



Responsible Down Standard 3.0

RDS-101-V3.0-2019.07.01





©2014 Textile Exchange. All rights reserved. RDS, RESPONSIBLE DOWN STANDARD, and the RDS Logo are trademarks of Textile Exchange.

The RDS 3.0 replaces RDS 2.0 and is effective as of July 1, 2019. All audits conducted after June 30, 2020 shall be conducted using RDS 3.0.

English is the official language of the Responsible Down Standard. In any case of inconsistency between versions, reference shall be made to the English version.

Disclaimer

Although reasonable care was taken in the preparation of this document, Textile Exchange and any other party involved in the creation of the document HEREBY STATE that the document is provided without warranty, either expressed or implied, of accuracy or fitness for purpose, AND HEREBY DISCLAIM any liability, direct or indirect, for damages or loss relating to the use of this document.

This is a voluntary standard and is not intended to replace the legal or regulatory requirements of any country.

Copyright

This publication is protected by copyright. Information or material from this publication may be reproduced in unaltered form for personal, non-commercial use. All other rights are reserved. Information or material from this publication may be used for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review permitted under the Copyright Act 1976.

Any reproduction permitted in accordance with the Copyright Act 1976 shall acknowledge the *Responsible Down Standard* as the source of any selected passage, extract, diagram or other information.

The RDS will undergo a revision process at least every five years. The next revision is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2023. You may submit feedback to the standard at any time; send to ResponsibleDown@TextileExchange.org. Points of clarification may be incorporated into RDS guidance documents prior to 2023. More substantive feedback or suggested changes will be collected and reviewed as part of the next revision of the standard.

Document Revision History

Responsible Down Standard, released January 2014
Responsible Down Standard 2.0, released March 2015
Responsible Down Standard 3.0, released July 2019



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction..... | 5 |
| About the Responsible Down Standard | 5 |
| About Textile Exchange..... | 5 |
| Acknowledgements..... | 6 |
| How to Use This Document..... | 8 |
| Section A – General Information..... | 9 |
| A1. References | 9 |
| A2. Requirement Levels | 9 |
| Section B – Principles of RDS Certification | 11 |
| B1. Scope..... | 11 |
| B2. Claims..... | 11 |
| B3. Farm Certification | 12 |
| B4. Slaughter Certification | 14 |
| B5. Supply Chain Certification..... | 14 |
| Section B – Animal Welfare Criteria | 15 |
| AW1. Nutrition..... | 15 |
| AW2. Living Environment | 16 |
| AW3. Animal Management..... | 19 |
| AW4. Handling and Transport | 22 |
| AW5. Management, Plans, and Procedures | 24 |
| AW6. Slaughter..... | 26 |
| Section D – Farm Group Certification..... | 28 |
| D1. Eligibility for Farm Group Certification | 28 |
| D2. Internal Control System Requirements..... | 28 |
| D3. Group Member Requirements | 29 |
| D4. Inspection of Members..... | 30 |
| D5. Adding and Removing Members | 30 |
| Section E – Farm Area Certification | 32 |
| E1. Eligibility for Farm Area Certification..... | 32 |
| E2. Farm Area Management | 32 |
| E3. Collector Requirements..... | 32 |
| Section F – Chain of Custody | 34 |
| F1. Farm Chain of Custody Criteria..... | 34 |



F2. Chain of Custody Criteria35

Appendix A – Definitions36

Appendix B – Risk Assessment.....38

Appendix C – International Working Group Members.....41



Introduction

About the Responsible Down Standard

The Responsible Down Standard (RDS) is an international, voluntary standard that addresses animal welfare in the duck and geese supply chain and chain of custody of down and feather material from certified farms to the final product.

Individual sites are certified by independent third-party certification bodies using annual audits. Material is tracked from the farm to the final product using transaction certificates, following the requirements of Textile Exchange's Content Claim Standard (CCS). For more information or to apply for certification, please visit: ResponsibleDown.org.

The goals of the Responsible Down Standard are to:

- Ensure that down and feathers do not come from supply chains where animals have been subjected to any unnecessary harm.
- Reward and influence the down and feather industry to incentivize practices that respect the humane treatment of ducks and geese.
- Education and development of the supply chain in order to drive continuous improvement of best practices.
- Provide companies with a tool to know what is in their products, and to make accurate claims.
- Ensure strong chain of custody for certified materials as they move through the supply chain.

About Textile Exchange



The Responsible Down Standard is owned and managed by **Textile Exchange**. Textile Exchange is a global non-profit that works closely with our members to drive industry transformation in preferred fibers, integrity and standards and responsible supply networks. We identify and share best practices regarding farming, materials, processing, traceability and product end-of-life in order to reduce the textile industry's impact on the world's water, soil and air, and the human population.



Acknowledgements

The first version of the RDS was sponsored by The North Face, and developed through a joint effort between Control Union, Textile Exchange and The North Face. The North Face gifted ownership of the standard to Textile Exchange upon its completion in 2014.

The Responsible Down Standard would not be possible without the help of the International Working Group that worked to review, research, discuss, and approve the revision of the Responsible Down Standard. See Appendix B for a list of International Working Group Members.

The Responsible Down Standard draws on leading knowledge of animal welfare organizations, and we would like to specifically thank Four Paws International, Humane Society International, and RSPCA UK for their contributions in research and advisement.



Responsible Down Standard 3.0
© 2014 Textile Exchange





How to Use This Document

This document sets forth the overall requirements for compliance with the RDS. Guidance and support documents are available at ResponsibleDown.org.

This standard includes six key sections (General Information, Principles of RDS, Animal Welfare Criteria, Farm Group Certification, Farm Area Certification, and Chain of Custody), as well as additional Appendices.

In the RDS, the following terms are used to indicate requirements, recommendations, permissions, and possibilities or capabilities:

- “shall” indicates a requirement,
- “should” indicates a recommendation,
- “may” indicates a permission, and
- “can” indicates a possibility or a capability.

“Desired Outcomes” have been included to detail the intent of requirements, but they are not requirements themselves. They are designated by an icon before each module, see the following example:



Desired outcome: Access to sufficient feed and water suited to the animals’ age and needs to maintain normal health and to prevent prolonged hunger, thirst, malnutrition or dehydration.



Section A – General Information

A1. References

A1.1 All certified *organizations* are subject to the requirements of the following documents. All can be found at <http://ResponsibleDown.org/>.

A1.1.1 *CCS-101 Content Claim Standard (CCS)* - The **Content Claim Standard (CCS)** is a chain of custody standard that provides companies with a tool to verify a specific input material in a final product. It requires that each organization along the supply chain take sufficient steps to ensure that the integrity and identity of the input material are preserved.

A1.1.2 *RDS-301 RDS Logo Use and Claims Guide* - This document describes the language and design requirements for communication related to the RDS.

A1.1.3 *RDS-201 RDS User Manual* – This document accompanies the standard and should be used for interpretation and guidance for users of the standard, including farms, slaughter sites, supply chain companies, brands, and retailers.

A2. Requirement Levels

Each animal welfare requirement is assigned to one of four levels:

C

CRITICAL

Critical requirements are the most important and they shall all be met during the audit to achieve and/or maintain certification. If non-conformity to any of the critical requirements is found, the scope certificate shall be immediately suspended or the site removed from the scope certificate and the supply chain shall be informed. In the case of an initial audit, the organization shall not receive a scope certificate until the critical non-conformity has been closed. A new evaluation is needed if the organization does not close the critical major non-conformity within 180 days.

Ma

MAJOR

Major requirements shall be met to achieve certification. Major non-conformities shall be closed within 30 days. Scope certificates may not be issued or reissued if there is an open major non-conformity. If a major non-conformity is not closed within 30 days after the audit, the certificate shall be suspended.

Mi

MINOR

Minor requirements shall be met. Minor non-conformities shall be closed within 60 days, though the organization remains certified through that time. If a minor non-conformity is not closed within 60 days after the audit, the minor non-conformity is upgraded to a major non-conformity with a timeline 30 days from the original deadline.



NOTE: Certification bodies may issue major non-conformities for minor requirements if, either alone or in combination with other non-conformities, the certification body believes they result in, or are likely to result in, a fundamental failure to achieve the objectives of the standards. Such fundamental failure may be indicated by non-conformities which continue over a long period of time, are repeated or systematic, affect a wide area, or are not corrected or adequately responded to by the client once they have been identified.

R

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are not required to achieve or maintain certification. They serve as guidance and are best practices in the industry. They could be integrated as requirements in future versions of the standard. All recommended requirements shall be fully audited and recorded by the certification body, but do not have any effect on the certification status of the organization.

Requirements other than animal welfare requirements are not assigned levels. Certification bodies may issue critical, major, or minor non-conformities.

Full requirements for issuing non-conformities are found in *ACP-101 Accreditation and Certification Procedures for Textile Exchange Standards*.



Section B – Principles of RDS Certification

B1. Scope

B1.1 RDS certification applies to all *supply chain sites* of waterfowl down and feather material: from the *hatchery (if in possession of hatchlings longer than 24 hours)*, *farm, slaughter*, processing of down or feather, assembly of the final products, up to the seller in the last business-to-business transaction.

B1.1.1 Certified organizations may elect to apply the full RDS to *parent farms*, even though this is not required by the standard.

- a. All parent farms that are to be a direct source of RDS down or feathers are subject to B4 Farm Certification.
- b. In the case of voluntary *Parent Farm Certification*, all parent farms are subject to B4 Farm Certification. A parent farm's failure to conform will result in loss of Parent Farm Certified status, but will not affect the RDS certification of the farm or applying organization.
- c. In industrial goose supply chains, some monitoring of parent farms may be required (see AW5).

B1.2 The RDS may be applied globally.

B1.3 The Standard applies to supply chain sites of down and feather material from waterfowl only.

B1.3.1 Materials collected from *wild* birds are ineligible for certification.

B1.3.2 *Recycled* down is ineligible for certification.

B1.4 The *Standard* applies to products that contain at least 5% *RDS material*, calculated as a percentage of the down or feather material.

B2. Claims

B2.1 Claims related to the RDS may be either product-specific or general (non-product specific).

B2.1.1 RDS products that meet all of the following criteria qualify for product-specific labelling.

- a. Product is certified up to the seller in the last business-to-business transaction.
- b. All down or feather material in the product is RDS certified.



- c. All artwork and language meet the requirements of *RDS-301 RDS Logo Use and Claims Guide*.
- d. Approval of final artwork has been obtained from an authorized certification body through a label release form.
- e. Only certified organizations may physically attach product-specific claims with reference to the RDS (e.g. hangtags, sewn-in labels).

B2.1.2 Organization that meet one or more of the following criteria may make general marketing claims (non-product specific) related to the RDS:

- a. Organizations with current certification to the RDS
- b. Organizations that purchase certified products or products that contain certified material (verified using transaction certificates)
- c. Organizations that have made public commitments to the RDS

B2.1.3 All claims related to the RDS are subject to the requirements of the *RDS Logo Use and Claims Guide*.

B2.2 There is no separate RDS consumer-facing *label* or grade for voluntary Parent Farm Certification. Products that contain Parent Farm Certified down are eligible for additional claims. Please refer to the *RDS Logo Use and Claims Guide* for further information.

B2.2.1 Parent farm certified down shall be clearly indicated on the transaction certificates. For business-to-business (B2B) communications only, this will be referred to as Parent Farm Certified (PFC) RDS.

B3. Farm Certification

B3.1 The following modules apply to all farms:

Section B: Animal Welfare Criteria

AW1. Nutrition

AW2. Living Environment

AW3. Animal Management

AW4. Handling and Transport

AW5. Management

Section F: Chain of Custody



F1. Farm Chain of Custody Criteria

- B3.2** Farms may not carry both certified and non-certified waterfowl.
- B3.3** Farms shall provide certification body full access to all sites. Farms shall inform certification bodies of any biosecurity measures prior to the audit.
- B3.4** Farms may be certified to the RDS according to one of the following certification types:
- B3.3.1** Individual Farm Certification,
 - B3.3.2** Farm Group Certification, or
 - B3.3.2** Farm Area Certification.
- B3.5** Individual Farm Certification applies for farms wishing to become certified independently, or when the qualifications for farm group or farm area are not met.
- B3.5.1** Individual Farm Certification is intended for large farms that independently own the birds. However, it may be applied for any farm.
 - B3.5.2** Individual Farm Certification requires annual on-site audits of the farm. The notice given for these audits will vary depending on the risk assessment of the certification body.
 - B3.5.3** Individual Farm Certification may also include additional *confirmation visits* by the certification body without notice.
- B3.6** Farm Group Certification applies for groups with a defined internal control system (ICS) in place for the group. The farm group shall meet the requirements of Section D of this Standard.
- B3.6.1** Farm Group Certification requires annual on-site audits of the ICS and sample audits of farm group members according to the risk assessment of the certification body.
 - B3.6.2** Farm Group Certification may also include additional confirmation visits of farm group members by the certification body without notice.
- B3.7** Farm Area Certification applies for organizations purchasing from *small farms* within a defined geographical area. The organization shall meet the requirements of Section E of this Standard.
- B3.7.1** Farm Area Certification requires annual on-site audits of the responsible organization and a minimum number of audit days of farms within the *area*, according to the risk assessment of the certification body.
 - B3.7.2** Farm Area Certification may also include additional confirmation visits of farms within the area by the certification body without notice.



B4. Slaughter Certification

B4.1 The following modules apply to all slaughter sites:

Section B: Animal Welfare Criteria

AW4. Handling and Transport, if the site is responsible for transport

AW6. Slaughter

Section D: Chain of Custody

F2. Chain of Custody Criteria

B4.2 The criteria of **B4.1** shall apply to:

B4.2.1 All sites where slaughtering occurs, and

B4.2.2 All birds processed at the site, whether or not they were raised on an RDS certified farm.

B5. Supply Chain Certification

B5.1 The following modules apply to all supply chain sites subject to RDS certification:

Section D: Chain of Custody

F2. Chain of Custody Criteria

Section C – Animal Welfare Criteria

AW1. Nutrition



Desired outcome: Access to sufficient feed and water suited to the animals' age and needs to maintain normal health and to prevent prolonged hunger, thirst, malnutrition or dehydration.

| Number | Requirement | Level |
|--------------|---|-------|
| AW1.1 | There shall be no force-feeding of waterfowl. | C |
| | AW1.1.1 The farm shall not source animals that were force-fed and shall not outsource animals for force-feeding. | C |
| AW1.2 | Waterfowl shall be provided with sufficient food to meet their nutritional needs and maintain them in good condition. | Ma |
| | AW1.2.1 Feed shall be continuously available during daylight hours. | Ma |
| | AW1.2.2 In all cases, birds should not go more than 8 hours without access to food. | R |
| | AW1.2.3 Food shall be provided without undue competition. | Ma |
| | AW1.2.4 Growth hormones shall not be applied. | Ma |
| AW1.3 | Waterfowl shall be provided with a supply of clean and safe drinking water. | Ma |
| | AW1.3.1 Regular testing of the water should be conducted by management to ensure it is fit for consumption by the animals. | R |
| | AW1.3.2 In all cases, birds should not go more than 8 hours without access to water. | R |

AW2. Living Environment



Desired outcome: Animals are kept in an environment that provides the conditions and facilities needed for health, safety, comfort and normal behavior.

| Number | Requirement | Level |
|--------------|--|-------|
| AW2.1 | Waterfowl shall have access to housing or a shelter protecting them from extreme weather conditions. | Mi |
| | AW2.1.1 The roof and walls shall be in good condition and be waterproof, where needed. | Mi |
| | AW2.1.2 Housing shall be located away from areas of (potential) run off. | Mi |
| | AW2.1.3 Shelter should include a sufficient number of exits in view of the waterfowl. | R |
| AW2.2 | Shelters and housing (including nesting areas) shall be clean and well ventilated. | Ma |
| | AW2.2.1 Housing should not have a strong ammonia smell. | R |
| | AW2.2.2 Nesting areas shall be weatherproof and dry. | Mi |
| AW2.3 | Temperature shall be controlled in the housing of hatchlings. | Ma |
| | AW2.3.1 Hatchlings shall be provided with appropriate supplemental brooding heat. | Ma |
| | AW2.3.2 After 20 days, temperature shall be controlled to prevent the waterfowl from being subject to extreme heat or cold. | Ma |
| AW2.4 | Housing and shelters shall have an area available that provides dry, safe, and comfortable footing. Dry, mold-free bedding shall be continuously available to waterfowl. | Ma |
| | AW2.4.1 The floors should be well-drained. | R |
| | AW2.4.2 Wire mesh should not be used as flooring. | R |



| Number | Requirement | Level |
|--------------|--|-------|
| AW2.5 | Waterfowl shall have sufficient space indoors to enable them without competition to move freely, stand, turn around, stretch their wings, and run. | Ma |
| | AW2.5.1 When provided, shelter should have at least one nest box for every four birds. | R |
| AW2.6 | Waterfowl shall not be kept in cages. | Mi |
| | AW2.6.1 Waterfowl may be temporarily held in cages for vaccinations or other justified reasons. | Mi |
| | If this occurs, justification shall be provided in writing from a qualified veterinary practitioner and is indicated for the treatment of a medical condition. | |
| AW2.7 | Except for brooding under a heat lamp up to four weeks of age, a minimum of eight hours of darkness - or near darkness - at night and eight hours of light during the day shall be provided. | Mi |
| | AW2.7.1 Shelters and housing should allow natural light to enter. | R |
| | AW2.7.2 Nesting areas should be kept dark so that they are attractive nesting sites. | R |
| | AW2.7.3 If artificial light is used, it should be distributed evenly. | R |
| AW2.8 | Waterfowl shall have access to water for behavioral needs. | Mi |
| | AW2.8.1 Waterfowl shall have access to water deep enough for them to dip their heads. | Mi |
| | AW2.8.2 Waterfowl should have access to water deep enough to be able to swim without the feet touching the bottom of the water. | R |
| | AW2.8.3 Water for behavioral needs shall be kept safe. | Mi |
| AW2.9 | Waterfowl shall have free outside access from six weeks of age. | Mi |
| | AW2.9.1 Outdoor area should have sufficient space that is consistently dry. | R |
| | AW2.9.2 The waterfowl shall not be forced to stand in water or mud. | Mi |



| Number | Requirement | Level |
|---------------|--|-------|
| | AW2.9.3 Shelter should have sufficient exits, allowing birds to exit at will. | R |
| | AW2.9.4 In addition to outdoor access, birds should be provided with environmental enrichment. | R |
| AW2.10 | Outdoor space shall have sufficient space to enable them without competition to move freely, stand, turn around, stretch their wings, and run. | Ma |
| AW2.11 | Waterfowl shall be protected from predators. | Ma |
| | AW2.11.1 Predator control shall be humane. | Mi |

AW3. Animal Management



Desired outcome: Animals are managed in a way that promotes good health and prevents disease. Sick or injured animals are treated. Husbandry operations are carried in a way that minimizes pain and distress.

| Number | Requirement | Level |
|----------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| AW3.1 | Farm workers shall conduct wellness checks at least twice per day. | Ma |
| AW3.2 | A veterinarian shall pay regular visits at the farm to check on the health condition of waterfowl. For <i>small farms</i> , veterinary access shall be available as needed. | Ma |
| AW3.2.1 | Veterinarian visit should include a review of the Veterinary Health and Welfare Plan (VHP) and identification of areas of improvement. | R Not applicable for small farms |
| AW3.3 | Appropriate hand-washing facilities and toilets should be available for all personnel working on or visiting the farm. | R Not applicable for small farms |
| AW3.4 | Foot brush/disinfectant or barrier footwear systems should be provided at the entrance to the farm. | R Not applicable for small farms |
| AW3.5 | Surgical procedures shall be limited to those that are medically necessary and shall be carried out by a veterinarian | Ma |
| AW3.6 | Any sick or injured bird shall be treated immediately to minimize pain and distress. Treatment shall not be withheld in order to preserve a bird or flock's eligibility for market. | Ma |



| Number | Requirement | Level |
|-----------------|---|-------|
| AW3.7 | A safe place, free of competition, shall be provided for sick and/or injured animals to recover. | Ma |
| AW3.8 | There shall be no physical alterations of waterfowl such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• De-clawing• Hole-punching• Wing-clipping• Trimming of feathers• Castration | Ma |
| AW3.9 | There shall be no bill trimming, de-beaking, or infra-red bill treatment (or trimming). | Ma |
| AW3.10 | There shall be no <i>live-plucking</i> of down and feather of waterfowl. | C |
| AW3.10.1 | There shall be no molt harvesting, forced molting, or assisted molting. | C |
| AW3.10.2 | All down shall come from waterfowl that were raised for food. | Ma |
| AW3.10.3 | The farm shall not source animals that were ever live-plucked and shall not outsource animals for live-plucking. | C |
| AW3.11 | Female waterfowl that are in lay shall be provided with nesting areas that provide a partially enclosed area for egg-laying and each nest area shall contain friable nesting material. | Mi |
| AW3.12 | Measures shall be taken to minimize fighting and/or feather pecking. | Ma |
| AW3.12.1 | If the capacity of a barn is more than 3000, a separation wall should be high enough that waterfowl are not able to see each other. | R |
| AW3.13 | Waterfowl having pain or injury from which they are unlikely to recover shall be immediately and humanely euthanized in a way that renders the waterfowl immediately insensitive to pain. | Ma |
| AW3.13.1 | The following birds shall be euthanized: 1) birds that are in uncontrollable pain, and are unlikely to recover without prolonged suffering, 2) birds that have not made any signs of recovery after a period | Ma |



| Number | Requirement | Level |
|-----------------|---|-------|
| | of three days, 3) birds no longer able to drink water unassisted after 48 hours. | |
| AW3.13.2 | Only the following methods are allowed for euthanasia: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Captive Bolt Gun• Hand-held stunning followed by exsanguination• Cervical neck dislocation (only if other options are not available) | Ma |
| AW3.13.3 | Only trained workers shall carry out euthanasia on the farm. | Ma |
| AW3.13.4 | A single worker or veterinarian shall not cull more than 70 birds by cervical neck dislocation in a day unless this is required for bird welfare or where other qualified and experienced people are not available. | Ma |

AW4. Handling and Transport



Desired outcome: Good human-animal relationships are in place and animals are handled and transported around the farm and off the farm in a way that protects welfare.

| Number | Requirement | Level |
|--------------|---|-------|
| AW4.1 | Animals shall be handled humanely; mistreatment of animals is unacceptable. | C |
| | AW4.1.1 Mistreatment includes rough physical contact such as kicking, striking, throwing or dropping animals, dragging or pulling waterfowl by the feathers, wings, head, neck, tail, or legs. | C |
| | AW4.1.2 Extra care shall be taken when handling waterfowl with special needs, such as hatchlings, chicks, sick, lame, or injured waterfowl. | C |
| AW4.2 | No farm cats, dogs and other pets should be present in the waterfowl housing and shelter. | R |
| AW4.3 | While loading and unloading, proper handling techniques shall be followed to prevent distress in the birds. | Ma |
| AW4.4 | Waterfowl shall be transported in a vehicle that provides sufficient ventilation and protection from wind, rain, snow and thermal stress. | Ma |
| | AW4.4.1 Waterfowl shall not be transported during severe weather conditions unless enough protection is provided. | Ma |
| AW4.5 | Waterfowl shall not be overcrowded during transport. | Ma |
| | AW4.5.1 Based on average weight of waterfowl, the amount of waterfowl per container shall be determined before transport. | Mi |
| | AW4.5.2 The trucks should be weighed upon arrival at slaughter to verify density. | R |



| Number | Requirement | Level |
|--------------|--|-------|
| AW4.6 | Planning of transport shall ensure that waterfowl reach their destination as soon as possible. | Ma |
| | AW4.6.1 If transport is further than eight hours away (including loading and unloading time), steps shall be taken to ensure the birds do not go more than eight hours without food or water. | Ma |
| | AW4.6.2 A trained worker shall accompany the birds on trips longer than four hours to ensure proper care. This may be the driver. | Ma |
| AW4.7 | The words "LIVE BIRDS" should be present in the local language on the outside of the truck. | R |
| AW4.8 | Transportation vehicle shall be cleaned and dried prior to loading the waterfowl. | Ma |
| AW4.9 | Only birds fit for transport shall be permitted on the truck. | Ma |

AW5. Management, Plans, and Procedures



Desired outcome: Farmers have a clear strategy and set of protocols to safeguard the welfare of their animals, and to demonstrate compliance to the relevant RDS.

| Number | Requirement | Level |
|--------------|--|-------|
| AW5.1 | Farms shall comply with all applicable legal animal welfare requirements. | Ma |
| AW5.2 | The biosecurity policy shall be made available to the certification body prior to the visit, to ensure the audit may take place. Where personal protection equipment is required, it shall be provided or the farm shall inform the certification body ahead of the audit. | Ma |
| AW5.3 | The farm shall have a written Veterinary Health and Welfare Plan (VHP). | Mi |
| | AW5.3.1 This plan should be developed with, or reviewed by, a veterinarian at least annually. | R |
| | AW5.3.2 The VHP shall include a provision to ensure the nutritional requirements of the waterfowl are met. | Mi |
| | AW5.3.3 The VHP shall include a provision to ensure waterfowl have access to clean and safe drinking water at all times. | Mi |
| | AW5.3.4 The VHP shall include a biosecurity plan, including steps to prevent contamination from incoming waterfowl, people, buildings, or equipment. | Mi |
| | AW5.3.5 The VHP shall include a plan for emergency situations (e.g. fire, power or water cut off, flood, snow storm, feeding system breakdown, transport vehicle breakdown) shall be available to care for the waterfowl. | Mi |
| | AW5.3.6 The VHP shall include a written plan for Euthanasia, including how the decision shall be made, who may perform | Mi |



| Number | Requirement | Level |
|--------------|---|---|
| | euthanasia (including during non-work hours), and the methods of euthanasia. | |
| AW5.4 | Records on administration of veterinary medicinal products or other interventions, mortality rate, injured, euthanized waterfowl (reasons and methodology) shall be maintained. | Mi |
| AW5.5 | The farm personnel shall have training on basic animal welfare principles, including the specific measures described in the <i>VHP</i> and the <i>RDS User Manual</i> . | Mi Not applicable for <i>small farms</i> |
| | AW5.5.1 Training records shall be maintained. | Mi Not applicable for small farms |
| | AW5.5.2 Responsible personnel shall be trained on good practices for handling of waterfowl. | Mi Not applicable for small farms |
| | AW5.5.3 Personnel involved in the transport of birds shall receive basic animal welfare training. Training shall include: 1) Basic animal welfare principles 2) Proper handling, moving of birds 3) How to observe signs of illness or injury | Mi Not applicable for small farms |

AW6. Slaughter



Desired outcome: The slaughter process prevents or minimizes pain and distress. All animals are stunned (rendered unconscious and insensible to pain) prior to slaughter.

| Number | Requirement | Level |
|--------------|--|-------|
| AW6.1 | Slaughter sites shall comply with all legal animal welfare requirements. | Ma |
| AW6.2 | Personnel responsible for unloading, stunning and killing shall receive basic animal welfare training. Training shall include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Basic animal welfare principles 2) Proper handling, moving of birds 3) How to observe signs of illness 4) Stunning methods, checking stunning effectiveness 5) Slaughter methods | Mi |
| | AW6.2.1 Training records shall be maintained. | Mi |
| | AW6.2.2 Standard operating procedures (e.g. posters) should be in view of workers and available in their language. | R |
| | AW6.2.3 Workers should be provided with a way to report non-conformity to the certification body. | R |
| AW6.3 | The site shall keep records for all incoming loads of birds from RDS certified farms: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Rate of birds dead on arrival 2) Rate of sick or injured birds on arrival 3) Travel time 4) Time from arrival to slaughter | Mi |
| AW6.4 | All birds shall be inspected upon arrival for sickness, injury, or illness. Records shall be kept and made available to inspectors. | Ma |
| AW6.5 | After arriving at the slaughter site, waterfowl shall be handled properly to prevent distress. | Ma |
| | AW6.5.1 Staff shall never deliberately injure a bird. | C |



| Number | Requirement | Level |
|---------------|---|-------|
| AW6.6 | Waterfowl shall be unloaded and slaughtered within two hours, unless the slaughterhouse has a waiting area with appropriate facilities. | Ma |
| AW6.7 | Waterfowl should be unloaded (or hung) in a room with reduced lighting to prevent stress and fear as much as possible. | R |
| | AW6.7.1 Steps should be taken to prevent waterfowl from seeing other waterfowl get killed. This requirement is fulfilled if sufficient measures are taken to minimize stress of waterfowl from arriving to the slaughter site up to the moment of killing. | R |
| AW6.8 | Birds shall not be subject to extreme cold or heat. | Ma |
| AW6.9 | Waterfowl shall be stunned then killed before they can regain consciousness. | Ma |
| | AW6.9.1 The following methods of slaughter are permitted: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electrical Stunning, followed by neck cutting• Captive bolt gun | Ma |
| | AW6.9.2 If electrical stunning applied; when using a 50 Hz AC frequency stun setting, a minimum of 130 mA per bird shall be applied. | Ma |
| | AW6.9.3 Stunning frequency shall be checked three times per day and results recorded. | Ma |
| | AW6.9.4 Adjustments shall be made when the frequency and current settings do not produce an effective, consistent stun. | Ma |
| AW6.10 | Slaughter sites should conduct confirmation inspections of supplier farms to confirm their compliance to RDS. | R |



Section D – Farm Group Certification

The following requirements apply for Farm Group Certification. References to a farm below refer to any member farm in the group.

D1. Eligibility for Farm Group Certification

- D1.1** The farm group shall be managed by a legal entity which represents the entirety of the *farm group* and is considered to be the applicant or certified *organization*.
- D1.2** The following categories of sites may be *group members*:
 - D1.2.1** Farms; and
 - D1.2.2** *Small slaughter sites*.
- D1.3** The organization and all members shall be located in the same country or within the European Union. Any two members, or the organization and any member shall be located a maximum of 500 km apart.

D2. Internal Control System Requirements

- D2.1** The organization shall have an *internal control system (ICS)* in place.
- D2.2** The organization shall appoint an *ICS Manager* who is responsible for the management of the ICS and for ensuring conformity to the RDS by all farms.
- D2.3** The organization shall cooperate with the certification body's risk assessment process and with the coordination of information and auditing for member farms.
- D2.4** The ICS shall maintain documented procedures which show how Farm Group Certification requirements are met, including procedures for at least the following elements:
 - D2.4.1** Accepting, adding and removing group members;
 - D2.4.2** Maintaining records;
 - D2.4.3** Training of group members and ICS personnel;
 - D2.4.4** Internal inspection of group members; and
 - D2.4.5** Use of RDS logos and promotional claims within the group.
- D2.5** The ICS shall maintain the following records:
 - D2.5.1** A documented management structure of the ICS, and
 - D2.5.2** A complete list of group members.



D2.6 The ICS shall maintain the following records for each farm:

D2.6.1 A signed membership agreement which specifies rights and obligations of group members to conform with the RDS and permit inspections by the ICS inspectors as well as audits by the certification body;

D2.6.2 Maps or sketches of the farm showing where waterfowl are located;

D2.6.3 A record of the numbers of waterfowl, purchase of eggs or hatchlings, purchase and sales of live waterfowl, and all other records required by the RDS; and

D2.6.4 Records of internal inspection results, showing the farm's conformity or non-conformity with all applicable requirements.

D2.7 The ICS shall maintain the following records for each slaughter site:

D2.7.1 A signed membership agreement which specifies rights and obligations of group members to conform with the RDS and permit inspections by the ICS inspectors as well as audits by the certification body;

D2.7.2 A record of the numbers of birds slaughtered;

D2.7.3 Records of internal inspection results, showing the site's conformity or non-conformity with all applicable requirements; and

D2.7.4 All other records required by the RDS.

D2.8 The ICS shall ensure that

D2.8.1 All group members have access to a copy of the RDS or the relevant sections of the Standard; and

D2.8.2 All farm group members understand the relevant requirements of the Standard and be aware of consequences of non-conformity.

D2.9 Group members and ICS personnel (including *ICS inspectors*) shall be provided with training regarding the RDS which is sufficient to meet their responsibilities. Training records shall be maintained.

D3. Group Member Requirements

D3.1 Group members shall not be independently RDS certified.

D3.2 Group members shall conform with the applicable requirements of B3 (farms) and B4 (slaughter sites).

D3.3 Slaughter sites shall conform with the requirements of B4 unless all of the following requirements are met:

D3.3.1 The site is a *small slaughter site* and a farm group member;



D3.3.2 The site processes exclusively RDS certified birds purchased from farms which are members of the same group; and

D3.3.3 The site only sells *RDS material* to or through the group organization.

D4. Inspection of Members

D4.1 The ICS shall document and implement an inspection protocol to ensure that RDS requirements are met by all group members.

D4.2 The inspection protocol shall include a process for handling non-conformity, including the following elements:

D4.2.1 Identification of non-conformities against all applicable requirements of the Standard;

D4.2.2 Grading of non-conformities according to the levels identified in A2 Requirement Levels. For animal welfare requirements, grading shall match the levels identified in the Standard;

D4.2.3 Follow-up to ensure that non-conformities are closed within a specified timeline which is not more than 30 days for major non-conformities and 60 days for minor non-conformities;

D4.2.4 Immediate suspension from the group in the case of critical non-conformities, until such non-conformities have been closed; and

D4.2.5 Documentation of non-conformities issued and closed, including explanation of corrective actions taken.

D4.2 The ICS shall appoint one or more ICS inspectors to carry out inspections. The ICS manager may also be an ICS inspector. ICS inspectors shall not be responsible for inspections of family members or themselves.

D4.3 The ICS shall carry out annual inspections of each group member. Inspections shall be carried out on-site.

D4.4 A written inspection report shall be prepared for each inspection, including identification of all non-conformities. Photos or other verification of the date and location should be included.

D4.5 The *ICS Inspector* shall conduct confirmation visits for at least one third of all member farms per year. This should be used as the preferred method to evaluate critical and major non-conformities.

D5. Adding and Removing Members

D5.1 Members may be added to the group after the following steps have occurred:



- D5.1.1** Information required by D2.6 and D2.7 has been received by the ICS,
- D5.1.2** The ICS Inspector has completed an inspection of the site,
- D5.1.3** All critical and major non-conformities for the site have been closed, and
- D5.1.4** The ICS has received approval from the certification body for the addition of the site.

NOTE: Certification bodies may require an audit of a site prior to allowing it to be added as a group member, or may require an audit of a sample of sites added since the previous audit before more sites may be added.

- D5.2** The ICS shall have the authority to remove members from the group. If a member is removed, the ICS shall notify both the group member and the certification body of the removal in writing, including the reason for removal (e.g. voluntary, non-payment, non-conformity).



Section E – Farm Area Certification

E1. Eligibility for Farm Area Certification

- E1.1** Farm Area Certification shall apply for *organizations* purchasing from a defined geographical *area* and is considered to be the applicant or certified *organization*.
- E1.2** The following categories of sites may be included in *Farm Areas*:
 - E1.2.1** *Small farms*, and
 - E1.2.2** *Small slaughter sites*.
- E1.3** The organization and all members shall be located in the same country or within the European Union. The Farm Area may not span more than 500 km apart from any two points.
- E1.4** The Farm Area shall be homogeneous with regard to agricultural production, geographical location and economic situation.

E2. Farm Area Management

- E2.1** The following documentation on the Farm Area shall be available:
 - E2.1.1** Clearly defined map that shows the villages under certification;
 - E2.1.2** *Collector(s)*, with unique identification numbers;
 - E2.1.3** Estimated number and type of waterfowl per village;
 - E2.1.4** Statements from collectors, see E3. Collector Requirements; and
 - E2.1.5** Quantity and type of down and feather products delivered by collectors.
- E2.2** The organization shall have procedures indicating actions to be taken in instances of non-compliance with the standard, sanctions and exclusion of regions or collectors.
- E2.3** The organization shall maintain the following records for each collector:
 - E2.3.1** A signed agreement which specifies rights and obligations of Farm Area *collectors* to conform with the Standard and permit inspections by the certified organization as well as audits by the certification body; and
 - E2.3.2** The quantity of down and feather delivered by the collector, along with delivery dates.

E3. Collector Requirements

- E3.1** Each registered collector shall have access to and be knowledgeable on the Standard.
- E3.2** Each collector shall provide documentation on:



- E3.2.1** Map with villages they source down and feather from, and
- E3.2.2** Quantity of feathers and down delivered.
- E3.3** Each collector shall ensure that all down and feather is sourced from within the *Farm Area*.
- E3.4** Each collector shall ensure that all down and feather under certification is separated and identified.
- E3.5** Each collector shall report as soon as possible to the organization any practices on farms they observe that do not conform to the RDS.



Section F – Chain of Custody

F1. Farm Chain of Custody Criteria

- F1.1** The farm (or relevant responsible organization) shall keep a record of all suppliers of eggs or hatchlings. This shall be made available to the certification body for review.
- F1.2** The farmer shall maintain up-to-date procedures to ensure that all waterfowl over the age 24 hours, arriving at the farm as certified, come from certified sources.
- F1.3** There shall be established procedures to manage reception and inspection of incoming birds, as well as the appointment of responsible personnel.
- F1.4** Records on incoming and outgoing waterfowl shall be kept and maintained.
- F1.5** Farms working with *industrial* goose supply chains shall take the following measures to ensure parent farms providing eggs to RDS farms are not live-plucking:
 - F1.5.1** Conduct direct confirmation visits of parent farms,
 - F1.5.2** Provide certification body with a list of all parent farms, and
 - F1.5.3** Allow responsible certification body to conduct confirmation visits of parent farms according to risk.

NOTE: In cases where live-plucking is observed by the certification body, a major non-conformity shall be issued to the certified organization. The corrective action plan shall include either a confirmation that live-plucking on the parent farm has ceased or that the parent farm is no longer a supplier of eggs or hatchlings to the RDS certified farm.

- F1.6** In the case of voluntary Parent Farm Certification, the following requirements shall also apply:
 - F1.6.1** Certified organizations shall have a system in place to ensure traceability from all parent farms to the raising farm;
 - F1.6.2** Parent farm certification shall apply to all parent farms supplying farms within a scope certificate; and
 - F1.6.3** The organization shall provide a list of all parent farms involved in its supply chain to the certification body and shall ensure that the certification body is able to access parent farms for audits and confirmation visits.



F2. Chain of Custody Criteria

F2.1 The requirements of the *CCS-101 Content Claim Standard (CCS)* whereby

F2.1.1 Each reference of “CCS” in the Content Claim Standard shall be understood as “RDS.” In the case of contradiction with the CCS, the RDS requirement supersedes that of the CCS.

F2.1.2 “Claimed material,” as defined in the CCS, refers to *RDS material* for the RDS. Waterfowl down or feathers collected or produced from RDS certified sites or otherwise sold by organizations that are certified to the applicable modules of the RDS may be considered to be RDS Material.

F2.2 Certified organizations that are physically attaching consumer-facing RDS claims shall meet the following requirements:

F2.2.1 RDS hangtags or communication shall only be applied when a corresponding label release form has been issued by an authorized certification body, in accordance with *RDS-301 RDS Logo Use and Claims Guide*; and

F2.2.2 Organizations shall have a system in place to ensure the product is certified up to the seller in the last business-to-business transaction.

F2.3 *Small slaughter* sites may be exempt from written records or procedures required by the CCS.



Appendix A – Definitions

Refer to *TE-101 Terms and Definitions for Textile Exchange Standards and Related Documents* for definitions of terms used in these procedures. Key definitions are included below. Defined terms are shown in italics in the first usage in this document, and in some other uses for clarity.

Area: A clearly defined geographical area from which *RDS material* is purchased. An area does not need to be contiguous.

Area Certification: Certification of the supply *area*. The organization purchasing from the area is the certified *organization*.

Bird: See *waterfowl*.

Collector: A person or organization that collects down and feather from farms and trades this to down traders and/or processors. A collector may work independently or under contract by another entity. In the context of RDS, collector refers to the small collector collecting from households and registered by the certified *organization* as an approved RDS collector.

Down: The fine plumage on a *waterfowl* that sits under the outer feathers. For simplicity, the term down refers to all plumage including feathers and down. All RDS requirements are applied to down and feathers.

Farm: Any *site* where crops or livestock are raised for the production of food and/or textiles. Non-adjacent fields may be considered part of the same farm, provided they are under the same management (i.e. *same farmer*). For RDS: Limited to domestic *waterfowl* farms (for production of food and/or parent *waterfowl*); includes *hatcheries*.

