

Leading the way *with animal welfare*

M&S
— FOOD —

M&S has set a high bar for animal welfare, integrating RSPCA's market leading farm animal welfare standards across its supply chain.

Animal welfare has long been top of the agenda for M&S and, with a wider range of RSPCA Assured products than any other retailer, its commitment is clear to see. Cliona Duffy, Head of Commercial Partnerships for RSPCA says M&S has shown its commitment to higher animal welfare through its strong actions. "M&S incorporated the RSPCA farm standards into its own standards some time ago, hence why it has such a strong reputation in this area.

"In 2017 M&S became the first retailer to sell RSPCA Assured milk and it continues to be the only retailer offering this. M&S is unique in that it has its own milk pool which has made that possible."

RSPCA standards prioritise welfare across the animal's life cycle and requires enhanced living conditions and a good quality of life, she explains. "No cages are allowed and there is a focus on increased living space and enriched living conditions so that animals are stimulated both physically and mentally and have the ability to display natural behaviours."

"The standards cover the end of the animal's life too,

including minimising travel time and detailed specifications over humane slaughter." In addition to ensuring high welfare practices, the standards also focus on responsible use of antibiotics and medical interventions meaning that such practices are used only when necessary and not preventatively.

"We know that animal welfare is a key concern for consumers, and so having the reassurance of the RSPCA Assured logo, demonstrating that M&S's suppliers are meeting the RSPCA's globally recognised standards, is really important."

Not only that, but the fact that M&S's commitment reaches across all its retail product ranges, including the Remarkable value range, and all of the products on offer in its 350 cafes, shows the company's extensive commitment to welfare. This is having a positive impact across the whole supply chain, she says.

In particular M&S's move to 100% higher welfare chicken has been 'game changing'. "It's been the biggest change in chicken farming for a generation and by setting that example M&S is demonstrating that it is possible.

"Where M&S leads, others will follow."

