

Since its formation in 2014, the National Association of Egg Farmers (NAEF) has defended conventional caged layer systems in producing a safe, wholesome egg while providing the best environment for the chicken. For more information: www.eggfarmers.org

A. Food Safety and Security

Food safety is paramount and the members of NAEF are encouraged to purchase chicks from the National Poultry Improvement Plan *SE-Clean* breeding flocks and chick papers are tested upon delivery. Furthermore, claims that cage-free improves egg safety is simply untrue.

1. Penn State researchers have found that eggs from small flocks of chickens are more likely to be contaminated with *Salmonella enteritidis* as eggs sold in grocery stores, which typically come from larger flocks.

B. Human Health and Welfare

A study conducted by the Coalition for Sustainable Egg Supply reported

1. The aviary system had **dust levels 8-10 times higher** than other systems.
2. The aviary system resulted in high **worker exposure to endotoxin dust particles** and reduced lung function by the end of a shift.
3. The aviary system also **presented ergonomic challenges**; hens laying in litter resulted in a lot of crawling around for employees and potential respiratory and infection hazards.
4. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issues caution concerning human health to owners of backyard chickens. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/pets/farm-animals/backyard-poultry.html#cdc-recommendations>

Conventional Caged Systems



Aviary (Cage-Free) System



C. Sustainable Egg Production Systems

The rush by retailers and food manufacturers to source their egg needs from cage-free facilities must consider these facts on sustainability.

1. The cost to implement new barns for cage-free chickens needed is calculated at \$45 per chicken. For 200 million chickens, that's a capital investment of \$9 billion. Cage-free egg production costs are determined to be 36% higher* than conventional.
2. The cost to produce cage-free eggs is 36% higher than conventional cages, but that increased cost is not being supported by consumers everywhere. This California reporter below says consumers are not likely to pay \$3.50-\$4 per dozen for cage-free when regular eggs cost \$1.33 per dozen.

<http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=14d29221-3d62-466b-ba44-659bb7f7bf29>

*Using conventional production as a baseline, aviary production was 36 percent higher in costs, reported the Coalition for Sustainable Egg Supply at the International Poultry Production and Processing Exposition, January 26, 2016.

D. Animal Welfare and Husbandry

1. The Coalition for Sustainable Egg Supply reported at an international forum on January 26, 2016 that the total accumulated mortality was highest in the aviary (cage-free) system (11.5 percent), due to aggressive pecking and cannibalism. It was 4.7 percent in conventional cages. This results from the hens establishing a pecking order among their population.
2. Keel bone breakage was highest in the aviary system. Increased keel bone breakage was confirmed with **New Research at the University of California-Davis with Dr. Maja Makagon** showing the majority of breast bone damage originates from collisions with perches in cage-free environments.

NAEF has defended conventional caged systems in producing safe, wholesome eggs while caring for the welfare needs of the chickens: www.eggfarmers.org