Explanatory Notes on the Initiative Tierwohl

Cattle production

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General

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

The company (= location) is defined by a location number (e.g., in Germany by VVVO number) and, if applicable, a shed ID, as well as the production scope. Within a VVVO number, sub-units (defined as shed IDs) can be registered with different shed IDs and participate using different ITW programmes. This is only possible if uniform husbandry conditions apply within a single shed or building (under one roof). In addition, all sheds must be certified to at least QS standard under the location number. If there are several sheds with the same Haltungsform or the same ITW programme (e.g. Stall plus Platz), these can be registered under a single shed ID.

How exactly is the shed ID defined? Is it possible to have two different shed IDs within a single building?

To register a shed, uniform husbandry conditions must apply within that building ('under one roof'). Exception: If areas within a building are structurally and permanently separated from one another, two shed IDs may be assigned to that building. In this case, different husbandry conditions are possible, e.g. *Stall plus Platz* and *Frischluftstall*. The decisive factor is the clear separation of the shed areas – e.g. 'old' shed and 'new' shed.

The separation must be clearly evident and verifiable to third parties at all times from the site plan and the farm layout diagram, and will be verified during the audit. During the first audit following the allocation of the shed ID, the auditor must include a site plan in the audit report. Detailed stock records, verifiable by third parties, must be maintained for each part of the farm assigned to a shed ID.

The allocation of shed IDs on a crate-by-crate basis or separation by the feeding table is not permitted.

What must be taken into account if sub-areas of a site are participants under a single shed ID?

If selected sheds at a site participate in a programme (e.g. *Frischluftstall)*, the records kept on the farm (e.g. shed-by-shed records of the livestock population, shed map, site plan/farm layout) must clearly and verifiably indicate which shed is a participant in which ITW programme. This is checked and documented during the audit.

All animals must be reared continuously in accordance with the requirements of the selected programme from the start of fattening and for at least six months (from January 2027 eight months) prior to slaughter (see ***When can animals be marketed as ITW animals?).***

The traceability of animals from specific sheds must be ensured through unique animal identification and documentation at the abattoir. To this end, each individual animal must be assigned to a VVVO number, including the shed ID, on the delivery notes for marketing purposes.

How should stricter regional husbandry requirements be handled?

As with QS, the legally binding, nationwide requirements serve as the basis.

How long must the animals be kept on an ITW company, at a minimum?

All cattle (including purchased cattle) must be kept continuously for at least the last six months prior to slaughter on a company authorized to supply ITW. As of January 1, 2027, all cattle (including purchased cattle) must be kept continuously for at least the last eight months prior to slaughter on a company authorized to supply ITW. If,

in individual cases, marketing is necessary before the expiration of the six-month period (or, as of January 1, 2027, the eight-month period), these cattle may not be marketed as ITW animals.

The plan is to close the ITW chain in the future so that all cattle must be kept continuously under ITW conditions. The chain closure is to take place in parallel with the QS scheme. ITW will provide timely information on this in due course.

When can animals be marketed as ITW animals?

As soon as the passed programme audit has been released in the ITW database, the company is authorised to supply. All animals that were already on the farm at the time of the programme audit become ITW animals upon release of the audit and may be marketed as such. All animals that are brought in or purchased after the programme audit must be kept continuously for at least six months—or, starting January 1, 2027, at least eight months—prior to slaughter at a company authorized to supply ITW animals (either on the farm owner's own premises and/or at a supplier company). If the animals are purchased from a company authorized to supply ITW, the duration of their stay at that company may be counted toward the requirement.

When do the ITW requirements based on the respective programme for cattle production take effect?

The ITW requirements based on the respective programme for cattle production must be complied with for all cattle classified under production scope *1001 Cattle Production*. This includes both male and female fattening animals as well as rearing animals (e.g., female offspring from dairy cattle production) that may potentially be slaughtered as culled breeding animals. Production scope *1001 Cattle Production* covers the rearing of these animals from approximately six months of age until slaughter. The company is defined by the location number (VVVO number), the production scope and if applicable the shed-ID.

If fattening animals and/or rearing animals are kept from the age of approximately six months under a location number registered for cattle production, the ITW requirements must be implemented from this age. If older cattle are housed, the relevant rearing period begins correspondingly later. If younger animals are kept together with cattle from six months of age, the ITW requirements must also be implemented for these animals.

Which animals can be marketed as ITW animals under production scope 1001 Cattle Production?

young fattening animals and culled breeding animals (young bulls, heifers, steers) as well as breeding bulls can be marketed as ITW animals if the company participates in the ITW through cattle production. Suckler cow farmers can also register for the marketing of their fattening animals via production scope *1001 Cattle Production*. Registration for suckler cow farming itself is possible via production scope *1016 Suckling Cow Production with Calves*.

Fattening calves (raised for meat production in accordance with the marketing regulations for veal) are **not** registered or marketed under production scope 1001. For these animals, registration under production scope 1002 is required. Cattle from production scope *1001 cattle producti* that are slaughtered between six and eight months of age may be marketed as calves or veal, but not as ITW veal.

