



EUROPEAN CHICKEN COMMITMENT (ECC)

PROGRESS REPORT



2025

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THIS REPORT EXAMINES THE PROGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN CHICKEN COMMITMENT (ECC) ACROSS DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND SECTORS IN EUROPE.

It outlines the corporations that have committed to the ECC and those that are reporting progress, high-level trends and impacts of the ECC, case studies, and guidance for companies seeking to meet ECC requirements.

What is the Open Wing Alliance?

The **Open Wing Alliance (OWA)** is a global coalition of 95 organizations working together to end the abuse of animals raised for food. Since its founding in 2016, the OWA has made major progress for egg-laying hens—securing over 2,600 global commitments from corporations to end the use of cruel battery cages in their supply chains.

Following this tremendous momentum in its cage-free work, the OWA expanded its influence to chickens raised for meat (also known as “broilers”), working to end the worst forms of abuse for all chickens worldwide.

Why broiler commitments? A step towards better chicken welfare

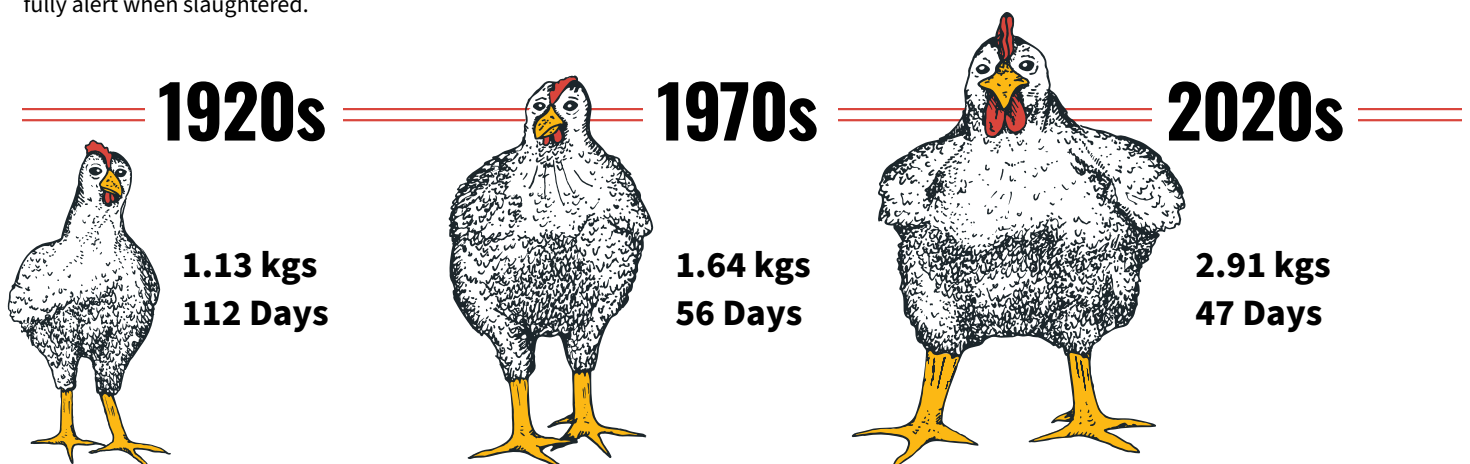
“Broiler” chickens, or chickens raised for meat, are some of the most abused animals on the planet. Selectively bred to grow unnaturally large in a very short amount of time (**see below**), the most common fast-growing breeds suffer poor leg health, painful health conditions, and even inability to walk.

The vast majority of broilers are housed in massive barns with a stocking density of 19-21 birds per square meter. In the EU, 53% of broilers are slaughtered with an electrical water-bath system—shackled upside down by their legs, passed through an electrical water bath, and slit by the throat. Sadly, stunning methods often fail, meaning birds can be fully alert when slaughtered.

Consumers and advocates alike have raised concerns about the treatment of animals on factory farms. One recent study, which surveyed participants in five European countries, revealed [a strong consumer preference for animal welfare](#) over environmental sustainability when purchasing meat and dairy products. Other reports from The Humane League have garnered significant coverage by investigating “white striping” disease, a muscle myopathy caused by fast-growth breeding, in supermarket chicken across the [United States](#) and the [United Kingdom](#).

In response to these concerns, companies around the world have committed to address some of the worst abuses of broiler chickens, including stocking density, breeding, and slaughter. Broiler commitments—when followed by tangible progress and reporting—are an essential step toward ending the worst abuses of broiler chickens worldwide.

