

Further development of the organic poultry production - requirements for amending EC Regulation on organic production

A keystone of organic farming is the species-specific animal husbandry. According to the EU Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, it is characterized by the fact that species-appropriate behaviour can be enabled in poultry houses and in open air runs. Ecological damage resulting from animal husbandry should be avoided (article 14 b). Suitable breeds for organic livestock production should be used (article 14 a) and c)). Other principles are the renunciation of mutilation (article 14 b) as well as the feeding of livestock with organic feed, adapted to their needs (article 14 d).

Over the past few years, experience in organic poultry production has shown that further development of the Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 is needed to meet the requirements of the Council Regulation No 834/2007, to prevent unharmonized interpretation and implementation of the organic regulation in the EU, and to fill existing gaps resulting from the dynamic development of the sector.

The German associations of organic agriculture support the following changes of the organic regulation:

- The currently lacking specific regulations for young poultry rearing and parent flocks, as well as for quails, should be completed.
- The use of hatching eggs from organic poultry should be mandatory.
- Organic poultry should be kept in houses which provide different climatic zones. These should include a warm indoor area and an unheated indoor area (wintergarden) that can be used for pawing, along with access to an open air run. During the night, the stocking density in poultry houses should be higher than during their activity time. The regulation should also deal with multilevel systems in detail. During times of activity, fattening poultry should be given more space.
- In future young poultry, parent animals and fattening poultry should be able to use a protected open air run as a substitute for pasture, introducing the corresponding hygienic requirements and climatic conditions to create an environment that is animal friendly and which protects the soil.
- The number of production units at a location should be limited.
- Transition rules for existing farms should be adopted.

Suggestions for revision

No.	Topic	Suggestion for modification
1	New rules	
1.1	Rules for the keeping of organic parent flocks and organic hatcheries	<p>The keeping of parent flocks, hatcheries and the rearing of young poultry are joint components of organic poultry farming. To satisfy the different requirements of the animals in different phases of life and to avoid distortions of competition, uniform rules have to be established in the organic regulation for each of these areas.</p> <p>Organic hatcheries have to be included in the organic regulation. Corresponding specifications have to be developed until 2014.</p> <p>In order to make the supply situation in different EU countries transparent, and the use of organic hatching eggs and organic young poultry easier, we suggest a database for organic poultry and hatching eggs, similar to that which already exists for seeds.</p> <p>Until the following dates, hatching eggs and their parent flocks must originate from organic keeping for all species:</p> <p>From 2018 for organic hatching eggs</p> <p>From 2021 at least three generations must be kept under organic conditions</p>
1.2	Rules for young poultry	<p>The organic regulation should include special rules for the keeping of young poultry for the purpose of egg production.</p> <p>Young poultry should be kept in a house with climatic distinctions like all other organic poultry. Due to the special requirements of the young animals, a protected open air run can serve as a pasture substitute if veterinary and epidemic hygienic requirements prevent the use of pasture. The protected open air run has to be accessible after the 70th day of life at the latest and must be completely covered with litter.</p> <p>We suggest the following regulations for young poultry rearing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A maximum of 480 animals per hectare of agricultural area - A maximum of 6,600 pullets per poultry house - A maximum of 13,200 pullets (2 flocks) per production unit - Confinement rings are permitted up to the 21st day of life - Until the 70th day of life a maximum of 16 pullets/m² of usable area - Until the 71-126th day of life a maximum of 13 laying hens/m² of usable area - A maximum of 24 pullets/m² of warm house area - A maximum of 25 pullets/m² in the outside climate area - A maximum of 8.55 pullets /m² usable area (explanation: 13 pullets in the warm house area and 25 pullets in the outside climate area = 8.55) - A perch length of at least 8 cm per animal until the 70th day of life and at least 12cm until the 126th day of life - Pop holes of 3m per 1000 animals - Wall openings into the wintergarden 2m per 1000 animals (corresponding to 2/3 of the pop holes)

