SPCA
ANIMAL WELFARE CERTIFIED

Free Range and Barn Layer Hens

SPCA Certified® Standards

SPCA Certified Standards for Free Range and Barn Layer Hens

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SPCA Certified Standards for Free Range and Barn Layer Hens

Overview of SPCA Certified

SPCA Certified is a certification system designed to celebrate good farming and raise animal welfare above current legal requirements. Its overarching goal is to improve the lives of as many animals as possible, through a process of increasing uptake and continual improvement over time. As such, SPCA Certified standards for free range and barn layer hens allow participants to demonstrate that they apply a high level of animal welfare to their farming operations.

Certification is given to participants, which may include farmers, distributors, retailers and companies, through a legal contract, following a successful initial assessment and subsequent welfare audit of compliance with the SPCA Certified standards.

SPCA Certified standards for free range and barn layer hens apply to:

Free range systems: *Hens are housed in a shed, in single or multiple groups. Pop holes, located along the sides of the shed, allow hens access to an outside range area with shade and shelter. The shed may be static or mobile and may contain multiple tiers. Areas for nesting, perching, scratching and foraging are available for the hens to exhibit natural behaviours.*

Barn systems: *Hens are housed in a shed, in single or multiple groups. There is no access to an outdoor range. The shed is usually static and may contain multiple tiers. Areas for nesting, perching, scratching and foraging are available for the hens to exhibit natural behaviours.*

In terms of the welfare outcomes they achieve, SPCA Certified standards are intended to go beyond the Animal Welfare Act 1999 and relevant Codes of Welfare. They are informed by animal behaviour and welfare science, consultation with stakeholders, and the values of SPCA. All farm staff, operators and owners should be aware of, and compliant with the standards, as well as the legal requirements relating to the animals in their care.

SPCA Certified standards are to be used alongside existing industry programmes and practices on farm, and should be read in association with the following documents:

- Animal Welfare Act 1999.
- Animal Welfare (Layer Hens) Code of Welfare 2018.
- Animal Welfare (Painful Husbandry Procedures) Code of Welfare 2018.
- Animal Welfare (Transport within New Zealand) Code of Welfare 2018.
- Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2018.

Framework of the SPCA Certified animal welfare standards

Previous iterations of SPCA standards (Blue Tick) were based on the 'Five Freedoms' framework, which focuses on freedom from negative states, e.g. hunger, fear and injury, in order to achieve good welfare. However, with the recognition that animals can experience positive, as well as negative emotions and the acknowledgement of sentience[1] in the amended Animal Welfare Act 1999, the time has come for a new approach.

As a result, the framework for the SPCA Certified standards has been derived from the Five Domains model of animal welfare, developed by New Zealand Professor, David Mellor[2]. The Five Domains model is a holistic assessment of animal welfare, which addresses both minimising suffering and promoting positive emotional states.

The Five Domains are:

- nutrition;
- physical environment;
- health;
- behavioural interactions; and
- mental state.

Each of the four physical domains contribute to the provision of opportunities for positive mental experiences, as evaluated in the fifth domain.

[1] Sentience is the ability to feel, perceive or experience things subjectively (i.e. from one's own perspective), rather than objectively (i.e. from an external perspective).

[2] Mellor, D. J., Beausoleil, N. J., Littlewood, K. E., McLean, A. N., McGreevy, P. D., Jones, B., & Wilkins, C. (2020). The 2020 five domains model: Including human–animal interactions in assessments of animal welfare. Animals: an open access journal from MDPI 10(10): 1870

Scope

SPCA Certified standards for free range and barn layer hens apply from the moment that pullets are placed into the shed, until they are transported for slaughter or euthanased on the farm.

All transport, including transport to and from the farm, up until the point of slaughter, is covered by the Animal Welfare Act and relevant Codes of Welfare. It is the responsibility of the participant (farmer/licensee[3]) to ensure that the supplying farms, transport operators, contractors and slaughter facilities comply with the law and ideally follow all best practice recommendations.

Traceability and integrity

SPCA Certified endeavours to inspire best practice animal welfare within the layer hen industry and to ensure transparency in animal welfare. To protect the integrity of SPCA Certified and the participating farmers, distributors, retailers and companies who use the brand, it is important that all SPCA Certified members clearly demonstrate product traceability throughout their supply chains.

SPCA Certified also uses independent audits, including unannounced audits, to maintain the integrity of the scheme and ensure that participants are meeting its standards. As a result, products carrying the SPCA Certified logo allow consumers to identify eggs that have come from layer hens farmed to a higher standard of animal welfare than is currently required by law.

SPCA Certified encourages participants to use egg stamping programmes, in order to make it easy for consumers to trace the farm where their eggs have come from and the production method used.

For more information about SPCA Certified, including types of membership, procedures and the third-party auditing process, please refer to the SPCA Certified Farmed Animals Operations Manual.

[3] See the SPCA Certified Farmed Animals Operation Manual for more information.

SPCA Certified Standards for Free Range and Barn Layer Hens

Important notes:

- Section titles and their accompanying descriptions are taken from the Five Domains.
- Information presented in ***bold italic*** type is either a standard explanation, a recommendation, an area of concern, or an indication of where a standard is likely to be reviewed in the future.

Positive Mental Experience

Provide safe, congenial and species-appropriate opportunities to have pleasurable experiences

The chicken icon indicates those standards and recommendations that provide positive mental experiences for layer hens.

Good Nutrition

Provide ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour

Feed

N1 Layer hens must have unrestricted access to a good quality diet. The only exceptions to this are when acting under veterinary advice or when withholding feed for no more than eight hours prior to transport.

N2 Feeders must be:

- Distributed evenly within each shed.

- Located at an appropriate height, suitable to the hens' life stage, in order to ensure they can access the feed using a normal posture and without experiencing undue competition.
- Maintained in a clean state, in order to avoid feed becoming stale or contaminated.
- Monitored to ensure that feed is evenly distributed.

N3 If standard manufactured feeder equipment is used, it must be installed according to the manufacturer's recommendations and be suitable for the hens in production.

A minimum of 10 cm of linear feed space (single side) or 4 cm of circular feeder space must be accessible per bird.

N4 Feed must be free from avian-derived proteins, sub-therapeutic antibiotics, growth promoters and hormones.

A current feed declaration, or letter of guarantee, must be available for inspection.

N5 The use of pharmaceutical products in the birds' feed is prohibited, unless acting under written veterinary guidance.

N6 Insoluble grit, or similar, must be made available to the hens at least weekly.

N7 Feed storage must be secure and feed must not be allowed to become contaminated by pests or the effects of adverse weather.

N8 In case of any unexpected interruption to the feed supply, there must be sufficient feed stored on the farm to cater for all birds for at least 48 hours.

N9 A minimum of 20 hens, selected from at least three different areas of each shed, must be weighed fortnightly, until at least peak lay, in order to ensure that the birds' body weights are in line with breed standards.

Records of bodyweight and flock uniformity must be made available, alongside a comparison of the relevant breed standard.

Advice must be sought from a registered veterinarian if the average weight of the flock decreases by more than 5 % when compared to the previously weighed batch.

To ensure accuracy, weighing scales must be calibrated at least every three months. In house calibration is acceptable.

N10 Feed levels must be monitored daily, in order to ensure that equipment is working properly and to check that birds are consuming the correct amount of feed according to breed recommendations.

Any changes in the type, quantity or composition of feed, must be introduced gradually.

N11 Any physiological, e.g. loose, watery droppings, or behavioural, e.g. pecking, issues that are observed in the hens must be investigated and appropriate remedial action taken.

To reduce stress, it is recommended that the feeding and drinking equipment used in the laying shed is similar to that used in the rearing environment.

It is recommended that 100 hens per shed are weighed weekly during the growing period, until they reach at least 30 weeks of age.

Water

N12 All birds must have unrestricted and continuous access to clean, potable water, including up until the time of catching at depopulation, except when acting under written veterinary advice or for no more than four hours prior to vaccination.

N13 Drinkers must be:

- Evenly distributed within the shed.
- Located at the correct height for birds, in order to allow easy access using a normal posture and without experiencing undue competition.
- Maintained in a clean state, in order to avoid water becoming contaminated.

N14 If standard manufactured drinking equipment is used, it must be installed according to the manufacturer's recommendations and be suitable for the hens in production.

A minimum of one standard bell drinker (120 cm circumference) per 50 hens, or one nipple/cup per 10 hens, or 2.5 cm of linear trough space per hen must be provided.

N15 Where a chemical water treatment is used, weekly testing of the chemical at drinker level is required.

Testing records must be kept and available for inspection on request.

N16 Unless drinking water is supplied via town supply, water quality must be tested annually at the source, e.g. bore, in order to ensure that microbiological levels are acceptable and that the water is potable.

Testing for *E. coli* in the drinker line must be completed at least annually. If *E. coli* is detected (> 0 %), then immediate remedial action must be taken.

Water quality reports must be available for inspection on request.

N17 In the event of a new water source being used, the water supply must be tested before being made available to the birds.

N18 In the event of a major incident in the surrounding area, e.g. earthquake or flood, the water supply must be tested at the source no later than two months after the event has been resolved.

Water quality reports must be made available for inspection on request.

N19 Provision must be made to ensure that there is an alternative emergency water supply, in case the normal water supply fails.

Water meters are recommended for each shed, in order to record flock water intake.

Good Physical Environment

Provide shade/shelter, suitable housing, good air quality and comfortable resting areas

Pullet placement

E1 The shed and facilities must be suitably prepared prior to the arrival of pullets and must include:

- Cleaning and sanitising of all equipment and facilities.
- Provision of sufficient, suitable and easily accessible feed and water.
- Appropriate ventilation, lighting, relative humidity and temperature conditions.
- Provision of good quality litter, at an appropriate depth to meet the birds' needs.
- Ensuring that all equipment is fully functional and able to meet the birds' needs.

Shed and housing standards

E2 A site plan of the farm must be available to view and must include:

- the number of sheds;
- the shed size (internal length and width);
- the maximum number of hens per enclosure and per shed;
- the size of the range and winter garden (if applicable);
- the number, size and location of pop holes, e.g. along one side or both sides of the shed;
- the shade and shelter areas on the range, including the type and amount;
- any drainage areas (if applicable);
- the internal shed specifications, including the number of feeders and drinkers per bird;
- the type of perching provided, including the perch area per hen; and
- the type of lighting and lighting programme in use, including total light hours given.

E3 The hens' physical environment must not cause, nor have the potential to cause, recurring injury, distress or disease to the animals.

E4 Structures must not obstruct the hens' access to facilities or resources.

E5 Free and easy access to all parts of the shed is required for effective flock and equipment inspection, the retrieval of sick, injured or dead birds and to ensure that effective and humane catching processes can be carried out.

E6 Any equipment on which the birds rely, e.g. feeders, drinkers and ventilation systems, must be maintained so that it is in full working order. This includes ensuring that all electrical installations are well insulated, inaccessible to birds and safeguarded from rodents.

All electrical installations must be safety checked by a qualified person at least annually and the results recorded.

E7 Where birds are dependent on a power supply for feed, water or environmental control, a fully functioning alarm system is required, in order to notify staff of any problems with the power supply.

Personnel must be available to respond to alarms at all times.

Alarms must be checked at least monthly, in order to ensure that they are functioning correctly.

Any problems found with an alarm system must be rectified as soon as possible and ideally within 24 hours.

E8 An auxiliary power supply must be available on each farm and be functional at all times. It must be capable of powering all critical equipment, including mechanical equipment, for at least 24 hours and must be tested under load at least every month.

Generators should:

- Be self-starting upon a power outage.
- Be started weekly, to ensure functionality. If weekly start-ups are done, then the time, date and result of the start-up must be recorded.
- Be load bank tested at least annually, by a suitably trained operator, in order to ensure that maximum load outputs are available. The test should also cover ancillary equipment, in order to ensure this is working properly.
- Be certified by a competent person to be of sufficient size to handle the maximum load that could be required on farm.
- Have scheduled service checks, as stipulated by the manufacturer.
- Have accurate and up to date testing records available for inspection on request.

Flooring

E9 All floors must be easy to clean and sanitise.

E10 All floors must be even, smooth, solid and actively maintained, in order to ensure that no element has the potential to cause injury to the birds.

E11 Flooring must provide for claw wear. If existing flooring does not allow for sufficient claw wear, then abrasive strips must be provided.

E12 Floors must not become wet, or be likely to become wet, from rising moisture.

E13 Fully slatted, fully wire or mesh shed floors are prohibited.

It is recommended that shed floors are either made out of concrete or tar sealed, in order to allow for effective cleaning and sanitation between flocks.

Litter

E14 Layer hens must have continuous access to good quality litter that is of a suitable material and particle size. Litter must be dry, absorbent, friable and free from toxic contaminants.

E15 If limiting access to litter is required during nest box training, access must not be prevented for any longer than the training period and this period must be recorded.

E16 Litter must cover the entire usable indoor floor area.

E17 If litter becomes irreparably wet, fouled or pugged, it must be removed promptly and replaced with dry, friable litter. This applies to all areas of the building, including winter gardens.

E18 Litter must be actively maintained at a minimum average depth of 5 – 10 cm until depopulation.

E19 Litter condition must be assessed weekly, at a minimum of ten random sites in each shed, by a trained operator and the results recorded. If litter is found to be in poor condition, immediate remedial action, e.g. turning or replacement, is required.

Litter assessment should not be done under drinker lines or directly opposite pop holes in the shed.

The table below gives an indication of a suitable litter scoring method.

Litter description	Litter condition
Litter loosely packs together when compressed: springs back on release	Acceptable
Litter packs together easily when compressed: feels wet	Not acceptable
Litter will not pack together when compressed: very dusty	Not acceptable

Left sample: too wet, not acceptable. Right sample: about right, acceptable.

