



Empowering choice:

how and why to market higher welfare in hospitality and foodservice



CERTIFICATION MARK

FOOTPRINT
INTELLIGENCE

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Tell great stories

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Bring customers (and clients) on board

Empower employees

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Foreword

People in the UK care about animal welfare. And they want transparency and assurance that the values they care about can be reflected in their out of home food choices. At RSPCA Assured, our mission is to make higher welfare the benchmark, not the exception, in the UK's food industry. This report delves into the crucial role of clear, compelling communication in achieving this goal for the hospitality and foodservice sector.

This is not just as a driver for widespread welfare improvements across the industry, but also as a tool for operators to build brand value with their customers – most of whom care keenly about animal welfare.

By providing practical strategies and insights, this report offers a roadmap for hospitality and foodservice operators to communicate their welfare standards meaningfully. We know that many businesses face challenges around the technical language of welfare standards, and fear of “welfare-washing” can hold back good work. The solution is simple yet powerful: share the journey transparently, engaging customers in ways that inform and inspire them without overwhelming them with jargon.

RSPCA Assured believes that high-welfare marketing isn't simply about selling a product – it's about setting a standard. It's an opportunity for every restaurant, caterer, and food service provider to become part of a growing movement toward a food system that values integrity, animal care, and ethical progress.

The steps outlined in this report make that possible, helping businesses align with the values of today's conscious consumers and shape a future where ethical food choices are accessible to all.

We thank all contributors and industry leaders who generously shared their time, experiences, and ideas. By working together, we can ensure that animal welfare remains a priority.

Richard Bowcott

chief marketing officer
RSPCA Assured

Executive summary: your guide to higher welfare marketing success

Ask most hospitality and foodservice insiders what marketing they're doing around animal welfare and most likely you'll have a tumbleweed moment. The reality is too few people are even talking about the (often considerable) commitments they have made, finding the topic too thorny and the business more preoccupied with issues such as carbon reduction or sustainable diets.

But operators who don't communicate are missing out on a massive opportunity: to attract and retain customers who care (as well as clients and staff members) but also to improve the wellbeing of farm animals.

This report addresses the challenges and opportunities for marketing higher welfare products within the UK's hospitality and foodservice industry. With consumer awareness and concern for animal welfare riding high (our research found that 88% of UK adults say they care about animal welfare), this report highlights strategies for businesses to effectively communicate their commitments.

Based on original consumer polling, industry interviews, in-depth research, behavioural insights, and case studies, it provides actionable recommendations on how operators can use storytelling, social proof, certifications, staff engagement and industry collaboration to market higher welfare practices in a meaningful,

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impactful way. By embracing these approaches, the industry has the potential not only to meet consumer expectations but to lead the movement towards ethically conscious animal products.

From leveraging social media to sharing personal farm stories, businesses are encouraged to incorporate their animal welfare values into every touchpoint, creating a lasting connection with

customers. Companies such as Wahaca and Compass Group UK & Ireland illustrate how effective welfare messaging builds customer loyalty and strengthens brand integrity. This report outlines how adopting these practices can help brands navigate the complexities of compliance, maintain transparency, and ultimately build a more ethical, trusted, and profitable business model.

At a glance: key actions for higher welfare marketing success:

1 Tell great stories:

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Our survey found that 40% more would choose a dish which had a welfare claim over one that didn't, and that twice as many UK adults - 67% versus 33% - would choose a dish with a benefit-led, short, simple and impactful descriptor over a straight-forward welfare claim. So, use storytelling that connects emotionally with customers, making complex welfare topics more relatable and engaging.

- **Understand your audience:** Tell the right message, to the right person, at the right time, through the right channel.
- **Be human and sincere:** Be authentic to foster trust, focusing on personal stories from suppliers, farmers, or chefs.
- **Think short, simple, impactful and authentic:** Create concise, messaging that resonates, and which helps customers see how their choices make an actual difference.

- **Demonstrate benefit:** Link welfare practices to direct customer benefits, such as improved flavour and product quality.
- **Leverage social norms and harness social pressure:** Encourage welfare-focused dining by making it a socially supported, norm-setting experience for customers.
- **Say: I will if you will:** Share what you're doing and invite customers to act too.
- **Focus on personal farm and fishery stories:** This will build a stronger, more relatable narrative around welfare practices.
- **Run regular farm visits:** Engage both staff and customers through on-site visits, bringing the issue to life and deepening their connection with suppliers and welfare commitments.
- **Use visual storytelling:** Enhance marketing with imagery that genuinely reflects welfare standards, avoiding misleading or overly polished visuals.
- **Major on social media:** It's perfect for creating story-led, engaging, interactive content that brings provenance to life.
- **Engage with influencers and celebrities:** Advocates can authentically expand the brand's reach and welfare message.
- **Harness the media, including awards:** Use these platforms to reach broader audiences, reinforce and share successes and build credibility.
- **Use all channels and tie everything together:** Integrate welfare messaging consistently across all customer touchpoints, from in-store materials to digital channels.
- **Highlight health benefits:** Emphasise the added nutritional value of ethical meat options, backed by credible testing data when possible.

2 Communicate compliantly:



Our survey found that only 34% of consumers trust restaurant and food-to-go businesses welfare claims. So, follow the Green Claims Code guidance to ensure marketing is transparent, accurate, and well-supported.

- **Gather robust data:** Use reliable, evidence-based data to support substantial claims and build consumer trust.
- **Be aware: the bigger you are, the higher the bar:** Large businesses must uphold higher standards of evidence for substantiation.
- **Use it carefully and third-party data might be acceptable:** Consider credible third-party research as support, provided there are no significant differences in products.
- **Harness quality accreditation to support compliance:** Rely on recognised certifications to validate higher welfare claims and add credibility.
- **Be prepared: compliance will get even more rigorous:** Anticipate stricter legislation by 2028.

3 Bring customers (and Clients) on board:



Nearly half of those we polled said they want to eat higher welfare products when eating out, so use gamification, eco-loyalty programs, and interactive formats to enable and encourage higher welfare choices among diners.

- **Find innovative ways to engage:** Incorporate unique engagement techniques, like tabletop quizzes or customer ballot bins, to spark conversations around welfare.
- **Harness customer testimonials:** Collect and display customer feedback to build social proof and encourage further engagement.
- **Market on taste and quality:** Emphasise that higher welfare products are also high-quality, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- **Run supplier pop-ups:** Host supplier events that allow customers to meet producers, learn about welfare practices firsthand, and sample products.
- **Narrate the challenges:** Transparently communicate the brand's journey toward meeting full welfare standards, acknowledging challenges as steps in progress.
- **Be open about cost implications:** Explain the pricing considerations around higher welfare products and offer creative solutions like the use of different cuts to keep costs accessible.

4 Empower employees:

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likes a place to eat more if their server can tell them how the food is responsibly sourced

Equip staff to become brand ambassadors by educating them about welfare standards and sharing key welfare messages with customers: around a third of those we polled said hearing provenance stories from staff made them like brands more.

- **Create behind-the-scenes shorts:** Use videos featuring employees and suppliers to share welfare efforts authentically with customers.
 - **Use competitions and league tables:** Incentivise welfare-focused efforts among staff by recognizing top performers, creating a shared mission around welfare.
 - **Take staff on farm visits:** Provide firsthand exposure to farm conditions to enrich staff understanding and support meaningful conversations with customers.
 - **Get sustainability and comms teams communicating:** Facilitate cross-team collaboration to capture and share welfare stories accurately and impactfully.
 - **Capture chef passion:** Highlight chefs' experiences with higher welfare products, as they play a unique role in communicating the value of ethical sourcing.
- **Incorporate higher welfare into inductions:** Include memorable facts about welfare commitments in training programs to reinforce understanding.
 - **Display welfare commitments and key facts in kitchens:** Use visible kitchen displays to keep staff aligned with welfare standards and values.
 - **Provide training for frontline staff:** Empower frontline employees with in-depth welfare knowledge, supporting informed conversations with customers.
 - **Include certification information in recipe management systems:** Ensure easy access to welfare certifications within recipe systems for staff and customer reference.
 - **Design a visual identifier for menus:** Highlight higher welfare options on menus to guide customer choices intuitively.
 - **Task staff to create content:** Encourage employees to create videos showcasing welfare-focused products and stories to build a sense of ownership.

5 Collaborate across the supply chain:

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Consumers respond well to supplier-led information, with menus and venue descriptions which include farmer references two to three times as popular. So work with suppliers, trade bodies, and producers to address sourcing challenges and promote higher welfare industry-wide.

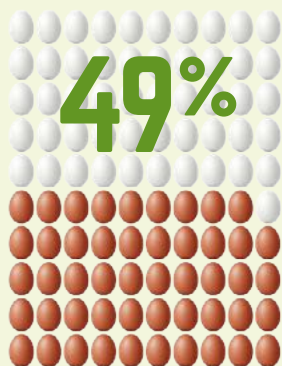
- **Improve supply side communication:** Help operators promote higher welfare product by identifying relevant products and sharing stories and access to farmers.
- **Harness third-party endorsements:** Partner with reputable welfare certifications to lend credibility to claims, ensuring customer trust and transparency.
- **Enlist certifier's help:** They have data, manpower and resources ready to help.
- **Support certification bodies in reinforcing their core proposition:** Help certification bodies clearly communicate the value of welfare standards, reducing “label fatigue” among consumers.
- **Adopt a shared language:** Align industry messaging on welfare improvements to foster consumer understanding and appreciation across brands.

