GLOBAL FOOD PARTNERS

Animal Welfare Benchmark Criteria for Layer Hen Standards

Version
1.0 July 2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREAMBLE 03

BENCHMARK APPROACH 03

GLOBAL FOOD PARTNERS BENCHMARK PROGRAM 04

ANIMAL WELFARE BENCHMARK CRITERIA STRUCTURE 04

ANIMAL WELFARE BENCHMARK CRITERIA SCOPE 05

THE FIVE DOMAINS MODEL 06

ANIMAL WELFARE FRAMEWORK 07

ANIMAL WELFARE BENCHMARK CRITERIA DEVELOPMENT 07

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS 09

THE BENCHMARK CRITERIA 11

1. NUTRITION 11
2. INDOOR LIVING ENVIRONMENT 12
3. OUTDOOR LIVING ENVIRONMENT (WHERE PROVIDED) 15
4. HUSBANDRY AND HEALTH 16
5. EUTHANASIA 20
6. ON-FARM KILLING 21
7. DEPOPULATION AND TRANSPORT 22
8. SCHEME OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT 24

APPENDIX 25

© 2022 Global Food Partners

PREAMBLE

Egg producers worldwide are adopting cage-free egg production to meet the growing demand and requirements from food businesses, consumers and governments. Growing demand for cage-free eggs, coupled with requirements for greater transparency, has led to the establishment of numerous animal welfare standards and certification schemes for layer hens in cage-free production systems. Food businesses, producers, governments and the public are now seeking tools to evaluate these different standards and schemes.

BENCHMARK APPROACH

A benchmark is a reference point against which something is evaluated. Worldwide, there are many existing layer hen welfare standards, developed and managed by various certification schemes. A benchmark approach has been adopted to leverage and add value to these standards that are already in use. This approach first involves defining a minimum set of criteria (or 'threshold'), and then subsequently giving recognition to those standards which meet or exceed this threshold.

This document, the Animal Welfare Benchmark Criteria for Layer Hen Standards (hereafter 'the Benchmark Criteria') was developed as a tool to evaluate layer hen welfare standards and certification schemes. The Benchmark Criteria can also be used as a guidance document for egg producers, food businesses and certification schemes looking to develop or update their own standards, procedures or sourcing requirements. Similarly, the Benchmark Criteria can assist these stakeholders in measuring their progress and commitment to improving the welfare of layer hens, particularly in emerging cage-free egg markets around the world.

© 2022 Global Food Partners

GLOBAL FOOD PARTNERS BENCHMARK PROGRAM

Global Food Partners has established a Benchmark Program as the means to evaluate certification schemes and their standards against the Benchmark Criteria. The Benchmark Program recognises those participating certification schemes and associated standards which meet or exceed the Benchmark Criteria and enables **scheme owners** to make permissible claims about their participation in the program. Further information about the Benchmark Program is available on our website www.globalfoodpartners.com.

Certification schemes that are recognised by the Benchmark Program as being aligned with the Benchmark Criteria are eligible to participate in Impact Incentives, a multi-commodity credit trading system supported by the Impact Alliance, of which Global Food Partners is a founding member.

ANIMAL WELFARE BENCHMARK CRITERIA STRUCTURE

Global Food Partners recognises that there are different systems of cage-free layer hen farming, and that the levels of animal welfare vary greatly around the globe. With the Benchmark Criteria, we have set an initial threshold that represents a basic level of care, reflected in the 'requirements,' as well as additional options which are outlined in the 'recommendations' that provide higher levels of animal welfare. In this document, "shall" indicates a requirement, and "should" indicates a recommendation.

Requirements: These are the factors that must be met by each certification scheme. The standards and certification scheme to be benchmarked must meet the requirements listed.

Recommendations: These are good practices that may not be covered by many certification programs at present, but which are likely to improve animal welfare. We will be looking at adding them to the Benchmark Criteria 'requirements' following future reviews. **Scheme owners** should view these recommendations as potential future additions when they review and revise their standards. The standards and certification scheme to be benchmarked does not have to meet the recommendations listed. Where there is capacity to include the recommendations in their standards, Global Food Partners encourages **scheme owners** do this as soon as possible.

© 2022 Global Food Partners

ANIMAL WELFARE BENCHMARK CRITERIA SCOPE

The Benchmark Criteria only pertains to standards during the laying (egg production) stage as certification schemes usually do not cover other life stages. Hence, the Benchmark Criteria focus on production practices that occur or originate on the laying farm. This includes on-farm killing practices, **depopulation**, and transport.

However, Global Food Partners encourages the adoption of best practices at all stages of production including at breeder farms, hatcheries, rearing facilities and slaughter. This includes the humane handling of birds at all ages and living conditions that satisfy the animal welfare framework, including cage-free housing, good nutrition, adequate space, comfortable physical environment, environmental enrichment, good health, expression of normal behaviours, and humane killing. In future reviews of the Benchmark Criteria, Global Food Partners will look to expand the scope and include other life stages, starting with pullet rearing.

