NATIONAL CHICKEN COUNCIL BROILER WELFARE GUIDELINES AND AUDIT CHECKLIST

NATIONAL CHICKEN COUNCIL
1152 15th Street NW
Suite 430
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 296-2622

Updated June 2026

Contents

- NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines
- NCC Broiler Welfare Audit Checklist
- Appendix 1
  - Guidance for Conducting Audits Under NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines
  - Standard Contract for Audits Under NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines
- Appendix 2 – Suggested Topics for Broiler Welfare Training of Personnel
- Appendix 3 – University of Arkansas Center for Food Animal Wellbeing Cervical Dislocation Training
- Appendix 4 – Approved Methods of Euthanasia (AVMA, 2020)
- Appendix 5 – Measuring Atmospheric Ammonia in Broiler Houses
- Appendix 6 – Evaluating Litter Moisture in Broiler Houses
- Appendix 7 – American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) Broiler Foot Condition Scoring Guide
- Appendix 8 – Calculating Stocking Density in Broiler Houses
- Appendix 9 – Evaluating Lighting Programs in Broiler Houses
- Appendix 10 – Gait Scoring of Commercial Broilers
- Appendix 11 – Transportation Equipment
- Appendix 12 – American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) Broiler Wing Condition Scoring Guide
- Appendix 13 – American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) Broiler Leg Condition Scoring Guide
- Appendix 14 – Major non-conformances as outlined in the guidelines

National Chicken Council Broiler Welfare Guidelines and Audit Checklist

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 broilers and to promote the production of quality products.

Preface

According to the World Organization for Animal Health Terrestrial Animal Health Code, good welfare is when the animal is healthy, comfortable, well-nourished, safe, and not suffering from pain, fear, or distress. Animals must also be able to express behaviors that are important for their physical and mental state. Animals' physical needs are relatively easily discussed, described, and studied, but their mental states and needs can be more difficult to characterize. We recognize this understanding is an ongoing discussion and evolving science, and we recognize the importance of the Five Freedoms[1] and Five Domains.[2] With that in mind, the NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines are updated as new science-based parameters become available.

The NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines have been developed to assess how current commercial strains of broiler chickens are raised, housed, managed, and processed. 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 broiler chickens) were considered in the development of this document:

1) Broiler chickens raised for food should be cared for in ways that minimize fear, pain, stress, and suffering while promoting measurable positive welfare outcomes.

2) Guidelines for welfare should balance scientific knowledge, practical application, and professional judgment with consideration of ethical and societal values.

3) It is the welfare outcomes of the broiler chickens themselves that is foremost, not how humans might perceive a practice or an environment.

4) Broiler chickens should be treated with respect throughout their lives and provided a humane death using an AVMA-approved method when processed for food or when they are euthanized for any other reason.

5) These guidelines are focused on true indicators of broiler welfare and are not focused

---

[1] Animal Welfare - WOAH - World Organisation for Animal Health.
[2] The 2020 Five Domains Model: Including Human-Animal Interactions in Assessments of Animal Welfare - PubMed.

on prescriptive requirements that may have little to no impact on broiler welfare. As a result, these guidelines place special emphasis on several key welfare indicators (KWI), including, but not limited mobility, insensibility at slaughter, wing injuries, leg injuries, and other like parameters. It is the intent of the guidelines to be comprehensive and address a series of broiler welfare parameters. Performance parameters have been established with an emphasis on continuous improvement. Companies must have robust, well-documented, and accurately implemented broiler welfare programs for hatchery, growout, catching and transportation, and processing.

6) The NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines and Audit Checklist are formally reviewed every two years alternating between a review conducted by a group of scientific advisors and a review conducted by the NCC Broiler Welfare Committee. The intent of these formal reviews is to focus on continuous improvement with increased emphasis on KWIs. Performance parameters for these KWIs may become more stringent in subsequent versions.

7) The NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines and Audit Checklist are reviewed and certified by the Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO) on an annual basis.

Introduction

Commercial broiler chickens are adaptable to a variety of conditions. Today's broiler 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 based on the AVMA's Animal Welfare Principles. The specific applications of these criteria are spelled out in these guidelines, and the checklist is used to assess compliance. Broiler chicken producers and processors endorsing these guidelines must designate a management person or group within the company responsible for promoting adherence to the guidelines. NCC Broiler Welfare Guidelines, which outline best practices for broiler production and processing, are categorized into the following sections:

A Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training
B Hatchery Operations
C Growout Operations
  C1 Designated Management and Emergency Plans
  C2 Nutrition and Feeding
  C3 Comfort and Shelter
  C4 Health Care and Monitoring
  C5 Flock Husbandry
D Catching and Transportation
E Processing Operations for Electrical Stunning
F Processing Operations for Controlled Atmospheric Stunning (CAS)
G Abuse and Audit Failure

National Chicken Council Broiler Welfare Guidelines

A Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training

Failure to meet all parameters outlined in the Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training section of the guidelines will result in an automatic failure of the audit.

1) The company must have a written broiler 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 broiler welfare program.

3) The company must have a person or management group responsible for broiler 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 documented mechanism in place whereby broiler welfare violations can be reported without threat of retaliation.

6) Signs stating the importance of broiler welfare with contact information for reporting incidents must be posted prominently in locations where birds are handled.

7) The company must have a written program in place to address all non-conformances should they occur, which must include corrective actions and retraining of personnel in the specific area of the process where the non-conformance was observed. In these guidelines, a non-conformance refers to any deviation from specified standards, procedures, or expectations outlined within the guidelines.

8) All employees who work with live birds must be trained at least annually on the fundamentals of chicken behavior and welfare including that abuse or neglect of birds is not tolerated under any circumstance. An optional training program is included in Appendix 2. A cervical dislocation training guide is included in Appendix 3.

9) Training must be understood by everyone. Training must be documented for each employee and should include how the training was conducted (classroom, online, in-person, on-farm, language used, etc.) as well as the tasks and responsibilities for which the employees were trained.

10) All employees who handle live birds must be trained prior to handling live birds and annually after the initial training using a SOP-based or task-specific training program that focuses on acceptable management practices at the specific locations where employees work with live broiler chickens. All procedures involving live birds must be accomplished in such a manner as to minimize stress and injuries. Confirm that there is a training program in place focused on each of the following areas:

a) Hatchery Operations. The hatchery operation must have a written training program covering all activities performed at the hatchery. Training may include chick processing (which may include sexing, vaccinating procedures, beak conditioning), culling, euthanasia, vaccination procedures, chick holding, and chick loading and transportation.
b) Growout Operations. The growout operation must have a written training program covering all activities performed in growout. Training may include chick placement, general signs of disease, culling, euthanasia, handling and catching techniques, and vaccination procedures.
c) Catching and Transportation. The live-haul department must have a written training program covering all activities performed both by company personnel and contract catching crews. Training may include bird catching, handling, culling, euthanasia, and transportation.
d) Processing Operations. The processing operation must have a written training program covering all activities performed at the processing plant. Training may include bird handling after transport, shackling, stunning, slaughter, and euthanasia.

B Hatchery Operations

1) Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the hatchery operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

2) The hatchery must have a person responsible for ensuring that proper broiler welfare practices are always followed and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.

3) The hatchery must have a current contact list for emergency needs that include company management staff and local emergency and utility services; the list must be posted and readily accessible for all hatchery staff.

4) The hatchery must have a written program addressing a disaster with the potential to negatively impact bird welfare including, but not limited to, loss of power, water outages, structural damage, emergency depopulation, etc.

5) The hatchery must have a written program for monitoring the hatchery environment (such as egg room/incubator temperature and humidity) during setting, hatching, processing, and holding with written or electronic logs available for the auditor to review.

6) The facility must have an alarm system in place to alert hatchery personnel to failures of critical systems (heat, electricity, etc.).

7) A written emergency power back-up program must be in place and available for review by the auditor and must include a method by which the hatchery can gain access to supplemental power. Auditor must review documented back-up power checks.

8) Both manual and automated chick processing systems must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner that prevents injuries to the chicks. Chick processing systems must be examined by hatchery staff at the start of the hatch day to ensure equipment set-up and system function will prevent chick injuries. Equipment checks must be documented.

9) No live chick should drop from heights more than 12 inches throughout the hatchery. The 12 inches is measured between two points of contact on equipment, belts, macerator, etc. Slides are a helpful tool to minimize chick drop distances and are considered a point of contact.

10) The hatchery must have a written program to monitor and respond to equipment-related chick injuries during processing and handling, should they occur. Equipment-related injuries must be recorded daily at a minimum.

11) The hatchery must have a written program outlining which chick defects should result in culling. List of reasons for culling/chick defects – including but not limited to cross beak, exposed brain, etc.

12) Chicks must be evaluated at a minimum of once per day for equipment-related injury and chick defects by hatchery personnel. Results, including the reason for culling, must be recorded. Corrective action must be taken and documented if more than 10 chicks (1%) with equipment-related injuries and chick defects are discovered during a single 10-box check. The auditor must review documentation for daily equipment-related injuries and chick defect checks.

13) The auditor must evaluate chicks for equipment-related injury and chick defects. Prior to shipping, evaluate chick injury by examining 10 boxes of chicks selected at random (total of 1,000 chicks) for equipment-related injuries and chick defects.

14) The hatchery must have a written program for the separation process.

    a) Mechanical separation: Equipment must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner that prevents injuries to the chicks and protects personnel. The separator must be checked for proper operation at least once per shift by hatchery personnel. No live chick should drop more than 12 inches between the hatcher basket and the belt or chick box.
    b) Manual separation: Equipment must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner that prevents injuries to the chicks and protects personnel. Staff must be trained to carefully handle chicks during the separation, and no live chick should drop more than 12 inches when being moved from the hatcher basket to the belt or chick box.

15) The separation process (mechanical or manual) must be observed by the auditor to ensure proper functionality and for potential chick injuries. The auditor must observe a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 hatch trays being processed.

16) Only methods of euthanasia applicable to poultry approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA, 2020) can be used for culled chicks, pips, and embryonated eggs. Approved euthanasia methods can be found in Appendix 4. The hatchery must have a written program for euthanasia and disposal of pips and culled chicks.

17) Culled chicks and pips must be euthanized after each flock change at a minimum. The number of culled chicks (not pips) must be documented by hatchery personnel. The auditor must verify that the number of culled chicks is documented.

18) The hatchery must have a written program for embryonated eggs that are removed from the system (in-ovo vaccination, break-outs, depopulation, etc.). The written program may include, but not limited to, the approved method of euthanasia utilized, the timing of euthanasia, and documentation related to eggs that are removed.

19) The auditor must confirm the primary system used for euthanasia is operational. A pile-up of live chicks/live embryos in the feeding hopper should be minimized. There must be no live chicks in the waste disposal container post maceration. 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.
    b) Open-macerator system: Hatchery waste must be verified in the collection containers only when it is safe to do so.

20) If maceration is used for euthanasia, the macerator must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner that results in immediate death of chicks and embryonated eggs. If gas is used for euthanasia, it must be verified that the chicks are dead when it is safe for employees to do so (i.e., the gas has been turned off). No chicks can be placed in the macerator until it is operational.

21) If the primary euthanasia system is not functioning as intended, the hatchery must have a written backup plan.

22) Regardless of the approved euthanasia method used, any evidence of a live chick in the hatchery waste stream after the completion of the euthanasia process is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor while observing the euthanasia system in operation, it results in an automatic failure of the hatchery operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

23) Maintaining an appropriate environment is critical to the comfort and health of the chicks. The hatchery must have a written program in place to monitor chick comfort and health which may include, but is not limited to, monitoring temperature-related behaviors, temperature ranges for chick holding areas, etc. The hatchery must

document results from chick comfort monitoring and document corrective actions should parameters outlined in the written program not be met.

24) Temperature-related behaviors should be used to evaluate if the chick holding room is maintained at an acceptable temperature. With the support of hatchery personnel, the auditor must evaluate ten random chick boxes for temperature-related behaviors. Chicks in nine of the ten boxes must demonstrate appropriate temperature-related behavior as defined in the company's written program.

25) 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.

26) The hatchery must have a written program in place to ensure that all live chicks are removed from hatcher trays and chick boxes so that no live chicks enter the tray wash equipment. The program must include how the hatchery will minimize chicks remaining in hatcher trays and/or chick boxes prior to the tray wash equipment.

27) The auditor must observe 25 total hatchery containers (chick boxes and/or hatcher trays) prior to tray washing to ensure that all live chicks are removed from hatcher trays and chick boxes so that no live chicks enter the tray wash equipment. This observation should be performed only if active tray washing is occurring. The auditor must document any findings of chicks entering the tray wash equipment.

28) A written program for chick delivery vehicles must be in place for both daily operations and for emergencies and available for review by the auditor. The written program may include appropriate environmental conditions, alarms, and emergency back-up systems.

29) Transport vehicles for chicks must be equipped with temperature-control capabilities and alarms should these systems fail during transport.

C Growout Operations

C1 Designated Management and Emergency Plans

1) Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the growout operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

2) Growout operations must have a person responsible for ensuring that proper broiler welfare practices are always followed and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.

3) The growout operation must have a written program in place for disaster response and recovery, including, but not limited to, SOPs addressing structural damage, loss of

power, water and feed outages, and emergency depopulation due to natural disasters, disease outbreaks, etc. using a government-approved method.

4) When the ventilation system is dependent on electrical power, confirm that generator checks are performed and documented at least monthly.

5) The growout operation must have an alarm system or regular monitoring system in place to alert farm personnel about failures of critical systems (water, electricity, etc.).

6) The growout operation must have a written program for temperature, lighting programs, and ventilation levels (which may include specifications for maintaining temperature and air quality) within the house appropriate to bird age, size, and activity level. This program must be available in at least one house on the farm.

7) The auditor must confirm that the parameters of the written program for temperature, lighting, and ventilation level are being met during the audit.

8) Consultation with a veterinarian or poultry welfare specialist is required for the development of a flock lighting program.

9) The growout operation must have current contact information for key company personnel, local emergency and utility services, and each producer must display a list of emergency contacts at a minimum of one location on the farm. This list must be reviewed and updated annually if necessary.

C2 Nutrition and Feeding

1) Diets must be formulated, produced, and fed to prevent all signs of nutritional deficiency and to promote good health and normal maintenance and growth. Formulations should be routinely reviewed by a poultry nutritionist.

2) The feed mill must meet good manufacturing practices (GMP) for feed production and must have documented GMPs for feed production. A copy of the GMPs must be available for the auditor to review.

3) Feeder and watering space must meet manufacturers' recommendations or good poultry husbandry practices. Feed and watering systems must be sited and adjusted in height as the birds grow so that these systems are easily accessible by the birds.

4) All feeding and drinking systems must be checked for proper operation daily.

5) Water consumption must be routinely monitored and recorded daily.

C3 Comfort and Shelter

1) Broiler housing and equipment must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner to protect the birds from adverse environmental conditions, including typical seasonal temperatures and precipitation, as well as from predators and wild birds.

2) Broiler housing, equipment, and environment must be maintained to avoid sharp edges and protrusions to prevent injury or entrapment. Observe equipment and environment throughout the house during the audit.

3) The company must have a written chick placement program that includes, but is not limited to, house environmental parameters including temperature, humidity, and lighting, litter depth and temperature, and feed and water availability.

4) The company must have a written brooding program that includes, but is not limited to, house environmental parameters including temperature, humidity, ammonia, and lighting, feed and water availability, and criteria for culling.

5) Ammonia in the atmosphere must not exceed 25 parts per million at bird head height. The company must have a written ammonia monitoring program that includes, but is not limited to, an objective monitoring method for ammonia, criteria for maintaining monitoring devices (calibration frequency, use by dates, storage), and appropriate corrective actions should the maximum ammonia level be exceeded.

6) During the audit, the auditor must evaluate two houses per farm on three separate farms evaluated for atmospheric ammonia at bird head height during the audit. Each house must be scored independently. Instructions on how to measure atmospheric ammonia can be found in Appendix 5.

   a) One farm must have chicks that are seven days of age or less.
   b) One farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing.
   c) One farm must have birds within seven days of processing.

7) During the audit, the auditor must evaluate two houses per farm on two separate farms for litter moisture. Each house must be scored independently. Instructions on how to evaluate litter moisture can be found in Appendix 6.

   a) One farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing
   b) One farm must have birds within seven days of processing.

8) **Note to the Auditor:** Although foot pad health is a key welfare indicator associated with litter quality and moisture, it is assessed at the processing plant by the auditor using the AAAP Broiler Foot Condition Scoring Guide (Appendix 7) to score paws as either a pass (Score 0 or 1) or fail (Score 2). At the processing plant, the auditor must evaluate a random sample of 200 paws at the processing plant for footpad health. Points for this parameter are assessed at the processing plant but are attributed to this section (the Growout Operations section) of the audit.

C4 Health Care and Monitoring

1) Access to a licensed veterinarian 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, information on the veterinary-client-patient relationship (VCPR, as defined by the state veterinary board and AVMA), 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 criteria, emergency depopulation, euthanasia procedures, gait monitoring, and when, how, and under what circumstances a producer reports a disease, sudden increase in mortality, or other health situation to a designated person for determination of corrective action.

3) 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 should include, but are not limited to, a control program for rodents, predators, or other pests such as insects, water quality program, mortality disposal, visitor entry requirements, and traffic control. Companies should consider the National Poultry Improvement Plan Program Standards' Biosecurity Principles[3], as well as other currently available information, when designing biosecurity procedures. Confirm that the company has a written biosecurity program.

4) Each company must have a written program for downtime between flocks developed in consultation with a veterinarian. The written program should include, but is not limited to, the scope of the plan, expected downtime between flocks, documentation of actual downtime between flocks, cleaning and disinfection procedures, and maintenance of housing and equipment. Consultation with the veterinarian or designated individual with written documentation is required before the downtime period is reduced to less than the company's standard downtime. Confirm that the company has written program and that there is a written record from the veterinarian or designated individual should there be a variance from the standard downtime.

5) Flocks must be inspected at least twice daily, and all mortality must be removed at least once daily. Confirm that mortality is removed and recorded daily.

6) If a bird requires euthanasia, it must be done in a timely manner. The company's written program must include expectations and training related to on-farm culling procedures using AVMA-approved methods of euthanasia. If the situation arises during an audit where a bird requires euthanasia, the auditor must evaluate that euthanasia practices are conducted in accordance with the company's written program. Only methods of euthanasia applicable to poultry approved by AVMA (AVMA, 2020) can be used on farm. Approved euthanasia methods can be found in Appendix 4.

7) Companies must have a written water and feed withdrawal program prior to catch and processing. The auditor must confirm that the company has and follows this program.

---

[3] 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.

C5 Flock Husbandry

1) Stocking density will depend on the target market weight, type of housing, ventilation system, feeder/drinker equipment, litter management, and husbandry. Stocking density is determined at the end of the flock based on target market weight, by adjusting the initial placement numbers with the average mortality (defined as mortality over the life of the flock). For the farm audited with the oldest birds, the auditor must calculate and confirm that stocking density does not exceed the following metrics using the calculation provided in Appendix 8.

Maximum Bird Weight Range	***Maximum Stocking Density***
Below 4.5 lbs liveweight	6.5 pounds per square foot
4.5 to 5.5 lbs liveweight	7.5 pounds per square foot
5.6 to 7.5 lbs liveweight	8.5 pounds per square foot
More than 7.5 lbs liveweight	9.0 pounds per square foot

2) Except for the first week and last week of growout, birds must be provided with a minimum of four hours of darkness within a 24-hour period. While it is ideal that these four hours are consecutive, they may be divided within the 24-hour period (see Appendix 9 for details). During the period(s) of darkness, light levels at bird height must not exceed 10 percent of the light level during the period(s) of light. The auditor must review electronic or written records and confirm that birds are receiving four hours of darkness within a 24-hour period.

3) By taking four light intensity readings per house, confirm that the average light intensity within each house is consistent with the company's lighting program. Light readings within each house must be averaged and each house must be scored independently. The auditor must take light readings at two houses per farm on three separate farms evaluated. Instructions on how to measure light intensity can be found in Appendix 9.

   a) One farm must have chicks that are seven days of age or less.
   b) One farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing.
   c) One farm must have birds within seven days of processing.

4) To monitor bird leg health and their ability to access feed and water, gait scoring must be performed by the company once per flock at a minimum. The results must be documented.

5) During the audit, the auditor must walk approximately 100 feet between the wall and the first line of drinkers and observe the birds' gait. Record the number of birds that cannot walk five feet or exhibit obvious lameness (Score of 2) using the U.S. Gait Scoring System found in Appendix 10. The intent is to ensure adequate culling throughout the house and the bird's ability to access feed and water regardless of the age of the flock. Two houses per farm on two separate farms must be gait scored.

   a) One farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Evaluate two houses. Score each house independently.

b) One farm must have birds within seven days of processing. Evaluate two houses. Score each house independently.

D Catching and Transportation

1) Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the catching and transportation section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

2) The live-haul department must have a person responsible for ensuring that proper broiler welfare practices are always followed and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.

3) Any birds found during catching that are unfit for transport must not be loaded and must be euthanized using an AVMA-approved method. A company must have a written program for handling birds unfit for transport which must include parameters for euthanasia, time to euthanasia, etc.

4) An individual responsible for euthanizing birds unfit for transport must be designated by the company and must be trained annually on methods of euthanasia. If the situation arises during an audit where a bird requires euthanasia, the auditor should evaluate that euthanasia practices are conducted in accordance with the company's written program by the designated individual. Only methods of euthanasia applicable to poultry approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA, 2020) can be used on farm. Approved euthanasia methods can be found in Appendix 4.

5) The live-haul department must have a written program for emergency response and recovery, including, but not limited to, truck accidents involving live broilers. Incidents must be recorded, the effectiveness of the response plan must be internally evaluated, and necessary adjustments made to the program to improve response effectiveness.

6) A company must have a written catching program for either hand catching and/or mechanical catching, depending on which method is used by the company.

   a) For hand catching, this written program must include, but is not limited to, procedure for bird handling to minimize injury, upright and single layer bird placement in compartments, and target bird density per compartment.
   b) For mechanical catching, this written program must include, but is not limited to, operational requirements to minimize bird injury, belt rate to be operated in a manner to prevent piling or bird injury, the maximum number of birds that can be loaded per door (or tray), upright and single layer bird placement in compartments, and bird density target per compartment.

