



the COMPASSIONATE FOOD GUIDE

THE EASY WAY TO SHOP COMPASSIONATELY



COMPASSION
in world farming 
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COMPASSIONATE EATING STARTS WITH YOU

The food you choose has a direct effect on how farm animals live.

The vast majority of all farm animals are reared in intensive systems that seriously impact their welfare.

CHICKENS

95% of all farmed animals in the United States are chickens raised for meat, also known as broilers. Most are raised in overcrowded, barren conditions with no natural light. Because of Americans' preference for white breast meat, chickens have been selectively bred to grow very big, very fast. They often find it difficult to walk, collapsing under the weight of their own bodies, and can suffer from heart attacks and other immune issues.

We believe there is a better way. A chicken should be allowed to be a chicken. This means giving her enough room to move around freely, an enriched environment and natural light to encourage natural behavior like scratching and wing flapping, and genetics that don't inherently cause suffering.

LAYING HENS

Laying hens often spend their entire lives in battery cages where the average space allowance per bird is less than a sheet of paper.

Higher welfare alternatives for egg laying hens include pasture raised, free-range, and cage-free systems. In well-designed and managed higher-welfare systems, hens can engage in more natural behaviors, such as perching.



PIGS

In much of the world it is common for pregnant sows to be kept in "gestation crates" for their entire 16-week gestation period. A gestation crate is a metal cage, usually with a bare, slatted floor, which is so narrow that the sow cannot turn around and can only stand up and lie down with difficulty.

Higher welfare alternatives for pigs include pasture raised systems where breeding sows are housed outdoors with huts furnished with straw for shelter and nesting. In these systems, sows have a higher quality of life and are able to act naturally by rooting, wallowing, and foraging.

DAIRY COWS

The majority of dairy cows in the US are kept with no access to pasture for most of their lives. This is known as "zero grazing."

We believe cows belong in the fields, and the highest welfare alternatives for dairy cows allow access to pasture where the animals can graze.

ANIMAL WELFARE CERTIFICATIONS

If you are searching for products that embrace higher farm animal welfare, look for meaningful, third-party certifications like Animal Welfare Approved, Global Animal Partnership (GAP), and Certified Humane. Labels that certify that animals are pasture raised indicate the highest animal welfare potential. While it can be more expensive, pasture-raised animals have access to the outdoors and the freedom to express their natural behaviors.

A PLANT-BASED DIET

The best way to help farm animals is to reduce your consumption of animal products. It's better for your health, your planet, and your wallet!

REMEMBER:

REFUSE animal products unless certified higher welfare.

REDUCE your overall consumption of animal products.

REPLACE more animal products with plant-based foods.

ABOUT THE LABELS

MEANINGFUL 3RD PARTY CERTIFICATIONS



Animal Welfare Approved: No cages that excessively restrict movement are permitted. Access to pasture and indoor enrichment is required, so animals can exhibit natural behaviors.



Certified Humane Raised & Handled: No cages that excessively restrict movement are permitted. Access to outdoors is not required for pigs and poultry, but is required for other species. Indoor enrichment is required so animals can exhibit natural behaviors.



Global Animal Partnership (5-Step Animal Welfare Rating Program): This five-step rating system ranges from Step 1 (no crates, no cages and no crowding) to Step 5+ (animals spend their entire life on pasture on the same farm).

OTHER CERTIFICATIONS

These labels are common but not quite as meaningful for animal welfare:



USDA Organic: Most restrictive cages and feedlots are not permitted. However, painful mutilations are still permitted. Animals do not necessarily have access to pasture, though they will have access to some outdoor area, which may be limited to a screened in concrete 'porch.' Antibiotics are prohibited and the feed is 100% organic.



American Humane Certified: This certification is less meaningful to animals. Most, but not all, cages and crates are banned. For example, it does not allow gestation crates. It does allow enriched cages for laying hens and feedlots for beef cattle. Indoor enrichments are not required for chickens raised for meat.

BEWARE OF THESE LABELS

Natural or naturally raised: This claim has no relevance to animal welfare.

Vegetarian-fed: This means they are not fed animal byproducts, but has little relevance to animal welfare.

"Humane": There is no legal definition for "humane." Unless the product has a certification as listed on this page, there is little way of telling what is meant by this term.

Cage-free (chickens raised for meat): While "cage-free" is meaningful for egg-laying hens, no chicken raised for meat in the US is kept in a cage. This label is a meaningless distinction, indicating how chickens would be raised regardless of welfare policy.

Hormone-free (for poultry and pigs): It is illegal to give poultry and pigs hormones. This label is a meaningless distinction indicating that the company is following the law.

OTHER LABELS

Cage-free, free-range, and free-roaming: Terms like these have no legal definition in the US. The only way to be sure you're actually getting a higher-welfare product is to look for the meaningful third party certifications listed on this page, which audit farms for adherence to higher animal welfare requirements.

Grass-fed: This common term has no legal definition in the US, and can be used even if animals start their lives on grass, but spend the latter part of their lives on a feedlot. To be sure the cattle or sheep are 100% grass fed, look for a certification from the American Grassfed Association.

CAN'T FIND SOME OF THE LABELS?

If you can't find the higher-welfare products you're after, why not ask the supermarket or shop manager? That way, they'll learn what consumers really want and may consider stocking more higher-welfare products.

We believe there is a better way. With your help, we can improve the lives of billions of animals and create a more transparent food system for consumers.

Today there is a huge variety of meatless alternatives to animal products. You can learn more about going meat, egg, and dairy-free in this guide.

[DAIRY]

Your health

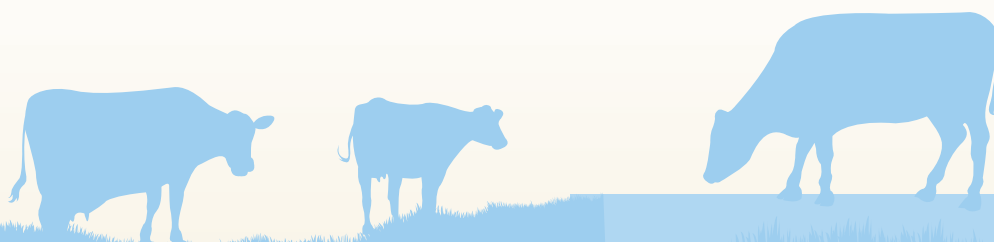
Milk from pasture raised cows is higher in good omega-3 fatty acids than milk from cows with limited or no access to pasture.¹

Look for grass-fed, hormone-free

If you buy dairy, ensure it is certified to Animal Welfare Approved standards. If unavailable, look for Certified Humane.

Labels that say rBGH-free or rBST-free mean that the cows were not dosed with those genetically engineered hormones that increase milk production. Overproduction of milk leads to severe welfare problems for dairy cattle, including lameness and mastitis. These hormones are also banned in the EU because of human health concerns.

In addition, look for 100% grass-fed dairy products, certified by the American Grassfed Association. You can also explore widely-available dairy alternatives such as soy, coconut, or nut-based milk, cheese, yogurt, or dessert.



What does it mean?

CERTIFICATIONS

Animal Welfare Approved standards require continuous pasture access for dairy cows.

Certified Humane does not require pasture, but does require access to outdoors and a minimum of four hours in an exercise area per day.

USDA Organic standards ensure that dairy cows have access to pasture during the grazing season, which is 120 days per year, and that at least 30% of dairy cows' "dry matter intake" comes from pasture during the grazing season.

SHOPPER'S TIP >>

When you're eating out or making a supermarket purchase, remember that the milk in your coffee and ice cream—or the cheese in your sandwich—is unlikely to be grass-fed or hormone-free unless indicated.

