



Animal Welfare Approved Standards for Laying Hens

The *Animal Welfare Approved* seal is a hard earned badge of difference and demonstrates the farmer's commitment to the care of their animals, the land and the local community. Farmers in this program will be distinguished by a humane and conscientious attitude towards the animals in their care as evidenced by physical audit and development of detailed plans and records of farm practices.

Farmers in the program agree to a minimum of one visit a year from *Animal Welfare Approved* staff or agents, with the possibility of additional visits if deemed necessary, to confirm compliance with the standards during various seasons and to allow observation of birds in different phases of life. Participation in the program is on an annual basis and must be renewed each year.

The premise of the *Animal Welfare Approved* standards is that animals must be allowed to behave naturally. The following standards allow chickens the opportunity to perform natural and instinctive behaviors essential to their health and well-being. Provisions are made to ensure social interaction, comfort, and physical and psychological well-being.

The *Animal Welfare Approved* program is voluntary. The standards do not supersede national government or state legislation.

Animal Welfare Approved recommends that farmers have the *Guide to Understanding Our Standards* and *Standards and Program Definitions* documents to hand while reading these standards.

1.0 OWNERSHIP AND OPERATION

1.0.1 Each farm must be a working independent family farm, that is, one on which a family or individual:

1.0.1.1 Owns the birds.

1.0.1.2 Is engaged in the day to day management of the farm and its birds.

1.0.1.3 Derives a share of his/her/their livelihood.

1.0.1.4 Produces a livestock product for sale or trade.

1.0.2 The family or individual may participate in networks, co-operatives or marketing groups as long as each member is audited as meeting all other requirements listed in these standards.

1.0.3 Exceptions to the family farm requirement may be permitted for farms that serve an educational purpose or demonstrate exceptionally high bird welfare.

1.0.4 The family or individual must employ the *Animal Welfare Approved* Standards for all the animals of the species for which they are seeking approval. Farmers must not use "split" or "dual" systems, in which some birds of one species are simultaneously kept in systems that do as well as systems that do not meet *Animal Welfare Approved Standards*.

Note: A farm is not required to seek approval for all species on the farm simultaneously.

1.0.5 Meat sold under the *Animal Welfare Approved* label or logo must come from animals that have been slaughtered using a method and at a location that has received written approval from *Animal Welfare Approved*.

2.0 BREEDS AND ORIGIN OF BIRDS

2.0.1 Birds who have undergone genetic selection to the point that their welfare is negatively affected are prohibited.

2.0.2 Birds must be chosen with consideration of their ability to thrive in the prevailing climatic conditions of the farm, in free range, forage-based, outdoor systems.

2.0.3 Cloned or genetically engineered birds are prohibited.

Note: This includes the use of cloned or genetically engineered breeding stock, the offspring of clones or genetically engineered birds and semen from cloned or genetically engineered birds.

2.0.4 The farmer must ensure that any bird brought onto the farm for breeding is suitable for the *Animal Welfare Approved* program.

2.0.5 A record of the source, date of purchase and number of breeding birds must be kept.

2.0.6 Farmers should develop a breeding plan to produce their own replacement stock.

2.0.7 Any farm or ranch which rescues or rehabilitates birds must contact the *Animal Welfare Approved* office as soon as practically possible and preferably before rescue birds arrive on farm.

2.1 Not allocated

2.2 The chicken breeding flock

2.2.1 Artificial insemination for chickens is prohibited.

Note: Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

2.2.2 The use of birds from confinement and/or caged systems is prohibited.

2.2.3 According to breeders' published data, egg production for birds kept on *Animal Welfare Approved* farms must not exceed 280 eggs per laying cycle.

2.2.4 to 2.2.6 Not allocated.

2.2.7 The use of birds derived from traditional breeds is recommended.

2.2.8 The use of dual purpose breeds so that male chicks can be raised as meat type birds and female chicks can be raised as laying hens is recommended.

Note: The recommendations in 2.2.7 and 2.2.8 will be reviewed annually with the intent of making them requirements whenever sufficient suitable stock is available.

2.3 Source of pullets and meat birds

2.3.1 Not allocated.

2.3.2 If chicks or pullets are unavailable from *Animal Welfare Approved* farms and hatcheries other sources must be approved on a case by case basis.

2.3.3 Birds that start life under Animal Welfare Approved standards must be kept to Animal Welfare Approved standards for their entire productive lives.

2.3.3.1 Birds hatched on farm or delivered as a straight run from a hatchery that does not provide sexed birds, must be raised to AWA standards until they can be sexed on farm. If only males or only females are required the unwanted birds may be removed from the AWA system.

2.3.3.2 All birds hatched on farm or delivered as a straight run should be raised to AWA standards.

3.0 HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Health and management planning increases both positive welfare and productivity.

3.0.1 Bird management must be focused on promoting health rather than treating disease.

3.0.2 Each farmer in the *Animal Welfare Approved* program must establish contact with a qualified expert such as a veterinarian. The qualified expert must be familiar with:

3.0.2.1 The birds on the farm.

3.0.2.2 The health requirements of the state.

3.0.2.3 Methods to maximize bird health and welfare.

3.0.3 Each farmer should schedule regular preventative care visits by a qualified expert.

Note: The Animal Welfare Approved program will provide support and assistance in achieving this standard.

3.0.4 A health plan emphasizing prevention of illness or injury must be prepared in consultation with the farm's qualified expert advisor to promote positive health and limit the need for treatment. It must address:

- 3.0.4.1 Avoidance of physical, nutritional or environmental stress.
- 3.0.4.2 Lameness and other leg problems.
- 3.0.4.3 Climatic considerations.
- 3.0.4.4 Vaccinations and other methods to cope with prevailing disease challenges.
- 3.0.4.5 Biosecurity measures.
- 3.0.4.6 Nutrition.
- 3.0.4.7 Environmental impacts, including manure management and run-off.
- 3.0.4.8 Ranging and foraging area management.
- 3.0.4.9 Exclusion of predators and control of rats and mice.
- 3.0.4.10 Euthanasia.

3.0.5 Any surgical procedure not covered by these standards must be carried out by a veterinarian.

3.0.6 Not allocated.

3.0.7 All birds must be thoroughly inspected at least twice per 24 hours.

Note: During this inspection, the welfare of each bird must be observed. If any bird is not in a state of well-being, it must be cared for immediately and corrective measures must be taken. During a time of increased risk to health and welfare, inspections must be increased as necessary to protect the bird's well-being.

3.0.8 Not allocated.

3.0.9 If there is disease or known risk of disease on farm, vaccines must be used.

Note: In order to help eliminate or reduce vulnerability to disease and the need for antibiotics at therapeutic levels, Animal Welfare Approved encourages the appropriate use of vaccines on an individual or group basis for prevention of disease.

3.0.10 Any sick or injured birds on the farm must be treated immediately to minimize pain and distress. This must include veterinary treatment if required.

3.0.10.1 Homeopathic, herbal or other non-antibiotic alternative treatments are preferred.

3.0.10.2 If alternative treatments are not suitable or not effective or if a veterinarian has recommended antibiotic treatment, this must be administered.

3.0.10.3 Withholding treatment in order to preserve a bird or flock's eligibility for market is prohibited.

Note: Finding untreated injured or ill birds may be grounds for removal from the program.

3.0.11 Birds treated with an antibiotic must not be slaughtered or used to produce eggs for the *Animal Welfare Approved* program before a period of time has passed that is at least twice the licensed withdrawal period of the antibiotic used.

3.0.12 Birds treated with any off-license medication must not be slaughtered or used to produce eggs for the *Animal Welfare Approved* program until at least seven days after medication, or an alternative withdrawal as advised by a veterinarian.

3.0.12.1 Birds must not be treated with any medications prohibited for food animal use.

3.0.13 Action must be taken to treat lameness and to remove any causes of lameness.

3.0.14 There must be provision of a safe place for sick or injured birds to recover, free of competition.

3.0.15 If injured birds are separated from the flock they must only be kept apart until such time they can rejoin the group without adversely affecting either the health or welfare of the individual or the flock.

3.0.16 The sub-therapeutic and/or non-therapeutic use of antibiotics, or any other medicines, to control or prevent disease or promote growth, is prohibited.

3.0.17 Growth hormones or the use of any other substances promoting weight gain are prohibited.

3.0.18 Probiotics to promote positive health are permitted.

3.0.19 Records must be kept of the administration of veterinary medical products.

3.0.19.1 Date of purchase.

3.0.19.2 Name of product.

3.0.19.3 Quantity purchased.

3.0.19.4 Identity of the birds treated.

3.0.19.5 Reason why birds were treated.

3.0.19.6 Number of birds treated.

3.0.19.7 Date when treatment started and finished.

3.0.20 The primary methods of preventing parasite infestations must be pasture management or rotation and bedding management and removal.

3.0.21 If prevention has not been effective, medicine regimens must be implemented to effectively control worms, lice, mange and any other parasites.

3.0.22 The use of organophosphates and other products with the same or a similar mode of action is prohibited.

Note: An exception to the standard above may be considered if other treatments have been shown to be ineffective. Please refer to the Animal Welfare Approved paper on organophosphate and non-organophosphate type products.

3.0.23 Fecal samples to monitor internal parasite burdens should be taken at least annually.

Note: This standard is under review with the intent of making it a requirement in 2015.

3.0.24 Fecal samples must be reviewed by a competent person.

3.1 Not allocated

3.2 Temporary separation

3.2.1 A bird must not be kept in isolation unless briefly required for veterinary procedures or to recover from an illness or injury.

3.2.2 The pen or enclosure for temporarily single-housed birds must meet the space requirements in section 8.1.

3.2.3 Temporarily single-housed birds should have visual and auditory contact with other chickens.

3.2.4 At minimum, pens used for the treatment of sick birds must be cleaned between each use.

3.3 Euthanasia

3.3.1 Birds experiencing pain or suffering from which they are unlikely to recover must be immediately and humanely euthanized on the farm.

3.3.2 Euthanasia must be carried out in a manner that renders the bird immediately insensible to pain.

Note: Please contact Animal Welfare Approved if further information on appropriate methods of euthanasia is required.

3.3.3 Not allocated.

3.3.4 Euthanizing birds in a way that causes unnecessary pain or suffering is prohibited. Methods that do not render the birds immediately insensible to pain include:

3.3.4.1 Suffocation.

3.3.4.2 Poison.

3.3.4.3 Penetration of the brain or spinal column without pre-stunning.

3.3.5 When local or national authorities order the killing of a flock of birds or if any large-scale euthanasia is about to take place to eradicate disease, the *Animal Welfare Approved* program must be notified immediately. Such an event must be supervised by a veterinarian, government authority, poultry expert, and/or official representative of the *Animal Welfare Approved* program, to ensure that the proper euthanasia protocol and humane handling procedures are being followed. Using two-stage or non-aversive Controlled Atmosphere Killing (CAK) is strongly preferred.

4.0 EMERGENCIES

4.0.1 A plan to care for or house birds in emergency situations must be prepared and be understood by all of those working on the farm.

4.0.1.1 The plan must consider the welfare of the birds during a fire. In shelters or housing with restricted access (a single door or doorways), a fire plan must be established with escape routes to the outdoors, available from the interior of the shelter to allow all birds to be evacuated quickly. In shelters or housing with restricted access, a method to extinguish the fire (fire extinguisher, water source) must be readily accessed. Birds must be kept from direct access to electrical wiring and heat sources as a fire prevention measure.

4.0.1.2 The plan must ensure welfare of the birds is maintained in any potential climatic extreme such as floods, snow storms, and drought.

4.0.1.3 The plan must ensure welfare of the birds is maintained during any potential disruption of services or mechanical breakdown, such as water supply cutoff or breakdown of feeding or ventilation machinery.

4.0.1.4 The plan must ensure the welfare of birds is maintained during transport to include actions to be taken in the event of an accident or vehicle breakdown.

5.0 FLOCK MANAGEMENT

5.0.1 Each farm must maintain, and provide the auditor access to, records to demonstrate compliance with *Animal Welfare Approved* standards.

5.0.2 Records must be kept of the purchase, sale or transfer of *Animal Welfare Approved* birds and products (e.g. eggs).

5.0.3 Records must be kept of mortalities, morbidity and culls including the cause of these where known.

5.0.4 Birds must be maintained in stable groups of a suitable size to uphold a well-functioning hierarchy. Introduction of new birds to a group must be carefully managed and supervised.

5.0.5 Special care must be taken when mixing breeding males to minimize harm to individuals.

5.0.6 Not allocated.

5.0.7 All facilities, equipment, fittings and pasture used by the birds must be free of debris.

5.0.8 All facilities, equipment, fittings, fencing and pasture areas must be designed and maintained in such a way that they do not pose a risk, or inflict injury or damage to the birds.

5.1, 5.2 & 5.3 Not allocated

5.4 Management of chickens

5.4.1 Chickens must be carefully monitored to minimize fighting, feather pecking and other negative behaviors, and necessary steps must be taken to protect birds from harm.

5.4.2 Chickens should be kept in flocks of no more than 500 birds.

5.4.3 Not allocated.

5.4.4 If negative behaviors affecting the welfare of birds in the flock are seen or reported, the *Animal Welfare Approved* program may require the farmer to reduce the flock or colony size within the affected flock or any future flocks in order to remain in the *Animal Welfare Approved* program.

Note: Flock size is a factor that has been shown to affect the occurrence of negative behaviors such as feather pecking, cannibalism and others.

5.4.5 Birds must be able to exhibit their normal physical and social behaviors including self-isolation.

5.4.6 All chickens must have access to areas of retreat both in the house and out on range.

5.4.7 Hens must be protected from excessive injury during treading.

5.4.8 All chickens must have access to dust baths.

5.4.9 Not allocated.

5.4.10 Confinement systems, in-house or field-based pens or cages that restrict the birds' natural behaviors, are prohibited.

5.4.11 After the brooding period each chicken must have continuous access to at least 4 sq ft (0.37 sq m) range and foraging area (see also 7.0.3).

5.4.12 to 5.4.13 Not allocated.

5.4.14 Birds must have space to fly, run and stretch their wings.

5.4.15 The minimum pen size must be 18 ft by 10 ft (5.4m by 3m).

5.4.16 to 5.4.17 Not allocated.

5.4.18 Fully enclosed (covered) pens may only be used when there is a predator risk that cannot be controlled by other means.

5.4.19 A fully enclosed pen must be at least 4 ft (1.2m) high.

5.4.20 to 5.4.21 Not allocated.

5.4.22 If pens are moved in the lifetime of the flock protocols must be in place to ensure no harm comes to birds during the move.

5.4.23 The use of goggles is prohibited.

5.4.24 Poultry systems must be arranged and managed in such a way to minimize mortality.

5.5 Management of breeding flocks and laying birds

5.5.1 Chicken breeder flocks and laying hens must have access to 7 in (18 cm) aerial perch per bird.

5.5.2 and 5.5.3 Not allocated.

5.5.4 Perches for breeder flocks and laying birds must be built in such a way that the birds can securely grip the perch, be non-slip and have no sharp edges.

5.5.5 Perches should be rounded with a flat top.

5.5.5.1 Perches should be at least 12" off the floor; 18" apart vertically in ladder perches; 12" apart vertically in A frame or diagonal perches; 12" apart horizontally and at least 8" from a wall.

Note: This standard is being reviewed with the intent of making it a requirement in 2015.

5.5.6 Hens must have access to nest boxes.

5.5.7 Laying hens must have at least one individual nest box for every five birds.

5.5.8 Where communal nests are used there must be at least 20 sq. inches per laying hen.

5.5.9 Not allocated.

5.5.10 Laying birds may only be excluded from nest boxes during the nighttime perching period.

5.5.11 Nest boxes must be in a dark and secluded area.

5.5.12 Each nest box must allow the bird to perch and alight.

5.5.13 Not allocated.

5.5.14 Nest boxes must be weatherproof.

5.5.15 Nest boxes must be dry with friable and manipulable nesting material.

5.5.16 Nest boxes must be in an area that provides ventilation.

5.5.17 to 5.5.18 Not allocated.

5.5.19 Birds must be allowed to molt naturally. Forced molting is prohibited.

5.5.20 The breeder flock must be allowed to molt at least once before removal of the flock.

5.5.21 The layer flock must be allowed to molt at least twice before removal of the flock.

Note: Under exceptional circumstances a farmer may seek permission from the Animal Welfare Approved program to end the life of a breeder flock prior to one molt and the life of a layer flock prior to two molts.

5.6 Provision for hatching

The following standards apply if hatching takes place on or under the control of the approved farm.

5.6.1 Natural brooding is recommended.

5.6.2 Hatching records must be kept. These must include:

5.6.2.1 The number of eggs received.

5.6.2.2 The number of eggs set.

5.6.2.3 The number of eggs hatched.

5.6.2.4 The number of chicks delivered to the growing farm.

5.6.3 The hatchery must be constructed to allow easy cleaning and disinfection.

5.6.4 There must be an alarm to show power failure to the incubator and hatchery.

5.6.4.1 There should be alarms to show when temperature and humidity in the incubator and hatcher are outside of expected levels.

5.6.5 There must be a backup power source that meets the requirements for the hatchery.

5.6.6 The backup power source must be maintained and tested as per the manufacturer's instructions with a record kept of this.

5.7 Management of chicks and pullets

5.7.1 Throwing young birds or mechanical moving of young birds from delivery containers is prohibited.

5.7.2 Young birds must be placed from a height of 12 in (30.48 cm) or less.

5.7.3 Litter must be provided from placement of young birds.

5.7.4 Young birds must be placed within 36 hours of the first egg hatching.

5.7.5 Young birds should have access to forage from 24 hours after placement.

5.7.6 Young birds must have access to forage by seven days of age.

5.7.7 In climatic conditions that do not pose a risk to bird health, young birds must have access to a ranging and foraging area from four weeks of age.

