
Subway® signs the European Chicken Commitment

Subway®, the world's largest quick service restaurant chain, has confirmed its intent to adhere to the European Chicken Commitment, requiring its suppliers to review their current practices and meet the standards for 100% of the chicken in its European managed supply chain. Subway® will work closely with Compassion in World Farming and its supply chain to create a viable roadmap to achieve the commitment.

Mike Kehoe, Subway® EMEA President, said: "We're thrilled to be joining the growing European Chicken Commitment community. Animal welfare has always been important to us, and we work hand in hand with our suppliers to ensure that the animals in our supply chain are treated well. We want to be part of the food companies driving this change and we know that this commitment will require industry-wide change, which is why we have taken the time to participate in an industry roundtable, deep-dive into the commitment with our suppliers and consider a viable roadmap necessary to get there."

Compassion's Director of Food Business, Dr Tracey Jones, said: "I am delighted that food service giant Subway has made the commitment to move to higher welfare chicken across its European business. Committing to change is challenging, especially for a company that only uses chicken breast and includes supply outside of Europe, so we applaud them for driving the market for better chicken across their global supply chain."

"Collective action is essential for success and as more global brands like Subway sign up to the ECC it gives a clear signal to industry that higher welfare chicken is the future. Acting on these commitments is a crucial next step, and we look forward to working with Subway on their roadmap for change."

1) ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY ECC COMMITMENT

Subway®, the world's largest quick service restaurant chain, has confirmed its intent to adhere to the European Chicken Commitment (ECC), requiring its suppliers to review their current practices and meet the standards for 100% of the chicken* in its European managed supply chain. This commitment is made with the understanding that achieving the ECC will require industry-wide change, which is why Subway® has taken the time to participate in an industry roundtable and deep-dive into the commitment with our suppliers to determine its feasibility. Subway® will work closely with Compassion in World Farming and its supply chain to create a viable roadmap to achieve it.

By 2026, Subway® will require suppliers to meet the following requirements for 100% of the chicken* in its European supply chain:

1. Comply with all EU animal welfare laws and regulations, regardless of the country of production.
2. Implement a maximum stocking density of 30kg/m² or less. Thinning is discouraged and if practiced must be limited to one thin per flock.
3. Adopt breeds that demonstrate higher welfare outcomes: either the following breeds, Hubbard Redbro (indoor use only); Hubbard Norfolk Black, JA757, JACY57, 787, 957, or 987, Rambler

Ranger, Ranger Classic, and Ranger Gold, or other breeds that meet the criteria of the RSPCA Broiler Breed Welfare Assessment Protocol.

4. *Meet improved environmental standards including:*

- *At least 50 lux of light, including natural light.*
- *At least two metres of usable perch space, and two pecking substrates, per 1,000 birds.*
- *On air quality, the maximum requirements of Annex 2.3 of the EU broiler directive, regardless of stocking density.*
- *No cages or multi-tier systems.*

5. *Adopt controlled atmospheric stunning using inert gas or multi-phase systems, or effective electrical stunning without live inversion.*

6. *Demonstrate compliance with the above standards via third-party auditing and annual public reporting on progress towards this commitment.*

Statement of Intent

Electrical water bath stunning is the main method used globally for the slaughter of poultry. There are, however, significant animal welfare concerns with this method and in 2012 the European Food Safety Authority called for an end to its use¹. Effective electric alternatives are yet to be developed. However, recognising that under halal standards, Controlled Atmosphere Systems may not be accepted as the animal must not be dead at the time of slaughter (cutting), it is a bare minimum that a stunning method which renders the animal insensible to pain, but still alive, is developed and adopted as soon as possible –

We Subway® agree to:

- *Actively press our suppliers and support the latest research projects² to find alternatives to electrical water bath as a matter of urgency.*
- *Support the call for the use of water bath stunning to be banned by 2026, and new, more humane systems for the effective electric stunning of poultry without conscious inversion to be developed and commercially available by no later than 1st January 2026.*
- *Commit to investing and adopting such a stunning method (without conscious inversion) as soon as it is commercially available.*

**This applies to all fresh, frozen and processed chicken in Subway's European managed supply chain*

FAQs

What is the ECC?

The European Chicken Commitment, the ECC, is a commitment to address the most pressing welfare concerns relating to broiler production identified by a group of European and global organisations, including Compassion in World Farming. The organisations call the commitment the “minimum that any European corporate policy must achieve and make publicly available.

¹ ESFA 2012 report, pg. 35

² For example, by engaging with the Effective Electrical Stunning roundtable convened by Compassion in World Farming

Why has Subway signed up to the ECC?

Animal welfare is important to us, and we work closely with our suppliers to ensure that animals are treated well in accordance with Subway's® global Animal Welfare Policy. As part of this, we are committed to continuously improving chicken welfare standards across our supply chain, which is why our policy now includes the European Chicken Commitment (ECC). Achieving all the criteria of the ECC is not something that one company can achieve alone – it requires industry-wide change but having taken the time to participate in an industry roundtable and fully understand the implications of the commitment and the steps necessary to get there, we're delighted to now be part of the growing ECC community to develop a viable roadmap for change and to further improve the lives of our chickens.

When did Subway sign up to the ECC?

Subway® signed up to the European Chicken Commitment in August 2021.