

Meat Chicken Standards Technical Advisory Group Meeting

Wednesday 6th November 2024 Meeting

Summary Notes

Natural cover on the range

The group discussed the potential for increasing the minimum requirement for natural cover on the range. The benefits of increasing the minimum requirement from 5% was discussed, for example in terms of encouraging birds onto the range. Issues such as how this standard would be assessed at different times of the year and when vegetation is being established was also discussed as was what would be considered 'suitable' vegetation. This subject will be discussed further at the next meeting of the group.

Perching provision

The group discussed the potential for increasing the minimum perch requirements in the *RSPCA standards for meat chickens*. The need to give due consideration to avoiding hazards with the shed was discussed in addition to the benefits to bird welfare of increasing perch space. The importance of perch design and height was also discussed.

'Tipping' poultry

The group discussed whether the RSPCA should look to include standards related to the 'tipping' of poultry i.e. the placement of day old chicks into the shed. The group indicated that some information and guidance in this area would be worthwhile and, therefore, the RSPCA will develop proposals for further consideration.

Proposed changes to standards and information boxes

The group considered proposed changes to the *RSPCA welfare standards for meat chickens* for possible inclusion in the next revision of the standards. The proposals related to many areas of the standards including stepped lighting, extended depopulation, appropriate enrichment items, range management plans and transport conditions. The proposals will be considered further.