



AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF EGG PRODUCERS

OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

OF THE

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF EGG PRODUCERS

AFFILIATED WITH THE NATIONAL FARMERS' FEDERATION

1. BACKGROUND:

The Australian Council of Egg Producers represents the following organisations at federal level:-

South Queensland Commercial Egg Producers'
Organisation

Livestock & Grain Producers' Association
of N.S.W. - Egg Producers

Victorian Farmers & Graziers Association
(Poultry)

The Commercial Egg Producers Association
(Victoria)

The Commercial Egg Producers of South
Australia

The Poultry Farmers Association of
Western Australia

Tasmanian Egg Producers' Association

Through these organisations, the Council represents approximately 2,500 egg producers i.e. all commercial egg producers in Australia except North Queensland and the Northern Territory.

The Council was originally the Federal Council of Poultry Farmers' Association of Australia.

Composition of the Council is by way of two delegates representing each organisation. The President is elected from the delegates.

2. BASIC OBJECTIVES:

1. To provide an organisation whereby egg producer organisations can be represented jointly at federal level.

2. To foster the support and co-operation between the egg marketing authorities and producers in all States of Australia, and to provide a forum whereby problems affecting the industry may be discussed in the interests of all egg producers and to take such actions as may be agreed to implement the solution of such problems.
3. To foster co-operation between industry associations with a view to ensuring that the returns to the producers in Australia is economic, fair and reasonable.
4. To support orderly marketing of eggs and egg products through the State and Australian egg marketing authorities.
5. To ensure the performance of egg marketing authorities is not inconsistent with the producers' aims while at the same time recognising that the consumer is entitled to the highest quality products all year round at a realistic price, through orderly marketing.
6. To obtain and tabulate information of the industry, production and marketing reports locally, nationally and overseas and other statistical information of interest to Australian egg producers.
7. To make submissions to State and Federal Governments on matters pertaining to the Australian egg industry.
8. To actively participate with egg marketing authorities and the Council of Egg Marketing Authorities of Australia to ensure the overall well-being of the industry.

9. To assist any organisation being members of A.C.E.P. who so requests, to make representation on their behalf to, Governments or other organisations and authorities in respect of Egg Industry issues, while such a request does not conflict with A.C.E.P. policy.
10. To engage in any other activity as directed by members to ensure the well-being of the industry.

3. SPECIFIED ISSUES:

1. Demand Supply Management:

A minimal "service margin" is required to ensure that consumers in Australia have access to eggs all year round at reasonable prices. For this reason the industry has established demand supply management which controls this surplus margin. While in a number of States, this margin is somewhat high the industry is fine-tuning demand supply management to the point where a minimal service management can be achieved while at the same time guaranteeing year round supply of eggs, and therefore result in greater rationalisation of the industry.

It is important to recognise that because of the strict quarantine measures Australia could not import eggs from other countries to make up any shortage, in the event of a nil surplus or shortage situation. It is also necessary to recognise that the quarantine aspect is critical in that such a move to import eggs would pose a real threat to the health of not only laying flocks, but also native birds.

A.C.E.P. believes that proper application of demand supply management will result in fine-tuning the surplus which is contended as being unacceptably high in some States. Inherent in the demand supply management is the need to control the production and it is accepted that hen quota controls are the most effective means of achieving this at present with supportive seasonal quota adjustments, lease back schemes etc. Demand supply management has also achieved conservation of Australia's national resources of raw food materials such as wheat. By tuning production to domestic consumption, stockfeed normally used in the production of surplus eggs can be channelled into more appropriate and profitable markets.

2. Marketing:

Marketing strategies are developed by the various States marketing authorities with the Council of Egg Marketing Authorities of Australia responsible for common marketing approaches at a national level. A.C.E.P. recognises the expertise of such authorities as distributors of their products to the market place, however as marketing performance is relative to producer returns, A.C.E.P. maintains a constant monitoring of the marketing system and holds regular meetings to discuss improved methods of marketing. Four key factors are important in the development of egg marketing:-

1. Consumers should have access to high quality fresh eggs at all times at prices reasonable to consumers when taking into account various seasonal fluctuations.
2. Orderly marketing is equitable to both consumers and producers alike, and is an efficient marketing distribution system.