7) Birds must never be lifted, carried, or dragged by the wing or neck. Catching must be conducted in a manner that minimizes bird stress and bird injury. Birds must be placed upright and in a single layer in a transport module. During catching, auditors must

observe a minimum of five and a maximum of 10 transport modules being loaded. The auditor must record any instances of mishandling during the catching, handling, and loading process. Assessment of appropriate catching including bird placement and density within transport modules, is conducted at the farm at loading, not after the transport module is loaded or after the truck has departed the farm including arrival at the processing plant.

8) Transport modules are made up of separate transport compartments which must be appropriately sized and in good repair so that no bird can be injured or escape during transit (additional information on transportation equipment is available in Appendix 11). Transport compartment damage, including large holes that could allow a bird to escape, broken or missing doors, or sharp metal or plastic that can injure birds, should be assessed when evaluating the condition of the individual compartments. Companies may flag compartments that are damaged indicating that they are not to be used. These specified compartments must not be used or audited. The auditor must randomly inspect a total of 200 empty individual transport compartments (not 200 transport modules) between a minimum of two and a maximum of four trailers for signs of damage that can injure birds or allow them to escape during transit. The inspection of a total of 200 empty individual transport compartments (not 200 transport modules) may be verified at the processing plant in lieu of on the farm.

9) The company must have a written program to protect birds from adverse environmental conditions (weather, bright lights, etc.) during the loading process and transport to the processing facility. This program must include the use of interventions such as light controls, fans, misters, or side boards as appropriate.

10) Loss of birds from trailers during transportation must be prevented. A bird being loaded in a damaged transport compartment that would allow for a bird to escape is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the catching and transportation section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

E Processing Operations for Electrical Stunning

1) Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

2) Processing operations must have a person responsible for ensuring that proper broiler welfare practices are always followed and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.

3) The company must have a written emergency response program in place in the event of a utility outage, mechanical breakdown, or some other event that limits the processing

of birds. This written program must include a response timeframe to address issues related to live birds during all stages of processing including holding, shackling, and stunning.

4) The company must have a written program to protect birds from adverse environmental conditions and maintain bird comfort while in holding sheds or during the unloading process. The written program may include, but is not limited to, maintenance of covered holding areas including structural integrity, fans and misters, and operational parameters for fans and misters.

5) Documentation must be available to demonstrate the total time elapsed from completion of catching to processing for each truckload. If the total time from completion of catching to processing is greater than 12 hours, additional documentation is required which must include total time elapsed, reason for extended time, and corrective actions implemented. The auditor must review documentation for the last six months.

6) The company must have a written program in place for retrieval of loose birds and return them to the general flow if found in holding sheds, live receiving, and at shackling that emphasize timeliness and worker safety.

7) During the audit, the auditor must observe that loose birds are being retrieved and appropriately handled by company personnel if applicable.

8) The company must have a written program in place for euthanasia of injured or sick birds which must be performed by trained plant personnel on a timely basis. Only methods of euthanasia applicable to poultry approved by AVMA (AVMA, 2020) can be used at the processing plant. Approved euthanasia methods can be found in Appendix 3.

9) The company must have a written program in place to document DOAs which may include, but is not limited to, documentation of DOAs per truckload, communication with live haul department if issues arise, corrective actions, etc. DOAs averaging over 0.4% on a weekly basis must result in an internal investigation. If the cause of elevated DOAs is determined, corrective actions must be taken and documented. The auditor must review documentation for the last six months.

10) No live bird should be discarded as a DOA. Injured or sick birds removed from processing must be euthanized using an AVMA-approved method (AVMA, 2020) before placement in a DOA bin. A live bird in the DOA bin is a major non-conformance, and if observed during the audit, is a major non-conformance which results as an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

11) Unloading:

a) Transport modules must be lifted and moved from trailers in a manner that does not injure the birds. Evaluate a minimum of five but no more than ten transport modules being lifted and moved from trailers.
b) The unloading and conveying system must be designed, maintained, and operated to avoid injury to the birds and accommodate a single layer of birds. The belt should be empty where the next transport module is to be unloaded. Birds should not be intentionally unloaded on top of other birds. Evaluate a minimum of five but no more than ten transport modules being unloaded to ensure birds are not being intentionally unloaded on top of other birds.
c) Birds remaining in transport compartments after unloading must be gently removed. Birds must never be lifted by the wings. Evaluate a minimum of five but no more than ten transport modules to ensure no birds are remaining in any transport compartments.

12) Any live bird left in a transport compartment before reloading a transport module onto a trailer is a major non-conformance. All live birds retrieved from transport compartments must be returned to the processing system. At the plant, the auditor must observe a minimum of five but no more than ten transport modules for instances of live birds being left in a transport compartment before reloading. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

13) Shackling (If applicable, each slaughter line must be assessed and scored independently during the audit. Guidance on scoring multiple lines can be found in Appendix 1).

a) Observe 500 shackles per line to ensure that shackles are well-maintained.
b) Birds should be in a single layer on the belt prior to shackling.
c) Birds should be kept calm during and after shackling and prior to stunning. Excessive wing activity should be prevented by dim lighting and/or breast-rubs.

14) Observe 500 birds per line for proper shackling techniques. Confirm that birds are being appropriately shackled (e.g. birds are not being shackled by one leg, other body part, paws from previous birds are not present in shackles, or cross hung, etc.).

15) More than four birds observed being improperly shackled is a major non-conformance. The auditor must observe birds immediately after the birds leave the shackle belt and prior to the stunner. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

16) Stunning equipment and the automatic knife must be designed, maintained, and operated within manufacturer's recommendations. There must be a written program in

place including the frequency of equipment checks, information to be recorded, and documented corrective actions taken, if necessary.

17) The company must have a written emergency program for how to handle birds if the stunning equipment is not functioning properly including a timeframe to remove birds from the system.

18) Stunning and Slaughter (If applicable, each slaughter line must be assessed and scored independently during the audit. Guidance on scoring multiple lines can be found in Appendix 1.)

a) Observe 500 birds per line after water-bath stunning to verify that birds are effectively stunned. At least 99% of the birds should be effectively stunned which renders the bird insensible to pain. Corrective action must be initiated and documented if the percentage of effectively stunned birds is below 99%.
b) Observe 500 birds per line after the automatic knife to verify that bleed-out is induced. At least 99% of the birds should be effectively cut by the automatic knife to induce bleed-out. Corrective action must be initiated and documented if the percentage of effectively cut birds is below 99%.
c) There must be backup personnel after the automatic knife to induce bleed-out in any birds not effectively cut by the equipment. Backup personnel must have sufficient room and lighting to ensure that the blood vessels are cut on 100% of the birds. Observe 500 birds per line to ensure effectiveness of backup personnel.

19) All birds must be dead before entering the scalder. A bird observed with an intact head, uncut carotid arteries, and red in color after the picker was not dead before entering the scalder and is a major non-conformance. The auditor must observe 500 birds per line after the picker to ensure that no live birds enter the scalder based on these characteristics. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

20) The company must have a documented monitoring program in place for wing and leg injuries. This program must include corrective actions should the audit standard for wing and/or leg injuries be exceeded.

21) Broken or dislocated wings must be monitored immediately before or after the stunner and always before feather removal. Leg injuries must be monitored after feather removal. If both wings are broken or dislocated or if both legs are injured on one bird, this counts as one bird. (If applicable, each slaughter line must be assessed and scored independently during the audit. Guidance on scoring multiple lines can be found in Appendix 1).

a) Wing condition must be assessed by the auditor using the AAAP Broiler Wing Condition Scoring Guide in Appendix 12. Evaluate 500 birds per line for broken or dislocated wings immediately before or after the stunner.

b) Leg injuries must be assessed by the auditor using the AAAP Broiler Leg Condition KWI Guide in Appendix 13. Leg injuries may involve fractures or severe hematomas resulting from catching or shackling. Leg injuries due to disease conditions must not be counted. Evaluate 500 birds per line for leg injuries after feather removal.

22) Using the AAAP Broiler Foot Condition Scoring Guide (Appendix 7), the auditor must evaluate a random sample of 200 paws for footpad health. Score paws as either a pass (Score 0 or 1) or fail (Score 2) and no less than 180 (90%) of the paws scored must pass (Score 0 or 1). This scoring should be allocated in the Growout Operation section of the checklist. Please refer to the "Note to the Auditor" at the end of Section C3.

F Processing Operations for Controlled Atmospheric Stunning (CAS)

1) **Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**

2) Processing operations must have a person responsible for ensuring that proper broiler welfare practices are always followed and that there is strict adherence to the guidelines.

3) The company must have a written emergency response program in place in the event of a utility outage, mechanical breakdown, or some other event that limits the processing of birds. This written program must include a response timeframe to address issues related to live birds during all stages of processing including holding, shackling, and stunning.

4) The company must have a written program to protect birds from adverse environmental conditions and maintain bird comfort while in holding sheds or during the unloading process. The written program may include, but is not limited to, maintenance of covered holding areas including structural integrity, fans and misters, and operational parameters for fans and misters.

5) Documentation must be available to demonstrate the total time elapsed from completion of catching to processing for each truckload. If the total time from completion of catching to processing is greater than 12 hours, additional documentation is required which must include total time elapsed, reason for extended time, and corrective actions implemented. The auditor must review documentation for the last six months.

6) The company must have a written program in place for retrieval of loose birds and return them to the general flow if found in holding sheds, live receiving, and at shackling that emphasize timeliness and worker safety.

7) During the audit, the auditor must observe that loose birds are being retrieved and appropriately handled by company personnel if applicable.

8) The company must have a written program in place for euthanasia of injured or sick birds which must be performed by trained plant personnel on a timely basis. Only methods of euthanasia applicable to poultry approved by AVMA (AVMA, 2020) can be used at the processing plant. Approved euthanasia methods can be found in Appendix 3.

9) The company must have a written program in place to document DOAs which may include, but is not limited to, documentation of DOAs per truckload, communication with live haul department if issues arise, corrective actions, etc. DOAs averaging over 0.4% on a weekly basis must result in an internal investigation. If the cause of elevated DOAs is determined, corrective actions must be taken and documented. The auditor must review documentation for the last six months.

10) No live bird should be discarded as a DOA. Injured or sick birds removed from processing must be euthanized using an AVMA-approved method (AVMA, 2020) before placement in a DOA bin. A live bird in the DOA bin is a major non-conformance, and if observed during the audit, is a major non-conformance which results as an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

11) Unloading:

a) Transport modules must be lifted and moved from trailers in a manner that does not injure the birds. Evaluate a minimum of five but no more than ten transport modules being lifted and moved from trailers.
b) The unloading and conveying system must be designed, maintained, and operated to avoid injury to the birds and accommodate a single layer of birds. The belt should be empty where the next transport module is to be unloaded. Birds should not be intentionally unloaded on top of other birds. Evaluate a minimum of five but no more than ten transport modules being unloaded to ensure birds are not being intentionally unloaded on top of other birds.
c) Birds remaining in transport compartments after unloading must be gently removed. Birds must never be lifted by the wings. Evaluate a minimum of five but no more than ten transport modules to ensure no birds are remaining in any transport compartments.

12) Any live or stunned bird left in a transport compartment before reloading a transport module onto a trailer is a major non-conformance. All live or stunned birds retrieved from transport compartments must be returned to the processing system. At the plant, the auditor must observe a minimum of five but no more than ten transport modules for instances of live or stunned birds being left in a transport compartment before reloading. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

13) Though birds are irreversibly stunned, proper shackling of birds is important. (If applicable, each slaughter line must be assessed and scored independently during the audit. Guidance on scoring multiple lines can be found in Appendix 1).

a) Observe 500 shackles per line to ensure that shackles are well-maintained.
b) Observe 500 birds per line for proper shackling techniques. Confirm that birds are being appropriately shackled (e.g. birds are not being shackled by one leg, other body part, paws from previous birds are not present in shackles, or cross hung, etc.).

14) More than four birds observed being improperly shackled is a major non-conformance. The auditor must observe birds immediately after the birds leave the shackle belt and prior to the backup stunner. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

15) The CAS system must be designed, maintained, and operated to ensure effective stunning and must be operating within manufacturer's recommendations. There must be a written plan including the frequency of equipment checks, information to be recorded, and documented corrective actions taken, if necessary.

16) The company must have a written program in place regarding how to handle birds that are not effectively stunned. The auditor must evaluate that the program is being implemented as written.

17) The company must have a written emergency plan for how to handle birds if the system is not functioning properly including a timeframe to remove birds from the CAS system.

18) Stunning and Slaughter (If applicable, each slaughter line must be assessed and scored independently during the audit. Guidance on scoring multiple lines can be found in Appendix 1).

a) Observe 500 birds per line after exiting the CAS system to verify that birds are effectively stunned. At least 99% of the birds should be effectively stunned which renders the bird insensible to pain. Corrective action must be initiated and documented if the percentage of effectively stunned birds is below 99%.
b) Observe 500 birds per line after the automatic knife to verify that bleed-out is induced. At least 99% of the birds should be effectively cut by the automatic knife to induce bleed-out. Corrective action must be initiated and documented if the percentage of effectively cut birds is below 99%.
c) There must be backup personnel after the automatic knife to induce bleed-out in any birds not effectively cut by the equipment. Backup personnel must have sufficient room and lighting to ensure that the blood vessels are cut on 100% of the birds. Observe 500 birds per line to ensure effectiveness of backup personnel.

19) All birds must be dead before entering the scalder. A bird observed with an intact head, uncut carotid arteries, and red in color after the picker was not dead before entering the scalder and is a major non-conformance. The auditor must observe 500 birds per line after the picker to ensure that no live birds enter the scalder based on these characteristics. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.

20) The company must have a documented monitoring program in place for wing and leg injuries. This program must include corrective actions should the audit standard for wing and/or leg injuries be exceeded.

21) Broken or dislocated wings must be monitored immediately before or after the stunner and always before feather removal. Leg injuries must be monitored after feather removal. If both wings are broken or dislocated or if both legs are injured on one bird, this counts as one bird. (If applicable, each slaughter line must be assessed and scored independently during the audit. Guidance on scoring multiple lines can be found in Appendix 1).

a) Wing condition must be assessed by the auditor using the AAAP Broiler Wing Condition Scoring Guide in Appendix 12. Evaluate 500 birds per line for broken or dislocated wings immediately before or after the stunner.
b) Leg injuries must be assessed by the auditor using the AAAP Broiler Leg Condition KWI Guide in Appendix 13. Leg injuries may involve fractures or severe hematomas resulting from catching or shackling. Leg injuries due to disease conditions must not be counted. Evaluate 500 birds per line for leg injuries after feather removal.

22) Using the AAAP Broiler Foot Condition Scoring Guide (Appendix 7), the auditor must evaluate a random sample of 200 paws for footpad health. Score paws as either a pass (Score 0 or 1) or fail (Score 2) and no less than 180 (90%) of the paws scored must pass (Score 0 or 1). This scoring should be allocated in the Growout Operation section of the checklist. Please refer to the "Note to the Auditor" at the end of Section C3.

G Abuse and Audit Failure

1) The abuse of the broilers is not tolerated under any circumstances. Willful acts of abuse or neglect are defined as acts that intentionally cause pain and suffering that are outside of accepted production practices (such as blood collection for diagnostic testing) and are not tolerated under any circumstances. Conditions that put chicks or broilers in immediate danger are egregious. 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.
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 processing).

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.

e) Striking a bird(s) with any type of object.

2) Any willful acts of abuse or neglect observed by the auditor during any stage of this audit is considered a failure of the entire audit.

3) If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of that section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees involved in that section of the process.

4) Major Non-Conformances: All major non-conformances as outlined in the guidelines are summarized in Appendix 14.

NCC Broiler Welfare Audit Checklist

The following checklist is provided to assist broiler companies in complying with the Broiler Welfare Guidelines recommended by the National Chicken Council and voluntarily adopted by this company. This audit checklist is used in conjunction with the Guidelines. Auditors are reminded of the importance of maintaining biosecurity and flocks that are experiencing a disease should not be chosen for auditing due to biosecurity risk. Auditors should follow company guidance regarding farm selection.

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

Auditor: _____ Date: _____

Company and Plant: _____ Est. No.: _____

Address: _____

Accompanied by: _____ Title: _____

Farm Information (include names of farms & age of birds)
Farm 1 (chicks seven days of age or less): _____
Farm 2 (birds older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing): _____
_____
Farm 3 (birds within seven days of processing): _____

Summary for Electrical Stunning:

	Area	Maximum Score	Score Needed to Pass	Facility Score
A	Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training			
B	Hatchery Operations	230	195	
C	Growout Operations	490	415	
D	Catching and Transportation	60	50	
E	Processing Operations – Electrical Stunning	400	340	
	POINT TOTAL FOR ALL SECTIONS – B, C, D, and E (Electrical Stunning)	1180	1000	

Summary for Controlled Atmospheric Stunning (CAS):

	Area	Maximum Score	Score Needed to Pass	Facility Score
A	Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training			
B	Hatchery Operations	230	195	
C	Growout Operations	490	415	
D	Catching and Transportation	60	50	
F	Processing Operations – CAS	365	310	
	POINT TOTAL FOR ALL SECTIONS – B, C, D, and F (CAS)	1145	970	

	AUDIT FORM: BROILERS 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, Growout, Catching & 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.			**Check if done**
A	**Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training (while there is no individual score for the items in this section, all items must be met in order to pass this section)**			
1	The company must have a written broiler welfare program.			
2	The company has a broiler welfare program endorsed and fully supported by senior management.			
3	The company must have a person or management group responsible for broiler welfare throughout the operation.			
4	The company must have, implement, and document an internal and external auditing program.			
5	The company must have a mechanism in place whereby broiler welfare violations can be reported without threat of retaliation.			
6	Signs stating the importance of broiler welfare with contact information for reporting incidents must be posted prominently in locations where birds are handled.			
7	The company must have a written program in place to address all non-conformances should they occur, which must include corrective actions.			
8	All employees who work with live birds must be trained at least annually on the fundamentals of chicken behavior and welfare including that abuse or neglect of birds is not tolerated under any circumstance.			
9	Training must be understood by everyone. Training must be documented for each employee and should include how the training was conducted (classroom, online, in-person, on-farm, language used, etc.) as well as the tasks and responsibilities for which the employees were trained.			
10a	Hatchery Operations. Review hatchery operation training materials and verify documentation of annual training.			
10b	Growout Operations. Review growout operation training materials and verify documentation of annual training.			
10c	Catching and Transportation. Review live-haul department training materials and verify documentation of annual training.			

10d	Processing Operations. Review processing operation training material and verify documentation of annual training.			
B	**Hatchery Operations**	**Points available**	**Points awarded**	**Check if done**
1	**Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the hatchery operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Hatchery Audit Failure**		
2	Confirm that the hatchery has a person responsible for ensuring proper broiler welfare practices and strict adherence to the guidelines.	**5**		
3	Confirm that the hatchery has posted a current contact list for emergency needs that includes company management staff and emergency services.	**5**		
4	Confirm that the hatchery operation has a written program for disaster response and recovery which must include parameters described in the guidelines.	**5**		
5	Confirm that the hatchery has a written program for monitoring the hatchery environment and review written or electronic logs.	**5**		
6	Confirm that the facility has an alarm system in place.	**5**		
7	Confirm that the facility has a written emergency power back-up program in place and review documented back-up power checks.	**5**		
8	Confirm that equipment checks are being performed and are documented.	**10**		
9	Confirm that no live chick is dropped from heights more than 12 inches throughout the hatchery.	**20**		
10	Confirm that the hatchery has a written program to monitor and respond to chick injuries during processing and handling and review the injury log.	**5**		
11	Confirm that the hatchery has a written program outlining which chick defects should result in culling.	**5**		
12	Chicks must be evaluated at a minimum of once per day for equipment-related injury. Confirm that these checks are documented. If corrective action has been taken, confirm documentation.	**5**		
13	The auditor must evaluate chick injury by examining a minimum of ten boxes of chicks on site.	**20**		
14	Confirm that the hatchery has a written program for checking for and removing chicks that may become misplaced or stuck if using a mechanical separator.	**5**		
15	Observe the separation process for proper functionality and potential chick injuries. Observe a	**20**		

	minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 hatch trays being processed.			
16	Confirm that the hatchery has a written program for euthanasia and disposal of pips and culled chicks.	**5**		
17	Culled chicks and pips must be euthanized after each flock change at a minimum. The number of culled chicks (not pips) must be documented by hatchery personnel. The auditor must verify that the number of culled chicks is documented.	**5**		
18	Confirm that the hatchery has a written program for embryonated eggs that are removed from the system (in-ovo vaccination, break-outs, depopulation, etc.) to ensure euthanasia occurs during the same shift in which they are removed from the system.	**5**		
19	Confirm that the primary system used for euthanasia is operational.	**10**		
20	Evaluate the maceration process, if used. Ensure no chicks are placed in the macerator until it is operational.	**10**		
21	Confirm that the hatchery has a written backup plan for an alternative form of euthanasia should the primary system not function as intended.	**5**		
22	**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. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor while observing the euthanasia system in operation, it results in an automatic failure of the hatchery operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Hatchery Audit Failure**		
23	Confirm that the hatchery has a written program in place to monitor chick comfort and health. Confirm that results and corrective actions, if necessary, are documented.	**5**		
24	The hatchery must check ten random stacks in the presence of the auditor for temperature-related behaviors. Nine of the ten stacks must demonstrate appropriate temperature-related behavior as defined in the company's written program.	**20**		
25	Confirm that the hatchery has a written program in place to retrieve loose chicks from the floor which must happen, at a minimum, after each flock change.	**5**		
26	Confirm that the hatchery has a written program in place to ensure that all live chicks are removed from equipment (hatcher trays and chick boxes) so that no live chicks enter the tray wash equipment.	**5**		
27	The auditor must observe 25 consecutive chick boxes and/or 25 consecutive hatcher trays entering the tray wash equipment to verify that no live chicks enter the tray wash machine. If any chicks enter the tray wash, award zero points. *If tray wash is not present or not being used during audit, award no points and adjust total score by deleting these points from the section.*	**20**		

