



Animal Welfare Standards for Laying Hens

- Whole Foods Market believes it has an obligation to look after the welfare of the animals that provide food for its stores and customers. The company has been engaged in developing animal welfare standards and applying them to a growing number of product categories in its stores since 2005.
- The following animal welfare standards for laying hens were developed after more than 200 visits to laying farms and consultation with farmers, poultry geneticists, pullet growers and animal welfare scientists. The standards are designed to improve the level of animal welfare and meet the expectations of Whole Foods Market customers.
- Standards were developed for each System Category (production system) in which laying hens are raised for eggs sold at Whole Foods Market. The intention of these standards is not to imply that one production system is better than another, but rather that each system is unique and has different ways to achieve good animal welfare.
- All standards for a System Category must be met to receive certification to that System Category.
- During inspections of each farm, information and photographs are collected. The information is then reviewed, corrective actions issued if required and, when all standards have been met, certification awarded for a specific System.
- Inspections are conducted by independent inspectors or by the Whole Foods Market Quality Standards Coordinator for Animal Products. All inspections are reviewed by the inspection company's oversight staff and/or their animal welfare consultant before certifications are issued.
- The inspection process is designed to determine whether each farm meets all required standards and to work with the farm to correct any outstanding issues for a successful certification.
- Traceability of eggs from laying house to carton is required for assurance that all eggs are produced in the System Category stated on the carton.
- Each farm is inspected every 15 months so that over time, all farms are assessed during each season, preventing farms from being seen repetitively at their best or at their worst.

Further stipulations:

- No standard in this document may supersede local, regional or national regulations or laws.
- If in a particular situation or circumstance a standard as written might compromise the welfare of birds in the producer's care, the producer should contact Whole Foods Market Quality Standards for determination.

System Categories:

- **Unacceptable:** Cages, enriched colony cages and basic cage-free systems are not permitted by Whole Foods Market Animal Welfare Standards for Laying Hens.
- **Cage-Free Plus:** Birds must be able to move about freely in housing. They must be able to dust bathe and forage in high-quality litter, to perch and to isolate themselves or escape aggressive flock mates. Birds live entirely in housing or might have access to an outdoor area that does not meet all requirements for the Outdoor Access System Category. Beak trimming is permitted, but only within strict guidelines on length and balance to maintain functional use as in their natural state. Infrared trimming is strongly encouraged.
- **Outdoor Access:** All standards for the Cage-Free Plus System Category are required for Outdoor Access. Additionally, birds must have access to an outdoor area that is at least equal to the area of the house for at least half of daylight hours. Water is required in the outdoor area; shade and cover must accommodate at least half the number of birds outdoors.
- **Pasture Raised*:** Birds live in permanent housing and have access to grassland or rangeland throughout the day. Cover and shade must accommodate 75% of the birds outdoors, be visible from the house and distributed throughout the pasture to encourage birds to use the entire outdoor area. Rangeland is preferred as it provides shade and cover in a natural setting that encourages natural behavior. Grassland must be maintained with at least 50% vegetative cover, measured from 15 feet outside the perimeter of the house. Beak trimming is permitted, but only within strict guidelines on length and balance to maintain functional use as in their natural state. Infrared trimming is strongly encouraged.
- **Mobile Houses on Pasture*:** Birds live outdoors with mobile housing available for laying eggs and secure roosting at night. Mobile housing must be moved frequently to ensure at least 75% vegetative cover is maintained on grassland or birds have continuous access to rangeland environments. Shade and cover must accommodate all birds in the flock. Beak trimming is prohibited.

**For pasture system claims, if birds are restricted from grassland or rangeland for more than two but less than six calendar months per year due to snow cover or weather, the claim must be qualified by the term "seasonal" on the carton.*

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Section 1: Farm Plan and Documentation

1.1: Traceability: All systems

There must be a traceability program in place to ensure that all farms supplying eggs to Whole Foods Market have successfully been inspected and meet all practices outlined in these standards to achieve one of the acceptable system categories.

- If there are multiple production systems in use on the same farm and eggs from these systems will be differentiated, there must be a traceability program in place to ensure all eggs are traceable back to the production system in which they were produced.
- If caged birds are kept on the farm, there must be a traceability program in place to ensure no eggs from caged birds enter Whole Foods Market's supply.

1.2: Farm plan: All systems

The farm must have a written farm plan. The plan must include the following:

- Biosecurity procedures and protocols.
- Strain of bird used.
- Health plan and schedule (such as vitamin and mineral supplementation, vaccination programs and/or other practices used to promote health).
- Routine husbandry and production procedures.
- Animal handling and catching procedures.
- Brooding procedures.
- Pullet rearing procedures.
- Depopulation
- Training program for all persons who work with the birds, gather or wash eggs
 - Training records for each employee
- Routine maintenance, including:
 - Building, fixtures and equipment.
 - Litter condition
 - Nest condition.
 - Feeder and drinker condition.
- Procedures for addressing:
 - Feather pecking and cannibalism.
 - Extreme feather loss.
 - Pests and predators.
- Emergency plan:
 - Delivery of feed, water and air flow during an emergency.
 - List of essential and emergency contacts such as farm veterinarian and flock manager.

1.3: Management plan for outdoor area: Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised, Mobile Houses on Pasture

Farms that provide outdoor access for birds must have a written outdoor management plan. The plan must cover all aspects of management necessary to provide a meaningful environment outdoors for the birds, specific to the location of the farm. At minimum, it must include the following:

- Overall dimensions of outdoor area.
- Description or diagram of each location within the outdoor area which birds will occupy:

- Number of individual locations within the larger outdoor area.
- Size of each location within the larger outdoor area.
- Stocking rate for each location.
- Vegetation type in each location.
- Maintenance of vegetation quality.
- Rotation protocol.
- Prevention of contamination.
- Management of cover and shade.
- Plan to manage pests and predators.

1.4: Daily and weekly inspection records: System distinction

1.4.1: All systems

- All occupied houses must be inspected daily and the following items recorded:
 - Ill or injured birds, using guide in Appendix III.
 - Air quality.
 - Presence of feed and drinking water.
 - Temperature.
 - Birds found dead (mortality) and those euthanized (culls), recorded separately.
- All occupied houses must be inspected weekly and the following items recorded:
 - Litter condition.
 - Nest cleanliness, using scoring guide in Appendix VI.
 - Cleanliness of feeders and drinkers.
 - Condition of buildings and fixtures.
 - Functionality of lighting.
 - Functionality of automated equipment.
 - Evidence of rodent activity.

1.4.2: Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised, Mobile Houses on Pasture

- All occupied outdoor areas must be inspected daily and the following items recorded:
 - Times popholes or doors are opened and closed each day.
 - Ill or injured birds using guide in Appendix III.
 - Dead birds.
 - Presence of drinking water.
 - Predator activity.
- All occupied outdoor areas must be inspected weekly and the following items recorded:
 - Cleanliness of drinkers.
 - Fencing integrity.
 - Vegetation condition.
 - Shade and cover condition.
 - Condition of outdoor area, including anything that presents a risk of contamination, injury or toxicity.

1.5. Delivery records: All systems

The farm must maintain written records for each delivery of birds. The following records must be kept and made available at inspection.

- Date and time of delivery of chicks and/or pullets.

- Source of birds.
- Strain of birds.
- Date and time of placement for birds after delivery.
- Age of birds delivered.
- Number of birds delivered.
- Condition of birds upon delivery.
- Beak trim quality.
- Number of birds dead upon delivery.

1.6. Flock records: System distinction

The farm must maintain written records for each flock and make them available at inspection.

- Each flock must have a unique number or ID.

1.6.1: Flock records: All systems

- Number of birds in each flock.
- Feed ration ingredients and ratio of ingredients.
- Edible foraging material provided as supplement to ration.
- Number of eggs laid weekly.
- Treatment of birds for any illness, injury, parasitic infestation, sudden feather loss or other malady, including alternative remedies and/or medications.
- Dates of induced molting, including feed regimen and lighting schedule for molting period.
- Dates and method of depopulation.
- Maintenance completed.

1.6.2: Records of outdoor access for each flock: Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised, Mobile Houses on Pasture

- Outdoor access:
 - Date of onset of outdoor access.
 - Dates and reasons for any restrictions from outdoor or pasture access.
- Stocking rate:
 - Identification of the area to which birds have access.
 - Dates in and out of each outdoor area.
- Actions taken to mitigate fecal contamination in the outdoor area.

1.7: Records of rangeland or grassland management: Pasture Raised, Mobile Houses on Pasture

The following records must be kept of actions taken to manage rangeland and grassland. The records must be made available at inspection.

- Actions taken to manage vegetative cover, such as planting grasses, legumes, herbs, trees, shrubs and bushes; mowing, re-sowing, etc.

1.8: Records of mobile house movement: Mobile Houses on Pasture

The following records must be kept of the movement of mobile houses. The records must be made available at inspection.

- Dates of movement.
- Reason for movement.

Section 2: Health and Wellbeing

2.1: Strain selection: All systems

Strain selection must be based on suitability to the system in which birds will be raised and must focus on welfare traits as well as production targets.

- If problems such as high mortality, chronic feather pecking or feather loss are seen, alternate strain selection must be explored.

***Note:** High productivity is frequently a criteria for strain selection, but productivity levels are often predicated on specific temperature, lighting and environmental conditions. Some strains may not produce as expected in outdoor environments and could exhibit increased negative issues such as poor feather condition and/or aggressive behavior. Similar issues can occur when birds that perform well in outdoor environments are chosen for indoor systems.*

2.2: Placement of birds: All systems

Placement of chicks or pullets must begin within 2 hours of delivery to the farm and must be completed without interruption.

2.3: Spent hens: All systems

Sourcing hens that are past the peak of lay and/or have been depopulated from other farms is prohibited.

2.4: Prohibited substances: All systems

2.4.1: Medications

Administration of antibiotics, sulfa drugs or ionophores to individual birds or flocks is prohibited.

2.4.2: Mammalian or avian by-products

Mammalian or avian by-products in feed are prohibited with the exception of dairy probiotics or eggs.

2.4.3: Growth hormones

Administration of growth hormones is prohibited.

2.5: Health and functioning: All systems

Birds must be maintained in a healthy and functioning state.

- Ill or injured birds must be removed from the flock immediately upon discovery and action taken in accordance with Standard 2.6.
- Dead birds must be removed from the flock immediately upon discovery.
- If birds are kept in a hospital pen, it must meet all standards in Section 5 of this document.

***Note:** Signs of poor health or poor function include poor feather condition, feather loss, heat stress, morbidity, low egg production for the strain and injuries from aggressive behavior of flock mates.*

2.6: Reduction of suffering: All systems

Ill or injured birds must not be allowed to suffer.

- Treatment must not be withheld from ill or injured birds.
 - If treatment includes prohibited medications, the eggs from treated birds must be withdrawn from supply and Whole Foods Market Quality Standards contacted.
- Birds that are ill or injured and have been removed from the flock must be permitted to recover, given treatment if necessary or euthanized.

- All persons who work within proximity of the birds must be able to recognize signs of illness and injury and trained to take action to reduce suffering.
- A person competent to euthanize ill or injured birds must be able to respond promptly.
- Only preferred or acceptable methods of euthanasia are permitted.

Note: Acceptable methods of euthanasia are cervical neck dislocation or use of an individual controlled atmosphere killing (CAK) chamber. Decapitation is acceptable but not preferred.

2.7: Feather condition: All systems

Feather condition must be monitored at least monthly. There must be a plan in place to respond to feathering issues. If feather condition drops below the scores defined for each type of system below, the response plan must be implemented immediately to identify causes and correct the problem.

If a sudden flock-wide feather loss event occurs, Whole Foods Market Quality Standards must be notified immediately and provided with a corrective action plan for rectifying the situation.

2.7.1: Cage-Free Plus

Feather condition for the flock must not exceed a score of 2 at 25 weeks, 3 at 35 weeks, 3.5 at 45 weeks and older.

2.7.2: Outdoor Access

Feather condition for the flock must not exceed a score of 1.5 at 25 weeks, 2.5 at 35 weeks, 3 at 45 weeks and older.

2.7.3: Pasture Raised

Feather condition for the flock must not exceed a score of 1 at 25 weeks, 1.8 at 35 weeks, 2 at 45 weeks and older.

2.7.4: Mobile Houses on Pasture

Feather condition for the flock must not exceed a score of 1 for the first 30 weeks and 1.5 at 45 weeks and older.

Note:

Whole Foods Market considers feather condition to be an important indicator of bird welfare. Our goal is that feather condition is maintained at an acceptable level throughout the life of the flock, with the exception of molting. Feather condition will be evaluated against the preceding criteria throughout the life of the flock and reviewed to determine progress. See Appendix IV for scoring guide.

2.8: Integrated production: Mobile Houses on Pasture

All birds, from chicks through end of lay, must be raised on the same farm or on a neighboring farm that is a member of the same integrated local cooperative or production group.

- After brooding, young birds must be provided with resources and given exposure to outdoor environments in the same forms they will experience where they will be placed.
 - These resources include feeding and drinking system, perches, nests and enrichments.
- Birds must remain in the same flock throughout their lives.
- The brooder/pullet grower designated by the local cooperative or production group must achieve a Mobile Houses on Pasture distinction.
 - Outdoor environments must match their destination farms in type of vegetation and area to which birds have access.
 - Birds must be accustomed to similar management practices and human contact as they will experience on the destination farm.

Section 3: Water and Feed

3.1: Water: All systems

All birds must have free and continuous access to clean drinking water in all areas to which they have access including indoor areas, outdoors, porches and wintergartens.

Note: *If water is provided only in housing/wintergartens but not in outdoor areas, the farm can achieve Cage-Free Plus but cannot meet requirements for Outdoor Access or Pasture Raised. In mobile housing systems, water is not required inside the house providing doors to the outdoors are open at all times or are opened no later than 1 hour past dawn as required in Standard 6.4.3.*

If outdoor temperatures are below the freezing point for water, drinking water does not have to be provided in the outdoor area.

3.2: Feed: All systems

Birds' nutritional needs must be met through a comprehensive daily feeding program.

- Fresh feed must be provided at least daily.
- Feed must be provided in a manner that minimizes competition.
- Feed must not be contaminated.
- If a modified molt is conducted, it must not be stimulated by interrupting feed availability.

3.3: Edible foraging material: System distinction

3.3.1: Cage-Free Plus, Outdoor Access

Edible foraging material must be provided to birds indoors whenever the primary feed ration is not available.

3.3.2: Pasture Raised

Edible foraging material, distinct from the primary feed ration, must be available indoors when restriction from grassland or rangeland exceeds the tolerances of 6.4.2.

3.3.3: Pasture Raised, Mobile Houses on Pasture

Edible foraging material must be present in the birds' outdoor environment at all times.

- Edible foraging material must be either naturally occurring in the area, such as plants and insect populations; or provided supplementally in pans, troughs or scattered on the ground.
- For plants in the outdoor area to qualify as edible foraging materials, they must:
 - Consist of a mixture of species that provides nutritive value and are palatable for laying hens, whether naturally present or planted.
 - Clovers and forb species must be present in addition to grasses.
- If natural foraging materials are insufficient to provide foraging opportunities for all the birds, supplemental edible foraging material must be provided, must be plentiful enough for all birds and must be spaced to allow access without competition.

Note: *See Guidance for list of acceptable supplemental feed sources.*

Section 4: Physical Alterations

4.1: Physical alterations: All systems

Physical alterations are prohibited with the exception of beak trimming when carried out as detailed in Standard 4.2.1. Prohibited physical alterations include the application of blinkers or contact lenses, wing clipping, dubbing, despurring, etc.

4.2: Beak trimming: System distinction

4.2.1: Cage-Free Plus, Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised

Beak trimming practices must meet the following criteria:

- Beak trimming must be conducted by a trained person.
- Beak trimming must occur by 10 days of age.
- No more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the beak can be removed.
- Upper and lower beaks must meet evenly at the tip after trimming.
- The average beak trim score for the flock must not exceed 2.25 on the Whole Foods Market Beak Trim Scoring Scale in Appendix II.

Note: Infra-red trimming at the hatchery is the preferred method of beak trimming.

4.2.2: Mobile Houses on Pasture

Beak trimming is prohibited.

Section 5: Housing

5.1: Cages: All systems

Birds must not be confined to cages at any time during their life.

- Brooding structures composed of drawers or compartments are prohibited.

Note: Placing birds in crates is permitted only during transport.

5.2: Indoor space: System distinction

5.2.1: Cage-Free Plus, Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised

There must be enough space in housing for all birds to move freely and safely among resources (feed, water, nests, perches, litter and enrichments), flap their wings, run, dust bathe and forage.

5.2.2: Mobile Houses on Pasture

There must be enough space in housing units for all birds to move freely and safely among resources (water, nests, perches and feed if provided indoors).

5.3: Litter quantity: System distinction

5.3.1: All systems

- All solid floor areas in housing occupied by hens or pullets, whether concrete, wood, clay or dirt, must be covered with litter.
 - Litter must be deep enough that birds can forage and dust bathe throughout the available scratch area.

5.3.2: **Cage-Free Plus, Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised**

- For housing constructed or remodeled before January 1, 2015, the area covered with litter must equal at least 15% of the total area of the house, including raised platforms.
- All housing constructed or remodeled after January 1, 2015, must have an area of solid flooring covered with litter that is at least 30% of the total floor area of the house, including raised platforms. .
- Restriction to a reduced litter area is prohibited except for nest training.
 - During nest training, litter area must be at least 15% of the total floor area.
 - Litter area restriction must last no longer than 4 weeks.
 - If feather pecking is observed while the litter area is restricted for nest training, the restriction of litter area must cease immediately.

5.3.3: **Mobile Houses on Pasture**

- After brooding and until pullets have full outdoor access, there must be a minimum of 1 square foot (0.09 m²) of litter area per pullet.

5.4: **Litter quality: Cage-Free Plus, Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised**

Litter must be composed of absorbent plant-based organic material or fresh sand.

- Good condition of litter must be maintained throughout the life of the flock.
 - Litter must not become compromised such that it poses a risk to birds' health.
 - Litter material must remain distinguishable from fecal matter throughout the life of the flock. If the litter material is indistinguishable, fresh litter must be added.
- Litter must support dust-bathing behavior.
- Litter must be friable.

5.5: **Air Quality: All systems**

Air quality must be maintained at an acceptable level in each building in which birds are housed. Acceptable levels are determined using one of the two following methods:

- An air quality score of 0 or 1 on the sensory evaluation scale must be maintained at all times.
 - If at any time the score is 2 or above, a plan must be immediately implemented to improve air quality.
- An ammonia level of below 20 ppm if an ammonia meter is used.

***Note:** The air quality sensory evaluation scale can be found in Appendix V.*

5.6: **Light: All systems**

Birds must not be kept in continuous dark or light.

- A light intensity of at least 20 lux must be maintained throughout the house during the daytime.
- Each 24-hour cycle must consist of at least 6 hours uninterrupted darkness and at least 8 hours of uninterrupted light.

***Note:** If possible, changes between light and dark should be made gradually over at least 15 minutes.*

5.7: **Nests: All systems**

There must be enough individual or community nests so that all birds can meet their laying needs.

- Nests must contain substrate that the birds can manipulate (straw, wood shavings, etc.) or fixed padding such as AstroTurf® that is manipulable.
- Nest cleanliness must be monitored.
 - Nest cleanliness must be maintained with a score no higher than 1 on the Nest Cleanliness Scale.
- Nests must enable birds to seek seclusion during their nesting period. This can be achieved by curtains, opening design or position of the nests.
- Nests must have a staging platform or rail.

Note: The Nest Cleanliness Scale can be found in Appendix VI.

5.8: **Perches: System distinction**

5.8.1: **All systems**

Perches must be provided.

- To be considered a perch, the rail or bar must be 16" (41 cm) or more above the floor or platform and allow birds to adopt a secure roosting posture with their feet wrapped around the rail.
 - Floor slats, edges of platforms and staging rails in front of nests do not qualify as perches.
- Perch design and placement must not pose a risk of injury to the birds.

Note: Perches should be distributed throughout the house in a manner that enables birds to escape aggressive flock mates.

5.8.2: **Pasture Raised, Mobile Houses on Pasture**

Pullets must be provided with objects on which they can learn to perch.

5.8.3: **Mobile Houses on Pasture**

There must be at least 6 linear inches (15 cm) of perch space per laying hen.

5.9: **Cover or blinds in housing: Cage-Free Plus, Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised**

Cover or blinds must be provided in housing no later than 4 weeks after placement to allow birds to hide and to isolate themselves from aggressive behavior.

- Nests do not meet this requirement, although open spaces under nest structures do qualify as cover.

5.10: **Mobile houses: Mobile Houses on Pasture**

Mobile houses are the only acceptable type of house.

- Birds must be placed in mobile housing prior to onset of lay.
- Mobile houses must be large enough to provide space for all birds at the same time.
- Mobile houses must be moved regularly throughout the outdoor area to provide fresh foraging opportunities.

Section 6: Outdoor Access and Environment

6.1: Doors and popholes: **Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised, Mobile Houses on Pasture**

- Doors or popholes must be large enough to permit more than one bird to pass through without obstruction.
- Doors or popholes must be provided in sufficient number to provide easy outdoor access from any point in the house.
- Doors or popholes must be positioned and designed to facilitate bird movement between indoor and outdoor environments.
 - Ramps or steps must be provided if there is more than 16" (41 cm) difference between the house and the ground.

6.2: Outdoor Environment: **System distinction**

6.2.1: **Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised, Mobile Houses on Pasture**

All birds must be able to run, flap their wings, scratch and peck in the outdoor area without being obstructed by other birds.

6.2.2: **Outdoor Access**

The outdoor area must be equal to or greater than the area of the house or houses that open onto the area.

6.2.3: **Pasture Raised, Mobile Houses on Pasture**

The outdoor area to which birds have access must be large enough to be sustained as grassland or rangeland.

- To qualify as grassland, the area must average at least 50% rooted vegetative cover.
- To qualify as rangeland, there must be sufficient areas of plants, bushes and trees to accommodate all birds.

***Note:** Grassland and rangeland are defined in Appendix 1. Assessment protocols are outlined in Appendix VII. If grassland or rangeland is sustained, there is sufficient space in the outdoor area. If grassland or rangeland degenerates, there is not sufficient space.*

6.3: Onset of outdoor access: **System distinction**

6.3.1: **Outdoor Access**

Outdoor access must begin by 25 weeks of age.

6.3.2: **Pasture Raised**

Access to grassland or rangeland must begin by 22 weeks of age.

6.3.3: **Mobile Houses on Pasture**

Access to grassland or rangeland must begin by 10 weeks of age.

6.4: Duration of daily outdoor access: **System distinction**

6.4.1: **Outdoor Access**

Birds must have access to the outdoors for more than half of daylight hours on a daily basis.

6.4.2: **Pasture Raised**

All birds must have continuous access to grassland or rangeland from within 3 hours of dawn until one hour before dusk.

6.4.3: **Mobile Houses on Pasture**

All birds must have continuous daily access to grassland or rangeland from within one hour of dawn until within one hour of dusk.

6.5 Conditions of restriction from outdoor environments: System distinction

6.5.1: Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised, Mobile Houses on Pasture

The use of arbitrary or fixed dates as a basis for restriction from access to the outdoors or to grassland or rangeland is prohibited.

6.5.2: Outdoor Access

Restriction to housing from outdoor access is prohibited except during extreme weather and resulting outdoor conditions, such as snow cover, that pose a risk to the birds' welfare.

