



CODE OF PRACTICE

For the keeping of poultry
for non-commercial purposes
including pure breeds of poultry for breeding and
exhibition as
a recreational activity.

Poultry Stud Breeders & Exhibitors Victoria

Victorian Poultry
Fanciers' Association
Ltd

Trading as:
Poultry Stud Breeders
& Exhibitors Victoria

ACN 099 521 847

*Guidelines that support
good practice*

www.vpfa.com.au

This statement is in two parts

A **CODE of PRACTICE** that targets the keeping of Poultry for non-commercial purposes and in particular the keeping of pure breeds of Poultry for breeding and exhibition as an accepted recreational activity. Non-commercial poultry refers to backyard enterprises where poultry are kept for eggs and or meat as well as for breeding and exhibition.

A series of **GUIDELINES** directed mainly towards keeping pure breeds of poultry for breeding and exhibition as an accepted recreational activity. These guidelines can also be applied to backyard flocks where applicable.

This Code of Practice and the supporting information is aimed at providing individuals and authorities with acceptable standards that promote good practice.

Special thanks to
T.W. Bowden
President South Australian Poultry Association

INTRODUCTION

People keep back-yard flocks of poultry as a recreational activity to provide eggs and meat, for breeding and for exhibition. Whatever the reason poultry are kept they must be adequately managed to ensure flock welfare and neighbourhood harmony.

Presentation is vital in the way each individual's poultry establishment is seen through the eyes of neighbours, visitors and local authorities. It implies focussing on practice that shows the establishment in an aesthetically appealing, neat and tidy, hygienically acceptable way. Promotion of the activity as being worthwhile through positive communication especially with neighbours and the wider community is essential. Positive publicity in all its forms and through a wide range of channels by individuals, clubs and associations is vital. While each individual who keeps poultry has his or her own personal approach they must realise that the image they project translates to the overall perception of keeping poultry. If individuals set high standards and maintain them the overall perception of keeping poultry as a worthwhile recreational activity will be high. Outsiders, and in particular, local authorities and government draw general conclusions about a particular activity based on the lowest standard they have experienced.

As individuals we owe it to our peers to ensure that we strive to present our hobby in such a way that others realise that we are very serious about what we do as we work towards a standard of excellence that elevates the keeping of poultry as a recreational activity to the level it deserves.

This Code of Practice is one mechanism that will help the aforementioned goal being achieved.

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

To ensure the highest possible standard, Poultry Stud Breeders & Exhibitors Victoria shall:-

Adopt a Code of Practice for the keeping of poultry for non-commercial purposes and in particular pure breeds of poultry and that this code of practice (with supporting guidelines) be the parameter under which the VPFA Ltd. and its members operate and that this code be promoted as a standard in the community.

Work co-operatively with appropriate government departments to have this code of practice developed and universally accepted as the benchmark of good practice for the keeping of non-commercial poultry and in particular breeding and exhibiting of pure breeds of poultry.

Provide support for breeders and exhibitors who are challenged by local government authorities and/or other agencies concerning the keeping of pure breeds of poultry only if they abide by the provisions of this code and are financial members of the Victorian Poultry Fanciers Association Ltd.

Have both an advisory and conciliatory role in the event of conflict.

From time to time develop supplements and amendments to this Code of Practice that will enhance the development of good practice in all aspects of keeping, breeding and exhibiting poultry.

2. THE PURPOSE

The keeping of poultry for non-commercial purposes whether the poultry are pure or cross breeds requires a basic Code of Practice that applies to all keepers of such poultry.

Victorian Poultry Fanciers Association Ltd. [Trading as Poultry Stud Breeders & Exhibitors Victoria] is committed to the promotion of keeping of pure breeds of poultry and provides leadership and support for individuals and organisations interested in the Breeding and Exhibition of Pure Breeds of Poultry.

The breeding and exhibiting of pure breeds of poultry including large fowl, bantams, waterfowl (ducks and geese) and turkeys has been a worthwhile recreational activity for over 120 years. It is a stimulating activity that appeals to all ages. It provides young people with an activity that encourages responsibility, thought stimulation, physical activity, challenge, competition, sense of achievement and most of all a rewarding use for their spare- time.

It also meets similar needs for older people and plays an important part in providing those in their retirement with an interest that fills a void.

