







BETTER CHICKEN COMMITMENT CRITERIA (US & CANADA)

| | SPACE | LIGHTING | LITTER | ENRICHMENT | BREEDS | SLAUGHTER | AUDITING |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| CRITERIA → CERTIFICATION ↓ | Indoor stocking density ≤ 6 lb/sq ft. No caged systems. | Min 8 hrs of continuous light (≥50 lux) & 6 hrs of continuous daily darkness daily (<1 lux). | ≥3 inches of friable litter covering the full floor & managed to prevent wet or caked areas. | ≥1 functional enrichment per 1000 sq ft or 1000 birds, which multiple birds can use at one time. Provided by 10 days of age & maintained thereafter. | Adopt breeds with higher welfare outcomes approved by the RSPCA or Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.) | Avoid pre-stun handling & utilize a multi-step Controlled Atmosphere Stunning (CAS) processing system that induces an irreversible stun. | Demonstrate compliance with all standards via third-party auditing. |
| Global Animal Partnership¹ (G.A.P.) Step 1 & Above  | All cage systems are prohibited, as well as housing on slatted and/or wire floors. Max indoor stocking density - Steps 1-3: 6 lb/sq ft, Steps 4-5+: 5.5 lb/sq ft. ✓ | All Steps: Min 8 hours of ≥50 lux continuous light each day. Steps 2 & above: Only natural light from Jan 2022. Min 6 (Steps 1-2) or 8 hours (Steps 3-5+) continuous daily darkness (<1 lux). ✓ | All Steps: Full floor coverage in all houses with ≥3 in of friable litter, with no more than 10% caked. Soiled feather & litter quality assessments recorded for every flock at 15-20 days of age. ✓ | List of acceptable indoor enrichments is provided. Step 1: Min 1 type of functional enrichment per 1000 sq ft of indoor space. ≥2 different types of enrichments per 750 sq ft (Steps 2-3) or 500 sq ft indoors (Step 4). Indoor enrichments not applicable to Steps 5-5+. ✓ | All Steps: Only higher welfare breeds approved by G.A.P.'s Broiler Chicken Assessment Protocol can be used. ✓ | CAS not required. Slaughter methods that use pre-stun handling, e.g., shackling of live birds by both legs, are permitted. Step 5+: Chickens must be slaughtered on-farm using an on-farm slaughter facility or a mobile slaughter unit. ✗ | Authorized, independent third-party audits every 15 months (to capture any seasonal differences). A min of 50% of flocks are audited on farms with ≥4 flocks (min 1 inspection per location). Priority for older flocks to be audited (≥21 days of age or within 2 weeks before slaughter). Audits include observation of brooding, and catching & loading, at least once per 5-year certification cycle. Slaughter facilities must be third-party audited annually. ✓ |
| Certified Humane²  | Housing in cages, or on wire or slatted floors, is prohibited. Max indoor stocking density 6 lb/sq ft. ✓ | Light intensity of ≥20 lux (from artificial or natural light sources) throughout the house, for a min of 8 hours a day. A min of 6 continuous hours of darkness per 24-hour cycle. ✗ | Full floor covered by dry and friable litter. No min depth specified. Wet and caked litter must be removed promptly. ? | For every 1000 birds, 1.5 standard sized long chopped straw bales, 2m of perch space, 1 pecking objects should be provided by 10 days of age. Approved enrichments include: ramps, low perches, pecking blocks, straw bales, scattering of whole grains, cabbages, cauliflowers, sprouts, broccoli, rounded tubes, & hanging wooden blocks. ✓ | Care must be taken to select birds for high welfare traits & avoid genetic strains with undesirable traits. However, using breeds with verified higher welfare outcomes is not required. ✗ | CAS not required, but is endorsed as a humane slaughter method. When used, CAS systems must be designed to kill the birds (not just stunning). Slaughter methods that use pre-stun handling, e.g., shackling of live birds by both legs, are permitted. ✗ | Independent third party audits every 12 months. For group certifications, a minimum of 10% of producers are inspected. ✓ |
| American Humane Certified³  | Maximum indoor stocking density 7 lb/sq ft, calculated using target weight of the birds. Use of cages not specifically prohibited. ✗ | Average daylight intensity of ≥10 lux throughout the house for a min of 8 hours each day (from artificial or natural sources). A min of 4 hours of continuous darkness (recommended ≤1 lux) each day. ✗ | Access to dry and friable litter at a min of 1 in deep is required at all times, but full floor coverage not specified. Wet litter is not allowed and should be replaced. ✗ | Enrichments strongly encouraged but not required. ✗ | No specifications or requirements on breed or genetic selection for higher welfare. ✗ | CAS not required, but auditing guidance covers standard operating practices for CAS. CAS systems can be used for stunning only (not stun-kill exclusively). Slaughter methods that use pre-stun handling, e.g., shackling of live birds by both legs, are permitted. ✗ | Independent third party audits are required every 12 months for re-certification. Only 1 flock/house required to be audited per location. Auditors encouraged to observe loading, transport, and slaughter processes, but training documentation sufficient if these stages are conducted by an outside company. ✓ |
