Poultry Euthanasia: Koechner Euthanizing Device

Learn essential guidelines and safety measures for the use and setup of a Koechner euthanizing device for chickens and turkeys.

The Koechner Euthanizing Device is for chicken and turkey euthanasia only. The appropriate device should be used for the appropriate-sized bird:

- KED-S for birds up to 4 pounds
- KED-C for birds up to 30 pounds
- KED-T for turkeys up to 65 pounds
- KED-Txl for turkeys over 65 pounds

Method of Application

1. Restrain the bird in a cone (figure 1) or have another person restrain the bird for the operator.
2. Slowly close the blades until they are in light contact with the neck of the bird (figure 2).
3. When the single blade is at the base of the skull, quickly pull the handles fully together (figure 3).
4. Allow time for tonic/clonic convulsions to cease.
5. Check the bird for signs of life such as respiration, movement, muscle tone in the neck, voluntary blinking, or involuntary blinking when touching the eye.
6. If there are no signs of life, the bird has been successfully euthanized and can be disposed of properly.

Improper use of this tool can result in serious injury to the operator.
Additional information regarding the use of the Koechner Euthanizing Device can be found at www.cvear.com/equipment_and_supplies/koechner-euthanizing-device-c/.

**Checking for Signs of Death**

Following are physical reflexes to observe following euthanasia application. Continue observations until all reflexes have stopped for a total of 1 minute.

- **Nictitating membrane.** Induced blinking after gently tapping the inner corner of the eye; used to indicate brain-stem death

- **Rhythmic breathing.** Repeated opening and closing of the beak or movements of the sternum. When rhythmic breathing has stopped for 2 minutes, indicating brain-stem death, the animal will be considered in a state of nonrecoverable onset of death.

- **Body movement.** Uncoordinated movement of the body, legs, or wings, indicating unconsciousness and brain dysfunction

- **Absence of a pain reflex.** Firm comb or toe pinch (noxious stimulus) used to indicate unconsciousness and brain dysfunction

- **Heartbeat.** Absence of regular heart rhythm, indicating nonrecoverable onset of death

Euthanasia is successful when one application attempt is needed, with no signs of recovery (sustained and/or return of rhythmic breathing or reflexes) at 5 minutes after euthanasia application.