



MERCY FOR
ANIMALS

CANADA ANIMAL WELFARE SCORECARD 2021

Ranking major food companies on their
animal welfare performance

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Executive Summary

Over the past decade, hundreds of food companies around the globe have committed to improved animal welfare standards and responsible sourcing practices. Most major Canadian food companies have recognized that animals in our food system suffer at industrial farms and that animal welfare is integral to corporate social responsibility.

Companies have responded to consumer concern for farmed animal welfare with public commitments to phasing out cruel confinement systems for egg-laying hens and mother pigs and adopting standards that address the most pressing welfare issues affecting chickens raised for meat. These commitments are time-bound with deadlines to complete transitions between 2020 and 2026.

Canadian consumers have a high level of interest in knowing how animals raised for food are treated, and this report ranks 40 major Canadian companies on their animal welfare progress. This is the first report that focuses exclusively on Canadian food companies and provides Canadian consumers with an overview of which companies are leading on animal welfare and which ones have fallen behind.

This new annual report will increase transparency and accountability by highlighting improvements over time and sharing key corporate animal welfare progress with the public.

What are the key animal welfare issues addressed in this report?

The key issues addressed in this report are conventional practices at Canadian farms and slaughter plants that result in poor animal welfare: housing, breed selection, and slaughter of chickens used in meat production (known in the industry as “broilers”); confinement of egg-laying hens in cages; and confinement of pregnant pigs in gestation crates.

Chickens Raised for Meat

- Bred for rapid growth, which results in immobility, organ stress, and heart disease
- Crowded in sheds with waste-soaked litter, which leads to ammonia burns and respiratory problems
- Processed at five to seven weeks old using live-shackle slaughter, a method in which birds are shackled upside down by their legs while conscious and painfully shocked before being slashed at the throat and defeathered in scalding water

Hens Confined in Cages

- Crowded in wire cages in groups of four to eight hens with 67 square inches of floor space per bird, unable to walk or spread their wings
- Prevented from engaging in natural behaviours such as perching, foraging, dustbathing, and nesting
- Subjected to conditions that lack stimulation and cause chronic stress, prompting aggression and self-mutilation

Pregnant Pigs Confined in Stalls

- Individually confined in narrow stalls, which prevent the animals from turning around or lying down with their legs fully extended, causing joint pain and muscle weakness from inactivity

- Prevented from engaging in natural behaviours such as rooting, foraging, nesting, and socializing, causing extreme stress and frustration and leading to mouth and tooth damage from chewing on crate bars

Which animal welfare components were scored?

1. Public [Better Chicken Commitment](#) policy
2. Public, time-bound cage-free egg policy
3. Public reporting of progress on sourcing cage-free eggs
4. Public, time-bound crate-free pork policy
5. Public reporting of progress on sourcing crate-free pork

What represents a meaningful animal welfare policy and report on progress?

1. Species- or product-specific language
2. Time-bound goals
3. Coverage for all Canadian operations
4. Percentage of progress toward 100 percent fulfillment

How were rankings determined?

After analyzing publicly available information and engaging with companies across various sectors in the food industry through a survey and dialogue, we outlined how companies included in the report rank on these critical animal welfare issues. Companies were provided with a pre-publication assessment, which included specific recommendations to update public animal welfare policies and progress reporting in order to improve rankings.

Company Rankings

Gold Tier

Leading in Commitments and Transparency












Companies in the gold tier have all three policies and are publicly reporting percentage of progress toward sourcing cage-free eggs and crate-free pork.

- Chipotle 
- UNFI¹ 
- Whole Foods Market 
- IKEA

Silver Tier

Significant Commitments and Transparency



Companies in the silver tier have two of the three policies and are publicly reporting percentage of progress toward sourcing cage-free eggs or crate-free pork.

- A&W 
- Loblaws 
- McCain Foods 
- Metro 
- Nestlé 
- Save-On-Foods 
- Sobeys 
- Sodexo 
- Starbucks 
- Subway 
- Unilever 
- Aramark
- Campbell's
- Compass Group
- Kellogg's

Bronze Tier

Some Commitments and Transparency

Companies in the bronze tier have one of the three policies and are publicly reporting percentage of progress toward it.

