

Laying Hen Welfare Standard v4 March 2021

This document applies to all Shell Eggs supplied to Whitbread UK. It should be read, actioned and signed in conjunction with the following reference documents.

- **Whitbread Animal Welfare Policy**
- **Whitbread Egg Raw Material Specification**
- **Outcome Measure Requirements for Laying Hens**

1. Selection of Animals

- 1.1 Producers and catching teams must only select fit and healthy birds for travel. When selecting birds for transport the following need to be considered:
 - Body Condition and weight
 - Clinical evidence of disease or parasitism.
 - Feather cover.
 - Cleanliness
- 1.2 All withdrawal periods must have been observed.
- 1.3 Catching teams must be able to identify birds which are suitable for transport and not load individuals which are already compromised or would become so in transit. There must be suitably trained personnel available to immediately dispatch any compromised birds *in situ*.
- 1.4 End of lay hens must be held by both legs, with a maximum of 3 birds per hand. When removing from an aviary system, the breast should be supported or a breast slide used.
- 1.5 Where mechanical depopulation is utilized, drivers must be effectively trained. Birds should be collected by the forwards motion of the vehicle which should move at an appropriate speed to avoid any damage or injury to the birds. Any signs of injury or distress should be immediately investigated.
- 1.6 Water must be available until catching commences.
- 1.7 Feed must not be withdrawn in excess of 12 hours before slaughter.

2. Procurement of Livestock

- 2.1 The origin of stock and the farming method for all poultry reared must be recorded at farm and made available to the packing station.
- 2.2 No cloned livestock or progeny are acceptable
- 2.3 Supplying farms must be certified to a recognised Animal Welfare scheme e.g. Lion Code, KAT, IKB-EI.
- 2.4 Schemes must lay down clear standards for stockmanship, housing, nutrition, welfare, management of outdoor systems (where applicable), animal health

(including salmonella control), handling and transportation, travel times and environmental issues.

- 2.5 Schemes must include a pre-approval inspection, and farms must be audited on a regular basis, preferably at least once per year. Audit results must be recorded.
- 2.6 Pullets should be obtained from known sources, with both the pullet rearing farm and the supplying hatchery certified to a recognised Animal Welfare scheme e.g. Lion Code, KAT, IKB-EI.

3. Transport to point of slaughter

- 3.1 Only fit animals must be transported as per the guidance outlined EU Transport Best Practice Guidelines for Poultry <http://animaltransportguides.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Animal-Transport-Guides-Poultry-2017.pdf>. Due to the typical transport conditions for poultry there can be no provision to allow the transport of slightly injured or otherwise compromised birds as transport containers do not facilitate additional safeguards for individual birds.
- 3.2 All transportation should be in accordance with relevant legislation. As a minimum, catching and transport operations must be consistent with legislative requirements as outlined in **Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2005**
- 3.3 It is the responsibility of the consignor to employ a reputable and experienced contractor to transport livestock.
- 3.3 The following criteria should be addressed:
 - 3.3.1 All catching teams and drivers must be adequately trained and adopt practices to load and drive birds with their well-being as a priority.
 - 3.3.2 Catching should take place under subdued lighting conditions but with provision for lighting for key activities (e.g. forklift operations).
 - 3.3.3 The vehicle and transport containers must be fit for purpose and in particular the interior of the transport containers should contain no projections or edges capable of injuring the birds.
 - 3.3.4 Transport containers must not be overloaded and stocking density must be adjusted in response to environmental conditions.
 - 3.3.5 Space allowances must always provide at least these, bird weight specific, minimum limits
 - < 1.6 kg: 180 – 200 cm²/kg
 - 1.6 – 3.0 kg: 160 cm²/kg
 - 3.0 – 5.0 kg: 115 cm²/kg
 - > 5.0 kg: 105 cm²/kg
 - 3.3.6 All transport containers must be securely anchored in transit
 - 3.3.7 Vehicles should be cleaned and disinfected between successive deliveries.

- 3.3.8 Timing of transportation should be planned to minimise travel and waiting times. Journey times should not exceed 8 hours excluding the time taken to load and unload vehicles (subject to audit findings). It is preferred that end of lay hens are not part of multi-site pick-ups.
- 3.3.9 Vehicles must provide animals with adequate ventilation, whilst maintaining protection from adverse weather conditions. Side curtains must be available to protect birds from extremes of weather.
- 3.4 Any birds which are identified as being injured following transportation should be slaughtered immediately in order to avoid undue suffering and distress.