DID YOU KNOW?

Like humans, cows only produce milk after they have given birth, and dairy cows must give birth to one calf per year in order to continue producing milk. Calves are taken away from their mother shortly after birth. This causes severe distress to both the cow and her calf, and has long-term effects on the calf's physical and social development. Many of these calves are sent to become veal.

Over the last fifty years, dairy farming has become more intensive in order to increase the amount of milk produced by each cow. In the US, the average dairy cow produces more than seven gallons of milk per day. If she was producing just enough to feed her calf, a dairy cow would only produce about one gallon of milk per day. These high-production cows produce milk on average for less than three years, after which they are sent to slaughter for beef.

[EGGS]

Your health

Free-range eggs often contain more omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants than eggs from caged hens and are a rich source of vitamin E.

Look for pasture-raised

If you buy eggs, look for Animal Welfare Approved and Certified Humane. The highest welfare systems under these certifications are pasture raised, followed by free-range. If unavailable, look for cage-free eggs. This is the simplest thing you can do to help the hens who lay your eggs.

The most common eggs typically originate from cage systems, where hens are confined in small cages and are never allowed outside. They are not able to run around or perform natural behaviors like laying eggs in a nest, flapping their wings, dust bathing, scratching, or perching.



What does it mean?

CERTIFICATIONS

Animal Welfare Approved standards for egg-laying hens require outdoor access from the age of four weeks with continuous access to adequate shelter. Indoor housing must provide at least 1.8 sq ft per laying hen in order to facilitate freedom of movement and the expression of natural behaviors.

Certified Humane standards do not require outdoor access. However, they have separate requirements for producers that do provide outdoor access, such as Certified Humane Free-range or Pasture Raised.

USDA Organic certified laying hens must be cage-free and given at least some outdoor access, which are typically limited to a concrete, screened-in 'patio,' and must be raised without antibiotics.

SHOPPER'S TIP >>

Remember egg ingredients. Additional foods such as mayonnaise, cakes, cookies, and pasta often contain egg. Unless the ingredients say 'cage-free,' they are likely from caged hens.

LABELS

Free Range Systems: While there is no legal definition in the US, egg producers must show to the USDA that the birds have access to the outside. No information on stocking density, the frequency or duration of how much outdoor access must be provided, nor the quality of the land accessible to the animals.

Cage-Free Systems (no outdoor access): While there is no legal definition in the US, cage-free systems typically house hens on the floor of a barn or aviary. Even though cage-free systems may not provide outdoor access, they do allow for greater expression of hens' natural behaviors. They can stretch, flap their wings, peck, scratch, and lay their eggs in a nest.

Enriched Cages: Enriched cages provide more space than battery cages and may offer enrichment such as a perch, but they are still restrictive: hens can't escape an area to be safe from feather pecking, and with limited litter area, dust bathing isn't possible. Because these cages provide only marginally better welfare than battery cages, Compassion in World Farming opposes them in favor of cage-free or other higher welfare systems.

DID YOU KNOW?

Americans now eat an average of one egg every weekday. In 2012, we consumed about 250 eggs per person in the US.

Modern commercial hens have been bred to produce large numbers of eggs. This depletes the hen's store of calcium and can result in high levels of osteoporosis and fractures.² Restricted movement can also contribute to osteoporosis. Several tiers of crowded cages make inspection difficult, and in large cage sheds injured birds can be left to die unnoticed.

²LayWel, 2006. Welfare implications of changes in production systems for laying hens <http://www.laywel.eu/web/pdf/deliverable%2071%20welfare%20assessment.pdf>

[CHICKEN]

Your health

Free-range and organic chicken contains up to 50% less fat than intensively reared chicken meat.

Look for higher welfare certified or pasture raised

If you buy chicken, look for products certified by Animal Welfare Approved, Certified Humane or Global Animal Partnership Step 3 or higher which give birds a better quality of life. If these are not available, look for organic or free-range chicken.

