

M&S FARM ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE POLICY



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1.0 PURPOSE

This policy outlines our minimum requirements for farm animal health and welfare. It is to be used by all farmers and processors supplying livestock and seafood products into the M&S Food supply chain. It provides guidance on M&S farm animal health and welfare requirements and should be used in conjunction with the species-specific M&S Sourcing Standards relating to livestock production (including farmed fish), which include animal health and welfare requirements that are relevant for that species.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy is aimed as a reference point for all farmers and suppliers of livestock derived products into the M&S Food business, as well as assessors undertaking Marks & Spencer Select Farm assessments. For clarity, the term 'livestock' covers terrestrial land-based livestock production and aquaculture production (including farmed finfish, shellfish, wildcaught and farmed decapod crustaceans) but does not include wild-caught fish. More information on our approach to wild caught fish can be found in our Seafood Sourcing Standard.

Sources of further information published on our website:

- Our approach to animal welfare
- M&S Animal Welfare Annual Performance Report
- M&S Aquaculture & Wild Caught Decapod Welfare
- M&S Clothing and Home Sourcing Standards Animal Welfare Policy
- M&S Antibiotic Usage Policy in Sourced Livestock and Aquaculture
- M&S Forever Fish Seafood Sourcing Standard

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

M&S takes farm animal health and welfare very seriously and is committed to delivering leading standards. This policy has been prepared to require producers and processors supplying us to adopt and implement the highest practical and commercially viable standards of farm animal health and welfare across our supply chains (UK and globally) – at all stages of the animal's life – on the farm, during transportation and at the place of slaughter. These are global commitments and apply wherever we source. Day to day management and implementation of this policy is the responsibility of our team of agriculture and aquaculture specialists. All our agriculture and aquaculture managers are externally trained in animal welfare and re-certified every three years (examples of the type of training includes Animal/Poultry Welfare Officer training provided by Bristol University). We also have a requirement that our suppliers undertake equivalent training in animal welfare.

Adherence to these policy requirements forms part of our terms of trade with our suppliers and is reviewed as part of our M&S Select Farm assurance programme, welfare and integrity audit programme and annual supplier scorecard assessment.



4.0 BACKGROUND

Our initial welfare policies and production specifications were based upon the internationally recognised Five Freedoms, recommended by the UK Farm Animal Welfare Committee. However, our understanding of welfare has evolved over time and therefore so has our approach. We now incorporate the Five Domains of animal welfare into our approach. We recognise animals as sentient, with the ability to experience emotions such as pleasure and pain. The Five Domains is an evolution of Five Freedoms that incorporate the importance of an animals’ mental state to their overall wellbeing. Using this framework helps us to put greater emphasis on providing opportunities for the animals in our supply chains to be exposed to, or engage in, activities that provide positive experiences.

The Five Freedoms		The Five Domains	
1. Freedom from hunger and thirst		1. Nutrition	- giving sufficient, balanced, varied, and clean food and water.
2. Freedom from discomfort		2. Environment	- comfort through temperature, substrate, space, air, odour, noise, and predictability.
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease		3. Health	- enabling good health through the absence of disease, injury, impairment, and with a good fitness level.
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour		4. Behaviour	- providing varied, novel, and engaging enrichment through sensory inputs, exploration, foraging, bonding, playing, retreating, and others.
5. Freedom from fear and distress		5 Mental state	- the animal should benefit from predominantly positive states, e.g., pleasure comfort, while reducing negative states such as fear, frustration, hunger, pain, or boredom.



5.0 REQUIREMENTS

This section outlines the general requirements of our Farm Animal Health & Welfare Policy.

5.1 General Principles

- As a minimum, all our producers must adhere to current legislative requirements and meet at least one national or industry farm assurance scheme standard (e.g., UK Red Tractor, RSPCA Assured) or for seafood, standards such as ASC, Global Gap or BAP.
- Animal welfare or husbandry systems that are prohibited in UK legislation must not be used. This also applies to livestock-derived and seafood products sourced from outside of the UK.

