



Poultry Highlights

19/01/2012

Poultry Highlights are written by the NFU Poultry team on a fortnightly basis. Please remember to quote the NFU as the source of the information if this email is forwarded on.

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NFU –Shining a light on Good Eggs

From the big four supermarkets, to top high street food chains and leading food manufacturers, the NFU has been shining a light on those companies who have pledged to buy higher welfare eggs.

The NFU has widely voiced serious concerns over the threat that imported eggs produced in conventional cages pose to British egg producers. The major concern is the threat of egg products that are hidden within foods such as cakes, salad dressings and quiches.

As a result, the NFU, BEIC and Defra contacted leading food companies and retailers to find out exactly who is a Good Egg and will stand by British eggs and are encouraging more to come forward.

The list went live on NFU Online on January 16 and within days the NFU had been inundated by companies guaranteeing their support for higher welfare standards and wanting to be part of the Good Egg list.

NFU poultry board chairman Charles Bourns said: "We are extremely pleased that they have decided to support the industry to ensure it does not suffer at the hands of those producers in Europe that have had more than 12 years to meet new welfare standards but have failed.

"Publishing this list was always about encouraging companies to come out and say they were fully behind the move to enriched cages and we have been overwhelmed by the response. All of those companies that we had not heard from confirmed their support within days and we also had a number of other companies – both big and small – that had not been contacted, wanting to have their names on the list. It has been a very useful exercise that has seen support at all

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The voice of British farming

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levels of the food chain and gained interest in the press and by the consumer.”

Before the list went live, the British Retail Consortium (BRC) said that Asda, Tesco, Morrisons and Sainsbury's had confirmed they would not source any own-brand products from battery cages, as well as Marks & Spencer, Waitrose, Iceland and The Co-op.

Other supporters included manufacturers ABF, which produces Blue Dragon sauces and noodles, Premier Foods, producers of Mr Kipling, and United Biscuits, that makes McVitie's. Hotel and restaurant company Whitbread, which runs Premier Inn, Costa and Beefeater, as well as Greggs, Starbucks and many others also made the pledge.

To view the full list please [click here](#)

State of play on UK non-compliance

Last week it was reported that a very small minority of UK producers had not met the deadline for the conventional cage ban, figures reported 500,000 hens remained in conventional battery cages over 30 farms in the UK. However, the figure has been reducing daily and by the end of this week it is thought that the non-compliant farms in England will be at very low single figures and that by February 1 action will have been taken against all non-compliant producers in the UK. Enforcement against non-compliant producers could not begin until conventional battery cages became illegal on the 1 January and inspections have been targeted based on risk.

Defra issued a press release on the 12th of January which stated

“The level of non-compliance in the UK is very low and latest figures show [as of 12 Jan] that it represents just 1% of the total UK flock. By 1 February we expect that these producers will have stopped using these battery cages or we will have issued legal notices and referred the producers to the local council who will consider prosecution. It is disappointing that a small minority of egg producers have not yet made the necessary changes when the rest of the industry has spent £400 million to improve welfare and meet these standards.”

AHVLA has said that they' are taking enforcement action to prevent eggs from being marketed as Class A'. This was backed up by Agricultural Minister Jim Paice who spoke to farming today on Wednesday.

Charles Bourns Poultry Board Chairman said that 'Our producers are committed to higher welfare standards and have invested significantly in both colony cages and free range production in the lead up to 2012. There is no doubt that those producers who have invested in their businesses to meet this regulation will feel let down by the few who have not met the deadline.”

The NFU poultry team are in contact with both Defra and the AHVLA and are keeping up to date on the current situation in regard to non-compliance.

Tough action promised to protect UK egg farmers

Local MEP Fiona Hall has secured an assurance from the European Commission that it is prepared to take legal action against Members States that do not comply with the ban on battery hens.

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While UK farmers have invested in ensuring their facilities meet new standards which came into force this month, they fear their business being undermined by cheap imports from countries flouting the rules.

