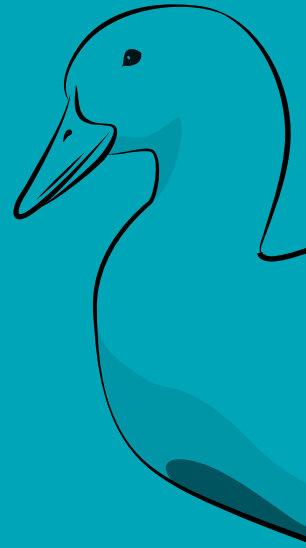

**Yukon Livestock
Guide**

POULTRY



**YUKON
LIVESTOCK
GUIDES**

 Cattle, Yak + Bison

 Equine

 Poultry

 Sheep + Goat

 Swine

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PURPOSE

The Government of Yukon's role is to support the Yukon's agriculture sector and create conditions for a thriving agricultural industry.

This booklet supports livestock farmers with guidance on raising and caring for their animals as well as managing their farm operations. The content is a summary of the applicable Codes of Practice for raising and caring for livestock and information on addressing or preventing common issues that can impact livestock farmers in the Yukon.



STANDARDS OF CARE

The Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals are nationally developed guidelines that are scientifically informed, practical and reflect societal expectations for responsible farm animal care. We encourage you to consult the [Codes of Practice on the National Farm and Animal Care Council's website](https://nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice) (nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice).

Increasing your understanding and adopting best management practices for raising and caring for livestock can increase production, reduce overall costs, reduce injuries and illness as well as reduce loss of profits.

The Five Freedoms

The Five Freedoms are internationally accepted standards for the care of living beings and their right to humane treatment. When producers safeguard these freedoms, they ensure an animal's primary welfare.

The Five Freedoms are the basis for animal care protocols.

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst.
2. Freedom from discomfort.
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease.
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour.
5. Freedom from fear and distress.

POULTRY CATEGORY

We are including chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys in the poultry category. The information provided can apply to all of these birds. We refer to a species of bird where information is specifically applicable to that species.

NOMENCLATURE

Chicken nomenclature:

- **Male:** Rooster or cockerel.
- **Female:** Hen (pullet when young).
- **Hatchling:** Chick.
- **Group name:** Flock.
- **Category:** Layers are raised to produce eggs; broilers are raised for meat.

Duck nomenclature:

- **Male:** Drake.
- **Female:** Hen or duck.
- **Hatchling:** Duckling.
- **Group name:** Brace, raft, waddling, badling, team or flock.

Goose nomenclature:

- **Male:** Gander.
- **Female:** Dame or hen.
- **Hatchling:** Gosling.
- **Group name:** Gaggle.

Turkey nomenclature:

- **Male:** Tom or gobbler (jake when young).
- **Female:** Hen (jenny when young).
- **Hatchling:** Poult.
- **Group name:** Rafter or flock.

BASIC NEEDS

Housing and environment

Housing and living environment must provide for a bird's basic needs and be as stress free as possible. Stressed livestock do not thrive and are more susceptible to illnesses.

Facilities

For indoor facilities, manage the indoor environment for temperature, air quality, humidity, dust level and ammonia levels to promote health and welfare for adult poultry as well as hatchlings.

Provide bedding to allow for normal behaviour such as scratching, foraging or dust bathing. Monitor conditions of litter daily, and correct to ensure it is not too wet. Wet litter can cause hock burn, foot-pad lesions and breast blisters. Bedding can be straw, hay, wood chips or wood pellets.

Poultry dust-bathe to help maintain their feather condition. They will often choose their own dust-bathing location such as litter in a sun beam or in drier parts of an outdoor paddock. They prefer to dust-bathe in finer substrates such as sand, ashes or peat moss.

Chickens and turkeys prefer to sleep on roosts (perches). Introduce perches early to promote activity and bone strength. Position perches to avoid fecal accumulation or litter management issues.

- Provide chickens with 18 centimetres per bird of roost space.
- Provide turkeys with 40 centimetres per bird of roost space.

Poultry need time to rest. When artificial light is provided, a minimum of 20 lux should be provided for no longer than 16 hours continuously. A minimum of six consecutive hours of darkness during each 24-hour period must be provided.

Ensure the facility allows enough space for the free movement and normal behaviour of all birds at the same time (standing, wing stretching and sitting).

Beware when intermixing bird species that birds appearing different from the group majority may be isolated or pecked at. When intermixing bird breeds or species, closely monitor those who are the minority in the groups and mitigate any adverse behavior. Do not intermix birds with other livestock in confined pens.

Only provide birds with access to the outdoors when their feather cover and outdoor conditions enable them to adequately thermoregulate.

- Chickens are usually fully feathered at around four to six weeks of age.
- Ducks are usually fully feathered around seven to nine weeks of age.

Holes for accessing the outdoor area should measure at a minimum of 45 centimetres by 100 centimetres (18 inches by 39 inches) for chickens to minimize dominant hens from guarding access to the outdoors.

BASIC NEEDS

Balance your outdoor stocking densities and group size with soil type, productivity of the land, environmental impact, and health and welfare of the birds.

Ensure facilities protect and provide relief to birds from extreme weather that poses a serious risk to their welfare (wind chill, heavy rain, ice storm, snowstorm, hail and heat).

Fencing

Perimeter fences must be well constructed and regularly maintained to protect birds from predators and to prevent escape.

Some breeds of birds are quite active and enjoy short bursts of flying. You may require additional fence height to contain some breeds or overhead netting to prevent escape. Overhead netting can also help prevent losses from aerial predation. Moveable electrified netting or overhead lines are a great temporary solution. Monitor snow load in the winter to prevent breaks in the lines or mesh.

Government funding is available for protecting livestock, pasture or crops from wildlife. Learn more at [Yukon.ca/funding-agriculture](https://www.yukon.ca/funding-agriculture).

There is also compensation available for damage caused by wildlife. Learn more at [Yukon.ca/funding-agriculture](https://www.yukon.ca/funding-agriculture).

Contact the Agriculture Branch's Livestock Extension Services Unit for more information on agricultural funding programs. (See "Contact" section.)

Feed and nutrition

Correct feed management is necessary to meet your birds' health and nutritional needs. Poultry benefit from a varied diet that includes fruit and vegetables with a balanced poultry ration. The quality of the diet provided will be reflected in the quality of meat and eggs produced.

Poultry are able to use anywhere from 10 per cent to 20 per cent of their diet from green material. Greens can be a rich source of vitamins and minerals for poultry. Providing greens as an enrichment to a standard poultry ration decreases or prevents feather picking. In addition to green matter, birds also consume herbs, roots, stems and invertebrates.

Distribute feed in a way that avoids provoking excessive competition between birds. Increase available feed if there is fighting among birds or empty feeders between fillings.

Avoid feeding birds a commercial diet outdoors in open feed troughs unless the feeding area is netted or covered to reduce the risk of contact with wild birds.

Check the quality of your feed. Ask your supplier for a feed analysis. Yukon feed suppliers can get their feed tested through the Agriculture Branch. (See "Contact" section.)

Water

Provide birds with access to adequate and clean sources of water at all times.

The temperature of drinking water should not exceed 30 degrees Celcius (86 degrees Fahrenheit).

Distribute water in a way that avoids provoking excessive competition between birds. Increase available water if there is fighting among birds or empty waterers between fillings.

You can use clean, loose snow as a water source temporarily. Ice is not an adequate source of water.

If using snow as the sole water source, you must ensure:

- there are sufficient quantities available each day;
- there is no sign of dehydration in the flock;
- the flock gradually acclimated early in the cold season;
- the snow is not hard packed, trampled or soiled; and
- a backup water source is available.

Contact the Agriculture Branch's livestock health technicians who can connect you with veterinarians and nutritionists specialized in livestock. (See "Contact" section.)

The Veterinary Services Program helps farmers get veterinary care for livestock. Learn more at Yukon.ca/livestock-health. Contact the Animal Health Unit about this program. (See "Contact" section.)

POULTRY HEALTH STRATEGIES

An effective Flock Health Management Program contributes to bird well-being by focusing on disease prevention, rapid diagnosis and effective treatment. Here are a few strategies for ensuring your birds' welfare and well-being.

Cold climate

If planning on raising chickens over the winter months, birds with thick, heavy feathers are recommended. Recommended breeds are Rhode Island Red, Cornish Giant, Plymouth Rock, Columbian Rock, Leghorns and Sussex. The hardiest is the Chantecler that was bred in Northern Canada and can withstand subarctic temperatures. The Chantecler lay about 200 eggs a year.

We recommend birds with small combs as they are less susceptible to frostbite. Consult with local poultry owners to discuss popular breeds in your specific area.

Breeding

Refer to the [National Farm Animal Care Council's Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Hatching Eggs, Breeders, Chickens and Turkeys](https://nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/chickens-turkeys-and-breeders) (nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice/chickens-turkeys-and-breeders) for information on breeding and hatching.

Disease prevention

Importing new birds is the most common way that disease is introduced into a flock and parasites are introduced into your soil.

- When purchasing new birds, ask the sellers about their disease and parasite management programs.
- Quarantine a new bird(s) for a minimum of one week and up to 30 days in a dedicated location separate from all other livestock on the farm.
- Consult with the Agriculture Branch's livestock health technicians or a licensed veterinarian about disease and parasites common in the territory.

For pest control:

- avoid standing water around coop and run;
- ensure litter is free of contamination;
- keep feed bins in good repair; and
- move old equipment or lumber away from coop and run.

To prevent illness, properly sanitize huts and shelters, waterers, feeders, roosts, nest boxes, runs, pitchforks, wheel barrels, buckets and boots.

Research and understand the life cycle of the parasites that pose problems in livestock in the Yukon. Controlling internal parasites can prevent health and welfare issues.

Refer to the [Government of Yukon's Poultry Health Handbook](http://Yukon.ca/poultry-health-handbook) (Yukon.ca/poultry-health-handbook) to review common diseases and parasites for poultry in the Yukon.

Do a routine check of your flock to identify any issues or disease quickly.

Reportable diseases

If a bird is displaying signs of aggression, poor health or welfare, it is your responsibility to investigate those problems or vices to determine the cause.

Reportable diseases in poultry include: Avian influenza, Fowl typhoid, Newcastle disease and Pullorum disease. Refer to the [Canadian Food Inspections Agency's list of reportable diseases](http://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/eng/1303768471142/1303768544412) (inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/eng/1303768471142/1303768544412).

If you suspect that a bird has a reportable disease, you must advise a veterinarian or the Animal Health Unit. (See "Contact" section.) This is required by law.

Caring for sick or injured birds

Provide immediate care, convalescence or treatment for sick or injured birds. Have sick cages on site and use them to isolate ill birds. Ensure sick cages allow for easy access to resting, food and water areas.

Consult with a veterinarian or nutritionist when a bird's body condition seems poor.

Poultry should not suffer for lack of action on flock health, nutrition, handling or facility design. It is your responsibility to consult a professional and implement any necessary actions to ensure poultry's welfare.

Build an ongoing working relationship with the Agriculture Branch's livestock health technicians or a veterinarian and determine a strategy for disease/parasite prevention and flock health. (See "Contact" section.)

The Veterinary Services Program helps farmers get veterinary care for livestock. Learn more at [Yukon.ca/livestock-health](https://www.yukon.ca/livestock-health). Contact the Animal Health Unit about this program. (See "Contact" section.)

Avian influenza

Avian influenza is a contagious viral infection, also known as "bird flu" or "avian flu." It can infect wild birds including water fowl, raptors and owls, as well as domestic poultry. It is naturally carried by wild and migratory birds worldwide, but some years it is more infectious than others. Some strains of avian flu are highly pathogenic and cause illness and death in bird populations. Learn more on how to protect your birds at [Yukon.ca/avian-flu](https://www.yukon.ca/avian-flu).

Euthanasia

Euthanize, without delay, birds that:

- are unlikely to recover from illness or injury;
- fail to respond to treatments;
- are in chronic, severe or debilitating pain and distress;
- are unable to get to or consume feed or water; or
- show continuous weight loss or emaciation.

Prior to euthanasia poultry should not be dragged or made to move when in pain or suffering.

Methods and approach

Whenever possible, ensure no other birds or animals are present when euthanasia is being performed.

The person performing euthanasia must be experienced and confident.

Consult the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency's Guidelines for stunning techniques for avian food animals including ratites](https://inspection.canada.ca/food-guidance-by-commodity/meat-products-and-food-animals/guidelines-for-stunning-techniques/eng/1538160892409/1538160892704) (inspection.canada.ca/food-guidance-by-commodity/meat-products-and-food-animals/guidelines-for-stunning-techniques/eng/1538160892409/1538160892704).

POULTRY WELFARE STRATEGIES

Handling

Personnel and animal handlers should be familiar with poultry behaviour and handling techniques. This includes being able to recognize indicators of aggression, poor health or welfare.

Government funding is available for training, mentorship and internship projects. Learn more at [Yukon.ca/funding-agriculture](https://www.yukon.ca/funding-agriculture) and contact the Agriculture Branch for more information. (See “Contact” section.)

Remove feeders, waterers and other obstructions when catching birds.

When catching birds:

- minimize passing of birds between people;
- ensure both legs are secure; and
- ensure only one bird is being handled per person at a time.

When carrying poultry, support the whole body and do not carry a bird by the head, neck, one wing or tail feathers.

Birds should be kept in the upright position when placed in crates for moving. No parts of the birds should protrude from the handling container in any way including when closing the door. All birds in a crate or bin should be able to rest on the floor at the same time. Birds should be able to move their heads freely when sitting on the floor.

It is unacceptable to mistreat or cause intentional harm to birds. This includes and is not limited to rough handling, pulling wings, lifting by head, etc.

Transportation

Prior to transportation, evaluate the flock for fitness to travel. Feel the breast bone area. Healthy birds will have good muscle tone surrounding the breast bone. Some birds may be emaciated. Careful not to confuse end-of-lay hens with emaciated birds. Due to their production cycles and genetics, the end-of-lay hens may be viewed as having less muscular tone, but are in fact fit for transport.

Those deemed unfit for transport can either be separated or euthanized. (See “Euthanasia” section.)

Recommended maximum transportation densities for chickens are:

- 57 kilogram per square metre of tray or crate floor area in hot weather (to reduce heat stress); and
- 63 kilogram per square metre of tray or crate floor area in cold weather.

Ensure the number of birds in each container allows for all birds to rest at once without touching another bird and limit excess movement. Excess movement can lead to bruised or injured wings.

Do not transport unfit birds. Under the federal [Health of Animals Regulations](https://canlii.org/en/ca/laws/regu/crc-c-296/latest/crc-c-296.html) (canlii.org/en/ca/laws/regu/crc-c-296/latest/crc-c-296.html) under the *Health of Animals Act*, unfit animals are not to be transported unless being transported to receive care recommended by a veterinarian. If transported, the unfit animal must be

POULTRY WELFARE STRATEGIES

loaded, confined, transported and unloaded in accordance with the provisions under the regulations (see section 139) to prevent suffering, injury or death.

Minimize transportation time to less than 36 hours.

Containers with birds should be handled, moved and secured with care, to prevent moving during transport and minimize causing stress or injury to birds.

Weather conditions

When temperatures exceed 32 degrees Celsius (90 degrees Fahrenheit), birds should not be loaded unless they will be processed the same day.

Adjust travel time of day according to the forecasted weather conditions

Avoid transporting wet birds especially in cool/cold weather.

Slaughter

Only healthy birds can be transported to a slaughter facility.

Remove feed a maximum of 10 hours prior to slaughter or six hours prior to catching. Water should be provided up to the point of catching.

Birds that have received a veterinary drug cannot be slaughtered to be sold or used for food until the withdrawal time specified on the drug's label has passed.

Selling meat for human consumption

The Yukon's *Meat Inspection and Abattoir Regulations* apply to the slaughter of animals and sale of meat in the Yukon. According to the regulations, no person shall slaughter animals, sell or offer meat for sale to any person unless the animal has been slaughtered and inspected in accordance with regulations.

To sell meat or advertise meat for sale, you must meet all the requirements in the regulations, including:

- slaughtering the animal in a licensed abattoir;
- having the meat inspected and approved fit for consumption by a government meat inspector; and
- transporting and storing meat from an abattoir in an approved containment that is both temperature-controlled and equipped for the care of meat.

POULTRY WELFARE STRATEGIES

If one of the requirements above occurs in a non-inspected setting, the meat product loses its inspected status and can no longer be sold.

For the sale of uninspected (also known as “farm gate”) meat, an animal must be sold whole and alive directly from the producer to the purchaser prior to slaughter. The purchaser must be able to provide proof of a purchase agreement date before the slaughter date. The purchaser agrees that the meat will not be used or sold commercially and will only be consumed by themselves, their immediate family and non-paying guests. Each meat package should be stamped with “uninspected” or “not for sale.”

MANAGING FARM OPERATIONS

Identification

Yukon farmers are encouraged to enrol in the Premises Identification and Traceability Program. The program is a bridge between local farms and the National Livestock and Poultry Traceability System. Get more information on how to enrol at Yukon.ca/premises-identification. Enrolment is free.

You also require the premises identification number to register for the Government of Yukon's Veterinary Services Program. (See "Government support" section.)

Biosecurity

Biosecurity is critical to minimizing the spread of diseases among poultry and within the poultry industry.

A biosecurity plan puts measures and procedures in place to reduce the risk of introducing and spreading disease agents (pathogens).

- External biosecurity means keeping disease agents from getting onto the farm and keeping them from getting out into other farms.
- Internal biosecurity means containing the spread of disease within the farm or system and is managed by individual farms.

Biocontainment means preventing the spread of pathogens to other populations of poultry.

MANAGING FARM OPERATIONS

Integrate the following actions into your daily farm practices and routines.

- Segregate diseased or infected birds to limit the risk of pathogens entering uninfected areas or groups of birds.
- Sanitize areas (especially segregation cages and coops) to reduce or inactivate pathogens. Clean and wash to remove visible organic materials. Then disinfect and dry the area, including travel units.
- Apply flow management practices and guidelines to reduce cross-contamination by people, material (equipment) and other birds. A good practice is to divide your farm into zones to control and organize movements (of people, livestock and equipment). Designate areas for parking spots, signage, boots and equipment, cleaning/changing areas and fencing. These are good tools to limit contacts between designated zones.
- Keep records. Record keeping helps with origin tracking if there is an outbreak within your flock. It also helps you mitigate an outbreak and reduce the spread to other producers. It can also be used to train new staff. (See “Record keeping” section.)

We recommend that you stay up to date on the [National Avian On-Farm Biosecurity Standard from the Canada Food Inspection Agency](https://inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/biosecurity/standards-and-principles/eng/1344707905203/1344707981478) (inspection.canada.ca/animal-health/terrestrial-animals/biosecurity/standards-and-principles/eng/1344707905203/1344707981478).

Record keeping

Keeping good records helps producers with their biosecurity and profitability.

Animal ID records: Tracks a bird's place of origin, date of birth, health, vaccination records and treatment records. This is valuable in determining withdrawal periods for slaughter.

Biosecurity records: Tracks farm visitors, pest management and cleaning protocols.

Cost records: Helps producers plan for the future by evaluating the expenses versus revenues associated with poultry production (e.g., feed cost, vaccination cost, maintenance, income from selling/butchering).

Health records: Tracks treatments, types of medications and vaccinations per animal and withdrawal times.

Inventory records: Tracks and determines the number of birds that have been bought, sold, born and died over a one-year period.

Traceability records: Tracks transportation of livestock and deadstock.

