



RSPCA welfare standards

Turkeys

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Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the 2026 version of the *RSPCA welfare standards for turkeys*. This update continues to build on previous versions. As such, these standards do not represent the end-point; they are a living document that is being continually reviewed and updated to drive progressive improvements to the lives of turkeys. Our core mission is to ensure that turkeys can live a good life and have a humane death.

Key amendments in this standards update include the following:

- **Poults:** New requirements for brood and move operations specify minimum feeding space for birds up to 1.5kg and allow for drinker provision to follow manufacturer guidelines.
- **Environment:** Standards for non-permanent housing now require independent surveys for site suitability. New requirements for electrical and gas safety maintenance, testing, and record-keeping have also been introduced. Enrichment provisions have been updated to allow for a wider variety of "pecking objects," with new requirements for stock-keepers to monitor bird engagement and rotate under-utilised items.
- **The range:** The Housing Confinement Contingency Plan for free-range birds has been refined into specific standards to improve clarity during periods of mandatory housing.
- **Management:** Contingency planning for mass-culling has been elevated from guidance to a formal standard, ensuring units are prepared for notifiable disease outbreaks.
- **Transport:** Upright catching and carrying is now formally permitted for birds under 5kg and mandated for birds over 5kg, with a strong recommendation to move away from carrying birds inverted.
- **Slaughter/killing:** A section on manual head-only electrical stunning has been introduced, alongside a new requirement for a secondary back-up killing method to be available at the slaughterhouse.

We thank all those who assisted in the development of these standards and those that implement them.

Dr Marc Cooper

Head, Farm Animals

RSPCA

Introduction

The RSPCA welfare standards for turkeys cover the rearing, handling, transport and slaughter/killing of turkeys. Standards related to the hatching of poults are covered in a separate set of standards, the RSPCA welfare standards for hatcheries (chicks, poults and ducklings). The standards take account of UK legislation, government welfare codes, scientific research, veterinary advice, recommendations of the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) and the practical experience of the farming industry.

RSPCA.

Guide to the use of the RSPCA welfare standards

- It is expected that all relevant UK legislation regarding farm animal husbandry and welfare on-farm, during transport, and at the abattoir, will be fully implemented in addition to the RSPCA welfare standards.
- Farmers are required by law to have a thorough knowledge of the Defra Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock: Turkeys.
- In this document, the numbered requirements, e.g. FW 1.1, are the standards, all of which must be complied with.
- Some standards have been labelled as shown below, which have the following meaning:

LEGAL refers to a standard that is based on the UK legal requirement.

REVISED refers to a standard or information box that was in the previous edition of these standards but has been amended

NEW refers to a new standard or information box.

- In this document, boxed sections are referred to as information boxes (indicated by ). They are non-mandatory, but provide important information and guidance relating to an individual standard. They have been labelled as shown below, which have the following meanings:

AUDITING / CALCULATIONS may either state how a standard will be audited, or provide example calculations.

FUTURE DIRECTION may either indicate the intended future direction of the standards, such as potential future standards or amendments, or signal aspirational intentions, i.e. where the RSPCA would like a standard to be in the longer term.

RATIONALE / EVIDENCE BASE may: explain the importance (rationale) of applying a standard; provide the evidence base that underpins a standard; state the RSPCA's position; or, reference legislative requirements.

CLARIFICATION may: provide definitions; offer a comprehensive explanation; clarify what's permitted; provide advice on meeting a standard; or, clarify what *is* and *is not* acceptable.

ATTENTION draws attention to specific information to be aware of, such as: references to other relevant standards and appendices; encouraging those implementing the standards to discuss design and suitability of equipment with the RSPCA Farm Animals Department; encourage the installation of certain equipment at the earliest opportunity; and provide important advice, e.g. reminders to test equipment.

FURTHER INFORMATION may: encourage training, and provide links to relevant training/online tools; provide recommendations and links to external resources; or, state that the RSPCA is currently examining an issue and is seeking supporting evidence.

RSPCA Farm Animals Department

The RSPCA's Farm Animals Department is responsible for developing and maintaining these standards.

The Department works to continually develop and improve the standards using a range of information, including the latest scientific research and practical farming experience. We regularly consult with other animal welfare and agricultural scientists, veterinary surgeons, and farming industry representatives. This helps to ensure that the standards continue to be at the forefront of farm animal care and welfare, and are also achievable on commercial farms.

Please note that the RSPCA does not approve equipment, but sets standards to ensure any equipment permitted for use is managed appropriately to safeguard the welfare of animals.

We value constructive feedback regarding these standards - particularly from those implementing them. Such feedback can be discussed with RSPCA Farm Animals Department scientific and technical staff, by contacting them on the below details:

Address: Farm Animals Department
RSPCA
4th Floor Parkside
Chart Way
Horsham
West Sussex RH12 1GY

Email: farm-animals@rspca.org.uk

Poults

Poult sourcing

- P 1.1** Poults must be:
- a) hatched according to the *RSPCA welfare standards for hatcheries*
 - b) sourced from a hatchery that has been approved by the certification scheme assessing these standards as being compliant with the *RSPCA welfare standards for hatcheries*.

Specific provisions for turkey poults

- P 2.1** For producers implementing brood and move operations, birds must be moved to their finishing/rearing accommodation by 8 weeks of age.
- P 2.2** **REVISED** Sufficient time must be allowed to ensure that the necessary target brooding temperature at bird level is achieved prior to the poults being placed, allowing for differences in the time of year and external temperature.
- P 2.3** **REVISED** Up to the first 10 days of life, the following parameters must meet at least the levels specified within the breeding company's published management guidelines:
- a) the number of feeders placed
 - b) the number of drinkers placed
 - c) stocking density
 - d) air quality parameters
 - e) ventilation rates.



ATTENTION After the first 10 days of life, for the above parameters producers should refer to the levels specified by the *RSPCA welfare standards for turkeys*.

- P 2.3.1** **NEW** Records relating to P 2.3 must be kept for 12 months.
- P 2.4** During unloading and placement, poults must be handled carefully.
- P 2.5** Care must be taken to avoid heat and cold stress in poults.
- P 2.6** Throughout the brooding period, the behaviour of the poults must be closely monitored and the brooding temperature adjusted accordingly.
- P 2.7** The environment for brooding poults must be lit at a minimum of 25 lux for the first few days.
- P 2.8** **REVISED** During the initial stage of brooding:
- a) supplementary feed trays must be provided
 - b) extra steps must be taken to ensure that poults can easily access water.



NEW CLARIFICATION In many cases, standard P 2.8 b) can be achieved by raising the water level in existing drinkers, by for example:

- using float balls to increase the water level
- pre-filling the lower sections of nipple or cup drinkers.

Alternatively, additional water containers could be provided.

P 2.9 Feeders and drinkers must be kept clean and free from litter.

P 2.10 Where spot brooding is used:

- a) particular care must be taken in the placement and maintenance of brooder heaters to ensure against risk of fire and emission of noxious gases, for example carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide
- b) the brooder must be suspended above the centre of the surround
- c) the height of the brooder must be adjustable to ensure that the temperature at the level of the litter is maintained at the optimum level
- d) brooder surrounds and feeding and watering equipment within the surround must be designed and constructed such that poults can move freely towards or away from the brooder
- e) supplementary lighting must be hung next to the brooder for the first few days after placement to attract poults to the heat source and provide extra illumination of feeders and drinkers
- f) care must be taken to ensure that feeders do not become hot, especially when metal feeders are used.

P 2.11 Natural daylight must be provided to the birds:

- a) as early as possible, and by no later than 10 days of age
- b) through all the required openings (see standard P 2.12) by no later than 17 days of age.



CLARIFICATION Birds should be exposed to natural daylight as early as possible. However, standard P 2.11 requires some level of natural light to be provided from no later than 10 days of age, which can then be increased over the following seven days so that birds are exposed to the full natural daylight provision (see standard P 2.12) by no later than 17 days of age.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Research shows that ultraviolet (UV) light can encourage foraging and feeding behaviours, improve bone calcification and help reduce injurious pecking. As windows can filter out UV light, the inclusion of artificial UV lamps in the house is strongly encouraged.

P 2.12 The natural light openings in the house must correspond to at least 3% of the total floor area of the house.

Brood and move

P 3.1 For brood and move operations:

- a) birds must only be moved to another accommodation once in their lifetime
- b) poults reared with bell drinkers must not be moved to a finishing shed with nipple drinkers (cup drinkers are permitted)
- c) **NEW** for birds weighing up to 1.5kg, if circular feeders are used, a minimum 5mm of feeding space must be provided and accessible for each bird (standard FW 1.10 applies for birds weighing over 1.5kg)
- d) **NEW** for birds weighing up to 1.5kg, if cup/pendulum drinkers are used, these must be provided and accessible for each bird to at least the manufacturer's recommended stocking rate (standard FW 2.7 applies for birds weighing over 1.5kg)
- e) each brooding shed must each be managed as 'all-in / all-out'.

Food and water

Livestock need to have ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and promote a positive state of well-being.

Food

- FW 1.1** **REVISED** **LEGAL** All units must have a written feeding programme to ensure that turkeys are fed a wholesome diet which:
- a) is of appropriate quality
 - b) is appropriate to their breed/strain
 - c) is appropriate to their age
 - d) is appropriate to their sex
 - e) is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health
 - f) satisfies their nutritional needs.

- FW 1.2** **NEW** In flocks with uneven growth, a proportion of feeders and drinkers must be lowered, reflecting the number of smaller birds present within the flock.

- FW 1.2.1** **NEW** These lower-level feeders and drinkers must be distributed throughout the house and not restricted to a single location.

- FW 1.3** **REVISED** **LEGAL** Producers must:
- a) keep a written record confirming the nutritional composition of all purchased and home-mixed feed
 - b) retain statutory feed statements.

- FW 1.3.1** **NEW** Records relating to FW 1.3 must be kept for 12 months.

- FW 1.4** **LEGAL** No feedstuffs containing mammalian or avian derived protein are permitted.



NEW FURTHER INFORMATION The RSPCA is aware of ongoing developments regarding the potential use of insect protein in poultry feed, and has concerns regarding the welfare of these animals. The RSPCA will continue to closely monitor progress in this area.

- FW 1.5** **REVISED** **LEGAL** The use of antibiotic or hormonal growth promoters is prohibited.

- FW 1.6** In-feed antibiotics may only be given for therapeutic reasons under the direction of the attending veterinary surgeon.

- FW 1.7** **REVISED** **LEGAL** Feed must be safely and hygienically transported, stored and delivered to stock, to prevent:
- a) infestation
 - b) contamination
 - c) wetting.

- FW 1.8** Food must not be allowed to remain in a contaminated or stale condition.

- FW 1.9** Where troughs are used, there must be a minimum of 30mm feeding space per bird, which may need to be increased depending on lighting programmes.

- FW 1.10** **REVISED** Where circular or pan feeders are used, these must be:
- a) designed and manufactured for use with turkeys
 - b) provided and accessible at the following minimum rates
 - i. birds up to 11kg liveweight, 10mm feeding space per bird
 - ii. birds over 11kg liveweight, 15mm feeding space per bird.
- FW 1.11** Track feeders/feeder chains are prohibited.
- FW 1.12** **NEW** Feeders must be approximately evenly distributed about the house.
- FW 1.13** **NEW** Turkeys must not have to travel more than 7m anywhere in the house to reach food.
- FW 1.14** **NEW** All feeders must:
- a) be in working order
 - b) contain feed at all times except when required by the attending veterinary surgeon
 - c) be hygienically managed.
- FW 1.15** **REVISED** Wire over feeders must not be:
- a) electrified
 - b) connected to any electrical source.



CLARIFICATION Where used, wire over feeders should be covered with plastic tubing to help discourage birds from attempting to perch on it.

Water

- FW 2.1** **REVISED** **LEGAL** Turkeys must have access to water:
- a) that is clean and fresh
 - b) at all times, except when required by the attending veterinary surgeon.
- FW 2.2** **REVISED** The quality of drinking water must be:
- a) independently tested by a certified laboratory
 - b) tested every 6 months, or where there is only one flock per year, tested prior to bird placement
 - c) tested at the point of consumption for mains water, borehole water, and stores water (e.g. from storage tanks), and
 - d) tested at the source for borehole water.
- FW 2.2.1** **REVISED** The water quality test records relating to standard FW 2.2 must:
- a) be independently interpreted by a testing facility or vet
 - b) explicitly state whether the water is considered an acceptable source of drinking water for livestock
 - c) be kept for at least two years.



NEW CLARIFICATION Results in relation to FW 2.2.1, should be:

Constituent	Maximum value
Total viable count	<1,000 cfus/ml
Coliforms	<100 colony forming units (cfus)/ml
Total hardness	110 mg/l
Magnesium	125 mg/l
Iron	0.3 mg/l
Chloride	150 mg/l
Sulfates	200 mg/l
Nitrates	25 mg/l
Lead	0.014 mg/l
Copper	0.6 mg/l
Zinc	1.5 mg/l
pH	5-8

Regarding water hardness and mineral levels; these are industry recommended levels (from Management Guidelines for Commercial Turkeys- version 4. Published by Aviagen turkeys, available online). If the water hardness and mineral test results show a deviation from these levels that is considered significant to bird health, there should be evidence documenting actions taken to improve this. For example, this could include the installation of borehole filters, or an exploration of the feasibility of moving from borehole to mains supply.



ATTENTION It is important to stress that water quality may change over time and therefore one should not rely on past analysis. Although water testing should be conducted routinely under normal circumstances, any unusual situation such as changes in water smell, clarity, taste or changes in animals eating or drinking habits, loss of performance or health problems should immediately trigger the need for re-testing.

FW 2.3 **LEGAL** Water must not be allowed to remain in a contaminated or stale condition.

FW 2.4 Provision must be made for supplying water in freezing conditions.

FW 2.5 **REVISED** A water storage tank (with fitted lid) must be installed on-site which is capable of providing water to the flock of all ages for a period of at least 24 hours when the primary water supply is cut off.

FW 2.6 Header tanks must be covered at all times.

FW 2.7 The minimum number of drinkers which must be provided are as follows:

Bell	1 per 100 turkeys
Nipple	1 per 10 turkeys
Cup/pendulum	1 per 28 turkeys

FW 2.8 There must be a minimum of two drinkers available to a flock.

FW 2.9 All drinkers must be in working order, providing access at all times to clean, fresh water.

FW 2.10 The siting of drinkers must be such that all birds have ready access to water without undue competition.

FW 2.11**REVISED** Drinkers must be:

- a) of a design that reduces water wastage
- b) of an appropriate design to enable the birds to drink freely
- c) approximately evenly distributed about the house
- d) placed at optimum height for the size and age of the birds.

FW 2.12**NEW** Turkeys must not have to travel more than 7m anywhere in the house to reach water.**FW 2.13**

Water meters must be connected to all the birds' drinking systems to monitor water consumption for each house (see standard M 2.9).



NEW CLARIFICATION The requirement for water meters to be installed for each house ensures that water consumption can be monitored on a flock basis. This is important, as changes in water consumption can help provide an early indication of any health issues arising. However, for this to be an effective tool, the approximate number of birds within a house needs to be known.

In some free-range systems, where birds are kept in non-permanent houses, birds from different houses can share the same range area and therefore the number of birds within a house can vary day-to-day. In this case, monitoring water consumption for a house is unlikely to provide useful data. Therefore, measuring water consumption for the flock, i.e. all the birds from different houses that share a common range, is more appropriate.

On this basis, where free-range turkeys are kept on a single site, are housed in more than one mobile house (i.e. houses not exceeding 150m² floor space), have access to the same range area at the same time, and can move freely between each house, and the number of birds on that single site does not exceed 15,000, then a single water meter can be used to record and monitor water consumption for these birds as a flock.

FW 2.14**REVISED** Wire over drinkers must not be:

- a) electrified
- b) connected to any electrical source.



CLARIFICATION Where used, wire over drinkers should be covered with plastic tubing to help discourage birds from attempting to perch on it.

FW 2.15**NEW** All drinkers must be hygienically managed.

Environment

The environment in which livestock are kept needs to take into account their welfare needs and be designed to protect them from physical and thermal discomfort, fear and distress, and allow them to perform their natural behaviours.



NEW CLARIFICATION Turkey housing is categorised as either permanent (fixed structures like naturally or mechanically ventilated sheds) or non-permanent (mobile structures such as polytunnels and mobile sheds).



NEW FURTHER INFORMATION The RSPCA has concerns over the design and construction of some types of polytunnels with regards to their ability to provide a suitable environment for turkeys. The RSPCA is currently reviewing these structures, and may include new standards on polytunnels in the future.

- E 1.1** Where management systems, designs or layout of facilities not covered in the *RSPCA welfare standards* are being employed or considered, these must be referred to, and discussed with, the RSPCA Farm Animals Department before they can be considered for certification.
- E 1.2** **REVISED** Prior to changes being made to existing buildings, and/or new equipment being installed that has not previously been assessed, managers must inform the certification scheme responsible for assessing against these standards.



ATTENTION It is strongly recommended to discuss any proposed changes, referred to in standard E 1.2, in relation to the *RSPCA welfare standards* with the RSPCA Farm Animals Department.

Buildings

- E 2.1** **LEGAL** All turkeys must be provided with accommodation.
- E 2.1.1** **LEGAL** Housing must be designed, erected and maintained so as to be suitable for local weather conditions and to withstand expected seasonal extremes of weather.



CLARIFICATION Windbreaks, such as straw bales or netting, should be put in place on open sided barns to maintain a suitable environment and protect the birds from seasonal extremes of weather.

- E 2.1.2** **NEW** If damage to a house occurs that can affect the welfare of the birds then it must be repaired promptly to rectify the issue.
- E 2.2** **NEW** Producers must not erect a house on a site that is unsuitable.



NEW CLARIFICATION Unsuitable sites include those that:

- are located on a floodplain or in an area prone to flooding
- have poor soil drainage, which can lead to rising damp (especially in non-permanent housing)
- do not have adequate access for vehicles, including those for services and hauliers, which can impede daily operations and emergency access
- are in a location that makes it difficult to manage the site effectively under all weather conditions (e.g. exposed to strong winds).



NEW CLARIFICATION Standard E 2.2 includes where an existing house is being replaced.

E 2.2.1 **NEW** To verify the suitability of a site for non-permanent housing, a site survey must be completed by an independent person/organisation possessing the necessary training and competence.



NEW CLARIFICATION A suitable person/organisation to conduct the site survey would include land or environmental advisory experts and soil scientists.

E 2.2.2 **NEW** With regard to E 2.2.1, the site survey must identify:

- a) any risks to site suitability, including:
 - i. poor soil drainage
 - ii. restricted access for vehicles
- b) any mitigating actions that can be taken to make the site suitable, e.g. installation of additional drainage, landscaping to improve access.

