



BETTER FARM ANIMAL WELFARE
25
YEARS



IMPACT REPORT 2020

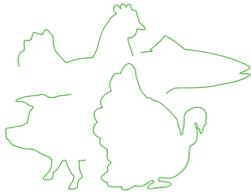


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RAISING THE BAR FOR FARM ANIMAL WELFARE IN AUSTRALIA

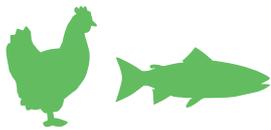




3 BILLION ANIMALS

HAVE BENEFITTED FROM BETTER CONDITIONS SINCE 1996

FOR 25 YEARS THE RSPCA APPROVED FARMING SCHEME HAS BEEN IMPROVING THE LIVES OF AUSTRALIA'S FARM ANIMALS. ESTABLISHED BY THE RSPCA AS PART OF ITS EFFORTS TO DRIVE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS FOR FARM ANIMAL WELFARE, DURING ITS TIME, THE SCHEME HAS SEEN MORE THAN 3 BILLION ANIMALS BENEFIT FROM HIGHER WELFARE FARMING CONDITIONS.



585 MILLION ANIMALS

FARMED TO RSPCA STANDARDS IN 2020

Today, the RSPCA Approved logo is recognised by Australians as meaning animals have been farmed with consideration of their welfare. The Scheme is highly respected both at home and globally as a driver of tangible improvements to animal welfare, its extensive market uptake and for its robust and rigorous certification process.



525 FARMS

PARTICIPATED IN THE SCHEME IN 2020

The Scheme is like no other in Australia. With detailed standards that are focused on improving animal welfare and informed by evidence, as well as a certification process that's tough and stringent, Australians can trust the RSPCA Approved certification. In today's age, where customers are increasingly looking for assurances about how their food has been produced, having a trustworthy independent certification has never been more valuable.



36 FORWARD-THINKING BRANDS

SOURCING RSPCA APPROVED PRODUCTS

There are 5 variations of the RSPCA Approved logo – the paw logo and 4 animal specific logos – that are currently used in the market on RSPCA Approved product and associated marketing material.



MORE THAN 1,000 PRODUCTS

AVAILABLE WITH THE RSPCA APPROVED CERTIFICATION





95% OF AUSTRALIANS

ARE CONCERNED ABOUT FARM ANIMAL WELFARE

91% WANT

AT LEAST SOME REFORM TO ADDRESS THIS
— FUTUREYE, 2018



1/2 OF ALL CONSUMERS

PAY MORE ATTENTION TO LABELS ON CHICKEN MEAT PACKAGING THAN THEY DID 5 YEARS AGO
— AGRIFUTURES, 2021



MORE THAN 3 OUT OF 4

AUSTRALIAN CONSUMERS SAY THAT HAVING A THIRD-PARTY AUDITED ANIMAL WELFARE PROGRAM WITH ESTABLISHED STANDARDS IS IMPORTANT TO THEM WHEN PURCHASING CHICKEN
— AGRIFUTURES, 2021

‘As Australia’s leading quick service restaurant business, we work with suppliers and partners that share our commitment to animal welfare practices. One of the most meaningful ways we can improve the lives of farmed animals is to ensure they have access to an environment that meets their individual needs and encourages them to express their natural behaviours. With the ongoing support and partnership of our Aussie chicken farmers, we are proud to supply RSPCA Approved chicken across all restaurants nationally.’

Kylie Freeland —
Director of Supply Chain and Sustainability, McDonald’s Australia

Every year hundreds of millions of animals are farmed in Australia to meet demand for food and fibre. In 2020, more than 660 million of these animals were meat chickens. While a growing number of consumers are looking for plant-based alternatives, the majority of Australians continue to include animal-derived products in their diet. It’s therefore crucial that animal welfare is a leading consideration when farming animals into the future.

One of the most meaningful ways the RSPCA can raise the bar for animal welfare within Australian farming industries is by working closely with committed farmers who are raising animals to higher welfare standards. We know when consumers choose higher welfare food it leads to increased uptake of higher welfare farming practices along the supply chain. This means that providing guidance and a trustworthy choice to customers through the RSPCA Approved certification ultimately leads to more farm animals benefitting from better farm conditions.

Our work encouraging food companies and brands to support a better future for Australia’s farm animals has led to the Scheme currently working with 36 forward-thinking brands sourcing RSPCA Approved products, and altogether more than 1,000 products available with the RSPCA Approved certification. These products are available in all 3 major supermarkets, independent grocers and many well-known restaurant chains. This is a key indicator of the Scheme’s success and means higher-welfare food is more accessible than ever to Australians.

Improving how the Scheme operates is key to its future. The requirements for participants are high and we know that the standards we set for ourselves are just as important. Since the Scheme was established, it has undergone two external reviews – the first in 2009 and the second in 2018. Since the latest review, we have been working to implement many of the recommendations, which will make the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme an even more robust program.

We are proud that the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme is Australia’s leading independent certification scheme focused on animal welfare and is positively impacting the lives of millions of farm animals every year.

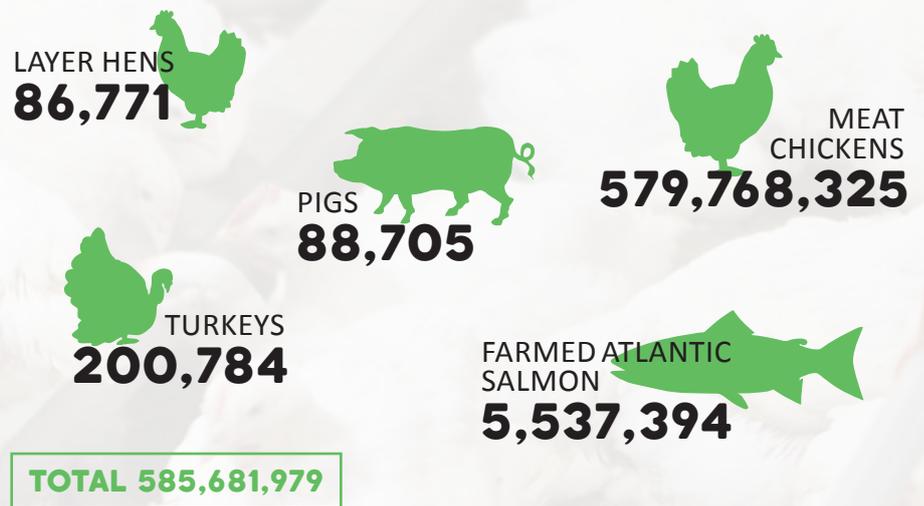
‘At Coles we believe that protecting and improving the welfare of animals in our supply chains is central to gaining and maintaining customer trust and the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme logo is one of the most well recognised symbols for high animal welfare for our customers. Coles has been working with the RSPCA for two decades and is proud to have the broadest range of RSPCA Approved products of any major Australian retailer. We’ve expanded our range of RSPCA Approved products over the years to include chicken, turkey and free-range pork which is evidence of our support and commitment to the scheme.’

Brad Cook —
General Manager, Own Brand, Quality & Responsible Sourcing, Coles

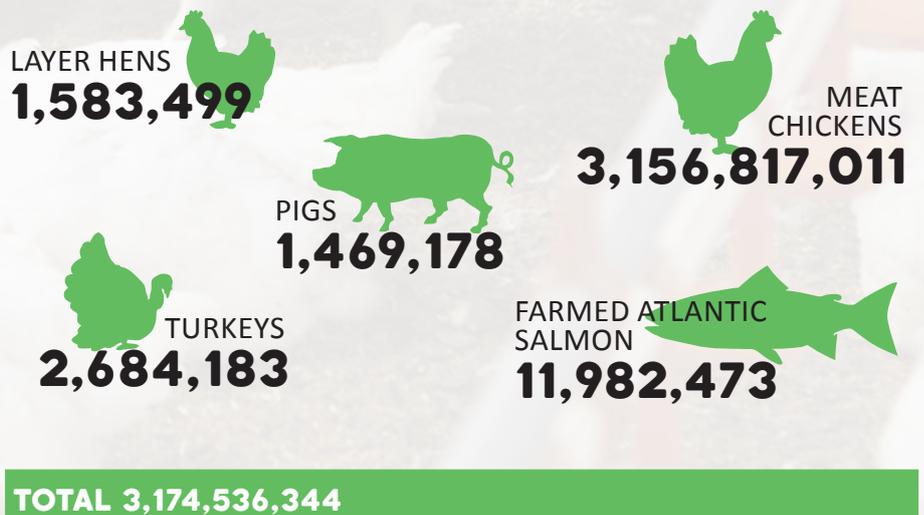
OUR IMPACT

During its lifetime, the Scheme has seen more than 3 billion animals raised under its animal welfare standards and benefit from higher welfare farming conditions.

ANIMALS RAISED UNDER THE SCHEME IN 2020



ANIMALS RAISED UNDER THE SCHEME SINCE 1996





WHAT THE SCHEME MEANS FOR FARM ANIMALS

For good animal welfare, animals need food, water and shelter, as well as the opportunity to express behaviours that come naturally to them. The RSPCA Standards focus on providing an environment that allows animals to do the things they like to do, leading to better overall wellbeing.

LAYER HENS



Safe and enclosed nests for hens to lay their eggs.



Perches to help hens feel safe and allow them to rest properly.



