

Impact Report 2013

# RSPCA APPROVED FARMING SCHEME

Giving farm animals  
a better quality of life





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## RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme

The RSPCA established the Approved Farming Scheme as part of its efforts to improve the lives of Australia's farm animals and provide guidance and a trustworthy choice to consumers wanting to purchase products from higher welfare production systems.

The Approved Farming Scheme is a not-for-profit program that works on three levels, by

- establishing animal welfare standards that go beyond regulatory requirements and that are commercially viable;
- enabling differentiation and marketing of products from RSPCA Approved farms; and
- offering consumers who buy pork, chicken, turkey and eggs a higher welfare alternative.

Animal welfare standards for layer hens were launched in 1996, followed in 2001 by standards for pigs and in 2010 by standards for meat chickens and turkeys. These industries were prioritised as these are some of the most intensively farmed animals in Australia, with some of the most serious animal welfare issues occurring on the greatest scale.

This approach is fundamental to the objective of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme: that is, to improve the lives of as many farm animals as possible, today.

**The lives of more than 95.2 million farm animals have been improved since the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme started.**

Currently, the RSPCA works with 20 different producers (who between them own or contract almost 200 separate farms), resulting in 15 brands selling more than 180 RSPCA Approved product lines in almost 2,000 stores nationally.

As part of the RSPCA's efforts to raise consumer awareness about farm animal welfare issues, interest in the Scheme provides a platform for the RSPCA to build a better understanding of agricultural practices and the impact of consumer choices.

The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme encourages people who eat meat and eggs to choose higher welfare products.

The RSPCA is not opposed to the farming of animals for food or fibre, and its position reflects that of the vast majority of Australians who live a lifestyle that includes using or consuming animal products.

Animals destined for slaughter still deserve a good life and humane treatment. Regardless of any individual's personal choice, promoting higher welfare in farming is a very important way to make a positive difference to the lives of millions of farm animals, today.

Without higher welfare alternatives, consumers looking to buy animal products are more likely to purchase products from conventional systems that may offer less humane treatment and conditions for the animals involved. This could be a very poor outcome from an animal welfare point of view.



## How the Scheme works

# 70%

of Approved Farming Scheme expenditure in financial year 2012/13 related to monitoring compliance with the standards, with the remainder going to building consumer awareness and encouraging participation in the Scheme by more brands, producers and retailers.

Producers (including individuals or companies) that aspire to improve animal welfare on their farms, or wish to have their efforts to improve animal welfare recognised, can apply to join the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme and implement the RSPCA's standards.

These standards, which have been developed through a rigorous process that includes consultation with farmers themselves, are publicly available at [www.rspca.org.au](http://www.rspca.org.au).

If the producer (or a company they supply) wishes to describe or market their products as being produced according to the RSPCA's standards, they must sign an agreement with RSPCA Australia to become a Licensee.

As part of this agreement, Licensees are able to use the RSPCA's trademark-protected name and logo; but only to describe products from farms that have been assessed and approved under the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme.

Some RSPCA Approved producers only supply products for other Licensees to sell. Other producers are also Licensees themselves, because they sell RSPCA Approved products under their own brand name.

As a not-for-profit program, the Approved Farming Scheme is funded by those who participate in it. Assessment of farms as well as the management and promotion of the Scheme is funded by fees received from Licensees.

Ensuring RSPCA Approved products cannot be mixed or substituted with non-Approved products is critically important to maintaining trust in the Scheme. The RSPCA requires Licensees to have robust chain of custody systems in place throughout the supply chain. This ensures RSPCA Approved products are clearly identified and kept separate from other products, and can be reliably traced from point of sale right back through to the farm.

Farm animal welfare in Australia is guided by voluntary model codes of practice (soon to be superseded by Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines). However, these basic requirements do not go far enough to protect the animal's welfare and generally meet only the animal's most basic physical needs.

Animals can experience great frustration, distress and suffering when their behavioural needs are not addressed. Such behavioural needs may include a hen being able to stretch her wings and lay eggs in a nest, or a pig having access to straw for bedding and foraging.





## The assessment process

Since it started, the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme has improved the lives of more than **95.2 million** farm animals.

As part of a typical on-site assessment, the RSPCA Assessor will observe all areas where animals are kept as part of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme and verify compliance with the species-specific animal welfare standards. They also meet with farm managers and check farm records. Once the visit is complete, the Assessor will submit their compliance report to RSPCA Australia, where it will be reviewed. The producer is then advised of the outcome of the assessment including any corrective actions required.

RSPCA Australia employs specialised animal welfare Assessors to assess farms against the RSPCA's animal welfare standards, which go beyond what is required by law. This program is entirely independent of the state/territory RSPCA Inspectors, whose role it is to enforce existing animal protection legislation on behalf of the state/territory government.

“The RSPCA has been very vigilant in enforcing their standards and they take the RSPCA Approval process extremely seriously. They’re very involved in the ongoing certification of the farms and we believe they offer a genuine welfare endorsement for consumers to have confidence in.”

— *Freedom Farms*

The Approved Farming Scheme works with small, medium and large-scale producers.

The inclusion of such a wide variety of different types of farms in the Approved Farming Scheme means farming to higher animal welfare standards is achievable and worthwhile for almost any farming operation.

# ANIMAL WELFARE MATTERS



## Layer hens

**Nesting:** Hens have a strong instinct to lay their eggs in a nest. Hens that are denied access to a nest become restless and frustrated.

**Perching:** Perches help hens feel safe from predators so they can rest properly. Providing items such as perches is one way to enrich the hen's environment.

**Dust bathing:** Dust bathing helps hens to clean and maintain feathers, removes oil build-up, helps regulate body temperature and also helps them to control irritating mites and pests on their skin.



## Pigs

**Bedding:** Quality bedding (usually straw, rice hulls or wood shavings) is important to the welfare of pigs because it helps the animals maintain a comfortable temperature, provides a dry area for resting, and allows for foraging and rooting behaviour to be expressed.

**Space:** Pigs are intelligent, social animals and providing adequate space is vital to their welfare as it means they can exercise and express their natural behaviours. Pigs without adequate space are more likely to become bored, frustrated and aggressive.



## Meat chickens and turkeys

**Litter management:** Litter quality is critically important to the welfare of farmed meat chickens and turkeys, because wet or caked litter increases the likelihood of respiratory problems as well as skin burns and eye irritation.

Good quality litter of an appropriate material and depth allows birds to maintain body temperature, scratch, forage and dust bathe.

**Lighting:** Lighting is important to bird welfare on meat chicken and turkey farms, as adequate light encourages birds to forage and explore. By moving around, birds develop muscle and leg strength — preventing a range of health issues, including lameness.

**Activity:** Providing hay bales, perches and objects to peck at are some of the ways to enrich the environment and encourage meat chickens and turkeys to be more active and express a range of natural behaviours.



The RSPCA assesses eligible farms against its standards, and these may include indoor, outdoor or combination systems.

Good animal welfare is not achieved as the result of one aspect of farming, such as access to the outdoors or stocking density. It relies on a combination of factors including good stockmanship and management, appropriate housing and the ability to meet the animal's behavioural needs.

Where a farm is approved by the RSPCA and provides outdoor access for the animals, product from that farm may be marketed by the brand owner as 'free range' — but any such claims are entirely separate from the RSPCA Approved status.

The RSPCA has been calling for nationally consistent and legally enforceable definitions of 'free range' for each species. Until this occurs, 'free range' remains primarily a marketing term that cannot be relied upon as a guarantee of good animal welfare.

## Strong where it counts

Critical to the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme are its robust standards and rigorous assessment process.

RSPCA standards (specific to each species) provide the requirements for the rearing, housing, handling, transport and slaughter of the species. The RSPCA's standards are detailed, and reach beyond the current legal requirements to the stretching end of what is commercially viable in Australia right now.

The standards are developed based on the best available science and in consideration of RSPCA policy, current Australian and overseas leading practices, as well as input from the industry and farmers themselves.

Farms that become part of the program are assessed by specialised RSPCA Assessors up to four times a year, not including any additional unscheduled assessments. RSPCA Approved producers are also required to submit regular information detailing any on-farm issues and production data.

