

Animal Welfare Policy

We've long known that animal welfare is important to our customers and members so we are committed to offering products produced to good animal welfare standards for all our customers regardless of their budget. We support animal welfare through schemes such as Red Tractor, RSPCA Assured and our own brand animal welfare standards. The establishment of The Co-op Farming Groups strengthens our supply chain and the pillar model focuses our farmers on delivering high standards of welfare. We have dedicated long term relationships within the Farming Group with over 400 carefully selected farmers across key species which we call our foundation farmers. They produce our fresh protein and liquid milk with passion to the high standards you expect. We will work with our farming partners to monitor and improve the health and welfare of farmed animals and fish and to address environmental and ethical issues in our supply chain.

All meat and poultry sold under The Co-op brand is produced from livestock reared to strict standards of animal welfare and must be accredited to one of the national Farm Assurance Schemes controlled by Assured Food Standards, which allows meat to display the Red Tractor Logo (or equivalent).

We have, for many years, sought to improve the welfare of animals with initiatives, such as labelling the living conditions of hens laying our eggs back in the 1990s. Following on from this we became the first retailer to only use free-range eggs in all our products. We have also worked on introducing standards on chicken, pork and turkey, over and above the legal requirement

We have stringent non animal testing policies for our own brand product range. In response to customer opinion we developed the most stringent of non animal testing policies on our own brand product range. In the case of toiletries and household goods, our systems are reviewed by Cruelty Free International and their endorsement is used to communicate to our customers that this claim is credible and independently verified.

Background to our policy

The Co-op is committed to animal welfare. In developing our policy we have consulted many experts in this area and used the Farm Animal Welfare Committee's Five Freedoms as a reference document for guidance.

Farmers care for their animals by following the Five Freedoms welfare code:

- Freedom from hunger and thirst, by ready access to water and a diet to maintain health and vigour.
- Freedom from discomfort, by providing an appropriate environment.
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease, by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- Freedom to express normal behaviour, by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and appropriate company of the animal's own kind.
- Freedom from fear and distress, by ensuring conditions and treatment, which avoid mental suffering.

Scope

Our policy is universal to all products produced under own brand label irrespective of tier, geography or species.

- All meat and poultry sold under The Co-op brand is produced from livestock reared to strict standards of animal welfare and must be accredited to one of the national Farm Assurance Schemes controlled by Assured Food Standards, which allows meat to display the Red Tractor Logo (or equivalent).
- We have specific animal welfare requirements within each of our livestock and fish standards
- All products containing meat or fish will be clearly labelled in a transparent manner for our customers to clearly identify the country of origin or display the Red Tractor or additional Farm Assurance Logo
- We will work with our farming partners to monitor and improve the health and welfare of farmed animals and fish and to address environmental and ethical issues in our supply chain.
- We are committed to developing our standards further through external advice and benchmarking with our own expert panel and through close relationships with welfare groups such as the RSPCA and Compassion in World Farming
- We are committed to reporting our animal welfare performance across our key species

Policy position statements



Animal Cloning

Animal Cloning is an assisted reproductive technology that allows farmers to replicate their best animals. This means many animals can be produced from the best stock for either meat production, milk production or egg production, without traditional breeding techniques. Meat and dairy from cloned animals has been found to be safe for human consumption but there are serious concerns about the welfare of cloned animals and their offspring. In the EU foods produced from cloned animals are controlled under regulation, although there are significant issues regarding traceability of animals that are offspring of cloned animals. The Co-op does not knowingly source any own label meat or dairy from cloned animals or their offspring. We do not support animal cloning whilst current scientific advice suggests that welfare of the cloned animals is of concern.

