



Animal Welfare Approved Standards for Chickens

Farmers in this program will be distinguished by a humane and conscientious attitude toward the animals in their care as well as by housing and husbandry which meet the *Animal Welfare Approved* standards.

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 animals in different phases of life. Participation in the program is on an annual basis and participation must be renewed annually.

The *Animal Welfare Approved* program must be informed immediately of any deviations from the standards. Temporary deviations when unexpected circumstances arise that are not under the control of the farmer will be taken into consideration. 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.

The premise of the *Animal Welfare Approved* standards is that animals must be allowed to behave naturally. The following required criteria 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* standards do not supersede national government or state legislation.

1.0 OWNERSHIP AND OPERATION

1.0.1 Each farm must be an independent family farm^{*}, that is, one on which a family or individual:

1.0.1.1 Owns the animals.

1.0.1.2 Participates in the day to day physical labor to manage the farm and its animals.

1.0.1.3 Derives a share of his/her/their livelihood from the farm. The family farm requirement does not prohibit networking among farmers provided that all criteria listed in these standards are adhered to by every member of the network.

1.0.2 The family or individual may participate in family farm networks, as long as all other requirements listed in these standards are adhered to by every member of the network.

^{*} *Exceptions may be permitted for farms that serve an educational purpose or demonstrate exceptionally high animal welfare.*

1.0.3 The family or individual must employ the *Animal Welfare Approved* standards for all of their chickens. Farmers must not use “split” or “dual” systems, in which some birds are simultaneously kept in systems that do not meet *Animal Welfare Approved Standards for Chickens*.

2.0 BREEDS AND ORIGIN OF BIRDS

2.1 Genetic selection

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

2.1.2 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.

2.1.3 When averaged over their entire lives, the rate of growth of birds allowed to grow naturally on an optimum ration must not exceed 0.075 lbs (34 g) per day.

Note: The Animal Welfare Approved program is a strong advocate of the use of standard-bred (pure-bred) birds.

2.1.4 Cloned or genetically engineered birds, breeding stock and semen are prohibited.

2.2 Breeding flock

2.2.1 The use of birds, eggs and/or chicks derived from confinement and caged systems is prohibited.

2.2.2 Artificial insemination is prohibited.

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

2.2.3 Breeder flocks must be allowed to molt naturally. Forced molting of laying hens, as well as any other techniques including food withdrawal and/or the use of a low protein diet for the purpose of inducing molting, is prohibited.

2.2.4 The breeder flock must be allowed to molt once 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.

2.2.5 The *Animal Welfare Approved* program recommends the use of birds derived from standard breeds. This recommendation will be reviewed annually with the expressed intent of making this standard a requirement whenever sufficient suitable stock is available.

2.2.6 The *Animal Welfare Approved* program recommends 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. This recommendation will be reviewed annually with the expressed intent of making this standard a requirement whenever sufficient suitable stock is available.

3.0 HEALTH MANAGEMENT

It is recognized that proper health and management planning increases both positive welfare and productivity.

3.0.1 Each farmer in the *Animal Welfare Approved* program must establish contact with a veterinarian familiar with poultry and the health requirements in the state to maximize bird health and the welfare of the flock. An *Animal Welfare Approved* poultry advisor can also be consulted for further assistance.

3.0.2 A health plan emphasizing prevention of illness or injury must be prepared in consultation with the farm's veterinarian to promote positive health and limit the need for treatment. (See section 10.0.1) It must address:

- 3.0.2.1 Avoidance of physical, nutritional or environmental stress.
- 3.0.2.2 Climatic considerations.
- 3.0.2.3 Vaccinations and other methods to cope with prevailing disease challenges.
- 3.0.2.4 Bio-security measures.
- 3.0.2.5 Nutrition.
- 3.0.2.6 Environmental impacts including manure management and run-off.
- 3.0.2.7 Ranging and foraging management.
- 3.0.2.8 Exclusion of predators and control of rats and mice.
- 3.0.2.9 Euthanasia.

3.0.3 All birds must be thoroughly inspected at least twice per 24 hours. During this inspection, the welfare of each bird must be observed. If any chicken is not in a state of well-being, the bird 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.

3.0.4 Vaccines must be used where appropriate to disease or risk of disease on farm.

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

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

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

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

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

3.0.5.4 Birds treated with an antibiotic must not be slaughtered for the *Animal Welfare Approved* program for a period of time that is at least twice the licensed withdrawal period of the antibiotic used.

Note: Animal Welfare Approved auditors, at inspection, will note gait, any signs of feather loss or feather pecking, and obvious signs of untreated clinical illness and injuries. Depending on severity or if withholding of treatment has been deliberate, finding untreated injured or ill birds may be grounds for suspension from the program.

