JERSEY CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE WELFARE OF

TURKEYS

THE CODE

The Code of recommendations for the welfare of turkeys is intended to encourage all those responsible for looking after these birds to adopt the highest standards of husbandry. It takes account of five basic needs, known as the "Five Freedoms".

The Five Freedoms are:

1. **FREEDOM FROM HUNGER AND THIRST**

- by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour;

2. **FREEDOM FROM DISCOMFORT**

- by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area;

3. **FREEDOM FROM PAIN, INJURY OR DISEASE**

- by prevention or by rapid diagnosis and treatment;

4. **FREEDOM TO EXPRESS NORMAL BEHAVIOUR**

- by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animals' own kind;

5. **FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND DISTRESS**

- by ensuring conditions and treatment to avoid mental suffering.

The Code identifies good stockmanship as a key factor in farm animal welfare. This Code is an essential tool for every stockkeeper. All involved in the rearing and production of turkeys should read it carefully and to bear its recommendations in mind at all times.

Without competent, diligent stockmanship the welfare of the birds cannot be adequately catered for. The recommendations which follow are designed to help stockkeeper, particularly those who are young or inexperienced, to attain the required standards.

INTRODUCTION

1. The welfare of turkeys can be safeguarded and their physiological and behavioural needs met under a variety of management systems. The system, and the number and the stocking rate of birds kept at any one time, should depend on the suitability of the conditions and the skills of the stockkeeper.

2. Consideration should be given to the question of animal welfare before installing more complex or elaborate equipment than has previously been used. In general the greater the restriction imposed on the bird and the greater the complexity of the system or of the degree of control which is exercised over temperature, air flow or food supply, the less the bird is able to use its instinctive behaviour to modify the effect of unfavourable conditions and the greater the chance of suffering if mechanical or electrical failures occur. Thus systems involving a high degree of

control over the environment should only be installed where conscientious staff skilled in both animal husbandry and the use of the equipment will always be available.

3. Large flocks can be managed successfully, but in general the larger the size of unit the greater the degree of skill and conscientiousness needed to safeguard welfare. The size of a unit should not be increased nor should a unit be set up unless it is reasonably certain that the stockkeeper in charge will be able to safeguard the welfare of the individual bird.

4. All stockkeepers should know the normal behaviour of turkeys, watch closely for signs of distress or disease and, where necessary, take prompt remedial action.

5. The good stockkeeper will know the signs which indicate good health in turkeys. He should be able to recognise impending trouble in its earliest stages and may often be able to identify the cause and put matters right immediately. If the cause is not obvious or if the stockkeeper's immediate action is not effective, veterinary or other expert advice should be obtained as soon as possible.

6. Important indications of health are alertness, clear bright eyes, good posture, vigorous movements if unduly disturbed, active feeding and drinking, and clean healthy skin, shanks and feet. Attention should be paid to any departure from the normal.

7. The early signs of ill-health may include changes in feed and water intake, in preening, in "chatter" and in activity. In laying birds there may also be a drop in egg production, and changes in egg quality such as shell defects.

8. Ailing birds, and any birds suffering from injury such as open wounds or fractures or from prolapse of the vent should be segregated and treated or, if necessary, be humanely killed without delay.

HOUSING

9. Advice on welfare aspects should be sought when new buildings are to be constructed or existing buildings modified. Some intensive systems depend on specialised buildings and complex mechanical and electrical equipment, which require a high level of technical and managerial skills to ensure that husbandry and welfare requirements are met. Considerations should be given to the incorporation of weighing, handling and loading facilities.

10. Ventilation, heating, lighting, feeding, watering and all other equipment should be designed, sited and installed so as to avoid risk of injuring birds.

11. All floors, particularly slatted or metal mesh ones, should be designed, fitted and maintained so as to avoid injury or distress to the birds. Remedial action should be taken if either of these occurs.