5.2 Select Farm Assurance

Our Marks & Spencer Select Farm Assurance standards are set out in our Sourcing Standards and go beyond the requirements of current legislation. All Select Farms must be assured by an independent third party farm assurance standard. We specify the standards required by species (see table below) and use these as the foundation upon which our additional Select Farm sourcing requirements are built.

Required Third Party Assurance by Species

Please note, all organic meat, fish and poultry we sell will also be certified to a recognised organic certification scheme standard.

Species	Required Third Party Assurance
Fresh milk (UK)	Red Tractor and RSPCA Assured
Dairy (cheese, ingredient)	Red Tractor or M&S Select Farm (for non-UK) approved by M&S
Veal	Red Tractor, and RSPCA Assured
Pork (UK)	Red Tractor, and RSPCA Assured
Pork (continental)	Red Tractor equivalent and certified to one of the following standards Genesis, Global GAP, Winter Botham Darby UCAS, Interpork, IBAW
Beef	Red Tractor, FAWL, Bord Bia or QMS
Lamb	Red Tractor, FAWL, Bord Bia or QMS
Chicken (Oakham Gold)	Red Tractor and RSPCA Assured
Chicken (ingredient)	Red Tractor
Chicken (free range)	Red Tractor Free Range
Duck	Red Tractor
Turkey (Oakham)	Red Tractor
Turkey (free range)	Red Tractor and RSPCA Assured/Red Tractor Free Range
Egg (shell and ingredient)	Lion and RSPCA Assured (UK), KAT, IKB or Belplume Assured (EU)
Goats	Red Tractor

Species	Required Third Party Assurance
Salmon	RSPCA Assured
Trout	RSPCA Assured
Other seafood species	ASC, Global Gap or BAP

We work with our suppliers and a number of leading organisations (e.g., RSCPA, Compassion in World Farming (CIWF), Crustacean Compassion, the Humane Slaughter Association and FAI Farms) to further research and progress our animal welfare standards. We will update this policy in line with independent advice to ensure that leading standards are met and maintained.

5.3 Animal Welfare training

- All M&S Agriculture and Aquaculture Managers must undertake regular farm animal welfare training and continuous professional development provided through an independent training provider such as Bristol University.
- All suppliers are required to ensure that all relevant company staff receive internally delivered training on animal welfare to ensure they have an awareness of company and customer animal welfare policies, a basic awareness on animal welfare legislation and key welfare issues and know how to report animal welfare concerns.
- All farmers and those involved in the handling of livestock must be appropriately trained and competent to care for them.

5.4 Transport and slaughter

- All the meat, poultry and farmed fin fish we sell must, without exception, come from animals that have been humanely slaughtered and animals must be pre-slaughter stunned.
- All abattoirs and our farmed salmon, organic salmon and trout harvesting stations for fish used in our supply chain must have CCTV, with footage kept for a minimum of 90 days. All other farmed fish species will have CCTV in place at harvesting stations by 2025.
- We do not sell live decapod crustaceans.
- We require suppliers to ensure that transport time of live animals are kept to a minimum. All live animal transportation must not exceed 8 hours. For poultry transport our policy is that times for poultry should not exceed four hours¹.

5.5 Genetics, exotic species, foie gras and feathers

- Specific breeds of animal that, due to their genetics, inherently cause welfare issues are not permitted to be supplied, including Barbary duck.
- Genetic engineering or cloning of livestock is prohibited.
- The selling of meat and by-products from certain exotic species such as crocodile, kangaroo, and frogs legs is not permitted.
- We do not sell foie gras or meat from birds reared for foie gras, or products from any animals that have been force fed.

5.6 Livestock health

All livestock used to produce our foods must be maintained in good health and veterinary medicines must only be used for the treatment of sick or injured animals.

- All farms in the M&S supply chain must have written veterinary health plans that are regularly reviewed and updated.
- Any sick or injured animals must be treated promptly.
- The routine physical mutilation of farm animals, farmed fish and shrimp is not permitted unless veterinary advice deems it strictly necessary to protect the animals from subsequent loss of welfare due to injury. Where certain practices are currently unavoidable within the industry (e.g., castration or disbudding of male cattle or sheep), suppliers must utilise early intervention and best practice procedures with appropriate use of anaesthetic and analgesic for pain relief.
- No medicines or substances are permitted to be used to artificially promote animal growth.
- Veterinary medicines must only be used according to veterinary advice. We do not permit prophylactic or routine metaphylaxis use. Antibiotics must always be prescribed by a veterinarian for non-routine metaphylaxis and the treatment of specific diseases.

