

# KNOW YOUR FOOD



Every day thousands of battery farmed chickens which have been plucked and frozen to beyond recognition are bought and sold without a thought. Their eggs are stamped in red ink and packaged in cheap, flimsy, plastic egg boxes. They are consumed by people ignorant of the suffering these chickens have gone through to get this

far. Almost as soon as they hatch the fluffy yellow chicks are sexed. This process entails sorting through them to determine whether they are male or female. If they are male these baby birds are gassed being of no use to the egg laying industry or even the meat industry.

Tens of thousands of would-be-cockerels are killed every year. The females however are carted off to have their beaks trimmed by infrared lasers, although this is a big improvement from the hot blades they used to use it is still unnecessarily painful. After this they are brought to the Battery farm where as many of the chickens as possible are shoved into the cage the size of an A4 piece of paper. Every day these poor creatures must lay their eggs in these horrific conditions. As they have been bred to produce eggs much faster, the chickens lay up to 320 eggs in their pitiful lifespan of 72 weeks as opposed to the ordinary hen who lays a fraction of the eggs in a lifespan of up to 4 years. After the hen reaches the end of its egg laying days it is shipped off to be turned into animal feed or human food or sometimes they are simply discarded. Not exactly a pleasant retirement for those hardworking birds. So next time you go shopping in the food isle and your hand reaches for the cheapest chicken or eggs 'think twice', there are alternatives after all such as free range or organic. The chickens will have had the chance to feel grass beneath their feet and indulge in habits such as grooming or nest making, habits which in a battery farm have been made impossible to do. Each mouthful will be guilt free.

*By Maisie Weston Lake*

## SOURCES

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