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New Zealand egg producers to revise colony cage labelling following regulatory scrutiny

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The packaging changes aim to improve consumer transparency regarding poultry housing systems and compliance with the Fair Trading Act.



New Zealand egg producers are reviewing their packaging following concerns raised by animal welfare organisation SAFE over the labelling of eggs produced using colony cage systems. SAFE submitted a complaint to the Commerce Commission in January 2025, arguing that existing terminology could mislead consumers about poultry housing conditions.

According to SAFE's 2026 industry report, the Commerce Commission informed the Egg Producers Federation of New Zealand in May that continued use of the existing terminology could risk breaching the Fair Trading Act 1986. A survey commissioned by SAFE in 2024 found that 84 per cent of respondents were unaware that colony-laid eggs came from caged hens.

New Zealand phased out conventional battery cages on 1 January 2023, although colony cage systems remain permitted. The packaging revisions reflect growing scrutiny of production method disclosures across the country's poultry and food retail sectors.