

Heartbreaking new investigation shows that animal farming can never be high welfare

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A piglet at a "high-welfare" farm. Photo: Animal Rising

Advocacy group [Animal Rising](https://animalrising.org) has released the largest undercover investigation in UK history, revealing systemic cruelty at every 'high-welfare' facility.

Footage from over 40 supposedly 'high welfare' farms across the United Kingdom has been released by animal rights organization [Animal Rising](https://animalrising.org), revealing cruelty in every single one.

The farms fall under the Royal Society for the Prevention of Animals ([RSPCA](https://www.rspca.org.uk)) [Assured scheme](https://www.rspca.org.uk/assured), which is one of the largest animal welfare programs in the country.

The accompanying report contains investigations from 45 farms across the UK - including chickens, pigs, salmon, and trout. The farms were randomly selected, with investigators finding cruelty and suffering across the board. The scenes include dead and dying baby chickens, dead pigs left in filthy farm walkways for days, and salmon being eaten alive by sea lice.

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The report details an alleged 280 legal breaches and 94 breaches of Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) regulations, with Animal Rising calling on the RSPCA to drop the scheme.



“The world’s oldest and most respected animal charity has clearly lost its way. The work they do for cats, dogs, and other animals is evidently not making its way to others like chickens and pigs. As the charity nears its 200th birthday it has a choice to make; will it step up, protect animals, and drop the Assured Scheme?”

On one Somerset farm investigators found a dead and decomposing pig in a walkway, whilst others observed a shed at an RSPCA Assured egg-laying hen farm in Kent with approximately 64,000 chickens in dire conditions.

RSPCA President, Chris Packham, was sent the footage and called the footage “indefensible,” calling on the charity to suspend the scheme and take a bolder stance to protect animals, whilst a Crown Court Judge described the scheme as “effectively fraud”.

This exposé comes after several other investigations into RSPCA Assured farms by other UK groups such as Animal Justice Project (AJP) and VIVA!

Last week, two supporters of Animal Rising pasted the face of the iconic British character Wallace over the famous portrait of King Charles III to help draw attention to the cruelty on RSPCA Assured farms. The stunt went viral and made headlines across the world, showing the truth behind “high-welfare” to millions.

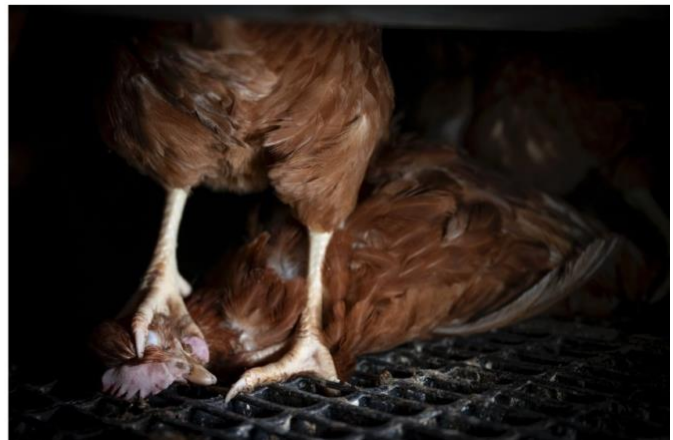
One poster overlaid the King’s face with Wallace, from the popular Aardman stop-motion, whilst another was a speech bubble reading “No Cheese Gromit. Look At All This Cruelty On RSPCA Farms!”

The lighthearted action played on the King’s love of Wallace and Gromit and his status as Royal Patron of the RSPCA. Animal Rising has called on the King to suspend his support for the charity until they drop the Assured Scheme.

“With King Charles being such a big fan of Wallace and Gromit, we couldn’t think of a better way to draw his attention to the horrific scenes on RSPCA Assured farms!,” said Daniel Juniper, former Early Years Practitioner and one of those involved. “Even though we hope this is amusing to His Majesty, we also call on him to seriously reconsider if he wants to be associated with the awful suffering across farms being endorsed by the RSPCA.

“Charles has made it clear he is sensitive to the suffering of animals in UK farms; now is the perfect time for him to step up and call on the RSPCA to drop the Assured Scheme and tell the truth about animal farming.”

The investigations show that there's no such thing as humane meat or eggs, say Animal Rising. Even on the highest welfare scheme in the United Kingdom, cruelty and suffering are a systemic part of farming animals for food.



What About in the US?

Data and investigations show that the United States is no better. A 2017 survey found that 75 percent of Americans believe they consume meat, dairy, and eggs from humanely treated animals. However, statistics on the number of animals per farm in the US reveal that over 99 percent of animals live on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), known as factory farms.

Despite many consumers making a conscious effort to purchase cage-free or pasture-raised eggs or buy meat from local farmers' markets, these labels are often just clever marketing ploys. The reality is that animals suffer on farms far removed from the idyllic grassy fields depicted to consumers.

For instance, although hens used to produce cage-free eggs are not kept in cages, they are still confined to the same limited space per bird as those in caged systems. These hens are crowded into sheds with tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands, of other birds.

In such stressful conditions, the birds often peck at each other, leading to feather loss, bleeding, and even death due to cannibalism caused by their overcrowded confinement.

What Can You Do?

The only way to make sure you're not contributing to the suffering of farmed animals is to choose plant-based foods instead. An incredible 70 percent of our 100,000-strong Species Unite community is actively choosing to incorporate more plant-based foods into their diets after learning about the truth behind animal farming.