



## It **doesn't** have to be like this



Animals reared free-range and organically can roam freely and behave more naturally. Food produced humanely in this way can be safer for humans, better for the environment, and kinder to the animals.

In partnership with Food Animal Initiative, the WSPA has set up the Model Farm Project ([www.modelfarmproject.org](http://www.modelfarmproject.org)), which aims to establish an international network of development and demonstration farms. These show that humane and sustainable farming is a practical and viable reality.



## What **you** can do

The WSPA is working with organisations throughout the world to phase out intensive farming. YOU can help make a difference to farm animals worldwide:

- If you eat animal produce, avoid intensively farmed meat, milk and eggs. Choose free-range and organic food produced humanely. In the UK, look out for certifications such as Soil Association and RSPCA Freedom Food.
- Watch out for misleading labels such as “fresh” or “farm assured” (unrelated to animal welfare) and question unclear labelling.
- Ask your local supermarket to stock more free-range and organic products. Use customer comment cards and

helplines to tell suppliers you care about farm animal welfare.

- When eating out, complain if you see cruel products on the menu.
- Send for the WSPA's Farm Animal Welfare Information Pack.
- Order and distribute copies of this leaflet.



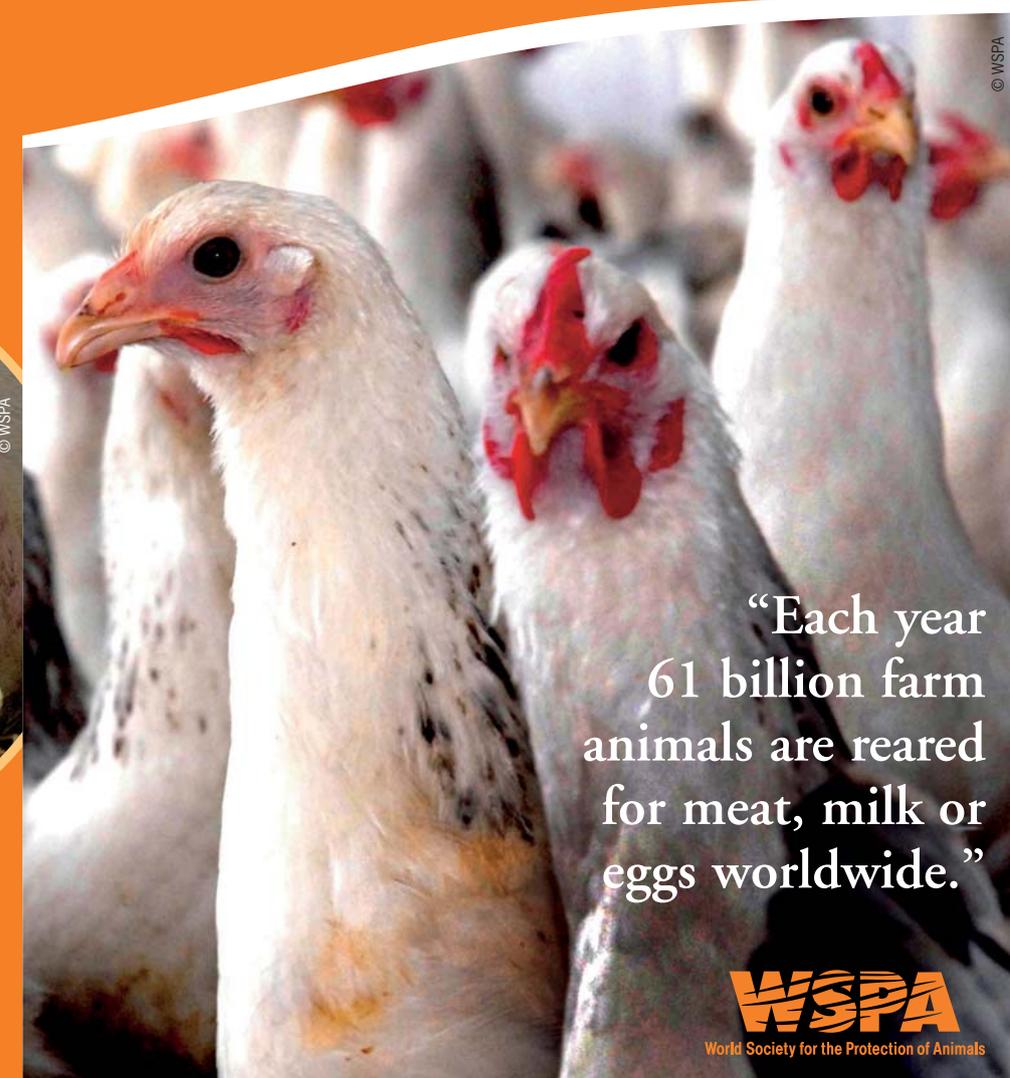
To take action, visit [wspa.org.uk](http://wspa.org.uk)

For more information, visit [www.wspafarmwelfare.org](http://www.wspafarmwelfare.org)  
– our portal for governments and animal welfare organisations.

