

STONEGATE FARMERS CORPORATE WELFARE REPORT 2021-22

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



Stonegate

The information presented within this report presents company flock data from 01 Jan 2021 to 31 Dec 2021. 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 privately owned 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 rigorous British Lion 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.

Stonegate Farmers Ltd

Lacock Green, Corsham Road, Lacock, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 2LZ
Company Registration: 740635 | Registered in England

01249 730 700
enq@stonegate.co.uk
[stonegate.co.uk](https://www.stonegate.co.uk)

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 pride ourselves on our universal commitment to ensure we do not produce or process egg from non-free to fly systems.



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, developed, and communicated with our customers. The company's team work collaboratively to ensure welfare commitments are achieved and managed. The responsibility of welfare control within the supply base rests with the farm managers. The companies Supply Chain Director leads the supply chain team and 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 DEMONSTRATION OF WELFARE POLICY APPLICATION THROUGH THE SUPPLY CHAIN- ALL SPECIES

The companies 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 entire supply base is expected to conform to all minimum and all higher-level Stonegate established standards to maintain approved supply in the company. 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).

0.92% of supply base laying birds are duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) which are audited routinely under a company developed Code of Practice, RSCPA welfare standards for laying hens which has been developed to ensure sites meet equivalent production and welfare standards of chicken laying farms within the supply base. 100% of duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) are audited and managed to operate according to higher level welfare standards and practices.

99.08% of supply base laying flock are chickens, which are routinely audited according to standards outlined by the Lion Code of Practice, RSPCA standard for laying hens and other site relevant organic production scheme. 100% of laying chickens within the company supply base are audited and managed to operate according to higher level welfare standards and practices.

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 and use of enrichment, access and use of range area, levels of aggression/ vocalisations/ calmness on inspection.

All species including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu) are also audited as part of the Qualitative Behavioural Assessment which is supported by Stonegate and its customers as an alternative to typical quantitative measured assessments but instead focusses on our field's team/ farm managers assessment of the hens phycological state shown through their behavioural expressions. The assessment likens human sentience and characteristics of positive and negative animal behaviour to enable scores to be placed on the perceived psychological at time of the assessment.

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

- Customer Review and Declaration of Welfare and Production KPI's/KWI's (monthly)
- Qualitative Behavioural Assessment (minimum of 12 weeks routinely)
- Stonegate Farmers/ Waitrose Welfare Audit (minimum of 12 weeks routinely)
- Stonegate Farmers Waitrose Environmental Audit (minimum 12 months routinely)
- Customer Bolt-on laying Audit (minimum 12 months routinely)
- Customer Bolt-on environmental Audit (minimum 12 months routinely)
- Customer 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 12 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.

