

RANGECARE

CODE OF PRACTICE

for accreditation by

FREE RANGE EGG AND POULTRY AUSTRALIA LTD



AUSTRALIA LTD.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Document

The Free Range Egg and Poultry Association was formed in 1993 after Government deregulation in the Victorian Egg Industry. Deregulation enabled the establishment of independent egg and poultry farms which marketed their own produce in line with consumer concerns and interests. Free Range Egg and Poultry Australia Ltd was established in 2002.

The intent of RangeCare (the Code) is to demonstrate to the public and government that FREPA's methods of poultry husbandry represent best practice poultry care and biosecurity, safe food quality and sustainable extensive farming practices.

This RangeCare is inclusive of the current editions and successors of the Legislation, Regulations and Codes of Practice in existence such as:

Welfare

- Welfare Regulations and Code of Practice, current edition appropriate for the State of operation
- the Land Transport Regulations and Code for current edition appropriate for the State of operation

Food Safety

- Regulations required by the State of operation for the handling of eggs
- Regulations required by the State of operation for the handling of birds and processed poultry

Packaging

- General Requirements on Pre-Packed Articles for Retailers/Manufacturers/Packers, as revised appropriate for State of operation.

Health

- Food Act and Regulations , as revised appropriate for State of operation

Biosecurity

- Biosecurity Code of Practice for the Egg Industry, current edition OR
- Or compatible manuals specifically developed for a particular sector, e.g. the National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Chicken Growers (ACMF, 2010).

1.2 Free Range Definition

There is not a current definition of Free Range production in the Competition and Consumer Act but it is defined in 4th edition of Domestic Poultry Code of Welfare and State Codes. It is also defined in the State animal welfare legislation.

1.3 Sunset Clause

All FREPA egg and poultry farmers with pre-existing rights which are in existence because of situations which pre-date FREPA membership, and are outside the control of the farmer, will have to comply with the government-endorsed codes or government legislation.

This clause will only apply to farms in which these rights are not major non-compliances in the audit process.

2. POULTRY CARE

2.1 Animal Care

- a) All farms should complete and retain for inspection records which demonstrate their compliance with: the current edition Regulations and the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals - Domestic Poultry, or appropriate State Code, the Regulations and Code of Practice for the Land Transport of Poultry, or appropriate State Code, this Code and FREPA's system.

2.2 Ausvetplan

When an emergency disease outbreak occurs, the relevant Department of Agriculture will give instructions subject to State or National Response Plan and any other industry-government agreement.

2.3 Biosecurity

- a) All farmers should complete and retain for inspection records which demonstrate their compliance with:
 - the Biosecurity Code of Practice for the Egg Industry, OR
 - National Farm Biosecurity Manual for Chicken Growers (ACMF, 2010).

or other industry-government endorsed document, this Code and FREPA's system.

3. LANDCARE

3.1 Sustainability

Free Range farms are to demonstrate sustainable agriculture, and be promoted as practicing extensive egg and poultry farming.

3.2 Environment

FREPA Farms are to practice extensive agriculture and sustainable land use through the control of their manure deposition and grazing rates.

4. FOOD SAFETY

4.1 Code of Practice

Eggs from laying hens are subject to the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) requirements as enforced in State of operation.

Eggs are subject to the Trade Measurement packaging requirements as enforced in in State of operation.

Poultry meat birds are subject to the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) requirements as enforced in State of operation.

4.2 Traceability

- (a) There shall be traceability from originating farm until the farmer sells the product and from the packer as per the Egg Regulations and the Poultry Processing regulations.

(b) FREPA farmers shall ensure that only produce from accredited FREPA farms is marketed with the FREPA logo.

4.3 HACCP

All farms shall be required to put in place a HACCP-based system, which ensures that produce is handled in a way which minimises food safety problems

5. GENERAL PROVISIONS

5.1 Records

All farms shall have in place records which show that their compliance with the Code and how they solve any non-compliances which arise.

Records to help with the above information should include:

- (a) Copies of reference Codes of Practice and Handbooks.
- (b) HACCP flow diagrams, work sheets and plans.
- (c) Appropriate records for the size of the farm

5.2 Audits

Demonstration of capability of compliance with the Code requires that the applicant has successfully completed an audit process (at its own expense) by an auditor accredited by a recognised auditing organisation and endorsed by FREPA.

The audit will have no critical non-compliance; major non-compliances will be closed out at the discretion of the auditor in compliance with the FREPA auditors guide and minor non-compliances at the discretion of the auditor in compliance with the FREPA Auditors Guide. The auditor may make Observations to assist the farmer.

