



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

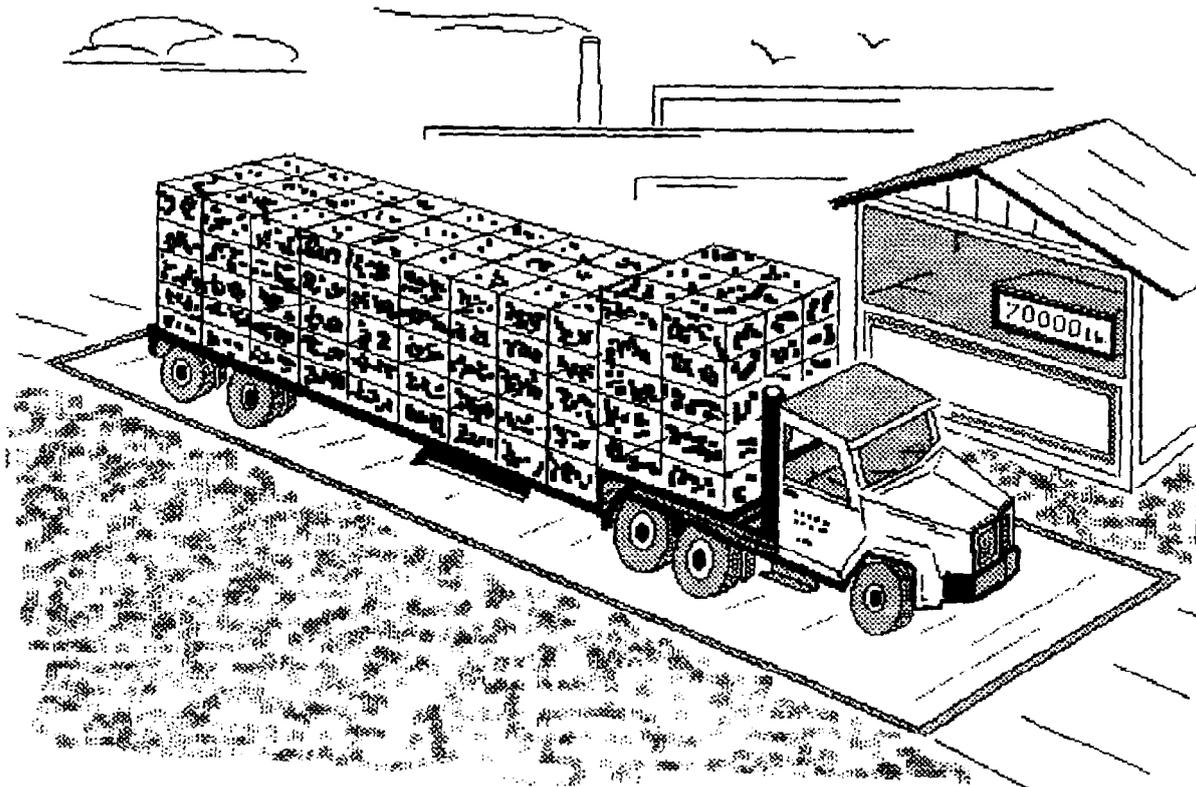
Grain Inspection,
Packers and
Stockyards
Administration

Packers and
Stockyards
Programs

January 1998

Instructions for Weighing Live Poultry

Scales and Weighing Memorandum No. 3 - P



Instructions for Weighing Live Poultry, Scales and Weighing Memorandum No. 3-P

Forward

Regulations (9 CFR 201.73) issued under authority of the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, as amended and supplemented (7 U.S.C. 181 et seq.), require that persons weighing live poultry for purposes of purchase or sale under the Act shall perform their duties in accordance with official instructions. Regulations (9 CFR 201.76, 201.82 and 201.108-1) containing the official instructions are set forth below.

201.73 Scale operators to be qualified.

Stockyard owners, market agencies, dealers, packers and live poultry dealers shall employ qualified persons to operate scales for weighing livestock, livestock carcasses or live poultry for the purpose of purchase, sale, acquisition or settlement, and they shall require such employees to operate the scales in accordance with the regulations.

201.76 Reweighing.

Stockyard owners, market agencies, dealers, packers and live poultry dealers shall reweigh livestock, livestock carcasses or live poultry on request of any authorized representative of the Secretary.

