# **How Switzerland got rid of battery cages**

by Heinzpeter Studer Pro Tier International © 2001 Zurich

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# **United Poultry Concerns**

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Opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of United Poultry Concerns.

#### **About Pro Tier International**

- Pro Tier helps animals we are practical, committed and unbureaucratic.
- We fight for the animals as fellow creatures who must no longer be considered and treated as objects to be used arbitrarily.
- We fight against the industrial exploitation of animals and nature, and for a better world for animals and humans, since "animal welfare means educating humanity" (Albert Schweitzer).
- Our way of thinking and acting is based on an ethical responsibility for the individual animal. Animals have the right to live their lives free from harm and in a manner appropriate to their species.

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#### **About United Poultry Concerns**

- United Poultry Concerns is a nonprofit public education organization and sanctuary that addresses the treatment of domestic fowl in food production, science, education, entertainment, and human companionship situations.
- UPC promotes the compassionate and respectful treatment of domestic fowl through its chicken sanctuary, its quarterly newsletter *Poultry Press*, its annual Forum, its web site, and many other publications and communication networks.
- UPC conducts national and international campaigns in opposition to abusive practices such as battery cages and in support of compassionate choices such as veganism.

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Note: Lengths and weights in figures and graphs are expressed in metric quantities. Please be advised that one meter (m) is the equivalent of about 3 and 1/4 feet while one square meter (m²) is the equivalent of about 10 and 3/4 square feet. It takes about 2 and 1/2 centimeters (cm) to make an inch and about 6 and 1/2 square centimeters (cm²) to make a square inch. One kilogram (kg) is the equivalent of about 2 and 1/4 pounds. It takes just over 28 grams (g) to make up one ounce and just under 454 grams to make up a pound. Where possible, conversions are provided within the text.

# Prologue

### For a Hen

You lay an egg nearly every day. People from the so-called 'first world' eat one egg nearly every day. That is one hen per person. Just as, on average, every person keeps a dog, a cat or another pet in the rich countries. Would you like to live with a person who eats your eggs? What would your life be like then? And what is it like today?

No, living alone with a human being is not what you want. There would have to be a few other hens with you. And a cock. And a few chicks and young hens. Just a real little flock, twenty or thirty birds. That is how your ancestors lived in the jungle, you say.

Today most of you live separated from the cocks and the young, only hens, but thousands of them, all in the same house. Nearly none of you ever gets outside, most of you never see daylight, the majority are always confined in cages. One and a half years in the cage and then your life is put to an end because your egg production decreases. Perhaps a human being will eat you in a soup; but more likely you will end up dumped in a landfill as waste.

Do I really want to ask for your understanding? No, I just want to explain that we humans sometimes need quite a long time to understand. After all, we did learn something. We found out how we can make you lay the eggs that our forebears had a hard time to steal out of the hidden nests of your ancestors. We even learned how to make a few people do the whole job for us. There are enough eggs in the supermarket, so where is the need to own hens nowadays?

One egg per day - a human right? You ask where the rights of the hens are in all of this? Be patient - I said: We humans are able to learn. Given that you lay eggs no matter if the circumstances are good or bad, one like the other, same shell, same taste, it takes some time until we realize where the difference is. We have to get the hang of it first, then you will be better off. Because then we will appreciate the value of the eggs, eat them thoughtfully and in smaller quantities, and pay more for them. Less stress for the hens. And less stress for the farmers.

You think that I just want to take the part of your bosses? Those who cramp you into narrow cages and only care about you when you lay eggs? Did you ever try to revolt? To demand shorter working hours? More nature? More care? Maybe your bosses simply don't see what doesn't suit you, maybe they only see their own worries about feed costs, price collapse, productivity, competition, and having to obey even bigger bosses.

You say: Yes, of course we know all about the bosses: retail managers for whom turnover and gains are the only thing that counts; politicians whose highest aim is to be reelected; civil servants who don't want to burn their fingers. You may be right there; but they also do what they do simply because it is accepted, because they hardly meet any resistance.

The best thing you could do would be to go on strike. But that doesn't work, you say, strikes are for humans only.

# Chapter I

# Why Do We Lock Up Hens?

Intensive animal farming was developed in the first half of the last century. However, it was not until the end of World War II that factory farms really triumphed. "Rationalization" of animal farming was a part of the economic reconstruction. The rapidly growing proportion of Europeans who had returned to work, earned wages and now could afford meat and eggs called for mass production at the lowest possible prices. The need for a guaranteed food supply was used as an argument for industrial (and against conventional) animal farming.

The first victims of industrialization were the laying hens. It seemed that they easily adapted to the conditions dictated by their confinement into more or less small cages. At least they continued to lay eggs, even more than ever before. The advocates of intensive farming claimed that this was the proof that the animals were happy with the new system. From then on, batteries with endless rows of cages and several storeys were built.

#### What hens really want

Over the last twenty years I have been occupied with creating conditions for hens that correspond to their needs in the best possible way. I kept ten to twenty hens myself for several years, and later on I worked at my office desk to win people over to grant the hens more freedom. I always considered the confinement of hens in battery cages as something that could only come to the minds of people who were insensitive and hardhearted, because in these cages the laying hens aren't able to do nearly anything they want to do.

Hens want to experience day and night, the seasons, the sun, the wind and the weather - this is what their feathers are for.

Hens want to experience day and night, the seasons, the sun, the wind and the weather - this is what their feathers are for. Hens want to scratch in the earth with their claws and peck at edible things with their beaks. Hens want to take a bath in the dust or in the sand to keep their feathers clean. Hens want to stroll, to explore the area and to fly a little, to sit down together on a branch and also to be alone and in peace. This applies all the more to laying eggs, which hens like to do in a private and secure place.

Hens in battery cages are denied all of this. They spend their whole life in closed buildings, three or four of them cramped into each cage, with the cages built in a row and several storeys of rows. They stand on wire nettings that aren't adapted to their feet and where they can never scratch. The cages are so narrow and so low that the hens constantly touch each other and are never able to withdraw, to say nothing of jumping up. The windowless buildings are poorly lighted with a reddish twilight in order to prevent the stressed birds from hurting each other (this lighting dampens activity and reduces aggression because chickens cannot see well in dim light). The only things the hens are allowed to do are eating, drinking, and laying eggs.

#### The road to hen batteries

Who except animal abusers could be interested in locking up defenseless birds in such a special security wing? This is what I thought before I started studying the history of hen batteries once again for this book. I came across the memoirs of the pioneer of Swiss hen battery farming. Harald Ebbell describes his path from a young farming apprentice to an internationally acclaimed expert of egg production who, as the director of the poultry farm Wander in Bern (producer of the breakfast beverage "Ovomaltine") and thanks to his generous employer, was able to conduct fundamental research for decades. In 1935, Switzerland's first big battery unit was constructed at the Ovomaltine Farm.

Ebbell had started his apprenticeship in Germany and had got fond of that country. However, in 1931, he already "learned to think critically, particularly concerning human relations", he writes in his memoirs, since he saw himself "exposed to a web of racist glorification that I found repulsive" and learned "so much about mass psychology that I could live off these experiences throughout my whole life". This small section set me thinking.

Until then I had, according to the commonly used term among German animal welfare circles, despised battery owners as "hen KZ [concentration camp] henchmen". Now I began to see things in a different light: The pioneers of battery farming certainly had motives that, taken for themselves, were worthy. I also had to be advised by Werner Thomann, the former director of the Swiss Poultry Breeding College (SGS), that "the term 'hen KZ' should be avoided. It was created by an anti-semite, the veterinary surgeon Bernhard Grzimek. In his egg book, he had included some disrespectful anti-semitic notes about the Jewish egg trade during the 1930's."

The battery pioneers were looking for a solution to the problems of hen farming at the time:

- The increasing concentration of hens in a narrow space [see graphic 1] led to growing hygienic problems because eggs came into contact with hen droppings and germs, which could be dangerous for the consumers' health.
- At the same time, the hens' health was also harmed, which lead to reduced performance and a higher death rate among the birds and thus to higher production costs.
- The feed costs make a considerable part of the egg price. In order to guarantee that nearly everybody could afford eggs, farmers looked for ways to reduce the feed consumption per egg.

"Intensive mass animal farming allows us to protect the animals from negative environmental influences such as bad weather and rapid climatic changes. It allows us to keep the flock at optimal temperatures the whole year through and at the same time to guarantee sufficient fresh air supply. This improves the general state of health of the poultry. Intensive animal farming in batteries allows to combat infectious diseases better. Feed which is not polluted by dirty litter, as in floor keeping, is another aspect."

Harald Ebbell, pioneer of battery farming in Switzerland In a polemic by the Swiss Association of Poultry Farmers, 1975.

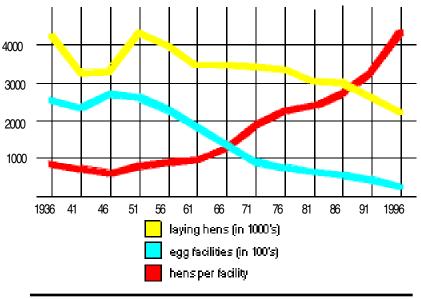
Since the high concentration of hens on big farms and the obligation to produce eggs at low costs were seen as economically necessary, keeping hens in batteries seemed to be an obvious solution. This even more efficient production method spread especially because many egg producers hoped that a bigger turnover could help them maintain their incomes despite the continuously sinking egg prices. The consumers increasingly earned more money but wanted to spend less and less of their wages for food. Compared to the wages, the egg prices decreased enormously [see graphic 2].

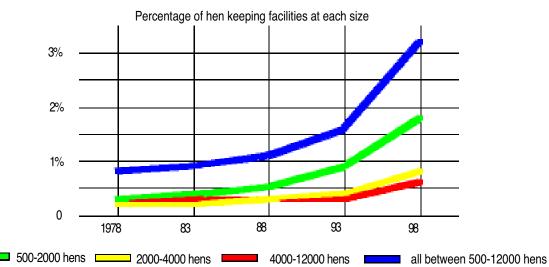
#### **Batteries: Just too densely stocked?**

Even today, Werner Thomann still considers accusations against hen batteries to be "silly". According to Thomann, it is not the system that is the problem, but the fact that the cages were built too small and were stocked too densely, against the recommendations of the German battery pioneer Paul Collignon. According to Thomann, "Ebbell used the best hen battery that could be found on the market at the time, a British Patchett, which could even today provide more optimal conditions than most of the cheap brands that are being sold in the foreign trade. Moreover, he had an excellent German poultry breeder who didn't overcrowd the cages and who also strictly instructed the staff to always observe the animals and to work quietly."

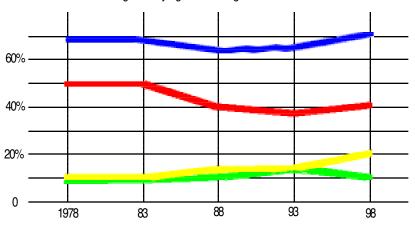
After having worked for 17 years as a poultry expert for the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in the Third World, Thomann was appointed director of the SGS in 1971 "and got caught in the swirls of vehement discussions about the appropriateness of hen batteries to the animals". He proposed to examine the impact of

**Graphic I: Concentration of Hen Keeping** 









different stocking densities on the state of the birdss, since criticism of battery farming had primarily arisen because of overcrowding. However, nobody wanted to test his propositions. Even Harald Ebbel didn't, "since he didn't know at all that his former colleagues overcrowded their cages. It was said on the quiet that obviously, he could put fewer animals into his cages because the company Wander disposed of financial resources much differently than an ordinary producer."

Thomann insists that "the" battery doesn't exist; there are numerous and very different models. When it was first introduced, battery farming was rejected in all countries because it was too expensive, as their inventors, like Collignon, recommended  $800 \text{ cm}^2$  [124 in²] of floor space per hen (a little more than an A 4 sheet of paper). However, when it was realized that even with a cage base area of only  $360 \text{ cm}^2$  [55 $^{3/4}$  in², i. e. half a sheet ] per laying hen, a good performance could be obtained, overcrowded hen batteries began to triumph.

"The whiny fuss about the feelings of hens has always been repugnant to me," Thomann admits even today in his private correspondence. "I knew very well from the behavior of the hens if it suited them or not. I didn't need an ethologist to prove it, who hadn't worked in hen houses every day, from morning till evening, seven days per week, nor a small farmer who had to deal only with a small flock. It is pitiful that an animal welfare act was needed, partly with strange requirements, to keep animals appropriately. First of all, keeping animals requires dedication, commitment and understanding." Unfortunately, not all of the farmers are as professional and committed as Thomann.

### Responsibility of the consumers

Neither sadism nor mere greed for profit led to battery farming. But nowadays, those who ruthlessly aim at profits with huge cage batteries obviously keep the majority of the hens worldwide. The majority of the hen farmers, however, don't make much profits, neither with batteries nor with floor keeping, and their ruthlessness isn't any greater than that of the consumers who only look for the lowest prices when the buy eggs.

"During the 1970's, there were two big studies in Switzerland concerning the impact of hen keeping methods and of the stocking density on laying performance, state of health, and well-being. In the first study, the staff was unskilled, in the second, they were selected experts. The laying performance and the state of health of the animals were disastrous in the first study, which was mainly due to the lack of experience and skills of the staff. In the second study, the ethological parameters of the cages were at least as good as those in floor keeping. In cage keeping, the laying performance and the state of health were best in the less stocked cages."

Werner Thomann.

Director of the Swiss Poultry Breeding College 1971-1982:

(Personal message, 2001)

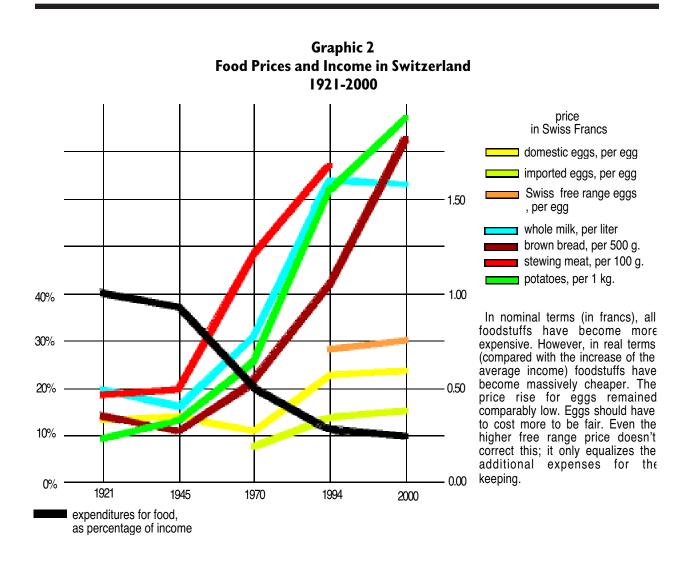
This is not to excuse anything that is being done to the hens who are kept in cages. It is just to help us to understand how people came to lock up hens their whole lives through. Without understanding this, it won't be possible to improve the situation of the hen farmers and, consequently, of the hens.

#### Hens feel uncomfortable not only in cages

This kind of understanding also means we must say good-bye to convenient black and white pictures. Even in alternative keeping systems, hens are denied some of the things they want. In floor keeping, the hens mostly can't see any daylight, and thousands of them live in the same building. Even free range hens usually don't grow up with their mother hens, but come from big hatcheries and rearing establishments. They too live in big groups of hundreds or thousands of birds of the same age and after one and a half years are hung up head down on the evisceration line. Only in idyllic exceptional cases, hens get what they really want nowadays:

to grow up with their mother hen and to live in small mixed flocks for five or seven or even more years until they die naturally.

Certainly, each alternative to cage keeping is progress for the hens, and certainly free range keeping corresponds most closely to the needs of the hens. But here too there is a compromise made between what is desirable and what is financially possible, and in this voting only the moneybag has a voice — the animal never has.



# Chapter 2

# **Animal Welfare Passes into Law**

First comes the belly...

Initially, criticism of industrial animal keeping went unheard. But protests grew when in 1964 the British author Ruth Harrison presented an unsparing report in her book <u>Animal Machines</u>, The British government set up a commission chaired by Prof. F. W. Rogers Brambell, which basically agreed with Harrison's criticism and which, for the first time in history, called for minimum standards for the keeping of farm animals. As to the keeping of laying hens, the Brambell commission didn't recommend a step back to traditional free range keeping that, for want of good management of runs and litter, facilitated the spread of poultry diseases in many cases and was regarded as hardly efficient. Instead, the commission concluded that, in spite of all doubts about battery keeping, it was to be preferred (with improvements) to the usual floor keeping with or without runs. In order to make sure that each hen was able to stand upright and spread her wings, the height of the cages would have to be 45 cm [18 in] on average, the floor area per bird at least 730 cm² [113 in²] and the stocking density three hens per cage at the utmost. In order to make sure that each hen was inspected at least once a day, not more than three storeys could be built.

Werner Thomann, director of the Swiss Poultry Breeding College at the time, advised the Swiss Association of Poultry Farmers to test the propositions made by the Brambell commission in a number of batteries. "But nothing happened. Neither in Switzerland nor in the UK did the big poultry farmers show any interest. Even though Ruth Harrison had already calculated that due to fewer losses in the less stocked cages, the higher costs of the housing units and their equipment could be fully compensated. But all of the suggestions were set at nought, and this paved the way for the ban on battery keeping. The sea raged and wanted its victims."

#### First approaches to national animal welfare

Even though Ruth Harrison and the Brambell commission hadn't declared themselves against hen batteries, not even their modest recommendations were followed. However, the idea to legally protect farm animals from avoidable cruelty couldn't be ignored anymore.