As advocacy for broiler chickens has grown, different iterations of broiler policies have formed around the world. These include: the [Better Chicken Commitment \(BCC\) North America](#), the [Better Chicken Commitment \(BCC\) UK](#), the [Better Chicken Commitment \(BCC\) Australia/New Zealand](#), the [Brazilian Better Chicken Commitment \(BCC\)](#), and the [European Chicken Commitment \(ECC\)](#).



WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN CHICKEN COMMITMENT (ECC)?

The European Chicken Commitment is a science-based, six-point chicken welfare policy that addresses issues related to breeding for fast growth and high yield, housing, stocking density, and slaughter. This policy directly reduces the most prominent forms of suffering associated with intensive farming of chickens raised for meat.

The ECC came on the heels of the Better Chicken Commitment (BCC) in the United States, a growing industry standard that has been adopted by over 240 food companies since its development in 2016. There are now over 650 broiler commitments around the world.

As global awareness about the plight of broiler chickens continued to grow—and with many broiler initiatives underway and gaining momentum in Europe—the European Chicken Commitment was officially launched in 2017 to provide a similar industry standard overseas.

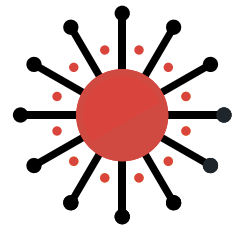
ECC STANDARDS & REQUIREMENTS

The European Chicken Commitment addresses the major welfare concerns that broiler chickens face every day on factory farms: fast growth breeding, lack of enrichment, stocking density, and slaughter—and enforces compliance with third-party auditing and EU animal welfare laws and regulations.



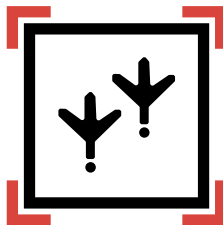
BREED

Adopt breeds that demonstrate higher welfare outcomes



ENRICHMENT

Meet improved environmental standards



STOCKING DENSITY

Maximum stocking density of 30kg/m² or less

CAS

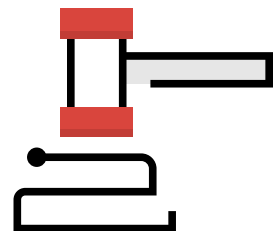
SLAUGHTER METHOD

Adopt controlled atmospheric stunning



AUDITING

Demonstrate compliance with third party auditing



EU LAW

Comply with all EU animal welfare law and regulations

PROGRESS FOR CHICKENS IN EUROPE

Since the publication of last year's report, **220 million more broiler chickens are protected under the BCC/ECC**. More and more major companies across Europe continue to make commitments in response to consumer demand.

Previously, the ECC had a blanket deadline of 2026. With the deadline approaching quickly, we made the decision to take a more flexible approach—working with companies on a case-by-case basis to set ambitious and achievable deadlines for ECC implementation. We will continue to support companies with 2026 deadlines in meeting their commitments.

PET FOOD PROGRESS

Even a pet food brand has committed to improving chicken welfare. Hill's has committed to meet all the ECC requirements by 2030—a change that will improve the lives of approximately 450 million birds per year. The popular pet food brand sells products at veterinary clinics, retailers, and online.

Biologische Kip
930 gram

Plofkip
2.350 gram



Wakker Dier's 2012 Plofkip campaign, which translates to "exploding chicken," began to increase consumer awareness about the welfare of broiler chickens in the Netherlands, setting the stage for the European Chicken Commitment.