201.82 Care and promptness in weighing and handling livestock and live poultry

(a) Each stockyard owner, market agency, dealer, packer and live poultry dealer shall exercise reasonable care and promptness with respect to loading, transporting, holding, yarding, feeding, watering, weighing or otherwise handling livestock or live poultry to prevent waste of feed, shrinkage, injury, death or other avoidable loss.

(b) Whenever live poultry is obtained under a poultry growing arrangement, the poultry shall be transported promptly after loading and the gross weight for grower payment purposes shall be determined immediately upon arrival at the processing plant, holding yard, or other scale normally used for such purpose.

201.108-1 Instructions for weighing live poultry

Live poultry dealers who operate scales on which live poultry is weighed for purposes of purchase, sale, acquisition, or settlement are responsible for the accurate weighing of such poultry. They shall supply copies of the instructions in this section to all persons who perform weighing operations for them and direct such persons to familiarize themselves with the instructions and to comply with them at all times. This section shall also apply to any additional weighers who are employed at any time. Weighers must acknowledge their receipt of these instructions and agree to comply with them by signing in duplicate, a form provided by the Packers and Stockyards Programs, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. One copy of this form is to be filed with a regional office of the Packers and Stockyards Programs, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration and the other copy retained by the Agency employing the weighers. The following instructions shall be applicable to the weighing of live poultry on all scales except that paragraph (c)(1) of this section is only applicable to the weighing of live poultry on vehicle scales.

(a) *Balancing the empty scale.* (1) The scale shall be maintained in zero balance at all times. The empty scale shall be balanced each day before weighing begins and thereafter its zero balance shall be verified before any poultry is weighed. In addition, the zero balance of the scale shall be verified whenever a weigher resumes weighing duties after an absence from the scale.

(2) Before balancing the empty scale, the weigher shall notify parties outside the scale house of his/her intention and shall be assured that no persons or vehicles are in contact with the platform. When the empty scale is balanced and ready for weighing, the weigher shall so indicate by appropriate signal.

(3) Weighbeam scales shall be balanced by first seating each poise securely in its zero notch and then moving the balance ball to such position that a correct zero

balance is obtained. A scale equipped with a balance indicator is correctly balanced when the indicator comes to rest in the center of the target area. A scale not equipped with a balance indicator is correctly balanced if the weighbeam, when released at the top or bottom of the trig loop, swings freely in the trig loop in such manner that it will come to rest at the center of the trig loop.

(4) Dial scales shall be balanced by releasing all drop weights and operating the balance ball or other balancing device to obtain a correct zero balance. The indicator must visibly indicate zero on the dial reading face and the ticket printer must record a correct zero balance. "Balance tickets" shall be filed with other scale tickets issued on that date.

(5) Electronic digital scales should be properly warmed up before use. In most cases it is advisable to leave the electric power on continuously. The zero balance shall be verified by recording the zero balance on a scale ticket. The main indicating element and the remote visual weight display shall indicate zero when the balance is verified. The proper procedure for balancing this type of scale will vary according to the manufacturer. Refer to the operator's manual for specific instructions.

(6) A balance ball or other balancing device shall be operated only when balancing the empty scale and shall not be operated at any time or for any other purpose.

(7) The time at which the empty scale is balanced or its zero balance verified shall be marked on scale tickets or other permanent records

(b) *Sensitivity control.* (1) A scale must be sensitive in response to platform loading if it is to yield accurate weights. It, therefore, is the duty of a weigher to assure himself that interferences, weighbeam friction, or other factors do not impair sensitivity. He shall satisfy himself, at least twice each day, that the scale is sufficiently sensitive, and, if the following requirements are not met, he must report the facts to his superior or employer immediately.

(2) A weighbeam scale with a balance indicator is sufficiently sensitive if, when the scale is balanced with the indicator at the center of the target, movement of the fractional poise one graduation will change the indicator rest point 1/4 inch (0.25) or the width of the central target area, whichever is greater.

(3) A weighbeam scale without a balance indicator is sufficiently sensitive if, when the scale is balanced with the weighbeam at the center of the trig loop, movement of the fractional poise two graduations will cause the weighbeam to come to rest at the bottom of the trig loop.

(4) Adjustable damping devices are incorporated in balance indicators and in dial scales to absorb the effects of load impact and to bring the indicator to rest. The weigher must be familiar with the location and adjustment of these damping devices and keep them so adjusted that when the indicator is displaced from a position of rest, it will oscillate freely through at least one complete cycle of movement before coming to rest at its original position.