Animal Feed Policy

The Co-op recognises the importance of providing correct nutrition to livestock reared for Co-op brand products. We aim to ensure that each animal is given a wholesome diet, appropriate to its age and species, which is formulated to provide the balance of nutrients necessary to maintain good health and vigour, without posing adverse effects to the animal or to the subsequent food chain. The diet of animals providing our own brand meat, dairy products and eggs is inevitably varied. For example, lambs generally are reared outdoors and are therefore grass fed, with some dietary supplements. Similar examples arise in the dairy sector, where animals also have a broad diet. For this reason we are especially careful to ensure the integrity of our feeds; to this end, our farmers rear all our livestock on feeds certified under the Feed Material Assurance Scheme (FEMAS).

Animal Testing

Our non animal testing stance is very much taken from a customer product point of view. As a consumer owned democratic business we have a duty to respond to our customers and use of animal testing for toiletries and household goods remain a key concern for the overwhelming majority. In response to customer opinion we developed the most stringent of non animal testing policies on our own brand product range. In the case of toiletries and household goods, our systems are reviewed by Cruelty Free International and their endorsement is used to communicate to our customers that this claim is credible and independently verified.

Assurance

All our own brand UK meat and poultry products are produced, as a minimum, to Red Tractor Farm Assurance Scheme standards (or equivalent). All own brand non-UK meat and poultry products are produced, as a minimum, to standards equivalent to Red Tractor. Compliance with our standards is verified through annual Red Tractor Farm Assurance audit or equivalent. All farms supplying us with meat or poultry products may be subject to announced and unannounced audits by either The Co-op or an appointed audit body at any time. To progress the animal welfare standards of all our own brand meat and poultry, we have an in house team of dedicated, trained animal welfare experts. All suppliers must notify us of any audit failures, compliance problems, and proven or investigated breaches in legislation or welfare standards. Once notified we review on a case by case basis and put in place an appropriate management action plan where necessary.

Antibiotics

In all own-brand meat and poultry products, the use of antibiotics is not allowed unless there is a written approval of a vet to address a specific health threat and administered by a qualified person. Prophylactic use of antibiotics within our supply chain is not permitted. We are working with our supply base on an antibiotic strategy based on a risk based approach. Farmers and suppliers are encouraged to engage with industry forums and initiatives to promote responsible antibiotic use and monitor and ultimately reduce antibiotic usage.

CCTV at Slaughter

All abattoirs slaughtering livestock for supply to The Co-op Group shall have in place a CCTV system for the monitoring and recording of livestock up to the point of kill (including offloading, handling, stunning and sticking) for the purpose of managing animal welfare. The CCTV equipment should be capable of recording legible time and date stamped images and storing these images for a period of not less than 6 months. Footage from this CCTV system is to be checked by senior management on a routine basis and be available for audit by a representative from The Co-op or an appointed agent/audit body at any time

Policy position statements



Confinement and Intensive Systems

All meat and poultry sold under The Co-op brand is produced from livestock reared to strict standards of animal welfare and must be accredited to one of the national Farm Assurance Schemes controlled by Assured Food Standards, which allows meat to display the Red Tractor Logo (or equivalent) as a minimum. The detail behind these livestock standards are detailed on Page 4 and 5. We do not permit specific production and confinement systems which do not meet our livestock standards; these include sow stall and tether systems, battery hens, force feeding of geese and ducks for foie-gras and rearing of calves for white veal. We are carrying out research within our Pork Farming Group to find a solution to confinement in sow farrowing crates.

Genetic Engineering

We do not permit the use of genetically modified (GM) crops, animals, ingredients or additives within Co-op brand products.

Growth Promoters

In all own-brand meat and poultry product the use of artificial substances specifically to promote abnormal muscle growth is not allowed.

Religious Slaughter – Farm Animal Welfare at Slaughter

All meat and poultry sold under The Co-op brand is produced to strict standards of animal welfare. All own-brand fresh and frozen meat and poultry sold in Co-op stores has been humanely stunned prior to slaughter, and all abattoirs and processing plants supplying our own-brand products are required to work to the standards laid down by our strict animal welfare requirements as well as the Humane Slaughter Association in their Codes of Practice. We do not stipulate Halal/Kosher in our product specifications, nor do we currently sell any Halal/Kosher certified meat and all of our meat comes from animals that are pre-stunned. There is currently no UK wide labelling scheme to cover whether an animal has been stunned prior to slaughter and to avoid confusing our customers, we would need a consistent approach across the UK food industry, including food service and catering.

