

Humane Turkey Loading for Processing

For Catching and Loading Crews



Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food & Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs
Turkey Farmers of Ontario

Revised February 2013

Introduction

Welfare includes both the physical and mental wellbeing of the turkey. Your actions impact on the welfare of the birds you catch.

Poor catching, herding, handling and loading practices are sources of stress and trauma to turkeys. Handling response varies with age, weight, sex and conditioning.

If catchers and loaders are careful, conscientious and properly supervised, then they can reduce the number of injuries to the turkeys.

You can improve the welfare of turkeys through your actions!



Why Treat Turkeys Humanely?

It is Essential to Treat Turkeys Carefully to:

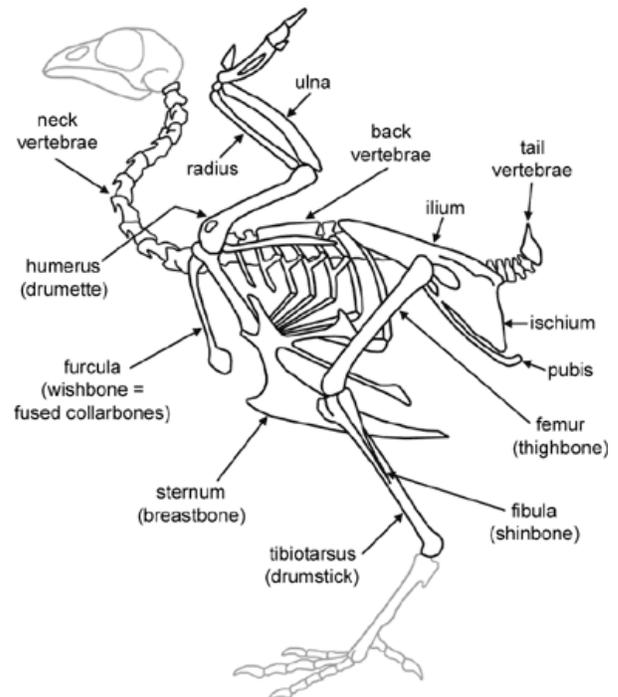
- ✓ Prevent pain and fear
- ✓ Prevent death, bruising and skeletal trauma such as broken bones or dislocated bones= Reduces monetary losses
- ✓ It is the LAW!
- ✓ It's the RIGHT THING TO DO!

Rough handling can cause piling, suffocation, excessive stress, death or other types of trauma

Common Types of Trauma in Turkeys:

- **Broken Wing Bones**
(Radius, Ulna, Humerus)
as a result of loading and herding
- **Dislocated Joints**
From poor handling during load out procedures
- **Scratching and Bruising**
from herding and rough handling

Diagram of a Turkey Skeleton



By treating birds humanely, you can prevent pain and suffering.

Bird Behaviour

Turkeys are naturally curious. Birds will walk toward you when you enter the barn. Male turkeys (toms) may be aggressive (lunge, jump).

Turkeys also exhibit herding behaviour so they can be efficiently herded for loading.

Sssshhh!

Always:

- Move quietly among birds to reduce fear
- Do not yell or shout
- Walk slowly among birds
- Watch for birds piling into corners, along the walls or at the loader. Suffocation or injuries can result.



Humane Handling

Handle Birds Carefully:

Do **NOT** load obviously sick or injured birds.

- **Hand catching**

- Do **NOT** swing birds by the legs when you are carrying them.
- Do **NOT** carry birds by wings or neck only, but you may need to control the bird's wing actions to avoid injury.
- Based on bird size, maximum amount of birds to carry is no more than three birds total, two in one hand and one in the other.
- Do **NOT** throw or drop birds.

- **Turkey Loaders/ Herding**

- Use herding corals/gates
- Herd small groups of birds towards the loader
- Work together to herd birds: using flags or bags or brooms to encourage birds to move (visual cues)



DO NOT LOAD Sick or Injured Birds

Sick or injured birds should not be loaded. Point them out to the Producer or Farm Manager for them to deal with.

Remember, birds must be treated carefully!

SHOULD THIS BIRD BE LOADED? Guidelines for Transporting Poultry		LOAD & TRANSPORT HEALTHY BIRDS
DO NOT LOAD DO NOT TRANSPORT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak and/or not alert • Dark red, purple, or black combs or wattles • Discharge from eyes/nostrils • Swollen head/neck • Skin on head or neck is dark red or very pale (Exceptions: Toms may have bright blue skin in this area) • Bloody and/or prolapsed vents • Emaciated and weak; very thin, easily felt breastbone (Exception: End-of-lay hens may have pronounced breastbones but if emaciated they must not be loaded) • Dislocated, broken, or exposed bones (including injury due to handling) • Unable to rise or walk due to physical abnormality or injury <p><i>Birds not loaded should be segregated according to on-farm protocol. Notify farm manager of birds left on the farm before leaving.</i></p>	CAUTION Conditions requiring assessment before loading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wet birds in cool or cold weather • Heat and/or humidity • Cold and/or wind chill • Road closures Individual Bird <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor trauma, wounds or bleeding (including injury due to handling) Flock <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea • Coughing and sneezing "snickling" • If a flock is diagnosed with a disease by a veterinarian or laboratory, special provisions for loading may be required. <p>Assessment and joint decisions should be made by the producer, catching crew, hauler and processing plant when faced with CAUTION conditions.</p>	Regulations No person shall load or cause to be loaded... an animal that by reason of infirmity, illness, injury, fatigue or any other cause cannot be transported without undue suffering during the expected journey. Health of Animals Regulations, Part XII, 236, 24 <p>DO NOT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport a sick or injured bird • Load or unload a bird in a way likely to cause injury or suffering • Crowd birds to such an extent as to cause injury or undue suffering <p>www.inspection.gc.ca</p> <p>Violators of the Health of Animals Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fines up to \$10,000 • Increased fines for repeat offenders • Repeat offenders posted on CFIA website <p><small>See the "Should This Bird Be Loaded" Handbook for more information.</small></p>

Humane Handling

Placing Birds in Liners

- Gently place birds into liner
- Ensure birds are in an upright position and all birds can rest on the floor at the same time
- Ensure all parts of the bird are inside before closing the door
- The transport driver will determine the number of birds per bin
- Use two hands to support birds to strategically place into bins:
 - Manual Loading: Legs and wing or legs and breast
 - Mechanical Loader: Neck and supporting rear of bird



Transporting Birds

Parameters around loading density:

- Follow transport driver direction
- Maximum of 98 kg/M² or 2.16 lbs/ft²
- Reduce loading density in hot weather

General considerations:

- Minimize the time on the truck
- Weather factors/ tarping
- Bird holding facilities
- Route planning
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Canadian Livestock Transporter Course



Remember, birds must be treated carefully!

Humane Handling