



## Certification regulations

### Better Life label (Beter Leven keurmerk)

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## 1. Certification regulations

These Certification Regulations set out the responsibilities and practices of accredited Certification Bodies (CBs) and the primary and secondary participants of the Better Life label (users of the Better Life label). The Certification Regulations are part of the Regulations covering the use and supervision of the collective 'Beter Leven' (Better Life) logo.

In order to obtain certification, the primary and secondary participants are required to cooperate fully with the Certification Bodies in the execution of their audits or assessments and in that context to comply with all instructions or requirements issued by or on behalf of the Certification Body. Participants are also required to grant the Certification Body free access to all sites and business premises necessary for carrying out the audit or assessment. They must also allow Certification Body access to all documents and provide them with all information necessary for carrying out the audit or assessment. They must grant employees of the Better Life label Foundation (BLLF) (Stichting Beter Leven keurmerk - SBLk) or supervisors appointed by them access to all sites and business premises and make all documents available to them when the BLLF so requires. These points do not apply if there is demonstrable evidence of emergencies such as quarantine due to animal diseases.

This document enters into force from 01-12-2019 (subject to 1/2 year transition period) and is published on the Better Life website and is accessible to everyone. The BLLF reserves the right to make interim amendments to the terms and conditions of the Regulations. The BLLF will inform the participants and the Certification Bodies of any changes and the effective date. Participants will be informed of any changes through the Better Life website and the BLL newsletter. In addition to the newsletter, Certification Bodies will also receive this information by email/phone or by the standard means of dialogue used.

### 1.1 Scope

The Certification Regulations describe the way in which accredited Certification Bodies audit and certify Better Life participants. These regulations apply to all participants in the Better Life label scheme and the accredited certification Bodies. The applicable BLL criteria (as published on the Better Life website) are followed unamended by the Certification Bodies when conducting audits and certifying Better Life label participants.

## 2. Definitions

Nonconformity/shortcoming	Irregularities found to be in conflict with, or that do not comply with or satisfy one or more of the Better Life label criteria.
Better Life label (BLL)	The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals uses the Better Life label to encourage livestock farms etc. to provide a better life to the livestock reared for production purposes. The better the conditions for the animals, the more stars. Consumers can use the Better

	<p>Life label to take animal welfare into account: the more stars, the more animal-friendly the product. The Better Life label consists of the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals logo with the words 'Beter Leven' (Better Life) and 1, 2 or 3 stars. The Better Life label is a chain label. This means that all companies in the production chain, from primary sector to retail/food service, must participate in the label scheme. In order to be able to receive, process and/or deliver Better Life products, the company's suppliers and buyers must have been approved by the Better Life label Foundation for the corresponding Better Life scope (animal species/number of stars).</p>
<p>Certification Body (CB)</p>	<p>A Certification Body conducts audits (in accordance with the frequency determined by the BLLF) in order to ensure that a participant complies with the corresponding Better Life criteria. Based on an audit at the participant's premises, a report is drawn up which is assessed at the office by an assessor and/or certification manager (ISO-17065) as to whether the participant complies and whether the certificate can be awarded again for another year/issued. Certification Bodies must be accredited by the Better Life label Foundation. Certification Bodies wishing to be accredited must meet the Accreditation Requirements for Certification Bodies.</p>
<p>Certification</p>	<p>Participants who can affect the Better Life status of an animal/product are regularly (in accordance with the control frequency as determined by BLLF) audited against the Better Life criteria and certified by an accredited Certification Body. After certification, the participant receives a Better Life certificate.</p>
<p>Audit</p>	<p>By visiting the (primary/secondary) participant's premises, and using the Better Life criteria, facts are collected to support the certification decision at the CB's office.</p>
<p>Participant</p>	<p>A business location that has been approved by Foundation Better Life label/and has been certified within the set period by an accredited CB for a certain type of business operation (e.g. livestock farming, slaughterhouse, processor and retail) and a certain Better Life scope (animal species/number of stars).</p>
<p>Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals</p>	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals is the owner of the Better Life label (holder's scheme) and lays down the</p>

Approval	<p>criteria which the participating companies are required to meet.</p> <p>Following a favourable administrative assessment of an application by a secondary participant, i.e. <b>not</b> primary participants (livestock farms), the Better Life label Foundation issues an approval. Once approved, the participant may use the Better Life label directly on its products under the condition that the participant has been audited and certified by an accredited CB within the set period, and the products manufactured under the Better Life label meet the requirements of the Style Manual. The approval also remains valid after certification. The approval is linked to the conditions for participants (e.g. meeting criteria and payment) while the certificate proves compliance with the criteria.</p>
Chain directors	<p>A party that registers the livestock farm with the BLLF and monitors the livestock farms. In addition, the chain director connects the various links in the supply chain, from primary company to processor/seller and all links that may be found in between. For instance, the chain director can be a slaughterhouse, packing station, processor, egg packing station or an intermediary organisation.</p>
Secondary participants	<p>Companies other than livestock farms, for example chain director, slaughterhouse, packing station, processor, logistics service provider 2b and 2c, retail, retail with processor, food service and butcher.</p>
The Better Life label Foundation (BLLF)	<p>The Better Life label Foundation is the private label organisation that is responsible for the correct assurance of the Better Life label (BLL) and communication with CBs and participants. The BLLF handles and assesses the applications from secondary participants and grants approval. The BLLF also supervises the accredited Certification Bodies.</p>
Livestock farm	<p>A livestock farm (primary actor) is a location where livestock (poultry, cattle, pigs, calves, rabbits etc.) are bred and/or reared for the production of meat, milk or eggs. At Better Life farms, livestock must be reared in a manner that meets the Better Life criteria for the relevant animal species and the number of stars (1, 2 or 3 stars).</p>
Processor	<p>Locations where the processing of Better Life products is carried out. Processing also includes the labelling and packaging of the product, with the exception of re-portioning where the product is wrapped by at least one original packaging.</p>

A livestock farm (primary actor) Is a location where livestock (poultry, cattle, pigs, calves, rabbits, etc.) are bred and/or reared for the production of meat, milk or eggs. At Better Life farms, livestock must be reared in a manner that meets the Better Life criteria for the relevant animal species and the number of stars (1, 2 or 3 stars).

A full glossary can be found on the Better Life label website.

### 3. Registration

#### 3.1 Registration of companies

You can register via the Better Life website/portal. BLLF assesses applications from potential participants. After approval, the participant is referred to an accredited Certification Body according to the participant's preference. The assignment for a BLL entry audit is always given by the BLLF. A participant cannot instruct the CB to schedule a BLL entry audit and certification decision.

#### 3.2 Duration of approval

The BLLF allows secondary participants to use the logo in accordance with the requirements of the Style Manual for a certain period of time set out in the letter of approval, prior to the entry audit being conducted by a Certification Body. The participant is responsible for concluding a certification agreement with the certification body within the set period of time, and for scheduling an entry audit. After a successful entry audit and certification decision at the participant's premises, the logo may continue to be used in accordance with the requirements set out in the Style Manual. In the event of scope extensions, no additional entry audit is required and the assessment will be included in the next audit and certification decision. Primary participants (livestock farms) must first be certified before they are allowed to participate in the Better Life label scheme.

### 4. Certification procedure

The primary participants can only be registered with the BLLF through a chain director and, after assessment by the BLLF, are referred to the selected CB. The primary participant may only supply BLL products after the company has been certified by an accredited Certification Body in accordance with the criteria.

After the BLLF has made an administrative assessment of the secondary participant's application, the BLLF refers the company to the selected CB. The following steps will then be taken:

1. The participant and the CB conclude a certificate agreement, after which an entry audit is scheduled, bearing in mind the duration of the approval as stated in the letter of approval.
2. The CB conducts the entry audit according to the BLL criteria for the business type(s) and scope(s) as provided by the BLLF to the CB. The operation as well as the procedures and administration are audited.

3. Upon completion of the audit, the inspector discusses his/her findings with the participant. If any shortcomings are found during the audit, they are discussed with the participant and the inspector leaves a copy/summary of the audit findings with the participant. The inspector cannot make any promises about the outcome of the certification procedure.
4. After the assessor/certification manager has assessed the report at the office, a certificate is issued and/or feedback is given on any shortcomings found in an official certification decision.
5. Identified shortcomings must be resolved within the time limits set out in the 'Sanctions Framework' summary in Appendix C before the certificate can be issued.
6. The CB informs the BLLF of the outcome of the certification procedure, including the certification decision and the final report. If the participant has been certified again, they will be included in the BLL register as recertified participant instead of approved.
7. Before the certificate's expiry date, the CB conducts a new, regular BLL audit which forms the basis on which the certificate may or may not be extended. The period of validity of the BLL certificate depends on the type of company. The period of validity of a BLL certificate is described in greater detail in Chapter 6 of these certification regulations.

## 4.1 Implementation of the audit

### 4.1.1 BLL criteria

When conducting the BLL audit and making the certification decision, the CB applies the applicable BLL criteria as published on the Better Life website, including any supplementary decisions and interpretations.

If the CB uses its own system in which the BLL criteria are included, these BLL criteria correspond exactly with the BLL criteria as they appear on the Better Life website. Any supplementary decisions and interpretations can be considered during the assessment/certification decision at the office.

## 4.2 Types of BLL audits

### 4.2.1 General audit

All regular BLL audits are conducted under the responsibility of the accredited Certification Body. Additional checks (e.g. unannounced and traceability audits) are coordinated by the BLLF by means of an additional assignment issued to the accredited Certification Bodies. The additional controls must also be carried out on the basis of the BLL criteria, including the sanctions framework (Appendix C), whereby the BLLF may indicate certain focal points on which the audit needs to focus.

When conducting the audits for the BLL, the CB may use the following auditing tools:

1. **Administrative audit**; the participant can submit in writing the CB documents needed for certifying the company. These documents may be submitted during the audit or sent to the CB as a result of an entry or other type of audit. Administrative documents (or copies) can also be taken by an inspector, if the inspector believes they are necessary for the audit or for the certification decision.



2. **Physical audit;** an audit can be carried out at the company's production site or main site. During the physical audit, in addition to the employee(s) accompanying the inspector, employees at the production location are also interviewed.
  - a. Audits at slaughterhouses and packing stations are conducted when slaughter or packing activities (BLL or non-BLL animals/eggs) take place at the same time the audit is being conducted, and there is sufficient time to observe and check the whole slaughter process/packing activity operation.
  - b. During a physical audit on the production floor, employees from the various departments/production lines are interviewed to check whether they are working according to the criteria of the Better Life label. An interview alone with the quality employee is not enough.

#### 4.2.2 Entry audit

The entry audit, the initial assessment for the purpose of certification, may only be conducted following an order issued by the BLLF.

##### **Primary holdings (Livestock farm)**

An entry audit at a livestock farm can only be carried out if the farm in question has housed the animals in accordance with the corresponding BLL criteria at the time of the audit. A livestock farm may only supply animals or products (e.g. milk, eggs) with a particular Better Life scope (animal species/product and number of stars) after it has been certified for this Better Life scope (animal species/product and number of stars).

If a livestock farm decides to alter its BLL scope, a new audit must be conducted and a BLL certificate with the new Better Life scope must be issued before the livestock company may supply the animals or products under the new Better Life scope (animal species/product and number of stars).

##### **Secondary companies**

With participants who are not livestock farms/retail and Logistic Service Provider 2a, an entry audit will only be conducted if the company has a BLL contract for the use of the Better Life label and holds a letter of approval for the relevant BLL scope(s) (animal species/product and number of stars), and if the participant has been approved for a type of business operation where regular audits are prescribed. In order to retain this approval, such participants must be audited and certified by one of the BLLF-accredited CBs within the approval period stated in the letter. Scope extensions, in cases where a participant has already been certified, are described in Chapter 6.

#### 4.2.3 Regular re-audit

Within the validity period of a certificate, which is stated on the certificate itself, the CB will conduct a regular re-audit at the participant's premises to assess whether the participant still complies with the applicable BLL criteria. On the basis of the inspector's findings, he or she writes up the report, which is followed by the CB's assessment and the certification decision as to whether or not the certificate can be reissued.

The BLL certificate will be issued after it has been shown that the company complies with all BLL criteria or has had no more than five warnings. During the regular re-audit, the company is always checked both physically and administratively.

The certification bodies and the participant must jointly ensure that there is always a valid certification period, whereby time of inspection, time required to rectify deviations on the part of the participant and time of assessment for the certification decision are key issues. For primary participants, the regular re-audit takes place 4-12 weeks before the certificate expires. For secondary participants, the regular re-audit takes place 6-12 weeks before the certificate expires.

Certificates are issued for a specified period, with the entry audit being the 'date of birth', provided that the above deadline is met. The BLLF determines the method of certification for each type of business /scope.

#### 4.2.4 Remedial audit

A remedial audit is conducted to check whether the shortcomings found have been satisfactorily rectified within the specified period of time. The CB can assess the rectification on the basis of an administrative or physical audit. If a remedial audit can also be demonstrated administratively, then the CB may decide to audit the rectification administratively.

#### 4.2.5 Unannounced audit

The CB carries out unannounced audits of participants for the BLLF. An unannounced audit can only be conducted if the company has a valid BLL certificate or approval. Unannounced audits are conducted by an BLLF-accredited CB without first informing the participant about it in any way.

The purpose of this audit is to assess whether participants continue to meet the BLL criteria between two regular audits. The BLLF commissions unannounced audits and indicates to the CBs how many of them must be conducted in each period and for each type of business, and whether there are any specific aspects requiring attention (participants or products) or risk areas. In principle, the unannounced audits are scheduled according to risk (based on signals received from the BLLF and/or the CB); the remaining unannounced audits are planned randomly. The CB returns its findings to the participant and to the BLLF. If any nonconformities are found during this audit, the CB will impose sanctions in accordance with the criteria and the sanctions framework (Appendix C), and carry out the ensuing actions/remedial audits. Both the participant and the BLLF receive a report of the audit.

#### 4.2.6 Trace-back audit

The CB carries out additional trace-back audits at participants' premises for the BLLF. A trace-back audit can only be conducted if the company has a valid BLL certificate or approval. Trace-back audits are always conducted by one of the BLL-accredited CBs and are both announced and unannounced.

The aim of these audits is to assess whether:

1. Supplied BLL products can be traced back to BLL-worthy raw materials and vice versa;

2. The channelization of BLL and non-BLL products is guaranteed at all stages of production;
3. All parties in the BLL production chain are certified or approved for the relevant Better Life scope.

The BLLF commissions the trace-back audits and directs the CBs regarding which participants are to be subjected to a trace-back check, including any additional information such as the scope, product and period concerned. The CB reports the findings to the participant and to the BLLF. If any nonconformities are found during this audit, the CB will impose sanctions in accordance with the criteria and the sanctions framework (Appendix C), and carry out the ensuing actions/remedial audits. Both the participant and the BLLF receive a report of the checks and ensuing action/remedial audit(s).

#### 4.2.7 Trial audit

Companies/livestock farmers have the opportunity of having the Certification Body conduct a trial audit. This is an agreement between the company/livestock farmers and the Certification Body without the intervention of the BLLF. It is not possible for a trial audit to serve as a BLL entry audit or other BLL audit.

#### 4.3 Reporting

Once the certification decision has been taken by the CB, the final audit report is sent to the participant and to the BLLF (physically and/or electronically). When communicating the certification decision, the certificate is issued physically and/or electronically.

The report includes at least the following information:

##### General company information:

1. BL number / UBN / Poultry (KIP) number
2. Name of company
3. Visiting address
4. Contact(s) present during the audit
5. Type of business
6. Better Life scope(s)

##### Company structure:

Provide a brief description of the business location and operations.

For example:

**Livestock farm:** various species of animal, various types of husbandry, several UBNs, enclosed farm, breeding farm, weaner farm, finishing farm, rosé or white veal calf farm etc.

**Secondary company:** family business, part of a larger holding, several production areas (1x pig and 1x beef), several production lines. The company produces various types of products. Operations not

covered by BLL, such as other animal husbandry systems, other animal species, slaughter, packaging etc.

#### Audit data

1. Name of inspector
2. Type of audit:
  - a. entry audit (IC)
  - b. regular re-audit (RC)
  - c. remedial audit (HC)
  - d. unannounced audit
  - e. trace-back audit (TC)
3. Audit date
4. Criteria used, including version
5. Checklist of criteria with findings

Reports from different types of audit can be recognised (above coding included in the name of the document) submitted to the BLLF.

All criteria are to be included in the entry audit report or regular re-audit report, including those where the inspector has entered the answer 'N/A'. The reports are submitted electronically and retained by the CBs and the BLLF for at least five years.

#### **4.4 Conducting the assessment of the audit report**

The findings reported by the inspector (BLL audit report) are assessed by a BLL assessor (certification decision). If one or more major shortcomings, i.e. ones resulting in suspension or (conditional) exclusion, are found during the audit, then the assessment feedback (certification decision) to the participant and the BLLF must be fast-tracked.

The assessment of the audit report includes at least:

1. An assessment as to whether the report is complete, all (relevant) BLL criteria have been checked and a complete answer has been given for each of the criteria (in accordance with BLL criteria, column measurement method).
2. An assessment as to whether the reported findings are correct; this is verified where necessary, e.g. using registers etc.
3. An assessment as to whether the way the recorded findings are set out complies, e.g. according to additional decisions and interpretations on the BLL website, working agreements between the BLLF and the CB etc.

Based on this assessment, the BLL assessor makes the BLL certification decision, or the assessor puts forward a proposal for a BLL certification decision to the BLL Certification Manager. Where necessary, the BLL Certification Manager can in turn reassess and/or finalise the BLL certification decisions (possibly on the strength of a random sample). The BLL Certification Manager may delegate the taking of certification decisions to the BLL assessor; however, the BLL Certification Manager remains

at all times ultimately responsible for the BLL certification decisions taken. The assessor/Certification Manager must at all times be a person other than the inspector.

Within four weeks following the date of the audit, the audited company will receive a written report of the audit findings. If the requirements for certification have been met, the company will also receive a certificate.

Within 24 hours of the certificate being issued/renewed, the certificate must be included in the BLL registry. This also applies to deregistering and mutations.

If, during the audit, the company does not comply with the requirements for certification, the report as a result of the assessment will include details of the nonconformities found and it states how and within what period of time the company has rectified the nonconformities found in order for certification to be awarded.

When an identified shortcoming has not been rectified in time and/or it has not been adequately resolved during a remedial audit, then the shortcoming in question will be the subject of the next sanction and all related actions and consequences, in accordance with the Sanctions Framework (Appendix C).

#### **Assessment of nonconformities leading to suspension or exclusion**

If one or more nonconformity triggering suspension or exclusion is found during an audit, the completion of the assessment must be fast-tracked. Both the participant and BLLF will receive a report of the audit within five working days of the audit being conducted and the ensuing actions/remedial audits.

In addition, the report will specify that the participant must inform its upstream and downstream links in the supply chain of the suspension/exclusion. The suspension takes effect from the date of the letter or email. This is the same date on which the CB informs the participant. The participant will be removed from the BLL register on this date, or as soon as possible thereafter. During suspension or exclusion, the participant may not purchase, produce or supply products under the BLL scheme. See the sanctions framework (Appendix C).

For a suspension, rectification must be demonstrated during a physical remedial audit. If the remedial audit demonstrates that the participant again meets the BLL criteria, then the suspension can be lifted and the participant may still be given the BLL certificate (after the end of the suspension period).

The CB forwards exclusions and suspensions to the participant and to the BLLF at the same time. The CB sends the suspension or exclusion letter/mail (or copy thereof) to both the participant and the BLLF. If the CB wishes to derogate from the prescribed sanction involving suspension or exclusion, it must submit a request to the BLLF, including a description of the situation (giving the reason why the CB wishes to derogate from the prescribed sanction).

If a suspension is withdrawn and the CB decides to award a BLL certificate, the CB will inform the participant and the BLLF by email within 24 hours about the term of the new BLL certificate. The participant is reinstated by the BLLF and relisted in the BLL register.

#### 4.5 Public register

The public register lists all companies that have received approval from the BLLF or have been given a valid certificate from an accredited CB. The BLLF manages the register and processes the certification data, as supplied by the CBs, in it. The public register is published by the BLLF on the website.

The CBs are responsible for supplying the correct certification data to the BLLF.

The CBs provide at least the following certification data:

- 1 CB number
- 2 Company registration number (BL number)
- 3 UBN or Poultry (KIP) number (if applicable)
- 4 Type of company
- 5 Type of audit (IC, HC)
- 6 Better Life scope (animal species/number of stars)
- 7 Certificate's start and expiry dates

#### 4.6 BLL certificate

The Better Life certificate can only be issued by a BLLF-accredited CB. The BLL certificate will only be issued after an entry audit or a regular re-audit in which no shortcomings have been found, after the identified shortcomings have been rectified or when the participant has fewer than five warnings. The certificate is drawn up in Dutch as standard. The text may also be written in English.

If, after a regular audit, a new certificate is issued, then this certificate has a start date that immediately follows the expiry date of the previous certificate in such a way that the participant's certification status remains uninterrupted. It is possible to derogate from the original certification date if the participant has been late resolving issues resulting in sanctions or if the participant has been the subject of a suspension.

### 5. Types of certification

Among Better Life companies, there are two types of certification:

1. **Individual certification**
2. **Multi-site certification**

Certification only applies to types of business/scopes for which a set of BLL criteria has been set and where the participant must be audited regularly.

## 5.1 Individual certification

Individual certification applies to participants who have been approved for a business type for which regular audits are prescribed. In the case of individual certification, the participant receives its own certificate and regular re-audits are conducted. See also Appendix B. In the case of individual certification, the participant will be subject to regular re-auditing.

## 5.2 Multi-site certification

Multi-site certification only applies to head offices with a network of sub sites. The sub sites operate under the responsibility and supervision of the main site. All sub sites work with the same quality system, which is managed at the head office. With multi-site certification, the quality system of the head office is audited and certified. In addition regular re-audits are conducted at the head office and a section of the sub-sites. Any nonconformities identified at sites are assessed to determine whether it is an incident at the site or systematic across all sites. See also Appendix B.

Multi-site certification is only possible for types of business/scopes that have been duly approved by the BLLF.

## 5.3 Scopes issued on certificate

All scopes for which a participant is registered and approved by the BLLF are taken into consideration during the certification procedure. Even if in the previous period no BLLF production came under a certain BLLF scope.

