



CIWF key requirements for better welfare systems include: appropriate pullet rearing; good shed design with functional space to encourage welfare-positive behaviors like perching, dustbathing, and foraging; adequate space; ample enrichment; adequate diet; nipple drinkers; and access to range wherever possible. If range access is provided, shelter on range must be available. Welfare indicators/outcomes must be established and monitored.

	Criteria/Standard	UEP Certified	American Humane Certified	Certified Humane	Animal Welfare Approved	GAP 5-Step
FACILITIES	Use of battery cages	Battery cages allowed, with a minimum space requirement of 67 - 86 in ² of usable space per bird.	No battery cages allowed.	No battery cages allowed.	No battery cages allowed.	No battery cages allowed.
	Use of enriched cages (and/or housing systems that restrict hens' access to the full facilities for part of the day)	Enriched cages allowed, but no current standard or recommendations for their use are available.	Enriched colony cages are allowed for operations certified under the Enriched Colony Standard.	No enriched cages allowed.	No enriched cages allowed.	No enriched cages allowed.
	Space allowance	Battery cage systems: 67 - 86 in ² of usable space per bird. Cage-free: 1.0 - 1.5 ft ² per hen.	Enriched colony: 116.3 in ² , equivalent to 0.8 ft ² per hen, including nest. No less than 17.7 inches in height; slope of the floor must not exceed 14 percent or 8 degrees. Cage-free: House with all-litter floor: 1.5 ft ² per hen. House with perching/roosting area over a droppings pit/belt, and multi-tier systems: 1.2 ft ² per hen for brown egg layers and other medium weight birds; and 1.0 ft ² per hen for White Leghorns and other lightweight birds.	Single level, all-litter house: 1.5 ft ² per hen. Litter and raised slatted area housing: 1.2 ft ² per hen. Multi-tier house with feeders and drinkers on overhead perches: 1.0 ft ² per hen. Pasture-raised systems with mobile housing: 1.0 ft ² per hen.	Laying hens: 1.8 ft ² per bird. Breeders: 1.8 ft ² per bird. After the brooding period, continuous access to at least 4 ft ² of range and foraging area per hen.	1.4 ft ² per hen.
	Natural light	Not required.	Not required.	Not required.	Natural light is required.	Required for Steps 3-5.
	Nestboxes * 9.0 ft ² per 100 hens = 12.96 in ² per hen. ** 1.0 ft ² per 10 hens = 14.4 in ² per hen.	Battery cage systems: Not required. Cage-free: Nestboxes required; communal nest with minimum 9.0 ft ² per 100 hens.*	Enriched colony: One nestbox per unit. Cage-free, pasture, and free-range: Nestboxes required; one per every 5-7 birds, or communal nest with minimum 9.0 ft ² per 100 hens.*	Nestboxes required; one per every five birds, or communal nest with minimum 9.0 ft ² per 100 hens.*	Nestboxes required; one per every five birds, or communal nest with minimum 20.0 in ² per hen.	Nestboxes required; one per every six birds, or communal nest with minimum 1.0 ft ² per 10 hens.**
	Perches	6 in aerial perch per bird (applies only to cage-free systems).	Enriched colony: 6 linear inches per hen. Cage-free: 6 in aerial perch per bird.	6 in aerial perch per bird.	7 in aerial perch per bird.	5 in aerial perch per bird.
HUSBANDRY	Pullet rearing Methods that help them better adapt to the systems in which they will be laying, including early introduction to perches, nextboxes, and outdoor access if destined for pasture-based or free-range laying systems.	Access to raised areas/perches recommended, starting at 4 weeks. Drinker type should be the same in rearing and laying facility.	Stocking density, as well as food and water regimes, must be similar to those of laying facility. Pullets destined for cage-free systems must be raised on litter and have access to scratching areas.	Access to perches before or at 4 weeks of age, and access to litter. Maximum stocking density 4 lb/ft ² . Pullets moved to laying facility between 16-18 wks of age.	Access to litter. Access to forage starting at 24 hours after placement, and no later than 7 days of age. Space allowance: 0.67 ft ² per bird	Access to litter. Stocking densities: 0.45 ft ² per chick during brooding, and 0.65 ft ² per chick post-brooding. Access to perches starting at day 7, perch space 1.5 in per chick during brooding, 3 in per chick post-brooding. Lowest perch at least 4 in from the floor. Adjustment periods for temperature and light intensity must be provided before transfer to laying facility. Insoluble grit provided starting two weeks before transfer. Transfer complete 4 weeks before onset of laying.
	Provision of enrichment that encourages natural behaviors. **For the purposes of this framework, enrichment is defined as a resource that an animal values, but is not essential (such as a nestbox or perch).	Not addressed.	Not addressed.	Not addressed.	Not addressed.	Steps 1 and 2: one type of enrichment. Step 3 and above: two types of enrichment. Hens must be able to peck at, manipulate, and destroy enrichment items.
	Beak trimming	Infrared within 24 hours of hatching and hot blade trimming in pullets 10 days and younger permitted. Therapeutic beak trimming may be performed at any age if an outbreak of cannibalism occurs.	Infrared within 24 hours of hatching preferred. If not possible, hot blade permitted in pullets 10 days and younger.	Only permitted at 10 days or younger in flocks susceptible to cannibalism, or to correct beak distortions.	All beak trimming/conditioning prohibited.	Steps 1-3: beak trimming/beak conditioning permitted using infra-red treatment and only for day-old pullets. Step 4 and above: Beak trimming/conditioning prohibited.
	Pre-slaughter stunning Controlled atmosphere stunning before shackling is the preferred method.	Not addressed.	Electrical water bath stunning or hand-operated stunning acceptable. Birds must be hung on the shackles by both legs. Birds must not be suspended for more than 90 seconds before they are stunned. No more than 10 seconds may elapse between stunning and neck cutting.	Not addressed.	On farm slaughter and Controlled Atmosphere Killing (CAK) recommended, with mixture of argon and/or nitrogen and carbon dioxide. Shackling of live birds is not permitted without prior written consent.	Permitted stunning methods for all step ratings: gas stunning and killing systems using multi-phase carbon dioxide, argon, nitrogen, or a mixture of these gases; electrical stun-knife (if bird is stunned prior to cutting); waterbath stunning; low atmospheric pressure stunning; penetrating and non-penetrating captive bolt pistol. Shackling of birds with broken wings or legs on arrival at the slaughter facility is not permitted. Step 5+ systems require that birds be slaughtered on farm (birth-to-slaughter system).
	Transportation time	Not addressed.	Not addressed.	Not addressed.	Transport to slaughter must not exceed 4 hours.	Transport to slaughter must not exceed 8 hours for Step 1-5 certified systems, and 2 hours for Step 5+ systems.