

# Annual review 2019



**25** years helping  
farm animals



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# Introduction

2019 marked RSPCA Assured's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This milestone gave us an opportunity to look back and reflect on how far we have come since 1994, when Freedom Food was first established as a farm animal welfare certification scheme for laying hens and pigs.

In the decades that have followed, we've worked closely with the RSPCA to implement welfare standards for numerous species, which have come a long way since those early days. The most recent updates came to the beef cattle standards in early 2019.

Membership has grown steadily since 1994 to include almost 4,000 members across the UK and even further afield. And our commitment to international farm animal welfare was fortified in 2019 when we became founding members of the Global Animal Welfare Alliance, together with the Royal Agricultural University, Bristol University, Soil Association, Beter Leven, Global Animal Partnership and SPCA Blue Tick.

Since rebranding in 2015, awareness of the RSPCA Assured brand has risen steadily, surpassing 50% for the first time in 2019, following an increased investment in marketing. This included television advertising, Instagram influencer campaigns, social media and events.

Our investment in the scheme has not only focused on promotion, but of course on improvement. In 2019, our new chain of custody process was introduced to help make our certification even more rigorous. We also created a new Welfare Improvement Manager role within our farming team to oversee the introduction of welfare outcome assessments to the scheme.

I'd like to thank all of our friends and colleagues who have worked with us over the past 25 years to achieve our vision; for all animals to have a good life and to be treated with compassion and respect.

**Clive Brazier, Chief Executive, RSPCA Assured**



# About us: who we are and what we do

We are the RSPCA's farm animal welfare assurance scheme and ethical food label.

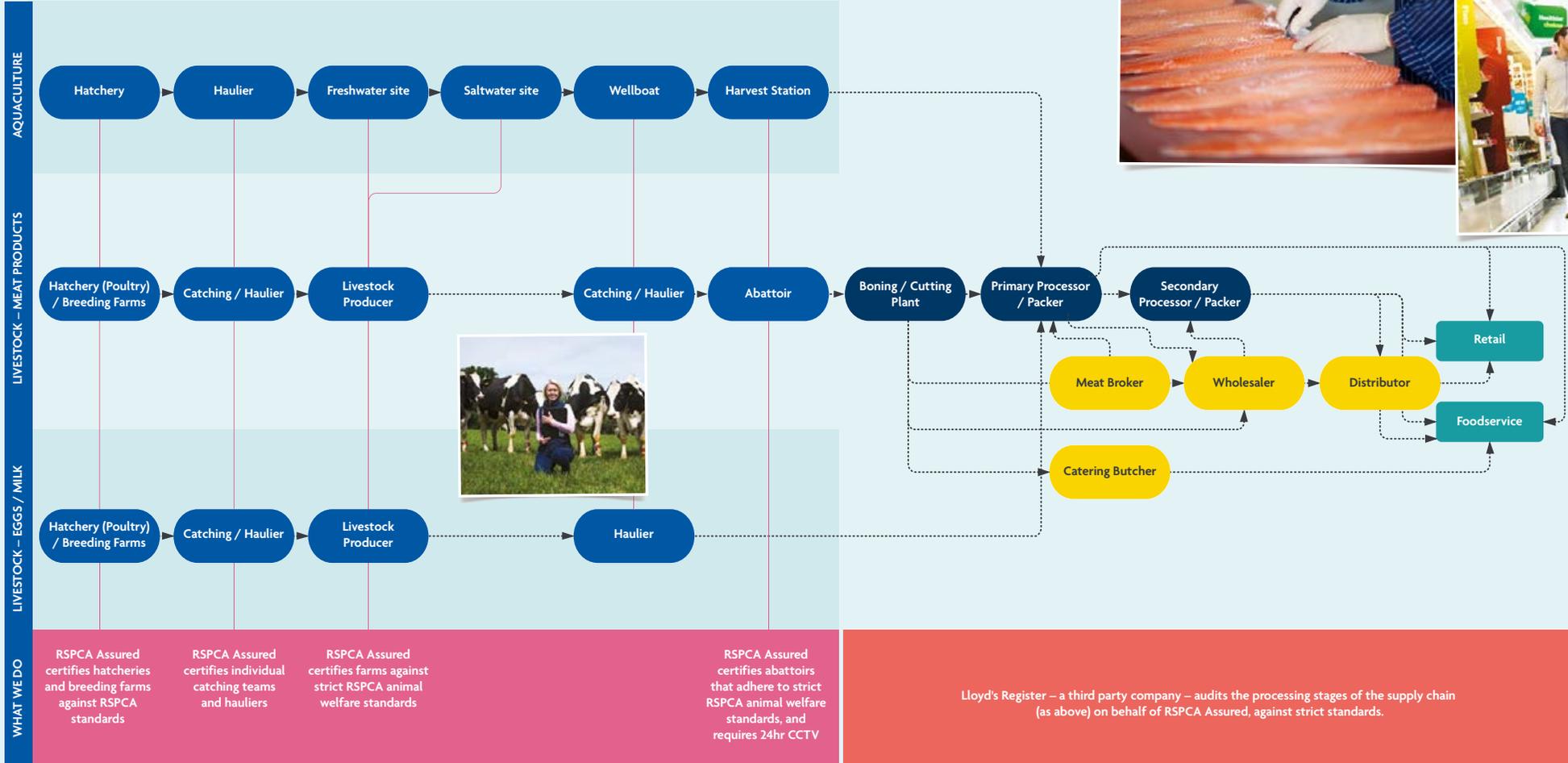
Our assessors inspect hatcheries, farms, hauliers and abattoirs to strict RSPCA welfare standards to ensure that farm animals have been well cared for throughout their lives. We also work with Lloyd's Register auditors to inspect processors and packers and to ensure a full chain of custody for products that carry the RSPCA Assured logo.

The RSPCA's welfare standards cover the whole of an animal's life, from their health and diet to environment and care; from birth to slaughter for most species.

