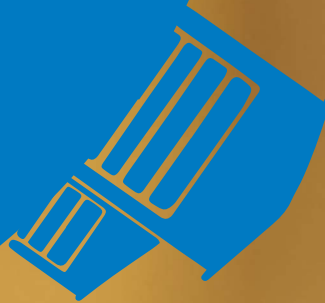
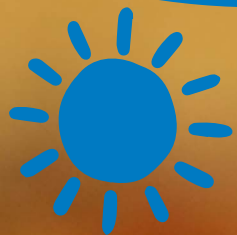




Meat Chickens

SPCA Certified®
Welfare Plus+ Standards



SPCA Certified Welfare Plus+ Standards for Meat Chickens

Version 1.0 – 2026



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SPCA Certified Welfare Plus+ Standards for Meat Chickens

Overview

SPCA supports a science-based commitment to drive the introduction of higher welfare standards for meat chickens including the use of slower-growing breeds, better housing conditions, lower stocking density, and more humane slaughter methods.

Certification is given to participants, which may include farmers and producers, following a successful initial assessment and subsequent welfare audit of compliance according to the SPCA Certified Welfare Plus+ Standards for Meat Chickens. SPCA Certified members are then independently audited up to four times a year, including unannounced audits.

The SPCA Certified Welfare Plus+ Standards applies to free range and barn raised meat chicken production systems and has been developed for those wanting to further improve bird welfare beyond the existing SPCA Certified Standards for Meat Chickens 2023.

They should be read in association with the following documents:

- [SPCA Certified Standards for Meat Chickens 2023](#)
- [Animal Welfare Act 1999](#)
- [Animal Welfare \(Care and Procedures\) Regulations 2018](#)
- [Code of Welfare: Meat Chickens 2018](#)
- [Code of Welfare: Painful Husbandry Procedures 2018](#)
- [Code of Welfare: Transport within New Zealand 2018](#)
- [Code of Welfare: Commercial Slaughter 2018](#)

SPCA Certified Welfare Plus+ Standards for Meat Chickens

Important notes:

- Information presented in ***bold italic*** type is either a standard explanation or a recommendation.
- To avoid unnecessary duplication, existing information/records from other sources can be used to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of a standard. Electronic records and logs are acceptable if they can be accessed during assessments and audits.
- These standards are in addition to meeting the existing SPCA Certified Standards for Meat Chickens 2023.

Stocking densities

W+1 The maximum stocking density is 30kg/m² (or less) and must be calculated based on the target live weight of the birds at slaughter.

Catching

W+2 Thinning must be limited to one cut/thin per flock, excluding depopulation.

Thinning of flocks is discouraged to minimise stress.

Breed

W+3 An approved SPCA Certified transition plan must be in place to adopt breeds that demonstrate higher welfare outcomes.

Higher welfare breeds include Hubbard Redbro (indoor use only); Hubbard Norfolk Black, JA757, JACY57, 787, 957, or 987, Rambler Ranger, Ranger Classic, and Ranger Gold, or other breeds that meet the criteria determined by SPCA New Zealand.

Lighting

W+4 Chicks under five days of age must be provided with a minimum period of continuous darkness of at least two hours from placement.

- W+5 From day 5, birds must be provided with a minimum of eight hours of continuous light and a minimum of seven hours of darkness in each 24-hour period, of which four hours of darkness must be continuous and occur at normal night time.
- W+6 An average light intensity of 50 lux, including natural light, must be provided. Where natural light cannot be provided at this time, an approved SPCA Certified transition plan must be in place.

Behavioural enrichment/pecking objects

- W+7 At least two pecking substrate/s per 1,000 birds must be provided.

Ventilation

- W+8 With the exception of brooding, the concentration of ammonia must not exceed 15ppm and the concentration of carbon dioxide must not exceed 3000ppm at the level of the chickens' heads, regardless of stocking density.

Housing

- W+9 The housing of meat chickens in cages or multi-tier systems is not permitted.

Slaughter

- W+10 An approved SPCA Certified transition plan must be in place to move to controlled atmosphere stunning using inert gases or multi-phase systems, or effective electrical stunning without live inversion, as soon as this is available in New Zealand and is feasible.

The transition plan should outline actions members will take to move towards meeting this standard, including lobbying the government and investing in, supporting relevant research and development of new stunning systems.

<END OF STANDARDS>

Appendix:

Records required

Record	Standard	Description
Daily		
Ammonia levels	W+ 8	Date, time and test result. Initials of person doing inspection. Record the outcome of any remedial action taken.
Carbon dioxide levels	W+ 8	Date, time and test result. Initials of person doing inspection. Record the outcome of any remedial action taken.
Weekly		
Enrichment interactions	W+ 7	Whole flock general summary.
Other		
Lighting plan (every flock)	W+ 4–6	Record: • Lighting programme in use • Duration of light/dark period(s) • Light levels (in lux)
Thin/Cut (every flock)	W+ 2	Where undertaken a record must be kept.