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If a whole or part of a paragraph has been amended, the date of the amending regulation appears in square brackets at the end of the paragraph. If a whole paragraph or sub-paragraph has been deleted, the date of the deletion appears in square brackets beside the deleted paragraph or sub-paragraph.

Republic of Latvia

Cabinet

Regulation No. 98

Adopted 2 February 2010

Welfare Requirements for Keeping and Use of Chicken for Meat Production

*Issued pursuant to
Section 10, Clause 1 of the Animal Protection Law*

I. General Provisions

1. This Regulation prescribes the welfare requirements for keeping and use of such chicken (*Gallus gallus*) which are intended for meat production.

2. Terms used in this Regulation:

- 2.1. chicken – an animal of the species *Gallus gallus* kept for meat production;
- 2.2. holding – an individual confined area with one or several houses where chickens are kept;
- 2.3. house – a building on a holding where a flock of chickens is kept;
- 2.4. useable area – a littered area accessible to a flock of chickens at any time;
- 2.5. stocking density – the total live weight of chickens which are present in a house at the same time per square metre of useable area;
- 2.6. flock – a group of chickens which are placed in a house of a holding and are present in this house at the same time;
- 2.7. daily mortality rate – the number of chickens which have died in a house on the same day (including those that have been culled either for disease or because of other reasons) divided by the number of chickens present in the house on that day, multiplied by 100;
- 2.8. sum of rates – the sum of the cumulative daily mortality rates in the time period from placing a flock of chickens in the house until their bringing out from the house;
- 2.9. veterinarian authorised by the Service – a veterinarian who as referred to in Annex I, Section III, Chapter IV, Part A of Regulation (EC) No 854/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific rules for the organisation of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption is qualified for such position and who has been authorised by the Director General of the Food and Veterinary Service (hereinafter – the Service).

3. The Regulation shall not apply to:

- 3.1. keeping of chickens in hatcheries;
- 3.2. keeping of chickens in holdings:

- 3.2.1. with fewer than 500 chickens;
- 3.2.2. with only breeding stocks of chickens;
- 3.2.3. with indoor and free range chickens as referred to in points (b), (c), (d) and (e) of Annex V of Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 of 16 June 2008 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 as regards the marketing standards for poultrymeat;
- 3.2.4. organically reared chickens in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91.

4. The owner or keeper shall ensure that a house conforms to the requirements laid down in Chapter II of this Regulation.

5. The Service shall supervise the conformity with the requirements of this Regulation and perform controls in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules.

6. Each year until 30 June the Service shall inform the European Commission regarding the results of State supervision and control and the number of controls performed in relation to conformity with this Regulation, as well as submit a list of the planned measures for problem-solving.

7. Professional associations and foundations of poultry farming sectors shall draw up a handbook of good management practice, which contains recommendations for fulfilment of this Regulation. The handbook of good management practice shall be co-ordinated with the Service.

8. The Ministry of Agriculture shall inform the European Commission regarding laws and regulations that determine sanctions, if the requirements of this Regulation are violated until 30 June 2010, and amendments to such laws and regulations, which apply to the fulfilment of the requirements of this Regulation.

II. Welfare Requirements for Keeping of Chickens

9. Feed shall be either continuously available or be meal fed to chickens.

10. Feed shall not be withdrawn from chickens more than 12 hours before the expected slaughter time.

11. Chickens shall be ensured with free access to water, unless determined otherwise by a practising veterinarian. Drinkers shall be positioned and maintained in such a way that water pollution and spillage is minimised.

12. The following corresponding to the physiological needs of chickens shall be ensured in a house:

- 12.1. temperature;
- 12.2. air humidity;
- 12.3. ventilation in order to supply fresh air, prevent accumulation of water vapour and gases harmful to the health of chickens.

13. The owner or keeper shall ensure inspecting of chickens and equipment of the house at least twice a day. Damages to equipment detected during an inspection, which cause threats to the health or life of chickens, must be eliminated without delay.

