5 July 2019

Compass Group commits to sourcing higher welfare chicken across Europe

The welfare of farm animals is important to Compass Group, and is a key element of our approach to responsible sourcing – one of the nine action platforms within our Group Sustainability Strategy. We continue to collaborate with partners such as Compassion in World Farming, Humane Society International and The Humane League to help us drive forward improvements in animal welfare practices across our supply chain globally. For example, all of our businesses around the world are aiming to source 100% cage-free shell eggs and liquid egg products by 2025. Currently, 91% of shell eggs that our business in the USA purchase are certified cage free.

Building on our existing animal welfare commitments, we are today announcing a commitment that will further improve the lives of millions of broiler chickens across Europe, by supporting a set of aspirational standards that centre on a transition to breeds with better welfare outcomes, increased living space, greater environmental enrichment and more humane stunning methods.

Compass Group has committed to meet the following standards set out in the European Chicken Commitment (ECC) for 100% of the chicken meat it sources for Europe, by 2026:

1. Comply with all EU animal welfare laws and regulations, regardless of the country of production.

2. Implement a maximum stocking density of 30kg/m^2 or less. Thinning is discouraged and if practiced must be limited to one thin per flock.

3. Adopt breeds that demonstrate higher welfare outcomes which meet the criteria of the RSPCA Broiler Breed Welfare Assessment Protocol.

4. Meet improved environmental standards including:
    - At least 50 lux of light, including natural light.
    - At least two metres of usable perch space, and two pecking substrates, per 1,000 birds.
    - On air quality, the maximum requirements of Annex 2.3 of the EU broiler directive, regardless of stocking density.
    - No cages or multi-tier systems.

5. Adopt controlled atmospheric stunning using inert gas or multi-phase systems, or effective electrical stunning without live inversion.

6. Demonstrate compliance with the above standards via third-party auditing and annual public reporting on progress towards this commitment.

Federico Tonetti, Compass Group Safety and Sustainability Director, said:

“The welfare of farm animals within our global supply chain is important to us and is a key element of our Sustainability strategy. As a founding member of the Global Coalition for Animal Welfare (GCAW), a global platform launched in October 2018 that unites seven major food businesses and animal welfare experts in advancing animal welfare globally, we identified improved broiler chicken welfare as a key priority for our business. Underpinning this commitment is the need for our farmers, processors and supply chain partners to mobilise as one with the wider industry, to drive these welfare improvements forward, and we look forward to working with them.”

Vicky Bond, Managing Director of The Humane League UK said:

“The Humane League is delighted to see Compass joining the ever-increasing list of companies signing up to the ECC. This commitment will benefit the lives of countless chickens throughout Compass’s supply chain, and this bold step shows that the welfare of animals raised for food is a high priority. We would encourage the rest of the foodservice sector to swiftly follow suit.”

Compassion in World Farming Director of Food Business, Dr Tracey Jones, said:

“I congratulate Compass on this next step in their animal welfare program which will secure a better life for millions of chickens in their supply. We have worked with Compass for more than a decade and I look forward to continuing our valued partnership to ensure the effective implementation of these new welfare standards.”

Notes to Editors

Compass Group PLC is the world's leading food service company, which generated annual revenues of £23.2 billion in the year to 30 September 2018. It operates in around 45 countries, employs and engages around 600,000 people and serves over 5.5 billion meals a year. The Company specialises in providing food and a range of support services across the core sectors of Business & Industry, Healthcare & Seniors, Education, Sports & Leisure and Defence, Offshore & Remote, with an established brand portfolio.

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