

Battery /Caged Hens

- Over 90% of eggs sold in Australia come from caged hens.
- Caged eggs come from over 10 million caged hens in battery farms.
- A single battery farm can contain thousands of battery hens, stacked in cages as high as 5 rows above each other, in enclosed sheds.
- A battery hen spends her entire life cramped inside a shared cage.
- Each cage usually holds between about 3 to 5 birds.
- Each hen's floor area is smaller than an A4 piece of paper.
- With her wings outstretched, a hen is twice the size of a typical battery cage.
- A battery hen in a cage cannot express any of her natural instincts such as perch, dust bathe, spread her wings, feel the sunshine or build a nest to lay her eggs.
- Hens can become so desperate to build nests to lay eggs, that they have been seen to lay their eggs in the rotting corpses of other chickens in their cage.
- Stressed and overcrowded hens often peck each other. To stop this, in many factory farms, a heated blade is used to cut off the tips of the hens' sensitive beaks. This is called debeaking and is done without any anaesthetic.
- Lack of exercise can cause hens' bones to become weak, brittle and break easily.
- Some hens have broken bones and can die from ulcers, infections or starvation.
- Half of all chicks born are male and they are considered useless by the egg industry so they are killed when they are about 1 day old.
- In order to eat, crowded hens push against the wire cages. This often rubs off their feathers leaving raw spots on their necks, chest and other tender areas.
- In a natural environment, a hen's claws are worn down from walking. As battery hens never have the opportunity of walking, their claws grow long. Sometimes the claws can curl around the wire floor of the cage making movement impossible.

Chicken

When most people hear the word 'chicken', they think of food - something they often see crumbed, in small pieces, maybe served in a box with fries.

Before this chicken arrived in the shop, she/he was a living being just like us.

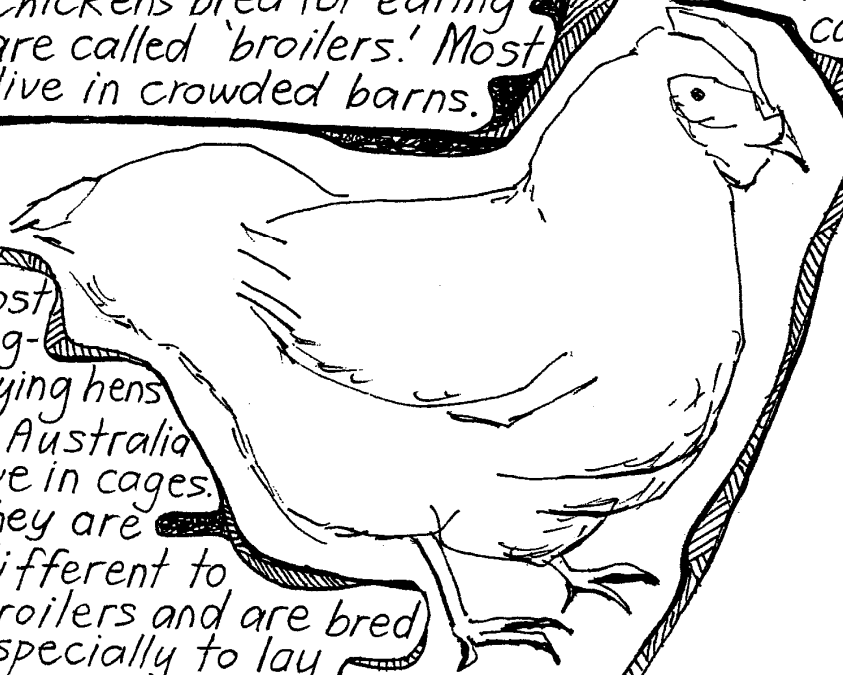
Chickens are birds and like other birds, they like to peck at the ground, make nests, lay eggs and look after their babies when they hatch from the eggs.

Chickens bred for eating are called 'broilers.' Most live in crowded barns.

Find out about broilers. How long do they live before they are killed? What kind of diseases or injuries can they get from living in crowded barns?

Most egg-laying hens in Australia live in cages. They are different to broilers and are bred especially to lay eggs.

Both broilers in crowded barns and egg-laying hens in tiny cages suffer. What could people do to be more compassionate towards chickens? After you've done some research about broilers, egg-laying hens and free range farms, write your findings on the back.



chickens



are
cute

Baby chickens grow up to be hens or roosters. They love to walk around and peck food from the ground.

They are very unhappy if they are put in small cages.

Hens lay eggs.

ACTIVITY

Get up from your seat and crawl under your desk. Sit there for a while. Now imagine that you are forced to stay there for your **WHOLE LIFE**. You have nothing to do and you can't move. Now you can imagine what it might be like for a hen kept in a small cage all her life. Write your experience here.

Did you know that about 10 million Australian hens live their entire lives in small cages? Each hen's personal space is even smaller than

this page

Can you imagine how sad and how crazy they must feel?

