



# Worthwhile Operational Guidelines & Suggestions

BROILER PROCESSING TIMELY INFORMATION – MAY 2004

## ANIMAL WELFARE PROGRAMS

Voluntary animal care and welfare guidelines have been developed by the National Chicken Council and National Turkey Federation for their respective sectors of the poultry industry. These guidelines target various phases of the industry, including pullet, breeder and broiler farms, hatchery, and the processing plant, as well as specific practices, such as providing birds comfort and shelter, nutrition and feeding, health programs, ability to display normal behavior, catching and transportation. Education, training, verification, documentation and auditing (internal and external) are core components of these programs. Poultry processing facilities have major responsibilities in meeting these welfare guidelines. Following is a checklist of control points for the pre-slaughter phase that must be incorporated into the internal verification and audit programs:

- Optimum feed withdrawal program
- Bird handling practices during catching and loading
- Condition of the transportation cages and crating density
- Bird comfort during transportation and plant holding
- Monitoring and control of DOA's
- Bird comfort during unloading and hanging
- Effectiveness of stunning process
- Effectiveness of killing and bleeding
- Elimination of cadavers
- Monitoring and control of wing and leg fractures

Control standards may be qualitative (for example, gentle handling, herding or hanging of birds based on SOP or GMP's) or quantitative ( $<0.5\%$  DOA's or zero incidence of cadavers, based on internal or external guideline). In many instances, consistent implementation of the standards will require verification activities and the use of Statistical Process Control tools.



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