

SCHEDULE 2

Regulation 4

Additional conditions that apply to the keeping of laying hens in non-cage systems

1. All non-cage systems of production for keeping laying hens shall comply with the requirements of this Schedule.
2. All systems shall be equipped in such a way that all laying hens have—
 - (a) linear feeders providing at least 10 cm per hen or circular feeders providing at least 4 cm per hen;
 - (b) either continuous drinking troughs providing 2.5 cm per hen or circular drinking troughs providing 1 cm per hen;
 - (c) at least one nest for every seven hens. If group nests are used, there shall be at least 1 m² of nest space for a maximum of 120 hens;
 - (d) perches, without sharp edges and providing at least 15 cm per hen, which shall not be mounted above the litter, and the horizontal distance between perches shall be at least 30 cm and the horizontal distance between the perch and the wall shall be at least 20 cm; and
 - (e) at least 250 cm² of littered area per hen, the litter occupying at least one third of the ground surface.
3. Where a system is equipped with nipple drinkers or cups, there must be at least one nipple drinker or cup for every 10 laying hens.
4. Where a system has drinking points plumbed in, at least two cups or two nipple drinkers must be within reach of each laying hen.
5. The floors of installations shall be constructed so as to support each of the forward-facing claws of each hen's foot.
6. If systems are used where the laying hens can move freely between different levels—
 - (a) there shall be no more than four levels;
 - (b) the headroom between the levels shall be at least 45cm;
 - (c) the drinking and feeding facilities shall be distributed in such a way as to provide equal access for all hens; and
 - (d) the levels shall be so arranged as to prevent droppings falling on the levels below.
7. If laying hens have access to open runs—
 - (a) there shall be several popholes giving direct access to the outer area, at least 35 cm high and 40 cm wide and extending along the entire length of the building; in any case, a total opening of 2 m shall be available per group of 1,000 hens; and
 - (b) the open runs shall be—
 - (i) of an area appropriate to the stocking density and to the nature of the ground, in order to prevent any contamination, and
 - (ii) equipped with shelter from adverse weather conditions and predators and, if necessary, appropriate drinking troughs.
8. The stocking density shall not exceed nine laying hens per square metre of usable area.

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012, SCHEDULE 2.