Responsibly Sourced Fish

In recognition of concerns about the effect that overfishing and environmentally destructive catch and production methods are having on fish stock the Co-op Food operates a strict policy to monitor and control our fish supplies. This was originally launched in 2008 and has had many revision including a recent version in 2014 to introduce an externally accredited fish sourcing standard to validate environmental claims made on labelling covering fish in all products.

Routine Mutilations

All meat and poultry sold under The Co-op brand is produced from livestock reared to strict standards of animal welfare and must be accredited to one of the national Farm Assurance Schemes controlled by Assured Food Standards, which allows meat to display the Red Tractor Logo (or equivalent) as a minimum. The detail behind these livestock standards are detailed on Page 4. We do not permit the routine mutilations of farm animals. We are committed to working with our supply base to reduce the incidence of tail docking and beak trimming which is undertaken under veterinary advice to a minimum. In all cases we will follow the advice of the vet where these challenges exist however our long term aim is to reduce these practices further.

Travelling Distance and Time

We ensure our supply base keep live animal transportation to a minimum and avoid unnecessary long distance travel. We specify specific transportation limits with each livestock standard. Overall a maximum transport time of 8 hours is permitted across our supply chain with key targets in place for all species. This data is reviewed through monthly data collection from our supply chain which is uploaded onto our animal welfare portal called Pyramid. We have previously been awarded RSPCA Hot Topic Award (Live animal transportation times) for our standards on transportation within our supply chain.

The Farming Groups

Introduction

The Co-op Food supports nearly 2,300 UK farmers and has dedicated long term relationships with over 400 carefully selected farmers, collectively known as The Co-op Farming Groups. These 400 carefully selected farmers across key species are called foundation farms. They are focussed on growing and rearing The Co-op's fresh protein with passion to the standards you expect. They provide chicken, pork, Hereford and Aberdeen Angus beef, Cambrian lamb and milk through a transparent supply chain.

Since the establishment of our Co-op Dairy Group in 2011, we launched five additional Farming Groups for farmers supplying our own-brand fresh British meat and poultry. The six groups are helping to maintain The Co-op's strict animal welfare policies and encourage long-term investment and improvements to farm efficiencies, training and sustainability.

Farming Group Structure

The structure of the groups is based on five agricultural pillars and farms are rated Bronze, Silver or Gold base on performance against our pillar model. All farms meet our fundamental health and quality standards as well as work with us to demonstrate best practice, as well as promote our values and the Co-op brand.

The further three pillars focus on sustainability, the environment and ethical and training initiatives. As farms progress through the pillars to become Silver or Gold farms, they receive an additional premium according to the level they achieve.

Our foundation farms all receive an annual audit where the performance against the Farming Group pillars is determined and compliance against our livestock standards are monitored



Livestock and Assurance Standards

All meat and poultry sold under The Co-op brand is produced from livestock reared to strict standards of animal welfare and must be accredited to one of the national Farm Assurance Schemes controlled by Assured Food Standards, which allows meat to display the Red Tractor Logo (or equivalent) as a minimum. The following additional livestock standards are in place for each species:



Beef

All of the beef in our own brand fresh and prepared products is British and assured to UK conventional farm assurance standards. Animals are either reared outdoors on grass pasture with access to shelter during harsh weather, or on grass pasture during summer and in open-sided well ventilated barns on silage or forage during the winter.



Chicken

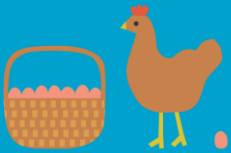
All our own-brand fresh chicken is produced, to a minimum, to Red Tractor Farm Assurance Standards and our premium fresh chicken are RSPCA Assured free range accredited. Chicken in our prepared products is assured to UK Red Tractor Standards. We require our chickens raised for meat (broilers) to have environmental enrichment (straw/sawdust/bales etc.) along with recommended period of light and darkness during the day.

Livestock and Assurance Standards



Dairy

Our dedicated British dairy supply chain, launched in 2011 produces milk to Red Tractor Standards on grass pasture with access to shelter during harsh weather. The group improves animal welfare standards of British dairy cows through the monitoring of herd health and proactive monitoring of husbandry practices



Eggs

All shell eggs sold (own-brand and branded) are free-range, as a minimum, and we only use free-range eggs as ingredients in own brand products. In addition our shell eggs are 100% British produced to the Lion Quality Mark



Fish

All fish must be sourced to our own brand Responsible Fish Policy in accordance with an external accredited fish sourcing standard. Our fish standards are detailed below:

Atlantic Salmon (Scotland) – All Scottish and certified to GlobalG.A.P. scheme. This includes salmon used as an ingredient in our food products. Additionally all of our 'Irresistible' fresh salmon and smoked salmon is certified against RSPCA Welfare Standards

Basa (Vietnam) – All sources are ASC or GlobalG.A.P. certified

Seabass (Turkey) – All sources are GlobalG.A.P. certified

Mussels (Scotland) – Source is MSC certified

Mussels (Chile) – Source uncertified, working towards certification late 2015/early 2016

Tiger Prawns (Indonesia) – Organic, certified by Naturland

King Prawns (Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Nicaragua and Honduras) – All sources are ASC or GAA/BAP certified



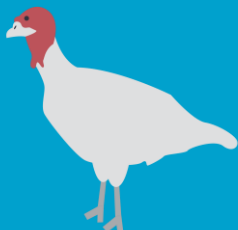
Lamb

Our own-brand lamb is sourced on a seasonal basis from the UK and New Zealand to UK Farm assurance standards or equivalent. All Fresh lamb is reared outdoors on grass pasture with access to shelter during harsh weather.



Pork

All own-brand fresh pork, bacon and sausages are sourced to as a minimum to UK Farm Assurance Standard or equivalent. Our premium tier is sourced to RSPCA Assured outdoor bred standards. These standards provide the pigs with access to deep straw bedding with lots of natural light and an environment that takes into account their welfare needs.



Turkey

Own-brand fresh turkey is produced to a minimum of Quality British Turkey standard.

Awards & benchmarking



2015

Business Benchmark Farm Animal Welfare (BBFAW) – awarded Tier 2 status, 'Integral to Business Strategy'
Northern Ireland Food and Drink Awards (NIFDA) – Supply Chain Excellence Award for the Hereford Beef supply chain

2014

Greenpeace Tuna Sustainability League Table – achieved top tier as one of the market leaders

2012

Business Benchmark Farm Animal Welfare (BBFAW) – awarded Tier 2 status, 'Integral to Business Strategy'
RSPCA Hot Topic Award (Live animal transportation times)

2011

Compassion in World Farming – Good Dairy Award
Compassion in World Farming – Most Improved Supermarket Award
RSPCA People's Choice Supermarket Award

2010

RSPCA People's Choice Supermarket Award

2009

RSPCA People's Choice Supermarket Award

2008

Compassion in World Farming – Good Egg Award
RSPCA Lifetime Achievement Award
Supermeat Awards – Best Head Office Initiative (Elmwood Chicken)

Promotion of Animal Welfare

Animal welfare is an integral part of The Co-op's engagement with its customers and wider stakeholders. This is delivered through many channels such as:

- CSR Report [[Click here for Link](#)]
- The Co-op Food Website and online communications such as social media
- Farming Group Model
- Producer articles within Food magazine
- Customer and farmer research such as Let's Talk and activities such as Farm to Fork
- Agricultural Shows
- Open Farm Sunday
- Trade and National press
- Point of sale in store, advertisement, radio and store tills
- Award submissions
- Television and Radio interviews
- Research and Development and Concept Farms
- British Born and Bred Report
- Stakeholder relationships – quarterly meetings with key opinion formers, welfare bodies, farming representatives and Universities
- Joint collaboration initiatives with our external stakeholders

Animal welfare objectives & targets

- The Co-op is committed to ensuring our customers operating on a variety of budgets have the opportunity to support good animal welfare standards and that all shell eggs and egg ingredients in own brand products are at least free range
- We record data from our supplying farms monthly and review progress against agreed welfare, health and quality key performance indicators. We take action when targets are not met and work collaboratively with our supply base and farmers to improve performance on a quarterly basis through joint business plan meetings
- Within our published CSR report we report on the progress of our farm animal welfare commitments and are committed to publishing further performance within our Farming Group website during 2015

Some of our specific targets reported in our CSR and our recent British Born & Bred report include:

- 2013: Improve animal welfare standards for dairy cows together with environmental impacts by developing a dedicated supply chain
- 2013/2015: Measure and report the impact of our own brand Higher Welfare standards on animal welfare by 2015
- 2013/2014: Continue to ensure that shoppers operating on a variety of budgets have the opportunity to support higher welfare standards
- 2014: We will source 50% of our meat and poultry from our farming groups and extend these further over a 3 year period

Management, monitoring & implementation

- The Co-op has an in-house team of dedicated, trained animal welfare experts to progress our animal welfare standards for all our own brand meat and poultry. Our training requirements are detailed previously.
- We have a detailed meat policy in place where our suppliers can only source product from an approved sourcing list and all meat and fish must be sourced against our livestock standards.
- All meat and poultry sold under The Co-op brand is produced from livestock reared to strict standards of animal welfare and must be accredited to one of the national Farm Assurance Schemes controlled by Assured Food Standards, which allows meat to display the Red Tractor Logo (or equivalent) as a minimum. In addition we source chicken, beef, pork, lamb and liquid milk through our Farming Group model as detail on page 4.
- All our farms within our Farming Groups are registered on our farming group database called Pyramid. Data is collected monthly for health & welfare KPIs for input, outcome and quality measures. The agricultural team analyses this data monthly, taking any necessary actions and communicates performance to the business.
- We are moving to reporting our animal welfare performance against these KPI's within our CSR in 2015 and is published in our animal welfare performance document online on our Food & Farming Webpage/Animal welfare section.
- All suppliers must notify us of any audit failures, compliance issues, and proven or investigated breaches in legislation or welfare standards. Once notified we review on a case by case basis and put in place an appropriate management action plan were necessary.
- The Co-op has created an internal management structure to drive this agenda. The Co-op animal welfare and Fish Sustainability Teams are multi-disciplinary in constitution, drawing from a broad base of internal and external stakeholders and represent a holistic business approach to this important issue. These two teams fulfil the roles of analysing and interpreting scientific data as well as having policy and decision making powers based on the outputs of these analyses.

Performance of animal welfare standards

- We are committed to the implementation of our animal welfare policy within the scope as detailed previously across our supply chain. The continued aim to extend the range of products that meet improved welfare standards through our Farming Group model and to ensure that our fresh own brand products comply as a minimum with Red Tractor Assurance standards or equivalent.
- As a business we benchmark our performance against animal welfare through the use of agricultural and welfare platform – Pyramid. Our suppliers and farmers input data monthly on KPI's for animal welfare performance, health and quality parameters. These are broken down into input, outcome and quality measures. The agricultural team then analysed this data monthly, take any necessary actions and communicate performance to the business
- We report on animal welfare performance against its objectives and targets within our annual Corporate Sustainability Report, and publish performance measures linked to the proportion of its own-brand fresh and frozen poultry, meat and fish sales that meet different welfare standards,
- In addition to the above examples, The Co-op Food publishes sales figures on the proportion of sales by welfare standard across key species/products (i.e. chicken, turkey, beef, bacon, pork, sausage, lamb)
- We are moving to reporting our animal welfare performance against these KPI's within our CSR in 2015 and is published in our animal welfare performance document online on our Food & Farming Webpage/Animal welfare section.