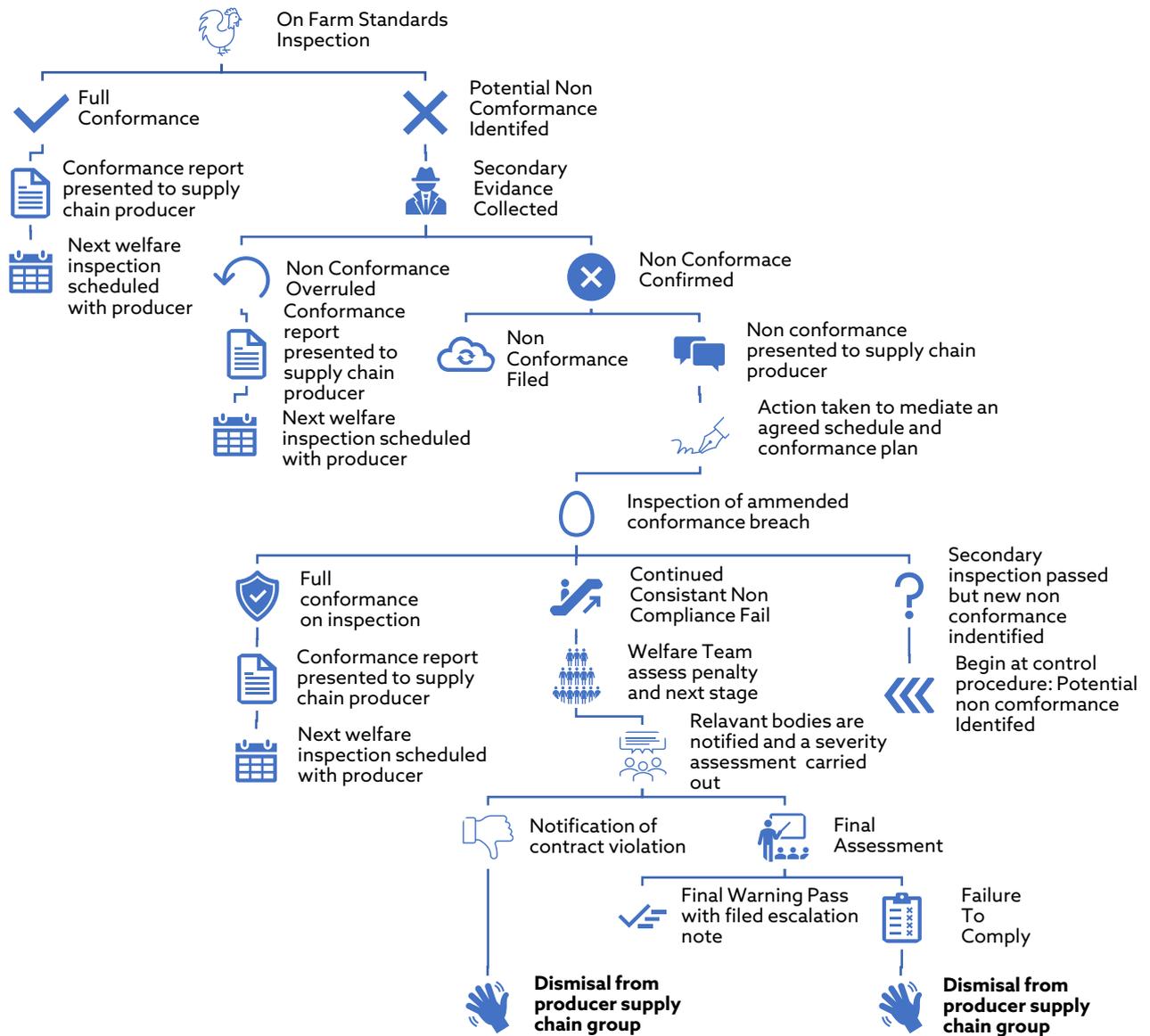
The value which can be achieved through implementing additional infrastructure and adoption of new husbandry techniques to improve animal welfare is also routinely communicated with our suppliers through several regional producer meetings which takes place twice per year. These meetings provide an opportunity for the company to demonstrate the 'needs and wants' of the consumer and our retail customers to our farmers. Our stratified range of egg production contracts incentivise strong welfare consideration and data sharing. These regular virtual and in person meetings to facilitate the transfer and uptake of husbandry knowledge and novel welfare practices have been introduced to better align production approach with consumer expectations.

100% of supply base sites are contractually bound to enter data routinely into a service app called Eggbase which allows production, welfare provision, husbandry, and prescription data to be shared and reviewed with Stonegate and its customers. Most importantly the shared record of data allows farm managers and our liaison team to work collaboratively to react to disease, environmental, welfare and production challenges more effectively. Stonegate continue to cover the monthly fee for the entire supply base and continue to support Eggbase in its development of new resources.

The company's dedicated fields team provide training to all producers to ensure that husbandry at all life stages, culling technique, trouble shooting, record keeping, and compliance control are completed and assessed proficiently to optimise standards of animal welfare.

5.0 WELFARE ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE- ALL SPECIES

Processes for ensuring welfare standards are implemented within supply chain.



