
Text consolidated by Valsts valodas centrs (State Language Centre) with amending regulations of:

8 March 2011 [shall come into force from 12 March 2011];

20 March 2012 [shall come into force from 23 March 2012].

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. 744

Adopted 7 July 2009

Regulations Regarding Welfare Requirements of Laying Hens and Procedures for Registration of Establishments Keeping Laying Hens

*Issued pursuant to
Section 10, Clause 1 of the Animal Protection Law,
Section 5, Paragraph four of the Law On the Supervision
of the Handling of Food and Section 54,
Paragraph six of the Veterinary Medicine Law*

I. General Provisions

1. This Regulation prescribes the welfare requirements for keeping of laying hens (hens of *Gallus gallus* species, which have reached laying age and the eggs of which are intended for human consumption, not hatching), as well as the procedures for registration of commercial companies, individual merchants, farms or individual undertakings (hereinafter - establishment) keeping laying hens.

2. This Regulation shall apply to establishments with more than 350 laying hens.

[20 March 2012]

3. An owner of an establishment shall assign a person who is responsible for the compliance with the welfare requirements of laying hens in the establishment.

4. Eggs for human consumption shall be acquired in an establishment which complies with the requirements of this Regulation and which is registered with the Food and Veterinary Service (hereinafter - Service).

5. The Service shall control the fulfilment of the requirements of this Regulation.

II. Requirements for Keeping of Laying Hens

6. The following methods of keeping of laying hens shall be used in holdings of laying hens:

6.1. deep litter;

6.2. unenriched cages;

6.3. enriched cages.

7. Laying hens shall be provided with a possibility to freely take in feed and drinking water appropriate to the physiological needs of the species, except cases if it is necessary to provide medical treatment to the laying hens or to take preventative measures.

8. In a holding of laying hens the following shall be provided appropriately to the physiological needs of the relevant species:

8.1. temperature;

8.2. air humidity;

8.3. ventilation in order to supply fresh air, prevent accumulation of water vapour and gases harmful to the health of laying hens.

9. It is prohibited to change the appearance of laying hens. If it is not possible to improve the keeping conditions in accordance with Paragraph 11 of this Regulation preventing feather pecking and cannibalism, beak trimming may be carried out on chickens that are less than 10 days old. Such non-medical operation on chickens shall be carried out by an employee trained by a practising veterinarian.

10. A person working with laying hens shall inspect the laying hens and equipment of the holding not less than once a day. The damages discovered during an inspection shall be rectified immediately.

11. If health or behavioural problems are determined for laying hens, 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 laying hens out of the holding.

12. Ill laying hens in accordance with the instructions of a practising veterinarian shall be treated, isolated or slaughtered.

13. Dead laying hens shall be removed from the holding every day.

14. Those parts of buildings, equipment or utensils which are in contact with laying hens shall be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected regularly, in any case every time depopulation is carried out and before a new batch of hens is brought in. While the cages are occupied, the surfaces and all equipment shall be kept clean. Droppings shall be removed as often as necessary.

III. Requirements for Holdings of Laying Hens and General Requirements for Cages

15. The holding shall be equipped with lighting that provides a possibility for laying hens:

15.1. to see one another and to see the surroundings;

15.2. to maintain a physiological level of activity.

16. If the holding has natural light, even lighting shall be provided throughout the holding.

17. If the holding has artificial lighting, the following shall be ensured:

17.1. a lighting regime in accordance with a 24-hour cycle;

17.2. an uninterrupted period of darkness for not less than eight hours a day;

17.3. gradual dimming of lighting so the laying hens may find an appropriate place for rest for themselves.

18. Litter in the holding shall be any friable material enabling the laying hens to satisfy their natural need to peck and scratch.

[8 March 2011]

19. Water that conforms to the mandatory harmless requirements for drinking water specified by regulatory enactments shall be used in the holding of laying hens.

