



# **NATIONAL CHICKEN COUNCIL BROILER WELFARE GUIDELINES AND AUDIT CHECKLIST**



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# National Chicken Council Broiler Welfare Guidelines and Audit Checklist

The National Chicken Council (NCC) is the national trade association representing vertically integrated broiler producer-processors. NCC recommends the following guidelines to its members to assure the humane treatment of broilers and to promote the production of quality products.

## **Preface**

According to the World Organization for Animal Health Terrestrial Animal Health Code, good welfare is when the animal is healthy, comfortable, well-nourished, safe, and not suffering from pain, fear, or distress. Animals must also be able to express behaviors that are important for their physical and mental state. Animals' physical needs are relatively easily discussed, described, and studied, but their mental states and needs can be more difficult to characterize. We recognize this understanding is an ongoing discussion and evolving science. With that in mind, the NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines are updated every two years to include new science-based parameters.

The NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines have been developed to evaluate the current commercial strains of broiler chicken by auditing how these birds are raised, housed, managed, and processed. It is important to note that such standards may not be appropriate for other types of poultry as management practices may differ.

The following principles (which apply to all types of housing and strains of chickens) were considered in the development of this document:

- 1). Poultry raised for food should be cared for in ways that minimize fear, pain, stress, and suffering while promoting measurable positive welfare outcomes.
- 2). Guidelines for welfare should balance scientific knowledge, practical application, and professional judgment with consideration of ethical and societal values.
- 3). It is the welfare of the chickens themselves that is foremost, not how humans might perceive a practice or an environment.
- 4). Poultry should be treated with respect throughout their lives and provided a humane death when processed for food or when they are euthanized for any other reason.
- 5). These guidelines are focused on true indicators of broiler welfare and are not focused on prescriptive requirements that may have little to no impact on broiler welfare. As a result, these guidelines place special emphases on several key welfare indicators (KWI), including, but not limited to wing, leg, and foot pad health, mobility, insensibility, and other like parameters. It is the intent of the guidelines to provide for optimum broiler

welfare. Allowances have been set with an emphasis on continuous improvement. Companies must have robust, well-documented, and accurately implemented broiler welfare programs for hatchery, growout, catching and transportation, and processing.

- 6). The NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines and Audit Checklist are formally reviewed every two years alternating between a review conducted by a group of scientific advisors and a review conducted by the NCC Broiler Welfare Committee. The intent of these formal reviews is to focus on continuous improvement with increased emphasis on KWIs. Allowances for these KWIs may become more stringent in subsequent versions. All recommended changes are approved by NCC's Board of Directors.
- 7). The NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines and Audit Checklist are reviewed and certified by the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO) on an annual basis.

## **Introduction**

Domestic broilers are adaptable to a variety of conditions. Today's broiler chicken has been selected to thrive under modern management conditions. Management practices that promote good health and production, prevent disease, and minimize stress are consistent with generally accepted criteria of humane treatment. The specific applications of these criteria are spelled out in these guidelines and the checklist is used to assess compliance. Broiler chicken producers and processors endorsing these guidelines must designate a management person or group within the company responsible for promoting adherence to the guidelines. NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines, which outline best practices for broiler production and processing, are categorized into the following sections:

- A. Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training
- B. Hatchery Operations
- C. Growout Operations
  - C1. Designated Management, Training, and Emergency Plans
  - C2. Nutrition and Feeding
  - C3. Comfort and Shelter
  - C4. Health Care and Monitoring
  - C5. Flock Husbandry
- D. Catching and Transportation
- E. Processing Operations
- F. Abuse and Audit Failure

## **History**

February 1999	Guidelines originally approved by Board of Directors
January 2001	Revision approved by Task Force, additional revisions made by Executive Committee
February 2001	Additional revisions made by Board of Directors, revisions approved by Board of Directors
July 2001	Revisions recommended by Task Force
September 2001	Revisions approved by Executive Committee
October 2001	Revisions approved by Board of Directors
December 2001	Revisions recommended by Task Force
January 2002	Revisions approved by Executive Committee
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March 2003	Amendment approved by Board of Directors
January 2005	Revisions approved by Executive Committee
April 2005	Amendments approved by Executive Committee
December 2009	Revisions approved by Task Force
January 2010	Minor edits approved by Task Force Chairman, revisions approved by Executive Committee and Board of Directors
January 2014	Minor edits approved by Task Force Chairman, revisions approved by Executive Committee and Board of Directors
November 2016	Revisions recommended by Task Force
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July 2018	Certified by the Professional Animal Auditors Certification Organization (PAACO)
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December 2022	Recertified by the Professional Animal Auditors Certification Organization (PAACO)

# National Chicken Council Broiler Welfare Guidelines

## A. Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training

Failure to meet all parameters outlined in the Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training section of the guidelines will result in an automatic failure of the audit.

- 1). The company must have a written broiler welfare program that provides a clear understanding of how the program is to be implemented throughout the company.
- 2). Current senior management must endorse and fully-support the broiler welfare program.
- 3). The company must have a person or management group responsible for broiler welfare throughout the operation.
- 4). The company must have, implement, and document an internal (i.e., first party) and an external (i.e., third party) auditing program.
- 5). The company must have a documented mechanism in place whereby broiler welfare violations can be reported without threat of retaliation.
- 6). Signs stating the importance of broiler welfare with contact information for reporting incidents should be posted prominently in locations where birds are handled.
- 7). The company must have a written program in place to address all non-conformances should they occur, which must include corrective actions.
- 8). All employees who work with live birds must be trained at least annually on the fundamentals of chicken behavior and welfare including that abuse or neglect of birds is not tolerated under any circumstance. An optional training program is included in Appendix 1. A cervical dislocation training guide is included in Appendix 5.
- 9). Training must be understood by everyone. Training must be documented for each employee and should include how the training was conducted (classroom, online, in-person, on-farm, language used, etc.) as well as the tasks and responsibilities for which the employees were trained.
- 10). All employees who handle live birds must also be trained annually using a SOP-based or task-specific training program that focuses on acceptable management practices at the specific locations where they work. All procedures involving live birds must be accomplished in such a manner as to minimize stress and injuries. Confirm that there is a training program in place focused on each of the following areas:

- a). Hatchery Operations. The hatchery operation must have a written training program covering all activities performed at the hatchery. Training may include chick handling, chick processing (which may include sexing, vaccinating procedures, beak conditioning), culling, euthanasia, vaccination procedures, and chick loading and transportation.
- b). Growout Operations. The growout operation must have a written training program covering all activities performed in growout. Training may include chick placement, general signs of disease, culling, euthanasia, handling and catching techniques, and vaccination procedures.
- c). Catching and Transportation. The live-haul department must have a written training program covering all activities performed both by company personnel and contract catching crews. Training may include bird catching, handling, culling, euthanasia, and transportation.
- d). Processing Operations. The processing operation must have a written training program covering all activities performed at the processing plant. Training may include bird handling, shackling, stunning, slaughter, and euthanasia.

## **B. Hatchery Operations**

- 1). **Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the hatchery operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**
- 2). The hatchery must have a person responsible for ensuring that proper broiler welfare practices are always followed and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.
- 3). The hatchery must have a written plan addressing a disaster with the potential to negatively impact bird welfare including, but not limited to, loss of power, water outages, structural damage, emergency depopulation, etc.
- 4). The hatchery must have a written program for monitoring the hatchery environment (such as egg room/incubator temperature and humidity) during setting, hatching, processing, and holding with written or electronic logs available for the auditor to review.
- 5). The facility must have an alarm system in place to alert hatchery personnel to failure of critical systems (heat, electricity, etc.). A documented emergency power back-up program must be in place and available for review by the auditor and should include a method by which the hatchery can gain access to supplemental power.
- 6). Both manual and automated chick processing systems must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner that prevents injuries to the chicks. All equipment operation must be examined at the start of the hatch day to ensure chick injuries are prevented. Equipment checks must be documented.

- 7). Chicks must not be dropped from heights more than 12 inches.
- 8). The hatchery must have a written program to monitor and respond to chick injuries during processing and handling, should they occur. Injuries should be recorded daily at a minimum with documented corrective action taken, if necessary.
- 9). The hatchery must have a written guide outlining which chick defects should result in culling.
- 10). Chicks must be evaluated at a minimum of once per day for equipment-related injury by hatchery personnel. Results should be recorded. Prior to shipping, evaluate chick injury by examining a minimum of 10 boxes of chicks selected at random (total of 1,000 chicks) for severe equipment injuries (torn legs, broken legs, or wings). Corrective action must be taken and documented if more than 10 chicks (1%) with equipment-related injuries are discovered during a single 10-box check. The auditor should review documentation for daily equipment-related injury checks.
- 11). The auditor should also evaluate chicks for equipment-related injury. Prior to shipping, evaluate chick injury by examining 10 boxes of chicks selected at random (total of 1,000 chicks) for severe equipment injuries (torn legs, broken legs, or wings).
- 12). The separator must be checked for proper operation at least once per shift. The hatchery must have a written protocol for the separation process and should include the actions to prevent any live chicks from entering the tray washer.
  - a). Mechanical separation: Equipment must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner that prevents injuries to the chicks and protects personnel.
  - b). Manual separation: Equipment must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner that prevents injuries to the chicks and protects personnel. Staff should be trained to carefully handle chicks during the separation and chicks should not drop more than 12 inches when being moved from the hatcher baskets to the belt or box.
- 13). If maceration is used, the macerator must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner that results in immediate fragmentation and death of chicks and embryonated eggs. Chicks should not drop more than 12 inches when going into the macerator. In the event the primary system is not functioning, the hatchery must have a documented backup plan in place so that repairs can be made or an alternative, approved method can be used. No chicks can be placed in the macerator until it is operational. If gas is used for euthanasia, it must be verified that the chicks are dead when it is safe to do so (i.e., the gas has been turned off). There must be no live chicks in the waste disposal container after gassing. Different types of systems exist for handling hatchery waste:
  - a). Closed-macerator system: Hatchery waste cannot be seen in this closed system. The operation must be verified by the function of the system (noise/vibrations) when in use. A pile-up of waste in the feeding hopper is an



indicator of a system malfunction. There should be no live chicks in the hatchery waste stream post-maceration.

