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**From:** Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture  
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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Impact of Animal Rights Activism on Victorian Agriculture

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## **SUBMISSION CONTENT:**

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Animal Activists instigated the end of the battery cage in the ACT in 2014 and the profit of \$23 million dollars for the ACT government.

In the end of high school through my enjoyment of raising chickens I decided to do work experience at a poultry farm on the border of the ACT called 'Parkwood eggs'.

The facility is part of one of the biggest egg producing companies in Australia; PACE farms. The CEO sat on the board of the 'Australian Egg Corporation'.

The first day I sat down to listen to the farm manager talk on production methods and I was shocked at the lack of interest in the care for the animals. I asked naively; 'but don't you care about the animals?' The farm manager seemed surprised and bemused.

There were two large sheds full of thousands of caged chickens deprived of their basic rights to life; access to fresh air, sunlight and room to move.

- There were three chickens crammed into a cage so small they did not have room to sit. The farm hands would start their day pulling out the dead flattened chickens that the other two had pecked to death from stress.
- The methane from the mountains of faeces was so intense that masks needed to be worn to breathe. Some chickens had escaped the cages and were conditioned to a life of picking grain from piles of faeces at the bottom.
- The meat chickens were subjected to intense fluoro-lighting 24 hours a day, to stop sleep and encourage growth during their short (3 month) life before slaughter.

The level of noise and stress was intense. Chickens squawked continuously hanging out of their cages in

desperation. None of them looked healthy. Unfortunately the mental, emotional and physical welfare of the chickens is not in line with maximum productivity.

On day two I brought a camera, and took photos. Anyone can become an animal activist when faced with cruelty. I didn't see the farm hand walking towards me as my flash went through the shed. When he approached he just smiled at me and kept walking.

The workers are under non-disclosure contracts and the Laos packers didn't speak English.

At the end of the week I witnessed egg cartons come in with 'free range eggs' printed on them empty and go out full. This was a battery cage only facility. When I questioned a personal friend that had worked there he said 'it happens all the time'. He also told me that animal activists occasionally broke in, which when leaving, was my only hope for the future of these poor creatures.

In 2007 PACE was offered 1 million dollars by the ACT government to go 'barn laid' at the facility and they refused.

In 2012 Animal activists broke in and as a result; the battery cage was banned in the ACT.

As part of the deal to go 'barn laid' PACE farms was offered \$7.5 million for 24 hectares of subdivided excess land which made the government \$23 million dollars in profit. This land had sat there unused while billions of hens had lived in hell, not touching or smelling grass, feeling sun or safety for over 30 years. Not that they do now with the current standards.

This is the only egg facility in the ACT, with TAS being the only other state to ban the battery cage. This is going on every day on a huge scale.

Instead of focusing on punishing activists; remove their motivations by making farmers more accountable to the consumer, and show the public that animal welfare is equal to, at least if not of higher priority than throwing the book at whistleblowers.

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File1:

File2:

File3: