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It doesn't have to be like this

Free-range and organic systems ensure that poultry can behave naturally and grow at a more normal pace.

Hens do not have to be caged to produce lots of eggs, and commercial cage-free alternatives are in use worldwide. Hens reared free-range have access to the outdoors; others roam in large indoor "barns" with nest boxes, scratching areas and perches, all of which are important for their welfare.



In partnership with Food Animal Initiative, the WSPA has set up the Model Farm Project (www.modelfarmproject.org), which aims to establish an international network of development and demonstration farms. These show that humane and sustainable poultry farming is a practical and viable reality.



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What you can do

The WSPA is working with organisations throughout the world to end the suffering of intensively farmed poultry. YOU can help make a difference to poultry worldwide:

- If you buy meat and eggs, always choose free-range or organic poultry meat and eggs. In the UK, look out for certifications such as Soil Association and RSPCA Freedom Food.
- Watch out for misleading labels such as "fresh" or "farm assured" (unrelated to animal welfare) and question unclear labelling.
- Ask your local supermarket to stock more free-range and organic

produce. Use customer comment cards and helplines to tell suppliers you care about farm animal welfare.

- When eating out, complain if you see cruel products such as foie gras on the menu.
- Send for the WSPA's Farm Animal Welfare Information Pack.
- Order and distribute copies of this leaflet.



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To take action, visit wspa.org.uk

For more information, visit www.wspafarmwelfare.org
– our portal for governments and animal welfare organisations.

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World Society for the Protection of Animals

The facts about our food: Intensive poultry farming



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“Each year 57 billion poultry are reared for meat and eggs worldwide.”



Inside intensive poultry farms



in other systems, crowding may lead to cannibalism. To prevent this, part of their beak is sliced off using a red-hot blade – a severe mutilation that can cause prolonged pain.

Forced moulting

In the USA and Asia, laying hens caged for a second year are often force-moulted in order to be returned to production as soon as possible. This involves shocking the hens into shedding their feathers unnaturally quickly by starving them for up to 14 days. This stressful process causes a dramatic increase in mortality.

Very short lives

In many parts of the world, male chicks hatched in egg-laying flocks are of no commercial use. They are gassed with carbon dioxide, shredded by a macerator or, in some countries, simply thrown out with the rubbish.



Ducks and geese

Intensively farmed ducks reared for meat and eggs are subjected to severe confinement in barren, often filthy sheds, overcrowding, unnatural growth rates, and mutilations such as bill-trimming. These essentially aquatic birds never have access to water for swimming or washing.

In the UK, over 95% of ducks killed for meat are farmed intensively. Intensive duck farming has also spread to Asia, and Thailand now has one of the most highly developed duck industries.

The so-called delicacy known as foie gras (“fat liver”) is produced by closely confining ducks and geese for several weeks, forcing a pipe down their throats and pumping food into them 3 times a day. This force-feeding causes their livers to swell to as much as 10 times their natural size and become fatty. By the time they are slaughtered, birds often have difficulty walking or breathing.



It's not only the animals that suffer

Food safety

Antibiotics and hormones fed to intensively farmed poultry can leave residues in meat and eggs. Use of antibiotics is also believed to be increasing antibiotic-resistant microbes. Poultry meat can

be a potent source of food poisoning from *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*, which both cause gastroenteritis.

When hens are force-moulted, their eggs are more likely to be infected with *Salmonella*, and are therefore another probable source of food poisoning.

Intensively farmed chicken meat, which is made from inactive animals fed on high-energy food, contains low levels

of iron and protein but may have high levels of fat – linked to obesity, diabetes, cancers, heart disease and strokes.

The environment

Water: Poultry manure can cause nitrate, phosphate and pathogen pollution of both ground and surface water.

Air: Chicken sheds emit bacteria, insects, faeces, skin and feathers as dust downwind. Poultry manure also releases ammonia (a serious pollutant linked to acid rain) into the air.

Soil: The presence of metals such as copper, arsenic, iron and manganese in poultry manure contaminates soil.



Broiler chickens

Super-fast growth

Broiler chickens are made to grow super-fast through a combination of genetics, high-protein feed and often growth-promoting chemicals. Their hearts, lungs and bones struggle to keep pace: the skeleton of a 6-week old bird now carries the equivalent weight of a 12-week old bird. As a result, millions of chickens a year suffer crippling leg disorders or succumb to heart failure.

Overcrowded sheds

Broiler chickens are kept in windowless sheds holding up to 50,000 birds. They have nowhere to rest except on faeces-laden litter, and often suffer breast blisters, hock burns and other skin problems.

Laying hens

Battery cages

Up to 90,000 hens can be kept in one shed, in stacks of wire cages so small that the birds cannot walk, stretch their wings, peck and scratch at the ground or perch. Their bones become so brittle through lack of exercise that many suffer broken bones by the time they come to be slaughtered.

In the European Union, which produces more eggs than any single country except China, barren battery cages will be banned from 2012.

Beak trimming

With 5-11 birds per barren cage, the frustrated hens often display unnaturally damaging behaviour. Their inability to forage leads to feather-pecking and, as

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