

Chicken Label Guide

What to Look For

These three certifications represent a range of significantly better environments for birds than conventional farms and require annual farm audits:

Animal Welfare Approved®

Requires pasture environment and slower growing breeds. Applies standards to slaughter and transport.



Certified Humane®

Sets indoor space and enrichment requirements. Applies standards to slaughter and transport.



Global Animal Partnership 5 Step Program®

(Steps 2 and above)

Step 2: indoor space and enrichment requirements.

Step 3: outdoor access.

Step 4: access to pasture.

Step 5: full pasture environment.

Step 5+: slaughter on farm.



Don't Be Fooled!

These claims don't always mean a bird had a better life.

Organic

Auditors visit farms but indoor conditions vary widely and can be crowded, without enrichment, fresh air or sunlight. Birds have "outdoor" access, though amount, duration and quality of space is undefined and can vary widely.

Humanely Raised

An unregulated term without standards.

Natural

An unregulated term without standards.

Cage-Free

A meaningless, misleading claim for meat chickens because, unlike egg-laying hens, they are never raised in cages.

Free Range

Birds have access to outdoors, though amount, duration and quality of space is undefined and can vary widely.

Hormone-Free

Another misleading claim. It's already illegal to feed hormones to chickens.

Antibiotic-Free/No antibiotics administered

Antibiotics are fed to animals on factory farms as a band aid fix for unhealthy living conditions. However, removing drugs does not alone make for a more humane system. Look instead for certifications that prohibit the misuse of antibiotics and require healthier environments.