The credibility of a certification scheme is dependent not only on its performance requirements (i.e., the standards), but also on the scheme's operational processes (i.e., how the standards are assessed and how the scheme is managed). Some key operational processes include the scheme's assurance or verification systems, governance and management structure, standard setting procedures and product traceability and labelling requirements. Recognising the importance of these processes for monitoring and ensuring compliance with the layer hen welfare standards and welfare outcomes for the hens, we have included requirements and recommendations for scheme operation and management as part of the Benchmark Criteria (see section 8).

© 2022 Global Food Partners

THE FIVE DOMAINS MODEL

The Five Domains Model was developed to provide a comprehensive and systematic means of assessing animal welfare. Historically, animal welfare assessment primarily centred around minimising negative experiences (welfare compromise). However, the Five Domains Model also emphasises the importance of animals having the opportunity for positive experiences (welfare enhancement).

It acknowledges and reflects an animal's subjective experiences across the four physical domains of nutrition, environment, health and behaviour, which contribute to the animal's overall mental state (the fifth domain). The Model is regularly updated to include the latest developments in animal welfare science, the most recent update being 2020. The table below lists the 5 domains and outlines the associated welfare provisions and aims.

DOMAIN	PROVISION	ANIMAL WELFARE AIM
NUTRITION	Provide ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour	Minimise thirst and hunger and enable eating to be a pleasurable experience
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	Provide shade/shelter or suitable housing, good air quality and comfortable resting areas	Minimise discomfort and exposure and promote thermal, physical and other comforts
HEALTH	Prevent or rapidly diagnose and treat disease and injury, and foster good muscle tone, posture and cardiorespiratory function	Minimise breathlessness, nausea, pain and other aversive experiences and promote the pleasures of robustness, vigour, strength and well-coordinated physical activity
BEHAVIOURAL INTERACTIONS	Provide sufficient space, proper facilities, congenial company and appropriately varied conditions	Minimise threats and unpleasant restrictions on behaviour and promote engagement in rewarding activities
MENTAL STATE	Provide safe, congenial and species-appropriate opportunities to have pleasurable experiences	Promote various forms of comfort, pleasure, interest, confidence and a sense of control

Source: Information collated from Mellor et al. (2020) and Mellor (2016)

© 2022 Global Food Partners

ANIMAL WELFARE FRAMEWORK

Global Food Partners has developed an Animal Welfare Framework using the Five Domains Model for animal welfare assessment and associated provisions and aims as described in the section above. The Animal Welfare Framework sets out desired outcomes and principles across a comprehensive set of animal welfare categories:

- Nutrition
- Living Environment - Indoor and Outdoor
- Husbandry and Health
- Euthanasia
- On-farm Killing
- Depopulation and Transport
- Scheme Operation and Management

ANIMAL WELFARE BENCHMARK CRITERIA DEVELOPMENT

The development of the Benchmark Criteria 'requirements' and 'recommendations' involved consideration of the animal's physiological, behavioural and mental needs as outlined in the Five Domains Model and the Animal Welfare Framework, consulting existing global animal welfare standards for layer hens, as well as the considering the feasibility of meeting welfare standards in various regions of the world.

The Benchmark Criteria are intended to apply globally, hence the requirements need to be relevant and viable in regions around the world with differing conditions. The Benchmark Criteria requirements therefore reflect the 'minimum' needs for hen welfare rather than best practices, included as recommendations in this document. As such, many of the recommendations build on the requirements and provide additional guidance on how the needs of the hen can be met in cage-free systems.

Following the drafting of the Benchmark Criteria, a public consultation process was conducted during which stakeholders and standards holders gave feedback. Feedback was processed and considered in the context of the aforementioned considerations and constraints. A summary document highlighting the key changes to the Benchmark Criteria was provided to all stakeholders who provided feedback during the consultation period.

© 2022 Global Food Partners

To develop the Benchmark Criteria, Global Food Partners referred to animal welfare standards, good practices and existing frameworks including:

- Five Domains of Animal Welfare (October 2020)
- The Leather Impact Accelerator Farm Scope Benchmark Criteria (2020)
- The FARMS Responsible Minimum Standards for Laying Hens (March 2020)
- Humane Farm Animal Care – Animal Care Standards Egg Laying Hens (January 2018)
- Standards of China Association T/Cas For Standardization Farm animal welfare requirements: Laying hen (July 2017)
- RSPCA UK Welfare Standards Laying Hens (August 2017)
- RSPCA Australia Layer Hens Approved Farming Scheme Standards (September 2015)
- OIE Draft Chapter 7.Z Animal Welfare and Laying Hen Production Systems (September 2019)
- OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code Chapter 7.6 Killing of animals for disease control purposes (July 2021)
- Environment & Animal Society of Taiwan – Welfare Standards for Laying Hens (March 2019)
- ISEAL Code of Good Practices (December 2014)
- ISEAL Sustainability Benchmarking Good Practice Guide (September 2020)
- Textile Exchange Draft Animal Welfare Framework (November 2020)
- BSI Standards Publication Animal welfare management – General Requirements and Guidance for Organizations in the Food Supply Chain (2017)
- Compassion in World Farming – CIWF criteria for higher animal welfare: Laying Hens (April 2017)
- Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards, Philippines – Code of Practice for Cage-free Egg Production (2021)

© 2022 Global Food Partners

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply. Where used, the terms are bolded throughout the document.

TERM	DEFINITION
Applicable legislation	Any legislation and/or regulatory requirements relevant to the farming enterprise. This may include, but is not limited to, animal welfare, animal health, food safety and product labelling, biosecurity, transportation and environmental protection.
Beak trimming	The removal of the sharp tip of the bird's beak, resulting in a beak that is blunt or rounded at the end.
Cage system	Housing system where hens are kept in cages. This includes conventional and furnished ('enriched') cages.
Cage-free system	Housing system where hens are not kept in cages. This includes single-level and **multi-tier systems.** Hens may or may not have access to the outdoors.
Combination system	Housing system that combines aspects of conventional cages and **multi-tier (aviary) systems** and is designed to operate as either a cage or cage-free system. Doors and internal partitions, when in use, restrict the hens' movement between and within the multi-tier structure and effectively converts the cage-free system into a system similar to an enriched colony cage. Also referred to as 'hybrid' or 'convertible' housing systems or 'lock-back' cages.
Depopulation	Process of removing end-of-lay ('spent') hens from the shed, generally involving catching and handling of individual hens and sometimes placing them into crates for transport.

© 2022 Global Food Partners

TERM	DEFINITION
Euthanasia	Humane killing of an animal when it is in the best interests of the welfare of the animal to alleviate pain and suffering. Sometimes referred to as 'mercy killing'.
Forced moulting	Using environmental manipulation (such as feed withdrawal and changes to the lighting program) to unnaturally force birds to shed and replace their feathers. Also known as induced moulting.
Injurious pecking	Term used to describe a group of damaging pecking behaviours including severe feather pecking (vigorous pecking at and pulling out the feathers of birds), vent pecking (directed at the cloaca of other birds) and cannibalism (pecking at and eating the flesh of other birds)
Lux	A standard unit for measuring illuminance (i.e. the amount of light or intensity of light projected onto a surface). The minimum lux levels referenced in this document should be measured at bird head height.
Multi-tier (aviary) system	A type of cage-free housing system in which birds have access to multiple levels or 'tiers' inside the shed. Each tier consists of a raised slatted area. Equipment such as nest boxes, perches, feeders and drinkers are provided at various levels throughout the system, and birds can access the areas underneath the tiers.
Pecking objects	Items for the birds to peck, provided to increase activity and stimulate pecking towards the environment. A form of 'environmental enrichment'.
Scheme owner	The organisation responsible for the development, governance and management of the certification scheme
Usable area	Horizontal floor area available to the birds. This includes the litter area and any raised slatted areas or tiers where there is sufficient headroom for birds to walk comfortably. Nest boxes and perching spaces are not included.

© 2022 Global Food Partners

THE BENCHMARK CRITERIA

1. NUTRITION

Requirements - Feed

1.1 The standard shall require that feed is provided in sufficient quantity and quality that is appropriate for the birds' age and needs

1.2 The standard shall require adequate feeding space be provided throughout the shed and that feeding equipment be positioned to ensure easy access for all birds and to minimise risk of competition

Recommendations - Feed

1.3 The standard should specify that feed is formulated with appropriate levels of essential amino acids, fibre and sodium to minimise the risk of **injurious pecking**

1.4 The standard should require that insoluble grit of appropriate size and quantity is provided at least once weekly

1.5 The standard should specify that feeding equipment is of an appropriate height and design for birds to access feed easily using normal posture

1.6 The standard should require that no avian-derived protein is included in the feed

1.7 The standard should require that changes in diet be introduced gradually

1.8 The standard should require that timing of feed is consistent and regular, and matched to the timing of feed during rearing

1.9 The standard should require that feed is an appropriate consistency (such as mash) to minimise the risk of **injurious pecking**

Requirements - Water

1.10 The standard shall require water that is clean, fresh and safe for birds to drink, be available at all times

1.11 The standard shall require adequate drinking space be provided throughout the shed and drinking equipment be positioned so water is easily accessible to all birds and to minimise risk of competition