3. Producers have supported, together with Federal and State Governments, the orderly marketing system.
4. The orderly marketing system incorporating commercial marketing strategies have succeeded in achieving the above objectives.

3. Grower Communications:

A.C.E.P. acts as a source centre in collating, disseminating and distributing information on the industry to all commercial producers. In conjunction with C.E.M.A.A., the Australian Egg Industry Review Day is held every year in rotation around Australia. The Review Day is seen as grass-roots communication with producers and provides an industry forum whereby all aspects of the industry can be discussed, and improvements in the industry initiated.

4. RETURNS TO PRODUCERS:

Technological changes, producer efficiency, demand supply management are some of the tools which have provided the producer with a viable and long term industry. While acknowledging that the industry has received legislative support to ensure this viability it is accepted that most aspects of the day to day performance of the industry are, to a large extent, a result of producer initiations and self-regulation. The industry has established production methods to ensure that not only consumers are being satisfied but that producers are gaining a fair and equitable return for their produce. No industry enters into a venture without expecting some return on investment.

5. POULTRY WELFARE:

Although animal liberation activities and the welfare issues have peaked and troughed over the last couple of years it cannot be assumed that the issue is of little long term relevance to the industry. Since 1980 numerous welfare committees have been established to the point where they number over 150 in Australia alone. A.C.E.P. in conjunction with the Council of Egg Marketing Authorities of Australia has established a poultry welfare committee so that the real concern of egg producers for the welfare of their flocks could be adequately represented. While this committee was at the initiation of C.E.M.A.A. in its establishment, it is accepted that eventually A.C.E.P. is the body that should address itself to issue and formulate policy in respect to poultry welfare. A.C.E.P. in this regard has been prominent in formulating codes of practices for the welfare of poultry, nominations of industry spokesmen and representations to Government. Obviously as the welfare issue basically relates to farm management, flock housing options and the welfare of the hen, the issue of welfare is one of direct relevance to producers.

6. QUARANTINE:

Australia's hen laying flocks and subsequently the products produced are of the highest standard. This has to be due, not in the least, to the fact that strict regulations in respect of the importation of animals and animal products into Australia are applied. At this stage of technical development it could not be assumed that the importation of flocks, bacteria etc. would have any dramatic improvement in industry productivity. However, the industry maintains regular contact with Health Authorities and the C.S.I.R.O. in monitoring overseas developments and their possible application to Australian conditions. It is important to note that the industry does not oppose importation of stock; however, such importation should be through appropriate Quarantine Stations such as Cocos Island and not facilities like Torrens Island, which are in very close proximity to production regions.

7. GENETIC BANKS:

In view of the quarantine restrictions mentioned above Australia relies heavily on the development of flocks using genetic stock currently available in Australia and it is in the producers' interest to maintain genetic banks. An example of this is the desirability of maintaining a genetic flock at Parafield Research Station, South Australia. The industry considers that the retention of such flocks coupled with development overseas will provide the industry with on-going flock improvement.

8. PRODUCERS EFFICIENCY AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES:

The Australian Egg Industry is one of the few primary areas where technological change and producer efficiency have continued to improve to the benefit of producers and consumers alike. In implementing such changes, however, producers are ever aware that any modification to current production methods etc. must be also of benefit to the flock in his charge.

9. RESEARCH:

Research is an inherent factor in the Australia Egg Industry. While research may appear to be only solely beneficial to the producer, any improvements made as a result of research are eventually passed on to the consumer by way of quality and price.

10. MARKETING AUTHORITY ADMINISTRATION AND MARKETING CHARGES

The Council recognises that egg marketing authorities' administration and marketing costs that benefit all producers should realistically be a charge on the hen rather than such costs being deducted on a per dozen eggs basis. Extending these charges to a hen levy is more equitable and cost efficient. The Council supports the Australian Egg Marketing Council in achieving this system of payment.