Which animals can be marketed as ITW animals under production scope 1016 Suckler Cow/Foster Cow Farming with Calves ?

Suckler cow and foster cow farming involves raising cows, including their calves, until the end of the rearing period (approx. six months). Slaughter cows from suckler cow and foster cow farming can be marketed as ITW animals if a company participates in the ITW under production scope *1016 "Suckling cow production."*

Do all animals have to be delivered to an ITW abattoir?

No. Animals from ITW farms can be marketed freely. However, compensation under the ITW is only possible if the animals are marketed to an abattoir that is a participant in the ITW.

Important: ITW livestock owners and abattoirs (or recipients) enter into bilateral agreements regarding the delivery of ITW cattle and delivery terms. There is no claim for payment against the operating company, nor is the operating company liable for the payment of the price surcharge by the abattoirs or its actual amount.

What criteria must a quarantine shed meet?

As a general rule, compliance with all general requirements is mandatory in quarantine shed as well.

For the *Frischluftstall'* and *Auslauf/Weide* programmes, there are no requirements in a quarantine shed regarding the design of outdoor environmental stimuli or the layout of the outdoor access area.

1 General requirements

1.1 Basic criteria: livestock farming, hygiene, animal health

What is assessed?

It must be ensured that livestock farming complies with the law and good professional practice. During the farm tour, the animals and conditions in the shed are observed; records and documents are only checked if there are indications of nonconformities.

The requirements correspond to the QS requirements

Important: All requirements always apply to all animals and sheds on a participating company. The company is defined by its disease control location number (VVVO number) and production scope (cattle production, calf production, dairy farming) and if applicable, a shed ID. Under a VVVO number, each production scope can be registered separately and independently of other production scopes.

How are the basic criteria assessed?

Compliance with the individual criteria is assessed using the evaluations "met" (A), "partially met" (C), "not met" (K.O.), and—where applicable for certain requirements—"not applicable" (E), and documented in the audit report . An "not met" evaluation does not necessarily result in exclusion from the Initiative Tierwohl. For the basic criteria, corrective actions (=C evaluation) can be agreed upon with deadlines. The nonconformities must be rectified by the livestock owner without delay, which is why a correspondingly short deadline must be set for the implementation of the measures.

Please note: From the time of the release of the audit report until the time the certification body has closed the corrective action, the location is not eligible for payment.

What criteria must a recovery crate meet?

With exception of scrubbing devices, compliance with all general requirements must also be ensured in recovery crates.

Are animals allowed to be tethered in the recovery crate?

No, sick and injured animals must not be tethered in the recovery crate—except upon individual veterinary recommendation—as per.
Bulls or heifers in temporary tethered housing (= combined husbandry) may, depending on the illness or injury, be treated at the tethering station and remain there.

1.2 Participation in the QS Antibiotic Monitoring Program

What should be noted?

Antibiotic data is collected for all ITW cattle. This is done through the QS antibiotics monitoring program. Livestock owners must observe two points:

First: Report the average number of animal places and the veterinary practice with which they collaborate to the coordinator.

Second: An agreement with the veterinary practice that the veterinarian's antibiotic prescriptions are entered into the central QS database. Afterward, monitoring continues automatically for cattle farmers; they only need to take action if there are changes to the information provided to the coordinator ( ) under "First," specifically regarding . More detailed information can be requested from the respective coordinator or found in the antibiotics monitoring guideline for cattle farming.

The monitoring program is continuously being developed. In the future, there will be cross-farm analyses and farm comparisons that will be shared with livestock owners so they can ensure the best possible health for their animals.

1.3 Participation in the indexed slaughter findings data program

What exactly does the livestock owner need to do here?

Nothing. The findings, which are independently recorded by official veterinarians at the abattoir, are collected in a central database and regularly analyzed. Cattle farmers therefore automatically participate in this monitoring and do not need to take any action. More detailed information can be requested from the respective coordinator or found in the guideline on Diagnostic Data Monitoring for Cattle Slaughter.

The monitoring system is continuously being developed. In the future, there will be cross-farm analyses and farm comparisons that will be shared with livestock owners so they can ensure animal health as effectively as possible.

What happens if all animals are delivered to abattoirs that do not participate in the ITW or the QS scheme and therefore do not collect slaughter findings data?

All ITW abattoirs must also participate in the QS scheme and thus in the slaughter findings data program for cattle. If the animals from a company participating in ITW Cattle are delivered exclusively to non-ITW and thus non-QS abattoirs, the collection of slaughter findings data is not mandatory. If the livestock owner is unable to provide slaughter inspection data as a result, this will not result in a negative assessment during the audit. However, in this case, the animals cannot be marketed as ITW animals, and the livestock owner is not entitled to payment of the ITW price surcharge.

1.4 Further training measures

When and how often must a participant participate in a training measure?

Participants must attend a further training measure prior to the initial audit and then once in each subsequent calendar year.

