

Egg Sourcing Policy

Background

There has been a growing demand for cage-free eggs in the UK following a petition set up by a 14-year-old girl to Tesco, asking them to stop selling caged eggs. Tesco made a commitment to do so, which was shortly followed by more retailers, foodservice companies, manufacturers and other food businesses who recognised the need for better systems for laying hens and the rising demand from the public who were buying free range eggs.

According to DEFRA, overall production of free-range eggs, which includes eggs for foodservice and food manufacturing, has more than doubled from 27% to 60% since 2004.

Cage-free laying hen systems allow hens more room to roam and the ability to express their natural behaviours such as dust bathing, wing flapping and perching on different levels. This means the birds are less stressed and enjoy a better quality of life, both of which are important to consumers, and contribute to better quality egg production.

What is Bidfood doing?

Bidfood is fully committed to the move towards cage-free eggs by 2025. This includes branded and own label shell and liquid eggs, and own brand products containing eggs as an ingredient.

As of 2019, all of our own brand shell eggs are certified to meet British Lion Assurance Standards. This includes strict measures on traceability, welfare, feed, temperature and hygiene. The British Lion stamp also indicates that the eggs are British, the hen has been vaccinated against salmonella and the farm adheres to strict health and safety requirements.

Policy

This policy states the cage-free egg standards which we expect our suppliers to comply with when producing products for Bidfood's own brand, along with the procedures to ensure that this is the case. It also states any goals that we would like to achieve and includes reporting of progress against these.

Scope

This policy covers all shell and liquid eggs sold by Bidfood UK, and own brand products containing egg as an ingredient.

Definitions

Cage-free eggs: Eggs from laying hens produced in systems free of any type of cage including battery cages and colony cages (also referred to as 'enriched' cages).

Combi-cage: Combi-systems are multi-tiered structures with doors - when the doors are closed they offer the benefits of a conventional cage system and when the doors are opened the hens are allowed to roam freely as in a cage-free system.

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Procedures and responsibilities

Responsibility for ensuring this policy is reviewed, monitored and implemented sits with our Category Technical Controller and will be discussed annually in the Healthy and Sustainable Working Group. The monitoring and implementation for shell and liquid eggs will be the responsibility of the Cage Free Egg Steering Group that is owned by the Sustainability Projects Manager and contains members from buying, category management and technical services. For ingredient egg, this will sit with the Animal Welfare and Soy Steering Group. This is to ensure alignment across our business.

Government buying standards and market capability may have an impact as we work towards our pledge, but we will take active steps to achieve our commitment which includes creating a list of actions and a roadmap to 2025.

These actions include (but are not limited to):

- Any new Bidfood branded products containing egg as an ingredient should be developed using cage-free eggs.
- Bidfood will ensure cage free eggs are always included in customer tenders when eggs are required (unless expressed in tender documents).
- Bidfood will remove advertising around our enriched colony eggs in our product brochures and price lists.

At Bidfood, we are fully committed to collaborating with our egg producers and customers to work towards our pledge by understanding industry dynamics and assisting in the switch to cage-free alternatives, such as barn, free range and organic eggs.

We understand combi-cages are not allowed as part of the lion scheme ran by the British Egg Industry Council unless under derogation, and we will follow these standards when sourcing British cage free eggs.

Customer nominated lines are excluded from this policy but recommendations to include cage free eggs will be given to the customer and sales of these products will be monitored to highlight any significant increases in volumes.

Bidfood will continue at this time to provide a range of egg options so that we can cater for our different customer requirements. However, we are in conversations with egg suppliers to understand timelines for moving to cage-free egg supply, as well as speaking with customers about switching to cage-free alternatives by 2025 in order to achieve a 100% cage-free egg offering.

Reporting

Reporting shall be updated annually and publically available in our sustainable development report.

Policy history

Date	Version	Changes From Previous Version
July 2022	2.0	Policy reviewed and moved into new policy template.

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