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The British Veterinary Association (BVA) is the national representative body for the veterinary profession in the United Kingdom. With more than 19,500 members, our primary aim is to represent, support and champion the interests of the United Kingdom's veterinary profession. We therefore take a keen interest in all issues affecting the profession, including animal health and welfare, public health, regulatory issues and employment matters.

The British Veterinary Poultry Association (BVPA) is an active non-territorial division of BVA. The objective of the BVPA is to further the knowledge of its members, who are drawn from academia, research, government, commerce and practice, by holding educational and technical meetings. The Association also offers objective science-based advice and comment on issues affecting its members and the poultry industry in general.

We welcome the opportunity to



haemorrhagic
exercise.

< Inability to escape aggression from other hens.

There is considerable evidence demonstrating that cage free systems, such as free-range, offers laying hens improved welfare conditions compared to the enriched cages. Having more space both indoor and outdoor means laying hens are able to dust bathe which helps hens clean and maintain feathers, remove parasites and oil build up and regulate their body temperature. Similarly, a free-range system allows hens to forage, which is another natural behaviour where hens explore their surroundings by pecking the ground or suitable litter substrates. This is severely limited in the enriched cage systems. For both of these natural behaviours it was found that providing suitable litter substrate in the first 4 weeks of life for hens helped reduce the occurrence of severe and injurious feather pecking in commercial flocks. This is something that cannot be offered effectively in a cage system.

Yes.

Removing laying hens from cages will help address the negative outcomes listed in our response to Q1 part b.

More space both indoor and outdoor will allow hens to move around more freely helping skeletal development and muscular maintenance of layer hens. At the very least it will help prevent the deleterious impacts currently being experienced by having hens inside cages that limit movement significantly more. The increased range of movement will also reduce the risk and incidence of metabolic diseases, such as fatty liver haemorrhagic syndrome which is associated with increased feed intake and minimal exercise.

Although the increased flock sizes that come with barn housing or free-range may lead to issues around hen pecking orders that can be detrimental to health and welfare, the increased space compared to an enriched cage does mean hens can feasibly escape aggression from other hens more effectively in a non-caged system, which is a clear improvement on welfare.



changes that should have been made years ago when they were banned for laying hen commercial units. A ban on these systems should be introduced much sooner.

Barren battery cages struggle to meet basic health and welfare needs of the hens kept within them. This was a significant reason in why they were banned for large scale commercial units. The issues with the cages remain the same regardless of the size of the flock and should not be used in any circumstance. Even a handful of hens kept in one of these cages are stuck in an