6.5.3: Pasture Raised

Restriction from grassland or rangeland is prohibited except during extreme weather and resulting outdoor conditions such as snow cover that pose a risk to the birds' welfare.

- If birds are restricted from grassland or rangeland for longer than the duration of extreme weather due to resulting outdoor conditions such as snow cover, a seasonal outdoor area equal to or greater than the area of the house must be available to the birds.
 - Restriction to housing from the seasonal outdoor area must only occur during an extreme weather event.
 - Restriction to housing from the seasonal outdoor area must not exceed 7 days in any one calendar month.

6.5.4: Mobile Houses on Pasture

All birds must live outdoors on grassland or rangeland during daylight hours for their entire production cycle except during extreme weather events that pose a risk to the birds' welfare.

- Restrictions to the mobile house must only occur during extreme weather events.
 - Water and feed must be provided within the mobile house during any restriction to housing that lasts longer than three hours past dawn.
 - Restriction to the mobile house must not exceed 48 hours unless housing has additional space as required in 5.2.1 and a solid floor area covered with litter. If the mobile house is not designed to provide these resources, the mobile house can be moved into a larger permanent house.
- Restriction from grassland or rangeland during extreme weather events must not exceed 7 days in any one calendar month.

***Note:** If a serious event occurs that requires birds to be moved out of their mobile house system, Whole Foods Market Quality Standards must be contacted immediately.*

6.6: Seasonal outdoor access months: System distinction

6.6.1: Outdoor Access

If birds are restricted to housing from outdoor access for more than 14 days during a calendar month, this must be counted as a seasonal access month.

- There must be no more than 6 seasonal access months in a year in which birds are restricted to housing.

6.6.2: Pasture Raised

If birds are restricted from grassland or rangeland for more than 14 days during a calendar month, this must be counted as a seasonal access month.

- There must be no more than 6 seasonal access months in a year in which birds are restricted from grassland or rangeland.

6.6.3: Mobile Houses on Pasture

Seasonal restriction from grassland or rangeland is prohibited.

6.7: Condition of outdoor area: Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised, Mobile Houses on Pasture

The outdoor area must not be contaminated with feces or present a risk to the birds' health.

- The outdoor area to which birds have access must be maintained in a manner such that birds' feathers do not become unavoidably soiled with feces.
- The outdoor area must not pose a risk of toxicity or injury.

6.8: Cover and shade placement: Outdoor Access, Pasture Raised, Mobile Houses on Pasture

In addition to housing, cover and/or shade must be present in the outdoor area.

- Shade must be visible to the birds from the doors of the house to facilitate their movement to the outdoor area.
- Cover and/or shade must be distributed throughout the available outdoor area to encourage birds to range over the entire outdoor area.

6.9: Amount of cover and shade: System distinction

6.9.1: Outdoor Access

There must be enough cover and/or shade to accommodate 50% of the maximum number of birds that use the outdoor area at any time of the day.

- For example, in a flock of 10,000 birds, if 2000 birds use the outdoor area, there must be enough cover and/or shade to accommodate 1000 birds.

6.9.2: Pasture Raised

There must be enough cover and/or shade to accommodate 75% of the maximum number of birds that use the outdoor area at any time of the day.

- For example, in a flock of 5000 birds, if 2000 birds use the outdoor area, there must be enough cover and/or shade to accommodate 1500 birds.

6.9.3: Mobile Houses on Pasture

There must be enough cover and/or shade to accommodate all of the birds in each group throughout the day

Section 7: Requirements for Free Range, Outdoor Access or Pasture Raised Production Claims

7.1: Free range or outdoor access claims:

To make the claims of “free range” or “outdoor access,” all standards for **Outdoor Access** must be met and restriction from outdoor access must total no more than 2 seasonal months, as defined in 6.6.1.

- If all standards for **Outdoor Access** are met and a producer restricts access to the outdoors for between 3 and 6 seasonal access months, use of the marketing terms “free range” or “outdoor access” is prohibited unless the seasonal aspect of the outdoor access is clearly stated in the claim, such as “seasonally free range” or “seasonal outdoor access.”

7.2: Pasture raised claims:

To make the claim “pasture raised,” all standards for **Pasture Raised** must be met and restriction from grassland or rangeland must total not more than 2 seasonal months as defined in 6.6.2.

- If all standards for **Pasture Raised** are met, and a producer restricts access to grassland or rangeland for between 3 and 6 seasonal months, use of the term “pasture raised” is prohibited unless the seasonal aspect of pasture access is clearly stated in the claim, such as “seasonal access to pasture” or “seasonally pasture raised.”
- Any farm achieving **Mobile Houses on Pasture**, regardless of whether birds live on grassland or rangeland, may make the claim “pasture raised” without qualification.
- All pasture raised claims must be approved by Whole Foods Market Quality Standards.

Appendix I: Definitions

Animal by-products

Feed ingredients derived from the slaughter process

Blinds

Objects birds can hide behind, such as vertically placed boards, nest structures that sit in the middle of the floor, etc. Blinds provide an area of limited visibility where birds can seek protection from aggressive flock mates.

Cage

A cage is any boxlike enclosure of bars, slats or wires, or a brooding structure composed of drawers or compartments, within which birds are confined.

Cover

Because of their innate fear of overhead predators, chickens seek out areas where they can be under objects that make them feel safe, whether indoors or out. In their native habitat, this would be bushes and low-growing trees and plants.

Indoor cover:

Low objects or installations birds can go under for protection.

Outdoor cover:

Natural vegetation, low objects or structures that birds can go under for protection.

Enrichment

An object provided in the environment that is not a behavioral need (such as perches or litter) but provides novelty and stimulation. Provision of enrichments significantly reduces feather pecking behavior. Enrichments can be suspended over the scratch area or platform, or can be placed on the floor itself, such as a bale of hay or straw. Several studies have found that some of the more effective enrichments to be suspended are pieces of braided rope or string that birds can unravel. To be effective, enrichments should be provided early in the birds' lives.

