

Commitment to Product Quality and Food Safety

Schiltz Foods, Inc., and Schiltz Goose Farm, Inc., have made what we believe to be the most extensive commitment to our goose product quality and food safety in the history of goose production in the world. Our commitment starts at the farm breeding facility and continues throughout the hatchery and grow-out facility, and culminates at our processing plant, which produces quality goose products to the entire USA and other countries.

Our breeding flocks are derived from a long regime of breeding work starting back in the 60's where Schiltz Goose Farm brought in every known breed of goose in the world and created the only goose breed ever developed in the United States and has been recognized by the USDA in Beltsville, MD as being a unique breed.

Our breeding flocks are kept in a clean and dry environment and have ample feed and water space in a free range environment. Each goose has 7 to 9 square feet per bird inside for inclement weather and 40 to 50 square feet per bird outside in their range pens. They are provided a clean water and feed source and all hay and bedding materials are kept under a shed to eliminate mold problems. Geese are one of the most sensitive animals to molds in the world, in the young molds can cause death and in breeding stock molds can cause sterility in the males. We adhere to strict daily water cleaning regimen which reduces the pathogen load on the breeders and the eggs in the barns. We have built an egg wash and pre-shipment storage room on the farm where the eggs are cleaned of any foreign materials and disinfected prior to transport to the holding area and eventually to the hatchery. This room has limited access to keep any cross contamination of the eggs from the rest of the farm after being disinfected.

A state of the art hatchery has been built with support from Dr. Mike Wineland, a professor of embryology at North Carolina State University, to keep with the latest technology on hatchery monitoring and sanitation levels. The hatchery is separate from the breeder flocks with a stringent bio-security procedure that is strictly enforced. The hatchery has a cleaning and disinfecting procedure in place to lower bacteria loads on the building and equipment. The hatching eggs are disinfected 12 times during incubation to keep pathogens in check so that we produce the cleanest goslings as possible on hatch day. A sample of fuzz from each hatch is collected and sent to a lab for testing for early detection and monitoring of any pathology in the flock. We also do cleanliness testing on all equipment and facilities.

Our grow-out facilities are set up to produce free range, all natural geese for Schiltz Foods, Inc. Our geese are started in a clean, disinfected, four-building system where the birds reside in a building which is freshly cleaned every week for the first four weeks of their life; then moved to a barn where they will stay for the next 4 weeks with full access to the outdoors and extra room for growth. At approximately eight weeks of age, the birds are given an outside feed lot. Each bird is allowed a minimum of 25 square feet of open area around them in order to provide ample space for growing geese. The geese are on a full feed regimen designed by Dr. Jim Rhoades, Poultry Nutritionist, specifically for producing quality geese for market. Our grow-out pens are equipped with the newest

technology in automated feeding systems that eliminate contaminated feed from rain spoilage and rodent activity and a continuous clean water supply with a sprinkler or misting system to keep the geese cool on hot summer days.

All of the geese are put in a pre-shipment pen with a clean water source (bathing trough) so the geese can clean and groom themselves prior to their arrival at the plant. This allows the bird to naturally lower pathogen load on the feathers and skin.

All geese shipped from Schiltz Goose Farm, Inc. are walked onto a horse trailer and walked off at the processing plant. No mechanical or hand loading is used in an effort to reduce bruising, condemnation, and any opportunity for mishandling by employees, thereby increasing overall product quality at the processing plant.

Any geese brought in from other growers are shipped in specially designed cages and trailers for ease of loading which reduces bird mishandling and lengthy load times on the farm. At the plant, these cages are designed to be unloaded without handling the bird, also reducing mishandling. The cage system can be cleaned, disinfected, and inspected easily prior to being sent out to another farm. All the geese are kept in a concrete lined pen with a sprinkler/shower system so the birds can clean and groom themselves prior to processing which again reduces the pathogen load in the scalding and picking systems.

Extensive research has been done on humane stunning and bleeding of geese by Schiltz Foods, Inc., along with installing a special counter-flow goose scalder and picking equipment with a time-temperature microbial log reduction step after the scalder.

