



Humane Farm Animal Care Animal Care Standards Fact Sheets Laying Hens

Housing Systems

HFAC's Animal Care Standards allow barns as housing systems for laying hens. A number of requirements, including the ones below, must be met by such systems. HFAC *does not allow* cages in any of its housing systems.

All hens must have sufficient freedom of movement to be able, without difficulty, to stand normally, turn around, and stretch their wings; they must also have an environment that supports natural behaviors such as dustbathing. All birds must have sufficient space (including perches) to be able to perch or sit quietly without repeated disturbance. Minimum space and perch allowances for different housing systems are detailed in the HFAC Animal Care Standards for laying hens.

The following photos illustrate various barn housing systems allowed by HFAC.



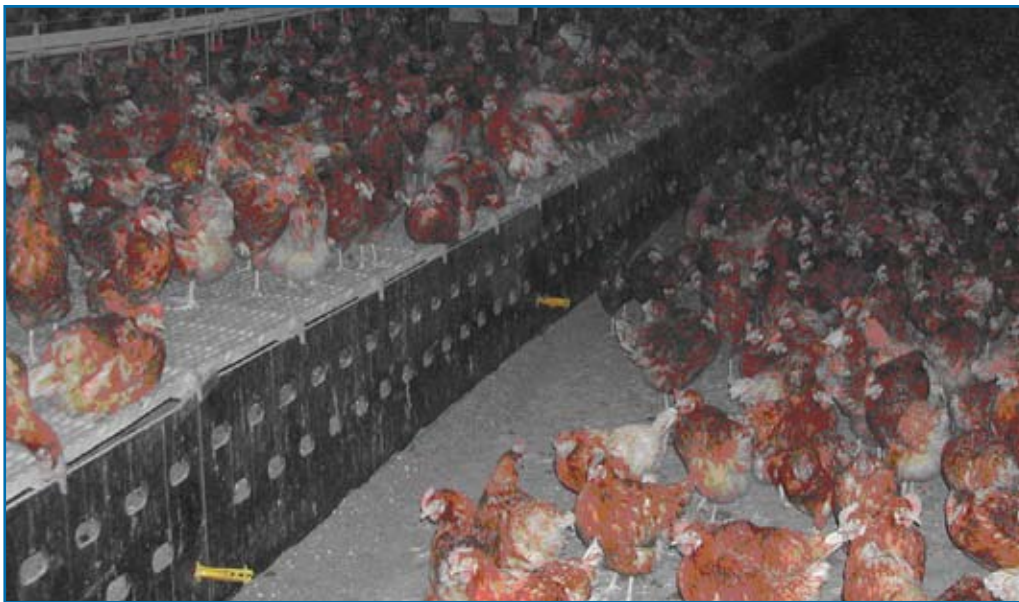
One-level barn. In these systems, sawdust, shavings or other dustbathing substrate is provided throughout the house in large boxed areas.

PO Box 727 | Herndon, VA 20172
tel: 703-435-3883 | fax: 703-435-3981
www.certifiedhumane.org





Two-layer barn with raised droppings pit, nest boxes, feed and water and roosting area, with additional perches in the background.



Raised perforated area for nest boxes, feed and water, and a deep-litter floor area. The litter encourages dustbathing, one of the “comfort behaviors” that hens use to keep their feathers clean and in good condition. The hen works the material (wood shavings or sand, for example) through her feathers using movements of her legs and wings, and then shakes the dust out. This removes oil from the feathers and makes them fluffier. Maintaining good feather cover is important because it helps to protect the hen from injury and maintain her body temperature.



(Note: Each level in the multi-tiered system pictured above is around 5 feet wide, but hens tend to flock toward the edges when people are present in the house and walking down the aisles, as in this photo.) Multi-tiered systems consist of several tiers of perforated platforms made of plastic mesh or timber slats, built into a laying house. The platforms are interconnected by ladders or intermediate perches. The ground floor level is covered with litter. Nest boxes are provided at several levels, and feed and water are available on at least 2 platforms in most systems. Most aviaries have conveyor manure collection systems (located beneath each tier) that remove waste from the house on a regular basis.



HFAC does not allow hens to be housed in cages.