In addition to the improved welfare of animals raised under the Scheme, changes made to infrastructure (especially at processing plants) in order to meet the RSPCA standards, may benefit other animals as well.

*"Was so happy to see your stamp marking on approved farming meat products, makes my shopping so much quicker and easier! Thank you for all you do for animals and for making it easier for us to help."*

*— JW, via social media*



## Your animal welfare assurance checklist



Backed by the RSPCA — an established and trusted Australian animal welfare organisation



Robust animal welfare standards that address both the physical and behavioural needs of the animal



Assessments conducted by RSPCA Assessors who know and understand animal welfare



Standards for indoor, outdoor and combination systems



Animal welfare standards are challenging but achievable for both small and large producers



On-farm assessments up to four times a year — not just desktop audits or occasional farm visits



Unannounced assessments as well as regular scheduled visits



Chain of custody protocols, with product traceability right throughout the supply chain



Products are widely available in supermarkets, grocers, butchers, delis and other outlets throughout Australia



Not-for-profit structure with fees used to operate the program



# 96%

**prompted brand awareness of the RSPCA name, with the overall perception overwhelmingly positive.**

**(2012 national survey)**

The RSPCA's view is that implementing higher welfare standards, on even part of a farm, provides a better quality of life for those animals and demonstrates to farmers the benefits and viability of higher welfare farming.

Some producers operate production systems according to the RSPCA's higher welfare standards, and separately, also operate production systems using conventional practices. This is called 'parallel production'.

RSPCA Approved products only come from animals raised in accordance with the RSPCA standards, and traceability of RSPCA Approved products in a parallel production system is just as important as elsewhere.

Many brands that have products that are RSPCA Approved, also sell products that are not RSPCA Approved. That's why it's so important to look for the RSPCA's name or logo on packaging.



# IMPROVING THE LIVES OF LAYER HENS

"I especially like to see the hens able to dust bathe.  
You can tell they enjoy it, and they look happier for it."

— MMM Farms



There are approximately **16.9 million** layer hens in Australia today. More than 11 million are confined to cages.

The welfare of the caged layer hen is the most compromised of all farm animals. Therefore, higher animal welfare standards for layer hens were first delivered by the RSPCA in 1996. Since then, public awareness of animal welfare issues in cage egg production has increased dramatically, due in no small part to the RSPCA's ongoing campaign efforts.

More consumers than ever before are choosing cage-free eggs — labelled either as 'free range', 'barn laid' or 'cage free' — which is great progress for the welfare of millions of hens no longer kept in cages. However, there remains much work to be done.

The increased visibility of cage-free eggs on supermarket shelves does not mean the issue of caged hens is solved. Around two-thirds of the eggs produced in Australia still come from more than 11 million layer hens that remain confined to cages. Significantly, almost half the number of eggs produced by these caged hens are used in food services and manufacturing of products such as pasta, mayonnaise and baked goods (rather than being sold as shell eggs direct to shoppers).

As demand for cage-free alternatives has increased, the retail market has seen a rush of new brands and — combined with inconsistent or unclear definitions of barn laid and free range — it is little surprise consumers are becoming confused by this array of options. The result is a situation that disadvantages consumers, producers, and importantly, hens.

While cages are the single greatest welfare problem in egg production, and simply getting hens out of cages is a huge step in the right direction, a cage-free system isn't the only guarantee of good welfare. Good animal welfare is not achieved as the result of one aspect of farming, such as access to the outdoors or stocking density. Rather, it relies on a combination of factors including good stockmanship and management, space allowance, housing, lighting and ventilation as well as litter and enrichment — all of which are assessed as part of the RSPCA standards.

Through the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme, the RSPCA is working with an increasing number of cage-free egg producers, who recognise the need to reassure their customers and differentiate their higher welfare product from their competitors. For these producers, the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme provides a clear, reliable and trustworthy endorsement for their cage-free production system.

While consumers have shown a willingness to move from cage to cage-free eggs, efforts throughout 2014 will focus on encouraging more producers to meet the Approved Farming Scheme standards, and encouraging more consumers to demand this assurance, including in manufactured products containing eggs.

