

Chicken Handling



Disclaimer

A series of booklets has been developed by the Clinical Skills Lab team (staff, recent graduates and students) from the School of Veterinary Sciences, University of Bristol, UK. Please note:

- Each booklet illustrates one way to perform a skill and it is acknowledged that there are often other approaches. Before using the booklets students should check with their university or college whether the approach illustrated is acceptable in their context or whether an alternative method should be used.
- The booklets are made available in good faith and may be subject to changes.
- In using these booklets you must adopt safe working procedures and take your own risk assessments, checked by your university, college etc. The University of Bristol will not be liable for any loss or damage resulting from failure to adhere to such practices.

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Equipment list:

Chicken Handling

Equipment for this station:

- Model chicken

Considerations for this station:

- There is a useful video on Blackboard in the Animal Management 2 section → Practicals → Poultry → chicken handling video
- Booklet 'CSL_H19 Exotic Species Blood Sampling Sites' has further details on blood sampling.

Anyone working in the Clinical Skills Lab must read the 'CSL_I01 Induction' and agree to abide by the 'CSL_I00 House Rules' & 'CSL_I02 Lab Area Rules'

Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.

Clinical Skills: Chicken Handling

1



Approach the chicken slowly and quietly and place your hands either side of its body, holding the wings so they do not flap.

2



Lift the chicken and hold it against your body so it feels secure. Make sure the wings are held securely to prevent flapping.

3



Place one hand underneath the chicken to support it, with your middle two fingers between its legs.

4



While continuing to hold the chicken, now start the examination: Assess the head, beak, eyes, wattle, feathers, wings, legs, feet and cloaca (underneath the tail).

Carefully and gently turn the chicken and repeat the examination on the other side.

5



Cloaca

6



A basic neurological status assessment can be made by holding the chicken with both hands around its body over the wings, and turning the whole chicken from side to side. If the chicken is normal its head should remain in the same position (not move from side to side).

Clinical Skills:

Chicken Handling



Assess the body condition score by palpating the keel bone and assessing muscle coverage.

See scoring system below.



Blood samples can be taken from the 'wing' vein (cutaneous ulnar vein).

In the photo above, the wing vein is visible running between the biceps and the triceps muscles. The wing vein forms a 'V' (bifurcates).

Take care not to damage the vein as this may result in a haematoma forming.



When the examination is complete, hold the chicken in both hands before gently place it on the floor feet first.

Ensure your hands cover the wings to prevent flapping.

Body Condition Score



Score 1 – Poor condition

Concave curvature with minimal palpable muscle mass over keel plate.



Score 2 – Adequate condition – Slightly thin

Palpable muscle mass over keel plate.



Score 3 – Good, ideal condition

Convex curvature, but keel bone palpable.



Score 4 – Well muscled, somewhat heavy

Convex curvature, but keel bone less prominent.



Score 5 – Overweight

Very well developed muscle mass, smooth over keel plate.

Resetting the station: Chicken Handling

1. Return the model and booklet to the designated area e.g. on one of the tables/benches in the clinical skills lab (CSL).

Station ready for the next person:



Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.

I wish I'd known:

Chicken Handling

- Always approach chickens slowly and quietly.
- Once caught, always hold the wings to the body to avoid wing flapping.