



AVE: 9184.84 (ZAR)

Protesters insist on cage-free chicken eggs

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AN ONLINE petition to get McDonald's South Africa's to source eggs from cage-free hens in South Africa, is gaining momentum with support from four local animal protection groups and thousands of others.

More than 8000 people have signed the petition within a week.

McDonald's internationally committed to phasing out battery cages (a battery cage is a wire box, the size of A4 paper, where hens spend their lives laying egg after egg for human consumption) from their supply chain in Canada and the US within 10 years, last year.

This followed previous animal welfare commitments in Europe, North America and South America. However, the company did not extend the commitment to South Africa.

Animal protection groups Beauty without Cruelty SA, United Front 4 Animals and South African Faith Communities' Environment Institute wrote to the CEO of McDonald's South Africa, Greg Solomon, and other top officials in February about the company's use of caged eggs.

Animal Voice, the official South African representative of Compassion in World Farming has also added its voice to this campaign.

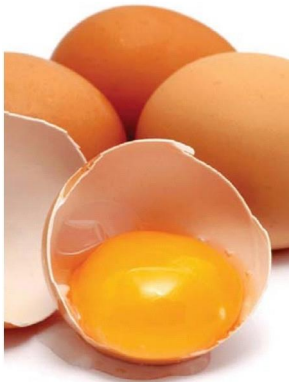
"We are exploring the viability of expanding McDonald's cage-free policy to South Africa and we will complete our investigation within a year," Tracy Miller, the company's South African spokesperson, said.

The franchise said it sourced its farm fresh eggs directly from its own farms and suppliers, who met McDonald's stringent quality and food safety standards.

The petition states that the caged hens have no space to do any ordinary chicken activities, such as spreading their wings, nesting, walking or perching.

"They will almost never see the sunlight or take a breath of fresh air. Extensive research shows that the hens are frustrated and suffer psychological stress. They also suffer from physical harm, including bone weakness and breakage, feather loss, and diseases," the petition states.

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EGGS OVER EASY: A row has developed about the source of eggs