20. Floors of cages shall be constructed so that laying hens may concurrently support forward-facing claws of both feet.

21. Each cage shall have a claw-shortening device.

22. When keeping laying hens in enriched cages or deep litter, they shall be provided with a usable area which complies with the following conditions:

22.1. the floor area is at least 30 centimetres wide;

22.2. the height is at least 45 centimetres;

22.3. a floor slope does not exceed 14 per cent.

23. The area of a nest (a separate place for egg laying, the floor components of which do not include wire mesh that can come into contact with the laying hen) shall not be included in the usable area of the cage.

24. Cages shall be constructed so as to prevent laying hens from injury and escaping the cage.

25. The construction of the cage door shall be such that laying hens can be removed from the cage without suffering.

26. If in holdings, battery cages are placed on several levels, an appropriate utensil or equipment shall be provided so as to ease inspection of laying hens and removal thereof from cages.

27. Minimum noise level shall be ensured in the holding, 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.

IV. Requirements for Keeping Laying Hens in Deep Litter

28. Not more than nine laying hens shall be kept per square meter of the usable area.

29. The litter area in the holding shall be not less than one third of the floor area and each laying hen shall be provided with litter in the area of at least 250 square centimetres.

30. An individual or group nest shall be arranged for egg laying providing not less than one individual nest for seven laying hens or not less than a square meter of nest space per 120 laying hens, if group nests are arranged. The wire mesh floor shall not be considered as a nest.

31. Taking into account the construction of the feeding system each laying hen shall be provided with 10 centimetres of the length of a linear feeder or 4 centimetres of the area of a circular feeder.

32. Taking into account the construction of the drinking facilities each laying hen shall be provided with 2.5 centimetres of the length of a continuous drinking trough or 1 centimetre of the area of a circular drinking trough.

33. If the following shall be used for drinking:

33.1. nipple drinkers or cups, there shall be at least one nipple drinker or drinking cup per 10 laying hens;

33.2. drinking facilities connected to the water supply, two nipple drinkers or two drinking cups shall be available to each laying hen.

34. Laying hens shall be provided with perches complying with the following requirements:

34.1. the perch is rounded;

34.2. the perch is not located above the litter;

34.3. the distance between perches is not less than 30 centimetres;

34.4. the distance between the wall and the perch is not less than 20 centimetres.

35. Each laying hen shall be provided with 15 centimetres of the perch.

36. If in conformity with the type of keeping, laying hens move freely in the holding between different levels, then:

36.1. no more than four levels shall be arranged;

36.2. the height between the levels shall be at least 45 centimetres;

36.3. each laying hen shall have free access to feeding and drinking facilities;

36.4. it shall be ensured that droppings of the laying hens do not fall on the levels below.

37. If laying hens have a possibility to access open runs outside the holding:

37.1. latched doors at least 35 centimetres high and at least 40 centimetres wide shall be arranged along the entire length from the holding to an open run, but the total width of the doors shall be at least 2 metres per 1000 laying hens;

37.2. an appropriate area and covering of an open run shall be provided in order not to restrict the freedom of movement of laying hens;

37.3. an open run shall be equipped with a shelter and fenced to protect laying hens from precipitation and predatory animals and birds, as well as, if necessary, drinking cups shall be installed.

V. Requirements for Keeping of Laying Hens in Unenriched Cages

38. A cage complying with the requirements specified in this Chapter is an unenriched cage.

39. A usable area not less than 550 square centimetres shall be provided for in a cage for each laying hen. The usable area of a cage shall be determined by measuring the horizontal surface of the cage which is used by laying hens without restrictions.

40. Not less than 10 centimetres of the feeder length shall be provided for each laying hen in the cage.

41. If the following is used for drinking:

41.1. continuous drinking troughs, not less than 10 centimetres of the length of the continuous drinking trough shall be provided for each laying hen;

41.2. drinking facilities connected to the water supply, not less than two nipple drinkers or two drinking cups shall be provided in each cage.

42. Floor slope in a cage shall not exceed 14 per cent or eight degrees if wire mesh has been used for floor installation.