Farm

A production system, owned and operated as one farm that may be composed of one or more sites that are close in proximity.

Farm plan

A written outline of farm practices and protocols that both ensure consistency in farm operations and provide a guide for anyone who steps in to manage the farm, such as during family vacations or emergencies.

Feather loss

Different from feather pecking, feather loss is generally the response of large numbers of birds to stressors in their environment. Feed-related issues are the most common cause of feather loss. Feed can be rancid or spoiled, it can suddenly be mixed differently with slightly different ratios of components, or the amount of feed can be inadequate. Sudden changes in lighting or air quality can also stimulate a spontaneous molt, as can other stressful conditions such as heat, cold, disease and lack of adequate amounts of water.

Flock

A uniquely identified group of birds kept together throughout their laying career. All the birds in one house.

Fresh feed

Fresh feed is that which is provided newly each day rather than left over from the previous day. This is especially relevant in systems where feeders are filled manually. Fresh feed must not be compromised in quality.

Friable

Dry and crumbly, a qualifier for functional litter.

Hospital or sick pen

An area where birds that are injured or ill can recover. If a bird's injury or illness is severe, it must be euthanized.

Integrated production

A group of farms in a local area that work together as a cooperative or small community production group that might share stages of production and that use mobile houses.

Lux

A unit of illumination that is used for defining the amount of ambient light in an area.

Morbidity

The state of being unhealthy.

Outdoor-based systems

Systems in which birds primary living space is outdoors.

Outdoor environments**Rangeland**

A type of outdoor environment comprised of a variety of tall plants, forbs, shrubs, bushes, rocks, woodlands, orchards, etc. that attracts birds by providing cover, shade and foraging. Rangeland vegetation must be visible to birds from the door of the house and close enough to be accessible to the birds.

Essential attributes of a rangeland environment are overhead cover to encourage ranging and vegetative material that stimulates foraging. Trees, bushes and tall plants are examples of overhead cover. Fallen branches, twigs and leaf litter are examples of productive and interesting foraging opportunities. Although there can be areas of bare ground, the environment that provides cover, shade and foraging must meet the requirements of Standard 6.9.

Grassland

A type of outdoor environment with more than 50% rooted vegetative ground cover composed primarily of low growing grasses, legumes and herbs. Grassland vegetation must begin within 15 feet from the door of the house. Important attributes of a grassland environment are that the vegetation is edible and dense enough to be attractive to birds. The minimum vegetative cover requirement of 50% averaged throughout the outdoor area, but excluding the area within 15 feet of the house, must be met at all times to be considered grassland.

Outdoor management plan

Farm protocols and practices that result in continuously robust outdoor environments for the birds, including rotation protocols, inspection criteria and management of stocking rate, contamination, cover and shade.

Pecking behavior**Feather pecking**

Feather pecking can range from gentle pecks to the ends of the feathers to vigorous pecking that can cause bleeding which exacerbates pecking and can lead to cannibalism.

Vent pecking

Generally caused by attraction to a drop of blood on the vent. Most common with young hens at the onset of lay.

Aggressive pecking

Generally focused on the head or neck, this type of pecking is related to aggression and so is a different issue with different causes than feather pecking or vent pecking.

Perches

Perches are rails, usually in an angled frame that enable birds to grasp the rail and balance in their sleeping posture. Perches are elevated above the floor or platform. Sections of slats that are raised above the floor level, even when constructed of boards with spaces between, do not qualify as perches.

Staging platform or rail



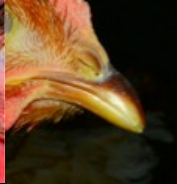


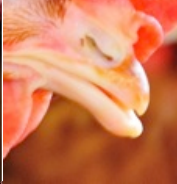




A rail or platform in front of nests to provide birds with a place to stand as they wait for a nest and as they perform nesting rituals.

Traceability

Protocols and records that show the path of eggs from hen to carton in Whole Foods Market stores to ensure all eggs in cartons are from farms that have been validated by a third party to meet Whole Foods Market Animal Welfare Standards for Laying Hens rated for the same System Category and have also met either FDA requirements for egg packing facilities or Whole Foods Market Food Safety Standards for Small Farms.

Appendix II: Beak Trim Scoring



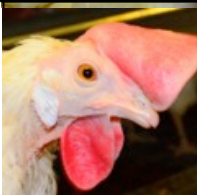
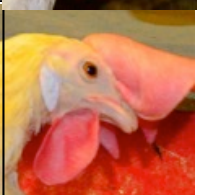


Beak Trim Score-Brown Birds

0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No beak trim 		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beak trim just visible Upper and lower beaks even Infrared beak trim at hatchery or excellent hand trim 		
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 3/4 beak remains Upper and lower beaks even 		
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 1/2 beak remains Difference between upper and lower beaks minor 		
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 1/2 and 1/4 of beak remains Food compaction in nares Imbalance between beaks Minor neuroma 		
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 1/4 beak remaining Major difference between upper and lower beaks - 1/2 length Major neuroma like a pea Major splitting, cracking or damage to beak 		

Procedure: Score 20 birds per house and calculate average score

At 4 or 5, just one criteria listed is sufficient to score that level. To score 1, 2 or 3 all criteria must be met. Scores of 2.25 or better are acceptable. Scores of 3 or higher must prompt urgent corrective action with the beak trimmer.


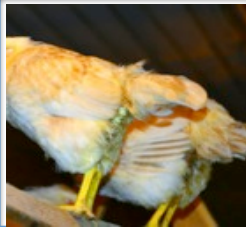








Beak Trim Score-White Birds

0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No beak trim (Also notice the facial, beak and comb color of this bird raised outdoors) 		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrared beak trim at hatchery only Beak trim just visible Upper and lower beaks even 		
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 3/4 beak remains Upper and lower beaks even 		
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 1/2 beak remains Difference between upper and lower beaks minor 		
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 1/2 and 3/4 of beak remains Food compaction in nares Imbalance between beaks Minor neuroma 		
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 1/4 beak remaining Major difference between upper and lower beaks - 1/2 length Major neuroma like a pea Major splitting, cracking or damage to beak 		

Procedure: Score 20 birds per house and calculate average score
Scores of 2.25 or better are acceptable. Scores of 3 or higher must prompt urgent corrective action with the beak trimmer.

