

## Nordic Position Paper – Organic Poultry regulation – August 2018

### Poultry – Gallus Gallus

#### Definitions

**Pullets** means young animals of the *Gallus gallus* species of an age of less than 18 weeks (intended to be egg layers). Article 3 (29) of the new legislation

**Laying hens** means animals of the *Gallus gallus* species intended for the production of eggs for consumption and of an age of at least 18 weeks. Article 3 (30) of the new legislation

**Broilers** are defined as chicken produced for meat production (table chickens/ meat chickens).

**Breeding birds (parent stock)** is defined as parent poultry more than 18 weeks for production of hatching eggs.

**Central rearing flocks** are defined as young pullets from 0-18 weeks intended for parent stock production.

**Veranda** means an additional, roofed, uninsulated, outdoor part of a building intended for poultry, the longest side being equipped with wire fencing or netting with outdoor climate, natural and, where necessary, artificial illumination, and a littered floor. Article 3 (28) of new legislation

**Poultry house** means a fixed or mobile building for accommodating flocks of poultry, which includes all surfaces covered by roofs, including a veranda; the house may be subdivided into separate compartments, each accommodating a single flock. Article 3 (69) of new legislation

**Holding** means all the production units operated under single management for the purpose of producing live or unprocessed agricultural products, including products originating from aquaculture and beekeeping, referred to in point (a) of Article 2(1) or products listed in Annex I other than essential oils and yeast. Article 3 (8) of new legislation

**Production unit** means all assets of a holding, such as primary production premises, land parcels, pasturages, open air areas, livestock buildings or parts thereof, hives, fish ponds, containment systems and sites for algae or aquaculture animals, rearing units, shore or seabed concessions, and premises for the storage of crops, of crop products, of algae products, of animal products, of raw materials and of any other relevant inputs managed as described in point (10), point (11) or point (12). Article 3 (9) of new legislation

### I. General rules (pullets, laying hens, broilers, parent stock and central rearing)

#### 1. No general farm size limitations for poultry production

##### Proposal

Flock size has a limit that differs between layers, broilers, pullets and central rearing, but each house may be subdivided into separate compartments, each accommodating a single flock.

##### New legislation

Annex II, part II, 1.9.4 For poultry, 1.9.4.4 Housing and husbandry practices:

(n) not more than 3 000 laying hens shall be allowed in a single compartment of a poultry house.

## 2. Separation of flocks

### Proposal

Separation of flocks must ensure that the different flock does not mix, and that maximum flock size is not exceeded. Separation can be solid or with a net (mesh) to ensure ventilation.

## 3. Multilayer systems

### Proposal

Multilayer systems can be used in organic production of poultry. The layers are part of the usable area, if the requirements for usable area are fulfilled and if there is a maximum of 12 birds/m<sup>2</sup> in the ground floor for laying hens and breeding birds (including the ground floor in the veranda if this is part of usable area).

## 4. Usable area

### Proposal

In addition, usable area is an area where birds have access during their active period (during light hours).

In addition, where birds have access to a veranda during light hours, the veranda can be included as usable area.

### New legislation

Article 3: Usable area is defined in Article 2(2) of Council Directive 1999/74/EC as an area of at least 30 cm wide with a floor slope not exceeding 14%, with headroom of at least 45cm, where birds have access 24h/day. Nesting areas shall not be regarded as usable areas.

## 5. Daylight

### Proposal

No additional specific requirements for daylight are needed because birds have access to outdoor areas and natural light enters through pop holes.

## 6. Outdoor areas (runs)

### Proposal

Continuous daytime open air access shall be provided from as early an age as practically possible. Maximum age of access to outdoor areas can be defined by Member States according to their climatic conditions and it cannot be more than 6-12 weeks. Despite variation in maximum age to access outdoor area, poultry shall have access to an open air area for at least one third of their life.

### New legislation

Annex II, part II, 1.6.5 Open air areas may be partially covered. Verandas shall not be considered as open air areas.

