



STANDARDS FOR BROILER AND ROASTER CHICKEN PENS AND YOUNG TURKEY PENS



All market pens will be judged on the basis of conformation, fleshing, finish, and uniformity.

Conformation	30
Fleshing	20
Finish	10
Uniformity	20
Absence of defects	<u>20</u>

TOTAL SCORE 100

- I. **Conformation:** Refers to the skeletal system or shape of the bird. It **is not** used to describe the amount and distribution of flesh on the bird. The ideal shape of a meat bird approaches that of a rectangle.

Conformation includes:

A. Length

1. The keel bone should be moderately long, straight, and free of defects such as dents or knobs.
2. Keel bone should carry well back between the legs.
3. Keel bone should be parallel to backbone.

B. Depth

1. The body should be full and deep.
2. Body depth must be consistent with width; balanced. Birds which are extremely deep but are narrow across the back and breast are termed “slab sided” and should be discriminated against.

C. Width

1. Back should be long and wide with a broad, normal-shaped spring of rib.

Length, depth, and width should be well balanced, with all having vital importance in the final evaluation of the bird.

- II. **Fleshing:** Refers to the amount and distribution of muscle on the bird. Breast, drumstick, and thighs carry the bulk of the meat and should be examined closely.

A. Breast should be:

1. Well developed and evenly muscled on either side of the keel.
2. Wide and long, with width of muscle carrying well back on the keel bone.
3. Sufficiently well fleshed so that it has a rounded appearance with the flesh carrying well up to the crest of the keel or breast bone.

B. Drumstick and thighs should:

1. Be well developed and carry an abundance of muscle.
2. Have a rounded appearance and show bulginess and be soft to the touch when handled.

III. **Finish:** Refers only to the amount of fat in and immediately under the skin. Without a good fat cover, a well-fleshed bird will lose a great deal of eye appeal.

Poultry should not be fat to the point of being wasteful. Abdominal fat should account for less than 10 percent of the total body weight. The amount of fat in the skin between and in the feather tracts on the side of the breast is the best indication of finish. There must be a noticeable amount of fat in these areas. The condition of the web of the wing is also indicative of the amount of fat deposited. The skin of the abdomen when pinched between the thumb and fingers should feel thick to the touch.

The amount of finish that is considered adequate will vary from judge to judge and will more or less depend on his personal preference. The only standard in regard to finish is the following: "To be of A quality, the live bird must have a well developed covering of fat in the skin considering the class, age, and sex of the bird."

IV. **Uniformity:** (Applies to two or more birds in an exhibit pen)

When birds are shown in pens of two or more birds, entry uniformity becomes a very important factor. Every bird in the entry should be as near as possible a carbon copy of his pen mate(s) in size, conformation, fleshing, finish, and even skin color. **If one bird has a defect, it will affect the rating of the entire pen.**

V. **Presence of Defects:**

A. The presence of any of the following defects can lower the final placing of the bird/pen or can eliminate it from the show.

1. Defects

a. General

- 1) Cuts and tears
- 2) Broken or disjointed bones
- 3) Skin or flesh bruises anywhere other than on the wing tip. (Note: Wing tip bruises must not extend into any portion of the joint.)
- 4) Breast blisters – includes mucous "sacs"
- 5) Heavy callouses or scaly condition on breast
- 6) Insect bites

- 7) External parasites (lice, mites, or fleas)
- 8) Extremely dirty birds
- 9) Sometimes in poultry with black or green shanks, there will be an extension of these pigments into the skin of the drumsticks, thighs, and abdomen causing these areas to appear black or green. These birds should be removed from the show.

b. Feathering

- 1) Multiple pin feathers, particularly those just coming through the skin and without sufficient brush on them to facilitate picking.
- 2) Areas of skin which may be discolored because of broken quills or sunburn resulting from inadequate feather or “bareback.”
- 3) A lack of feather covering over the keel area of well fleshed birds **is not a defect and must not** be considered as such.
- 4) Today’s market birds generally have light colored feathers. However, feather color is important to the extent that it might detract from the appearance of the ready-to-cook poultry.

c. Conformation

- 1) Breast bones which are:
 - a) Dented
 - b) Crooked or curved
 - c) Knobby
 - d) V-shaped
 - e) Slab sided (birds which are much deeper than they are wide)
 - f) Non parallel to backbone
- 2) Backs which are:
 - a) Narrow
 - b) Crooked
 - c) Hunched or humped
- 3) Legs and wings that are deformed
- 4) Bodies that are definitely wedge shaped
- 5) Defects such as crooked toes or beaks are not important and should be disregarded.

d. Fleshing

- 1) Breasts which:
 - a) Do not carry muscle width well back to the end of the keel
 - b) Are V-shaped or concave rather than full and rounded (U-shaped)

- 2) Drumsticks and thighs that are thin
 - 3) Backs that are not well fleshed along the vertebrae and around hip bones
- e. Finish
- 1) Lack of fat cover:
 - a) In the skin between and in the heavy feather tracts on the breast
 - b) In the color of the wishbone
 - c) Where the thigh skin joins the breast
 - d) Around the tail, head, and abdominal region

By: Phillip J. Clauer
Senior Extension Associate
4-H Youth and Small Specialty Flock
Department of Poultry Science
The Pennsylvania State University

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of Congress May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Legislature. T. R. Alter, Director of Cooperative Extension, The Pennsylvania State University.

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 201 Willard Building, University Park, PA 16802-2801, Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY.