

# Responsible Agriculture FAQs

## Does Coles have animal welfare targets or requirements?

Coles has a commitment to source meat and animal products from farming operations that have a standard of animal welfare that meets our high expectations and, where applicable, that hold animal welfare certification. We are continuously working with our suppliers to improve animal welfare standards in a way that supports Australian farmers and food producers, as we know this is important to our customers.

Coles has an Australian first sourcing policy to provide Australian-grown food as a first priority. In FY18, more than 88 per cent of Coles branded food and drink was sourced from Australian suppliers including 96 per cent of fresh produce and 100 per cent of fresh lamb, pork, chicken, turkey, beef, milk and eggs.

Coles is proud to be the first national Australian supermarket retailer to launch the following initiatives:

- First Australian retailer to offer all No Added Hormone Beef (2011)
- First Australian supermarket with all fresh pork sow stall-free and produced without artificial growth promotants (2014)
- First with RSPCA Approved Chicken (2014)
- First retailer to have cage-free for all supermarket own brand eggs (2013)
- First with 100% Sustainably Sourced Seafood (2015)
- All Coles own brand products are sourced without animal testing (2016)

Through our [Coles Farm Program](#) we are able to identify outcomes-based animal welfare measures and work with our suppliers to improve on these metrics year on year.

Since 2011, Coles own brand fresh meat and animal product suppliers have been required to meet specific sourcing requirements or have been independently assessed to a higher animal welfare standard. We are also extending animal welfare requirements into other Coles own brand products. For example, our fresh sandwiches range includes sow stall free ham and RSPCA Approved chicken, and our convenience meals have no added hormone beef. To support these higher animal welfare initiatives we have incorporated these standards into the Coles Farm Program. We also continue to develop products in guidance with our no animal testing policy, verifying that all Coles own brand food and non-food products do not test finished products on animals.

In 2018, Coles started rolling out our Pork Farm Program, which includes measurement of tail biting instances, mortality rates and pig responses to human contact.

Coles participates in industry and animal welfare events organized by government, researchers and NGOs throughout the year. Coles also sponsors research projects on

sustainability with organisations such as WWF-Australia and research projects on farm animal welfare with organisations such as Meat and Livestock Australia looking at the link between meat grading and animal nutrition, and issues such as handling and transport.

### **Does Coles sell foie gras?**

Coles does not currently sell any foie gras products and no Coles own brand foods include products that involve the force feeding of animals.

### **What types of agricultural production systems does Coles source from?**

Coles sources products from a variety of animal production systems including some considered intensive such as cattle feedlots, indoor raised chickens and conventional pork systems. When sourcing from these systems, Coles uses production standards such as the [National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme](#), [RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme](#) and [Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance program with Customer Specifications for Supply to Coles Supermarkets Australia Pty Ltd \(APIQ +CSC\)](#) to ensure that the animals have adequate welfare standards alongside space and stocking density requirements. Coles also sources from extensive production systems such as grass-fed (Graze) cattle, free range egg production and Free Range RSPCA Approved Pork and Turkey.

For RSPCA Approved Chicken the stocking density must not exceed:

- 28kg per m<sup>2</sup> for natural ventilation systems; or
- 34kg per m<sup>2</sup> for mechanical ventilation systems.

### **Does Coles sell products derived from genetic engineering or cloned animals?**

Coles' policy is that all Coles own brand products must be formulated using non-GM ingredients or additives. There are no genetically modified (GM) animals approved for farming in Australia, where all lamb, pork, beef, chicken, turkey, eggs and milk are sourced.

### **Are animals in the Coles food chain subjected to routine surgical husbandry procedures?**

Coles recognises the importance of animal welfare, during the routine surgical husbandry procedures in animal production. Through initiatives such as the Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance Program + Customer Specifications for Coles Supermarkets Australia Pty Ltd (APIQ + CSC) pork standard, Coles grass-fed beef standard and Coles Brand Egg Production Standard, Coles requires suppliers to avoid procedures such as dis-budding, tail docking or beak trimming. If these are ever performed they must be deemed necessary by a veterinarian prior to the activity being undertaken.

All layer hens managed under the Coles Brand Egg Production Standard must be provided with a proper environment and breed selection to avoid beak trimming being required. If

beak trimming is required, the hens must be at one day old and the trimming be undertaken by a trained and competent operator to minimise stress placed on the animal.

Our range of RSPCA Approved products mean the following procedures are prohibited:

- Coles Free Range RSPCA Approved Turkey: free from de-snooding, de-winging and toe trimming.
- Coles Free Range RSPCA Approved Pork: free from tail docking, nose ringing, surgical castration and teeth clipping.

## **Are farm animals stunned prior to slaughter?**

As per the Australian [National Animal Welfare Standards for Livestock Processing Establishments 2nd Edition](#) or the relevant RSPCA Standard, all farm animals that produce Coles own brand fresh meat are stunned prior to slaughter. Through these standards, suppliers must measure the effectiveness of stunning and ensure that the processes are effective and consistent.

## **Does Coles have a position on the long haul transport of farm animals?**

Coles requires suppliers to minimise transport distances wherever possible. The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme Standards for meat chickens, turkey and pigs require the timing of transport to be co-ordinated between the producer, transporter and processor in order to ensure that an animal's time in transit is minimised. RSPCA Approved turkeys and meat chickens must not be without food and water for more than 18 hours and pigs no more than 20 hours. Coles also encourages livestock transporters to adopt Standards such as [Truck Safe Animal Welfare](#).

## **Does Coles stock vegan alternatives?**

Coles stocks a range of vegan products across the store. Product details can be found here: [vegan products](#)

In June 2018, Coles also began trialling a meat-less burger patty substitute called Beyond Burger in some stores.

## **Who is responsible for animal welfare at Coles?**

The regulation of animal welfare at Coles is managed by the Responsible Sourcing Manager – Agriculture. Any animal welfare concerns should be escalated to the Responsible Sourcing Manager – Agriculture by emailing [farmprogram@coles.com.au](mailto:farmprogram@coles.com.au) or your main Coles contact.

## **How are animal welfare policies implemented at Coles?**

Coles has processes in place to ensure that animal welfare is reflected in the supply chain through mechanisms including contracts, auditing processes and the Coles Farm Program.

For Coles own brand products that are RSPCA Approved, a chain of custody and a current RSPCA approval status is required to supply. Since 2011, our Coles own brand suppliers have met specific sourcing requirements or been independently assessed to a higher animal welfare Standard. Similarly the Coles Food Manufacturing Supplier Requirement is a Standard that suppliers are audited against that includes animal welfare for relevant businesses. For example, where processes involve live animals, poultry, fin fish or crustaceans, an animal welfare policy must be in place stating the company's commitment to meet all local laws and regulations regarding animal welfare.