

# Conditions for Rejection of Poultry at Post Mortem

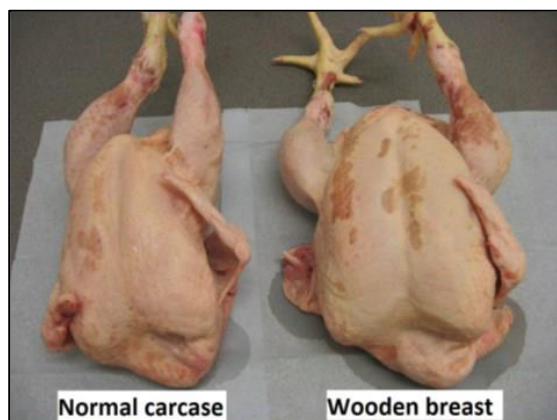
## Myopathies

Wooden breast is the most common myopathy seen at present.

### Visual inspection at the slaughterhouse

Wooden breast is detectable upon palpation of breast muscles. The breast is broader, harder and appears flat with muscle edges well-developed and sharper. Firmness varies from mild to severe. In some cases the breast muscle appearance resembles figure “8” and looks as if it was constricted by a rubber band in the middle of the carcass.

As wooden breast alone is not a reason for rejection, a visual assessment for other conditions should be made (see Further Assessment and Post mortem disposition).



### Further Assessment at the co-located Cutting Plant

Detailed assessment of wooden breast is much easier at a co-located cutting plant or a trimming station when the skin is removed.

A Standard Operating Procedure must be implemented at the slaughterhouse and co-located cutting plant to ensure that wooden breast fillets with secondary lesions (e.g. subcutaneous oedema, discoloration, exudate) are rejected. If legs and wings are not affected, they can be salvaged. The OV at the slaughterhouse must be satisfied with the SOP and should regularly verify the correct implementation of that SOP.

## FSS Responsibilities

### Post mortem disposition

**Judgement:** Carcasses with myopathies alone do not constitute a food safety risk. On that basis, only cases of myopathies accompanied by secondary lesions that would normally be rejected should result in rejection (partial or total).

**Partial rejection:** carcasses affected by localised severe myopathies and secondary lesions (e.g. subcutaneous oedema, discoloration, exudate, haemorrhages) can have the affected parts of the carcass salvaged, provided that the FBO has implemented SOPs for carcass assessment and trimming.

**Total rejection:** if carcasses with severe myopathies affected by generalised conditions or localised secondary lesions (e.g. subcutaneous oedema, discoloration, exudate, haemorrhages) when SOPs for carcass assessment and trimming are not implemented.

**Affected carcasses are Category 3 ABP**

**Recording of the condition:** The condition must be recorded under “Other Farm” in the Post Mortem Inspection section of OWS.

## Further Information

### Definitions

Wooden breast is characterised by fillets which are either totally hardened to the touch or partially hardened “ridges” along the caudal aspect of the breast muscle.

### Causes

The exact cause of wooden breast is not known. It is possibly related to a reduction in capillary supply to the developing myofibres, although this is not proven. In some cases it is accompanied by white striping.

### Remarks

Wooden breast lesions have been reported to be aseptic and often described as severe chronic pectoral degenerative myopathy. Wooden breast can be detected upon palpation of the breast fillets, and is occasionally accompanied by secondary conditions/lesions (e.g. subcutaneous oedema, discoloration, exudate, haemorrhages) which could impact on the final post-mortem judgement.



Well developed muscle edge



The breast muscle (above) looks as if it has been constricted by an elastic band in the middle of the carcass.

### Deep Pectoral Myopathy

**Synonyms:** Oregon disease or Green Muscle Disease.

**Definition:** Green discoloration of supracoracoideus muscle (deep breast muscle).

**Causes:** The supracoracoideus muscle is enclosed in an inelastic membrane. In periods of intense muscular activity there is an occlusion of the blood supply due to this membrane, resulting in blood remaining trapped in the muscle and no oxygen being received.

**Remarks:** Breast meat can appear concave on whole bird inspection. The insertion of a light source into the body cavity may reveal the lesion as a shadow due to high density of the necrotic muscle. Farms should be notified to carry out investigation if high prevalence is detected.

### White Striping

In white striping (below right) the outer breast muscle has white stripes that run in parallel to the muscle fibres. The thickness of the stripes may vary. Affected fillets have a slightly higher fat content. Secondary conditions are not seen with white striping and as such no rejection is necessary.



Photo courtesy of Aviagen

