



RSPCA APPROVED FARMING SCHEME OPERATIONS MANUAL

OCTOBER 2011



© RSPCA Australia Inc 2011

RSPCA Australia
PO Box 265
Deakin West ACT 2600

P: 02 6282 8300
F: 02 6282 8311
E: approvedfarming@rspca.org.au
W: rspca.org.au

Table of contents

SECTION ONE – Scheme overview	3
1.1	Introduction 3
1.2	About the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme..... 3
1.3	Supporting documents 3
1.4	Participation in the Scheme 4
1.5	Sectors of the supply chain encompassed by the Scheme..... 4
1.6	Policy regarding parallel production 4
1.7	Management of the Scheme 5
1.8	Approved Farming Scheme Assessment Panel..... 5
1.9	Becoming an Approved Producer..... 5
1.10	Becoming a Licensee 6
1.11	RSPCA Approved Farming Standards 6
1.12	Exemptions to the Standards 7
1.13	Traceability requirements 7
1.14	Promotion of the Scheme 7
SECTION TWO – Information for Approved Producers	8
2.1	Application process 8
2.2	Animal Care Statement 9
2.3	Pre-approval Self Assessment..... 9
2.3.1	Assessment Report..... 9
2.3.2	Pre-approval Visit..... 10
2.4	Maintaining approval status..... 10
2.4.1	Routine Approved Producer Assessments 10
2.4.2	Assessment Reports 10
2.4.3	Unscheduled Assessments 11
2.4.4	Accompanied Assessments 11
2.4.5	Submission of regular data 11
2.5	Exemptions to the Standards 11
2.6	Approval status 12
2.6.1	Under consideration 12
2.6.2	Unconditional approval..... 12
2.6.3	Conditional approval..... 12
2.6.4	Suspension of approval 12
2.6.5	Cancellation of approval..... 13
2.6.6	Withdrawal from the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme..... 13
2.6.7	Reapplication to Scheme..... 13
2.7	Traceability requirements 13
2.8	Use of Approved Producer information..... 14
2.9	Rights and responsibilities of Approved Producers..... 14
2.9.1	Complying with the Standards, Operations Manual and Producer Agreement..... 14
2.9.2	Cooperating with approval process..... 14
2.9.3	Making appropriate approval claims 14

2.9.4	Protecting RSPCA Australia’s reputation.....	15
2.9.5	Discontinuing use of approval claims.....	15
2.9.6	Transferring ownership	15
2.10	Dispute resolution	15
SECTION THREE – Information for Licensees.....		16
3.1	Application process	16
3.2	Trademark Licence Agreement.....	16
3.3	Suspension/cancellation of licence	16
3.4	Re-application to the Scheme	16
3.5	Traceability requirements	17
3.6	Use of Licensee information	17
3.7	Rights and responsibilities of Licensees	17
3.7.1	Correct use of the Scheme’s mark and/or logo	18
3.7.2	Making appropriate approval claims	18
3.7.3	Provision of information	18
3.7.4	Protecting RSPCA Australia’s reputation.....	18
3.7.5	Discontinuing use of approval claims.....	18
3.7.6	Payment of royalties.....	18
Appendix 1		19
Routine Assessment schedule.....		19
	Layer hens.....	19
	Meat Chickens	19
	Pigs.....	19
	Turkeys	19
Appendix 2		20
Sectors of the supply chain covered under the Scheme		20
	Pigs.....	20
	Layer Hens	21
	Meat Chickens and Turkeys	22
Appendix 3		23
Contact details.....		23
Glossary of terms.....		24

SECTION ONE – Scheme overview

1.1 Introduction

The RSPCA is Australia's best known and most trusted animal welfare organisation.

With a mission to prevent cruelty to animals by actively promoting their care and protection, the RSPCA is a charity that is firmly based in the Australian community.

RSPCA Australia is a federation of the RSPCA Societies operating in each State and Territory. Together these Societies work to improve animal welfare at the local, regional and national level. RSPCA Australia is the national voice for the RSPCA, leading opinion, policy and behaviour through strong science and technical expertise.

RSPCA Australia's policies, positions and the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme are developed within a framework of the Five Freedoms, which are based around the principle that every animal deserves the following:

- Freedom from hunger and thirst - by providing ready access to fresh water and a healthy, balanced diet.
- Freedom from discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- Freedom from pain, injury or disease - through prevention or rapid diagnosis and veterinary treatment.
- Freedom to express normal behaviour - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- Freedom from fear and distress - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

1.2 About the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme

The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme (from here on referred to as "the Scheme") is RSPCA Australia's farm assurance and food labelling scheme. It was established in the mid 1990s to improve the welfare of farm animals on a commercial scale in Australia and provide a means of leading a consumer-driven change to producing welfare-friendly food. RSPCA Australia manages all aspects of the Scheme.

The Scheme is underpinned by animal welfare standards that have been developed by RSPCA Australia. The standards take into account animal welfare science as well as advice from veterinary and other specialists, similar programs overseas and the practical experience of producers.

1.3 Supporting documents

The documentation that supports the Scheme consists of the following:

- Operations Manual - details the operation of the Scheme for both Approved Producers and Licensees, including the application process and the Assessment procedures.
- Standards (specific to each species) - provide the requirements for the rearing, handling, transport and/or slaughter of the species.
- Templates for assessment and reporting.

1.4 Participation in the Scheme

Currently there are two avenues of participation in the Scheme:

1. By becoming an *Approved Producer*. Approved Producers agree to abide by the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme Standards (the Standards) for some or all of their animal production. Once an Approved Producer enters into a Producer Agreement with RSPCA Australia, product produced in line with the Standards is regarded as *Approved Product*.

The Standards go beyond what is required by law. For producers choosing to participate in the Scheme, the Standards are mandatory; however they are designed to be achievable for both small and large-scale farms. RSPCA Australia approves well-managed indoor and outdoor systems providing that all the Standards are met. Production which involves intense confinement and which opposes RSPCA policy is not permitted under the Scheme. Approved Producers participating in the Scheme are subject to regular Assessments to ensure adherence to the Standards is maintained.

2. By becoming a *Licensee*. Licensees source and market Approved Product, and can use the RSPCA Approved Farming Logo on the Approved Product and associated marketing materials. Licensees enter into a Trademark Licence Agreement with RSPCA Australia and are permitted to use the RSPCA Approved Farming Logo in accordance with the Style Guide.

Some entities may participate in the Scheme as both an Approved Producer and a Licensee.

1.5 Sectors of the supply chain encompassed by the Scheme

Currently, RSPCA Australia does not formally include all sectors of the supply chain for species covered under the Scheme; however the Scheme will continue to develop with this aim.

Sectors of the supply chain currently included under the Scheme detailed in Appendix 2.