Small farm: Any *farm* where less than 200 birds are raised at one time.

Force feeding: Any form of feeding that forces the *waterfowl* to eat more than it wants/needs. In particular, this refers to manual intervention using mechanical equipment (i.e. tubes) to increase the fat content, often for the production of foie gras.

Group: A scope certificate which includes multiple, separately owned *sites* whose conformity with the standard falls under the responsibility of another separately owned legal entity with an **internal control system (ICS)**. The entity which manages the ICS is considered the **organization**. Group eligibility requirements are defined in RDS.

Group Member: A *site* which is part of a *group* certification. The word 'member' may be used to refer to a group member.

Hatchery: Any *site* where *waterfowl* eggs are mechanically or naturally hatched to produce *waterfowl*.

Industrial: A supply chain where the following are true: more than 200 birds are raised on a farm at once, the slaughter site has a capacity higher than 1,000 birds per day, and the meat is sold commercially (i.e. not for personal or local consumption).



Internal Control System (ICS): The system used by an organization for the oversight and management of certification for multiple sites, such as a group.

ICS Manager: The ICS manager (or management group) is responsible for the implementation of the *ICS*.

ICS Inspector: A person responsible for conducting inspections of sites covered by an *ICS*.

Live-plucking: Any form of removing *down* and feather from living *waterfowl*, including any form of molt harvesting.

Organization: A legal entity which is *certified* to or in the process of becoming certified to the RDS.

Parent Farm: Any *farm* where *waterfowl* are kept for producing eggs. Any time RDS *down* is collected from a parent farm, the entire farm is subject to RDS certification.

Parent Farm Certification: An optional extension of the application of the RDS. Under Parent Farm Certification, all *parent farms* that supply to the raising farms on a scope certificate are required to be audited and certified. Material certified under parent farm certification may be separately identified through to the final product.

Parent Farm Certified Material: Material certified under *parent farm certification*. The designation shall appear on the *transaction certificate*.

RDS Material: The specific material that is being verified by the RDS as a content claim in a product which is sold.

Site: Any geographically distinct unit within a certificate scope. Locations which are geographically distinct or have different civic addresses are considered to be separate sites (see exception for *farms*).

Slaughter: Any *site* where livestock are killed for their meat. The slaughter process may happen at *farms*, small *facilities* or large-scale slaughterhouses.

Small slaughter site: Any *slaughter site* with a capacity of less than 1,000 *waterfowl* per day.

Waterfowl: Domestically raised ducks and geese. Use of the word *bird* in the context of RDS refers to individual waterfowl.



Appendix B – Risk Assessment

This appendix is for informative purposes only. Organizations are not required to conduct risk assessments.

Certification bodies conduct a *risk assessment* on each organization prior to each audit and assign a risk designation of low, medium, or high risk. Higher risk levels require certification bodies to visit more farms and/or to conduct more *semi-announced* and *unannounced audits*. Full requirements for risk assessments can be found in the documents *ACP-101 Accreditation and Certification Procedures for Textile Exchange Standards* and *RDS-102 RDS Certification Procedures*.

The following table shows the minimum indicators to be used by certification bodies in risk assessments. Identification of a critical risk factor results in an automatic high-risk designation.

| Risk Factor | | Level |
|--|---|----------|
| Scope Certificate History (<i>N/A for initial audits</i>) | Previous audits found live-plucking or force-feeding | Critical |
| | Previous audits found major non-conformities, but no live-plucking or force-feeding | Medium |
| | Previous audits found no major non-conformities | Low |
| Local Legislation | No animal welfare legislation | High |
| | Animal welfare legislation in place, but not strongly enforced | Medium |
| | Strong local legal enforcement of animal welfare legislation | Low |
| Live-plucking | Known live-plucking in the region | High |
| | No known live-plucking in the region, but live-plucking is legal | Medium |
| | No known live-plucking in the region and live-plucking is illegal | Low |
| Force-feeding | Known force-feeding in the region | High |
| | No known force-feeding in the region, but force-feeding is legal | Medium |



| | | |
|---|---|--------|
| | No known force-feeding in the region and force-feeding is illegal | Low |
| Live-plucking | Known live-plucking in the region | High |
| | No known live-plucking in the region, but live-plucking is legal | Medium |
| | No known live-plucking in the region and live-plucking is illegal | Low |
| Additional Risk Factors for Live-plucking | Goose supply chain | Medium |
| | Recent drop in meat prices | Medium |
| | Birds slaughtered at an older age (more than 6 months) | Medium |
| | Parent Farm is combined with raising farm | Medium |
| Farming Practices <i>(Farm Group and Farm Area only)</i> | High degree of variation of farming practices between sites | High |
| | Medium degree of variation of farming practices between sites | Medium |
| | High degree of homogenous farming practices among sites | Low |
| ICS Performance <i>(Farm Group and Farm Area only, n/a for initial audit)</i> | CB auditor identified critical or major AW non-conformities not identified by the ICS during the previous audit | High |
| | CB auditor identified minor AW non-conformities not identified by the ICS during the previous audit | Medium |
| | CB auditor did not identify AW non-conformities not identified by the ICS during the previous audit | Low |
| Other Factors | High volume of down | Medium |
| | No availability of third-party information or standard | Medium |



| | | |
|--|--|--------|
| | Collectors purchase down from outside the region (Collector Area only) | Medium |
|--|--|--------|



Appendix C – International Working Group Members

Adidas

Allied Feather & Down

Control Union

COFRAC

Coyuchi

Culver Duck Farms, Inc.

Downlite

European Outdoor Group

Four Paws

Humane Society International

ICEA

IDFL

Multiglory Home Textiles

NSF International

Patagonia

Pyrenex

Rohdex

**Shanghai Donglong Feather
Manufacture Co. Ltd.**

SN Interplume SAS

Sustainable Down Source

The Lollipop Tree

The North Face

Trendsetter UK

Volcom