

**6<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

### **The unsavoury truth behind many meat and dairy labels**

A petition launching today, by leading farm animal welfare charity Compassion in World Farming, is calling on the UK government to introduce compulsory method of production labelling on meat and dairy products, under the new 'gold standard labelling scheme' proposed by DEFRA.

There are currently no labelling laws in place to show how animals farmed for meat and dairy were reared. This means that shoppers are often left in the dark when purchasing these products. They could be buying intensively farmed meat and dairy products without realising it.

Labels on intensively reared products frequently display misleading images of rolling landscapes and happy animals, suggesting animals have been farmed outdoors, when in reality the livestock are crammed into barren cages, kept indoors all their lives, or kept in such close confinement, that they are unable to express their natural behaviours. Generic, meaningless phrases are brandished across numerous factory farmed food packets, such as 'farm fresh' and 'natural', when in fact more appropriate slogans would be 'raised in confinement' or 'grown quickly, without access to the outdoors'. This undermines farmers who genuinely operate to high animal welfare standards.

*"The truth about intensively farmed meat and dairy products isn't advertised on food labels because it's extremely hard to swallow," explained Bronwen Reinhardt, Honest Labelling Campaign Manager at Compassion in World Farming. "More than 70% of the animals raised in the UK each year are factory farmed but these inhumane farming practices are hidden behind closed doors, out of public view."*

*"When you think about it, it's obvious. The truth about factory farming isn't advertised on food labels because it's an unsavoury one."*

The existing egg labelling scheme is an excellent example of how effective and honest labelling can re-shape the market. Producers and retailers are legally required to label eggs,

stating the farming system used to produce them. Eggs are labelled as 'eggs from caged hens', 'barn eggs', 'free range' or 'organic'. Since it was introduced in 2004, the proportion of hens in cage-free systems has more than doubled.

When consumers know which farm system has been used to produce their eggs, many opt for higher welfare. In turn, this increases the demand for higher welfare eggs, helping to drive welfare improvements for millions of egg-laying hens.

*“We need a clear labelling law, like that which currently exists for eggs, extended to all meat and dairy products,” Bronwen continued. “This would allow animal welfare to be part of consumers’ shopping decisions.”*

To support the Compassion’s campaign please visit [www.ciwf.org.uk/honest-labelling](http://www.ciwf.org.uk/honest-labelling)

~ends~

**For more information about the campaign please email [mediateam@ciwf.org.uk](mailto:mediateam@ciwf.org.uk) or call 01483 541 886 or 078 1403 8196**

Please note, this campaign has already been covered by [the Independent](#).

## **Notes to Editors**

1. Compassion in World Farming was founded in 1967 by a British dairy farmer who became horrified at the development of intensive factory farming. Today Compassion is the leading farm animal welfare organisation dedicated to ending factory farming and achieving humane and sustainable food. With headquarters in the UK, we have offices across Europe, in the US, China and South Africa
2. To find out more about Compassion in World Farming visit: [www.ciwf.org](http://www.ciwf.org)
3. Compassion in World Farming is proposing a [six tier labelling scheme](#) which must have clear descriptions of the farming system, and ideally also a ranking number to help consumers understand the relative welfare potential of the different systems.

## **0 - Intensive indoors**

This label is for products from animals raised in systems which only meet legislative minimum requirements, or go slightly beyond but not enough to meet the requirements of Improved Indoor. Compassion would describe these animals as being factory farmed. They are likely to live in barren conditions, suffer mutilations and overcrowding – and never go outside.

### **1 - Improved indoors**

This label is for products from animals kept in indoor systems, with some improvements. For example they will have slightly more room to move around, better bedding and some enrichment to alleviate boredom in their otherwise sterile environment. This system is a step up from Intensive Indoors, but still is wholly indoors and does not enable the animal to perform all their natural behaviours.

### **2 - Partially outdoors**

This label is for animals who live outdoors for part of the year, or part of their life, but not long enough to merit a Free Range label. Outdoor access allows animals to perform more natural behaviour, and enjoy better health. For example, studies show the dairy cows with access to grazing can have lower instances of mastitis and lameness.

### **3 - Free range**

This is an existing label used widely across many types of product. The main criteria for this label is that animals have access to the outdoors. It also ensures amenities like roosts for chickens, or straw bedding for pigs.

### **4 - Organic**

This is an existing label with a legal definition. It has several requirements which must be met before a farm and its produce can be officially deemed 'organic.' Meeting these government-mandated standards will usually provide a higher quality of life for the animal and lower environmental impacts.

### **5 - Pasture-fed**

This is for animals who are raised in Free Range or Organic systems and fed on a natural diet not including grain.