- Dairy Queen 
- McDonald's 
- Recipe Unlimited 
 - Brands Include
 - Harvey's
 - The Keg
 - Swiss Chalet
- Taco Bell 
- ConAgra Brands
- General Mills
- Kraft Heinz



¹ UNFI Canada does not source chicken or pork, so the only applicable policy for UNFI Canada in this ranking is for cage-free eggs, and they report that 99 percent of their eggs are cage-free.



Fourth Tier

Significant Commitments, No Transparency

Companies in the fourth tier have two or all three policies but are not publicly reporting any progress.

- Boston Pizza
- Restaurant Brands International
 - Burger King
 - Popeyes
 - Tim Hortons
- Second Cup
- Walmart

Fifth Tier

Some Commitments, No Transparency

Companies in the fifth tier have one of the three policies but are not publicly reporting any progress.

- Flanagan Foodservice
- Gordon Food Service
- KFC
- MTY Group
 - Brands Include
 - Country Style
 - Manchu Wok
 - Mr. Sub
- Pizza Hut
- Pizza Pizza
- Stewart Foodservice
- Wendy's

Sixth Tier

No Commitments, Some Transparency

Companies in the sixth tier do not have any of the three policies but are publicly reporting percentage of progress.


- Costco 

Lowest Tier

No Commitments and No Transparency

Companies in the lowest tier have none of the policies and are not publicly reporting any progress.

- Sysco

 Indicates regional progress reporting in Canada. All other companies reporting progress are reporting in North America or globally. Please note that beginning in 2022, this report will score only regional reporting in Canada. We strongly encourage companies to begin gathering data on progress toward all animal welfare commitments as soon as possible.



Industry Considerations and Company Highlights

Gold Tier Leaders

Companies ranked in the gold tier have shown significant leadership in eliminating intensive confinement systems for hens and pigs in their Canadian supply chains and have adopted Better Chicken Commitment standards for broiler chickens with implementation deadlines no later than 2026.



Whole Foods Market has led the retail sector in animal welfare by banning stalls for pregnant pigs since 2003 and cages for laying hens for all product categories since 2005. Additionally, Whole Foods is a leader in broiler chicken welfare, adopting all components of the Better Chicken Commitment by 2026 in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

“At Whole Foods Market, we’ve long maintained rigorous Quality Standards across our store, and take the issue of animal welfare seriously. We appreciate the important work of organizations like Mercy For Animals and look forward to continuing to raise the bar for animal welfare and responsible sourcing practices across our industry.”

—Carol Medeiros, Vice President of Quality Standards at Whole Foods Market

Chipotle has led the fast-casual sector by sourcing exclusively crate-free pork and cage-free eggs. In 2015, when a pork supplier audit revealed the use of gestation crates, Chipotle maintained its commitment by removing pork from its menu in affected locations until standards could be met. Chipotle is also a leader in broiler chicken welfare by adopting all components of the Better Chicken Commitment by 2024 in Canada and the United States and by 2026 in Europe.

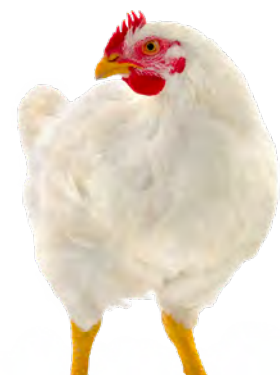
“Chipotle is committed to cultivating a better world, which means sourcing responsibly raised ingredients. For over 25 years, Chipotle has been an industry leader in exceptional animal welfare standards and while we still have more work to do, we are proud of the progress we have made in offering real food with integrity to our consumers.”

—Chipotle

IKEA has led responsible sourcing initiatives globally with cage-free egg, crate-free pork, and broiler chicken welfare policies covering all locations in North America and the European Union. IKEA is a leader in transparency by reporting annually on progress and will meet Better Chicken Commitment standards in North America and Europe by 2025.

“Our commitment to more sustainable agriculture and better animal welfare is strongly connected to the IKEA vision of creating a better everyday life for the many people.”

