ORGANIC POULTRY FARMING

Guidelines no. 23:
Rules for organic poultry production
in accordance with EU Regulation (EC) no.834/2007 and (EC) no.889/2008
I. Scope

The poultry species covered by European Regulation are listed in Annex III of (EC) Regulation 889/08:

- Laying hens
- Fattening poultry: chicken (broiler), guinea fowl, goose, duck and turkey

Species which are not covered by European Regulation may be awarded organic certification if recognised national or private rules exist in the Member States. In France, for example, this applies to ostriches.

II. Conversion

A. Definition

The conversion to organic farming corresponds to the transition phase between conventional agriculture and the « organic farming » designation.

The conversion period starts once:

- All the breeding requirements stated in (EC) Regulation 834/07 (arts.11 and 14) and (EC) Regulation 889/08 (arts. 8 to 25) are met (housing, feeding, disease prevention...).
- The operator has submitted his holding to the control system and notified his organic activity to his competent authority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversion period</th>
<th>Runs</th>
<th>12 months or 6 months (with no other possible reduction) if the land concerned has not received disallowed treatments during the last year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fattening poultry</td>
<td>10 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laying hens</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Refer to chapter « V. Purchasing animals » on requirements for introducing non-organic animals into the holding.

B. Examples of conversion

NB: Animals may be wholly fed on in-conversion feedingstuffs (meaning starting from the 12th month of conversion of the land used to produce the feed) if the feed originates solely from the holding.
Non-simultaneous conversion:

12-month pasture conversion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start of runs conversion</th>
<th>Start of conversion for animals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/05/2010</td>
<td>01/05/2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Start of conversion for animals ORGANIC

6 or 10 -week conversion for poultry

Pasture conversion reduced to 6 months:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Start of runs conversion</th>
<th>Start of conversion for animals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/05/10</td>
<td>01/11/10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 or 10 -week conversion for poultry

Note:
Simultaneous conversion of land and animals over 24 months is not « economically » beneficial in poultry production, when compared with non-simultaneous conversion.

III. Mixed operations

A. Definition:
“Mixed operations” means that one or several types of animal are reared simultaneously on the same holding, organically and conventionally. This duplication may be temporarily tolerated under specific conditions or prohibited in some cases.
B. General rules:

A single animal species may not be reared organically and conventionally simultaneously on the same farm (even if the organic and conventional units are completely separate).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special cases</th>
<th>Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Possible diversity of different species</td>
<td>Clear separation of buildings and runs Example : organic chickens and conventional guinea fowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holdings carrying out agricultural research or formal education : rearing the same species organically and conventionally</td>
<td>Possibly subject to prior agreement of project by ECOCERT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Identification and transport

A. Identification documents

Poultry must be identified individually or by batch. **Livestock records** should be kept at all times, be made available to the control body and include the following details:

- animals entries (origin, number, conversion period, veterinary history, identification marks)
- animals leaving (age, number, destination, identification mark)
- any animal losses and the causes thereof
- feeding
- disease prevention, treatment and veterinary care

B. Transporting animals

Animal transportation time should be reduced to limit stress and maintain their welfare conditions.

Identification of the animals and their products must be ensured at all stages of production, preparation (slaughter, cutting up), transport and marketing. The use of allopathic tranquilisers before and during transportation is prohibited.
V. Purchasing animals

A. General remarks

On an organic holding, purchased animals must be organic. Purchasing non-organic animals may, however, be authorised where the quantity of organic animals is inadequate.

