broiler watch

2025 | 2nd EDITION





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1. ABOUT ALIANIMA

Alianima is a non-profit organization that works closely with leaders in the food industry to identify and address key challenges within the animal production chain. We offer partnerships, consulting, and free technical support to companies committed to improving animal living conditions, assisting in the implementation of sustainable practices and animal welfare measures.

Our technical team is highly specialized, grounding all actions and materials in scientific and technical data. Our mission is to foster an industry that is more attentive and concerned with animal suffering and to encourage a more informed consumer, aware of the origin of their food, promoting critical and conscious consumption.

Learn more about our work at <u>alianima.org/en.</u>



2. ABOUT THE ANIMAL WATCH

The Animal Watch is a platform developed by Alianima to enhance transparency regarding the public commitments made by companies in the food and hospitality sectors in Brazil concerning animal welfare. It aims to facilitate civil society monitoring and ensure that such commitments are effectively fulfilled.

Since 2024, four annual reports have been launched: the Egg Watch, the Pig Watch, the Fish Watch, and the Broiler Watch. The latter two stand out not only for their novelty but also for addressing animal categories heavily impacted by food production—both in terms of the number of individuals involved and the low levels of animal welfare typically provided under standard husbandry practices.

These reports offer up-to-date overviews of production and animal welfare conditions, seeking to raise awareness among stakeholders in these production chains and encourage the adoption of public commitments to animal welfare in Brazil in the near future.

The Animal Watch also shares updates and news about our initiatives and the realities of the food production chain, highlighting the role of the industry in promoting meaningful changes in the treatment of animals. The goal is to foster more critical and conscious consumption, enhance corporate responsibility, and drive tangible progress in animal welfare nationwide.

Visit: observatorioanimal.com.br/en.



2.1 ABOUT THE BROILER WATCH

Following the public corporate commitments approach already successfully applied to laying hens and pigs, third-sector organizations have initiated efforts to establish scientifically validated requirements that positively impact the quality of life of broiler chickens. <u>The Better Chicken Commitment</u> (BCC) outlines clear and measurable targets that companies may voluntarily pledge to meet within a planned timeline.

By incorporating animal welfare issues proposed by the BCC, companies demonstrate a commitment to ethical food production and more compassionate treatment of the billions of broiler chickens slaughtered each year. As a result, this initiative can significantly enhance a company's reputation and competitive market positioning.

In the Global North, many companies have already adopted the BCC. Since 2016, through negotiations and civil society campaigns, hundreds of corporations have publicly released broiler chicken welfare policies, signaling to the poultry industry the emergence of new market expectations. This trend is expected to influence Brazil, where the poultry industry holds a prominent role globally. In this context, the second edition of the Chicken Watch, published by Alianima, aims to deepen the discussion around broiler welfare commitments in Brazil. It details the BCC requirements and presents the <u>Welfare Footprint</u> <u>Institute's</u> impact study on its implementation. This study broadens the reach and depth of the conversation on this topic in the country.

Through the Broiler Chicken Watch, the goal is to encourage food companies—particularly those in the Brazilian broiler production chain—to plan their commitment to standards that significantly improve animal welfare.





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3. OVERVIEW OF BROILER CHICKEN PRODUCTION IN BRAZIL

Brazil reached new records in agricultural production in 2024. With a 2.9% increase compared to the previous year, 5.45 billion broiler chickens were slaughtered, equivalent to approximately 153 million more birds than in 2023. Although the country dropped one position in global chicken meat production, it remained the world's leading exporter of this product. The Southern region continues to lead both production and export, accounting for 65% of production and 78% of Brazil's chicken meat exports.

Production 2024	1,000 MT		
USA	21,384		
China	15,000		
Brazil	14,972		
European Union (27)	11,385		
Russia	4,800		
Others	35,505		

Export 2024	1,000 MT
Brazil	5,295
USA	3,058
European Union (27)	1,780
Thailand	1, 150
China	680
Others	1,611

Source: USDA/ABPA

10%

0%

Source: USDA/ABPA

The domestic market remains the primary destination for the country's production (64.6%). However, chicken meat exports broke another record with a 3% increase, totaling 5.29 million metric tons of exported product. In 2024, China, the United Arab Emirates, Japan, and Saudi Arabia were the top importers of Brazilian chicken.

Halal certifications continue to expand in Brazil, and markets requiring such certification stood out among the importers of Brazilian chicken meat. In total, Brazil produced more than 2.3 million metric tons of Halal-certified chicken meat, accounting for about 40% of the country's exports, thereby maintaining its position as the world's largest Halal exporter.

Among Brazilian broiler chicken producers, Seara/JBS and BRF together accounted for nearly 70% of the country's chicken meat production in 2024, according to WATT Poultry data². Cooperatives also play a significant role in the sector, representing approximately 21% of national production.





4. BETTER CHICKEN COMMITMENT (BCC)

The first edition of the <u>Broiler Watch</u>³ introduced the subject with a brief literature review, highlighting the main critical points of broiler chicken welfare, potential solutions, and a survey of the national and international regulatory landscape. Given that broiler chicken welfare problems are **multifactorial**⁴, a public animal welfare commitment must address multiple aspects to **effectively improve** the living conditions of chickens raised and slaughtered for meat production.

With a broad animal welfare concept, the BCC encompasses factors affecting the **physical** and **mental health** of birds, as well as their **natural behavior**⁵. It takes into account the impact of **genetics, general rearing conditions**, and **slaughter practices** on animal welfare.



AUDITABLE ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARD



MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

STOCKING DENSITY

- Maximum of 30 kg/m²
- Cages or multi-level systems are prohibited for breeders and broilers
- Thinning at most once in the flock

ENVIRONMENT

- Minimum of 7.5 cm of dry and friable litter
- Minimum of 8 hours of continuous light in 24 hours (>50 lux), including natural light
- Minimum of 6 hours of continuous darkness in 24 hours (<1 lux)
- Platform or perch of at least 2 m + substrate for pecking for every 1000 birds, from 10 days onwards
- Maximum ammonia of 20 ppm and maximum carbon dioxide of 3000 ppm

BREEDS*

- Demonstrate a better level of animal welfare
- Meet the RSPCA Broiler Breed Assessment Protocol criteria or
- Meet the Global Animal Partnership (GAP) criteria or
- Meet the equivalent certification criteria approved by the BCC commission

STUNNING



- When using a controlled atmosphere system (CAS), it should use inert gas or a multistage system with irreversible stunning
- When using an electrical method, it should induce immediate loss of consciousness, without any reversal of the birds while they are still conscious

Welfare requirements of the Better Chicken Commitment for broiler chickens. Photos: personal archive, APO Souza.

*For more information on genetic breeds, visit the <u>RSPCA</u> <u>Broiler Breed Assessment Protocol</u> e <u>Global Animal</u> <u>Partnership (GAP).</u>

6

FACTORS IN POULTRY BARNS AND THEIR DIRECT CONSEQUENCES FOR THE WELFARE OF HOUSED BIRDS

FACTORS

- HIGH TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY
- HIGH STOCKING DENSITY
- BARREN ENVIRONMENT
- WET LITTER
- **POOR VENTILATION**
- INADEQUATE LIGHTING (TYPE, INTENSITY, DURATION)
- FAST GROWING BREED

DIRECT CONSEQUENCES

HYPERTHERMIA, HEAT STRESS 🛛 🔵

MOVEMENT RESTRICTION

REDUCED MOVEMENT, INCLUDING BEHAVIORAL REPERTOIRE

INJURY BY CONTACT WITH OTHER BIRDS

INJURY BY CONTACT WITH FACILITIES/ EQUIPMENT

DISTURBED REST PERIODS

INCREASED TRANSMISSION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

REDUCED LITTER QUALITY

REDUCED AIR QUALITY (INCREASED CHANCES OF EYE AND RESPIRATORY IRRITATION, ETC.)

BOREDOM, APATHY, FRUSTRATION 🔴

CONTACT DERMATITIS (PAINFUL PROCESSES DUE TO FOOT-PAD DERMATITIS, HOCK BURN AND BREAST BURN)

INCREASED TIME IN CONTACT WITH BED (WITH INCREASED RISK OF DEVELOPING CONTACT DERMATITIS)

REDUCED VISUAL PERCEPTION

HIGHER BODY MASS, UNBALANCED CONFORMATION (RISK OF MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS)

PAINFUL PROCESSES DUE TO LAMENESS, MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

ASCITES 🔴

SUDDEN DEATH SYNDROME 🔶

The BCC addresses common issues in industrial poultry farming that directly affect animal welfare. Therefore, implementing these requirements leads to a **significant improvement in broiler chicken quality of life** and has **the potential to reduce the low animal welfare standards** currently experienced by birds in commercial poultry barns.



Despite progress in adopting good agricultural practices, such as litter and air quality management, lameness and contact dermatitis remain prevalent. This persistence is attributed to the **limitations** of improving animal welfare through environmental and housing management alone.

Image: Example of low-quality poultry litter. Photos: personal archive, APO Souza.



Commercial broiler farming is one of the most serious animal welfare concerns in global food production⁶. Effective actions to improve bird welfare must include the genetic strain adopted by companies^{7,8}.

This is a crucial factor to be incorporated by companies, mainly because, to date, existing policies and other standards have not been effective in promoting the necessary changes in poultry farming.

Adapted from European Food Safety Authority^{8,20}.

4.1 IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF BROILER CHICKENS

A recent study evaluated the **impact of the** Better Chicken Commitment (BCC) and the adoption of slower-growing breeds on the welfare of broiler chickens⁹. The analysis was based on recognized animal welfare assessment criteria¹⁰, including the **begining**, duration, intensity, and prevalence of welfare issues that cause pain in birds.

Pain assessment plays a crucial role in evaluating animals' quality of life. Pain states reflect low levels of animal welfare—thus, the greater the pain, the poorer the welfare¹⁰. For categorizing pain, the study considered the following severity levels*:

ANNOYING

Pain is perceived, but not intense enough to disrupte animal's routine and behavior. Birds can ignore pain most of the time.

HURTFUL Pain interferes with the animal and is felt most of the time. Birds are able to perform some important activities in their routine, such as eating and foraging. However, the frequency and duration of other pleasurable behaviors may be reduced. Animals show signs of apathy. It is believed that the effect of drugs to relieve pain can be observed in birds.



DISABLING

Pain interferes with the bird's performance of almost all behaviors and prevents most forms of positive welfare. The pain is continuous and activity levels are drastically affected, with great apathy being observed. Higher doses or more potent drugs are necessary to alleviate the symptom.

EXCRUCIATING

Pain conditions incompatible with life. Behavior may include intense vocalization, involuntary shaking, severe muscle tension, or intense agitation. The animal's pain is clearly perceptible.

*Adapted from Schuck-Paim and Alonso⁹.



*All the results of the Schuck-Paim and Alonso study are freely available and the different scenarios presented in this report can be customized in the online simulator.

According to the results, the authors concluded that **the adoption of slower-growing breeds improve the welfare of broiler chickens under commercial conditions**⁹, since:

There was a significant reduction in the pain indicators of the birds, with a reduction of approximately 24% in the time of exposure to hurtful pain, 66% to disabling pain and 78% to excruciating pain. **Lameness and ascites** in broiler chickens, as well as **chronic hunger** in female breeders, were the most impacted welfare problems, with a **significant reduction** in the occurrence of more **severe pain** in **slower-growing breeds**. This occurs because these problems are known to be aggravated by genetic selection for fast growth^{6,7}.



ABOUT LAMENESS

Lameness was identified as the **most crit**ical welfare issue, responsible for the longest duration of pain experienced by broiler chickens during the rearing period⁹.

Birds from **fast-growing genetic strains** spent **more time** suffering **severe pain** due to higher rates of severe lameness.

On average, **38 hours of disabling pain** caused by lameness could be avoided if slower-growing strains were used, **despite their longer lifetime**.



Image: Broiler chicken with severe lameness, unable or with extreme difficulty to move. Source: Personal archive, APO Souza. **ABOUT ASCITES**

Ascites and sudden death are significant **met-abolic disorders** exacerbated by **genetic se-lection for fast growth**, and are among the most common causes of mortality in broiler chickens⁷.

In the study, ascites was identified as one of the most serious welfare issues due to the **prolonged suffering** it causes, associated with **high-intensity pain**. On average, birds affected by ascites experienced **130 hours of disabling pain** and up to **3 hours of excruciating pain**.

The analysis also showed that the impact of pain was influenced by the **prevalence** of each condition within the population. Nonetheless, the **total pain duration**—at any intensity—caused by ascites **was lower** in birds from **slower-growing strains**.





*Adapted from Schuck-Paim and Alonso⁹.

ABOUT CHRONIC HUNGER

Chronic hunger in female breeders is a **severe welfare** issue in the broiler chicken production chain¹¹. As growth rates of broilers and breeders are closely linked, **higher growth rates** demand **greater feed restriction** in breeders to maintain production efficiency⁸.

According to the study⁹, a **fast-growing female breeder** may experience **4,170 hours in hurtful pain and 2,000 hours in disabling pain** due to chronic hunger.

These results surpass the pain values observed in other critical conditions, such as **feather pecking, bone fractures, peritonitis,** and **behavioral deprivation** in **battery-caged laying hens**¹²—a system already widely associated with poor animal welfare.





Slower-growing (56 days)
 Fast-growing (42 days)

*Adapted from Schuck-Paim and Alonso⁹.

► Although not explicitly listed among the BCC requirements, **chronic hunger in female breeders** is indirectly addressed by the standard, since the adoption of **slower-growing strains** is a **mandatory** criterion under the BCC. With the transition from **fast-growing** to **slower-growing strains**, the study also observed⁹:

Not only are welfare problems reduced, but they also manifest later. As a result, slower-growing birds experience less pain prior to slaughter, despite their longer life.

There is a real potential for reductions in mortality and in carcass condemnations during slaughter, resulting in a decreased number of broiler chickens needed to produce the same quantity of meat. This transition could lead to a 1% to 4% reduction in the total number of birds produced.

It is important to emphasize that the study's results are conservative, representing the minimum amount of pain expected to be avoided through the implementation of the BCC and the use of slower-growing broiler chickens. The analysis did not include other conditions that predominantly affect **fast-growing broil**ers, such as muscle abnormalities, infectious and inflammatory diseases (e.g., cellulitis, contact dermatitis). Therefore, it is estimated that the **differences** between **fast-growing** and **slower-growing** genetic strains are even **more pronounced** than those presented in the study⁹. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the actual benefits of the BCC exceed these estimates.

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"Most welfare offenses endured by broilers are strongly associated with fast growth, including lameness and cardiopulmonary disorders, and the adoption of slower-growing breeds not only reduces the incidence of these problems but also delays their onset. Our analysis showed that using a slower-growing breed prevents 'at least' 13 to 53 hours of disabling pain for every broiler bird, and at least 2,000 hours of disabling pain for each parent bird."

In general: the slower the growth rate, the higher the expected welfare impact.

Kate Hartcher,

Welfare Footprint Institute.



4.2 WHAT IS A SLOWER-GROWING BREED?

The Better Chicken Commitment (BCC) accepts certain genetic strains from companies already operating in Brazil, such as Aviagen, Cobb-Sasso, and Hubbard, which are initially approved by one or both of the following international protocols: the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (<u>RSPCA</u>) and the Global Animal Partnership (<u>G.A.P.</u>). These lists are **continuously updated** based on emerging demands and new testing of additional genetic strains.

Other standards seeking to certify new genetic strains must undergo an **equivalency assessment** by the BCC.

The RSPCA and G.A.P. protocols for the approval of genetic strains are **publicly available**, and the testing is conducted **independently** at facilities certified under these protocols. These measures are critical to ensure **transparency** and **impartiality** in the approval process.

Although there are some variations between the two protocols regarding indicators and approval criteria, both include **animal-based indicators**, which are strongly recommended in certification schemes because they allow for the **progressive improvement of welfare standards**¹³.



It is essential that both **environment and facilities** in which the birds are tested for RSPCA, G.A.P., or any other genetic strain assessment protocol are **comparable** to

those in which they will be raised for commercial meat production. Therefore, it is recommended to:

✓ Provide a comprehensive analysis of the differences between the characteristics of Brazilian poultry production systems and the protocols from the Global North that approved the strains currently accepted by the BCC, with a focus on the potential impacts on broiler welfare;

✓ Develop a Brazilian protocol for the approval of slower-growing genetic strains, adapted to the realities of local systems implementing the BCC.



For illustration, the following table outlines a few examples of animal-based indicators and their expected thresholds for tested strains:

INDICATOR	<u>G.A.P. Standard</u>	RSPCA Standard		
MORTALITY	Maximum 2.5%	Max. 3%, including • 1% cardiac failure • 1% ascites • 1.5% other causes		
CULL RATE	Maximum 5%	Max. 1% due to leg disorders		
FOOTPAD DERMATITIS	Score 1: Max. 35% Score 2: 0% Image: Dr. Lotta Berg, available at G.A.P. Broiler Chicken Assessment Protocol v1.0	Scores 0+0.5: Minimum 90% 0 = no lesion 0.5 = <25% of the pad is covered with a lesion		
LEG DEFORMITIES VALGUS - VARUS	Scores 2 and 3: 0%, as follows: 2 = 25° to 45° between tibiotarsus and metatarsus 3 = angle greater than 45° between tibiotarsus and metatarsus VALGUS VALGUS Image: The Poultry Site	No defined standard		
LAMENESS	 Score 1: max. 20%, as follows: 1 = may use wings to help balance, squats within 15 seconds of standing, may lie down after several steps Score 2: 0%, as follows: 2 = bird is reluctant or unable to move, uses wings to move, takes at most a few steps, if any 	Scores 0+1+2: Minimum 95% 0 = smooth, fluid locomotion 1 = slight defect in the gait that is difficult to define precisely 2 = definite and identifiable gait abnormality, but this does not affect the ability to move Score 3: max. 5% 3 = obvious gait defect that affects the ability to move		
HOCK BURNS	Scores 1+2: Max. 15% Scores 3 + 4: 0%	Scores 0+0.5: Minimum 80% 0 = no lesions 0.5 = <25% of the hock is covered with a lesion		

4.3 HOW TO PERFORM MORE EFFECTIVE STUNNING?

Painful and ineffective pre-slaughter procedures represent some of the worst conditions to which broiler chickens may be subjected, with severe compromise to their animal welfare. The study also analyzed the use of **electrical waterbath stunning** (the most commonly used system in Brazil¹⁴) and **controlled atmo-sphere stunning (CAS)** with **multistage carbon dioxide (CO**₂), the method recommended by the BCC.

✓ In the analysis of pain caused by electrical stunning, the study considered the following⁹:

	Assessed Factors						
	Electrical parameters		Psychological pain				
Scenarios	1. Effective to induce unconsciousness	 Inversion and shackling of con- scious birds, causing: 	 Pre-shocks Shocks:	• Conscious bleeding	cious • Conscious g scalding	• Fear until loss of consciousness	
	2. Death during stunning	 cardiac and respiratory discomfort wing fractures pain in the legs 	 paralyzing but not rendering birds unconscious 				
	3. Parameters optimized for meat quality (e.g., low voltage, high frequency), which may be less effective for humane slaughter		 perceived by the bird up to the point of loss of consciousness that causes the death of the bird 				

✓ In contrast, the analysis of pain caused by controlled atmosphere stunning with CO considered⁹:

	Assessed Factors						
Systems			Physical pain based on CO2 concentration (%)				Psychological pain
arios	1. Properly adjusted CAS systems to promote unconscious- ness with reduced aversive effects	20	30	40	50	>60	Fear until loss of consciousness
Scen	2. Poorly implemented , insufficient to prevent birds from regaining consciousness	Aversive effects					



RESULTS

When properly implemented, **controlled atmosphere stunning using CO**₂ is **more effective** in reducing pain than electrical stunning in commercial settings.

The following figure shows that in all three **electric stunning** scenarios, **shackling** is a **key factor** influencing the duration in which birds would experience annoying, hurtful, and disabling pain, reinforcing the importance of **eliminating** this practice on **conscious** animals.



In systems where electrical parameters are set to prioritize meat quality rather than welfare, birds are exposed to much **longer durations of severe pain**, especially through **live birds scalding.**

This is particularly relevant in countries like Brazil, where **no legal standards** define minimum electrical parameters for poultry stunning. Consequently, birds may be subject to processing methods where concerns for meat quality override welfare. It is estimated that **between 5.2 million and 350 million birds** may be **scalded while still alive** annually in Brazil⁹. When properly implemented, **CAS systems** significantly **reduce** the time birds experience **severe pain** (both disabling and excruciating), compared to **any scenario involving electrical waterbath stunning.**

Transitioning from electrical stunning to **controlled atmosphere stunning** is expected to **reduce** the duration of intense acute pain, preventing **99% to 100% of the time birds experience excruciating pain and 87% to 90% of the time birds experience disabling pain**⁹. However, it is essential to note that CAS systems are not completely free from causing some level of discomfort. While they reduce the duration of severe pain, birds may experience a 27% to 36% increase in the duration of hurtful and annoying pain due to the aversive properties of CO2⁹.

Therefore, the operation of CAS systems must follow strict control protocols and be continuously monitored by companies.



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT ELECTRICAL STUNNING

A critical factor contributing to low **animal welfare** during slaughter is the use of waterbath electrical stunners, particularly due to the practice of **inverting and shackling birds while still conscious**¹⁵.

In addition to the **fear** and **stress** caused by handling and being placed in unnatural positions, broiler chickens often suffer from **musculoskeletal issues**. Thus, shackling and hanging them by the legs can cause **significant pain**¹⁵.

Moreover, as this method depends on numerous variables—such as the bird's weight, flock uniformity, correct shackling, accurate electrical parameters, adequate contact time with the water bath, stunning line design, etc. —there is a **substantial risk that some birds remain conscious during subsequent steps at the slaughterhouse**¹⁶.



Image: Inversion and shackling of broiler chickens in a slaughterhouse. Source: Personal archive, APO Souza.

Given that shackling is an inherent characteristic of the process, immersion bath electronarcosis poses a challenge for companies in Brazil, as it depends either on **changes to the stunning method** or on **research aimed at adapting the electronarcosis itself.**



The challenge also involves developing a method that, when allowed by the destination market, **renders**

birds insensitive to pain while complying with Halal slaughter principles which require the bird to be alive at the time of bleeding to ensure full exsanguination.

Given the importance of this issue and the time potentially needed to comply with BCC standards, it is essential that companies **prioritize the inclusion of broiler stunning adjustments in their animal welfare management and improvement agendas.**

5. WHO HAS ALREADY COMMITTED?

The adoption of higher animal welfare standards for broiler chickens has grown significantly in recent years, especially in the Global North. More than 500 food companies, including major fast-food chains and consumer brands, have adopted the Better Chicken Commitment (BCC) as a public commitment to broiler chicken welfare.

Some of these companies already **operate in Brazil** but have not yet formalized a public commitment locally:



Most of the companies that have adopted the BCC are part of the restaurant, food service, hospitality, retail, distribution, and food manufacturing sectors¹⁷. They have **committed** to using **chicken meat** sourced from **higher-welfare** production systems in their products and services.



This scenario reveals a disconnect between **market expectations** and the **current state of poultry farming**. This gap may result in a shortage of **certified raw material**, making it difficult for companies to meet the timelines established in their commitment roadmaps.

Therefore, it is important for chicken meat producers to recognize the BCC as a strategic market opportunity, especially in light of the growing commitment across the food chain and the demand for qualified suppliers in the near future. One success story in implementing the BCC comes from the Norwegian company Norsk Kylling, the first large-scale producer to achieve 100% BCC-certified production in 2022.

With an annual output of 13 million birds (27% of the local market), Norsk Kylling reduced its flock by 3 million birds while maintaining the same volume of final product.

The company reported the following benefits after adopting the BCC¹⁷:

- ✓ A 40% reduction in daily mortality
- ✓ A 76% reduction in dead-on-arrival (DOA) cases at the slaughterhouse
- An 80% reduction in ascites cases



Image: Norsk Kylling

A practical way for committed companies to demonstrate their progress is through a **road**map. This allows transparent tracking of implementation steps and their corresponding interim and **deadlines**¹⁸.

For example, a company might report:

- ✓ The percentage of its total production that meets BCC standards each year (e.g., 15% in 2025, 40% in 2026, ..., 100% by 2028);
- ✓ The target year for full implementation of each criterion, as shown in the roadmap released by Pret a Manger¹⁹:

BCC Requirement	2023	2024	2025	2026
Lighting	0%	50%	100%	100%
Litter	90%	100%	100%	100%
Environmental Enrichment	90%	100%	100%	100%
Stocking Density	0%	50%	100%	100%
Stunning	0%	30%	60%	100%
Genetic Strain	0%	30%	60%	100%
Auditing	90%	100%	100%	100%

Among Brazilian chicken producing companies, it is observed that almost 70% of production is concentrated in two companies, JBS and BRF². This is important information, since the adoption of better agricultural practices by these companies has the **potential to** impact the majority of f Brazil's broiler chicken population. Cooperatives also play an important role in this sector, corresponding to approximately 21% of national chicken production in 2024.

6. HOW TO MOVE FORWARD?

The demands of key actors in the food supply chain—such as retailers and restaurant chains—have proven effective in **promoting changes** in **animal production systems**, creating a virtuous cycle of **gradually increasing** corporate standards.

Stricter standards are now beginning to influence areas where there has traditionally been resistance to change among broiler producers. This includes several of the requirements proposed by the Better Chicken Commitment (BCC), such as reducing stocking density, providing natural light, implementing environmental enrichment, improving genetic strains, enhancing stunning methods at slaughter.



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH ALIANIMA

Alianima has been working **collaboratively** to promote **best practices in broiler chicken farming** since 2020. The organization has a **technical team** with expertise in **animal wel-fare and sustainable husbandry.**

Alianima is a **strategic partner** for companies seeking to implement the BCC in Brazil, as it actively contributed to the development of the BCC protocol and is qualified to support companies through:

- Lectures and training sessions: We offer awareness-raising activities tailored to each company, delivering in-depth knowledge in a language adapted to the needs of each role or department.
- Corporate relations: Our team is prepared to engage in technical discussions with companies interested in adopting the BCC, assisting with implementation, launching public commitments, monitoring deadlines, and communicating progress.
- ✓ Dialogue with certification bodies: We maintain contact with certifiers to assess the alignment of their certification protocols with BCC standards. We also verify the transparency and independence of these processes, acting as facilitators in helping companies understand the requirements of each certification.





Certification bodies play a key role in implementing the BCC. They are responsible for **verifying and validating** that compa-

ny practices are in **accordance** with the established standards.

Additionally, certifiers can assist companies in preparing for certification, providing guidance on the necessary criteria and identifying areas for improvement.

Currently, there is no official data on **animal welfare certifications** in use for **broiler chickens** in Brazil. However, the general landscape includes:

 Some poultry-producing companies are certified under <u>Certified Humane</u> and <u>National Chicken Council (QIMA/</u> <u>WQS</u>) standards. These certifications have been reviewed by the BCC, <u>which published</u> specific recommendations for updates to fully align with its requirements.

- The <u>Produtor do Bem</u> label entered the market in 2025 as an additional standard for broiler chicken welfare certification. Its newly launched protocol also includes a supplementary module specifically designed to meet BCC standards.
- Two other standards available in Brazil— <u>GLOBAL S.L.P.</u> and <u>Certificação em</u> <u>Bem-estar Único - Missão de Cuidar</u> — are not specifically focused on animal welfare, but they do include some related criteria. These have not yet been assessed in relation to the BCC.
- All certification protocols must maintain full public access to their criteria and standards to promote **transparency** in the certification process.



Image: iStockphoto

7. CONCLUSION

Throughout this document, we have presented scientific evidence on the various factors that lead **billions of broiler chickens** to unnecessary suffering in the context of meat production. The findings reveal that while considerable progress has been made in improving husbandry, nutrition, and housing conditions, truly effective actions to raise the level of animal welfare must inevitably involve changes in both **genetic strain** and **slaughter practices**.

For over two decades, robust scientific studies have pointed to **genetic selection for fast growth as the main cause of serious welfare issues in broiler chickens**, such as locomotor diseases, contact dermatitis, ascites, and sudden death. However, we have yet to see concrete action to address the root cause of these conditions. Similarly, electric stunning in water bath stunners has consistently proven to be less humane than other stunning methods for poultry.

Animal health cannot be understood solely in terms of contagious diseases or zoonoses. **The chronic physical and psychological stress** endured by broiler chickens—along with its impact on welfare—should prompt deeper reflection on the true state of health experienced by these animals.

From the perspective of One Health, it is critical **not to overlook** systemic issues in current production models that compromise animal health and may directly affect the balance between human, animal, and environmental health. Given its global importance and organizational structure, the Brazilian broiler industry has the potential to drive and lead global efforts in advancing animal welfare standards. Some companies in Brazil have already started incorporating animal welfare into their corporate strategies to remain competitive and aligned with evolving market demand. Investing in research and taking concrete action to resolve the bottlenecks in broiler welfare appear to be the **most effective ways** to ensure meaningful progress and business sustainability in the near future. It is therefore essential that companies begin aligning their welfare policies with the Better Chicken Commitment, actively participating in and strengthening this global movement.



Image: iStockphoto

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9. CONTACT

Join this major movement for the animals!

If your **farm** or **company** would like to receive additional information about our initiatives or clarify specific questions related to **animal welfare**, please contact us through the following channels:

