



NATIONAL CHICKEN COUNCIL  
ANIMAL WELFARE GUIDELINES  
AND AUDIT CHECKLIST

**FOR BROILER BREEDERS**



NATIONAL CHICKEN COUNCIL

1152 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW

Suite 430

Washington, DC 20005

(202) 296-2622

# Contents

- NCC Animal Welfare Guidelines
- NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist
- Guidance for Conducting Audits Under NCC Animal Welfare Guidelines
- Standard Contract for Audits Under NCC Animal Welfare Guidelines
- Appendix

# NATIONAL CHICKEN COUNCIL ANIMAL WELFARE GUIDELINES

The National Chicken Council (NCC) is the national trade association representing vertically integrated broiler producer-processors. NCC recommends the following guidelines to its members to assure the humane treatment of animals and to promote the production of quality products.

## **Preface**

An animal is considered to be in a good state of welfare “...if (as indicated by scientific evidence) it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behavior, and if it is not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress” (World Organization for Animal Health, OIE). Animals’ physical needs are relatively easily discussed, described, and studied, but their mental states and needs can be more difficult to characterize. We recognize that this is an ongoing discussion and evolving science. With that in mind, the NCC Animal Welfare Guidelines are updated regularly to include new science-based parameters.

The NCC Animal Welfare Guidelines have been developed to evaluate the current commercial strains of broiler breeder chickens by auditing how these birds are raised, housed, managed, and transported to slaughter at the end of their production cycle. It is important to note that such standards may not be appropriate for other types of poultry as management practices may differ.

The following principles (which apply to all types of housing and strains of chickens) were considered in the development of this document:

1. Poultry raised for breeding should be cared for in ways that prevent or minimize fear, pain, stress, and suffering.
2. Guidelines for welfare should balance scientific knowledge and professional judgment with consideration of ethical and societal values.
3. It is the welfare of the chickens themselves that is foremost, not how humans might perceive a practice or an environment.
4. Poultry should be treated with respect throughout their lives and provided with a humane death if they are euthanized for any reason or when they are processed at the end of their production cycle.
5. The NCC Animal Welfare Guidelines and Audit Checklist are formally reviewed every two years, with the current review conducted by the NCC Animal Welfare Committee followed by a review by a committee of scientific advisors, who recommends final changes to the NCC Board of Directors. This two-year cycle will continue indefinitely.

## **Introduction**

Domestic animals are adaptable to a variety of conditions. Today's broiler breeder chicken has been selected to thrive under modern management conditions. Management practices that promote good health and production, prevent disease, and minimize stress are consistent with generally accepted criteria of humane treatment. The specific applications of these criteria are spelled out in these guidelines and the checklist is used to assess compliance. Broiler breeder chicken producers, transporters, and processors endorsing these guidelines must designate a management person or group within the company responsible for promoting adherence to the guidelines. NCC Animal Welfare Guidelines for Broiler Breeders, which outline best practices for broiler breeder production, transport, and processing, are categorized into the following sections:

- A. Corporate Commitment
- B. Personnel Training
- C. Hatchery and Chick Services
- D. Housing
  - D1. Designated Management, Training, and Emergency Plan
  - D2. Comfort and Shelter
  - D3. Nutrition and Feeding
  - D4. Health and Veterinary Care
  - D5. Flock Husbandry
- E. Handling and Transportation
  - E1. Vaccination and Pullet Movement
  - E2. Transportation at End of Production
- F. Abuse and Audit Failure

## **HISTORY:**

February 1999	Guidelines originally approved by Board of Directors
January 2001	Revision approved by Task Force, additional revisions made by Executive Committee
February 2001	Additional revisions made by Board of Directors, revisions approved by Board of Directors
July 2001	Revisions recommended by Task Force
September 2001	Revisions approved by Executive Committee for submission to Board of Directors
October 2001	Revisions approved by Board of Directors
December 2001	Revisions recommended by Task Force
January 2002	Revisions approved by Executive Committee
December 2002	Revisions recommended by Task Force
January 2003	Revisions approved by Executive Committee
March 2003	Amendments approved by Board of Directors

January 2005	Revisions approved by Executive Committee
April 2005	Amendments approved by Executive Committee
2009	Task Force appointed by NCC Chairman
December 2009	Revisions approved by Task Force
January 2010	Minor edits approved by Task Force Chairman, revisions approved by Executive Committee and Board of Directors
November 2014	Revisions recommended by Task Force
February 2015	Revisions approved by Task Force
February 2015	Revisions approved by Executive Committee and Board of Directors
March 2017	Revisions recommended by Task Force
May 2017	Revisions approved by Task Force
June 2017	Revisions approved by Board of Directors
July 2018	Certified by the Professional Animal Auditors Certification Organization (PAACO)
December 2019	Recertified by the Professional Animal Auditors Certification Organization (PAACO)

# **GUIDELINES**

## **A. Corporate Commitment**

- 1). The company must have a written animal welfare program that provides a clear understanding of how the program is to be implemented throughout the company.
- 2). Current senior management must endorse and fully-support the animal welfare program.
- 3). The company must have a person or management group responsible for animal welfare throughout the operation.
- 4). The company must have, implement, and document an internal (i.e., first party) and an external (i.e., third party) auditing program.
- 5). The company must have a mechanism in place whereby animal welfare violations can be reported without threat of retaliation. Signs stating the importance of animal welfare with contact information for reporting incidents should be posted prominently in locations where birds are handled.

## **B. Personnel Training**

- 1). All employees who work with live birds must be trained at least annually on the fundamentals of broiler breeder chicken behavior and welfare. An optional training program is included in Appendix 1.
- 2). All employees who handle live birds must also be trained annually using a SOP-based or task-specific training program that focuses on acceptable procedures at the specific locations where they work (hatchery/chick services, brooding, rearing, laying, and services such as vaccination, catching, transportation, etc.). All procedures involving live birds must be accomplished in such a manner as to avoid stress and injuries.
- 3). Training must be documented for each employee and should include how the training was conducted (classroom, online, etc.) as well as the tasks and responsibilities for which the employees were trained.
- 4). Training material must be multilingual where appropriate.
- 5). Training must emphasize that abuse or neglect of the animals is not tolerated under any circumstances.

**C. Hatchery and Chick Services (These criteria pertain to the primary breeder hatchery supplying breeder chicks. Given that the primary breeder hatchery is not usually accessible for auditing by the receiving company, omit Section C and all associated points in the audit checklist. Primary breeder companies will typically provide a certificate indicating compliance with the below parameters.)**

- 1). The hatchery must have a person responsible for ensuring that proper animal welfare practices are followed at all times and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.
- 2). The hatchery must have a written training program for chick processing, culling, euthanasia, sexing, and vaccination procedures, where applicable. This training must be conducted annually for all employees involved in conducting these procedures.
- 3). The hatchery must have a written plan for disaster response and recovery, including, but not limited to, SOPs addressing structural damage with potential to impact bird welfare, loss of power, and water outages. The hatchery must have a written program for monitoring the hatchery environment (such as temperature and humidity) during setting, hatching, processing, and holding with written or electronic logs available for the auditor to review.
- 4). The facility must have an alarm system or regular monitoring system in place to alert hatchery personnel to failure of critical systems (heat, electricity, etc.). A documented emergency power back-up program must be in place and available for review by the auditor and should include a method by which the hatchery can gain access to supplemental power.
- 5). Both manual and automated chick processing systems must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner that prevents injuries to the chicks. All equipment operation must be examined at the start of the hatch day to ensure chick injuries are prevented. The speed of the belt, belt material, slides, and chutes all play a role in preventing injury to chicks. In the hatchery, chicks must not be dropped from heights more than 12 inches.
- 6). The hatchery must have a written program to monitor and respond to chick injuries during processing and handling, should they occur. Injuries should be recorded daily at a minimum with corrective action taken, if necessary, in accordance with Audit Item C (14).
- 7). The separator must be checked for proper operation. The hatchery must have a written protocol for the separation process and should include the actions to prevent any live chicks from entering the tray washer.
  - a. Mechanical separation: Equipment must be designed, maintained, and operated in a

- manner that prevents injuries to the chicks and protects personnel.
- b. Manual separation: Equipment must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner that prevents injuries to the chicks and protects personnel. Staff should be trained to carefully handle chicks during the separation and chicks should not drop more than 12 inches when being moved from the hatcher baskets to the belt or box.
- 8). Only methods of euthanasia approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA, 2013) can be used. Rapid maceration or displacement of oxygen with nitrogen, carbon dioxide, or other approved gas are preferred methods for cull chick and pipped egg euthanasia. Employees must be trained for the method in use and proper implementation of the method must be verified and documented.
- 9). If maceration is used, the macerator must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner that results in immediate fragmentation and death of chicks and embryonated eggs. In the event the primary system is not functioning, the hatchery must have a documented backup plan in place so that repairs can be made or an alternative, approved method can be used. No chicks can be placed in the macerator until it is operational. If gas is used for euthanasia, it must be verified that the chicks are dead when it is safe to do so (i.e. the gas has been turned off). There must be no live chicks in the waste disposal container after gassing. Different types of systems exist for handling hatchery waste:
- a. Closed-macerator system: Hatchery waste cannot be seen in this closed system. The operation must be verified by the function of the system (noise/vibrations) when in use. An accumulation of waste in the feeding hopper is an indicator of a system malfunction. There should be no live chicks in the hatchery waste stream post-maceration.
  - b. Open-macerator system: Hatchery waste should be verified in the collection containers only when it is safe to do so. There should be no live chicks in the hatchery waste stream post-maceration.
- 10). **Regardless of the approved euthanasia method used, a live chick in the hatchery waste stream after the completion of the euthanasia process is a major non-conformance. Non-conformances must be recorded and corrective actions made in all circumstances. If a non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of the Hatchery Section of the audit and must result in retraining of all employees at the hatchery.**
- 11). The hatchery must have a written program for pips and culled chicks to be euthanized after each flock change at a minimum, and disposed of by the end of the shift. The number of culls (not pips) must be documented.
- 12). The hatchery must have a written guide outlining which chick defects should result in culling for the welfare of the bird.



- 13). Chicks must be evaluated at a minimum of once per day for equipment-related injury. Prior to shipping, evaluate chick injury by examining a minimum of 10 boxes of chicks (total of 1,000 chicks) for severe equipment injuries (torn legs, broken legs, or wings). Corrective action must be taken and documented if more than 10 chicks (1%) with equipment-related injuries are discovered during a single 10-box check. Should more than seven chicks out of 1,000 (0.7%) on a weekly average be found to have equipment-related injuries, corrective action must be taken and documented.
- 14). Maintaining an appropriate environment is critical to the comfort and health of the chicks. The hatchery must have a temperature range goal for the chick holding area to allow chicks to maintain normal body temperature. Since hatchery layouts and airflow differ among hatcheries, each hatchery must establish and document holding room temperatures. Chick behavior should be used to determine the comfort of the birds and to determine the acceptable temperature of the holding room. The hatchery program may also incorporate the measurement of the internal chick body temperature (optimal at 102<sup>0</sup>F to 104<sup>0</sup>F) to verify that the temperature range of the holding area is appropriate.
- 15). The hatchery must have a written program in place to retrieve any loose chicks while maintaining employee safety. This must happen, at a minimum, after each flock change.
- 16). A written chick delivery vehicle SOP, for both daily operation and for emergency, must be available for review by the auditor.
- 17). Transport vehicles for chicks must be equipped with temperature-control capabilities, and with alarms should these systems fail during transport when the driver is physically separated from the chick environment.
- 18). Certain procedures such as beak, toe, comb, and/or spur treatment/conditioning may be necessary for the long-term welfare of the broiler breeder flock. These are closely monitored and consistently reviewed in the breeder hatchery supplying the day-old breeder chicks. These procedures are performed to reduce injuries among birds and promote health. If these procedures are performed, task-specific training based on a written SOP must be available and verified. The following are acceptable procedures:
  - **Beak Treatment/Conditioning:** Due to the continual growth of the beak of a bird, beak treatment or conditioning provides welfare benefits such as to prevent overgrowth of the beak, feather picking, aggressive pecking, and cannibalism. Beak treatment (using infrared beak treatment equipment (IRBT)) or beak conditioning (using the hot-blade method) results in the removal or treatment of the tip of the beak. This process must be performed by trained staff using appropriate, well-maintained equipment following established operational procedures to minimize potential infections, and is audited by quality assurance personnel.
  - **Toe Treatment/Conditioning:** Toe treatment/conditioning involves the removal of the nail of the rear toe of male chicks. This procedure provides a welfare benefit as it

reduces the potential for injury to the hen during the mating process. This process must be performed by trained staff using appropriate, well-maintained equipment following established operational procedures to minimize potential infections, and is audited by quality assurance personnel.

- **Comb Treatment/Conditioning:** Comb treatment/conditioning involves the removal of a portion of the comb of the chick and has a welfare benefit of preventing later problems and complications due to rooster aggression and feed accessibility in the breeder flock. This process must be performed by trained staff using appropriate, well-maintained equipment following established operational procedures to minimize potential infections, and is audited by quality assurance personnel.
- **Spur Treatment/Conditioning:** Spur treatment/conditioning involves the removal of the spur on the leg of the male breeder chicks. The welfare benefit of this service is to prevent damage by the adult rooster to the hen during the mating process. This process must be performed by trained staff using appropriate, well-maintained equipment following established operational procedures to minimize potential infections, and is audited by quality assurance personnel.

**D. Housing (Two pullet and two breeder hen houses must be evaluated in connection with each complex. All audit points in Section D apply to both types of house unless specified. Pullet and breeder hen houses should be scored on two separate audit sheets and like-house scores should be averaged.)**

**Any willful abuse of birds during brooding, rearing, or laying phases is a major non-conformance. Major non-conformances must be recorded and corrective actions made in all circumstances. If a major non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of the Housing Section of the audit and must result in retraining of all employees of the Broiler Breeder facility.**

**D1. Designated Management, Training, and Emergency Plan**

- 1). The Breeder operation must have a person in charge of ensuring that proper animal welfare practices are followed at all times and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.
- 2). The Breeder operation must have a written training program for basic pullet and broiler breeder behavior, flock husbandry, general signs of disease, culling, euthanasia, handling and catching techniques, and vaccination procedures, where applicable. This training program must be conducted annually for all employees involved in conducting these procedures.

- 3). The Breeder operation must have a written plan for disaster response and recovery, including, but not limited to: SOP's addressing structural damage, loss of power, water and feed outages, and emergency depopulation using a Federal and/or State-approved method.
- 4). The Breeder operation must have an alarm system or regular monitoring system in place to alert farm personnel about failures of critical systems (water, electricity, etc.). Emergency procedures are in place to provide adequate ventilation and temperature control in the event of a power failure. Records of generator run times are maintained at each facility.
- 5). The Breeder operation must have current contact information for local emergency services, and each producer must display a list of emergency contacts.

## **D2. Comfort and Shelter**

- 1). Poultry housing and equipment must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner to protect the birds from environmental conditions, including typical seasonal temperatures and precipitation, as well as from predatory animals or birds.
- 2). A written biosecurity program must be designed, established, and implemented to minimize any negative impacts on bird welfare and protect flock health. Components of a biosecurity program may include provisions for, but are not limited to, a control program for rodents, predators or other pests such as insects, visitor entry requirements, mortality disposal, and traffic control. Companies should consider the [National Poultry Improvement Plan Program Standards' Biosecurity Principles](#)<sup>1</sup>, as well as other currently available information, when designing biosecurity procedures.
- 3). A written plan or checklist must be in place for flock placement and housing new birds on a farm. To minimize stress, morbidity, and mortality, chicks must be placed in a pre-warmed house. Chick placement must be done in a manner to minimize injury. A brooding SOP must include information on house and bedding temperature, ammonia level, feed and water availability, and lighting. A flock placement SOP for receiving birds at a laying farm may include information on ventilation programs, lighting programs, and feed and water availability.
- 4). Ventilation systems must be designed, maintained, and operated in such a manner as to provide optimal air quality at all times. The facility must have a written protocol for minimum ventilation requirements, which must include specifications for maintaining temperature and reasonable control of humidity.
- 5). Ammonia in the atmosphere must not exceed 25 parts per million at bird height. A

---

<sup>1</sup> United States Department of Agriculture – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services. (2017, January) National Poultry Improvement Plan Program Standards. Standard E – Biosecurity Principles. Retrieved from <http://www.poultryimprovement.org/documents/ProgramStandardsJanuary2017.pdf>.

documented air quality monitoring program must be in place which must include appropriate corrective actions should the maximum ammonia level be exceeded.

- 6). Good quality, absorbent bedding material free of sharp objects and fungal growth is maintained to allow for normal behaviors such as foraging and dust bathing and for insulation from cold floors. **For breeder hen houses only:** where used, slats should not exceed 24 inches in height unless steps are provided to allow for bird movement between the litter area and the slats. Slats are maintained to avoid sharp edges and protrusions to prevent injury and slats should not have areas where birds can get under the slats.
- 7). **A bird found under the slats is a major non-conformance. Major non-conformances must be recorded and corrective actions made in all circumstances. If a major non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of the Housing Section of the audit and must result in retraining of all employees of the Broiler Breeder facility.**
- 8). Birds that get under the slats should be removed if observed.
- 9). Moisture in litter should not exceed 35% (loosely compacted when squeezed in the hand). If the litter remains in a clump when it is squeezed in the hand, it is too wet. Litter, ventilation, drinking systems, and feed formulation must be managed to maintain optimal foot pad health and to control ammonia.

### **D3. Nutrition and Feeding**

Certain husbandry and management practices may be utilized to moderate the growth rate, to control the development (maturation), and to promote long-term health, welfare and reproductive ability of the broiler breeder flock. Examples of these management practices may include the use of specific feed allocation programs, the use of specific diets for the stage of growth and production, and measured feed amounts for the flock. Regardless of the management or husbandry practices used, an evaluation of gradual weight gain, body composition, and uniformity should be used to optimize welfare outcomes of the breeder flock.

- 1). The feed mill must meet good manufacturing practices (GMP) for feed production. The feed mill must be licensed through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) if medicated feeds are produced. Verify that the feed mill is registered with FDA and/or has documented GMP's for feed production.
- 2). Diets must be formulated, produced, and fed to prevent signs of nutritional deficiencies and to promote optimal health and reproductive performance. Companies should consider the recommendations of the National Research Council (NRC), as well as other currently available information when formulating diets. Formulations should be reviewed by a poultry nutritionist.

- 3). All feeding and drinking systems must be checked for proper operation on a daily basis. The company must have a written water sanitation program to control bacteria and mold in the drinker system.
- 4). Feed intake and water consumption must be monitored and documented. Feeding systems must provide enough feeder space so that all birds can eat simultaneously at scheduled feeding times. Signs of inadequate access must be corrected immediately. In general, replacement pullets and breeders should not lose weight. Body weight profiles should be determined for each particular strain and followed closely to ensure gradual body weight gains. Decisions to modify the rate of weight gain (for production or health related reasons) are acceptable. Moderation of feed intake may be used to maintain correct frame size, body composition, and weight gain.
- 5). Body weight and uniformity (body composition and/or CV of bird weight) must be monitored regularly. Gradual body weight gains must be achieved throughout the rearing period in accordance with the company's body weight profile for each strain. The company must have a documented plan for assessing bird weight for each flock. The plan must include, but is not limited to, a description of the number of birds to be weighed, the frequency of evaluation, the expected age(s) for evaluation, target body weights or body weight profile, etc. Additionally, the plan may include what modifications (ex: feeding changes) may take place after the body weight and uniformity evaluation has been completed.
- 6). Clean, fresh water is provided in sufficient quantities for normal hydration, health, and productivity. Moderated feeding programs may result in over-consumption of water, which can adversely impact welfare. Restrictions on excessive water intake, usually by limiting water availability during certain times of the day and with due consideration to environmental conditions, promotes overall welfare and is an acceptable practice.

#### **D4. Health and Veterinary Care**

- 1). Access to a veterinarian experienced in poultry care must be available.
- 2). Each company must have a written flock health and welfare monitoring plan developed in consultation with a veterinarian. This plan should include, but is not limited to: immunization programs (including training of those who handle birds for immunizations or blood testing); daily flock checks; daily mortality/morbidity monitoring, which should include detailed culling parameters; euthanasia procedures; and when, how, and under what circumstances a producer reports a disease or other health situation to the appropriate person for determination of corrective action. This person may be the veterinarian, service technician, live production manager, or other qualified individual.
- 3). Feed and water consumption, mortality, and bird health are routinely monitored. Flocks must be inspected at least twice daily and all mortality must be removed at least once

daily. Inspection should be conducted in a manner that does not unnecessarily disturb birds. This includes moving quietly and slowly through the flock to prevent piling. Verify that mortality is recorded daily.

- 4). Birds that cannot access feed or water due to lameness, injury, stunted growth, abnormal development, physical defects, etc. must be identified humanely euthanized by trained staff using an approved method of euthanasia. During the evaluation of each house (2 pullet houses and 2 breeder houses), the auditor must walk through the house and evaluate the flock for evidence of mortality removal and general bird condition. In addition to walking the house, the auditor may also talk with staff about culling and euthanasia methods and may review daily flock records to verify evidence of culling and mortality removal. During the direct evaluation of each house, if the auditor observes any birds that should be humanely euthanized, he/she must record this observation and bring it to the attention of staff during the evaluation. While the goal is to find zero birds that require humane euthanasia, an incident rate of less than 0.1% (1 bird out of 1000 birds) is acceptable. The incidence rate is calculated based on the number of birds observed in need of humane euthanasia divided by the current number of birds in the house. If the incidence rate greater than 0.1% is observed, no points will be awarded for this criteria.
- 5). When birds must be euthanized, only methods of euthanasia accepted by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA, 2020) can be used. The following methods, in addition to other AVMA approved methods, may be used:
  - a. Rapid cervical dislocation. If a tool is used it should separate, but not crush, the vertebrae or spinal cord.
  - b. Rapid decapitation.
  - c. Displacement of oxygen with carbon dioxide or other approved gas.
  - d. Captive bolt.
- 6). In the event that an emergency depopulation of a flock is necessary, AVMA, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), or State veterinary guidelines must be followed to accomplish this process.
- 7). Personnel who perform euthanasia must be appropriately trained in approved methods. An example of a cervical dislocation training diagram is provided in Appendix 3.
- 8). A minimum layout period of 28 days between flocks is recommended for both pullet and breeder hen houses but may be modified based on health status of the flock, weather emergencies, litter replacement, total cleanout, and/or utilization of practices and technologies that lower the health risk to the birds. Consultation with the veterinarian, service technician, or live production manager and written documentation is required before the period is shortened.

## D5. Flock Husbandry

- 1). Birds should have space to express normal behaviors such as dust bathing, preening, eating, drinking, etc. Upon entering a pullet or breeder hen house, most of the birds should be active, with background contentment vocalizations (e.g. chirping or clucking). Evaluated flock husbandry practices including, but not limited to, stocking density and lighting are important to assess normal behavior.
- 2). Birds must be allowed to roam freely throughout the growing area.
- 3). Stocking density must allow all birds to access feeders and drinkers, and follow manufacturer and/or primary breeder recommendations for bird placement. Density will depend on type of housing, ventilation system, feeder/drinker equipment, litter management, husbandry, and breeder company guidelines.
- 4). Lighting in the housing facility must be appropriate to bird age and activity, and must be adequate for the caretaker to observe and inspect the birds. Chicks may receive up to 24 hours of light per day for at least the first two days of brooding to encourage eating and drinking. Lighting programs are utilized to help manage growth, sexual maturation and weight gain in replacement pullets and cockerels. Birds should receive a minimum of eight constant hours of light per day during rearing to allow them to express natural behaviors.
- 5). **For breeder hen houses only:** any company that practices gradual introduction (replacement) of males into the breeder house must have a plan to do so in a manner that promotes overall flock well-being.
- 6). **For breeder hen houses only:** adequate nest space must be provided for hens. Depending on the style and design of the nest system, the number of hens per nest must follow the manufacturers' recommendation.

## E. Handling and Transportation

- 1). **Any willful abuse of birds during handling, catching, or transportation is a major non-conformance. Major non-conformances must be recorded and corrective actions made in all circumstances. If a major non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of the Handling and Transportation Section of the audit and must result in retraining of all employees involved in handling and transportation.**
- 2). The company must have a person in charge of ensuring that proper animal welfare practices are followed at all times and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.
- 3). The company must have a written training program for basic broiler breeder behavior, culling, euthanasia, handling techniques, vaccination procedures, catching procedures,

and loading protocols. This training must be conducted annually for all employees involved in conducting these procedures.

- 4). Employees must be trained to handle birds so that risk of injury to birds is minimized. All handling must be carried out by trained personnel under the supervision of an individual in charge of animal welfare practices so that risk for bird injury is minimized. Employees and supervisors should be trained in how to prevent unnecessary flock stress and bird injury during all handling procedures.
- 5). Whenever birds are handled for any reason (at placement, during vaccinations, weighing, treatment, and catching and transport to new facilities or to processing) handling must be conducted in a manner that minimizes bird stress and does not cause bird injury. Birds must never be lifted, carried, or dragged by the wing or neck. Birds must never be thrown.

**E1. Vaccination and Pullet Movement (Auditor must observe either vaccination or pullet movement procedures for Audit Section E1, and assign scores to that procedure using the boxes indicated in the audit tool)**

- 1). The set up and maintenance of the vaccination or moving area must be conducted in a manner that prevents excessive bird stress and promotes pullet and employee comfort (ex: adequate space, low light intensity, adequate ventilation, and low noise levels).
- 2). There must be a written plan for evaluating pullets during the vaccination and movement procedures. Pullets that exhibit stunted growth, abnormal development, obvious physical defects that limit an individual bird's ability to move about or access feed and water for normal growth, or are unfit for transport must be humanely euthanized as detailed in the company's welfare program in accordance with Section D4, Item 4 of these Guidelines. An individual responsible for humanely euthanizing pullets must be designated by the company.
- 3). Equipment used during vaccination or pullet moving procedures such as tables or catch frames should be assessed for condition. Equipment must be operational and in good repair to prevent injury during vaccination or moving procedures. Companies should supply instructions for appropriate disposal of supplies used during vaccination (needles, bottles, or other disposable items). Juveniles moving from growing to laying facilities are transported in specialty transportation coops and vehicles used exclusively for this purpose. Transportation coops must be appropriately sized and in good repair so that no pullets can be injured and none can escape during transit. Coop damage, including large holes, broken or missing doors, or broken (not bent) wires, should be assessed when evaluating the condition of the individual compartments. Inspect a total of 100 individual compartments on two empty trailers for signs of damage that can injure birds or allow them to escape during transit.



- 4). All vaccination and pullet moving procedures must be performed such that unnecessary flock stress and bird injury is minimized. When used, equipment to segregate pullets, such as flags or bags, is kept in good condition and does not result in unnecessary flock stress or have direct contact with the birds.
- 5). Vaccination and/or transportation records for pullet moves should be evaluated by the auditor to verify field-caused injuries and pullet death due to a handling procedure. Understanding that there are a variety of factors contributing to the potential for injury or pullet death during handling, the goal of the industry will be to have less than 1% of pullets become injured or die during a handling procedure. If the number of pullets that are injured or die during a handling procedure exceeds 1% in any given handling procedure, corrective action must be initiated. This does not include pullets that are culled during the handling process due to not meeting company animal welfare and quality standards.

## **E2. Transportation at End of Production**

- 1). The company must have a written plan for emergency response and recovery, including, but not limited to, truck accidents. Incidents must be recorded and the effectiveness of the response plan must be evaluated and necessary adjustments made to the plan to improve response effectiveness.
- 2). Any birds found during catching that are unfit for transport should not be loaded and must be humanely euthanized. An individual responsible for humanely euthanizing birds unfit for transport must be designated by the company and must be trained annually on AVMA-approved methods of euthanasia. Euthanasia should occur less than 12 hours after catching is complete, but must be performed within 24 hours after catching is complete. A company must have a written plan for handling birds unfit for transport.
- 3). The company must have a written plan for the maximum number of birds allowed per transportation coop. The maximum number of birds must permit the birds to sit during transport without being on top of one another (in a single layer). Bird numbers per coop may vary based on bird size or environmental conditions. Examine two trailer loads to ensure all birds are in a single layer. During transport and holding, birds must be protected from extremes of heat and cold and provided with adequate ventilation.
- 4). Sexually mature breeder birds after the completion of their laying cycle are transported in specialty transportation coops and vehicles used exclusively for this purpose. Transportation coops must be appropriately sized and in good repair so that no birds can be injured and none can escape during transit. Coop damage, including large holes, broken or missing doors, or broken (not bent) wires, should be assessed when evaluating the condition of the individual compartments. Inspect a total of 100 individual compartments on two empty breeder transport trailers for signs of damage that can injure

birds or allow them to escape during transit.

- 5). Sexually mature breeder birds must be carried by the base of wings or by legs (between the hock and the foot) as this is standard catching procedure. Individual birds must never be lifted, carried, or dragged by a single wing or neck and birds must never be thrown. The number of birds in the catcher's hand depends on the size of the bird and should not cause injury to the birds. The maximum number of adult birds per hand must not exceed five.
- 6). Field-caused injuries are monitored and documented. Understanding that there are a variety of factors contributing to dead on arrival (DOA) rates, the goal of the industry will be to have less than 1% of birds DOA. If the number of birds DOA due to the move exceeds 2% in any given week, corrective action must be initiated.
- 7). **Loss of birds from vehicles during transport to the processing operation is a major non-conformance. Major non-conformances must be recorded and corrective actions made in all circumstances. If a major non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of the Handling and Transportation Section of the audit and must result in retraining of all employees involved in handling and transportation.**

## **F. Abuse and Audit Failure**

- 1). **The abuse of the animals is not tolerated under any circumstances. Conditions that put chicks or broiler breeders in immediate danger are referred to as acts of intentional and egregious animal abuse and are considered a major non-conformance for the audit. These include but are not limited to:**
  - a. **Poking a stick, prod, or other object into a sensitive part of the bird such as the eye, nostril, mouth, ear, or cloaca, with the exception of company approved practices such as sample collection for diagnostic testing.**
  - b. **Cutting off limbs, wings, skinning, or cutting into any bird that shows any sign of sensibility (consciousness), with the exception of company or religiously-approved practices to optimize bird well-being (for example, blood sample collection, Kosher, or Halal slaughter).**
  - c. **Malicious use of equipment that results in breaking a bone, suffocation, or death of a bird(s).**
  - d. **Dragging, hitting, kicking, or throwing a bird with the intention of causing injury.**
  - e. **Striking a bird(s) with any type of object with the intention of causing injury.**
- 2). **Audit Failure: Any intentional and egregious abuse observed by the auditor during**

**any stage of this audit is considered a major non-conformance. Any major non-conformance must be documented and appropriate corrective action must be taken. If a major non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of that section of the audit and must result in retraining of all employees involved in that section of the process.**

# National Chicken Council Animal Welfare Audit Checklist Broiler Breeders

The following checklist is provided to assist broiler breeder companies in complying with the Animal Welfare Guidelines recommended by the National Chicken Council and voluntarily adopted by this company. This audit checklist is used in conjunction with the Guidelines.

