

# **RSPCA APPROVED FARMING SCHEME**

**IMPACT REPORT 2016**





# 20 YEARS

## 805 MILLION FARM ANIMALS



It's been twenty years since the RSPCA established the Approved Farming Scheme as part of its efforts to improve the lives of Australia's most intensively farmed animals.

In that time, more than 805 million hens, pigs, chickens and turkeys have benefited from significantly better conditions on farm. This achievement is a credit to the farmers who have put the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme standards in place on-farm, as well as the brand owners and retailers who have offered Australian consumers higher-welfare products.

When the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme began, there was far less knowledge and awareness of animal welfare in farming among grocery buyers. Now more consumers are conscious of the impact their choices have on farm animals and are looking for labels that tell them their food has been raised humanely.

As products from higher-welfare farming systems become more sought after on the supermarket shelf, offering reliable and independent accreditation that a product meets customers' expectations is a valuable point of difference. This is great news for the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, which is Australia's leading independent accreditation scheme dedicated to improving farm animal welfare, and a recognised brand that consumers can trust.



### 4 OUT OF 5 AUSTRALIANS

BELIEVE THAT IT'S IMPORTANT THE MEAT, EGGS AND DAIRY PRODUCTS SOLD IN AUSTRALIA ARE FARMED IN A HUMANE AND ETHICAL WAY

*McCrindle Research April 2015*



## 805 MILLION HENS, PIGS CHICKENS AND TURKEYS

HAVE BENEFITED FROM BETTER CONDITIONS SINCE 1996

*Animal and farm figures in this report use data collected up until December 2015*



## HOW THE SCHEME WORKS

As a not-for-profit program, the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme is funded by fees received from brands which use the RSPCA Approved logo. Assessment of farms as well as the management and promotion of the Scheme is entirely funded by these fees.

## ASSESSMENT PROCESS

As part of a typical on site assessment, the RSPCA Assessor will observe all areas where animals are kept as part of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme and verify compliance with the RSPCA's species-specific animal welfare standards. They also meet with farm managers and check farm records. Once the visit is complete, the Assessor will submit their compliance report to RSPCA Australia, where it will be reviewed.

RSPCA Australia employs specialised animal welfare Assessors to assess farms against the RSPCA's robust standards, which go beyond what is required by law.

The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme is entirely independent of the state and territory RSPCA Inspectorates, whose role it is to enforce existing animal protection legislation on behalf of the state and territory governments.

## WORKING WITH AUSTRALIAN FARMERS

The RSPCA encourages people who eat meat and eggs to choose higher welfare products. By supporting producers who farm in an environment that meets the animals' behavioural and physical needs, we are working to improve the lives of millions of farm animals today.



**440 FARMS**

PARTICIPATED IN THE RSPCA  
APPROVED FARMING SCHEME  
IN 2015





# CREATURE COMFORTS FOR LAYER HENS

Of the more than 18 million layer hens currently in Australia, more than 11 million are still confined to barren battery (conventional) cages. Unable to do the most basic things that hens like to do – such as stretch their wings, scratch at the ground, or lay their eggs in a nest – they suffer both mentally and physically.

While just getting hens out of battery cages would be a major step in the right direction, a cage-free system isn't always the guarantee of good welfare that many consumers are looking for in the egg aisle. Good animal welfare and a better quality of life are not achieved through just one aspect of farming, such as 'free range' outdoor access or stocking density. Rather, they rely on a combination of factors, including good stockmanship, housing, lighting and ventilation, as well as good litter management and access to perches and nests.

The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme's comprehensive standards for layer hens focus on many aspects of farming. Through the Scheme, the RSPCA is working with egg farmers to provide good animal welfare while ensuring it remains possible to meet growing consumer demand for eggs and egg products. Importantly, for these farmers, participation in the Scheme provides a clear, reliable and trustworthy endorsement for their product – a valuable feature in a category that consumers often find confusing.

