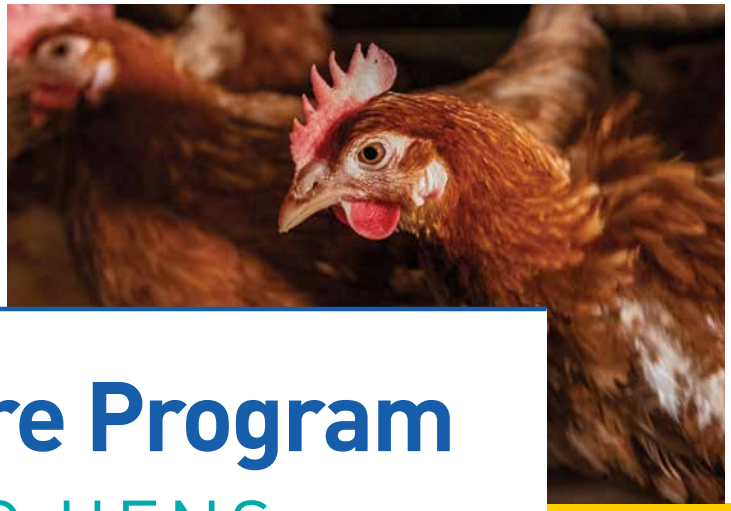


Animal Care Program

LAYING HENS

FARMER MANUAL

EGG FARMERS OF CANADA

ANIMAL CARE PROGRAM – LAYING HENS

Farmer Manual

Acknowledgements

Egg Farmers of Canada would like to acknowledge the efforts and commitments of current and past members of the Animal Care Program Redevelopment Project Team and Egg Farmers of Canada Production Management Committee for the development of the 2022 Egg Farmers of Canada Animal Care Program. Additionally, we would like to thank the Board of Directors, EFC Committees, egg boards, farmers and stakeholders who provided valuable feedback and contributed to the program development.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction iv

On-Farm Audit and Certification Process vi

Sample Audit Checklist ix

Section 1 – Housing Systems 1-1

1a. All housing systems 1-1

1b. Conventional 1-3

1c. Enriched colony 1-4

1d. Free run / free range 1-8

1e. Access to outdoors 1-13

Section 2 – Lay Facility Environmental Management 2-1

Section 3 – Feed and Water 3-1

Section 4 – Health Management and Husbandry Practices 4-1

Section 5 – Handling and Transportation 5-1

Section 6 – Euthanasia 6-1

Section 7 – On-Farm Depopulation 7-1

Glossary A-1

Appendix A – Record Templates A-6

Appendix B – Example Feather Scoring System 1 ..... A-33

Appendix C – Example Feather Scoring System 2 ..... A-43

INTRODUCTION

Egg Farmers of Canada (EFC) has a comprehensive animal care program designed to demonstrate the level of care given to laying hens on Canadian egg farms and provide assurance that farmers are meeting appropriate animal care standards. The program includes a number of steps egg farmers must take on their farms every day to meet high standards of animal welfare. The Animal Care Program (ACP) is complementary to EFC's food safety program, Start Clean-Stay Clean®.

The ACP is based on the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pullets and Laying Hens (2017)*. The Codes of Practice are nationally developed guidelines for the care and handling of farm animals. They serve as our national understanding of farm animal care requirements and recommended practices. Today, the development of Codes of Practice is led by the National Farm Animal Care Council (NFACC), using a credible and robust process that is consensus and science-based. Foundational to the development process is collaboration between a diverse group of stakeholders that includes farmers, veterinarians, processors, transporters, animal welfare and enforcement agencies, retail and food service organizations, researchers and governments.

EFC implemented the first ACP in 2005, which was based on the *Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pullets, Layers and Spent Fowl (2003)*. With the release of a new version of the Code in 2017, the EFC Board of Directors agreed to redevelop the ACP to include the 2017 Code requirements using the NFACC Animal Care Assessment Framework. This framework laid out a credible and transparent process to develop an assessment program for a Code of Practice, and brought together key stakeholders including farmers, auditors, veterinarians, researchers, animal welfare organizations, retailers and industry to redevelop the ACP. The redevelopment of the ACP concluded in 2022. The updated program launched in a voluntary capacity in November 2022, and became mandatory on all regulated egg farms in May 2023.

The ACP is a cornerstone of our industry and reflects the commitment of Canadian egg farmers to uphold high standards of animal care. The program is mandatory on Canadian egg farms with an annual on-farm audit to verify compliance and enforcement mechanisms when the program requirements are not met. It offers one national standard with science-informed requirements that are consistent for egg farms across Canada. EFC strongly believes in credibility and transparency with respect to animal care and food safety and to this end in 2019, the Egg Quality Assurance™ (EQA®) program was launched. EQA® is an umbrella certification program that consists of a consumer facing logo found on egg cartons which certifies eggs were produced by Canadian farmers in accordance with EFC's national on-farm food safety and animal care standards. Along with the Start Clean-Stay Clean® program, the ACP is one of the EQA® program pillars and critical to our efforts to promote the high standards of animal care within our industry to customers and consumers.

The Animal Care Program manual provides egg farmers with all of the program requirements, recommended practices, and example record templates and feather scoring systems. Requirements are mandatory, while recommended practices are suggestions. Some requirements have additional keys to compliance that are outlined to ensure farmers have all the information they need to successfully implement the requirement. Records needed for certain requirements are also highlighted. The record templates included in Appendix A in this manual contain the minimum information that has to be recorded. Farmers can create their own records, provided equivalent information is included. Deviations from the ACP requirements and corrective action taken must be recorded in the corrective action log. Please note that while some requirements in this manual specifically list the corrective action log as a record to complete, the corrective log is to be used to document all issues and / or deviations from ACP requirements.

There are 7 sections in the Animal Care Program containing various requirements. Unless a specific type of housing system is specified, requirements apply to all housing system types (e.g. conventional, enriched colony, free run / free range including single-tier and aviary).

For additional information on the requirements, refer to the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pullets and Laying Hens* (2017) at **nfacc.ca**

On-Farm Audit and Certification Process

The ACP is implemented at both the national and provincial / territorial levels. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreed to by the provincial / territorial egg boards and EFC sets the requirements of EFC and the egg boards for the on-farm delivery and implementation of the ACP.

Roles and responsibilities

Egg Farmers of Canada responsibilities:

- Design, development and delivery of the ACP and its related documents
- Implementation of certification procedures and issuance of certification
- Development and delivery of training material and programs for the auditors
- Ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the ACP to ensure effectiveness and consistency in application across all regions
- Management of the complaints / appeals / disputes process

Egg board responsibilities:

- Prepare farmer for ACP audit where necessary
- Assist farmer with completing or preparing to complete corrective action requests, where applicable
- Liaise between EFC and farmers regarding complaints / appeals / disputes

Farmer responsibilities:

- Implement and maintain compliance with the ACP
- Keep records to demonstrate conformance to the ACP
- Continue to implement the program and undergo scheduled audits
- Take corrective action as necessary to resolve any non-conformances identified in an audit

Audit procedure

Conformance to the ACP is determined by an annual audit process.

Audits are conducted by EFC Field Inspectors or independent third party auditors. Inspectors perform audits on two thirds of registered egg farms annually, while third-party auditors perform the remaining third of audits across the country. All auditors / inspectors are PAACO-certified. Under normal circumstances, audits are scheduled in advance with the farmer by the auditor / inspector. The audit date is based on the availability of both parties.

The ACP audit consists of an on-farm visit and full audit conducted by the auditor / inspector to check and verify compliance by the farm to all applicable requirements in the ACP. An opening meeting is conducted at the start of the audit where the auditor / inspector will confirm the audit scope, procedure etc. During the audit, compliance to the ACP is assessed through reviewing the required documentation and records, discussing implementation with the farmer and touring the farm premises, lay facility, production unit and other buildings / areas as required. Non-conformances to ACP requirements that are observed will result in corrective action requests (CARs) being issued. At the end of the audit, a closing meeting is held to review the audit results and establish CAR timelines if applicable. An audit report is generated with this information, and provided to the farmer as well as the egg board. Before CARs can be closed by the auditor / inspector, they must verify the implementation and effectiveness of the corrective action taken to become compliant with the ACP requirement(s) in question.

In order to pass the ACP audit, a farm must be in compliance with all applicable ACP requirements. This means all CARs issued for non-conformances observed during an ACP audit will have to be closed in accordance with the issued timeframe. Non-conformances for requirements are categorized as critical, major or minor, and each category has an assigned CAR closure timeframe. Critical non-conformances must be closed immediately within 7 days or less (feed and water access CARs must be closed within 24 hours). Major non-conformances must be closed within 30 days, and minor non-conformances within 3 months. Any acute welfare issue observed in the major or minor non-conformance category may be assigned a timeframe of 7 days or less at the discretion of the auditor / inspector. Additionally, auditors / inspectors retain flexibility to assign longer closure timeframes based on farm specific situations. Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) can be developed for major or minor non-conformances that cannot be closed until the next flock cycle to close a CAR. If CARs are not closed within the issued timeframe, the ACP is failed and the alternative markets process is implemented.

Biosecurity during an audit

All auditors / inspectors follow EFC's biosecurity protocol when visiting farms. The protocol consists of a set of preventive measures undertaken to prevent contamination and reduce the biosecurity risk of visiting a farm. These measures include sequencing farm visits appropriately, vehicle cleaning, parking in a designated area, wearing clean coveralls and boots, disposing of clothing and boots in an acceptable location, disinfecting equipment and following any additional biosecurity measures requested by the farmer.

Audit schedule

ACP audits are conducted annually, within 9-15 months of the previous audit.

Triggered audits may be initiated outside of the scheduled audits by events or issues that may have an impact on the welfare of the hens. These include but are not limited to:

- On-farm animal welfare incident or complaint reported by the public, media, farmer, farm employee or visitor, egg board, grader, processor or other stakeholder
- Animal welfare and / or cruelty investigation (SPCA or other)
- ACP audit failure
- Change in farm management or ownership
- New construction

Certification

Certification is granted when a farm meets the requirements of the ACP and has no outstanding CARs. EFC issues a certificate for a one-year period from the date of the initial assessment or re-assessment.

Certification may be suspended and / or withdrawn if an interim audit determines non-conformances and the farmer fails to meet the ACP requirements and / or meet the timelines of a CAR.

Confidentiality and privacy policy

Through the ACP, EFC collects information related to individual farmers. EFC may collect this information through on-farm inspections, on-farm audits, and through CARs. Except as required by law, EFC will treat this information as confidential and will use this information for the sole purpose of administering the ACP. To this end, EFC may share this information with the egg board in the province or territory where the farmer is located, EFC Field Inspectors and third party auditors for the sole purpose of administering the ACP.

Sample Audit Checklist

Please use the corrective action log to document issues and / or deviations from ACP requirements, and corrective action taken.

Manual reference	Page number	Requirement	Acceptable	Unacceptable	N/A
1a. Housing systems – all	1-1	Housing system materials and equipment are safe and non-toxic to birds. • *Record: Commitment statement to this in Farm Animal Welfare Policy*	☐	☐	☐
	1-2	Openings to the housing system allow birds to be put in and removed without injury.	☐	☐	☐
	1-2	Flooring does not contribute to injuries or deformities, and supports forward facing claws.	☐	☐	☐
1b. Housing systems – conventional	1-3	Manure does not fall onto birds housed below.	☐	☐	☐
	1-3	Each bird has at least 7.0 cm (2.8 in) of accessible feed space (5% tolerance allowed until December 31, 2025).	☐	☐	☐
	1-3	There is at least one waterer for every 12 birds, and each bird has access to at least 2 water sources (nipple drinkers or cups).	☐	☐	☐
	1-3	Each white hen has a minimum space allowance of 432 cm^2 (67 sq in) and each brown hen has a minimum space allowance of 484 cm^2 (75 sq in).	☐	☐	☐
1c. Housing systems – enriched colony	1-4	Floor slope is 8 degrees (14%) or less.	☐	☐	☐
	1-4	Manure does not fall onto birds housed below.	☐	☐	☐
	1-4	Each bird has at least 7.0 cm (2.8 in) of accessible feed space.	☐	☐	☐
	1-4	There is at least one waterer for every 12 birds, and each bird has access to at least 2 water sources (nipple drinkers or cups).	☐	☐	☐
	1-4	There are 45 cm (17.7 in) between each floor and ceiling.	☐	☐	☐
	1-4	Each hen has a minimum space allowance of 750 cm^2 (116.25 sq in) (including nests), of which 600 cm^2 (93 sq in) does not include nest box space.	☐	☐	☐
	1-5	Nest space is enclosed on at least 3 sides.	☐	☐	☐
	1-5	Nest curtains extend close to the floor without impeding the flow of eggs.	☐	☐	☐
	1-6	No drinkers, feeders or perches in the nest area.	☐	☐	☐
	1-6	Nest area floor is covered with a surface that promotes nesting and prevents injury.	☐	☐	☐
	1-6	Space between nest area and useable feed trough is at least 15.2 cm (6 in).	☐	☐	☐
	1-6	Each hen has at least 65 cm^2 (10 sq in) of nest space.	☐	☐	☐
	1-6	Perches are positioned to minimize fecal fouling below.	☐	☐	☐

Manual reference	Page number	Requirement	Acceptable	Unacceptable	N/A
	1-6	Perch material is easily cleaned and does not harbour mites. Perches are solid or capped if hollow.	☐	☐	☐
	1-6	Perches minimize injury to hens mounting, dismounting and nearby hens.	☐	☐	☐
	1-7	Perch diameter is at least 1.9 cm (0.75 in).	☐	☐	☐
	1-7	Each hen has at least 15 cm (5.9 sq in) of useable, elevated perch space.	☐	☐	☐
	1-7	Each hen has at least 31 cm^2 (4.8 sq in) of scratch pad space.	☐	☐	☐
1d. Housing systems – free run / free range	1-8	Useable space slope is 8 degrees (14%) or less.	☐	☐	☐
	1-8	Each bird has at least 7.0 cm (2.8 in) of accessible feed space (linear feeders).	☐	☐	☐
	1-8	Nipple drinkers and cups: There is at least one waterer for every 12 birds.	☐	☐	☐
	1-8	Bell drinkers: There is at least 1 bell drinker / every 100 hens.	☐	☐	☐
	1-8	Straight water troughs: Each hen has at least 1.3 cm (0.5 in) water trough space.	☐	☐	☐
	1-8	There are 45 cm (17.7 in) between each floor and ceiling.	☐	☐	☐
	1-8	Single-tier, all-litter systems: Each hen has a minimum space allowance of 1,900 cm^2 (294.5 sq ft / 2.05 sq ft).	☐	☐	☐
	1-8	Single-tier and aviary systems with combined litter / slats / wire installed or re-tooled after April 1, 2017: Each hen has a minimum space allowance of 929 cm^2 (144.0 sq ft / 1.0 sq ft).	☐	☐	☐
	1-9	Single-tier and aviary systems with combined litter / slats / wire installed before April 1, 2017 that provide a minimum of 15 cm (5.9 in) of perch space per bird): Each hen has a minimum 929 cm^2 (144 sq in / 1.0 sq ft) of useable space.	☐	☐	☐
	1-9	Single-tier and aviary systems with combined litter / slats / wire installed before April 1, 2017 that provide 7.6 cm – <15 cm (3.0 – < 5.9 in) of perch space per bird): Each hen has at least 1,115 cm^2 (1.2 sq ft / 172.8 sq in) of useable space.	☐	☐	☐
	1-9	The nest space is enclosed on at least 3 sides.	☐	☐	☐
	1-9	No drinkers, feeders or perches in the nest area.	☐	☐	☐
	1-9	Nest area floor is covered with a surface that promotes nesting and prevents injury.	☐	☐	☐
	1-9	Space between nest area and useable feed trough is at least 15.2 cm (6 in).	☐	☐	☐
	1-9	Each hen has at least 83.2 cm^2 (12.9 sq in) of nest space.	☐	☐	☐
	1-10	Perches are positioned to minimize fecal fouling below.	☐	☐	☐

Manual reference	Page number	Requirement	Acceptable	Unacceptable	N/A
	1-10	Perch material is easily cleaned and does not harbour mites. Perches are solid or capped if hollow.	☐	☐	☐
	1-10	Perches minimize injury to hens mounting, dismounting and nearby hens.	☐	☐	☐
	1-10	Perch diameter is at least 1.9 cm (0.75 in).	☐	☐	☐
	1-10	At least 20% of all useable perch space is elevated 40.0 cm (15.7 in) or more from any level or tier.	☐	☐	☐
	1-10	Perches are not higher than 1.0 m (39.4 in) above the closest floor or perch.	☐	☐	☐
	1-10	There are at least 19.0 cm (7.5 in) between perches and walls, top of the perch to the ceiling, stacked vertical perches, or other structures.	☐	☐	☐
	1-10	Adjacent perches less than 19.0 cm (7.5 in) apart vertically are at least 30.0 cm (11.8 in) apart horizontally.	☐	☐	☐
	1-10	Single-tier and aviary systems installed or re-tooled after April 1, 2017: Each hen has at least 15 cm (5.9 in) of useable, elevated perch space.	☐	☐	☐
	1-11	Single-tier and aviary systems installed before April 1, 2017: Each hen has at least 7.6 cm (3 in) of useable, elevated perch space.	☐	☐	☐
	1-11	Hens have continuous access to litter in litter-based systems.	☐	☐	☐
	1-11	Single tier systems installed or re-tooled after April 1, 2017: At least 15% of the usable space is litter.	☐	☐	☐
	1-11	Single tier systems installed before April 1, 2017: If system is single-tier fully slatted, or less than 15% of useable space is litter, a solid surface area of at least 1.5 m^2 (16.0 sq ft.) for litter / substrate for dust bathing is provided for each 1,000 hens. If multiple sites are provided, they are evenly distributed.	☐	☐	☐
	1-11	Single-tier systems: There is one foraging site for every 1,500 birds. Sites are evenly distributed.	☐	☐	☐
	1-11	Aviary systems: At least 33% of the usable space is litter.	☐	☐	☐
	1-11	Aviary systems: Litter access is not restricted after 24 weeks of age, and litter space provided until 24 weeks of age is at least 15% of the useable space.	☐	☐	☐
	1-12	Aviary systems: Birds are placed on the system near feed and water sources.	☐	☐	☐
	1-12	Aviary systems: Tier arrangement and manure removal systems prevent droppings falling onto tiers below.	☐	☐	☐
	1-12	Aviary systems: Manure removal systems are safe.	☐	☐	☐
	1-12	Aviary systems: The number of tiers does not exceed 4 (including the ground).	☐	☐	☐

Manual reference	Page number	Requirement	Acceptable	Unacceptable	N/A
1e. Housing systems – access to outdoors	1-13	Birds have continuous access to a shelter, including the lay facility if accessible.	☐	☐	☐
	1-13	Doors to the range are at least 35.0 cm (13.8 in) high and 40.0 cm (15.7 in) wide, and distributed throughout the lay facility.	☐	☐	☐
	1-13	Birds restricted from the range when health or welfare is at risk.	☐	☐	☐
	1-13	Range has perimeter fence that is inspected and well maintained.	☐	☐	☐
	1-13	Openings to range are designed to minimize the negative impact of weather on litter quality.	☐	☐	☐
	1-14	Range has no debris to shelter pests.	☐	☐	☐
	1-14	The range is sited and maintained to mitigate negative impacts on bird health or welfare.	☐	☐	☐
	1-14	If feed and water are provided on the range, access by wild birds is discouraged.	☐	☐	☐
2. Lay facility environmental management – ventilation and air quality	2-1	Ventilation system provides birds with fresh air.	☐	☐	☐
	2-1	Ammonia at bird height is below 25 ppm. If this level is reached or exceeded, corrective action is taken. Ammonia levels tested monthly (October-March). • *Record: Monthly Inspection Form*	☐	☐	☐
2. Lay facility environmental management – temperature	2-2	Lay facility temperature controlled and monitored daily to remain between 10-28ºC. Min / max temperature recorded daily. • *Record: Lay Facility Temperature Record*	☐	☐	☐
	2-2	Birds are monitored for cold and heat stress, and remedial action taken immediately if found.	☐	☐	☐
2. Lay facility environmental management – lighting	2-3	Conventional and enriched colony housing: Light intensity at feeders in light phase is at least an average of 5 lux.	☐	☐	☐
	2-3	Free run / free range housing: Light intensity in the hens' environment is at least an average of 10, lux.	☐	☐	☐
	2-3	Enriched colony and free run / free range housing: Lights are turned on gradually or staged over a period of at least 5 minutes.	☐	☐	☐
	2-3	Enriched colony and free run / free range housing: Lights are turned off gradually or staged over a period of at least 15 minutes.	☐	☐	☐
2. Lay facility environmental management – litter	2-4	Litter is monitored and managed to be in good condition, and not causing health problems.	☐	☐	☐
3. Feed and water	3-2	Daily feed and water consumption records are completed, and corrective action taken if issues arise. • *Records: Daily Feed and Water Consumption Records*	☐	☐	☐
	3-1	All birds have access to feed and water at all times.	☐	☐	☐

Manual reference	Page number	Requirement	Acceptable	Unacceptable	N/A
4. Health management and husbandry practices – general	4-1	Farm Animal Welfare Policy reviewed, signed and dated annually. • *Record: Farm Animal Welfare Policy*	☐	☐	☐
	4-2	Visitor policy available for all visitors. Visitor logbook states visitors must review policy. Visitors sign to acknowledge understanding. • *Records: Visitor Policy; Logbook; Regular Returning Visitor Signing Sheet*	☐	☐	☐
4. Health management and husbandry practices – pullet sourcing	4-3	Aviary systems: Pullets sourced from free run / free range systems with access to perches.	☐	☐	☐
	4-3	**(Recommended)** Chicks sourced from a hatchery certified on Canadian Hatchery Federation animal welfare program, or US equivalent program.	☐	☐	☐
4. Health management and husbandry practices – health management	4-3	There is a working relationship with a veterinarian. • *Record: Contact Information*	☐	☐	☐
	4-3	Records kept for disease outbreaks, health problems, abnormal conditions and remedial actions taken.	☐	☐	☐
4. Health management and husbandry practices – skills related to flock management	4-4	Personnel who work with the birds are knowledgeable in their care and handling, or work with experienced personnel.	☐	☐	☐
	4-4	Employee Code of Conduct signed by employees annually. • *Record: Employee Code of Conduct*	☐	☐	☐
	4-4	Employees understand the Farm Animal Welfare Policy, Handling Catching and Loading Guidelines, emergency plan, husbandry relevant to their position, and the Animal Care Program, as reviewed annually.	☐	☐	☐
4. Health management and husbandry practices – disease prevention and management	4-4	Causes investigated and / or appropriate intervention taken if birds show signs of a disease, altered behaviour, or greater than expected mortalities.	☐	☐	☐
	4-5	Mortality recorded daily. • *Record: Mortality Record*	☐	☐	☐
3. Feed and water	3-1	Feeding and watering equipment monitored daily and corrective action taken when necessary.	☐	☐	☐
4. Health management and husbandry practices – inspections	4-5	Flocks inspected at least twice daily.	☐	☐	☐
	4-5	Daily and weekly routine inspection forms completed and available. • *Records: Routine Inspection Forms (Daily Inspection Check-Off Form; Weekly Inspection Checklist)*	☐	☐	☐
	4-6	Appropriate methods or devices used to ensure inspection of all birds.	☐	☐	☐

Manual reference	Page number	Requirement	Acceptable	Unacceptable	N/A
4. Health management and husbandry practices – sick and injured birds	4-6	Sick and injured birds are segregated, assessed and given appropriate care, treatment or euthanized.	☐	☐	☐
	4-7	Sick and injured birds are monitored at least twice a day and treated according to their condition and signs of recovery.	☐	☐	☐
6. Euthanasia	6-4	Sick or injured birds that are suffering and unlikely to recover are euthanized without delay.	☐	☐	☐
4. Health management and husbandry practices – feather pecking and cannibalism	4-7	Corrective action is taken if feather pecking or cannibalism occur.	☐	☐	☐
	4-8	**(Recommended)** Flocks are regularly scored for feather condition.	☐	☐	☐
4. Health management and husbandry practices – beak treatment and trimming	4-9	Required beak treatment and / or trimming records available and appropriate activities undertaken. • *Records: Beak Treatment and Trimming Policy; Records; Letters of Assurance and / or Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
4. Health management and husbandry practices – moulting	4-10	If done, controlled moulting happened due to extenuating circumstances with egg board approval, veterinarian and nutritionist oversight, using non-feed withdrawal methods with water always available. • *Records: Egg Board Approval Letter; Veterinarian and Nutritionist Letters*	☐	☐	☐
3. Feed and water	3-2	Plan in place to ensure feed and water are available to birds at all times. • *Record: Emergency Plan (if written)*	☐	☐	☐
4. Health management and husbandry practices – emergency management and preparedness	4-11	Emergency plan prepared and reviewed with employees. • *Record: Emergency Plan (if written)*	☐	☐	☐
	4-11	Emergency contact list available. • *Record: Contact List*	☐	☐	☐
	4-12	At least one responsible individual is available at all times to take necessary steps in an emergency. • *Record: Emergency Plan (if written)*	☐	☐	☐
	4-12	Backup power system (generator) available to use in power outage to operate electrically dependent equipment.	☐	☐	☐
	4-12	Backup power system, and at minimum power and temperature alarms tested monthly. • *Record: Monthly Inspection Form*	☐	☐	☐
5. Handling and transportation – pre-transport planning	5-1	The catching and loading process is planned in advance to minimize bird handling, duration, and ensure trucks can leave once full. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐

Manual reference	Page number	Requirement	Acceptable	Unacceptable	N/A
5. Handling and transportation – feed and water: pre-loading	5-2	Feed withdrawal time provided by processor, and followed. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Flock Sheet, Flock Disposal and Housing Record or Feed Consumption Records*	☐	☐	☐
	5-2	Water is available right until catching starts. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Water Consumption Records*	☐	☐	☐
5. Handling and transportation – fitness for transport	5-3	Flock is evaluated before transport for fitness for transport. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-3	Birds that are sick, injured, wet or unfit for transport are not loaded. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Bird Handling-Catching Crew Record; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-3	Birds not loaded are cared for in accordance with the Animal Care Program. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
5. Handling and transportation – handling and catching	5-4	Farmer or designate present during catching and loading and oversaw catching crew. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-4	Corrective action taken if birds handled in a way that compromises their welfare. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-4	Copy of Handling Catching and Loading Guidelines available.	☐	☐	☐
	5-4	Catching crew members understand and follow Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines (placing pullets and removing end of lay hens). • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Bird Handling-Catching Crew Record; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-5	Birds placed into containers gently and able to regain upright position. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Bird Handling-Catching Crew Record; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-5	Light intensity lowered for catching. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; bird handling-catching crew record; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-5	Easy access to each cage must be provided for catchers • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐

Manual reference	Page number	Requirement	Acceptable	Unacceptable	N/A
5. Handling and transportation – loading and unloading	5-6	Transport containers and equipment minimize stress and / or injury when birds are loaded and unloaded. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Bird Handling-Catching Crew Record; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-6	Containers with birds are handled, moved, securely positioned on the transport truck, and unloaded in a way to minimize stress and / or injury. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Bird Handling-Catching Crew Record; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-6	Measures taken to prevent birds from becoming too hot, cold or wet during loading and unloading. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-6	Steps taken to minimize the time birds are inverted during catching and loading. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Bird Handling-Catching Crew Record; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-7	Number of birds per container is determined before loading, depending on floor space, body size / weight, expected weather / environmental conditions, and duration of transport. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-7	Birds loaded into containers in a way that lets them all rest on the floor simultaneously when evenly distributed. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Bird Handling-Catching Crew Record; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-7	Containers visually inspected to ensure no parts of birds are trapped prior to loading on the vehicle. • *Records: Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines; Bird Handling-Catching Crew Record; Pullet Flock History Certificate*	☐	☐	☐
	5-7	Driveway and yard provide safe and easy access by transport trucks.	☐	☐	☐

Manual reference	Page number	Requirement	Acceptable	Unacceptable	N/A
6. Euthanasia	6-1	There is a written euthanasia plan that includes, at minimum: • *acceptable methods of euthanasia, including the primary and alternate, back-up method* • *which birds have to be euthanized* • *a protocol to ensure that euthanasia is carried out in a timely manner* • *who is authorized to perform euthanasia* • *The following steps:* › *Birds are inspected to confirm insensibility immediately after the euthanasia method has been applied.* › *If signs of sensibility are observed, a second application of an acceptable method is immediately administered.* › *Death is confirmed before leaving birds and disposing carcasses.* • *Record: Euthanasia Plan*	☐	☐	☐
	6-2	All personnel who identify birds for euthanasia or perform euthanasia are aware of and follow the euthanasia plan.	☐	☐	☐
	6-1	The euthanasia plan is reviewed annually and revised as necessary. • *Record: commitment statement to this in Farm Animal Welfare Policy*			
	6-4	Sick or injured birds that are suffering and unlikely to recover are euthanized without delay.	☐	☐	☐
	6-2	All personnel who perform euthanasia are trained on required euthanasia content outlined in this manual and successfully performed a demonstration of competency. • *Records: Euthanasia Training Certificates and / or Euthanasia Training Log or Record*	☐	☐	☐
7. On-farm depopulation	7-1	Death is confirmed before birds are disposed of.	☐	☐	☐
	7-1	There is a written protocol for planned on-farm depopulation, developed in consultation with a vet or other qualified advisor. • *Record: Planned On-Farm Depopulation Protocol*	☐	☐	☐
	7-3	Acceptable methods of euthanasia are used for planned on-farm depopulation.	☐	☐	☐
	7-4	There is a written plan for depopulating the flock in an emergency situation. • *Record: Emergency On-Farm Depopulation Plan*	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 1 – HOUSING SYSTEMS

Lay facilities have been measured for applicable ACP housing system requirements in accordance with EFC's measuring protocols for conventional, enriched colony and free run / free range housing systems. Information measured and any corresponding calculations (e.g. bird capacity) are recorded in the housing measurement certificate and form. These documents must be up to date (i.e. no changes have been made to the lay facility and amenities in it since the certificate and / or form were issued) and should be kept on file / available. The number of birds housed at the 23 week count cannot exceed the bird capacity for the lay facility and / or enriched colony or conventional housing unit identified on the housing measurement certificate. Meeting the bird capacity outlined on the enriched colony and free run / free range housing measurement certificates, by the 23 week count, will ensure that all applicable requirements stipulating a certain amount of feed space, waterers, space allowance, nest space, perch space, and foraging space per bird are met. Bird capacity on conventional housing measurement certificates does not account for feed space per bird, so additional calculations are required to ensure compliance with the feed space per bird requirement.

1A. ALL HOUSING SYSTEMS

Housing and equipment: design and construction

Requirements

- Materials used in the construction of housing and equipment to which birds have access must not be harmful or toxic to birds, and must be able to be thoroughly cleaned and maintained.

Keys to compliance

- Any housing system material or equipment that birds come into contact with cannot cause physical harm. Materials are safe, standard industry accepted materials.
- Farm Animal Welfare Policy contains a commitment statement that the housing system and equipment are not made of materials that are harmful or toxic to birds.
- Housing system is well maintained and in good repair.

Records

- Farm animal welfare policy

- Openings and access points must permit placement of pullets and removal of full grown layers of all breeds without injury.

Keys to compliance

- Openings and access points are in good repair with no sharp edges or protruding wires.
- Handling practices are adjusted according on the housing system type and design, and size of the pullet or full grown layer, to accommodate moving birds safely in and out. For example, smaller openings will require less birds be moved out of the system at one time.

Flooring

Requirements

- Flooring must be designed, constructed, and maintained in a manner that does not contribute to injuries or deformities to the birds' legs, feet, and / or toes.
- All slatted, wire, or perforated floors must be constructed to support the forward facing claws.

1B. CONVENTIONAL

Flooring

Requirements

- Housing system floors must be designed and maintained to prevent manure from birds in upper levels from dropping on birds enclosed directly below.

Keys to compliance

- There must be a functioning manure belt, curtains or deflectors that prevent manure from dropping directly onto birds below.

Feeders and waterers

Requirements

- Accessible feed space must be provided at a minimum rate of 7.0 cm (2.8 in) per bird.
  - *A 5% tolerance is applied to feed space per bird in conventional housing systems installed before the release of the Code of Practice on March 27, 2017. As such, it is acceptable for hens in conventional housing systems to have a minimum of 6.65 cm (2.66 in) of feed space. This allowance expires on December 31, 2025 for all flocks regardless of placement date, or an EFC imposed deadline for the conventional housing transition, whichever comes first.*
- All birds must have access to:
  - a minimum of one waterer for every 12 birds.
  - at least 2 water sources (e.g. nipple drinkers, cups).

Space allowance

Requirements

- Each bird must be provided with a minimum space allowance of 432 cm^2 (67 sq in) for white birds and 484 cm^2 (75 sq in) for brown birds.

1C. ENRICHED COLONY

Flooring

Requirements

- The slope of any slat or wire floor or solid surface that is included in the useable space calculation must not exceed 8 degrees (14%).
- Housing system floors must be designed and maintained to prevent manure from birds in upper levels from dropping on birds enclosed directly below.

Keys to compliance

- There must be a functioning manure belt, curtains or deflectors that prevent manure from dropping directly onto birds below.

Feeders and waterers

Requirements

- Accessible feed space must be provided at a minimum rate of 7.0 cm (2.8 in) per bird.
- All birds must have access to:
  - a minimum of one waterer for every 12 birds.
  - at least 2 water sources (e.g. nipple drinkers, cups).

Space allowance

Requirements

- A minimum height of 45 cm (17.7 in) must be provided between the floor and ceiling of each level.
- Each hen must have a minimum of 750 cm^2 (116.25 sq in) of total space (including nests), of which 600 cm^2 (93 sq in) does not include nest box space.

Nesting

Requirements

- The nest space must be enclosed on at least 3 sides to provide privacy and shading.
  - *The nest area must have at least 3 sides to facilitate hens' preferences to lay eggs in a dim, enclosed space. Sides can be a nest curtain or flap, wire or solid wall, or other partition. Creating a clear enclosure for nesting, separate to the scratch pad and rest of the colony, helps define the nest area within the colony unit as a suitable space for laying eggs.*

Keys to compliance

- To count as a "side" that offers adequate enclosure, a nest curtain, or nest curtains where used collectively, must cover the majority of the intended nest box side.
- Reasonable gaps between curtains, and between curtains and the end of the nest box side, are acceptable provided that overall, the majority of the nest box side is covered to offer a clear enclosure within the nest box from the rest of the enriched colony.

- Where nest curtains are used, they must extend close to the floor (without impeding the flow of eggs).

Keys to compliance

- When used, curtains must fully cover the sightline of the hens when they are sitting down in the nest box. Unless altered / shortened, manufacturer issued curtains are acceptable[1].
- Front nest curtains should extend to the feed trough, however existing curtains issued from a manufacturer that have a gap between the feed trough and curtain are acceptable, provided the curtains have not been altered / shortened. The same approach applies to panels in front nests that are blocking access to the feed trough.

[1] Please note that acceptable nest curtain length will be reviewed at the next Code of Practice review and/or update.

- The nest area must not contain drinkers, feeders, or perches.
- The floor of the nest area must be covered with a surface that promotes nesting and prevents injury.

Keys to compliance

- The nest floor material cannot be wire floor. If the colony has wire flooring, the nest area must be covered with an overlay to the normal wire floor of the colony, or plastic / rubber coated wire.
- The overlay material must be safe, standard industry accepted material, and be securely attached to the colony.
- The scratch pad and nest pad materials must be different.

- The space between the nest area and the useable feed trough must be at least 15.2 cm (6 in).
- Each hen must be provided with nest space area at a minimum of 65 cm^2 (10 sq in).

