



# Canadian Views Toward Cage-Free Egg Production National Survey – May 2016

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Prepared by:  
**NRG Research Group**

Andrew J. Enns / David Gabor  
aenns@nrgresearchgroup.com  
204.989.8986



Suite 1910-360 Main Street  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3Z3

There is a strong level of support within the Canadian general public for egg production being conducted in a completely cage-free manner. Of the five questions asked in this survey on the topic of cage-free egg production, four of them received 'cage-free' favourable results of over 75%. Specially:

- 76% of Canadians surveyed said *No* it is not acceptable to keep egg-laying hens in cages nearly their entire lives.
- 79% percent of Canadians surveyed said *Yes*, the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC) should recommend that egg producers in Canada use cage-free systems.
- 83% percent of Canadians surveyed said *Yes*, our government should enact laws to ensure the humane treatment of food animals.
- And finally, 81% of Canadians surveyed said *Yes* that they would be willing to pay more for eggs that were produced in a cage-free environment.

A strong majority of Canadians surveyed (61%) were even prepared to cut government-provided taxpayer support to the NFACC should it not recommend egg producers transition to a cage-free environment.

While support for a cage-free egg production environment was generally strong across all population sub-groups, there were a few differences of note:

- Women were significantly more likely to support a cage-free system than men.
- Support appeared to be higher among residents of Atlantic Canada.

A final interesting finding from the survey is that of the individuals who said *Yes* it was acceptable to produce eggs from hens that are kept in cages for almost their entire lives, approximately half of this respondent population answered in a 'cage-free' favourable manner to the remaining questions. This result could be an indication that the belief in the acceptability of caged egg production is not strong.

Mercy For Animals is a not-for-profit organization focused on improving the rules and treatment of Canadian farmed animals. Currently the organization is focused on working with industry stakeholders regarding regulatory changes to improve the manner in which egg-laying hens are treated in Canada.

A total of 1001 interviews were conducted from May 26 to May 31, 2016. The results of this study are accurate +/- 3.10%, 19 times out of 20. The survey was conducted in a regionally representative manner across Canada. Sample for the calling consisted of randomly selected landline telephone records from a Canada-wide database maintained by Canada Survey Sampler. In addition, listed wireless records were included in the sample to improve the overall representativeness of the study. The final survey data was weighted to ensure it accurately reflects the age-gender population distribution of Canada based on the 2011 Census.

The survey questionnaire was collaboratively developed by NRG Research Group and Mercy For Animals staff. The interviews averaged three to four minutes to complete and were conducted by live agent telephone interviewers from NRG's data collection centre located in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

# Sample Characteristics (weighted)

Variable	% of N=1001	Variable	% of N=1001
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Language Preference</b>	
Male	49	English	78
Female	51	French	22
<b>Age</b>		<b>Region</b>	
18-34	28	British Columbia	14
35-54	36	Prairies	16
55+	35	Ontario	38
Refused	1	Quebec	24
		Atlantic	7

