

Good Commercial Practices (GCP) Humane Handling Poultry

1.0 HANDLING OF LIVE BIRDS

Abuse of any birds during catching, holding shackling, slaughtering is not permitted.

Conditions that put broilers in immediate danger are referred to as acts of intentional and egregious animal abuse. 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), except for religiously approved practices – (example are Kosher or Halal slaughter).
- c. Malicious use of equipment that results in breaking a bone, suffocation, or death of a bird(s).
- d. Dragging, hitting, kicking, or throwing a bird with the intention of causing injury.
- e. Striking a bird(s) with any type of object with the intention of causing injury.

1.0.1 All poultry operations should have a written training program for bird catching, holding, handling, shackling, slaughtering and euthanasia.

1.0.2 Birds in coops must be gently removed.

1.0.3 Broilers must be caught by their LEGS as this is standard catching procedure.

1.0.4 Birds must not be caught or carried by one leg.

1.0.5 Birds must never be lifted, carried, or drug by the wing or neck and never be thrown.

1.0.6 Birds in holding crates must be gently removed. Birds must never be removed / lifted by the wings.

1.0.7 The Holding area should be covered and equipped with fans (and misters if necessary) or heaters to ensure proper cooling/warming of birds.

1.0.8 Holding cages should be appropriately sized and in good repair so that no birds can be injured or escape. Cage damage, including large holes, broken or missing doors, or broken (not bent) wires.

1.0.9 Holding cages should permit the birds to sit without being on top of one another (in a single layer).

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2.0 Slaughter

2.0.1 Birds must be handled as little as possible up to the point of slaughter

2.0.2 Holding crates should be as close as possible to the cones or shackles to lessen the time of handling of the birds.

2.0.3 Birds must be slaughtered within a reasonable amount of time, normally within two hours.

2.0.4 Inversion and suspension of birds must be minimized.

2.0.5 No bird should be inverted or suspended in such a manner as to cause it avoidable pain or suffering.

2.0.6 Birds must not be inverted and placed in cones or on shackles unless personnel mean to slaughter them immediately.

2.0.7 If birds are placed in cones they must be the correct size for the type of bird.

2.0.8 Chickens and ducks must not be inverted for more than 60 seconds before being stunned or killed.

2.0.9 Turkeys and geese must not be inverted for more than 120 seconds before being stunned or killed.

2.0.10 Cutting, bleeding or dressing any sensible bird is not allowed.

3.1 Shackles

3.1.1 If shackles are used they must be the correct size and width for the birds.

3.1.2 If shackles are used, birds must be hung by both legs.

3.1.3 The shackle must be designed and positioned in such a way that the bird suspended on it is clear of any obstruction – including when its wings are outstretched.

3.1.4 From the time of shackling to the time of stunning there should be no unnecessary noises that can cause unnecessary disturbance to the birds.

3.1.5 Shackles must be cleaned and maintained according to manufacturer's specification.

Note: Rust on shackles may prevent effective electric stunning.

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4.0 STUNNING AND SLAUGHTER

4.0.1 Stunning must render birds immediately insensible to pain on the first attempt.

4.0.2 All birds must be rendered insensible to pain (stunned) prior to being cut.

4.0.3 Stunning must ensure birds remain insensible to pain until the bird dies due to slaughter or blood loss.

4.0.4 If any sign of sensibility is observed at any time after stunning, the bird must be re-stunned immediately.

4.0.5 Equipment used to shackle, stun, bleed and kill a bird must be kept and maintained in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

4.0.6 Equipment used to shackle, stun, bleed and kill a bird must only be used within the design parameters described by the manufacturer.

4.0.7 For all stunning equipment there should be reserve equipment for use in case of emergency or breakdown; or there must be a protocol to stop slaughtering and remove any live birds from shackles or cones.

4.0.8 Staff that carry out stunning and bleeding must be trained and be competent to use of the available equipment.

5.0 STAFF AND TRAINING

5.0.1 There should be a named individual responsible for bird welfare within the facility that has the authority to act should any welfare issues arise.

5.0.2 Training in humane methods of poultry handling should be made available to all staff working with live birds.

5.0.3 Staff should be trained to recognize signs of effective and ineffective stunning and signs of recovery of consciousness.

5.0.4 There should be clearly written standard operating procedures for every step of the operation and staff responsible for animal handling, stunning and slaughter are to be familiar with these procedures.