



Soil Association



Dear Commissioner Borg,

Over 80% of chickens and pigs reared for meat in the EU are factory farmed. Much of the pork we eat in the UK is imported, meaning that it often comes from pigs kept indoors for their entire lives, sometimes: with no straw bedding; with their tails cut off; and forced to give birth in crates. Now is your chance to stop it.**

We want you to improve the lives of millions of farm animals by extending method of production labelling to all meat and dairy products in the EU. Consumers can then identify the farm system animals were raised in and choose not to support factory farming.

This is a crucial way to provide consumers with information and empower them to help drive future improvements in farm animal welfare. Schemes such as organic certification already ensure higher welfare products can be identified but until lower animal welfare products can also be identified, consumers will not be able to make informed decisions.

The EU has already improved the lives of millions of hens by introducing mandatory method of production labelling on eggs in 2004. The market share for shell eggs from cage-free hens in the UK increased from 31% in 2003 to 51% in 2011***. We want to see this success repeated for all farm animals in the EU.

Please take this opportunity to achieve clear, honest labelling of meat and dairy products and, in doing so, allow consumers to help lead Europe towards fairer, healthier and more humane farming practices.

Yours Sincerely

The Soil Association

*Tonio Borg is Commissioner of SANCO, the EU Health and Consumer Affairs Directorate, responsible for labelling food, and for animal welfare at EC level

** Based on data from Tables 4 and 5 in EFSA (2007) Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Animal Health and Welfare on a request from the Commission on Animal health and welfare in fattening pigs in relation to housing and husbandry. The EFSA Journal 564, 1-14, citing Hendriks, H.J.M. and van de Weerdhof, A.M., 1999. Dutch Notes on BAT for Pig and Poultry Intensive Livestock Farming. Information Centre for Environmental Licensing, The Hague, The Netherlands and calculations by Compassion in World Farming including data for the UK and France, the two largest broiler chicken producing countries in the EU.

*** UK figure for 2011 44% free range, 4% barn 3% organic = 51%

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=17379>

1. 'Labelling Matters is a joint project of the Soil Association, Compassion in World Farming (CIWF), RSPCA and World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)