| Animal Welfare Approved⁴  | From 4 weeks of age, each bird must have continuous daytime access to at least 4 sq ft ranging & foraging area. When climatic conditions pose a threat to the birds' welfare, each bird must be provided with a min of 0.67 sq ft indoor space & 2 sq ft additional foraging space (average 2.4 lb/sq ft based on 6.41 lb final body weight). Cages prohibited, both indoors and on the range, and broiler chicks cannot be sourced from breeding stock kept in cages. ✓ | Birds have daily access to natural light outdoors for a min 50% of daylight hours. However, shelters & housing must allow natural light to enter. ✓ | Bedding (litter) must be clean, dry, mold-free, & replenished as needed. In stationary housing, bedding must be available to chickens at all times. ? | Access to forage from 7 days of age. Outdoor access to ranging & foraging areas from 4 weeks of age for a min 50% of daylight hours. Birds excluded from outdoor ranging & foraging areas must be provided vegetative material. Access to raised surfaces (e.g., perches, straw bales) from 4 weeks of age. Raised areas should be 4.5 in off the ground & provide a min 1 inch of perching space (or 1 sq inch of platform space). ✓ | Breeds must be chosen with consideration of their ability to thrive in the prevailing climatic conditions of the farm, in pasture-based, free range, outdoor systems. Their growth rate must not exceed 40 g/day averaged over their lifetime. Use of traditional (heritage) breeds is recommended. ✓ | On farm slaughter is recommended & CAS systems using argon or nitrogen are the preferred slaughter method. Multi-step CAS systems using carbon dioxide (CO2) for stunning or to stun-kill are also permitted, but must use ≥2 phases. Birds must be exposed to ≤30% CO2 for at least 1 minute before moving into higher CO2 concentrations. Shackling of live birds is not permitted without prior written permission, and is withdrawn once a slaughter facility that does not use shackles, and is within the maximum travel distance of 4 hours, is approved. ✓ | A qualified independent third party AWA farm auditor visits the farm (and the separate slaughter facilities if applicable) to conduct official inspections for re-certification every 12 months. Only independent farmers, who own the animals & are responsible for their day-to-day care, are eligible for AWA certification. Cooperatives & networks of independent farms are also eligible, but all farms must be audited in the group. ✓ |
| National Chicken Council⁵  | Use of cages not specifically prohibited. Max stocking density based on target live weight: ≤ 4.5 lbs: 6.5 lb/sq ft; 4.5- 5.5 lbs: 7.5 lb/sq ft; 5.6 to 7.5 lbs: 8.5 lb/sq ft; ≥ 7.5 lbs: 9 lb/sq ft. ✗ | No min daytime light intensity specified. During the dark period(s), the light intensity must be ≤10% of the daytime light intensity. A min of 4 hours of darkness every 24 hours must be provided, but does not need to be continuous & can be in increments of 1, 2, or 4 hours. ✗ | Dry & friable litter should be provided throughout the majority of the house, but full floor coverage is not required. No min litter depth specified. Litter quality must be assessed in ≥2 houses per site. ✗ | Not addressed or required ✗ | Not addressed or required ✗ | CAS not required, but is covered as a humane slaughter method. Birds can be handled & shackled by their legs prior to stunning and/or killing. ✗ | Third-party auditing by an independent contractor, but no specifications around the frequency of audits. The number of flocks/locations audited is up to desire of the company. For larger operations, audits are recommended to cover the hatchery, a processing plant, & sample ≥3 of the grow-out houses on different farms (1 farm with chicks a min of 7 days old & 1 farm with birds within 7 days of processing). ? |
| USDA Organic⁶  | Continuous total indoor confinement is prohibited, so caged systems cannot be used as permanent housing. Maximum stocking densities not addressed. ✗ | All animals must have year-round access to direct sunlight. However, there are no regulations specifying the light intensities and the lengths of daily light & dark periods. ✗ | Appropriate clean, dry bedding (litter) is required, and cannot be solely dried manure. No min litter depth addressed. Litter should cover all solid floors, but no min requirement for solid floor space in poultry houses. ✗ | Indoor enrichment not addressed. All animals must have year-round access to the outdoors, but no regulations covering the regularity or duration of daily outdoor access. Chickens may be confined indoors until 4 weeks of age. For poultry, enclosed runs without vegetation can qualify as a form of outdoor access. ? | Selection of breeds with regard to suitability for site-specific conditions and resistance to prevalent diseases & parasites. However, using broiler breeds with verified higher welfare outcomes is not required. ✗ | Not addressed or required ✗ | Accredited third-party certifying agents conduct on-site audits every 12 months of every operation that grows or handles organic products, including slaughter facilities. A certified organic slaughter facility must be used for processing meat that is to be marketed as organic. ✓ |

¹Global Animal Partnership's 5-Step® Animal Welfare Standards for Chickens Raised for Meat v3.2

²HFAC Animal Care Standards for Chickens August 2014

³American Humane Certified Animal Welfare Standards for Broiler Chickens (May 2019)

⁴Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW Standards for Meat Chickens 2021

⁵National Chicken Council Animal Welfare Guidelines and Audit Checklist for Broilers (Sept 2020)

⁶7 CFR Part 205 enforced by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

KEY

✓ **COMPLIANT**

? **UNSURE**

✗ **NOT COMPLIANT**