Recommendations - Water

1.12 The standard should specify that drinking equipment is of an appropriate height and design for birds to access water easily using normal posture

1.13 The standard should provide specifications on water quality

Requirements - Emergency feed and water provision

1.14 The standard shall require that contingency plans and adequate facilities are in place to ensure access to sufficient feed and water in the case of an emergency

© 2022 Global Food Partners

2. INDOOR LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Requirements - Facilities and equipment

2.1 The standard shall prohibit the use of **cage systems**

2.2 The standard shall prohibit the use of **combination ('combi') systems**

2.3 The standard shall require that facilities and equipment are designed, constructed and maintained to minimise stress, minimise the risk of disease or injury, avoid thermal discomfort, facilitate cleaning and good hygiene practices, and restrict the access of pests, predators and other animals

2.4 The standard shall require that contingency plans and equipment are in place to ensure conditions within the shed can be managed in the event of power failure or natural disaster

2.5 The standard shall require that there are no features in the environment that are likely to cause injury or distress to the birds

Recommendations – Facilities and equipment

2.6 The standard should specify that housing and equipment are designed to enable all hens to be visible during inspections

2.7 The standard should set specific requirements for the design, operation and management of **multi-tier (aviary) systems**

2.8 The standard should specify that if there is a droppings pit, it is not accessible to birds and that it is checked daily

2.9 The standard should require that all equipment including alarms and controls are functional

2.10 The standard should require that hens are protected from pests and other animals using the most humane control methods available

2.11 The standard should require that where wires are used over feeders and drinkers, these must not be electrified

2.12 The standard should set restrictions on the use of electrified wires along the walls or corners of the shed and encourage the use of alternatives such as physical barriers

Requirements - Ventilation

2.13 The standard shall require that the ventilation system maintains a thermally comfortable environment (and avoids heat or cold stress)

2.14 The standard shall require that the ventilation system maintains good air quality with low levels of dust and harmful gases to avoid negative impacts on bird welfare

2.15 The standard shall require that ammonia concentrations do not exceed 20ppm

© 2022 Global Food Partners

Recommendations – Ventilation

2.16 The standard should require that indoor minimum and maximum temperatures are recorded daily

2.17 The standard should set limits for other air quality parameters (such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and dust)

2.18 The standard should require that ventilation systems and air quality are monitored and recorded daily

Requirements - Flooring and litter

2.19 The standard shall require that all birds have unlimited access to an area with litter material that allows birds to dustbathe and forage

2.20 The standard shall require that litter material is of sufficient depth, quality, and type, and maintained in a dry and friable condition for birds to dustbathe and forage

2.21 The standard shall require that the litter area is at least one-third (1/3) of the **usable area**

2.22 The standard shall require that all flooring areas (including any raised slatted areas, tiers or platforms) provide adequate foot support to avoid damage or injury to the birds

Recommendations – Flooring and litter

2.23 The standard should require that the litter depth is at least 5cm

2.24 The standard should specify that any wet, damp or hardened areas of litter be removed promptly and replaced with dry and friable litter

2.25 The standard should require that birds have access to the litter area as soon as possible after arrival at the farm, ideally not more than 24 hours after placement

Requirements - Space allowance

2.26 The standard shall require that birds are provided with sufficient space to prevent crowding and allow normal behaviours

2.27 The standard shall set a maximum stocking density of 9 birds per m^2 of **usable area**

Recommendations - Space allowance

2.28 The standard should require that where there are high rates of disease, mortality or injuries, **injurious pecking**, or where there is difficulty managing environmental conditions, that the stocking density is reviewed for future flocks and reduced (where necessary) to ensure the welfare of the birds

Requirements - Lighting

2.29 The standard shall require a minimum period of 8 hours continuous light and a minimum period of 6 hours continuous darkness (or the natural period of darkness, if less) in every 24-hour period

2.30 The standard shall require that a minimum light level of 10 **lux** is maintained throughout the facility (excluding nest boxes)

© 2022 Global Food Partners

Recommendations – Lighting

2.31 The standard should require a minimum period of at least 8 hours of continuous darkness (provided at night) and that hens have access to natural light (during the light period)

2.32 The standard should specify that light levels during the light period are adequate to allow inspection of birds and the shed environment, and that light levels are not increased for the purposes of carrying out these inspections

2.33 The standard should require a minimum light level of 20 **lux** throughout the facility (excluding nest boxes)

2.34 The standard should specify that lighting is not changed suddenly and that artificial light is switched on/off gradually

2.35 The standard should specify that light intensity can only be reduced temporarily to control **injurious pecking** where other solutions have first been employed

Requirements - Nest boxes

2.36 The standard shall require that all birds have access to enclosed nest sites

2.37 The standard shall require that a minimum of 1 nest per 5 birds for individual nests or $1m^2$ for every 120 birds for group nests are provided