B. Use of non-organic poultry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fattening poultry</th>
<th>Conventional chicks introduced to constitute a flock or for renewal if they are less than 3 days old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laying hens</td>
<td>Conventional chicks introduced to constitute a flock or for renewal if they are less than 3 days old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Until 31 December 2014: non-organic pullets under 18 weeks of age which have been fed and cared for in accordance with organic production methods may be introduced (Certificate issued by a certification body at the time of introduction of the pullets should be kept)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Exceptional conditions

When animal mortality is high due to illness or catastrophic circumstances, the competent authority may authorise, with documentary evidence, flock renewal or re-establishment with non-organic animals on a temporary basis when organically reared animals are not available. (Art 47 RCE 889/08).
### VI. Feeding

#### A. Feed materials of agricultural origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedstuff self-production</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ORGANIC FEEDSTUFFS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant origin</td>
<td>Any type of plant</td>
<td>No conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal origin</td>
<td>Any feed material of animal origin</td>
<td>in compliance with standard regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                             | Non-organic | Spices, herbs and molasses | -if non available in organic form  
- produced or prepared without chemical solvents  
-1% /year maximum of the feed ration (calculation as a % of dry matter of feed from agricultural origin) |                                                                         |
|                             | Protein feed of plant and animal origin |                                                      | -if non available in organic form  
- produced or prepared without chemical solvents  
-5% maximum per period of 12 months (calculation as a % of dry matter of feed from agricultural origin) for 2012, 2013 and 2014 |                                                                         |
<p>|                             | Yeasts Saccharomyces cerevisiae and/or carlsbergiensis |                                                      |                                                                         |
|                             | Products from sustainable fisheries |                                                      |                                                                         |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF FEEDSTUFF</th>
<th>1st year of conversion (C1*)</th>
<th>In-conversion (C2*)</th>
<th>Exceptional conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>self-produced perennial forage and protein crop</td>
<td>self-produced</td>
<td>Purchased</td>
<td>The use of non-organic feedstuffs may be permitted by the competent authority for a limited period in a designated area where there have been forage losses due to exceptional climatic conditions, fires...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchased fodder/ cereals/...</td>
<td>Self-produced</td>
<td>Considered as conventional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 20%**</td>
<td>Up to 100%</td>
<td>Up to 30%**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fodder (roughage, fresh, dried) or silage</td>
<td>Must be added to the daily ration</td>
<td>Mandatory, but no minimum percentage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete foods</td>
<td>No conditions</td>
<td>May be used as they are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete foods</td>
<td>No conditions</td>
<td>May be used as they are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary feedstuffs</td>
<td>The label must state &quot;may be used in organic production in accordance with Regulations (EC) 834/2007 and (EC) 889/2008&quot;</td>
<td>The operator must check the percentage of non-organic feedstuffs and calculate the animal’s ration in relation to its life-span or per 12-month period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* C1 : produced on parcels in the 1st year of conversion
* C2 : produced on parcels during the conversion period from the 2nd year onwards
** calculated as a percentage of dry matter in feedstuffs of plant origin

**B. Raw materials of non-agricultural origin**

- Synthetic amino acids and growth enhancers are prohibited
- Natural vitamins and provitamins and synthetic vitamins which are identical to natural ones are permitted
- The trace-elements listed in Annex VI 3b and the minerals listed in Annex V.1 are permitted
- Sea salt and coarse rock salt
- The technological, sensory and zootechnical additives respectively listed in Annex VI 1, 2 and 4 are permitted
- All raw materials and substances used must be guaranteed “non-GM” (particular vigilance is required for micro-organisms, enzymes and yeasts).

For further details, please refer to Guidelines no. 26 on animal feedstuffs.

**C. Prohibited practices**

Keeping animals in conditions which promote anaemia, or subjecting them to a diet which promotes anaemia, is prohibited.

Fattening practices must be reversible at any stage of the rearing process and force-feeding is prohibited.
VII. Buildings

A. Requirements

- The total usable area of houses in any single production unit where poultry is bred for meat may not exceed 1600 m².
- At least 1/3 of the floor area must be constructed with solid material (not slatted or grids) and be covered with natural litter.
- The combined length of the exit/entry pop-holes must be at least 4 m per 100 m² area of the house available to the birds.
- The poultry have access to an open-air area for at least 1/3 of their lives.
- Keeping poultry in cages is prohibited.
- The buildings are equipped with perches.
- Artificial light may be used in addition to natural one with a maximum of 16 hours per day but a minimum of 8 hours continuous rest time must be guaranteed at night.
- Aquatic birds must have access to a watercourse, pool, lake or pond.