This audit applies to the following company, complex or facility:

Auditor: \_\_\_\_\_

Company and Plant: \_\_\_\_\_ Est. No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Accompanied by: \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary:**

Area	Maximum Score	Score Needed to Pass	Actual Score
<b>A. Corporate Commitment</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>160</b>	
<b>B. Personnel Training</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>C. Hatchery and Chick Services</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>250</b>	
<b>D. Housing Total</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>860</b>	
Average Pullet Housing Subtotal	465	400	
Average Breeder Hen Housing Subtotal	530	460	
<b>E. Handling and Transportation</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>340</b>	
<b>Point Total for All Areas</b>	<b>1885</b>	<b>1650</b>	

*NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders*

<b>AUDIT FORM: Broiler Breeders</b>			
<p>Confirm that each point is done by facility and award full score for each point done and zero for each point not done, except for those items for which a sliding scale is provided. Any designated “major non-conformance” (indicated in the Audit Form in boldface type) is an audit failure for that particular area (Hatchery, Housing, Handling &amp; Transportation, etc.) and must be documented on the audit form. A major non-conformance occurs only if the auditor personally observes it in the course of an audit.</p>			
<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Points available</b>	<b>Check if done</b>	<b>Points awarded</b>
<b>A: Corporate Commitment</b>			
The company has an animal welfare program endorsed and fully-supported by current senior management.	<b>40</b>		
The company must have a person or management group responsible for animal welfare throughout the operation.	<b>40</b>		
The company must have, implement, and document an internal and external auditing program.	<b>40</b>		
The company must have a mechanism in place whereby animal welfare violations can be reported without threat of retaliation.	<b>40</b>		
<b>A: Corporate Commitment - Point Total</b>	<b>160</b>		
<b>B: Personnel Training</b>			
Employees who handle birds are trained at least annually. Verify documentation of training. Training must be multilingual where appropriate and must emphasize that abuse of the animals is not tolerated.	<b>40</b>		
<b>B: Personnel Training - Point Total</b>	<b>40</b>		

*NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders*

<p><b>C: Hatchery and Chick Services (These criteria pertain to the primary breeder hatchery supplying the day-old breeder chicks. If the primary breeder hatchery is not being audited, omit Section C and all associated points in the checklist (290 points).)</b></p>			
<p>Ensure that the hatchery has a person in charge of ensuring proper animal welfare practices and strict adherence to the guidelines.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>		
<p>Confirm that the hatchery has a written task-specific training program, including proper euthanasia and culling procedures, conducted annually for all employees involved in conducting those tasks. Verify documentation of training.</p>	<p><b>40</b></p>		
<p>Ensure that the hatchery operation has a written plan for disaster response and recovery which may include parameters described in the guidelines. Ensure the hatchery has a written program for monitoring the hatchery environment (such as temperature and humidity) during setting, hatching, processing, and holding with written or electronic logs available.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>		
<p>Ensure that the facility has an alarm system or regular monitoring system in use to alert hatchery personnel to failure of critical systems (heat, electricity). A power failure emergency response program is in place and available for review.</p>	<p><b>40</b></p>		
<p>Verify employee training if manual separation is used. Ensure chicks are not dropped from heights of more than 12 inches. Chicks must be protected from sharp corners and edges during transitions. The hatchery must have a written program to document chick injuries during processing and handling. Ensure that the separator is working properly to segregate healthy chicks from hatchery waste.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>		
<p>The hatchery must have a written protocol to ensure that no live chicks enter the tray washer.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>		
<p>If a macerator is used, ensure it is operating properly and that no chicks are placed in the macerator until it is operational. If gas is used for euthanasia, ensure no live chicks are in the waste disposal container after this method is used.</p>	<p><b>40</b></p>		

*NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders*

<p><b>A live chick in the waste stream after the completion of the euthanasia process is a major non-conformance and an audit failure for the hatchery. All instances of major non-conformance must be recorded and corrective action must be taken and documented. If this major non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of the hatchery section of the audit.</b></p>	<p><b>Hatchery Audit Failure</b></p>		
<p>Ensure the hatchery has a written program for pips and culled chick euthanasia and disposal. Verify that the hatchery has a written guide for which chick defects result in culling for the welfare of the bird.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>		
<p>Check injury reports for processing or equipment injury to chicks. Ensure corrective action is taken and documented if processing injuries occur.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>		
<p>Ensure the hatchery has a temperature range goal for the holding room in the hatchery when chicks are present and that the temperature of this room is documented.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>		
<p>Ensure the hatchery has a written program in place to retrieve any loose chicks when observed while maintaining employee safety.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>		
<p>Review the chick delivery SOP. Ensure that transport vehicles are equipped with temperature-control capabilities and alarms during transport if the driver is physically separated from the chick environment.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>		
<p>If beak conditioning, back toe conditioning, comb dubbing, or spur removal is performed, a written SOP must be in place and employees must be properly trained. (Note: for broiler breeder companies receiving day-old breeder chicks from a primary breeder supplier, written documentation of the mentioned chick procedures may be provided.)</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>		
<p><b>C: Hatchery and Chick Services - Point Total</b></p>	<p><b>290</b></p>		

***NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders***

<p><b>D: Pullet Housing Operations</b>                      This audit form is used for scoring pullet houses. Two pullet houses are audited in connection with each complex. Average scores for the pullet houses to obtain a subtotal score for Pullet Housing. Add Pullet Housing and Breeder Hen Housing subtotals to obtain the Housing Operations Section point total.</p> <p>Confirm that each point is done by facility and award full score for each point done and zero for each point not done, except for those items for which a sliding scale is provided. Any designated “major non-conformance” (indicated in the Audit Form in boldface type) is an audit failure for the Housing Operations Section of the audit and must be documented on the audit form. A major non-conformance occurs only if the auditor personally observes it in the course of an audit.</p>	<p><b>Points available</b></p>	<p><b>Check if done</b></p>	<p><b>Points awarded</b></p>
<p><b>Any abuse of birds during brooding, rearing, or laying is a major non-conformance and an audit failure for the housing operation. Major non-conformances must be recorded and corrective actions made in all circumstances. If a major non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of the Housing Section of the audit and must result in retraining of all employees at the housing facility.</b></p>	<p><b>Housing Audit Failure</b></p>		
<p><b>D1: Designated Management, Training, and Emergency Plan</b></p>			
<p>Verify that the Breeder operation has a person in charge of ensuring proper animal welfare practices and strict adherence to the guidelines.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>		
<p>Verify that the Breeder operation has a written, task-specific training program, conducted annually for all employees involved in conducting those tasks. Verify documentation of annual training.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>		
<p>Ensure that the Breeder operation has a written plan for disaster response and recovery which may include the parameters described in the guidelines.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>		
<p>Confirm that the Breeder operation has an alarm system or regular monitoring system in place to alert personnel of a failure of critical systems. Verify records of generator run times.</p>	<p><b>40</b></p>		
<p>Confirm that the Breeder operation has a current contact list displayed.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>		



***NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders***

<b>D2: Comfort and Shelter</b>			
House and equipment must be maintained and operated to protect the birds from environmental conditions.	<b>40</b>		
Verify that a written biosecurity program is established and implemented to minimize any negative impacts on bird welfare and protect flock health.	<b>20</b>		
Verify that a written SOP is in place for chick placement.	<b>40</b>		
Ensure the facility has a written protocol for minimum ventilation requirements.	<b>20</b>		
Ensure sampling and monitoring of atmospheric ammonia (not to exceed 25 ppm) is in place. Document that corrective actions are in place should that number be exceeded. Evaluate two houses on each type of farm for ammonia. Award 20 points per house if ammonia is under limits (25 ppm), and 0 points for a house that is above limits (25 ppm). Average the scores of the two houses.	<b>20</b>		
Litter should be loosely compacted when squeezed in the hand. Evaluate two houses per farm and award points on a sliding scale with 40 points being the maximum score per house. Average the scores of the two houses. Dry and friable litter throughout the majority of house = <b>40</b> Caked litter beyond 2 ft of feeders and drinkers = <b>20</b> Caked and wet litter throughout the house = <b>0</b>	<b>Up to 40</b>		
<b>D3: Nutrition and Feeding</b>			
Feed mill must meet good manufacturing practices (GMP) for feed production and is a Food and Drug Administration licensed feed mill if medicated feeds are produced.	<b>5</b>		
Feed formulations are reviewed by a poultry nutritionist.	<b>5</b>		

***NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders***

Ensure that all feeding and drinking systems are in proper operation and easily accessible by all birds on each farm.	<b>20</b>		
Ensure that feed intake and water consumption is monitored and recorded on farm.	<b>20</b>		
<b>D4: Health and Veterinary Care</b>			
Company access to a veterinarian experienced in poultry care must be available.	<b>5</b>		
Each company must have a written health plan developed in consultation with a veterinarian. This health care plan includes at a minimum: vaccinations; daily checks on bird condition; mortality/morbidity monitoring; and when, how, and under what circumstances a producer reports a disease situation.	<b>20</b>		
Verify that mortality and culling are documented at least twice a day. Confirm that the company has a written plan to respond to sudden increases in mortality.	<b>20</b>		
Verify training of personnel who perform euthanasia.	<b>10</b>		
Confirm layout period of at least 28 days or written approval if there is a deviation.	<b>10</b>		
<b>D5: Flock Husbandry</b>			
Verify that stocking density in house does not limit the ability of birds to easily access food and water.	<b>40</b>		
Ensure that birds are provided with a minimum of eight hours of constant light and that lighting programs are appropriate to bird age and activity. Lighting must be adequate for the caretaker to observe and inspect the birds.	<b>40</b>		
<b>D: Pullet Housing Operations - Point Subtotal</b>	<b>465</b>		

***NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders***

<p><b>D: Breeder Hen Housing Operations</b>                      This audit form is used for scoring breeder hen houses. Two breeder hen houses are audited in connection with each complex. Average scores for the breeder hen houses to obtain a subtotal score for Breeder Hen Housing. Add Pullet Housing and Breeder Hen Housing subtotals to obtain the Housing Operations Section point total.</p> <p>Confirm that each point is done by facility and award full score for each point done and zero for each point not done, except for those items for which a sliding scale is provided. Any designated “major non-conformance” (indicated in the Audit Form in boldface type) is an audit failure for the Housing Operations Section of the audit and must be documented on the audit form. A major non-conformance occurs only if the auditor personally observes it in the course of an audit.</p>	<p><b>Points available</b></p>	<p><b>Check if done</b></p>	<p><b>Points awarded</b></p>
<p><b>Any abuse of birds during brooding, rearing, or laying is a major non-conformance and an audit failure for the housing operation. Major non-conformances must be recorded and corrective actions made in all circumstances. If a major non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of the Housing Section of the audit and must result in retraining of all employees at the housing facility.</b></p>	<p><b>Housing Audit Failure</b></p>		
<p><b>D1: Designated Management, Training, and Emergency Plan</b></p>			
<p>Verify that the Breeder operation has a person in charge of ensuring proper animal welfare practices and strict adherence to the guidelines.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>		
<p>Verify that the Breeder operation has a written, task-specific training program, conducted annually for all employees involved in conducting those tasks. Verify documentation of annual training.</p>	<p><b>20</b></p>		
<p>Ensure that the Breeder operation has a written plan for disaster response and recovery which may include the parameters described in the guidelines.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>		
<p>Confirm that the Breeder operation has an alarm system or regular monitoring system in place to alert personnel of a failure of critical systems. Verify records of generator run times.</p>	<p><b>40</b></p>		
<p>Confirm that the Breeder operation has a current contact list displayed.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>		

*NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders*

<b>D2: Comfort and Shelter</b>			
House and equipment must be maintained and operated to protect the birds from environmental conditions.	<b>40</b>		
Verify that a written biosecurity program is established and implemented to minimize any negative impacts on bird welfare and protect flock health.	<b>20</b>		
Verify that a written SOP is in place for flock placement.	<b>40</b>		
Ensure the facility has a written protocol for minimum ventilation requirements.	<b>20</b>		
Ensure sampling and monitoring of atmospheric ammonia (not to exceed 25 ppm) is in place. Document that corrective actions are in place should that number be exceeded. Evaluate two houses on each type of farm for ammonia. Award 20 points per house if ammonia is under limits (25 ppm), and 0 points for a house that is above limits (25 ppm). Average the scores of the two houses.	<b>20</b>		
Height of slats should not exceed 24 inches unless steps are provided to allow for movement between the litter area and the slats. Slats should be in good condition and repair to optimize flock well-being. No birds should be trapped underneath the slats.	<b>10</b>		
<b>A bird found under the slats is a major non-conformance. Major non-conformances must be recorded and corrective actions made in all circumstances. If a major non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of the Housing Section of the audit and must result in retraining of all employees of the Broiler Breeder facility.</b>	<b>Housing Audit Failure</b>		
Litter should be loosely compacted when squeezed in the hand. Evaluate two houses per farm and award points on a sliding scale with 40 points being the maximum score per house. Average the scores of the two houses.  Dry and friable litter throughout the majority of house = <b>40</b>  Caked litter beyond 2 ft of feeders and drinkers = <b>20</b>	<b>Up to 40</b>		

***NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders***

Caked and wet litter throughout the house = <b>0</b>			
<b>D3: Nutrition and Feeding</b>			
Feed mill must meet good manufacturing practices (GMP) for feed production and is a Food and Drug Administration licensed feed mill if medicated feeds are produced.	<b>5</b>		
Feed formulations are reviewed by a poultry nutritionist.	<b>5</b>		
Ensure that all feeding and drinking systems are in proper operation and easily accessible by all birds on each farm.	<b>20</b>		
Ensure that feed intake and water consumption are monitored on farm.	<b>20</b>		
Gradual body weight gains must be achieved throughout the rearing period in accordance with the company’s body weight profile for each strain. Ensure the company has a documented plan for assessing bird weight for each flock.	<b>20</b>		
<b>D4: Health and Veterinary Care</b>			
Company access to a veterinarian experienced in poultry care must be available.	<b>5</b>		
Each company must have a written health plan developed in consultation with a veterinarian. This health care plan includes at a minimum: vaccinations; daily checks on bird condition; mortality/morbidity monitoring; and when, how, and under what circumstances a producer reports a disease situation.	<b>20</b>		
Verify that mortality and culling are documented at least twice a day. Confirm that the company has a written plan to respond to sudden increases in mortality.	<b>20</b>		
Evaluate the flock for evidence of mortality removal and general bird condition. While the goal is to find zero birds that require humane euthanasia, an incident rate of less than 0.1% (1 bird out of 1000 birds) is acceptable. The incidence rate is calculated based on the number of birds observed in need of humane euthanasia divided by the current number of birds in the house. If the incidence rate greater than 0.1% is observed, no points will be awarded for this criteria.	<b>20</b>		

***NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders***

Verify training of personnel who perform euthanasia.	<b>10</b>		
Confirm layout period of at least 28 days or written approval if there is a deviation.	<b>10</b>		
<b>D5: Flock Husbandry</b>			
Verify that stocking density in house does not limit the ability of birds to easily access food and water.	<b>40</b>		
Ensure that birds are provided with a minimum of eight hours of constant light and that lighting programs are appropriate to bird age and activity. Lighting must be adequate for the caretaker to observe and inspect the birds.	<b>40</b>		
Any company that practices gradual introduction (replacement) of males into the breeder house must have a plan to do so in a manner that promotes overall flock well-being.	<b>5</b>		
Adequate nest space must be provided for hens. Depending on the style and design of the nest system, the number of hens per nest must follow the manufacturers' recommendation.	<b>10</b>		
<b>D: Breeder Hen Housing Operations - Point Subtotal</b>	<b>530</b>		
<b>E: Handling and Transportation</b>	<b>Points available</b>	<b>Check if done</b>	<b>Points awarded</b>
<b>Any abuse of birds during handling, catching, or transportation is a major non-conformance and an audit failure for the Handling and Transportation area. All instances of major non-conformance must be recorded and corrective action must be taken and documented.</b>	<b>Handling Audit Failure</b>		
Verify that the company has a person in charge of ensuring proper animal welfare practices are followed at all times and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.	<b>20</b>		

***NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders***

Verify the company has a written task-specific training program conducted annually for all employees involved in conducting procedures such as culling, euthanasia, handling, vaccination, catching and loading birds.		<b>40</b>		
Confirm that employees have been trained to handle birds so that risk of injury to birds is minimized, and unnecessary flock stress is avoided.		<b>20</b>		
Confirm that birds are handled in such a manner that avoids injuries during all handling procedures.		<b>20</b>		
<b>E1: Vaccination and Pullet Movement (Auditor must observe and score either vaccination or pullet movement procedures for Audit Section E1. Use the boxes indicated to circle or otherwise select which procedure was observed.)</b>				
Confirm that set up and maintenance of the vaccination or moving area is conducted in a manner that prevents excessive pullet stress and promotes bird and employee comfort.	<b>Vaccination</b>	<b>20</b>		
	<b>Pullet Movement</b>			
Verify that there is a written plan for evaluating and culling pullets as necessary during vaccination and movement procedures. Confirm that an individual responsible for humanely euthanizing pullets is designated.	<b>Vaccination</b>	<b>20</b>		
	<b>Pullet Movement</b>			
Equipment used during vaccination or pullet moving procedures such as tables or catch frames are in good condition. Instructions for appropriate disposal of supplies used during vaccination or pullet moves are provided.	<b>Vaccination</b>	<b>20</b>		
	<b>Pullet Movement</b>			
Inspect a total of 100 individual coops for signs of damage that can injure birds or allow them to escape. It is preferable that trailers be empty during the audit process. Award points based on a sliding scale: < 3 damaged coops = <b>20</b> 3-5 damaged coops = <b>10</b> > 5 damaged coops = <b>0</b>		<b>Up to 20</b>		
	<b>Vaccination</b>	<b>20</b>		

***NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders***

Equipment used to segregate pullets is kept in good condition and does not result in unnecessary flock stress or have direct contact with the birds.	<b>Pullet Movement</b>			
Verify records of vaccination and/or transportation field-caused injuries and pullet death. If the number of pullets that die or are injured exceeds 1% during a handling procedure, corrective action must be initiated. Do not include pullets that are culled during the handling process.	<b>Vaccination</b>	<b>40</b>		
	<b>Pullet Movement</b>			
<b>E2: Transportation at End of Production</b>				
Ensure that the company has a written plan for emergency response and recovery.		<b>20</b>		
Ensure that the company has a written plan for the maximum number of birds allowed per transportation coop. Density in the transport coop should permit the birds to sit during transport without being on top of one another (in a single layer). Examine two trailer loads with birds to ensure all birds are in a single layer. Confirm that the individual responsible for humanely euthanizing birds unfit for transport is identified by the company. Verify that the company has a written plan for handling birds unfit for transport.		<b>40</b>		
Inspect a total of 100 individual coops on a breeding transport trailer(s) for signs of damage that can injure birds or allow them to escape. It is preferable that trailers be empty during the audit process. Award points based on a sliding scale: < 3 damaged coops = <b>20</b> 3-5 damaged coops = <b>10</b> > 5 damaged coops = <b>0</b>		<b>Up to 20</b>		
Employees may not lift, carry, or drag individual birds by a single wing or by the neck. Ensure birds are being caught by their legs or both wings and are not placed on their backs. Verify that no more than five birds are carried in one hand.		<b>40</b>		
Verify records of field-caused injuries and dead on arrival (DOA) rates. If the number of birds DOA exceeds 2% in any given week, corrective action must be initiated.		<b>40</b>		



*NCC Animal Welfare Audit Checklist – Broiler Breeders*

<p><b>Loss of birds from trailers during transportation is a major non-conformance and an audit failure for the Handling and Transportation area. All instances of major non-conformance must be recorded and corrective action must be taken and documented. If this major non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of the handling and transportation section of the audit.</b></p>	<p><b>Transport Audit Failure</b></p>		
<p><b>E: Handling and Transportation - Point Total</b></p>	<p><b>400</b></p>		

# Guidance for Conducting Audits Under National Chicken Council Animal Welfare Guidelines

- 1). **Facilities to be Audited.** The Company may choose to audit all of its operations or only a subset of its operations, depending on its needs with respect to its customers. The audit applies only to facilities or complexes named on the checklist.
- 2). **Audit of a Complex.** If asked to verify compliance for an entire complex, the Auditor should expect to visit a sample of the pullet and breeder hen farms associated with that complex. Farms are chosen by the Auditor from a list presented by the Company. At least 10 farms are on the list presented by the Company.

Two houses on each type of farm (pullet and breeder hen) are audited in connection with each complex. Average scores for the pullet farms and breeder hen farms should be taken to calculate a subtotal score for each type of farm for the Housing Section of the audit. The subtotal scores for pullet housing and breeder hen housing should be added to obtain a total Housing Section score. When auditing Section E1 of the audit: Vaccination and Pullet Movement, the Auditor must observe either vaccination *or* pullet movement procedures, and use the boxes indicated to circle or otherwise select which procedure was observed.

**Note:** The hatchery section of the NCC Broiler Breeder audit pertains to the primary breeder company supplying day-old breeder chicks. The primary breeding companies conduct independent third party animal welfare audits that include the primary breeder hatchery. The broiler companies may request a copy of the primary breeding company's certificate of their Animal Welfare Audit.

- 3). **Audit of a Company.** If a company-wide audit is desired, the Company may elect to contract with more than one auditor in the interest of getting the audits done in a timely manner. The Company may also choose to audit only those facilities that serve a particular customer.
- 4). **Written Report.** The Animal Welfare Checklist prepared by the National Chicken Council as adopted or amended by the Company is the only authorized basis for an audit of the NCC Guidelines. If, however, the Company desires additional information from the auditor, it may elect to ask the Auditor to prepare a report on their observations and recommendations in addition to the checklist; but in all cases the checklist must be completed.
- 5). **“Free To Roam.”** The Animal Welfare Guidelines state: “Birds are allowed to roam freely throughout the growing area.” The growing area is defined as either the entire house or a subdivision thereof if dividers are used during brooding or other stage of growout.
- 6). **Initial Evaluation of a Flock in a Pullet or Breeder Hen House:** Enter the house quietly and do not startle the birds. Stand quietly at the door for several minutes to monitor the birds for displays of normal behaviors such as dust bathing, posturing, eating, drinking, etc. Most of the birds should be active with background contentment vocalizations (eg. chirping or clucking).

