

WORK INSTRUCTIONS FOR MONITORING POULTRY AFTER HOT BLADE BEAK TRIMMING



Careful management of birds after hot blade beak trimming, maintains flock welfare, reduces mortality, cost of production and improves farm profit. Checking birds is an important task. Regular inspection of the birds is important to the welfare of a hot blade beak trimmed flock.

1. There should be a minimum of four inspections daily in the first two weeks after hot blade beak trimming.
2. Observe the birds at regular intervals after beak trimming. Immediately after trimming birds will be unstable when standing, but commence eating and drinking soon after. If the flock is very quiet and does not behave normally, the farm manager should ensure that there is no aspect of the operation causing problems for the birds.
3. Identify birds to be culled and humanely kill them straight away. Neck dislocation is an acceptable method.
4. Assess at least 100 birds on the day of beak trimming using the beak trimming scoring sheets *Day of trim and 14 days after trim* to determine the effectiveness of trimming.
5. Ensure hot blade beak trimmed birds are feeding and drinking within two hours after trimming. Make sure that adequate quantities of feed and water are available.
6. Maintain adequate feed depth in troughs. Beak trimmed birds need access to open water troughs for at least three to four days to readjust to nipple drinkers. Water depth must be sufficient for birds with a large beak step.
7. Monitor feed and water consumption and body weight throughout the life of the flock especially in the first few weeks after hot blade beak trimming.
8. Assess the beak shape, step and imperfections at 10–14 days after trimming by using the scoring sheet *Day of trim and 14 days after trim*. Do further assessments if there are concerns about the beak shape and whether it will effectively prevent pecking following transfer of pullets to the laying shed. Carry out additional assessment using the scoring sheet *At transfer to laying shed/feather pecking event* at:
 - 1) prior to, or at placement of pullets in the layer facilities if purchased as started pullets
 - 2) when a bout of pecking occurs or flock's flightiness increases
 - 3) towards end of lay if there are concerns about feather pecking.Scoring procedure:
 - a) Score a random sample of 100 birds.
 - b) Stock attendants should carefully observe the beak and record any evidence of beaks that have bulbous growths, splitting, chipping, thin keratinisation, impacts from feed or dieback.
 - c) Score the feather condition, flightiness and behaviour of the birds at the same time.