Agricultural Excellence

- The Co-op has an in-house team of dedicated, trained animal welfare experts to progress our animal welfare standards for all our own brand meat and poultry.
- Our team are experts in their area through academic training at University prior to recruitment and/or additional training during their employment through accredited courses in animal welfare such as Animal Welfare Officer at University of Bristol or equivalent per species.
- Our experts continue in their development through academies and attendance at industry events and workshops in animal welfare and engagement with welfare organisations such as RSPCA and Compassion in World Farming
- We actively promote our supply base to follow similarly and ensure their team are adequately trained and have in place a professional team to meet the requirements of welfare regulations at the time of killing and associated standards
- Follow the work of The Co-op Farming and Food team at: <https://twitter.com/coopagrimatters>

Governance Report

An independent report on the Co-op's Animal Welfare Strategy by Food Animal Initiative

Executive Summary

2015 has been a tough year for the agricultural industry with ongoing disease challenges and low commodity prices and this will continue into 2016. The Co-op supported over 2300 farmers in The Co-operative Farming Groups in 2015 and will continue to do so in 2016 through incentives and investment with projects and Research and Development.

The Co-op Agriculture Team continued to uphold good animal welfare standards through working with their suppliers and their farming groups in 2015. The Co-op will extend their farming groups to include turkeys and laying hens in 2016. Good animal welfare standards were maintained on supply farms in 2015. This was evidenced by the high level of compliance in the Key Performance Indicators that The Co-op monitor on a monthly basis. Beef, Lamb, Pork and Chicken farms in the Farming Groups have an annual audit to ensure compliance with the Agriculture Pillars. In 2016 The Co-op will continue to be open and honest about their animal welfare commitment's and policies by publishing the Outcome Measures that are collected for turkey, chicken, dairy, beef, lamb and pork.

The use of antibiotics in farm animals was raised as a concern in 2015 and will continue to be into 2016. The Co-op is working closely with its suppliers to responsibly minimise the use of antibiotics in their supply chain. This programme will be of the highest priority in the coming year.

The Co-op held their first Research and Development Day in December 2015 which involved all of their key suppliers and FAI. This provided an opportunity for The Co-op to share their work with their suppliers and identify further projects for 2016. The Co-op publish information on the research projects on their website and is committed to extending this further in 2016.

Communication

The Co-op are committed to providing products that have been produced to good animal welfare standards for all of their customers. All of their customers, no matter what their budget, should be able to enjoy meat, poultry and fish knowing it has come from animals reared to good welfare standards. All of The Co-operative own brand meat and poultry products are produced as a minimum to Red Tractor Farm Assurance Scheme standards or equivalent where sourced outside of the UK.

The Co-op is committed to being open and transparent about their animal welfare commitments and policies. The Animal Welfare Commitments and policies are publically available on their website for their customers and other interested parties to view. This has been recognised by Business Benchmark on Food Animal Welfare in 2015 and 2016 where The Co-operative was awarded Tier 2 status- 'Integral to business strategy. The Co-op also published information in the 2013 and 2014 Corporate Sustainability Reports and this included a Progress Report on the Animal Welfare and Farming Groups in July 2015. In 2016 The Co-op will report on how they are actively improving their outcome measures through collaboration with their supply chains. The Co-operative Group has already published the Outcome Measures that are collected for turkey, chicken, dairy, beef, lamb and pork on their website. Further details will be included in the Corporate Sustainability Reports going forward.