¹Whilst our policy requires a maximum four hour transport time for poultry there are currently issues with availability of spent hen processing facilities meaning for some suppliers transport times are longer than four hours. Our other poultry suppliers also have times when four hours is exceeded. We publicly report on the proportions of poultry that are transported within our maximum transport times policy and work with suppliers on keeping transport times to a minimum. Our RSPCA Assured salmon can be transported for up to 24 hours and no longer than 10 hours in closed well conditions in line with the RSPCA standard- however in 2023 maximum transport time for our salmon was 12 hours. Live transport of our decapod crustaceans (crab, lobster and crayfish) can also exceed 8 hours but should be minimised with appropriate storage conditions in line with industry codes of good practice.

5.7 Antibiotic usage

The following outlines our approach to responsible antimicrobial use across all livestock and aquaculture species. Our full policy for antibiotic usage in M&S sourced livestock and aquaculture can be found on our corporate website.

The 4Rs Framework

1. **Record:** the use of antimicrobial agents per unit of livestock at the time of treatment, on all farms in the M&S supply, reliably and robustly.
2. **Reduce:** the annual usage of antimicrobial agents in our supply chains, by discontinuing unnecessary use, whilst ensuring animal health and welfare is preserved.
3. **Replace:** the use of antimicrobial agents where possible with evidence-based and sustainable solutions to disease prevention.
4. **Refine:** the use of antimicrobial agents, by ensuring the responsible and informed selection and correct administration of products to animals that require treatment.

5.8 Close confinement and production systems

We prohibit the use of production or confinement systems for any animals in our supply that do not meet our standards and cannot fulfil an animal's welfare needs. These include:

- The use of sow stalls
- The use of confinement farrowing crates
- The use of cages across all poultry production
- The use of feedlots or The use of feedlots or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)
- Tethering of dairy cows
- Rearing of white calves for veal
- The forced feeding of geese and ducks for foie gras (and meat from these birds).

5.9 Species Specific Enrichment Provision

- Meat, poultry and fresh milk must come from animals which have been provided with effective species-specific enrichment for encouraging expression of natural behaviours. For salmon, we ask that environmental enrichment is provided where conditions allow and are currently undertaking trials with our salmon suppliers on enrichment provision. The table below lists the species-specific provisions required for all products supplied to M&S. For requirements on the amounts to be provided please refer to species specific Sourcing Standard.

Species	Enrichment Required
Chicken	Natural light, play bales, pecking objects, perches/perching platforms. Free range and organic birds must have access to a range area.
Laying Hens	Perches, nest boxes, pecking objects, tree cover (minimum 5% for ingredient, shell egg 20%) and artificial shelters on the range.
Turkey	Natural light, pecking objects, straw bales/ perching platforms.
Duck	Natural daylight, open water provision to allow natural preening behaviours.
Pork (UK)	Provision of enrichment materials that encourage rooting, pawing and chewing behaviours such as long straw/loose material across all animals and life stages, wallows for outdoor sows, bedding material for nest building.
Continental (EU) pork)	Manipulable material, loose bedding across all animals and life stages. Provision of nesting material for sows prior to farrowing.

Species	Enrichment Required
Beef & Lamb	When housed provision of dry lying area with natural bedding or synthetic rubber mats, seasonal grazing.
Veal	Enrichment must be provided from six weeks of age, for example hay balls, brushes or short lengths of chain, dry, bedded lying area. Must be group housed by three weeks of age at the latest.
Dairy Cows (UK fresh milk)	Loafing/ outdoor areas, cow brushes, minimum of 110 days grazing for four hours per day per year.
Dairy Calves (UK fresh milk)	All calves must be provided with environmental enrichment from six weeks of age suitable enrichment include hay balls, short lengths of chain, brushes and must be moved into paired or grouped housing by the 22nd day after birth.
Goats	Examples of approved enrichments are bales, barrels and brushes.
Geese	Access to range, straw bales and crop cover.
Salmon (marine stage)	The use of natural and artificial seaweed hides are encouraged where water currents allow to provide shelter and natural habitat for cleaner fish, and enrichment for salmon.