Annex II, part II, 1.9.4.4 Housing and husbandry practices

(d) poultry shall have access to an open air area for at least one third of their life.

However, laying hens and finisher poultry shall have access to an open air area for at least one third of their life, except in the case of temporary restrictions imposed on the basis of Union legislation;

(e) continuous daytime open air access shall be provided from as early an age as practically possible, whenever physiological and physical conditions allow, except in the case of temporary restrictions imposed on the basis of Union legislation;

(f) by way of derogation from point 1.6.5, in the case of breeding birds and pullets aged under 18 weeks and when the conditions specified in point 1.7.3 as regards restrictions and obligations related to the protection of human and animal health imposed on the basis of Union legislation are met and prevent breeding birds and pullets aged under 18 weeks from having access to open air areas, verandas shall be considered as open air areas and in such cases shall have a wire mesh barrier to keep other birds out;

## **7. Vegetation outdoor areas**

### Proposal

The outdoor area must be covered by vegetation with a mixture of trees/bushes and groundcover vegetation.

### New legislation

Annex II, part II, 1.9.4.4 Housing and husbandry practices

(h) open air areas for poultry shall be mainly covered with vegetation;

## **8. Resting period of outdoor area**

### Proposal

Member States shall establish the period for which runs must be emptied taking into account the climatic conditions and the vegetation in the runs.

### Regulation 889/2008

#### Article 23 Disease prevention

§5. Buildings shall be emptied of livestock between each batch of poultry reared. The buildings and fittings shall be cleaned and disinfected during this time. In addition, when the rearing of each batch of poultry has been completed, runs shall be left empty to allow vegetation to grow back. Member States shall establish the period for which runs must be empty. The operator shall keep documentary evidence of the application of this period. These requirements shall not apply where poultry is not reared in batches, is not kept in runs and is free to roam, throughout the day.

## **9. Ranging distance in the outdoor area**

### Proposal

Maintain the current legislation as defined in annex III of Commission Regulation (EC) No 2295/2003 defining free range egg production:

Maximum ranging distance in the outdoor area should be limited to 150 m radius but extendable to 350 m if at least 4 shelters (either natural or artificial) per hectare.

## **10. Pop holes to outdoor area**

### Proposal

Pop holes to outdoor area must be at least 4 m per 100 m<sup>2</sup> area of the usable area available to the birds or minimum 6.6 m/1000 birds (= 4 m/100 m<sup>2</sup> of usable area).

Regulation 889/2008

Article 12 Specific housing conditions and husbandry practices for poultry

3. Buildings for all poultry shall meet the following conditions:

(d) they shall have exit/entry pop-holes of a size adequate for the birds, and these pop-holes shall have a combined length of at least 4 m per 100 m<sup>2</sup> area of the house available to the birds;

## **11. Pop holes between inner stable (house) and Veranda**

### Proposal

Pop holes between house and veranda must be at least 1,5 m per 100 m<sup>2</sup> of usable area available to the birds or minimum 2,5 m/1000 birds (= 1,5 m/100 m<sup>2</sup> usable area), for new buildings.

Regulation 889/2008

Article 12 Specific housing conditions and husbandry practices for poultry

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## **12. Treatments**

### Proposal

The use of parasite treatments, other than through compulsory control schemes operated by Member States, shall be limited to three courses of treatments within 12 months, or no more than one course of treatment if their productive lifecycle is less than one year. The withdrawal period for parasite treatments, including treatments under compulsory control and eradication schemes, shall be twice the withdrawal period as referred to in Article 11 of Directive 2001/82/EC or, in a case in which where this period is not specified, 48 hours.

In situations where the withdrawal period for a veterinary medical product against parasites in poultry is specified as zero days, no additional withdrawal period should be required.

Please notice Reg. 889/2008 - Art. 24 - paragraph 4.