3.0.6 A safe place must be provided for sick or injured birds to recover, free of competition.

3.0.7 Injured birds must only be kept separate from the flock until such time they can rejoin the flock without adversely affecting either the health or welfare of the individual or the flock.

3.0.8 The non-therapeutic use of antibiotics to control or prevent disease or promote growth, or any other kind of substances as growth promoters (including sulfa drugs or ionophores), is prohibited.

3.0.9 Records must be kept of the administration of veterinary medical products. (See section 10.0.2)

3.0.9.1 Date of purchase.

3.0.9.2 Name of product.

3.0.9.3 Quantity purchased.

3.0.9.4 Identity of the birds or flock treated.

3.0.9.5 Reason why a bird was treated.

3.0.9.6 Number of birds treated.

3.0.9.7 Date when treatment started and finished.

3.0.10 Regular ranging and foraging area rotations and proper bedding management and removal must be the primary method of preventing parasitological infestations.

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

3.0.12 The use of organophosphates is prohibited.

Note: An exception to the standard above may be considered if other treatments have been shown to be ineffective.

3.1 Temporary separation

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

3.1.2 The primary enclosure for any temporarily single-housed bird must meet their basic accommodation needs.

Note: See the specified space allowances in the housing section.

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

3.1.4 All enclosures for sick, injured or quarantined birds must be cleaned between each use.

3.2 Euthanasia

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

3.2.2 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.

3.2.3 Euthanizing birds in a way that poses unnecessary pain or suffering is prohibited. Prohibited methods include:

3.2.3.1 Suffocation.

3.2.3.2 Blow to the head by blunt instrument.

Note: 3.2.3.2 does not preclude the use of percussive poultry killers that are specifically designed for the humane slaughter of birds.

3.2.4 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 with the chickens. (See section 10.0.3)

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 *Animal Welfare Approved* recommends that meat chicks, pullets or laying hens and breeding birds are obtained from farms and hatcheries following the *Animal Welfare Approved* standards.

5.0.2 Records must be kept of the purchase, sale or transfer of all birds on or off the farm. (See section 10.0.4) They must include:

5.0.2.1 Whether birds are bought or transferred from *Animal Welfare Approved* hatcheries or farms.

5.0.2.2 The destination and ages of the birds sold or transferred.

5.0.3 Records must be kept of mortalities and morbidity including cause where known. (See section 10.0.5)

5.0.4 Records must be kept of the number and reasons for birds being culled. (See section 10.0.5)

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

5.0.6 Birds must be maintained in stable groups of a suitable size to uphold a well-functioning hierarchy. Introduction of new birds to a group should be avoided, but if necessary, it must be carefully managed and supervised.

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

5.0.8 The *Animal Welfare Approved* program recommends that chickens are kept in flocks of no more than 500 birds.

5.0.9 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.

5.0.10 The indoor and outdoor environment must allow the birds to exhibit their normal physical and social behaviors including self-isolation and must enable positive social interaction among the birds.

5.0.10.1 All chickens must have access to dust baths.

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

5.0.10.3 Breeder flocks and laying hens must have access to 7 in (18 cm) aerial perch per bird.

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

5.0.10.5 Perches should be rounded with a flat top.

5.0.10.6 Meat chickens must have access to raised areas from four weeks of age. These may be perches or may be provided by straw bales or other items that allow the birds to get up off the floor.

5.0.11 Chickens must at all times have adequate space to socialize, fly, walk, stretch, look for food and water, scratch the ground, and dust bathe.

5.0.12 Confinement systems, in-house or field-based pens or cages, are prohibited.

5.0.13 The use of goggles is prohibited.

5.0.14 All facilities, equipment, fittings and range areas used by chickens must be free of debris. In addition, they 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 Provision for different types of chickens

5.1.1 Provisions for breeder flocks and laying hens.

5.1.1.1 Hens must have continuous access to individual indoor nest boxes and nesting material but may be excluded from nest boxes during the nighttime perching period.

5.1.1.2 Hens must have an adequate number of nests/nest boxes, at least one for every five birds.

5.1.1.3 Each nest box must have a perch or alighting rail.

5.1.1.4 Hens must be provided with nesting material.

5.1.1.5 Nest boxes must be arranged to allow hens to get away from brightly lit areas when laying eggs, whether the light be natural or artificial.