5.10 Welfare Outcome Measures reporting & use

Welfare Outcome Measures (WOMs) are metrics that describe how an animal has experienced the environment in which it has lived. They are collected both on-farm and at slaughter by directly observing the animal or carcass. The metrics focus on attributes associated with a good quality of life. Traditionally, 'input' measures have been used to inform how farmers should provide for good welfare, for example through the type of feed given or the size of housing space, etc. Although these measures are important in managing livestock systems, they do not directly measure the experience of the individual animal and often fail to capture the full effect of a system upon the animal's welfare.

M&S use outcome measures to provide an objective tool to measure welfare, regardless of the production system, breed, climate, and so on. The data can be used to benchmark

farming systems, locate best practice, and identify areas that can be improved within supply. They also allow quantifiable tracking of continuous improvement and progress over time.

- Suppliers must comply with our requirement to monitor animal welfare compliance using Welfare Outcome Measures where required and submit the data on a monthly or quarterly basis (dependent on species) via the M&S Livestock Hub.
- WOM reviews take place as part of quarterly meetings with M&S Agriculture Managers and individual suppliers. Performance is reviewed including discussions on what is driving performance, agreement of future focus areas, and conversations on challenges and opportunities for welfare improvement. Where required targets for improvement or action plans are also put in place.



6.0 SPECIES-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

All livestock used to produce our foods must be produced according to M&S livestock specifications and species-specific Sourcing Standards that detail specific animal welfare requirements.

All farms must have an M&S Select Farm assessment alongside the required industry assurance scheme.

The information below highlights some of the key requirements for each species, the species-specific sourcing standards should be referred to for the full M&S requirements.

Please refer to section 5.9 for the species-specific enrichment requirements for all species.

Laying Hens

- All shell eggs, frozen egg and eggs used as ingredient must be free range or organic.
- Where beak trimming is undertaken to protect welfare, it must only be performed on day old chicks in the hatchery using infrared beak treatment (IRBT) by trained and supervised staff.
- All shell eggs are Lion Code and RSPCA Assured. All ingredient eggs are RSPCA, KAT, IKB or Belplume Assured.
- Male chicks must be humanely slaughtered by CAS stunning using inert gas.

Targets

- Beak trimming on laying hens will be prohibited by 2030.
- The culling of day-old male chicks will be prohibited by 2030.

Broilers

- All our fresh chicken must be certified to RSPCA Assured indoor, free range Red Tractor Enhanced Welfare or a recognised organic certification scheme.
- All ingredient chicken must be Red Tractor assured.

Targets

- In addition to meeting our existing requirements, by 2026 all our chicken will meet the following additional requirements of the Better Chicken Commitment:
 - All birds to be grown to a maximum stocking density of 30kg/m² or less.
 - All birds will come from approved slower growing breeds as defined by the Better Chicken Commitment.
 - Only controlled atmospheric stunning (CAS) using inert gas or multi-phase systems, or effective electrical stunning without live inversion will be used.

Geese

- All geese must be free range.
- The forced feeding of geese for foie gras is prohibited.
- Live plucking and live harvesting of down/feathers is prohibited.

Turkey

- All fresh indoor turkey must be provided with 10% more space than Red Tractor/ Quality British Turkey standards.
- All our free-range turkey must be RSPCA Assured or Red Tractor Free Range.
- All our organic turkey must be produced to a recognised organic certification scheme standard.

Duck

- All duck must be Red Tractor Assured.
- The force feeding of ducks for foie gras is prohibited.

