

Egg Quality Assurance Scheme Standard Producer / Rearer Requirements



Growing the success of Irish food & horticulture

Bord Bia
Irish Food Board

Egg Quality Assurance Scheme Standard Producer / Rearer Requirements

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1.0

INTRODUCTION

This Egg Quality Assurance Scheme (EQAS) was developed by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) representing Bord Bia, Teagasc, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), pullet rearing farms, egg producers, Packing Centres, industry advisors and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF).



The Standard includes the general requirements for the rearing of point of lay pullets for the production of table eggs (Section 5) and the general requirements for four types of egg production systems: Unenriched Cage, Enriched Cage, Alternative (Free Range, Barn) and Organic (Section 3).

This Standard replaces the previous Egg Quality Assurance Standard (Producer), Revision 02 of April 2001.

1.1**OBJECTIVES**

The primary objectives of the EQAS (Producer / Rearer) are:

- To set out the requirements for best practice in the production of eggs at farm level;
- To provide a uniform mechanism for recording and monitoring egg production quality assurance criteria on the farm with a view to achieving continual improvement in production standards;
- To provide a means of demonstrating best practice at producer level; and
- To convey, through use of the Logo, to both retailer and consumer that eggs are produced and packed to the highest standards.

1.2**PARTICIPATION**

The Egg Quality Assurance Scheme is voluntary and application for certification is open to all Producers / Rearers with a valid DAFF Registration Code (or equivalent) who wish to participate.

Certification to the Standard, however, will only be granted to Producers / Rearers who meet the relevant requirements.

1.3**LEGISLATIVE AND NORMATIVE REFERENCES**

This Standard incorporates the key legislative requirements relevant to egg production and has been based on the following best practices / standards:

- Recognised international quality management standards (such as ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System – Requirements);
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) as outlined by Codex Alimentarius (1997 3rd edition);
- Relevant National and EU legislative requirements;
- Codes of Practice such as the *Salmonella* Code of Practice; and
- EN 45011 (1998) General Requirements for Bodies Operating Product Certification Systems.

However, it is also recommended that Producers consult with their Agricultural and Veterinary advisors and DAFF (or DARD).

1.4

DATABASE INFORMATION:

The name of each certified Producer / Rearer will be listed on a published Bord Bia register / database.

1.5

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED

Bord Bia: the Irish Food Board.

Certification Body: the Agency / Committee to which the Quality Assurance Board has devolved responsibility and authority for all certification decisions with regard to membership of the Scheme.

Certification Period: this will be 18 months from the date of certification under the Scheme or until the next audit.

DAFF: the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

DARD: the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Egg: Class A table egg, as defined in Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1028/2006.

EQAS: the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Scheme.

EQAS Register / Database: the register / database of the current certified members indicating their status.

FSAI: the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

Farm Auditor: the independent auditor carrying out the farm audits.

Formal Training: the term “formal training” is used to indicate the requirement that the training was received from a national or public body or from a Bord Bia approved organisation / individual and that a certificate is available.

HACCP: Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point, a system for identifying how food can become unsafe for human consumption and then deciding how it can be prevented.

Producer: an egg producer (egg laying farm) approved to supply eggs to an approved Packer under the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Scheme.

Producer / Rearer Standard: this consists of the provisions as set out in Sections 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Standard and the associated Appendices (Sections 4 and 6).

Quality Assurance Board: an independent subsidiary board within Bord Bia that has overall responsibility for policy, certification and appeals for the Quality Assurance Schemes.

Rearer: A person who rears day old chicks up to point of lay.

Rearing Organisation: The organisation that procures day-old chicks for or supplies day-old chicks to the Rearer.

Scheme: the Egg Quality Assurance Scheme consists of three elements:

- The Producer / Rearer Standard;
- The Packing Centre Standard; and
- The process for ensuring that the requirements as set out in the Standards are met (through auditing, certification, etc.) and that the relevant details are published.

Teagasc: Agriculture and Food Development Authority of Ireland.

1.6

CAUTIONARY NOTES

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this Standard, Bord Bia cannot accept any responsibility for errors or omissions.

Compliance with this Standard does not guarantee compliance with all relevant legislation.

Bord Bia is not liable for any costs or potential or estimated loss of earnings resulting from having to comply with any requirement of this Scheme or in regard to the consequences of being found to be in breach of any requirement.

All references to legislation in the text of this Standard are given on an "as amended basis".

2.1

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

2.1.1

Application Process

Producers / Rearers seeking certification must apply either through the Packing Centre(s) to whom they will supply product or directly to Bord Bia.

The application will be evaluated and, if appropriate, a full independent audit of the Producer / Rearer will be carried out to evaluate the capability of the applicant to meet all the requirements of the Standard.

A Producer / Rearer Declaration Form will be completed at the audit (see Producer Appendix 4.2 / Rearer Appendix 6.2).

When the Producer / Rearer is deemed to have complied with the requirements of the Standard as determined by independent audit, the Producer / Rearer will be considered for certification under the Scheme.

When certified, the Producer / Rearer will be issued with a certificate of compliance for each house.

2.1.2

Producer Eligibility

Only Producers / Rearers registered with DAFF (or equivalent) can apply.

Producers that have been convicted of an offence under the legislation (or equivalent in other jurisdictions) listed below in the previous 3 years will not be eligible for certification to this Standard. In addition, if, during the period of validity of the certificate, the Producer is convicted of an offence under the Acts listed here, the certificate will be revoked and the Producer will be withdrawn from the Scheme:

- Animal Remedies Act 1993;
- Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts 1977 and Amended Act 1990;
- Diseases of Animals Act 1966-2001;
- Protection of Animals Act 1911;
- Protection of Animals (Amendment) Act 1965; and
- EC (Welfare of farmed animals) Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 14 of 2008).

2.2

CONTROL AND MONITORING

2.2.1

Control

Overall control of the Scheme will be exercised by the Bord Bia Quality Assurance Board. This Board is representative of the relevant sectors of the food industry and collaborates with the Technical Advisory Committee, which is responsible for drafting the Standard and formulating required amendments.

The decision of the Quality Assurance Board on any matter relating to the control or operation of the Scheme is final.

2.2.2

Monitoring

Monitoring of Producer / Rearer compliance with the requirements of the Standard will be carried out by Bord Bia or its nominated agents through audit.

Each Producer / Rearer will be independently audited at determined intervals. The maximum interval between successive audits will be 18 months. Independent Auditors with relevant sectoral experience will carry out these audits and a full report will be issued directly to the Producer / Rearer.

Bord Bia reserves the right to carry out audits or spot checks, on an unannounced basis, for the purpose of verifying compliance with the requirements of the Standard, or to determine that corrective / preventive actions identified during audit are in place.

Bord Bia (or its appointed agents) reserves the right to remove samples for independent analysis (feed, water, dust, faeces, birds, eggs, etc.) to establish compliance with the Standard.

Auditors are entitled to seek access to relevant regulatory reports (reports required to be maintained by the Producer, by law).

The full onus of responsibility for compliance with the requirements of this Producer / Rearer Standard is on Producers / Rearers participating in the Scheme and not on Bord Bia or its agents or any other third party.

2.3

REQUIREMENT CATEGORIES AND APPLICATION OF NON-COMPLIANCES

2.3.1

Categories

For audit purposes, non-compliances against the requirements of this Standard (see Section 3, Producer Requirements and Section 5, Rearer Requirements) are classified as Critical, Category 1 or Category 2.

Critical:

A critical non-compliance is raised when, because of a breach of a requirement, a serious and immediate food safety hazard exists or is likely to occur. These requirements are printed in **bold, underlined** typeface and are identified in the text as **(Critical)**.

Category 1:

A category 1 non-compliance is raised when there is evidence that core best practice is not being observed. These requirements are printed in **bold** typeface and are identified in the text as **(Category 1)**.

Category 2:

A category 2 non-compliance is raised where best practice has not been fully complied with, but where departure from best practice will not immediately compromise the operation of the Egg Quality Assurance Scheme. These requirements are printed in normal typeface.

2.3.2

Application of Non-Compliances

Critical:

Where a critical non-compliance has been raised, the applicant Producer / Rearer cannot be certified to this Standard and existing certified Producers / Rearers cannot continue to supply eggs / pullets under the Quality Assurance Scheme. The auditor will immediately advise the Certification body (or Bord Bia) of the situation and the certification will be suspended pending a review of the situation.

Note: the Producer / Rearer can re-apply when evidence is available that the problem has been rectified.

Category 1:

Producers / Rearers against whom a category 1 non-compliance has been raised must give an immediate commitment, in writing to the Bord Bia farm auditor, to implementing corrective action within a 1 month period, and must subsequently be able to demonstrate that each such non-compliance has been addressed.

All category 1 non-compliances must be closed out to be eligible for certification.

Bord Bia reserves the right to carry out independent verification of the implementation of such corrective action.

Category 2:

Producers / Rearers against whom category 2 non-compliances have been raised must give an immediate undertaking, in writing to the Bord Bia auditor, to implement corrective action within a 3 month period for all the non-compliances, and must submit evidence within this period that demonstrates that each such non-compliance has been addressed.

All category 2 non-compliances must be closed out to be eligible for certification.

Where there are more than 10 category 2 non-compliances, the situation will be treated as a category 1 non-compliance and the period for close-out will be foreshortened as for category 1.

Bord Bia reserves the right to carry out independent verification of the implementation of such corrective action.

2.4**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BEST PRACTICE**

There are a number of recommendations for best practice included in this Standard (see Section 3, Producer Requirements and Section 5, Rearer Requirements). These are printed in italics in a light green background and are numbered (R 1, R 2, etc.).

Compliance with these requirements is not mandatory for certification. This may be revised at a future date in consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee.

2.5**CERTIFICATION DECISIONS**

The decision to grant, extend, or withdraw approval to / from a Producer / Rearer in the Egg Quality Assurance Scheme is made by the Certification Body. The decision is made primarily on the basis of the audit findings, but other factors (such as failure to meet regulatory compliance or other food safety requirements, or previous audit history) may be taken into consideration in arriving at the certification decision.

In the event that certification is withdrawn, the certificate must be returned to Bord Bia and the Producer / Rearer will be removed from the register of certified Producers / Rearers.

2.6

APPEALS

The Producer / Rearer may appeal the certification decision directly to Bord Bia. The Bord Bia Quality Assurance Manager must receive, in writing, a request to appeal from the Producer / Rearer within two weeks of the date of issue of the audit result. All such appeals will be discussed and decided by Bord Bia. The appealing Producer / Rearer will be informed in writing of the appeals procedure at the time of appeal. The decision of Bord Bia in relation to appeals will be final.

2.7

COMPLAINTS

The Producer / Rearer may complain with regard to the audit(s) or any other aspect of the operation of the Scheme. All complaints must be in writing and must be addressed to Bord Bia. All such complaints will be acknowledged and followed up.

2.8

REVISION UPDATES

Users should note that only this latest edition (Revision 03) now applies. When future changes occur, updates will be issued in whole or in part and the obsolete sections must be destroyed.

2.9

NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE

In the event that changes to the following occur, Bord Bia and the Packing Centre (where relevant) must be immediately informed using the change of status facility available on the EQAS database:

- Change of ownership of the production unit(s);
- The Producer wants to supply a different Packing Centre from that on the original Producer Application Declaration Form; or
- The Producer or Rearer wants to add a new production house or amend an existing production house.

Introduction

3.0

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The purpose of this Standard is to set out the requirements to ensure that the highest standards are achieved in the production of table eggs. The Standard covers all aspects of egg production.

Egg producers and rearers will seek advice from recognised sources and consult the relevant and current guidelines / publications produced by DAFF and other relevant bodies (Appendix 4.1).

This section of the Producer / Rearer Standard contains all the production related requirements with which the Producer must comply.

The layout of the information is intended to ensure clarity and to assist the reader; there are three main panels in each sub-section as follows:

1. The first panel (blue text on blue) in all cases sets out background information that is relevant to the sub-section;
2. The second panel (blue text on white) sets out the specific production related requirements against which the Producers will be audited; and
3. The third panel (blue italic text on green) sets out the recommendations for best practice.

The key aspects of production are covered by these Producer Requirements and must be taken in conjunction with the requirements of the Introduction, Scheme Rules and the Producer Appendices (Section 4). The Producer Appendices offer further information and clarification on various aspects of the Producer Requirements.

3.1

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- a) If a critical non-compliance is identified during routine Management Checks or at any other time, the Packing Centre must be notified immediately (Critical).

Note: The Packing Centre will then immediately implement the procedures as outlined for critical non-compliances in Scheme Rules 2.3.2: Application of Non-Compliances.

- b) Each egg producer participating in the Scheme must complete an initial Producer Declaration Form (see Producer Appendix 4.2) at the time of the audit.
- c) Each egg producer must be registered with DAFF or the equivalent for their production system and evidence of this registration must be available (Category 1).
- d) Egg laying houses and free-range paddocks must be dedicated to laying birds only (Category 1).
- e) All specified records relating to the two previous flocks must be maintained.

3.2

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

- a) Each Producer must appoint a designated person responsible for the implementation of the requirements of this Standard.
- b) Each Producer must understand the basic principles of HACCP and apply them to the production of the eggs. An Illustrative HACCP Plan is included in Producer Appendix 4.5 for reference and may be used by the Producer for guidance in drafting a farm HACCP plan (Category 1).

3.3

FLOCK SOURCING

Background Information

In the sourcing and placing of young birds, safety, traceability, bird quality and welfare (Rearer Appendix 6.4) are the key considerations. Where flocks from more than one rearing house / farm are used for re-stocking, the same sourcing information must be provided for each flock.

The Producer will be aware that time of delivery must be co-ordinated with the Rearer so that adequate help is available to place the young birds in the house as quickly and efficiently as possible. Producers and Rearers will be aware of the need for close collaboration regarding welfare and the importance of disease control, especially with regards to *Salmonella* and other transmissible diseases (e.g. avian influenza).

Records of all rearing, transport and *Salmonella* status must be maintained by the Producer.

- a) A pre-movement *Salmonella* certificate must be available (Category 1).
- b) Evidence must be available to prove that pullets were sourced from a Bord Bia approved Rearer (Category 1).
- c) A delivery / dispatch docket from the Rearer (as specified in Rearer requirements 5.11d) must be available for inspection (Category 1).

- R1. Ensure that the young birds are left for a short time to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings. Later, check to ensure that all the young birds have access to water and feed.
- R2. Ensure that any necessary adjustments to equipment and temperature are made and re-checked to ensure temperature is stabilised.

Hygiene and Disease Control

Background Information

The Producer will be aware of the need to minimise the risk of disease transmission. Legislative control of *Salmonella* Enteritidis and *Salmonella* Typhimurium exists in Ireland and both types are currently notifiable diseases (this list is subject to change at any time). *Salmonella* vaccines and competitive exclusion products must not be used in the rearing of poultry flocks. Antibiotics must not be used to treat flocks for *Salmonella* infections. Producers will be aware that the health of the birds is crucial to food safety and productivity on the farm. Producers will have a close relationship with their veterinary surgeon and will be conscious of the need to try to prevent disease, in particular *Salmonella* and other transmissible diseases (e.g. avian influenza). To this end, certain records must be maintained by the Producer.

3.4

HYGIENE: GENERAL

- a) An effective *Salmonella* monitoring programme must be in place in accordance with the national *Salmonella* Control Plan (available from DAFF or equivalent). Each month during production, a sample must be taken (faecal or dust). In a month when the statutory faecal sample is due no further sample is required. Sampling must be carried out in accordance with the relevant procedure (Appendix 4.9) and the analysis must be done in a laboratory that is DAFF approved¹ (Category 1).

Note: The DAFF Central Veterinary Laboratory maintains a list of these laboratories.

- b) There must be a documented procedure to ensure that the eggs of both suspect and infected flocks are not supplied to Packing Centres and are not otherwise used for human consumption, unless they are pasteurised, and that confirmed infected flocks are slaughtered immediately. Where a *Salmonella* breakdown occurred (as indicated in environmental testing), egg supply may not recommence until there is official confirmation from DAFF that the problem has been resolved. Records of these events must be maintained (Critical).

¹ The sampling must be carried out independently (e.g. by a Packing Centre Field Officer).

- c) Flock production records (daily / weekly) must be maintained and must include an egg production graph (Category 1).
- d) Any unusual increase in mortality or a major decrease in bird performance that may cause concern must be reported to management / veterinarian as appropriate and investigated immediately by a veterinary laboratory (Category 1).
- e) Each Producer must operate and maintain a rodent control programme. It must include a map of all bait points (internal and external) and a specification of all products used (Category 1).
- f) The bait points must be positioned inside and outside the house, with additional outer perimeter baiting (for free range and organic). Supplementary baiting at high risk areas (e.g. dung-steads, streams, hay-barns, outhouses) must be considered.
- g) There must be a record demonstrating that bait points are inspected at least eight times annually and more frequently where there is a specific risk, and corrective action recommended by the manufacturer / service provider must be taken.
- h) An effective control measure (e.g. physical barrier / foot dip) must be provided at the entry to each house (Category 1).
- i) Where foot dips are used, the disinfectant solution must be replenished as required, but at least on a weekly basis and a record maintained.
- j) A cover must be provided for foot dips to avoid rainwater dilution.
- k) Except as in 3.4.I below, staff and all those in frequent contact with the laying flock (including catchers) must not keep or have any contact with any other live birds whatsoever (for food or hobby purposes) and this must be demonstrated through records (e.g. staff declarations) (Category 1).
- l) If a Producer wishes to keep turkeys for the Christmas market, then separate protective clothing and footwear must be worn while attending to them. Hands must be washed before returning to the layer flock. In addition, *Salmonella* tests must be carried out during their production period as per Appendix 4.9 (Category 1).

- m) Hand washing with hot water (ideally premixed to 44°C) or hand sanitising facilities must be available on each site and hands must be washed / sanitised before entering the bird area of the house and again afterwards (Category 1).
- n) Hands must be washed before and after handling eggs with perfume free soap to prevent taint (Category 1).

R3. Ensure that Producers familiarise themselves with the current Salmonella Code of Practice (available from DAFF).

3.5

MEDICINES

Background Information

All animal remedies for use in food producing animals are currently authorised by either the Irish Medicines Board (IMB) or by the European Medicines Evaluation Agency (EMA).

Prescription medicines must only be administered as directed by a veterinary surgeon and withdrawal periods must be adhered to in all cases.

- a) Where medicines are used, records must be maintained according to regulations (Category 1).
- b) Where medicines are used, eggs must not be supplied for human consumption during the withdrawal period (Critical).
- c) All medicines must be stored in a secure cabinet (Producer Appendix 4.11).

3.6

HOUSE AND ENVIRONMENT

Background Information

Producers will be aware of the need to carefully control the house environment and will have installed ventilation systems that are sensitive, responsive to environmental change and easy to clean. As with fan assisted ventilation, stocking densities govern ventilation rates.

The main contaminants of the air are dust, ammonia, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and excess humidity. In order to assure safety, the levels of noxious substances must be monitored.

- a) Houses must be screened against wild birds, rodents (such as rats and mice) and other animals (such as domestic pets).
- b) Houses must be structurally sound (i.e. no holes, cracks or leaks in the structure, in the roof, walls or floor).
- c) Houses must be insulated.
- d) All surfaces within the house must be smooth and easy to clean.
- e) There must be no obvious unsafe features (e.g. exposed wiring, sharp edges or projections) likely to cause injury to birds or personnel.
- f) Birds must not be housed where surfaces have been treated with strong smelling wood preservatives or disinfectants or any toxic substance that could present a significant toxin in the birds or in the eggs.
- g) There must be a procedure for the removal and method of disposal of dead birds, and a record of this must be maintained (e.g. mortality in the House Management Checklist) (see Producer Appendix 4.7).
- h) **Dead birds must be removed on a daily basis and be held in a sealed vermin-proof container outside each house or centrally (Category 1).**
- i) Dead birds must only be disposed of by a licensed collection contractor for rendering or licensed incineration where applicable, and records maintained.
- j) Dust must not be allowed to accumulate on surfaces, walls, ceilings and floor areas.
- k) Forced ventilation systems must be capable of expelling quantities of air as follows:
 - i) Alternative system (Free Range, Barn): 5.6 m³/bird/hour; and
 - ii) Unenriched cage / Enriched cage: 5.1 m³/bird/hour.
- l) The ammonia levels must be tested and recorded, as per the Farm Sampling Procedures Guideline (outlined in Producer Appendix 4.9), at monthly intervals at a minimum.

Name of Gas	Long-Term Exposure limit (ppm) (8 hour day)	Short-Term Exposure limit (ppm) (10 minutes)	Compliance
Ammonia	20	35	Required

- R4. Ensure that buildings are designed to provide a safe, hygienic and comfortable environment for the birds and personnel.*
- R5. Ensure that the capability of forced ventilation systems is verified on installation of the units.*
- R6. Ensure the air intakes are screened to exclude flies.*

3.7

SITE SECURITY AND SURROUNDS

Background Information

Producers will be aware of the need to ensure that best practice in biosecurity is central to the control of disease in the flock and will have appropriate controls in place. Producers will also be aware of the risks associated with the movement of personnel between farms (catching teams, advisory staff, veterinarians, service personnel, etc.).

- a) The site must be clearly signposted and secured at all times to prevent any entry of unauthorised personnel or vehicles.
- b) The yard at the entrance and front of the hen-house must be of a level surface (ideally concrete) for ease of access for vehicles and for ease of cleaning.
- c) Vegetation must be kept under control to minimise rodent cover and wild birds.
- d) The exterior of the hen-house must be kept free of any debris, equipment etc., since these can be a source of attraction for vermin.
- e) The site must be kept clean and tidy.
- f) Pets (such as cats and dogs) must be excluded from the production house.

3.8

VISITORS

- a) Personnel entry and traffic movement must be kept to a minimum.
- b) A Visitors Log (which can exclude service vehicles) must be maintained. This must record at a minimum (all Category 1):
 - i) Date;
 - ii) Name;
 - iii) Organisation;
 - iv) Previous site visited with date of visit, if applicable; and
 - v) Vehicle registration number, if applicable.
- c) All visitors must be made aware of the Hygiene Policy on arrival.
- d) Visitors who need to enter the house must be provided with full protective clothing (disposable coats, hats and footwear) and required to wash hands on entry to and exit from the house (Category 1).

3.9

TERMINAL HYGIENE PROGRAMME

- a) A comprehensive cleaning and disinfection programme must be documented and in operation (Category 1).

Note: The procedure outlined in the Illustrative Terminal Hygiene Programme (Producer Appendix 4.3) sets out the basic requirements which must be addressed by any programme that the Producer may draw up. This procedure may need to be modified to meet the specific needs of the farm.

- b) There must be adequate supervision by management to ensure the procedures are carried out effectively and a Terminal Hygiene Checklist completed and signed off.

Flock Welfare

Background Information

The welfare and health of a flock depends on the implementation of good stock management and the provision of a suitable environment (e.g. lighting and noise levels). It is an obligation of the Producer to ensure that the health and welfare of the flock is maintained at all times.

The stock-person is responsible for the welfare of the flock. Personnel who care for the birds will have adequate knowledge of poultry and of the husbandry systems used.

Producers will therefore be aware of the need to deal humanely with ill, injured, overtly lame birds or birds finding it difficult to reach feed or water and will, where required, be competent to carry out humane slaughter.

3.10

GENERAL

- a) The Producer must have a procedure that specifies how the health and welfare of the stock is assured and the checks required must be recorded in a Management Checklist which must meet the requirements of Producer Appendix 4.7 at a minimum (Category 1).
- b) The Producer must provide evidence that the birds were not put through a moulting programme (Category 1).
- c) The catching of spent hens must be conducted as per Rearer Appendix 6.4.

Stock-person

- d) The stock-person must be able to demonstrate competence with regard to the welfare of the flock.

Transport

- e) A record of all collection of birds at end of cycle must be maintained. The information in the record must include the following at a minimum:
 - i) Date;
 - ii) Number of spent birds collected;
 - iii) Name, transporter authorisation number and vehicle registration;
 - iv) Destination of spent birds; and
 - v) Evidence that the birds will not be more than 8 hours in transport.
- f) To ensure good hygiene practices, transport of spent hens must be carried out in accordance with the guidance provided in Producer Appendices 4.12 and 6.4.

Feed and Water

Background Information

Birds require easy access to feed, of adequate quantity and quality, to satisfy their dietary requirements. A fresh supply of clean water must always be available. Rate of consumption of water is an excellent indicator of flock health and vigour.

Producers will also be conscious of the need for good lighting to ensure that the birds can easily find feed and water.

For testing procedures, refer to the guideline for Farm Sampling Procedures in Producer Appendix 4.9.

3.11

FEED

- a) Producers must provide evidence that the feed has been sourced in a Bord Bia approved feed mill and is appropriate for feeding to laying hens i.e. the feed must be treated by heating to 80°C for a minimum 4 minute period or equivalent approved process (Critical).
- b) The Producer must retain all feed delivery records. Properly labelled feed samples, from each delivery, must also be retained for 3 months after the supply has been used. The label must show the batch number, date of delivery and supplier.
- c) In the event that a feed delivery is unsuitable, the rejection of this delivery and the appropriate corrective action (as outlined in the Illustrative HACCP Plan, Producer Appendix 4.5) taken must be recorded.
- d) Feed storage bins and lines must be cleaned in accordance with the Terminal Hygiene Programme (see Producer Appendix 4.3).

3.12

WATER

- a) The storage tank must be covered at all times to ensure a fresh supply of clean water and that contamination is minimised (Category 1).
- b) A sample of water must be tested² at least annually between 1st May and 30th September (or in the event that the source is changed) for *E. coli* and Enterococci. The test results, which must be absent in 100 ml for these organisms, must be retained. If there is a failure (detection of either organism), corrective measures must be taken and the supply re-tested after 1 month. In the event that there are two consecutive failures, the Packing Centre must be notified and a water treatment process initiated (Category 1).
- c) All sites / houses must have an emergency supply of water sufficient to provide a minimum of 12 hours supply to the house.

R7. Ensure a water meter is installed and daily consumption is recorded.

3.13

EGG COLLECTION / STORAGE / DELIVERY

Background Information

The Producer must be aware that the handling of eggs must be kept to a minimum to avoid contamination and breakage.

Collection

- a) An egg collection programme must be in place and documented.
- b) Eggs must not be washed (Category 1).

² The sampling must be carried out independently (e.g. by a Packing Centre Field Officer) and the analysis by a laboratory using the following methods: *E. coli* (ISO method 9308-1) absence in 100 ml, Enterococci (ISO method 7899-2) absence in 100 ml, or equivalent validated methods.

Storage

- c) Eggs must be stored in a ventilated and insulated egg store that is not exposed to direct sunlight.
- d) A max-min thermometer must be in place in the egg store and temperatures recorded.
- e) The egg store must be separated from the laying house.
- f) The store must be used for the storage of eggs only.
- g) Non-conforming eggs must be identified clearly and segregated, and the dispatch documentation must clearly reflect this.
- h) Eggs must be clearly labelled and dated.

R8. Ensure hands are washed before and after collection, with perfume-free soap.

R9. Ensure belts are operated hourly until all eggs are removed.

R10. Ensure eggs are placed into the trays with pointed end facing down and removed from the production house as soon as possible.

R11. Ensure dirty and reject eggs are separated from clean, sound eggs.

R12. Ensure only clean, dry trays are used.

R13. Ensure that the store is of a sufficient size to allow for adequate air circulation when there are 5 days of egg production stored and that eggs are collected at least every third working day.

Delivery

- i) Each shipment must be clearly identified with the following information and a record maintained (all Category 1):
 - i) Farm Code and House ID number (e.g. 1IEA12);
 - ii) Shipment Date;
 - iii) Date of lay;
 - iv) Total quantity of gradeable eggs; and
 - v) Quantity of non gradeable eggs.

3.14

HEALTH AND SAFETY ON THE FARM

Background Information

All Producers will be aware of their legal responsibility to have a completed health and safety statement on the production unit / farm. The Producer will be aware that the statement needs to be reviewed on an on-going basis and communicated to all staff.

Health and Safety

- a) A safety statement that complies with regulatory requirements must be prepared, displayed on-site and reviewed annually (Category 1).
- b) All hazard areas on the site must be clearly identified (such as electrical outlet points, perches, fencing, slatted or mesh floor areas, steps, ladders, fans, air inlets, drinkers and feeders) at the location of the hazard, or centrally, and appropriate protective measures adopted (Category 1).
- c) A notice must be prominently displayed to the effect that eating, drinking and smoking are prohibited in the house(s).
- d) Each site must have a first aid kit.
- e) A plan for dealing with emergencies such as personal injury, fire, flood or power failure, must be in place (see Producer Appendix 4.10).
- f) Fire extinguishers³ must be in place and checked at a minimum every 5 years.
- g) Relevant contact telephone numbers must be displayed at a central location, or at the exit.