Meeting demand through meaningful marketing

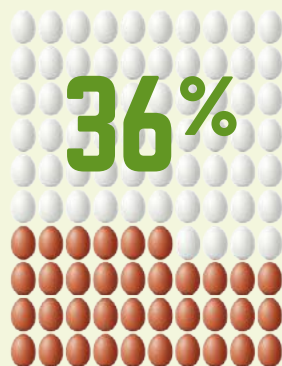


EMPOWERING CHOICE: HOW AND WHY TO MARKET HIGHER WELFARE
IN HOSPITALITY AND FOODSERVICE

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I want to eat higher welfare animal products (such as meat, eggs, milk & fish) when eating out



I want to eat higher welfare products when eating out but I don't know who serves it

“Absolutely. Higher welfare products taste better. You can tell just by looking at them. The quality is evident to everyone, from chefs to the everyday consumer.”

Ryan Holmes, B&I culinary director, Compass Group UK & Ireland

Consumers care about animal welfare, but are often confused as to how to act on this concern when deciding where to eat out. In the polling conducted for this report, 49% of UK adults said they wanted to eat higher welfare animal products, such as meat, eggs, dairy products and fish, when eating out.

But identifying them is clearly an issue: 36% reported that they didn't know who actually serves higher welfare products. Choosing venues that align with their values is difficult because few hospitality and foodservice operators actively market welfare credentials.

Hospitality and foodservice operators, meanwhile, face challenges in communicating their welfare efforts. One issue is the “ick factor” concerning meat, as many consumers are uncomfortable being reminded that part of their meal was once alive. This makes it challenging to market any welfare benefits enjoyed by the animal before it reached the plate.

Cost or supply constraints may also prevent operators from sourcing products from well-cared

for animals. Additionally, as the industry gradually adopts higher standards, such as the transformative shifts required for commitments like the Better Chicken Commitment, some operators may still be working toward their full welfare goals. These obstacles make it hard to condense commitments, progress, and success into clear, catchy marketing messages that can cut through in busy out of home environments. The technical complexity of welfare metrics and species-specific requirements further complicates translating these into accessible language for a broad, often price-sensitive, customer base.

There's also the risk of making claims that could be perceived as misleading or “welfare-washing,” especially with tightening advertising and marketing standards.

These challenges make it harder to advance welfare standards when businesses feel uncertain about how to effectively communicate their work in this area, so don't see the benefits of investments





The confused consumer

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75% of UK adults would choose a place to eat with a tagline that included a welfare claim over one that didn't

in purchasing (typically pricier) higher welfare product, and going to the effort of working out how to market it.

But marketers are amazing at distilling complicated information into pithy punch lines that make us want to buy things, do things and be things. It's time to harness this amazing creativity to drive improvements for farmed animals.

This report addresses many of these obstacles. Drawing

on original consumer polling of UK adults, dozens of in-depth interviews with industry experts, behavioural psychology, marketing expertise, and industry insight, it outlines how to better communicate and market higher welfare traits. It also builds the business case for adopting higher welfare products to help consumers identify and support these options in hospitality and foodservice settings.

“Marketing higher-welfare products isn't just about promoting ethical choices; it's a chance for hospitality and foodservice to lead the way in creating a food system that values quality, transparency, and trust – ultimately enriching the dining experience for customers and strengthening loyalty to the brand.”

Richard Bowcott, chief marketing officer, RSPCA Assured

Many UK consumers assume that traditional practices for farmed animals and fish already align with higher welfare standards. This is largely because imagery in agricultural marketing and narratives in civil society (such as children's story books) often feature idyllic green fields and content animals, living natural-looking existences with freedom and room to roam and express their natural behaviours. This can give a false impression of widespread higher welfare, sustainable farming, when sadly the reality for many farmed creatures can be different, with cramped conditions and their ability to express natural behaviours curtailed.

“Without method of production labelling, the current situation is very misleading for shoppers and penalises higher welfare farmers,” observes Jo Cooper, head of

marketing communications, food business, Compassion in World Farming. “The most intensive and lowest welfare products are often labelled with deliberately misleading terms such as ‘farm fresh’ ‘all natural’ etc., and use imagery that suggests outdoor rearing for the animals. Consumers want to buy higher welfare products but cannot reliably identify them, while dedicated higher welfare farmers often don’t get the market demand because labelling is misleading.”

Research conducted for Better chicken, better business highlights the impacts of these misconceptions:

- More than a third of people think Red Tractor standards are higher than RSPCA Assured. (They are not)
- 28% believe all accreditations have equally high standards. (They do not)
- Only 23% correctly identified RSPCA Assured as the accreditation listed with the highest welfare standards.



Welfare matters – ethically and economically

Our research shows that 88% of UK adults care about farm animal welfare. This finding aligns with 2024 research by the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, which found that 84% of UK consumers consider animal welfare an important factor when purchasing animal products.¹

And the stats just keep coming.

- 9 out of 10 (89%) EU citizens – around 400 million people – believe animals should not be farmed in individual cages, according to the EU Commission’s own Eurobarometer survey.²
- 9 out of 10 people want better protection for farmed fish according to Compassion in World Farming Research.³
- The majority of UK consumers (98%) value animal welfare and most (72 to 84%)⁴ state they are willing to pay more (around 20 to 30% more)⁵ for food from higher welfare production systems, according to official EU research.

These results reflect a broader trend: consumers not only prioritise animal welfare but also seek clearer information on production methods and welfare standards across a range of animal products, including beef, pork, and dairy.⁶

Effectively communicating the added benefits of higher welfare systems requires clearer distinctions

and public education around farming methods and certification systems to reshape consumer understanding.

Moreover, animal welfare standards are complex and technical, making them difficult for consumers to understand. Diners are unlikely to be interested in or understand details about stocking densities, enrichment, or antibiotic use in menus or restaurant environments.

Isabel Martin, acting head of projects and consultancy at The Sustainable Restaurant Association, notes that all animal products on a menu may not meet the same level of welfare standards. Hospitality and foodservice operators therefore worry that alerting customers to this could lead to complaints about the conventional products still on the menu. Consumers also often assume that standards are already higher than they are, so announcements which confirm a new commitment to something the consumer thought an operator was already doing, can cause concern that sharing new welfare commitments or milestones could actually damage brand value rather than build it.

Using chicken as an example, brands adhering to the Better Chicken Commitment (BCC) need to meet six key areas of improvement. Some elements, like increased enrichment and natural

“There is an urgent need for transparency and honesty in conventional animal production to reduce consumer confusion about certification schemes.”

Nikki Yoxall, technical director, Pasture for Life

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light, are simpler to implement and communicate (e.g., “Our chickens get more things to play with and more natural light!”), and our polls suggest these elements are worth highlighting.

However, other aspects, such as breed changes and stocking density adjustments, require broader industry collaboration to improve production practices, increase availability and lower costs for welfare-compliant products. They are harder to communicate.

Communicating an operator’s journey to improve standards is challenging, which is why such details are often reserved

for corporate websites and ESG reporting. However, without visibility in restaurants, on social media, or in wider marketing, consumers cannot support businesses working toward higher welfare, even if they haven’t yet met all standards.

Consequently, consumers may not understand the difference between, say, a local chicken shop that buys based solely on price and a large chain like KFC, which is actively working to meet BCC goals.

But how can citizens act on their desire to consume higher welfare products when it is time consuming and laborious to sift through

websites and ESG reporting to find out which operators supply higher welfare products?

There are strong indications that consumers will use welfare information as part of their decision making criteria when choosing a venue if information is available. We asked UK adults to choose between takeaway options on the basis of their tag lines: 75% chose one with a tagline that included a welfare claim.

With power, comes responsibility

“We need to give people inspiration. We need to give them actionable advice. We need to prompt more conversations.”

Juliet Kinsman, travel writer, sustainability expert and broadcaster

Brands also recognise that higher welfare is about more than doing the right thing; it offers tangible business benefits. By showcasing their leadership and commitment to animal welfare, brands can build trust, loyalty, and competitive edge in the foodservice industry, aligning with sustainability and social impact goals.

The hospitality industry is uniquely positioned to influence broader consumer habits. As Juliane Caillouette Noble, managing

director, The Sustainable Restaurant Association, noted at a recent working group on sustainable communications, “We are a human-based industry that gets to tell stories. We can inspire change in our customers. We can have influence beyond the doors of our restaurants, because people take their experiences in restaurants and bring them home with them. We can change their minds and their choices as consumers in other parts of their eating lives.”

Restaurants can showcase high-welfare practices through social media, in-store campaigns, and video content, setting industry standards and making ethical dining choices more mainstream. Brands can – and must – inspire positive shifts in consumer habits and establish high-welfare animal products as a preferred choice.

Committed, and communicating

One of the few restaurants which has made bold commitments and who is publicising them is Mexican restaurant business Wahaca. The UK-based brand has made a strong commitment to sourcing higher welfare meat and animal products, even if it comes at a higher cost. Over 50% of their menu has also shifted to vegetarian or plant-based options to reduce reliance on meat.

Wahaca sources free-range chicken and pork and uses Grassroots beef from a small cooperative of farmers who prioritise animal welfare and environmental impact. They work closely with a trusted network of suppliers to ensure high welfare standards are maintained. To communicate this without stretching marketing budgets, Wahaca focuses on training staff and clear menu signposting.

Internal communication efforts:

- Wahaca offers a thorough onboarding and training program for all new staff, including a welcome session, a “Food Bible” handbook on ingredient provenance and welfare standards, and interactive training modules.
- Chefs and managers participate in farm visits to witness farming practices firsthand and gain pride in the quality of the suppliers.
- Leadership frequently reinforces the importance of ethical sourcing and higher welfare across the organisation.

External communication efforts:

- Wahaca clearly labels its pork and chicken as free-range, and its beef as Grassroots on menus, both in-restaurant and online, ensuring transparency with customers.
- They are exploring ways to share supplier stories and farm visit experiences through social media and QR codes for more in-depth context.
- Mindful of regulatory guidance on sustainability claims, Wahaca aims to authentically showcase the quality and care behind their ingredients.

Marketing for impact

1. Tell great stories
2. Communicate compliantly
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EMPOWERING CHOICE: HOW AND WHY TO MARKET HIGHER WELFARE
IN HOSPITALITY AND FOODSERVICE

1 Tell great stories

A photograph of a restaurant interior with a hanging sign. The sign is white with green text that reads "TOP QUALITY BEEF" and "Reared with care" below it. The restaurant has wooden tables and chairs, and a bar area in the background with shelves of bottles and warm lighting.

**TOP
QUALITY
BEEF**

Reared with care

1. Tell great stories

“We are much more likely to remember and understand something if it is told us as a story. Stories need to be simple. Powerful. And relatable. That is our role.”

Juliet Kinsman, travel writer, sustainability expert and broadcaster

Storytelling, using relatable narratives which appeal to people’s values and emotions, and which present personal solutions, is just as important as scientific facts. So argues sustainable behavioural change expert Solitaire Townsend, co-founder and chief solutionist at Futerra. Both the “head” and the “heart” are needed to drive widespread action.

Research shows that positive storytelling is more likely to drive sustainable behaviour change than focusing on negatives,⁷ such as the poor living conditions experienced by many farmed animals and fish. Positive animal welfare stories – for example, those that emphasise health and nutrition benefits, taste, heritage, and provenance – are much more likely to engage consumers.

Understand your audience

The starting point in marketing is to really understand your audience, according to RSPCA Assured’s chief marketing officer Richard Bowcott.



Credit: Grassroots Farming Ltd

“What do they believe? How do they think? How do they act? Use this to engage with them not just at the point of sale,” says Richard, “but through the whole life cycle of marketing. Stories are a really great way to communicate, but you need to tell the right message, to the right person, at the right time, through the right channel.”

Be human and sincere

Human-centric, relatable stories engage customers. According to Juliet Kinsman, Travel writer, sustainability expert and broadcaster, “We should be fostering compassion, not just consumerism, it’s citizenship over capitalism. Although companies drive most decisions, we must remember that they are run by real people. Authenticity is crucial because customers can see through insincerity – they value genuine, human communication.”

So think: farmer stories, chef’s experiences, and customer testimonials. (With more on each of these topics to come).

Think short, simple, impactful and authentic

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If you had to choose one, which of these two pork dishes would you choose?

Amazing taste, higher welfare, same great price **67%**

Made with higher welfare pork **33%**

The goal is to craft short, impactful statements that resonate with consumers, and overcome any barriers (such as concerns over

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Which dish would you choose from the following options?

Free-range roast chicken	62%
Roast chicken	38%

price – a major barrier for citizens purchasing higher welfare products). Phrases like “free-range” or “amazing taste, higher welfare, same great price” can communicate benefits concisely. In our poll, just adding the word free-range in front of roast chicken created a 40% uplift in people choosing that option. And, as discussed in *Be open about cost implications*, even when we made the free-range option cost 10% more, 59% still chose it (compared to 62% when there was no price uplift).

Messages should also be relatable, demonstrating how your products help consumers make an actual difference through their choices.

“Boil messages down to short, impactful statements while providing substantiation,” advises Susan Wickes, managing director, jellybean, a specialist food and drink marketing agency.

Demonstrate benefit

Lucy Shea, Group CEO, Futerra, says effective communications

link consumer benefits directly to sustainability efforts. Ask: what is it in the work that you’re doing which can give a consumer benefit? Link the “we” or collective benefit, for the environment say, or for more humane treatments of animals, with a personal, “me” benefit?.

When we tested the tag line “amazing taste, higher welfare, same great price” with our consumer panel, over twice as many - 67% versus 33% - chose it over “made with higher welfare”, demonstrating the power of this kind of benefit-led, short, simple and impactful phrasing over straight forward welfare claims.

Such approaches can address the value-action gap – the difference between consumers’ stated

intentions around sustainability and their actions. This cognitive dissonance can be especially pronounced in food service settings, according to the RSPCA Assured *Business of Farm Animal Welfare* report, because dining out is often seen as a “treat” occasion. In these situations, people may want to mentally separate the food they’re consuming from the realities of animal farming.

The *Low Carbon Lifestyle Wheel* was designed specifically to help overcome such challenges. It points out that these value-action gaps aren’t due to a lack of consumer care, but rather practical and psychological barriers like availability, cost and convenience.



67%
Chose this tag line over a simple welfare claim

88%

‘want help to adopt sustainable lifestyles’

Futerra’s research indicates that 88% of consumers want brands to help them adopt sustainable lifestyles,⁸ which suggests that clearly communicated benefits could help bridge this gap.

To cut through the noise and engage consumers effectively, Lucy advises brands to focus on benefits consumers care about, and that can be communicated clearly, even if that means not communicating every detail.

The *Low Carbon Lifestyle Wheel* identified three core benefits which brands should link sustainability initiatives to.

1. Functional Benefits: These are practical advantages that directly improve the consumer’s experience. They include aspects like saving money, enhancing quality, or providing better performance. For instance, sustainably farmed products can offer a richer flavour profile, which enhances the dining experience and adds tangible value for the consumer. Highlighting these practical benefits makes sustainable choices more appealing by showing how they directly impact consumers’ daily lives.

2. Emotional Benefits: Emotional benefits tap into how a product or action makes the consumer feel. Supporting sustainable products can create a feel-good factor, as citizens may experience satisfaction or pride in making eco-friendly choices. For example, purchasing

regenerative farmed beef might give a customer a sense of contribution to environmental health, boosting their self-worth and reinforcing their personal values. By making consumers feel good about their choices, brands can strengthen the connection between sustainability and positive emotions.

3. Social Benefits: Social benefits appeal to consumers’ desire to be seen positively by others or to feel part of a community. Choosing sustainable products can enhance one’s image as environmentally conscious or responsible, appealing to a citizen’s social identity. For instance, buying higher-welfare, sustainably sourced meat could be perceived as a smart and conscientious choice, making the consumer look good in the eyes of others.

Leverage social norms and social pressure

The *WRI’s Food Service Playbook for Promoting Sustainable Food Choices* outlines 90 evidence-based techniques to encourage sustainable choices, many of which can be applied to promoting higher welfare products. One is leveraging social norms and social proof. Social proof is the psychological phenomenon where individuals mirror the actions of others, assuming it represents correct or popular behaviour. By showcasing testimonials or indicating popular demand, restaurants can establish a social norm around choosing ethically sourced meat, encouraging others to follow suit.

Studies from the *Coolfood* initiative show that when diners see others choosing low-carbon or climate-friendly meals, it creates

a social influence effect that encourages them to follow suit. This effect is further supported by studies published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, which demonstrate that social pressure can drive behaviour change more effectively than education alone.

Restaurants can create visible examples of higher welfare practices through social media, in-store campaigns, or video content, setting industry standards and making ethical dining choices more mainstream. By leveraging social proof in this way, brands can inspire positive shifts in consumer habits and establish high-welfare meat as a preferred option.

Think statements like:

“You care: we care, which is why we’re committed to improving the lives of farmed animals.”

“We know you care about animal welfare: so do we. Find out what we’re doing to improve the lives of farmed animals here.”

Say: I will if you will

The “I Will If You Will” approach, developed by the sustainability communications consultancy Futerra, is a behavioural framework that encourages mutual action for sustainability. At its core, this approach relies on reciprocity and collective responsibility, with the idea that people or organisations are more likely to adopt sustainable practices if they see others committing to do the same. It’s built on the psychology of social proof and the motivational power of shared goals.

In practice, “I will if you will” positions sustainability not as a one-sided effort but as a collaborative partnership with concrete action

points for each actor. So, in an animal welfare scenario, a company might commit to buying ensuring one of its dishes, or cuts, is higher welfare, while asking its customers to make a specific effort in return, perhaps making a commitment to buy the same cut at the same welfare standard at home, or paying a small optional donation on higher welfare dishes to support the higher cost of the product.

The “I will if you will” method is effective for fostering trust and engagement because it creates a tangible, shared path towards sustainability that is both achievable and inclusive.

Young’s has had success in using it to address energy saving and waste, presenting five things its customers can do alongside five parallel efforts by the company.

Share farm and fishery stories

Use producers to provide tangible benefits

Concepts like animal welfare and biodiversity can be complicated to explain, but producers are perfectly positioned to demonstrate how commitments translate into tangible benefits to the animals, and more widely too, especially because higher welfare systems usually have wider benefits such as supporting biodiversity. So identify higher welfare producers, and share farm, and farmer, stories.

“We have a tool which enables us to easily identify and showcase local suppliers and their stories,” explains Gina Camfield, head of ESG, Aramark UK and Global Offshore. This allows the contract caterer to tailor messages to specific sites.

