

CALF LIFE – WANTED NOT WASTED

Nearly half a million unwanted calves are born every year in the UK. Welcome to the dark side of the milk industry.

Dairy cows have to give birth once a year in order to continuously produce milk for human consumption. Female calves join the dairy herd, but male dairy calves cannot produce milk. Moreover, being a pure-bred dairy breed, these calves are not as well suited for beef production.

Male dairy calves are therefore often considered a waste product. Thousands of calves are shot at birth; many others are transported from the UK to veal farms on the continent – some on journeys lasting 50 hours or more. On the continent these calves are intensively reared on bare slatted floors; conditions which would be illegal in the UK.

Compassion wants UK male dairy calves to be reared under the highest welfare systems possible.

Unlike continental veal calves, British calves are fed a more natural diet – with more fibre – and are group housed with straw bedding in larger well-lit barns throughout the rearing period.

When produced under the best conditions, veal does not need to be a cruel meal.



WHAT THE LABELS MEAN

MINIMUM UK STANDARD REQUIREMENT

UK law requires straw bedding, considerably more space for older calves and double the amount of fibrous food for young calves compared with EU requirements. The veal you buy in your supermarket or online can carry any of the following labels:

ORGANIC

Organic systems offer animals higher welfare – more space and a better diet.



Look for the Soil Association organic label; it provides the highest welfare standards. Veal calves have greater space allowance and are kept outside when conditions permit. They are fed a normal diet without restriction of fibre or iron intake and may even be reared with a 'nurse' cow.

RSPCA FREEDOM FOOD™

The RSPCA Welfare Standards cover all aspects of the animal's life, including living conditions, diet, handling and transport.



Calves live in groups in deep straw bedded barns. They have greater space allowance and their diet must provide more iron than minimum UK legal requirements.

SUPERMARKET BRANDS

Supermarkets often have their own higher welfare ranges. Look for information on the packaging or ask for assistance.

RED TRACTOR



The Red Tractor scheme, run by Assured Food Standards, ensures compliance with minimum UK legal requirements. The Red Tractor label is not a guarantee of higher welfare standards.