



## Statistics: *Laying hens*

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### Population & Production

#### World

- **There are 6.6 billion laying hens worldwide, producing over 1 trillion eggs each year. NB. These figures include hens laying eggs for hatching. The number of hens laying eggs for human consumption will be a little lower so we can say “around 6 billion”.**  
(Source: FAOstat – see Table 1)
- **Total global hen egg production is 65 million tonnes per annum.**  
(Source: FAOstat – see Table 1)
- **The largest producer is China, accounting for more than a third of world hen egg production.**  
(Source: FAOstat – see Figure 1)

**Table 1: Hen egg production 2011 – global and top 10 production countries.** Source: FAOstat. NB. Hen numbers refer to all hens contributing to egg production during 2011 (i.e. not population at a point in time) and include hens laying eggs for hatching as well as for human consumption.

Country	Hen egg production 2011 (tonnes)	Share of global hen egg production 2011 (%)	Hen egg production 2011 ('000 eggs)	Laying hens 2011 ('000 head)
WORLD	65,181,280	100.0	1,226,174,530	6,617,299
China	23,897,000	36.7	477,940,000	2,545,000
USA	5,415,600	8.3	91,855,000	338,475
India	3,490,000	5.4	63,500,000	303,658
Japan	2,482,628	3.8	41,377,000	137,352
Mexico	2,458,732	3.8	47,622,740	185,446
Russia	2,283,600	3.5	40,778,280	159,978
Brazil	2,036,534	3.1	40,730,688	285,000
Indonesia	1,166,400	1.8	24,911,000	207,700
Ukraine	1,064,200	1.6	18,428,100	97,910
France	839,500	1.3	14,087,635	53,040
Other	20,047,086	30.8	364,944,087	2,303,740



Figure 1. Source: FAOstat.

