

RECEIVING BROILER CHICKS AND POULTS

1. PURPOSE

To provide a smooth transfer into the barn.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

- 2.1 Chief Animal Science Technician
- 2.2 Student volunteers
- 2.3 Poultry Unit Technician

3. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Chief Animal Science Technician or delegate must be present to oversee the unloading process.
- 3.2 Crews and transporters must be familiar with and abide by the guidelines established in the Recommended Guidelines for Procurement, Handling and Transportation of Broiler Chickens
- 3.3 Unload the birds in a way that prevents injury or undue suffering. Refer to Appendix [PU-A-3B Handling Guidelines for Catching Crews](#).

4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1 Prepare the Broiler barn to receive the birds as per SOP [PU-203 Broiler Barn Preparation](#).
- 4.2 Confirm the date of delivery with the provider. Once the receiving date is confirmed, recruit student volunteers.
- 4.3 Ensure that the lighting and temperature are adequate before chick placement:
 - 4.3.1 Lighting: 40 lux light for the first 2-3 days and a dark period of at least 6 hours. After this initial period, the chicks should be put on a controlled lighting program.
 - 4.3.2 Temperature: about 32°C at a distance of 15 cm outside the brooder canopy or reflector and 5 cm above the floor.)
- 4.4 Student volunteers must arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the birds' arrival for training manipulation and loading instructions by the Poultry Unit Technician. Instructions include but are not limited to:
 - 4.4.1 Basic on-farm biosecurity practices
 - 4.4.2 Safety precautions
 - 4.4.3 Humane handling
- 4.5 Document training of loading crews.
- 4.6 Ensure easy access of the Transport vehicle to the loading area of the barn.
- 4.7 Don the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment as per SOP [PU-201 Biosecurity: Broiler Barn](#).
- 4.8 Unload the crates from the vehicle and transfer to the corridor in front of the appropriate room.
- 4.9 Open the crate and gently remove 2 chicks randomly from each crate by
 - 4.9.1 circling its body with your hand, your fingers loosely around the underside of its body and your thumb across its back
 - OR
 - 4.9.2 Scoop the chick up from underneath, cradling its belly in one hand and placing your other hand over its back. Never let a baby chick stand on your open palm, especially if you're standing up, because they're likely to hop off or flutter their wings and end up airborne, which will likely end in a bad fall.



*** IMPORTANT**

Never let a baby chick stand on your open palm because they're likely to hop off or flutter their wings and end up airborne, which will likely end in a bad fall.

- 4.10 When the target of 31-kg/ m² is achieved, transfer the tray to a vacant pen in Room 1200.
- 4.11 Repeat until all pens are populated.
- 4.12 Any supplemental birds will be transferred to the small room (1430), with a maximum of 42 birds per pen.
- 4.13 Dead birds are recorded and disposed of as per SOP [PU-116 Carcass Disposal-Poultry](#). Observation of sick or severely injured animals are recorded and the animal is euthanized as per SOP [PU-520 Euthanasia: Poultry](#).
- 4.14 Transport the empty crates back to the loading dock. The transporter loads the empty crates into the vehicle.
- 4.15 The Poultry Unit Technician walks through each aisle to take inventory to ensure the receipt of accurate numbers and confirms the housing capacity per pen.
- 4.16 The Poultry Unit Technician acknowledges the delivery and signs the invoice. Record observations of sick, injured or dead birds on the invoice.
- 4.17 Transporter and volunteers leave.
- 4.18 Sweep aisle and corridor floors
- 4.19 Allow ~ 1 hour for birds to acclimate to the new environment.
- 4.20 Walk through the barn to monitor bird health and behavior. Refer to SOP [PU-501 Poultry Health Monitoring](#).
- 4.21 Closely monitor the chicks at frequent intervals within the first 24 hours for activity, eating, drinking, and acclimating to the new environment. Refer to [Table 1: Observation in Elevated and Decreased Temperatures](#).
- 4.22 Gradually reduce the room temperature by one degree, with the frequency of adjustments dependent on the season and the age of the animals. Refer to [PU-A-2A: Broiler Temperature Management Chart](#).
- 4.23 Chicks must be monitored at least twice daily. Ensure that the lighting, feed and water levels are adequate, and the animals are in good health. Document health checks and observations.

TABLE 1: Observation in Elevated and Decreased Temperatures

Observation	Cause	Concern	Corrective Measure
Piling under Heat lamp	Room is too cold	Dehydration, decrease appetite: Too cold to leave the warm to seek food and water	Check room temperature and increase gradually
Chicks are far away from the heat lamp	Room is too hot	Stress and mortality	Check the room temperature and decrease to the recommended temperature.

5. REFERENCES

CCAC Guideline on: The Care and Use of Farm Animals in Research, Teaching, and Testing. Canadian Council on Animal Care, 2009.

National Farm Animal Care Council: The Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals: Hatching Breeders, chickens, and turkeys, 2016.

Document Status and Revision History

DATE	STATUS
14-Nov2018	VERSION 01: Macdonald Campus FACC approved
21-June-2023	VERSION 02: Reviewed and approved by MAC FACC