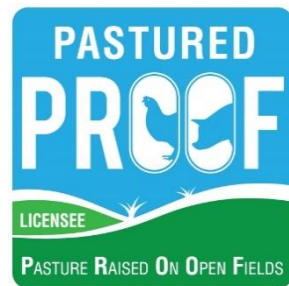


The focus of PROOF certification is the on farm management of livestock in a farming system that provides unrestricted daytime access to actively managed, pastured range areas in an environment that encourages purposeful use of those areas.



POULTRY STANDARDS 2017

Version 1.7

Introduction

The PROOF – Pasture Raised On Open Fields certification program was developed to certify farms that adhere to these standards. The focus of PROOF certification is the on farm management of livestock in a farming system that provides unrestricted daytime access to actively managed, pastured range areas in an environment that encourages purposeful use of those areas.

This Standard covers the on farm management of **layer hens, meat chicken, ducks and turkeys**.

Onus is on the operator and their employees/contractors to ensure at all times that they are fully aware of all relevant aspects of the PROOF Standard relating to their operation. It is also the responsibility of the operator to be aware of extra regulatory or market requirements that are in addition to the PROOF standard. These may include but are not limited to:

- Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals—Domestic Poultry or equivalent Australian Standard or State code where one exists).
- Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for the Land Transport of Livestock.
- Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals—Livestock at Slaughtering Establishments (or equivalent Australian Standard or State code where one exists).
- Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code - Standard 4.2.5 – Primary Production and Processing Standard for Eggs and Egg Product.
- National Farm Biosecurity Manual Poultry Production.

Compliance with all such regulatory requirements is outside the scope of these standards however, when a particular standard aligns with one that is set out in the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Domestic Poultry, an * will be applied to that standard.

Pastured Definition

All poultry, once sufficiently feathered, are raised outdoors with continuous and unrestricted daytime access to paddocks that are suitable for grazing and are provided with shade and shelter. All birds must use the paddocks each day unless; they choose to shelter because of inclement weather or short term confinement for veterinary treatment. Feed supplements are available to ensure all their nutritional needs are met. Birds are kept at a stocking intensity that will ensure forage is always available in an actively managed rotational grazing system.

Core Values

1. **All poultry are able to range in open fields or paddocks**
2. **All poultry are kept at stocking densities that will ensure access to forage and grazing**
3. **All poultry are able to interact with their flock and to carry out natural behaviours**
4. **Poultry will not be kept in cages**
5. **Densely confined production systems and feed lotting are not permitted**
6. **All poultry will be protected from predation**
7. **All poultry will be fed to meet their nutritional needs as well as production requirements**
8. **All poultry will be inspected daily**

* Denotes that minimum requirements for this element are also set out in the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Domestic Poultry

Guide to using the PROOF Poultry Standard

- The broad objectives of the standard are described at the beginning of each section.
- Each requirement of the standard is numbered and must be complied with.
- Where information is presented inside a textbox, its purpose is to provide additional explanatory information.
- A guide to records that must be kept to demonstrate compliance with the standard will be indicated at the end of each section.

1. All birds are able to range freely in open fields or paddocks

Range Management

Objective: This standard requires that all poultry have continuous and unrestricted daytime access to paddocks and that stocking intensity is monitored to ensure that forage is always available for the birds in an actively managed rotational grazing system. Stocking densities need to be monitored and adjusted as necessary to achieve compliance with these standards.

- 1.1. A farm map will be provided to PROOF. The map may be hand drawn or a satellite image.
The map must include the following:
 - 1.1.1. The Lot number and Deposited Plan number for the property being certified;
 - 1.1.2. The Property Identification Code (PIC);
 - 1.1.3. Paddock layout and size of each paddock; and
 - 1.1.4. The location of building on the land.
- 1.2. Paddocks must be actively managed to:
 - 1.2.1. Prevent heavily degraded, muddy and excessively barren ground;
 - 1.2.2. Minimize the build-up of manure;
 - 1.2.3. Encourage the birds to make use of the range area with:
 - 1.2.3.1. Well drained, shade and shelter areas that are distributed around the range area for birds to rest outdoors without having to crowd together;
 - 1.2.3.2. Protection from predators;
 - 1.2.3.3. Easy access to feed and water in covered feeding/watering stations or in sheds to minimize access by wild water fowl.
 - 1.2.4. Maintain groundcover in the range area so that it does not fall below 40%.
- 1.3. Birds will have access to edible forage at all times except in circumstances of extreme weather conditions and extended dry periods that are beyond the control of the operator.

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At such times, good Lucerne hay or other suitable fodder shall be provided. Any occasion or time period that forage is unavailable, and it is necessary to supply supplemental fodder, will be recorded in the Farm Diary.

- 1.4. The paddocks must be rotated periodically to allow the range area to recover from use.
- 1.5. The area immediately surrounding the outside of bird housing must be kept clean and tidy and not offer shelter to vermin or wild birds.
- 1.6. A written Paddock Management Plan must be in place that identifies how paddocks will be rotated and what remedial action will be taken to correct bare areas of ground, recovery of vegetation and manure build-up. This plan will include:
 - 1.6.1. Paddock rotations;
 - 1.6.2. Pasture restoration;
 - 1.6.3. Movement of mobile housing;
 - 1.6.4. Manure management; and
 - 1.6.5. Management of muddy and overused areas.
- 1.7. Paddock rotations are defined as mobile housing systems that are relocated to fresh ground and the resting, or renovation, of the area previously grazed to ensure recovery of forage to the area. Fixed sheds are not encouraged but are acceptable if adequate paddock rotations can be demonstrated and compacted, bare areas in the immediate vicinity of the shed are managed to ensure that muddy conditions and build up of manure does not occur.

Records to be kept

- Paddock Management Plan
- Farm Map

2. All birds are kept at stocking densities that will ensure access to forage and grazing

Objective: That poultry always have access to pasture and/or forage in an environment that encourages them to make purposeful use of the range area. Stocking densities will play an important role in managing and maintaining pasture availability.

Stocking Rates

2.1. Layer Hens

- 2.1.1. Layer hen stocking rates shall not exceed of 1,500 hens per hectare.
- 2.1.2. Flock sizes shall not exceed 2,500 birds in each house.

2.2. Meat Chickens

2.2.1. Meat chicken stocking rates shall not exceed 3,500 birds per hectare.

2.3. Ducks

2.3.1. Duck stocking rates shall not exceed 2,500 birds per hectare.

2.4. Turkeys

2.4.1. Turkeys stocking rates shall not exceed 2,500 birds per hectare.

2.5. Stocking densities shall be calculated over the laying cycle of hens or ducks kept for egg production, or the production cycle of birds produced for meat.

2.6. Stocking rates must be calculated according to the size of the paddocks, species of the bird and be applied to a designated enclosure or paddock and not to the total land area of the property. The producer must be able to demonstrate that birds do graze the allocated areas.

Laying cycle means: the period during which a group of hens are kept and managed together, from commencement of egg laying to end of laying life.

Production cycle means: from delivery on farm as chicks, poults or ducklings until slaughter.

The Flock

Replacement Stock

2.7. Meat birds, ducks and turkeys must be raised on farm from hatchlings (day olds).

2.8. Meat chicks, ducklings and poults must have unrestricted access to the range as soon as they are sufficiently feathered or before 28 days of age. The Licensee must be able to demonstrate that meat birds have spent the majority of their lives in an outdoor environment.

2.9. Chicks, ducklings, poults and point of lay pullets may be purchased from a reliable source and must be accompanied by a vendor declaration that states the source of the birds, age of the birds and vaccination history.

2.10. Purchased point of lay pullets, layer hens or ducks that have not been sourced from a PROOF certified supplier will be excluded from the PROOF license for a period of four weeks from delivery on farm. Eggs from these birds cannot be sold under the PROOF license during this period.

2.11. Replacement pullets must have access to perches from arrival on farm to introduce them to the laying environment.

- 2.12. Layer chicks raised on farm must have access to perches from at least 16 weeks of age. Access to perches from an earlier age is highly recommended to help with bone and muscle development and to introduce the birds to perching in the laying environment.

Surgical Procedures

- 2.13. The following procedures are not permitted:
- 2.14. De-snooding;
- 2.15. Toe trimming;
- 2.16. Secondary beak cutting/trimming.

Infra-red beak tipping is permitted. This is a one time trim of the tip of the top beak in the first few days of life that is carried out at the hatchery. No further trimming or cutting is permitted. This standard may change in the future to exclude all beak trimming as untreated birds become more readily available.