394

companies committed to
the ECC*

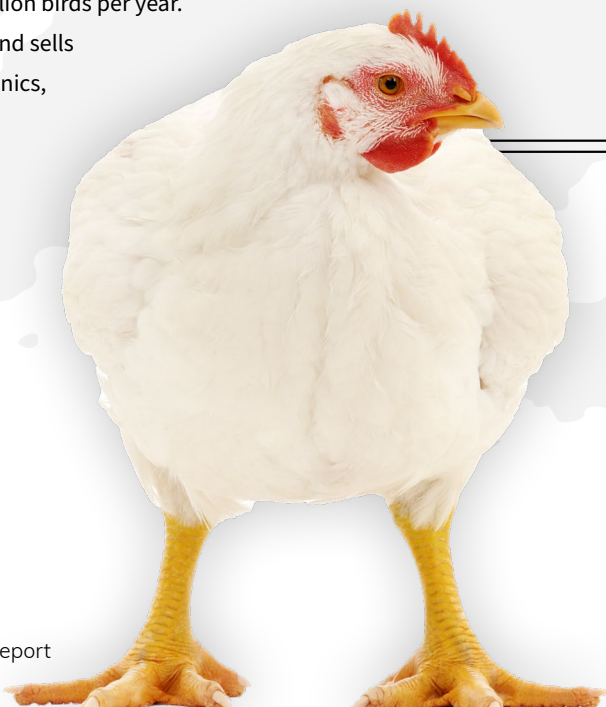
1.3 BILLION CHICKENS

covered by corporate
ECC commitments

260+ MILLION CHICKENS

already being impacted
on the ground

*as of July 2025



3/3

of Europe's biggest broiler producers have taken up ECC production at scale

12/12

of the biggest companies committed are reporting progress

WE ESTIMATE THAT THESE TOP 12 REPRESENT THE MAJORITY OF ECC BROILER VOLUMES COMMITTED TO THE ECC:



Germany (SÜD & Nord)



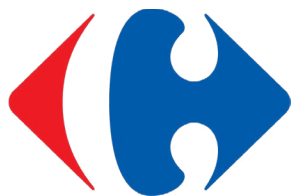
France



UK



France



France & Spain



France

Waitrose

France

M&S

EST. 1884

UK



France

Intermarché

France

All reporting progress

WAITROSE (UNITED KINGDOM)

In an exciting new development this year, the UK supermarket [Waitrose](#) announced that it will be 100% compliant with BCC requirements starting in September 2025. This update will improve the lives of approximately 37 million birds within the company's supply chain.

Additionally, Waitrose has introduced its own [welfare labeling](#) system, completely removing the two lowest-welfare tiers after implementing BCC requirements. Impressively, because of its smart and strategic implementation, Waitrose's BCC-compliant chicken has not increased in price. **Waitrose is charging £3.15/kg, while Tesco and M&S are charging £6.00/kg and £5.63/kg respectively.**

We applaud Waitrose for this incredible leadership and progress!

JUDICIAL REVIEW (UNITED KINGDOM)

After a four-year legal fight on behalf of broiler chickens, The Humane League UK's challenge against the UK government has come to an end—laying the groundwork for future legal fights for farmed animals. Although the court ultimately dismissed the case, the judges made one thing clear: **animal welfare takes precedence over profitability.** They stated that farmers must inform themselves of the serious issues

associated with fast-growing breeds and carefully assess scientific evidence before choosing which chickens to raise.

The case argued that using conventional meat chicken breeds—genetically selected to grow unnaturally large, unnaturally fast—violates the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007, which states: *"Animals may only be kept for farming purposes if it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of their genotype or phenotype, that they can be kept without any detrimental effect on their health or welfare."*

Broiler chickens have been selectively bred over decades to prioritise rapid growth and maximum meat yield. As a result, they often suffer from a range of severe health and welfare issues, including heart attacks, lameness, green muscle disease, hock burns, and organ failure.

The ruling confirmed that it is illegal to farm any animal whose suffering stems from their genetic makeup, if that suffering cannot be alleviated by changes to the environment. In light of this, The Humane League UK will now explore bringing private prosecutions against mega-farms using fast-growing chicken breeds. With this ruling, it's clear: **raising fast-growing breeds isn't just unethical. It's criminal.**

We received **374 media mentions** covering the judicial review appeal, which reached media outlets with a combined **996.39 million unique monthly visitors**.

- This included three Gold Tier media mentions, defined as national broadcast media including our Managing Director Sean Gifford making [an appearance](#) on BBC Morning live, the nation's biggest morning show, as well as appearances on [BBC East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire](#) and [Times Radio](#).
- It also received 15 silver tier mentions, meaning national online and print newspapers.

- Key articles include coverage from the Press Association, both for [the hearing](#) and [the result](#), which appeared in the Daily Mail, Evening Standard, Independent and hundreds more.
- [The Telegraph](#) and [The Daily Mirror](#) covered the hearing.
- BBC News covered [the case](#), the [result](#), and our [future plans](#).
- These results are comparable to the coverage for the judicial review case at the High Court in May 2023, where we received 185 mentions in outlets with a combined 1.07 billion unique monthly visitors.
- Beyond the United Kingdom, the case also garnered coverage across Europe, including in [Germany](#) and the [Netherlands](#).

ROKKEDAHN (DENMARK)

[Rokkedahl](#) is a Danish producer that is now supplying ECC chicken and has high hopes of expanding its ECC production in the future, creating further opportunity for both new and existing ECC commitments. Multiple member organizations of the Open Wing Alliance worked with Rokkedahl to help the company with this implementation.

MEETING ECC REQUIREMENTS

Companies intending to meet the requirements of the European Chicken Commitment must demonstrate compliance with ECC standards via third-party auditing, carried out by an auditor of their choosing. After the audit, companies must publicly report their progress each year.

A number of existing certification schemes already align, or will align, with the ECC. As such, any company certified by the following schemes has fulfilled the ECC audit criteria:

EXISTING CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

Beter Leven *Netherlands*

While the exact standards of Beter Leven 1 star do not match up exactly with the criteria of the ECC, its welfare outcomes are considered equivalent. It has now been approved that Better Leven 1 star can be sourced as ECC compliant chicken.



Deutscher Tierschutzbund *Germany*

The lighting level is currently set at 20 lux minimum. Thus, companies can use the DTB label, but will need to ensure the lux lighting meets the minimum 50 lux as set by the ECC.



Label Rouge *France*

Label Rouge always meets the ECC's criteria for density, natural light, and breed, but it does not necessarily ensure the 50 lux, enrichments, and slaughter criteria. Some Label Rouge production may meet these other criteria, but companies would need to verify.



RSPCA Assured *UK*

This label **meets the ECC**. However, Ranger Gold is not allowed for use as Free Range under the label (all other breeds are).



The Government

Animal Welfare Label *Denmark*

The label is divided into one, two or three hearts, each representing a rising level of welfare. All broilers in the scheme must grow at least 25% more slowly than conventional breeds, and must also have additional space (10%, 20%, and 30%). There are no special requirements for light beyond the 20 lux required by law, but all three hearts broilers have access to an outdoor range. Currently, none of the hearts are aligned with the ECC—although Denmark groups are working to align the 2 hearts label with the ECC, which is slightly lower at the moment.



Red Tractor *UK*

The **Enhanced Welfare standard** (purple badge) meets ECC criteria.



FOR COMPANIES WORKING TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN CHICKEN COMMITMENT, MAKING A PLEDGE IS JUST THE BEGINNING.

Each company is expected to publicly report detailed percentages of its supply chain progress for each of the ECC criteria, across every market in which it operates.

What are roadmaps?

Roadmaps are detailed progress milestones, or timelines, marking the implementation of the ECC criteria. In a roadmap, the company will detail the intermediate deadlines leading up to 100% compliance by the agreed-upon final deadline. For example, a company may detail which criteria of the ECC it will achieve by what date (e.g. enrichment by 2024, stocking density by 2025, CAS by 2026, SD by 2027), or what incremental percentage of its volumes will be compliant each year (e.g. 20% ECC by 2025, 50% by 2026, 75% by 2027, 100% by 2028).

Why are roadmaps useful?

- Roadmaps can be used to help establish a realistic timeline for the company during the negotiation period. They can also be used to track progress against intermediate deadlines (e.g. the company commits to being 100% compliant on stocking density by 2025, etc.).
- They help companies stay accountable throughout the implementation period of the ECC, especially if roadmaps are shared publicly.
- Most importantly, roadmaps help ensure that companies are not delaying the implementation of the “easier” criteria until the final deadline.

For timelines up to 6 years, we strongly encourage signatories to share their roadmap with the partner NGO and to make their roadmap public.

For proposed timelines above 6 years, the partner NGO will need to work on a proposed roadmap with the company and to share it with the ECC Advisory Committee in order for the commitment to be considered for approval. For commitments with a timeline longer than 6 years to be approved, the roadmap will need to provide evidence that the company is committing to meet the easier criteria (e.g. enrichment, light, stocking density) within 6 years. If approved by the ECC Advisory Committee, the company will then need to make this roadmap public.

Companies making their roadmap public can easily do so in complement to their public annual progress reporting, which is already a requirement of the ECC.

See examples of what this may look like in the case studies that follow.





Norsk Kylling *Norway*

Producing 13 million broiler chickens per year and holding 27% of the country's market share, Norsk Kylling is the first sizable producer to be producing exclusively **ECC-compliant broiler** chickens. The company committed to the ECC in 2020 and had already fulfilled all of the requirements by spring 2022.

