

Scottish Egg Producer Retailers Association

MARKET REPORT

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Date: 11th July 2014

	Size	V. Large	Large	Medium	Small
Farm to Shop	Prices	£1.49	£1.25	£1.15	80p
Scottish Wholesaler	Prices	£1.20	80p	75p	
English Wholesaler	Colony	£1.30	88p(-2p)	80p	60p
	F/R	£1.43	£1.33	£1.23	70p
	Colony	£1.25	£1.00	80p	65p
	F/R	£1.40	1.40	£1.30	70p
Packer / Producer Contracted average Price					
		Organic	FreeRange	Barn	Colony
		£1.20/£1.45	85p/£1.10	75p/£1.00	70p/95p
Producer / Consumer		V. Large	Large	Medium	Small
- Colony	Prices	£2.00	£1.85	£1.40	90p
- Free Range	Prices	£3.00	£2.35	£1.93	£1.05
Free-Range to Farm Shop	Prices	£1.75/£2.25	£1.31/£1.91	£1.15/£1.45	95p
Central Egg Agency	Colony	99p	85p	75p	57p
	F/R	£1.40	£1.20	£1.15	87p
Imported Continental Prices in Bulk					
Dutch Eggs	Barn	85p(+1p)	70p(-3p)	65p(-1p)	

The market is very quiet with some price reductions particularly on Large and there might well be further reductions, but this is the wholesale market, if you are moving all your eggs and are in a holiday area don't reduce prices as it is hard work getting them back up again the old saying make hay while the sun is shining makes sense.

Small ripples can turn into large waves.

Beak trimming, we asked you to write to Richard Lochhead, your MSP;s and MP's about this issue, **have you**, but on your behalf we wrote to Richard Lochhead and his reply is printed below.

No politicians in England who are proposing the ban in 2016 have thought of the economic consequences if they push through this proposal, it would push up the production costs particularly in Free Range as the labour requirements would be greatly increased, with all the additional equipment to keep the hens amused and busy.

Other EU countries will not follow England's ban in particular France, Spain and Italy and will take advantage of having lower cost of production.

But if England goes ahead with a ban and Scotland, Wales and Eire do not there would have to be a derogation on chicks coming from English hatcheries, as we understand that under the EU charter it is illegal for any country to enforce its own legislation on any other EU country unless it is EU law.

And would a ban trigger a move of a substantial part of the rearing industry to Scotland and Wales?

Germany is also considering a beak trimming ban, and are also carrying out trials, with very similar results to the UK's.

But the wider implications of this proposed ban are much greater particularly for Free Range, we in Scotland with the policy of aerial perching would be better able to cope, but in England which is predominantly flat deck and the predicted blood bath and sky high mortality happened, the media would most certainly pick up on this, the resulting bad press would destroy Free Range sales back to 2000 levels and move production to Colony cages!!!!

Letter from Richard Lochhead to SEPR

2~ June 2014

Thank you for your email of 27th May regarding the Scottish egg industry, beak trimming and the potential for promoting the industry, for example as part of the Commonwealth Games and the Ryder Cup.

On the issue of beak trimming, animal health and welfare is devolved and so any potential ban on beak trimming birds in Scotland would be a matter for the Scottish Government. We would only consider a ban if we were satisfied that it would not harm the overall welfare of laying hens, and we will continue to monitor the research that is being done in this area.

You may be reassured to note that the Scottish Government are represented on the Beak Trimming Action Group. This was convened to provide advice to Defra following their Ministerial commitment to review the policy on the routine beak trimming of laying hens with a view to potentially banning this procedure in 2016, without detriment to overall bird welfare, and includes Government, industry and welfare representatives.

The Group is currently overseeing two on-going research projects, one of which is funded by the Scottish Government, into keeping non-beak trimmed birds in enriched cages and alternative systems and into methods to reduce pecking injuries. The research still needs to be completed and fully analysed; however, we are aware of the injuries on some of the units being studied. I understand that currently the feeling within the group is that a ban in 2016 is almost certainly unrealistic.