Perching

Requirements

- Perches must be positioned to minimize fecal fouling of birds, feeders, or drinkers located below them.
- Perches must be constructed of materials that are easily cleaned and do not harbour mites.
  - *Examples of acceptable materials include, but are not limited to, galvanized steel, plastic, wood, metal and rubber coated metal.*

Keys to compliance

- Hollow perches must be capped, or perches must be solid.

- Perches must be designed to minimize injury to hens that are mounting or dismounting as well as to any hens nearby.

Keys to compliance

- Perches must be smooth with no broken parts or sharp edges and must not roll.

- Perches must not extend into nests.
- Perches must be at least 1.9 cm (0.75 in) in width or diameter to allow hens to wrap their toes around the perch and balance evenly on it in a relaxed perching posture.
- Each hen must be provided with a minimum linear length of 15 cm (5.9 in) of useable, purpose-designed, elevated perch space.

Foraging

Requirements

- Each hen must be provided with a minimum of 31 cm^2 (4.8 sq in) of a flooring surface for foraging.

Keys to compliance

- The flooring surface (scratch pad) must be a solid surface that is securely attached to the colony during the flock cycle. The material used could be in accordance with a manufacturer company's recommendations, and must be safe, industry accepted material.
- The scratch pad and nest pad materials must be different.
- Refer to the glossary for the definition of scratch pad to see additional information and criteria for scratch pads.

1D. FREE RUN / FREE RANGE

Flooring

Requirements

- The slope of any slat or wire floor or solid surface that is included in the useable space calculation must not exceed 8 degrees (14%).

Feeders and waterers

Requirements

- Accessible feed space must be provided at a minimum rate of 7.0 cm (2.8 in) (linear feeders) per bird.[2]
- All birds must have access to:
  - a minimum of one waterer for every 12 birds.
  - at least:
    - 2 water sources (e.g. nipple drinkers, cups),
    - or 1 bell drinker / 100 hens,
    - or 1.3 cm (0.5 in) water trough space when straight troughs are used.

Space allowance

Requirements

- A minimum height of 45 cm (17.7 in) must be provided between the floor and ceiling of each level.
- **Single-tier, all-litter housing systems:** each hen must be provided a minimum useable space allowance (which does not include nest space) of 1,900 cm^2 (294.5 sq in / 2.05 sq ft).
- **Single-tier and aviary systems with combined litter / slats / wire installed or re-tooled after April 1, 2017:** each hen must be provided with a minimum 929 cm^2 (144 sq in / 1.0 sq ft) of useable space.

[2] Round feeder space per bird requirement to be added pending the outcome of the five-year Code of Practice review.

- **Single-tier and aviary systems with combined litter / slats / wire installed before April 1, 2017:** For systems that are a combination of wire, slats and litter, each hen must be provided with the following minimum useable space allowance (which does not include nest space):
  - 929.0 cm^2 (144.0 sq in / 1.0 sq ft) if a minimum of 15.0 cm (5.9 in) of perch space per hen is provided, or
  - 1,115 cm^2 (172.8 sq in / 1.2 sq ft) if perch space of at least 7.6 cm (3.0 in) but less than 15.0 cm (5.9 in) per hen is provided.

Nesting

Requirements

- The nest space must be enclosed on at least 3 sides to provide privacy and shading.
  - *The nest area must have at least 3 sides to facilitate hens' preferences to lay eggs in a dim, enclosed space. Sides can be a nest curtain or flap, wire or solid wall, or other partition. Creating a clear enclosure for nesting, separate to the litter area and rest of the system helps define the nest area within the housing system as a suitable space for laying eggs.*
- The nest area must not contain drinkers, feeders, or perches.
- The floor of the nest area must be covered with a surface that promotes nesting and prevents injury.

Keys to compliance

- The nest floor material cannot be wire floor. If the housing system has wire flooring, the nest area must be covered with an overlay to the normal wire floor of the housing system, or plastic / rubber coated wire.
- The overlay material must be safe, standard industry accepted material, and be securely attached to the system.

- The space between the nest area and the useable feed trough must be at least 15.2 cm (6 in).
- Each hen must be provided with nest space area at a minimum of 83.2 cm^2 (12.9 sq in).
  - *This is equivalent to 1.0 m^2 (10.8 sq ft) for each 120 hens.*

Perching

Requirements

- Perches must be positioned to minimize fecal fouling of birds, feeders, or drinkers located below them.
- Perches must be constructed of materials that are easily cleaned and do not harbour mites.
  - *Examples of acceptable materials include, but are not limited to, galvanized steel, plastic, wood, metal and rubber coated metal.*

Keys to compliance

- Hollow perches must be capped, or perches must be solid.

- Perches must be designed to minimize injury to hens that are mounting or dismounting as well as to any hens nearby.

Keys to compliance

- Perches must be smooth with no broken parts or sharp edges and must not roll.

- Perches must not extend into nests.
- Perches must be at least 1.9 cm (0.75 in) in width or diameter to allow hens to wrap their toes around the perch and balance evenly on it in a relaxed perching posture.
- At least 20% of the perch space must be elevated a minimum of 40.0 cm (15.7 in) from any level or tier.
- The height of elevated perches must not exceed 1.0 m (39.4 in) above the closest floor or perch.
- Perches must be at least 19.0 cm (7.5 in) from walls and from the top of the perch to the ceiling, stacked vertical perches, or other structures.
- Adjacent perches separated by less than 19.0 cm (7.5 in) of vertical space must be at least 30.0 cm (11.8 in) apart horizontally to allow hens to perch simultaneously.
- **Single-tier and aviary systems installed or re-tooled after April 1, 2017:** Each hen must be provided with a minimum linear length of 15 cm (5.9 in) of useable, purpose-designed, elevated perch space.

- **Single-tier and aviary systems installed before April 1, 2017:** Each hen must be provided with a minimum linear length of 7.6 cm (3.0 in) of useable, purpose-designed, elevated perch space.
  - *If less than 15 cm (5.9 in) of perch space per bird is provided, refer to the space allowance requirements for single-tier and aviary systems with combined litter / slats / wire installed before April 1, 2017 that mandate a higher space allowance per bird in this situation.*

Foraging and dust bathing

Requirements

- Hens housed in litter-based systems must be provided with continuous access to litter.
- **Single-tier systems installed or re-tooled after April 1, 2017:** at least 15% of the usable space must be litter.
- **Single-tier systems installed before April 1, 2017:** In systems that are fully slatted or where less than 15% of useable space is litter, a solid surface area of at least 1.5 m^2 (16.0 sq ft.) of litter / substrate for dust bathing must be provided for each 1,000 hens. Where multiple sites are provided, they must be evenly distributed.
- **Single-tier systems:** hens must be provided with at least one foraging site for each 1,500 hens (e.g. bales of hay or straw, insoluble grit or oat hulls, or other material that provides foraging opportunities). Where multiple sites are provided, they must be evenly distributed
  - *Example of foraging sites include providing nutritional enrichment such as hay or straw bales, insoluble grit or oat hulls, or providing material that provides foraging opportunities such as golf balls, hanging CDs or rope tassels, compressed cardboard pellets or peck stones.*
  - *Dust bathing sites can count as foraging sites as well, if substrate is present.*
- **Aviary systems:** at least 33% of the usable space must be litter, except for up to 24 weeks of age, when the litter may be reduced to a minimum of 15% of the useable space.

Special considerations for aviary systems

Requirements

- Birds must be placed on the system near feed and water sources when moving birds to aviaries.
- Tiers must be arranged to prevent droppings from falling directly on tiers below, excluding perches, terraces, and ramps / ladders.
- Raised tiers must have a system for removal of manure that does not interfere with the birds or cause injury.
- The number of tiers must not exceed 4 where the ground level is considered to be one tier.

Keys to compliance

- Tiers are measured on a vertical plane.
- If more than 4 tiers are present in total in the lay facility, a walkway must be present to ensure the upper tiers can be adequately inspected.
- There cannot be a straight vertical drop in excess of 4 tiers.

1E. ACCESS TO OUTDOORS

Housing and range: design and construction

Requirements

- Birds must have easy and continuous access to a structure that protects them from environmental conditions and meets the temperature and hygiene needs of the birds.
  - *The lay facility is an acceptable structure provided that the pop holes are left open / bird always have access to the lay facility interior when they are outside on the range.*
- Door openings from the lay facility to the range must be a minimum of 35.0 cm (13.8 in) high and 40.0 cm (15.7 in) wide and must be distributed throughout the lay facility so that all birds have access.
  - *This information was collected when the lay facility was measured in accordance with the EFC measuring protocol for free run / free range housing systems, and is recorded on the housing measurement form.*
- There must be a means to restrict access to outdoors when bird health or welfare is at risk.
- Perimeter fencing must be provided and maintained to protect birds from ground predators.
- The openings to the range must be designed to minimize the adverse effects of weather to maintain good litter quality.

Range management

Requirements

- The range area must be kept free of debris that may shelter pests.
- The outdoor range must be sited and maintained to manage range conditions that can negatively affect bird health or welfare.
  - *Examples of range management practices include cutting grass, maintaining grass cover, harrowing, range rotation, range downtime, or keeping birds inside when the range is too wet or muddy.*

Keys to compliance

- Range management practices must be in place to mitigate conditions like muddiness, wetness, predation, pests, and birds monitored for mortality and injury outside.

Feeders and waterers: access to outdoors

Requirements

- If feed and water are provided outdoors, it must be in such a way that discourages access by wild birds.
  - *Examples of practices to discourage access by wild birds include fully enclosing the range, or using poles with a deterrent attached such a plastic ribbon streamers or pieces of metal flashing.*

SECTION 2 – LAY FACILITY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Ventilation and air quality

Requirements

- Environmental control systems must be designed, constructed and maintained in a manner that allows for fresh air and hygienic conditions that promote health and welfare for birds.
- Action must be taken to manage ammonia levels if they reach a harmful range (e.g. 20-25 ppm).

Keys to compliance

- Ammonia levels at bird height in the lay facility, and covered veranda if considered useable space, must be tested and recorded monthly between the months of October-March and be below 25 ppm.
- Corrective action must be taken if ammonia levels reach or exceed 25 ppm.
- If ammonia is measured monthly using a method that only provides a range (e.g. 10-20 ppm) and is not able to measure specific values within the range, then corrective action must be taken if the ammonia level exceeds 20 ppm (e.g. range of 20-30 ppm).
- If a lay facility has two separate rooms, with a wall between them, an ammonia test must be performed in each room, and the results for each room recorded.
- Record each ammonia test and result in the monthly inspection form or equivalent record.

Records

- Monthly Inspection Form (October – March Ammonia Test Record)
- If applicable, Corrective Action Log (document corrective action taken if ammonia reaches a harmful level)

Temperature

Requirements

- Temperatures inside housing systems must be monitored on a daily basis.
- Temperatures inside housing systems must be maintained within a range that contributes to good health and welfare of the birds.
- Birds must be monitored for signs of cold or heat stress. Upon discovering birds showing signs of cold or heat stress, remedial action must be taken immediately.
  - *Examples of remedial action include increasing heat, running more fans or turning on a cooling system if installed in the lay facility.*
  - *Checking birds for cold and heat stress is included as an item to inspect flocks for during routine inspections in the weekly inspection checklist.*

Keys to compliance for all temperature requirements

- Daily minimum and maximum temperature in the lay facility, and covered veranda if considered useable space, must be measured with a working thermometer and recorded daily.
- If a lay facility has two separate rooms, with a wall between them, the farmer must monitor and record the temperature daily for each room.
- The lay facility and covered veranda (if considered useable space) must be maintained within a temperature range of 10-28°C (50-82°F).
- In instances of temperatures outside of this range, corrective action taken must be documented in a corrective action log. Keeping a record of outside temperatures is considered equivalent to writing in the corrective action log.
- Include checking birds for thermal comfort in routine inspections, and record this activity by completing the routine inspection forms: daily inspection check-off form and weekly inspection checklist.

Records for all temperature requirements

- Lay Facility Temperature Record (document daily min / max temp in lay facility)
- Routine Inspection Forms (document birds are monitored for cold or heat stress)
  - Daily Inspection Check-Off Form
  - Weekly Inspection Checklist
- If applicable, Corrective Action Log (document corrective action taken if thermal discomfort is observed in the birds and / or acceptable temperature range is exceeded)

Lighting

Requirements

- **Conventional and enriched colony housing systems:** Light intensity must be at least an average of 5 lux at feeders during the light phase. Light intensity may only be reduced to correct injurious behaviour (e.g. feather pecking).
  - *To measure light intensity, measure in lux at 2 spots along the feeder (directly under a lightbulb and in-between lightbulbs) on each level. Add all measurements together, and divide by the total number of measurements taken to get the average of the lay facility.*
- **Free run / free range housing systems:** Light intensity must be at least an average 10 lux in the hens' environment during the light phase, so that hens can navigate their surroundings.
  - *To measure in aviary systems, measure light intensity in lux at 2 spots along the feeders (directly under a bulb and in-between bulbs) on each tier and a floor reading (excluding underneath the system). Add all measurements together, and divide by the total number of measurements taken to get the average of the lay facility.*
  - *To measure in single-tier systems, measure light intensity in lux at 5 spots (2 dark spots, 2 light spots, 1 midpoint), add the lux together and divide by 5 to get the average.*
- **Enriched colony and free run / free range housing systems with artificial light:** the light intensity must be raised gradually or staged over a minimum period of 5 minutes and lowered gradually or staged over a minimum period of 15 minutes to give birds sufficient time to roost and come off perches without causing injury.

Litter management

Requirements

- Litter must be of a good quality, and friable.
- Litter condition must be monitored and managed to avoid levels of dustiness or dampness that could cause leg, respiratory, or other health problems such as the build-up of parasites or diseases.
  - *Moisture levels in the litter can be monitored and measured a number of ways, for example using a moisture meter, visual inspection or by doing the squeeze ball test. Foot health can also be an indicator of litter quality, as can air quality, ammonia levels and respiratory health.*
  - *Squeeze ball test guidelines:*
    - *Pick up a handful of litter and squeeze into a fist to form a ball.*
    - *When litter content is appropriate, the litter will loosely compact and form a ball when squeezed, but will not stay together well when released.*
    - *When moisture content is too high, the litter will be tightly compacted and form a ball when squeezed that will remain intact when released.*
    - *When moisture content is low, the litter cannot compact and will not squeeze into a ball.*
- Litter that has become excessively wet (e.g. from a water leak, flood) must be removed promptly.

Keys to compliance for all litter management requirements

- Record any issues and corrective action taken in the corrective action log.

Records for all litter management requirements

- If applicable, Corrective Action Log

SECTION 3 – FEED AND WATER

Increases or decreases in feed or water consumption can be an early indicator of problems. If feed is not meeting the hens' nutritional needs, is delivered inadequately, or is stale, mouldy or contaminated, or if water is not delivered adequately, is not palatable or is negatively affecting their health, the hens may respond by changing feeding and / or drinking behaviour, production or showing other health problems. This can prompt investigation and corrective action to remedy this situation.

Feed and water management

Requirements

- Access to feed must be provided at all times and delivered in ways that minimize aggression, poor body condition, and injuries.
- Access to water in sufficient quantities must be provided to all birds at all times in normal circumstances, up until end of lay. Interruptions for the purposes of vaccinations or water system maintenance are acceptable.
- Feed that has become stale, mouldy, or contaminated must not be used, and must be replaced immediately.
- Feeding and watering equipment must be monitored daily, and corrective action promptly taken when necessary.

Keys to compliance

- Record this activity by completing the routine inspection forms: daily inspection check-off form and weekly inspection checklist.
- Record any issues and corrective action taken in the corrective action log.

Records

- Routine Inspection Forms (document equipment monitored)
  - Daily Inspection Check-Off Form
  - Weekly Inspection Checklist
- If applicable, Corrective Action Log (document corrective action if issues found)

- A plan must be in place to ensure that adequate supplies of suitable feed and water are available at all times, as well as in the event of on-farm emergencies such as power interruptions, mechanical breakdowns, and / or the need to remove and replace feed.
  - *This plan is part of the farm's emergency plan, which could be written down, and must be reviewed with all farm employees. Refer to Section 4-Health Management and Husbandry Practices; Emergency management and preparedness, in this manual for more emergency plan requirements. An example emergency plan template can be found in Appendix A at the end of this manual.*

Nutrition

Requirements

- All birds must receive feed that meets their daily nutrient requirements to maintain good health, meet physiological demands, and avoid metabolic and nutritional disorders.

Water

Requirements

- Water must be palatable and not harmful to bird health.

Keys to compliance for all feed and water requirements

- Daily flock feed and water consumption must be recorded.
- Daily feed consumption can be monitored through the following methods:
  - Daily bin scale weights or dump hopper weights computed into daily value
  - Daily run times from cross auger timer recorded / verified
- In normal circumstances, birds must have access to feed and water at all times (includes feed and water being present and accessible due to properly functioning equipment).
- If water is shut off during the dark period, it must be clear that the birds are able to drink overnight, and that water was only shut off during the dark period (via overnight water consumption records and records that show the time water was turned on and off).
- Hens must not be loose in the lay facility (outside of their housing system) as they will not have adequate access to feed and water.

- Roosters could be loose if provided with their own sufficient feed and water access, and managed separately to the hens.
- Feed and water must be available for birds being depopulated on-farm right up until the depopulation process begins.
- Feed withdrawal in preparation for catching and loading for live transport for processing (on or off-site) must comply with the time off feed intervals outlined in the *Health of Animals Regulations, Part XII* (Transport of Animals). Water must be available until catching commences.
- Corrective action must be taken as needed for issues related to feed and water and documented.

Records for all feed and water requirements

- Daily Feed and Water Consumption Records
- If applicable, Corrective Action Log (document corrective action if feed / water related issues found)

SECTION 4 – HEALTH MANAGEMENT AND HUSBANDRY PRACTICES

General

Requirements

- Farm Animal Welfare Policy
  - The farm must have a Farm Animal Welfare Policy which is reviewed, signed and dated annually.
  - The policy must include an emphasis on the commitment of the farmer to foster a culture of understanding towards animal care principles and requirements.
  - The policy must as a minimum include statement(s) containing commitment to zero tolerance for any abuse, neglect, cruelty, or mistreatment of birds.

