

FARM MANAGERS AND TEAM CHECKLIST FOR HOT BLADE BEAK TRIMMING



A checklist for farm managers and hot blade team leaders to complete when beak trimming is carried out on a flock of chickens, pullets or layer hens.

Place a tick as applicable in the left hand box.

BIOSECURITY		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrival at farm	Notify the farmer on arrival.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Declaration	Completed and signed biosecurity declaration.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Farm biosecurity	Check farm biosecurity policy and follow instructions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal biosecurity	Do not keep backyard domestic hens or other birds at home.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Diary	Keep a diary of all their farm visits.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vehicles and equipment	Vehicles and equipment are cleaned and sanitised after each beak trimming job.
EQUIPMENT SET UP		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stable equipment	Beak trimming equipment is set up on a secure table or legs of machine are placed on a firm base.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Height	Beak trim equipment is set at a suitable height and position for the operator.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Levelling	The beak trimming equipment is level.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lighting	Adequate lighting is available.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Correct blades	The blades used must be designed for beak trimming.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sharp blades	The blades are sharp and sharp edge of the blade is facing the operator.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change blades	Blades are changed after every 4000 birds.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blade temperature	Blade temperature of 650–750 °C is used. The blade is a dull red colour.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Base plate	The base plate is straight and clean.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Guide distance	Guides are set at correct distance from cutting bar.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Guide size	Correct guide is selected for chick age/size.

Place a tick as applicable in the left hand box.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY		
	Operator position	A seated or standing position to address the machine is used according to operator preference.
	Lighting	Adequate lighting is provided for the hot blade machine operator.
	Air quality	Equipment is set up in a position with good ventilation.
	Temperature	When temperature reaches 33 °C beak trimming is stopped.
	Dust mask	A P2 type dust mask is used, or preferably a dust mask with air supply is provided and used.
	Regular breaks	Rest breaks are taken every hour.
	Equipment safety	Beak trimming equipment is regularly checked for electrical compliance.
	Injury prevention	Extension leads are positioned to minimise the risk of tripping by staff.
	Injury prevention	Operators use cotton gloves to reduce the risk of burns to fingers.
	Injury prevention	Birds, boxes and equipment are handled carefully to prevent personal injuries.
	First aid kit	A first aid kit is available and staff know where it is located.
YARDING BIRDS		
	Chick boxes	Chicks are held at appropriate stocking density.
	Dim lighting	Lighting is dimmed (where possible) to reduce the flightiness in birds.
	Flightiness	Persons herding birds reduce flightiness by not shouting, clapping or waving hands.
	Staff movement	Staff are calm and move quietly and smoothly without rushing.
	Crates	Crates for holding birds are adequately ventilated and filled to no more than the approved stocking density.
	Pens	Pens for holding birds are adequately ventilated and not over stocked.
	Smothering	Birds are not forced into the corners of pens.
	Injuries	Pens for holding birds are free of protruding wires or other objects.
	Catching	Birds are picked up by both legs only.
	Carrying birds	A maximum of 10 hens weighing less than 2 kilograms each (five/hand) is carried.
	Location of trimmer	Birds are not carried for more than 30 metres to the beak trimming site.
HOLDING BIRDS FOR TRIMMING		
	Holding	Chicks are held gently in the palm of the hand with the thumb curled over the head and the forefinger gently place across the throat. Older birds are held firmly either by both legs or under the arm.
	Gentle handling	Birds are handled gently and calmly.
	Injuries	Injuries are minimised, particularly to head and body.
	Position of the bird	The beak is aligned squarely on the cutting bar and raised at an angle of 15–30 degrees.

Place a tick as applicable in the left hand box.

TRIMMING		
	Lighting source	Lighting is adequate.
	Beak hardness	Beak hardness is judged by pressing the beak gently with fingernail.
	Tip of quick	The cut is made at the tip of the quick to reduce beak regrowth.
	Beak on cutting bar	The beak is aligned squarely on the cutting bar.
	Cauterisation	The cauterising time is adjusted depending on bird age, strain and length of beak removed at first trim.
	Re-cauterisation	The re-cauterising time is adjusted depending on age, and length, of beak.
	Beak trimming rate	Beak trimming rate is maintained at a maximum of 15 birds/minute.
	Ambient temperature	Trimming rate is reduced as ambient temperature in the shed increases.
	Bleeders	Birds with bleeding beaks do not exceed 1 per cent of flock.
	Rounding beaks	Beaks are rounded off on the edges.
	Severity of trim	Severe trimming may be necessary when all possible management factors have been addressed to stop persistent cannibalism.
	Angle of cut	Beaks are tilted at an angle of 15–30 degrees to achieve an inward shape to the beak.
	Monitor	All aspects of the beak trimming process are closely monitored.
	Blade cleaning	Beak residue is scraped from the cutting blade every 15–30 minutes.
	Vocalisation	Trimming procedure is checked if birds exhibit excessive vocalisation.
POST TRIMMING CHECK		
	Vocalisation	Birds do not exhibit excessive vocalisation after the operation.
	Eating and drinking	Birds commence eating and drinking soon after beak trimming.
	Appearance of wound	The beak has a light brown colour on the outer edge of the cut and a darker brown centre.
	Bleeders	There are no bleeders in the flock.
	Behaviour	Flock behaves normally.
	Culling	Moribund chicks are culled.
	Score beak trimming	At least 100 birds are assessed on the day of trimming.