



RSPCA Assured

Eat less. Eat Better.

TV advert verification

RSPCA Assured is the RSPCA's farm animal welfare scheme and ethical food label. The scheme is completely independent from the food and farming industries and is the only UK farm assurance scheme solely dedicated to improving the lives of farm animals.

The scheme has been recognised by the government's Farm Animal Welfare Council as a 'higher level' scheme and by the EU funded 'Welfare Quality Project' as one of only two assurance schemes in dedicated to farm animal welfare in Europe.

There are over 600 RSPCA welfare standards for laying hens alone. These go well above the requirements of UK and EU law as well as other farm assurance schemes to ensure a better life.

They cover everything from food and water, environment and range management – including the provision of stocking densities, shade and shelter, natural cover and environmental enrichment - to stock-keeping requirements, health, transport and humane slaughter.

No product may carry the RSPCA Assured certification mark unless every stage of the process has been audited and approved to these mandatory welfare standards.

You can find out more out how we provide a better life for laying hens along with a copy of the welfare standards on our website at the following address:

<https://www.rspcaassured.org.uk/farm-animal-welfare/egg-laying-hens/>

The farm at which the TV advert was shot on 10 April 2018 is a current member of the scheme and as such has been audited by one of our trained assessors to the RSPCA welfare standards for laying hens detailed above.

Better life substantiation

The RSPCA has higher standards of farm animal welfare than the law and other industry schemes. Here are example comparisons from the farm animal welfare standards for laying hens.

	Statutory	Lion Code	RSPCA
Litter	In alternative systems, all birds should have access to a littered area which should be maintained in a friable condition and at an adequate depth for dust bathing, approximately 10 cm. To ensure good litter management, this depth of litter may be made up over the first two months of use. Birds should have access to good quality substrate for dust bathing and to prevent health problems, in particular foot, leg and breast lesions.	The quality and depth of the litter shall be to an appropriate standard and be effectively managed. Litter should be dry, friable and free from marked odour. Once off-heat pullets should have an average depth of at least 5 cm (as for layers). It can be less when younger as some units progressively add litter as age increases. Minor capping around drinkers may occur, particularly in damp cool weather.	Litter must: a) cover the floor within 24 hours of birds being placed in the shed b) be maintained at a minimum of 5cm from 24 hours of placement up to the first 2 months of placement c) be maintained at a minimum of 10cm, by the latest, after the first 2 months of use.
Lighting	In normal conditions, in cage and multi-level systems, light intensity should be at least 5 lux, and preferably not less than 10 lux, measured at any feed trough level; in other systems, light intensity in the perching, walking and feeding areas should be at least 10 lux measured at bird eye height. However, a temporary reduction in lighting level may assist in addressing behavioural problems such as feather pecking or cannibalism.	Lighting levels shall follow breeders or other planned programme and be sufficient to allow easy inspection of the flock. Lighting must be a minimum of 10 Lux at feed trough level.	The lighting system in hen houses must: a) be designed and maintained in order to give a minimum illumination of 20 lux in the open areas of the house (e.g. over litter and feed tracks) b) only be reduced temporarily, as a last resort, where: i) there are signs of an outbreak of injurious pecking or cannibalism ii) other solutions to prevent injurious pecking have been employed.
Nest boxes	Nests should be	No minimum	Nest boxes must be:

	<p>provided with a floor substrate which encourages nesting behaviour. This is especially important at the start of lay, when the provision of loose litter may be used to encourage the pullets to use the nests. Individual nests should be designed to accommodate only one bird at a time. Communal nests should be designed using divisions and suitable access points to minimise overcrowding.</p>	<p>requirement</p>	<p>a) provided at not less than 1 per 5 hens if individual boxes, or 1m² of nesting substrate per 120 hens for group nesting b) enclosed and draught-free.</p>
<p>Perches</p>	<p>No minimum requirement</p>	<p>No minimum requirement</p>	<p>For all flocks, perches must be provided at not less than 15cm per hen, of which: a) in multi-tier systems, at least 15cm per hen must be raised b) in flat deck systems built or refurbished after 1st August 2018, at least 8cm must be raised per bird and preferably 15cm c) in flat deck systems built before 1st August 2018, at least 8cm per hen must be raised for all flocks placed after 1st August 2018.</p>
<p>Environmental enrichment</p>	<p>No minimum requirement</p>	<p>No minimum requirement</p>	<p>For every 1,000 birds there must be at least 2 items of environmental enrichment inside the house, which must: a) be permanently available to the birds</p>