Keys to compliance

- The Policy contains commitment statements to: zero tolerance policy; housing hens in a safe environment where materials used in the construction of the housing system and equipment to which birds have access are not harmful or toxic to birds; and having a written euthanasia plan that is reviewed annually and revised as necessary.
- Ensure there is a signed and dated Farm Animal Welfare Policy on file for the farm.
- The Policy must be signed and dated within the last 13 months, at the time of an ACP audit.

Records:

- Farm Animal Welfare Policy

- Visitor Policy
  - Visitor Policy must be available in the visitor logbook for review by visitors, or incorporated into existing farm visitor policies.
  - The visitor logbook must clearly state that all visitors are required to review the Visitor Policy.
  - All visitors to the production unit must sign the logbook or equivalent record, acknowledging their understanding of the commitments associated with the Visitor Policy.
  - The Visitor Policy must state at a minimum that:
    - Birds are to be handled in a positive and compassionate manner at all times and any abuse or mistreatment is prohibited.
    - Visitors are expected to contribute to upholding high standards of animal welfare.
    - Visitors must abide by any policy, procedure, or instruction from farm representatives that could affect the welfare of the birds.
    - All visitors must follow the individual farm's on-farm biosecurity protocols while on the farm.

Keys to compliance

- Every visitor must sign the logbook or equivalent record to confirm their understanding of the commitments in the Visitor Policy.
- Regular returning visitors, like egg truck drivers, have the option to sign a 'regular returning visitor signing sheet' annually, in lieu of signing off on the visitor policy each visit. This document must be on file for the year and available during an audit.

Records:

- Visitor Policy
- Visitor Logbook
- Visitor Policy: Regular Returning Visitor – Signing Sheet

Pullet sourcing and transition to lay

Requirements

- Hens that will be housed in aviary systems must be sourced from free run / free range systems in which pullets had access to perches.

Recommended practices

- Chicks should be sourced from a hatchery certified on the Canadian Hatchery Federation animal welfare program, or US equivalent program.
  - *Documentation such as a letter of assurance or certification from the hatchery could be provided to confirm this.*
  - *It is highly recommended that the hatchery and pullet farmer send all supporting hatchery and pullet documentation with the hens to the layer farm.*

Health management plan

Requirements

- A working relationship with a veterinarian must be established.

Keys to compliance

- Contact information for the farm's primary veterinarian must be listed in a record such as a cell phone contact list, flock health plan or farm emergency plan (emergency contact list).

Records

- Cell Phone Contact List, Flock Health Plan or Emergency Plan (Emergency Contact List)

- Records on disease outbreaks, health problems, abnormal conditions noted and causes if known, and remedial actions taken, must be maintained.

Records

- Health / Medical Records
- Corrective Action Log

Skills related to flock management

Requirements

- Personnel must be knowledgeable of normal bird behaviour and signs of poor health, distress, and behaviour problems, or must work in conjunction with experienced personnel.
- Employee Code of Conduct
  - All employees who work in the production unit must understand, sign and date the Employee Code of Conduct annually. The required minimum template has been provided in this manual.
  - All employees who work in the production unit must understand the Farm Animal Welfare Policy, Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines, emergency plan, bird knowledge / husbandry as appropriate to their position and the Animal Care Program annually. Understanding of these must be affirmed by signing the Employee Code of Conduct each year.

Keys to compliance

- Ensure there is a signed and dated Code of Conduct on file for each employee that works in the production unit.
- Use the minimum template provided in this manual to ensure compliance.
- Employee Codes of Conduct must be signed and dated within the last 13 months, at the time of an ACP audit.

Records:

- Employee Code of Conduct

Disease prevention and management

Requirements

- If signs of a disease are recognized or suspected, or if birds are showing signs of altered behaviour, or mortalities are greater than expected, action must be taken without delay to establish the cause, and / or appropriate intervention must be undertaken by a suitably qualified person.
  - *Calculating and recording monthly mortality can help establish a baseline to assist with understanding expected mortality. The mortality record template in this manual includes a space to calculate this.*

- Mortalities must be recorded daily.
  - *When recording daily mortality, also recording the number of those birds that were culled vs. found dead can be a helpful tool to manage flock health, identify trends or issues and take corrective action. Additionally, tracking the reason for found and culled mortality can help in identifying problems that need to be addressed and management practices that can be improved.*

Keys to compliance

- Each daily spot in the mortality record must have a number written down, even if the number is 0. In the event that there is no mortality one day, write a zero (0) in the mortality record spot for that day. It is not acceptable to leave the space blank as there is no way to distinguish between a missed mortality check and no mortality that day.

Records

- Mortality Record

Routine inspections

Requirements

- Flocks must be inspected a minimum of twice daily. Such inspections must include: listening to and looking at the birds, checking for bird health and well-being; checking access to and availability of feed and water; operating condition of equipment; environmental conditions; and disposing mortalities.
  - *Refer to the weekly inspection checklist (template included in this manual) for the full list of items which at minimum must be checked during routine inspections.*

Keys to compliance

- Ensure the following items are checked during each routine inspection:
  - Overall appearance of birds
  - General sound of the flock
  - Abnormal behaviour
  - Signs of disease / illness
  - Injured birds
  - Respiratory problems
  - Panting or huddling (heat or cold stress)
  - Lameness
  - Signs of feather pecking or cannibalism

- Trapped birds
- Dead birds
- Availability of feed and water
- Operating condition of equipment in the lay facility (e.g. feeders, drinkers, ventilation etc.)
- Condition of amenities and materials in housing system (e.g. nest box flooring, scratch pads, perches, flooring)
- Lay facility environment (e.g. temperature, relative humidity, air quality)

- Initial the daily inspection check-off form twice a day after each inspection to document the required inspections were completed.
- Complete the weekly inspection checklist form once a week.
- Document any issues encountered during an inspection and corrective action taken in the corrective action log.

Records

- **Daily Inspection Check-Off Form**
- **Weekly Inspection Checklist**
- **If applicable, Corrective Action Log (document corrective action for any issues found)**

- Appropriate methods or devices must be available to allow inspection of all birds.
  - *Examples include using a walkway or catwalk, or equipment like a scissor lift to elevate personnel so they can view and inspect birds in higher tiers, or by using flashlights or raising light intensity during inspections to properly see birds.*

Sick and injured birds

Requirements

- Sick or injured birds must be promptly segregated for assessment and provided with appropriate care and / or treatment, or euthanized.
  - *Appropriate care will depend on the condition of the bird, lay facility set up and farm management practices. An example of appropriate care is placing the bird in a hospital pen to reduce competition for resources and antagonistic behaviour from other hens, and increasing the sick or injured hen's proximity and access to feed and water sources to provide fast and easy access to these resources.*

- Birds that have been identified as sick or injured must be monitored at least twice daily, or at a frequency appropriate to their conditions. If not showing signs of recovery, birds must be euthanized in accordance with the on-farm euthanasia plan.
- Any suspected cases of reportable diseases must be reported to a veterinarian immediately.

Keys to compliance for all sick and injured bird requirements

- Sick or injured birds must be cared for appropriately and promptly.
- Document all instances and corrective action taken in the corrective action log.
- Keeping a cull record is considered equivalent to writing in the corrective action log for birds that are euthanized.

Records for all sick and injured bird requirements

- If applicable, Corrective Action Log (document corrective action taken for sick or injured birds found)

Feather pecking and cannibalism

Requirements

- Corrective action must be taken at the onset of an outbreak of feather pecking or cannibalism.
- Injured birds must be promptly segregated for assessment and provided with appropriate care and / or treatment, or euthanized.

Keys to compliance for all feather pecking and cannibalism requirements

- Document all instances and corrective action taken in the corrective action log.

Records for all feather pecking and cannibalism requirements

- If applicable, Corrective Action Log (document corrective action taken at the start of any feather pecking or cannibalism)

Recommended practices

- Regularly score the feather condition of the flock to monitor changes over time and take corrective action when necessary.
  - *Feather condition scoring is a valuable tool that can assist with establishing a baseline for feather condition, and monitoring feather condition over time. Monitoring this at a regular interval (e.g. weekly, monthly, bi-monthly) can help with early recognition of an issue and / or the identification of a flock health or behavioural issue that requires investigation and intervention (e.g. feather pecking or feather loss, cannibalism).*
  - *Refer to Appendices B and C in this manual for two examples of feather scoring systems that could be adopted and implemented on your farm.*
  - *Appendix B – this feather scoring was developed by Dr. Alexandrea Harlander and her research team at the University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario, Canada.*
  - *Appendix C – this feather scoring system / laying hen protocol was developed as part of the AssureWel project by the RSPCA, Soil Association and University of Bristol in England, United Kingdom. For additional resources, please visit* ***assurewel.org/layinghens.html****.*
  - *Scoring could be recorded in a scoring sheet. An example sheet is included in Appendix B.*

Beak treatment and trimming

Requirements

- Each farm must have a written beak treatment and trimming policy available that outlines acceptable methods, timing and limits, and is reviewed and signed annually. The required minimum template has been provided in this manual.
- When planned, on-farm, beak trimming of the new flock must be performed prior to 10 days of age.
- Beak trimming must not be performed on birds that are older than 10 days of age, unless deemed necessary for emergency welfare reasons after all other measures to control cannibalism have been exhausted. In such cases, beak trimming must be carried out with veterinary consultation and oversight.

Keys to compliance

- Veterinarian consultation and oversight includes meeting with the on-farm personnel performing the beak trimming procedure to discuss proper beak trimming methods and the proper use of equipment before the beak trimming procedure occurs.
- The veterinarian must provide a letter or similar document confirming this.

- Beak treatment and trimming must be performed only by competent persons using industry approved methods that minimize bird discomfort and equipment that is properly maintained.
- The producer or a competent designated representative must be readily available throughout the beak trimming process.
- When beak treating or trimming, do not remove more than one-third of the top beak, as measured from the tip to the entrance of the nostrils.

Keys to compliance for all beak treatment and trimming requirements

- Understand the definitions of beak treatment (using infra-red methods, typically used at the hatchery on day-old chicks) and beak trimming (using hot blade methods, typically used on-farm) and which requirements apply. Refer to the glossary for the definitions.
- Ensure that the required records from the hatchery and / pullet grower are received and kept on file for each flock. Records must confirm:
  - Beak treatment or trimming method.
  - Age of the birds when treatment or trimming occurred.
  - That it was performed by competent personnel using infra-red or hot blade equipment that was properly maintained.
  - That no more than one-third of the top beak, as measured from the tip to the entrance of the nostrils, was removed during beak treatment or trimming.
  - (Applies to beak trimming on-farm) that the farmer or designated competent representative was readily available during the process.
- Ensure if beak trimming happens on-farm after 10 days of age that:
  - It was done for emergency purposes and that all other measures to control cannibalism have been exhausted.
  - There is a letter of assurance from a veterinarian confirming consultation and oversight.

Records for when beak treatment or trimming was done before 10 days of age

- Beak Treatment and Trimming Policy
- Beak Treatment / Trimming Records
- Pullet Flock History Certificate and / or letter of assurance from hatchery, pullet grower or on-farm crew (the pullet grower can sign the Pullet Flock History Certificate or equivalent record, but must be able to produce the original hatchery letter if needed)

Records for when beak treatment or trimming was done after 10 days of age

- Beak Treatment and Trimming Policy
- Beak Trimming Records
- If applicable:
  - Corrective Action Log
  - Health / Veterinary Records
  - Veterinarian Letter to confirm consultation and oversight
  - Pullet Flock History Certificate and / or letter of assurance from hatchery or pullet grower or on-farm crew (the pullet grower can sign the Pullet Flock History Certificate or equivalent record, but must be able to produce the original hatchery letter if needed)

Controlled moulting

Requirements

- Controlled moulting must not be undertaken unless in emergency or extenuating situations, at which time both nutritionist and veterinarian oversight is necessary.
  - *In Canada, moulting can only be undertaken with egg board approval.*
- When necessary, controlled moulting must be induced using methods that do not involve feed withdrawal, and water must be available at all times.

Keys to compliance for all controlled moulting requirements

- If moulting a flock, obtain and keep on file the following documents:
  - Written approval from the egg board to perform controlled moulting.
  - Letter from nutritionist to demonstrate nutritionist oversight.
  - Letter from veterinarian to support the moult, the methods used and veterinary oversight.

Records for all controlled moulting requirements

- If applicable, written approval from the egg board, and nutritionist and veterinarian letters

Emergency management and preparedness

Requirements

- An emergency plan for reasonably foreseeable problems that may affect bird welfare must be prepared and reviewed with all personnel.
  - *This plan may be written down. An example template has been included in this manual.*

Records

- Emergency Plan (if written down)

- Emergency contact information must be readily available.
  - *The emergency contact list should at minimum include: address of the farm, key farm staff including the person(s) responsible for taking charge during an emergency (required), 911, electrician, plumber, gas company, veterinarian and feed mill.*
  - *An example emergency plan with an emergency contact list is included in this manual.*

Keys to compliance

- Emergency contact numbers are written down and the physical list available for farm employees in the event of an emergency.
- The list can be kept anywhere accessible to farm employees, for example a posting in the production unit, a workroom, or in a SOP binder.
- The emergency contact list must name the individual(s) responsible for taking charge / the necessary steps during an emergency.

Records

- Emergency Contact List

- At least one responsible individual must be available at all times to take necessary steps in the case of an emergency.

Keys to compliance

- This individual(s) is listed in the emergency contact list.

Records

- Emergency Contact List

- A backup power system, where applicable, must be available to ensure that all electrically dependent mechanical systems necessary for bird health and well-being continue to operate during a power outage.
- All alarms and fail-safe devices, including alternate power supply, must be regularly tested.

Keys to compliance

- Test the backup power system (e.g. generator) and at minimum power and temperature alarms monthly and record in the monthly inspection form or equivalent record.
- Test results can be sent directly to a cell phone. A record of the test on a cell phone along with a clear date is considered an equivalent to completing the monthly inspection form for the backup power system and alarm tests.

Records

- Monthly Inspection Form

SECTION 5 – HANDLING AND TRANSPORTATION

Everyone involved in catching, loading and transporting the birds has a responsibility and obligation to ensure catching, transfer, and holding on-farm is undertaken in such a manner that minimizes stress and injury. Proper planning, training and oversight, as well as building design and equipment can help improve humane handling. It is the farmer's responsibility to oversee animal care on-farm and to coordinate with catchers, transporters, and processors to help ensure animal care is maintained as birds leave the farm.

The Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines outline the roles and responsibilities of the farmer, catching crew and transporter. They must be applied when pullets are caught and loaded at the pullet rearing facility, received and unloaded at the lay facility, and when end-of-lay hens are caught and loaded. Documentation (e.g. letter of assurance or Pullet Flock History Certificate) from the pullet grower will confirm to the egg farmer that the Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines were followed when pullets were caught and loaded at the pullet rearing facility.

The federal regulatory requirements for animal transport are covered under the *Health of Animals Regulations, Part XII* (Transport of Animals).

Pre-transport planning

Requirements

- The catching and loading processes must be planned in advance to minimize bird handling and the amount of time needed to catch and load birds, and to ensure that each vehicle can leave promptly after loading.
- Pre-transport planning must take into consideration the type of housing system, the number of birds that will be shipped, and the number of containers that will be needed to ensure that maximum loading densities are not exceeded.

Records for all pre-transport planning requirements

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

Feed and water: pre-loading

Requirements

- Pre-transport feed withdrawal must be managed to minimize the time that birds are off feed.
  - *Applies to flocks that are sent to a processing plant for slaughter (including federal, provincial and / or colony plants), not flocks that are depopulated on-farm.*
  - *Feed withdrawal marks the start of the interval where the birds do not have access to feed. The total interval of time that a flock is off feed before slaughter is federally regulated and enforced, through the Health of Animals Regulations, Part XII (Transport of Animals), and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Remaining compliant with the maximum interval of time off feed is shared responsibility between the farmer, transporter and processing plant, and communication is critical. The focus of this requirement is minimizing the time flocks are off feed on-farm, by ensuring the farmer receives and follows a feed withdrawal time recommendation from the processor for the flock.*
  - *CFIA considers feed removed (i.e. no access to feed) when feed augers / feed lines are turned off, or in some cases, when lines are raised. The onus is on the farmer to use what is most accurate and practical for their situation, and to provide consistent information for the purposes of completing the required documentation. If a farmer is able to accurately note when the feed troughs became empty, it is their choice to use this time, otherwise, note the time the feed supply was stopped as it is clearly known.*
- Hens must be fed an appropriate layer ration until feed is withdrawn to maintain bone strength.
- Water must be available to the birds until catching commences.

Keys to compliance for all feed and water: pre-loading requirements

- The processor provides a feed withdrawal time recommendation which is followed.
- Actual feed withdrawal time, or information that allows this to be calculated (e.g. time feed was no longer accessible; time catching began), must be documented.

Records for all feed and water: pre-loading requirements

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Flock Sheet; Flock Disposal and Housing Record; or Feed Consumption Records

Fitness for transport

Requirements

- In preparation for transport, the flock must be evaluated for health and fitness and those birds that are deemed unfit for transport must be euthanized, separated, or transported with special provisions[3] only if for veterinary care and treatment.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Pullet Flock History Certificate
- If applicable, Corrective Action Log

- Birds that are visibly sick, injured, or wet, or birds otherwise deemed unfit for transport, must not be loaded.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Bird Handling – Catching Crew Record
- Pullet Flock History Certificate
- If applicable, Corrective Action Log

- Birds that are not loaded for transport must continue to be cared for in accordance with the Animal Care Program (or equivalent care for pullets).

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Pullet Flock History Certificate
- If applicable, Corrective Action Log

[3] Section 139 (2) in Part XII (Transport of Animals) of the Health of Animals Regulations specifies four conditions that must be met when transporting unfit animals for veterinary care.

Handling and catching

Requirements

- Crews must be overseen by the producer or a competent designated representative, who must be readily available throughout the catching and loading process.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

- Corrective action must be taken if crews or individuals are observed handling birds in ways that compromise their welfare.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Pullet Flock History Certificate
- If applicable, Corrective Action Log

- All on-farm and contracted personnel involved in catching must be competent in handling birds, and must not handle birds in such a manner that causes injury or distress.