Photo credit: AAAP Welfare Committee Litter Subcommittee.

E20 Litter must be completely removed and replaced between flocks.

E21 Any additional litter kept on site must be properly stored, so that it is not able to become contaminated.

Nest boxes

E22 Individual nest boxes are preferred and must measure at least 35 cm x 35 cm x 35 cm. One individual nest box must be provided for every five hens. If group nests are used, there must be a minimum of 1 m² of nesting space for every 120 hens.

E23 Where access to nest boxes may be difficult, non-slip access via ramps or ledges must be provided.

E24 Nest boxes must be provided with a flooring substrate that encourages nesting behaviour, minimises the risk of parasite build-up and disease, and is easy to hygienically manage.

Nest box flooring must be made of easily cleaned synthetic matting or a material that is dry, friable and easily replaced when required.

Where nest box filler is used, it must be kept fresh at all times.

E25 Nest boxes must not have wire, plastic-coated or otherwise, that can come into contact with the birds.

E26 Floor eggs must be picked up promptly, in order to help prevent increasing numbers of eggs being laid on the floor.

All farms must have a programme in place to target no more than 2% floor eggs.

Total floor egg production must be recorded.

Lighting

E27 The lighting programme must be controlled through a timer and must spread light evenly throughout the shed.

E28 A minimum average light intensity of 20 lux, measured at bird height across the shed, must be provided.

Lighting levels may only be reduced temporarily and as a last resort, upon written veterinary advice.

E29 In each 24-hour period, the lighting programme must provide a minimum of 12 hours of continuous light, either through the provision of artificial light or by access to daylight.

There must also be a minimum period of eight hours of continuous darkness in every 24 hours, except when the natural darkness period is shorter.

The minimum period of continuous dark may only be interrupted upon written veterinary advice.

E30 There must be sufficient fixed or portable lighting available to ensure that birds in all areas of the shed can be thoroughly inspected at all times.

It is recommended that light meters are available, in order to assess light levels and the distribution of light in each shed.

The use of a dimmer switch to enable gradual changes in light levels over a 15-minute period is recommended, in order to allow birds to prepare for the resulting light or dark period.

Where possible, the provision of natural lighting in barn systems is recommended. Where artificial light it used, it should provide a broad spectrum of wavelengths, in order to mimic natural light more closely.

Temperature

E31 Layer hens must be housed in a thermally comfortable environment at all times. For adult hens, temperatures inside the shed should ideally be maintained between 10-25°C, noting that this range is broader than the optimal range for egg production. Panting or huddling behaviour in hens is an indication that they are not thermally comfortable.

E32 Provisions must be made to protect the birds from stress associated with extreme weather or other extreme environmental conditions.

E33 Minimum and maximum temperatures inside the shed must be recorded daily.

Ventilation and air quality

E34 Natural or mechanical ventilation, sufficient to avoid the build-up of condensation, heat, humidity, dust and noxious gases, without causing draughts, must be provided.

E35 Shed orientation, spacing and ventilation systems must be designed to avoid contaminating one shed with the exhaust from another.

E36 Where sheds are fitted with defined air intakes and outlets, these devices must be adjustable and sufficient to cope with adverse weather conditions.

E37 Ammonia must be assessed at bird head height and recorded daily. Calibrated meters or colorimetric tests, e.g. pull tubes, are preferred, although moistened red litmus paper can be used as a presence/absence test.

Ammonia levels at bird head height must be maintained at or below 15 ppm, i.e. if you can smell it then the level is too high. If the maximum ammonia level is exceeded, immediate remedial action must be taken and the outcome recorded.

E38 Dust levels in sheds must be managed to avoid any negative impact on the birds. As a rough guide, if you cannot see the far end of the shed because of haze, then dust levels are too high.

Stocking densities

E39 All systems must provide hens with enough space to move freely, turn around completely and perform natural behaviours, such as preening, wing flapping and full extension stretching, without coming into contact with other hens.

E40 The maximum permitted flock size is 5,000 birds. Flocks larger than this must be divided into smaller groups, in order to minimise competition and avoid migration movement.

E41 The maximum permitted stocking density in systems that do not provide access to an outdoor range is 7 birds per m^2 of usable floor area.

For multi-tier systems, the calculation of usable floor area may include the tiers, litter space and any raised, slatted or plastic mesh platforms.

For systems with winter gardens, if the winter garden is closed off for anything other than an exceptional circumstance, it cannot be used in the calculation of usable floor area.

E42 The maximum permitted stocking density inside the shed of a free range system is 9 birds per m^2 of usable floor area.

E43 In free range systems that do not practice range rotation/range spelling, a maximum stocking rate of 1,500 birds per hectare of useable range area is permitted.

In free range systems where range rotation/range spelling and good use of shade and shelter is practiced, a maximum stocking rate of 2,000 birds per hectare of usable range area is permitted.

In free range systems where range management, shade and shelter, and the provision of outdoor enrichment are all considered to be excellent, a maximum stocking rate of 2,500 birds per hectare of useable range area may be permitted, subject to prior written approval from SPCA Certified.

Multi-tier systems

E44 Multi-tier systems must allow for, and encourage, the free movement of birds within and around the shed.

All birds must have the ability to move onto, between and under structures easily, safely and comfortably, via the use of ramps and intermediate platforms, in order to ensure that they have ready access to all available facilities.

E45 The design of the multi-tier system must allow for the proper inspection of birds, no matter which level they are on, and enable immediate access to any sick, injured or dead birds.

E46 All ramps must be made of non-slip material and be easy, safe and comfortable for the birds to use.

E47 There must be 0.5 - 1 m of vertical space between each tier, including the floor to the first tier, as measured from the bottom of the manure belt to the top of the tier below.

E48 A manure belt removal system must be present and operated at least once a week.

Manure levels under the slats must not be allowed to become so high that birds can access it.

The birds below each tier, ramp and intermediate platform should not be able to be soiled by the birds above.

When building multi-tier systems, careful consideration should be given to the practicalities of bird placement and depopulation, in order to ensure that all hens can be handled without causing injury.

If birds are intended to be placed into multi-tier systems, it is important to ensure that they are trained to use the system during the rearing phase. Farmers should check that this is the case, before sourcing pullets from rearing facilities.

Outdoor environment

E49 Hens must have unrestricted access to an outdoor range area, adjacent to the shed, for at least eight hours every day during daylight hours.

Access to the range must be given as soon as possible, but no later than three weeks after nest box training has been completed.

Access to the range must only be prevented in exceptional circumstances, such as during nest box training, extreme weather conditions, upon written veterinary advice or on the day of depopulation.

E50 A daily record must be kept, detailing the times that the hens had access to the range, or an explanation as to why they did not.

Ensuring that hens have access to the range as soon as possible after any exceptional circumstances have resolved, must be a priority.