Quality, well managed litter for hens to scratch, peck and dust bathe to clean and maintain their feathers.



Space to move, stretch and flap their wings so hens can socialise with other hens and build stronger bones and muscles.



Hens are not kept in cages of any kind.

PIGS



Secluded places with quality bedding give sows a comfortable place to rest and build a nest for their young.



Space to move freely, so sows can forage, socialise and wallow.



Sheltered housing with quality bedding gives weaned piglets a dry area to rest, play and maintain a comfortable temperature.



No painful husbandry procedures, such as teeth clipping, tail docking and surgical castration.



Pigs are not kept in cages or crates of any kind.

MEAT CHICKENS



Good indoor environment (because even free-range chickens spend most of their time indoors).



Brighter lighting during the day to encourage chickens to be active and move about, while periods of complete darkness at night allow them to rest properly.



Perches and interesting objects to play with and peck at encourages activity and helps chickens build stronger muscles and bones.



Quality, well managed litter for chickens to scratch, peck and dust bathe and improves their leg and foot health.

TURKEYS



Brighter lighting during the day to encourage turkeys to be active and move about, while periods of complete darkness at night allow them to rest properly.



Perches and interesting objects to play with and peck encourages activity which helps turkeys build stronger muscles and bones.



Quality, well managed litter for turkeys to scratch, peck and dust bathe and improves their leg and foot health.

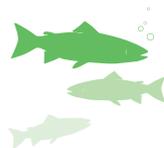


No painful husbandry procedures, such as toe trimming.

FARMED ATLANTIC SALMON



Good management and husbandry help protect salmon from injury and disease.



Good stockpersonship with a focus on low-stress handling.



Managing water quality, including appropriate oxygen levels, temperature and stocking densities, so that salmon have an environment in which they can thrive.



Lower stocking densities means salmon can swim effortlessly and perform natural schooling behaviours.

DAIRY CALVES



A nutritious diet that includes good quality colostrum, prevents calves having mineral and vitamin deficiencies.



Feeding is done in a way that encourages suckling and chewing behaviours.



Space to move freely with other calves, so they can socialise and play.



Sheltered housing with quality bedding gives calves a dry area to rest, play and maintain a comfortable temperature.



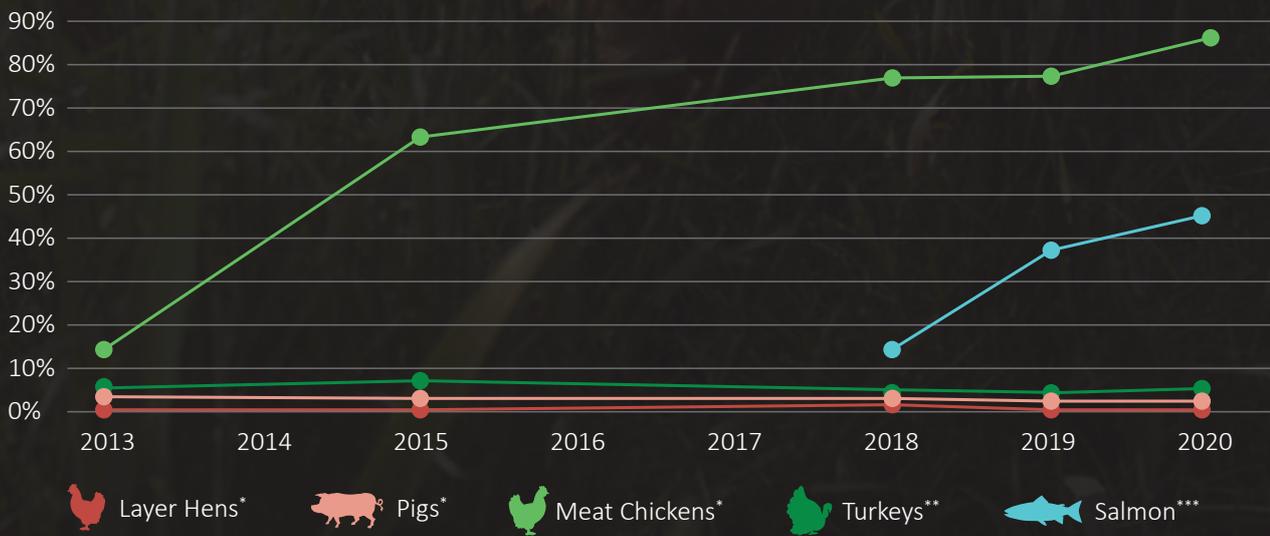
Access to a paddock.



Good stockpersonship with a focus on low-stress handling.

MARKET SHARE OF RSPCA APPROVED

MARKET SHARE OF ANIMALS RAISED TO RSPCA APPROVED STANDARDS OVER TIME



* Based on ABS data ** Based on industry supplied data *** Based on ABARES/FRDC data

Note: No producers have farmed to the RSPCA Standard for dairy calves

MARKET SHARE EXPLAINED

LAYER HENS

The RSPCA launched the Scheme with a Standard for layer hens, however uptake of the Standard and market share of RSPCA Approved eggs is low.

There are around 20 million layer hens on Australian farms and the majority of these hens are housed in battery cages, producing cage eggs. The RSPCA strongly opposes the use of barren battery cages because the scientific evidence overwhelmingly tells us that hens suffer greatly when they are housed in them. For this reason, battery cages have never been allowed under the Scheme.

Simply providing access to the outdoors is not a guarantee of good welfare either, as conditions on free-range farms can vary greatly. For a free-range farm to meet the needs of birds there must be easy access to a range that is attractive, with vegetation, trees and shrubs, and overhead shelter. A lower stocking density has also been shown to increase the time hens spend outdoors. The RSPCA Standard for layer hens allows a maximum stocking density of 1,500 hens per hectare outdoors (2,500 hens per hectare if the range area is regularly rotated). However, by law the maximum stocking density for hens laying eggs that may be labelled as free range is 10,000 hens per hectare.

Currently, barn-laid egg farming systems are not as common in Australia. However, as more consumers and brands commit to sourcing cage-free eggs, this market is set to rise. A well-designed and managed cage-free system (barn laid or free range) can provide good welfare for hens, but must meet robust animal welfare standards.

For an egg farmer wanting to gain RSPCA Approved certification, meeting the RSPCA Standard is challenging. The market is price sensitive, which makes staying competitive while reducing stocking density and farming to higher welfare standards difficult.

Rohde's Free Range Eggs were early adopters of the RSPCA Standard, joining the Scheme more than 15 years ago. Rohde's continue to supply SA customers with RSPCA Approved eggs from their farm in the scenic Clare Valley. Farmer Rod's Free Range Eggs are laid by hens on a picturesque farm in regional NSW and have supplied ACT and NSW customers with RSPCA Approved eggs since 2018.

As the cage-free egg market grows, we expect to see more brands seeking to differentiate themselves and show their animal welfare credentials. They can achieve this by joining the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme.



'We are extremely proud of how the farm looks and operates today. Being RSPCA Approved gives our customers the confidence they are buying free-range eggs with the highest welfare standards certified by one of the most reputable and recognisable organisations in Australia.'

**Rodney Pope –
Farmer Rod's Free Range Eggs**



PIGS

Similarly, to layer hens, the uptake of the RSPCA Standard for pigs remains difficult.

Currently, around 90% of pigs in Australia are farmed entirely indoors, 5% are born in a free-range environment and, once weaned, are raised indoors, while 5% of pigs spend their whole life with access to the outdoors.

While the RSPCA Standard allows pigs to be housed indoors, the requirements are high and there is yet to be a producer farming pigs indoors that can meet it. The Standard requires pigs to have an enriched environment, with straw bedding and opportunities for pigs to explore and forage. Painful husbandry procedures that are common within the industry, such as tail docking and teeth clipping, are not allowed and the use of sow stalls,

farrowing crates and boar stalls is prohibited. The Australian pork industry has made a voluntary commitment to phase out the use of sow stalls, and so far this has been achieved for around 80% of Australia's sows. However, throughout the industry, and even when pigs are sow-stall free, farrowing crates continue to be used for a period of around five weeks every time a sow gives birth.

Since 2010 we have been working with a dedicated group of free-range pig farmers in WA. Pigs from these farms supply Coles supermarkets which, since then, has committed to sourcing RSPCA Approved for their Coles Finest and now Coles Free Range Pork range. At the time this was a first in Australia and remains the only RSPCA Approved pork brand available nationwide.

MEAT CHICKENS

Chicken is the most popular meat in Australia, with Australians eating an average of 47kg of chicken meat every year. This high consumption rate places increased pressure on farmers to rear large numbers of meat chickens, with more than 660 million birds farmed in 2020 alone.

Most Australian commercial meat chicken farms rear birds entirely indoors in large sheds, with each shed housing 40,000 – 60,000 birds. Rearing birds entirely indoors means it's easier for farmers to protect birds from weather extremes and predators. Some farms have sheds where the sides can be opened, bringing in air and sun from the outside while keeping birds inside.

Around 20% of farms have sheds that allow meat chickens to have access to the outdoors during the day. On these farms, birds typically have access at around 21 days of age, as this is when they have grown all their feathers and are better protected from the weather. Given the lifespan of chickens raised for meat is quite short, with birds slaughtered when they are around 35 days old, birds with outdoor access, generally only have access for 2 weeks.