Our experienced team of RSPCA Assured assessors carry out annual assessments while our members also receive independent monitoring visits, most of which are unannounced, from RSPCA farm livestock officers.

The RSPCA Assured mark makes it easy for people to recognise products from animals that had a better life, so they can feel confident and good about their choice.

# How we do it: certifying the supply chain



# Our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary: 25 key achievements



- 1** The RSPCA has developed welfare standards for 10 classes of farm animal: meat chickens, ducks, turkeys, laying hens, sheep, dairy cattle, beef cattle, pigs, farmed Atlantic salmon and trout
- 2** RSPCA standards were the first to introduce farm-specific veterinary health planning which has now been widely adopted by the farming industry, including all major UK farm assurance schemes
- 3** 2005 – FAWC stated this in their report: “Of all the schemes currently operating it is Freedom Food, the RSPCA’s farm assurance and food labelling scheme, that is most explicitly focussed on assuring the welfare of farm animals [bit.ly/3cnqTZc](http://bit.ly/3cnqTZc)”



- 4** RSPCA Assured (then Freedom Food) was recognised by the EU Funded “Welfare Quality Project” as the first assurance scheme dedicated to farm animal welfare in Europe – Roe & Murdoch (2006) UK Market for Animal Welfare Friendly Products: Market Structure, Survey of Available Products and Quality Assurance Schemes
- 5** 2008 – the scheme gained the support of Jamie Oliver and Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall for RSPCA Assured (then Freedom Food) chicken in their Fowl Dinners campaign



- 6** 2011 – RSPCA introduced mandatory requirements for CCTV in abattoirs to monitor activity during slaughter process for all RSPCA Assured members, which in 2018 was adopted into national legislation
- 7** 2012 – chicken, pork and eggs from RSPCA Assured farms were used in the athletes village at the London Olympics
- 8** 2013 – RSPCA introduced a standard stating that only higher welfare breeds – verified via the RSPCA broiler breed welfare assessment protocol – could be used. This has resulted in several new higher chicken welfare breeds being developed specifically to meet this standard (this was a development of the 2006 standard introduced to prohibit breeds with a published genetic growth rate of greater than 45g per day being used).
- 9** 2013 – McDonald’s UK switched to only using RSPCA Assured pork
- 10** 2014 – farrowing crates for pigs were banned under RSPCA Assured

- 11 2015 – Sodexo, one of the UK's leading caterers, become the first to supply RSPCA Assured pork and eggs to all its 70-plus independent schools
- 12 2017 – online tool launched for people to lobby supermarkets to stock RSPCA Assured products [www.rspcaassured.org.uk/get-involved/lobby-your-supermarket](http://www.rspcaassured.org.uk/get-involved/lobby-your-supermarket)



- 13 2017 – restaurant chain Frankie and Benny's and pub chain JD Wetherspoons committed to using RSPCA Assured eggs
- 14 2017 – the first nationally available RSPCA Assured labelled milk was launched in M&S



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- 15 2018 – Co-op moved to sourcing 100% RSPCA Assured pork
- 16 2018 – RSPCA Assured launched its Eat Less Eat Better campaign to encourage people to eat less meat, fish, eggs and dairy from low welfare farms and to choose higher welfare food



- 17 All National Trust farms must be either RSPCA Assured or Soil Association certified
- 18 RSPCA Assured and the RSPCA have inspired and assisted similar farm animal welfare schemes in Australia, Canada, Netherlands, Norway and Germany, and helped establish a scheme in the US



- 19 Nearly 24 million terrestrial animals are currently farmed under the scheme, plus 113 million salmon and trout
- 20 There are around 1,300 different RSPCA Assured labelled products available across nearly all the UK's supermarkets – with Sainsbury's selling about 30% of all RSPCA Assured products sold in the UK
- 21 Targeted awareness of RSPCA Assured has more than doubled from 19% in 2015, to 56% today
- 22 95% of cage-free laying hens and the majority of Scottish farmed salmon are farmed to RSPCA welfare standards under the RSPCA Assured scheme
- 23 About 23% of UK pig production is RSPCA Assured certified
- 24 There are more than 3,700 RSPCA Assured members (including farms, hauliers, processors and packers)
- 25 The RSPCA pioneered on-farm welfare outcome assessments



Will Hawkes



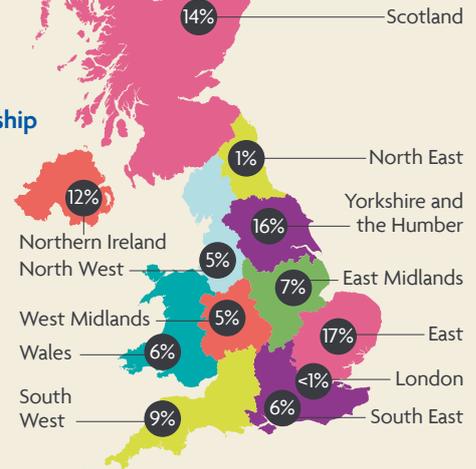
# Key stats



## Membership Services:

Our membership services team looks after our members; from application through to renewal.

## UK membership by region



England 66.72%

Scotland 13.82%

Northern Ireland 10.93%

Wales 5.36%

Ireland 2.78%

Norway 0.18%

Denmark 0.05%

France 0.05%

Belgium 0.03%

Germany 0.03%

Iceland 0.03%

USA 0.03%



This includes salmon and trout hatcheries in other countries, which provide eggs to the British aquaculture industry, and members who process and package RSPCA Assured products for foreign markets.