Lib Dem Fiona Hall said: "UK egg producers who invested heavily in new enriched cages to replace battery cages must not suffer from illegal competitors who can undercut their prices through animal cruelty." I welcome the Commission's determination to hold non-compliant Member States to account.

"The Commission must also support countries such as the UK that are using every means at their disposal to try and ban illegally produced eggs from entering their markets."

According to EU Health and Consumer Commissioner John Dalli, inspection teams will start their investigations in targeted Member States as of January 2012 to collect evidence of non-compliance to back up the prosecution when it goes to court.

Notes: In the UK, Defra has revealed that 30 UK farms still use battery cages for up to 500,000 laying hens. However, the Government announced that it expected full compliance with the new hen welfare law by February and would prosecute any non-compliant egg producers after this date.

What's in the pipeline for employers?

Keeping abreast of developments in Employment Law has never been easy, but at present there are a number of significant changes, and proposals for change, that could impact on your business.

This article is intended to provide a flavour of some of the key changes on the horizon.

The Public Bodies Act to abolish the Agricultural Wages Board (the body that decides on the Agricultural Wages Order each year) became a piece of legislation following Royal Assent on 14 December 2011. The government's initial timescale suggested this stage should have been reached sooner, so a further Agricultural Wages Order is now expected in 2012. This is to allow time for consultation on precisely how abolition is to be effected, as well as further detailed legislation to bring abolition about. Nevertheless, we are one step further along the road to abolition so watch this space

To read more on the implications for employers please [click here](#)

Know your Farm Business Survey

Many NFU members will have contributed to the Farm Business Survey over the years.

The broad scope of the FBS makes it the most extensive and independent source of information, on both the physical and economic performance of farm businesses.

Regional reports and its data builder capabilities provide a huge amount of insight for policy makers and agri-business, but the broad scope of FBS and the fact that it is freely available, also make it an increasingly valuable tool for farmers. The free online benchmarking facility allows meaningful comparisons across gross margins, farm profitability and performance.

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A number of Farm Business Survey workshops are taking place across England in the coming weeks, led by the same Rural Business Research team that gather the FBS data.

The workshops give farmers the chance to find out just how effective a tool the survey can be, and how it can help towards business strategy. Details can be found [here](#).

EU's animal welfare strategy imminent

The European Commission's long awaited 'strategy for the protection and welfare of animals 2012-2015' is due to be published on Friday. Early drafts suggest the Commission will propose new science-based welfare indicators, a network of European reference centres, common EU requirements for animal keepers and a public information campaign.

The strategy is also expected to stress the importance of including animal welfare standards in bilateral trade agreements and to ensure that welfare is better streamlined into CAP measures. The EU spent around £57 million on animal welfare between 2000 and 2008, 71% of which was paid to farmers through measures under the second pillar. It is estimated that welfare legislation has added around 2% to livestock production costs.

Winter Red Tractor newsletters now available

The six sector Red Tractor Assurance winter newsletters have now been distributed to Red Tractor farm members and should be received by the end of the week. Digital versions have already been uploaded to the Red Tractor Assurance website and can be [found here](#).

The newsletters highlights the recent marketing activity that has been carried out by AFS, as well as the latest information on each sector.

FSA updates guidance document on feed usage

The FSA has updated its guidance document on the placing on the market and use of feed. Some of the amendments are fairly minor; however, major changes include revisions to the references to the Codes of Practice on labelling to reflect the formal adoption of the CoP on the labelling of pet food, and the addition of new questions on integrated poultry units manufacturing feed for their own flocks and the setting of maximum limits for processing aids.

To read to the visit the FSA website by clicking [here](#)

BEIC launch legal eggs website

A new website, www.legaleggs.com, has been launched to explain the risk of purchasing non-compliant eggs from EU countries still producing eggs from conventional battery cages. Trade buyers and consumers will also be encouraged to pledge their support for British egg producers via the website.

To visit the site please [click here](#)

AHVLA Launch poultry knowledge transfer survey

The AHVLA has launched a Layer and broiler knowledge transfer survey which aims to both improve and better tailor the knowledge transfer to the poultry industry. The AHVLA want as many people from the poultry industry including

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managers, farm owners, veterinarians and poultry employees to complete a short questionnaire which will help them prioritise the information which is most valuable.

To view the questionnaires please visit the AHVLA website by [clicking here](#) or look out for hard copy sent by your association. The questionnaires need to be returned by 3 February 2012 and there is the chance to win a £50 voucher

Red Tractor gets full back-ing from Bristol Rugby Club's full-back, Jack Tovey

Two local Bristol farmers, John Hore and Charles Bourns have combined their two greatest passions, farming and rugby, by sponsoring up-coming rugby star, Jack Tovey. The sponsorship aims to promote great food and farming through the use of the Red Tractor logo which will now gain exposure to thousands of Bristol's rugby fans.

John, a local Red Tractor beef and sheep farmer, said: "Rugby is a truly British sport, featuring highly skilled athletes and it has a vast number of supporters who regularly go and watch their team each week. We thought the rugby would provide a fantastic stage to highlight the important role that Red Tractor farming plays in producing quality food." Charles Bourns runs a poultry farm in Gloucestershire, he said: "A tremendous amount of effort and integrity goes into producing great quality chickens under the Red Tractor Scheme and it is important that we help to promote this to consumers."

Every time full back Jack scores a try, the Red Tractor name is announced and it seems to be providing an extra lift for Jack who has made 56 appearances for Bristol and scored seven tries so far this season. Jack said: "I'm delighted that John and Charles approached me about the Red Tractor sponsorship. I jumped at the chance to help support local farmers in the Bristol community and to engage spectators in something with real value."

Please help out student by filling in a short poultry survey

We recently received an email from a student asking for help with her poultry dissertation at Newcastle University. Please see below

I am a poultry farmer's daughter from Nottinghamshire currently studying in the final year of my degree (BSc Environmental Science) at Newcastle University. For my dissertation, I am looking into the possible impacts of climate change on conventional broiler systems, in order to determine any adaptations which could be made in the future.

Below is a link to a survey which I would be extremely grateful if you could take the time to fill it in. I do not require any information which identifies which particular farm you are returning information from. However, I am looking to study a couple of farms in more detail (e.g. information regarding heating/ventilation, internal temperature data). If you are happy to provide me with this more detailed information, please could you supply me with your contact details as requested at the end of this survey. I would once again like to stress that you or your farm will not be identifiable in any report that is based on this survey.

Here's the link; Many thanks Amy

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/R6WPF98>

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AI Update:

HPAI

No new outbreaks

LPAI

No new outbreaks

Newcastle Disease

No new outbreaks

Forthcoming events and meetings:

National Poultry Board dates

Events

- 19 Jan** **Severn Valley Poultry Discussion Group**, Pengethley Manor Hotel, Ross-on-Wye, Contact Anthony Harman Tel 07775 580 363, Email anthonyharman@humpreyfeeds.com
- 23 Jan** **NFU North West Poultry board – health and safety issues**, Start time 7:30pm at the Rural Business Centre of Myerscough College near Preston, Lancashire, PR3 0RY. For more info contact Aarun Naik - Tel: 01695 554 929, Email: aarun.naik@nfu.org.uk
- 21-22 Feb** **NFU Annual Conference**, International Conference Centre, Birmingham, Contact NFU Conference Team Tel 02476 858 572
- 15-16 May** **British Pig & Poultry Fair**, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, Contact Kate Rider Tel 02476 858 298, Email kater@rase.org.uk

Egg-cellent links:

www.nfuonline.com

www.ukturkeys.co.uk

www.greatbritishchicken.co.uk

[Link to Local Food Directory & Accreditation Scheme](#)

www.nfuonline.com/x17049.xml (Finding local food producers near you).

www.hgca.com/markets (Up dated cereal prices).

www.britegg.co.uk

www.theranger.co.uk British Free Range Egg Producers Association

www.fwi.co.uk/poultry

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