

**[DA ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 12, S. 2002,
APRIL 1, 2002, April 01, 2002]**

**CODE OF PRACTICE AND MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE
WELFARE OF CHICKENS**

Pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act 8485, otherwise known as the "Animal Welfare Act of 1998", the following rules and regulations are hereby promulgated for the information, guidance and compliance of all concerned:

SECTION 1. Basic Policy and Objectives. —Welfare considerations are important for the keeping and farming of animals. Standard procedures in animal welfare are not only important legally, but also have direct economic benefits by enhancing productivity.

Good husbandry such as modern breeding, feeding, housing and management systems is essential for good welfare. This will lead to an improvement in the quality of life for chickens as well as an improvement in the quality of the product. This Code is intended to encourage all persons involved in the poultry industry to adopt the highest standards of husbandry.

This Code takes into consideration the five basic freedoms of animals, which are:

- Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition
- Freedom from physical discomfort and pain
- Freedom from injury and disease
- Freedom to conform to essential behavior patterns; and
- Freedom from fear and distress

Chickens are raised ranging from backyard to large commercial enterprises. They are totally reliant on man for all their daily requirements. Those who are concerned with the day-to-day care of the chickens are obliged to treat them with skill and consideration. Their welfare shall be safeguarded under a variety of management systems.

Chickens shall be provided with comfortable and secured accommodations. When they are kept outside, they shall be provided with shelter to protect them from inclement weather and give them shade from direct sunlight. They shall have access to high ground where there is danger of flooding. Those confined in houses shall have sufficient space for feeding, roosting, stretching and expressing their normal behavioral patterns. Adjustments shall be made when necessary.

This Code may be revised to take into account advances in the understanding of animal physiology and behavior, changes in animal husbandry, and their relationship to the welfare of the animals. This is based on the knowledge and technology at the time of publication. It does not replace the need for experience and common sense in the husbandry of domestic poultry.

SECTION 2. General Responsibilities. —

2.1 The Animal Welfare Act of 1998 aims to protect and promote the welfare of all animals in the Philippines.

2.2 All farms with a minimum stocking density of at least 40,000 broilers or 30,000 layers or 2,000 breeders shall be required to have an attending veterinarian. In all cases, the veterinarians must be currently registered to the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) with current Professional Tax Receipt (PTR) and TIN (Tax Identification Number).

2.3 A responsible officer/person shall be designated for the implementing of good husbandry practices.

2.4 No person shall commit any of the following acts:

2.4.1 Cruel treatment of any chicken

2.4.2 Neglecting to supply the chicken with proper and sufficient food, water and shelter

2.4.3 Willfully or wantonly causing unreasonable or unnecessary pain, suffering or distress to the chicken such as, but not limited to:

- Hanging them upside down for long periods of time
- Crossing the wings of the chicken

2.4.4 Slaughtering, mutilating, or carrying the chicken in such a manner or position as to cause it unnecessary pain or suffering

2.4.5 Keeping alive any chicken which is in a condition that is cruel/inhumane to keep it alive

2.5 Farms with 20,000 broilers and 5,000 layers and above, and breeder farms of any volume shall be registered with the Bureau of Animal Industry. The BAI shall promulgate the necessary guidelines for registration.

2.6 Feeding trials for chickens for scientific purposes shall conform with DA AO 40, series of 1999.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. —

3.1 Attending Veterinarian refers to a licensed veterinarian who is adept in poultry medicine and husbandry. He/She shall be responsible for the veterinary duties related to the farm operations which include, but not limited to, diagnosis,

prescription of treatment regimens, compliance with the Generics Law and other legal obligations, formulation of disease prevention programs and the implementation of good husbandry practices.

3.2 **Breeder** refers to the bird, either male or female, designed to produce fertile hatching eggs to produce chicks for further breeding or for broiler or layer chick production.

3.3 **Breeder Farm** refers to the facility where commercial breeder flocks are raised.

3.4 **Broiler** refers to a chicken either male or female bred to produce meat.

3.5 **Brooding** refers to the process of providing artificial heat to chicks from day old up to such time the chicks thermo-regulatory mechanism is functional.

3.6 **Chick** refers to the immature bird up to 30 days of age.

3.7 **Chicken** refers to the type of poultry domesticated to produce either meat or eggs.

3.8 **Cockerel** refers to the young male chicken.

3.9 **Day – Old Chicks (DOC)** refers to newly hatched chicks.

3.10 **Down Time Period** refers to time between harvest of chicken/culls and placement of day old chicks/pullets. This period is devoted to the cleaning and preparation of the poultry houses.

3.11 **Dubbing** — refers to trimming of wattle/comb through electro-cautering of male breeders to reduce further injury due to pecking and fighting.

3.12 **Good Ventilation** refers to the process of providing good quality and ample amount of air to the chickens.

3.13 **Hen** refers to the adult female chicken.

3.14 **Layer** refers to the female bird bred to produce table eggs.

3.15 **Pullet** refers to the female layer, which has not reached its laying age or period.

3.16 **Rooster** refers to the adult male chicken.

SECTION 4. Housing. —

4.1 Chickens shall be provided with houses and cages that are designed, constructed and properly maintained to provide good ventilation, protection from draft and strong winds, and minimize risks of injuries and disease.

4.2 Advice on welfare aspects shall be sought when new cages or equipment are to be purchased, new buildings to be constructed or existing buildings to be modified. Such advice is available from qualified advisers with experience in poultry

health and management from BAI, DA-regional offices, Philippine College of Poultry Practitioners (PCPP), academic institutions, and training centers. The advisers may be private or government employee.

4.3 Floors and other surfaces shall be so designed, constructed and maintained in order to minimize the risk of injury and disease, and to adequately support the chickens. The chickens shall be provided with enough space to enable them to lie down all at the same time. Please see Appendices I and II.

4.4 Alternative husbandry systems which will enhance the welfare of the chickens shall be adapted when they become available.

SECTION 5. Space Allowances. —

5.1 Space requirements for each species, breed, strain and type of chickens shall be followed. It is however, recommended that these standards be able to fit the local climatic conditions. Please see Appendices I and II.

5.2 Stocking density largely depends on the quality and type of housing and the capacity to provide and maintain recommended temperature levels, humidity, removal of noxious gases and proper lighting. In case of a disease outbreak or when behavioral changes are observed, stocking densities shall be immediately evaluated.

5.3 Maximum stocking densities apply only to chickens housed under good management conditions with optimal temperature and ventilation, otherwise lower densities shall apply.

5.4 Recommended stocking densities are found in Appendices I and II.

SECTION 6. Equipment. —

6.1 Chickens shall not be exposed to sharp objects and equipment to avoid injury or pain to them.

6.2 All automatic feeders and waterers shall be checked at least once a day for efficient operation.

6.3 All automated hatchery and environmental control equipment for controlled environment sheds shall have adequate back-up systems and alarms.

SECTION 7. Lighting. —

7.1 Day-old chicks shall be provided with enough light especially during their first three (3) days in order for them to find food and water. Initially a minimum light intensity of 40 lux is recommended.

7.2 When conducting night inspection, a light intensity of 10 lux may be used to reduce agitation and excitement.

7.3 A standby power supply shall be available.

7.4 Refer to management guides for specific lighting programs found in Appendix

III.

SECTION 8. Ventilation. —

8.1 Proper ventilation shall be provided at all times to avoid discomfort to the chickens due to noxious gases, heat, water vapor and dust.

8.2 Whenever possible, the use of ventilating fans and other alternative methods to maintain humidity to approximate the optimal 80% and temperature at 30°C shall be provided.

8.3 The ideal humidity is 80% and ideal house temperature is 30°C.

8.4 Ammonia levels in the poultry houses shall not exceed 20 ppm at the bird level.

8.5 Other noxious gases like hydrogen sulfide, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide shall be below 5 ppm and 0.3 % respectively. Caution shall be observed in using equipment making use of fossil petroleum.

SECTION 9. Temperature. —

9.1 For Newly hatched Chicks

9.1.1 Since newly hatched chicks have poor ability to control body temperature, supplementary heat source shall be available to bring the environment temperature to a comfortable level.

9.1.2 Supplementary heat at gradually reducing levels may be required up to 4-5 weeks of age depending upon the behavior of the chicks and the environmental conditions.

9.2 For Growing Adult Chickens

9.2.1 Chickens shall be protected from draft during cold weather and provided with shade during hot weather.

9.2.2 During hot weather, cool drinking water shall be available at all times. When extremely high temperatures cause distress to the chickens, ventilating fans or other cooling systems shall be readily available.

9.2.3 Recommended stocking densities shall always be followed to allow the chickens to facilitate body heat loss such as panting, standing erect with wings held away from the body and raising the scapular feathers in hot weather.

9.2.4 Nest boxes shall be properly positioned and constructed such that they do not become heat traps.

9.2.5 As extreme weather conditions may occur, housing facilities for poultry shall be able to maintain temperatures between 19-33°C at all times.

SECTION 10. Protection. —