Layer hens in conventional systems are kept in wire cages with less space each than the size of an A4 piece of paper. Hens in cages cannot perch, cannot roost, cannot dust bathe, cannot forage for food and cannot satisfy their urge to lay their eggs in a nest. This inability to express their natural behaviours leads to chronic frustration and aggression.



Photo: Brenda Strong / APN

## Case study Silver Dale Eggs

"Reviewing all the certifying bodies, the RSPCA's standards were the most in keeping with our beliefs about humanely raising animals for food, and also our belief that our customers would love to know that the hens were cared for in the process." So says Dan Carney, who runs Silver Dale Eggs, a family-owned farm that became part of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme in 2010.

"One of the main benefits to us of being involved with the RSPCA is obviously the brand recognition of the Approved Farming Scheme. You don't have to explain to anyone who you are certified by, everyone knows what the RSPCA is about and hence, to have our eggs 'RSPCA Approved' is a big marketing opportunity."

"Working with the RSPCA has definitely made me think about humane food production across all agricultural industries," said Dan.

"We've come to be very fond of the humble layer hen. They're great girls to watch with all their dust bathing, bug chasing and general chookie shenanigans. It saddens us that the majority of Australian layer hens are kept in cages, deprived of space to stretch their legs and wings. Our chooks have free access to shelter, perches, grain and cosy nests in our purpose-built chook-houses."

"We receive feedback on a regular basis from our customers, complimenting us on the quality and freshness of our product. We have obtained a great number of new customers through having the RSPCA Approval, as they wished to be assured of the low stocking numbers and benefits to our hens."

— Rohde's Eggs

**In 2013, around 150,000 hens were farmed to the RSPCA standards producing almost 40 million eggs.**

**More than 690,000 hens have benefitted from better conditions under the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme standards, since 2009.**



## LAYER HENS ON RSPCA APPROVED FARMS BENEFIT FROM...

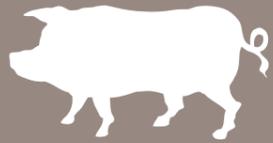
the opportunity  
to lay their eggs  
in a nest

perches and  
environmental  
enrichment

no cages or  
forced moulting

dry and friable  
litter for foraging  
and dust bathing





# IMPROVING THE LIVES OF PIGS

"We've been involved with the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme for a long time now and it is a central part of the way we operate. It is our belief, by adhering to the Five Freedoms and implementing a system which allows our pigs to exhibit natural behaviour at all times, we are successful in producing a supreme article. Wallows allow the pigs to cool themselves and protect against the sun and the high level of animal husbandry practices coupled with a stress free environment, ensure all the pigs are 'as happy as...!'"

— Gooralie



Australia produces around **4.73 million** pigs each year, from a sow herd of around 261,000.

The introduction of RSPCA standards for pigs in 2001 reflected the need to address long-held concerns by the RSPCA over animal welfare issues in intensive pig farming.

While overall consumer awareness of farm animal welfare issues is at an all-time high, RSPCA research conducted in 2012 found that compared to chicken, turkey and eggs, fewer shoppers were looking to buy higher welfare pork. This shopping preference may be attributed to the wider availability and promotion of 'sow stall-free' pork and a mistaken belief among consumers that animal welfare issues in pig farming have been, for the most part, resolved. This is far from true.

Animal welfare organisations like the RSPCA have made great progress over the past decade building public awareness of the issues associated with the use of sow stalls in conventional pig farming.

In addition to time spent confined to sow stalls — now called 'mating stalls', where a sow may be confined for up to five days post mating — there remain many other issues associated with conventional pig production that impact animal welfare. These include the ongoing use of farrowing crates and keeping pigs in a barren environment, as well as painful husbandry procedures such as tail docking and teeth clipping.

'Sow stall-free' production will most likely become a new minimum standard for industry, and as consumer education also grows, there's little doubt their expectations for better welfare for pigs will continue to rise.

Producers and retailers will be subsequently driven to find ways to differentiate products that are produced according to higher animal welfare standards that are more wide-ranging, and which have a focus on providing for the pigs' natural behaviours — such as the RSPCA's Approved Farming Scheme standards.