E51 Routine inspections by stock-keepers must include an assessment of the number of birds using the range.

E52 The range must be inspected daily, in order to ensure that there are no factors present, which could cause distress, disease or injury to the birds.

E53 The range area must be managed to encourage birds to use the outdoor area fully, i.e. to go outside and roam away from the building.

E54 The ground area directly outside the pop holes must be made of a material that helps to avoid muddy conditions in wet weather.

Particular care must be taken with ground cover in areas that are heavily used, e.g. near pop holes.

E55 Other areas on the range must not be allowed to remain in a muddy condition due to standing or stagnant water.

E56 The range must have appropriate ground cover that is well maintained and well drained.

If arable crops are planted, they must provide effective and appropriate shade, shelter and behavioural enrichment for the birds on the range.

E57 Overhead shelter and shade, both natural and artificial, must:

- Cover at least 20 % of the outdoor range area or be provided at an area of not less than 8 m² per 1,000 birds, whichever is greater.
- Always be available when birds have access to the range.
- Be of sound construction, secure and not pose any welfare or health risks to the hens.
- Be of sufficient height to ensure that all birds can adopt a normal standing position beneath it.
- Offer adequate protection from overhead/aerial predators.
- Be provided in the form of natural plantings, plus artificial structures (if needed).
- Be distributed in a way that encourages full use of the range, i.e. have a number of plantings/structures within 10 – 15 m of the pop holes.

E58 Where deciduous or immature trees are used for shade and shelter purposes, other forms of overhead protection must be provided, until those trees provide sufficient cover for the hens.

E59 The range must be suitably fenced, in order to contain the flock and discourage the entry of predators and unauthorised people.

Provision of behavioural enrichment on the range is recommended, as this encourages birds to utilise the outdoor space more effectively.

Pop holes

E60 Pop holes must:

- Allow easy, safe and comfortable access to and from the range.
- Allow birds to see part of the range and the shelter provisions from inside the shed, when the pop holes are open.
- Be designed to minimise the effects of adverse weather on both the birds and the litter inside.
- Be closed no earlier than the time that the artificial lights are being turned off inside the shed, or at natural dusk.
- Be well fitted and secure when closed.

E61 Where there is a frame or lip at the base of a pop hole that hinders the birds' ability to easily access the range or get back into the shed, ramps must be provided.

Ramps must run the length of the pop hole, with no gaps, and be maintained to ensure that no part is likely to cause injury to the birds.

Once the flock has access to the range, regular observations must take place in order to ensure the frame or ramps do not impede bird access to and from the shed.

E62 There must be a minimum of 1 pop hole per 600 birds.

Pop holes that give access to the range must be at least 1 m wide, 35 cm high and be evenly spaced along the length of the shed.

The height of the pop holes must allow hens to use a normal posture to enter and exit the shed.

> ***It is recommended that birds are able to access the range from both sides of the shed, as this encourages better use of the outdoor area.***

Winter garden (or veranda)

Note: SPCA Certified does not require that birds have access to winter gardens, however, where they are present and are included in the calculation of the usable shed area, the following additional standards must be met:

E63 Hens must be given access to the winter garden as soon as possible after nest box training and no later than three weeks after placement.

E64 The winter garden must be designed, constructed and maintained to provide shade, natural light, appropriate airflow and protection from extreme weather conditions.

E65 Winter gardens must be at least 2 m wide.

E66 Pop holes from the shed to the winter garden must be at least 40 cm wide and 35 cm high, in order to allow hens to use a natural posture when passing through them. They must also be distributed evenly along the shed, in order to allow easy and unrestricted access in and out.

E67 An appropriate flooring substrate must completely cover the winter garden floor and be maintained in a dry and friable condition. If litter is used, it must be managed in the same way as required by the litter section of this document.

> ***A winter garden (or veranda) is a covered area attached to the shed, which provides natural light and a manipulable flooring substrate. It may or may not allow access to an outdoor range, but where it does, the winter garden acts as a protective transition area between the range and the shed.***

Transport

E68 Prior to loading and transport, the flock must be assessed by the person in charge, in order to ensure that the birds are fit for transport. The assessment must take into consideration the likely trip duration and weather conditions that will be experienced by the birds.

E69 Animals deemed unfit for transport include hens who are:

- Severely lame, deformed, unable to stand or evenly bear weight on both limbs, or walk.
- Unlikely to withstand the journey without suffering unnecessary pain or distress.
- Obviously injured or diseased.
- Unable to effectively regulate their body temperature, e.g. suffering major feather loss.

Animals deemed unfit for transport must not be transported and must be euthanased immediately.

E70 Accurate transport records must be maintained and must include:

- the name and address of the place to which the birds were transported;
- the number of birds that were transported;
- a signed declaration of 'Fitness to Transport' for the birds;
- a record of any birds deemed unfit for transport and the reasons why;
- the departure date, the time birds were loaded and the time that the transport vehicle left the farm; and
- any occurrences of injury and mortality during loading.

E71 Where ambient temperatures exceed 25°C, birds must either be transported at night, in the coolest part of the day, or have the transport stocking density reduced by 15 %. The ambient temperature at loading must be recorded and the records made available upon request.

E72 There must be adequate ventilation for all birds when in transport crates and on the vehicle.

E73 With the exception of loading and unloading, the transport vehicle must not be kept stationary or parked for extended periods when animals are on board.

If, for any reason, it is unavoidable to keep birds on-board a stationary vehicle, the driver must take action to avoid the birds experiencing heat or cold stress.

Parking in direct sunlight must be avoided.

E74 Where levels of bird mortality or euthanasia during transport exceed 0.2 %, the situation must be investigated. Where causes of mortality or injury are identified, prompt action must be taken to prevent further deaths or injury and the matter reported to SPCA Certified.

E75 The time between the loading of the last bird, to the time of arrival at the final destination, must be less than eight hours.

E76 Every effort must be made to ensure that journeys are completed without unnecessary delays. Drivers must be aware of any potential traffic problems in the area and plan their journey accordingly.

Layer hens are particularly vulnerable to conditions causing poor welfare during transport. It is therefore important that their physical, health and behavioural needs are met throughout the transport process. Consequently, careful planning is needed at every stage of transport.

Emergency preparedness

E77 A written emergency response and preparedness plan must be created. The plan must detail how the farm will safeguard and ensure the health and welfare of the birds in emergency situations or during severe events.

E78 Where possible, fire prevention measures and fire detection/limitation devices must be incorporated into each shed and management practices implemented to reduce the risk and severity of fire.

All fire prevention measures and fire detection/limitation devices must be maintained and tested regularly.

Good Health

Prevent or rapidly diagnose and treat disease and injury, and foster good muscle tone, posture and cardio respiratory function

Animal health plan

H1 An animal health plan must be created and maintained in conjunction with a registered veterinarian. It must include:

- Procedures for the identification of sick or injured birds, including procedures for euthanasia.
- Details of health issues that have affected previous flocks and any preventative actions that have been taken for the current flock.
- A record of all mortalities, including euthanasia, and the underlying reason(s), where those are known.
- Procedures for managing disease outbreaks, feather pecking and cannibalism.

