



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate B – Sustainability

Brussels

agri.b.4(2022)2475417

Dear [REDACTED],

I would like to thank you for your email of 14 March 2022¹, in which you ask for clarifications regarding the stocking density for laying hens in organic production.

In your email, you refer to the concrete example of a laying hen holding, for which your calculations of stocking densities result in contradictory results. Hence, you ask for guidance with regard to the relevant interpretation and calculations for the appropriate stocking density for poultry.

I would like to recall that in relation to stocking densities for livestock, several different provisions apply in organic production:

- those related to the minimum surfaces for indoor and outdoor areas, as referred to in Article 14 (3) and point 1.6.4 of Part II of Annex II to Regulation (EU) 2018/848 on organic production and labelling of organic products² as well as Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/464³, and for poultry Part IV of its Annex I. Here, the stocking densities are established for the indoor and outdoor areas for the housing and the open air areas available to poultry.
- and those related to the maximum limit of organic nitrogen per year and hectare of agricultural area, as referred to in points 1.6.6 and 1.6.7 of Part II of Annex II to Regulation (EU) 2018/848. Here the stocking densities are established on the basis of the agricultural area of the organic poultry holding, which may include for example the hectares used for the production of grains to feed the poultry.

Hence, the calculations presented in your email related to points 1.6.6 and 1.6.7 of Part II of Annex II to Regulation (EU) 2018/848 are incorrect because they need to be applied to the agricultural area of the organic poultry holding.

When calculating the appropriate stocking densities to comply with the maximum limit of organic nitrogen per year and per hectare of agricultural area, you need to take into account the maximum number of laying hens as calculated for the indoor and outdoor

¹ Ares(2022)1864264

² [EUR-Lex - 02018R0848-20220101 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

³ [EUR-Lex - 02020R0464-20211125 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)



areas and see how it fits with the agricultural area available. Annex IV to Regulation (EC) No 889/2008⁴, which does not apply anymore from 1 January 2022, was setting the maximum number of animals per ha equivalent to 170 kg N/ha/year and you can use this as a guidance; for laying hens, the maximum number was 230 animals per ha equivalent to 170 Kg N/ha/year which is close to the number of 255 you calculated.

This opinion is provided on the basis of the facts set out in your letter of 14 March 2022 and expresses the opinion of the Commission services and does not commit the European Commission. In the event of a dispute involving Union law it is, under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, ultimately for the Court of Justice of the European Union to provide a definitive interpretation of the applicable Union law.

Yours faithfully,



⁴ [EUR-Lex - 02008R0889-20220101 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)