



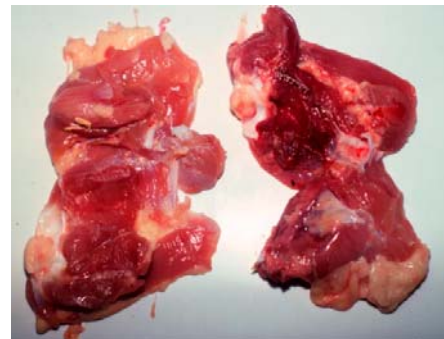
Worthwhile Operational Guidelines & Suggestions

BROILER PROCESSING TIMELY INFORMATION – JULY 2007

Catching Damage

Millions of market age broiler chickens must be caught and transported to the processing plant each day. Although mechanical catching systems are increasingly being adopted by the industry, a great majority of the birds in the US are caught by hand. Handling alone by humans is a novel experience in itself and often leads to avoidance behavior and stress response by the birds. During catching and crating, birds are also prone to various degrees of physical trauma.

Rough handling by the catch crew or mechanical equipment during catching, carrying and loading of poultry can result in trauma to the wings and legs. Dislocation of the femur at the hip joint is a condition frequently observed with hand catching. The prevalence of hip joint dislocations are strongly influenced by the catching and carrying method (one > two legs), weight of the bird (large > small), gender (males > females; due to mass), height of the crate being loaded (top tier of transport modules), and level of force used by the catch crews. Hemorrhaging associated with this type of physical injury can be a severe enough to cause mortality and contribute to high DOA's prior to slaughter. In many instances, the trauma is not severe enough to cause death, but associated hemorrhaging in the joint area (usually affects the handled leg) results in loss of quality and quantity of thigh meat harvested during deboning. Training and financial incentive programs for catch crews can reduce this type of damage and often pays big dividends for the operation.



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