6.0 COMPANY WELFARE TARGETS- ALL SPECIES

1. Introduction of both a live and inactivated salmonella vaccine as a compulsory requirement for all poultry within the supply base. 100% of chickens within the company supply base to be vaccinated with a live and inactivated combination by 2023.

The company has notified its producer base that all birds placed in rearing farms from November 2021 which are destined for placement on a Stonegate supply base site will need to be vaccinated using a combination of live and inactivated vaccines.

To date, there has not been a positive detection of field strain salmonella when using this combination of vaccine. To date every positive salmonella break has been in flocks given only a live vaccine.

This step has been taken to as a result of industry pressure to control salmonella detections on laying sites during routine swab sampling. Between 2019 and 2021 the industry experienced a significant increase in the number of positive detections and consequent slaughter of poultry flocks.

These changes will increase costs across company rearing sites (up to 5%) and increase the price which supply base sites pay for their pullets (up to 10%). However, this change will significantly reduce the risk of a positive salmonella case on a supply base site. The company will need to invest in significant infrastructure and staff to support the additional requirement. The company will need to communicate with all current and potential suppliers to ensure that changes are made to practice across 100% of the supply base.

2. 100% non-beak treated beaks by 2028.

The company reduce the reliance on Infra-red beak trimming through a combination of change including adapting management techniques, genetic profiles, and breed selection. Our target is to step away from beak trimming each year and completely prohibit its practice by 2028. The company is developing a road map to achieve this including the start of on farm company trials.

The company will set up regularly 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. The company understands and respects the consumers desire to remove all routine mutilations from the supply chain.

The company expects that the changes to genetic profiles of some breed types will increase the cost of pullets (5-10% in short term) for the supply base. The company is committed to supporting the cost of these changes to improve rates of reduction. The company understands that the main consequence of this change will require the company and its supply chain to have increased understanding and investment within novel practices to reduce the effects of consequential negative bird activity through manging fully beaked birds within modern laying systems.

3. A minimum of 20% tree cover on 100% of static (non-mobile) sites by 2025

The company and its customers value the provision of environmental stimulants which promote natural activities of laying birds. The company will look to increase the provision of trees on all static ranges within the supply base by 2025. The company alongwith its customers will look to financially incentivise and support supply base producers to develop greater than 20% tree cover on their ranges.

7.0 2021 COMPANY WELFARE OBJECTIVES REVIEWED

After reviewing targets which were outlined in 2020, the company has reported progress and trends identified to improve upon existing welfare standards.

The company will aim 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.

The company has successfully introduced the requirement for all laying birds within the company supply base to have received both a live and inactivated salmonella vaccine while in rear. All supply base sites are now contractually bound to vaccinate for ILT to reduce the risk of the disease negatively impacting birds within the supply base. Although the additional vaccination has led to an increased cost of pullets, the company has experienced no cases of positive salmonella detection within chickens which have been entered into this vaccination program.

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 fields 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.

100% supply base sites are now routinely audited as part of the QBA program. Over 200 assessments were completed in 2021. The assessment outcomes are reviewed quarterly with assessment accounts soon to be developed for farmers.

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. As standard practice the company will work to ensure that all chickens are scheduled to be depleted at least 76 weeks of age.

Free range life cycles continue to increase year on year. Mean average Free range life length has increased by 6 weeks (42 days) since 2016. We expect the upward trend to slow with free range as the company achieved its original target of 78 weeks. Improvements in the breeds are being capitalised on in free range producers with genetic groups now looking at longevity of lay as their main target to drive further efficiencies. Although the company would like to see further increases in life lengths the company would value a stabilisation of increases within brown bird chickens as shell quality has suffered towards the later weeks of flocks with longer life lengths.

The company will make significant progress towards implementing advanced free-range standards within 2021.

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 extra tree cover provisions, additional indoor floorspace, winter garden/ veranda spaces and novel enrichments greatly surpass the baseline standards and requirements of free-range schemes.