If you are looking for the system with the highest welfare potential, seek out pasture raised and ask the company or farm if they use slower-growing breeds better suited for pasture. While it is more expensive, animals raised in this system will have access to the outdoors and have full potential to express natural behaviors.



What does it mean?

CERTIFICATIONS

Animal Welfare Approved standards require that birds over the age of four weeks are given continuous outdoor access. Breeds that have been selectively bred to the point where their welfare is negatively impacted are prohibited, meaning any AWA certified chicken is a breed suited for pasture..

Global Animal Partnership also requires that chickens at Steps 3 through 5+ of its 5-Step program are given continuous outdoor access. Steps 2 through 5+ must provide at least some enrichments for all birds when indoors. GAP has committed to slower-growing breeds and more space, enrichment, and natural light for all chickens by 2024.

Certified Humane does not require outdoor access, natural light, or slower-growing breeds, but does require more space per bird and indoor enrichment. If birds are offered outdoor access, the label will say Certified Humane Free-Range.

USDA Organic chickens must be given at least some outdoor access. This label does not require slower-growing breeds, enrichment, or natural light when birds are indoors. In addition, birds must be reared without antibiotics.

LABELS

Free Range: There is no legal definition for free-range chicken in the US, but for meaningful third party certifications, free-range means chickens have some outdoor access.

Cage-free: While cage-free is meaningful for egg laying hens, no chicken raised for meat in the US is kept in a cage. Therefore this label is a meaningless distinction indicating how chickens would be raised regardless of welfare policy.

SHOPPER'S TIP >>

Remember – when you're eating out, ask if the chicken on your plate or in your sandwich is from a pasture raised or higher welfare system.

DID YOU KNOW?

95% of all factory farmed animals raised each year in the United States are chickens raised for meat. In terms of numbers, no other farm animal is more severely affected by factory farming than broiler chickens.

The modern chicken is bred to grow so fast that their bones, heart, and lungs often can't keep up, causing crippling lameness or heart failure. They don't have access to the outdoors, and tens of thousands may be crowded into one shed.

Intensively farmed chickens are bred to reach their slaughter weight in about six weeks. This is less than half the time it would take heritage breeds.

PORK & PORK PRODUCTS

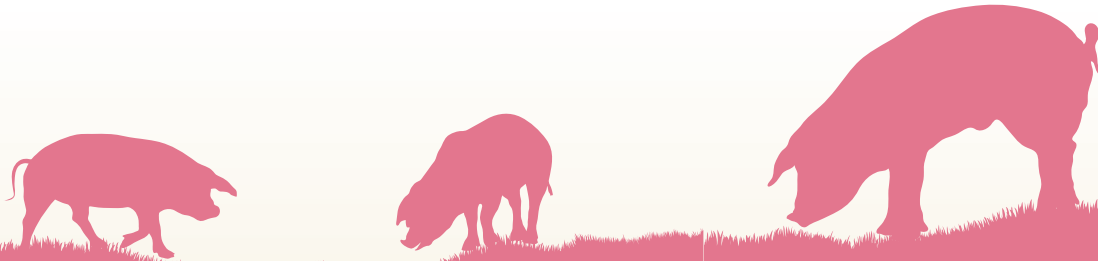
Your health

Free-range pig meat is richer in vitamin E and iron than meat from pigs intensively farmed indoors.

Look for pasture raised

If you buy pork, bacon, sausage, or other pork products, look for certifications that do not permit gestation crates or farrowing crates.

Look for certified higher welfare pig products from pasture raised systems, where pigs are allowed to root in the soil, explore their environment, and raise their young naturally. Unless it specifies as such, standard pork and pork products come from factory farms that closely confine and isolate pregnant and nursing sows in crates so small that they cannot lie down easily or turn around.



What does it mean?

