

Higher Welfare Pork Launched

UK - The Co-operative has announced plans to role out higher welfare pork in the New Year.

According to Meatinfo.co.uk, from 5 January 2009, all The Co-operative's own-brand premium Truly Irresistible pork, bacon and sausage ranges will be made using Freedom Food-accredited outdoor reared Hampshire breed pork.

The products will come from animals reared on farms approved under the Freedom Food scheme, which assesses conditions for farm animals in accordance with welfare standards devised and monitored by the RSPCA.

As well as meeting these higher-welfare standards, the meat comes from pigs that are sired by Hampshire boars, a traditional British breed renowned for producing tasty and succulent meat.

The Co-operative, the UK's largest convenience store retailer, is planning to extend higher-welfare standards to all its own-brand fresh pork by Autumn 2009.

The move to improve welfare standards for pork follows The Co-operative's conversion of its entire standard range of own-brand fresh chicken to the retailer's higher-welfare Elmwood standard earlier in 2008.

The retailer said this continuing commitment to improving animal welfare standards is also in response to the results of The Co-operative's ground-breaking Food Ethical Policy, which were announced in February 2008.

More than 100,000 customer-members across the UK responded to the poll, and animal welfare emerged as one of the top areas that they wish to see prioritised by the business.

The Co-operative introduced its responsible fish sourcing policy in summer 2008. All Co-operative fresh salmon, turkey, duck, beef, pork and chicken is British.

Lynne Forbes, category development manager for chilled, prepared & protein at The Co-operative, said: "We are committed to introducing higher-welfare standards for pork as part of our Food Ethical Policy. As well as providing a better quality of life for the pigs, the outdoor reared Hampshire breed pork is mouthwatering and delicious. We're sure that our customers will agree when the products are launched in January."

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