



## APPLICABILITY

Theme/Keywords Slow-growing broilers

#### Context

Organic regulations, extensive label production

**Geographical coverage** Worldwide

**Required time** 

**Period of impact** Full life cycle

Equipment Not required

#### Best in

Extensive, free-range and organic broiler production systems



# Slow-growing broiler breeds

### Problem

In conventional intensive broiler production, fast-growing breeds with a daily growth of 50 – 55 grams (g) are common. In the EU`s organic regulation (EU 2018/848), fast-growing breeds have a minimum slaughter age of 81 days. So-called "slow-growing" breeds are used in these systems, as normal breeds would become too big too early, which may result in major health issues. There is no common definition of slow-growing in the EU member states, but various slow-growing broiler breeds are available for various free-range systems.

### Solution

For free-range systems (organic and extensive label production), slow-growing breeds with a daily growth of 30 – 45 grams are preferred.

#### Benefits

Slow-growing breeds are recommended or obligatory in organic and extensive label production. Slow-growing birds seem to be healthier and seem to perform better in organic production than conventional fast-growing broilers.

## **Practical recommendations**

#### Examples:

• Fast-growing breeds (50-55 g daily growth)

Ross 308, Ross 508, Hubbard Classic, Hubbard Flex

• Slow-growing breeds (30-45 g daily growth)

Hubbard JA 757, Hubbard JA 787, Hubbard Colouryield, Hubbard Naked Neck, Ranger Gold, Rowan Ranger, Sasso X44, Sasso T44, T44NI, Kabir

Dual-purpose breeds (only males for fattening, 25 – 35 g daily growth)

Lohmann Dual, Coffee\_&\_Cream, Regio-Huhn

• Heritage breeds (20 – 25 g daily growth)

Brahma, Cochin





Figure 2: Slow-growing birds in a mobile house (L. Vogt, Naturland e.V.)

## **On-farm application**

Please investigate further regarding a national list of slow-growing breeds and other criteria to see which slow-growing breeds are available in your country.



Figure 3: Slow-growing breed Hubbard Colouryield (Source: L. Vogt, Naturland e.V.)

### FURTHER INFORMATION

#### **Further readings**

Article: Slower growing broilers are healthier. T. Mcdougal, Poultryworld.net, 2020 https://www.poultryworld.net/healthnutrition/slower-growing-broilersare-healthier

#### Weblinks

Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on organic production

#### About this practice abstract and *mEATquality*

# **Publishers:**

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#### mEATquality:

The *mEATquality* project aims to provide consumers with better-quality pork and broiler meat and animals with a high level of welfare by developing scientific knowledge and practical solutions together with farmers and chain partners.

The mEATquality project, an H2020 project, is coordinated by Wageningen Research (The Netherlands) and is a multidisciplinary team of 17 partners organisations representing 7 EU countries. The project is running from October 2021 to September 2025.

Project website: www.meatquality.eu/ Social media: Facebook and LinkedIn @mEATquality & X @mEATqualityEU

#### **Project partners:**

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