The significant uptake of the RSPCA Standard by the meat chicken industry is undoubtedly the biggest achievement for animal welfare within the Scheme. From sheds that were often highly stocked, with low light, very poor litter quality and no perches, the adoption of the RSPCA Standard has seen space allowance increased, better lighting provided, good litter quality and provision of perches and enrichment. Resulting in better health and wellbeing for these birds. For chickens with access to the outdoors, the RSPCA Standard has meant improvements to the quality and appeal of the range, for example better shade and shelter, and easier access.

MAJORITY OF CHICKENS ARE FARMED INDOORS

80% of the meat chicken farms participating in the Scheme are assessed against the indoor requirements of the RSPCA Standard only. The remaining 20% are assessed against both the indoor and outdoor requirements, with chicken from these farms able to be labelled as free range and RSPCA Approved.

In Australia, chickens raised for meat, even free range, will spend the majority of their life inside. For this reason, having a quality indoor environment, where birds are encouraged to express natural behaviours, is more important than whether they have access to the outdoors, and is a priority in the RSPCA Standard.





579,768,325
MEAT
CHICKENS

RAISED TO THE RSPCA
STANDARD IN 2020

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST SLOW- GROWING CHICKEN

Slower-growing breeds of meat chickens with improved animal welfare outcomes have been developed and are in use commercially overseas. However, currently the genetics are not easily accessible in Australia. One producer has been able to import genetics into the country and these chickens are farmed for Coles Slow Hills – Australia's first slow-growing chicken.



In 2013, two years after the RSPCA released its Standard for meat chickens, around 13% of Australia's production of meat chickens was RSPCA Approved – today, it's more than 87%. The driver for the uptake of the Standard was the 2014 landmark move by Coles to become the first supermarket to source RSPCA Approved chicken for all of its own branded fresh chicken. This move was closely followed by Woolworths and launched a transformation within the industry resulting in continual improvements to bird welfare.

Over the years, both retailers have expanded their commitment to include using RSPCA Approved where chicken is used as an ingredient. As more brands have looked to source RSPCA Approved chicken the number of birds farmed to the RSPCA Standard has steadily grown. Today, the Scheme is one of the most successful globally for meat chicken market uptake.

Currently, Coles, Woolworths and ALDI stock RSPCA Approved chicken. Coles offers customers the broadest range with Coles Chicken, Coles Free Range Chicken, The Bare Bird, as well as Coles Slow Hills, the first slow-growing chicken in the Australian market, all RSPCA Approved.

Woolworths offers customers RSPCA Approved through Woolworths Chicken, The Bare Bird and The Free Ranger (in selected stores). ALDI sources RSPCA Approved chicken for selected product lines. David Jones sources RSPCA Approved chicken for all its products containing chicken. Romeo's Retail Group exclusively source RSPCA Approved chicken for its meat departments and Freedom Farms Chicken, Mt Barker Free Range Chicken and Nichol's Poultry are RSPCA Approved and stocked in independent grocers.

There is an increasing number of restaurants participating in the Scheme, with Grill'd, Zambro, Zeus St Greek, Oporto, Nando's, Gami Chicken & Beer and McDonald's, all sourcing 100% RSPCA Approved for the chicken for their menu.

The steady rise in well-known brands committing to sourcing RSPCA Approved chicken and the adoption of the RSPCA Standard across the industry has also opened up opportunities for businesses looking to source higher welfare chicken as an ingredient. Compass Group, Campbell's Real Stock, Herbert Adams, Mr Lee's Noodles, Moira Mac's, Starbucks and The Coffee Club all source RSPCA Approved chicken as an ingredient in their chicken products.

While there's certainly been a significant shift within the meat chicken industry, we know our work isn't done and there is more that can be done to improve welfare outcomes for these birds. Our best chance at doing this is by continually driving standards higher, while maintaining high participation in the Scheme, and supporting the industry to become a leader in prioritising animal welfare.

As public awareness and retailer demand for good farm animal welfare grows, continual improvement within the industry will be crucial in maintaining its social licence. While the RSPCA Standard is setting a higher level of animal welfare on farms right now, the RSPCA has also identified key areas for ongoing improvement within the industry going forward. For example, improving welfare within breeding programs and increasing the proportion of slower-growing genetics. Outlined in our publication *Meat chickens: Challenges and priorities for good animal welfare*, these areas will need to be addressed by both industry and retailers in order to meet community expectations, and make sure chickens grown in Australia continue to have a good quality of life.

Ultimately, consumers will be the driving force for change. While the price paid for chicken meat remains low, farmers will be under pressure to meet both the demand for ethical farming practices and the low price of chicken meat. Slower-growing breeds of chickens are more expensive to raise. While a proportion of customers have demonstrated a willingness to pay this increased price, more Australians will need to support it to show the industry that this is a viable market opportunity that deserves investment.



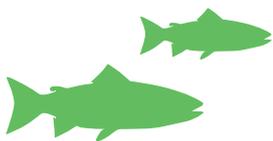
TURKEYS

Australia's production of turkey meat is small compared to other poultry products, and primarily supplies a heightened demand during the Christmas period.

The RSPCA released its Standard for turkeys in 2010. In 2011, 37,000 birds were raised to the Standard which then rose rapidly to 225,000 in 2013. This jump was a result of Coles committing to source RSPCA Approved turkey for its Coles Finest range. Since then, the number of turkeys farmed under the Scheme has remained steady, with just over 200,000 turkeys farmed to the RSPCA Standard in 2020, or 5% of the approximately four million turkeys raised on Australian farms in total.

Interest in higher welfare turkey is growing, with 2020 seeing an RSPCA Approved turkey offering by both Coles and Woolworths during the Christmas period for the first time. With Coles sourcing RSPCA Approved turkey for both its Coles Turkey and Coles Finest Free Range Turkey as well as Woolworths sourcing RSPCA Approved turkey for its Woolworths Turkey, it's a clear indicator that demand for higher welfare turkey is increasing.





**5,537,394
FARMED
ATLANTIC
SALMON**

RAISED TO THE RSPCA
STANDARD IN 2020

SALMON

Aquaculture (the farming of fish) is recognised as one of the fastest-growing animal protein production sectors in the world. Like other sentient animals, fish can experience pain and suffering. It's therefore important that where fish are farmed, it is in accordance with higher animal welfare standards.

The past few years have seen significant growth in the farmed Atlantic salmon industry in Tasmania. In 2020, the industry produced over 12.2 million fish, nearly half of which were farmed to the RSPCA Standard.

The RSPCA released its Standard for farmed Atlantic salmon in 2016. Huon Aquaculture became the first RSPCA Approved salmon producer in July 2018, showing leadership within their industry. Huon remains the only producer participating in the Scheme, selling RSPCA Approved salmon under the Huon brand and supplying Pialligo Estate, an award-winning artisan smokehouse. Currently around 98% of Huon Salmon is raised under the RSPCA Standard. In 2020 this meant that more than 5.5 million fish benefitted from better conditions on farm.

THE ROLE OF THE CONSUMER

BY CHOOSING RSPCA APPROVED IN THE SUPERMARKET AND WHEN DINING OUT, AUSTRALIANS ARE SUPPORTING FARMING THAT PRIORITISES ANIMAL WELFARE AND IS LEADING TO A FUTURE OF HIGHER WELFARE FARMING.





YOUR ANIMAL WELFARE ASSURANCE CHECKLIST

1

Independent, third-party certification by the RSPCA – an organisation that you can trust.

2

Farms meet Standards, developed by the RSPCA, that give animals a good quality of life.

3

Animals have food, water, shelter as well as the opportunity to do the things they like to do.

4

Whether farmed indoors, outdoors or in a combination of both, there is always a focus on providing animals with an enriched environment.

5

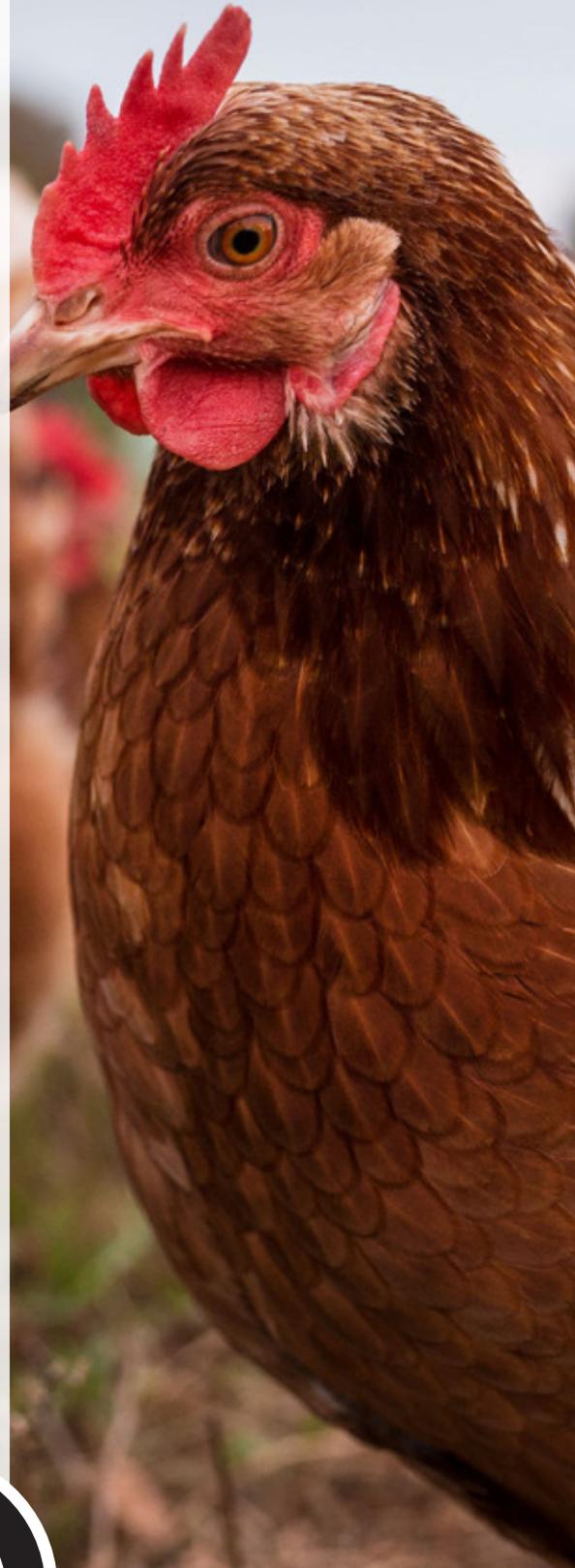
Frequent, comprehensive assessments conducted by specially trained RSPCA Assessors.

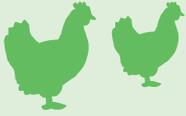
6

Assessment reports are reviewed and evaluated by the RSPCA Certification Body.

7

Products are traceable right through the supply chain from point of sale back to the farm.





LAYER HENS

218 REQUIREMENTS
WHEN ON FARM*



PIGS

322 REQUIREMENTS
WHEN ON FARM AND
88 AT SLAUGHTER



MEAT CHICKENS

312 REQUIREMENTS
WHEN ON FARM AND
109 AT SLAUGHTER



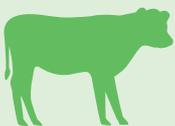
TURKEYS

242 REQUIREMENTS
WHEN ON FARM AND
109 AT SLAUGHTER



SALMON

471 REQUIREMENTS
WHEN ON FARM AND
34 AT SLAUGHTER



DAIRY CALVES

259 REQUIREMENTS WHEN ON
FARM AND 60 AT SLAUGHTER

HOW OUR SCHEME WORKS

THE RSPCA APPROVED FARMING SCHEME IS LIKE NO OTHER IN AUSTRALIA. THE RSPCA STANDARDS EXIST SOLELY TO IMPROVE ANIMAL WELFARE AND THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS IS TOUGH AND STRINGENT.

SETTING THE STANDARDS

As an evidence-based organisation, the RSPCA acts upon the science that says animals benefit from being able to express behaviours that they find rewarding. To have a good quality of life, animals need to have their nutritional, environmental, health and behavioural needs catered for as well as having a good mental state which is drawn from positive experiences.

Developed and reviewed by RSPCA Australia's science team, the RSPCA Standards are informed by animal welfare science, RSPCA policy, leading farming practices in Australia and overseas, and take account of the commercial realities associated with farming. They are created with the aim of meeting the needs of animals while also being commercially achievable. This means the Scheme can work with large scale producers and improve the lives of a greater number of animals.

Since launching the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, the RSPCA has developed and released animal welfare standards for 6 of Australia's most intensively-farmed animals. An RSPCA Standard for layer hens was first released in 1996, followed by a Standard for pigs in 2001. A Standard for meat chickens and Standard for turkeys were released in 2010, a Standard for farmed Atlantic salmon in 2016 and a Standard for dairy calves (formerly dairy veal calves) in 2017.

* For most species we can cover the life of the animal under our Standards, however the nature of egg farming means that the assessable Standard for layer hens only covers birds during the time they are on the egg farm. To help guide the industry and give hens the best start the RSPCA released a voluntary RSPCA Standard for pullets (young layer hens) in rear.

**RSPCA
STANDARDS ARE
UNDERPINNED
BY RSPCA
AUSTRALIA'S
GOOD ANIMAL
WELFARE
POLICY**

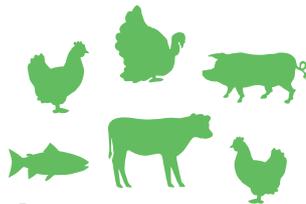
‘RSPCA Australia considers that the welfare of an animal includes both physical and mental states. Ensuring good animal welfare goes beyond preventing pain, suffering or distress and minimising negative experiences, to ensuring animals can express their natural behaviour in an enriching environment, feel safe, have healthy positive experiences and a good quality of life. Thus, providing good animal welfare means providing animals with all the necessary elements to ensure their physical and mental health and a sense of positive individual wellbeing.’

The RSPCA Standards are detailed, and our approach aims to cover animals throughout their life. There’s an average of 370 specific requirements under the Standards that need to be met for a product to have RSPCA Approved certification.



'I strongly believe the RSPCA Standard for meat chickens achieved a lot in changing the farming approach and general mindset to animal welfare. I feel honoured that I was at the forefront of creating better relationships and open communication between the RSPCA and farmers. There are many deservedly hard-working and committed farmers out there and assessors have helped and supported them along the way to becoming RSPCA Approved.'

**Sue —
RSPCA Assessor, RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme**



6
SPECIES-SPECIFIC ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS



23
REVIEWS TO RSPCA STANDARDS TO CONTINUALLY RAISE THE BAR



AN AVERAGE OF 370
SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE STANDARDS THAT NEED TO BE MET FOR A PRODUCT TO BE RSPCA APPROVED

A PATH OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

While the RSPCA Standards go above and beyond what's legally required in Australia, our aim is to set participating farms on a path of continuous improvement in animal welfare while maintaining commercial viability. To achieve this, the Standards are formally reviewed every five years. A new Standard will undergo an interim review one year after its release to address any issues with their practical implementation and can undergo ad hoc reviews if and when required. Altogether, the RSPCA has undertaken 23 reviews to our Standards over the past 25 years.

For every formal Standard review, we commission an independent review of relevant animal welfare science, and invite participants in the Scheme, industry bodies, and other animal welfare NGOs to provide input. The development and review of RSPCA Standards is led by the RSPCA Australia science team, with internal and external working groups established to support them.





TOUGH AND STRINGENT CERTIFICATION

Key to the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme's robust certification process is frequent, comprehensive on-site assessments. These are coordinated by the RSPCA Certification Body and conducted by specially trained RSPCA Assessors.

The operating parameters of the RSPCA Certification Body are set by the RSPCA Certification Committee. This committee consists of three senior RSPCA Australia employees who do not work directly in the Scheme. Currently the RSPCA Australia CEO, Executive Officer and Senior Scientific Officer – Farm Animals make up the Certification Committee.

Key responsibilities for the RSPCA Certification Committee:

- Determine the RSPCA Certification Body's governance rules and operating parameters.
- Monitor the RSPCA Certification Body's performance against the operating parameters set.
- Consider and decide on exemption applications.
- Resolve appeals to certification decisions made by the RSPCA Certification Body.
- Receive and review reports of RSPCA Certification Body activities.

'Approval is not a given and, in my role, I am able to develop and implement processes to ensure the Approval of farms is consistent and unbiased. Daily, I see producers striving to improve their conformance and I work with them to ensure continued improvement and conformance. They're proud of what they do, and it is great to see the farms raising the bar year-on-year.'

**Nikki —
Senior Certification Coordinator,
RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme**

REGULAR AND THOROUGH ASSESSMENTS

Frequency of assessments and attention to detail are key to making sure the RSPCA Standards are upheld. RSPCA Approved farms are visited by an RSPCA Assessor 2–4 times a year. Abattoirs processing pigs, meat chickens, turkeys and salmon from farms participating in the Scheme are also assessed on an annual basis and must have CCTV in place. All sites participating in the Scheme are subject to additional unscheduled visits.

As part of a typical assessment, an RSPCA Assessor will evaluate all areas of the farm or site where there are animals being raised under the Scheme. Depending on the size of the farm this can take from a couple of hours to a couple of days. Assessors will also review documentation required and records kept as part of their participation in the Scheme and, where relevant CCTV, for example in abattoirs. The Assessor will then provide their report to the producer and the RSPCA Certification Body.

When the RSPCA Certification Body receives a report, a Certification Coordinator will review. If any issues have been raised, they will consult with the Assessor and work with the producer to make sure the issue is resolved. After this evaluation phase, the assessment is reviewed by another Certification Coordinator who makes sure all policies and procedures were followed before then making a certification decision. This multi-layered approach is a feature of world's-best practice in audit and certification.

The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme is independent of the state and territory RSPCA Inspectorates. RSPCA Inspectors enforce existing animal protection legislation on behalf of their respective state and territory governments. Farms and brands participating in the Scheme choose to do so because they are looking to raise animal welfare standards, above and beyond the legal requirements, and want independent certification for this.

FREQUENCY OF ASSESSMENTS

RSPCA Assessors are on farm often to make sure the Standards are being met. The frequency of visits is determined by the lifecycle of each species.

LAYER HENS, MEAT CHICKENS AND TURKEYS

New farms are assessed four times in the first year. Following a good track record of consistent conformance with the Standards this may reduce to three or two assessments annually. All sheds housing birds raised under the Scheme are assessed during an on-farm assessment.

Abattoirs processing meat chickens and turkeys are assessed annually.

PIGS

Farms are assessed twice a year. All areas where pigs are housed are assessed during an on-farm assessment.