43. Height of the cage:

43.1. shall be 40 centimetres over at least 65 per cent of the cage area;

43.2. shall be not less than 35 centimetres in other part of the cage.

VI. Requirements for Keeping of Laying Hens in Enriched Cages

44. A cage complying with the requirements specified in this Chapter is an enriched cage.

45. In the cage each laying hen shall be provided with:

45.1. an area not less than 750 square centimetres from which 600 square centimetres shall be a freely usable area;

45.2. at least 12 centimetres from the length of the feeder;

45.3. a nest;

45.4. litter;

45.5. a perch at least 15 centimetres long.

46. The height of a cage above a nest shall not be less than 20 centimetres, and the total area of the cage shall not be less than 2000 square centimetres.

[20 March 2012]

47. If nipple drinkers or drinking cups are used for drinking of laying hens, two nipple drinkers or drinking cups shall be available to each laying hen.

48. When placing cages in the holding it shall be provided that a space between rows of cages shall not be less than 90 centimetres, but a space between the cage floor and the floor of the holding shall not be less than 35 centimetres.

VII. Procedures for the Registration of Establishments Keeping Laying Hens

49. The Service shall assign a registration number to an establishment keeping laying hens in accordance with Paragraph 54 of this Regulation.

50. An establishment shall submit the following information to the Service:

50.1. the name and address of the establishment;

50.2. the given name, surname and address of the owner and keeper (if he or she is not the owner) of the establishment;

50.3. registration numbers of other establishments covered by the scope of this Regulation and which are owned by the owner or keeper of the establishment or which are run by him or her;

50.4. the type of keeping of laying hens;

50.5. the current number of laying hens and the maximum number of laying hens;

50.6. if different types of keeping laying hens exist in the establishment, in addition the maximum number of laying hens for each type of keeping shall be indicated.

51. No new establishment shall be brought into use prior to completion of registration and receipt of registration number.

52. The Service shall create and maintain a register of establishments keeping laying hens.

53. An establishment shall, within 10 days, inform the Service in writing regarding changes in keeping of laying hens and the necessary changes in the registration number.

54. The registration number of an establishment keeping laying hens shall consist of:

54.1. the number designating the type of keeping laying hens;

54.2. the code of Latvia (LV);

54.3. the unique identification number assigned by the Service;

54.4. an additional sign identifying separated buildings of a single flock.

55. If laying hens are kept according to the requirements specified in Commission Regulation (EC) No 557/2007 of 23 May 2007 laying down detailed rules for implementing Council Regulation (EC) No 1028/2006 on marketing standards for eggs, the type of keeping shall be designated with one of the following numbers:

55.1. free range - "1";

55.2. barn- "2";

55.3. cage- "3".

56. If laying hens are kept according to the requirements specified in 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, the type of keeping shall be designated with an "0".

57. [20 March 2012]

VIII. Closing Provisions

58. Cabinet Regulation No. 102 of 4 March 2003, *Regulations Regarding Welfare Requirements of Laying Hens and Procedures for Registration of Establishments Keeping Laying Hens (Latvijas Vēstnesis, 2003, No. 38; 2004, No. 101; 2006, No. 140)* is repealed.

59. It shall be allowed to use the unenriched cages installed until 1 May 2003 referred to in Chapter V of this Regulation until 31 December 2011. After 1 May 2003 unenriched cages shall not be installed in holdings of laying hens.

Informative Reference to the European Union Directives

This Regulation contains legal norms arising from:

1) Council Directive 99/74/EC of 19 July 1999 laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens;

2) Commission Directive 2002/4/EC of 30 January 2002 on the registration of establishments keeping laying hens, covered by Council Directive 1999/74/EC.

Prime Minister V. Dombrovskis

Minister for Agriculture J. Dūklavs

Translation © 2013 Valsts valodas centrs (State Language Centre)

© Oficiālais izdevējs "Latvijas Vēstnesis"