Longevity of life for many older people can be traced back to some challenging recreational activity. This is particularly the, case with the breeding and exhibition of poultry.

The hobbyist is responsible for maintaining the gene pool of pure breeds of poultry and the survival of many rare, pure breeds of poultry, most of which could be considered to be endangered.

This responsibility has taken on even greater significance as governments surrender their involvement by closing poultry research stations which once provided an additional purebred gene pool.

Code of practice guidelines give to this recreational activity, parameters within which individuals can operate and provides a professional code which will ensure a high degree of quality control.

They provide a valuable standard when dealing with government either in negotiations for specific conditions and concessions for members or in the case of dispute.

While local government regulations apply to the keeping of poultry, birds and livestock this code of practice complements those regulations and provides information that may be used to negotiate special conditions for the breeders and exhibitors of pure, breeds of large fowl, bantams, waterfowl and turkeys.

3. PART 1 THE CODE OF PRACTICE

- 1. NUMBERS**
- 2. HOUSING**
- 3. HYGIENE**
- 4. FEED and WATER**
- 5. NOISE**
- 6. TRANSPORTING**
- 7. POULTRY SHOWS**
- 8. GENERAL**

THE CODE of PRACTICE

1. NUMBERS

The number of adult birds (*birds over the age of 12 months*)

- ❖ **For backyard flocks of pure breeds of poultry used for eggs or meat for personal use.**

The maximum number of adult birds to be kept shall be 19 (nineteen) The minimum number of males shall be 2 (two). These shall be inclusive.

- ❖ **For flocks of pure breeds of poultry used for breeding and for exhibition.**

The maximum number of adult birds to be kept for any one breed or colour of a breed shall be 30 (thirty).

The maximum number of males shall be 20% (twenty percent) of that number.

These numbers are considered to be the lowest desirable number to maintain an adequate gene pool to maintain an effective breeding programme.

2. HOUSING

For all types of non commercial poultry the basic requirements for housing must provide:-

* A minimum shed space for each individual bird kept as follows:

Large Fowl - 0.4 square metres per bird.

Bantams - 3 bantams require the area of 2 large fowl.

Ducks (excluding muscovy) - 1.0 square metre per bird.

Muscovy Ducks and Geese - 2.0 square metres per bird.

Turkeys - 3.0 square metres per bird.

- * Protection from extremes of climate.
- * Clean fresh air, adequate ventilation and freedom from draught.
- * An adequate number of feed and water stations to meet the requirements of all birds.
- * Protection from predators and vermin including bird proofing.
- * Adequate light and regular photo periods (length of daylight hours).
- * Adequate floor base. This must be of an impervious nature unless dirt floors are preferred then side walls must be buried at least 300mm into the ground.
- * Adequate drainage for roof and surface water.
- * The open aspects of pens must have a sheet metal surround not less than 400 mm above ground and 300 mm in the ground.
- * All external doors must have a kick plate of sheet metal of 400 mm with an additional 300 mm in the ground.

3. HYGIENE

- * All housing must be kept in a state of cleanliness that is conducive to the good health of the birds and public health.
- * Diseased birds must be isolated from the main flock and treated with the appropriate medication immediately or euthanised.
- * Dead birds must be disposed of promptly in a manner that is consistent with Local Government practices.
- * Vermin must be controlled as soon as there is evidence that they have entered the premises.
- * Housing and birds must be inspected for parasites on a monthly basis. Incidental treatments must be implemented immediately there is an infestation between monthly inspections. This will apply to internal and external parasites.
- * Birds must be excluded from external runs during wet weather

4. FEED and WATER

Feed

- * Poultry must be fed at least once daily or have a constant supply of food provided in a suitable container.
- * If birds are fed in the evening there must be sufficient daylight hours *to* allow all feed to be consumed.
- * Birds must be provided with adequate fresh, clean food at least once per day. Where birds have a constant supply of food containers must be used that are unlikely to cause injury to the birds.
- * Containers must not be placed in positions where they can become contaminated with faeces.
- * Mouldy food must not be fed.

Water

- * Clean, cool drinking water must be available at all times.
- * Water containers must be located in a position where they are, unlikely to become contaminated with faeces.
- * Containers must be kept in a clean condition and as free as possible foreign matter.

5. NOISE

Bird 'noise' must be kept to a minimum. Screening of cages with shrubs can help. Blinds may be used. The time birds can be kept in darkness can coincide with local government regulations concerning the use of lawn mowers.

6. TRANSPORTING

The basic requirements that must be met when transporting birds are as follows:-

- * The material from which the transporting crate is constructed must provide protection for the birds from injury.
- * Adequate ventilation must be provided. Birds must not be able to protrude their heads through any ventilation opening.
- * Lids and doors must be secured once the birds are placed in the container.
- * Adequate space must be provided for all birds. Allow an area the size of each bird plus an imaginary envelope of 25mm around each bird. If two or more birds are placed in the same container determine the total space required by multiplying the space described above by the number of birds. Increase ventilation openings appropriately.
- * Suitable soft, clean, dry bedding at a minimum depth of 25mm must be provided.
- * Poultry that travel for more than 8 hours must have access to food and water after that time. All poultry must be released from their containers on arrival at their destination and given food and water.
- * Poultry must not be transported in extreme weather conditions. Temperatures above 35 degrees C are considered too high
- * During transportation containers must be secured and covered to minimise stress or injury.

It is illegal to transport poultry in the boot of a car

7. POULTRY SHOWS

Cage sizes (minimum sizes)

These minimum cage sizes apply to venues where:

- **The show is held over three days or more,**
 - **A club, society, association or venue owner replaces or builds cages after the endorsement of this Code of Practice.**
 - **The minimum cage sizes required by this Code of Practice does not apply to existing cages provided that they are used for shows of two days duration or less.**
 - **Existing cages must be kept in an acceptable state of repair and must not present any danger to the health and well being of the poultry that occupy them.**
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- **Large Fowl and Waterfowl (excluding Muscovy Drakes) –**
600 mm wide, 600 mm deep and 750 mm high.
 - **Bantam Fowls –**
400 mm wide, x 400 mm deep x 400 mm high.
 - **Muscovy Drakes, Geese, Turkeys –**
1200 mm wide x 1200 mm deep x 1200 mm high.
 - **Breeding Teams - (1 male & 2 females) Large Fowl and Waterfowl –**
1200 mm x 1200 mm x 1200 mm high.
 - **Breeding Teams - (1 male and 2 females) Bantams –**
600 mm x 600 mm x 600 mm high.

Bedding.

- * Must be clean, dry and adequate to absorb droppings. Treated pine shavings or sawdust must not be used.

Watering facilities.

- * Adequate, water points must be available for exhibitors to obtain water for their birds.
- * A supply of clean, cool water must be made available for each bird
- * For shows of three days duration or more the, organisers of the show must feed and water all birds. Adequate water and food (where applicable) containers must be provided. Soiled and damp bedding must be replaced daily.
- * For shows of two days duration or less the exhibitor must take responsibility for his or her poultry. They must be adequately fed and watered for the duration of the show.

At all shows, sick or distressed birds must be removed from exhibition and treated or euthanised.

8. GENERAL

- * Where leg bands are used, these rings must be of the appropriate size and nature so as not to cause injury or risk getting legs caught.
- * Poultry must not be tethered as a means of restraint.
- * Poultry must not be housed with any other species of bird, reptile or animal, whereby the keeping of which in the same accommodation, will be detrimental to the bird(s) health or welfare.
- * A person who has the care or charge of poultry must comply with any reasonable direction of an authorised officer as may be necessary to assess the welfare of any bird under their control.
An authorised officer means a person empowered by legislation to enforce welfare or protection laws - e.g. RSPCA, Stock Inspector or Police Officer.
- * A person who has the care or charge of poultry must use a method of management that ensures that birds are not subjected to unreasonable or unnecessary pain, suffering or distress.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act states that the owner of an animal is the person who has custody or control of it and that person must provide adequate and appropriate food, water, exercise and shelter.

PART 2 GUIDELINES THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR GOOD PRACTICE

The guidelines have been developed to provide more detailed information concerning the Code of Practice

GUIDELINES TO GOOD PRACTICE

PART 1 – NUMBERS

For Pure Breeds for Breeding and Exhibition Purposes

The number of adult birds (over the age of 12 months) that can be kept will be determined by the space available.