8.0 REVIEW OF WELFARE PERFORMANCE METRICS- ALL SPECIES

The data the company auditing team collect and record against predetermined systems of measurement are termed our Key Welfare Indicator's (KWI's). These are a set of quantifiable measures we use to gauge comparable long-term welfare performance. They metrics enable us to set targets, guide our strategic plan and benchmark farm performance within our own supply base and allow reflection against the wider industry.

Routine beak treatment

42% of laying chickens within our supply chain were not routinely beak treated in 2021.

The rate of routine chicken beak treatment continues to fall with a 5% 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's target is to reduce routine beak treatment to less than 50% within our supply chain by 2025 and to prohibit the beak treatment of all chickens within the supply base by 2028. 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 these targets.

The company has made further investment in novel brands which promote zero beak treatment practices along with other responsible production practices such as on farm feed milling to improve tailed poultry diets and to reduce their environmental impact. The company currently offers the largest packed volumes of UK sourced egg from flocks which are not beak treated.

Feather cover

The company flocks average feather score at point of slaughter for head/neck was 0.57 on a 0-2 scale in 2021 (0.73 in 2019).

The company flocks average feather score at point of slaughter for back/rump was 0.74 on a 0-2 scale in 2021 (0.91 in 2019).

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.

The company expect to continue to see steady improvements in end-of-life feather score as the quantity of white bred birds continues to increase within the supply base and understanding of environmental provisions to reduce negative bird activity improves.

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 company has worked to ensure that change is made in this space.

The average age of chickens at point of slaughter was 78 weeks old in 2021 and 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 2021 of 88 weeks.

Quails continue to live the shortest lives within the company supply chain as flock age at point of slaughter was 59 weeks in 2021.

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 of 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 2021. Techniques to improve laying length potential have included better controlling the 'step up' of egg size increases, provision of oyster shell within diets to support shell quality and placement of more white breed flocks supported by directives to reduce environmental footprint and improve efficiencies.

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 2021 was 12.74% (12.53% in 2020 and 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 2021 was 0.28% (0.26% in 2020 and 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 at end of life with two phases of inert gas mixtures in 2021. Zero cases of secondary or repeat stunning processes were reported by the three licenced slaughter sites which were used.

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 company operates a dedicated transport team which oversee and prepare movement places for the supply bases entire stocking and depopulation processes.

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 4.5 hours in 2021 (5.7 hours in 2020 and 5.1 hours in 2019).

100% of chicken and duck were transported to laying farm facilities within 8-hours of departure in 2021.

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 2021.

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 pre-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 4.8 hours across the supply chain in 2021 (5.1 hours in 2020 and 5.7 hours in 2019).

100% of chicken and duck were transported to slaughter facilities within 8-hours of departure in 2021.

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 2021.

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 eight-hour target. Although this record is likely to show year on year variation due to variation within supply chain locations however this rate remains acceptable as the business continues to trade 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.

Improvement within transit times is dependent on the distribution of our supply base across the UK at any given time but the company expect to make the most significant reductions through increasing the transportation of all species during quieter periods of the day such as overnight.

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 2021 (Mixed flock ages).

Mean Average Enrichment Engagement Score

Excellent (Continuous use of enrichments)- 77.9% of supply chain assessments (75.5% in 2020, 64.0% in 2019)

Average (Intermittent use of enrichments)- 18.7% of supply chain assessments (22.9% in 2020, 32.0% in 2019)

Poor (Low or infrequent use of enrichments)- 3.4% of supply chain assessments (1.6% in 2020, 4.0% in 2019)

Mean Average Ranging Score

Good (Greater than 5% of birds ranging)- 74.3% of supply chain assessments (85.8% in 2020, 88.0% in 2019)

Average (Between 1-5% of birds ranging) - 12.2% of supply chain assessments (11.9% in 2020, 4.0% in 2019)

