

SUMMARY OF LAYING HEN STANDARDS

FACILITIES

	STANDARD → CRITERIA	CIWF Criteria for a Higher Welfare Laying Hen System	United Egg Producers (UEP) Certified	American Humane Certified	Certified Humane	Animal Welfare Approved	Global Animal Partnership (G.A.P.) 5-Step	USDA Organic
Use of Battery Cages		Cage housing guidelines allow use of battery cages. ✗	Battery cages are prohibited. ✓	Battery cages are prohibited. ✓	Battery cages are prohibited. ✓	Battery cages are prohibited. ✓	Battery cages are prohibited. ✓	Continuous total confinement of any animal indoors is prohibited. ✓
Use of Enriched Cages		Standards for enriched cage use in development. ?	Enriched cages are prohibited. ✓	Enriched cages are prohibited. ✓	Enriched cages are prohibited. ✓	Enriched cages are prohibited. ✓	Enriched cages are prohibited. ✓	Continuous total confinement of any animal indoors is prohibited. ✓
Use of Combination, Convertible, or Select/Limited-Access Systems	Use of caged systems is prohibited.	Cage-free housing guidelines do not specifically prohibit these systems. ✗	Once placed in the laying house, young hens may be enclosed overnight to prevent continuous access to the litter area. Housing doors must be opened every day within 6 hours of the onset of the light period. Young laying hens must be provided with continuous access to the laying area when 50% of egg production is reached, but must not be confined overnight for more than 4 weeks after placement in the layer house, whichever comes first. ✗	All cage systems, such as battery cages, furnished or enriched cages, and aviary systems designed to confine birds (such as lock back cages that would be open during the day but closed at night), are prohibited. In aviary systems, all hens must have access to all levels of the housing system at all times. If there are doors remaining on the equipment from a pre-cage-free system, they must be completely removed or sealed open. ✓	Confinement systems, in-house or field-based pens or cages that restrict the birds' natural behaviors, are prohibited.	Systems designed to shut hens into cages/aviaries, even if only temporarily, are prohibited. ✓	Systems designed to shut hens into cages/aviaries, even if only temporarily, are prohibited. ✓	Permitted. Young hens may be confined in the system for up to five weeks ✗
Space Allowance	A minimum of 1.2 ft ² of usable total area per hen, with at least 0.6 ft ² per hen of floor area for litter access.	All-littered floor cage-free systems (no elevated levels): 1.5 ft ² per hen. Multi-tier, single-tier/flat deck, or any cage-free systems providing vertical space: 1.0 ft ² per hen. Usable space includes tiers, slatted areas, floors (littered or unlittered), and nest boxes (if kick-out feature not in use). No maximum stocking density specified at the floor level for litter access. ?	All-littered floor cage-free systems (no elevated levels): 1.5 ft ² per hen. Multi-tier, single-tier/flat deck, or any cage-free systems providing vertical space: 1.2 ft ² per hen for brown layers and other medium-weight birds; 1.0 ft ² per hen for White Leghorns and other light-weight birds. Usable space includes floors (littered or unlittered), slatted areas, and tiers, but excludes nesting areas. No maximum stocking density specified at the floor level for litter access. ?	All-littered floor cage-free systems (no elevated levels): 1.5 ft ² per hen. Single-tier/Flat deck: 1.2 ft ² per hen. Multi-tier/Aviary: 1.0 ft ² per hen. Pasture-raised systems with mobile housing: Indoor space of at least 1.0 ft ² per hen. Usable space includes floors (littered or unlittered), slatted areas, and tiers, but excludes nesting areas. No maximum stocking density specified at the floor level for litter access. ?	Continuous daytime ranging access of a minimum of 4 ft ² per hen from 4 weeks of age onwards. When kept indoors during daylight hours, each hen must be provided a minimum of 1.8 ft ² indoor space, plus 4 ft ² of additional foraging area per hen. Usable space includes solid floors (littered or unlittered) and outdoor ranges, but does not include roosts, perches, or nest boxes. Maximum stocking density of 4 ft ² per hen at floor level for access to indoor foraging area or pasture. ✓	Steps 1-2: 1.5 ft ² per hen. Steps 3-5+: Each hen must have access to 4 ft ² on pasture during the day. When kept indoors during daylight hours, 1.5 ft ² per hen must be provided (Step 3 and above). Usable area includes solid littered floors and slatted areas, but excludes nest boxes and perches. Maximum stocking density to provide a minimum of 0.6 ft ² per hen of solid littered floor area. ✓	Indoor stocking density limits not specifically regulated, but enough flat areas indoors must be available to allow all birds to move freely, stand normally, stretch their wings, and engage in natural behaviors. Indoor space allowances include floors and flat platforms but excludes perches and nest boxes. No maximum stocking density specified at the floor level for litter access. ✗	
Access to Litter	38 in ² of dry, friable litter provided per hen, covering at least 1/3 of the floor area, or continual access to an area covered with vegetation for ranging and foraging.	For cage-free systems, hens must have continual access to scratch area covered in loose, friable litter, which should be at least 15% of total usable floor space. ✗	Hens must have access at all times to a well-maintained area with dry, friable litter within the house. A minimum of 15% of the total usable area of the house (excluding nest space) must be devoted to the litter area. ✗	Hens must be kept on, or have daily access to, well maintained loose substrate/litter. However, only 15% of floor space is required to have litter. ✗	Litter must be provided from placement of chicks indoors. Access to outdoor area with vegetation maintained for ranging and foraging required by 7 days of age. ✓	All solid floors must be covered in dry, friable litter from placement of chicks. ✓	Litter must be provided consisting of a bedding material and not just dried manure. Bedding must be provided on solid floors and solid portions of floors, but there is no minimum percentage of solid floor space specified. ✗	
Lighting	Provision of natural light is recommended. The light intensity should be even throughout house and a minimum of 20 lux during daylight hours, whether natural or artificial, and areas of extreme darkness or brightness avoided. No sudden changes in lighting and changes should be gradual, stimulating dusk and dawn. A minimum of 6 hours of continuous darkness per day should be provided.	Natural light is not required. Minimum 5 lux (0.5 foot candles) at feeders and drinkers throughout the daytime. No minimum periods of daylight or darkness specified. Use of dimming systems recommended. ✗	Natural light is not required. The lighting system must provide an average minimum illumination of 10 lux (1 foot candle) for at least 8 hours in each 24 hour period. Patches of high-intensity artificial or natural light must be avoided in a house. ✗	Natural light is not required. Minimum light intensity during the day, but patches of extreme brightness should be avoided and the use of dimming systems recommended for stepwise changes in light levels. For each 24 hour period, hens must be provided a minimum of 8 hours continuous artificial light (or daylight) and 6 hours of continuous darkness or the natural period of darkness, if less. ✗	Natural light is required. For hens kept indoors temporarily, artificial light may be used as a supplement at a minimum 20 lux intensity for no more than 16 hours/day. ✓	During daylight hours, artificial and/or natural light must provide 20 lux of light with a minimum of 6 hours of continuous darkness per day. Natural light is required for Steps 3-5+. Use of dimming systems (or natural light) is required for gradual changes in light at dawn and dusk. ✓	Natural light is required and should be sufficient indoors on sunny days so that one can read and write when all artificial lights are turned off inside. ✗	
Nest Boxes	Minimum of one nest box per 5 hens, or 9 ft ² of nest box space per every 100 birds (12.96 in ² per hen).	For cage-free systems, a minimum of 9.0 ft ² of nest box space per 100 hens. ✓	A minimum of one functional nest boxes for every 5-7 hens. For colony nest, at least 9.0 ft ² per 100 hens. ?	A minimum of one nest box per every 5 hens, or group nests with at least 9.0 ft ² per 100 hens. ✓	One nest box per every 5 hens, communal nests with minimum 20.0 in ² per hen. ✓	One nest box per every 6 hens, or communal nests with minimum 1.0 ft ² per 10 hens (14.4 in ² per hen). ✓	Nesting space provided to hens not specifically addressed. ✗	
Perches	Minimum of 6 in. per hen of aerial perching space.	For cage-free systems, 6 in. of aerial perch space per hen. ✓	6 in. of perch space provided per hen. However, the edge of an elevated floor/tier can be counted towards the perch space requirement if hens are able to grasp the floor edge to roost effectively. ?	6 in. of aerial perch space provided per hen. ✓	7 in. of aerial perch space per hen. ✓	5 in. of aerial perch space per hen. ✗	Housing must allow all hens to perch, but the type and amount of perching space is not regulated. 6 in. per bird is recommended. ✗	
Pullet Rearing	No caged systems. Pullets should be reared in open rearing systems matching the laying house design with early access to litter (by 7 days of age), perches (minimum 2.4 in per chick by 7-10 days of age), elevated tiers, and ramps to teach them how to navigate 3D space. Introducing nest boxes at the end of rear to train pullets and prevent floor eggs. At the end of rear, a minimum of 0.78 ft ² should be provided per pullet for light strains, or 1 ft ² per pullet for medium and heavy strains.	Does not explicitly prohibit use of cages for pullet rearing. Recommends providing pullets with early access to raised areas, perches, and litter by 4 weeks of age, but not required. Recommended to raise pullets with same type of drinker as layer house. ✗	No caged systems allowed. Pullets must be reared on litter and provided with a minimum space allowance of adult laying flock adjusted for the pullets' current average weight (e.g., light-weight pullets provided a minimum of 0.5 ft ² /chick when the pullets are 50% of the anticipated weight of the adult hens). Feeding and watering systems for pullets must be similar to the layer house. Perches and litter scratch areas must be included in pullet housing. ?	No caged systems allowed. Access to 3 in. of perch space per chick before 4 weeks of age, and pullets provided continuous access to litter. Maximum stocking density of 0.73 ft ² at 16 weeks, up to 0.92 ft ² at 18 weeks of age. ?	No caged systems allowed. Pullets are recommended to have at least 0.25 ft ² per bird when first placed in brooders. When kept indoors during daylight hours, each pullet must be provided 0.67 ft ² indoor space, plus 2 ft ² per pullet of additional foraging area. Pullets should have access to the outdoor range as early as possible (e.g., if conditions allow, from 2-3 days of age). Pullets should have access to litter at placement and access to forage from 24 hours onwards, and no later than 7 days of age. Training perches must be provided to pullets by 10 days of age with a minimum of 1 in. of perching space per pullet up to 4 weeks of age. After 4 weeks, perch requirements should be increased to match the adult hens. ✓	All caged systems are prohibited and pullets must be reared in a similar type of system as the laying hen operation. Pullets up to 4 weeks of age are provided a minimum of 0.45 ft ² per chick and 1 ft ² per chick for pullets 4 weeks or older. Pullets must be brooded on solid floors fully covered in dry, friable litter from placement with a minimum of 0.4 ft ² per chick up to 4 weeks of age and 1 in. of perch space once birds are 4 weeks old. Enrichments recommended, but not required. For Step 5+, pullets must have pasture access by 12 weeks of age. ✓	Pullet rearing is not addressed with the exception that pullets must be provided natural light. Birds must be provided access to the outdoors by 16 weeks of age. ✗	
Provision of Enrichment That Encourages Natural Behaviors	For the purposes of this framework, enrichment is defined as a resource that an animal values, but is not essential (excludes nest boxes or perches). Minimum of 2 substrates per 1,000 hens that facilitate pecking, scratching, and/or foraging.	Not addressed. ✗	Not required. Enrichments are recommended as method to deter injurious pecking. ✗	Not required. Foraging materials recommended as method to deter injurious pecking. ✗	Hens have continuous access to vegetated ranging areas and access to forage by 7 days of age. ✓	Indoor enrichments provided at 24 weeks of age for Steps 2-3, Steps 3 and above provided with at least daily access to pasture to forage and dust-bathe. ✗	Not addressed. ✗	
Beak Trimming/Treatment	Recommended to avoid routine beak trimming/treatment.	Infra-red treatment within 24 hours of hatching and hot blade trimming in pullets 10 days and younger permitted. Therapeutic beak trimming may be performed at any age if an outbreak of cannibalism occurs. ✗	Infrared within 24 hours of hatching preferred. When not available, hot blade permitted in pullets up to 10 days of age. ✗	Only permitted at 10 days or younger in flocks susceptible to cannibalism. Only the tip of the upper mandible may be removed, but the lower mandible can be heat-treated. ✗	Prohibited. ✓	Steps 1-3: Beak trimming permitted using only infra-red treatment for day-old pullets, which removes less than 1/3 of the beak. Step 4 and above: Beak trimming prohibited. ✗	Physical alterations can be performed when needed. No stipulations around trimming age or methods for beak trimming. ✗	
Outdoor Access	Recommended, but not required.	Not required. ✗	Not required. Additional standards for outdoor runs, free range, and pasture operations. ?	Not required. Additional standards for free-range, seasonal pasture-raised, and pasture-raised systems. ?	Hens are required to have continuous daytime outdoor access to range from 4 weeks of age. ✓	Hens are required to have at least daily access to pasture for Steps 3 and above. ✗	Hens must be provided year-round outdoor access with shade, shelter, and exercise areas by 16 weeks of age. The regularity, amount, and quality of outdoor access is not specified. ✗	