



Frequently Asked Questions

Program Overview

What is Humane Farm Animal Care?

Humane Farm Animal Care (HFAC) is a non-profit organization created to improve the lives of farm animals through the highest animal welfare standards for farm animals in food production. This program includes all stages of the animal's life, including handling and slaughter.

HFAC does this through the Certified Humane Raised and Handled® certification and labeling program for meat, eggs, dairy and poultry products. These products are from animals raised according to Humane Farm Animal Care's Animal Care Standards.

Humane Farm Animal Care is endorsed by a consortium of over 50 supporting organizations, including the Center for Food Safety, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). A full list can be found on our website at: <http://www.certifiedhumane.org/index.php?page=humane-organizations>.

What is the Certified Humane® Certificate Program?

The Certified Humane Raised & Handled® program is an inspection, certification and labeling program for meat, poultry, egg and dairy products which come from animals raised with humane care standards. The program is a voluntary, program available to producers and of animals raised for food. The purpose of the program is to provide independent verification that the care and handling of livestock and poultry on farms enrolled in the program meet high quality humane *Animal Care Standards*.

What do the standards require?

The *Animal Care Standards* require that animals must have ample space, shelter, and gentle handling to limit stress and additionally require that:

- The standards cover the animals from birth through slaughter. Slaughter facilities are inspected as well as the farms and ranches.
- Food additives such as antibiotics, hormones, growth promoters and animal byproducts are prohibited;
- Cages, crates, and tie stalls are prohibited; the animals must be free to move and not be confined. This means that chickens must be able to flap their wings and dust bathe, pigs have space to move around and root, and other requirements that mandate that all animals must be able to exhibit natural behaviors;
- All animals must have sufficient protection from weather elements and live in an environment that promotes well-being. Cows, sheep, and goats must have daily access to pasture;
- Managers and caretakers must be thoroughly trained, skilled, and competent in animal husbandry and welfare, and have good working knowledge of their system and the species of livestock in their care.

How were the *Animal Care Standards* set?

The standards were created by a team of a 28-member Scientific Committee, animal scientists and, veterinarians who have backgrounds in farm animal welfare research or teaching. During the original creation of the standards, the team reviewed the latest research and consulted established standards, such as those in use by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) in England, and other standards and guidelines recognized for the humane treatment of animals. Input was also obtained from producers who raised their animals to a high welfare standard. The Animal Care Standards are updated by the scientific committee as new research and information on farm animal welfare becomes available. We have since updated our standards in 2008 and 2012.

Producer Application and Inspection

How do producers receive Certified Humane Raised and Handled Certification?

Producers must apply to the program, by completing a lengthy application. After the HFAC office receives and reviews the application and determines that the producer meets our standards, a trained inspector is assigned to do the inspection. From the time a producer first contacts our office, it can take one or two years before we ever receive the application, because **producers must meet all the standards before applying to the program.** There is no phase-in period.

The on-site inspection includes interviews with staff, review of records, observation, and evaluation of operating procedures. Handling and slaughter inspections are also conducted in conjunction with these inspections. Inspections include the entire process, the slaughter process, and traceability to make sure that the product in the packaging came from the animals which were inspected. If a producer passes the inspection, the producer becomes certified for a one-year period and is subsequently allowed to carry the Certified Humane Raised and Handled® seal on its products. Each certified producer must reapply and be re-inspected annually in order to maintain certification.

What happens if the producer fails to meet the standards?

If the applicant does not meet the standards, certification will be denied. If the producer is already on the program and has failed inspection upon re-application, they will not be certified and their current certification will be revoked. Failure to provide the HFAC inspector access to all facilities and records or providing any false or misleading information is grounds for revoking certification.

If we perform an unannounced inspection and find that the producer is not meeting our standards, we will revoke their certification.

For detailed information on how the program works, go to our website's Program Policy Manual at:

<http://www.certifiedhumane.org/uploads/pdf/Pol13.1J.pdf>.

You can also see all of our standards for all of our species, as well as slaughter standards at:

<http://www.certifiedhumane.org/index.php?page=standards>

Certified Humane® Products

How will I know which products in the supermarket are Certified Humane®?

For more information on where to find Certified Humane® products, visit HFAC's "Where to Buy" page: <http://www.certifiedhumane.org/index.php?page=where-to-buy>. The Certified Humane® App is available for download for the iPhone and Android, and our website is mobile accessible from all devices.

A complete listing of all Certified Humane® producers and products is located on our website:

<http://www.certifiedhumane.org/index.php?page=producers-products>

Look for the Certified Humane Raised & Handled® logo to ensure that the products you purchase were manufactured using the highest farm animal welfare standards.

Does Certified Humane® mean “free range”?

Many Certified Humane® products are free-range, but welfare is more important to HFAC standards than the farming system involved. Free-range does not automatically guarantee improved welfare. After many discussions with experts in veterinary and animal welfare science, farm animal research, and conversations with people who have practical farming experience, we found that appropriately designed and well-managed indoor systems can equally satisfy an animal’s key requirements, except in the case of beef cattle, dairy cows, sheep, and goats.

Does Certified Humane® mean “organic”?

HFAC is concerned primarily with animal welfare, while organic programs focus primarily on environmental sustainability. There are many producers on the program that are both Certified Organic and Certified Humane®. We believe that both programs can work synergistically.

“I am vegan and believe that the most humane thing would be not to eat meat. Why does this program exist?”

96% of Americans identify themselves as omnivores (consuming meat, poultry, or dairy). Only 4% of the US population is vegetarian and a small percentage of vegetarians are vegans. There are 10 billion farm animals raised and slaughtered for food in the US every year. These animals will be raised and slaughtered whether or not our program exists. Our program exists to improve the welfare of those farm animals and to ensure that they meet their ends as peacefully as possible.

How can I help promote this program to help improve the lives of farm animals being raised for food?

First and foremost, purchase products that have the Certified Humane Raised and Handled® logo on them. Certified Humane® Product listings can be found on the “Where to Buy” page of our website, or by using our App for Android and iPhone.

If your grocery store or restaurant does not carry products with the Certified Humane Raise and Handled®, download our product request form to fill out and give it to your grocer.

Our “Take Action” page lists many things that you can do to bring about change and can be found at the following link: <http://www.certifiedhumane.org/index.php?page=take-action>

If you would like to volunteer your time to help spread the word about Certified Humane®, please send your mailing address to info@certifiedhumane.org with a note indicating that you would like to volunteer.