

Pig & Poultry Farming Project

Poultry Production updates for Validation phase

April 2022

Summary of Feedback and Key Changes

Thank you to the stakeholders that provided feedback on the drafts that were made available from 18 February until 22 March 2022 under the 'Drafts Available' stage. During this time, feedback was collected via the online feedback hub, webinars, phone calls and emails. The qualifications, skill sets and units were drafted with guidance from Subject Matter Experts, made up of workplace experts and industry.

Changes to Poultry Sector Qualifications, Skill Set and Units

Certificate III in Poultry Production

- Packaging rules changed to decrease core from seven to four units, increase electives from nine to 12 units, and to require at least one specialisation to be completed.
- Specialisations titles updated to poultry farm technician, poultry breeding technician, egg grader, poultry services provider, and a new poultry hatchery technician specialisation.
- Unit mix and mandatory units to achieve each specialisation have been revised.
- Units added and removed from General Elective Group F.

Skill Sets

- Seven existing Skill Sets proposed for deletion due to no enrolments.
- Five new Skill Sets created to reflect the five specialisations *Certificate III in Poultry Production*.

Units of Competency

- Minor changes have been made in some units to increase clarity in the Performance Criteria, Performance Evidence and to reduce duplication in the Knowledge Evidence.
- 'Safe and low stress animal handling techniques' added to the Performance Criteria and Knowledge Evidence in some units for consistency with the units and across the units.
- *AHCPLY2X2 Maintain health and welfare of poultry* has been revised to reflect Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) level outcomes and recoded to *AHCPLY3X5*.
- *Set up sheds or placement of point of lay or day old poultry* has been revised to cover a broader range of poultry and reflect AQF level outcomes. The unit is now *AHCPLY3XX Set up sheds for poultry production*.
- *AHCPLY2X3 Set up sheds or placement of point of lay or day old poultry* has been revised to cover a broader range of poultry and reflect AQF level outcomes. The unit is now *AHCPLY3X6 Set up sheds for placement of poultry*.
- *Knowledge Evidence revised in AHCPLY3X1 Brood poultry* to remove duplication.

- *AHCPLY3X4 Implement and monitor biosecurity measures in poultry production* has had Element 4 removed, Performance Criteria removed, added or revised, Foundation Skills and Knowledge Evidence updated to better reflect specific national Poultry Production biosecurity codes and outcomes. The SMEWG also compared this unit to two existing generic AHC biosecurity units and advised the generic units were not appropriate for the commercial poultry production sector.

Animal ethics concerns

The revised poultry units (AHCPLY) require the Performance Evidence (PE) to be assessed in a 'commercial poultry production site or an environment that accurately represents workplace conditions', which includes live poultry. The unit *Maintain health and welfare of poultry* requires administering treatments to a group of at least 20 live birds, the removal of one dead bird, and the isolation of one bird showing signs of illness.

Feedback has been received that these requirements may create Animal Ethics Committee issues and may also limit access to these units for some Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)/learners. The subject matter expert working group (SMEWG0, that includes representatives from industry and RTOs, carefully considered this feedback (including suggestions to allow replica animals). The outcome of this discussion by the SMEWG was the advice to not change these requirements, citing the reasons below:

- In most cases, the treatments provided to poultry are generally added to the drinking water and do not create any animal welfare issues.
- The PE in the revised and new AHCPLY units have been designed with expert advice from representatives of the Poultry Production industry. The standards have been designed to ensure graduates of these units are competent to work safely and productively in their industry.
- It is envisaged and encouraged that RTOs establish cooperative arrangements with poultry farmers to train and assess their workers to the standards required by industry on their own farms and using their animals. For example, three of the four Registered Training Organisations listed on Training.gov.au that have *AHC30516 Certificate III in Poultry Production* on scope, successfully deliver and assess AHCPLY units on poultry farms.
- Animal Ethics Committee approvals are not required if the units are trained and assessed in farming workplaces, further encouraging cooperative arrangements between RTOs and employers and ensuring students learn in a real environment.
- Treatments provided to poultry on farms are highly controlled by enterprise procedures, Farm Treatment Plans, and Approved Medication Lists, and will only be provided as part of routine animal husbandry practices.
- In addition to the skill development required by workers in this industry, it is in the best interests of biosecurity, animal welfare, worker safety and public health that live animals are used in the training and assessment of these units. To provide some further clarity on these points, the SMEWG stressed the following:
 - Handling and sometimes restraining animals, especially larger ones, can only really be trained with live animals that have a mind of their own. If taught on an inanimate replica (that currently do not exist), essential animal handling knowledge and skills are not developed. This results in people who think they are competent when they are not and contributes to injuries to workers and animals when these people have to handle live animals.

- The handling, movement and disposal of dead or sick animals brings with it lots of risks (health and safety related to manual handling of larger poultry, infection control for workers, spread of pathogens to other poultry on site, and within the general community). Poultry production enterprises have strict codes and procedures that are followed for these activities, specialised equipment and other resources manage these risks. For example: materials handling equipment, disposable PPE, showers for workers, foot baths to sanitise and disinfect footwear, equipment sterilisation facilities, and controlled movement routes for people, animals, feed, water and equipment required for poultry husbandry tasks. Visitors to sites (trainers and assessors) are screened for their risks, trained in site procedures and know how to maintain safety and biosecurity.
- If the AHPCLY units are assessed in an RTO site that does not have similar controls in place, the risk of the learner bringing pathogens into a poultry production farm increase. In addition, a person that has had contact with poultry on another site (for example, at an RTO), is required by the poultry industry to be quarantined before they can return to their poultry production worksite. The quarantine period is a minimum of 24 hours but may be longer on some farms. This obviously creates issues for poultry production farms releasing their workers for training with animals at an RTO.

To view the Validation drafts and provide your comment, or to register for a validation webinar, visit the Pig & Poultry project page on the Skills Impact website at <https://www.skillsimpact.com.au/agriculture/training-package-projects/pig-and-poultry-farming-project/>. Please note that this validation phase of the project will close on 20 May 2022.