

# GO FREE-RANGE CAMPAIGN

## Your guide to convincing local businesses to go free-range

Following continued media coverage of the welfare issues surrounding chicken farming, now is a great time to convince local restaurants, shops and hotels to offer free-range chicken to their customers. There are many strong arguments for businesses to do this and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's Chicken Out! campaign in Axminster showed how it can be a real success.

### AIM OF OUR CAMPAIGN

- If a local business offers intensively farmed chicken meat only, convince the manager to offer a higher welfare option.
- If a local business offers a free-range option, ask the manager to offer a special promotion and to stop stocking intensively farmed chicken altogether

## 1

### TIPS FOR APPROACHING LOCAL BUSINESSES

- Please remain **friendly and polite** when talking to staff. This will more likely result in a positive response.
- It is best to talk to the **manager** of the restaurant, shop or hotel as they are likely to be the person who makes the decision about chicken meat. If the manager isn't available, ask when you will be able to talk to them.
- Offer the manager the enclosed **Compassion in World Farming leaflet**: it clearly summarises all the arguments for offering free-range chicken. Also, offer the **River Cottage poster**: businesses can use it to promote the free-range chicken they sell.
- Make sure you emphasise the **benefits to the business** that are listed below. Many businesses may be more convinced by the economic arguments to go free-range than the animal welfare arguments.
- It is probably best to start with **businesses that are more likely to agree** to offer free-range chicken. These may be businesses that already offer welfare-friendly options such as free-range eggs or organic milk.

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### THE ARGUMENTS FOR A BUSINESS TO OFFER FREE-RANGE CHICKEN

It is useful to be familiar with these arguments when you are trying to convince a business to go free-range.

#### IT DOESN'T COST THE EARTH

On average it only costs around **74p/kg** more to produce free-range chicken meat than standard chicken meat. Even at current retail prices, for a restaurant to use free-range chicken could cost less than 50p extra per meal.

#### CONSUMER DEMAND

Between December 2007 and December 2008, free-range chicken sales alone have grown by 35 per cent. Sales of higher welfare chicken meat (including higher welfare indoor systems such as RSPCA Freedom Food standard) have grown by 42 per cent. These figures clearly show that consumers care about animal welfare and are ready to pay a little bit more for it, even during our difficult financial times. Higher animal welfare standards could mean a more popular business.

## PUBLICITY

There is a great positive (and free!) PR opportunity for the business to drum up local publicity if they switch to free-range chicken.

Local media are keen to have a local angle on this high profile national story. The media team at Compassion in World Farming can help to get local news coverage.

The business can be added to [freerangereview.com](http://freerangereview.com) which is an independent directory of free-range chicken suppliers. Here the details can be added to the growing database of free-range diners and help direct customers who care about the way their food is produced to the business by letting them know about the commitment to free-range food.

## OTHER BUSINESSES ARE MOVING TOWARDS HIGHER WELFARE CHICKEN

Several companies have responded to the Chicken Out! campaign by ending the sale of factory farmed chicken products. This shows that this is an issue that food retailers and manufacturers are taking seriously. Examples include:

- **Sainsbury's** has pledged that all their chicken meat will switch to RSPCA Freedom Food standard or equivalent. This ensures more space, slower growing birds and environmental enrichment such as straw bales.
- **Wetherspoons** has introduced free-range chicken in all its children's meals.
- **Many local businesses** have switched to free-range chicken. Find out your nearest free-range restaurant and shop by visiting [freerangereview.com](http://freerangereview.com)

## CHICKEN WELFARE

Intensively farmed chickens suffer greatly in their short lives. Kept in crowded conditions, they experience high rates of lameness, heart failure and skin burns (hock burns). Switching to free-range chicken will support higher welfare standards that allow chickens to carry out their natural behaviours.

# 3

## WHAT TO DO IF A LOCAL BUSINESS AGREES TO GO FREE-RANGE

### TELL COMPASSION IN WORLD FARMING

We would be delighted to hear from you if you convince a local business to go free-range or if you have any other feedback about the progress of your campaign.

### TELL THE LOCAL MEDIA

It is important to get local media coverage. This will encourage other local businesses to follow suit and will raise awareness of the issue locally.

- Before contacting local media you could try to convince other local businesses to go free-range. They will be more likely to do this if other local businesses have made the switch. It would make a bigger media story if several businesses in the area go free-range.
- If you are happy to contact local media yourself, we have enclosed a template press release that you could adapt.
- If you would rather that Compassion in World Farming contact your local media, please contact us on 01483 521 950.

