

THE HUMANE LEAGUE

UNITED KINGDOM

HOW DO COMPANIES STACK UP?
chicken welfare in the meal kit sector

**AS OF THE 17.09.2020, 6
OF THE LARGEST MEAL KIT
COMPANIES OPERATING IN
THE UK HAVE COMMITTED TO
IMPROVING THE WELFARE
STANDARDS OF CHICKENS
RAISED FOR MEAT IN THEIR
SUPPLY CHAINS.**

**HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF THESE
CONTINUE TO SERVE CHICKEN
THAT DOES NOT MEET MINIMUM
STANDARDS** defined by leading animal
protection organisations that eradicate
the most extreme forms of suffering and
show no intention to change or consider
this important issue.

Chickens are inquisitive, friendly and playful
birds, and are more intelligent than most
people think, yet they are one of the most
abused land animals in the world. In the UK
alone, over one billion are killed for food
each year.



A SHOCKING 95% OF CHICKENS REARED FOR MEAT ARE RAISED ON INTENSIVE FACTORY FARMS. THEY ARE OFTEN PACKED INTO NOISY BARNs, LIVING IN THEIR OWN WASTE THAT BURNS THEIR LEGS AND BODIES.

why does this matter?

Chickens' bodies are bred to produce as much meat muscle, particularly on the breast—for fillets—in as little time as possible. This leads to painful leg weakness and bone problems. As a result, many struggle to walk, suffering from pain, lameness and decreased energy levels. Despite what is often argued by the agricultural industry, it is not “normal” or “natural” for a young chicken to be sitting down to ‘rest’ most of the time. Like other animals, chickens love to explore and play, but are unable to. Along with cramped conditions, intensive chicken breeds are the source of the majority of welfare issues encountered in the industry. But, it doesn't have to be this way. By signing up to the [Better Chicken Commitment \(BCC\)](#), companies can raise the welfare of the birds that they use.

what is the Better Chicken Commitment?

The BCC is a set of standards for improving the lives of chickens raised for meat. These standards were agreed by a group of leading animal protection organisations including the RSPCA, Compassion in World Farming, World Animal Protection and The Humane League UK, and have already been adopted by food industry leaders such as KFC, Pret a Manger, Nestlé and Marks & Spencer.

there are 6 essential requirements:

1 USE BREEDS WITH BETTER WELFARE.

Intensive breeds are at the core of health and welfare problems for broiler chickens. By transitioning away from the common intensive breeds, many of these can be improved or avoided altogether.

2 COMPLY WITH EU ANIMAL WELFARE LAWS.

All EU animal welfare regulations must be adhered to, even when chicken is produced outside of the EU and imported into the UK.

3 REDUCE DISTRESS AT SLAUGHTER.

Current stunning and slaughter methods are highly distressing. In waterbath stunning systems, birds are hung upside down while fully conscious, their legs placed in metal shackles, causing pain and distress. Rather than effectively being stunned to avoid the pain of a neck cut, birds often receive an insufficient stun. Controlled atmospheric killing (CAK) offers the opportunity to vastly reduce suffering by ensuring effective stunning and less handling.

4 IMPLEMENT THIRD-PARTY CHECKS AND PUBLIC REPORTING.

We're asking for greater transparency in the industry, ensuring the public is kept informed of progress towards achieving corporate welfare commitments and farms are audited to ensure compliance of standards.

5 IMPROVE AIR QUALITY, LIGHT, & ENRICHMENT.

Chickens should be provided with perches to help satisfy their natural impulses. Housing must give natural light to a specific, measured standard.

6 GIVE BIRDS MORE SPACE.

Chickens should be stocked at a maximum of 30kg/m² (approximately 14 birds per m² at a slaughter weight of 2.2 kg). More space allows movement and better quality life.



THESE HIGHER BROILER WELFARE MEASURES ARE MUCH MORE THAN A TREND—they're becoming the industry standard. Since 2018, over 95 companies have now made a public commitment to their customers and stakeholders to improve the lives of broiler chickens in their UK and European supply chains by 2026 or earlier.

With the industry making more and more commitments, broiler producers are also recognising the necessity for change, and are moving much quicker on this issue than they did on cage-free eggs.

why focus on meal kit companies?

With customers staying at home throughout the lockdown period, looking for something to do which didn't require eating out, and avoiding the weekly supermarket shop, the meal kit industry has taken on new customers and seen a seismic growth in sales.

Some estimate this industry in the UK to be worth £1bn a year, with the global industry predicted to reach \$9bn (£7.2bn) by 2025. Gousto alone for example, one of the key players in the meal kit market, demonstrated this success by reportedly delivering some 4 million meals to 380,000 UK households each month in 2020.

Many of the meals delivered by recipe box companies contain chicken meat, and it is therefore vitally important that these companies be held to account by animal protection groups working in the interest of animals.

Fortunately, several of the nation's leading meal kit companies have already committed to the BCC and are encouraging others to do the same. HelloFresh, Love Yourself and Pasta Evangelists have all made public commitments, among others.

**COMMITTED
TO THE BCC**



love yourself



At Fit Kitchen we have been conscious for some time that a major overhaul needs to happen in the way animals in our food chain are treated. We were approached by animal protection charity The Humane League to help affect this change by committing to the Better Chicken Commitment, an initiative advancing the welfare of broiler chickens. Fit Kitchen fully supports this campaign and will continue to work alongside THL to be part of this much needed change for the better treatment of animals

Amar Lodhia

Founder of Fit Kitchen UK



**REGRETTABLY, SEVERAL COMPANIES
HAVE NOT GONE FAR ENOUGH WITH
SOME COMPANIES BEING UNWILLING
TO ENGAGE IN, OR PROGRESS
DISCUSSIONS AROUND THEIR
COMMITMENT TO ANIMAL WELFARE.**

Companies owe it to consumers and stakeholders to be open about their commitments to improve animal welfare—especially when they directly impact millions of chickens' lives. Meal kit companies must be held accountable for producing meaningful public commitments to improve broiler chicken welfare across the board. They must give continual reporting and demonstrate an ongoing commitment by having third-party audits. This way, we know that there will be no drop in standards.

This report is intended to provide more transparency for key stakeholders and consumers alike and find out which meal kit companies are lagging behind.

**TO SEE HOW THE TOP MEAL KIT COMPANIES PERFORM
ON CHICKEN WELFARE, [CLICK HERE](#).**