In Switzerland, animal welfare activists also tried to protect animals by legislation. Until then, there had only been a prohibition of slaughter without prior stunning (prohibition of kosher butchering, integrated into the Federal Constitution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by a popular initiative launched by Swiss animal welfare activists) and a prohibition of cruelty against animals in penal law. Real animal welfare laws only existed in some cantons [federal states]. In 1963, with a motion in the Swiss Parliament, the veterinarian of the canton Basel-Land, National Councillor Degen, proposed to replace the prohibition of kosher butchering in the Federal Constitution with a comprehensive article on animal welfare in order to create a basis for an animal welfare act. The attempt was considered an indistinct proposal - and disappeared in a drawer.

At the end of 1969, the National Councillor of Bern and veterinarian Tschumi asked for a report of the Federal Council [federal government] about how things stood. The annual report of the Swiss Society for Animal Welfare (ProTier) stated: "Our efforts to create a [national] Animal Welfare Act haven't succeeded in the last two years. After two parliamentary proposals we had attempted, the Federal Council asked the cantons if they approved of such an act or if they would reject it as unnecessary. Even though 16 cantons [from 25 at the time] had answered in the affirmative, the Federal Council finally turned it down thinking that it would be

sufficient if the cantons created their own acts." The animal welfare organizations took this opportunity, and in 1969, in the canton of Zurich, people approved an Animal Welfare Act proposed by Pro Tier with 85 percent of the votes.

"According to the old conceptions that can still be found in animal welfare regulations of the past, prohibitions and punishments in case of proven cruelty to animals were considered to be sufficient. Today, however, regulations to guarantee that animals are kept appropriately and to protect the animals from cruelty strive for preventive animal welfare, as it were."

Andreas Nabholz, "father" of the Swiss Animal Welfare Act
 director of the Federal Veterinary Office (FVO) from 1966 till 1977.
 From the 1972 annual report of the Swiss Society for Animal Welfare.

#### A member of the government stands up

Finally, the growing public opinion in favor of a legal regulation led to some progress on the national scale. Andreas Nabholz, director of the Federal Veterinary Office at the time, recalls it in a conversation. Being disappointed about the years of delaying the issue, he had applied to the Federal Council for writing off Degen's proposal as an unsettled issue. When the liberal Ernst Brugger from Zurich, elected into the Federal Council in 1969, visited all of the chief officers in his department of national economy, he wanted Nabholz to tell him if his application was really serious. Very serious! Would he really sign such an application if he was a Federal Councillor himself? No, of course not! Brugger understood; he had already supported the implementation of the cantonal Animal Welfare Act as an Administrative Councillor in Zurich. In 1971, Brugger appointed a study commission presided by Nabholz, with the mission to prepare a constitutional animal welfare article. The amendment to the Constitution was approved by Parliament in 1973 and collected 84 percent of the popular votes.

This empowered the Confederation to enact animal welfare regulations, but implementing those regulations remained the responsibility of the cantons (which, unfortunately, leads to certain differences regarding the implementation of the Act). Moreover, the preventive purpose as explained by Nabholz in articles and speeches during the voting competition also was a novelty.

#### **Resistance from factory farmers**

The constitutional article outlined the scope of the future act, particularly by announcing regulations concerning keeping, transport and slaughter as well as animal experiments. The Federal Council charged a research commission chaired by Nabholz with the elaboration of an appropriate draft for an Animal Welfare Act. But the basic principles hadn't been integrated into the Constitution for long when intense debates started about how imperatively they were to be implemented as laws. Big poultry farmers particularly resisted strict regulations with all their means. They pleaded for an insubstantial act that would merely provide a general framework, with the exact details to be regulated in a future ordinance. Though voters or Parliament cannot influence ordinances prepared by the administration and implemented by the government, well organized associations can.

Poultry farming was highly concentrated at the time [see graphic 1]; commercial battery farms produced the majority of the nation's eggs while rural hen farming had become more and more irrelevant. In spite of contrary interests, the big poultry farmers knew very well how to use the rural organizations for their own ends. They jointly warned the public of the consequences of 'exaggerated' animal welfare: Eggs and meat would become more expensive, consumers would increasingly buy cheap imported products, and national production would be disrupted.

By the way, the rural sections didn't all agree to the advance of intensive mass animal farming, which they criticized particularly because the national system lacked self-sufficiency in feed. In the National Council, in 1975, the president of the Swiss Farmers' Union called for measures against the "industrialization of stock farming" which increasingly made Switzerland dependent on feed imports. Though the Federal Council admitted that such measures actually were necessary to "guarantee the national supply" (the 'sacred cow' of the Swiss agricultural policy at the time), it stated that intensification could be only partially prevented. The background of this evasive answer: eight years before, a vigorous secretary of state for trade and industry had wanted to introduce regulation of big farms but had failed because of vehement resistance. The most vehement opponent was Migros, the biggest retail store chain, which had opened a big pig farm only shortly before.

Efforts to weaken the future Animal Welfare Act already on paper were opposed by animal welfare groups. In 1974, 160 000 people signed a petition calling for the abolition of factory farms. In order to fight against this hostility among the population, big egg producers founded an 'animal welfare organization' that promoted battery keeping by claiming that hens felt comfortable in them. In 1976, at the exposition "The Animal and Us" in Basel, they handed out eggs from 'happy battery hens' to prove it.

"The propagandists of battery keeping deny the suffering of the hens. According to them, laying hens have been created specially, as it were, for this unnatural life by eliminating their original drives and instincts. However, ethology has shown that not a single inherent behavior pattern of battery hens has been eliminated. Ethologists rather count the hen among those animals who are the most genetically programmed as to their behavioral repertoire and who are consequently the least adaptable to unnatural living conditions."

 Eugen Seiferle, professor of veterinary anatomy and founder of the Swiss Society for Animal Protection (Pro Tier).
 From the Bulletin of the Swiss Society for Animal Protection, 3/1976.

#### **Arguments against battery keeping**

During the intense discussions about the new law, several scientists tried to emphasize rational reasons to protect farm animals. Professor of veterinary anatomy and Nabholz study commission member Eugen Seiferle of Zurich, for example, pleaded for a "rational animal welfare founded on fact." He justified this in numerous articles, e. g. by stating that "hens are social animals, each hen having a specific rank within the community according to the pecking order hens always establish. However, in battery cages three to four hens are forced to live together on a floor area of  $40 \times 42$  cm [15 x 16 inches]. Due to the narrow space, the animals are constantly in contact with each other, pushing and pressing each other. For animals such as hens who only have a limited capacity to adapt and to compensate, this means living in constant stress."

Seiferle continues: "Free range hens distinguish themselves by a marked need for activity. They are constantly occupied with searching for food, scratching, pecking and social disputes. From time to time they stretch, flap their wings, groom their feathers or take a bath in the dust. During the night, they sleep high up on their perches, and in order to lay eggs they can withdraw to secluded and quiet laying nests. Battery hens aren't able to interact with their companions as usual, to rest in a normal sleeping position or to withdraw to an appropriate, quiet area to lay eggs. Glarita Martin who intensively studied the behavior of battery hens was able to show that at the moment of laying eggs, the hens fall into a state of extreme agitation and distress because of the unnatural situation, so that the act of laying eggs [which normally lasts around 20 minutes, note of the editor] will often be delayed for hours."

#### Major issue: Battery keeping

The Animal Welfare Act drafted by the Nabholz study commission was based on the needs of the animals (article 2 of the act). In article 5, the study commission accordingly proposed to prohibit the keeping of poultry and pigs in cages, the keeping of calves on slatted floors, and the constant keeping of farm animals in the dark. Seiferle called these explicit prohibitions a "logical consequence" of the preceding general principles. "Of course, the advisory commission was aware of the fact that the prohibitions of animal keeping contained in article 5 would have significant economic consequences for all of those who were directly concerned. By stipulating time limits of two to ten years for adaptation, they tried to somewhat diminish the damages." Of course, it could be asked if, in view of the stipulations of article 2, detailed regulations were at all necessary said the study commission, which also had representatives of the producers and the trade among its members. "The commission unanimously answered in the affirmative because they were persuaded that on the one hand, animal farmers wanted to know what the Animal Welfare Act will mean for them, and on the other hand, animal welfare circles aren't content with a general provision, but demand clear regulations," the report of the study commission stated.

In contrast to the other prohibitions, however, the prohibition of cage keeping of poultry was a controversial issue already within the commission. Its final report summarizes the controversy as follows: "A large minority of the commission refused (this) prohibition with the statement that this goes too far, that in view of the higher death toll in floor keeping and the ranking fights with negative impacts, this is not in the interest of the hens, and that from an economic point of view, this is unrealistic and hardly practicable."

Seiferle comments: "So nobody basically refuses the creation of an Animal Welfare Act since nowadays nobody wants to be labeled as an enemy of the animals. If an Animal Welfare Act is to be created, obvious cruelty to animals cannot simply be ignored just because certain circles think that these prohibitions are a nuisance."

#### Art. 2 Basic principles

- 1 Animals must be treated in a way that their needs are taken into account in the best possible way.
- 2 Those who deal with animals must care for their well-being as far as their purpose allows it.
- 3 Nobody must inflict pain, suffering, or injuries to an animal or frighten it without legal cause.

#### Art. 3

2 - The freedom of movement necessary for an animal must not be limited constantly or unnecessarily, if this implies pain, suffering, or injuries for the animal  $\boldsymbol{.}$ 

 From the Swiss Animal Welfare Act (approved by the people in 1978)

The resistance of the battery farmers made the Swiss Animal Protection STS, the Swiss Association for the Protection of Nature and the WWF demand a strict ban on cage batteries in another petition. With 400 000 signatures, the petition was submitted in 1976.

#### Protests and the media force the federal council to make promises

The Federal Council gave in to the urges of the egg producers and, at the beginning of 1977, submitted to the Parliament a bill without concrete prohibitions. The controversial article 5 now merely maintained the competence of the Federal Council to prohibit "keeping methods which are clearly contradictory to the principles of animal welfare, especially certain methods of cage keeping and keeping in the dark," with ordinances, and to "submit certain keeping methods to the requirement of authorization." One of the reasons for this more open wording were hopes placed in a get-away-cage (with a large capacity) newly developed at the Swiss Poultry Breeding College, which, sure enough, were only short-lived.

There was a lot of disappointment about the compromise proposed by the government. The press reminded the Federal Council of its duty: "This middle course can only be accepted if the Federal Council clearly explains to Parliament what it really intends to do with its competence" ("Berner Nachrichten", 02-10-1977).

In fact, public pressure forced the Federal Council to show its colors before the parliamentary debate about the bill. In its message to Parliament and later on in the voting brochure it announced a ban on the usual cage keeping. Under this condition, Parliament approved the Animal Welfare Act at the beginning of 1978.

In 1978, the national Animal Welfare Act was approved by Swiss voters, with 81 percent of the popular vote

But shortly after that, animal welfare activists emerged who were disappointed by the compromises: A request for a referendum launched by the League against Vivisection of Geneva and signed by 92,000 voters within a three-month time limit wanted to overthrow what was, in their opinion, a wishy-washy Act and to create space for stricter regulations. However, most of the animal welfare groups vehemently promoted the Act fearing that an "all or nothing" strategy could put at stake everything that had been arduously achieved.

At the end of 1978, the Act was approved by the popular vote with 81 percent of the votes. It is still valid in this form (a revision of the Act being pendent in 2002).



Conventional battery cage

# Chapter 3

# The Batteries Disappear - Even Without a Ban

In contrast to widespread worldwide belief, Switzerland didn't generally prohibit batteries. It simply defined higher standards and hasn't authorized any more cage systems after practical inspection - that is the short version of quite a long story.

At first, the egg producers spoiled things. The Animal Welfare Act showed a direction that would jeopardize their interests in the long term; at first, however, clear regulations for its implementation didn't exist. So the battery supporters once again pulled out all the stops and tried to make the voters, most of whom had approved the Act, side with them by way of putting forward consumer-friendly arguments: They said that eggs from caged hens were more hygienic (i. e., healthier) and, what's more, cheaper.

The battery farmers aimed at influencing the Animal Welfare Ordinance to be issued by the Federal Council in a way that cage keeping without litter would still be possible in future. Most of these producers were real experts with many years of experience who didn't want to risk a relapse into the hygienic problems of big poultry farms before the battery period. Moreover, they worried about heavy financial losses as there were still no workable alternatives to the battery keeping of big hen stocks - except for floor keeping with deep litter which had no chances economically, and free range keeping which was considered to be non-practicable for farms with more than a few hundred hens.

### Animal Welfare Ordinance: With a little sting, though

Most of the batteries had been set up during the 1970's and weren't amortized yet, so the battery farmers didn't want to risk any experiments. "There is no usable alternative to hen batteries", Dieter Wolff, president of the Swiss Egg Producer's Association (VSGH) at the time, concluded in an article in the Basler Zeitung in 1980. In this article, he alleged that the ethologist Konrad Lorenz had stated that "hens don't suffer in hen batteries". But Lorenz had never uttered something like that; on the contrary, he had criticized battery keeping as a "cruelty to animals and a cultural disgrace." This episode shows how difficult it was for the supporters of cage keeping to still find arguments.

During the formulation of the Act, the dispute had only been postponed; now it raged all the more about the elaboration of the Animal Welfare Ordinance. When the draft became known in 1980, not only animal welfare activists were disappointed. In April 1981, the popular magazine *Beobachter* [*Observer*] launched a petition to add some teeth to the Ordinance. It called for adequate space and freedom of movement, free exercise at least once a day, litter for each animal as well as floors on which the animals don't get hurt. However, the 300,000 signatures gathered in two months came too late, since in May 1981, the Federal Council put the Ordinance into force.

The new regulations weren't completely toothless, though. As to poultry keeping, it was stipulated that hens must be provided with at least 800 cm<sup>2</sup> [124 in<sup>2</sup>] accessible floor area per bird, with protected and shaded nests as well as with perches or gratings. Thus, the usual unstructured cage keeping was in fact prohibited; however, a scope for 'furnished' cage systems remained.

#### **Authorization procedure shows the way**

The requirement of authorization for serially produced systems of stalling and house equipment already included in the Act was of great importance. The regulation goes back to contacts of Andreas Nabholz,

director of the Federal Veterinary Office (FVO) until 1977, with Ingvar Ekesbo in Skara, professor at the Swedish university of Veterinary Medicine in Uppsala. Ekesbo had conducted comprehensive research at practical farms about injuries and other health problems due to keeping systems. Therefore, Sweden, whose animal welfare laws resemble the Swiss laws in their strictness, commissioned him to inspect new systems of stalling and house equipment before they were authorized. "This idea came from Ekesbo, and its application was decisive for the success of the conversion in Switzerland", Nabholz points out. In 1976, staff of the FVO and the cantonal veterinary surgeons in Skara were trained for the testing method developed by Ekesbo.

The requirement of authorization hadn't been introduced only to protect the animals, but also to prevent high costs to the producers and the construction companies. Thus, the state also guaranteed that housing units constructed according to a temporary authorization could still be used further even if the system couldn't be authorized after the inspection. After all, the development of alternative systems was a completely new ground. Temporary authorizations were necessary in order to enable the producers to construct a certain number of housing units and to make practical inspections possible.

"A keeping of animals is to be considered appropriate to the species if the physical functions, the behavior and the state of health of the animals aren't disturbed and their adaptability isn't overstrained.

"There is an interaction between the animal and its environment that is expressed by behavior, the state of the body, and the functions of the body. According to its inherent predispositions, each animal has very distinct demands and expectations concerning its environment, which can differ depending on the different daytimes and seasons and in different periods of life. The fulfillment of such demands is the condition for organisms to develop and to preserve themselves normally.

"Farm animals additionally have to perform without any injury to their organisms. In stalling systems where these biological correlations aren't taken into account sufficiently or not at all, disturbances occur which express themselves by abnormal behavior, increased diseases, injuries due to the keeping method, or decreased performance."

Josef Troxler (1990)

director of the FVO Inspection Body for Cattle and Pigs at the time; now professor at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna.

#### **Inspection body for poultry houses**

In order to carry out the procedure, the FVO created two inspection bodies: one of them responsible for cattle and pigs, the other for poultry and rabbits. This second inspection body (now called the Center for the Appropriate Keeping of Poultry and Rabbits) was created at the Swiss Poultry Breeding College (SGS) in Zollikofen, which played a part in the practical inspections. The first two members of this inspection body, Hans Oester and Ernst Fröhlich (both of whom have been active until today), have inspected a total of 54 applications since 1981. As a basis for judgment, they used scientific studies about the behavior of hens in different keeping systems which had been conducted since the mid-1970's. According to Andreas Steiger, director of the FVO's animal welfare section at the time, the continual accompanying of the introduction of new keeping systems was an important factor for the successful change of the Swiss keeping of hens.

#### The normal hen

"The normal behavior of adult laying hens is the result of their ontogenetic development in a comprehensively created environment which can be actively changed by the hen and which changes itself, where the hen is able to cultivate its phylogenetically inherited behavior and to apply it according to its functions. These requirements are generally fulfilled in a free range keeping which is conceived and operated correspondingly."

Hans Oester and Ernst Fröhlich (1996)
 FVO Inspection Body for Poultry and Rabbits

#### **Strict inspection procedures**

What does this kind of inspection look like? In 1990, Josef Toxler, director of the FVO's Inspection Body for Cattle and Pigs at the time, summarized the procedure as follows. The house construction company submits its application including blueprints, details about material and construction, references, etc. to the FVO. If there are doubts about the appropriateness for animals, if the equipment is new, or if there is a lack of scientific documents or practical experience, a practical inspection will be carried out by one of the inspection bodies or at practical farms. Systems and equipment will be examined for possible faults, and improvements will be suggested. An authorization based on this and granted by the FVO can be limited and combined with additional conditions.

In 1990, Troxler made clear in an article that "the practical inspection is not an inspection of material, but it comprises an assessment based on the animal. An objective assessment requires practical experience and knowledge regarding physiology, behavior, hygiene, and veterinary medicine. At any rate, an examination for the appropriateness for animals imposes good knowledge about the biology of the species involved in order to be able to assess deviant behavior and injuries due to keeping methods."

#### **Behavioral disturbances**

"We consider behavioral disturbances as a deviation from normal behavior regarding form, rate, length, and frequency, leading to or due to a disruption of the self-construction and self-preservation of the organism. Since the development of a behavior also belongs to the self-construction of the animal, deviations from normal behavior which do not lead to assessable changes of the body can also be behavioral disturbances. The repeated occurrence of the behavior is a fundamental characteristic of these behavioral disturbances, not leading to performances known from normal behavior and without there being any recognizable function of the behavior."

Hans Oester and Ernst Fröhlich (1986)
 FVO Inspection Body for Poultry and Rabbits

#### Normal and overstrained behavior

Oester and Fröhlich consider any disturbance of the hens' behavior as a deviation from normal behavior. In simplified terms, they categorize the functional circles of the behavior of laying hens (during the day) as follows: "a) eating and drinking behavior, b) egg laying behavior, c) locomotive behavior, d) resting behavior, e) comfort behavior, f) exploring behavior, g) social behavior. These functional circles of behavior can be attributed to functional areas in the keeping system. Thus, eating and drinking behavior correspond to feeding troughs, drinking troughs, and litter, and resting and comfort behavior correspond to certain perches."

The adaptability of a laying hen is called normal by Oester and Fröhlich "if at least after one laying cycle it can continue to live without disruptions regarding self-construction and self-preservation in a well-conceived free range keeping." An overstrained adaptability, on the other hand, manifests itself as "a disruption of self-construction and self-preservation and finally as an occurrence of injuries."

#### **Contents of the practical inspection**

Each system newly applied for is tested with at least four flocks with a changing staff. According to Oester and Fröhlich, practical inspection comprises the following areas:

- External assessment of the living birds (sampling) at the time of housing and leaving, in order to ascertain the impact of the keeping conditions on the state of the hens (feathers, injuries, etc.)
- Examination of the hens' behavior throughout an entire lighted day during the 30<sup>th</sup> and the 50<sup>th</sup> week of life. This is to answer the following questions: Is the behavior normal? Do the functional areas of the system correcspond to the functional circles of behavior [as specified on page 17]? Are the birds able to avoid the development of physical injuries in this environment?
- Special examinations concerning hygiene: morbidity and mortality, samples of droppings and litter
- Inspection of management and houses
- Veterinary examination of ill or dead hens
- Inspection of the climate (pollution with harmful gases, temperature, humidity, air velocity) and the lighting conditions in the houses

#### **Differentiated findings**

This is an example of the differentiated findings of Oester and Fröhlich resulting from an inspection (1986): "If in a cage (fig. 1) the feeding troughs are arranged on both sides and the drinkers are arranged in the middle of the grid floor, there is no zone were the hens can sit down to rest during the day without being repeatedly disturbed. As a result, the hens react nervously and are easily startled by all sorts of disturbing stimuli (passing persons, noises, etc.). A better solution would be the mini diagonal grid cage (fig. 2). The feeding trough, accessible from both sides, and the drinkers are located in the front half of the cage, so the grid floor on the back with wooden slats remains free to rest and to groom. During the day, the hens can always find a place where they are not constantly disturbed. Accordingly, their behavior is calmer than that of the hens in the previous circumstance. Similar observations can be made with diagonal grid systems (fig. 3) where the floors are made out of plastic grating and where the birds sit down only rarely during the day. When high perches were offered at an inspected farm, the proportion of sitting birds during the day increased from 1 or 2 to 10 percent within two weeks."

In spite of these partly positive findings, however, neither big cages nor diagonal grid systems prevailed.

#### Separating the wheat from the chaff

At the beginning of the 10-year conversion, some very different systems had to be assessed:

- enlarged cages with the required structures ("enriched cages", "modified cages", "get-away-cages")
- conventional floor keepings with litter and dropping pits under the perches
- diagonal grid systems without litter
- aviaries using the third dimension, with a litter area on the floor

Until 1986, house construction companies had applied for the inspection of 36 systems. They withdrew 13 applications during inspections because operating them turned out to be too complicated or because the system had lead to strong deviations from normal behavior and resultant injuries. In 1986, the Federal Veterinary Office ruled out efforts to continue cage keeping under different conditions: It withdrew the temporarily granted authorization of all the cage systems that were still on the market.

The decision about diagonal grid systems was more delicate. With a relatively high stocking density, their continuous, mostly sloped grid floors provide an economic solution to hygienic problems similar to the battery, but provide more space for the hens. Martin Häne comments on this in his extensive survey about the keeping of laying hens in Switzerland

(1999): "In spite of disappointing experiences abroad, several varieties of these systems (with a reduced stocking density of 12.5 birds/m²) were temporarily authorized also in Switzerland as they fulfilled the minimum requirements of the animal welfare laws. As easily constructed built-in varieties, they were primarily chosen to keep smaller flocks (circa 500 animals). However, inspections and practical experience eventually showed that diagonal grid systems without litter areas were to be judged as inappropriate to the animals and to be considered as an actual aberration."

### Examples of enlarged cage systems

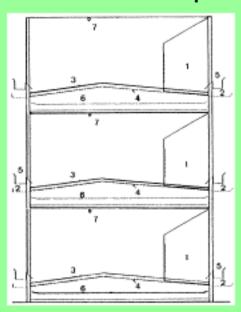


Fig. 1: Two-storey cages:
Group keeping with 50 or 58 hens
(1) roll away laying nest (2) egg scoop

(3) perches (4) floor out of wire netting (5) feed trough (6) dung removal (7) nipple drinker

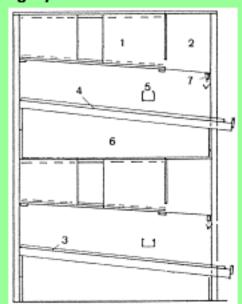
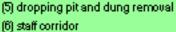
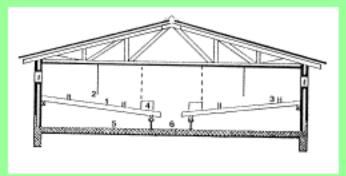


Fig. 2 Mini diagonal two-storey grid cage: Group keeping with 41 hens (1) roll away laying nest (2) egg storage

(3) perches (4) floor out of wire netting (5) feed trough (6) dung removal (7) nipple drinker

Fig. 3: Grid Keeping: Diagonal grid system (1) floor grid out of wire netting (2) drinkers (3) feed trough (4) roll away nests





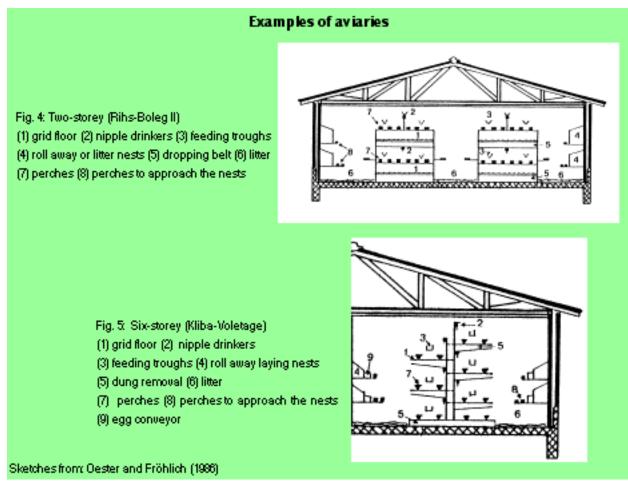
#### **Aviaries prevail**

According to Oester and Fröhlich, the inspection body partly had to act on a blank area because, from their experience, the minimum requirements of the Animal Welfare Ordinance don't guarantee a keeping which is absolutely appropriate. The support they received from the management of the FVO was all the more important, they say. However, Oester regrets that the new findings of the inspection body weren't implemented when the Animal Welfare Ordinance was being revised (1997); even the modest request by the FVO to put the remaining ten percent of hen keeping establishments on litter hadn't been realized.

In the inspection procedure, the aviaries proved the most successful. With their grates or perches on several storeys, they give the hens access to the third dimension appropriate to their species and allow the

farmers to have a stocking density up to three times higher at a given base, which is nearly as high as in the former batteries, but with incomparably more freedom of movement for the hens. At the end of the 1970's, a team of the veterinarian and ethologist Detlef Fröhlich developed the first aviary with separated functional areas (eating and drinking; sleeping and resting; egg deposition; scratching and pecking; walking and flying). Construction companies quickly applied for the inspection of several aviaries; in 1986, five systems could already be indefinitely authorized. Today, the situation is as follows:

- Systems indefinitely authorized: SEG aviary, Rihs-Boleg types I and II (varieties 1000, 1400, 2000), Globovolg, Kliba Voletage
- •Systems temporarily authorized: Rihs-Boleg 3, Natura types 3, 400 (var. 445 and 450, also breeding) and B (var. 140 and 187), Globogal Multiflor types 2, 2A (breeding), 2S and 3, OLI-Free Voletage, Rihs-Boleg II (breeding type), Eco-Voletage types 70, 84, 100 and 120 (also breeding), Inauen C, Mobi BF and Oekolino aviaries, mini/block aviaries



### Cage and diagonal grid systems not authorized

The fact that even today a number of house systems (including the leading Natura aviaries and the ecoaviary common at ecological farms) still only have a temporary and provisional authorization is due to the inspection body's modest number of staff members. According to Oester, there is also a certain reluctance to authorize a system definitely as long as the available data are still too irrelevant and the system is still being improved.

After all, Fröhlich says that the following conclusion can be drawn from the activities of the inspection body: "Today, the principle of the aviary is authorized while cage and diagonal grid systems aren't."

# Chapter 4

# Why the Farmers Cooperated

Obligations alone certainly don't guarantee that regulations are actually adhered to. Those who are to change their behavior must be motivated to do so. Until the mid-1980's, the advocates of battery keeping showed only little willingness to change anything. They rather continued to resist the actual abolition of hen batteries, very loudly at times and with questionable assertions and methods - and more and more obviously with their backs against the wall.

At the end of 1986, those who were in favor of the battery suddenly fell silent. Apparently the egg producers had understood that they had gone too far and that their resistance was only counterproductive. At the end of 1991, shortly before the end of the time limit for adaptation, the poultry farmers' organizations told the press with (justified) pride that 99.3 percent of all laying hens in Switzerland were kept according to animal welfare standards. Only a handful of farms hadn't completely adapted for several reasons. "The egg producers' organizations urgently appeal to the relevant producers as well as to the competent cantonal authorities to ensure that the last batteries immediately disappear. Moreover, they are astonished that several cantons have granted exceptional authorizations to extend the time limit for adaptation." This procedure was "legally questionable and harmful to the reputation of the industry".

An amazing about-turn within only five years! Alois Mettler, manager of the Swiss Egg Producer's Association (VSGH, now Gallo Suisse) then and today, explains: "Only when there were practicable alternative systems, things gradually changed." From the mid-1980's, the Association organized farm tours and professional training. "There was a need for a certain enthusiasm about alternative systems for the about-turn to come," Mettler says.

#### A new generation of hen farmers

Hans Oester and Ernst Fröhlich from the Federal Inspection Body for House Equipment state that the reason for this sudden conversion of the poultry producers also had something to do with a change of generations. Old campaigners like the former VSGH president Dieter Wolff had retired in the mid-1980's. The succeeding generation at the farms and in the associations had realized that the change couldn't be stopped. They were interested in a quick change because they saw the opportunity to positively distinguish Swiss eggs with their animal welfare bonus from the considerably cheaper imported eggs. And they found that things can indeed be done differently.

An ordinance from 1980 imposed maximum stocking numbers as well as the redistribution of 500,000 laying sites from big specialized egg producing farms to "protected" small rural farms

According to Fröhlich, Oester and Mettler, another factor was an ordinance from 1980 imposing maximum stocking numbers as well as the redistribution of 500,000 laying sites from big specialized egg producing farms to "protected" small rural farms (see chapter 5). As the rural farms hadn't had anything to do with hen batteries, they were the first to gain experience with alternative systems. The farmers involved mostly hadn't any experiences with professional hen keeping; sometimes they even didn't know anything about hens. Oester remembers a farmer from the Rhine Valley who desperately asked for advice when his 500 hens rolled about on the floor of the house; he didn't know that hens take baths in the dust. On the whole, however, Oester thinks it is positive that hens were increasingly kept on rural farms, as the Swiss farmers saw themselves as animal keepers and were closer to the animals than commercial hen farmers. According to him, this is also

shown by the fact that in farms with more than 2000 laying hens, it is rather the farmer who cares for the hens, and not his wife who traditionally does it.

#### **Proud result, proud industry**

Even today, Mettler complains that the ordinance imposing maximum stocking numbers ruined numerous professional hen farms and "destroyed a lot of know-how". In his opinion, without this ordinance, the adaptation of battery farms would have started later.

Certainly, the know-how about cage keeping got lost. But already in 1992, at a press conference, Mettler had called the "state of training of the industry" the primary reason for the fact that the new keeping systems developed for Switzerland worked. At that press conference, the industry indulged in self-adulation. This wasn't unjustified, however, since the poultry farmers were the only group of keepers of farm animals who practically fulfilled the obligations of the new Animal Welfare Ordinance completely and within the appointed time limit. The VSGH's president at the time and poultry farmer Peter Schrag pointed out "that the poultry farmers had invested 200 million francs in the new keeping systems and that they had adapted within the time limit and without any support from the state". And Mettler emphasized that with eggs from abroad, you had to believe the declaration, but "with Swiss eggs, production methods appropriate to the species are a legally grounded fact".

An offensive of charm: this is what Swiss egg producers have now taken to. Apparently, the industry has changed not only their farms but also their minds. "We provoked the demand a little," Mettler smiles, "we said over and over again that people want Swiss eggs, and we praised them for it. That increased the demand, since everybody wants what is demanded". So Mettler declared a positive end result in front of an international specialist public at the Lohmann conference in Zollikofen, in 1998: "We were able to win over more and more consumers, and not fewer, for Swiss eggs: the domestic consumption share of national shell eggs increased from nearly 62% in 1991 to more than 72% in 1997. There are still 28% of consumers left whom we can win over - so these are bright prospects!"

#### History of a farm adaptation

With 12,000 laying hens and 6,000 young hens, Paul von Euw from Oberglatt near Zurich is one of the biggest Swiss hen farmers, since more hens per farm aren't allowed by the ordinance limiting the stocking density. In the course of time, the farm founded at the end of the 1940's bought more land to be able to deploy a part of the dung, since "you have to run after each farm in the area to get rid of the dung", von Euw says. On 20 hectares [50 acres], he plants about one third of his feed himself: maize, barley, wheat, sunflowers, peas, and grass meal. He receives the remaining corn from the regional collection center. More than 5 persons are occupied with the production of the farm, another 4 persons with marketing.

# In-house hatching

For his hatchery von Euw buys hatching eggs exclusively from Swiss parent farms. He proudly says that his farm has never had to buy hens. And he is not at all interested in the import of young hens a part of the egg industry counts on to decrease the costs: "You only get problems with that: long animal transports, introduction of diseases we successfully eradicated in Switzerland, and collapse of the laying performance because the animals have grown up in different keeping systems and have to re-adapt first."

After 18 weeks of floor keeping, von Euw's young hens are moved into the laying house. A new flock is housed every two months. With a total of eight laying flocks, von Euw is able to counterbalance a fluctuating demand. The market also decides how the hens live on his farm; at the moment there are about 5,800 hens kept at free range and 6,200 in a aviary (floor keeping with storeys). In order to prevent any mistakes, von Euw takes only hens laying white eggs into the aviary, while his free range hens tend to lay brown eggs (the color of the eggshells is genetically determined).

### At first, cage and floor keeping...

Two keeping systems side by side: von Euw's father had already introduced that. The increasing demand at the beginning of the 1970's had made him build another house - a battery, of course, which was beyond question at the time, his son says. The only question was if it should be constructed in an old floor keeping house or in a new building. In spite of the higher costs, von Euw senior opted for a new building - luckily for him, because with the increase of criticism of cage keeping at the middle of the 1970's, he was able to sell the eggs still produced in the old floor keeping house immediately as floor keeping eggs - the advertising came from a label from the Swiss Animal Protection (STS), and the promotion from the women's magazine "Annabelle".

In 1985, von Euw junior took the farm of his parents on lease. As a direct vendor, he soon realized that there was an increasing demand for domestic eggs from a keeping that was more appropriate to the species, while pressure against cage keeping became more intense. This is why in 1987, he opted for a change to aviary keeping which he completed at the end of 1990. "Concerning adaptation, the young should have more to say than the old because it is about their future," he concludes from his own positive experience.

# ...and then floor and free range keeping

Von Euw made aviaries out of batteries, and free range keeping out of floor keeping. He says that adapting wasn't the problem, but choosing the alternative was: which of the new hardly tested keeping systems would have a low proportion of lost eggs? Where would feed loss, behavioral disturbances, or a bad economic efficiency occur? "The first farmers who changed were courageous, but they were sometimes badly rewarded for it", von Euw says. Some of the pioneers were forced to rebuild their hen houses once again - by the vendors, not by the authorities, von Euw points out: "The Swiss hens actually don't need an animal welfare law anymore. It is the pressure from the consumers that was and that is decisive. The law was only necessary for those hen farmers who didn't want to see or believe it."

For von Euw, lost eggs don't pose a big problem anymore: "I install a party lighting in the laying nests so that the hens learn where they have to lay their eggs", he smiles and adds that basically, the amount of care required for alternative keeping systems is indeed much bigger.

For a good free range keeping, it is not the area that is decisive, but the state of the run, von Euw says. Lest the 1,500 hens of each group squash their pasture with their feet, they aren't allowed to go out all the time, of course, but "always when the weather is good enough for children to go to the playground", as the born communicator von Euw puts it. Visitors who presumably imagined the life of a free range hen to be a little more idyllic may be satisfied with this explanation. For an approval by the strictest label (kagreiland), however, this wouldn't be enough; the flocks would be too big, the runs to small and not structured enough. What von Euw offers his hens corresponds to the average of Swiss free range keeping.

### Regional strength

After a laying period of 14 to 15 months, the hens are slaughtered. Until the beginning of the 1980's, they could slaughter the hens themselves and sell them as dog food, 20 tons per year, von Euw remembers. Today, the old hens have to be driven about 80 km [50 miles] to the poultry slaughterhouse at Zell near Lucerne because of stricter hygienic regulations, but also because of the idleness of people and because the mail charges would be too expensive in proportion to dog food, he says.

The transport of von Euw's eggs is shorter. Two in-house panel trucks supply the retailers of the region. There is a Jumbo supermarket among the purchasers. Jumbo has refused imported eggs for years - thanks to von Euw who, with the help of eight colleagues, organized a supply for the Jumbo supermarkets with eggs from the surrounding area. Von Euw reacted similarly when in 1985, the bakery Hiestand from Zurich called him because it had decided to buy only domestic eggs in future. The high transparency and credibility of the Swiss eggs also exist in processed form: Of late von Euw even has his own pasteurization facilities. These are also at the disposal of other producers and labels.



Floor keeping with daylight and nests (Dulla system)

# Open doors

Short transports, a high vertical integration and thus a high added value at his own farm: that is what von Euw is proud of. And this is the chance of the Swiss egg, he says: an exclusive, healthy product from the area surrounding the consumer and a production the consumer can always come to see. This is why von Euw always keeps his doors open for those who want to know.

# Chapter 5

### The State Pushed...

After World War II, higher laying performances thanks to successful breeding and commercial battery keeping lead to a concentration in egg production [see graphic 1]. At the same time, many farmers had to give up their farms. Both of these developments increased the call for corrections from the state. So the motive wasn't just animal welfare, but there were also agro-political objectives which finally lead to the state's enacting several ordinances. As a basis, there was the Agriculture Act from 1951 which had actually intended to link animal production to the existing agricultural land. In practice, however, production without self-sufficiency in feed had steadily increased.

#### **Transfer in favor of rural farms**

In 1980, the federal government enacted an ordinance concerning maximum stocks in animal keeping. It limits poultry keeping to a maximum of 12,000 laying hens or 12,000 parent animals or 12,000 breeding hens per farm. Holdings doing their own breeding are allowed to keep only a maximum of 18,000 hens. Until 1984, the reduction of higher animal stocks was assisted by reparations. Until 1987, for example, about 500,000 places for laying hens were removed - and reinstalled on smaller rural farms (2,200 hens on 100 farms each and 500 hens on 574 farms each).

At the same time, the state enacted a requirement of authorization for housing units with more than 500 hens. The transfer of egg production to rural farms could thus be directed centrally. Along with the "ordinance about supplements on animal feed" from the 1950's which aimed at preserving domestic arable farming and gradually made feed for laying hens become 2.5 times more expensive than abroad, this lead to a better adaptation of animal stocks to the existing farm land.

In 1998, Alois Mettler, manager of the Swiss Egg Producer's Association (VSGH), summarized the effects of these three ordinances as follows: Since agriculture hadn't realized the potential of poultry, entrepreneurial producers specialized totally on poultry keeping. "But when the farmers increasingly met with production limits due to rising costs (due to the milk quotas of 1977), they suddenly discovered poultry as an alternative. Specialized poultry keeping then came under enormous pressure from agricultural policy and was finally forced to re-dimension with the introduction of maximum stocks in 1980. With the resulting capacities, a part of the production could be transferred to rural farms. This way of transferring tried to preserve smaller farms (with farm land from 8 to 12 hectares) thanks to a so-called 'inner stocking up' with poultry, pigs or cattle by supplying farm land that was too small with additional feed, leading to a sustainable earned income at least for a while."

## "Gray eggs" and "system eggs"

Mettler continues: "However, because of their lack of training and time, these stocked up farms weren't able to commercialize their products themselves. So they received a protection from the state which guaranteed them a price fixed by the authorities and the sale of the authorized number of eggs."

From then on, a difference was made between "protected" and "free" egg producers. The protected farms delivered their eggs within the framework of a system set by the authorities to two collecting organizations commissioned by the state, hence the term "system eggs"; farms without protection from the authorities had to make sure themselves that their eggs were sold and existed on a comparably "gray" market from the point of view of the time, which is why their eggs were often called "gray" eggs.

In contrast to the rest of agriculture, the Swiss egg market was traditionally strongly liberalized. Long before the abolition of battery keeping, Switzerland already covered about one half of its egg consumption with imports [see graphic 6]. With these basic conditions, how could a part of the egg producers be protected? The system installed by the state was clever: The "ordinance about the egg market and the egg supply" obliged the egg importers to take 40 domestic eggs for 100 imported eggs for commercialization (principle of domestic performance; but only "system eggs" were taken into account). The aim was to ensure that the domestic share didn't decrease even further. However, as a representative of the domestic producers, Mettler criticized the impact of this ordinance: "Actually it was more of a guarantee for the importers that they could import at least 35 percent of the egg demand."

"Until the 1970's, poultry wasn't really important - in the official agricultural policy, a recognized professional line of production was barely mentioned. However, far-sighted and entrepreneurial poultry farmers had already realized the potential of poultry before and had specialized on this line of production. They sold cows and land and totally committed themselves to the production and commercialization of eggs. But when the farmers increasingly met with production limits, they suddenly discovered poultry as an alternative. Specialized poultry keeping then came under enormous pressure from agricultural policy and was finally forced to re-dimension."

Alois Mettler, manager of the Swiss Poultry Farmers:
 (Lohmann conference in Zollikofen, 1998)

Imported eggs were (and are) much cheaper, of course. Even at the time of battery keeping, Swiss eggs at wholesale level cost twice to three times more because the general level of wages and the agricultural production costs are higher in Switzerland and because other countries occasionally subsidize the export of eggs. As to the "protected" farms, the state intervened in price fixing with two measures: on the one hand, it fixed the price the two collecting organizations had to pay for "system eggs". On the other hand, a contribution in favor of a "price compensation till" was imposed which compensated the expenditures of the collecting organizations. This reduced the price difference between domestic system eggs and imported eggs at wholesale level by 10 to 15 percent. At the level of consumer prices, the retailers reduced the difference a little more by internal variable costing (especially the big retail chains Migros and Coop).

#### Criticism of the import of cage eggs

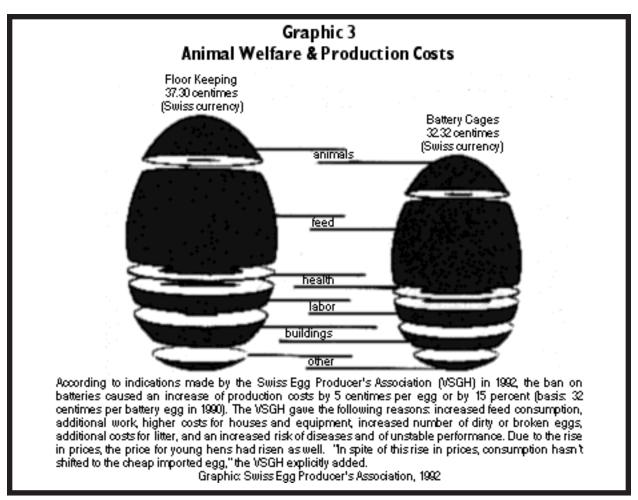
About one third of the domestic egg production could be protected by the system the state had created. But interestingly, not only the protected farms benefited from it, but also the free producers who, according to Mettler, "could adapt to an official and, generally, quite comfortable price."

Many specialized poultry farmers feared that abolishing battery keeping would lead to a decreasing demand for Swiss eggs and/or increasing pressure on the producers' prices. There was a justified criticism that one half of the eggs was still imported even though imported eggs nearly always came from battery keeping. According to estimations made by the VSGH, the stricter animal welfare regulations made the Swiss eggs another 15 percent more expensive [see graphic 3] while the producers abroad didn't have to change anything.

Wide sections felt that this was unfair. From the beginning of the 1980's, the farm animal welfare organization KAG (now Kagfreiland) had repeatedly called for a ban on imports of agricultural products that weren't produced in accordance with Swiss animal welfare and environmental regulations. Later on, this demand was shared by different organizations, including the Swiss Farmers' Union and the Swiss Trade Union Federation, and corresponding demands were submitted in Parliament. The Federal Council refused a ban on imports for reasons of international trade relations. However, the years of efforts to get "equally long spits" for the domestic animal farmers led to the fact that importers now also have to declare production methods.

By the way, the association of the directly concerned poultry farmers had never been interested in a ban

on imports. Mettler justified this with the fact that the price difference between Swiss eggs and imported eggs had always been large, which is why the increase in prices after the end of battery keeping "hadn't actually been crucial". "In a certain way, the high egg price is even one of the reasons why in the consumer's point of view, Swiss eggs are of a higher quality than imported eggs."



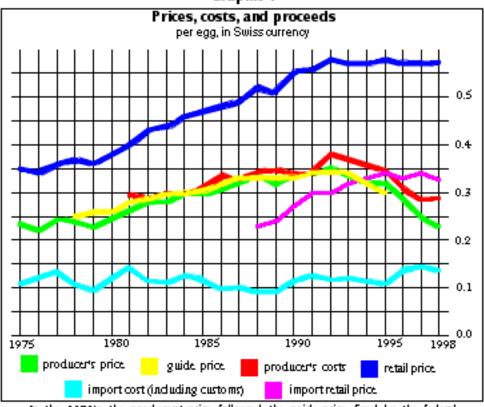
#### Swiss eggs maintain their market share...

Certainly, the self-assured attitude of the professional poultry farmers has favored this positive development, and in fact, even today the domestic production still covers about one half of the total Swiss egg consumption [see graphic 6]. As to the consumption of unprocessed shell eggs, the domestic coverage even increased to 75 percent! Obviously, the consumers rewarded the improved hen keeping.

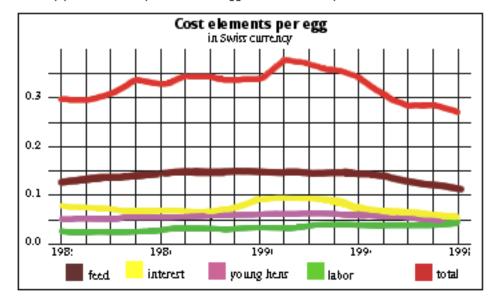
However, the share of processed eggs (egg products) within the total egg consumption has heavily increased; in 1998, it already was at 33 percent. Especially in the catering trade, semi-finished and finished products save a lot of work in the kitchen and, in their pasteurized form, prevent the risk of salmonellosis. "The demand of egg products seems to level off at about one third of the total consumption, and this is a market where the price comes first and where ethical aspects of production methods hardly attract any interest," Mettler states and concludes: "In the field of egg products, expensive Swiss eggs certainly don't have a chance." From a total of 450 million eggs consumed yearly in the form of egg products, only about 5 percent come from Swiss hens.

Swiss egg production did tend to decrease in absolute numbers since 1986 [see graphic 1]. However, this wasn't due to higher prices owing to animal welfare, but to decreasing egg consumption [see graphic 6].

Graphic 4



In the 1980's, the producers' price followed the guide price fixed by the federal government. Even at that time, the proceeds didn't always completely cover the costs. At the beginning of the 1990's, this difference became bigger because of rising costs (particularly for investments due to the ban on batteries, see graphic below). The rising shop price consumers paid for a Swiss egg didn't benefit the producers.



#### ... and their high price

sinking prices! A comparison of producers' prices and production costs [see graphic 4] shows that

- the average producers' price per egg had long been 2 to 10 percent below the production costs, i. e. the producers' work had always been paid only partially;
- from 1991 (abolition of batteries), the production costs did rise rapidly by 12 percent, but the prices only rose by hardly 4 percent however, the prices were "only" 8 percent below the costs, i. e. in the range of former years;
- from 1996, the producers' prices decreased, but thanks to the reduction of the duty for animal feed, the production costs did as well;
- even today, the Swiss egg costs around twice as much as an imported egg. The difference has become a little smaller, not because Swiss producers lowered the price to stay on the market, but because of decreased domestic production costs and a slight increase of the prices of imported eggs [see graphic 2]. So the adaptation of hen keeping to new systems wasn't an (additional) loss-maker for Swiss producers. If the Swiss egg still came from batteries, the producers would probably be worse because they would have

# Divide between producers' price and shop price

nothing to counter the imported egg with, which is half as expensive.

However, it is alarming that since 1998, the producers' prices have regularly been around 20 percent below the production costs, while the consumer prices have remained high and the turnover share of Swiss eggs has continued to rise [see graphic 6]. Mettler holds the forced transfer of the egg production in the 1980's responsible for this paradoxical development: away from specialized farms with their own marketing to rural farms who supply collecting points or traders with their eggs. But since the "system" has been replaced by a largely liberalized order in 1996, there have been no "protected" farms and no fixed egg prices anymore.

"As to price fixing, the market is still having a lot of trouble finding a way in line with market requirements," Mettler says - because the producers don't longer commercialize by themselves and are totally dependent on the intermediate trade. About one half of Swiss eggs are sold via contracts. But the single producer hasn't any influence on the quantity fixed by the purchaser; he or she must deliver them at any price. The traders, who are under pressure themselves because of trade liberalization, lower the prices in order to maintain their margin because, since 1996, they don't receive any subsidies from the price balancing anymore. Furthermore, the former collecting points now also acting as traders compete with them. It seems that as long as the "protected" egg producers got through because of fixed prices, they didn't see any reason to organize themselves - "Now they are lost", Mettler says, who has been trying to organize them for years.

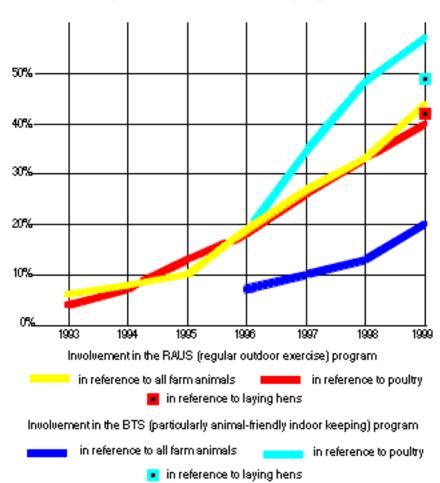
How can producers deliver in view of prices below their production costs, anyway? Where do they take the 5 to 6 centimes of the missing proceeds per egg? "They don't ensure anymore that their investments pay for themselves, saving 3 centimes per egg," Mettler points out, "and they don't pay themselves their work, that is another 3 centimes per egg." How long can anybody do this? "Not much longer anymore." This is why Mettler's association wanted to change the contracts with the traders. With a producers organization level of only 50 percent, however, this is hard to achieve. For this reason, the association wanted to develop a sales alternative so that the producers could put pressure on the traders by way of delivery stops. But founding an own marketing company for the producers wasn't necessary anymore; the mere announcement of it had the wanted effect, Mettler says. "Meanwhile, the merchandisers have offered the producers better contracts."

#### Direct payments for even better hen keeping

For an increasing proportion of egg producers, things are looking a little less gloomy. As they keep their hens even better than the Animal Welfare Ordinance stipulates, they receive not only slightly higher market

prices, but also additional eco-payments from the state. Those who offer their hens regular exercise (state program RAUS = regelmäßiger Auslauf ins Freie = regular outdoor exercise) or a winter garden (state program BTS = besonders tierfreundliche Stallhaltung = particularly animal-friendly indoor keeping), receive eco-payments of about half a centime per egg - in addition to the general direct payments. In 1999, 42 percent of the Swiss hens already had regular exercise, and 49 percent at least a covered outdoor climate area (winter garden). 37 percent of the hens lived on a farm that fulfilled both programs and consequently received the sum twice [see graphic 5].

This is the actual point of this success story: the Swiss hens haven't only been freed from the cages, but they are increasingly allowed to go outside. So the result of the actual ban on batteries is even more positive than the original task. Two developments made this possible: A newly oriented agriculture policy and changes in consumer preferences.



Graphic 5: Involvement in eco-programs

With the introduction of federal eco-contributions from 1993, more and more farm animals soon got outdoors on a regular basis (RAUS program). The poultry benefited from it about the same as the average of all species. This should be true also for laying hens (for them, special data exist only from 1999). From 1996, the federal government introduced another eco-contribution program for animal keeping: without a run, but with an outdoor climate area (BTS). Here, the number of poultry (and of laying hens) is much higher than that of the average of all species. [Data source: Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture.] Note: RAUS doesn't mean free range keeping yet (i. e., exercise may be reduced to zero in case of bad weather, which isn't defined in more detail). And eco-program doesn't mean organic animal keeping.

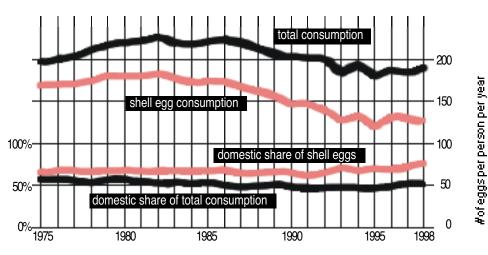
#### **Newly orientated agricultural policy**

The first development is political. It is based on the dissatisfaction about the perverted effect of the Agriculture Act from 1951 and the criticism about subsidies worth a few billion Swiss francs for an agriculture which was un-ecological, produced surpluses, and was dominated by associations. In 1990, 25 organizations from the fields of environmental protection, animal welfare, consumer protection, development politics, and oppositional rural sections launched a popular initiative to codify the aims of an agriculture in the Federal Constitution which is animal-friendly, ecological, and in line with market requirements. The Federal Council and Parliament worked out a counterproposal with the same purpose but with more moderate means. The initiators then turned to the counterproposal which was accepted by the people in 1996 with 78 percent of the votes. The new Agriculture Act based on this as well as numerous new ordinances passed into law in 1998.