5.8 Castration

5.8.1 Castration (caponizing) of chickens is prohibited.

5.9 Physical Alteration

5.9.1 All mutilations or physical alterations are prohibited. These include:

5.9.1.1 De-beaking (beak clipping, tipping and trimming).

5.9.1.2 De-clawing.

5.9.1.3 De-spurring.

5.9.1.4 De-toeing.

5.9.1.5 Hole punching.

5.9.1.6 Pinioning.

5.9.1.7 Notching.

5.9.1.8 Wattle trimming.

5.9.1.9 Comb trimming.

5.9.2 Trimming of feathers is permitted. Skin or flesh must not be cut.

5.10 Identification

5.10.1 Where identification is required it must not cause harm to the bird.

6.0 FOOD AND WATER

6.0.1 Chickens must have free access to clean, fresh water at all times.

6.0.2 Chickens must have a feeding plan that will guarantee a varied, well-balanced and wholesome nutritional regime that meets the optimal nutritional requirements of the age, breed and size of the birds on the farm.

6.0.3 A list of ingredients or sample tear tags from all feed and supplements used on farm must be made available to the *Animal Welfare Approved* representative.

6.0.4 Food and water must be distributed in a way that eliminates competition.

6.0.5 Feeding meat or animal by-products, including fishmeal is prohibited.

Note: Feeding dairy products or by-products is permitted.

6.0.6 Wherever possible, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or derivatives of GMOs, including GMO feed and veterinary and health care products containing GMOs or their derivatives as well as the growing of genetically engineered crops must be avoided.

6.1 & 6.2 Not allocated

6.3 Food and water for chickens

6.3.1 Chickens must have constant access to food during daylight hours.

6.3.2 Birds must always have access to insoluble grit. Birds must be able to pass the grit into the gizzard.

Note: Grit may be obtained from the environment or provided as a supplement. If provided as a supplement it can be removed 48 hours prior to slaughter.

6.3.3 A source of calcium must be provided for layers.

6.3.4 Synthetic yolk colorants are prohibited.

7.0 RANGING AND FORAGING ACCESS

The aim of good ranging and foraging area management is to satisfy the bird's natural behaviors. Birds must be able to explore the ground and their natural environment.

For management of chickens in extreme weather please see sections 7.5 and 8.0.

7.0.1 to 7.0.2 Not allocated.

7.0.3 In climatic conditions that do not pose a risk to bird health continuous ranging and foraging area access is required for all birds from the age of four weeks onwards.

Note: Animal Welfare Approved recommends that all chickens have access to the outdoor ranging and foraging area from as early on in life as possible. This could be from two to three days old onwards if conditions allow.

7.0.4 Ranging and foraging areas should be used in rotation.

7.0.5 The amount of outdoor area must be such that the health and welfare of the birds and range and forage quality is maintained.

7.0.6 Birds must have access to ranging and foraging areas that are well drained and clean.

7.0.7 A ranging and foraging management plan must be in place that addresses the specific farm site. It must ensure that:

7.0.7.1 Not allocated.

- 7.0.7.2 Birds have access to growing green vegetation on the range whenever conditions allow.
 - 7.0.7.3 The composition of the ranging and foraging area does not create health problems for the birds.
 - 7.0.7.4 Birds must have access to ranging and foraging areas that have not become polluted with manure.
 - 7.0.7.5 Ranging and foraging areas are not subject to erosion by the activities of the birds.
 - 7.0.7.6 Ranging and foraging areas are not degraded by overuse or other management techniques.
 - 7.0.7.7 Appropriate paddock size is assured.
 - 7.0.7.8 The location of water, shelter, and feeding areas is addressed.
 - 7.0.7.9 Non-point pollution and other local environmental standards are being met.
 - 7.0.7.10 Ranging and foraging areas that are worn out or denuded are restored.
- 7.0.8 Periodic soil testing must be conducted as necessary.
- 7.0.9 Periodic testing of pasture or forage nutritional content is recommended.
- 7.0.10 Herbicides and pesticides may only be used when weeds or pests cannot be practically controlled by other means.
- 7.0.11 Herbicides and pesticides must be mixed, used and disposed of according to manufacturer's instructions to avoid environmental contamination.
- 7.0.12 Birds must not be kept on land within 21 days of direct application of herbicides or pesticides.
- 7.0.13 The use of any manures or fertilizers for pasture land that are bought in from off-farm must be justified by soil testing and pasture nutritional need.
- 7.0.14 Waste from on-farm slaughter must be properly composted before it is applied to pasture.
- 7.0.15 Fish fertilizer must come from sustainable sources.
- 7.0.16 After the application of slaughter waste or fish fertilizer to pasture there must be an interval of at least one month, or until all visible signs of the application have disappeared (whichever is longer), before birds use the land.

Note: Permission may be granted to graze the land prior to one month after application of fish fertilizer if it can be demonstrated that animals will not be exposed to any trace of the fertilizer.

7.0.17 Manures and fertilizers that can have a negative effect on soil microbial life and/or which contain heavy metals should be avoided.

7.1 & 7.2 Not allocated

7.3 Ranging and foraging area access for chickens

7.3.1 The activity of the birds must not cause more than 20% of the ranging and foraging area they are kept on being denuded.

7.3.2 Birds must have access to land that meets standard 7.3.1 for at least 50% of daylight hours.

7.3.3 Birds must be able to forage and seek nutrition from the range.

7.3.4 Clean drinking water must be continuously available to birds on range.

7.3.5 Birds must be protected from the immediate threat or fear of aerial predators.

7.3.6 Areas of retreat or cover must be available close to the birds and provided in a manner that encourages ranging behavior and ensures maximum use of the ranging and foraging areas available.

Note: These can be natural (for example: trees, shrubs and cover crops) and/or artificial.

7.3.7 The colony or flocks must be moved before the land becomes damaged or contaminated.

7.4 Not allocated

7.5 Exclusion from ranging and foraging area

Birds who have been properly selected for the specific climate conditions will voluntarily choose to go outdoors in all but the most extreme weather. However when exclusion is in the best interest of the bird or flock the standards in the following section and those in section 8 must be met.