Records to be kept

- Sales and purchases of birds
- Vendor declarations
- Farm Diary
- Farm Map
- Housing records (refer to standard 4.10)

3. All birds are able to interact with their herd or flock and to carry out natural behaviours

- 3.1. No animal shall be kept or confined on its own unless necessary for short term medical treatment.
- 3.2. The range area must provide conditions that allow the following behaviours to be performed;
- 3.2.1. Dustbathing;
 - 3.2.2. Foraging;
 - 3.2.3. Roosting;
 - 3.2.4. Scratching.
- 3.3. The paddock will include an area of loose substrate suitable for dust bathing.

4. Birds will not be kept in cages

Objective: That birds are free to forage and explore in pastured paddocks without the restraint of cages. Housing will provide easy access to the range by all birds and shall also provide protection from the sun, wind and inclement weather.

Housing

- 4.1. All birds will have access to weatherproof housing at all times that will;
 - 4.1.1. provide freedom of movement;
 - 4.1.2. allow adequate ventilation and natural light;
 - 4.1.3. provide protection from the elements;
 - 4.1.4. be constructed of materials that will not pose any risk of contamination;
 - 4.1.5. provide loose substrate/litter for all non-roosting birds;
 - 4.1.6. be free of protrusions that could cause harm and/or trauma; and
 - 4.1.7. have non-slip floors.
- 4.2. Sufficient perches will be available to enable roosting behaviour for all layer hens so that they may all access the perches at the same time.*
- 4.3. Perches must;
 - 4.3.1. allow at least 15cm of space per bird;*
 - 4.3.2. have at least 30cm between the perches;*
 - 4.3.3. be non-slip;
 - 4.3.4. be constructed of materials that will not pose any risk of contamination;
 - 4.3.5. be free of protrusions that could cause harm and/or trauma; and
 - 4.3.6. Be constructed of materials that will not cause discomfort during cold weather.
- 4.4. Adequate space and bedding in bird housing will be available for all non-roosting birds: meat chickens, and ducks, so that they may all rest comfortably at the same time.*
- 4.5. Sufficient drinkers and feeders will be available within the housing if birds are contained in housing overnight, to permit easy access without crowding of the birds.*
- 4.6. Enough clean, dry nesting boxes or colony boxes will be provided to allow no less than 20% of the laying hen flock access at any one time.*
- 4.7. Sufficient exits from housing will enable ease of access for the birds to the range area. Exits will not contain barriers or structures that prevent or deter birds from exiting the housing.*
 - 4.7.1. Exits will not be of a height that prevents or deter birds from exiting the housing.
 - 4.7.2. All exits will allow for the passage of more than one bird at a time.
- 4.8. Birds may be housed overnight for protection from predators.
- 4.9. When birds are contained in housing overnight for protection from predators, maximum stocking densities in the house will apply. Stocking density indoors shall not exceed;
 - 4.9.1. 8 birds per square metre for layer hens and ducks;
 - 4.9.2. 10 birds per square metre for meat chickens; and
 - 4.9.3. 4 birds per square metre for turkeys.

* Denotes that minimum requirements for this element are also set out in the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Domestic Poultry

- 4.10. Records must be kept to enable the producer and/or the inspector to verify indoor space requirements at any time. These records will include:
- 4.10.1. The floor area (not including nest boxes and perches) of each house;
 - 4.10.2. Dimensions of nestboxes;
 - 4.10.3. Length of perches and construction materials;
 - 4.10.4. The number of birds permitted in each house;
 - 4.10.5. The current number of birds in each house;
 - 4.10.6. Lighting programs;
 - 4.10.7. Weekly mortality rates; and
 - 4.10.8. Number of birds culled.
- 4.11. Housing must be located a sufficient distance apart to ensure adequate ranging capability by the birds and sunlight between houses.
- 4.12. Housing and equipment must be cleaned and disinfected to prevent contamination, disease and harmful micro-organisms.
- 4.13. Birds will have access to paddocks and pasture for a minimum of 8 hours each day.
- 4.14. Housing, paddocks, range areas, yards and transport must be;
- 4.14.1. free of any objects or protrusions that could cause harm or distress; and
 - 4.14.2. made from materials that will not be a possible source of contamination.

Lighting

- 4.15. When artificial lighting is used, the combination of artificial light and daylight hours must not exceed a total of 16 hours in any one 24 hour period.
- 4.16. Lighting may be used to encourage hens to use nest boxes or discourage floor eggs in dark corners of housing.
- 4.17. Artificial lighting is permitted for the purpose of supplying heat in chick rearing facilities.
- 4.18. Whenever artificial lighting is used, the lighting patterns must be recorded as per standard 4.10.6.
- 4.19. All light fittings should be fitted with shatter proof covers to prevent harm to the birds in the event of breakages.

Records to be kept

- Housing records as per standard 4.10
- Farm Diary
- Paddock Management Plan

5. Densely confined production systems and feed lotting are not permitted

Objective: That all poultry have continuous and unrestricted daytime access to paddocks and that stocking intensity is managed to ensure that forage is always available for the birds from the beginning of their productive life.

- 5.1. 'Chicken tractors' or mobile pens, that enclose the birds preventing free access to paddocks, are not permitted.
- 5.2. When electric netting is used to fence range areas, stocking rates set out in Standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 must be applied.

6. All birds will be protected from predation

Objective: To offer as much protection from predators as practicable for all birds.

- 6.1. Fencing must be designed to exclude feral animals and provide protection from predators.
- 6.2. Guard animals or mechanical deterrents are encouraged.
- 6.3. Birds may be housed for their protection at night when indoor stocking rates comply with clause 4.9 of this standard.

7. Birds will be fed to meet their nutritional needs as well as production requirements

Objective: That poultry receive a balanced diet from a range of feed ingredients to meet their nutritional needs. Pasture alone will not sustain productive birds therefore it is necessary to supply feed supplements to support appropriate growth and body function.

- 7.1. Poultry will not be fed on pasture alone. Suitable supplementary nutrition will be available at all times.
- 7.2. Clean, fresh drinking water shall be available at all times and be:
 - 7.2.1. from an uncontaminated source; and
 - 7.2.2. from a source that is managed to prevent contamination.
- 7.3. Fresh feed that is appropriate to the nutritional needs of the birds shall be:
 - 7.3.1. supplied in sufficient quantity to maintain the bird in good body condition and health;
 - 7.3.2. free from banned substances or contaminants.
- 7.4. Feeders and waterers must be sufficient in number to avoid bullying and competition for feed and water.*

* Denotes that minimum requirements for this element are also set out in the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Domestic Poultry

- 7.5. Feeders and waterers, as well as any equipment used to transport feed and water, must be kept clean and in good repair.
- 7.6. Force feeding is prohibited.
- 7.7. The routine use of antibiotics is prohibited. Antibiotics may be used to treat disease only under veterinary supervision.
- 7.8. Shell grit or another source of insoluble grit, will be made available at all times to layer hens and meat chickens to aid in digestion of pasture and other vegetation.
- 7.9. Ducks must have access to watering points deep enough to enable them to fully immerse their bills.
- 7.10. Feed storage must be covered and sealed sufficiently to reduce risk of contamination by vermin and wild birds.
- 7.11. An emergency or backup water supply must be available.

Records to be kept

- Farm Diary
- Feed records
- Animal treatment records

8. All birds will be inspected daily

- 8.1. All birds will be inspected each day.

Records to be kept

- Farm Diary

9. Understanding the Standards

- 9.1. All staff, contractors or any person involved with the handling and management of the birds will;
 - 9.1.1. receive a copy of this standard;
 - 9.1.2. demonstrate understanding of this standard; and
 - 9.1.3. comply with this standard.
- 9.2. A suitable training program will be in place for all staff and anyone involved in the handling and management of the birds to ensure compliance to this standard.
 - 9.2.1. In house training programs must be documented.
 - 9.2.2. Producers and staff have the option to undertake training modules available through PROOF. Records of completion will be provided.

Record Keeping

- 9.3. The Licensee must maintain and make available to PROOF or an inspector, production and management records. These records must be dated and include:
- 9.3.1. A Farm Diary or equivalent record keeping system. The diary can include the following if separate records are not kept:
- 9.3.1.1. Routine activities;
 - 9.3.1.2. Cleaning;
 - 9.3.1.3. Maintenance;
 - 9.3.1.4. Movement of housing;
 - 9.3.1.5. Paddock rotations;
 - 9.3.1.6. Harvest of crops or hay
- 9.3.2. Egg Production
- 9.3.3. Feed records (including feed purchase invoices, feed analysis, feed bag tags/feed formulas)
- 9.3.4. Animal treatments
- 9.3.5. Sales and purchases
- 9.3.6. Bird mortalities and culls
- 9.3.7. Paddock Management Plan
- 9.3.8. Housing records (refer to standard 4.10)

PROOF – Pasture Raised On Open Fields

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