14. If health or behavioural problems are determined for chickens, their keeping conditions shall be evaluated first. If the health or behavioural problems result from deficiencies in keeping conditions which cannot be eliminated immediately, it shall be performed after taking the chickens out of the holding.

15. Chickens that are sick or seriously injured shall receive appropriate treatment according to instructions of a practising veterinarian or be culled and killed immediately.

16. Those parts of buildings, equipment or utensils which are in contact with the chickens shall be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected every time after final depopulation is carried out or before a new flock introduced into the house, as well as all litter must be removed, and clean litter must be provided.

17. The house shall have lighting with an intensity of at least 20 lux, measured at bird eye level, and illuminating at least 80% of the useable area. A temporary reduction in the lighting level may be allowed when necessary following veterinary advice.

18. The lighting in the house must follow a 24-hour rhythm and include periods of darkness lasting at least six hours in total, with at least one uninterrupted period of darkness of at least four hours. When necessary, within first seven days from the time when the chickens are placed in the house, and until three days before the foreseen time of slaughter the lighting regime may be changed, following veterinary advice.

19. Floors of houses shall be covered in dry and friable litter.

20. As low noise level as possible shall be ensured in the house, as well as sudden occurring of noise shall be prevented. Ventilation, feeding and other utensils shall be constructed, placed, operated and their technical maintenance shall be performed so as not to cause noise or its level is as low as possible.

21. The owner or keeper shall aggregate the following information regarding the house:

- 21.1. the number of chickens introduced;
- 21.2. the hybrid or breed of the chickens;
- 21.3. by each control, the number of birds found dead with an indication of the causes, if known;
- 21.4. by each control, the number of birds culled with cause;
- 21.5. the number of chickens remaining in the flock following the removal of chickens;
- 21.6. the useable territory.

22. The information referred to in Paragraph 21 of this Regulation shall be retained for a period of three years after the last entry is made and shall be made available to the inspector of the Service upon request.

23. The standard stocking density in a house shall not exceed 33 kilograms per square metre of the useable area.

24. The stocking density may be increased up to 39 kilograms per square metre, if in addition the requirements laid down in Chapter III of this Regulation are conformed to.

25. The stocking density in a house may be increased above 39 kilograms per square metre, if in addition the requirements laid down in Chapters III and IV of this Regulation are conformed to.

III. Additional Requirements for Increasing the Stocking Density up to 39 Kilograms per Square Metre

26. The owner or keeper shall notify the Service regarding a decision to increase the stocking density up to 39 kilograms per square metre.

27. The owner or keeper shall inform the Service at least 15 working days prior to the placement of the flock in the house, indicating a precise number of chickens.

28. The owner or keeper shall prepare and maintain a detailed plan of the house, as well as submit it upon request of the Service, indicating therein:

28.1. the layout and dimensions of the surfaces occupied by the chickens;

28.2. the layout of heating, cooling (if relevant) and ventilation system and a ventilation plan, detailing target air quality parameters (airflow, speed and temperature);

28.3. the layout of feeding and watering systems;

28.4. the layout of alarm systems and backup systems in the event of a failure of any automated or mechanical equipment essential for the health and well-being of the animals;

28.5. floor type and litter normally used.

29. The owner or keeper shall ensure that each house is equipped with ventilation and, if necessary, heating and cooling systems designed, constructed and operated in such a way that:

29.1. the concentration of ammonia (NH_3) does not exceed 20 ppm and the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO_2) does not exceed 3000 ppm measured at the level of the chickens' heads;

29.2. the inside temperature, when the outside temperature measured in the shade exceeds 30°C , does not exceed this outside temperature by more than 3°C ;

29.3. the average relative humidity measured in the house during 48 hours does not exceed 70% when the outside temperature is below 10°C .

30. The owner or keeper shall notify the Service regarding any changes to the house, equipment or procedures which are likely to influence the welfare of chickens within five working days after the changes are made.

