The National Chicken Council (NCC) Animal Welfare Guidelines and Audit Checklist has been endorsed and widely adopted by the commercial broiler industry in the US since 1999. The voluntary guidelines include specific and objective criteria covering all aspects of chicken’s life from the hatchery through processing operations. The 2014 update to the guidelines can be found at:
http://www.nationalchickencouncil.org/comprehensive-guidelines-date-released-well-chickens/

The new guidelines include:
- Increase emphasis on corporate commitment
- A syllabus for animal welfare training
- A whistle-blower protection policy on animal welfare violations
- Task-specific training programs for all employees who work with animals
- Requirement for internal and external audits
- More detail on acceptable euthanasia practices
- Clarification of animal abuse conditions
- Stocking density limits based on market weights
- New corrective action limits
- Clear consequences of non-conformances
- Tighter limits on stunning and slaughter practices
- Conditions that can result in audit failure
- Streamlined audit scoring system

The NCC recommends auditors certified by PAACO (http://www.animalauditor.org)

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