

"Humane Choice" Standards - Poultry



1.1 ANIMAL WELFARE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Animals should be allowed to satisfy their basic behavioural needs. In particular, livestock are able to forage on land, move untethered and uncaged and take wing in the case of flight birds.

Fences, yards and housing are constructed in ways which do not lead to injury or bruising as a consequence of poor design.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Operators should maintain conditions that promote the animals' physiological and behavioural needs.

Shelter in paddocks should include windbreaks and shade throughout the day.

Animal breed selection should encompass consideration of breeds and genetic material, which is naturally suited to the farm and district environment.

Yards next to animal housing should be managed to provide comfortable and secure conditions without excessive mud, dust, hazardous material.

STANDARDS

1.1.1 Shelter and shade shall be provided to give all animals protection against the sun, extreme wind and rain.

1.1.2 Measures must be taken to provide animals with adequate alternatives to waterlogged pasture or housing.

1.1.3 Animals must be allowed free movement and access to pasture.

1.1.4 When confined for nights, inclement weather or for other reasons on a temporary basis, animals must have access to:

- A sleeping area with natural bedding material;
- A supply of fresh water and feed;
- Space to stand, lie down, turn around, groom, and carry out natural behaviour such as stretching and wing flapping;
- Fresh air, sunlight, ventilation (to prevent high humidity and build-up of gases), and insulation from heat and cold;
- Housing cleaned of manure, urine and uneaten or spilt feed as often as necessary to minimise unpleasant odours and avoid attracting pests.

1.1.5 Where livestock are housed on a temporary, the minimum "on ground" density shall comply with the following, for:

Poultry and squab	Not less than 1 square metre for every 5 birds including the roosting area
Ducks, geese and turkeys	Not less than 1 square metre for every 2 birds on ground

1.1.6 Housing, equipment and utensils must be cleaned and disinfected to prevent cross infection and the build-up of disease carrying organisms.

1.1.7 Litter must be of good quality and be managed to maintain it in a dry, friable condition; it must be of a sufficient depth for dilution of faeces and be skimmed and topped up as necessary with fresh litter.

1.1.8 Chicken tractors shall not be permitted where restrictions to free range and movement result.

1.1.9 In the case of laying hens natural light may be supplemented by artificial means to provide a maximum of sixteen (16) hours light per day with a continuous nocturnal rest period without artificial light of at least eight (8) hours.

1.1.10 Fowl must not be kept in cages.

1.1.11 Animals must be protected from predation. Feral animals may be managed using the following:

- Physical exclusion, chasing and guard dogs;
- Trapping of individuals using live traps with relocation or, where there is no alternative, humane euthanasia;
- Poisons for control of rodents or feral animals in the field are prohibited, unless required by a statutory authority and the statutory authority confirms use in writing.

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1.2 ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Livestock husbandry is based on the harmonious relationship between land, water, plants and livestock, respect for the physiological and behavioural needs of livestock and the feeding of good quality, feedstuffs. Animal management is based on the principles of balanced nutrition and feeding for prevention of disease and resistance to infection, parasitic attack and metabolic disorders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Producers should maintain conditions that enhance the animals' lives, physiological needs and behavioural needs.

Animal breeding and selection should consider breeds and genetic characteristics, which are naturally suited to the individual farm.

STANDARDS

1.2.1 Animals shall be allowed to practise their normal behaviours without interference to normal growth patterns.

In particular animals must be capable of natural copulation and birth.

- The use of genetically engineered species or breeds is not allowed.
- Hormonal heat treatment is not allowed.

DEROGATION

Unless applied to individual animals for medical reasons and under veterinary supervision.

1.2.2 Synthetic growth promotants are prohibited in all production systems.

1.2.3 Induced molting is unacceptable.

1.2.4 The operator must make provision for animal welfare through adequate ground cover that considers all extremities in climatic conditions.

1.2.5 Stocking rates for livestock must be appropriate for the region, taking into consideration feed production capacity, health, nutrient balance, and environmental impact.

1.2.6 Animals shall be provided with adequate diet, nutrition and water supply.

1.3 DIET AND NUTRITION

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Animal health results from a combination of good management practice and sound nutrition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Energy, protein and roughage supplies should be adequate to maintain good animal health and condition.

Based on human and animal health consideration meat meal should not be fed to poultry.

STANDARDS

1.3.1 The diet must be balanced according to the needs of the animal, be sufficient and of good quality and include daily access to roughage.

