

Questionnaire on the Initiative Tierwohl

Poultry production

The following is a compilation of frequently asked questions and the corresponding answers on participation in the Initiative Tierwohl for poultry farmers.

How, when and under what conditions can I register to participate in the Initiative Tierwohl?

Poultry farmers can register for the Initiative Tierwohl at any time. Registration for the Initiative Tierwohl must always be done via a coordinator. This requires the declaration of participation together with the annexes, which can be found in the [download area](#) of the ITW-website. The coordinator registers livestock owners in the database. The basic prerequisite for participation is successful certification in the QS scheme. Approval for the Initiative Tierwohl is granted following release of the successfully passed programme audit.

What do I have to bear in mind as a turkey rearer?

From 1 January 2026, ITW participating turkey rearer may only purchase young fattening turkeys from ITW-approved rearing farms. Rearing companies must therefore register in good time with the turkey rearing (see above). This also applies if other locations of the company are already approved for turkey production at the ITW. All locations must be registered, including those that may only rear turkeys or that rear turkeys and combine them with their own turkey production.

As a turkey rearing company, the relevant requirements of the ITW criteria must be complied with at all times.

What do I have to bear in mind as a turkey fattener with own turkey rearing when registering?

If turkey fatteners operate turkey rearing and turkey fattening at the same location, the turkey fattening and the preceding turkey rearing must be registered with the coordinator, stating the number of rearing places available at this location.

As a turkey fattener with own (combined) turkey rearing, can I expect additional audits after successful registration?

No. If turkey rearing and turkey fattening are registered at the same location, one programme audit and one stock check are carried out in accordance with the inspection system for each calendar year and independently of the age of the animals present at the time of the audit at this location. Approval for turkey rearing and turkey fattening is granted after a successfully passed audit.

Where can I find a coordinator if I want to participate in the Initiative Tierwohl?

All coordinators who have registered for the Initiative Tierwohl are published on a list in the [download area](#). A coordinator can be selected from the list. It is up to the livestock owners whether they want to work with the same coordinator as for the QS scheme participation or whether they choose a different coordinator.

As an already participating turkey fattener, when should I start registering the turkey rearing at the same location with my coordinator, and by when?

If turkey rearing is also carried out at a location that has already been registered for turkey fattening, the turkey rearing should be registered with the coordinator immediately. This additional registration is carried out by updating the existing declaration of participation with the responsible coordinator, stating the turkey rearing places of the locations.

The registration of turkey rearing must be carried out in such a way that by 31st December 2025 at the latest, turkey rearing for one's own turkey fattening is also registered and approved. The location-specific turkey rearing must be registered and approved so that all fattening turkeys produced at the same location can be marketed as ITW poultry.

Do I have to register my own turkey rearing for ITW if I want to continue marketing ITW poultry for slaughter?

From 1st January 2026, turkey production will be subject to the requirement of identity, starting with rearing. This means that a turkey fattening company with its own or affiliated turkey rearing operation must also register its turkey rearing with the coordinator by 31st December 2025, in order to participate. Otherwise, identity will not be guaranteed from 1st January 2026, and the turkey fattening farm will not be allowed to fatten the young fattening turkeys it has raised itself or market them as ITW rearing turkey from 1st January 2026.

Is my registered and certified location with turkey fattening and combined turkey rearing still approved after registration of the turkey rearing?

Yes. Locations with turkey rearing that have been registered in the ITW database by the coordinator as turkey fattening "with rearing" will receive the approval already in force for turkey fattening and thus also the eligibility of delivery for turkey rearing.

When does compliance with the new additional criteria for broiler and turkey production begin?

The new criteria (see *Manual Agriculture, Criteria Catalog Poultry*) for broiler and turkey production must be complied with from 1st July 2025. For criterion 1.10 *Structuring the environment in which the animals are kept/raised levels*, for example, this means that flocks housed before 30th June 2025 must have raised levels available to structure the environment in which the animals are kept from 1st July 2025.

As a turkey rearing business, when do I have to start compliance with the relevant criteria?

Compliance with the criteria for turkey rearing is mandatory for all registered locations with turkey rearing from 1st July 2025.

Which implementation date can I choose when registering a location with turkey rearing for participation?

For locations with turkey rearing, 1st July 2025 can be selected for registration as the earliest possible implementation date. With the self-declared implementation date, the company determines from when all relevant criteria will be met at the location and the location in question is ready for the audit.

Which implementation date can I choose when registering a location with broiler or turkey production for participation?

When a location with a poultry farm is newly registered, the implementation date can be freely selected. With the implementation date specified for registration, the company determines for the location in question from when all criteria will be met and the registered location is thus ready for the audit.