CERTIFICATIONS

Animal Welfare Approved standards require that pigs have continuous outdoor access to ranging and foraging areas. Standards allow castration of piglets who are less than 15 days old. Gestation and farrowing crates are prohibited.

Global Animal Partnership welfare standards require that pigs at Steps 3 and higher have continuous outdoor access, and continuous access to pasture is required at Steps 4 and higher. Step 5 prohibits all physical alterations of the pigs, including castration and ear notching, and requires pigs remain with their litter mates for their entire lives. Pigs in Step 5+ systems spend their entire lives from birth to slaughter on a single farm. Gestation and farrowing crates are prohibited at all levels.

Certified Humane standards do not require outdoor access for pigs. Indoor enrichment is required, and pigs must be able to turn around without difficulty. Castration is allowed before 7 days of age. Gestation and farrowing crates are prohibited.

USDA Organic standards require that pigs have access to the outdoors, shade, shelter, and exercise areas. However, raising pigs on pasture is not required, and there are no specific space requirements for the animals. Castration is permitted. Standards allow gestation and farrowing crates.

LABELS

Pasture Raised: Pigs have continuous and unconfined access to pasture throughout their life cycle. Check third party certification standards for their more specific requirements.

Free Range: There is no legal definition of free range pork in the US.

SHOPPER'S TIP >>

Remember – when you're eating out, ask if the pork or pork product on your plate is from a higher welfare system, like pasture raised and gestation crate-free.

DID YOU KNOW?

Pigs are inquisitive animals and need materials for rooting. Intensive systems don't provide the varied environment that they need to thrive.



Your health

Beef raised on pasture has 25-50% less fat and more vitamin E and beta-carotene than intensively reared beef.

Look for grass-fed, hormone-free

If you buy beef or lamb, look for certified high welfare, 100% grass-fed or grass-finished, or pasture raised. Grass-fed animals live their early lives on pasture, but may have been sent to a feedlot for the last few months of their life. The 100% grass-fed or grass-finished label tells you that the animal lived its entire life on pasture. Unless the packaging says otherwise, cattle are likely to be reared on a confined feedlot, which leads to severe welfare problems.

In addition, look for hormone-free beef. Hormones are commonly used to speed growth in beef production, and their use by the beef industry is associated with animal welfare problems.

Also, be sure to look for locally produced lamb and mutton. Sheep raised locally typically do not have to be transported as far to slaughter and avoid many of the stressors and potential injuries associated with extended transport.



What does it mean?

CERTIFICATIONS

Animal Welfare Approved requires continuous outdoor pasture access for cattle, except in the case of extreme weather. They must be able to explore the ground and their natural environment. Castration is permitted, with restrictions.

Sheep carrying the certification must have continuous access to pasture. AWA prohibits tail docking and mulesing (the surgical removal of sections of skin from around the tail of a sheep, often with no anesthetic causing pain to the animal), and only allows castration as a last resort to prevent uncontrolled breeding.

Global Animal Partnership's standards require that cattle are given at least some outdoor access at all Step levels. At Step 5, cattle must spend their entire life on range or pasture with housing only permitted during weather emergencies. Additionally, Step 5+ requires that the cattle be slaughtered on farm or locally with no transport permitted, and weaning of calves must be natural. Castration is prohibited at step 5 and 5+, but allowed at all other steps.

Sheep raised at Steps 4 and higher spend the majority of their lives on pasture and the use of feedlots is prohibited. At Step 5+, sheep spend their entire lives on a single farm and are slaughtered at a mobile or on-farm slaughter facility.

Certified Humane standards for cattle require continuous access to the outdoors. The animals may be finished in feedlots (meaning the animals are taken off pasture for a portion of time before slaughter). In the feedlots, confinement and tethering are prohibited, and animals must have sufficient freedom of movement to fully extend their limbs, lie down, turn around, and groom themselves without difficulty.

Sheep standards require access to pasture or an outside exercise area during the grass-growing season. Castration is allowed between the ages of 24 hours and seven days, and tail docking is allowed as a last resort between the ages of 24 hours and 14 days.