Abattoirs are assessed annually.

SALMON

Marine sites are assessed every two years, freshwater sites are assessed annually, and all animal handling procedures, including slaughter, are individually assessed annually.



1,231

ASSESSMENTS OF FARMS WERE CONDUCTED IN 2020

4,592

POULTRY SHED ASSESSMENTS WERE CONDUCTED IN 2020

14

ASSESSMENTS AT SALMON SITES BETWEEN MAY 2019 – APR 2020*

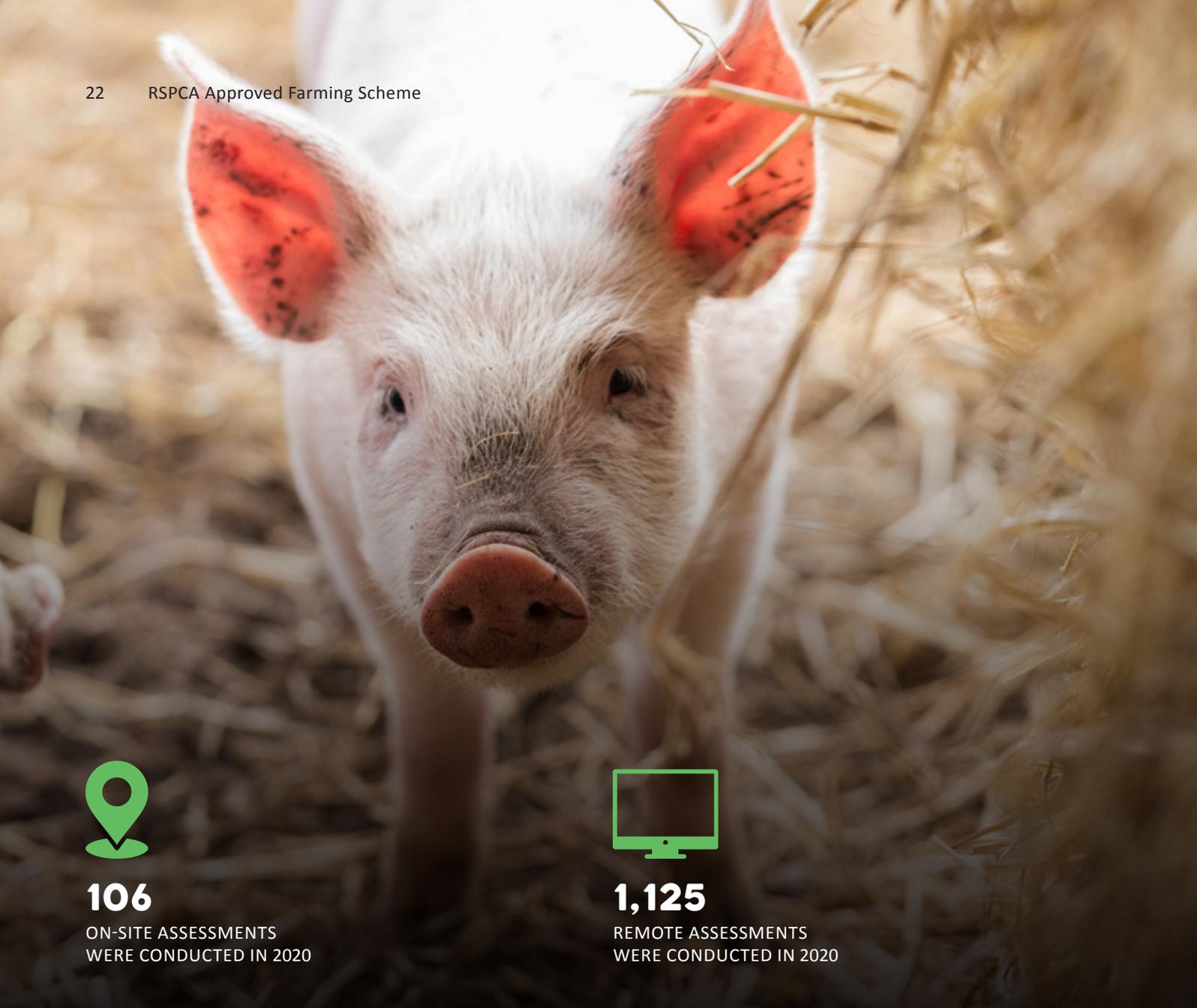
MORE THAN 1,000KM

WERE WALKED BY RSPCA ASSESSORS IN 2020, CHECKING ALL AREAS WHERE ANIMALS ARE KEPT AS PART OF THE SCHEME

6,561

ASSESSMENTS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED BY RSPCA ASSESSORS SINCE 2015

*Generally, RSPCA assessments are recorded as a calendar year but due to the nature of salmon farming, assessments are recorded from May through to April the following year.



106

ON-SITE ASSESSMENTS
WERE CONDUCTED IN 2020



1,125

REMOTE ASSESSMENTS
WERE CONDUCTED IN 2020

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ASSESSMENTS IN 2020

While improving the lives of farm animals is core to the Scheme’s mission, the health, safety and wellbeing of RSPCA staff, participating producers and the Australian community is important to us. For this reason, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a change to how assessments of farms took place in 2020. When scheduled on-site assessments are not possible, remote virtual assessments have been conducted to maintain consistent inspection of farms and make sure the RSPCA Standards are being met.

As part of a virtual assessment, producers are required to take video footage of sheds and farms that the RSPCA Certification Body select. RSPCA Assessors evaluate this footage along with other materials and documents producers are required to provide. They submit their findings in the assessment report and the certification process continues in the usual way.

While the pandemic continues, the Scheme will continue to work in line with relevant COVID-19 restrictions. Wherever possible, on-site assessments are taking place, however remote assessments are being used when restrictions limit the ability of RSPCA Assessors to travel to farm locations.

‘At Woolworths, we are committed to improving the lives of animals in our supply chains. Our concern for animal welfare is shared by our suppliers and our customers and will continue to be a core pillar in our Sustainability strategy. We have worked with the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme since 2014 and are proud of our achievements which have offered customers greater confidence that their food is sourced in a way that respects animal welfare. All our own brand fresh chicken, chicken used as an ingredient, and whole fresh turkeys are RSPCA Approved.’

**Fiona Walmsley —
Head of Sustainability — Climate
and Environment, Woolworths**

ONE OF THE POSITIVE TRENDS OVER TIME IS THE STEADY IMPROVEMENT TO CONFORMANCE, IN PARTICULAR ON MEAT CHICKEN FARMS PARTICIPATING IN THE SCHEME.

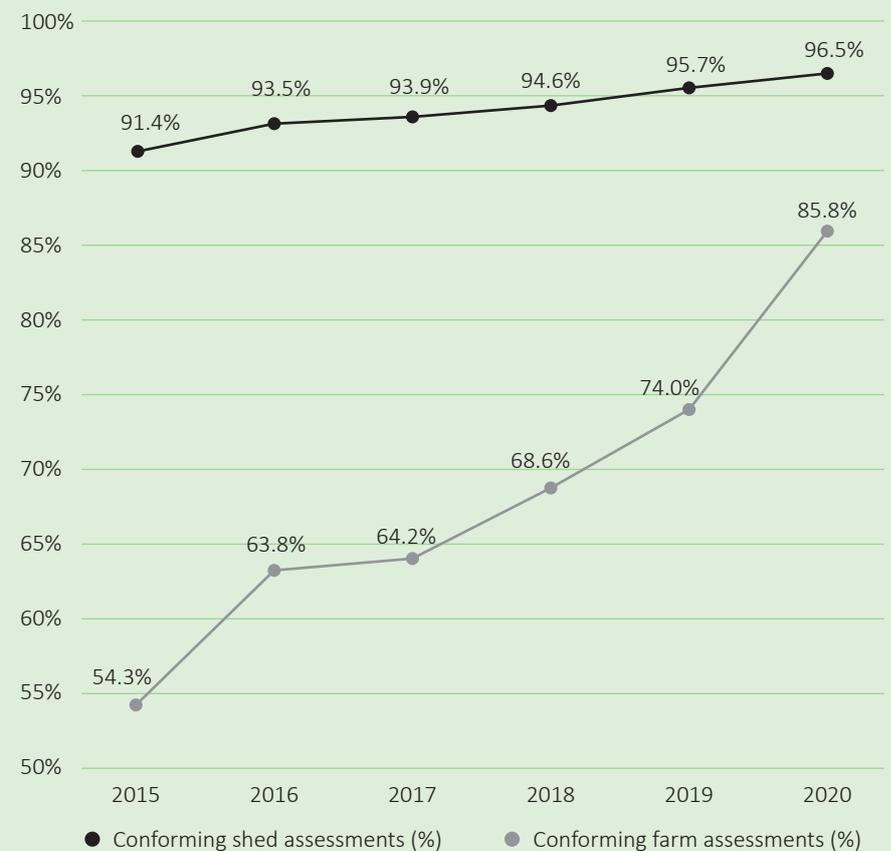
In 2020, 3.5% of meat chicken sheds assessed had a minor non-conformance, 1.4% a major and 0.02% a critical. On average this is a 70% improvement from 5 years ago.

ADHERING TO THE RSPCA STANDARDS

Most assessments find a high level of conformance with the Standards. However, if an issue is identified or a requirement isn't being met, this is known as nonconformance. When this happens, a process is put in place to correct the issue immediately. Nonconformances are categorised by their severity being minor, major or critical. While most of the time these are minor and don't always have a direct impact on animal welfare, they are all taken seriously.