E 2.2.3 **NEW** If mitigation measures are recommended (see standard E 2.2.2 b)) these must be actioned before the house is placed.

E 2.3 New housing, or housing undergoing major structural change, must be designed to allow easy removal and minimal carrying and handling of birds during depopulation.

E 2.4 **REVISED** For all accommodation the following information must be prominently displayed at, or near, the entrance to each building:

- a) total floor area available to the birds
- b) total number of birds
- c) maximum number of birds permitted within the house
- d) stocking density
- e) total number of drinkers and feeders
- f) target air quality parameters
- g) lighting levels and regimes
- h) emergency procedures, i.e. actions in the case of fire, flood, failure of automatic equipment, and when temperatures move outside acceptable limits.
- i) the amount of light openings (windows) (see E 4.11 and E 4.12) and pophole (see R 2.3 and R 2.4) space provided.

- E 2.5** **LEGAL** There must be nothing in the turkeys' environment that is likely to cause unnecessary injury or distress to the birds.



CLARIFICATION Environmental factors which should be considered in relation to standard E 2.5 include noise, atmospheric pollution, adverse weather conditions, predators and, in the case of free-range systems, soil conditions.

- E 2.6** **NEW** All buildings, equipment (including livestock fencing and guttering) and facilities must be:

- a) fit for purpose
- b) well maintained.

- E 2.7** **NEW** Within the house husbandry practices and equipment must be managed to minimise unexpected loud noises.

- E 2.8** **NEW** The internal walls of permanent housing must be:

- a) unobstructed
- b) constructed of a durable material capable of withstanding clean-out procedures.

- E 2.9** **LEGAL** Except where preservatives with an insecticidal role are used, turkeys must not come into contact with toxic fumes or surfaces, for example from paints, wood preservatives or disinfectants.

- E 2.10** **NEW** All residual current devices (RCDs) must:

- a) be tested using the test button at least every six months, and
- b) records of testing be kept for three years.

- E 2.11** **NEW** All electrical installations must be maintained to ensure they:

- a) show no signs of damage
- b) show no signs of overheating
- c) have no missing parts
- d) are inaccessible to the turkeys
- e) are safeguarded from rodents.

- E 2.11.1** **NEW** To meet standard E 2.11:

- a) electrical installations must be checked annually, and
- b) records of the checks kept for three years.



NEW CLARIFICATION The term 'electrical installations' includes (but is not limited to) systems supplied by mains electricity, renewable energy sources (such as solar panels), battery storage systems, and generators.



NEW ATTENTION An Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) should be completed at least every three years by a qualified or competent person, and records retained.

- E 2.12** **NEW** Managers must ensure that gas installations and equipment are operated and maintained with particular care to prevent the risk of fire and carbon monoxide emissions.

- E 2.13** **REVISED** Housing and equipment must be designed so that all turkeys can be clearly seen during inspections.

E 2.14

NEW The apron must:

- a) be kept clean and tidy
- b) not offer shelter to wild birds or rodents
- c) be well-managed, with vegetation kept short
- d) be approximately level and even to facilitate the loading of birds at the time of placement and depopulation.



NEW CLARIFICATION The "apron" refers to the area immediately surrounding the outside of the house and is not determined by the substrate used.

Managing the area around the house, an area which can be heavily used by the birds, is particularly important, especially in helping prevent excessive wear and poaching.

Examples of materials that can help prevent poaching and aid in cleaning birds' feet include:

- gravel (stones ≥ 13 mm, as smaller stones cap quickly)
- bark
- slats or mesh (provided they do not risk damaging birds' feet)

Note: Materials like gravel and bark can be effective but may be difficult to clean.

Alternatively, concrete, which is easier to clean down, could be laid with plastic slats positioned on top. A combination of concrete and the other materials, e.g. gravel, could also be considered. The distance from the house that should be protected will depend on the individual unit, but as a guide should be at least 2m.

Floor and litter

E 3.1

Turkey house flooring must allow for effective cleansing and disinfection, preventing significant buildup of parasites and other pathogens.



CLARIFICATION Where possible, the house floor should be concrete that is well maintained.

E 3.2

NEW Internal floors of non-permanent housing must be maintained to prevent excessive moisture buildup from rising damp, leaks, or poor drainage.

E 3.2.1

NEW Areas of persistent wetness must be:

- a) identified
- b) rectified
- c) appropriately addressed to prevent recurring issues.

E 3.3

REVISED Prior to the placement of birds, all houses must be:

- a) thoroughly cleansed and disinfected (see standard H 4.10),
- b) tested to demonstrate the environmental bacteria load is satisfactory as specified in the Veterinary Health and Welfare Plan (VHWP) (see standard H 1.1).



NEW CLARIFICATION Demonstrating the environmental bacteria load is satisfactory refers to the testing required to evidence the hygienic status of the house. This should include testing of pre-placement swabs to assess Total Viable Count (TVC), as a minimum. Additional testing for specific pathogens (e.g. viruses or parasites) may be required as outlined in the Veterinary Health and Welfare Plan (VHWP).

E 3.4 The floor of all houses must be completely covered in litter.

E 3.4.1 **REVISED** The litter must:

- a) be of a suitable material and particle size
- b) be an average minimum depth of 5cm to allow for the dilution of faeces
- c) be managed to maintain it in a dry, friable condition
- d) be monitored and replaced immediately if it becomes wet or contaminated
- e) allow birds to dust bathe
- f) where needed, be topped up daily with fresh litter
- g) be managed hygienically to prevent disease, parasites and moulds
- h) not be introduced into the house if the litter is wet or otherwise contaminated.

E 3.5 Turkeys must have access to litter at all times.

Lighting



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Commercially employed illuminance and colour balance (from artificial light sources) may impose a degree of visual sensory deprivation in turkeys – inhibiting foraging, exploration and social behaviours¹. Not allowing birds to use their full range of visual abilities is likely to have negative consequences on their behaviour and welfare¹.

The introduction of natural light into turkey houses is likely to be beneficial to bird welfare by, for example, increasing activity and enriching the birds' environment and providing a range of illuminance levels in different areas within the house, which changes throughout the day. The light entering the house is also spectrally different to artificial sources, providing further variation.

Research has shown that turkeys demonstrate a greater preference to spend longer periods of time in brighter lit environments (20 and 200 lux versus 1 and 6 lux)¹.

¹Barber, C.L.; Prescott, N.B.; Wathes, C.M.; Le Sueur, C. and Perry, G.C. (2004) Preferences of growing ducklings and turkey poults for illuminance. *Animal Welfare*, 13:211-224..

E 4.1 **LEGAL** Adequate lighting, whether fixed or portable, must be available to enable the turkeys to be thoroughly inspected at any time.

- E 4.2** The lighting system in the turkey house must provide in each period of 24 hours:
- a) a minimum period of 8 hours continuous light, which must take place during the natural light period
 - b) a minimum period of 8 hours continuous darkness up to the time of catching, which must take place during the natural dark period, except:
 - i. where the birds are kept under natural lighting conditions and the natural period of darkness is shorter
 - ii. for birds up to three days of age.
- E 4.3** The use of intermittent lighting patterns to meet the minimum number of hours of darkness is not permitted, with the exception of the first 36 hours after placement.
- E 4.4** Lighting patterns in all houses must be recorded.



CLARIFICATION In the case of natural lighting, documenting that natural light patterns are followed would be sufficient to meet standard E 4.4.

Where possible, the lighting pattern in artificially lit houses should be recorded automatically.

- E 4.5** **REVISED** Natural daylight must be provided:
- a) at all times during the natural daylight period
 - b) through all the required openings (see standard E 4.11).
- E 4.6** Natural light must penetrate all areas of the house.
- E 4.7** **REVISED** The entry of natural light into the building must not be obstructed, except temporarily as part of a specific management strategy related to the following:
- a) preventing bright patches of daylight on the floor
 - b) reducing the risk of heat stress
 - c) creating darkness during catching
 - d) as a last resort in an emergency situation, to reduce injurious pecking behaviour.
- E 4.8** During the light period (see standard E 4.2 a)) no area must be lit at less than 20 lux.



CLARIFICATION On dark days, it may be necessary to use artificial lighting to ensure the 20 lux level is achieved.

- E 4.9** Outside the 8 hour light period (see standard E 4.2 a)), but not during the dark period, no area must be lit at less than 6 lux.



CLARIFICATION Where injurious pecking or cannibalism is a problem, or to minimise the risk of a problem, ongoing management techniques (such as increasing environmental enrichment, increasing visual barriers and/or altering the diet) should be put in place. Lighting levels should be maintained to allow and encourage birds to explore their environment. However, as a last resort in an emergency situation, and with the ongoing use of other possible solutions, lighting levels can be reduced (where possible). This should only be for a short period of time, to help the birds settle. Lighting should then be increased gradually over a few days and returned to normal levels as soon as possible.

Advice should be sought from the attending veterinary surgeon in relation to these issues.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Practical experience has shown that there are benefits to providing turkeys with a variable lighting level throughout the house. Darker areas provide the opportunity to rest whilst brighter lit areas allow birds to perform more active behaviours. Spatially variable lighting has also been reported to help reduce the incidence of feather pecking.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Scientific studies have demonstrated that turkeys actively avoid very low lighting levels, around 2 lux, and prefer more brightly lit conditions, especially during the first few weeks of life.

Research on turkey vision has identified that damage to the eyes occurs when birds are kept under either very dimly lit conditions and/or when they are exposed to prolonged lighting. This can lead to a condition known as 'buphthalmia', which can result in temporary or even permanent blindness.

There is evidence that such problems can arise when birds are kept at lighting levels as low as 2 to 5 lux, and even at 10 lux changes to the eye have been recorded. For this reason, the RSPCA does not permit the use of very low lighting levels for the turkey's environment, although the provision of shaded areas is permitted for resting. However, light levels should be adopted which are as bright as practicable.

- E 4.10** The lighting level (illuminance) must be measured at bird height.
- E 4.11** The light openings in the house must correspond to at least 3% of the total floor area of the house.
- E 4.12** At least 90% of all the light openings required to achieve standard E 4.11 must be no smaller than 0.56m² (e.g. 0.75 x 0.75m or 1.0 x 0.56m).



ATTENTION The RSPCA is aware of alternative methods of providing natural light other than through windows, such as solar tubes, which may not meet standards E 4.11 and E 4.12. Producers considering using novel technologies to provide natural daylight which do not meet the current standards should contact the RSPCA Farm Animals Department to discuss this.



CLARIFICATION It is acknowledged that it may not be possible to install light openings of a minimum of 0.56m² in all areas of the house to achieve standard E 4.12. Therefore, where this is the case, up to 10% of the light openings required to achieve standard E 4.12 are permitted to be smaller than 0.56m².

E 4.13 Where there are areas of different light intensity within the house, there must be:

- a) a gradual change in light intensity between each area
- b) no patches of bright light on the floor of the house.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Bird activity may be greater in more illuminated areas, which can adversely affect litter quality. Streams of bright light could also encourage injurious pecking, especially during the first few weeks of the bird's life.



CLARIFICATION Where it is possible that direct sunlight could enter through a light opening, it may be beneficial to use polycarbonate (rather than glass) windows, as they are better at diffusing light and can help avoid patches/streams of direct sunlight entering the building. Alternatively, horizontally mounted shutters, positioned above the windows, which can be adjusted up and down, can be used to block direct sunlight whilst still allowing natural daylight to enter the shed.

E 4.14 Measures must be taken to:

- a) prevent windows from breaking
- b) prevent birds coming into contact with glass if it breaks.



CLARIFICATION Standard E 4.14 could be achieved by, for example:

- i) erecting barriers, such as wire mesh
- ii) covering the window with a transparent self-adhesive vinyl film
- iii) selecting a window material that is more resistant to breaking, such as perspex.

Options ii) and iii) will also fulfil standard E 4.14 b). However, where option i) is selected, installing plastic guttering under the window, or the use of fine netting over the window that will capture broken glass, is acceptable.

E 4.15 Where glass is used, this must be safety/toughened glass.



REVISED CLARIFICATION When installing windows, the additional information and advice below should be taken into account:

Window material:

Those windows that help prevent condensation should be selected, e.g. double-glazed windows. Transparent windows will allow birds to see out of the building, further enriching their environment. Experience has also shown that exposing birds to events occurring outside the house at an early stage of their lives allows them to develop recognition and familiarity and therefore reduce their fearfulness towards them.

Positioning of windows:

Where possible, windows should be installed down both sides of a house. This allows greater control over the light entering the house. For example, if the shutters on one side of the house have to be closed to block out direct sunlight, then daylight can still enter through the windows on the opposite side.

Thermal environment:

The provision of natural daylight – particularly via windows – can affect environmental temperature within the house. Therefore it is important to consider the capacity of the ventilation system and the positioning of the ventilation inlets so that good ventilation and correct house temperature can be achieved. In the event of excessive heat, shutters can be used to block out sunlight. The shutters, especially if insulated, can also help keep the building warm during cold weather, which is especially important during the brooding phase. It is also important to ensure that windows are properly sealed, so correct air flow within the house can be maintained and draughts avoided.

E 4.16 Birds must be exposed to the natural dawn and dusk periods.

E 4.17 When used outside the natural daylight period, for example, to extend the natural daylight period and prior to 10 days of age (see standard P 2.11), artificial lights must be switched on and off:

- a) in a stepped or gradual manner
- b) over a period of at least 30 minutes.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE The inclusion of ultraviolet (UV) light can have beneficial effects on turkey health, for example, by improving bone strength (also see standard E 7.8). Where UV light is provided, a uniform distribution should be achieved, as patches of light could become a focus for pecking behaviour. It should also be noted that glass windows can filter out UV light and, therefore, remove its beneficial effects.

E 4.18 **REVISED** Where windows are used, it must be possible to readily control the amount of natural daylight entering the building to the extent that darkness can be achieved.



NEW FUTURE DIRECTION The RSPCA acknowledges the practical challenges of controlling natural daylight in non-permanent structures, such as polytunnels. The RSPCA is currently exploring potential solutions to improve light control in these buildings and will provide more guidance on this in future editions of the standards.



CLARIFICATION Installing, for example, shutters can help control the amount of light entering through the light opening. Shutters are especially important to control the ingress of direct sunlight, which can increase the risk of heat stress. The shutters can be used to block daylight entering the house, which is useful during catching and also at night where events outside the house could cause birds to panic. To have the greatest amount of control over the light entering the house it should be possible to open/close the shutters by varying degrees.

- E 4.19** Where used, windows must be properly sealed to maintain correct airflow within the house and avoid draughts.

Stocking density

- E 5.1** Stocking density, which is calculated using the floor space available to the birds, must never:
- exceed 25kg/m²
 - be planned to exceed 25kg/m² (applies to current flock).



CLARIFICATION Stocking density should be set at a level which is appropriate to the design of the building, its locality, and must take account of the ventilation capacity of the building in order to maintain adequate temperatures to avoid heat stress (also see standard M 2.11).



CLARIFICATION Breed performance and historical data from previous flocks should form part of the plan for calculating stocking density for standard E 5.1 b).

- E 5.2** The number of birds placed in a building must be no more than the number required to rear all the birds to the maximum stocking density once, which is to be at depopulation, hence thinning is not permitted.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Thinning is characterised by placing additional birds into a building so that the maximum stocking density can be reached on one or more occasions prior to final depopulation (the removal of all birds from the building). During the rearing period, a proportion of the birds are removed from the building at planned times to ensure the maximum stocking density is not exceeded. Therefore, thinning is defined as the planned removal of a proportion of birds, on one or more occasions, from a building so as not to exceed the required maximum stocking density.

As an example, as the maximum stocking density is 25kg/m², if you intend to rear the birds to a maximum weight of 5kg at depopulation, then no more than 5 birds/m² can be placed in the building (i.e. 25 / 5 = 5).

Air quality and thermal environment

E 6.1 **LEGAL** Ventilation systems, natural or forced, must be designed to maintain air quality.

E 6.2 Provision must be made to ensure that aerial contaminants do not reach a level at which they are noticeably unpleasant to a human observer.



CLARIFICATION Air quality parameters should be maintained, under all foreseeable climatic conditions, below the following levels at bird head height:

Ammonia	5ppm
Carbon dioxide	5000ppm
Relative humidity	50 to 70%
Inhalable dust	10mg/m ³
Carbon monoxide	50ppm

Where practically feasible, air quality parameters, i.e. ammonia, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, etc. should be measured and recorded on a weekly basis. Where a level higher than that specified within the *RSPCA welfare standards* is recorded, daily recordings should be made until an acceptable level is achieved and maintained.

Where possible, these levels should be automatically recorded. Where automatic recording is not possible, producers should monitor and record air quality on a daily basis.



AUDITING/ CALCULATIONS The number, size and capacity of the fans are an important consideration when determining ventilation rate.

A minimum ventilation rate of $1.6 \times 10^{-4} \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ per $\text{kg}^{0.75}$ liveweight is recommended. The maximum ventilation capacity should be sufficient to limit a maximum temperature lift of 3°C.

E 6.3 Provision must be made to ensure that turkeys have access to a thermally comfortable environment at all times so that heat/cold stress does not occur.

E 6.4 **REVISED** The following parameters must be recorded daily from the centre of the house and at either end, at bird height:

- maximum temperature
- minimum temperature
- relative humidity (for forced ventilation system housing only).



NEW RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Recording the maximum and minimum temperatures from three points in the house (centre and either end) ensures that any variations in environmental conditions are identified. Recording these six readings helps in early identification of temperature differences and allows for timely intervention to maintain thermal comfort.



NEW RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Even in naturally ventilated housing, recording humidity can help identify problems with management of the internal environment. This can be particularly useful when free-range birds are being housed due to a housing order, reflecting the increased risk of high humidity developing. The RSPCA recommends that all sites have humidity monitoring equipment available and that it is used to help monitor and manage the air quality within the house.

E 6.5 Stock-keepers must:

- a) have access to a copy of the Defra booklet, *Heat Stress in Poultry – Solving the problem* (PB 10543, 2005)
- b) be familiar with its content
- c) adopt its recommendations.

Environmental enrichment



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Turkeys are naturally inquisitive and explore their environment by pecking to investigate objects. The provision of effective and suitable forms of environmental enrichment can encourage increased activity levels and has been shown to reduce pecking directed towards other birds and promote good health.

E 7.1 All environmental enrichment provisions must be:

- a) made available by 14 days of age at the latest
- b) maintained/replaced throughout the rearing period as necessary.



ATTENTION Standard E 7.1 applies especially to straw bales, which can be dismantled by the birds very quickly.

