

PRESS RELEASE

CHICKEN CHARITY DEFENDS BRITISH CAGED PRODUCERS

The Battery Hen Welfare Trust began its pioneering work five years ago building a bridge between commerce and welfare and has been swift to defend caged producers, Noble Foods and in particular Holsworthy Beacon Farm, who have recently come under the spotlight as a result of an undercover investigation.

The Trust's Founder, Jane Howorth, explained: "It disappoints me that the blame culture continues with tactics designed to shock and berate the British industry. The Battery Hen Welfare Trust has worked with the Holsworthy Beacon Farm and can confirm first hand that conditions met legal requirements on our visits. We entered with permission and had full access to hens in cages."

Howorth added: "CIWF does wonderful work helping improve the lives of billions of farm animals and we respect their achievements entirely. However we believe the answer to improved welfare for laying hens lies with educating the consumer, not condemning the British farmer".

Howorth went on: "If we continue to undermine our domestic industry, the net result will be imported caged eggs from countries where welfare conditions are out of our control. At the BHWT we carry out a positive campaign engaging with farmers, educating consumers and through our re-homing initiative thousands more are aware of how they can help improve life for laying hens *as well as* helping British farmers.

Howorth founded the charity in 2003 and since that date over 76,000 caged birds have been given a reprieve from the slaughterman finding retirement homes as family pets. As Howorth points out, this achievement has been reached as a result of the growing trust she builds within an industry that has been reviled for decades.

"It is my greatest wish to see the 19,000,000+ million caged birds come out into the sunshine and fresh air, but this will only happen if consumers support the industry and give farmers confidence to invest in free range systems once the 2012 ban is in place.

Howorth points out other countries are already gearing up to supply caged eggs to the UK when the EU ban on barren cages comes into force in 2012: "It is vital that we make consumers aware of their role in hen welfare. Purchasing products that contain free range eggs is the strongest message a consumer can send to food manufacturers that high welfare is imperative."

Details about the BHWT can be found on their website here:
<http://www.bhwt.org.uk>

NOTES TO EDITORS

The BHWT is a registered charity, number 1109060. Set up in 2003, its aim is to reduce consumer demand for eggs from caged systems and increase demand for high welfare eggs. The charity is a staunch supporter of the British egg industry going so far as to say that it would rather see caged production in the UK than caged eggs coming into the UK. The charity operates a re-homing initiative whereby end of lay hens go on to become family pets. To date the charity has found homes for over 76,000 hens.

Patrons include celebrities: Jamie Oliver, Jimmy Doherty, Pam Ayres, Amanda Holden, Antony Worrall Thompson and The Duchess of Richmond.

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