

## **Ex-workers allege animal cruelty and worker mistreatment at Josh's Rainbow Eggs**

- **Farm Transparency Project has published allegations of starvation, mistreatment and forced moulting from ex-workers at major free-range egg producer, Josh's Rainbow Eggs.**
- **Two ex-workers claim that the farm made them clean machinery with toothbrushes and treated workers as 'expendable.'**
- **Workers also claim that the farm uses starvation to force moulting in egg-laying hens.**



*Photos of dead hens at Josh's Rainbow Eggs. Photo: provided by ex-worker.*

Animal advocacy group Farm Transparency Project (FTP) has published two [statements](#) from ex-workers at so-called 'ethical egg' producer [Josh's Rainbow Eggs](#), which is sold in major supermarkets around Victoria. The ex-workers claim that the farm utilises the controversial practice of starving chickens to force moulting. They also make claims that they were subjected to demeaning and potentially illegal treatment and working conditions.

Both workers have chosen to remain anonymous to protect themselves from retribution from the farm. Their stories have been verified by FTP.

In one statement, an ex-worker reported witnessing animal cruelty and being forced to endure demeaning working conditions, including using a toothbrush to clean floors.

*Extracts from ex-worker's statement:*

"[A manager] admitted that the farm practiced "forced molting (sic)...". A colleague of mine received the same information from her. Shortly after these revelations, workers were suddenly prohibited from entering the sheds, with an unconvincing explanation."

"Deaths among the flock occurred almost daily, and the way the birds were handled was extremely disrespectful. On several occasions I personally witnessed the manager kicking or shoving hens out of her way in order to work faster."

"After hours of cleaning, the owner's son, Josh, would deliberately blow dirt back onto the equipment with an air compressor, forcing us to start over from the beginning. We were also required to scrub the entire shed floor with toothbrushes - an unreasonable and demeaning task clearly designed to exert pressure and assert control."

Induced or forced moulting is not considered best industry practice and is not accepted on RSPCA farms.

In another statement, an ex-worker describes workers being "treated more like machines than human beings."

"We performed prolonged, fast-paced labour under the threat that if we didn't work fast enough, we could be let go; we would work frantically, skipping bathroom and water breaks, pushing through injuries, dehydration, emotional and physical exhaustion, all to try and meet rigid deadlines and constant arbitrary changes to process. Management created a culture of fear and surveillance, and made it very clear that we were valued

or not according to our 'numbers' (rigorously collated data on how fast we worked)."

This worker also recalls being told that the farm was "subjecting their hens to 'forced molts (sic)', a practice involving partially or completely reducing hens' food and water intake for consecutive days or weeks so that they lose all their feathers, and drop a significant proportion of their body weight, to 're-invigorate' egg-laying."

The ex-worker says that, after this admission was made, it was quickly revoked by the staff member.

Footage taken by anonymous investigators shows images of dead hens, some which seem to have been trampled on. Images of dead hens were also captured by one of the ex-workers and provided to FTP.

FTP director Harley McDonald-Eckersall says that they have reported Josh's Rainbow Eggs to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) for false and misleading claims after receiving these statements.

"Josh's Rainbow Eggs proudly labels their eggs as 'ethical,' and markets themselves as a company that takes animal welfare seriously. However, behind the scenes they are exploiting humans and chickens, all in the name of profit. After speaking to the brave ex-workers who shared their stories with us, and viewing the footage captured by anonymous investigators who independently documented the conditions on the farm, we plan to do whatever it takes to share the truth behind the marketing."

"The Australian egg industry is lying to consumers. It's hiding the suffering of millions of hens behind buzzwords such as 'ethical' and 'natural.' Consumers deserve to know the truth about where their food is coming from, and these producers should be held to account for their misleading and deceptive conduct, as well as for their abuses towards the animals in their care."

FTP has released footage from Josh's Rainbow Eggs as part of a [larger campaign](#) revealing conditions across 7 free-range and cage-free egg farms across Victoria.

#### **Facilities related to this media release:**

[Josh's Rainbow Eggs, Monegeetta VIC](#)  
[Farm Pride Bears Lagoon - Pullet raising, Bears Lagoon VIC](#)  
[Farm Pride Bears Lagoon - Site 1, Bears Lagoon VIC](#)  
[Farm Pride Bears Lagoon - Site 2, Bears Lagoon VIC](#)  
[Valley Park Seymour Farm 1 \(Fyfe Family Eggs\), Seymour VIC](#)  
[Valley Park Seymour Farm 2 \(Fyfe Family Eggs\), Seymour VIC](#)  
[Valley Park Seymour Farm 3 \(Fyfe Family Eggs\), Seymour VIC](#)  
[Barn-laid egg farm, Teesdale VIC](#)  
[Free-range egg farm \(Peter & Cheryl King\), Lethbridge VIC](#)  
[South Gippsland Eggs, Devon Meadows VIC](#)  
[Bridgewater Poultry \(Egg\) Farm, Bridgewater VIC](#)

#### **Campaigns related to this media release:**

[Eggs Uncaged](#)  
[Eggs Exposed](#)

*[Farm Transparency Project \(FTP\)](#) is a non-profit animal protection charity, dedicated to ending the abuse and exploitation of animals in farms, slaughterhouses and other commercial settings. Through comprehensive investigations, documentary films, and the creation of innovative tools and resources, FTP seeks to force industry transparency and educate consumers by shining a light on the brutal reality endured by animals in the name of profit.*