

Responsible Down Standard International Working Group

Farm: Handling and Management Practices Module

May 17, 2018

- **Agenda**
- Introductions, Announcements, and Housekeeping
- Updates
- Review of Farm: Handling and Management Practices Module

Key Topics to be reviewed:

- Infra-red beak trimming.
 - These articles give good summaries of the differing stances on this practice: <http://www.poultryhub.org/health/health-management/beak-trimming/> (Poultry Hub, hosted by Poultry Cooperative Research Centre)
 - <https://www.ciwf.org.uk/media/3818838/debeaking.pdf> (Compassion in World Farming)
 - Video about infrared bill trimming: <https://youtu.be/AdgYcvjArD4> (US poultry)
 - Management practices without bill trimming: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Publication-details.htm?publicationId=publication-way-353135363539> (Wageningen Livestock Research)
- Handling
 - Ducks: <https://www.hsa.org.uk/catching-and-handling/ducks> (Humane Slaughter Association)
 - Geese: <https://www.hsa.org.uk/catching-and-handling/geese> (Humane Slaughter Association)

Theory of Change:

Set a meaningful benchmark with the RDS, but we want to make sure we are also providing mechanisms to help move that benchmark. Therefore, we want to provide incentives to help people move toward that benchmark.

General RDS Updates:

Parent Farm Proposal

- Self-assessment Draft

- Proposal: Begin a small pilot now with the Certification Bodies, begin collecting from the scope certificate holders over the next 10-12 weeks, and assess after.

Parallel Production Proposal

1. Require that sites have purchased RDS material in order to be renewed/
2. Recognize certified companies that are 100% RDS certified material.
3. *Optional:* Sign a declaration of no non-plucked, non-force fed material.
 - They must disclose all their suppliers and CBs can do random checks.
 - Suppliers that have signed would be listed online.
 - Suppliers that are found to be linked to live-plucking would get removed, publicly listed as revoked.

Euthanasia Proposal

- Most in the group would like us to require euthanasia.
- There are many obstacles to this practice being adopted, most are not well understood.
- **Identify a task force** to work on a plan for sites to work *towards euthanasia*, to include:
 - Training
 - Management practices, plans
 - Resources for workers and management
 - Should address: the 1) when, 2) how, and 3) by whom of euthanasia
- **Let us know if you would like to be a member of this task force.**

Farm: Handling and Management Practices Module

Training

NUMBER	REQUIREMENT	GUIDANCE	LEVEL
F9.1	Responsible personnel shall be trained on good practices for handling of waterfowl. Training records shall be kept for at least five years or for the length of their validity, whichever is longer.	A written plan is required for operations with more than five employees. For farms with five or less employees, it is sufficient for the inspector to interview the farmer.	MINOR
			<i>Not applicable for Small Farmer Groups</i>

Add guideline for handling practices.

Handling resources: Humane Slaughter Association

Suggested Changes:

- Introduce minimum handling requirements in transport and slaughter module.
- Increase F9.1 from Minor to Major.
- Make minimum handling practices Major.
- This could be a point of guidance for the auditor. The auditor should observe how the employees handle and pick up the birds.

Physical Alterations

NUMBER	REQUIREMENT	GUIDANCE	LEVEL
F9.2	There shall be no physical alterations of waterfowl such as: De-clawing Hole punching Wing clipping Trimming of feathers Castration	Trimming of large feathers is allowed if feathers become broken or damaged.	MINOR
F9.3	Bill trimming and de-beaking is prohibited.		MAJOR

There has been a request for the IWG to allow infrared bill trimming. There are two differing opinions.

In Favor:

The infrared process is considered an animal welfare treatment because nothing is actually removed during the process. Over time the hook at the end of the bill will naturally wear off or fall off like a scab. The aim is to ensure the animals' safety and wellbeing.

Bill trimming is written by the European Union as an animal welfare practice.

Bill trimming is intended to prevent injury from occurring in feather pecking or during feather pecking.

Against:

It doesn't really address the cause of feather pecking. Injurious feather pecking is an abnormal behavior and the environment is the influencer. Allowing bill trimming would be a step backwards, it is possible to rear ducks without bill trimming. You are treating a symptom without address the underlying cause. There is research available with chickens that indicates the injurious feather pecking is caused by a lack of an environmental necessity. With ducks if they do not have access to water, then that foraging trait is redirected. Infrared bill trimming may be better than other methods of bill trimming, but infrared is not pain free. We should look at space, access to water, stimulation, and bedding as management practices to help prevent the cause of injurious feather pecking.

Infrared beak trimming

Should the RDS allow Infrared beak trimming?

There just is not enough credible research out there and the research that is out there is conflicting. It would be difficult to justify bill trimming to the public, especially consumers.

Questions:

- Could we hear from some other auditors?
 - Answer: In China feather pecking is not very common and we do not have beak trimming.
 - Answer: Certifier: On the farms we certify in Europe we do not see feather pecking and beak trimming is not practiced.

Actionable Items:

- Pose the question to auditors.
- Have another call to review this issue in further detail.

Prevention of fighting, pecking

NUMBER	REQUIREMENT	GUIDANCE	LEVEL
F9.4	Glasses may be allowed to prevent fighting at breeding farms.	Where fighting is a problem, less drastic steps such as reducing the stocking density and providing a more complex environment are usually warranted.	RECOMMENDATION
F9.5	Measures shall be taken to minimize fighting and/or feather pecking by other waterfowl and other negative behaviors.	Flock size (too many waterfowl in one flock), dirty environment, nutritional problems might affect the occurrence of negative behaviors, such as fighting, smothering from panic, or competition for food and water. If the capacity of a barn is more than 3000, a separation wall shall be high enough that waterfowl are not able to see each other.	MINOR

If we do ban beak trimming we need to make sure we have looked at the sufficiently and go over these thoroughly.

Handling

NUMBER	REQUIREMENT	GUIDANCE	LEVEL
F9.6	Hatchlings shall be not be thrown or dumped.	They shall be placed gently from a height of not more than 12 in (30.5 cm) or lower	MINOR

Actionable Items:

- Look at these specific sections (Transport/Slaughter/Hatchlings/General) to make sure handling requirements are listed and we will put it back to the group when we have a draft.
- Training requirements should cover all of these types of handling.

Sector Meetings:

- Animal Welfare: May 18th 9am – 10:30am cst.
- Suppliers: May 25th 8am – 9:30am cst.
- Brands/Retailers: May 31st 9am – 10:30am cst.

Reminders:

- Have you signed the RDS IWG Charter?
- Do we have your permission to be publically listed?
- Any other questions or feedback:
ResponsibleDown@TextileExchange.org

Thank you!