



# Animal Welfare Report



2025

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# Welcome



**Fábio Brancher**  
Agriculture Director  
Pilgrim's Europe

At Pilgrim's Europe we talk about Animal Welfare as a Condition – it is a core principle that guides every aspect of our agriculture operations. This 2025 Animal Welfare Report outlines our continued commitment to the ethical treatment of animals across our poultry, pig, and lamb supply chains. It reflects the progress we've made, the challenges we've faced, and the innovations we're driving to ensure that welfare standards evolve in line with the latest scientific understanding, consumer expectations, and industry-leading best practice.

Our approach is rooted in the Five Freedoms, which guide our farming systems and welfare protocols. From enriched environments for chickens to outdoor-bred pigs and naturally reared lambs, we strive to create conditions that allow animals to express natural behaviours and live a life worth living. This year's report highlights key welfare indicators from antibiotic stewardship and stocking density, to transport times and locomotory health, showcasing our data-driven approach to continuous improvement.



We are proud to report significant advancements in areas such as reduced antibiotic use, increased adoption of higher welfare production systems, and improved livability rates. Our partnerships with farmers, veterinarians, academic institutions, and industry bodies continue to play a vital role in shaping our approach to animal welfare and drive innovation. Notably, our research collaborations and investment in precision farming and AI-based behavioural monitoring signal a forward-looking vision for welfare enhancement.

As we look ahead to continued improvement during 2025 and beyond, Pilgrim's Europe remains committed to transparency, leadership, and progress in animal welfare. This report serves as both a reflection and record of our achievements and a roadmap for future action – ensuring continuous improvement in the way that the animals in our care are treated with respect, compassion, and integrity.

# Animal Welfare

At Pilgrim's Europe, animal welfare is a fundamental condition of our business. We are committed to providing the highest standards of husbandry, welfare, and biosecurity across our poultry, pig, and lamb supply chains. Our farmers are partners in this commitment - working under independently audited assurance schemes including Red Tractor, RSPCA Assured, and our own higher welfare and organic standards.

Our approach is guided by the Five Freedoms, ensuring that all animals have:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst – constant access to fresh water and a balanced diet.
2. Freedom from discomfort – appropriate housing, shelter, and comfortable resting areas.
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease – prevention, prompt diagnosis, and treatment.
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour – sufficient space, enrichment, and social interaction.
5. Freedom from fear and distress – calm handling and conditions that prevent mental suffering.

Animal welfare is verified through regular independent audits, supported by our veterinary services team and welfare specialists. We maintain strict protocols for investigating any welfare concerns, ensuring swift corrective action.

This commitment underpins every part of our integrated farming model - from genetics and nutrition to health planning, enrichment, transport, and processing - ensuring animals live healthy, natural lives under our care.





Welfare Outcome Measures

# Chicken

## Production systems

At Pilgrim’s Europe, we continue to highlight the proportion of birds grown to each recognised production standard. As always, we stress that Pilgrim’s Europe has never, and will never, rear broiler chickens in cages.

Looking ahead, 2025 will be a milestone year as we step into rearing indoor, slower-growing chickens to meet the Better Chicken Commitment (BCC) standards. This transition represents an important advancement in our journey to improve poultry welfare, and Pilgrim’s Europe is proud to be the largest producers of BCC chicken in the UK.

In 2024, we achieved a significant increase in the proportion of our birds reared to indoor higher welfare standards, with 74% of all birds grown under these specifications, compared with 54% in 2023. This shift represents a major positive change in our farming system and reflects our continued collaboration with customers to align with their sourcing requirements and consumer demand for higher welfare chicken.

| Year | % Of birds grown to better chicken commitment (bcc), free range or organic standards | % Of birds Grown to indoor Higher welfare Standards | % Of birds grown to red tractor indoor standards |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 2021 | 3%                                                                                   | 13%                                                 | 84%                                              |
| 2022 | 3%                                                                                   | 14%                                                 | 83%                                              |
| 2023 | 3%                                                                                   | 54%                                                 | 43%                                              |
| 2024 | 3%                                                                                   | 74%                                                 | 23%                                              |

Environmental Enrichment

In 2024, Pilgrim’s Europe continued to provide 100% of our chickens with environmental enrichment designed to promote good welfare. Enrichment is a cornerstone of our approach, underpinning the principles of the Five Freedoms and encouraging positive behaviours such as playing, foraging and perching.

We recognise the importance of natural light for birds, offering them the full spectrum of daylight and a natural variation of light intensity across the house. This not only improves activity levels but also supports the development of healthy daily rhythms. Perches enable birds to fulfil their instinctive drive to roost, while straw bales and pecking objects provide important outlets for foraging and exploration.

Pilgrim’s Europe has never, and will never, rear broiler chickens in cages. We are proud to champion barn-reared systems with enrichment at their core, ensuring that every bird in our care experiences an environment that supports its welfare and allows natural behaviours to be expressed.



| Year | Access To Natural Light | Access To Perches | Access To Pecking Objects | Barn Reared / Cage Free |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2020 | 100%                    | 100%              | 100%                      | 100%                    |
| 2021 | 100%                    | 100%              | 100%                      | 100%                    |
| 2022 | 100%                    | 100%              | 100%                      | 100%                    |
| 2023 | 100%                    | 100%              | 100%                      | 100%                    |
| 2024 | 100%                    | 100%              | 100%                      | 100%                    |

