MORRISONS EMPLOYEE SAYS HE WAS FIRED FOR STANDING UP FOR SUFFERING CHICKENS

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For immediate release

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A Morrisons employee has been fired after protesting the supermarket's use of low-welfare, rapid-growing 'FrankenChickens'.

Doug Maw is organising another protest in Morrisons uniform against the use of these unnatural breeds of chicken in Bognor Regis, despite losing his job. His Halloween-themed protest will take place at the Bedford Street Morrisons in Bognor Regis at 5pm on Saturday 30th October.

Maw said: *"I believe Morrisons has fired me because I could not stay silent about animal abuse. I had hoped that my employers would respect my principles but instead they have terminated my job, ignored my pleas, and left these chickens to suffer in silence."*

Cordelia Britton, Head of Campaigns at The Humane League UK, said: *"It is disappointing to see that Morissons do not respect the right of their employees to protest, or to stick up for what is right. Doug was bound by his conscience to object to Morissons' cruel use of these chickens, and he has been punished for that choice."*

Maw first took part in the campaign by signing a petition and sharing a link in Morrisons' internal Facebook group. He was called into a meeting and told the post was inappropriate, after which he organised a protest in uniform, as reported by The Independent, The Mirror and Sky News.

After being subjected to several disciplinary hearings throughout the summer and autumn, one of which lasted five and a half hours, Maw was finally fired on October 22nd.

Morrisons justified dismissing Maw on three grounds:

- That his communication with the press broke confidentiality with Morrisons, as Doug did not obtain written permission from the company to do this.
- That Maw's protest was intentionally harmful to the interests of the company and misrepresented the Morrisons brand.
- That he breached the Respect in the Workplace Policy and Social Media Policy.

Maw says he will be appealing the decision and going to an employment tribunal.

Over Halloween protestors will bring placards and pumpkins carved with chickens, as well as sharing video footage of the desperate birds at demonstrations at Morrisons stores across the country.

The protests are in support of the Morrisons Misery campaign, coordinated by charities The Humane League UK, Open Cages, and Animal Equality.

The campaign strives to get the supermarket to sign onto the Better Chicken Commitment (BCC), an initiative devised by animal welfare experts which transitions away from the use of fast-growing "FrankenChickens" which suffer from numerous health problems.

These issues affect slower-growing birds far less and include lameness, wooden breast syndrome, white striping disease, ascites, heart attacks and green muscle disease.

"FrankenChickens" can grow up to fifty grams a day, and grow from a birth weight of 40 grams to reaching slaughter weight of 4kg eight weeks after birth. To put this into context, this is equivalent to a 6 pound human baby reaching a weight of 660 pounds after two months.

An investigation led by animal protection charity Open Cages in May-June found shocking conditions in East Anglian chicken farms which supply Morrisons.

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Over one billion chickens are raised and slaughtered for their meat in the UK every year, the vast majority of which are bred to grow at an unnatural speed.

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