



Stonegate Farmers Corporate Welfare Report 2020-21

Applicable to all chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) within the company supply chain.



The information presented within this report presents company flock data from 01 Jan 2020 to 31 Dec 2020. All company species and supply chain flock data including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) have been included within the following data evaluation and review.

1.0 Company Welfare Statement- All Species

Stonegate Farmers is a private company, and its owner and employees are personally committed to the welfare of all livestock that are kept directly or indirectly on the company behalf. Welfare is a priority business issue that determines how Stonegate conduct their management and distinguish themselves within the industry.

The care and welfare of our laying birds is of the utmost importance to us. All our eggs are produced on UK farms, which adhere to the stringent British Lion Quality and RSPCA welfare standards. Our customers can enjoy peace of mind in the knowledge that our farming partners apply best practice in laying bird wellbeing at every stage of our birds' lives.

Stonegate Farmers fully recognise the importance of food businesses acknowledging their effect on the animals within their supply chain. Within times of modern food production, it is clear through review of research that husbandry and provision of a tested environment can positively influence measures of both harnessable and non harnessable effects. For this reason, it is more relevant than ever before to understand that value for supply chains can be enhanced through the development of a systematic and dedicated welfare approach.

We believe the welfare to be a leading attribute of our business culture which can be identified regularly throughout our supply chain. We aim to operate a system which allows for good levels of knowledge transfer and develop a working environment where continuous improvement is recognised.

2.0 Our Confinement and Housing Position- All Species

Stonegate Farmers welfare policy precludes any involvement with egg produced from caged, colony caged and barn systems. The companies' goal is to ensure free-range egg is the base standard from where we operate.

- 100% of our egg is sourced from chicken, duck and speciality species reared in 'free to fly' systems.
- 100% of chicken, duck, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, emu are farmed within free-range systems with access to an outdoor range.
- 100% of quail are farmed within 'free to fly' low stocking density systems.
- 0% of our eggs are sourced from birds from 'caged' or 'colony caged' systems.

We enforce a universal commitment to ensure no egg from non-free to fly systems reaches consumers from which we have packed.



Cage Free Commitment

0% of eggs within the company supply chain are produced in 'caged' or 'colony caged' systems.

3.0 Company Welfare Responsibility- All Species

Stonegate Farmers work to ensure welfare management policy and procedure is encouraged and evaluated internally. The company's team work collaboratively to ensure welfare commitments are achieved and managed. The responsibility of welfare control within the supply chain rests with the farm managers. The company's Supply Chain Director; who leads the supply chain team, provides a valuable connection to allow reflection and further direction from the company's executive team.

Stonegate works closely with the major equipment and building suppliers within the industry to develop and provide the best environments for the laying birds under their care. All systems comply with the current welfare standards; however, Stonegate is constantly striving to introduce innovative applications that will help create more carefully considered environments for the poultry within our supply base. This may be achieved through direct adjustments in the design of buildings and equipment or through the provision of enhanced enrichment which go above and beyond minimum provisions outlined within codes of practice.

4.0 Company Welfare Targets- All Species

1. The company will aim to continue to develop upon the preliminary results of Qualitative Behavioural Assessment and attempt to make significant progress to expanding its use through to site managers in 2021. The company will continue to resource and staff the QBA project. All field team staff will be provided with tablets to ensure that assessments are collected and submitted on farm. Stonegate will work with retailers to ensure assessments and the project are regularly reviewed to reflect results of preliminary findings.
2. The company will attempt to continue to increase life length where possible within chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) in 2021. Stonegate will continually assess the health status of flocks and where possible extend life length where possible whilst ensuring new pullets and animal welfare is not intentionally hindered as a result of any amendments. As standard practice the company will work to ensure that all chickens are scheduled to be depleted at least 76 weeks of age.
3. The company will look to further reduce the rate of chicken within the supply base subject to routine Infra-red beak treatment in 2021. The company will set up regular reviews and discussions with hatcheries to raise the subject and influence change to standard practices. The company will work with an elected vet to develop management techniques which can be introduced.
4. The company team will continue to routinely assess birds within its supply chain to assess standards of feather cover with 2021 and improve understanding of patterns in management techniques which present good results. This will allow continuous reflection and promote proactive management actions. The company will resource field team staff to work independently and report of the health status and feather cover of flocks within the supply base.
5. The company will look to introduce policy to ensure that 100% of chickens within the company supply base will be vaccinated at day old against Infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT) in 2021. All supply base contracts will be amended and updated to include the requirement to vaccinate for ILT. All flocks entering the supply chain will be verified as having received the additional vaccination before egg can be processed by Stonegate.

