

Farming Tomorrow

The way to better farm animal welfare in the UK

Farm Animal Welfare Forum

A Working Document

Contents

- Section one: Context 3
 - Introduction 3
 - About us 4
 - Our approach 5
 - What is animal welfare? 5
 - What are systems of higher welfare potential 5
 - Our priorities..... 6
 - Definitions 6
- Section two: Production, consumption and regulation 7
 - 2.1 Strategy for higher welfare production 7
 - 2.2 Strategy for higher welfare consumption 8
 - 2.3 Strategy for higher welfare regulation..... 12
- Section three: Our priority species 15
 - 3.1 Goals 15
 - 3.2 The strategy for laying hens 15
 - 3.3 The strategy for broiler chickens 18
 - 3.4 The strategy for pigs 20
 - 3.5 The strategy for dairy cows 22
- Section four: Conclusion..... 25
- Appendix 1: Members of FAWF 26

Section one: Context

Introduction

In a concerted bid to tackle pressing farm animal welfare concerns around the food we eat in the UK today, a group of influential organisations has come together in the Farm Animal Welfare Forum (FAWF) to develop and commit to this powerful strategy for change. By harnessing the expertise of key players, we are proposing a way forward that is focused, practical and achievable within ten years.

Working together and separately, we will bring about a significant improvement in farm animal welfare by mobilising the buying power of consumers, providing farmers with viable higher welfare solutions, tackling legislative shortcomings and boosting a trading environment that makes higher animal welfare a must-have for consumers and suppliers alike.

Our vision

Our vision is of a thriving food and farming system, which demands that all farmed animals are reared with compassion to higher levels of welfare in ways that protect the environment.

Our mission

Our mission is to bring about a transparent food chain that delivers higher levels of farm animal welfare in producing the food we eat in the UK.

Our beliefs

We believe:

- **animal welfare matters** – farm animal welfare has intrinsic importance
- **there is a positive future for agriculture** – a thriving farming community can be empowered to produce food in ways that deliver higher levels of farm animal welfare
- **collaboration is powerful** – the protagonists in our sector that share these values can achieve more by working together
- **engagement is key** – we can enhance positive change in the food chain through partnership, liaison and coordination between other stakeholders and wider society.

About us

The Farm Animal Welfare Forum brings together a group of influential organisations concerned with improving farm animal welfare. We are:

- Compassion in World Farming
- Food Animal Initiative
- Freedom Food
- Co-operative Group
- World Society for the Protection of Animals
- RSPCA
- Soil Association
- Tubney Charitable Trust.

We believe we can do most to improve the welfare of animals consumed in the UK by working collaboratively towards shared strategic objectives, and by focusing on the most pressing animal welfare issues that are not currently being addressed effectively through other initiatives and activities.

Because we believe improvements in farm animal welfare must be based on peer-reviewed scientific evidence and analysis, we have consulted with representatives from two centres of excellence for animal welfare science:

- University of Bristol Animal Behaviour and Welfare Group
- Oxford University Department of Zoology.

Our proposed improvements must be economically viable for farmers and businesses in the food supply chain, so the Forum includes leading representatives from the voluntary sector, food and farming industry and funding organisations.

With the Farm Animal Welfare Council's (FAWC) five freedoms as our guide, we have identified four of the most pressing animal welfare issues, as identified using the FAWC's own criteria, and developed high-level strategies for addressing them.

Each Forum member will use its resources to achieve our goals and ten-year objectives. We will act separately where individual members can have the greatest impact, and collaboratively where a joint approach will work best.

We will cooperate with other organisations concerned with farm animal welfare that support our analysis and want to work with us to achieve our objectives.

We will review our progress towards the ten-year objectives annually, and adjust the strategy to incorporate new opportunities that will help us achieve them.

The five freedoms

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour
5. Freedom from fear and distress.

Our approach

- We focus on the food we eat in the UK.
- We see higher animal welfare as central to better food.
- We take a whole food chain approach.
- We want to help design solutions as well as highlighting problems.
- Our long-term needs analysis identifies how we can maximise change.
- We encourage all stakeholders, from consumers to the food and farming industries and decision-makers, to help drive change.
- We act from a sound evidence-base of science and practical experience.
- We believe animal welfare and environmental protection should go hand in hand.
- We believe a truly sustainable agricultural future depends on the prevalence of humane and environmentally friendly farming systems
- We believe that unilateral improvements in the UK should not be allowed to result in the importation of goods produced to lower welfare standards.
- Failure to impose trade barriers based on welfare standards should not be allowed to stop the UK and other countries showing leadership on welfare standards.

What is animal welfare?

Animal welfare is about ensuring the wellbeing of the individual animal from the animal's point of view. It includes animal health and encompasses both the physical and psychological state of the animal. The welfare of an animal can be described as good or high if the individual is fit, healthy and happy (free from suffering and in a positive state of wellbeing). To put it another way, the animals are healthy and have what they need and want.

Welfare is about consideration for the living animal, as dead animals do not suffer. Death may pose ethical questions, but is not a welfare issue in itself. However, the manner and reason for death may indicate poor welfare. The way an animal is killed, for example, can cause pain and suffering. Similarly, mortality may be a symptom of poor welfare, such as disease.

What are systems of higher welfare potential¹

Higher welfare potential means a husbandry system that can provide for behavioural freedom without compromising health. Major concerns for animal welfare arise from husbandry practices with low welfare potential i.e. those that fail to meet the behavioural and physical needs of the animal and thereby have the potential to cause pain or suffering. Examples include confinement systems, such as veal crates for calves, or the overcrowded conditions and super-fast growing breeds used to produce meat chickens.

¹ An assessment of the welfare potential of a husbandry system or practice is increasingly used to evaluate different systems of keeping and handling food animals. A full paper on welfare potential is in preparation by PJ Lymbery.

All food and farming production involving animals should use systems of higher welfare potential, i.e. systems that meet the welfare needs of the animal. These systems should be managed in a way that ensures delivery of the highest level of welfare outcomes.

Definitions

Intensive agriculture = a system of farming livestock in which management of the animals hinders the performance of normal behaviours to such an extent that welfare is compromised.

Industrial agriculture = large-scale farming, usually of an intensive nature, where the production system/management style treats the animals as a commodity, and which does not proactively support or allow them to be managed according to their individual needs.

Higher welfare systems = systems of production that consistently operate to standards that are equivalent to the RSPCA welfare standards for farm animals.

Our priorities

The scale of the challenge of improving global farm animal welfare is huge. Rather than trying to address all the issues, we will maximise our impact by channelling our efforts into carefully chosen, clear, realistic priorities.

To have an impact on the way animals reared for food are treated means taking an holistic approach to the whole marketing and trading environment. We have therefore developed focused strategies for:

- enabling higher welfare production
- encouraging higher welfare consumption
- ensuring better regulation.

In addition, we have looked at the pressing, species-specific animal welfare issues where we believe we can achieve the most. We have used the following criteria to establish these priorities:

- severity - how severe is the welfare problem?
- duration and frequency – how long does the problem last/how often does it affect animal(s)?
- incidence – how many animals are affected?
- achievability – what can we achieve with our resources in ten years?
- current activity – are other initiatives/activities already addressing the problem?

Our four top priorities are:

- ending the use of cages for laying hens
- improving the welfare of broilers
- ending tail docking of pigs
- reducing metabolic disease and improving the welfare of dairy cows.

We know there are other welfare issues that could be included against our criteria but these are the four issues where we, along with others, can have the greatest impact.

Section two: Production, consumption and regulation

2.1 Strategy for higher welfare production

What we want

We want better animal welfare across all species of animals farmed for food – either by changing existing production systems incrementally, to reduce avoidable welfare problems, or replacing low welfare systems that cannot be improved with new higher welfare systems.

What we will do

We will focus on the following three priorities.

- We will draw up a FAWF farm animal welfare charter and encourage food and farm industry companies to sign up to it.
- We will develop viable higher welfare, evidence-based production systems that will support farmers' ability to join assurance schemes that meet or exceed RSPCA welfare standards for farm animals.
- We will support farmers to improve practice by developing a network of higher-welfare, market-supported successful pioneer farms (see box) that use a range of husbandry systems across priority livestock species, to inspire other producers to make changes to their own systems, and provide practical information.

The outcomes we expect

- A high percentage of livestock farming businesses and companies dealing with farm animal products signed up to a Farm Animal Welfare Charter that requires signatories to adhere to its principles and to progress one of its stated priority issues.
- Regular FAWF reviews of signatories' progress, with awards and publicity for higher welfare achievement.
- An increased range of viable, evidence-based, higher welfare production systems developed, defined and in successful operation.
- A national network of pioneer farms demonstrating how farmers can adopt new, higher welfare systems or modify their existing systems to offer higher welfare, while remaining commercially viable and productive.

Pioneer farms

- Pioneer farms are individual or groups of commercially viable farms with higher welfare standards. They will inspire other farmers to adopt changes, and allay any fears about financial risks. A pioneer farm network will include all major species and a range of systems.
- This will be the first farm network committed not only to demonstrating progressive practice to other farmers, but also to engaging with the food chain and consumers. A range of systems will be used, for example developing franchise opportunities, or highlighting best practice in existing units.
- Linking a farmer-owned, progressive network with a consumer-facing approach will unlock market-supported opportunities for new products and higher welfare production systems. As DEFRA withdraws support for ADAS demonstration units, there is an opportunity to look at the best model. The success of the monitor farms developed in New Zealand promises more buy-in from producers than a traditional demonstration unit, as farmer-producers are involved in the network.
- Success will be measured by the number of farmers adopting either higher welfare potential systems or modifying conventional systems.

The facts about charters

- Charters enable suppliers to make public commitments that they will meet a set of agreed standards and be accountable for maintaining them.
- Many local trading standards and environmental health bodies publish animal health and welfare charters. These tend to vary in content and nature.
- There is currently no national charter for farm animal welfare.

The facts about farm assurance schemes – see Section 2.2

2.2 Strategy for higher welfare consumption

What we want

Our goal is to greatly increase the consumption of food in the UK from higher welfare farming by persuading food industry companies, public purchasers and individual consumers to choose only welfare-friendly products.

Specifically, we are determined to achieve:

- higher welfare products bought and sold by the UK food industry
- animal welfare adopted by companies as a key part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) – whether or not they are part of the food industry
- higher welfare products bought and sold by public bodies, local authorities and non-food companies
- farm assurance welfare standards raised to minimum RSPCA welfare standards
- compulsory labelling as to method of production on all animal produce and products that contain them as ingredients.

What we will do

We will focus on the following five priorities.

