

McDonald's under pressure to commit to cruelty-free eggs

A petition against the eggs used in McDonalds meals in SA has been signed by 16,756 supporters so far.



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Yolanda Guse of Cape Town started the campaign on change.org, demanding that McDonalds "stop the suffering of hens and commit to cage-free eggs".

Beauty without Cruelty SA, United Front 4 Animals (UFA), Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI) and Compassion in World Farming are supporting the campaign.

"Battery cage farms are a living hell for the innocent hens who lay eggs for McDonald's SA," Guse said.

"A battery cage is a wire box, the size of an A4 (piece of) paper, where hens spend their lives laying egg after egg for human consumption. They will most (likely) never see the sunlight or take a breath of fresh air. Extensive research shows that (battery-bred) hens are frustrated and suffer psychological stress. They also suffer from physical harm, including bone weakness and breakage, feather loss and diseases. To make matters even worse, standard factory-farm practices are inflicted upon them — slicing off parts of their beaks without painkillers and manipulating their laying cycles by starving them."

Supporters of the campaign who signed the petition endorsed the attitude that humane standards should be applied to food

production.

Elodi Jansen from Bloemfontein said: "Cruelty to animals for human consumption is simply inhumane and selfish."

"I'm signing this petition to stop a brand that inflicts such cruelty upon our animals just to maximise company profits," Jenny Ruiters from Johannesburg said.

In September 2015, McDonald's publicly committed to phasing out battery cages from their supply chain in Canada and the US, albeit over 10 years.

McDonalds SA could not immediately be reached for comment. On its website, it answered a range of questions about other issues with the tagline, "We've heard just about every rumour out there and so have you. So, we're taking you behind the scenes to see exactly where your McDonald's comes from and how it's made."

A statement shared by the animal rights groups attributed to the company states: "McDonald's SA takes note of the moves made by their USA and Canadian counterparts, and though we are exploring the viability of expanding McDonald's cage-free policy to SA, we cannot, at this stage, make a similar commitment as the one made by McDonald's USA and McDonald's Canada."

Guse said the company and the farmers it sourced its eggs from should commit to changing their methods of production.

"Intensive confinement is a horrid reality that our farm animals face on a daily basis — 95% of all egg-laying hens in SA are kept in battery cages.... Please ... let McDonald's know that the humane treatment of egg-laying hens is important to South Africans, and that McDonald's should adopt a cage-free policy for its supply chain within SA.

"Get McDonald's egg-laying hens out of cruel battery-cages, so we can enjoy Egg McMuffins guilt-free."

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Source: Business Day

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