—IKEA





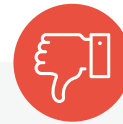
Poor Performers

While many companies have shown significant leadership in banning the cruelest practices affecting chickens and pigs at Canadian farms, others have yet to make meaningful commitments or have backtracked on key policies.



KFC

KFC has consistently performed poorly on committing to animal welfare standards in North America despite making measurable strides in other countries, including adopting the Better Chicken Commitment in the United Kingdom and Ireland and demonstrating meaningful progress reporting. KFC previously committed to phasing out live-shackle slaughter in favour of controlled-atmosphere stunning for chickens in Canada. That commitment has since been removed, and KFC has not indicated any intention to eliminate cruel practices for chickens sourced in Canada or the United States.



Sysco

Sysco is ranked in the lowest tier owing to the company's lack of meaningful animal welfare policies in Canada. Despite having a cage-free egg commitment in the United States, Sysco Canada has failed to take public action on this important issue. While its competitors have committed to meaningful animal welfare standards in Canada, Sysco is falling behind. We strongly encourage Sysco to extend its cage-free egg policy, clearly indicating that it applies to Canada, and to adopt meaningful commitments to banning some of the cruelest practices for pigs and chickens raised for meat in its Canadian supply chains.



MTY
GROUPE
GROUP

MTY Group owns nearly 60 restaurant brands in Canada—including Country Style, Extreme Pita, Manchu Wok, Mr. Sub, Mucho Burrito, Thai Express, and The Works—but has done little to ban cruel practices in its supply chain or report progress toward fulfilling its commitment to banning cages for hens. We encourage all MTY brands to report on their progress toward sourcing cage-free eggs and to adopt the Better Chicken Commitment.



Campbell's

Campbell's was previously leading in animal welfare standards for chickens and pigs until recently limiting the scope of its 2024 broiler chicken welfare policy to improving only litter and enrichments. To qualify for the gold tier in future rankings, Campbell's will need to publicly reaffirm its full time-bound Better Chicken Commitment policy.



Retail Council of Canada Backtracks on Animal Welfare

The Retail Council of Canada (RCC) works to advance the country's retail industry. In 2013, the RCC announced that its grocery members were voluntarily committing to phasing out gestation crates for pigs by 2022. In 2016, the RCC announced that its grocery members were voluntarily committing to phasing out battery cages for laying hens by 2025. These commitments stemmed from exposés and public outcry from concerned consumers who know that these confinement systems represent some of the most egregious abuse in Canada's factory farms.

In March 2021, the RCC announced they would no longer honour their commitments to the Canadian public and that it would be up to individual grocery members to make independent decisions regarding products they source. This was a huge step backward for animal welfare in Canada and initially led several Canadian retailers to remove their own policies. After an immediate public backlash, many retailers reposted commitments but weakened their policy language despite being responsible for purchasing the vast majority of meat, eggs, and dairy in Canada.

The shift on the part of Canadian retailers to no longer showing leadership on animal welfare is particularly concerning in the context of the multiple anti-whistleblower "ag-gag" laws being passed in Canada since 2019. Mercy For Animals has conducted over a dozen undercover exposés at Canadian farms, and each has revealed horrific cruelty. Ag-gag laws prevent the Canadian public from knowing what goes on behind barn doors by making it illegal for journalists and animal advocates to enter Canadian farms to reveal animal abuse and risks to workers and food safety.

Now more than ever it is critical for Canada's largest food companies to maintain public trust by honouring the promises they have made to Canadians to eliminate egregious confinement systems from their supply chains.



Retailer Rankings Explained



Several years ago, major grocery retailers in Canada made public commitments to banning battery cages for hens and gestation crates for pigs. In early 2021, some retailers attempted to backtrack on these promises. These companies have since acknowledged their original commitments and demonstrated transparency about challenges in meeting their original deadlines for phasing out cruel confinement systems. While going forward we expect improvements to policy language, time frames, and progress reporting, this year's ranking is based on good faith that Canadian retailers will establish leadership in advancing animal welfare and keep their promises to Canadian consumers.

