



2025: Individual Member Motion: Animal Welfare

This meeting notes that Co-op Members value animal welfare and expect that the animals raised for Co-op products have good lives under ever-improving welfare standards. Our Co-op has made significant progress towards improved standards for Co-op chickens over the past two years, noting the decrease in stocking density on chicken farms that supply Co-op to give chickens more space.

This meeting also notes that Co-op is supplied each year with over 10 million chickens, 98% of which are fast-growing Franken chickens - breeds that have been scientifically proven to suffer more from heart attacks, organ failure, white striping, lameness, and ammonia burns than slower growing breeds, even when given more space.

This meeting believes that our Co-op should continue to improve the welfare of chickens raised for meat and requests the Board to consider phasing out the sale of fast-growing breeds of chickens and transitioning to slower-growing breeds, ensuring that all chickens sold align with our core value of compassionate treatment towards animals.

This meeting also requests the Board to consider setting a timeline for transitioning to slower-growing breeds of chicken and report on chicken welfare improvements at the next AGM.

2026: Update

Our Co-op is committed to improving animal welfare across the whole supply chain. Following the Member Motion that was passed at our AGM in 2023, we launched our “Space to Thrive” commitment. This moved to lower stocking density across all fresh chicken lines in February 2024, which was nine months earlier than planned.

Since then, we were one of the first retailers to extend this commitment to breaded and ready to eat products, which represents a significantly higher proportion of the chicken that we sell. We are working with our suppliers to adopt the latest technology such as AI assisted cameras, which help farmers identify and resolve any welfare issues. These actions put us significantly ahead of most other retailers on chicken welfare.

Slower growing breeds of chicken require more barns to be built, putting farmers under additional pressure where the planning process for building new barns is challenging and expensive. While we are pleased that other retailers are joining the Co-op and committing to lower stocking density for their chickens, this only puts further pressure on farmers who already have reduced space on their farms.

A move to a slower growing breed would also cost tens of millions of pounds, which would result in an increase in the price of chicken in our stores. At a time when consumer confidence is low and there is a tough economic climate, we are acutely aware of the need, and our responsibility, to provide our members and customers with well sourced, quality products at a good value price point.

For our commitment to animal welfare more broadly, the annual Business Benchmark for Animal Welfare Report ranked Co-op as the third highest overall UK retailer, ahead of all big four supermarkets, and the discounters. To further strengthen our strong animal welfare commitments, in 2025, we also committed to being 100% eye stalk abolition free on shrimp and introduced Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) standards on farmed fish to improve our broader welfare and environmental credentials.

Towards the end of 2025, we became the first UK convenience retailer to move to cage-free pork across our Spanish, German and Italian continental range. The move will see products such as Prosciutto, Parma Ham, Salami, Mortadella and Chorizo sourced from pigs raised without confinement, reinforcing our longstanding dedication to animal welfare and responsible sourcing.

We have done so whilst continuing to support British farmers, both through our 100% British sourcing commitments and by giving farmers and suppliers greater certainty and stability through longer committed supply contracts across protein and dairy. We work closely with all of our suppliers and farmers to continually improve animal welfare. During 2025, we also allocated over £760,000 of our £802,000 sustainability fund to farmers in our beef, lamb and dairy supply chain to support them in reducing emissions and promoting nature on their farms.