INVESTOR IN PEOEOPLE!

I note your request for me to write to the Defra Minister on this matter. Defra is already fully aware of the Scottish Government position on beak trimming; I will consider whether or not it would serve a useful purpose to write to the Defra Minister once the review has been completed next year. As animal welfare is devolved it would be inappropriate for me to try to influence decisions taken in England. However, since the majority of laying hens in Scotland are currently supplied from hatcheries in England we would need to consider the implications

for the supply of beak-trimmed birds to Scotland if a ban was to be proposed in England only.

On a positive note, Glasgow 2014 has produced a Food Charter to demonstrate its commitment to taking proper account of the sustainability of the food provided at the Games. The key objectives of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games Food Charter is to derive social, economic, health and environmental benefits through the food provided by contractors and suppliers. The Charter also highlights the fantastic food provenance we have in Scotland and for the food provided to meet standards that are equivalent to Scottish standards on food products such as Scottish eggs.

Glasgow 2014 will consider sustainability at the outset and throughout each stage of the procurement process when appointing catering and food suppliers for the Games. This means taking account of social, economic and environmental impacts in Scotland and beyond. Glasgow 2014 will ensure that information on food, menus and provenance is available at venues and the Charter encourages catering contractors appointed to provide food at venues to work with Scottish SMEs that are interested in supplying the Games. The Charter also covers the Scottish Dietary Goals, health promotion, Fair Trade, sustainable food and environmental and food waste policies. Across 2014, the Food Charter has also been adopted by the Ryder Cup and Homecoming 2014. In the longer term, a version of the Food Charter will also feature as part of Year of Food and Drink 2015. The potential for the Charter to be extended to the public sector is also being explored. The Glasgow 2014 Food Charter can be accessed on line here <https://www.glasgow2014.com/document/food-charter>.

The Scottish egg industry has much to be proud of and the Scottish Government's support for the industry, is, I hope that you will agree, reflected in the funding that has been provided through the Scottish Rural Development Programme for 2007-2013. This includes £13.7 million through Rural Priorities funding and £2.58 million through the Food Processing, Marketing and Co-operation grants scheme.

RICHARD LOCHHEAD

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Letter to George Eustice MP from Phillip Clarke editor of Poultry World

George Eustice MP,
DEFRA Parliamentary Undersecretary ,
Noble House,
17 Smith Square,
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Dear Mr Eustice,

I am writing to add *Poultry World's* weight to the call for an indefinite postponement to the proposed ban on infra-red beak trimming (IRBT).

Your comments to the NFU's AGM earlier this year indicated that a ban from 1 January 2016 is still your "default position" – though you will give due consideration to the scientific evidence.

That evidence is mounting up and the fact that two of the three commercial flocks involved in the Bristol University trials have experienced serious outbreaks of injurious feather pecking highlights the horrific welfare problems that can all too easily arise with non-beak trimmed birds.

Pecking is a natural bird behaviour and can get out of hand in a commercial environment. But a commercial environment is what we have in the UK and, unless you want the sector to return to a cottage industry, it is essential that IRBT is allowed to continue.

No doubt the breeders could, in time, develop a bird that is less inclined to peck. But that would be at the expense of productivity, playing into the hands of overseas producers not faced with the same restrictions.

The proposed ban on IRBT derives from legislation that was drawn up when hot blading was the usual method of beak trimming. This is not the case now, as IRBT is the only method used in British hatcheries.

Your own Defra-funded research in 2009 concluded that this does not cause chronic pain or adverse nerve function. I am not aware of any other research since then that contradicts this.

I am, however, aware that you, like us at *Poultry World*, have seen IRBT in operation. Indeed, we feature it in our July issue. It is a modern, clean and effective method that achieves results, without causing undue stress to the chick. It is in no way a "mutilation" as the legislation suggests.

