



### **'HEN WELFARE CHARITY BACKS BRITISH EGG FARMERS'**

Devon-based charity the British Hen Welfare Trust has just announced a change of name to more accurately reflect its pro-British stance.

Formerly known as the '*Battery* Hen Welfare Trust', the charity re-homes commercial laying hens, educates the public about hen welfare and encourages support for the British egg industry. Now called the *British* Hen Welfare Trust, the charity has a smart new logo featuring a hen with a golden egg in patriotic colours, and a campaign line '*For a free range future.*' The charity is well-known for its level-headed approach and willingness to work with farmers to find solutions; a recent Country Life ranking of the people with most influence on those who live in the countryside placed its Chief Exec Jane Howorth, 82<sup>nd</sup> - just two places behind David Cameron. The article described the charity as one '*which educates the public about the egg industry in a remarkably sensible and non-hysterical way.*'

Jane Howorth, who founded the charity, began campaigning for hen welfare after being moved by a Panorama documentary in 1977. She set up the charity in 2005 and has since found homes for around 200k ex-battery hens which were otherwise destined for slaughter.

One of those lucky hens rescued from slaughter is 'Darcy' (pictured), now enjoying a happy free range retirement at the British Hen Welfare Trust's headquarters in Devon where a tiny percentage of hens unsuitable for re-homing are cared for. Darcy was so named courtesy of the ballerina-like arabesque she performs when walking – possibly this unusual gait results from an old break sustained whilst in her cage, although this cannot be assumed. Whatever the cause, Darcy has no trouble at all in making the most of her new found freedom and has so far enjoyed the delights of laying an egg in a straw-lined nest, dust bathing and a spot of bug-chasing! All good free range fun!

Jane Howorth said: 'We are proud of the fact that the charity has re-homed around 200,000 commercial laying hens, like Darcy... but that's just the tip of the iceberg. In the UK, there are still 16 million battery hens kept in cages where they cannot perform natural behaviours such as scratching, stretching their wings or nesting, and they have no access to sunlight, fresh air or grass.'

She continued: 'Farmers have a difficult job and are competing with foreign imports to supply the demand for cheap eggs, and setting up free range systems requires a big investment. British farmers need to know that consumers will support them and pay a little extra for free range products.'

Antony Worrall Thompson is a patron of the British Hen Welfare Trust. He is right behind the charity's ethos and revamped identity. He said: "As a chef, I care very much about where my ingredients come from. We should respect the animals that give us the food on our table – even the humble laying hen. I say support our farmers, buy British free range, and be an all round good egg!"

The British Hen Welfare Trust's Devon farm will be featured in the BBC documentary 'The Private Life of Chickens' on BBC2, April 28<sup>th</sup>.

To find out more or to support the work of the British Hen Welfare Trust  
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