Currently under the Scheme, the RSPCA works with farms where all breeding pigs are outside and grower pigs are housed in large straw-filled shelters where, in some cases, they also have access to the outdoors, or they are outdoors in paddocks with huts for shelter.

In time, the Scheme may also encompass enhanced indoor systems that cater for the behavioural and physical needs of both breeding and grower pigs.

The RSPCA's efforts will continue to focus on raising awareness of the breadth of animal welfare issues in conventional pig farming, and ensuring consumers understand there is still work to be done. It will also focus on ensuring consumers look for RSPCA Approved pork and building market demand for pigs farmed to the RSPCA's standards.

In conventional systems, breeding pigs (sows) may be kept in sow stalls and farrowing crates that are so narrow that the sow cannot turn around and can only take one small step forward or back. Grower pigs may be confined to barren concrete pens. With no access to straw and without being able to forage for food or wallow in the mud, these highly inquisitive animals become bored and frustrated. Piglets' teeth are clipped and their tails docked to prevent biting injuries. The inability to express natural behaviours and the intense confinement of sows means that pigs in many conventional systems suffer chronic frustration.



## Case study Linley Valley Pork

"The RSPCA's Approved Farming Scheme appealed to us due to the fantastic reputation the RSPCA has for standards in farm animal care," said Linley Valley Pork Product Development and Sales Manager John Thompson.

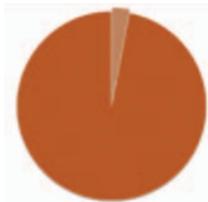
Since some of its pig farms became part of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme in 2011, Linley Valley Pork has benefited from the RSPCA's efforts to ensure its standards reflect the latest knowledge.

"Being involved with the RSPCA allows us to maintain a high standard and keeps us up to date with changes and developments in animal welfare," said John.

"Additionally, the RSPCA's drive to continually improve its standards by working alongside farmers and producers was also appealing."

John also said the RSPCA Approved status has been well received by the company's staff as well as the farmers.

"The response from our farmers has been great, as they are eager to adopt practices that improve the lives of the animals they work with every day."



In 2013, around 158,000 pigs were raised on RSPCA Approved farms, or just over 3% of the more than 4.73 million pigs raised on Australian farms in total.

"We always monitor stocking density closely, but we're seeing a lot less aggression and fewer injuries on the animals now. And that's a good thing from the stockperson's point of view as well."

— Plantagenet Pork

An estimated **642,000** pigs have benefitted from being reared under RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme standards, since 2009.



## PIGS ON RSPCA APPROVED FARMS BENEFIT FROM...

no confinement in sow stalls or farrowing crates

bedding and environmental enrichment

no teeth clipping, tail docking or surgical castration





# IMPROVING THE LIVES OF MEAT CHICKENS

"All growers and farm workers have remarked on the overall improvement to the wellbeing of the chickens in our care and with the improved litter condition, we have a much happier catching crew."

— Nichol's Poultry



Australia produces over **550 million** meat chickens each year, and on average, Australians now consume around **44kg** of chicken each, per year.

The meat chicken category is the greatest success story of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme to date, and the one in which the RSPCA expects to see the most growth in 2014.

Record high consumption of chicken in Australia means farming large volumes of birds to meet this demand, and as a result the welfare of farmed chickens is seriously compromised.

The introduction of the category to the Approved Farming Scheme in 2010, along with efforts to educate consumers by the RSPCA, means consumers are more aware than ever before of animal welfare issues in chicken farming.

As more producers join the Scheme, the number of chickens raised on RSPCA Approved farms has grown each year, from just over 8.7 million in 2012 to over 72 million in 2013.

This was due substantially to a decision by Coles Supermarkets to use RSPCA Approved chicken in all its own brand of fresh chicken from January 2014.

An October 2013 statement issued by Woolworths also indicated it would move to higher welfare fresh chicken.

These landmark decisions by Australia's two major supermarket chains, in response to consumer interest and demand, will improve the lives of tens of millions of meat chickens this year and hundreds of millions in the future.

This unprecedented level of consumer interest in the welfare of farmed chickens is also likely to encourage new brands to join the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme.

Importantly, this also means the meat chicken category of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme stands as a leading example of the capacity for a higher welfare program to change farming practices across a large part of an industry.

Meat chickens in conventional systems may suffer from: overcrowding, respiratory problems, eye irritations from ammonia in the air, and skin burns from wet litter. Muscle and bone problems may result from being bred to grow too quickly and from a lack of movement due to lighting levels being kept very low. Birds may experience chronic frustration from being unable to express natural behaviours such as perching and dust bathing.



## Case study Mad Mex

"We have had an overwhelmingly positive response from our customers as well as our staff, which is a credit to the work the RSPCA does in educating consumers about animal welfare issues," said Mad Mex founder Clovis Young.

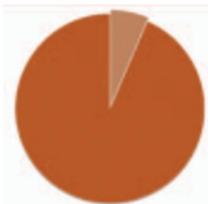
In 2013, Mad Mex became the first national quick-service-restaurant chain to introduce RSPCA Approved chicken — starting with all NSW and ACT stores in March, and expanding to all 39 stores nationally in July.

"The decision to introduce RSPCA Approved chicken at Mad Mex was a simple choice for us — it's the right thing to do," said Clovis.

Clovis also said he hopes the success of Mad Mex's transition to higher welfare chicken products would inspire and motivate other businesses as well as consumers.

"The RSPCA program enables Mad Mex to deliver higher welfare chicken to Australians who want fresh, healthy and ethically sourced food, whilst showing how making responsible supply chain decisions can result in an ethical business model," he said.

"By increasing consumer demand we can drive real change and provide opportunities for organisations like the RSPCA to work with brands, such as Freedom Farms, and create a higher welfare food system."



In 2013, over 78 million meat chickens were raised on RSPCA Approved farms, or around 13% of the more than 550 million meat chickens raised on Australian farms in total.

"Since joining the Scheme, our RSPCA birds have seen feed conversion rates improved, mortalities reduced and we are seeing less leg problems as a direct result of providing birds with more space and the opportunity to perch."

— Hazeldene's



An estimated **93 million** meat chickens have benefitted from better conditions under the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme standards, since 2010.



## MEAT CHICKENS ON RSPCA APPROVED FARMS BENEFIT FROM...

good lighting to encourage foraging and activity

period of full darkness to allow proper rest

stronger muscles and bones from more movement

perches and environmental enrichment

dry and friable litter for foraging and dust bathing





# IMPROVING THE LIVES OF TURKEYS

“We’ve put in a lot of shade-cover and we’ve planted a whole lot of trees, so the birds have shade and things to climb on. The birds do love to perch, so inside the sheds we’ve got perching boxes, we’ve put down things for them to play with ... This is taking it to a new level, where there is a benchmark that you aim for, and you get there.”

— *Baiada*



Around **3.5 million** farmed turkeys were processed in Australia in 2013.

Turkey farmers have had the opportunity to join the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme since standards were introduced in 2010.

Turkey is a category that is growing rapidly, with the number of turkeys raised to RSPCA standards increasing from 37,000 in 2011 to over 225,000 in 2013.

Industry-driven promotion of turkey meat as a lean and healthy alternative as well as development of additional product lines (outside the traditional large roast) is contributing to a steady increase in turkey consumption.

As the popularity of turkey products increases outside festive occasions, the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme has an opportunity to ensure this increased take-up is matched by consumer demand for product raised to higher animal welfare standards. It also provides the chance to increase consumer understanding that good animal welfare is not achieved as the result of one aspect of farming, such as access to the outdoors or stocking density. Rather, it relies on a combination of factors including good stockmanship and management, space allowance, housing, lighting and ventilation as well as litter and enrichment — all of which are assessed as part of the RSPCA standards.

Turkeys in conventional systems may suffer from: overcrowding, respiratory problems, eye irritations from ammonia in the air, and skin burns from wet litter. Muscle and bone problems may result from being bred to grow too quickly and from a lack of movement due to lighting levels being kept very low. Birds may experience chronic frustration from being unable to express natural behaviours such as perching and dust bathing. Husbandry procedures such as toe trimming are routine in conventional turkey production.



