



NSF INTERNATIONAL

NSF Global Animal Wellness Standards
Certification Scheme

Version 1.0 2019



NOT FOR
DISTRIBUTION OR SALE

Published by
NSF International
PO Box 130140, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48113-0140, USA

Copyright 2019 NSF International

Unless otherwise specified, no part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and microfilm, without permission in writing from NSF International.

Printed in the United States of America.



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
List of Tables	5
1. General	7
1.1. Introduction	7
1.2. Background	7
1.3. Design and Purpose.....	7
1.4. Scope.....	8
1.5. <i>Acknowledgements</i>	8
2. Normative references	8
2.1. <i>Reference standards and guidelines</i>	8
3. Definitions	9
4. Certification Process.....	12
4.1. Pre-Application.....	12
4.1.1. Review Standards and Guidance Manual	12
4.2. Application	12
4.2.1. Application review	12
4.2.2. Applicable Certification Standards.....	12
4.2.3. Scope of Certification.....	12
4.2.4. Seasonal Production Operations.....	13
4.2.5. Vertically integrated groups and service providers certification.....	13
4.3. Arranging Audits.....	13
4.4. Initial Certification.....	14
4.5. On-site Audit	14
4.6. Desk and Remote Audit.....	14
4.7. Contingency Audit Protocol	14
4.8. Verification Audit	15
4.9. Recertification Audit	15
4.10. Unannounced Visits.....	15
4.11. Certification Timeline	15
5. Auditor Requirements and Responsibilities	16
5.1. Auditor Qualifications	16
5.2. Language and Communication.....	16
5.3. Conflict of Interest	16
6. Audited Facility Requirements and Responsibilities.....	16
7. Audit Process.....	17
7.1. Audit Frequency.....	17
7.2. Audit duration	17
7.3. Site and Animal Sampling Guidelines.....	17
7.4. Audit time frames	18



8. Non-Conformances	18
8.1. General.....	18
8.2. Classification of Non-conformances	18
8.3. Repeat Non-Conformances.....	19
8.4. Correction of Non-Conformances	19
8.5. Timelines for the resolution of corrective actions.....	19
8.6. Extension for resolution of corrective actions	19
9. Request for deviation	20
10. Audit Score and Rating	20
10.1. Audit Score and Grade.....	20
10.2. Certification Decision.....	20
10.3. Denial of Certification.....	21
10.4. Audit Rewrite.....	21
10.5. Certificate Issuance.....	21
10.5.1. Certificates.....	21
10.6. Certificate extension requests:.....	21
10.7. Certificate Modifications	21
10.7.1. Scope	21
10.7.2. Change of Ownership	22
10.7.3. Relocation of Premises or Additional Sites	22
10.8. Certificate Revocation and Withdrawal	22
10.8.1. Revoking Certification	22
10.8.2. Voluntary Withdrawal	22
10.8.3. Making Claims of Certification	22
10.8.4. Reapplication for Re-Certification after Revocation or Voluntary Withdrawal	22
11. Complaints and Appeals	23
11.1. Complaints and appeals procedures	23
Annex A - NSF Global Animal Wellness Standards – List of Standards	24
Beef Series:	24
Dairy Series:	24
Pig Series:.....	24
Small Ruminant Series:	24
Meat Poultry Series:	24
Laying Poultry Series:.....	24
Annex B – Required Documentation and Records of Compliance	25
Annex C – Use of Video and Technology	27
Annex D – Examples of Site and Animal Sample Selection	27



List of Tables

Table 1 Audit Duration.....	17
Table 2 Sampling Formulas.....	17
Table 3 Classification of Non-conformances	18
Table 4 Overall Audit Score.....	20
Table 5 Audit Grade	20



This page is intentionally left blank



NSF Global Animal Wellness Standards - Certification Scheme

1. General

1.1. Introduction

Animal welfare is a global issue impacting an expansive portion of the agricultural and food production industry spanning the production, delivery and harvesting protein supply chain. The success and sustainability of this area of industry is directly linked to the relationship between animals and society and the responsible stewardship and treatment of animals within the settings where they are kept, raised and responsibly used.

The food industry has become increasingly attuned to consumer and investor expectations and in order to meet these increasing demands for transparency and proactively respond to emerging trends regarding the welfare of animals, retailers and processors are requiring that animal handling and care guidelines are defined, implemented and measured. These guidelines are critical to the health and wellness of animals at every step from birth to slaughter.

1.2. Background

The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), with a global and science-based agenda, has established guidelines applicable to animal welfare (OIE 2017). These guidelines are global, science-based standards agreed upon by the trading nations of the world, taking into account the cultural and economic variations between regions and countries of the world.

The general principles for the welfare of animals in livestock production systems and species-specific program guidelines for production, transport and slaughter, provide a basis for practical requirements to ensure that the concept of the internationally recognized five freedoms are being met.

- freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition
- freedom from fear and distress
- freedom from physical and thermal discomfort
- freedom from pain, injury and disease
- freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour

The OIE guidelines identify scientifically-based criteria and indicators that will provide critical information that has an impact on the welfare of animals.

In 2016, ISO released a Technical Specification 34700: Animal welfare management: General requirements and guidance for organizations in the food supply chain (ISO 2016) that provides the guidance for management of the welfare of animals raised for food or feed production around the world and is adaptable to different situations, including:

- production systems across the supply chain for products of animal origin
- geographical, cultural and religious contexts
- developed and developing countries

1.3. Design and Purpose

The NSF Global Animal Wellness standards are designed to be relevant in every country, region and market. To accomplish this, the assessment standards are designed to:

- recognize the variability in regulatory requirements and consumer and market pressures globally
- be outcome-based rather than prescriptive
- account for variations in local awareness and implementation of scientific and technical developments

The NSF Global Animal Wellness System requirements are consistent with ISO/TS 34700 and OIE principles



and guidelines and has been developed as a tool to assist in determining if ensure that the key elements of an animal welfare management system and programs are in place in organizations. The system elements covered in the standards include:

- Management Commitment, Policy, Procedures and Planning
- Personnel
- Monitoring Animal Welfare Plan Implementation and Outcomes
- Evaluation and Review
- Facilities, Equipment and Materials

The NSF Global Animal Wellness Standards include a series of species and production specific requirements that establish, in greater depth, the program elements required in OIE TAHC, industry-recognized animal welfare care and handling guidelines, codes of practice and international standards and certifications and cover the following:

- Animal Sources, Health and Safety
- Design, Maintenance and Protection in Animal Environment, Facilities and Equipment
- Feed and Water
- Animal Handling, Husbandry and Management

Each requirement in the NSF species and production specific standards is directly linked to one or more of the five freedoms as well as to the four (4) welfare criteria and twelve (12) welfare sub-criteria proposed by Botreau et al. (Botreau R 2007).

The purpose of the assessment to these standards is to:

- identify gaps
- help organizations achieve continuous improvement in their programs
- provide assurance of animal wellness in an organization's operations

Applicants and participants must conform to these requirements in order to gain certificate of conformity with the standard.

1.4. Scope

Organizations and individual operations which produce animals and animal products are eligible to apply for NSF Global Animal Wellness Standards certification. The standard applies to beef, dairy and small ruminant operations, pigs, and poultry production systems, including poultry meat and egg production.

1.5. Acknowledgements

Grateful to the members of the Technical Advisory Boards (TAB) and other parties who prepared and provided comments on the requirements.

Grateful to the leadership and members of the NSF Animal Wellness Working Group and the technical teams who contributed to the development and revisions of the standards.

2. Normative references

2.1. Reference standards and guidelines

The following documents contain provisions that, through reference, constitute provisions of the Certification Scheme. At the time the Certification Scheme was written, the editions listed below are current and valid. All documents are subject to revision, and parties are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the documents indicated below. The most recent published edition of the document shall be used for undated references.

ISO (2016). ISO/TS 34700 - Animal welfare management — General requirements and guidance for organizations in the food supply chain. ISO/TS 34700. Geneva, Switzerland, ISO.

OIE (2019). Terrestrial Animal Health Code. Chapter 7 - Animal Welfare. Paris, France, World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

3. Definitions

Animal: is defined as mammal or bird

Animal based measures: response of an animal or effect on an animal used to assess its welfare, which can be taken directly on the animal or indirectly and includes amongst others the use of animal records (ISO)

Animal handler: a person with knowledge of the behaviour and needs of animals who, with appropriate experience and a professional and positive response to an animal's needs, can achieve effective management and good welfare (OIE TAHC)

Animal welfare management system: a set of interrelated elements, principles, policies and objectives to direct and control the organization to ensure that animal welfare is maintained.

Interactive elements:

- Good Practices and Pre-requisite programs (PRPs)
- Animal Welfare Hazard Analysis (e.g. HACCP)
- Management System
- Statutory and regulatory requirements
- Communication

Competence: Capable of applying knowledge and abilities to achieve intended results

Continual improvement: planning and implementing strategic programs to change the organization's products, services, people and processes for the better. Continual Improvement models include is the cycles of Plan-Do-Check-Act and Define-Measure-Analyze-Improve-Control (Six Sigma).

Control measure: An action or activity that can be used to prevent or eliminate a hazard or reduce it to an acceptable level.

Correction: An action to identify and correct a problem that occurred without other actions associated with a corrective action procedure (such as actions to reduce the likelihood that the problem will recur, evaluate all affected animals or animal products and prevent affected animal food from entering commerce). Shall have the same meaning as "corrected."

Corrective action: Action to eliminate the cause of a detected nonconformity or other undesirable situation and includes:

- any immediate action required/taken
- root cause analysis of the problem
- Evaluate action needed based on the identified cause
- Determine if the problem exists elsewhere in the system and implement actions needed
- Document the results of the action taken
- Review/verify and document effectiveness of action taken with objective evidence

Critical limit: criterion which separates acceptability from unacceptability

Critical control point: A critical control point is the point in a process where failure to control known hazards can lead to serious harm to people, animals or equipment.



Facility: applied in a broad sense to the physical space and premises used by the organization for the handling and management of animals, for harvest of products from animals and includes the processes, equipment, environment, materials and personnel involved. This includes supporting areas such as maintenance, electrical or boiler rooms, also. The facility must be managed and supervised under the same organizational management. The facility is the site audited during an on-site audit.

Flow diagram: A schematic and systematic presentation of the sequence and interactions of steps and inputs and can then be used to identify points in the process where hazards may be introduced or are reasonably likely to occur and that require a preventive control measure.

Gap analysis: structured process to conduct an evaluation of the usual practices implemented/ utilized by the organization in comparison to each of the general principles and requirements of animal welfare identified in the OIE TAHC to identify gaps

Hazard analysis: the process of collecting and evaluating information on hazards associated with the inputs, processes and operations under consideration to decide which hazards are significant and must be addressed; steps include hazard identification and hazard assessment.

Hazard assessment: process to determine, for each hazard identified, whether its elimination or reduction to acceptable levels is essential to achieve animal welfare objectives, and whether its control is needed to ensure that defined acceptable levels are met. Assessment evaluates the possible severity of adverse effects and the likelihood of their occurrence.

Hazard identification: process to identify all known or reasonably foreseeable hazards relevant to the scope of the operation with the potential to cause an adverse effect on animal welfare. Relevant hazards will vary based on species, type of production, life stages of animals and point in protein supply chain. Hazards may be identified by conducting workplace inspections and reviewing work procedures.

Indicators: objective, consistent and repeatable results that are used to assess that preventive and control measures are functioning appropriately. These may include but are not limited to:

- Animal assessments - body condition score, weight, vocalization, lameness, etc.
- Facility and equipment function assessments - water test results, pasture quality testing and feed testing; ventilation rates, air quality; lighting measure, etc.
- Operation assessments – e.g. frequency of use of animal handling aids, holding times before unloading animals, etc.

Internal audit (first party): an audit a process or set of processes in the management system conducted by the organization itself to ensure it meets the procedure that the company has specified. The auditor may be an employee of the organization or someone hired by the organization and is acting on behalf of the company.

ISO: The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an international standard-setting body composed of representatives from various national standards organizations; the organization promotes worldwide proprietary, industrial and commercial standards.

Management Review: regular evaluation of whether management systems are performing as intended and producing the desired results as efficiently as possible; critical to process of continual improvement.

Monitoring: conducting a planned sequence of observations or measurements to assess whether control measures are operating as intended

One Health: The “One Health” concept was introduced at the beginning of the 2000s. In a few words, it



summarized an idea that had been known for more than a century; that human health and animal health are interdependent and bound to the health of the ecosystems in which they exist. This concept is envisaged and implemented by the OIE as a collaborative global approach to understanding risks for human and animal health (including both domestic animals and wildlife) and ecosystem health as a whole.

Operations: the activities that an organization/producer engages in; a series of operations that are interconnected may be termed as a process.

Organization: Company, corporation, firm, enterprise, municipality, authority or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private, that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities and relationships to achieve its objectives. Encompasses corporations, cooperatives, partnerships, and sole proprietorships. (For the purposes of this document, the term refers to a single business operator or a group of business operators of the whole or a part of the food supply chain, including primary breeding companies, animal farmers, livestock transport companies and slaughterhouses. An organization can be public or private and includes, but is not limited to, sole-trader, company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority, partnership, association, charity or institution, or part of combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private.)

Points of particular attention (POPAs): conditions that could be threatening to animal health, animal welfare, public health or on-farm management but where strict standards and tolerances have not been or cannot be defined. POPAs are generally influenced by many factors including biological variation among live animals and interactions between management practices.

Resource based measures: factor or combination of factors that may be linked to a change in the likelihood of good or poor animal welfare. These factors include resources (e.g. housing, space allowance per animal, handling and restraint facilities, air temperature and quality, stunning equipment parameters) or management (e.g. personnel, financial, process). (ISO)

Scope description: provides detail on the scope of production that provides detail including:

- Species and life stage(s) of animals under the responsibility of the organization
- Production type
- Specific management claims (grass-fed; cage-free, etc.)
- Product collection
- Target Market
- Intended Use
- Customer requirements/Certifications

Second party audit: an audit of a supplier or contracted service provider performed on behalf of the customer to ensure that they are meeting the requirements specified in the contract. Audit criteria may be proprietary to the customer. The auditor may be an employee of the customer or may be a third-party auditor conducting the audit on behalf of the customer.

Site: A single farm, functional unit of an organization, or a combination of units situated at one location, which is geographically distinct from other units of the same organization

Third party audit: an audit conducted by an independent auditor to verify that an organization has met the requirements of a specific scheme (may be a certification scheme).

Tolerance limit: operation-specific targets for identified POPAs; when targets are not achieved, management is adjusted. Reflects that operations and producers will have unique management strategies and approaches.



Validating: The process or procedure of obtaining evidence that the activity or control measure achieves the intended result.

Verifying: Confirmation through objective evidence that activity or control measure was done according to its design.

4. Certification Process

4.1. Pre-Application

4.1.1. *Review Standards and Guidance Manual*

Before each audit, it is the responsibility of the applicant or participant to ensure that they have the most up to date edition of the standard and any other relevant normative documents. [Annex A](#) lists the standards and these are available from the [NSF International website](#).

Applicants and participants must:

- be fully aware of the requirements of the standard
- have read and fully understood the technical requirements
- undertake a self-audit (internal audit) of their systems, procedures and policies
- address any areas considered to be non-conforming prior to a third-party audit being conducted

Applicants and participants may opt for a pre-audit visit to be conducted, however this would be an unscored visit and no certificate can be issued for such an activity. The auditor delivering the pre-audit visit cannot offer any consultation to the site.

4.2. Application

Client will submit an application for certification.

4.2.1. *Application review*

NSF shall review the application and supporting documentation to determine the required scope and prepare a quote. Once executed, the [certification timeline](#) will begin.

4.2.2. *Applicable Certification Standards*

Audits are carried out using the NSF Global Animal Wellness Standards appropriate to the relevant species, production type and point in the protein supply chain.

4.2.3. *Scope of Certification*

The certification audit scope must make clear the name of the [site](#), the standard used along with any version number and the activities included. Certification is site-specific. The entire site must be included in the scope of certification.

Where a supplier seeks to exempt part of the site for any reason, the request for exemption must be submitted in writing and shall be listed in the facility description. However, all parts of the premises and processes that are involved with the production, transport, handling and processing of animals included in the scope cannot be exempted.

If the supplier elects to exempt processes, animals or areas of the site from the scope of certification, the request must be submitted in writing prior to the audit and shall be listed in the facility description. Exempted processes, animals or areas of the site shall not be listed on the certificate and must not be promoted as being covered by the certification. Instances where promotion of exempted processes, animals or areas of the site is identified and substantiated (either by regular audit or by other means) shall result in immediate withdrawal of the NSF Global Animal Wellness certification.



Once the audit scope is agreed upon between the supplier and the certification body, it cannot be changed once the audit has commenced.

When activities are carried out in different premises but are overseen by the same senior, operational, and technical management, and are covered by the one system, the site can be expanded to include those premises. This may impact on [audit duration](#).

4.2.4. Seasonal Production Operations

A seasonal production operation is defined as an operation where the period of animal production and/or the animal product harvest is limited to less than six (6) consecutive months. This may include more than one period of production per calendar year.

Certification audits will be conducted during the peak operational part of the season and within the first 45 days of the production period.

Where an operation has more than one period of production in a calendar year, the certification audit will be conducted in the period with the highest volume of production. Relevant records for any other period of production will be assessed during the certification audit. The operation must supply information to indicate the period with the highest volume of production.

4.2.5. Vertically integrated groups and service providers certification

An Organization and its internally approved feed manufacturer, supply farms, co-manufacturers/co-producers of the certified product may be certified as a group structure. In this scenario, the main Organization manages the certification compliance management system of multiple suppliers (the Members) under its control, and a service contract exists between the main entity and each member of the group.

The service contract with the members must require that each member commit to the following:

- Abide by the NSF Global Animal Wellness certification requirements at all times.
- The compliance management system of the main entity and its control mechanisms (i.e., internal audits, corrective action procedures, enforcement policies).
- Permit NSF authority to conduct on-site audits at the member's site and have access to any certification compliance related documentation and records associated with the member.

No member shall be added to the group without the prior approval in writing by NSF. The fee structures for group certification structures shall be determined by NSF.

The Organization's service providers, such as catching, transport or other contracted services, must be included within the applicable portion of the certification, and a contract must exist between the two entities. The service provider must be able to demonstrate compliance to the requirements of the organization applicable to the provided service and may also apply for independent certification with NSF, if desired.

4.3. Arranging Audits

If for justifiable reasons prior notice is required to coordinate the organization's onsite assessments, NSF shall be notified of these concerns and will ensure that timely communication is made in advance of the date of the visit. Justifiable reasons can include biosecurity protocols and other unique or seasonal production schedules.

For on-farm [unannounced audits](#), the farm will be given 24 hours prior notice for biosecurity preparedness.

NSF schedules the audit respecting any biosecurity requirements the Operation has in place, providing



those biosecurity requirements can be substantiated (if requested). In the event of a reportable disease outbreak, where regulatory disease control orders are in effect, NSF will refer to [contingency audit protocol](#).

4.4. Initial Certification

All applicable requirements and clauses of the Standard shall be assessed as part of the certification audit. Some specific criteria may not be applicable; however, it is the responsibility of the (organization) to provide the necessary justification in these instances, and the auditor shall make appropriate comments to this effect within the corresponding section of the audit report.

Mandatory elements cannot be reported as “not applicable” or “exempt” and must be audited and compliance/non-compliance reported. Mandatory elements are designated with an “M”.

NSF shall conduct a scheduled, announced on-site audit consisting of a facility inspection, program documentation, as required and records audit in order to make a certification determination. All non-conformances must be approved and closed before certification can be granted.

NSF may delay this determination and conduct an additional partial audit at the company’s expense to determine that the company has implemented corrective actions.

If NSF determines the facility has demonstrated effective implementation of its policies and procedures and is able to maintain compliance, upon payment of fees due, NSF shall issue a certificate declaring the Operation as being NSF Global Animal Wellness Certified.

4.5. On-site Audit

The auditor will assess the documentation including policies, procedures for updates and confirm that copies of the relevant documentation are available to employees/contracted resources as required to carry out their duties.

For units where livestock or poultry are handled, an assessment of any relevant animals present and covered in the scope of the certification and assessment of monitoring activities carried out by the operation will be conducted. It will not be possible to carry out a complete audit if sites are empty, de-stocked or not handling animals included in the scope of certification. If the auditor cannot complete the audit in full, the application for initial certification cannot be progressed nor ongoing certification maintained.

During the audit, detailed notes are made of the client’s ability to comply with the standard. These will be used as the basis for the audit report. The auditor will submit the completed audit report for technical review.

4.6. Desk and Remote Audit

A desk and/or remote audit may be conducted by NSF as a means to determine compliance to the standards and/or verification of implemented corrective actions. Remote viewing technology may be utilized.

The auditor will notify the organization of any non-conformances identified during a desk and/or remote audit. Critical non-conformances cannot be raised at desk audits. An initial certification audit cannot be a desk and/or remote audit.

4.7. Contingency Audit Protocol

In the event of a reportable disease outbreak (where regulatory disease control orders are in effect) that would preclude the conduct of an on-site audit for recertification, the contingency audit protocol may be followed.



A remote audit will be conducted of the system documentation and utilize interviews to supplement evidence collection to assess compliance to the standards. Corrective actions for any non-conformances identified must be submitted as per established [time frames](#).

Requirements that rely on auditor observation of facility and animal conditions and animal handling will be deferred. NSF will require an on-site audit when the disease control orders are no longer in effect to complete assessment of compliance.

4.8. Verification Audit

An on-site verification audit may be conducted by NSF as a means to determine compliance to the standards and/or verification of implemented corrective actions. The scope may be full or partial and will be determined prior to scheduling.

The auditor will notify the organization of any non-conformances identified during a verification audit.

4.9. Recertification Audit

The re-certification audit shall be conducted within thirty (30) calendar days either side of the anniversary of the date of initial certification.

If an extension to the recertification boundary date is required, a request must be submitted in writing to NSF detailing the reasons for the extension request. If a permanent change to the recertification date is required, a request must be submitted in writing to NSF detailing the reasons for the change. In these cases, the recertification date can only be moved to a date earlier than the original recertification date.

