



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City

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Administrative Order

No. 7

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Subject: CODE OF PRACTICE FOR POULTRY DRESSING

Pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act 8485, otherwise known as the “Animal Welfare Act of 1998”, the following rules and regulations are hereby promulgated for the information, guidance and compliance of all concerned:

Section 1. BASIC POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

All poultry processing plants shall ensure adequate protection and welfare of the birds while awaiting slaughter in order to avoid mishandling or the infliction of unnecessary pain or distress during the slaughtering process.

Meat Control Officers or Meat Inspectors from the National Meat Inspection Commission or from the local government shall supervise the meat inspection work.

The following guidelines shall be followed:

- 1.1 Slaughtering and/or dressing of shall be done in the presence of an Animal Welfare Officer.
- 1.2 The Meat Control Officer or Local Meat Inspector, Provincial, City and Municipal Veterinarian shall be deputized as Animal Welfare Officers by the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) through the NMIC.
- 1.3 All Meat Control Officers or Meat Inspectors conducting meat inspection work shall be trained by the National Meat Inspection Commission (NMIC). They shall be kept abreast of the implementing rules and guidelines of RA 8485 otherwise known as “Animal Welfare Act”.

Section 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- 2.1 *Deputized Animal Welfare Officer* refers to a person deputized by the Bureau of Animal Industry to monitor the welfare of the animals before and during slaughter process.
- 2.2 *Management* refers to the individual or group of persons managing the whole operation of the dressing plant.

2.3 **Machine Operator** refers to a technical personnel operating machineries and equipment inside the poultry dressing plant.

2.4 **Stunned Chicken** refers to a chicken which was subjected to stunning. The typical signs of effective stunning are: the chicken's eyes are wide open, legs are rigidly extended, the head is arched toward its back, wings are slightly spread and close to the body displaying rapid short burst of flapping, and tail feathers are turned up over its back.

Section 3. REQUIREMENTS FOR POULTRY DRESSING PLANTS

- 3.1. Holding accommodations for birds awaiting slaughter shall be provided with proper ventilation and protection from adverse weather.
- 3.2. Unloading arrangements shall be provided.
- 3.3. The system of moving loose crates containing birds from the delivery vehicle to the point at which the birds are removed from the crates shall be in a manner that avoid any jolting or undue tilting.
- 3.4. The unloading and shackling arrangements shall be designed to reduce to a minimum the physical effort required of the personnel and to lessen stress to the birds.
- 3.5. The positioning of the shackle line shall ensure that suspended birds are kept well clear of all obstructions even when their wings are outstretched.
- 3.6. In the whole length of the shackle line up to the point of entry into the scalding tank, the presence of the worker is necessary to provide the birds immediate attention when necessary.
- 3.7. The speed of the shackle line shall be limited to that which enables the worker to perform their tasks efficiently without undue haste and with proper regard for the welfare of the birds.
- 3.8. All dressing plants shall have contingency plans to ensure that birds awaiting slaughter are not held in excess of the recommended twelve (12) hours time limit.
- 3.9. Suffering birds shall be slaughtered without undue delay.
- 3.10. All personnel employed in the dressing plant shall be oriented to all aspects of RA 8485.
- 3.11. All dressing plants shall be registered with the Bureau of Animal Industry through the NMIC with an annual registration fee of P 200.00.

Section 4. UNLOADING AND SHACKLING OF BIRDS

- 4.1. Management shall ensure that the operation of removing poultry from crates and hanging on shackles is under the direct supervision and constant control of the animal welfare officer.

- 4.2. Poultry birds must not be suspended with the head downwards for more than three (3) minutes while turkeys for no more than six (6) minutes before slaughter or stunning.
- 4.3. Operators shall ensure that all loose birds are frequently collected.

Section 5. STUNNING AND SLITTING

- 5.1. Electrical stunning either by rod or water shall be used in poultry slaughter.
- 5.2. Electrical stunner shall be used in poultry. Provided however, that no unstunned chicken shall be bled properly
- 5.3. Management shall ensure that the stunning equipment is in good working condition at all times.
- 5.4. Stunning equipment shall incorporate visual and audible warning devices to detect any mechanical and electrical failure. In the case of chickens, the effective stunning current shall be provided by the manufacturer and displayed near the device.
- 5.5. A back-up stunner shall always be available in case an automatic electrical stunner fails.
- 5.6. Birds which are not stunned to the satisfaction of the operator shall be appropriately dealt with immediately.
- 5.7. Birds shall be bled immediately after they are stunned.
- 5.8. A back-up slitter shall be properly positioned at all times.

Section 6. PENAL PROVISIONS

Violation of any of the provisions of this Code of Practice shall be penalized in accordance with the law.

Section 7. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

In case any provision of this Code of Practice is declared contrary to law and/or unconstitutional, other provisions which are not affected thereby shall continue to be enforced and in effect.

Section 7. REPEALING CLAUSE

All Administrative Orders, Rules and Regulations and other administrative issuance or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Code are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 8. EFFECTIVITY

This Code of Practice shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in a newspaper of general circulation.


LEONARDO Q. MONTEMAYOR
Secretary