



## PRESS RELEASE

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\*\*\*\*\*For immediate release\*\*\*\*\*

### TO 'LIBERTY'! - BRITAIN'S LAST BATTERY HEN

Britain's very last battery hen will be re-homed today, marking the end of an era for commercial laying hens. Farmers across the country have been clearing their flocks to make way for the new enriched cage system which comes into effect on New Year's Day, in response to an EU Directive abolishing the barren (battery) cage system.

The last lucky ex-battery hen, aptly named Liberty will be re-homed today by national charity, the British Hen Welfare Trust, at their base in Chulmleigh, Devon.

The British Hen Welfare Trust was set up in 2005 by Jane Howorth, who was first alerted to the plight of battery hens by a Panorama documentary and was inspired to find homes for hens which would otherwise have gone to slaughter at the end of their commercial life. Starting out as a one woman with a van operation, the charity has grown rapidly over the last few years and now has over 25,000 loyal supporters and a team of 200 volunteers across the country, and, at its last count, will have re-homed over 300,000 ex-battery hens by the end of 2011.

In addition to re-homing ex-commercial laying hens, (and it will continue to re-home enriched cage, barn hens and spent free-range hens from 2012), the charity works tirelessly to educate the public about how they can make a difference to hen welfare, and is well known for encouraging support for the British egg industry.

Founder of the British Hen Welfare Trust, Jane Howorth, said:

Today is a major milestone in the life of the commercial laying hen in Britain and I'm pleased that improved welfare changes are being implemented. However, these things are never simple, and whilst Britain is complying with the new legislation, many overseas countries are not, and we will continue to see battery eggs imported into the UK, many of which will end up in processed food. This will provide a challenge for British farmers who will struggle to compete with lower welfare, cheaper egg imports from abroad. So we urge consumers to continue supporting our British farmers and always insist on British . and wherever possible - free range eggs.+

Since launching an appeal to the public in November to help re-home as many of the last batch of battery hens as possible, the charity hoped it would be able to re-home about 6,000 hens in the last 6 weeks of the year. The response has been so high that it has, in fact, re-homed nearer 15,000 . almost 6,000 of which were re-homed in 3 days between Christmas and the New Year!

Howorth continued: The response from the public has been truly phenomenal and I cannot thank them, our supporters and our dedicated volunteers - 140 of whom have been working flat out over the Christmas period - enough. The compassion and support demonstrated by the British public shows that welfare is truly alive and kicking in this country and I am so proud of what we have achieved, and will continue to achieve, together.+

Liberty the hen will enjoy her retirement at the charity's home in Devon, where she will join around 60 other ex-battery hens who need special care and attention.

Howorth concluded: Today is an emotional day for us at the British Hen Welfare Trust, as one chapter closes and a new one begins. As Liberty enjoys her new-found freedom, she is blissfully unaware of the milestone in the history of hens that she represents and the fact that she is the very reason I set up this charity. So here's to a very happy New Year, some very happy hens, and, of course, to Liberty!+

**To find out more or to support the work of the British Hen Welfare Trust please email [info@bhwt.org.uk](mailto:info@bhwt.org.uk) , log on to [www.bhwt.org.uk](http://www.bhwt.org.uk) or tel: 01769 580310**

\*\*\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\*\*\*

**Notes to Editors:**

**For jpegs of photos (to follow) and to arrange interviews:**

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