What criteria must I, as a participating company, comply with at all times?

The requirements for livestock owners are set out in the respective criteria catalogues and described in the associated explanatory notes (see [download area](#)). The animal welfare criteria are e.g. *1.8 Additional activity options*, *1.9 Bigger space allowance* and *1.10 Structuring the housing environment/raised levels* or e.g. *1.11 Shed*

climate check or 1.12 Drinking water check. Additional criteria selected from the **QS Guideline Agriculture Poultry Production** form the ITW basic criteria, which must also be complied with at all times.

When do I have to comply with the criteria once I have registered?

When registering a new location for the Animal Welfare Programme, each livestock owner indicates the date from which they will comply with the criteria. This date is the implementation date.

The new criteria come into force on 1st July 2025 and must be implemented by all farms already participating with chicken or turkey fattening and turkey rearing from this date.

Note: the criteria do not have to be met at the time of registration of new participants. The selected implementation date then applies.

How many audits are carried out?

At the start of participation, an initial programme audit takes place. After release of the programme audit, the company is approved for the Initiative Tierwohl. Subsequently, the approved location is audited twice per calendar year: A programme audit and a stock check are carried out. If a livestock owner does not begin participation until 1st July of a calendar year, no stock check will take place in that calendar year. In the next calendar year, the twice-yearly audit cycle begins without a specific audit sequence.

Are the audits at my company unannounced?

Yes, all animal welfare audits are unannounced (contact maximum 24 hours in advance). This also applies to the first audit at the start of participation from the selected implementation date. Stock checks are completely unannounced.

What are the recommendations on the level of the price surcharge for ITW fattening poultry and how are these claims paid out to me?

The price surcharge will be paid directly by the abattoirs to the livestock owners. Usually, payment will be made with the slaughter invoice. The price surcharge must be shown separately on the slaughter invoice.

The bodies in the ITW have agreed on a recommendation on the level of the price surcharges.

The following recommendations apply up to and including 30th June 2025:

- 2.75 ct per kilogram live weight for broilers
- 3.25 ct per kilogram live weight for turkey hens
- 4.80 ct per kilogram of live weight for turkey cocks

New recommendations will apply from 1st July 2025:

- 2.97 ct per kilogram live weight for broilers
- 3.64 ct per kilogram live weight for turkey hens
- 4.38 ct per kilogram of live weight for turkey cocks

No recommendations were made for Peking duck fattening and **turkey rearing**. A possible surcharge is to be negotiated freely between the market participants.

How is the animal welfare fee or price surcharge assessed for tax purposes?

The price surcharges recommended in the programme manual of the Initiative Tierwohl are net amounts. They are taxed at the standard tax rate.

How long can I participate in the Initiative Tierwohl?

Participation in the Initiative Tierwohl is unlimited in time. After registration for the ITW, participation is automatically renewed for one calendar year at a time (until 31st December of the following year), unless participation is actively cancelled with the coordinator. An ordinary termination of agreement is possible at any time with a notice period of three months.

What do I need to bear in mind when I stop participating in the Initiative Tierwohl?

To terminate participation from the Initiative Tierwohl, a final programme audit must be carried out to confirm compliance with the criteria until the end of participation. For this audit, the shed climate and drinking water check as well as the proof of further training must already be available for the current calendar year. The sheds must also (still) be occupied. If a company deregisters without a final programme audit, a contractual penalty may be imposed. The audit must be carried out between three months before the date of deregistration at the earliest and two weeks after the date of deregistration at the latest. If a regular programme audit with all the necessary evidence has already been carried out during this period, this can be used as the final audit **at the request of the coordinator or the certification body to the operating company.**

In the case of termination of agreement at the end of the year - especially if, for example, new requirements apply from 1st January of the following year - the audit should be carried out in the current calendar year if possible.

What happens if an audit is not passed?

If a livestock owner does not pass an audit, the participation in the Initiative Tierwohl is terminated. From the day of the failed audit onwards, the entitlement to a price surcharge ceases. In addition, the operating company may impose a contractual penalty. The amount of the penalty is based on the recommended price surcharge that the livestock owner received for implementing the requirements of the ITW. The period of time that has elapsed since the last successful audit (programme audit, stock check, if applicable) is decisive for the assessment of the contractual penalty if the livestock owner is unable to prove the implementation of the requirements at a later point in time (reversal of the burden of proof). In determining the contractual penalty, the operating company assumes that the livestock owner has received the livestock welfare payment determined in the ITW or the price surcharge recommended in the ITW. The livestock owner has the possibility to appeal both the certification decision (to the certification body) and the contractual penalty (to the operating company), inter alia if the amount actually received was lower. In the event of a failed audit, the operating company shall provide written information on the possibilities of appeal.

