The Poultry Processing Line: An Overview of How Chickens Are Slaughtered and Processed in the U.S.

RECEIVING AND SLAUGHTER

- Chickens arrive at the processing plant from the farm from where they are raised cage-free in large, ventilated barns called “growout houses.”
- Workers trained in humane handling carefully place chickens on a moving line.
- The chickens are calmed by dim lighting and by “rub bars,” which provide a comforting sensation on the chicken’s chest.
- Birds are stunned (rendered unconscious and unaware of pain) and then slaughtered with a quick, single cut to the throat.
- Trained workers ensure that each bird is properly slaughtered before feather removal, evisceration and cleaning.

CLEANING AND EVISCERATION (REMOVAL OF FEATHERS AND INTERNAL ORGANS)

- Feathers, internal organs and feet are removed.
- Carcasses are thoroughly washed.
- Each carcass is inspected by a member of the processing plant and a USDA inspector for any food safety and quality issues.
- Carcasses are then chilled to reduce any possible food borne pathogens.
- The chicken is tested for any potential dangerous bacteria, like Salmonella.

PROCESSING AND PREPARATION

- Chicken carcases are cut and deboned to become different products like chicken wings, drumsticks or chicken breasts.
- Chicken might also be cooked in the plant or sent to other plants to be made into products like chicken nuggets, patties or frozen meals.
- Once the chicken is cut up into parts, it is packaged, bagged and/or boxed.
- The chicken products cannot leave the plant without being inspected by USDA and getting the USDA seal of approval.
- Finally, the chicken is shipped in a refrigerated truck to grocery stores, restaurants or distribution centers.

For more information, visit www.chickencheck.in/faq/how-chickens-slaughtered-processed/