

### GREEN LIGHT: CHOOSE A CERTIFIED LABEL



Certified farms are regularly inspected and assessed to a set of standards. Choosing a certified label supports farmers who go through a rigorous auditing process to ensure transparency to consumers and a high level of care for animals.

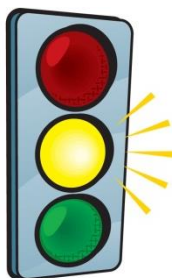
#### SPCA CERTIFIED

Farms must adhere to standards developed in collaboration with veterinarians, animal welfare scientists and farmers. Standards confinement housing (like gestation crates, cages and tie stalls), limit painful practices and require animals to be provided with enrichment to facilitate expression of natural behaviours.

#### CERTIFIED ORGANIC

Certified organic standards include some animal welfare provisions, such as free-range requirements, within the organic management practices.

### YELLOW LIGHT: PROCEED WITH CAUTION



Certain product labelling suggests animals were raised to a high welfare standard. However, if the farm has not been certified, then it has not been inspected, which means you cannot be sure what standards are met.

#### FREE-RANGE

Animals are provided with access to the outdoors, weather permitting. Free-range does not guarantee suitable or useable pasture for grazing or foraging.

#### PASTURE-RAISED

Animals have access to pasture for grazing or foraging, weather permitting. This claim does not indicate quality of pasture or total time spent on pasture.

#### GRASS-FED

There are a variety of labels and certifications that claim grass-fed. Animals *usually* have access to pasture and a diet that is composed entirely of grass and forage. This claim is used mostly for beef cattle and lamb.

### RED LIGHT: AVOID THESE PRODUCTS



Some terms are just marketing tools. They are designed to appeal to consumers without giving any indication of how animals are raised. Terms like **Animal-Friendly**, **Naturally Raised** and **Country Fresh** have no real meaning.

#### FREE-RUN

This claim only has merit for eggs; on meats or dairy it is just a marketing ploy. It is sometimes found on dairy products – along with “free roam” – to describe free stall systems. Most dairy farms in B.C. are free stall. All poultry are raised free-run, and are often subject to dangerous over-crowding. Be wary of this label used on pork, as market pigs are never caged but their parents often are.

#### NON-MEDICATED AND RAISED WITHOUT ANTIBIOTICS

Animals were not given pharmaceutical drugs or antibiotics. In Canada, all animals must be free of antibiotic residues at slaughter.

#### RAISED WITHOUT HORMONES

This claim only applies to beef cattle, as hormonal implants are prohibited for all other species. Products cannot say “hormone free” as hormones occur in the body naturally.

#### ANIMAL CARE CERTIFIED

Farms are assessed to minimum farm animal care requirements outlined in the Canadian Code of Practice. Animals are not raised to higher welfare standards than on conventional farms.

## SPCA CERTIFIED FARMS

SPCA Certified is a Canada-wide farm animal welfare certification program. The program aims to improve farm animal welfare standards in Canada while empowering consumer choice and rewarding farmers who make a difference for how farm animals are raised.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE STANDARDS

- ✓ Prohibit confinement housing, like cages for egg-laying hens, gestation crates for pigs, and tie-stalls for dairy cattle
- ✓ Prohibit painful practices like dehorning, mulesing and toe clipping
- ✓ Require pain control medication for necessary practices that cause pain
- ✓ Enable animals to express natural behaviours, such as grazing, foraging, rooting, perching and nesting
- ✓ Prohibit the use of antibiotics, ionophores and hormones for growth enhancement

Find program information and a list of SPCA Certified farms and retailers online at:

[www.spcacertified.ca](http://www.spcacertified.ca)

For more information contact:

[spcacertified@spca.bc.ca](mailto:spcacertified@spca.bc.ca)



[spcacertified.ca](http://spcacertified.ca)

*Look for  
the little  
red barn  
logo!*

### Did you know?

The gestation period of a sow is 115 days: 3 months, 3 weeks and 3 days. Pigs build a nest when they are close to giving birth, preferring to use hay and other materials to keep their young warm. Most sows in Canada live in barren crates where they are unable to perform this natural behaviour.



### THE PROBLEM WITH CONFINEMENT

Confinement housing is a term used to describe systems like cages, tie stalls and crates that constrain the movement of animals and prevent them from expressing natural behaviours. These housing systems represent a serious threat to animal welfare, and animals often exhibit signs of severe discomfort, stress and frustration.

In Canada, egg-laying hens, pigs and dairy cattle are most at risk of confinement. Poultry and beef cattle are not caged or tie-stalled, but are often subject to over-crowding, painful procedures and dangerous transport conditions.

Grass-fed?

Organic?

Hormone  
free?



## A CUT ABOVE:

### YOUR GUIDE TO ETHICALLY-RAISED MEATS AND DAIRY

Free-run, free-range, naturally raised, non-medicated, country fresh... These labels all sound good, but are the animals actually well-treated? How would you know?

Use this guide to keep farm animal welfare on top of your grocery list.

For more information on food labelling and farm animal welfare visit us online at: [spca.bc.ca](http://spca.bc.ca)

**BCSPCA**  
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS