



**National Council
of SPCAs**

POSITION STATEMENT 4.2

SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

The SPCA is opposed to the development of farming systems which causes or may cause pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.

DEVELOPMENT OF FARMING SYSTEMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Farming and the utilisation of animals has been a part of human society for most of history. Farming practices have various concerns in terms of food safety, animal well-being and environmental impacts to the extent that intensive farming is often referred to as factory farming. The farming systems to produce products for human consumption and for the production of other products using skins, hides, wool and feathers from animals pose ethical and animal well-being challenges. Despite that the general public's level of concern for animal well-being in food production remains high, a comprehensive understanding and knowledge with regards to the realities of this sector remains poor. Most intensive farming systems strive to maximise output while minimising costs, always at the animals' expense. Giant corporations that run most intensive farms have found that they can increase profits and productivity by housing as many animals as possible in small confined spaces, even though many of the animals die from disease, infection and injuries.

Farming systems in South Africa have changed radically in recent years. South Africa has what is known as a dual agricultural economy. On the one hand, it is a well-developed commercial sector, whilst on the other hand, the majority of people engaged in farming systems are involved in subsistence-oriented practices in rural areas. An increasing trend in human population growth with associated demands from the agriculture sector has consequently resulted in an increasing trend of developing more farming systems to meet demands. Various types of animals are now being farmed in South Africa, and these include apiculture (beekeeping), heliciculture (snail farming), aquaculture (farming of aquatic fauna), and livestock and poultry production.

CONCERNS RELATING TO SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

The information below serves to provide an overview of some of the animal well-being concerns with regards to animals that are intensively farmed. These include but are not limited to the following:

➤ **Cattle**

- Once they have grown large enough, cows raised for beef are sent to massive, unhygienic outdoor feedlots, where they are fattened for slaughter purposes; and
- Cows on dairy farms are repeatedly artificially impregnated for purposes of increasing milk production; followed by traumatically separating a cow from her new-born calf and milked until such a point that the cow is regarded as economically unviable.

➤ **Pigs**

- Pigs spend their entire lives in cramped unhygienic housing conditions; under the constant stress of intense confinement; and are unable to express natural behaviours important to their well-being;
- Mother pigs (sows) spend most of their lives in small gestation and farrowing crates. These crates are so small that they cannot turn around. As of 01st January 2017, all gestation crates were to have been modified to be able to allow sows to fully turn around and lie down fully stretched without touching the sides of the gestation crate. Alternatively, they were to be placed into group housing;
- Sows are impregnated repeatedly until their bodies give out and are then sent for slaughter; and
- Piglets are torn away from their distraught mothers just a few weeks after birth. The young pigs then spend their short lives in cramped, crowded pens on slabs of unhygienic concrete.

➤ **Aquatic Fauna**

- Fish are impaled; crushed; suffocated; or cut open and gutted whilst fully conscious;
- Many fish on aquafarms suffer from parasitic infections, diseases and debilitating injuries; and
- Lobsters can experience pain; and when kept in tanks, they may suffer from stress associated with confinement, low oxygen levels and overcrowding.

➤ **Poultry/Birds**

- Ducks and geese are raised for foie gras which involves the fattening of the liver by force-feeding with feeding tubes. This fatty liver is considered a delicacy by some diners;
- Chickens are deprived of the chance to take dust baths; feel the warmth of the sun on their backs; breathe fresh air; roost in trees and build nests;
- Broiler chickens spend their entire lives in unhygienic housing conditions where intense overcrowding and confinement leads to the outbreak of diseases;
- Broiler chickens are farmed under certain conditions in order for them to grow large very quickly. Their legs and organs cannot keep up, making heart attacks, organ failure, and crippling leg deformities a common occurrence. Many become crippled under their own weight and eventually die because they cannot reach food and water sources; and
- Birds exploited for their eggs, called "laying hens", are crammed together inside wire cages where they do not even have enough room to spread their wings. Because the hens are crammed so closely together, these normally clean animals are forced to urinate and defecate on one another.

➤ **Bees**

- Like other factory-farmed animals, honeybees are victims of unnatural living conditions, genetic manipulation and stressful transportation; and
- Since "swarming" (the division of the hive upon the birth of a new queen) can cause a decline in honey production, beekeepers do what they can to prevent it, including clipping the wings of a new queen; killing and replacing an older queen after just one or two years; and confining a queen who is trying to begin a swarm;

➤ **Crocodiles**

- Keeping crocodiles in single pens limits them from exhibiting natural behaviour necessary for their well-being.