And, in cases where certification standards guarantee that a farmer’s story is genuinely representative, that same story could potentially be used in a generic form to showcase higher welfare standards across multiple sites.

By focusing on the personal stories and experiences of the farmers, notes Will White, Sustain’s sustainable farming co-ordinator, brands like Wildfarmed and Pipers Farm are able to make higher welfare aspects tangible and relatable to customers. The brands appear to have built a strong sense of trust and integrity around their sustainability claims, which is crucial for consumers to believe and act on messaging.

Some operators tailor their sourcing stories site by site, sharing information on specific suppliers local to each outlet, such as the National Trust, which often shares stories about the products produced by its tenant farmers.

Focus on British provenance

Highlighting British sourcing (e.g. We love British farmers, so we source all our meat locally) can be a strong motivator for consumers who want to support local farmers. In our polling, close to three times as many customers chose the pub which advertised its commitment to local farmers. As demonstrated by McDonald’s heavy promotion of its commitment to source key products such as potatoes, pork and milk from the UK, this approach resonates with customers.

Hone in on the “how”

Meat has a disproportionately high carbon impact compared to plant-based protein options; for example, beef can produce up to 60kg of CO₂-equivalent emissions per kg, compared to around



Credit: Young’s



2kg for beans. However, as Ollie Rosevear from Fuller’s notes, “it’s not the cow, it’s the how.” Meat from regenerative systems, which integrate sustainable practices to build soil organic matter, promote biodiversity, and improve water cycles, can have much lower carbon impacts while also supporting higher animal welfare. This “how” forms the basis of powerful stories.

Yet these concepts may still be confusing for consumers: farmer stories bridge the gap. Take Grassroots beef. This is produced by a collective of farmers using regenerative farming techniques that significantly reduce carbon emissions compared to

conventional beef production. The meat’s environmental impact is independently assessed using the Farm Carbon Toolkit, which credibly shows that Grassroots beef has a notably lower carbon footprint. Alastair Trickett, co-founder, notes: “Farmer stories and the low carbon footprint of the beef are the elements our operators communicate. Farmers put a face to the story and make impacts personal to the customer, such as by showing the carbon footprint of the actual dish they are eating”

Building direct relationships with suppliers also gets around the common industry challenges of tracking product origins through

FOOTPRINT VYPR INSIGHT



Which pub would you choose from these two options?

We love British farmers, so we source all our meat locally **72%**

Come on in! **28%**

complex supply chains. Fuller’s, for instance, has introduced Grassroots-farmed beef at its Bel & The Dragon brand, finding that the direct supplier relationship and storytelling effectively communicate the benefits to consumers. The pub brands describe it as “Grassroots beef” on menus and provide a website link for diners to learn more. This link leads to a video from Grassroots founder Alastair Trickett, who summarises the benefits of the Grassroots approach simply in layman’s terms as farming that benefits the environment, the local community, and family businesses, and is independently audited. This approach makes it easy and appealing for consumers to understand the broader benefits of their choices.

Run regular farm visits
Farm visits are excellent at

“Sharing the experiences and perspectives of farmers can help make the messaging more personal and relatable.”

Isabel Martin, acting head of projects and consultancy, The Sustainable Restaurant Association

bringing farm and welfare stories to life tangibly and relatably for staff members. They also generate compelling content like testimonials and footage that can be leveraged across marketing channels.

Operators report that farm visits are a valuable way to engage their internal teams, particularly the chefs, and build pride in the quality and provenance of their ingredients.

Opening these visits to customers and clients is an option interviewees hadn't previously explored but it was one they felt provided considerable promise. This hands-on, experiential approach is a powerful way to normalise conversations around higher welfare standards, and many of the operators consulted were excited by the idea of opening up farm visits more widely, perhaps through customer or supplier competitions. Such competitions could also generate social media and marketing buzz.

Farm visits have been an impactful strategy for McDonald's to enhance consumer trust in its commitment to animal welfare and sustainable farming. Through their Farm Forward initiative, McDonald's has brought both consumers

and media to visit farms that supply their products, using these experiences to create engaging, authentic content, including videos, social media updates, and stories for their website.

Use visual storytelling

Visual imagery is powerful because it provides a shorthand way to communicate a tremendous amount of information in just one image. So share photos and videos of farms, animals, and the people involved in the production process to make welfare commitments tangible.

However, when using imagery to promote green credentials, it's essential to avoid misleading or exaggerated visuals, cautioned Rob Don, assistant project director at the Competition and Markets Authority, during a recent sustainable communications working group hosted by the Sustainable Restaurant Association. Instead, use visuals that accurately represent the product's environmental impact, avoiding overly lush or pristine scenes if they don't reflect reality. Be cautious with green symbols or icons; only use them if they genuinely represent certifications or standards met by the product. Ensure images reflect actual sustainable practices to avoid implying a broader eco-friendliness than the product delivers. Thoughtful and accurate visuals help communicate authenticity and build consumer trust.

Major on social media

Social media is an ideal platform for sharing higher-welfare messages, offering a visually engaging and interactive space

FOOTPRINT VYPR INSIGHT



of UK adults like it when restaurants share farmer's food stories on social media

for storytelling that can evolve over time to create a well-rounded narrative as campaigns progress. Social media's visual nature means images of animals in natural, healthy environments (when these are genuinely representative) can resonate strongly with followers.

It can also enable operators to share stories in a time-efficient way. This is valuable as many operators shared their struggle with finding the time and money to share welfare and wider sustainability stories. Apricity, for instance, highlights its ethical sourcing by sharing supplier stories, such as their choice to use hand-dived scallops and to avoid dredged scallops and salmon. These narratives are often shared through photos or videos of farm visits and seamlessly integrated into existing social media content, creating an efficient storytelling approach.

It is also an effective way to engage followers with interactive content. Polls, Q&A sessions, and "behind-the-scenes" videos featuring suppliers or farmers discussing welfare practices invite followers to

Credit: Fullers

engage directly and learn more. Welfare credentials can also be routinely highlighted in recipe posts. Chef-owner Chantelle Nicholson of Apricity notes that recipe-focused posts generally receive the most engagement, allowing values to be communicated without overwhelming consumers. “We encourage our diners to dig a little deeper and find out more about where things come from, without overwhelming them, always prioritising a positive dining experience,” says Chantelle.

Credit: Apricity



Stay compliant

Businesses need to apply the same level of caution and compliance when communicating about higher welfare meat on social media as they would in any other marketing or advertising, cautions Dominic Watkins, partner, global regulatory compliance and investigations, global lead, consumer sector, DWF Law LLP. Social media posts and content, just like traditional advertising, need to comply with relevant laws and regulations around making environmental, health, and other types of claims.



Watkins notes:

- The risk profile and likelihood of challenge increases when claims are made on social media channels, versus more isolated instances on a restaurant menu or in-person.
- This is because social media content is more widely distributed and easier for regulators or advocacy groups to identify and scrutinise for potential violations.
- Even if a social media post is just sharing third-party research or opinions, there is still a risk if the context implies the business is endorsing or adopting those claims about their own products.

Engage with influencers and celebrities

Celebrities and influencers involvement can help to amplify messages and cut through the noise, making sustainability topics more accessible and mainstream. Jeremy Clarkson has played a notable role

in raising public awareness around agriculture, showing that personal experience, even from someone outside the field, can significantly impact discourse. Similarly, Andy Cato’s work with Wild Farm Flour demonstrates how making sustainable agriculture relatable and enjoyable can help engage a broader audience. These examples highlight the importance of a human connection in storytelling, aligning with what Juliet discussed about the power of personal, lived experiences.

- **Collaborate with influencers:** Partner with UK food influencers known for advocating ethical eating. Their endorsement can add credibility and expand your story’s reach.
- **Social media:** Create shareable content, such as short videos or infographics, that influencers can easily promote on platforms like Instagram or Twitter.

- **Piggy back on other posts where users have shared positive stories** – e.g. Young’s reusable cups popped up in influencers feeds at Glastonbury and even on Gogglebox.

Leveraging third-party information and opinions could be a way to educate consumers about the benefits of higher welfare products, but, cautions Dominic Watkins, partner, global regulatory compliance and investigations, global lead, consumer sector, DWF Law LLP, businesses need to be thoughtful about how it is presented to avoid any misleading implications about their own products. This includes inadvertently adopting those influencer’s claims when they don’t have the supporting evidence or they are not permitted in law.

Harness the media, including awards

Media engagement can be a powerful tool for raising awareness, reinforcing and sharing successes and building credibility. “We make sure we engage media with sustainability related stories,” says Wahaca’s sustainability lead, Carolyn Lum. “This in turn can result in coverage highlighting these practices which then gets picked up on by potential customers. The comms around our recent *Which? Magazine* award win and the extensive national news coverage it received is a good (and recent) example of this.”

The award recognised Wahaca as the most sustainable restaurant group in the UK and generated extensive national media coverage, which helped the restaurant business reach a wider audience.

Strategies to make your animal welfare story trend

Leverage influencers

Partner with animal welfare advocates or chefs passionate about ethical sourcing to broaden your story’s reach. Have them create collaborative content, like Instagram takeovers or live discussions on the benefits of higher welfare meat. For instance, a celebrity chef might showcase the sourcing journey of free-range pork, sharing insights on welfare standards and inspiring followers to make more mindful choices.

