ANIMAL WELFARE UPDATE 2024

At Whitsons, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing sustainable sourcing practices and promoting animal welfare throughout our operations. We recognize the integral role animal welfare plays in building a more sustainable future and are dedicated to the care and compassion of animals in our supply chain.

We understand the importance of transparency and accountability in animal welfare practices. That is why we regularly review and enhance our reporting processes, collaborate with suppliers to strengthen animal welfare practices, and publicize our targets, performance, and achievements.

Cage-Free Eggs:

All the eggs we source come from cage-free or pasture-raised hens. This commitment ensures that the birds have access to a more natural environment, promoting their welfare.

Chicken Welfare:

While we had aimed to achieve compliance with Global Animal Partnership (GAP) standards by 2024, we acknowledge falling short of this goal. However, we remain steadfast in our dedication to upholding animal welfare principles and are continuing to work towards alignment with GAP standards.

We work with and rely on our supplier partners to maintain and uphold humane treatment standards throughout their operations. We are actively collaborating with our suppliers to improve welfare standards, to further maximum stocking density, providing enriched environments, and employing humane stunning methods.

We have requested that our chicken suppliers meet the following animal welfare standards as soon as possible.

GOALS	CURRENT PERFORMANCE
Stocking Density: Ensure maximum stocking density is equal to/less than six pounds per square foot per GAP standards.	93%
Environment: Provide enriched environments, including natural light, hay bales, litter, perches, and lighting per GAP standards. At minimum 8 hours of continuous light (≥50 lux) and 6 hours of continuous darkness daily (<1 lux).	93%
Harvesting: Render birds unconscious prior to shackling, using controlled or low-atmosphere stunning.	no progress at this time - the broader industry adoption of CAS has been slow.
Breeds: Use only BCC-approved breeds that demonstrate higher welfare outcomes.	no progress at this time - the use of BCC approved breeds has not been fully adopted within the poultry industry.
Auditing: Provide details on compliance by a third-party auditor.	99%

Additionally, the chicken that we source is free of hormones and steroids, and no antibiotics important to human health (NAIHM) are used.

Pork:

The pork we source is 100% hormone free. We are committed to working with our supplies to source gestation crate free pork as soon as possible and are conducting regular reviews with our suppliers to improve our reporting and transparency.

Seafood:

Our seafood is sourced exclusively from sustainable fisheries, adhering to guidelines such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch. We prioritize ethical sourcing practices to minimize our environmental impact and support responsible fishing practices. We also partner with Red's Best who distributes sustainable wild-caught fish and seafood for over 1,000 small community-based fishing boats in New England.

Plant-based Offerings:

In 2022 Whitsons began partnering with the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) to increase healthy, sustainable plant-based menu offerings to K-12 school districts through a program called Veggabóls, the first 100% plant-based K-12 concept in the country. Our goal is to offer 33% plant-based menu items on all our onsite school menus by 2025. In 2024, Whitsons ranked 6th on the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) 2024 Protein Sustainability Scorecard, reflecting its commitment to providing plant-based options. Initiatives like the Veggabóls program have resulted in increased plant-based offerings and significant greenhouse gas savings.

Continuous Improvement:

We are actively collaborating with our suppliers to strengthen ethical practices within our supply chain by:

- Holding our suppliers accountable for animal welfare through monitoring and third party audits.
- Conducting regular reviews with our suppliers to improve our reporting and transparency.
- Publicizing our animal welfare targets, performance, and achievements.

At Whitsons, we are committed to treating animals with compassion and we invite you to join us on our journey as we strive to build a better world for all. Together, we can create a more humane and sustainable future for generations to come.