2.38 The standard shall require that nests have a suitable floor substrate that encourages nesting behaviour and that can be kept clean

Recommendations – Nest boxes

2.39 The standard should discourage the use of lighting in nest boxes and set parameters on the use of nest box lighting (where permitted)

2.40 The standard should encourage the regular collection of floor eggs during the early laying period

Requirements - Perches

2.41 The standard shall require that all hens have access to elevated perches at all times

2.42 The standard shall specify requirements on the dimensions and positioning of perches to ensure hens can perch comfortably and safely

2.43 The standard shall require that a minimum of 15cm linear perch space is available per hen

Recommendations – Perches

2.44 The standard should specify that the perches are an appropriate width to allow birds to wrap their toes around and to support the birds' feet, and be of a non-slip material

© 2022 Global Food Partners

Requirements - Pecking objects

2.45 The standard shall require that **pecking objects** are provided inside the laying facility at all times

2.46 The standard shall require **pecking objects** to be distributed throughout the facility and provided in sufficient quantities so that all birds have easy access

Recommendations – Pecking objects

2.47 The standard should specify the types and quantities of the **pecking objects** to be provided

2.48 The standard should specify that **pecking objects** are replaced or replenished to maintain birds' interest

2.49 The standard should specify the provision of **pecking objects** that are destructible, manipulable or edible

Recommendations – Flock size

2.50 The standard should specify that where flock size exceeds 6000 birds, the flock should be divided into groups of 6000 birds or less

3. OUTDOOR LIVING ENVIRONMENT (WHERE PROVIDED)

Requirements - Facilities and access

3.1 The standard shall require that shade and/or shelter are provided to protect hens from extremes of temperature, weather and aerial predators

3.2 The standard shall require that the outdoor area, access to the area and fencing are designed, constructed and maintained to encourage use of the outdoor area and minimise stress and the likelihood of disease, injury and predation to the hens

3.3 The standard shall require that hens have continuous access to the outdoor area during the day

Recommendations – Facilities and access

3.4 The standard should require an outdoor management plan be developed, implemented and updated annually

3.5 The standard should specify that the outdoor area is actively maintained in good condition

3.6 The standard should require shade/shelter be provided at no less than $8m^2$ per 1000 birds

3.7 The standard should specify conditions around access to the outdoor area including pop hole requirements, age of access, stocking density, and conditions under which hens do not have access to the outdoors

3.8 The standard should specify that the pop holes provide unimpeded visual contact to the outdoor area

© 2022 Global Food Partners

4. HUSBANDRY AND HEALTH

Requirements - Training

4.1 The standard shall require that all those working with hens are trained and competent to carry out the tasks required of them

Recommendations – Training

4.2 The standard should specify that staff training includes bird handling, inspections, maintenance, bird behaviours, treatment of sickness, injury or distress, and **euthanasia**

4.3 The standard should require that staff training is recorded

Requirements - Handling

4.4 The standard shall require that hens are handled humanely, and that the mistreatment of animals is unacceptable

4.5 The standard shall have prescriptions for bird handling

Recommendations – Handling

4.6 The standard should require that staff are trained in low-stress handling methods

4.7 The standard should specify that hens are always handled in a careful, positive and compassionate manner

4.8 The standard should specify that hens are held with both hands gently supporting the bird's body and not caught or carried by a single leg, the neck, head, tail or feathers or tips of the wings

4.9 The standard should specify that birds are not moved or handled roughly, thrown or swung, hit, dragged, dropped, kicked or piled on top of one another

Requirements - Inspection

4.10 The standard shall require that inspections of the birds and the environment are conducted at least daily

4.11 The standard shall require that staff responsible for the birds are able to recognise signs of good health, behaviour and welfare as well as poor or abnormal health, behaviour and welfare

Recommendations – Inspection

4.12 The standard should ensure that staff movements throughout the shed are slow and deliberate to reduce fear and risk of injury to the birds

4.13 The standard should require that welfare assessments are conducted internally on a regular basis

4.14 The standard should specify that where any bird is found to be trapped or has escaped, they are freed or caught as soon as possible

4.15 The standard should specify that staff are available to respond to problems that arise in a timely manner

© 2022 Global Food Partners

Requirements - Health and treatment

4.16 The standard shall require that any animal identified as being sick or injured is given appropriate treatment as soon as possible

4.17 The standard shall require that hens are proactively managed for the prevention of disease

4.18 The standard shall require a written health and welfare plan be developed and implemented as relevant to the challenges on the farm

4.19 The standard shall require that medications and vaccines are administered safely and appropriately

4.20 The standard shall require that antibiotics are only administered for therapeutic purposes and not used prophylactically

