



Chicken Farmers of Canada **ANIMAL CARE PROGRAM** MANUAL



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
On-Farm Audit and Certification Process	6
Audit Frequency	7
List of Definitions for Terms Used in the Animal Care Program	9
Sample Audit Checklist	10
SECTION 1 – Workers and Management	15
SECTION 2 – Feed and Water	16
Feed	16
Water	16
SECTION 3 – Environment	17
Temperature	17
Air Quality	17
Lighting	19
SECTION 4 – Stocking Density, Housing System, and Litter Management	20
Stocking Density	20
Housing System	21
Litter Management	21
SECTION 5 – Bird Monitoring and Handling	22
Monitoring During Chick Delivery and Placement	22
Monitoring During the Grow-Out	23
SECTION 6 – Health Care Practices	24
Flock Health Plan	24
Mortality and Culls	25
Euthanasia	25
SECTION 7 – Emergency Management and Preparedness	28
SECTION 8 – Catching and Loading	29
Farm and Building Design	29
Catching and Loading	29
SECTION 9 – Record Keeping and Corrective Actions	31
Record Keeping	31
Corrective Actions	32

Introduction

Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC) has a comprehensive animal care program designed to demonstrate the level of care given to Canadian chickens. The program was designed to complement CFC's *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* On-Farm Food Safety Program (OFFSP) and to provide assurance through documentation that farmers are meeting appropriate animal care standards.

CFC's *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* Animal Care Program (ACP) is based on the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens and Turkeys (2016)*, which was developed using the National Farm Animal Care Council's (NFACC) Code development process. This credible process is based on science and collaboration amongst a broad group of stakeholders, including farmers/producers, transporters, veterinarians, animal welfare and enforcement agencies, retail and food service organizations, processors, governments, and researchers.

CFC has been implementing the ACP on Canadian farms since 2009. It was originally based on the *Recommended Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals: Chickens, Turkeys and Breeders from Hatchery to Processing Plant (2003)* and has been updated using NFACC's Animal Care Assessment Framework process to bring the program into compliance with the 2016 Code of Practice requirements. Through this process, a multi-disciplinary working group (farmers, veterinarians, academia, animal welfare associations, processors, hatcheries, retailers, and restaurants) renewed CFC's auditable standard based on the Code.

Important elements of the ACP include:

- » Our program uses one national standard that ensures consistency of requirements and record-keeping for all chicken farms in Canada
- » Our program includes annual farm audits
- » Our program is mandatory for Canadian chicken farms
- » Our program uses enforcement mechanisms in cases of non-compliance
- » Our program offers the additional assurance of being third-party audited
- » Our program is science-informed and has a credible foundation

The ACP is administered to meet the same ISO-based requirements as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's requirements for on-farm food safety programs.

In 2016, CFC began implementing a system of third-party audits for both the ACP and the OFFSP, which demonstrates that the ACP has been implemented effectively and animal care measures are being consistently applied. The third-party audit is conducted by an internationally-recognized, third-party certification body, accredited by the American National Standards Institute to ISO 17065.

The third-party audit is comprehensive in covering not only implementation at the farm-level, but also evaluating CFC auditors for consistency and compliance, as well as performing audits of the management system at both provincial and national levels.

Communicating the ACP standards and their enforceability not only adds credibility to the program but is an important aspect of building and maintaining public trust. In 2017, new logos were created for the ACP, OFFSP, and Sustainability Excellence initiatives, linking them to the *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* brand. CFC's *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* brand is a consumer facing logo which not only signals to Canadians that their chicken is raised in Canada, but also by farmers dedicated to meeting the standards upheld through CFC's Animal Care and On-Farm Food Safety programs, which are key elements to CFC's Sustainability Initiative.

Animal care is an important issue for Canadian chicken farmers. CFC believes that the processes and standards that have been implemented on our farms and throughout the industry are proof of our industry's strong commitment to animal care, and that based on these, the industry is in a solid position to promote the high standards of animal care within the industry to our customers and our consumers.

The content of the *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* Animal Care Program, has been independently reviewed by the National Farm Animal Care Council and found to have met all requirements outlined in Canada's Animal Care Assessment Framework. This national framework was developed by consensus among multiple stakeholders and sets a credible process for developing animal care assessment programs based on Codes of Practice. More information is available at www.nfacc.ca.



Legend

In each section, production practices have been designated with either MD or HR .

MD

represents a “MUST DO” production practice. These are mandatory for the humane care of your flock.

HR

represents a “HIGHLY RECOMMENDED” production practice which indicates its importance in the animal care program. HR production practices are not mandatory, but they are strongly recommended to ensure the highest level of care for your flock.

On-Farm Audit and Certification Process

The audit of the ACP will be combined with the OFFSP audit.

This section provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities for players involved in the audit and certification process.

Chicken Farmers of Canada Responsibilities

- » The design and delivery of the ACP on a national basis and the maintenance of the technical standard and Producer Manual
- » The development, maintenance and delivery of training programs for the ACP on-farm auditors
- » The ongoing monitoring of an effective program and ensuring consistency in application and certification across all provinces

Provincial Board Responsibilities

- » The delivery of the ACP and certification services to farmers in the province
- » The implementation of certification procedures, which include performing on-farm audits, reviewing audit reports and recommendations, and making certification decisions
- » The management of the complaints and appeals procedures

Farmer's Responsibilities

- » Implementing and maintaining compliance with the ACP
- » Keeping documents demonstrating conformance to the ACP
- » Continuing to implement the program, as well as to undergo on-going audits as per the frequency and for taking corrective actions to resolve any deficiencies identified in the audit report
- » Informing the provincial board of any large management change on the farm (e.g. operating a new barn that which has not been previously audited or changing ownership)



Audit Frequency

A combination of full audits (F) and records assessment audits (R) will be used to assess compliance with the program on an annual basis. The audit cycle will consist of a two-year cycle of full and records assessment audits with new farms receiving a full audit the first year, and then the two-year cycle, F-R, starting the second year.

Full audit: An on-farm/on-site evaluation of records, statements of fact or other relevant information to determine the extent to which all the specified requirements of the program are met.

Records assessment: Off-farm evaluation of a subset of records or other relevant information to determine the extent to which all or a subset of the specified requirements of the program are met. This evaluation includes direct communication with the farm representative and can be performed on-farm.

In addition, a minimum 5% of those farms undergoing a records assessment in any given year will be subject to an on-farm full audit.

Triggered audits can also occur at any time. An on-farm audit can be triggered by laboratory reports, audit reports, by complaints of non-conformances by stakeholders or by changes made by farmers.

Farmer Pre-Audit Checklist

Prior to undergoing an on-farm audit, farmers should complete the sample audit checklist to assess their preparedness for a real audit.

Biosecurity During an Audit

During an on-farm audit, auditors will follow strict biosecurity guidelines to prevent contamination. Auditors must take preventive measures to ensure that they do not present a biosecurity risk to the farm by parking in a designated area, preventing cross-contamination,

wearing clean coveralls and boots, disposing of the clothing and footwear in an acceptable location, and by following any additional biosecurity measures requested by the farmer.

Audit Process

Under normal circumstances, farmers will be informed when an audit will be occurring, and the date will be determined based on the auditors' and the farmer's availability; however, provincial boards can perform triggered audits without notice or with a shorter notice than a regular audit.

The audit of the ACP will be combined with the OFFSP audit. Once the audit starts, the auditor will confirm the scope of the audit and will give a brief description of how the audit will proceed. For on-farm audits, the auditor will review the farm records, discuss the implementation with the farmer and will perform a tour of the farm to assess compliance with the program.