B. Number of animals

Each building used for aviculture may contain no more than:

- 3000 laying hens
- 4800 chickens
- 5200 guinea fowl
- 4000 female Muscovy or Peking ducks
- 3200 male Muscovy or Peking or other ducks
- 2500 capons, geese or turkeys

C. Minimum areas

Stocking density must guarantee animal comfort and welfare. For that purpose, minimum surface levels for buildings and exercise areas are clearly defined.

1. Animal density indoors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fattening poultry</th>
<th>Laying hens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 10 poultry birds/ m² in fixed housing (with a maximum of 21 kg live weight/ m²)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 16 poultry birds / m² in mobile housing with a maximum of 30 kg live weight / m²)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 20 cm of perch/guinea fowl</td>
<td>- 6 laying hens/ m²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 18 cm of perch/laying hen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 7 hens per nest or for shared nests 120 cm² per hen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*)For mobile houses with a floor area not exceeding 150 m²
2. Outdoor area per animal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fattening poultry</th>
<th>Laying hens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where birds are reared in fixed housing:</td>
<td>4 m² per hen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 4 m² per broiler and per guinea fowl</td>
<td>4,5 m² per duck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 10 m² per turkey</td>
<td>15 m² per goose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where birds are reared in mobile buildings:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 2,5 m² per poultry bird</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stock density must not result in an annual nitrogen load per hectare of organic agricultural land used by the producer which exceeds 170 kg and the total quantity of effluent from the holding (solid, dehydrated and composted poultry manure) is taken into account for the purposes of this calculation. In determining this stock density, the competent authority may take the figures in Annex IV to EC Regulation 889/08 into account or else establish the figures in accordance with EEC Directive 91/676 (concerning protection of water against nitrate pollution from agricultural sources).

Where excessive manure is produced, this may only be spread on organic land and the operator must conclude a written cooperation agreement to this effect with another operator whose land is organic.

**D. Transitional measures**

Insofar as housing conditions and stocking density are concerned, the competent authority may permit exceptions for buildings constructed before 24th August 1999 (for producers who were certified before 24th August 2000) until 31st December 2010, with a possible extension of this transitional measure until 31st December 2013 at the producer’s request, provided that there is one additional control visit each year.
VIII. Slaughtering fattening poultry

The animals must undergo minimal suffering during slaughter.

To avoid intensive rearing methods, there is a minimum slaughtering age for each type of animal:

- 81 days for chickens
- 150 days for capons
- 49 days for Peking ducks
- 70 days for female Muscovy ducks
- 84 days for male Muscovy ducks
- 92 days for Mallard ducks
- 94 days for guinea fowl
- 140 days for male turkeys and roasting geese
- 100 days for female turkeys

IX. Disease prevention and veterinary treatment

A. General principles

In organic production, disease prevention is based on preventing illness: selecting breeds, husbandry management practices, feedstuff quality, adapting stocking density and housing, ease of exercise.

B. Hygiene measures

1. Cleaning

Buildings and equipment must be cleaned and disinfected using the products with ingredients listed in Annex VII to EC Regulation 889/08. Rodenticides in traps and the appropriate products from Annex II may be used against insects and pests.

2. Hygiene requirements

Buildings must be emptied, cleaned and disinfected between each rearing batch. At the end of every production cycle, runs should remain empty for a period of time to allow vegetation re-growth. The period of time for suspending livestock operations in facilities or enforcing a fallow period in runs, is defined by the competent authority.

NB: when poultry are not reared as a group, are not kept in delimited runs and raised on free-range, mandatory fallow period does not apply.
C. Prohibited practices

The use of substances to stimulate growth or production.
The use of hormones or analogous substances to control reproduction (e.g.: induction or synchronisation of oestrus)
Cloning.