5.0 Company Welfare Objectives Completed

After review of the objectives which were outlined from 2019 data the company has review objectives which were outlined as targets to improve upon existing welfare standards.

Chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu lifecycles to extend by two weeks by 2020.

The company has experienced improvements in usable life lengths of poultry within the supply chain. The company has seen chicken life lengths increase by 2.7 weeks on average across the supply base since 2019. A slower rate of increase has been seen within other species as ducks and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) have already challenged the boundaries of increasing life lengths and seen good increases in life length in the past.

Since 2016 the company has worked to increase life length within laying hens from an industry standard practice to abide by a 72-week life length. Since then, the company has worked with geneticists, rearing teams, feed compounders and supply chain teams to ensure that efforts have been made to re-test the boundaries of extended periods of lay. The company can report several cases where flocks have surpassed 95-week life lengths within 2020.

Keel Bone Assessment

The company will continue to conduct routine keel bone assessments within all species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) of the company supply chain, as a measure of long-term welfare provision. However due to the somewhat invasive and sometimes stressful nature of the assessment, the company continues to look for new lead indicators to allow earlier intervention and maintain an increased level of proactive management. Keel bone scoring can be linked with a reactive style of management which does not offer benefit to the animals which are assessed. However, the increased understanding of the environmental exposures and system stresses which poultry are exposed can justify infrequent keel bone scoring.

The company will make significant progress towards implementing advanced free-range standards within 2020.

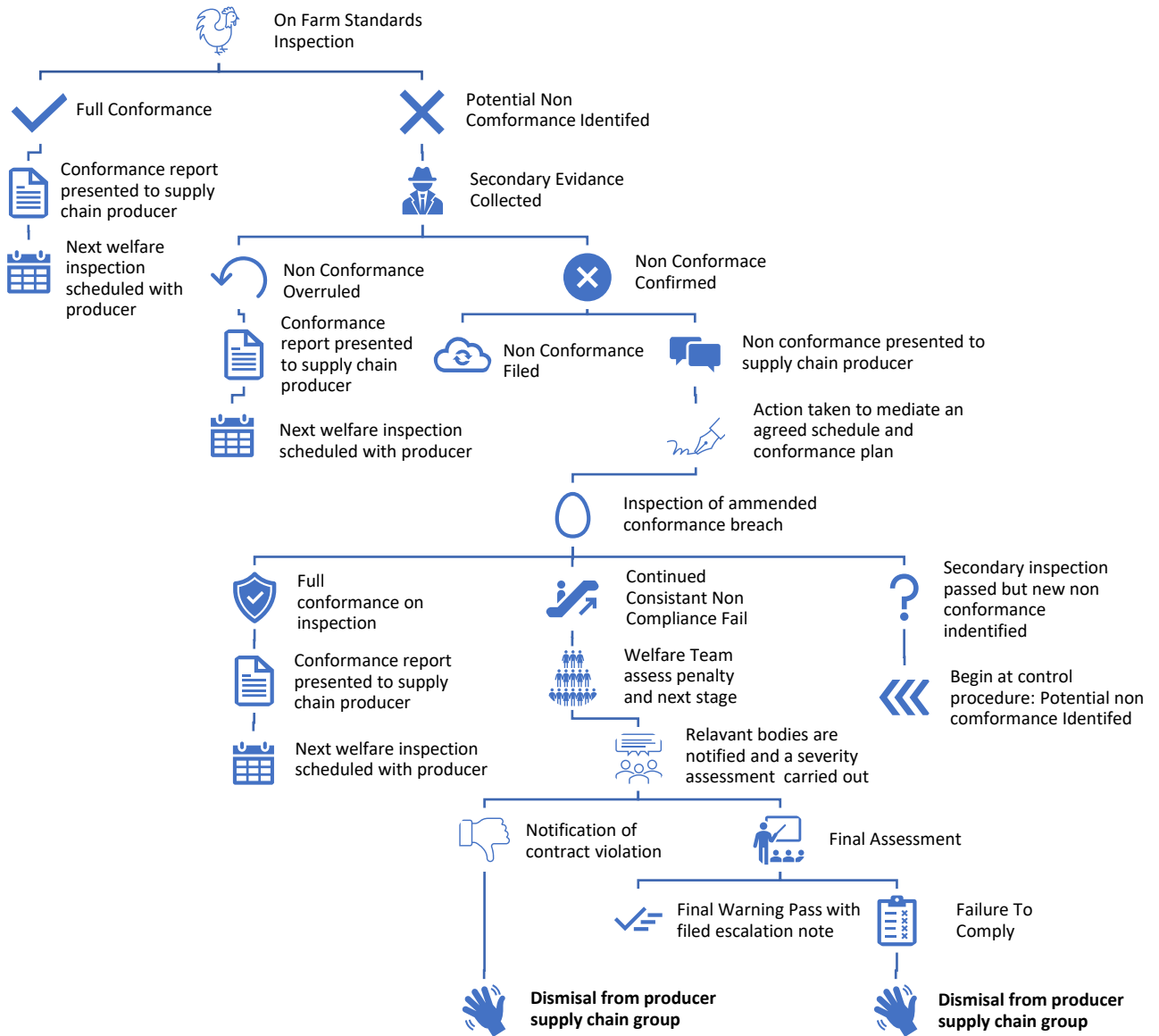
The company has made investment within the development of advanced free-range egg production systems on its own sites to test various additions and adaptations to the existing free range standards. The company's farms team has played an active role in the development of a system which provides clear directive towards a further enriched and natural housing provision for poultry. Throughout the supply chain there are clear examples where tree cover provisions, additional indoor floorspace, winter garden/ veranda spaces and enrichments greatly surpass the baseline standards and requirements of free range schemes.

The company will ensure the rate of poultry subject to routine Infra-red beak treatment will be further reduced within 2021.

The company has continued to develop this long-term commitment to continue reduction in the rates of routine beak treatment. The company reduced the rate of routine infra-red beak treatment between 2019 and 2020 by 3% to a total of the growing company supply base. The company's progress when compared against other UK suppliers is significant. The company continues to become closer to its ambition of reaching zero practice of routine mutilations within all species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) within the company supply chain.

6.0 Welfare Enforcement Procedure- All Species

Processes for ensuring welfare standards are implemented within supply chain.



7.0 Demonstration of Welfare Policy Application through the Supply Chain- All Species

The company's entire supply base is formally bound to farm in a responsible manner. Our egg purchase contracts stipulate various grades and banding according to the egg type produced by the supplier. The company supply base is expected to uphold at least the baseline standards to sell their egg to Stonegate. Baseline standards of welfare conformance are enforced according to rulings by bodies such as the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Royal Society for the Prevention and Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), British Egg Industry Council (BEIC) and Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

0.88% of supply chain laying birds include duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) are audited routinely under a company tailored equivalent of Lion Code of Practice which has been developed to ensure sites meet equivalent production and welfare standards of chicken laying farms within the supply base.

99.18% of supply chain laying birds are chicken which are routinely audited under Lion scheme, RSPCA and other relevant production schemes.

All supply base sites including those who manage all species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) are audited under additional bolt on audit schedules. Higher tier audits consider KPIs and management assessments ranging from laying performance, bird activity, access to enrichment, access to range, litter quality and many other measures.

100% of supply sites are audited through the following additional audit programs.

- Stonegate Farmers/ Waitrose Welfare Audit (minimum 8 weeks routinely)
- Stonegate Farmers Waitrose Environmental Audit (minimum 12 months routinely)
- M&S Bolt-on laying Audit (minimum 12 months routinely)
- M&S Bolt-on environmental Audit (minimum 12 months routinely)
- Waitrose Ethical Audit (minimum 18 months routinely)

Stonegate Farmers operate a dedicated field team whose role focusses on the inspection of welfare standards throughout the supply chain. The team demonstrate a broad range of experience, provide guidance and most importantly ensure animal welfare reaches optimum levels and works hand in hand with egg production.

The company farms team are available to supply base farms 24/7 and visits are carried out routinely no less frequently than every 8 weeks. Stonegate also hosts monthly webinars with producers and invites guest speakers to discuss topics such as antibiotic use, tree planting and range management. The company makes continuous effort to demonstrate the value which can be achieved through consideration and management of animal welfare techniques.

8.0 Company Review of Welfare Progress- All Species

Routine beak treatment

39% of chickens within our supply chain were not routinely beak treated in 2020.

