



Laying Hens Animal Welfare

Introducing Yasuda's contributed article to 2026 New Year issue of Keimeishi Shimbun, the most influential monthly newspaper in the poultry industry in Japan.

Note: The original article in Japanese is attached after this English translation.

Laying hens Animal Welfare from Japan

for 90% of the global population

Happy New Year !

It has been five years since the 6th Secretariat Draft on Animal Welfare (AW) for laying hens was not adopted at the WOA (formerly OIE) General Session in 2021, and three years have passed since Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) issued its AW guidelines (Technical Guidelines on Rearing Management, etc. by Livestock Species).

Although MAFF's AW guidelines have been issued for all livestock species, I believe there is an important difference in how these guidelines are positioned and applied at the farm level between species for which guidelines have been adopted by the WOA General Session — such as broilers, pigs, and cattle— and laying hens, which are the only livestock species for which WOA guidelines have not been adopted.

The Importance of laying hens AW initiative from Japan

With its high egg standards of safety and quality, world-leading farm productivity, one of the highest per-capita egg consumption levels globally, and a domestic production ratio exceeding 90%, Japan can truly be described as “Egg Kingdom ” unmatched in the world.

The gap created by the non-adoption of laying hens animal welfare standards at the WOAHP is highly unlikely to be closed in the future, and at present there are no international standards for laying hens AW.

Under these circumstances, amid consumer backlash led by animal welfare organizations against egg production putting extremely crowded birds in cages in EU especially in Germany, the Green Party was at the German government position and Germany served as the EU presidency in 1999. At that time, the EU directive equating AW with Floor systems, “AW = Floor systems” was politically enacted without sufficient discussion with egg producers and consumers. In contrast to AW approaches of the EU and other Western countries, which represent around 10% of the world’s population, I believe there is great significance in Japan—widely recognized as a world-leading “Egg Kingdom”—taking the initiative to build and promote a laying hens AW model that achieves a win-win outcome for consumers and egg producers and can be adopted by the 90% of the world’s population.

Development of Japan AW standards

Following the issuance of MAFF’s rearing guidelines in 2023, facility development for both cage and floor systems has been steadily progressing. Based on consumer purchasing behavior that takes price into consideration, cage systems are increasingly positioned as the core infrastructure of egg production. Within the broader trend toward agricultural market liberalization, this development can be regarded as being in a sound and healthy direction.

On the other hand, AW is a global trend, and I believe it is necessary to develop AW standards for cage systems that can gain consumer understanding through discussions that fully take into account on-site production realities faced by egg producers.

With regard to husbandry management practices such as beak trimming and induced molting, egg producers’ views are generally aligned with the content of the MAFF rearing guidelines issued in 2023. Therefore, I believe that the area requiring further development lies primarily

in production facilities.

The key points requiring improvement can be summarized as the following two items.

(1) Space per hen — a minimum area that can be understood and accepted by consumers

I consider 430 cm² per bird, as indicated in the guidelines of the Japan Livestock Technology Association, to be an appropriate benchmark.

This figure has also been scientifically validated through three years of space and stress testing conducted from 2014 involving two flocks by Gifu University and Hytem, demonstrating its effectiveness.

In South Korea, a government-led mandate has set a minimum of 750 cm² or more, forcing producers to make substantial additional investments in facilities. It is therefore necessary to utilize scientifically validated data in order to avoid such situations.

(2) Ancillary facilities stipulated in Article 4-4 of the MAFF rearing guidelines

The guidelines list scratch areas, pecking litter, nesting areas, and perches as items “recommended for future implementation.” While these facilities are necessary for floor systems, they are unnecessary for cage systems, as they are prone to contamination from manure and result in inefficient use of space.

For Japan’s AW standards to be communicated internationally as AW standards applicable to countries representing 90% of the world’s population, the ancillary facilities stipulated in Section 4-4 should be explicitly defined as “ancillary facilities for floor systems.”

Regarding point (1), I hope for discussions led primarily by egg producers, while for point (2), I expect initiatives from egg producers to MAFF. Through these efforts, we hope that Japan, as the world-leading “Egg Kingdom,” will establish its AW standards for laying hens as a model adopted by countries representing 90% of the world’s population.