E 7.2 **REVISED** For every 500 birds the following provisions must be provided as a minimum:

- a) one large (e.g. 250kg bale) or two small (i.e. conventional rectangular approximately 18kg) long chopped straw bales.
- b) two metres of perch space (in addition to straw bales)
- c) two pecking objects e.g. pecking blocks, brassicas (e.g. cabbage, cauliflower, sprouts, broccoli), maize stalks, pumpkins, rope, hanging items (e.g. plastic drinking bottles, livestock ear tags, CDs).



CLARIFICATION In relation to standard E 7.1 a), two small (i.e. conventional rectangular) straw bales, are not equivalent to one large (e.g. 250kg bale) straw bale in terms of the quantity of straw provided. When using two small bales it may therefore be necessary to replenish them more frequently to ensure that standard E 7.6 b) is met.



REVISED CLARIFICATION If rope is provided as a pecking object, it is recommended to provide it at lengths of approximately 30cm long and knotted near each end to prevent the entire rope from fraying. Rope could also be suspended at turkey head height and knotted at the end.

E 7.3 **NEW** All pecking objects provided must be safe for bird use.

E 7.4 **NEW** Stock-keepers must:

- a) monitor how birds interact with pecking objects to assess whether the enrichment is being used and remains engaging
- b) replace or rotate any items that are under-utilised.

E 7.5 **NEW** A variety of pecking objects must be provided.



REVISED ATTENTION Stock-keepers are encouraged to use additional enrichment items, which are safe for bird use, to encourage greater bird activity and reduce/avoid injurious pecking.

E 7.6 **REVISED** Perches must:

- a) be appropriate to the size and weight of the birds
- b) be designed to avoid damage to any region of the bird
- c) support the whole of the bird's foot
- d) allow the bird to curl its toes around it to allow the bird to express its normal perching behaviour
- e) be deep enough so that the turkey cannot puncture its own footpad by curling its toenails around the bottom
- f) be elevated
- g) be accessible and easily seen by the birds.



CLARIFICATION As a guide, practical experience has shown that:

- a suitable perch height can range from approximately 20 to 150cm, but should be adjusted according to the size and breed of the turkeys being reared
- turkeys prefer a 5 x 7.5cm (height x width) timber perch with rounded edges
- turkeys should be provided with approximately 40cm of perch space per bird
- approximately 40% of birds can choose to perch at any one time, which is important for calculating the total amount of perching space to provide to a flock.

Where applicable, sufficient space should be provided to allow birds to perch adjacent to each other.

It may be beneficial to the birds to provide perches of varying widths to cater for birds of different sizes and allow the bird to vary where its body weight is positioned on its foot.



FUTURE DIRECTION Experience and advice suggests that turkeys like to use elevated solid table structures to stand and rest on, and that turkeys of around 10 weeks and older may prefer these to elevated lengths of perching. The standards will be reviewed as more information becomes available, but the RSPCA would currently recommend that safe and appropriate table structures may be a beneficial addition to the turkeys' environment and that careful consideration is given to the perching requirements of turkeys reared above 10 weeks of age (while meeting standard E 7.2, and with reference to standard E 7.6).



CLARIFICATION Allowing birds to perch on top of drinker or feeder lines will not satisfy standard E 7.2. Birds perching on drinker lines could:

- a) contaminate drinking water with faecal material and/or dirt from their feet
- b) restrict other birds from accessing the drinkers
- c) defecate on birds that are drinking.

Crates and straw bales will not count towards the perching space requirement.



ATTENTION It is advised that perches be made visible by, for example, painting them white or using brightly coloured adhesive strips, to help birds negotiate them during the dark period.

To encourage use, the perches could be placed in the darker areas of the shed.

E 7.7 Where perches are aligned adjacent to each other, there must be a sufficient gap between perches to allow the turkey to grip the perch without risk of trapping its feet.

E 7.8 **NEW** For adjacent perches to be counted as separate perch space there must be sufficient space between them for birds to comfortably use both perches simultaneously.

E 7.9 **NEW** Perches must:

- a) have sufficient clear space above the perch to allow birds to stand in a normal upright position
- b) be positioned to minimise the fouling of any birds perching below.

E 7.10 **NEW** When a perch runs parallel to a wall, there must be sufficient space between the perch and the wall to enable birds to perch comfortably.

E 7.11 Turkeys must be provided with visual barriers.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Visual barriers are items, such as straw bales and free-standing feeders, which can be used by the birds to seek a degree of refuge and rest from other birds. Research has shown that, in addition to other enrichment items, injuries caused by feather pecking can be reduced by providing four free-standing plywood boards (measuring 120 x 30cm (length x height)) for each 20m² of floor space, with a 25cm length of metal chain attached 5cm from the top in the middle of the board as a pecking attraction.

E 7.12 If injurious pecking is known to be a problem on the farm, e.g. from experience with the previous or current flock/s, then:

- a) the entire building must be lit with UV light, and
- b) the number of enrichment items required under standard E 7.1 must be increased by at least 25% until the problem is under control.



CLARIFICATION Natural daylight provides a source of UV light (e.g. as in a pole barn system). However, windows can filter out much of the UV light in natural daylight. Therefore, where birds are not exposed to UV light within the building from a natural source, UV light can be provided using artificial sources, i.e. blacklight blue fluorescent tubes.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Research has shown that the provision of UV lighting from an artificial source (Phillips TL D, 36W/08 blacklight blue lamps), in addition to other enrichment items, can help reduce the incidence of injuries caused by feather pecking.

It has also been shown that turkeys prefer UV enriched environments, as UV light is thought to allow turkeys to pick up on visual cues, which may be important for the performance of a range of visually mediated behaviours and for recognition of other flock members.

Climate change and animal welfare



REVISED FUTURE DIRECTION Changing weather patterns attributable to climate change are affecting all farmed species. These include high temperatures, rapid and unpredictable temperature fluctuations, high and low rainfall, strong winds, and increased sunlight and humidity. Future planning will need to take these scenarios into account. Increased contingency planning will also be required to safeguard welfare against these more extreme weather events.

Animals kept outdoors are likely to require improved provision of shelter from direct sun, wind and rain. On some soil types, sustained rainfall increases the risk of deep mud, which increases the risks of disease and injury from slippage. If heavy rain is followed by a heatwave, poaching produces hard, uneven ground that further increases injury risk. Lower stocking densities may help mitigate these effects. Local microclimates may either reduce or intensify climate change impacts.

The range

The RSPCA believes that free-range conditions can offer considerable benefits to bird welfare, provided the range area is well-managed and the birds are offered suitable protection against inclement weather and predators. Where range is provided, the following standards need to be met in addition to all other relevant standards in other sections of this document.

- R 1.1** A Range Management Plan, incorporating the standards in the range section, must be developed, implemented and annually updated.



REVISED CLARIFICATION The Range Management Plan (see standard R 1.1) is intended to help focus on range quality and management as well as showing how the range standards are being met.

As a guide, the following should be included:

- map – total range area, location of shade/shelters, natural cover, enrichment, rotated areas
- general details about the range – total available area, number of birds, stocking density
- protective overhead shade/shelter – type (natural/artificial), amount
- natural cover – type, amount (expected area if not fully grown)
- enrichment areas for dustbathing/perching/foraging – type, number, management
- range use – e.g. shelters/enrichment rotation
- strategy for heavily worn and poached areas
- strategy to minimise build-up of parasites/disease
- details of any planned rotation of range areas
- details of management of the area directly outside the popholes
- procedure before new flock is placed – plan for heavily contaminated areas
- general comments – observations of range use and any future plans
- how the area surrounding the building will be prevented from flooding during wet weather.

- R 1.2** **REVISED** The outdoor area in free-range systems must:

- a) be designed and managed in ways which ensure that the areas do not become poached
- b) consist of pasture mainly covered by living vegetation.



NEW RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE The requirement for outdoor areas to consist mainly of living vegetation is to ensure good ground cover, helping to prevent poaching. Maintaining healthy vegetation supports bird welfare by providing a dry, stable surface and encouraging natural ranging behaviour.



CLARIFICATION Commercial arable crops are not regarded as acceptable vegetation and will be excluded from calculations for range stocking density.

- R 1.3** If birds have access to any commercial arable crop then:
- the crop must only be planted outside the perimeter of the range, to allow birds uninterrupted access to all parts of the range
 - the crop must not be detrimental to bird welfare
 - birds must not be exposed to any crop management practice that may cause them harm, e.g. spraying, pesticide use, sowing, cropping etc.
- R 1.4** Free-range turkeys must have access to a well-drained area for resting whilst outside the building.
- R 1.5** Mobile houses must be moved with sufficient regularity to avoid fowl sick and continuous muddy conditions.
- R 1.6** The range must be managed in order to provide the most suitable conditions to encourage the birds to roam.



CLARIFICATION Standard R 1.6 can be achieved by, for example:

- positioning shade and shelter facilities at varying distances from the house
- the rotation of artificial shelters in order to prevent poaching of the land around them
- the trimming of hedgerows so that access is provided underneath
- restricting access to certain areas of the range as and when necessary in order to prevent poaching of the land
- managing poached areas to aid recovery and prevent poaching reoccurring in the same area
- an appreciation of the need to take individual flock behaviour into account: some flocks may be reluctant to range and therefore need encouraging by, for example, providing a sheltered route, or 'corridor', onto the range.

- R 1.7** **REVISED** A site-specific written Housing Confinement Contingency Plan must be:
- developed:
 - with advice from your vet
 - to safeguard the welfare and behavioural needs of the birds during periods of confinement
 - included in the VHWP.
- R 1.8** **REVISED** The Housing Confinement Contingency Plan must be implemented for free-range birds during periods of confinement, for example when there is a high risk of spread of a contagious disease and the government requires birds to be housed.

R 1.9

REVISED The Housing Confinement Contingency Plan must detail:

- a) the additional biosecurity measures that will be implemented to protect the birds, where there's a high risk of spread of a contagious disease, including the measures taken to:
 - i. prevent wild birds entering the house
 - ii. safely store any enrichment items, e.g. straw bales, to ensure they do not become contaminated and present a biosecurity risk when provided to the birds
- b) the additional/novel enrichment items that will be provided to encourage foraging behaviour, including, the:
 - i. type of items
 - ii. number of items
 - iii. management of the items
- c) how the litter will be managed to prevent heavily worn or poached areas forming
- d) dustbathing provisions, including, the:
 - i. type of provision
 - ii. material/s used
 - iii. management of the provisions
- e) additional measures that can be implemented if aggression and feather pecking occur (barriers, enrichment, lighting)
- f) a section that is to be completed following a period of housing that reviews what worked well and what could be improved in the future should the birds need to be housed again.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE The Housing Confinement Contingency Plan (see standard R 1.7 to R 1.9) is intended to ensure a suitable environment is provided to meet the welfare and behavioural needs of the turkeys and reduce any stress that may be caused during periods of confinement.

Access to the range

R 2.1

LEGAL For free-range systems, managers must be compliant with the EU Poultrymeat Marketing Standards Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 including stocking densities and access to range.



REVISED RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Legal requirements (as detailed in Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008) for turkeys reared in 'free-range' systems include:

- minimum 4m² range area per bird
- access to range for at least half their lifetime
- at least 4m of pophole length per 100m² of house floorspace.

R 2.2

Free-range turkeys must have continuous daytime access to the range for a minimum of 8 hours each day except when the natural daylight period is less.

R 2.3

There must be a minimum of two popholes per building.



ATTENTION In some circumstances (for example, in unfavourable weather conditions and when turkeys are not fully grown) pophole height and/or number may need to be adjusted in order to manage the temperature and environment inside the house to safeguard the welfare of the birds. For this reason it is strongly recommended that more than the minimum number of popholes are installed to allow for adjustment. For example, to remain compliant with the requirements on a windy day, only popholes on the leeward side could be opened if there are a sufficient number installed.

R 2.4 Each pophole must be:

- a) a minimum of 75cm high, but in any case the height of the pophole must ensure that the tallest birds have sufficient clearance between their head and the top of the pophole to adopt a normal standing position under the pophole
- b) a minimum of 1.5m wide to allow the passage of more than one turkey at any one time.



AUDITING/ CALCULATIONS As a build-up of the litter may reduce the pophole space available to the birds over time, the pophole height will only be measured according to the usable space available to the birds.

R 2.5 Popholes must:

- a) be evenly distributed along the entire length of the building
- b) ensure birds have ready, unhindered access to the range.



ATTENTION It is strongly recommended that where there is a step at the base of the pophole, such as a concrete plinth, it should be no higher than 10cm. If it is higher than 10cm, ramps should be provided which run along the entire length of the pophole.

R 2.6 Turkeys must have a clear view of the range from within the building when adopting a normal standing position at the pophole.

R 2.7 All popholes must be kept open to satisfy standard R 2.2, except when this is precluded by adverse weather conditions or veterinary advice.

Verandas



FUTURE DIRECTION It is strongly recommended that verandas are installed on turkey units.

The RSPCA are currently considering a requirement for verandas in future editions of the standards.

Verandas provide fresh air and natural light whilst reducing exposure to sun, wind and rain.

By reducing the stocking density in the house, verandas can help to better manage and maintain litter condition and encourage greater activity.

Verandas provide an excellent location for additional foraging materials and dust-baths without leading to crowding of the house.

For free-range systems, verandas may also encourage ranging and can help protect the litter within the main house.

Further, during a disease outbreak, a housing order may be put in place for free-range birds. In such situations, a veranda can help offer the additional space, litter and natural light the birds are used to whilst preventing contact with wild bird populations.

Due to the variation in turkey unit designs, any producers considering installing a veranda should contact the RSPCA Farm Animals Department.

Shade and shelter

R 3.1

REVISED Overhead shade and shelter (natural and/or artificial) must:

- be of sound construction, secure and not pose any welfare risks, including injury, to the birds
- be of sufficient height to ensure all birds can adopt a normal standing position under it, with sufficient head space
- offer adequate protection from inclement weather and overhead predators
- be provided at an area of at least 10m² per 1,000 birds
- in summer conditions, be of sufficient size such that the birds do not have to crowd together (thereby risking further heat stress)
- be available at all times the birds have access to the range
- be distributed appropriately to encourage full use of the range.



AUDITING/ CALCULATIONS Some turkeys may need more shade and shelter in the summer months to minimise the risk of heat stress and crowding in shaded areas, as well as to further encourage ranging behaviour. Shelter provision can be calculated on the basis of the formula: $m^2 = ((N \times 0.3)W)/D$ where N is the number of birds in the flock, W is the expected average bird live weight at depopulation and D is the maximum stocking density recommended by Defra. For example, 500 birds reared to 7kg would be stocked at 41.7kg/m² according to Defra and therefore require a minimum total shelter area of 25m² (i.e. $m^2 = ((500 \times 0.3)7)/41.7$). This could take the form of 2 x 12.5m² areas, for example.



CLARIFICATION Calculations of the overhead shade/shelter area will be based on the amount of shade provided by the object/facility. Vegetation that does not provide overhead shade/shelter, and therefore cannot be included in the calculation of 10m² per 1,000 turkeys, includes: a) immature trees that have yet to produce foliage, and b) deciduous trees when they have lost their foliage, e.g. during winter. In such cases, artificial shelters will need to be provided until trees are mature. Hedgerows may be included in calculations of overhead shade/shelter provided that there is enough room underneath for turkeys to access. However, at certain times of the day, the position of the sun may mean that the hedgerow is not offering any protection in terms of shade. As shade/shelter must be appropriately distributed, hedgerows alone will not meet standard R 3.1 d).

- R 3.2** Natural cover must be present in the form of existing or newly planted trees/shrubs/cover crops/other at an area equal to at least 5% of the total range area (this may include natural cover meeting the requirements of standard R 3.1d)).



CLARIFICATION Research and experience has shown the potential of natural cover to help encourage birds to use the range more fully. Natural cover may include the planting of trees and shrubs or semi-permanent vegetation that can easily be established and removed, such as artichoke and kale.

A well-managed range should include a variety of different types of natural cover and areas of interest for turkeys. Wide open spaces should be avoided and the provision of moveable artificial shelters, enriched areas (standard R 3.3) and newly planted areas can help to achieve an appropriate distribution of elements.

The requirements of standard R 3.2 differ to those of standard R 3.1 d) in that 'natural cover' focuses on enrichment of the range, while 'shade and shelter' must offer actual overhead protection at all times. For any newly planted natural cover, the area that the vegetation is expected to cover when mature will be taken into account for calculating compliance. For example, when mature, trees may cover an average area of 3m x 3m.

- R 3.3** Additional facilities, or designated existing natural elements, must be provided for dustbathing/perching/foraging or a combination of these behaviours:
- a) in at least one area per 2,000 birds
 - b) in at least two areas.



CLARIFICATION Well managed and positioned brushings from trees and covered sand areas are examples of facilities that can help to provide extra opportunity for turkeys to carry out perching, foraging and dustbathing and can also help to encourage the whole range area to be used.

Management

A high degree of caring and responsible management and stockmanship is vital to ensure good animal welfare. Managers and stock-keepers need to be thoroughly trained, skilled and competent in animal husbandry and welfare, and have a good working knowledge of their system and the livestock under their care.



NEW CLARIFICATION "Manager" and "assistant manager" means any natural or legal person or persons responsible for the overall supervision and welfare of animals, including the management of farm operations and personnel, whether on a permanent or temporary basis.

"Stock-keeper" means any natural or legal person or persons responsible for or in charge of animals whether on a permanent or temporary basis.

Note that the roles of manager and stock-keeper may be fulfilled by the same person.

- M 1.1** All records and other documentation that the *RSPCA welfare standards for turkeys* require the producer to keep and maintain, must be made available on request.

Managers

- M 2.1** Managers must ensure that all stock-keepers:
- a) have access to a copy of the current version of the *RSPCA welfare standards for turkeys*
 - b) are familiar with its content
 - c) understand and apply its content in their specific areas of responsibility.
- M 2.2** **NEW** All farm managers and assistant farm managers must have undertaken or be working towards suitable recognised validated poultry training.
- M 2.3** **LEGAL** All staff employed who are responsible for the welfare of livestock must be identified, and records must be kept of all relevant training (including in-house) and experience received or gained.
- M 2.4** **REVISED** Managers must ensure all stock-keepers have completed relevant and adequate training and can satisfy the certification scheme assessor of their competence in practical circumstances.
- M 2.5** **REVISED** Managers must develop and implement contingency plans and preventative measures for the following emergency situations, to help ensure the welfare of the animals can be safeguarded:
- a) fire
 - b) flood
 - c) interruption of supplies to the farm, e.g. feed
 - d) notifiable disease outbreaks
 - e) mass on-farm culling, e.g. due to an outbreak of avian influenza where all birds in a house/on the farm need to be culled (see M 2.5.1)
 - f) periods where the animals are required to remain on the farm for longer than planned, e.g. where there is a significant delay in animals being taken to the slaughterhouse.