Appendix III: Ill or Injured Birds

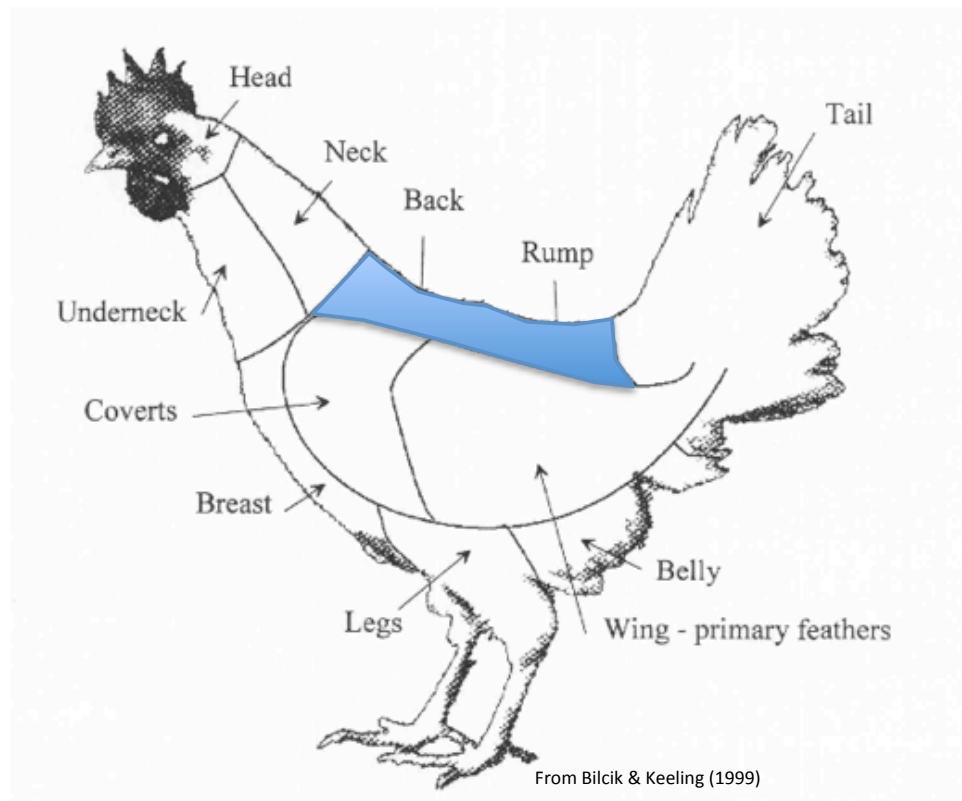
Ill or injured bird identification

Vent gleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oozing white or yellow discharge from vent • Feathers generally wet and sticky 		
Prolapse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red tissue emanating from the vent • Can be covered with litter or soil • Can attract flies • Can exacerbate pecking behavior 		
Morbid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bird's posture is generally indicative • May be crouched in corners or high away from other birds • Look dull, often the head is pulled back on the neck so it nestles into the body 		
Broken limb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be a leg or wing, clearly dysfunctional 		
Cuts or wounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh red blood, often on the comb or vent if the result of pecking • Injuries resulting from equipment edges or other objects • Don't count wounds that are obviously old and healed 		
Blind birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyes are missing or creamy • Can be the result of pecking or a spike in ambient ammonia levels 		

Appendix IV: Feather Condition Scoring

Feather Score Guide

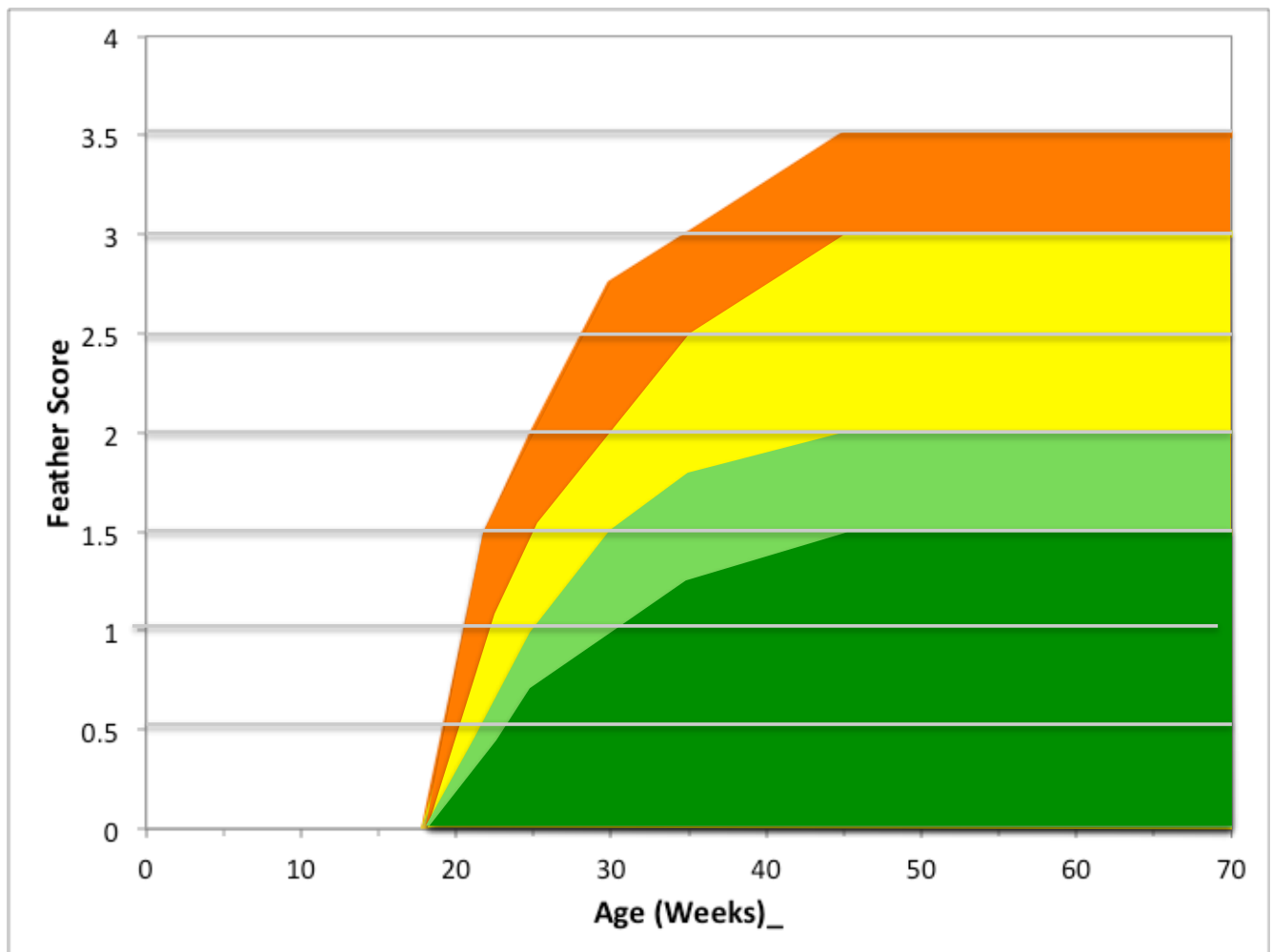
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intact feathers• No sign of damage		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signs of damage or disturbance to feathers• Very few feathers are missing		
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly feathers are missing• May just see some skin		
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obvious bare patch that is less than 50% of back/rump area		
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bare patch that is greater than 50% of back/rump area		
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completely bare		