Poor (Less than 1% of birds ranging) - 3.5% of supply chain assessments (2.3% in 2020, 8.0% in 2019)

Mean Average Distressed Vocalisations Score

Good (Nothing heard)- 91.2% of supply chain assessments (94.9% in 2020, 95.0% in 2019)

Average (One or two incidents heard)- 6.2% of supply chain assessments (4.9% in 2020, 4.0% in 2019)

Poor (Many instances heard)- 2.6% of supply chain assessments (1.1% in 2020, 1.0% in 2019)

Mean Average Calmness Score

Level 4 (Calm)- 70.1% of supply chain assessments (73.7% in 2020, 83.0% in 2019)

Level 3 (Cautious)- 23.7% of supply chain assessments (21.6% in 2020, 5.0% in 2019)

Level 2 (Flighty)- 5.9% of supply chain assessments (4.7% in 2020, 2% in 2019)

Level 1 (Distressed)- 0.3% of supply chain assessments (0% in 2020, 0% in 2019)

Mean Average Aggressive Behaviour Score

Good (No aggressive incidents)- 91.3% of supply chain assessments (97.2% in 2020, 95.0% in 2019)

Average (One or two incidents)- 5.1% of supply chain assessments (1.9% in 2020, 4.0% in 2019)

Poor (Many incidents seen)- 3.6% of supply chain assessments (0.9% in 2020, 1.0% 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 part of the company's welfare policy and auditing program.

All supply base sites are assessed against guidelines of the APHA Poultry Health Scheme (PHS) with further assurance supported through reflection towards welfare driven metrics outlined by assurance services such as RSPCA Assured and 'AssureWel'. Supply sites are audited by independent government and assurance scheme auditors routinely to comply with production legislation however Stonegate's independent audit team carry out higher level assessment on all sites at least every twelve weeks. The additional audit schedules record and assess factors such as 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 base 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 base 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 base are farmed under standard free-range standards within flock sizes of 16,000 birds or less.

The company maintains a universal commitment to provide species specific enrichment for all species within the company supply base including chicken, duck, and speciality species (quail, ostrich, guinea fowl, geese, pheasant, rhea, turkey, and emu). The company will remain adaptive to further inclusion and introduction of novel enrichments which positively influence welfare and encourage natural behaviours within their environments.

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 assessment.

Higher level schemes stipulate the following requirements as examples.

- Greater than 5% range tree cover provision
- Multiple types of pecking enrichments provided per 1000 birds. Hanging knotted rope/string, pecking blocks, rubber/ plastic balls, dustbathing boxes/ sand pits, straw bales and plastic-wrapped bales of shavings.
- Internal scratch/ bathing areas to promote natural behaviours.
- Artificial range shelters to promote range activity.
- Nesting box mats to provide a clean and comfortable laying spaces.
- Ergonomic perching designed to promote climbing and improve comfort while resting.

The company further outlines its position within its corporate welfare policy.

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 further 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 further 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.

42% of laying chickens within the company supply chain were free from routine beak treatment in 2021 (39% in 2020 and 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 2021.

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 planned for in an effort 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 2021 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 2021.

The company further 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 2021.

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 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 phycological state of poultry species within the supply chain at a snapshot in time. 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 welfare assessment 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 continues to work with organisations such as the Wye and Usk Foundation and engaged with Natural Resources Wales to complete on 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. Trials have also included rearing tests on the efficiency of growing male chicks.
- 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

Each 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 act responsibly and work towards higher standards reviewed 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 12.3K Facebook followers (10.8K in 2020 and 6.5K in 2019) and 57.6K Instagram followers (43.7K in 2020 and 24.5K in 2019). 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 was also the principal sponsor of the 2021 Ragley Hall Game Fair. The company continues to look for opportunities to demonstrate the sectors processes and approach to consumers.

Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the company had limited opportunities to reach the public directly in both 2020 and 2021, however significant effort was made to continue to provide a connection 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.