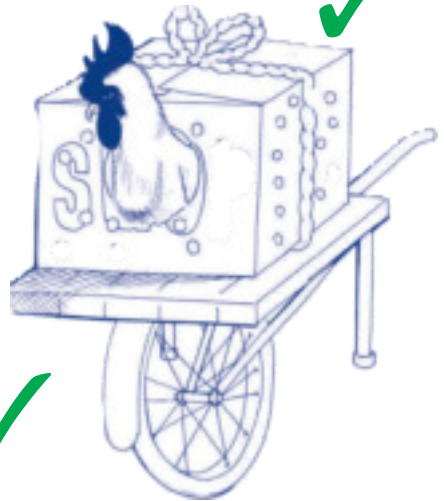
Since the SPCA believes that many of the farming systems employed hold serious animal well-being and ethical implications, the SPCA strives to ensure that consideration and concern for the well-being of the animals farmed is incorporated into such farming systems.

The SPCA bases its perspectives on the best available information and data available at the time. Our positions and opinions may change as more information and data become available.



SPCA says...

CARRY YOUR CHICKENS CORRECTLY



**Do Not Hold
Chickens in
this way it
causes pain
and suffering**

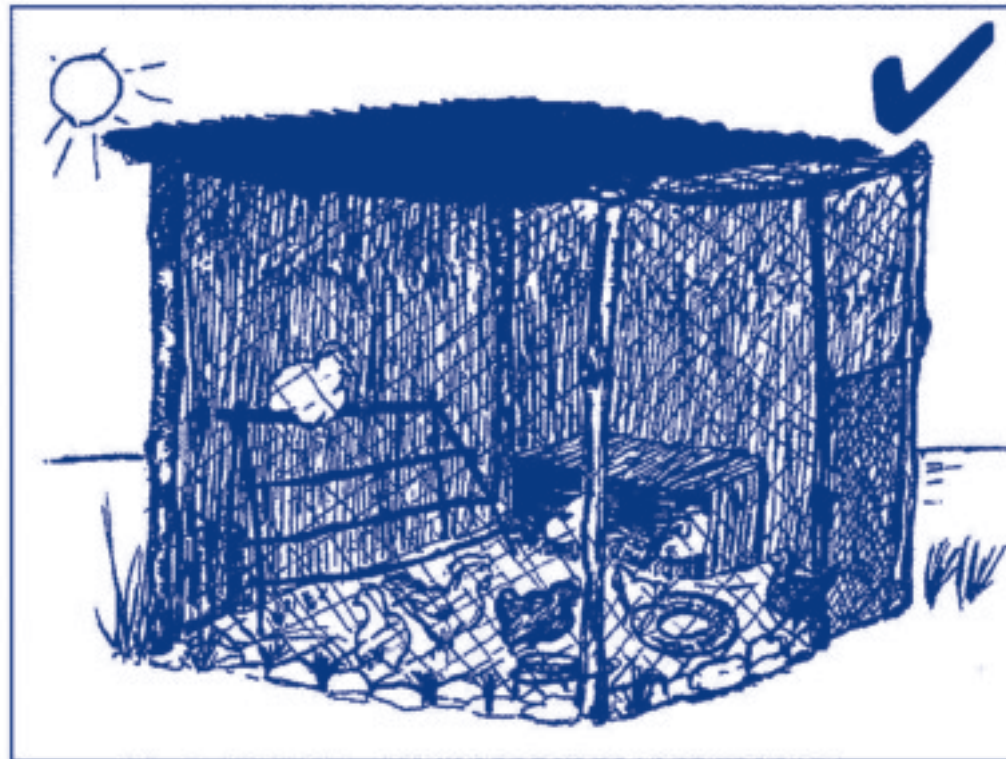
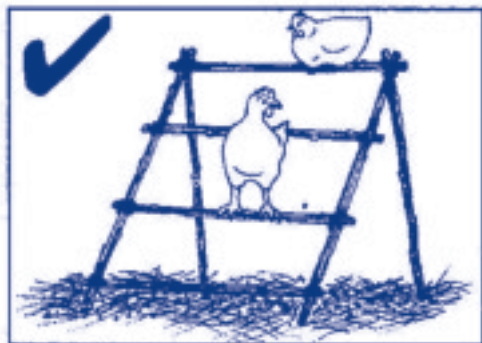
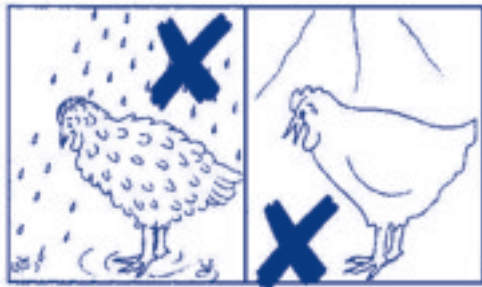