## Survey Findings – General Attitudes

# Is It Acceptable to Keep Egg-laying Hens in Cages

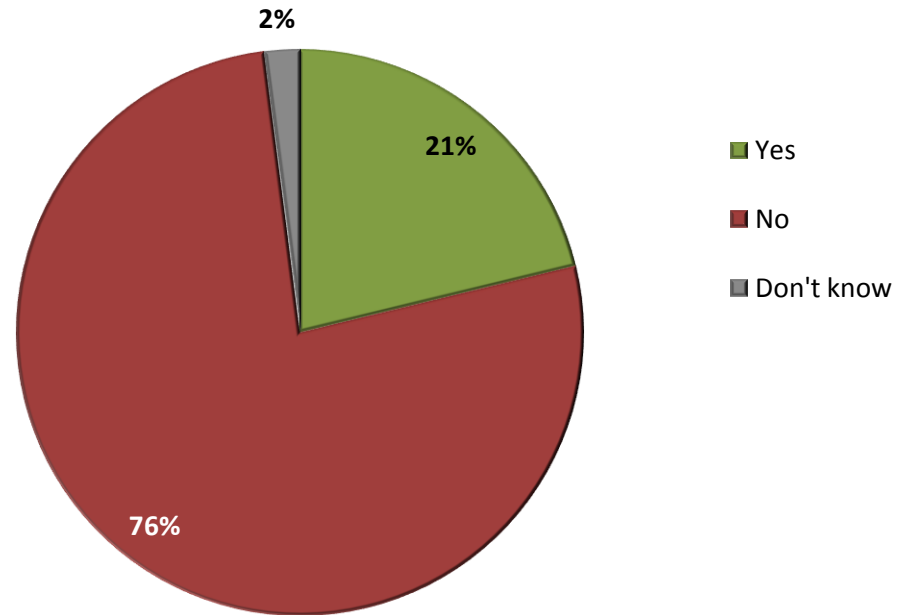
*Q1. Currently most eggs in Canada are produced from hens confined to wire cages. These cages can range in size, but all restrict the birds from being able to engage in natural behaviours. Do you believe that it is acceptable to keep egg-laying hens in cages nearly their entire lives?*

A total of 76% of respondents replied *No* on whether it was acceptable to keep Egg-Laying hens in cages nearly their entire lives.

Female respondents were significantly more likely to say *No* in comparison to male respondents (83% vs. 68%).

Respondents in the Atlantic (84%) and British Columbia (80%) regions had the highest number of respondents out of all regions to respond *No*, with the other regions being in the range of 69%-77%.

Residents in Manitoba/Saskatchewan (29% Yes) and Quebec (25% Yes) were somewhat more accepting of allowing caged-egg production.



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# Should Council Recommend Cage-Free Systems

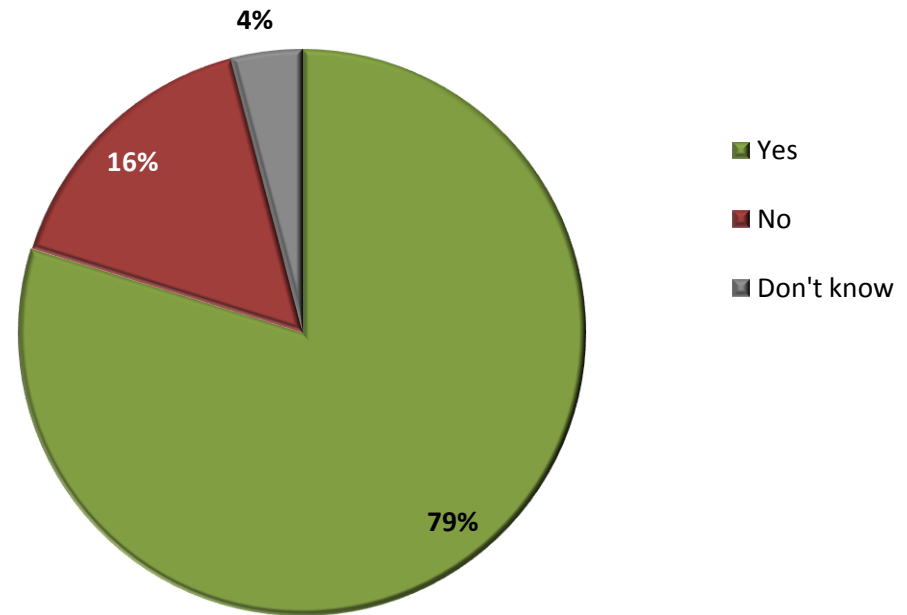
Q2. The National Farm Animal Care Council is a tax-payer funded group that develops codes for the care for animals such as egg-laying hens. Should the Council recommend that egg producers in Canada use cage-free systems?

A total of 79% of respondents replied *Yes* to the Council recommending that egg producers in Canada use cage-free systems.

Female respondents were significantly more likely to say *Yes* in comparison to male respondents (85% vs. 73%).

Those that replied *No* were significantly more likely to be from the western regions of Canada (British Columbia and Prairies) than Quebec (22% vs. 10%).

50% of individuals who said *Yes* it is acceptable to produce eggs in a caged environment also said *Yes* the Council should recommend egg producers use cage-free systems.



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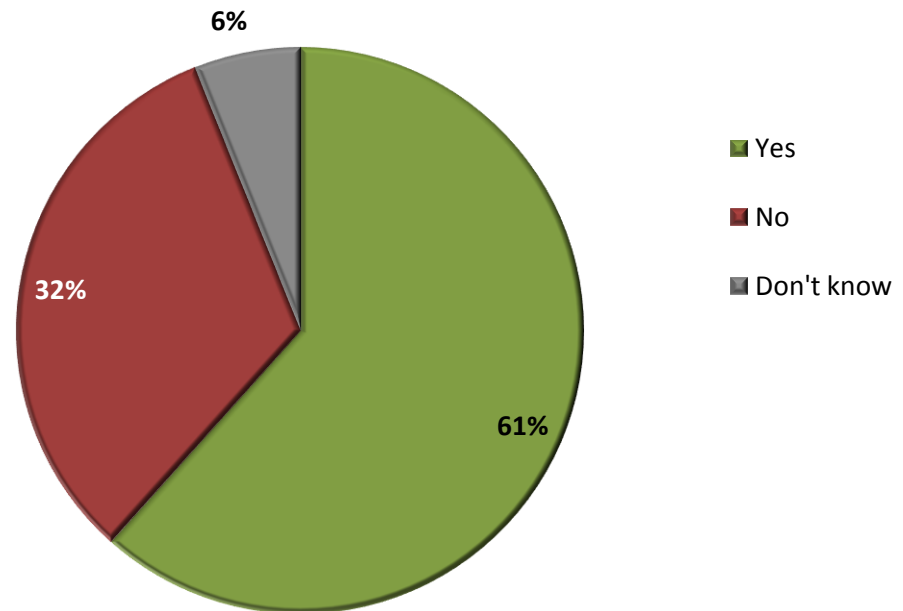
## Cut Tax Payer Support to Council

*Q3. Major companies such as McDonald's, Tim Hortons, Loblaws, Sobeys and WalMart have all pledged to only buy eggs produced in a cage-free environment. The Council, however, has been reluctant to recommend Canada move to a cage-free egg environment. If the Council does not recommend a cage-free system for egg-laying hens, should the government look at cutting its taxpayer support?*

A total of 61% of respondents replied *Yes* to the government's looking at cutting the Council's taxpayer support if they does not recommend a cage-free system for egg-laying hens.

Male respondents were significantly more likely to say *No* in comparison to female respondents (36% vs. 28%).

Respondents in Ontario had a significantly higher number of respondents reply *Yes* compared to Quebec (64% vs. 53%).



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# Enact Laws to Ensure Humane Treatment of Food Animals

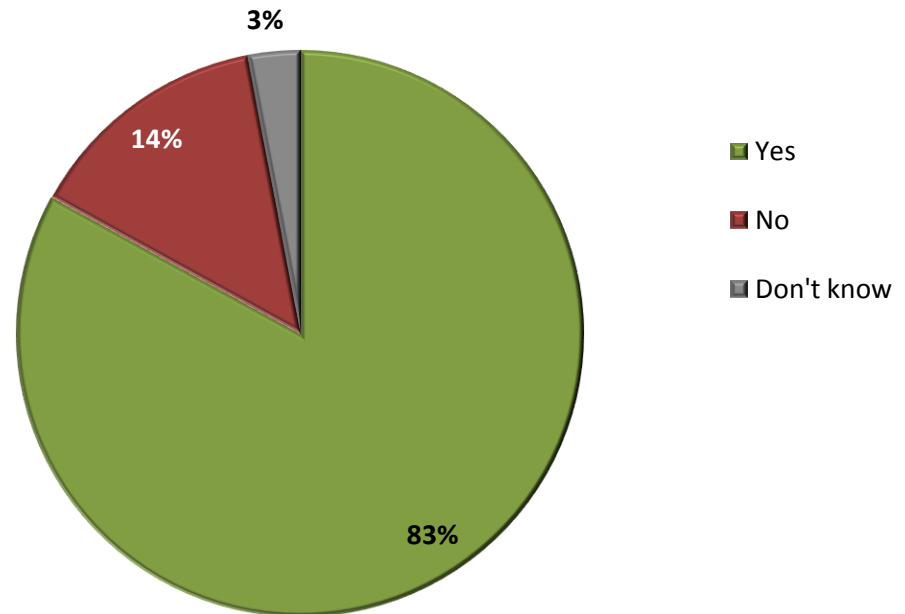
Q4. Do you think that our government should enact laws to ensure the humane treatment of food animals, including ensuring that egg-laying hens are able to live cage-free?

