

media release

NATIONAL AWARDS RECOGNISE 'GOOD EGGS'

The lives of tens of thousands of hens each year will be better thanks to the RSPCA's latest *Good Egg Award* winners, announced in Canberra last night.

The RSPCA *Good Egg Awards* acknowledge major companies that make the switch to cage-free eggs. Our 2011 national *Good Egg Award* winners are:

- Grill'd – Food Service category
- The Coffee Club – Food Service category
- The Pancake Parlour – Food Service category
- Doodles Creek Mayonnaise – Manufacturing category
- Da Vinici Foods – Manufacturing category
- The Canberra Hospital, Food Services Division – Public procurement category

"These companies have shown great leadership in their industry and we'd like to recognise them for their commitment to animal welfare," said RSPCA Australia CEO, Heather Neil.

"Combined, they use more than 8.2 million cage-free eggs each year. That's tens of thousands of hens that are living a life, free from confinement, out of a cage, as a direct result of these companies. "

"Consumers are becoming increasingly interested in how their food is produced, with two thirds of shoppers concerned about hens in cages. Making the switch to cage-free eggs is simply giving customers what they want."

The Good Egg Award began in the UK by Compassion in World Farming. Previous International Good Egg Award winners have included McDonalds UK, Subway UK and Sainsburys supermarkets.

"International winners tell us that receiving a Good Egg Award and helping to get hens out of cages has made good business sense. It has also boosted staff morale, improved brand image and reputation, and benefited their bottom line. We are looking forward to seeing more Australian based organisations making the switch to cage-free," Ms Neil said.

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Good Egg Award 2011 Winners

FOOD SERVICE CATEGORY

Grill'd

Since opening in 2004, Grill'd made the commitment to only use free-range whole eggs on their burgers. As the business has grown the number of eggs that they use has increased to more than 1 million free-range eggs each year.

"Here at Grill'd Healthy Burgers we are always looking to evolve and improve our products for our much loved customers... and we've had some great feedback on our eggs," said Grill'd Supply Chain Quality Manager, Shane Pigdon.

"Animal welfare is important to us and we do our best to support businesses that provide a safe and happy environment for their animals."

The Coffee Club

The Coffee Club uses more than 5.2 million whole barn-laid eggs each year in food made on site at more than 200 restaurants Australia-wide. Sourcing cage-free eggs has formed part of their efforts of being a socially responsible business.

"We made the decision to switch because we recognise the benefits of using cage-free eggs in our cafes; we wanted to put our hand up and say we are responsible in the way we source our eggs," said The Coffee Club's Executive Chef, Dan Forrest.

"Our customers are very conscious about what they are purchasing, and they appreciate that The Coffee Club is also taking the very same approach when we source our eggs."

"The Good Egg Award allows us to show The Coffee Club's commitment to using cage-free eggs and encourages others in our industry to take responsibility for the produce they buy."

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The Pancake Parlour

The Pancake Parlour was established in 1965 and has always had a firm policy to do things as naturally as possible. Using free-range eggs is a firm part of that philosophy. The Pancake Parlour now uses 1.1 million whole free-range eggs per year in their salads, breakfast dishes as well as of course their sweet and savoury crepe and pancake mix in their 12 restaurants.

Serge Meiers, Senior Manager and Food and Beverage Executive, said the Good Egg Awards was fantastic acknowledgment of what the company has been trying to achieve for the past 45 years.

“We only serve food in the restaurants that we would eat at home.”

“The success of our restaurants has a lot to do with the quality of food we serve and we continue to receive positive feedback from our customers about using free-range eggs.”

MANUFACTURING CATEGORY

Doodles Creek Mayonnaise

Doodles Creek Mayonnaise made the switch to free-range eggs in 2009, and now uses 140,000 free-range eggs each year. Doodles Creek says it was a philosophy of putting quality before profit and a commitment to animal welfare that led to Doodles Creek Mayonnaise making the switch to free-range.

“Supporting the Free Range Egg industry is important to Doodles Creek. We were the first Australian mayonnaise manufacturer to use free-range eggs in January 2009 and to our knowledge are still the only nationally retailed Australian mayonnaise company to use free-range eggs,” said Doodles Creek Director, Sarah Ross.

“Despite costing more to manufacture, our philosophy has always been to use only the best ingredients available to make the best natural whole food that is sustainable and true.”

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Da Vinci Foods

Pasta manufacturers Da Vinci Foods takes their responsibility of animal welfare very seriously. In March this year Da Vinci Foods moved to using 100 percent free-range eggs in their business – including pasta that is manufactured under their own brand and on behalf of retailer’s private label pasta products – that is now 840,000 free-range eggs each year.

“As animal lovers, we could not believe the conditions that these hens were kept in, and we were in fact contributing to by purchasing cage eggs. This made us look into options of how we could show leadership in the food industry and at the same time assist in the reduction of these practices,” said Da Vinci Foods Group General Manager, Tony Di Sebastiano.

“The introduction of free range within our products has given us a major point of difference within the pasta industry, being the first to move 100% of production.”

“Although the cost of free-range eggs is higher, in the end the cost impact is negligible, but the benefits are huge, both morally and from a business perspective. I believe it is the best move we have made to date.”

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CATEGORY

The Canberra Hospital – Food Services Division

The Food Services Division of The Canberra Hospital uses over 43,000 barn-laid eggs each year in their food for patients and staff. The Canberra Hospital believes that patient meals are an important part of the recovery process while in hospital. It was with this in mind, and a strong social conscience that, three years ago, The Canberra Hospital decided to use only barn-laid eggs in their patient and staff meals.

The Food Services Division of The Canberra Hospital also uses barn laid eggs for the meals they supply to Meals on Wheels in Canberra.

“In a time when Food Services Departments and operations are constantly looking at costs we have been able to support our decision to stick with cage-free eggs. We have been forthright in not succumbing to these pressures and taking the cheaper, caged egg options because we believe that Government Departments need to lead by example, be good corporate citizens with a strong moral compass,” said The Canberra Hospital, Food Services Division, Operations Manager, Tom Walsh.

“Winning a Good Egg Award acknowledges our commitment to excellence in the products we produce and importantly our support of the cage-free egg industry and the happy hens.”