

# Your turkey & chicken update

from RSPCA Assured



## Welcome

Welcome to this festive edition of your RSPCA Assured turkey & chicken e-newsletter. Hopefully, you will find it not only interesting but also useful. I would love to hear your good news stories, awards you have been nominated for, personal and business achievements. This is your opportunity, as well as ours, to share information, photos, thoughts, and ideas, as well as standards updates and pertinent industry news.

## A message from Joe Bailey Head of Farming, Welfare & Welbeing



Joe began her career with the RSPCA as an Inspector back in 1994. Since then, she has worked as a Trading Standards Animal Health and Welfare Inspector, Livestock Technical Manager for NSF and Farm Community Network Ambassador. She is also a Nuffield Farming Scholar.

Joe attends and speaks at events, conferences, industry and government meetings and is a well-regarded figure in the industry. In 2017, Joe was awarded the CharityComms inspiring communicator award.

**'Its the most wonderful time of the year....' although for farmers it can also be one of the busiest and most stressful times of the year. Many work long hours to meet the extra demand or will cover for those wanting a holiday, and some can feel isolated and excluded from the festivities, although I am sure there are also those who prefer the peace and solitude of the henhouse. As a child I would often find my dad, after eating his Turkey and plum pudding, managing to escape family charades, taking a well-earned nap in the hay barn!**

If your house is full to the brim with family or friends, escaping (even if just to take the dog for a walk, or go for a run, check on the chickens/turkeys), can re-energise you and help keep stress levels low. But please spare a thought for those who are alone or who

are struggling to feel jolly. Sparing some of your precious time to reach out a hand, share a sherry, pull a cracker with or even just pop in to see if they are ok, can not only make a huge difference to them but will also fill you with the true spirit of Christmas.

2019 has been a year of political uncertainty, extreme weather conditions and increased anti-farming activism. By the time you read this, we will have had an election and we may/may not know what the deal is with Brexit! Whatever the result, one thing is certain 2020 will bring about new challenges but also exciting opportunities. Consumer awareness of our label, the public's growing interest in, and demand for higher welfare will hopefully help you value your membership as much as we value you.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Tel: 07717 722045



## Avian Influenza

by Gary Ford, NFU Chief Poultry Adviser

**Unfortunately, there has already been an outbreak of Avian Influenza and therefore it is vital we do all we can to stop it spreading. Poultry farmers must focus on good biosecurity to keep AI out of their farms. The virus is in the environment and we must be on our guard.**

We have entered the high-risk period for AI. Please help to communicate the 3 key messages to our poultry members:

### Enhanced biosecurity all of the time

- \* Minimise contact with wild birds, i.e. ensure that food spillages are promptly cleaned up
- \* Restrict access to essential visitors and keep full records of visits
- \* Check to see if you are in a higher-risk area
- \* Use government-approved disinfectants at the correct dilution and regularly change foot dips to ensure that they are effective
- \* Preparing a contingency plan for your farm in the event of AI - or being in a movement restriction zone - is strongly recommended.

### Vigilance

Look out for signs. These can vary from species to species. Signs can include:

- \* coughing
- \* sneezing
- \* lethargy
- \* diarrhoea
- \* reduced food and water intake
- \* swollen head
- \* blue discolouration of the neck and throat

### Prompt reporting of any suspicion of disease

\* Contact your vet promptly if you notice an increase in mortality

The Poultry Health and Welfare Group (PHWG), which we are members, ran an AI webinar in October. The webinar can be watched again here:

<https://www.nfuonline.com/sectors/poultry/poultry-news/in-case-you-missed-it-avian-influenza-readiness-webinar/>



## Kingsley Bell

By Ivor Hunter, Contract Assessor

**Kingsley and Paul Bell run a free-range chicken poultry unit in the picturesque townland of Drumearn, close to the border town of Aughnacloy, producing high-quality chickens on behalf of Moy Park. Kingsley has been married to Lindsey for 15 years and has four children, Jamie, Katie, Millie, and Harry.**

In addition to the free range chicken enterprise, Kingsley runs a small herd of pedigree Simmental cows and is just establishing a pedigree flock of Texel sheep. This is a true family farm, with Kingsley being assisted by his father Paul, and his son Jamie, aged 8 already showing a great deal of interest in both the chickens as well as the cattle and sheep side of the business.