If the first continuing education measure was completed in the year prior to the programme audit (up to 365 days before the programme audit), then a continuing education measure must also be attended in the calendar year of the programme audit.

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

If participation in the ITW is to be terminated (prematurely), a final confirmation audit must be conducted. Proof of continuing education measure for the current calendar year must already be available for this confirmation audit.

Companies that terminate their participation in the ITW by March 31 of a calendar year (either because the participation period has expired or because they have been deregistered from the database) are not required to participate in any continuing education measure for that calendar year. If the participation period extends beyond March 31 of the calendar year, proof of participation in a continuing education measure must already be on file for the current calendar year.

Who is required to participate in a continuing education measure once a year?

At least one responsible employee or the livestock owner at the location must always participate in a continuing education measure. This person must be designated as an animal caretaker. The certificate of participation for the continuing education measure must be issued in the name of the livestock owner/employee. If a livestock owner/employee oversees multiple locations, the proof may also be used for other locations. Continuing education for a person outside the company (e.g., a consultant) cannot receive recognition. Likewise, it is not possible to split the continuing education hours among several people (e.g., 4 employees who each received 30 minutes of training).

What must the proof of the continuing education measure look like?

A personalized certificate of attendance must be submitted as proof for each event (for the person responsible for livestock farming). In addition to the participant's name, the proof must document the content of the event; it is recommended to include the duration. If the duration of the training program is not specified on the certificate of attendance, the minimum duration of two hours must be verified by other means (e.g., via a program overview, invitation, or similar).

What is the required duration of the continuing education measure?

The continuing education measure must comprise at least two hours of substantive content (equivalent to a half-day event). Multiple training sessions may also be combined.

What content must the continuing education measure cover?

The content must have a direct connection to animal welfare and animal protection. Topics related to management, husbandry, animal health, feeding, and climate control in relation to animal welfare and animal protection may be included.

These include (non-exhaustive list):

- Specialized events
- E-learning, webinars
- Training courses specifically agreed upon with the technical advisor or veterinarian (e.g., on emergency euthanasia)

Possible topics for continuing education events include:

- Humane emergency euthanasia
- Recognizing and interpreting animal signals
- Conducting animal observation
- Handling sick and injured animals
- Assessment of cattle's fitness for transport and slaughter
- Improving hygiene management

Which of the following does not constitute a training measure that meets the requirements?

The following are not included

- consultations on business development (e.g., business management consulting or construction consulting)
- Stable inspections conducted as part of the consultation, unless they are expressly organized as a continuing education measure
- Stable inspections in connection with veterinary herd inspections, unless they are expressly organized as a continuing education measure
- Internal training for company employees
- Visits to trade fairs or exhibitions
- Subscriptions to trade journals
- Membership in producer/advisory groups
- Continuing education measures that are not related to one's own production sector

Who is authorized to organize and conduct continuing education measures?

Continuing education measures may be organized and conducted by any qualified individuals. This includes, for example, coordinators, advisory organizations, veterinarians, technical advisors, etc. Approval from the Initiative Tierwohl is not required.

Does a continuing education event need to be approved by ITW?

No. ITW does not release events. Any event that meets the criteria may be used.

1.5 Special husbandry requirements

Do all requirements also ensure compliance with the outdoor area that must be provided for animals in group husbandry?

Yes, in principle, compliance with all requirements that apply to group husbandry in the shed must also be ensured here. The water supply must also be ensured accordingly.

The increased space allowance for group husbandry is not relevant to the outdoor area, as there are specific requirements for the outdoor area per animal.

Are there exceptions to the requirement that animals must be able to move freely?

Free movement for at least two consecutive hours on at least 120 days per year may be restricted based on an individual veterinary indication for the period specified by the veterinarian. Written proof of the veterinary indication must be provided in the audit.

In the event of an outbreak, free movement time may be restricted provided that the outdoor area is in fact no longer usable due to the outbreak (e.g., blocking of pastures by authorities, mandatory housing). Indoor outdoor yards or outdoor pens that are not affected by the outbreak must continue to be made available to the animals. Written proof of the order must be provided in the audit.

In both cases, the period during which the animals were unable to move freely must be compensated for, if possible. If weather conditions and/or, in the case of pasture-based husbandry, the condition of the pasture vegetation do not permit use, the period for which there was an individual animal-specific veterinary indication or an outbreak of disease may be deducted from the specified 120 days for the affected animals. Records are also required for this.

How must the animals' time spent in the outdoor area be documented?

The animals' time spent in the outdoor area must be documented via a logbook that records the time each individual animal spent moving about. The documentation may also cover multiple animals collectively, provided that it is always possible to identify which individual animals the documentation refers to. This is conceivable if the animals go to the outdoor area in fixed groups. If individual animals are taken to the outdoor area outside their group or are not taken to the outdoor area due to an individual veterinary indication, this must be documented separately in every case.

If the livestock owner decides not to take individual or all animals to the outdoor area at certain times, this must be compensated for on other days so that all animals can move freely for at least two consecutive hours on at least 120 days per year.

