

Ban on cut-price chicken can speed up transition

Supermarkets will no longer sell fast-grown cut-price chicken from 2023. Consumers will pay more for chicken and there will be fewer broiler birds in the Netherlands, expects WUR poultry expert Peter van Horne.

From 2023, Dutch consumers will only be able to buy chicken with the Better Life label in supermarkets. Van Horne investigated the costs, revenue and income of poultry farmers who keep fast-growing chickens for cut-price meat and farmers with slower-growing broiler chickens. He concludes that incomes were about the same for all poultry farmers in 2017. The farmers producing meat for the Chicken of Tomorrow and Better Life (one-star) labels in supermar-

'Abattoirs should persuade farmers that they can earn a good income with Better Life chickens'

kets had higher costs but that was fully compensated by the higher prices they got from the abattoirs. Costs are 20 per cent higher for the Chicken of Tomorrow label and 44 per cent

higher for the Better Life label compared with the old-style cut-price chicken. That is mainly due to fewer birds per square metre of barn space, higher feed costs per kilo of meat and a covered chicken run for the Better Life label.

Good income


Van Horne thinks nearly all poultry farmers who currently produce meat for the less strict Chicken of Tomorrow label will start producing Better Life chicken from 2023. He also expects the cut-price chicken farmers currently producing for the export market to switch to the Better Life label. 'These poultry farmers have had a bad year due to the pandemic and a fall in the export market. The abattoirs should try and persuade these farmers that they can earn a good income with Better Life chickens.'

Van Horne expects 45 to 50 per cent of Dutch broiler chickens to be farmed under

animal welfare label conditions in 2023. 'That would be a very rapid transition to more animal-friendly meat.'

The end of the fast-grown cut-price chicken will also mean

consumers have to pay more for their chicken meat: cut-price chicken costs six euros per kilo, the Chicken of Tomorrow eight euros per kilo and the Better Life chicken about 12 euros per kilo. AS

 resource.wur.nl **FULL STORY ONLINE**