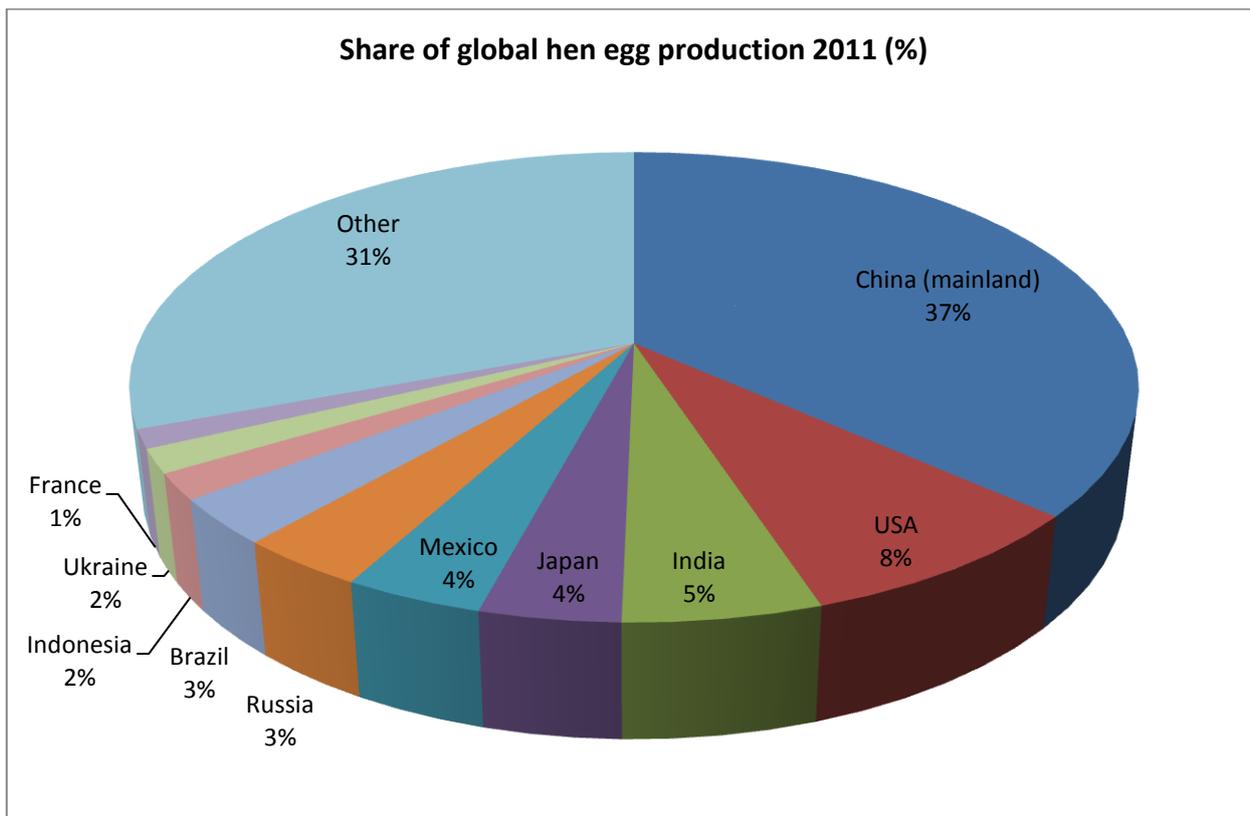


Table 2: Top global egg production companies (as of 27<sup>th</sup> February 2012). Source: [egg-cite.com](http://egg-cite.com)

Ranking	Company	Country	Number of hens in production (head +/-5%)
1	Cal-Maine Foods	U.S.	29 million
2	Protinas	Mexico	25 million
3	Avangard Holdings	Ukraine	22 million
4	Rose Acre Farms	U.S.	22 million
5	Moark LLC	U.S.	16 million
6	Bachoco	Mexico	13 million
7	Rembrandt Enterprises	U.S.	12 million
8	Hillandale Group	U.S.	10 million
9	Michael Foods	U.S.	10 million
10	Sparboe Foods	U.S.	9 million
11	Mantiquera Agronegocios	Brazil	9 million
12	Itanhandu	Brazil	9 million

**EU**

- **There are around 360 million laying hens in the EU27.**  
(Source: European Commission – see Table 3)
- **Total usable production of eggs in the EU27 is over 7 million tonnes per annum.**  
(Source: European Commission – see Table 3)



- **The largest producers are Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and UK, accounting for two thirds of EU27 egg production between them.**

(Source: European Commission – see Table 3)

**Table 3: Egg production and number of laying hens in the EU27.** Source: [European Commission](#).

NB. Total usable production includes eggs for hatching as well as eggs for human consumption. Laying hen population is commercial birds laying eggs for human consumption, excluding flocks with fewer than 350 birds, and is the theoretical maximum number of hens if all units were fully stocked at the same time. Note that the number of laying hens was predicted to fall in several member states by the end of 2011 (see table 9). However, these are the most recent complete data.

Member State	Total usable production of eggs (000 tonnes) 2011	Share of EU27 production 2011 (%)	No. of laying hens in April 2011 (head)
<b>EU27 total</b>	<b>7,120</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>362,958,011</b>
Spain	937	13.2	44,613,693
France	892	12.5	45,530,578
Germany	793	11.1	41,729,130
Italy	723	10.2	49,575,278
Netherlands	713	10.0	33,448,526
UK	704	9.9	38,826,127
Poland	637	8.9	37,015,661
Romania	310	4.4	6,216,476
Czech Republic	188	2.6	4,246,900
Belgium/Luxembourg	162	2.3	9,279,766
Hungary	156	2.2	4,937,836
Portugal	128	1.8	7,059,289
Sweden	104	1.5	6,518,995
Greece	100	1.4	5,328,145
Austria	99	1.4	5,591,191
Bulgaria	78	1.1	3,162,158
Denmark	76	1.1	3,461,577
Slovakia	76	1.1	3,095,000
Finland	62	0.9	3,500,000
Lithuania	51	0.7	2,661,676
Ireland	44	0.6	2,413,294
Latvia	41	0.6	2,042,731
Slovenia	22	0.3	1,387,104
Estonia	11	0.2	600,893
Cyprus	8	0.1	435,796
Malta	5	0.1	280,191

