

Size Matters when it comes to Eggs

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It's Official: Size Matters When It Comes To Buying Eggs

A new collaboration is urging British consumers to eat a range of egg sizes to do what's right for the hens that lay them. The British Hen Welfare Trust (BHWT) and British Free Range Egg Producers Association (BFREPA) have come together to crack the issue to raise awareness that egg size matters.

The BHWT says consumers have little or no idea that eating a range of egg sizes benefits hen welfare and making a small change to shopping habits and recipes can make a big impact.

More than 13 billion eggs are eaten in Britain every year and BFREPA says shoppers prefer to buy large or very large eggs rather than medium or mixed weight boxes, despite the fact hens naturally lay a range of egg sizes.

Jane Howorth, founder of BHWT, said: "Eating a range of egg sizes is an easy way for consumers to support the best possible welfare for hens. There are more than 40 million laying hens across Britain who will thank you for it.

"Lots of factors can affect the size of egg a hen lays, including the hen's age, how big it is, the breed, what it eats – even the weather. If shoppers only want large eggs then those hens are being asked to work harder, rather than just allowing them to do what comes naturally."

Robert Gooch, BFREPA CEO, said free range eggs are a staple of British diets but shoppers have become obsessed with getting the biggest they can, which is also exacerbated when recipes stipulate a large egg.

"We've been campaigning for consumers to buy a range of egg sizes for more than two years and have found that consumer habits change instantly when they understand why it is important to hen welfare," he said.

"Every day nearly half of the eggs laid by free range hens are medium or small.

"It's fantastic to be working in collaboration with the BHWT and we hope together we will be able to affect a sea change in the way shoppers buy eggs."

Medium eggs are just as nutritious and tasty as large or very large eggs but a lack of demand sees them used primarily in processed food such as sandwich fillings, cakes and sauces. And the main difference between a medium and large egg is in the amount of white – the yolk size is broadly the same.

Emma Mosey from Yolk Farm and Minskip Farm Shop in Yorkshire added "We have 6,000 happy hens at Yolk Farm: in July, we opened the world's first egg restaurant on a free range egg farm. One of the ways we ensure our girls are as happy and relaxed as possible is to use the eggs of all sizes straight from the

hen house in our kitchen. This also reduces waste. We speak to customers in our farm shop every day who have no idea of the impact of their buying habits on the industry and the hens: as soon as they find out, they adjust what size they choose.”

The Guild of Food Writers which became aware of the issue say its members' eyes have been opened to how they can change recipes to encourage better consumer buying behaviours. Jane Howorth reported: “In speaking to the Guild, a highly influential flock of foodies, this could have a significant impact on how recipes are written in the future. In turn that change in recipes will help laying hens everywhere. It's a fantastic opportunity for us all to impact welfare with no more than a simple switch in our shopping behaviour.

To watch a video explaining egg sizes featuring free range egg farmer Susie Macmillan and her 18,000 organic free range hens, click here:

ENDS

Stats:

- A free range hen will typically lay 55% large or very large eggs and 45% medium, smalls and second quality eggs (source: ADAS / The Ranger magazine)
- Free range egg producers typically receive 14p/dozen less for medium eggs than a large egg (source: ADAS / The Ranger magazine)
- BFREPA is the voice of the British free range egg industry representing the interests of over 500 producers
- Over the past three years the free range egg industry has been growing at 10% a year
- 60% of eggs purchased by consumers through retailers are free range
- The average UK consumer eats 196 eggs every year

For interviews and images contact ben@evecommunications.co.uk or call 01327 438 617

The British Hen Welfare Trust: Notes to Editors

- The British Hen Welfare Trust was established in 2005 by Jane Howorth and is Britain's first registered charity concerned with rehoming laying hens while improving hen welfare across commercial and domestic sectors.
- Jane Howorth was awarded an MBE in the 2016 New Year's Honours list.
- In the UK there are approximately 16 million hens kept in colony cages. The BHWT has so far found retirement homes as pets for over 810,000 caged hens, all of which were destined for slaughter.
- The British Hen Welfare Trust has 44 pop-up collection points across the UK
- The British Hen Welfare Trust has 1,000 volunteers.
- The British Hen Welfare Trust educates consumers about caged eggs hidden in processed foods, like pasta, quiches, cakes and mayonnaise, helping them make informed choices when shopping.

- The British Hen Welfare Trust works closely with DEFRA and other agencies to develop practices and protocols to improve the lives of both commercially-farmed and hobbyist pet hens.
- The British Hen Welfare Trust works closely with business leaders of the British Egg Industry to influence hen welfare.

For photos and to arrange interviews please contact:

Rio Rossarne,
Head of Marketing & Communications, BHWT
Email: rio.rossarne@bhwt.co.uk
Direct line: 01884 824967

British Hen Welfare Trust
Hope Chapel, Ash Moor, Rose Ash, SOUTH MOLTON, Devon EX36 4RF

Registered Charity No. 11473556
Company No. 8057493
www.bhwt.org.uk