M 2.5.1 **NEW** With regard to standard M 2.5 e) contingency plans must include:

- a) details of the on-farm mass culling method/s that can be used
- b) access routes for specialist vehicles and equipment to the poultry buildings
- c) any additional biosecurity measures required
- d) actions to be taken to ensure bird welfare is protected up to the point of death (e.g. feed and water provision, lighting schedule and ventilation and climate checks)
- e) the building preparations required for instances where whole house gas killing may be required.



CLARIFICATION A contingency plan is a course of action designed to help a business respond effectively to a significant future possible event/situation.

For each event/situation, the plan includes the potential impacts on the animals and the actions that can be taken to address the issues identified. For example, in the event of a slaughterhouse breakdown that results in the animals having to remain on farm for longer than planned, contingency plans will detail:

- the potential issues caused by this event and the implications to the welfare of the animals
- the actions that can be taken to best safeguard the animals' welfare.



REVISED ATTENTION Avian influenza (AI) has become more prevalent in recent years, resulting in an increased incidence of mass on-farm culling of poultry. The RSPCA recognises that mass culling during an AI outbreak can be highly distressing for those involved, and appreciates the significant emotional impact this has on stock people. However, it remains essential that contingency plans are in place to ensure that any culling is carried out without delay, effectively and humanely.

While the primary purpose for poultry houses is to ensure the well-being of the birds, the RSPCA highly recommends that buildings also be equipped for effective and humane whole-house gas killing, whenever feasible. Where this method is not viable, the most effective and humane method for that housing system should be used.

M 2.6 Managers must provide an emergency action board sited in a prominent position that is visible to all farm staff and emergency services, which must include:

- a) the procedures to be followed by those discovering an emergency
- b) the location of water sources for use by the fire services
- c) the what3words address and postcode for location of the unit.

M 2.7 **REVISED** Managers must develop and implement a biosecurity plan to minimise the risk of introducing and transmitting disease onto and within a site.

M 2.8 **NEW** Managers must develop and implement a site-specific plan detailing how sites will be managed to maintain a suitable environment under seasonal extremes of weather, including how:

- a) heat stress will be mitigated
- b) cold stress will be mitigated
- c) the potential negative effects of prolonged precipitation will be mitigated.



NEW CLARIFICATION In developing the plan for managing sites under seasonal extremes of weather conditions (see M 2.8), managers should consider conditions such as:

- prolonged rainfall (≥48 hours)
- saturated land with large pools of standing water
- high wind speeds (>29 mph)
- snowfall
- outside temperatures below 3°C
- outside temperatures above 25°C.

Appropriate mitigation strategies to satisfy M 2.8 will depend on the house type and surrounding conditions. However, as a guide, the following should be considered:

- how direct sunlight can be prevented from entering the house in hot weather (e.g. use of shutters or curtains)
- how airflow can be increased or decreased within the house, depending on outside weather conditions (e.g. managing positioning of straw bales within the house)
- how birds in open-sided or non-permanent structures can be shielded from high winds and/or precipitation (e.g. use of windbreaks such as straw bales or netting).

M 2.9 **REVISED** Managers must maintain records of production data, including:

- a) number of birds placed in the house
- b) incoming and outgoing stock
- c) **LEGAL** daily mortality (the cause of death must be stated where this can be identified)
- d) number culled (reasons must be stated)
- e) number of birds removed for slaughter
- f) average weight of birds removed for slaughter
- g) causes of illness and injury must be recorded
- h) daily feed consumption
- i) daily water consumption
- j) daily minimum and maximum temperatures
- k) daily minimum and maximum relative humidity (for controlled environment buildings only)
- l) daily ventilation (for controlled environment buildings only, including settings and any necessary changes)
- m) any medication provided.

M 2.9.1 Records relating to standard M 2.9 c), d) and e) must be dated, signed and noted with the time of inspection.

M 2.10 Managers must develop and implement a transport plan which minimises waiting time for the birds at the slaughterhouse.

M 2.11 Managers must take into account the abilities of the stock-keepers when:

- a) deciding on stocking densities
- b) deciding on the size
- c) considering expanding the unit
- d) considering installing more complex equipment.

Stock-keepers

M 3.1 Prior to being given responsibility for the welfare of livestock, stock-keepers must be properly trained and competent to:

- a) recognise early signs of disease
- b) know the appropriate actions for treatment
- c) recognise signs of normal behaviour, abnormal behaviour and fear
- d) understand the environmental requirements for turkeys
- e) handle turkeys in a positive and compassionate manner
- f) cull turkeys when necessary to prevent further suffering.

M 3.1.1 **NEW** Training relating to standard M 3.1 must be:

- a) validated
- b) recorded.



REVISED FURTHER INFORMATION Acceptable validated forms of training include that offered by a recognised training provider to at least NVQ/SVQ level or equivalent, or a formal in-house training programme.

It is strongly recommended that producers adopt British Poultry Training – Poultry Passport – as the formal route for industry training and training recognition. This may become mandatory in the next standard review.

M 3.2 When an outbreak of abnormal behaviour occurs, it must be tackled immediately by appropriate changes in the system of management.

M 3.3 **REVISED** Stock-keepers must:

- a) be able to demonstrate their proficiency in procedures which have the potential to cause suffering, e.g. injections, beak trimming, culling
- b) be aware of the welfare problems associated with poor litter management e.g. burnt hocks, foot pad lesions and breast blemishes
- c) understand the factors which affect litter condition i.e. moisture, nitrogen content and greasy capped litter.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE The requirement to keep litter in a well-maintained state is detailed in law (Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007) and the Defra Codes of Recommendations.

Pododermatitis (foot pad burn, which can result in lameness, pain and bacterial infection), hock burn and breast blisters can all be the consequence of poor litter.

Litter moisture is a key cause of litter related problems and can be affected by drinker design, height and management; air change rate; litter material and depth; stocking density and rate; diet (i.e. raw material quality and formulation) and flock health.

In poultry houses, three environmental factors have to be considered together, because their control is interdependent. They are humidity, ventilation rate and environmental temperature.

The humidity of the poultry house environment is affected by the number and size of the birds and therefore by their respiratory output and also, of course, by the relative humidity of the air being drawn into the house by the ventilation system. When the relative humidity in the house exceeds 70%, the moisture content of the litter tends to increase, leading to poorer conditions. The aim should be to maintain a relative humidity level in the house of between 50 and 70% by supplying sufficient air and added heat when necessary. It can also be helpful to encourage movement and an even spread of birds in the house to help prevent any build-up of condensation on the litter.

The ventilation rate must always be maintained at a level sufficient to ensure that ammonia does not approach the threshold level of 15ppm. In cold weather this may necessitate increasing the heating levels within the house.

Finally, if birds spend excessive amounts of time squatting down due to leg problems or other diseases they will be more likely to suffer from conditions due to increased contact with the litter. Poultry Litter Management, Defra, 2004.

Inspection

- M 4.1** All turkeys must be inspected:
 - a) at least 3 times daily
 - b) using a procedure that will identify all birds that are sick, injured or behaving abnormally
 - c) and signed records must be kept with the date and time of inspections noted.
- M 4.2** In order that the turkey inspection is thorough, the stock-keeper must walk within approximately 3m of each bird and encourage them to move.
- M 4.3** All movement throughout the unit must be slow and deliberate, both to alleviate fear and reduce possible injury to birds.
- M 4.4** Any welfare problems seen during an inspection must be dealt with appropriately and without delay.



AUDITING/ CALCULATIONS Welfare problems of sufficient severity that they should have been noticed on previous inspections and dealt with, shall be taken as evidence of negligence of duties by the stock-keeper.

- M 4.5** **NEW** Turkeys must at all times be handled in a careful, positive and compassionate manner.

Equipment

M 5.1 **LEGAL** Stock-keepers must inspect the equipment, including the automatic equipment, upon which turkeys depend at least once daily to check that there is no defect in it.

M 5.2 **LEGAL** **REVISED** Where a defect relating to standard M 5.1 is found it must be rectified immediately, wherever possible.

M 5.2.1 **REVISED** If standard M 5.2 is not possible, such measures as are required to safeguard the birds from suffering unnecessary pain or distress as a result of the defect must:

- a) be taken without delay
- b) be maintained until the defect is rectified.



NEW CLARIFICATION Examples of situations where standard M 5.2 would apply include:

- failure of automatic drinkers that cannot be rectified immediately. In this case, temporary drinkers should be placed throughout the house and manually topped up to ensure birds have continuous access to water
- failure of automatic ventilation equipment, particularly in hot weather. In this case, ventilation and air movement can be maximised by fully opening inlets, vents and popholes.

M 5.3 **LEGAL** Where the birds' welfare is dependent on automated equipment, the system must contain:

- a) an alarm which will give adequate warning of the failure of that system to function properly (the alarm must operate even if the principal electricity supply to it has failed)
- b) additional equipment or an alternative means (whether automatic or not) of maintaining a satisfactory environment so as to prevent the birds from suffering unnecessary distress as a result of the failure.

M 5.3.1 **NEW** Alarms related to M 5.3 a) must:

- a) be fully operational at all times
- b) be checked daily to ensure they are in correct working order, and
 - i. records relating to these checks must be kept.

M 5.4 For existing or new equipment which is used in management, e.g. heaters, lighting, ventilation (flaps/fans), stock-keepers must be able to:

- a) demonstrate an ability to operate the equipment competently
- b) demonstrate the ability to carry out routine maintenance
- c) recognise common signs of malfunction
- d) demonstrate knowledge of action to be carried out in event of failures.

Protection from other animals

- M 6.1** A written wild animal control plan (WACP) must be:
- in place, and
 - implemented on farm.
- M 6.2** Levels of potentially harmful wild animals (e.g. rodents and birds) must be managed humanely to avoid:
- the risk of disease spread to livestock
 - damage to livestock buildings and the services on which livestock depend
 - contamination and spoilage of feed.



REVISED RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE In England and Wales, the following legislation applies to the management of wildlife:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- Pests Act 1954
- Spring Traps Approval (England) Order 2018
- Spring Traps Approval (Wales) Order 2019
- The Small Ground Vermin Traps Order 1958
- Food and Environment Protection Act 1985
- The Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986
- Animals (Cruel Poisons) Act 1962
- Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019
- Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023
- Glue Traps (Offences) Act 2022

Equivalent legislation applies in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

- M 6.3** The primary means of protecting livestock from wild animals, as documented in the WACP, must be by:
- physical exclusion methods
 - the removal of elements in the vicinity that might encourage the presence of wild animals
 - maintaining units in a clean and tidy condition to minimise the risk of wild animals gaining access to the unit.



CLARIFICATION Physical exclusion measures are the most humane and effective methods of providing protection from wild animals.

Measures should only be applied after the area has been checked and cleared of elements that could encourage the presence of wild animals, as applying some measures can interfere with rodent behaviour and encourage them to spread to other areas. Humane methods of protecting livestock from other animals include:

- construction/maintenance of fencing appropriate for excluding the wild animals in question
- removal of shelter/cover (e.g. weeds, heaps of rubble, broken equipment etc.) in the area surrounding livestock buildings
- removal/protection of obvious food sources
- maintenance of drains
- maintenance/proofing of buildings against wild animals
- storing bedding away from livestock.

In free-range systems, it is appreciated that elements, such as natural cover, are provided in order to encourage birds onto the range. Some of the methods listed above are intended to remove unnecessary and unintended harbourage sites, as opposed to elements specifically provided for other purposes.



CLARIFICATION Rodents are less likely to inhabit an area if there is no cover or food supply. Reduced food availability will also increase the likelihood of rodents consuming bait, where applied. When stores or livestock buildings are empty, the opportunity should be taken to clean spaces and introduce any necessary controls before restocking.

- M 6.4** Where any method of lethal control is being considered, a site survey of the unit must be carried out before applying the control, i.e. bait or traps, identifying:
- a) the type, level and extent of the problem species
 - b) any non-target animals likely to be present (including pets and children)
 - c) any maintenance and proofing issues.
- M 6.5** Where any lethal method of control is used, its use must have taken into account the result of the site survey (standard M 6.4).
- M 6.6** The WACP must include provisions that specifically exclude the following methods of control:
- a) snaring
 - b) gassing
 - c) vertebrate glue traps.
- M 6.7** Long-term baiting must not be used as a routine rodent control measure.



NEW CLARIFICATION Long-term baiting is defined as a baiting programme that continues for more than 35 days.



CLARIFICATION In relation to standard M 6.7, site plans should therefore highlight potential high risk areas for wild animal activity (rather than permanent baiting locations).

Long-term baiting should not be necessary if bait traps are applied effectively. Long-term baiting can contribute to bait resistance in rodents.

However, where bait traps are applied effectively and the requirements of standard M 6.3 have been implemented, and there continues to be problems with protecting livestock from wild animals, it is appreciated that continued baiting may be necessary. However, this should be part of a continued review of the need to bait following the requirements of standard M 6.4.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE The RSPCA is opposed to the use of poisons that cause animal suffering and it is important not to rely solely on the use of rodenticide. The RSPCA is concerned about the welfare of all animals that have the capacity to suffer, and therefore all alternative forms of deterrent and humane control should be exhausted before resorting to the use of poisons for rodents.



CLARIFICATION Any baiting programme should be considered carefully and justified in risk assessments for each location where used. Consideration should be given to using non-toxic baits in order to ascertain the presence of rodents, which may necessitate the use of rodenticide.

M 6.8 **REVISED** When bait and/or traps are used, records of their use must be kept and:

- a) state the location of the bait/traps
- b) state what bait/traps were used
- c) state the volume/number of bait/traps placed
- d) state the type of rodenticide used (if applicable)
- e) state the batch number of the rodenticide used (if applicable)
- f) state the name of the person who placed the bait/traps
- g) be retained for at least two years.



NEW CLARIFICATION M 6.8 c) refers to both the number of locations where bait or traps have been placed and the number of trap activations in these locations. This ensures a clear record of rodent control measures, helping to track effectiveness and compliance.

M 6.9 Bait and traps must:

- a) be placed in suitable positions, and
- b) be sufficiently protected to avoid harming non-target animals.

M 6.10 Bait must be used according to the manufacturer's instruction for:

- a) storage
- b) usage, including areas of use and replenishment
- c) disposal.

- M 6.11** Traps must be:
- used according to the manufacturer's instructions
 - maintained in good order
 - disposed of appropriately if no longer fit for purpose, e.g. have broken
 - stored safely and securely.
- M 6.12** Bait points must:
- be monitored regularly, and
 - records of monitoring must be kept, including:
 - levels of any activity at each bait point
 - any missing or disturbed bait
 - the name of the person responsible for monitoring the bait points.
- M 6.13** Trap points must:
- be monitored at least twice a day, ideally at dawn and dusk, and
 - records of monitoring must be kept, including:
 - level of activity at each trap
 - any missing or disturbed traps
 - the name of the person responsible for monitoring the traps.
- M 6.14** Any injured, sick or dying wild animals found – that have been targeted for control – must be humanely dispatched immediately to prevent further suffering.



CLARIFICATION Regular replenishment of bait will help to prevent sub-lethal doses, which can result in a build-up of resistance to the active ingredient.

- M 6.15** Where bait is used, dead animals must be disposed of safely, in line with the manufacturer's product label.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Safe disposal of wild animals that have died as a result of poisoning reduces the risk of secondary poisoning in non-target species, such as domestic and other wild animals (including birds), that may consume the carcasses.

- M 6.16** Once treatment is complete, all traps and traces of bait must be:
- removed
 - disposed of/stored according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- M 6.17** **NEW** Wild animal control methods must be covered by the farm COSHH assessment, where required.
- M 6.18** Managers must ensure that all stock-keepers:
- have access to a copy of the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use *UK Code of Best Practice: Best Practice and Guidance for Rodent Control and the Safe Use of Rodenticides*
 - are familiar with its content
 - understand and apply its content.



REVISED FURTHER INFORMATION Producers are strongly encouraged to complete at least one of the free, self-study training courses on rodent control, available at: www.thinkwildlife.org/training-certification/#int_Ink.

These courses are approved by the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU). Further information and access to the CRRU Code of Best Practice is available on the AHDB website, here: <https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/rodent-control-on-farms>

M 6.19 Farm dogs and cats must not be permitted in the turkey house.

Independent welfare audits



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Independent welfare audits are a good way of helping ensure that on-farm standards, particularly those that have a direct impact on bird welfare and can change during the lifetime of a flock, are being implemented and maintained at all times throughout the year and between any formalised farm assurance scheme assessment visits.



CLARIFICATION For clarity, these independent welfare audits, termed 'welfare audits', do not include those conducted by the certification scheme assessing these standards.



CLARIFICATION The welfare audit does not have to include an assessment of all the *RSPCA welfare standards for turkeys*, such as those relating to the presence and upkeep of paperwork. The audit is to specifically focus on those standards that have a direct impact on bird welfare and can change on a frequent basis during the lifetime of a flock, including an assessment of stock-keeper ability, performance and competence. See Appendix 2 for a full list of standards to be included within the welfare audit.

M 7.1 Producers must ensure that a welfare audit is carried out:

- to include an assessment of all the standards listed in Appendix 2
- by a welfare auditor (see standard M 7.2)
- on all houses where the *RSPCA welfare standards for turkeys* are being implemented
- at least once per flock.

M 7.2 The welfare auditor, who conducts the welfare audits, must be:

- independent from the direct management of the farm
- suitably qualified and/or experienced to conduct the audit.



CLARIFICATION A suitable person to conduct the welfare audit would be the company fieldsperson (or, if the company does not have a fieldsperson, someone with an equivalent role within the company); a vet; or an independent consultant with a good knowledge of turkey production.

M 7.3 Welfare audits must be unannounced.



CLARIFICATION For welfare audits to be most effective, the producer should not be given any advanced warning of the visit. However, it is accepted that in some circumstances the producer may need to be contacted on the day of the audit to arrange a suitable time for the visit.

M 7.4 A welfare audit must take place:

- a) after 6 weeks of age
- b) in the rearing unit in the case of brood and move operations
- c) in the last 10 days prior to slaughter/killing on at least one occasion annually per house, except if there is only one flock per year.

M 7.5 For each flock, a record of the welfare audit must be kept, which shows:

- a) the date of the audit
- b) the name of the person who undertook the audit
- c) the age of the flock at the time of the visit
- d) the outcome of the audit including a list of all the standards not being fully met
- e) the action to be taken to rectify each standard not being fully met (if relevant)
- f) verification that action was taken to rectify each standard not being fully met (if relevant)
- g) verification that the audit was unannounced (if the producer was given any advance warning of the visit this must be stated)
- h) the signature and position/role of the person undertaking the audit
- i) the signature of the stock-keeper/farm manager.