The rate of routine chicken beak treatment continues to fall with a 3% reduction since 2019.

100% of duck and speciality species including quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu within our supply chain were not routinely beak treated in 2020.

The company is working towards its target to reduce routine beak treatment to less than 50% within our supply chain by 2025. This goal will be supported through continued work with bird geneticists and improved provision of positive enrichment provisions. At current rates of reduction, the company is on target to achieve its target.

Feather cover

The company flocks average feather score at point of slaughter for head/neck was 0.73 on a 0-2 scale in 2020.

The company flocks average feather score at point of slaughter for back/rump was 0.91 on a 0-2 scale in 2020.

Previously the company reported upon average feather cover on an annualised average calculated from all flock assessments, however moving forwards the company will compare scores at point of slaughter only, to improve consistency of reporting.

The company continues to evaluate bird feather cover routinely and will continue to review the effectiveness and consistency of its completion. The process allows for interventions to take place to improve and learn from bird management techniques. Comparable scores have been shown across bird species with slight improvement shown in multiple breed and production types since 2018.

Duck and speciality species including quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu within the company supply chain continue to demonstrate the lowest species averages which are significantly below that of chickens with the supply base.

Life Length

Since 2018 the company has experienced significant interest from customers to increase life lengths.

The average age of chickens at point of slaughter was 78 weeks old in 2020.

Ducks and speciality species including ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu continue to live the longest life lengths within the group with an average in 2020 of 87 weeks.

Quails continue to live the shortest lives within the company supply chain as flock age at point of slaughter was 58 weeks.

End of Life Mortality

The average rate of flock mortality of all species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) in 2020 was 12.53% (11.02% in 2019)

The rates of mortality fall in line with expected free range production standards. The company's incentive to increase bird life length which has been largely driven by retail customers is expected to increase the rates of overall flock mortality as birds will continue to live increasingly long lives. The company continues to prioritise the need to extend and balance life length with the natural productive decline and lower energy efficiency of an aged bird.

Rates of end-of-life mortality within the company supply base amongst all species began to plateau in 2016. This is linked to the change in standard practices which is beginning to become more widespread across the free range sector. For this reason, the company places greater value upon comparing flocks at equal ages such as 40 and 70 weeks (bird age) to compare flocks at an equal stage of life.

End of life dead on arrival (DOA)

The average rate of DOA's for all species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) in 2020 was 0.26% (0.29% in 2019).

The company continues to report consistent rates of DOA cases and stands well against industry thresholds of 0.5%. Welfare driven bird handling procedures will continue to be observed and enforced to protect poultry which enter transportation phases.

Pre-slaughter stunning

100% of bird species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) from the supply chain were pre slaughter stunned using inert gas mixtures in 2020 with zero cases of secondary or repeat stunning processes reported by licenced slaughterhouses.

100% of our 'end of life' depopulated species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) are pre slaughter stunned using inert gas mixtures through licenced slaughter facilities.

Pullet transport time

The company's integration and insight gained from its own rearing department offers increased ability to prepare for delays or unforeseen events within the supply chain transportation to laying farms.

The average time of transportation for 'pullets' delivered to laying farms including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) stood at 5.7 hours in 2020 (5.1 in 2019).

100% of chicken and duck were transported to laying farm facilities within 8-hours of departure in 2020.

100% of speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) were transported to laying farm facilities within 4-hours of departure in 2020.

The company continues to develop the quantity of laying farms within the supply base. The company will continue to optimise and reduce travel times to reduce likely impact of negative bird welfare as a result of journeys which exceed 8 hours. The company will target to continue to reduce average travel times for chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) and will aim to ensure that no journeys are planned to take place which exceed 6 hours by 2030.

End of life transport time

The average time of transportation for 'end of life' birds including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) stood at 5.1 hours across the supply chain in 2020 (5.7 hours in 2019).

100% of chicken and duck were transported to slaughter facilities within 8-hours of departure in 2020.

100% of speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) were transported to slaughter facilities within 5-hours of departure in 2020.

The company continues to operate end of life transport with effective practices which are supporting the transportation of poultry within the supply chain within the target eight-hour period. Although this record is likely to show year on year variation due to adjustments within supply chain locations this rate remains acceptable as business operations are nationwide.

