



# NATIONAL ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS

FOR THE

# CHICKEN MEAT INDUSTRY

Manual for Pick-Up Crew

This Manual for Pick-up Crew was prepared as part of the following series of Standards:

**National Animal Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry, Manual for Breeder Production, 2008.**

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For further information, refer to the “National Animal Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry” that contain the policy objectives and standards recommended for the whole of industry. See [www.poultrycrc.org.au](http://www.poultrycrc.org.au)



# ABOUT THIS MANUAL

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- **The ‘Manual for Pick-Up’ provides the key animal welfare guidelines for the chicken meat industry.**
- **This manual was developed to:**
  - Provide a tool to incorporate the national animal welfare standards for the meat chicken industry into company and enterprise QA programs.
  - Provide a mechanism whereby industry participants can demonstrate their compliance with animal welfare Codes of Practice, other relevant legislation and meet the owner of the birds’ requirements.
  - The focus of this manual is meat chickens. For spent breeders consult the owner of the birds for additional information.

## About this manual

- **This manual is designed to:**
  - Provide information for pick-up crew on daily procedures and responsibilities for animal welfare.
  - Be used for training purposes.
  - Detail the key procedures that should be followed to ensure bird welfare during pick-up and transport.
  - Provide key targets as a guide on ‘what to do’ to ensure bird welfare for areas such as loading densities.
  - Provide recording sheets that can be used by pick-up crew to ensure that welfare provisions are met.

# PICK-UP PROCEDURES

## Containers and equipment are cleaned regularly



*Pick up crew should complete visitor logs and should have clean equipment, clothing and boots for each farm.*

Ensure vehicles, forklifts, containers and any other equipment are clean and disinfected regularly.

Observe biosecurity procedures set by the owner of the birds.

## Containers were the appropriate size for the birds being picked up.

### Containers provided sufficient height (clearance) for the birds to be transported.

Note: Containers should be:

- lifted and placed with care
- positioned on the vehicle in an upright position without excessive tilting
- securely attached to the vehicle
- suitable for the intended purpose

Category of poultry	Minimum container height (cm)
Meat chickens	23

### Empty crates are kept dry and in the shade, where possible, before loading.

### All crates are in in good working order and secure.

Containers and boxes for poultry and chicks should be stacked in a way which facilitates ventilation during transport.

Birds should only be carried in properly designed containers to prevent toe and foot damage when they are dragged or stacked.

Containers should be strong enough to prevent the possibility of collapse when stacked and secured when closed to prevent birds from escaping.

## Pick-Up Procedures

<p><b>The schedule was coordinated in advance to ensure prompt pick up and transport of birds.</b></p>	<p>Records of the pick-up time should be kept.</p> <p>During assembly and pick-up of caged end of lay hens, transport containers should be placed as close as possible to the cages to minimise handling and carrying birds, subject to biosecurity arrangements.</p>
<p><b>The pick-up leading hand was satisfied that all birds were in a fit state to be transported.</b></p> <p><i>Cull birds identified and action taken to treat or humanely destroy as required.</i></p> <div></div>	<p>Prior to pick-up, any cull birds should be identified and treated or humanely destroyed. Birds should be assessed to be fit for the intended journey and birds loaded must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– have broken legs or be unable to walk</li><li>– be visibly dehydrated or weak</li><li>– be showing visible signs of severe injury or distress</li><li>– have a condition that is likely to cause increased pain or suffering during transport</li></ul> <p>During pick-up, any cull birds should also be identified and not transported. The grower/manager should be informed so that action can be taken to humanely destroy the bird(s).</p>
<p><b>Birds were handled appropriately during pick-up.</b></p> <p>Meat chicken birds, hens or chicks, should not be solely lifted or carried by the head, neck, wings or tail unless otherwise supported.</p>	<p>Care should be taken when carrying meat chickens to reduce the risk of injury and assist birds to remain calm.</p> <p>The system used for bird pick-up should ensure that stress is minimised. This might include dimming lighting, use of barriers or a catching frame and careful handling.</p> <p>For meat chickens weighing below 1.7 kg loaded by hand, the maximum carried should be up to 11, with 5 and 6 chickens in each hand.</p> <p>For meat chickens weighing 1.7-2kg, the maximum carried should be 4 or 5 in each hand, depending on their live weight.</p>

