



THE WORLD
CAN'T WAIT
TO CHANGE
THE LIVES OF
FARM ANIMALS.



Your guide to
understanding
grocery store labels.

**THE WORLD
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TO CHANGE
THE LIVES OF
FARM ANIMALS.**

We can't wait for animal farming that's better for humans and better for animals. For animals to stop being valued simply for what they can do for us. For pigs to live in clean pens with straw, space and fresh air. For chickens to live with natural light and the space to roam and feed. For cows to be looked after well, with access to everything they need to thrive. For animals everywhere to be cared for and protected, living free from fear, hunger and thirst.

The world can't wait to change the lives of animals. And we can't wait to have you join us to make it happen.



Together,

We are World Animal Protection.

We end the needless suffering of animals.

We influence decision makers to put animals on the global agenda.

We help the world see how important animals are to all of us.

We inspire people to change animals' lives for the better.

We move the world to protect animals.

Humane animal farming is better for everyone. Animals live longer, healthier and more active lives. Farmers can earn more too.

So, we work with governments, farmers and consumers all over the world – campaigning for farm animals and working with businesses to show that farming can be sustainable and profitable.

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World Animal Protection has created this guide to help consumers make an informed decision when grocery shopping. This guide was created with the information that was available at the time it was gathered. World Animal Protection does not endorse a specific label or producer and does not intend to vify any either. Please use this guide as it was intended. World Animal Protection makes no guarantee to the completeness of the contents of this guide and shall not be held liable to any person(s) in regards to the information contained in this guide.



**THE WORLD
CAN'T WAIT
FOR HIGH
ANIMAL
WELFARE.**

What does it mean when an animal has good welfare?

Ensuring every animal has a good quality of life, or a life worth living, is the essence of high animal welfare. A holistic view of welfare means the health and physical well-being of the animal is considered. It also means farming conditions provide for animals' ability to express natural behaviour and their need to socialize with other animals, to ensure their psychological well-being.

Welfare can be described as "high" if the animals are fit and healthy, feeling good and free from suffering.

Animal welfare ensures the Five Freedoms are met

- 1 Freedom from hunger and thirst** by access to fresh water and appropriate diet
- 2 Freedom from discomfort** by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area
- 3 Freedom from pain, injury or disease** by preventing or rapidly treating problems
- 4 Freedom to express normal behaviour** by providing sufficient space, facilities and company
- 5 Freedom from fear and distress** by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering

Myths and confusing labels

Label	Meaning
Natural, Farm Fresh and Farm-raised	There is no agreed upon definition for these terms when it comes to food labeling nor do they refer to a set of agreed upon standards.
Vegetarian fed	Farm animals are sometimes fed animal by-products which is unappealing for some consumers. Some producers give their animals a diet of exclusively vegetarian feed. However, animals fed vegetarian feed may still be raised on factory farms unless the label also includes something about higher welfare.
Hormone-free	This means animals are not given any growth hormones. While added hormones can negatively impact animal welfare, those raised without hormones may still be kept in intensive, crowded conditions. Thus, this label does not guarantee higher welfare for animals.
Antibiotic-free	This means animals are not given antibiotics to prevent illness or promote growth. This is not a reliable indicator of animal welfare. While antibiotics should not be used to prevent illness or promote growth, it is important that sick animals are treated. Thus, this label does not guarantee higher welfare for animals.
Local or locally-raised	Locally raised is not a reliable indicator of animal welfare. What is important is the animal welfare practices on the farm regardless of geography as well as distance animals travel from farm to slaughter. While it's important to support local producers, look for those that are also raising their animals in higher welfare conditions.
Grass fed or grass finished	Beef cows typically start out on pasture and are sent to feedlots for finishing where they are fed a high-density grain diet that is hard on their digestive system. The 'grass-fed' label does not guarantee cows have not been sent to feedlots. 'Grass-finished' means cows spend their entire life on pasture.

Do farm animals in Canada receive antibiotics?

In Canada, antibiotics are given to farm animals for three purposes, to prevent animals getting sick, to treat sick animals and/or promote growth. Treating animals who are ill is considered good practice and important for animal welfare. However, certain antibiotics are also approved for routine use and are administered at low levels to prevent disease and promote growth. Since animals are kept in crowded conditions with poor air quality, they are more likely to get sick. An indirect effect to these low-level antibiotics is that they act as growth promoters.

Antibiotic use for these purposes are approved for beef, dairy cattle, chicken, turkey, pork and fish. However, the industry no longer uses "Category 1" antibiotics - those that are critical for treatment of human diseases and where no alternatives exist. They are moving away from the use of other antibiotics for this purpose as well.

