

Appendix 1

Proposed amendments to Soil Association Standards: Chapter 20

For clarity, standards amendments are written in the following format: Underlined text is new text; text with ~~strikethrough~~ is deleted; normal text is unchanged.

20 Poultry

Introduction

Soil Association organic standards for poultry aim to produce high quality, high welfare food from birds that are healthy and thriving and reared in a way that encourages them to carry out their natural behaviour. Birds are given easy access to pasture with shelter and vegetation that allows them to range and forage freely outdoors and are provided with comfortable housing. The system is also designed to reduce environmental impact through integration with other farming enterprises - manure is recycled into fertiliser for crops, birds have a natural diet grown as locally as possible, while soil health on the range is maintained through regular rotation.

20.1 Poultry within your farm system

Aims

- The poultry enterprise is fully integrated into a mixed or diverse farming system
- Land used for the poultry enterprise has good soil health, supports vegetation and is disease-free.

Outcomes

- At least one third of feed and bedding material is grown on farm or on a linked farm
- Manure from the poultry house is used responsibly and does not exceed the farm's/linked farm's nitrogen allowance
- Nutrients from the poultry range are used effectively within the rotation.

Management requirements

20.1.1

You must manage your organic poultry enterprise so that it either:

- is an integral part of your whole organic farm system, or
- integrates with other organic farms in the area, in terms of manure, rotation and, where possible, feed.

20.2 Converting table and laying poultry

Aims

- Birds are well-adapted to their organic, free range living conditions
- Poultry enterprise is well-managed to organic standards

Outcomes:

- Use of organic, chicks/pullets from organic parent flocks
- No or minimal use of non-organic inputs to the system

Management requirements

Table Poultry

20.2.1

For your poultry to have organic status you must use organic chicks (from organically managed parents) when they are available.

20.2.2

With our permission and when organic chicks are not available, you may bring in non-organic chicks under three days old. However you must manage them organically from then for at least 10 weeks before you can sell them as organic. You must also send us a plan which details:

- the number of birds you need each year
- the number of organic and non-organic birds you plan to bring in
- the name of your suppliers
- whether your current suppliers will be able to supply you with organic birds in future, and
- what you are doing to make sure you get organic birds in future.

20.2.3

Where you use organic chicks, poults, ducklings, goslings and keets (from organically managed parents) of traditional or slow growing strains, you may slaughter and sell them as organic at any age.

Note – please refer to standard 21.1.11 for definitions of slow growing strains.

~~20.3.4~~

~~Where you use non-organic 'day old' chicks, poults, ducklings, goslings and keets of traditional or slow growing strains, they must go through a 10-week conversion period before you can slaughter and sell them as organic.~~

20.2.5

The following table shows the minimum ages in days when poultry can be slaughtered as organic.

Poultry slaughter ages (days)

	<i>Using organic birds</i>		<i>Using non-organic birds</i>	
	Slow growing	Fast growing	Slow growing	Fast growing
Geese	Any age	140	70	140
Turkeys	Any age	140	70	140
Guinea fowl	Any age	94	70	94
Chickens	Any age	81	70	81
Peking duck	Any age	49	70	70
Muscovy duck	Any age	84	70	84
Mallard duck	Any age	92	70	92

Laying Poultry

20.2.6

If you want to convert a flock you already have on your holding to produce organic eggs you must keep them to these standards for at least six weeks before you can sell their eggs as organic.

20.2.7

If you want to bring in a flock to produce organic eggs you must, in order of preference:

- use organic pullets from organically managed parents if they are available
- with our permission, use pullets that have been kept to organic standards from three days of age if they are available.

20.2.8

With our permission, you may bring in non-organic pullets before they are 18 weeks old. Any non-organic pullets you bring in must have been reared to the veterinary and feed standards detailed in sections 10.8 - 10.10 and 10.13.

Please contact us for more information.