Keys to compliance

- A copy of the Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines must be available in the production unit.
- For receiving and unloading pullets, and catching and loading end-of-lay hens, all catching crew members must have been provided with a copy of the Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines, and each member must be instructed on and acknowledge they will follow the guidelines.
- Complete the bird handling – catching crew record. The crew supervisor must write down each crew member's name, and sign off on their behalf to confirm they have been instructed on and will follow the guidelines.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Bird Handling – Catching Crew Record
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

- Birds must be placed in transport containers gently and in a manner that allows them to rapidly regain an upright position.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Bird Handling – Catching Crew Record
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

- When catching birds, light intensity must be low enough to keep birds calm.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Bird Handling – Catching Crew Record
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

- Easy access to each cage must be provided for catchers.
  - *In conventional and enriched colony housing systems, catching crews must easily be able to access cages on all tiers, regardless of height, to facilitate humane handling and the easy removal of birds from cages and transfer into containers.*

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

Loading and unloading

Requirements

- The design, construction, space, state of repair, and use of containers and equipment must allow the birds to be loaded, conveyed, and unloaded in ways that minimize stress and / or injury.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Bird Handling – Catching Crew Record
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

- Containers with birds must be handled, moved, securely positioned on vehicles, and unloaded in a manner that minimizes stress and / or injury to birds.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Bird Handling – Catching Crew Record
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

- Measures must be taken to prevent birds from becoming too hot or too cold or wet during loading and unloading.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

- Steps must be taken to minimize the amount of time birds are kept in an inverted position during loading.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Bird Handling – Catching Crew Record
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

- The number of birds in each container must be determined prior to loading, taking into consideration the available container floor space, body size / weight, prevailing environmental conditions, and duration of transport.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

- Birds must be loaded in containers in such a way that permits all of them to rest on the floor at the same time when evenly distributed.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Bird Handling – Catching Crew Record
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

- Containers must be visually inspected to ensure that no parts of birds are trapped prior to loading on the vehicle.

Records

- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines
- Bird Handling – Catching Crew Record
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

Facilities design and maintenance

Requirements

- When building new barns or renovating existing barns or yards, the way in which birds are moved into and out of barns and / or cages must be taken into consideration with a view to facilitating safe and humane transfer of birds to and from the transport vehicles (e.g. tractor-trailer).
- Driveways and yards must be maintained to facilitate unobstructed, safe, and easy access by transport vehicles.

SECTION 6 – EUTHANASIA

On-farm euthanasia plans

Requirements

- An on-farm written euthanasia plan, that at a minimum includes the following elements, must be developed and followed:
  - Methods of euthanasia (including the primary and alternate, back-up method).
  - Which birds have to be euthanized (how to identify birds for euthanasia).
  - A protocol to ensure that euthanasia is carried out in a timely manner (within a maximum of 24 hours).
  - Who is authorized to perform euthanasia.
  - The following steps:
    - Birds are inspected to confirm insensibility immediately after the euthanasia method has been applied.
    - If signs of sensibility are observed, a second application of an acceptable method must be immediately administered.
    - Death must be confirmed before leaving birds and disposing carcasses.
      - *Examples of signs of death include, but are not limited to: lack of pulse; lack of breathing; lack of movement; loss of posture and rigor mortis.*

Records

- Euthanasia Plan

- The on-farm euthanasia plan must be reviewed annually and revised as necessary.

Keys to compliance

- Ensure that a statement outlining the farm's commitment to do this is included in the Farm Animal Welfare Policy.
- An example minimum Farm Animal Welfare Policy template with such a statement is included in Appendix A in this manual.

Records

- Farm Animal Welfare Policy

- On-farm personnel who are responsible for identifying birds to be euthanized or for performing euthanasia must be aware of the plan and kept apprised of all amendments.

Skills and knowledge

Requirements

- Personnel must be competent in identifying birds that need to be euthanized.
- Individuals who euthanize birds must be competent in the appropriate euthanasia methods, as well as in determining insensibility.
- Personnel must be supervised until proven to be competent in their ability to euthanize birds.

Keys to compliance for all skills and knowledge requirements

- All personnel who perform euthanasia must be trained in accordance with the following:
  - At least one person who performs euthanasia on-farm has been trained on euthanasia by a certified trainer[4] in the following areas:
    - Identifying birds that need to be euthanized.
    - Training on primary euthanasia method and alternate euthanasia method(s) used on-farm. This must include a demonstration of competency to a certified trainer on the primary method.
    - Handling birds in a manner that minimizes pain or suffering prior to and during euthanasia.
    - Maintaining equipment used for euthanasia, using it correctly and not overloading it, to ensure it operates effectively and efficiently.
    - How to evaluate the effectiveness of the application (euthanasia method) used, and taking action (e.g. repair, replace, alternative method employed) when failure occurs.
    - How to determine / confirm insensibility after application of euthanasia method(s).
    - How to confirm death.

[4] A certified trainer for the purpose of euthanasia training would be someone with extensive knowledge and experience in performing proper euthanasia technique, and who has expertise in the euthanasia technique being trained on. This could be a vet, poultry specialist or other person who has demonstrated competency in performing euthanasia and can verify that someone being trained is competent.

- There must be a certificate or record of completion for the participant who completed the training signed by the certified trainer. The record must document the date of training, list the content covered in the training and confirm that a successful demonstration of competency on the primary euthanasia method was performed for the certified trainer.
- All other personnel who perform euthanasia have been trained in euthanasia by the person originally trained by the certified trainer, in the following areas:
  - Identifying birds that need to be euthanized.
  - Training on primary method and alternate euthanasia method(s) used on-farm. This must include a demonstration of competency to the trainer on the primary method.
  - Handling birds in a manner that minimizes pain or suffering prior to and during euthanasia.
  - Maintaining equipment used for euthanasia, using it correctly and not overloading it, to ensure it operates effectively and efficiently.
  - How to evaluate the effectiveness of the application used (euthanasia method), and taking action (e.g. repair, replace, alternative method employed) when failure occurs.
  - How to determine / confirm insensibility after application of euthanasia method(s).
  - How to confirm death.
- There must be records of this training for personnel that include date of training, description of training (material and / or methods used), content covered and confirm that a successful demonstration of competency on the primary euthanasia method was performed to the trainer. The record must be signed by the participant and the trained person doing the training.

- Training must be renewed as new euthanasia techniques are introduced for application on the farm and training becomes available.

Records for all skills and knowledge requirements

- Euthanasia Training Certificate and / or Euthanasia Training Log or Record

Decision making around euthanasia

Requirements

- Personnel must be competent in identifying birds that need to be euthanized.
- Sick or injured birds that are suffering and unlikely to recover must be euthanized without delay.

Keys to compliance for all decision making around euthanasia requirements

- Document the procedures for these requirements in the euthanasia plan (elements "which birds have to be euthanized" and "a protocol to ensure that euthanasia is carried out in a timely manner"), which applicable personnel must be aware of and follow.
- Have a protocol that ensures sick and suffering bird unlikely to recover are euthanized without delay, within a maximum of 24 hours, which personnel are aware of and follow.

Records for all decision making around euthanasia requirements

- Euthanasia Plan

Methods of euthanasia

Requirements

- An acceptable method for euthanizing birds must be used. See table below for acceptable methods and their special considerations.
- The method used to euthanize birds must be administered by a competent individual in a manner that minimizes pain or distress.
- Prior to being euthanized, birds must be handled in a manner that minimizes pain or suffering.
- All equipment used for euthanasia must be well maintained, used correctly, and not overloaded, so that it operates effectively and efficiently.
- The effectiveness of the application used must be evaluated, and action taken (e.g. repair, replace, alternative method employed) when failure occurs.
- An alternate back-up euthanasia method must be readily available whenever birds are euthanized, in case the primary method fails.
- Birds must be inspected to confirm insensibility immediately after the euthanasia method has been applied.

- If signs of sensibility are observed, a second application of an acceptable method must be immediately administered.
- Death must be confirmed before leaving birds and disposing carcasses.

Keys to compliance for all methods of euthanasia requirements

- All requirements must be covered in euthanasia training, to be implemented when euthanasia is applied on-farm by trained personnel. Refer to the above "**Skills and knowledge**" section requirements and keys to compliance for specific training requirements.

Records for all methods of euthanasia requirements

- Euthanasia Training Certificate and / or Euthanasia Training Log or Record

Acceptable methods of euthanasia*

Method	Special considerations
Physical methods	• Euthanasia method should be chosen based on the welfare of the bird, human safety, skill and training of personnel, availability of equipment, and the ability to adequately restrain the bird.
Manual cervical dislocation	• There are a variety of techniques that may or may not be appropriate in that some methods do not result in rapid insensibility. • The site of the dislocation must be as close to the head as possible. • Other methods should be considered when large numbers are to be euthanized due to operator fatigue.
Blunt force trauma to the head	• There are a variety of instruments that may be used. The method of restraint and the location where the force is applied has a significant impact on whether rapid insensibility is achieved. • This method may be preferred over cervical dislocation for birds that have broken or injured legs. • Can be used to render a bird insensible as the first step in a two-step method of euthanasia (e.g. cervical dislocation, decapitation). • Due to the impact on operators and observers, other methods should be considered, especially when large numbers are to be euthanized.
Non-penetrating captive bolt	• Ensure that the device is designed and set to deliver the required amount of force and that it is placed in the proper positon on the head.
Decapitation	• Instrument must be sharp. • The head must be completely severed from the body in one stroke. • Requires adequate restraint and containment.
Inhaled agents: Carbon Dioxide (CO_2), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Argon (Ar), Nitrogen (N)	• Acceptable only with properly-maintained, proven effective, purpose-designed equipment. • When inhaled gases are used for euthanasia, birds should be checked to verify death because they may appear dead but can regain consciousness if the exposure time or the concentration of the agent is insufficient. • CO is dangerous to operators and must be used in a well-ventilated area. • Euthanasia gases must be delivered in pure and commercially available form.
Anesthetic overdose	• Must be administered by a licensed veterinarian.

*This table has been adapted from the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pullets and Laying Hens (2017)*, Appendix E.

SECTION 7 – ON-FARM DEPOPULATION

On-farm depopulation is an alternative to shipping end-of-lay hens to a processing plant. Additionally, in some cases, it might be necessary to depopulate entire laying hen flocks in an emergency such as a disease outbreak, natural disaster, or other unexpected event.

A written protocol detailing Standard Operating Procedures for planned on-farm depopulation is necessary to perform this event. Protocols need to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis as new and better methods are developed and approved. Having a plan for emergency on-farm depopulation will provide guidance in the event of an emergency. A cancellation from a poultry processing plant is not considered an emergency situation but rather an event to anticipate and have a planned on-farm depopulation protocol to use as a back-up, in particular if this is a likely scenario.

Requirements

- Death must be confirmed before disposal.
  - *Examples of signs of death include, but are not limited to: lack of pulse; lack of breathing; lack of movement; loss of posture and rigor mortis.*

Keys to compliance

- Ensure the steps taken to confirm death (e.g. signs of death checked for) are included in the written protocol for planned on-farm depopulation.

Records

- Planned On-Farm Depopulation Protocol

Planned on-farm depopulation

Requirements

- In consultation with a veterinarian or other qualified advisor, a written protocol for planned on-farm depopulation must be developed for operations that depopulate on-farm.

- *Qualified advisors include experts who are knowledgeable in depopulation and bird welfare, and are able to design the procedure to ensure bird welfare is not compromised throughout the depopulation process.*

Keys to compliance

- Ensure the written protocol is signed by the veterinarian or other qualified advisor to indicate that it was developed in consultation with them.
- The written protocol details that the personnel performing the depopulation are adequately trained in applying the euthanasia methods, to the satisfaction of the veterinarian or other qualified advisor.
- Those performing depopulation must be trained to perform the depopulation to ensure animal welfare is maintained, and follow the depopulation written plan.
- Once a protocol is completed and signed off by the veterinarian or other qualified advisor, if minor changes or efficiency improvements etc. are made to the protocol that don't impact bird welfare, it is not required that the veterinarian or other qualified advisor have to review and sign off on the protocol again. However, significant changes that impact bird welfare do require review of the protocol and re-signing by the veterinarian or other qualified advisor.
- The written protocol includes at minimum:
  - Name and all relevant contact information of service provider (if used); or list of personnel performing the depopulation and euthanizing birds
  - Method of euthanasia
  - Procedure
    - Details of process (e.g. standard operating procedure)
    - Time from beginning to end as applicable to the method and procedure
      - e.g. if MAK carts are used, time from beginning to end can refer to time from loading until death in the MAK cart, while if whole barn gassing is used, time from beginning to end can refer to gas fill until death
    - Number of birds as applicable to the method and procedure
      - e.g. total number of birds depopulated
      - If depopulation takes place in rounds, also note how many birds per round etc.
    - Other relevant procedure details
  - Process to confirm death prior to carcass disposal
  - Personnel who perform euthanasia for depopulation and their training records.
- The written protocol is followed (implemented) during depopulation.

- An acceptable method for euthanizing birds must be used. See table below for acceptable methods and their special considerations.

Acceptable methods of euthanasia for planned on-farm depopulation*

Method	Special considerations
Physical methods	• Euthanasia method should be chosen based on the welfare of the bird, human safety, skill and training of personnel, availability of equipment, and the ability to adequately restrain the bird.
Manual cervical dislocation	• There are a variety of techniques that may or may not be appropriate in that some methods do not result in rapid insensibility. • The site of the dislocation must be as close to the head as possible. • Other methods should be considered when large numbers are to be euthanized due to operator fatigue.
Blunt force trauma to the head	• There are a variety of instruments that may be used. The method of restraint and the location where the force is applied has a significant impact on whether rapid insensibility is achieved. • This method may be preferred over cervical dislocation for birds that have broken or injured legs. • Can be used to render a bird insensible as the first step in a two-step method of euthanasia (e.g. cervical dislocation, decapitation). • Due to the impact on operators and observers, other methods should be considered, especially when large numbers are to be euthanized.
Non-penetrating captive bolt	• Ensure that the device is designed and set to deliver the required amount of force and that it is placed in the proper positon on the head.
Decapitation	• Instrument must be sharp. • The head must be completely severed from the body in one stroke. • Requires adequate restraint and containment.
Inhaled agents: Carbon Dioxide (CO_2), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Argon (Ar), Nitrogen (N)	• Acceptable only with properly-maintained, proven effective, purpose-designed equipment. • When inhaled gases are used for euthanasia, birds should be checked to verify death because they may appear dead but can regain consciousness if the exposure time or the concentration of the agent is insufficient. • CO is dangerous to operators and must be used in a well-ventilated area. • Euthanasia gases must be delivered in pure and commercially available form.
Anesthetic overdose	• Must be administered by a licensed veterinarian.
Stunning and exsanguination	• Exsanguination can be used as an adjunctive euthanasia method for birds that have been stunned (i.e. are unconscious), for example with an electric knife. Exsanguination cannot be used alone as the sole means to euthanasia, without prior stunning. • Proper stunning quickly renders the birds unconscious and insensible to pain.
Low atmospheric pressure stunning (LAPS)	• LAPS is a computer controlled patented system for reduction of atmospheric pressure developed by Technocatch LLC in MS, USA, and the pressure curves applied by the process are patented. The processes for LAPS have been optimized, for example regarding stocking density; rate of decompression; rate of changes in partial pressure of oxygen; illumination, temperature and humidity of chamber; equipment calibration and system etc. • Only the patented LAPS is allowed, not general reduction of atmospheric pressure.

*This table has been adapted from the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pullets and Laying Hens (2017)*, Appendix E.

Records for all planned on-farm depopulation requirements

- Planned On-Farm Depopulation Protocol

Emergency on-farm depopulation

Requirements

- An on-farm depopulation plan for emergency situations must be developed.
- Methods for depopulating entire flocks on-farm must be as humane as possible given the circumstances and the need to balance the risk for further negative impacts on bird welfare.

Keys to compliance for all emergency on-farm depopulation requirements

- The written plan must contain a statement committing to: *Methods for depopulating entire flocks on-farm must be as humane as possible given the circumstances and the need to balance the risk for further negative impacts on bird welfare.*

Records for all emergency on-farm depopulation requirements

- Emergency On-Farm Depopulation Plan

GLOSSARY

Accessible feed space: Amount of available feed trough space, as measured in linear inches or cm, provided to each bird. Depending on the location of the trough, available space can be provided on one side of the trough or on both sides.

Alighting rail: A rail immediately outside of a nest box, or at the end of a terrace or tier, intended to facilitate movement in and out of the nest box, or on and off of an elevated tier or terrace. Also referred to as a landing rail.

All-litter system: A free run / free range housing system where 100% of the useable space is litter.

Ammonia: A noxious gas common in animal production that forms during breakdown of nitrogenous wastes in animal excrement.

Aviary: A free run / free range system where nests, perches, and feed and water resources are located on multiple elevated tiers. Also referred to as multi-tier.

Beak treatment: A non-invasive procedure that uses specialized equipment (i.e. infra-red) that results in blunting of beaks.

Beak trimming: Removal of a portion of the beak, usually with a specialized instrument that simultaneously cuts and cauterizes (e.g. hot blade).

Bedding: Loose material such as wood shavings or chopped straw that is added to housing environments.

Bird: A chicken used in egg production of any age, size, or weight.

Cannibalism: A behaviour problem in which a bird pecks and consumes the flesh of another bird.

Carts: Portable wheeled devices that are used to move birds in an upright position from barns to transport vehicles. They can also be referred to as a dolly or pullet carts.

Chick: A young bird from the time of hatch up until the point it is fully feathered, which is usually between 14 to 21 days of age.

Competent: Demonstrated skill and / or knowledge in a particular topic, practice, or procedure that has been developed through training, experience, or mentorship, or a combination thereof.

Container: Portable enclosures that are used to transport pullets and end-of-lay hens.

Conventional housing: Wire mesh enclosures for housing laying hens with equipment for provision of water, automated feeding, and egg collection.