Paul is the chairperson of the School of Governors for Aughnacloy College – having served for more than 20 years in this role.

The family has also supported a number of charities over the years most recently for the Chest, Heart and Stroke Association and is currently organising a charity concert for the Northern Ireland Air Ambulance Charity, and to date the family have raised over £30,000 for these Organisations.

The farm has been RSPCA Assured certified for almost three years and Kingsley stated: “One of the major changes we have noticed with this year’s RSPCA Assured audit is the inclusion of the Welfare Outcome Assessment – although we had been informed that this would be undertaken at the audit it was only during the process that we realised the value of this welfare assessment. The farm assessor – Ivor Hunter – has a good knowledge of meat chickens, and as the 20 birds were assessed, a number of relevant topics were discussed, such as the management of litter, the optimum height of drinkers and the ventilation settings. This provided a more focused approach and also encourages the farmer to consider the ways in which activities are conducted on the farm, rather than just doing them as this is the way we have always done them.

As farmers, our priority is always the care and performance of our livestock, and sometimes during farm assessments, it can feel that the care of birds and their welfare can be secondary to other issues such as farm records, the Welfare Outcome Assessment ensures the animals are put at the center of the farm audit”





## Meet the Office Staff

**Mary Spreadbury**  
Membership Services Manager





Mary joined RSPCA Assured in 2014, having previously worked in the RSPCA's Farm Animal department for six months. She has held a number of roles within RSPCA Assured since then, including administrator, Certification assistant to the Field Assessor Manager, and now Membership Services Team manager.

Mary enjoys socialising and being active by taking part in activities such as walking and cycling, and is a keen Scrabble and board game player.

**I am fortunate to lead the Membership Services Team from RSPCA Assured Headquarters in Southwater, West Sussex and have done for almost 6 years. Before that, I held several roles in the team since joining RSPCA Assured in 2014.**

It is a very varied and fast-moving role that oversees the essential compliance processing and procedures of our UKAS accredited scheme, whilst supporting our members and delivering the best possible service all round.

No two days are the same, one day I could be working with the Operations Manager to review a members audit report in relation to compliance processes or non conformance, attending meetings with NSF our Certification Partner, planning the distribution of welfare standard updates, designing process improvements such as the recent digitisation of our certificates to save on unnecessary use of paper or working on the streamline project for the implementation of Salesforce, our new CRM platform. The list really is endless as we are constantly seeking to improve what we do for our members and staff alike.

I also get involved with the technical aspects of the scheme evaluating questions and queries raised by producers directly and via the assessors, the marketing team and many other stakeholders. Along with leading the Complaint process and raising / Derogation / Exception requests.

It is not all inward-facing though, and I really enjoy talking directly with producers and groups, whether it is just a quick update or working on projects.

In my spare time, I enjoy physical activities such as walking. When I saw the Everest 'Expawdition' Base camp trek featured in the Head Quarters foyer, I thought it would be a significant challenge to undertake! After I declared my provisional request for over 2 weeks of annual leave I realised that I had to go ahead with it, and I am glad I did! The few 'enjoyments' of the trek was stopping to appreciate the views on route, the feeling of achievement on reaching base camp with 19 other like-minded & supportive trekkers, and relaxation time after the end of the trek at our lovely hotel in Kathmandu. It took a good week of really early nights to recover from the trek and come back down to earth, so to speak. To be honest, even after doing a recent presentation at Head Office, it's still

difficult to appreciate the enormity of the trip. I raised £700 myself and with fellow colleagues, Helen and Barrie's fundraising amounts to £2800, all to RSPCA.



## Head of Commercial Development Lydia Stratton



I joined RSPCA Assured (previously known as Freedom Food) as a Business Development Manager in 2005, with the remit to introduce the scheme and build relationships with the retailers and members. I had no knowledge of agriculture or animal welfare, so this was a complete change of direction for me.



I had worked in a variety of roles and industries; recruitment, mobile phones, government training, managed a team of field consultants in the South East of England and had my own business. RSPCA Assured at first was 'just' a business development role. As my understanding grew and my interest in the scheme developed, I was hooked.