Schiltz Foods, Inc. is continually upgrading the facility to strengthen our food safety standards with new non-porous building materials and all stainless steel hardware and equipment. New non-skid non-porous floors were installed in all production areas to improve worker and food safety standards. We have also removed the waxing step, which is widely used in feather removal in waterfowl processing plants, due to a food safety risk found in our hazard analysis. Our bird chilling procedures have been modified by removing the chiller and putting in small chill tanks that are cleaned and disinfected after every use to eliminate bacterial loads in the chill process. This effectively gives a clear break point after every 80 head. Our geese are blast frozen on racks after packaging for a much faster freeze time than freezing in the box which reduces food safety hazards. All our geese are packed in containers with strapping which reduces risk of product tampering and each unit is placed on a brand new clean pallet with stretch wrap and a cardboard pallet topper to ensure product integrity and also to reduce product tampering.

Schiltz Foods, Inc. has an approved and validated HACCP plan and an approved standard sanitation and operating procedure in place that has been reviewed by the USDA annually. There is extensive hazard analysis done annually by plant management with assistance from the USDA IIC, and the HACCP review team.

An on site lab has been set up to monitor food safety by microbiologic testing for food borne pathogens. An approved testing procedure is in place to monitor, on a daily basis,

any food borne pathogen activity in the plant so corrective actions can be taken immediately.

Our feather processing facility is inspected by the USDA for standard sanitation operating procedures and all of our feather products are certified as sterilized feathers prior to leaving our facilities for bio-security to the further processors and manufacturers using our feather products.

A barcode system is in place to track each pallet of geese that is sent to the distribution system. This allows Schiltz Foods, Inc. traceability of our products back to the farm level.

STATEMENTS OF SCHILTZ GOOSE RAISING

- a) That the geese have had access to the outdoors, sunshine and fresh air during their lifetime;
- b) That the geese were not totally confined during the period of time that they grew from goslings to maturity. The geese were started in barns, but not in cages or confined spaces within the building. Each week they were given more inside barn space until they were approximately three weeks old (or before); they then are given a choice of being inside or outside, weather permitting. (Before three weeks of age it takes too long to return them to cover in case of inclement weather.);
- c) That basically the geese had open and easy access to this outside area starting early in the morning until evening when they were herded back into their buildings in order to protect them from the elements and predators (at this age the outside space is approximately 15 sq ft per goose);
- d) That the inside space for the geese is increased each week for the first 3 weeks and then are given approximately 3 sq ft per goose inside space to go with the 15 sq ft per goose outside space;
- e) That each goose had available a minimum of 25 square feet of open area around him at all times after they reached the age of 8 weeks in order to range freely;
- f) That these birds were never confined in closed cages nor force fed any feed, feed supplements or nutrients, but were allowed to range freely with feed, water and grit furnished as free choice;
- g) The geese were not given any ionophores (including antibiotics) for non-therapeutic purposes and were under the care of a licensed poultry veterinarian.
- h) Nothing was used in the feed or water to stimulate the growth of these geese unnaturally. No hormones or unnatural growth stimulants were used to grow the birds;
- i) The geese eat grass or greens when they go to an outside pen along with alfalfa or some other goose delicacy that you or I may call roughage. Geese require roughage in their diet, as a percentage it changes through their life as their body changes, in a generalization, roughage (grass is a roughage) is between 10% to 33% of their diet with the rest being mainly a corn or wheat based diet using soybean meal for a protein source along with the necessary ingredients our nutritionist deems necessary for the stage the goose is in its' life;

- j) The geese were never subjected to any sort of trimming of any of their body parts for any reason whatsoever including but not limited to their bills;
- k) The geese were allowed to walk onto and off a trailer for harvesting, they were not subjected to cages;
- l) The geese were harvested with low stress in mind, we do many things to lessen the stress and tensions normally associated with a harvest of this nature;
- m) The geese were bagged without any additions whatsoever, and in no way was this product altered before packaging.