

## Summary of Changes For Poultry and Swine

*Many sections of the final rule were modified to pertain to chickens and not other avian species. The terms layers, broilers and pullets are all now in reference to chickens (Gallus gallus).*

**New Definitions:** there are a number of new definitions. These include:

- A variety of physical alterations which are used in animal agriculture;
- Indoor space for poultry, including the different types of housing such as mobile (pasture) housing, aviaries, raised slats and single level (floor litter) housing.
- Outdoor access for avian species must include at least 50% soil access. This area can include space under a roof as long as it is not enclosed. Outdoor space with soil must include maximal vegetative cover and be maintained as appropriate for the season, climate, geography, species of livestock and stage of production.
- Establishes “Vegetation” as living plant matter that is anchored in the soil by roots and provides ground cover.

### Changes to All Livestock Healthcare:

- Many physical alterations prohibited for organic livestock production. Needle teeth trimming and tail docking in pigs may not be routinely practiced (only if alternative methods to prevent harm fail); beak trimming for poultry prior to 10 days of age, and toe trimming for turkeys if performed by infra-red at the hatchery, would be allowed.
- Producers are encouraged to provide pain control materials (such as anesthetics) as allowed on the National List when performing physical alterations.
- Ammonia levels in poultry houses must be monitored at least monthly and kept under 25 ppm, with producer taking action to improve air quality once it exceeds 10 ppm.
- Producers must have a comprehensive internal parasite prevention program, including preventative measures such as fecal monitoring and pasture management.
- Producers must have a written euthanasia plan, using allowed methods of euthanasia.
- Producers must keep records of the percent of the herd or flock suffering from lameness and the causes.

### Changes to Mammalian Living Conditions:

- Clarification that animals must be kept clean through the use of clean, dry bedding and sufficient shelter, as appropriate for the species.
- Swine must be group-housed except for farrowing/suckling sows, boars, or in cases of recovery from illness or documented aggression.
- Swine must have access to rooting materials both indoors and outdoors.

### Changes to Avian Living Conditions:

- Natural lighting is required in all housing; artificial lights may be used to extend light up to 16 hours per day. Artificial lights must be gradually dimmed when turned off. Natural light is sufficient if an inspector can read and write on sunny days with the lights off.
- Litter must be provided in scratch areas in the house, and maintained in dry condition

- For layers (gallus gallus) only, 6" per bird of perch space must be provided, except in aviary systems where 55% of birds must be able to perch at once (3.3"/bird perch space required).
- Stocking density requirements are calculated on pounds of bird per square foot and are required for chickens (Gallus gallus only). The numbers used assume that the average mature laying hen weights approximately 4.5 lbs. Indoor stocking density maximums:
  - In floor litter (single level) housing: 3.0 lbs hen/sq.ft. (~1.5 sq.ft/bird)
  - In slatted/mesh floor (raised slats) housing: 3.75 lbs hen/sq.ft (~1.2 sq.ft/bird)
  - In aviary (multi-tier) and pasture (mobile) housing: 4.5 lbs hen/sq.ft. (~1 sq.ft/bird)
  - For broilers, 5.0 lbs bird/square foot (must be met by March 20, 2020).
- Access to the outdoors exit door spacing and size must be designed to promote and encourage birds to go outside.
- Outdoor stocking density maximums are calculated on pounds of bird per square foot and are required for chickens (Gallus gallus only – see below for dates when these standards must be met).
  - For layers, 2.25 lbs hen/square foot
  - For pullets, 3.0 lbs bird/square foot
  - For broilers 5.0 lbs bird/square foot
- Outdoor access may be temporarily denied for certain reasons, including:
  - Inclement weather, including temperatures <40°F and >90°F
  - Stage of life – broilers (Gallus gallus) less than 4 weeks of age, and pullets (Gallus gallus) less than 16 weeks of age
  - Nest box training (5 weeks maximum)
  - To establish vegetation by reseeding the outdoor space

#### **New Standards on Organic Livestock Transport:**

- Animals must be fit for transport to auction or slaughter – no sick, lame or injured animals may be transported (except for veterinary care).
- Transport vehicles must provide sufficient season-appropriate ventilation and protection against cold and heat stress.
- Bedding must be provided in livestock trailers (not required in poultry crates).
- Animals must be provided with organic feed and water if their transport time, including all time on the mode of transportation, exceeds 12 hours, and transport must comply with the Federal Twenty-Eight Hour Law. Transport documents must be available to certifying agent or inspectors confirming that travel requirements, including time in transport, are being met.
- Organic producers must have emergency plans in their Organic System Plan to address potential animal welfare problems that might occur during transport.
- Organic producers must provide records of any non-compliant actions during transport and the corrective actions taken to the organic inspector.

#### **New Standards on Organic Slaughter**

- Organic mammalian slaughter facilities must be compliant with the Federal Meat Inspection Act (inspected by either a federal or state inspector).

- Organic poultry slaughter facilities must be compliant with the Poultry Products Inspection Act, unless they are exempt; exempt facilities must ensure:
  - Lame birds are not shackled or hung by the legs;
  - All shackled birds are stunned prior to bleeding; and
  - All birds must be completely insensible prior to scalding.
- Organic slaughter facilities must provide records of any non-compliant actions and the corrective actions taken to the organic inspector.

### **Implementation Period**

The final rule will be fully implemented on March 20, 2018. That means that all requirements must be met by that date to continue certification, except that:

- Organic egg operations that are certified before March 20, 2020 need to implement the outdoor access requirements by March 21, 2022. Organic egg operations that become certified after March 20, 2020 need to comply with the outdoor access requirements in order to obtain certification.
- Organic broiler operations must fully implement the indoor space requirements by March 20, 2020.