This is the actual point of this success story: the Swiss hens haven't only been freed from the cages, but they are increasingly allowed to go outside. So the result of the actual ban on batteries is even more positive than the original task.

In 1992, the Federal Council had already initiated this development with a first step of the agricultural reform. It changed a part of the former subsidies into direct payments, a possibility it had been able to enforce with other industrial countries at the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) Uruguay Round (under the "green box" state subsidies are still allowed if they don't promote production). Secondly, the Federal Council introduced the above-mentioned additional direct payments for special ecological achievements (eco-payments).

The next chapter is dedicated to the developments in the market.



**Graphic 6: Domestic share of egg consumption** 

From the beginning of the 1980's, egg consumption in Switzerland has declined. Shell eggs in particular are bought less often. At the same time, the domestic producers were able to improve their market share of shell eggs up to 75%. The consumption of egg products (pasteurized eggs, etc.) has increased during the last few years. Today, these mostly industrially produced semi-finished and finished products are mainly imported. This is why the domestic share of the total egg consumption has stagnated at approximately 50%...[Data source: Alois Mettler Agriconsulting.]

### A manufacturer of housing units remembers...

The most common aviary system in Switzerland, "Natura", is from the company Inauen (Big Dutchman) of Appenzell. Its owner Urs Inauen remembers: "At the end of 1986, we presented our Natura aviary, the first system with four clearly separated functional areas on three storeys, dropping belt and integrated nest. At that time, the experts shook their heads: Inauen's bonkers, he doesn't even feed on the third storey."

### The big retailers pressured

Four months later, everything was totally different: "Of course there had been pressure from animal welfare and environmental activists, from the law and from the media. But it was the big retailers who achieved the abolition of cage keeping. In March 1987, Migros and Coop informed their egg suppliers in a letter that from 1989, they wouldn't purchase battery eggs from them anymore." The idea to write these letters, which were sent nearly at the same time, had come during an incidental conversation of the "egg bosses" Hermann Tanner (Migros) and Ernst Seiler (Coop) on a train, Inauen says. "After that, everything happened very quickly. The poultry farmers flocked to us - those headmost who had said only shortly before that they would rather sell their mothers-in-law than throw out the cages, that they would even elapse the fixed time limit for adaptation until 1992 and would then go up to the Federal Supreme Court. From 1987 till 1989, we were totally booked up with manufacturing housing units. The aim set by Migros and Coop could be fulfilled with a delay of half a year. And in 1990, more than 80 percent of all Swiss battery farms had already placed their orders for adaptation."

Financial incentives also quickened adaptation, Inauen says. The big retailers were interested in selling more expensive Swiss eggs because they made good money with it. And the hen keepers were motivated to adapt by means of an extra charge of 2 to 3 "animal welfare centimes" per egg. "The Swiss hen keepers actually did everything that was demanded of them. Until 1998, they did have the money for it. From then on, prices have been lowered, and now improvements are hardly possible. Many producers simply don't know their own costs, which are higher with the new systems than formerly with batteries."

On the European scale, the conduct of the big retailers should be considerably more decisive because in contrast to Switzerland, the EU doesn't stipulate any inspection and authorization procedures for alternative systems. "Without clear laws, competition has the result that those who pack more hens into the system are the winners," Inauen says. He fears that the European abolition of batteries passed in 2000 could miss the aim of 2012 and "end in chaos".

# No eagerness for export

So is this the chance for one of the leading Swiss manufacturers of poultry housing units? Inauen turns this down: "Certainly, we have a head start because of our experience. And we have always had many visitors from abroad. We are now the market leader for aviaries also in Germany. Our system is cost-effective; this is decisive, since housing units are bought according to their prices. The Dutch also want this system, but with four storeys and with the nest in a fifth intermediate storey - they are heading for a catastrophe with that! We tried this once in

1988, but it doesn't work, because how can you still control the hens on the fourth storey? The EU directive stipulates a stocking with a maximum of 16 hens per  $m^2$  [ $10^{3/4}$  ft²] floor area for aviaries from 2012. For the Dutch producers, this is still insufficient - that makes my hair stand on end! For the manufacturers of housing units it is more interesting to sell intensive systems. And the producers only look for a decrease of production costs: They demand a stocking per  $m^2$  as dense as possible, but today nobody thinks about lost eggs... Because of this beating down of prices, we from Big Dutchman already lost orders , of course."



Aviary keeping (Rihs Boleg II system)

# How young hens are raised is also important!

Big Dutchman is a worldwide network of manufacturers of housing units that Inauen owns and whose name he uses abroad. But no, he doesn't want to export, Inauen says; in the long run, this doesn't work out for him. If you deliver housing units, you also have to be able to offer services on site. He rather focuses on licensing which enables him to sell because of the concept and not the prices. From his Swiss production, he only supplies special components and machines today. He is skeptical about his know-how head start: "That will soon be outdated. In Switzerland, we only have two to six thousand hens per housing unit. In the UK, there are 20,000 hens; there we once paid dearly."

Meanwhile, Inauen and Big Dutchman have had experiences with bigger constructions. For example in the German Rügen, where seven housing units for 100,000 hens had to be constructed for one of the first big aviary projects in Germany. Inauen pressed for the determination of a breeding establishment and its change to an aviary first. "Breeding [raising juvenile hens] and keeping [of laying hens] must harmonize. In France, they do breeding with 20 juvenile hens per  $m^2$  [ $10^{3/4}$  ft²] in floor keeping - later in the aviary the hens are of no use because they have never learned to move." Inauen learned very soon to move. "It was a nice experience, the development of the last seventeen years," the only forty-years-old man says.

# Chapter 6

### ... & the Market Pulled

The fact that Switzerland could abolish battery keeping and enormously improve its hen keeping wasn't determined only by politics but primarily by the market. And it was the consumers who demanded that hens be provided with litter even though the law doesn't impose it.

#### Big retailers implement animal welfare

The conduct of the two leading big retailers — Migros and Coop, who together sell more than half of all eggs consumed in Switzerland (and about 30% of all eggs produced in Switzerland) — was decisive. In 1987, the two big retailers informed their Swiss producers that from 1989, they wouldn't purchase battery eggs from them anymore. "This really was a courageous step of Migros and Coop," Ernesto Hausmann confirms, who has been in the Swiss egg trade since 1986 (today in the company Ei AG). "But those who forced it the most were the consumers and the voters. And the media. And the eco-payments by the state have also supported adaptation. The problems with alternative keeping systems the producers had feared didn't happen, and above all the performance didn't decrease. The keeping was improved. Today, hardly anybody wants to go back to the old systems."

The conduct of the two leading big retailers was decisive.

On the management floors of Migros and Coop, the keeping of hens also hadn't been an issue because the battery eggs still were purchased. Only when in 1981, the organization M-Frühling (Migros Springtime), a broad movement of oppositional members of the Migros Cooperative, launched a collection of signatures for a management policy without animal factories, the Migros management was obliged to react. In 1982, they formulated a "model for the protection of farm animals" which certainly didn't name any measurable aims, but at least took a direction in accordance with the initiators. Franz Wicki, poultry adviser for Migros since 1974, remembers: "Migros would have liked to change to Swiss eggs from uncaged hens even before 1992. However, Migros also imports eggs, so they had to purchase a corresponding obligatory quantity of 'system eggs' (see chapter 5). So we were obliged to sell domestic battery eggs as well" [because system eggs at the time included eggs from caged hens.]

According to Hausmann's estimations, Coop had supported adaptation as well, especially free range keeping (Coop Naturaplan). We just have to restrict ourselves to Migros' contribution because in the meantime Coop had repeatedly changed experts and data systems, so a continual documentation was no longer possible.

#### No cage eggs from abroad anymore

So, beginning in 1992, Migros and Coop no longer sold cage eggs from Switzerland. But they still sold foreign cage eggs! As about 95 percent of the imported eggs still came from batteries at the time, a complete refusal seemed unrealistic at first. The supermarket chain Waro was the first to delete imported cage eggs from their range of products. "And Migros and Coop had to follow immediately," Ernesto Hausmann remembers: "One has to go ahead, and then competition forces the others to imitate."

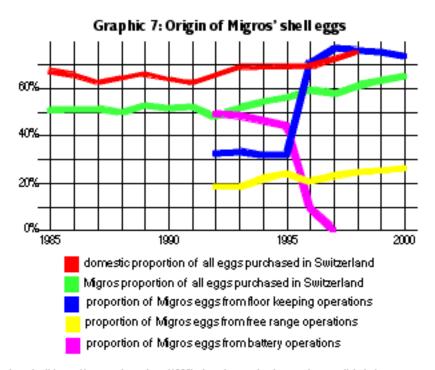
In 1995, Migros commissioned their product manager Peter Diethelm to look for floor keeping farms in Europe corresponding to Swiss requirements. At the end of 1995, Migros opted for farms in Germany (controlled by the German Animal Welfare Society / KAT) and in France (Qualité France). Since the spring of

1996, Migros and Coop haven't sold a single egg from battery keeping. And how have the consumers reacted? "Neither positively nor negatively," Diethelm says and explains this partly with the fact that the imported share of Migros' egg range had already been declining since 1993 [see graphic 7]. Those who still wanted to buy the cheapest cage eggs after 1996 simply went to the discounter Denner - yet since 2001, you can hardly buy any shell egg from batteries even in the cheapest store. (redaktionelle Aktualisierung)

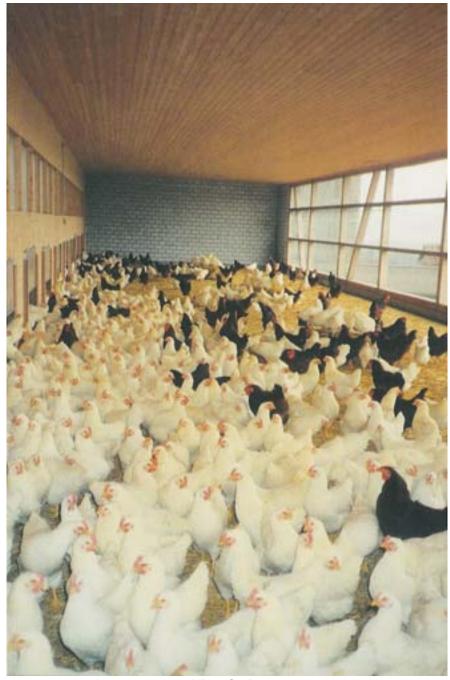
#### Egg products mostly from batteries, however

But even after 1996, Migros and Coop have continued to import cage eggs: in the form of processed products or in order to manufacture such products. Both retailers are trying to change to eggs from floor keeping also in this area. Since 1998, for example, they don't offer pasta produced with cage eggs anymore. Meanwhile, Migros also produces its mayonnaises and breakfast drinks on a cage-free basis. However, Diethelm warns about illusions: "Egg products are a totally different international market." With certain food, doing without cage eggs is possible without any problems, but not with the whole range of products."

At the end of 1999, this was what was usually said in the industry. But already two years later, a study showed that nearly all of the bigger processors and suppliers of egg products were already occupied with actively reducing the share of battery eggs to zero. Most of them wanted to reach this aim by 2002! So even there the years of criticism had finally made a difference.



After the abolition of battery keeping (1992), the domestic share of eggs didn't decrease as had been feared, but increased, in the whole of Switzerland as well as for the biggest Swiss retailer Migros. Since 1996, Migros hasn't bought imported battery eggs. However, there has been a massive increase of the share of eggs from floor keeping, now slightly declining while the share of free range eggs slowly but surely increases. [Data source: Migros Cooperative Alliance.] Note: The short-term decrease in the share of free range eggs in 1996 is due to the lack of complete data for that year.



Winter Garden

# **Support of especially hen-friendly systems**

While sales of battery eggs and imported shell eggs generally declined, Swiss eggs from especially animal-friendly farms sold increasingly well. The big retailers both actively supported hen keeping with runs or winter gardens. Because of the higher margin, this is also of a commercial interest, all the more so since a part of the producers' additional expenditure is already made up with the eco-payments by the state (chapter 5).

It was decisive that both the market and politics positively complemented one another and thus multiplied the effects. It is mainly due to this synergy that the Swiss hens weren't only freed from the batteries, but increasingly enjoy liberties that surpass the stipulations made by the law.

## Chapter 7

## **Are Swiss Hens Better Off?**

Nobody denies that today's living conditions for the hens in Switzerland are better than at the time of battery keeping. However, there is still some disagreement about the question if the hens are healthier than formerly. Although since 1992, cases of salmonellosis and Newcastle Disease (NCD) decreased in Switzerland, there are still the old ravines between the former battery supporters and the advocates of appropriate hen keeping when it comes to the issue of animal health.

Nobody denies that today's living conditions for the hens in Switzerland are better than at the time of battery keeping.

In 1996, Alois Mettler, director of the Swiss Egg Producer's Association (VSGH), presented his point of view to the fraction of the German social democrats (SPD) in the Bundestag: "However, the indisputable advantages of the alternative keeping systems for hens have the flaw that operating them is complicated for the keepers and that they cannot be overviewed clearly. Ill and dead animals can't be discovered so easily, and in order to clean after taking out a flock, the whole equipment has to be dismantled in many cases in order to clean up the numerous quiet corners of parasites and pathogens."

#### More diseases because of litter?

Most of the keeping systems in Switzerland, Mettler continues, "also offer the hens a scratching area, even though this isn't stipulated. From an animal welfare point of view, this may be desirable, and in practice you can really observe that the animals tend to be calmer than in systems without litter. However, we have grave problems regarding hygiene. Along with the well-known ectoparasites like lice, mites and fleas that had practically been non-existent in the battery, coccidiosis is what mainly worries us - and the hens: the fact that the animals walk around in their own faeces and those of the whole flock and that they also peck up these faeces means that this dangerous intestinal disease rapidly spreads to the whole flock and can cause considerable losses if it isn't recognized early."

However, Mettler's assertion that coccidiosis caused by intestinal parasites is promoted by litter had been strongly put into perspective already in 1989 with scientific studies at the Swiss Poultry Breeding College in Zollikofen. The author Franziska Matter concluded that it is not the existence of litter itself but its humidity which is the decisive factor. The dry keeping of litter is of an exceptionally great importance as the pathogens of coccidiosis are dependent on humidity to develop. Moreover, Matter recommends letting young hens pass through a bout of coccidiosis while they are reared so that they can build up the best possible immunity. She advises against medical treatment (coccidiostatics) because this obstructs immunization. According to Matter, other factors promoting coccidiosis (and other diseases) include stressful conditions due to moving out the hens, the beginning of laying, and a high laying performance.

In 1992, these findings were confirmed by further studies at the Poultry Breeding College. The authors Amgarten and Meierhans name the following main factors for coccidiosis and other economically relevant poultry diseases: lack of natural immunization during rearing, bad or humid litter, stocking density too high, lack of perches, not enough light, stress due to moving, and bad airing. Nadja Brodmann, poultry expert of the farm animal protection organization Kagfreiland, adds that sunlight is very important because of the disinfecting effect of UV-rays. Furthermore she notices that the faeces under the perches have to be separated from the birds, and points to the now available Paracox vaccination which is given to the hens via their

drinking water and acts very well against coccidiosis.

In 1999, Martin Häne found in his representative study that in 72% of flocks with litter, pathogens of coccidiosis existed in the faeces, while there was only one case in eight flocks without litter. But Häne adds: "One has to take into account that at the time of sampling in the studied flocks, the animal keepers only rarely mentioned actual difficulties with coccidiosis." And he sums up: "The existence of parasites in the sample faeces at the time of the visit didn't have any effect on the mortality or the laying performance."

#### The quality of care decides

However, there has been an increase of worm infestations. Mettler mentions the Blackhead disease (histomoniasis), especially in free range keeping. In his study, Häne found worm eggs in 75% of the flocks with a pasture, but only in 43% of the flocks without a pasture. In contrast to coccidiosis, the aim with worms is to keep flocks free from infestation, Matter says. She recommends fastidious cleaning and disinfection, the inand-out method (change of all hens of a housing unit at the same time) and in case of free range keeping a good pasture management and a covered bad weather run (outdoor climate area).

Laying hens spend 30 to 50 percent of the day with eating and searching for food (normal behavior). In addition to meeting their nutritional requirements, the hens also need to scratch, to peck and to work on different substrates with their beaks.

On balance, the result is that the physical condition of the hens depends on how well the animal keeper can care for them. Werner Thomann, former director of the Swiss Poultry Breeding College, confirms this: "Small animal keeping isn't in anymore! The big retailers find it unprofitable to collect eggs from small poultry farms," Thomann criticizes. He refers to the development in Switzerland, where in the course of the 1990's, old farms with 500 hens were replaced by farms with several thousands of hens up to the fixed maximum stock of 12,000. Appropriate animal care in the huge farms abroad with tens of thousands of hens must be even more impossible. These farms are mostly operated by a single person who can bestow only an average of fractions of a second per day on each hen.

#### More disputes than in the battery?

In 1996, Mettler mentioned a second problem. This problem had occurred relatively seldom in the battery but was a matter of concern in the alternative systems: "In spite of an apparently animal-friendly keeping appropriate to the species, the hens peck at each other, peck their feathers, tear them out and don't even stop at cloaca cannibalism. Ruth Morgenstern, the (former) poultry veterinarian at the Institute of Animal Pathology of the Bern University states that cannibalism - often with an evisceration of the intestine - seldom occurs in batteries because the observation distance and the possibility of access between the animals are too small." Thomann notices "that with all of these new systems, as Ruth Morgenstern already stated more than ten years ago, all the old diseases reemerge and have to be respected."