Where the Standards do not cover a sector of the supply chain, it is expected that the producer is aware of and complies with the requirements in the relevant State/Territory legislation and Standards and Guidelines or Codes of Practice including:

- *Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals—Poultry* (or equivalent Australian Standard or State code where one exists).
- *Australia Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals—Pigs* (or equivalent Australian Standards or State Code where one exists).
- *Australian Standards and Guidelines for the Welfare of Animals—Land Transport of Livestock* (or equivalent Code of Practice where one exists).
- *Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals—Livestock at Slaughtering Establishments* (or equivalent Australian Standard or State code where one exists).

1.6 Policy regarding parallel production

Approved Producers are permitted to operate parallel production systems so long as the animals and products that are associated with the Scheme are clearly identified and appropriate traceability systems are in place. Where parallel production exists, that production must at least meet the relevant Model Code of Practice or Standards for that species.

RSPCA Australia believes that encouraging involvement in the Scheme of all relevant producers offers the best chance of improving the welfare of the greatest number of animals and, in the longer term, provides opportunity and incentive for these producers to move away from intensive, lower welfare production systems.

Licensees are permitted to sell non-Approved Product from other production systems as well as

Approved Products (products produced in line with the Standards and sourced from Approved Producers), as long as only Approved Products are marketed as being part of the Scheme.

1.7 Management of the Scheme

The Scheme is governed by the RSPCA Australia Board. Day-to-day management is the responsibility of the Compliance Manager under the guidance of the Chief Executive Officer of RSPCA Australia. The Compliance Manager provides reports and recommendations to the Approved Farming Scheme Assessment Panel. (See 1.8)

RSPCA Australia is responsible for:

- Setting the Standards.
- Assessment of producers participating, or wishing to participate, in the Scheme.
- Operational and administrative procedures and outcomes.

RSPCA Australia contracts and employs Assessors and may engage other expert individuals or advisory groups in order to assist in the further development of the Scheme.

Where there is a dispute between RSPCA Australia and an Approved Producer regarding non-compliance to the Standards, RSPCA Australia may seek independent expert advice to assist in resolving the dispute.

1.8 Approved Farming Scheme Assessment Panel

The Approved Farming Scheme Assessment Panel was established in order to provide additional rigour and objectivity into the Assessment process.

The terms of reference for the Assessment Panel are as follows:

1. To review the Compliance Manager's recommendations relating to compliance and non-compliance issues following a producer assessment.
2. To agree to any required actions and timeframes to address non-compliance with any standard.
3. To agree, as necessary, to any exemptions to the Standards and timeframe for the exemption.
4. To decide whether the approval status of the producer as a result of each Assessment is Unconditional, Conditional, Suspended or Cancelled.

If any Panel member has attended or conducted an Assessment, that member is disqualified from participating in the decision-making process regarding that Assessment.

The Assessment Panel may seek external expertise as necessary on a commercial-in-confidence basis.

1.9 Becoming an Approved Producer

Approved Producers agree to abide by the RSPCA Australia Standards for some or all of their animal production. Only product produced according to the Standards is accepted under the Scheme and this production may be across one or multiple sites.

Producers interested in approval apply through a formal process including submitting a Producer Application Form, Animal Care Statement and a Pre-approval Self Assessment Report together with an Application Fee. Should this documentation be satisfactory, RSPCA Australia will organise an Initial Producer Assessment. If the Applicant meets the requirements under the Standards, the Applicant will be invited to enter into a Producer Agreement and products produced in line with the Standards will be regarded as Approved Product.

Scheme overview

A producer applying to participate in the Scheme is obliged to disclose in writing to RSPCA Australia details of any previous convictions and pending prosecutions relating to any offence involving the care, handling, rearing, transport, slaughter or sale of animals or produce.

The Approved Producer takes responsibility for ensuring that the operations which have gained approval maintain compliance with the requirements of the Scheme. This includes ensuring staff members are aware of and thoroughly understand the Standards relating to the Scheme.

RSPCA Australia will, where possible, advise the Approved Producer of transporters/abattoirs to which the Approved Producer may supply animals. RSPCA Australia reserves the right to withdraw approval if animals supplied by an Approved Producer to transporters and/or abattoirs are subject to inhumane treatment and the Approved Producer is unwilling or unable to make alternate, more humane arrangements for transport and/or slaughter.

RSPCA Australia undertakes routine and unscheduled Assessments on all Approved Producers and Approved Producers are also required to supply regular production-related data. Identified non-compliance to Standards or failure to supply data will result in a requirement to rectify the identified problem or, in some circumstances, suspension or cancellation of approval.

Details of the application process, Assessments, supply of data and compliance matters are included in Section Two of this Operations Manual.

1.10 Becoming a Licensee

A Licensee can be:

- An Approved Producer marketing their own Approved Products.
- A group of Approved Producers marketing their Approved Product(s) together under the one brand name via a cooperative or similar structure.
- A brand owner that sources and markets Approved Products.

A Licensee is permitted to use the RSPCA Approved Farming Logo on the Approved Product and associated marketing materials in accordance with the Style Guide.

A company interested in becoming a Licensee under the Scheme applies through a formal process including submitting a Licensee Application Form. Should the Application be accepted, the company is invited to enter into a Trademark Licence Agreement with RSPCA Australia. This Agreement requires the Licensee to adhere to rules on use of the Scheme's trademarks and to pay a Royalty Fee on the sale of Approved Product.

Details of the application process are included in Section Three of this Operations Manual.

1.11 RSPCA Approved Farming Standards

RSPCA Australia aims to regularly review the species-specific Standards to ensure that requirements are in accordance with current animal welfare science and industry best practice.

Approved Producers, Licensees, Assessors and other interested parties will be notified when Standards revisions are being considered and invited to submit any comments to RSPCA Australia regarding the Standards or the Scheme.

RSPCA Australia may also develop new Standards for other parts of the supply chain relating to existing Standards or develop additional Standards for other species. Approved Producers, Licensees, Assessors, relevant industry groups, experts, and other interested parties will have the opportunity to comment during the development process for any new Standards.

1.12 Exemptions to the Standards

RSPCA Australia will not consider exemptions to the Standards if such an exemption directly contravenes RSPCA Australia policy.

However, for those exemptions that do not relate directly to its policies, RSPCA Australia will carefully consider an Applicant/Approved Producer's application for an exemption to a Standard if it is substantiated with a detailed argument and if the exemption is supported by an Assessor.

Details on exemptions to the Standards are included in Section Two of this Operations Manual.

1.13 Traceability requirements

By signing the Producer Agreement, the Approved Producer agrees that while participating in the Scheme, procedures will be implemented and maintained to ensure non-approved products are not supplied as Approved Products.

By signing the Trademark Licence Agreement, the Licensee agrees that while participating in the Scheme, procedures will be in place to ensure that only RSPCA Approved Products, sourced from an Approved Producer, will be marketed under the RSPCA Approved Farming Logo. Deliberate or inadvertent substitution of non-approved product for RSPCA Approved Product is considered a serious breach of the Trademark License Agreement.

RSPCA Australia encourages Approved Producers and Licensees to continuously improve the traceability of RSPCA Approved Products from the farm gate to the retail outlet.

RSPCA Australia must, on request, be provided with farm production figures, sales figures and any other information required to assist in verifying that substitution of product is not occurring.

RSPCA Australia reserves the right to conduct an independent audit of the supply chain in order to verify the traceability of RSPCA products. Such an audit may be unannounced.

1.14 Promotion of the Scheme

RSPCA Australia will undertake general marketing activities to promote the Scheme and the Approved Products. Such activities will not usually focus on individual Licensee brands under the Scheme, but will aim to educate consumers about the Scheme in general and encourage them to seek out the Scheme's logo when purchasing.

Licensees will be consulted and kept informed regarding promotional activities and are encouraged to complement them with brand-specific promotion.

SECTION TWO – Information for Approved Producers

2.1 Application process

In summary:

An Applicant becomes an Approved Producer of the Scheme when:

- ✓ The Applicant has submitted the relevant application documentation and Application Fee.
- ✓ RSPCA Australia is satisfied with the application documentation and has organised an Initial Producer Assessment visit.
- ✓ The Assessment visit is undertaken and RSPCA Australia is satisfied that all requirements are met.
- ✓ A Producer Agreement is signed.
- ✓ A Producer Certificate is issued.

Please note that the process from initial application to formal approval can take several months, particularly if the producer needs to undertake structural or operational changes in order to comply with the Standards.

Producers wishing to become part of the Scheme can either download the Producer Application Pack from www.rspca.org.au/approvedfarming or request that the Pack be sent to them by post or email. Contact details are included as Appendix 3.

The Application Pack contains:

- Producer Application Form
- Operations Manual
- Animal Care Statement Template
- Pre-approval self assessment report
- Assessment Report Template
- Species-specific Standards

To apply, a producer submits a completed Producer Application Form, an Animal Care Statement, a Pre-approval Self Assessment Report and the Application Fee. (See 2.2 and 2.3.) Details of Application Fees are available on request.

Within ten business days of receipt of the completed documentation and Application Fee, RSPCA Australia will contact the nominated person to discuss any issues identified for resolution prior to the Initial Producer Assessment. This Assessment visit will be arranged as soon as possible following resolution of any such issues.

RSPCA Australia will contact the Applicant and the Assessor to arrange the date and time for the Initial Producer Assessment (on either one or multiple sites depending on distance and/or biosecurity constraints).

Prior to the Assessment, RSPCA Australia will provide the Assessor with copies of all application documentation.

Should an Applicant need to postpone an Assessment, notice of the postponement must be provided at least ten business days prior to the proposed Assessment date in order to prevent forfeiture of the Application Fee.

During the Initial Producer Assessment, the Assessor will use the relevant Assessment Report Template to verify compliance with the Standards applicable to the operation. The Assessor may also take photographs of the production system as a record of the Assessment.

The Assessor will identify areas of compliance and non-compliance and submit a completed Assessment Report to RSPCA Australia within ten working days of conducting an Assessment.

The Compliance Manager reviews the Assessment Report, and clarifies any issues by speaking to the Producer and/or the Assessor.

The Compliance Manager then submits the Assessment documentation to the Approved Farming Scheme Assessment Panel, including recommendations for Approval status.

The Assessment Panel reviews the documentation and the recommendations provided by the Compliance Manager. The Panel can immediately accept or reject the recommendations, or may delay making a decision pending further clarification on particular points.

Once the Assessment Panel has decided Approval status this is communicated to the Producer by the Compliance Manager.

If the Assessment Panel grants approval, the Applicant is invited to enter into a Producer Agreement for the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme. Should an application be unsuccessful, the Applicant may choose to re-apply after ensuring that matters of non-compliance are addressed.

After signing a Producer Agreement, the Applicant becomes an Approved Producer and will receive a Certificate of Approval confirming participation in the Scheme. Products produced in line with the Standards by an Approved Producer are Approved Products and can be marketed under the RSPCA Approved Farming Logo by a Licensee under the Scheme.

Should an Assessor, during the Assessment of an Applicant's operation, observe an act that breaches the relevant state/territory animal welfare legislation, the Assessor is obliged to report it to the state/territory RSPCA or other animal welfare legislation authority. Any investigation from that point will be conducted in the normal manner by the responsible body and will not involve the Assessor. The application for approval will remain on hold pending the result of the investigation.

Producers wishing to participate in the Scheme should refer to Clause 1.5 and Appendix 2 of this manual which details the sectors of the supply chain encompassed by the Scheme.

2.2 Animal Care Statement

The Scheme requires the Applicant to provide an Animal Care Statement which describes the procedures in place for the management of animals and staff, the responsibilities of those staff, the features of the operation's infrastructure, emergency procedures and the Veterinary Health Plan.

Applicants must complete the Template included in the Producer Application Pack and submit the Animal Care Statement as part of the application process.

Approved Producers are required to re-submit an Animal Care Statement each year on the anniversary of receipt of the Certificate of Approval to ensure the information is kept up to date. However, changes to personnel or procedures that may affect approval status must be immediately brought to the attention of RSPCA Australia.

2.3 Pre-approval Self Assessment

2.3.1 Assessment Report

Applicants are provided with a pre approval self assessment report and must complete a self-assessment. This will assist an Applicant to identify areas of minor or major non-compliance that would need to be addressed prior to the Initial Producer Assessment (see 2.1).

2.3.2 Pre-approval Visit

If an Applicant requests a visit from an Assessor prior to the Initial Producer Assessment this can be arranged at cost.

2.4 Maintaining approval status

2.4.1 Routine Approved Producer Assessments

Approved Producers undergo routine Assessments. The schedule for Assessments is outlined in Appendix 1.

Prior to a routine Assessment, RSPCA Australia will provide the Assessor with all relevant information, particularly that related to non-compliance issues identified on previous assessments.

During the routine Assessment, the Assessor will use the relevant Assessment Report Template to verify compliance with the Standards applicable to the operation.

The routine Assessment may be scheduled to coincide with placement, pick-up for slaughter and/or transport to abattoir.

The Assessor will identify areas of compliance and non-compliance and submit a completed Assessment Report to RSPCA Australia within ten business days of conducting an Assessment.

2.4.2 Assessment Reports

Assessment Reports will be completed by the Assessor for both the Initial Producer Assessment and the ongoing routine Approved Producer Assessments.