28	Confirm that the hatchery has a written program for chick delivery vehicles.	**5**		
29	Confirm that transportation vehicles are equipped with temperature-control capabilities and alarms should these systems fail during transport.	**10**		
B	**Hatchery Operations – Point Total**	**230**		
C	**Growout Operations**			
C1	**Designated Management and Emergency Plans**			
1	**Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the growout operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Growout Audit Failure**		
2	Confirm that the growout operation has a person responsible for ensuring proper broiler welfare practices and strict adherence to the guidelines.	**5**		
3	Confirm that the growout operation has a written program in place for disaster response and recovery which must include parameters described in the guidelines.	**5**		
4	Confirm that generator checks are performed and documented at least monthly if the ventilation system is dependent on electrical power.	**10**		
5	Confirm that the growout operation has an alarm system or regulator monitoring system in place to alert personnel of a failure of critical systems	**10**		
6	Confirm that the growout operation has written program for temperature, lighting programs, and ventilation levels within the house for the duration of growout. Confirm that these plans are available in at least one house on the farm.	**5**		
7	At the time of the audit, confirm that the temperature, lighting, and ventilation level is consistent with the written program.	**10**		
8	Confirm that the flock lighting program was developed in consultation with a veterinarian or poultry welfare specialist.	**5**		
9	Confirm that the growout operation has a current contact list displayed.	**5**		
C2	**Nutrition and Feeding**			
1	Confirm that feed formulations are reviewed by a poultry nutritionist.	**5**		

2	Confirm that the feed mill has documented GMPs for feed production.	**5**		
3	Ensure that all feeding and drinking systems are in proper operation and easily accessible by all birds.	**10**		
4	Confirm that feeding and drinking systems are checked for proper operation daily.	**10**		
5	Confirm that water consumption is routinely monitored and recorded daily.	**10**		
C3	**Comfort and Shelter**			
1	Confirm that the housing and equipment are maintained and operated to protect the birds from environmental conditions.	**10**		
2	Observe equipment and environment throughout the house for sharp edges or protrusions that may cause injury or entrapment.	**10**		
3	Confirm that the company has a written program for chick placement. This program must contain parameters outlined in the guidelines.	**5**		
4	Confirm that the company has a written program for brooding. This program must contain parameters outlined in the guidelines.	**5**		
5	A written ammonia monitoring program must be in place including appropriate corrective actions should the maximum ammonia level be exceeded.	**5**		
6a	**Farm 1, House 1.** Evaluate atmospheric ammonia at bird head height in the first house on a farm with chicks that are seven days of age or less.	**10**		
6a	**Farm 1, House 2.** Evaluate atmospheric ammonia at bird head height in the second house on a farm with chicks that are seven days of age or less.	**10**		
6b	**Farm 2, House 1.** Evaluate atmospheric ammonia at bird head height in the first house on a farm with birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing.	**10**		
6b	**Farm 2, House 2.** Evaluate atmospheric ammonia at bird head height in the second house on a farm with birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing.	**10**		
6c	**Farm 3, House 1.** Evaluate atmospheric ammonia at bird head height in the first house on a farm with birds that are within seven days of processing.	**10**		
6c	**Farm 3, House 2.** Evaluate atmospheric ammonia at bird head height in the second house on a farm with birds that are within seven days of processing.	**10**		
7a	**Farm 2, House 1.** Evaluate litter moisture in the first house on a farm with birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Award points on a sliding scale: Dry and friable litter throughout the majority of house = 10 Caked litter beyond 2 ft of feeders and drinkers = 5	**10**		

	Caked and wet litter throughout the house = 0			
7a	**Farm 2, House 2.** Evaluate litter moisture in the second house on a farm with birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Award points on a sliding scale: Dry and friable litter throughout the majority of house = 10 Partially caked litter beyond 2 ft of feeders and drinkers = 5 Caked and wet litter throughout the house = 0	**10**		
7b	**Farm 3, House 1.** Evaluate litter moisture in the first house on a farm with birds that are within seven days of processing. Award points on a sliding scale: Dry and friable litter throughout the majority of house = 10 Partially caked litter beyond 2 ft of feeders and drinkers = 5 Caked and wet litter throughout the house = 0	**10**		
7b	**Farm 3, House 2.** Evaluate litter moisture in the first house on a farm with birds that are within seven days of processing. Award points on a sliding scale: Dry and friable litter throughout the majority of house = 10 Partially caked litter beyond 2 ft of feeders and drinkers = 5 Caked and wet litter throughout the house = 0	**10**		
8	Evaluate a random sample of 200 paws for foot pad health. Score paws as either pass (Score 0 or 1) or fail (2). No less than 180 (90%) of the paws must pass (Score 0 or 1) to receive points.	**40 (KWI)**		
C4	**Health Care and Monitoring**			
1	Confirm that the company has access to a licensed veterinarian.	**5**		
2	Confirm that the company has a written flock health and welfare monitoring program developed in consultation with a veterinarian. Information that should be included in the program can be found in the guidelines.	**5**		
3	Confirm that the company has a written biosecurity program. Information that should be included in program can be found in the guidelines.	**5**		
4	Confirm that the company has written program for downtime between flocks, and that there is a written record from the veterinarian or designated individual should there be a variance from the standard downtime.	**5**		
5	Confirm that mortality is removed and recorded daily at each house.	**10**		
6	Confirm there is a written program for on-farm culling and euthanasia.	**5**		

7	Confirm that the company has a written water and feed withdrawal program prior to catch and processing.	**5**		
C5	**Flock Husbandry**			
1	Confirm that the stocking density growout house does not exceed limits set in guidelines.	**10**		
2	Confirm that birds are receiving four hours of darkness within a 24-hour period by reviewing electronic or written records.	**10**		
3a	**Farm 1, House 1.** Confirm that the average light intensity is consistent with the company's lighting program in the first house on a farm with chicks that are seven days of age or less.	**10**		
3a	**Farm 1, House 2.** Confirm that the average light intensity is consistent with the company's lighting program in the second house on a farm with chicks that are seven days of age or less.	**10**		
3b	**Farm 2, House 1.** Confirm that the average light intensity is consistent with the company's lighting program in the first house on a farm with birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing.	**10**		
3b	**Farm 2, House 2.** Confirm that the average light intensity is consistent with the company's lighting program in the second house on a farm with birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing.	**10**		
3c	**Farm 3, House 1.** Confirm that the average light intensity is consistent with the company's lighting program in the first house on a farm with birds that are within seven days of processing.	**10**		
3c	**Farm 3, House 2.** Confirm that the average light intensity is consistent with the company's lighting program in the second house on a farm with birds that are within seven days of processing.	**10**		
4	Confirm that the company is gait scoring at least once per flock by reviewing the documentation.	**20**		
5a	**Farm 2, House 1:** Record the number of birds that cannot walk five feet or exhibit obvious lameness (Score of 2) in the first house on a farm with birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Award points on a sliding scale: 0-2 birds = 20 3-4 birds = 10 ≥5 birds = 0	**20 (KWI)**		
5a	**Farm 2, House 2.** Record the number of birds that cannot walk five feet or exhibit obvious lameness (Score of 2) in the second house on a farm with birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Award points on a sliding scale: 0-2 birds = 20 3-4 birds = 10	**20 (KWI)**		

	≥5 birds = 0			
5b	**Farm 3, House 1.** Record the number of birds that cannot walk five feet or exhibit obvious lameness (Score of 2) in the first house on a farm with birds within seven days of processing. Award points on a sliding scale: 0-2 birds = 20 3-4 birds = 10 ≥5 birds = 0	**20 (KWI)**		
5b	**Farm 3, House 2.** Record the number of birds that cannot walk five feet or exhibit obvious lameness (Score of 2) in the second house on a farm with birds within seven days of processing. Award points on a sliding scale: 0-2 birds = 20 3-4 birds = 10 ≥5 birds = 0	**20 (KWI)**		
C	**Growout Operations – Point Total**	**490**		
D	**Catching and Transportation**			
1	**Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the catching and transportation section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Catching Audit Failure**		
2	Confirm that the live-haul department has a person responsible for ensuring proper broiler welfare practices and strict adherence to the guidelines.	**5**		
3	Confirm that the company has a written program for handling birds unfit for transport.	**5**		
4	Confirm that the individual responsible for euthanizing birds unfit for transport is designated by the company and trained annually on methods of euthanasia.	**5**		
5	Confirm that the live-haul department has a written program for emergency response and recovery.	**5**		
6	Confirm that the company has a written catching program for hand catching and/or mechanical catching. If the company uses both types of catching, audit each program separately.	**5**		
7	Catchers may not lift, carry, or drag birds by the wings or necks. Confirm birds are being caught by their legs and placed upright in a single layer in a transport module. Observe a minimum of five and a maximum of 10 transportation modules being loaded.	**20**		
8	Randomly inspect a total of 200 empty individual transport compartments (not 200 transportation	**10**		

	modules) between a minimum of two and a maximum of four empty trailers for signs of damage that can injure birds or allow them to escape during transit. Award points based on a sliding scale: < 3 damaged compartments = 10 3-5 damaged compartments = 5 > 5 damaged compartments = 0			
9	Confirm that the company has a written program to protect birds from adverse environmental conditions during the loading process and transport to the processing facility.	**5**		
10	**Loss of birds from trailers during transportation must be prevented. To audit this point, a bird being loaded in a damaged transport compartment that would allow for a bird to escape is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the catching and transportation section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Catching Audit Failure**		
D	**Catching and Transportation – Point Total**	**60**		
E	**Processing Operations for Electrical Stun**			
1	**Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Processing Audit Failure**		
2	Confirm that the processing operation has a person responsible for ensuring proper broiler welfare practices and strict adherence to the guidelines.	**5**		
3	Confirm that the company has a written emergency response program in place in the event of a utility outage, mechanical breakdown, or other events which prevent birds from being processed.	**5**		
4	Confirm that the company has a written program in place to protect birds from adverse environmental conditions while in holding sheds or during the unloading process.	**5**		
5	Review the last six months of documentation demonstrating the total time from completion of catching to processing. If the total time from completion of catching to processing is greater than 12 hours, additional documentation is required which must include total time elapsed, reason for extended time, and corrective actions implemented.	**5**		
6	Confirm that the company has a written program in place for the retrieval of loose birds.	**5**		
7	Observe that loose birds are being retrieved and appropriately handled by company personnel if applicable.	**20**		

