

Poultry sector guidance for SPS changes



There are a number of new areas of specific rules for poultry production including for:

- Breeder flocks
- Pullets and brother roosters
- Capons (castrated cockerels) and Poulardes
- Verandas
- Multi-tiered houses
- New definitions related to poultry production

We are expecting transitional periods to be agreed for businesses to make any changes needed especially where it involves changes to housing and outside areas.

We are also expecting so timeframe before implementation to enable pullet rearing to become fully certified.

Origin of stock

- There is still an allowance to bring in non-organic chicks up to 3 days old when organic birds are not available however this now also applies to pullets for laying hens that must be reared to full organic standards from 3 days old rather than being brought in as pullets up to 18 weeks old.
- Businesses rearing pullets must now become organically certified to handle pullets for organic laying birds after 3 days old

Housing requirements

EU regulation allows subdivision of poultry houses so more than one flock can be accommodated in a single building

- Species Partition Requirement Chickens (*Gallus Gallus*) - Mesh partition permitted

All other species - Solid wall required

- Outside range areas must also be separated for each flock when housing is subdivided

Perching Requirements for Table Birds

For housing table chickens, turkeys, and guinea fowl, perches or raised sitting levels are required with species-specific minimum requirements.

There are new requirements for the specifications of verandas. New Requirements Include:

- Minimum dimensions for pop holes between the house and veranda
- Minimum dimensions for pop holes between the veranda and outside range area
- If housing multiple flocks, separation must continue in the veranda and outside areas

Verandas can still be regarded as part of the house provided birds have continuous 24-hour access to them.

If 24-hour access is not provided, verandas are excluded from stocking density calculations.

If existing organic poultry systems use verandas, they will need to ensure these new requirements are met.

Multi-tiered Housing

There are new restrictions on the number of tiers in multi-tiered housing, limiting the number of tiers to 3, including floor level.

Stocking Density for Table Birds

Table bird stocking densities now refer to maximum weight of 21kg/m^2 rather than maximum number of birds.

Pullet Rearing

There are new specific rules for pullet rearing and breeder flocks. Under GB regulations, pullets are treated as laying hens. In the EU reg requirements include:

- Flock size -10,000 pullets permitted
- Outside area Range access - Minimum 1m^2 /bird if provided

Poultry must have access to outside areas as soon as practicably possible and whenever physiological and physical conditions allow and for at least 1/3 of their life which may not be required through the pullet rearing phase.

If outside access is given it must be a minimum of 1m^2 /bird.

Where pullet rearers do not give access to range and do not have organic land on the farm where the pullets are reared, they must have a written cooperation agreement with other organic farms so that the manure from the organic pullets can be spread at less than 170kg/n/ha on organic land.

Range Requirements

Outdoor range area must be designed to be provided within 150m of the house and must provide protective facilities across the range to encourage birds to use the entire range in a balanced way.

This can be extended to 350m if additional shelters are provided spread out across the range to encourage full use of the range (minimum 4 per hectare).

In addition to vegetation coverage, diversity of plants is now required (though not specifically defined).

New emphasis on the resting period for the management of nutrients on the range as well as regrowth of vegetation. This will require evidence of nutrient burden to be reviewed as part of the certification process.

Feed and Nutrition

Farm supplied (or regionally sourced) feed requirement increases from 20% to 30%.

Definition of “region” is critical in determining the impact of this change. Currently, region is defined as the EU.

5% non-organic protein feed ingredients allowance when suitable organic ingredients are not available will continue to be allowed for young poultry.