


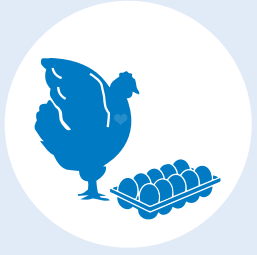




Raising the welfare standards for layer hens

	Requirement	Why is it important	SPCA Certified Free Range	SPCA Certified Barn	Code of Welfare - Free Range	Code of Welfare - Barn	Code of Welfare - Colony cage
 <p>HEN HEALTH</p>	Food and water	High quality and sufficient food and water helps hens maintain good health.	Unrestricted access to food and water; water quality is tested annually.	Unrestricted access to food and water; water quality is tested annually.	Adequate quantities of food provided; water must be drinkable and not harmful to health. Water quality testing not required.	Adequate quantities of food provided; water must be drinkable and not harmful to health. Water quality testing not required.	Adequate quantities of food provided; water must be drinkable and not harmful to health. Water quality testing not required.
	Insoluble grit	As hens don't have teeth, grit allows them to grind down and more easily digest their food.	Provided at least weekly and available to the hens at any time.	Provided at least weekly and available to the hens at any time.	Grit not required.	Grit not required.	Grit not required.
	Maximum flock size	Overcrowding can stress hens, and lead to abnormal behaviours, such as severe feather pecking. It can also cause disease, and limit food and water intake.	Maximum 5,000 hens per flock.	Maximum 5,000 hens per flock.	No limit on hens per flock.	No limit on hens per flock.	Hens are kept in cages (up to 60 hens/cage).
	Health inspections	Feet, feathers and weight are important indicators of a hen's overall health and wellbeing, and can be an early sign that something is wrong.	Hens are weighed fortnightly, feathers inspected monthly and feet inspected regularly.	Hens are weighed fortnightly, feathers inspected monthly and feet inspected regularly.	Regular weight, feather and foot checks not required.	Regular weight, feather and foot checks not required.	Regular weight, feather and foot checks not required.
 <p>HOUSING</p>	Shed floor	Hens prefer a good layer of wood shavings on the shed floor, as it gives the hens lots of opportunity to dustbathe, scratch and forage.	The entire floor is covered in 5-10cm of shavings. Shavings are checked weekly and if in poor condition, must be fixed or replaced. Flooring composed only of slats and wire mesh only is prohibited.	The entire floor is covered in 5-10cm of shavings. Shavings are checked weekly and if in poor condition, must be fixed or replaced. Flooring composed only of slats and wire mesh only is prohibited.	Shavings do not need to cover the entire area, but must be good quality dry at all times; dust and dampness are managed.	Shavings do not need to cover the entire area, but must be good quality dry at all times; dust and dampness are managed.	Hens are in cages that have a bare wire mesh floor without shavings.
	Light hours	Appropriate light and dark hours in the shed are important to ensure hens have a normal behaviour pattern around egg laying, resting and sleeping.	Minimum 12 hours of light and 8 hours dark every 24 hours.	Minimum 12 hours of light and 8 hours dark every 24 hours.	No minimum light hours. Minimum 8 hours continuous dark in each 24 hr period.	No minimum light hours. Minimum 8 hours continuous dark in each 24 hr period.	No minimum light hours. Minimum 8 hours continuous dark in each 24 hr period.
	Air quality indoors	Hens need good air quality to prevent respiratory problems, such as disease and damage to eyes and lungs. High ammonia is also bad for people working inside the shed with the hens. Hens prefer a temperature between 20 - 25°C to stay healthy, avoiding disease and heat stress.	Ammonia must be < 15 ppm, and temperature and ammonia levels are monitored and recorded daily.	Ammonia must be < 15 ppm, and temperature and ammonia levels are monitored and recorded daily.	Ammonia must be ≤ 20 ppm; but daily recording of ammonia or temperatures not required.	Ammonia must be ≤ 20 ppm; but daily recording of ammonia or temperatures not required.	Ammonia must be ≤ 20 ppm; but daily recording of ammonia or temperatures not required.
	Perches	Hens have a strong instinct to perch at night, reflecting the drive to avoid being eaten by sheltering up high. Perches provide an elevated safe area to rest and preen. During the day, perches can provide hens lower in the pecking order an escape from pecking by more dominant hens. Perches can also help improve leg strength.	Perches provided, with a minimum of 15cm space per hen, unless combined with other platform types.	Perches provided, with a minimum of 15cm space per hen, unless combined with other platform types.	Must provide areas to perch on; but no stated minimum requirements on space per hen.	Must provide areas to perch on; but no stated minimum requirements on space per hen.	Perches must have a minimum of 15cm space per hen.
	Enrichment	Enrichment encourages hens to explore, improving leg strength and heart health. It can also reduce fearfulness in hens and improve their ability to cope with stress later in life. Fearfulness can lead to adverse behaviours, such as severe feather pecking. Enrichment include hay nets, cardboard boxes and pecking stones. The more a hen can peck and pull apart something, the better they like it!	Enrichment is provided, with a minimum number of large items (e.g. hay bales, cardboard boxes and pecking stones). Enrichment items must be spread throughout the shed so all hens can 'play' with them.	Enrichment is provided, with a minimum number of large items (e.g. hay bales, cardboard boxes and pecking stones). Enrichment items must be spread throughout the shed so all hens can 'play' with them.	Enrichment not required.	Enrichment not required.	Enrichment not required.
