

# M&S

EST. 1884



## M&S' FIVE POINT PLAN

LEADING THE INDUSTRY IN TACKLING THE CAMPYLOBACTER CHALLENGE  
NOVEMBER 2015

### THE CAMPYLOBACTER CHALLENGE

Campylobacter in chicken hit the headlines last year. Its presence in poultry was not news itself, the news was that the Food Standards Agency (FSA) had made it its number one priority and was calling on retailers to take action. Concerned that campylobacter levels in chickens were not improving, the FSA set the industry a target of fewer than one-in-ten chickens having the highest levels of the bug by the end of 2015.

Campylobacter is a

naturally occurring bacteria. Consumers can avoid food poisoning by following on-pack cooking, handling and storage advice.



M&S has been making it even easier for our customers for many years with initiatives such as leak proof packaging

and labelling every chicken with a specific cooking time based on its weight. But to produce a step-change in campylobacter presence in M&S chickens, we had to innovate.

The M&S team took on the challenge to create a ground breaking programme that would not only protect customers, but significantly reduce levels of campylobacter in the supply chain.

### THE PLAN

Our team joined with our biggest poultry supplier – 2 Sisters Food Group – and began to research and test ways to make an impact. From work we'd undertaken over the past few years we knew there was not one, silver bullet intervention that would reduce campylobacter.

Action had to be taken throughout the supply chain, from farms right through to customer homes.

By the end of September 2014, we were ready to trial five initiatives and by November we could see that they were working as an integrated, farm to customer home approach. The decision was taken to roll the plan out across the M&S / 2 Sisters supply chain and the Five Point Plan was born.

In the last 12 months we haven't stopped learning and looking to improve the plan.

For example, we've added a new intervention with M&S farmers now including a feed additive into the diet which improves the bird's digestive health, limiting the ability for campylobacter to multiply in the stomach.



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## 1. FARMER BONUS



A bonus scheme for farmers that produce campylobacter free chickens on their farms. This is intended to stop the spread of the bacteria by incentivising farmers to strictly control access to the farms and chicken houses.

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## 2. ZERO THINNING



M&S farmers have stopped part harvesting chickens from flocks through the growing cycle, known in the industry as operating a 'zero thinning' policy. This is helping maintain farm biosecurity throughout the life of the chicken, reducing levels of campylobacter and delivering animal welfare benefits.

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## 3. FEED SUPPLEMENT



M&S farmers are now adding a supplement into the diet which improves the bird's digestive health, limiting the ability for campylobacter to multiply in the stomach.

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## 4. BLAST SURFACE CHILLING



We invested in new technology on a dedicated M&S processing line that rapidly chills whole chickens. The system circulates air at minus 90 degrees which is enough to make the chickens passing through the machine very cold without freezing them. Low temperatures help to reduce levels of campylobacter.

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## 5. PACKAGING UPGRADES



We have made the front of pack labelling on M&S whole chickens even clearer for customers, adding a large, front-of-pack label that says 'Washed and ready to cook'. We have also introduced a 'double bag' which means M&S chickens can be placed straight into the oven in a bag. The upgrades make it easier for our customers by reducing the risk of cross contamination in the kitchen.

