



Sustainable Poultry Network USA

Purpose and Guidelines for BREEDER Certification

Purpose of Flock Certification: Our *national flock certification* program is designed to give the credibility, assurance, and authenticity that a flock of poultry is true to breed and is being bred to the highest excellence for vigor, standard qualities, and production qualities.

Note: Many breeds of chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese and guineas are being marketed around the world that are not true to breed and their original purpose is being compromised. Consumers and buyers can be assured that the birds they receive from our certified flocks will be true to breed and will be bred with the following values:

- I. **Developing Breeding Strains:** Our commitment is equip our breeders with the knowledge and skills to protect the genetics of the breeding line, to improve the quality each year by making sure that they are bred by the *Poultry Standards* noting where the breed originated. We believe this is best accomplished through careful inbreeding and line breeding and not by carelessly adding “*outside bloodlines*”.
- II. **Breed Uniformity:** Culling rigorously and selecting of ALL progeny is critical in our breeding programs. This will assure uniformity in the quality of the birds. This must be of utmost importance with the breeders of our certified flocks.
- III. **Production Qualities:** With all of our certified flocks, we expect our breeders to breed with the highest quality production as one of its primary goals; both meat and egg production.
- IV. **Preservation of Standard Bred Poultry:** unless we intentionally work hard to breed, grow, and use these heirloom breeds of poultry, we will lose them!

Initial BREEDER Certification:

CHOOSE the SPN-USA BREEDER Certification Option below that best fits your desires:

Option #1 - “Full Farm Mentoring Membership” – This network membership is for those who are brand new to poultry breeding and desire to be mentored by a *SPN-USA certified coach*. The steps to flock certification includes choosing a breed, purchasing quality stock, growing them out, selecting the breeding stock and setting up the breeding pens – all this is done with your coach “walking through the process” with you. For new breeders who are just starting, the certification process can take up to (9) months before the flock is officially certified. Upon joining the network, you will be assigned a coach.

Option #2 - “Established Breeding Flock” – Are you a breeder, currently breeding a flock of Standard Bred poultry? If you are interested in flock certification and you choose not to join the full farm mentoring program, you can request an on farm consultation by one of our coaches. The farmer/breeder must believe in the SPN-USA Mission and Core Values. If your flock fulfills certification guidelines, and the farm passes the *BREEDER Standards of Poultry Welfare & Husbandry*, your flock can be approved for certification within (30) days. To schedule an on farm consultation contact SPN-USA.

Option #3 – “Purchase Adult Birds from a SPN-USA Certified Flock”– Flocks may be certified if adult breeding stock are purchased directly from another certified breeder. Selection of the birds must be completed by a *SPN-USA certified coach*. The farmer/breeder must believe in the SPN-USA Mission and Core Values. If the farm passes the *BREEDER Standards of Poultry Welfare & Husbandry* and is willing to commit to the guidelines of certification, they can be certified during the initial on farm consultation.

Annual BREEDER Certification

What you can expect from the Sustainable Poultry Network USA

- 1. SPN-USA Certified coach:** During your annual *certification* year, you will be assigned one of our fully trained, *SPN-USA certified coaches*. Your coach will provide the following during the calendar year.
 - Unlimited coaching via email, phone & social media.
 - One *complete* (full day) on farm consultation. SPN-USA recommends that this visit is done in the fall of the year – could include breeder selection, setting up matings, business planning, strategic marketing and flock assessment.
- 2. Addition coaching consultation:** In addition to your annual coaches’ visit, additional coaching consultations are welcome for additional fees. The coach that is assigned to these additional visits will vary depending on availability.
- 3. Branding:** Your flock listed on the official SPN-USA national website!
- 4. Promoting sales of chicks, poults and adult birds:** As an *SPN-USA Certified flock*, you will be offered opportunities to sell chicks, poults and adult birds at a premium price because they are branded high-quality stock.
- 5. Official SPN-USA Poultry Veterinarian:** As a network, SPN-USA has secured an official poultry veterinarian who will serve our breeder flocks.

Guidelines for Breeders:

Annual certification is from January 1st until January 15th of the following year.

- 1. Annual selection & ongoing line breeding:** It is critical that this happens every year with your flock. Every year that you do not *selectively* breed, you are taking a “*step backwards*” in your breeding program. Your *SPN certified coach* will work with you throughout the year to mentor you in the selection process. In some cases, the breeder is allowed *flock mating* (multiply males and females together) for one generation. Approval for this comes from the assigned coach.

