



# **RACE TO THE TOP**

*Tracking supermarket progress toward a fairer and greener food system*

## **MODULE BRIEFING PAPER**

### **ANIMAL WELFARE**

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**Note.** This paper is a position paper designed to present the case for increased scrutiny and benchmarking of supermarkets' environmental policies and performance, and to present methodologies for how that benchmarking may be carried out. It is written by the coordinator of the Animals Module and does not necessarily represent the views of members of the alliance of organisations involved in the Race to the Top project, or the project's Advisory Group. It is a working document which is being regularly updated.

### *Introduction to the 'Race to the Top' project*

#### *Why is this project needed?*

Questions are increasingly being asked about the integrity and safety of our food, the impact of its production on the environment and animal welfare, and the fairness of trade between consumers and workers along the food chain. In the UK and across Europe, there is an opinion that society should be much more directly involved in setting the farming and food agenda, rather than leaving it solely as the domain of government policy and market forces.

Supermarkets exert a huge influence on the rural economy in the UK and overseas, by setting farming standards and by seeking ever greater efficiencies for customers, competition and shareholder value. Their product range and siting policies affect the health of our communities and the environment. Customers trust the supermarkets to look after the environment and be good corporate citizens.

#### **How will Race to the Top work?**

The aim is to track the social, environmental and ethical performance of UK supermarkets, and catalyse change within the UK agri-food sector and beyond. An alliance of farming, conservation, labour, animal welfare and sustainable development organisations has developed several indicators of supermarket performance. These will provide comparative data to track progress towards fairer and greener food over the next five years.

By identifying and promoting best practice by supermarkets, the project will point to key issues for public policy, consumers, investors, retailers and campaigners. It will also provide objective data and analysis. An advisory group of independent experts provides advice and quality control.

There are seven groups of indicators:

- Environment
- Producers
- Workers
- Communities
- Nature
- Animals
- Health

Race to the Top will benchmark the major supermarkets annually using these indicators, and publish the results along with case studies of best practice by supermarkets and their suppliers. The RTTT project allows a consolidated, constructive relationship between civil society and supermarkets, rather than the single-issue action-and-reaction dynamic that has characterised civil society scrutiny to date. The project explores the boundary of corporate responsibility, the role for legislation, and responsibilities of consumers.

This briefing paper covers the **Animals** module and pertains to **farm animal welfare**. Other briefing papers are available which describe the other modules. Each seeks to identify the key issues within the module, and what actions UK supermarkets can take on these issues. There are many other issues which could be included within each module, but those identified are considered by the Race to the Top alliance of organisations to be highly significant representative issues on which retailers can act. Each of the issues is accompanied by an indicator that will be used to track positive supermarket action. It is hoped that these indicators will help to track supermarket progress towards a fairer and greener food system, and that they will provide a basis for discussion on how further progress towards this goal can be achieved.

## **FARM ANIMAL WELFARE MODULE – BRIEFING PAPER**

*Prepared by Philip Lymbery, Animal Welfare Working Group Co-ordinator*

### **Introduction**

The welfare of farm animals is recognised in the European Union (EU) as an important public and political issue. The links between humane farming methods and environmental sustainability have been well established. Nevertheless, the vast majority of farm animals in the western hemisphere are still kept indoors in highly intensive systems. The general public now question these rearing methods on grounds of food safety, quality, environmental protection and animal welfare.

### ***Counting the Cost***

The current crisis in European agriculture is largely borne out of over intensification of farm animals and crops. The two are inseparable. When farm animals are taken from the land and housed permanently in large numbers and at high stocking densities – intensively – the system then needs intensive production of feedstuffs such as grains, grass and soya, grown elsewhere.

Europe is now counting the cost of its intensive farming methods. Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), or “Mad Cow Disease”, resulted from turning natural herbivores – cattle – into carnivores by feeding meat and bone meal. Over 100 people have contracted the fatal human equivalent of BSE in the UK (FSA, 2001). By 1996, BSE had cost £288 million. When animal welfare is jeopardised, food safety is compromised (O’Brien, 1997). Food poisoning epidemics such as Salmonella and Campylobacter in eggs and

poultry meat, cost the UK £350 million per year. In the USA, where livestock farming is often even more intensive, food poisoning is four times more common (FSA, 2000). The clean-up cost of Foot & Mouth Disease in the UK is estimated at US\$30-60 billion (Roeder, 2001).

Populations of once familiar farmland birds, a key indicator of environmental integrity, have declined steeply. Previously common species have declined by 52-95% in the past 28 years (Gregory *et al*, 2001).

Farmers too have been disappearing and rural communities taken to the brink of collapse. Between 1946 and 1989, the total number of people working on farms in the UK declined from about 1 million to 285,000. In the USA, the decline has been even more staggering (Rowan *et al*, 1999).

Intensive agriculture in Europe and America has caused serious disease problems, a diminished environment, poor welfare in farm animals, and has threatened farming communities and rural livelihoods. There is now serious debate in Europe on charting a course toward a sustainable agricultural system, which to be successful, must also pay full regard to animal welfare.

### ***The Rise of Factory Farming & the Reform Movement***

The latter half of the last century saw the rapid rise of factory farming systems in western Europe and the USA. These were characterised by large numbers of farm animals being caged or crated, and crammed into windowless sheds. Three classic factory farm methods epitomised this approach; veal crates for calves, stall and tether-cages for pregnant pigs, and battery cages for laying hens. All three of these classic systems of the 1960s are subject to far reaching reform in the European Union.

There has been an awakening in Europe to the fact that animals are sentient beings, capable of feeling pain and suffering. It has seen the European Union (EU) agree to outlaw veal crates for calves, battery cages for hens, and the prolonged use of sow stalls and tethers for pigs – three key areas of progress for animal welfare. During this period, the EU has also agreed a legally binding protocol that recognises animals as sentient beings rather than just “agricultural products”.

However, factory farming in the 1980s and 90s has continued to expand in more insidious forms. Whilst legislation, fuelled by public opinion, is forcing the abandonment of cages and crates, factory farming has concentrated on intensifying its breeding and feeding regimes – making animals grow faster or produce more milk, with equally devastating consequences for the animals concerned. Broiler chickens that are crippled or suffer heart attacks before the age of 6 weeks, dairy cows with a metabolic system that can scarcely keep pace with their over-producing udders are just two examples. The new breed of factory farm has intensified the physiological strain put on the animals, whilst at the same time rearing animals in ever-larger group sizes and at high stocking densities.

## ***The Role of Retailers***

Supermarkets have enormous influence over the animal welfare standards used to produce the meat, milk and eggs they sell. The 10 biggest supermarket companies account for over 60% of all UK grocery sales. Supermarkets collectively represent the main conduit by which low-welfare animal products reach the general public. The dominant force of the major multiples and their consequent buying power means they can move quickly and decisively on food standards issues including animal welfare, perhaps more so than political decision-makers.

The vast majority of fresh animal produce in major supermarkets is sold under company own labels, where they have direct control over how the animals are reared and slaughtered (CIWF, 2002). Supermarkets have tremendous scope for promoting one product over another. Methods such as price promotions, labelling, in-store positioning and customer information, can all be used to promote ethically reared food. There is a growing recognition amongst major retailers that animal welfare is a key part of corporate responsibility. The aim of the 'Race to the Top' animal welfare indicators is to track supermarket progress and commitment on this area, and create an environment whereby supermarkets can play their full part in the drive to higher welfare standards for all farm animals.

## **APPROACH TO ANIMAL WELFARE INDICATORS**

### **Encouraging Farming with High Welfare Potential**

Major concerns for animal welfare arise from farm production methods with low welfare *potential*. These are systems that fail to meet the behavioural and physiological needs of the animals reared, such as the battery cage for hens, and therefore cause suffering. The 'Race to the Top' indicators of supermarket progress on-farm focuses on meat and egg sales coming from production systems with high welfare *potential*.