			b) include some destructible forms of enrichment.
Shade/shelter	Where birds are kept extensively and are free to range it is important to provide some overhead shelter. Reasonable precautions should be taken to protect birds against predators, dogs and cats. Shelter from rain, sun and cold should always be available when necessary. Windbreaks should be provided on exposed land.	All birds in organic and free range systems shall have access to external shade shelters at a minimum of 8m ² per 1,000 birds. Shelters shall be provided on the range area in the form of trees, shrubs and other suitable vegetation. Where this is not possible, alternative man-made shelters should be provided ensuring no injury to birds.	Shade/shelter must: a) be provided at an area of at least 8m ² per 1,000 birds b) be available at all times from when the hens first have access to the range c) offer adequate protection from inclement weather and overhead predators d) be available from a distance of no more than 20m from the popholes e) be distributed appropriately to encourage full range use f) be of sound construction, secure and not pose any welfare risks, including injury, to the birds.
Popholes	No minimum requirement	No minimum requirement	For flocks/colonies of birds with 1,200 birds or fewer, the following applies (for flocks of 1,201 birds and above, see R 3.2): a) there must be a minimum of 2 popholes b) popholes must be at least 50cm wide and 45cm high c) Number of birds Minimum total pophole length (metres) Up to 300 birds 1.0 301 to 600 birds 1.5 601 to 900 birds 2.0 901 to 1,200 birds 2.5
Natural cover	No requirement	See shade / shelter:	Natural cover must be present in the

			<p>form of existing or newly planted trees/shrubs/other canopy forming plants at an area equal to at least 5% of the total range area (this may include natural cover meeting the requirements of R 2.1).</p>
<p>Inspections</p>	<p>It is essential to ensure that enough time is available within the flock-keepers daily work routine for birds to be properly inspected and for any remedial action to be taken. The flock keeper should have adequate knowledge of the husbandry system used to be able to appreciate the suitability of the total environment for the birds' health and welfare. The system used, the number of birds kept and their stocking rate should depend on the suitability of the conditions and the skill of the flock-keeper.</p>	<p>All birds shall be inspected at least once daily and a further two flocks inspections carried out per day.</p>	<p>All hens must be inspected at least 3 times a day in order to identify any birds which are sick, injured or behaving abnormally.</p>
<p>Predator control</p>	<p>The design, construction and maintenance of enclosures, buildings and equipment for laying birds should be such that they: - exclude predators, rodents, and wild animals and minimise insects;</p>	<p>There must be a documented, effective control programme against wild birds, vermin, rodents and pests in poultry houses and feed stores. Effective measures must be taken by suitably trained personnel to control vermin, rodents, flies and other arthropods including the</p>	<p>A written Wild Animal Control Plan (WACP) must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) in place, and b) implemented on farm. <p>Levels of potentially harmful wild animals (e.g. rodents and birds) must be managed humanely to avoid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the risk of disease spread to livestock b) damage to livestock

		<p>elimination of potential breeding areas. Such control measures must be carried out using licensed products in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, and must be logged to enable Senior Management to determine that the necessary operations have been carried out. Pests shall be suitably controlled.</p>	<p>buildings and the services on which livestock depend c) contamination and spoilage of feed. The primary means of protecting livestock from wild animals, as documented in the WACP, must be by: a) physical exclusion methods b) the removal of elements in the vicinity that might encourage the presence of wild animals c) maintaining units in a clean and tidy condition to minimise the risk of wild animals gaining access to the unit.</p>
Pullets	No requirement	No requirement	All pullets destined for an RSPCA Assured approved laying unit must be sourced from an RSPCA Assured approved rearing unit.
Beak trimming		<p>Infra-red beak treatment of chicks shall be optional. If yes, IRBT will take place at day-old in the hatchery. If no, beak trimming must be carried out at less than 10 days. Where carried out, Infra-red beak treatment / beak trimming shall be to a satisfactory standard with no more than one-third of the bird's beak being IRBT / trimmed.</p>	<p>Where chicks are beak trimmed, this procedure must only be carried out on chicks no older than 24 hours using infrared equipment (see 'RSPCA welfare standards for hatcheries'), unless in accordance with H 2.4. (Other methods are not permitted)</p>
Transport	No minimum travel time / 12 hour maximum	Legal maximum	The time between the loading of the last hen to the time of arrival at the final destination must be

