

**RSPCA Laying Hen Standards Technical Advisory Group meeting  
on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016**

**Meeting Summary Notes**

**Beak trimming and perch proposals**

The group discussed proposed amendments relating to beak trimming and perch provision for inclusion in the next revision of the standards due to be published in 2016. The beak trimming proposals included a requirement for an Injurious Pecking Action Plan (IPAP) inline with the Beak Trimming Action Groups (BTAG) recommendations, and the discussions around the perch provision proposals included the feasibility of providing more perching space. These would be taken forwards for further consideration.

**Proposed changes to standards/information boxes**

The group considered proposed changes to the RSPCA welfare standards for laying hens for possible inclusion in the next revision of the standards. The proposals related to many areas of the standards including floor and litter, lighting, multi-tier systems, the range, environmental enrichment, management, health, food and water, welfare outcome assessment, transport and slaughter/killing. These would be taken forwards for further consideration.

**New multi-tier systems**

The group discussed new designs of multi-tier systems, including the benefits and issues associated with three tier systems. New multi-tier systems are currently being considered by the RSPCA. Anyone considering installing a system not already covered by the standards should contact the RSPCA's Farm Animals Department first.

**Oversupply of pullets**

The RSPCA is aware of issues relating to the oversupply of pullets and subsequently potential issues with overstocking on laying hen units. Overstocking beyond the permitted stocking density would be a non-compliance with the standards and a legal issue.

**Sharing ranges**

The group discussed separate flocks sharing ranges including the issue of migration of birds between houses. The RSPCA welfare standards require separate flocks to have separate ranges.