



Vital Farms: Restoring Soil, Animal Welfare, and Conscious Consumerism One Carton at a Time

OVERVIEW

Two in three eggs in America are laid within the confines of a cage. Hens forced to live in cages are trapped in a space about the size of an 8.5 X 11" sheet of paper. One company brings a different option to consumers: a restorative choice. **Pasture-raised eggs from Vital Farms are laid by hens with outdoor access of at least 108 square feet of pasture per hen—100 times more space than a cage.**

Vital Farms has high standards for farming practices, animal welfare, and third-party certifications, yet the company has taken these standards a step further to begin restoring ecological health. Its Restorative Eggs set an even higher standard for a pasture-raised option, one that is regenerative—nourishing and replenishing the soil through regenerative farming principles. Through its Restorative Eggs, Vital Farms is demonstrating how companies can transform the food system.

FIT FOR THE FUTURE

A food system fit for the future will come from a transformational change in how we produce and consume animal products, paired with companies addressing environmental and social issues across supply chains. This holistic approach will build a more regenerative food system. Compassion in World Farming's vision is a food system where farm animals are treated with compassion and respect.

The welfare potential of a regenerative system is much higher than that of conventional models. **Regenerative agriculture elevates welfare by creating better conditions for animals, improving the land they live on, and allowing them to express their natural behaviors.**

Building resiliency is the goal of regenerative agriculture: allowing the land and the farmer to adapt and be more resilient to environmental fluctuations and extreme conditions, leading to greater productivity and output. Regenerative systems are extensive in their nature: they provide high welfare for animals as they integrate livestock outdoors on the land. This approach has a high sustainability potential, both for the environment and for farmers' well-being, as the animals give back to the land. Integrating livestock into a regenerative system contributes to enhanced soil health and increased biodiversity. Farmers increase resiliency by building diversity in the soil and complexity in an ecosystem.



Businesses that choose to act and join the shift toward a regenerative system will see key benefits for their supply chain and will enact a positive change downstream for the farmers and producers they partner with. Key drivers for businesses to adopt

regenerative principles include improving brand reputation and managing risk, ensuring security of supply, seizing market opportunities, demonstrating leadership, and building a business for the future. Vital Farms has modeled this innovation and commitment to regenerative agriculture through its Restorative Eggs.



Photo courtesy of Vital Farms, Grace Spring Farm

ABOUT VITAL FARMS

Vital Farms, a Certified B Corporation, is on a mission to bring ethically produced food to the table. Vital Farms began in 2007 in Austin, TX with a small flock and a commitment to improving the lives of people, animals, and the planet through food. It is now a national consumer brand that works with over 300 family farms and is the leading U.S. brand of pasture-raised eggs by retail dollar sales. The company's ethics are exemplified by its focus on the humane treatment of farm animals and sustainable farming practices. In addition, as a Delaware Public Benefit Corporation, Vital Farms prioritizes the long-term benefits of each of its stakeholders, including farmers and suppliers, customers and consumers, communities and the environment, and crew members and stockholders. Vital Farms' products, including shell eggs, butter, hard-boiled eggs, and liquid whole eggs, are sold in approximately 24,000 stores nationwide. Vital Farms pasture-raised eggs can also be found on menus at hundreds of foodservice operators across the country.

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE: "RESTORATIVE EGGS"

Industrial farming over the past century has degraded soil quality. The continual practice of tilling soil, planting mono-crop fields, and depending on pesticides has led to poor soil health and increased runoff. What once was nourished soil is now dirt, void of life because of intense industrial practices. Farmers, companies, and consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the damage that's been done and its impact on food quality, runoff, and waterways. In their partnerships with farmers, companies like Vital Farms are working to transform the food system by using regenerative practices and bringing consumers regenerative choices. They are beginning to rebuild what has been damaged.

Regenerative farming is farming for the future. **Restorative Eggs are regeneratively produced eggs defined by core tenets:**

- **Knowing animals and soil are better together**
- **Living roots are best kept in the soil**
- **Farms are meant to have diversity**

Plants and animals living on, within, and beneath the soil can thrive by keeping the soil and land balanced and covered.

Through this restorative model, Vital Farms aims to leave the land better than it was found and improve the land's resiliency.