12. Nest boxes, and perches if used, should not be so high above floor level that birds have difficulty or risk injury in using them.

13. Accommodation should be designed and maintained so as to minimise discomfort, distress or injury to the birds.

14. The type and arrangement of accommodation should allow for efficient working and for each bird to be properly inspected.

15. Accommodation should be of sufficient height to allow standing birds free movement of the head and neck. Part of the floor area for adult birds should be solid. In the case of adult breeding males the whole of the floor area should be solid.

Ventilation and temperature

16. Ventilation rates and house conditions should at all times be adequate to provide sufficient fresh air for the birds. In particular, accumulations of ammonia, hydrogen sulphide, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and dust should be avoided.

17. Care should be taken to protect confined birds from draughts in cold conditions.

18. Birds should not be exposed to strong direct sunlight or hot surroundings long enough to cause heat stress as indicated by prolonged panting.

19. Young poults should not be subjected to conditions which cause either panting due to overheating or prolonged huddling and feather ruffling due to under-heating. After about four to five weeks birds can tolerate a fairly wide range of temperatures; but every effort should be made to avoid creating conditions which will lead to chilling, huddling and subsequent smothering.

20. All turkey accommodation should be so designed that even when fully stocked its ventilation is adequate to protect the birds form overheating under any weather conditions that can reasonably be foreseen.

Stocking rates

21. Irrespective of the type of enclosure or system of management used, all turkeys should have sufficient freedom of movement to be able, without difficulty, to stand normally, turn round and stretch their wings. They should also have sufficient space to be able to perch or sit down without interference from other birds.

22. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that birds kept under any system can be prone to stress, injury and disease if management and husbandry are not of a high standard. Within the present limits of scientific knowledge it is not possible to relate stocking rate to welfare in any simple manner. Stocking rate is only one aspect of a complex situation involving such things as breed, strain and type of bird, colony size, temperature, ventilation, lighting and quality of housing. The observance of any particular rate cannot, by itself, ensure the welfare of the birds.

23. The following figures are a guide to the minimum available floor area per bird which is acceptable in most circumstances:

Rearing	**Area**
Broiler-type housing	260 cm^2 per kg
Tier brooders	515 cm^2 per kg
Carry-on cages	
Hay boxes raised on wire or slats, and verandahs	300 cm^2 per kg
Pole barns	410 cm^2 per kg
Enclosed range areas	10 m^2 per bird

Breeding	Area
On floors Hens kept for insemination, and hens and males kept together for natural mating	515 cm^2 per kg
On floors Males kept for artificial insemination	1 m^2 per bird
In individual pens Hens	345 cm^2 per kg
In individual pens Males	1 m^2 per bird
In enclosed range areas	17 m^2 per bird (590 birds per hectare)

24. If disease (particularly respiratory) or vice becomes evident, expert qualified advice should be sought to deal with the problem. Stocking and ventilation rates should also be checked and variations in stocking and ventilation should be considered in order to minimise the likelihood of recurrence of the problem.

MANAGEMENT

Feed and water

25. Birds should have easy access to adequate fresh feed each day and to adequate fresh water at all times. Care should be taken at any change of system to ensure that the birds find the feed and water points.

26. Stale or contaminated feed or water should not be allowed to accumulate and should be replaced immediately. Efforts should be made to minimise the risk of drinking water freezing.

27. In no case should birds be without feed or water for more than 24 hours.

Husbandry

28. Frequent inspection of the stock is essential because the condition and reactions of the birds are the main guides to their welfare. An inspection must be made at least once daily in addition to the looking-over which birds receive during routine management work Injured or dead birds should be removed promptly, as should individual sick birds.

29. It is desirable to establish a regular work routine. Care should be taken not to frighten the birds with sudden unaccustomed movement or noise, but without placing too much emphasis on quietness.

30. Adequate control measures should be taken to protect the birds from disturbance by rodents and other animals.

31. Mouldy litter should not be used. There should be frequent checks to ensure that the litter does not become excessively wet or dry, or infested with mites or other harmful organisms.

32. Premises and equipment should be regularly cleansed. Thorough disinfection should be carried out at suitable times (for example, before restocking) and to reduce the danger of continuing infection.

33. Land on which range birds are kept for prolonged periods may become ‘fowl sick’, i.e. contaminated with organisms which cause or carry disease to an extent which could seriously prejudice the health of poultry on the land. The time taken for land to become fowl sick depends on the type of land and the stocking rate. Flocks and portable houses should be moved with sufficient regularity to avoid fowl sick or continuously muddy conditions leading to ill-health or discomfort of the birds.

34. Vaccinations, injections and similar procedures should be undertaken by competent, trained operators. Care should be taken to avoid injury and unnecessary disturbance of the birds.

35. Artificial insemination is prohibited except under licence issued by the Minister for Planning and Environment.

36. A programme to control vermin, without endangering the birds, should be in place.

Saddling of hens

37. Before hens are mated they should be fitted with strong saddles, made for example of canvas, to prevent injury to the backs and sides by the males.

Toe cutting

38. To avoid injury to hens during mating, even when saddled, the last joint of the inside toes of the male breeding birds should be removed. This must be done within the first 72 hours of life. A veterinary surgeon must carry out the operation if it is performed after the first 72 hours of life.

Beak trimming

39. When birds are kept in daylight conditions they can be vicious, and beak trimming is an essential aid to management. It is usual to trim beaks as a routine measure before birds leave the brooder or the rearing accommodation and normally it need be done once in the lifetime of the stock.

40. When birds are kept in buildings with a light control system, beak trimming should be carried out only when it is clear that more suffering would be caused in the flock if it were not done.

41. Beak trimming should be done by a skilled operator or under his supervision.

Desnooding

42. When desnooding is done, this should be as soon as possible after hatching. A veterinary surgeon must carry out the operation if it is performed after the first 21 days of life.

Dewinging

43. Dewinging, pinioning, notching or tendon severing, which involves mutilation of wing tissue, must not be undertaken. When it is necessary to reduce the effects of flightiness, the flight feathers of one wing may be clipped.

EMERGENCIES/FIRE PREVENTION

44. In the design of new buildings or alteration of existing ones there should be provision for livestock to be released and evacuated quickly in the case of emergency. Materials used in construction should have sufficient fire resistance and adequate doors and other escape routes should be provided to enable an emergency

procedure to be followed in the event of a fire. To reduce the risk to stock from fire and smoke, where possible the storage of straw should be separate to stock accommodation.

45. There is usually some warning of interruptions in the supply of feedingstuffs and, so far as possible, arrangements should be made to lay in adequate stocks of feed or water to offset the worst effects of such a contingency.

HANDLING AND TRANSPORT OF STOCK ON THE PREMISES

46. The proper handling of birds requires skill, and it should be undertaken only by competent persons who have appropriately trained. It should be carried out quietly and confidently, exercising care to avoid unnecessary struggling which could bruise or otherwise injure the birds. Care must be taken in catching birds in loose-housed systems in order to avoid creating panic and subsequent injury to or smothering of the birds.

Day-old Poults

47. Poults for despatch should be healthy and vigorous, and should be placed in suitably ventilated boxes without overcrowding. Care should be taken to ensure adequate ventilation of the boxes, particularly when they are stacked, and to protect the poults from direct sunlight and cold draughts.

48. Packing materials used inside boxes should be dry and free from moulds.

49. Poults should be transferred to the brooders as soon as possible.

LEGISLATION

50. The following legislation is of relevance:

- Animal Welfare (Jersey) Law 2004
- Animal Health (Jersey) Law 2016
- Veterinary Surgeons (Jersey) Law 1999
- Community Provisions (Welfare of Animals during Transport) (Jersey) Regulations 2013