Since making the transition, Norsk Kylling has reported a 39% lower daily mortality, 79% lower DOAs (birds that die during transport), and an 80% lower incidence of ascites (the accumulation of fluid in the abdominal spaces, which leads to illness and fatalities in broiler chickens). Notably, while the company produces 3 million fewer birds each year, it still produces the same amount of meat.

"Our animals live longer and healthier than comparable broiler chickens... The lower mortality rate and significantly lower illness and injury rates improve profits. We also achieve better yields with our slower growing breed and can therefore offer our meat at the same price or even cheaper than Ross chicken meat on the Norwegian market."

— Hilde Talseth, COO, Norsk Kylling



2 Sisters Food Group

United Kingdom

As the UK's biggest supplier of broiler chickens, 2 Sisters is an example of how even the largest companies can successfully transition their supply chains to meet ECC requirements. 2 Sisters is reporting that 20% of its flock is already ECC-compliant, which translates to 100 million broiler chickens per year. **In a new development, the company has also announced plans to reduce its entire flock to a maximum stocking density of 30 kg/m².**

"As the years go by, more and more people are asking for higher welfare birds that are still competitively priced, and that's what we're proud to deliver to help feed the nation."

— Ronald Kers, CEO, 2 Sisters Food Group



REWE GROUP and LIDL *Germany*

REWE Group and Lidl, two large retailers in Germany, offer an impressive example of how strategic partnership can drive impact for animals. By partnering with the nonprofit Albert Schweizer Foundation (ASF), the two retailers were able to meet ECC criteria by adding additional welfare improvements to an existing German certification scheme called Haltungsform.

Haltungsform covers multiple species, including chicken, using a tiered system from 1 to 5—with 5 representing the strictest welfare requirements. The middle tier, Haltungsform 3 (HF3), meets the majority of the ECC criteria but still falls short on some.

The Albert Schweizer Foundation worked to connect Haltungsform to the ECC, convincing Haltungsform to remove a standard that allowed conventional fast-breeds to be grown for 81 days by restricting their diet to slow their growth, rather than using slower growing breeds, as required by ECC. Along with REWE Group and Lidl, ASF's strategic partnership has allowed for multiple other high-impact commitments across Germany.

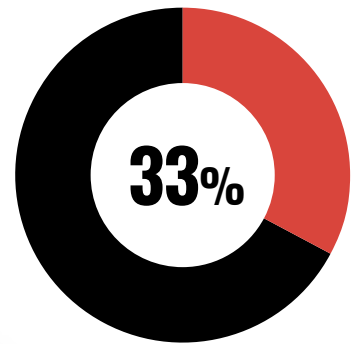
"After some years fighting for change, we realised that embracing existing initiatives, such as Haltungsform, provided a new strategic opportunity, and started to connect it to the ECC. Now, the system has adapted many criteria and even added a new one, so that it fulfills almost all of the ECC criteria and even goes beyond them in most cases. More birds are now benefiting from better welfare conditions than what would have been possible with the ECC alone."

— Esther Erhorn, Director of Corporate Outreach, ASF

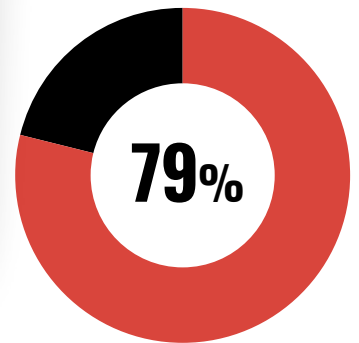
IMPACTS OF THE ECC

Poultry welfare: Kraft Heinz and Nomad Foods to meet European Chicken Commitment

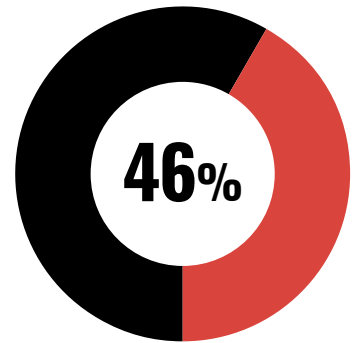
Fast-food giants make first steps toward chicken welfare in Romania and Poland



market trade increase
reported [Marks & Spencer](#)
after ECC compliance



fewer broiler deaths in transport
reported by [Norsk Kylling](#)



ECC compliance already reported
[Carrefour](#) the largest retailer
in France

113x

decrease in antibiotic usage in
ECC systems at [Plukon](#), the third
largest broiler producer in Europe

United Kingdom

As a result of pressure campaigns, all major supermarkets in the UK other than Asda, have taken steps to reduce stocking densities to those required in the ECC. Three recent movers, Co-op, Morrisons, and Lidl, have all been THL UK campaign targets. However, they crucially continue to ignore the calls for the adoption of slower-growing breeds.



