

Agricultural Manual - Catalogue of Criteria - Poultry



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Foreword

As part of the animal welfare initiative for poultry "**Initiative Tierwohl Geflügel**" companies and associations from agriculture, the meat industry and grocery retail have together made it their objective to promote humane and sustainable meat production.

In the future too they want to offer consumers poultry of exceptional quality and great variety whilst at the same time focussing even more on animal welfare as the foundation of their business.

To this end, the initiators - together with participants from the economy, science and other stakeholder groups have developed a comprehensive programme to promote animal welfare at livestock producer agricultural production level and for this purpose have defined scientifically substantiated, measurable and verifiable requirements for livestock production. Livestock producers who decide to participate in the animal welfare initiative **Initiative Tierwohl Geflügel** shall implement these requirements. Independent, accredited certification bodies shall regularly check that the requirements are being complied with.

The animal welfare initiative for poultry is to be subject to continual ongoing development. Whilst initially it is geared to the implementation and remuneration of defined measures, in the future the results of joint efforts to achieve greater animal welfare and the clear relationship between the products sold in grocery retail outlets and goods produced in accordance with animal welfare requirements (brand identity) are to come more to the forefront. In the future, in the field of remuneration of livestock producers, the initiative shall focus increasingly on the data obtained as part of extended recording of findings (e.g. the animal welfare monitoring programme as part of the QS scheme) and shall take the issue of brand identity into account as part of the consultation process on the further development of the initiative. The Expert Committee for Poultry, set up within the sponsoring company, is soon to focus its attention on this intended development and make the necessary decisions.

1 Basic requirements

1.1 Basic criteria for livestock production, hygiene, animal health

The livestock producer must meet basic criteria for welfare-friendly rearing, hygiene and animal health. The below mentioned basic criteria are determined as part of the **QS Agricultural Manual - Poultry Production** in the chapters listed below. The main emphasis of the animal welfare audit is on the monitoring of production within the livestock housing. A comprehensive document check shall only be carried out should there be signs of any deviations.

Welfare-friendly rearing, hygiene and animal health:

- Monitoring and Care of Livestock (3.6.1 [K.O.]
- General Farming Requirements (3.6.5 [K.O.]
- Shed Floor (3.6.6)
- Shed Climate, Temperature, Noise Pollution, Ventilation (3.6.7)
- Lighting (3.6.8)
- Alarm System (3.6.10 [K.O.]
- Coop Fittings and Appliances (3.6.13)
- Safety of Feeds and Cleanliness of Water (3.2.5)
- Hygiene of Drinking and Feeding Troughs and Technical Equipment for Feed (3.2.6)
- Buildings and Equipment (3.5.1)
- Hygiene on the Farm (3.5.2)
- On-farm Biosecurity Measures (3.5.3)
- Cleaning and Disinfection Measures (3.5.4)
- Medicines and Vaccines (3.3.3 [K.O.]

If anomalies are established - in particular with regard to injuries, feather pecking or beast skin lesions - countermeasures must be determined together with the veterinarian responsible for the livestock (plan of measures including deadlines). The livestock producer must implement this plan of measures by the deadlines set and document this.



If required, plan of measures and its implementation

1.2 Origin and Marketing: *Procurement of day-old-chicks*

For rearing of chicken and turkey all day-old chicks must be obtained from hatcheries with QS eligibility to deliver.

Turkey

For obtaining young fattening turkey from rearing companies these companies must be eligible to deliver into QS.

Verification of eligibility (e.g. hatcheries or rearing farms) to deliver in the QS scheme is performed in the software platform (www.qs-plattform.de).


 Livestock register, livestock record cards, hatchery delivery notes, excerpts from the QS database

1.3 Monitoring and Care of Livestock: *Measures to improve foot pad health*

The aim is the preservation of foot pad health in broilers and fattening turkeys. To this end, livestock producers commit to participate in an animal welfare monitoring programme. Slaughterhouse operations forward any company-specific results of the monitoring of foot pad lesions to their suppliers.

In order to protect foot pads and guard against diseases, measures are to be taken that ensure permanently loose, dry and soft bedding until the day livestock is moved out (depopulation day).

⇒1.6 Documentation of findings from slaughterhouse data

 Records regarding participation in animal welfare monitoring programme, documentation of data from slaughterhouse findings and if required, measures implemented by operation.

1.4 Handling of livestock when loading: *Instructions for preliminary destocking (only for broilers)*

Doors, gates and windows in the animal housing have to be darkened against the ingress of light. Depending on location or site, this can be achieved for example by using strip curtains or tunnels. Direct ingress of sunlight must be effectively prevented. Depending on location, time of day and orientation to the sun, measures shall need to be taken based on these. Covers must be attached in such a way that an adequate supply of fresh air is still guaranteed. When opening the loading doors, ventilation short-circuits are to be avoided where possible.