In addition to the logbook, the audit must include a plan showing the available net area of the outdoor area as well as the maximum possible number of animals per outdoor area.

Can the animals' access to the outdoor area be restricted in bad weather?

The livestock owner decides which days the animals have access to the outdoor area. Thus, access may be suspended on individual days in case of bad weather. The key requirement is that the animals are still able to move freely for at least two consecutive hours per day on at least 120 days a year.

Is a net area plan (including the maximum possible number of animals) also required for the outdoor area?

No, a net area plan with the maximum possible number of animals is only required for outdoor area; it is not necessary for outdoor areas on pastures.

Can the outdoor area be included in the calculation of unrestricted usable area?

The outdoor area can only be included in the unrestricted usable area if it is guaranteed to be continuously and at all times accessible. Of course, the space allowance may be temporarily reduced for the duration of cleaning.

It must be ensured that the animals have sufficient space available in the shed even if access to the outdoor area is restricted - e.g., in the event of an outbreak, upon a veterinarian's order, or for animal welfare reasons. Therefore, compliance with the space allowance specified in the QS Guideline for Cattle Farming must be maintained at all times.

How is stall length defined in combined husbandry?

Stall length is defined as the area behind the feeding trough or the tethering device up to the end of the stall. The entire stall length must be designed as a solid surface (with an appropriate soft covering). Slats or other perforated floors are not included in the stall length.

In the case of short stalls, it must also be ensured that the space above the feeding trough is available to the animals at all times for lying down, standing up (head movement), resting, and eating, and is not restricted.

Daylight

What should determine the duration of lighting?

The duration of lighting must be based on the natural day-night rhythm. The light phase should last at least eight hours daily.

Shed climate

To what extent must all windows and air inlets always be open?

Air conditions throughout the shed must be suitable for the animals. Windows and air inlets must be open, except in adverse weather conditions. However, the key factor is ensuring an optimal shed climate. If ventilation systems are designed such that windows or air inlets must be closed (temporarily) to ensure an optimal shed climate, this is permissible.

1.6 Animal Hygiene

How is it determined whether an animal is clean?

When assessing this criterion, all cattle on the company's farm are considered. It should be noted that there are different degrees of soiling between "clean" and "heavy soiling." The "clean" condition should always be the goal for all animals. For the ITW, a situation in which no more than 10% of all animals are heavily soiled is acceptable.

What happens if individual animals show heavy soiling?

If animals are classified as very soiled during the audit or exhibit heavy soiling, the livestock owner must ensure that the animals are cleaned and do not become soiled again in the future . It is recommended to create an action plan documenting both the measures and their implementation.

The audit tolerates a maximum of 10% of animals with severe mud-slinging.

1.7 Intensified veterinary herd care

What is the maximum time period that may have elapsed since the last herd visit prior to the first programme audit?

Herd visits that took place no more than 1 year (= 365 days) prior to the audit date may receive recognition in the first programme audit.

Exception: If, at a site that is already a participant, only one shed is registered for a different ITW programme, or if the site switches to a different ITW programme, the records of the herd visits can be carried over to the new ITW programme. Accordingly, in this case; the most recent herd visit may be more than 365 days old; the key requirement is that at least two herd visits have been carried out per year.

When and how often must a herd visit be conducted?

A herd visit must be conducted once before the initial audit (no more than 365 days before the first programme audit) and then regularly at least twice in each calendar year. If the first herd visit was conducted in the year prior to the initial audit, additional herd visits (see details below) must be conducted for the calendar year of the first programme audit. It is recommended that on-site visits be conducted approximately once every six months.

The following points must be observed at the start of participation:

- If the initial audit is approved **by June 30** of a calendar year, **two on-site visits** must be documented for the calendar year of the initial audit
- If the initial audit is approved **after June 30** of a calendar year, only **one on-site visit** must be documented for that calendar year

If participation in the ITW is terminated (= end of the term or deregistration in the database), the following rules apply:

- If participation in the ITW is terminated **by March 31** of a calendar year, **no herd visit** needs to be documented for that calendar year
- If participation is terminated **between April 1 and June 30**, at least **one herd visit** must be documented in the last confirmation audit for that calendar year.
- If participation is terminated **after June 30** of a calendar year, **two on-site visits** must be documented for that calendar year in the most recent confirmation audit.

Can a veterinary herd visit for QS also be used for the ITW?

A veterinary herd visit for QS can only be used for the ITW criterion "Intensified Herd Care" under certain conditions. To do so, the herd visit must also meet the ITW requirements. This means that during the herd visit, special attention must have been paid to the care of the animals, and this must be noted accordingly in the visit report.

If the documentation from the last "QS herd visit" does not cover the care of the animals or if only simplified documentation (e.g., "no specific findings") is available, this is not sufficient.

1.8 Scrubbing devices

When must scrubbing devices be provided?