Preventive use of chemically synthesised allopathic veterinary medicinal products, antibiotics or coccidiostatics.

NB: artificial insemination is allowed

D. Veterinary treatment

When preventive measures (referred to above in the « general principles ») prove ineffective, the illnesses and/or injuries must receive immediate treatment to prevent the animal suffering in any way. Preference must be given to phytotherapeutic products and the minerals listed in Annex V.1 to EC Regulation 889/08 and the vitamins and trace-elements listed in Annex VI.3 to EC Regulation 889/08.

If these measures are ineffective, chemically synthesised allopathic veterinary medicinal products or antibiotics can only be used to heal the animal on the instruction of a veterinarian.

The legal withdrawal period between the last administration of the allopathic veterinary medicine and the time when the animal and its products are marketed on the organic market must be doubled. If there is no withdrawal period for a product, a 48-hour time-limit must be applied.

NB: Trimming of beaks should not be common practice. These practices may be permitted by the competent authority on an exceptional basis and upon receipt of a formal request from the operator for safety reasons or in order to improve the animal health and welfare.

1. Records

When therapeutic procedures and veterinary care are carried out, the date of treatment, diagnosis, type of product (detailing the active ingredients concerned), dosage, means of administration, length of treatment and legal withdrawal period must be clearly noted in the livestock record. Veterinary prescriptions must also be retained. Treated animals must be identified individually or in a batch.
2. Number of allopathic treatments permitted

| Animals whose life-cycles are under 1 year (fattening poultry) | 1 single treatment during life-cycle |
| Animals whose life-cycles are greater than 1 year (laying hen) | 3 treatments per 12-month period |

Parasites treatments and vaccinations are not taken into account when making this calculation and the same applies to treatment prescribed within the framework of compulsory eradication schemes.

NB: When non-organic animals are purchased (in the required conditions), their producer must give the purchaser the list of treatments carried out (number, nature and dates) so that these can be taken into account when calculating treatment.

X. Definitions

**Holding**: (Art 2e REC 889/08)
Means all the production units operated under a single management for the purpose of producing agricultural products.

**Production Unit**: (Art 2f REC 889/08)
Means all assets to be used for a production sector such as production premises, land parcels, pasturages, open air areas, livestock buildings, fish ponds, containment systems for seaweed or aquaculture animals, shore or seabed concessions, the premises for the storage of crops, crop products, seaweed products, animal products, raw materials and any other input relevant for this specific production sector.

**In-conversion feedingstuffs**: (Article 2i REC 889/08)
means feedingstuffs produced during the conversion period to organic production, with the exclusion of those harvested in the 12 months following the beginning of the conversion.

**Veterinary treatment**: (Art 2h REC 889/08)
means all courses of a curative or preventive treatment against the occurrence of a specific disease.
XI. References and EU Regulations

**Scope** - art 7 + annex III to EC Regulation 889/08

**Conversion** - art. 17 of EC Regulation 834/2007 and arts. 36, 37 and 38 of EC Regulation 889/2008

**Mixed operation** - art.11 of EC Regulation 834/2007 and arts.17, 40 of EC Regulation 889/2008

**Identification and recording** - arts.75 and 76 of EC Regulation 889/2008

**Transport** - art 14 of EC Regulation 834/2007 and art. 18 of EC Regulation 889/2008

**Purchasing animals** - arts. 42 and 47 of EC Regulation 889/2008

**Feeding** - art. 14 of EC Regulation 834/2007 and arts. 20, 21, 22, 43 and 47 + annexes V and VI to EC Regulation 889/2008

**Buildings and density** - arts. 10, 12, 14, 15, 95.2 and annexes III and IV to EC Regulation 889/2008

**Husbandry practices** - art. 14 of EC Regulation 834/2007 and arts. 12 and 18 of EC Regulation 889/2008

**Disease prevention** - arts. 23 and 24 + annex VII to EC Regulation 889/2008

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