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Kipster Challenges Industry Norms in U.S. by Committing to In-Ovo Sexing Technology to End Culling of Male Chicks

Forward-thinking egg farmer strives to improve animal welfare further, reduce waste by raising male birds in alignment with a more humane, sustainable food system

North Manchester, Indiana May 29, 2024 - Kipster, a global leader in animal welfare and sustainable farming, announces it is adopting a new in-ovo sexing technology which it will use as an alternative to culling male chicks, starting in the U.S. this fall. The company will be one of the first U.S. egg brands to launch this cutting-edge approach that allows for the sex determination of chick embryos during incubation before they develop sentience, aiming to prevent the hatching of males.

The U.S. egg industry kills over 300 million male chicks each year after they hatch. Kipster's goal is to utilize all animals born into its farm system, including raising roosters for animal protein. However, the U.S. meat supply chain is not currently set up to process males of the breed commonly used for layer hens. This innovation will allow the company to continue its foundational commitment to animal welfare and zero-waste philosophies.

"In-ovo sexing is a crucial step forward that will allow us to eliminate chick culling right away," said Ruud Zanders, Co-founder of Kipster. "This technology provides an immediate and effective solution as we continue to explore sustainable meat production that meets our high welfare standards."

As the very first commercial egg producer in the U.S. to not cull its male chicks since its U.S. farm opened in 2022 like it does in Europe, the company had to resort to doing so for the first time this year because of a lack of critical infrastructure and retail market for rooster meat in the U.S. Undeterred by obstacles and determined to address this ethical concern that is an issue across the egg industry, Kipster's adoption of in-ovo sexing of embryos is a solution for the company moving forward.

Launching in the Netherlands in 2017, Kipster started climate-neutral egg production in the U.S. in December 2022 and its eggs are available at Kroger and its many other site banners in 28 states. The company invites stakeholders and the public to engage in discussions about this significant change. Input and ideas are welcomed by emailing egg@kipster.farm to help prompt more solutions further to Kipster's ethical and environmental standards.

"Kipster has shown its commitment to animals and the environment by developing a more compassionate and responsible way of farming at scale through innovative barn design that makes cruel routine practices like caging and beak trimming obsolete. We applaud Kipster's commitment to adopting in-ovo sexing technology and its transparency about its challenges and its willingness to pivot to stay true to its mission. We hope Kipster's leadership inspires the wider egg industry to prevent needless male chick culling."

—Nancy Roulston, Senior Director of Corporate Policy and Animal Science, ASPCA Farm Animal Welfare

"Mercy For Animals commends Kipster's leadership on adopting in-ovo sexing in the United States. Consumers are horrified to learn that male chicks in the egg industry are routinely killed — often ground up alive — shortly after hatching, as they're deemed useless by the industry. Kipster's latest commitment to in-ovo sexing demonstrates its dedication to transparency and continually improving animal welfare.

—Leah Garcés, CEO and president, Mercy For Animals

"We are encouraged when producers, like Kipster, take innovative approaches towards improving animal welfare. By embracing technology to determine the sex of chicks before they hatch, egg producers can avoid the current practice of killing day-old male chicks, thus reducing animal suffering."

—Karla Dumas, Vice President, Farm Animal Protection, The Humane Society of the United States

"The introduction of in-ovo sexing technology will allow specialty egg producers to create a new value-added category of more ethical eggs that will be massively successful in the market. Cost-effective technological solutions to major challenges like chick culling are critical to modernizing the US egg supply chain and restoring consumer trust in animal agriculture. We applaud Kipster for continuing to demonstrate their leadership in the egg industry by being one of the first producers to use this technology in the US."

—Robert Yaman, CEO, Innovate Animal Ag

"Each year, at just one day old, billions of male chicks are killed without a second thought—deemed a "by-product" by the egg industry. Years ago, The Humane League was instrumental in encouraging United Egg Producers to ban this practice that had become the standard in all commercial egg production. With alternative methods available, we're eager to see male chick culling come to an end once and for all. We encourage all egg producers to adopt in-ovo sexing technologies like Kipster has to put a stop to this practice."

—Giovana Vieira, Senior Animal Welfare Scientist, The Humane League

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About Kipster

With the first farm open in October 2017 in the Netherlands, Kipster is a pioneer in sustainable and transparent farming. The company has consistently challenged conventional agriculture practices, aiming for a food system that respects farm animal welfare and minimizes environmental impact. In the U.S. the Kipster farm produces the nation's first certified climate-neutral eggs in North Manchester, Indiana. They are currently available in 12-count egg cartons at Kroger and its other banners including City Market, Copps, Fred Meyer, Fry's, Kings

Soopers, Mariano's, Metro Markets, Pick 'n Save, QFC, Ralphs, Roundy's, and Smiths in 28 states. For more information on Kipster, please visit <https://www.kipster.farm>.

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