Documentation of any corrective actions taken must be kept for a minimum of three years and be available for inspection on request.

H2 High numbers of sudden deaths, disease outbreaks, severe feather pecking and cannibalism must be investigated and reported to SPCA Certified.

In the case of a notifiable disease being confirmed on farm, this must be reported to SPCA Certified as soon as possible.

H3 The animal health plan must be updated annually, or after any major instance of disease, illness or other problematic outbreak, and after any significant change to the production system. This must be done in accordance with veterinary advice.

When developing, implementing and reviewing the animal health plan, it is important to establish and maintain a good working relationship with a practicing veterinarian who specialises in poultry medicine.

Pullet health

H4 All pullets must be vaccinated against Marek's disease and anticoccidial treatment may be used during rearing.

H5 A record of pullet placement must be kept, including the name and address of the rearing contractor, the bird breed, the number of pullets placed, the placement date, the time of placement and any concerns or mortality observed during placement.

Pharmaceutical use

H6 Staff involved in the administration of any pharmaceutical must be trained and competent to do so. All equipment used must be calibrated and tested regularly.

H7 Therapeutic antibiotics must only be used where they have been prescribed by a registered veterinarian for the treatment of a specific diagnosed condition, disease or injury.

H8 Pharmaceuticals must only be stored and administered as per the manufacturer's guidelines on the label, be in-date and be licensed for use in New Zealand, unless otherwise authorised by a registered veterinarian.

Pharmaceuticals may only be used 'off-label' with prior veterinary approval. Such approval must follow the relevant Ministry for Primary Industries guidelines[4] and be accompanied by a signed and dated declaration from the veterinarian that 'off-label' use was justified.

Inclusion of animal live weight is required for ensuring accurate dosages.

All pharmaceutical treatments must be safely discarded after the expiration date.

H9 Up-to-date records must be kept of all treatments administered and must include:

- the pharmaceutical name, administration method and dose rate;
- the reason for administration and the result of treatment;
- the date(s) administered, and
- the withholding period observed for eggs.

The animal health plan (see start of this section) should include protocols addressing the use, storage and monitoring of antibiotic treatments and a strategy for the reduction of their use. Protocols should be in line with the recommendations of the New Zealand Veterinary Association (NZVA) policy on judicious use of antimicrobials.

Establishing an antimicrobial stewardship plan on farm is highly recommended.

[4] https://www.mpi.govt.nz/processing/agricultural-compounds-and-vet-medicines/acvm-guidance-for-veterinarians/#using-products-off-label

Feather pecking and cannibalism

H10 Beak trimming must only be done on chicks no older than 24 hours, using infra-red beak treatment, at the hatchery.

Where there are any concerns regarding badly tipped beaks of pullets or hens, SPCA Certified must be informed.

H11 If beak trimming outside of the hatchery is deemed necessary, it must be carried out under veterinary advice and SPCA Certified must be informed.

Alternative strategies to reduce injurious feather pecking must be utilised in the first instance, before any additional beak trimming is conducted.

H12 Beak trimming after arrival at the farm must only be conducted by trained and competent operators.

The operator must not remove more than one quarter (25 %) of the upper and lower beaks, which effectively means that adult hens cannot have more than the blunting of their upper and lower beak tips.

Beaks must be tipped accurately and uniformly.

Each bird must be carefully examined following the procedure. Any bird found to have been beak tipped incorrectly, resulting in an inability to eat and drink easily, should be euthanased.

Whenever beak tipping is performed, a record must be kept, detailing the date, the number of birds tipped and the number that were culled because of incorrect tipping.

For at least one month following post hatchery beak trimming, the flock must be inspected to assess beak condition.

H13 From 30 weeks of age, monthly feather condition scoring of 50 random birds from one randomly selected shed on site, must be recorded (see appendix 4 for details).

Beak trimming is against the principles of SPCA Certified. However, it is acknowledged that at the current time prohibiting beak trimming could result in a negative impact on bird welfare in some flocks, therefore infra-red beak treatment is permitted.

Where possible, alternative strategies for managing injurious feather pecking, which minimise the need for beak trimming, should be utilised.

It is recommended that any concerns regarding badly trimmed beaks of pullets or hens are discussed with the rearing manager and the hatchery.

Inspection and general health

H14 Flocks, both indoors and outdoors, must be inspected at least twice a day, in order to ensure that they do not show signs of injury, disease, distress, abnormal behaviour, or any other health or welfare concerns.

Any birds requiring treatment must be kept separate from healthy birds, until they are fit to return to the flock, or else euthanased.

H15 Shed inspections must be appropriately spaced throughout the day and records of the inspection made, i.e. date, initials and time of inspection.

Any concerns about the welfare of the birds, the facilities or the equipment that are observed during the inspection, must be recorded.

H16 Nest boxes must be inspected at least weekly.

H17 Inspection rates must increase during periods of extreme weather and where there are welfare concerns. Increased inspection rates must continue until conditions have returned to normal.

H18 Inspections must be conducted in a calm and compassionate manner that minimises the chance of birds becoming distressed.

H19 At least 20 hens, from different areas of the shed, must be inspected fortnightly for general foot pad health, e.g. Foot Pad Dermatitis (FPD) and signs of red mite. The results must be recorded (see appendices 2 and 3 for details).

Persons in charge of layer hens should ensure regular, positive flock interactions occur, in order to build resilient flocks that are better able to cope with stressful events.

Euthanasia

H20 Euthanasia must ensure a rapid death, without causing undue pain, fear or distress. It must be done as soon as possible after recognising untreatable pain or distress in the bird.

H21 The only method of euthanasia permitted on farm is cervical dislocation.

Any other methods not specified in these standards must not be performed without prior approval from SPCA Certified.

H22 All equipment used for euthanasia must be well maintained, in order to operate efficiently.

H23 Equipment that crushes the bird's neck, including killing pliers, or the use of manual objects to assist euthanasia is prohibited.

H24 Methods of neck dislocation that require spinning or flicking the bird by the head are prohibited.

H25 All staff responsible for conducting euthanasia must be appropriately trained and competent for the role. All training must be documented and the techniques used, monitored.

H26 All euthanased birds must be inspected by the person undertaking the procedure, in order to confirm death. The following signs can be used to confirm death:

- A gap in the neck vertebrae, which can be felt with the finger, indicating complete severance between the brain and the spinal cord.

- A lack of rhythmic breathing.
- A lack of the blink or nictating membrane (third eyelid) reflexes, when the eyeball is touched.
- Dilated pupils.

Nothing within this section is intended to discourage the rapid diagnosis and appropriate treatment of any diseased, sick or injured bird.

Mortality

H27 Daily mortality rates must be recorded over the flock cycle and must include birds found dead and those euthanased.

