

THE HUMANE LEAGUE

UNITED KINGDOM

FOODSERVICE REPORT

European Chicken Commitment



**AS OF 10.01.2020, 17 OUT
OF 40 OF THE LARGEST
FOODSERVICE COMPANIES
OPERATING IN THE UK HAVE
COMMITTED TO RAISING THE
STANDARDS OF CHICKENS
RAISED FOR MEAT IN THEIR
SUPPLY CHAINS.**

**HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF THESE
CONTINUE TO SERVE CHICKEN THAT
DOES NOT MEET MINIMUM STANDARDS**
defined by leading animal protection
organisations and show no intention to
change or consider this important issue.

Chickens are inquisitive, friendly and playful
birds, and are more intelligent than most
people think, yet they are one of the most
abused land animals in the world. In the UK
alone, over one billion are killed for food
each year.



A shocking 95% of chickens reared for meat are raised on intensive factory farms.

They are often packed into noisy barns, living in their own waste that burns their legs and bodies.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

CHICKENS' BODIES ARE BRED TO PRODUCE AS MUCH MEAT MUSCLE, PARTICULARLY ON THE BREAST—for fillets—in as little time as possible. This leads to painful leg weakness and bone problems. As a result, many struggle to walk, suffering from pain, lameness and decreased energy levels. Despite what is often argued by the agricultural industry, it is not “normal” or “natural” for a young chicken to be sitting down to ‘rest’ most of the time. Like other animals, chickens love to explore and play, but are unable to. Along with cramped conditions, intensive chicken breeds are the source of the majority of welfare issues encountered in the industry. But, it doesn't have to be this way. By signing up to the [European Chicken Commitment \(ECC\)](#), companies can raise the welfare of the birds that they use.

WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN CHICKEN COMMITMENT?

THE ECC IS A SET OF STANDARDS FOR IMPROVING THE LIVES OF CHICKENS RAISED FOR MEAT. These standards were agreed by a group of leading animal protection organisations including the RSPCA, Compassion in World Farming, World Animal Protection and The Humane League UK, and have already been adopted by food industry leaders such as KFC, Pret a Manger, Nestlé and Marks & Spencer.

THERE ARE 6 ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS:

1 USE BREEDS WITH BETTER WELFARE. Intensive breeds are at the core of health and welfare problems for broiler chickens. By transitioning away from the common intensive breeds, many of these can be improved or avoided altogether.

2 COMPLY WITH EU ANIMAL WELFARE LAWS. All EU animal welfare regulations must be adhered to, even when chicken is produced outside of the EU and imported into the UK.

3 REDUCE DISTRESS AT SLAUGHTER. Current stunning and slaughter methods are highly distressing. In water-bath stunning systems, birds are hung upside down while fully conscious, their legs placed in metal shackles, causing pain and distress. Rather than effectively being stunned to avoid the pain of a neck cut, birds often receive an insufficient stun. Controlled atmospheric killing (CAK) offers the opportunity to vastly reduce suffering by ensuring effective stunning and less handling.

4 IMPLEMENT THIRD-PARTY CHECKS AND PUBLIC REPORTING. We're asking for greater transparency in the industry, ensuring the public is kept informed of progress towards achieving corporate welfare commitments and farms are audited to ensure compliance of standards.

5 IMPROVE AIR QUALITY, LIGHT, & ENRICHMENT. Chickens should be provided with perches to help satisfy their natural impulses. Housing must give natural light to a specific, measured standard.

6 GIVE BIRDS MORE SPACE. Chickens should be stocked at a maximum of 30kg/m² (approximately 14 birds per m² at a slaughter weight of 2.2 kg). More space allows movement and better quality life.



THESE HIGHER BROILER WELFARE MEASURES ARE MUCH MORE THAN A TREND—they're becoming the industry standard. Starting in 2018, over 99 companies have now made a public commitment to their customers and stakeholders to improve the lives of broiler chickens in their UK and European supply chains by 2026 or earlier.

With the industry making more and more commitments, broiler producers are also recognising the necessity for change, and are moving much quicker on this issue than they did on cage-free eggs.

WHY FOCUS ON FOODSERVICE?

THE FOODSERVICE SECTOR HAS A CLEARLY DEFINED AND WELL-REPRESENTED CLIENTELE, ranging from workers, civil servants, school and university students, patients, and prisoners, all who have access to a canteen or internal restaurant. Across Europe, this sector has a combined annual turnover of over €25 billion and delivers over 6 billion meals each year¹, many of which contain chicken meat from broilers.

However, since most Foodservice brands are not household names or indeed known to the public at all, it is therefore vitally important that they be held to account by animal protection groups working in the interest of animals.

Fortunately, many of the nation's leading Foodservice companies have already committed to the ECC and are encouraging others to do the same. Sodexo, SSP Group, Newrest, Elio Group, Aramark and Compass have all made public commitments, among others.

***committed
to the ECC***



Speaking on this issue, Compass Group's Safety and Sustainability Director Federico Tonetti said: "The welfare of farm animals within our global supply chain is important to us and is a key element of our sustainability strategy.

"As a founding member of the Global Coalition for Animal Welfare (GCAW), a global platform launched in October 2018 that unites seven major food businesses and animal welfare experts in advancing animal welfare globally, we identified improved broiler chicken welfare as a key priority for our business."

"Underpinning this commitment is the need for our farmers, processors and supply chain partners to mobilise as one with the wider industry, to drive these welfare improvements forward, and we look forward to working with them."² *Compass Group's Safety and Sustainability Director Federico Tonetti*



¹ <http://www.foodserviceeurope.org/en/european-industry-overview>

² <https://www.verdictfoodservice.com/news/compass-group-source-cage-free-eggs/>

Regrettably, several companies have not gone far enough...

WITH MANY COMPANIES BEING UNWILLING TO ENGAGE IN, OR PROGRESS DISCUSSIONS AROUND THEIR COMMITMENT TO ANIMAL WELFARE.

Companies owe it to consumers and stakeholders to be open about their commitments to improve animal welfare—especially when they directly impact millions of chickens' lives. Foodservice companies must be held accountable for producing meaningful public commitments to improve broiler chicken welfare across the board. They must give continual reporting and demonstrate an ongoing commitment by having third-party audits. This way, we know that there will be no drop in standards.

This report is intended to allow key stakeholders and consumers alike to review those Foodservice companies who are lagging behind, to commit to positive change for chickens and sign up to the European Chicken Commitment.

COMPANY RANKING

The ranking information is current from date mentioned in the European Chicken Commitments- UK Foodservice Company Ranking document. If you think it is incorrect, please contact us at corporaterelations@thehumaneleague.org.uk