

EMU FARMING

Emus are native to Australia and play an important ecological role within the ecosystem as seed dispersers. Sadly, emus are farmed across Australia for their oil, skin, eggs and feathers.

Wild living emus face increasing threats from climate change and diminishing habitats. At any time, 6,000 emus are being bred for their slaughter across the country.

INDUSTRY STANDARD MUTILATIONS

The amputation of an emu's toe is a legal, standard industry practice across the farming of ratites. This involves the removal of the end of day-old emus toes to "decrease skin injury caused by claws and to reduce stereotypic aggression". These injuries will ultimately damage the "final product", namely their skins, thereby making them less profitable for producers. Such amputations are also carried out because it minimises the risk of injuries to handlers during transport to slaughter.

HOUSING AND CONFINEMENT

Despite their incredible natural role as seed dispersers, emus are kept in large, often barren, fenced off paddocks.

Australian Codes of Practice allow for emus to be raised in intensive, semi-intensive and free-ranging conditions. Intensive operations, commonly known as factory farming, is often a more desirable option for producers as more product (skins, oil, eggs and meat) can be produced on a smaller area of land.

Emus raised under factory farm conditions are known to suffer from panting, bodily swelling, coughing and lameness. Ammonia and urine commonly build up in housing facilities, which can lead to respiratory issues and burning of the eyes and nostrils.

SLAUGHTER

Slaughter methods have been found to cause significant stress and stunning methods are known to often fail. This can result in either multiple attempts at stunning, causing further pain and suffering to the animal, or leaving them to be slaughtered while they are still conscious and sensible to pain.

SOLUTIONS ARE AVAILABLE

PLANT-BASED ALTERNATIVES TO EMU OIL

Emu oil is used in both cosmetics and therapeutic treatments, including soaps, hair products, and deodorants. It is also consumed to treat joint and muscle pain, inflammatory bowel disease, skin conditions and arthritis. A plant-based alternative to emu oil has been developed that can be used in the same way as emu oil.

Emu oil gets its anti-inflammatory properties due to being high in fatty acids content and omegas. Both of these can be derived from plant-based alternatives including hemp seed oil, hemp seed oil capsules, or plant-based omega tablets.

A JUST TRANSITION OUT OF EMU FARMING

The emu farming industry is relatively small in Australia, with only a handful of farms still in operation. Research indicates this industry has been a difficult one for most producers, struggling to make ends meet, or to establish the markets needed for a profitable business. Funding is needed to support these producers in a transition away from the farming of native wildlife to more sustainable and wildlife friendly employment alternatives.

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