Recommendation from the company team and focus to ensure that the supply base opt for slaughter sites closer to their sites has helped to reduce overall journey times. The company is working towards reaching the target by 2030 that 100% of poultry species including chicken, duck and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) will be transported to slaughter facilities within 6 hours of departure.

9.0 Welfare Outcomes (Physical and Psychological Measures)- All Species

The company makes continual record of eight weekly welfare assessments which are completed routinely throughout the supply chain. This assessment utilises qualitative measures to record various status during routine inspections. The measurement aims assess the perceived display or natural behaviour of birds within the production system and score them against the remainder of the supply base. Below is a summary of assessment results from all supply species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) of the company supply chain in 2020 (Mixed flock ages).

Average Enrichment Engagement Score

Excellent (Continuous use of enrichments) – 75.5% of supply chain assessments (64% in 2019)

Average (Intermittent use of enrichments)- 22.9% of supply chain assessments (32% in 2019)

Poor (Low or infrequent use of enrichments)- 1.6% of supply chain assessments (4% in 2019)

Average Ranging Score

Good (Greater than 5% of birds ranging)- 85.8% of supply chain assessments (88% in 2019)

Average (Between 1-5% of birds ranging) – 11.9% of supply chain assessments (4% in 2019)

Poor (Less than 1% of birds ranging) – 2.3% of supply chain assessments (8% in 2019)

Average Distressed Vocalisations Score

Good (Nothing heard)- 94.9% of supply chain assessments (95% in 2019)

Average (One or two incidents heard)- 4.9% of supply chain assessments (4% in 2019)

Poor (Many instances heard)- 1.1% of supply chain assessments (1% in 2019)

Average Calmness Score

Level 4 (Calm)- 73.7% of supply chain assessments (83% in 2019)

Level 3 (Cautious)- 21.6% of supply chain assessments (5% in 2019)

Level 2 (Flighty)- 4.7% of supply chain assessments (2% in 2019)

Level 1 (Distressed)- 0% of supply chain assessments (0% in 2019)

Average Aggressive Behaviour Score

Good (No aggressive incidents)- 97.2% of supply chain assessments (95% in 2019)

Average (One or two incidents)- 1.9% of supply chain assessments (4% in 2019)

Poor (Many incidents seen)- 0.9% of supply chain assessments (1% in 2019)

10.0 Environmental Enrichment Provision- All Species

Stonegate Farmers ensure all birds on company and supply base farms are approved and tested against minimum standards outlined by RSPCA, APHA and BEIC and other site relevant schemes. The company ensure enrichment provision is a subject outlined within the company's welfare policy and auditing program.

The company encompasses the entire supply chain into multiple supplementary enrichment criteria. Farms are assessed against outlines of the Poultry Health (PHS), 'FeatherWel' and company Qualitative Behavioural Assessment schemes. These measures are audited and inspected routinely at least every twelve working weeks within the entire company supply chain. The additional criteria record and assess factors such a litter quality, pecking stimulants, environment quality and most importantly pay continuous attention to the psychological health and state of birds within systems.

The companies organic supply is also subject to further welfare and enrichment rules. The company currently works with producers from three organic certification bodies. These are SA Organic, OF&G Organic and OFF Organic. Links to these standards can be found within the links below.

<https://www.soilassociation.org/organic-living/why-organic/better-for-animals/poultry-chickens/>

<https://ofgorganic.org/>

<http://www.orgfoodfed.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Production-Standards-November-2018.pdf>

100% of poultry including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) within the company supply chain have been provided with the minimum base line enrichment provisions outlined within RSPCA, DEFRA, BEIC and APHA guidelines. As speciality species including quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu are not bound by strict production standards, Stonegate ensure that speciality species are audited and supplied equal provision to the standards outlined by laying chickens.

9.91% of poultry including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) within the company supply chain are farmed under organic standards within flock sizes of 3,000 birds or less.

90.09% of poultry including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) within the company supply chain are farmed under standard free range standards within flock sizes of 16,000 birds or less.

Base level schemes stipulate the following.

-For every 1,000 birds there must be at least 2 items of environmental enrichment inside the house, which must: a) be permanently available to the birds b) include some destructible forms of enrichment. (100% of supply sites)

-5% range tree cover available to birds. (100% of supply sites)

100% of poultry including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) within the company supply chain are subject to higher level company specific enrichment provision and assessment. Above this a stratified group of certification bodies and customers outline further provision measures from which a large proportion of our supply chain opt into.