- We will encourage companies to integrate higher animal welfare as a key component of CSR and food quality
- We will persuade food industry companies to sell higher welfare products across their entire product range and adopt voluntary labelling according to method of production for animal products and ingredients
- We will encourage non-food industry companies to adopt higher welfare standards in their corporate buying, by identifying people within the companies who are sympathetic to our aims and can act as insider champions
- We will enable consumers to make compassionate choices by explaining the animal welfare and food quality impacts of different production systems and assurance schemes
- We will press all public procurement agencies to include higher animal welfare standards in their specifications and contracts for food and catering services, particularly for school and hospital meals.
- We will encourage consumers and consumer groups to sign up to the FAWF farm animal welfare charter (see Production section).

The outcomes we expect

- High animal welfare seen by individuals, food companies, restaurateurs, non-food companies and public bodies as a must-have component of quality food.
- A range of better welfare choices for shoppers and diners instead of the odd one amongst an array of bad welfare options.
- All livestock products and ingredients labelled according to method of production.
- A wave of welfare-friendly food marketing that encourages further far-reaching reforms for farm animals through new and enhanced legislation.
- A trading environment that rewards progressive farmers in both developed and developing countries.
- FAWF charter signatories buying unprocessed meat only from production systems that are working to achieve, as a minimum, UK farm animal welfare legislation within an agreed period of signing the charter.

The facts about food companies

- As the gatekeepers to our food system, food companies – whether retailers, manufacturers, restaurants or fast-food outlets – have enormous influence over the way farm animals are reared, transported and slaughtered.
- Operating nationally or internationally, they can set standards for how animal products are produced, and can market these standards to consumers. They can move much faster and more decisively than national governments.

- The UK's top four biggest retailers (Tesco, ASDA, Sainsbury's and Morrison) account for over 70% of the nation's food market.
- Taking eggs as an example, 49% of UK shell eggs are sold through the retail sector, 28% go into processed foods and 23% are consumed by the food service sector. For pig meat, retail accounts for 80% of consumption, with 20% going into food service.
- The top five UK food-manufacturing companies (Unilever, Diageo, Cadbury Schweppes, Associated British Food and Tate & Lyle) have global sales totaling over 70,000 million Euros.
- The nation's top food service operators in 2005 by UK sales were McDonalds (€3,800m), Compass Group (€3,000 m), Mitchells & butlers (€2,300 m), Whitbread (€1,900 m) and the Spirit Group (€1,200 m) (source: Horizons, 2006).

	Supplied direct to consumer via off-farm sales*	Supplied direct to consumer via doorstep delivery	Sold by retailers	Used in food manufacturing / processing**	Used in catering (restaurants / food outlets and public procurement)
Broilers (1998)	-	-	64%	17%	19%
Eggs (2006)	4%	-	49%	28%	23%
Pigs (2004)	-	-	45%	45% (38% retail, 7% catering)	10%
Dairy (1997)	2%	16%	24%	60%	<1%

* Percentage of total production before distribution, i.e. this figure is in addition to other figures totalling 100% of distribution.

** May go into retail or catering sector after processing.

Restaurants	19.9%
Fast food	26.3%
Pubs	13.9%
Hotels	20.8%
Leisure	9.1%
Staff catering	4.1%
Health care	2.6%
Education	2.7%
Services/welfare	0.7%
Source: IGD, UK Foodservice Market Overview, September 2004	

The facts about non-food companies

- Many big companies that have no direct link with the food industry can be influential corporate consumers through their staff canteens.
- Companies are increasingly sensitive to social issues and can be keen to adopt progressive policies. Google, Microsoft (UK) and Sky TV (UK) have all pledged to sell only cage-free eggs in staff canteens, for example.

The facts about public procurement

- The public sector is responsible – in many cases through contract caterers – for providing food in schools, hospitals, prisons, the armed forces and staff canteens.
- A recent Cabinet Office Strategy Unit paper says public sector food procurement is worth £2,000 million and provides over 1,000 million meals a year.²
- The NHS, schools, prisons and the forces are the largest public sector food buyers. Around half the spending goes on school meals, and a quarter on hospital meals.
- There are a few large players and a group of small organisations in UK contract catering. Compass Group, Sodexo and Aramark are the three largest.
- Few public sector contracts include good welfare standards in their specifications. Instead, standard farm assurance (eg Red Tractor) is used, which often goes no further than the minimum legislative baseline for animal welfare.
- The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) launched the Public Sector Food Procurement Initiative designed to ensure that ‘public procurement of food ... supports delivery of the government’s Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy for England’. Its principles include consistently high standards of animal welfare, but it has achieved very little so far. Most poultry, eggs and pig meat procured by the public sector comes from industrially reared animals.

The facts about consumers

- Buying power means consumers can, and do, influence farm animal welfare. The 2005 Eurobarometer survey found that 74% of EU citizens think they can influence farm animal welfare for the better by their buying behaviour.
- But good intentions are frustrated by lack of availability of alternative products and the need for better information such as clear labelling according to production method.

The facts about farm assurance schemes

- The food industry introduced farm assurance schemes in the 1980s to boost consumer confidence in livestock products, as a result of increasing concern about animal welfare.
- The main national schemes provide a framework for good farm management. They generally seek to encourage high standards of stockmanship, and provide a useful mechanism for ensuring that farms comply with minimum legislative requirements and government guidelines.