For any one breed or colour of a breed:-

The maximum number of adult birds required is 30

The maximum number of males be 20%.

These numbers would be inclusive.

These numbers are required to maintain a satisfactory gene pool and to ensure that an adequate scientific breeding programme can be maintained. There needs to be enough birds to provide a show team as well as birds for the breeding pen. The latter are often not in show condition.

For Consideration

- *Established breeders and exhibitors need to monitor numbers so that they are within recommended range and have a contingency plan if approached by local authorities especially if there has been a complaint.*
- *New breeders and exhibitors need to be aware of council regulations and carefully consider the space they have available and realise that although they may start with 2 or 3 birds of one breed they will need to build to numbers within the range suggested to have an effective team. Avoid the trap of collecting too many breeds or colours at the start.*
- *The Association may negotiate with local government authorities for variations to the number of poultry that can be kept for breeding and exhibition purposes where local government regulations indicate a specific number.*

PART 2 HOUSING

Various types of housing are required and the actual size varies with the type of birds being kept.

At least 3 types of housing are required for any brooding facility.

- (a) Breeding Pens which house one male and one, two or three females
- (b) Rearing Pens - larger pens where a number of immature birds are raised or spare breeding or show birds are housed.
- (c) Show Training Pens where birds are placed in readiness for show. These pens can double as housing for males and individual females.

If an incubator is used then provision for an artificial brooding method will be required. Suitable storage for the incubator and brooders will be required. A larger shed or garage may be used

Existing Housing

Before using existing housing ensure that:-

- * It is structurally sound and neat in appearance;
- * Vertical walls are buried to a depth of 300 mm;
- * Roofing is rain proof to keep litter dry;
- * Doors fit tightly and that all areas are bird proof;
- * There is adequate drainage for roof and surface water;
- * If existing housing is on a fence line then the floor is impervious;
- * It is in good repair and of neat appearance.

New Housing

Before establishing new housing ensure that:-

- * Local government requirements are met. Plan requirements in conjunction with local government regulations - it may be possible to obtain approval for a larger shed which then can be utilised with internal structures to meet your needs. Some sizes of garden sheds and aviaries can be erected without council approval being required. Check this out and then make the necessary modifications;
- * It is at least one, metre from fences;
- * It is aesthetically pleasing;
- * It has a northerly aspect if possible to maximise sun penetration and minimise the effect of rain;
- * Fronts of pens are covered with bird-proof mesh or netting,
- * Doors fit tightly and have a 400 mm kick plate;
- * Floors are impervious - e.g.. concrete, pavers etc. If dirt floors are preferred the vertical walls should penetrate the ground by at least 300 mm;
- * Ventilation is adequate - all ventilation openings must be bird proofed;
- * If using prefabricated garden sheds or aviaries they must be secured.

Screening for both existing and new housing

- * Screening is important. The use of shrubs, hedges, lattice, shade cloth, trellising or another material that screens housing from neighbours or general view is beneficial. Screening also provides a boundary to the area and enables greater control.
- * Some recommended shrubs are :- native wisteria, hakeas, wattles, drought resistant ivy and shrubs suitable for hedging.

For consideration

- * *Develop housing screens and surrounds that are aesthetically pleasing and functional.*
- * *Regular maintenance is essential Existing housing should be maintained in a manner that enhances rather than detracts from the environment.*
- * *Before building new housing -visit established members to collect ideas and discuss concerns.*
- * *The Association could compile detailed information on housing and surrounds including plans photographs; brochures video tapes that could be made available to registered members.*

PART 3 HYGIENE

Within poultry house, pens and cages.

- * Keep litter clean and dry - in larger pens for poultry establish deep litter for waterfowl use barley straw For training pens and smaller pens use a suitable bedding such as sand, shavings, sawdust and chair.
- * Clean out regularly. Any form of litter odour is unacceptable. Ensure sound management practices are, used at all times.
- * Control vermin and, parasites by :-
 - Removing all possible breeding places.
 - Implementing a regular baiting programme for rodents.
 - Bird proofing all housing.
 - Spraying housing regularly for parasites.
 - Treating stock regularly for internal and external parasites.
 - Storing all feed in vermin-proof containers.
 - Providing clean water in suitable containers the-at are secure. Automatic watering must be 'leak proof'.
 - Waterfowl will need special attention and must not have access to mud below water containers or drains.
 - Keeping houses and surrounds clean, neat and tidy. Do not store surplus materials on roofs, against walls, between sheds and fences.
 - Dispose of dead birds in a hygienic manner and as quickly as possible.
 - Do not free range birds in residential areas.