ATTENTION Appendix 2 provides a template for the record referred to in standard M 7.5.

M 7.6 Any welfare problems identified during a welfare audit must be dealt with appropriately and without delay to rectify the problem.

M 7.7 There must be a process in place to:

- a) ensure that all standards raised as not being fully met during the welfare audit are rectified
- b) prevent the same standards being raised as not being fully met at future welfare audits.

Artificial intelligence



FURTHER INFORMATION The RSPCA is reviewing the role of artificial intelligence and the wide-ranging benefits it can bring to farm animal welfare, particularly in the areas of monitoring growth parameters, behaviour change and welfare assessment. It is strongly recommended that producers investigate the feasibility of such technology to further safeguard animal welfare. Where such technology is being considered, please contact the RSPCA Farm Animals Department.

Health

- H 1.1** A written Veterinary Health and Welfare Plan (VHWP) must be drawn up, reviewed and updated at least annually by the attending veterinary surgeon.



REVISED CLARIFICATION The VHWP (see H 1.1) should be aimed at reducing the risk of disease challenges and maximising the health and welfare of each flock. The VHWP should address both general issues known to affect turkeys as well as any health and welfare concerns specific to the individual farm.

Accurate and up to date records, agreed tolerance levels for areas of health and production, and appropriate action plans included in the VHWP should enable any potential problems to be detected and managed at the earliest opportunity. Reviewing these records, at the end of each flock, allows the effectiveness of any actions taken to be assessed and the VHWP to be updated where relevant to help safeguard the health and welfare of the next flock.

The VHWP should also include the stock management records required under standard M 2.9.

- H 1.2** The VHWP must include targets set for health aspects and records kept to identify whether targets have been met every year and at each assessment made by the veterinary surgeon.
- H 1.3** If any flock performance parameters fall below the tolerance limits identified in the VHWP (standard H 1.1)
- a) the veterinary surgeon must be informed
 - b) the VHWP must be revised to include a programme of action which will remedy the problem.
- H 1.4** Flock performance data must be continuously monitored for signs of disease or production disorders.
- H 1.5** Where birds with a severe level of foot pad burn, or those with breast blistering or back scratching have been identified (see 'health monitoring' section) the farm must take appropriate action, to be reflected within the VHWP, to prevent these conditions in subsequent flocks.
- H 1.6** Ailing and lame turkeys and any turkeys suffering from injury, such as open wounds or fractures, must be:
- a) segregated, but within sight and sound of other turkeys
 - b) treated without delay
 - c) or, if necessary, humanely killed immediately.
- H 1.7** There must be no recurring injuries of a similar nature seen on a number of birds attributable to physical features of their environment or handling procedures.
- H 1.8** If injuries are found, a programme of preventative action must be specified in the VHWP (standard H 1.1).
- H 1.9** **LEGAL** Facilities must be available to segregate sick or injured birds.
- H 1.9.1** **REVISED** Segregation pens relating to standard H 1.9 must:
- a) be within the main house
 - b) provide birds with food and water, which is accessible without undue effort or discomfort, as specified in the 'Food and water' section
 - c) have a minimum of two drinkers
 - d) be stocked at a density lower than the rest of the house to allow birds to rest quietly
 - e) be well littered, as specified in the 'Environment' section

f) be inspected at least three times daily and an assessment made of each bird. This must be recorded.

H 1.10 Stock-keepers must:

- a) take care when placing a turkey into the segregation pen
- b) not, under any circumstances, drop the turkey over the surround.

H 1.11 Any turkey that has difficulty standing and/or reaching food and water must be:

- a) promptly removed from the flock
- b) if necessary, humanely killed.

H 1.11.1 There must not be any overtly lame (Bristol gait score 3 or above) birds.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Lameness can be a serious welfare problem in growing turkeys, whether caused by infectious agents or growth abnormalities. Research has concluded that bird welfare is unduly compromised in birds with gait scores of 3 or more, as birds with such gait scores are likely to experience pain and discomfort. In fact, anatomical research on chickens has shown that such joint pathologies are likely to be as painful to chickens as they are to humans.

H 1.11.2 Any bird with a gait score of 3 or above, as defined in the information box below, must be humanely killed immediately.



CLARIFICATION A bird's level of lameness can be determined by assessing its walking ability. The following scoring system is based on the University of Bristol's Gait Scoring Guide:

Score 0 – The bird displays smooth, fluid locomotion

Typically the foot is picked up and put down smoothly and each foot is brought under the bird's centre of gravity as it walks (rather than the bird swaying). Often, the toes are partially curled while the foot is in the air.

Score 1 – The bird has a slight defect in its gait that is difficult to define precisely

The bird may take unduly large strides, be unsteady or wobble when it walks, which produces an uneven gait, but the problem leg is unclear/cannot be easily identified.

Score 2 – The bird has a definite and identifiable gait abnormality, but this does not affect its ability to move

The bird may make short, quick, unsteady steps with one leg, but is not sufficiently lame to seriously compromise its ability to move, i.e. manoeuvre, accelerate and run.

Score 3 – The bird has an obvious gait defect that affects its ability to move (bird welfare is compromised)

The bird may have a limp, jerky or unsteady strut, or splay one leg as it moves. The bird often prefers to squat when not coerced to move, and will not run.

Score 4 – The bird has a severe gait defect

The bird is capable of walking, but only with difficulty and when driven or strongly motivated. Otherwise it squats down at the first available opportunity.

Score 5 – The bird is incapable of sustained walking on its feet

Although it may be able to stand, the bird cannot walk except with the assistance of the wings or by crawling on the shanks.

N.B. Not all the attributes of a score are necessarily identified in a bird.

H 1.12 Management plans must prevent turkeys suffering chronic joint disease or leg deformation.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Leg disorders can be particularly prevalent in birds close to killing weight, especially in heavier finishing stags. Management techniques, such as the provision of enrichment items that encourage activity, and good litter and biosecurity management, can help prevent the occurrence of leg disorders. However, an underlying problem is that birds have been genetically selected, and are usually fed, so as to maximise muscle weight at the time of slaughter.

The RSPCA believes that selection for weight has been taken beyond the limit of acceptability and that it is not appropriate to continue to select for increased weight without first improving leg health. Therefore, breeding companies should improve selection for leg health and should not seek to produce commercial lines that have extreme conformation. Likewise, turkey producers should select strains that have good health and welfare characteristics and should not exploit the limits of the birds' growth potential if this is likely to result in poorer welfare.

It is also a legal requirement (under schedule 1, paragraph 29, of the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007) that: "animals may only be kept for farming purposes if it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of their genotype or phenotype, that they can be kept without any detrimental effect on their health or welfare".

The RSPCA is considering this issue further and may impose a limit on the maximum weight achieved by turkeys and/or prohibit the use of certain strains.

H 1.13 **NEW** Particular attention must be paid to the health and welfare of smaller birds during daily checks.

H 1.13.1 **NEW** Small birds which are not thriving must be humanely culled.

H 1.14 If the mortality level within a house is in excess of 0.5% in any 24-hour period, a veterinary investigation must be made.



CLARIFICATION Investigation of lower mortality levels is at the discretion of the attending veterinary surgeon.

Medication

- H 2.1** **LEGAL** **REVISED** Any medicine used must be:
- legal for use in the UK,
 - in accordance with UK and EU legislation.



FURTHER INFORMATION It is recommended that producers obtain, read and where appropriate, apply the advice contained within the latest version of:

- *Guidelines on Responsible Use of Antimicrobials in Poultry and Game Production*, issued by the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture (RUMA) Alliance (RUMA, Acorn House, 25 Mardley Hill, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, AL6 0TT; www.ruma.org.uk)
- *Code of practice on the responsible use of animal medicines on the farm*, issued by the Veterinary Medicine Directorate
- *Veterinary Medicines: safe use by farmers and other handlers*, issued by the Health and Safety Executive.

H 2.2 All personnel involved in the administration of animal medicines must be competent to do so.

H 2.3 **NEW** Medicine administration records must include the following information:

- a) identity of medicine or therapy
- b) batch numbers
- c) expiry date of medicine or therapy
- d) quantity of medicine or therapy administered
- e) identification of the bird or group of birds to which administered
- f) the number of birds treated
- g) date treatment started
- h) date treatment finished (if multiple treatment)
- i) name of person administering the medicine or therapy
- j) reason for treatment.

H 2.4 **REVISED** Medicines must be:

- a) clearly labelled, stored and used in accordance with the label instructions
- b) kept in a secure, lockable store that is:
 - i. safe from pet animals, children and wild birds
 - ii. separate from food producing areas.

H 2.5 Written procedures must be in place, and must be followed at all times, for the safe disposal of pharmaceutical waste, needles and other sharps.

H 2.6 Procedures relating to standard H 2.5 must be in strict accordance with the relevant waste disposal regulations.

Antibiotics



FURTHER INFORMATION Prevention is better than cure, and it is the implementation of prevention strategies alongside the adoption of farming practices that prioritise and promote animal welfare that are key to reducing antibiotic use.

For more information on this issue, please see our information sheet available on our website www.rspca.org.uk

H(A) 1.1 Antibiotics must only be used when necessary, and always used responsibly.

H(A) 1.2 The prophylactic use of antibiotics is not permitted.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Prophylactic treatment is intended to prevent sickness or disease developing in a group of healthy animals where a veterinary surgeon has identified that there could be a high risk of bacterial infection. We believe that, in poultry, there should be no need for the prophylactic use of antibiotics when following these standards. However, we acknowledge there may be very exceptional circumstances, e.g in the case of an emergency, where a veterinary surgeon may feel it is in the best interests of the affected animal's welfare for antibiotics to be given preventatively. We would expect these occasions to be extremely rare.

Metaphylactic treatment is intended to control disease spreading in groups of animals where some are already showing clinical signs of disease and is not covered by standard H(A) 1.2.

H(A) 1.3 The use of antibiotics on-farm must be reviewed annually and this review must form part of the VHWP.

H(A) 1.3.1 **REVISED** In light of the findings of the antibiotic use review (see standard H(A) 1.3) an action plan must be drawn up aimed at reducing the use, or maintaining nil use, of antibiotics on the farm through improvements in animal husbandry.

H(A) 1.3.2 When reviewing the use of antibiotics on-farm, the following must be included in the plan (see standard H(A) 1.3.1):

- the different classes of antibiotic drug used,
- which group/s* of animals were treated, and for which condition/s,
- the number of animals treated per occasion,
- the total amount of each individual drug within a class that was used (in mg/kg or mg/pcu) per occasion
- a specific section covering all the above for 'Critically Important Antibiotics' (CIAs).

*A group of animals refers to animals of a similar age and/or stage of production.



CLARIFICATION This review is intended to highlight which groups of animals are suffering from particular diseases and therefore aid the development and implementation of targeted prevention strategies.

Mutilations

H 3.1 Where practised, beak trimming must:

- a) take place only once
- b) be carried out before 24 hours post-hatching
- c) not remove more than one third of the beak
- d) be conducted by properly trained and competent operators
- e) be carried out on the direction of the attending veterinary surgeon
- f) be carried out using appropriate infra-red equipment.

H 3.2 If injurious pecking does occur:

- a) immediate action must be taken to alleviate the problem through means other than beak trimming, including examination of the areas listed in the information box below
- b) the VHWP (see H 1.1) must be updated with the actions taken to alleviate injurious pecking
- c) the actions listed in the VHWP must be regularly reviewed with the intention of eliminating the need to beak trim.



REVISED FUTURE DIRECTION The practice of beak trimming is contrary to the principles of the *RSPCA welfare standards*. The RSPCA plans to phase out beak trimming within the next five years.

The RSPCA will be reviewing practical experience with intact beak birds and welfare outcome assessment data, including feather cover scores, to help inform the inclusion of an appropriate date from which beak trimming will be prohibited.

Producers that are managing good feather cover in consecutive flocks are strongly encouraged to trial intact beak birds.

The RSPCA strongly encourages producers to focus resources into achieving good feather cover to facilitate a smooth transition to the requirement to have fully intact beak flocks as soon as possible.

Injurious pecking is a multifactorial problem. The following areas are to be examined on all units experiencing an injurious pecking problem, to help alleviate the issue:

- litter quality
- pecking enrichment
- visual barriers
- natural light
- ultraviolet light
- feed
- range use
- rearing experience

H 3.3 If, in emergency circumstances, and as a last resort (having tried alternative approaches such as changes in management, environment etc.) and only on veterinary advice, beak trimming of birds older than 24 hours is deemed necessary for welfare reasons, then the producer must:

- a) obtain a signed letter from the vet stating the reasons for advising that beak trimming be undertaken, and details of other approaches tried prior to beak trimming
- b) inform the RSPCA Farm Animals Department in writing with a copy of the letter referred to in a).

- H 3.4** No other forms of mutilation are permitted, e.g. claw/toe trimming, desnooding and dewinging.
- H 3.5** All artificial appliances (such as blinkers and contact lenses) which are designed to stop cannibalism must not be used.

Biosecurity

- H 4.1** A record of all visitors to the farm must be maintained.
- H 4.1.1** The visitor record must include the following details of the visitor:
- a) name
 - b) organisation
 - c) contact details
 - d) date and time of arrival
 - e) date of last visits to poultry sites and farms
 - f) declaration that they are not suffering with any enteric illness.
- H 4.2** Where there is an identifiable and significant risk of visitors compromising the health and welfare of the birds they must not be allowed onto the site.
- H 4.3** **REVISED** The wheels of all vehicles entering and leaving the farm must be:
- a) cleaned
 - b) disinfected.
- H 4.4** Farm dedicated protective clothing must be worn by all visitors.
- H 4.5** Protective clothing must be washed or discarded between flocks.
- H 4.6** A physical barrier footwear system must be provided at the entrance/exit to each bird area.
- H 4.6.1** The physical barrier (see Standard H 4.6) must:
- a) be no less than 30cm high
 - b) be removable for washing or, if fixed, there must be appropriate drainage to allow effective cleaning of the barrier area.
- H 4.6.2** Before crossing the physical barrier system (standard H 4.6), footwear must be disinfected using a foot dip.
- H 4.7** On entry into a bird area, all staff and visitors must change into dedicated boots or use new disposable overshoes.
- H 4.8** Hand sanitisers or hand wash facilities must be:
- a) present within reach of the physical barrier (see standard H 4.6)
 - b) used before entering and after exiting the bird area.
- H 4.9** Hand washing facilities must be available on farm and must consist of a basin with running water, antibacterial soap, and disposable hand towels or hand dryers.
- H 4.10** **REVISED** **CLARIFICATION** All disinfectants (including foot dips) must be:
- a) Defra approved (e.g. for use in foot dips and for wheel washing)
 - b) used at the dilution rates specified by Defra
 - c) used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
 - d) be replaced with fresh solution regularly, where applicable.



NEW CLARIFICATION H 4.10 b) applies to the following situations:

- routine operations, such as cleaning livestock transport vehicles or slaughterhouse holding areas
- during statutory disease control measures, including periods of notifiable disease outbreaks.



REVISED FURTHER INFORMATION Producers should contact Defra for information on Defra approved disinfectants. Contact details can be found on the Defra website:
<https://disinfectants.defra.gov.uk/>

H 4.11 All disinfectants must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

H 4.12 Permanent standing water must not accumulate on the farm.

H 4.13 The house must operate a period free of all livestock between flock cycles.

Casualty killing/slaughter

H 5.1 **LEGAL** Each farm must have provisions for the humane killing/slaughter – without delay – of casualty turkeys.

H 5.1.1 **LEGAL** Casualty killing/slaughter must be carried out by either:

- a named, trained, competent member of staff, or
- a licensed slaughterman, or a veterinary surgeon.

H 5.2 **LEGAL** If there is any doubt as to how to proceed, the veterinary surgeon must be called at an early stage to advise whether treatment is possible or whether humane killing/slaughter is required to prevent suffering.

H 5.3 **LEGAL** If a bird is in severe pain that is uncontrollable, then the bird must be promptly and humanely killed/slaughtered.



FURTHER INFORMATION It is not illegal to kill/slaughter a bird to prevent further severe suffering if a method of humane killing/slaughter is available on the premises and there is someone competent to undertake the procedure.

The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) has produced a booklet entitled *Practical Slaughter of Poultry: A Guide for the Small Producer*. Producers should obtain a copy of this booklet, from HSA, The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Herts AL4 8AN.

H 5.4 **REVISED** The only permitted methods of on-farm casualty killing/slaughter are:

- hand held electrical stunning, immediately followed by neck cutting
- manual neck dislocation
- captive bolt (see standard H 5.6 a) to k)).

H 5.5 Manual neck dislocation is a permitted method of emergency killing or for the one-off killing of a very small number of turkeys, for birds weighing up to 3kg.

H 5.5.1 Where permitted, neck dislocation must involve stretching the neck to separate the spinal cord and cause extensive damage to the major blood vessels.

H 5.6 **NEW** Where a captive bolt device is being used:

- a) it must be cleaned, tested and maintained according to the manufacturer's guidelines
- b) it must be cleaned on each day of use, after being used
- c) it must be tested on each day of use, prior to being used
- d) birds must be restrained appropriately to enable accurate positioning of the device
- e) the muzzle of the device must be placed on the highest point of the head, on the midline, with the bolt aimed straight down
- f) the convex head, which is suitable for turkeys, must be used
- g) Cash Powerload 'E'.22 cartridges must be used, for cartridge powered devices, or an equivalent cartridge as specified by the device manufacturer for other brands or models
- h) for birds over 2kg, the air pressure must be at least 135psi, for compressed air devices
- i) for poultts under 2kg, the air pressure must be at least 60psi, for compressed air devices
- j) the operator must check that the birds show signs indicating they have been properly stunned/ killed
- k) if there are any signs that a bird has not been properly stunned/ killed, it must be immediately re-stunned/ killed using a back-up method.



NEW CLARIFICATION When testing captive bolt devices, it is important not to “dry-fire” cartridge-fired captive bolt equipment because this increases wear on the device. For testing, a suitable medium should be used such as: ballistic gel, manufacturer produced testing blocks, cabbages or watermelons.

H 5.6.1 Those responsible for using the captive bolt must:

- a) have received appropriate training
- b) be competent when using this equipment.

H 5.7 Equipment that crushes the neck, including killing pliers, must not be used.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Equipment that crushes the neck is neither quick nor humane.

H 5.8 **NEW** Where any bird is killed/slaughtered, the bird must be checked thoroughly to ensure it is dead.