## WHO IS RSPCA APPROVED?

MMM BARN LAID EGGS • ROHDE'S FREE RANGE EGGS • SILVER DALE EGGS



*Providing quiet and secluded places means hens can fulfil their basic instinct to lay their eggs in a nest.*



*Providing perches helps hens feel safe from predators and allows them to rest properly.*



*Providing quality, well-managed litter allows hens to scratch, peck and dust bathe which helps clean and maintain their feathers.*



*Allowing hens space to move, stretch and flap their wings enables them to build stronger bones and muscles, as well as socialise with other hens.*

## GOOD START: RSPCA STANDARDS FOR PULLETS

In September 2015, the RSPCA released Approved Farming Scheme standards for the rearing of pullets. Pullets are young layer hens that are yet to be placed in an egg-laying facility. These standards aim to improve the rearing and handling of birds before they reach the farm.

While they are voluntary for now, these new standards represent the RSPCA's approach to developing standards that cover welfare from birth to slaughter.



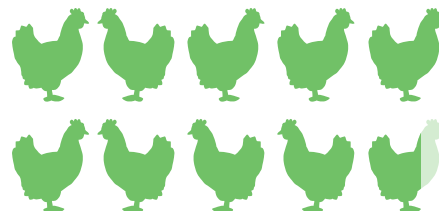
### 137,000 HENS

FARMED TO THE RSPCA'S STANDARDS IN 2015



### 26 MILLION EGGS

PRODUCED ON RSPCA APPROVED FARMS IN 2015



### 970,000 HENS

HAVE BENEFITED FROM BETTER CONDITIONS UNDER THE RSPCA'S STANDARDS, SINCE 2009

# ROOM TO ROAM FOR PIGS

The Australian pig industry's positive move towards group housing of pregnant sows and a voluntary phase out of sow stalls (due to be completed by 2017), is improving the welfare of millions of Australian pigs. However, as sow-stall-free production becomes the minimum standard in Australia, consumers are increasingly becoming aware of other welfare issues associated with pig farming.

Over 70% of processed pork – including most ham and bacon products – are imported into Australia. For farmers and retailers of Australian fresh pork products, it's vital they are able to find ways to distinguish themselves, including through securing independent animal welfare endorsements for their products. For this reason, a growing number of farmers are working with the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme to let their customers know they care about the welfare of their pigs.

Farmers raising pigs to the RSPCA's standards can operate systems where both breeding pigs (sows) and grower pigs are housed outside, or where – after weaning – grower pigs are housed in large straw-filled shelters that may provide access to the outdoors. The Scheme also provides standards for indoor farming systems, although there are currently no farmers participating in the Scheme and farming in this way.

## WHO IS RSPCA APPROVED?

**BORROWDALE FREE RANGE PORK · COLES FREE RANGE PORK · GOORALIE FREE RANGE PORK · PANDANI SELECT FOODS · VALENCA FREE RANGE PORK**



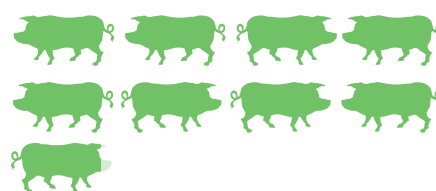
## 122,900 PIGS

FARMED TO THE RSPCA'S STANDARDS IN 2015



## 15 FARMS

PRODUCED RSPCA APPROVED PIGS IN 2015



## 890,000 PIGS

HAVE BENEFITED FROM BETTER CONDITIONS UNDER THE RSPCA'S STANDARDS, SINCE 2009



*Providing quality bedding (usually straw, rice hulls or wood shavings) helps pigs maintain a comfortable temperature, provides a dry area for resting, and allows the expression of instinctive nesting behaviours.*



*Allowing space to move about freely and not confining them within sow stalls or farrowing crates, means pigs are physically healthier and are able to perform innate behaviours, such as foraging, socialising, wallowing and nesting.*



*Painful husbandry procedures, such as teeth clipping, tail docking and surgical castration are not performed on piglets.*

# CROWD CONTROL FOR MEAT CHICKENS

Chicken is the most popular meat in Australia, with Australians eating an average of 45kg of chicken meat every year. With this high consumption rate comes strong demand on farmers to farm large numbers of chickens.

Since the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme released standards for meat chickens in 2011, there has been significant uptake by the chicken meat industry. In 2013, around 13% of Australia's production of meat chickens was RSPCA Approved – today, it's more than 63%. This is good news for more than 397 million chickens every year that now have an environment that ensures better health and comfort for their entire lives.