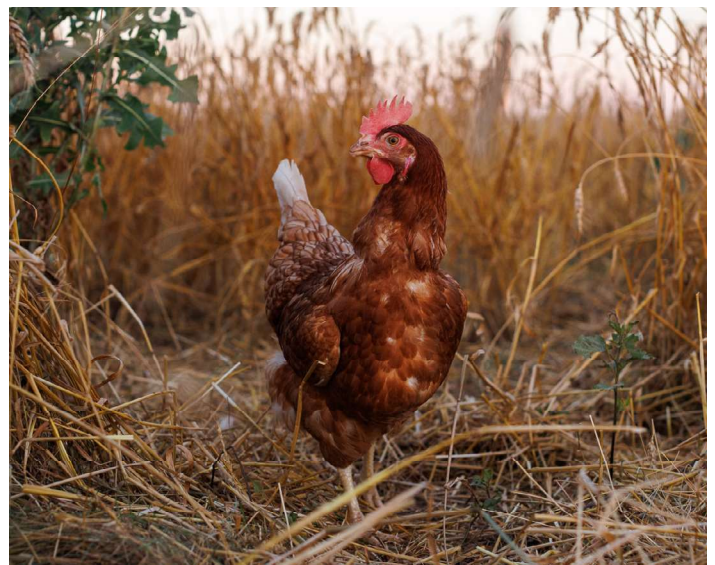


Photo courtesy of Vital Farms, Grace Spring Farm



Photo courtesy of Vital Farms, Oak Hill Farm

Vital Farms has worked side-by-side with a core group of farms for several years to implement regenerative principles to produce Restorative Eggs. These farms employ regenerative practices like planting cover crops, minimizing soil disturbance and rotating hens on pasture. These regenerative principles take its existing pasture-raised practices to the next level, increasing the standards for the life of the hens and the product available to consumers.

In its first year on shelves, Vital Farms Restorative Eggs were in the top 10 egg SKUs at Whole Foods Market and grew 23% in sales year over year, contributing to Vital Farms' overall business. **In early 2023, Vital Farms committed to engaging all farms in its network on additional regenerative practices by 2026.** They will focus on training, educational resources, and funding opportunities to scale and support soil health for the long term.

Hrang, one of the Restorative farmers in Vital Farms' network speaks about his experience farming regeneratively:

"Regenerative farming takes care of the grass, is forage for the chickens, and makes for healthy soil. I attend regenerative workshops to learn more about soil. The workshops are like a biology class. We look into a microscope to see what healthy soil looks like."

Hrang saw firsthand the transformation of the land from implementing regenerative practices at his farm, Grace Springs Farm. He says, "This farm used to be a dairy farm. When we arrived, the grass was overgrazed and there were a lot of bare spots. To fix the bare spots, we seed it. Right now, we're seeding oat. And next season, we'll seed millet."

MEASURING IMPACT

Through the practices they use to ethically produce food, Vital Farms believes they should be restoring the earth. Regenerative principles help promote balanced environments between pastures and animals. They also can result in higher profits for farmers, better land resiliency, and improved health of waterways. All the farms in Vital Farms' network of family farmers already use regenerative principles like practicing pasture rotation and avoiding the use of herbicides and pesticides for the health of the land. The Restorative family farms go a step further with additional regenerative practices that aim to improve and scale the impact on soil health.

In Fall of 2023, Vital Farms became the first national egg brand to earn a Regenified™ verification. This verification recognizes the progress made with a core group of farmers using regenerative practices. Regenified™ is a regenerative agriculture verification organization setting a gold standard for farming and ranching practices. The 6-3-4™ Verification Standard is a consistent way for farmers and ranchers to measure and understand where their practices and lands are on the regenerative path. The Regenified™ seal is a signal of trust to consumers, showing that Vital Farms is a leader in regenerative farming, improving soil for future generations. Regenified™ helps Vital Farms measure the impact their Restorative Eggs are having on the soil. To determine soil health improvement, they do an annual boots-on-the-ground analysis of up to 65 data points to assess living root, soil armour, biodiversity, and water retention.

Beyond restorative for the soil, these eggs contribute to better welfare for the hens on pasture. Pasture-raised systems allow high animal welfare standards for laying hens. These systems allow hens to express their natural behaviors, such as perching, scratching, and dust bathing with natural enrichments. Pasture-raised systems also ensure hens have access to the outdoors with adequate space and proper shade and shelter.

CORPORATE RECOMMENDATIONS

Compassion in World Farming encourages policymakers, farmers, food businesses, and consumers to move beyond industrial farming and seek new ways to achieve more regenerative, sustainable, and humane systems of food production. Bettering our food system requires a collective effort across sectors. Companies and NGOs can partner with farmers to transform systems by exchanging knowledge, purchasing regenerative goods, and elevating stories. These partnerships will help shift toward regenerative models that are good for the earth and good for animals simultaneously.

