Manual Agriculture
List of Criteria for Cattle Production

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1 General requirements

All cattle (including purchased cattle) must be kept under ITW conditions at all times.

***Note**: In accordance with QS, all cattle (including purchased cattle) must be kept under ITW conditions for at least the last six months prior to slaughter. As of January 1, 2027, all cattle (including purchased cattle) must be kept under ITW conditions continuously for at least the last eight months prior to slaughter.*

This list of criteria covers cattle production (including heifer and steer fattening) and suckling cow production for the *"Stall plus Platz," "Frischluftstall,"* and *"Auslauf/Weide"* programmes.

1.1 Basic Criteria for Livestock Farming, Hygiene, and Animal Health

The livestock owner must ensure compliance with basic criteria regarding animal-welfare-compliant husbandry, hygiene, and animal health. The basic criteria correspond to the requirements of **the QS Guideline for Agriculture: Livestock Farming** in the chapters listed below. In the animal welfare audit, the focus is on inspection of production in the shed. A comprehensive document review is conducted only if there are indications of existing nonconformities.

If abnormalities such as injuries, lameness, or severe soiling are detected, corrective actions (action plan including deadlines) must be established in consultation with the stock care veterinarian. The livestock owner must implement the action plan by the deadline and document this.

Action plan and its implementation, if applicable

Animal welfare, hygiene, and animal health:

- 3.2.1 Monitoring and Care of the Animals
- 3.2.2 General housing requirements
- 3.2.3 Handling of sick and injured animals
- 3.2.4 Shed Floors
- 3.3.1 Feed supply
- 3.3.2 Hygiene of feeding systems
- 3.3.3 Handling and storage of feed
- 3.4.1 Water supply
- 3.4.2 Hygiene of watering systems
- 3.6.1 Buildings and equipment
- 3.6.2 Shed hygiene
- 3.6.4 Carcass storage and removal
- 3.6.5 Pest monitoring and control

1.2 Participation in the QS antibiotics monitoring programme

The livestock owner must participate in antibiotics monitoring. Antibiotics monitoring is conducted in accordance with the guidelines of **the QS Antibiotics Monitoring Guideline for Cattle.**

1.3 Participation in the indexed slaughter findings data programme

The livestock owner must be a participant in the indexed slaughter diagnostic data program. The findings are recorded in accordance with the guidelines of **the QS Guide to Slaughter Diagnostic Data for Cattle**.

1.4 Further training measures

The livestock owner or a responsible employee (e.g., herd manager, farm manager) must participate in relevant, subject-specific continuing education courses on livestock farming once per calendar year. Appropriate documentation must be maintained. This documentation must be provided for the first time at the initial audit.

Proof of continuing education, e.g., certificate of attendance for technical lectures

1.5 Special housing requirements

All animals must be able to move freely, at least temporarily.

Tethered livestock farming is prohibited in bull fattening as well as in the rearing of mother cows and foster cows.

In heifer and steer fattening, tethering alone is prohibited . If animals are kept tethered, they must be able to move around for at least two consecutive hours per day on at least 120 days of the year. This exercise can be provided through grazing, access to an exercise yard, or access to an exercise pen. The exercise area must be at least 4.5 m^2 per animal and consist of a single, contiguous area of at least 16 m^2. A log must be kept of the exercise time for each individual animal. A plan showing the available net area and the maximum possible number of animals must be available during the audit.

When keeping animals in tie-stalls, compliance with the following minimum dimensions is required:

	Stall width [cm]	Stall length [cm]
Animals in short stalls	110	165
Animals in medium-length stalls	110	200

Documentation regarding the use of the exercise area; plan showing net area and possible number of animals

Daylight

Every shed must have daylight incidence, and the light should enter the animal area as evenly as possible.

In indoor housing, the intensity and duration of lighting must be appropriate for the animals. If natural light is insufficient, the shed must be supplemented with artificial lighting accordingly.

A lighting duration of more than eight hours is recommended.

Shed climate

Air conditions must be appropriate for the animals throughout the shed. Windows and air inlets must be open, except in adverse weather conditions. Signs of inadequate air conditions, such as condensation, a pungent odor, or similar issues, must not occur.

1.6 Cleanliness of the animals

All animals must be clean. Discoloration and soiling must be kept to a minimum; furthermore, heavy soiling, such as significant fecal buildup, must be avoided. No more than 10% of the animals may exhibit significant matting in their coats.

1.7 Intensified veterinary stock care

The livestock owner must ensure compliance with the agreements set forth in the veterinary care contract; regarding the number of farm visits, the veterinarian must visit the company prior to the initial audit and then regularly at least twice a year, except in cases of acute illness.

As part of stock care, special attention must be paid to the care of the animals. This must be noted in the visit report. Forage analyses, ration calculations, and drinking water analyses should be taken into account.

The veterinarian must document the herd management, the herd visits, and their results, and the company must retain this documentation.

If a need for action is jointly identified, an animal health and hygiene management plan must be developed specifically for the company. This plan must include the regular, scheduled, systematic, and consistent application of veterinary knowledge and skills in accordance with the current state of scientific knowledge. If necessary, an action plan must also be drawn up that specifies the individual activities (to be carried out by the veterinarian and the livestock owner).