² Food: an analysis of the issues. Cabinet Office Strategy Unit. January 2008.

- However, in 2006, around 12% of farms visited by government inspectors failed to comply with statutory welfare regulations.³
- Most of the fresh meat, milk and eggs sold in UK supermarkets are produced under nationally recognised farm assurance schemes (eg British Farm Standard – or Red Tractor – for meat and milk, and the Lion mark for eggs).
- Some UK farm assurance schemes allow some of the most intensive forms of farming – farrowing crates for breeding pigs and battery cages for laying hens for example – and often set standards that assure little more than compliance with basic legislation and, in some cases, government guidelines on animal welfare. This is not always so, however – for example they allow the rearing of broiler chickens at higher stocking densities than the maximum stipulated by the government code of practice.

2.3 Strategy for higher welfare regulation

What we want

We want an effective and robust legislative framework that supports higher animal welfare. We also want an international trading environment that takes ethical concerns such as animal welfare fully into account.

Specifically, we are determined to achieve:

- enforcement of current legislation in the spirit of the law as it was intended
- legislation that builds on market trends and changes to ensure continued progression of farm animal welfare standards
- a separation of responsibility for animal welfare and agri-business in UK government
- reform of international trade rules to recognise animal welfare as a legitimate non-trade concern and protect the interests of trade in higher welfare products.

What we will do

We will press for:

- better enforcement of legislation through higher-quality, more consistent auditing in the spirit of the law as it was intended
- new, improved legislation that consolidates welfare improvements that have been driven by the market-led changes we advocate in this strategy
- a decoupling of animal welfare from agriculture within government and the creation of a single government animal welfare authority responsible for developing and delivering an animal health and welfare policy that is truly independent of commercial food and farming interests
- clear, mandatory labelling about production systems, on both EU products and imported animal products

³ DEFRA CVO report 2006

- key World Trade Organisation (WTO) actors – particularly the EU and influential key countries – and countries negotiating Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), to:
 - o recognise animal welfare concerns and accept animal welfare as a public moral issue
 - o ensure that trade rules facilitate higher welfare production
 - o ensure the rules do not undermine animal welfare standards
 - o promote animal welfare as a long-term and sustainable trade opportunity
- the empowerment of key third countries to promote:
 - o inclusion of animal welfare in the Green Box or other relevant WTO rules
 - o free trade tariff lines that favour trade in higher welfare products
 - o bilateral and multilateral cooperation for the preservation and improvement of traditional extensive farming systems
- the EU to designate eggs as Sensitive Products, in order to stem the import of cheap battery eggs from third countries
- allocation of a higher (fixed minimum) amount of EU Green Box subsidies for the improvement of animal welfare.

The outcomes we expect

- More rigorous enforcement of UK farm animal welfare legislation.
- More robust legislation to protect farm animals.
- All livestock products and ingredients labelled according to method of production.
- A single expert authority to the government on farm animal welfare, that is independent of agri-business.
- The inclusion of animal welfare in free trade agreements between the EU and key third countries.
- Animal welfare included in the Green Box, or other such relevant WTO trade rules.
- Take-up of higher welfare farming practices in key third countries, driven by legislative reform and demand for such products in the EU.
- EU recognition of eggs as Sensitive Products.
- Extension of the scope of animal welfare provisions in the veterinary agreements already in place between the EU and third countries.

The facts about UK regulation and DEFRA

- DEFRA is the UK government department responsible for farm animal welfare.
- An independent advisory body, the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC), advises ministers on animal welfare.
- Most major decisions on farm animal welfare are made at EU level, but the UK government can play a critical role in championing new legislation.
- Better enforcement of legislation is needed, as shown by the 12% non-compliance found during DEFRA's 2006 inspection of UK farms.
- Legislation is needed to end the use of all caged egg production systems, and to raise welfare standards for broilers, pigs and dairy cows.
- Currently, it is not compulsory to label animal products according to method of production. Having this key information on a product would help consumers identify a product of higher welfare.
- On average, 75% of the domestically reared pigs that end up on the shelves of the UK's leading grocery chains have had their tails docked, even though routine tail docking was banned in the UK in 2003.
- Farm animal welfare may progress better if it were decoupled from agri-business in government.
- The government's ten-year Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain, produced in 2004, is available at: www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/default.html

The facts about world trade

- Importing products produced to lower animal welfare standards can seriously undermine animal welfare progress in the UK and EU. It can also slow the progress of further reform.
- Under WTO rules, governments find it extremely difficult to ban imports on ethical grounds, or insist that their own laws to protect animals or the environment must apply to the products they import.
- EU-negotiated FTAs will lower or delete import tariffs, increasing the problem.
- WTO Green Box subsidies are not widely used to support animal welfare.
- Future WTO reforms could decrease the ability of countries to pay subsidies to support higher animal welfare.
- Legislative reforms in one country often lead to a displacement of production to another country with lower standards.

Section three: Our priority species

3.1 Goals

We have agreed strategic goals for each of our priority species.

Laying hens

We aim to end the use of all caged egg production systems in favour of higher welfare alternative egg-laying systems.

Broiler welfare

We aim to achieve higher broiler welfare using only systems and genotypes that maintain high levels of welfare throughout the production cycle.

Tails on pigs

We aim to achieve improved pig welfare through systems that do not require tail docking or incur tail biting.