## UK

- **There were an estimated 34 million laying hens in the UK laying flock in 2012.**  
(Source: [BEIS industry estimate](#))
- **Egg production in the UK in 2012 was a little under 10 billion eggs.**  
(Source: Defra, [Agriculture in the UK 2012](#) – 9.564 billion eggs produced for human consumption in 2012 – provisional)



## Consumption

### World

- **Estimated average global egg consumption per capita is around 9 kg/cap/yr.**  
(Source: FAOstat – 8.9 kg/cap/yr in 2009)

### EU

- **Total egg supply available for human consumption in the EU27 in 2011 was 6.1 million tonnes.**  
(Source: [European Commission](#) – 6 110 000 tonnes)
- **Average egg consumption per capita in the EU27 is around 12 kg/cap/yr.**  
(Source: [European Commission](#) – 12.2 kg/cap/yr gross apparent human consumption per capita in 2011)
- **Within the EU27, total egg consumption is highest in Germany at around 1 million tonnes/yr and per capita egg consumption is highest in Denmark at around 17 kg/cap/yr.**  
(Source: FAOstat – see Table 4)

**Table 4: Egg consumption in the EU27.** Source: FAOstat.

Country	Total egg consumption 2009 (tonnes)	Per capita egg consumption 2009 (kg/cap/yr)
<b>EU27</b>	<b>6,060,123</b>	<b>12.1</b>
Germany	1,008,655	12.2
France	895,724	14.3
Italy	764,010	12.7
Spain	637,477	14.0
United Kingdom	634,872	10.3
Poland	433,579	11.3
Romania	269,412	12.5
Netherlands*	251,718	7.5
Belgium	157,681	14.8
Hungary	147,646	14.8
Austria	113,767	13.6
Greece	108,255	9.6
Sweden	107,209	11.5
Czech Republic	102,972	9.9
Portugal	99,320	9.3
Denmark	92,923	16.8
Slovakia	81,509	15.0
Bulgaria	74,513	9.9
Finland	45,065	8.4
Lithuania	38,554	11.5
Ireland	38,009	8.6
Latvia	30,238	13.4
Slovenia	21,136	10.4
Estonia	13,759	10.3
Cyprus	9,372	8.6
Malta	5,832	14.1
Luxembourg	4,145	8.3

\* Netherlands data for 2008.



## UK

- **Total egg supply available for human consumption in the UK in 2012 was a little over 11 billion eggs.**  
(Source: Defra, [Agriculture in the UK 2012](#) – 11.28 billion total new supply of eggs for human consumption in 2012 – provisional)
- **Average egg consumption per capita in the UK is around 182 eggs/cap/yr or around 10 kg/cap/yr.**  
(Source: [BEIS industry estimate](#) – egg number, provisional 2012; FAOstat – kg, 2009 – see Table 4)

## Trade

### World

- **The largest exporter of eggs and egg products globally is the Netherlands, accounting for 30% of gross exports.**  
(Source: FAOstat – see Table 5 and Figure 2)
- **The largest importer of eggs and egg products globally is Germany, accounting for over a quarter of gross imports.**  
(Source: FAOstat – see Table 6 and Figure 3)

**Table 5: Gross exports of eggs and egg products – global and top 10 exporting countries.** Source: FAOstat.

Country	Shell egg gross exports 2010 (tonnes)	Egg product gross exports 2010 (tonnes shell egg equivalent)	Total egg gross exports 2010 (tonnes shell egg equivalent)	Share of global egg gross exports 2010 (%)
WORLD	2,085,451	328,467	2,413,918	100.0
Netherlands	603,570	131,352	734,922	30.4
Poland	152,850	14,943	167,793	7.0
Spain	123,096	15,721	138,817	5.8
Germany	115,359	17,671	133,030	5.5
Turkey	131,610	1	131,611	5.5
USA	86,103	30,309	116,412	4.8
China	101,192	5,442	106,634	4.4
France	72,209	24,796	97,005	4.0
Belgium	78,838	15,930	94,768	3.9
Malaysia	89,243	210	89,453	3.7
Other	531,381	72,092	603,473	25.0



Figure 2. Source: FAOstat.

