

Activists chain themselves to battery hen farm Coalition to End Factory Farming 20/02/2011

Activists from Coalition to End Factory Farming are currently occupying a battery hen farm located at 203 Harrisville Road, Tuakau. Deirdre Sims and Marie Brittain have chained themselves to seven-metre high silos on the farm. Sims and Brittain are taking this action to draw attention to the cruelty inherent of factory farming.

Dozens of supporters holding banners, placards and chicken costumes are in support outside the farm. Sims and Brittain are prepared to stay in their position occupying the factory farm overnight.

Ms Sims says, "Over the past year we have been involved in investigating many battery hen farms the across the country. What we've seen is both shocking and sadly typical of factory farms in New Zealand."

"It is heartbreaking to see inside these sheds. You see row upon row of caged hens that are treated as nothing more than egg producing machines, unable to carry out the most basic natural behaviours such as wing stretching and walking."

88 per cent of the 3 million layer hens in New Zealand are kept confined and suffering in cruel cages.

"Our action is not aimed at this particular farm. It is aimed at the egg industry which is inherently cruel and a government which refuses to act," says Ms Sims.

Coalition to End Factory Farming believes the new draft Code of Welfare for Layer Hens is appallingly inadequate as hens will still be confined in cages for many decades to come.

"The egg industry is proposing to introduce colony cages as a replacement for existing battery cages. But colony cages still breach welfare legislation as they do not allow hens to express their normal behaviour. A cage is a cage no matter how the Egg Producers Federation tries to spin it."

In 2006 Parliament's Regulations Review Committee ruled that battery cages were in breach of the Animal Welfare Act 1999.

"This means that we have illegal systems in place sanctioned by our government, purely so that these industries can continue to make a profit - this is completely unacceptable," says Ms Sims.

"A Colmar Brunton poll showed that around 80 per cent of New Zealander's think battery cages are cruel. The public want change and, in an election year, it would pay for the government to listen.

"Until factory farming practices cease to exist, we will continue to expose animal cruelty and carry out non-violent civil disobedience actions like this," concludes Ms Sims.

ENDS

For further information contact Coalition to End Factory Farming spokespersons:

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Notes:

- 1) Footage of our investigations inside typical battery hen farms is available on mini DV; including footage from inside the farm the activists have chained themselves to.
- 2) High resolution photographs of typical battery hen farms are also available.
- 3) Coalition to End Factory Farming is comprised of several Animal Rights organisations from across the country including New Zealand Open Rescue, Animal Freedom Aotearoa and the Wellington Animal Rights Network.
- 4) The draft Code of Welfare for Layer Hens is currently open for public submission until 25 March 2011.