Nest boxes	Hens are highly motivated to lay in an enclosed nesting site that is safe and secure, and where they aren't disturbed. Too few nest boxes can lead to frustration.	Hens have access to individual or group nests, with a minimum of one nest box for 5 hens; must have appropriate flooring that encourages nesting, is easily cleaned or kept fresh at all times.	Hens have access to individual or group nests, with a minimum of one nest box for 5 hens; must have appropriate flooring that encourages nesting, is easily cleaned or kept fresh at all times.	Hens have access to secluded nest area and can lay without undue competition; floor of nest area covered with flooring to prevent direct contact with wire mesh floor.	Hens have access to secluded nests and can lay without undue competition; floor of nest area covered with flooring to prevent direct contact with wire mesh floor.	One nest area provided to share between all hens in the cage; with a suitable floor to prevent hens directly contacting wire mesh floor.	
 <p>OUTDOOR ACCESS</p>	Outdoor access & size	Being outside provides hens with more opportunity run, scratch around, forage for food and dustbathe - showing normal behaviours. Being outside supports better feather cover and reduces the risk of feather pecking. Access outside also gives more space inside the shed to hens that prefer to stay inside.	Hens have unrestricted access outside for at least 8 hrs day. A maximum of 2,500 hens per hectare are allowed only when the outdoor management, shade and shelter and enrichment is excellent. Hens must be allowed outside as soon as possible after nest box training.	No access outside. However, enrichment inside the shed is required to encourage hens to explore their environment.	Hens are given some access outside during daylight hours, but there is no minimum amount of time given. There is no minimum size requirement for the outdoor area, or timing as to when hens should have access outside range.	No access outside, and no enrichment required.	Hens kept in cages.
	Popholes	Popholes cut into the sides of the sheds allow hens to access the area (range) outside. Popholes of the right size and popholes being kept open for longer encourages more hens outside more often and for longer periods.	At least one pop hole per 600 hens, closed no earlier than the time the lights are turned off in the shed or at dusk. Popholes must allow hens to see part of the range and shelter from inside the shed.	No access outside. However, enrichment inside the shed is required to encourage hens to explore their environment.	Popholes need to be evenly distributed along the shed. However, there are no requirements as to when they should open or how long they should be open for.	No access outside, and no enrichment required.	Hens kept in cages.
	Shade, shelter & shrubs/vegetation outdoors	Shelters, trees and shrubs give hens a sense of protection from overhead predators, whilst vegetation, such as grass, crops and shrubs encourages hens to scratch and forage outside - performing normal behaviours. Overhead shade and shelter encourages hens out onto the range, and for longer. Domestic hens evolved from Red Jungle fowl, who lived in the jungle under trees - this influences their behaviours (foraging, ground scratching) and need for overhead cover.	Shelters and trees/shrubs need to cover at least 20% of the range or an area of ≥ 8m ² per 1,000 hens, hens must be able to use the shelter and shade at all times; appropriate ground cover (e.g. grass), needs to be looked after, with no big muddy patches.	No access outside. However, enrichment inside the shed is required to encourage hens to explore their environment.	Hens must have access to some shelter to protect them from heat and cold, and to reduce the risk of predation.	No access outside, and no enrichment required.	Hens kept in cages.
 <p>CONSUMER ASSURANCES</p>	Animal welfare audits	Announced and particularly unannounced audits ensure transparency, integrity and credibility of standards.	Independently audited by an external auditing company, annually, and at least one unannounced audit/year. Additionally, SPCA Certified visit every single farm.	Independently audited by an external auditing company, annually, and at least one unannounced audit/year. Additionally, SPCA Certified visit every single farm.	Animal welfare audits not required.	Animal welfare audits not required.	Animal welfare audits not required.
	Feed and water free from sub-therapeutic antibiotics	Using antibiotics sub-therapeutically - where there is no diagnosed disease, condition or microorganism (bacteria etc) - can lead to antibiotic resistance and means that healthy hens are unnecessarily treated.	Use of sub-therapeutic antibiotics in feed and water is not allowed. Therapeutic antibiotics may only be used when prescribed by a registered vet for treatment of a specific diagnosed condition, disease or injury.	Use of sub-therapeutic antibiotics in feed and water is not allowed. Therapeutic antibiotics may only be used when prescribed by a registered vet for treatment of a specific diagnosed condition, disease or injury only.	Is not prohibited, however medication may only be used in accordance with registration conditions, manufacturer's instructions or professional advice.	Is not prohibited, however medication may only be used in accordance with registration conditions, manufacturer's instructions or professional advice.	Is not prohibited, however medication may only be used in accordance with registration conditions, manufacturer's instructions or professional advice.
	Use of cages	Cages prevent hens expressing normal behaviours, such as running, foraging, dustbathing and flapping their wings.	Prohibited.	Prohibited.	Prohibited.	Prohibited.	Allowed. Up to 60 hens per cage, with a minimum of 750 cm ² of space per hen or 13 hens per m ² .