Pork

- All fresh, ingredient and frozen pork must be outdoor bred, free range or organic and certified to RSPCA Assured or organic standards. All finishing pigs must be housed in deep straw bedded barns after weaning.
- All speciality continental EU sourced pork must be Red Tractor equivalent and certified to one of the following standards Genesis, Global GAP, Winter Botham Darby UCAS, Interpork, IBAW.
- For all pork (fresh, frozen, ingredient and continental) the use of sow stalls is prohibited. Short duration confinement is allowed for management purpose such as feeding and conducting artificial insemination but must be restricted to four hours or less.
- All pork (fresh, frozen, ingredient and continental) must be produced from free-farrow systems.
- All sow, boars and finishing pigs must be provided with enrichment materials that encourage rooting, pawing and chewing.
- All pork (fresh, ingredient, frozen and speciality continental) must come from group housed sows kept in groups throughout the dry period, from weaning to one week prior to farrowing.
- For our fresh, ingredient and frozen pork tail docking, teeth resection and castration is prohibited except where veterinary advice deems it strictly necessary in order to protect the animals from subsequent loss of welfare due to injury. Please refer to section 5.6 which states our requirements for non-routine mutilation procedures.

Targets

- By 2025 all speciality pork will come from pigs that are not tail docked, teeth resected or castrated.
- Routine spaying or hysterectomy of gilts and sows used for Iberico and Parma ham will be prohibited from 2027. Where this practice is currently deemed necessary, it must be carried out by a veterinary surgeon using anaesthetics and pain relief during the procedure.

Dairy

Definitions – fresh milk refers to fresh liquid milk produced by our M&S Dairy Pool farmers. Where the term ‘all’ is used below this covers all other liquid milk (i.e UHT) and milk used as an ingredient (butter, cream, yoghurt, ice cream and powdered milk) and the specified cheese supply chains.

- All fresh milk is RSPCA Assured or organic. All other UK milk and cheese must be Red Tractor Assured or for our key continental cheeses audited against our M&S Select Farm standards.
- Tethering systems for dairy cows are prohibited across all dairy supply chains.
- Tail docking is prohibited across all dairy supply chains.
- Calves within our fresh milk supply chain must have sight and touch of at least one other calf, unless isolated for disease control, and must be moved into paired or grouped housing by the 22nd day after birth.
- All our fresh milk supply comes from cows that spend on average more than 120 days at pasture annually for six hours per day or more.
- All cows within our fresh milk dairy supply chains must be provided with enrichment including cow brushes and loafing areas.
- Within our UK dairy supply chains (milk and cheese) it is prohibited to shoot healthy bull calves. It must be ensured that calves are never exported or taken straight to slaughter.
- The rearing of calves for white veal is prohibited.

Beef and Lamb

- All fresh beef and lamb are Red Tractor, FAWL QMS or Bord Bia Assured (or an equivalent national standard) or certified to a recognised organic standard.
- No calves under the age of eight months can go direct to slaughter.
- Any new build beef units post January 2022 using slatted systems must have rubber slats installed or alternative lie back areas.

Farmed Fish, Shellfish and Decapod Crustaceans

- Any new species that do not meet our welfare and Forever Fish Sourcing policy requirements will not be approved.
- M&S do not sell any live seafood except for oysters.
- All M&S farmed seafood must be Select Farm approved.
- All hatcheries, nurseries and grow out farms/ponds (marine or freshwater) must be third-party certified (for example BAP, ASC, Global GAP).
- Any third-party scheme must be GSSI recognised.
- All farmed Atlantic Salmon and Trout must be farmed to RSPCA standards. Our organic salmon must be

RSPCA Assured and be certified to a recognised organic standard (i.e., Soil Association).

- Risk assessed welfare audits are required at all factories that process live fish and shellfish (including decapod crustaceans)
- All wild caught and farmed fish and shellfish should always be handled humanely to ensure unnecessary suffering or harm does not take place.
- Where animals are landed alive work should be conducted to introduce an effective stun process prior to dispatch.
- M&S suppliers must ensure species are not subjected to mutilations which cause unnecessary pain and discomfort.
- Eye stalk ablation is not permitted in any species for supply to M&S.
- Fin clipping is not permitted.
- Sex reversal in any seafood species is not permitted.
- All species of farmed fish must be effectively stunned prior to dispatch using percussive electrical methods. The use of ice slurry as a stunning/slaughter method is not permitted in fin fish. Details on the stunning methods used for each species can be found in our annual performance report.
- All species of farmed shellfish (including decapod crustaceans) must be effectively stunned (electrical only) prior to dispatch by the end of 2025. (This does not include mussels, scallops and oysters).
- All farms must have a company policy and written statement to the effect that fish and shellfish will be reared, handled, transported and slaughtered under conditions of minimum stress, with minimal environmental impact and with full regard to animal welfare.
- All employees must have training in the RSPCA's Freedom Food Scheme in addition to basic fish health and welfare (salmon and trout only).