#### New legislation

Annex II, part II, 1.5.2.2 Disease shall be treated immediately to avoid suffering of the animal. Chemically synthesised allopathic veterinary medicinal products, including antibiotics, may be used where necessary, under strict conditions and under the responsibility of a veterinarian, when the use of phytotherapeutic, homeopathic and other products is inappropriate. In particular, restrictions with respect to courses of treatment and withdrawal periods shall be defined.

1.5.2.5 The withdrawal period between the last administration to an animal of a chemically synthesised allopathic veterinary medicinal product, including of an antibiotic, under normal conditions of use, and the production of organically produced foodstuffs from that animal shall be twice the withdrawal period referred to in Article 11 of Directive 2001/82/EC, and shall be at least 48 hours.

Annex II, Part III : production rules for algae and aquaculture animals, 3.1.4.2 (f) the withdrawal period for allopathic veterinary treatments and parasite treatments in accordance with point (d), including treatments under compulsory control and eradication schemes, shall be twice the withdrawal period referred to in Article 11 of Directive 2001/82/EC or, where this period is not specified, 48 hours;

#### Comments

*Egg producers could incur vast expenses and losses if eggs cannot be sold as organic during the 4-5 days treatment against endoparasites and the following 48 hours after the treatment. For most common veterinary medicinal products against endoparasites, the withdrawal period is defined as zero days.*

### **13. Non-organically poultry**

No additional proposal on implementing and delegated acts

#### New legislation

**Annex II, Part II 1.3.4.3** By way of derogation from point 1.3.1, where a flock is constituted for the first time, or is renewed or reconstituted, and where the qualitative and quantitative needs of farmers cannot be met, the competent authority may decide that non-organically reared poultry may be brought into an organic poultry production unit, provided that the pullets for the production of eggs and poultry for meat production are less than three days old. Products derived from them may only be considered as organic if the conversion period specified in point 1.2 has been complied with.

Article 53 Derogations, authorisations and report

1. The derogations from the use of organic plant reproductive material and from the use of organic animals provided in points 1.8.5 of Part I of Annex II and **points 1.3.4.3** and 1.3.4.4 of Part II of Annex II, with the exception of point 1.3.4.4.2 of Part II of Annex II, shall expire on 31 December 2035

2. From 1 January 2028, based on the conclusions as regards availability of organic plant reproductive material and animals presented in the report provided for in paragraph 7 of this Article, the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 54 amending this Regulation by:

(a) ending the derogations referred to in point 1.8.5 of Part I of Annex II and in **points 1.3.4.3** and 1.3.4.4 of Part II of Annex II, with the exception of point 1.3.4.4.2 of Part II of Annex II, at an earlier date than 31 December 2035 or extending them beyond that date; or (...)

3. From 1 January 2026, the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 54 amending point (b) of Article 26(2) to extend the scope of the information system referred to in Article 26(2) to pullets and **point 1.3.4.3** of Part II of Annex II to base the derogations concerning pullets on the data collected in accordance with this system.

6. By 30 June of each year, Member States shall make available to the Commission and to the other Member States:

(b) information on the derogations granted in accordance with point 1.8.5 of Part I of Annex II and **points 1.3.4.3** and 1.3.4.4 of Part II of Annex II; and (...)

7. By 31 December 2025, the Commission shall present a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the availability on the Union market of and, if relevant, on the causes of limited access to:

(b) organic animals covered by the derogations referred to in **points 1.3.4.3** and 1.3.4.4 of Part II of Annex II;

## II. Specific requirements

### 1. Pullets – specific requirements

Subject	Proposed regulation	Comments
Pullets - Flock size 0-8 weeks	10.000 - 12.500	Flock size should be adjusted to the later division in flocks of 3000. Due to welfare concerns, the flock should not be divided and handled from 0-18 weeks.
Pullets - Flock size 9-18 weeks	10.000 - 12.500	See above.
Pullets - Minimum indoor area 0-8 weeks	24 birds/m <sup>2</sup> <b>OR</b> maximum 21 kg/m <sup>2</sup>	Due to heat management and the secondary welfare, stocking density should be more flexible when the birds are small.
Pullets - Minimum indoor area 9-18 weeks	15 birds/m <sup>2</sup> and maximum 21 kg/m <sup>2</sup>	
Pullets - Perches	4-12 cm (age-related, to be specified by member states)	The need and use of perches varies during the 18 week due to level of activity and size of bird.
Pullets - Minimum outdoor area	0,5- 1m <sup>2</sup> /bird  Recommendation: additional area could be required if vegetation is low.	Outdoor area is important for pullets and the use of outdoor area when the pullets turns to layers, but limited area could be provided due to reduced activity and animal pressure on the areas.

### 2. Breeding birds (parent stock) and central rearing

Parent stock and central rearing (CR) – specific requirements		
Subject	Proposed regulation	Comments
CR - Flock size 0-18 weeks	10.000	Flock size should be adjusted to the later division in flocks of 3000. Due to welfare concerns, the flock should not be divided and handled from 0-18 weeks.
Parent stock - Flock size >18 weeks	3.000	

CR - Minimum indoor area 0-8 weeks	24 birds/m <sup>2</sup> <b>OR</b> maximum 21 kg/m <sup>2</sup>	Due to heat management and the secondary welfare, stocking density should be more flexible when the birds are small.
CR - Minimum indoor area 9-18 weeks	15 birds/m <sup>2</sup> and maximum 21 kg/m <sup>2</sup>	
Parent stock - Minimum indoor area	6 birds/m <sup>2</sup> . <i>In the case of multi-layer systems, maximum 12 birds/m<sup>2</sup> ground floor.</i>	
Parent stock and central rearing - Perches	From 0-18 weeks 4-12 cm (age-related, to be specified by member states). >18 week 18 cm/bird	The need and use of perches varies during the 18 week due to level of activity and size of bird.
Veranda and outdoor area	by way of derogation, verandas may replace /substitute outdoor area for breeding birds.  In addition, in this case, the area of the veranda has to be at least half of the usable area required for the number of the animals.	In this case the veranda is additional. If you have flock of 3000 breeding birds (parent stock) you will need 500 m <sup>2</sup> usable area (6 birds/m <sup>2</sup> ) inside and additional 250 m <sup>2</sup> veranda to substitute the outdoor area (12 birds/m <sup>2</sup> ).

#### New legislation

Annex II, part II 1.6.5 Open air areas may be partially covered. Verandas shall not be considered as open air areas.

Annex II, part II, 1.9.4.4 Housing and husbandry practices

(f) by way of derogation from point 1.6.5, in the case of breeding birds and pullets aged under 18 weeks and when the conditions specified in point 1.7.3 as regards restrictions and obligations related to the protection of human and animal health imposed on the basis of Union legislation are met and prevent breeding birds and pullets aged under 18 weeks from having access to open air areas, verandas shall be considered as open air areas and in such cases shall have a wire mesh barrier to keep other birds out;

### 3. Broilers

Subject	Proposed regulation	Comments
Broilers flock size	4800	
Broilers - Minimum indoor area 0-21 days	20 birds/m <sup>2</sup> <b>OR</b> maximum 21 kg/m <sup>2</sup>	Due to heat management and the secondary welfare, stocking density should be more flexible when the birds are small.
Broilers - Minimum indoor area 22-81 days	10 birds/m <sup>2</sup> and maximum 21 kg/m <sup>2</sup>	
Broilers - Minimum outdoor area	1 m <sup>2</sup> /bird - additional area could be required if vegetation is low.	Limited area could be provided due to reduced activity and animal pressure on the areas. The birds will in most cases not enter the outdoor area before they are feathered and stay relatively close to the house. The current demand of 4 m <sup>2</sup> /birds have shown exaggerated.

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