

Broiler Leg Condition Scoring Guide

Leg condition scoring is an important key welfare indicator for welfare audits since it reflects the care and handling of broilers at the farm, during catching and transport, and at the processing plant. Leg injury can result from incorrect bird handling, from equipment that is not used correctly or is poorly maintained, and from rough transport conditions. **Leg scoring includes evaluation of broilers at processing for leg bruising (hematomas) and broken leg bones.** To optimize the scoring accuracy, legs should be evaluated at the processing plant after carcass scalding and feather picking of the carcass, but before chilling. The auditor should be positioned to see the keel of the bird and should evaluate both legs on each bird for the required number to be audited. **NOTE:** Auditors should refer to the required sample size and the scoring criteria noted in the welfare standard or assessment guidelines being utilized. A bird with damage to both legs should only be counted once during the audited sample.



PASS (Score Criteria)

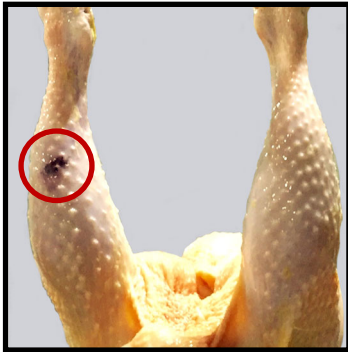
- Normal skin color* and no broken bone
(*note, skin color may vary from yellow to white due to breed or diet)
- Slight discoloration or darkened skin
- Bruise is less than the size of a quarter

FAIL (Score Criteria)

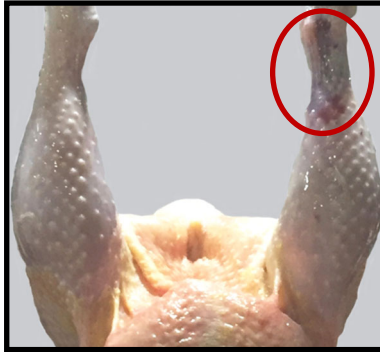
- Leg is broken
- Bruise is greater than the size of a quarter



Pass (drumstick with normal skin color & no bruising)



Pass (drumstick has slight bruising but < quarter size)



Fail (drumstick with one bruise > quarter size)



Fail (drumstick with various bruises that are > quarter size)

Guide for Coloration of Bruising (Gregory et al, 1992)	
<u>Estimated Time of Bruising</u>	<u>Color of Bruise on Skin</u>
2 minutes	red
12 hours	dark red/purple
24 hours	light green/purple
48 hours	yellow/orange/light green

Note: Leg injuries can occur on the thigh and drumstick of the broiler. When evaluating and scoring for leg injury for a broiler welfare audit, bruise color associated with incorrect handling during catching, transport and shackling of broilers is normally dark red or purple as shown above. If the skin is yellow/orange/green, this may indicate a prior injury and the bruise should not be scored as a failure for the purpose of this KWI assessment.