- b). Open-macerator system: Hatchery waste should be verified in the collection containers only when it is safe to do so. There should be no live chicks in the hatchery waste stream post-maceration.

- 14). **Regardless of the approved euthanasia method used, a live chick in the hatchery waste stream after the completion of the euthanasia process is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the hatchery operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**
- 15). Only methods of euthanasia applicable to poultry approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA, 2020) can be used for culls, pips, and embryonated eggs. Approved euthanasia methods can be found in Appendix 10. The hatchery must have a written program for euthanasia and disposal of pips and culled chicks.
- 16). Culled chicks and pips must be euthanized after each flock change at a minimum. The number of culls (not pips) must be documented.
- 17). The hatchery must have a written program for embryonated eggs that are removed from the system (in-ovo vaccination, break-outs, depopulation, etc.) to be euthanized during the same shift in which they are removed from the system.
- 18). Maintaining an appropriate environment is critical to the comfort and health of the chicks. The hatchery must have a temperature range goal for the chick holding area to allow chicks to maintain normal body temperature. Since layouts and airflow differ among hatcheries, each hatchery must establish and document holding room temperatures.
- 19). Temperature-related behaviors should be used to determine the acceptable temperature of the holding room. The hatchery should check ten random stacks in the presence of the auditor. Nine of the ten stacks must demonstrate appropriate temperature-related behavior as defined in the company's program.
- 20). The hatchery must have a written program in place to retrieve any loose chicks while maintaining employee safety. This must happen, at a minimum, after each flock change.
- 21). The hatchery must have a written program in place to ensure that all live chicks are removed from equipment (hatcher trays and chick boxes) so that no live chicks enter the tray wash equipment. The program should include how the hatchery will minimize chicks remaining in hatcher trays and/or chick boxes prior to the tray wash equipment.

- 22). The auditor should observe 25 consecutive chick boxes and/or 25 consecutive hatcher baskets entering the tray wash equipment. This observation should be performed only if the equipment is available for auditing. The auditor must document any findings.
- 23). A written chick delivery vehicle SOP, for both daily operations and for emergencies, must be available for review by the auditor.
- 24). Transport vehicles for chicks must be equipped with temperature-control capabilities, and with alarms should these systems fail during transport when the driver is physically separated from the chick environment.

## **C. Growout Operations**

### **C1. Designated Management and Emergency Plans**

- 1). **Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the growout operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**
- 2). Growout operations must have a person responsible for ensuring that proper broiler welfare practices are always followed and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.
- 3). The growout operation must have a written plan for disaster response and recovery, including, but not limited to, SOPs addressing structural damage, loss of power, water and feed outages, and emergency depopulation due to natural disasters, disease outbreaks, etc. using a Federal and/or State-approved method.
- 4). When the ventilation system is dependent on electrical power, confirm that generator checks are performed and documented at least monthly.
- 5). The growout operation must have an alarm system or regular monitoring system in place to alert farm personnel about failures of critical systems (water, electricity, etc.).
- 6). The growout operation must have a written plan for expected temperatures, lighting programs, and ventilation levels within the house appropriate to bird age, size, and activity level.
- 7). The auditor must confirm that written plans for temperature, lighting, and ventilation within the house are being met.
- 8). The growout operation must have current contact information for local emergency services, and each producer must display a list of emergency contacts at a minimum of one location on the farm. This list must be reviewed annually.

## **C2. Nutrition and Feeding**

- 1). Diets must be formulated, produced, and fed to prevent all signs of nutritional deficiency and to promote good health and normal maintenance and growth. Formulations should be reviewed by a poultry nutritionist.
- 2). The feed mill must meet good manufacturing practices (GMP) for feed production and must have documented GMPs for feed production.
- 3). Feeder and watering space must meet manufacturers' recommendations or good poultry husbandry practices. Feed and watering systems must be sited and adjusted in height as the birds grow so that these systems are easily accessible by all birds.
- 4). All feeding and drinking systems must be checked for proper operation daily.
- 5). Water consumption must be routinely monitored and recorded daily.

## **C3. Comfort and Shelter**

- 1). Poultry housing and equipment must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner to protect the birds from adverse environmental conditions, including typical seasonal temperatures and precipitation, as well as from predators and wild birds.
- 2). Poultry housing, equipment, and environment must be maintained to avoid sharp edges and protrusions to prevent injury or entrapment. Observe equipment and environment throughout the house during the audit.
- 3). A written biosecurity program must be designed, established, and implemented to minimize any negative impacts on bird welfare and protect flock health. Components of a biosecurity program should include provisions for, but are not limited to, a control program for rodents, predators, or other pests such as insects, visitor entry requirements, mortality disposal, and traffic control. Companies should consider the [National Poultry Improvement Plan Program Standards' Biosecurity Principles](http://www.poultryimprovement.org/documents/ProgramStandardsJanuary2017.pdf)<sup>1</sup>, as well as other currently available information, when designing biosecurity procedures. Confirm that the company has a written biosecurity plan.
- 4). A written chick placement SOP must include parameters on chick placement, health, and comfort. A written brooding SOP must include information on house and bedding temperature, ammonia level, feed and water availability, and lighting.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Agriculture – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services. (2017, January) *National Poultry Improvement Plan Program Standards*. Standard E – Biosecurity Principles. Retrieved from <http://www.poultryimprovement.org/documents/ProgramStandardsJanuary2017.pdf>.

- 5). Ventilation systems must be designed, maintained, and operated in such a manner as to provide optimal air quality at all times. The company must have a written protocol for minimum ventilation requirements, which must include specifications for maintaining temperature and humidity.
- 6). Ammonia in the atmosphere must not exceed 25 parts per million at bird head height. A documented ammonia monitoring program must be in place which must include an objective monitoring method and appropriate corrective actions should the maximum ammonia level be exceeded.
- 7). Two houses per farm on three separate farms must be evaluated for atmospheric ammonia at bird head height during the audit. Each house must be scored independently.
  - a). One farm must have chicks that are seven days of age or less. Evaluate two houses. Score each house independently.
  - b). One farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Evaluate two houses. Score each house independently.
  - c). One farm must have birds within seven days of processing. Evaluate two houses. Score each house independently.
- 8). Litter moisture must be evaluated in the middle of the house, not immediately under or around drinking or feeding systems. Litter should be loosely compacted when squeezed in the hand. If the litter remains in a clump when it is squeezed in the hand, it is too wet. Two houses per farm on three separate farms must be evaluated for litter moisture during the audit. Each house must be scored independently.
  - a). One farm must have chicks that are seven days of age or less. Evaluate two houses. Score each house independently.
  - b). One farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Evaluate two houses. Score each house independently.
  - c). One farm must have birds within seven days of processing. Evaluate two houses. Score each house independently.
- 9). Foot pad health must be assessed at the processing plant by the auditor using the [AAAP Broiler Foot Condition Scoring Guide](#) (Appendix 4) to score paws as either a pass (Score 0 or 1) or fail (Score 2). Evaluate a random sample of 200 paws at the processing plant for footpad health. Points for this parameter are attributed to the Growout Operations section of the audit.

#### **C4. Health Care and Monitoring**

- 1). Access to a licensed veterinarian must be available.

- 2). Each company must have a written flock health and welfare monitoring plan developed in consultation with a veterinarian. This plan should include, but is not limited to, information about: the veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR, as defined by AVMA), immunization programs (including training of those who handle birds for immunizations or blood testing), daily flock checks, daily mortality/morbidity monitoring which should include detailed culling criteria, emergency depopulation, euthanasia procedures, gait monitoring, and when, how, and under what circumstances a producer reports a disease, sudden increase in mortality, or other health situation to a designated person for determination of corrective action.
- 3). Each company must have a written plan for downtime between flocks developed in consultation with a veterinarian. The written plan should include, but is not limited to, documentation of days between flocks, cleaning and disinfection procedures, and maintenance of housing and equipment. Consultation with the veterinarian, service technician, or live production manager with written documentation is required before the downtime period is reduced.
- 4). Flocks must be inspected at least twice a day and all mortality must be removed at least once daily. Confirm that mortality is removed and recorded daily.
- 5). If a bird is found that requires euthanasia, it must be done in a timely manner. The company's written program must include expectations and training related to on-farm culling procedures using approved methods of euthanasia. If the situation arises during an audit where a bird requires euthanasia, the auditor should evaluate that euthanasia practices are conducted in accordance with the company's written program. Only methods of euthanasia applicable to poultry approved by AVMA (AVMA, 2020) can be used on-farm. Approved euthanasia methods can be found in Appendix 10.
- 6). Withdrawal of feed and water before processing is necessary for sanitary processing and for improving food safety.
  - a). Feed withdrawal must not exceed 18 hours prior to processing.
  - b). Water withdrawal must not exceed one hour prior to the start of catch for that house.

**C5. Flock Husbandry**

- 1). Birds should have space to express normal behaviors such as eating, drinking, dust bathing, preening, etc. Stocking density will depend on the target market weight, type of housing, ventilation system, feeder/drinker equipment, litter management, and husbandry. Stocking density is determined at the end of the flock based on target market weight, by adjusting the initial placement numbers with the average mortality (defined as mortality over the life of the flock) and must not exceed the following:

***Maximum Bird Weight Range***

Below 4.5 lbs liveweight  
4.5 to 5.5 lbs liveweight

***Maximum Stocking Density***

6.5 pounds per square foot  
7.5 pounds per square foot

5.6 to 7.5 lbs liveweight  
More than 7.5 lbs liveweight

8.5 pounds per square foot  
9.0 pounds per square foot

- 2). Except for the first week and last week of growout, birds must be provided a minimum of four hours of darkness within a 24-hour period. While ideal that these four hours are consecutive, they may be divided within the 24-hour period (see Appendix 3 for details). During the period(s) of darkness, light levels at bird height must not exceed 10 percent of the light level during the period(s) of light. The auditor should verify that light levels at bird height which may be done by viewing electronic or written records.
- 3). Recognizing that there is not an optimum light intensity that may be uniformly applied to all broiler chicken strains, house types, lighting sources, or growout programs, a written lighting program must be available for auditor review and must be adhered to. Consultation with a veterinarian or poultry welfare specialist is required for the design of a flock lighting program. Measurements of the chosen light intensity must be taken at bird height, directly beneath the light source.
- 4). To monitor bird leg health and their ability to access feed and water, gait scoring must be performed by the company once per flock at a minimum. The results must be documented.
- 5). During the audit, the auditor must walk approximately 100 feet between the wall and the first line of drinkers and observe the birds' gait. Record the number of birds that cannot walk five feet or there is obvious lameness (Score of 2) using the U.S. Gait Scoring System found in Appendix 2. The intent is to ensure adequate culling throughout the house and the bird's ability to access feed and water regardless of the age of the flock. Two houses per farm on three separate farms must be gait scored.
  - a). One farm must have chicks that are seven days of age or less. Evaluate two houses. Score each house independently.
  - b). One farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Evaluate two houses. Score each house independently.
  - c). One farm must have birds within seven days of processing. Evaluate two houses. Score each house independently.