A total of 83% of respondents replied Yes to our government should enact laws to ensure the humane treatment of food animals.

Female respondents were significantly more likely to say Yes in comparison to male respondents (88% vs. 77%).

Respondents in the Atlantic (92%) and Quebec (87%) regions had a significantly higher number of respondents reply Yes compared to Western regions (78%) and Ontario (83%).

51% of individuals who said Yes it is acceptable to produce eggs in a caged environment also said Yes the government should enact laws to ensure the humane treatment of food animals, including ensuring that egg-laying hens are able to live cage-free.



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## Willingness to Pay More for Cage-Free Eggs

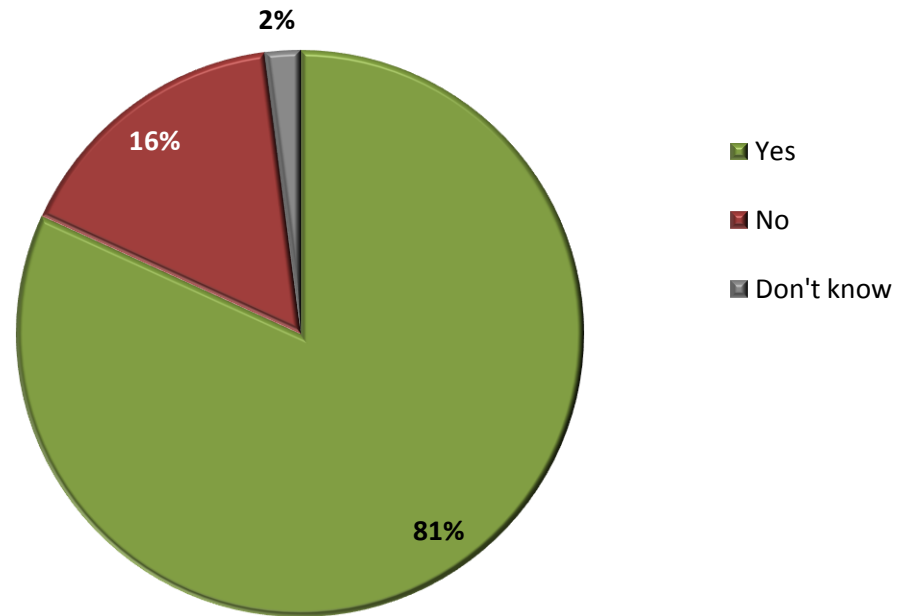
Q5. If moving egg-laying hens to a cage-free environment increases the cost of eggs, do you still think egg-laying hens should be taken out of cages?

A total of 81% of respondents replied *Yes* to egg-laying hens should be taken out of cages, regardless of increase to the cost of eggs.

Female respondents were significantly more likely to say *Yes* in comparison to male respondents (87% vs. 75%).

Support for this statement was approximately 80% across all regions.

46% of individuals who said *Yes* it is acceptable to produce eggs in a caged environment also said *Yes* they would pay more for eggs produced in a cage-free environment.



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End