# 6. Expanding, withdrawing, extending or synchronising the certificate

## 6.1 Expanding approval

Approved and certified secondary companies can apply to the BLLF to expand their approval to include new Better Life scope(s). Among other things, the channelization of the various Better Life scopes by the participant must be described in protocols/work instructions and submitted to BLLF for administrative audit and approval. After a positive assessment, approval is granted for the expansion to include the relevant Better Life scope.

Physical audits of the expansion of the approval and the correct channelization of the various Better Life scopes are included in the next regular re-audit by the CB, assessed and (if the requirements are met) added to the BLLF certificate. Until that time, the new Better Life scope(s) will continue to be listed in the BLLF register as 'approved'.

As such, if there is an expansion to include a new Better Life scope, an interim audit by the CB is not necessary. As a result of this new physical audit, the CB will issue an amended certificate to include the new scope, and in principle its period of validity will not exceed 12 months. This period of validity may only be extended beyond 12 months if the matter discussed with the BLLF.

## 6.2 Withdrawal of certificate

A certificate can be withdrawn for various reasons, the main one being that the participant did not meet the conditions for participation set out in the Regulations for use and supervision of the 'Better Life label', certification regulations and/or BLL criteria corresponding to the participant's type of business/scope.

The CB will inform the BLLF by email by when it decides to withdraw a participant's BLL certificate. For its part, the BLLF will inform the CB if a participant no longer meets the conditions for participation, as a result of which their participation is terminated. The participant's BLL certificate will be removed from the BLL register as of the date the withdrawal of the BLL certificate becomes effective.

## 6.3 Extending the term of the certificate

In exceptional situations of animal disease or human illness, death, empty shed, natural disasters, the CB may decide on a temporary extension of the BLL certificate of up to three months. The term of the current certificate cannot be altered. The CB must record the reason for issuing an extension.

Other reasons for issuing an extension of the BLL certificate are submitted to the BLLF for approval. After approval from the BLLF, a one-time extension of the certificate is issued for up to three months.

The CB reports any extension of a BLL certificate to the BLLF in such a way that the new certification details can be correctly processed in the BLL register.

If a further extension is needed after the three-month period, the BLLF must be notified in advance and, if necessary, will grant permission for this.

## 6.4 Synchronising certificates with other certification processes

If a participant wishes to align their BLL certificate with another certification process, then it is possible to extend the BLL certificate by up to three months. The granting of a three-month extension for the purpose of aligning other certification processes may be issued once.

## 6.5 Switching to other Certification Body (CB)

A participant may only switch to another CB if there are no unresolved shortcomings under the current/former CB. If a participant decides to switch to another CB, the participant must register the switch with the BLLF. The BLLF will inform the former and the new CB about the switch. Both the current/former and the new CB will be given the opportunity to object to the switch if the above conditions for switching have not been met.

The basis for the switch is that the participant has a valid BLL certificate. Primary participants must switch shortly before the existing certificate expires, whereas secondary participants, due to approval, should have a transition period of up to three months to ease the changeover. If this



method is not applied, each of the CBs and the participant must agree upon the starting date of the new BLL certificate.

If the current/former certificate expires during the changeover and a valid certificate has not yet been issued by the new CB (new entry audit), the participant may [continue to operate under the BLL scheme] during the period without a valid BLL certificate.

## 6.6 Expansion, relocation or renovation of participant's premises

### Primary participant/Livestock farm

If a livestock farm undergoes a new build /renovation or (UBN) extension/adaptation/new build/renovation that has a direct effect on animal welfare aspects of and compliance with the BLL certificate, a new audit must be conducted and a new BLL certificate may need to be issued before the livestock farm may supply any animals or products that are included in the Better Life scope (animal species/product and number of stars).

### Secondary participant

If a participant moves to a new location or has new building(s)/renovations/extensions done at the existing location, the participant must indicate whether the changes will affect the existing situation and if so how. Depending on the changes, a new application may eventually need to be submitted to the BLLF, accompanied at least by a Chamber of Commerce form and EC approval. If the protocols/work instructions do not change, an approval will be issued for three months from the date of relocation. If the protocols/work instructions change, then they must first be approved.

## 6.7 Acquisition of one BLL company by another BLL company

When a BLL participant is acquired/comes under different ownership, the participant must inform the BLLF and the CB by email of when the current participant ceases participating (which will also stop the BLLF sending invoices) and who is taking over the participant/becoming the new owner.

