

Code of Practice

for broiler chickens



**Chicken Farmers
of Canada**
**Les Producteurs de
poulet du Canada**

THE NEW CODE OF PRACTICE FOR BROILER CHICKENS

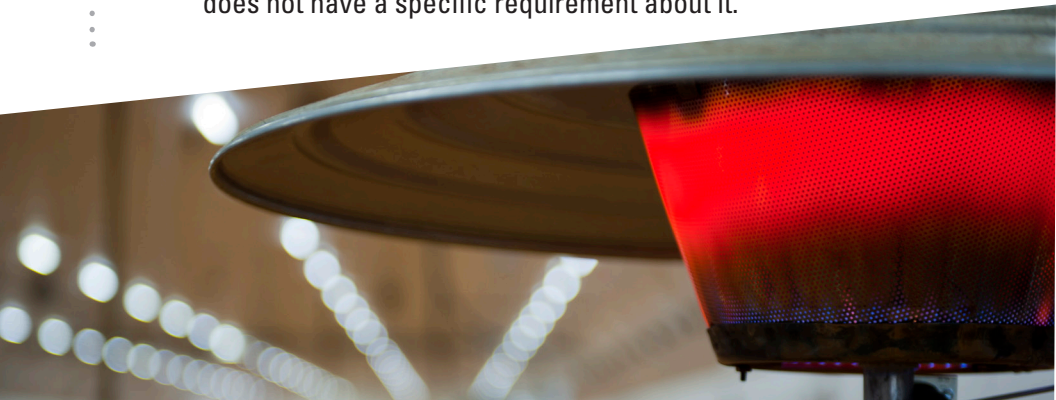
The Code of Practice for Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens, and Turkeys has been updated through the National Farm Animal Care Council (www.nfacc.ca, www.nfacc.ca/francais). Our Animal Care Program (ACP) is based on the previous version of the Code, and will be updated to be in line with this new Code.

No changes to the ACP have yet been implemented. This document serves to highlight the major differences between the new Code and our current program to illustrate what changes may be coming.

You will receive a copy of the new Code through your provincial Board and it is available online on NFACC's website. The Code includes a number of references for further information and appendices to support the requirements – check them out! The new Code clearly indicates what are requirements and what are highly recommended practices, which is a change from the previous Code. This summary will focus on the requirements.

TEMPERATURE

- > Bird behaviour must be observed and necessary corrective action taken as soon as possible if birds are displaying signs of thermal discomfort.
 - The ACP describes what to observe for thermal discomfort but does not have a specific requirement about it.





AIR QUALITY

- > Includes the same requirement to take steps if ammonia is too high, but the harmful level is provided as a range: 20 to 25 ppm (instead of just 25 ppm).
 - This range is in line with ammonia test strips, which are sensitive between 20 and 25 ppm and are an inexpensive and easy way to measure ammonia.
 - The wording in this section indicates that a monitoring device, and not just smell, should be used to detect ammonia.
 - Research has shown that an individuals' sense of smell can become accustomed to the odour.



LIGHTING

- > After the first 24 hours chicks must have 1 hour of darkness.
- > The dark period must be gradually increased to a minimum of 4 hours by day 5.
- > Minimum 4 consecutive hours of darkness must be provided from day 5 until 7 days prior to catching.
- > Darkness = 20% of the intensity of the light period
 - example, if daytime is 10 lux, night time must be no more than 2 lux
- > Provides the range of 5 to 10 lux as adequate daytime lighting level.
- > Light intensity may only be reduced temporarily to correct abnormal behaviour.
- > Light control systems must be inspected regularly and maintained in working order.

This represents a change from the current ACP, but is in line with recommendations in Cobb and Ross production manuals. Significant research exists to support these lighting requirements, both in terms of animal welfare and productivity. Programs from many other countries require 4 or more hours of darkness.

STOCKING DENSITY

- > Density limits remain at 31 and 38 kg/m².
- > Conditions for going above 31 kg/m² are the same, with the addition of developing a flock health plan (described in Code section 5.1).
- > Health and injury data, if available from processors, must be used to determine if density is contributing to recurring health or welfare problems (e.g. foot pad and breast lesions, cellulitis, bruises).

BIRD MONITORING AND HANDLING

- > Birds must not be carried solely by the head, neck, wing, or tail feathers.

HEALTH CARE PRACTICES

- > Culls, in addition to mortalities, must be recorded daily.
 - Currently this is only required for high density producers.
- > Appendix B in the Code has a table listing acceptable euthanasia methods.
 - Almost all methods are acceptable with conditions (exception is anaesthetic overdose).
 - example: with cervical dislocation, crushing of the neck bones must not occur
 - example: mechanical devices must be purpose-designed and appropriate for the size of the bird
 - When equipment is used for euthanasia it must be properly maintained and proven effective.
 - The Code Development committee members generally agreed that proven effective means that peer reviewed research is needed.

CATCHING AND LOADING

- > Flocks must be evaluated for fitness prior to transport.
 - Birds unfit for transport must be euthanized, separated or transported with special provisions for treatment.
- > Wet birds must not be loaded in cold weather if there is a risk they will become chilled.
- > The flock and environmental conditions, as well as expected journey duration, must be taken into consideration when loading birds.
- > Birds not loaded for transport and not euthanized must continue to be cared for in accordance with the Code (feed, water, temperature, ventilation).
- > When building new barns or renovating, take into account the way birds are moved to facilitate safe and humane transfer¹.
- > Openings through which birds pass must be large enough so birds are transferred in a way that minimizes injury².
- > Driveways and yards must be maintained to facilitate unobstructed, safe, and easy access by transport vehicles³.

¹⁻³ These three points are already described in the ACP, but are not MD elements.



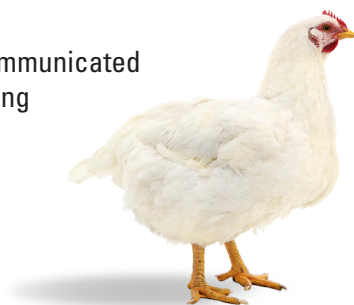


WORKERS AND MANAGEMENT

- > A code of conduct covering bird welfare must be developed and communicated.
 - Appendix A provides a template.
- > Personnel must be monitored and receive additional training as necessary.

SUMMARY

- > Main changes in the new Code are in terms of:
 - lighting
 - euthanasia
 - catching and loading
 - ammonia monitoring
- > CFC is consulting with provincial boards, the Production Committee and the CFC Directors as the Animal Care Program is updated.
- > Changes to the ACP will be communicated to producers well ahead of being implemented.



**For more information, please contact
your provincial board office.**

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