## Pick-Up Procedures

<p>Ensure that all containers are handled with care and not tilted excessively to prevent the smothering of birds.</p> <p>If using a conveyor, this also should not have an excessive tilt.</p>	<p>Containers should be handled and carried horizontally.</p> <p>Work practices should ensure that smothers are avoided. As a guide, 1-2 in 1000 birds is an appropriate target before action should be taken to examine practice.</p>										
<p>Ensure records are maintained and signed. Records should include the time of pick-up, time the vehicle left the farm and all other batch card information for the birds being loaded.</p> 	<p>The batch card should be signed by the leading hand.</p> <p>The time at the start and end of pick-up should be recorded.</p> <p>Any smothers or mortalities should be recorded on the pick-up docket.</p> <p>Water and feed deprivation times limits should be observed and the time(s) recorded.</p> <p>Time off water (maximum) : all birds – 24 hours.</p>										
<p>Ensure the stocking densities in containers are in accordance with recommendations.</p> <p>The correct number of birds should be caught and handled.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Floor space</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Poultry up to 1.6kg</td> <td>40 birds per m<sup>2</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poultry 1.6-2.2kg</td> <td>36 birds per m<sup>2</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poultry 2.2-3.0kg</td> <td>28 birds per m<sup>2</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poultry 3.0-5.0kg</td> <td>20 birds per m<sup>2</sup></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Floor space	Poultry up to 1.6kg	40 birds per m <sup>2</sup>	Poultry 1.6-2.2kg	36 birds per m <sup>2</sup>	Poultry 2.2-3.0kg	28 birds per m <sup>2</sup>	Poultry 3.0-5.0kg	20 birds per m <sup>2</sup>
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## Pick-Up Procedures

<p><b>Ensure, when loading containers that they are placed to enable effective airflow for ventilation.</b></p>	<p>Ventilation should ensure a good airflow and during hot weather, vehicles should not be left stationary to ensure there is sufficient airflow (windspeed) to avoid heat stress in birds.</p>
<p><b>Full crates should be monitored during pick-up to ensure action can be taken if required to minimise heat stress in birds.</b></p>	<p>Actions might include, not leaving birds stationary, providing shade, misters, sprays or fans to cool birds in containers as required. To avoid heat or cold stress in birds, the 'effective temperature' for a load of live poultry should ideally be between 10-30 °C. Where there is risk of heat or cold stress in birds, actions should be taken accordingly.</p>
<p><b>Ensure that during extreme weather, action is taken to minimise stress on birds including shortening the journey, not leaving the vehicle stationary, use of misters, sprays, shade or covers.</b></p> <p><b>Where the air temperature was &gt; 30 °C, the birds are monitored during loading to ensure action can be taken to reduce the risk of heat stress if required.</b></p>	<p>Birds being transported in cold conditions may be affected by wind chill, particularly if they are wet. Birds, both at the front and the back of the vehicle should be protected from the extremes of the weather while being transported, as the temperature between the top and bottom and front and back of the vehicle can differ significantly. Suitable covers, that enable sufficient natural ventilation, may be used to protect birds in containers from wind and rain, and from cold conditions.</p> <p>Birds being transported in hot conditions need to be monitored by the crew during pick-up, transport and while waiting at the processing plant for unloading. As far as practicable, action should be taken to avoid pre-disposing birds to hot temperatures. Actions might include transporting birds during the cooler time(s) of the day (that is, mornings), not leaving the vehicle stationary or arranging the schedule to minimise transport duration (see above). Transport and slaughter should ensure that the time the birds remain in containers from pick-up to processing is minimised, particularly in hot weather.</p>
<p><b>Before departure, all containers are secure with doors closed.</b></p> <p><b>Containers should be placed in a way that ensures birds are comfortable and that the risk of injury or escape is minimised. Any escaped birds are caught.</b></p>	<p><b>The pick-up crew leading hand (or delegate) ensures that there are no loose birds outside of the shed before leaving the farm.</b></p> <p>Stray or escaped birds in shed at final pick-up or outside shed during pick-up are caught before transport and placed in crates or housed.</p>