Moving forward, we expect retailers to strengthen their existing cage-free and crate-free policies by clarifying that they remain committed to 100 percent elimination of cages (battery and enriched) for laying hens and 100 percent elimination of gestation crates for pigs. To successfully fulfill these commitments, retailers should establish a clear road map with reasonable time frames for eliminating cruel forms of confinement in their supply chains. We also expect retailers to report progress across their entire supply chains toward these commitments in the coming year.

Broiler Chicken Welfare in Canada

In 2019, [nearly 750 million chickens](#) were raised for meat in Canada. This amounts to 94 percent of the land animals used for food in the country, making broiler chicken welfare one of the most pressing animal welfare concerns in the food industry today.



While per capita demand for most other animal products has been steady or declining over the past 30 years, [chicken meat consumption](#) has consistently increased every year until 2020, which saw the [first decline in poultry consumption](#) in Canada in a decade. The trend toward increased chicken consumption is particularly concerning, as there is no federal legislation that protects chickens at Canadian farms.

For this reason, leading food companies are committing to a set of science-backed broiler chicken welfare standards known as the [Better Chicken Commitment](#).

Policies aligned with the BCC have been adopted by over 400 companies globally and address the most pressing welfare concerns impacting chickens raised for meat: stocking density and living conditions, slaughter method, and breed.

Aligning with these standards is critical in meaningfully reducing the suffering of chickens raised for meat. The majority of BCC policies have come from restaurants, foodservice providers, and consumer-packaged-

goods companies. But [grocery retailers](#) purchase more than half of the chicken produced in Canada. For the Canadian animal agriculture sector to be a world leader in animal welfare, grocery retailers must begin addressing broiler chicken welfare in their supply chains.



The companies ranked in this report that have committed to BCC standards include Aramark, Boston Pizza, Chipotle, Compass Canada, IKEA, McCain Foods, Nestlé, Restaurant Brands International (Tim Hortons, Popeyes, Burger King), Second Cup, Starbucks, Sodexo, Subway, Unilever, and Whole Foods.

There are over 50 companies in Canada with BCC policies.

Some other notable BCC adopters are Bento Sushi, Denny's, Hero Certified Burgers, La Prep, Pita Pit, and Quesada and pizza chains 241 Pizza, New Orleans Pizza, and Panago Pizza.²

“As we continue to serve more Canadians every day, Quesada is committed to working with our suppliers in this important step towards improving animal welfare in Canada.”

—Steve Gill, Quesada
Founder and CEO

Producer Spotlight: Maple Leaf Foods

With the publication of their [2020 Animal Care Performance Report](#), Maple Leaf Foods demonstrated an industry-leading commitment to transparency among major producers. The company reported significant progress on key issues Canadians care about, including animal confinement and transport, stocking density, and environmental enrichments that allow animals to express natural behaviours.

Notable Achievements:

- Maple Leaf is the first producer in the country that will offer a line of chicken products that complies with 2024 Better Chicken Commitment standards.
- Maple Leaf is transitioning to controlled-atmosphere stunning methods for all chicken processing plants.
- Maple Leaf had transitioned 87 percent of its owned sow spaces to open sow housing at the end of 2020 and is on track to transition the remaining owned sow spaces by the end of 2021.

State of the Egg Industry in Canada

In Canada, the poultry industry is regulated by codes developed by the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC). Unfortunately, the current poultry code does not ban cruel confinement systems for laying hens. Instead, it promotes practices like using “enriched” cages. In 2019, 84 percent of laying hens in Canada spent their entire lives in cages despite scientific proof that cage systems lead to worse animal welfare outcomes than cage-free ones.³

By endorsing these cruel practices, NFACC is going against the latest in animal welfare science, public sentiment, and corporate animal welfare commitments to Canadian consumers. What’s more, Canada’s largest retailers are just beginning to publicly report on progress toward sourcing cage-free eggs despite being more than halfway to reaching their deadlines to complete the transition. As a result, the Canadian

egg industry is significantly falling behind on eliminating cages relative to Europe and the United States, where cages are being legally banned across entire countries and states.

Nevertheless, of the global companies operating in Canada that are included in this report, many have fulfilled their cage-free egg commitments in North America.



Additionally, other companies included in this report have been making good progress and are demonstrating transparency to consumers by reporting progress in Canada.

