

INFRARED BEAK TREATMENT SCORING SHEETS



Holding the bird for scoring

Hold the bird firmly without applying any pressure on the throat as this may draw the lower beak backwards giving the appearance the lower beak is shorter than it is. At least two people are required to do the scoring plus catchers.

How to select birds for scoring of treated beaks

Select 100 birds at random throughout the shed and assess beak quality to determine the effectiveness of tipping at the nominated times over the life of the flock.

The birds to be scored must be representative of the flock. The process for selecting a random (or representative) sample of birds is as follows.

From cages:

- select cages throughout the house
- select cages from the top, middle and lower tiers
- ensure cages are selected from both ends of the house as well as the middle
- score all the birds in the same cages every time beaks are assessed.

From a litter and/or slatted floor shed including aviary:

- if you have several sheds with birds of the same age, randomly select one shed for sampling
- divide the shed into 10 sections and randomly select 10 birds from each section
- score birds from different locations such as litter area, slatted area, perches and various levels or tiers
- an alternative for litter or slatted floored sheds is to set up catching pens at the front and back ends and in the middle and randomly select the appropriate number of birds to score
- scoring free range birds is easier before they are given access to the range
- if birds are to be scored on the range, score half of the sample in the shed and half on the range
- sample the birds on the range from various locations
- visually assess the beaks of each bird.

It is preferable to score hens in the afternoon after they have completed lay for the day.

When to score the treated beaks

The treatment applied affects beak growth, shape and length as the bird ages.

- At 28 days of age—identifies gross treatment errors and unacceptable shapes such as beaks that are non-treated, have a severe hook or a large step (known as shovel beak).
- Before or at transfer of the pullets to the layer facilities particularly if started stock are purchased—the beak shape indicates if the prescribed treatment has been applied correctly.
- When a bout of pecking occurs or a flock's flightiness increases—indicates if the treatment applied is appropriate for the environment the flock lives in.
- Towards the end of lay if there are concerns about the beak shape even if pecking is not a problem—indicates if the treatment applied is appropriate for the environment the flock lives in.

Combine beak scoring with other activities, such as on farm vaccination or body weight checks.

How to score beaks

1. Select 100 birds randomly from the flock.
2. Hold the bird firmly with the beak in a closed but natural position. Do not apply any pressure on the throat as this may cause the lower beak to withdraw backwards and appear shorter.
3. Match the beak shape of each bird to the closest drawing and place a tally mark (✓ or ✗) against each beak rating scale.
4. Add tally marks in each beak rating scale, divide by the total beaks rated and work out a percentage score.

The distribution of beak shapes within these scores is influenced by the treatment prescription applied.

For birds 28 days old

The sum of scores 3, 4, 5 or 6 should represent 97 per cent of beaks.

For birds aged 12–30 weeks

The sum of scores 2, 3 or 4 should represent 97 per cent of beaks. For score 2 the difference in length between the upper and lower beak tips (upper beak over step) must be less than 3 millimetres. For score 4 the difference in length between the upper and lower beak tips (upper beak under step) must be less than 5 millimetres. The residual beak length should be 10 millimetres or more for birds older than 16 weeks.

For birds older than 30 weeks

The sum of scores 3, 4 or 5 should represent 97 per cent of beaks. For score 5 the difference in length between the upper and lower beak tips (the beak step) must be less than 5 millimetres.

Comments on the quality of treatment (e.g. unusual beak shapes) should be included in the comments box at the bottom of the scoring sheet. Photos will help to describe unusual beak shapes.








Photographing the beak

If taking photographs of beaks for scoring it is essential that the centre of the camera lens points at the tip of the beak and the edge of the nares is showing in the edge of the frame. The camera must be 'square on' to the bird's head otherwise the beak image will be distorted making it difficult to determine the beak shape and length.

BEAK TREATMENT (IRBT) SCORING SHEET for 28 day old chickens

Date	Hatchery	Age of flock
Farm	Hatch date	Mortality to 10 days %
Production system*	Donor flocks	Mortality to date %
Breed	Flock size at day old	Body weight
Shed/flock ID	Flock size at transfer	Uniformity %

* cage, aviary, barn, free range







<p>1.</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____ as %</p>
<p>2.</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____ as %</p>
<p>3.</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____ as %</p>
<p>4.</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____ as %</p>
<p>5.</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____ as %</p>
<p>6. Step is less than 5mm</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____ as %</p>
<p>7.</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____ as %</p>

TOTAL of all scores _____ TOTAL of 3+4+5+6 scores as % _____

BEAK TREATMENT (IRBT) SCORING SHEET for birds older than 30 weeks

Date	Hatchery	Age of flock
Farm	Hatch date	Mortality to date %
Production system*	Donor flocks	Body weight
Breed	Flock size at day old	Uniformity %
Shed/flock ID	Flock size at transfer	

* cage, aviary, barn, free range

<p>1.</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____</p> <p>as % _____</p>
<p>2.</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____</p> <p>as % _____</p>
<p>3.</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____</p> <p>as % _____</p>
<p>4.</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____</p> <p>as % _____</p>
<p>5. Step is less than 5mm</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____</p> <p>as % _____</p>
<p>6.</p> 		<p>Total _____</p> <p>Score _____</p> <p>as % _____</p>

TOTAL of all scores _____ TOTAL of 3+4+5 scores as % _____