The veterinary examination reports prepared as part of veterinary care or for curative treatment must be provided to the company after each visit.

Veterinary herd visit records or similar documents, action plan, vaccination plan

1.8 Scrubbing devices

All animals kept in groups (in free-stall sheds, exercise yards, or exercise crates) must be provided with a functional , species-appropriate scrubbing device (e.g., a scratching brush), at least one per group or crate, so that every animal can use a scrubbing device. No scrubbing device needs to be provided in pastures.

Scrubbing devices must be available in a ratio of at least 1:60 animals and be freely accessible.

The scrubbing device should, if possible, be mounted vertically. It must be sufficiently long (at least 90 cm) and wide (at least 30 cm) and allow for species-typical rubbing (on the sides of the body) throughout the entire fattening period.

The scrubbing device must have an uneven surface texture. The scrubbing device must not pose a risk of injury.

If a scrubbing device is no longer functional, it must be replaced as soon as it is safe to do so (e.g., after destocking of animals ready for slaughter has occurred). The date of failure and of replacement/repair must be documented.

[Compliance with this criterion is required as of July 1, 2027.]

2 Requirements for *"Stall plus Platz"*

The following criterion applies to all companies participating in the Initiative Tierwohl *"Stall plus Platz."* Compliance with the criterion is required **in addition** to the General Requirements (Chapter 1). *The Initiative Tierwohl* "Stall plus Platz" *is classified as Haltungsform Level 2.*

2.1 Increased space allowance

In free-stall sheds, all animals must be able to lie down at the same time. In cubicle sheds, each animal must have a cubicle available (animal-to-cubicle ratio of 1:1).

In cattle farming, an area that can be used without restriction must be available at all times, at a minimum in accordance with the table.

Weight range LG	space allowance
Up to 150 kg	1.5 m²/animal
Over 150 to 220 kg	1.8 m²/animal
Over 220 to 400 kg	2.5 m²/animal
Over 400 kg	3 m²/animal

An operational plan showing the net pen area and the maximum possible number of animals must be available during the audit.

For mother-calf and foster cow systems, each cow, including the calf, must have at least 5 m² of unrestricted usable space available.

Farm plan showing net area and maximum number of animals

3 Additional Requirements for *Frischluftstall*

The following criteria apply to **cattle farms** participating in the Initiative Tierwohl *Frischluftstall*. They must be complied with **in addition** to the general requirements (Chapter 1).

3.1 Space allowance for the *Frischluftstall*

Tethered livestock farming is prohibited.

Every animal must have access at all times to an area that can be used without restriction, the size of which must be at least as specified in the table.

In free-stall sheds, all animals must be able to lie down at the same time. In cubicle sheds, each animal must have a cubicle available (animal-to-cubicle ratio of 1:1).

Weight range LG	space allowance
Up to 150 kg	1.5 m²/animal
Over 150 to 220 kg	2 m²/animal
Over 220 to 400 kg	3 m² per animal
Over 400 kg	4 m² per animal

An operational plan showing the net pen area and the maximum possible number of animals must be available during the audit.

Farm plan showing net area and maximum number of animals per crate and in the outdoor area

3.2 Design of outdoor climate

All animals must be able to experience outdoor climate.

Outdoor climate must be provided via one of the following options:

Option 1: Free-stall shed with a year-round outdoor area

Each animal must have access at all times to an outdoor area where they can move freely and experience external weather conditions (e.g., seasonally changing temperatures). The outdoor area must be usable year-round and have a minimum size of 3 m² per animal.

The outdoor area must consist of at least 16 m² of contiguous area.

If weather conditions could negatively affect animal health or upon the veterinarian's instruction, the outdoor area may be temporarily closed. The start and end of the closure must be documented.

Option 2: Free-stall shed with access to pasture

Each animal must be provided with access to pasture for at least 6 consecutive hours per day, 120 days a year.

Access to pasture must be documented for all animals using appropriate records (e.g., pasture log, calendar).

Option 3: Outdoor climate shed

The outdoor climate must be perceptible in every crate and for all animals.

a) Open-front shed

25% of both long sides must be permanently open. Windbreak nets in the openings are approved. Only those openings that have a direct impact on the animals' climatic conditions are relevant.

To calculate the open areas (i.e. to meet the 25 % requirement for both long sides), additional openings on the gable ends may also be included.

If weather conditions could negatively affect animal health or upon the veterinarian's instruction, open areas may be temporarily closed.

b) Spaceboard shed

30% of both long sides must be open to wind and climate (= may be equipped with spaceboards).

Starting January 1, 2028, spaceboards will only receive recognition if they have a slotted area of at least 12%.

To calculate the wind- and climate-permeable areas (i.e., to meet the 30% requirement on both long sides), additional openings on the gable ends may also be included.

Movable Spaceboards may be closed if weather conditions could negatively affect animal health or upon the veterinarian's instructions.