NEW CLARIFICATION Reliable indicators that a bird is dead include:

- completely limp carcass
- no breathing
- loss of nictitating membrane response
- dilated pupil and absence of papillary response, i.e. no constriction of the pupil in response to a bright light shone into the eye from a distance of 5cm.

H 5.9 **LEGAL** All carcasses must be disposed of strictly according to current legislation.

H 5.10 **LEGAL** A record must be kept of how and where all such carcasses are disposed of.

H 5.11 **NEW** Carcasses must be stored in secure, designated areas or containers that are:

- a) located outside areas accessible to birds
- b) locked when the site is not attended and always at the end of each working day.

Transport

Animal transport systems need to be designed and managed to ensure livestock are not caused unnecessary distress or discomfort. The transport and handling of livestock needs to be kept to an absolute minimum. Personnel involved in transport need to be thoroughly trained and competent to carry out the tasks required of them.

- T 1.1** **REVISED** All birds must be caught under the direct supervision of a senior member of the catching team, e.g. foreman, gang leader, who has been approved by the certification scheme that is assessing against these standards.



CLARIFICATION The producer/farm manager may have their own team approved by the certification scheme that is assessing against these standards if organising catching themselves.

- T 1.2** All personnel involved in the catching and transportation of birds must be
- a) properly trained
 - b) competent to carry out their duties.



CLARIFICATION Where possible this training should be validated.



ATTENTION Managers should consider the construction of buildings and bear in mind the access to and from the area where birds are placed and removed. Particular attention should be paid to the width of doors.

- T 1.2.1** **NEW** Inexperienced catchers must be closely supervised by an experienced operator.

- T 1.3** The catching team leader/PWO must be familiar with the content of the Humane Slaughter Association DVD *Poultry Welfare – Taking Responsibility* and:
- a) convey the relevant content to other members of the catching/slaughter team
 - b) ensure that the recommendations are applied where appropriate.



FURTHER INFORMATION Where possible all members of the catching/slaughter team should be familiar with the content of the Humane Slaughter Association DVD *Poultry Welfare – Taking Responsibility*.

- T 1.4** Managers must prepare full and detailed written instructions for the catching staff.
- T 1.5** All catching staff must:
- a) have a copy of the instructions relating to standard T 1.4
 - b) be aware of their duties
 - c) be trained and competent to perform their duties.

- T 1.6** **REVISED** It must be the farm manager's/assistant's responsibility to ensure:
- a) the welfare of the birds throughout the catching process
 - b) that all catchers work in accordance with the *RSPCA welfare standards for turkeys*.
- T 1.7** The farm manager/assistant must be present at all times during the catching operation.
- T 1.8** Procedures must be in place to ensure that any concerns regarding the catching techniques used by the catching staff are:
- a) recorded
 - b) raised with the area manager.

Catching

- T 2.1** Catching teams must never put speed of operation before bird welfare.
- T 2.2** Turkeys must not suffer prolonged thirst, hunger, or thermal distress. Specifically:
- a) birds must have access to water up to the time of catching
 - b) no bird must be deprived of food for more than 10 hours prior to slaughter
 - c) when catching during hot weather (in excess of 25°C), sufficient ventilation must be provided for birds until the time they are loaded (e.g. the provision of additional mobile fans)
 - d) when catching during cold weather, adequate draught free ventilation at bird height must be provided for birds up to the time of loading.
- T 2.3** **REVISED** Birds which are visibly unfit before loading must:
- a) not be transported
 - b) be humanely culled without delay.
- T 2.4** **NEW** Where catching teams are responsible for culling birds that are deemed unfit for travel (casualty birds), at least one member of the catching team must be nominated to be responsible for culling.
- T 2.4.1** **NEW** The nominated person referred to in standard T 2.4 must be trained and competent to cull birds humanely in accordance with standards H 5.4 (permitted methods) to H 5.8 (bird assessment).
- T 2.5** Catching must take place in low or blue lighting to minimise fear reactions of the birds.
- T 2.6** During catching:
- a) partitions must be used to segregate the flock into groups of 50 to 100 birds (depending on bird size) for catching
 - b) the partitions must be continually relocated as depletion progresses to maintain a).



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Segregating the flock into smaller groups for catching makes the catching process more manageable. The birds are easier to catch as they are contained in a smaller area, the birds can be retained closer to the modules, which limits the distance they have to be carried, and the likelihood of trampling and smothering is reduced.



CLARIFICATION Partitions often comprise of 244 x 122cm (8 x 4ft) plywood sheets on framing, which extend out from the side of a shed toward the centre. Modules are placed between the two partitions to form a 'catching area'.

T 2.7 When only a proportion of birds are to be removed from a building, a partition (made from hurdles or hardboard, for example) must be erected prior to catching to separate those birds being caught from those remaining in the shed.

The partition must:

- a) be mobile
- b) not cause physical injury to the birds
- c) minimise any disruption caused by the catching team to those birds remaining in the shed
- d) not reduce the floor area available to those birds not being caught to such an extent that the maximum stocking density of 25kg/m² is exceeded.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE The removal of a proportion of birds from a house for slaughter can compromise the wellbeing of those birds not being caught. For example, those birds to remain in the house after catching can be affected by:

- setting up the house for catching
- temporary withdrawal of feed and water
- noise and disruption from the catching process
- forklift operation in the house
- the condition of the house after catching
- the disturbance caused by returning the house to its condition after catching
- thermal discomfort from rapid temperature changes
- compromises in biosecurity, e.g. the introduction of modules and a forklift, which may not have been cleaned properly thus introducing infectious agents, such as Avian Rhinotracheitis.

The catching process should be managed sympathetically to minimise such problems.

T 2.7.1 When only a proportion of birds are to be removed from a building, those birds not being caught must have access to food and water during the catching operation.

T 2.8 Birds must be approached calmly and quietly to avoid stress.



CLARIFICATION Resting of the bird's breast against the catcher's leg during carrying can help keep the bird calm.

T 2.9 During catching, action must be taken to prevent turkeys from crowding together.

T 2.9.1 Where crowding occurs, the house lights must be raised, the birds spread out calmly and quietly, then allowed to settle before catching is resumed.

T 2.10 Sufficient time must be made available to ensure birds are handled with care.

T 2.11 Handling of birds must be carried out quietly and confidently, exercising care to avoid unnecessary struggling, stress and injury.

T 2.12 **REVISED** The method of catching must take into account the weight and size of the birds, and be adjusted accordingly. Specifically:

- a) birds weighing less than 2kg must be:
 - i. caught and carried:
 - I. by both legs with no more than three birds in each hand, or
 - II. individually around the body using both hands to hold the wings against the body
- b) birds weighing between 2kg and 5kg must be:
 - i. caught and carried
 - I. by both legs with no more than one bird in each hand, or
 - II. individually around the body using both hands to hold the wings against the body
- c) birds weighing between 5kg and up to 8kg must be:
 - i. caught and carried individually in an upright position by grasping the shoulder of the wing furthest away from the catcher, whilst using the other hand to hold both legs
 - ii. lifted and held close to the catcher's body
- d) birds weighing 8kg and over must be:
 - i. caught and carried individually in an upright position by grasping the shoulder of the wing furthest away from the catcher, whilst using the other hand to hold the closest leg
 - ii. lifted and held close to the catcher's body.



NEW FUTURE DIRECTION The RSPCA is considering alternative handling methods for turkeys weighing up to 5kg at depopulation.

Poultry do not have a diaphragm and inversion can result in respiratory distress (birds having difficulty breathing).

It is strongly encouraged that these smaller turkeys are also both caught and carried individually by the body using both hands to hold the wings against the body, so that the birds are not inverted.

An upright catching and carrying method has been used successfully under commercial conditions in the laying hen sector in some European countries.

T 2.13 Turkeys must not be caught or carried by a single leg.

T 2.14 Care must be taken to ensure that birds do not come into contact with moving vehicles whilst being caught.

T 2.15 Managers must ensure that when birds are placed in transport crates, handling of birds, design of crates, and method of transportation, minimise the soiling of feathers.

Modular transport systems

T 3.1 Modular transport vehicles must be parked as near as possible to the house being de-populated.

T 3.2 The distance birds are carried must be minimised, for example, by bringing the transport containers as close to the birds as possible.

- T 3.3** Modular crate transport drawers must:
- have completely open tops with a depth of not less than 350mm
 - permit adequate ventilation and protect birds from adverse climatic conditions
 - be thoroughly cleansed after carrying each consignment of birds. The cleanliness of the vehicle must be checked by the appointed supervisor before any birds are loaded onto the vehicle
 - be well maintained
 - have no sharp edges or protrusions on the crates or vehicle that could cause injury to the birds.

- T 3.3.1** **REVISED** When loading birds into module drawers:
- this must take place within or immediately outside the house
 - the top drawer must be loaded first, unless the manufacturer's instructions state otherwise and bird welfare is not compromised
 - where birds are carried individually:
 - one hand must hold the legs, and the other hand must support the breast
 - they must be placed in the crate one at a time
 - they must not be held by the wing or neck
 - they must be placed carefully into the drawer
 - they must not be dropped or thrown into the drawer.

- T 3.4** The stocking density in each drawer must meet the specifications in the table below:

Live weight (kg)	Minimum area in cm ² per kg
Up to 1.6	180-200
1.6 to 2.9	160
3 to 4.9	115

Live weight (kg)	Maximum number of birds per m ²
5 to 6.9	14
7 to 7.9	11
8 to 8.9	10
9 to 11.9	8
12 to 17.9	6
18 to 24	5



LEGAL RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE The space allowances in standard T 3.4 for birds up to 4.9kg live weight are legal requirements. The variation in space allowance for birds up to 1.6kg is to allow for adjustment according to not only the weight and size of the birds, but also their physical condition, the weather and the likely journey time.

- T 3.5** Stocking density must be reduced by 10% when birds are being transported during hot weather (i.e. in excess of 25°C).
- T 3.6** As each drawer is filled, it must be closed carefully to ensure that the birds' heads, wings or legs are not trapped in any way.
- T 3.7** Modules must be taken from the shed slowly and care must be taken to ensure no damage is caused to the birds.

Fixed crate transport systems



ATTENTION The RSPCA advocates the use of modular-type transport systems for turkeys as they can offer improved bird welfare compared to fixed crate type systems. Where fixed crate systems are used, producers should consider investing in the installation of a modular transportation system.

- T 4.1** For those seeking RSPCA Assured approval, the fixed crate transport system must be authorised by the RSPCA Farm Animals Department.
- T 4.2** Fixed crate transport vehicles must be parked as near as possible to the house being depopulated.
- T 4.3** Birds must be walked calmly towards the entrance of the building where the vehicle is parked.
- T 4.4** Fixed crate vehicles must:
- a) have flaps which permit adequate ventilation and protect birds from adverse climatic conditions
 - b) have flaps which close securely
 - c) be thoroughly cleaned after carrying each consignment of birds
 - d) be well maintained
 - e) not cause injury to the birds.
- T 4.4.1** Fixed crates must:
- a) have no sharp protrusions which could cause injury to the birds
 - b) have floors that prevent faeces falling on birds beneath but do not hinder ventilation inside the crate.
- T 4.5** The cleanliness of the vehicle must be checked by the appointed supervisor before any birds are loaded.
- T 4.6** When loading birds into fixed crates:
- a) facilities must be provided for catchers to ensure they are able to load birds onto the vehicle from a position which gives them easy access to all the crates, i.e. a loading platform with steps
 - b) catchers must not lift birds above their head height
 - c) they must be loaded into the fixed crate carefully
 - d) they must not be thrown into the crate.
- T 4.7** The stocking density in each fixed crate must not exceed that specified in standard T 3.4.
- T 4.8** Stocking density must be reduced by 10% when birds are being transported during hot weather (in excess of 25°C).
- T 4.9** The person responsible for supervising the depopulation and loading must ensure that the flap on each crate is securely fastened and the wings, head or legs of any bird are not trapped in the flap or any part of the fixed crate.
- T 4.10** On unloading, if any birds are trapped or injured, a report must be made to the person in charge of supervising the catching and loading in order to identify and rectify any further problems.

Transport

- T 5.1** **NEW** All birds must be transported by a haulier that has been approved by the certification scheme that is assessing against these standards.
- T 5.2** **LEGAL** Personnel in charge of turkey transporters must:
- a) have completed an approved training course
 - b) be able to demonstrate their competence in handling turkeys when loading and unloading them and while in transit.
- T 5.2.1** **NEW** The farmer/farm manager/catching foreman must ensure that all birds are fit to travel.
- T 5.2.2** **NEW** The haulier must ensure that the welfare of birds are safeguarded from the time they are loaded onto the vehicle until they are unloaded from the vehicle.
- T 5.3** All transporters must have a livestock capacity document on board at all times.



CLARIFICATION The livestock capacity document will give data on the size of the transporter and the calculated carrying capacity for different livestock species under different climatic conditions.

- T 5.4** **REVISED** All hauliers must have a written Standard Operating and Emergency Procedure to implement during transportation (see Appendix 1).
- T 5.5** An on-farm record must be maintained of any incidents relating to standard T 5.4.
- T 5.6** **NEW** Transport vehicles must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before each use.
- T 5.7** **NEW** Transport equipment (e.g. modules) must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before each use.
- T 5.8** Where identified, prompt action must be taken to prevent further deaths, injury or suffering occurring.
- T 5.9** If on any day mortality exceeds two birds, or 0.1% for loads over 2,000 birds, for a single consignment of turkeys during transport:
- a) the level of mortality must be recorded
 - b) there must be an investigation to establish the cause/s of death, the outcome of which is recorded
 - c) effective preventative measures must be put in place without delay to remedy the problem.
- T 5.10** When transporting from the brooding site to the finishing site, the time between the start of loading (first bird loaded) and the completion of unloading (last bird unloaded) must be less than 6 hours.
- T 5.11** All birds must be slaughtered within 8 hours of loading the first bird into a module.
- T 5.12** The time from when the birds leave the farm to arriving at the processing plant must be no longer than 4 hours.
- T 5.13** **REVISED** Noise levels, from all sources, must be minimised during:
- a) catching
 - b) loading
 - c) transport
 - d) unloading.

- T 5.14** Every effort must be made to ensure:
- a) journeys are completed without unnecessary delays
 - b) that drivers are aware of any potential traffic problems and plan their journey accordingly.
- T 5.15** The person supervising the catching and loading of birds must liaise closely with the slaughterhouse to minimise the time birds spend waiting on the vehicle.
- T 5.16** If it is necessary to keep birds on board a stationary vehicle, the driver must take action to avoid heat/cold stress to the birds.



ATTENTION In hot weather (in excess of 25°C) one of the most effective ways of providing a cooling draught is to keep the vehicle moving.

- T 5.17** **REVISED** All transport vehicles must be equipped and operated to avoid wetting and chilling.
- T 5.17.1** **NEW** Where transport involves a journey off-farm the vehicle must be equipped with suitable curtains that can be opened and closed by a single operator.
- T 5.17.2** New vehicles must be equipped with fan-operated ventilation.



FUTURE DIRECTION The technology is now becoming available to monitor temperature and humidity on board transport vehicles. This allows drivers to take appropriate action to maintain ideal conditions for birds. The use of such equipment is encouraged by the RSPCA. The RSPCA will monitor the development of such technology and review its use for inclusion in future development of these standards.

- T 5.18** Plans must be made in advance and appropriate action taken to reduce the risk of heat stress occurring.
- T 5.18.1** Plans relating to standard T 5.18 must include the routine monitoring of weather forecasts of predicted temperatures.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE At times of high ambient temperature or when high humidity poses a threat to the birds, catching, loading and transportation create particular risks of heat stress.

- T 5.19** In periods of hot weather (in excess of 25°C):
- a) a central passageway must be left free of birds/trays to allow increased ventilation, and
 - b) turkeys must be transported at night or in the coolest parts of the day.
- T 5.20** Turkeys must be sheltered from extremes of weather during transport.

Slaughter/killing

- S 1.1** Turkeys must be:
- a) killed/slaughtered according to these standards (see Slaughter/killing section)
 - b) sent to a slaughter plant that has been approved by the certification scheme assessing these standards as being compliant with the Slaughter/killing section of these standards.
- S 1.2** For those seeking RSPCA Assured approval, the standards relating to the slaughter/killing of turkeys (standards with the 'S' prefix) must be assessed by the RSPCA Farm Animals Department, prior to approval.
- S 1.3** Turkeys must be slaughtered as close as possible to the point of production.

Management

- S 2.1** **REVISED** Managers must develop and implement an animal welfare policy which must include:
- a) written procedures with regard to maintaining animal welfare in the slaughterhouse
 - b) the responsibilities and duties of staff
 - c) emergency procedures.
- S 2.2** Contingency plans and suitable back up procedures and systems must be in place to:
- a) deal with occasions when unavoidable delays may occur, such as a mechanical breakdown, and it is not possible to process the birds as planned
 - b) ensure the continued killing of animals in the event of an emergency that threatens the ongoing use of the main system, such as a disruption to the supply of gas in the case of gas killing systems.
- S 2.2.1** **NEW** A reserve (back-up) method of slaughter/killing that is different to the primary method of slaughter/killing must be available and ready for use in the event that the primary method cannot be used, e.g. due to a lack of supply of carbon dioxide in the case of gas killing.
- S 2.3** The animal welfare policy must be reviewed and updated at least annually, and when there are changes to the design or operation of the handling, stunning or slaughter system.
- S 2.4** **LEGAL** Managers must appoint at least one trained Poultry Welfare Officer (PWO), who is responsible for the implementation of the animal welfare policy.



CLARIFICATION Where possible, the PWO should have attended a recognised, validated training course, e.g. Bristol University Animal Welfare Officer training programme.

- S 2.5** **REVISED** Managers, in conjunction with the PWO must:
- a) develop and implement a training programme for all staff involved in the handling and slaughtering/killing of turkeys, and
 - b) ensure these staff are trained and competent to carry out their duties.
 - c) only record staff training as completed once a self- declaration of competence has been signed by both the trainee and management staff.

S 2.5.1 The following areas must be included in the staff training programme (see S 2.5), as applicable to the site:

- a) turkey welfare
- b) turkey behaviour
- c) lairage environment, including lairage conditions and care of turkeys during lairage
- d) handling and movement of turkeys
- e) restraint of turkeys for stunning/killing
- f) slaughter/killing method/s, including emergency back-up methods
- g) assessment of an effective stun/kill
- h) bleeding turkeys.



LEGAL CLARIFICATION Where possible, training related to standards S 2.5 and S 2.5.1 should be validated.

A Certificate of Competence in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009¹ can be used to validate competence for undertaking the following operations:

- the handling and care of animals before they are restrained
- the restraint of animals for the purpose of stunning or killing
- the stunning of animals
- the assessment of effective stunning
- the shackling of live animals
- the bleeding of live animals.