Covered veranda: A fenced or walled, covered area outside of, but connected to, the lay facility interior that birds have access to year round. Covered verandas typically have a floor suitable for scratching and natural or open air ventilation. Also referred to as a winter garden.[5]

Crate: A portable container designed and constructed specifically for transporting pullets and hens.

Dark period: No more than 20% of the light intensity of the light period.

Dust bathing: A sequence of behaviour patterns that functions to clean the feathers and improve their insulative value. Depending on the substrate, it may also remove parasites from plumage.

End-of-lay hens: Egg laying poultry that have reached a timed point in their egg-laying cycle beyond which productivity significantly declines and they are removed from production.

Enrichable: A housing system that could become a fully enriched colony, but currently does not contain any furnishings. Enrichable housing is equivalent to conventional housing.

Enriched colony: An enclosure predominantly made from wire with wire or solid walls, outfitted with perches, nest area, scratch area and more head room compared to conventional housing; group sizes in enriched colony housing can range from 10 to over 100 birds, depending on the model. Enriched colony housing is also referred to as enriched housing or furnished housing.

Enrichment: Enhancement of a bird's physical or social environment that adds complexity.

Euthanasia: The process of ending the life of an individual bird in a way that minimizes or eliminates pain and distress. It is characterized by rapid, irreversible unconsciousness (insensibility), followed by prompt death.

Feather pecking: A behaviour problem in domestic birds that involves a bird pecking (or plucking) the feathers from flock mates or itself.

Forage / foraging: The behaviour patterns involved in searching for and consuming food.

Free range: A system where birds roam freely inside a lay facility and are allowed access to an outdoor pasture or range area.

[5] Please note that the Canadian Organic Standards use the term "enriched veranda." While similar in concept, enriched verandas under the Organic Standards have a different definition and different requirements to a covered veranda or winter garden under the Egg Farmers of Canada Animal Care Program.

Free run: A system where birds roam freely inside a lay facility but do not have access to the outdoors.

Hen: A female domestic fowl that has reached sexual maturity (i.e. begun to lay eggs).

Insensible / insensibility: The point at which an animal no longer has the ability to perceive and respond to its environment (e.g. light).

Litter: The combination of bedding and / or bird excreta, feathers, feed, dust and other materials on floors of bird housing systems.

Litter space: A solid floor surface with the ability to hold or contain litter / substrate.

Moulting: A natural seasonal event in which birds substantially reduce their feed intake, cease egg production, and replace their plumage. Induced or controlled moulting is a process that simulates natural moulting that extends the productive life of hens.

Non-penetrating captive bolt: A specially designed device used for stunning and euthanasia that propels a blunt bolt with great force which, when applied in the correct position, causes immediate loss of sensibility.

On-farm depopulation: An on-farm practice that involves killing entire flocks or large numbers of birds.

Perch: A structure, usually in the form of a narrow rod, that allows hens to wrap their toes around it and is elevated a minimum of 1.3 cm (0.5 in) above the floor, which birds can use to sit or roost above the floor. Integrated perches / alighting rails / step rails / approach perches in aviaries can count as perch space[6], but feeder trough edges, slats, ladder rungs and integrated step-rail perches do not.

Pullet: A young female domestic fowl from the point it is fully feathered and that has not yet reached sexual maturity (i.e. begun to lay eggs).

Ramp(s): A ladder or narrow piece of material such as plastic or wire mesh affixed to a tier frame at varying heights and angles that do not exceed 45 degrees, to facilitate movement between different levels.

Range: The outdoor area to which birds may have access from indoor production systems.

Rearing: The phase during which chicks and pullets are cared for prior to reaching sexual maturity (i.e., begun to lay eggs).

[6] Integrated perches / alighting rails / step rails / approach perches can count as useable perch space provided they are purpose designed as perch space by a commercial manufacturer. The manufacturer must provide a letter of assurance confirming that the integrated perches are purpose designed as perch space, a schematic diagram with detailed measurements and photo evidence that the hens use the perches at night to roost on.

Re-tooling: A major renovation or overhaul of existing housing systems and / or structures that is not part of normal or routine repair or maintenance. The addition of enrichments or furnishings that were not included when housing systems were installed is not considered to be re-tooling.

Roost: When a bird rests or sleeps on a perch.

Shackle carts: Portable wheeled devices that are used to move birds in an inverted position from barns to transport vehicles.

Scratch pad: A solid flooring surface that is securely attached to the colony during the flock cycle, that birds can forage (peck and scratch) and / or dust bathe on. Feed can be sprinkled intermittently on the scratch pad to encourage these behaviours. Scratch pad is also referred to as a scratch mat.

To be considered an eligible scratch pad, the following criteria must be met:

- Scratch pads must be horizontal to allow birds to stand upright on them with two feet.
- Any area of scratch pad below a perch is not considered available (useable) scratch pad space. In the event that a perch extends over a scratch pad, only the area of the scratch pad that does not have perching above it can be measured as useable scratch pad space.
- Solid surfaces, such as covered egg belts and manure drying duct surfaces, can be considered eligible if they are horizontal and the birds can stand upright on them with two feet, and there is clearance between the flooring surface and other furnishings in the colony, such as a nest box, that allows for pecking and scratching.
- Scratch pads must be a solid material that supports pecking and scratching (foraging) behaviour. Small perforations in the material may be acceptable, provided that the material still supports foraging behaviours and the perforations are small enough that they cannot cause injury or harm to the birds toes, feet, legs, beak etc.
- The scratch pad and nest pad materials must be different.

Single-tier: A free run / free range system where nests, perches, and feed and water resources are located on one main level and / or raised slats or platforms.

Terrace: An additional flat surface or wire floor that may or may not be located within the main tier structure or over a manure belt, that birds use to access higher tiers. Terraces serve as transitional useable space for the birds.

Tier: Flat surface or wire floor that forms a main floor level where at least one of the following resources are located: nests, perches, litter space (ground level), feed and water. Tiers serve as non-transitional useable space for the birds.

Training: The act that aims to impart skills and / or knowledge in a formal or informal manner (e.g. through mentoring) that results in the recipient's understanding and / or ability to perform assigned tasks.

Unfit for transport: A bird with a reduced capacity to withstand transportation and where there is a high risk that transportation will lead to suffering.

Useable space (applies to free run / range systems): Includes the main floor and litter area, plus any elevated floor areas / tiers and terraces with a height of at least 45 cm (17.7 in) between the floor and ceiling, to which birds have continual access, but excludes ramps, ladders, nest box floor space and any outdoor area, if applicable. Additional flooring that is wall mounted around the perimeter of the lay facility may only count as useable space in single tier-free run systems if the flooring is at least 19.0 cm (7.5 in) in width. Alighting rails counted as perch space cannot be included in useable space calculations. The slope of any flooring or surface (slat or wire floor, or solid surface) which counts as useable space cannot exceed 8 degrees (14%). Covered verandas that have the ability and are managed to provide full protection from adverse weather, elements and predators, and maintain air and litter quality, and bird thermal comfort, which birds have continual access to and utilize year round are considered useable space.

APPENDIX A – RECORD TEMPLATES

List of record templates

- Farm Animal Welfare Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Visitor Policy
- Visitor Policy: Regular Returning Visitor – Signing Sheet
- Lay Facility Temperature Record
- Daily Feed and Water Consumption Record
- Mortality Record
- Routine Inspections – Daily Inspection Check-Off Form
- Routine Inspections – Weekly Inspection Checklist
- Corrective Action Log
- Monthly Inspection Form
- Beak Treatment and Trimming Policy
- Emergency Plan
- Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines for Pullets and Laying Hens
- Bird Handling – Catching Crew Record
- Euthanasia Plan
- Euthanasia Employee Training Record
- Planned On-Farm Depopulation Protocol
- On-Farm Depopulation Plan for Emergency Situations
- Pullet Flock History Certificate

Farm Animal Welfare Policy (template)

At (Farm Name) _____, we strive to foster a culture of understanding towards animal care principles and requirements that will allow our birds to be healthy, productive, safe and secure.

It is the responsibility of every manager, employee and / or visitor to continuously watch for employees or other persons who may engage in animal cruelty, abuse and / or neglect of the birds.

This farm is committed to upholding high animal welfare standards for each bird, for the duration of their time spent on the farm. This includes during euthanasia. A written euthanasia plan is reviewed annually and revised as necessary. We ensure that our laying hens are housed in a safe environment where materials used in the construction of the housing system and equipment to which birds have access are not harmful or toxic to birds.

All employees who work here understand that we have a zero tolerance policy towards unacceptable treatment of our animals. Any form of abuse, neglect, cruelty, or mistreatment of the birds under our care will not be tolerated and may be grounds for immediate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. All incidents of potential animal abuse, neglect or cruelty will be reported to management immediately. Proper care of our animals is a high priority and important because it is the right thing to do.

_____

Farmer Name

_____

Farmer Signature

_____

Date

Employee Code of Conduct (template)

All employees who work here understand that we have a zero tolerance policy towards unacceptable treatment of our animals. Any form of abuse, neglect, cruelty, or mistreatment of the birds under our care will not be tolerated and may be grounds for immediate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. All incidents of potential animal abuse, neglect or cruelty will be reported to management as soon as it is noted. Proper care of our animals is a high priority and important because it is the right thing to do. Please ensure that you have read and understand this policy and sign and date below.

As an employee, within the production unit of (Farm Name) _____, I have read the Farm Animal Welfare policy and agree to uphold high standards of welfare in my regular duties or performance of my work. I have read and understood the Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines, the farm's emergency plan and if relevant to my duties the euthanasia plan. I acknowledge and agree that the following is expected of me, as appropriate within the purview of my job / role, while working in the production unit of this farm:

The following is expected of my behaviour while working on this farm. As it pertains to my role, I will ensure that:

- Cruelty of any kind is not tolerated;
- I will handle birds in a positive and compassionate manner at all times, and any abuse or mistreatment of the birds is prohibited;
- If I witness any abuse or mistreatment of birds, I will report it immediately to the manager;
- I will contribute to upholding high standards of welfare in my regular duties or performance of my work;
- As an employee it is my responsibility to understand the basic requirements of birds, including feed, water, lighting, ventilation, temperature control, and bio-security and notify the supervisor immediately if any of these basic needs are lacking;
- Injured or sick birds need to be taken care of as soon as it is noted. I will contact the manager if I have questions about the action to be taken with such birds;
- Euthanasia of sick, injured, or cull birds must only be conducted by properly trained employees. I will contact the manager if I am not properly trained to perform this task;
- Dead birds will be removed from lay facility at least on a daily basis and properly disposed of. I will contact the manager if procedure is not being followed by all employees;
- All birds will be handled with respect and dignity. Proper handling and catching methods to minimize stress must be followed. Any person not adhering to these requirements will be reported to the manager.

I understand that if I am found not abiding by this Employee Code of Conduct, I could receive immediate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, and / or be asked to leave the premises. I may also be required to obtain further training on what is required in order to provide proper care, and consider high standards of welfare during performance of my duties.

_____	_____	_____
Farmer / Manager Name	Farmer / Manager Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Employee Name	Employee Signature	Date

Visitor Policy (template)

Taking into consideration the strict animal welfare, biosecurity and safety programs in place for our employees, visitors are expected to follow similar procedures when visiting the production unit at our farm.

As a visitor, I recognize that I am expected to adhere to the policies of this farm. I acknowledge and agree that the following is expected of me while visiting this farm:

- Birds are to be handled in a positive and compassionate manner at all times and any abuse or mistreatment is prohibited.
- Visitors are expected to contribute to upholding high standards of animal welfare.
- Visitors must abide by any policy, procedure, or instruction from farm representatives that could affect the welfare of the birds.
- All visitors must follow the individual farm's on-farm biosecurity protocols while on the farm.

I have read and agree to meet the above conditions under which visitors are allowed to visit (Farm Name) _____. By signing the Visitor Logbook or equivalent record, I acknowledge my understanding of the Visitor Policy, and that I will abide by the conditions outlined therein.

Visitor Policy: Regular Returning Visitor – Signing Sheet (template)

This sheet is meant for people who visit the production unit on a regular basis, sometimes outside of regular business hours, and could enter the production unit unescorted. An example would be an egg pick-up driver. Any company that employs multiple people who will visit the production unit of this farm need to fill out a sheet per employee annually. Please read the Visitor Policy and acknowledge your understanding by signing and returning the sheet(s) to the farm so they can have it on file.

Taking into consideration the strict animal welfare, biosecurity and safety programs in place for our employees, visitors are expected to follow similar procedures when visiting the production unit at our farm.

As a visitor, I recognize that I am expected to adhere to the policies of this farm. I acknowledge and agree that the following is expected of me while visiting this farm:

- Birds are to be handled in a positive and compassionate manner at all times and any abuse or mistreatment is prohibited.
- Visitors are expected to contribute to upholding high standards of animal welfare.
- Visitors must abide by any policy, procedure, or instruction from farm representatives that could affect the welfare of the birds.
- All visitors must follow the individual farm's on-farm biosecurity protocols while on the farm.

I, _____ (please print your name) have received and read (Farm Name)_____ Visitor Policy, and agree to follow the policy as written on any and all visits to the production unit. I acknowledge my understanding of the Visitor Policy, and abide by the conditions outlined therein.

_____ _____

Visitor Signature Date

Lay Facility Temperature Record (template)

Month & year: _____

Lay facility: _____

Day	Temperature (°C or F)	
	Maximum (Hi)	Minimum (Lo)
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		
27		
28		
29		
30		
31		

Document any deviations outside of the acceptable temperature range (10-28ºC or 50-82ºF) and resulting corrective action in the corrective action log.

Keeping a record of outside temperature is considered equivalent to documenting corrective action.

Daily Feed and Water Consumption Record (template)

Month & year: _____

Lay facility: _____

Day	Flock feed consumption	Flock water consumption
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		
27		
28		
29		
30		
31		

Document any deviations in flock feed and water consumption and resulting corrective action in the corrective action log

Mortality Record (template)

Month & year: _____

Lay facility: _____

Number of birds housed in lay facility at start of month: _____

Day	Total mortality (found dead + culls)	Found dead (optional)	Culls (optional)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			
26			
27			
28			
29			
30			
31			
(Optional) Total monthly mortality (# birds):			

Document any deviations in mortality and resulting corrective action in the corrective action log.

Note, records on disease outbreaks, health problems, abnormal conditions noted and causes if known, and remedial actions taken, must be maintained.

Additionally there must be an expected mortality level which if exceeded, action must be taken without delay to establish the cause, and / or appropriate intervention must be undertaken by a suitably qualified person. Calculating and recording monthly mortality can help establish a baseline.

Recommended: ***Monthly mortality (%):*** _____

Monthly mortality = (total monthly mortality / # birds housed at start of month) x 100%

Routine Inspection – Daily Inspection Check-Off Form (template)

Month & year: ____________________ **Lay facility:** __________________

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______
Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______
Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______
Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______	Insp. 1: ______ Insp. 2: ______

Please initial to indicate that each daily inspection was completed. Refer to the weekly inspection checklist for a complete list of what must be inspected.

Document any deviations found during inspections (e.g. sick or suffering birds found, broken or malfunctioning equipment, housing system amenities or environmental control systems) and resulting corrective actions in the corrective action log.

Routine Inspection – Weekly Inspection Checklist (template)

Month & year: _____

Lay facility: _____

Please initial or put a check mark to indicate every item was checked during each daily inspection, and sign (and date) the record.

Document any deviations found and resulting corrective actions in the corrective action log.

Inspection	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Overall appearance of birds					
General sound of the flock					
Abnormal behaviour					
Signs of disease / illness					
Injured birds					
Respiratory problems					
Panting or huddling (heat or cold stress)					
Lameness					
Signs of feather pecking or cannibalism					
Trapped birds					
Dead birds					
Availability of feed and water					
Operating condition of equipment in the lay facility (e.g. feeders, drinkers, ventilation etc.)					
Condition of amenities and materials in housing system (e.g. nest box flooring, scratch pads, perches, flooring)					
Lay facility environment (e.g. temperature, relative humidity, air quality)					

Week 1 Signature: _____ Date: _____

Week 2 Signature: _____ Date: _____

Week 3 Signature: _____ Date: _____

Week 4 Signature: _____ Date: _____

Week 5 Signature: _____ Date: _____

Corrective Action Log (template)

Document animal care and ACP deviations / issues and corrective action in the corrective action log. Examples of things to log could include finding and treating a sick bird, finding and fixing broken equipment inside the lay facility, dealing with a broken water line, wet, damp or dusty litter, high mortality or morbidity, high ammonia levels, stale, mouldy or contaminated feed, or abnormal changes in flock feed or water consumption etc.

Date issue identified	**Date corrective action taken**	**Involved personnel**	**Description of Issue** *To be filled out by the person(s) involved. Describe the issue encountered in detail.*	**Action taken & results** *Describe any actions taken to correct the issue, the results, and how the issue will be prevented from happening again.*	**Date issue resolved**	**Comments**

Monthly Inspection Form (template)

Month & year: _____

Lay facility: _____

Please initial to verify that the following were checked and in good working order, and sign and date the record. Monthly ammonia testing at bird height is required in all lay facilities during the months of October to March.

Document deviations (e.g. alarm malfunctioning) and resulting corrective action in corrective action log. For ammonia, corrective action is required if levels are 25ppm or higher. Please note that a strip showing a result between 20-30ppm counts as 30ppm.

Inspection	Initial	Result
Backup power supply		
Alarms (power and temperature)		
If applicable, other fail safe devices*		
Ammonia level at bird height		

*other sensors or monitoring systems designed to provide warning about electrically dependent systems that could impact bird welfare.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Beak Treatment and Trimming Policy (template)

Beak treatment refers to a non-invasive procedure that uses specialized equipment (i.e. infra-red) that results in blunting of beaks.

Beak trimming refers to the removal of a portion of the beak, usually with a specialized instrument that simultaneously cuts and cauterizes (e.g. hot blade).

