

Information sheet

Laying hens in organic free-range husbandry in accordance with the EU organic regulation

1. Stables:

- **Upper limit per stable unit:** maximum of 3000 hens
- **Stocking density:** maximum of 6 hens/ m²
- **Laying nests:** maximum of 7 hens/single nest, for group nests: minimum of 120 cm²/hen
- **Perches:** minimum of 18 cm/hen
- **Feeding place:** length at the trough or line: 10 cm/animal; feeding trough at the rotary platform: 4 cm/animal
- **Watering place:** nipple-, cup troughs: 1/10 animals; circular drinking troughs: 1,5 cm/animal; drinking trough space: 2,5 cm/animal
- **Scratching area:** a minimum of 1/3 of the surface area must be continuous solid floor and strewn in with litter (hay, wood shavings, sand or turf).
- **Deep pit:** this is defined as the area for the feces, that is available for absorption of feces: benchmark: at least 40% of stable area.
- **Stable disinfection:** it is required, but only permitted means may be implemented.
- **Light:** the stables must be bright. To ensure sufficient natural daylight, a window area of a minimum of 3% of the stable surface area is necessary. Artificial light is only allowed a maximum of 16 hours, a continuous night's rest of a minimum of 8 hours is required.
- **Exit/entry pop-holes:** A total length of at least 4 linear meters per 100 m² needed for the livestock minimum stable area must be available.

2. Outlet:

- **Outlet frequency:** a minimum of 1/3 of the lifespan, distributed over the whole year.
- **Outlet duration per day:** minimum of 8 hours.
- **Outside area:** a minimum of 8 m² per hen, covered mostly with plant growth protection devices (for example against sun, birds of prey) must be available.
- **Resting time:** there must be 4 weeks of resting time for the outside areas between occupied periods.
- **Notice for „free-range egg“ declaration:**
According to the lawful regulation, if eggs are declared as „free-range eggs“, the organic establishment must be able to meet stricter requirements.
 - **Outlet frequency:** daily
 - **Outside area:** a minimum of 10m² per hen.

3. Feeding:

- If organic fodder is not 100% available, conventional protein components at a limit of maximum 5% of the yearly ration may be used.
Conventional herbs, spices and molasses may be used at a limit of 1% of the yearly ration.
- 30% of the yearly ration may contain externally bought conversion fodder. If the fodder is in-house conversion product, it may be used completely.
- Roughage must be included in the daily ration.

4. Animal purchases:

- Organic pullets must be bought. The purchase of conventional pullets is an exception and only possible if the very strict requirements are kept. Please contact the ABG prior to purchasing conventional pullets, as an additional request must be filed with the authorities.

5. Livestock density:

- According to EU organic regulation, a maximum of 230 laying hens per ha, if no other animals are being kept.

6. Animal health:

- The **preventative** use of allopathic and chem. –synth. medicine is prohibited. Medicine may only be used if prescribed by a veterinarian. The treated animals must be identifiable through sufficient documentation.
- The lawful **waiting period** must be doubled for organic sale. For medicine without a waiting period, a 48 hour waiting period must be implemented, this means, if medicine without a waiting period is used, any product stemming from two days after the treatment may not be marketed as organic eggs.
- A maximum of **3 treatments/year**. This means, if there are more than 3 treatments a year, the animals lose their organic status and must undergo a 6 week conversion period. This procedure must be allowed by ABG.
- Sufficient **records** must be kept: details are listed in the documentation journal of ABG.