# GROWER PREPARATION FOR PICK-UP

<p><b>Procedures are in place to ensure that feeders and drinkers are raised in a timely manner to enable pick-up.</b></p>	<p>Feeders to be lifted at an appropriate time to prepare for pick-up and with consideration of the maximum feed and water deprivation times for birds including time spent loading, during transport and at the plant prior to slaughter (24 hours maximum).</p> <p>Drinkers to be lifted when pick-up crew arrive.</p>
<p><b>Lighting is adjusted accordingly.</b></p>	<p>Lighting might be dimmed to assist in minimising stress to birds.</p>
<p><b>The track between the shed and the trailer is well-maintained.</b></p>	<p>Shed surrounds should be clean. Access points to the shed and birds should be available and kept clear.</p>
<p><b>Birds are not left in crates for more than 2 h before transport.</b></p>	<p>The time birds are held in containers at the farm should be as short as possible. Birds should not be held stationary in containers for more than 2 h (ie during pick-up).</p> <p>Records of the pick-up time, batch information and the time birds were removed from feed and water should be kept.</p> <p>Any birds not loaded or humanely destroyed should also be recorded.</p>
<p><b>Any cull birds rejected for transport are humanely destroyed.</b></p> <p>NOTE: Cervical dislocation involves partial separation of the head/brain from the spinal cord. The resulting damage to the nervous system leads to cardiac and respiratory arrest and death. The method requires a high degree of skill to be humane.</p>	<p>Birds intended for transport should have been inspected and assessed for their fitness for the intended journey and any birds that were not fit to be transported treated, removed or humanely destroyed.</p> <p>The preferred method for humane destruction of poultry is <b>cervical dislocation</b>. An alternative option is rapid decapitation.</p>

# RECORD KEEPING

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- **Instruction:**
  - Ensure that records are kept of pick-up events.
  - Ensure there is feedback with suppliers and owners of birds.
  - Ensure there is communication with the driver on relevant consignment details.
  - Review animal welfare practices regularly to ensure any non-compliance is identified and action is taken.



- The example recording sheets in this manual provide the key information that should be kept for each pick-up.
- Other recording sheets can be used if appropriate otherwise these example sheets can be used and kept.

# EXAMPLE RECORDING SHEETS

Record	Record or location of evidence	Notes	Date	Sign
Start time of pick-up				
End time of pick-up				
Estimate of number of rejects left in the shed				
Inspections on departure to ensure the load is secure and containers are correctly stacked to minimise any risk of injury to birds or birds escaping.				
Location of signed consignment note				
Consignment note with farm and shed identification of batch (1)				
Consignment note with farm and shed identification of batch (2)				

# CHECKLIST

	Yes	No	Sign
Equipment (forklift, crates) cleaned before use			
Crates according to recommendation (dry, working order, correct sizing)			
Pick up crews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- complied with biosecurity measures</li> <li>- received training</li> <li>- provided with written procedures</li> <li>- carried containers horizontally</li> </ul>			
Shed prepared appropriately for pick-up by farm manager			
All birds were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- in a fit state to be transported</li> <li>- caught and carried in the correct manner</li> <li>- in crates within the correct stocking densities</li> <li>- not left in crates for more than 2hrs in hot weather without misters, sprays, shade or other action</li> <li>- were accounted for according to batch records</li> </ul>			
Operations were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- checked by the grower/facility manager</li> <li>- checked by pick-up crew leading hand</li> <li>- smoothly conducted and reliably carried out</li> </ul>			
Air temperature between 10-30°C			
The consignment note was signed			