### Member certificates by type:

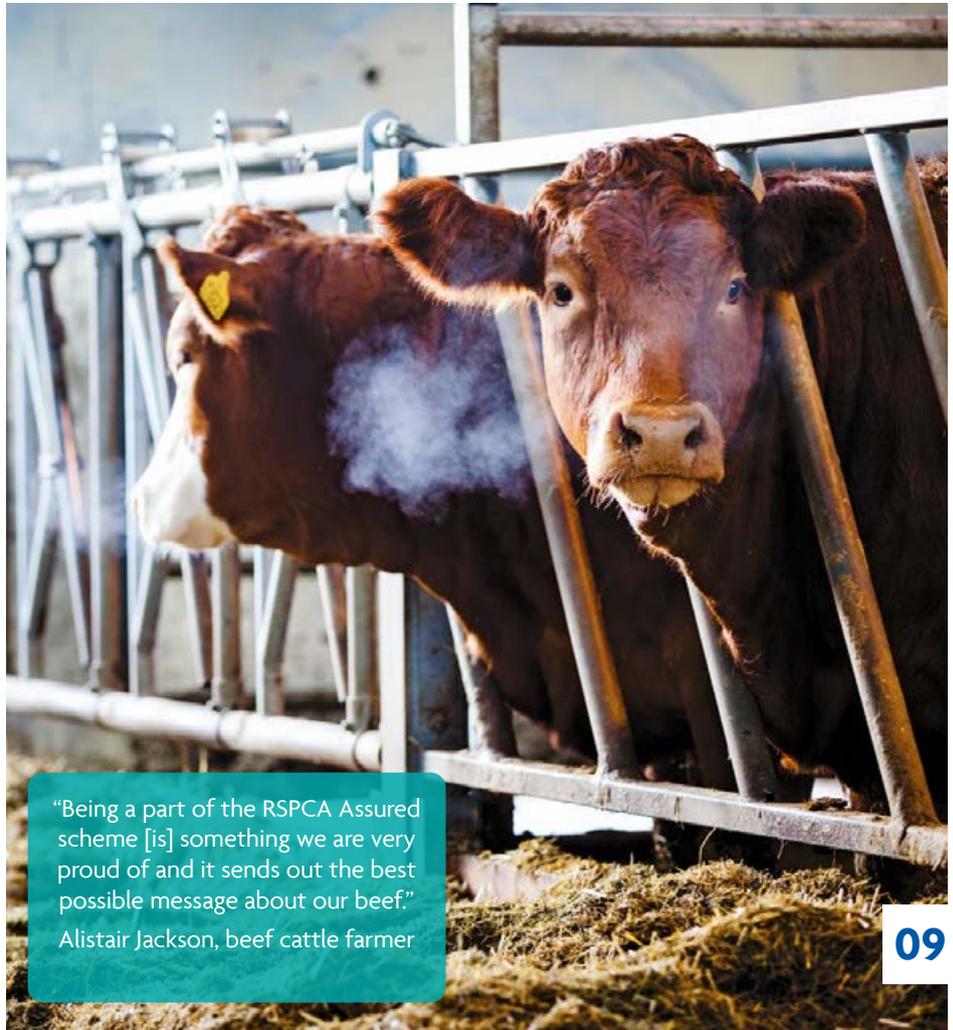
Laying hens	Free-range laying hen unit	31.24%	41.16%
	Pullet rearing unit	7.84%	
	Egg packing station	1.25%	
	Hatchery unit	0.39%	
	Barn system laying hen unit	0.31%	
	Free-range mobile laying hen unit	0.13%	
Pigs	Pig finishing unit	13.25%	32.93%
	Pig rearing to finishing unit	7.73%	
	Pig rearing unit	6.12%	
	Pig breeding unit	4.50%	
	Pig breeding to finishing unit	1.33%	
	Salmon unit	3.75%	
Salmon	Salmon hatchery & tank unit	0.68%	5.42%
	Salmon wellboat	0.55%	
	Salmon freshwater site	0.18%	
	Salmon abattoir	0.13%	
	Salmon smolt transport unit	0.08%	
	Salmon helicopter transfer unit	0.05%	
Chickens	Chicken unit (free-range)	3.59%	4.16%
	Chicken unit	0.57%	
Poultry general	Poultry catching unit	1.59%	3.05%
	Poultry haulier	1.17%	
	Abattoir (poultry)	0.29%	
Livestock general	Livestock haulier	2.19%	2.68%
	Abattoir (livestock)	0.49%	
Turkey	Turkey unit	1.69%	1.69%
Dairy cattle	Dairy cattle unit	1.12%	1.12%
Trout	Rainbow trout unit	0.96%	0.96%
Beef cattle	Beef cattle unit	0.81%	0.81%
Sheep	Sheep unit	0.60%	0.60%
Other	Processor / packer unit	3.96%	5.41%
	Own vehicle	1.30%	
	Wholesaler unit	0.10%	
	Manufacturer unit	0.05%	

Group applications  
= 436

Independent  
applications = 71



### Applications by year:



“Being a part of the RSPCA Assured scheme [is] something we are very proud of and it sends out the best possible message about our beef.”  
Alistair Jackson, beef cattle farmer

## Assessors

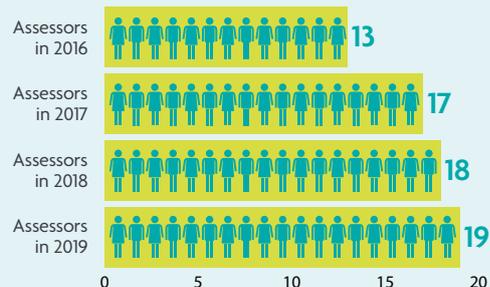


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Our highly qualified team of assessors works across the UK and beyond to carry out annual assessments of our members' farms, hatcheries, hauliers and abattoirs, ensuring full compliance with RSPCA welfare standards.

Members have, on average, 368 standards per species that they must comply with. Assessors record a "non-compliance" when **any** standard isn't met; from very minor issues such as paperwork being filled out incorrectly, to severe issues related to animal welfare.