## **D. Catching and Transportation**

- 1). **Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the catching and transportation section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**

- 2). The live-haul department must have a person responsible for ensuring that proper broiler welfare practices are always followed and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.
- 3). Any birds found during catching that are unfit for transport should not be loaded and must be euthanized. A company must have a written plan for handling birds unfit for transport which must include parameters for euthanasia, time to euthanasia, etc.
- 4). An individual responsible for euthanizing birds unfit for transport must be designated by the company and must be trained annually on methods of euthanasia. If the situation arises during an audit where a bird requires euthanasia, the auditor should evaluate that euthanasia practices are conducted in accordance with the company's written program by the designated individual. Only methods of euthanasia applicable to poultry approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA, 2020) can be used on farm. Approved euthanasia methods can be found in Appendix 10.
- 5). The live-haul department must have a written plan for emergency response and recovery, including, but not limited to, truck accidents. Incidents must be recorded, the effectiveness of the response plan must be internally evaluated, and necessary adjustments made to the plan to improve response effectiveness.
- 6). A company must have a written catching procedure for both hand catching and mechanical catching which must include, but is not limited to, the maximum number of birds that can be carried per hand, active record-keeping to assess and measure welfare outcomes (such as DOAs, broken legs/wings, bruises, etc.), a feedback mechanism by which measured welfare outcomes are communicated to the catching crew, a prescribed timeframe by which this information is communicated back to the catching crew, and defined corrective actions should issues arise.
- 7). Birds must never be lifted, carried, or dragged by the wing or neck. Birds must never be thrown or placed on their back in transport modules. Catching must be conducted in a manner that minimizes bird stress and does not cause bird injury. During catching, auditors must observe a minimum of five and a maximum of 10 transport modules being loaded and record any instances of mishandling during the catching, handling, and loading process.
- 8). Transport modules are made up of separate transport compartments which must be appropriately sized and in good repair so that no bird can be injured or escape during transit (additional information is available in Appendix 9). Transport compartment damage, including large holes, broken or missing doors, or broken (not bent) wires, should be assessed when evaluating the condition of the individual compartments. The auditor must inspect a total of 200 individual transport compartments (not 200 transport modules) between a minimum of two and a maximum of four empty trailers for signs of damage that can injure birds or allow them to escape during transit. This audit point may also be verified at the processing plant.

- 9). The company must have a written program to protect birds from adverse environmental conditions (weather, bright lights, etc.) during the loading process and transport to the processing facility. This program must include the use of interventions such as light controls, fans, misters, or side boards as appropriate.
- 10). **Loss of birds from trailers during transportation must be prevented. To audit this point, a bird being loaded in a transport compartment that is damaged in a manner that would allow for a bird to escape is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the catching and transportation section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**
- 11). Density in the transport modules should permit the birds to sit in a single layer. Examine ten random transport modules to ensure all birds are in a single layer and are right-side up.

**E. Processing Operations for Electrical Stun\* (religious processing exemption)**

- 1). **Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**
- 2). Processing operations must have a person responsible for ensuring that proper broiler welfare practices are always followed and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.
- 3). A written emergency response plan must be in place in the event of a utility outage, mechanical breakdown, or some other event that limits the processing of birds. This written plan must include a response timeframe to address issues related to live birds during all stages of processing including holding, shackling, and stunning.
- 4). The company must have a written program to protect birds from adverse environmental conditions while in holding sheds or during the unloading process.
  - a). Holding areas should be covered and equipped with fans (and misters if necessary) or heaters to ensure proper cooling/warming of birds according to the company guidelines.
  - b). Procedures for ventilation/cooling/heating must have designated environmental conditions at which fans, misters (if present), and heaters are to be operated.
- 5). Documentation must be available to demonstrate the total time elapsed from completion of catching to processing. If the total time from completion of catching to processing is



greater than 12 hours, additional documentation is required which must include total time elapsed, reason for extended time, and corrective actions implemented.

- 6). Given that birds may move during transportation, transport modules must be evaluated at the processing plant to ensure that birds are in a single layer only. Examine ten random transport modules to ensure all birds are in a single layer.
- 7). Written procedures must be in place to retrieve loose birds from holding sheds, live receiving, and at shackling that emphasize timeliness and worker safety.
- 8). The plant must have a written policy in place for euthanasia which must be performed by trained plant personnel on a timely basis. Only methods of euthanasia applicable to poultry approved by AVMA (AVMA, 2020) can be used at the processing plant. Approved euthanasia methods can be found in Appendix 10.
- 9). DOAs averaging over 0.4% on a weekly basis must result in an internal investigation and the cause of elevated DOAs must be documented. Documentation must be reviewed.
- 10). **No live bird should be discarded as a DOA. Injured or sick birds removed from processing must be properly euthanized before placement in a DOA bin. A live bird in the DOA bin is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**
- 11). Unloading:
  - a). Transportation modules must be lifted and moved from trailers in a manner that does not injure the birds. Evaluate a minimum of five transport modules but no more than ten transport modules being lifted and moved from trailers.
  - b). The unloading and conveyor system must be designed, maintained, and operated to avoid injury to the birds. Conveyors must have adequate space to accommodate the birds with no obstructions. Birds should not be unloaded on top of other birds. Evaluate a minimum of five transport modules but no more than ten transport modules being unloaded to ensure birds are not being unloaded on top of other birds.
  - c). Birds remaining in transportation modules after unloading must be gently removed. Birds must never be lifted by the wings. Evaluate a minimum of five transport modules but no more than ten transport modules to ensure no birds are remaining in transportation modules.
- 12). **Any live bird left in a transportation compartment before reloading a transportation module onto a trailer is a major non-conformance. All live birds retrieved from transportation compartments must be humanely returned to the**

**processing system. The auditor must observe five transportation modules but no more than ten transportation modules for instances of live birds being left in a transportation compartment before reloading. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**

- 13). Shackling (this section should be repeated for each shackle line as applicable):
  - a). Observe 500 shackles per line to ensure that shackles are well-maintained.
  - b). Birds should be in a single layer on the belt prior to shackling.
  - c). Birds should be kept calm during and after shackling and prior to stunning. Excessive wing activity should be prevented by dim lighting and/or breast-rubs.
- 14). Observe 500 birds per line for proper shackling techniques. Confirm that birds are being appropriately shackled (e.g. birds are not being shackled by one leg, other body part, paws from previous birds are not present in shackles, or cross hung, etc.).
- 15). **More than four birds observed being improperly shackled is a major non-conformance. The auditor should observe birds immediately after the birds leave the shackle table and prior to the stunner. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**
- 16). Stunning and Slaughter (this section should be repeated for each stunning and slaughter line as applicable):
  - a). Stunning equipment must be maintained, operated, and monitored to ensure proper function. Observe 500 birds per line after water-bath stunning to verify that birds are effectively stunned. At least 99% of the birds should be effectively stunned which renders the bird insensible to pain. Corrective action must be initiated and documented if the percentage of effectively stunned birds is below 99%.
  - b). The automatic knife must be maintained, operated, and monitored to ensure proper function. Observe 500 birds per line after the automatic knife to verify that bleed-out is induced. At least 99% of the birds should be effectively cut by the automatic knife to induce bleed-out. Corrective action must be initiated and documented if the percentage of effectively cut birds is below 99%.
  - c). There must be backup personnel after the automatic knife to induce bleed-out in any birds not effectively killed by the equipment. Backup personnel must have sufficient room and lighting to ensure that the blood vessels are cut on 100% of the birds. Observe 500 birds per line to ensure effectiveness of backup personnel.

- 17). **All birds must be dead before entering the scalding. A bird, typically red in color, observed with uncut carotid arteries after the picker was not dead before entering the scalding and is a major non-conformance. The auditor must observe 500 birds per line after the picker to ensure that no live birds enter the scalding. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**
- 18). The company must have a documented monitoring program in place for wing and leg injuries. This program must include corrective actions should the standard for wing and/or leg injuries be exceeded.
- 19). Broken or dislocated wings must be monitored immediately before or after the stunner and always before feather removal. Leg injuries must be monitored after scalding and picking. If both wings are broken or dislocated or if both legs are injured on one bird, this counts as one bird. Each slaughter line must be assessed during the audit.
  - a). Wing condition should be assessed by the auditor using the [AAAP Broiler Wing Condition Scoring Guide](#) in Appendix 6. Evaluate 500 birds per line for broken or dislocated wings immediately before or after the stunner. For any system that involves stunning and/or killing prior to shackling, wing injury assessment can be performed on live birds prior to stunning and/or killing. Award points on a sliding scale.
  - b). Leg injuries should be assessed by the auditor using the [AAAP Broiler Leg Condition Scoring Guide](#) in Appendix 7. Leg injuries may involve breaks, trauma-induced fractures, or severe hematomas resulting from catching or shackling. Leg injuries due to disease conditions must not be counted. Evaluate 500 birds per line for leg injuries after scalding and picking. Award points on a sliding scale.
- 20). Use the [AAAP Broiler Foot Condition Scoring Guide](#) (Appendix 4) to evaluate a random sample of 200 paws for footpad health. Score paws as either a pass (Score 0 or 1) or fail (Score 2) and 90% of the paws scored must pass. This scoring should be allocated in the Growout Operation section of the checklist.