		<p>Existing farms must adapt to these requirements within 3 years of the regulation entering into force.</p> <p>For existing houses, more than 2 flocks per production unit are permitted for a transition period of 15 years.</p>
1.3	Rules for the rearing of fattening poultry	<p>The organic regulation should include precise regulations for the rearing of fattening poultry.</p> <p>Within the first weeks of life, during the so-called pre-rearing phase, young fattening poultry can be raised in warm houses without a wintergarden and without access to pasture due to their need for higher temperatures.</p> <p>We suggest the following regulations for the pre-rearing phase of fattening poultry:</p> <p>A maximum flock size:</p> <p>2 x 4,800 fattening chicken</p> <p>2 x 2,500 turkeys</p> <p>2 x 2,500 geese</p> <p>2 x 8,000 ducks</p> <p>2 x 8,000 guinea fowls</p> <p>A maximum of 2 flocks per production unit</p> <p>Stocking density: a maximum of 18 kg /m² house area for all species of fattening poultry</p> <p>Raised seating levels for 30% of the fattening animals</p> <p>Maximum pre-rearing duration:</p> <p>Fattening chicks: 28 days (20 animals/m²)</p> <p>Turkeys: 42 days (10 animals/m²)</p> <p>Geese: 28 days (10 animals/m²)</p> <p>Ducks: 28 days (15 animals/m²)</p> <p>Guinea fowls: 28 days (20 animals/m²)</p> <p>Transition period for existing houses: 3 years</p>
1.4	Rules for quails	<p>The laying behaviour of quails differs from the behaviour of laying hens. The quails' laying time is in the afternoon for instance and they use partly-protected pawing areas on the ground as nests. This is why special regulations should be included in the organic regulation for the keeping of quails (fattening and laying quails) since those gain market significance while they require different specifications than the other fattening poultry.</p> <p>Quails are kept in houses with climatic distinctions with a protected open air run (unroofed outdoor area).</p> <p>Since quails lay their eggs unanimously in the afternoon, the outdoor area should be kept closed from 2pm.</p> <p>The house should be equipped in a way that facilitates the quail-specific behaviour.</p> <p>Usable area: 15 animals or 3.0 kg/m²</p> <p>Warm house area: 30 animals or 6.6 kg/m²</p> <p>Wintergarden area 30 animals or 6.6 kg/m²</p>

		<p>Protected open air run (unroofed open air run): 15 animals/m² or 3 kg/m²</p> <p>Pawing area: at least 50% of the accessible warm house area</p> <p>Nest area: 1m² nest area for 175 quails</p> <p>Transition period for existing houses: 3 years</p>
2	Poultry houses	
2.1	Poultry houses with different climatic areas	<p>Stationary poultry houses consist of a closed warm area and a wintergarden. The housing areas have to be defined in the farm's management plan. The wintergarden is credited completely to the house area. All areas of the poultry houses with different climatic areas are freely accessible during the poultry's activity phase. Access to the wintergarden can be reduced during night resting hours as long as this is necessary for the climate control in the house and as long as the stocking densities in the warm house comply with the organic regulation.</p> <p>The poultry house with different climatic areas ensures the animals' access to outside climate conditions during their activity time. Even on days when the animals do not use the access to the outdoor areas due to bad weather conditions, the wintergarden ensures intensive contact to natural light and fresh air. These spaces are particularly animal-friendly: They increase the welfare and vitality of animals. It is an important component of the preventive health considerations. Since the animals do not use the wintergarden during their resting phase but stay in the warm house, access to it can be reduced at night to facilitate the climate control in the warm house.</p>
2.2	Wintergarden	<p>The wintergarden is not subject to the climate control of the warm house area (unheated indoor area). It is roofed, delimited by suitable materials such as fine-meshed wire fences. It has multiple, evenly distributed pop holes along the entire length of the inner and outer wall and is covered with pawing material. The person in charge should have direct access to it, be able to stand upright and see clearly.</p> <p>The wintergarden is part of the poultry house and must be accessible for the entire activity time. The access can however be restricted during the night's rest.</p> <p>Provided that the wintergarden merges into a protected open air run which should be accredited as pasture substitute, it is not attributable to the area of the open air run substitute. The division of space has to be documented in the management plan.</p> <p>The wintergarden is particularly animal-friendly, it increases the welfare and vitality of animals, and is an important component of the preventive health considerations. In Germany, this has been mandatory for newly built conventional free-range houses since 2006. Organic poultry keeping should not remain behind this standard and should establish the wintergarden as a part of the poultry house with different climatic areas.</p>
2.3	Stocking densities for fattening poultry	<p>18 kg/m² of usable area during activity time (warm house and outside climate area)</p> <p>A maximum of 24 kg/m² of warm house area during resting time at night</p> <p>These regulations apply to new buildings. There should be a 10 year transition period for existing houses.</p>
2.4	Stocking density for laying hens	<p>A maximum of 6 laying hens/m² usable area during activity time</p> <p>A maximum of 12 laying hens/m² wintergarden area</p> <p>The regulation for the stocking density in the wintergarden applies to new</p>