USDA Organic certified cattle must be allowed access to pasture at least 120 days a year. There is no protocol for alternations such as castration and dehorning.

Sheep must be provided access to pasture, but there are no rules on mutilations. There is no protocol for alterations such as castration and dehorning.

YOUR HEALTH

Compared to intensively-reared lamb, pasture-reared lamb has a higher proportion of good omega-3 fatty acids and a lower ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids (which could reduce the risk of many chronic diseases).³

SHOPPER'S TIP >>

Look for beef and lamb labeled pasture raised to ensure the animals have access to pasture during the grazing season.

³ <https://www.ciwf.org.uk/media/5234769/Nutritional-benefits-of-higher-welfare-animal-products-June-2012.pdf>

[TURKEY]

Did you know?

Turkeys are naturally very inquisitive animals and explore their environment by pecking objects around them. Intensive systems don't provide the varied environment that they need.

Look for higher welfare certified or pasture raised

If you buy turkey, look for Animal Welfare Approved or Global Animal Partnership's Steps 3 and higher. If you can't find AWA or GAP look for USDA Organic "free-range." As with other animals, pasture raised provides the highest welfare potential.

Unfortunately, most turkeys are raised in intensive, indoor systems, which causes many welfare issues.



What does it mean?

CERTIFICATIONS

Animal Welfare Approved standards for turkeys require access to an outdoor foraging area for all turkeys over four weeks of age, but encourage access for turkeys as young as two or three days of age if conditions are suitable.

Global Animal Partnership standards require outdoor access and enrichments at Steps 3 and higher. At Step 5, turkeys must have continuous access to pasture, weather permitting. Step 5+ requires turkeys to remain on the operation at all times from placement through slaughter.

Certified Humane standards do not require outdoor access, but indoor housing requirements include enough room to stand normally, stretch their wings, and turn around without difficulty. If labeled "free-range" the animals must have at least some access to the outdoors.

USDA Organic requires that all poultry carrying the "free-range" label must have had at least some access to the outdoors.

CONVENTIONAL TURKEY

Unless certified higher welfare, turkeys are likely raised on overcrowded factory farm sheds. The sheds are usually bare except for food and water, with litter on the floor to absorb the droppings. As the birds grow, the overcrowding intensifies until the floor of the shed is completely covered and the birds can no longer move freely. The sheds are artificially lit and ventilated. The lights in the sheds are kept on for much of the day to encourage the birds to eat.

DID YOU KNOW?

Modern commercial turkeys are selectively bred to grow much faster and with more breast meat than traditional turkeys. Baby turkeys (called "poults") are typically reared in enclosed sheds that can house thousands of birds.

By the time they are ready for slaughter between nine and 24 weeks of age, turkeys weigh between 11 and 44 lbs (and sometimes more).



Your health

Watching the calories? Wild salmon has up to 60% less fat than farmed salmon.

Unfortunately, there is currently no higher welfare certification for fish or shellfish.

We are unable to provide a recommendation of what to look for at this time.

For more sustainable seafood, the Marine Stewardship Council logo (below) ensures the fishing activity is legal, minimizes environmental impact, and is done at a level that could be continued indefinitely.



DID YOU KNOW?

In crowded sea cages many farmed fish can prematurely die from hazards like poor water quality.

Farmed salmon are usually fed wild fish. Around three times the weight of the salmon has to be caught to feed it over its lifetime. This is unsustainable and has an impact on our declining fish stocks.

SHOPPER'S TIP >>

Don't be afraid to ask restaurant staff where the fish you are eating came from.

**More
sustainable!**



PLANT-BASED DIET

Concerns for animal welfare, human health, and the environment all play into people's decisions to go meat, egg, and dairy-free.

Vast areas of land are used for chemical-intensive mono-crops grown for animal feed. Globally, the area of a forest half the size of the UK is cleared yearly, mainly for ranching or growing animal feed.