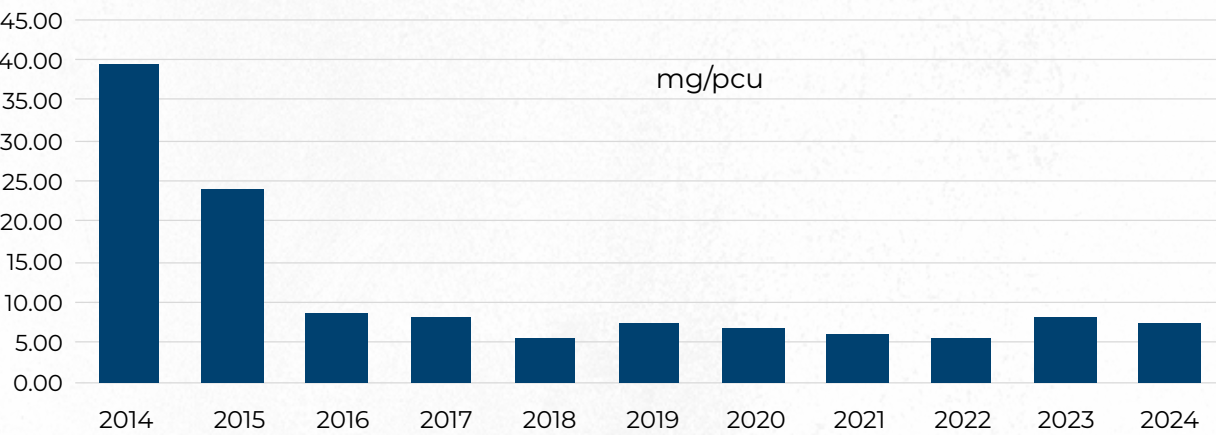
Responsible use of antibiotics

Pilgrim’s Europe continues to lead the industry in a best-in-class approach to antibiotic stewardship. Our principle remains clear: antibiotics are used only where necessary to safeguard animal welfare, and never as a routine preventative measure. By working closely with our farmers, veterinarians and supply chain partners, and by investing in husbandry and hygiene practices, we are able to raise healthy, resilient birds while keeping antibiotic use to an absolute minimum.

Over the last decade we have reduced usage dramatically, maintaining industry-leading low levels of less than 9 mg/PCU since 2016. In 2024, our usage decreased to 7.4 mg/PCU, following a rise in 2023. While year-on-year

variation reflects the natural challenges of farming, our overall position remains one of the lowest in the industry. Importantly, 87.1% of our flocks required no antibiotic treatment at all in 2024.

Pilgrim’s Europe does not permit the use of any antibiotic classes identified by the World Health Organisation (WHO, Sixth Revision 2018) as ‘Highest Priority Critically Important Antimicrobials’ in our chickens. These include quinolones, cephalosporins (3rd, 4th and 5th generation), macrolides and ketolides, glycopeptides and polymyxins (colistin). This steadfast commitment underlines our responsible and transparent approach, ensuring we protect both bird health and the wider effectiveness of antibiotics for the future.



| Year | % Flocks not treated | % Flocks treated pre day 7 | % Flocks treated post day 7 |
|------|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2020 | 89.8                 | 6.9                        | 3.3                         |
| 2021 | 93.7                 | 2.1                        | 4.2                         |
| 2022 | 92.5                 | 3.7                        | 3.8                         |
| 2023 | 85.7                 | 8.7                        | 5.7                         |
| 2024 | 87.1                 | 6.0                        | 6.9                         |

Stocking Density

Providing birds with adequate space is a cornerstone of our farming standards. Pilgrim’s Europe adheres to a maximum planned stocking density of 38kg/m<sup>2</sup>, well below the EU legal limit of 42kg/m<sup>2</sup>. This commitment is independently verified through regular audits by Red Tractor and our customers, ensuring strict compliance across all farms.

In 2024, we continued to see a positive shift in the space available to our birds. More than half of our flocks (52%) were reared at 30kg/m<sup>2</sup> or less, an increase from 47% in 2023. At the same time, the proportion of flocks grown at the highest density (34kg/m<sup>2</sup> and above)

reduced further, from 32% in 2023 to just 19% in 2024. This represents significant progress towards industry and NGO-recognised ‘higher welfare’ standards, which identify 30kg/m<sup>2</sup> or below as a key threshold for enhanced bird welfare.

This ongoing transition is made possible through close collaboration with our customers, who share our commitment to advancing poultry welfare. Together we are providing more birds with the additional space they need to thrive, delivering benefits not only for the animals but also for shoppers and consumers who are seeking higher welfare chicken.



Foot and Hock Health

At Pilgrim’s Europe, we closely monitor foot pad and hock condition as part of our ongoing commitment to bird welfare. These are key indicators, providing a broad picture of the litter environment, gut health, water management and ventilation throughout the life of the flock. By focusing on positive outcomes, we track the proportion of birds with healthy feet (no signs of pododermatitis) and healthy hocks (no signs of hock marking).

In 2024, 70% of our birds were recorded with healthy feet and 85% with healthy hocks. While these results reflect

natural year-to-year variation, they remain a significant improvement compared with historic levels, and underline the benefits of our long-term focus on litter management, nutrition and farm environment.

To continue building on this, we have invested in farm-level trials on bedding and diet to further improve foot pad health, alongside additional training and support for our farmers on ventilation and water management. These steps form part of our precision management approach, ensuring that more of our birds benefit from healthy, comfortable environments.

| Year | Healthy Feet % | Healthy Hock % |
|------|----------------|----------------|
| 2019 | 57             | 86             |
| 2020 | 64             | 89             |
| 2021 | 74             | 91             |
| 2022 | 76             | 91             |
| 2023 | 71             | 88             |
| 2024 | 70             | 85             |

Livability

At Pilgrim’s Europe, we measure success by the number of healthy birds that thrive throughout the growing cycle. In 2024, overall livability improved to 96.5%, up from 95.9% in 2023. Early-life outcomes were particularly strong, with 98.7% of chicks thriving beyond the first 7 days of life, compared with 97.9% the year before. Leg health also improved, with 99.3% Leg health showed excellent progress, with 99.3% of birds maintaining good locomotory health, our best performance in recent years.

This positive shift reflects our long-term investments in vaccination programmes, early brooding practices, farm-level training and a continuous focus on bird health and resilience. Livability provides a clear demonstration of the effectiveness of our approach, ensuring that the overwhelming majority of birds under our care live healthy, robust lives.

| Year | 7 Day Livability % | Leg Health % | Livability % |
|------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 2018 | 98.27%             | 99.11%       | 95.60%       |
| 2019 | 98.27%             | 99.12%       | 95.67%       |
| 2020 | 98.19%             | 99.21%       | 95.80%       |
| 2021 | 98.16%             | 99.20%       | 95.91%       |
| 2022 | 98.00%             | 99.10%       | 95.28%       |
| 2023 | 97.95%             | 99.12%       | 95.85%       |
| 2024 | 98.68%             | 99.30%       | 96.53%       |



Transport Times

Pilgrim’s Europe prioritises minimising the time birds spend in transport, ensuring that welfare is safeguarded throughout the process. The majority of our farms are located within a 30-mile radius of our primary processing sites, significantly reducing the need for long journeys.

We always comply with all legislative requirements and industry standards governing the transportation of live birds, and continue to work closely with our farmers and logistics partners to ensure the highest standards of welfare during transport.

In 2024, the average transport time for our chickens was 2 hours, consistent with our high standards in recent years. Importantly, 56% of birds were transported for less than 2 hours, a significant improvement on 2023 (45%). A further 42% travelled between 2 and 4 hours, while just 1.3% of birds travelled longer than 4 hours. This means that over 98% of our chickens were delivered to factory within 4 hours of catch, a level we consider best-in-class across the industry.

| Year | Average transport time |
|------|------------------------|
| 2024 | 02:00                  |

| Year | % of chickens |                   |                  |
|------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|
|      | Less than 2hr | Between 2hr - 4hr | Greater than 4hr |
| 2021 | 47.00         | 52.50             | 0.50             |
| 2022 | 47.39         | 51.49             | 1.12             |
| 2023 | 45.37         | 52.71             | 1.93             |
| 2024 | 56.32         | 42.34             | 1.34             |



## Welfare Outcome Measures

# Pigs

## Production systems

Pilgrim's Europe operates two core pork supply chains, both fully accredited to nationally recognised farm assurance schemes. These systems ensure consistent, higher welfare production across all farms supplying our business.

We are the only UK pig producer and processor with facilities in both the southwest and east of England, enabling us to work with leading farmers across the country. This regional approach reduces transport distances, minimises stress, and supports a more localised, sustainable supply model.

### 1. Outdoor Bred Higher Welfare Supply Chain

Pilgrim's Europe's own pig production operates through our integrated agricultural business. In this system, long standing farmer partners rear pigs to our bespoke Pilgrim's Outdoor Bred (ODB) Standards, which exceeds both Red Tractor and RSPCA Assured requirements. This vertically integrated model covers the full supply chain from genetics and feed to production standards, livestock haulage, and processing, ensuring traceability and welfare consistency.

Our outdoor bred pig production is primarily based in East Anglia, the South West, and Yorkshire. Within this supply chain, 100% of pigs are born outdoors, and many are raised under Free Range or Organic systems, where pigs remain outdoors for their entire lives. Together, these systems account for approximately 65% of all pigs procured by Pilgrim's Europe each year.

### 2. Red Tractor Supply Chain

Pilgrim's Europe also produces and procures pigs under the Red Tractor Assurance scheme. This group represents approximately 35% of our total pig supply and maintains robust welfare, biosecurity, and husbandry standards.



## Environmental Enrichment and Housing

All pigs within Pilgrim’s Europe’s higher welfare supply chains have continuous access to enrichment materials such as straw, wood, or interactive objects, supporting natural rooting and exploratory behaviours. In our Outdoor Bred (ODB) system, pigs are born outdoors and weaned at four to five weeks. Sows are never confined during gestation or farrowing. Slatted flooring is not permitted, ensuring pigs live on dry, comfortable bedding that promotes positive welfare outcomes.

In our Red Tractor farm supply chain, enrichment is mandatory across all units, and straw or similar manipulable materials are provided at all times. These measures reduce stress, prevent tail biting, and support natural behaviour.

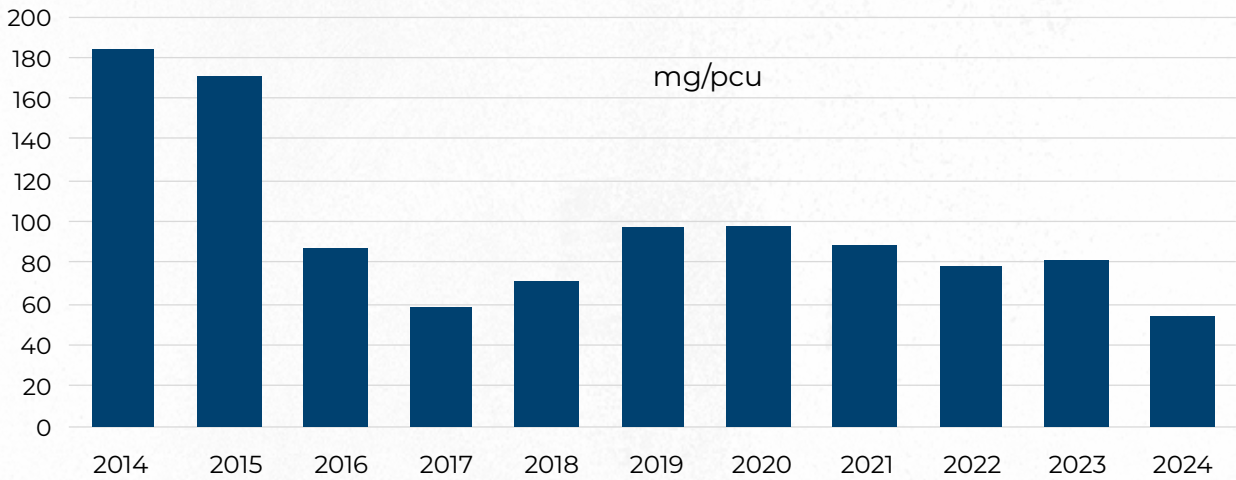
## Responsible Use of Antibiotics

Antibiotics are used only when essential to protect pig health and welfare, never routinely or as growth promoters. All treatments require veterinary oversight. Continuous data collection allows benchmarking against industry standards and informs reduction strategies.

Pilgrim’s Europe’s goal is for the antibiotic usage within the pigs that we control on farm to be consistently lower than the RUMA target each year. We aim to achieve this through the implementation and evolution of our health strategy which is tailored to continuously drive health improvements through initiatives such as herd repopulations, vaccination programs and good bio-security practices. Our Pilgrim’s Europe health strategy is coordinated by our own in-house veterinary team.

A growing proportion of the pigs produced in our supply chain will never have been treated with antibiotics. All suppliers of pigs into Pilgrim’s Europe will actively record their farms’ antibiotic use in the AHDB’s electronic medicine book (eMB). Not only does this provide an online record of their medicine usage but it also allows producers to benchmark themselves against the industry average.

Pilgrim’s Europe is proud to show that our own supply chain has consistently lower antibiotic usage than the industry standard and the industry target, as set by RUMA. In 2024, our usage decreased to 54mg/pcu, a reduction of 83.98% over the last decade.

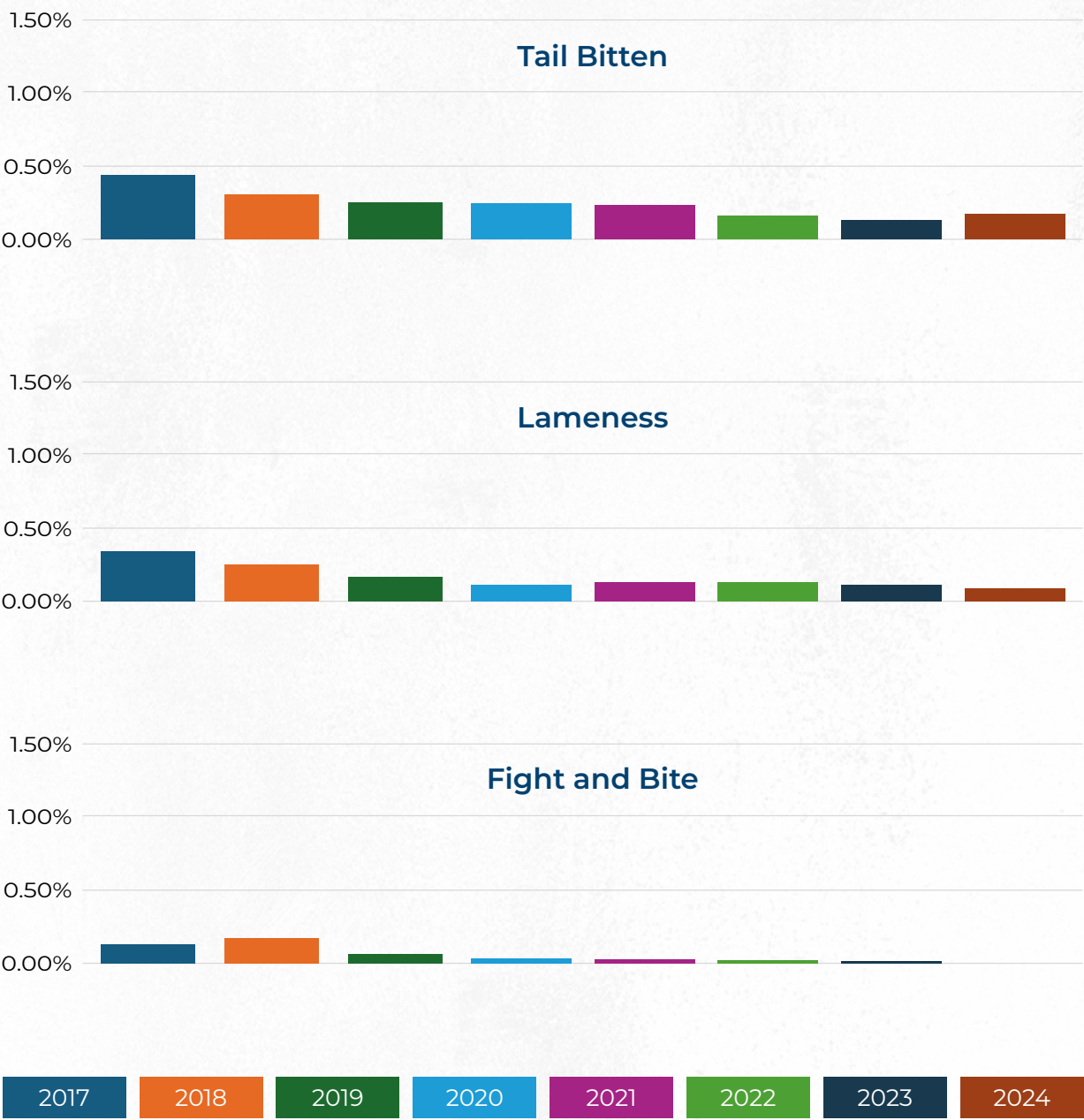




Avoidance of Routine Procedures

Routine tail docking and teeth clipping are prohibited. Tail docking is only permitted in justified cases where tail biting has been evidenced. In 2024, 55% of pigs were raised with full tails, demonstrating tangible progress toward elimination of docking. Pig castration remains strictly prohibited across our supply chains.

Welfare Outcome Measures



Health and Locomotory Welfare

These consistently low levels confirm the success of our higher welfare systems and health focused management.

## Livability

Livability reflects the proportion of pigs that remain healthy and reach market weight without mortality or culling. This indicator provides an overall measure of welfare success. In 2024, our livability increased by 3% year on year.



# Transport Times

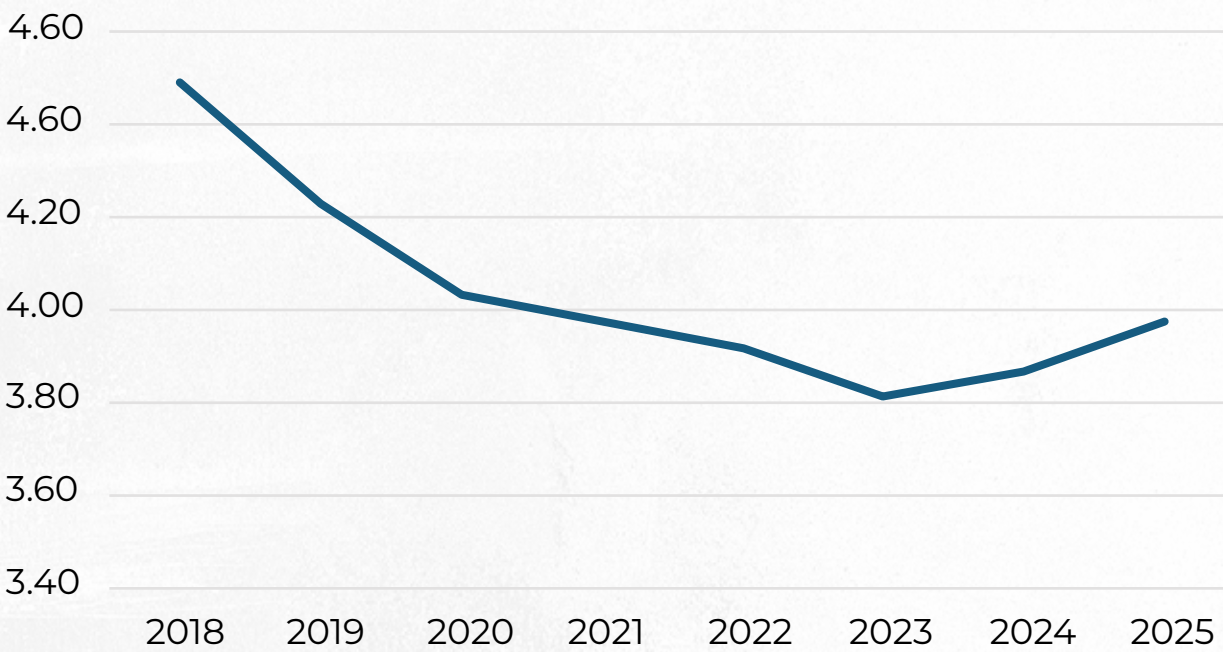
Short transport distances minimise stress and ensure animal comfort. With processing facilities in both the southwest and east of England, Pilgrim's Europe maintains efficient regional logistics.

All hauliers are Red Tractor or RSPCA approved, and drivers receive animal welfare training. Electric goads are

prohibited, and straw bedding is provided during every journey.

We closely monitor journey times, with the current average at 3.87 hours. Our policy ensures that no journey is scheduled to exceed 8 hours, from the first pig loaded on farm to the last pig unloaded at the processing site.

Average Transport Time (Hours)





## Welfare Outcome Measures

# Lamb

## Production systems

Pilgrim's Europe works with approximately 2,000 lamb producers each year, operating two distinct producer groups: the Higher Welfare Lamb Group, supplying premium retail customers, and the Standard Lamb Group, supplying lambs primarily for export and wholesale markets.

This report focuses exclusively on data collected from our Higher Welfare Lamb Group, which represents farms committed to enhanced welfare practices that go beyond baseline industry standards.

Many of our supplying farms have worked with us, in some cases, for more than 30 years. All our farms have been selected for their high standards of husbandry and welfare. Strict production protocols are in place and farms are visited regularly by the supply chain team.

We work closely with our supplying farmers and their vets to ensure that the welfare of the animals within our supply chain is always prioritised, engaging and participating in projects to develop and promote high welfare standards ensuring best practice is implemented.

We do this through working with industry leading experts and using knowledge transfer events on farm to promote best practice within our supply group across production techniques, health & welfare, nutrition and stockmanship.



## Environmental Enrichment and Housing

All lambs within the Higher Welfare Lamb Group are reared outdoors throughout life, enabling them to express natural behaviours such as grazing, playing, and social interaction. Ewes and lambs remain together from birth until weaning, typically between three and five months, promoting strong maternal bonds and natural feeding behaviour. After weaning, lambs continue to graze in stable social groups with continuous access to forage, natural shelter and fresh water.

Where housing is required for short periods — for example during extreme weather or lambing — all facilities provide deep, dry bedding, ample space, and good ventilation. Slatted flooring systems are not permitted. These standards ensure that lambs experience a natural, enriched environment supporting healthy growth, freedom of movement, and positive welfare outcomes throughout their lives.

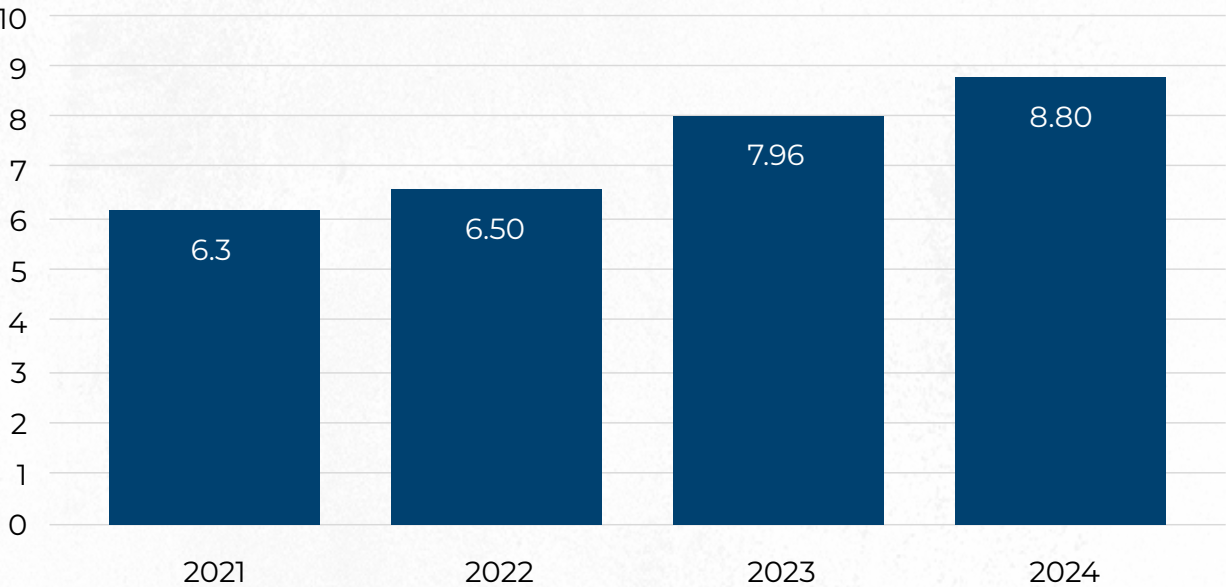


## Responsible Use of Antibiotics

Data from our higher welfare farms — the largest dataset of its kind in the UK — supports precise monitoring and responsible use. In 2024, exceptionally

wet spring conditions increased mastitis, lameness, and joint ill cases, leading to a temporary rise in antibiotic use.

2024 Antibiotic Usage (mg/PCU)



In 2024, we concluded a 3-year trial in conjunction with MSD a Bio Pharmaceutical company, on a project across 12 farms. This project was focused on vaccinating against lameness, as it has been identified within the industry that lameness is the condition requiring the most antibiotics on farms.

The trial successfully achieved a reduction in lameness incidents and in turn a significant reduction in antibiotic usage. This demonstrates that targeted vaccination can deliver improved animal welfare outcomes while supporting responsible antibiotic stewardship.

## Reproductive Performance and Livability

Favourable weather in autumn 2023 led to high-quality forage, supporting strong mating outcomes. As a result, 2024 saw the highest scanning percentage in four years, with a group average of 168%. Typical industry targets are:

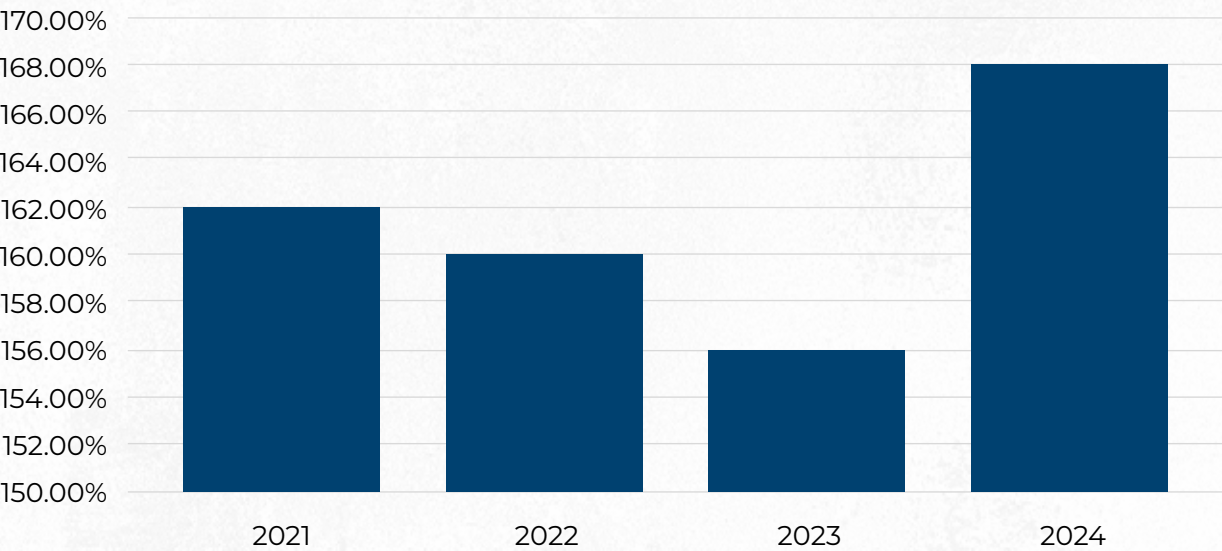
**Hill ewes targeting ~130% scanning**

**Lowland ewes targeting ~180% scanning**

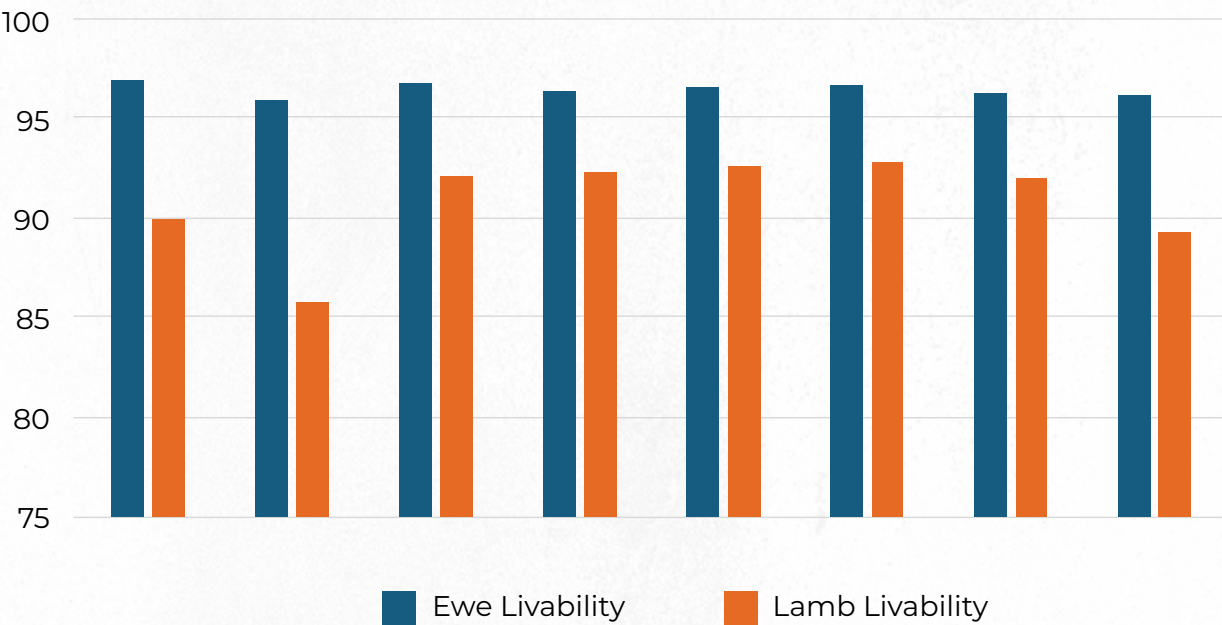
The blended average of 168% is a strong performance across our stratified production systems. Higher scanning percentages often lead to more multiple births, which can increase lambing challenges. Combined with the poor spring weather, this contributed to lower ewe and lamb livability compared to previous years.



## Lambing percentage (%)



## Ewe and Lamb Livability %

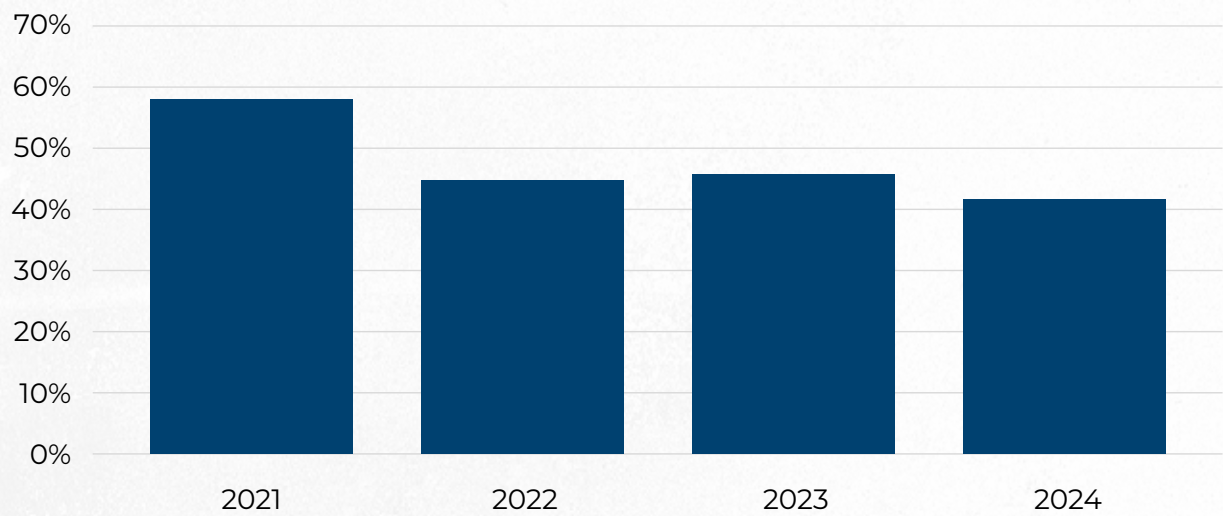


## Castration and Tail Docking

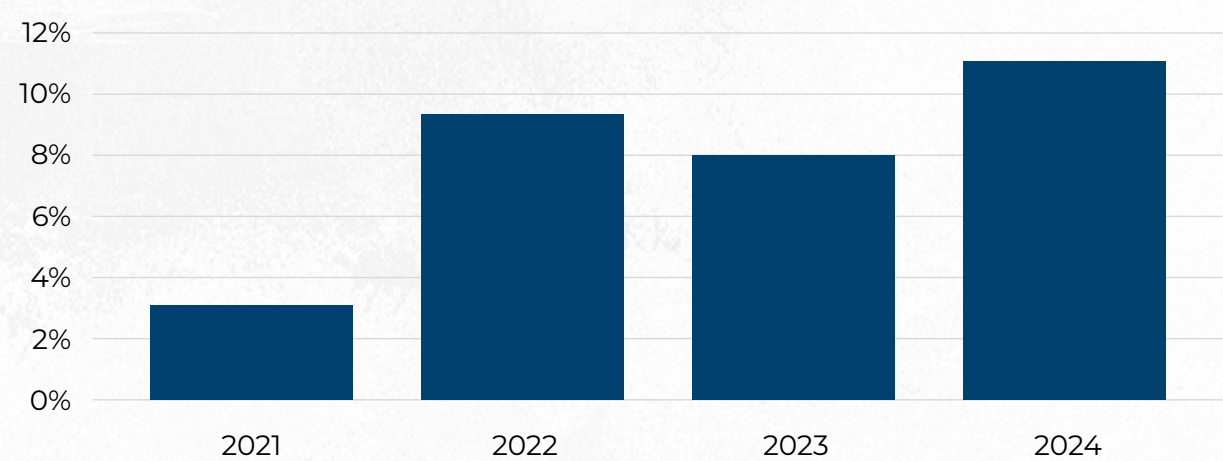
Tail docking and castration are permitted in our lamb supply chain, on welfare grounds providing they are carried out to Red Tractor standards. However, a % of our lambs are not tail docked or castrated.