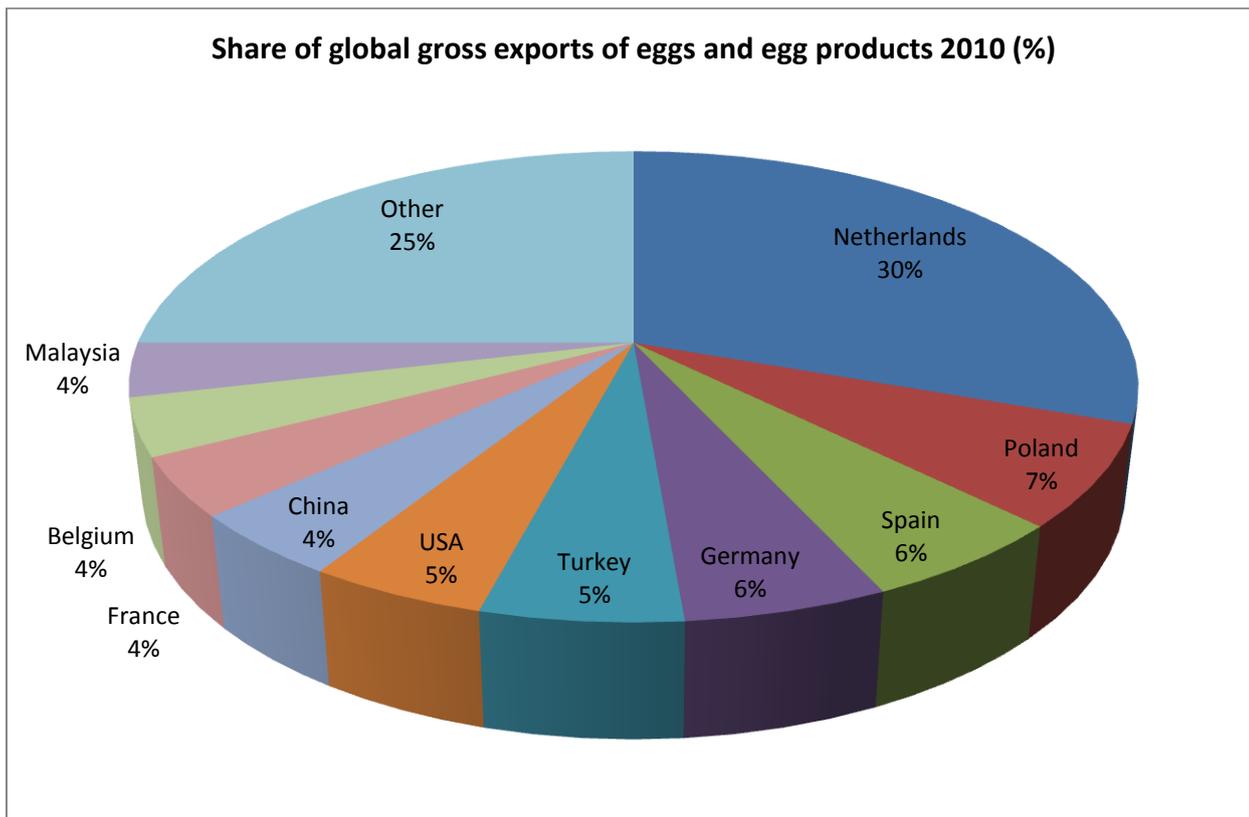
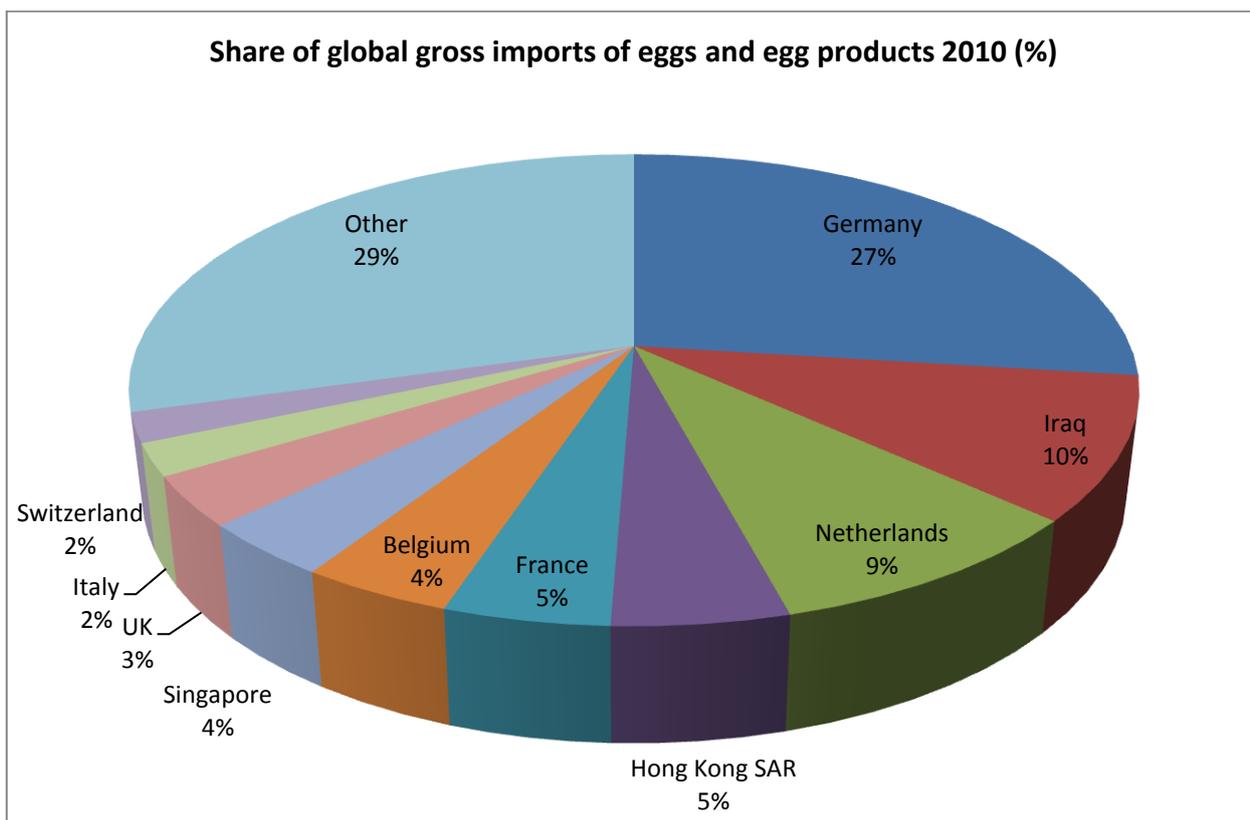


Table 6: Gross imports of eggs and egg products – global and top 10 importing countries. Source: FAOstat.

Country	Shell egg gross imports 2010 (tonnes)	Egg product gross imports 2010 (tonnes shell egg equivalent)	Total egg gross imports 2010 (tonnes shell egg equivalent)	Share of global egg gross imports 2010 (%)
WORLD	1,718,044	329,964	2,048,008	100.0
Germany	482,742	70,207	552,949	27.0
Iraq	199,482	1	199,483	9.7
Netherlands	169,016	17,561	186,577	9.1
Hong Kong SAR	95,244	2,339	97,583	4.8
France	59,759	32,003	91,762	4.5
Belgium	61,242	22,920	84,162	4.1
Singapore	75,837	565	76,402	3.7
UK	37,168	32,238	69,406	3.4
Italy	41,698	3,430	45,128	2.2
Switzerland	34,336	7,107	41,443	2.0
Other	461,520	141,593	603,113	29.4



**Figure 3.** Source: FAOstat.



**EU**

- In 2011 the EU exported around 216 000 tonnes of eggs (including egg products). (Source: [European Commission](#))
- In 2011 the EU imported around 16 000 tonnes of eggs (including egg products). (Source: [European Commission](#))

**UK**

- In 2012 the UK imported around 2 billion eggs (including egg products). (Source: Defra – see Table 7)
- In 2012 the UK exported around 240 million eggs (including egg products). (Source: Defra – see Table 7)

**Table 7: UK trade in shell eggs and egg products, 2012 (provisional).** Source: Defra, [Egg Statistics](#). Egg products are given as shell egg equivalent.