H28 Where monthly flock mortality after placement at the laying farm exceeds 0.25 %, causes must be investigated. Where appropriate, veterinary advice must be sought.

H29 Carcasses of all euthanased birds, and any birds found dead, must be disposed of immediately upon death/discovery. Disposal must be done:

- in accordance with local Council regulations;
- in a manner that does not put other animals at risk of disease; and
- in a manner that ensures carcasses are protected from pests or being disturbed by other animals.

A record must be kept, detailing where and how all dead birds have been disposed of.

Egg production

H30 Any significant variations in egg production, e.g. shell quality, must be investigated.

H31 Up-to-date performance records must be kept for each flock. This information must be able to be reviewed against previous records and the relevant breed standard, in order to check for any signs of health compromise or production disorder.

H32 The egg collection system must not cause harm or distress to the hens.

H33 Layer hens must never be subjected to an induced moult.

H34 The farm must operate under a Risk Management Plan (RMP) according to the Animal Products Act 1999.

Biosecurity

H35 A detailed biosecurity plan must be created. Staff must be familiar with and follow its instructions, in order to reduce the risk of introducing and/or spreading disease on the farm. As a minimum, the plan must document and implement the following:

- A visitor sign-in book.

- Personal protective equipment.
- Hand washing facilities.
- Hand sanitiser, which must not be allowed to become depleted, for all visitors to the farm.
- Procedures for entry to the farm and sheds.
- Pest control procedures and equipment location records.
- Cleaning, sanitation and waste/carcass removal procedures.

H36 Pest control programmes must be humanely managed. Preferable methods of pest control include physical exclusion and removal of elements that may encourage pests, rather than baiting, trapping or poisoning.

Sheds and the area around sheds must be maintained in a clean and tidy condition, in order to reduce the risk of rodent movement.

Where lethal control is used, the extent of the pest problem must be assessed at least annually, in order to determine if lethal control is still warranted and if so, that it meets the requirements of the relevant regulatory authority.

It is recommended that all sheds housing birds should have a period of at least three weeks without birds between flocks, in order to allow equipment and facilities to be thoroughly cleaned, sanitised and dried.

It is recommended to have separate hand sanitiser for each shed, in order to minimise the risk of visitors spreading disease between flocks.

Appropriate Behaviour Interactions

Provide sufficient space, proper facilities, congenial company and appropriately varied conditions

Sourcing of pullets

B1 The rearing environment for pullets must be appropriate for the production system they are intended for.

Care of pullets

B2 All pullets must be unloaded and placed into their housing facilities as soon as possible after arrival at the farm.

B3 Where, for any reason, pullets cannot be unloaded immediately, a plan must be in place to ensure their welfare until unloading can commence.

B4 Pullets must be handled with care during unloading and placement.

B5 Pullets must be inspected at least three times a day, for no less than five days after placement, in order to ensure that their appearance, health, behaviour and distribution within the shed are appropriate.

Behavioural enrichment

B6 Sufficient and suitable behavioural enrichment items must be available in the shed by the end of nest box training and must be maintained or replaced regularly until depopulation.

B7 Enrichment items must be spread evenly throughout the shed, so that they are easily accessible by the hens.

Where large enrichment items are used, e.g. boxes and bales, there must be at least one enrichment item for every 2,000 birds.

B8 Enrichment items must be cleaned and sanitised, or disposed of, between flocks, in order to prevent disease transmission.

B9 A weekly record of bird interactions with the behavioural enrichment items must be kept (see appendix 5 for details).

The provision of behavioural enrichment has been shown to increase bird activity, promote leg strength and decrease the incidence of hen welfare issues. Combining a variety of both small and large enrichment items is recommended.

Perches and perching structures

B10 Perches must be available to enable roosting to occur.

Perches must be designed and constructed to ensure that they do not damage the birds' feet, are non-slip, have no sharp edges and are rounded, in order to allow the birds to grip and perch comfortably.

B11 Perches must:

- Be fit for purpose and be elevated above floor areas.
- Support the whole of the bird's foot, allowing the bird to curl its toes around the perch.
- Be deep enough so that birds cannot puncture their own footpads by curling their claws around the bottom of the perch.
- Be placed to minimise soiling of any birds below.
- Be sited to avoid fouling of drinking water and feed.
- Provide enough vertical space so that hens can use the perch and still retain a normal

standing position.

- Be placed to avoid vent pecking by other birds.

B12 Perches must provide a minimum of 15 cm of perch space per hen, unless they are combined with slatted/perforated roosting platforms, in which case, a minimum of 13 cm of perch space per hen is permitted.

Where slatted or perforated roosting platforms are used, they must be able to accommodate a maximum of 20 birds per m^2.

Regardless of the perching system that is used, all hens must be able to perch comfortably at the same time.

B13 Electrified anti-perch wires must only be used for training purposes and must be turned off once the hens have learnt to lay in the nest boxes.

If electrified anti-perch wires are used, they must be properly and effectively fitted.

To provide for perching requirements, a combination of both elevated perches and slatted/perforated roosting platforms is recommended. It is the intention of SPCA Certified to require both types of perching in all laying sheds in the future.

It is recommended that perches provide at least 17 cm of perching space per hen.

It is recommended that perches are introduced during the rearing phase and should be similar to those used during production, in order to encourage proper perching behaviour.

Perches for flat deck systems can be provided in a variety of ways, including the use of A-frame perches, nest box alighting rails and the edges of slats.

Managers, stock-keepers and other personnel

B14 Managers must ensure that all staff who are directly involved with the birds have access to, are familiar with, and adhere to the most up-to-date version of this document and the relevant Codes of Welfare.

B15 The farm must have a written policy of the actions that will be taken if an employee is found to be negligent in their role and responsibilities in relation to maintaining the welfare of the hens.

B16 The farm must have a written policy that encourages employees to report any concerns they have in regard to personnel actions or situations that negatively impact the birds' health and welfare. Where concerns are raised, an immediate investigation into the issue must be conducted.

B17 All staff must undergo training to ensure that they can carry out their duties and responsibilities in a manner that promotes positive health and welfare for the birds in their care. Stock-keepers in particular, must have a good working knowledge of poultry health and husbandry that is specific to their area of work and responsibilities. For example:

- Identifying sick, diseased or injured birds, providing appropriate treatment and knowing when to seek management and veterinary advice.
- Conducting euthanasia.

- Carrying out appropriate handling and depopulation procedures.
- Understanding bird behaviour and the ability to recognise deviations from normal flock activity.
- Performing routine husbandry procedures in a manner that minimises fear and distress.
- Operating, inspecting and maintaining equipment and alarms.

B18 Up-to-date records must be kept detailing on-going training for staff.

B19 All staff responsible for the hens, including external personnel, must be fully aware of their personal roles and responsibilities with regard to animal welfare.

B20 Staff who are still in training, must work in conjunction with fully trained, competent and experienced stock-keepers, until they are fully trained themselves. No member of staff is to carry out any task that they have not been trained in or are not competent in performing.