7.5.1 Birds may only be removed from the ranging and foraging area and housed in an emergency situation or extreme weather conditions when their welfare would otherwise be affected.

7.5.2 Birds may only be housed with no management plan and no pasture access in an emergency situation and to a maximum of up to 28 days.

7.5.3 If local conditions mean that there will be a planned removal of birds from pasture for any length of time or in an emergency where removal from pasture exceeds 28 days, the farmer must put into place a plan for bird management. It must include:

7.5.3.1 Triggers for housing such as temperature, precipitation or soil condition.

7.5.3.2 Space available to each housed bird.

7.5.3.3 Facilities available to house the birds. These must include roosting areas, scratch areas, feeding areas and space to enable birds to fulfill their behavioral needs.

7.5.3.4 Triggers for birds to be returned to ranging and foraging areas.

Note: It is not acceptable to use a particular date during the year as a trigger for either housing or return to ranging and foraging areas. Triggers should relate to the identified risk to the welfare of the birds under certain climatic or environmental scenarios.

7.6 Exclusion from ranging and foraging area for chickens

7.6.1 Not allocated.

7.6.2 If chickens are excluded from daytime access to ranging and foraging areas they must be provided with vegetative material so that they can engage in foraging behavior.

8.0 HOUSING AND SHELTER

8.0.1 Not allocated.

8.0.2 Birds must have continuous access to housing or shelter that protects them from weather extremes, including high winds, sleet and heavy snows, and sun in climatic regions where high temperatures may negatively impact their welfare.

8.0.3 In extreme weather there must be a means to feed and water birds in a sheltered environment.

8.0.4 Shelters and housing must be positioned away from areas of run off or potential run off.

8.0.5 Shelters and housing must be well ventilated and allow fresh air to enter.

8.0.6 Shelters and housing must allow natural light to enter.

8.0.7 Birds must not be subjected to dim and/or continuous lighting or kept in permanent darkness.

8.0.8 In the daytime, the birds must always be able to see each other, their food and water sources, as well as their surroundings clearly.

8.0.9 Use of artificial light is permitted as long as it does not exceed a maximum day-length of 16 hours.

8.0.10 Artificial light must be distributed evenly.

8.0.11 Stationary housing and shelters must have solid floors.

8.0.11.1 Wire mesh flooring in mobile housing must not damage the birds' feet.

Note: Existing mesh or slatted flooring areas may be covered to create the equivalent of a solid surface. Mobile housing may have wire mesh or slatted flooring for laying hens, as long as hens are only confined to the house when perching at night.

8.0.12 Birds at all times must have an area available that provides dry footing so they are not forced to stand in mud or manure.

8.0.13 Inspection of birds must be possible at any time day or night.

8.0.14 Manure must be removed from housing or shelters on a regular basis.

8.0.15 The house or shelter must be managed to eliminate ammonia, dampness and mold.

Note: The human nose can detect ammonia at levels of 5ppm upwards. If the farmer can smell ammonia action must be taken to eliminate the source.

8.0.16 Liquefaction of manure and liquefied manure handling systems are prohibited.

8.0.17 Close confinement in cages is prohibited (see 8.0.18).

8.0.18 Temporary close confinement which may be required for vaccination, weighing, marking or veterinary procedures, is permitted. This must be noted in the farm plan or recorded at the time.

8.0.19 Accommodations must be constructed so that they can be easily and effectively cleaned.

8.0.20 Maintenance and housekeeping routines must be in place to minimize any potential problems from rats or mice.

8.1 Housing and shelter for chickens

Space allowances for housing and shelter have been set to allow all birds to move around freely and have sufficient space allowing for the behavioral structure of the flock.

8.1.1 The following space allowances are required in housing or shelter:

Chickens – minimum indoor area

Type of bird	Space per bird	Space per bird
Pullet	0.67 sq ft	0.06 sq meters
Laying hen	1.8 sq. ft	0.16 sq. meters
Breeder	1.8 sq. ft	0.16 sq. meters

Chickens – minimum additional foraging area when birds are excluded from a ranging and foraging area

Type of bird	Space per bird	Space per bird
Pullet	2.0 sq ft	0.18 sq meters
Laying hen	4.0 sq. ft	0.37 sq. meters
Breeder	4.0 sq. ft	0.37 sq. meters

8.1.1.1 Chicks should have access to at least 0.25 sq. ft. (0.02 sq. meters) per bird when first placed in brooders and this space should be increased as the birds grow.

8.1.2 to 8.1.8 Not allocated.

8.1.9 Structures housing birds must be capable of protecting the bird from thermal challenge with natural or mechanical temperature and humidity controls as required.

8.1.10 Housing must be kept at an average of at least 15 lux in daylight hours.

8.1.11 Housing and shelter must be kept dry.

8.1.12 Structures and outdoor areas must encourage birds to go outside in the hours of daylight.

8.1.13 Manure or soiled bedding must not be stored in the house.

8.1.14 If there are more than 75 birds in the flock there must be more than one entry and exit open at any time to allow birds free access to the outside.

8.1.15 The minimum width for any entry or exit is 18 inches.

8.1.15.1 The height of any entry or exit must be at least one inch more than the height of the tallest bird in the flock when the bird is upright.

8.1.16 Chickens must have access to entries and exits whose combined width adds up to at least a quarter of an inch per bird.

Note: A flock of 75 birds or less must have access to at least one entry/exit door that is at least 18 inches wide. A flock of 75 to 140 birds must have access to two entry/exit doors that are each 18 inches wide. A flock of more than 140 birds must have at least two doors whose combined width adds up to at least quarter of an inch per bird; for example a 200 bird flock must have at least two doorways that add up to at least 50 inches in width.

8.1.17 to 8.1.19 Not allocated.

8.1.20 Openings must be large enough to allow at least two birds to pass without touching.

8.1.21 There must be no obstructions that would prevent birds from seeing the exits.

8.1.22 If a house is depopulated, bedding must be removed and the house completely cleaned and left for at least 24 hours before restocking.