Before completing the audit, the auditor will complete an audit report. This report will list any corrective actions and a target completion date will be agreed upon by the auditor and the farmer. A separate report will be completed for the OFFSP and the ACP. Farmers will receive a copy of both of these reports.

If corrective actions have been assessed, a timeline will be set with the farmer as to when the corrective actions will be re-evaluated. Based on this, a follow-up audit will be scheduled, where the auditor will judge the implementation and effectiveness of the corrective actions. At this time, a follow-up audit report will be completed, one for each program, and the farmer will be requested to sign a declaration indicating that they will keep implementing the ACP.

The auditor does not grant certification; rather, the auditor makes a recommendation and the audit reports will be sent to the Certification Agent.

Certification

Once the audit report is received, the Certification Agent will make a decision on granting certification.

Before granting certification, the Certification Agent must ensure that all mandatory ACP requirements have been successfully completed, that the farmer is a registered quota holder or licensed producer, that the farmer has signed the Farmer Declaration indicating that they will continue to implement the program requirements and undergo audits as per the prescribed frequency and that the farmer has successfully completed the audit (i.e. has completed the corrective actions).

All mandatory items must be implemented prior to receiving certification. When successful, a certification letter will be sent to the farmer.

Based on the certification process, farmers can register complaints or file appeals with the provincial board. Farmers should check with the provincial board for specific procedures.

Certification with this program indicates that the system being used on the farm at the time of the audit meets the ACP standards. Certification does not guarantee the level of animal care provided on these farms.

Certificate Withdrawal

The Certification Agent has the authority to suspend or terminate certification.

The reasons for suspension or terminating a previously granted certification include:

- » A farmer stops raising broilers for a period longer than one year
- » A farmer declines an audit
- » A farmer does not complete the required corrective actions
- » A farmer no longer maintains the requirements of the ACP
- » A farmer sells his/her quota
- » Cooperation and access to documentation, facilities and personnel are not provided to auditors during audits
- » A farmer uses the certification or other program materials in ways that conflict with stated guidelines

Once suspended or terminated, the certification cannot be displayed or otherwise used to indicate that the farm is certified under the program. If a farmer intends to become certified after having had the certification suspended or terminated, they must commence the audit frequency again with a full audit.

For further information pertaining to the ACP, please contact Chicken Farmers of Canada or your provincial board office.

List of Definitions

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
Conscious:	Aware of and responding to one's surroundings; awake
Cull/Culling:	The process of removing birds from production based on specific criteria
Day 1:	The first 24-hour period after placement
Dark Period:	Length of time where light intensity is no more than 20% of the light intensity of the light period
Deviation:	Extenuating circumstances or occurrences that fall outside of normal operations or production practices
Euthanasia:	The process of ending the life of a bird in a way that minimizes or eliminates pain, fear, and distress. It is characterized by rapid, irreversible unconsciousness (insensibility), followed by prompt death before the bird returns to consciousness
Humane:	Actions that promote good welfare and minimize suffering
Insensible/Insensibility:	The point at which an animal no longer has the ability to feel pain or perceive and respond to its environment (e.g. light, touch)
Local:	Relating or restricted to a particular area or the neighbourhood in which the barn is located
Monitor:	The act of conducting a planned sequence of observations, tests, or measurements to assess whether a critical control point, a process control, and/or a prerequisite program is under control. This can include recording the results of those observations
Stockmanship:	The practice of undertaking the immediate day-to-day husbandry tasks associated with caring for birds
Thermal Comfort Zone:	The range of temperatures where no additional energy is required to maintain core body temperature; the temperature where birds are most comfortable and productive
Training:	The act that aims to impart skills and/or knowledge on a formal or informal basis (e.g. through mentoring) that results in the recipient's understanding and/or ability to perform assigned duties
Unfit for Transport:	A bird with reduced capacity to withstand transportation and where there is a high risk that transportation will lead to suffering
Wet Bird:	A bird with wet or moist feathers in contact with the skin and/or wet or moist skin resulting in decreased capacity to thermoregulate

Sample Audit Checklist

Manual Reference	Page Number		Requirement
Mandatory Items			
Workers and Management	p. 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	All personnel understand the ACP
	p. 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	All personnel familiar with <i>Code of Practice</i>
	p. 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code of Conduct covering bird welfare signed by all personnel
	p. 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Signed Code of Conduct obtained from external service providers
	p. 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personnel competent in bird behaviour, disease recognition, correct bird handling techniques, humane euthanasia techniques, litter and air quality management, and emergency procedures for fire and disaster
	p. 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personnel monitored and receive additional training
	p. 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional animal welfare risks minimized
Feed	p. 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birds have adequate space to feed without restriction
	p. 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of feeders/feeder space recorded in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
	p. 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate number of feeders provided
	p. 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feed satisfies dietary requirements
	p. 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	OFFSP requirements on feed quality followed
Water	p. 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birds have continuous access to water
	p. 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	OFFSP requirements on water quality followed
	p. 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate number of drinkers provided
	p. 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of drinkers/water nipples recorded in the SOPs
Temperature	p. 17	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temperature alarms and corrective actions recorded
	p. 17	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birds checked twice daily for thermal comfort
Air Quality	p. 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	Air quality monitored daily
	p. 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	Corrective actions taken if humidity out of acceptable range
	p. 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ammonia measured once per week starting week 4

Lighting	p. 19	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate illumination for normal feed and water intake provided
	p. 19	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birds provided with 1 hr continuous darkness by 24-hr after placement
	p. 19	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birds provided with 4 hours continuous darkness from day 5 to 7 days before shipping
	p. 19	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dark period no more than 20% of the light intensity of light period
	p. 19	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lighting program documented in the SOPs
Stocking Density	p. 20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stocking density targeted for no more than 31 kg/m ² (6.35 lb/ft ²) at its highest point <i>unless the requirements outlined below are met</i>
	p. 20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inside floor area of the barn recorded in the SOPs
	p. 20	<input type="checkbox"/>	If stocking between 31 kg/m ² and 38 kg/m ² the following requirements are met: » Birds travel no farther than 3-4 m (10–13 ft) to reach feed and water » Water meters available » Minimum and maximum daily temperatures recorded » Minimum and maximum levels of humidity or ammonia measured daily » Mortality, euthanasia, and condemn records maintained per flock
Housing System	p. 21	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alternative housing systems must meet the stocking density requirements of the program
Litter Management	p. 21	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good quality litter provided to each flock
	p. 21	<input type="checkbox"/>	Corrective measures taken if litter is too wet or too dry
	p. 21	<input type="checkbox"/>	Litter cleaned out after each flock
Bird Monitoring and Handling	p. 22	<input type="checkbox"/>	Farmer or representative present during chick delivery and placement
	p. 22	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chicks handled in a way that prevents injury and reduces stress
	p. 22	<input type="checkbox"/>	New chicks inspected
	p. 23	<input type="checkbox"/>	OFFSP requirements followed to ensure barn ready for receiving new chicks
	p. 23	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birds handled in a way that prevents injury and minimizes stress
	p. 23	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chicks monitored twice daily
	p. 23	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feed, water, ventilation, heating, and lighting systems checked twice daily

