Animal Welfare Guidelines and FSIS Activities

Poultry Processor Workshop

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History of the NCC Animal Welfare Program

- NCC has had guidelines since 1999
- Finalizing the Update – January 2014
  - Reviewed by an expert academic panel – Fall 2012 through Summer 2013
  - Reviewed by the NCC Animal Welfare Committee – Summer 2013 to January 2014
- Guidelines widely used throughout industry on a voluntary basis and are generally accepted by customers (retailers, restaurant companies), some of which have own programs
Purpose of the NCC Program

Provide a science-based auditing program that will monitor various aspects of broiler production to ensure that humane handling occurs throughout.
Structure

• Animal Welfare Guidelines
  o Description of Auditing Points

• Audit Checklist
  o Score sheet

• Any company using the guidelines should verify its compliance by using the audit checklist
Core Principles

- Care for poultry to minimize fear, pain, stress, and suffering
- Balance science and professional judgment with ethical and societal values
- Treat animals with respect and provide a humane death when processed or euthanized
Continuing Process

- Guidelines are reviewed every two years
- Alternating between Academic Advisory Committee and Industry Committee Review
- Approval by NCC Animal Welfare Committee
- NCC Board of Directors Approval (January 2014)
Auditing Points

- Corporate commitment
- Personnel Training
- Hatchery Operations
- Grow-out Operations
  - Designated Management, Training and Emergency Plan
  - Nutrition and Feeding
  - Comfort and Shelter
  - Health Care and Monitoring
  - Ability to Display Normal Behaviors
- Catching and Transportation
- Processing Operations
- Abuse and Audit Failures
Some Details

- Increased emphasis on corporate commitment - top management must sign off on the program.
- Company must have a person or management group in charge of animal welfare throughout the company.
- Those involved in handling live animals must be trained annually
  - NCC provides an example training program
- Abuse of birds will **not** be tolerated – failed audit
More Details

• Stocking density based on bird size
• Ammonia levels and litter moisture evaluation
• Wing and leg damage are monitored at the plant
  o Wings less than 4% (20 wings out of 500 birds)
  o Leg damage less than 0.6% (3 legs out of 500 birds)
• Birds protected from extremes of temperatures during transportation and holding at the plant
More Detail

• Stunning and killing each to be at least 98% effective
• No live birds entering scald – zero tolerance
• Provides details on acceptable euthanasia practices from the hatchery to the processing plant
  o Following AVMA guidelines
• Concept of “major non-conformance” (live chicks in hatchery waste, abuse of birds, live bird in DOA bin, live bird into scald): results in audit failure and mandatory documented corrective action.
New to the 2014 Audit

- Changing has/will/is/are to should/must
- Adding whistleblower protection
- Outlines what a training program should look like
- Increasing internal documentation and monitoring
New to the 2014 Audit

- Increased visual inspection of bird damage post slaughter
- Developed a more streamlined auditing tool for ease of auditing
- Changed language around litter moisture and ammonia in grow-out houses
- Added stocking density for larger birds
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Bird Weight Range</th>
<th>Maximum Stocking Density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 4.5 lbs. live weight</td>
<td>6.5 lbs./ft²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 to 5.5 lbs. live weight</td>
<td>7.5 lbs./ft²</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.6 to 7.5 lbs. live weight</td>
<td>8.5 lbs./ft²</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; 7.5 lbs. live weight</td>
<td>9.0 lbs./ft²</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New to the 2014 Audit

- Requires gait scoring no earlier than seven days prior to slaughter
- Provides more detail around acceptable cage condition and how they should be scored
- Clarification on shackling and stunning scoring
- Requires a program to monitor wing and leg damage
New to the 2014 Audit

- Changes the scoring system emphasizing each step in the process from hatchery to the plant
- Made a more user-friendly audit tool for the auditor
- Highlights the implications of non-conformances to the guidelines
- Created a dedicated section on abuse and audit failures
Paw Scoring

Evaluate a random sample of 100 birds from two separate flocks (200 paws) for footpad health. Use the AAAP Paw Scoring System to score paws as either a 0 or 1. 95% of the paws scored (190 out of 200) must be 0.
Broiler Breeders

• Guidelines and checklist similar to broilers but tailored to breeder operations
• Packaged separately from broiler audit
• Will be updated in Fall 2014