

Latest News from RSPCA Assured

[View this email in your browser](#)

Your ruminants update

From RSPCA Assured



Welcome to your festive newsletter

By Joe Bailey, Head of Farming



It's been a year of bad news and perhaps it doesn't seem right to celebrate but we should, as now more than ever there is much to be proud of.

So let's start with a positive, RSPCA Assured festive products have scooped up a whopping 28 awards and accolades in this year's taste tests for best supermarket Christmas food.

Hooray to everyone who has produced them, sold them, and will get to enjoy them! For more information on the awards, read the following article.

RSPCA Assured now in its 27th year, has more than 24.3 million animals on the scheme, plus many millions of salmon and trout.

There is a growing trend for higher welfare products, with nearly 70% of families and young professionals recognising our logo and trusting what it stands for. The public has a real interest in how and where animals are reared.

As we celebrate this anniversary of helping to improve farm animal welfare, we're continuing to see an increasing demand for higher welfare lamb and beef from both businesses and the general public, which is testament to the hard work and dedication of all members.

We have some truly fantastic producers on the scheme, who are committed to raising the bar for UK agriculture, and we hope to see more join next year.

Golly gosh it's been a strange year for everyone, but as always, the farming community has triumphed. I'm incredibly proud of the resilience, dedication and determination you've all shown to adapt to the circumstances around not only COVID-19 but also Brexit, and all the while, ensuring the animals you care for are treated with respect and compassion.

I wish you a very Merry Christmas... and I hope for a better, less stressful, and far happier 2021 for everybody.




RSPCA Assured festive products scoop 28 top awards and accolades

By Rebecca Lenik, Public Relations Manager

From traditional turkeys and pigs in blankets to gin-infused smoked salmon and whisky and orange stuffing parcels, RSPCA Assured labelled supermarket foods have bagged a whopping 28 awards and recognitions in taste tests this Christmas.

These prestigious wins and recommendations come from leading food and glossy magazines; BBC Good Food, Good Housekeeping, Olive and Woman and Home, as well as the much-coveted Quality Food Awards.

For more information about all of this year's award-winning RSPCA Assured products and a guide to having a higher-welfare Christmas, click [here](#).

	Smoked salmon	Other fish product	Sausages/pigs in blankets	Sausage meat/stuffing	Bacon	Other pork product	Turkey whole	Turkey crown	Other turkey product	Chicken product
Aldi	✓	✓					✓	✓		
Asda							✓	✓		
Coop	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Lidl	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Morrisons							✓			
Sainsburys	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Tesco	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓

Icons made by freepik, iconixar and turkkub, from www.flaticon.com

Salesforce update

By Liam Kurzeja, Head of Marketing



This past year, I've led a project to implement a leading customer relationship management database called Salesforce.

The new system will replace our existing membership database. It will provide RSPCA Assured members with a time-efficient, accessible and more personal experience. Unfortunately, due to the unforeseen circumstances of Covid-19, we were delayed piloting the live system.

However, after a short hold up, I'm pleased to announce that we've almost completed the second stage of our live pilot. Our in-house IT administrator and Salesforce partner are in the process of ironing out any final kinks in the system.

We're well on course to roll out Salesforce to our members through 2021. That being said, some species may have to wait on the progress of the mobile app being developed for RSPCA Assured assessors carrying out their on-farm assessments. However, I'm delighted to say this app is in full development, looks fantastic, and we hope to be in a position to pilot it early next year.

Thank you to those who've provided feedback and, or, participated directly in the pilot and app development to date.

Pain expression in lambs

By Sophie Prater, Scientific Officer at RSPCA

The 2020 Welfare Standards for Sheep now requires long-acting pain relief to be given to lambs during both castration and tail docking. Research by McKraken et al (2010) has shown that these procedures cause both short term and long term pain. But how do these studies measure animal pain, and can any of the techniques be used on-farm?

The pain experienced by sheep can be measured physiologically or behaviourally. Physiological methods usually measure cortisol, sometimes called the stress hormone, but this isn't practical for the average farm. Instead, farmers can look at the behavioural signs of pain, but as sheep are very good at disguising any discomfort, you need to know what to look out for!

First, look at the lamb's posture - is it standing with a hunched back, or lying on its side with its legs extended? Second, check to see if it's rolling from side to side. These postures signify pain and are a clear indication of discomfort. You can also look out for active pain behaviours such as lambs shifting weight in their hindquarters, leg kicking and turning their head towards their abdomen.

When you're next lambing, try taking 15 minutes to watch your lambs after castration or tail docking. You must use long-acting pain relief, but as this can take a while to start working, lambs will still likely experience acute (short term) pain. So, if you're still spotting active pain behaviours, consider giving short-acting pain relief too, such as local anaesthetic.