The audit will be done in accordance with normal auditing practices and in compliance with the FREPA system.

6. MANAGEMENT OF CODE

6.1 Management Committee

Management will be vested in a FREPA Code management committee comprising of:

- One chairman who is President of FREPA
- One secretary who is the executive officer of FREPA (non-voting)
- 4 farmer nominees - at least one farmer to be an egg farmer and at least one to be a chicken meat farmer

The Chairman may exercise a casting vote.

6.2 Term of Appointment

Apart from the Chairman and Secretary, appointments are to be made a selection committee chaired by the Immediate Past President of FREPA for a twelve month term.

6.3 Conflict of Interest

Should a complaint concern a member person or organisation represented by a member of the Management Committee, that member will, for that investigation, disqualify himself or herself and the Chairman will appoint a representative of another member to act as a temporary member of the Management Committee.

6.4 Quorum

Three members of the Management Committee will constitute a quorum provided that there is a representative of egg or chicken meat as appropriate to the complaint.

6.5 Management Committee Terms of Reference

These include:

- Mediation and determination of disputed cases of alleged non-conformity to the Code
- An annual review of complaints and their status
- A review of the Code, as necessary, to assess the need for changes.

7. COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE

Allegations of a breach of the Code must, initially, be pursued by the person or company making the complaint directly with the person or company alleged to have breached the Code.

7.1 Alleged Breach of Code

The procedure which shall be followed is:

- The complainant shall notify the respondent (of whom the breach is alleged) in writing within 21 days of the date of the complainant becoming aware of the incident:
 - Specifying the breach
 - Requiring that the breach be remedied
 - Requiring that a reply in writing which includes the following be given to the complainant in 21 days from receipt of the notification by the respondent
 - Acknowledging receipt of the complainants notice
 - Admitting or denying the breach
 - And if admitting the breach setting out steps taken or proposed to remedy the breach
- If :
 - There is no reply by the respondent within the time limit
 - The respondent denies the breach
 - The complaint is not resolved

the dispute maybe referred by either party to the Management Committee.

7.2 Referral of Dispute to Management Committee

If the complainant refers the dispute to the Management Committee, the complainant must send to the Secretary of the Management Committee:

- A copy of the notice given under 7.1
- A copy of the reply if any given by the respondent
- Notice setting out the clauses of the Code alleged to have been breached
- A request that the dispute be referred to the Management Committee
- A fee of \$500.00.

7.3 Documents referred to Respondent by Secretary

The secretary shall send copies of the documents referred to in 7.2 to the respondent and require the respondent to within 14 days of receipt of the documents to in writing send to the secretary:

- Acknowledgment of receipt of the copies of the documents
- Any response the respondent desires to make

When the Secretary receives the documents in 7.3 or after 21 days of sending the documents in 7.2, whichever occurs first, the Secretary shall refer the dispute to the Management Committee

7.4 Management Committee Options

Its options are to:

- Attempt to resolve the dispute through mediation. The Chairman of the Management Committee shall obtain the consent of all parties to the mediation before commencing
- Request the complainant or the respondent to provide such further information as the Committee may require
- Co-opt the services of appropriate experts as required. Such co-opted experts will have not voting rights. The costs incurred will be covered by the parties to the dispute on a basis pre-determined by the Management Committee and agreed in writing by the parties prior to the co-opting of the experts.

If the dispute cannot be resolved within 28 days through mediation, it will be reviewed by the Management Committee which will decide whether to refer the matter to arbitration.

7.5 Arbitration

If referred to arbitration, the independent arbitrator agreeable to both parties shall be appointed by the Management Committee. Both parties will agree to abide by the decision of the arbitrator and to meet the full costs of the arbitrator.

The arbitrator's decision will be final and binding on both parties.

8. REMEDIAL ACTION

8.1 Actions for breaches of the Code

Where breaches of the Code have been clearly established the following actions may be taken by the Management Committee:

- Notify the respondent in writing to give a written undertaking to discontinue, within a specified time frame, any practice which has been determined to constitute a breach of the Code
- Upon written notification, the respondent maybe required to issue corrective statements as appropriate. Prior to release or publication the Management Committee will approve the format, size, wording, mode of publication and method of distribution
- A breach of the Code may be referred to an appropriate regulatory authority
- Continued refusal by the offending party to undertake the required remedial action may lead to the Management Committee recommending the suspension or expulsion of a member of FREPA where permitted under its Constitution.