

UK GOVERNMENT: PHASE OUT CAGES FOR LAYING HENS

We, the undersigned, are representing some of the largest food companies in the UK, writing to you in support of Compassion in World Farming's call for the phasing out of cages for laying hens. We have all either eliminated the use of cages for egg laying hens within our supply or are committed to do so by the end of 2025. By that time, over 90% of the UK's egg production will be cage-free. However, even when UK production is 90% cage-free, around 4 million laying hens will still be confined to cages every year.

In order that the UK can be 100% cage-free for laying hens, and to ensure that there is a level playing field for egg sales and production, we urge you to begin taking the necessary steps to phase out the use of eggs from caged systems from domestic production and for such a ban to be accompanied by a general ban on sales of eggs produced from caged animals regardless of their origin.

The first step in that process is to publish the long-awaited consultation on the use of cages. In 2022, when Parliament debated the 'End the Cage Age for farmed animals' petition^[1], the then-Defra Minister of State (Victoria Prentis) stated that the Government would very soon be bringing forward consultations on cages for laying hens, stating that it was 'almost ready to go.' We were encouraged that the legislation in this

[1] <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/593775>



area seemed likely to keep pace with the changes we were making within supply chains, and the strong support for action on this issue from the then-Official Opposition

However, over two years later, this consultation has not been published. If the Government is to ensure that the UK remains a beacon for good farmed animal welfare, and our companies are not to be undercut by those yet to commit to cage-free eggs, we must move away from cages towards higher welfare systems.

We therefore encourage you to publish a consultation which envisages the UK becoming cage free in the sale and production of eggs. Given the substantial progress that has been made by companies like us in committing to no longer sell eggs / egg products from caged systems, we urge that the consultation envisages an ambitious phase-out period – for example no new cage systems can be installed with immediate effect and existing cage systems must be replaced by the end of the current Parliament with a sales ban also being introduced at that point.

Sincerely,



The
Big Table



GREGGS

Mitchells
& Butlers

M&S
EST. 1884

Morrisons

WAITROSE
& PARTNERS

