

RSPCA Certified - Current Approved Exemptions

Meat Chicken Standard (2020)

Clause	Requirement	Exemption	Date Granted	Duration
2.13c	Where antimicrobials are used, an Antimicrobial Stewardship Plan must - from 1 July 2021 - specify the current type, quantity, and nature (therapeutic or preventative) of antimicrobial use, in a format agreed with RSPCA Australia.	The requirement to disclose the quantity of each antimicrobial used is removed. All other requirements regarding disclosure of antimicrobial use - including type, nature, frequency, and purpose - remain in full effect. Quantity data alone provides limited animal welfare insight; the welfare-relevant considerations are the purpose, frequency, and indication for use. Detailed quantity data is captured and monitored at a national level through existing veterinary and regulatory frameworks.	31/10/2022	Until release of the next version of the Standard
5.25b	Birds >7 days of age must have, in each 24-hour period: (a) a minimum of 8 hours continuous light; and (b) a minimum of 6 hours darkness, of which at least 4 hours must be continuous - except on the day of catch, when less than 4 hours continuous darkness is permitted.	During periods of extreme high temperature, sheds may be operated with less than 4 hours of continuous darkness as prescribed by clause 5.25(b). Periodic stimulation of birds to rise from the shed floor during darkness promotes more effective convective cooling of both birds and the floor surface. The requirement for a total of 6 hours of darkness per 24-hour period is retained. Producers must demonstrate that effective controls are in place to minimise disruption to normal sleep patterns.	08/02/2023	Until release of the next version of the Standard
7.01	Birds must be given the choice to access the outdoor area as soon as they are reasonably feathered and by 21 days of age at the latest, unless: a) under direct veterinary advice for treatment of injury or disease b) extreme weather requires birds to be temporarily kept indoors.	During declared risk periods for high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI H5), Producers certified to the additional requirements of Section 7 of the Standard (Outdoor Area) are permitted to confine birds indoors as a precautionary biosecurity measure to minimise the risk of infection and onward spread. Producers must notify the Certification Body immediately upon implementing this exemption and again when outdoor access is reinstated. For the purposes of product labelling, a Producer may continue to use the words "free range" (or similar) in association with the RSPCA Certified brand for up to 90 days from the date on which outdoor access was suspended as a precaution against HPAI infection. After 90 days, outdoor access must be reinstated or any labelling references to outdoor access must be removed from certified products.	22/06/2026	22/06/2027

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Clause	Requirement	Exemption	Date Granted	Duration
7.11	Where outdoor access is provided on both sides of a shed, and the overall farm footprint prevents equal distribution of outdoor area across both sides, the smallest outdoor area must comprise at least 30% of the total shed floor area.	Where reasonable safeguards are in place to prevent crowding, range deterioration, and to ensure easy and unimpeded access to and use of the range by birds, the smallest outdoor area in a two-sided range system does not need to meet the 30% minimum. It is anticipated that this criterion will be removed or revised in the next version of the Standard.	08/08/2022	Until release of the next version of the Standard
8.01a	Stocking density must not exceed 34 kg/m ² of usable shed floor area in tunnel ventilated or extractive systems - defined as housing systems using air inlets, evaporative cooling, and extraction fans capable of at least one air exchange per minute, with optional stirring fans.	Evaporative cooling via cool cells is the standard expectation for certification purposes that meets the definition of a tunnel or extractive system shed. However, where a producer can demonstrate that effective temperature control is achieved through alternative means appropriate to the geographic location and shed type, the system may be considered to meet the intent of the tunnel and evaporative cooling shed definition and farming to a maximum density of 34 kg/m ² may be permitted.	12/09/2022	Until release of the next version of the Standard
13.30	Birds must have their neck cut within 15 seconds of stunning.	Where the physical layout or space limitations of a slaughter facility prevent compliance with the 15-second interval, the time from stunning to neck cutting may be extended to a maximum of 21 seconds. This interval is measured from exit of the stunner to the position of the back-up knife operator - not the automatic neck cutter. Twenty-one seconds represents the maximum permissible interval from stunning within which a manual neck cut must be delivered where required.	21/02/2024	Until release of the next version of the Standard

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Layer Hen Standard (2023)

Clause	Requirement	Exemption	Date Granted	Duration
7.02	Birds must be given the choice to access the outdoor area during daylight for a minimum of eight hours each 24-hour period, unless: a) extreme weather conditions require birds to be temporarily kept indoors b) under direct veterinary advice...	During declared risk periods for high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI H5), Producers certified to the additional requirements of Section 7 of the Standard (Outdoor Area) are permitted to confine birds indoors as a precautionary biosecurity measure to minimise the risk of infection and onward spread. Producers must notify the Certification Body immediately upon implementing this exemption and again when outdoor access is reinstated. For the purposes of product labelling, a Producer may continue to use the words "free range" (or similar) in association with the RSPCA Certified brand for up to 90 days from the date on which outdoor access was suspended as a precaution against HPAI infection. After 90 days, outdoor access must be reinstated or any labelling references to outdoor access must be removed from certified products.	22/06/2026	22/06/2027
7.06	The design, number and position of openings that provide access to the outdoor area must: a) allow birds to pass through easily and unhindered using normal posture b) give birds at ground level within the shed a clear view of the outdoor area...	During periods of adverse weather where there is a reasonable likelihood of weather ingress into the shed, pop-hole doors may be positioned to limit the entry of rain, wind, or cold air. Under these circumstances, birds may temporarily have a restricted view of the outdoor area and may need to adopt a modified posture to pass through the opening. This exemption applies only where the following conditions are met: the restriction is temporary and limited strictly to the duration of adverse weather conditions; birds retain a meaningful view of the outdoor area through the opening; birds are able to pass through the door without risk of injury, and without their access to or from the outdoor area being unreasonably impeded or frustrated. Producers must demonstrate that normal pophole configuration is restored as soon as weather conditions permit, and that records or other evidence are available to confirm that use of this exemption is limited to qualifying weather events.	12/08/2025	Until release of the next version of the Standard

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Pig Standard (2018)

Clause	Requirement	Exemption	Date Granted	Duration
2.14b	Where antimicrobials are used, an Antimicrobial Stewardship Plan must...b) specify current type, quantity and nature (therapeutic or preventative) of antimicrobial use per class of pig...	The requirement to disclose the quantity of each antimicrobial used is removed. All other requirements regarding disclosure of antimicrobial use - including type, nature, frequency, and purpose - remain in full effect. Quantity data alone provides limited animal welfare insight; the welfare-relevant considerations are the purpose, frequency, and indication for use. Detailed quantity data is captured and monitored at a national level through existing veterinary and regulatory frameworks.	10/11/2023	Until release of the next version of the Standard
11.11c	Where weaner pigs <6 weeks old are transported...c) the floor of the transport vehicle must be completely and evenly covered with dry, clean bedding to a minimum average depth of 10cm...	The requirement for bedding during transport may be waived in either of the following circumstances: where biosecurity restrictions prohibit the movement of straw or other vegetation-based materials between premises; or where the journey is short and can be completed within 60 minutes. In either case, the welfare of animals during transport must not be compromised, and all other requirements of clause 11.11 governing the transport of young weaner pigs must be met in full.	24/05/2024	Until release of the next version of the Standard

Turkey Standard (2023)

Clause	Requirement	Exemption	Date Granted	Duration
2.08b	Where antimicrobials are used, an Antimicrobial Stewardship Plan must...b) specify current type, quantity and nature (therapeutic or preventative) of antimicrobial use in a format to be agreed with by RSPCA Certified...	The requirement to disclose the quantity of each antimicrobial used is removed. All other requirements regarding disclosure of antimicrobial use - including type, nature, frequency, and purpose - remain in full effect. Quantity data alone provides limited animal welfare insight; the welfare-relevant considerations are the purpose, frequency, and indication for use. Detailed quantity data is captured and monitored at a national level through existing veterinary and regulatory frameworks.	10/11/2023	Until release of the next version of the Standard
7.01	Birds must be given the choice to access the outdoor area during daylight hours for a minimum of eight (8) hours per 24-hour period as soon as they are reasonably	During declared risk periods for high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI H5), Producers certified to the additional requirements of Section 7 of the Standard (Outdoor Area) are permitted to confine birds indoors as a precautionary biosecurity measure to minimise the risk of infection and onward spread.	22/06/2026	22/06/2027

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Clause	Requirement	Exemption	Date Granted	Duration
	feathered or by 42 days of age at the latest, unless: a) under direct veterinary advice for treatment of injury or disease b) extreme weather requires birds to be temporarily kept indoors.	Producers must notify the Certification Body immediately upon implementing this exemption and again when outdoor access is reinstated. For the purposes of product labelling, a Producer may continue to use the words "free range" (or similar) in association with the RSPCA Certified brand for up to 90 days from the date on which outdoor access was suspended as a precaution against HPAI infection. After 90 days, outdoor access must be reinstated or any labelling references to outdoor access must be removed from certified products.		