



EGG PRODUCERS FEDERATION
OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

MEDIA STATEMENT

**Response to *Sunday / 60 Minutes* Programmes
From the Egg Producers Federation
14 November 2011**

The egg industry does not support illegal farming practices and where these are believed to take place, the industry draws such practices to the attention of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) who have the power to take action.

This categorical assurance has been given by the Egg Producers Federation following an expose of what appeared to be poor and possibly illegal farm practice on last night's *Sunday* programme. Although the specific identity of the farm shown on the television was not divulged, where poor performers are known to the industry these have been brought to the attention of MAF.

"The practices on this farm portrayed on the programme are abhorrent to our industry and this, thankfully, is an isolated instance," says Michael Guthrie, chairman of the Egg Producers Federation.

The problem can be the use of non-compliant equipment, but more often it is poor stockmanship which is plain bad farming practice whether in cages, barn or free-range operations. Unfortunately, every industry has its delinquents. Any contravention of the code of animal welfare is not acceptable and the EPF is proactive in trying to eradicate these operations.

"There are nearly 130 egg farms in New Zealand and it's a case of a very small number of substandard performers damaging the reputation of the whole industry.

"Unfortunately, an industry body has no power to pull the tiny minority of delinquent farmers into line. In fact, because we operate under the Commodity Levy Act we don't even have the opportunity to expel them from the industry body.

"If MAF decides it will be tougher on these types of operators they will get no opposition from us. We fully support strong action against rogue operators," he said.

Both the TV1 and TV3 programmes screened last night looked at the question of activists breaking into egg farms, debating the pros and cons of such practices.

"Unfortunately, the actions of this small minority of rogue operators are wrongly taken by activists as justification for the practice of illegal break-ins and they do this, not only without fear of prosecution, but knowing that they are likely to be lauded by the news media. *Continues...*

“We have to be very clear about the practice of break-ins. They are no more or less than a criminal act – breaking and entering.

“The vast majority of egg farms are family businesses where the owners live on the property so the break-in involves entering personal space. Many break-ins are into the properties of honest law-abiding farmers, not just the rogue operators. They tell us they feel violated just like people who have their houses burgled.

“These break-in activists are no more or less than vigilantes, taking the law into their own hands. They should report any suspicions to MAF and we would support MAF being tougher and thereby removing any justification used by these activists for their illegal actions,” says Mr. Guthrie.

For further information:

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