Health Care Practices	p. 24	<input type="checkbox"/>	Follow OFFSP for appropriate biosecurity, cleaning, disinfection, and pest management
Flock Health Plan	p. 24	<input type="checkbox"/>	A flock health plan developed and followed
	p. 24	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name of veterinarian and alternate recorded in the SOPs
	p. 24	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor information provided by processors (e.g. condemnations, hock burn, breast blisters, and footpad lesions)
Mortality and Culls	p. 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Record mortality and cull levels separately
	p. 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Notified veterinarian if mortality exceeded 1% in 24 hrs
Euthanasia	p. 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Culled sick and injured birds daily
	p. 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personnel trained on appropriate euthanasia techniques
	p. 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	An acceptable euthanasia method used
	p. 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Euthanasia equipment well maintained and used according to directions
	p. 26	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birds promptly treated or euthanized when in pain or experiencing lameness that prevents them from walking and/or reaching food and water
	p. 26	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birds inspected for signs of consciousness after euthanasia
Emergency Management and Preparedness	p. 26	<input type="checkbox"/>	Death confirmed prior to disposing of carcass
	p. 28	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitoring system tested and recorded once/production cycle
	p. 28	<input type="checkbox"/>	Standby power system or alternate system of maintaining ventilation, feeding, watering and lighting programs available and tested once per production cycle
	p. 28	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contingency plan prepared and reviewed
	p. 28	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact information of farm employees available
	p. 28	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mass depopulation done in consultation with veterinarian and provincial board notified

Farm and Building Design	p. 29	<input type="checkbox"/>	These features included in new barns or renovations: » Risk of getting birds wet during loading minimized » Doorways protected from falling ice » Building design adapted for catching and loading equipment » Loading areas, lighting and equipment facilitate humane handling of birds » Driveways and yards constructed to facilitate access by transport vehicles
	p. 29	<input type="checkbox"/>	Openings large enough to minimize bird injury during transfer
	p. 29	<input type="checkbox"/>	Driveways and yards maintained to facilitate access by transport vehicles
Catching and Loading	p. 29	<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter of assurance attained from catching crew
	p. 29	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feed withdrawal managed to minimize time off feed
	p. 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flock evaluated for fitness for transport, unfit birds euthanized or separated out
	p. 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flock and environmental conditions considered prior to transport
	p. 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prior to catching, farmer and catching supervisor meet to evaluate flock fitness for transport
	p. 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Barn prepared to facilitate catching
	p. 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Water available until start of catching
	p. 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Farmer available locally to assist catching crew when necessary
	p. 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wet birds not loaded in cold weather
	p. 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Birds not loaded and not euthanized continue to be cared for (within 8 hours of completion of loading)
	p. 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	Code requirements for catching crews followed when hiring own catching crew, acting as a catcher, or providing own catching equipment
Record Keeping and Corrective Actions	p. 31	<input type="checkbox"/>	Static information recorded in the SOPs
	p. 31	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate information recorded on the Flock Specific Record forms (or similar)
	p. 32	<input type="checkbox"/>	At least one years worth of records retained
Corrective Actions	p. 32	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deviations and corrective actions are recorded

<i>Highly Recommended Items</i>			
Workers and Management	p. 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steps taken to minimize bird excitement
Water	p. 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Water meters used for monitoring intake (31 kg/m ²)
Air Quality	p. 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	Steps taken to reduce ammonia when it exceeds 10 ppm
	p. 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	CO ₂ levels monitored
Lighting	p. 19	<input type="checkbox"/>	Light intensity during period of darkness ≤ 1 lux
Bird Monitoring and Handling	p. 22	<input type="checkbox"/>	Follow chick supplier recommendation for ideal bedding surface temperature
	p. 22	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do not drop chicks from height that may cause injury
Mortality and Culls	p. 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overall flock mortality monitored daily
Emergency Management and Preparedness	p. 28	<input type="checkbox"/>	A 24-hour emergency supply of water is available

Section 1

Workers and Management

Good animal husbandry and good management practices go hand in hand with good results. Personnel need to be knowledgeable of the basic needs of the birds in their care. Stockmanship is one of the most important determinants of poultry welfare. Frequent, positive interactions with humans have been linked to reduced fear and stress in birds.

- MD** All personnel that are involved in the care and handling of the birds must understand the animal care program and sign the relevant SOPs annually.
- MD** All personnel must be familiar with the sections of the *Code of Practice* for the care and handling of broiler chickens that are relevant to their areas of responsibility.
- MD** A code of conduct covering bird welfare must be understood by and signed by all farm personnel. A sample has been provided in the SOPs.
- MD** Obtain a signed code of conduct covering bird welfare from external service providers involved in the care and handling of the birds.
- MD** Personnel involved in the care and handling of the birds must be competent in the following areas for which they are responsible:
 - » Understanding basic bird behaviour (normal and abnormal behaviour)
 - including signs of fear, distress and thermal discomfort
 - » Identifying signs of disease or poor health
 - including evaluation of lameness and foot pad lesions

- » Correct bird handling techniques (including during catching and loading, if applicable)
- » Procedures for euthanasia (including when to euthanize)
- » Litter and air quality management
- » Emergency procedures for fire and disaster

MD Personnel must be monitored and receive additional training as necessary.

MD A training record must be kept for each employee. This record can simply be a sign off that they have been provided and understood the SOPs.

HR To minimize excitement and to avoid startling the chickens when attending to them, it is recommended that:

- » Personnel wear clothing of uniform appearance
- » Routine procedures be performed consistently and according to a schedule
- » A signal be given consistently when entering the facility to alert birds that someone is approaching
- » Movement through the barn should be smooth and quiet when birds are present

This manual has been developed based on general production practices found on Canadian farms. Personnel should be observant for any additional risks to animal welfare that have not been identified in this manual.

MD The ACP manual requirements have been developed based on the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens, and Turkeys* (2016) and production practices used on chicken farms in Canada. If there are additional animal welfare risks identified, these need to be addressed and minimized even if they are not mentioned in this manual.

Section 2

Feed and Water

An elevated level of aggression can occur when chickens are forced to compete for inadequate resources. To avoid this make sure that chickens are provided with enough space for feeding and watering as well as an adequate supply of feed and water. Monitoring feed and water intake is a useful practice as changes in consumption can be an early indicator of problems.

Feed

- MD** Chickens must be provided with adequate space to feed without restriction. The quantity and style of feeders must be appropriate to the number and size of the birds in the facility and they must be set at the appropriate height. Follow the recommendations of the manufacturer and the primary breeder for your particular size of bird.
- MD** The total number of feeders or linear feeder space, the manufacturers' recommendations and the maximum barn capacity (no. of birds) must be recorded in your SOPs.
- MD** The feed must be capable of satisfying dietary requirements and maintaining good health.

This may be demonstrated by showing:

- » the feed is purchased from a feed mill (feed mills are required to meet certain standards)
- » the protocol for mixing feed and the rationale behind the feed formula, in instances where the feed is mixed on-farm. Ideally, the feed formula should be developed with a veterinarian or a nutritionist

Feed may be temporarily withdrawn when required by a flock veterinarian, or when heat stress is a concern or prior to processing as part of the feed withdrawal program. Withdrawal times should be developed in consultation with the processor and veterinarian.

- MD** The requirements of CFC's OFFSP must be followed to ensure the quality and supply of feed is adequate.