Recommendations – Health and treatment

4.21 The standard should specify that sick or injured birds can be temporarily segregated in appropriate facilities

4.22 The standard should require that every farm has access to a local veterinarian

4.23 The standard should require that medicines are only used for therapeutic purposes under the direction of a veterinarian

4.24 The standard should specify that health records include details of vaccinations, treatments, diseases, and mortalities

4.25 The standard should specify that the health plan includes details on treatment of injured or sick birds, prevention of **injurious pecking**, vaccination schedule, parasite treatment schedules, prophylactic treatments, biosecurity procedures, pest control and cleaning

4.26 The standard should specify that where the cause of disease or appropriate treatment cannot be identified, a veterinarian is contacted for advice

Requirements - Injurious pecking

4.27 The standard shall require that hens are monitored for feather condition and signs of **injurious pecking**, and that prompt action be taken to address signs of **injurious pecking**

4.28 The standard shall require that hens are proactively managed for the prevention of **injurious pecking**

4.29 The standard shall prohibit the use of artificial devices (such as blinkers or contact lenses) that restrict the bird's vision

© 2022 Global Food Partners

Recommendations – Injurious pecking

4.30 The standard should provide specifications for the frequency and method for observing and recording feather condition and pecking injuries

4.31 The standard should set threshold levels for feather loss and require immediate action to alleviate the problem

4.32 The standard should specify that where early signs of **injurious pecking** are exhibited by a number of birds, that action be taken to adjust management practices and that technical or veterinary advice be sought

4.33 The standard should require that any necessary changes in the environment or diet are done gradually

4.34 The standard should require the use of appropriate feed formulations, programs and equipment to minimise the risk of **injurious pecking**

Requirements - Beak trimming

4.35 The standard shall specify that where **beak trimming** is performed, it is done using infrared trimming at the hatchery and limited to the tip of the beak

4.36 The standard shall only permit hot blade trimming in situations where infrared trimming at the hatchery is not available and shall specify that hot blade trimming can only be performed on birds up to 10 days of age and is limited to the tip of the beak

4.37 The standard shall only permit **beak trimming** of birds over 10 days of age in emergency situations, when it is deemed in the best welfare interest of the birds, as directed under veterinary advice and approval provided by the **scheme owner**

4.38 The standard shall require that alternative practices to beak trimming are implemented to prevent and control **injurious pecking**

Recommendations – Beak trimming

4.39 The standard should specify that **beak trimming** is not routine and only performed when there is a risk of **injurious pecking** and only when it is in the best welfare interests of the hens

4.40 The standard should specify that **beak trimming** equipment is well maintained and calibrated, and operated by trained and competent personnel

4.41 The standard should specify that **beak trimming** is performed consistently across the flock

4.42 The standard should, where **beak trimming** is permitted on birds up to 10 days of age or on older birds in emergency situations, set additional parameters on the procedure, record keeping and monitoring of birds during and after the procedure

Requirements - Forced moulting

4.43 The standard shall prohibit any methods of **forced moulting**

© 2022 Global Food Partners

Requirements - Mortality

4.44 The standard shall require that mortality rates are recorded regularly

Recommendations – Mortality

4.45 The standard should require that farmers take action when mortality exceeds normal farm levels

4.46 The standard should specify a maximum acceptable rate of mortality

Requirements - Biosecurity

4.47 The standards shall require that quarantine and biosecurity procedures are in place

Recommendations – Biosecurity

4.48 The standard should specify that visitors' details are recorded

4.49 The standard should specify that protective clothing and footwear are worn by all visitors

4.50 The standard should specify footbaths and hand disinfectant at the entrance of each shed

4.51 The standard should specify that where people are moving between sheds that they visit the younger birds first

Recommendations – Records

4.52 The standard should require that, at a minimum, records are kept of the following: number of birds, bird age, mortality, egg production and feather condition

4.53 The standard should require the dates and times and any notes from daily inspections are recorded

© 2022 Global Food Partners

5. EUTHANASIA

Requirements - Training

5.1 The standard shall require that birds that are suffering pain or distress and not responding to treatment are euthanased as soon as possible

5.2 The standard shall require that staff responsible for **euthanasia** are trained and competent in the appropriate methods

Requirements - Methods and equipment

5.3 The standard shall require that appropriate methods of **euthanasia**, which cause immediate unconsciousness that lasts until death, are used

5.4 The standard shall specify appropriate methods of **euthanasia** which may include: cervical dislocation, captive bolt devices, controlled atmosphere gas killing systems or lethal injection

5.5 The standard shall require all equipment used to perform **euthanasia** be appropriately designed, maintained and operated to ensure the method is consistent between animals and humane

Recommendations – Methods and equipment

5.6 The standard should specify **euthanasia** methods and equipment that are unacceptable

5.7 The standard should require that the main causes of **euthanasia** are recorded

5.8 The standard should specify appropriate actions where the method of **euthanasia** did not result in immediate loss of consciousness and death

5.9 The standard should specify that a veterinarian be consulted on how to proceed where there is any doubt over whether treatment or **euthanasia** is required, or where there is any doubt in performing the appropriate method of **euthanasia**

Requirements - Confirming death

5.10 The standard shall require that after performing **euthanasia,** each bird is checked to confirm death

© 2022 Global Food Partners

6. ON-FARM KILLING

This section relates to the on-farm killing of hens for purposes other than **euthanasia**, including killing end-of-lay hens (slaughter) and large-scale killing in emergency situations (e.g. for disease control or after natural disasters).