For consideration

- *Sound hygiene practice is essential. It is one area that can make or break you.*
- *Set and maintain your own high standards and minimise the likelihood of complaint and council attention.*

PART 4 NOISE

Keeping too many birds for the area available, positioning enclosures too close to boundaries, crowing males and cackling females are the main causes of unacceptable noise levels.

To reduce noise -

- Keep only the essential number of adult birds for the area and conditions that are available.
- Keep only effective minimum number of adult males.
- Use screening to baffle noise.
- Cover open parts of housing with blinds to keep birds in darkness.
- Blinds can be lowered at dusk and be raised at a time that coincides with the local government regulations concerning the use of lawn mowers.
- Breed choice is important because some breeds are noisier than others.
- Place males in dark boxes at night in a larger shed or garage.
- Soundproof sheds using sound absorbing material e.g. egg cartons.
- To reduce noise avoid outside lights. Avoid keeping birds hungry.

For consideration

Excessive noise has been the bane of poultry breeders especially in residential areas since keeping poultry began. In more recent times the frustrations of society have caused less tolerance and the crowing rooster syndrome has caused people to react in a negative way towards poultry keepers:

Try to reduce noise right from the start. Don't overstock or keep excess adult birds.

Adopt effective noise management practices

Once a complaint has been made there is often protracted trouble because the complainant hears noise even though a genuine effort has been made to reduce it.

Good neighbour practices should be a top priority.

PART 5 COMMUNICATION WITH NEIGHBOURS

Establish positive communication with neighbours. Sound relationships can be enhanced by

- Regular supply of eggs and manure,
- Seek their views and encourage them to express concerns
- Act on any reasonable requests promptly and report back on actions taken
- Share achievements with them
- Explain the hobby to them and stress the importance of keeping pure breeds give them some of your excess birds to keep in their own chook house, if they wish.
- Let local children visit (while you are home) to see your birds.
- Arrange for a broody hen to be set at your local school or kindergarten if they have the facilities and will co-operate with care till chicks hatch.
- Organise school talks and demonstrations assist secondary school biology classes with the study of genetics as it relates to colour, combs and other aspects.

For consideration

- *The closer neighbours are to the establishment the greater the potential for problems.*
- *Consider neighbours - don't assume that things are all right. Establish positive communication*
- *Attend conscientiously to the physical environment and to husbandry.*
- *Consider if roles were reversed and the reaction that would have. In other words step into your neighbours shoes, look over the fence and see if you like what you see.*
- *Remember that an antagonist approach will not work so work on positive, friendly relationships that will have mutual advantages to both parties*

PART 6 OTHER MATTERS

These matters were mentioned by respondents and need to be considered because they highlight the positive aspects of keeping poultry and help raise it's profile. Anything that provides the community with a better understanding of our activities should be promoted to gain the optimum exposure.

Consider:

- ❖ Publicity in all it's forms.
- ❖ Positive promotion.
- ❖ Awareness opportunities - involving government figures in functions.
- ❖ Television and radio coverage.
- ❖ Canvass appropriate groups about the importance of keeping particularly pure breeds for breeding and exhibition.
- ❖ Promote the social side. Develop strategies to encourage potential new members to have an acceptable start in the hobby.
- ❖ Press releases.

For consideration

- The promotion of the breeding and exhibiting of pure breeds of poultry as a worth-while recreational activity should be the priority of individuals clubs and the Association at all times.
- Often we are our own worst enemies. We need to focus on the positive stress our beliefs with conviction and be proactive.
- The provision of resource materials on the various aspects of poultry keeping, such as husbandry, breeds and breeding, genetics, exhibiting and judging.
- Strategies to deal with local authorities need to be carefully thought through to enable us to negotiate in a positive way for better acceptance of what we are about while preserving what we already have It is stressed that the Association will not condone, sub-standard husbandry practices but it may be able to provide information to Councils on acceptable standard.

