



December 2015

As part of the amendments to the 2012 layer hens code of welfare, the Egg Producers Federation undertook to provide the Minister for Primary Industries with an annual report outlining progress towards phasing out conventional cages and transitioning to alternative layer hen farming systems. This is the second annual report produced by the Egg Producers Federation.

Replacing conventional cages is a significant undertaking for farmers. Many farmers have had to, or will need to, build new sheds, either on their existing sites or on new sites, with the associated need to raise capital, possibly purchase land, obtain building and resource consents, physically build new sheds and restock their flocks. Other farmers have altered, or will need to alter, existing sheds.

The December 2015 report on the transition indicates that the egg farming industry is making solid progress to meet the timeframes set out in the code of welfare. Since December 2013, the number of conventional cage farms has declined by 10, a fall of 23%, and there has been a 10% reduction in the number of hens in conventional cages. There has also been significant growth in the number of hens in alternative farming systems, resulting in a 9% increase in the total number of hens in all farming systems since 2013. A significant level of transition to alternative housing systems still needs to occur to meet the first deadline at the end of 2018, when conventional cages installed prior to 31 December 1999 can no longer be used.

As at December 2015, there are 151 active commercial egg farms in New Zealand. Of these, 33 farms still use the conventional cage farming system and are working towards phasing this out. Of these 33 egg farms, 12% (four farms) intend on leaving the industry at the transition date required; 12% (four farms) are still undecided as to whether or not they will exit the industry at the transition date required; and 76% (25 farms) intend to carry on egg production via alternative farming systems.

Note: Eggs are an important low-cost source of protein in the diet of New Zealanders. The per capita annual egg consumption in New Zealand continues to grow and in 2014 was 227. Due to biosecurity reasons, the market is completely dependent on locally produced eggs.