

Higher welfare *Fresh Chicken*

M&S
— FOOD —

In September 2022, M&S became the first national retailer to sell 100% slower-reared, higher-welfare fresh chickens. M&S Oakham Gold chicken is RSPCA assured and builds on M&S' market-leading animal welfare standards.

"M&S was already leading the way with its Oakham production system," says Christine Jackson from 2 Sisters Food Group. "But Oakham Gold builds on this and takes it even further. By being the first major retailer to sign up to the Better Chicken Commitment, M&S made the decision to move its whole fresh offering over to a Hubbard slower growing breed and create a production system which centres on animal welfare."

Using this slower growing breed, which is fed a multi-grain diet designed to support natural growth and muscle development, has resulted in further improved health and welfare measures.

M&S Oakham Gold chickens also benefit from 20% more space when compared to the industry norm and an enhanced environment with natural light, perches and pecking objects to allow birds to express their natural behaviours.

"M&S Oakham Gold is a fantastic example of collaboration through the whole supply chain. The agricultural team, farmers and breeders worked hard to implement the new production system, taking time to understand how this would look on farm and learning how to raise slower growing birds. Without a doubt, M&S is the leader in this market space and its engagement with this production system reflects the business' long-term commitment to animal welfare."

Edinburgh farm manager, Jim Bone (pictured below), was one of the first farmers to produce Oakham Gold chicken for M&S and he is a firm believer in the slow-rearing and high-welfare approach that comes with the production system.

"Having been in the industry for 25 years, Oakham Gold is a real breath of fresh air," says Jim. "Although there are some differences to our previous production system, we've learnt a lot and it has been a really interesting opportunity. Ultimately, I believe it's the right way to do things and it's how I want to be raising chickens."