B21 All staff must know who to contact should they observe anything abnormal and emergency contact details must be readily available.

> ***The initial and continuing training of all those involved with layer hen husbandry is important in promoting a high standard of animal welfare.***
>
> ***Where possible, training from certified training providers is recommended.***

Catching and handling at depopulation

B22 Hens must always be caught, handled and moved in a calm and careful manner that does not cause mortality, injury or undue fear and distress to them.

B23 Hens must be caught individually, by grasping both legs just above the feet, or around the chest, using both hands to hold the bird's wings against the body.

B24 A catcher must not carry more than three birds in each hand. In addition, birds must not be caught or carried by a single leg, or by their wings, tail, neck or head.

B25 Birds must never be hit, thrown, swung, dropped, kicked or handled in any way that could cause them injury or distress.

> ***The recommended best practice for catching is to hold hens upright, with the catcher's hands around the wings and chest, so that the birds are not inverted.***

End of lay depopulation

B26 A depopulation plan must be available on the farm and must include:

- Clear guidelines on humane catching and handling procedures.
- How to catch and move birds so that they do not crowd or smother.
- Euthanasia procedures and the persons responsible during depopulation.

- Transport arrangements.
- How the needs of the birds will be met if there is an unexpected delay or an emergency.
- The time and date when feed, water and behavioural enrichment will be withdrawn.

B27 All staff involved in the depopulation process must be trained and competent in handling and moving hens, and be aware of the factors that may negatively impact the hens' welfare.

All stages of the depopulation process must be conducted in a manner that does not cause the hens to experience undue fear or distress.

B28 Hens must have access to the range and winter garden areas (where installed) until the day before depopulation takes place.

B29 Environmental conditions within the shed must be controlled, in order to minimise thermal stress to the hens.

B30 Feed must not be withdrawn for longer than eight hours prior to catching.

B31 If environmental enrichment is removed, it must be withdrawn at the same time as feed, in order to minimise the disturbance caused to the birds.

B32 Water must be available to the birds until immediately prior to catching.

B33 Noise produced by staff and equipment must be kept to a minimum at all times.

B34 A nominated and stated member of the team must be responsible for supervising, monitoring and maintaining good animal welfare standards throughout the catching and handling process.

B35 Catching must take place in low light conditions, e.g. under blue light, or after dark when the hens are roosting. The conditions of catching must not compromise the welfare of the birds.

B36 Catching teams must never put the speed of the operation before hen welfare.

B37 If a staff member is found to be in breach of SPCA Certified standards, they must be immediately removed from the catching and loading process.

B38 All mortality and incidents resulting in pain or injury to the hens during depopulation must be investigated, in order to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future.

Loading and unloading

B39 Only personnel who are trained and competent in handling hens and knowledgeable about humane methods of loading, unloading and transporting hens, are to be involved in these processes.

B40 Transport vehicles must be parked as close as possible to the shed being depopulated, in order to reduce the distance that the hens have to be moved.

B41 Hens must be transported in an upright position and must be placed in transport crates in a

manner that allows them to rapidly regain this position.

Hens must never be dropped or thrown into transport containers.

B42 The vehicle and all transport crates, modules and equipment, must be examined prior to the birds being loaded, in order to ensure that they are clean, fit for purpose and that no element, e.g. sharp edges, could cause injury or distress to the birds.

B43 Crates, containers or modules used to transport hens must be at least 22 cm in height. They must provide enough space to ensure that the risk of heat or cold stress is minimised and that all birds are able to be transported comfortably.

B44 Hens must be loaded into transport containers carefully, in order to ensure that no part of their bodies, wings, legs or head becomes trapped.

Particular care must be taken when stacking containers and when drawers are opened and closed.

B45 Transport crates, containers or modules containing birds must not be thrown or dropped and must be moved carefully during loading and unloading.

B46 Once on the transport vehicle, transport containers must be safely secured, in order to ensure that they do not move during the journey.

B47 All conveyances and containers must have sufficient ventilation, even when the vehicle is stationary, in order to prevent the birds from exposure to harmful conditions, e.g. concentrations of gases or water vapour, and to protect them from climatic conditions that could compromise their welfare.

END OF STANDARDS

Appendices

Appendix 1: Records required

Records	Standard	Description
Twice daily		
Flock/shed inspections	H14 & H15	Date and time of the inspection. Initials of the person doing the inspection. Record any signs of injury, distress, abnormal behaviour or other concerns identified and any actions taken.
Daily		
Access to range	E50	Record the time that pop holes were opened and closed and when hens went out/came back inside. If not opened, give a detailed explanation as to why not.
Ammonia level	E37	Date, time and test result. Initials of person doing inspection. Record the outcome of any remedial action taken.
Euthanasia & mortality	H25 & H27	Retain euthanasia training records for inspection. Record mortality rate and reasons for euthanasia and mortality (where known).
Floor egg production (for each flock)	E26	Record the number of floor eggs laid daily.
Temperature	E33	Record the minimum and maximum temperature in each shed daily.
Weekly		
Enrichment interaction	B9	Whole flock general summary (see appendix 5).
Generator start-up	E8	Record time, date and result of test.
Litter quality	E19	Record the litter condition in at least 10 different areas in each shed.

Water chemical treatment	**N15**	Date of testing. Initials of person doing the test. Record the results of the test.
Fortnightly		
Body weight	**N9**	Record bodyweight and flock uniformity across 20 hens weighed from various areas in the shed.
Foot pad condition & red mite	**H19**	Foot pad condition from 20 hens assessed randomly in the shed (see appendices 2 and 3).
Monthly		
Feather condition score	**H13**	Record feather condition in 50 hens over 30 weeks of age, from one randomly selected shed.
Generator testing	**E8**	Load testing results required.
Annually		
Animal health plan	**H1 & H3**	Review and update annually or after a major disease outbreak. Record any corrective actions taken and retain documentation for at least three years.
Electrical safety check	**E6**	Retain annual test results for inspection.
Generator testing	**E8**	Load bank test results. Assessment of load handling capability. Service/maintenance records.
Water quality	**N16**	Laboratory report for water quality.
Other		
Biosecurity plan	**H35**	Must be available for inspection.
Dead bird disposal (every occurrence)	**H29**	Record details of how and where birds have been disposed of.
Depopulation plan (every depopulation)	**B26**	Review and update for each depopulation.
Detailed site plan	**E2**	Must be available for inspection.
Emergency response and preparedness plan	**E77**	Must be available for inspection.
Feed declaration or letter of guarantee	**N4**	Retain for inspection.
Flock performance (every flock)	**H31**	Retain for inspection.