20.2.9

If you bring in non-organic pullets (see standard 20.4.3) you must manage them organically from the time they arrive on your farm and for at least six weeks before they can produce organic eggs. You must also provide us with a plan that details:

- the number of birds you need each year
- the number of organic and non-organic birds you plan to bring in
- the name of your suppliers
- whether your current suppliers will be able to supply you with organic birds in future, and
- what you are doing to make sure you get organic birds in future.

20.3.5 You must **not** bring in:

- poultry from caged systems, or
- poultry whose beaks have been clipped or tipped.

General

20.2.10

With our approval, you may start organic poultry production on land in its second year of conversion if:

- at least 24 months has passed since you used inputs we do not allow on the land, and
- you can demonstrate this to us at your inspection.

Note - during the six week conversion to produce organic eggs, you only need to adhere to statutory withdrawal periods for veterinary products. However, you must adhere to the organic withdrawal period (standard 10.9.15) if you treat your hens towards the end of the six weeks and the organic withdrawal period would go beyond the conversion date.

Note - for general conversion requirements please refer to sections 10.4, 'Managing your herd or flock through conversion', 10.5, 'Simultaneous conversion' and 10.6, 'Bringing in livestock'.

Good practice

20.2.11

You should:

- choose a breed that is suitable to thrive under organic, free-range conditions
- use slow growing strains for meat production.

20.3 Welfare of poultry

Aims

- Birds are demonstrably healthy and thriving, and exhibit natural behaviour

Outcomes

- The results from the key welfare measures indicate excellent bird health and welfare
- Birds have not undergone any mutilation
- Self-assessment of the key welfare measures is carried out regularly and the farmer/manager acts to avert problems and improve the results
- The farmer/manager is competent in self-assessment

Management requirements

20.3.1

You must make sure that suitably trained or experienced personnel check your poultry at least three times a day. They should pass within three metres of each bird.

20.3.2

You must maintain good standards of health and welfare in your flock. If you do not, ~~we will require you to~~ you must change the way you manage your operation poultry enterprise in order to retain certification.

20.3.3

You must monitor the health and welfare of your poultry and keep records of:

For all poultry:

- veterinary treatments
- mortalities and the cause of death
- footpad dermatitis

For broilers only:

- hock damage, and
- reject percentages and the cause of rejection.

20.3.4

You must **not**:

- clip primary flight feathers
- beak clip or tip
- caponize
- carry out any other mutilations.

20.4 Feeding poultry

Aims

- Birds have ready daytime access to a natural diet that meets their nutritional requirements

Outcomes

- Birds have easy access to grit, feed and water
- Natural sources of food from the range provide a significant input to the diet
- There are good scores on key welfare measures, especially on stress-related factors such as aggressive behaviour and injurious feather pecking
- Feed does contains only permitted ingredients

Management requirements

20.4.1

You must:

- give your poultry access to feed at all times in daylight hours, except just before transport and/or slaughter, when you may withhold it for up to 12 hours before slaughter
- give all your poultry access to insoluble grit.

20.4.2

You must give your poultry access to water at all times in daylight hours.

20.4.3

You must **not** use:

- synthetic yolk colourants
- routine in-feed or in-water medication
- any other feed additives
- forced feeding systems

- synthetic amino acids.

20.5 Housing poultry

Aims

- The housing environment facilitates the expression of the birds' natural behaviour
- Birds utilise the whole indoor and outdoor environment
- Birds can move freely in, out and around the house and obtain refuge from bullying
- Flock size is appropriate for the level of management provided
- Birds are not in excessive competition for access to feeders and drinkers
- The housing facilities are in good condition and provide good thermal conditions, humidity and air quality
- The poultry enterprise is integrated into the whole farm system
- Disease is avoided through good range rotation and management
- There is minimal nitrogen pressure on the land

Outcomes

- There are good scores in key welfare measures, especially cleanliness and aggression
- Birds show no leg injury
- Birds are carrying out natural behaviour
- All birds are actively using the range
- Birds have easy access from the house to the range
- Areas for refuge are available in the house
- Mobile housing is used where practical
- There is no or limited soil and pasture damage
- There are no disease or parasite problems
- Range is part of crop and grazing rotation