## **F. Abuse and Audit Failure**

- 1). **The abuse of the broilers is not tolerated under any circumstances. Willful acts of abuse or neglect are defined as acts that intentionally cause pain and suffering that are outside of accepted production practices (such as blood collection for diagnostic testing) and are not tolerated under any circumstances. Conditions that put chicks or broilers in immediate danger are egregious. These include but are not limited to:**

- a. **Poking a stick, prod, or other object into a sensitive part of the bird such as the eye, nostril, mouth, ear, or cloaca.**
  - b. **Cutting off limbs, wings, skinning, or cutting into any bird that shows any sign of sensibility (consciousness), with the exception of company or religiously-approved practices to optimize bird well-being (for example, blood sample collection, Kosher, or Halal processing).**
  - c. **Malicious use of equipment that results in breaking a bone, suffocation, or death of a bird(s).**
  - d. **Dragging, hitting, kicking, or throwing a bird.**
  - e. **Striking a bird(s) with any type of object.**
- 2). **Audit Failure: Any egregious abuse observed by the auditor during any stage of this audit is considered a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of that section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees involved in that section of the process.**
- 3). **Major Non-Conformances: All major non-conformances as outlined in the guidelines are summarized in Appendix 8.**

# National Chicken Council Broiler Welfare Audit Checklist

The following checklist is provided to assist broiler companies in complying with the Broiler Welfare Guidelines recommended by the National Chicken Council and voluntarily adopted by this company. This audit checklist is used in conjunction with the Guidelines.

Auditors are reminded of the importance of maintaining biosecurity. Flocks that may be experiencing a disease must not be chosen for auditing due to biosecurity reasons.

This audit applies to the following company, complex, or facility:

Auditor: \_\_\_\_\_

Company and Plant: \_\_\_\_\_ Est. No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Accompanied by: \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## Summary:

Area	Maximum Score	Score Needed to Pass	Facility Score
<b>A. Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training</b>			
<b>C. Hatchery Operations</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>170</b>	
<b>D. Growout Operations</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>425</b>	
<b>E. Catching and Transportation</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>65</b>	
<b>F. Processing Operations</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>325</b>	
<b>Point Total for ALL Areas</b>	<b>1160</b>	<b>985</b>	

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<p><b>AUDIT FORM: BROILERS</b></p> <p>Confirm that each point is done by facility and award full score for each point done and zero for each point not done, except for those items for which a sliding scale is provided. Any designated “major non-conformance” (indicated in the Audit Form in boldface type) is an audit failure for that particular area (Hatchery, Growout, Catching &amp; Transportation, etc.) and must be documented on the audit form. A major non-conformance occurs only if the auditor personally observes it in the course of an audit.</p>			
			<b>Check if done</b>
<p><b>A: Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training (while there is no individual score for the items in this section, all items must be met in order to pass this section)</b></p>			
<p>1. The company must have a written broiler welfare program.</p>			
<p>2. The company has a broiler welfare program endorsed and fully supported by current senior management.</p>			
<p>3. The company must have a person or management group responsible for broiler welfare throughout the operation.</p>			
<p>4. The company must have, implement, and document an internal and external auditing program.</p>			
<p>5. The company must have a mechanism in place whereby broiler welfare violations can be reported without threat of retaliation.</p>			
<p>6. Signs stating the importance of broiler welfare with contact information for reporting incidents should be posted prominently in locations where birds are handled.</p>			
<p>7. The company must have a written program in place to address all non-conformances should they occur, which must include corrective actions.</p>			
<p>8. All employees who work with live birds must be trained at least annually on the</p>			

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fundamentals of chicken behavior and welfare including that abuse or neglect of birds is not tolerated under any circumstance.			
9. Training must be understood by everyone. Training must be documented for each employee and should include how the training was conducted (classroom, online, in-person, on-farm, language used, etc.) as well as the tasks and responsibilities for which the employees were trained.			
10a. Hatchery Operations. The hatchery operation must have a written training program covering all activities performed at the hatchery. Training may include chick handling, chick processing, culling, euthanasia, vaccination procedures, and chick loading and transportation. Verify documentation of annual training.			
10b. Growout Operations. The growout operation must have a written training program covering all activities performed in growout. Training may include chick placement, general signs of disease, culling, euthanasia, handling and catching techniques, and vaccination procedures. Verify documentation of annual training.			
10c. Catching and Transportation. The live-haul department must have a written training program covering all activities performed in catching and transportation. Training may include bird catching, handling, culling, euthanasia, and transportation. Verify documentation of annual training.			
10d. Processing Operations. The processing operation must have a written training program covering all activities performed at the processing plant. Training may include bird handling, shackling, stunning, slaughter, and euthanasia. Verify documentation of annual training.			
<b>B: Hatchery Operations</b>	<b>Points available</b>	<b>Points awarded</b>	<b>Check if done</b>
<b>1. Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the hatchery operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the</b>	<b>Hatchery Audit Failure</b>		

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<b>company's written welfare program.</b>			
2. Confirm that the hatchery has a person responsible for ensuring proper broiler welfare practices and strict adherence to the guidelines.	<b>5</b>		
3. Confirm that the hatchery operation has a written plan for disaster response and recovery which must include parameters described in the guidelines.	<b>5</b>		
4. Confirm that the hatchery has a written program for monitoring the hatchery environment (such as egg room/incubator temperature and humidity) during setting, hatching, processing, and holding with written or electronic logs available for the auditor to review.	<b>5</b>		
5. Confirm that the facility has an alarm system or regular monitoring system in use to alert hatchery personnel to failure of critical systems (heat, electricity). A power failure emergency response program is in place and available for review.	<b>10</b>		
6. Both manual and automated chick processing systems must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner that prevents injuries to the chicks. All equipment operation must be examined at the start of the hatch day to confirm chick injuries are prevented. Equipment checks must be documented.	<b>10</b>		
7. Confirm chicks are not dropped from heights of more than 12 inches.	<b>20</b>		
8. The hatchery must have a written program to monitor and respond to chick injuries during processing and handling, should they occur.	<b>5</b>		
9. The hatchery must have a written guide outlining which chick defects should result in culling.	<b>5</b>		
10. Chicks must be evaluated at a minimum of once per day for equipment-related injury. Confirm that these checks are documented and corrective action is taken and documented if necessary.	<b>5</b>		
11. The auditor should evaluate chick injury by examining a minimum of ten boxes of chicks on site.	<b>20</b>		
12. Confirm that the separator is functioning properly, and that the hatchery has a written protocol for checking for and removing chicks that may become misplaced or	<b>10</b>		



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stuck if using a mechanical separator.			
13. When a macerator is used, ensure it is functioning properly and that no chicks are placed in the macerator until it is operational. When gas is used for euthanasia, ensure no live chicks are in the waste disposal container after this method is used. Review documented backup plan.	<b>10</b>		
<b>14. Regardless of the approved euthanasia method used, a live chick in the hatchery waste stream after the completion of the euthanasia process is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the hatchery operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.</b>	<b>Hatchery Audit Failure</b>		
15. Confirm the hatchery has a written program for euthanasia and disposal of pips and culled chicks.	<b>5</b>		
16. Culled chicks and pips must be euthanized after each flock change at a minimum. Confirm that the number of culls (not pips) are documented.	<b>5</b>		
17. The hatchery must have a written program for embryonated eggs that are removed from the system (in-ovo vaccination, break-outs, depopulation, etc.) to be euthanized during the same shift in which they are removed from the system.	<b>5</b>		
18. Confirm that there is a temperature range goal for the holding room in the hatchery when chicks are present, and that the temperature of this room is documented.	<b>10</b>		
19. Temperature-related behaviors should be used to determine the acceptable temperature of the holding room. The hatchery should check ten random stacks in the presence of the auditor. Nine of the ten stacks must demonstrate appropriate temperature-related behavior as defined in the company's program.	<b>20</b>		
20. Confirm the hatchery has a written program in place to retrieve loose chicks from the floor which must happen, at a minimum, after each flock change.	<b>5</b>		
21. The hatchery must have a written program in place to ensure that all live chicks are removed from equipment (hatcher trays and chick boxes) so that no live chicks enter the tray wash equipment.	<b>5</b>		

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22. The auditor should observe 25 consecutive chick boxes and/or 25 consecutive hatcher baskets entering the tray wash equipment (if applicable or available for auditing).	20		
23. Review the written chick delivery vehicle SOP.	5		
24. Confirm that transportation vehicles are equipped with temperature-control capabilities and alarms during transportation if the driver is physically separated from the chick environment.	10		
<b>B: Hatchery Operations – Point Total</b>	<b>200</b>		
<b>C: Growout Operations</b>			
<b>C1: Designated Management, Training and Emergency Plans</b>			
<b>1. Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the growout operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.</b>	<b>Growout Audit Failure</b>		
2. Confirm that the growout operation has a person responsible for ensuring proper broiler welfare practices and strict adherence to the guidelines.	5		
3. Confirm that the growout operation has a written plan for disaster response and recovery which must include parameters described in the guidelines.	5		
4. When the ventilation system is dependent on electrical power, confirm that generator checks are performed and documented at least monthly.	10		
5. Confirm that the growout operation has an alarm system or regulator monitoring system in place to alert personnel of a failure of critical systems	10		
6. Confirm that the operation has written plans for temperature, lighting, and ventilation levels within the house for the duration of growout. Confirm that these plans are	5		

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available in at least one house on the farm.			
7. Confirm that written plans for temperature, lighting, and ventilation within the house are being met.	10		
8. Confirm that the growout operation has a current contact list displayed. This list must be reviewed annually.	5		
<b>C2: Nutrition and Feeding</b>			
1. Confirm that feed formulations are reviewed by a poultry nutritionist.	5		
2. Confirm that the feed mill has documented GMPs for feed production.	5		
3. Ensure that all feeding and drinking systems are in proper operation and easily accessible by all birds.	10		
4. Confirm that feeding and drinking systems are checked for proper operation daily.	10		
5. Water consumption must be routinely monitored and recorded daily.	10		
<b>C3: Comfort and Shelter</b>			
1. House and equipment must be maintained and operated to protect the birds from environmental conditions.	10		
2. Poultry housing, equipment, and environment must be maintained to avoid sharp edges and protrusions to prevent injury or entrapment.	10		
3. Effective biosecurity procedures must be designed, established, and implemented to minimize any negative impacts on bird welfare and protect flock health. Confirm that the company has a written biosecurity plan.	5		
4. Confirm that a written SOP is in place for chick placement and brooding. This program must contain parameters outlined in the guidelines.	5		
5. Confirm that the company has a written protocol for minimum ventilation requirements which must include specifications for maintaining temperature and humidity.	5		
6. A documented ammonia monitoring program must be in place which must include	5		

