

Meat Chicken Standards Technical Advisory Group
Summary notes
2nd October 2025

RSPCA Assured Impact and insights team

The new Impact and Insights team highlighted their focus on refining the collection of the welfare outcome data that is undertaken by RSPCA Assured assessors on member units. This data will help direct areas for future standards development.

RSPCA Assured Farming and technical engagement

A new team in RSPCA Assured has been established to help RSPCA Assured members comply with standards across all species.

Mortality levels

The group discussed the current standard relating to mortality levels and the need for veterinary investigation, including whether the current requirements are appropriate for each stage of the flock. A risk of overstocking exists when farms place extra chicks anticipating high mortality. A number of potential options to mitigate this risk was discussed, including contingency plans.

Staff training

Training for farm staff, especially in critical procedures like culling, is required, but the RSPCA standards do not currently mandate periodic review or revalidation of this training. The group discusses potential options to ensure all stock-keepers remain competent to carry out their health and welfare related duties, and aid the practical assessment of this standard on farm.

Accepted chicken breeds - de-listing process

Concerns were raised regarding the potential delisting of breeds following re-testing, particularly those currently permitted under derogation. Any such change would necessitate a transition period, likely involving a phase-out period. Industry stakeholders require confidence in breed selection given the investment involved. The RSPCA is looking to establish a framework for such situations to provide clarity and confidence to all interested parties.

Other discussion points

Other discussion points included neurodivergence in farming, testing of electrical installations and natural cover on the range.