	Trade volume (000 eggs)
<b>Shell eggs</b>	
Imports	825,480
Exports	99,864
<b>Egg products</b>	
Imports	1,138,968
Exports	141,840



### World

- **Globally, over 60% of eggs are produced in industrial systems.**  
(Source: 60.6% - [FAO \(2006\) Livestock's Long Shadow](#); 68% - WorldWatch Institute, State of the World, 2004.  
NB: Industrial systems include all landless systems).

**Table 8: Egg production by housing system in selected countries.** Source: *World Poultry* (2008), 24 (1): 20-21.

Country	% Cage	% Non-cage	% Barn	% Free range
Argentina	100	0	0	0
Australia	79	21	6	15
Brazil	100	0	0	0
Canada	98	2	1	1
China	65	35	10	25
Columbia	100	0	0	0
India	78	22	22	0
Iran	100	0	0	0
Japan	95	5	0	5
Mexico	100	0	0	0
New Zealand	88	12	4	8
South Africa	85	15	0	15
Switzerland	0	100	40	60
Thailand	100	0	0	0
USA	98	2	0	2

### EU

- **Around 60% of laying hens in the EU27 are housed in cages (over 200 million hens).**  
(Source: European Commission – see Table 9).



**Table 9: Number and proportion of laying hens in each housing system in the EU on 31/12/11 (as predicted on 01/04/11).** Source: European Commission, data supplied to Eurogroup for Animals on 03/08/11. NB. Figures supplied for cage systems were divided into enriched and conventional cages. I have grouped these together under cage systems (i.e. I have assumed that the numbers of birds in conventional cages when these figures were supplied are now in enriched cages rather than any other system). An estimated 20 million hens are still housed in conventional battery cages in Greece and Italy.

Member State	No. of laying hens	Free range	Barn	Organic	% Non-cage	Cage	% Cage
Belgium	9,193,666	854,225	2,978,596	222,471	44.1	5,138,374	55.9
Bulgaria	2,990,645	115,810	1,170,243	0	43.0	1,704,592	57.0
Czech Republic	3,231,500	15,100	618,200	11,900	20.0	2,586,300	80.0
Denmark <sup>A</sup>	3,461,577	257,317	648,791	559,175	42.3	1,996,294	57.7
Germany <sup>B</sup>	41,729,130	5,928,034	25,776,760	3,006,001	83.2	7,018,335	16.8
Estonia	537,060	8,000	13,060	4,100	4.7	511,900	95.3
Ireland	2,289,776	934,874	27,058	44,448	44.0	1,283,396	56.0
Greece <sup>A</sup>	5,328,145	39,700	155,075	127,549	6.0	5,005,821	94.0
Spain <sup>A</sup>	44,613,693	828,878	250,125	65,471	2.6	43,469,219	97.4
France <sup>A</sup>	45,530,578	6,089,060	1,776,248	2,301,336	22.3	35,363,934	77.7
Italy <sup>A</sup>	49,575,278	412,284	12,805,711	1,041,730	28.8	35,315,553	71.2
Cyprus	476,336	36,018	60,000	6,630	21.5	373,688	78.5
Latvia <sup>A</sup>	2,042,731	6,833	90,478	320	4.8	1,945,100	95.2
Lithuania	2,392,372	0	116,142	2,830	5.0	273,400	11.4
Luxembourg <sup>A</sup>	86,100	0	76,400	9,700	100.0	0	0.0
Hungary <sup>A</sup>	4,937,836	15,006	938,363	26,611	19.8	3,957,856	80.2
Malta <sup>A</sup>	280,191	0	<sup>C</sup> 16,758	0	6.0	<sup>C</sup> 263,433	94.0
Netherlands	33,448,526	6,020,729	22,410,492	1,672,425	90.0	3,344,850	10.0
Austria	5,591,191	1,096,420	3,745,332	519,165	95.9	230,274	4.1
Poland	28,007,962	282,307	3,106,495	51,634	12.3	24,567,526	87.7
Portugal	6,856,404	129,866	66,804	32,920	3.3	6,626,814	96.7
Romania <sup>A</sup>	6,216,576	1,200	1,129,071	38,319	18.8	5,047,986	81.2
Slovenia	1,231,647	11,486	696,592	5,870	58.0	517,698	42.0
Slovakia	3,164,712	0	429,874	9,980	13.9	2,724,858	86.1
Finland	3,300,000	0	1,000,000	100,000	33.3	2,200,000	66.7
Sweden	6,518,995	3,100	3,468,659	749,539	64.8	2,297,697	35.2
UK	34,000,000	17,000,000	1,400,000	1,000,000	57.1	14,600,000	42.9
<b>EU27 total</b>	<b>347,032,627</b>	<b>40,086,247</b>	<b>84,971,327</b>	<b>11,610,124</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>208,364,898</b>	<b>60.0</b>