The Assessment Report includes details of the producer and site, a checklist and Corrective Action Plan, as well as any additional information and observations recorded or provided during and after the Assessment. Any photographs taken during the Assessment will be submitted with the Assessment Report.

The Compliance Manager reviews the Assessment Report, and clarifies any issues by speaking to the Producer and/or the Assessor.

The Compliance Manager then submits the Assessment documentation to the Approved Farming Scheme Assessment Panel, including recommendations for Approval status and for actions and timeframes to address non-compliance.

The Assessment Panel reviews the documentation and the recommendations provided by the Compliance Manager. The Panel can immediately accept or reject the recommendations, or may delay making a decision pending further clarification on particular points.

Once the Assessment Panel has decided Approval status and, where applicable, actions and timeframes to meet non-compliance, this is communicated to the Producer by the Compliance Manager. The Compliance Manager is then responsible for monitoring the Producer's completion of action items, if any, within the stated timeframes. Action items that require immediate rectification will be brought to the attention of the Approved Producer at the time of the Assessment or as soon as possible after completion of the Assessment.

In situations where an Assessor determines that animal welfare is compromised or at risk, RSPCA Australia reserves the right to require a producer to adjust management and/or husbandry practices in the interest of the animal(s) concerned. For example, where a producer is not able to maintain appropriate environmental conditions at the maximum allowable stocking density, RSPCA Australia will, in consultation with the Assessor, require the producer to reduce stocking density to a level that will ensure animal welfare is not compromised.

2.4.3 Unscheduled Assessments

In addition to the scheduled Assessments, RSPCA Australia may conduct an unscheduled Assessment at any time, giving the Approved Producer 12-24 hours notice.

An unscheduled Assessment takes the same form as the routine Approved Producer Assessment.

2.4.4 Accompanied Assessments

An accompanied Assessment is an Assessment conducted by a designated Assessor, in accordance with the existing schedule, but where the Assessor is accompanied by RSPCA staff or Board Members or others, for observation purposes only. The Approved Producer will be advised if the Assessment will be an accompanied Assessment.

2.4.5 Submission of regular data

Participation in the Scheme requires regular submission of specific animal welfare data that allows RSPCA Australia to monitor basic animal welfare at approved operations throughout the period between regular Assessments.

In addition to data relating to the animal welfare requirements of the Scheme, Approved Producers are required to submit production and sales data to assist with traceability and promotion of the Scheme. This information is species-specific and may include, but is not limited to:

- production figures
- grading floor data (for egg production)
- animals supplied to abattoir
- product supplied to Licensee(s).

The Data Reporting Templates for Approved Producers provide details of the information required of the Approved Producer.

2.5 Exemptions to the Standards

RSPCA Australia will not consider exemptions to the Standards if such an exemption directly contravenes RSPCA Australia policy.

However, for those exemptions that do not relate directly to its policies, RSPCA Australia will carefully consider an Applicant/Approved Producer's application for an exemption to a Standard if it is substantiated with a detailed argument. The views of Assessors may also be sought.

If the exemption relates to a procedure or animal management practice, the written application for an exemption to the Standards should include, but may not be limited to, the following details:

- Why the procedure or practice is required.
- What measures have been undertaken in an attempt to avoid the need for the procedure or practice.
- Where and when the procedure or practice will be conducted.
- Who will perform the procedure or practice and their level of expertise.
- Detailed description of the procedure or practice.
- Number of animals that will undergo the procedure or practice.
- Observations of the animals' behavioural and physical responses during previous undertaking of the procedure or practice.

If the exemption is to involve changes to the animals' housing or environment, the written

application for an exemption to the Standards should include:

- Detailed description of the proposed housing or environmental feature.
- Number of animals that will be affected.
- Length of time required to make the change.
- Cost associated with the exemption (if the exemption is necessary to prevent huge capital modifications).

Decisions made by RSPCA Australia regarding an exemption are final.

2.6 Approval status

After each Assessment, the Assessor will make recommendations to RSPCA Australia as to the Approved Producer's status in the Scheme. Approval status is determined according to the Approved Producer's compliance to Standards and whether areas of non-compliance are major or minor.

Details of categories of non-compliance are included in the Operations Manual.

Categories of approval status include:

- under consideration
- unconditional approval
- conditional approval
- suspension
- cancellation.

2.6.1 Under consideration

A potential producer or previously approved producer re-applying to the Scheme will be given the status of 'under consideration' during their initial assessment.

2.6.2 Unconditional approval

The Approved Producer is in compliance with the Scheme requirements as per the Operations Manual and relevant Standards.

2.6.3 Conditional approval

One or more minor non-compliance issues have been identified during an Assessment. The Approved Producer continues to be included under the Scheme with the understanding that all non-compliance issues will be addressed as per the Corrective Action Plan accompanying the Assessment Report. Photographic or other evidence demonstrating how the non-compliance issues have been addressed will be required. RSPCA Australia has the discretion to require a repeat Assessment to confirm compliance and may withdraw approval if areas of non-compliance are not adequately addressed.

2.6.4 Suspension of approval

Reasons for a suspension of approval include:

- A major non-compliance issue arising from an Assessment or a repeated less serious non-compliance.
- The failure to provide required data by the due date.
- Lack of a Licensee to market the Approved Product under the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme Logo.

Periods of suspension and restoration of approval status following a suspension will be at the discretion of RSPCA Australia. Restoration will only be considered when all issues of non-compliance have been resolved and all criteria for the Scheme have been met in full within the agreed timeframes.

In the case of suspension due to lack of a Licensee to market the product, suspension will be lifted when an appropriate marketing avenue is found.

While a suspended Approved Producer may choose to withdraw from participation in the Scheme, serious non-compliance issues relating to the welfare of animals in the Approved Producer's care that breach animal welfare legislation must be rectified regardless of formal participation in the Scheme. Such breaches will be reported to the state/territory RSPCA or other animal welfare legislation authority.

An Approved Producer will be informed in writing of any decision regarding suspension.

2.6.5 Cancellation of approval

Reasons for terminating approval may include:

- The failure to address non-compliance within the agreed timeframe.
- Repeated non-compliances over an extended period.
- The Approved Producer enters into receivership.

Serious non-compliance issues relating to the welfare of animals in the Approved Producer's care that breach animal welfare legislation must be rectified regardless of formal participation in the Scheme.

An Approved Producer will be informed in writing of any decision regarding cancellation.

2.6.6 Withdrawal from the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme

The Approved Producer may, at any time and without cause, terminate their participation in the Scheme. The Approved Producer must submit a notice of termination in writing, giving 60 days notice. Termination will become effective upon expiration of the 60 days.

An Approved Producer will be informed in writing of their termination status.

2.6.7 Reapplication to Scheme

Approved Producers wishing to re-enter the Scheme after approval is cancelled or withdrawn will be required to re-apply to the Scheme as per the initial application process.

2.7 Traceability requirements

By signing the Application Form, the Approved Producer agrees that while participating in the Scheme, procedures will be in place to ensure products that are not RSPCA Approved are neither mixed with RSPCA Approved Products, nor provided to a Licensee to be sold with the RSPCA Approved Farming Logo.

RSPCA Australia encourages producers to continuously improve the traceability of RSPCA Approved Products from the farm gate to point of sale.

RSPCA Australia must, on request, be provided with farm production figures, sales figures and any other information required to assist it in verifying that substitution of product is not occurring. RSPCA Australia reserves the right to conduct an independent audit of the supply chain in order to verify the traceability of RSPCA products. Such an audit will take place within 12-24 hours of notifying the Approved Producer.

2.8 Use of Approved Producer information

The following Approved Producer-related records will be used by RSPCA Australia for internal reporting and Assessment purposes only:

1. Application Form
2. Animal Care Statement
3. Assessment Reports
4. Approved Producer approval status
5. Data as detailed in the Data Reporting Templates
6. Fees paid
7. Production figures, sales figures and other data needed to assist in traceability checks.

The Scheme's Assessors will have access to any information relevant to compliance matters, including information relevant to traceability.

RSPCA Australia may use the following records for information and promotional purposes:

1. Market share / numbers of animals / production statistics. This information would be presented as totals across all producers. At no time will individual producer or other commercial-in-confidence information be released.
2. Retail outlets selling Approved Products.
3. Photographs of facilities and animals under the Scheme where agreed by the Approved Producer.

2.9 Rights and responsibilities of Approved Producers

2.9.1 Complying with the Standards, Operations Manual and Producer Agreement

Approved Producers must ensure their operations are managed in compliance with the RSPCA Approved Farming Standards, Operations Manual and Producer Agreement. Approved Producers are required to immediately report to RSPCA Australia any changes to the management practices documented on their most recent Animal Care Statement or other documentation, which may potentially affect compliance with approval requirements.

2.9.2 Cooperating with approval process

Cooperation between RSPCA Australia and Applicants/Approved Producers is essential to the success of the Scheme. In applying to participate in the Scheme, the Applicant must:

- Provide true and accurate information.
- Respond to communications regarding the Scheme in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Pay fees (where applicable) in a timely manner.
- Provide all other requested information in relation to the Scheme as required.

2.9.3 Making appropriate approval claims

Approved Producers may only make approval claims for products produced in compliance with the RSPCA Approved Farming Standards and Operations Manual. It must not be implied that these claims can be extended to any non-Approved Product, animal or premises produced/operated by the Approved Producer.

2.9.4 Protecting RSPCA Australia's reputation

Approved Producers must protect RSPCA Australia and the Scheme from disrepute by making only accurate claims about the Scheme, its Standards and procedures.

2.9.5 Discontinuing use of approval claims

If an Approved Producer's approval status is suspended or cancelled or the producer withdraws from the Scheme, the operation must discontinue use of the approval claims.

2.9.6 Transferring ownership

The transfer of approval status (for example, upon the sale or transfer of ownership of an operation) is at the discretion of RSPCA Australia. Approved Producers wishing to transfer approval status must apply to RSPCA Australia in writing stating the circumstances under which the transfer is sought.

Applicants will be advised in writing of RSPCA Australia's decision concerning the transfer of approval status.

2.10 Dispute resolution

Any complaints or concerns should be submitted in writing to RSPCA Australia.

Where there is a dispute between RSPCA Australia and an Approved Producer regarding non-compliance to the Standards, independent expert advice may be sought to assist in resolving the dispute. In the case of an administrative or governance issue, the issue will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer of RSPCA Australia.

If after 30 days of negotiation in good faith an issue cannot be resolved (or longer period agreed between the parties), RSPCA Australia may refer the dispute for mediation to the Australian Commercial Dispute Centre Limited or similar organisation as agreed. Responsibility for costs in relation to mediation will be shared.

SECTION THREE – Information for Licensees

3.1 Application process

A Licensee can be:

- An Approved Producer marketing their own Approved Products.
- A group of Approved Producers marketing their Approved Product(s) together via a cooperative or similar structure and under the one brand name.
- A brand owner that sources and markets Approved Products.

A Licensee is permitted to use the RSPCA Approved Farming Logo on the Approved Product and associated marketing materials.

A company interested in becoming a Licensee under the Scheme must submit a Licensee Application Form, available for download from www.rspca.org.au/approvedfarming. Alternatively the relevant information can be obtained by post or email on request. As part of the application process, the company will be required to advise RSPCA Australia of the Approved Producers that will supply the product to be marketed under the Scheme.

Should the Application be accepted, the company is invited to enter into a Trademark Licence Agreement with RSPCA Australia.

3.2 Trademark Licence Agreement

A Trademark Licence Agreement is a legally binding contract. This Agreement requires the Licensee to adhere to rules on use of the Scheme's logo and to pay a Royalty Fee on the sale of Approved Product. Details of Royalty Fees are available on request.

Trademark Licence Agreements are for a two-year period. Sixty days before the end of the contract term the Licensee will be contacted by RSPCA Australia regarding the negotiation of a new contract.

Some entities may be eligible to participate in the Scheme as both an Approved Producer and a Licensee.

3.3 Suspension/cancellation of licence

The Trademark Licence Agreement details circumstances which will lead to suspension or cancellation of the Agreement. These include:

- Marketing of non-Approved Product as RSPCA Approved Product (substitution).
- The failure to provide required data by the due date.
- The failure to pay royalties by the due date.
- The Licensee enters into receivership.

A Licensee will be informed in writing of any decision regarding suspension or cancellation.

3.4 Re-application to the Scheme

Companies wishing to re-enter the Scheme after their Trademark Licence Agreement is cancelled will be required to re-apply to the Scheme as per the initial application process.

3.5 Traceability requirements

By signing the Trademark Licence Agreement, the Licensee agrees that while participating in the Scheme, procedures will be in place to ensure that products which are not RSPCA Approved are not sold with the RSPCA Approved Farming Logo.

To assist in verification and traceability, RSPCA Australia will require from Licensees information including, but not limited to:

- receipt of product from Approved Producer(s)
- sales figures.

The Data Reporting Templates for Licensees provide details of the information required from the Licensee.

RSPCA Australia encourages Licensees to continuously improve the traceability of RSPCA Approved Products from the farm gate to point of sale.

RSPCA Australia reserves the right to conduct an independent audit of the supply chain in order to verify the traceability of RSPCA products. Such an audit will take place within 12-24 hours of notifying the Licensee.