Scrubbing devices must be provided for all animal groups by July 1, 2027, at the latest. The deadline must be complied with even if a livestock owner's participation begins later. If compliance with the deadline is not possible—e.g., because some areas are still occupied by animals and installing the scrubbing devices would not be safe—the implementation date must be chosen so that all scrubbing devices are installed by the time of the programme audit.

What are suitable scrubbing devices?

The scrubbing devices must allow the animals to engage in species-typical scratching on the sides of their bodies (head, neck, torso, and flanks) and/or on their backs and heads . The surfaces of the scrubbing devices must have an uneven profile. Suitable options include scratching and grooming brushes such as stationary brushes and rotating oscillating brushes, as well as rubber scratching mats or corrugated metal sheets. The scrubbing devices must not pose any risk of injury.

All scrubbing devices must be sufficiently large.
The rubbing area of vertically mounted scrubbing devices must be at least 90 cm long and 30 cm wide (Please note: The width does not correspond to the circumference).
In addition to vertical scrubbing devices, horizontally designed annexes where animals can scratch their backs and heads are also suitable, as well as combinations of vertical and horizontal annexes . No specific dimensions are specified for such scrubbing devices, but species-typical scrubbing must be possible .

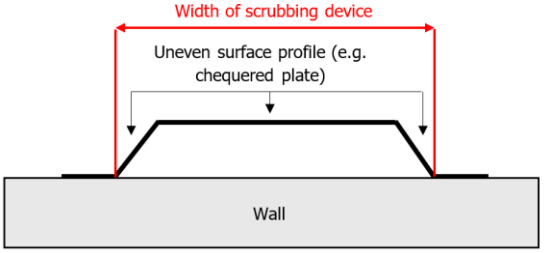
How must the scrubbing devices be installed?

The scrubbing devices must be freely accessible to all animals. They must be installed so that all animals (of all sizes) can reach the scrubbing devices and scrub themselves on the sides of their bodies (see above) and/or on their backs and heads . The scrubbing devices must therefore protrude into the crates or stand out clearly from the walls so that the animals can rub themselves in a manner typical of their species and not just at specific points on the widest parts of their bodies. When corrugated sheets are mounted flush against the pen wall or when they are mounted with only minimal clearance (e.g., using a screw, nut, or similar fastener) from the wall , species-typical rubbing is not sufficiently possible.

How is the size of vertical scrubbing devices measured?

The size of the scrubbing devices is always measured within the actual scrubbing area of the structures. In cattle production facilities, vertical scrubbing devices must be at least 90 cm long (= high) and 30 cm wide. The following examples illustrate which areas are taken into account during measurement. This is **not** an exhaustive list of scrubbing devices that are approved, but merely an illustrative list of various measurement methods.

<u>Example: Scrubbing devices made of folded or curved checker plate:</u>

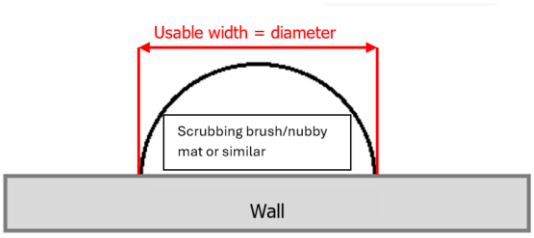


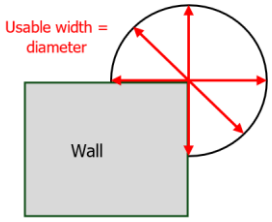
The length and width are measured in the area where the animals can rub themselves in a manner typical of their species. The parts of the checker plate that lie flat against the wall are not included. The area that clearly protrudes from the wall is measured. The adjacent image illustrates how the width (view from above) is measured. What is relevant here is not the circumference of the profile, but the width (the area

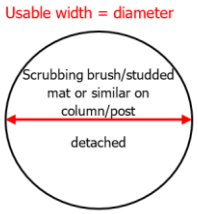
marked as usable rubbing surface in the adjacent image). The measurement method is also applicable to scrubbing devices with curved sheet metal as well as to the measurement of length.

Example: Round scrubbing devices mounted on the wall or freestanding

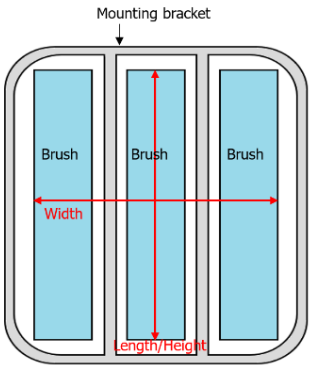
For round scrubbing devices, the width corresponds to the diameter of the scrubbing device. This applies regardless of whether the brushes are mounted on the wall, "across a corner," or freestanding, or attached to a column or post. For brush designs, the length of the bristles is included; however, it must be noted that the width of the scrubbing device may decrease as the brushes wear down. Such wear must be factored into the durability of the brushes. Freestanding scrubbing devices may—provided they can be used by two animals simultaneously and independently from two sides—be counted as two scrubbing devices. The following images illustrate how the width of various round scrubbing devices is measured.





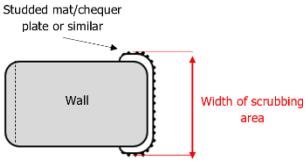


Example: Structures with multiple brush elements



If scrubbing devices consisting of multiple brush elements are combined, the contiguous scratching area is measured. Small gaps between individual brush elements do not need to be excluded from the calculation, provided that the structure is clearly contiguous. The adjacent image illustrates how the scratching area of such structures is measured.
If several individual brushes are installed in a crate and are spatially separated from one another, their scrubbing areas cannot be added together.

Example: Scrubbing devices on door posts/wall openings/passages



If scrubbing devices (e.g., made of checker plate or studded mats) are installed on door posts, wall openings, passageways, or similar locations, the width (including the scrubbing device) is measured as shown in the adjacent image (top view).

When must worn-out scrubbing devices be repaired or replaced?

Scrubbing devices must allow for species-appropriate scratching (see above) throughout the entire fattening period. Before introducing new animals, it is therefore necessary to check whether the existing scrubbing devices are in a condition that allows for use for an (additional) full fattening period. If it is foreseeable that the scrubbing

devices will not be able to allow species-typical scratching for another fattening cycle, they must be replaced before the start of the cycle.

What if the scrubbing devices become inoperable during the fattening period?

If a scrubbing device is no longer functional, it must be replaced as soon as it is safe to do so. If the housed animals are still young enough that the replacement can be carried out in the occupied crates, the scrubbing devices must be replaced immediately. If it is no longer safe to enter the crates (e.g., for animals that are already older than approximately six months), the scrubbing device must be replaced after the animals have been destocked and, in any case, before the crates are restocked.

The date of any malfunction and the date of replacement or repair of the scrubbing devices must be documented in all cases.

2 Requirements for Stall plus Platz

2.1 Increased space allowance

How is the space calculated?

This refers to the area that is fully accessible to the animals, i.e., the area where the animals can move freely (= walk, lie down, and stand) (internal dimensions of the stall). When calculating the net stall area, the area beneath stall fixtures such as drinkers, partitions, feed racks, and the feed table, etc., is not taken into account. The area beneath scrubbing devices can only be included if it is fully accessible to the animals. The required space allowance is specified in the criteria catalog.

Important: Compliance with the increased space allowance is required for every animal group at all times (including during marketing bottlenecks).

Do raised edges and steps count toward the area calculation?

Upslopes and steps, e.g., between straw and slatted areas, are included in the area calculation.

Do cubicles count toward the space calculation?

The freely available space within cubicles—that is, the area where animals can lie down, stand, and walk—is included in the space calculation. The area beneath the cubicle partitions as well as the space available only when lying down (e.g., in the front area of the cubicles) must be deducted.

What must be presented during the audit?

An operational plan must be available that specifies the available net pen area per group of animals kept together and the maximum possible number of animals.

Must every animal have access to a cubicle in sheds with cubicles?

If fattening cattle are kept in cubicle barns, each animal must have a cubicle available. These requirements must also be met for bulls, steers, and heifers being fattened if they are kept in cubicle sheds.

If fattening animals are kept in crates containing individual cubicles, it is not necessary for each animal to have a cubicle provided, provided that the space allowance is complied with and all animals can lie down at the same time. In this case, the cubicles are included in the total area. This applies, for example, in cubicle sheds that were

previously used for dairy cattle and have now been divided into smaller crates for fattening, or in free-stall sheds whose crates have individual cubicles on the back or wall side. The following diagrams outline some examples illustrating when each animal must have a cubicle available and when they do not.



If littered areas are provided, must all animals be able to lie down on the littered area at the same time?

No. The requirement that all animals must be able to lie down at the same time applies to the total net crate area. If part of the crates is littered, the space allowance does not need to be larger than in a crate that is not littered.

3 Additional requirements for *Frischluftstall*

3.1 Space allowance for Frischluftstall

See explanations for Criterion 2.1. These apply mutatis mutandis.

3.2 Design of outdoor climate

Must animals in recovery crates also have access to the outdoor environment or an outdoor area/pasture?

No.

Option 1: Free-shed housing with an outdoor outdoor area usable year-round

The outdoor area yard must be usable year-round and have a minimum size of 3 m² per animal. It must consist of at least 16 m² of contiguous area.

There is no specific definition of the open area. The key requirement is that the animals must be able to experience outdoor environmental stimuli (external weather conditions) in the outdoor area.

Can the outdoor run be included in the unrestricted usable area?

The outdoor area can only be included in the unrestricted usable area if it is guaranteed to be continuously and at all times accessible.

It must be ensured that the animals have sufficient space available in the shed even if access to the outdoor area is restricted—e.g., in the event of an outbreak, upon a veterinarian's order, or for animal welfare reasons. Therefore, compliance with the space allowance specified in the QS Guideline for Cattle Production must be ensured at all times.

In which cases may access to the outdoor area be blocked, and what must be documented in such cases?