³ Bord Bia recommends that an extinguisher suitable for electrical fires must be available; the Producer must consult with a fire safety expert on this issue.

Storage and Handling of Chemical Substances

- h) All chemicals must be stored and handled at a minimum in accordance with Producer Appendix 4.6, which must be displayed (e.g. on a notice board in the store).
- i) The use for which each chemical is intended must be clearly identified and displayed (e.g. on a notice board in the store) and a Material Safety Data Sheet must be available for each chemical on-site.

R14. Ensure a record of all chemicals purchased, as well as who used them, when and where, is maintained.

3.15**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION****Background Information**

The production house(s) must be compliant with planning laws and designed with due regard to the visual impact of the building on the local landscape.

Producers will be aware of the desirability of locating poultry units and conducting operations on-site so as to minimise the impact on the environment and the amenities beyond the site boundary. Producers will therefore have taken advice and sought relevant permissions prior to establishing a new production house, including IPPC licencing where relevant.

Producers with existing houses will already have implemented measures to minimise environmental problems through good maintenance procedures, as set out in this Standard. All Producers will also be aware that sites exceeding the bird number threshold require an IPPC licence.

- a) All Producers must have a manure management programme in place to minimise problems of overspreading or waterway pollution associated with poultry manure application and this must be equivalent to the Illustrative Manure Management Programme included in Producer Appendix 4.4.
- b) This programme must be accompanied by a map of the areas being used for spreading and a record of the spreading activity on the land under the management of the Producer, detailing at a minimum:

- i) Date;
 - ii) Land area used (as identified on the map); and
 - iii) Amount of manure spread.
- c) Where a Producer uses a contractor / neighbour to dispose of their litter / slurry, then a record must be kept detailing at a minimum:
 - i) Date;
 - ii) Quantity (tonnes / gallons); and
 - iii) Name and destination.
- d) Where applicable, the Producer must provide evidence of a current IPPC licence.
- e) **The use of raw sludges, raw or treated sewage sludges / bio-solids or raw wastes (other than farm produced animal wastes and slurries) are prohibited from use (Category 1).**

R15. Ensure the site is planned so that it is dry, free draining and open (but not exposed), and so that it does not cause significant interference in the locality.

3.16

LAYING HOUSES, BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT: GENERAL

Background Information

Housing requirements in terms of available space per bird are specified for each system. Bord Bia recommends that expert advice is sought by the Producer prior to finalising housing parameters / bird numbers. The parameters outlined in this Standard need to be carefully considered.

- a) All houses must be fitted with a provision to alert the owner / manager in the event of failure of the mains power supply, or excessive temperatures.
- b) A max-min thermometer must be positioned within the bird area and temperature recorded.
- c) Data on house parameters must be recorded on a House Specification Sheet.

Note: An Illustrative House Specification Sheet is included in Producer Appendix 4.8.

- d) Buildings and equipment must be designed so as to:
 - i) Maintain good conditions of hygiene and air quality; and
 - ii) Maintain equipment in good condition and to the required specification.
- e) Buildings and equipment must be constructed and maintained in a manner so as to minimise risk of fire, sound levels (especially sudden sounds) and attraction of pests.
- f) Feeding and watering equipment (see the specification information in the following sections) must be designed, constructed, placed, operated and maintained in such a manner that:
 - i) Birds must have easy access to feed and water so as to avoid aggressive competitive behaviour;
 - ii) Spillage of feed and water is avoided; and
 - iii) Injury to the birds is avoided.
- g) Flooring must be designed, fitted and maintained so as to avoid distress or injury to the birds (see the specification information in the following sections).
- h) For all housing types, lighting intensity must permit birds to express normal behaviour (e.g. visually inspect surroundings) and where natural daylight is provided, light must be distributed evenly throughout the house.
- i) All cages must allow inspections of hens, doors must be of a size to allow bird removal without causing injury, and constructed to prevent birds escaping.
- j) For all production systems, floors must be constructed so as to support adequately each of the forward facing claws. In caged systems, floor slope of the usable area must not exceed 14% (or 8 degrees).

Note: In the case of floors using other than rectangular wire mesh, steeper slopes may be permitted (caged systems).

Production Systems

Specific Housing and Environment requirements are described under the four headings as follows:

- Unenriched Cage System
- Enriched Cage System
- Alternative Systems (Barn, Free Range), including multi-tier
- Organic System

Unenriched Cage System

Note: Unenriched cages are permitted until 1st January 2012.

3.17

BIRD CAGE SPECIFICATION

- a) At least 550 cm² of cage area, measured in a horizontal plane, which may be used without restriction, in particular not including non-waste deflection plates liable to restrict the area available, must be provided for each laying hen.
- b) Cages must be at least 40 cm high, over 65% of the cage area and not less than 35 cm at any point.
- c) A claw shortening device must have been fitted in each compartment.
- d) A feed trough, which may be used without restriction, must be provided. Its length must be at least 10 cm per bird in the cage.
- e) At least two nipple drinkers or two drinking cups must be within reach of each hen.

3.18

LIGHTING

- a) Artificial lighting must not exceed 16 hours per day with a dimmer system to allow control of light intensity and to permit observation of the birds as required.
- b) A documented lighting programme must be followed and must follow the day and night rhythm.
- c) Lights must be clean and burned out bulbs replaced promptly.

Enriched Cage System

3.19

BIRD CAGE SPECIFICATION

- a) At least 750 cm² of cage area per hen, 600 cm² of which has to be usable; the height of the useable area must be 45 cm at a minimum.
- b) Compartment height outside the useable area must be 20 cm at a minimum.
- c) Total area of cage must be no less than 2000 cm².
- d) Minimum aisle width of 90 cm must be provided between tiers of cages and a space of at least 35 cm must be allowed between the floor of the building and the bottom tier of cages.
- e) Each compartment must have been fitted with a device for restricting the growth of the hens' claws.
- f) A feed trough, which may be used without restriction, must be provided. Its length must be at least 12 cm per bird in the cage.
- g) At least two nipple drinkers or two drinking cups must be within reach of each hen.
- h) Perching space must be provided for 100% of the flock and a minimum of 15 cm of perch length per bird must be provided.
- i) A nest area must be available to each hen.
- j) A litter area must be available such that pecking and scratching is possible.

3.20

LIGHTING

- a) Artificial lighting must not exceed 16 hours per day with a dimmer system to allow control of light intensity and to permit observation of the birds as required.
- b) A documented lighting programme must be followed and must follow the day and night rhythm.
- c) Lights must be clean and burned out bulbs replaced promptly.

Alternative System (Free Range)

3.21

THE LAND

- a) The overall stocking density must not exceed 1,000 birds per hectare of ground.
- b) The production house must be sited so that the birds have access to all of the land available in rotation, for the duration of the laying cycle of the flock.
- c) A secure perimeter fence must be erected on the land registered for free-range production (unless there is an existing secure boundary).
- d) The birds must have continuous daytime access to open-air runs or paddocks, which must be used and rested in rotation, and re-seeded with grass when necessary.
- e) Shelter / shade from inclement weather and predators must be provided on the range. This must be structurally safe and sound, be appropriately distributed across the range (and ideally provide 8 m²/1000 birds).
- f) Pot-holes on the land must be filled in before re-stocking, in accordance with good pasture management.
- g) The ground to which the birds have access must be well drained, mainly covered with vegetation (i.e. with grass growing, not weeds or scrub) and topped as required.
- h) No other livestock (mammals or avian species) must be allowed onto the ground as a safeguard against *Salmonella* or other infections.
- i) Land registered for free range egg production may be used only for this purpose.
- j) Rubbish, litter material, farm machinery or manure must not be allowed to accumulate on registered land.
- k) Domestic septic tank soak ways sited on registered land must be fenced and not accessible to poultry.

3.22

FREE-RANGE HOUSE SPECIFICATION

- a) The house must be constructed so that it is well insulated and ventilated, with a concrete floor throughout (including verandas / scratch area) allowing for easy cleaning and disinfection between flocks. A dirt / earth floor is not acceptable.
- b) The surrounds of the house or the ground surrounding the pop-holes must be laid in gravel or concrete, to avoid muddy conditions, which can increase the risk of disease to flocks and lead to soiled eggs.
- c) Houses must have two thirds slatted area and one third scratch area and must be covered with a litter material (such as chopped straw, white untreated wood shavings, building sand or turf).

3.23

THE MANURE PIT / WASHINGS COLLECTION

- a) The droppings pit must be constructed so as to prevent seepage. Where the pit is totally below floor level, the capacity of the pit must adequately accommodate the manure produced by a colony / flock of birds, unless belts or scrapers are incorporated into the system.
- b) Any effluent that arises within a poultry house (e.g. wash water) must be collected in a suitable leak-proof tank for storage and disposal.

3.24

FLOCK SIZE / COLONY SIZE

- a) The maximum flock size is 30,000 birds.
- b) The maximum colony size is 4,000 birds from the same flock. Houses must be sub-divided so as not to exceed maximum colony size.
- c) Maximum permissible stocking density within the house is:

Part Litter and Slats	7 birds/m ² of total available floor area
Multi-tier	<p>9 birds/m² of total available floor area, where perches or platforms are fixed above the slatted floor level.</p> <p>There must be no more than 4 levels with the headroom between the levels at least 45 cm and the levels must be arranged so as to prevent droppings falling on the levels below.</p> <p>Where the usable space below any perch is less than 45 cm above the slatted floor area, it must not be used in calculating floor area.</p>

3.25

FEEDING SPACE

- a) Feeding facilities must be distributed in such a way as to provide equal access for all birds.
- b) Either linear feeders providing at least 10 cm per bird or circular feeders providing at least 4 cm per bird must be in place.
- c) In multi-tier systems, the Producer must provide feeding space at more than one level.

3.26

DRINKING SPACE

- a) Drinking facilities must be distributed in such a way as to provide equal access for all birds.
- b) Where nipple drinkers or cups are used, there must be at least one nipple drinker or cup for every 10 hens.
- c) The allocation of drinkers must not be less than 1 bell drinker per 100 birds which must provide minimum 1 cm per hen.
- d) In multi-tier systems, drinkers must be provided at more than one level.

3.27

PERCHING

- a) Perches must have no sharp edges and be of non-slip material.
- b) A minimum of 15 cm of perch length per bird must be provided for all birds.
- c) The width of the top surface must not be less than 3 cm.
- d) Perches must not be mounted above the litter.
- e) The horizontal distance between perches must be at least 30 cm and the horizontal distance between the perch and the wall must be at least 20 cm.
- f) Overhead perches must be positioned to minimise fouling of any birds below.

3.28**NEST BOXES**

- a) Individual nest boxes must provide not less than 1 box per 5 birds. Automatic / communal systems must provide not less than 1 m² of nesting area per 120 birds.
- b) Nesting systems must be provided with a floor substrate which encourages nesting behaviour.
- c) All systems must be inspected daily to ensure surfaces are clean.

3.29**LITTER**

- a) Litter must be free of any contamination from livestock, wild birds or rodents.
- b) Litter must be maintained in a dry and friable condition.
- c) The source of the litter must be identified. (**Note:** Hard wood by-products and sawdust must not be used.)

3.30**SCRATCH AREA**

- a) At least 250 cm² of littered area per bird must be provided. Birds must be able to dust bathe in a litter area, which must equate to a minimum of 33% of total floor area available to the birds. This litter scratching area can be either incorporated into the house area or provided under a covered weather proofed veranda attached to the external walls of the building.

3.31

POP HOLE REQUIREMENT

- a) In order to ensure that birds have easy and adequate access to the range, the minimum number and size of pop-holes that must be open during daylight hours per flock is:

Flock Size	Pop Holes	Height	Length
500 birds or under	2	45 cm	60 cm
501 to 1,000 birds	4	45 cm	60 cm
1,001 to 1,500 birds	4	45 cm	90 cm
1,501 to 2,500 birds	6	45 cm	90 cm
2,501 to 3,500	Min. 6	45 cm	9 m (total)
3,501 to 4,500	Min. 8	45 cm	12 m (total)
4,501 to 5,500	Min. 10	45 cm	16 m (total)
5,501 to 6,500	Min. 12	45 cm	20 m (total)
Each additional 1,000 birds	+ 2	45 cm	+ 4 m

- b) Where access to the land is provided only at a gable end of the house, not more than 1,000 birds must be stocked in that house.
- c) Exit space equal to the combined length of four pop-holes, as set out above, is allowable in these circumstances. Where a house is divided into sections, each section must have direct access to pasture.

Alternative System (Barn)

3.32

BARN SPECIFICATION

- a) The house must be constructed so that it is well insulated and ventilated, with a concrete floor throughout (including verandas / scratch area), allowing for easy cleaning and disinfection between flocks.

Note: A dirt / earth floor is not acceptable.

3.33

MANURE PIT

- a) The capacity of the pit below the floor must adequately accommodate the manure produced by a colony / flock of birds, unless belts or scrapers are incorporated into the system.

3.34

LIGHTING

- a) A lighting programme must be documented and in place. An 8 hour minimum and a 16 hour maximum period of light must be provided for the birds. A dimmer system must be used to allow control of light intensity and to permit observation of the birds as required.
- b) In a split-level system of housing, lights must be available at all levels that permit observation of the birds as required, and a dimming device must be used to switch off the lights.

3.35

FLOCK SIZE / COLONY SIZE

- a) The maximum flock size is 30,000 birds.
- b) The maximum colony size is 4,000 birds from the same flock. Houses must be sub-divided so as not to exceed maximum colony size.

- c) Maximum permissible stocking density within the laying house is:

Part litter and slats	9 birds/m ² of total available floor area, provided the house has a raised slatted floor area over a droppings pit comprising a minimum of 53% of the total floor area of the house, and that the slat design meets the criteria for perches as below.
Multi-tier	<p>9 birds/m² of total available floor area, where perches or platforms are fixed above the slatted floor level.</p> <p>There must be no more than 4 levels, with the headroom between the levels at least 45 cm, and the levels must be so arranged as to prevent droppings falling on the levels below.</p> <p>Where the usable space below any perch is less than 45 cm above the slatted floor area, it must not be used in calculating floor area.</p>

3.36

FEEDING SPACE

- a) Feeding facilities must be distributed in such a way as to provide equal access for all birds.
- b) Either linear feeders providing at least 10 cm per bird or circular feeders providing at least 4 cm per bird must be in place.
- c) In multi-tier systems the Producer must provide feeding space at more than one level.