We believe that antibiotics should not be used as growth promoters or on a routine preventative basis to enable animals to be kept in poor welfare conditions, and instead the animals should be given healthier environments.

Do farm animals in Canada receive hormones?

In Canada, only cows are subject to hormones to accelerate growth (beef cows). It is unclear the full animal welfare impacts of using hormones as studies are scarce. Some of the implications are unnatural growth and side effects which include aggressiveness and nervousness. Studies have also shown chronic stress conditions.

To avoid products using additional hormones to increase growth, look for organic and other high welfare labels to ensure beef is free from added hormones. In Canada, chicken, pigs, dairy cows and other animals are never administered growth-promoting hormones.

World Animal Protection believes that the use of growth-promoting substances is unacceptable.



What do the higher welfare labels mean?

Organic

- Producers meet animal health and welfare standards. They use 100% organic feed.
- The use of hormones and antibiotics for growth purposes are not permitted.
- Animals are given antibiotics as treatment when they are ill. In this case, milk producers must wait for a 30-day withdrawal period before milk can be marketed as organic. Meat animals given antibiotics cannot be marketed as organic and must be labeled as standard conventional meat.
- This label is Canadian government regulated and farms are regularly inspected.



Certified Humane

Humane Farm Animal Care (HFAC) is an international non-profit certification organization dedicated to improving the lives of farm animals in food production from birth through slaughter. The goal of the program is to improve the lives of farm animals by driving consumer demand for kinder and more responsible farm animal practices. When you see the Certified Humane Raised and Handled® label you can be assured that the food products have come from facilities that meet precise, objective standards for farm animal treatment.

- The producer meets Animal Care Standards and applies them to farm animals, from birth through slaughter.
- Animals are never kept in cages, crates, or tie stalls. Animals must be free to do what comes naturally. For example, chickens must be able to flap their wings and dust bathe, and pigs must have space to move around and root.
- Animals must be fed a diet of quality feed, without animal by-products, antibiotics or growth hormones.
- The strict use of antibiotics must only be administered under the supervision of a veterinarian when the animal is sick.



Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW

Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW (AWA) is an independent, non-profit farm certification program. The goal of the program is to ensure animals are raised outdoors, on pasture or range for their entire lives, using sustainable humane farming practices. AGW has trained independent auditors that visit the certified farms at least once a year to ensure that all standards are being met.



Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.)

G.A.P. is a 5-step animal welfare rating program. Higher steps require farms meet stricter welfare standards. Lower steps (1-2) facilitate the transition of conventional farms to higher standards but allow some harmful practices during the transition. Each step builds on the progress made from the previous step. Farms are audited every fifteen months by a third-party certification company. G.A.P. products are available at Whole Foods Market and are labeled according to the Step which reflect the conditions in which the animals were raised.

- Step 1:** No cages, no crates, no crowding
- Step 2:** Enriched environment
- Step 3:** Enhanced outdoor access
- Step 4:** Pasture-centered
- Step 5:** Animal centered; no physical alterations
- Step 5+:** Animal-centered, entire life on the same farm

Other labels

Grass finished, free range, cage-free, free run and antibiotic free

Chicken

	No cages, crates or crowding ¹	Enriched Environment ²	Outdoor access	Appropriate lighting ³	Bedding (fresh, clean litter)	No animal by-products in feed	Restricted use of antibiotics ⁴	Requires slow-growing breeds
Organic	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔	
Certified Humane	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔	
AGW	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔	🐔
Free range			🐔					
Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.)	Step 1 and higher	Step 1 and higher	Step 3 and higher	Step 2 and higher	Step 1 and higher	Step 1 and higher	Step 1 and higher	Step 4 and higher
Free from antibiotics and hormones							🐔	
Standard chicken								

¹ Birds have room to move around and express natural behaviours.

² Birds are provided with perches, hay bales or other forms of stimuli to satisfy their behavioural needs.

³ Natural light or artificial with a minimum of 6 hours of darkness in a 24-hour period.

⁴ Antibiotics are only given when bird is sick and not for preventative purposes.

Organic – Chickens must have free access to a wholesome diet with a feeding system. The feed is certified organic, free from antibiotics and includes supplements and vitamins. The farmers have a choice between natural or artificial lighting system but must adhere to at least 8 hours of darkness. The density allotment is a maximum of 30 kg/m² (approximately 10 grown chickens).

Certified Humane – A plan must be made available to ensure chickens always have enough space. The environment must be well ventilated with a low level of carbon dioxide and dust. Enrichment is important to prevent lameness and keep the chickens active. Chickens must have free access to a wholesome diet with a feeding system that prevents health problems. The density allotment is a maximum of 30 kg/m².























