

Dairy Farm Group egg supplier reported to the Singapore Food Agency following investigation

Video showing potential food safety risks and animal welfare issues that undermine the Singapore Quality Egg Scheme is submitted to the SFA by an intl NGO

SINGAPORE, January 28, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- An international consumer protection organization has filed a complaint with the Singapore Food Agency this week following an investigation into a Singapore farm that produces eggs for Giant and Cold Storage in “battery cage” egg production facilities. The Dairy Farm Group, the Hong Kong-based retail group that owns Giant and Cold Storage, is one of the last multinational food retailers that still accept eggs from suppliers using caged egg production.

The Singapore Quality Egg Scheme, managed by the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) under the SFA, was introduced in 1999 to encourage domestic production to international standards. In 2019 approximately 528 million hen eggs were laid in Singapore, the highest production volume for the past ten years. Under SQES, local poultry layer farms are required to ensure that their facilities are hygienic and quality control monitoring systems are well maintained at all times. The eggs produced undergo monthly inspection and freshness tests by AVA to verify their quality. The date of production and farm code is also stamped on every egg to ensure traceability.

The investigation [video](#) footage, taken at Chews Agriculture Pte. Ltd in Singapore was submitted to the Singapore Food Agency in a formal complaint that called attention to potential food safety risks and animal welfare problems at the facility. The footage shows chickens packed in small cages, uniformed workers grabbing birds by the neck, and cages coated with dirt. The video was released by Equitas, an international consumer protection organization based in the UK and operating across Asia.

“Equitas is committed to highlighting the risks of caged egg production for consumers as well as animals, said Equitas spokesperson Bonnie Tang. “The Dairy Farm Group is selling eggs laid under conditions which we believe violate the Singapore Quality Egg Scheme. It’s time for Dairy Farm to catch up with international retailers and set an earlier timeline for ending the sale of all eggs from caged hens.”

The Dairy Farm Group, a subsidiary of the Jardine Mattheson Group, is listed on the Hong Kong

stock exchange and operates the Giant and Cold Storage brands. Cold Storage is the island's oldest established supermarket operator with over 100 years of experience in Singapore and operates 35 outlets. While most other multinational food retailers operating in Asia have set a timeline for shifting to sell only “cage-free” eggs, including Tesco, Costco, METRO, Marks&Spencer, ALDI, Auchan and Carrefour, Dairy Farm Group has not done so. In Singapore, Dairy Farm announced it would make its own-brand eggs cage-free at Cold Storage outlets by 2028, though the move will cover only a small percentage of the company's total egg use in the country.

Research by the European Food Safety Authority and others has found that caged egg farms are up to 25 times more likely to be contaminated with key strains of salmonella compared to “cage-free” egg farms. According to the Singapore Ministry of Health, the incidence rate of notified Salmonella infections increased from 4.7 per 100,000 population in 2003 to 35.9 per 100,000 population in 2015 and appears to be trending upwards. In December 2020, three children aged six and under were hospitalized due to cases at a Singapore pre-school.

Over fifty food companies including Subway, Burger King, Nestle, and Unilever have committed to using only cage-free eggs in Singapore within the next several years. Battery cage egg production has been banned throughout the European Union as well as in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Canada, India, and elsewhere, with many countries banning caged egg production entirely.

The complaint filed with the SFA this week follows investigations into Dairy Farm Group egg suppliers in other regions. News outlets in Hong Kong including [HK01](#), RTHK, and Apple Daily broke an investigation last June into the company's suppliers in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In March of last year, a supplier to Giant and Cold Storage grocery stores in Malaysia was [cited by the Malaysian Department of Veterinary Services](#) for food safety and animal welfare violations.

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