

Explanatory notes on the Initiative Tierwohl

Poultry

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The implementation of the requirements in the Initiative Tierwohl is monitored at least twice in unannounced audits in each year of the certificate period.

The concrete requirements and thus the basis for auditing are laid down in the criteria catalogue for poultry fattening of the Initiative Tierwohl and in the QS guidelines for poultry fattening in agriculture.

1. Requirements

General

Is it possible to participate with only part of a company or location?

All requirements always apply to all animals and sheds of a participating company. The company (= location) is defined by the disease-hygienic unit (e.g. in Germany by VVVO number) and the production scope (broiler production, turkey production). Each production scope can be registered separately and independently of other production scopes under an official registration number (in Germany VVVO number). Within one registration number and production scope, no sub-sector can be excluded from participation.

Is it possible to participate with locations that contain unused sheds where the criteria are then not implemented?

Yes, but the sheds must have been demonstrably shut down (supply lines for water and feed taken out of operation, ventilation system shut down, etc.).

Is compliance with national requirements mandatory for participation in the Initiative Tierwohl Poultry?

Yes. If livestock owners are subject to stricter, legal requirements that exceed the requirements of the Initiative Tierwohl, compliance with these requirements is checked in the audit. Fatteners must prove that they comply with the legally applicable requirements.

1.1 Basic criteria livestock farming, hygiene, animal health

What is evaluated?

It must be ensured that the husbandry of the animals complies with the law and is in line with good professional practice. During the company inspection, the focus is on the observation of the animals and the conditions in the shed; records and documents are consulted in a supportive manner if this is sensible or necessary to check the criterion.

The requirements correspond to the QS requirements, cf. the guideline Agriculture Poultry production.

How are the basic criteria evaluated?

The implementation of the individual basic criteria is evaluated on the basis of the evaluations "fulfilled" (A), "partially fulfilled" (C), "not fulfilled" (K.O.) and – conceivably for some basic requirements – "not applicable" (E) and documented in the audit report. The evaluation "not fulfilled" leads to withdrawal from the Initiative Tierwohl. In the case of the basic criteria, corrective actions with deadlines can be agreed upon for the evaluation "partially fulfilled". The nonconformities must be corrected immediately by the livestock owner, which is why a correspondingly short deadline must be set for the implementation of the measures.

Please note: From the release of audit report until the certification body has completed the corrective action, the location is blocked and therefore not eligible to deliver for the Initiative Tierwohl and not entitled to payment. If a corrective action is not remedied (in due time), the audit will be deemed "failed" after the deadline has expired and the company will lose its approval for the ITW.

Important: if injuries (e.g. feather pecking), lameness or severe soiling have occurred in the animals, which indicate a stock problem, countermeasures must be defined together with the (farm) veterinarian in charge of stock care (including deadlines). These corrective actions must already have been initiated and documented at the time of the animal welfare audit.

What criteria must a recovery compartment for turkeys fulfil?

Every turkey owner must have a way to separate sick birds from the others. For this purpose, recovery compartments must be set up that allow the separated animals to have visual contact with conspecifics. For the Initiative Tierwohl, it is not necessary for each part of a location to have its own convalescent compartment or convalescent pen; a convalescent compartment or convalescent pen can also be used jointly for several parts of a company; this arrangement must be plausibly demonstrated in the audit. Of course, the distance and transportability of the animals must be taken into account here. All criteria (e.g. additional employment opportunities) must also be complied with in recovery pens.

The space allowance for animals separated in recovery compartments must be in compliance at all times with a maximum of 45 kg live weight per m² of usable space.

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

What should be considered?

Day-old chicks from hatcheries or rearing turkeys for fattening may only be sourced from companies that are eligible to deliver for the QS scheme or a recognised standard at the time of delivery.

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

What should be considered?

The health of the foot pads is actively improved by maintaining a permanently loose, soft and dry bedding.

In order to protect foot pads and prevent diseases, it must be ensured that the animals have a permanently loose, dry and soft bedding until the day they are turned out.

What to do if the litter quality is not optimal?

It can happen that the quality of the litter is not optimal (e.g. moist, encrusted, caking). Reasons can be, among others, a leakage of the drinker line, high humidity/high degree of enthalpy, a broken air conditioning system or diarrhea of the animals. In this case, measures must be initiated to minimize the possible negative effects on the animals and their foot pad health.

In case of a low quality of the litter, the livestock owner has to explain the taken measures to improve the quality of litter to the auditor in a plausible way (written overview of the taken measures or verbal explanation).

Measures to improve the quality can be e. g. repair of the drinker line, treatment of animal diseases, refilling and mixing the litter at critical points or short time ventilation to reduce the air humidity.

What measures can help improve the foot pad health?

With the aim of maintaining good foot pad health, the livestock owner takes measures that are individually adapted to the respective company or flock. For this purpose, livestock owners have access to relevant management recommendations for maintaining foot pad health in fattening turkeys and broilers. These include:

1. preparing the shed before each pass

- Timely heating and control of the floor temperature (approx. 28 °C) before housing.
- Checking the functionality of the drinking troughs (water pressure and tightness)
- Observing the requirements for good litter quality and litter quantity - depending on the litter type
- Control of the humidity in the shed: for broiler, a relative humidity of at least 50 % at the beginning of fattening is to be aimed for. (Later in the fattening process, a humidity of over 80 % should be avoided).

2. start and rearing phase

- Observing an even distribution of animals in the shed (where applicable turkeys in a ring). Uniform illumination and temperature control play an important role
- If chick paper is used, it should be self-decomposing.
- Already in the first days after the chicks have been housed, attention must be paid to the minimum air change rate.
- Adjustment of the water supply to the age of the animals. This concerns in particular the height adjustment of the watering lanes as well as the water pressure.
- Regular control of the excrement consistence. If necessary, a farm veterinarian must be consulted.

3. measures to control the bedding humidity

- Refilling and working through the critical areas, especially around drinkers and troughs
- Shock ventilate to lower the humidity.

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

What should be considered?

Doors, gates and windows in the shed must be darkened against light incidence by light filters, blackout sheets or curtains (e.g. by means of strip curtains or tunnels). Depending on the solar radiation and sun orientation, further site-specific measures are required. Covers must be fitted in such a way that a sufficient supply of fresh air remains guaranteed.

There must be a plausible, up-to-date concept that describes the implementation of the farm-specific instructions for action.

1.5 Lighting programme for sheds with artificial lighting: *twilight phases* (only for broilers)

In which sheds must twilight phases be offered?

Livestock owners who provide artificial light in their sheds during activity periods must provide the animals with at least 15 minutes of twilight before and after the dark period.

How should the twilight phase be implemented?

The twilight phase is to be ensured with an automated lighting programme that, to end the dark phase, achieves the maximum required illuminance only after at least 15 minutes of twilight. For this purpose, the luminous intensity is continuously increased by dimming the lamps used. The same procedure applies vice versa for the required twilight phase before the dark phase begins.

What can be used to implement the twilight phase with artificial lighting?

The light sources used for lighting during activity periods must be dimmable and controlled by an automated lighting programme. It is not permissible to use non-dimmable light sources for the creation of twilight phases and to switch them off or on successively, e.g. by dividing them into different current or control circuits.

1.6 Proof of proficiency of the livestock owner: Proof of annual training of livestock owner

When and how often must the training be attended?

Livestock owners must attend a training course before the initial audit and then once in each subsequent calendar year. Further training that took place a maximum of 1 year (= 365 days) before the first programme audit can be recognized in the first programme audit.

If the first training course was completed in the previous year of the first programme audit (max. 365 days before the initial audit), a training course must also be attended in the calendar year of the first programme audit.

If a programme audit is carried out to terminate participation in the Initiative Tierwohl, the training certificate for the current calendar year must be available for this audit. Companies that terminate their participation in the Initiative Tierwohl by 31 March of a calendar year (= deregister in the database) do not have to provide proof of training for this calendar year. If participation continues beyond 31 March in the calendar year, the training must also be carried out for the current calendar year.

What should be considered?

In addition to the required proof of expertise (cf. QS Guideline Agriculture Poultry Production), livestock owners must participate in further training measures at least once per calendar year, which impart knowledge e.g. on husbandry management, supply regimes or legal requirements. The main areas of training are listed in the Guidelines for Poultry production in the areas of knowledge and skills for expert knowledge. Confirmations of attendance at training courses must be documented with information on the technical content as proof.

For the initial audit, participation for the current calendar year must be proven.

What must be the scope of the training?

The training must demonstrably comprise at least two content-filled hours (corresponds to a half-day event). Different training offers can also be added up.

Who must participate in a training course once a year?

At least one responsible employee or the livestock owner or the main livestock care taker of the location must always participate in a training event. This person must be designated as an animal handler (e.g. in the QS list for livestock care personnel). The certificate of attendance for the training event must be issued in the name of the livestock owner/employee. If a livestock owner/employee looks after several locations, the certificate can also be used for other locations.

The training of an external person (e.g. consultant) cannot be recognised, even if it is included in the list of animal caretakers. It is also not possible to split the training hours among several persons (e.g. four employees who each received 30 minutes of training).

Proof of employee knowledge

Livestock owners must ensure that all persons involved in the care or capture and loading of poultry have animal welfare knowledge and skills, including humane stunning and killing methods, in accordance with their duties and responsibilities.

Is it necessary to participate in training even if there is a prolonged unoccupied period?

Yes, participation in a training course is not dependent on shed occupancy. As long as the livestock owner participates in the Initiative Tierwohl and is registered in the database, he must attend a training course once per calendar year.

What does the proof of further training have to look like?

For each event, a personalised confirmation of participation must be presented as proof (person responsible for livestock farming). In addition to the name of the participant, the contents of the event must be documented on the certificate; it is recommended to indicate the duration of the training. The duration of the training of two hours can also be proven in another way (e.g. via a programme overview, invitation or similar).

What content must the training include?

The content must be directly related to animal welfare and animal protection. This may include topics on management, husbandry, animal health, feeding and climate control in relation to animal protection and welfare.

These include (uncompleted list):

- Professional events
- E-learning, webinars
- Training courses specially agreed with the specialist adviser or veterinarian
- Working groups

Possible contents for the training events are:

- Animal welfare appropriate stunning and emergency killing
- Recognising and interpreting animal signals
- Carrying out the animal observation
- Handling sick and injured animals
- Assessment for the transportability of poultry
- Feather pecking, prevention and measures in case of occurrence
- Use of activity material
- Improving hygiene management
- Structuring the enclosure environment

What does not represent training in accordance with the requirements?

The following are not taken into account

- Advice on business development (e.g. business management advice or construction advice)
- Shed tours as part of the advisory service, unless they are explicitly organised as a training measure
- Shed rounds in connection with veterinary stock control, unless they are expressly organised as a training measure
- Shed climate or drinking water checks
- Internal training for employees of the company
- Attendance at trade fairs or exhibitions
- Subscription to trade journals
- Membership in advisory rings
- Training courses that are not related to the registered branch of production (e.g. training on plant protection).

Who is allowed to hold training courses?

Training courses may be organised and held by all persons qualified to do so. These include, for example, coordinators, advisory organisations, veterinarians, expert advisors, etc. Approval by the Initiative Tierwohl is not required.

1.7 Participation in diagnostic data monitoring

What specifically must the livestock owner do and what must he pay attention to?

The livestock owner must report the mortality in the shed for each slaughter batch. The mortality and the findings independently collected by the official veterinarians at the abattoir as well as the transport-related losses are collected in a central database and regularly evaluated.

Every livestock owner must be aware of the animal health based on the findings determined, either via the QS info letter which he receives quarterly from his coordinator or online via the QS diagnostic data database (Vetproof).

What must the broiler fatteners do if action is required in the context of diagnostic data monitoring?

If conspicuous evaluation results in the QS info letter indicate a need for action, the livestock farmer is obliged to appoint an external consultant and to clarify the causes with him without delay. Once the causes of the conspicuous evaluation results have been established, the fattener must draw up a corrective actions report together with the advisor, which will enable the causes identified to be eliminated or deficiencies to be rectified without delay. **The time of implementation of each defined measure must be documented.**

How long until a corrective actions report must be created once the need for action has been identified?

In the event of conspicuous findings, proof of consultation and a corrective actions plan must be provided within 42 days (6 weeks) of the key date calculation. The QS info letter offers a corresponding corrective actions plan for animal health advice as a working aid.

A corrective actions plan and proof of advice can also be drawn up independently of the evaluation results of the QS info letter if anomalies are detected in relevant slaughter batches. These can also be used as evidence in the audit.

What must a corrective actions plan for animal health advice at least include?

The documentation of a corrective actions plan must contain at least the following information:

- Location name (shed) and official registration number
- First name/last name of external consultant with details of the consulting company
- Date of consultation (date)
- Details (with specific reference) of cause/reason and the conspicuous findings
- Description of the need for action as plausible measure(s)
- Start of implementation of the measure(s)

Recommendation: If the QS quarterly monitoring (see QS info letter) has identified a need for action due to conspicuous slaughter findings, the development of these findings should be considered further as part of the farm-specific animal health advice with the next slaughter result reports or QS info letter.

Who may carry out the consultations on an individual company basis?

Individual farm consultations may be organised and held by all persons qualified to do so. These include, for example, advisors from the fattening circles, advisory organisations, veterinarians, feed consultants, etc. Approval by the Initiative Tierwohl is not required.

1.8 Additional activity options

What should be considered?

The changeable manipulable materials provide an incentive for the animals to occupy themselves with them. For this purpose, the chosen material is consumable and it is at least either pickable or movable.

In addition to loose and dry bedding, which must be such that the animals can peck, scratch and dust-bathe in parts, at least one other changeable material that is consumable, such as straw/hay in pens/baskets or other pickable objects, is constantly offered as additional activity material from the second week of life.

Straw, hay or wood shavings bales in compressed form also serve as suitable activity material - also on bedding made of the same material - as long as these materials have not reached the given floor level of the bedding due to consumption.

The number of activity materials provided must be sufficient in relation to the usable shed space. The employment material must be evenly distributed in the shed and easily accessible for each animal.

For broilers, at least one pecking element or activity material must be provided per 100 m² or part thereof of usable floor space (sufficient for approx. 2,000 birds).

For turkeys, at least one pecking element or activity material must be provided per 400 m² or part thereof of usable floor space.

In the audit, it is checked how much additional activity material is available to the animals in relation to the usable shed area and whether the number of activity materials per 100 m² or part thereof for broilers or per 400 m² or part thereof for turkeys is sufficient.

Further activity material for use against behavioural abnormalities

If behavioural abnormalities (e.g. feather pecking and/or cannibalism) occur despite the continuous use of additional activity material, further suitable activity material beyond that already offered must be offered immediately. This activity material must not have been offered to the flock prior to the time of the behavioural abnormalities observed. It must not be consumable or movable but at least pickable. However, it must be available at all times on the company for immediate use in the shed.

1.9 Bigger space allowances

What should be considered?

The space allowance for each housing group in a shed must be chosen in such a way that during the entire housing period all animals can easily reach food and drinking water, the animals can move around and perform normal behavioural patterns (e.g. dust bathing and wing flapping). Any animal wishing to move from a confined area to an open area must always be able to do so. Ventilation capacity must be taken into account when planning space allowance.

Are additional levels allowed to increase space allowance?

Yes. The installation of an additional level to increase the space allowance is possible if this area is also fully usable in the sense of a usable shed area (cf. definition).

How can outdoor climate areas be taken into account in the space allowance?

Broiler

An outdoor climate area, which is freely accessible in the shed at the latest when the stocking density limit is reached, can be added to the usable area at 100 %.

Turkeys

If an outdoor climate area is permanently available to the animals, if possible from the sixth week of life and at the latest from the ninth week of life, the usable area of the outdoor climate area can be allocated 50 % of the permissible stocking density applicable to the Initiative Tierwohl. The usable area of the outdoor climate area is limited to a maximum of 25 % of the shed area.

Provided that the relevant stocking densities specified in the QS Guidelines are not exceeded in the fattening run, 100 % of the area of the outdoor climate area can be counted as usable shed area.

Under what condition may outdoor climate areas be used?

Outdoor climate areas available to the animals must always be littered without gaps.

What exceptions allow access to the outdoor climate area to be restricted or closed off?

If there is a veterinary indication or if the environment is covered with snow or if the temperatures in the outdoor enclosure are very cold (several days below freezing point ($< 0^{\circ} \text{C}$)), access to the outdoor enclosure may be restricted for a certain period or closed for the period specified by the veterinarian.

What should be considered in planning and stocking density calculations for compliance with the space allowance?

For planning and stocking density calculation, three consecutive passes are always considered.

In the case of several marketings within one run, only the pre-destockings for themselves or likewise the main destockings for themselves are always used for comparison.

On average of three consecutive runs, the stocking density per herd group (in kg live weight per m^2 usable shed area) must be taken into account at the time of marketing (proof of slaughter settlement).

Broiler

On average over three consecutive runs, the stocking density must be 35 kg live weight per m^2 of usable floor space per herd group in a pen and must not be exceeded.

Turkeys

On average over three consecutive runs, the stocking density must be 48 kg live weight per m^2 usable shed area per flock group of a shed for hens and 53 kg live weight per m^2 usable shed area per flock group of a shed for cocks and must not be exceeded.

If hens or cocks are temporarily kept in a shed as flock groups, the space allowance for both sexes must be planned and complied with separately - i.e. the cock passages for themselves and the hen passages for themselves. If hens and cocks are fattened alternately as flock groups in one shed, the successive passes per sex must also be considered. This also applies if the individual runs of one sex are interrupted by runs of the other sex.

The maximum stocking density (according to the **QS Guideline Agriculture Poultry Fattening** or lower due to applicable regulations or national provisions) may not be exceeded at any time. Such an excess - even in a single run - cannot be compensated for in the average of three runs.

Notes: *If, in exceptional cases, a second pre-destocking of the herd group takes place per company in one run before the main destocking (final destocking), this does not necessarily have to be observed, as there is rarely comparability of three consecutive runs.*

Definition of usable floor space: *This refers to the usable area that is accessible to the animals of a herd group as a littered area at all times. The area under the supply lines (troughs and drinking troughs) can be added to the usable floor space if they are adjustable in height and it is ensured that troughs and drinking troughs are always at least (from the 21st day of life) at the back height of the animals with unhindered feed and water intake.*

Raised levels for turkeys may also be accepted as perforated levels if they and the level below can be used in an animal-friendly manner. The minimum height of the raised level must be at least the back height of the animals. When calculating the usable floor space of a flock group, it should be noted that the raised perforated levels may only be included with a maximum of 10 % of the floor space. Example calculation: raised levels 60 m²; shed floor area 500 m² => calculation of usable shed area: 500 m²+50 m² (10 % of 500) = 550 m²

What do fattening farmers have to prove for the first programme audit?

In the first programme audit, plausible and written evidence must be provided that the space allowance is planned in such a way that the maximum live weight per m² is not exceeded for each group of herds with the stock available on the company. If, at the time of a follow-up audit, less than three runs have been marketed from a shed, plausible, comprehensible planning calculations must be available. Precautions taken to ensure compliance with the space allowance must be plausible, traceable and documented.

How is the increased space allowance calculated for Austrian fattening farms and what stocking densities are accepted for the Initiative Tierwohl Poultry?

Broiler

For the calculation of the stocking density for broiler, two calculations are made due to the different definition of the shed area. For the calculation by definition according to Austrian law, the available shed area as gross area per flock group is used as a reference value to the live weight. This also takes into account those shed areas that are available but cannot be used, e.g. those that are not accessible to the animals below the supply lines. In addition, raised levels with an area of max. 10 % of the available shed area can be taken into account to increase the space allowance. On average over three consecutive runs, the nationally defined upper stocking limit of 30 kg live weight per m² of shed area and herd group must not be exceeded.

For the calculation according to the requirements of the Initiative Tierwohl Poultry, only the usable and littered shed area that is actually available to the animals is used as a reference value for the live weight (cf. definition of usable shed area). The average stocking density of 35 kg live weight per m² and flock group must not be exceeded at any time during three consecutive runs.

Turkeys

The stocking density is calculated according to the requirements of the Initiative Tierwohl Poultry. On average over three consecutive runs, the nationally defined maximum stocking density of 40 kg live weight per m² of usable shed area and flock group must be complied with.

1.10 Shed climate check

What is the maximum time limit for the first programme audit since the last shed climate check?

Shed climate checks that were carried out a maximum of 1 year (= 365 days) ago at the time of the audit can be recognised in the first programme audit.

Shed climate checks must always be carried out in occupied sheds. Especially in the case of new sheds, the time of implementation should be chosen in such a way that the shed climate check can be carried out after the first housing, but before the time of implementation. If not all sheds are occupied at the time of implementation, the necessary checks must be carried out as soon as the animals are housed. In the audit, it must be proven that the sheds have not actually been used by the time the animals are brought in and that the checks have been commissioned in a correspondingly timely manner. If the results are not yet available, they must be submitted within a short period of time.

Do companies that already participate and wish to continue participating must have a new shed climate check for 2024 carried out before the last confirmation audit for the 2021-2023 programme and the new programme audit for 2024?

Companies that carry out their last confirmation audit and the new programme audit together (at the same time) do not need a shed climate check for 2024 at the time of the audit. It is sufficient that the shed climate check is carried out in the calendar year 2024. Proof of this will then be provided in the next audit in 2025.