3.6 Use of Licensee information

The following Licensee-related information will be used by RSPCA Australia for internal reporting and Assessment purposes only:

1. Application form
2. Trademark Licence Agreement
3. Royalties paid
4. Supply figures, sales figures and other data needed to assist in traceability checks.

RSPCA Australia may use the following information for information and promotional purposes:

1. Photos of products.
2. Market share / numbers of animals / production statistics. This information would be presented as totals across whole Scheme. At no time will details of individual Licensees or other commercial-in-confidence information be released in promotional activities unless with specific prior consent of the Licensee.
3. Retail outlets selling Approved Products.

3.7 Rights and responsibilities of Licensees

The rights and responsibilities of Licensees are detailed in the Trademark Licence Agreement and include but are not limited to:

- correct use of the Scheme's mark and/or logo
- making appropriate approval claims
- provision of information
- protecting RSPCA Australia's reputation
- discontinuing use of approval claims
- payment of royalties.

3.7.1 Correct use of the Scheme's mark and/or logos

The marks and logos must be used as per the Style Guide.

3.7.2 Making appropriate approval claims

Licensees may only make approval claims for Approved Products: that is, product supplied by an Approved Producer and produced in compliance with the RSPCA Approved Farming Standards. It must not be implied that these claims can be extended to any non-Approved Product marketed by the Licensee.

3.7.3 Provision of information

Cooperation between RSPCA Australia and Applicants/Licensees is essential to the success of the Scheme. In applying to participate in the Scheme, the Applicant must:

- Provide true and accurate information.
- Respond to communications regarding the Scheme in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Provide all other requested information in relation to the Scheme as required.

3.7.4 Protecting RSPCA Australia's reputation

Licensees must protect RSPCA Australia and the Scheme from disrepute by making only accurate claims about the Scheme, its standards and procedures.

3.7.5 Discontinuing use of approval claims

If a Trademark Licence Agreement is suspended/cancelled or the Licensee withdraws from the Scheme, the Scheme's marks and logos must be removed from all product and from all marketing materials as per the requirements under the Agreement.

3.7.6 Payment of royalties

Royalties must be paid according to the requirements of the Trademark Licence Agreement.

Appendix 1

Routine Assessment schedule

Once a producer has gained approval, RSPCA Australia will coordinate a schedule of routine Assessments in consultation with the Approved Producer and the Assessor.

In addition to the scheduled Assessments, RSPCA Australia may conduct an unscheduled Assessment at any time, giving 12 - 24 hours notice to the Approved Producer.

The schedule is as follows:

Layer hens

For the first 12 months from date of approval	Routine Assessment 4 times during the 12 month period
In second and subsequent years	Routine Assessment 2 times per year
If a major non-compliance is identified	Routine Assessment reverts to every 4 times during the following 12 month period

Meat Chickens

For the first 12 months from date of approval	Routine Assessment 4 times during the 12 month period
In second and subsequent years	Routine Assessment 2 times per year
If a major non-compliance is identified	Routine Assessment reverts to every 4 times during the following 12 month period

Pigs

From date of approval	Routine Assessment 2 times per year
-----------------------	-------------------------------------

Turkeys

For the first 12 months from date of approval	Routine Assessment 4 times during the 12 month period
In second and subsequent years	Routine Assessment 2 times per year
If a major non-compliance is identified	Routine Assessment reverts to every 4 times during the following 12 month period

Appendix 2

Sectors of the supply chain covered under the Scheme

Pigs

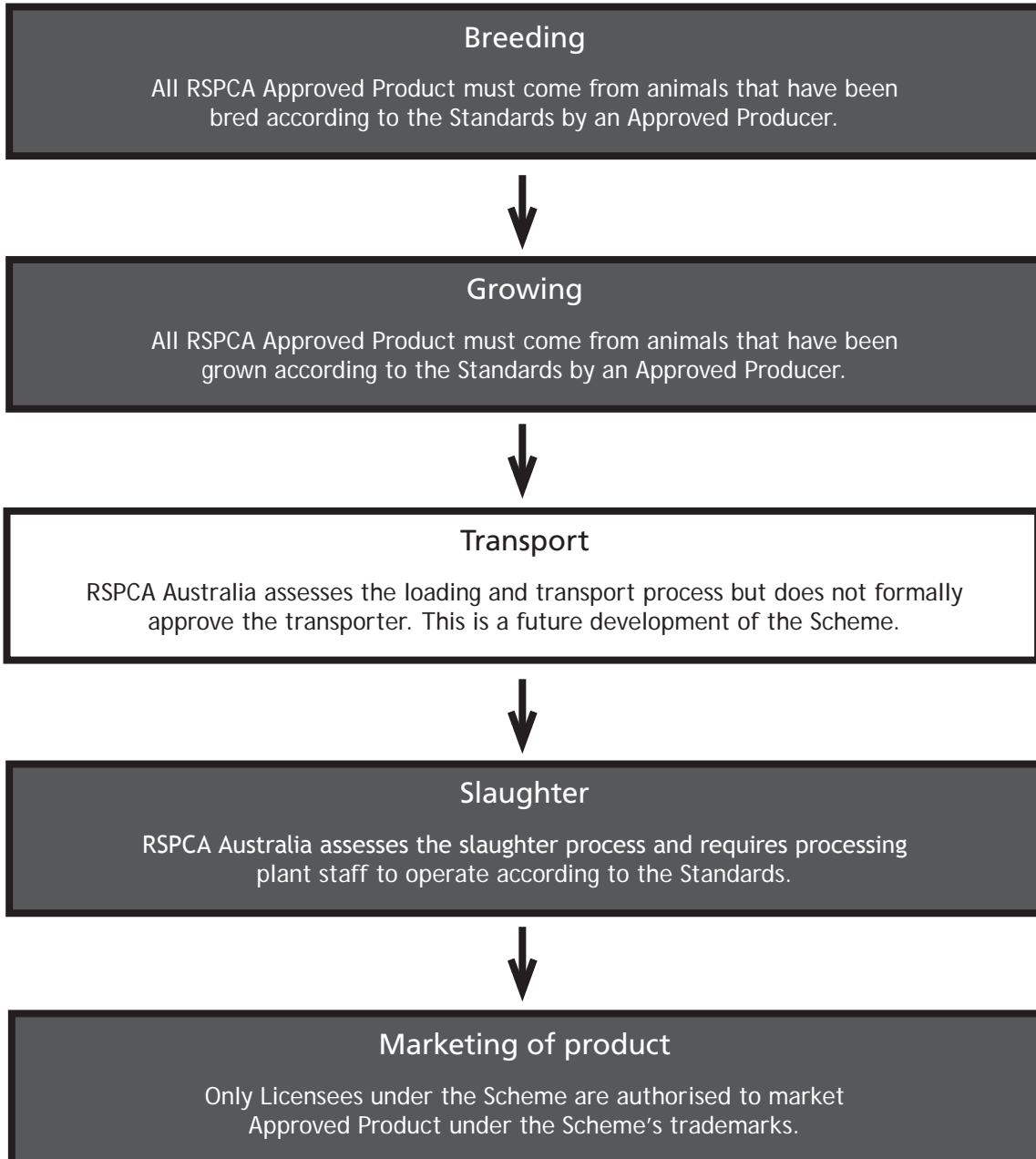


Figure 1: RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme: Pigs
How sectors of the supply chain relate to the Scheme.