Article reference

McCracken L, Waran N, Mitchinson S, Johnson CB (2010) Effect of age at castration on behavioural response to subsequent tail docking in lambs. *Vet Anaesth Analg*, 37(4):375-8

The Farming Community Network: coping with change

By Glyn Evans, Regional Director for Training at The Farming Community Network

The Farming Community Network (FCN) is a voluntary organisation supporting farmers and families within the farming community. This year we celebrate its 25th anniversary of helping people through difficult times.

Over the years, farming has experienced a great deal of change, from irregular weather patterns to fluctuating market prices. There have been a fair few challenges to overcome, but farmers are resilient people.

They have a faithfulness to the land, to the welfare of their animals, and the food we eat to stay healthy. But, there are times when that resilience is tested. Sadly, more than one member of the farming community died by suicide every week in 2019.

Here at FCN, we provide free support to the whole farming community! We listen to your concerns and queries, alongside other organisations such as: [Farming Help](#), [The Agricultural Chaplains Association](#) and rural support groups. Our [Helpline](#) is staffed daily

with volunteers from 7am to 11pm, 03000 11199.

In England and Wales, we have [33 county-based groups](#) of trained volunteers who can provide face to face support. Typically, people come to us if they're experiencing poor mental wellbeing, and although we're not a mental health charity per se, our volunteers always give people time to talk through what they're feeling and signpost them to further help.

We hope to raise awareness of the stresses people face in farming, and how they have an impact on mental wellbeing. This includes helping people identify the early signs and take preventative steps to keep themselves, and others they work with or live amongst, safe. But our work goes beyond just educating; we share our understanding with policymakers who can affect agriculture and mental health.

This year, the impacts of lockdown, tiered restrictions and uncertainty about Brexit have made life unpredictable. We've experienced an unprecedented rise in calls to our [Helpline](#). But despite all of this change, our support can help you. In partnership with FarmWell, we're running a [Time to Plan](#) initiative, to help you plan ahead and better manage change.

At the end of the day, the health and happiness of us all, including the animals that are farmed, rely on the farming community. The support we provide, such as dealing with change, can benefit everyone.

For more information on how FCN can help you, [click here](#).

Desktop assessment: a two-way solution

By Dorian Cross, Field Assessment Manager



In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, this year has brought real challenges for us all in the way we work.

For our assessors, not being able to visit our members on their farms was a real disappointment. So they were really pleased to be able to return to site visits again by a mutual agreement.

As assessments are critical to the approval and continuation of certification for our members, the ability to deliver assessments remotely was adopted and has been a workable interim solution.

Notably, 'desktop' assessments have helped assessors keep pace with the timely delivery of assessments for members where site visits remain not possible.

However, this revised remote approach to assessments wouldn't have been as successful

as it has been if it wasn't for the resilience, adaptability and cooperation of our members.

Until we return in full to the normality of on-site visits to farms, a huge thank you from all of our assessors and membership services team in helping remote assessments work so well.

Beef reflection

By Barrie Gibson, Senior Assessor and species lead for beef



The past year has been challenging. COVID-19 has changed our daily lives. But, farmers have reverted to their resourceful selves, overcoming every hurdle and getting on with their work.

During the first lockdown, I spoke with a member about how they were coping with the restrictions, "I'm a farmer, I've been socially distancing for 35 years", he replied.

It's been fantastic to see our members keep their farms running, ensuring higher welfare standards for their animals continue.

Due to the risks of COVID-19, many farms are shielding vulnerable members of staff, either by minimising their contact with others or asking them to stay at home when an RSPCA Assured assessor is visiting.

From our end, we've done the utmost to conduct safe assessments for all. The 'remote' assessments, utilising video calls, have been a steep learning curve for some of our members. But, one you've all managed with a little guidance.

At the beginning of the year, the RSPCA Beef standards underwent a revamp. Not only was the content updated, but the front cover got a fresh new look. The standards have been praised for their informative layout, and I'm pleased you've found them useful.

In comparison to other species we cover on the scheme, RSPCA Assured beef membership is small. But, I'm hoping there will be a flurry of new members in a post-Brexit world, to ensure more cattle are reared to higher welfare standards. I'm looking forward to 2021 and beyond, so watch this space!

Helpful wellbeing links

If you need help or have queries regarding desktop assessments or anything else

related to RSPCA Assured, please do [contact us](#). We have also shared some helpful links on wellbeing during the Covid-19 crisis below:

[That Discomfort You're Feeling is Grief](#)

[Caring for employee mental health: a coronavirus guide](#)

[The Adaptive Challenge of COVID-19](#)

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.berpscaassured.org.uk t. 0300 123 0014 e. 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