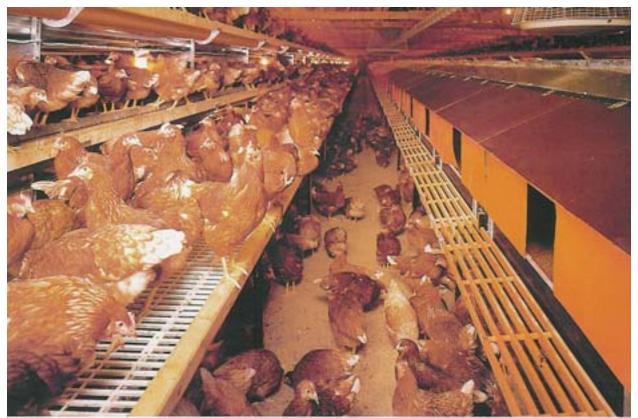
The fact that feather pecking and cannibalism "practically occur necessarily and with a high frequency" in housing units without litter had been laid down by Hans Oester and Ernst Fröhlich already in 1986. But litter and possibilities of occupation alone cannot exclude feather pecking and cannibalism, as Nadja Brodmann points out: "This shows that the problem is based on numerous factors and is influenced also by other factors like genetics, breeding, feed, keeping system, and management. But occupation certainly plays an important role."

Laying hens spend 30 to 50 percent of the day eating and searching for food (normal behavior). In addition to meeting their nutritional requirements, the hens also need to scratch, to peck and to work on different substrates with their beaks. If this substrate doesn't exist, the hens take the feathers of their conspecifics as a substitute.

#### Paying attention to origin and keeping of the young hens

In 1999, Häne stated on the basis of literature: "Feather pecking and eating as well as cannibalism occur primarily in intensive keeping, but can basically be found in all keeping systems. In batteries, where due to the effect of 'supercrowding', the aggressiveness of the hens is lower and the hens are frequently kept with shortened beaks and under easily controllable environmental conditions, these behavioral disturbances have largely lost their economic importance and scientific interest." Nevertheless, Thomann emphasizes that these disturbances also hadn't occurred in less stocked battery cages, i. e. without "supercrowding".

The importance of behavioral disturbances has again risen with the emergence of alternative keeping methods, Häne states. According to his study, an important factor for the occurrence of feather pecking is the fact "that a considerable part of the keepers of laying hens know nothing or only a little about the keeping and the origin of the purchased young hens."



Aviary keeping (Inauen/Big Dutchman)

## Chapter 8

## Free range - why not right away?

Wouldn't it have been better to take the chance of adaptation in poultry keeping to do the whole step right away than to invest 200 million francs in a compromise? Why not adapt everything directly to free range keeping?

For Alois Mettler of the Swiss Egg Producer's Association (VSGH), this is "the wrong question", and he justifies this as follows: "Those who wanted to have especially animal-friendly eggs before the abolition of batteries had to buy eggs from floor keeping. From 1992, however, this only corresponded to the fixed minimum; from then on, especially animal-friendly eggs have come from free range keeping." This is why the sale of free range eggs highly increased then, he says [see graphic 7]. As a consequence, consumers have to have the choice — which they wouldn't have anymore if there were only free range eggs...

From a marketing point of view, Mettler may be right. But from the hens' point of view? And from the point of view of the producers, who assume that in the long term intensive keeping isn't what animal welfare activists are satisfied with and what makes the consumers willing to pay fair prices?

In their evaluation of the appropriateness of the new keeping systems for laying hens (chapter 3), Hans Oester and Ernst Fröhlich had already concluded that "a correspondingly conceived and operated free range keeping" met with all requirements. This means that with other alternative systems, there are compromises more or less to the detriment of the hens.

From 1972, the housewife and painter Lea Hürlimann committed herself to free range keeping with her "consumers' team for a keeping of farm animals appropriate to the species and protecting the environment" (KAG, today Kagfreiland\*). In cooperation with rural farms, she showed that things can be different, with free range eggs from small flocks, which were initially delivered directly to consumer circles and later directly to shops. From the beginning, the KAG's aim went beyond animal protection. It supported the independence of the producers in order to lead them out of their dependence on intermediate traders and vulnerability to price dumping. It put through minimum prices which compensated for the additional expenditure of free range keeping. And it was committed to a clear transparent declaration with the complete naming of the producer, a novelty at the time. Thanks to good media contacts, the KAG's concerns rapidly reached a wider public.

#### Eggs from floor-kept hens as a compromise

At about the same time, the battery keeper Peter Bosshard from Zurich began to have similar thoughts about the situation of the Swiss egg producers. He hit on the idea of moving some of his hens to a building with floor keeping and to sell their eggs under the name of "sunn ei" (sun egg). He won the Swiss Society for Animal Protection (SGT/ProTier) as a partner. In 1974, they presented the project to the media. On this occasion, SGT founder Eugen Seiferle repeated his criticism of battery keeping (see chapter 2) and concluded: "If there is the belief that in the interest of egg production, intensive keeping of laying hens cannot be abolished, then floor keeping is a keeping method which can be justifiable also from an animal welfare point of view." This was diplomatic; in his heart, Seiferle certainly didn't endorse this way of hen keeping.

The media reported in detail and with sympathy, and the demand for the slightly more expensive "sunn ei" with the SGT control label made the number of sale points rise rapidly. The Association of Poultry Farmers which held the battery course at the time distanced itself from this "small short-term test" of a poultry farmer from Zurich. At the same time, however, some retailers in the Zurich area who were close to the battery keepers printed labels which imitated the SGT badges with their texts and their design.

<sup>\*</sup> KAG = Konsumenten-Arbeits-Gruppe = consumer work group. Freiland = free range.

Animal Protection (STS) tries different politics taking into account as many interests of associations as possible. Big size means power. But does power also bring quality, quality of life, does it bring change at all? Most of the eggs from floor keeping with the animal welfare badge come from farms that produce their main contingent of eggs in cages, a smaller part in floor keeping, and sometimes a tiny percentage in free range keeping."

Lea Hürlimann, founder of the KAG consumer team for the keeping of farm animals
in a manner appropriate to their species and protecting the environment.
 From Paper of the Swiss Society for Animal Protection, 2/1979.

#### Debate among animal welfare activists

The KAG project had also been imitated - by the "sunn ei" farmer who copied what the KAG had already shown on a small scale. Of course, the copy had a lower standard concerning animal keeping and seriousness. From 1976, the SGT distanced itself from the "sunn ei". It hadn't been able to make the "sunn ei" controllable; the suppliers only kept hens who laid brown eggs, in the cage as well as on the floor.

The KAG had repeatedly criticized the cooperation of the SGT with the "sunn ei" project. It pointed out both in public and within the SGT that floor keeping wasn't a real alternative to the battery but an uneasy compromise that animal welfare activists in particular mustn't make. With regard to the umbrella organization Swiss Animal Protection STS which had meanwhile taken over the control of eggs from floor keeping, Lea Hürlimann wrote in the SGT's paper in 1979: "With the help of the animal welfare badge on the eggs from floor keeping, the battery on the farm of this egg producer is being kept alive! The KAG doesn't conclude any contracts with producers who operate two or even three keeping methods."

In its annual report of 1979, the SGT summed up the animated discussion: "Our society has always presented floor or hall keeping as an alternative to the keeping of hens in batteries as the hens can at least satisfy the basic needs of their species in a well operated floor keeping. We have never kept quiet about our opinion that floor keeping is a compromise because thinking that a keeper of battery hens immediately changes to free range keeping is absolutely illusory." Nevertheless, the KAG's calculation was referred to, mentioning "that the egg demand in our country could be covered if each farmer had an average of 50 hens, with feed that can be produced on his own farm."

#### **Confusing declarations**

The controversy didn't end there, especially when the STS launched its label "Gourmet mit Herz" ("gourmet with a heart") in 1988. The KAG inveighed against the expensive advertising campaign which presented animals outdoors while the "Gourmet" requirements didn't necessarily stipulate it. With this label, eggs from floor keeping were sold primarily along with free range eggs. After "Gourmet" disappeared from the market at the end of 1994, STS and KAG also managed to occasionally cooperate well. In spite of all the differences regarding the alternatives to be supported, the goal of a ban on battery keeping, with or without "improved" cages, has always been clear among all animal welfare organizations.

The KAG criticized the term "floor keeping" as misleading. In fact, representative studies had repeatedly shown that one half of consumers thought that eggs from floor keeping were from hens who could go outside. But the KAG vainly asked the federal agencies to replace "floor keeping" with "hall keeping," which consumers clearly understand according to the studies. The trade and the producers resisted the consumers' request for honest information.

At the end of the 1980's, the KAG met with understanding more rapidly in Austria and in Germany where some circles began to seek improved agricultural animal keeping. The consumers-producers-team of Vorarlberg (KOPRA) basically took on the requirements of the KAG. The Team Critical Medicine of Vienna (now Free

Range Association), which was founded a little later on, had planned at first to issue its label also for eggs from floor keeping, but was convinced at the last moment that this would be hardly consequent. In Germany, the organization "Neuland", which had been founded after extensive clarifications, also stipulated guidelines in accordance with the KAG.

"From an ethological point of view, those hen keeping systems are the best which, along with a spacious house equipment appropriate to the species, also offer access to a winter garden and daily exercise on a green pasture. In a real free range keeping, the hens have a pasture structured with artificial or natural hideouts which is inviting even with less optimal weather (rain, wind, extreme sunlight). Raindrops mostly bother hens less than humans. Only then do the delicious worms and snails come out! If the hens are fed up with the weather, they can decide themselves to go to a shelter or rather to withdraw into the house."

- Nadja Brodmann, ethologist, poultry expert for Kagfreiland since 1997

#### Not only a question of the heart

The decision for eggs from free range or from indoor keeping is also a question of the heart. But with love of animals alone the issue isn't solved.

Good animal keeping isn't the task of farmers alone. How well farm animals can be kept also depends on the prices of the products. Consumers and voters who are horrified by television images of actually existing animal production practices are able to change the original causes if they are willing to pay a price which is fair for the producers, be it in the shop or be it with taxes for an agricultural policy which supports the consideration of animals.

As long as society isn't willing to cover higher costs for an animal- and human-friendly food production, cageless indoor hen housing is in fact a realistic compromise. Always assumed is that it is a human right to eat so many eggs even while one 'actually' knows that hens kept indoors aren't really happy.

Each way of keeping animals is a compromise between different interests, in the best case between the needs of the animal and the desires of the human, in the worst a compromise among the desires of the producers, the traders, and the consumers.

#### Making the compromise with the animals

After all that we know now about what an animal's disposition is and how it wants to be expressed, we must assume that animals would never let humans choose their living conditions even if they possibly chose themselves to live near humans. Animals have their own way of living, feeling joy or pain, and it is sensible to assume that they also have an internal life plan whose obstruction creates suffering.

If humans are allowed to use animals - a decision I have to make alone and even I as a vegetarian am not relieved of because maybe I eat dairy products or wear leather or have a pet - then the question arises under which conditions I use animals.

Marthe Kiley-Worthington, a British ethologist and farmer who is committed to improving animal keeping in organic agriculture, precisely gets to the heart of it: "The aim must be an animal keeping which creates a situation for the animal that would be even better than if it was free in the wild where it doesn't always find feed and water, where nobody cares for its wounds or protects it from extreme weather conditions." And this is not only about physical needs. "Animals have enormous perceptive needs and sensory capabilities that go far beyond those of humans but are totally unconsidered in intensive keeping," the Kagfreiland poultry expert Nadja Brodmann says. And Kiley-Worthington concludes: "We do know about the physiological and social needs of animals. Knowing more about their cognitive capabilities is a precondition to improve animal keeping even further. Once we know more clearly what happens in the animals' minds, we will have to start all over

again and assess what we want to do to the animals, what we are allowed to do to them and what we mustn't do to them."

This is the kind of compromise with the animals to be found. If the influences the two parties have weren't so extremely unequal, a compromise like that could be called a "social contract": Animals give something to me, even if it is not voluntary, and as a countermove I try to give them as much as possible of what they lack. Regarding feeding and protection from natural enemies and natural forces, any animal keeper who doesn't want to have losses provides this, of course. But a good free range keeping, for example, also allows the birds to move freely (within an enclosure), to explore their surroundings, to search for food, to be with other conspecifics, to withdraw, to experience the change of the seasons, the daytime, the climate, to bathe in the sun, to walk and to lie on the earth, and to look further than the next wall. Surely, this kind of keeping is closer to how a hen wants to live than any other form of keeping.

#### Can animals think?

"An animal must have the possibility to express its whole behavioral repertoire, as far as this doesn't cause suffering to others. This means that we have to find a way to quantitatively assess limitations in the field of behavior. The aim must be an animal keeping which creates a situation for the animal that would be even better than if it was free in the wild where it doesn't always find feed and water, where nobody cares for its wounds or protects it from extreme weather conditions.

"In the last fifteen years, there have been great efforts to explore the cognitive capabilities of animals, to study their 'minds' or their 'reason'. It was found that animals have learning capabilities that go far beyond what we had thought possible until then. Animals can use symbols, act methodically, make decisions, they have a memory - if this is what we call thinking, then animals certainly think."

Marthe Kiley-Worthington, British ethologist

From: Bioskop(magazine of Bio Suisse and the Research Institute for Biological Agriculture), 1/1997

#### Free range also is a compromise

Even free range keeping isn't a paradise for the birds; if they could choose for themselves, they wouldn't opt for even the nicest system with a house, litter, a run and a pasture, but they would prefer freedom among their own kind. Under economic pressure even free range keeping tends to make compromises that wouldn't stand up to a "social contract". Such compromises could soon be even more detrimental for the birds. In his extensive study about the keeping of laying hens in Switzerland, Martin Häne concluded in 1999 that flocks that only have access to a winter garden have lower mortality rates and a higher laying performance than flocks with access to a pasture. This will confirm quite a few producers who already now let their pasture expenditure go only as far as they receive free range payments from the state. But who knows: if Häne's study was extended to farms with fewer than 500 hens and to flocks with a longer lifespan, the result might be different.

Today, free range hens nearly always live in groups of 200, 500 or even more birds, all of the same age, without chicks, without young hens, without old mother hens and mostly also without cocks ("They just eat and don't lay anything.") Even free range hens mostly aren't pedigree chickens today, but they stem from a line of hybrids with the breeding aim of the highest laying performance in the first year; so farmers cannot breed their own birds but always have to purchase new young hens - from a one-sided breeding operation where the male chicks are destroyed already on their first day of living because they are economically useless and wouldn't put on enough weight for an economically profitable fattening.

And even most of the free range hens are slaughtered at the age of about one and a half years because feeding through the yearly moulting (a period of several weeks during which the hen replaces her old feathers

with new plummage and doesn't lay eggs) is regarded as unprofitable. The fact that older hens lay fewer (but larger) eggs also doesn't fit into the economic plan. In fact, it would be possible to breed laying hens "who lay a good quantum of eggs for several years," the former director of the Swiss Poultry Breeding College, Werner Thomann, confirms, "but then the breeding organizations couldn't sell so many chicks anymore and would earn less."

#### Is considering life too expensive?

A hen wants to live a few years, to be at home in a group of about 25 birds, with a cock, three or four other hens and their young chicks. She would prefer varied food or garden scraps to the eternally similar commercial feed, even if "eco" is printed on the sack.

Who when eating eggs remembers that animals must die for it?

Certainly, a keeping system with small family groups would require more know-how and more work per egg. But at the same time, other production costs could be lowered. Especially the yearly purchase of young hens could be omitted, which would be one sixth of the production costs, at any rate [see graphic 4]. Hygiene and health could be easily achieved with small groups of mixed ages and flocks that can be easily moved to different pastures. And as reproduction and rearing of the offspring would again be taken over by the mother hen, the costs for investments and risks of the modern breeding establishments could be eliminated. An egg from such an obviously sustainable hen keeping which orientates to the hens could undoubtedly make a slightly higher price. It could well be that at the final count, such a keeping wouldn't be less economical than an egg production which is orientated to a short-termed high performance. In addition, it is also nicer for the hen keepers to work with birds who live close to nature and who don't have to go on to the evisceration line as lively animals after only one year of laying.

"As long as we keep animals, we won't be able to totally avoid killing. But we have to reduce the number of animals we rear in order to kill them," Kiley-Worthington says. With today's usual hen keeping the average egg consumer causes the reckless "disposal" of two "useless" animals each year: a hen at the age of one and a half years and a newly hatched male chick.

But who when eating eggs remembers that animals must die for it?

## Chapter 9

## The Swiss recipe

Menu proposition: Abolition of the battery keeping of laying hens.

Use the following ingredients:

- 1. Animal welfare organizations that basically agree on the aim and are able to make this aim a public issue in their country for a long time. Be sure that the animal welfare organizations have the necessary means and capacities and put aside differences on other issues.
- 2. Consumers who are willing to pay attention to the origin of the eggs when they buy and eat them and to pay more for eggs from a hen-friendly keeping. Take care that the consumers are kept informed and interested, on the one hand by presenting negative cases, but especially with positive examples and news about the steps that have already been taken. By the way: We are all consumers don't we already know each other?
- 3. Clear regulations on the scale of laws or ordinances about animal welfare, objectives, responsibilities, competences, deadlines, and sanctions. Insure that they are implemented by choosing experts with a backbone.
- **4. An authorization procedure** that makes sure that there are only investments in systems enabling animal-friendly keeping. Choose a central, proficient and competent authority, provide it with sufficient means and competences, and support it with independent objective research.
- 5. Hen keepers who are willing to venture something new. Be sure that you win several hen keepers for this step early so that it will be easier for their colleagues to follow them. And support everything that encourages them to take the marketing of their eggs into their own hands so that they won't become dependent on intermediate traders.
- 6. **Retailers** who respond sensitively to an initially small but growing consumer segment and who take the chance to do their business with a better product. It is especially helpful if big retail chains can be won for adaptation.
- **7. Media and organizations** who take on the demands of animal welfare and spread them. Especially promote contacts on a personal level.
- **8.** An agricultural policy that supports the most favorable basic conditions for an animal-friendly production. An appropriate agricultural policy can be recognized by the fact that on the one hand, it supports animal-friendly farms with direct payments, and on the other, makes a concentration on big farms and intensive production less attractive.
- **9. Politicians and authorities** who commit themselves to stipulating and implementing regulations and who support the organs responsible for enforcing them. Take care that you win over politicians from different camps and make sure that animal welfare isn't just an issue for them shortly before the elections.
- 10. Exemplary hen keepings that go far beyond cageless intensive keeping, since the keeping of thousands of hens isn't really what fills more and more people with enthusiasm. In the long term, a minimalist alternative to battery keeping isn't a suitable spice to win and to keep the consumers' fidelity to a more expensive egg. Actually, most people want eggs from hens who are allowed to lead a hen's life, so take care that you support models corresponding to this wish.