Create interactive content

Engage followers with welfare-focused polls, quizzes, and challenges. Use tabletop QR codes that link to quick, animal welfare-themed polls, asking customers about their values around animal sourcing. Additionally, run a weekly quiz on platforms like Instagram Stories, myth-busting common misconceptions or testing awareness about welfare certifications. Display live results in the restaurant or on social media to create a sense of community and encourage discussions around welfare.

Use relevant hashtags

Tap into hashtags like #AnimalWelfare, #HigherWelfare, or #EthicalEating to reach a broader, more aligned audience. Creating a unique campaign hashtag (e.g., #WelfareMatters) can help establish a community of engaged followers and amplify your message.

Share educational infographics and videos

Use visually engaging infographics and short videos to communicate the benefits of animal welfare practices, like the health benefits of free-range meat or the environmental impact of pasture-raised systems. Thoughtful, fact-based content is more likely to be shared and encourages followers to learn more.

Collaborate with like-minded brands and organisations

Team up with respected animal welfare organisations or other ethical brands to cross-promote content. Collaborations can boost credibility and extend your reach, bringing your message to audiences who already value ethical sourcing.

Awards also provide prime opportunities to highlight achievements to a broader audience. Footprint’s Higher Animal Welfare in Foodservice award and Compassion in World Farming’s Good Farm Animal Welfare Awards, for instance, honour companies that adopt higher welfare standards, providing a platform to showcase their commitment to animal welfare to consumers and industry leaders alike. Compassion’s Best Marketing Award is presented to companies that launch impactful and far-

reaching marketing campaigns that promote higher welfare products to consumers.

Winning or even being nominated for such awards gives brands a seal of approval that resonates with ethically conscious customers and can be leveraged in marketing efforts.

To maximise the benefits, brands should build relationships with journalists and influencers who focus on sustainability and food ethics, sharing press releases, case studies, and award



Credit: Billy Downes

Digital transparency

Wahaca leverages its website as a central platform to communicate its sustainability and animal welfare commitments in detail. This includes providing information on supplier relationships, ethical sourcing, and farming practices, offering an accessible resource for customers interested in a deeper understanding beyond what’s shared in the restaurant.

To enhance transparency in-store, Wahaca is also exploring the use of QR codes on menus. This feature would allow diners to access detailed information about ingredients, farm origins, welfare standards, and sustainability initiatives with a quick scan. The dual approach of QR codes and robust website content aims to create a seamless experience, bridging the gap between the limited space on menus and Wahaca’s commitment to transparency.

wins regularly. These efforts can result in continuous, positive media exposure that enhances the brand’s reputation as an ethical leader, and helps shift industry norms.

Use all channels and tie everything together

Different channels can be used to build, reinforce, and round out

the full picture. Every space within the restaurant can share a story - from menus (both printed and digital) and posters, to pop-ups, point-of-sale stands, and take-away packaging. Even unexpected areas, like the back of the toilet door, can be used to convey a brand’s commitment to improving the lives of farmed animals.

For example, McDonald’s took this approach during the London

Olympics, gaining traction after carpeting their restaurants with wall-to-wall messaging about their sustainability efforts. Ryan Holmes, B&I culinary director at Compass Group UK & Ireland, explains Compass’s approach: “We highlight sustainable choices in visually engaging ways. Dishes are placed prominently on menus, and accreditation labels are used to guide consumer decisions. Digital screens can provide additional information about welfare and origin of meat products used throughout venues, and collaborative videos with suppliers further reinforce the messaging.”

The goal is to educate without overcomplicating the menu itself.

Danny Brown, senior brand content manager, Young’s Pubs, says integrating provenance details like farm names on menus, complemented by farm stories shared on social media and around

the restaurant can be effective. It helps customers connect with the origins of the food they enjoy and multiple channels allow for the more opportunities to provide additional detail and to build understanding (and awareness) across different platforms.

Leverage event days

It's also worth aligning promotional activities with relevant theme days. Relevant key days include:

- World farmed animal day (October)
- World animal day, (October)
- World Environment Day (June)
- International Day for Biological Diversity (May)
- Earth Day (April)
- Sustainable Gastronomy Day (June)

Take higher welfare pork supplier Dingley Dell as an example. For its one million bee project, it has planted nectar-rich wildflowers across the equivalent of 83 football fields. These nectar strips are staggered to ensure prolonged flowering, creating habitats for insects, butterflies and bees, and the farm is monitoring wildlife species to assess the positive impact. Danny shared how footage taken with family farmer Mark Hayward discussing the project will provide printed, static, short and long form content which can be used across multiple channels such as social

media and YouTube. The initiative (and links to content) will also be flagged in mailers, through local messaging in pubs, even - for seasonally related provenance stories - through push notifications through the app. The goal is to create a cohesive storytelling narrative which demonstrates the producer's commitment to animal welfare and the environment which customers can connect and identify with, and which enriches the dining experience without focusing on the elephant in the room: the fact any meat eaten was once a living animal. Young's is also trying to track the impact of these campaigns by surveying customers on their views on provenance before the outreach started and afterwards.

Highlight health benefits

Ethical meat from pasture-raised and free-range animals often boasts a richer nutritional profile, especially with higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids, beneficial antioxidants like vitamin E and beta-carotene, and lower overall saturated fat content. This balance can contribute to reduced inflammation and associated health risks, including heart disease.

There is a wealth of research data available – but producer specific data is best. Certifications like Pasture for Life can provide producer specific data to enable operators to back health claims as many certified farms test their meat for essential nutrients like

omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin B. This is safest from a Green Claims code compliance point of view. By using actual testing data, operators can offer credible claims about their products, but it is still safer to avoid making direct comparisons to conventionally farmed alternatives.

Keeping health claims compliant

According to Dominic Watkins, partner and global regulatory compliance and investigations lead for the consumer sector at DWF Law LLP, when making health claims, the best approach is to focus on specific nutrients and health claims approved by the relevant regulatory bodies. He advises:

- Only making health claims for food products if they have been approved by the EU. Unapproved health claims are not allowed, and generic claims only when supported by an approved specific claim.
- Looking for specific approved claims related to nutrients like omega-3s, vitamins, etc. that you can tie to the higher welfare attributes of your meat.
- Avoiding making broad claims about the “health benefits” of your meat or other animal product without being able to directly link it to approved nutrient claims.
- The wording and specificity of the claim is important – you need to be able to demonstrate how your product meets the criteria for the approved claim.

2

Communicate compliantly



EMPOWERING CHOICE: HOW AND WHY TO MARKET HIGHER WELFARE
IN HOSPITALITY AND FOODSERVICE

2. Communicate compliantly

FOOTPRINT VYPR INSIGHT



34% trust welfare claims made by restaurants and food-to-go businesses

With the majority of consumers sceptical about the trustworthiness of green claims, and with increasingly stringent regulation, it's essential to avoid misleading green claims, which includes those relating to animal welfare. The bible to follow is the Green Claims Code. By adhering to this, businesses can make credible, compliant and trustworthy green claims that resonate with informed consumers. Claims:

- **Must be truthful and accurate:** Ensure all claims are honest and reliable, with businesses living up to their promises.
- **Must be clear and unambiguous:** Use clear and straightforward language—avoid vague terms – such as ‘better’ or ‘ethical’ – that might confuse or mislead customers.

- **Must not omit or hide important information:** Customers need the full picture to make informed choices.
- **Must only make fair and meaningful comparisons:** Only compare products that serve the same purpose or meet the same needs.
- **Must be substantiated:** Provide solid and credible evidence to back up any claims.
- **Must consider the full life cycle of the product:** Assess the product's overall impact from production to disposal.

At a recent sustainable communications working group hosted by the Sustainable Restaurant Association, Rob Don, Assistant Project Director, at the Competition and Markets Authority, provided some insight into applying the guidance in practice.

Gather robust data

First, it's essential to ensure claims are supported by robust data. Since the code is based on principles rather than strict rules, each claim is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The more substantial the claim, the stronger the evidence required. Additionally, transparency is key – for example, if a restaurant is marketing itself as “higher welfare,” but only a portion of the animal products used receive that treatment, that information should be disclosed clearly to identify which product the claim applies to, to avoid misleading consumers.

Be aware: the bigger you are, the higher the bar

In practice, larger businesses with

more resources should uphold higher standards of substantiation compared to smaller entities, essentially, you need to ensure that all claims are proportionate to the available evidence. But regardless of size, all businesses should have evidence to support the claims they are making.

Use third-party data carefully

If there is credible third-party research supporting the claims you want to make about a product or service, it's often acceptable to use this external evidence, as long as the research is evidence based and you have no reason to believe your product differs significantly from those studied.

Using established science from reputable sources is a fair approach to substantiation, especially if performing in-house research is impractical. To maintain transparency, consider indicating on the packaging that claims are based on third-party research and provide consumers with a QR code or link for more information. Life cycle analysis (LCA) is often considered the gold standard in providing comprehensive, reliable substantiation.

Harness quality accreditation to support compliance

When making claims about higher welfare products, recognised third-party certifications can lend credibility and provide data to support those claims. Accredited certifications often supply valuable insights into the specific impacts of their standards, such as improvements in animal welfare, reductions in carbon emissions,

benefits to human health and verification of superior product quality resulting from ethical farming practices.

However, it's crucial to select certifications with established credibility and rigorous standards. Some third-party endorsements carry more weight than others, so choosing those that can substantiate claims with robust evidence and data is key. Also look for certifications with clear standards, transparent evaluation processes, and regular audits to ensure they align with genuine animal welfare goals. This approach helps build consumer

trust and shows commitment to substantiated, meaningful higher welfare efforts.