Over the years I have spent a lot of time at agriculture shows, meeting members, promoting the scheme on a retailer's stand, building relationships with a variety of industry stakeholders, attending a variety of conferences, exhibitions, and networking events. It has been a busy time.

14 years on, I am still passionate about promoting the scheme, our members and their products to retail, foodservice and the industry. My role and responsibilities have grown and there are now five of us, with managers focusing on supply chain traceability and auditing, business development and levy.

Our focus is on transparency and traceability within the supply chain and to manage this we launched a chain of custody standard for the supply chain with the help of BRC, Sainsbury's, NSF and Lloyds Register, the latter also audit the food supply chain on our behalf.

We map our supply chains to try and ensure any use of the RSPCA Assured name or logo is valid and the products it is used on are authentic. To achieve this we are building relationships with the industry to enable us to cross-reference members and claims. We have met with a variety of stakeholders such as Soil Association, Association of Independent Meat Traders, BRC, Federation of Warehouse and Distributors and the British Sandwich Association, amongst others, to garner support for our traceability efforts.

We build relationships with food and farming industry stakeholders, engaging with all the major retailers and discounters, associations and members. And we actively promote the scheme to foodservice to get more RSPCA Assured products listed..

When I am not working I have two daughters who keep me busy, do a little sports therapy (I am qualified!) and my passion for martial arts has been overtaken by a passion for golf.

My partner and I spend most weekends playing in all weathers with the odd trip abroad for a new challenge. I'm not very good, I can just about manage to hit the ball and find it immensely frustrating but my competitive streak keeps me going!



**Meet the Farm Animals Department**  
**RSPCA**

**Farm Livestock Officer**  
**Lucy Blumberg**



**Lucy studied Animal Health and Welfare at Harper Adams University before getting an Agricultural Graduate role within the 2 Sisters Food Group for 18 months. She then moved on to become a Farm Livestock Officer, monitoring RSPCA Assured farms in the West Midlands and Wales.**

Lucy has always been passionate about animals, especially concerning their health and welfare. Her passion for animals began at the young age of 5 when she began horse riding. She was a member of the Ludlow Pony Club for 9 years and still competes regularly in showjumping and eventing competitions. She loves being outside, going for long walks in the fresh air and outdoor activities!

Lucy will be spending Christmas with her family and dogs eating and drinking as much as possible!



## **The Farming Community Network: Here For You**

Sam Conway, Marketing & Communications Manager

**As the old saying goes, it never rains, but it pours. For the farming community, this is not only the case metaphorically, but also literally.**

The recent spate of torrential rain across the country has been described in some quarters as “biblical” and left a significant amount of British farmland underwater.



Many farmers have been unable to finish harvesting crops and many have experienced significant delays in drilling and sowing winter cereals. Meanwhile, livestock farmers have been forced to bring in livestock earlier than normal, which means higher costs for feed and bedding.

With the water levels reducing, farmers are now counting the cost of the damage that has been done. It only seemed like yesterday that the farming community was dealing with the impact of 2018's adversely wet spring and dry summer. For some of those people, repeating this process may be too much to bear.

The weather is not the only factor that farmers are being forced to deal with all over again. The subject of climate change has, once again, put farmers in the spotlight and unjustifiably portrayed them in a less than favourable light.

In times like these, it is more important than ever that farmers build their personal and business resilience. As The Farming Community Network (FCN) enters its 25th year in 2020, we have evolved from merely responding to farmers in crisis into an organisation which offers a much more proactive support service that actively encourages farmers to seek help before their situation worsens significantly. We now plan to be even more focused on helping to build personal and business resilience in those that turn to us for help.

There is some great information available to help farmers become more resilient, but this information is rarely in one place and can often be difficult to access, especially if you are dealing with reduced mental wellbeing.

This is why we have launched a brand new initiative called FarmWell - a one-stop online resources hub to help farmers and their businesses stay strong and resilient. FarmWell gives ready access to a range of vital information from a wide variety of sources. It is free to use and has three clear aims:

To help develop and keep farm businesses resilient through changing times

To help farmers, their families, and their staff become resilient and enable them to manage their personal and business lives more effectively

To provide ready access to a range of support and help to anyone who may need it

FarmWell is available to use now and is already attracting interest from a wide variety of key agricultural stakeholders, including the NFU and AHDB. To learn more about FarmWell, visit [www.farmwell.org.uk](http://www.farmwell.org.uk).