Appropriate means must be employed when thinning - for example use of partitions - to ensure that stress is kept to a minimum both for the animals being removed and those that remain.


The last dark phase provided for in the animal housing management plan is to be adapted to coincide with loading time. The supply of drinking water for the animals must be guaranteed until immediately before loading commences.

The loading doors are to be closed immediately after completion of pre-loading. New bedding is to be spread on the area from which the depopulated animals have been moved out. The same bedding material is to be used for this as had been spread at the start of the rearing period. Appropriate bedding material shall be kept in stock. Finally, prior to the continuation of the rearing process of the remaining animals, all alarm equipment shall be activated and checked.

 Records pertaining to the concept specific to the operation for implementing the handling instructions.

1.5 Proof of proficiency of the livestock farmer: *Proof of annual training of livestock farmer*

In addition to proof of competence, each livestock farmer must attend relevant, subject-specific further training measures at least **once every calendar year**. Appropriate certificates must be kept in this regard. **The proof has to be provided for the first time to the initial audit.**

 Certification relating to further training measures, such as confirmation of participation at specialist lectures

1.6 Documentation of Results from the Slaughtering Process: *Participation in animal welfare control plan*

Note: For every fattening cycle the operation must document the number of animals delivered. The information received from the slaughterhouse operation regarding the weight delivered for slaughter, fatalities during transport, as well as main reasons for rejection (findings) and the number of rejections is to be documented.

Broilers and turkeys

Livestock owners are obligated to take part in the animal welfare control programme. The central element of the animal welfare control programme is the systematic recording of indicators both in livestock and in slaughterhouse operations. The indicators have to be suitable for identifying need for action in order to improve animal welfare. The minimum indicators to be recorded are:

- Mortality in the livestock housing
- Foot pad changes (monitoring is carried out at the slaughterhouse)
- Fatalities due to transportation (monitoring is carried out at the slaughterhouse)

Turkeys

In addition to the listed indicators, the following shall be recorded with regard to turkey cocks

- ~~Breast skin changes (monitoring is carried out at the slaughterhouse).~~

With the mandatory participation of broiler and turkey producing operations in the animal welfare monitoring programme, results from the systematic recording of indicators, as well as the measures derived from these (e.g. amendment of parameters) will be documented.



Findings data, results of the indicators recorded, planned or implemented measures to improve animal welfare.

2 Compulsory elective criteria

2.1 Additional activity options

In addition to a loose and dry bedding, that must be furnished that way, that animals can pick, paw and dust bath in partition, at least one other changeable, consumable material must be constantly on offer as additional manipulable material from the second week of life, e.g. straw or hay in hay racks or baskets, other bedding material (such as granulated straw or wood shavings in bales) or other peckable objects (such as pecking blocks).

The changeable manipulable materials must provide an incentive for the livestock to engage with. This shall be given, if one of the following criteria is met:

- Peckable
- Movable

The behavioural enrichment materials have to be designed and affixed that they pose no increased injury risk to the animals.

For broilers a minimum of one object or item of manipulable material has to be provided for every or every part of 150 m² of usable floor space and for Turkeys every or every part of 400 m² usable floor space.

Should behavioural deviations occur (such as feather pecking and/or cannibalism) additional suitable materials must be offered immediately above and beyond those already available, which were not provided until the point in time, where behavioural deviations occurred in the flock. This material can be chosen freely and must be available on site at all times. Though these activity options are not allowed to be the identical activity options which are already used in the shed (litter as well as peckable and moveable activity options).

2.2 Bigger space allowances

The livestock producer must choose the amount of available space so that during the entire rearing process all livestock has easy access to feed and drinking water and the animals can move and exercise normal behavioural patterns such as dust bathing and wing beating and any animal which would like to move from a tightly restricted to a free area always has the opportunity to do so. The ventilation capacity is taken into account when calculating available space.

Broilers and turkeys

For broilers and turkeys the specifications listed in the following must be met and they must be evidenced for three successive rearing cycles using live weights and slaughter weights.

Broilers

Livestock producers must have evidence to show that stock densities have been planned not to exceed 35kg live weight per m² of usable floor space for three successive rearing cycles.

Turkeys

Livestock producers must have evidence to show that stock densities have been planned not to exceed 48kg live weight per m² of usable floor space for hens and 53 kg live weight per m² of usable floor space for cocks for three successive rearing cycles.



Slaughtering accounts, details concerning usable livestock housing floor space, livestock record cards, plan calculation for stock density, measures to control available space for existing stocks

3 Definitions and related documents

Definition:

Locations are always considered to comprise of: Each animal welfare regulation unit with separate VVO number in conjunction with the type of production, regardless of the number of livestock housing units/sheds/barns

Related documents

QS Agricultural Manual - Poultry Production, as amended

Animal welfare initiative *Initiative Tierwohl* programme manual, as amended

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