So what do we mean by the welfare *potential* of a farming system? From the outset, it is important to acknowledge that high levels of stockmanship and management are prerequisites in any successful animal farming operation. Nevertheless, the *potential* to achieve high standards of welfare is inescapably linked to, and limited by, the husbandry system employed. There are a number of factors, which affect the welfare *potential* of any method of livestock farming. These include:

- Housing system - close confinement systems, such as the battery cage, or systems which otherwise restrict behavioural expression, are likely to offer low welfare potential.
- Breeding - animals that have been selectively bred for production traits at the expense of welfare criteria.

- Feeding regime - where animals are fed a diet that secures high production but may not be conducive to maintaining normal health and vitality.
- Husbandry practices – such as mutilations (castration, tail docking, debeaking, etc.) that are likely to cause pain or distress.

The classic example of welfare potential is the battery cage for egg laying hens. The cramped and barren environment of the cage does not allow for the birds' behavioural and physiological needs. The birds suffer as a result (Appleby, 1991). The restrictive nature of the battery cage is an inherent part of the system. The battery cage is therefore a system with low welfare potential. No matter how much stockmanship and care you lavish on the birds in the system, their welfare will remain poor.

A free-range system, however - with its space and enriched environment - has a high welfare potential. Of course, if stockmanship levels are poor or neglectful, then the birds will suffer. But then, high standards of stockmanship should be an absolute *must*, not an option, in any farming system. Similarly, a badly designed unit could also negatively affect the birds' welfare. However, as the problems are not an inherent part of the system, they can be adjusted or improved. The point is, that any design or husbandry problems in these free-range-type systems can be ironed out, allowing the full welfare potential of the system to be achieved.

Organic farming as a land-based farming system without chemical fertilisers and pesticides; preventing disease through best practice animal husbandry, not drugs; in harmony with the environment, is a good example of an approach with high welfare potential.

### ***Farming Systems with Low Welfare Potential***

Examples of animal rearing systems with low welfare potential include:

- Close confinement systems for animals - battery cages for laying hens, sow stalls and farrowing crates for breeding pigs, veal crates for calves.
- Mass farming methods whereby animals are kept in barren and overcrowded environments - broiler chicken and turkey rearing, for example, as well as intensive pig fattening, caged salmon production, intensive and indoor cattle production (such as 'barley beef' systems and US-style outdoor feedlots), etc.
- Physiologically intensive methods - such as fast-growing broiler chickens, high-producing dairy cows, etc.

Farming systems and practices that have low welfare potential, and therefore cause pain or suffering to farm animals, are ethically unacceptable. Broadly speaking, there is a spectrum of welfare potential. This goes from highly

intensive systems at the low welfare end, (close confinement systems like battery cages for laying hens), through to less intensive indoor systems (e.g. barn egg production), to extensive outdoor systems, such as free range, at the high end of the spectrum.

The core ‘Race to the Top’ animal welfare indicators are concerned with encouraging sales of meat and eggs from farming systems with high welfare potential.

## **VISION OF THE ‘PERFECT’ WELFARE-FRIENDLY SUPERMARKET**

Race to the Top is encouraging supermarkets to progress toward a fairer and greener food system. The indicators constructed reflect the current state of progress in the retail industry. A fair question to ask is “what would the perfect welfare-friendly supermarket look like?” The following points form the essential elements to be included within any ‘perfect 10’ supermarket:

1. All red meat, poultry meat, milk and eggs would be produced using well-managed, welfare-friendly systems (i.e. free range or organic). This would include 100% of fresh and processed produce. It would also include 100% of manufactured foods and ready made meals containing animal products as an ingredient. This 100% free range or organic requirement would include the company’s entire range of branded products as well as its own label range. No fish products would come from conventional intensive farms.
2. All animals would be provided with bedding material such as straw (mammals) or litter (birds).
3. None of the animals reared for the ‘perfect 10’ supermarket would have been subjected to mutilations such as tail docking, teeth clipping, debeaking or castration.
4. No products from genetically engineered strains of animals would be accepted, nor those produced using GM production enhancers such as Bovine Somatotropin (BST) for dairy cows.
5. No animals or meat would be sourced from livestock auction markets.
6. Journey times for animals travelling to slaughter would be progressively reduced to the point where the norm is for animals to be slaughtered on the farm of rearing, or at the very least, the local abattoir.
7. All animals would be slaughtered humanely using effective and instantaneous pre-slaughter stunning methods.
8. No exotic animal products would be sold that are produced from essentially wild animals or those where production imposes severe welfare problems. Examples here include ostrich and emu meat, frogs’ legs and foie gras.
9. The company should have a written animal welfare policy with targets that are actively reviewed on an annual basis.
10. A main Board or Executive member should be appointed with specific responsibility for animal welfare. In addition, a dedicated animal welfare officer should be appointed to the staff to facilitate active implementation of the company’s animal welfare policy.

## THE ANIMAL WELFARE INDICATORS

### Indicator 6.1

**Issue: General Farm Animal Welfare Standards**

**Indicator: Board-level responsibility for and policy on farm animal welfare standards, and promotion**

An indicator of overall company commitment to a progressive animal welfare policy has been included. The self-explanatory questions forming this indicator are:

1. Has your company appointed a main Board/Executive member with specific responsibility for farm animal welfare?
2. Does your company have a written corporate farm animal welfare policy with objectives?

### Indicator 6.2

**Issue: The Welfare of Breeding Pigs – Pregnant Sows**

**Indicator: Sales of pigmeat from progeny of breeding sows kept in stall or tether systems**

#### ***Importance of the Issue***

Sow stalls and tethers are systems of keeping pregnant pigs in such close confinement they are unable to exercise or even turn around throughout their 16-week pregnancy. Confined sows show abnormal, repetitive behaviours, and suffer higher levels of foot injuries, lameness, pain from infected cuts and abrasions, weakened bones and muscles, urinary infections and heart problems.

Sow tethers will be prohibited in the EU by 2006, whilst the use of individual sow stalls for pregnant pigs for all but the first 4 weeks after service will be banned from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013. Several EU countries have already banned sow stalls and tethers on a unilateral basis ahead of EU-wide bans. These include Finland, Sweden, and the UK. Supermarkets selling imported pigmeat produced using these methods can undermine animal welfare progress on this issue.

#### ***Evidence of Welfare Importance***

Confined sows carry out meaningless, repetitive motions, known as stereotypies. Experts regard these abnormal behaviours as outward signs of stress and suffering. They are the only behavioural means available for the highly frustrated sow to attempt to 'cope' with her confinement. Stereotypic behaviours include bar-biting, sham-chewing (chewing the air), shaking the head from side to side, repeated nosing in the empty feed trough, and attempting to root at the concrete floor.



In its 1997 Report on pig welfare, the European Commission's expert Scientific Veterinary Committee (SVC) concluded:

"Since overall welfare appears to be better when sows are not confined throughout gestation [pregnancy], sows should preferably be kept in groups".

The Report went on to say that sow stalls have "major disadvantages" for welfare; "The major disadvantages for sow welfare of housing them in stalls are indicated by high levels of stereotypies, of unresolved aggression and of inactivity associated with unresponsiveness, weaker bones and muscles and the clinical conditions mentioned above." The Report stated, "In general, sows prefer not to be confined in a small space" and they "find the confinement aversive".

As the SVC noted, sows kept in stall and tether systems often suffer a range of health problems, such as foot injuries, lameness, and long-term pain from infected cuts and abrasions. Lack of exercise leads to weakened bones and muscles. Being unable to move freely also causes greater levels of urinary infections. They may suffer heart problems, which can be evident by higher mortalities due to stress when being transported for slaughter.

Not surprisingly, the European Commission itself concluded that sow stalls "are causing serious welfare problems to the animals" (EU Commission, 2001).

### ***How Supermarkets Can Help***

Supermarkets can help by selling only pigmeat produced without the use of sow stalls or tethers during the breeding phase. Supermarket procurement policies for pigmeat should be clear that meat and processed products produced from the progeny of sows kept in stalls and tethers is not acceptable. This policy should be fully enforced at all times throughout company product ranges, and should cover both own label and branded products.

### ***Indicator of Breeding Pig Welfare***

The following question forms the 'Race to the Top' indicator of supermarket performance on breeding pig welfare:

1. What proportion of your company's total pigmeat sales volume in each of the following product categories is produced from the progeny of breeding sows kept in stall or tether systems: Own label fresh pigmeat; branded fresh pigmeat; own label bacon and ham; branded bacon and ham; own label processed pigmeat; branded processed pigmeat; own label ready made meals containing pigmeat ingredient; branded ready made meals containing pigmeat ingredient?

### ***Desired Outcome***

The desired supermarket outcome on this issue is for the proportion of non-stall and tether-produced pigmeat to be 100% across the company's product range both own label and branded.

### **Indicator 6.3a**

**Issue: The Welfare of Egg Laying Hens**

**Indicator: Sales of shell eggs by production system**

#### ***Importance of the Issue***

The production of eggs from battery cages is a flagship issue for farm animal welfare that has been the subject of many years of intense public and political campaigning. This has resulted in the European Union agreeing to prohibit barren battery cages by 2012. The UK Government supported the ban and was "delighted at this successful outcome", which it describes as a "major step forward" (DEFRA, 2002). Complementary egg marketing legislation will make it compulsory for all battery eggs sold in the EU to be labelled "eggs from caged hens" from 2004.

The prospect of battery eggs being imported into the UK, either as eggs in shell or as liquid egg for processing, will remain after the anticipated cage ban in the EU. The EU legislation will also permit the use of so-called "enriched" cages, although the level of uptake for this system within the European industry is uncertain. Severe welfare problems remain with "enriched" cages (Lymbery, in press), and the eggs from this system will be compulsorily labelled "eggs from caged hens".

Worldwide, some 70-80% of laying hens are housed in battery cages. About 90% of the EU's 271 million hens are caged. This is likely to change rapidly in the run-up to 2012 when the EU bans battery cages. In the UK, the proportion of caged hens continues to decrease (MAFF, 2001). Of the 29.2 million hens in the UK, about 78% are caged, with the rest in non-cage alternatives; 16% free range; and 6% in barn/perchery systems (Williams, 2000).

#### ***Evidence of Welfare Importance***

Battery cages are wire cages for egg-laying hens. They are so small that the hens cannot flap their wings, so barren they have no nest in which to lay their eggs, and so restricting that lack of exercise causes the birds' bones to become brittle. The cages may be stacked up to 9 tiers high, with as many as 90,000 birds caged in one windowless building.

There is clear scientific evidence that hens suffer in battery cages (e.g. Appleby, 1991; Baxter, 1994; SVC, 1996). Common sense also tells us that to keep a healthy hen in a barren wire cage, with less space than an ordinary sheet of typing paper, is bound to cause suffering. These conditions prevent the hens performing their natural behaviours, and cause their bodies to degenerate through lack of exercise. Battery hens suffer Caged Layer Osteoporosis (CLO), or brittle bones through lack of exercise and the demands of high egg production (Turner & Lymbery, 1999).

In 1996, the European Union's committee of scientific and veterinary experts published a report acknowledging the behavioural needs of hens, and the welfare problems caused by caging. After reviewing the evidence, the Scientific Veterinary Committee report concluded that:

"Battery cage systems provide a barren environment for the birds... It is clear that because of its small size and its barrenness, the battery cage as used at present has inherent severe disadvantages for the welfare of hens" (SVC, 1996).

### ***How Supermarkets Can Help***

Opinion polls in the UK and elsewhere have shown that the majority (over 80%) of the public believe battery cages are cruel. Supermarkets can help by facilitating consumer choice, prioritising the sale of high value and high welfare non-cage eggs, and by moving to a position where they no longer sell battery eggs.

There is a range of methods open to supermarkets to increase the proportion of non-cage eggs that they sell. Clear labelling of battery eggs has already helped many citizens to match their beliefs with their consumer buying habits. Most major retailers have already introduced egg labelling according to method of farm production. This has been matched by a marked increase in non-cage egg sales amongst the buying public. Other options open to supermarkets include promoting non-cage eggs through price and in-store positioning, customer information, and targeted promotion on welfare-friendly eggs.

Race to the Top encourages all supermarkets to increase the proportion of non-cage egg sales volume to 100%. In addition, supermarkets should insist on non-cage egg ingredient in ready made meals and processed egg products throughout their product range. Marks & Spencer and Waitrose have already met both of these targets.

### ***Indicator of Laying Hen Welfare***

The following questions form the 'Race to the Top' indicator of supermarket performance on laying hen welfare:

1. Of the total sales volume of shell eggs sold by your company (own label & branded) in the UK each year, what percentage is made up of battery cage produced eggs (Own label & branded) and eggs from non-cage alternatives (barn, free range, etc.)?
2. Of your company's total sales volume of alternative shell eggs, what proportion is produced using the following non-cage production systems:  
Free Range; Barn/Perchery; or others (please specify)?

3. Of your company's total sales volume of processed and ready-made meal products containing egg ingredient (both own label and branded), what proportion currently uses egg ingredient from non-cage alternatives (barn, free range, etc.)?
4. Has your company set a target date by which it intends to cease selling both own label and branded battery eggs?

### ***Desired Outcome***

Race to the Top encourages supermarkets to sell 100% non-cage eggs. Of those non-cage eggs sold, those produced under free range conditions are most desired. For egg ingredient, supermarkets are encouraged to work towards 100% non-cage throughout their product range. The best outcome is for supermarkets to have set a target for no longer selling battery eggs or products containing battery egg ingredient, and to have fully implemented it. This is already the case for Marks & Spencer and Waitrose.

### **Supermarket Progress on Non-cage Egg Sales**

Recent years have seen highly commendable progress from leading supermarkets on sales of non-cage eggs:

1. Marks & Spencer ceased selling battery eggs in favour of 100% free range eggs in the latter part of the 1990's. This was a first for UK major multiple. In 2001, M&S added another 'first' to their name, by eliminating battery egg ingredient from the company's entire range of processed and ready made meal products.
2. Waitrose has shown strong progress on welfare-friendly eggs. In a 1998 survey by Compassion In World Farming, Waitrose reported that 65% of their egg sales were from free range or other non-cage systems. That figure now stands at 100% and also includes non-cage egg ingredient.
3. Tesco have progressed from 20% non-cage egg sales in 1998 to 55% in 2001.

Source: Compassion In World Farming (2002)

### **INDICATOR 6.3b**

**Issue: The welfare of Broiler (Meat) Chickens**

**Indicator: Sales of fresh and frozen chicken by production system**

### ***Importance of the Issue***

In terms of the number of individual animals produced annually, broiler chickens reared for meat represent the largest livestock sector in the UK/EU. Their welfare is subject to criticism at the highest level, including a recent report by the European Commission's own expert Scientific Committee on Animal Health and Animal Welfare (SCAHAW), which criticised the welfare of intensively produced broiler chickens (SCAHAW, 2000).

The vast majority of the 800 million broiler chickens reared annually in the UK are crammed together, many thousands of birds in each barren shed. They are not caged, but kept at such high stocking densities that the birds quickly carpet the floor of the shed. Broiler chickens grow at super-fast rates, so fast that their bones, heart and lungs often cannot keep pace.