The company that takes over a BLL participant and wishes to continue to be eligible for the Better Life label reports the changes to the BLLF, and include at least a Chamber of Commerce form and EC approval with the application. If the protocols/work instructions/employees and location do not change, an approval will be issued for three months starting from the acquisition date to bridge a possible transfer to another CB. If the CB does not change either, the name of the participant will be amended administratively. If the protocols/work instructions do change, they must first be approved by BLLF before BLL production can be started at the new location. From the moment of approval (date of BLLF approval) the participant may operate under the Better Life label. After approval by the BLLF, the participant must be audited and certified within three months.

## 7. Confidentiality

The CB is bound to confidentiality with respect to information obtained during the execution of its activities. Information may only be disclosed to a third party where required by law. An exception is the information the CB provides to the BLLF, as set out in the BLL Regulations.

## 8. Complaints and appeal

Participants have the right of complaint and appeal.

### 8.1 Complaints

If participants have any complaints about the execution of the audit or do not agree with the audit results or the assessment by the CB, they may submit a complaint within the provisions of the CB. The CB has set out a complaints procedure for this purpose.

### 8.2 Appeal

Participants who disagree with a certification decision may lodge an appeal against it. The CB has set out an appeal procedure for this purpose. Decisions will remain in force until the outcome of the appeal proceedings.

If the participant and the CB fail to reach agreement with each other, the participant has the opportunity to lodge an appeal with the BLLF. An attempt is made to reach a solution through mediation. If the issue is the interpretation of criteria, the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals will deliver a judgment following consultation with the BLLF.

## Appendices

- A. Conditions for multi-site certification
- B. Types of certificates
- C. Sanctions framework

## A. Conditions for multi-site certification

The following conditions apply to multi-site certification:

- a. The organisation has a head office from which activities are planned/directed.
- b. The organisation has a network of (sub)locations/branches.
- c. The head office has a contract or declaration with the sites.
- d. All sites are essentially of the same nature (e.g. retail formula, animal species).
- e. All sites are subject to the same quality system (methods and procedures), which is set up and managed from the head office. The relevant procedures are available at the head office and at the sites.
- f. All of the sites undergo annual in-house audits arranged by the head office.
- g. Prior to the CB audit being conducted, all registered sites must have undergone an in-house audit for Better Life and a report will be available.
- h. The head office collects and analyses all data from the in-house audits.
- i. The head office imposes remedial and preventive measures on the locations of the multi-site organisation, resulting from the in-house audits.
- j. The head office must be able to demonstrate its ability to collect and analyse the data from all of the sites, and implement any changes where necessary. The data to be collected must be recorded in a document and results from each site must be clear and traceable.
- k. Every year the head office and at least 25% of the affiliated sites must be audited. Depending on the activities (e.g. catering; no communication and central purchasing of single BLL products) at a branch, a reduction in the random sample may be granted in order to reach a considered certification decision. Other certification schemes can provide support here. This exemption is demonstrable and issued by the BLLF.
- l. All locations that sell Better Life products are registered with the CB. It is not possible to add or deregister a site during an audit.
- m. The head office provides the CB with an up-to-date list of participating sites prior to the regular audit. Possible changes in the participating sites must be clearly indicated. Visits to new sites must be fast-tracked in accordance with the sampling method.
- n. Audits conducted by the CB may be announced or unannounced.
- o. All sites (including the head office) must meet the conditions for multi-site certification and corresponding BLL criteria. If the head office or sites do not meet these conditions or the BLL criteria, the sanctions regulations as described in Appendix C will apply.
- p. Sites that do meet the conditions will be registered in an appendix to the certificate. Sites with shortcomings/fail to comply with the certification conditions may only be added to the certificate after rectification has been demonstrated.
- q. Failure to meet the certification conditions at one or more sites may affect the certification of the entire multi-site organisation. If shortcomings triggering sanction suspension or exclusion are found at 5% or more sites of the multi-site organisation, revocation of the multi-site certificate (i.e. the head office and all sites in the multi-site organisation) will ensue.

Only the main site will receive a multi-site certificate with a list of the sites covered by the multi-site certificate in the appendix.

## B. Types of certificates

There are two types of certificates:

1. Certificates for individual participation
2. Certificates for companies participating according to the multi-site principle

### 1. Certificates for individual participation

For each set of criteria, a certificate containing at least the following information is issued:

- 1 Name of the company
- 2 BL number of participant (Livestock farm: poultry (KIP) and/or UBN)
- 3 Address of the participant
- 4 Audit date (the audit date on the basis of which the certificate is awarded)
- 5 Type of company and in the case of livestock farms: species of animal kept
- 6 Scope of certification in words, e.g. BLL pig 1 star, BLL chicken 2 stars
- 7 BLL logo; the logo may be depicted together with the number of stars corresponding to the Better Life scope. If there are several scopes with a various number of stars on the certificate, the logo with the lowest number of stars will be depicted
- 8 If BLL is mentioned in full, this will be written as Better Life label
- 9 Name and address Certification Body, possibly with logo
- 10 Period of validity of the certificate from <DATE> to <DATE>
- 11 Certificate number
- 12 Signature by authorised assessor/certification manager
- 13 Listing: This certificate is only valid in combination with a certified listing in the Better Life register on the Better Life website
- 14 For secondary participants, the additional text: The participant may use the logo in accordance with the guidelines set out in the 'User protocol and style manual'