8	Confirm that the company has a written program for euthanasia.	**5**		
9	Confirm that the company has a written program to document DOAs. Review the last six months of documentation.	**5**		
10	**Inspect the DOA bin. No live bird should be discarded as a DOA. Injured or sick birds removed from processing must be euthanized using an AVMA-approved method before placement in a DOA bin. A live bird in the DOA bin is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Processing Audit Failure**		
11a	Evaluate a minimum of five transport modules but no more than ten transport modules being lifted and moved from trailers. Confirm that modules are being lifted and moved in a manner that does not injure the birds.	**20**		
11b	Evaluate a minimum of five transport modules but no more than ten transport modules being unloaded to ensure birds are not intentionally being unloaded on top of other birds. Omit this audit point if a drawer system is used and subtract the associated points from the audit.	**20**		
11c	Evaluate a minimum of five transport modules but no more than ten transport modules to ensure no birds are remaining in any transport compartments.	**20**		
12	**Observe a minimum of five but no more than ten transport modules for instances of live birds being left in a transport compartment before reloading. Any live bird left in a transport compartment before reloading a transport module onto a trailer is a major non-conformance. All live birds retrieved from transport compartments must be humanely returned to the processing system. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Processing Audit Failure**		
13a	Observe 500 shackles per line ensuring that they are well-maintained.	**10**		
13b	Confirm that birds are in a single layer on the belt prior to shackling.	**20**		
13c	Evaluate bird activity from shackling to stunning. Observe bird activity to ensure compliance.	**20**		
14	Observe 500 birds per line for proper shackling techniques. Confirm that birds are being appropriately shackled. Award points based on a sliding scale: 0 to 2 birds not shackled correctly = 20 3 to 4 birds not shackled correctly = 10	**20**		

	> 4 birds not shackled correctly = 0 and a major non-conformance			
15	**Observe birds immediately after the birds leave the shackle belt and prior to the stunner. More than four birds observed being improperly shackled is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Processing Audit Failure**		
16	Confirm that the company has a written program in place regarding the design, maintenance, and operational parameters of the stunning equipment and automatic knife.	**5**		
17	Confirm that the company has a written emergency program in place for how to handle birds if the stunning equipment is not functioning properly.	**5**		
18a	Observe 500 birds per line after water-bath stunning to confirm that the equipment is functioning properly and birds are being rendered insensible. Award points based on a sliding scale: ≤ 5 birds un-stunned = 40 6 to 10 birds un-stunned = 20 > 10 birds un-stunned = 0	**40 (KWI)**		
18b	Observe 500 birds per line after the automatic knife to confirm that the automatic knife is effectively cutting blood vessels to induce a rapid bleed-out. Award points on a sliding scale: ≤ 5 birds un-cut = 40 6 to 10 bird un-cut = 20 > 10 birds un-cut = 0	**40 (KWI)**		
18c	Confirm that a backup knife operator is present after the automatic knife to induce bleed-out on any birds not effectively cut by the equipment. Observe 500 birds per line to ensure effectiveness of the backup knife operator.	**40 (KWI)**		
19	**Observe 500 birds per line after the picker to ensure that no live birds entered the scalder. A bird observed with an intact head, uncut carotid arteries, and red in color after the picker was not dead before entering the scalder and is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Processing Audit Failure**		
20	Confirm the company has a documented monitoring program in place for wing and leg injuries. This program must include corrective actions should the standard for wing and/or leg injuries be exceeded.	**5**		

21a	Evaluate 500 birds per line for broken or dislocated wings immediately before or after the stunner and always before feather removal. Award points on sliding scale: ≤ 15 wing injuries = 40 16 to 20 wing injuries = 20 > 20 wing injuries = 0	**40 (KWI)**		
21b	Evaluate 500 birds per line for leg injuries after feather removal. Award points on a sliding scale: ≤ 2 leg injuries = 40 3 leg injuries = 20 > 3 leg injuries = 0	**40 (KWI)**		
22	Evaluate a random sample of 200 paws for foot pad health. Score paws as either pass (Score 0 or 1) or fail (2). No less than 180 (90%) of the paws must pass (Score 0 or 1) to receive points.	**Score in Growout Section (C3, 8)**		
E	**Processing Operations for Electrical Stunning – Point Total**	**400**		
	POINT TOTAL FOR ALL SECTIONS – B, C, D, and E (Electrical Stunning)	**1180**		
F	**Processing Operations for Controlled Atmospheric Stunning (CAS)**			
1	**Any willful act of abuse is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Processing Audit Failure**		
2	Confirm that the processing operation has a person responsible for ensuring proper broiler welfare practices and strict adherence to the guidelines.	**5**		
3	Confirm that the company has a written emergency response program in place in the event of a utility outage, mechanical breakdown, or other events which prevent birds from being processed.	**5**		
4	Confirm that the company has a written program in place to protect birds from adverse environmental conditions while in holding sheds or during the unloading process.	**5**		
5	Review the last six months of documentation demonstrating the total time from completion of catching to processing. If the total time from completion of catching to processing is greater than 12 hours, additional documentation is required which must include total time elapsed, reason for extended time, and corrective actions implemented.	**5**		
6	Confirm that the company has a written program in place for the retrieval of loose birds.	**5**		

7	Observe that loose birds are being retrieved and appropriately handled by company personnel if applicable.	**20**		
8	Confirm that the company has a written program for euthanasia.	**5**		
9	Confirm that the company has a written program to document DOAs. Review the last six months of documentation.	**5**		
10	**No live bird should be discarded as a DOA. Injured or sick birds removed from processing must be euthanized using an AVMA-approved method before placement in a DOA bin. A live bird in the DOA bin is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Processing Audit Failure**		
11a	Evaluate a minimum of five transport modules but no more than ten transport modules being lifted and moved from trailers. Confirm that modules are being lifted and moved in a manner that does not injure the birds.	**20**		
11b	Evaluate a minimum of five transport modules but no more than ten transport modules being unloaded to ensure birds are not intentionally being unloaded on top of other birds. Omit this audit point if a drawer system is used and subtract the associated points from this section.	**20**		
11c	Evaluate a minimum of five transport modules but no more than ten transport modules to ensure no birds are remaining in any transport compartments.	**20**		
12	**Observe a minimum of five but no more than ten transport modules for instances of live birds being left in a transport compartment before reloading. Any live bird left in a transport compartment before reloading a transport module onto a trailer is a major non-conformance. All live birds retrieved from transport compartments must be humanely returned to the processing system. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Processing Audit Failure**		
13a	Observe 500 shackles per line ensuring that they are well-maintained.	**10**		
13b	Observe 500 birds per line for proper shackling techniques. Confirm that birds are being appropriately shackled. Award points based on a sliding scale: 0 to 2 birds not shackled correctly = 20 3 to 4 birds not shackled correctly = 10 > 4 birds not shackled correctly = 0	**20**		

14	**Observe birds immediately after the birds leave the shackle belt and prior to the backup stunner. More than four birds observed being improperly shackled is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Processing Audit Failure**		
15	Confirm that the company has a written program in place regarding the design, maintenance, and operational parameters of CAS system.	**5**		
16	Confirm that the company has a written program in place regarding how to handle birds that are not effectively stunned.	**5**		
17	Verify that the company has a written program regarding how to handle birds if the CAS system is not functioning properly including a timeframe to remove birds from the CAS system.	**5**		
18a	Observe 500 birds per line after exiting the CAS equipment to confirm that the equipment is functioning properly and birds are being rendered insensible. Award points based on a sliding scale: ≤ 5 birds un-stunned = 40 6 to 10 birds un-stunned = 20 > 10 birds un-stunned = 0	**40 (KWI)**		
18b	Observe 500 birds per line after the automatic knife to confirm that the automatic knife is effectively cutting blood vessels to induce a rapid bleed-out. Award points on a sliding scale: ≤ 5 birds un-cut = 40 6 to 10 bird un-cut = 20 > 10 birds un-cut = 0	**40 (KWI)**		
18c	Confirm that a backup knife operator is present after the automatic knife to induce bleed-out on any birds not effectively cut by the equipment. Observe 500 birds per line to ensure effectiveness of the backup knife operator.	**40 (KWI)**		
19	**Observe 500 birds per line after the picker to ensure that no live birds entered the scalder. A bird observed with an intact head, uncut carotid arteries, and red in color after the picker was not dead before entering the scalder and is a major non-conformance. If a major non-conformance is observed by the auditor, it results in an automatic failure of the processing operations section of the audit and must result in documented corrective actions and retraining of all employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program.**	**Processing Audit Failure**		
20	Confirm the company has a documented monitoring program in place for wing and leg injuries. This program must include corrective actions should the standard for wing and/or leg injuries be	**5**		

	exceeded.			
21a	Evaluate 500 birds per line for broken or dislocated wings immediately before or after the stunner and always before feather removal. Award points on sliding scale: ≤ 15 wing injuries = 40 16 to 20 wing injuries = 20 > 20 wing injuries = 0	**40 (KWI)**		
21b	Evaluate 500 birds per line for leg injuries after feather removal. Award points on a sliding scale: ≤ 2 leg injuries = 40 3 leg injuries = 20 > 3 leg injuries = 0	**40 (KWI)**		
22	Evaluate a random sample of 200 paws for foot pad health. Score paws as either pass (Score 0 or 1) or fail (2). No less than 180 (90%) of the paws must pass (Score 0 or 1) to receive points.	**Score in Growout Section (C3, 8)**		
F	**Processing Operations for CAS – Point Total**	**365**		
	POINT TOTAL FOR ALL SECTIONS – B, C, D, and F (CAS)	**1145**		

Appendix 1

Guidance for Conducting Audits Under National Chicken Council Broiler Welfare Guidelines

1) **Facilities to be Audited**. The company may choose to audit all 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. Flocks that are facing health challenges must not be audited.

2) **Audit of a Complex.** If asked to verify compliance for an entire complex, the auditor should expect to visit a hatchery, a processing plant, and a sample of the farms associated with that plant. Growout houses on three different farms must be audited in connection with each complex. One farm must have chicks that are seven days old or less, one farm must have birds within seven days of processing, and one farm must have birds that are older than seven days of age and more than seven days from processing. Due to heightened biosecurity or logistics, the auditor should prioritize the auditing of the two older flocks. The auditor should work with the company to determine an alternate approach if all three farms cannot be visited.

   If there is only one house on a farm selected for auditing purposes, it will be audited just like any multi-house farm. However, the points associated with auditing a second house on that farm will be removed which would include ammonia (10 points), litter moisture (10 points), and gait scoring (40 points). The total available points for the Growout Operations section of the audit would become 430 points and 365 points would be needed to pass that section of the audit.

   If a major non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor during any portion of the audit (hatchery, growout, catching and transportation, or processing) it results in an automatic failure of that section of the audit.

3) **Document Review.** Documents to be reviewed should apply directly to an audit parameter. When reviewing applicable documents, documents must not be older than one year from time of audit.

4) **Scoring**. All parameters in the guidelines must be evaluated and scored. If a parameter is omitted (beak conditioning is not performed, for example), associated points must not be awarded and the associated points must be subtracted from the overall total for that section and for entire audit. As a result, this will lower the "maximum score" for a section as well as the "score needed to pass."

   In the processing operations section of the audit for electrical stunning, shackling (items numbered 13a, 13b, 13c, 14, and 15), stunning and slaughter (items numbered 18a, 18b, 18c, and 19), and wing and leg evaluation (items numbered 21a and 21b) must be independently audited and scored for each line in the processing plant. For example, if

there are two shackle lines, 140 points is now available (if 70 points per shackle line). Since a parameter was added, associated points must be added to the overall total for that section and for the entire audit. As a result, this will increase the "maximum score" for the processing section as well as the "score needed to pass."

The percentage needed to pass a section and the entire audit – regardless of the "maximum score" and the "score needed to pass" – is 85%.

