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Over half of Pancake Day egg buyers would leave a shop and go elsewhere if higher welfare choices weren't available

RSPCA Assured survey shows the importance of hen welfare in consumer shopping choices

A new survey by RSPCA Assured, released ahead of Pancake Day, has revealed a high demand for higher welfare eggs amongst UK shoppers. More than half (61%) of adults said they would either leave a shop and go elsewhere or refuse to buy eggs altogether if eggs from cage-free hens were not available¹.

The survey, carried out by YouGov for RSPCA Assured - the RSPCA's ethical food label and farm assurance scheme – found that the majority of UK adults want to make better choices for hen welfare and support cage free farming.

78% of respondents who consume animal products also said they thought their shopping choices could make a positive difference to the lives of farmed animals.

Kelly Grellier, Chief Commercial Officer, at RSPCA Assured said: "We're fast approaching Pancake Day - one of the biggest egg-eating days of the year - so it's really reassuring that a high number of consumers are voting with their feet and refusing to buy eggs that have come from caged hens.



"However, it was disappointing to find that just over one in five people who consume animal products (22%) said a lack of available information was a barrier to buying higher welfare².

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“It’s going to be a continual struggle to see zero eggs from caged hens on shelves if labelling and information is not clear enough for consumers - many of whom might be unwittingly buying eggs from caged hens and accidentally driving that demand.

“It’s really important that labelling and point of sale signage in stores is as clear as possible about where produce on the shelves has come from. A small action like more transparent signposting could make a massive difference to the lives of millions of hens.”

In the UK, around eight million hens (20%) are still kept in cages that restrict their ability to move around, stay active and easily perform natural behaviours - like dustbathing. Being in a cage can make hens stressed and frustrated, which can lead to abnormal behaviours like birds pulling out each other’s feathers. It is also common to see bald patches from where their heads and necks have rubbed on the bars when they poke their heads out to feed.

The majority of eggs sold in UK supermarkets are now cage-free (over 70%), but not all of them are, which is why RSPCA Assured is encouraging everyone who chooses to eat eggs this Pancake Day to look for cage-free and preferably those with the RSPCA Assured label.

Supermarkets, including Aldi, Co-Op, Marks and Spencer, Morrisons, Sainsbury’s and Waitrose already only supply cage-free eggs, and a number of other retailers have also committed to becoming cage-free in 2025.

The RSPCA Assured label means that hens are not kept in cramped cages. Instead, they live cage-free lives on free-range or organic farms or inside cage-free barns with plenty of space to move around. All RSPCA Assured certified egg producers must meet nearly 700 strict standards aimed at improving hen welfare. These standards include providing perches, nest boxes and enrichment items like straw bales and pecking objects, which allow hens to express natural behaviours such as nesting, foraging and perching.

Kelly added: “We all have the power to help more hens live better lives by supporting the sale of higher welfare eggs and consigning eggs from caged hens to the past for good. Consumer actions are speaking loudly and it’s time for the entire industry and all retailers to listen.

“Producers who would like to chat to us about transitioning to higher welfare farming and becoming a member of the RSPCA Assured family can reach out to our [Farming and Technical Engagement Team](#). We are more than happy to talk about the benefits of the

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RSPCA welfare standards for both producers and their hens. Equally, retailers who want to find out more about only selling produce from cage-free animals can reach out to us at help@rspcaassured.org.uk.”

Visit RSPCA Assured’s [website for more information on hen welfare](#) and support the RSPCA’s campaign for a Cage Free Future [here](#).

-ends-

Notes to editors:

1,2: RSPCA Assured commissioned survey conducted by YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2068 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 3rd - 5th January 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

3: RSPCA Assured commissioned survey conducted by YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2003 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 31st January - 3rd February 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

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