

## **Farm Animal Welfare Policy**

### **Background**

Our food should be produced responsibly and animals used in food products should be treated humanely, shown respect and be free from pain and suffering. This is important not only to Bidfood, but to our customers and their consumers too.

An [IGD survey](#) conducted in September 2021 showed that 86% of people believe the welfare of animals is important to them, which is further strengthened by a [later survey of UK consumers](#) conducted by AHDB/Blue Marble demonstrating similar results. With concern around welfare and sustainability issues continuing to rise, Bidfood will ensure our policies meet the high environmental and ethical standards our customers expect.

### **What is Bidfood doing?**

In creating this policy, we have referenced information from organisations to ensure that we are striving for industry best practice. These include:

- Compassion in World Farming (CIWF)
- Business Benchmark for Animal Welfare (BBFAW)
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
- Humane Society International (HSI)

In July 2022 we sent out a questionnaire to all suppliers of products containing animal derived ingredients (ADI) or soya as an ingredient, and have used this to inform our approach, enhance our policy and set targets to improve farm animal welfare in our supply chain.

### **Policy**

This policy states the animal welfare standards which we expect suppliers to comply with when producing products for Bidfood's own brand products, and 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.

In our own brand products, by 2025 we aim for 100% of suppliers of products containing animal derived ingredients to have an animal welfare policy in place and report against key criteria specified within this. As a minimum, this needs to include a commitment to the five freedoms and policies on humane slaughter, mutilations, castration, confinement, transportation and enrichment as well as a clearly defined scope of which species and products the policy applies.

### **Scope**

This policy covers all of Bidfood UK's own brand farm animal derived products and products containing farmed animal derived ingredients, but does not apply to any derivatives such as gelatine, whey powder, milk protein, meat extracts, fats and rind. Our cage-free egg and responsible fish sourcing policies are detailed in separate documents and contain further information on each of these areas.

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The five animal welfare freedoms are the basis for our policy, these being:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, Injury or disease
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour
5. Freedom from fear and distress

Any product processed in relation to a specific accreditation scheme, such as Red Tractor, Freedom Foods (RSPCA) or as Free Range must comply with all aspects of these certifications.

As a minimum, all animals should be raised in accordance with all farm animal welfare legislation for the country in which they are born, reared or slaughtered.

All our own brand fresh whole meat products are from animals that have been raised in compliance with European Animal Welfare legislation EU Directive 2008/120/EC as a minimum. This is enacted in UK legislation as “The Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007”. All own brand meat originating through UK farms and UK Processing plants will be in conformation with this standard.

We will not sell any products that cannot be produced in compliance with the Five Freedoms, such as foie gras and white veal.

### **Pre – Stunning**

All animals that are processed for Bidfood own brand products must have been pre-stunned before slaughter. This includes any animals that have been processed for halal slaughter. All animals must have been assessed by a Veterinarian before and during slaughter to ensure that animal welfare requirements have been complied with.

Bidfood is committed to providing a Halal offering which has clear provenance and acceptability to the target customer base. All halal products must come from pre-stunned animals and from production sites which have been approved by a Halal certification body. At Bidfood we check and monitor site certification for all products where halal claims are made.

### **Mutilations**

We are committed to the avoidance of routine mutilations such as tail docking, teeth clipping, and castration of pigs. We work closely with our suppliers in these areas.

Castration is not permitted on UK farm assured pigs. Whilst castration is permitted within other Member States of the EU, this must be performed by a trained member of staff under the guidance of a Veterinarian. Suppliers are actively encouraged to avoid this procedure, where possible, if it doesn't compromise welfare or consider using humane alternatives instead such as immunocastration (a vaccination to delay puberty and limit injuries caused by mounting behaviour).

### **Confinement**

We recognise that close confinement of animals is a serious issue and do not allow close confinement (use of cages, farrowing crates, sow stalls or tethering) as a routine management practise for animals in our beef, chicken, duck, goose, goat, venison, lamb or turkey supply chains, unless used briefly for safe handling purposes.

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Bidfood is committed to only sourcing cage free eggs by 2025, and only using cage free eggs as an ingredient in our own brand products. More details of our cage free egg policy can be found in our separate egg sourcing policy available from our [website](#).

All pork used must be fully compliant with the sow stall regulations. In the UK, no sow stalls should be used. In the EU sow stalls should be used for no longer than four weeks. Outside of these areas farmers should follow the applicable local laws regarding sow stalls.

