

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Free Range Egg Labelling Consultation Paper.

A legislated definition of free-range eggs is critical to ending the exploitation of consumers and the unfair market that confronts genuine free-range farmers. In order to meet consumer expectations of animal welfare, it is essential that the definition of ‘free-range’ includes specific conditions like stocking density, defined feed and husbandry practices.

Taking this into account, I believe that the following definition of ‘free-range’ should be legislated:

“Free-range production systems must have a maximum stocking of 1,500 per hectare, hens are housed in sheds and have access to the outside area for about eight hours a day.

- Within a shed there are a maximum of 14 birds per square metre.*
- Outside there are is a maximum of 1500 birds per hectare.*

It must be ensured that hens can, and do, move about freely on an open range on most days. De-beaking is not permitted as a routine procedure.”

Further comments on the consultation paper:

- I support ‘free-range’ remaining a single, premium label. New labels like “premium free-range” and “access to range” will cause further confusion and potentially allow for the exploitation of consumers to continue.*
- Production systems that stock hens intensively at 10,000 birds per hectare should not be permitted to use the ‘free-range’ label.*
- Independent, third party accreditation of farms to ensure they adhere to agreed standards is critical to restoring consumer confidence.*

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,