4. Husbandry

- 4.1 All persons handling birds must be able to demonstrate competency based upon recorded formal training. Records of the relevant training are to be maintained.
- 4.2 Stockpersons must be able to:
 - 4.2.1 Recognise signs of normal behaviour and abnormal behaviour e.g. Injurious Pecking
 - 4.2.2 Recognise signs of distress; signs of common diseases & digestive disorders.
 - 4.2.3 Apply the principles of sound animal nutrition.
 - 4.2.4 Assess feather cover using the FeatherWel system and understand approaches which reduce injurious pecking and aggression.
- 4.3 The provision of environmental enrichment is key to animal management. Perches are particularly important for the laying hen, with provision being necessary during rear and production.

5. Feed and Water

- 5.1 All livestock must have ready access to a wholesome diet which is appropriate for their age and body condition, so that it satisfies the nutritional requirements of the animal.
- 5.2 Animal feed may not contain any animal or avian proteins or any other product not permitted by local or European law, or Whitbread. Restrictions apply as follows:
 - a) Antibiotic and hormonal growth promoters cannot be used.
 - b) Blood products cannot be used.

- c) The use of all animal proteins, except for fish meal, is prohibited.
 - d) Fishmeal must be registered and from a sustainable source.
 - e) The inclusion of canthaxanthin is not permitted
 - f) Raw materials which are likely to produce taint or toxin in eggs must be avoided.
- 5.3 Where genetically modified animal feed is used this must be declared on the finished product specification and the feed specification supplied to farm.
- 5.4 Animals must have ready access to sufficient fresh clean water. Water trough space or nipple availability must be suitable for the number of animals and shall be adequate to enable ready access for a number of animals to drink at the same time.
- 5.5 Provision must be made to ensure an emergency supply of suitable drinking water in the event of failure of the normal supply (e.g. due to freezing, drought, etc.).
- 5.6 In multi-tier systems, suitable food and water provision must be available on alternate levels, at least.

6. Housing

- 6.1 Caged systems are not permitted for pullets or laying hens.
- 6.2 Birds must have continuous access to litter area from 2 weeks of age onwards.
- 6.3 Perching must be designed and positioned to reduce the risk of keel bone damage. Ramps should be used to link tiers to ensure the birds can utilise the full space available without injury.
- 6.4 Where birds have access to outdoors, this land must be kept free of any debris which could present a hazard to animals. Provision must also be made to minimise predator challenge.

7. Medicines and Health

- 7.1 A proactive Health Plan shall be developed and documented in conjunction with the farms veterinary surgeon and updated at least annually in accordance with changes to management, treatment or farm records and implemented by all staff.
- 7.2 Manual cervical dislocation can only be used for birds weighing < 3kg. Assisted methods are required for birds between 3-5kg. A mechanical means must be used for birds weighing in excess of 5kg. Methods which crush the spine or vertebrae are not permitted.
- 7.3 Clinically unsubstantiated prophylactic use of medication is not permitted. Where known disease challenges are such that a population of animals is at significant risk of developing clinical disease then targeted use of medication is permissible if the rationale is fully documented e.g. within a Veterinary Health Plan. Sites must additionally develop an overarching reduction strategy for antibiotic use.

- 7.4 Beak Treatment is permitted using infra-red device at day old only. Treatment must ensure that no more than one third of the bird's beak is removed and the equipment must be used and monitored by trained staff.
- 7.5 Beak treatment can only be used when justified in the veterinary health plan and all suppliers should be working towards production systems where such intervention is no longer routine.

8. Staff Training

- 8.1 Personnel monitoring Critical Control Points shall have received appropriate training and the competency of these staff shall be verified.

9. Principles of Implementation

In order for suppliers to effectively implement this policy, Whitbread requires them to:

- 9.1 Communicate this policy throughout their own supply chain
- 9.2 Provide documentary evidence confirming accreditation to a farm assurance system
- 9.3 Ensure Whitbread representatives, including third party auditors are given uninhibited access to sites used to produce Whitbread goods and that all documentation is accurate and complete
- 9.4 Accurately and transparently communicate when these standards are not being met or are unlikely to be met and when support is required to meet these standards
- 9.5 In collaboration with farmers and suppliers, ensure that legal compliance on animal welfare standards is maintained at all times

In order to ensure the policy is effectively implemented throughout the supply chain and to drive continuous improvement, Whitbread will commit to:

- 9.6 Communicate this policy to all suppliers and seek formal acceptance and commitment to its implementation
- 9.7 Require all suppliers to report their level of compliance to this policy and the corrective actions being taken towards improvement
- 9.8 Maintain an internal system to record and monitor the level of compliance to the policy
- 9.9 Review the animal welfare policy on an annual basis and whenever necessary and appropriate.
- 9.10 Cease trading with suppliers demonstrating persistent disregard for the animal welfare policy

Signed:	Title:
Date:	
I declare that I have received and acknowledge in full Whitbread Plc's Laying Hen Welfare Standard and agree to work with Whitbread towards full compliance.	
On behalf of: <i>(Company name)</i>	

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