Emergency planning

It is important to prepare an emergency plan for unexpected events such as fires or wildfires, flooding, limited feed supply, utility failure or extreme weather. This can also include serious illness or death of main caretaker, transportation accidents, or evacuating and relocating livestock.

Refer to these emergency preparedness documents specific for farms and livestock.

- [Government of Canada's Emergency Preparedness for Farm Animals](https://getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/frm-nmls/index-en.aspx) (getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/frm-nmls/index-en.aspx).
- [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Emergency planning is for producers too](https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/canadas-agriculture-sectors/animal-industry/agriculture-emergency-management/emergency-planning-producers-too) (agriculture.canada.ca/en/canadas-agriculture-sectors/animal-industry/agriculture-emergency-management/emergency-planning-producers-too).

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Agricultural funding programs

The Government of Yukon's Agriculture Branch, in partnership with the Government of Canada, provides funding to the Yukon's agriculture sector to:

- increase competitiveness, productivity or profitability;
- increase environmental sustainability;
- expand domestic and international markets; and
- improve anticipating, mitigating and responding to risks.

Learn more about the programs at [Yukon.ca/funding-agriculture](https://yukon.ca/funding-agriculture) or contact the Agriculture Branch. (See "Contact" section.)

Veterinary Services Program

The Government of Yukon's Animal Health Unit coordinates the Veterinary Services Program.

- It's free for farmers to enrol.
- Producers must have a premise ID to enrol.
- It helps with consultations, animal care, management plans, biosecurity assessments, drugs, vaccines and treatments, and laboratory analysis.
- It offers funding for private veterinarian costs.

Learn more at [Yukon.ca/livestock-health](https://yukon.ca/livestock-health) to access the Veterinary Services Program for farmers or contact the Animal Health Unit. (See "Contact" section.)

RESOURCES

Standards

- [National Farm Animal Care Council's Codes of Practice for the Care and Handling of Farm Animals](http://nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice) (nfacc.ca/codes-of-practice)
- [Yukon Poultry Health Handbook](http://Yukon.ca/poultry-health-handbook) (Yukon.ca/poultry-health-handbook)
- [Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada's Guidance for Organic Poultry Production: Animal Welfare on Organic Farms](http://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/agriculture/oacc/en/livestock/Welfare/awtf_guidance_poultry08.pdf) (cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/agriculture/oacc/en/livestock/Welfare/awtf_guidance_poultry08.pdf)

Poultry organizations

- [Canadian Poultry Magazine](http://canadianpoultrymag.com/) (canadianpoultrymag.com/)
- [Canadian Poultry Research Council](http://cp-rc.ca/en/home) (cp-rc.ca/en/home)
- [Chicken Farmers of Canada](http://chickenfarmers.ca/) (chickenfarmers.ca/)
- [Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada – Animal Welfare Task Force](http://dal.ca/faculty/agriculture/oacc/en-home/resources/livestock/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-task-force.html) (dal.ca/faculty/agriculture/oacc/en-home/resources/livestock/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-task-force.html)
- [Poultry Industry Council](http://poultryindustrycouncil.ca) (poultryindustrycouncil.ca)
- [Wild Wise Yukon](http://wildwise.ca) (wildwise.ca)

CONTACTS

Agriculture Branch, Livestock Extension Services Unit

Department of Energy, Mines and Resources
Government of Yukon

Phone: 867-667-5838 or toll-free: 1-800-661-0408
(ask to be transferred)

Fax: 867-393-6222

Email: agriculture-livestock@yukon.ca

Website: Yukon.ca/support-agriculture

Location: 300 Main Street, Suite 320, Elijah Smith Building in Whitehorse

Mail: PO Box 2703 (K-320A) Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6

Animal Health Unit

Department of Environment
Government of Yukon

Phone: 867-667-5600 or toll-free: 1-800-661-0408
(ask to be transferred)

Fax: 867-393-6263

Email: animalhealth@yukon.ca

Website: Yukon.ca/support-agriculture

Location: 10 Burns Road in Whitehorse

Mail: PO Box 2703 (V7) Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6

DISCLAIMERS

French version

This document is available in French. A digital version is available online at Yukon.ca/livestock-health.

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