Governance Report

An independent report on the Co-op's Animal Welfare Strategy by Food Animal Initiative

Communication continued

There is a set process in place between The Co-operative and their suppliers to address any animal welfare concerns. Suppliers must notify The Co-op of any audit failures, compliance issues, and proven or investigated breaches in legislation or welfare standards. Once notified The Co-op follow the procedures outlined in their 'Agricultural Escalation Policy'. Every issue is reviewed on a case by case basis and an appropriate management action plan is implemented where necessary.

The Co-op is working closely with its suppliers to responsibly minimise the use of antibiotics in their supply chains. They are working to avoid the use of antibiotics that are important in human medicine. However effective treatment with antibiotics is sometimes necessary to protect animal health and welfare. This programme will be of the highest priority in the coming year. The Co-op has been working closely with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate on the use of antibiotics in its supply chain.

The Co-op engage, on a regular basis, with external stakeholders such as Compassion in World Farming. They take part in the Supermarket Survey carried out by Compassion in World Farming. The Co-op Sourcing Standards and the Key Performance Indicators have been developed to ensure that The Co-op is addressing key concerns of external stakeholders for example: CCTV in slaughterhouses, pre-slaughter stunning, and use of antibiotics.

The Co-op also engage with their customers and educate them about their animal welfare commitments through Open Farm Sunday and their attendance at Agricultural Shows. Five farms supplying The Co-op were involved in Open Farm Sunday in 2015.

The Co-op Agriculture team externally promotes the work that they do through external presentations. Examples of this include their involvement at Food Matters Live in 2015 and the launch of The Co-operative Farming Group twitter account, Open Farm Sunday, Agricultural Shows and their website. The website address is:

<http://www.co-operativefood.co.uk/food-matters/farming-food/animal-welfare/>

The Co-op have invested in Agriculture Team which has allowed the team to expand during 2015. The Co-op Agriculture Team have developed their knowledge further through attending conferences and have undergone welfare training during 2015 and further training is scheduled for 2016.

The Co-op conducted a Farming Group Survey in 2015 which was open to all members of the Farming Group. One of the issues highlighted by this survey is that the members would like to see improve Environment schemes within our farming groups and that from this, we are now developing an Environmental Tool. The Co-op is looking at methods for increased communication between its farming group members to share best farming practice.

Governance Report

An independent report on the Co-op's Animal Welfare Strategy by Food Animal Initiative

Sourcing Standards

The Co-op has Livestock Sourcing Standards in place for Beef, Lamb, Dairy, Pork, Chicken, Egg and Turkey which all of the farms supplying The Co-operative have to comply with. The Co-operative supports nearly 2,000 farmers and has dedicated and long term relationships with over 400 carefully selected farmers. These 400 foundation farms are organised into Farming Groups across key species. They are focussed on growing and rearing The Co-operative's fresh protein with passion to the standards that The Co-operative customers expect. The Co-operative Farming Groups provide chicken, pork, Hereford and Aberdeen Angus beef, Cambrian lamb and milk through a transparent supply chain.

The Co-op have reviewed their Sourcing Standards for Beef, Lamb, Dairy, Pork, Chicken, Egg and Turkey in 2015 with the aid of FAI.

[The Co-op](#) and their premium Hereford beef supplier, Dunbia have picked up the Supply Chain Excellence Award at the prestigious, biannual Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Awards (NIFDA) 2015. There is the potential for The Co-op Agriculture team to apply for external welfare which would highlight the great work being done by the team.

The work that The Co-operative has done has been recognised externally and the business has been awarded the following awards:

2016

Business Benchmark on Farm Animal Welfare (BBFAW) – awarded Tier 2 Status 'Integral to business strategy'

2015

Business Benchmark on Farm Animal Welfare (BBFAW) – awarded Tier 2 Status 'Integral to business strategy'

2012

RSPCA Hot Topic Award (Live animal transportation times)

2011

CIWF Good Dairy Award

CIWF Most Improved Supermarket Award

RSPCA People's Choice Supermarket Award (won 2008-2011).