### ***Evidence of Welfare Importance***

Fast growing broiler chickens suffer high rates of lameness, heart disease and skin sores. Although broilers now put on weight very quickly, the strength of their bones has not improved significantly. Putting on weight at twice their normal rate has led to the travesty of a 42-day old bird's skeleton being forced to carry the weight of an 84-day old. This often causes lameness and painful crippling. One UK study found that 90% of commercially reared broilers could not walk normally. 26% were believed to be suffering chronic pain and discomfort (Kestin *et al.*, 1992). For some birds, (2%) crippling was so bad that they could only move with the help of their wings or by crawling on their shanks.

In its 2000 Report on the welfare of broiler chickens, the European Commission's advisory committee on animal welfare (SCAHAW 2000) concluded that:

- "Leg disorders are a major cause of poor welfare in broilers."
- "Contact dermatitis [skin sores from caustic burns] is a relatively widespread problem in the European broiler" industry.
- "Ascites [fluid in the abdomen associated with heart failure] has a serious negative effect on broiler welfare. The problem has increased in recent years."
- "The greatest threat to broiler welfare due to behavioural restriction would appear to be likely constraints on locomotor and litter directed activities caused by crowding, and consequences for leg weakness, poor litter quality and contact dermatitis."
- Findings are "indicative of poorer welfare at the higher stocking densities."

Free range and organic systems, especially where more traditional, slow growing strains of bird are used, are a high welfare alternative to intensive broiler chicken production. In these systems, the enriched environment and greater space encourage the chickens to exercise and move around, rather than spending a large proportion of their day squatting on litter floor. This can reduce leg problems and sores from dirty litter, thereby contributing to a better quality of life for the birds.

## ***How Supermarkets Can Help***

Supermarkets can help by promoting the sale of free range and organic chicken meat. There is a range of methods available including clear labelling of intensively produced chicken, which is often labelled “fresh” chicken. Unlike egg marketing, the labelling of intensively produced chicken as to method of production is currently unknown. Other options open to supermarkets include promoting free range and organic chickens through price and in-store positioning, customer information, and targeted promotion on welfare-friendly chicken.

## ***Indicator of Broiler Chicken Welfare***

The following question forms the ‘Race to the Top’ indicator of supermarket performance on broiler chicken welfare:

1. Of the total sales volume (both own label & branded) of fresh and frozen chicken sold by your company (both whole birds and chicken joints), what proportion is made up of: Standard intensive broiler chickens; free range broiler chickens; organically reared broiler chickens; or other non-intensively reared chickens (e.g. Freedom Food)?

## ***Desired Outcome***

The desired supermarket action on this issue is to increase the proportion of free range and organic chicken sales volume to 100%.

## **INDICATOR 6.3c**

**Issue: The welfare of laying hens and broiler (meat) chickens**

**Indicator: Effort in Promoting Welfare-friendly Eggs & Poultry Meat**

Race to the Top recognises that differences in demographic customer profile mean that the proportion of customers with a propensity (natural tendency) to buy high-welfare products will vary between companies. For this reason, the promotional effort needed to make similar progress on, for example, increased sales of free range poultry will differ between companies. Companies such as Somerfield and Morrison’s are likely to need more promotional effort to gain a 5% increase in welfare-friendly chicken than, for example, Waitrose or Marks & Spencer. To reflect this tendency, an indicator of promotional ‘effort’ has been included.

A sustained promotional effort on welfare-friendly produce is advantageous to the companies concerned by increasing sales of higher value products. It is also an important prerequisite in ensuring that customers with a propensity to buy welfare products do not simply switch their store allegiance. Otherwise this could result in a simple shift in sales distribution rather than a genuine increase in consumption of high welfare meat and eggs.

### ***Indicator of Effort in Promoting Welfare-friendly Eggs & Poultry Meat***

The following question forms the 'Race to the Top' indicator of supermarket performance on promotional effort:

1. What proportion of your company's overall promotions budget was spent on promoting the sale of non-cage eggs and free range/organic broiler chickens in the last calendar year?

### ***Desired Outcome***

Race to the Top encourages supermarkets to ensure that a significant proportion of their overall promotions budget is spent on pushing welfare-friendly products. The first year's results are expected to provide benchmark figures on this indicator. These could be helpful in informing the promotional strategies of individual companies to help perform better in related indicators.