Of the 3,173 assessments completed in 2019, 44% had one or more non-compliances recorded. The vast majority of those were very minor, however 17 (0.5%) had severe animal welfare related non-compliances which resulted in immediate suspension from the scheme and subsequent investigation.



**Number of assessments completed in 2019 – 3,173\***

**Assessments that were fully compliant – 56%**

**Assessments where at least one non-compliance was raised – 44%**

**Average number of non-compliances per assessment – 2.3**

**Total number of non-compliances raised in 2019 – 3,199**

\* Why is this not the same as the number of scheme members (3,711)? Approximately 200 of our members are processor packers who do not deal with live animals and are therefore audited by Lloyd's Register rather than RSPCA Assured assessors. Of the remaining members, not all farms were active in 2019 (so would not have been assessed) as many undergo fallow periods between cycles. Members that applied at the end of 2018 and had their initial assessment to determine whether they could join the scheme in 2018, but whose membership did not start until 2019, will not have had their first assessment within that calendar year.

## Case study: Mark Robertson, RSPCA Assured Senior Assessor

Senior Assessor Mark Robertson explains how a passion for animal welfare and an affinity for pigs led him to his dream job.

### What made you become an RSPCA Assured assessor?

As a child, I used to go on country walks with my great grandparents and see pigs in fields – and I fell in love with them. I wasn't born into a farming family but I knew looking after farm animals was what I wanted to do. Later, I gained experience with farm animals including turkeys, chicken, cattle, deer, sheep and, of course, pigs!

Seeing how some animals were treated on farms made me want to be part of the bigger picture regarding farm animal welfare. When I saw a position advertised for an RSPCA Assured assessor based in East Anglia, I thought that would be the best way for me to fulfil that. Membership of the RSPCA Assured scheme means all animal food products have been produced using the RSPCA's strict welfare requirements and I'm proud to be a part of helping farms achieve that.

### What does your role involve?

A farm assessment can take anything from two to three hours, or more depending on the size of the farm and number of species. I assess everything from the amount of space and type of diet the animals are provided with, to how much lighting and bedding they are given.

In order for meat, fish, eggs and dairy to carry the RSPCA Assured label, the products must have come from animals that have been cared for using the RSPCA's standards at every stage of their life.

This means that, as well as assessing farms, I also assess hatcheries, hauliers and abattoirs to ensure they are meeting RSPCA standards.

### What's the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is being out on a farm and seeing what a big difference RSPCA Assured is making in improving the welfare of animals. Seeing pigs sleeping in nice straw beds in airy barns, turkeys pecking at hanging objects such as CDs and string, and hens perching on poles – all things our members have to provide for their animals' enrichment – makes the early starts and long days worth it.

### Do you keep any animals yourself?

I keep a small flock of pedigree Southdown sheep with my family, which graze a local orchard, and we also have a dog called Ruby, who's a sprocker spaniel.

### How has your job changed you?

Since joining RSPCA Assured, I've become even more passionate about promoting the importance of farm animal welfare, and regularly post on Twitter about the scheme and what I do @RSPCAFFA. Whenever I can, I also give talks at colleges and youth groups to educate young people about the importance of farm animal welfare.

And it goes without saying that I always look for the RSPCA Assured logo when shopping.

*This article first appeared in Animal Life magazine*



# Farming



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Species		Scheme numbers (000's)	DEFRA 2019 (000's)	RSPCA Assured market penetration %
Beef cattle		3	1,319	0.22%
Veal		0.4	688,000	0.07%
Dairy cattle		15	1,603	0.95%
Chickens		873	95,150	0.92%
Laying hens		20,876	33,799	61.76%
Pigs		1,083	3,776	28.68%
Sheep		132	15,390	0.86%
Turkeys		1,365	9,901	13.79%
Salmon		70,284	(no data)	(no data)
Trout		42,609	(no data)	(no data)

# Case study: Sophie Collins, RSPCA Assured Welfare Improvement Manager

**W**elfare Improvement Manager Sophie discusses RSPCA Assured's use of welfare outcome assessments, and how RSPCA Assured uses them to improve the lives of farm animals.

## What does your role involve?

RSPCA Assured carries out 'welfare outcome assessments' on our members' farms. This means that alongside checks to ensure members are following the RSPCA's higher welfare standards, our assessors also collect detailed information about the health and behaviour of the animals they see on their visits. This gives us a much more accurate picture of the wellbeing of the animals on the farm and allows us to make sure the scheme is delivering against the high standards that both we and our customers expect.

My job is to oversee this aspect of RSPCA Assured's work. The welfare outcomes team and I use the information collected during these assessments to monitor welfare on our members' farms and look at how we could work together with them to improve it even further.

## What made you become the Welfare Improvement Manager for RSPCA Assured?

I joined RSPCA Assured relatively recently, in June 2019. Before that I worked as a Scientific Officer in the RSPCA's farm animals department, covering welfare outcome assessments and small ruminants (sheep and goats). And prior to joining the RSPCA, I completed a PhD on welfare outcome assessments in dairy cattle.

I've always been interested in farm animal welfare and keen to make a difference. My role as RSPCA Assured's Welfare Improvement Manager helps me do this.

## What's the best part of your job?

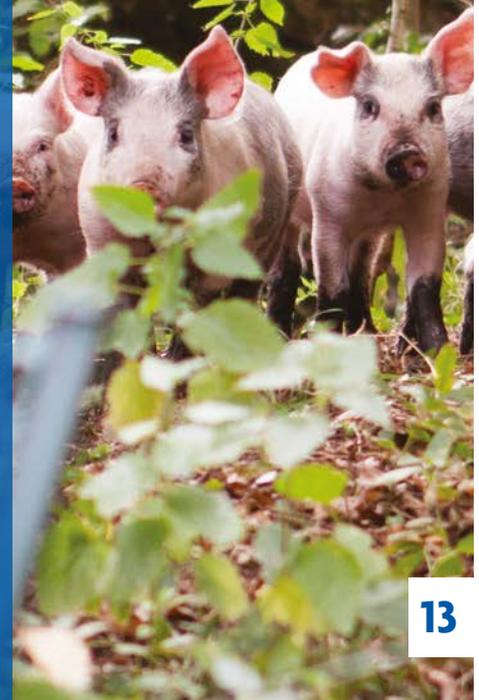
It's really rewarding seeing RSPCA Assured labelled products on the shelves in the supermarket. I think it's very important farmers are recognised for working to higher welfare standards, and for consumers to be able to easily pick out higher welfare products when shopping.

## Do you keep any animals yourself?

I don't have any pets at the moment but I have lots of happy childhood memories of growing up with animals. I look forward to being able to share my home with animals again at some point!

## How has your job changed you?

Working for RSPCA Assured reminds me every day that there are lots of people out there trying to make a difference for farm animals. From farmers going the extra mile for their animals to consumers choosing to buy higher welfare products. And, of course, also my colleagues at RSPCA Assured who share my passion for farm animal welfare.



# Commercial development

“Arena are delighted to have RSPCA Assured on board as a corporate member. It provides the opportunity to build important business relationships via Arena’s networking events and promote animal welfare amongst senior foodservice and hospitality individuals”

Lorraine Wood, Director,  
Arena Hospitality Networking

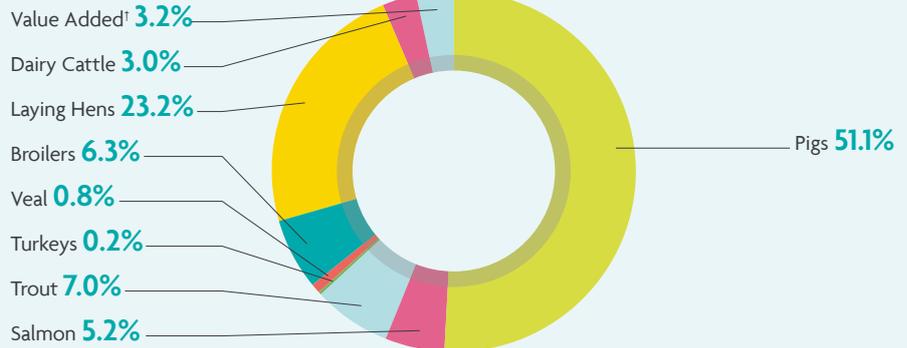
Our commercial team supports food businesses looking to find RSPCA Assured producers, and to take advantage of the growing consumer demand for higher welfare products. It also manages licensing, traceability and supply chain auditing.

## Products per quarter & products by species

Number of products per quarter



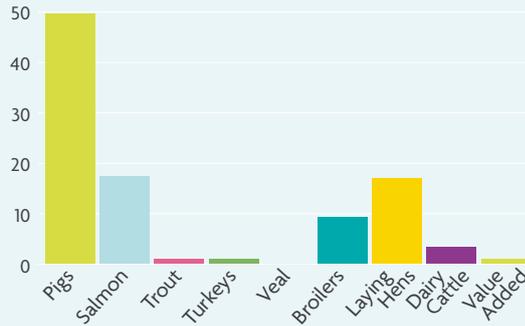
## Percentage of products by species



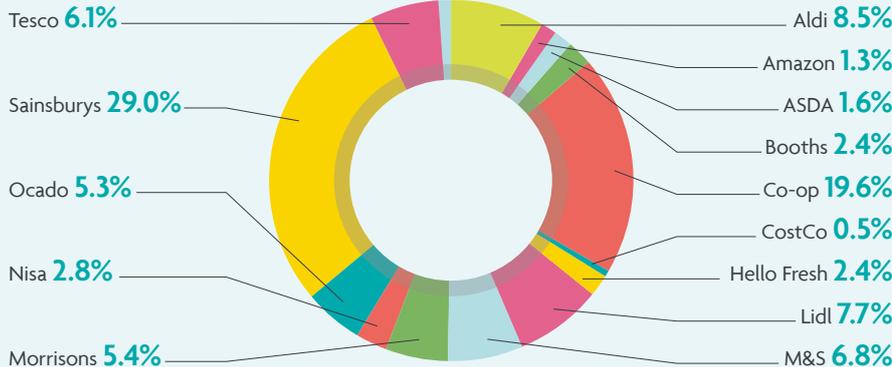
\*Value added' products are those that are not wholly RSPCA Assured, for example; a pie, sandwich or ready-meal.

## Levy\* by species & products by retailer

Percentage of levy by species



Percentage of products by retailer



\*A levy is the fee charged for use of the RSPCA Assured brand and/or label.

