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Australia's States and territories sign up for new national poultry standards

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Agriculture ministers from all states and territories have now endorsed the new Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry.

The poultry standards were finalised by the Independent Poultry Panel commissioned by all agriculture ministers. The standards are the culmination of an extensive stakeholder and public consultation process and underpinned by contemporary animal welfare science.

Assistant Secretary for Animal Welfare, Dr Carol Sheridan said the endorsement of the poultry standards is an important step towards harmonising national animal welfare legislation and providing clarity and consistency to industry, consumers and trading partners.

â??The poultry standards introduce a range of welfare measures for chickens, ducks, pigeons and emus, including a focus on light, water and ventilation,â?• Dr Sheridan said.

â??The standards also allow for a range of egg production systems, such as larger furnished cages, barns and free range, that producers can choose from to best suit their business.â?•

While the standards propose a phased approach to banning conventional cages, implementation is a matter for the states and territories. Consumers also have a choice about the products they purchase and some retailers have already announced that they will introduce a ban on products from conventional cages.

Till date, the Australian Government has invested $5 million over 4 years to renew the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy. ABARES forecasts egg production for 2022-23 to reach $4.66 billion. ABARES forecasts the value of poultry meat to continue to rise and is estimated to be worth $3.4 billion over 2022-23.