Dairy cow welfare

We aim to achieve higher dairy cow welfare for example through using only dairy production systems and management protocols that substantially reduce metabolic disease and lameness, and improve early calf care.

3.2 The strategy for laying hens

What we want

We want a much higher proportion of eggs from non-cage systems to be consumed in the UK. We want to ensure non-cage production systems provide the highest welfare possible.

Specifically, we are determined to achieve:

- an end to egg production from caged hens in the EU by 2012
- no increase in the importation of eggs from caged systems into the EU
- an increase in the proportion of non-cage systems with low levels of injurious pecking and fractures.

What we will do

We will focus on three priorities:

- making sure general consumers and public purchasers have clear information about the welfare of laying hens in different production systems, so they can make a choice and compel retailers and producers to supply more cage-free eggs.

- devising viable systems for producers to adopt – this is particularly important when advocating non-cage systems, where the risks of injurious pecking and fractures need to be managed as the use of these systems grows
- campaigning against legislation being undermined by increased importing of cage-produced eggs.

The outcomes we expect

- A system of honest, clear labelling describing the production method for all eggs and egg products – whether produced in the UK or imported from third countries – by 2012.
- All major retailers and public purchasers only buying eggs and egg products from non-cage systems.
- A range of practical husbandry solutions to reduce fractures in commercial non-cage production by 2012.
- A range of practical husbandry solutions to reduce injurious pecking available and in use on all farms by 2011.
- A fully enforced Laying Hens Directive (1999/74/EC) in the EU.
- No increase in importation of cage-produced eggs into the EU as a result of inappropriate interpretation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).
- No UK-based investment supporting importation of cage-produced eggs into the EU.

The facts about laying hens

Just over 63% of the eggs we eat in the UK² are from hens living in cage systems. While there are some welfare concerns – such as injurious pecking and keel bone fractures – associated with non-cage systems, all birds in battery cages are:

- prevented from behaving naturally for their entire laying lives
- at risk of fractures from progressive loss of structural bone during the laying period, accelerated by inactivity.¹

The details

- The UK produces 8,600 million eggs per year, mostly for UK consumption². We import a further 2,001 million: 95% of these from the EU, 5% from the rest of the world³.
- There are 28,700 million laying hens living in the UK at any time². This is a small decrease from the 29,200 million in 2000³.
- Currently 32% of eggs produced in the UK are from free-range systems (5% from barn systems and 63% from cage systems).²
- For their entire laying period – 17 to 72 weeks – all birds in battery cages suffer behavioural restrictions.

- An estimated 55% of non-cage flocks⁴ experience injurious pecking, which can infringe all five freedoms and increase mortality. Careful management can reduce the risk of this.
- Examinations of slaughtered end-of-lay birds from battery systems show higher levels of recent fractures due to disuse osteoporosis.¹
- Non-cage birds also risk fractures, particularly when they move freely round their houses and come into contact with perches and other furniture, but good management reduces the risk.
- The Laying Hens Directive (1999/74/EC) prohibits conventional battery cages from ¹ January 2012 but will allow ‘enriched cages’.
- Enriched cages provide more space, height, nest, litter and perching space but it is not known how many existing cages could be modified and whether modifications will be commercially viable.
- A recent review of the welfare issues associated with different production systems⁵ included an examination of the enriched or furnished cage systems and concluded that ‘although the behavioural repertoire is significantly improved....the low proportion of hens performing foraging behaviour and absence of complete dust bathing.....indicate that the substrate areas in these systems do not fulfil the needs of the hen’
- A ban on the beak trimming of laying hens is due to come into force on 1st January 2011. The ban was originally enacted in 2002 and was repeated in the Mutilations (Permitted Procedures) (England) Regulations 2007. Similar legislation has been enacted in the other parts of the UK.

References

1. Whitehead C C and Fleming R H (2000) *Osteoporosis in cage layers* Poultry Science 79:1033–1041
2. British Egg Information Service figures from 2006 (<http://www.britegg.co.uk/ukeggs05/ukeggs4.html>)
3. Defra statistical notices on eggs (<http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/publications/auk/2005/5-19.xls>)
4. Green, L. E. Lewis, K. Kimpton, A. Nicol, C.J. (2000) Cross-sectional study of the prevalence of feather pecking in laying hens in alternative systems and its associations with management and disease. *Veterinary Record* 2000. 147: 233-238
5. Research project funded by the European Commission under the 6th Framework Programme (<http://www.laywel.eu>).

3.3 The strategy for broiler chickens

What we want

We want a concerted UK effort to promote higher welfare chicken meat, leading to an increase in consumption of chicken bred in systems of higher welfare potential. We want to ensure those systems provide the highest welfare possible.

Our long-term goal is to achieve boiler production using only systems and genotypes that are routinely able to maintain high levels of welfare at all stages of the production cycle. There is an urgent need to negate all the welfare issues associated with the current fast-growing strains of bird.

Specifically, we are determined to achieve:

- strengthened legislation that ensures consistent higher welfare by addressing the major welfare concerns affecting broiler chickens
- no increase in importation into the UK of chicken meat from countries that permit lower animal welfare standards
- a higher proportion in the UK of genetically slower-growing broiler breeds, reared to RSPCA welfare standards (Freedom Food) or above.

What we will do

We will focus on three priorities:

- We will ensure that people and public purchasers have information about the welfare of the birds that produce the meat they buy, so they can make a choice and compel retailers and farmers to supply more chicken from higher welfare systems.
- We will devise viable systems for farmers to adopt.
- We will campaign for strengthened and enforced legislation.