Some in the industry have called for a definitive answer now, to allow IRBT to continue – a call *Poultry World* supports. But I anticipate you will not be giving any such indication until the Bristol University trials are complete and the formal review has been held.

If you are still minister by that time, then we would urge you to proceed with the utmost caution before imposing any rule change that would make the welfare outcome significantly worse.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Clarke, Editor, *Poultry World*

From David Spackman

BEAK TRIMMING

Last month, I asked members to write to their MPs, or to George Eustice at Defra, asking that the proposed ban on beak trimming, to come in on 1st January, 2016, be postponed or dropped.

There is certainly no suggestion in France, Italy or Spain that they propose to ask for a similar ban for their producers, so yet again, the UK would be disadvantaged.

I wrote to George Eustice and have had a fairly prompt reply. Both letters follow:-

9th June, 2014

Dear Mr Eustice,

Defra Beak-Trimming Review

The Executive Committee of the UK Egg Producers Association, together with its members, are concerned that Defra, on the face of it, seems to still be inclined to pass legislation banning beak-trimming in chickens from 1st January, 2016.

Our members, who represent over 5% of the national egg laying stock, are concerned at the interim findings of the Defra-sponsored Pilot Study, being run by Bristol University.

It is the opinion of our members that, currently, there is no alternative to well carried out beak-trimming, to prevent severe injurious pecking in many laying flocks, especially on free-range sites. This seems to be borne out by some of the results from the Pilot Study.

Whilst pecking can occur spontaneously in any sized flock, the unacceptable levels of injurious pecking, including cannibalism, were found in two of the only three commercially-sized flocks in the Pilot Study.

This represents 66% of this group and, additionally, represents 10% of all twenty flocks in the Pilot Study.

Since experience is showing that the future of free-range flocks in the UK is towards larger sizes, usually 16,000 and above, the findings point to a potentially serious financial and welfare consequence if beak-trimming is banned.

Animal welfare activists will point to the formation of neuromas, with accompanying pain, as reason to go through with the ban.

However, such findings refer to previous, hot-blade treatment on older birds and in no way refers to the current, infra-red method, carried out at day-old at the hatchery.

This method has received the approval of the RSPCA and, in work carried out in 2009 by Glasgow University, proved to be painless and non-neuroma forming.

Our members believe that, until such time as genetic involvement produces a bird less naturally inclined to indulge in injurious pecking, a process which could take ten or more years, the infra-red beak-trimming method, carried out in the most humane and welfare-friendly manner, to maintain the optimum conditions for our laying flocks, should be continued.

On behalf of the UK Egg Producers Association, I am, therefore, formally requesting the government to further postpone any decision on banning beak-trimming in the UK.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

David Spackman, NDP, BVSc, MRCVS, (Secretary, UK Egg Producers Association Ltd)

-----ENDS-----

REPLY FROM GEORGE EUSTICE:-

Dear Mr Spackman,

Thank you for your letter of 9 June on behalf of the Executive Committee and Members of the UK Egg Producers Association about beak trimming.

We are working with the Beak Trimming Action Group, which includes representatives from industry, welfare groups and scientists, to find ways to manage flocks of birds without the need to beak trim. As part of this process, Defra is currently funding a peer reviewed research study to assess the effectiveness of management strategies in reducing injurious pecking in non-beak trimmed laying hens.

I can assure you that we continue to listen to all parties, including the egg industry, and understand the concerns on this issue. We will consider all available advice and evidence, along with the outcome of the research study, in the review we are conducting in 2015.

George Eustice, MP.

-----ENDS-----

Comment from David Spackman

Scotland, and I suspect Wales, will make their own decisions on any banning and it would be ludicrous if beak trimming carried on there after 2016, but was banned in England and N. Ireland.

And would there be derogations if day-old chicks were imported from the Continent, already beak trimmed, if we had a ban, or would they be banned from entering

Why did the hen cross the playground?

To get to the other---- slide!

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