Management requirements

20.7.2

If your housing unit has more than 100 adult birds then you must allow the development of social groups within the unit through:

- ~~the number and distribution of feeders, drinkers and other facilities, and~~
- ~~providing partitions.~~

20.5.1

Your poultry housing must comply with the following list:

- minimum solid floor area: 50% covered with litter/bedding material
- maximum slatted floor area: 50%
- minimum exit/entry pop-holes: 4m/100m² of the housing available to the birds, and
- maximum area of houses (table birds only): 1,600m²/ unit.

Note - please refer to chapter 23 for complete standards for pullet rearing.

20.5.2 20.7.4

Your housing and facilities must comply with the following requirements for each category of poultry you keep:

Pullets

- maximum stocking rates:
 - i. in fixed housing: 10 birds/m² (with a maximum of 21kg/m²)
 - ii. in mobile housing: 16* birds/m² (with a maximum of 30kg/m²)
- *Note – only in mobile housing of less than 150m² floor and which remains open at night.
- You must provide a minimum of 15cm aerial perch space per pullet.

~~Note – if you do not already have this amount of aerial perch space per bird, you may provide this at the next flock changeover~~

Laying chickens

- maximum stocking rates:
 - i. in fixed housing: six birds/m²
 - ii. in mobile housing: six birds/m²
 - maximum number of birds for each individual nest box: six
 - minimum space per bird in communal nests: 120cm²/bird
- Note – when calculating the internal stocking rate you ~~should~~ must exclude the area taken up by the nest boxes.
- You must provide a minimum of 18cm aerial perch space per laying chicken.
- ~~Note – if you do not already have this amount of aerial perch space per bird, you may provide this at the next flock changeover~~

Table chickens

- maximum stocking rates:
 - i. in fixed housing: 10 birds /m² (with a maximum of 21kg /m²)
 - ii. in mobile housing: 16* birds /m² (with a maximum of 30 kg /m²).
- *Note – only in mobile housing of less than 150m² floor space ~~and which remains open at night.~~

Turkeys

- maximum stocking rates:
 - i. in fixed housing: two birds /m² (with a maximum of 21kg /m²)
 - ii. in mobile housing: three birds /m² (with a maximum of 21kg /m²)
- minimum perch space: 40 cm / bird.

Ducks

- maximum stocking rates:
 - i. in fixed housing: 10 birds /m² (with a maximum of 21kg /m²)
 - ii. in mobile housing: 16* birds /m² (with a maximum of 30 kg /m²)
- *Note - only in mobile housing of less than 150m² floor space ~~and which remains open at night.~~
- minimum perch space: 40 cm / bird.
- Note - the perching space requirement only applies to Muscovy ducks.

Geese

- maximum stocking rates:
 - i. in fixed housing: two birds /m² (with a maximum of 21kg /m²)
 - ii. in mobile housing: three birds /m²

Guinea fowl

- maximum stocking rates:
 - i. in fixed housing: 10 birds /m² (with a maximum of 21kg /m²)
 - ii. in mobile housing: 16* birds /m² (with a maximum of 30 kg /m²)
- *Note - only in mobile housing of less than 150m² floor space ~~and which remains open at night.~~
- minimum perch space: 20 cm / bird.

20.7.5

~~If you install a new poultry house for pullets or laying chickens, you must provide the aerial perch space in standard 20.7.4.~~

20.7.6

You must install aerial perches that will allow the birds to exhibit their natural behaviour. This must ensure that birds can:

- distance themselves from bullying

- move freely around the house, and
- cannot be trapped under the perching area.

Note – please contact your certification officer for guidance on installing aerial perches.

20.5.3

You must site aerial perches over dung collection areas.