The outcomes we expect

- A compulsory system of clear labelling that tells customers about the source and method of production of chicken meat, whether sold on its own or as an ingredient.
- More retailers and public purchasers who only buy chicken meat or chicken meat products from genetically slower-growing breeds produced on farms where they are reared to RSPCA welfare standards (Freedom Food) or above.
- A strengthened, properly enforced EU Broiler Directive that encompasses requirements for slower-growing breeds and maximum stocking densities, as a result of our strategic interventions, supported by concerned EU stakeholders.
- Strong trade links for higher welfare chicken meat between EU and non-EU countries, highlighting the trade opportunities offered by higher animal welfare.
- No imports of poultry products produced by systems that do not comply with EU welfare legislation.

The facts about broilers

A weak EU Directive means the 5,000 million broiler chickens bred for meat every year in the EU are too often:

- overcrowded
- in pain
- at risk of disease, injury and death
- hungry
- unable to perform their natural behaviours
- unable to sleep properly and sufficiently.

The details

- 5,000 million chickens are bred for meat every year in the EU.
- Most are reared in windowless, barren and overcrowded sheds, in dim lighting without a dark period long enough for proper rest.
- They are genetically selected to grow much faster than is sustainable, reaching slaughter weight in as little as 35-36 days⁴ – twice as fast as 30 years ago.
- Hearts and lungs often cannot keep up with the fast growth, and 0.1%-3% die from heart failure – also known as Sudden Death Syndrome – at only a few weeks old. This amounts to nearly 130 million chickens a year.
- Leg disorders are another major problem. Lamé broilers spend up to 86% of their time lying down, sometimes unable to reach water and food.
- In the past 50 years, broiler growth rates have increased by over 300%, from 25g per day to 100g per day. Over 27.6% of birds in a 2008 Bristol University study⁵ showed poor locomotion and 3.3% were almost unable to walk. This high prevalence of poor locomotion occurred despite culling to remove severely lame birds from flocks.
- The primary risk factors associated with impaired locomotion and poor leg health are those specifically associated with rate of growth.
- SCAHAW says stocking density should be no higher than 25kg/m² (12.5 2kg birds per square metre) ‘for major welfare problems to be largely avoided’. Above 30kg/m² (15 birds per square metre), there is a ‘steep rise in frequency of serious problems’.
- High stocking density restricts behaviour. Crowded sheds can increase the risk of wet litter, increased air pollution from ammonia and dust particles, and poor temperature and humidity control. These environmental conditions can lead to lameness, breast blisters, footpad dermatitis, hock burns and infections.
- Broilers allowed to grow to adulthood for breeding are only allowed a fifth to a half of the food they want to eat during their growing period and ‘appear to be chronically hungry, frustrated and stressed’ (SCAHAW 2000). Less severe feed restriction (up to 50%) may be

⁴ Ross 308 Performance Objectives June 2007

⁵ Knowles, TG, Kestin, SC, Haslam, SM, Brown, SN, Green, LE, Butterworth, A, Pope, SJ, Pfeffer, D, and Nicol, CJ. 2008 Leg disorders in chickens: prevalence, risk factors and prevention. [http://www.plosone.org/doi/PLoS ONE 3 \(2\): e1545](http://www.plosone.org/doi/PLoS ONE 3 (2): e1545). Doi: 10.1271/journal.pone.0001545

continued in adulthood. SCAHAW says these breeding birds are ‘very hungry’, resulting in ‘unacceptable welfare problems’.

- EU Council Directive 2007/43/EC lays down minimum rules which member states will have to implement by 2010. But the Directive is extremely weak, allowing a maximum stocking density of 33kg/m², with derogations allowing for a maximum of 39kg/m², and 42kg/m² where prevailing conditions result in low mortality rate.
- There is an excellent opportunity to lobby for strengthening the Directive, which requires a number of future reports to be produced, particularly on fast growth rates and chicken meat labelling.
- There is no legislation relating to the import of meat and eggs from other countries. Import of products from countries that permit lower animal welfare standards can effectively avoid and undermine standards adopted in EU.

3.4 The strategy for pigs

What we want

We want an increase in the proportion of pig meat consumed in the UK from systems where pigs do not have their tails docked, and where there is no tail biting.

Specifically, we are determined to achieve:

- industry-wide adoption of systems for rearing pigs where their tails do not have to be docked to prevent tail biting
- no importation of pig meat into the UK from systems that necessitate tail docking.

What we will do

We will focus on two priorities:

- We will tell people and public purchasers about the welfare of the pigs that produce the pig meat they buy, so they can make a choice and compel retailers and farmers to supply more pigs with undamaged, undocked tails.
- We will devise viable systems for farmers to adopt, taking into account that land and environmental pressures mean we cannot keep all our pigs in the outdoor systems that have the potential to provide the best welfare.

The outcomes we expect

- A system of clear, honest labelling that tells customers about the production method of pork and pig meat products, whether produced in the UK or imported from other countries.
- Retailers and public purchasers who only purchase pigs with unbitten, undocked tails making a commitment with public stated date.