To get a sense of how it might be for these hens, try this:

Create a battery cage in your classroom. You could use things in the room like spare desks, cardboard, masking tape or string.

Have turns of four people at a time sit in the cage. If you still have space between you, have five people so you get the same experience as the hens. Try and stay in the cage for half an hour.

Imagine being in there your **WHOLE LIFE**, crammed against others, unable to move, unable to even stretch your arms or legs. How would that feel?

Write about your experience here:

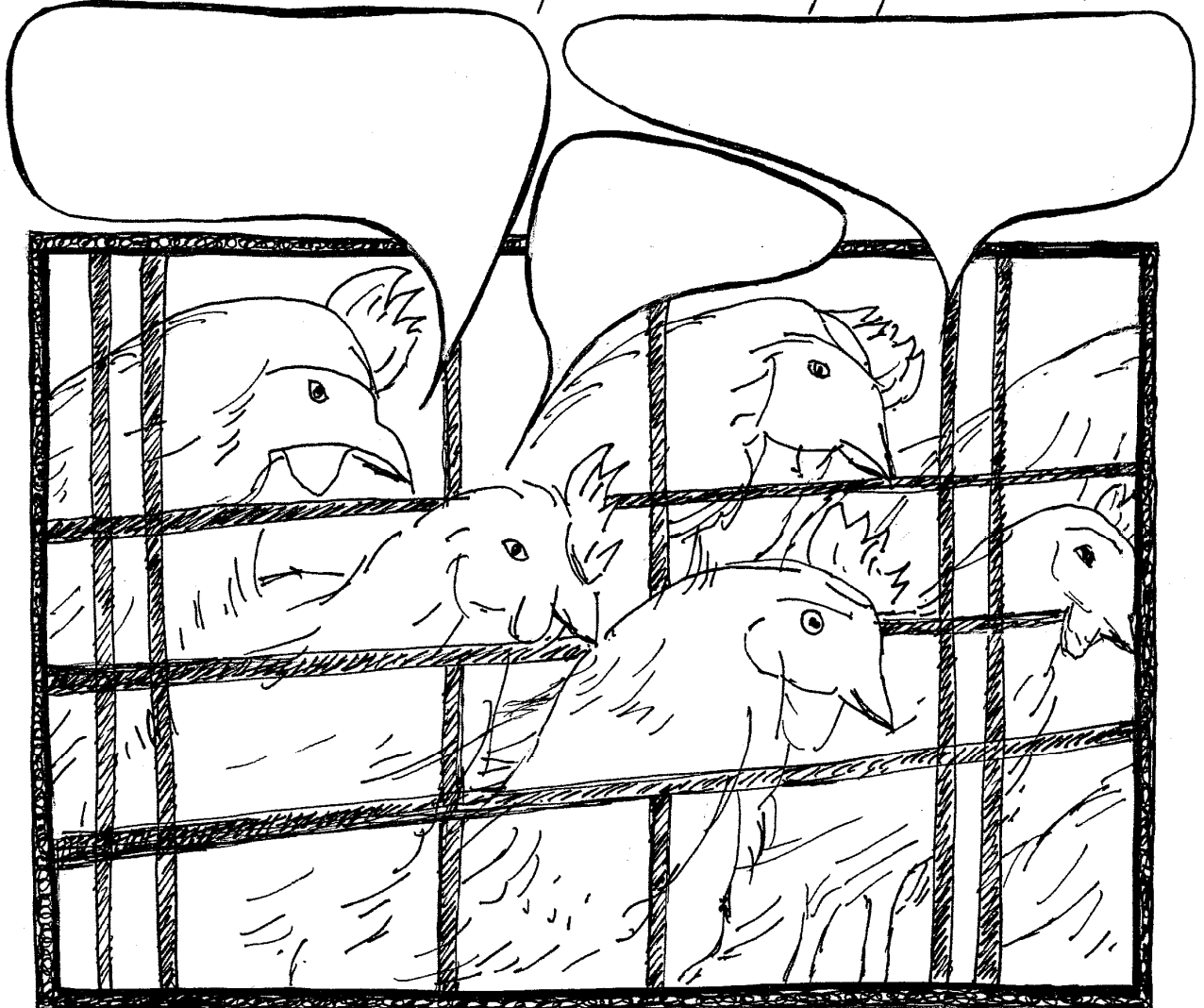
Cage eggs come from caged hens like these hens.

Imagine

If these hens could speak English, what would they say?

A fully grown hen

in a battery hen farm. The space in which she lives her entire life is smaller than this piece of paper!



- What percentage of eggs in Australia come from hens who live in battery cages? 10% 40% 60% 90%
- How many hens live in battery cages in Australia? one thousand, thirty thousand, one million, 10 million
- A single battery farm will often contain 50 hens, 300 hens, 1,000 hens, many thousands

Circle the answers which you think are right.