

# Ethical Sourcing Policy – a White Paper by Rob Marchetti

## Introduction

I am a founding Ambassador of Animals Australia's *Make it Possible* campaign – launched in 2012 with the aim to bring an end to factory farming -- the biggest animal welfare crisis facing the world today.

Make it Possible is supported by over a dozen high profile Australians, including Pat Rafter, Mick Molloy, Carl Barron, Judith Lucy, Missy Higgins, Michael Caton, Michelle Bridges and Peter Siddle.

The reason why this campaign has attracted such significant support is because exemptions in animal cruelty laws allow factory farmed animals to be severely confined, denied quality of life and subjected to surgical procedures without pain relief. This is despite science acknowledging that the capacity of animals subjected to factory farming to suffer is no different to the family pet.

As community awareness of the welfare impacts of factory farming has grown so has opposition to the practices inflicted on animals to produce 'cheap' products.

## Abstract

The movement to treat animals raised for food humanely is being driven by the corporate sector, which is increasingly recognising that they play a key role in either maintaining current treatment of animals, or in driving needed change.

Since the launch of Make it Possible, there have been commitments from major retailers to reduce the number of factory farmed products on their shelves, with Woolworths committing to remove all cage eggs by 2018. Animals Australia was also instrumental in the recent landmark decision by McDonald's and Subway to phase out their use of cage eggs.

Growing disquiet in the community relating to factory farming practices also presents clear opportunities for food retailers and the restaurant sector to embrace and drive needed change and to be recognised and applauded for taking a proactive stance on animal welfare issues.

## Business Case

There are clear commercial benefits in embracing an ethical purchasing policy. By doing so, there is an opportunity to enhance brand capital, increase customer loyalty and provide a point of difference with competitors through being seen as ethically progressive. Importantly - one restaurant using 50,000 eggs a week changing from cage to free range - sends a significant message as to where future funds need to be invested in the egg industry.

## Solution/Recognition

Businesses that make the decision to source higher welfare animal products (meat or eggs) would receive an endorsement from Australia's two peak animal welfare bodies, Animals Australia and the RSPCA.

1. They will be recognised with a certificate as well as publicly by Animals Australia, and can choose to publicise their support of Animals Australia's *Make it Possible* campaign to end factory farming on their own websites or other marketing materials. With a supporter base exceeding one million people and with a greater social media reach than any other NGO in the country, Animals Australia is well placed to ensure any positive announcement is broadly applauded.
2. The RSPCA has also introduced the *Good Egg Award*, recognising companies that do not use cage eggs. The *Good Egg Award* recipients are announced annually and can display the GEA logo on their websites and other paraphernalia. Visit [www.GoodEggAward.org.au](http://www.GoodEggAward.org.au)
3. The RSPCA also lists restaurants and hotels that are not using factory farmed chicken meat, pork or eggs (or all three) on this website [www.ChooseWisely.org.au](http://www.ChooseWisely.org.au) – also providing a 'look-up' tool for consumers wanting to find such restaurants in their area. Choose Wisely incorporates a ranking system of three levels (Gold, Silver, Bronze) depending on what level businesses commit.

## Future Direction / Long-Term Focus

Our long-term goal for this project is to raise consumer awareness of the plight of animals living in cruel, confined conditions – and to encourage major food retailers, large corporates and the restaurant industry, to pledge to make a positive change.

## Results / Conclusion

The movement has already begun ... so jump on board ... and this is just the beginning!

Major corporations including Nestle and Heinz have recently announced they are overhauling their supply chains to improve animal welfare, all in response to increased consumer awareness and concern for animals. Australian retailers Coles and Woolworths are doing the same, with Woolworths committing to no longer stocking cage eggs by 2018, already taking them off their shelves throughout the ACT. Fast food giants, McDonald's and Subway recently announced a "phase out" of cage eggs across all their Australian stores.

And you don't have to be a major corporate or chain to get involved. One by one, Australian businesses are making more ethical purchasing decisions - from hotels like Crown Plaza in Canberra to the Hilton International in Adelaide. One Victorian IGA recently became the first to announce they would be taking all cage and barn-laid eggs off their shelves and they did it overnight! Their decision was met with international applause and made the prime time news.

So, if McDonalds can do it .... Why can't you?