

## WHAT'S WRONG

### WITH BROILER CHICKENS?

- 488 million baby chickens are slaughtered annually in Australia. They still chirp and have soft feathers but they have the body of an adult bird. They are broiler (or meat) chickens - slaughtered at just 6 weeks (a chicken's natural lifespan is around 7 years).
- Broiler chickens are bred to grow nearly 3 times quicker than nature intended. The chicken's body is put under enormous pressure, and they struggle to survive heart and skeletal conditions.
- The Australian Code of Practice for the welfare of broiler chickens deems it acceptable for 20 birds to be kept per square metre and for most birds to live in huge sheds containing thousands of birds. The primary purpose of the Code is to provide for only the absolute minimal standards of care and to give industry operators exemptions from being prosecuted under state animal laws.
- As the birds get bigger many suffer bone fractures and lameness, and struggle to walk. Those who cannot stand just lie in the damp ammonia-soaked filth of litter and faeces, and if there long enough, develop breast blisters.
- A typical intensive broiler facility may house 300,000 birds with approx 40,000 to 60,000 birds per shed.
- Overcrowding is a major problem, and as the chicken nears the target weight of 2kg, it has the equivalent of 500cm<sup>2</sup> of space, which is less than an A4 sheet of paper.
- Upon reaching the target weight, their lives end in more pain and horror. The birds will be denied food for 8 to 12 hours, and water for 1 hour. 'Catchers' then round up 300-500 birds per hour and quickly load them onto trucks bound for the abattoir.
- In the early 1950s only 3 million broiler chickens were raised commercially each year. Now over 488 million are killed annually.

**Each year in Australia it is estimated that almost 1 million chickens die during transport to the abattoir. Of those that survive, some 14 million may have fractures (3%) and over 20 million chickens (4.5%) may have dislocated hips when they arrive for slaughter.**

**As with all animals intensively raised in Australia, their first sight of the outside world is on their way to be slaughtered.**

