

## Chickens don't want to be 'free range,' they prefer being indoors, Australian government veterinarians says

Do chickens really like being free-range? It seems like a dumb question. Who wouldn't like a big green paddock full of grass to peck and dust to bathe in?

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"Chickens are related to forest-dwelling birds. They don't like open spaces," says Dr Charles Milne, who on [May 17] retired as [Victoria, Australia's] chief vet. "Free-range can deliver huge welfare problems. Instinctively as people, we anthropomorphize animals and think they must prefer free-range because we would."

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There is plenty of evidence, he says, that indicates chickens do not like being in an open paddock at all. In fact, they may be most comfortable inside.

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[Australia's [Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals](#)] endorses both cage-free barn systems and free-range (it, of course, says battery cages are "horrible"). "We don't say free-range is better," says Dr Kate Hartcher, the society's scientific officer for farm animals. "They can be perfectly healthy and have good welfare in an indoor system."

**Read full, original article:** [Do chickens actually like being free-range?](#)