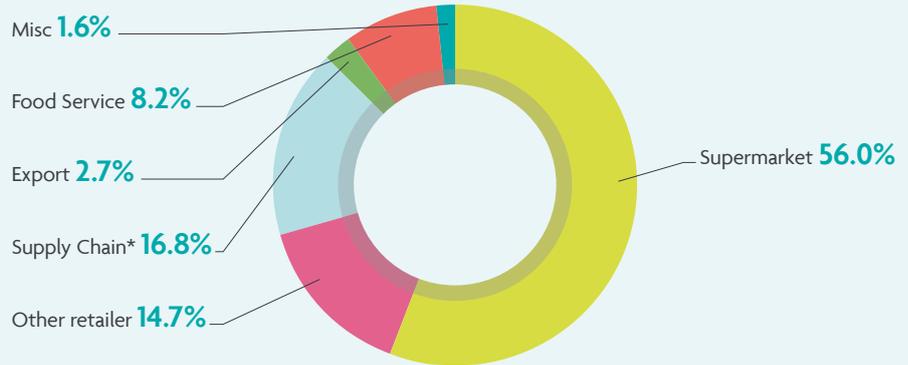


# Commercial development

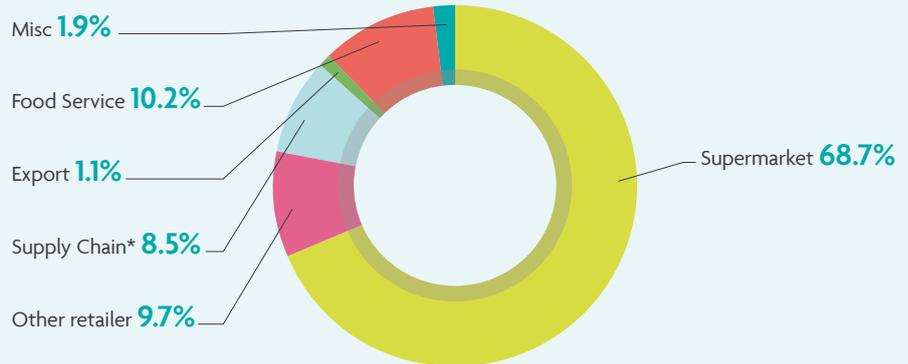


## Products & levy by customer type

### Percentage of products by customer type



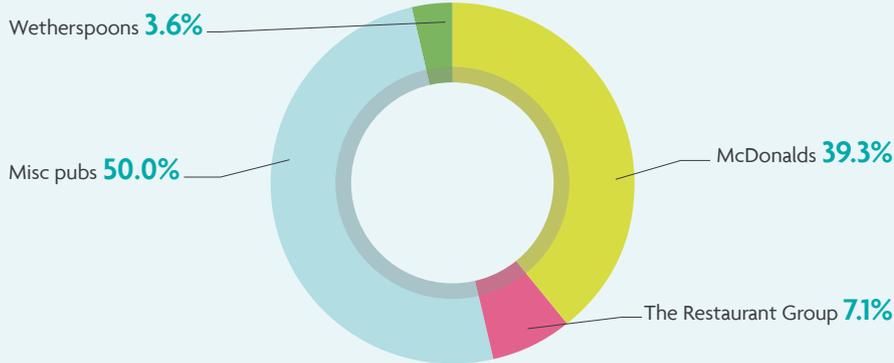
### Percentage of levy by customer type



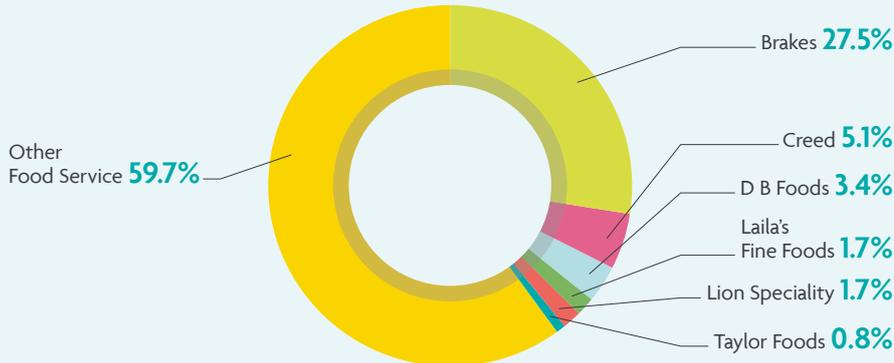
\*Supply chain for further processing

## Products by retailer / restaurant & by foodservice / wholesaler

### Percentage of products by retailer / restaurant



### Percentage of products by foodservice / wholesaler



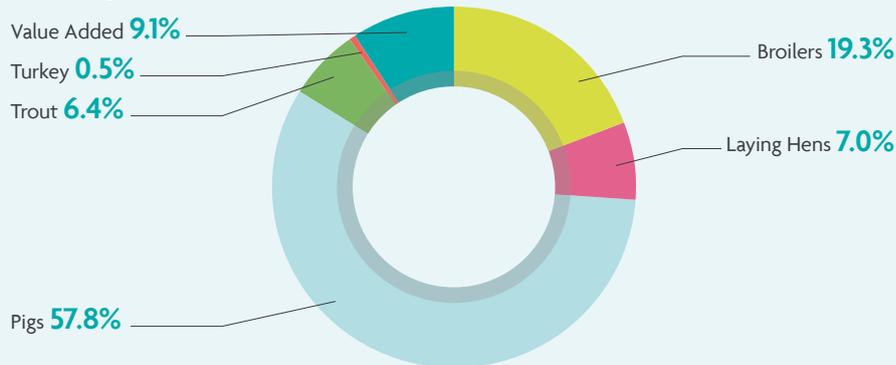
# Commercial development

“We’re delighted to work alongside RSPCA Assured, a trusted hallmark that enables Co-op customers to buy products safe in the knowledge that animals have been reared to high welfare standards. Our collaborative relationship has helped us to become the first UK retailer to source our entire range of own-label pork products from 100% outdoor bred pigs on RSPCA Assured farms. We look forward to continuing this longstanding and important alliance into the next decade to ensure that animal welfare continues to be a priority for retailers and consumers alike.”

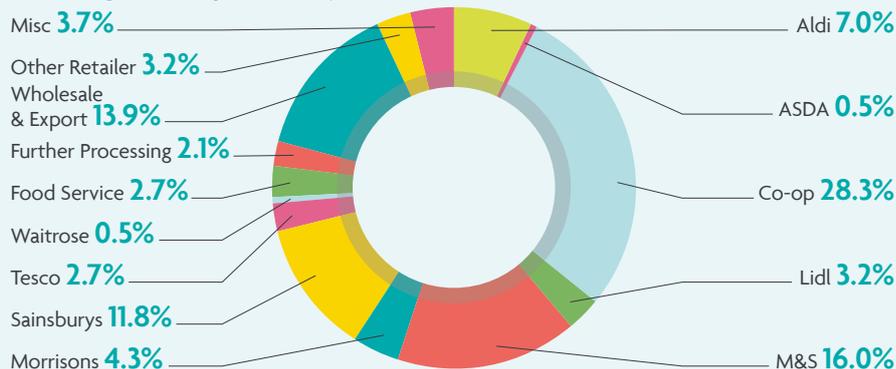
Caroline Mason,  
Head of Agriculture, The Co-op

## New products by species & by customer

### Percentage of new products by species



### Percentage of new products by customer



# New policies

Our understanding of humanity's effect on the natural world has changed rapidly over the past few years, as its impact has become more visible. It's becoming increasingly clear that our treatment of the environment, people and animals needs to change, which is why we developed three new policies in 2019, in consultation with The Environment Agency, WWF, WRAP UK and our members.