5) **Pass/Fail Requirements**. Failure to meet all parameters outlined in the Corporate Commitment and Personnel Training section will result in an automatic failure of that section of the audit. All other sections must meet the designated point allocation for passage. If the points received in any section (hatchery, growout, catching and transportation, and processing operations) is below the designated point allocation, that section of the audit is failed and must result in a reauditing of that section. Witnessing a major non-conformance during an audit results in the failure of that section of the audit must result in a reauditing of that section. Witnessing any egregious activities as outlined in Section G results in a failure of the entire audit.

6) **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.

7) **Written Report**. The Broiler 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, the company may elect to ask the auditor to prepare a report on observations and recommendations in addition to the checklist; but in all cases the checklist must be completed.

8) **"Free To Roam."** The Broiler 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.

9) **Initial evaluation of a flock in a growout 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 sitting and relatively quiet, with background contentment vocalizations (e.g., chirping or clucking).

10) **Qualified Auditor.** An auditor is qualified by an independent body based on appropriate education, training, and experience. When a PAACO-certified auditor is not available, the available auditor should have similar education, training, and experience as a PAACO-certified auditor.

11) **Frequency of Auditing.** The frequency of auditing is up to the discretion of the company and is often influenced by customers of the company. However, it is suggested that auditing be conducted at least annually.

Standard Contract for Audits Under National Chicken Council Broiler Welfare Guidelines

This AGREEMENT was made on [*date*]_____ between [*Company*] _____ and [*Contractor*] _____

1) **Services To Be Performed.** Contractor agrees to perform Broiler Welfare audit(s) of company facilities for purposes of verifying the facilities' compliance with the Broiler 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, more than 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 Broiler 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 2

Suggested Topics for Broiler Welfare Training of Personnel

This can be used for initial training and/or re-training.

1) **Introduction**
    a. What is Broiler Welfare
        i. Provide company's description for boiler welfare
        ii. Discuss the connection between broiler health (physical characteristics) with broiler 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 broiler 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 Broiler Welfare**
    a. Provide company's broiler welfare position or statement
    b. Emphasize the importance of each employee's responsibility for meeting company expectations and best management practices (Broiler Care, Broiler Handling, Euthanasia, etc.)
    c. Discuss the consequences for broiler welfare violations
    d. Emphasize the company's expectation for any employee to immediately report any concerns or observations of abusive behavior or mistreatment of broilers to a company supervisor
    e. Explain the importance of welfare for the birds, for the company, for the customers and how audits may be used to verify compliance

3) **Learning Objectives for Broiler Health and Behavior (specific to work area)**
    a. Discuss and provide examples for normal bird behavior and activity
    b. Discuss and provide 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
    c. Discuss company expectations for biosecurity and how biosecurity is important for bird health and welfare, including preventing the introduction of disease

4) **Learning Objectives for Broiler Handling (specific to working area(s) of employee)**
    a. Discuss and demonstrate proper technique of handling chickens
    b. Emphasize that deliberate abuse is not tolerated, and include what is not allowed per company policy for bird handling
    c. 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 (e.g., working in dim lighting, moving slowly, avoiding loud noises, etc.)
    d. Discuss and give examples of what is not allowed for handling and what can result in broiler welfare violations
        i. Include how improper handling may result in bird injury and/or stress

e. Discuss how to move groups of birds safely and securely, and how to monitor and protect them from injury and damage during transport
f. Discuss the importance of evaluating equipment that may be damaged or may require repair before using it to move or load birds
g. 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 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 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-dominate 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 seperation 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.

Center for Food Animal Wellbeing
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

Appendix 4

Approved Methods of Euthanasia for Chicks and Embryonated Eggs in Hatcheries

Reference (AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals (2020 Edition); Section S.3, Poultry)

Name	Description	Conditions of Use	Location for Use	Key Parameters for NCC Guidelines
Maceration	Specially designed mechanical apparatus having rotating blades or projections, that causes immediate fragmentation and death	Chicks up to 72 hours Embryonated eggs	Hatchery	**USE**: Macerator must be on before chicks are placed in the hopper or funnel; **OBSERVATION**: Chicks must be delivered in a way and at a rate that prevents a backlog at the point of entry into the macerator and without causing injury, suffocation, or avoidable distress to the chicks before maceration; **SET-UP**: drop distances must be less than or equal to 12 inches. **VERIFICATION:** Function of equipment (closed system) or verification of macerated waste product (open system).
Inhaled Gas (CO_2 or other approved gas)	Gas supplied in purified forms (typically from a commercially supplied cylinder or tank) via gas-dispensing system that has sufficient capacity and control to maintain the necessary gas concentrations in the container being utilized. The container is sufficiently airtight to hold the gas at appropriate levels.	Chicks up to 72 hours Embryonated eggs	Hatchery	**USE**: Chicks or eggs are placed in a single layer in the box and a specific program (gas concentration and time) is used to ensure effective death; **OBSERVATION**: Post-gas exposure, chicks are checked to verify death before disposal; **SET-UP**: Sufficent gas concentration (higher concentrations for neonatal birds may be used) maintained, duration achieves euthanasia of pipped eggs or newly hatched chicks, chicks are in a single-layer in container; **VERIFICATION**: Any bird showing signs of recovery must be killed by some other means that is acceptable; no live chicks are present in final waste disposal container.
Cervical dislocation	Dislocation results in luxation of the cervical vertebrae without primary crushing of the vertebrae and spinal cord	Chicks up to 72 hours	Hatchery	**USE**: Support the body of the chick with one hand; with the other hand, apply pressure just below the base of the skull until the cervical (neck) vertebrae separate; **OBSERVATION**: Sudden, reduction of resistance of the neck indicates separation of the cervical vertebrae, presence of involuntary reaction(s); **VERIFICATION:** palpate neck vertebrae to verify separation

Approved Methods of Euthanasia for Broilers at Farms and at Processing Plants

Reference (AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals (2020 Edition); Section S.3, Poultry)

Name	Description	Conditions of Use	Location for Use	Key Parameters for NCC Guidelines
Cervical dislocation	Cervical dislocation results in luxation of the cervical vertebrae without primary crushing of the vertebrae and spinal cord (method may be manual or tool-assisted)	Broilers	Farm Processing plant	**USE (Manual)**: Hold the legs (shanks) of the broiler with one hand; with the other hand, stretch the neck while down and rotating the head to create the dislocation. **USE (Tool-Assisted)**: Hold the legs or the body of the broiler; place the tool close to the head to create luxation of the vertebrae at or close to the skull; **OBSERVATION**: Sudden, reduction of resistance of the neck indicates separation of the cervical vertebrae, presence of involuntary reaction(s); **VERIFICATION:** palpate neck vertebrae to verify separation.
Decapitation	Decapitation is executed with a sharp instrument, ensuring rapid and unobstructed severing of the head from the neck	Broilers	Farm Processing plant	**USE**: Securing the legs (shanks) of the broiler with one hand or apprpriate equipment (ex: shackle); use a sharp instrument to rapidly sever the head from the neck; **OBSERVATION**: Head fully separated from neck; sudden presence of involuntary reaction (ex: wing-flapping) and other reflexes; **VERIFICATION:** head is completely severed from neck.
Captive Bolt	Captive bolt euthanasia utilizes a device (penetrating or non-penetrating) that results in a severe and irreversible damage of the brain provoked by the shock of the bolt.	Broilers	Farm Processing plant	**USE**: Appropriately restrain the broiler to avoid injury to personnel during use; captive bolt device must be appropriately designed and configured for the bird size, provide sufficient impact energy, and be properly applied. **OBSERVATION**: Correct position and direction of bolt device results in damage to the brain (skull); **SET-UP**: Well-maintained device with appropriate velocity, exit length and diameter of bolt according to broiler size; **VERIFICATION**: Any bird showing signs of recovery must be killed by a 2nd shot or some other means that is acceptable; no live broilers are present in final waste disposal container.
Inhaled Gas (CO_2 or other approved gas)	Gas supplied in purified forms (typically from a commercially supplied cylinder or tank) via gas-dispensing system that has sufficient capacity and control to maintain the necessary gas concentrations in the container being utilized. The container is sufficiently airtight to hold the gas at appropriate levels.	Broilers	Farm Processing plant	**USE**: Broilers are placed in a single layer in the container and a specific program (gas concentration and time) is used to ensure effective death; **OBSERVATION**: Post-gas exposure, broilers are checked to verify death before disposal; **SET-UP**: Sufficent gas concentration maintained, duration achieves euthanasia of broilers; broilers are in a single-layer in container; **VERIFICATION**: Any bird showing signs of recovery must be killed by some other means that is acceptable; no live broilers are present in final waste disposal container.

Appendix 5

Measuring Atmospheric Ammonia in Broiler Houses

Atmospheric ammonia in broiler houses refers to the concentration of ammonia gas (NH_3) present in the air in the poultry house environment. Measurements should be taken as follows:

- Ammonia should be measured at bird height in the center of the active chamber or house.
- Ammonia should not be measured in housing sections if birds are not present. For example, young birds may not fill a house and may be housed in a specified chamber in the house.
- Two readings must be taken at least 100 feet apart within each house.
- These two measurements are specific to each house, and the two measurements should be averaged.
- If measuring device registers 25ppm or greater points, the appropriate number of points are deducted from the checklist.
- Each house must be scored independently from others.

Additional information on measuring atmospheric ammonia in broiler houses can be found here:

- Measuring Ammonia Levels in Poultry Houses, University of Georgia, Cooperative Extension Service, October 2022.
- Detecting Ammonia in Poultry Housing Using Inexpensive Instruments, Penn State Extension, January 2026.
- IPWA Broiler Chickens Guide V13.pdf, International Poultry Welfare Alliance, Key Welfare Indicators, Broiler Chickens, 2022.

Appendix 6

Evaluating Litter Moisture in Broiler Houses

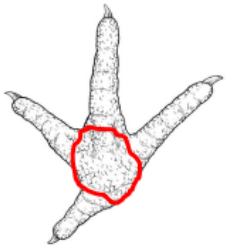
A way to assess litter moisture in a broiler house is the “Squeeze Test.” This method will provide a reliable measure of moisture in litter.

- Litter moisture is to be measured in the center of the house, at least two feet from feeders and water lines/drinkers.
- Only collect samples in areas that represent the litter in the majority of the house.
- Select a handful of litter and squeeze in the fist.
- When opening the hand:
  - if the litter does not remain caked this would be considered dry and friable litter and result in full points being awarded (less than 35%).
  - if the litter remains partially caked this would be considered as increased moisture and result in partial points being awarded.
  - if the litter remains fully caked this would be considered as excess moisture and result in no points being awarded (more than 35%).

Appendix 7

American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) Broiler Foot Condition Scoring Guide

Broiler Foot Condition Scoring Guide



Foot condition scoring is an important key welfare indicator for poultry welfare audits since it reflects flock health, bird care and environmental conditions on the farm. To optimize audit scoring accuracy, auditor efficiency, and minimize welfare concerns with handling poultry in the field, broiler feet should be evaluated at the processing plant. Welfare assessment includes the visible condition of the broiler foot pad (red circled area in the illustration to the left) and the toes. This evaluation includes observation of the presence of any irregularities including ulcers, scab formations, erosions, hemorrhages, discoloration, skin thickening, and/or foot pad swelling.