		buildings. Transition period for existing houses: 10 years.
2.5	Multilevel systems	<p>Organic poultry houses can have multilevel systems. A maximum of three aviary levels may be positioned directly one above the other.</p> <p>The distance to the wintergarden or to the run may be a maximum of 12m. At least 1/3 of the usable area in the warm house must be a pawing area.</p> <p>During rest at night, the accessible area can be limited to the warm area if the maximum stocking density is not exceeded in the warm area.</p>
2.6	Stocking density in multilevel systems for laying hens	<p>Usable area: 6 laying hens/m²</p> <p>Warm house floor area: 15 laying hens/m²</p> <p>These regulations apply to new buildings. 10 years transition period for existing houses.</p>
2.7	Minimum sizes for wall openings in the house and for pop holes	<p>For pop holes (between the wintergarden and pasture areas) 1 regular metre is required for 150 chickens (laying hens) or for 525 kg (fattening poultry). The wall openings in the house (between warm house and wintergarden) should be calculated in a way that they have the length of 2/3 of the size of the pop holes to the outdoor space.</p> <p>The wall openings in the house must be open during the animals' complete activity time. If they are closed during night's rest, an automatic opening is to be provided. In case of strong frost the wall openings in the house may be reduced by up to 50%, even during the day.</p> <p>The pop hole size should not be fixed according to the house size but according to the number of animals. This amendment is more practical and also makes it possible to use existing buildings for organic poultry keeping.</p> <p>The wall openings in the inside area of the house can be smaller than the openings to the outdoor area. As the animals are protected in the inside area, escape situations are unlikely. As the animals stay in the warm house during their resting time at night, the wall openings within the house can be closed at this time to facilitate the climate control. It must be guaranteed however that the wall openings are opened automatically with the beginning of the activity phase.</p> <p>Explanation:</p> <p>4m pop holes for 100m² of usable area (according to article 12 3 (d) EC Regulation 889/2008):</p> <p>Laying hens: for 600 animals 4m - > 1m for 150 laying hens</p> <p>Fattening poultry: for 2100 kg 4m - > for 525 kg 1m</p>
2.8	Mobile houses	<p>A mobile house must be moved several times a year during growing season so there is always fresh growth at their disposal.</p> <p>Mobile fattening houses must be moved at least after every fattening cycle.</p>
2.9	Stocking densities for fattening poultry in mobile houses	<p>For mobile houses over 150m² no separate specification is required. The same regulations as for stationary houses apply.</p> <p>For houses of less than 150m² a 24 kg/m² house floor area applies.</p>
3	Open air run	
3.1	Protected open	The protected open air run can complete the poultry keeping system and can be offered voluntarily as a protected part of the run. However it can

	air run	also be accepted as a run substitute to meet the requirements of a special location (vegetation duration, soil type, etc.) or hygienic conditions as long as certain minimum requirements are fulfilled. The protected open air run can be roofed, covered by a net and have a solid floor. It can also be a specially managed open air run near the house. The open air run can in general serve as a full run substitute for young poultry and parent animals. For fattening poultry it can be used as a full run substitute during the vegetation dormancy in winter.
3.2	Stocking densities in the protected open air run as a run substitute	<p>Provided that the protected open air run serves as a run substitute for reasons of soil conservation or for hygienic reasons, it must be possible that all animals are outside the house at the same time. The following minimum sizes must be kept:</p> <p>Young hens: A maximum of 21 kg/m²</p> <p>Parent animals: A maximum of 10 animals/m² or 21 kg/m²</p> <p>Fattening poultry: A maximum of 21 kg/m²</p> <p>For fattening poultry it should be possible to use a run substitute in winter if the pasture cannot be used for reasons of hygiene and soil conservation.</p> <p>For young poultry (rearing of poultry for breeding and egg production) and parent animals, the possibility of using a protected open air run as a substitute shall exist all year round to meet hygienic requirements.</p>
3.3	Open air run sizes for laying hens in stationary houses	<p>For the regeneration of vegetation the open air run area can be temporarily subdivided. In this case the open air run can also be less than 4m² for laying hens. The minimum area must be 2.5m².</p> <p>The practice of pasture rotation should remain for hygienic reasons and for the regeneration of the vegetation.</p>
3.4	Open air run sizes for laying hens in mobile houses	In case of mobile houses for laying hens the open air run can also be less than 4m ² per laying hen. The minimum area must be 1.5m ² if the house is moved every two weeks.
3.5	Open air run sizes for fattening chicks	<p>The minimum open air run size for fattening chicks has to be reduced to 2m² per fattening chick.</p> <p>The previous 4m² are not used. 2m² are a completely sufficient pasture.</p>
3.6	Run distances	<p>As experience shows poultry do not use open air runs that are far apart, they have to be created in a way so that laying hens do not need to cover a distance of more than 150m inside the open air run.</p> <p>For ducks and fattening chicks a maximum distance of 80m applies (provided that a minimal open air run size of 2m² is fixed).</p> <p>For turkeys the maximum run distance is 150m.</p> <p>For geese no specification should be adopted since these can also be held as flock stock.</p> <p>Existing stationary houses must be adapted to this regulation within 10 years of the regulation entering into force.</p>
4	Farm sizes	
4.1	Production unit	<p>A location is a holding (a control unity).</p> <p>A location can have several production units. A production unit corresponds to a poultry house. The house can shelter several flocks in several</p>