To see a meaningful transformative shift across the food system, regenerative agriculture principles should be woven into and prioritized in common farming practices. Sustainability, animal welfare, and farmer wellbeing are interconnected and can work together to build a food system that is fit for the future.

The Compassion in World Farming Food Business Team is available to partner with companies, farmers, and other industry leaders ready to improve animal welfare through regenerative farming.

For more information, please email FoodBusinessUS@ciwf.org.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to Vital Farms Inc.

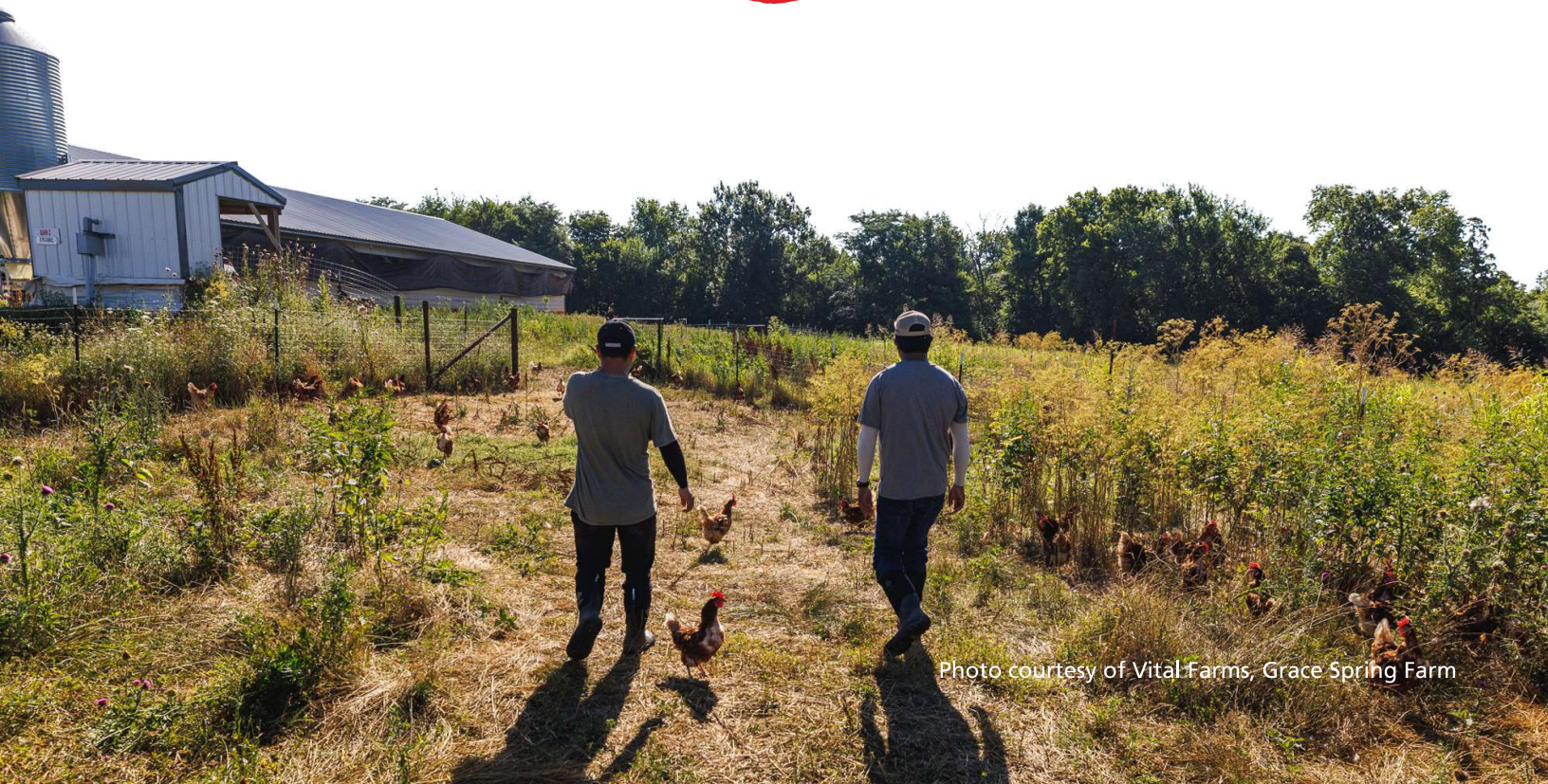


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