


1. Translate the text!



## BATTERY FARMING

'What exactly is battery farming?' one might well ask. Battery farming involves the production of eggs at the least possible cost using the least possible space. A chicken battery usually looks like an enormous garden shed with rows and rows of cages, inside which chickens are kept busy eating and laying eggs. However, this view of egg production doesn't actually sit well with most people today, considering all the negative hype attached to it. For some years now, we have been receiving information through the media from environmental and animal rights organisations about how inhumane this system of egg production is. This has led many people to wrongly believe that this technique has been developed only recently.

However, battery farming, which is one aspect of factory farming, has in fact been around for more than seventy years. The research was originally done in America during the 1930s and has been used in Europe since just after the end of World War II.

Health rather than economy was the primary motivation for the development of battery farming in the first place. The idea was to separate the birds from their waste, as this could contaminate the eggs with parasitic diseases. This was why cages with sloping floors were introduced, enabling the egg to roll clear of the chicken waste as soon as the chicken had laid it.

At first, the cages were quite primitive, made of wood and wire. However, they were soon replaced by metal ones, as it was quickly understood that wood became easily infected and was therefore unhygienic. In fact, it wasn't long before the whole system became automated, which required very little labour expenditure and cut down costs even more, making it very popular with poultry farmers.

Geneticists have also been involved in battery farming, doing research and cross-breeding birds in order to improve production. It wasn't until the late sixties that they came up with a bird capable of laying about three hundred eggs a year, each weighing approximately sixty-three grams. This, in combination with the fact that this bird also required the minimal amount of feeding units, made it the ideal producer, and this type of bird has remained the most popular one up till now.

Chickens arrive at battery farms at the age of sixteen weeks. They have their beaks trimmed to prevent injuries to other hens and they stay in their cages for a total of eighteen months, until they are killed for meat. It doesn't make economical sense to keep them any longer, as they produce fewer eggs after that age, and younger replacements can produce far more.

However, battery farming has been outlawed in Europe. Other governments have been keen to follow suit, but they have been more inclined to introduce strict guidelines, while research is carried out to develop more humane methods of egg production. Demand for free-range eggs is steadily increasing, even though the price is higher than for battery hen eggs. Some experts have claimed that it wouldn't be possible to have solely free-range chickens, because there simply isn't enough room, taking into consideration the demand that exists. Besides, research has shown that diseases are more likely to spread with free-range farming, rather than the controlled environment. It seems like cages are here to stay, but some form of regulation is needed to support the chicken's welfare.

2. Write a for and against composition (100-120 words)!

*Social networking is bad for children.*