

Freeranger 1 hA Demo Paddock

At Freeranger Eggs, we have set up a one hectare paddock with a couple of mobile sheds to show what the set up looks like.

We have 300 Isa Browns hens in the paddock, which we believe is a sustainable number. Our sheds are moved regularly.

Looking at the site, visitors can make up their own minds about the potential consequences for sustainable land use if the Australian Egg Corporation had succeeded with its push to allow 20,000 hens per hectare to be classified as free range. The Coles standard of 10,000 hens per hectare is just as absurd.

Our farm is in South Gippsland. We have reasonably assured rainfall and excellent pasture – if there is anywhere in Australia where that stocking density could be sustained, it is here.

But if we put 10,000 hens in that paddock it would either a dustbowl or a muddy quagmire within a few days – depending on the season.

The big boy's high density propositions only work if the hens never go outside. **So how can that be called free range?**