Save-On-Foods is the only major Canadian retailer that has

demonstrated their commitment to increasing cage-free egg sourcing by creating a comprehensive labelling and marketing program that clearly shows consumers that cage-free eggs are the better choice and that eggs from caged hens raise concerns.

² “Broiler Welfare Commitments,” WelfareCommitments.com, accessed August 31, 2021, <https://welfarecommitments.com/broiler/>.

³ Cynthia Schuck-Paim et al., “Laying Hen Mortality in Different Indoor Housing Systems: A Meta-analysis of Data from Commercial Farms in 16 Countries,” *Scientific Reports* 11, no. 1 (February 2021): 3052; R. M. De Mol et al., “A Computer Model for Welfare Assessment of Poultry Production Systems for Laying Hens,” *NJAS: Wageningen Journal of Life Sciences* 54, no. 2 (September 2006): 157–68; “The Welfare of Laying Hens,” Welfare Footprint Project, accessed August 31, 2021, <https://welfarefootprint.org/research-projects/laying-hens/>.

Cage-Free in North America



100 percent



100 percent



100 percent

of shell eggs and 99.99 percent of liquid eggs

in company-operated stores

Good Cage-Free Progress in Canada



85 percent



60 percent



55 percent



38 percent



100 percent

of Kirkland liquid eggs and 22.8 percent of shell eggs

State of the Pork Industry in Canada

Until recently, the Canadian pork industry had supported efforts to phase out stalls for breeding sows. NFACC's pig code set a deadline of 2024 for banning confinement systems for pigs, while large retailers, major foodservice providers, and restaurant chains set more progressive deadlines. In 2021, NFACC extended this deadline by five years, which has resulted in challenges for food companies to meet the deadlines they set in promises to consumers. Not only are industry guidelines permitting several more years of confining pregnant pigs in crates so small they are unable to turn around, but the codes themselves are mere recommendations that are not legally enforceable.

Consequently, it currently falls to companies who purchase animal products and sell them to consumers—grocery stores, restaurants, and institutions—to use their buying power to influence producers to take the Canadian public's concern for animal welfare seriously. Companies that choose to follow NFACC's lead are failing to take a progressive stance on animal welfare.

“NFACC is a taxpayer-funded organization that is unfortunately dominated by industry interests and commodity groups. The codes often don't align with the latest in animal welfare science and fall far short in protecting animals from horrific cruelty at factory farms in Canada.”

—Leah Garcés, President of Mercy For Animals

Thankfully, some companies are still making good progress on eliminating gestation crates.

Leading in Eliminating Gestation Crates for Pigs



A&W Canada, which has also committed to banning cages for hens by the end of 2024, currently sources 70 percent of its pork from crate-free sources and is committed to entirely eliminating gestation crates for pigs from its supply chain by the end of 2021. Additionally, a number of companies operating in Canada are reporting progress globally but need to begin regional reporting in Canada.





What to Expect in the 2022 Canada Animal Welfare Scorecard

For the inaugural Canada Animal Welfare Scorecard, companies were asked to report percentage of progress toward their cage-free egg and crate-free pork commitments. In determining company rankings, we highlighted regional reporting across Canadian supply chains and included progress reporting in North America and globally. Additionally, we included reporting from retailers that focused on their private-label supply chains. For several companies, this was the first time demonstrating transparency by reporting any progress publicly.

Moving forward, we strongly encourage companies to report on progress regionally in Canada, as this gives a more accurate picture of corporate animal welfare progress in Canada, and we will increasingly focus on Canada-specific reporting in this ranking. Additionally, for retailers, we expect progress reporting across entire supply chains, as private-label reporting does not adequately capture the company's overall

sourcing percentages. This can mislead consumers, particularly if private-label products make up only a small portion of the company's supply chain.

Furthermore, as dozens of companies in Canada have now adopted the Better Chicken Commitment, we expect companies to prepare to publicly report progress toward the components of this policy for future evaluation in the Canada Animal Welfare Scorecard.

We encourage all food companies in Canada to integrate animal welfare into their corporate social responsibility work. Companies will benefit by creating road maps to stay on track and ensure that they are advancing each year toward fully implementing their animal welfare commitments. This involves committing to annual and transparent progress reporting and collaborating externally with key stakeholders and internally across departments to ensure that animal welfare is a priority.

