

# Egg Industry backs increased penalties in NSW



Publication: 2 February 2010  
Categories: Media Releases  
Reading time: 1 minute

The Australian Egg Corporation (AECL) enthusiastically supports the increase to penalties for egg farmers who fail to comply with hen housing standards, announced by the Minister for Primary Industries, Tony Kelly last week, and instigated by the former Minister, Ian Macdonald, during his time in the Primary Industries portfolio.

"Most egg farms in Australia reflect a modern, progressive and compliant environment, encouraging best practice on-farm for the benefit of the animals, staff and management. These modern establishments no longer reflect the images that are commonly broadcast in the media, and AECL is eager to eliminate any association the general public may have with these out-dated images" said James Kellaway, the Managing Director of AECL.

The Australian egg industry is proud of the innovation and advancement that has taken place within much of the industry in recent years, and does not support illegal egg farmers who choose not to upgrade their facilities.

The vast majority of Australian egg farmers have made significant capital investments in recent years to comply with 2008 requirements, however some NSW egg farmers have been reluctant to upgrade their systems to meet these obligations. While in December 2008 over 83% of the national flock were housed in compliant cages, only 73.1% of the NSW flock met this standard, and although this figure has increased during the interim 12 months, there is a sustained need for the remaining egg farmers in NSW to comply with the regulation.

The Australian Egg Corporation applauds this move by the NSW Government, and predicts that harsher penalties for non-compliance to the regulation will be an additional incentive for unlawful egg farmers to upgrade their facilities or exit the egg industry.

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