In 2024, approximately 41% of our lambs were free from castration and 11% free from tail docking. Most tail docking was performed for welfare reasons, such as preventing flystrike.

Free from Castration (%)



Free from Tail Docking (%)

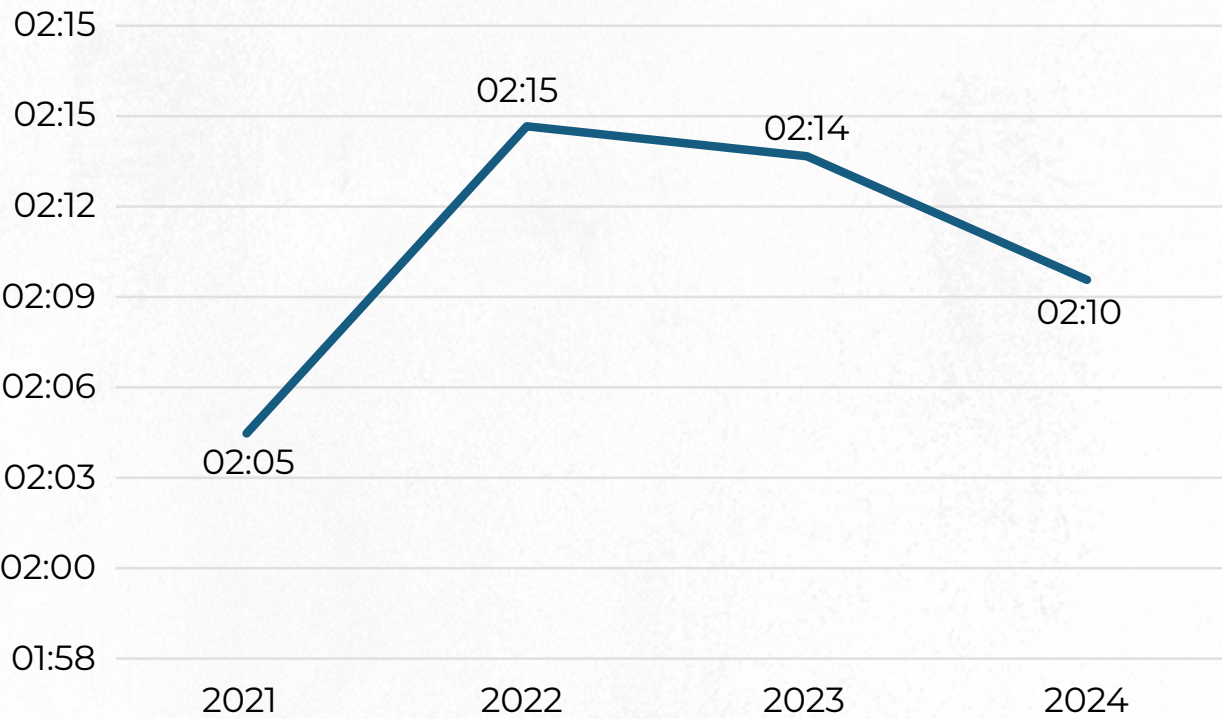


## Transport Times

Low journey durations are crucial to our lamb welfare commitment. The average 2024 transport time was 2 hours 10 minutes, four minutes shorter

than in 2023. All movements meet or exceed national and assurance scheme standards.

Average Transport Time (hours and minutes)



# Welfare Research

Over the past 15 years we have been proud to forge the path in improving farm animal welfare and lift standards across the industry, underpinned by scientific research. Our proven track record includes the first to give our birds access to natural light, new perch designs, more access to space and new breeds.

Our research to date has concentrated on our broiler generation but over the last two years, in partnership with Queen's University Belfast we have explored the development of environmental enrichment for our breeder generation. This first of its kind research demonstrates our commitment to enhance the lived experience of all animal on our cares and culminated in the publication of this work in the journal of 'Scientific Reports'.

Within the pork division our welfare driven R&D has spanned across breeding and growing, covering behaviour, nutrition, husbandry, veterinary, genetics and health. Projects in 2024 included increasing feeder spaces in our growing farms, water quality project on our breeding farms, genetic assessment from

insemination to butchery with huge emphasis on behavioural differences, gut health feed additives to mitigate zinc removal and a phytogenic tail biting product review.

Much understanding of animal behaviours and their welfare has been derived by in retrospect observations and from human interpretation. Building on work started in 2024 we plan to push the frontier of animal behaviour understanding by looking to utilise machine vision learning and artificial intelligence. We continue to engage with our academic network to ensure we are at the forefront of understanding and how we can work collaboratively to understand how to apply our knowledge in commercial environments.





# Future Outlook

Reflecting on the past year and the insights within this report, our commitment to animal welfare remains a defining element of who we are at Pilgrim's Europe. Across our poultry, pig, and lamb supply chains, we continue to strengthen our culture of care — ensuring that transparency, sustainability, and innovation are embedded in every stage of production.

Looking ahead, our focus is on continuous improvement, harnessing technology and research to drive measurable welfare outcomes. We will build on the progress achieved in reducing antibiotic use, enhancing environmental enrichment, improving livability, and minimising transport times. Through these data-led improvements, we aim to elevate welfare standards across all species while supporting our farmers with training, resources, and cutting-edge insights.

2025 marks an important chapter as we expand our adoption of higher welfare production systems, including the commercial rollout of Better Chicken Commitment (BCC) birds, and continued investment in welfare innovations for pigs and lambs. Our welfare research partnerships — spanning animal behaviour, genetics, and precision farming — will remain central to this progress, enabling us to apply science-based solutions to real-world challenges.

We are also deepening our commitment to sustainability, with welfare viewed not in isolation, but as integral to responsible farming and environmental stewardship. Through collaboration with customers, farmers, and academic partners, we aim to pioneer practical, scalable welfare solutions that improve animal wellbeing and deliver food produced with care and integrity.



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