At (Farm Name) _____, we source pullets that have had beak treatment or trimming done in accordance with the following:

- Beak treatment or trimming was done prior to 10 days of age by competent persons using industry approved methods (infra-red or hot blade) that minimize bird discomfort and equipment that is properly maintained.
- No more than one-third of the top beak, as measured from the tip to the entrance of the nostrils is removed during the process.
- The producer or a competent designated representative must be readily available throughout the beak trimming process.
- Beak trimming must not be performed on birds that are older than 10 days of age, unless deemed necessary for emergency welfare reasons after all other measures to control cannibalism have been exhausted. In such cases, beak trimming must be carried out with veterinary consultation and oversight.

This policy applies to the farm and will be reviewed annually, and signed and dated.

Records or letter of assurance for each flock at this farm will be provided by the pullet grower or hatchery confirming the content of this policy was applied in practice. When received, these records or letter will be attached to this policy or be readily available on file.

_____

Farmer / Manager Name

_____

Farmer / Manager Signature

_____

Date

Emergency Plan (template)

Farm name: _____

Farm address: _____

_____

_____

Directions to farm, landmarks or other information:

_____

_____

_____

Emergency Contacts (required – an emergency contact list must be written down)

Contact	Name and contact information
Required	
Farm owner	
Farm staff	
FARM PERSONNEL TO CONTACT IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY*	
Emergency services	911
Veterinarian	
Electrician	
Plumber	
Gas or propane company	
Feed mill	
Optional	
Transporter	
Poultry processing plant	
Egg board	
Grading station	
Egg processor	

**This is the designated person(s) tasked with being available to take necessary steps in an emergency. Multiple people can be responsible, and the responsible person(s) can change depending on who is on duty / working / time of day.*

An emergency plan must be prepared and reviewed with all personnel. The plan may be written down and must address the following.

Plans and / or steps to be taken to ensure that adequate supplies of suitable feed and water are provided to the birds in the event of on-farm emergencies such as power interruptions, mechanical breakdowns, and / or the need to remove and replace feed (e.g. contaminated feed):

Plans and / or steps to take in the event of a reasonably foreseeable problem that may affect bird welfare (e.g. fire, flood, barn collapse, extreme weather event, inclement weather, natural disaster, disease outbreak, power failure).

Examples of things to consider as part of this emergency planning include securing the area, contacting emergencies, animal safety and care, providing essentials, animal transportation, biosecurity, human safety etc.

Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines for Pullets and Laying Hens

All parties involved in the catching and transporting process have a responsibility and obligation to ensure catching, loading and holding on-farm is undertaken in such a manner than minimizes stress and injury. It is the farmer's responsibility to oversee animal care on-farm and to coordinate with catchers, transporters and processors to ensure animal care is maintained throughout the process and as birds leave the farm.

The Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines must be applied when pullets are caught and loaded, received and unloaded at the lay facility, and when end-of-lay hens are caught and loaded. Farm employees who work in the production unit as well as catching crews must be trained on and understand the Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines.

Farmer or competent designated representative responsibilities:

1. Plan catching and loading processes in advance to minimize bird handling, catching and loading duration and ensure that trucks can leave promptly after loading. This can be done in coordination with catching crews, transporters and / or processors.
    a. Pre-transport planning must take into consideration the type of housing system, the number of birds that will be shipped, and the number of containers that will be needed to ensure that maximum loading densities are not exceeded.
    b. Determine the number of birds per container before loading, accounting for floor space, body size / weight, environmental conditions and duration of transport.
    c. Pre-transport feed withdrawal must be managed to minimize the time that birds are off feed. Catching and transport must be planned so that the maximum time off feed and water intervals set out in the *Health of Animals Regulations:* Part XII: Transport of Animals are not exceeded.
2. Provide birds with access to water until catching commences.
3. In preparation for transport, evaluate the flock for health and fitness. Birds deemed unfit for transport must be euthanized, separated, or transported with special provisions[7] only if for veterinary care and treatment. It is recommended that the farmer (or designate) and catching supervisor walk through the barn and observe the condition of the flock prior to catching.
4. Ensure birds that are visibly sick, injured or wet, or birds otherwise deemed unfit for transport are not loaded. Ensure birds not loaded for transport are cared for in accordance with the Animal Care Program.
5. Ensure on-farm and contracted personnel involved in catching are competent in handling birds, and do not handle birds in such a manner that causes injury and distress.
6. Oversee crew(s) and be readily available (in person) throughout the catching and loading process to ensure the Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines are being followed.
7. Take corrective action if crews or individuals are observed handling birds in ways that compromise their welfare.
8. Inspect containers and equipment to ensure good condition that minimizes stress and injury.
9. Monitor loading and transporting of the birds until the truck has left the farm.
10. Manage lay facility operations (ventilation, lighting etc.) during catching and take measures to prevent birds from becoming too hot or cold. Reduce light intensity during catching to keep birds calm.
11. Ensure catchers are provided with easy access to each cage (e.g. equipment provided to enable easy access to upper tiers).
12. Confirm transporter responsibilities at the farm are adhered to.

[7] Section 139 (2) of the Health of Animals Regulations specify 4 conditions that must be met when transporting unfit animals for veterinary care.

Recommended

13. Receive a letter of assurance from the processor, catching and / or transport company that the catching supervisor has been trained, and the catching crew has received proper training on acceptable humane methods for catching and loading of pullets and / or end-of-lay hens.

Catching crew responsibilities:

1. Catch birds in a manner that does not cause them to crowd or pile in corners, which could result in suffocation of birds. Minimize sudden loud noises and other disturbances alarming to birds.
2. Personnel involved in catching are competent in handling birds, and do not handle birds in such a manner that causes injury and distress. The Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines must be followed. Crews must be supervised by experienced personnel.
3. Take corrective action if crews or individuals are observed handling birds in ways that compromise their welfare.
4. Handle birds to minimize bone breakage or injury. Birds are not to be carried by the wings, or by the head, neck or tail.
5. Check containers and equipment as birds are loaded to ensure good condition that minimizes stress and injury.
6. Place birds in transport containers gently, and in a manner that allows them to rapidly regain an upright position.
7. Catch birds in lowest light intensity possible without affecting worker safety, or use blue lights, which will calm the birds while providing better visibility for catchers.
8. Handle, move, securely position on vehicle, and unload containers with birds in a manner that minimizes stress and / or injury to the birds.
9. Minimize the time that birds are held in an inverted position.
10. Load birds into containers in such a way that permits all of them to rest on the floor at the same time when evenly distributed.
11. Visually inspect containers to ensure that no parts of birds are trapped prior to loading on the vehicle.

Transporter responsibilities:

1. Confirm containers and equipment are in good condition to minimize stress and injury to the birds.
2. Birds must be loaded into clean, well maintained transport containers and vehicles. The doors of the containers must be closed securely so that birds do not escape during loading or transit.
3. The size of openings such as container doors, cage doors, and panels on trucks should be large enough to permit easy passage of birds to avoid bone breakage and other injuries.
4. Handle, move, securely position on vehicle, and unload containers with birds in a manner that minimizes stress and / or injury to the birds.
5. Containers must not be dropped or tipped such that birds pile up against the side.
6. As applicable, visually inspect containers to ensure that no parts of birds are trapped prior to loading on the vehicle.
7. Assessment and joint decisions should be made by the farmer, catching crew, transporter and the processing plant when faced with caution conditions.
8. The drivers of transport vehicles must be aware of climate conditions and make necessary adjustments to keep birds thermally comfortable.
9. Catching and transport must be planned so that the maximum time off feed and water intervals set out in the *Health of Animals Regulations: Part XII*: Transport of Animals are not exceeded.

Bird Handling – Catching Crew Record (template)

The Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines must be applied when pullets are received and unloaded at the lay facility, and when end-of-lay hens are caught and loaded. This record acknowledges the catching crew supervisor and catching crew members were provided with, instructed on and understood the Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines and that they will handle birds throughout the process in accordance with the Guidelines.

Farm: _____ **Lay facility:** _____

Activity: _____
(e.g. unloading pullets at lay facility, catching and loading end-of-lay hens)

Date: _____

Catching crew supervisor: _____

Please list the names of all catching crew members who took part in the catching, loading and / or unloading.

Catching crew member: _____

Catching crew member: _____

Catching crew member: _____

Catching crew member: _____

Catching crew member: _____

Catching crew member: _____

Catching crew member: _____

Catching crew member: _____

Catching crew member: _____

Catching crew member: _____

All catching crew members were provided with and instructed on the Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines. The catching crew supervisor will sign on their behalf to confirm this and that the crew followed the Guidelines.

_____	_____	_____
Catching crew supervisor name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Farmer / designate name	Signature	Date

Euthanasia Plan (template)

Who is authorized to perform euthanasia

Training records for authorized personnel who can perform euthanasia are attached to the euthanasia plan. Please refer to them for the list of authorized personnel.

Euthanasia methods and procedure

Primary method: _____

Alternate method: _____
(The alternate back-up euthanasia method is different to the primary method, and must be readily available whenever birds are euthanized, in case the primary method fails)

Procedure (these steps must be taken during the euthanasia process)

- Birds are inspected to confirm insensibility immediately after the euthanasia method has been applied.
- If signs of sensibility are observed, a second application of an acceptable method is immediately administered).
- Death is confirmed before leaving birds and disposing carcasses.
- Other: _____

How to identify birds for euthanasia (which birds have to be euthanized)

Describe how it is determined a bird needs to be euthanized (decision making tree or support for personnel responsible for identifying birds to be euthanized)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(Example euthanasia decision guidance can be found below)

Example Euthanasia Decision Guidance

Source: *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Pullets and Laying Hens (2017)*

Answering the following questions can assist in making appropriate euthanasia decisions for poultry (adapted from[8],[9]):

- does the bird appear to be experiencing pain or distress (see below)?
- what is the degree of that pain and distress, and can it be treated?
- what is the cause of the pain or distress? Can the cause be addressed?
- does the bird show interest in feed and water?
- can the bird access feed and water?
- is the bird responding positively to treatment, or is its condition getting worse?
- is recovery likely within an acceptable time frame?
- is the bird likely to transmit disease to other birds?

Individual operations may establish additional criteria for euthanasia.

The following list provides examples of potential signs of pain or distress in individual birds that warrant further evaluation:

- weak, not alert
- hunched posture with head drawn in, often with closed eyes
- ruffled or dirty feathers unrelated to litter conditions
- unable to rise / walk due to injury or physical abnormality
- reluctance to eat or drink
- severely injured
- swollen head
- discoloured comb
- emaciation

Protocol to ensure euthanasia is carried out in a timely manner

Describe the protocol that ensures any bird requiring euthanasia is euthanized in a timely manner, within 24 hours maximum. Consider availability of trained personnel, shifts, inspection and / or monitoring schedules, etc. For example, at least one person who is trained / competent to identify birds for euthanasia walks the lay facility every morning to identify if there are any birds that require euthanasia. Birds identified are gently removed from the housing system and euthanized immediately by that trained person, who is authorized to perform euthanasia.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Plan prepared by: _____

Date developed: _____

Date amended: _____

(On-farm personnel who are responsible for identifying birds to be euthanized or for performing euthanasia must be aware of the plan and kept apprised of all amendments)

[8] National Turkey Federation (2013) Animal Care Best Management Practices: Euthanasia Guidelines. Washington, DC: National Turkey Federation.

[9] National Turkey Federation (2012) Animal Care Best Management Practices: Production Guidelines. Washington, DC: National Turkey Federation.

Euthanasia Employee Training Record (template)

Farm employees trained and certified by certified trainer[10] *(Optional record)*			
Employee name	Certified trainer name and occupation	Date(s) of training and certification	***(Required)*** Certificate or record of training attached to this record or readily available[11]
			☐ Yes ☐ No
			☐ Yes ☐ No

Other farm employees trained to perform euthanasia *(record or equivalent **required**)*				
Name and signature of employee	Date of training	Description of training (materials and / or methods used)	Content covered during training	Name and signature of trainer:
Name: Signature:				Name: Signature:
Name: Signature:				Name: Signature:
Name: Signature:				Name: Signature:
Name: Signature:				Name: Signature:

[10] A certified trainer for the purpose of euthanasia training would be someone with extensive knowledge and experience in performing proper euthanasia technique, and who has expertise in the euthanasia technique being trained on. This could be a vet, poultry specialist or other person who has demonstrated competency in performing euthanasia and can verify that someone being trained is competent.

[11] Records must list the date of training, content covered during training, indicate successful demonstration of competency was completed and be signed by the certified trainer.

Planned On-Farm Depopulation Protocol (template)

Lay facility: _____

Housing system type: _____

Number of birds in lay facility: _____

Name and contact information of service provider (company) if used: _____

List of trained personnel* performing depopulation and euthanizing birds: _____

_____

_____

*Please attach corresponding training records to the depopulation protocol, or have readily available.

- *Training may be provided externally, provided as the farmer overseeing depopulation you are confident in their training.*
- *Personnel performing the depopulation must be adequately trained in applying the euthanasia methods, to the satisfaction of the veterinarian or other qualified advisor signing off on this depopulation protocol. Those performing depopulation must be trained to perform the depopulation to ensure animal welfare is maintained, and follow the written depopulation protocol.*

Euthanasia method (Please refer to the ACP manual for acceptable euthanasia methods):

_____

Procedure

- Details of process (e.g. standard operating procedure (SOP))

  _____

  _____

  _____

  ☐ More detailed SOP is attached to this protocol

- Time from beginning to end of process as applicable to the euthanasia method and procedure (e.g. if MAK carts are used, time from beginning to end can refer to time from loading until death in the MAK cart, while if whole barn gassing is used, time from beginning to end can refer to gas fill until death)

  _____

  _____

- Number of birds being depopulated as applicable to the method and procedure
  Total number of birds depopulated: _____

  If depopulation takes place in rounds, also note how many birds per round (e.g. per MAK cart):

  _____

- Other relevant procedure details (e.g. continuous monitoring procedures, preventing operator fatigue where applicable, etc.)

  _____

  _____

  _____

- Process to confirm death prior to carcass disposal
  (Examples of signs of death include, but are not limited to: lack of pulse; lack of breathing; lack of movement; loss of posture; rigor mortis)

_____
_____
_____

(Recommended) **Other considerations**

- Biosecurity

_____
_____
_____

- Removal and / or disposal of dead birds

_____
_____
_____

- Identification of appropriately trained individuals to take control of the process

_____
_____
_____

- Reporting procedures to designated authorities

_____
_____
_____

- Personnel considerations, including emotional and physical stress

_____
_____
_____

Sign Off By Qualified Advisor

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Signature: _____

(By signing the qualified advisor hereby signs off in approval of this planned on-farm depopulation protocol)

(It is acceptable for the qualified advisor to sign a more detailed SOP document in lieu of this space on the plan. In those cases, all required information in the depopulation plan must be present in the detailed SOP)

On-Farm Depopulation Plan for Emergency Situations (template)

In the event of an emergency situation caused by a disease outbreak, extreme weather events, natural disaster or catastrophe (e.g. fire, barn collapse), the following plan can be applied and / or offer guidance. Please note that a cancellation from a poultry processing plant is not considered a emergency situation but rather an event to anticipate and have a planned on-farm depopulation protocol to use as a back-up.

(Required)

(Farm Name) _____commits that methods for depopulating entire flocks on-farm will be as humane as possible given the circumstances and the need to balance the risk for further negative impacts on bird welfare.

(A plan is required for emergency situations – the following are items to consider as part of your plan)

Key contacts to notify (e.g. egg board, designated government authorities, veterinarian, etc.):

_____
_____
_____

Euthanasia methods to consider (factor in availability of supplies and equipment, labour, timing etc.):

_____
_____
_____

List of personnel or companies to contact for equipment, materials and / or labour:

_____
_____
_____

Consider and / or plan for:

- Biosecurity

  _____
  _____
  _____

- Removal and / or disposal of dead birds

  _____
  _____
  _____

- Depopulation processes and continuous monitoring procedures

_____
_____
_____

- Identification of appropriately trained individuals to take control of the process

_____
_____
_____

- Reporting procedures to designated authorities

_____
_____
_____

- Personnel considerations, including emotional and physical stress

_____
_____
_____

Pullet Flock History Certificate

Pullet Grower: _____ No. of Pullets:_____

Rearing facility housing system: _____
(e.g. conventional cage, free run / free range-single-tier, free run / free range-aviary)

Egg farmer: _____ Date of Delivery: _____

(To be completed by the pullet supplier)*

I, the undersigned pullet (laying hen) supplier, am participating in the Egg Farmers of Canada HACCP-based On-Farm Food Safety Program Start Clean-Stay Clean® (Pullets), with the cooperating egg producer. The pullets encompassed by this Certificate were grown in compliance with the provincial board *Salmonella* testing program.

We will not knowingly supply any pullets that are or have been contaminated with *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE) bacteria or with pharmaceutical residues. To the best of our knowledge, these chicks / pullets have been grown in an environment free of SE and confirm that no Category 1 antibiotics were given.

This flock was tested for SE on the following dates: (Attach a letter or lab results from the provincial board attesting that the flock environment samples were tested at *name* Laboratory on *date* and found to be SE negative)

Date of Test: _____ **Results:** _____

Start Clean-Stay Clean® Status:

- ☐ Date of Last Audit _____
- ☐ Score _____

Flock History:

Source of day-old chicks (hatchery): _____ Hatch Date: _____

Please check yes or no to the following statement: Chicks for this flock were sourced from a hatchery certified on the Canadian Hatchery Federation Animal Welfare Program, or US equivalent program (records / letter of assurance to be provided upon request).

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Vaccination Record:

Date:	_____	Vaccine:	_____
Date:	_____	Vaccine:	_____
Date:	_____	Vaccine:	_____
Date:	_____	Vaccine:	_____
Date:	_____	Vaccine:	_____
Date:	_____	Vaccine:	_____

Beak treatment[12] or trimming[13]: Method used (e.g. infra-red or hot blade): _____

Date of treatment or trimming: _____

Age at treatment or trimming: _____

Location of process (hatchery or on-farm): _____

I confirm that the following statements are true (records letter of assurance to be provided upon request):

- Beak treatment or trimming was done prior to 10 days of age by competent persons using industry approved methods (infra-red or hot blade) that minimize bird discomfort and equipment that is properly maintained.
- No more than one-third of the top beak, as measured from the tip to the entrance of the nostrils was removed during the process.
- If beak trimming happened, the producer or a competent designated representative was readily available throughout the beak trimming process.
- Beak trimming must not be performed on birds that are older than 10 days of age, unless deemed necessary for emergency welfare reasons after all other measures to control cannibalism have been exhausted. If beak trimming happened after 10 days of age at the pullet rearing facility, it was carried out with veterinary consultation and oversight.