Higher level schemes stipulate the following requirements.

-20% range tree cover provision in development (100% of supply sites)

-At least four enrichments provided per 1000 birds. Hanging knotted rope/string, pecking blocks, vegetables and plastic bottles with coloured water, and providing dustbathing boxes, straw bales and plastic-wrapped bales of shavings (100% of supply sites).

11.0 Growth Promoting Substances- All Species

Stonegate Farmers prohibits the use of all growth promoting substances on all species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu within the company supply chain.

The company outlines its position within its corporate welfare policy.

12.0 Genetic Engineering and Cloning- All Species

Stonegate Farmers do not purchase or permit the use of any poultry species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) derived from hatcheries where cloning takes place.

Stonegate Farmers do not purchase or permit the use of any poultry species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) derived from hatcheries where genetic engineering takes place.

The company continues to enforce that both practices remain prohibited within company involvement and that this is clearly written into the company's animal welfare policy and supply contracts.

13.0 Antibiotic Usage - All Species

The company's antibiotic usage procedures outline the need to operate with caution and with veterinary supervision. The company clearly prohibits the prophylactic use of antibiotics. The company works to ensure 'Critically Important Antibiotics' (CIA's) are safeguarded, and antibiotic treatments are used with strict caution and in the interests of preserving animal health and welfare.

The company outlines its position within its corporate welfare policy.

14.0 Free from Routine Mutilation Volumes- All Species

Stonegate Farmers have worked to ensure that routine mutilations show decline from their previously industry wide use. The company has been part of several projects to support the industries movement to reduce mutilations to become only necessary where a further risk to bird welfare is compromised. The companies first move to eliminate routine beak trimming was shown within the British Blacktail breed which is an exclusive line into Waitrose. This has demonstrated the potential to counter the effects of increased feather pecking and cannibalism through the introduction of environmental provisions such as grit and limestone to inhibit negative tendency within birds. Although most birds within the company supply chain are routinely break treated the company is making continued movements towards a sector with significantly reduced rates of routine beak treatment.

39% of chickens within the company supply chain are free from routine beak treatment (36% in 2019).

100% of duck, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, emu and quail within the company supply chain are free from any routine mutilation.

100% of chicken, duck, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, emu and quail within the company supply chain are free from de winging.

100% of chicken, duck, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, emu and quail within the company supply chain are free from toe clipping.

100% of chicken, duck, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, emu and quail within the company supply chain are free from desnooding.

15.0 Long-distance Live Transportation- All Species

100% of poultry species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) were transported to slaughter facilities within 8 hours of departure in 2020.

The company maintains a dedicated transport department which provide time scheduled, pre-planned transport which operates nationwide. The company makes great effort to ensure that any time delays which arise are controlled in a way which preserves and protects standards of animal welfare.

The company's transport policy is outlined within the annual corporate welfare policy.

16.0 Proportion of Animals Subject to Repeat Stunning- All Species

100% of poultry species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) were successfully gas stunned in 2020 without system failure or reason to secondary stun.

Due to the low-risk nature of the gas stunning processes the company continues to demonstrate no reported cases where secondary stunning was required in 2020.

The company outlines its procedure within its annual corporate welfare policy.

17.0 Slaughter Facilities- All Species

100% of our 'end-of-life' depopulated birds including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) were killed posterior to being successfully gas stunned using inert gas mixtures within licenced slaughter facilities in 2020.

Bird slaughter practices and bird handling procedures are outlined within the annual corporate welfare policy.

18.0 Prescribed Company Standards Policy- All Species

100% of supply base sites including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) are audited on a minimum 12 weekly welfare audit cycle. This forms the first of a higher-level additional audit template which is designed in house to make record and support the basic assurance six monthly BEIC self-audits.

100% of supply base flocks including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) are evaluated for Qualitative Behavioural Assessment (QBA) in line with the welfare audit. The QBA forms part of a higher-level assessment which attempts to better understand the psychological state of poultry species within the supply chain at a snapshot in time. The QBA is now supported by many of the company's retail customers.

100% of supply base flocks including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) are audited as part of additional retailer assessments on a 12-month cycle. These audits are an additional higher-level assessment which further test a sites provision of tailored environments with increased focus on information recording and data control.

100% of supply base sites including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) are audited under a workplace risk audit on an 18-month cycle.

