

Title: WQS-QIMA Cage Free Certification Process		Doc. Issue date: 11/15/2018	
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1) GENERAL REGULATIONS

Certification Process:

WQS Cage Free certification shall follow the same workflow and process set in the procedure LC-QP-010 (WQS General Certification Process).

Certification Audit Frequency:

A full Cage Free audit including the square root of grow-out farms and all involved facilities shall be conducted once a year. Over the course of the 12-month period, a surveillance audit at the facilities shall be conducted to assess traceability, mass balance and labelling. For recertification, the same process shall be followed.

Auditor Requirements:

Raised Cage Free Certification audits shall be performed by individuals who hold the current status of PAACO Certified Animal Welfare Auditor for Poultry or who have a minimum education level with combined relevant experience as follow:

- High School Diploma – 5 years of relevant experience within the past 10 years
- Associate or Bachelor's Degree - 3 years of relevant experience within the past 7 years
- Master's, Ph.D, DVM Degrees - 2 years of relevant experience within the past 5 years

The requirements and steps set in the procedure LC-QP-003 (Management of WQS Staff Competence) must also be followed.

2) AUDIT GUIDELINES

A. Corporate Commitment

- 1). The company must have a written animal welfare program that provides a clear understanding of how the program is to be implemented throughout the company. Cage free production constitutes birds being allowed to roam in houses with adequate space, as described below, during the grow out period.
- 2). Current senior management must endorse and fully-support the animal welfare program.
- 3). The company must have a person or management group responsible for animal welfare throughout the operation.
- 4). The company must have a mechanism in place whereby animal welfare violations can be reported without threat of retaliation. Signs stating the importance of animal welfare with contact information for reporting incidents should be posted prominently in locations where birds are handled.



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B. Grow-out Operations

B1. Training and Emergency Plan

- 1). The grow-out operation must include the standards for raising birds that are free to roam inside the houses in the training program. This training program must be conducted annually for all employees involved in conducting these procedures.
- 2). The grow-out operation must have a written plan for disaster response and recovery, including, but not limited to, SOPs addressing structural damage, loss of power, water and feed outages, and emergency depopulation using a Federal and/or State-approved method.
- 3). The grow-out operation must have a written plan for expected temperature, lighting, and ventilation levels within the house appropriate to bird age, size, and activity level. The grow-out operation must have an alarm system or regular monitoring system in place to alert farm personnel about failures of critical systems (water, electricity, etc.).
- 4). The grow-out operation must have current contact information for local emergency services, and each producer must display a list of emergency contacts.

B2. Nutrition and Feeding

- 1). Feeder and watering space must meet manufacturers' recommendations or good poultry husbandry practices. Feed and watering systems must be sited and adjusted in height as the birds grow so that these systems are easily accessible by all birds.
- 2). All feeding and drinking systems must be checked for proper operation on a daily basis. The company must have a written water sanitation program to control bacterial growth in the drinker system.
- 3). Feed intake and water consumption must be monitored.

B3. Comfort and Shelter

- 1). Poultry housing and equipment must be designed, maintained, and operated in a manner to protect the birds from environmental conditions, including typical seasonal temperatures and precipitation as well as from predatory animals or birds.
- 2). Ventilation systems must be designed, maintained, and operated in such a manner as to provide optimal air quality at all times.

B4. Health Care and Monitoring

- 1). Flocks must be inspected at least twice a day and all dead birds must be removed daily. Inspection should be conducted in a manner that does not unnecessarily disturb birds, such as moving quietly and slowly through the flock to prevent piling.
- 2). When necessary, birds must be properly euthanized. Birds that cannot access feed and water for normal growth and development must be humanely euthanized on a timely basis. A written SOP must be in place for on-farm culling and euthanasia training. Only methods of euthanasia accepted by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA, 2013) can be used. The following are acceptable methods of on-farm euthanasia:

- a. Rapid decapitation.
- b. Rapid cervical disarticulation at the junction of the skull and first cervical vertebra. If a tool is used it should separate, but not crush, the vertebrae.
- c. Displacement of oxygen with carbon dioxide or other approved gas.
- d. Captive bolt.

