

PRESS RELEASE

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UK CONSUMERS VOTE FOR HIGHER WELFARE CHICKEN AND EGGS

British consumers voted with their shopping trolleys and bought more higher welfare chicken and eggs this year despite the fear that the recession would hit sales of higher welfare products. Compassion in World Farming revealed new figures today showing that sales of higher welfare eggs and fresh chicken meat have both continued to increase.

Sales of free range, barn and organic eggs increased to 66.4% of the total spend on eggs in the twelve months to 22 March 2010, compared with 62.2% the year before. This means that the majority of shell eggs sold (52.6% by volume) are now from hens that are free from cages compared with 47.3% in the same period in 2008-9.

Higher welfare fresh chicken meat sales have grown by 22% in the last year whereas sales of standard chicken have remained at only 0.1% year on year.

This sustained growth in higher welfare chicken shows a long term trend of consumer action on chicken welfare following Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's Channel 4 TV exposes of modern chicken farming in January 2008 and 2009 and his joint 'Chicken Out' campaign with Compassion in World Farming.

Steve McIvor, Director of Food Business at Compassion in World Farming said "By choosing higher welfare chicken and eggs, consumers make a real difference to the wellbeing of farm animals. The latest figures should encourage major supermarkets and others in the food industry to continue working towards higher welfare standards. There is a great opportunity for both farmers and retailers to make the most of growing consumer demand for higher welfare chicken and eggs – and this is good news for animal welfare too."

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Notes for editors

Consumers shell out for hen welfare

Sales data provided by Kantar Worldpanel reveals that consumers are continuing to abandon eggs from caged hens. Sales of free range eggs have risen to 56.8% of the value of the market from 52.3% in the previous year, making up 44.2% of the market by volume (up from 40.6%). Barn eggs, traditionally a small proportion of the market, have also seen growth to 5.6% of the market by value (up from 4.7%), 6.4% by volume (up from 4.0%). In comparison, caged egg

sales have dropped to one third of the market by value (33.6%, down from 37.8%; 47.4% of the market by volume, down from 52.7%).

Barren battery cages will become illegal throughout the European Union (EU) in 2012. So-called "enriched cages" will remain legal. Compassion in World Farming is running a highly successful campaign to persuade businesses to go totally cage-free on eggs and to use or sell only barn, free range or organic eggs.

Higher welfare indoor chicken meat shows biggest growth

Growth of the total fresh chicken market (4.5% by volume, year to 21st February 2010) has been driven by sales of higher welfare indoor chicken (up 46.7% year on year by volume and 37.8% by £ sales value), with the most notable growth in Freedom Food higher welfare indoor chicken (up 360% by volume to 5.5% of the total market, and up 493.5% to 5% by £ value). In total, higher welfare chicken (including higher welfare indoor, free range and organic production) now accounts for more than a fifth of all fresh chicken sold (23.2% of the fresh chicken market by volume, 27.7% by value).

Higher welfare indoor birds have more room to move, environmental enrichments and, in some cases, natural daylight, that encourage exercise, leading to less lameness and better welfare. Freedom Food's higher welfare chicken goes a step further, using a breed of bird that grows more slowly, increasing their chances of staying healthy and reducing risks of respiratory distress, sudden death and other problems associated with fast growth.

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For further information or to arrange interviews contact Caroline Burkie on +44 (0)1483 521952 or +44 (0)7771 926005 (out of office hours) or email caroline.burkie@ciwf.org