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# Your poultry 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.

Unsurprisingly, RSPCA Assured turkey products have been acknowledged. For more information on the awards, read the following article. Hooray to everyone who has produced them, sold them, and will get to enjoy

them!

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 increased demand for higher welfare poultry products 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 not only around COVID-19 but also Brexit and AI, whilst, still 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, including six for turkey**

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	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓

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## 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.

## Pullets reflection

By Rob Howorth, Senior Assessor and species lead for pullets



**Although 2020 is a year most wouldn't want to repeat, we've managed to learn so much about the ways we can lead our lives. Independent farmers and groups have been as resilient and inventive as ever in finding new ways of working.**

I've been impressed with our RSPCA Assured pullet members, who've been able to adapt in these challenging times. While there is no real substitute for face-to-face meetings, it's incredible to see how well they've taken to remote assessments.

For many working on a farm, it's been 'business as usual'. But, no one is unaffected, and for some, this has been a very challenging time.

The uncertainty, health concerns, and financial implications of Covid-19 have had an impact in one way or another on most businesses, whether large or small. If you have been affected and would like to talk to someone in complete confidence, the [Farming Community Network](#) (FCN) are always there.

I'm proud to be an FCN volunteer, working as a caseworker. The work FCN does to support, help and answer questions for those who contact them is tremendous.

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## 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](#).

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## Turkey reflection

By Mark Robertson, Senior Assessor and species lead for turkeys



**What an unbelievable year! The turkey industry, as a whole, has done so well to cope with the challenges of COVID-19 and AI. It has been great to see happy, healthy and well-grown turkeys.**

The incredibly wet autumn we had was just another hurdle for us to overcome. Despite heavy rainfall on the ranges, thankfully, the ground has held up well.

Due to restrictions around the pandemic and Brexit, this year, sourcing workers has been a challenge. Some of our European colleagues have decided to return home, or have been unable to travel due to quarantine rules.

The uncertainty around Christmas, and families mixing, doesn't seem to have had much of an impact on demand. We were all worried about how that could affect us, but it's good that orders have stayed at the same level.

Although this year has been tough, everyone seems to be in good spirits when I'm out visiting on-farm. It's great to catch up with lots of you, and I'm looking forward to seeing more of you next year.

## 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.

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## 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**

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