2008

CIWF Good Egg Awards

RSPCA Lifetime Achievement Award

Supermeat Awards – Best Head Office Initiative (Elmwood Chicken).

Since the establishment of The Co-operative Dairy Group in 2011, The Co-op launched five additional Farming Groups for farmers supplying their own-brand fresh British meat and poultry. The six groups help to maintain The Co-operative's strict animal welfare policies and encourage long-term investment and improvements to farm efficiencies, training and sustainability.

Governance Report

An independent report on the Co-op's Animal Welfare Strategy by Food Animal Initiative

Sourcing standards continued

The structure of the groups is based on five agricultural pillars and farms are rated Bronze, Silver or Gold based on performance against the pillar model. All farms must meet The Co-op fundamental health and quality standards and secondly, work with them to demonstrate best practice and promote their values and the Co-operative brand.

The further three pillars focus on sustainability, the environment and ethical and training initiatives. As farms progress through the pillars to become Silver or Gold farms, they receive an additional premium according to reflect the standards that they achieve. The Co-op foundation farms all receive an annual audit where the performance against the Farming Group pillars is determined and compliance against their livestock sourcing standards are monitored. The audits are carried out by an independent company that are accredited to UK Red Tractor Standards.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Co-op has an online database which records the impact of key animal welfare indicators on a monthly basis. This data is used to enable suppliers to identify better ways of improving farm animal welfare. The collection of this information is viewed in conjunction with 'input' measures such as stocking densities. The Co-op has set criteria and an agreed target for each species that their farmers and suppliers work to. This enables them to show due diligence against their animal welfare targets but more importantly drives actions and progress across their farming and supplier base.

The welfare tracker is reviewed monthly and circulated to senior members of the Food Executive Team for further review. The Co-op feedback performance data through farming group meetings so that individual farmers can see how they benchmark against the group. This helps drive further improvements and facilitates the sharing of best practice in a practical manner. The Co-op suppliers and farmers can also review their performance and benchmark themselves against the wider farming base on their online database. The KPI's are also used to determine research and development priorities across the species. The Co-op has invested in the online database to enable more KPIs to be collected for dairy.

Governance Report

An independent report on the Co-op's Animal Welfare Strategy by Food Animal Initiative

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) continued

The table below details the % of farms that achieved the required standards for input, outcome and quality measures in 2015. Comparison cannot be drawn year on year as each species has undergone welfare changes, KPI RAG changes and farm changes. The table highlights the challenges faced by the more intensively grown species.

Farm levels of compliance, 2015 (%)				
Species	Input	Outcome	Quality & Consistency	Overall measures
Beef	100	97	93	97
Chicken	90	64	78	77
Dairy	97	94	99	97
Lamb	100	99	91	97
Pork	100	92	89	94
Overall	97	89	90	93

Research and Development

In 2015, The Co-op began an exciting new partnership with FAI to revise their Livestock Sourcing Standards and manage their Research and Development Programme. The review of the Livestock Sourcing Standards is complete with the exception of fish which is due to be completed in Q1 of 2016. The Co-op has also invested more funding into their research programme to address some of the key health & welfare issues that challenge their suppliers. The research programme in 2016 will be expanded to cover eggs and fish. The work that The Co-op fund is widened by the extensive work that their suppliers undertake within their own farming bases and shows exemplary commitment to British Agriculture through its continued investment.

The Co-op have invested in Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) to ensure sustainable sources of fish. The Co-op have invested in a leading research and development project to assess the level of antibiotics used within its dairy supply chain in conjunction with Kite Consulting.

The Co-op held their first Research and Development Day in December 2015 which involved all of their key suppliers and FAI. This provided an opportunity for The Co-op to share their work with their suppliers and identify further projects for 2016. The Co-op will publish further information on the research projects on their website.