After a failed audit, livestock owners with the locations concerned can potentially re-register for the Initiative Tierwohl.

*Corrective actions for QS basic criteria and **selected animal welfare criteria** - what needs to be considered?*

Corrective actions with deadlines can be agreed for all basic criteria **and selected animal welfare criteria**. If a corrective action is agreed, the company continues to participate in the ITW. The corrective actions must be implemented in a timely manner. The nonconformities must be corrected immediately by the livestock owner, which is why a correspondingly short deadline must be set for the implementation of the actions.

Please note: From the release of audit report until the certification body has completed the corrective action, the location is not eligible to deliver. If a corrective action is not remedied (in due time), the audit will be deemed as "failed" after the deadline has expired and the company will lose its approval for the ITW.

If there are repeated deviations in selected animal welfare criteria that lead to corrective actions, the audit is considered failed for the second consecutive corrective action per criterion - regardless of the content of the deviations.

What applies to companies that are obliged to comply with higher requirements due to national legal requirements (e.g. abroad)?

Livestock owners who are obliged to comply with higher requirements, e.g. abroad due to national legal requirements, must of course comply with them. If these requirements also affect the ITW criteria (e.g. space allowance), they are checked accordingly in the ITW audit. Non-compliance can lead to a knock-out evaluation.

Who is allowed to carry out the shed climate check?

External, competent persons who have previously registered with the operating company of the Initiative Tierwohl. All experts approved for the shed climate check are published on a list in the [download area](#). Please note that in addition to the shed climate experts for the Initiative Tierwohl poultry, the list also includes the shed climate experts of the Initiative Tierwohl for the pig sector and that you select shed climate experts for the poultry sector.

Who is allowed to carry out the drinking water check?

External competent persons who have previously registered with the operating company of the Initiative Tierwohl. All samplers approved for the drinking water check are published on a list in the [download area](#). Please note that the list also includes samplers for drinking water for the Initiative Tierwohl for the pig sector and that you select samplers for drinking water for the poultry sector.

Who is authorised to advise me on abnormal slaughter findings in terms of animal health advice?

Farm-specific advice may only be provided by external specialists. These include fattening advisors, veterinarians, feed consultants, etc. Approval by the Initiative Tierwohl is not required.

What happens if I expand the animal places at a registered operation site?

All criteria must always be complied with for all animals and all areas of the registered locations (Registration number + production scope), i.e. also for the new parts of the company and the additional animal places.

If the stock increases due to the addition of a new shed/compartment or the **merging of two locations**, this must be reported to the coordinator **immediately**. A new programme audit must be carried out to check whether the ITW requirements are complied with in the entire company. If, according to the inspection system, a programme audit must be carried out for the calendar year anyway, this can also be used - if carried out promptly - for the certification of the operational changes to livestock farming.

What do I need to do if I sell or lease a registered location to another company (change of operator)?

Any changes **to the registered operating site** that affect the agreement, the size of the livestock **or the number of animal places** or the criteria must be reported to the coordinator immediately. The coordinator can adjust the data in the database.

In case of rental or sale of **participating operating sites**, it is possible to transfer the participation in the Initiative Tierwohl to **subsequent livestock owner**. However, the new owner must have an audit carried out after the takeover, as the person responsible and, if applicable, the livestock farming management will change.

What happens if I share a participating location or merge two participating locations?

Requests to divide or merge companies or locations must be submitted to the database via the coordinator.

Where can I market my animals?

Every livestock owner can market their poultry freely. There is no obligation to sell to an ITW company.

For a fattener, there is also no obligation on the part of the Initiative Tierwohl to deliver to a specific abattoir that participates in the Initiative Tierwohl. However, an animal welfare price surcharge is only paid for those slaughter poultry that is delivered to an ITW abattoir with which an agreement has been made for the delivery of ITW poultry.

Where can I find abattoirs that participate in the Initiative Tierwohl?

All ITW-approved abattoirs can be accessed via the [public search function](#) (Slaughtering and Deboning stage) on the home page of the animal welfare database. Here, it is possible to search for specific abattoirs or to view a list of all abattoirs authorized to deliver by clicking on the "Search" button without entering any search criteria. The delivery of slaughter animals requires direct coordination between the fattener and the abattoir or marketer in order to define the delivery and billing conditions.

Initiative Tierwohl GmbH

CEO: Dr. Alexander Hinrichs, Robert Römer
Schwertberger Str. 14
53177 Bonn
Tel +49 228 336485-0
info@initiative-tierwohl.de