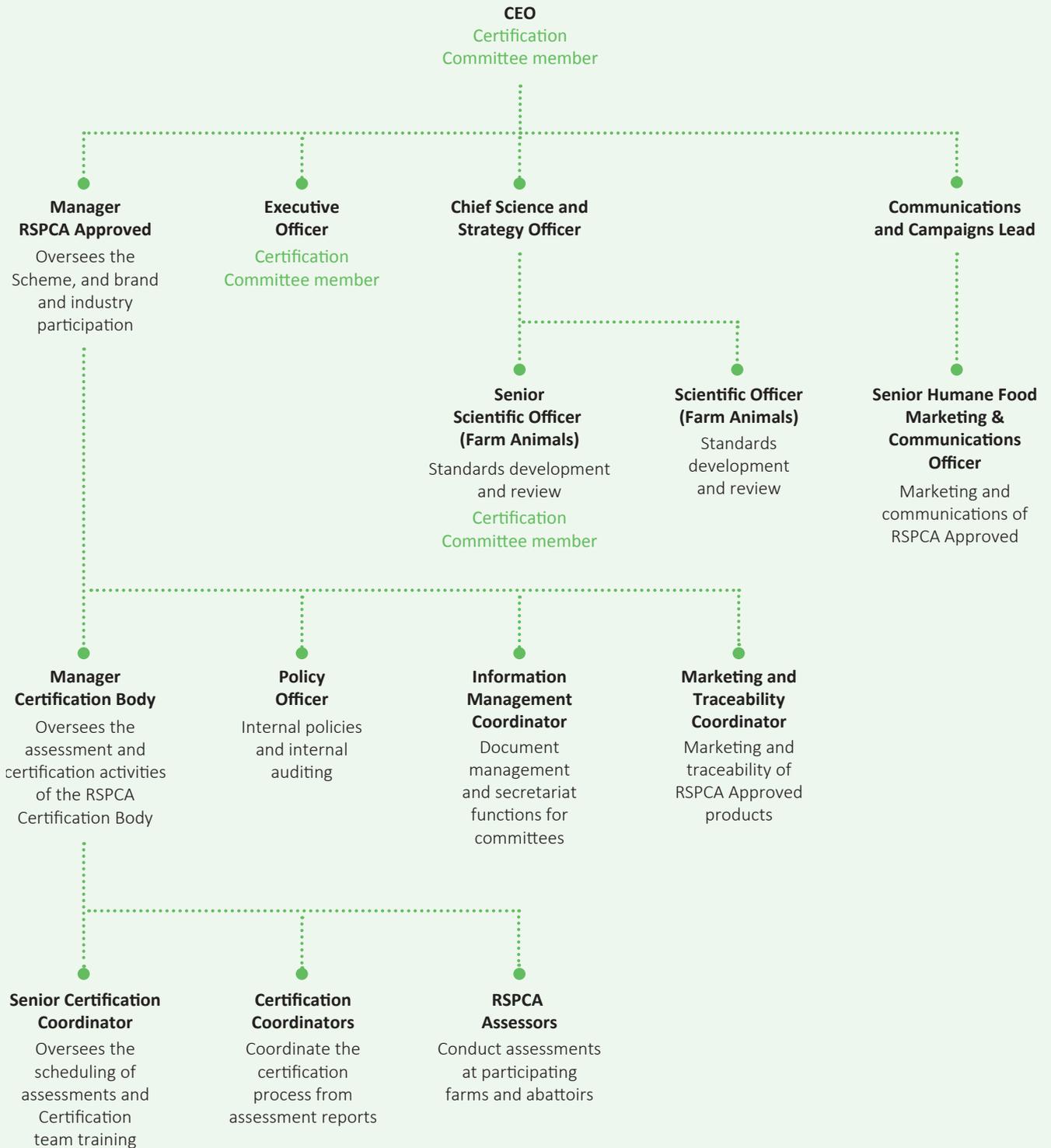
Where an RSPCA Assessor finds a nonconformance, the farm is required to correct the problem so it meets the Standard and is prevented from happening in the future. When it isn't corrected or the nonconformance is frequent or persistent, then action is taken that could lead to a farm or producer being removed from the Scheme.

Conformance by meat chicken producers



WHO WE ARE

There are a number of dedicated RSPCA Australia employees contributing to the operation of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme.



Note: Structure at the time of publication.



ASSESSING A
LAYER HEN

FARM:
≈ **\$2,000**
PER ASSESSMENT



ASSESSING A
PIG

FARM:
≈ **\$2,000**
PER ASSESSMENT



ASSESSING A
MEAT CHICKEN

FARM*:
≈ **\$1,200**
PER ASSESSMENT



ASSESSING A
TURKEY

FARM**:
≈ **\$800**
PER ASSESSMENT



ASSESSING A
SALMON

SITE:
≈ **\$2,325**
PER ASSESSMENT

HOW WE ARE FUNDED

The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme is not-for-profit, and not funded by donations to the RSPCA.

The costs of running the Scheme, including the high costs associated with frequent farm visits and certification, is covered by a licensing fee. Licensing fees are paid by brands that source from RSPCA Approved farms and market their product with the RSPCA Approved logo. The fee is calculated with consideration of how much it costs to have the brand and their suppliers participate and be certified.

Producers themselves are not required to cover certification costs, unless they are also the brand owner or choose to have their farms certified as part of their own commitments to animal welfare.

This structure recognises that there is already a higher cost for producers associated with meeting the RSPCA Standards, and that brands receive the market benefit by promoting their product as RSPCA Approved.

All income raised is kept within the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme and used to implement our work, promote the Scheme and its participants and at the end of the day, improve the lives of Australia’s farm animals.

65% of RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme expenditure in FY 2019/20 directly related to monitoring conformance with the Standards with the remainder going to promoting the Scheme and building consumer awareness, as well as operational costs.

COST OF ASSESSMENTS

The cost to certify a participating farm can vary according to its size and location. Many farms are in remote locations and RSPCA Assessors travel across the country, rotating which farms they visit to maintain their independence.



* based on a typical farm with an average of 6 sheds housing birds.
**based on a typical farm with an average of 4 sheds housing birds.



THE STANDARDS WE SET FOR OURSELVES

Improving how the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme operates is key to its future. The standards we set for participants in the Scheme are high and we know that the standard we set for ourselves is just as important.

The Scheme has undergone two external reviews during its time – the first in 2009 and the second in 2018. The 2009 review led to the appointment of a Compliance Manager and Marketing Manager with the objective to grow the Scheme in terms of numbers of animals covered and brands participating.

Following the commitment by Australia’s two biggest supermarket retailers to source chicken from RSPCA Approved farms, the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme grew quickly. This prompted another external review, commissioned by RSPCA Australia, so that we could better understand how the Scheme needed to operate to meet best practice and the expectations of stakeholders. This review included a benchmarking exercise to assess the Scheme against other comparable farm animal welfare assurance programs across the world.

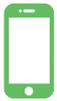
Since then, we have been working to implement a number of the recommendations, which will ultimately make it a more robust certification program. This includes extensive development work aimed at making sure the Scheme’s certification activities meet international best practice and ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 17065 requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services.

RSPCA Australia established the RSPCA Certification Body that is impartial and independent of the organisation to coordinate certification of the Scheme and meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 17065:2013 *Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services*. Our audit program, conduct of assessments and evaluation of competence and training of personnel is designed to meet the requirements of ISO/IEC 19011:2018E. Work towards independent accreditation of the RSPCA Certification Body, and ultimately the Scheme, against all applicable international standards is continuing.

We are committed to continually improving the Scheme’s operations and also how we report on its performance. As this is our expectation of our stakeholders and the Australian food and agriculture industry, we should do the same.

TELLING AN IMPORTANT STORY

We know that raising awareness about farm animal welfare is core to the RSPCA's role within the Australian community. By promoting the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme and the benefits of higher welfare farming for animals to Australians who eat eggs, meat and fish, we're supporting farmers going above and beyond and bringing higher welfare to the forefront of consumer decision-making. We know many Australians deeply care about farm animal welfare but can be confused by labelling. Through all our marketing and communications activities we strive to be accurate, authentic, and make it clear that for those who eat eggs, meat and fish and want to make an ethical choice, RSPCA Approved is their best choice.



DIGITAL

Throughout the year, we promote the Scheme through various channels and to a diverse audience. In FY 2019/20 we invested in a 6-month digital advertising campaign. This campaign was aimed at building brand recognition and understanding, promoting higher welfare products at particular times of the year and promoting individual RSPCA Approved brands in state-specific markets. Advertisements were delivered through Google Search, YouTube, Unruly and Facebook, delivering more than 7 million impressions (times our content appeared online).



TV

RSPCA Approved TV commercials continue to get community service airtime during prime time thanks to the generous support of major television networks.



EVENTS

While COVID-19 certainly put a hold on many events, wherever possible, we continued to reach out to the community by participating in virtual and online events. For example, we held a virtual stall at the 2020 Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology (AIFST) Virtual Convention where we shared information about the RSPCA's efforts to improve farm animal welfare and the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme.



EDUCATION

Through the Latest News section on the RSPCA Approved website we regularly discuss key farm animal welfare issues, higher welfare farming and how Australians can support it, and share stories about farmers and brands participating in the Scheme. These posts are shared across RSPCA Australia's social media channels.