3.37

DRINKING SPACE

- a) Drinking facilities must be distributed in such a way as to provide equal access for all birds.
- b) Where nipple drinkers or cups are used, there must be at least one nipple drinker or cup for every 10 hens.
- c) The allocation of drinkers must not be less than 1 bell drinker per 100 birds.
- d) In multi-tier systems drinkers must be provided at more than one level.

3.38**PERCHES**

- a) Perches must have no sharp edges and be of non-slip material.
- b) A minimum of 15 cm of perch length per bird must be provided for all birds.
- c) The width of the top surface must not be less than 3 cm.
- d) Perches must not be mounted above the litter.
- e) The horizontal distance between perches must be at least 30 cm and the horizontal distance between the perch and the wall must be at least 20 cm.
- f) Overhead perches must be positioned to minimise fouling of any birds below.

3.39**NEST BOXES**

- a) Individual nest boxes must provide not less than 1 box per 5 birds. Automatic / communal systems must provide not less than 1 m² of nesting area per 120 birds.
- b) Nesting systems must be provided with a floor substrate, which encourages nesting behaviour.
- c) All nesting systems must be inspected daily to ensure surfaces are clean.

3.40**LITTER**

- a) Litter must be free of any contamination from livestock, wild birds or rodents.
- b) Litter must be maintained in a dry and friable condition.
- c) The source of the litter must be identified. (**Note:** Hard wood by-products and sawdust must not be used).

3.41

SCRATCH AREA

- a) At least 250 cm² of littered area per bird must be provided. Birds must be able to dust bathe in a litter area, which must equate to a minimum of 33% of total floor area available to the birds. This litter scratching area can be either incorporated into the house area or provided under a covered weather proofed veranda attached to the external walls of the building.

3.42

POP HOLES

- a) Where verandas are used as a scratch area, pop holes must be distributed evenly along the building.
- b) There must be several popholes giving direct access to the outer area, at least 45 cm high, 40 cm wide and extending along the entire length of the building. A total opening of 2 m must be available per group of 1,000 birds.

Organic Production System

Background Information

Organic Producers will be certified by one of the organic certification bodies. On receipt of a certificate, the Producer will acquire a registration number from the DAFF (or equivalent). The organic Producer will, at a minimum, meet the requirements as laid out in section 3 of the Bord Bia EQAS Standard (Producer / Rearer).

3.43

ORGANIC REQUIREMENTS

- a) The Producer must have a valid current certificate of organic status (Category 1).

Reference Information¹

HUSBANDRY / ANIMAL WELFARE

- Poultry Hatcheries Act 1947 (No. 49 of 1947).
- Poultry Hatcheries Regulations 1959 (S.I. No. 122 of 1959).
- European Communities (Live Poultry and Hatching Eggs) Regulations 1992 (Council Directive 90/539/EEC).
- European Communities (Live Poultry and Hatching Eggs) (Amendment) Regulations 1995 (S.I. No. 45 of 1995) and Council Directive 93/120/EEC.
- Council Directive 1999/74/EC, laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens. Amended by Council Regulation (EC) No. 806/2003. Derogated by Decision 2004/433/EC.
- Commission Directive 2002/4/EC. Adapted by Commission Directive 2006/83/EC.
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport.
- EC (Protection of Animals During Transport) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 267 of 2006).
- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 589/2008.
- European Communities (Welfare of Farmed Animals) Regulations (S.I. No. 14 of 2008).
- **For organic production**, Council Regulation (EC) No. 834/2007. Commission Regulation 889/2008.

ANIMAL REMEDIES

- E.C. Control of Animal Remedies and their Residues Regulations, 2007 (S.I. No. 143 of 2007).
- E.C. Animal Remedies (No. 2) regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 786 of 2007).

¹ All references given in the Standard must be taken on an 'as amended' basis.

DISEASE / *SALMONELLA* CONTROL

- Diseases of Animals (Poultry Feed) Order 1991 (S.I. No. 364 of 1991).
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 2160/2003 on the monitoring and control of *Salmonella*.
- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1168/2006 implementing Regulation (EC) No. 2160/2003.
- EC (Control of *Salmonella* in Laying Flocks of Domestic Fowl) Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 247 of 2008).

FOOD LAW / FOOD SAFETY / FOOD AND FEED HYGIENE

- Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council, laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety.
- Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29th April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs.
- European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) Regulations 2005 (S.I. No. 910 of 2005). Amended by European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 387 of 2006) and European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 56 of 2007).
- Regulation (EC) No. 1935/2004 on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food.
- European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 278 of 2007).

EGGS – HYGIENE

- Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29th April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin.

EGGS – MARKETING STANDARDS

- New Irish legislation is currently being drafted to replace S.I No. 810 of 2007.

- Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007, establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation).
- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 589/2008, laying down detailed rules for implementing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007 as regards marketing standards for eggs.
- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 598/2008, laying down detailed rules for implementing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007 as regards marketing standards for eggs.

MARKING OF EGGS / LABELLING, PRESENTATION AND ADVERTISING OF FOODSTUFFS

- Directive 2000/13/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Regulations 2005 (S.I. No. 392 of 2005).

MISCELLANEOUS

- Directive 2002/4/EC on the registration of establishments keeping laying hens, covered by Council Directive 1999/74/EC.
- List of Approved Disinfectants. June 1993 Disease of Animals (Disinfectants) Order, Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF).
- List of Approved Laboratories – Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF).

Guidelines for Best Practice

- Code of Good Agricultural Practice to Protect Water from Pollution by Nitrates. Departments of Agriculture and Environment July 2006 (S.I. No. 378 of 2006).
- FSAI Guidance Note No. 11. Assessment of HACCP Compliance.

Producer Declaration Form

Producer Declaration Form

Note: The Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Scheme is a voluntary Scheme. You will be required to sign this document in the presence of the auditor during the farm audit.

Details of Producer to be completed in block capitals:

Flock Owner Name: _____

(Person in whose name the flock is registered with DAFF / DARD where applicable)

Address: _____

Address for Correspondence: _____

(if different to above)

Tel/Fax/Mob: _____ / _____ / _____

DAFF/DARD: _____ Farm Code: _____ Manager: _____

Registration Number

Packing Centre(s) Supplied: _____

House Identification:

Producer House Number	Production System
	(Unenriched cage, enriched cage, alternative (free range, barn), organic)

Declaration:

- I declare that compound feeds for poultry will not be fed to other species and I undertake to maintain my feedstuff storage facilities in a manner that prevents cross-contamination from feedingstuffs intended for other species.
- I agree to allow farm inspectors and auditors access to my farm during normal business hours and to take feed samples for test purposes.
- I undertake to abide by the conditions applicable to egg producers as laid down in the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Standard: Producer Requirements.
- I acknowledge having received a copy of this Standard and the accompanying documentation.
- I agree to provide full and accurate details of my farming practices that relate to the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Scheme.
- I declare I am in compliance with the relevant statutory requirements with regard to the operation of my farm.
- I understand that my participation in the Scheme is a demonstration of my commitment to achieving the highest standards in the production of quality eggs and my responsibilities in the food chain.
- I agree to permit my name and EQAS Certification Status to be published on the EQAS Register / Database.

Producer Signature(s): (1) _____ (2) _____

Position(s): (1) _____ (2) _____

Date: _____

Illustrative Terminal Hygiene Programme for the Cleaning and Disinfection of Poultry Houses

A comprehensive cleaning and disinfection programme must be documented, in operation and recorded. The procedures outlined hereunder set out the basic requirements that must be addressed by any programme that the Producer may draw up. This procedure may need to be modified to meet the specific needs of the farm.

TERMINAL HYGIENE AND CLEANING PROCEDURE

Management

- There must be supervision by management to ensure the procedures are carried out effectively.
- A Terminal Hygiene Checklist must be completed and signed off, to demonstrate the adequacy of procedures.
- Any visible organic material is a failure and the house must not be re-stocked.
- In addition, if any *Salmonella* has been found in relation to the previous flock, drag swabs must be taken and, after further cleaning, tested clear of *Salmonella* prior to re-stocking.

Depopulation

- Depopulate flock and while the house is still warm, spray for mites and beetles.
- Ensure that spent hens are disposed of to minimise risk of disease.

Dry Clean

- Remove any residual food from the feeding system and bulk feed bins.
- Dismantle and remove all portable equipment, feeders, drinkers, nest boxes, slats, etc., from inside the house for cleaning.
- Remove litter / manure in a covered vehicle and remove from the poultry site.
- Vacuum / blow down all surface dust from ceilings, rafters, edges, water pipes, inlets, fans, switches, egg conveyance equipment etc.
- Sweep floor thoroughly and remove all remaining debris to a removal vehicle.

- Bulk feed bins should be cleaned out / blown down at this stage.
- Turn off power to all electrical devices.

Washing

- Washing should remove all dirt and debris.
- Use high-pressure hose nozzle: 80-100 bar or 900-1200 psi. Start work at the back of the house and proceed towards the front of the building and the wash water storage tank.
- Wash ceilings, walls, passageways, steps, platforms, cages, egg rollers, all egg conveyors, cross belts, under conveyors and the pit. Clean everything thoroughly.
- Pay particular attention to underside of all equipment.
- Wash down bulk feed bins.
- Clean and disinfect water lines. This is a very necessary procedure in order to avoid transfer of infection from flock to flock via the drinking water system. The header tank should be drained and checked to ensure that it is free of debris. The tank should then be filled with the required amount of diluted water and suitable disinfectant. This solution should be allowed to fill the drinking system, and left to stand for 2 hours and then thoroughly flushed out.
- Any necessary repairs should be attended to at this time. A visual inspection using a checklist should be carried out after final wash, and before starting the disinfection programme.

Disinfection of House and Equipment

- Select a suitable broad-spectrum disinfectant and dilute with clean water, follow manufacturers instructions. **Note:** Disinfectants are effective only on visually clean surfaces.
- Set pressure washer / orchard sprayer at low pressure: 10-20 bar or 140-280 psi and saturate all surfaces for the manufacturer's recommended contact time (usually 1 hour).
- Only return disinfected equipment to a disinfected house.
- Allow all surfaces to dry thoroughly.
- Check working order of all electrical equipment.
- Close and secure the house.

Note: Fumigating, misting or fogging is only effective on an airtight house. Wear protective clothing and follow manufacturers' instructions.

- Afterwards close and secure the house to prevent recontamination.
- Put in place a rodent control and monitoring programme.

Free Range: Additional requirements

- Wash concrete apron / hard-core / stone strip outside the pop-holes.
- Skim topsoil from area adjacent to concrete / hard-core / stone strip. Remove from site, and replace with fresh sand / soil mix and compact down firmly. If time and weather permit, sow grass seed.
- Check perimeter fencing for any damage.
- Refill potholes with fresh sand / soil mix.

Illustrative Poultry Manure Management Programme

Location and Operation of Egg Production House

Minimise environmental problems relating to the location of the poultry house and the operation of egg production as follows:

- Select a suitable house site at least 400 m from the nearest dwelling and such that it will have minimum impact on nearby amenities;
- Operate an effective hygiene programme in the unit, to minimise odours;
- Have well designed house and ventilation system with wash water storage facilities;
- Maintain buildings in good repair, especially guttering and down-pipes;
- Have well designed feeders and drinkers, so that feed wastage and spoilage are kept to a minimum; and
- Minimise waste packaging materials and containers.

Manure Spreading

Minimise environmental problems relating to the removal and spreading of manure as follows:

- Ensure suitable weather conditions to clean out houses, and remove manure and / or empty liquid manure from pit;
- Transport the poultry manure in suitably covered vehicles;
- Spread the manure more than 200 m from the poultry house; and
- Poultry manure should not be spread on land in use for the production of ready to eat crops or on land to which free-range flocks have access.

- Poultry manure and wash water should be landspread or applied to land observing the following “buffer zones”:

Buffer zones for spreading poultry manure	
Area	Buffer Zone (m)
Hospitals, schools, churches	200
Dwelling houses	100
Lakes and main river channels	20
Small watercourses and field drains	10
Public roads	10
Domestic wells	50
Public water supply (depending on vulnerability)	50-300

Conditions to Avoid

Avoid spreading manure in the following conditions:

- During the period November to February (inclusive);
- On heavy, wet soils, when heavy rain is forecast within 48 hours;
- When the wind direction is towards population centres or ‘neighbouring’ houses;
- When the risk of causing odour nuisance to the public is greatest e.g. Sundays or public holidays; and
- After daylight hours.

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan

Background Information

HACCP is a support system for the safe production of food. When adequately developed and efficiently implemented it provides systematic control of biological, chemical and physical hazards at key stages of production. It is a strategy for prevention rather than detection of safety problems. HACCP is built on a foundation that requires a farm unit to have a coherent hygiene system in place. It will address inputs, decision points and outputs.

A HACCP Plan is unique to each farm and must be compiled by a farm team who would agree a flow diagram for the process.

The Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan shows how product / process safety is ensured through control and prevention. At a minimum the Hazard Control Plan includes:

- A detailed description of the products and process steps (e.g. a flow diagram showing all the steps of each process);
- A detailed description of the hazards (chemical, microbiological and physical / foreign bodies) that could arise at each process step and the risks that these represent;
- Identification of Critical Control Points (CCP) in the plan;
- Definition of the limits that must be met to ensure control of each CCP;
- The monitoring required to ensure that control is maintained at each CCP;
- The corrective action to be taken if a non-conformance occurs for each CCP;
- Identification of the responsibilities, procedures and records applicable for each CCP; and
- Annual verification / testing of the HACCP plan, to ensure that it is effective.

The implementation of hygiene barriers, biosecurity measures and personnel hygiene practices at all levels of production underpin the HACCP plan.

An illustrative HACCP plan for Producers is given below. However, each Producer is advised to seek qualified assistance in creating a HACCP plan for his / her own enterprise.

Illustrative Producer HACCP Plan

(Contingent on Compliance with Hygiene and Disease control, Flock Welfare, Housing and Environment.
Verification to be carried out as part of the On-Farm audit)

Step	CCP No.	Hazard	Preventive Measure	Limits	Monitoring	Corrective Action	Doc. Ref.
Poultry sourcing Pre-lay	CCP 1	Disease carriers	Obtain poultry from certified sources only	From certified only	See Producer Requirements Section 3.3	Notify DAFF	Hatchery / Import records; Rearer records
Feed sourcing and storage	CCP 2	Product contamination due to pathogens or medication misuse	Purchase from approved supplier. Segregate medicated feed	Use only approved suppliers / Medication by prescription	See Producer Requirements, section 3.11	Reject delivery. Source alternative supply. Clean bins / lines	Delivery doc. Storage Record
Water sourcing and storage	CCP 3	Pathogenic organisms	Use a clean supply and use covered storage	No failure of microbiological specifications. See Producer Requirements, Section 3.12	See Producer Requirements, Sections 3.12	Upgrade supply (own source) Inform Packing Centre	Test report

Safe Handling of Chemicals

Note: This is a recommendation for the safe handling of chemicals. It is not intended as a definitive guide to the safe handling of chemicals and does not replace any applicable statutory requirement.