あけましておめでどう
ごいませ。

重要な違いがあると考え
ます。

国際獣疫事務局(WOAH、旧OIE)の2021年の総会で、採卵鶏

日本発信 AWの必要性

のアニマルウェルフェア(AW)第6次事務局案

安全・安心の高い品質、

が不採択になって5年、

世界最高水準の生産性、

農林水産省のAW指針

世界トップレベルの1人

(畜種)ごとの飼養管理等

量、90数%の

に関する技術的な指針)

の高い国産

が通達されて、3年が経

比率など、

過しました。

日本は世界

農水省のAW指針は、

に冠たる

すべての畜種について発

「たまたま王

信されていますが、WO

国」です。

AH総会で指針案が採択

WOAH総会で採卵鶏

されたフレイター、豚、

AW基準が不採択になっ

牛などと、WOAH総会

た溝が今後、埋まってい

で指針案が採択されてい

く可能性はほとんどな

ない唯一の畜種、採卵鶏

く、採卵鶏AWの国際基

では、農水省AW指針の

準は現在、不在の状態

飼育現場での位置付けに

す。

このような状況の中、し、世界人口の9割に定 飼いの設備比率は、消費 産者の意見は、令和5年 2群にわたる生活スパーリ木が記載されていま 極度のケージ密飼いに対 着する消費者・生産者が 者の価格を考慮した購買 の農水省の指針で概ね一 スとストレス試験でも実 する動物愛護団体を中心 WIN・WINの関係を 傾向から、ケージが鶏卵 致していると思われ、整 証されています。 いには必要であつても、 とした消費者の反発の中 築ける採卵鶏AWを、世 生産の基幹設備として進 備が必要なのは施設につ 韓国では政府主導で、 ケージには鶏糞などによ で、グリーンパーティー 界に冠たる「たまたま王 国」みつつあり、農産物自由 いてであると考えます。 750平方センチ以上のの る汚れの原因やスペース 化の流れの中、健全な方 整備が必要なポイント 基準が定められ、生産者 の無駄となり不要です。 与党であり、また同国が ていく意義は大きいと思 向にあると思います。 は次の2点と見ます。 が設備投資増に追い込ま 科学的な実 口9割の諸国のAWとし 証データを て発信されていくため 活用し、こに、第4-4項は「平飼 のような事 の付帯設備」と明記さ 態を避ける れるべきです。

日本発信世界人口9割の採卵鶏AW



株式会社ハイテム 代表取締役社長 安田 勝彦

999年、生産者・消費

日本発信 AWの整備

者との十分な議論を経な いまま政治的に発令され たEU指令による「AW 2023(令和5)年 現場を踏まえた議論を通 示されていた430平方 針」第4-4の付帯設備 世界人口9割の採卵鶏A 11平飼い」との概念に対 の農水省指針通達もあ して整備していく必要が 楚びが自安と考えます。 の項には、「将来的な実 Wとして定着していくこ し、また世界人口に占め り、ケージおよび平飼い あると考えます。ピーク この数字の妥当性は、 施が推奨される事項」とを願っています。(岐阜県各務原市テク する割合が1割にとどまる による設備整備が進みつ トリミングや誘導換羽な 岐阜大学とハイテムとの して砂浴び、ついばみ、 (岐阜県各務原市テク する割合が1割にとどまる による設備整備が進みつ トリミングや誘導換羽な 岐阜大学とハイテムとの して砂浴び、ついばみ、 (岐阜県各務原市テク

EUほか欧米のAWに対 あります。ケージと平 どの飼養管理に関する生 2014年から3年間、 営巣のエリアおよびま プラザ2-10)

潮流であり、ケージ飼育 1ス11消費者にも理解が 指針第4-4項付帯設備 水省に向けての発信を期 に消費者の理解が得られ 得られる一定の広さ 同省「採卵鶏の飼養管 待し、世界に冠たる「た るAWを、生産者の生産 畜産技術協会の指針で 理に関する技術的な指 ま「王国」日本のAWが、