The outdoor area may be blocked temporarily for the performance of routine work or, to the extent that this is absolutely necessary in individual cases for animal welfare reasons. Routine work includes exclusively cleaning the outdoor area, adding bedding, urgently needed repairs, sorting the animals, or veterinary treatments. Animal welfare reasons may include, for example, protection from extreme weather (heat, hail, prolonged frost). If access to the outdoor area is restricted, this must be documented at the start of the restriction, specifying the duration of the restriction and the respective reason. Routine tasks are exempt from this documentation requirement.

A complete blocking of the outdoor area is permitted only in two exceptional cases: first, an official blocking, e.g., due to an acute outbreak of disease; and second, a veterinary order prohibiting the use of the outdoor area for a

specific period due to an outbreak of disease . Both cases must be documented and substantiated (official order, veterinary certificate), stating the reason and the duration starting from the beginning of the blocking.

Do animals in recovery crates also need access to an outdoor outdoor area?

No, animals in recovery crates do not need to have access to outdoor outdoor areas.

Does the outdoor area have to be available at all times?

The outdoor area must be available at all times throughout the year. Every animal must have the opportunity to use the outdoor area. This does not mean that all animals must have the opportunity to be in the outdoor area at the same time.

Option 2: Free-shed housing with access to pasture

How must the animals' time spent on pasture be documented?

The animals' time spent on pasture must be documented for all animals via a logbook or other suitable documentation. The documentation may also cover multiple animals collectively, provided it is always clear which individual animals the documentation refers to. This is feasible if the animals go out to pasture in fixed groups. If individual animals are taken out to pasture outside their group or, based on an individual animal-specific recommendation by the veterinarian, are not taken out to pasture, this must be documented separately in every case.

If the livestock owner decides not to take individual or all animals to pasture at times, this must be compensated for on other days so that all animals can graze for at least six consecutive hours on at least 120 days per year.

Variant 3A: Open-front shed

Is there a tolerance range when checking the open area or the spaceboards?

At the start of the programme, the required open area or area lined with spaceboards may have a nonconformity of a maximum of 10%. This means: if 30 m² of open area is required, at least 27 m² must actually be provided.

As of January 1, 2028, this tolerance range will no longer apply. If, during the audit starting January 1, 2028, the open area or the area lined with spaceboards has not yet been fully implemented, a correction period of one year may be agreed upon.

What counts as open area?

Only openings that actually influence the climate in the shed are considered open areas. Not every small opening can be included in the calculation (e.g., small holes in the ceiling, "cat flaps").

Note: Internal walls (e.g. partition walls in sheds) are also to be regarded as external walls of the shed. Openings in partition walls may be counted as opening areas whenever the spaces behind them provide exposure to the outdoor climate.

How can the open areas be distributed?

The open areas should be distributed predominantly (51 per cent) along the long sides of the shed. The open areas may be distributed across all the vertical wall surfaces of the shed. If there is insufficient space along the long sides, open areas on the gable ends may also be included to a lesser extent. It is also possible, for example, for the open area to be located exclusively on the long side. The key requirement is that, in total, 25 % of the long sides of the shed are open. Openings in the roof are not taken into account.

Can open doors, windows and/or gates be taken into account when calculating the open area?

Yes, this is possible. However, the audit must provide plausible evidence that these are permanently open. This is the case if the windows or door leaves have been removed from their hinges accordingly.

Variant 3B: Spaceboard shed

How is the spaceboard shed evaluated in the audit?

At the start of the programme, the audit checks and evaluates the proportion of wind- and climate-permeable area (spaceboards) at 30%. The slotted area is not yet part of the evaluation.

Starting January 1, 2028, only Spaceboards with a slot area of at least 12% will be subject to recognition. If the slot area of at least 12% has not yet been implemented on the company by the time of the audit starting January 1, 2028, a correction period of one year may be agreed upon.

Apart from Spaceboards, can other structures also be used as air-permeable surfaces?

Yes, for example, perforated sheets. The key requirement is that the surface must be permeable to air and climate. From 1 January 2028, the proportion of slits or holes – that is, the actual open area – must also be at least 12 %.

How is the area calculated when using Spaceboards?

The wall area of both long sides serves as the basis for calculation. 30% of this area must be covered with Spaceboards. For example, if the wall area of both long sides is 100 m², a total of 30 m² must be covered with Spaceboards. The area lined with Spaceboards can be distributed freely across the long sides. If the area on the long sides is insufficient, areas equipped with Spaceboards on the gable ends may also be included in the calculation.

How are hybrid designs combining open-front and Spaceboard sheds handled?

It is possible to combine completely open areas with areas equipped with Spaceboards. In this case, it is crucial which shed type predominates.

If a company predominantly uses Spaceboards, an area of 30% of both long sides (see Variant 3B) must be equipped with Spaceboards or be completely open. If the proportion of completely open areas predominates, 25% of both long sides (see Variant 3A) must be open or equipped with Spaceboards.