- Availability of a financially viable non-land-based, non-confined and mutilation-free system that provides good welfare.
- Introduction and implementation of higher welfare systems in all UK pig production.
- Fully enforced Council Directives 2001/88/EC and 2001/93/EC, laying down minimum standards for pigs, in the EU.
- No increase in importation into the EU of pig meat from barren environments⁶ where tail docking is necessary, as a result of inappropriate interpretation of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).
- No UK-based investment supporting importation of pig meat from barren environments into the EU.

The facts about pigs

Most of the pigs farmed for pork in the UK and EU are kept in barren environments, without appropriate environmental enrichment or adequate space, for most of their lives. This puts them at risk of:

- tail biting
- lifelong bullying from other pigs
- injury and/or death.

To reduce the risk of tail biting, piglets are routinely mutilated by having their tails docked, even though the law specifically prohibits routine docking.

The details

- The UK produces 739,000 tonnes of pig meat per year, the majority of which is for UK consumption. 459,000 tonnes are also imported, mainly from Denmark and Holland¹.
- There are 455,000 breeding sows and gilts currently in the UK¹ – down from 799,000 in 1998.²
- The main categories of fresh pork sold are organic, free-range, outdoor-reared, outdoor-bred and standard, with the latter being by far the largest.
- Outdoor-reared and outdoor-bred labels can be misleading. Although the sows are kept outside, almost 100% of their pigs are finished indoors. These systems can vary from straw-based to intensive slatted or concrete-based systems.
- There is no legal definition of free-range for pig systems, as there is for poultry.
- The current legislation relating to pigs requires that ‘pigs must have permanent access to a sufficient quantity of material to enable proper investigation and manipulation activities’³
- However, in reality the recommended substrates are frequently not used and there is often no serious attempt to deal with tail biting through environmental management.

⁶A barren environment is one that fails to provide appropriate environmental enrichment, such as bedding.

- Many current systems make non-docking impossible and will need to be phased out over time.
- Increasingly, commercial incentive is encouraging systems where tails are being left on. It is not yet known how successful these systems are in terms of tail biting. Bristol Veterinary School is looking at tail biting in non-docked pigs.
- An undamaged tail on a finished pig is one good indication that it is likely to have been in a good environment for all its life.

References

1. Defra pig statistical notice, including census data from 2007
<http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/statnot/pignote.pdf>
2. Defra statistical notices
(<http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/publications/auk/2005/5-14.xls>)
3. Commission directive 2001/93/EC (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/pri/en/oj/dat/2001/l_316/l_31620011201en00360038.pdf)

3.5 The strategy for dairy cows

What we want

We want higher standards on those UK dairy farms that are not currently providing the best possible husbandry conditions for their cows.

Specifically, we are determined to achieve a reduction in the severity and incidence of lameness and hunger/metabolic distress.

What we will do

We will focus on six priorities. We will:

- support farmer-driven initiatives that encourage them to work together to reduce lameness and nutrition-related disorders
- work with the industry to develop a knowledge-transfer strategy that meets farmers' needs for information on lameness, nutrition and genetics
- support the implementation of available selection indices information to ensure greater emphasis on welfare traits in future breeding programmes
- support research and development on commercially viable husbandry systems that do not depend on high-yielding genetics
- encourage the food industry to introduce milk contracts and farm assurance requirements that promote a reduction in the number of lame and thin cattle
- lobby DEFRA to ensure that the minority of farms with an excessive number of severely lame or thin cows do not receive their full single farm payment.

The outcomes we expect

- A reduction in the average prevalence of lameness, to significantly less than 20% (MDC⁷ score 2 and 3)
- no farms with more than 5% untreated severely lame cows (MDC score 3)
- a reduction in the number of farms with more than 30% thin cows (DEFRA body condition score less than 2).

The facts about dairy cows

Too many of our dairy cows suffer from preventable welfare problems, including:

- lameness
- abdominal diseases and susceptibility to other diseases
- metabolic stress
- hunger.

The details

- In the UK there are currently 14,000 farms and 2 million dairy cows.
- There are no dramatic differences in behavioural freedom between different husbandry systems.
- Some studies have shown statistical differences in the levels of lameness, and other welfare parameters between systems, but there is usually a large overlap in performance, so it is harder to identify higher welfare systems.
- Maximum welfare gain will come from improving conditions on farms with higher than average problems, such as lameness and thin cows.
- The average prevalence of lameness in UK cows is consistently over 20% – 400,000 cows – a rate the FAWC calls ‘unacceptably high’. This affects all five freedoms, especially freedom from pain, injury and disease.
- Many farms lose over £14,000 per 100 cows a year through lameness; so most strategies to control it are attractively cost-effective. But studies say producers are on average aware of only one in four lame cows.
- There are many solutions known to reduce lameness levels on farms, supported by a considerable body of scientific knowledge and established experience. The critical next step is to develop motivational strategies to drive change.
- A mismatch between the high-yielding genetic potential of dairy cows and their nutrition can lead to numerous clinical and behavioural issues.

⁷ Milk Development Council

- Cows bred for high yields may have a conflict between the need to rest – which is very important to avoid lameness – and the need to eat enough to satisfy their daily requirements. They therefore have an increased susceptibility to either acute abdominal diseases or a chronic energy deficiency, which will cause a loss in body condition and an increased susceptibility to other diseases.
- Though high genetic potential cows, fed very carefully controlled diets, may achieve a low incidence of these disorders and maintain body condition, such systems are of high risk and require much higher levels of management.
- Many aspects of nutrition can be measured, but decreased body condition is a useful long-term indicator of hunger.
- Around 500,000 pure-bred male dairy calves are born in the UK each year. Around half of these are either exported to continental veal farms (about 70,000 expected in 2007), where welfare conditions often fall short of UK minimum legislative requirement, or are shot soon after birth (about 150,000). These latter animals may receive inadequate care and attention on the farm where they are born.⁸

⁸Beyond Calf Exports Stakeholders Forum, 2008. Report on Conclusions and Recommendations, published January 2008.