## Case study Coles Supermarkets

The RSPCA has been working with Coles Supermarkets and its suppliers since 2010 to introduce higher welfare turkey across the Coles Finest range, during the peak Christmas season.

General Manager - Responsible Sourcing, Quality and Product Technology at Coles, Jackie Healing, said the move to offer RSPCA Approved turkey was made in response to demand from customers.

"The RSPCA is a really trusted organisation, by both us and the customers. They've got some really great standards for animal welfare, so we chose to partner with them," said Jackie.

And a recent evaluation by Coles has shown that Australians have responded positively to the option.

"We've seen strong sales and customer satisfaction is also high so that's great news from our point of view, for customers and for producers," said product technologist Dr Nicholas Hover.

"Importantly, sales trends are looking very promising, especially for value-added products, so that's a good indication that we can expect to see strong growth in this category."



In 2013, over 225,000 turkeys were raised on RSPCA Approved farms, or almost 6.5% of the 3.5 million turkeys raised on Australian farms in total.

An estimated **547,000** turkeys have benefitted from better conditions under the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme standards, since 2010.

"We joined the Approved Farming Scheme because we wanted someone independent of industry. The RSPCA is a highly credible organisation focused on welfare with a reputation that our consumers trust."

— Mt Barker Chicken and Turkey

coles Finest



## TURKEYS ON RSPCA APPROVED FARMS BENEFIT FROM...

good lighting to encourage foraging and activity

period of full darkness to allow proper rest

perches and environmental enrichment

no toe trimming

dry and friable litter for foraging and dust bathing





# SPREADING THE WORD

"Thanks so much for your email. This information is really fantastic. I will definitely read the information you have linked and I will speak to our local butcher about the practices their producers use, armed with this new knowledge ... It's great to see RSPCA taking a lead on animal welfare in the farming industry. I think RSPCA has much more credibility than [other animal welfare group] in this sense ... and is definitely an organisation widely trusted ... Many thanks for lending so much of your time to respond. The work you do is so important."

— JN, via e-mail



RSPCA Australia has over **170,000** fans on Facebook, its Twitter profile is followed by 15,000 people, and 115,000 people subscribe to its e-news.

As part of the RSPCA's efforts to raise consumer awareness about farm animal welfare issues, interest in the Scheme provides a platform upon which the RSPCA can build a better understanding of agricultural practices and the impact of the consumer's choices. However, it is just one piece of the puzzle, with these efforts supported by the RSPCA's wider campaigns and communications, policy development and marketing activities.

Throughout the year, the RSPCA works to present the humane food message at events, conferences and exhibitions as well as online and through various media channels.

In 2013, RSPCA Australia worked with the RSPCA's state-based education teams to participate in events such as the Better Homes and Gardens Live! Sydney expo, as well as the Taste of Sydney food festival, each of which is attended by tens of thousands of people.

Representatives from the RSPCA also spoke about the Approved Farming Scheme and the importance of farm animal welfare at various industry and educational conferences and meetings. In addition to these more structured events, the RSPCA regularly meets with individual producers, industry bodies, large and small retailers, and other businesses and organisations.

Information about the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme was shared through industry and consumer magazines and newsletters, as well as national and regional newspapers, and other publications.

Since its launch in 2010, the Shop Humane website [www.shophumane.org.au](http://www.shophumane.org.au) has grown to become a valuable education portal, in addition to its primary purpose as a directory of RSPCA Approved products and where to buy them.

The Shop Humane site complements the RSPCA's main website with clear, straightforward and useful information about the farming of layer hens, pigs, meat chickens and turkeys in Australia. Infographics showing the lifecycle of species under the Scheme and different production methods, as well as facts about farming and 'frequently asked questions' are among the resources most popular with visitors.

# THANK YOU

Improved farm animal welfare has been delivered by committed farmers, retailers and growing consumer demand.

We thank you all for your continued support of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme – giving farm animals a better quality of life.



**RSPCA Australia**  
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