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# THE RESULTS

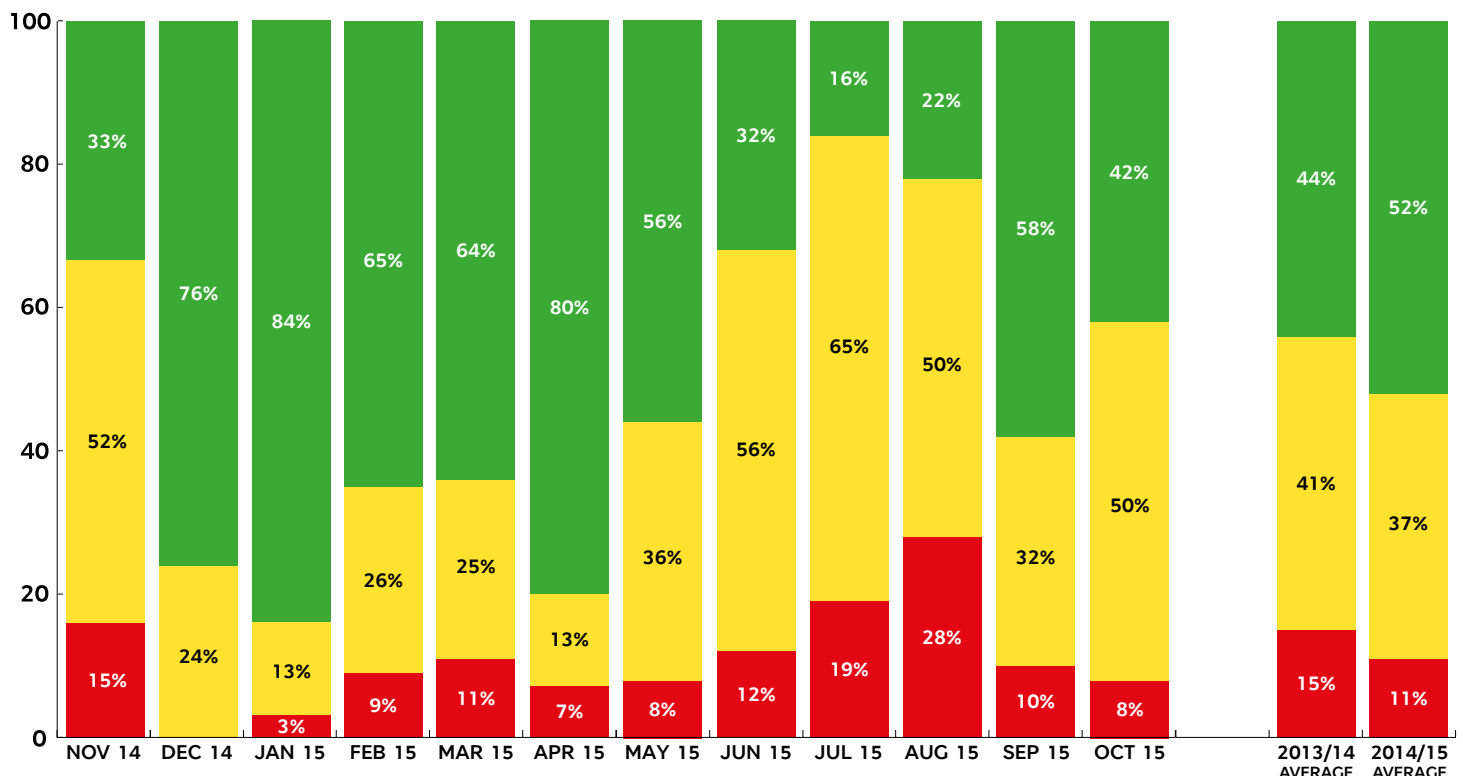
The Five Point Plan is an integrated approach that ensures the highest possible standards, incorporates new technology and makes it as easy as possible for our customers. Test results over the past 12 months have shown a step change improvement with the average number of chickens containing the highest levels of campylobacter dropping by almost a third – from 15% (average from November 2013 to October 2014) to 10.8% (average from November 2014 to October 2015). Chickens containing no traces at all of campylobacter have jumped from 44% to 52%.

The Five Point Plan has the backing of the FSA. Its policy team has been kept informed throughout the process and we've shared results with them. Steve Wearne, the FSA's Director of Policy, said:

***“It is one year since M&S became the first retailer to commit to a detailed public plan to reduce campylobacter at all stages of the food chain. As we know there’s no one solution to getting rid of campylobacter but we fully support M&S’s determined and ongoing efforts to reduce the levels on chicken.”***

The Five Point Plan is a transformational plan that is leading the industry. We take food safety extremely seriously and are committed to monitoring and further improving it. Acting with integrity in our supply chain is a business priority, it's one of the values that makes M&S food different.

## M&S CAMPYLOBACTER RESULTS 2014/15



Methodology – based on a total sample of 1,149 M&S chickens. The tests are carried out by FSA approved independent testing laboratory Campden BRI.

The chickens tested are taken at random from the shelves of M&S stores across the UK.

■ >1000  
■ 100-1000  
■ <100