



Media request to see the Enriched Colony System

We confirm that media requests to film the Enriched Colony System have been declined on the basis that it is neither useful nor practical to grant unrestricted access to media representatives.

All visits to egg farms pose some risk to biosecurity and animal welfare and the value of such visits needs to be weighed against these risks, as well as disruption to the day to day business of the farm.

If the goal is to accurately convey the quality of the environment for hens living in an enriched colony an appropriate filming technique is needed. A television news camera looking into a Colony is not appropriate.

A suitably qualified production company has been engaged to capture this footage through small non-intrusive in-cage cameras. This will be made available on the EPF site. It will be of broadcast quality allowing media to also access this content.

It will be important for the public to have access to balanced and credible information around Enriched Colony System should the recommendation by NAWAC for Colony Systems to replace current cages be adopted. At present this is a proposed alternative and the final code of practice has yet to be released.

The industry believes that suggestions that the industry is hiding the system are an attempt to undermine this promising alternative. The new system is considered by welfare experts to retain the benefits of current cages while allowing the birds to express natural behaviours such as nesting, perching, scratching and the ability to spread their wings.

The pilot Enriched Colony System in Dunedin is part of an international research project and leading animal welfare experts have been closely scrutinising the health and well-being of the birds. These individuals are well regarded independent experts whose international reputation ensures they offer unbiased opinion on matters related to animal welfare. Our own local experts and authorities have also visited the farm as have some of the very people who claim that the farm is closed to outsiders. Those visitors include Hans Kriek from SAFE, Sue Kedgely from the Green party, the Hon. David Carter, Minister of Agriculture, members of the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) and the Director General of MAF, Wayne McNee and other senior MAF officials.

In closing it is important to note; that it is NAWAC who have prosed the change from current cages to colony systems. The EU is adopting this system as an alternative to current cages and the USA egg industry and the American Humane Society have recently agreed to approach the USA Federal government for legislation to change from current cages to the colony system. The N.Z. egg industry has been looking at alternatives to current cages and Enriched Colony Systems appear to offer an excellent alternative.