Be prepared: compliance will get even more rigorous

It doesn't fall under the CMA's remit, but upcoming legislation in 2028 will further impact how food claims are made. This law will require that any claims related to the characteristics of food (such as "organic," "sustainable," or "free-range") must apply to the entire product, not just one ingredient within it.

For example:

- If a food product is labelled as "organic," all ingredients in the

product must meet organic standards, not just a single ingredient like sugar or flour.

- This prevents misleading marketing where a product might highlight one ingredient as high quality or ethically sourced, while the rest do not meet the same criteria.

This type of legislation is designed to increase transparency for consumers, ensuring that product labels and claims more accurately reflect the overall quality and ethical standards of the food item, rather than just a portion of its ingredients.

3

Bring customers (and clients) on board



EMPOWERING CHOICE: HOW AND WHY TO MARKET HIGHER WELFARE
IN HOSPITALITY AND FOODSERVICE

3. Bring customers (and clients) on board

Find innovative ways to engage

FOOTPRINT VYPR INSIGHT



want to eat higher welfare when out

Position low-carbon items prominently on menus, add visible carbon labels, pop-ups, games, and quizzes, or introduce eco-loyalty programs that reward customers for choosing low-carbon dishes. According to caterers such as Compass, Elior, and Aramark, these tactics help normalise sustainable choices. Such techniques can also apply to animal welfare. As Charlotte Wright, director of CSR at Elior, notes, these initiatives add brand cache with clients, who see them as a reflection of their caterers' commitment to sustainability.

Behaviour change expert Trewin Restorick, founder of Sizzle and formerly of Hubbub, emphasises the value of using visualisation and “fun theory” to engage consumers meaningfully. Examples could include:

- **Children's activities**, like colouring pages and matching games, that engage kids (and their parents) on higher welfare practices.

- **Tabletop quizzes or games**, like scratch-off cards or “higher or lower” challenges, sparking conversations around animal welfare.

Harness customer testimonials

Customer testimonials can be used as authentic reflections of your brand's ethical commitments. Quotes from customers who appreciate the quality, flavour or values of your higher welfare products can serve as powerful endorsements, influencing other consumers by creating a sense of social proof.

Gather testimonials at key touchpoints: Platforms like Compass's “Do We Make You Smile” are excellent for capturing feedback directly after the customer's experience, providing real-time data on what resonates most. By gathering testimonials when the experience is fresh, you're more likely to capture genuine reactions that can be used to highlight customer satisfaction with ethical sourcing practices.

Use testimonials in strategic locations: Place customer quotes on menus, in social media posts, on digital screens, and even on takeaway packaging, wherever they'll have maximum impact. Seeing positive feedback on these channels reinforces to other customers that they're making a good choice by supporting higher welfare options.

Build a feedback loop with data-driven insights: Ryan Holmes, Compass Group UK & Ireland, emphasises the value

of data-driven decision-making. Analysing customer feedback allows brands to understand which messages are most effective and refine their approach accordingly. If, for instance, multiple customers comment on the taste or quality of higher welfare meat, this insight can help shape future marketing efforts to emphasise these qualities.

Amplify the voice of loyal customers: Encourage satisfied customers to share their experiences through various mediums—like short video testimonials, reviews, and even social media shoutouts. Direct quotes can be repurposed into visually engaging posts that resonate with followers, creating a ripple effect of positive association with ethical practices.

“Higher welfare meat offers superior flavour, texture, and quality. And, it is the right choice to make in terms of sourcing.”

Chantelle Nicholson, chef-owner, Apricity.

Incorporate visuals for stronger impact: Pair testimonials with imagery from farm visits or other elements of your ethical sourcing process.

Market on taste and quality Chefs and diners often report that ethically raised meat is of higher quality and more tender. This can be due to the animal's varied diet

Innovation in action

Aramark uses interactive table pop-ups to engage customers and communicate key sustainability messages. The success of these sustainability-focused games suggests they could be adapted to educate diners about higher welfare standards, using similar interactive and rewarding formats to reinforce the message.

Higher or lower game: Customers guess which of two dishes has a lower carbon footprint, learning about sustainability while winning eco-friendly prizes.

Odd claim out: Customers pick the false statement from a list of nutrition or sustainability claims.

These pop-ups are especially effective in university settings, observes Aramark’s head of ESG, Gina Camfield. The success of these sustainability-focused games suggests they could be adapted to educate diners about higher welfare standards, using interactive and rewarding formats.

Hubbub’s Ballot Bins offer another inspirational example. It uses playful engagement tactics originally to reduce litter. These bins let people “vote” on fun questions (Who’s the best footballer: Ronaldo or Messi; Which is better: cats or dogs?) with cigarette butts. This approach, tapping into social norms and gamification, reduced cigarette litter by up to 46% in some locations. A similar playful approach could encourage higher welfare choices, or provoke discussion/provide information about farm practices (e.g. Would you pay £1 extra for free-range chicken? Which chickens get more space? RSPCA Assured/ Red Tractor).



Credit: Aramark

and reduced stress, which improves quality.

Take chicken, for example. According RSPCA Assured’s Farm Animal Department, using slower growing breeds of meat chicken not only results in better health and welfare outcomes for chickens, but also leads to a reduction in ‘wooden breast’, a disease of the breast muscle caused by fast growth which results in the affected muscle tissue

hardening and becoming ‘woody’. Wooden breast is a meat quality issue as it has a hard, chewy texture when cooked.

The same applies to other livestock, such as pigs. Not only are higher welfare transport and slaughtering practices better for pig health and welfare, but they also help to avoid meat quality issues. If pigs are subject to stress during these processes, PSE (pale, soft

and exudative pork) is more likely to result. PSE leads to watery pork that appears pale and has a high fluid loss when cut, and is rejected by consumers.

And, within the industry, there are plenty of anecdotal examples of diners responding positively when operators use higher welfare products. For instance, when Fuller’s brand Bel & The Dragon introduced Grassroots beef, reviews on TripAdvisor shifted from occasional complaints to multiple rave reviews about beef quality.

Higher welfare systems often provide evidence to back quality claims. Even without this, operators can collect their own qualitative data for marketing via:

- Chef testimonials on product quality
- Customer testimonials and surveys
- Results from taste tests, polling diners on their preferred high-welfare versus a conventional dish.

Winning with flavour

At Compass, offering dishes made from food that would otherwise be wasted has changed consumer perceptions. Ryan Holmes, B&I culinary director, suggests this flavour-first strategy could also promote higher welfare meat. Leading with taste allows consumers to enjoy the product and understand welfare benefits afterward.

Run supplier pop ups

Especially in contract catering environments, supplier pop-ups can allow customers to engage directly with producers, providing an authentic opportunity for

suppliers to share the benefits, such as enhanced flavour, texture, and quality, more compellingly than through traditional marketing. Such experiences allow customers to ask questions, learn about welfare practices, and taste products, solidifying trust and understanding. Pop-ups are especially effective when chefs, suppliers, and front-of-house staff work together to tell these stories, bringing abstract concepts into tangible, memorable interactions that can inspire repeat visits and stronger brand loyalty.

Narrate the challenges

To enhance transparency without triggering consumer scepticism or accusations of “welfare washing,” openly communicate the journey your business is on to improve animal welfare standards, even if you haven’t achieved all your goals yet.

- **Frame it as a journey,** acknowledging that improving welfare standards is gradual. For example: “We’ve committed to the Better Chicken Commitment, investing in long-term change.”
- **Showcase efforts and investments,** highlighting the resources required, such as investments in supply chains, new infrastructure, or farmer partnerships, to give consumers a concrete sense of progress.
- **Use contextualisation,** such as industry context to show consumers the broader picture. For example, this could involve sharing statistics on the overall market for higher welfare chicken, alongside their own progress to contextualise the brand’s efforts as part of a broader industry shift.
- **Demonstrate concrete steps** to address consumer concerns around greenwashing or welfare

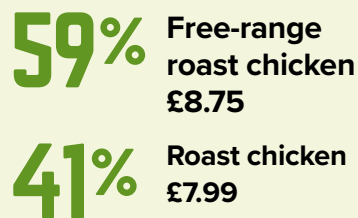
washing by sharing tangible milestones and evidence of change, even if you haven’t fully achieved your goals yet. Regular updates, such as videos featuring farmers or behind-the-scenes looks at supply chain improvements, can give consumers a transparent view of ongoing efforts. This builds trust by showing that change is real and substantiated, not just a marketing message.

Be open about cost implications

FOOTPRINT VYPR INSIGHT



Which dish would you choose from the following options?



Cost can be a sensitive topic when it comes to higher welfare, as there’s a public perception (often accurate) that these products tend to be more expensive. Citizens say they are prepared to pay for higher welfare: when we gave UK adults the choice between two chicken dinners, 59% chose the free-range chicken, even though it was priced at 10% more.

This provides hope that if right messaging and methods are used, the value action gap which has typically existed between intention to pay more and actually paying more can be closed. However, in reality, in many cases, diners don’t actually pay more for higher welfare products as operators often absorb additional costs rather than passing them on to customers.