### **Co-op Leads on Egg Labelling**

In the 1990's, the Co-op (CWS) was the first supermarket to begin voluntarily labelling its battery eggs. The term chosen by the company was "intensively produced". This progressive approach to enhancing consumer choice was so far ahead of the game that it was technically *illegal* under European egg marketing rules. The resulting ripples forced the European Commission to amend egg marketing rules to allow battery eggs to be labelled "eggs from caged hens". This was strongly supported by welfare groups such as Compassion In World Farming.

Things have now moved a long way. Newly agreed European legislation will make it compulsory from 2004 for all battery eggs in the EU to bear the term, "eggs from caged hens". And it's thanks to the Co-op. The company's highly welcome initiative broke the logjam and kick-started the move to clear, factual labelling that now enhances consumer choice and animal welfare on eggs.

### **INDICATOR 6.4**

**Issue: Transport of Farm Animals**

**Indicator: Policy on transport of farm animals**

### ***Importance of Issue***

The long distance transport of animals for slaughter or further fattening is a hot topic in Europe. Millions of farm animals undergo transport over long distances within the UK and across Europe, simply to be slaughtered at the journey's end. The animals are often packed into poorly ventilated lorries and taken on journeys that can last 24 hours or more to slaughter.

New European rules governing the transport of animals were drawn up after the seminal UK campaign against the 'live export trade' in 1994-96. The resulting law, supposedly in place "for the protection of animals during transport", extended the allowable journey times for animals and amounted to

a counterproductive relaxation of the rules in this respect. Sheep, for example, can legally be transported for 30 hours without a proper break for food, water or rest. After a subsequent 24-hour rest period, the animals can be reloaded and taken for yet another 30 hours. In this way, British animals are often ending up in southern European countries such as Spain and Italy.

Animal welfare organisations continue to press for animals to be slaughtered as near to the farm of rearing as possible. A total maximum journey time of 8 hours from farm to abattoir should be imposed for all red meat animals travelling from farm to slaughter. For poultry, the total maximum journey time should be no more than 4 hours.

### ***Evidence of Welfare Importance***

Researchers at Bristol University in the UK concluded; “transport is a stressful process involving psychological and physical stress” (Knowles *et al.*, 1996). Many hours of investigative footage by European animal welfare groups testify to the fact that, despite seemingly elaborate legal rules to ‘protect’ transported animals, enormous suffering remains widespread.

Animal welfarists continue to press for the slaughter of all farm animals, including poultry, to be carried out as near as possible to the farm of origin.

### ***How Supermarkets Can Help***

There is concern that supermarkets may be causing unnecessarily long journeys for animals travelling to abattoirs within the UK due to centralised slaughter facilities. Supermarkets are encouraged to help reduce journey times by specifying maximum journey times for animals destined for their stores, whether in the UK or abroad. A total maximum journey time of 8 hours from farm to abattoir should be imposed for all red meat animals travelling from farm to slaughter. For poultry, the total maximum journey time should be no more than 4 hours. Of course, maximums that exceed this welfare requirement are to be welcomed. In addition, steps should be taken to ensure that *average* journey times remain well below these maximums. Ensuring that animals are slaughtered as near to the farm of rearing as is practically possible will achieve this aim.

### ***Indicator of the Welfare of Animals in Transit***

The following questions form the ‘Race to the Top’ indicator of supermarket performance on animal transport:

1. What is the total maximum journey time (hours) from farm to slaughter allowed by your company for cattle, sheep and pigs?
2. What is the average journey time that an animal (cattle, sheep and pigs) travels from farm to slaughter for your company?



3. What is the maximum number of movements for beef cattle that your company will allow using cattle passports as a means of verifying this?

***Desired Outcome***

Supermarkets should set total maximum journey times of 8 hours or less for all red meat animals. Average journey times should be well below this maximum. The number of movements for beef cattle indicated on cattle passports should be minimal.

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