

Animal Welfare:

Poultry

During animal health emergency situations, animal welfare issues must be considered and addressed. This handout overviews some pertinent animal welfare considerations for poultry during these situations.

Animal Welfare

Animal welfare is the ethical responsibility of ensuring the well-being of animals. It refers to the physical and mental state of the animal and includes consideration of the animal's health, behavior, and biological function. **Animal welfare plans need to be continuously evaluated and refined**

The Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare

The internationally recognized ideal states of welfare, can provide valuable guidance and a framework for determining and assessing animal welfare situations.

- **Freedom from hunger and thirst**
 - Providing ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain health and vigor
- **Freedom from discomfort**
 - Providing appropriate environment, including shelter and a comfortable resting area
- **Freedom from pain, injuries, or illness**
 - Providing disease preventive measures or rapid diagnosis and treatment
- **Freedom to express normal behavior**
 - Providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind
- **Freedom from fear and distress**
 - Ensuring conditions and treatment which avoids mental suffering

Freedom from Hunger and Thirst

- **Daily requirements vary with species and age**
- **Monitor all feed and water intake**

	Water (per 100 birds/day)	Feed (per 100 birds/day)
Layer Chickens	5 gallons	17 pounds
Broiler Chickens	5 gallons	10 pounds
Turkeys	12 gallons	40 pounds

Freedom From Discomfort

- **Appropriately sized confinement space**
 - Indoor housing
 - Protection from elements
 - Ventilation
 - Temperature
- **Clean litter**
 - Wood shavings, paper by-products, hulls, ground corncobs, chopped straw
- **Avoid overcrowding**
- **Waste management**

Freedom From Pain, Injury, Disease

- **Veterinary examination upon entry/exit**
 - Illness
 - Injury
 - Nutritional well-being
- **Treat appropriately**
 - Medical, surgical
 - Humane euthanasia
- **Monitor daily**
- **May have delay in showing signs**

Freedom To Express Normal Behavior

- **Flock animals**
- **Natural behavior**
 - Preening, dust bathing
 - Foraging
 - Nesting, perching
- **Separate birds by farm of origin; keep in pre-established groups**

Freedom From Fear and Distress

- **Humane handling**
 - Experienced handlers
- **Humane euthanasia**
 - Avoid startling or sudden movements
 - "Pile ups" can cause injury or suffocation of birds on the bottom
- **Safe transport**
 - Avoid overcrowding

Responders Mental Health and Animal Welfare

- **Response stress can affect mental health of responders**
- **May affect animals welfare**
 - Responder apathy
 - Responder fatigue
 - Uncompleted tasks
 - Carelessness of tasks
 - Forgetting overall welfare needs

Additional Resources

- American Veterinary Medical Association. The veterinarian's role in animal welfare at www.avma.org/products/animal_welfare/welfare.pdf
- AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia www.avma.org/issues/animal_welfare/euthanasia.pdf
- OIE Animal Welfare Guidelines. Terrestrial Animal Health Code www.oie.int
- American College of Animal Welfare www.acaw.org

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