 Farm plan showing net area and potential number of animals in the outdoor area; documentation of pasture use; if applicable, documentation of access control to the outdoor area; calculation of open outdoor areas

4 Additional Requirements for *Auslauf/Weide*

The following criteria apply to **cattle farms** participating in the Initiative Tierwohl: *Auslauf/Weide*. Compliance with these criteria is required **in addition** to the General Requirements (Chapter 1).

4.1 Space Allowance for *Auslauf/Weide*

Tethered livestock farming is prohibited.

Every animal must have access at all times to an area that can be used without restriction, the size of which must be at least as specified in the table.

In free-stall sheds, all animals must be able to lie down at the same time. In cubicle sheds, each animal must have a cubicle available (animal-to-cubicle ratio 1:1).

Weight range LG	space allowance
Up to 150 kg	1.5 m²/animal
Over 150 to 220 kg	2.5 m²/animal
Over 220 to 400 kg	4 m² per animal
Over 400 to 500 kg	5 m² per animal
Over 500 kg	6 m² per animal

An operational plan showing the available net pen area and the maximum possible number of animals must be available during the audit.

Farm plan showing net area and maximum number of animals per crate and in the outdoor area

4.2 Design of the outdoor area/grazing

Animals must be kept in a free-stall system with constant access to an exercise yard or pasture.

The animals must be able to use the exercise yard or pasture at all times throughout the year. If the pasture is only available in the summer and/or only during the day, an exercise yard must be available in the winter and/or at night. The exercise yard must have a minimum size of 3 m² per animal.

The exercise yard or pasture must consist of at least 16 m² of contiguous area.

If weather conditions could negatively affect animal health or upon the veterinarian's instruction, the exercise yard may be temporarily closed or access to the pasture restricted. The start and end of the closure or restriction of access to the pasture must be documented.

4.3 Sclerotherapy of horn systems

Sclerotherapy of horn systems is approved only under anesthesia administered by a veterinarian.

Pain medication must be administered for every sclerotherapy of horn systems to alleviate postoperative pain. The medications prescribed by the veterinarian for this purpose must be administered in accordance with the prescription.

List of medications, combined receipt, herd register

4.4 Deformable lying area

All animals must have access to deformable lying areas. The use of litter is approved, as is the use of elastically deformable mats (e.g., rubber mats). In group sheds, the lying area must be sufficiently large so that all animals can lie on it at the same time.

[Compliance with this criterion is required as of July 1, 2027.]

5 Definitions and Related Documents

Definition:

The following is always considered:
Epidemiological unit per location number, or shed ID if applicable, in combination with production scope

related documents:

QS Guideline for Agriculture: Cattle Farming

QS Explanatory Notes on the Guideline for Agriculture: Cattle Farming

QS Guideline for Antibiotics Monitoring in Cattle

QS Guideline for Diagnostic Data in Cattle Slaughter

Programme manual for the Initiative Tierwohl, including ITW Explanatory Notes on Cattle Production

6 Annex:

6.1 Feeding Add-on module

This criterion is not a component of the Initiative Tierwohl standard.

However, to qualify for the retail food sector's housing type labelling, implementation of the "Feeding" criteria in *Frischluftstall* (Chapter 6.1.1) or *Auslauf/Weide* (Chapter 6.1.2) is required.

6.1.1 Feeding in *Frischluftstall*

Either

No feed that is subject to labeling requirements under Regulation (EC) No. 1829/2003 may be used during the validity period (see Chapter 1). This must be verified

a) for self-cultivated feed, by means of a cultivation certificate, or

b) in the case of purchased feed, via certification (e.g., according to VLOG), or

c) in the case of purchased feed, via shipping documents (declaration or absence of labelling as GMO product).

Or

80% of the feed raw materials must be grown by the livestock owners themselves or have been grown and processed in the member states of the EU-27. Excluded from this are feed additives (vitamins, amino acids, etc.), premixes, and mineral feeds. The origin must be documented.

The remaining 20% of feed raw materials must not be labelled in accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 1829/2003. This must also be verified.

🗐 Proof via shipping documents (e.g., delivery notes for feed), supplier's certificate, possibly certification (e.g., VLOG), documentation from own cultivation, feed ration, certificate/database proof of the feed's origin

6.1.2 Feeding in *Auslauf/Weide*

No feed that is subject to labeling requirements under Regulation (EC) No. 1829/2003 may be used during the validity period (see Chapter 1). This must be documented

a) for self-cultivated feed, through proof of cultivation, or

b) in the case of purchased feed, through certification (e.g., according to VLOG) or

c) in the case of purchased feed, via shipping documents (declaration or absence of labelling as GMO product).

In addition, at least 60% of the feed raw materials must be grown by the livestock owner themselves or have been grown and processed in the member states of the EU-27. Excluded from this are feed additives (vitamins, amino acids, etc.), premixes, and mineral feeds. The origin must be documented.

In addition, at least 60% of the dry matter in the daily ration must consist of fresh, dried, or silage roughage.

🗐 Proof via shipping documents (e.g., delivery notes for feed), supplier's certificate, certification (e.g., VLOG), documentation of own cultivation, feed ration, certificate/database proof of feed origin

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