We encourage suppliers of products containing dairy to avoid milk and milk products from cows that are routinely tethered. The majority of milk products in our own brand products are confirmed as not from cows that are tethered and this practise is not common in the UK.

### **Transport**

Transport times for all animals used in Bidfood’s products should be kept to a minimum and not exceed 8 hours where possible.

### **Enrichment**

Environmental enrichment (providing objects that make the animal’s environment more interesting, comfortable or dynamic) can reduce abnormal behaviours which commonly occur in farm animals, by reducing these behaviours it will minimise stress and promote better livestock health. Bidfood encourages suitable species-specific enrichment to be provided where possible.

For pigs, it is a legal requirement (EU directive 2008/120/EC) for pig producers to provide environmental enrichment materials in “a sufficient quantity... to enable proper investigation and manipulation activities” at all production stages. AHDB provides a [practical guide](#) to suitable types of enrichment, and the Pig Site provides a [tail biting contingency plan](#) with more details in this area.

### **Antibiotic use**

Antibiotic use in animals destined for Bidfood own brand meat products may only be used when prescribed by a Veterinarian and must come from a veterinary medicines directorate approved supplier.

Bidfood’s position is that the routine prophylactic use of antibiotics should be avoided. Bidfood endorses the responsible use of antibiotics and only prescribing antibiotics to animals when required for their health, not using them routinely as a preventative measure for commercial gain, or using them as growth promoters.

### **Training and stock handling**

Staff working directly with animals should receive animal handling and welfare training appropriate to the species which they are working with.

### **Method/procedure**

In June 2022 we began a review of animal welfare practices in our supply chain to identify weaker areas which we can focus on improving, with the aim to create time-bound targets to improve the welfare of farmed animals in our supply chain.

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The review included a detailed questionnaire sent to all suppliers of animal derived products, and products containing animal derived ingredients in our own brand products. We identified a key focus area from this to improve gaps in our suppliers animal welfare policies and encourage reporting against these so that we can ensure any policies we hold are complied with. Our supply chain is complicated with often many stages between our products and farm level, so we will support our suppliers with developing in this area by giving clear guidance and expectations on what is required, and further assistance with this if necessary.

All animal species and products in Bidfood’s own brand range are displayed in the table below, and the animals these come from are what is covered by this policy. Any new lines listed will be monitored and any new species or products included annually, where relevant.

Species/Products in Bidfood’s own brand supply chain			
Fresh Meat	Frozen Meat	Dairy & Egg Products	Product Ingredient
Pork	Beef	Cheese	Pork
Chicken	Chicken	Butter	Beef
Beef	Lamb	Milk Powder	Chicken
Lamb	Pork	Shell Eggs	Lamb
Turkey		Liquid Egg	Duck
Duck			Egg
Goat			Dairy
Venison			

### **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. Monitoring and implementation will be the responsibility of the Animal Welfare Steering Group, which is owned by the Sustainability Projects Manager, and contains members from buying, category management and technical services.

Bidfood expects suppliers of own brand products containing farm animal derived ingredients (excluding fish) to send a copy of their animal welfare policy to Bidfood annually, along with completing a detailed animal welfare practices review including reporting against key criteria from the previous calendar year.

We expect suppliers to update us as soon as a change occurs to their animal welfare status in order to maintain information integrity. Information provided by suppliers will be periodically audited as part of the Bidfood internal audit annually through Project Verify.

If any suppliers are found to be in breach of this policy and/or our code of practice then we will offer support and advice to help suppliers improve, with a window agreed between Bidfood and the supplier in which the supplier needs to meet the standards in these agreements, in length of no longer than 1 year.

If suppliers are still unable or unwilling to improve within this time, then Bidfood will terminate the agreement with that supplier.

## Reporting

Reporting needs to be provided to us by our suppliers annually, by August each year for the previous calendar year. It needs to include the following information, as applicable as possible to the animals used in products supplied to Bidfood:

- The % of animals which were effectively stunned before slaughter, if applicable
- The % of animals which received a backup stun, if applicable
- The % of animals mutilated, stated per species and type of mutilation
- The % of animals castrated, stated per species
- The % of animals kept in cages, tethered, or in another type of close confinement stated per species and system
- The average transportation times of all animals used in Bidfood’s products
- The maximum transportation times of all animals used in Bidfood’s products

Bidfood will report this combined information annually in our sustainability report along with the percentage of suppliers who have been able to report fully against all criteria.

## Policy History

Date	Version	Changes From Previous Version
July 2022	1	Standalone policy created from meat assurance policy
April 2023	2	Targets added, more specifics on key issues and guidance for suppliers