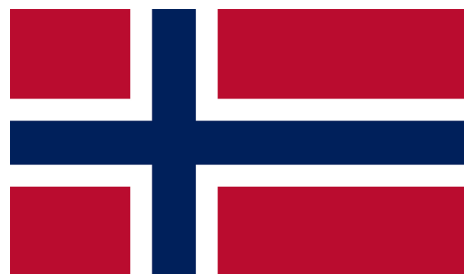
France



All major retailers in France have ECC commitments (for own brand products, >50% chicken meat) and are making progress. These include top European retailers Carrefour, Leclerc, and Auchan. Additionally, all leading producers have either partial ECC commitments or commitments to supply ECC ranges. In the restaurant sector, many companies are reporting on ECC commitments, including BK, Popeye's, and Quick. There are Farm Assurance Schemes available that are aligned to the ECC. As well as switching their own brand by 2028, approximately 12% of French supply, LDC has pledged to help others meet their ECC commitments.

Norway

In Norway, Rema 1000, a major discounter accounting for 32% of retail broilers in Norway, is already selling over 96% ECC-compliant chicken, supplied by producer Norsk Kylling who has converted 100% of its 13 million broilers / year from conventional to ECC-compliant stock. The Animal Ethics Council, under appointment by the Norwegian government, recently recommended a ban on fast-growing broiler breeds such as Ross 308.



Denmark



By April 2024 the entire convenience sector in Denmark had committed to the ECC, with around 40 companies in total. Danish franchises of **7-Eleven**, **Circle K**, **Q8**, **Shell**, and **OK Plus** have all publicly made commitments, setting an example for other sectors to follow. Additionally, retailers **Salling Group**, **Dagrofa**, **Nemlig.com**, **Rema 1000** and **Lidl** have a plan to phase out fast growing chickens in fresh and frozen categories (80-95% total volume) by 2025 and have made significant progress already. Anima are working on a revision of the national government welfare label, and so far have received mainly positive indications of support.

Spain

In Spain, 6 out of the top 10 supermarkets are committed to the ECC. It is important to bear in mind that in Spain only **Mercadona**, **Lidl**, and **Aldi** have exclusively own-brand fresh chicken. The rest have a high percentage of manufacturer branded chicken. All the commitments were obtained through campaigns or lobbying, except for the DIA Group. They made the commitment through lobbying actions directed at other companies.



New Commitments

MORE AND MORE COMPANIES ACROSS EUROPE CONTINUE TO TAKE STEPS TO IMPROVE CHICKEN WELFARE.

We're excited to announce several new commitments since the publication of last year's report:

- Stena Line (2026) and Hills (2030) in Europe
- Viking Line Group (2028) in Estonia
- Viking Line Group (2028) in Finland
- Transgourmet (2028), France Frais (2026), and Côté Sushi (2028) in France
- DEKRA Congresshotel Wart (2025), Nature & Respect (2025), and V-Markt (2030) in Germany
- Domino's (2030) in UK & Ireland
- Domino's (2030) in Poland
- Biosano (2025) in Romania
- Circle K (2026), Viking Line Group (2028), Reitan Convenience Sverige (2027), and Brasseriegruppen (2026 + 20% FR) in Sweden
- Domino's (2032) in the UK

BIGGEST COMMITMENT SO FAR

LDC (France) has committed to switching all of their own brand chicken to ECC by 2028. This is **approximately 120 million birds annually (approximately 12% of all French supply)**. On top of this, LDC has pledged to help others in France to also meet their own commitments, likely shifting an **additional 180 million birds to ECC by 2028**.



RETAILERS

Retailer commitments include:

- All of the major retailers in France (**Carrefour**, **E. Leclerc**, **Intermarché**, **Système U**, and **Lidl**)
- **ALDI Nord**, **ALDI SÜD**, and **Norma** in Germany
- 6 of the top 10 retailers in Spain, including **ALDI**, **Dia**, and **Carrefour**
- **Marks & Spencer** and **Waitrose** in the UK
- **Rema 1000** & **Circle K** in Norway
- **7-Eleven** in Denmark
- **Carrefour** and **Auchan** in Poland
- **Carrefour** in Italy

These include full commitments, as well as commitments including all fresh and frozen chicken, products containing at least 50% chicken, and commitments for own or own brand. Some commitments in Sweden, Denmark, and France exceed the ECC criteria, making it a priority to include at least 20% of chicken from free-range systems.