This huge shift towards improving the welfare of meat chickens is due predominantly to forward-thinking decisions by Australia's two biggest supermarket chains, in response to consumer interest and demand. First Coles, and then Woolworths, committed to sourcing RSPCA Approved chicken for their complete range of own brand fresh chicken. Both continue to expand their use of RSPCA Approved chicken into value-added products and prepared meals. Australia is now an international leader in this industry, improving the lives of billions of meat chickens, thanks in no small part to the commitment of Coles and Woolworths.

## WHO IS RSPCA APPROVED?

**ENTIRE RANGE: COLES BRAND FRESH CHICKEN • FREEDOM FARMS CHICKEN • GAME FARM SPATCHCOCK • GRILL'D HEALTHY BURGERS • MT BARKER FREE RANGE CHICKEN • NICHOLS POULTRY CHICKEN • ROMEO'S BRAND FRESH CHICKEN • WOOLWORTH'S BRAND FRESH CHICKEN • ZAMBRERO**

**SELECTED PRODUCTS: HERBERT ADAMS CHICKEN PIES • HAZELDENE'S CHICKEN • OLGA'S FINE FOODS • PERFECTO POULTRY**



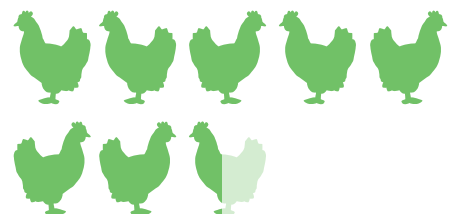
## 397 MILLION MEAT CHICKENS

FARMED TO THE RSPCA'S STANDARDS  
IN 2015



## 63% OF AUSTRALIA'S CHICKEN MEAT

FARMED TO THE RSPCA'S STANDARDS  
IN 2015



## 739 MILLION MEAT CHICKENS

HAVE BENEFITED FROM BETTER  
CONDITIONS UNDER THE RSPCA'S  
STANDARDS, SINCE 2010



*Good lighting encourages chickens to be active while daily periods of full darkness allow proper rest.*



*Providing perches and environmental enrichment encourages activity which helps chickens build muscles and bone strength.*



*Providing quality, well-managed litter improves leg health and encourages birds to express natural foraging and dust bathing behaviours.*



# NO GOBBLE DYGOOK FOR TURKEYS

Traditionally popular during the Christmas period, Australia's production of turkey meat is still relatively small compared to other poultry products. However, consumption is set to rise with industry-driven promotion of turkey as a lean and healthy option, and with increased availability of additional value-added turkey products offered all year round.

Since 2010 the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme has been working with Coles Supermarkets and its suppliers in their efforts to source RSPCA Approved turkey for Coles Finest and Coles branded range of turkey products. The commitment by Coles to raise the animal welfare standards on-farm for their turkey products has led to an encouraging uptake of the RSPCA's standards within the industry. The number of turkeys raised to the RSPCA's standards in 2015 was more than double the number raised in 2013.

The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme's standards for turkeys focus on providing an environment that ensures better health and comfort for the entire life of the bird. As the popularity of turkey products increases, the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme has an opportunity to increase consumer understanding of good animal welfare for turkeys and ensure higher welfare options are available.

## WHO IS RSPCA APPROVED?

COLES FINEST TURKEY • COLES SLICED TURKEY



**490,000  
TURKEYS**

FARMED TO THE RSPCA'S STANDARDS  
IN 2015



**8.4% OF  
AUSTRALIA'S  
TURKEY MEAT**

FARMED TO THE RSPCA'S STANDARDS  
IN 2015



**1.3 MILLION  
TURKEYS**

HAVE BENEFITED FROM BETTER  
CONDITIONS UNDER THE RSPCA'S  
STANDARDS, SINCE 2010



*Good lighting encourages turkeys to be active while daily periods of full darkness allow proper rest.*



*Providing perches and environmental enrichment encourages activity which helps turkeys build muscles and bone strength.*



*Providing quality, well-managed litter improves the leg health of turkeys and encourages birds to express natural foraging and dust bathing behaviours.*



*Painful husbandry procedures, such as toe trimming are not performed on turkeys.*



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Through the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme and other humane food initiatives, the RSPCA actively works to raise consumer awareness about farm animal welfare and encourage Australians who eat meat or eggs to choose products that come from animals raised to higher welfare standards.