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appropriate corrective actions should the maximum ammonia level be exceeded.			
7a. <b>Farm 1, House 1:</b> Evaluate atmospheric ammonia at bird head height in two houses. The farm must have chicks that are seven days of age or less. Score each house independently.	<b>10</b>		
7a. <b>Farm 1, House 2:</b> Evaluate atmospheric ammonia at bird head height in two houses. The farm must have chicks that are seven days of age or less. Score each house independently.	<b>10</b>		
7b. <b>Farm 2, House 1:</b> Evaluate atmospheric ammonia at bird head height in two houses. The farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Score each house independently.	<b>10</b>		
7b. <b>Farm 2, House 2:</b> Evaluate atmospheric ammonia at bird head height in two houses. The farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Score each house independently.	<b>10</b>		
7c. <b>Farm 3, House 1:</b> Evaluate atmospheric ammonia at bird head height in two houses. The farm must have birds within seven days of processing. Score each house independently.	<b>10</b>		
7c. <b>Farm 3, House 2:</b> Evaluate atmospheric ammonia at bird head height in two houses. The farm must have birds within seven days of processing. Score each house independently.	<b>10</b>		
8a. <b>Farm 1, House 1:</b> Evaluate litter moisture in two houses. Litter should be loosely compacted when squeezed in the hand. The farm must have chicks that are seven days of age or less. Score each house independently and award points on a sliding scale:  Dry and friable litter throughout the majority of house = 10 Caked litter beyond 2 ft of feeders and drinkers = 5 Caked and wet litter throughout the house = 0	<b>10</b>		
8a. <b>Farm 1, House 2:</b> Evaluate litter moisture in two houses. Litter should be loosely compacted when squeezed in the hand. The farm must have chicks that are seven	<b>10</b>		

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<p>days of age or less. Score each house independently and award points on a sliding scale:          Dry and friable litter throughout the majority of house = 10          Caked litter beyond 2 ft of feeders and drinkers = 5          Caked and wet litter throughout the house = 0</p>			
<p><b>8b. Farm 2, House 1:</b> Evaluate litter moisture in two houses. Litter should be loosely compacted when squeezed in the hand. The farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Score each house independently and award points on a sliding scale:          Dry and friable litter throughout the majority of house = 10          Caked litter beyond 2 ft of feeders and drinkers = 5          Caked and wet litter throughout the house = 0</p>	<b>10</b>		
<p><b>8b. Farm 2, House 2:</b> Evaluate litter moisture in two houses. Litter should be loosely compacted when squeezed in the hand. The farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Score each house independently and award points on a sliding scale:          Dry and friable litter throughout the majority of house = 10          Caked litter beyond 2 ft of feeders and drinkers = 5          Caked and wet litter throughout the house = 0</p>	<b>10</b>		
<p><b>8c. Farm 3, House 1:</b> Evaluate litter moisture in two houses. Litter should be loosely compacted when squeezed in the hand. The farm must have birds within seven days of processing. Score each house independently and award points on a sliding scale:          Dry and friable litter throughout the majority of house = 10          Caked litter beyond 2 ft of feeders and drinkers = 5          Caked and wet litter throughout the house = 0</p>	<b>10</b>		
<p><b>8c. Farm 3, House 2:</b> Evaluate litter moisture in two houses. Litter should be loosely</p>	<b>10</b>		

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<p>compacted when squeezed in the hand. The farm must have birds within seven days of processing. Score each house independently and award points on a sliding scale:                      Dry and friable litter throughout the majority of house = 10                      Caked litter beyond 2 ft of feeders and drinkers = 5                      Caked and wet litter throughout the house = 0</p>			
<p>9. Foot pad health must be assessed at the processing plant by the auditor using the <a href="#">AAAP Broiler Foot Condition Scoring Guide</a> (Appendix 4) to score paws as either a pass (Score 0 or 1) or fail (Score 2). Evaluate a random sample of 200 paws at the processing plant for footpad health. 90% of the paws must pass. Points for this parameter are attributed to the Growout Operations section of the audit.</p>	<b>40 (KWI)</b>		
<b>C4: Health Care and Monitoring</b>			
1. Access to a licensed veterinarian must be available.	<b>5</b>		
2. Each company must have a written health plan developed in consultation with a veterinarian. Information that must be included in the health plan can be found in the guidelines.	<b>5</b>		
3. Confirm that there are at least ten days between flocks. Confirm written documentation there is a deviation.	<b>5</b>		
4. Confirm that mortality is removed and recorded daily at each house.	<b>10</b>		
5. Confirm there is a written program for on-farm culling and euthanasia.	<b>5</b>		
6a. Confirm feed withdrawal does not exceed 18 hours prior to processing.	<b>10</b>		
6b. Confirm water withdrawal does not exceed one hour prior to the start of catch for that house.	<b>10</b>		
<b>C5: Flock Husbandry</b>			
1. Confirm that the stocking density (based on expected market weight) in growout house does not exceed limits set in guidelines.	<b>5</b>		

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<p>2. Confirm that birds are provided with a minimum of four hours of darkness every 24 hours.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>		
<p>3. Confirm that the flock lighting program has been designed in consultation with a veterinarian or poultry welfare specialist.</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>		
<p>4. To monitor bird leg health and their ability to access feed and water, gait scoring must be performed by the company once per flock at a minimum. The results must be documented.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>		
<p>5a. <b>Farm 1, House 1:</b> Record the number of birds that cannot walk five feet or there is obvious lameness (Score of 2) in two houses. The farm must have chicks that are seven days of age or less. Score each house independently and award points on a sliding scale:          0-2 birds = 20          3-4 birds = 10          ≥5 birds = 0</p>	<p><b>20 (KWI)</b></p>		
<p>5a. <b>Farm 1, House 2:</b> Record the number of birds that cannot walk five feet or there is obvious lameness (Score of 2) in two houses. The farm must have chicks that are seven days of age or less. Score each house independently and award points on a sliding scale:          0-2 birds = 20          3-4 birds = 10          ≥5 birds = 0</p>	<p><b>20 (KWI)</b></p>		
<p>5b. <b>Farm 2, House 1:</b> Record the number of birds that cannot walk five feet or there is obvious lameness (Score of 2) in two houses. The farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Score each house independently and award points on a sliding scale:          0-2 birds = 20          3-4 birds = 10</p>	<p><b>20 (KWI)</b></p>		

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≥5 birds = 0			
<p><b>5b. Farm 2, House 2:</b> Record the number of birds that cannot walk five feet or there is obvious lameness (Score of 2) in two houses. The farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Score each house independently and award points on a sliding scale:</p> <p>0-2 birds = 20            3-4 birds = 10            ≥5 birds = 0</p>	<b>20 (KWI)</b>		
<p><b>5c. Farm 3, House 1.</b> Record the number of birds that cannot walk five feet or there is obvious lameness (Score of 2) in two houses. The farm must have birds within seven days of processing. Score each house independently and award points on a sliding scale:</p> <p>0-2 birds = 20            3-4 birds = 10            ≥5 birds = 0</p>	<b>20 (KWI)</b>		
<p><b>5c. Farm 3, House 2.</b> Record the number of birds that cannot walk five feet or there is obvious lameness (Score of 2) in two houses. The farm must have birds within seven days of processing. Score each house independently and award points on a sliding scale:</p> <p>0-2 birds = 20            3-4 birds = 10            ≥5 birds = 0</p>	<b>20 (KWI)</b>		
<b>C: Growout Operations – Point Total</b>	<b>500</b>		
<b>D. Catching and Transportation</b>			



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<p><b>1. Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the catching and transportation section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.</b></p>	<p><b>Catching Audit Failure</b></p>		
<p>2. Confirm that the live-haul department has a person responsible for ensuring proper broiler welfare practices and strict adherence to the guidelines.</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>		
<p>3. Confirm that the company has a written plan for handling birds unfit for transport.</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>		
<p>4. Confirm that the individual responsible for humanely euthanizing birds unfit for transport is identified by the company.</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>		
<p>5. Confirm that the live-haul department has a written plan for emergency response and recovery.</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>		
<p>6. Catching must be conducted in a manner that minimizes bird stress and does not cause bird injury. Confirm that the company has a written catching procedures being used in the growout operations.</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>		
<p>7. Catchers may not lift, carry, or drag birds by the wings or necks. Confirm birds are being caught by their legs and are not placed on their backs. Observe a minimum of five and a maximum of 10 transportation modules being loaded.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>		
<p>8. Inspect a total of 200 random individual transport compartments (not 200 transportation modules) between a minimum of two and a maximum of four empty trailers for signs of damage that can injure birds or allow them to escape during transit. Award points based on a sliding scale:          &lt; 3 damaged compartments = 10          3-5 damaged compartments = 5          &gt; 5 damaged compartments = 0</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>		
<p>9. Confirm that the company has a written program to protect birds from adverse environmental conditions during the loading process and transport to the processing</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>		

facility.			
<b>10. Loss of birds from trailers during transportation must be prevented. To audit this point, a bird being loaded in a compartment that is damaged in a manner that would allow for a bird to escape is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the catching and transportation section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.</b>	<b>Catching Audit Failure</b>		
11. Density in the transportation modules should permit the birds to sit in a single layer. Examine ten random transportation modules to ensure all birds are in a single layer and are right-side up.	<b>20</b>		
<b>D: Catching and Transportation – Point Total</b>	<b>80</b>		
<b>E: Processing Operations</b>			
<b>1. Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.</b>	<b>Processing Audit Failure</b>		
2. Confirm that the processing operation has a person responsible for ensuring proper broiler welfare practices and strict adherence to the guidelines.	<b>5</b>		
3. Confirm that the processing operation has a written emergency response plan in place in the event of a utility outage, mechanical breakdown, or other events which prevent birds from being processed.	<b>5</b>		
4. Confirm that the company has a written program in place to protect birds from adverse environmental conditions while in holding sheds or during the unloading process. This program must include when fans, misters, or heaters are to be operated.	<b>5</b>		

*NCC Broiler Welfare Audit Checklist*

5. Documentation must be available to demonstrate the total time from completion of catching to processing. If the total time from completion of catching to processing is greater than 12 hours, additional documentation is required which must include total time elapsed, reason for extended time, and corrective actions implemented.	5		
6. Given that birds may move during transportation, transport modules must be evaluated at the processing plant to ensure that birds are in a single layer only. Examine ten random transport modules to ensure all birds are in a single layer.	20		
7. Verify that there is a written procedure in place to retrieve loose birds that emphasizes timeliness and worker safety.	5		
8. Confirm that the processing operation has a written program for euthanasia.	5		
9. DOAs averaging over 0.4% on a weekly basis must result in an internal investigation and the cause of elevated DOAs must be documented. Documentation must be reviewed.	5		
<b>10. No live bird should be discarded as a DOA. Injured or sick birds removed from processing must be properly euthanized before placement in a DOA bin. A live bird in the DOA bin is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.</b>	<b>Processing Audit Failure</b>		
11a. Transportation modules must be lifted and moved from trailers in a manner that does not injure the birds. Evaluate a minimum of five transport modules but no more than ten transport modules being lifted and moved from trailers.	10		
11b. Birds should not be unloaded on top of other birds. Evaluate a minimum of five transport modules but no more than ten transport modules being unloaded to ensure birds are not being unloaded on top of other birds.	20		
11c. Birds remaining in transportation modules after unloading must be gently removed. Birds must never be lifted by the wings. Evaluate a minimum of five transport modules but no more than ten transport modules to ensure no birds are	20		

NCC Broiler Welfare Audit Checklist

remaining in transportation modules.			
<b>12. Any live bird left in a transport compartment before reloading a module onto a trailer is a major non-conformance. All live birds retrieved from transport compartments must be humanely returned to the processing system. The auditor must observe a minimum of five but no more than ten transport modules for instances of live birds being left in a transport compartment before reloading. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees involved in processing live birds.</b>	<b>Processing Audit Failure</b>		
13a. Confirm that the shackles are well-maintained. Observe 500 shackles.	<b>10</b>		
13b. Confirm that birds are in a single layer on the belt prior to shackling.	<b>20</b>		
13c. Evaluate bird activity from shackling to stunning. Observe bird activity to ensure compliance.	<b>20</b>		
14. Observe 500 birds per line for proper shackling techniques. Confirm that birds are being appropriately shackled (e.g., birds are not being shackled by one leg, other body part, paws from previous birds are not present in shackles, or cross hung, etc.). Award points based on a sliding scale: 0 to 2 birds not shackled correctly = 20 3 to 4 birds not shackled correctly = 10 > 4 birds not shackled correctly = 0 and a major non-conformance	<b>20</b>		
<b>15. More than four birds observed being improperly shackled is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.</b>	<b>Processing Audit Failure</b>		
16a. Observe 500 birds per line after stunning. Confirm that the equipment is functioning properly and birds are being rendered insensible. Award points based on	<b>40 (KWI)</b>		

NCC Broiler Welfare Audit Checklist

<p>a sliding scale:  <math>\leq 5</math> birds un-stunned = 40          6 to 10 birds un-stunned = 20  <math>&gt; 10</math> birds un-stunned = 0</p>			
<p>16b. Observe 500 birds per line after the automatic knife. Confirm that the automatic knife is effectively cutting blood vessels to induce a rapid bleed-out. Award points on a sliding scale:  <math>\leq 5</math> birds un-cut = 40          6 to 10 bird un-cut = 20  <math>&gt; 10</math> birds un-cut = 0</p>	<p><b>40 (KWI)</b></p>		
<p>16c. Confirm that a backup knife operator is present after the automatic knife to induce bleed-out on any birds not effectively cut by the equipment. Observe 500 birds per line.</p>	<p><b>40 (KWI)</b></p>		
<p><b>17. All birds must be dead before entering the scalding. A bird, typically red in color, observed with uncut carotid arteries after the picker was not dead before entering the scalding and is a major non-conformance. The auditor must observe 500 birds per line as outlined in the guidelines. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.</b></p>	<p><b>Processing Audit Failure</b></p>		
<p>18. Confirm the company has a documented monitoring program in place for wing and leg injuries. This program must include corrective actions should the standard for wing and/or leg injuries be exceeded in all circumstances.</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>		
<p>19a. Evaluate 500 birds per line for broken or dislocated wings as outlined in the guidelines immediately before or after the stunner. Use the AAAP Broiler Wing Condition Scoring Guide (Appendix 6) to evaluate wing injuries. Award points on sliding scale:</p>	<p><b>40 (KWI)</b></p>		

*NCC Broiler Welfare Audit Checklist*

<p>≤ 15 wing injuries = 40          16 to 20 wing injuries = 20          &gt; 20 wing injuries = 0</p>			
<p>19b. Evaluate 500 birds per line for leg injuries as outlined in the guidelines after scalding and picking. Use the AAAP Broiler Leg Condition Scoring Guide (Appendix 7) to evaluate leg injuries. Award points on a sliding scale:          ≤ 2 leg injuries = 40          3 leg injuries = 20          &gt; 3 leg injuries = 0</p>	<b>40 (KWI)</b>		
<b>E: Processing Operations – Point Total</b>	<b>380</b>		
<b>Point Total for ALL Areas</b>	<b>1280</b>		

# Guidance for Conducting Audits Under National Chicken Council Broiler Welfare Guidelines

- 1). **Facilities to be Audited.** The company may choose to audit all of its operations or only a subset of its operations, depending on its needs with respect to its customers. The audit applies only to facilities or complexes named on the checklist. Flocks that are facing health challenges should not be audited.
- 2). **Audit of a Complex.** If asked to verify compliance for an entire complex, the auditor should expect to visit a hatchery, a processing plant, and a sample of the farms associated with that plant. Growout houses on three different farms must be audited in connection with each complex. One farm must have chicks that are seven days old or less, one farm must have birds within seven days of processing, and one farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing.

If there is only one house on a farm selected for auditing purposes, it will be audited just like any multi-house farm. However, the points associated with auditing a second house on that farm will be removed which would include ammonia (10 points), litter moisture (10 points), and gait scoring (40 points). The total available points for the Growout Operations section of the audit would become 560 points and 480 points would be needed to pass that section of the audit.

If a major non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor during any portion of the audit (hatchery, growout, catching and transportation, or processing) it results in an automatic failure of that section of the audit.

- 3). **Document Review.** Documents to be reviewed should apply directly to an audit parameter. When reviewing applicable documents, documents must not be older than one year from time of audit.
- 4). **Scoring.** All parameters in the guidelines should be evaluated and scored. If a parameter is omitted (beak conditioning is not performed, for example), associated points must not be awarded and the associated points must be subtracted from the overall total for that section and for entire audit. As a result, this will lower the “maximum score” for a section as well as the “score needed to pass.”

In the processing operations section of the audit, shackling (items numbered 13, 14, and 15), stunning and slaughter (items numbered 16 and 17), and wing and leg evaluation (items numbered 19 and 20) must be independently audited and scored for each line in the processing plant. For example, if there are two shackle lines, 140

points is now available (70 per shackle line). Since a parameter was added, associated points must be added to the overall total for that section and for the entire audit. As a result, this will increase the “maximum score” for the processing section as well as the “score needed to pass.”

The percentage needed to pass a section and the entire audit – regardless of the “maximum score” and the “score needed to pass” – is 85%.

- 5). **Pass/Fail Requirements.** Failure to meet all parameters outlined in the Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training sections of the guidelines will result in an automatic failure of the entire audit. All other sections must meet the designated point allocation for passage. If the points received in any section (hatchery, growout, catching and transportation, and processing operations) is below the designated point allocation, that section of the audit is failed and must result in a reauditing of that section. If a major non-conformance is witnessed during an audit, that section of the audit is failed and must result in a reauditing of that section.
- 6). **Audit of a Company.** If a company-wide audit is desired, the company may elect to contract with more than one auditor in the interest of getting the audits done in a timely manner. The company may also choose to audit only those facilities that serve a particular customer.
- 7). **Written Report.** The Broiler Welfare Checklist prepared by the National Chicken Council as adopted or amended by the company is the only authorized basis for an audit of the NCC Guidelines. If, however, the company desires additional information from the auditor, the company may elect to ask the auditor to prepare a report on observations and recommendations in addition to the checklist; but in all cases the checklist must be completed.
- 8). **“Free To Roam.”** The Broiler Welfare Guidelines state: “Birds are allowed to roam freely throughout the growing area.” The growing area is defined as either the entire house or a subdivision thereof if dividers are used during brooding or other stage of growout.
- 9). **Initial evaluation of a flock in a growout house.** Enter the house quietly and do not startle the birds. Stand quietly at the door for several minutes to monitor the birds for displays of normal behaviors such as dust bathing, posturing, eating, drinking, etc. Most of the birds should be sitting and relatively quiet, with background contentment vocalizations (e.g., chirping or clucking).
- 10). **Qualified Auditor.** An auditor is qualified by an independent body based on appropriate education, training, and experience. When a PAACO-certified auditor is not available, the available auditor should have similar education, training, and experience as a PAACO-certified auditor.



- 11). **Frequency of Auditing.** The frequency of auditing is up to the discretion of the company and is often influenced by customers of the company. However, it is suggested that auditing be conducted at least annually.

# Standard Contract for Audits Under National Chicken Council Broiler Welfare Guidelines

This **AGREEMENT** was made on [date] \_\_\_\_\_ between [Company] \_\_\_\_\_  
and [Contractor] \_\_\_\_\_

- 1). **Services To Be Performed.** Contractor agrees to perform Broiler Welfare audit(s) of company facilities for purposes of verifying the facilities' compliance with the Broiler Welfare Guidelines of the National Chicken Council, as adopted or amended by the company.
- 2). **Time For Performance.** Contractor agrees to complete the performance of these services on or before [date] \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3). **Estimated Time Required.** The company estimates that contractor will require \_\_\_\_ day(s) on site to complete the proposed audit. Any days, or portions thereof, more than this estimate are subject to prior approval by the company.
- 4). **Payment.** In consideration of contractor's performance in full of these services, client agrees to pay contractor as follows: \$\_\_\_\_\_ per day on site or in travel to and from site.
- 5). **Out of Pocket Expenses.** Actual, reasonable expenses related to the contractor's work, including meals, long distance telephone charges, travel, hotel, fax transmission, copying, postage, and shipping will be reimbursed by the company.
- 6). **Invoices.** Contractor will submit invoices for all services performed and attach receipts for all actual expenses.
- 7). **Basis of Audit.** Contractor agrees that the Broiler Welfare Audit Checklist, as prepared by the National Chicken Council and adopted or amended by the company, shall be the basis for the contractor's audit of the company's facilities. Company shall provide contractor with sufficient copies of the checklist for the facilities to be audited.
- 8). **Work Product.** The desired work product consists of complete checklists for each facility audited. No other report will be provided by contractor, unless specifically requested by the company. It is agreed and understood that the completed checklists are the property of company, and that company regards such checklists as confidential proprietary business information. Contractor agrees not to release the checklists, or copies thereof, to third parties without the express written permission of company.

- 9). **Other Clients.** Contractor retains the right to perform services for other clients.
- 10). **Independent Contractor.** For purposes of this agreement, contractor is an independent contractor, and, under no circumstances, shall be considered or treated as an employee of company. This agreement creates no partnership or any kind of joint undertaking or venture between contractor and company.
- 11). **Entire Agreement.** This agreement represents the entire agreement and understanding between the parties and supersedes all prior written and oral negotiations. This agreement may not be amended or modified, except in writing signed by both parties.

**CONTRACTOR**

**CLIENT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX 1

## **Suggested Topics for Broiler Welfare Training of Personnel Working in the Broiler Industry**

*(can be used for initial training and/or annual re-training)*

### **1. Introduction**

- a. What is Broiler Welfare
  - i. Provide company's description for boiler welfare
  - ii. Discuss the connection between broiler health (physical characteristics) with broiler well-being (behavioral characteristics)
    1. Provide examples of how the well-being of a bird (behavior) may reflect that the bird has a health problem (physical defect), or vice versa
  - iii. Discuss how broiler welfare is relevant and critical to the role of each person in the company who is involved with live animals (production, transport, vaccination, veterinary, nutrition, etc.)

### **2. Company Expectations for Broiler Welfare**

- a. Provide company's broiler welfare position or statement
- b. Emphasize the importance of each employee's responsibility for meeting company expectations and best management practices (Broiler Care, Broiler Handling, Euthanasia, etc.)
- c. Discuss the consequences for broiler welfare violations
- d. Emphasize the company's expectation for any employee to immediately report any concerns or observations of abusive behavior or mistreatment of broilers to a company supervisor
- e. Explain the importance of welfare for the birds, for the company, for the customers and how audits may be used to verify compliance

### **3. Learning Objectives for Broiler Health and Behavior (specific to work area)**

- a. Discuss and provide examples for normal bird behavior and activity
- b. Discuss and provide examples of expected environment for good poultry health
  - i. Include what temperature, lighting, noise, will be "normal" in the area
  - ii. Include how this can impact behavior and health
- c. Discuss company expectations for biosecurity and how biosecurity is important for bird health and welfare, including preventing the introduction of disease

### **4. Learning Objectives for Broiler Handling (specific to working area(s) of employee)**

- a. Discuss and demonstrate proper technique of handling chickens
  - i. Emphasize that deliberate abuse is not tolerated, and include what is not allowed per company policy for bird handling
- b. Discuss expectations for employees working in the area with regards to movement of staff members, equipment, etc. so that bird welfare can be optimized and so that risk for injury, entrapment and stress can be minimized (e.g., working in dim lighting, moving slowly, avoiding loud noises, etc.)
- c. Discuss and give examples of what is not allowed for handling and what can result in broiler welfare violations
  - i. Include how improper handling may result in bird injury and/or stress
- d. Discuss how to move groups of birds safely and securely, and how to monitor and protect them from injury and damage during transport
- e. Discuss the importance of evaluating equipment that may be damaged or may require repair before using it to move or load birds
- f. Discuss the importance of, and expectations for, maintaining bird comfort during holding periods

**5. Learning Objectives for Culling and Euthanasia (specific to working area of employee)**

- a. Discuss and give examples of poultry that may be defective (anatomically), ill or injured and need to be considered for culling and humane euthanasia
- b. Discuss what euthanasia is, why it is used and the goals of effective euthanasia
- c. Discuss what methods of euthanasia are (and are not) allowed by the company
  - i. Demonstrate how to hold the bird and how to perform the method
  - ii. Discuss how to verify that the euthanasia was effective
  - iii. Discuss what the 'normal reaction' is for the bird after euthanasia
- d. Discuss what should be done for disposal of the bird(s) after euthanasia

## APPENDIX 2

### Gait Scoring in the Commercial Broiler

For most audits, the auditor will only watch the broiler and their movement. The U.S. Gait Scoring technique is recommended (Gait Scoring in the Commercial Broiler. Office of Agricultural Communications, Box 9625, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Broilers may need to be gently encouraged to walk. If the broilers become stressed, especially in hot weather, discontinue scoring immediately.

**Score 0** – Bird can walk at least 5 feet with a balanced gait. Bird may appear ungainly but with no visible signs of lameness.

**Score 1** – Bird can walk at least 5 feet, but appears awkward, uneven in steps.

**Score 2** – Bird cannot walk 5 feet or there is obvious lameness. May shuffle on shanks or hocks with assistance of wings.

# APPENDIX 3

## Evaluating Lighting Programs

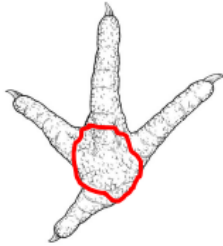
Birds are sensitive to light levels, displaying behavioral and physiologic responses. Poultry flock managers use lighting programs to manage a breeder flock's reproductive activity. Lighting programs have also been developed to help manage broiler flocks by reducing behavioral problems, controlling growth, and improving musculoskeletal development. Lighting programs may need to be adjusted to account for strain differences, disease conditions, or environmental changes.

Lighting programs will vary depending on the size of the broiler when it is taken to market. The lighting program will also depend on whether natural light (open-sided house) or artificial light (solid or dark-curtain walled house), or some combination of the two are used. Any lighting program used must not have detrimental effects on broiler health and behavior. There must also be sufficient contrast in light intensity between the day and night periods. While there are numerous lighting programs available, NCC does not currently recommend any specific program, only that the overall welfare of the flock is addressed.

# APPENDIX 4

## American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) Broiler Foot Condition Scoring Guide

(The AAAP Broiler Foot Condition Scoring Guide can be found on the [AAAP Website](#))



Foot condition scoring is an important key welfare indicator for poultry welfare audits since it reflects flock health, bird care and environmental conditions on the farm. To optimize audit scoring accuracy, auditor efficiency, and minimize welfare concerns with handling poultry in the field, broiler feet should be evaluated at the processing plant. Welfare assessment includes the visible condition of the broiler foot pad (red circled area in the illustration to the left) and the toes. This evaluation includes observation of the presence of any irregularities including ulcers, scab formations, erosions, hemorrhages, discoloration, skin thickening, and/or foot pad swelling.

At the processing plant, feet (also referred to as paws) should be assessed after they are clean (yellow feet below) or after removal of the cuticle (white feet below). A random sample of broiler feet should be evaluated from each flock assessed for this key welfare indicator. A score should be assigned to each foot; scoring may be noted as PASS or FAIL, or each foot may be numerically scored (0, 1, 2). **NOTE:** Auditors should refer to the required sample size and the scoring criteria noted in the welfare standard or assessment guidelines being utilized.

Broiler Foot Condition Scoring Guide

### PASS (Score Criteria 0 or 1)

- Score 0: Normal color & no lesions; slight discoloration of foot pad
- Score 1: Hyperkeratosis (thickening of skin); lesion(s) covering less than ½ of foot pad

Score 0



Score 1



### FAIL (Score Criteria 2)

- Lesion(s) covering more than ½ of foot pad and may include the toes
- Hemorrhages or swelling of foot pad

Score 2



Produced by the AAAP Animal Welfare & Mgmt Committee / Created: 2015; Updated & approved: March 2022



## APPENDIX 5

### University of Arkansas Center for Food Animal Wellbeing Cervical Dislocation Training

#### How To Perform Cervical Dislocation



1. Grasp the chicken near the feet or below the hocks using the non-dominant hand. Do NOT hold between the hocks and thigh.



2. Place the other hand's thumb and index finger at the base of the skull on either side of the head.



Using your leg for support as necessary, rotate the head backward while pulling straight down on the neck.



3. When you feel complete separation of the neck vertebrae place the bird on its back on the ground. Reflexive wing flapping and leg movement will occur for several minutes.



4. To verify death observe for rhythmic breathing, and touch the eye to check for blink reflex.



# APPENDIX 6

## American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) Broiler Wing Condition Scoring Guide

(The AAAP Broiler Wing Condition Guide can be found on the [AAAP Website](#))



### Broiler Wing Condition Scoring Guide

Wing condition scoring is an important key welfare indicator for welfare audits since it reflects the care and handling of broilers at the farm, during catching and transport, and at the processing plant. Wing injury can result from incorrect bird handling, from equipment that is not used correctly or is poorly maintained, from rough transport conditions, incorrect handling during shackling or sub-optimal stunning conditions. **Wing scoring includes evaluation of broilers at processing for broken or dislocated wings.** To optimize the scoring accuracy, wings may be evaluated at the processing plant before stunning or after stunning (as determined by the audit standard being used and the safety and organizational options at the processing plant). For all audits, wing condition should always be evaluated before feather removal. The auditor should be positioned to see the keel of the bird and should evaluate both wings on each bird for the required number to be audited. **NOTE:** Auditors should refer to the required sample size and the scoring criteria noted in the welfare standard or assessment guidelines being utilized, and should discuss location for wing evaluation with the processing plant staff prior to conducting the audit. If a bird has damage to both wings, it should only be counted once during the audited sample.

