



FEATHER SCORING CRITERIA AND TREATMENT



SCORE	DESCRIPTION
0 (BEST)	Intact feather cover, little to no wear, singular feathers may be missing, no bald patches.
1	Damaged feathers (worn/deformed) or visible bald patches that are smaller than or equal to a quarter.
2 (WORST)	At least one visible bald patch that is larger than a quarter.



ESTABLISH A TREATMENT PLAN

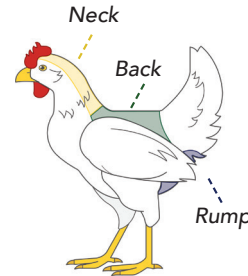


Flock scores and comparisons should be maintained to establish a baseline. Consider isolating any unique outliers when feather scoring, including those with tissue damage, and treating or euthanizing them in alignment with your farm's established procedures.

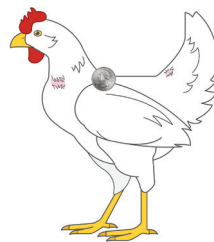


FEATHER SCORING TIPS

- Trained staff should consistently monitor birds to alleviate potential flock health concerns before they escalate.
- Plan to feather score three times throughout the life of the flock, including within three months of the end-of-flock, to see development over time.
- Proper monitoring includes collecting, analyzing and interpreting data.

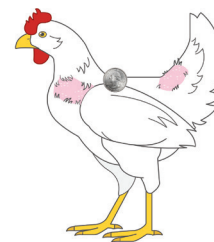


SCORE 0



SCORE 1

≤
(SMALLER THAN/EQUAL TO)



SCORE 2

>
(LARGER THAN)

Adapted from schematics by Nienke van Staaveren and Renee Garant.



United Egg Producers

FEATHER SCORING GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS

Adapted from research by Dr. Alexandra Harlander and team at the University of Guelph, Decina et al. 2019, doi: 10.3390/ani9070436.



EGG FARMERS OF CANADA

Created in collaboration with Egg Farmers of Canada

WHY IS FEATHER SCORING IMPORTANT?

Members of the egg farming community have a moral obligation to provide high-quality care for their hens; produce safe, affordable, nutritious eggs; and meet the expectations of customers. Feather scoring is an important welfare practice that helps assess the health and well-being of hens.

WHAT IS FEATHER SCORING?

Feather scoring includes examining hens on their head, neck, back and rump area for feather damage. Consistent monitoring can alleviate potential flock health concerns before they escalate.

WHAT CAUSES

FEATHER DAMAGE?

- Aggressive pecking
- Severe feather pecking
- Equipment

FEATHER SCORE REGULARLY

To cause minimal disruption to the birds, perform feather scoring during a typical flock check.

- Allow the birds time to get acclimated to your presence
- There is no need for direct handling
- Visually scoring birds allows for quick, easy and reliable assessments

IDENTIFY BIRDS TO SCORE

TO GAIN AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF FLOCK WELL-BEING:

- Assess up to 80 birds*
- Select birds from various places throughout the facility
- Only score birds that can be assessed in all three body regions (neck, back and rump)

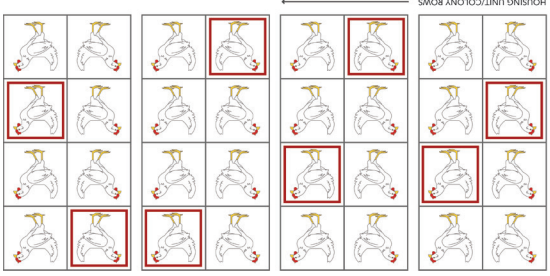
ASSESS THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF BIRDS

AS INDICATED BY THE TABLE BELOW.

BIRDS IN THE BARN	MINIMUM BIRDS ASSESSED
≤ 8,000	20
≤ 10,000	25
≤ 15,000	30
≤ 20,000	35
≤ 40,000	40
≤ 50,000	45
≤ 65,000	50
≤ 80,000	60
≤ 100,000	80

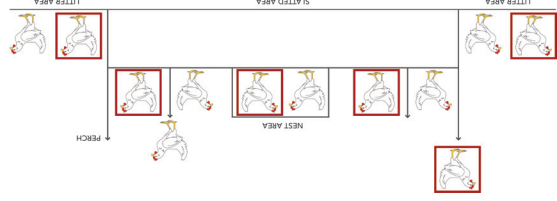
CONVENTIONAL AND ENRICHED COLONY

- Select cages and birds at random, ideally using a random number generator prior to scoring.
- Score a max of 2 birds per cage in conventional.



SINGLE-TIER

- Select birds from different areas of the barn (litter area, slatted area, nest area, and if applicable, outdoor areas).
- Choose birds proportionally based on the number present in each area.



MULTI-TIER

- Select birds from different areas of the barn (litter area, slatted area, nest area, perches, different tiers, and if applicable, outdoor areas).
- Choose birds proportionally based on the number present in each area. If most are in one spot, score at least half from that area.

