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

1 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.

2 CLEANING AND EVISCERATION (REMOVAL OF FEATHERS AND INTERNAL ORGANS)

This part of the processing line is highly automated. Machines conduct most of the activity.

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.

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

3 PROCESSING AND PREPARATION

Chicken carcasses 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.

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