Hen treatment record (every occurrence)	**H9**	Record: • The pharmaceutical name, administration method and dose rate. • The reason for administration and the result of treatment. • The date(s) administered. • The withholding period observed for eggs.
Loading temperature records (every transportation)	**E71**	Record the ambient temperature during loading.
Negligence policy	**B15**	Must be available for inspection.
Nest box training (every flock)	**E15**	Record period of litter deprivation.
Off label pharmaceutical use (every occurrence)	**H8**	Retain veterinary approval document for inspection.
Pullet placement records (every flock)	**H5**	Record: • The name and address of the rearing contractor. • The bird breed. • The number of pullets placed. • The placement date and time of placement. • Any mortality or concerns during placement.
Staff training (every training)	**B18**	Record: • Name of staff member. • Date and type of training. • Qualifications gained (if appropriate).

Transport records (every transportation)	**E70**	Record: • The name and address of the destination. • The number of birds transported. • Birds unfit for transport and the reason why. • The departure date, time the birds were loaded and time the transport vehicle left the farm. • Any occurrence of injury and/or mortality during loading. Also provide a signed 'Fitness for Transport' declaration.
Whistleblowing policy	**B16**	Must be available for inspection.

Appendix 2: Foot Pad Dermatitis (FPD) scoring and description

A monthly record of foot pad condition must be kept, recording signs of Foot Pad Dermatitis.

Method:

- Select the oldest flock on site.
- Sample a minimum of 20 hens from different areas of the shed once a month.
- If more than 10 out of the 20 birds have mild or severe Foot Pad Dermatitis or bumble foot (see appendix 3 for details), remedial action must be taken to prevent further deterioration and occurrence in subsequent flocks.
- A record of inspections and actions must be kept.

Score	Description	Photo
0	No lesion or small superficial lesions: Slight discolouration on a limited area of the foot pad, mild thickening of the outer layer of skin (hyperkeratosis) or healed lesions.	
1	Mild lesion: Substantial discolouration of the footpad, superficial lesion, dark papillae and hyperkeratosis less than 20 mm across (size of a 10 cent coin).	
2	Severe lesion: Epidermis is affected, ulcers or scabs of significant size, signs of haemorrhages or swollen foot pad greater than 20 mm across.	

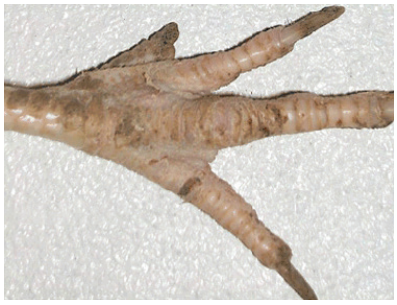
Adapted from: Foot Pad Dermatitis scoring and description – Swedish Scoring System (Berg, 1998; de Jong and van Harn, 2012).

Appendix 3: Bumble foot scoring and description

A monthly record of foot pad condition must be kept, recording signs of bumble foot.

Method:

- Select the oldest flock on site.
- Sample a minimum of 20 hens from different areas of the shed once a month.
- If more than 10 out of the 20 birds observed have mild or severe bumble foot, remedial action must be taken to prevent further deterioration and occurrence in subsequent flocks.
- A record of inspections and actions must be kept.

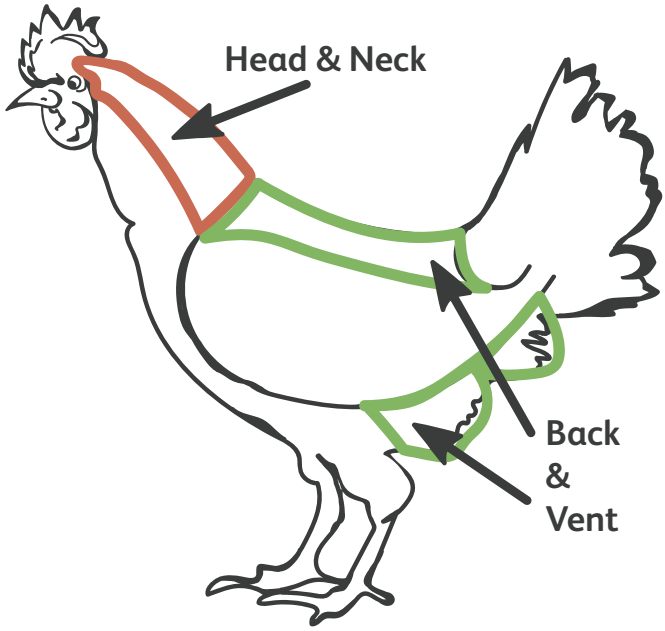
Score	Description	Photo	
0	No evidence of bumble foot		
1	Minor swelling		
2	Severe swelling		

Adapted from: LayWel (Welfare implications of changes in production systems for laying hens, 2004).

Appendix 4: Feather condition score

There are a number of different reasons why hens lose feather condition throughout the production cycle. These include nutrition, housing, rearing conditions and lack of range use amongst others. Measuring and recording the condition of the bird's feathers throughout the production cycle can give an insight into the welfare of the flock and provide an indicator of potential problems. Scoring hens for feather condition can be done without handling the birds and is an easily completed visual task.

Scoring is recommended on a monthly basis throughout the production cycle, starting from 30 weeks of age, and where possible, conducted on the oldest flock on site.



Method:

- Select a random flock on site over 30 weeks of age.
- On entry into the shed, select 50 random hens from 10 different areas of the shed.

For each hen, score the head and neck area separately from the back and vent area.

Score		Description
0	None/Minimal	No bare skin visible, no or slight wear, only single feathers removed.
1	Slight	Moderate wear and damaged feathers, or two or more adjacent feathers missing with bare skin visible up to 5 cm dimension.
2	Moderate/Severe	Bare skin visible of 5 cm or more in dimension.

Adapted from AssureWel, Layer hen Assessment Protocol: Instructions http://www.assurewel.org/layinghens/featherloss.html

Appendix 5: Engagement with enrichment

A weekly record of bird interaction with the behavioural enrichment provided must be kept. This will give an understanding of the level of engagement with the items, e.g. interaction or no/low interaction. Where possible, comment on any likely reasons for low/no engagement with the enrichment provided, or where there is high interaction, record those items being used the most. This will help when planning future interventions.

Studies have shown that the following can be useful as forms of environmental enrichment:

Large items

- Straw bales. Chopped straw (4-5 cm in length), pressed and presented in 20 kg bales.
- Bales of wood shavings (not sawdust).
- Heaped piles of wood shavings.
- Cardboard boxes.

Small items

- Lengths of string or rope hung together in the shed (individual strings do not work well).
- Edible pecking blocks
- Balls*
- Plastic bottles (empty)*
- Mirrored/shiny surfaces*

* These items have to be regularly changed/rotated in order to maintain their novelty.

Method:

- On entry to a shed, visually assess the whole flock for engagement with the enrichment items provided.

Score	Interaction	Description
0	No/Low	No or limited interaction with the items.
1	Yes/High	Birds are observed interacting with the items.

Note: Photographs of acceptable and unacceptable forms of environmental enrichment, along with supporting information, can be found at here (https://globalanimalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/G.A.P.s-Animal-Welfare-Pilot-Standards-for-Laying-Hens-v1.1.pdf)

Contact

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