

**THE ROYAL NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY FOR THE  
PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS**



**WELFARE STANDARDS**

**for**

**FREE RANGE POULTRY**

***MINIMUM STANDARDS – MAY 2011***

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Approval Programme

The Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RNZSPCA) has developed an approval programme for the growing, handling, transport and slaughter of poultry broilers. The standards are derived from a number of sources, including: current legislation; codes of practice; scientific research; veterinary advice; and practical farm experience.

## 1.2 The Five Freedoms

The standards are based on the “FIVE FREEDOMS” which are:

- 1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst:**  
by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
- 2. Freedom from Discomfort:**  
by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- 3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease:**  
by prevention, rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- 4. Freedom to Express Natural Behaviour:**  
by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and the company of the animal's own kind.
- 5. Freedom from Fear and Distress:**  
by ensuring conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering.

The success of the above freedoms rests with those who are responsible for their care by providing:

- Caring and responsible planning and management
- Skilled, knowledgeable and conscientious stockmanship
- Adequate nutrition
- Appropriate environmental design
- Considerate handling and transport
- Humane slaughter.

## 1.3 Codes of Welfare

The main sources of information for these standards are:

- New Zealand NAWAC Animal Welfare (Broiler Chickens) Code of Welfare 2011.
- New Zealand NAWAC Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.

These standards are written with reference to the Codes above and should be read alongside these Codes.

Adherence to the relevant sections within the Codes is also a requirement for Accreditation under the RNZSPCA Scheme.

Some of the minimum standards within the Codes are repeated and elaborated on in these standards where extra conditions were considered necessary or where extra emphasis was required. All minimum standards in the Codes are equally applicable and where no elaboration was necessary they have not been included.

## 1.4 Useful Contacts:

RNZSPCA  
PO Box 15349  
Auckland 0640  
CEO: Robyn Kippenberger  
Telephone: 09 827 6094  
Email: [ceo@rnzspca.org.nz](mailto:ceo@rnzspca.org.nz)  
Web: [www.rnzspca.org.nz](http://www.rnzspca.org.nz)

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry  
PO Box 2526  
Wellington  
Telephone: 04 474 4100  
Email: [animalwelfare@maf.govt.nz](mailto:animalwelfare@maf.govt.nz)  
Web: [www.maf.govt.nz](http://www.maf.govt.nz)

Poultry Industry Association of New Zealand (Inc.)  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 96D Carlton Gore Road  
Newmarket  
Auckland 1023  
Telephone: 09 520 4300  
<http://www.pianz.org.nz/>

## 1.3 Accreditation

Accreditation will be given to individuals, as people are responsible for the welfare of the animals and the processes applied. Companies may be accredited to use the standard if they have appropriate people accredited at the critical areas.

The areas for individual accreditation are:

- Broiler Growing
- Catching and Transport
- Lairage and Slaughter
- Processing (Separation of Product).

In a small operation the same person can be accredited in all areas.

The RNZSPCA auditor will be notified of any deviation from any of the standards when that deviation occurs and what corrective action has been undertaken and the results of the corrective action taken.

## 1.4 Scope

The scope of the scheme is from day-old placement at the growing farm to grow out, catching, slaughter and processing.

## 2 THE FIVE FREEDOMS

### 2.1 Freedom from Hunger and Thirst:

#### 2.1.1 Introduction:

- Inadequate or imbalanced feed quality or amount can have a significant negative impact on the welfare of broilers. Inadequate feeder space can also impact on the welfare of the flock by inducing competition between individuals. The impact on the less competitive birds can be significant.
- The welfare issues can be measured by incidence of nutritional disorders, by looking at growth rates to a standard and by assessing the evenness of the flock.
- Water is also essential to the welfare of the flock. Access to and quality of water are important. High levels of bacteria will affect growth rates and high levels of chemical contaminants can also have an impact on the birds. Bacterial contamination can come from the water source or from the water lines themselves (biofilm) especially if the water lines are old and have not been maintained adequately. If bacterial quality is not achieved then changing water source, using water sanitisers and drinker line maintenance (cleaning) need to be considered.
- Measurement of water intake provides a valuable tool for early warning of any disease or intake problem. Normal intake is about 1.8 times the feed intake for the day; however, this can vary depending on diet and the environment. A reduction or increase in water intake is important to measure and to compare with standard consumption for the age of bird, diet and conditions. The normal consumption may take a number of cycles through the shed to determine.

#### 2.1.2 Food:

##### 2.1.2.1 Standards:

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 2; Food and Water; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Broilers must have access to food each day, except when withholding food before transportation. Food may be withheld for no longer than 8 hours prior to processing.
- Broilers must be fed a diet in sufficient quantity and quality to maintain them in good health and which satisfies their nutritional requirements. The measurement

of success will be confirmation to the bodyweight profile and number of runts and culls (see below).

- No same species of protein is allowed. Meat and bone meal must not contain poultry meat.
- The use of sub-therapeutic antibiotics (except coccidiostats) and growth enhancers is prohibited. Antibiotics prescribed or authorised by a veterinarian for therapeutic application are allowed to be used.
- Feeder space and design must be such that it ensures that all animals receive their daily food requirements without any undue competition as measured by conformity to the bodyweight profile and number of runts and culls (see below).
- In order to reduce contamination by birds and vermin all food sources/storage areas must be bird proof or indoors.
- Each production unit will have a standard bodyweight curve that is applicable to the particular nutritional regime the birds are on, the management system, and the breed and production requirements. A representative sample of the flock will be weighed weekly (0.5%) and bodyweights compared to that standard bodyweight curve. Each production unit will have any deviations from that standard investigated and corrective actions taken if applicable. The growth curve may need to be redrawn.
- The flock must be inspected at least daily by trained operators and observations made on flock evenness and feeding behaviour. Any abnormal feeding behaviour or increase in unevenness to be investigated and corrective actions taken.
- Mortality and culls must be recorded daily, separately. Any daily mortality over 0.5% or culling over 0.5% must be investigated and the causes understood and documented.
- Runts and culls that cannot access food and water must be removed during daily inspections and euthanased immediately, or raised separately.

### **2.1.2.2 Evidence to be Provided:**

- Compliance with Example indicators for Minimum Standard No.2; Food and Water; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chickens) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Observation of feeding behaviour and any investigation of abnormal behaviour.
- Observations of flock uniformity and records of any investigations and corrective actions.
- Records of bodyweight versus expected growth rate.
- Records of observations of flock behaviour and evenness, and any corrective actions taken.
- Records of mortality and culling and of any investigations and corrective action undertaken.

## **2.1.3 Water**

### **2.1.3.1 Standards:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 2; Food and Water; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- All broilers must have a continuous access to an adequate supply of clean, fresh drinking water, except when a restriction is required for certain management procedures like vaccination.
- Adequate drinkers must be provided so that any undue competition is avoided. The measure of success will be measurements of daily water intake, and deviation from growth rate curves.
- Provisions must be made to ensure supply of suitable drinking water in case normal supplies fail, e.g. due to freezing, drought, power failure etc.
- Bacterial quality (coliforms) should be checked once a year from the source and every six months from the drinker line. If bacterial quality is not achieved then corrective actions must be taken and retesting done monthly until quality parameters are achieved.
- An initial test for water chemical quality on non-municipal or rainwater supplies needs to be done and from then on every 18 months. If water quality with respect to chemical parameters is not achieved then corrective action must be taken and retesting until quality parameters achieved.
- Daily measurement of water consumption will be made. Any daily deviation in consumption of greater than 5% needs to be investigated and the causes understood and rectified where necessary.

### **2.1.3.2 Evidence To Be Provided:**

- Compliance with Example indicators for Minimum Standard No.2; Food and Water; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chickens) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Records of bacterial quality and any corrective actions taken.
- Records of chemical quality and any corrective actions taken.
- Observations of drinking behaviour and any corrective actions taken.
- Plan for emergency supply of water available for inspection.
- Observations on flock evenness as for feed.
- Records of bodyweights as for feed.
- Daily water intake records.

## 2.2 Freedom from Discomfort

### 2.2.1 Introduction

- The environment in which livestock are kept must take into account their welfare needs and be designed to limit any welfare implications from physical and thermal discomfort.
- Shelter is essential in ranges to encourage the birds to access the range and to provide some protection from adverse weather conditions.
- Areas of water pooling and mud must be avoided, as these areas will have a significant impact on the welfare of the animal.
- The condition of the range can impact negatively on the welfare of the bird. Factors that can influence the quality of the range are:
  - Stocking density;
  - Range rotation and spelling;
  - Pasture species on the range;
  - Range management;
  - Weather conditions;
  - Siting of the range;
  - Shelter;
  - Drainage.
- The interface between the shed and the range can be a difficult area to manage. Pugging and muddy conditions can occur which can impact on shed litter conditions, bird foot health and discomfort (wetting birds).
- This area can be constructed of material to avoid this pugging and to facilitate cleaning to avoid contamination.
- Free-range birds can be subject to adverse weather conditions. These need to be recognised and limited and will depend on the age of the bird and its feathering. Access to the range may need to be controlled due to these adverse conditions and or the age of the bird and its feather condition.
- Shade and shelter (natural or artificial) is necessary to ensure that the birds are encouraged to have access to all areas of the range.
- The internal shed environment is important to control. Control of ventilation and drafts, temperature and litter is very important for the health and welfare of the birds. It is important to remember that they are all interrelated. Ambient conditions, stocking density, ventilation, bird live weight, and litter quality all have an influence on the internal shed environment.
- Ammonia is an irritant gas and is present in all animal production systems. As ammonia levels rise to 25ppm the impact on the birds increases, reducing feed intake and causing irritation of the mucous membranes. 10–15ppm can be

detected by people and is a good measure. It is important to note that people can quickly become insensitive to the smell of ammonia so any assessment must be made immediately on entry to the shed.

- Dust is also an irritant to the birds. Dust levels irritant to the operator, will be irritant to the birds.
- Litter condition can impact on dust levels as well as foot health and should be assessed daily. Proactive management is important as litter can change quickly and impact on welfare. Factors that can influence litter condition are:
  - Stocking density;
  - Litter source and depth;
  - Ventilation;
  - Management and condition of drinkers;
  - Range condition.
- The behaviour of the birds and the distribution of the birds within the shed are good indicators of appropriate thermal conditions within the shed. Drafts and excessive cold and heat will lead to the birds being unevenly spread.
- Sneezing and huddling will be seen in birds that are too cold. Panting is not an indicator of stress or poor welfare as long as it is transient and mild. Excessive panting shown by an increase in frequency, excessive movement of the skin below the beak (gular flutter) is a problem. Birds will also stand with wings outstretched and be reluctant to move.

## **2.2.2 Site**

### **2.2.2.1 Standards**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 3; Range; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 4; Housing and Equipment; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- All permanent buildings must be recorded on the site plan of the farm. Site plan record of:
  - Area of ranges;
  - Sheds and ranges those sheds have access to;
  - Shade and shelter areas;
  - Drains, rivers, dams, pools etc.

### **2.2.2.2 Evidence To Be Provided:**

- Site plan is available.

## **2.2.3 Buildings:**

### **2.2.3.1 Standards:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 3; Range; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 4; Housing and Equipment; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Internal surfaces of housing must be made of materials, which can be readily cleansed and disinfected and also easily replaced when necessary.
- All electrical installations must be inaccessible to the broilers, well insulated, safeguarded from rodents, properly grounded and regularly tested (annually) by an appropriately qualified person. Any deficiencies on the inspection are to be rectified immediately.
- The shed must be designed to prevent access of rain, storm water, and extreme winds by the use of solid walls, curtains wintergardens, eaves etc.
- The shed must be designed to limit the build-up of heat by using insulation, natural or artificial ventilation.
- The number of pop holes must be such that there is free access to the range and that the area outside the pop holes doesn't become heavily contaminated or pugged. The pop holes are to be evenly arranged across the length of the shed. Pop holes should be capable of being closed. The area outside the pop hole will be assessed during each audit.
- Pop holes should be provided at a minimum of 2m per 1000 birds. A minimum height of 35cm is necessary.
- The shed must be constructed so that at times of inclement weather, for example, heavy and persistent rain, windy and wet conditions, or snow, (for the age and feathering of the bird) access to the range can be controlled.

### **2.2.3.2 Indicators:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 3; Range; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 4; Housing and Equipment; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Shed inspection and observation by auditor.
- Yearly electrical inspection report from a suitably qualified person. Records of corrective actions taken.
- Measurements of pop holes and bird numbers to be available.
- Records of when access to the range has been limited with reason as to why.

## **2.2.4 Thermal Environment and Ventilation:**

### **2.2.4.1 Standards:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 6; Ventilation; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 7; Temperature; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Areas must be effectively ventilated by natural means or assisted mechanically so that condensation, drafts, dust and ammonia build up can be limited and controlled.
- Maximum and minimum temperatures must be taken daily.
- Ammonia must be kept under 15ppm and measured daily. The 'measurement' will be an assessment by a trained operator immediately on entry to the shed in the morning or by a suitable chemical measuring device, for example, a Dreagar. Corrective action is to be taken if the level is increasing.
- Behaviour is monitored at least once per day (more frequently in extreme environmental conditions e.g. temperatures less than 15°C or greater than 25°C) or when there is a wind, for signs of stress due to cold or heat and corrective action taken. Any huddling, gular flutter, birds reluctant to move and excessive panting is to be recorded.

### **2.2.4.2 Evidence To be Provided:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 6; Ventilation; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 7; Temperature; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Observations from auditor on evidence of condensation, dust build up and observations of birds for signs of thermal discomfort.
- Daily records of temperature (maximum and minimum).
- Daily records of ammonia levels and records of any corrective actions taken.
- Daily record of behaviours for temperature stress.
- Records on when daily shed inspections were taken.

## **2.2.5 Range Management**

### **2.2.5.1 Standards:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 3; Range; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- A range management plan must be in place to ensure that the condition of the range doesn't impact on bird welfare.
- A contingencies plan must be in place in case the range gets to a condition that impacts on the welfare of the flock.
- Shade and shelter must start near pop-holes to encourage birds to initially venture out of shed. Shade must cover a minimum of 20% of the minimum range. Shade must be provided year round.
- Daily inspection of the shed/range interface for pugging and contamination and corrective action taken.
- Daily inspection of the condition of the range.
- Daily comment of the usage of the range by the birds.
- Birds should have unrestricted access to the range during daylight hours (weather permitting) once mature feathering change is complete.
- Access to the range should be restricted during inclement weather, for example, wind and wet, snow etc.

### **2.2.5.2 Evidence To be Provided:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 3; Range; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Records of the daily range and interface inspections and any corrective actions.
- Map of the range showing shelter and shade.
- Observations on bird behaviour and use of the range and daily records.
- Daily records of when range is open or closed.
- Observations from the auditor on range conditions during the audit process.

## **2.2.6 Litter Conditions**

### **2.2.6.1 Standard:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 8; Litter Management; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.

- A daily assessment of the dust levels needs to be made by a trained operator. Levels to be recorded first thing in the morning and assessed by how irritant the level is to the trained operator. Corrective action to be taken if levels are too high.
- The trained operator on a daily basis must make an assessment of the litter. Proactive corrective action taken when litter conditions are changing in a way that may affect welfare. Litter assessment will be as outlined in Appendix 2.