Layer Hens

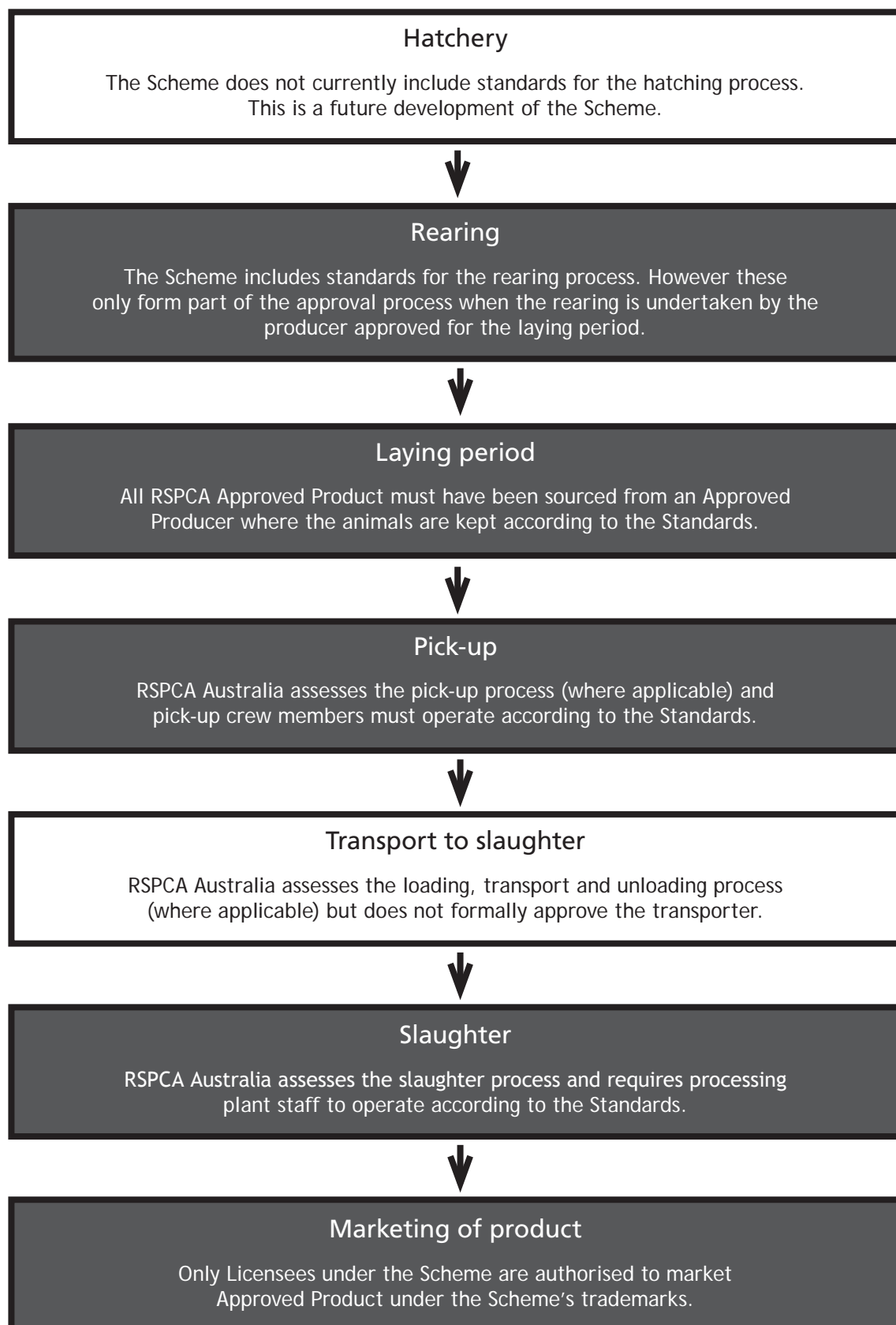


Figure 2: RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme: Layer Hens
How sectors of the supply chain relate to the Scheme.