5.1.1.6 Nest box floors and bedding must be maintained in dry and friable condition.

5.1.1.7 Nest boxes must be in an area that provides sufficient ventilation.

5.1.1.8 Laying hens must be allowed to molt naturally. Forced molting of hens, as well as any other techniques including food withdrawal and/or the use of a low protein diet for the purpose of inducing molting, is prohibited.

5.1.1.9 The layer flock must be allowed to molt 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 two molts.

5.2 Provision for hatching

5.2.1 Natural brooding is recommended.

5.2.2 Hatchery records (see section 10.0.6) must be kept to allow the auditor to determine:

5.2.2.1 The number of eggs received.

5.2.2.2 The number of eggs set.

5.2.2.3 The number of eggs hatched.

5.2.2.4 The number of chicks delivered to the growing farm.

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

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

5.2.5 A backup generator that meets the power requirements for the hatchery is required. This must be maintained and tested as per the manufacturer's instructions with a record kept of this. (See section 10.0.6)

5.3 Provision for meat chickens and pullets

5.3.1 Throwing chicks or mechanical moving of chicks from delivery containers is prohibited.

5.3.2 Chicks or pullets must be placed from a height of 12 in (30.48 cm) or less.

5.3.3 Litter must be provided from placement of chicks.

5.3.4 Chicks must be placed within 36 hours of the first egg hatching.

5.3.5 In weather that does not pose a risk to bird health, chicks and pullets must have outdoor access from four weeks of age.

5.4 Physical Alteration

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

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

5.4.1.2 De-clawing.

5.4.1.3 De-spurring.

5.4.1.4 De-toeing.

5.4.1.5 Hole punching.

5.4.1.6 Pinioning.

5.4.1.7 Notching.

5.4.1.8 Wattle trimming.

5.4.1.9 Comb trimming.

5.5 Identification

5.5.1 Individual identification may be undertaken provided that the method used does not cause injury to the bird.

5.6 Castration

5.6.1 Castration (caponizing) of chickens is prohibited.

6.0 FOOD AND WATER

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

6.0.2 There must be a written chicken 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. (See section 10.0.7 and 10.0.8)

6.0.3 Food and water must be distributed in such a way that it minimizes competition.

6.0.4 Chickens must have constant access to food.

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

6.0.6 Grit provided for layers must be rich enough in calcium to ensure optimal shell production.

6.0.7 Feeding chickens eggs, avian and/or mammal protein or other animal by-products is prohibited.

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

6.0.8 *Animal Welfare Approved* requires that 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 be avoided.

6.0.9 Yolk colorants are prohibited.

7.0 HOUSING AND SHELTER

Shelter may be provided by natural features such as shade, trees, or by buildings. Housing may also be used as shelter.

7.0.1 Birds must have continuous access, as required, 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.

7.0.1.1 Shelter and housing must be sufficiently spacious to allow all birds to move freely, stretch their wings and engage in natural behaviors.

7.0.1.2 The following space allowances are recommended for chickens:

Type of bird	Space per bird	Space per bird
Meat chicken	1 sq. feet	0.1 sq. meters
Pullet	1 sq. feet	0.1 sq. meters
Laying hen	1.75 sq. feet	0.16 sq. meters
Breeder	1.75 sq. feet	0.16 sq. meters

7.0.2 The roof and sides of housing and shelter must provide a barrier to predators.

7.0.3 Shelters and housing must be well ventilated and allow fresh air and natural light to enter.

7.0.4 Stationary housing and shelters must have solid floors.

Note: Existing mesh or slatted flooring areas may be covered to create the equivalent of a solid surface.

7.0.5 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.

7.0.6 Inspection of chickens must be possible at any time day or night.

7.0.7 Wet bedding must be removed and manure or soiled bedding must not be stored in the house.

7.0.8 Structures housing birds must be well-insulated with internal temperature and humidity controls, either natural or mechanical.

7.0.9 Housing must be kept dry.

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

7.0.11 Lighting in housing must meet the following requirements:

7.0.11.1 In housing, birds must not be subjected to dim and/or continuous lighting or kept in permanent darkness.

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

7.0.11.3 Shelters and housing must be constructed with windows or openings that allow daylight and circulation of air and allow the birds to experience natural light patterns.

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

7.0.11.5 Artificial light must be distributed evenly.

7.0.11.6 Lighting may not be kept artificially dim or bright.

7.0.12 The house and fittings must be constructed so that they can be easily and effectively cleaned.

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

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

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

7.0.16 There must be more than one entry and exit open at any time to allow birds free access to outside.

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

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

7.1 Not allocated

7.2 Bedding

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

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

7.2.3 Bedding from timber-based products sourced from chemically treated wood, paper-based materials and/or cedar wood is prohibited.