The ingredients 1 to 5 are indispensable for success, the other ingredients support it additionally.

Season according to the country and its customs. Prepare and serve with love of the animal and respect for the fellow human. Don't serve too hot, and never only lukewarm.



## For Non-Swiss

Warning: Switzerland is a special case! "As a non-member of the European Union, our agriculture has a certain life of its own which is especially characterized by a distinctive frontier-defense - even under the new GATT conditions." This is what Alois Mettler from the Swiss Egg Producer's Association (VSGH) said to the social-democratic fraction of the German Bundestag in 1996.

#### Is Switzerland really a special case?

Is Switzerland really a special case? For Swiss poultry farmers, that would be practical. During conversation, Mettler intimates that he isn't especially interested in other countries' following the Swiss example because then the Swiss egg would lose the advantage of its image on the market... But Swiss consumers don't behave any differently than those in other industrial states. As long as battery keeping was allowed in Switzerland, the demand for eggs from animal-friendly keepings remained modest. It only increased on a grand scale when politics and the market implemented the virtual ban on cage keeping.

The agropolitical conditions also hardly make Switzerland a particular case. During the last years, the frontier obstacles for agricultural trade have been reduced also in Switzerland. The Swiss farmers are struggling against trade liberalization - but that applies to all industrial states. The EU's agricultural policy isn't essentially different from that of Switzerland. The EU has even taken over the idea of milk allocation and later the idea of direct payments from Switzerland - now it also follows what the small "laboratory" Switzerland has developed for hen keeping.

#### End of battery keeping in the EU from 2012?

After a lot of bargaining and intensive lobbying by animal welfare organizations and producers' associations, the EU ministers of agriculture decided on a "European directive for the protection of laying hens" [See Appendix I] in June 1999. It is similar to the Animal Protection Ordinance which the Swiss government had to force itself to implement twenty years before (see chapter 2). Just as formerly in Switzerland, poultry farmers in the EU now have about ten years (until 2011) to adapt their batteries. Just as formerly in Switzerland, the EU also didn't ban batteries but formulated minimum conditions that surely cannot be fulfilled by conventional battery cages. And just as formerly in Switzerland, the EU also included intermediate steps in the long period of adaptation.

The decision of the EU Council of Ministers is a laboriously achieved compromise between states that want a total ban on batteries and states that want to retain them. The compromise of "enriched" cages might have gone wrong also in Switzerland. Except for the manufacturers of housing units, nobody will be happy about that. For the hens, the "enriched" cages will hardly be of any use as the expenditure for the maintaining and keeping clean of the scratching room, laying nests and perches is so big that in most cases it will be omitted. A cage is a cage.

Why does the EU choose the same complicated way that Switzerland tried for years (see chapter 3) until it finally changed to floor, aviary, and free range keeping? Certainly, the detour via "enriched cages" will bring the European poultry farmers higher investment and production costs. But the pressure to totally abolish cage keeping will continue to grow. Because even "improved" cages lead to massive behavioral disturbances as they only offer the hens a little more space but no possibilities to withdraw.

#### Tug of war between EU states

According to the wishes of partner organizations in Europe, I wrote to the EU ministers of agriculture (in the name of Kagfreiland) shortly before their decision, to point out how Switzerland had abolished battery keeping and what the consequences were: "The ban on battery keeping has led to a rapid and continual improvement of the entire hen keeping. Additionally, the targeted sensitization of the consumers has lead to a change for eggs from more animal-friendly keeping methods. This result should also apply to the EU when it bans cage batteries."

The German ministry of agriculture answered that "it is a special concern of the Federal Government to noticeably improve the keeping conditions of our farm animals. Steps to change the current keeping of laying hens are particularly urgent. We have to get away from the present form of cage keeping to keeping methods that are more appropriate to the species. But even though many people here call for it, it has to be stated that at the moment a general ban on cage keeping can't be agreed upon in the EU."

- No ban on all cage systems, but only a gradual slight enlargement of the area and new requirements for the equipment of the cages.
- The introduction of modified cages won't improve the animal welfare situation because important behavior
  patterns cannot be expressed due to the lack of space. Example: Switzerland had bad experiences with
  such cages; today they aren't used anymore. It is still unclear if aggression and cannibalism even increase
  in enlarged cages (reduced "supercrowding" effect).
- In alternative keeping systems, the stocking density has been increased to 9 birds per m<sup>2</sup> [109/4 ft<sup>2</sup>] although
  the negative impact of a higher stocking density on behavioral anomalies such as cannibalism are wellknown.
- In keeping systems with a run, the minimum size of the area isn't stipulated; this could lead to a dilution of free range keeping and could make the consumers uncertain.
- · The shortening of beaks is allowed in all keeping systems.

After the decision of the EU Council of Ministers, I received an answer from the Austrian ministry of agriculture which was considerably straighter: "Austria wasn't able to agree because even though the present cages are abolished, improved cages in the form of enriched cages are planned." Based on a unanimous decision of the Federal Parliament, the Austrian minister of agriculture had committed himself to a total ban on battery keeping. In Austria itself, the cage keeping of laying hens has already been prohibited in four out of nine federal states.

In his answer, the Dutch minister of agriculture announced that his country is examining the possibility of stricter national regulations, including a minimal floor area of 1000 cm² [1 square foot] per hen. "This would make the enlarged cages more expensive and promote the change for alternative systems such as floor and free range keeping."

The EU directive gives relief to Sweden where usual battery cages have been prohibited since 1999. After joining the EU, it seemed at first that Sweden would have to allow them again. Now the EU ministers of agriculture had to yield. Actions and polls in most of the member states and especially in Italy and in the UK had made clear that many people don't want cage keeping anymore. Only Spain finally voted against the directive while France, Portugal and Greece could be won over with concessions at the last moment.

#### Does a ban on batteries lead to the export of cage keeping?

When a ban on battery keeping is discussed, one thing has to be well considered: "Can Germany do this alone without seriously jeopardizing this branch of industry and without having to put up with the reproach

that it simply moved the problem, together with the battery hens, to other countries?" This is what Alois Mettler asked the social-democratic fraction of the German Bundestag in 1996.

The egg producers in Switzerland had argued similarly twenty years ago. The German ministry of agriculture argued similarly in 1999 in its answer to Kagfreiland: A "ban on cage keeping of only one country doesn't solve the animal welfare problems but only moves them to countries with less restrictive animal welfare standards. At the same time, we would lose all possibilities to influence this area."

Switzerland's abolition of battery keeping has rapidly and continuously improved hen keeping for the entire nation. The Swiss egg producers were able to keep their market share and the prices. The sensitization of the consumers by animal welfare organizations has led to a preference for eggs from more animal-friendly keeping methods also in imported eggs. So Switzerland certainly didn't export cage keeping in order to be able to import cheap eggs.

Switzerland has rather exported the idea and the example of a better hen keeping.

The history of Switzerland's abolition of battery keeping shows that this logic is wrong because Switzerland now imports fewer eggs than formerly [see graphic 6] — and its example has a lot of influence on the population of many other countries! Switzerland does import more egg products now than formerly, but this is a totally globalized market which a small national economy can't really influence anymore — although even on this market, Swiss purchasers were able to minimize the battery share or even to reduce it to zero. However, a big domestic market like the EU could indeed solve this problem. It should also be considered that a domestic market can protect itself the better against unwanted imports (for example US beef from cattle treated with hormones) the more credibly it aligns its domestic policy with high standards.

#### **Judgment by the German Federal Constitutional Court**

The Animal Welfare Act "allows a limitation of the possibility to move appropriately as long as neither pain nor avoidable suffering, or injuries aren't inflicted upon the animal. In general, nobody may inflict pain, suffering, or injuries to an animal without reasonable cause. From this and from the principle of ethically based animal welfare it follows that not every consideration about the profitability of animal keeping can in itself be a 'reasonable cause'.

"A comparison of the average physical mass of a fully-grown laying hen  $(47.6 \times 14.5 \times 38 \text{ cm})$  [19 x 6 x 15 in] with the stipulated cage floor area of 450 cm<sup>2</sup> [69<sup>3/4</sup> in<sup>2</sup>] already shows that with cages occupied by four, five, or even six hens as they are currently used in Germany, undisturbed simultaneous resting isn't possible.

"This control based on numeric size already shows that the regulations of the Hen Keeping Ordinance don't correspond to the legal authorization.

"Until the enactment of a new ordinance, the requirements of authorization directly conform to the Animal Welfare Act."

Quotations from the press release of the Court, July 1999.

#### An EU-wide inspection procedure would be important

In Switzerland, the "furnished cages" had already proved too expensive and too labor-intensive. After that, aviaries with several storeys were developed to create an environment for the hens which was more appropriate to the species and also allowed a high stocking density per floor area. Swiss experts now fear that in spite of virtually identical regulations for the hen farmers, the development in the EU won't possibly have such a positive result. Hans Oester and Ernst Fröhlich from the Center for Animal Keeping Appropriate to the

Species emphasized how important it was that the Swiss poultry farmers complied with an official inspection and authorization procedure when abolishing batteries. As the EU directive doesn't stipulate such a procedure, the detour via more expensive "enriched cages" could also lead back to the old batteries. The egg producing establishments elsewhere in the EU are much bigger than those in Switzerland, which is why opposition to their abolition will also be bigger. "If somebody has 200,000 hens in the battery who are cared for by one and a half workers, then it is obvious that this doesn't work in a aviary because a aviary doesn't work with so little time for each animal," Fröhlich says.

#### German court judgment exerts pressure

A judgment by the German Federal Constitutional Court from July 1999 may contribute to a positive development. The Court declared the Hen Keeping Ordinance imposed by the minister of agriculture in 1987 to be void because it is inconsistent with the (strict) German Animal Welfare Act. From then on, this law was directly applicable when cage systems were newly equipped until a new ordinance according to the court's findings was imposed in March 2002. In practice, this should imply that even the new EU directive doesn't suffice as a norm. Because of the Court's considerations as to the needs of the hens, systems that are more animal-friendly have to be developed at least in Germany. This conclusion is also drawn by the German ethologist and poultry expert Detlef Fölsch: "All in all, the enriched cages must be refused from an ethological point of view regarding farm animals," his report to the Hessian animal welfare representative concludes.

Until the EU commission has to present its intermediate report and further measures in 2005, it may conclude that a joint abolition of batteries isn't feasible without a central inspection and authorization procedure.

#### "A cage is a cage"

Until the end of the 1980's, Detlef W. Fölsch, professor at the University of Kassel and (until 2002) director of the branch of applied ethology and appropriate keeping of farm animals in Witzenhausen, taught at Swiss universities as an expert on poultry keeping. After the decision of the EU Council of Ministers in June 1999 and the judgment of the Federal Constitutional Court in July 1999, Fölsch and Bernhard Hörning elaborated a report about the inappropriateness of the "enriched" cages as stipulated by the new EU directive for the animal welfare representative of the federal state of Hesse. The report draws the following conclusions:

## Not enough movement

"... the manufacturers usually conceive enriched cages for 4 to 6 animals (small cages). [H]ere [are] the most severe limitations in the functional circle of locomotive behavior. The hens aren't able to run, to flap their wings, and to fly appropriately, only walking and ascending / jumping on the perches or in the nests / sand baths is possible. Even walking is only very limited with a stocking density of 16.7 hens per  $m^2[10^{3/4} \, \text{ft}^2]$ ."

## Not enough opportunities to withdraw

"In the field of social behavior, the animals cannot escape from conflicts in small cages. At the utmost, they can move to the nest or to the litter area though they may also be driven into a corner there. The stocking density also leads to distinctively smaller individual distances which can lead to social stress. The partly observed greater calm can be attributed to the suppression of the specific behavior of the species."

## Not enough to peck at and to scratch in

"Further severe limitations can be found in the functional circle of feeding. Hens are naturally

predisposed to continuously search for and working on food. Scratching in the ground, multiple pecking activities as well as working with the beak are all part of this. Most of this behavior isn't possible in enriched cages. The provision of ground food isn't technically feasible in cages. Certainly, the ordinances stipulate litter. In the trials conducted so far, an additional sand bath usually was the utmost of what was offered. Here, only a minimum of pecking or scratching is possible, an additional feeding or working on food (such as with straw) not at all."

#### Improvements are not enough

"In the functional circle of egg laying, a choice of the nest (nest inspection) isn't possible as in many cases, only one nest is offered in small cages. (...) In the functional circle of resting behavior even the instructions of the Federal Constitutional Court aren't fulfilled with 600 cm<sup>2</sup> [93 in<sup>2</sup>]. There is a possibility to rest on perches, but not to jump up and rest."

"In total, the enriched cages offer the hens more behavioral *possibilities* than the conventional cages. However, because of the above reasons, this isn't enough to call it an accommodation appropriate to behavior - as the Federal Constitutional Court demanded. So all in all, enriched cages must be refused from an ethological point of view regarding farm animals."

## Appendix I

# Comparison of Swiss animal welfare ordinance & EU directive for the protection of laying hens

#### **Switzerland**

Swiss Animal Welfare Ordinance of 05-27-1981

#### **European Union**

Decision of the EU ministers of agriculture of 06-14-1999

#### **Cage Keeping**

#### **Switzerland**

From 01-01-1992, the following minimum standards apply:

- 800 cm<sup>2</sup> [124 in<sup>2</sup>] floor area per hen (with stockings under 40 hens: 1000 cm<sup>2</sup> [155 in<sup>2</sup>] or more)
- total area per cage 6000 cm<sup>2</sup> [6<sup>1/2</sup> ft<sup>2</sup>]
- incline max. 12%
- cage height 50 cm [193/4 in]
- maximum of 5 hens per single nest or 100 hens per group nest
- no litter stipulated
- no scratching possibilities stipulated
- 14 cm [5<sup>1/5</sup> in] perches and 8 cm [3 in] feeding trough per hen
- 2 drinking nipples per unit; maximum of 15 hens per drinking nipple

#### Delays of adaptation:

- from 1981, new and adapted constructions only according to animal welfare ordinance
- from 01-01-1987: enlargement of the area per hen from 400 cm<sup>2</sup> [62 in<sup>2</sup>] to 500 cm<sup>2</sup> [77<sup>1/5</sup> in<sup>2</sup>] in the existing batteries

#### **European Union**

From 01-01-2012, only enriched cages with the following minimum standards:

- 750 cm<sup>2</sup> [116<sup>1/4</sup> in<sup>2</sup>] floor area per hen, 600 cm<sup>2</sup> [93 in<sup>2</sup>] of it usable
- total area per cage 2000 cm<sup>2</sup> [2<sup>1/4</sup> ft<sup>2</sup>]
- incline of the floor area maximum of 14%
- cage height 40 cm [15<sup>3/4</sup> in] for 65% of the area, 35 cm [13<sup>3/4</sup> in] for the rest
- one laying nest per cage (included in the floor area, no further stipulations)
- litter for pecking and scratching
- scratching possibility to shorten claws
- 15 cm [6 in] perches and 12 cm [4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in] feeding trough per hen
- 2 accessible drinking nipples per hen

#### Delays of adaptation:

• from 01-01-2003, new and adapted constructions only according to new directive

- from 01-01-2003, the existing battery cages have to be adapted as follows:
- 550 cm<sup>2</sup> [18 ft<sup>2</sup>] floor area per hen (formerly: 400 cm<sup>2</sup> [13 ft<sup>2</sup>])
- cage height and scratching possibility according to new directive
- 10 cm [4 in] feeding trough and 2 accessible nipple drinkers per hen

#### **Alternative Systems**

#### **Switzerland**

From 07-01-1981, the following minimum standards apply to systems without cages:

- floor keeping with only 1 level and litter on more than 67% of the walkable area: maximum of 7 hens per  $m^2$  [10<sup>3/4</sup> ft²]; maximum of 6 hens per  $m^2$  [10<sup>3/4</sup> ft²] for breeds exceeding 2 kg [4<sup>1/2</sup> lb]
- in aviaries as well as in systems with less than 20% litter: 12.5 hens per  $m^2$  [ $10^{3/4}$  ft<sup>2</sup>] on grids & 3.5 birds per  $m^2$  [ $10^{3/4}$  ft<sup>2</sup>] on litter
- litter: 2/3 of the walkable area in floor keeping, 20-66% in the aviary, 0-20% in grid keeping
- 14 cm [51/2 in] perches and 8 cm [3 in] feeding trough per hen
- 2 drinking nipples per unit, maximum of 15 hens per drinking nipple
- maximum of 5 hens per single nest or 100 hens per group nest
- height per storey 50 cm [191/2 in]; number of storeys not limited

#### Delays of adaptation:

- from 1981, new and adapted constructions only according to the animal welfare ordinance
- from 01-01-1987, adaptation of existing systems
- until the end of 1986, the schedule for the replacement of existing battery cages has to be submitted to the cantonal management authority
- until the end of 1986, intermediate report of the cantonal management authority to the state

#### **European Union**

From 01-01-2007, the following minimum standards apply to systems without cages:

- maximum of 9 hens per  $m^2$  [10<sup>3/4</sup> ft<sup>2</sup>] of walkable area (until 12-31-2001 a stocking density of 12 birds per  $m^2$  [10<sup>3/4</sup> ft<sup>2</sup>] can be authorized if it had been used before the coming into effect of the new directive)
- 200 cm<sup>2</sup> [31 in<sup>2</sup>] litter area per hen (1/3 of the floor area)
- 15 cm [6 in] perches and 10 cm [4 in] feeding trough per hen
- 1 drinking nipple per 10 hens
- maximum of 7 hens per single nest or 120 hens per group nest
- in aviaries, maximum of 4 storeys, height per storey 45 cm [17<sup>3/4</sup> in]

#### Delays of adaptation:

- from 01-01-2002, new and adapted constructions may only be build according to the new directive
- by 01-01-2005, the EU commission must submit a report concerning the ethological, zoo-technical, physiological, physical, ecological, and socioeconomic effects of the directive and propose further appropriate measures



## **Experiences of Australia & New Zealand**

#### Still no ban on batteries in Australia

Source: Helen Rosser, "Animals Australia"

At the end of the 1970's, criticism of battery cages grew within the Australian public, especially with the influence of the book "Animal Liberation" by philosopher Peter Singer. Following the release of this book, animal liberation organizations were formed in all of the six states and two territories of Australia; the battery caging of layer hens was one of their main campaigns.