The requirements listed under 'Training' (6.1) and 'Killing in emergency situations' (6.8) must be met by all standards and associated certification schemes.

Where on-farm slaughter is included in the welfare standard's scope, the requirements listed under 'Killing for slaughter' must also be met. However, Global Food Partners recognises that some certification schemes do not currently include standards covering on-farm slaughter. In these circumstances, the requirements listed under 'Killing for slaughter' do not have to be met. The **scheme owner** is encouraged to review the scope of their standards in future and meet these criteria as soon as possible.

Requirements - Training

6.1 The standard shall require that all staff involved in on-farm killing procedures are trained and competent in their required tasks

Requirements - Killing for slaughter

6.2 The standard shall require birds be stunned and rendered insensible prior to killing

6.3 The standard shall specify the stunning methods permitted and set parameters on the design and operation of each method to ensure the risk to bird welfare is minimised throughout the process

6.4 The standard shall require that all stunning and killing equipment is maintained and operated according to the manufacturers' instructions and regular checks are performed to ensure the procedures are effective and consistent

6.5 The standard shall require that, where birds have not been effectively stunned, immediate corrective action is taken

Recommendations – Killing for slaughter

6.6 The standard should require that hens are slaughtered on the farm where possible

6.7 The standard should require stunning methods that minimise handling and inversion or shackling of conscious birds

Requirements - Killing in emergency situations

6.8 The standard shall require a written contingency plan to maintain animal welfare in emergency situations, including mass killing

6.9 The standard shall require that, at a minimum, methods for killing in emergency situations adhere to Article 7.6.5 of Chapter 7.6 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code

Recommendations - Killing in emergency situations

6.10 The standard should specify that the contingency plan for the killing of large numbers of birds in emergency situations includes details of: acceptable and unacceptable killing methods, required facilities, resources and equipment, and hygienic disposal of the dead birds

© 2022 Global Food Partners

7. DEPOPULATION & TRANSPORT

Global Food Partners recognises that some certification schemes do not include compulsory standards on **depopulation** and transport. In other cases, the scheme may include standards on **depopulation** and transport, but these standards are not necessary assessed as part of the certification process.

Where the welfare standard includes and assesses **depopulation** and transport as part of the certification process, the requirements below must be met.

Where **depopulation** and transport are not currently covered by the welfare standard, the **scheme owner** is encouraged to include **depopulation** and transport into the scope of standards and meet the following requirements as soon as possible.

Requirements - Fitness for transport

7.1 The standard shall require that birds are only transported if they are fit and well enough to cope with all aspects of the journey

7.2 The standard shall require that water is available up to the point of **depopulation** and the feed withdrawal period prior to **depopulation** is kept to a minimum

Requirements - Handling

7.3 The standard shall require that the **depopulation** process is managed to avoid crowding, distress, discomfort, injuries and mortalities

7.4 The standard shall require that birds are not moved or handled roughly, thrown or swung, hit, dragged, dropped, kicked or piled on top of one another

7.5 The standard shall require that birds are placed gently into transport crates and that the drawers/lids are closed carefully to ensure that no body parts are trapped

Recommendations – Handling

7.6 The standard should specify that the flock is separated into groups calmly and gently

7.7 The standard should require that birds are caught in low lighting to minimise fear and to keep birds calm

7.8 The standard should specify that hens are caught gently and held with both hands gently supporting the bird's body or held firmly by both legs and not caught or carried by a single leg, the neck, head, tail, feathers or tips of the wings

7.9 The standard should specify the maximum number of birds to be carried in each hand

7.10 The standard should require that hens are monitored for piling and smothering during catching

7.11 The standard should require that catching staff are trained in low-stress handling methods

Requirements - Space allowance

7.12 The standard shall require that hens have adequate space during transport to minimise the risks of injury and thermal discomfort

© 2022 Global Food Partners

Recommendations – Space allowance

7.13 The standard should specify the space allowance in transport crates that allows adequate air flow and ensures that birds are not piled on top of one another

7.14 The standard should require that the space and number of hens to be transported is planned prior to **depopulation**

Requirements - Transport conditions

7.15 The standard shall require that transport crates are clean, well-designed and maintained so as not cause injury or distress to the birds