In addition to requiring more comprehensive progress reporting in next year's ranking, we will include additional companies. With that in mind, we encourage all food companies to add or update animal welfare policies and for those with existing policies to ensure commitments are publicly posted and that they are publicly reporting on progress.

Recommendations for Companies

- Time-bound cage-free egg and crate-free pork commitments
- Regional cage-free and crate-free progress reporting in Canada
- Annual progress reporting for total supply chain in Canada
- Adoption of the Better Chicken Commitment
- Broiler welfare progress reporting on stocking density, enriched environments, controlled-atmosphere stunning, and breed selection

Appendix

Public Animal Welfare Policies and Progress Reporting

The following publicly available information was used to determine company rankings in this report. The information is current as of September 2, 2021. Companies are listed alphabetically.

Company	Cage-free egg policy deadline	Cage-free egg progress	Crate-free pork policy deadline	Crate-free pork progress	Better Chicken Commitment policy deadline
A&W Canada	2024		2021	70% 🇨🇦	CAS by 2023
Aramark	2022 for shell eggs; 2025 for all eggs	51%			2024/2026
Boston Pizza	2025				2024
Campbell's	2025	10%	2022	16%	2024 (original policy)
Chipotle	Fulfilled	100% 🇨🇦	Fulfilled	100% 🇨🇦	2024
Compass Group Canada	2025	27% shell, 14% liquid			2024
ConAgra Brands	2024	1-10%			
Costco		22.8% 🇨🇦			
Dairy Queen	2025	39% 🇨🇦			
Flanagan Food-service	2025				
General Mills	2025	55%			
Gordon Food Service	2026				
IKEA	2015	90.5%	2025	45%	2025
Kellogg's	2025	13% US and Canada	2025		CAS by 2024
KFC	2030				
Kraft Heinz	2025	70%		16%	
Loblaws	2025 (timeline extended; update pending)	PC brand shell 100% 🇨🇦	2022 (timeline extended; update pending)	PC Free From brand 30% 🇨🇦	

Company	Cage-free egg policy deadline	Cage-free egg progress	Crate-free pork policy deadline	Crate-free pork progress	Better Chicken Commitment policy deadline
McCain Foods	2025	52% 			2024
McDonald's	2025	55% 			
Metro	2025 (timeline extended; update pending)	LifeSmart brand over 50% 	2022 (timeline extended; update pending)		
MTY Group (brands include Country Style, Extreme Pita, Manchu Wok, Mr. Sub, Mucho Burrito, Thai Express, The Works, South St. Burger)	2025				
Nestlé	2025	60% 		56%	2024
Pizza Hut	2030				
Pizza Pizza	2025				
Recipe Unlimited (brands include East Side Mario's, Harvey's, The Keg, Kelseys, Milestones, Montana's, The Pickle Barrel, Swiss Chalet)	Fulfilled	100%			CAS by 2025
Restaurant Brands International (Burger King, Popeyes, Tim Hortons)	2025		2022		2024
Save-On-Foods	2025 (timeline extended; update pending)	38% 	2022 (timeline extended; update pending)		
Second Cup	2020				2024

Company	Cage-free egg policy deadline	Cage-free egg progress	Crate-free pork policy deadline	Crate-free pork progress	Better Chicken Commitment policy deadline
Sobeys	2025 (timeline extended; update pending)	17.5% 	2022 (timeline extended; update pending)	30% Own Brand lean ground pork 	
Sodexo	2025	85% 			2024/2026
Starbucks	2020	100% shell, 99.99% liquid, 99.3% ingredient in company-operated stores 	Updated timeline pending	25% North America	2024
Stewart Foodservice	2025				
Subway	2025	6% 			2024
Sysco					
Taco Bell	Fulfilled	100% 			
UNFI	Near fulfillment	99% 	Not applicable		Not applicable
Unilever	Fulfilled	100% 			2024
Walmart	2025 (timeline extended; update pending)		2022 (timeline extended; update pending)		
Wendy's			2022		
Whole Foods Market	Fulfilled	100% 	Fulfilled	100% 	2024/2026