1.3.2 All animals must have access to forage.

1.3.3 Feeds containing offal, faeces, urine, urea, food industry by-products treated with solvents, same species materials or other prohibited substances are not permitted.

1.4 HEALTH

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Management practices promote and maintain the health and well being of animals through balanced nutrition, stress-free living conditions, breed and breeding selection for resistance to diseases, parasites and infection.

Animal management is based on the prevention of disease and raising healthy animals that are able to resist infection, parasitic attack and metabolic disorders.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Health promotion and disease prevention should include the following techniques:

- Breeding and selection;
- Exercise and access to the open;
- Appropriate stocking densities and rotational feeding.

Approved veterinary treatment should be considered as an adjunct to, and not a substitute for, good management practices.

The aim should be to develop resistance in animals through breeding and selection and to correct the cause of the disorder, rather than treating the symptoms.

STANDARDS

This Standard prohibits the addition of any antibiotics to feedstuff.

1.4.1 Animal health must be maintained primarily through pro-active management, breeding and selection to address the cause of disorders, rather than treating the symptoms.

1.4.2 The operator shall provide records of veterinary treatment to animals.

1.4.3 If animals suffer disease or injury despite preventative measures the operator must not withhold appropriate veterinary treatment.

1.6 ANIMAL SURGICAL TREATMENTS

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Animal surgical treatments are only carried out if the operator can demonstrate that the benefits of the action outweigh the consequences of non-treatment and there are no other acceptable management options.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The operator should choose breeds and practices which do not rely on surgical treatments.

STANDARDS

1.6.1 Animal mutilations are not permitted.

1.6.2 Beak cutting and trimming, de-beaking and wing cutting are prohibited.

1.7 ANIMAL RECORDS AND IDENTIFICATION

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Identification of animals is the basis for ensuring traceability, final product identity and permitting accurate and informed management. The operator shall maintain adequate records and identification practices to ensure that each animal flock can be identified and traced back to the farm.

1.8 TRANSPORT

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Transport of stock is carried out to ensure the best animal welfare and sanitation, the preservation of identity and to permit traceability of the animals. A management plan is used to ensure that the holding, loading, watering, transport and delivery of livestock is conducted with compassion, hygiene and oversight.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Animals should be transported to the nearest available facilities for slaughter and should not be unnecessarily transported between properties or owners unless required by feed shortages and drought. Transport of animals between properties or to abattoirs shall take into consideration welfare requirements and shall ensure the minimisation of stress to the animal at all times.

The period from catching the first bird to slaughter of the last bird in that consignment must not exceed 12 hours.

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STANDARDS

1.8.1 A Management Plan for transport of livestock shall be in place. This plan shall address the following:

- Holding;
- Feeding;
- Watering;
- Identification;
- Loading;
- Travel;
- Oversight;
- Delivery;
- Documentation.

1.8.2 Loading and unloading facilities must not have parts protruding or sharp edges that can cause injury, soiling or damage to animals.

1.8.3 Transport vehicles shall be of suitable size to prevent damage and or bruising.

1.8.4 Animals should be offloaded by experienced personnel as soon as practicable after arrival.

1.8.5 Feed and clean water must be available before and after transport.

1.8.6 No transport leg shall exceed 8 hours.

1.8.7 A responsible agent must accompany the livestock on the journey and be present for loading and unloading.

1.8.8 Unfit animals must not be transported.

1.9 SLAUGHTER

STANDARDS

1.9.1 Slaughter will be carried out quickly and without undue stress.

1.9.2 Minimum slaughter age for poultry is 81 days.

1.9.3 Animals must not be conscious during slaughter.

1.9.4 Gas stunning is the preferred method of rendering unconsciousness.

1.9.5 A stun action device must be backed up by emergency measures in the case of failure.

1.9.6 Death without stunning, is not permissible.

1.9.7 Clearly identifiable labelling such as branding of all carcasses must take place which differentiates them by colour from conventional carcasses and identifies them as "Humane Choice".

1.9.8 Where stock is slaughtered for "Humane Choice" sale the processing facility must be inspected as a certified component of the operator's operation or certified in its own right before the 'Humane Choice' Label may be applied.

HSI concentrates on the preservation of endangered animals and ecosystems and works to ensure quality of life for all animals, both domestic and wild. HSI is the largest animal protection not-for-profit organisation in the world, with over 9 million supporters globally and has been established in Australia since 1994.



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