#### **2.2.6.2 Evidence To Be Provided:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 8; Litter Management; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Daily records of dust levels and records of any corrective actions taken.
- Daily records of litter quality and records of any corrective actions taken.
- Observations from the auditor during the audit process on dust build up within the shed.

## **2.3 Freedom from Pain, Injury and Disease:**

### **2.3.1 Introduction.**

- Livestock must be protected from pain, injury and disease. The environment in which birds live must be conducive to good health.
- Birds that are showing illness injury or pain must be either culled from the flock or removed and appropriately treated immediately.
- Any birds culled from a flock must be culled humanely.
- Biosecurity is an important part of preventing flocks from getting disease. The biosecurity plan for the site needs to include rodent and wild bird control, people and equipment movement, shed hygiene and cleanout (where applicable).
- Pecking can be an issue in free-range operations.

### **2.3.2 Standard:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 12; Management of Health and Injury; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 13; Humane Destruction; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- All farms must have, and must follow, an appropriate biosecurity policy to limit the introduction and/or spread of disease onto and within the production units. The biosecurity policy and plan will detail wild bird and rodent control, people and equipment movement onto the farm, shed cleaning.
- All mortality and culls must be collected on a daily basis and recorded separately.
- Mortality and culls must be recorded daily, separately.

- Any daily mortality over 0.5% or culling over 0.5% must be investigated and the causes understood and documented.
- All flocks must be inspected at least once per day for signs of illness, abnormal behaviour and distress by a trained operator. Any abnormality is to be recorded. Any early sign of disease is to be investigated and corrective action taken.
- Any birds culled from the flock are to be humanely killed by trained operators (see Minimum Standard Number 13, Animal Welfare (Broiler Chickens) Code of Welfare 2011).
- Any bird with an obvious gait deficit that affects its ability to move must be culled from the flock as soon as it is recognised by a trained operator. The operator must take specific training in the recognition of these gait defects.
- All medicines used must be licensed for use in New Zealand and at all times be locked away and used under veterinary instruction only.
- Weekly, 10 birds in each flock are to be scored for footpad dermatitis. If any severe lesions are seen they will need to be investigated and corrective action taken to prevent further deterioration and reoccurrence in subsequent flocks. If more than 6 birds have mild lesions then an investigation is needed. Operators need training in lesion scoring.
- Daily examination for any signs of pecking and immediate action taken to eliminate the pecking.

### **2.3.3 Evidence To Be Provided:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 12; Management of Health and Injury; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 13; Humane Destruction; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Documented biosecurity plan available for audit.
- Records of culls and mortality and any records of investigation and corrective action.
- Records of any investigation and action taken on early signs of disease.
- Records of training in humane killing, leg scoring and foot pad lesion scoring.
- Records of any medication used and veterinary authorisation for medication.
- Records of daily foot pad scoring.
- Daily records of pecking and corrective action taken.

## **2.4 Freedom to Express Natural Behaviour:**

### **2.4.1 Introduction:**

- The environment in which the broilers are kept must allow them to express natural and normal behaviour appropriate to their age. Normal behaviour can include preening, running, dust bathing stretching, ground pecking wing flapping. Manipulating the environment or providing environmental enrichment can increase bird activity and improve welfare.

### **2.4.2 Standard:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 10; Providing for the Behavioural Needs; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.

### **2.4.3 Evidence To Be Provided:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 10; Providing for the Behavioural Needs; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Access to documented management practices.
- Bird behaviour is appropriate to its age. Normal behaviour can include preening, running, dust bathing, stretching, ground pecking and wing flapping.

## **2.5 Freedom from Fear and Distress:**

### **2.5.1 Introduction:**

- The environment and actions of caregivers must be such that the broiler is protected from fear and distress.
- Frequent human contact is important.
- Music played in sheds has been known to calm birds and make them more refractory to sudden noise.
- Pecking can be a problem in free range operations.