Animals Australia believes that public pressure for an extensive reform of the egg industry and for a ban on the keeping of layer hens in battery cages will continue to grow.

During the 1980's, the Senate Select Committee on Animal Welfare looked into intensive farming. In 1990, it drew the conclusion that a ban on the keeping of laying hens in a battery caged system was to be "considered when it can be demonstrated that viable alternative systems can be developed suitable to Australian conditions and that these alternative systems have positive welfare advantages." They recommended a minimum floor area of 600 cm² [93 in²] per hen. After that, the (voluntary) national Code of Practice for poultry keeping was revised in order to give the hens this area from 1995. But with this date approaching, the egg industry shied away. Finally, after a national review (1993/94) about hen keeping, only a national regulatory minimum area of 450 cm² [693/4 in²] per hen was stipulated.

#### **A Test Case**

In 1997, the government of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) passed legislation to abolish the battery cage within six years, after actions by the Animal Liberation group had exposed the suffering of hens in the only large battery farm within the ACT. In order to make sure that the ACT market wasn't congested with battery eggs from other states after the abolition, the ACT law sought to also stop the sale of battery eggs in its Territory. To do so though it needed an exemption from the Australian Mutual Recognition Act of 1992 by unanimous support from the other States and the Northern Territory. The animal welfare organisations lobbied for national support, but in vain, as in February 2000, South Australia and Victoria refused this exemption. The ACT legislation is therefore not yet enacted at all.

#### **Endless discussions between ministers of agriculture**

In August 1999, the Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand (ARMCANZ) considered a national abolition of battery hen cages. The ministers agreed that it would be desirable to have a nationally consistent system of 'truth in labeling' including the production methods used in the egg industry [i.e. battery cages, barn and free range systems]. ARMCANZ commissioned the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management (SCARM) to inform it about developments in the EU and worldwide and to submit proposals for necessary changes. However, an abolition of the battery cage system was refused by one half of the Council.

At its next session in March 2000, the Council agreed upon the desirability of the abolition of cage keeping, but merely then published a discussion paper to seek public input. In Queensland, where the paper was widely distributed, the public overwhelmingly indicated they opposed battery cages, but the governments of other states hardly made an effort to let their citizens know that their opinion was sought.

This instigated the launch of a national campaign by the animal welfare organisations with the support of celebrities from Australia and abroad. The Body Shop outlets throughout Australia distributed badges, and postcards demanding that the agricultural ministers stop the keeping of layer hens in battery cages. At a conference in July 2000, representatives of animal welfare organizations and the egg industry agreed upon an abolition after 15 years.

#### Egg rationalization in New Zealand?

On 11th December 2000, the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" (NZZ) wrote: "New Zealand's bakeries and housewives have to anticipate that they can only make Christmas pastries to a limited extend this year." There was a lack of 6 million eggs and there were concerns about an increase of prices. "There is already talk about the question if the sale of eggs will be rationalized."

How had it come to that? "The problem began a year before, when a big surplus of eggs became noticeable for the first time. At the middle of the year, the prices sank, and many producers either ceased production or reduced the number of hens. In the meantime, egg production has dropped 10 percent below the average offer. There is a lack of about 200,000 hens. The director of one of the biggest production companies declared that 16 years ago, there had still been 2,000 producers. Today, there are fewer than one hundred."

According to the "NZZ", only five percent of New Zealand's hens have access to outdoors. The industrialization of egg production avenges itself with turbulences on the egg market.

#### Egg industry put pressure on the media

A little later, however, the Australian Egg Industry Association refused this compromise and threatened to take legal action over anti-battery hen commercials produced by the animal welfare umbrella organization "Animals Australia". The broadcasts were withdrawn by the TV companies. The egg industry also put pressure on the Body Shop and on radio stations.

At the ARMCANZ session of August 2000, only Tasmania, Queensland and ACT opted for the abolition of batteries while New South Wales and Victoria opposed it for economical reasons. The remaining ministers of agriculture abstained from voting. The Council didn't decide to abolish battery cages but, on the contrary, to guarantee that battery cages may continue to be used for up to 20 years after their installation! Only very old batteries will have to be scrapped (from 2008), and newly constructed batteries will have a slightly enlarged minimum area of 550 cm² [85¹/4 in²] per hen. In March 2001, the ARMCANZ finally agreed to declare eggs from battery-caged hens as "cage eggs", which animal welfare activists criticized as again bowing to the egg industry - they had called for the term "battery cage eggs" which in their view is clearer.

Animals Australia believes that public pressure for an extensive reform of the egg industry and for a ban on the keeping of layer hens in battery cages will continue to grow.

## Appendix III

## **Addresses**

#### **Poultry farming**

Alois Mettler
Manager of GalloSuisse, the Swiss Egg Producer's Association (formerly VSGH)
Alois Mettler Agriconsulting, Postfach 81, 3038 Kirchlindach
tel. 0041 31 822 05 73, fax 822 05 77
alois.mettler@bluewin.ch
www.gallosuisse.ch

Paul von Euw (egg producer) Geflügelhof im Hof 20, CH-8154 Oberglatt tel. 0041 1 850 11 77, fax 850 11 16

Gallo Suisse Postfach 265, 8049 Zürich info@gallosuisse.ch www.gallosuisse.ch

Werner Thomann former director of the Swiss Poultry Breeding College) Grangette 5 CH-1752 Villars-sur-Glâne tel. 0041 26 402 76 21

#### Manufacturing of housing units

Inauen R. AG / Big Dutchman Urs Inauen Rütistr. 12, CH-9050 Appenzell tel. 0041 71 788 39 39, fax 788 39 33 pollo@bluewin.ch www.bigdurchman.com

Rihs-Agro AG Urs Richner Im Marcoup 12, CH-3286 Muntelier tel. 0041 26 670 34 15, fax 026 670 34 16 verkauf@rihsagro.ch

Globogal AG David Stauffer Tannlihag 5, CH-5600 Lenzburg tel. 0041 62 769 69 69, fax 769 69 70

#### **Trade**

Coop Schweiz Lorenz Wyss, Chief purchaser of fresh products Postfach 2550, CH-4002 Basel tel. 0041 61 336 69 11, fax 336 69 13 lorenz.wyss@cs.coop.ch www.coop.ch

Ei AG Ernesto Hausmann Birkenstr. 12, Postfach 60, CH-6144 Zell tel. 0041 41 389 85 00, fax 389 85 01 Ernesto.Hausmann@eiag.ch or info@eiag.ch www.eiag.ch

Migros-Genossenschafts-Bund Peter Diethelm, Product manager Franz, Wicki, Chief advisor poultry farming Postfach, CH-8031 Zurich tel 0041 1 277 24 06, fax 277 24 07 (First name.Surname)@mgb.ch or m-infoline@migros.ch www.migros.ch, www.miosphere.ch

#### **Animal Protection**

Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Tierschutz / ProTier (Swiss Society for Animal Protection )
Rita Dubois, Geschäftsleiterin
Alfred-Escher-Str. 76, CH-8002 Zurich
tel. 0041 1 201 25 03, fax 201 26 23
info@protier.ch, www.protier.ch

Schweizer Tierschutz STS (Swiss Animal Protection)
Postfach 461, CH-4008 Basel
tel. 0041 61 361 15 15, fax 361 15 16
sts@tierschutz.com
www.schweizer-tierschutz-sts.ch

## Associations for farm animal keeping appropriate to the species and protecting the environment

Kagfreiland Nadja Brodmann, poultry expert Engelgasse 12a, CH-9001 St. Gallen tel. 0041 71 222 18 18, fax 071 223 13 37 nadja.brodmann@Kagfreiland.ch or info@Kagfreiland.ch www.Kagfreiland.ch

Neuland Torsten Walter, Director Baumschulallee 15, D-53115 Bonn tel. 0049 228 604 96 88, fax 604 96 40 Freiland-Verband Reinhard Gessl, Director Wickenburggasse 14, A-1080 Wien tel. 0043 1 408 87 23, fax 402 78 00 freiland@ins.at, www.freiland.or.at

#### **Science and enforcement**

Zentrum für tiergerechte Haltung Geflügel/Kaninchen (Center for the Appropriate Keeping of Poultry and Rabbits) Hans Oester und Ernst Fröhlich Burgerweg 22, CH-3052 Zollikofen tel. 0041 31 915 35 10/15, fax 915 35 14 (first name.surname)@bvet.admin.ch

Bundesamt für Veterinärwesen (Federal Veterinary Office) Schwarzenburgstr. 161 CH-3097 Liebefeld tel. 0041 31 323 85 63, fax 323 85 94 www.bvet.admin.ch

Detlef W. Fölsch
Professor at the university of Kassel and Director of the branch of applied ethology and appropriate keeping of farm animals (until March 2003)
Nordbahnhofstr. 1a
D-37213 Witzenhausen
tel. 0049 5542 98 1642, fax 98 1588
steiner@wiz.uni-kassel.de
www.wiz.uni-kassel.de/art

Do you want to see the different methods of keeping laying hens in Switzerland with your own eyes?

We will be pleased to set up an individual visiting program for you!

Pro Tier International
Alfred-Escher-Straße 76, CH-8002 Zurich
T 0041 1 201 25 03, F 201 26 23
info@protier.ch, www.protier.ch



## Literature

#### History and criticism of cage keeping

Ebbell, Harald: <u>50 Jahre Geflügelhaltung</u>, published by Verband Schweizerischer Geflügelhalter (VSGH), 1979.

Insight into the life and the thoughts of a leading Swiss battery pioneer.

Collignon, Paul: <u>Rationelle Eier-Erzeugung</u>. <u>Ausführliche Anleitung zur Haltung von Hennen in Legekäfigen</u>, Berlin and Stuttgart

Solid practical introduction to the operation of laying cages, with numerous illustrations.

Thomann, Werner et al: <u>Vergleichsversuch über die Leistung und das Verhalten von Legehennen in Batterie- und Bodenhaltung</u> [Comparative test concerning the behavior of laying hens in battery keeping and floor keeping], published by Institut für Tierproduktion der ETHZ, Gruppe Physiologie und Hygiene, Zurich, 1982.

Harrison, Ruth: Animal machines (1964)

This book caused widespread criticism of industrial animal keeping.

Rogers Brambell. F.W et al: <u>Report of the Technical Committee to Enquire into the Welfare of Animals kept under Intensive Livestock Husbandry Systems</u>, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1965.

## Alternatives in professional hen keeping

Häne, Martin: <u>Legehennenhaltung in der Schweiz 1998</u>, Schlussbericht, Zentrum für tiergerechte Haltung Geflügel/Kaninchen, Zollikofen.

Representative and extensive up-to-date study about the current practice in Switzerland.

Schweizer Tierschutz STS: <u>Legehennen</u>, <u>zwölf Jahre Erfahrungen mit neuen Haltungssystemen in der Schweiz</u> [12 years of experience with alternatives in hen keeping in Switzerland, 1982-1994], Basel, 1994.

Overview of legal regulations, new keeping systems, studies about profitability and state of health of the hens. Also exists in English and French.

Fölsch, Detlef W. et al: Entwicklung eines tiergerechten Legehennen-Haltungssystems: Die Volierenhaltung [Development of a hen keeping system appropriate to the animal: the aviaries]. From: Landtechnik 6, 255-257, Darmstadt, 1983.

Fölsch, Detlef W. et al: <u>Artgemäße Hühnerhaltung</u>, <u>Grundlagen und Beispiele aus der Praxis</u>. C. F. Müller, Karlsruhe, 1995. ISBN 3-7880-9879-1.

Basics of and practice in breeding, feeding, livestock housing, behavior, free range and aviary systems for smaller and bigger farms, profitability.

#### Label comparison and terms

Bio-Konsum-Tip Nr. 2 "Huhn und Ei".

Available at Bioterra, Dubsstr. 33, CH-8003 Zurich.

#### **History of the Swiss Animal Welfare Act**

Oester, Hans und Ernst Fröhlich: <u>Die Beurteilung der Tiergerechtheit der neuen Haltungssysteme für Legehennen im Rahmen der Tierschutzgesetzgebung</u>. From: Schweiz. Arch. Tierheilk. 128, 521-534 (1986).

Approach and procedures of inspecting housing systems and housing equipment.

Steiger, Andreas: <u>Die eidgenössische Tierschutzgesetzgebung - ihre Ziele und Auswirkungen</u>. From: Schweiz. Arch. Tierheilk. 128, 329-346 (1986).

Short summary of the history of the Animal Welfare Act in Switzerland.

Schweizer Tierschutz STS: <u>Kommentar zum Entwurf des Eidgenössischen Tierschutzgesetzes</u>. STS, Basel

Containing the final report by the study commission Nabholz (1975) as well as opinions about different areas, especially about hen keeping.

#### For hen lovers

Fölsch, Detlef W.: <u>Auslaufhaltung für Hühner</u>, Wirz Verlag, Aarau, 1985. ISBN 3-85983-030-0 (French issue: ISBN 3-85983-031-7).

Practical instructions for the construction of housing units and the keeping of small hen flocks in free range.

Stern, Alice: <u>Geflügel artgerecht halten</u>. Franckh-Kosmos, 1993. ISBN 3-440-06726-2. Good guidebook about hobby keeping.

Brandis, Sylvia: Mein Huhn, rororo rotfuchs Nr. 745, Hamburg, 1995. ISBN 3-499-20745-1. A loving critical introduction to hen keeping in small groups not only for children and young persons.

Frommherz, Andrea und Peter Schlup: <u>Nutztiere im Brennpunkt</u>, Unterrichtshilfe, Teil Huhn. Schubi Lermedien AG, Schaffhausen, 1998.

Basics on hens for teachers of medium level classes (13 years up). With many illustrations and masters to copy.

#### By the same author

Hürlimann, Lea und Heizpeter Studer (1997): <u>Tiernutz - Tierschutz? 25 Jahre Politik mit dem Einkaufskorb</u>. Kagfreiland, St. Gallen, 1997, ISBN 3-9521426-0-3 Political and economic implementation of consequential free range keeping; 25 years of the work of Kagfreiland.

Heinzpeter Studer: <u>Kann mensch EG essen? Konsumelend und Agrikult anstatt direkt Wirtschaft,</u> Selbstverlag, 1992.

Critical observations beyond the frontiers regarding Europe, the EU and its agropolitics.

## **Author's acknowledgments**

During my work for the welfare of farm animals I frequently come across enquiries from abroad: "How did you manage to ban cage batteries in Switzerland?" I always had to tell the story again and again just like that, and the feeling always remained that it would have been important to hand out something to the enquirers. Just a little book that tells the story and perhaps also leaves its mark on animal welfare activists as well as on farmers, politicians and consumers.

When the enquiries increased before the decision of the EU Council of Ministers in the spring of 1999, I decided not to delay this book any longer. The Swiss Society for Animal Protection / Pro Tier was enthusiastic about the idea and agreed to take on the costs and to care for the German issue and later on for issues in other languages. I would like to express my special thanks for this firstly.

I also thank all those who readily gave me information and contributed with documents and hints, with attentive cross-reading and encouragement to complete this book. These are especially, in a chronological order: Andreas Steiger, professor at the Institute for Animal Breeding of the Bern University, Hans Oester and Ernst Fröhlich from the Center for the Appropriate Keeping of Poultry and Rabbits, the egg farmers' association secretary Alois Mettler, Peter Diethelm and Franz Wicki from the Migros Cooperative Alliance, Andreas Nabholz, former director of the Federal Veterinary Office, Werner Thomann, former director of the Swiss Poultry Breeding College, my colleague Nadja Brodmann from Kagfreiland, the poultry farmer Paul von Euw, and the manufacturer of housing units Urs Inauen - and others who will hopefully forgive me for not mentioning their names here.

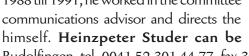
With some of the mentioned persons, I previously rather had it out. I was especially pleased that it was possible to explore the story together and in good conversations. Obviously, the abolition of battery keeping has become a success for everybody - a success we actually achieved together.

Heinzpeter Studer

#### About the author

Heinzpeter Studer (1947) is a social psychologist and a journalist. He has long dealt with nutritional and agrarian issues from the point of view of animal welfare, protection of the environment and consumer safety. From 1987 till 1997,

Cooperative members, M-Frühling. His the direction of the organization for the 1988 till 1991, he worked in the committee





he headed the society of oppositional Migros regular occupation from 1985 till 2001 was protection of farm animals Kagfreiland. From of Pro Tier. Today he is a freelance fish welfare society Fair-Fish which he initiated reached at Schlossstr. 6, CH- 8465

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#### **Credits**

Unless otherwise noted, all graphics originally created by Heinzpeter Studer, translated by Anja Schmidtke, and adapted for this publication by Pattrice Jones for United Poultry Concerns. The photographs on pages 14, 24, 33, and 36 are from the Kagfreiland archive. The photograph on page 39 was provided to the author by Urs Inauen.