Meat Chickens and Turkeys

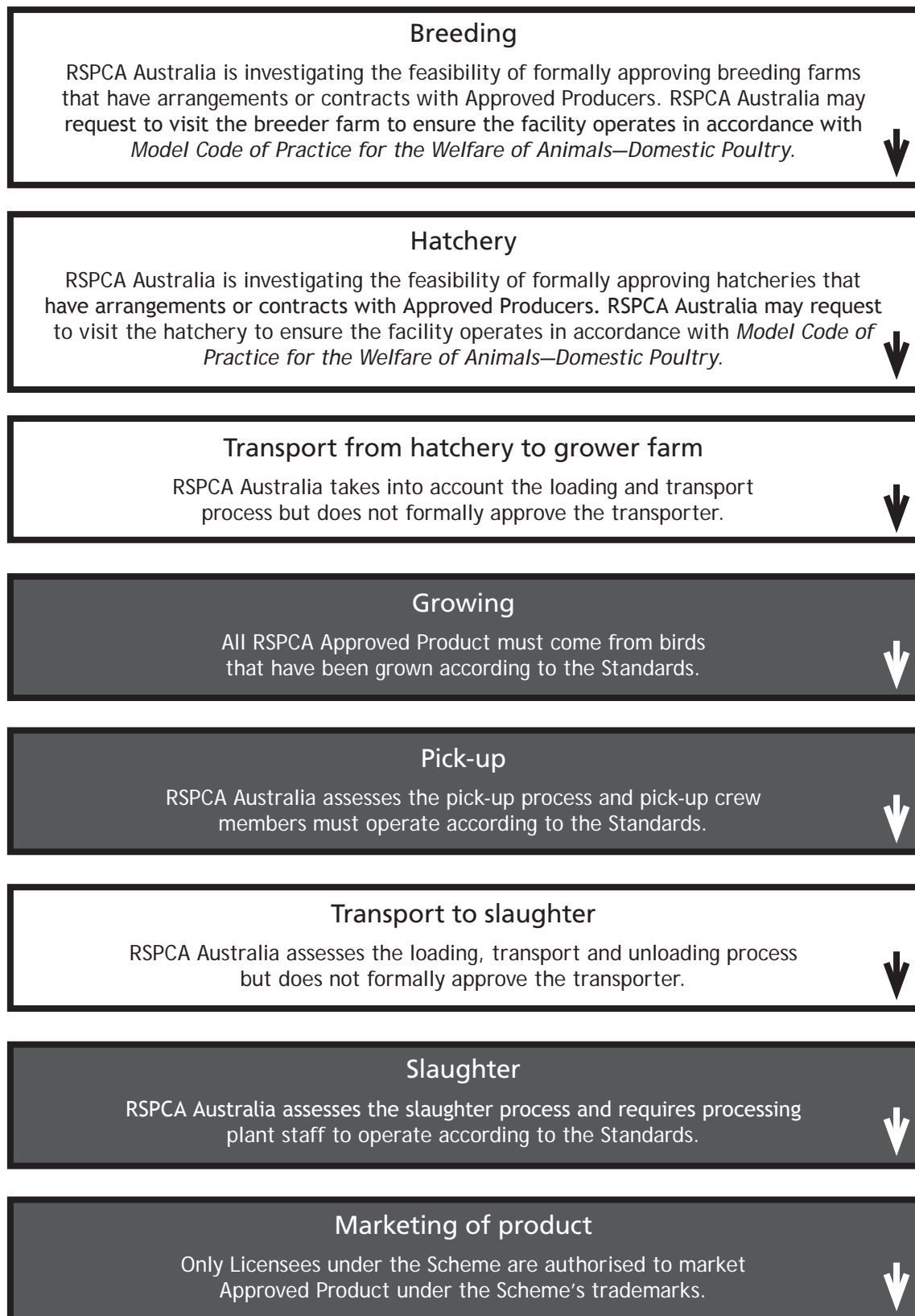


Figure 3: RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme: Meat Chickens and Turkeys
How sectors of the supply chain relate to the Scheme.

Appendix 3

Contact details

For further information regarding the Scheme, contact:

Compliance Manager
RSPCA Australia
PO Box 265
DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600

P: 02 6282 8300
F: 02 6282 8311
E: approvedfarming@rspca.org.au

Glossary of terms

Animal Care Statement

Animal Care Statement describes the procedures in place for the management of animals and staff, the responsibilities of those staff, features of the operation's infrastructure, emergency procedures and the Veterinary Health Plan.

Applicant

An Applicant is either a producer applying to be an Accredited Producer under the Scheme, or a marketing company applying to be a Licensee under the Scheme.

Application Fee

Producers applying to participate in the Scheme submit an Application Fee as part of the application process.

Approved Producer

Once a producer has successfully applied to participate in the Scheme and has signed a Producer Agreement, the producer is an Approved Producer. Approved Producers agree to abide by the RSPCA Australia Standards for all animal production covered under the Scheme.

Approved Product

Once an Approved Producer enters into a Producer Agreement with RSPCA Australia, product produced in line with the Standards is regarded as Approved Product.

Assessment

An Assessment is a visit by an RSPCA-contracted/employed Assessor to a farming operation, or to associated operations in the supply chain such as an abattoir, for the purpose of checking adherence to the Standards.

Assessment Panel

The Assessment Panel receives Assessment Reports and recommendations from the Compliance Manager. Its role is:

- To review the Compliance Manager's recommendations relating to compliance and non-compliance issues following a producer assessment.
- To agree to any required actions and timeframes to address non-compliance with any standard.
- To agree, as necessary, to any exemptions to the Standards and timeframe for the exemption.
- To decide whether the approval status of the producer as a result of each Assessment is Unconditional, Conditional, Suspended or Cancelled.

Assessment Report

An Assessment Report may include details of the producer and site, a checklist and Corrective Action Plan, as well as any additional information and observations recorded or provided during and after the Assessment. Any photographs taken during the Assessment will be submitted with the Assessment Report.

Assessor

Assessors are contracted or employed by RSPCA Australia to undertake Assessments and produce Assessment Reports.

Certificate of Approval

After signing a Producer Agreement an Approved Producer is provided with a Certificate of Approval which provides proof of their participation in the Scheme.

Corrective Action Plan

A Corrective Action Plan outlines areas of non-compliance identified in an Assessment and the required action/s that needs to be undertaken to rectify the areas of non-compliance.

Initial Producer Assessment

The Initial Producer Assessment is the RSPCA Assessor's first site visit to a producer as part of the formal approval process.

Licensee

After entering into a Trademark Licence Agreement with RSPCA Australia, Licensees source and market Approved Product and may use the RSPCA Approved Farming Logo on the Approved Product and associated marketing materials in accordance with the Style Guide.

Licensee Application Form

A company wishing to participate as a Licensee under the Scheme must initially complete a Licensee Application Form.

Operations Manual

The Operations Manual details the operation of the Scheme for both Approved Producers and Licensees, including the application process and the Assessment procedures

Pre-approval Self Assessment

Applicants are provided with an Assessment Report template for completing a self assessment. This assists an Applicant to identify areas of minor or major non-compliance that would need to be addressed prior to the Initial Producer Assessment.

Pre-approval Visit

An Applicant can request a visit from an Assessor prior to the Initial Producer Assessment. This can be arranged at cost.

Producer Agreement

Once an Applicant has met the application requirements and is deemed to be meeting the Standards, the Applicant is asked to sign a Producer Agreement and becomes an Approved Producer. By signing the Producer Agreement, the Approved Producer agrees to meet the requirements of the Scheme.

Producer Application Form

A producer wishing to participate as an Approved Producer under the Scheme must initially complete a Producer Application Form.

Producer Application Pack

The Producer Application Pack includes documentation relevant to the Scheme, as well as the Producer Application Form.

Glossary of terms

Royalty Fees

Licensees under the Scheme pay royalty fees or 'royalties' on Approved Product sold under the RSPCA Approved Farming Logo.

RSPCA Approved Farming Logo

The RSPCA Approved Farming Logo is the official trademarked logo for the Scheme. Licensees are authorised to use the logo on packaging for Approved Product and in marketing materials for Approved Product.

Scheme

Scheme refers to the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme.

Standards

The RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme Standards outline the requirements for the care and well-being of the animals in the Scheme. Specific Standards apply to each species covered by the Scheme.

Trademark Licence Agreement

A company which successfully applies to market RSPCA Approved Product enters into a Trademark Licence Agreement with RSPCA Australia and becomes a Licensee under the Scheme.

Veterinary Health Plan

The Veterinary Health Plan forms part of the Animal Care Statement and details animal health related matters such as vaccination programs, use of medicines and biosecurity procedures.



RSPCA Australia

PO Box 265

Deakin West ACT 2600

P 02 6282 8300

F 02 6282 8311

E approvedfarming@rspca.org.au

W rspca.org.au