For spaceboards, compliance with the minimum 12% slatted area requirement will not be verified until January 1, 2028. If the minimum 12% slatted area has not yet been implemented on the company's farm by the time of the audit starting January 1, 2028, a corrective action plan with a one-year deadline may be agreed upon.

4 Additional Requirements for *Auslauf/Weide*

4.1 Space Allowance for Outdoor Area/Pasture

See explanations for Criterion 2.1. These apply mutatis mutandis.

4.2 Design of Auslauf/Weide

The outdoor area must be usable year-round and have a minimum size of 3 m² per animal. It must consist of at least 16 m² of contiguous area.

There is no definition of the open area. The key factor is that the animals must be able to perceive outdoor environmental stimuli (external weather conditions) in the outdoor area.

Can the outdoor area be included in the unrestricted usable area?

The outdoor area can only be included in the unrestricted usable area if it is guaranteed to be continuously and at all times accessible. Of course, the space allowance may be temporarily reduced for the duration of cleaning.

It must be ensured that the animals have sufficient space available in the shed even if access to the outdoor area is restricted—e.g., in the event of an outbreak, upon a veterinarian's order, or for animal welfare reasons. Therefore, compliance with the space allowance specified in the QS Guideline for Cattle Farming must be ensured at all times.

In which cases may access to the outdoor area be blocked, and what must be documented in such cases?

The outdoor area may be blocked temporarily for the performance of routine tasks or, to the extent that this is absolutely necessary in individual cases for animal welfare reasons. Routine tasks include exclusively cleaning the outdoor area, adding fresh bedding, urgently needed repairs, sorting the animals, or veterinary treatments. Animal welfare reasons may include, for example, protection from extreme weather (heat, hail, prolonged frost). If access to the outdoor area is restricted, this must be documented at the start of the restriction, specifying the duration of the restriction and the respective reason. Routine tasks are exempt from this documentation requirement.

Complete blocking of the outdoor area is permitted only in two exceptional cases: first, an official blocking, e.g., due to an acute disease outbreak; second, the existence of a veterinary order prohibiting the use of the outdoor area for a specific period due to a disease outbreak. Both cases must be documented and substantiated (official order, veterinary certificate), including the reason and duration, starting from the beginning of the blocking.

Does the outdoor area have to be available at all times?

The outdoor area must be available at all times throughout the year. Every animal must have the opportunity to use the outdoor area. This does not mean that all animals must have the opportunity to be in the outdoor area at the same time.

Do animals in recovery crates also need to have access to the outdoor area/pasture?

No.

4.3 Sclerotherapy of horn systems

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4.4 Contourable lying area

How should the resting area be designed?

All animals must have access to elastic, deformable lying areas. In addition to using litter, soft surfaces such as rubber mats can also be used for this purpose. Lying areas consisting of bare concrete floors or with minimal litter, e.g., sawdust, are not sufficient.

6 Annexes

6.1 Feeding Add-on module

What needs to be taken into account when feeding GMO-free feed? What documents must be provided?

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

a) for self-grown feed, through a cultivation certificate, 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).

Note: Feed containing, consisting of, or produced from genetically modified organisms (GMOs) must be labelled throughout the EU. A declaration in the feed label stating "genetically modified" or "produced from genetically modified (name of the organism—e.g., corn)" is sufficient proof.

How must the origin of feed be verified?

Not at all when purchasing feed from external sources. In such cases, it is sufficient to certify compliance with the ITW. The aim is not to verify the actual country of origin of the goods.

In the case of feed produced on the farm itself, it must be plausible that the feed originates from the company's own operations.

How is ITW compliance regarding the origin of feed raw materials from the EU-27 Member States assessed during the audit?

Either confirmation must be provided by the supplier's feed manufacturer or distributor that the feed complies with the ITW requirements of the relevant programme. This can be confirmed either in general/across the board or with each feed delivery on the shipping documents.

Or the livestock owner obtains the feed from a feed business listed in the QS database. In this case, the feed must be ordered in accordance with the requirements of the *Frischluftstall* or *Auslauf/Weide* programmes. This order must be placed explicitly in writing (either as a general/blanket agreement, by contract or with each feed order) and must be presented during the audit.

What must the livestock owner consider when ordering feed?

As a participant in the ITW *Frischluftstall* or *Auslauf/Weide* programmes, the corresponding feed must be actively ordered in writing from the feed supplier. This order (either as a one-time general/flat-rate order or with every feed order) must be documented during the audit.

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

The relevant factor is the proportion of fresh matter in the feed raw materials within the typical ration; in other words, the mixed ration in the feed trough is assessed. This proportion is documented through the ration calculation. The percentage refers to the total portion and not to each individual component.

What needs to be taken into account during the initial audit?

It is crucial that, at the implementation date, the feeding regime complies with the relevant programme requirements. During the initial audit, it is not yet necessary to demonstrate that the animals were already being fed in accordance with the requirements prior to this. The period prior to the implementation date is not taken into account in the initial audit.

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