### **2.5.2 Standard:**

- The flock must be frequently walked.
- Daily observation of pecking and immediate corrective action taken if pecking is seen.

### **2.5.3 Evidence To Be Provided:**

- Lack of disturbance when sheds visited.
- Records of daily shed inspections.
- Daily records of any pecking and corrective action taken.

## **3 MANAGEMENT**

### **3.1 Introduction:**

- The importance of stockmanship cannot be underestimated. A good stockman can readily identify an animal's needs and any changes in behaviour or welfare parameters and will proactively manage the equipment, conditions and environment to prevent any situation occurring that will negatively impact on the animal's welfare.
- All stockmen and other staff associated with handling the birds in any area (farming, catching, transport, lairage, processing) will undergo training in the areas specified in the standards. Training can be by IITO, Company in-house training or with appropriately qualified or experienced industry specialists. The training providers are not specified by the RNZSPCA but the level of Stockmanship and degree of understanding will be assessed by the RNZSPCA auditor and/or technical specialist.
- The RNZSPCA auditor and/or SPCA technical specialist will assess the Stockmanship and training of the individuals in the critical areas before Accreditation is granted. The assessment will take into consideration experience, training and an understanding of welfare, the code and how management of equipment and the environment affect management.
- Any Company going for accreditation must clearly demonstrate that the individuals going for accreditation have authority to make proactive decisions to ensure that the welfare of the animals is maintained and the standards of the accreditation programme are met.

### **3.2 Standards:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 1; Stockmanship; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- All staff on the farm are to undergo training.
- All staff on the farm will be assessed for their technical ability in the areas specified within the standards.

### **3.3 Evidence To Be Provided:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 1; Stockmanship; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Records of any training.
- Job descriptions (authority).
- Assessment of competence by auditor and/or technical specialist.

## **4 CATCHING AND TRANSPORTATION:**

### **4.1 Introduction:**

- Catching and transport can be a risk to the birds' health and welfare, and can be a time when distress, injuries and mortality can be seen.
- The catching process must be planned to avoid inclement weather and the flocks must be prepared for catching.
- Training of the catching crew is important to ensure that birds are caught without injury and to minimise any distress.
- Lower light levels can help in minimising disturbance.

### **4.2 Standards:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 11; Catching Loading and Transport; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- A trained catching crew must catch the birds.
- There must be an accredited person in charge of the catching process and they must be onsite supervising the catching process.
- Sick, injured or deformed birds must not be caught.
- If a broiler bird is injured during the catch it must be euthanased humanely, immediately.
- Crates and cages used in catching must be inspected before loading and any birds recognised as being injured must be immediately removed and euthanased humanely.
- A catcher can catch no more than 6 birds at a time.
- Provision must be made to protect the birds from inclement weather, for example, rain or wind chill, during the catching process and during transport.
- A contingency plan must be available in case there is any delay in getting the birds to the processing plant.
- The accredited person must receive communication from the processing plant about any dead on arrivals and any injuries attributable to catching. Corrective action must be taken to prevent reoccurrence.

- The birds will be inspected on arrival at the processing site for any signs of huddling or wet birds. This inspection is to be documented and if any deficiencies are noted corrective action taken to prevent reoccurrence.

#### **4.3 Evidence To Be Provided:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 11; Catching Loading and Transport; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chicken) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Records of training of the catching crew.
- Written contingency plans available for inspection.
- Evidence and documentation of communication to accredited person of dead on arrivals and injuries attributable to catching and transport and records of corrective actions taken.
- Evidence of and documentation of communication to catching supervisor regarding any signs of transport stress and records of corrective actions taken.

### **5 LAIRAGE AND SLAUGHTER:**

#### **5.1 Introduction:**

- Birds in lairage can be subject to environmental extremes that could result in distress and even mortality.

#### **5.2 Standards:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 14; PreSlaughter Presentation and Handling of Birds; Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 15; Stunning and Bleedout of Poultry; Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 16; Automated Water Bath Stunning; Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 17; Controlled Atmosphere Stunning of Poultry; Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 18; Automated Neck Cutting of Poultry; Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 19; Hand Held Only Stunning for Poultry; Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Birds must be inspected in lairage every hour to ensure that they are not in distress. A record of the inspection must be made along with any corrective actions. Distress will be measured by birds panting excessively and/or huddling.
- There must be an accredited person in charge of the lairage and slaughter process at all times.

- All persons involved in the hanging and slaughter of the broilers must be appropriately trained for these standards.
- Line speeds must be such that hanging can be done without undue stress placed on the staff or birds.
- Hanging must be done to avoid injury and distress to the bird. Distress will be observed as birds showing flapping behaviour after hanging.
- Birds must not show signs of distress during the hanging period. If this occurs then corrective action must be taken.
- Line speeds and machine adjustment must be such that no birds miss the stunner or killer.
- The process of hanging, stunning and slaughter should be observed at the start of each flock and one more time during each flock and any adjustments made to the process to ensure that there is no distress, damage or birds missing stunning or killer. This observation must be recorded.
- Dead on arrival and injuries associated with catching and hanging to be recorded. Corrective action to be taken to prevent problems reoccurring.
- Dead on Arrival and catching damage records to be passed through to Accredited person in charge of catching.
- No slaughtering without stunning will be done by the company seeking the accreditation anywhere within any of its operations.

### **5.3 Evidence To Be Provided:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 14; PreSlaughter Presentation and Handling of Birds; Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 15; Stunning and Bleedout of Poultry; Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 16; Automated Water Bath Stunning; Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 17; Controlled Atmosphere Stunning of Poultry; Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 18; Automated Neck Cutting of Poultry; Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Compliance with Minimum Standard No. 19; Hand Held Only Stunning for Poultry; Animal Welfare (Commercial Slaughter) Code of Welfare 2010.
- Appropriate records available as prescribed in the appropriate Codes.
- Records of dead on arrival, catching and hanging damage and records of corrective actions taken.
- Records of lairage inspection and any corrective actions taken.
- Training records available.
- Observations made by auditor during auditing process.

## **6 STOCKING DENSITY:**

### **6.1 Introduction:**

- Flock and shed management, feed, environment, shed construction and design, equipment choice and management and stockmanship all interact with each other to ensure good welfare.
- Stocking density can be manipulated to help achieve appropriate welfare standards where one or more of the above parameters are less than optimum.

### **6.2 Standard:**

- Compliance with Minimum Standard No.9; Stocking Densities; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chickens) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Stocking density must be formally reviewed each batch according to the welfare outcomes measured during the batch.
- Maximum indoor stocking density is 34kg per meter square.
- Maximum outdoor stocking density is 10 birds per square meter.

### **6.3 Evidence To Be Provided:**

- Compliance with Example indicators for Minimum Standard No.9; Animal Welfare (Broiler Chickens) Code of Welfare 2011.
- Calculations on stocking density.

## **7 PROCESSING**

It is essential that flocks that have been through the accreditation process and those that have not are kept separate through processing and packaging.

Companies are to present to the auditor prior to the accreditation process how they intend to keep flocks separate, who will be the person in charge of the process and how the process will be internally audited.

## APPENDIX 1

### Foot Pad Lesion Scoring:



Score = Nil



Score = Mild



Score = Severe

## APPENDIX 2

### Litter Quality Assessment

Litter is to be checked in 8 places across the length and width of the shed.  
Avoid directly under drinkers and just inside doors and pop holes.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Description</b>
Acceptable	Litter loosely packs together when compressed, springs back when released.
Poor – Wet	Litter easily packs together when compressed. Feels wet or moist.
Poor - Dry	Litter will not pack when compressed. Caked.