		<p>compartments.</p> <p>The minimum distance between the houses results from the unhindered use of the open air areas.</p> <p>A view protection has to be attached between the individual flocks/ compartments which reaches at least 80cm above the highest resting or movement opportunities of the animals. Confinement rings and further subdivision units are excluded.</p>
4.2	Maximum size of production units	<p>The keeping of poultry at a location should be limited to the following animal numbers:</p> <p>Production unit laying hens: 12,000 laying hens</p> <p>Production unit parent animals: 6,000 parent animals</p> <p>Production unit fattening poultry: 9,600 fattening chicks 2,500 turkeys 2,500 geese 8,000 ducks 8,000 guinea fowls 2,000 quails</p> <p>Transition period for existing houses: 10 years</p>
5	Other topics	
5.1	Operations on poultry	<p>Any operations on poultry such as beak trimming or castration should be clearly excluded by the regulation. This also excludes the keeping of capons.</p>
5.2	Veterinary treatment – withdrawal period	<p>For the use of chemically synthesised allopathic medicinal products, the organic regulation must clearly monitor how long the withdrawal period has to be set if it is indicated by the producer as "zero days".</p> <p>That means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For remedies against endoparasites and for vaccinations the waiting time has to be 0 days. - All other chemically synthesised allopathic medicine demand a 48 hour withdrawal period. <p>Currently different implementation within the EU is leading to distortions of competition.</p>
5.3	Feeding	<p>A separate offering of whole grains should be carried out daily to promote animal-specific behaviour.</p>
5.4	Feeding	<p>Brewer's yeast is not regarded as an ingredient of agricultural origin and therefore is not imputed in the calculation of the percentage of organic compounds in the feed rations.</p>
5.5	Feeding	<p>Customary organic acids have to be allowed for the diminution of the drying of seeds for fodder.</p>

5.6	Feeding	Bacterium proteins should be allowed as a high-quality protein source for monogastric animals to improve their protein supply. The ingredients of the nutrient solutions with which the proteins are extracted should be 100% organic.
5.7	Feeding	Fly maggots should be allowed as a further protein source.
5.8	Manuring	The control obligation is extended to companies which sell organic farmyard manure. If the organic farmyard manure is transported on behalf of an organic company, no control of the transport company is required.

Definitions for the calculation of the poultry house areas

Usable area (accessible area) (begehbare Fläche): The usable area is the complete accessible net area freely available to the animals in the warm house and the wintergarden including the usable area of the raised levels in multilevel systems. In accordance with guideline 1999/74/ EC it is a surface "at least 30cm wide with a floor slope not exceeding 14%, with headroom of at least 45 cm. The nesting areas are not part of the usable area."

Warm house area (Warmstallfläche): Describes the complete available net area in the warm house (warm house floor area including raised levels).

Wintergarden area (Kaltscharrraumfläche): Describes the net surface in the wintergarden available to the animals.

House floor area (Stallfläche): Described as (net-) ground floor area in all areas of the house (warm house and wintergarden) which is freely accessible for the animals.

Warm house floor area (Warmstallfläche): Describes the part of the net ground floor area in the warm house which is freely accessible for the animals. So raised levels are excluded.

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