Whichever pricing strategy is adopted, to address cost concerns, it’s effective to:

- **Contextualise and explain cost justifications:** Be transparent about why higher welfare products may come at a premium, highlighting that the additional cost covers the true expense of ethical practices – such as providing animals with more space, better care, and a slower growth period.
- **Highlight value and quality:** Emphasise the benefits that come with higher welfare meat, such as better flavour and quality, which justify any minor price increase. This can reassure customers that they are receiving added value for their money.
- **Showcase pricing strategies:** Use creative menu and pricing strategies to balance costs, such as offering smaller portions or incorporating higher welfare options into specific dishes, to make the experience more affordable without compromising on ethics.
- **Reassure consumers:** If you have absorbed the additional cost, let customers know that choosing higher welfare meat does not mean they are paying higher prices.

4 Empower employees



EMPOWERING CHOICE: HOW AND WHY TO MARKET HIGHER WELFARE
IN HOSPITALITY AND FOODSERVICE

4. Empower employees

Inspire employees to be ambassadors

FOOTPRINT VYPR INSIGHT



1 IN 3

likes a place to eat more if their server can tell them how the food is responsibly sourced

“When you talk to the teams about it, they’re really engaged. The chefs take great pride in working with higher welfare meat and sustainably sourced vegetables. And that passion is transmitted to customers.”

Carolyn Lum, sustainability lead, Wahaca

As Juliet Kinsman, travel writer, sustainability expert and broadcaster explains, “The human beings in your business are the front line, and they are the ones who drive your values through word

of mouth. So, train your staff to tell compelling stories that make people care about and understand the work you are doing – not just about sustainability itself, but why it matters to your business and society. Think of sustainability storytelling like Pilates — we need to engage the core. Sure we need to effect change bottom up, with consumers, top down in terms of government policy, but what’s key is to activate all those in the middle, that’s the majority of us working in the hospitality business. We truly have a significant opportunity to create positive change.”

As discussed in **Tell great stories**, decide which story you want to tell, and use personal, human interactions as vehicles to communicate it effectively. One key difference between a restaurant and other experiences is the unique opportunity for staff to engage directly with customers – sharing stories at the table in a way that feels personal and impactful, and, as our polling shows, makes many customers feel more positive about the brand.

Lucy Shea, Group CEO at Futerra, advocates embedding sustainability communication in employee engagement and training. This empowers employees, making them better equipped to discuss efforts with consumers, which strengthens brand integrity and consumer trust while enhancing engagement and pride among staff.

Lucy gives the example of Nando’s, which successfully integrated sustainability messaging into its employee

training programmes through several channels. This included producing “hero films” and a “Nando’s Investigates” series, which explored their chicken farms to address questions around animal welfare. By involving employees in the brand’s sustainability story, Nando’s reduced turnover and empowered staff to confidently communicate these values to customers. The company also wove sustainability messaging into regular internal communications, such as team meetings and app updates, making it a consistent part of the employee experience.

“Higher welfare starts with educating our clients and teams before reaching consumers,” says Ryan Holmes, B&I culinary director, Compass UK and Ireland. “Mechanisms for educating employees include weekly team calls, weekly communications, and embedding our reasons for using higher welfare products within our guiding principles, the Compass Kitchen Promise.”

Incorporate higher welfare into inductions

This should include memorable facts and stats on what that commitment means in practice (such as more space to roam, freedom to display natural behaviours, and better access to daylight) that are easy for team members to remember and share with customers.

Display welfare commitments and key facts in kitchen

A short and snappy key facts poster enables staff to easily reference

them, enabling team members to share them with customers when prompted and unprompted.

Provide training for frontline staff

This will empower them to have informed conversations with customers about what welfare standards mean, and the welfare attributes of menu items.

Include certification information in recipe management systems

This makes it easier for staff to identify and communicate higher welfare products.

Design a visual identifier for menus

This highlights higher welfare options to guide customer choices.

Task staff to create content

Ask passionate team members to create a video showcasing all things higher welfare, such as the products on the menu and their benefits (e.g., improved quality, taste, customer feedback).

Young’s pubs developed an internal campaign with short, fun videos created by staff, sharing energy-saving and waste-reduction initiatives. These videos showed staff doing everyday energy-saving activities and highlighted the direct impact of simple changes, such as turning off equipment, by showing tangible energy and cost savings.

Create behind-the-scenes shorts

Young’s also produced a video explaining the journey of waste after it leaves the bin, helping staff understand why proper recycling practices matter. A similar story-

driven approach could involve filming at a higher welfare producer to make commitments more meaningful.

Use competitions and league tables

These can incentivise sites to boost sustainability efforts and engage employees in meaningful eco-friendly practices, a model that could effectively apply to promoting higher welfare animal products. For example, Young’s launched a “recycling championship,” placing each pub in a league based on recycling rates. Top performers earned rewards that went towards a partner charity or celebratory events at other Young’s pubs.

Get sustainability and comms teams communicating

Often, sustainability and procurement teams have lots of positive welfare and provenance stories to tell, but the comms team are not aware of them to incorporate them into marketing efforts. But whichever side of the marketing, sustainability or procurement fence you sit, smash down those silos and seek out your counterparts to ferret out stories. Then work together to communicate them powerfully, and accurately, remembering not to lose important nuances in search of pitchy punchlines.

Ongoing collaboration is crucial. Many sustainability professionals working with marketing and communications teams experience a common tension: marketing teams want simple, catchy, bold messaging, while sustainability professionals focus on accuracy and nuance. This dynamic can create friction. This is

why it is crucial to work together to ensure authenticity and compliance with Green Claims Code guidelines.

Capture chef passion

To effectively leverage the influence of chefs in promoting ethical sourcing, emphasise their firsthand experiences and passion for quality ingredients. Chefs are often deeply motivated by the connection

FOOTPRINT VYPR INSIGHT



1 IN 3

likes it when chef influencers share stories about where their food comes from

between high-welfare practices and the exceptional quality of their dishes, seeing animal welfare not just as an ethical commitment but as a direct contributor to taste and texture. As Ryan Holmes, B&I culinary director at Compass Group UK & Ireland, notes, chefs are naturally inclined toward “the best quality ingredients possible,” and they recognise how the “passion and care put into higher welfare products by the farmers and

producers” is evident in the final flavour.

Beyond culinary excellence, chefs also play a unique role as ambassadors who can communicate the story behind ingredients directly to customers, creating a powerful narrative around ethical sourcing. Our poll revealed that a big chunk of potential customers - nearly a third (31%) - like it when chefs share provenance stories.

When chefs discuss the benefits of higher welfare products, they not only elevate the dining experience but also build trust and transparency with customers. For instance, chefs at Wahaca have found that when they share the provenance of high-welfare ingredients, customers are more engaged and responsive, positively influencing their dining choices. Furthermore, involving chefs in the sourcing process – like taking them on farm visits to witness high-welfare practices – enriches their knowledge, enabling them to advocate authentically for these products in customer interactions.



5 Collaborate across the supply chain



EMPOWERING CHOICE: HOW AND WHY TO MARKET HIGHER WELFARE
IN HOSPITALITY AND FOODSERVICE

5. Collaborate across the supply chain

Inspire employees to be ambassadors

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If you had to choose one of these two chicken dishes, which one would you choose?

Roast chicken reared with care by our farmers **67%**

Roast chicken **33%**

Promoting higher welfare products in the hospitality industry requires coordinated efforts from operators, trade bodies, wholesalers, and producers. Clear, consistent communication along the supply chain is key to driving sustainable practices, especially as consumers respond well to supplier-led information, with descriptions which include farmer references two to three times as popular, as seen in our survey results. Charlotte Wright, director of CSR at Elior, highlights procurement’s role in meeting other sustainability goals and suggests a similar collaborative approach for welfare.

Challenges in sourcing higher welfare products often arise due to fragmented supply chains and

“The industry needs to work together to normalise higher welfare. We are not there yet, but we need to be bolder about communicating the journey we are on so we can shift practices.”

Charlotte Wright, director of CSR, Elior

inconsistent product availability, which can hinder operators from confidently promoting welfare claims. As RSPCA Assured observes, operators without closed-loop supply chains may struggle to guarantee the availability of higher welfare products. This uncertainty makes it difficult for operators to confidently promote or claim the use of higher welfare on their menus, as they can’t be certain they will be able to consistently source that product.

Gina Camfield, Aramark UK and Global Offshore’s head of ESG, notes that integrated systems could make it easier to access certification information from suppliers. Many suppliers source from a huge number of individual farms making it virtually impossible to identify where a specific animal product has come from, and what welfare standards might apply. For some wholesalers, technology can create a barrier in even identifying higher welfare products. Unlike dietary requirements, higher welfare

products often lack dedicated filters in ordering systems, resulting in account managers manually identifying these items. And even when wholesalers highlight higher welfare options, insiders consistently note that price concerns frequently override operators purchasing decisions. Lastly, operator, and industry, focus tends to prioritise issues such as carbon footprint over animal welfare.

However, addressing these gaps in communication and supply chain integration, as global food system transition affiliate Geraldine Gilbert of Forum for the Future argues, can serve as a form of strategic risk management. Embracing higher welfare standards offers added benefits such as improved food safety, traceability, and stronger supplier relationships, all crucial for businesses to adapt to future demands as well as to deliver on existing sustainable sourcing commitments generally.

Improve supply side communication

The adoption, and then promotion of, higher welfare standards could be vastly improved through the following supplier/wholesaler action:

1. Improve filtering and labelling: Suppliers should add clearer filters for welfare certifications (e.g., RSPCA Assured) on their websites and ordering systems, making it easier for customers to identify and source certified products.