20.5.4

You must **not** count the following as providing aerial perch space for your laying chickens or pullets:

- raised or integrated slats, or
- raised or integrated bars on flooring.

20.5.5

You must **not** site perches over scratch areas, nest boxes or where they can contaminate feed.

20.5.6

You must provide the following minimum number of feeders and drinkers for your poultry:

Layers

- linear feeder space: 10cm/bird
- circular feeder space: 4cm/bird
- bell drinkers: one per 100 birds
- nipple drinkers: one per 10 birds
- cup drinkers: one per 10 birds.

Table birds

- linear feeder space: 2.5cm/bird
- circular feeder space: 33cm per 65 birds
- bell drinkers: one per 100 birds
- nipple drinkers: one per 10 birds
- cup drinkers: one per 28 birds.

Layers and table birds

- linear drinker space: 2.5cm/bird
- circular drinker space: 1cm/bird.

~~20.5.7~~ 20-6-5

You may use artificial light to prolong the day length up to 16 hours but the day must end with dusk.

Note – this does not apply to birds in the brooding phase.

20.5.8

Between batches of poultry you must:

- clean and disinfect the house, preferably with steam, blowtorch or lime, or other disinfectants we allow (standard 10.12.14), and
- leave the poultry house empty to allow enough time to break pest cycles

20.5.9

The litter/bedding material you use must be:

- topped up regularly, and
- kept in a dry and friable condition, suitable for scratching and dust bathing.

~~20.5.10~~ 20-7-13

The litter/bedding material you use ~~should be organic straw (preferably chopped)~~ but may be, in order of preference:

- organic straw (preferably chopped),
- shavings or bark from untreated timber, or

- non-organic straw (preferably chopped).

20.5.11

You must **not** use paper based litter/bedding for poultry.

20.7.15

~~The number of birds in a poultry house should **not** exceed:~~

- ~~• 500 for laying and table chickens, ducks, guinea fowl~~
- ~~• 250 for turkeys and geese.~~

20.7.16

~~With our approval, you may have more than the number of birds per poultry house in standard 20.7.15, if we have approved it as part of your poultry management plan. We will~~

~~only give you permission if:~~

- ~~• you can show us that you can maintain a high level of bird health and welfare~~
- ~~• you can maintain good environmental conditions inside the house and out on the range~~
- ~~• you can provide your birds with the area of range they need (see section 20.8 for maximum stocking densities) within the maximum ranging distances from the house:~~
 - ~~layers, geese and guinea fowl: 100m~~
 - ~~table chickens, turkeys and ducks: 50m.~~

~~Note your calculation of the area of range available to the birds must exclude the area taken~~

~~up by the house, access roads, concrete aprons and any pasture that is being rested from poultry.~~

20.7.17

~~The number of birds in each poultry house must **not** exceed:~~

- ~~• 2,000 birds for laying chickens~~
- ~~• 1,000 birds for table chickens, ducks, geese and guinea fowl~~
- ~~• 1,000 birds for turkeys.~~

20.7.18

~~We may require you to decrease your housing unit size if there is a breakdown of health and welfare in the flock.~~

20.7.19

~~You must **not** house your poultry permanently.~~

20.5.12

The number of birds in each poultry house must **not** exceed:

- 3000 laying hens
- 4800 table birds
- 3200 male or 4000 female ducks
- 5200 guineafowl
- 2500 turkeys, or geese

Good practice

20.5.13

We recommend that you ~~should~~ use mobile poultry housing as this will allow you greater flexibility to integrate your poultry enterprise into your whole organic farming system and minimise disease.

20.5.14

The litter/bedding material you use should be chopped organic straw, preferably from your own farm or a linked farm.