### 2. Certificates for companies participating according to the multi-site principle

In the case of a multi-site organisation, a certificate is only granted to the head office. This certificate contains the following information:

- 1 Name of the head office
- 2 BL number of the participant
- 3 Address of the head office
- 4 Date of head office audit (the audit date on the basis of which the certificate was granted)
- 5 Type of business
- 6 Scope of certification in words, e.g. BLL pig 1 star, BLL chicken 2 stars
- 7 BLL logo; the logo may be depicted together with the number of stars corresponding to the Better Life scope
- 8 If BLL is mentioned in full, this will be written as Better Life label
- 9 Name and address Certification Body, possibly with logo
- 10 Period of validity of the certificate from <DATE> to <DATE>
- 11 Certificate number
- 12 Signature by authorised assessor/certification manager

- 13 Listing: This certificate is only valid in combination with a certified listing in the Better Life register on the Better Life website.

An appendix to the certificate lists all the sites covered by multi-site certification, including registration numbers where applicable. When a new certificate is issued, an up-to-date list is included as an appendix.

## C. Sanctions framework

When an identified shortcoming has not been rectified in time and/or it has been found not to have been adequately resolved during a remedial audit at the site, then the shortcoming in question will be raised to the next sanction level, with the corresponding consequences and rectification periods.

Status	Sanction level	Assessment	Implication
1.	<b>Warning</b>	Identified nonconformity poses no immediate danger to animal welfare and/or the BLL system.	<b>No immediate rectification necessary.</b>
2.	<b>Administrative Repair (AR)</b>	The identified nonconformity may pose a threat to animal welfare and/or the BLL system.	The nonconformity must be rectified by means of an <b>administrative supplement</b> to the audit, to be conducted at the CB office within six weeks of the assessment.
3.	<b>Re-Inspection (RI)</b>	The identified nonconformity may pose a threat to animal welfare and/or the BLL system and cannot be remotely assessed.	The nonconformity must be properly rectified by means of an <b>on-site re-inspection</b> within six weeks of the assessment by the CB.
4.	<b>Conditional Suspension</b>	The identified nonconformity poses an immediate danger to animal welfare and/or the BLL system.	Company is <b>suspended for a maximum of three months</b> and may not purchase, produce or supply products/livestock under the BLL scheme during the suspension period. The nonconformity must be properly remedied by means of an <b>on-site re-inspection</b> .
5.	<b>Suspension</b>	A shortcoming has already been identified on the farm and poses an immediate risk to animal welfare and/or the BLL system. 1 shortcoming resulting into suspension has been identified for the second time within a period of three years. Several identified nonconformities with the sanction suspension.	Company is <b>suspended for a maximum of three months</b> and may not purchase, produce or supply products/livestock under the BLL scheme during the suspension period. The nonconformity must be properly remedied by means of an <b>on-site re-inspection</b> . After rectification, the company will be subjected to <b>at least one additional, unannounced audit</b> at the participant's expense.
6.	<b>Conditional Exclusion</b>	The identified nonconformities pose an immediate danger to animal welfare and/or the BLL system. Second time several of the same identified shortcomings leading to suspension within a period of three years.	<b>Conditional exclusion</b> from BLL participation for maximum of three years. The nonconformity must be properly remedied by means of an <b>on-site re-inspection</b> . After rectification, the company will be subjected to <b>at least two additional, unannounced audits</b> at the participant's expense. Should the same shortcoming resulting in exclusion be identified during the period of conditional exclusion, then the conditional exclusion will immediately be converted into Exclusion from participation in the Better Life label scheme for at least one year.

7.	<b>Exclusion</b>	<p>The identified nonconformities pose an immediate danger to animal welfare and/or the BLL system.</p> <p>Second time several shortcomings leading to suspension within a period of three years.</p> <p>Third time several of the same identified shortcoming leading to suspension within a period of three years.</p>	<p><b>Exclusion from</b> participation BLL for <b>at least</b> 12 months.</p> <p>If the company wishes to participate again after 12 months, then it will have to re-apply. After approval and certification, the company will be subjected to <b>at least two additional, unannounced audits</b> at the participant's expense.</p>
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