A Countries with data for 01/04/11.

B Germany – data for 31/12/10.

C Malta – three farms with mixed barn and cage systems – in each case I have assumed that half of the birds are in the barn system and half in the cage system.

## UK

- **Half of eggs produced in the UK are from hens kept in non-cage systems.**  
(Source: Defra – see Table 10)



**Table 10: Proportion of eggs produced in each housing system in the UK, 1998-2013.** Source: Defra, egg packing station throughput – latest release [2013 Q1+2](#) and [historical data](#). **NB.** Proportion of eggs is not exactly equivalent to proportion of hens because caged birds produce more eggs per hen on average.

Year	% Cage	% Barn	% Free range / organic	% Free range	% Organic
1998	79.4	5.5	15.1		
1999	75.0	7.3	17.8		
2000	72.1	7.5	20.5		
2001	70.4	6.9	22.7		
2002	69.3	6.8	23.9		
2003	69.3	6.5	24.2		
2004	65.6	7.1	27.3		
2005	63.3	6.4	30.4		
2006	62.7	5.1	32.2	27.2	5.0
2007	61.8	4.0	34.2	28.4	5.8
2008	58.3	3.8	37.9	32.4	5.5
2009	54.6	4.2	41.2	37.1	4.1
2010	50.0	4.9	45.1	41.7	3.4
2011	48.8	4.0	48.3	45.2	3.1
2012	48.6	3.6	47.8	45.2	2.6
2013 – Q1+2 ONLY	50.0	3.5	46.6	44.3	2.2

## Mutilations

### EU

- **Beak trimming is performed on the majority of laying hens in most EU countries.**  
(Source: according to the 2004 EFSA report on welfare aspects of various systems of keeping laying hens, beak trimming is performed on the majority of laying hens in most EU countries, however we do not have data to be able to put a figure on the proportion of hens beak-trimmed across the EU)

### UK

- **Rough estimate: Around 90% of laying hens in the UK are beak trimmed (equivalent to over 30 million hens annually)** (Basis: This is based largely on information supplied by major UK retailers in response to Compassion's survey of supermarket animal welfare standards. Between 87% and 100% of laying hens producing eggs for all except one of the supermarkets surveyed are beak-trimmed. Only Waitrose reported a much lower proportion (36%) of hens being beak-trimmed. Overall, probably at least 90% of laying hens in the UK are beak-trimmed – see Compassion report [Supermarkets and Farm Animal Welfare: Raising the Standard, 2007-2008](#), p19, for details)

## Key Health & Welfare Problems

### Bone fractures

- **The results of several surveys indicate that the incidence of bone fractures in commercial laying hens ranges from over 20% to over 80% of birds.** In general, the incidence of fractures during the laying period is higher in birds from non-cage systems and the incidence of fractures during depopulation is higher in birds from cage systems.  
(Source: see Compassion report [Alternatives to the Barren Battery Cage for the Housing of Laying Hens in the European Union](#), p23, for details)

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