2. **Improving production qualities of eggs and meat:** this will always be a part of our record-keeping and breeder-selection process. Paying close attention to the production qualities of the flock is critical for breed preservation and market quality.
3. **Breed Limits for certification:** Initial BREEDER certification is limited to (3) breeds per farm/per breeder for a minimum of two years. (this is a total of all poultry species) To add additional breeds, the breeder must prove him/herself in their ability to improve the specific species. When additional breeders are on the SAME farm (others who are being mentored) up to three additional breeds may be added, per person – Each person must apply for certification annually. The assigned coach must give the approval for additional breeder certification on the same farm.
4. **Proven Breeding Program:** When a breeding flock, of a specific breed has been *certified for FIVE consecutive years* – it may qualify to enter into the *proven certification* program that will not require annual visits. When your flock qualifies, you will be presented with this opportunity.
5. **Do not add “outside” genetics:** With all certified flocks, you will be mentored by a *Certified SPN-USA Coach* who will assist you to determine whether or not you will add outside genetics from other certified flocks of the same breed. In some cases we may add completely separate breeding lines for the sake of genetic diversity and vigor. Your coach will guide you through this process.
6. **SLOW POULTRY Strategy Seminar:** BEFORE a flock is certified, the breeder must participate in the SLOW POULTRY Strategy Seminar. This strategic training provides the knowledge to understand the strategy for *sustainable poultry production*. It is critical that every member of SPN-USA understands this strategy BEFORE certification is granted. This is available by attending a live seminar, participating in a webinar or on-line streaming videos.
7. **Participate in Continuing Education:** During the calendar year of your certification, owners of certified flocks are **required** to attend our *SPN-USA National Conference* or the equivalent of 16 hours of approved training, coaching or mentoring. The costs for continuing education are not included in your annual certification fees.

Other ongoing education could include the following: (contact your *SPN Certified Coach* to discuss these other continuing education options. If you are unable to attend a regional coaching clinic and choose one of the following alternatives listed below, please submit your *written report* of your on-going education.)

- **Clerking with a poultry judge at a local poultry show:** There are poultry shows in almost every region of the North America. This would include county & state fairs. Check in your local area for county/state fairs or local poultry clubs.
- **Visiting another certified flock:** Arrange to visit another certified flock; the goal would be to spend time with the breeder learning about his/her breeding program; Submit a written report that needs to include your observations of breeding systems, housing, feeding and especially specifics about what you learned about the breed(s) that this breeder is raising.
- **Write an essay from recommended reading:** You may request a list of books that you can read and submit a minimum of (300) word summary of what you learned.

- **Attend a poultry related/agriculture conference:** There are some incredible sustainable farming conferences around the country. Most conferences, workshops and seminars would apply for continuing education. Once you have attended, you would submit a written summary of what you learned.
8. **NPIP Testing:** All our certified flocks are strongly encouraged to be NPIP tested annually (*National Poultry Improvement Plan*). Each state governs this program differently. In the application process, we will assist you in these testing procedures.
 9. **Annual Record Keeping Stats:** All *certified flock owners* must keep annual breeding records of the following and records must be submitted by January 15th of the following year.

Records that will be required on the annual report:

1. Annual egg production – how many eggs were produced by your certified flock.
 2. How many chicks were sold?
 3. Rate of egg fertility & hatchability.
 4. Rate of live-ability (past 10 days old).
 5. How many eggs were set to incubate? (both natural and artificial)
 6. How many birds did you grow out to for flock replacement?
 7. Submit weights of ½ grown age and processing age.
 8. How many growing birds died (after 10 days old)?
 9. How many birds were CULLED for defects?
10. **Inspected and certified annually:** to maintain certification, all flocks must be inspected and certified by an official *SPN-USA certified coach*. You must be in complete compliance with the *BREEDER Standards of Poultry Welfare & Husbandry*. Any violations of the standards will result in immediate removal of certification. A *welfare inspection* can be performed by your coach at anytime. They can be unannounced visits.

To request an application and more information on the costs for certification, please email karen32j@gmail.com or call/text: 209.890.5326.



© 2015 By Sustainable Poultry Network–USA™
 All Rights Reserved. Use by permission only.
 Please contact the author for use.