

Humane Handling During Catch and Transport

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HUMANE HANDLING PRINCIPLES

- Poultry used for food should be cared for in ways that prevent, or minimize fear, pain, stress and suffering.
- Welfare guidelines should balance scientific knowledge and professional expertise...
- The welfare of the chicken is foremost. It is not how humans might perceive a practice or an environment.
- We are to be good stewards of chickens providing a humane death when processed for food or euthanized for any other reason.

HUMANE TREATMENT

- Growout operations
- Feed and water
- Comfort and shelter (protected from predatory animals or birds)
- Ventilation
- Ammonia
- Litter moisture
- Health care and monitoring
- Biosecurity



HEALTH CARE AND MONITORING

- Daily flock checks
- Daily mortality/morbidity monitoring
- Foot pad and/or gait monitoring
- Euthanasia of injured or sick birds



EUTHANASIA

- On-farm methods (approved by AVMA,13)
 - Rapid decapitation
 - Rapid cervical disarticulation at the junction of the skull and first cervical vertebra. If a tool is used it should separate, but not crush, the vertebrae.
 - Displacement of oxygen with carbon dioxide or other approved gas.

HOW TO PROPERLY EUTHANIZE BIRDS

CULLING / SUFFERING

- o Culls or chronically sick birds should be removed from the flock and euthanized to minimize pain and discomfort in all birds.
- o Criteria for euthanasia include:
 - Weakness – birds unable to stand
 - Blindness – birds unable to detect motion in front of their eyes
 - Size – more than 20% smaller than other birds in the group
 - Trauma – birds that have life threatening injuries
 - Any bird not likely to survive should NOT be allowed to suffer
- o Approved methods include:
 - Cervical dislocation
 - Rapid decapitation
 - Electrocution
 - Displacement of oxygen with another approved gas

To euthanize the bird dislocate the neck without breaking the skin. If properly performed, this is a humane method that prevents spilling blood. (Report of AVMA Panel on Euthanasia, J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc. Vol. 188, No.3, page 265, 1996.)

1. Hold the bird by both legs at the hock joint.



2. Grasp the head, placing your index finger or thumb just above the neck at the junction of the skull and top vertebra with the other fingers under the lower beak.
3. With one quick motion, stretch the neck and rotate the head backward, while pinching between the thumb and forefinger. Dislocate the vertebrae between the skull and top vertebra, simultaneously severing the spinal cord and tearing the jugular vein and carotid artery.



4. At the moment of separation or severing of the spinal cord, the bird will try to flap its wings violently. The bird may either be held in the hand until these movements cease, or it may be placed in a closed container for confinement until its reflex movements have stopped.



BIOSECURITY

- Must minimize the negative impacts on bird welfare and protect flock health
 - Control of rodents, predators or other pests
 - Visitor entry requirements
 - Mortality disposal
 - Traffic control



AVIAN INFLUENZA (AI)

- Visitors
- Wild/outside/pet birds
- Hunting



CATCHING

- Feed and water withdrawal
 - Feed: withdrawal not to exceed 18 hours prior to slaughter
 - Water: not to exceed 1 hour prior to the start of catching
- Lighting
 - Darkened conditions
 - Subdued lighting



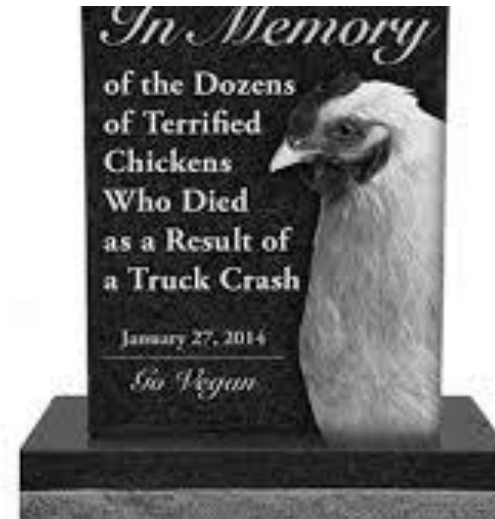
CATCHING (cont.)

- Must be caught by the leg
 - Never by wings or neck
- Coops/transport modules
 - Condition
 - Density



TRANSPORTATION

- Weather panels
- Accidents
- Bird loss during transport



AT THE PROCESSOR

- Hold times
 - Not to exceed 15 hours
- Fans/Misters
- Shed



RESOURCES

- National Chicken Council Animal Welfare Guidelines and Audit Checklist for Broilers, 30 January 2014
- AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association)



THANK YOU!

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