31. The owner or keeper register changes to the house, equipment or procedures, as well as regular technical checks of ventilation, heating, cooling and alarm systems.

IV. Additional Requirements for Increasing the Stocking Density above 39 Kilograms per Square Metre

32. The owner or keeper shall notify the Service regarding a decision to increase the stocking density above 39 kilograms per square metre.

33. If the owner or keeper wants to increase the stocking density above 39 kilograms per square metre, the holding must in addition conform to the following criteria:

33.1. non-conformity with the requirements of this Regulation has not been detected in a control performed by the Service within the last two years;

33.2. the handbook of good management practice is used in supervision of the holding;

33.3. the total daily mortality rate in the relevant house in at least seven consecutively controlled flocks is less than 1% + 0,06%, multiplied by the slaughtering age of the flock, expressed in days.

34. If the controls referred to in Sub-paragraph 33.1 of this Regulation have not been performed until receipt of the notification referred to in Paragraph 32 of this Regulation, the Service shall perform a control in the respective house for assessing the welfare of chickens within 30 days.

35. If the sum of daily mortality rates in a holding is elevated and the owner or keeper provides a justified explanation regarding exceptional nature of the mortality rate or proves that its reasons are beyond his or her control, the Service may decide on increasing the stocking density.

36. Upon evaluating the request for increase of the stocking density, the Service may issue an authorisation for increasing the stocking density above 39 kilograms per square metre, determining that the maximum increase is not more than three kilograms per square metre.

V. Training of Keepers

37. A keeper (natural person) has received a certificate issued by the competent authority on training in the field of welfare of chickens according to the following requirements:

37.1. requirements of the laws and regulations regarding keeping and use of chickens for meat production;

37.2. physiology, behaviour of chickens and stress impact;

37.3. emergency care for chickens, culling and killing;

37.4. preventive biosecurity measures;

37.5. practical aspects in catching, loading and transporting of chickens.

38. The limited liability company “Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre” (hereinafter – the Centre), on the basis of the delegation contract entered into, shall draw up and coordinate a training programme with the Service for keepers regarding welfare of chickens.

39. The Centre according to the developed training programme shall train keepers and after passing a test shall issue a certificate confirming knowledge to them.

40. The Centre may recognise experience obtained by the keeper until 30 June 2010 as equivalent to training and issue a certificate confirming knowledge.

41. The owner or keeper shall ensure that persons who take care of or move chickens are informed regarding welfare requirements of chickens.

VI. Monitoring and Follow-up at Slaughterhouses

42. The owner or keeper, upon sending a flock to the slaughterhouse, which was kept in density exceeding 33 kilograms per square metre, shall ensure that the following information is indicated in accompanying documents:

42.1. the holding;

- 42.2. the number of the house;
- 42.3. the hybrid or breed of the chickens;
- 42.3.¹ daily mortality rate;
- 42.4. sum of daily mortality rates.

[19 November 2013]

43. A veterinarian authorised by the Service shall register:
- 43.1. the information indicated in Paragraph 42 of this Regulation;
 - 43.2. the number of chickens that died during transportation;
 - 43.3. the number of slaughtered chickens;
 - 43.4. the results of post-mortem inspections in order to assess the welfare conditions.

44. If the sum of daily mortality rates of chickens or the results of post-mortem inspection point to inadequate welfare conditions of chickens, the authorised veterinarian shall inform the owner or keeper and the Service thereof. The owner or keeper and the Service shall take appropriate measures to improve the welfare conditions of chickens.

VII. Closing Provisions

45. This Regulation shall come into force on 1 July 2010.
46. Until 1 September 2011 the Service shall submit information to the European Commission regarding control of representative sample of chicken flocks slaughtered within a year.

Informative Reference to the European Union Directive

This Regulation contains legal norms arising from Council Directive 2007/43/EC of 28 June 2007 laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production.

Prime Minister

V. Dombrovskis

Acting for the Minister for Agriculture –
Minister for Environment

R. Vējonis