7.2.4 Bedding is not required in mobile housing for laying hens where birds are only kept inside at night while perching.

8.0 RANGING AND FORAGING ACCESS

8.0.1 Continuous outdoor ranging and foraging access is required for all chickens from the age of four weeks old 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.

8.0.2 The amount of outdoor area must be such that the health of the birds as well as range and vegetation quality is maintained.

Note: Animal Welfare Approved recommends that range and forage areas be used in rotation.

8.0.3 The ranging and foraging area must be well drained and clean.

8.0.4 A ranging and foraging management plan must be in place that addresses the specific farm site. (See section 10.0.9) It must demonstrate that paddocks are an appropriate size and layout to ensure that:

- 8.0.4.1 Chickens have access to growing green vegetation on the range whenever conditions allow.
- 8.0.4.2 The composition of the ranging and foraging areas does not inadvertently create health problems for chickens.
- 8.0.4.3 Ranging and foraging areas are not denuded by overuse and other management techniques.
- 8.0.4.4 The location of water, shelter, and feeders is addressed.
- 8.0.4.5 Non-point pollution and other local environmental standards are being met.

8.0.4.6 Ranging and foraging areas that have been used, worn out or denuded are restored.

8.0.5 The application of pesticides and herbicides on areas being utilized by chickens is prohibited.

Note: A minimum interval of 21 days is required between application of any pesticides and the resumption of use of the range.

8.0.6 Sufficient ranging and foraging area must be provided such that the bird's activities do not lead to more than 20% of the range being denuded.

8.0.7 The birds must be able to scratch and seek nutrition from the range.

8.0.8 The ranging and foraging area must provide birds with access to a rich variety of vegetation and green plants that are rich in calcium and other vitamins.

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

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

8.0.11 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.

8.0.12 The colony or flocks must be moved before the land becomes damaged or contaminated. The frequency of the rotation will depend on the size of the flock, range and forage quality, land available, and weather conditions.

8.1 Exclusion from ranging and foraging areas

8.1.1 Chickens over the age of four weeks must only be excluded from ranging and foraging areas in emergency situations or extreme weather conditions where the welfare of the birds would otherwise be affected.

8.1.2 If disease threat or inclement weather requires hens in mobile houses to be confined during the day, any mesh or slatted flooring aside from that directly around drinking areas must be covered.

8.1.3 When chickens are excluded from ranging and foraging areas at times of disease risk or inclement weather, they must be provided with vegetative material so that they can engage in foraging behavior.

9.0 PROTECTION FROM PREDATORS AND CONTROL OF RATS AND MICE

9.0.1 Birds must be protected from predators.

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

- 9.0.3 Live traps must be checked twice daily.
- 9.0.4 All other forms of traps are prohibited.
- 9.0.5 All snares and leg hold traps are prohibited.
- 9.0.6 The use of poisons against predators is prohibited.
- 9.0.7 If live trapping is not possible or is not successful, lethal control of specific animals may be carried out.
- 9.0.8 All lethal control/euthanasia of predators must result in instantaneous irreversible unconsciousness and death.
- 9.0.9 If a predatory animal has been euthanized to protect the animals on the farm, there must be records kept of the species in question, number of animals, and euthanasia method. (See section 10.0.10)
- 9.0.10 Glue boards for the control of rats and mice are prohibited.
- 9.0.11 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 RECORDS AND RECORD-KEEPING

This section lists the records that must be maintained on farm.

- 10.0.1 Records of a health plan.
- 10.0.2 Records of the administration of veterinary medical products.
- 10.0.3 Records of an emergency plan.
- 10.0.4 Records of purchase, sale or transfer of all birds on or off the farm.
- 10.0.5 Records of mortality, morbidity and culling.
- 10.0.6 Records of hatchery information and backup generator.
- 10.0.7 Records of a feeding plan including nutritional regime.
- 10.0.8 Records of ingredients of feed for each class of bird, proportion of the constituents to the total feed on a dry matter basis, and/or sources of the constituent parts.
- 10.0.9 Records of a ranging and foraging area management plan.
- 10.0.10 Records of predatory animals who have been euthanized to protect the birds on the farm.
- 10.0.11 Records of a plan for transporting birds.

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.

11.0 HANDLING

11.0.1 Birds must be caught in darkness.

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

11.0.2 All birds must be caught and carried by both legs. Single leg catching is prohibited.

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

11.0.3 Abuse or maltreatment of birds is prohibited.

11.0.4 Birds must be caught with a minimum of chasing.

11.0.5 Handling and catching must only be done by competent persons able to complete these actions without causing injury or undue stress.