SCORING REGION IN BLUE

Photograph from behind to see the back easier

Reviewer will score 20 birds from each group and calculate average for each group and for the farm as a whole. Referring to the table below, determine the average score for the farm and the level at which they fall.



Feather score level calculator

Calculate the average feather score and trace across horizontally until you reach the age of the flock in weeks

Week	18	22	25	30	35	45	50	60	70
Orange	0	1.5	2	2.75	3.0	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Yellow	0	1.0	1.5	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Green	0	0.6	1.0	1.5	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Green Plus	0	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.25	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5

Appendix V: Air Quality Scoring Scale

Sensory Air Quality Scoring Scale

Score air quality when you first enter the barn and when you are about to leave the barn. A score higher than 2 is unacceptable and requires immediate action to reduce levels of ammonia and dust.

0 Zero: Odor or dust not noticeable (easy to breathe)

1 Weak: Odor or dust hardly noticeable

2 Moderate: Odor or dust distinct, annoying

3 Strong: Odor or dust irritating (watery eyes and/or coughing)

4 Very Strong: Odor or dust just bearable (stinging eyes and mouth, excessive coughing and/or pain when swallowing)

5 Overpowering: Odor or dust unbearable, you need to leave the barn (hurts to breathe)

Appendix VI: Nest Cleanliness Scale

0 Clean: there is no fecal material visible in the nests








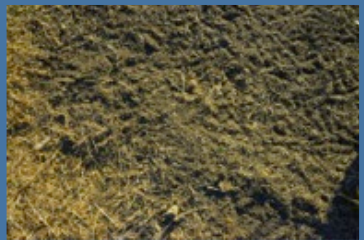
1 Low: less than 1/4 of the nest floor is covered with fecal material

2 Moderate: between 1/4 and 1/2 of the nest floor is covered with fecal material

3 Excessive: more than 1/2 of the nest floor is covered with fecal material

Appendix VII: Vegetation assessment

Grassland Vegetation Assessment

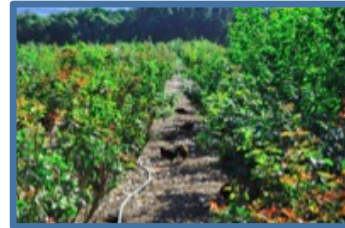
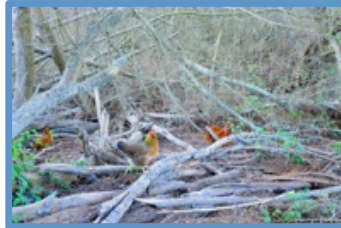
	Growing	Dormant
100%		
75%		
50%		
25% or less		

Separately score all outdoor areas through which birds are rotated, whether currently occupied or not. Excluding any barren area just outside the house (approximately 15 feet) walk across the entire area to be assessed, stopping and taking photos looking straight down every 10 paces. Take a minimum of 10 photos, optimally closer to 20 for accurate assessment. To qualify as Grassland, the area must average at least 50% rooted vegetative cover.

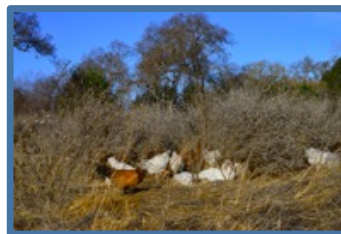
Farm self assessments do not require photos, but it creates a good record and is advisable.

Rangeland Vegetation Assessment

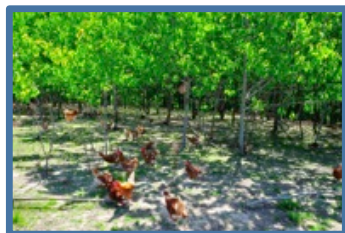
**Low tree or
bush cover**



Tall plants



**Orchard or
woodland**



**Unique natural
objects**



Describe vegetation in terms of the above four categories in each outdoor area. Take photos of the entire outdoor area outside the house or houses and everywhere vegetation provides cover for birds. If the area includes both grassland and rangeland, assess vegetation according to both grassland and rangeland assessment protocols with photos to show the distribution of vegetative areas available to the birds. If there are different environments available in different areas of rotation, try to show the entire area and each division of the larger area so it is clear what resources the farm is using for the birds.