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World Society for the Protection of Animals

## The facts about our food: Intensive farming



“Each year 61 billion farm animals are reared for meat, milk or eggs worldwide.”



## Inside intensive farms

The majority of farm animals are reared intensively in battery cages, overcrowded chicken sheds, sow stalls, zero-grazing dairy systems, cattle feedlots or veal crates. The WSPA believes these intensive systems should be replaced by humane alternatives that are kinder to the animals, safer for humans and better for the environment.

### Battery cages

Three quarters of the world's 5.6 billion egg-laying hens are confined in battery cages. These cages are so small that the hens cannot stretch their wings, so barren that they have no nest in which to lay their eggs, and so restricting that the birds' bones become brittle and can snap through lack of exercise.

### Overcrowded chicken sheds

Each year 48 billion "broiler" chickens are reared for meat worldwide. The majority are kept in windowless sheds holding up to 50,000 birds. They are made to grow so fast through a combination of genetics, high-protein feed and often growth-promoting chemicals that their bones and hearts

cannot keep pace – many suffer crippling leg disorders and heart failure.

### Sow stalls and farrowing crates

In many countries, pregnant pigs are caged in individual sow stalls (or "gestation crates"). These are so narrow that the sow is unable to take more than one step or turn around throughout her four-month pregnancy. Before giving birth, she is moved to the equally restricting farrowing crate, where she cannot move other than to stand up and lie down.

### Barren pig pens

Piglets are weaned prematurely at 3-4 weeks of age and fattened for meat in overcrowded, often dirty pens. They live

on bare concrete or slatted floors without bedding material. They are unable to carry out natural behaviours such as rooting, foraging and exploring.

### Zero-grazing dairy systems

In many parts of the world, intensively farmed cows produce around ten times their natural milk yield through a combination of selective breeding and high-energy feed. The strain of this over-production can cause metabolic diseases, painful udder infections and high levels of lameness. In indoor cubicles, where some cows are permanently tethered, lameness is exacerbated by manure-laden concrete floors.



### Cattle feedlots

In the feedlot system, thousands of cattle are confined in grassless outdoor enclosures, where they are fed almost exclusively on grain. Very common in the United States, this system is spreading to countries such as Brazil, China, India, the Philippines and Australia.

### Veal crates

In some countries, calves reared for veal are kept in solitary confinement, in crates so narrow that they are unable to turn around. They are fed an iron-deficient diet to produce "white veal". This practice was banned in the UK in 1990 and throughout the European Union in 2007, but remains in many countries including most of the United States.



## It's not only the animals that suffer



### Food safety

Antibiotics and hormones fed to intensively farmed animals can leave residues in eggs, meat and dairy products. This may lead to increased risk of human cancers. Use of antibiotics is also believed to be encouraging antibiotic-resistant microbes (such as Salmonella and E-coli), making it more difficult to fight both animal and human diseases.

Intensively farmed meat, which comes from inactive animals fed on high-energy food, often contains high levels of fat – linked to obesity, diabetes, cancers, heart disease and strokes.

### The environment

**Water:** Nitrate contamination from manure seeping into groundwater may create greater risk of miscarriage in pregnant women. Heavy metals pollution from manure in rivers serving as water supplies is also likely to affect embryonic development.

**Air:** As manure decomposes, it releases chemicals into the air. Residents living near

intensive farms report higher rates of respiratory problems, headaches, nausea and fatigue.

**Soil:** Intensive farming relies on large quantities of feed for the animals, which is often grown intensively using chemical fertilisers and pesticides – linked to the loss of soil fertility and farmland wildlife.

### Food security

Intensive farming demands a large share of the cereal harvest to feed the animals: for example, poultry need to consume 2-3 kilos of grain in order to produce one kilo of meat. This leaves some developing countries struggling to feed local populations, and puts significant pressure on global land and water resources.

### Rural livelihoods

Highly-mechanised intensive farms threaten rural employment. In the UK and the USA, the number of farmers has been dramatically reduced. In England, for example, the number of farm workers has dropped by over 90% over the past 50 years. In developing countries, intensive farming obstructs poverty elimination by driving local farmers out of business.