Water

- MD** Chickens must have continuous access to potable water, except when required by a veterinarian, as part of vaccination procedures or during the catching process.
- MD** The requirements of CFC's OFFSP must be followed to ensure water quality is appropriate.
- MD** The number and style of waterers must be appropriate to the number and size of the birds in the facility. Follow the recommendations of the manufacturer and the primary breeder for your particular size of bird to determine an appropriate watering system.
- MD** The total number of drinkers or nipples, manufacturers' recommendations and the maximum barn capacity (no. of birds) must be recorded in your SOPs.
- HR** Water meters, at least one per barn, should be used to monitor daily water intake by the flock. A change in water consumption can be an early indicator of disease in the flock.

Section 3

Environment

(Temperature, Air Quality and Lighting)

Temperature

The environmental temperature represents the combined effects of several variables including air temperature, humidity, air speed, surrounding surface temperatures, stocking densities, the age, and state of production.

In general, the thermal comfort zone of chickens lies between 20 and 30°C (68–86°F). Day old chicks are unable to maintain their body temperature if the temperature falls below 26°C (78.8°F). The temperature of the barn should be maintained at 30–34°C (86–93°F) for the first week following placement. In general, the temperature should be lowered by 2–3°C (4–6°F) per week following placement down to approximately 18–24°C (64–75°F) at the age of 6 weeks. Thereafter, the temperature should be maintained within the range of 10–27°C (50–80°F). Temperature should be measured at the bird level. Efforts must be made to avoid temperature extremes in the barn. The effect of hot weather can be moderated by providing additional air movement or evaporative cooling opportunities. Always protect chickens, no matter what their age, against drafts or cold areas.

MD

The temperature program must be documented in the SOPs. Alarms are to be set for temperature changes outside of the optimal temperature range (thermal comfort zone) for the age and breed of bird. Record all temperature alarms and the corrective actions taken (see Flock Specific Record Forms).

Optimum temperature requirements vary with different strains of chickens. For this reason, the behaviour of chickens can be used as a reliable indicator of thermal comfort.

Temperatures that are too high cause:

- » Crowding of the chickens away from heat source
- » Pasty vents
- » Frequent spreading and flapping of wings
- » Panting

Temperatures that are too low cause:

- » Crowding around the heat source
- » Huddling or piling
- » Feather ruffling
- » Rigid posture or trembling
- » Distress calls

When the temperature is close to optimum, chickens spread evenly over the entire brooder area or barn floor.

MD

Birds must be observed twice daily for signs of thermal comfort. If any signs of thermal discomfort are observed, corrective action must be taken.

Air Quality

Design your facilities to give you control over the air quality inside the barn during normal weather changes. This includes:

- » The removal of water vapour
- » The removal of ammonia
- » The removal of carbon dioxide

A good ventilation system will bring in enough fresh air for a growing, healthy flock. Adequate air movement should occur at bird level. You should be able to set the rate of air changes to the right level for the age and weight of the birds, given the outside weather conditions. When ventilation systems are working well and adjusted properly, the litter stays dry, temperatures are uniform, and drafts are prevented.

Air quality is dependent on stocking density, the age of birds, litter quality and depth, ambient temperature and management. You should consult with the equipment manufacturer to determine the appropriate design, ventilation rate, number of fans, etc. for your specific operation.

MD Farmers and/or farm representatives must monitor the quality of the air in the barn daily.

Air quality may be monitored by:

- » Watching for litter that is too wet or too dry. This will provide an estimate of the level of humidity in the barn
- » Observing the behaviour of the birds. Are the birds huddling or spread out evenly throughout the barn? Birds will huddle if the temperature in the barn is uneven or if there are drafts

The humidity range should be targeted for 50–70% relative humidity.

- » Humidity should be maintained at a level that prevents the excessive build up of moisture in the litter and/or the formation of condensation on the walls

Humidity levels above 70% contribute to excessive moisture and ammonia levels. In addition, too little moisture in the litter will cause the litter to become dry and dusty. However, it is recognized that there are many factors that can affect the humidity levels in the barn, some of which are more difficult for the farmer to control. Humidity levels are generally lower at placement. In addition, the range may be exceeded due to outside weather conditions for periods of time and are considered acceptable provided that corrective actions are taken to bring the humidity back into the desired range.

MD The acceptable humidity range is between 50–70% relative humidity. If humidity is out of this range, corrective actions must be taken.

High ammonia levels increase the risk of birds developing respiratory infections, foot pad lesions and hock burns. In addition, immune function may be reduced. At 20 to 25 ppm discomfort to the workers may be noticeable (i.e. eye and nasal irritation). At 10–15 ppm, ammonia may be detected by smell.

HR If ammonia levels exceed 10 ppm, steps should be taken to try to address it to avoid any risk of respiratory damage to the birds.

MD Ammonia must be measured, at minimum once weekly starting at week 4 of grow-out (day 21–27), and measured on each floor at bird level, using an ammonia monitoring device (e.g. strips or tubes). If ammonia exceeds 25 ppm corrective actions must be taken.

Some steps that may be taken to lower ammonia levels in the barn include:

- » Increasing the ventilation rate – the capacity of the ventilation system must be adequate for the stocking density
- » Feeding diets that reduce the level of urea and proteins excreted in the feces
- » Reducing water spillage at the drinkers by ensuring proper height and pressure – nipple drinkers tend to spill less water than bell drinkers
- » Using litter that has a high capacity for holding water
- » Removing wet litter and replacing it with dry bedding
- » Reducing stocking density

High concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO₂) can affect bird welfare. CO₂ is produced by the birds' respiration as well as by burning hydrocarbon fuels used in heating equipment. CO₂ levels are more likely to be elevated in the first week of grow-out when heaters and minimum ventilation are used.

HR It is recommended that CO₂ levels be monitored. Ideally, CO₂ levels should be maintained below 3,000 ppm.

Lighting

Chickens are sensitive to the length of the day and differences in light intensity during the grow-out period. This is why choosing your lighting program is a critical farm management decision. There are many programs available. Variables such as the type and sex of the birds you are raising need to be considered. Your lighting program should also coordinate with your feed and water systems.

Darkness benefits birds by allowing them to sleep and develop 24-hour day/night rhythms, which is important in immune function, growth rate, digestion, preventing lameness, and general health. Providing a dark period controls growth early in life, which gives skeletal and metabolic systems a chance to develop. If mortality issues arise due to metabolic, skeletal or immune issues, providing a period of darkness of 6 to 10 hours may help.

MD During the first three days of the chicks' life you must provide enough illumination for the establishment of normal feed and water intake and normal activity (e.g. no less than 20 lux). Daytime lighting levels must allow chickens to be visually inspected without difficulty (e.g. 5 to 10 lux).

MD

By at least 24 hours from placement, chicks must be provided with a minimum of 1 continuous hour of darkness in each 24-hour period.

The dark period must be gradually increased.

Starting by day 5 from placement through to 7 days prior to catching, birds must have a dark period of at least 4 consecutive hours in each 24-hour period.

MD

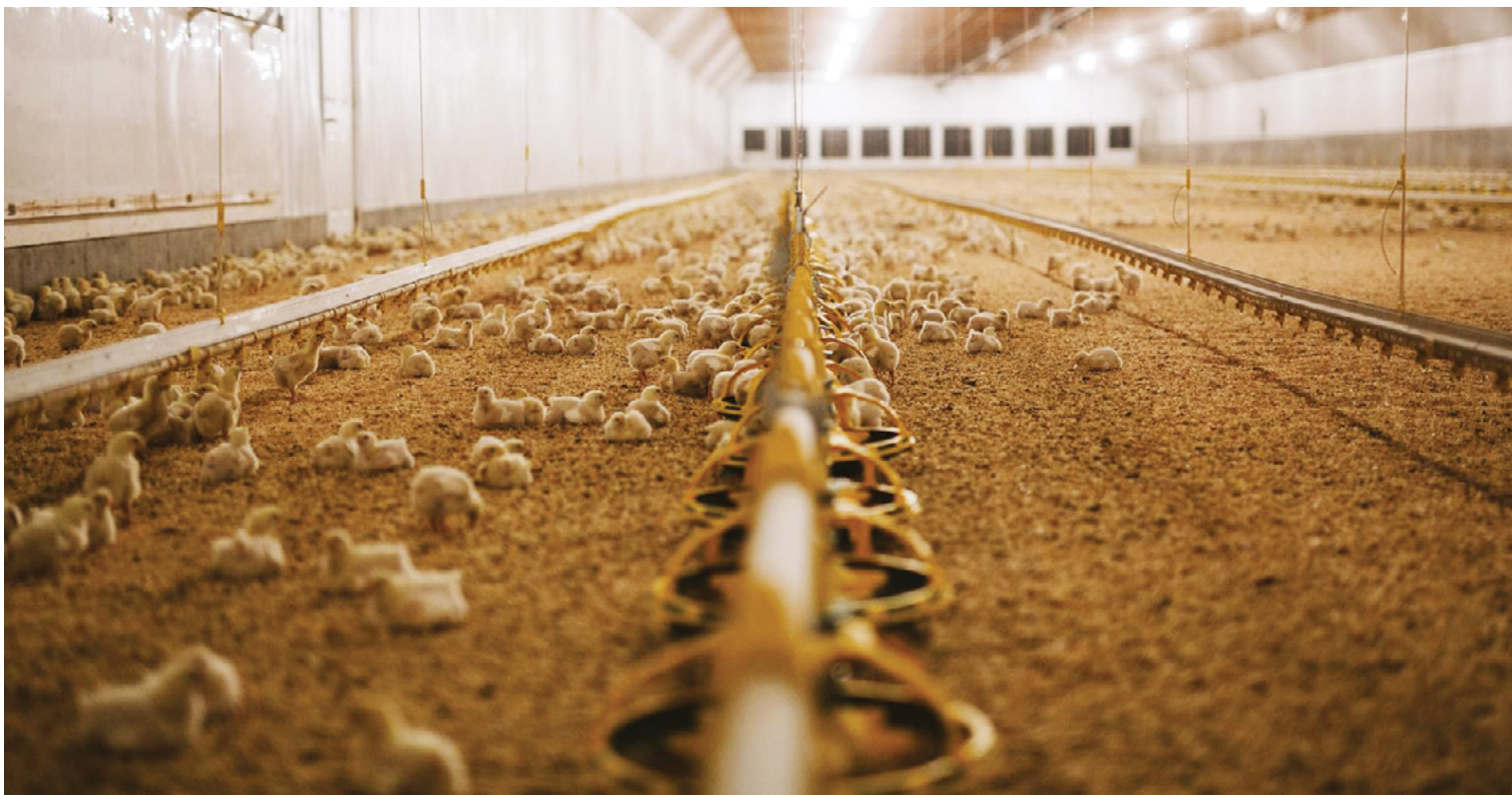
The dark period must be no more than 20% of the light intensity of the light period. During the light period, enough illumination must be provided to allow birds to navigate their surroundings and be visually inspected without difficulty (e.g. 5 to 10 lux). Light intensity may only be reduced temporarily to correct abnormal behaviours.

HR

The maximum lux level during the period of darkness should be no more than 1 lux.

MD

The lighting program must be documented in the SOPs and any deviations must be recorded in the Flock Specific Records (or similar).



Section 4

Stocking Density, Housing System and Litter Management

Stocking Density

Sufficient space must be provided for all birds to have the freedom to walk, turn, sit, preen, flap and stretch their wings, and dustbathe.

MD

Stocking density must be targeted for no more than 31 kg/m² (6.35 lb/ft²) at its highest point before the birds are shipped *unless you meet the requirements outlined below*. Where provincial regulations stipulate a specific stocking density (at or below 31 kg/m² (6.35 lb/ft²)), then those regulations supersede the stocking density requirements of this program.

Density Conversions		
kg/m ²	kg/ft ²	lb/ft ²
31	2.88	6.35
38	3.53	7.78

MD

The total inside floor area available to the birds and the maximum number of birds needed to meet target density at market weight must be recorded in the SOPs.

The maximum number of chicks that can be placed will be influenced by the number and capacity of the feeders and drinkers available as well as the inside floor area available to the birds, and must be taken into account when placing chicks. Refer to the sample calculations for Stocking Density in the SOPs.

MD

For all densities, the number of feeders and drinkers and the inside floor area available to the birds must be appropriate for the number of birds in the barn. You cannot place more chicks than the floor area, feeders and drinkers can accommodate.

Barns that demonstrate an ability to operate under higher densities can adopt a density up to 38 kg/m². These criteria are determined by flock mortality, air quality, husbandry programs, feeding and watering equipment, ventilation systems, and litter control. Farmers raising birds above 31 kg/m² must be vigilant to observe for signs of stress and overcrowding. These indicators include elevated mortality, elevated lameness, poor litter quality, poor growth and poor ventilation. The parameters below are designed as tools for monitoring and preventing these conditions in flocks with a density of over 31 kg/m².

MD

If stocking between **31 kg/m² and 38 kg/m²** (6.35 lb/ft² and 7.78 lb/ft²) the following requirements must be met:

- » Water meters must be available and intake must be recorded daily to monitor for changes in water intake
- » Chickens must not have to travel any farther than 4 m (13 ft) to reach feed or water
- » Minimum and maximum temperatures must be recorded daily
- » Humidity or ammonia meters must be available to ensure that air quality is sufficient. Humidity or ammonia must be measured on each floor of the barn and the minimum and maximum levels over each 24-hour period must be recorded. Corrective actions must be taken if levels are outside of the acceptable range as outlined in Section 2b. Air Quality
- » Mortality, euthanasia and condemnation records must be maintained for each flock. Mortalities and condemnations must not be higher than what would be expected for birds raised at a density of up to 31 kg/m² (6.35 lb/ft²)

Thinning of flocks is considered to be an acceptable practice provided that, at its highest point, stocking density does not exceed 31 kg/m² (6.35 lb/ft²) or up to 38 kg/m² (7.78 lb/ft²) with the above requirements met. Be aware that the practice of thinning represents a biosecurity risk to your flock. Refer to the On-Farm Food Safety Program for recommended procedures during catching.

Housing System

Chickens in Canada are generally raised in clean, climate-controlled barns. They are typically raised in free-run systems where they can move about the barn freely. Broiler chickens may be raised in alternative types of housing systems provided that the animal care requirements outlined in this program are met.

MD

Alternative housing systems that do not meet the stocking density requirements stipulated in this program are not permitted for use.

Litter Management

Good litter management is important for producing healthy birds. Ammonia levels will increase if the litter becomes too wet and may cause the birds to develop problems such as footpad lesions, hock burns and breast blisters. Litter that becomes too dry may contribute to respiratory infections.

MD

All flocks must be provided with good quality (clean, dry and absorbent) fresh bedding of suitable material, particle size, and depth to provide opportunities to express normal behaviour (e.g. scratching, foraging, dust bathing). Wood shavings and chopped straw are examples of suitable bedding.

MD

Litter quality must be monitored daily. If the litter quality is inadequate (that is, too wet or too dry) immediate measures must be taken to improve it.