(5) Friction at weighbeam bearings may reduce the sensitiveness of the scale, cause sluggish weighbeam action and affect weighing accuracy. A weigher must inspect the weighbeam assembly daily to make certain that there is clearance between the weighbeam and the pivot bearings.

(6) Interferences or binding of the scale platform, or other "live" parts of the scale, are common causes of weighing inaccuracy. A weigher shall satisfy himself, at the beginning of each weighing period, that all such "live" parts have sufficient clearance to prevent interference.

(c) *Weighing the load.* (1) Vehicle scales used to weigh live poultry shall be of sufficient length and capacity to weigh an entire vehicle as a unit; *provided*, that a trailer may be uncoupled from a tractor and weighed as a single unit. Before weighing a vehicle, either coupled or uncoupled, the weigher shall be assured that the entire vehicle is on the scale platform and that no persons are on the scale platform.

(i) On a weighbeam scale with a balance indicator the weight of a vehicle shall be determined by moving the poises to such positions that the indicator will come to rest within the central target area.

(ii) On a weighbeam scale without a balance indicator the weight shall be determined by moving the poises to such positions that the weighbeam, when released from the top or bottom of the trig loop, will swing freely in the trig loop and come to rest at the approximate center of the trig loop.

(iii) On a dial scale the weight of a vehicle is indicated automatically when the indicator revolves around the dial face and comes to rest.

(iv) On an electronic digital scale the weight of a vehicle is indicated automatically when the weight value indicated is stable.

(2) The correct weight is the value in pounds indicated by a weighbeam, dial or digital scale when a stable load balance is obtained. In any case, the weigher should concentrate upon the beam tip, balance indicator, dial or digital indicator while weighing and not be concerned with reading the visible weight indications until a stable load balance is obtained. On electronic digital scales, the weigher should concentrate on the pulsing or flickering of weight values to assure that the unit indicates a stable weight before activating the print button.

(d) *Recording the weight.* (1) The gross or tare weight shall be recorded immediately after the load balance is obtained and before any poises are moved or load removed from the scale platform. The weigher shall make certain that the printed weight record agrees with the weight value visibly indicated on the weighbeam, dial or digital indicator when correct load balance is obtained. The weigher shall also assure that the printed weight value is sufficiently distinct and legible.

(2) The weight printing device on a scale shall be operated only to produce a printed or impressed record of the weight while the load is on the scale and correctly balanced. If the weight is not printed clearly and correctly, the ticket shall be marked void and a new one printed before the load is removed from the scale.

(e) *Weigher's responsibilities.* (1) The primary responsibility of a weigher is to determine and record the true weight of live poultry without prejudice or favor to any person or agency and without regard for poultry ownership, price, condition, shrink, or other considerations. A weigher shall not permit the representations or attitudes of any persons or agencies to influence his judgment or action in performing his/her duties

(2) Scale tickets issued shall be serially numbered and used in numerical sequence. Sufficient copies shall be executed to provide a copy to all parties to the transaction. Unused scale tickets or those which are partially executed shall not be left exposed or

accessible to other parties. All such tickets shall be kept under lock when the weigher is not at his duty station.

(3) Accurate weighing and weight recording require that a weigher shall not permit operations to be hurried to the extent that inaccurate weights or incorrect weight records may result. The gross, tare and net weights must be determined accurately to the nearest minimum graduation. Manual operations connected with balancing, weighing, and recording shall be performed with the care necessary to prevent damage to the accurately machined and adjusted parts of weighbeams, poises, and printing devices. Rough handling of these parts shall be avoided.

(4) Poultry growers, live poultry dealers, sellers, or others having legitimate interest in a load of poultry are entitled to observe the balancing, weighing and recording procedures. A weigher shall not deny that right or withhold from them any information pertaining to the weight. The weigher shall check the zero balance of the scale or reweigh a load of poultry when requested by such parties or duly authorized representatives of the administrator.

(f) *General precautions.* (1) The poises of weighbeam scales are carefully adjusted and sealed to a definite weight at the factory and any change in that weight seriously affects weighing accuracy. A weigher, therefore, shall observe if poise parts are broken, loose or lost or if material is added to a poise and shall report any such condition to his/her superior or employer. Balancing or weighing shall not be performed while a scale ticket is in the slot of a weighbeam poise.

