Explanatory notes on the Initiative Tierwohl

Poultry

Structure

The implementation of the requirements in the Initiative Tierwohl is monitored at least twice in unannounced audits (programme audit, stock check) in each year of the certificate period.

The concrete requirements and thus the basis for auditing are laid down in the *criteria catalogue for poultry fattening* of the Manual Agriculture of the Initiative Tierwohl and in the *QS Guidelines for Agriculture Poultry Production.*

Requirements

General

Broilers and turkeys

How is it assessed?

The implementation of the individual criteria is assessed on the basis of the following evaluations and documented in the audit report:

- " fulfilled" (A),
- "partially fulfilled" (C) (basic criteria and selected animal welfare criteria),
- "not fulfilled" (K.O.)
- "not applicable" (E) – conceivable for some general requirements –

An evaluation of "not fulfilled" (K.O.) leads to exclusion from the Initiative Tierwohl or to a downgrade to the programme whose requirements were verified in the audit. For the basic criteria and selected ITW criteria, corrective actions with deadlines can be agreed upon for an evaluation of "partially fulfilled". The identified nonconformities must be remedied by the livestock owner without delay. A correspondingly short deadline must be agreed upon for the implementation of the measures.

Please note: From the time of the release of the audit report until the certification body has completed the corrective action, the location is blocked and therefore not eligible to supply the Initiative Tierwohl or receive payment. If a corrective action is not remedied (within the deadline), the audit will be considered "failed" after the deadline has expired: the location will then lose its ITW approval.

Is it possible to participate with only part of a location?

No. The entire location must always participate in the ITW programmes.

The location (= farm) is defined by its official location number (e.g. in Germany, by its VVVO number) and, where applicable, its shed ID, as well as the production scope (broiler production, turkey rearing/fattening). Within a location number, sub-areas (defined as shed) with different shed IDs may participate in different ITW programmes. A prerequisite is that uniform housing conditions exist within a shed or building (under one roof). If there are multiple sheds with the same ITW program (e.g. Stall plus Platz) they can be registered under a single shed ID.

All requirements of a selected programme always apply to all animals at a participating location or to a shed that is assigned to the location via a shed ID. Each production scope can be registered separately and independently of other production types; however, in principle, no sub-area of a location may be excluded from participation.

Exception: If disused sheds or shed compartments are located on a registered location, proof of disuse must be provided (e.g. decommissioned water and feed supply lines, disused ventilation system, etc.).

What needs to be taken into account if parts of a site are participants under a single shed ID?

If selected sheds on a site are participating in different programmes (e.g. "Stall plus Platz" and "Frischluftstall"), records kept on the farm (e.g. shed-by-shed records of livestock numbers, shed charts, site plan/farm layout) must clearly and transparently show which shed is a participant in which ITW programme. This is also checked and documented during the audit.

All animals must be reared in accordance with the requirements of the respective selected programme throughout the entire fattening phase (and, in the case of turkeys, also during the rearing phase).

The traceability of animals from specific sheds must be ensured through unique animal identification and documentation at the abattoir. To this end, each crate must be labelled with the shed ID during destocking so that the poultry for slaughter can be allocated by shed.

Is compliance with national requirements mandatory for participation in the Initiative Tierwohl for Poultry?

Yes. If stricter, legally regulated requirements apply that exceed the requirements of the Initiative Tierwohl, these must be met. Compliance with these requirements is checked during the audit. Livestock owners must prove that they comply with the legally applicable requirements.

Fattening turkeys

When does the fattening phase begin in turkey production?

The fattening phase begins when the animals are transferred to the fattening shed.

If some of the young turkeys are transferred from the rearing shed to a fattening shed after the rearing phase, the fattening phase for the animals remaining in the rearing shed begins at this point.

If all reared animals remain in the same shed without being transferred until fattening, the fattening phase begins at the start of the 42nd day of life.

1 General requirements

1.1 Basic criteria livestock farming, hygiene, animal health

Broilers and turkeys

What is assessed?

It must be ensured that the animals are kept in accordance with the law, good professional practice and the relevant QS criteria (see ***QS Guideline for Poultry Farming***).

Turkeys

What criteria must a recovery area for turkeys fulfil?

In principle, compliance with all criteria must always be ensured in recovery areas. This also applies to additional activity material.
Exception: Additional structural elements/raised levels do not have to be provided in recovery areas.

The space allowance for animals separated in recovery compartments must ensure compliance with a maximum of 45 kg live weight per m² of usable area at any time.

1.2 Purchase of day-old chicks and rearing poultry

Broilers and turkeys

What do poultry farmers need to bear in mind?

Only day-old chicks from hatcheries or rearing turkeys for fattening may be purchased from rearing farms that are authorised to deliver under the QS scheme at the time of delivery.

From 1 January 2026, turkey farmers will only be permitted to purchase young turkeys for fattening from ITW-approved turkey breeding farms (locations) with eligibility of delivery verified in the ITW database at the time of delivery.

Rearing turkeys

What do turkey rearing breeders need to bear in mind?

Turkey rearing breeders must have their breeding farms successfully audited by 31 December 2025 at the latest if ITW breeding animals are to be delivered to ITW turkey farmers or turkey production locations from 1 January 2026.

Are ITW-approved turkey rearing businesses only allowed to supply ITW turkey production facilities?

No. ITW breeding animals may also be delivered to non-participating turkey production farms at any time. However, ITW certification of turkey rearing is also mandatory if turkeys are only delivered sporadically to ITW turkey production farms within a year.

What do participating turkey fatteners who operate a turkey rearing facility for their own fattening under a separate location number have to take into account?

Turkey fattening farms with their own rearing operations that are separately registered with the authorities under a different location number must register this location with the Initiative Tierwohl as a turkey rearing production scope and have it audited. To register, the livestock owner must specify an implementation date.

What do turkey farmers who also operate a turkey rearing facility at an already participating turkey production location under the same location number need to consider?

Turkey farmers who operate rearing and fattening under the same location number must notify their coordinator of this, specifying the rearing locations.
Turkey fattening locations with their own turkey rearing will continue to require a programme audit and a stock check per location per calendar year. Upon successful completion of the audit, the location will be approved for both rearing and (combined) fattening.

Notes: *Turkey fattening locations with their own turkey rearing facilities may also supply their reared animals to other turkey fattening locations if they have existing eligibility of delivery. The eligibility of delivery for own rearing should be checked regularly, especially if, for example, the registered location is being converted into a fattening shed.*

1.3 Measures to improve foot pad health

What should be done if the litter quality is not optimal?

It may happen that the quality of the litter is not optimal (e.g. damp, encrusted, clumping). In this case, measures must be taken to minimise any negative consequences for the animals and their footpad health.

In this case, the livestock owner must be able to plausibly explain to the auditor what measures he has taken to improve the quality of the litter (written overview of measures or verbal explanations).

1.4 Handling instructions for pre-destocking (only for broilers)

Broiler

What needs to be considered when creating a farm-specific concept?

The concept must be up to date, plausible and available in document form. It must describe the implementation of the farm-specific instructions.

1.5 Lighting programme for sheds with artificial lighting: twilight phases (only for broilers and fattening turkeys)

Broilers and turkeys

How should the twilight phase be implemented?

The twilight phase must be ensured by means of an automated lighting programme which, at the end of the dark phase, only reaches the maximum required illuminance after at least 15 minutes of twilight lighting. To this end, the light intensity is continuously increased by dimming the light sources used. The same procedure applies in reverse for the required twilight phase before the start of the dark phase.

How can the twilight phase be implemented with artificial lighting?

The light sources used for lighting during activity periods must be dimmable and controlled by an automated lighting programme. It is not permissible to use non-dimmable light sources to create twilight phases and to switch them on and off in sequence, e.g. by dividing them into different power or control circuits.

Fattening turkeys

When must fattening turkeys be offered a twilight phase?

Fattening turkeys kept in closed sheds must be offered twilight phases no later than the first day of the fattening phase. If fattening turkeys continue to be kept in the rearing shed for fattening after the rearing phase **(see General information – *When does the fattening phase begin in turkey production?*)**, the animals must also be offered twilight phases from the first day of the fattening phase. If turkey hens and turkey cocks were kept in the rearing shed during the rearing phase, the fattening phase for the turkey hens begins when the turkey cocks are transferred to the turkey fattening shed.

What are the characteristics of closed turkey sheds?

Due to their design, closed turkey sheds have side walls (also with window areas) which, in contrast to sheds with side elements that can be opened (blinds, flaps, etc.), such as Louisiana sheds, have no openings between the shed floor slab and the roof base (e.g. knee wall). Closed sheds usually have active ventilation systems to control the shed climate and, if necessary, side doors or openings in the side walls for the animals to have an outdoor area, as well as windows for daylight incidence.

1.6 Proof of annual training

Broilers and turkeys

When and how often must training courses be attended by participants?

Training must be attended before the initial audit and then once in each subsequent calendar year. Training courses that took place no more than one year (= 365 days) prior to the initial programme audit can receive recognition in the initial programme audit.

Exception: If, at a site that is already a participant, a shed is registered for a different ITW programme with a shed ID, or if the site switches to a different ITW programme, the evidence of training for the new ITW programme may be carried over. Accordingly, in this case, the training may also be more than 365 days old; the key requirement is that at least one training course is attended per calendar year.

If the first training course was completed in the year prior to the first programme audit (max. 365 days before the initial audit), a training course must also be attended in the calendar year of the first programme audit.

If a programme audit is carried out to terminate participation in the Initiative Tierwohl, proof of training for the current calendar year must be available for this audit. Companies that terminate their participation in the Initiative Tierwohl by 31 March of a calendar year (= deregistration in the database) do not need to provide proof of training for that calendar year. If participation in the calendar year continues beyond 31 March, the training must also be completed for the current calendar year.

Turkey farmers who rear and conduct turkey production at the same location do not need to provide evidence of separate training in turkey rearing.

What is the scope of the training?

The training must demonstrably comprise at least two hours of content. Various training courses can also be combined.

What content must the training cover?

The content must be directly related to animal welfare and animal protection. Topics such as management, husbandry, animal health, feeding and climate control in relation to animal welfare and animal protection can be used for this purpose.

Possible content for the training events includes, for example:

- Animal welfare-friendly anaesthesia and emergency killing
- Recognising and interpreting animal signals
- Carrying out animal observation
- Dealing with sick and injured animals
- Assessing the transportability of poultry
- Feather pecking, prevention and measures to be taken when it occurs
- Use of activity material
- Improvement of hygiene management and biosecurity
- Structuring the housing environment

What does not constitute training that meets the requirements?

The following are not taken into account

- Consulting on business development (e.g. business management consulting or construction consulting)
- Stable inspections as part of consulting, unless they are expressly organised as a training measure
- Stable inspections in connection with veterinary stock checks, unless they are expressly organised as a training measure
- Stable climate or drinking water checks
- Internal training courses for company employees
- Visits to trade fairs or exhibitions
- Subscriptions to trade journals
- Membership in fattening circles/advisory groups
- Training courses that are not related to the registered production branch (e.g. training in plant protection)

Who must be a participant in a training course once a year?

At least one responsible employee or the livestock owner at the location must always participate in a training event. This person must be designated as a livestock owner (e.g. in the QS livestock owner list). The confirmation of participation for the training event must be issued in the name of the participant. If a livestock owner/employee looks after several locations, the certificate can also be used for other locations.

Training for a person external to the business (e.g. a consultant) cannot receive recognition, even if they are listed in the animal caretaker list. It is also not possible to split the training hours between several people (e.g. four employees who each received 30 minutes of training).

Is it still necessary to participate in training if there is a prolonged period of unoccupied space?

Yes, the obligation to participate in training is not dependent on stable occupancy. As long as the livestock owner participates in the Initiative Tierwohl and is registered in the database, they must participate in training once per calendar year.

What form must the proof of training take?

A personalised certificate of attendance must be submitted as proof for each event (for the person responsible for livestock farming). In addition to the name of the participant, the certificate must document the content of the event. It is also recommended to indicate the duration of the training. The duration of the two-hour training can also be proven in other ways (e.g. via a programme overview, invitation, etc.).

Who is allowed to hold training?

Training courses may be organised and held by any qualified person. This includes, for example, coordinators, advisory organisations, veterinarians, specialist advisors, etc. Approval from the Initiative Tierwohl is not required.

1.7 Participation in diagnostic data monitoring with measures in the event of abnormal findings

Broilers and turkeys

What exactly does the poultry farmer have to do and what does he have to bear in mind?

Livestock owners must register the mortality rate of their herd with the abattoir for each batch sent for slaughter. The mortality rate and the findings independently recorded by official veterinarians at the abattoir, as well as transport-related losses, are collected in a central database and evaluated on a regular basis.

Every livestock owner must be aware of the animal health status based on the findings, either via the QS information letter they receive from their coordinator on a quarterly basis or online via the QS findings database (Vetproof).

How long do you have to come up with an action plan after you see that something needs to be done?

In the event of abnormal findings, proof of consultation and an action plan must be provided by the next calculation date at the latest (calculations on 1 February, 1 May, 1 August and 1 November of each calendar year). The QS info letter provides a corresponding *action plan for animal health consultation* as a supporting document.

An action plan and proof of consultation can also be drawn up independently of the evaluation results of the QS info letter if abnormalities are found in relevant slaughter batches. These can also be used as evidence in the audit.

What must an action plan for animal health consulting contain as a minimum?

The documentation of an action plan must contain at least the following information:

- Location name (shed) and official registration number
- First and last name of the external consultant, specifying the consulting company
- Consultation date
- Details (with specific reference) of the cause/reason
- and the conspicuous findings
- Description of the action required as plausible measure(s)
- Implementation date of the measure(s)

Recommendation: If the QS quarterly monitoring (see QS info letter) has identified a need for action due to conspicuous slaughter findings, the development of these findings should be further examined as part of the farm-specific animal health consultation with the next slaughter results reports or the QS info letter.

Who is authorised to provide farm-specific consultations?

Farm-specific consultations may be carried out by external experts. These include fattening consultants, veterinarians, feed consultants, etc. Approval from the Initiative Tierwohl is not required.

1.8 Structuring of the housing environment/raised levels

Broilers and turkeys

Can unchangeable and changeable structural elements be combined in a shed?

Yes. All possible structural elements can be combined with each other (e.g. perches or jumping tables with changeable structural elements) to ensure the minimum required structuring of the housing environment for the animals in the interior of the shed.

Can structural elements in outdoor climate areas be taken into account?

Yes. Structural elements provided in outdoor climate areas can be counted if these areas are accessible to the animals at all times without restriction.

Are feeding and drinkers recognised as perches?

No. By definition, feeding and drinking facilities are not considered to be resting areas and are therefore not recognised as perches (see ***QS Guideline for Poultry Farming***).

What materials may be used as modifiable structural elements?

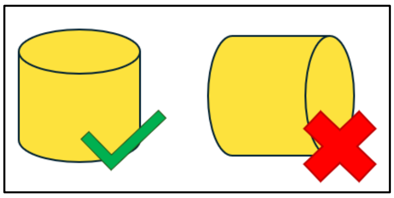
Any good quality materials (clean, dry, visibly free of fungal infestation) that are suitable as modifiable structural elements (e.g. straw, hay, grass seed straw bales, wood chip bales) may be used.

How do high-pressure bales differ from square bales in order to meet the requirements of a specified number of bales per stable area?

Rectangular bales are distinguished between small high-pressure bales and large rectangular bales based on their bale width. If the width of a bale measures a maximum of 80 cm, it is a high-pressure bale. If the bale width measures more than 80 cm, it is a rectangular bale. These bales are available in various rectangular formats. High-pressure bales are suitable for use with broilers and rectangular/round bales for turkeys.

What requirements apply to round bales when they are used as variable structural elements?

If round bales are used as adjustable structural elements or to create raised levels, they must have a diameter of



at least 120 cm. The round bales must be used upright (see adjacent illustration) so that the upward-facing, round front side can be used by the animals as a raised level. Round bales placed lying down do not receive recognition as a modifiable structural element for creating a raised level.

Note: For fattening turkeys, a minimum seating area of approx. 1.8 m^2*per 400* m^2*of usable shed floor area should be provided for round or square bales.*

What are the requirements for non-modifiable structural elements?

Non-modifiable structural elements must be installed at a height that ensures that seating areas and/or perches are clearly not in contact with the littered shed area. This rule also applies vice versa if perches are primarily installed.

Non-modifiable structural elements must be usable by the animals and enable them to assume an elevated position in order to be able to perch in accordance with their species-specific behaviour.

Broiler

What needs to be considered when structuring the housing environment?

At least 5% of the usable shed floor area must be equipped with raised levels. If perches are used that cover less than 5%, the required area of raised levels can be supplemented, for example, with high-pressure bales or perches, at the latest at the beginning of the second week of life. This rule also applies vice versa if perches are primarily installed.

How should perches be calculated as structural elements if they are offered in sections?

For every 45 $m^2$of usable shed floor area, at least 2.0 running metres of perch must be provided.
Note: Perches should have a minimum length of 1 metre per structural element if possible.

Fattening turkeys

When must fattening turkeys be provided with raised levels as structural elements?

Fattening turkeys must be able to use raised levels as structural elements from the first day of the fattening phase at the latest **(see General information –** ***When does the fattening phase begin in turkey production?*****)**.

What requirements apply to unchangeable structural elements (such as tables or side elements) in turkey fattening?

For every 400 m² of usable shed floor area, the total area of the minimum standing space available must be 1.85 m².

As an alternative to a continuous minimum standing area of 1.85 m², **smaller sub-areas** may also be accepted if all sub-areas have the same standing area of 0.185 m² or a multiple of 0.185 m². This means that all **smaller sub-areas** in a shed must be identical.

Round standing areas must have a diameter of at least 48 cm and other geometric shapes must have an edge length of at least 23 cm.

1.9 Shed climate check

Broilers and turkeys

When and how often must the shed climate checks be carried out?

A shed climate check must be carried out for each shed before the initial audit and then once every calendar year. If the first check was carried out in the year prior to the first programme audit (max. 365 days before the initial audit), a check must also be carried out for the calendar year of the first programme audit. The result must be documented. Exception: If, at a site that is already a participant, only one shed is registered for a different ITW programme with a shed ID, or if the site switches to a different ITW programme, the most recent shed climate check carried out may be carried over to the new ITW programme. Accordingly, in this case, the check may be more than 365 days old; the key requirement is that at least one check has been carried out per calendar year.

Note: If a rearing shed is also used as a fattening shed in turkey production, only one check is required (regardless of the rearing or fattening phase of the animals).

If a programme audit is carried out to terminate participation in the Initiative Tierwohl, the shed climate check for the current calendar year must be available for this programme audit.

Companies that terminate their participation in the Initiative Tierwohl by 31 March of a calendar year (= deregistration in the database) do not have to carry out a shed climate check for that calendar year. If participation in the calendar year continues beyond 31 March, the shed climate check must also be carried out for the current calendar year.

Shed climate checks must always be carried out in occupied sheds. Particularly in the case of new sheds, the implementation date must be chosen so that the shed climate check can be carried out after the first stabling but before the implementation date. If not all sheds are occupied at the time of implementation, the necessary checks must be carried out immediately as soon as animals are stabled. The audit must demonstrate that the sheds had not actually been used prior to the date of stabling and that the checks were commissioned in a timely manner. If no results are available yet, they must be submitted at short notice.

Who is authorised to carry out the stable climate checks?

External experts who have registered with the operating company of Initiative Tierwohl. All experts approved for the stable climate check are published on a list at www.initiative-tierwohl.de you are free to choose from this list.

How many stable climate checks must be carried out?

A **minimum** of one check per shed is required.

Do climate checks carried out by experts prior to their registration and publication in the Initiative Tierwohl list receive recognition?

A check can only be granted recognition from the date of approval of the respective expert. Experts must be included in the list. The date of approval in the list is decisive in this regard.

What happens if defects are found?

If nonconformities are discovered during the climate check, they must be listed and, if necessary, further measurements and a review of the dimensioning of the ventilation system must be carried out. In the event of defects, an action plan for troubleshooting (including deadlines) must be drawn up with the expert. Corrective actions must already have been initiated and documented by the initial audit.

What must be presented in the audit?

The certificate for the stable climate check (issued by an approved expert) must be presented during the audit; in addition, the list of defects with the action plan and proof that the corrective actions were started or implemented on time must be presented, if applicable.

Is it mandatory to use the original checklist for the stable climate check?

It is possible to expand the original checklist, but the basic structure and form must be retained and recognisable. If an action plan is drawn up, deadlines must be set (either defining the period or the date of implementation).

Note: For details on how to carry out the stable climate check (e.g. distribution of random samples), see "Instructions for carrying out the stable climate check".

1.10 Drinking water check

Broilers and turkeys

When and how often must drinking water checks be carried out?

A drinking water check must be carried out for each shed before the initial audit and then once in each subsequent calendar year. If the first check was carried out in the year prior to the first programme audit (max. 365 days before the initial audit), a check must also be carried out for the calendar year of the first programme audit. The drinking water check consists of sampling and water analysis.

Exception: If, at a site that is already a participant, only one shed is registered for a different ITW programme with a shed ID, or if the site switches to a different programme, the most recent drinking water check carried out may be carried over to the new ITW programme. Accordingly, in this case, the check may be more than 365 days old; the key requirement is that at least one check has been carried out per calendar year.

Note: If a rearing shed is also used as a fattening shed in turkey production, only one check is required (regardless of the rearing or fattening phase of the animals).

If a programme audit is carried out to terminate participation in the Initiative Tierwohl, the drinking water check for the current calendar year must be available for this audit.

Companies that terminate their participation in the Initiative Tierwohl by 31 March of a calendar year (= deregistration in the database) do not have to carry out a drinking water check for that calendar year. If participation in the calendar year continues beyond 31 March, the drinking water check must also be carried out for the current calendar year.

The samples for microbiological testing of the drinking water check must always be taken in occupied sheds. Particularly in the case of new sheds, the implementation date must be chosen so that the drinking water check can be carried out after the first stabling but before the audit. If not all sheds are occupied at the time of implementation, the necessary checks must be carried out immediately as soon as animals are stabled. The audit must verify that the sheds had not actually been used prior to the date of shed and that the checks were commissioned in a timely manner. If no results are available yet, they must be submitted at short notice.

<u>Special situation for broilers:</u>

Due to the short production cycle in broiler production, it may happen that the company has had the drinking water check carried out on the date of stabling (usually = implementation date), but that the analysis results of the drinking water test have not yet been returned to the company by the laboratory at the time of the audit. In this case, the results of the drinking water analysis can be submitted by the company at a later date.

Who carries out the sampling?

External experts who have previously registered with the operating company. All experts approved for sampling are published on a list at www.initiative-tierwohl.de; any expert from this list may be freely selected.

If water from the farm's own well is also used as drinking water (i.e. for humans and animals), the official drinking water monitoring can also be used for the physical-chemical drinking water check, provided that the specified parameters have been tested and the test results clearly show that it is an official sample. In this case, the sampler does not need to be registered with the Initiative Tierwohl.

The criteria catalogue (annex 2) describes where and how many water samples must be taken. The number of samples, the respective location and the date of sampling must be documented by the sampler in a report.

Are drinking water checks carried out by samplers prior to their registration and publication in the Initiative Tierwohl list granted recognition?

A check can only be recognised from the date of approval of the respective sampler. Samplers must be included in the list. The date of approval in the list is decisive in this regard. The first sampling, including the analysis result, must be available at the implementation date or at the latest at the time of the initial audit.

Can an official drinking water check be granted recognition (chemical-physical examination)?

The drinking water check can receive recognition if there is corresponding evidence of an official sampling that was taken a maximum of 365 days before the initial audit or once a calendar year thereafter.

Note: For detailed instructions on taking drinking water samples, see "Instructions for taking drinking water samples".

What happens if deficiencies are found?

If the analysis reveals that the assessment values have been exceeded or not reached, an action plan must be drawn up to rectify the situation (including deadlines). These corrective actions must already have been initiated and documented by the time of the initial audit. The aim is to provide the most suitable drinking water (= most important feed!). If compliance with the values is not achieved, measures must be taken to achieve the guideline values as quickly as possible. In the meantime, negative consequences for the animals must be kept to a minimum.

If there is no compliance with the limit value for hardness (<21° dH), the animals must be examined by a vet. If the vet finds any health problems or reduced water intake in the animals that can be attributed to the water quality, measures must be taken to ensure compliance with the hardness level. If the vet finds no health problems or reduced water intake, no further action is required.

Does each water source and each location number (e.g. according to VVVO) require its own test?

A physical-chemical test (or several tests in the case of multiple water sources) must be available for each location number and production scope. If several locations (= several location numbers or several production scopes) are supplied from a common water source, one physical-chemical analysis is sufficient.

This does not apply to microbiological testing: here, the registered sampler must take and analyse one sample per shed for each location number and production scope. If several sheds belong to one location number, a sample must be taken in each shed.

What must be presented in the audit?

The drinking water analysis certificate (issued by a laboratory) must be presented during the audit, as must the sampler's sampling protocol. The following information must be documented in the sampling protocol: name, address, location number of the company, sampling point (location of the tap or drinking nipple/drinking trough), name of the sampler, date of sampling. If this information is fully contained in the drinking water analysis certificate from the laboratory, this can be used as the protocol. In addition, the action plan for rectifying deficiencies and proof that the corrective actions have been implemented on time must be available.

2 Additional requirements for *Stall plus Platz*

2.1 Additional activity options

What needs to be considered when creating additional enrichment opportunities?

Compressed bales of straw, hay or wood shavings – even on litter made of the same material – also serve as suitable activity material, as long as these bales have not reached the given floor level of the litter due to consumption.

The amount of activity material provided must be sufficient in relation to the total usable area. If the usable shed floor area is increased by raised levels, the total usable area must be taken into account when providing additional activity material. The activity material must be distributed evenly throughout the shed and be easily accessible to every animal.

Can enrichment materials in outdoor climate areas be counted?

Yes. Enrichment materials provided in outdoor climate areas can be counted if these areas are accessible to the animals at all times without restriction.

Can the same bales be offered both as additional activity material and as a modifiable structural element?

No. An element may not be counted as both an additional enrichment option and a modifiable structural element (see *1.8 Structuring the housing environment/raised levels*). However, it is possible to use a certain number of bales as activity material and other bales as raised levels.

Additional activity material for use against behavioural abnormalities

If behavioural abnormalities occur despite the constant provision of additional enrichment opportunities (e.g. feather pecking and/or cannibalism), further suitable activity material beyond that already provided must be offered immediately. This activity material must not have been offered to the flock prior to the behavioural abnormalities being observed. It does not have to be consumable, but it must at least be peckable. However, it must be available on the company's farm at all times for immediate use in the shed.

2.2 Bigger space allowance

Broilers and turkeys

Are additional levels permitted to increase the space allowance?

Yes. The installation of an additional level to increase the space allowance (for broilers only in the interior of the shed) is possible to a limited extent if this area is also fully usable in terms of usable area.

Note: When calculating raised levels as an increase in space allowance, livestock owners must observe the building regulations for the shed in question and official requirements and ensure that the animals are provided with sufficient feed and water. Supply lines must be designed according to the number of animals or their live weight (see ***QS Guideline for Poultry Farming****).*

Fattening turkeys

Raised levels that can be passed underneath
Areas below raised levels can continue to be counted in full as usable shed area if the raised levels can be walked under at any time and are installed at least at the animals' back height. The eligibility of raised level areas is limited to a maximum of 10% of the usable shed floor area as additional eligible usable shed area.

Raised levels that cannot be walked under
The previously usable shed floor area below the raised levels can no longer be counted as usable shed area.

Broiler

Littered raised levels that can be walked under
Areas below raised levels can continue to be counted in full as usable shed area. The eligibility of raised levels with littered areas is limited to a maximum of 10% of the usable shed floor area as additional eligible usable shed area.

Non-littered, non-passable raised levels
Areas of these raised levels must be deducted from the usable shed floor area because they restrict the usable shed area.

Littered, non-passable raised levels or non-littered, passable raised levels

The areas covered by these structural elements (e.g. straw bales, litter-free jumping tables) do not alter the usable stable area.

How can outdoor climate areas be taken into account in terms of space allowance?

An outdoor climate area that is littered and freely accessible to broilers at the latest when the stocking density limit in the shed is reached and to turkeys at the latest from the ninth week of life (cf. permissible exceptions) can be added to the usable area at 100%.

If an outdoor climate area must be temporarily blocked to the animals due to permissible exceptions, the relevant stocking densities specified in **the QS Guideline for Poultry Farming** must not be exceeded in the fattening cycle in relation to the usable shed area.

In which cases may access to the outdoor climate area be restricted or closed?

In the event of a veterinary indication or extreme weather events, e.g. very low temperatures in the outdoor climate area (several days below freezing (< 0° C)), access to the outdoor climate area may be restricted for a certain period of time or closed for the period specified by the veterinarian.

Companies that are demonstrably located in officially designated restriction zones may temporarily reduce the air and light permeability of the outdoor climate area or close the outdoor area.

Periods of restricted access or closure of outdoor climate areas must be documented.

Broilers and turkeys

What needs to be taken into account when planning and calculating stocking densities to ensure compliance with the space allowance?

The average stocking density per flock of a shed kept together as a group (in kg live weight per m² of usable shed area) at the time of marketing must be taken into account over three consecutive cycles.

In the case of several marketing operations within one cycle, only the pre-destocking removals or the main destocking removals are used for comparison.

Notes: *If, in exceptional cases, a second pre-destocking takes place in a rearing group before the main destocking (final removal) in one run per company, this does not necessarily have to be taken into account for the average calculation, as it is rarely possible to compare three consecutive runs.*

If hens or roosters are kept as housing groups in a shed at times, the space allowance must be planned separately for both sexes – i.e. the rooster cycles separately and the hen cycles separately – and compliance with the specified stocking densities must be ensured. If hens and roosters are fattened alternately as groups in a shed, the consecutive cycles for each sex must also be considered. This also applies if the individual cycles of one sex are interrupted by cycles of the other sex.

The maximum stocking density (according to the **QS guideline for Poultry Farming**) must not be exceeded at any time. Such an exceedance – even in a single batch – cannot be compensated for by averaging over three batches.

What do fatteners have to prove for the first programme audit?

In the first programme audit, it must be demonstrated plausibly and in writing, on the basis of planned calculations, that the space allowance is planned in such a way that the specified maximum live weight per m² of usable shed area is not exceeded for each flock group with the stock present on the farm. If fewer than three batches have been marketed from a shed at the time of a follow-up audit, plausible, comprehensible planned calculations must be available.

How is the increased space allowance calculated for Austrian fattening companies and what is the minimum space allowance accepted for the Initiative Tierwohl for Poultry?

Broiler

Two calculations are made to determine the space allowance for broilers, based on the different definitions of shed area. To calculate according to the definition under Austrian law, the available shed area as gross area per herd group is used as the reference value for live weight. This also takes into account any available but unusable shed areas that are inaccessible to the animals, e.g. those below the supply lines. In addition, raised levels can be taken into account as passable structural elements with a maximum area of 10% of the available shed floor area to increase the space allowance. The national upper limit of 30 kg live weight per m² of usable shed area and flock group must not be exceeded on average over three consecutive cycles.

For calculation in accordance with the requirements of *the Initiative Tierwohl for Poultry*, only the usable and littered shed area that is actually available to the animals is used as a reference value for live weight. The specified upper limit of 35 kg live weight per m² of usable shed area and herd group must not be exceeded at any time on average over three consecutive cycles.

Turkeys

The space allowance is calculated in accordance with the requirements of *the Initiative Tierwohl for Poultry*. Compliance with the national upper limit of 40 kg live weight per m² of usable shed area and flock group is required on average over three consecutive cycles.

3 Additional requirements for *Frischluftstall*

3.1 Additional activity options

In addition to the explanations under *2.1 Additional enrichment opportunities*, the following applies:

Fattening turkeys

When must a second piece of additional activity material be provided for fattening turkeys?

At the start of the fattening phase (see ***When does the fattening phase begin in turkey production?***) or at the latest at the start of the 11th week of life, turkeys must be provided with a second additional activity material for every 400 m²of usable area.

3.2 Bigger space allowance

Broilers and turkeys

Are additional levels permitted to increase the space allowance?
(see explanations under *2.2 Increased space allowance*)

What needs to be taken into account when planning and calculating stocking densities to ensure compliance with the space allowance?

(see explanations under *2.2 Increased space allowance*)

What must fatteners provide evidence of for the first programme audit?

(see explanations under *2.2 Increased space allowance*)

Broiler

Is a second pre-destocking possible for broilers in exceptional cases?

In order to regulate the space allowance, a second pre-destocking is only permissible if it can be plausibly justified that this pre-destocking is due to circumstances beyond the control of the livestock owner/company (e.g. official restrictions, current disease outbreaks).

Can outdoor climate areas for broilers be taken into account when calculating space allowance?

No. The space allowance refers to the usable shed area, taking into account the minimum requirements for outdoor climate areas, on the basis of which different upper limits for stocking densities are set.

Fattening turkeys

Can outdoor climate areas for fattening turkeys be taken into account when calculating space allowance?

Yes. A littered outdoor climate area can be counted as additional usable space for the calculation of the space allowance up to a maximum of 30% of the usable shed floor area, provided that it is available to the animals day and night without restriction.

If an outdoor climate area has to be temporarily blocked for the animals due to the exceptions mentioned, the relevant stocking densities specified in **the QS Guideline for Poultry Farming** must not be exceeded in the fattening cycle in relation to the usable shed area.

3.3 Specific housing requirements/outdoor climate area

broiler

What needs to be considered for broilers when arranging outdoor climate areas?

Outdoor climate areas for broilers must always be arranged along the length of the shed. This applies to both indoor and outdoor climate areas. The outdoor climate area does not have to extend over the entire length of the shed, provided that it covers at least 20% of the usable shed floor area. However, it must be structurally justifiable and appropriately arranged.

Fattening turkeys

What is the minimum space requirement for fattening turkeys in terms of outdoor access?

The total width of all openings (total width) must be at least 5% of the length of the shed or gable side measured from the inside.

Broilers and fattening turkeys

What time period does "during the day" cover, and in which season must free access to the outdoor climate area be ensured?

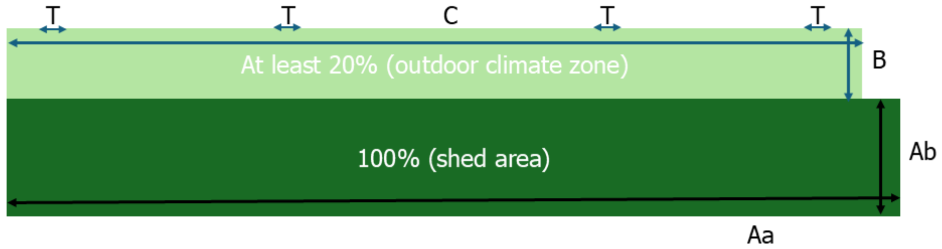
Access to the outdoor climate area must be granted to the animals from April 15 to November 15, no later than 10 a.m. and for a total of at least eight hours per day, and for at least five hours per day during the rest of the year.

How is the required opening area of at least 50% for broilers and turkeys measured and calculated for external side walls?

The vertical opening area of the air and light inlet on exterior walls must be at least 50% of the side walls of the outdoor climate area (see Variant A / Variant B). The opening area refers to the usable area of the outdoor climate area (maximum 30% of the usable shed floor area).

Variant A)

Outdoor climate area created along one of the long sides of the shed, with an open exterior wall along its length



Legend

Aa Interior length of shed area
Ab Interior width of shed area
B Interior width of outdoor climate area
C Interior length of exterior wall in outdoor climate area
T Width of non-light- and air-permeable partial areas > 0.20 m

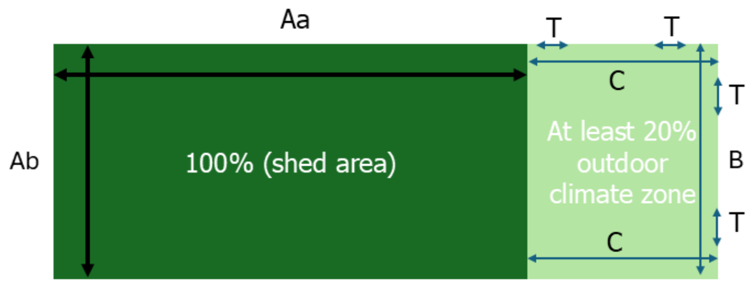
Minimum opening area (at least 50% of the outer wall):
The vertical opening area on the inside of the shed must be at least 50% from the top edge of the grille of the opening area to the floor. Partial areas that do not allow light and air to pass through (e.g., beams) with a width of more than 0.20 meters reduce the opening area.

The minimum height of the opening must be 1.00 m.

Note: If the required minimum opening area of an exterior wall is not achieved, opening areas of the exterior wall on the gable side can be taken into account for compensation.

Variant B)

Outdoor climate area created at one end of the shed



Legend

Aa Interior length of shed area
Ab Interior width of shed area
B Interior width of outdoor climate area
C Interior length of exterior wall in outdoor climate area
T Width of non-light- and air-permeable partial areas > 0.20 m

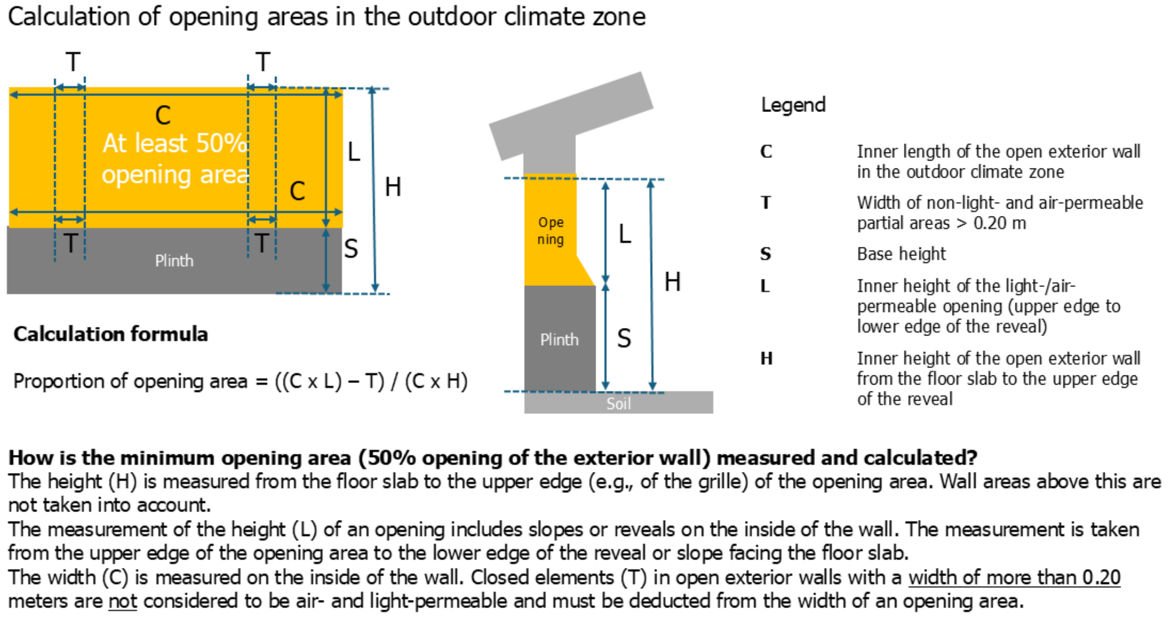
Minimum opening area (at least 50% opening of the exterior walls):
The vertical opening area of the opposite walls must be at least 50% of the distance from the top edge of the grille of the opening area to the floor on the inside of the shed. Partial areas that do not allow light and air to pass through (e.g., beams) with a width of more than 0.20 meters reduce the opening area.

The minimum height of the opening must be 1.00 m.

Note: If the required minimum opening area of an exterior wall is not achieved, opening areas of the exterior wall on the gable side can be taken into account for compensation.

The total area of the side wall to be taken into account (100%) refers to the inside of the external wall: The basis for calculating the area of an open side wall is its height (H), measured between the upper edge of the opening area and the floor slab, and the width of the total length (C) of the wall in question.

The height of opening areas must be at least 1.0 metre. The measuring points for determining the height of opening areas (L) are the upper edges and lower edges of the openings (e.g. sloping wall openings) on the inside wall. Elements within opening areas with a width of more than 0.20 metres (T) that are neither air- nor lightpermeable (e.g. supports, beams, foundations) reduce the required opening area and must be deducted from the



opening area.

Opening areas can be secured by means of, for example, grilles, windbreak nets or other similarly suitable elements in order to protect the animal population from the effects of the weather and the intrusion of wild populations.

When can other existing light- and air-permeable openings be taken into account?

If the 50% light and air permeability requirement for side walls is not met by openings with a minimum height of 1.0 metre, openings in other exterior walls (e.g. open gable walls) with a minimum height of 1 metre can be taken into account for compensation purposes.

What must be taken into account when installing partitions between indoor and outdoor climate areas?

The use of thin films, nets and similar materials to separate an outdoor climate area in the shed is not permitted. The partitions must not be easily alterable.

