

Animal welfare advice and producer support

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Animal Welfare Advisor

Objective 3: To ensure that immediate feedback, and subsequent advisory support and farmer networks which stimulate pro-active husbandry changes, are available to all Freedom Food and Soil Association Certification Ltd approved farms

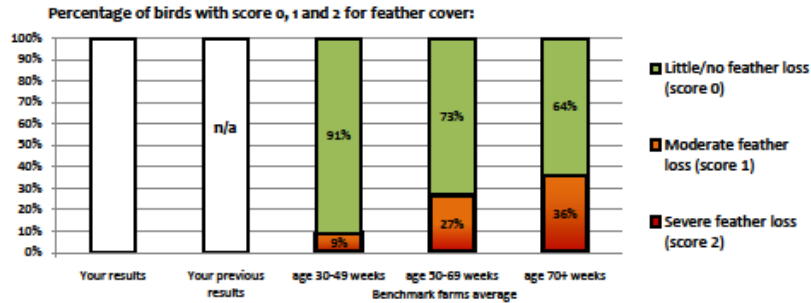
1. Immediate feedback on core measures at time of inspection + sign-posting to appropriate advice and support if improvement is possible or required
2. Advisory programme that will deliver the most useful and appropriate support to farmers

Laying Hen - Welfare Outcome Assessment - Feedback

Farm name			
System type (please circle)	Organic	Free-range	Barn
House number		Age of flock	
Breed			

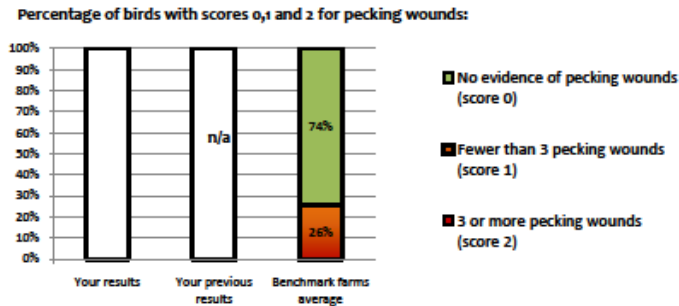
FF/SA reg. number	
AssureWel farm code	
Date	

Feather loss / cover



Benchmark farm data has been gathered using approximately the same scoring system, although scores 1 and 2 were not separated.

Pecking wounds



Benchmark farm data has been gathered using approximately the same scoring system, although scores 1 and 2 were not separated.

Management of sick or injured birds

Number of birds that would benefit from hospitalisation or euthanasia:

Your results	Your previous results	Benchmark farms average
	n/a	No data yet available

Your hen welfare assessment results

Welfare Outcome Measures: Laying Hens

As part of the AssureWel project, we have assessed your flock today for the measures shown below. These are all welfare outcome measures and can be affected by various factors, such as management practices, housing conditions, stockmanship and the strain and source of the birds used on your farm. This method of assessment is being developed to help demonstrate compliance with existing RSPCA and/or Soil Association welfare standards for laying hens. It may also help us in the development of our standards in the future. The results can also be used to show how your flock compares with those of flocks from other farms for these measures. If you would like to discuss your results further then please contact Kate Still, our Welfare Adviser for the project, who will be happy to help (kstill@soilassociation.org 0117 3145174), Soil Association licensees can also contact their Certification Officer.

Feather cover

Why is this measured? Feather cover is a measure of feather pecking which can be caused by a large number of reasons, such as breed, food, housing and range use during the rearing or laying period. Damage to feathers of the back and rump usually indicate feather pecking. Feather pecking is painful and poor condition of feathers can lead to thermal discomfort (cold/sunburn) and reduced productivity.

How is this measured? Visual assessment of the back and rump of the bird.

How is this scored? 0 = no feather loss (no bare skin visible, no or slight wear, only single feathers lacking)

1 = moderate feather loss (moderate wear i.e. damaged feathers or more than single feathers lacking, or bare skin visible any size < 5cm diameter)
 2 = severe feather loss (bare skin visible ≥ 5cm diameter)

Pecking wounds

Why is this measured? Pecking wounds are a sign of aggression which can increase stress and lead to difficulties for less dominant birds to access all facilities, e.g. nest boxes and popholes. Wounds are painful and can attract further pecking or become infected.

How is this measured? Close visual inspection of the head and comb on one side of the bird. Scars (healed lesions) are not included.

How is this scored? 0 = No evidence of pecking wounds

1 = Fewer than 3 pecking wounds

2 = 3 or more pecking wounds

Management of sick or injured birds

Why is this measured? Sick birds have poor welfare. The early recognition, treatment or euthanasia of sick birds will alleviate this welfare compromise.

How is this measured? Assessment of the whole flock for sick or injured birds that would benefit from hospitalisation (i.e. removal from the main flock) or should be euthanased, including birds in hospital pen that should be euthanased. This includes obviously sick birds (with fluffed up feathers and an inactive, unresponsive appearance) and birds with body wounds that have fresh blood that might attract cannibalistic attention from other birds.

How is this scored? Number recorded - no scoring

Advisory Programme

- Targeted individual support via, one on one advisory visits
- Technical fact sheets and online resources aimed at improving performance on all core measures
- Learning networks to include local ‘goal focused’ group workshops and also broader health and welfare advisory events
- On-going communication and support via e-mail and web-based forums
- A “high welfare” award scheme will celebrate both attainment and improvement in relation to core measures

Learning Networks

- Local 'goal focused' groups adopting the 'stable school' model
- Collaboration with existing farmer groups
- Linking up networks of producers with similar concerns or solutions
- Broader health and welfare events
- Continual support and momentum via e-communication and web forums