The following is a guide for determining the moisture level in the litter:

- » When the moisture content is appropriate, the litter should be loosely compacted when squeezed; when squeezed into a ball, the ball should easily fall apart
- » When the moisture content in the litter is too high, the litter will tightly compact when squeezed; when squeezed into a ball the ball remains intact
- » When the moisture content in the litter is too low, the litter will not compact when squeezed; it cannot be squeezed into a ball

MD

Litter must be cleaned out after each flock and replaced with clean bedding material once cleaning of the barn has been completed.



Section 5

Bird Monitoring and Handling

Monitoring During Chick Delivery and Placement

Special care needs to be taken to ensure that chicks settle in well to their environments. It is important to have adequate personnel available to ensure that chicks are unloaded in a timely fashion to prevent chicks from becoming chilled or overheated during unloading.

MD

Once the date and time of delivery is obtained from the hatchery, make sure that the barn is ready for placement of the chicks before the chicks are delivered.

The following procedures apply:

- » The bedding must be clean, soft and dry. An adequate layer is required to absorb the droppings of the chick. The thickness depends on the type of bedding used
- » The barn must be pre-heated in advance of the arrival of the chicks to ensure the chicks' body temperatures remain constant during transfer from the hatchery
- » Drinking lines must be ready and adjusted. An adequate water and feed supply must be available upon arrival of the chicks

HR

Follow the recommendations of your chick supplier for the ideal surface temperature of the bedding at placement. This temperature should be around 32-33°C (90-92°F).

MD

The chicken farmer or one of his/her representatives must always be present at the time of delivery and placement, to make sure that the chicks delivered are in good physical condition and to ensure that the environment is appropriate for the chicks.

Within the first 48 hours following placement, chick cloacal temperatures can be checked to ensure that they are comfortable. Cloacal temperatures should be around 40-40.7°C (104-105.4°F).

MD

Chicks must be handled in a way that prevents injury and minimizes stress. Chick handling protocols must be outlined in the SOPs.

HR

It is recommended that chicks, and boxes of chicks, not be dropped from a height of more than 15 cm onto a hard surface or 30 cm onto a soft surface as this may cause injury.

When placing the chicks, carefully take the chicks' boxes directly inside the barn and spread them throughout the area used for brooding. Release the chicks in a humane manner. Important points for placing are:

- » Boxes of live chicks should be always handled in a level position and never thrown or dropped
- » The chicks should be removed by inclining the box and then withdrawing it from under them with a smooth, swift movement
- » If removing by hand (with the hands forming a scoop), the chicks must not be squeezed
- » Chicks should not be dropped from a distance that would cause harm

MD

You must inspect your new flock as soon as you get the chicks. You must also check and record the flock condition three to four days into the grow-out period. Record your observations. Make note of any corrective actions you take.

The following quality assessment criteria are used at the hatchery level and are suggested to the producer to be used at the reception of their chicks:

- » Alertness: an alert chick has wide-open bright eyes and appears to be curious
- » Vigour: a vigorous chick is instantly active when disturbed and shows no signs of weakness
- » Condition: the condition of the chick is evaluated by handling. A good conditioned chick is firm, not mushy. The navel is healed, the fluff is not matted

and the chick presents no signs of dehydration. Unhealed navels provide an early access route for bacterial infections, resulting in chick losses

- » Normalcy: a normal chick has no apparent deformity showing no signs of abnormality such as twisted beaks, twisted toes, crippled or straddled legs, etc. There should not be noticeably undersized birds within the lot

MD Follow the requirements in CFC's OFFSP to ensure appropriate barn readiness at chick delivery.

Monitoring During the Grow-Out

Regular monitoring of the flock and environment is essential for the early detection and correction of any flock health or management issues. Sometimes, you will have to handle some of your birds for closer examination. For example, this could happen when you see the early clinical signs of a disease. Handling can be stressful to the birds if it is not done properly and injury could result. Being in an inverted position (upside down) for an extended period of time is stressful for birds and can cause discomfort.

MD

Birds must be handled in a way that prevents injury and minimizes stress. Birds must not be carried solely by the head, neck, one wing or tail feathers. Bird handling protocols must be outlined in the SOPs.

MD

You must inspect your chickens at least twice a day and more often during adverse weather. Corrective action must be taken if a problem is observed. Make note of any corrective actions that you take. The flock must be observed for:

- » Sick or injured birds
- » Abnormal respiratory sounds/mouth breathing
- » Dead birds
- » Lameness and inability to rise
- » Body condition
- » Feather condition and cover
- » Normal bird behaviour (including thermal comfort behaviour)

MD

You must check your feed, water, ventilation, heating and lighting systems at least twice daily. Any defective mechanical systems must be attended to without delay.



Section 6

Health Care Practices (Flock Health Plan, Mortality, Euthanasia)

Disease control and flock health management incorporate practices that are designed to optimize the health and welfare of poultry. Wild birds, rodents and insects may be carriers of infectious diseases and must be prevented from entering your barn.

Infectious agents – viruses, bacteria, fungi and parasites – can attack your chickens. They can reduce the welfare of the birds. People, pets, birds, rodents, and other animals can all be carriers. The first line of defence for your flocks is to limit, as much as possible, what comes into contact with them. The second line of defence is your cleaning and disinfection program.

MD Follow the requirements in CFC's OFFSP to ensure appropriate biosecurity, cleaning, disinfection and pest management for your facility.

Flock Health Plan

A flock health plan contributes to bird well-being by providing strategies for disease prevention, rapid diagnosis, and effective treatment. A poultry veterinarian can assist with recommending appropriate vaccinations to prevent infectious diseases as well as internal and external parasites.

A flock health plan may include:

- » Vaccination protocols
- » Protocols for dealing with internal and external parasites
- » Observation of birds for injury or signs of disease
- » Protocols for prevention, detection and treatment of disease or injury, including setting targets for measuring incidences of disease and injuries
- » Protocols for managing sick and injured birds
- » Protocols for culling birds
- » Maintaining flock health and mortality records

A veterinarian should be consulted for advice on the health and welfare of each poultry flock as needed.

MD A flock health plan must be developed and followed.

A sample flock health plan has been provided in the SOPs.

MD The name and contact information of a poultry veterinarian familiar with your farm operation and an alternate must be recorded in the SOPs. While helpful, it is not necessary for the alternate veterinarian to be familiar with the farm.

Precautions must be taken to prevent recurring injuries in the flock. Prompt action must be taken to find the cause of recurring injuries and corrective measures must be taken.

For example, leg disorders can cause pain and discomfort. Lameness and foot pad lesions in birds need to be monitored closely. A method for evaluating lameness can be found in ¹Garner et al. (2002). Lesions may vary from discoloration of the skin to ulcerations and inflammation of the foot pad. Footpad lesions are associated with poor litter conditions (wet litter and high ammonia). Steps should be taken to improve litter quality if lesions are observed in the flock.

MD Farmers must monitor the information provided by the processor after shipment, which may include the incidence of condemnations, hock burn, breast blisters and footpad lesions. A veterinarian or poultry specialist must be consulted and corrective actions taken if recurring problems are identified.

¹ Garner, J.P., Falcone, C., Wakenall, P, Martin, M. & J. A. Mench. 2002. Reliability and validity of a modified gait scoring system and its use in assessing tibial dyschondroplasia in broilers. British Poultry Science. 43: 355-363.

Mortality and Culls

It is important to closely monitor mortality levels as part of the overall assessment of the health of the flock. Tracking the number of culls and the reason for doing so (e.g. sick, not eating, lame) can be helpful in identifying management practices that need to be improved.

MD

Daily mortality and cull levels must be recorded separately. If unexplained mortality exceeds 1% in 24 hours, a veterinarian must be notified. If high mortality occurs immediately after placement, hatchery personnel may be contacted in place of a veterinarian. The problem, corrective action and outcome must be recorded.

HR

Overall flock mortality rates for mixed sex flocks should not exceed the values outlined in the table below. Mortality due to variables outside of the farmer's control, vertically transmitted disease (e.g. hepatitis) or euthanasia (culling) due to variable chick size/stunted growth would fall outside of these parameters.

Due to sex differences in mortality, overall mortality rates for single-sex male flocks may exceed the mortality rates for mixed-sex flocks by 2%.

Table 1. Parameters for mixed-sex flock mortality using the equation $2 + (0.06 \times \text{slaughter age in days})$

Slaughter Age (weeks)	Slaughter Age (days)	Theoretical Flock Mortality (%)
4	28	3.68
5	35	4.10
6	42	4.52
7	49	4.94
8	56	5.36

MD

Watch for clinical signs of a disease and unusually high mortality. If you find a problem, consult a veterinarian. They will give you a diagnosis and treatment recommendations. Keep these reports. If a reportable disease is confirmed or suspected, a veterinarian from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency must be informed. The Provincial Veterinarian or a Provincial laboratory and your Provincial Board must be contacted if a provincially reportable disease is detected.

Signs of illness include:

- » Increased mortality
- » Reduced food and water intake
- » Changes in activity or behaviour
- » Abnormal feather condition
- » Abnormal droppings
- » Respiratory changes

Euthanasia

To alleviate pain and suffering when there is no reasonable prospect for recovery, euthanasia of birds is necessary. It is characterized by rapid, irreversible unconsciousness, followed by prompt death. When performing euthanasia every effort must be made to reduce fear, pain and distress.

MD

Sick or injured chickens must be culled on a daily basis. When it is necessary to cull chickens, they must be euthanized in a humane manner by skilled personnel.

MD

All personnel responsible for euthanizing birds must be trained in appropriate euthanasia techniques.

MD

An acceptable method of euthanasia must be used. See the table below for acceptable euthanasia methods.

MD

All equipment used for euthanasia must be well maintained and used according to the manufacturer's directions.

MD

Birds must be promptly treated or euthanized in a humane manner by skilled personnel when:

- » exhibiting obvious signs of pain
- » experiencing lameness that inhibits or prevents them from walking
- » experiencing lameness that inhibits or prevents them from reaching food and water

MD

Birds must be inspected for signs of consciousness after the euthanasia method has been applied. If signs of consciousness are observed, a second application of the euthanasia method or an alternate method must be applied immediately.

Methods to assess loss of consciousness and death include:

- » Bird does not blink when the surface of the eye is touched (corneal reflex)
- » Lack of rhythmic breathing (check for abdominal movement in the vent area)
- » Lack of vocalization (other than exhalation that occurs as the lungs deflate)
- » Lack of neck muscle tone
- » Lack of heartbeat

MD

Death must be confirmed before leaving birds and disposing of carcasses.

Acceptable Methods of Euthanasia*

Euthanasia Method	Conditions	Comments
Manual Cervical Dislocation	Crushing of the neck bones is unacceptable prior to loss of consciousness This method is restricted to smaller birds (e.g. ≤ 3 kg) although this may vary depending on operator ability	To perform cervical dislocation correctly, the cervical vertebrae must be separated (dislocated), not crushed The site of the dislocation should be as close to the head as possible
Mechanical Cervical Dislocation	Crushing of the neck bones is unacceptable prior to loss of consciousness Device must be purpose-designed and appropriate for the size of bird	To perform cervical dislocation correctly, the cervical vertebrae must be separated (dislocated), not crushed The site of the dislocation should be as close to the head as possible
Non-Penetrating Captive Bolt/ Penetrating Captive Bolt	Correct placement of the device on the head is critical Humane restraint methods (e.g. 2 people, appropriate restraint device) may be necessary	May be more appropriate for large birds

Manual Blunt Force Trauma	<p>Humane restraint methods (e.g. 2 people, appropriate restraint device) may be necessary</p> <p>The impact must be of sufficient force and accurately placed in order to result in immediate loss of consciousness and death in a single blow</p>	<p>Alternative methods should be considered due to the potential for incorrect application</p>
Decapitation	<p>Instrument must be sharp and of appropriate size</p> <p>Procedure must be carried out in one quick motion and result in a complete severance of the head</p> <p>Requires secure restraint of the bird</p>	<p>Need for environmental sanitation (blood)</p> <p>Risk of disease transmission via blood</p>
Gas Inhalation: Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂)	<p>Requires specialized equipment (pressure-reducing regulator, CO₂ cylinder or tank) and a closed chamber to contain gas</p> <p>Gas must be supplied in a precisely regulated and purified form without contaminants or adulterants</p>	<p>May cause brief periods of distress before birds become unconscious</p> <p>Birds should be placed in the chamber in a single layer</p> <p>Use in a well-ventilated area for operator safety</p>

*Note: all methods described in this table are acceptable when the conditions noted have been met.

* This table has been adapted from the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens, and Turkeys* (2016). Refer to the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens, and Turkeys* for the full list of acceptable methods of euthanasia.

Section 7

Emergency Management and Preparedness

Emergency management protocols can protect the welfare of the birds in the event of an emergency (e.g. power failure, fire, flooding, and inclement weather). As farms generally rely on automated equipment, functional standby power systems are needed to ensure that an appropriate environment (feed, water, ventilation, temperature, and lighting) for the birds can be maintained in the event of a power failure. Preparedness includes installation, maintenance, and testing of necessary equipment or systems and personnel awareness.

MD

A monitoring system must be functional to inform you of any power failure and temperature variation outside of critical limits. You must test the monitoring system and record when it was tested at least once per production cycle to ensure it is functioning appropriately.

MD

Your barns must have a standby power system or an alternate method of providing and maintaining adequate ventilation, feeding, watering, temperature and lighting programs at all stages of grow-out. You must test the standby system at least once per production cycle to be sure that a proper environment can be maintained if there is a power failure. A record of this test is to be maintained on file.

HR

It is recommended that a 24-hour emergency supply of water be accessible in case of water interruption. The source of water may be located either on farm or at an identified location off-farm.

MD

A contingency plan for reasonably foreseeable problems that may affect bird welfare must be prepared and reviewed with all personnel. A sample contingency plan has been provided in the SOPs.

MD

Emergency contact information and contact information for key farm staff must be readily available.

In an emergency, such as a disease outbreak or natural disaster, it may be necessary for large numbers of birds to be depopulated. A plan for depopulating entire flocks or a large number of birds provides guidance in the event of an emergency. In the case of depopulation due to a reportable disease, government representatives may be involved in the decision making and depopulation processes.

MD

When mass depopulation is necessary, it must be done in consultation with your veterinarian and the provincial board office must be notified.

Section 8

Catching and Loading

The responsibility of catching and loading is shared between farmers, catching crews and processors. On the farm, you can improve the humane handling of your birds through proper planning, building design and easy accessibility for load outs. Buildings should be designed to discourage needless transfer of birds between handlers.

Automatic catching machines and modular transport systems may help alleviate catching and loading problems and may reduce injury to the birds. Only humane catching machines should be considered for use.

Farm and Building Design

Proper building design and accessibility to transport vehicles greatly improves the humane handling of birds.