PART 7 TRANSPORTING POULTRY AND SHOWS

One of the purposes of breeding pure breeds of poultry is to compete at various shows during the year. This brings into play another dimension to the activity.

Competition is one way that the breeder can compare his or her stock against those of other breeders and determine the progress he or she is making in the breeding program. Seeking the opinion of a qualified judge who compares each exhibit to the approved standard of excellence for the breed gives the breeder an outside assessment of his or her progress in the development of the breed.

It is not the intention of this paper to delve into the intricacies of preparing birds for exhibition but there are two aspects of exhibition that require comment in connection with good practice.

They are :-

- (1) Transporting poultry to and from the show**

- (2) Care of exhibits at the show**

TRANSPORTING

Poultry entered for competition must be transported to the Show venue and at the end of the show returned home.

Generally exhibition poultry are trained to show and when in top show condition are reasonably docile. This docility means that they normally 'travel' without stress.

There are a number of basic considerations that must be addressed when transporting poultry. These include

- (1) The type of container or carrying box. The following factors need to be considered :-
 - (a) the outer shell
 - (b) space for individual birds
 - (c) ventilation
 - (d) bedding material
- (2) The method of transport and safety considerations
- (3) The weather conditions
- (4) Other matters

The type of CONTAINER or CARRYING BOX

The type of container used to transport birds varies considerably from cardboard cartons to elaborately constructed metal or timber boxes. Commercial poultry crates are not recommended for transporting exhibition poultry as feathers can be damaged because of the relative openness of the crate construction.

The outer shell - This may be cardboard (carton), made of timber or metal, have a timber frame , base and lid with fabric sides(eg hessian) Whatever the material used it must be suitable to withstand the weight of the type, of bird. A small bantam will need a lighter container than a large fowl, duck or turkey.

Internal divisions are placed in some containers to provide individual compartments.

Whatever the construction it must be strong, be secure so that the birds cannot escape and provide the bird with protection so that it is not – damaged or placed in danger.

A ‘soft’ shell (cardboard) may be preferred for use inside a vehicle.

Space for individual birds -Whether- birds are provided with individual compartments or several are placed in the one space it is important that adequate room is provided. This will depend on the breed of poultry being carried. Male birds and some females need separate compartments. White birds too need separate compartments as they can become soiled if they share, space in the same box.

Adequate space implies that the bird is not crowded or crammed and that it can move freely in the area provided. There is an optimum space for each breed. Too much space not only takes up unnecessary room which can be at a premium if a number of birds have to be transported but it increases the possibility of injury as the bird can be ‘thrown about’ during travel. Too little space means that the bird is crammed, feather damage can occur and when transported considerable distances birds become over heated and stressed. Overcrowding birds will have the same effect.

Ventilation - Adequate ventilation is vital. Ventilation openings in the form of holes or slits along the sides of containers is essential.

These openings should be along both sides of a multi compartment container with one opening for each compartment. Openings must be large enough for ample air to enter and leave the container. It is important that the openings are not large enough to allow the bird to escape or get its head (or tail) outside the container.

Bedding Material - suitable material should be placed on the floor of the container to cushion any sudden movement and to absorb droppings. , The depth of this bedding will depend on the type of bird but a minimum 2-4 cm is recommended. chaff , shavings, sawdust and straw are all suitable materials.

Bedding should be changed frequently.

The METHOD OF TRANSPORT and SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Whether containers or carrying boxes are transported in a trailer or in the back of a station wagon or utility it is important to make certain that they are secure.

When constructing containers it is good practice to make them uniform to fit the conveyance.

Ventilation must be adequate. Care must be taken when packing containers that air can circulate around each container and readily enter air holes in individual compartments or containers.

When ventilation is inadequate birds overheat, become stressed and, in severe cases, die.

When covering loads on trailer or utilities with tarpaulins allow for adequate air movement between containers.

All containers must be stacked and tied so that they are secure and cannot move when the vehicle is in motion. Lids must be secured so that they cannot open and allow the, birds to escape.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Poultry must not be transported on very hot days. Temperatures *over 35 degrees C* are considered to be too high.

Poultry transported in extremely cold conditions can suffer stress if they are removed from a carrying box where their body heat has warmed their immediate environment, and they are placed in a show pen where the temperature is cold and is likely to remain cold.

Exposed containers on trailers, roof racks and utilities must be covered with a waterproof covering in wet weather.

OTHER MATTERS

- Containers or carrying boxes must be kept in a good state of repair.
- Lids and locks must be checked regularly.
- Containers must be kept clean and free from parasites
- The size, weight and external structure of containers and carrying boxes should be such that they do not cause personal injury to the person handling them.
- Ensure that your containers are named for easy identification.

For consideration

- *Determine the size of the container or carrying box to suit the type of poultry being transported.*
- *Consider where the containers will be placed during transport and determine the outer shell material.*
- *Construct the container in such a way that it offers a secure environment for each bird and that it is easy to handle.*
- *Design individual containers to fit an overall loading plan that maximizes the space available and allows the load to be secured effectively*
- *Check that ventilation is adequate for individual compartments or containers and for the overall load.*
- *Select a suitable bedding material and have a regular cleaning plan.*
- *Check weather conditions and make certain that each bird's 'travel comfort' is optimised.*
- *Have a contingency plan to cover extreme weather conditions.*
- *Run a safety check on containers both from the bird's aspect and also for your own safety. Include load security and load covering*
- *Are your containers or carrying boxes well presented and clearly named?*

AT SHOWS

The VENUE OWNER' S RESPONSIBILITY

The organisation that owns a showing venue needs to provide the following:-

- * **Show cages that are adequate for the size of the type of poultry being exhibited.**

See Code of Practice

- * **Suitable bedding material for the pens**

Straw, shavings, sawdust, or chaff are suitable .

Treated pine shavings or dust is toxic and must not be used.

Adequate bedding must be provided to absorb droppings.

Some venue owners require the hiring club to provide bedding and remove it after the show.

- * **Pest Control**

Venue owners must carry out a regular parasite control programme.

It is recommended that pens be sprayed at least once per year

Watering Facilities

Adequate water points must be available for exhibitors to obtain water for their birds.

If the show runs for more than three, days the venue owner or the club organising the show will be required to the supply suitable water containers for each bird and in the case of waterfowl, geese and turkeys also feed containers.

A supply of clean water must be made available to each bird at all times.

For consideration

The management of the venue needs a maintenance programme to ensure that facilities are kept in the best possible condition.

A clearly understood hire agreement defining hirer responsibilities needs to be available, explained and endorsed by both parties, Insurance responsibilities need to be spelt out.

*Make the setting as aesthetically pleasing as possible.
Provide information facilities to explain how to keep poultry to the public.*

AT SHOWS

THE EXHIBITORS RESPONSIBILITY

As it applies to the welfare of poultry.

At shows of two days duration or less the exhibitor is responsible for the welfare of each bird he or she has entered.

Matters to be considered: -

(1) Is the bedding provided ample. If not top it up. This may particularly apply where birds are penned the night before the show.

(2) Water and feed. It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to provide a suitable drinking vessel and clean water for each bird. The best vessels are those that can be secured on cage front (inside the pen) so that they cannot be tipped over. In cooler weather vessels may be moved from cage to cage rather than supply a vessel for each cage. Some clubs require water vessels to be removed for judging. As this is a short time it does not affect the welfare of the bird. Birds are fed by the exhibitor after judging. When birds are penned the night before a one day show they must be fed and watered if they have travelled for more than 8 hours.

For consideration

- *Collect a suitable set of water vessels preferably of a type that can be secured to the front of the cage so that it cannot be tipped over. It may be easier to have one vessel for each exhibit as this gives the exhibitor more time to meet with others and to discuss birds.*
- *Have a bulk supply of water for a suitable dispensing vessel with you,*
- *Bring enough feed to allow all of your birds to be given adequate feed.*
- *Do not overfeed as this is wasteful. Consider the safety of others by placing carrying boxes in a safe place.*

FURTHER REFERENCE

Also refer to Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Codes of Practice that include, but are not limited to, the:

- 1. Code of practice for the public display and exhibition of animals*
- 2. Code of practice for the housing of caged birds*
- 3. Code of accepted farming practice for the welfare of poultry*
- 4. Code of practice for the land transport of poultry*

More information on these Codes of Practice may be found on the DPI's website.

Please be aware that legislation may differ between states and territories.

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