#### PASS (Score Criteria)

- Normal wing posture
- No dislocation and no broken wing(s)

#### FAIL (Score Criteria)

- Abnormal wing posture
- Broken or dislocated wing(s)



**Left:** normal wing posture with wings tucked

(note: typical wing posture post-electrical stunning)

**Right:** normal wing posture with wings relaxed

(note: typical wing posture post-CAS stunning)



**Left:** abnormal wing posture (broken wing hangs down)

**Right:** abnormal wing posture (dislocated wing hangs down)

**Note:** Posture of the wings is the primary criteria for this portion of the audit. Birds with normal wing posture may have their wings tucked close to the body or may have wings slightly relaxed and extended out from the side of the breast. Both wing appearance and wing position should be evaluated during the audit to determine if any broken or dislocated wings are present in the sample being observed. Observation of asymmetrical wing posture or appearance on a bird can be a useful visual indicator when evaluating this item in the plant.

**Note:** Since wing damage can occur post-mortem due to wing contact with feather removal equipment, the auditor should evaluate wings prior to feather removal for audit accuracy.

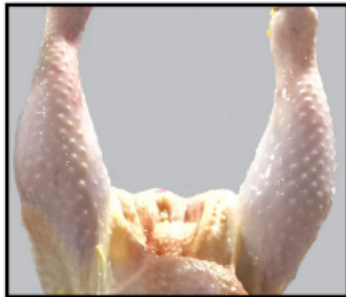
# APPENDIX 7

## American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) Broiler Leg Condition Scoring Guide

(The AAAP Broiler Leg Condition Scoring Guide can be found on the [AAAP Website](#))



### Broiler Leg Condition Scoring Guide



Leg condition scoring is an important key welfare indicator for welfare audits since it reflects the care and handling of broilers at the farm, during catching and transport, and at the processing plant. Leg injury can result from incorrect bird handling, from equipment that is not used correctly or is poorly maintained, and from rough transport conditions. **Leg scoring includes evaluation of broilers at processing for leg bruising (hematomas) and broken leg bones.** To optimize the scoring accuracy, legs should be evaluated at the processing plant after carcass scalding and feather picking of the carcass, but before chilling. The auditor should be positioned to see the keel of the bird and should evaluate both legs on each bird for the required number to be audited. **NOTE:** Auditors should refer to the required sample size and the scoring criteria noted in the welfare standard or assessment guidelines being utilized. A bird with damage to both legs should only be counted once during the audited sample.

#### PASS (Score Criteria)

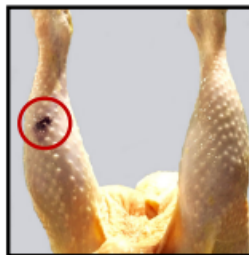
- Normal skin color\* and no broken bone  
(\*note, skin color may vary from yellow to white due to breed or diet)
- Slight discoloration or darkened skin
- Bruise is less than the size of a quarter

#### FAIL (Score Criteria)

- Leg is broken
- Bruise is greater than the size of a quarter



**Pass** (drumstick with normal skin color & no bruising)



**Pass** (drumstick has slight bruising but < quarter size)



**Fail** (drumstick with one bruise > quarter size)



**Fail** (drumstick with various bruises that are > quarter size)

#### Guide for Coloration of Bruising (Gregory et al, 1992)

<u>Estimated Time of Bruising</u>	<u>Color of Bruise on Skin</u>
2 minutes	red
12 hours	dark red/purple
24 hours	light green/purple
48 hours	yellow/orange/light green

**Note:** Leg injuries can occur on the thigh and drumstick of the broiler. When evaluating and scoring for leg injury for a broiler welfare audit, bruise color associated with incorrect handling during catching, transport and shackling of broilers is normally dark red or purple as shown above. If the skin is yellow/orange/green, this may indicate a prior injury and the bruise should not be scored as a failure for the purpose of this KWI assessment.

Produced by the AAAP Animal Welfare & Mgmt Committee / Created: 2017; Updated & approved: March 2022

# APPENDIX 8

## Major non-conformances as outlined in the guidelines

**Any major non-conformance occurring during internal audit must be recorded and corrective action must be taken and retraining of all applicable employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program must occur. Any major non-conformance witnessed during a third-party audit will result in a failure of that section of the audit and corrective actions must be taken. That section of the audit must be reaudited by a third-party auditor after corrective actions and retraining have taken place.**

### Hatchery Operations:

- Any willful act of abuse
- Regardless of the approved euthanasia method used, a live chick in the hatchery waste stream after the completion of the euthanasia process

### Growout Operations:

- Any willful act of abuse

### Catching and Transportation:

- Any willful act of abuse
- A bird being loaded in a transport compartment that is damaged in a manner that would allow for a bird to escape

### Processing Operations:

- Any willful act of abuse
- A live bird in the DOA bin
- Any live bird left in a transport compartment before reloading a transport module onto a trailer
- More than four birds observed being improperly shackled
- A bird, typically red in color, observed with uncut carotid arteries after the picker was not dead before entering the scalders

# APPENDIX 9

## Transportation Equipment

### Tractor with Transport Modules



### Transport Modules



### Tractor with Transport Drawer System



**Transport Module**



**Transport Drawer System**



Individual Transport Compartment

**Transport Coop**



# APPENDIX 10

Approved Methods of Euthanasia for Chicks and Embryonated Eggs in Hatcheries				
Reference (AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals (2020 Edition); Section 5.3, Poultry)				
Name	Description	Conditions of Use	Location for Use	Key Parameters for NCC Guidelines
Maceration	Specially designed mechanical apparatus having rotating blades or projections, that causes immediate fragmentation and death	Chicks up to 72 hours Embryonated eggs	Hatchery	<b>USE:</b> Macerator must be on before chicks are placed in the hopper or funnel; <b>OBSERVATION:</b> Chicks must be delivered in a way and at a rate that prevents a backlog at the point of entry into the macerator and without causing injury, suffocation, or avoidable distress to the chicks before maceration; <b>SET-UP:</b> drop distances must be less than or equal to 12 inches. <b>VERIFICATION:</b> Function of equipment (closed system) or verification of macerated waste product (open system).
Inhaled Gas (CO <sub>2</sub> or other approved gas)	Gas supplied in purified forms (typically from a commercially supplied cylinder or tank) via gas-dispensing system that has sufficient capacity and control to maintain the necessary gas concentrations in the container being utilized. The container is sufficiently airtight to hold the gas at appropriate levels.	Chicks up to 72 hours Embryonated eggs	Hatchery	<b>USE:</b> Chicks or eggs are placed in a single layer in the box and a specific program (gas concentration and time) is used to ensure effective death; <b>OBSERVATION:</b> Post-gas exposure, chicks are checked to verify death before disposal; <b>SET-UP:</b> Sufficient gas concentration (higher concentrations for neonatal birds may be used) maintained, duration achieves euthanasia of pipped eggs or newly hatched chicks, chicks are in a single-layer in container; <b>VERIFICATION:</b> Any bird showing signs of recovery must be killed by some other means that is acceptable; no live chicks are present in final waste disposal container.
Cervical dislocation	Dislocation results in luxation of the cervical vertebrae without primary crushing of the vertebrae and spinal cord	Chicks up to 72 hours	Hatchery	<b>USE:</b> Support the body of the chick with one hand; with the other hand, apply pressure just below the base of the skull until the cervical (neck) vertebrae separate; <b>OBSERVATION:</b> Sudden, reduction of resistance of the neck indicates separation of the cervical vertebrae, presence of involuntary reaction(s); <b>VERIFICATION:</b> palpate neck vertebrae to verify separation

Approved Methods of Euthanasia for Broilers at Farms and at Processing Plants				
Reference (AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals (2020 Edition); Section 5.3, Poultry)				
Name	Description	Conditions of Use	Location for Use	Key Parameters for NCC Guidelines
Cervical dislocation	Cervical dislocation results in luxation of the cervical vertebrae without primary crushing of the vertebrae and spinal cord (method may be <u>manual</u> or <u>tool-assisted</u> )	Broilers	Farm Processing plant	<b>USE (Manual):</b> Hold the legs (shanks) of the broiler with one hand; with the other hand, stretch the neck while down and rotating the head to create the dislocation. <b>USE (Tool-Assisted):</b> Hold the legs or the body of the broiler; place the tool close to the head to create luxation of the vertebrae at or close to the skull; <b>OBSERVATION:</b> Sudden, reduction of resistance of the neck indicates separation of the cervical vertebrae, presence of involuntary reaction(s); <b>VERIFICATION:</b> palpate neck vertebrae to verify separation.
Decapitation	Decapitation is executed with a sharp instrument, ensuring rapid and unobstructed severing of the head from the neck	Broilers	Farm Processing plant	<b>USE:</b> Securing the legs (shanks) of the broiler with one hand or appropriate equipment (ex: shackle); use a sharp instrument to rapidly sever the head from the neck; <b>OBSERVATION:</b> Head fully separated from neck; sudden presence of involuntary reaction (ex: wing-flapping) and other reflexes; <b>VERIFICATION:</b> head is completely severed from neck.
Captive Bolt	Captive bolt euthanasia utilizes a device (penetrating or non-penetrating) that results in a severe and irreversible damage of the brain provoked by the shock of the bolt.	Broilers	Farm Processing plant	<b>USE:</b> Appropriately restrain the broiler to avoid injury to personnel during use; captive bolt device must be appropriately designed and configured for the bird size, provide sufficient impact energy, and be properly applied. <b>OBSERVATION:</b> Correct position and direction of bolt device results in damage to the brain (skull); <b>SET-UP:</b> Well-maintained device with appropriate velocity, exit length and diameter of bolt according to broiler size; <b>VERIFICATION:</b> Any bird showing signs of recovery must be killed by a 2nd shot or some other means that is acceptable; no live broilers are present in final waste disposal container.
Inhaled Gas (CO <sub>2</sub> or other approved gas)	Gas supplied in purified forms (typically from a commercially supplied cylinder or tank) via gas-dispensing system that has sufficient capacity and control to maintain the necessary gas concentrations in the container being utilized. The container is sufficiently airtight to hold the gas at appropriate levels.	Broilers	Farm Processing plant	<b>USE:</b> Broilers are placed in a single layer in the container and a specific program (gas concentration and time) is used to ensure effective death; <b>OBSERVATION:</b> Post-gas exposure, broilers are checked to verify death before disposal; <b>SET-UP:</b> Sufficient gas concentration maintained, duration achieves euthanasia of broilers; broilers are in a single-layer in container; <b>VERIFICATION:</b> Any bird showing signs of recovery must be killed by some other means that is acceptable; no live broilers are present in final waste disposal container.