If companies carry out the last confirmation audit for the programme 2021-2023 and the new programme audit for 2024 at separate times, the shed climate check for the calendar year 2024 must already be available in the last confirmation audit. The same check can also be used for the new 2024 programme audit.

When and how often must the shed climate checks be carried out?

A shed climate check must be carried out before the initial audit and then once in each calendar year. If the first check was carried out in the previous year of the first programme audit (max. 365 days before the initial audit), a check must also be carried out for the calendar year of the first programme audit. The result must be documented.

If a programme audit is carried out to terminate participation in the Initiative Tierwohl, the shed climate check for the current calendar year must be available for this programme audit.

Companies that terminate their participation in the Initiative Tierwohl by 31 March of a calendar year (= deregistration in the database) do not have to carry out a shed climate check for that calendar year. If participation in the calendar year continues beyond 31 March, the shed climate check must also be carried out for the current calendar year.

Who implements the shed climate checks?

External experts who have registered with the operating company of the initiative. All experts approved for the shed climate check are published on a list at www.initiative-tierwohl.de; you are free to choose from this list.

How many shed climate checks need to be carried out?

As a **minimum**, one check per shed is required.

Are climate checks recognised that were implemented by experts before their registration and publication in the Initiative Tierwohl list?

A check can only be recognised from the admission date of the respective expert. Experts must be on the list. The approval date in the list is decisive here.

How exactly does the shed climate check work?

For this, the expert has a detailed description with a corresponding checklist. The focus is on the sensory test with the assessment of the shed air and the observation of animal behaviour. Subsequently, a functional test of the ventilation system (servomotors, temperature sensors, etc.) is carried out according to the specifications. In addition, the alarm systems are checked.

What happens if deviations are found?

If deviations are discovered during the shed climate check, they must be listed and, if necessary, further measurements and a review of the dimensioning of the ventilation system must be carried out. In the event of deficiencies, a corrective actions report must be drawn up with the expert (including deadlines). Corrective actions must already have been initiated and documented for the initial audit.

What must be presented in the audit?

In the audit, the certificate for the shed climate check (issued by an approved expert) must be shown; in addition, if applicable, the list of deficiencies with corrective actions report as well as proof that the corrective actions have been started or implemented in due time.

Does the original checklist have to be used for the shed climate check?

It is possible to expand the original checklist, but the basic structure and form must be preserved and recognisable.

If a corrective actions report is created, deadlines must be set (either defining the time period or the date of implementation).

Note: for the exact implementation of the shed climate check (e.g. sample distribution), see "Implementation instructions for the shed climate check".

What type of alarm system must be present on a company?

In the case of electrically operated ventilation systems, a functioning alarm device must be present on each company. For this purpose, e.g. either a signal horn or a signal light or a telephone dialler must be present. Which type of device (or which combination of devices) makes sense for a company must be decided on a case-by-case basis. It is crucial that a power failure or failure of the ventilation system is noticed immediately in any case (e.g. also during the night hours or in remote sheds).

1.11 Drinking water check

What is the maximum time limit for the first programme audit since the last drinking water check?

Drinking water checks dating back a maximum of 1 year (= 365 days) at the time of the audit can be recognised in the first programme audit.

The samples for the microbiological examination of the drinking water check must always be taken in occupied sheds. Particularly in the case of new sheds, the time of transfer should be chosen in such a way that the drinking water check can be carried out after the first housing, but before the time of transfer. If not all sheds are occupied at the time of implementation, the necessary checks must be carried out as soon as the animals are

housed. In the audit, it must be demonstrated that the sheds have not actually been used by the time the animals are brought in and that the checks have been commissioned in a correspondingly timely manner. If the results are not yet available, they must be submitted within a short period of time.

Special situation broiler:

Due to the short production cycle in broiler production, it can happen that the company has had the drinking water check carried out on the date of housing (usually = implementation date), but that the analysis results of the drinking water test have not yet been sent back to the company by the laboratory at the time of the audit. In this case, the results of the drinking water analysis can be submitted later by the company.

Do companies that already participate and wish to continue to participate have to have a new drinking water check for 2024 carried out before the last confirmation audit for the 2021-2023 programme and the new programme audit for 2024?

Companies that carry out their last confirmation audit and new programme audit together (at the same time) do not need a drinking water check for 2024 at the time of the audit. It is sufficient that the drinking water check is carried out in the calendar year 2024. Proof of this will then be provided in the next audit in 2025.

If companies carry out the last confirmation audit for the 2021-2023 programme and the new programme audit for 2024 at separate times, the drinking water check for the 2024 calendar year must already be available in the last confirmation audit. The same check can also be used for the new 2024 programme audit.

When and how often must the drinking water checks be carried out?

A drinking water check must be carried out before the initial audit and then once in each subsequent calendar year. If the first check was carried out in the previous year of the first programme audit (max. 365 days before the initial audit), a check must also be carried out for the calendar year of the first programme audit. The drinking water check passes through sampling and water analysis.

If a programme audit is carried out to terminate participation in the Initiative Tierwohl, the drinking water check for the current calendar year must be available for this audit.

Companies that terminate their participation in the Initiative Tierwohl by 31 March of a calendar year (= deregister in the database) do not have to carry out a drinking water check for that calendar year. If participation in the calendar year continues beyond 31 March, the drinking water check must also be carried out for the current calendar year.

Who implements the sampling?

External competent persons who have previously registered with the operating company. All experts approved for sampling are published on a list at www.initiative-tierwohl.de; you are free to choose from this list.

If water from the company's own well is also used as drinking water (i.e. used for humans and animals), the official drinking water monitoring can also be used for the physical chemical drinking water check, provided that the specified parameters have been examined and the examination result clearly shows that it is an official sample. In this case, the sampler does not need to be registered with the Initiative Tierwohl.

The criteria catalogue (Annex 2) describes at which location and how many water samples must be taken. The quantity of samples as well as the respective location and date of sampling must be documented by the sampler in a protocol.

Are drinking water checks carried out by samplers prior to their registration and publication of Initiative Tierwohl in the Initiative Tierwohl list recognised?

A check can only be recognised from the approval date of the respective sampler. Samplers must be on the list. The date in the list is decisive here. The first sampling including the analysis result must be available at the time of implementation or at the latest at the time of the initial audit.

Can an official drinking water check be recognised (chemical-physical examination)?

The drinking water check can be recognised with appropriate proof of an official sampling that was taken no more than 365 days before the initial audit or once per calendar year thereafter.

Note: for the exact implementation of drinking water sampling, see "Implementation instructions for drinking water sampling".

How exactly does the drinking water analysis work?

The drinking water analysis can be commissioned from any laboratory qualified to do so. No approval of the laboratories is currently required.

The criteria catalogue (Appendix 2) describes the parameters for which the drinking water must be tested.

For the parameter total plate count it is recommended to analyse the sample at 30 °C.

A microbial examination is necessary for water from the public drinking water network as well as when using own water. The physical chemical examination can be omitted for water from the public drinking water network .

What happens if defects are found?

If the analysis reveals that the assessment values are exceeded or fallen short of, a corrective actions report must be drawn up (including deadlines). These corrective actions must already have been initiated and documented for the initial audit. The aim is to provide the most suitable drinking water (= most important feedstuff!). If the values are not complied with, measures must therefore be initiated to reach the orientation values as quickly as possible. In the meantime, negative consequences for the animals must be kept as low as possible.

If the limit value for the degree of hardness (<21° dH) is not complied with, the animals must be checked by the veterinarian. If the veterinarian finds health problems or reduced water intake of the animals due to the water quality, measures must be taken to comply with the hardness level. If the veterinarian does not detect any health impairment or reduced water intake, no further action is required.

Do each water source and location number (e.g. according to VVVO) need a separate investigation?

There must be one physical chemical analysis (or several in the case of several water sources) for each location number and production scope. If several locations (= several location numbers or several production scopes) are fed from a common water source, one physical chemical analysis is sufficient.

This does not apply to microbiological testing: here, one sample per shed must be taken and analysed by the registered sampler for each location number and production scope. If several sheds belong to one location number, a sample must be taken from each shed.

What must be presented in the audit?

In the audit, the certificate for the drinking water analysis (issued by a laboratory) must be shown, as well as the sampling protocol of the sampler. The following information must be documented in the sampling protocol:

Name, address, location number of the company, sampling point (location of the tap or drinking nipple/drinking basin), name of the sampler, date of sampling. If this information is included in the laboratory's drinking water analysis certificate, it can be used as a record. In addition, the corrective actions report and proof that the corrective actions have been implemented in due time must be available.

Gesellschaft zur Förderung des Tierwohls in der Nutztierhaltung mbH (Society for the Promotion of Animal Welfare in Farm Animal Husbandry)

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