European Commission

Outcome Technical discussions Production rules Rabbits

Expert Group

Rabbits

6 September 2018

Implementing act rabbits

Article 14 Livestock production rules

3. The Commission shall, where appropriate, adopt implementing acts regarding Part II of Annex II providing rules on:

*(a) the **minimum period** to be complied with for **feeding of suckling animals with maternal milk**, referred to in point 1.4.1(g),*

Part II of Annex II 1.4.1 (g)

Suckling animals shall preferably be fed on maternal milk for a minimum period laid down by the Commission in accordance with point (a) of Article 14(3); milk replacers containing chemically synthetised components or components of plant origin shall not be used during that period;

Rabbits- Minimum suckling period
Outcome of sub-group

*All young mammals shall be fed on maternal milk for a minimum period of **30** days after birth for rabbits.*

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Livestock production rules

Article 14 Livestock production rules

3. The Commission shall, where appropriate, adopt implementing acts regarding Part II of Annex II providing rules on:

(b) the **stocking density and the minimum surface for indoor and outdoor areas** that are to be complied with for specific livestock species to ensure that the developmental, physiological and ethological needs of animals are met in accordance with points 1.6.3, 1.6.4 and 1.7.2.

(c) the **characteristics of and technical requirements for the minimum surface for indoor and outdoor areas**;

(d) the **characteristics of and technical requirements for buildings and pens for all livestock species** other than bees, to ensure that the developmental, physiological and ethological needs of animals are met in accordance with point 1.7.2;

(e) **requirements for vegetation and the characteristics of protected facilities and open air areas.**

Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 55(2).

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Livestock production rules for rabbits: basic act

1.9.5 For rabbits

1.9.5.1 Nutrition

With regard to nutrition, the following rules shall apply:

(a) at least 70 % of the feed shall come from the farm itself or, if this is not feasible or such feed is not available, shall be produced in cooperation with other organic or in-conversion production units and feed operators using feed and feed material from the same region;

(b) **rabbits shall have access to pasturage for grazing whenever conditions allow**;

(c) **rearing systems shall be based on maximum use of grazing pasturage by reference to the availability of pastures in the different periods of the year;**

(d) fibrous feed such as straw or hay shall be provided when grass is not sufficient. Forage shall comprise at least 60 % of the diet.

Livestock production rules for rabbits: basic act

1.9.5.2 Housing and husbandry practices

With regard to housing and husbandry practices, the following rules shall apply:

(a) housing shall be provided with **a comfortable, clean and dry laying or rest area of sufficient size, consisting of a solid construction which is not slatted.** Ample dry bedding strewn with litter material shall be provided in the rest area. The litter shall comprise straw or other suitable natural material. The litter may be improved and enriched with any mineral product authorised pursuant to Article 24 as a fertiliser or soil conditioner for use in organic production;

(b) rabbits shall be **kept in groups**.

(c) rabbit farms shall use **robust breeds adapted to outdoor conditions**;

(d) rabbits shall have **access to**:

(i) **covered shelter including dark hiding places**;

(ii) an **outdoor run with vegetation, preferably pasture**;

(iii) a **raised platform** on which they can sit, either inside or out;

(iv) **nesting material** for all nursing does.

Categories of rabbits

Four different categories according to sex and age and production purpose

- ***Nursing doe with kits****: lactating doe with kits*
- ***Pregnant and reproductive doe***
- ***Adult Buck****: reproductive adult male rabbit*
- ***Kits****: rabbits nursing a doe, not weaned*
- ***Fattening rabbits from weaning to slaughter*** *and* ***replacement rabbits***

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Systems of production for rabbits

- *Mobile housing on grassland/pasture*

- *Fixed housing with access to an outdoor run with vegetation, preferably with pasture*

➢ *Optional: concrete outside area excluded in the calculation of minimum outdoor surface in that case easy access to the outdoor run with vegetation*

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Mobile houses rabbits

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Stocking density and minimum surface for indoor area

- *Stocking density for indoor area according to four different categories of animals*

- *Indoor areas expressed in net usable area/ head excluding platforms. In the case of nursing doe with kits expressed in m^2/doe (kits not included in the number of heads)*

- *Same indoor stocking densities for fixed and mobile houses*

- *Number of does: two different positions from MS*
  - *Not more than 200 does per production unit and not more 400 does per production unit;*
  - *No limits*

- *Rabbits kept in groups of max 50 heads*

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Rabbits - Indoor area stocking densities- Outcome of sub-group

Rabbits	Indoor area (net area usable per animal excluding plaforms m^2/head) for the rest area Mobile and fixed houses
Nursing does with kits	0.6 m^2/doe with kits
Pregnant does/Reproductive females	**0.4** / 0.3
Fattening rabbits from weaning to slaughter Replacement rabbits (end of fattening to 6 months)	**0.2** /0.15
Adult bucks (breeding male)	**0.4**/0.3

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Characteristics of and technical requirements for the minimum surface for indoor area: floor and height, raised platform- light-Outcome of the sub-group

- *Solid ground **floor** with litter for the rest area (basic act)*
- *Minimum indoor surface fixed for the rest area*
- *Provides covered shelter with dark hiding places in sufficient number*
- ***height** for indoor area sufficiently high to allow rabbits to stand with ears erect and at least 60 cm*
- *Conceived in such a way that it can accommodate **different groups** of rabbits and allow the preservation of broods integrity upon transfer in fattening phase*
- *Conceived in such a way that it is possible for bucks and does with kits to be separated from the group for specific animal welfare reasons and for a limited period provided they keep eye contact with other rabbits*
- ***Raised platforms** (basic act)*
- *Natural light may be suplemented by artificial means to provide a maximum of 16 hours per day, with a continuous nocturnal rest period without artificial light of at least eight hours;*

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Characteristics of and technical requirements for the minimum surface for indoor area: Nests for does Outcome of the sub-group

- *Nests for kits in sufficient number at least one nest per nursing doe with kits*
- *Access to nests for all does at least 2 days before expected date of birth/parturition*
- *Possible to the doe to move away from the nest and return in the nest for feeding the kits*

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Rabbits - Outdoor area stocking densities- Outcome of the sub-group

Rabbits	Outdoor area m²/head Outdoor run with vegetation, preferably pasture Fixed houses	Outdoor area m²/head Mobile houses Moved daily
Nursing does with kits	**5** m²/doe with kits	**2.4** m²/doe with kits
Pregnant does/Reproductive females	**5**	**2.4**
Fattening rabbits from weaning to slaughter Replacement rabbits (end of fattening to 6 months)	**5** 0.5	0.4
Adult bucks (breeding male)	**5**	2
Replacement rabbits (end of fattening to 6 months)	5	0.6

Characteristics of and technical requirements for the minimum surface for outdoor area: mobile houses, platforms Outcome of the sub-group

- *Mobile houses must be placed every day/daily on different grassland/pasture*
- *Plaform outdoor (basic act)*
- *Provides covered shelter including dark hiding places (basic act)*
- *Fences to prevent flight by digging*
- *No additional details on vegetation*

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Transitional period

Implementing Act Article 26(7)

Collection of data concerning the availability on the market of organic animals
Outcome of the sub-group

- *No databases on organic rabbits in AT, IT, ES, FR and BE*

Background documents on rabbits on circa bc

Group of interest: Expert Group on Organics.

- *https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/d7461562-6768-4ccf-a8f4-4adbe9f70e2d*
- *Sub-group_Production rules for organic rabbits and certain poultry such as organic quails*

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