

Implementation of New EU Livestock Regulations

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The UK Register of Organic Food Standards (UKROFS) has produced their updated Livestock Standards of Production, which comply with the EU regulation 1804/1999, and were operational from 24 August 2000.

Additional or different standards and changes from the report in the March 2000 EFRC Bulletin are:

- Non organic stock can be grazed on organic land for a limited period of 120 days per year
- It is possible to purchase 10% of stock on an annual basis from non organic sources for replacement purposes (20% for sheep flocks), providing organic stock is not available.
- If a major extension to the farm is undertaken, breed policy is changed or a new livestock specialisation is developed, up to 40% of the final numbers may be bought into the herd/flock from non-organic sources.
- Vaccines can be used where there is a demonstrable need and a known farm disease risk
- Withdrawal periods will remain at twice the product license for all products. Those products with no specified withdrawal periods will have a withdrawal period of 48 hours.
- More than 3 courses of treatment for any one animal in any one year will eliminate that animal from organic sales (not including vaccinations or anthelmintics). Or if an animal has a productive lifecycle of less than 1 year more than 1 course of treatment will eliminate that animal from organic sales.
- The indoor space allowance for dairy cows is 6 m² per cow.
- Laying hens will require a maximum of 6 birds per m² indoors, with no more than 7 laying hens per nest box, and a minimum of 4 m² of outdoor area per head, provided that the limit of 170 kg N/ha/year is not exceeded.

It is proposed that in all cases where the UKROFS standards are not affected by the new EU regulations, the existing standards will remain as they are. Some certification bodies have set stricter standards in some respects.

The Organic Advisory Service (OAS) held a meeting with all the certification bodies to discuss their interpretations of the new UKROFS standards. The aim is to undertake a full review of the EU regulations, the UKROFS standards and the certification bodies' interpretations shortly, this will be thoroughly reported in the next Bulletin (see EFRC Bulletin No. 52).

Organic Farmers and Growers (OF&G) are planning on following the UKROFS Standards, and will produce a copy of these new standards with OF&G guidance notes in the future.

Organic Food Federation (OFF) is in the process of reviewing the new UKROFS Standards and is currently adopting them with no amendments. Demeter have decided to adopt the UKROFS Standards with limited changes or additions until a complete re-writing of the Demeter standards are completed by June 2001.

The Soil Association (SA) is producing a new document with its interpretation of the new UKROFS Standards shortly. There are significant differences in the SA poultry standards; however, in other respects they are very similar to the UKROFS standards, apart from the following areas:

- For chemically synthesised medications, the withdrawal period shall be 7 days for products with a 0-48 hour legal withdrawal period. Three times the withdrawal period for those with a 2-18 day legal withdrawal period. 56 days for products with an 18-27 day legal withdrawal period. Twice the withdrawal period for those with a legal withdrawal period of 28 + days and for products used off license or with an unspecified withdrawal period a withdrawal period of 14 days for milk and egg products and 56 days for meat products must be adhered to.
- For allopathic medications, those with none specified withdrawal periods products should be withdrawn for 48 hours. For medications with a 0-18 day withdrawal period products should be withdrawn for three times the legal withdrawal period. Medications with a 18-27 day withdrawal period, should be withdrawn for 56 days and products with a withdrawal period of 28 + days should be withdrawn for twice the legal withdrawal period.
- Dairy cows should have 1.00 m² per 100 kg liveweight, with a minimum of 6m² indoor space allowance.

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