☐ Yes

☐ No

If pullets were reared in a free run / free range system, please check yes or no to the following statement: This flock had access to perches.

☐ Yes

☐ No

I confirm that the Handling, Catching and Loading Guidelines for Pullets and Laying hens were followed by all personnel involved with the handling, catching and loading of pullets during their removal from the pullet rearing facility.

_____ _____

Signature: Pullet Supplier / Owner /Grower Pullet Quota #

*This certificate should be delivered to the egg farmer at the time when the pullets are transferred to the lay facility.

[12] *Beak treatment* refers to a non-invasive procedure that uses specialized equipment (i.e. infra-red) that results in blunting of beaks.

[13] *Beak trimming* refers to the removal of a portion of the beak, usually with a specialized instrument that simultaneously cuts and cauterizes (e.g. hot blade).

APPENDIX B – EXAMPLE FEATHER SCORING SYSTEM 1

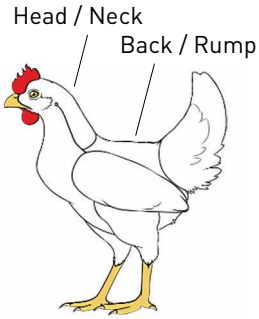
This feather scoring system was developed by Dr. Alexandra Harlander and her team at the University of Guelph. The scoring system, including additional information, has been slightly adapted and is being re-printed in the EFC ACP farmer manual with the kind permission of Dr. Harlander. Photographs and schematics courtesy of Nienke van Staaveren and Renée Garant.

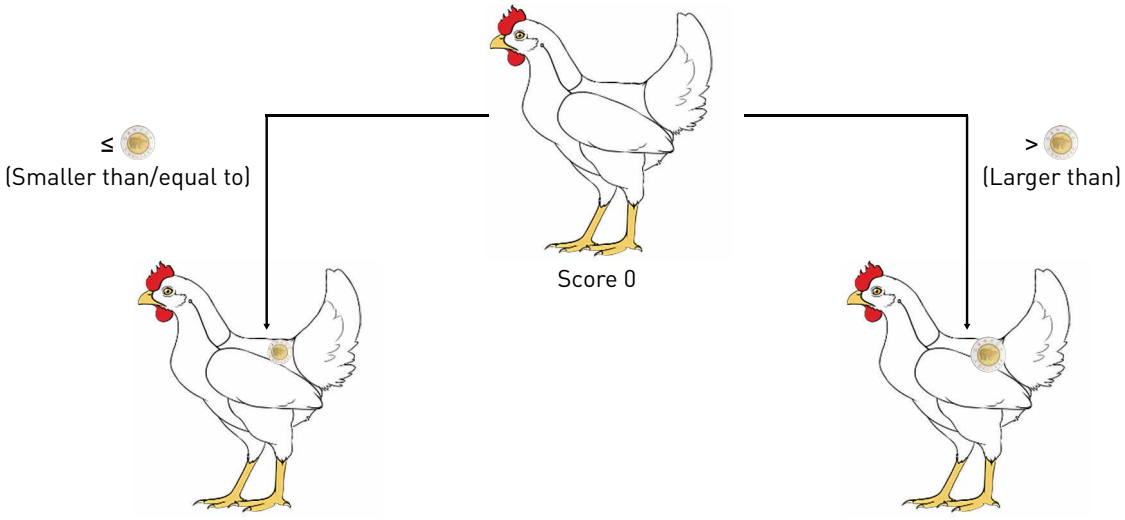
Reference: Decina C, Berke O, van Staaveren N, Baes CF, Harlander-Matauscheck A. Development of a Scoring System to Assess Feather Damage in Canadian Laying Hen Flocks. Animals. 2019; 9(7):436. https://doi.org/10.3390/ani9070436

Feather Scoring Guide

Feather cover damage should be assessed on the head, neck and back, and rump areas. Keep in mind that damage on the head / neck area can be caused by other factors such as abrasions from housing materials, in addition to feather pecking.

Score	Description
0	Intact feather cover, no or slight wear, only single feathers lacking
1	Damaged feathers (worn, deformed) or bald patch visible that is equal to or smaller than a two-dollar coin
2	At least one bald patch visible that is larger than a two-dollar coin





Consistent monitoring by trained farm staff can help identify problems before they escalate. You can record every week, every other week, or every month as long as you keep records and stay consistent with monitoring. Proper recording methods should be used and data should be collected, analysed, and interpreted. For example, by calculating the prevalence of birds with feather cover damage every week, you could see the development within your flock over time and might be able to attribute increases in feather damage to changes in management retrospectively.

Additional Information

When to score birds

We would recommend including feather cover scoring in your daily checks of the flock to cause as little disruption to the birds and your work schedule as possible. Keep your routine similar to any other day and allow the birds a couple of minutes to get used to your presence. The suggested method for scoring birds is a non-handling, visual assessment that is designed to be quick, easy and reliable, however to increase reliability one person should be responsible for scoring all of the birds.

Which birds to score

In order to get an accurate picture of the level of feather cover damage in the flock it is important to assess an appropriate and representative sample of birds. At least 50 birds should be assessed, but a larger sample could give more reliable data.

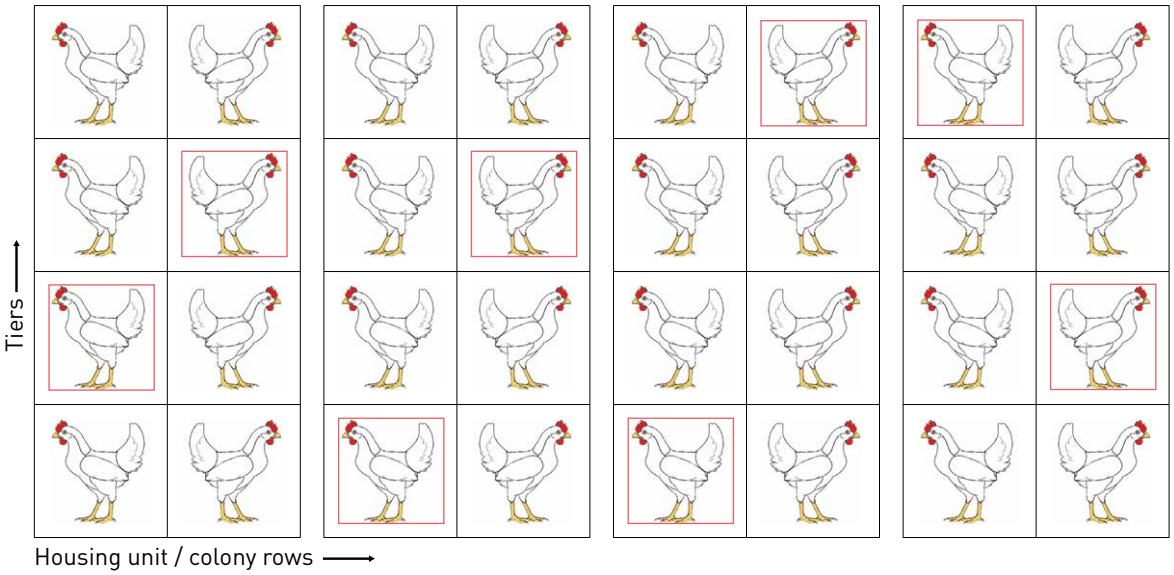
The selection of birds should reflect the proportion of birds in the different areas in the house (e.g. different colonies and tiers, litter area, slatted area, perches, nest area etc.). To avoid biased sampling when selecting birds, try not to favour a certain type of bird. For example, assess every second bird you see to keep assessment random. However, keep in mind that the bird has to be properly visible in order to be accurately assessed.

For conventional and enriched colony housing systems

- If your birds are housed in **conventional housing** or **enriched colonies**:
  - Select housing units / colonies at the beginning, middle and end of the row and from each tier.
  - Pick birds from 50 random housing units / colonies.
  - Pick birds as randomly as possible from the different areas within the housing unit / colony. Try not to favour a certain type of bird.

Conventional and enriched colony systems

Example



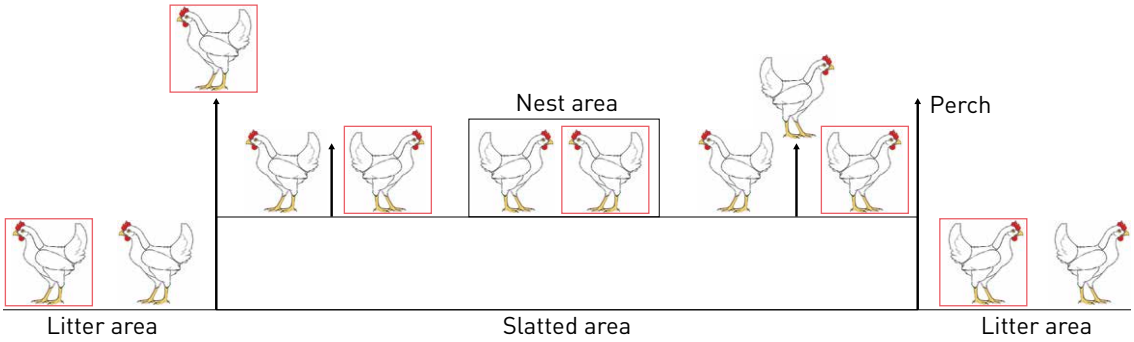
Select birds from housing units / colonies in different tiers and different locations (beginning, middle and end of rows) throughout the lay facility.

For free run / free range, single-tier systems

- If your birds are housed in **single-tier systems**:
  - Pick birds from different areas in your lay facility such as the litter area, slatted area, nest area and perches.
  - The number of birds chosen should be proportional to the number of birds present in each area. For example, if half of the birds are using the litter, score 25 birds from the litter area.
  - If an outdoor range is provided, remember to also assess birds on the range.

Single-tier system

Example



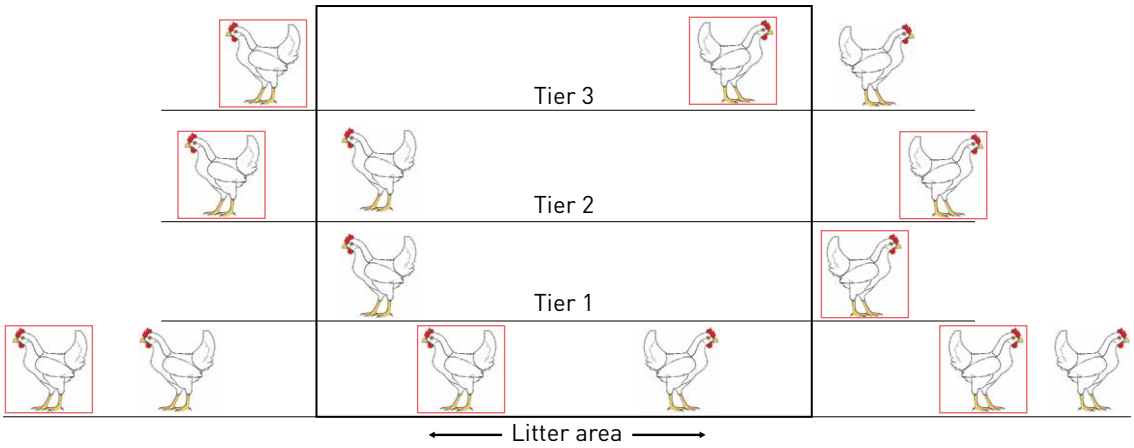
The number of birds chosen should be proportional to the number of birds present in each area (litter area, slatted area, nest area, perches). Because twice (2x) as many birds are present on the litter and slatted area, twice (2x) as many birds are selected from these areas compared to the perches and nest area.

For free run / free range, aviary (multi-tier) systems

- If your birds are kept in **aviary systems**:
  - Pick birds from different areas in your lay facility such as the litter area, slatted area, nest area, perches and the different tiers.
  - The number of birds chosen should be proportional to the number of birds present in each area. For example, if half of the birds are using the litter, score 25 birds from the litter area.
  - If an outdoor range is provided, remember to also assess birds on the range.

Aviary system

Example



The number of birds chosen should be proportional to the number of birds present in each area (litter area, slatted area, nest area, perches). Because twice (2x) as many birds are present on the litter and slatted area, twice (2x) as many birds are selected from these areas compared to the perches and nest area.

What do the different feather cover damage scores look like?

Example – white hens

Back score 0

Neck score 0

Back score 1

Neck score 1

Back score 2

Neck score 2

Example – brown hens

Back score 0

Neck score 0

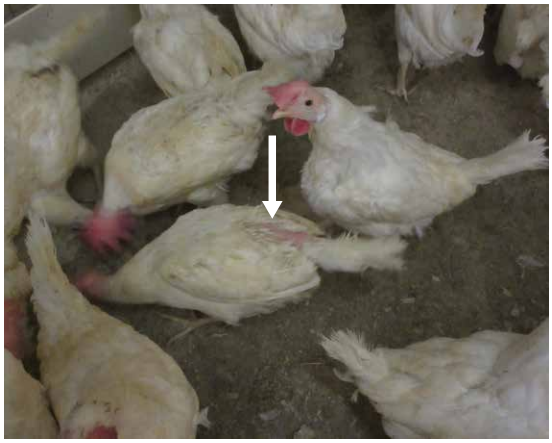
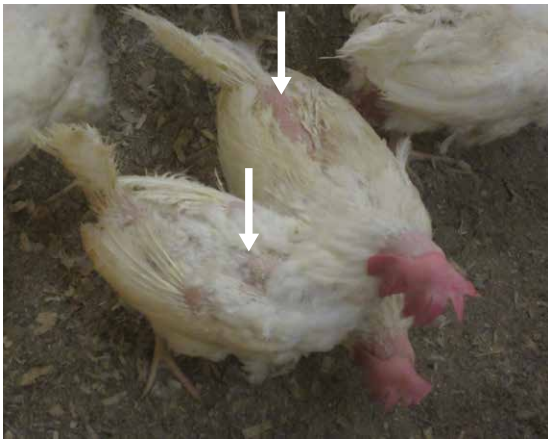
Back score 1

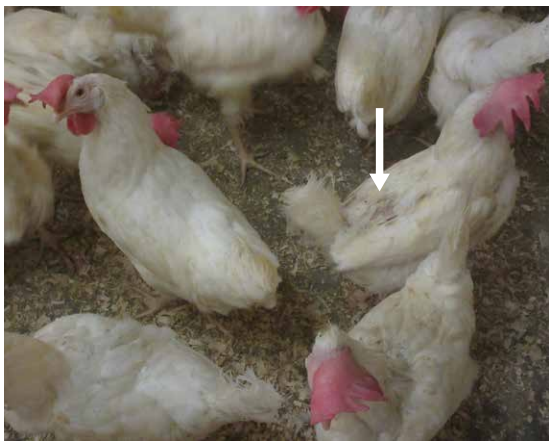
Neck score 1

Back score 2

Neck score 2

What does feather cover damage look like on farm?


Feather Cover – Scoring Sheet

Date (dd/mm/yyyy):	House:
Observer:	Age of birds (wks):

Please select

Conventional housing / Enriched colony / Single-tier system / Aviary system

Bird #	Neck	Back	Bird #	Neck	Back
1			26		
2			27		
3			28		
4			29		
5			30		
6			31		
7			32		
8			33		
9			34		
10			35		
11			36		
12			37		
13			38		
14			39		
15			40		
16			41		
17			42		
18			43		
19			44		
20			45		
21			46		
22			47		
23			48		
24			49		
25			50		

NECK

Score 0

Score 1

Score 2

BACK

Score 0

Score 1

Score 2

Feather Cover – Scoring Sheet

Date (dd/mm/yyyy):	House:
Observer:	Age of birds (wks):

Please select

Conventional housing / Enriched colony / Single-tier system / Aviary system

Bird #	Neck	Back	Bird #	Neck	Back
1			26		
2			27		
3			28		
4			29		
5			30		
6			31		
7			32		
8			33		
9			34		
10			35		
11			36		
12			37		
13			38		
14			39		
15			40		
16			41		
17			42		
18			43		
19			44		
20			45		
21			46		
22			47		
23			48		
24			49		
25			50		

NECK

Score 0

Score 1

Score 2

BACK

Score 0

Score 1

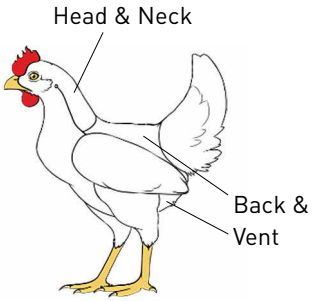
Score 2

APPENDIX C – EXAMPLE FEATHER SCORING SYSTEM 2

This feather scoring system was developed as part of the AssureWel project, a collaborative project led by the Soil Association Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), and the University of Bristol. The scoring system is being re-printed in the EFC ACP farmer manual with their kind permission.

Reference: RSPCA, Soil Association and University of Bristol (2013). AssureWel Laying Hen Protocol.

Feather Scoring Guide



1. Feather loss	
Sample size:	50 birds
Method of assessment	Assess and score 5 birds in each of 10 different areas of the house (lay facility) and / or range. Visually assess the head / neck area and back / vent area of the bird (without handling birds).
Scoring	Score separately for **head** / **neck** area and **back** / **vent** area. **0 = No / Minimal feather loss** No bare skin visible, no or slight wear, only single feathers missing **1 = Slight feather loss** Moderate wear, damaged feathers or 2 or more adjacent feathers missing up to bare skin visible < 5 cm maximum dimension **2 = Moderate / Severe feather loss** Bare skin visible ≥ 5 cm maximum dimension

For additional information and resources, including online training and a testing tool, please visit **assurewel.org/index.html**

Specific laying hen resources include:

- Assessment protocol
- Score sheet
- Explanation of measures