



For Immediate Release
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Bell & Evans Air Chilled Premium Fresh Chicken Rated #1 By Cook's Illustrated Magazine Taste Test

Fredericksburg, PA – September 19, 2012 – Bell & Evans Air Chilled Premium Fresh Chicken earned Cook's Illustrated's highest recommendation in a national taste test published in the September/October edition. Named the best-tasting whole chicken east of the Rocky Mountains, Bell & Evans Air Chilled Whole Chicken surpassed a host of other nationally known poultry producers.

"Thanks to almost three hours of air chilling, this bird's white meat was perfectly moist... and its dark meat silky-tender yet firm," Cook's Illustrated tasters stated. Several tasters remarked that Bell & Evans Air Chilled Premium Fresh Chicken tasted "really fresh."

Cook's Illustrated points out more than one reason why Bell & Evans Air Chilled Premium Fresh Chicken tastes better than most – including the company's insistence on feeding chickens an all-vegetable diet, with no animal byproducts and no antibiotics, ever.

"Typically," the Cook's Illustrated article states, "birds get doses of antibiotics from their earliest days not only to help prevent and treat diseases rampant in their crowded conditions but also to help them grow faster. Some producers even inject antibiotics into eggs, and most routinely add them to the chicken's feed, a soy and corn mix often bulked up with feather meal (ground-up chicken feathers) and other animal byproducts."

The taste test also highlighted what Bell & Evans owner Scott Sechler has been saying for years – the slow air-chill process Bell & Evans uses results in juicier, more tender meat.

Conventional water-chill systems used by most US poultry producers – including most of those in the Cook's Illustrated taste test – typically cause chickens to plump up, absorbing as much as 14 percent of their body weight in chlorinated water. "This water-chilling process," Cook's Illustrated states, "helped explain why tasters found the meat in several of these birds to be unnaturally spongy, with washed-out flavor."

Taste testers also noted that many Bell & Evans competitors tasted "utterly bland or, worse, faintly metallic, bitter, or liver-y."

Only One Chicken Breast Recommended without Reservation

When Cook's Illustrated evaluated America's most popular cut, the boneless, skinless breasts, they found Bell & Evans Air Chilled Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breasts are the best-tasting in the United States and "the only brand to track closely to its whole chicken counterpart."

Tasters said Bell & Evans Air Chilled Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breasts stood out not only for superior taste and moistness ("mega-juicy and tender"), but its texture. When Cook's Illustrated investigated why Bell & Evans Air Chilled Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breasts were so much better than the competition, they learned that it comes down to how Bell & Evans prepares its birds.

After the chickens are broken down into parts, Bell & Evans actually ages the breasts on the bone for up to 12 hours before removing bones and skin. This aging process improves tenderness and texture

because, as Cook's Illustrated points out, "When you bone too soon, the meat will be tough. Cutting it can cause the muscle to contract, and a shorter, contracted muscle is related to tougher meat."

To save time and money, most processors skip the aging process in favor of "shortcut tenderizing methods" which produced chicken breasts Cook's Illustrated tasters found to be "unremarkable."

For these taste tests, Cook's Illustrated compared Bell & Evans Air Chilled Premium Fresh Chicken and Bell & Evans Air Chilled Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breasts to fresh whole chickens and boneless, skinless breasts produced by Coleman, Empire, Gold Kist Farms, Mary's, Perdue, Springer Mountain Farms and Tyson. Visit <http://www.cooksillustrated.com/oct12> for complete taste test results.