

# CODES OF CRUELTY

## ***How Australian laws have abandoned farm animals***

**How effective is our animal protection legislation in Australia? Does it protect all animals from suffering and acts of cruelty? The answer is no.**

Tragically, the vast majority of animals in human care in this country – some 400 million production animals – have been excluded from the protection of our animal welfare legislation. As a result, millions of farm animals daily endure housing conditions and acts of cruelty that would be illegal if it instead involved a companion animal.

These animals need your help. Animal protection laws in this country do not effectively protect animals from suffering - they effectively protect the industries that profit through animal suffering.



## **Codes of Cruelty**

**During the 1970s and 1980s the suffering of animals in 'factory farms' in Australia was raised by animal protection groups. Instead of acting on the evidence of endemic suffering, industries and governments introduced 'codes of practice' which documented current practices and provided industries with exemptions from cruelty prosecutions.**

**Despite our laws stating that it is an offence to be cruel to an animal, in effect these laws only protect those animals who have become our companions, whilst permitting cruel acts and practices to animals that are raised to be eaten.**

**Currently, industry operators that cause mass suffering to animals for economic gain are exempted from the same duty of care to animals demanded of every other member of the Australian community.**

**To compound this injustice, the existence of 'codes of practice' is used by industries, retailers and governments to mislead the community to believe that they ensure the welfare of the animals – when in fact they are directly responsible for permitting cruel practices.**

# Animal industry practices which would be cruelty offences if not 'protected' by 'codes of cruelty':



## Battery Hen Industry

The severe confinement of hens in wire cages where they are unable to spread their wings, exercise or perform natural behaviours which causes physical and mental suffering. The debeaking of chicks where up to one half of the upper beak and one third of the lower beak are cut off to stop caged hens pecking each other. Nerves reach to the tip of the beak, so this mutilation is extremely painful and is chronic for some birds.

- Cruelty Offences:**
- Causing an animal unnecessary pain
  - Failing to provide adequate exercise
- Victims:**
- 12.5 million laying hens



## Intensive Pig Industry

The severe individual confinement of pregnant sows and mother pigs in sow stalls and farrowing crates. The inability to exercise and constant standing or lying on hard floors causes lameness, foot injuries, lesions and weakened bones. The docking of piglets tails, clipping of their teeth and castration of male piglets without anesthetic.

- Cruelty Offences:**
- Causing an animal unnecessary pain and suffering
  - Failing to provide adequate exercise
- Victims:**
- 350,000 mother pigs
  - 5 million piglets



## Intensive Meat Chicken Industry

Confining up to 23 chickens per square metre in indoor sheds prior to slaughter. Causing harm and suffering to chickens by selective breeding and high growth feed which results in unnaturally rapid growth, bone deformities, fractures, hip dislocations and diseases. Professor John Webster of the University of Bristol School of Veterinary Science: "Broilers are the only livestock that are in chronic pain for the last 20% of their lives."

- Cruelty Offences:**
- Causing an animal unnecessary pain
  - Failing to provide adequate exercise
- Victims:**
- 420 million chickens



## Wool Industry

Painful mutilations are performed on lambs without anesthetic. Their tails are cut off and the males are castrated. Most lambs are 'mulesed' which involves cutting slices of skin from the buttocks to produce a wool-less scar area that is less likely to attract to flies.

- Cruelty Offence:**
- Causing an animal unnecessary pain
- Victims:**
- 20 million lambs

In the ultra-fine wool industry, sheep are kept confined individually or in small groups in pens indoors denying them exercise and the ability to perform natural behaviours such as grazing.

- Cruelty Offence:**
- Failing to provide adequate exercise
- Victims:**
- At least 10,000 sheep

### Plus....

The dehorning of cattle, hot iron branding, transporting sheep (for up to 30 hours) and cattle (for up to 48 hours) without food and water etc.

This legislative betrayal of our responsibilities to animals cannot be ethically justified. It completely contradicts long established fundamental principals of justice and culpability.

## What you can do ...

- Write to your State Minister responsible for animal welfare and ask him to remove the exemptions provided to animal industry operators and amend animal protection legislation to provide equal protection for all animals.
- Refuse to buy cruelly-produced products.
- Alert friends, family and colleagues to the inequities in our laws and encourage them to also take action. Ignorance is the greatest ally of those who cause suffering to animals.