## What do these policies cover?

### Plastic packaging

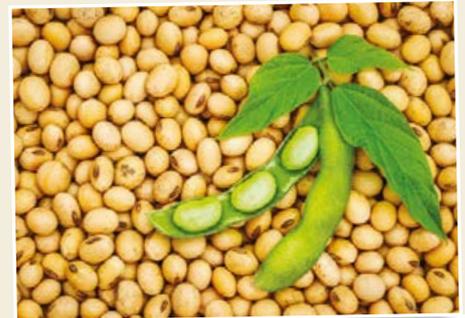
- Elimination of problematic or unnecessary single-use plastic packaging for RSPCA Assured products
- Adoption of reusable or recyclable materials in packaging
- Proactive promotion of effectively recycling, composting, or repurposing of packaging
- Increase in use of recycled content in all plastic packaging carrying the RSPCA Assured certification mark

### Palm oil

- Requirements for appropriate sourcing of sustainable palm oil to be used in RSPCA Assured products

### Soy

- Requirements for appropriate sourcing of sustainable soy to be used in RSPCA Assured products
- Advice and recommendations on appropriate sourcing of sustainable soy (soybean meal) to be used in feed consumed by animals on RSPCA Assured certified farms



You can read these policies in detail at [berspcaassured.org.uk/policies/](https://berspcaassured.org.uk/policies/)

# Marketing

“RSPCA Assured has helped raise standards across the whole of the UK poultry industry – all the other codes of practice, including government legislation, are based on its guidelines.”  
Dave Brass, laying hen farmer

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Our marketing team aims to increase awareness of the RSPCA Assured brand through advertising, web, press, social media activities and events. In 2019, awareness of the brand surpassed 50% for the first time.

## Targeted awareness over time



We had more than **272 media items**, with a PR value of more than **£1.3 million** and a potential reach of more than **101.2 million people**.

This included:

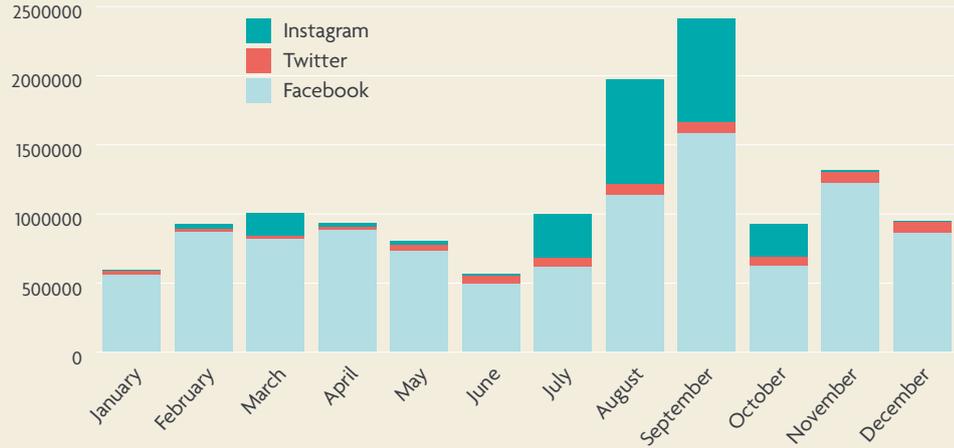
- 5** broadcast pieces
- 15** national newspaper piece
- 62** trade press pieces
- 24** consumer magazine pieces
- 33** regional media pieces
- 133** web and wire pieces

We had **18k mentions** on social media.



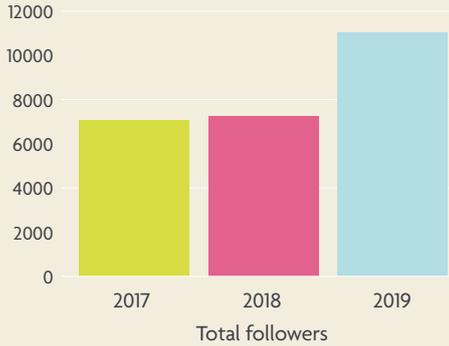
**Social impressions:** The number of times our content appears on screen (as opposed to 'reach' which is the number of people who see it)

**Twitter, Facebook and Instagram impressions**



**Total social followers**

(includes Twitter, Instagram and Facebook)

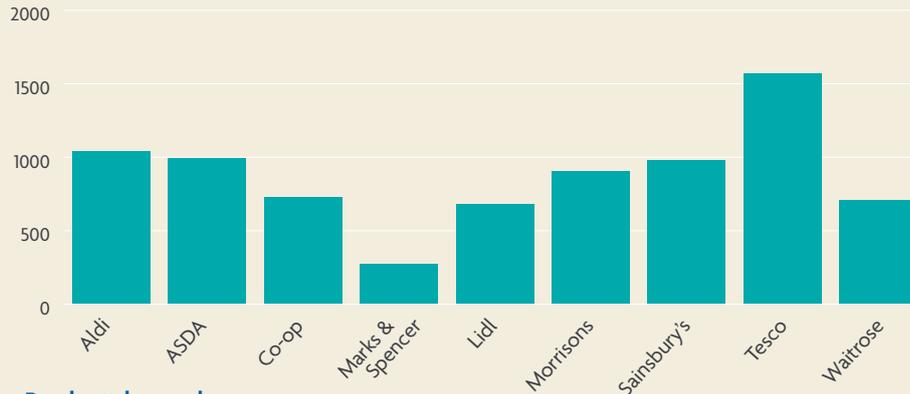


# Marketing



**Lobby your supermarket data:** The products the public would like to see more of and the shops where they would like to buy them