8.1.23 Houses must be fully dry before a new flock is introduced.

8.1.24 Houses must be at least 4 ft. high.

Note: This standard does not apply when birds always have free access in and out of the house.

8.2 Not allocated

8.3 Bedding

8.3.1 Not allocated.

8.3.2 In stationary housing bedding must be available to chickens at all times.

Note: Bedding is not required in roosts for laying hens where birds are only kept inside at night while perching. For the house or shelter to be considered only as a roost birds must be let out at first light and have un-obstructive access to the foraging area during daylight hours.

8.3.3 Bedding must be kept in a dry, mold-free, friable condition and replenished as necessary.

8.3.4 Bedding must not cause discomfort or harm to the birds.

8.3.5 Not allocated.

8.3.6 Bedding from timber-based products sourced from chemically treated wood is prohibited.

8.3.7 Not allocated.

8.3.8 In cold temperatures heat must be provided as necessary to keep birds comfortable.

9.0 REMOVAL OF BIRDS FROM THE APPROVED FARM

9.0.1 These standards only apply to birds that the approved farmer retains ownership of when they are moved off the approved farm.

9.0.2 When *Animal Welfare Approved* birds are removed from the approved farm they must be kept to *Animal Welfare Approved* standards until such time they leave the ownership of the approved farm or farmer.

9.0.3 There must be a separate and specific plan for maintaining bird health and welfare, transport, biosecurity and continued compliance with the *Animal Welfare Approved* standards while birds are removed from the approved farm. (see also 3.0.4).

9.1 Routine use of land that is not controlled by the approved farm

Animal Welfare Approved recognizes that the approved farm may routinely need to send birds off-farm to access ranging or foraging areas or for other management reasons. *Animal Welfare Approved* retains the right to audit these off-farm sites. Please see the standards below for guidance.

9.1.1 If the approved farm has any compliance issues other than record keeping and farm plans, the off-farm birds must be audited before approval can be granted or renewed.

9.1.2 If birds are removed from the main approved farm for five months or more in any calendar year, the off-farm birds must be audited before approval can be granted or renewed.

9.1.3 If 25% or fewer of the total birds owned are off the approved farm for less than five months in any calendar year and the main farm audit has no bird based compliance issues, the off-farm birds may not need to be audited.

9.2 Temporary removal of approved birds from the approved farm

9.2.1 *Animal Welfare Approved* livestock will only retain their status when temporarily removed from the approved farm for the following reasons:

9.2.1.1 to 9.2.1.2 Not allocated.

9.2.1.3 Movement of birds in an emergency.

9.2.1.4 Movement of birds prepared for showing.

9.2.1.5 Movement of birds for up to 24 hours for routine management practices.

9.2.2 Birds taken to shows do not have to meet ranging and foraging area access standards as long as they are only off the approved farm for a maximum of 72 hours.

9.2.3 to 9.2.4 Not allocated.

9.2.5 Showing birds must be conditioned to handling and human contact before movement to a show can be permitted.

10.0 PROTECTION FROM PREDATORS AND CONTROL OF RATS AND MICE

10.0.1 Birds must be protected from predators.

10.0.2 If livestock guardian dogs are used their management must meet the *Animal Welfare Approved* guidelines for guardian or herding canine management.

10.0.2.1 If other guardian animals are used they must be suitable for guardian duties.

10.0.2.2 Guardian animals must be chosen with consideration of their ability to thrive in the prevailing climatic conditions of the farm, in pasture-based, free range, outdoor systems.

10.0.3 In the event that exclusion is unsuccessful and predation remains an issue, live trapping may be used. (Please contact *Animal Welfare Approved* for guidance.)

10.0.4 Live traps must be checked twice daily.

10.0.5 All other forms of traps are prohibited.

10.0.6 All snares and leg hold traps are prohibited.

10.0.7 The use of poisons against predators is prohibited.

10.0.8 If live trapping is not possible or is not successful then as a last resort lethal control of specific animals may be carried out when these are causing an immediate threat to farm livestock.

10.0.9 If there is a continuous threat from predators that cannot be managed by live trapping advice must be sought from *Animal Welfare Approved* regarding a control program.

10.0.10 Lethal control/euthanasia of predators must result in instantaneous irreversible unconsciousness and death.

10.0.11 If a predatory animal has been euthanized to protect the birds on the farm, there must be records kept of the species in question, number of animals, and euthanasia method.

10.0.12 Glue boards for the control of rats and mice are prohibited.

10.0.13 Licensed rodenticides placed such that non-target species have no access to them may be used for the control of rats or mice.

10.0.14 Lethal control/euthanasia of live trapped rodents must result in instantaneous irreversible unconsciousness and death.

11.0 RECORDS AND RECORD-KEEPING

This section lists the records and plans that must be maintained on farm and the sections where they can be found. All records and plans must be in a physical form that can be shown to the *Animal Welfare Approved* auditor. Verbal plans and records are not acceptable

11.0.1 Records of the source, date of purchase, and number of birds in the breeding herd or flock (see also 2.0.5).

11.0.2 Records of a health plan (see also 3.0.4).

11.0.3 Records of the administration of veterinary medical products (see also 3.0.19).

11.0.4 Records of an emergency plan (see also section 4.0).

11.0.5 Records to show compliance with all *Animal Welfare Approved* standards (see also 5.0.1).

11.0.6 Records of sale or transfer of *Animal Welfare Approved* animals or products (see also 5.0.2).

11.0.7 Records of mortality, morbidity and culling (see also 5.0.3).

11.0.8 Records of a feeding plan including nutritional regime (see also 6.0.2).

11.0.9 Records of ingredients of feed for each class of stock, proportion of the constituents to the total feed on a dry matter basis, and/or sources of the constituent parts (see also 6.0.3).

11.0.10 Records of a pasture management plan (see also 7.0.7).

11.0.11 Records of a plan of management if there is planned exclusion of birds from pasture for any length of time or emergency or other removal from pasture for more than 28 days (see also 7.5.3).

11.0.12 Records of any close confinement (see also 8.0.19).

11.0.13 Records of a plan to maintain health and biosecurity of owned animals that are removed from the approved farm (see also 9.0.3).

11.0.14 Records of predatory animals who have been euthanized to protect the animals on the farm (see also 10.0.11).

11.0.15 Records of a plan for transporting birds (see also 13.0.1).

11.0.16 Records of a plan to increase sales to suitable outlets (see also 13.3.6.1).

11.0.17 Not allocated.

11.0.18 Records of hatchery information and backup power source maintenance (see also 5.6.2 and 5.6.6).

Note: For new farmers entering the program a period of 12 months will be provided to put the program plan and documents in place. The Animal Welfare Approved consultancy team will be able to assist in this process. The Animal Welfare Approved program will also provide templates for record-keeping upon request.

12.0 Not allocated

12.1 HANDLING OF CHICKENS

For some laying hen operations handling will be the exception. However handling of birds must always be carried out with care whether it is of individual birds for examination or groups of birds for flock disposal at end of lay.

12.1.1 Abuse or maltreatment of birds is prohibited.

12.1.2 Routine catching must be carried out in dusk or darkness.

Note: Individual birds may be caught in daylight for required treatments or inspections.

12.1.3 All chickens must be caught and carried round the body or by both legs.

12.1.4 Single leg catching of chickens is prohibited.

Note: Please contact Animal Welfare Approved if further information on appropriate methods of catching and handling is required.

12.1.5 Not allocated.

12.1.6 Birds must be caught with a minimum of chasing.

12.1.7 Handling and catching must only be done by competent persons.

12.1.8 Hired catching teams must have completed training on humane methods of chicken handling.

12.1.9 In the event a bird suffers accidental injury during catching, they must receive individual treatment to minimize pain and suffering immediately.

12.1.10 Sick, injured and/or suffering birds discovered during the catching process who are not expected to recover must be euthanized.

12.1.11 Birds must not be used for sport.

13.0 TRANSPORT

This section applies to all transport of birds including to slaughter, around the farm, between farms or delivery to farm.

13.0.1 A plan must exist to ensure that welfare of the birds is maintained during transport to the farm, around the farm and off the farm (see also 4.0.1.4).

13.0.2 All birds must be healthy and uninjured to be transported unless they are being transported to receive veterinary treatment.

13.0.3 Any person transporting birds must ensure they are taken without delay to their destination.

13.0.4 A competent individual must take responsibility for ensuring that birds do not suffer any injury or distress at any point immediately before, during and after transport.

13.0.5 All subcontractors, handlers and truckers must adhere to *Animal Welfare Approved* standards.

13.0.6 If delays during transport or unloading upon arrival at destination are anticipated, loading and transport must not commence until those complications are resolved.

13.0.7 During transport, all chickens must be protected from harm and thermal stress.

13.0.8 In the event that any birds suffer injury or distress during transport they must be treated or euthanized as soon as practically possible.

13.0.9 Ventilation must be provided that allows the birds to breathe fresh air while on the transport vehicle.

Note: When transporting birds in crates particular attention must be paid to ventilation passages between crates.

13.0.10 Overcrowding of birds during transport is prohibited. The following space allowance for transporting birds is required:

7 lbs (3 kg) per cubic foot (0.028 cubic meters).

13.0.11 The transportation vehicle must be thoroughly cleaned and dried prior to loading.

13.0.12 All birds must have continuous access to water until the point of catching.

13.1 & 13.2 Not allocated

13.3 Sale or change of management of birds before slaughter

13.3.1 All birds should be reared on their farm of hatch.

13.3.2 to 13.3.5 Not allocated.

13.3.6 The *Animal Welfare Approved* program is a hatch to end of life program.

13.3.6.1 Farmers who do not have any outlets for their birds that are acceptable to the *Animal Welfare Approved* program may still be eligible for approval if they have a plan to develop suitable outlets and can demonstrate year on year progress towards selling all stock through suitable outlets.

Note: Farmers that may come under this standard include:

- *Farms selling breeding stock to non-approved farms and other outlets.*
- *Farms selling chicks or older birds as pets, for 4H or FFA and showing.*
- *Farms selling chicks or older birds to non-approved farms and other outlets.*

13.3.7 Not allocated.

13.3.8 Birds ready for slaughter under the *Animal Welfare Approved* label or logo must only be sold to customers who will take them to *Animal Welfare Approved* slaughter plants.

13.3.9 *Animal Welfare Approved* recommends that even if birds or bird products are not sold under the label or logo they are sold to other *Animal Welfare Approved* farms and slaughtered at *Animal Welfare Approved* slaughter plants.

Animal Welfare Approved recognizes that it may be difficult for farms to market all their birds to suitable outlets.

Animal Welfare Approved will work with farms entering the program to develop a plan and timescale to end the practice of sale through unsuitable outlets.

Please contact us for further information on meeting the standards on sale of birds.

13.4 Transport of chickens

13.4.1 Mailing of live birds is prohibited.

13.4.1.1 Third party contractors may be used to transport birds but there must be a plan to protect bird/chick welfare.

13.4.2 The vehicle transporting the chickens must be capable of providing protection from high wind currents or rain and snow.

13.4.3 Transport after dark is recommended as it helps keep the birds calm and quiet.

13.4.4 Birds destined for slaughter may be crated overnight provided that they have adequate ventilation, are not overcrowded, and are transported to their final destination within three hours of dawn.

13.4.5 Feed must not be withdrawn for more than eight hours before slaughter.

Note: If birds are crated overnight and go directly to slaughter in the morning, feed withdrawal may exceed eight hours.

13.4.6 Transport to slaughter must not exceed four hours.

Note: A derogation may be granted if an approved slaughter plant is not available within 4 hours travel from the farm.