The re-certification audit is undertaken to verify the continued effectiveness of the organization's entire animal welfare management system.

For seasonal producers/operations, the re-certification audit date may be reset so that it falls during an operational season.

4.10. Unannounced Visits

Within three (3) certification cycles, NSF shall conduct one (1) unannounced re-certification audit of a certified supplier. The unannounced audit shall occur in the supplier's facility within the sixty (60) day re-certification window (i.e., the anniversary date of the initial certification audit +/- thirty (30) days).

The organization will be notified of any unannounced visit no more than 24 hours in advance, the auditor will have had no avian or porcine contact for a minimum of 72 hours to allow for appropriate biosecurity considerations.

A defined blackout period shall be established by negotiation between the supplier and NSF that prevents the unannounced re-certification audit from occurring out of season or when the facility is not operating for legitimate business reasons.

If an organization refuses entry to the auditor for an unannounced audit, this will result in immediate suspension of the supplier certificate.

4.11. Certification Timeline

The certification process begins when NSF receives an executed quote from a new or renewing applicant.

The average time from quote to certification is 10-12 weeks, but can vary depending on inspector availability, time of application/seasonal conditions (site-conditions need to be conducive to viewing program animals), and number and complexity of non-conformances needing to be addressed post-audit.



5. Auditor Requirements and Responsibilities

5.1. Auditor Qualifications

An auditor employed or contracted by NSF International and qualified to assess compliance for the scope of activities (i.e. agricultural production, processing) evaluated for NSF Global Animal Wellness certification shall be assigned to perform required audits.

NSF shall ensure all auditors are trained and competent in the requirements of the program and activities to be performed.

5.2. Language and Communication

The certification body shall ensure that the auditor conducting the audit can competently communicate in the oral and written language of the supplier being audited. For the purpose of resolving a conflict, the English version of the NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard shall be the deciding reference.

In circumstances where a translator is required, there must be agreement between the certification body and site regarding responsibility for providing a translator. The translator provided shall have knowledge of the technical terms used during the audit; be independent of the supplier being audited and have no conflict of interest. The supplier shall be notified of any increase in audit duration and cost associated with the use of a translator.

5.3. Conflict of Interest

The certification body shall ensure that all certification activities are separately controlled and managed from any consulting activity. Auditors shall not audit anywhere they deem to have a potential conflict of interest, where they have participated in a consulting role involving the supplier in question, are related to or have had business dealings with within the last two (2) years.

Consulting includes, but is not limited to, activities such as:

- Producing or preparing animal health or welfare plans, manuals, handbooks or procedures
- Participating in the decision-making process regarding the animal wellness system
- Giving advice – as a consultant or otherwise – toward the design, documentation, development, validation, verification, implementation or maintenance of animal wellness system
- Deliver or participate in the delivery of an “in-house” training service at which advice and instruction on the development and implementation of animal health or welfare plans or animal wellness management system for eventual certification is provided.

A supplier can refuse the service of an auditor when they consider the auditor has a conflict of interest, or for other reasons. In such circumstances the supplier shall outline the reasons in writing to NSF International.

6. Audited Facility Requirements and Responsibilities

The client shall ensure that the auditor has reasonable access to all staff, records, and site facilities in order to fully perform the audit.

It is the responsibility of the participant/applicant to ensure that key members of staff are present during the audit. For units where livestock or poultry are handled, it is the responsibility of the participant/applicant to ensure that relevant animals are present, and that handling and monitoring activities will be carried out at the time of the audit.

The client shall ensure that the auditor is provided with specific visitor protocols, biosecurity, health and safety and requirements for protective clothing as applicable.



7. Audit Process

7.1. Audit Frequency

In order to maintain the certification status, the site must have an audit each year.

7.2. Audit duration

Audits of most types of operation usually consist of four elements: an opening meeting, a site and production/operations inspection, a review of animal wellness management system, records and procedures and a closing meeting.

The audit times will vary according to the size and complexity of the site operations. Factors that can impact on the audit duration includes:

- The scope of the audit; number of species
- The size of the site(s); number of related facilities and locations; number and type of animal housing
- The number of production types and/or animals
- The ease of communication with company personnel (consider different languages spoken and/or use of translator);
- The cooperation of the supplier's personnel.

Based on the application details, once the certification body and supplier have agreed on the scope of certification, the certification body shall provide the supplier with an estimate of the time it will take to complete the certification audit.

Table 1 Audit Duration

Certification Activities	Basic duration (days)**
Desk Audit	0.5-1.0 days
Single Farm - Single Site	1.0 days + 0.5 per additional species
Single Farm – Multiple Site*	1.0 days + 0.5 day
Hatchery	1.0 days
Transport	1.0 days + 0.5 per additional species
Livestock Assembly	1.0 days + 0.5 per additional species
Slaughter	1.0 days + 0.5 per additional species

*Example: Site holds animals at additional non-contiguous properties. See [Scope of Certification](#) for clarification. Does not include travel time. Additional time if also auditing additional species.

**Justification is required if the actual audit duration deviates from this guide by greater than thirty percent (30%).

7.3. Site and Animal Sampling Guidelines

A random selection method will be used to select the site and animal samples to be assessed during the audit. Examples are provided in [Annex D](#).

Table 2 Sampling Formulas

Sampling Formulas	Default	Minimum
Sample of barns/houses/pens/pastures	Square root	No less than 20% or Minimum of 3, whichever is greater
Sample age/production group per species	Square root	Minimum of one (1) sample from each age/production group



7.4. Audit time frames

The auditor shall provide the Organization with a summary of non-conformances at the audit closing meeting.

NSF shall perform a technical review of all evidence collected in the certification process and once finalized, a draft audit report will be available to the organization to Client within 14 calendar days of the audit end date.

Certification decision completed within 3 business days of approval of corrective actions.
Certificate issued within 45 calendar days of the audit end date.

8. Non-Conformances

8.1. General

Where the auditor finds that an Organization does not meet the technical requirements of the standards, the auditor will bring it to their attention during the audit.

All non-conformances must be described in the audit report; if non-conformances are resolved on-site in the presence of the auditor, they must still be recorded in the audit report.

At the end of the audit visit, all non-conformances will be recorded in a Non-Conformance Summary Report, which will be explained and discussed at the closing meeting. The Organization will be asked to sign the Non-Conformance Summary Report, copies of which will be left on site or provided within five (5) calendar days. The auditor will indicate that the audit findings are subject to technical review.

If a deviation is granted for a non-conformance, the non-conformance will be indicated and the audit notes will describe the granted deviation.

8.2. Classification of Non-conformances

Table 3 Classification of Non-conformances

Compliance Rating	Definition
Conformance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meets certification tier requirement. ▪ Awarded when the element being audited meets or exceeds the applicable expectation.
MINOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The element being audited does not fully meet expectations of an element. ▪ Improvements are required to meet the expectation. ▪ A minor non-conformity is raised if there is an omission or deficiency that produces unsatisfactory conditions that if not addressed may lead to a risk to animal wellness but is not likely to cause a system element breakdown. ▪ Requirements are fulfilled or partially fulfilled but lacking documented procedures or records and/or lacking review.
MAJOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deficiencies of an element present a high probability of animal wellness or regulatory failure. ▪ Significant improvement is needed to meet the expectations. ▪ Hazard analysis requirements have not been fully documented or implemented ▪ An element of the standard has not been documented (if required) or implemented ▪ A situation is observed where, based on objective evidence, there is significant doubt as to the conformity to standard and/or regulatory requirements. ▪ There are numerous findings of non-conformance that indicate a lack or failure in a required section and a potential risk to animal wellness or regulatory non-compliance exists.
Critical (CRITICAL FAIL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A critical non-conformity is raised if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there is a non-correctable or willful violation of the requirements presenting an imminent risk to the welfare of the animals; ▪ a breakdown of control(s) at a critical control point or a pre-requisite program; ▪ unsatisfactory conditions that are unlawful or have a significant impact to the animal;



Compliance Rating	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ systemic failure of documented control procedures ▪ A critical non-conformity is raised if the supplier fails to take immediate action in the event of observed evidence of animal abuse. ▪ A critical non-conformity is raised if the supplier fails to take corrective action within the timeframe agreed with the certification body. ▪ A critical non-conformity is raised if the certification body deems that there is systemic falsification of records relating to animal welfare management system.
Not Applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The requirement is deemed as not applicable.

8.3. Repeat Non-Conformances

Repeat assessments of non-conformance, where the facility has not taken corrective action to effectively address previously cited deficiencies in the most recent NSF Global Animal Wellness audit, will be noted by the auditor in the report. Repeat non-conformance ratings may cause an additional downgrade of the audit question's rating, depending on nature of the deficiency and its impact on animal wellness at the facility. In addition, repeat non-conformances without effective correction actions taken shall be reflected as a non-conformance against management commitment.

8.4. Correction of Non-Conformances

The Organization shall complete a root cause analysis and submit corrective actions and objective evidence for review and approval by NSF. The organization shall indicate measures to prevent recurrence of the non-conformance. Objective evidence includes photographic, documentary/records, training, etc.

8.5. Timelines for the resolution of corrective actions

Critical non-conformances: will result in an audit failure and must be corrected before reapplication for certification where the auditor will determine if there is evidence of immediate (within 24 hours) corrective action.

Major nonconformances: corrected within 14 calendar days of audit end date

Minor nonconformances: corrected within 30 calendar days of audit end date

8.6. Extension for resolution of corrective actions

Extensions may be granted by the certification body. In circumstances where the corrective action involves capital investment, structural change or cannot be corrected due to extenuating conditions, the period for resolution can be extended provided:

- there is no immediate threat to animal wellness
- alternative, temporary methods of control are initiated within the corrective action time frame
- the proposed timeline for final resolution is acceptable to the certification body

Extended timeframes for close out of minor nonconformities shall not impede and delay certificate issuance. In the event an extension for corrective action is required the facility representative must complete a Request for Extension of Corrective Actions – NSF Global Animal Wellness Certification Program form and submit to NSF. Fees will apply as per the fee schedule for NSF Global Animal Wellness certification services.

A copy of NSF's approval must be attached as supporting documentation when the facility completes the corrective action response.

The facility must provide the evidence of completion of the final corrective action to the certification body by the approved extension due date. Failure to complete the corrective actions in the timeframe agreed upon in this extension request may result in suspension and/or withdrawal of the facility certification.



9. Request for deviation

Any request for deviation to NSF Global Animal Wellness Certification Program requirements shall be submitted using a form supplied by NSF.

NSF shall consider the request but is not obligated to grant the request for deviation and will not be obligated to return any portion of fees paid if the applicant chooses to discontinue certification as a result of NSF's decision.

NSF shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by applicants related to nonconforming product, if applicable, which is the subject of rejected deviation request or other product noncompliance.

To apply for a deviation, the client must complete the Request for Deviation – NSF Global Animal Wellness Certification Program form and submit to NSF. Fees will apply as per the fee schedule.

10. Audit Score and Rating

10.1. Audit Score and Grade

Based on the evidence collected by the auditor, each applicable aspect of the audit is scored.