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SPCA says...

TAKE CARE OF YOUR CHICKENS



- Young or baby chickens are called **CHICKS**.
- Adult female chickens are called **HENS**.
- Adult male chickens are called **ROOSTERS** or **COCKS**.

SHELTER AND CARE

- When chickens are kept in a cage, they must be protected from the weather – rain, hail, cold winds and direct sun.
- Very hot weather or cold, damp, wet weather can be dangerous for chickens. They can suffer and die. Even if they do not die they will not be as healthy and strong as they should be.
- In hot, humid areas the air should be able to pass through the cage to keep the birds cool. Ventilation is important for chickens.
- At least half of the cage must have a roof. (If the roof is made of metal it must be covered with grass or other material and then properly tied down to prevent the metal from getting too hot or too cold.) Two sides of the cage must be covered to protect the chickens from the rain, cold winds and the sun
- Chickens must have a warm, dry sleeping area. It is best to provide perches or branches for them to sleep on at night.
- Chickens in a cage cannot escape from other animals like dogs. Make sure that the cage is secure and that the chickens are protected from other animals.
- If one bird becomes sick or injured take it away and put it by itself in a safe and dry place. Give it very special care and food until it is well again. If the bird is very sick or badly injured it will be better to humanely slaughter the chicken.
- Never leave an injured chicken in a cage with other chickens. They may peck it until it dies.
- Small / weak chickens must be kept, fed and cared for separately.

BREEDING

- It takes about 21 days for the chicks to hatch from the eggs.
- There must be a warm, dry, protected area for a nesting box in which the hen can lay her eggs.
- Put some grass in the nesting box. This will keep the eggs clean and warm and help to prevent cracking.
- Often the hen will not leave the nest to search for food while she is sitting on eggs. Put food and water near her, where she can reach it.
- The nest should be near or on the ground once the chicks hatch so that they can get in and out safely.
- The hen will be very protective over her chicks. It is better to keep them separate from the other chickens until the chicks are big and strong. They must have water and food (Grower Mash or Chick Chick No 1) at all times.
- Never keep too many birds in a cage. They must have space to move around freely, and stretch their wings. It is best to keep chickens in small groups of about 20 as this will help prevent fighting and competition, even among the hens.
- Don't keep roosters together in the same cage or they may fight.
- Don't keep more roosters than hens or the hens will be injured and damaged by the roosters mating with them too often.
- One rooster for every 10 hens is enough.
- Roosters should be about the same size as the hens. If they are too much bigger they may injure the hens while mating.

WATER

- Chickens must always have clean, fresh water to drink.
- One chicken needs at least 100 ml of water to drink every day.
- In hot weather they need to drink more water to help keep them cool and keep their appetite.
- The water must be put in the shade to stop it from getting hot.
- To prevent the chickens from scratching sand and dirt into the water, raise the bowl from the ground.

Put it onto a few bricks or flat rocks.

- The side of the water bowl must be low enough for small chicks to reach the water but not so deep that they can drown.
- Tie the bowl to the side of the cage, or put a clean rock in the middle, so the water can't be tipped over and wasted.
- The water bowl must be cleaned and refilled every day.

FEED

- Chickens can eat mixtures of leftover food like mealie pap, bread, vegetables and maize. Commercial chicken food is very good – i.e. Laying Mash, Grower Mash or Chick Chick No1.
- Some food (e.g. hard pumpkin) will need to be cut into small pieces or cooked to make it soft enough for the chickens to eat. Chickens need a proper, mixed diet to stay healthy.
- If there are more than 10 chickens in the cage the food should be split into two containers, so that every bird can have a share. Ideally there should be a bowl of chicken food in the cage all the time.
- Raise the food bowl, or hang it from the roof (low enough for chicks to reach) to prevent chickens walking in the food.
- To produce strong, healthy eggs and chicks, hens must have calcium. If hens are not fed commercial layer rations then they should have access to limestone grit, oyster shells or small, regular quantities of bone meal (meat sawdust).
- Food must always be kept dry and be protected from the rain, or else it may go sour and will then be wasted.
- Bowls should be cleaned regularly and old / dirty food removed.

HYGIENE

- If chickens are kept in dirty cages this will make them sick or unhealthy.
- Cage floors must be cleaned at least once a week.
- Putting some grass on the floor will help to absorb the chickens' mess, especially if you put it under the sleeping perches. Old grass should be removed and new grass put in every week.
- Grass or bedding from the nest boxes must also be changed at least once a week.
- The cage floor should also be kept clean because chickens like to lie in the sand and roll in it (dust bath). Dust bathing helps to clean their feathers and control parasites like mites and lice.
- It is important that the floor of the cage is sloped so that excess water can run off, and the cage can keep dry.
- If water does collect in the cage, it is important to dig a furrow or ditch, leading out of the cage so that the water can drain out and the floor can dry.

SPCA says...
TAKE CARE OF
YOUR CHICKENS



CRUELTY COMPLAINT FORM AND INSPECTOR'S REPORT

Complaint No. _____

DATE OF COMPLAINT: _____ TIME: _____

COMPLAINANT DETAILS:

NAME & SURNAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL: _____ TEL: _____ CELL: _____

ADDRESS OF PREMISES / PERSON TO BE INVESTIGATED:

NAME & SURNAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL: _____ TEL: _____ CELL: _____

NATURE OF COMPLAINT:

Complainant notified:	Date:	Time:
Telephonically	E-mail	In person

INVESTIGATION REPORT

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ WARNING No _____

Access granted by: _____

List animals seen: _____

Concerns	Yes	No
Water available		
Adequate shelter available		
Adequate space available		
Clean living environment		
Animal/s chained / tethered / caged		
Animal/s in good condition		
Veterinary problems / health concerns		
Note: Any concerns noted in this table must be explained in detail in the Inspector's report.		

Report/Findings: _____

Action taken: (i.e. warning, education, seize, etc) _____

INSPECTOR: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

WARNING No _____

Access granted by: _____***List animals seen:*** _____

Concerns	Yes	No
Water available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequate shelter available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequate space available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clean living environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Animal/s chained / tethered / caged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Animal/s in good condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Veterinary problems / health concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Note: Any concerns noted in this table must be explained in detail in the Inspector's report.		

Report/Findings: _____

_____***Action taken:*** (i.e. warning, education, seize, etc) _____

INSPECTOR: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

WARNING No _____

Access granted by: _____***List animals seen:*** _____

Concerns	Yes	No
Water available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequate shelter available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequate space available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clean living environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Animal/s chained / tethered / caged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Animal/s in good condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Veterinary problems / health concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Note: Any concerns noted in this table must be explained in detail in the Inspector's report.		

Report/Findings: _____

_____***Action taken:*** (i.e. warning, education, seize, etc) _____

INSPECTOR: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Outcome of case:

No welfare concerns - NFA	Owner complied - NFA	Animal/s confiscated
Animal/s signed over	Animal/s given away	Owner moved
Charges laid	SAPS CAS No.	OB No.
If referred, to who?	Date & time:	

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ WARNING No _____

List animals seen:

Concerns	Yes	No
Water available		
Adequate shelter available		
Adequate space available		
Clean living environment		
Animal/s chained / tethered / caged		
Animal/s in good condition		
Veterinary problems / health concerns		
Note: Any concerns noted in this table must be explained in detail in the Inspector's report.		

Report/Findings:

Action taken: (i.e. warning, education, seize, etc)

INSPECTOR: _____ **SIGNATURE:** _____

Outcome of case:					
No welfare concerns - NFA		Owner complied - NFA		Animal/s confiscated	
Animal/s signed over		Animal/s given away		Owner moved	
Charges laid		SAPS CAS No.		OB No.	
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