2. Provide standardised materials: Develop accessible marketing materials that explain

welfare certifications in simple terms, supporting operators in educating their own staff and customers.

3. Partner with certification bodies: Work with organisations like RSPCA Assured to create training resources such as videos that suppliers can share with customers to help operator teams, including front-line staff, better understand and communicate the welfare standards.

4. Connect operators with producers: Facilitate direct connections between operators and higher welfare producers, enabling operators to gather authentic stories and share them with their customers.

5. Offer tailored support: Proactively reach out to operators interested in higher welfare products to understand their needs and provide tailored recommendations and support for sourcing and promoting these items.

Harness third-party endorsements

**OVER
60%**
rank higher welfare certifiers
"excellent or good when it
comes to welfare"

Partnering with reputable animal welfare organisations or certification bodies can significantly enhance the

“Operators can engage consumers and stay compliant with claims guidance by working directly with certified farms to develop marketing strategies based on evidence-based claims.”

Nikki Yoxall, head of research, Pasture for Life

credibility of higher welfare claims. Certifications offer an accessible, evidence-based way to bridge the trust gap between farmers and consumers, assuring customers that high standards back their food choices without the need for complex explanations.

Recent YouGov* research commissioned by RSPCA Assured demonstrated that the majority (between 51-66%) of UK adults rank the most common food marks as excellent or good in relation to animal welfare, with higher welfare certifiers RSPCA Assured, Pasture for Life and ASC all being ranked as good or excellent by over 60% of those polled.

This recognition is particularly helpful as animal welfare standards can be technical and challenging for consumers to fully understand, but certification logos on menus are a helpful visual shorthand which communicate a huge amount of information in a tiny picture. “A trusted animal welfare logo could build trust and brand honesty,” says Gina Camfield, head of ESG,

UK & Global Offshore at Aramark, “without cluttering menus.” Alastair Trickett, co-founder of Grassroots Farming, also highlights certification as a mark of integrity and professionalism within the supply chain.

As covered in **Communicate compliantly**, certification schemes can also provide valuable evidence-backed data on benefits – crucial to provide the evidence to underpin any green marketing claims made. For example, Pasture for Life, which aims to provide consumers with a clear, evidence-based certification that supports regenerative, pasture-based livestock farming, have research showing increased biodiversity on their member farms compared to conventional systems. They are also developing a data platform to help farms provide farm-level evidence for their environmental and carbon claims, which is expected to be available in the next three years.

However, certification schemes must maintain credibility. Controversies with farms failing to meet the standards required by their certification body underscore the need for transparency and integrity in welfare certifications. To maintain consumer trust, certifications need ongoing scrutiny and transparency, ensuring that standards are consistently upheld.

Will White, sustainable farming co-ordinator at Sustain, captures the sentiment of the industry well, echoing the views of most of our interviewees, “We need integrity in eco-labels to maintain consumer trust.”

*All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2055 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 18th - 20th October 2024. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+). Respondents were asked to rate a list of food certification schemes on their animal welfare standards, on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being very good and 10 being very poor. Results provided for those rating schemes as excellent/very good are based on those respondents who selected 1-4 on this scale.

“For our operators to be able to say that grassroots beef has a carbon footprint which is 43% less than the industry average is a very powerful story.”

Alastair Trickett, co-founder, Grassroots farming

Enlist certifier’s help

Certifiers can often provide a wealth of resources to support members. The type of support on offer varies, but might include access to ambassador farms, key messaging guides, point of sale materials, PR support, on menu messaging, staff training and social media opportunities.

Support certification bodies in reinforcing their core proposition

Clear, straightforward communication about the real impact of certifications can build trust and reduce decision fatigue. Myrtle Gregory, research and policy officer at Eating Better, highlights a significant barrier to

consumer choice: confusion around certification schemes. “Citizens are highly motivated by animal welfare when purchasing meat and dairy products, but many don’t know what the labels mean, leading to hesitancy to pay more when the value isn’t clear. Our recent public attitude survey found that 58% of people in the UK would be more likely to buy higher welfare meat if it was clearly labelled,” she explains. She also notes that consumers experience “label fatigue,” feeling overwhelmed by the pressure to make ethical choices amidst conflicting labels and messages, which often leads them to choose based on convenience or price. *The Better by Halfroadmap* by Eating Better encourages clear labelling to help consumers understand and trust welfare claims, addressing common issues of “label fatigue.”

Supporting certification bodies in amplifying their value proposition helps reinforce their purpose, while brands can strengthen these messages through their own channels by providing clear explanations of what each certification actually means in terms of improvements in farm animals’ lives. Additionally,

lobbying for unified standards across the industry can reduce confusion and enable consumers to make more informed ethical choices.

Adopt a shared language

The industry needs to develop a collective, aligned language around communicating animal welfare improvements to customers, explains Ruth Edge, head of supply chain sustainability at KFC. She suggests that terms like “enrichment” or “European Chicken Commitment” may lack clarity and impact for the average customer. Rather than each company creating its own messaging, a standardised approach could enhance clarity, helping customers better recognise and appreciate welfare efforts across brands. This shared language would make welfare advancements more accessible, fostering greater consumer trust and engagement.

Compassion in World Farming is hoping to help address this issue for chicken. It has created a set of assets^{9,10} for companies who have signed up to the Better Chicken Commitment to help them explain in simple, unified terms the higher welfare criteria they have committed to introduce.

Taking the next step: realising the power of marketing



EMPOWERING CHOICE: HOW AND WHY TO MARKET HIGHER WELFARE
IN HOSPITALITY AND FOODSERVICE

The hospitality and foodservice industry stands at a pivotal moment. Embracing and effectively marketing higher welfare standards is more than a response to consumer demand – it's an opportunity to lead the way toward a more ethical and sustainable food system. By using transparent, engaging marketing to communicate welfare commitments, businesses can empower customers to make informed choices that align with their values. This approach not only builds trust and deepens loyalty

but also differentiates brands in an increasingly competitive market.

Now is the time for operators to leverage the power of marketing to capture the business benefits of higher welfare. By telling compelling stories, using social proof, and clearly identifying higher welfare options on menus and through digital channels, businesses can justify a price premium and attract conscious consumers.

Sharing these welfare commitments creates a ripple effect

that drives positive change across the industry, positioning brands as leaders in ethical and responsible foodservice.

Taking these steps represents not only an investment in customer satisfaction but also a commitment to a future where high welfare is the expectation, not the exception. Let's lead the change through purposeful, impactful marketing that makes higher welfare standards visible, valuable, and attainable for all.

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About this report

Footprint Intelligence was commissioned to write this report by RSPCA Assured. The research comprised in-depth, semi-structured interviews with foodservice experts and sector thought-leaders; surveys with between c1,000 UK consumers conducted in November 2024, desk-based research, involvement in industry events and forums, and comments and insight from opinion leaders linked to the industry.

Aimee McDonald, sustainability manager, Young & Co's Brewery, PLC
Alastair Trickett, co-founder, Grassroots farming
Carolyn Lum, sustainability lead, Wahaca
Chantelle Nicholson, chef-owner, Apricity
Charlotte Wright, director of CSR, Elixir
Danny Brown, senior brand content manager, Young & Co's Brewery, PLC
Dominic Watkins, partner, global regulatory compliance and investigations global lead – consumer sector, DWF Law LLP
Geraldine Gilbert, global food system transition affiliate, Forum for the Future
Gina Camfield, head of ESG, Aramark UK & Global Offshore
Isabel Martin, acting head of projects and consultancy, SRA
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Ruth Edge, head of supply chain sustainability, KFC
Shelley Franklin-Morris, senior sustainability manager, people and sustainability, Bidfood
Susan Wickes, managing director, jellybean
Trewin Restorick, founder, Sizzle
Will White, sustainable farming co-ordinator, Sustain
Xenia Kingsley, senior marketing manager, RSPCA Assured



We are also grateful to consumer research expert Vypr for providing access to its consumer research panel. Surveys were published via Vypr's panel in November 2024, garnering more than 1000 responses per question.

Vypr is a leading predictive consumer intelligence platform that combines research into behavioural science with a well-segmented consumer panel. Vypr works with retailers including The Co-op Food and Starbucks, brands like Weetabix and Müller, and large manufacturing groups such as Cranswick PLC and 2 Sisters Food Group.

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About Footprint Intelligence



The ever-shifting sustainability debate makes it vital for businesses to have accurate intelligence for informed decisions. Footprint Intelligence is Footprint Media Group's research and analysis division, helping companies develop successful strategies in the context of responsible business practices. Footprint Intelligence aims to drive, promote and share best practice by helping industry resolve pressing sustainability issues. It asks tough questions and finds answers. It uses research and industry insight to bring businesses together to identify solutions, opportunities, trends and challenges.

About RSPCA Assured

RSPCA Assured is the UK's leading farm animal welfare assurance scheme, dedicated to improving the lives of farm animals and ensuring higher welfare standards across the farming industry. As a not-for-profit certification, it operates under the principles of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and covers farms, transport, and abattoirs, ensuring adherence to rigorous welfare guidelines. RSPCA Assured works closely with farmers, producers, and retailers to promote practices that provide animals with a better quality of life. By offering transparent welfare standards and engaging with consumers, the scheme enables shoppers to make more informed, ethical choices about the animal products they purchase. RSPCA Assured is committed to continuous improvement in animal welfare and strengthening consumer trust in ethical farming practices.

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CERTIFICATION MARK

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