(2) Stops are provided on scale weighbeams to prevent movement of poises back of the zero graduation when balancing or weighing. When the stops become worn or broken and allow a poise to be set behind the zero position, this condition must be reported by the weigher to their superior or employer and corrected without delay.

(3) Motion detection circuits are a part of electronic scales. They are designed to prevent the printing of weight values if the load has not stabilized within prescribed limits. The weighmaster's duty is to print the actual weight of the load within these limits. This requires printing the actual weight of the load, not one of the other weights that may be within the motion detection limits.

(4) Foreign objects or loose materials in the form of nuts, bolts, washers, or other material on any part of the weighbeam assembly, including the counter-balance hanger or counter-balance weights, are potential sources of weighing error. Loose balancing material must be enclosed in the shot cup of the counter-balance hanger and counter-balance weights must not be of the slotted type which can readily be removed.

(5) Whenever, for any reason, a weigher has reason to believe that a scale is not functioning properly or not yielding correct weight values, the weigher shall discontinue weighing, report the facts to the parties responsible for scale maintenance and request inspection, test or repair of the scale.

(6) When a scale has been adjusted, modified, or repaired in any manner which can affect the accuracy of weighing or weight recording, the weigher shall not use the scale until it has been tested and inspected and found to be accurate.

201.49 Requirements Regarding Scale Tickets Evidencing Weighing of Livestock and Live Poultry

(a) **Livestock.** When livestock is weighed for the purpose of purchase or sale, a scale ticket shall be issued which shall be serially numbered and used in numerical sequence. Sufficient copies shall be executed to provide a copy to all parties to the transaction. In instances where the weight values are automatically recorded directly on the account of purchase, account of sale or other basic record, this record may serve in lieu of a scale ticket. When livestock is purchased on a carcass weight or carcass grade and weight basis, the hot carcass weights shall be recorded using a scale equipped with a printing device, and such printed weights shall be retained as part of the person or firm's business records to substantiate settlement on each transaction. Scale tickets issued under this section shall show:

- (1) The names and location of the agency performing the weighing service;
- (2) The date of the weighing;
- (3) The name of the buyer and seller or consignor, or a designation by which they may be readily identified;
- (4) The number of head;
- (5) Kind of livestock;
- (6) Actual weight of each draft of livestock; and
- (7) The name, initials, or number of the person who

weighed the livestock, or if required by State law, the signature of the weigher.

(b) **Poultry.** When live poultry is weighed for the purpose or purchase, sale, acquisition, or settlement by a live poultry dealer, a scale ticket shall be issued which shall show:

- (1) The name of the agency performing the weighing service;
- (2) The name of the live poultry dealer;
- (3) The name and address of the grower, purchaser, or seller;
- (4) The name or initials or number of the person who weighed the poultry, or if required by State law, the signature of the weigher;
- (5) The location of the scale;
- (6) The gross weight, tare weight, and net weight;
- (7) The date and time gross weight and tare weight are determined;
- (8) The number of poultry weighed;
- (9) The weather conditions;
- (10) Whether the driver was on or off the truck at the time of weighing; and
- (11) The license number of the truck or the truck number; *provided*, that when live poultry is weighed on a scale other than a vehicle scale, the scale ticket need not show the information specified in paragraphs (b)(9)-(11) of this section. Scale tickets issued under this paragraph shall be at least in duplicate form and shall be serially numbered and used in numerical sequence. One copy shall be furnished to the grower, purchaser, or seller, and one copy shall be furnished to or retained by the live poultry dealer.

NOTE

Attention is called to Section 10 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, which is made applicable to persons subject to the Packers and Stockyards Act and provides in part:

"... Any person who shall willfully make, or cause to be made, any false entry or statement of fact in any report required to be made under this Act, or who shall willfully make, or cause to be made, any false entry in any account, record, or memorandum kept by any corporation subject to this Act or who shall willfully neglect or fail to make, or cause to be made, full, true, and correct entries in such accounts, records, or memoranda, of all facts and transactions appertaining to the business of such corporation, or who shall

the Commission or to any of its authorized agents, for the purpose of inspection and taking copies, any documentary evidence of such corporation in his possession or within his control, shall be deemed guilty of an offense against the the United States, and shall be subject upon conviction in any court of the United States or competent jurisdiction, to a fine of not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term of not more than three years, or to both such fine and imprisonment.”

A weigher who willfully prints or enters a false weight value on a scale ticket or other record of a stockyard company, market agency, dealer, packer or live poultry dealer is subject to the section quoted above.