- Purchase only approved chemicals.
- Store in designated storage facilities, which are labelled and locked, and well away from food.
- Do not transfer chemicals to other storage containers, especially soft drinks, bottles or food containers.
- Maintain only minimum stocks of chemicals (to avoid out of date chemicals).
- Read the label before opening the chemical and observe all safety precautions. Use chemicals in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.
- Wear the correct personal protection equipment for the chemical and operation involved.
- Have a supply of clean water for washing off splashes.
- Wash hands and exposed skin before eating or drinking, and shower down after the job is complete.
- Thoroughly rinse all equipment used, and store safely.
- Keep a record of all chemicals purchased, as well as when, where, and by whom they were used.
- Unused chemicals should be disposed of in a safe manner and so as not to harm the environment.

House Management Checklist, Minimum Requirement

House Identification Number
Week Ending
Age of Birds
Meal Batch Number

Checks	Check Frequency
Water Supply	Daily
Feeding System	Daily
Flock Mortality	Daily
Ventilation	Daily
House Temperature Max	Daily
House Temperature Min	Daily
Egg Store Max	Daily
Egg Store Min	Daily
Clean and Tidy Egg Store	Weekly
Replace Foot Dips	Weekly
Sweep Floors	Weekly
Dust Cages	Weekly
Check External Bait Points	Weekly
Check Internal Bait Points	Weekly
Inspect for Red Mite	Weekly
Check Alarm Operation	Weekly
Maintenance Check	Weekly
Fly Monitoring	Weekly
Belt Inspection (if appropriate)	Weekly

Illustrative House Specification Sheet, Systems (Free Range and Barn)

Illustrative House Specification Sheet, Systems (Free Range and Barn)

House ID / Farm / Packing Centre
Number Placed
Age Placed (Weeks)
Date Placed

House Area (sq m)
Lobby Area (sq m)
Slatted Area Total (sq m)
Scratch Area Total (sq m)
Nesting System
Total Area Occupied by Nestboxes (sq m)
No Birds / Nestbox
Area Obstructed (e.g. by feeder bins)
No. Drinkers
Litter / man / drinker
Available Drinking Space per Drink
No. Circular Feeders
Available Circular Feeding Space per Feeder (sq m)
Total area / Feeder
Lamp / Linear Accessible Feeder Space (m)
Linear inches / perch space
Pop-Hole Length Total
Total No. Pop-Holes

Available Area (sq m)
No. Birds / sq m
No. Drunks
Litter Type
Litter Source
No Lighting Points Slatted Area
No Lighting Points Scratch Area
Floor: Im Capacity
Water Tack Capacity
Grazing Area Available
Ventilation
Foil Seal

Signed _____ Dated _____

Farm Sampling: Guideline and Test Procedures

INTRODUCTION

The Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Standard requires that sampling and testing be carried out for the purpose of demonstrating compliance with the Standard.

All sampling and testing should be carried out in accordance with recognised procedures.

The following procedures constitute a guideline.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

- Faecal sampling (*Salmonella*)
- Dust sampling (*Salmonella*)
- Water
- Feed
- Sampling frequencies

Statutory Salmonella monitoring of Poultry Houses (based on DAFF regulations)

Sample Type:

Cage Flocks: 2 x 150 g of naturally pooled faeces to be taken from all belts or scrapers in the house after running the manure removal system; in the case of step cage houses without scrapers or belts, 2 x 150 g of mixed fresh faeces must be collected from 60 different places beneath the cages in the dropping pits.

Barn / Free Range Houses: Two pairs of boot swabs or socks shall be taken, without changing overboots between boot swabs.

Sampling must take place at least every 15 weeks during the laying life of the flock, with the first of these samplings taking place at the age of 22 to 26 weeks.

The results of the analysis of all samples, together with the date and place of sampling and identification details of the sampled flock, must be kept at the farm for 3 years. DAFF officials will inspect the results records from time to time.

Samples must be dispatched to an approved laboratory on the day of collection for testing. Samples should be taken on the first 3 days of the week to ensure same day dispatch and analysis as soon as possible thereafter. Avoid taking samples at the weekend.

Dust Sampling

Sample type: Composite dust sample, 25 g.

To meet the requirements of this Standard, sampling must be done monthly, either as a composite dust sample or a pooled faecal sample. However, where the pooled faecal sample (as required by the legislation and described above) is due, it (the faecal sample) alone will suffice.

Sampling – general

- Wash and dry hands on arrival at farm.
- Record name, date, time and vehicle registration number in visitors book.
- Fill in details i.e. name, address of farmer, house code, time and date and samplers name on the label of the sealed sterile sample bag to be used in each poultry house.
- Change into protective clothing (disposable) i.e. coat, boots, headgear, gloves before entering the poultry house.
- After entering the poultry house, put on sterile disposable gloves.
- Open sealed sterile bag and collect by gloved hand, sample types as described above. Seal the bag before leaving the house. Remove the gloves and dispose in facility provided.
- Record details in duplicate sampling book i.e. name of farm, address, type of sample and number, size and age of flock, house code, date and time of sample and signature.
- Attach by stapling one copy to sample bag at sealed edge and retain duplicate in book for reference.
- Remove protective clothing and dispose in facility provided.
- When sampling is completed put all sample bags with attached forms into separate plastic self-sealing bag. Attach a label along the sealed edge and staple in 2-3 locations. Sign initials and date to this label, so that tampering is self-evident.
- Store safely in tamperproof packaging and dispatch to an approved laboratory on the day of collection, in a manner that ensures the integrity of the sample.
- Follow the above procedures for sampling each poultry house.

Water Sampling²

Purpose: to monitor *E. coli* and Enterococci levels in drinking water / water used on the farm.

Sample Type: Sterile water sample (100 ml)

Sample frequency: Yearly minimum, between 1st May and 30th September

Sampling frequency: Minimum yearly, except in the case of high levels of contamination, when the cause should be established and corrective action taken. The supply should be re-sampled within a month and repeated until satisfactory results are obtained.

Notify the Packing Centre and the local authority if the 3rd consecutive sample results are above quality limit.

Use a sterile glass or polypropylene bottle with tamper evident sealing. If chlorine treatment is used on the water supply add a neutraliser to the bottle e.g. sodium azide.

Water sampling – general

- Samples should be rotated between taps and storage tanks / outlets at production house / site / Packing Centre site.
- The bottles should not be opened until required for filling with the water.
- Bottles should not be previously rinsed out before taking the sample.
- In collecting the sample, the bottle should be held near its base with one hand, and with the other the cap should be loosened. On no account must the stopper be laid down or allowed to touch anything. Remove cap without touching the rim or its internal surfaces.
- Fill bottles completely. Recap.
- Label the bottle with the name and address of the owner, the house identification code, source of supply, date and name of sampler. Specify test requirements.

2 The sampling must be carried out independently (e.g. by a Field Officer) and the analysis done by a laboratory using the following methods: *E. coli* (ISO method 9308-1) absence in 100 ml, Enterococci (ISO method 7899-2) absence in 100 ml, or equivalent validated methods.

- Place the bottle in suitably secure packaging supplied by laboratory and seal using tamper evident seal. Seal should be initialled and sealed.
- Transport to laboratory, hold the temperature below 4°C during a maximum transport time of 6 hours.
- If results are required for legal purposes maintain chain of custody.

Sampling from taps

- Select a tap that is fed from the service mains and not from a cistern or holding tank.
- When a sample of mains water is to be taken from tap, any external fittings, such as an anti-splash nozzle or rubber tube, should be removed.
- The outside and inside of the tap should be carefully cleaned with particular attention to removal of collections of grease inside the nozzle. The tap should then be turned on full and the water allowed to run to waste for two to three minutes in order to flush the interior of the nozzle and to discharge stagnant water in the service pipe.
- After water run off, turn off the tap and dry the outer surface with a clean cloth.
- Sterilise the tap either by a blowlamp, or by soaking a piece of cotton wool in methylated spirit, igniting and holding with a pair of tongs close to the nozzle.
- Allow the tap to cool by allowing water to run to waste for a few seconds. Fill the sample bottle from a gentle stream of water, taking care to avoid splashing. Seal label and transfer to laboratory for testing as described under general above.

Feed Sampling

Sample Type: Composite meal sample (500 g)

Sample frequency: One per delivery

Take a meal sample (500 g) from the feed compartment of the truck (e.g. from the discharge).

Environment Sampling

Sample Type: Ammonia (by specialised test)

Sample frequency: Monthly

The Producer must ensure that the levels of ammonia in the house are monitored monthly using recognised monitoring equipment (such as Draeger sampler and analysis tubes). The result of the test must be entered in the house Management Checklist.

Sampling / Frequencies Summary

Sample Type	Test	Sampling Frequency	Acceptable Criteria
Faecal	<i>Salmonella</i>	At least every 15 weeks commencing Wk 22 – 26)	<i>Salmonella</i> not detected
Dust	<i>Salmonella</i>	Monthly (except where statutory faecal sampling is done)	<i>Salmonella</i> not detected
Water	<i>E. coli</i> and Enterococci	Per annum, between 1 st May and 30 th September	<i>E. coli</i> and Enterococci count = absence in 100 ml
Feed	A Statement that the Feed Supplier is listed on Bord Bia's approved list of feed mills	Per delivery or for current production	<i>Salmonella</i> not detected
Air	Ammonia	Monthly	< 25 ppm

Emergency Procedure Notice: Guidelines

The priorities for site staff are:

- Maintenance of human life and the avoidance of situations likely to cause injury or harm to staff; and
- Flock safety, health and welfare.

Each farm should:

- Carry out a risk assessment on the farm;
- Have a strategy in place to deal with the identified risks such as:
 - Gas Leak,
 - Fire,
 - Power Failure,
 - Personal Injury,
 - Equipment Failure,
 - Flock Problem; and
- Post a list of emergency telephone numbers beside a telephone (and near an exit) and a separate list of useful numbers nearby.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

- Fire Brigade _____
- Doctor _____
- Ambulance _____
- Gardaí _____

Useful Telephone Numbers

- Safety Officer _____
- Site Manager _____
- Gas Service Centre _____
- Service Engineer _____
- Group Veterinarian _____
- Other 1 _____
- Other 2 _____

Medicine Storage

Note: This is a recommendation for the safe storage of animal remedies. It is not intended as a definitive guide to the safe handling and storage of animal remedies and does not replace any applicable statutory requirement.

- The medicine store should be of a sufficient size and strength to hold all animal remedies, whether unopened or partially used, that may be in stock at any one time.
- Only animal remedies recommended to be stored at room temperature should be kept in the medicine store.
- The medicine store should be located indoors and should be out of reach of children.
- The medicine store should be kept locked at all times. The key should be kept in a safe location. This location should be informed to all relief farm workers.
- The medicine store should contain a clear warning label.
- The medicine store should not be located in direct sunlight or adjacent to any source of heat or cold.
- All spillages should be removed immediately from the medicine store and disposed of in accordance with manufacturers recommendations.

Transport of Live Animals: Guideline Instructions for Hygiene During Transport

- Ensure that all poultry will be transported by authorised or licensed transporters in vehicles and transport crates or containers that have been well cleaned and disinfected before catching or loading.
- Ensure that animal transport to slaughterhouse is done in a direct way without calling at other poultry sites.
- Ensure that truck drivers are correctly trained and / or informed, in such a manner that they understand the importance of personal hygiene, and are aware of the means by which infection can be spread on hands, clothing and equipment.
- Ensure that the truck wheels are spray disinfected at the point of entry before entering the site and before leaving it.
- Ensure that appropriate records and official documents are fully completed and accompany the hens to their destination. This is essential to maintain the traceability system along the food chain.

5.0

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The purpose of this Standard is to set out the requirements to ensure that the highest standards are achieved in the rearing of point-of-lay pullets.

Rearers will seek advice from recognised sources and consult the relevant and current guidelines / publications produced by DAFF and other relevant bodies (Appendix 6.1).

This section of the Producer / Rearer Standard contains all the production related requirements with which the Rearer must comply.

The layout of the information is intended to ensure clarity and to assist the reader; there are three main panels in each sub-section as follows:

- 1 The first panel (blue text on light green background) in all cases sets background information that is relevant to the sub-section;
- 2 The second panel (blue text on white) sets out the specific rearing related requirements against which the Rearers will be audited; and
- 3 The third panel (blue italics text on green) sets out the recommendations for best practice.

The Rearer must be fully aware of the requirements for Rearers as set out in the Standard. This includes the Introduction (Section 1), Scheme Rules (Section 2) and Rearer Requirements (Section 5). The Rearer Appendices (Section 6) offer further information and clarification on various aspects of the Rearer Requirements.

The responsibilities outlined in the Rearer's requirements relate largely to the person who manages the house(s) on the Rearing farm i.e. the Rearer. However, the Rearing Organisation also has responsibilities with regard to certain requirements, as identified in the text below. For these requirements, the Rearing Organisation must collaborate with the Rearer to ensure compliance. Where no Rearer Organisation is involved, the Rearer himself must assume full responsibility for all requirements.

5.1**GENERAL**

- a) Each Rearer must be registered with the relevant regulatory authority (DAFF or equivalent) and evidence of this registration must be maintained (Category 1).
- b) Each Rearer participating in the Scheme must complete an initial Rearer Declaration Form (see Rearer Appendix 6.2) at the time of the audit.
- c) All specified records must be maintained on-site for 2 years at a minimum.
- d) Each Rearer must understand the basic principles of HACCP and apply them to the rearing of pullets. An Illustrative HACCP Plan is included in Appendix 6.5 for reference and can be used by the Rearer for guidance in drafting a farm HACCP plan (Category 1).
- e) The Rearer must appoint a designated person with responsibility for the operation of the Scheme.
- f) (Rearing Organisation) A minimum of 1 Field Officer report per crop must be conducted, copied to the Rearer AND made available at audit. This report must be equivalent to the report outlined in Appendix 6.7.