HOSPITALITY

Numerous hospitality groups have made EU-wide commitments, including **Louvre Hotels**, **Scandic Hotels**, and **Accor** (including Sofitel, Grand Mercure, Ibis, and other sub-brands). Accor is by far the biggest hotel chain in Europe, and all of its French hotels (along with Scandic Hotel's Swedish and Danish locations) have committed to include 20% free-range chicken in their supply.



CATERING

Many catering companies have made EU-wide commitments, including **Sodexo**, **Elior Group**, and **Compass Group**—the three largest contract catering companies in Europe, with revenues larger than the sum of the 20 other biggest caterers combined. Notably, Sodexo committed to an additional 20% of its supply with wintergardens (verandas) in France.



MANUFACTURER

EU-wide commitments include frozen-food market leader **Nomad Foods** (Bird's Eye, Findus, Goodfella's La Cocinera, and Lutose), **GB Foods** (Liebig Royco, Lacroix, and other sub-brands), **Kraft Heinz**, **Apetito**, **Frosta**, **Nestlé**, **Unilever**, and **Danone**. Frosta's commitment applies to all countries in which it operates, including Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Russia. Nestlé's commitment is notable in that it includes all of its sub-brands.

FIGURE 1

Number of Companies Committed in Each Sector

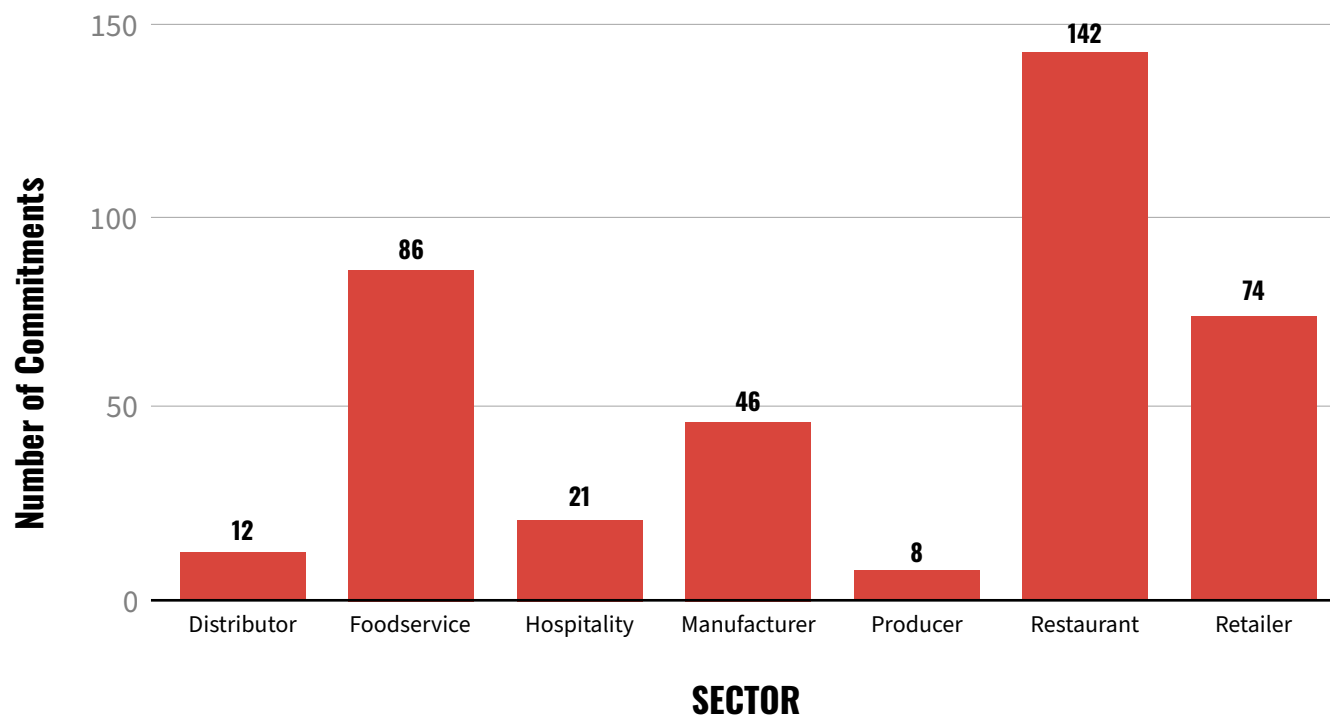


FIGURE 1: This graph shows the number of companies committed to the ECC in each sector.