Cramped conditions on factory farms encourage the spread of diseases, such as avian flu. In the US, 80% of all antibiotics are used on farm animals, given in daily feed to ward off diseases. The overuse of antibiotics for farm animals causes more drug-resistant superbugs.

Every minute approximately 120,000 farm animals are slaughtered around the world, with the majority raised on factory farms where animals cannot express their natural behaviors.

According to the USDA, the total red meat and poultry per capita consumption in the US has been declining since 2007—from 221.7 lbs to 214.5 lbs.

Initially based on health concerns, a nationwide campaign called Meatless Mondays was started to encourage people to have one meat-free day a week.

One way to help farm animals is to reduce your consumption of animal products. It's better for animals, your health, and the planet! You can get all the nutrients your body requires from plant-based sources. Start by trying a variety of whole grains, vegetables, fruits and plant-based proteins such as beans and legumes. Whether you're just looking to eat less meat, or eat a vegetarian or vegan diet, your food choices make a big impact on our world.

If you're looking to replace meat products, try some of these great plant-based options:



If you're looking to replace dairy products, try these:



And if you're looking to replace eggs in your diet, try some of these great plant-based alternatives:



You can get all the nutrients you need from a plant-based diet—and cut down on your cholesterol and fat intake. Here are some examples:

NUTRIENT	PLANT-BASED	ANIMAL-BASED
PROTEIN	1 cup chickpeas (10.7 g) 1 cup tofu (20.04 g)	4 oz burger (20 g) 1 cup whole milk (8g)
IRON	1 cup lentils (6.6 mg) 1 cup hummus (6 mg)	8.85 oz steak (6 mg) 1 cup chicken (1.8 mg)
CALCIUM	1 cup soy calcium fortified soy milk (299 mg) 2 tbsp sesame seeds (176 mg) 1 cup kale (101 mg)	1 cup milk (305 mg) 1 oz cheddar cheese (201 mg)
VITAMIN C	1 large orange (97.9 mg) 1 cup strawberries (84.7 mg)	0 mg
VITAMIN D	1 cup portabella mushrooms (976 IU) 1 cup fortified orange juice (105 IU)	3 oz cod (39 IU) 3 oz trout (539 IU)
CHOLESTEROL	0 mg	8.85 oz steak (196 mg) 1 cup whole milk (24 mg) 1 cup chicken breast (119 mg)
FAT	1 cup spinach (0.1 g) 1 cup soy milk (4.3 g)	8.85 oz steak (48 g) 1 cup whole milk (8 g)
FIBER	1 cup peas (8.8 g) 1 cup raspberries (8 g) 1 cup whole wheat pasta (5.9 g) 1 cup cooked barley (6 g)	0 g
VITAMIN E	1 cup almonds (36.65 mg)	3 oz hamburger (0.1 mg)
VITAMIN A	1 large sweet potato (34,592 IU) 1 cup carrots (20,381 IU)	3 oz tuna fish (48 IU) 1 cup whole milk (395 IU)

[NOTES]



Compassion in World Farming aims to end factory farming and advance the wellbeing of farm animals worldwide.

We work tirelessly to improve the lives of farm animals through advocacy, working with food businesses, and seeking legislative change to improve the lives of farm animals.

This Compassionate Food Guide is part of our work to improve the baseline standards of industrial farming and to give shoppers, like you, the power to make informed choices when you shop.

Please support our vital work to make life better for farm animals by making a donation today.



Image © Istock/Nemanja Glumac

[THANK YOU]
for caring where
your food comes from

To make a gift today, please visit:
www.ciwf.com/help-us/donate



I recognize that consumers have real power and believe the way we shop can change farming methods for the better, including animal welfare.

Philip Lymbery

CEO, Compassion in World Farming



To find out more about improving the lives of farm animals, please visit www.ciwf.com.