Throughout the year, the RSPCA promotes the Approved Farming Scheme through various channels and to a diverse audience, bringing higher-welfare farming to the forefront of Australian farming practices and consumer decision-making. Promotion of the Scheme and brands participating in the Scheme includes print and digital advertising, social media, marketing activities, participation in events, speaking spots at industry conferences, and through the RSPCA's state-based education programs.

In 2015 the RSPCA launched its latest Approved Farming Scheme campaign with the creative focusing on the welfare of layer hens, pigs, meat chickens and turkeys.

The campaign spanned print, digital and outdoor advertising and TV, with commercials airing during primetime thanks to the support of major television networks.



You can view these commercials on the RSPCA's YouTube channel:  
[youtube.com/user/RSPCAAustralia](https://www.youtube.com/user/RSPCAAustralia)

By cutting through labelling confusion, the campaign helps guide Australian consumers who want to make an ethical choice when shopping. Combining positive but accurate imagery, with information that focuses on the benefits of RSPCA Approved, customers can have confidence they know what 'RSPCA Approved' means and that it meets their expectations for good animal welfare.



**300 RSPCA  
APPROVED  
PRODUCTS**

ON THE SHELVES IN  
SUPERMARKETS AND SPECIALTY  
STORES ACROSS THE COUNTRY



**2,875  
RETAILERS**

LISTED ON THE RSPCA APPROVED  
FARMING SCHEME WEBSITE  
[SHOPHUMANE.ORG.AU](http://SHOPHUMANE.ORG.AU)



**94% BRAND  
AWARENESS**

OF THE RSPCA NAME AND ONE  
OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST TRUSTED  
ORGANISATIONS, RECOGNISED BY  
CONSUMERS AS THE FOREMOST  
AUTHORITY ON ANIMAL WELFARE

# ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

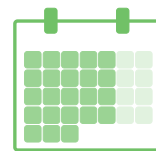
## GOOD CATCH: RSPCA STANDARDS FOR FARMED ATLANTIC SALMON

The available scientific evidence demonstrates that fish are sentient animals capable of experiencing pain and suffering. Due to the growth of aquaculture and the farmed Atlantic salmon industry in Tasmania, the RSPCA released RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme Standards – Farmed Atlantic Salmon.

Good welfare for fish means providing enough space to swim normally in clean, oxygen-rich water, being free from injury and disease, being handled in a manner that avoids stress, and stunning to ensure unconsciousness at the time of harvesting.



## WHAT'S NEXT?



### 2017 PLANS FOR THE RSPCA APPROVED FARMING SCHEME



#### MEAT CHICKENS

RELEASING UPDATED *RSPCA APPROVED FARMING SCHEME STANDARDS – MEAT CHICKENS*



#### PIGS

RELEASING UPDATED *RSPCA APPROVED FARMING SCHEME STANDARDS – PIGS*



#### DAIRY VEAL

RELEASING *RSPCA APPROVED FARMING SCHEME STANDARDS – DAIRY VEAL*



#### TURKEYS

REVIEWING THE *RSPCA APPROVED FARMING SCHEME STANDARDS – TURKEYS*



#### GOOD FOOD

INCREASING THE MARKET SHARE AND AVAILABILITY OF *RSPCA APPROVED EGGS, PORK, CHICKEN, TURKEY, FARMED ATLANTIC SALMON AND DAIRY VEAL*





IMPROVING THE WELFARE OF AUSTRALIA'S FARM ANIMALS IS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT. LEADERS IN ALL AREAS OF PRODUCTION, INCLUDING FARMERS, BRAND OWNERS AND RETAILERS ARE COMMITTED TO MEETING GROWING CONSUMER DEMAND FOR ETHICALLY PRODUCED FOOD. THE ROLE OF CONSUMERS IS INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT.

**WE SUPPORT AUSTRALIAN FARMERS AND  
BUSINESSES IN GIVING FARM ANIMALS  
A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE.**



## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To find out more about the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme – including information about the RSPCA standards and where to buy RSPCA Approved products – visit [shophumane.org.au](http://shophumane.org.au)



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