¹Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing, Article 7, Paragraph 2.



FURTHER INFORMATION In relation to S 2.5.1, The Humane Slaughter Association (HSA) *Poultry Welfare - Taking Responsibility* training package can be used to help inform the content of the training programme.

S 2.6 **LEGAL** The PWO must make frequent checks throughout the day to ensure that birds are being effectively stunned/killed.

S 2.7 **LEGAL** Where the birds are not being effectively stunned/killed the PWO must take immediate remedial action.

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)



FURTHER INFORMATION The use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in areas where live animals are present can assist those responsible for monitoring and enforcing animal welfare within the slaughterhouse in ensuring that standards are maintained. It is strongly recommended that CCTV footage is also used for in-house training programmes and to provide an additional level of security at the slaughterhouse.

- S(TV) 1.1** **LEGAL** A functional CCTV system must be installed and operational to monitor animals undergoing the following processes at the slaughterhouse (as applicable):
- a) unloading from vehicles into the lairage
 - b) shackling, including the shackling of birds following gas killing
 - c) stunning, including exiting the electrical waterbath
 - d) neck cutting
 - e) entering a gas killing system.
- S(TV) 1.2** **LEGAL** CCTV cameras must be positioned to ensure a clear view of the processes being monitored is achieved at all times.
- S(TV) 1.3** **LEGAL** It must be possible to observe clearly the view from each camera at all times via one or more monitors.
- S(TV) 1.4** **LEGAL** CCTV footage must be recorded at all times where animals are undergoing any of the processes listed under standard S(TV) 1.1.
- S(TV) 1.5** **LEGAL** The recorded CCTV footage must be:
- a) retained by the slaughterhouse for a period of at least three months, and
 - b) available for viewing on site on request.



ATTENTION Where possible it may be useful for managers to retain CCTV footage for longer than the three months specified in standard S(TV) 1.5, for their own monitoring and security purposes.



LEGAL FURTHER INFORMATION The RSPCA is currently reviewing Intelligent Camera Surveillance systems for use in slaughter plants. These systems can alert relevant slaughter plant staff to potential welfare concerns in real time, allowing situations to be dealt with quickly and efficiently. They can also be used to identify areas where staff require additional training or where staff safety is at risk. It is strongly recommended that slaughter plants adopt such technologies to help further safeguard animal welfare in their plant. Where such technology is being considered, please contact the RSPCA Farm Animals Department for further information.

Lairage

- S 3.1** On arrival at the slaughterhouse all birds must be:
- a) unloaded immediately
 - b) placed in an environmentally controlled lairage.
- S 3.2** All turkeys must be slaughtered as soon as possible after arrival at the slaughterhouse, and in any case within 3 hours.
- S 3.3** **NEW** The vehicle transporting the birds to the processing plant must be positioned to allow easy unloading of the modules.



NEW CLARIFICATION For easy unloading, the unloading area should be designed such that there is:

- flat, even ground that allows safe manoeuvring of equipment
- an absence of steep slopes, uneven surfaces, or obstructions that could hinder unloading
- minimal distance to the lairage.

S 3.4 Where turkeys are being unloaded from fixed crate vehicles:

- a) staff must be provided with facilities that allow them to unload birds from a position which gives them access to all the crates in each tier
- b) care must be taken when removing birds from the crates.

S 3.5 **REVISED** All transport containers must be examined on arrival at the slaughterhouse to identify any birds suffering from injury, heat or cold stress.

S 3.6 Where problems relating to standard S 3.5 have been identified, immediate action must be taken to prevent suffering and ensure that similar occurrences are prevented.

S 3.6.1 There must be a contingency plan in place to state what action will be taken to safeguard the birds' welfare in the event of heat stress occurring.

S 3.7 **REVISED** Turkeys that are held in slaughter facilities must be:

- a) protected from direct rays of sun and from adverse weather, i.e. wind, rain, hail, snow etc.
- b) provided with adequate ventilation
- c) provided with reduced or blue lighting
- d) humanely killed immediately if found to be suffering.

S 3.7.1 Temperature and humidity in the lairage must be regularly monitored and controlled to avoid heat and cold stress.

S 3.8 When a breakdown occurs that results in a delay in the slaughter process, birds may be held in lairage for up to 3 hours from the time of arrival, after which time they must be slaughtered using a permitted back-up method.

S 3.9 Once the turkeys have arrived at the premises at which they are intended to be slaughtered, they must not be moved on to other premises for slaughter.

S 3.10 Standby equipment, e.g. a generator, must be available for emergency breakdowns.

S 3.11 Where live birds are removed from crates prior to shackling, unloading must take place as close to the shackle line as possible to minimise carrying distance and to avoid any stress caused to the birds.

S 3.12 All deaths and injuries must be recorded and reported to the:

- a) driver
- b) haulier
- c) PWO
- d) farm manager before the next consignment from the same source is collected.

S 3.13 Records related to standard S 3.12 must be kept.

- S 3.14** **NEW** If on any day mortality exceeds 0.25% for a single load of turkeys during transport:
- a) the level of mortality must be recorded
 - b) there must be an investigation, that is recorded, to establish the cause/s of death
 - c) effective preventative measures must be put in place without delay to remedy the problem.

Health Monitoring

- S 4.1** The level of the following must be recorded for each flock:
- a) foot pad burn (classified as a score 0 – 4 in Appendix 3)
 - b) breast blisters
 - c) back scratches
 - d) dirty feathers (see information box below standard S 4.2).



CLARIFICATION The term 'flock' refers to a group of turkeys which are placed in a house of holding and are present in this house at the same time.

- S 4.1.1** **NEW** In relation to the assessment of foot pad burn, for each transport load of birds delivered to the slaughterhouse, a minimum of 100 feet from different birds, or 5% of the load (whichever is the greater), must be assessed.

- S 4.2** The method used to score breast blisters, back scratches and dirty feathers must be objective and:
- a) differentiate between minor, mild and severe conditions
 - b) provide consistent results within and between observers
 - c) provide reliable and accurate data for the level of a condition within a flock.



AUDITING/ CALCULATIONS The following scoring system should be used to classify dirty feathers:

0 (None):	Clean – not significantly dirty
1 (Minor):	lightly soiled
2 (Mild):	medium soiling
3 (Severe):	heavily soiled



CLARIFICATION Assessing birds for dirty feathers should take place on the farm during catching. This will avoid scoring birds that may have become dirty during transport and therefore provide a better picture of on-farm conditions. The stock-keeper and/or catching team manager should assess the birds.

- S 4.3** Data relating to standard S 4.1 must be reported back to the producing farm.
- S 4.4** **NEW** Data relating to the following parameters must be reported back to the catching team:
- a) leg damage
 - b) wing damage
 - c) dead on arrival (DOA).

Shackling

S 5.1 With the exception of the specific circumstances outlined in standard S 5.1.1, the shackling of conscious birds is prohibited.

S 5.1.1 The shackling of conscious birds is only permitted:

- a) where:
 - i. birds are slaughtered/killed on the farm where they were reared for finishing, and
 - ii. birds are not subjected to any transport by vehicle to the place of slaughter/killing, and
 - iii. the only commercially/practically viable option available is to slaughter/kill the birds using a system that requires shackling, and
 - iv. written permission has been sought from and granted by the RSPCA Farm Animals Department
- b) in the event of an emergency and when the most humane and only available alternative is to slaughter/kill the birds using a system that requires shackling.



FUTURE DIRECTION With respect to standard S 5.1.1 a), the RSPCA will phase out inverted shackling of conscious birds as soon as a commercially viable and more humane alternative method of slaughter/killing is available and suitable for use on-farm.



CLARIFICATION For the purposes of standard S 5.1.1 b), emergency situations include: culling in the event of notifiable disease outbreaks; and, as a 'back-up' in the event of failure of the usual, permitted killing/slaughter system.

S 5.2 Shackles must be of a size and type, and the slaughter line run at a speed, which permits turkeys to be hung on without causing unnecessary pain or distress.

S 5.3 **NEW** Small birds (e.g. runts) that could miss entering a stun bath must:

- a) not be shackled
- b) be humanely culled without delay.

S 5.4 **REVISED** Shackling teams must be:

- a) thoroughly trained to handle the birds in such a way as to avoid:
 - i. injury
 - ii. unnecessary pain and distress
- b) aware of the risk of breakages that the hanging-on procedure can cause to turkeys
- c) supervised by a trained and competent person during the shackling process.

S 5.5 Slaughterhouse managers must ensure that sufficient personnel are employed on shackling lines at all times to ensure due care and diligence.

S 5.6 The shackler must use a handling technique that calms the bird as it is being shackled.



CLARIFICATION Running the hands down the legs and body of the bird after shackling can help to reduce the incidence of wing flapping. Keeping hold of the birds legs for 0.5 seconds after shackling may have a similar effect.

S 5.7 Birds must be hung on by both legs.

S 5.8 From the point of shackling to entry into the stun bath there must be a:

- a) breast comforter that runs along the entire length of the line
- b) reduction in noise level
- c) maximum light level of 5 lux, or low level blue lighting.



CLARIFICATION Breast comforters should be constructed from firm rubber or plastic curtain and extend below the eye level of the bird.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE The provision of a breast comforter and a reduction in noise and light levels all help to calm the bird and prevent it raising its head, vocalising and wing flapping, which can all be behavioural indicators of discomfort. Wing flapping can cause the occurrence of red wing tips which, as well as being a welfare issue, can result in downgrading of the carcass, detract from the overall appearance of the carcass and lead to loss of total carcass weight if the wings require trimming.

S 5.9 Turkeys must not be suspended for more than 30 seconds before they are stunned.



CLARIFICATION Shackling a bird can cause discomfort and pain, so it is important to reduce the shackling period to a minimum. However, for an effective stun, it is necessary for the bird to be shackled for a short period, to allow it time to relax and stop wing flapping. We would strongly encourage that live turkeys are not suspended for more time than is necessary for wing flapping to cease, which information suggests to be around 25 seconds.

S 5.10 There must be no unevenness in the shackle line causing the shackles to jolt.

S 5.11 The design of the shackle line and entry to the waterbath must eliminate the risk of birds receiving pre-stun shocks.



ATTENTION Due to the size of turkeys, there is a greater risk of birds receiving pre-stun shocks due to the position of their wings, which can hang lower than their heads when shackled.



CLARIFICATION A steeply inclined flat ramp bolted on to the entrance of the waterbath can be effective in avoiding pre-stun shocks.

The ramp should extend over the water so the birds get drawn up the ramp by the shackle line and then swing down into the water in one smooth movement. This results in the bird's head and wing entering the water together and the bird is stunned immediately.

Care must be taken to ensure birds do not receive pre-stun shocks from the ramp itself. This may occur if the ramp is electrically live because of water flowing from the bath onto the ramp or if it is not isolated from the rest of the stunner.

S 5.12 Care must be taken to ensure that birds cannot:

- a) escape from the holding area
- b) fall from the shackle line.

- S 5.13** Where loose birds are found they must:
- a) be taken immediately to the hanging on area or,
 - b) if injured, immediately and humanely slaughtered/killed out of the sight of other birds.
- S 5.14** All crates must be checked to ensure no turkeys are left inside them.

Electrical stunning



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE The RSPCA recognises the shortcomings of the electrical waterbath stunning process, in terms of its actual and potential negative impacts on bird welfare. For example, it is necessary to handle, invert and hang live birds and use a constant voltage to stun the birds. As such, inverted shackling of conscious birds is being phased out, see standards S 5.1 and S 5.1.1.

Gas killing systems offer improved bird welfare and have been reported to provide a higher quality product and less carcass wastage due to downgrading of the carcass. Due to this, gas killing systems have the potential to pay for themselves over a given period of time.

- S 6.1** **NEW** All birds must be stunned prior to bleeding.
- S 6.2** **LEGAL** The following types of stunning equipment are permitted:
- a) electrically live stunning bath
 - b) dry stunner incorporating an electrically-live metal grid or bar
 - c) hand operated stunner
 - d) pneumatically powered poultry killer; however, this must not be used for routine killing purposes, i.e. only used in the event of a breakdown of one of the methods stated in a) to c).
- S 6.3** All stunning and bleeding equipment must be:
- a) properly maintained
 - b) regularly cleaned
 - c) checked daily to ensure that it is in full and proper working order.
- S 6.3.1** **NEW** Records relating to S 6.3 b) and c) must be kept for at least a year.
- S 6.4** An independent, qualified person must inspect the stunning equipment to test its efficacy.
- S 6.5** Any problems must be:
- a) reported to the PWO
 - b) rectified immediately.
- S 6.6** Unstunned birds must be screened from dead birds.
- S 6.7** **REVISED** All birds must:
- a) be checked immediately post-stunning to ensure they have been effectively stunned or killed
 - b) **LEGAL** be humanely killed or re-stunned without delay using a permissible back-up method before the neck is cut, in cases of a stun failure.



REVISED CLARIFICATION The most reliable indicator that a bird is stunned by the low voltage method is the electroplectic fit. The characteristics of this condition are:

- no rhythmic breathing
- neck arched with head directed vertically
- open eyes
- absence of a third eyelid (nictitating membrane) reflex*
- wings held close to the body
- rigidly extended legs and constant rapid body tremors.

The physical conditions of the electroplectic fit are shorter lasting and less pronounced when cardiac arrest is induced at stunning. They are followed by:

- completely limp carcass
- no breathing
- loss of nictitating membrane reflex
- dilated pupil.

*Unconsciousness can be checked by the absence of a blink reflex when the cornea (the surface of the eyeball) is lightly touched. The presence of a blink must be acted upon immediately: it does not necessarily indicate full consciousness but the return of this reflex after stunning is a sign of some brain function returning and it indicates the possibility that consciousness may also be returning.

- S 6.8** Staff must be trained to recognise the signs of an effective stun, and use these signs to recognise that birds have been effectively stunned or are dead.

Waterbath stunning

- S 7.1** **REVISED** Where an electrical water stunning bath is used:

- the stunning bath must be set at a height appropriate for the size and number of birds
- the height must be set such that the heads of all birds are covered by the water
- it must deliver a minimum current of 250mA per bird
- it must operate at a frequency of 50Hz with a sinusoidal (AC) waveform
- DC stunning is prohibited
- each bird must be in contact with the current for a minimum of 4 seconds
- the water level must be of sufficient depth to cover the heads of the birds
- the water must not overflow at the entrance to the bath
- the electrode which is immersed in the water must extend the length of the water bath
- it must be designed and set up to prevent birds receiving pre-stun shocks
- it must be fitted with an ammeter to accurately monitor current flow through the bath when loaded with birds.



FUTURE DIRECTION When commercially feasible, consideration will be given to making constant current stunning equipment a requirement of the welfare standards.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE There is mixed opinion from researchers as to the effectiveness of using a DC waveform for stunning poultry. In particular, there are concerns over whether a bird is effectively stunned when subjected to a DC waveform. Current literature states that DC stunning raises serious welfare concerns and that the use of DC stunning should be actively discouraged. Therefore, the use of DC stunning is prohibited under the scheme until there is further, unequivocal research in this area to suggest that DC stunning would offer at least a welfare neutral alternative to AC stunning.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE 50Hz sine wave (AC) is the optimum frequency and waveform for inducing cardiac arrest. The heart muscle is particularly sensitive to this frequency and when sufficient current is applied to the heart it ceases to beat normally and pump blood around the body. Therefore, an effective stun-to-kill can be achieved when using this frequency to provide a good standard of welfare.

S 7.2 It must be possible to visually observe birds at all stages of the stunning procedure, i.e. on entry, during and immediately on exit from the stunning bath.

S 7.3 **REVISED** Where electrical water bath stunning is used, the shackle, at the point where it meets the turkey's foot, must be continuously sprayed with water using a mist spray, along the entire length of the stun bath.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Contact between the bird's foot and the shackle is critical for good stunning, but tight fitting shackles can cause pain and discomfort to the bird. However, it has been reported that a continuous mist spray allows for a looser fitting shackle to be used without compromising the level of stun the bird receives.

S 7.4 If the slaughter line is stopped for longer than 1 minute, birds between the point of shackling and the killer must be humanely killed immediately.

Manual head-only electrical stunning

- S 8.1** Where electrical hand-held stunners are used:
- turkeys must be restrained in a cone or on a shackle
 - birds must be stunned immediately after being restrained
 - care must be taken to ensure that the stunning electrodes are applied in the optimum position, i.e. applied firmly to either side of the head between the eye and ear
 - hand-held stunners must deliver 400mA
 - the current must be applied for at least 10 seconds and until initial wing flapping ceases (or if held in a cone, until legs become rigid and extended).
 - neck cutting must be carried out immediately using a ventral neck cut to ensure both carotid arteries are severed.
- S 8.2** **NEW** Electrical stunning equipment must be tested daily to ensure it is delivering an adequate current.
- S 8.3** **NEW** A meter that tests current flow through a model that simulates the resistance of a bird's head must be used to test the stunning equipment.

- S 8.4** **NEW** The electrodes must be clean.
- S 8.5** **NEW** If there are signs that a bird has not been properly stunned, the electrodes must be re-applied immediately to give another stun.
- S 8.6** **NEW** Birds which fail to be properly stunned following an immediate re-stun (see standard S 8.5) must be humanely killed or re-stunned without delay using a permitted:
- a) back-up set of electrodes, or
 - b) captive-bolt.
- S 8.7** **NEW** When not in use, the stun tongs must be stored in a dry environment with the electrodes protected from damage.
- S 8.8** **NEW** Voltmeters and ammeters must be easy to read and must be visible to the stunning operator whilst stunning.

Gas killing



CLARIFICATION The use of gas under controlled conditions as a means of killing birds can provide many welfare benefits over conventional waterbath stunning, such as reduced manual handling, avoiding the need to invert and shackle live birds and a more consistent killing process.

The use of fully enclosed gas systems, whereby the gas is introduced to the birds, can offer a greater level of control and uniformity over the killing process and are therefore strongly encouraged.

Inert gases, inert gases with carbon dioxide and carbon dioxide gas only, are all permitted for use under these standards (see standard S 7.3 for more detail). However, unlike carbon dioxide, inert gases, such as argon and nitrogen, have been reported to be non-aversive to poultry and can therefore offer a more humane induction to unconsciousness.

Where carbon dioxide gas only is being used, exposing birds to a controlled, gradually increasing concentration of carbon dioxide results in a smoother transition to unconsciousness and is strongly encouraged.

- S 9.1** For processors choosing to use carbon dioxide gas only, new systems installed from 1st January 2018 must be designed and operated to expose birds to a gradually increasing concentration of carbon dioxide until the birds have lost consciousness.