At the processing plant, feet (also referred to as paws) should be assessed after they are clean (yellow feet below) or after removal of the cuticle (white feet below). A random sample of broiler feet should be evaluated from each flock assessed for this key welfare indicator. A score should be assigned to each foot; scoring may be noted as PASS or FAIL, or each foot may be numerically scored (0, 1, 2). ***NOTE:*** *Auditors should refer to the required sample size and the scoring criteria noted in the welfare standard or assessment guidelines being utilized.*

PASS (Score Criteria 0 or 1)

- **Score 0: Normal color & no lesions; slight discoloration of foot pad**
- **Score 1: Hyperkeratosis (thickening of skin); lesion(s) covering less than ½ of foot pad**

FAIL (Score Criteria 2)

- **Lesion(s) covering more than ½ of foot pad and may include the toes**
- **Hemorrhages or swelling of foot pad**

Produced by the AAAP Animal Welfare & Mgmt Committee / Created: 2015; Updated & approved: March 2022

Appendix 8

Calculating Stocking Density in Broiler Houses

Stocking density must be calculated by the auditor at the farm audited with the oldest birds. If the following metrics are exceeded, no points are awarded.

Maximum Bird Weight Range	***Maximum Stocking Density***
Below 4.5 lbs liveweight	6.5 pounds per square foot
4.5 to 5.5 lbs liveweight	7.5 pounds per square foot
5.6 to 7.5 lbs liveweight	8.5 pounds per square foot
More than 7.5 lbs liveweight	9.0 pounds per square foot

The calculation for stocking density is:

$$\frac{\text{(Number of birds at placement) – (total mortality including culls)}^{1} * \text{average target weight}}{\text{Area of broiler house}}$$

[1] Auditor would take headcount at time of processing (or estimated based on mortality/morbidity patterns for the week if not being done for houses processing that day).

Example:
20,000 square feet market-age broiler house with 25,000 broilers placed has lost 1,000 birds throughout the flock from culling or mortality. The average or target weight for the complex is 6.75 pounds. Using the formula above, stocking density would be calculated as:

[(25,000 – 1,000) * 6.75 pounds]/ 20,000 square feet = 8.1 pounds per square foot

Appendix 9

Evaluating Lighting Programs in Broiler Houses

Lighting programs play an important role in managing the welfare, behavior, and performance of broiler chickens. Properly designed lighting schedules are important for supporting the physiological development and natural behaviors of the birds, while also optimizing health outcomes and production efficiency.

Lighting programs will vary depending on multiple factors including, but not limited, the following:

- The age of the flock
- Breed of the flock
- Average daily gain
- The type of light
    - Natural light (open-sided house)
    - Artificial light (solid or dark-curtain walled house)
- Type of artificial light used
- Light wavelength and intensity

Any lighting program used must not have negative effects on broiler health and behavior. There must also be a contrast in light intensity between the day and night periods**.** Scientific research and welfare guidelines commonly recommend a minimum of four hours of darkness each 24-hour period which is consistent with NCC guidelines. Evaluating lighting in broiler houses is essential to ensure that birds receive the correct light duration and intensity needed for optimal welfare, health, and performance.

- **Duration and Light-Dark Cycle Review**
    - The light schedule should be verified against company guidelines. The auditor must confirm that birds receive at least 4 hours of darkness in every 24-hour period, with the exception of the first and last week.

- **Light Intensity Measurement**
    - Light intensity must be measured at bird level using a calibrated light meter (lux meter).
    - Four readings should be taken at bird height (two directly under the light and two offset from the light).
    - The auditor should average the four readings.
    - The average must equal or be above the minimum amount included in the company’s light program.

Appendix 10

Gait Scoring of Commercial Broilers

Auditors are to evaluate broilers and their movement. Broilers may need to be gently encouraged to walk. If the broilers become stressed, especially in hot weather, discontinue scoring immediately.

Score 0 – Bird can walk at least five feet with a balanced gait. Bird may appear ungainly but with no visible signs of lameness.

Score 1 – Bird can walk at least five feet, but appears awkward, uneven in steps.

Score 2 – Bird cannot walk five feet or there is obvious lameness. May shuffle on shanks or hocks with assistance of wings.

The U.S. Gait Scoring technique is recommended (Gait Scoring in the Commercial Broiler, Office of Agricultural Communications, Box 9625, Mississippi State, MS 39762.)

Additional references can be accessed here:

- Validation of a Three-Point Gait-Scoring System for Field Assessment of Walking Ability of Commercial Broilers - ScienceDirect
- Modeling gait score of broiler chicken via production and behavioral data - ScienceDirect

Appendix 11

Transportation Equipment

Tractor with Transport Modules

Transport Modules

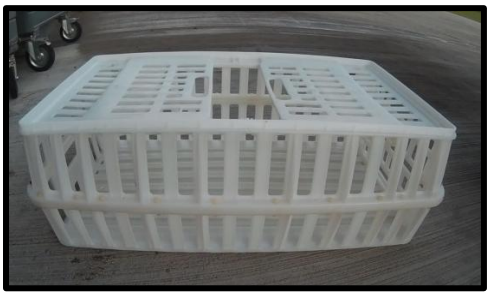
Tractor with Transport Drawer System

Transport Module

Transport Drawer System

Individual Transport Compartment

Transport Coop



Appendix 12

American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) Broiler Wing Condition Scoring Guide

Broiler Wing Condition Scoring Guide

Wing condition scoring is an important key welfare indicator for welfare audits since it reflects the care and handling of broilers at the farm, during catching and transport, and at the processing plant. Wing injury can result from incorrect bird handling, from equipment that is not used correctly or is poorly maintained, from rough transport conditions, incorrect handling during shackling or sub-optimal stunning conditions. **Wing scoring includes evaluation of broilers at processing for broken or dislocated wings.** To optimize the scoring accuracy, wings may be evaluated at the processing plant before stunning or after stunning (as determined by the audit standard being used and the safety and organizational options at the processing plant). For all audits, wing condition should always be evaluated before feather removal. The auditor should be positioned to see the keel of the bird and should evaluate both wings on each bird for the required number to be audited. ***NOTE:*** *Auditors should refer to the required sample size and the scoring criteria noted in the welfare standard or assessment guidelines being utilized, and should discuss location for wing evaluation with the processing plant staff prior to conducting the audit. If a bird has damage to both wings, it should only be counted once during the audited sample.*

PASS (Score Criteria)

- **Normal wing posture**
- **No dislocation and no broken wing(s)**

Left: normal wing posture with wings tucked

(note: typical wing posture post-electrical stunning)

Right: normal wing posture with wings relaxed

(note: typical wing posture post-CAS stunning)

FAIL (Score Criteria)

- **Abnormal wing posture**
- **Broken or dislocated wing(s)**

Left: abnormal wing posture (broken wing hangs down)

Right: abnormal wing posture (dislocated wing hangs down)

Note: Posture of the wings is the primary criteria for this portion of the audit. Birds with normal wing posture may have their wings tucked close to the body or may have wings slightly relaxed and extended out from the side of the breast. Both wing appearance and wing position should be evaluated during the audit to determine if any broken or dislocated wings are present in the sample being observed. Observation of asymmetrical wing posture or appearance on a bird can be a useful visual indicator when evaluating this item in the plant.

Note: Since wing damage can occur post-mortem due to wing contact with feather removal equipment, the auditor should evaluate wings prior to feather removal for audit accuracy.

Produced by the AAAP Animal Welfare & Mgmt Committee / Created: 2017; Updated & approved: March 2022

Appendix 13

American Association of Avian Pathologists (AAAP) Broiler Leg Condition KWI Guide

aaap
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF AVIAN PATHOLOGISTS

Broiler Leg Condition KWI Guide

Leg condition scoring is an important key welfare indicator for welfare audits since it reflects the care and handling of broilers at the farm, during catching and transport, and at the processing plant. Leg injury can result from incorrect bird handling, from equipment that is not used correctly or is poorly maintained, and from rough transport conditions. **Leg scoring includes evaluation of broilers at processing for leg bruising** (hematomas) **and broken leg bones**. To optimize the scoring accuracy, legs should be evaluated at the processing plant after carcass scalding and feather picking of the carcass, but before chilling. The auditor should be positioned to see the keel of the bird and should evaluate both legs on each bird for the required number to be audited. ***NOTE:*** *Auditors should refer to the required sample size and the scoring criteria noted in the welfare standard or assessment guidelines being utilized. Typically, a bird with damage to both legs should only be counted once during the audited sample.*

PASS (Score Criteria)

- **Normal skin color* and no broken bone**
  (*note, skin color may vary from yellow to white due to breed or diet)
- **Slight discoloration or darkened skin**
- **Bruise is less than the size of a quarter (24mm)**

FAIL (Score Criteria)

- **Broken leg, severely discolored (dark red, purple)**
- **Bruise is greater than the size of a quarter (24mm)**
- **Various leg bruises covering more than the size of a quarter (24mm)**

Pass (normal skin color & no bruising observed)

Pass (drumstick has a bruise but size is < quarter diameter)

Fail (drumstick with one bruise > quarter diameter)

Fail (large and dark bruises on leg and possible broken leg)

Guide for Coloration of Bruising *(Gregory et al, 1992)*

Estimated Time of Bruising	*Color of Bruise on Skin*
<2 minutes	***red***
<12 hours	***dark red/purple***
~24 hours	*light green/purple*
~48 hours	*yellow/orange/light green*

Note: *Leg injuries can occur on the thigh and drumstick of the broiler. When evaluating and scoring for leg injury for a broiler welfare audit, bruise color associated with incorrect handling during catching, transport and shackling of broilers is normally dark red or purple as shown above. If the skin is yellow/orange/green, this may indicate a prior injury and the bruise should not be scored as a failure for the purpose of this KWI assessment.*

Produced by the AAAP Animal Welfare & Mgmt. Committee / Created: 2017; Updated: May 2026

Leg injuries due to diseased conditions

Appendix 14

Major non-conformances as outlined in the guidelines

Any major non-conformance occurring during internal audit must be recorded and corrective action must be taken. Retraining of all applicable employees in accordance with the company's written welfare program must occur. Any major non-conformance witnessed during a third-party audit will result in a failure of that section of the audit and corrective actions must be taken.

Hatchery Operations:

- Any willful act of abuse
- Any evidence of a live chick in the hatchery waste stream after the completion of the euthanasia process

Growout Operations:

- Any willful act of abuse

Catching and Transportation:

- Any willful act of abuse
- A bird being loaded in a transport compartment that is damaged in a manner that would allow for a bird to escape

Processing Operations for Electrical Stun:

- Any willful act of abuse
- A live bird in the DOA bin
- Any live bird left in a transport compartment before reloading a transport module onto a trailer
- More than four birds observed being improperly shackled
- A bird, typically red in color, observed with uncut carotid arteries after the picker was not dead before entering the scalder

Processing Operations for CAS:

- Any willful act of abuse
- A live bird in the DOA bin
- Any live bird left in a transport compartment before reloading a transport module onto a trailer
- More than four birds observed being improperly shackled
- A bird, typically red in color, observed with uncut carotid arteries after the picker was not dead before entering the scalder