19.0 Company Investment in Welfare Advancement Projects- All Species

- Development and implementation of a new approach to livestock auditing through introduction of the Qualitative Behavioural Assessment to increase livestock managers consideration and awareness of bird behavioural variation according to environmental factors. The assessment is carried out upon 100% of supply base sites routinely.
- The entire company supply base are enrolled on 'BEIC Training Passport' program. This is a BEIC controlled program which was developed to enhance and certify that poultry managers and farm staff have sufficient competency to proficiently manage poultry farms.
- The company has worked with a retail partner to develop and complete an Environmental Bolt-on audit on 100% of company sites.
- The company has worked with bodies such as the Wye and Usk Foundation and engaged with Natural Resources Wales to complete farm risk assessments which allow for better insight of supply base manure, air and water control.
- The company is working collaboratively with feed compounders to begin the development of a diet which excludes or significantly reduces the use of the unsustainable feed ingredient; soyabean meal.
- The company has invested in the introduction of a salmonella testing notice program which is provided to all supply base producers to reduce the level of late or incomplete tests carried out as part of BEIC and APHA testing conditions. This resulted in a significant reduction in cases of non-conformance.
- The company participate in an 'Ethical Employment Survey' which assesses 100% of the supply base on an 18-month basis to assess and score the risk of supply base employment procedures. The results of the survey are available publicly through our customers. This process provides consumers with reassurance that the staff within the supply base are recognised and accountable towards production.
- Continued work and group attendance to STAG group meetings.
- Farms team visits to various European countries to identify examples of best practice.
- Supporting NGO lobbying with novel protein groups to support the development of alternative protein sources which further satisfy natural ranging activities for poultry.
- The company has recognised the value in enriching staff knowledge and up to date training to establish a modern and directional approach to welfare development. Company staff form part of groups such as 'The Laying Hen Welfare Forum', where several videos have been produced to demonstrate techniques to control and maintain feather cover in poultry. These are available at <https://lhwf.co.uk/news/>.
- The company has also recognised the value which may be achieved through further research and for some time has supported PHD projects from multiple students who are completing studies into research gaps and testing hypotheses. The company works continually to support studies within Bristol and Reading University. A group of company supply base farms have been selected to take part within sound therapy investigations which are testing whether artificial sounds within bird environments can positively impact bird welfare and production.
- Company staff have attended seminars and workshops through the 'Henovation' group which has included work on LED lighting, litter material, nutrition, and range cover studies. European project
- The company is a subscriber of Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) and participates through supply chain involvement where at least two farms will take part in an attempt to achieve LEAF mark status and hopefully secure the first poultry farm places within the group.
- The company works with the group 'Eyes on Animals' where studies take place to positively influence welfare guided strategies to catch and transport poultry.

20.0 Company Promotion of the Value of Welfare Control- All Species

Every year Stonegate sell and distribute millions of egg packs throughout the UK to retailers with various presence of standard bodies and quality marks printed on pack. The company recognises the importance of ensuring that consumers recognise that the supply chain is thorough in its efforts to conform and work towards higher standards assessed by industry organizations. The company hopes that this will provide continued confidence in the free-range sector and our company supply chain.

The company participates within several school visits every year to demonstrate the company's role within the supply chain. Lessons cover the company's value in the supply of free-range standards being our base production requirement. The lessons aim to cover and reiterate the value which increased welfare standards can offer to a supply chain.

The company's social media presence is growing year on year with the companies leading speciality egg business now possessing over 10.8k Facebook followers (6.5k in 2019) and 43.7K Instagram followers (24.5k in 2020). Its following is the most supported private egg page on the platforms. The company attempts to provide insight to as many customers as possible to broaden understanding of how egg reaches the plate. The platforms are regularly maintained and posted upon with many references to animal welfare and the company's commitment to bird health and welfare amongst its supply chain.

The company has a broad attendance at public facing events such as Linking Environment and (LEAF) open farm Sundays, Burghley Horse Trials, agricultural shows and many other events which demonstrate company efforts to promote free range and ethical farming methods. Stonegate's retail company Clarence Court is also the principal sponsor of the 2021 Ragley Hall Game Fair.

Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the company had limited opportunities to reach the public directly in 2020, however significant effort was made to continue to provide a link between the public and our farms. An example of this was a 10-minute video which was produced for LEAF which explained free range production and what our producers do to maintain high welfare and the daily processes on the farms.