B5. Flock Husbandry

- 1). Birds should have space to express normal behaviors such as dust bathing, preening, eating, drinking, etc. Upon entering a broiler house, most of the birds should be sitting and relatively quiet, with background chirping or clucking. Evaluated flock husbandry practices including, but not limited to, stocking density, lighting, and gait scoring are important to assess normal behavior.
- 2). Stocking density must allow all birds to access feeders and drinkers, and will depend on the target market weight, type of housing, ventilation system, feeder/drinker equipment, litter management, and husbandry. Stocking density is typically determined at the end of the flock based on target market weight, by adjusting the initial placement numbers with the average mortality and must not exceed the following:

Maximum Bird Weight Range	Maximum Stocking Density
Below 4.5 lbs liveweight	6.5 pounds per square foot
4.5 to 5.5 lbs liveweight	7.5 pounds per square foot
5.6 to 7.5 lbs liveweight	8.5 pounds per square foot
More than 7.5 lbs liveweight	9.0 pounds per square foot

- 3). **Any abuse of birds during the grow-out phase is a major non-conformance. Non-conformances must be recorded, and corrective actions made in all circumstances. If a non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of the Grow-out Operations Section of the audit and must result in retraining of all employees of the grow-out facility.**

² Olanrewaju, H. A., Thaxton, J. P., Dozier, W. A., III, Purswell, J., Roush, W. B., & Branton, S. L. (2006). A Review of Lighting Programs for Broiler Production. *International Journal of Poultry Science*, 5(4), 301-308. doi:10.3923/ijps.2006.301.308

³ Lien, R. J., Hess, J. B., Mckee, S. R., Bilgili, S. F., & Townsend, J. C. (2007). Effect of Light Intensity and Photoperiod on Live Performance, Heterophil-to-Lymphocyte Ratio, and Processing Yields of Broilers. *Poultry Science*, 86(7), 1287-1293. doi:10.1093/ps/86.7.1287

⁴ Newberry, R. C., Hunt, J. R., & Gardiner, E. E. (1986). Light Intensity Effects on Performance, Activity, Leg Disorders, and Sudden Death Syndrome of Roaster Chickens. *Poultry Science*, 65(12), 2232-2238. doi:10.3382/ps.0652232

⁵ Deep, A., Schwan-Lardner, K., Crowe, T. G., Fancher, B. I., & Classen, H. L. (2010). Effect of light intensity on broiler production, processing characteristics, and welfare. *Poultry Science*, 89(11), 2326-2333. doi:10.3382/ps.2010-00964

⁶ Downs, K. M., Lien, R. J., Hess, J. B., Bilgili, S. F., & Dozier, W. A., III. (2006). The Effects of Photoperiod Length, Light Intensity, and Feed Energy on Growth Responses and Meat Yield of Broilers. *The Journal of Applied Poultry Research*, 15(3), 406-416. doi:10.1093/japr/15.3.406

C. Abuse and Audit Failure

- 1). The abuse of the animals is not tolerated under any circumstances. Conditions that put chicks or broilers in immediate danger are referred to as acts of intentional and egregious animal abuse. These include but are not limited to:
 - a. Poking a stick, prod, or other object into a sensitive part of the bird such as the eye, nostril, mouth, ear, or cloaca, with the exception of company approved practices such as blood collection for diagnostic testing.
 - b. Cutting off limbs, wings, skinning, or cutting into any bird that shows any sign of sensibility (consciousness), with the exception of company or religiously- approved practices to optimize bird well-being (for example, nicking for blood - example blood sample collection, Kosher or Hallal slaughter).
 - c. Malicious use of equipment that results in breaking a bone, suffocation, or death of a bird(s).
 - d. Dragging, hitting, kicking, or throwing a bird with the intention of causing injury.
 - e. Striking a bird(s) with any type of object with the intention of causing injury.
- 2). Audit Failure: Any intentional and egregious abuse observed by the auditor during any stage of this audit is considered a major non-conformance. Any non- conformance must be documented and appropriate corrective action must be taken. If a non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of that section of the audit and must result in retraining of all employees involved in that section of the process.

D. Slaughter and Processing Facility

- 1). The slaughter and processing operation must include the standards for production and correct labeling of cage free birds. This training program must be conducted annually for all employees involved in conducting these procedures
- 2). The supplier shall develop a procedure showing how customer complaints are received, investigated and responded.
The procedure must detail the responsibility for investigating customer complaints, initiating follow up actions and communicating back to the customer how the complaint has been resolved. The procedure should include criteria for the determination of the validity of complaints.
- 3). Product identification and Traceability are in place and allow finished product's lot to be tracked to the broiler. Raw material traceability records are in place and non-Cage Free products segregated from Cage Free products.
- 4). Recall documented procedure in place. Review the records of the last mock recall performed.
- 5). It is the responsibility of the site to make reasonable checks to ensure that the raw materials supplied are genuine and that claim made is proven. Traceability records must include details of the quantities purchased and amounts used at each step, to enable a mass balance exercise to be undertaken. The site must undertake a mass balance quarterly. This must ensure that the system of records maintained enables all finished product batches to be identified for a particular batch of raw materials and that, for a given finished product, the batch(es)



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of raw materials used for its production can be identified. The test must be carried out in both directions. The objective is to test the systems and, where necessary, make improvements to information recording, to allow claim to be substantiated should they be challenged by a customer or legal authority.

6). Procedures must be in place to verify that adequate checks have been carried out to minimize potential errors in packaging/label use. The procedures must also include verification of any code information or other printing carried out at the packing stage.

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3) Cage Free Audit Checklist

Auditors are reminded of the importance of maintaining biosecurity. Flocks that may be experiencing a disease must not be chosen for auditing due to biosecurity reasons.

This audit applies to the following company, complex, or facility:

Auditor: _____

Company and Plant: _____ Est. No.: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Date: _____

Accompanied by: _____

Title _____

Summary:

Area	Maximum Score	Score Needed to Pass	Facility Score
A. Corporate Commitment	120	100	
B. Growout Operations	260	220	
C. Facility Operations	240	210	
Point Total for ALL Areas	620	530	



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AUDIT FORM Confirm that each point is done by facility and award full score for each point done and zero for each point not done, except for those items for which a sliding scale is provided. Any designated “major non-conformance” (indicated in the Audit Form in boldface type) is an audit failure for that particular area (Hatchery, Grow-out, Catching & Transportation, etc.) and must be documented on the audit form. A major non-conformance occurs only if the auditor personally observes it in the course of an audit.			
<i>Requirement</i>	Points available	Check if done	Points awarded
A: Corporate Commitment			
The company has an animal welfare program endorsed and fully-supported by current senior management	40		
The company must have a person or management group responsible for animal welfare throughout the operation.	40		
The company must have a mechanism in place whereby animal welfare violations can be reported without threat of retaliation.	40		
A: Corporate Commitment – Point Total	120		

B: Grow-out Operations			
B1: Designated Management, Training and Emergency Plan			
Verify that the grow-out operation has a written task-specific training program, conducted annually for all employees involved in conducting those tasks. Verify annual training.	40		
Ensure that the grow-out operation has a written plan for disaster response and recovery which may include parameters described in the guidelines.	10		
Confirm that the grow-out operation has an alarm system or regulatory monitoring system in place to alert personnel of a failure of critical systems. Check that the operation has a written plan for temperature, lighting, and ventilation levels within the house for the duration of grow-out.	40		
Confirm that the grow-out operation has a current contact list displayed.	10		
B2: Nutrition and Feeding			
Ensure that all feeding and drinking systems are in proper operation and easily accessible by all birds. Verify that the company has a written water sanitation program to control bacterial growth in the drinker system.	20		
Ensure that feed intake and water consumption is monitored.	20		



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B3: Comfort and Shelter			
House and equipment must be maintained and operated to protect the birds from environmental conditions.	40		
Ensure the facility has a written protocol for minimum ventilation requirements.	20		
B4: Health Care and Monitoring			
Verify that mortality and culling are documented at least twice a day, with dead birds removed daily. Confirm that the company has a written plan to respond to sudden increases in mortality.	20		
B5: Flock Husbandry:			
Verify that the stocking density (based on expected market weight) in grow-out house does not exceed limits set in guidelines.	40		
Any abuse of birds during the grow-out phase is a major non-conformance and an audit failure for the grow-out operation. Non-conformances must be recorded, and corrective actions made in all circumstances. If a non-conformance is witnessed by the auditor, it results in an automatic audit failure of the Grow-out Operations Section of the audit and must result in retraining of all employees at the grow-out facility.	Audit Failure		
B: Grow-out Operations – Point Total	260		



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C: Facility Operations			
The facility shall have standards for production and correct labeling of cage free birds. This training program must be conducted annually for all employees involved in conducting these procedures.	40		
The methods and responsibility for handling and investigating the cause and resolution of complaints from customers and authorities, arising from products manufactured or handled on site, shall be documented and implemented.	40		
Ensure that the traceability and product identification are in place throughout the production process, storage and shipment. Traceability records should be available.	40		
Recall documented procedure should be in place. Mock recall should be performed annually.	40		
The facility shall maintain purchasing records, traceability of raw material usage and final product packing records. The site shall undertake documented mass balance tests quarterly.	40		
The facility shall have procedures in place to ensure that products are packed in to correct packaging and correctly labelled that use the <i>Cage Free</i> claim.	40		
C: Facility Operations - Point Total	240		