5.2**PRODUCTION SITE**

- a) A site map must be maintained and available for inspection.
- b) At any given time, the site must be dedicated to one species and one production system (Category 1).
- c) Stock in any house must be single age (i.e. "all in all out" or a complete inter-crop production break) (Critical).
- d) The site must be isolated from other farm / poultry enterprises and protected by a physical barrier (i.e. a 2 m perimeter fence) that precludes entry of other farm animals.
- e) The site must be free of all debris, vegetation (grass, weeds) and equipment, so that cover is not provided for rodents.
- f) Where the previous flock was seriously diseased (i.e. notifiable disease), the manure cannot be stored.
- g) The site must be maintained free of manure.

R1. Ensure that the site is dry, free draining and open (but not exposed) and that it does not cause significant interference in the locality.

5.3

PRODUCTION HOUSE

Background Information

The rearing house must be compliant with planning laws and designed with due regard to the visual impact of the building on the local landscape.

Rearers will be aware that perches (where appropriate) are ideally introduced by 10 days of age, and positioned to facilitate the movement of pullets underneath and to allow pullets to express normal behaviour.

- a) The building must be structurally sound and vermin-proof.
- b) All surfaces within the house must be smooth and easy to clean.
- c) The roof must be waterproof and in good condition.
- d) The floor must be leak-proof, safe and smooth.
- e) Walls must be water- and draught-proof.
- f) Houses must be well maintained with no sharp edges or projections likely to cause injury to the birds or to personnel.
- g) **(Rearing Organisation) Stocking density must not exceed 20 kg/m² at any stage in the growing cycle (Category 1).**
- h) A floor plan of the house, detailing floor area and equipment layout (feeders, drinkers, perches and fans) with measurements / numbers / capacities, must be available.

- R2. Ensure the houses are insulated so that target air temperatures can be maintained on the desired curve, as determined by Rearing Organisation / group adviser.*
- R3. Ensure new houses are designed so as to be constructed of easily sanitised materials and smooth finishes to limit the areas to which pathogens and their carriers can migrate.*
- R4. Ensure buildings are designed to provide a safe, hygienic and comfortable environment for the birds.*
- R5. On full implementation of an enriched colony system, ensure perches are provided at not less than 1.7 cm per pullet.*

5.4

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT

Background Information

Rearers will be aware of the need to carefully control the house environment and will have installed ventilation systems that are sensitive, responsive to environmental change and easy to clean. As with fan assisted ventilation, stocking densities and thinning weights govern ventilation rates.

Rearers will also be conscious of the need for good lighting during the initial brooding period, to ensure that the chicks can easily find water and feed and to encourage even distribution of the chickens throughout the house.

- a) Temperatures must be monitored and controlled and the maximum and minimum temperatures at bird level inside the house must be recorded daily.
- b) The litter must be kept dry and friable.
- c) The ventilation system must be responsive to environmental change, easy to clean and capable of maintaining air quality (depending on stocking density and bodyweight of birds in the house).
- d) For rearing, where ventilation is fan assisted, fans must be able to expel, at a minimum, 3 m³ air/kg live weight/hr.
- e) Where natural ventilation is provided, the controller must be capable of regulating specific openings to the desired levels and of setting a minimum ventilation rate.

- f) All rearing houses must be fitted with:
 - i) An effective alarm (either audible up to 400 m or remote) that is triggered by failure in the main power supply and / or by temperature fluctuations; and
 - ii) An operational fail-safe system.
- g) The alarm system(s) must be tested weekly and the results recorded.
- h) All sites must have a stand-by generator, tested at least once each week and the test result recorded.
- i) There must be a written procedure for connecting to the stand-by power system.
- j) All electrical controllers, motors, computers and fail-safe systems must be tested annually. Either a service technician from the supplier / installer, an approved registered electrical contractor trained in this field with appropriate experience or service personnel with appropriate experience must carry out the test and any alterations or improvements must be documented.
- k) A written lighting programme (as specified by the Rearing Organisation or breeding company) must be documented, specifying duration and intensity.
- l) The duration and intensity must be recorded daily.
- m) Light intensity must be uniform at bird level to encourage even distribution of the birds throughout the house, and lights must be capable of being dimmed.
- n) Lights must be cleaned frequently and burned out bulbs replaced.

R6. *Ensure air intakes are screened to exclude flies.*

5.5

HOUSE PREPARATION

Background Information

Forward planning is essential for successful and efficient rearing. With good planning, provision can be made to allow adequate inter-crop intervals and to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of house(s) and site. Rearers will be aware that uneven litter will create an uneven floor temperature and chicks may huddle in pockets and be deprived of heat, water and feed.

- a) A house preparation sheet that complies, at a minimum, with the checklist in Rearer Appendix 6.3, must be completed before the arrival of each batch of chicks.

5.6

DAY-OLDS SOURCING

Background Information

In the sourcing of young birds, safety, traceability, bird quality and welfare are the key considerations. The Rearer will therefore be aware that time of delivery must be co-ordinated with the hatchery, so that adequate help is available to place the young birds in the house as quickly and efficiently as possible. This can be achieved by tipping them onto the litter gently, quickly and evenly.

Rearers will also be aware that full boxes must not be stacked in the brooding area (as this may cause overheating or suffocation). This will prevent dehydration and minimise stress to the birds.

- a) (Rearing Organisation) Documentation must be available for inspection to demonstrate that the day-olds sourced in RoI were supplied from hatcheries complying with the DAFF *Salmonella* Control Plan (Critical).
- b) (Rearing Organisation) Where imported day-olds are supplied, there must be written documentation available for inspection to confirm that they have come from parent flocks that were (all Critical):
 - i) Not *Salmonella* vaccinated;
 - ii) Tested and proved negative for *Salmonella* within the previous twenty eight days; and
 - iii) In compliance with Council Directive 90/539/EEC.

- c) A documented quality check on the day-old birds must be completed and available for inspection.
- d) (Rearing Organisation) Documentation, recording the following, must be available for inspection (home-reared or imported) (all Category 1):
 - i) Name of hatchery from where the day-olds were sourced;
 - ii) Date of arrival;
 - iii) Number of day-olds received;
 - iv) Beak trimming record (where applicable);
 - v) Vehicle identification;
 - vi) Condition / cleanliness of the vehicle; and
 - vii) A written declaration from the haulier to the effect that all equipment used was dedicated to the transportation of day-olds alone.
- e) (Rearing Organisation) Where day-olds are imported under licence, they must have accompanying EU inter trade health certificate and appropriate transport documentation (Critical).
- f) (Rearing Organisation) The day-olds must arrive with the approved vaccination programme as directed by the group veterinarian; documentation to verify this must be available (Critical).

R7. *Ensure the young birds are left for a short time to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings. Later, check to ensure that all chicks have access to water and feed.*

R8. *Ensure any necessary adjustments are made to equipment and temperature, and re-checked to ensure temperature is stabilised.*

5.7

FLOCK HEALTH

Background Information

Rearers and hatcheries will be aware of the need for close collaboration regarding welfare because of the impact on disease control especially, with regards to *Salmonella* and other transmissible diseases (e.g. avian influenza). Rearers have familiarised themselves with the *Salmonella* Control Plan (available from DAFF).

- a) Each Rearing Organisation must have access to the services of a veterinarian who will be available to the rearing farms for advice and monitoring.
- b) An animal health plan, to safeguard the health and welfare of the flock, must be drawn up in consultation with the veterinarian, implemented on the farm and reviewed annually in writing.
- c) All flock mortality must be recorded daily together with the reasons (where known).
- d) (Rearing Organisation) Written notification of the group mortality limit (day 1-7) must be provided by the Rearer and available for inspection.
- e) Mortality above this limit must be reported to the group adviser / veterinarian and samples submitted for laboratory examination where necessary.
- f) After day 7, mortality above 0.3%/day (of initial placement) must be similarly reported.
- g) During the growing cycle, an effective *Salmonella* monitoring programme must be implemented in accordance with Appendix 6.13 (Category 1).
- h) For regulatory purposes, analysis of the test samples must take place in a laboratory approved by DAFF (or equivalent).
- i) Where *Salmonella* Enteritidis or Typhimurium are identified in a flock, birds must be slaughtered. This must be carried out in consultation with the regulatory authorities (Critical).
- j) All remedies administered to flocks must be recorded in the animal remedies record. This record must be in book format and must contain the following information (all Category 1):
 - i) Date of administration;
 - ii) Name and quantity of animal remedy administered;
 - iii) Identification of animal / flock to which animal remedy is administered;
 - iv) Date of expiry of withdrawal period (if any);
 - v) Name of person who administered the animal remedy;
 - vi) Name of prescribing veterinary surgeon (if applicable); and
 - vii) Name of supplier of animal remedy.

- k) The Rearer or manager must sign this administration record after house depopulation and a new record must be used for each subsequent flock.
- l) Secure storage facilities must be provided for all remedies (Rearer Appendix 6.10).

5.8

FEED AND WATER

Background Information

Birds require easy access to feed, adequate in quantity and quality to satisfy their dietary requirements.

Ensure a fresh supply of clean water; rate of consumption of water is an excellent indicator of flock health and vigour, and accurate measurement of consumption is therefore essential.

Feed

- a) Rearing Organisation / Rearers must provide evidence that the feed has been sourced in a Bord Bia approved feed mill and is appropriate for feeding to laying hens i.e. the feed must be treated by heating to 80°C for a minimum 4 minute period or equivalent approved process (Critical).
- b) Anti-microbial substances administered through feed must only be used where deemed necessary by the veterinarian; administration must occur under veterinary control and be recorded in the remedies record (Category 1).
- c) Each feed delivery must be accompanied by a declaration of ingredients in descending order of weight and a declaration of nutrient analysis, together with the licence number, batch number, date of manufacture and expiry date.
- d) Properly labelled feed samples from each delivery must be retained for 3 months after the supply has been used. Samples must be stored in a vermin-proof container and made available for inspection during the growing period. In a fully integrated system, the samples can be held at the mill.
- e) All feed must be used before its expiry date.
- f) The bins and the feed lines must be cleaned between crops.

Feed Space

- g) Feeder Spaces must meet the following specifications:

Pan Feeders: 2.0 cm

Chain Feeders: 2.5 cm linear track

Water

- h) All water supplies must be sampled and tested¹ at least annually, or in the event that the source is changed, between 1st May and 30th September for *E. coli* and Enterococci. The test results, which must be absent in 100 ml for these organisms, must be retained (Category 1).
- i) Where there is a failure (detection of either organism), corrective measures must be taken, the group adviser notified immediately and the supply re-tested within one week. In the event that there are two consecutive failures, a water treatment process must be initiated.
- j) Birds must have access to water at all times (except for 1 hour prior to thinning / depopulation).
- k) Each house must have a water meter installed and the consumption recorded daily.
- l) The water storage tank must be covered at all times, to ensure that contamination is minimised (Category 1).
- m) The primary water supply source must have an alarm (Category 1).
- n) An emergency water supply must be available, adequate for a minimum of 12 hour supply for all birds on-site (Category 1).
- o) The use of untreated surface water for the birds is prohibited.
- p) Drinkers must be provided in numbers as per the manufacturer's recommendation for the species.
- q) A written plan for dealing with emergencies such as feed or water supply failure must be in place.

¹ The sampling must be carried out independently (e.g. by a Field Officer) and the analysis by a laboratory using the following methods: *E. coli* (ISO method 9308-1) absence in 100 ml, Enterococci (ISO method 7899-2) absence in 100 ml, or equivalent validated methods.

5.9

FLOCK WELFARE

Background Information

The welfare and health of a flock depends on the implementation of good stock management and the provision of a suitable environment. It is an obligation of the Rearer to ensure, that at all times, the health and welfare of the flock is maintained.

The stock-person is responsible for the welfare of the flock and personnel who care for the birds will have adequate knowledge of poultry and of the husbandry systems used.

Rearers will therefore be aware of the need to deal humanely with ill, injured, overtly lame birds or birds finding it difficult to reach feed or water and will, where required, be competent to carry out humane slaughter.

- a) The stock-person must be able to demonstrate competence with regard to the welfare of the flock (i.e. have either received formal training in flock welfare, or have a recognised qualification in bird production, and have attended a training course in the implementation of the requirements of this Standard).
- b) The stock-person must be able to demonstrate competence in the humane slaughter of birds.
- c) A record must be maintained (e.g. Rearer Appendix 6.9) to demonstrate that a thorough flock inspection was carried out at least twice daily as follows:
 - i) Observe the physical condition of the birds;
 - ii) Observe the behavioural patterns that would indicate stress;
 - iii) Verify that the feeders are in good working order and charged with feed;
 - iv) Verify that the drinkers are in good working order, with no leakage or spillage; and
 - v) Verify that the ventilation system is operating correctly.

This record must also provide space for the veterinarian to file a site report and additional checks, where required by the veterinarian or rearing organisation.
- d) A written procedure must be in place to deal with heat stress that addresses, at a minimum, the issues identified in Rearer Appendix 6.12 Heat Stress Avoidance.

- e) Catching and handling of birds in the house must be carried out in a manner that minimises stress on the bird, bird panic, bruising, etc.
- f) Where beak trimming is carried out, it must be undertaken by personnel who can demonstrate competence in this activity and only conducted on chickens <10 days old that are intended for laying.

5.10

SITE HYGIENE AND BIOSECURITY

Background Information

Rearers will be aware of the need to ensure that best practice in biosecurity is central to the control of disease in the flock, and will have appropriate controls in place. Rearers will also be aware of the risks associated with the movement of personnel between farms (vaccinating and catching teams, advisory staff, veterinarians, service personnel).

- a) A documented terminal hygiene programme (equivalent to Rearer Appendix 6.8) that was prepared in consultation with the veterinarian must be in place (Category 1).
- b) A terminal hygiene checklist must be completed, dated and authorised by the designated person between flocks (Category 1).
- c) An effective hygiene control measure must be provided at the entry to each house including (all Category 1):
 - i) Provision of covered foot dips with replenishment as required, but at least on a weekly basis; and
 - ii) Use of disinfectants with regulatory approval for the species in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- d) Hand washing facilities with hot water (ideally premixed to 44°C) or hand sanitising facilities must be available on each site and hands must be washed / sanitised before entering the bird area of the house and again afterwards (Category 1).
- e) Only site personnel must be allowed access to the site. All others must be regarded as visitors and essential visitors only allowed on the site.
- f) These visitors must be provided with full protective clothing (disposable coats, shoes and hairnets) and required to wash / sanitise hands on entry to and exit from the site (Category 1).

- g) A record of all visitors (which can exclude service vehicles) must be maintained and this must include at a minimum (all Category 1):
 - i) Date of visit;
 - ii) Name;
 - iii) Organisation / company;
 - iv) Name of poultry (production or processing) sites previously visited, with date of visit; and
 - v) Vehicle registration, if applicable.
- h) All visitors must be made aware of the Hygiene Policy on arrival.
- i) Staff and all those in frequent contact with the rearing flock (including catchers) must not keep or have contact with any other live birds (for food or hobby purposes) and this must be demonstrated through records (e.g. staff declarations) (Category 1).
- j) All equipment used at another site must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before entry to farm (trucks, crates, trolleys and fork lifts).
- k) Litter must be sourced from a documented source and stored so as to prevent contamination (e.g. from wild birds, rodents, water).
- l) An effective rodent control programme, with product specifications, must be in place for each site (Category 1).
- m) A plan of the bait points must be displayed on-site (Category 1).
- n) Bait points must be inspected at least eight times annually and more frequently where there is a specific risk, and corrective action recommended by the manufacturer / service provider must be taken.
- o) Houses must be screened against wild birds, rodents (such as rats and mice) and other animals (such as domestic pets).
- p) Domestic pets must be excluded from the rearing house(s).
- q) Dead birds must be removed on a daily basis and be held in a sealed vermin-proof container outside each house or centrally (Category 1).
- r) Dead birds must only be disposed of by a licensed contractor or by other approved means.
- s) Bins / containers must be retained on-site and washed and disinfected after each collection.
- t) The site must be clearly defined and sign-posted, to prevent entry of unauthorised personnel or vehicles.
- u) The loading bay at the entrance to each poultry house must be level (ideally constructed of concrete), for ease of access and to permit effective cleaning.

5.11

CATCHING AND TRANSPORT

Background Information

The importance of good catching techniques is well recognised and Rearers will be aware of the need to train all catchers in these procedures. The Rearer will be aware of the need to minimise the risk of disease transmission through vehicles (lorries, trailers, forklifts and modules). Rearers will be aware of the need to ensure that these are properly washed and disinfected before entering a farm.

Catching

- a) The Rearer or a nominated representative must be on-site during catching to ensure that good hygiene practices are adopted and the welfare of the birds including stocking density is ensured.
- b) A written procedure must be in place for catching teams, that complies at a minimum with the guidelines in Rearer Appendix 6.4.

Transport

- c) A copy of a pre-movement *Salmonella* certificate must be available for all birds leaving the site (Category 1).
- d) A document signed and dated by the Rearer for each dispatch must be available, recording the following at a minimum (all Category 1):
 - i) Name and address of Rearer;
 - ii) Loading date;
 - iii) Expected transport time – commencement and finish, which must not exceed 8 hours;
 - iv) Number of birds dispatched;
 - v) Destination;
 - vi) Vehicle / trailer identification;
 - vii) Condition / cleanliness of vehicles / modules;
 - viii) Record of vaccination programme;
 - ix) Beak trimming record (where applicable); and
 - x) A written declaration from the haulier to the effect that all equipment used was dedicated to the transportation of pullets alone.

- e) To ensure good hygiene practices, transport of pullets must be carried out in accordance with the guidance provided in Producer Appendix 4.12.

R9. To assist in the catching process, ensure light curtains are placed over the exit door(s).

R10. Ensure stocking densities within the drawers are observed which comply with the recommendations of the manufacturer and are reduced in warm weather.

5.12

HEALTH AND SAFETY ON THE FARM

Background Information

All Rearers will be aware of their legal responsibility to have a completed health and safety statement on the production unit / farm. The Rearer will be aware that it needs to be reviewed on an on-going basis.

Health and Safety

- a) A safety statement that complies with regulatory requirements must be prepared and displayed (Category 1).
- b) All hazard areas on the site must be clearly identified (such as electrical points, perches, fencing, slatted or mesh floor areas, steps, ladders, fans, air inlets, drinkers and feeders) at the location of the hazard, or centrally, and appropriate protective measures adopted (Category 1).
- c) A notice must be prominently displayed to the effect that eating, drinking and smoking are prohibited in the house(s).
- d) Each site must have a first aid kit.
- e) A plan for dealing with emergencies such as personal injury, fire, flood, power failure, must be in place (Rearer Appendix 6.6).
- f) Fire extinguishers² must be in place on-site and checked at a minimum every 5 years.
- g) Relevant contact telephone numbers must be displayed at a central location / the exit.

² Bord Bia recommends that an extinguisher suitable for electrical fires must be available; the Producer must consult with a fire safety expert on this issue.

Storage and Handling of Chemical Substances

- h) All chemicals must be stored and handled at a minimum in accordance with Rearer Appendices 6.10 and 6.11 (which must be displayed, for example, on a notice board in the store).
- i) The use for which each chemical is intended must be clearly identified and displayed (e.g. on a notice board in the store) and a Material Safety Data Sheet must be available for each chemical on-site.

R11. Ensure a record is kept of all chemicals purchased, as well as who used them, when and where.

5.13**AIR QUALITY****Background Information**

The main contaminants of the air in a rearing house are dust, ammonia, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and excess humidity. In this context, and as a guideline in the interests of the safety and welfare of workers, the Rearer will ensure that the following levels are not exceeded through management of ventilation:

Name of Gas	Long-Term Exposure Limit (8 hour day) ppm	Short-Term Exposure Limit (10 minutes) ppm
Ammonia	20	35

R12. Ensure the ventilation system is controlled so as to maintain gas levels that are compatible with a safe and comfortable environment

5.14

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Background Information

Rearers will be aware of the desirability of locating poultry units and conducting operations on-site so as to minimise the impact on the environment and the amenities beyond the site boundary. Rearers will therefore have taken advice and sought relevant permissions prior to establishing a new production house including IPPC licensing where relevant.

Rearers with existing houses will have implemented measures to minimise environmental problems through good maintenance procedures as set out in this Standard. All Rearers will also be aware that sites exceeding the bird number threshold require an IPPC licence.

- a) All Rearers must have documentary evidence of the appropriate IPPC status (Category 1).
- b) Effective facilities for collecting, storing and disposal of litter / manure must be in place that prevent pollution and the spread of disease (Rearer Appendix 6.14) (Category 1).
- c) Any effluent that arises within the poultry house (e.g. wash water) must be collected in a leak-proof tank that is safe and secure for storage and disposal.
- d) A record of manure disposal must be maintained with details of final destination.

R13. *Ensure the nutrient content of the manure, the nutrient requirements of the crop and the nutrient status of the soil based on soil analysis is taken into account when calculating the rate of application of poultry manure.*

R14. *Adhere to Teagasc Recommended Code of Manure Spreading Practices.*

Reference Information¹

HUSBANDRY / ANIMAL WELFARE

- Poultry Hatcheries Act 1947 (No.49 of 1947).
- Poultry Hatcheries Regulations 1959 (S.I. No. 122 of 1959).
- European Communities (Live Poultry and Hatching Eggs) Regulations 1992 (Council Directive 90/539/EEC).
- European Communities (Live Poultry and Hatching Eggs) (Amendment) Regulations 1995 (S.I. No. 45 of 1995) and Council Directive 93/120/EEC.
- Council Directive 1999/74/EC, laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens. Amended by Council Regulation (EC) No. 806/2003. Derogated by Decision 2004/433/EC.
- Commission Directive 2002/4/EC. Adapted by Commission Directive 2006/83/EC.
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport.
- EC (Protection of Animals During Transport) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 267 of 2006).
- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 589/2008.
- European Communities (Welfare of Farmed Animals) Regulations (S.I. No. 14 of 2008).
- **For organic production**, Council Regulation (EC) No. 834/2007. Commission Regulation 889/2008.

ANIMAL REMEDIES

- E.C. Control of Animal Remedies and their Residues Regulations, 2007 (S.I. No. 143 of 2007).
- E.C. Animal Remedies (No. 2) regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 786 of 2007).

DISEASE / SALMONELLA CONTROL

- Diseases of Animals (Poultry Feed) Order 1991 (S.I. No. 364 of 1991).
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 2160/2003 on the monitoring and control of *Salmonella*.

¹ All references given in the Standard must be taken on an 'as amended' basis.

- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1168/2006 implementing Regulation (EC) No. 2160/2003.
- EC (Control of *Salmonella* in Laying Flocks of Domestic Fowl) Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 247 of 2008).

FOOD LAW / FOOD SAFETY / FOOD AND FEED HYGIENE

- Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council, laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety.
- Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29th April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs.
- European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) Regulations 2005 (S.I. No. 910 of 2005). Amended by European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) (Amendment) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 387 of 2006) and European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 56 of 2007).
- Regulation (EC) No. 1935/2004 on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food.
- European Communities (Drinking Water) (No.2) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 278 of 2007).

EGGS – HYGIENE

- Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29th April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin.

EGGS – MARKETING STANDARDS

- New Irish legislation is currently being drafted to replace S.I No. 810 of 2007.
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007, establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation).

- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 589/2008, laying down detailed rules for implementing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007 as regards marketing standards for eggs.
- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 598/2008, laying down detailed rules for implementing Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007 as regards marketing standards for eggs.

MARKING OF EGGS / LABELLING, PRESENTATION AND ADVERTISING OF FOODSTUFFS

- Directive 2000/13/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Regulations 2005 (S.I. No. 392 of 2005).

MISCELLANEOUS

- Directive 2002/4/EC on the registration of establishments keeping laying hens, covered by Council Directive 1999/74/EC.
- List of Approved Disinfectants. June 1993 Disease of Animals (Disinfectants) Order, Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF).
- List of Approved Laboratories – Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF).

Guidelines for Best Practice

- Code of Good Agricultural Practice to Protect Water from Pollution by Nitrates. Departments of Agriculture and Environment July 2006 (S.I. No. 378 of 2006).
- FSAI Guidance Note No. 11. Assessment of HACCP Compliance.

Rearer Declaration Form

Rearer Declaration Form

Note: The Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Scheme is a voluntary Scheme. You will be required to sign this document in the presence of the auditor during the farm audit.

Please complete in block capitals:

Flock Owner Name: _____
(Person in whose name the flock is registered with DAFF / DARD where applicable)

Address: _____

Address for Correspondence: _____
(If different to above)

Tel/Fax/Mob: _____ / _____ / _____

DAFF/DARD Identifier Code: _____, **Producer House No.** _____

No Birds: _____, **Manager:** _____

Declaration:

- I declare that compound feeds for poultry will not be fed to other species and I undertake to maintain my feedstuff storage facilities in a manner that prevents cross-contamination from feeding stuffs intended for other species on the farm.
- I agree to allow farm inspectors and auditors access to my farm during normal business hours and to take feed samples for test purposes.
- I undertake to abide by the conditions applicable to Rearers as laid down in the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Standard: Rearer Requirements.
- I acknowledge having received a copy of this Standard and the accompanying documentation.
- I agree to provide full and accurate details of my farming practices that relate to the Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Scheme.
- I declare I am in compliance with the relevant statutory requirements with regard to the operation of my rearing farm.
- I understand that my participation in the Scheme is a demonstration of my commitment to achieving the highest standards in the production of quality point-of-lay birds and my responsibilities in the food chain.
- I agree to permit my name and EQAS Certification Status to be published on the EQAS Register / Database.

Signature: _____ (Person Responsible for Managing the Farm)

Position: _____ (Flock Owner, Manager, Flock Owner's Nominee)

Date: _____

House Preparation Checklist

Preparation of the House

- Fresh bedding must be spread evenly to cover the floor.
- Houses must be pre-heated gradually, at minimum, 24 hours before the birds arrive.
- The temperature must be stabilised.
- Space heaters or brooders must be set up to ensure that there are no extremes of temperature in the house.
- Independent thermometers must be placed around the house with at least two of them at bird level, to monitor uniformity of temperature.
- Fresh, clean water must be available to the day-olds immediately on their arrival at the farm. Starter ration must also be available.
- Trays and paper may be used to supplement pan or track feeders.
- Feeders and drinkers must not be placed directly under a heat source.
- Before the birds arrive, a final house-check is essential to ensure that temperatures are at the correct levels and that there are no water leaks.

A house preparation sheet must be completed before the arrival of each batch of chickens that records the following at a minimum:

House Preparation Checklist

Re-stocking Date:

Supplies

Starter Crumb Ordered	
Heating fuel supply checked / ordered	
Shavings supply checked / ordered	
Overalls and Shoe covers supply checked / ordered	
Re-stocking Date Confirmed	
Foot Dip Disinfectant supply checked / ordered	

Site

Free from debris	
Vegetation controlled	
No rodent cover	
Concrete aprons clean and disinfected	
Clean and Tidy	
Secure	

House

Power washed thoroughly	
Disinfected	
House condition checked and repaired as necessary	
Source of litter	
Quantity and depth of litter / shavings applied	
Brooders / Heaters switched on / lit.	
Temperature readings	
Foot dip at entrance doors	
Protective clothing and overshoes available	
Paper towels and soap available	

Equipment

Feeders checked, repaired	
Drinkers – leak free	
Water meter reading	
Lighting – even – wattage and number of light points	
Ventilation system and controls operations checked	

Supplementary Equipment

Generator	
Alarm System	
Fire Extinguishers	

Signed

Date

Hygiene and Welfare for Catching Teams of Point of Lay Pullets and Spent Hens

Background Information

It is in the interest of the farm to promote co-operation and harmony with the catching team. These workers operate in unpleasant conditions, doing repetitive work that does not allow for social interaction.

The Rearer / Producer (as relevant) must ensure efficient loading, good biosecurity practices and the maintenance of bird welfare.

Vehicles

- All vehicles and loading equipment must be clean and disinfected before being brought on-site.
- All equipment entering the site must have been washed clean and disinfected (lorries, trailers, forklifts and modules).
- Use the farm disinfectant to spray the wheels of all vehicles before entering the site.
- Disinfect the forklift before leaving site.

Personnel

- Catching teams must undertake a training programme to ensure they are properly trained for the task and understand the requirements.
- All catchers must wear protective clothing and footwear including facemasks and gloves.
- All personnel must wash hands thoroughly.
- Disposable or site dedicated protective overalls, hairnets and footwear must be worn by all.
- Used shoe covers and face masks should be placed in litter bin provided.
- Washable overalls should be hung for laundry.
- Personnel must wash hands thoroughly on-site.
- Consumption of food within the poultry house is prohibited.
- All personnel must use foot dips before entering poultry houses.
- Ensure that no person that is likely to be a carrier of, or suffering from, a disease likely to be transmitted, or that has infected wounds, skin infections, sores or diarrhoea is permitted to handle birds or to enter the production house.