- Minor non-conformance results in a loss of 1 point.
- Major non-conformance results in a loss of 10 points
- Critical non-conformance results in a loss of 25 points

Table 4 Overall Audit Score

Overall Score	Score
Meets Expectatons	95-100
Needs Improvement/Conditional Certification	85-94
Audit Fail	≤ 84

Table 5 Audit Grade

Number of Non-Conformities	Audit Grade	
Up to 10 'Minor'	Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CARs required and evidence of corrective actions must be provided. ▪ Auditor will review and approve corrective actions ▪ Certification decision will be completed
1 'Major' and up to 5 'Minor'	Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CARs required and evidence of corrective actions must be provided. ▪ Auditor will review and approve corrective actions ▪ Certification decision will be completed
11-15 'Minor'	Conditional Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CARs required and evidence of corrective actions must be provided. ▪ A desk or on-site partial verification audit (within 90 days) is required to assess implementation of corrective actions before facility can be certified
16 or more 'Minor'	Fail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CARs required and evidence of corrective actions must be provided. ▪ Full on-site re-audit is required. ▪ Facility may request a re-write to the assurance tier (does not guarantee achievement of requested tier)
2 or more 'Major'	Fail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CARs required and evidence of corrective actions must be provided. ▪ Full on-site re-audit is required. ▪ Facility may request a re-write to the assurance tier (does not guarantee achievement of requested tier)
1 or more 'Critical'	Fail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full on-site re-audit is required.

10.2. Certification Decision

NSF shall consider the results of the onsite audit and corrective action responses in its determination of compliance for granting certification. The certification decision will be taken by the Technical Operations



Manager or qualified designate.

10.3. Denial of Certification

If the audit findings and score indicate that the Organization has failed the audit, NSF will deny certification.

Organizations that do not achieve certification may re-apply once they have corrected any non-conformances. There is no time limit on when re-application can be made.

10.4. Audit Rewrite

If the facility has failed the certification audit, they may request in writing a rewrite of the audit to the assurance tier. This does not apply if failure was based on findings of critical non-conformances.

Conducting the rewrite does not guarantee achievement of requested tier. A technical fee will apply.

10.5. Certificate Issuance

NSF shall issue a certificate valid for one (1) year from the date of issue upon positive certification decision.

10.5.1. Certificates

Certificates shall list the following:

- Name and address(es) of the physical site(s) certified, and customer number
- Title of the Standard and version number
- Certificate number
- Certification decision date
- Certificate issue and expiry date
- Authorized signature

The certificate remains the property of NSF.

10.6. Certificate extension requests:

An extension to the certificate period of validity may be granted by NSF, not to exceed 3 months from the original expiration date, with a full audit required during the extension period.

10.7. Certificate Modifications

In the event there are substantial changes to the site or processes, NSF must be notified in writing. If changes are made to the operation that have a potential significant impact on the site's animal welfare system, a surveillance audit may be required. The certificate may be withdrawn in the event that changes occur which affect the company's ability to maintain their certification status.

Certified entities shall notify NSF of any prosecutions brought or likely to be brought against them with respect to animal welfare, animal movements, food safety, environmental legislation or other compliance requirements that directly affect the scope of their certification status.

10.7.1. Scope

When an organization plans to add species/livestock categories to their scope of certification, the organization shall request the increased scope of certification in writing to NSF.

NSF shall determine and indicate to the organization whether or not an audit of the additional species/livestock categories is required. This decision will be impacted by:

- the livestock category risk
- similarities to existing processes and products
- proximity to the next scheduled audit date
- number of changes



NSF will issue a new certificate or indicate to the organization in writing the reasons for not issuing a revised certificate.

10.7.2. Change of Ownership

When a certified organization's business changes ownership, the organization shall indicate the change to NSF in writing.

NSF shall determine and indicate to the organization whether or not an audit is required to maintain certification. A new initial certification or verification audit may be required. This decision will be impacted by:

- Degree of retention of site management and personnel with major responsibility for the management and oversight of the animal welfare management system

10.7.3. Relocation of Premises or Additional Sites

When an organization relocates or adds additional sites, NSF shall conduct an on-site audit of each new sites and issue a new certificate.

10.8. Certificate Revocation and Withdrawal

10.8.1. Revoking Certification

NSF reserves the right to revoke an organization's certification if the organization fails to:

- permit a verification or unannounced audit
- maintain the requirements of the NSF Global Animal Wellness Certification Program
- report changes in scope, ownership or location of premises that impact on the certification to NSF

Organizations that have refused a verification or unannounced audit and want to reapply for certification are required to have an on-site audit. Where organizations have certificates revoked for failure to meet the requirements of the NSF Global Animal Wellness Certification Program, all non-conformances shall be resolved prior to reapplication for certification. NSF reserves the right to conduct an additional inspection at the organization's expense to verify the effectiveness of the corrective action plan.

10.8.2. Voluntary Withdrawal

An organization will have the right to voluntarily withdraw from certification, and at that time, the certification will be revoked.

10.8.3. Making Claims of Certification

Any organization that has had certification revoked or has voluntarily withdrawn from the scheme must immediately cease making claims, whether explicit or implied, that they are certified to the NSF Global Animal Wellness Standards.

10.8.4. Reapplication for Re-Certification after Revocation or Voluntary Withdrawal

There is no time restriction for Organizations that have had certification revoked or voluntarily withdrawn who then want to reapply for re-certification.



11. Complaints and Appeals

11.1. Complaints and appeals procedures

The certification policies of the regional NSF office conducting the certification shall be referenced for procedures relating to complaints and appeals to NSF. At closing meeting, the Auditor will indicate this and refer to the NSF procedures relating to appeals. Appeals should be sent ideally within 1-2 days of the audit. A pending appeal will delay the finalization of the technical review and certification decision.



Annex A - NSF Global Animal Wellness Standards – List of Standards

Beef Series:

NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Beef Production)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Cattle Transport)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Livestock Assembly)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Cattle Slaughter)

Dairy Series:

NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Dairy Cattle Production)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Small Ruminant Dairy Production)
Transport, assembly and slaughter would be covered in relevant beef or small ruminant standards

Pig Series:

NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Pig Production)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Pig Transport)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Livestock Assembly)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Pig Slaughter)

Small Ruminant Series:

NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Small Ruminant Production)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Small Ruminant Transport)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Livestock Assembly)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Small Ruminant Slaughter)

Meat Poultry Series:

NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Hatchery)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Meat Poultry Production)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Poultry Transport)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Live Poultry Assembly)
NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Poultry Slaughter)

Laying Poultry Series:

NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard (Laying Poultry Production)
Hatchery, transport, assembly and slaughter would be covered in relevant poultry standards



Annex B – Required Documentation and Records of Compliance

Prior to an initial certification audit, the organization should have documentation available for a minimum of (3) three months or the duration of the life of the livestock groups managed at site at the time of the audit.

Administration and Regulatory Compliance

- Description of operation scope, activities, and animal/product types
- Regulatory compliance policies and documents of regulatory visits or comments
- Customer specifications for animal and/or animal products;
- Animal and/or animal products list or proposed product list; finished product profiles (formula or package size, retail or non-retail, brand(s), labels), where applicable to the scope of certification
- Flow diagram of animals and animal products through the supply chain process
- Where corporate documentation or documentation based on templates is used, the operation will ensure that the implementation is specific to the facility and that any adaptations, deviations, etc. are indicated clearly.

Management Commitment, Policy, Procedures and Planning

- Animal wellness policies, programs and procedures: in applicable language and well-communicated to all personnel handling and caring for animals
- Organization chart and designated management personnel with responsibility for animal wellness and credentials
- Current, signed animal wellness, animal welfare, animal health and emergency plans
- Relevant animal wellness management programs
- Document management and record keeping policies and procedures

Personnel Knowledge, Skills and Competency

- Policy/documents/procedures/records of training: initial and annual refresher training as applicable to job responsibilities on purpose and requirements of the program, policies and procedures and work instructions related to specific tasks.
- All employee training records shall be maintained at the production facility for a period of five (5) years and available for review during on-site inspections.

Monitoring Animal Wellness Plan Implementation and Outcomes

- Monitoring protocols, measures, critical thresholds and corrective action policies and documentation; verification and validation procedures and documentation

Evaluation and Review

- Animal welfare gap and hazard analysis and documentation
- Internal audit and policy compliance and effectiveness review program
- Any third-party audit reports of the operation
- Documentation for validating and verifying effectiveness of control measures
- Annual management review (at a minimum annually, or whenever significant changes in the program or management have occurred)) process and documentation

Facilities, Equipment and Materials

- Written documentation that provides detail on land, buildings, facilities, equipment and materials; includes layout, acreages and dimensions, purpose of use; property boundaries and adjacent features.
- Written documentation that provides detail on land, facility management practices (waste water, odor, noise, etc.), building, facilities, equipment and materials specifications, maintenance, calibration and sanitation.



Supplier approval and monitoring

- Documents/procedures/records of the supplier approval and monitoring process: evidence that compliant animals or inputs are sourced via: supplier product specification sheets and certificate of analysis; evidence of supplier certification to the NSF Global Animal Wellness Standard or other applicable third-party certification or regulation deemed equivalent by NSF, the scope of compliance must include the supplied ingredient.
- Detailed identification, traceability and chain of custody policy, procedures, including recall procedures, if applicable and system tests
- Documented Supplier Approval program and approved supplier list; Feed and Medical Treatment Suppliers, where applicable to the scope of certification
- Specifications for contracted service providers (veterinary, pest control, sanitation, live catching, transport, etc.), where applicable to the scope of certification

Livestock records

- Procedures/records of livestock transport activities and the feed provided during transport, if applicable; transport and storage vessels/vehicles cleaning and maintenance to preserve the integrity of materials and animals.

Annex C – Use of Video and Technology

NSF supports the use of video or other electronic monitoring records for assessment of compliance to the NSF Global Animal Wellness Standards. This can include use of closed-circuit television or remote viewing capability. Use of these methods must be indicated prior to the start of the audit. If the records do not satisfactorily allow the auditor to fully assess compliance, NSF reserves the right to conduct further on-site assessments with potential additional cost to the organization.

Annex D – Examples of Site and Animal Sample Selection

Default is square root (rounded up); minimum of 20% or 3.

Once minimum is met, additional locations to view can be based on risk.

Example: Poultry Operation:

- 16 houses on site
- Square root = 4; 20% = 3.2
- Auditor to select 4 houses to view

	Square Root	Auditor Selects
4 houses with birds within 1 week of market	2	1
6 houses with birds less than 1 week of age	2.5	1
6 houses with birds greater than 1 week of age and greater than 1 week from market	2.5	2

Example: Beef Cattle Operation:

- 40 separate pastures/pens where cattle are held
- Square root = 6.3; 20% = 8
- Auditor to select 8 pastures/pens to view

	Square Root	Auditor Selects
10 pastures with cow-calf pairs	3.1	2
9 pens with weaned heifers and steers	3	1
7 fields with finishing steers	2.6	1
7 fields with finishing heifers	2.6	1
2 fields with bulls	1.4	1
4 fields with replacement heifers	2	1
1 hospital pen	1	1

Example: Farrowing Operation:

- 8 farrowing pens
- Square root = 2.8; 20% = 1.6
- Auditor to select 3 farrowing pens to view

	Square Root	Auditor Selects
4 pens with farrowing gilts	2	2
4 pens with farrowing sows	2	1