AGW – The chickens must have natural light and receive at least 8 hours of darkness. The chickens must have a separate space when injured or sick to recuperate.

Free range – The chicken must have access to the outdoors. The amount of time spent outside can vary depending on the farm. No audit or verification system so conditions may vary.

Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.) Step 5 – Chickens spend their entire life on the farm with no transport time. No overcrowding and always on pasture that must include shade and enrichments. Natural light is required.

Standard chicken – Chickens in a standard system are exposed to artificial light for 20-23 hours a day with no natural light and up to 4 hours of darkness (one hour is the requirement). Bedding and litter must be provided. No additional enrichments are required. And density is 31-38 kg/m² (approximately 19 grown chickens) which gives each chicken the room size of an iPad to move.

Turkey

	No cages, crates or crowding ¹	Enriched Environment ²	Outdoor access	Appropriate lighting ³	Bedding (fresh, clean litter)	No animal by-products in feed	Restricted use of antibiotics ⁴
Organic							
Certified Humane							
AGW							
Free range							
Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.)	Step 1 and higher	Step 2 and higher	Step 3 and higher	Step 1 and higher	Step 1 and higher	Step 1 and higher	Step 1 and higher
Free from antibiotics and hormones							
Standard turkey							

¹ Birds have room to move around and express natural behaviours.

² Birds are provided with perches, hay bales, nest boxes or other forms of stimuli to satisfy their behavioural needs.

³ Natural light or artificial with a minimum of 8 hours of darkness in a 24-hour period

⁴ Antibiotics are only given when bird is sick and not for preventative purposes.

Organic - Turkeys must have free access to a wholesome diet with a feeding system. The feed is certified organic, free from antibiotics and includes supplements and vitamins. The farmers have a choice between natural or artificial lighting system but must adhere to at least 8 hours of darkness. The density allotment is a maximum of 26 kg/m² (approx. 2 full-grown turkeys per m²).

Certified Humane - A plan must be made available to ensure turkeys always have enough space. The environment must be well ventilated with a low level of carbon dioxide and dust. Enrichment must be provided. Turkeys must be provided with a diet designed to maintain full health and promote a positive state of well-being. The density allotment is a maximum of 36 kg/m².

AGW - The turkeys must have natural light and receive at least 8 hours of darkness. They must have a separate space when injured or sick to recuperate. The turkeys must be able to exhibit their natural behaviour including being able to self-isolate.























Free range - Turkeys must have access to the outdoors. The amount of time spent outside can vary depending on the farm. No audit or verification system so conditions may vary.

Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.) - Turkeys must have free access to food during daylight hours. Natural light is required. Steps 1 & 2 - turkeys must be provided with a minimum of 6 hours of darkness. Step 3 and higher, turkeys must be provided with a minimum of 8 hours of darkness.

Standard turkey - Turkeys in a standard system are exposed to artificial light for 20 hours a day with no natural light and only 4 hours of darkness. Bedding and litter must be provided. No additional enrichments are required. The density allotment is a maximum of 40 - 65 kg/m² (approx. 5 full-grown turkeys per m²).



Beef

	No cages, crates or crowding ¹	Enriched Environment ²	Outdoor access	No animal by-products	Two-stage weaning ³	Restricted use of antibiotics ⁵
Organic						
Certified Humane						
AGW						
Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.)	Step 1 and higher	Step 1 and higher	Step 1 and higher	Step 1 and higher	Step 5 ⁴	Step 1 and higher
Grass finished or mostly grass fed						
Free from antibiotics and hormones						
Standard beef						

¹ Although in conventional production systems beef cows are kept outdoors, they must have adequate space to move around and not be kept in crowded areas to be considered higher welfare.

² Although cows are housed outdoors, an enriched environment means they have space to move around and appropriate lying and shaded areas.

³ G.A.P. standards permit de-budding/de-horning of cows at Steps 1-4 but require pain medication be administered.

⁴ Beef cows and calves remain together for several months during first part of their life. Abrupt separation at weaning causes both the dam and calf severe distress. Two-stage weaning permits the calf to have visual and olfactory contact with the dam (usually through a fence). This has been shown to reduce stress.

⁵ Antibiotics are only given when cow is sick and not for preventative purposes.

Organic - The certification requires that cows receive 30% or more of their diet in a pasture and at least 60% of their diet consisting of organic feed such as hay, fresh/dried coarse plant material. In terms of physical alterations, the organic standards do not speak to the absence of this practice. While pain relief is permitted, the scope of pain relief options is limited while staying Organic. Dehorning and branding are permitted but pain medication is required.

