



Shell-shocked at Easter

The Editor Dear Editor, Soon, Australians will be celebrating Easter, though likely in quieter conditions than usual. We will watch the typical images of fluffy chicks and colourful eggs from our well-worn couches and over-used televisions. Let's take this unusual Easter as an opportunity to question the reality behind these falsely bucolic images. Compassionate Australians would be shell-shocked to see the routine cruelties and deaths that come with egg production. In this industry, male chicks are considered waste product, and are killed shortly after birth via maceration. This can be a cruel, inexact process, where baby boys are sent down a conveyor belt, still chirping for their mothers, to be minced alive. In some cases, machinery has been inexact, meaning that the chicks have had only their legs sliced off, and remained alive, in agony. Australian Eggs—an industry body—have acknowledged that maceration provides "awful and confronting imagery" and proposed gassing these chicks with carbon dioxide before they are sliced up. However, this process also leads to great suffering, leaving chicks gasping and shaking their heads for up to two minutes before they finally die. Female chicks who grow into hens have a longer, but similarly painful life. They are housed in cramped, filthy barns or cages, where they cannot enjoy any of their healthy, natural behaviours. Cage-free hens are maimed by having the tips of their beak sliced off, to avoid the pecking and cannibalism that comes with being confined in such excruciating conditions. There is no such thing as a "humane" egg, whether "free-range", "cage-free", or caged. Those of us currently living through confinement—albeit, with an end date—can show compassion for chickens by refusing to eat their eggs, and rejecting all other animal-derived ingredients in future. Desmond Bellamy Special Projects Coordinator PETA Australia PO Box 2352 Byron Bay NSW 2481 0411 577 416 desmondb@peta.org.au

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