Is it necessary to obtain approval to provide the animals with feed and water in the outdoor climate area/outdoor area?

Yes, the additional supply of feed and water to the animals is approved in the outdoor climate area/outdoor area, but the facilities cannot be counted towards fulfilment of the QS basic criteria (3.3.1 [K.O.] Feed supply, 3.4.1 [K.O.] Water supply).

How should openings be arranged in outdoor climate areas located along the length of the shed?

The arrangement and design of openings to the outdoor climate area must be appropriate. To this end, a sufficient number of openings must be provided and distributed evenly along the length of the shed.

Can an outdoor exercise area be granted recognition as an outdoor climate area?

Yes. Outdoor exercise areas can be granted recognition as outdoor climate areas if they are permanently established and cover at least 20% of the shed floor area.

In which cases may access to the outdoor climate area (including the outdoor area) be restricted or closed?

In the event of a veterinary indication or extreme weather conditions, e.g. very low temperatures in the outdoor climate area/outdoor area (several days below freezing (< 0° C)), access to the outdoor climate area may be restricted for a certain period of time or closed for the period specified by the veterinarian.

Companies that are demonstrably located in officially designated restriction zones may temporarily reduce the air and light permeability of the outdoor climate area or close the area/outdoor area.

Periods of restricted access or closure of outdoor climate areas/outdoor areas must be documented.

*Note: If an outdoor climate area must be temporarily blocked for the animals due to permissible exceptions, the relevant stocking densities specified in **the QS Guideline for Poultry Farming** must not be exceeded in the fattening cycle in relation to the usable shed area.*

3.4 Breeding lines

Broiler

From 1 April 2026, all breeding lines used must be included on the list of slow-growing breeds published by *Haltungsform*.

3.5 Feeding

Which feed may be used and what evidence must be provided?

No feed that is subject to labelling requirements under Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 may be used during the period of validity. This must be demonstrated

a) for own feed cultivation through proof of cultivation, or

b) for purchased feed, through the feed producer's certification (e.g., according to VLOG).

Note: Feed containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified organisms (GMOs) must be labelled throughout the EU. The absence of a declaration stating 'genetically modified' or 'produced from genetically modified (name of the organism – e.g. maize)' in the feed declaration is sufficient proof.

How is the origin of feed from the 27 EU Member States verified during the audit?

Proof of origin is required in the form of a certificate from the feed producer or supplier, which must then be presented during the audit. Alternatively, it will soon be possible for livestock owners to check in the QS database whether the feed company can supply feed in accordance with the requirements of the *Frischluftstall* or *Auslauf* schemes. This entry in the QS database alone is not sufficient as proof during the audit.

What does the livestock owner need to bear in mind when ordering feed?

All participants must actively place a written order for the relevant feed with the feed supplier. Evidence of this order (either a one-off order or included with every feed order) must be provided during the audit.

How is the proportion of feed ingredients originating from the EU-27 calculated?

The relevant figure is the proportion of fresh weight of feed ingredients in a typical ration; in other words, the mixed ration in the feed is assessed. This proportion is verified via the ration calculation.

4 Additional requirements for *Auslauf*

4.1 Additional activity options

The explanations under *2.1 Increased space allowance* and *3.1 Additional opportunities for activity* apply.

4.2 Bigger space allowance

The explanations under *3.2 Increased space allowance* apply.

4.3 Access to the outdoor area

In addition to the explanations relevant to the outdoor area under *3.3 Specific housing requirements/outdoor climate area*, the following applies:

Broilers and turkeys

What time period does "during the day" cover and in which season must free access to the outdoor area be ensured?

Animals must be given access to the outdoor area between 15 April and 15 November from 10 a.m. at the latest and for a total of at least eight hours per day, and for at least five hours per day during the rest of the year.

What are the requirements for the design of the outdoor area?

The outdoor area must offer the animals protection from predators and shade so that they can use it evenly. For example, trees or other tall plants serve as a natural structure for the entire outdoor area. Shaded areas or windbreak nets offer artificial protection. The arrangement of structural elements and shelters must be designed in such a way that the animals can easily cover the distances in the outdoor area.

How should outdoor access areas be arranged?

Outdoor access areas should be arranged in sufficient numbers as evenly as possible and designed in such a way that the animals have unhindered access to the outdoor climate area.

Fattening turkeys

What is the minimum requirement for outdoor access areas for fattening turkeys?

The explanations under *3.3 Specific housing requirements/outdoor climate area* apply.

4.4 Breeding lines

Broiler

From 1 April 2026, all breeding lines used must be included on the list of slow-growing breeds published by *Haltungsform*.

4.5 Feeding

Which feed may be used and what evidence must be provided?

No feed that is subject to labelling requirements under Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 may be used during the period of validity. This must be demonstrated

a) for own feed cultivation through proof of cultivation, or

b) for purchased feed, through the feed manufacturer's certification (e.g., according to VLOG).

Proof need only be provided for feed covered by Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003. Note: animal feed such as black soldier fly larvae is not subject to labelling requirements; consequently, no certification needs to be provided.

Note: Feed containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified organisms (GMOs) must be labelled throughout the EU. The absence of a declaration stating 'genetically modified' or 'produced from genetically modified (name of the organism – e.g. maize)' in the feed declaration is sufficient proof.

How is the origin of feed from the 27 EU Member States verified during the audit?

Proof of origin is required in the form of a certificate from the feed producer or supplier, which must then be presented during the audit. Alternatively, it will soon be possible for livestock owners to check in the QS database whether the feed company can supply feed in accordance with the requirements of the *Frischluftstall* or *Auslauf* schemes. This entry in the QS database alone is not sufficient as proof during the audit.

What does the livestock owner need to bear in mind when ordering feed?

All participants must actively place a written order for the relevant feed with the feed supplier. Evidence of this order (either a one-off order or included with every feed order) must be provided during the audit.

How is the proportion of feed ingredients originating from the EU-27 calculated?

The relevant figure is the proportion of fresh weight of feed ingredients in a typical ration; in other words, the mixed ration in the feed trough is assessed. This proportion is verified via the ration calculation.

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