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

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

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

12.0 TRANSPORT

12.0.1 A plan must exist to ensure that welfare of the birds is maintained during transport both around the farm and off the farm. (See section 10.0.11)

12.0.2 Birds who are sick or injured must not be transported.

12.0.3 Mailing of live birds is prohibited.

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

12.0.5 The person in charge of the chickens being transported must ensure that the birds are not caused any injury or suffering, during the crating procedure, during transport, or after they have been unloaded.

12.0.6 Farmers who are not doing the handling and/or transport of the birds themselves are responsible for selecting responsible and conscientious handlers and truckers who will adhere to *Animal Welfare Approved* requirements and prohibitions during loading, transport and unloading at the destination.

12.0.7 Hired handlers and truckers with sole responsibility must have completed training on humane methods of poultry transport. *The Animal Welfare Approved* program recommends the *Trucker Quality Assurance* training program, but will consider equivalent programs on a case-by-case basis.

12.0.8 Birds must not be transported during extreme weather conditions. If delays during transport or unloading upon arrival at destination are anticipated, catching, loading and transport must not commence until those complications are resolved.

12.0.9 During transport, all chickens must be protected from harm or stress. The birds must not be exposed to drastic temperature changes and hot or cold thermal stress.

12.0.10 The vehicle transporting the chickens must be capable of providing protection from high wind currents or rain and snow while still allowing the birds to receive breathable fresh air.

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

12.0.12 Birds must have continuous access to water until the point of catching.

12.0.13 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.

12.0.14 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.

12.0.15 Overcrowding of birds during transport is prohibited.

12.0.16 Transport to slaughter must not exceed four hours.

12.1 Transporting chicks

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

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

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

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

12.1.5 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.

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

12.2 Transport crates

12.2.1 Any bird over 36 hours old should be transported in a crate rather than a chick box.

12.2.2 Crates must be capable of being cleaned and disinfected. Crates must be designed to allow birds to be easily loaded and unloaded.

12.2.3 The use of wire transport cages is prohibited.

12.2.4 The doors on the crates must be sufficiently large to allow the insertion and extraction of birds to be easily tolerated. Crates with additional openings on top are preferable.

12.2.5 Crates 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.

12.2.6 The density of birds put in transportation crates must not exceed 7 lbs (3 kg) per cubic foot (0.028 cubic meters).

12.2.7 The containers and vehicles in which chickens are transported must be thoroughly cleaned and dried prior to loading.

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

12.2.9 Transportation crates must allow for proper care and inspection of the birds. They must have a mark that indicates the upright position and a symbol that shows they contain live animals.

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

12.3 Transporting breeder chickens

12.3.1 Adult breeder chickens must be transported in either individual crates or, if moved in a trailer, birds must be separated according to hens and roosters and also separated based on weight and age.

12.3.2 Flooring must consist of heavy bedding so birds are able to stand comfortably without slipping.

12.3.3 The permission to transport breeder chickens by direct destination flights in temperature controlled environments may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

13.0 SLAUGHTER

13.0.1 On-farm slaughter 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, are 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.

13.0.2 Slaughterhouses receiving birds in the *Animal Welfare Approved* program, or the process of slaughtering on-farm, must be visited and inspected by an *Animal Welfare Approved* staff member or agents and pass an audit for pre-slaughter handling, stunning, and killing.

13.0.3 *Animal Welfare Approved* recommends that the person delivering the birds to slaughter stay with them to ensure that they are slaughtered according to *Animal Welfare Approved* guidelines in 13.0.2.

13.0.4 Birds must be handled as little as possible up to the point of slaughter. If containers are used they must be unloaded horizontally and must be handled with care to ensure they are not tipped.

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

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

13.0.7 Containers must be unloaded in an upright position and handled with care. No person must cause or permit a chicken to sustain any avoidable excitement, pain or suffering.

13.0.8 Any person involved in the killing or slaughter process, including catching and movement of the chickens, must have the knowledge and skill to perform those tasks humanely and efficiently.

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

13.0.10 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.

13.0.11 Stunning must be followed immediately by killing (bleeding). When one person is responsible for both operations, they must be carried out consecutively on one chicken before moving on to the next.

13.0.12 Killing birds without prior stunning is prohibited.

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

13.0.14 Any method of stunning other than inert gases that are anoxic, CAS/CAK must render the bird immediately insentient to pain.

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

13.0.16 If cones are used, birds must not leave the cone until dead as demonstrated by the bird having no blink reflex and no reaction to pressure on the comb.

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.

14.0 DEROGATIONS

14.0.1 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.

14.0.2 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.