13.5 Transport of pullet chicks

13.5.1 Chicks must be transported in chick boxes designed for the purpose.

13.5.2 Boxes must have non-slip pads on the bottom.

13.5.3 The number of day-old chicks must be put in boxes according to box count.

13.5.4 Delivery containers must not cause crowding or packed conditions for chicks.

13.5.5 Chick boxes must not be stacked on one another unless specifically designed for the purpose. When stacking boxes, care must be taken to ensure that air flow to the chicks is not restricted.

13.5.6 Live chicks must only be transported in temperature controlled vehicles.

13.6 Transport containers for chickens

Some laying hen operations will not transport birds after they have arrived on farm. However, whenever containers are used they must meet the standards below.

13.6.1 Any bird over 36 hours old must not be transported in a chick box.

13.6.2 Transport containers must be capable of being cleaned and disinfected.

13.6.3 The containers and vehicles in which birds are transported must be thoroughly cleaned, disinfected and dried between uses.

13.6.4 Containers must be designed to allow birds to be easily loaded and unloaded.

13.6.5 The use of thin wire transport cages is prohibited.

13.6.6 When poultry crates are used they must be designed so that the birds can sit comfortably next to each other, but not stand.

Note: This limited space helps the birds stay calm and avoid harming themselves or distressing others by banging into the surrounding walls.

13.6.7 Transport containers must be capable of providing the birds with adequate fresh air and protection from inclement weather.

13.6.8 Transport containers must allow for inspection of the birds.

13.6.9 Transport containers must be kept in an upright position and be easily identifiable as containing live birds.

13.6.10 If containers are stacked, extra care must be taken to ensure chickens have sufficient ventilation.

13.7 Transporting breeder chickens

13.7.1 Adult breeder chickens must be transported in individual crates or on a trailer.

13.7.2 In a trailer, birds must be separated according to sex, weight and age.

13.7.3 In a trailer flooring must consist of heavy bedding so birds are able to stand comfortably without slipping.

13.8 Transport of chickens by air

13.8.1 Any birds transported by air must be delivered to and collected from the airport within 45 minutes of take-off and landing.

13.8.2 All containers used for transport by air must comply with section 13.6.

13.8.3 Records confirming the airline's commitment to air-condition the hold must be in hand prior to loading.

13.8.4 Receiving air handlers must have contact details of the person receiving birds.

14.0 Not allocated

14.1 SLAUGHTER

14.1.1 On farm slaughter is recommended and Controlled Atmosphere Killing (CAK), in which chickens remain in their crates and their oxygen is slowly replaced by a mixture of argon and/or nitrogen and carbon dioxide, is the preferred slaughtering methods.

Note: On-farm mobile slaughter and CAK are not readily available. It is the goal of the Animal Welfare Approved program to make these processes more widely available and acceptable for USDA-approved programs. Farms carrying out on-farm slaughter must have their slaughter process reviewed. Please refer to the online AWA Policy Manual section p2.6

14.1.2 CAK and Controlled Atmosphere Stunning (CAS) using carbon dioxide may be used for chickens.

14.1.3 Not allocated.

14.1.4 When a slaughterhouse using CAK/CAS in a form that includes the use of anoxic gas is available, such a plant must have priority.

14.1.5 Slaughterhouses receiving birds in the *Animal Welfare Approved* program, or the process of slaughtering on-farm, must pass a review by the *Animal Welfare Approved* program for pre-slaughter handling, stunning, and killing.

14.1.6 The person delivering the birds to slaughter should stay with them to ensure that they are slaughtered according to *Animal Welfare Approved* guidelines in 14.1.5.

14.1.7 Birds must be handled as little as possible up to the point of slaughter.

14.1.8 Birds must be unloaded and slaughtered within two hours of arrival at the slaughterhouse.

14.1.9 At the slaughter plant, birds must be unloaded in a dimly lit room.

14.1.10 Crates must be unloaded in an upright position and must be handled with care to ensure they are not tipped.

14.1.11 No person must cause or permit a chicken to sustain any avoidable excitement, pain or suffering.

14.1.12 Any person involved in the killing or slaughter process, including unloading and handling of the chickens, must demonstrate the knowledge and skill to perform those tasks humanely and efficiently.

14.1.13 Prior to stunning and slaughter chickens must be restrained in a manner that spares them any avoidable pain, suffering, agitation or injury.

14.1.14 Shackling of live birds is not permitted without prior written consent.

Note: Permission by the Animal Welfare Approved program must be renewed annually and will not be granted once a facility within the maximum travel distance that does not use shackles is approved.

14.1.14.1 Where shackle lines are permitted the line speed must not exceed 35 birds per minute.

14.1.15 Stunning must be followed immediately by killing (bleeding).

14.1.16 When one person is responsible for both operations, they must be carried out consecutively on one chicken before moving on to the next.

14.1.17 Killing birds without prior stunning is prohibited.

14.1.18 Stunning must render the birds immediately insentient to pain.

14.1.19 Cones may be used to restrain birds prior to stunning.

14.1.20 Birds must not leave the cone until dead.

It is the goal of the Animal Welfare Approved program to obtain stunning for poultry that does not involve shackling and hoisting of birds. Currently, the plants that use better methods are so rare in the U.S. that it is not possible for all Animal Welfare

Approved *farmers to access a plant that does not shackle and hoist. We are moving toward securing the least stressful methods of slaughter for all birds in the Animal Welfare Approved program as quickly as possible.*

15.0 PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

15.0.1 The *Animal Welfare Approved* program must be informed immediately of any changes on farm that result in a deviation from the standards.

15.0.2 Temporary deviations will be taken into consideration when unexpected circumstances that are not under the control of the farmer arise.

15.0.3 All other deviations from the *Animal Welfare Approved* standards can be cause for reconsideration of the farmer's participation or removal from the *Animal Welfare Approved* program and use of its seal, in conjunction with that farmer's products.

15.1 Derogations

15.1.1 If, in the opinion of the Animal Welfare Approved Standards Board, a system meets all of the principles of the program but does not pass a specific standard or standards, derogation may be granted.

15.1.2 In order for a derogation to be granted, an inspection report must be submitted stating the deviation from the published standard, the reason for this deviation, the length of time this deviation from standards will occur and the welfare outcome should the derogation be granted.