			less than 8 hours.
Lairage	No requirements	No requirements	All birds must be slaughtered as soon as possible on arrival at the processing plant and in any case within four hours.
Shackling	Permitted	Permitted	The shackling of live birds is only permitted: a) where: i) birds are slaughtered/killed on the farm where they were reared for finishing, and ii) birds are not subjected to any transport by vehicle to the place of slaughter/killing, and iii) the only commercially/practically viable option available is to slaughter/kill the birds using a system that requires shackling, and iv) written permission has been sought from and granted by the RSPCA Farm Animals Department b) in the event of an emergency and when the most humane and only available alternative is to slaughter/kill the birds using a system that requires shackling.
Pre-stunning	No requirement	No requirement	All birds must be pre-stunned to ensure humane slaughter
Bleeding	No requirement	No requirement	No more than 10 seconds must elapse between stunning and neck cutting.



Gas killing	No requirement	No requirement	Set of specific standards relating to gas killing to ensure humane slaughter
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Eat less. Eat better - substantiation

The eat less, eat better message is now widely accepted and supported by over 50 of the UK's most well-respected health, environment and animal welfare organisations, who are part of the Eating Better alliance.

They include: Compassion in World Farming, Food Ethics Council, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, Love Food Hate Waste, World Animal Protection and WWF. In their report *Principles for eating meat and dairy more sustainably: the 'less and better less and better less and better' approach* (April 2018) they independently (neither we, nor the RSPCA are partners of the alliance) outline eight well-evidenced reasons why this message is socially responsible and justified. These include:

"The 2015 Paris Climate Agreement commitments to keep global temperature rise within safe limits cannot be met without including dietary change as a priority solution. We need urgent action to reduce meat consumption of at least 50% by 2030 in high consuming countries including the UK." (p.3)

"In the UK we eat a lot of meat and dairy, with consumption around twice the global average." And, "households waste around 570,000 tonnes of fresh meat each year, 46% of which is avoidable with a value of about £1,300 million, together with embedded carbon and other resources used in its production." (p.13)

"For Eating Better, a focus on 'less' to reduce consumption of livestock products, particularly to address climate change, is only part of the picture. We also recognise there can be benefits including for animal welfare, the environment, health, reducing waste and for farming livelihoods from shifting our consumptions towards 'better' meat and dairy for the livestock products that we do choose to eat." (p.3)

"A study from Oxford University found that reducing average meat consumption in the UK to two or three servings a week could prevent 45,000 premature deaths a year and save the NHS £1.2 billion." (p.4)

This alliance of more than 50 civil society organisations independently identifies and endorses RSPCA Assured in their report as one of the schemes offering 'better':

"Better animal welfare. Better animal welfare. Better animal welfare. The RSPCA Assured certification covers both indoor and outdoor rearing systems and ensures greater space, bedding and enrichment materials are provided. In addition, on-farm health and welfare monitoring is required and stunning and slaughter processes are specified." (p.17)

This demonstrates that not only is the eat less, eat better message now widely used, understood and endorsed by many of the UK's leading and most influential civil society organisations (p.21) as a



necessity for the UK government to achieve its commitments to the Paris Climate Change agreement, but also that it is in no way unique to RSPCA Assured and this campaign.

“Eating Better encourages a culture where we place greater value on the food we eat, the animals that provide it and the people who produce it.” (p.14)

You can find a copy of the report summary, full report and blog on the Eat Better website via the following links:

Summary:

https://www.eating-better.org/uploads/Documents/2018/better_meat_summary_FINAL.pdf

Full report:

https://www.eating-better.org/uploads/Documents/2018/better_meat_report_FINAL.pdf

Blog: <https://www.eating-better.org/2018/04/Less-and-Better-Report>

Further information

- RSPCA Assured was set up to help improve the welfare of farm animals and encourage people who want to eat meat, fish, eggs and dairy to only choose higher welfare products such as those with the RSPCA Assured label
- Through the *Eat less, eat better* campaign we are simply engaging with the current trend - for reducing the amount of animal products people consume. We are not telling people to stop eating meat. What we are doing is continuing to encourage people to ‘eat less’ food from lower welfare farms and ‘eat better’ food from higher welfare farms - such as RSPCA Assured - when they are choosing to eat meat, fish, eggs and dairy - just as we’ve always done
- The eat less, eat better message obviously is in line with and helps us achieve our purpose as an animal welfare organisation; because if people eat less animal derived products from farms with poor welfare, but when they do eat animal derived products they choose those from animals from farms with good welfare, ultimately less animals will be farmed and/or farmed in poor welfare conditions - which can also have benefits for personal health and the environment