# Standard Contract for Audits Under National Chicken Council Animal Welfare Guidelines

This AGREEMENT was made on [date] \_\_\_\_\_ between [Company]  
\_\_\_\_\_ and [Contractor] \_\_\_\_\_

- 1). **Services To Be Performed.** Contractor agrees to perform Animal Welfare audit(s) of Company facilities for purposes of verifying the facilities' compliance with the Animal Welfare Guidelines of the National Chicken Council, as adopted or amended by the Company.
- 2). **Time For Performance.** Contractor agrees to complete the performance of these services on or before [date] \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3). **Estimated Time Required.** The Company estimates that Contractor will require \_\_\_\_ day(s) on site to complete the proposed audit. Any days, or portions thereof, in excess of this estimate are subject to prior approval by the Company.
- 4). **Payment.** In consideration of Contractor's performance in full of these services, Client agrees to pay Contractor as follows: \$\_\_\_\_ per day on site or in travel to and from site.
- 5). **Out of Pocket Expenses.** Actual, reasonable expenses related to the contractor's work, including meals, long distance telephone charges, travel, hotel, fax transmission, copying, postage, and shipping will be reimbursed by the Company.
- 6). **Invoices.** Contractor will submit invoices for all services performed and attach receipts for all actual expenses.
- 7). **Basis of Audit.** Contractor agrees that the Animal Welfare Audit Checklist, as prepared by the National Chicken Council and adopted or amended by the Company, shall be the basis for the Contractor's audit of the Company's facilities. Company shall provide Contractor with sufficient copies of the checklist for the facilities to be audited.
- 8). **Work Product.** The desired work product consists of complete checklists for each facility audited. No other report will be provided by Contractor, unless specifically requested by the Company. It is agreed and understood that the completed checklists are the property of Company, and that Company regards such checklists as confidential proprietary business information. Contractor agrees not to release the checklists, or copies thereof, to third

parties without the express written permission of Company.

- 9). **Other Clients.** Contractor retains the right to perform services for other clients.
  
- 10). **Independent Contractor.** For purposes of this agreement, Contractor is an independent contractor, and, under no circumstances, shall be considered or treated as an employee of Company. This agreement creates no partnership or any kind of joint undertaking or venture between Contractor and Company.
  
- 11). **Entire Agreement.** This agreement represents the entire agreement and understanding between the parties, and supersedes all prior written and oral negotiations. This agreement may not be amended or modified, except in writing signed by both parties.

**CONTRACTOR**

**CLIENT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX 1

## **Suggested Topics for Animal Welfare Training of Personnel Working in the Broiler Breeder Industry**

*(can be used for initial training and/or re-training)*

### **1. Introduction**

- a. What is Animal Welfare
  - i. Provide company's description for animal welfare
  - ii. Discuss the connection between animal health (physical characteristics) with animal well-being (behavioral characteristics)
    1. Provide examples of how the well-being of a bird (behavior) may reflect that the bird has a health problem (physical defect), or vice versa
  - iii. Discuss how animal welfare is relevant and critical to the role of each person in the company who is involved with live animals (production, transport, vaccination, veterinary, nutrition, etc.)

### **2. Company Expectations for Animal Welfare**

- a. Provide company's animal welfare position or statement
- b. Emphasize the importance of each employee's responsibility for meeting company expectations and best management practices (Animal Care, Animal Handling, Euthanasia, etc.)
- c. Discuss the consequences for animal welfare violations
- d. Emphasize the company's expectation for any employee to immediately report any concerns or observations of abusive behavior or mistreatment of animals to a company supervisor
- e. Mention the importance of animal welfare for the birds, for the company, for the customers and how audits may be used to verify compliance

### **3. Learning Objectives for Broiler Breeder Health and Behavior (specific to work area)**

- a. Discuss and give examples for normal bird behavior and activity
- b. Discuss and give examples of expected environment for good poultry health
  - i. Include what temperature, lighting, noise, will be "normal" in the area
  - ii. Include how this can impact behavior and health if it is not correct

- c. Discuss company expectations for biosecurity and how this is important for good bird health, preventing the introduction of disease, and how it relates to welfare

**4. Learning Objectives for Animal Handling and Transportation (specific to working area(s) of employee)**

- a. Discuss and demonstrate proper technique of handling chickens
  - i. Emphasize that deliberate abuse is not tolerated, and include what is not allowed per company policy for bird handling
- b. Discuss expectations for employees working in the area with regards to movement of staff members, equipment, etc. so that bird welfare can be optimized and so that risk for injury, entrapment and stress can be minimized
  - i. Include how to work with broiler breeder behavior to achieve safe handling (moving slowly, avoiding loud noises, etc.)
- c. Discuss and give examples of what is not allowed for handling and what can result in animal welfare violations
  - i. Include how improper handling may result in bird injury and/or stress
- d. Discuss how to move groups of birds safely and securely, and how to monitor and protect them from injury and damage during transport
- e. Discuss the importance of evaluating equipment that may be damaged or may require repair before using it to move or load birds
- f. Discuss the importance of, and expectations for, maintaining bird comfort during holding periods

**5. Learning Objectives for Culling and Euthanasia (specific to working area of employee)**

- a. Discuss and give examples of poultry that may be defective (anatomically), ill, or injured and need to be considered for culling and humane euthanasia
- b. Discuss what euthanasia is, why it is used and the goals of effective euthanasia
- c. Discuss what methods of euthanasia are (and are not) allowed by the company
  - i. Demonstrate how to hold the bird and how to perform the method
  - ii. Discuss how to verify that the euthanasia was effective
  - iii. Discuss what the “normal reaction” is for the bird after euthanasia
- d. Discuss what should be done for disposal of the bird(s) after euthanasia

## APPENDIX 2

### Evaluating Lighting Programs for Broiler Breeders

Birds have much better visual acuity than humans, and the way a bird “sees” may be different from humans.<sup>2</sup>

Birds are sensitive to light levels, displaying behavioral and physiologic responses. Poultry flock managers use lighting programs to manage a breeder flock’s reproductive activity. Lighting programs have also been developed to help manage broiler breeder flocks by reducing behavioral problems, controlling growth, and improving musculoskeletal development. Lighting programs may need to be adjusted to account for breed differences, disease conditions, or environmental changes.

Breeder birds are usually reared in light-controlled environments. During the first 2-3 days of the brooding phase breeder chicks should be provided with a higher intensity and longer duration of light (up to 24 hours daily) to encourage chick activity and feed and water consumption. Following the brooding phase, breeder birds should be provided with a constant minimum 8 hours of light on a daily basis. This period of light ensures that birds can freely move about and express normal behavior, access feed and water for normal growth and development, and prevent photo-stimulation before they complete their growth and reach sexual maturity. When breeder birds are mature, a light stimulation program (increasing intensity and duration of daily lighting) will be used to help initiate the laying cycle for the breeder flock.

Lighting programs will vary depending on the age and strain of the broiler breeder flock. The lighting program will also depend on whether natural light (open sided house) or artificial light (solid or dark-curtain walled house), or some combination of the two are used. Continuous or near-continuous lighting has detrimental effects on broiler breeder health and behavior and must not be used. There must also be sufficient contrast in light intensity between the day and night periods. While there are numerous lighting programs available, NCC does not currently recommend any specific program, only that the overall welfare of the broiler breeder flock is addressed.

---

<sup>2</sup> Meyer, D. B. (1986). The Avian Eye. In P. D. Sturkie (Ed.), *Avian Physiology* (4th ed., pp. 38-48). New York, NY: Springer-Verlag. doi:10.1007/978-1-4612-4862-0

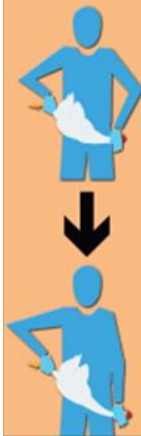
# APPENDIX 3

University of Arkansas Center for Food Animal Wellbeing Cervical Dislocation Training

## How To Perform Cervical Dislocation



1. Grasp the chicken near the feet or below the hocks using the non-dominant hand. Do NOT hold between the hocks and thigh.



2. Place the other hand's thumb and index finger at the base of the skull on either side of the head. Using your leg for support as necessary, rotate the head backward while pulling straight down on the neck.



3. When you feel complete separation of the neck vertebrae place the bird on its back on the ground. Reflexive wing flapping and leg movement will occur for several minutes.



4. To verify death observe for rhythmic breathing, and touch the eye to check for blink reflex.