Further information can be found in our Seafood Sourcing Standard and our briefing on Wild Caught and Decapod Welfare.

7.0 AUDITS, CORRECTIVE ACTIONS AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

7.1 M&S Select Farm assessments

- Our direct suppliers are responsible for undertaking Select Farm assessments to the minimum specified frequency depending on species.
- Supplying farmers must pass this audit in order to be part of our supply chain.

The supplier must sign off all audit actions within agreed timescales to remain part of the M&S supply base.

- The M&S Select Farm assessor (employed or contracted to the supplier) must be trained to our requirements by our independent training providers and must be re-trained every three years.

Suppliers must upload updated details (in the prescribed format) of farms which have passed and failed, and latest audit dates, to the M&S Livestock Hub.

- Our independent auditors perform a minimum of two shadow audits and spot checks of M&S Select Farms for direct suppliers per primary processing site each year to ensure consistency with our standards. Farms must also pass these audits to remain part of our supply chain.

7.2 Welfare integrity audits

- All supplying sites that slaughter M&S Select Farm animals and our key farmed fish species must permit our independent auditors to undertake a welfare audit of primary processing facilities on an agreed frequency (dependent on species) to ensure transport, lairage and slaughter all meet our requirements.
- Primary processing facilities are assigned a rating of fail, needs improvement, good or outstanding based on the number and type of non-conformances and how they are progressing with addressing non-conformances from previous audits.
- Welfare audit findings and corrective actions are stored within our online quality management system. The supplier must sign off all audit actions within agreed timescales to remain part of the Marks & Spencer supply base.

Livestock suppliers are required to have animal handling and management systems in place that ensure the welfare requirements of M&S are met. They must ensure:

- All animals are treated and handled in a way that prevents unnecessary pain, distress and suffering at all times and in accordance with relevant legislation.
- A practical, up-to-date written policy is in place for animal welfare reflecting good practice.
- There are animal welfare procedures in place that ensure humane treatment and minimisation of stress during unloading, lairaging, stunning and slaughter and there are contingency procedures in place in the event of emergencies.

- A continuous improvement programme is in place to proactively monitor and review the welfare outcomes of all animal handling and management systems.
- Where welfare issues are identified, appropriate corrective actions are taken to prevent reoccurrence.
- There is a log of all incidents of non-compliance against animal welfare legislation and the M&S Agricultural Manager is notified of any critical welfare incidents within 48 hours of their occurrence.
- Clear, unobstructed CCTV imaging is available for all high-risk areas with records that are kept for a minimum of 90 days.
- CCTV is used as part of internal audit to demonstrate compliance and continuous improvement.
- All relevant company staff receive internally delivered training on animal welfare to ensure they have an awareness of company and customer animal welfare policies, a basic awareness of animal welfare legislation and key welfare issues and know how to report animal welfare concerns, hold the necessary licences for their job role and who are competent in the handling of animals on site and trained in the understanding of the behaviours of the relevant animal under management.
- Welfare Outcome Measures are collected and recorded at the slaughterhouse, including carcass measures such as; rejects, bruising, injuries, and liver and lung disease indicators. These must be recorded on an individual animal basis wherever possible and reported back to farmers/producers.

7.3 Non-compliance process

How non-compliance is dealt with will vary based on severity and could involve one or more of the following actions:

- Remedial action agreed with supplier
- Deadlines set for compliance
- Training and knowledge transfer
- Increase in auditing or visits by M&S team
- Suspension/removal from supply base where improvements are not made, or the breach is unacceptable

7.4 Animal welfare reviews and continuous improvement

Direct suppliers are required to have regular welfare reviews with their relevant M&S griculture/aquaculture manager to address any negative welfare trends in outcome measures or audits scores, along with reviewing any farmer activity engagements or workshops. Suppliers need to have action plans to improve performance where required and submit, when required, a KPI document to the agreed level of detail and frequency.