ATTENTION Please contact the RSPCA Farm Animals Department to discuss what systems would be considered acceptable to comply with standard S 7.1.

- S 9.2** Nominated persons responsible for the operation of the system during the killing of birds must be properly instructed as to:
- a) the method of operation of the system
 - b) the procedures for flushing the system with atmospheric air
 - c) the procedures for emergency evacuation of birds from the system
 - d) the criteria for assessing an effective stun and kill.

S 9.3 **LEGAL** The following gas mixtures are permitted for use:

- a) argon, nitrogen or other inert gases, or any mixture of these gases, in atmospheric air with a maximum of 2% oxygen by volume; or
- b) any mixture of argon, nitrogen or other inert gases with atmospheric air and carbon dioxide, provided that the carbon dioxide concentration does not exceed a maximum of 30% by volume and the oxygen concentration does not exceed 2% by volume; or
- c) carbon dioxide (delivered in two phases) which does not exceed
 - i. an average maximum concentration of 30%, and
 - ii. a maximum concentration of 33%, until birds have lost consciousness (Phase 1).



CLARIFICATION In relation to standard S 7.3 c), the maximum concentration of carbon dioxide conscious birds are exposed to should not exceed 30%. However, due to the nature of gas injection systems, it is acknowledged that there will be some variability in the concentration of carbon dioxide within the system. Therefore, a 10% tolerance on this concentration has been applied, i.e. permitting a maximum concentration of 33% carbon dioxide.

Further, following loss of consciousness by exposure to carbon dioxide gas only, it is a legal requirement to expose the birds to a concentration of carbon dioxide above 40% until death, which is classified as Phase 2.

S 9.4 Where applicable to the gas system being used, Standard Operating Procedures must clearly describe any adjustments required to the system to account for:

- a) birds of different weights/ages
- b) birds from different production systems, i.e. indoor and free-range, including organic
- c) any other factors likely to affect the operation/management of the system, such as:
 - i. bird feather condition
 - ii. bird cleanliness
 - iii. wind speed and direction
 - iv. air humidity
 - v. environmental temperature
 - vi. transport crate stocking density.

S 9.5 Where pre-filled gas systems are used, there must be a written procedure that clearly explains how the correct gas concentration gradient is:

- a) achieved within the system prior to birds entering, and
- b) consistently maintained at all times during the gas killing process.

S 9.6 A contingency plan must be in place that details what action is to be taken to help safeguard the welfare of the birds if a system failure occurs while birds are in the system.

S 9.7 In case of system failure:

- a) there must be a permitted back-up killing method available and ready for use at all times that is capable of dealing with all birds awaiting killing (see standard S 6.2)
- b) where the permitted back-up method is used, the following must be recorded:
 - i. the date and time of the failure
 - ii. the reason/s for the failure
 - iii. the time taken to evacuate the birds from the system (where required)
 - iv. the time the failure was rectified and normal gas killing resumed.

- S 9.8** There must be a means of flushing the system with atmospheric air with the minimum of delay.
- S 9.9** Prior to the commencement of processing birds each day, checks must ensure there is a sufficient supply of gas to kill all the birds to be received.
- S 9.10** Where more than one type of gas is used, the gases must be mixed thoroughly prior to supply into the system.
- S 9.11** Live birds must remain in their transport containers throughout the gas killing process.
- S 9.12** There must be a means of access to any bird within the system with the minimum of delay.
- S 9.13** There must be a diagram readily available on site that clearly and accurately shows the location of all the gas concentration monitoring sensors.



CLARIFICATION Gas sensors should be positioned to accurately report the gas concentration/s being experienced by the birds. For example, in tunnel systems, the sensors should be positioned at bird head height.

- S 9.14** Birds must not be subjected to the gas prior to entry into the system.
- S 9.15** For pre-filled gas systems, birds must not enter the system until the correct gas concentration throughout the system has been achieved.
- S 9.16** Once birds have entered the system, they must be subjected to the correct gas concentration without delay.
- S 9.17** For systems using inert gases, birds must be exposed to the maximum concentration of the gas mixture within a maximum of 10 seconds after entry into the system.
- S 9.18** There must be a means of clearly visually monitoring in real time the birds throughout the gas killing process, i.e. from start/point of entry to finish/exit.



CLARIFICATION For tunnel systems, the installation of appropriately positioned windows at regular intervals along the entire length of the system can be sufficient to satisfy standard S 9.18. However, the use of windows in such systems to clearly assess the effect of the gas on birds can be difficult. Therefore, ideally, cameras should be installed, either to follow the birds through the system, or at critical monitoring points.



ATTENTION Where windows are used to monitor birds, it may be necessary for them to be cleaned regularly to ensure visibility of the birds is maintained and thus the requirement of standard S 9.18 is met at all times.

- S 9.19** For tunnel and pit type systems:
- there must be suitable equipment available on site and ready for use at all times that can clearly record the behaviour of a group of birds continuously as they progress through the system to the point of losing consciousness, and
 - it must be possible to view the footage in real time and/or promptly after it has been recorded.



CLARIFICATION A suitable mobile digital camera with a recording function mounted within a suitable container, e.g. a wire cage, that can be placed in with the birds in their transport container could be used to satisfy standard S 9.19. NB. It may be necessary to provide additional light, e.g. a torch, within the container.

S 9.20 The movement of the transport crates through the system must minimise any disturbance caused to the birds.

S 9.21 The induction to unconsciousness must be calm, i.e. birds must not show any avoidable signs of fear or excitement, such as wing flapping or escape behaviour.



CLARIFICATION When a bird loses posture and neck tension, this is likely to indicate the bird is unconscious.

During exposure to carbon dioxide, birds perform some headshaking, deep breathing and gasping prior to loss of consciousness. If these behaviours are performed at a high frequency or vigorously then this is of a welfare concern.

S 9.22 Bird behaviour during induction to unconsciousness must be assessed, and the outcome recorded, at the following times to ensure the induction to unconsciousness is calm:

- a) at the start of each day's kill, i.e. the first birds to enter the system that day
- b) at least every hour
- c) immediately following any break in processing
- d) immediately following any change in processing that could adversely affect bird welfare during induction to unconsciousness, e.g. alterations to the setup or operation of the system (see standard S 9.4).

S 9.23 If birds show avoidable signs of fear or excitement (see standard S 9.21) then:

- a) action must be taken without delay to investigate the cause/s
- b) the cause/s of the issue must be rectified prior to more birds entering the system
- c) a record of the cause/s and action/s taken to rectify the issue must be kept.

S 9.24 After loss of consciousness, birds must remain unconscious until death.

S 9.25 Birds must be dead on exit from the system.

S 9.26 For carbon dioxide gas only systems, minimum dwell times to achieve i. loss of consciousness prior to exposure to a gas concentration exceeding 33% and ii. death on exit from the system must be:

- a) established
- b) documented
- c) adhered to at all times.

S 9.26.1 In relation to standard S 9.26, if dwell times vary according to various factors, such as bird weight, then separate dwell times must be established for each factor.

S 9.27 For carbon dioxide only gas killing systems, time to loss of consciousness – from entry into the system/start of the gas killing process – must be recorded:

- a) hourly, and
- b) following any change in processing that could affect the time to loss of consciousness, e.g. alterations to the setup or operation of the system (see standard S 9.4).



CLARIFICATION The time to loss of consciousness should be recorded at the point when it appears that all birds in a crate have lost consciousness.

S 9.28 Where inert gases are used:

- a) birds must be exposed to the gas mixture for no less than 3 minutes
- b) the total amount of time birds are exposed to the gas, i.e. the dwell time, must be:
 - i. recorded at least hourly,
 - ii. measured continuously, displayed and recorded.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE With regard to standard S 9.28 a), The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015 requires birds are exposed to the gas for long enough to ensure that they are killed, i.e. a non-recoverable stun must be used.

According to Council Regulation (EC) No. 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing, a non-recoverable stun requires exposure to inert gases or carbon dioxide associated with inert gases for greater than 3 minutes.

S 9.29 For tunnel and pit type systems, the following must be recorded hourly:

- a) the transport crate throughput per minute
- b) the average weight of the birds being processed.

S 9.30 There must be sufficient time and space after exiting the system and prior to any other procedure to assess the effectiveness of the kill.

S 9.31 On exiting the system, all birds must be checked as soon as practically possible to:

- a) ensure they are dead
- b) identify any signs of damage or injury that could have been caused in the system prior to them losing consciousness.



CLARIFICATION Reliable indicators that a bird is dead include:

- completely limp carcass
- no breathing
- loss of nictitating membrane response
- dilated pupil and absence of pupillary response, i.e. no constriction of the pupil in response to a bright light shone into the eye from a distance of 5cm.

S 9.32 Any birds that are not dead after exiting the system must be humanely killed without delay.

S 9.33 During the gas killing process, the concentration by volume of each gas used must be continuously:

- a) measured
- b) displayed
- c) recorded.

S 9.34 The correct gas concentration/s must be maintained at all times during the killing process.

S 9.35 It must be demonstrated that the correct gas concentration gradient/profile is being maintained throughout the system consistently.



CLARIFICATION With regards to standard S 9.35, it will be necessary to provide recent (within the last 12 months) or real time graphical outputs of the actual gas concentration profile birds are exposed to throughout the killing process, i.e. printed or electronic graphical outputs showing gas concentration continuously over time as birds undergo gas killing. This will need to be for at least three separate runs.

The gas concentration gradient/profile should be continuously monitored and recorded throughout the system at all times.

- S 9.36** Gas sensors must be linked to an audible and visual alarm system, which is automatically triggered:
- when the maximum residual oxygen level is above 2% where inert gases are used
 - when the concentration by volume of carbon dioxide rises/is likely to rise above the maximum permitted level (see standard S 9.3).
- S 9.37** Birds must not enter the system at any time when:
- the audible and visible warning signals have been activated (see standard S 9.36)
 - there is any defect in the operation of the system.
- S 9.38** The temperature of the gas must:
- be continuously monitored, either within the system, or immediately prior to entry into the system
 - be sufficient to achieve an air temperature within the system equivalent to the current ambient temperature, i.e. the air temperature within the vicinity of the system at the time of processing
 - be continuously recorded or recorded at least hourly.



CLARIFICATION Air temperature within the system should be continuously monitored, displayed and recorded throughout the system at all times.

- S 9.39** Records showing the air relative humidity within the system prior to birds losing consciousness during killing must be available on request (records must be no more than 12 months old).



CLARIFICATION Standard S 9.39 can be achieved by providing an independent report that has measured this parameter within the last 12 months.



RATIONALE/ EVIDENCE BASE Air relative humidity should be continuously monitored, displayed and recorded throughout the system at all times.

It is a legal requirement to ensure the humidity within the system does not adversely affect bird welfare by being too low. EFSA (2004)¹ have stated that controlling humidity (and temperature) of gas mixtures could help to alleviate any physical discomfort and distress caused by inhalation of the gas mixtures and therefore improve bird welfare.

Ideally, air relative humidity should be above 60%: air relative humidity levels below 60% may cause a more painful stimulus of the bird's respiratory tract².

¹EFSA (2004) *Welfare aspects of animal stunning and killing methods: Scientific report of the Scientific Panel for Animal Health and Welfare on a request from the Commission related to welfare aspects of animal stunning and killing methods*. Italy, [Online] EFSA. Available from: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/45> (Accessed: 12/07/2016).

²Gerritzen, M.A., Reimert, H. G. M., Hindle, V. A. M., Verhoeven, T. W., and Veerkamp, W. B. (2013) Multistage carbon dioxide gas stunning of broilers. *Poultry Science*, 92:41-50.

- S 9.40** Gas sensors must be calibrated:
- a) at regular intervals
 - b) according to the manufacturer's procedures and recommendations.
- S 9.40.1** A verifiable record of calibration must be kept.
- S 9.41** Gas systems must:
- a) not cause injury to conscious birds
 - b) be well maintained
 - c) be cleaned according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- S 9.42** Records of birds recovering consciousness after exposure to gas mixtures must be maintained.
- S 9.43** Where signs of damage or injury to conscious birds are identified:
- a) this must be thoroughly investigated to ascertain where and how this may have occurred
 - b) immediate action must be taken to rectify the problem
 - c) this must be recorded, including the results of the investigation into the cause and the outcome of the action taken to rectify the problem.
- S 9.44** If any bird escapes from its transport crate within the system then:
- a) this must be recorded, and
 - b) preventative measures must be put in place to prevent this reoccurring
 - c) any preventative measures employed must be recorded.
- S 9.45** All records relating to this section of the standards (Gas Killing) must be kept for at least 12 months and made available on request.

Bleeding

- S 10.1** No more than 10 seconds must elapse between stunning and neck cutting.
- S 10.2** Post-stunning, both carotid arteries and both jugular veins must be effectively severed using a ventral cut.
- S 10.3** The neck cut must be checked by an appointed member of staff who must be given sufficient time to sever the blood vessels manually, if necessary.
- S 10.4** **LEGAL** No further processing must take place until at least 120 seconds have elapsed since the major blood vessels in the turkey's neck have been severed.
- S 10.5** **REVISED** All birds must be checked to ensure that they are dead before:
- a) entering the scalding tank
 - b) undergoing further processing/plucking.

Appendix 1

Transport - standard operating and emergency procedure

Relating to standard T 5.4

Items to be included

1. Out of hours telephone numbers and 'emergency procedure'.
2. Accident procedure.
3. Certificate of motor insurance and MOT.
4. Tyres – punctures Code of Practice.
5. Mobile phones or other communication equipment (and procedures for use).
6. Guidelines on correct environmental conditions during the journey, depending on length of journey and ambient temperature.
7. RSPCA Welfare standards relating to transport of turkeys.
8. Procedure for loading/unloading of poultry transporters.
9. Procedure for delivery of poultry to customer sites.
10. FTA – *The Driver's Handbook* including Tachograph Regulations (2022).
11. Fire extinguisher.
12. Operating procedures for roadside checks.
13. MAFF/Defra leaflet *Guide to Alleviation of Thermal Stress in Poultry in Lairage* (PB 3724, 1998).
14. Daily journey sheet.
15. Torch.

Appendix 2

Welfare audit form example

Standards to be included as part of the welfare audit (see standards M 7.1 to M 7.7) and an example of a suitable welfare audit form.

Date		Unannounced	Yes / No
Auditor			
Producer			
Flock age			
Comments			

Standard number/s	Summarised standard	Check	Comments
Food & water			
FW 1.1	Food provided: a) is appropriate for species b) is appropriate for age c) maintains birds in good health d) satisfies nutritional needs.		
FW 1.8	Food not contaminated/stale.		
FW 2.1	Water is clean & fresh & adequate supply available.		
FW 2.3	Water not contaminated/stale.		
FW 2.11	All drinkers: a) at correct height b) appropriate design.		
Environment			
E 2.5	There's nothing in the environment that could cause unnecessary injury/distress. To include outside environmental factors, e.g. noise, atmospheric pollution, adverse weather conditions, & other animals.		
Litter			
E 3.4.1	The litter: a) is of a suitable material & particle size – no large clumps b) is in a dry & friable condition c) is at least 5cm deep		

Standard number/s	Summarised standard	Check	Comments
	d) allows birds to dustbathe e) is topped up if necessary f) is managed hygienically.		
Lighting			
E 4.2	In each 24h: a) min 8h continuous light, & b) min 8h continuous darkness, except first 3d and where natural light is provided & natural period of darkness is less than 8h.		
E 4.8	No area lit at less than 20 lux for at least 8h.		
E 4.5	Natural daylight provided at all times during natural daylight period, through all required openings.		
E 4.17	When used outside natural daylight period, e.g. to extend the light period, and prior to 10 days of age, artificial lights switched on/off in stepped/gradual manner over a period of at least 30 mins.		
Space requirements & environment			
E 5.1	Stocking density within required limits.		
E 6.2	Aerial contaminants not noticeably unpleasant.		
E 6.3	Environment is thermally comfortable.		
E 7.2	For every 500 birds, there is at least: a) 1 large (e.g. 250kg bale) or 2 small (i.e. conventional rectangular approximately 18kg) straw bales, b) 2m of perch space, & c) 2 pecking objects.		
E 7.1	Enrichment items provided from 14d of age.		
Free-range			
R 2.1	Birds have access to the range for at least half their lifetime.		
R 2.2	Birds have continuous daytime access to the range.		
R 1.2	The range: a) surrounding the house is not poached		

Standard number/s	Summarised standard	Check	Comments
	b) consists of pasture mainly covered with living vegetation.		
R 3.1	There is a min. 10m ² of overhead shade & shelter per 1,000 birds. Shade & shelter facilities are appropriately distributed to encourage full use of range.		
R 1.6	The range is being managed to provide the most suitable conditions to encourage the birds to roam.		
Stock-keepers & management			
M 3.3	Stock-keepers can demonstrate their proficiency in procedures that have the potential to cause suffering, e.g. injection, beak trimming, culling.		
M 4.1	Birds are inspected a min 3x/d & inspection identifies sick/injured birds.		
M 4.3	Movement through unit does not frighten birds.		
M 4.4	Welfare problems seen during inspections are dealt with appropriately & without delay.		
M 5.1	Equipment upon which turkeys depend is inspected min 1x/d.		
Health			
H 1.3	If any health aspect exceeded the targets identified in the VHWP (see H 1.1): a) the vet was informed b) the VHWP was revised to include a programme of action that corrected the problem/s.		
H 1.11.2	There are no birds with a gait score of 3 or higher.		
H 5.3	Good culling practice being adopted – no birds that require culling are present in the flock.		

Standard number	Action required & comments	Date to be actioned	Date actioned and signature

Signature of auditor	
Auditor position/role	
Signature of producer	

Appendix 3

Foot pad burn assessment guide

Relating to Standard S 4.1



Score 0

No external signs of foot pad burn. The skin of the foot pad feels soft to the touch and no swelling or necrosis is evident.



Score 1

The pad feels harder and denser than a non affected foot. The central part of the pad is raised, reticulate scales are separated and small black necrotic areas may be present.



Score 2

Marked swelling of the foot pad. Reticulate scales are black, forming scale shaped necrotic areas. The scales around the outside of the black areas may have turned white. The area of necrosis is less than one quarter of the total area of the foot pad.



Score 3

Swelling is evident and the total foot pad size is enlarged. Reticulate scales are pronounced, increased in number and separated from each other. The amount of necrosis extends to one half of the foot pad.



Score 4

As score 3, but with more than half the foot pad covered by necrotic cells.

(Reference: P.M.Hocking et al. Standard European footpad dermatitis scoring system for use in turkey processing plants. *World's Poultry Science Journal*, Vol. 64 September 2008.)

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