Section four: Conclusion

FAWF believes the serious farm animal welfare issues we have prioritised above can and will be eradicated if we take the strategic approach we have outlined. We believe we can change farming and food production for the better by pushing – both as powerful, respected individual bodies and as a group – for the changes proposed in this strategic framework. We know that it requires action at all levels of government, with consumers, food industry and with producers, to highlight the benefits of a higher welfare approach for all of them, and for the thousands of millions of animals we rear for food.

A WORKING DOCUMENT

Appendix 1: Members of FAWF

Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)

The RSPCA is a charity whose vision is to work for a world in which all humans respect and live in harmony with all other members of the animal kingdom.

Our mission is to prevent cruelty and promote kindness to animals, and alleviate their suffering by all lawful means. We aim to achieve this by working tirelessly to reduce the harmful impact of human activities on animals through education, campaigning and the application of ethics, science and law.

The Society was founded in 1824 to address concerns about the welfare of cattle, and although we now cover all species, improving the welfare of farmed animals at every stage of their lives continues to be a high priority for the organisation today.

The Cooperative Group

The Cooperative Group is a member-owned cooperative, its vision is to be the best co-operative business in the world and is the largest independent convenience store operator in the UK, with branches from the far north in Shetland to the Channel Islands in the South.

Taking a responsible approach to business has been a guiding focus since its inception in 1863, in 2007 a study focusing on business ethics highlighted that consumers ranked the Cooperative Group as the most ethical brand in the UK. Consumer research undertaken by Cooperative Food has endorsed amongst other things animal welfare as a priority area, with nearly every consumer (98%) in the Shopping with attitude survey supporting the humane treatment of animals.

The Cooperative Group is involved with the Farm Animal Welfare Forum, a Cross-sector group of influential organisations, as it views the collaborative opportunities offered by the group as being key to driving meaningful, practical change within farm animal welfare.

Tubney Charitable Trust

The Tubney Charitable Trust is a grant-making charity. Its mission is to encourage the support of high calibre organisations and activities that will put in place systems to ensure:

- The improvement of the welfare of farmed animals both in the United Kingdom and internationally.
- The conservation of the natural environment of the United Kingdom.
- A long-lasting legacy for the work of the Tubney Charitable Trust which honours the memory of the Charity's founders.

In accordance with the wishes of the founders, Miles and Briony Blackwell, the Tubney Charitable Trust has a limited life and is spending both its income and its capital to achieve its objectives.

The Trust has facilitated the creation of the Farmed Animal Welfare Forum (FAWF) and participates in the Forum's meetings. For further information on the Trust's strategy see <http://www.tubney.org.uk>

Soil Association

The Soil Association was founded in 1946 by a group of farmers, scientists and nutritionists who observed a direct connection between farming practice and plant, animal, human and environmental health. Today the Soil Association is the UK's leading campaigning and certification organisation for organic food and farming. The Soil Association has a track record on promoting and implementing high standards of animal welfare. It has led the way in defining welfare standards since 1969, particularly focusing on developing farming systems that allow animals significant autonomy and the ability to fully express natural innate behaviours. It has sought to translate the concept of 'positive health' – a state of vitality and immune competence that goes far beyond the absence of disease – into practice within a commercial context. It has put the animal centre-stage in its environment, the farm, and has endeavored to ensure that farm management systems are built around the needs and best interests of the animal, not vice versa.

Food Animal Initiative

Food Animal Initiative (FAI) was set up by farmers in 1998 in recognition of the fact that commercially robust alternative systems – that significantly raise animal welfare standards, tackle environmental concerns and address issues of human health – can and do exist.

The objectives of FAI are:

- To develop sustainable farm systems that provide discernable benefits to animal welfare, the environment and human health.
- To demonstrate the success of these systems through practical and commercial application.
- To breed animals that are fit for their environment.
- To supply knowledge to commercial farmers and other interested parties.

Compassion in World Farming

Compassion in World Farming is the leading charity campaigning exclusively for the welfare of farm animals throughout the world. Our vision is a world where farm animals are treated with compassion and respect and where cruel factory farming practices end. Our mission is to advance the wellbeing of farm animals worldwide. We have pioneered engagement with the food industry, rewarding good practice and highlighting welfare failures.

World Society for the Protection of Animals

For 25 years, WSPA has aimed to promote the concept of animal welfare in regions of the world where there are few, if any, measures to protect animals. Politically, we have campaigned to convince governments and key decision makers to change practices and introduce new laws to protect or improve the welfare of animals.

Freedom Food

Freedom Food is the only UK farm assurance scheme dedicated to improving animal welfare. The primary objective of the company is to prevent, suppress or alleviate cruelty to animals, whether within the UK or elsewhere, by promotion of humane farming, transportation, marketing and slaughter of farm animals by implementing a set of rearing and handling

standards approved from time to time by the RSPCA.

A WORKING DOCUMENT



Compass Partnership