Evidence that eating less is better for the environment

- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/mar/21/eat-less-meat-vegetarianism-dangerous-global-warming>
- <https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/sustainable-agriculture/eco-farming/eat-more-plants/>
- <https://www.ciwf.org.uk/news/2013/07/new-alliance-promotes-less-and-better-meat>
- <https://www.ciwf.org.uk/factory-farming/>
- <https://reducetarian.org/blog/2017/4/13/earth-day-2017-how-eating-less-meat-helps-the-environment>
- <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/meat-and-environment/>



Evidence that eating less is better for your health

- <http://www.who.int/features/qa/cancer-red-meat/en/>
- <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-us/cancer-news/press-release/2015-10-26-cancer-research-uk-response-to-iarc-classification-of-red-and-processed-meat>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/red-meat.aspx>

Evidence that eating less is better for your pocket

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zt7syrd>
- <https://www.independent.ie/life/health-wellbeing/healthy-eating/eat-your-greens-its-good-for-your-health-and-your-pocket-30420046.html>

Eating less animal derived products, means you can afford better welfare

- One of the biggest excuses for not choosing better welfare products is cost
- At the time of writing you could buy 10 eggs from caged hens in Aldi and Lidl for 89p; where as 12 free range cost £1.67
- The difference with chicken is even more stark; you can get a whole fresh chicken for as little as £2.25 in Aldi, but a higher welfare chicken in Sainsbury's costs £6.17 or more
- So eating less animal derived products - and substituting them for more plant based products - means you can then afford to buy better when you do
- Source:mysupermarket.com (Accessed: 11 April 2018)

Research

- Reducing the amount of meat, fish, eggs and dairy we eat is a trend that is happening now - in fact research referenced by AHDB suggests as many as 68% of UK consumers are reducing the amount of animal products they eat and the number of 'flexitarians' is growing at more than five times the rate of the British population** However our own research indicates that 38% are reducing at 10% have cut out certain animal derived products.
- Whilst vegans, vegetarians, flexitarians and pescetarians are the segments most talked about in the media these segments combined represent less than 10% of the British population
- However conscious and unconscious reductarians - a term rarely used currently - represent a combined 38.5% of the population
- This move is reflected in a decline in sales of red meat, eggs and dairy products by as much as 5.8% year-on-year and supermarkets and restaurants ramping up their meat-free ranges and veggie options (DEFRA)
- The vast majority of animals farmed for food in the UK are kept in conditions which the RSPCA believes aren't good enough and thinks most consumers would probably agree
- RSPCA Assured was set up to help improve the welfare of farm animals and encourage people who want to eat meat, fish, eggs and dairy to only choose higher welfare products such as those with the RSPCA Assured label
- Through the *Eat less, eat better* campaign we are simply engaging with the current trend - for reducing the amount of animal products people consume. We are not telling people to stop eating meat or to reduce their meat consumption. What we are doing is continuing to encourage people to 'eat less' food from lower welfare farms and 'eat better' food from



higher welfare farms - such as RSPCA Assured - when they are choosing to eat meat, fish, eggs and dairy - just as we've always done

- We know people are choosing to reduce the amount of meat, fish, eggs and dairy they consume and cite concern about animal welfare as being their third main reason for this (after their own health and welfare concerns)
- And the trend looks set to continue with a quarter of all Brits saying they will be reducing, or considering reducing, their meat consumption within the next five years, according to new research commissioned by RSPCA Assured
- Added to this, the farming industry is itself talking about how Britain becomes more self-sufficient post Brexit - the NFU says we only produce 61% of the food we need to feed the nation - so 'eating less' and 'eating better' helps make that more achievable and realistic.
- With nearly one billion animals farmed for food each year in the UK, it's a huge task and one that requires a robust strategy with a powerful message to achieve its goal. That is why we are launching '*eat less, eat better*'
- We firmly believe that using a slogan that will resonate with people who are reducing the amount of animal products they eat, we will empower more people to trade up from low welfare to higher welfare products. This in turn will encourage more supermarkets and restaurants to stock higher welfare products and more animals to be farmed to higher welfare standards
(a reducetarian is 'someone who is mindfully and gradually reducing their consumption of animal products')
- Unsurprisingly red meat is the product most people are reducing because of health concerns
- After their own health and welfare, it is animal welfare (followed by environment) people are most concerned about
- Vegetables, mushrooms and meat substitutes were the most common ingredients used to replace meat
- The majority of these two segments are eating meat between three and four times a week and want to reduce by one day