MD

When building new barns or renovating existing barns, the following features must be included in your barn design:

- » Design facilities to minimize the risk of birds getting wet during the loading process (e.g. eaves troughs over loading doors)
- » Protect doorways from falling ice
- » Adapt building design to the catching and loading equipment used, and have sufficient number and size of door openings
- » Ensure that loading areas, lighting, and equipment permit efficient and humane bird handling
- » Construct driveways and yards to facilitate unobstructed, safe and easy access of transport vehicles

As an example, when birds are loaded into crates, buildings should have a door located every 15 m (49 ft) along the length of the barn and not more than 7.62 m (25 ft) from the end doors (where applicable). It is recommended that doors be large enough to enable

the workers and equipment to pass through easily. When modular catching is utilized, a door large enough to enable the equipment and modules to pass through easily should be available. Consult your normal service provider for guidance on the type of catching and loading equipment that will be used.

MD

Openings through which birds are passed must be large enough to ensure that birds can be transferred in a way that minimizes injury.

MD

Driveways and yards must be maintained to facilitate unobstructed, safe and easy access by transport vehicles.

Catching and Loading

At the time of catching, the welfare of the flock is a shared responsibility between the farm, the catching company, transporters and processors. There is a point of transaction where the care and control of the flock is passed from one responsible party to the next. Each party must cooperate with the others to ensure flock welfare.

The catching crew is responsible for the collection and loading of the flock. The farmer or designate remains responsible for barn operation such as lighting, ventilation, etc.

MD

A letter of assurance that animal welfare protocols will be followed by the catching crew must be attained.

Prior to the catching crew arriving at the farm:

MD

In consultation with processors, pre-transport feed withdrawal must be managed to minimize the time that birds are off feed.

MD

The flock must be evaluated for fitness and those birds deemed unfit for transport must be euthanized or separated out.

It is suggested that ventilation be increased during catching to improve the working conditions for the catching crews. Birds should be acclimated to the cooler temperatures prior to the arrival of the catching crews.

- MD** In consultation with processors, the flock and environmental conditions, as well as expected journey duration, must be taken into consideration, when loading birds for transport.

At the time of the arrival of the catching crew and throughout the catching process:

- MD** Prior to catching, the farmer (or designate) and catching supervisor must have a meeting to discuss the condition of the barn, health of the flock and the fitness of the birds for transport.
- MD** Feeders and drinkers must be lifted or removed, and the light intensity lowered to facilitate easier catching of the birds.
- MD** Water must be available until catching commences.
- MD** Farmers or a farm representative must be available locally (on site or by phone) to assist the catching crews should a problem arise.
- MD** In consultation with processors, wet birds must not be loaded in cold weather if there is a risk that birds will become chilled.

At the end of the catching process:

- MD** As soon as possible, and not longer than 8 hours, from the completion of loading birds that are not loaded for transport and not euthanized must continue to be cared for as outlined in this program. Euthanasia is the responsibility of the farmer.

While catching crews are typically hired by the processing plants, in some instances, farmers may hire their own catching crews, do their own catching and/or own their own catching equipment.

- MD** When hiring catching crews, acting as a catcher or using personal equipment for catching, farmers or farm representatives must meet the applicable required practices in the most recent version of the *Code of Practice*² for the care and handling of broiler chickens pertaining to catching crews.

Refer to the most recent version of the *Code of Practice for Transportation* for further information on the humane transportation of poultry.

² Note: in the 2016 version of the *Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens and Turkeys* this refers to section 7.3 and/or 7.4.

Section 9

Record Keeping and Corrective Actions

Record Keeping

The objective of record keeping is to provide evidence of animal care on the farm. The record-keeping forms are designed to help you document the level of animal care on your farm. If you already have your own record system or an individual animal care program with forms meeting the objectives of this program, you do not have to change. You will, however, want to ensure that your system refers to the pertinent sections of this manual when the time comes for the audit on your farm.

A set of forms has been provided as an example of a record-keeping system that can be used. Feel free to use these forms.

Here are some general guidelines for filling out the forms specific to each flock:

- » When you complete an activity, check the box beside it on the form or fill out the appropriate section on the form
- » Where applicable, write in the date you completed an activity on the line provided. This will be important if you have to show that enough time has passed between certain activities
- » For any space that does not apply to your operations, indicate this with a stroke or write “N/A”

Standard Operating Procedures

MD

A template to indicate the SOPs for the ACP is included with this program. These forms must be completed prior to initial implementation on the farm. The information on the SOPs forms must be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. Sign and date the form whenever this review is performed.

MD

The static information in the Stocking Density section of the SOPs must be available for each barn, and must be reviewed annually and updated as necessary on, at minimum, an annual basis.

A sample of how to perform the calculations has been provided.

The SOPs template has been provided, but farmers can use any form they wish, and do not have to re-write information that can be readily found elsewhere on the farm. For each section, describe in detail the procedures used on your farm as well as any additional comments that should be documented.

Flock Specific Records

MD

The information recorded on the Flock Specific Forms (or similar) must be completed for each flock, and for each barn.

The record forms for the *Raised by a Canadian Farmer* ACP and OFFSP have been combined to make implementation easier.

To complete these forms properly:

- » For the barn preparation section, record the date for each activity. A description of the activity, chemical product and/or concentration is required where a “*” is indicated
- » For the day-to-day record forms, the dates can be customized to your farm. Each day that an activity occurs, a checkmark should be placed in that box
- » All information about the day of catch as it relates to your farm is to be completed on these forms
- » In the Density section, complete the table with the information requested. For flocks that have been thinned, include a calculation for both the density when the flock was thinned and a calculation for the density at final catch

- » In the deviation chart, include anything that happens outside of the SOPs during a flock cycle. Deviations only need to be recorded if they exceed the upper or lower limits outlined in the SOPs
- » Depending on the length of your grow-out, additional pages have been included to allow for longer grow-out periods

MD Farmers will be required to retain at least one years' worth of records at all times.

Corrective Actions

Corrective actions for the ACP will be handled similarly to Chicken Farmers of Canada's OFFSP. This process is outlined in the On-Farm Audit and Certification Process section of this manual.

MD Each time a deviation occurs during a flock cycle, the deviation, and the reason behind it (for example: target density may be exceeded due the processing date being moved etc.) must be recorded on the Flock Specific Record Forms, or a similar form. A single deviation does not directly affect certification. Based on the reason for the deviation a change in management practice may need to take place in order to prevent the deviation from re-occurring. The farmer must record any changes that are made.

MD

For the following program requirements that may be impacted by factors outside of the farmers control, a one-time deviation does not necessarily indicate that there is a problem with management:

- » Stocking density
- » Air quality
- » Environmental temperature
- » Litter management
- » Feed and water

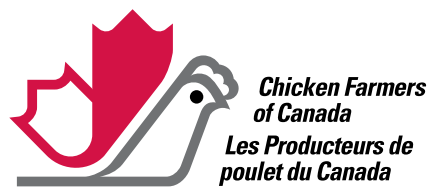
However, if a particular deviation becomes an ongoing occurrence (e.g. re-occurs within the next three flocks), the farmer must take corrective actions in order to receive/maintain certification.

MD

When a deviation is found during an audit the auditor will request that corrective actions be made. The farmer and the auditor will agree on an expected date of completion. A corrective action request form will be provided to the farmer by the auditor.

A follow-up audit will occur to ensure the requested corrective actions have been completed.





www.chickenfarmers.ca