If you, or someone you know needs someone to talk to, FCN is here for you. The FCN helpline is open from 7am-11pm every day of the year. Call 03000 111999 or email [help@fcn.org.uk](mailto:help@fcn.org.uk).

# FCN

## THE FARMING COMMUNITY NETWORK



# FarmWell

INFORMATION | SUPPORT | RESILIENCE







## **Xenia Kingsley**

### **Marketing Manager**

Xenia is responsible for consumer marketing. This includes planning television advertising; event catering partnerships; Google Adwords; campaign implementation and supplier management.

Prior to joining RSPCA Assured, Xenia's career background was in PR and marketing. She holds a degree in Marketing Food and Drink.

## **Poultry marketing update**

By Xenia Kingsley, Marketing Manager

**With Christmas just around the corner, we are now deep into our festive advertising programme. As we mentioned in our last update, this year we have invested £50,000 in the promotion of turkey this December. This includes the creation of a new Christmas TV advert, which we filmed at the end of October on Downmore farm in Norfolk. Huge thanks to farmer Sam Frost for all the help and for letting us loose with his turkeys.**

Click on the button below to see the advert. This is going to be aired between Thursday 5th - 10th December on Channel 4 (including spots during Sunday Brunch and Food Unwrapped), Sky 1, Sky Atlantic, Food Network, More 4, Eden, Home and All4 VOD. We're also making the most of the footage and photos we took by sharing them on social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

We're especially excited about RSPCA Assured turkey this year as so many retailers are stocking heritage breeds. Asda and Aldi are selling Norfolk/ Chesham Bronzes. Aldi also has oat-fed Roly Polys. Lidl is selling its Silver Slates again, while Tesco has a mix of varieties including Narragansetts, and Morrisons is selling oat-fed Marbury Reds.

A number of these products have won awards too: Lidl's Deluxe British Broadland free range bronze turkey crown came third in Good Housekeeping's Christmas taste test, and won the Quality Food Awards Christmas meat category, while its Silver Slate came 8th in Good Housekeeping's list and was Shortlisted at the Quality Food Awards. Aldi's Specially Selected free range Bronze has also been selected by The Independent as one of the best turkeys to buy this year.

And while Christmas is really all about the turkey, we're continuing to promote recipes that use RSPCA Assured chicken as part of our regular social media activity.

Don't forget to tag us on social media if you post about any poultry product deals and offers, so we can share them with our followers. And if you have any exciting food photos please do send them across. We'd love to help promote them on our website and social

media - we are @rspcaassured on Twitter and @rspcaassured\_official on Instagram.

Email us at [hello@rspcaassured.org.uk](mailto:hello@rspcaassured.org.uk)

## Christmas Advert



### Turkey Catching

By Mark Robertson, Senior Assessor

**As I write this we are drawing ever nearer Christmas and a time when all of our members hard work over the recent months comes to fruition. It was a really good start for our turkey members with the warm weather over the summer during placement, meaning good early growth. More recently it has been hard with the wet weather we have been having however most ranges seem to be holding up well!**

As catching begins I just wanted to take this opportunity to highlight some key standards.

\* T1.5: The farm manager/assistant must be present at all times during the catching operation.

\* T1.8: Handling of birds must be carried out quietly and confidently, exercising care to avoid unnecessary struggling.



\* T1.11.2: Birds must be approached calmly and quietly to avoid stress.

I look forward to seeing RSPCA Assured Turkeys and RSPCA Assured Turkey products on the supermarket shelves in the coming months. If anyone has any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.



Best wishes,

**RSPCA Assured**

Keep in touch with our news, sign up to our [newsletter](#).

To stop receiving these emails please [unsubscribe here](#).

[News](#) | [Media](#) | [Consumers](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Sitemap](#)

Registered Office: Freedom Food Limited, Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 9RS

[www.berspcaassured.org.uk](http://www.berspcaassured.org.uk) t. 0300 123 0014 e. [help@rspcaassured.org.uk](mailto:help@rspcaassured.org.uk)

Company No. 2723670 Charity Registered in England & Wales 1059879 and Scotland SC038199

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

RSPCA Assured · Wilberforce Way · Southwater · Horsham, West Sussex RH13 9RS · United Kingdom