20.6 Access to pasture and range

Aims

- Birds are ranging and foraging sufficiently to meet their behavioural and nutritional needs
- Poultry have easy daytime access to disease-free range with good ground cover, appropriate overhead cover and environmental enrichment
- The flock and pasture/ranging area are actively managed to encourage birds to fully utilize the whole outdoor environment

Outcomes

- There is clear evidence that all birds are using most of the ranging area
- There are specific management practices to encourage extensive ranging by all birds
- There are excellent scores in key welfare measure
- Birds have easy access to/from the range
- Birds have easy access to water when outdoors
- Birds have enrichment and overhead protection from predators and the weather throughout the ranging area
- Birds have the opportunity to forage, rest, preen, dust-bathe and socialise.
- There is no or limited aggressive behaviour
- There is good ground cover on most of the range at all times
- Parasite infections and disease are non-existent or at low levels

Management requirements

20.8.2

Your poultry must have:

- ~~access to properly managed pastures which are well covered with suitable vegetation~~
- ~~access to shelter at all times~~
- ~~protection from predators, and~~
- ~~enough cover in the free range areas to imitate their native habitat and encourage them to range fully. This can be either natural (such as trees, shrubs and cover crops) and/or artificial (such as screens and trailers).~~

20.6.1

You must demonstrate that you are actively managing your flock and pasture/ranging area to encourage your birds to fully utilize the whole environment to express their natural behaviour and fulfill their needs.

This must include:

- Building design to enable all birds easy access to and from the range
- Access to water and foraging, with good ground cover of suitable vegetation
- Protection from the weather and predators throughout the ranging area
- Environmental enrichment throughout the ranging area
- Specific management practices to encourage extensive ranging by all birds.

20.6.2 20.8.3

Your poultry must have continuous and easy daytime access to pasture, except in adverse weather conditions, from an early age, but at least for:

- all the laying life of laying poultry
- at least two thirds of the life of table poultry.

20.6.3

You must rest your pasture from poultry production:

- to allow vegetation to grow back
- for health reasons, and
- to enable built-up fertility to be used.

20.6.4

For laying poultry you must rest your pasture for at least nine months between each batch, except if you have less than 50 birds which are not kept in runs but are free to roam.

20.6.5

For table poultry you must rest your pasture for two months per year plus one year in every three years, except:

- where the birds are on the land for less than one third of the year, or
- if you have less than 50 birds which are not kept in runs but are free to roam.

20.6.6

The following outdoor stocking rates are the maximum you can have:

- laying chickens: 1,000 birds/ha
- table chickens: 2,500 birds/ha
- ducks: 2,000 birds/ha
- geese: 600 birds/ha
- guinea fowl: 2,500 birds/ha
- turkeys: 800 birds/ha.

Waterfowl

~~20.6.7~~ 20.8.8

Waterfowl must have access to a stream, pond or lake whenever the weather allows, with sufficient water for them to sit in and dip their heads into.

20.6.8

You must maintain and manage the water to prevent:

- the build-up of stagnant water
- the build-up of decaying vegetation
- pollution, and
- disease risk.

Good Practice

20.6.9

On pastures used by your poultry you should:

- use grass/clover leys based on fescues and other grasses that tiller
- graze sheep for sward management
- provide natural dusting areas
- give access to woodland, and
- give access to outside drinkers.

20.7 Transporting and handling poultry

Aims

- Birds are comfortable throughout transport and handling

Outcomes

- Caught birds are free from injury and fit to transport
- Birds are thermally comfortable at all times
- Birds arrive at their destination in good condition
- Unfit birds are not transported and are dealt with humanely without delay

Management requirements

20.9.1

During transport you ~~should~~ must make sure your birds have:

- ~~enough space to rest and stand up without restriction~~
- protection from large fluctuations in temperature, humidity and air pressure, and
- shelter from extremes of weather.

20.9.2

You ~~should~~ must **not** leave a vehicle that is loaded with poultry for any length of time unless there are suitable ventilation facilities for them.

20.9.3

You must:

- treat any unfit birds without delay, or kill them as soon as possible using approved humane slaughter methods
- protect your birds from the elements during loading, unloading, and when waiting for slaughter, and
- comply with standard 10.14.8 on maximum journey times for your poultry.