

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Animal Welfare Act 1992 Determination 2002

Disallowable instrument DI2003— 2

Section 22 of the Animal Welfare Act 1992 provides that the Minister may approve codes of practice relating to animal welfare.

The *Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals: Domestic Poultry 4th Edition* was prepared by the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) within the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) system.

Membership of the AWC comprised of representatives from each of the State and Territory Departments with responsibility for agriculture, CSIRO, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry—Australia and other committees within the PIMC system. Extensive consultation has taken place with industry and welfare groups on the development of this code.

Preface informs of the background involvement in the preparation of the code as well as setting the structure for the code.

Section 1 provides the scope of the code. It incorporates information relating to the basic needs of poultry and advises that the code is intended to provide minimum standards for the standard of care and husbandry required for layer hens in cage, barn and free-range housing systems.

Section 2 specifically relates to housing issues. It provides definitions for egg production from cage systems, barn systems and free-range systems as well as definitions for meat production systems. Section 2 outlines general information concerning welfare aspects of various equipment and building issues, as well as recommendations concerning steps to be taken to ease stress on chickens housed within various types of cage structures. It outlines the regulatory requirements for cage design and structure as endorsed by the then Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand (ARMCANZ). This section also designates the standards for cage life and when equipment should be decommissioned and assigns the requirements for non-cage systems in respect to the housing substrate, perches, nest provision for laying hens, basic free-range management and pullet rearing.

Section 3 provides information relating to the stocking density of birds and the requirement to ensure a healthy environment in maintained with acceptable levels of temperature, humidity, air exchange and ensuring that the area is free from noxious gases and has appropriate lighting.

Section 4 requires that all equipment used that poultry have access to is designed and maintained to avoid injury or pain to the bird.

Section 5 provides information regarding appropriate lighting levels for poultry.

Section 6 outlines the ventilation requirements within all housing facilities for poultry. This section also provides information regarding the safe levels of substances such as ammonia, hydrogen sulphide and carbon dioxide.

Section 7 provides information on temperature and humidity requirements for poultry, including the requirements for newly hatched birds, growing and adult poultry. There is a requirement to measure and record temperature and humidity levels when appropriate.

Section 8 is concerned with providing protection to poultry from predators and the effects of fires and floods. Information is given concerning considerations to be given to planning new accommodation.

Section 9 provides information relating to food, feed delivery and controlled feeding measures to induce moult. It establishes the amount of feeding space required per bird.

Section 10 provides information relating to water and water delivery. It establishes the amount of drinking points and water delivery systems required per bird.

Section 11 is concerned with inspections of poultry and related poultry equipment such as feeding systems and water delivery equipment. The code requires a minimum of a once daily inspection of poultry and in some cases the code requires inspections to be conducted twice daily.

Section 12 addresses matters relating to poultry health and signs of distress for workers to be aware. It gives indicators of possible ill-health signs to look for, such as reduced food and water intake, changes in the nature and level of activity, abnormal condition of feathers or droppings. It provides environmental modification steps to be taken should an outbreak of feather picking or cannibalism occur. These steps relate to adjustments being made to light intensity, temperature, humidity or alterations in pecking orders. It requires that records of treatments given, response to treatments, morbidities and mortalities are kept.

Section 13 identifies a number of management practices. These practices are only to occur in commercial enterprises and some may only apply to poultry kept in a free-range establishment. Practices discussed are artificial insemination, beak trimming, dubbing or desnooding, toe removal, toenail trimming, application of blinkers, flight restriction and identification. This section also prohibits certain management practices from being performed on poultry. Practices that are banned are castration and devoicing.

Section 14 describes appropriate hatchery management practices. It requires that culled or surplus to requirement hatchlings are to be treated as humanely as those intended to be retained for sale. It provides recommendations on the euthanasia treatment as waste disposal.

Section 15 identifies that any transport of poultry should be done in accordance with the *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Land Transport of Poultry*.

Section 16 relates to the sale of poultry and measures that should be taken to ensure that stress to the birds is avoided.

Section 17 outlines the procedures to be taken at slaughtering establishments to ensure poultry are not subjected to unnecessary stress. This section recommends that the procedures from the *Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals, Livestock and Poultry at Slaughtering Establishments (Abattoirs, Slaughter-houses and Knackeries)* is followed.

Appendix 1 provides detailed information on stocking densities for fowls housed in cage systems, including tables that identify differing stocking densities for cages that were installed prior to January 2001 and after that date.

Appendix 2 provides detailed information on stocking densities for fowls housed in non-cage systems. Tables are included for various classes of birds that are kept within a barn or a free-range establishment, for either egg or meat production. Tables include a weight range acceptable for certain stocking rates within barn establishments and the number of fowls per hectare for free-range establishments. This appendix gives additional information relating to headroom, feeding and watering points and level positioning.

Appendix 3 provides detailed information on stocking densities for turkeys. It gives detailed information on housing substrates, nests temperature ranges and space allowances. A table is provided that identifies differing stocking rates based on age and weight. Further information is given in respect to management practices such as beak trimming, toenail trimming and the saddling of hens.

Appendix 4 provides detailed information on stocking densities for ducks. A table is provided that identifies differing stocking rates based on age and weight. Further information is given in respect to management practices such as bill trimming and handling of birds.

Appendix 5 provides information on space and feed allowances for geese. Further information is given in respect to management practices such as catching and holding and moult inducement.

Appendix 6 provides information on the space allowances for pheasants. It gives additional information in respect to the management practice of beak trimming.

Appendix 7 provides detailed information on the stocking densities of guinea fowl. Additional information is given in respect to optimum temperatures.

Appendix 8 provides information on the space allowances for partridges. It gives additional information in respect to the management practice of beak trimming.

Appendix 9 provides information in respect to housing facilities for quail. It provides detailed information in regard to the space allowances for birds.

Appendix 10 provides detailed information on the housing facilities for pigeons. It provides information on space allowances as well as information regarding management practices of weaning and beak trimming. The transportation of pigeons is addressed in this appendix.