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Perdue Farms announces animal care improvements and commits to future advancements

Perdue is first major poultry company to promise to meet animal welfare criteria outlined in the “Joint Animal Protection Organization Statement on Broiler Chicken Welfare Issues”

SALISBURY, Md., (July 17, 2017) --- Perdue Farms announced animal care improvements that have elevated the welfare of its chickens and promised to meet growing customer and consumer demand for poultry raised to higher welfare standards. The details are outlined in the release of the company’s first annual report on progress since its comprehensive 2016 commitment to accelerate its advancements in animal care.

The announcement came as part of Perdue’s Animal Care Summit, a gathering of global animal care experts, advocates, researchers and farmers. “We know that trust is earned by responding to consumers and other stakeholders, and that includes a willingness to make significant changes,” said Jim Perdue, chairman of Perdue Farms. “It’s not easy, and it requires commitment, resources and time. But people expect more from Perdue, and we have to keep improving.”

Perdue also became the first major poultry company to promise its current and future customers a sustainable supply of chicken that meets all the [animal welfare criteria](#) outlined in the “Joint Animal Protection Agency Statement on Broiler Chicken Welfare Issues.” The standards, agreed upon by a coalition of nine advocacy groups as meaningful progress to address the main welfare concerns with broiler production, match many of the changes Perdue was already exploring as part of its comprehensive Commitments to Animal Care program.

“Major food companies are increasingly committing to treating chickens in their supply chains better. Perdue, with this announcement, becomes the largest poultry producer to ensure that this demand will be met,” said Josh Balk, vice president of Farm Animal Protection at the Humane Society of the United States. “We applaud Perdue for focusing its improvements on the core areas of concern within the poultry industry and this holistic approach demonstrates all that’s possible in creating better lives for billions of chickens.”

Perdue's recent improvements include:

- Giving chickens more space, more light during the day and longer lights-off periods for rest
- Increasing the number of chicken houses with windows
- Continuing to study the role of enrichments in encouraging active behavior
- Raising and studying slower-growing chickens
- Moving to controlled-atmosphere stunning (CAS)
- Strengthening relationships with farmers

As the fourth largest poultry company in the U.S. – representing seven percent of the nation's chicken production – Perdue's progress and commitment indicates a sizeable shift away from industry standards and toward addressing customer and consumer concerns around animal welfare, including issues related to fast growth.

“We commend Perdue's commitment to meet the rapidly growing demands for higher welfare chicken. Not only is it the right thing to do for the birds but it's the right thing to do for the business given the certain direction of the market,” said Leah Garces, executive director, Compassion in World Farming. “Their transformation and willingness to collaborate, be transparent and continually do better makes them a pioneer amongst poultry producers.”

Going forward, Perdue will continue to progress using the Five Freedoms, a globally accepted standard for animal husbandry that goes beyond animals' “needs” to include their “wants,” and to involve the farmers who raise its chickens. Specific advancements will include studying a fully enclosed, climate-controlled de-stress staging area for birds that arrived at the plant, continued work with slower-growing chicken breeds and further implementation of controlled atmosphere stunning.

About Perdue Farms

We're a third-generation, family owned, U.S. food and agriculture company. Through our belief in responsible food and agriculture, we are empowering consumers, customers and farmers through trusted choices in products and services.

We focus on continuously improving everything we do, constantly learning, and sharing those insights across different production methods. That innovative approach is driving change throughout the company and onto farms. This continuous advancement is leading us toward our vision of becoming the most trusted name in food and agricultural products.

The PERDUE® brand is the number-one brand of fresh chicken in the U.S., and Perdue AgriBusiness is an international agricultural products and services company. As we approach our 100th anniversary in 2020, our path forward is about getting better, not just bigger. We never use drugs for growth promotion in raising poultry and livestock, and we are actively advancing our animal welfare programs. Our brands are leaders in no-antibiotics-ever chicken, turkey and pork, and in USDA-certified organic chicken. We've increased our support for the family farm by creating new markets, including specialty crops. Through agricultural services, we give farmers more options for the acre, including conversion to organic production and products and services that increase the sustainability of conventional agriculture. Learn more at www.perduefarms.com.