



Australian Poultry Industries Association

APIA FREE RANGE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

A Trade Mark Certification Scheme

CERTIFICATION RULES AND APPLICABLE STANDARDS



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The Association

The Australian Poultry Industries Association (“the Association”) was established in 1968. Its members are all integrated poultry processors operating in Australia. The Association is one of seven members of the Australian Chicken Meat Federation which represents the growers and processors at the national level with governments, media, customers, consumers and other stakeholders. The Association is funded through voluntary membership subscriptions.

The areas of activities undertaken by the Association, either directly or through its membership of ACMF, include the promotion and dissemination of information to industry participants, jurisdictions, statutory authorities and the general public regarding animal health, animal welfare, food safety, standards and codes of practice.

Scope of the APIA Free Range Certification Program (“the Program”)

The Program covers the farming practices and related activities such as feed production, the slaughtering process, transport and traceability required to be implemented for chicken or turkey meat to be allowed to be sold as APIA Free Range Accredited.

Certification Trade Mark

The APIA Free Range Poultry Mark shall be used by APIA members (i.e. integrated processors or other companies engaged in the industry in Australia that is not integrated but that processes poultry for meat for human consumption) to identify poultry meat that has been produced on farms that are certified to the relevant APIA Free Range Standards and transported and processed in accordance with the APIA Free Range Standards. Inputs to certified farms also have to satisfy the relevant requirements of the APIA Free Range Standards (Feed, Hatchery, Breeders).

All uses of the Certification Trade Mark must be in accordance with these Certification Rules and must be approved by APIA.

Licences

A licence to use the APIA Accredited Free Range Poultry Mark will be granted to APIA Members who apply for such a licence and who can demonstrate to the satisfaction of an external auditor appointed by APIA that systems are in place to ensure that only product that has been produced according to the APIA Free Range Poultry Standards will be labelled, marketed, promoted or otherwise identified using the APIA Free Range Poultry Certification Trade Mark. A licensee will be required to pay an annual licence fee to be set by APIA. It is the Licensee’s responsibility to ensure that annual certification audits of all relevant operations, including the broiler farms providing the free range birds are undertaken. Each licensee shall report annually on all broiler farms accredited under this Program and supplying birds to their company and each processing plant used to process such birds for sale as APIA Accredited Free Range Poultry, including the date of the last audit and any corrective action required that was identified and action taken to rectify major and critical CARs.

Obligation of the Association

The Association is responsible for the administration of the Certification Trade Mark and its Licences. The Association shall maintain the Certification Trade Mark and associated Rules current, make the required standards freely and readily available via a dedicated website, assist potential licensees and growers seeking certification to supply poultry to a licensee under the APIA Free Range Certification Program through provision of information and training, appoint one or several auditors certified by the Registered Accreditation Board Quality Society of Australasia (or other suitable body to be determined) and train them in the APIA Free Range Poultry Standards.

APIA shall act upon the recommendations of the appointed auditors for the purpose of certifying broiler farms and processing plants.

APIA shall maintain and publish on the dedicated website the names of those processors who are licenced to apply the Certification Trade Mark.

APIA shall maintain a register of certified poultry farms.

APIA shall not alter or amend the Rules without prior approval of the ACCC.

APIA shall advise all licensees of any alteration, amendment, addition or deletion to or from these Rules approved by ACCC and keep the information on the dedicated web site current at all times.

Obligation of Certified Facilities

Each certified facility has the following obligations:

- a. To ensure that their operation complies with the minimum standards of APIA Free Range Poultry and to maintain these standards at all times;
- b. To agree with and ensure compliance with these Rules;
- c. To comply promptly with any reasonable direction of the Association relating to the APIA Free Range Standard;
- d. To advise the Association of any change in ownership of the Certified Facilities;
- e. Not to assign any benefit of certification or licence without written consent of the Association;
- f. To pay promptly, or when due, all fees arising under these Rules as specified from time to time by the Association;
- g. To assist certification audits by providing access to premises and records;
- h. To advise the Association in writing of any matter which may be relevant to the certification of the facilities or its continuance;
- i. To allow an Auditor selected by the Association access to the certified facilities for the purpose of confirming compliance with the APIA Free Range Poultry Standard and these Rules.

Termination

A certified facility or a licensee may at any time withdraw from the APIA Free Range Certification Program upon giving the Association at least 30 days' notice in writing.

A licence provided under these Rules may be terminated or suspended if there is a breach which, once notified, is not rectified within 30 days.

Appeal

A decision not to grant certification or not to grant a licence shall be reviewed by APIA if requested in writing indicating the grounds of dissatisfaction. In a case where the decision is based on an audit report and where the Association believes that reasonable grounds for a review exist, APIA shall seek the advice of the Auditor who conducted the Audit and issued the Audit report and thereafter may seek further advice of a more senior third party auditor and act on that advice when reviewing the decision.

The above process will be managed by the Executive Director or his/her nominee with input from the APIA Executive and/or a committee appointed by the APIA Executive for that purpose. However, any decision will have to be in line with the auditors' final recommendation.

In the event that the Association maintains the decision to refuse certification or a licence to use the Trade Mark, the aggrieved party may apply for a review to be conducted by an arbitrator appointed by mutual agreement or by the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

In case of a dispute relating to any other issue, that is not specifically related to a recommendation made by an auditor, the Executive Director of APIA will seek to resolve such a dispute within 30 days from being informed in writing that a dispute exists. If a resolution cannot be reached, the Executive Director will present the issues to the APIA Executive or a committee appointed by the APIA Executive for that purpose, to seek resolution of the dispute. If the dispute remains unresolved after 60 days from the time when it was notified in writing to the Executive Director, the aggrieved party may apply for a review to be conducted by an arbitrator appointed by mutual agreement or by the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

Conflict of Interest

Members of the APIA Executive or any committee appointed to assist in the delivery of this program will be required to abstain themselves of any involvement on behalf of APIA in disputes and other matters that specifically involve their organisation, either directly or indirectly (e.g. if a contract farm disputes a matter, then the relevant processor will abstain him/herself from any discussions and decisions) and will not be present during the relevant discussions.

Governing Law

Matters arising in relation to the Rules shall be governed and determined in accordance with the laws of the State of New South Wales.



APIA Free Range Certification Program

Reason for New Free Range Certification Program:

Given the substantial increase in free range poultry meat farming over the past three years in particular, the Australian Poultry Industries Association, representing all major integrated poultry meat processors, felt a need to develop a national industry standard for free range poultry meat that is more comprehensive, addresses the animal welfare concerns held by customers and consumers more fully, and is wholly focused on chicken and turkey meat. A number of free range poultry meat standards have been developed over the years, but many originated in free range egg farming and were State based rather than national. In other words, the free range poultry meat industry has outgrown its regional roots and the new standard responds to these developments. Since 2010, RSPCA is also offering its RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme standards, which has a free range component to it.

The chicken and turkey meat industries felt that current arrangements did not provide a sufficiently robust and animal welfare focused set of standards specific to chicken and turkey broilers that at the same time took into account other societal drivers in such a way as to optimise the longer term outcomes and to make free range poultry meat readily available to customers and consumers.

The new industry standard adopts as a foundation the National Animal Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry, which go well beyond the national codes of practice and welfare standards adopted by the Federal and State jurisdictions, and includes all the essential aspects of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme standards.

Until now, most of the free range poultry meat currently produced in Australia was covered by the FREPA standards. The new standard is a significant improvement in terms of transparency and animal welfare outcomes. The new standards explicitly stipulate a minimum of eight hours of access to an outside range and also expressly require an effective range area. Certification of farms will continue to be carried out annually by an independent qualified third party auditor. This regular and rigorous external audit will ensure that the agreed enhanced standards are fully adhered to in the production of free range poultry meat.

Consumers will be able to check that a product satisfies the industry standard by looking for the distinctive logo displaying a stylised chicken in front of the outline of the Australian continent and placed in a triangle with rounded corners. The logo is the industry's stamp of approval and provides the consumer with the certainty and clarity needed to make informed purchasing decisions.

The Standards – Chicken

1. General

- 1.1. All housing, equipment, ventilation and temperature control, health management and other management practices, transportation and processing of Free Range birds must comply with the relevant State or Territory animal welfare Act(s) and regulations and any other relevant Act, including State and Territory animal disease control legislation.
- 1.2. Approved processing plants and farming operations must be able to demonstrate compliance with the Australian Standard for the Construction of Premises and Hygienic Production of Poultry Meat for Human Consumption (AS4465:2005), the FSANZ Primary Production and Processing Standards for Poultry Meat and any other applicable regulatory requirements.
- 1.3. Compliance with the National Animal Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry and the National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Chicken Growers is a pre-requisite for all facilities and operations which are approved or accredited under this Program.

2. Farming Standards – Meat Chickens

The Range

- 2.1. All birds must have easy access to an outdoor area during daylight hours and for a minimum of 8 hours per day once they are fully feathered, but no later than when they are 21-28 days old (depending on prevailing climatic conditions). The only exception to this may be during periods of extreme adverse weather conditions or during serious outbreaks of disease, when birds may be kept inside. Therefore, access to the range must be able to be controlled in the event of adverse weather conditions, disease outbreaks and or the age of the bird and its feather condition.
- 2.2. Easy access to the range from the shed will be provided. Openings to the range should be evenly spaced along the length of the shed allowing easy movement between the shed and the range. Openings should be at least 35 cm high and 40 cm wide and provide an aggregate width of at least 2m per 1000 birds. However, these guidelines need to be applied taking into account local climatic conditions and other relevant circumstances. Access ramps (where used) should not be steeper than 60 degrees.
- 2.3. The total available range area must be:
 - at least 1.5 times the size of the total shed floor area in the case of any new sheds built after 1 July 2011 and existing sheds where the available range area is not limited by the overall farm footprint;
 - at least 1 times the size of the total shed floor area for existing sheds where the available range area is limited by the overall farm footprint.
- 2.4. The condition of the range can impact negatively on the welfare of the bird. Factors that can influence the quality of the range are stocking density, range rotation and spelling, pasture species on the range, range management, weather conditions, siting of the range, shelter and drainage. The range must be maintained and managed so as to encourage chickens to make full use of the area. The range area should carry palatable vegetation including pasture at all times. The range area must be managed so as to minimise disease risk, including ensuring adequate drainage of the land, and to avoid land degradation.

- 2.5. The range area must provide adequate shelter from the weather and from avian predators. Shelter may be provided in the form of trees, shrubs, shade cloth or other structures and will provide at least 8m² of shade for every 1000 birds.
- 2.6. Every reasonable effort must be made to provide protection from predators, including adequate fencing and regular inspection and maintenance of fences to ensure they remain effective.
- 2.7. The range area must be inspected regularly and any foreign objects that could injure birds removed.
- 2.8. The areas adjacent to the sheds and the range must be well drained and kept clean and tidy to minimise biosecurity and fire risks.

Inside the Sheds

- 2.9. Stocking density in the shed must not exceed:
 - 28kg per m² of available floor area for naturally ventilated sheds.
 - 30kg per m² of available floor area for mechanically ventilated sheds
- 2.10. Where day old chicks are supplied by the processor to a contract grower, the processor has to ensure that the above stocking densities are not breached.
- 2.11. Stocking density may have to be reduced in circumstances where air temperature and humidity are high and the available control mechanisms are insufficient to keep the shed conditions at optimal levels.
- 2.12. Continuous lighting is not permitted.
- 2.13. The lighting system in the shed must provide a minimum period of 8 hours artificial lighting per day (unless chickens have access to natural daylight) and a minimum period of 4 hours continuous darkness (to be provided at night) in every 24-hour period from 7 days onwards. Young birds require about 20 lux on food and water for first three days after hatching. Producers should refer to the relevant breed standards for guidance on specific light intensity targets for brooding chicks.
- 2.14. Temperature and humidity in sheds should at all times meet recommended values for the type and age of chicken being housed. Where extreme weather leads to deviation from these target values, all practicable measures should be taken as soon as possible to minimise the impact on the birds' welfare.
- 2.15. All feed and water must be provided inside the shed, not on the range, so as not to attract wild birds, predators and pests to the range.
- 2.16. Environmental enrichment devices, such as straw bales, perches or other items, should be provided.
- 2.17. Proactive management of litter condition is important as litter condition can change quickly and impact on welfare. Factors that can influence litter condition are stocking density, litter source and depth, ventilation, management and condition of drinkers and range condition.

The Chickens

- 2.18. Chicks must be sourced from breeder farms and hatcheries that operate in accordance with the animal welfare requirements of the National Animal Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry and any relevant State or Territory animal welfare acts and regulations.

- 2.19. Records must be kept of mortalities and culls and targets for mortalities must be identified. If mortality targets are exceeded, appropriate action must be promptly taken.
- 2.20. The approved method for humane killing of individual cull birds on-farm is cervical dislocation.
- 2.21. Husbandry, management and nutritional programs should minimise incidence of lameness, leg problems, hock burn, foot pad burn, breast blisters, back scratches and/or dirty feathers.
- 2.22. Beak trimming, toe trimming, or any mutilation of meat chickens is not permitted.
- 2.23. The feed provided must meet the nutritional requirements of the birds and in order to reduce contamination by wild birds and vermin all food sources must only be available within the enclosed shed.
- 2.24. Drinking water that is clean, safe and suitable for chickens must be readily available to all chickens at all times but must only be available within the enclosed shed.
- 2.25. Antibiotics must only be administered under veterinary advice. Where it is considered necessary to use antibiotics for therapeutic purposes, treated birds must not be sold as free range. The use of growth promotant antibiotics is not permitted.
- 2.26. The use of coccidiostats is permitted under veterinary direction.
- 2.27. As in all chicken production, growth promoting hormones are not used.
- 2.28. Where day old chicks and feed are supplied by the processor to a contract grower, the processor has to ensure that the free range standards relating to the use of antibiotics and feed quality are observed.

3. Catching and Transport

- 3.1. Free Range birds must be transported on a vehicle separately from conventional chickens, to maintain segregation of Free Range.
- 3.2. For traceability purposes, records of the farm from which the birds came, the total number of birds collected at pick-up and the pick-up date must accompany the vehicle to the processing plant. These records must also designate the birds as Free Range.
- 3.3. The air temperature in a load of live poultry should be maintained between 10–30°C (for chicks, 25–35°C). If temperature exceeds 30°C when transporting poultry, or while waiting to unload at the processing plant, vehicles should not be left stationary without shade, fans, misters, or other cooling being provided.
- 3.4. Birds remaining in the shed following partial depopulation must be given access to feed and water immediately following completion of pick-up.

4. Processing

- 4.1. Free range meat chickens must only be slaughtered at an approved processing plant satisfying the Australian Standard for Construction of Premises and Hygienic Production of Poultry Meat for Human Consumption and the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals, Livestock and Poultry at Slaughtering Establishments.
- 4.2. Processing plants are to operate to highest standards of animal welfare as specified by the National Animal Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry, including lairage and holding conditions, handling of birds, and effective stunning and killing. Processors

will only label as APIA Free Range product from birds that have been sourced from APIA Free Range accredited farms.

- 4.3. Processors must have systems and protocols in place to ensure full traceability from the Free Range accredited growing farms to all labelled products. Records must be maintained to demonstrate the reliability of these systems and protocols.
- 4.4. Compliance by the processor with the requirements set out under 4.2 and 4.3 above should be reviewed annually by a third party auditor.



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The new industry standard adopts as a foundation the National Animal Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry, which go well beyond the national codes of practice and welfare standards adopted by the Federal and State jurisdictions, and includes all the essential aspects of the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme standards.

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The Standards – Turkey

1. General

- 1.1. All housing, equipment, ventilation and temperature control, health management and other management practices, transportation and processing of Free Range birds must comply with the relevant State or Territory animal welfare Act(s) and regulations and any other relevant Act, including State and Territory animal disease control legislation.
- 1.2. Approved processing plants and farming operations must be able to demonstrate compliance with the Australian Standard for the Construction of Premises and Hygienic Production of Poultry Meat for Human Consumption (AS4465:2005), the FSANZ Primary Production and Processing Standards for Poultry Meat and any other applicable regulatory requirements.
- 1.3. Compliance with the National Animal Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry as far as applicable to turkey and the National Farm Biosecurity Manual - Poultry Production (DAFF) is a pre-requisite for all facilities and operations which are approved or accredited under this Program.

2. Farming Standards – Turkeys

The Range

- 2.1. When brooding is completed, in accordance with the current edition of the animal welfare code for poultry which is approved in each State and Territory, All birds must have easy access to an outdoor area during daylight hours and for a minimum of 8 hours per day once they are fully feathered, but no later than when they are 42 - 56 days old (depending on prevailing climatic conditions). The only exception to this may be during periods of extreme adverse weather conditions or during serious outbreaks of disease, when birds may be kept inside. Therefore, access to the range must be able to be controlled in the event of adverse weather conditions, disease outbreaks and or the age of the bird and its feather condition.
- 2.2. Easy access to the range from the shed will be provided. Openings to the range should be evenly spaced along the length of the shed allowing easy movement between the shed and the range. Openings should be at least 35 cm high and 40 cm wide and provide an aggregate width of at least 2m per 1000 birds. However, these guidelines need to be applied taking into account local climatic conditions and other relevant circumstances. Access ramps (where used) should not be steeper than 60 degrees.
- 2.3. The total available range area must be:
 - at least 1.5 times the size of the total shed floor area in the case of any new sheds built after 1 July 2011 and existing sheds where the available range area is not limited by the overall farm footprint;
 - at least 1 times the size of the total shed floor area for existing sheds where the available range area is limited by the overall farm footprint.
- 2.4. The condition of the range can impact negatively on the welfare of the bird. Factors that can influence the quality of the range are stocking density, range rotation and spelling, pasture species on the range, range management, weather conditions, siting of the range, shelter and drainage. The range must be maintained and managed so as to encourage turkeys to make full use of the area. The range area should carry palatable vegetation including pasture at all times. The range area must be managed so as to minimise

disease risk, including ensuring adequate drainage of the land, and to avoid land degradation.

- 2.5. The range area must provide adequate shelter from the weather and from avian predators. Shelter may be provided in the form of trees, shrubs, shade cloth or other structures and will provide at least 8m² of shade for every 1000 birds.
- 2.6. Every reasonable effort must be made to provide protection from predators, including adequate fencing and regular inspection and maintenance of fences to ensure they remain effective.
- 2.7. The range area must be inspected regularly and any foreign objects that could injure birds removed.
- 2.8. The areas adjacent to the sheds and the range must be well drained and kept clean and tidy to minimise biosecurity and fire risks.

Inside the Sheds

- 2.9. Stocking density in the shed must not exceed:
 - 28kg per m² of available floor area for naturally ventilated sheds (birds below 5kg).
 - 30kg per m² of available floor area for mechanically ventilated sheds (birds below 5kg)
 - 36kg per m² of available floor space for mechanically ventilated sheds (birds over 5kg)
- 2.10. Where day old poults are supplied by the processor to a contract grower, the processor has to ensure that the above stocking densities are not breached.
- 2.11. Stocking density may have to be reduced in circumstances where air temperature and humidity are high and the available control mechanisms are insufficient to keep the shed conditions at optimal levels.
- 2.12. Continuous lighting is not permitted.
- 2.13. The lighting system in the shed must provide a minimum period of 8 hours artificial lighting per day (unless turkeys have access to natural daylight) and a minimum period of 4 hours continuous darkness (to be provided at night) in every 24-hour period from 7 days onwards. Young birds require about 20 lux on food and water for first three days after hatching. Producers should refer to the relevant breed standards for guidance on specific light intensity targets for brooding poults.
- 2.14. Temperature and humidity in sheds should at all times meet recommended values for the type and age of turkey being housed. Where extreme weather leads to deviation from these target values, all practicable measures should be taken as soon as possible to minimise the impact on the birds' welfare.
- 2.15. All feed and water must be provided inside the shed, not on the range, so as not to attract wild birds, predators and pests to the range.
- 2.16. Environmental enrichment devices, such as straw bales, perches or other items, should be provided.
- 2.17. Proactive management of litter condition is important as litter condition can change quickly and impact on welfare. Factors that can influence litter condition are stocking density, litter source and depth, ventilation, management and condition of drinkers and range condition.

The Turkeys

- 2.18. Poult must be sourced from breeder farms and hatcheries that operate in accordance with the animal welfare requirements of the National Animal Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry (as far as applicable to turkeys) and any relevant State or Territory animal welfare acts and regulations.
- 2.19. Records must be kept of mortalities and culls and targets for mortalities must be identified. If mortality targets are exceeded, appropriate action must be promptly taken.
- 2.20. The approved method for humane killing of individual cull birds on-farm is cervical dislocation (up to 8kg, CO² or captive bolt above 8kg).
- 2.21. Husbandry, management and nutritional programs should minimise incidence of lameness, leg problems, hock burn, foot pad burn, breast blisters, back scratches and/or dirty feathers.
- 2.22. Beak trimming, toe trimming, or any other mutilation of meat turkeys is not permitted (except beak trimming via infrared if it is determined to be of greater benefit to the birds to reduce pecking).
- 2.23. The feed provided must meet the nutritional requirements of the birds and in order to reduce contamination by wild birds and vermin all food sources must only be available within the enclosed shed.
- 2.24. Drinking water that is clean, safe and suitable for turkeys must be readily available to all turkeys at all times but must only be available within the enclosed shed.
- 2.25. Antibiotics must only be administered under veterinary advice. Where it is considered necessary to use antibiotics for therapeutic purposes, treated birds must not be sold as free range. The use of growth promotant antibiotics is not permitted.
- 2.26. The use of coccidiostats is permitted under veterinary direction.
- 2.27. As in all poultry production, growth promoting hormones are not used.
- 2.28. Where day old poults and feed are supplied by the processor to a contract grower, the processor has to ensure that the free range standards relating to the use of antibiotics and feed quality are observed.

3. Catching and Transport

- 3.1. Free Range birds must be transported on a vehicle separately from conventional turkeys, to maintain segregation of Free Range.
- 3.2. For traceability purposes, records of the farm from which the birds came, the total number of birds collected at pick-up and the pick-up date must accompany the vehicle to the processing plant. These records must also designate the birds as Free Range.
- 3.3. The air temperature in a load of live poultry should be maintained between 10–30°C (for poults, 25–35°C). If temperature exceeds 30°C when transporting poultry, or while waiting to unload at the processing plant, vehicles should not be left stationary, without shade, fans, misters, or other cooling being provided.
- 3.4. Birds remaining in the shed following partial depopulation must be given access to feed and water immediately following completion of pick-up.

4. Processing

- 4.1. Free range turkeys must only be slaughtered at an approved processing plant satisfying the Australian Standard for Construction of Premises and Hygienic Production of Poultry Meat for Human Consumption and the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals, Livestock and Poultry at Slaughtering Establishments.
- 4.2. Processing plants are to operate to highest standards of animal welfare as specified by the National Animal Welfare Standards for the Chicken Meat Industry, including lairage and holding conditions, handling of birds, and effective stunning and killing. Processors will only label as APIA Free Range, product from birds that have been sourced from APIA Free Range accredited farms.
- 4.3. Processors must have systems and protocols in place to ensure full traceability from the Free Range accredited growing farms to all labelled products. Records must be maintained to demonstrate the reliability of these systems and protocols.
- 4.4. Compliance by the processor with the requirements set out under 4.2 and 4.3 above must be reviewed annually by a third party auditor.