FIGURE 2

Cumulative Number of Companies Committed by Commitment Year

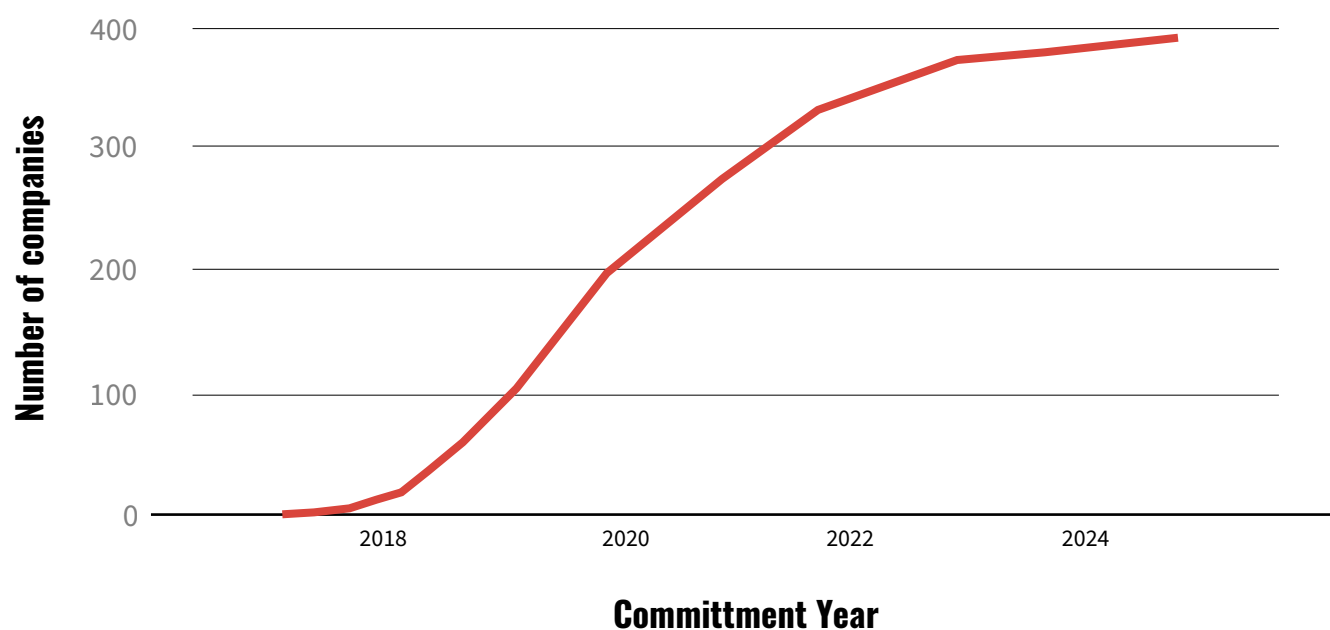


FIGURE 2: This graph shows the cumulative number of companies committed to the ECC by commitment year, since the ECC began in 2016.

IT'S CLEAR THAT THE EUROPEAN CHICKEN COMMITMENT ISN'T JUST THE FUTURE OF BROILER PRODUCTION. IT'S QUICKLY BECOMING THE PRESENT.

All six major markets in Europe—the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Poland, and Italy—are seeing progress in the critical retail sector, with one or more of the top retailers committed to the ECC and reporting progress.

While few of the hundreds of ECC commitments have been completely fulfilled, all of the top 12 companies with ECC commitments are reporting on their progress, ever more focused on meeting their fast-approaching deadlines.

Trailblazers are reaping the benefits. The two retailers in Europe that already transitioned to 100% ECC-compliant fresh chicken—British supermarket Marks & Spencer and Norwegian discounter REMA 1000—have experienced significantly above-average market growth following the change. Norway's Norsk Kylling also reports better yields and higher profits.

As more and more companies across Europe commit to the ECC, public reporting and roadmaps will be essential to help companies stay accountable. **We look forward to supporting companies as they transition their supply chains—and discover the better profits, and better reputation, that come with the better treatment of chickens.**