## Retail demand



## Product demand



# Instagram influencer campaigns

In 2019, we worked with Instagram influencers to promote RSPCA Assured eggs for pancake day and during the Great British Bake Off  
[#makeitrspcaassured](#) [#bakeitrspcaassured](#)



@kutovakika



@yasminecamilla



@laurentfkerr



@heartzeena



@kerryvillers



@sophieshealthykitchen



@beckyexcell



@cakesmyth



@kutovakika



@fvelittledoves



@nourishingamelia



@lifestylegemz



The campaigns collectively generated **4.2m impressions** for the brand, with strong positive engagement that led to **507 new followers**.

# Accounts

Will Hawkes

“The RSPCA standards help me to rear happy, healthy pigs and I firmly believe that if you look after pigs well, they will look after you. At the end of the day, you don't work in this business to make big money – you have to enjoy it. And seeing my pigs happy and thriving brings me pleasure every day.”

Andrew Summers, pig farmer



We are a charity and not-for-profit so the licence fee (or 'levy') and other membership fees help cover the cost of inspections. These fees are our only source of income and every penny is reinvested back into the scheme to promote higher animal welfare, conduct research and improve the lives of farm animals.

Joint Schemes /  
Other Income  
**£5,813**

Licence Fee  
Income  
**£2,378,198**

## Income



Scheme Membership  
**£957,952**

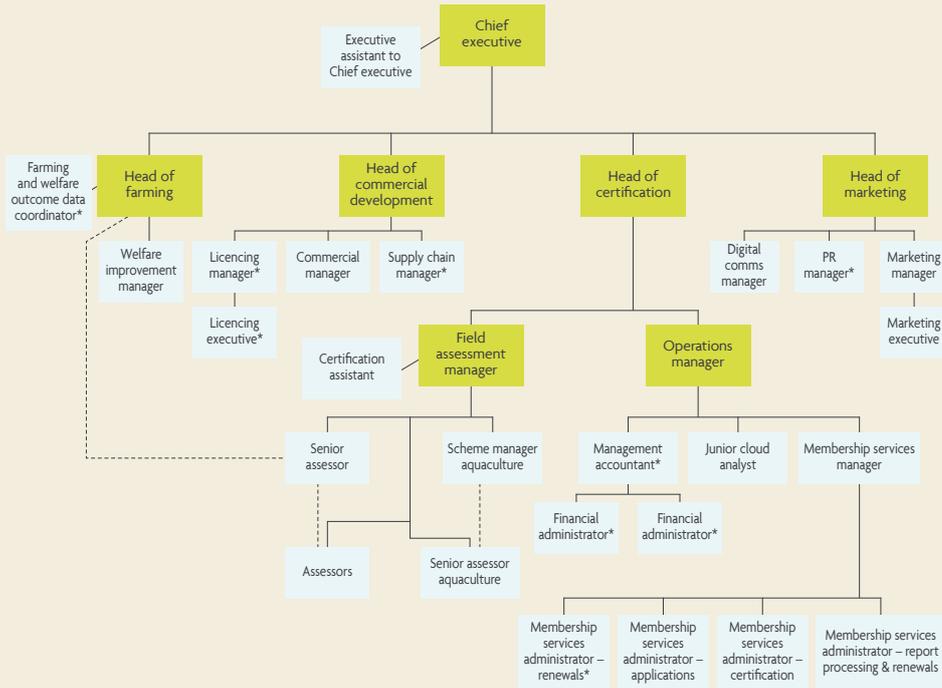
## Expenditure

Support costs  
**£2,154,226**



Direct costs  
**£1,184,870**

# Organogram



\* = part time

green box = member of the leadership team

## Board of directors

Our board of directors typically consists of four non-executives and four RSPCA members. It is chaired by Willie Hamilton and vice-chaired by Rene Olivieri. Our term limit for board members is three terms, each consisting of three years.

Name	Role	Date of appointment	Max-term ends	Present directorships or chairmanships
<b>Willie Hamilton</b>	Chairman (Non Exec)	7 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	2025	N/A
<b>Madeline Crawley</b>	Non Exec Board Member	5 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	2026	N/A
<b>David Main</b>	Non Exec Board Member	7 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	2025	N/A
<b>Rene Olivieri</b>	Vice Chair (RSPCA Board Member)	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2019	2028	Chairman of RSPCA
<b>David Smith</b>	RSPCA Board Member	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2019	2028	Digital Retail Advisory Ltd
<b>Bob Baylis</b>	RSPCA Member	7 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	2020	N/A
<b>Paul Baxter</b>	RSPCA Member	5 <sup>th</sup> July 2012	2020	RSPCA Isle of Wight Trading Company Ltd



Freedom Food is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the RSPCA, set up to administer the Society's farm animal welfare labelling scheme, RSPCA Assured.

Freedom Food Ltd is a registered charitable trading company operating in the commercial field of food production from farmed animals. Its role is to promote and apply welfare standards drawn up by the RSPCA through marketing the RSPCA Assured labelling scheme. RSPCA Assured encourages farmers, hauliers, abattoirs and other businesses in the food supply chain to participate, educate and promote awareness with end-users and consumers of food products bearing the RSPCA Assured certification mark.

Registered Office: RSPCA Assured, Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, RH13 9RS  
www.rspcaassured.org.uk t. 0300 123 0014 e. help@rspcaassured.org.uk  
Company No. 2723670 Charity Registered in England & Wales 1059879 and Scotland SC038199