7.16 The standard shall require that thermal comfort is monitored and maintained throughout the journey and during lairage

7.17 The standard shall require that procedures are in place to protect hens from weather extremes

Recommendations – Transport conditions

7.18 The standard should specify that transport vehicles and crates are designed and suitable for the transport of poultry

7.19 The standard should specify that hens are not transported in high or low temperatures that could risk their health or welfare

7.20 The standard should require that appropriate shade and ventilation are provided during lairage to minimise thermal discomfort

Requirements - Staff

7.21 The standard shall specify that only personnel who are trained and competent are involved in depopulation and transport processes

Recommendations – Duration

7.22 The standard should set a maximum transport and lairage duration

7.23 The standard should require that the maximum transport duration is 8 hours

Recommendations – Records

7.24 The standard should require that any incidents of mortality or injury are recorded and that prompt action is taken to prevent further injuries or deaths from occurring

© 2022 Global Food Partners

8. SCHEME OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT

Requirements - Compliance with the standard

8.1 The **scheme owner** shall require that each farm to be certified is audited for compliance against the standards at least annually and that this audit includes an on-site visit

8.2 The **scheme owner** shall apply the same certification standard in all areas of operation or have procedures for developing and implementing national/regional interpretations

Requirements - Compliance with legislation

8.3 The **scheme owner** shall require that the farm to be certified complies with all **applicable legislation**

Requirements - Standard setting

8.4 The **scheme owner** shall review and revise the standards on a regular basis (not exceeding five years)

Requirements - Product traceability

8.5 The **scheme owner** shall ensure chain of custody/traceability systems are implemented to ensure certified products are appropriately identified and segregated from non-certified products at all stages of the supply chain

Recommendations – Scheme operation and management

8.6 See Appendix

© 2022 Global Food Partners

APPENDIX

The below practices are derived from ISEAL Codes of Good Practice and credibility tools and specify best practices for Standards Systems.

SCHEME MANAGEMENT

1. The **scheme owner** has a higher animal welfare-oriented mission or vision
2. Stakeholders have an opportunity to provide input on the intended animal welfare impacts and possible unintended effects of the standards system
3. On a regular basis, the **scheme owner** monitors and evaluates progress towards its animal welfare impacts and accurately and publicly communicates the results
4. The **scheme owner** applies adaptive management by using the learning from monitoring and evaluation to improve its standard and supporting strategies
5. The **scheme owner** carries out internal or external audits of its management system and operations at least annually and incorporates the findings
6. The **scheme owner** makes information on the governance structure and income sources or financing structure of the scheme publicly available

STANDARD-SETTING

1. Information is made publicly available on standards development and revision processes and on decision-making
2. Consultations on the development or revision of the standard are open to all stakeholders
3. Input received during consultations is documented and there is a public report back on how issues raised are addressed
4. Decision-making on the content of the standard includes a balance of stakeholders and aims for consensus
5. The standard and consultation drafts are made freely and publicly available
6. The structure of the standard or accompanying guidance ensures consistent interpretation (e.g. auditable indicators)
7. There are provisions or mechanisms to ensure that the standard is locally applicable in the regions where it is applied

© 2022 Global Food Partners

ASSURANCE

1. The overall assurance methodology and structure for the scheme are publicly available
2. Assurance bodies are required to implement a management system that supports consistency, competence and impartiality
3. Stakeholders have an opportunity to provide input to the audit
4. There is a publicly available methodology for how compliance with a standard is determined (e.g. the scoring methodology)
5. Decision-making on compliance is impartial
6. There are procedures for how clients are required to address non-compliances, including when a certificate is suspended or revoked
7. There is a publicly accessible complaints and appeals process for certification decisions
8. Summaries of certification assessment reports are made publicly available
9. The certificate or license defines the scope of certification and duration of validity
10. A list of all certified enterprises is made publicly available
11. The **scheme owner** carries out regular reviews of its assurance programme and notifies assurance bodies & clients of any changes in requirements

OVERSIGHT

1. There is an oversight mechanism that is independent of the assurance bodies being assessed
2. There are documented procedures for oversight and a management system that ensures consistent and competent application of these procedures
3. Individuals involved in oversight are competent to evaluate assurance bodies and possess knowledge of the standard and its intent
4. Oversight includes a review of the performance of assurance providers and auditors in the field

CLAIMS AND LABELS

1. There are publicly available requirements for the use of claims and labels, including minimum levels of certified product content required for use of claims
2. A legal agreement is required for the use of claims and labels by enterprises in the supply chain
3. The types of claims allowed are appropriate considering the chain of custody models being applied
4. Allowable claims and labels contain enough information that their validity can be checked
5. The scheme employs surveillance strategies to monitor and rectify misuse of claims and labels

© 2022 Global Food Partners