



ANIMAL WELFARE INSTITUTE

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## A CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO FOOD LABELS AND ANIMAL WELFARE



### ● BEST CHOICES

These labels feature the highest comprehensive animal care standards, and compliance is verified by a third-party auditing program. This category also contains certified vegan products.

### ● NEXT BEST CHOICES

These labels typically feature lower comprehensive animal care standards, but compliance is verified by a third-party certification program. Labels in this category have standards that require animals to have outdoor access. This category also includes uncertified products labeled as “plant based.”

### ● FAIR CHOICES

This category includes labels with weaker comprehensive animal welfare standards that are verified by a third-party audit, as well as labels with standards AWI might consider higher welfare, but which are not verified by a third-party audit or accompanied by a certification.

Without verification, the level of animal welfare can range from very low to very high for different products under the same label.

### ● SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT

This category represents two types of labels: (1) those with comprehensive animal welfare standards that represent just a slight improvement from conventional industry production and are verified on the farm by a third-party audit, and (2) labels that are relevant to a single practice or aspect of production. Products with these labels are preferred over conventionally produced products that often come from factory farms. This category also includes foods labeled “vegetarian.”

### ● BEWARE OF THESE LABELS

These labels are meaningless or misleading with regard to animal welfare. They may not be meaningless or misleading for other purposes.

COMMON LABELS, CLAIMS,  
AND CERTIFICATIONS

- AGA Certified Grassfed
- American Humane Certified (pasture-raised and free-range eggs)
- American Humane Certified (products other than pasture-raised or free-range eggs)
- Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)
- Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP)
- Cage Free (eggs)
- Cage Free (poultry)
- CARE Certified
- Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW
- Certified Grassfed by AGW
- Certified Humane (free-range eggs, chicken, turkey)

- Certified Humane (pasture-raised eggs and chicken)
- Certified Humane (products without pasture-raised or free-range designation)
- Certified Vegan/Certified Plant Based
- Crate Free (veal, pork)
- Ethically/Responsibly/Thoughtfully Raised
- FACTA Animal Welfare Humane Certified
- Food Alliance Certified
- Free Range (uncertified)
- GLOBALG.A.P. (GGN Certified)
- Global Animal Partnership (Steps 4, 5, 5+)
- Global Animal Partnership (Step 3)
- Global Animal Partnership (Step 2)
- Global Animal Partnership (Step 1)

- Grass Fed (dairy, meat)
- Halal
- Humanely Raised/Humanely Handled
- Kosher
- Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)
- Natural
- Naturally Raised
- No Added Hormones (dairy, beef, lamb, pork)
- No Added Hormones (eggs, poultry, bison, veal)
- No Antibiotics Administered
- One Health Certified
- OPT Certified Grass-Fed Organic (dairy)
- Pasture Raised (uncertified) (products other than eggs)

- Plant Based (uncertified)
- Real Organic Project
- Regenerative Organic Certified (products other than dairy)
- Regenerative Organic Certified (dairy)
- Regeneratively Raised/Sustainably Raised
- Slow Growth
- UEP Certified (non-cage-free eggs)
- USDA Certified Organic
- USDA Process Verified
- Vegetarian
- Vegetarian Fed
- Whole Foods Market “Responsibly Farmed”