Early in 2020, the RSPCA launched the second season of the RSPCA Humane Food Podcast. In the successful first season, host Brian Daly spoke with RSPCA staff, industry, RSPCA Approved brands and leading experts in their fields on a range of topics, including meat chicken welfare, bobby calf welfare, pig welfare and slaughter. The second season included experts on topics that ranged from male chick culling in the egg industry and how this can be changed, to the use of antibiotics in farming and more. By the end of 2020, the RSPCA Humane Food Podcast had 5,000 downloads.

In 2020 we also published *The Kind Cook: Kid-friendly recipes using RSPCA Approved ingredients* in collaboration with The Australian Women's Weekly. Along with recipes curated with children in mind, there was a focus on education with information about how to care about farm animals and 'did you know?' facts about hens, chickens, pigs, turkeys, cows and salmon throughout. The Kind Cook was on sale October 2020 to January 2021 and was very popular.



RSPCA APPROVED WEBSITE

We are continually looking at how we can improve the experience of visitors to the RSPCA Approved website. In 2020, we added new pages for each of the species covered under the Scheme.



WHERE WE'VE COME FROM

Established as part of the RSPCA's efforts to improve the lives of farm animals, the Scheme was created to improve animal welfare on Australian farms, while also providing guidance and a trustworthy choice for consumers who want to purchase higher welfare products.

Prior to 2009 the Scheme was known as the RSPCA Accreditation Scheme and had animal welfare Standards for layer hens and pigs. Since becoming the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, we've grown exponentially. Releasing four more sets of animal welfare standards, opening up participation to industries responsible for farming millions of animals every year.

Improving the welfare of Australia's farm animals is certainly a collaborative effort. While we've come a long way, we have much more work to do. The success of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme is only possible because caring consumers are driving demand for ethically produced food, and there's commitment from dedicated farmers, brand owners and retailers.

In the past 25 years we've seen forward-thinking brands show leadership and adopt the RSPCA Standards early. These brands continue to show their dedication to the Scheme and farm animal welfare, today.



ROHDE'S FREE RANGE EGGS

Second generation farmers, John and Ange Rohde were early adopters of the RSPCA Standard and have participated in the Scheme for over 15 years. As demand has grown for eggs that are farmed in a way that gives hens a good life, so too has the Rohde family farm. More than 70,000 hens roam their free-range farm in SA's Clare Valley. Hen welfare is core to their business with the RSPCA Approved certification providing the third-party guarantee their customers are looking for.

'Our mission is to produce tasty and ethically farmed eggs from the happiest chickens. Being an RSPCA Approved farm for over 15 years highlights the importance we place on animal welfare and also ensures our standards are the best in the industry.'

John and Ange Rohde — Rohde's Free Range Eggs

FREEDOM FARMS

Cordina Farms is the oldest poultry processor in Australia and is behind many innovative milestones that have changed the industry. Cordina was the first to launch the market in Australia and offer customers fresh chicken. It was also the first to offer fresh value-added poultry products. In 2011, Cordina was also an early adopter of the RSPCA Standard for meat chickens, offering customers a range of higher welfare RSPCA Approved chicken products through their Freedom Farms brand.

After 65 years in the poultry business, their commitment to animal welfare and sustainable farming practices is evident. On their farms alone, they have made sure millions of birds have been farmed in an environment that meets their needs, through their participation in the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme.



‘When we launched our Freedom Farms brand in 2011, the concept behind this brand was to create affordable, higher welfare chicken that stands for truth and honesty in farming by communicating the real facts on how our chickens are grown. For this reason, we decided to work with the RSPCA, a fantastic co-advocate to ensure there are real and tangible welfare benefits for our Freedom Farmed chickens and not the fluffy marketing spin!

Our Freedom Farms’ higher welfare model exclusively uses traditional style barns, filled with natural sunlight. The Approved Farming Scheme and our brand vision are perfectly aligned, hence why we are delighted to have participated in the Scheme for a decade.’

**Jeremy Clegg —
COO, The Cordina Group**

HUON SALMON

From the moment the RSPCA Standard for farmed Atlantic salmon was released, Huon Aquaculture worked to become Australia’s first RSPCA Approved salmon producer. This commitment stems from fish welfare and health being the centre of their farming operations. To this day they remain the only producer meeting the RSPCA Standard for farmed Atlantic salmon.

Peter and Frances Bender started farming fish in the 1980s and today farm 5.5 million salmon* annually to the RSPCA Standard. Over the past several years as salmon consumption has increased, so has the desire for consumers to know more about the salmon they are eating and that it has been farmed to higher animal welfare standards.

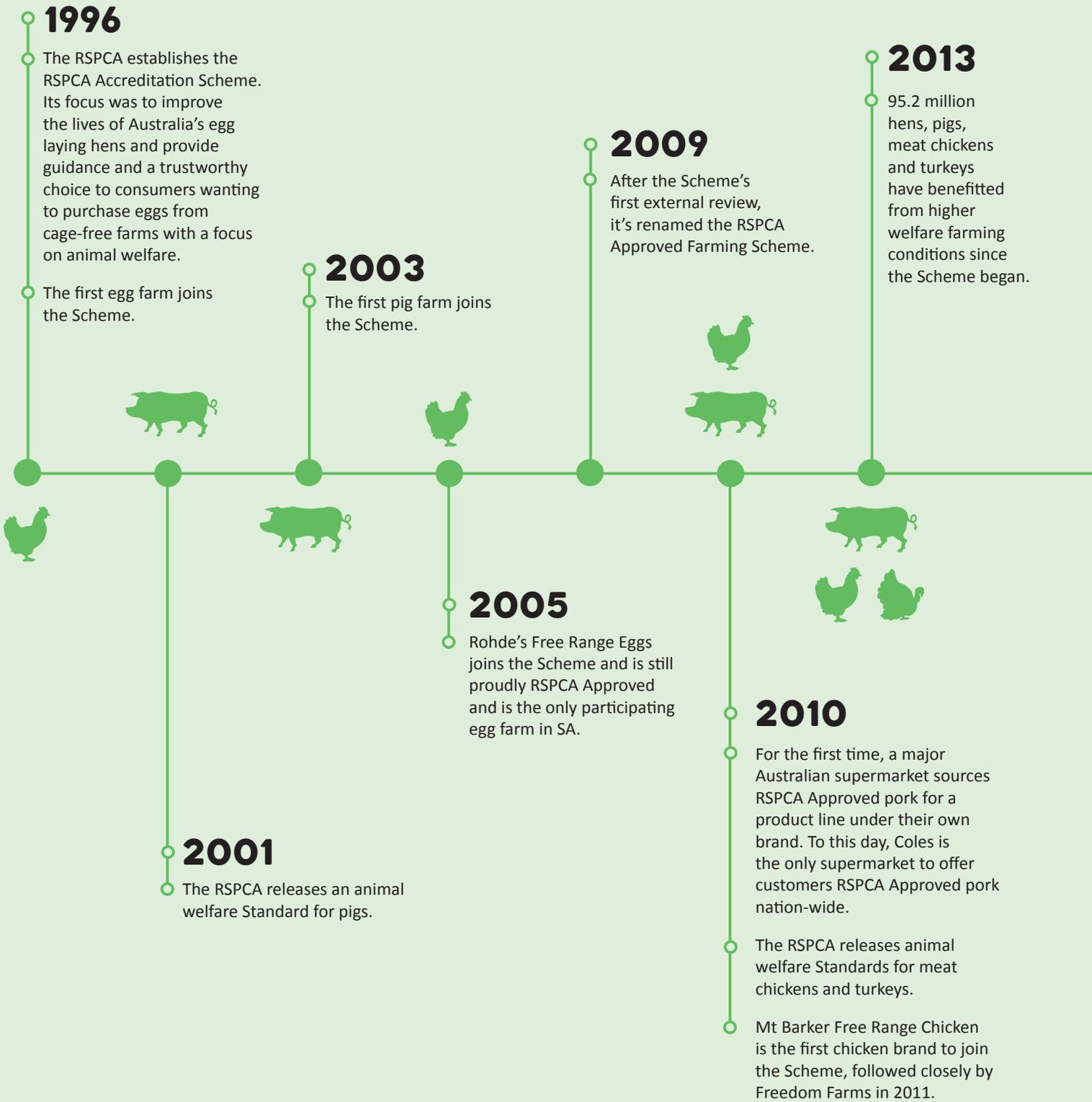
‘Huon Aquaculture works with the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme because it has an unparalleled focus on fish welfare — just like we do. When purchasing and eating Huon Salmon, people can be assured that fish have been farmed in a way that meets their behavioural and health needs.’

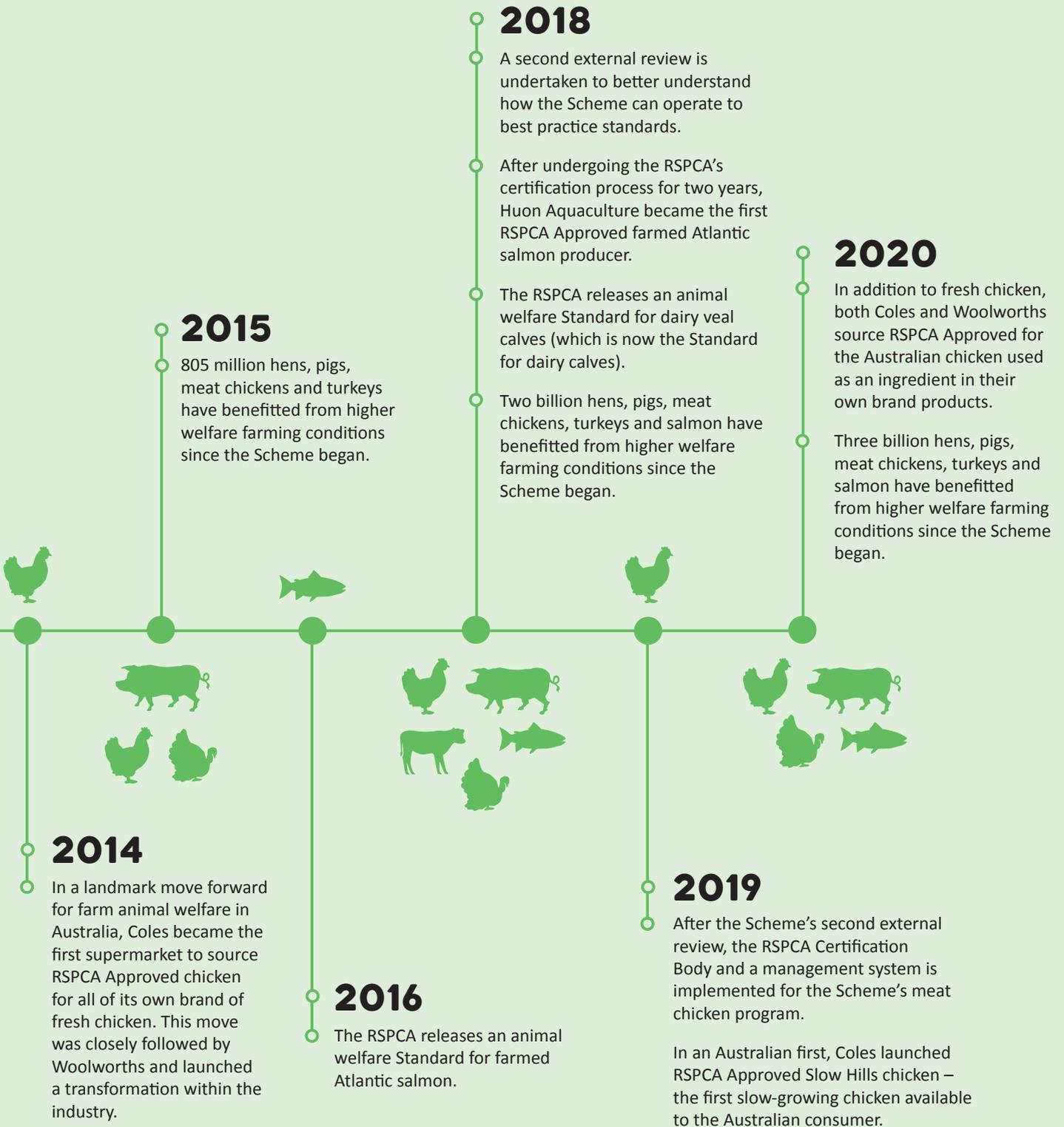
**Frances Bender —
Co-Founder, Huon Aquaculture**

* this is around 98% of salmon farmed by Huon. The 2% of Huon Salmon farmed in Macquarie Harbour is not allowed in the Scheme and is not labelled as RSPCA Approved.



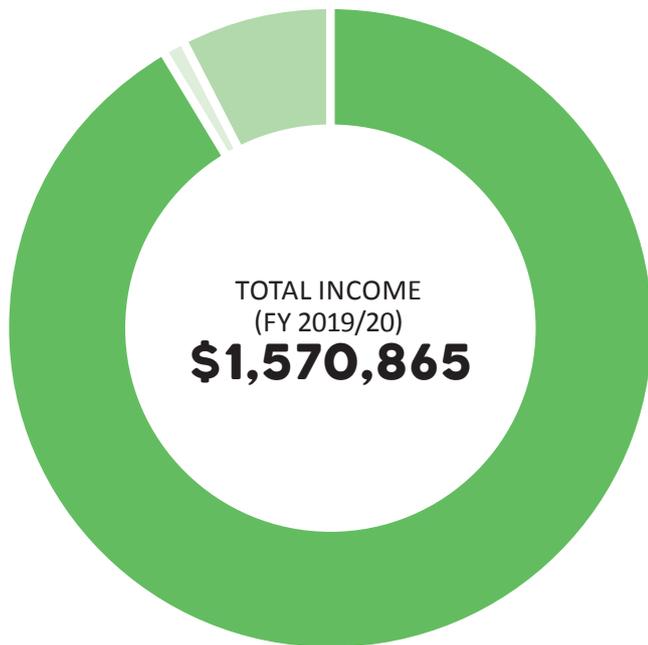
KEY MOMENTS IN OUR HISTORY







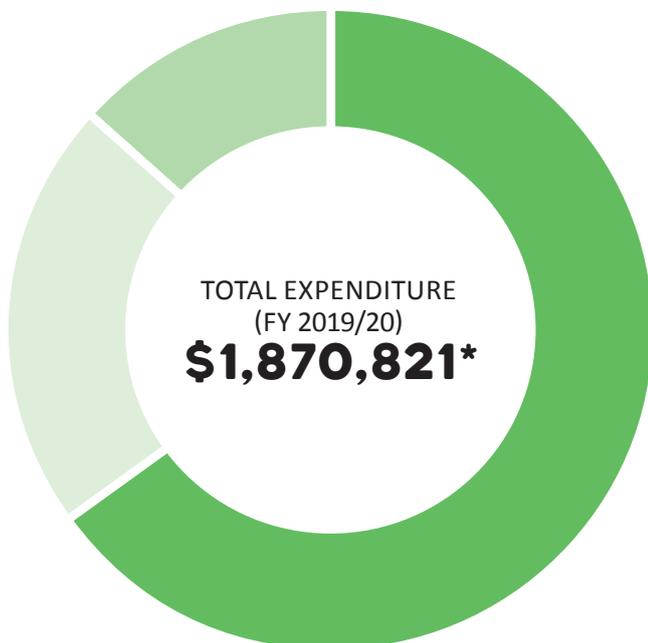
OUR INCOME AND EXPENDITURE



- **\$1,436,265**
LICENSING FEES
- **\$17,600**
PRODUCER FEES*
- **\$117,000**
OTHER INCOME**

* when a producer has chosen to gain RSPCA Approved certification without the backing of a brand

** includes JobKeeper payments received due to the impact of COVID-19



- **\$1,218,455**
spent on certification, including the direct costs of RSPCA Assessors conducting assessments, training and development and employee salaries

- **\$406,617**
spent on marketing, including raising awareness and promoting the Scheme, education and employee salaries

- **\$245,750**
spent on operational and administrative costs, including rent, utilities and administrative staff costs

* In the FY 2019/20, the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme ran a deficit of \$299,957.

LOOKING FORWARD

Like so many businesses, in 2020 the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme faced challenges that we didn't see coming. While we had to make some changes to our processes in order to keep our staff and those who we work with safe, certification remained thorough and saw more animals raised to higher welfare standards than ever before.

We are immensely proud of what the Scheme has achieved over the past 25 years. With our mission to improve the lives of Australia's most intensively-farmed animals, raising the bar for animal welfare, while maintaining uptake within industries that are under increasing market pressure, can be a significant challenge. The RSPCA Standards go above and beyond what's legally required in Australia and our aim has always been to set participating farms on a path of continuous improvement in animal welfare while maintaining commercial viability.

We know the majority of Australians care about farm animal welfare and want to support higher welfare. More customers are looking for labels and certification to help guide their decisions and many Australians are eating less meat, than they have in the past, with animal welfare being a key reason why for both. For customers who are looking for an indication of good farm animal welfare, the RSPCA higher animal welfare Standards and robust certification program make RSPCA Approved their best choice.

However, we also know that caring about animal welfare does not always translate to purchasing higher welfare products. This means our work is far from done. We are committed to continuing to work with industries, farmers, brands and retailers to make sure that consumers have choice and understand why it is important for animals to be farmed in a way that's empathetic to their needs as sentient animals. An important part of this is recognising that farmers should be paid a fair price for the work they do and that meeting higher welfare standards costs more.

While we have been speaking with dairy farmers for a few years now, there currently isn't a producer raising animals under the RSPCA Standard for dairy calves. Every year around 400,000 non-replacement calves are born into the dairy industry only to go to slaughter at 5 days old. There are significant animal welfare issues with this practice and the RSPCA aims to encourage farmers to consider rearing these calves for meat and improving their quality of life.

Sadly, Australia lags behind other countries when it comes to farm animal welfare legislation. This is particularly clear in the case of egg-laying hens and pigs. We recognise that this will continue to make it difficult for forward-thinking egg and pork brands to farm, or source animals farmed to higher welfare standards, and be competitive in the market. While the RSPCA works to push for legislative change and lift regulated standards for farm animals, we will continue to support brands looking to differentiate themselves in the market and show their animal welfare credentials through participation in the Scheme.

The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme is Australia's leading independent certification for animal welfare. Meeting the Standard and securing RSPCA Approval means Australian consumers can trust animal welfare is a priority, and this will increasingly become a valuable point of difference.





**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 rspcaapproved.org.au

RSPCA 
for all creatures **great & small**

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