Certified Humane - The use of supplemental hormones for growth is not permitted. Health plans must be in place for the cows including looking for signs of lameness and providing vaccinations to avoid diseases. Antibiotics are only given when an animal is sick. Tail docking is prohibited. Dehorning is allowed but must use pain management.


















AGW - Soil testing the pasture must be done every three years. Housing shelter allows the cows to move around freely including lying down. The cows must have a separate space when injured or sick to recuperate.

Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.) Step 5 - Calves are raised with their mothers until weaned. The cows are raised in a pasture enriched environment. Antibiotics are only given when the animal is sick. Once labelled at Step 5, there are no physical alterations. Prior to Step 5, all producers are trained on physical alterations, including the administration of pain relief.

Grass finished or grass fed - Beef cows may be raised on grass and feedlot or primarily on grass depending on the system. Grain is hard on the digestive system of cows so minimal diet of grains is preferred.

Standard beef - All cows are kept outdoors but it is not a requirement. There is no set space allowance. All cows must be able to move freely around the pen and access feed and water. Tail docking, disbudding (removing horns on calf before they are attached to the bone tissue), tagging ears and branding is permitted and pain medication is not required. Dehorning is also permitted but pain medication is required.

Pork

	No cages, crates or crowding ¹	Enriched Environment ²	Outdoor access	Physical alterations prohibited ³	No animal by-products	Restricted use of antibiotics ⁴
Organic						
Certified Humane						
AGW						
Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.)	Step 1 and higher	Step 2 and higher	Step 3 and higher	Step 5	Step 1 and higher	Step 1 and higher
Free from antibiotics and hormones						
Standard pork						

¹ Sows are not kept in sow stalls (gestation crates) but in group housing. Both sows and meat pigs are kept in small groups with space to move around.

² Enrichment for pigs includes straw bales, vegetables, toys (balls, traffic cones, rope), wallows and sprinklers.

³ Pigs are typically castrated and tail-docked. Some are ear-notched (for identification purposes) and teeth-clipped. All of these are highly stressful and painful procedures. Castration is permitted as it is required by processing plants.

⁴ Antibiotics are only given when pig is sick and not for preventative purposes.

Organic - Needs to meet the normal socialization and group housing requirement as well as provide outdoor pasture, sunlight and fresh air, weather permitting. Physical alterations are allowed only when necessary and pain medication is required.

















Certified Humane - Outdoor access is not required for pigs, but enriched indoor housing is a requirement. Specific grouping is required to prevent aggressive behaviour. The sows must have access to nutritious feed. The sows must maintain a healthy body weight and cannot be too thin or too fat. They need to have adequate space to move around and be comfortable in their surroundings with the right floor and bedding. Sow stalls and farrowing crates are not permitted. The animals can exhibit natural behaviour and live a good life. Only castration is permitted, and piglet must be 7 days old or younger, unless for veterinary reasons.

AGW - Similar to Certified Humane. Outdoor access is required. Piglets must be at least 6 weeks of age at weaning. Only castration is permitted, and piglet must be 7 days old or younger, unless for veterinary reasons.

Pasture raised/free range - The pigs can roam and forage in their natural environment. These labels are not readily available in stores and are mainly purchased directly from the farm.

Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.) Step 5 - No farrowing crates or gestation stalls. Enrichment items such as straw bales added to the group housing for rooting and exercise. Outside access all year round with added enrichments such as sprinklers. No physical alterations are permitted such as castrations and mutilations. Antibiotics administered when pigs are ill.

Standard pork - Sow stalls and farrowing crates are permitted. Outdoor access is not required. Multiple forms of enrichment are a requirement for standard pork and social contact with other pigs is considered enrichment. Ear notching is permitted but must be done before 14 days of age, castration before 10 days old and tail docking before 7 days old. All require pain medication.

	Tie stalls prohibited ¹	Enriched Environment ²	Outdoor access	No animal by-products	Restricted use of antibiotics ³
Organic					
Certified Humane					
AGW					
Grass fed					
Standard dairy					

¹ Cows are not kept in tie stalls are given enough space to rest and lie down comfortably, and to escape dominant cows.

² Cows must be provided with bedding, socialization opportunities, and increased space when housed indoors.

³ Antibiotics are only given when dairy cow is sick and not for preventative purposes.

Organic - They use 100% organic feed, that can include grain. Dairy cows must graze during grazing season, depending on climate. Organic dairy farmers can only use hormones on their dairy cows therapeutically. Dehorning and branding are permitted but pain medication is required. Tie stalls are permitted, cows are required exercise twice a week. Tie stalls are being phased out by December 2030.
























Certified Humane - Antibiotics are used only when dairy cow is sick and wait time is required to ensure all antibiotics are out of system prior to milking. Tail docking is prohibited. If dehorning must be done, it must be by a veterinarian and use anesthetic and anti-inflammatory medication. Debudding must be done within the first 3 weeks of age and use pain management.

AGW - Antibiotics are used only when dairy cow is sick and wait time is required to ensure all antibiotics are out of system prior to milking. Tail docking and dehorning is prohibited. Disbudding of calves over two months of age is also prohibited. Disbudding under two months of age must use appropriate anesthetic and analgesia.

Grass fed - The dairy cows are given grass or forage diet for the lifetime of the cow, apart from consuming milk prior to being weaned. They have continuous access to pasture during grazing season, depending on climate. Antibiotics only used when dairy cow is sick.

Standard dairy - Each producer has its own standards for animal welfare practices including outdoor access. All dairy cows require the use of pain medications for any branding, disbudding or dehorning. Teat removal is not permitted without the use of pain medication.

Eggs

	Lives cage-free	Can exhibit natural behaviour ¹	Access to nest boxes	Outdoor access	No animal by-products	Receive omega-3 feed
Organic						
Certified Humane						
AGW						
Free range						
Free run						
Furnished cage eggs						
Omega-3						
Standard eggs						

¹ Egg laying hens require nest boxes, perches, dust-bathing material to exhibit natural behaviour.

Organic - Producers meet animal health and welfare standards such as minimum space requirements and provisions for nest boxes, perches and litter. They use 100% organic feed and provide hens with access to the outdoors for at least 1/3 of their life, weather permitting.

Certified Humane - Free access to nutritious feed throughout each day is required. Area must allow hens to forage and dust bathe in a barn raised or free range environment. At least one nest box for every 5 hens is provided. Perches must be provided. Outdoor access is required if the eggs are labelled "free range".

AGW - Similar to Certified Humane. Outdoor access is required. The hens must have natural light and receive at least 8 hours of darkness. The hens must have a separate space when injured or sick to recuperate.

Free range - Free range hens can move freely within a barn and are given access to the outdoors, weather permitting. Standard practice is to provide nest boxes. Hens may also be provided with perches and litter.

Free run - Hens can move freely within a barn and standard practice is to provide nest boxes. Hens may be provided with perches and litter.

Furnished cage eggs - Sometimes called "Nestaid" or "Comfort Coop Eggs" hens in furnished cages have access to nest areas and perches. Conditions are still crowded and do not allow for the opportunity to perform most natural behaviours.

Omega-3 - Hens are fed a diet that is supplemented with a source of omega-3 fatty acids, often flax seed. Omega-3 eggs are from caged hens unless specified on the label as coming from a caged-free system.

Standard eggs - Hens are raised in cages without access to nest boxes, perches or litter. Conditions are crowded and do not allow for the opportunity to perform natural behaviour.

What to ask

A good butcher should know the origin of their meat. It is reasonable to expect them to be able to tell you the name of the farm and where it is located, even if they buy through a local supplier (this is important as it means the animals were not transported long-distance). Consider these questions when you're out at your favourite restaurant too.

Specific questions

Do they have space to move around if kept indoors?
(Not crowded, no cages or crates)

Where is the farm located?

Are animals kept indoors or permitted outdoor access?

Are they housed in social groups?

Do the barns permit natural ventilation and natural light?

How far are the animals transported to slaughter?

Beef cattle

Are they grass fed?
If so, for what portion of their lives?
Are the cows grain finished or grass finished?

Chickens

Are they given outdoor access or do they have space and enrichment?
Where are they slaughtered and by what means?

Sows and pigs

Are they housed in groups and given enrichment or given outdoor access?
Are surgical procedures performed?

Dairy cows

Are they given outdoor access?
How are the calves dehorned?

Laying hens

Are the hens free run or free range?

Look beyond the labels

- 1 Demand better** – Look for the labels and if you don't see it ask for it.
- 2 Ask questions** – Ask your butcher, grocer and restaurant questions (see questions above).
- 3 Learn more** – Every label and producer are different, go to their website and find out their standards.
- 4 Share your views** – Tell your friends, share your comments [@MoveTheWorldCA](#) [#shophumane](#) [#eathumane](#)
- 5 Eat higher welfare and eat less meat, eggs and dairy overall.** Doing so supports higher welfare farming and reduces demand for factory farmed meat.





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