

# The Lakes

## Free Range Egg Co

Producers, Packers and Distributors  
of Quality Free Range Eggs

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### **The Lakes Free Range Egg Company Ltd. – Sustainable Soy Sourcing Policy**

At The Lakes Free Range Egg Company (The Lakes), we are passionate about animal welfare and protecting the environment. With a significant proportion of our free-range laying chicken feed consisting of soy we are committed to ensuring 100% of the soy in our supply chain is deforestation and conversion free\* (DCF) and therefore more sustainable. This is in line with The UK Soy Manifesto, of which we are members, which aims to ensure all shipments of soy to the UK are deforestation and conversion free by 2025 (based on a cut-off date of 2020)<sup>1</sup>.

Most of the soy sourced by the UK originates from South American countries such as Brazil and Argentina<sup>2</sup>. These are origins where there is a recognised risk that soy may have been planted on land which was formerly forest and during conversion to arable land has undergone significant deforestation. Such land conversion has devastating impacts on both the environment and local wildlife. Trees sequest (or store) carbon and other greenhouse gases (GHG) thereby reducing the amount of GHGs in our atmosphere. If large quantities of trees are felled, such as across South America for soybean cultivation, then these GHGs are released and heavily escalate the effects of global warming.

Deforestation also destroys habitats such as the South American Cerrado and Gran Chaco forests. This destruction of ecosystems has catastrophic impacts on the welfare of all the local wildlife resulting in the endangerment of many species including jaguars, the maned wolf and giant anteaters<sup>3</sup>.

We recognize that the worldwide demand for soy can drive such deforestation and acknowledge that it is our duty to source sustainable soy to protect both the environment we live in and the welfare of endangered animals.

Here at The Lakes, we have already reduced the impact we have on demand for soy to the UK by reducing the soy content of our chicken feed across the entire supply chain. Standard feed rations for laying poultry in the UK contain 19% soy, a figure that we have worked together with our feed suppliers to reduce to just 8% thereby more than halving our soy demand and consequently reducing the carbon emissions associated with soy in our feed.

Great work is being carried out to try to reduce the environmental impact of South American soy through auditing soy farms to certify that they are 'deforestation and conversion free'. Although such certification is important in providing zero deforestation assurance for the future, it can be difficult to maintain a clear chain of custody throughout the supply chain from the farm to the UK market, and into individual supply chains.

\* This definition is aligned with the Accountability Framework Initiative and can be found here: <https://accountability-framework.org/issues/deforestation-and-conversion/>

North America is plentiful in arable land and therefore North American soy is regionally classed as being at lower risk of deforestation and conversion. Therefore, sourcing soy from North America is the favourable choice until more transparency is available for the deforestation and land conversion position of South American soy farms and or the ability to maintain a segregated supply chain for certified product. South American soy is believed to contribute around 6,500kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/tonne whereas North American soy is responsible for 93% less carbon emissions (at approximately 500kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/tonne), thereby switching to North American soy and reducing the soy content in our feed to 8% will allow us to reduce our total on farm carbon emissions by a total of 62%. This significant reduction in scope 3 carbon emissions along with our current position as scope 1 and 2 net zero strongly aligns with our target of reaching scope 1, 2, and 3 net zero by 2040, a target that parallels the UN Paris Agreement to limit global warming to no more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

One complication is that North American soy cannot be supplied for 3 months of the year and therefore our soy is mass-balanced to achieve 100% North American soy in The Lakes supply chain year-round. Although this is a great step in sourcing sustainable soy, we appreciate that this is not a long-term solution and are thereby looking at ways to source only North American soy without mass-balance.

As proud signatories of The UK Soy Manifesto, we also aim to communicate and cascade our commitment to achieving 100% DCF soy in our supply chain by 2025\*\* with our direct and indirect suppliers. That's why we have liaised with feed suppliers to our producer farms to negotiate the aforementioned feed alterations. As part of this commitment, we will now annually report our progress for The Lakes as a whole operation and all new contracts with supplier farms include a commitment to our sustainable soy sourcing policy.

Our [Annual Sustainable Soy Progress Report is available here](#).

## Conclusion

Sourcing soy sustainably is important to lower our scope 3 carbon emissions and protect the environment as well as global biodiversity. The Lakes has and will continue to prioritise lowering our soy associated carbon emissions by guaranteeing the use of DCF soy throughout our supply chain. Altering feed rations to include less soy and sourcing this soy from North America has allowed a 62% reduction of total on-farm carbon emissions so far.

\* This definition is aligned with the Accountability Framework Initiative and can be found here: <https://accountability-framework.org/issues/deforestation-and-conversion/>

\*\* This includes both legal and illegal deforestation and land conversion

## References

- (1) The UK Soy Manifesto website. Available at: <https://www.uksoymanifesto.uk/>
- (2) The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) website. Available at: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/industries/soy>
- (3) The story of soy, WWF. Available at: <https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/the-story-of-soy>

\*\* This includes both legal and illegal deforestation and land conversion