Operational Issues

- Dim the lights in the chicken house and use curtains to reduce natural light at doorways.
- Move quietly to minimise stress on the flock.
- Catch birds by the shanks or feet to avoid bruising and broken limbs.
- Care must be taken to ensure birds are not placed on their backs in crates.
- Modify stocking densities per module or crate according to temperature conditions.
- Reduce the house temperature by approximately 2°C, one hour prior to catching. This reduces bird movement and will lower bruising.
- Raise drinker and feeder lines before catching starts.
- Catching must not commence until the lights are dimmed and the house is darkened sufficiently for catching to proceed without causing undue stress on the flock.
- Care must be taken when first opening doors, in daylight, not to frighten birds.
- After catching, lights should be increased to full intensity. Temperature should be raised to approximately 23°C and the birds moved evenly over the house. This will give a more even temperature through the house. The lights and temperature should then be dropped back to their normal level.
- In warm weather stocking densities in crates must be reduced.
- Use side curtains on modules during the winter months.

Recording

- Record catching team personnel details in site visitor record.

Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan

Background Information

HACCP is a support system for the safe production of food. When adequately developed and efficiently implemented it provides systematic control of biological, chemical and physical hazards at key stages of production. It is a strategy for prevention rather than detection of safety problems. HACCP is built on a foundation that requires a farm unit to have a coherent hygiene system in place. It will address inputs, decision points and outputs.

A HACCP Plan is unique to each farm and must be compiled by a farm team who would agree a flow diagram for the process.

The Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan shows how product / process safety is ensured through control and prevention. At a minimum the Hazard Control Plan includes:

- A detailed description of the products and process steps (e.g. a flow diagram showing all the steps of each process);
- A detailed description of the hazards (chemical, microbiological and physical / foreign bodies) that could arise at each process step and the risks that these represent;
- Identification of Critical Control Points (CCP) in the plan;
- Definition of the limits that must be met to ensure control of each CCP;
- The monitoring required to ensure that control is maintained at each CCP;
- The corrective action to be taken if a non-conformance occurs for each CCP;
- Identification of the responsibilities, procedures and records applicable for each CCP; and
- Annual verification / testing of the HACCP plan to ensure that it is effective.

The implementation of hygiene barriers, biosecurity measures and personnel hygiene practices at all levels of production underpin the HACCP plan.

An illustrative HACCP plan for Rearers is given below. However, each Rearer is advised to seek qualified assistance in creating a HACCP plan for his / her own enterprise.

Illustrative Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Plan

Step	CCP No	Hazard	Preventive Measure	Limits (Standards)	Monitoring	Corrective Action	Doc. Ref.
Chick Sourcing.	CCP 1	Disease Carriers	Chicks from certified Hatcheries	As per Dirs. E.C. 92/117;90/539; and Poultry Hatcheries Act	Refer to Section 5.6 Sourcing	Notify DAFF / DARD	Hatchery Records / Import Cert
House Status	CCP 2	Contamination – Pathogens	Clean, Disinfect, Disinfect	As per Hygiene Programme See Appendix 6.3	Visual sampling (swabbing after outbreak)	Review Implementation of Hygiene Programme	House Prep Record
Input: Feed	CCP 3	<i>Salmonella</i> / Pathogens	Feed Produced in Compliance with Section 5.8	Dedicated Transport Segregation of medicated feed	See Section 5.8 Feed	Reject Source New Supply	Delivery Dockets
Input: Water	CCP 4	Pathogens	Clean Supply stored in protected tanks	Test negative as per Section 5.8	See Section 5.8 Water	Upgrade supply or treatment system	Test Report
Lorry / Modules	CCP 5	Pathogens Contamination	Clean and Disinfected Lorries, modules and crates	As per Section 5.11 and Appendices 4.12 and 6.4	Section 5.11	Improve collection practises	Records Section 5.11

Emergency Procedure Notice: Guidelines

The priorities for site staff are:

- Maintenance of human life and the avoidance of situations likely to cause injury or harm to staff are paramount; and
- Flock safety, health and welfare.

Each farm should:

- Carry out a risk assessment on the farm;
- Have a strategy in place to deal with the identified risks such as:
 - Gas Leak,
 - Fire,
 - Power Failure,
 - Personal Injury,
 - Equipment Failure,
 - Flock Problem; and
- Post a list of emergency telephone numbers beside a telephone (and near an exit) and a separate list of useful numbers nearby.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

- Fire Brigade

- Doctor

- Ambulance

- Gardaí

Useful Telephone Numbers

- Safety Officer

- Site Manager

- Gas Service Centre

- Service Engineer

- Group Veterinarian

- Other 1

- Other 2

Field Officer Report

At each visit, critical and category 1 requirements must be inspected and reported.

On an annual basis, the Field Officer inspections must cover all the requirements of the Scheme at least once.

Individual reports must be completed by a competent officer and may also report on the following specific issues:

- Name;
- House Address; and
- House identification.

Week No		Age of Birds		
Mortality	7d Avg.		Daily Avg.	
Vaccinations received	Date		Date	
Water Consumption				
House Climate				
Litter Type				
Litter Condition				
Bird Appearance				
General Hygiene				
Records				
Comments				

Signed

Date

Terminal Hygiene Programme

A comprehensive cleaning and disinfection programme must be documented, in operation and recorded. The procedures outlined hereunder set out **the basic requirements** which must be addressed by any programme that the Rearer may draw up. This procedure may need to be modified to meet the specific needs of the farm.

DRY CLEAN

- Remove any residual feed from the feeding system and feed bins (in exceptional circumstances this may not be possible).
- Winch up or remove all feeder and drinker systems. Remove all portable equipment from the house for cleaning.
- Remove all litter in a covered vehicle and store away from the poultry site.
- Blow down all surface dust from ceilings, rafters, ledges, water pipes, inlets, fan shafts and switches.
- Sweep the floor thoroughly and remove all remaining debris to a removal vehicle.
- Clean out / blow down bulk bins.
- Turn off power to all electrical equipment (unless otherwise advised by manufacturer).
- Wash all surfaces to remove dirt and debris.
- Use high pressure power washer.
- Wash ceilings, rafters, ledges, inlets, fan shafts and other surfaces, paying particular attention to the underside of all equipment.

WASH

- Wash down feed bins and platforms.
- Drain the header tank and check to ensure it is free from debris.
- Clean and disinfect water lines and drinking system by filling the header tank with water containing the required amount of suitable disinfectant. This solution should fill the drinking system and be left to stand for 2 hours and then flushed out thoroughly with clean water.
- Have all repairs attended to.
- A visual inspection should be carried out after the final wash.

DISINFECT HOUSE AND EQUIPMENT

- Select a suitable broad spectrum disinfectant and dilute with clean water. Follow the recommendations from the manufacturers. (**Note:** Disinfectants are effective only on clean surfaces.)
- Set the pressure washer / orchard sprayer at a low pressure (10-20 bar or 140–280 psi) and saturate all surfaces (house and equipment) for the recommended contact time.
- Return disinfected equipment to the disinfected house. (**Note:** Fumigating, misting or fogging is only effective on an airtight house. Wear protective clothing and follow product usage instructions. Fumigation with formaldehyde is potentially damaging to health.)
- Allow surfaces to dry.
- Check that all equipment is in good working order.
- Close the house securely to prevent recontamination.
- Put a rodent control programme in place, as devised by the veterinarian.

DISINFEST

- Consider spraying the perimeter of the houses with a suitable insecticide.
- Treat the wall / floor junctions of the interior of the houses with a suitable insecticide to eliminate beetles and other insects, which transfer *Salmonella* from one crop to another.

FREE RANGE: ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Wash concrete apron / hard core / stone strip outside the pop-holes.
- Skim topsoil from area adjacent to hard core to expose soil to air and sunlight.
- Re-seed when appropriate.
- Refill potholes.
- Check and repair perimeter fencing.

Flock Inspection Checklist

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR FLOCK INSPECTION CHECKLIST

- House Identification
- Date Housed
- Number of Birds Housed

TWICE-DAILY RECORDS OF

- Maximum and minimum temperatures
- Ventilation – functioning as per settings
- Feed lines – charged with feed
- Drinkers – operational
- Water meter reading
- Lighting – functioning as per programme
- Litter quality
- Mortalities and cause e.g. culls, leg weakness, injuries
- General flock appearance
- Corrective actions where required

WEEKLY CHECK RECORDS OF

- Generator
- Alarms
- Fire extinguishers in place
- Foot dips

YEARLY CHECK RECORDS OF

- Electrical equipment
- Water test

Medicine Storage

Note: This is a recommendation for the safe storage of animal remedies. It is not intended as a definitive guide to the safe handling and storage of animal remedies and does not replace any applicable statutory requirement.

- The medicine store should be of a sufficient size and strength to hold all animal remedies, whether unopened or partially used that may be in stock at any one time.
- Only animal remedies recommended to be stored at room temperature should be kept in the medicine store.
- The medicine store should be located indoors and should be out of reach of children.
- The medicine store should be kept locked at all times. The key should be kept in a safe location. This location should be informed to all relief farm workers.
- The medicine store should contain a clear warning label.
- The medicine store should not be located in direct sunlight or adjacent to any source of heat or cold.
- All spillages should be removed immediately from the medicine store and disposed of in accordance with manufacturers recommendations.

Safe Handling of Chemicals

Note: This is a recommendation for the safe handling of chemicals. It is not intended as a definitive guide to the safe handling of chemicals and does not replace any applicable statutory requirement.

- Purchase only approved chemicals.
- Store in designated storage facilities, which are labelled and locked, and well away from food.
- Do not transfer chemicals to other storage containers, especially soft drinks, bottles or food containers.
- Maintain only minimum stocks of chemicals (to avoid out of date chemicals).
- Read the label before opening the chemical and observe all safety precautions. Use chemicals in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.
- Wear the correct personal protection equipment for the chemical and operation involved.
- Have a supply of clean water for washing off splashes.
- Wash hands and exposed skin before eating or drinking and shower down after the job is complete.
- Thoroughly rinse all equipment used, and store safely.
- Keep a record of all chemicals purchased, as well as when, where, and by whom they were used.
- Unused chemicals should be disposed of in a safe manner and so as not to harm the environment.

Heat Stress Avoidance Procedures

RISK TIMES

- May to September
- During catching and while crated from May to September
- During first catch all year round

ENSURE THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES ARE ADHERED TO

- Computer Maximum Temperature alarm settings are at 3°C above house set temperature.
- Fail safe Temperature stat alarm settings are at 4°C above house set temperature.
- Confer with Rearing Organisation regarding stocking densities for summer months.
- Ventilation equipment is sufficient and able to operate to full capacity.

DURING SUMMER MONTHS

- The birds are frequently observed for signs of heat stress and any necessary action taken.
- The covers are removed from auxiliary fans and the fan stats are set to 2°C above the house set temperature.
- Weather forecasts are observed for temperature extremes.
- On very hot days the auxiliary fans are brought on in advance of stat settings to get ahead of temperature climb.
- Water supply is adequate and pressures are optimum.

DURING CATCHING AND ESPECIALLY THE FIRST CATCH

- Birds are observed throughout the catching and loading process for signs of stress, and house temperatures monitored.
- Doors are kept closed, so as to ensure even airflow throughout the house.
- Catching is stopped if heat stress is observed and all fans are set to maximum to reduce temperatures.

DURING HOT WEATHER

- Bird numbers per crate are reduced
- Trailers are removed to the Producer as soon as they are loaded
- Catching is avoided at the hottest times of the day

Salmonella Monitoring Programme for Rearing Houses

The Bord Bia Egg Quality Assurance Standard requires that sampling and testing be carried out for the purpose of demonstrating compliance with the Standard.

All sampling and testing should be carried out in accordance with recognised procedures (see Producer Appendix 4.9 for Farm Sampling Guidelines).

Ensure that a *Salmonella* test is carried out on birds during the rearing period as follows:

- On day of delivery of the chicks to the holding
 - samples shall be taken from the internal linings of the boxes in which the chicks were delivered to the holding from the hatchery, with a minimum of one box-liner being sampled for every 500 chicks delivered and each sample to consist of at least 1 cm² from each liner; and
 - samples shall be taken of the carcasses of all dead chicks, up to a maximum of 60, found dead on arrival on the day of the delivery to the holding.
- At 4 weeks of age (dust samples).
- At 8 weeks of age (dust samples).
- Within 2 weeks of movement to laying phase / laying unit (prior to 1st thinning)²
 - pooled faecal samples, made up of separate samples of fresh faeces each weighing not less than 1 g taken at random from a number of sites in the building in which the birds are kept, shall be collected.

² This must be done within an adequate period that ensures a negative result is available to the Rearer before thinning or depopulation occurs.

- The number of sites from which separate faecal samples are to be taken in order to make pooled samples shall be as follows:

Number of birds kept in a building	Number of faeces samples to be taken in the building or group of buildings
1-24	Number equal to number of birds, up to a maximum of 20
25-29	20
30-39	25
40-49	30
50-59	35
60-89	40
90-199	50
200-499	55
500 or more	60

Illustrative Poultry Manure Management Programme

Location and Operation of Egg Production House

Minimise environmental problems relating to the location of the poultry house and the operation of egg production as follows:

- Select a suitable house site at least 400 m from the nearest dwelling and such that it will have minimum impact on nearby amenities;
- Operate an effective hygiene programme in the unit, to minimise odours;
- Have well designed house and ventilation system with wash water storage facilities;
- Maintain buildings in good repair, especially guttering and down-pipes;
- Have well designed feeders and drinkers, so that feed wastage and spoilage are kept to a minimum; and
- Minimise waste packaging materials and containers.

Manure Spreading

Minimise environmental problems relating to the removal and spreading of manure as follows:

- Ensure suitable weather conditions to clean out houses, and remove manure and / or empty liquid manure from pit;
- Transport the poultry manure in suitably covered vehicles;
- Spread the manure more than 200 m from the poultry house;
- Poultry manure should not be spread on land in use for the production of ready to eat crops or on land to which free-range flocks have access; and
- Poultry manure and wash water should be land spread or applied to land observing the following "buffer zones":

Buffer zones for spreading poultry manure	
Area	Buffer Zone (m)
Hospitals, schools, churches	200
Dwelling houses	100
Lakes and main river channels	20
Small watercourses and field drains	10
Public roads	10
Domestic wells	50
Public water supply (depending on vulnerability)	50-300

Conditions to Avoid

Avoid spreading manure in the following conditions:

- During the period November to February (inclusive);
- On heavy, wet soils, when heavy rain is forecast within 48 hours;
- When the wind direction is towards population centres or 'neighbouring' houses;
- When the risk of causing odour nuisance to the public is greatest e.g. Sundays or public holidays; and
- After daylight hours.



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