

Following the conclusive formal adoption of the criteria stated above, the supplementary decisions and interpretations detailed below have been drafted in conjunction with the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals. The decisions/interpretations have not yet been formally adopted and are subject to change before being included in the established BLL criteria. In anticipation thereof, certification may still be carried out on the basis of

Date	Norm no. or topic	Question	Supplementary decision or interpretation
25-08-17	Spent laying hens	Can Better Life-certified laying hens also be used to produce BLL chicken when they are slaughtered?	Better Life-certified laying hen farms can sell spent BLL laying hens for the production of chicken meat. The chicken meat will receive the same number of stars as the eggs (as stated on the BLL certificate). The spent BLL laying hens must be slaughtered by a poultry abattoir approved by the BLLF. This is generally only possible at abattoirs that are specialised in slaughtering spent laying hens.
	Some Better Life eggs are labelled with 3 stars but are not free range	Under the Better Life label, there are eggs with 3 stars that are not free range. They are not free-range eggs but barn eggs – how is this possible?	Free range gives laying hens the opportunity to demonstrate important natural behaviours. This is an important issue for many consumers. But under the BLL 2-star label, the animals can still be adapted to the husbandry system (e.g. beak trimming) and the stocking density may be higher than it is for 3 stars. For the BLL 3-star label, the husbandry system is designed with the animals in mind. In this case, the laying hens are not always free range, but they always have a large covered run and a wooded area that can be configured such that hens can express their highly motivated behaviours. As a result, the BLL 3-star label satisfies all the natural behaviours of laying hens even if the hens are not free range. The BLL criteria for laying hens with 3 stars outlines two scenarios. Scenario 1 where the laying hens are not free range, and scenario 2 where the laying hens are free range.
4-10-16	UIT04 Anaesthetised slaughter	How can a livestock farm find out where its animals are slaughtered and whether the abattoir practices unanaesthetised slaughter?	This criterion is verified directly with the BLL-certified abattoir, therefore does not need to be verified with the poultry farmer. The criterion will be removed from the criteria as part of a subsequent review.
1-01-18	UIT05 Factory farming	A factory farm is defined as a single farm location (note: one UBN or one roof) housing 120,000 laying hens or more. What does one farm location mean?	It has been decided to follow the definition used by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RvO). One farm location is equivalent to one UBN. This criterion will be amended as part of a subsequent review.
1-09-16	UIT06 Multistorey sheds	Are barn and free-range sheds for laying hens with a maximum of two storeys permitted only on existing Better Life farms, or also on new Better Life farms?	Barn and free-range sheds for laying hens with a maximum of two storeys are (always) exempt from the prohibition on multistorey sheds. The exemption applies to both existing and new participants. This is consistent with local legislation in The Netherlands (for instance, in Brabant (due diligence score) and Overijssel). Multistorey sheds are excluded from the Better Life label since the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals believes that animals should, in principle, be able to roam freely (be free-range). In multistorey sheds, the possibilities for creating these conditions are either non-existent or too limited. In addition, multistorey sheds are too closely associated with factory farming amongst the general public.

27-02-17	A01 Supply chain quality system	Not all farms have an IKB EI or KAT certificate. Can these farms satisfy this criterion in any other way?	<p>For farms that do not have an IKB/KAT certificate: For 1 star, farms must always have an IKB or KAT certificate. For 2 and 3 stars, one of the following is also sufficient:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A minimum equivalent certificate (the applicant provides a comparison of the certificates that is assessed by the BLLF and submitted to the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals, which then decides if it can be accepted as equivalent or not) 2. An IKB/KAT audit that is carried out at the same time as the BLL audit (without issuing an IKB/KAT certificate), whereby the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals determines in advance which IKB/KAT criteria are non-compulsory for the foreign farm.
29-12-20	M03 Fire safety	The criterion states that an agricultural electrical inspection must be held at least once every five years in accordance with NEN 1010 or (HD) IEC 60364 Low voltage electrical installations. Do the NEN 3140 and NTA 8220 inspections also meet the criterion, and which inspections are allowed for foreign farms?	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals states that two types of inspections are held at a farm, namely an inspection before putting new systems into use and a five-yearly reinspection.</p> <p>New systems must be inspected before use in accordance with NEN1010 or (HD) IEC 60364 Low voltage electrical installations. The NEN 3140 and NTA 8220 inspections are not permitted as an inspection before the commissioning of new systems. However, the five-yearly reinspection <i>can</i> be held on the basis of NEN 3140 or NTA 8220.</p> <p>Foreign livestock farmers must have an electrical inspection carried out every five years when their house is taken into use, in accordance with the CENELEC HD 60364 standard of the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization.</p>
26-10-18	V05, V05A, V05B Straw/hay/alfalfa bales	How should straw/hay/alfalfa be provided? Can it be provided in a straw rack or net?	<p>The intention of this criterion is that there is a whole bale available to all hens. When provided in a rack, straw is not sufficiently accessible to the hens. A rack does not, therefore, satisfy this criterion.</p> <p>Full bales may be suspended in a net at the hens' eye level from the floor. That way, the hens can reach the bale properly, and the bale will not fall apart too quickly. Bales may also be laid on the ground.</p>

22-08-18	V05, V05A, V05B Straw/hay/alfalfa bales	Can bales be provided in plastic?	<p>Providing bales (alfalfa, rapeseed, etc.) in plastic to prevent the straw from falling out of the bales too quickly is strongly discouraged by the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals from an animal welfare perspective. The Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) also discourages the provision of bales in plastic for both product quality/food safety as well as animal welfare reasons.</p> <p>To prevent straw bales from falling apart too quickly, straw bales must be provided either in a net, laid on the ground or suspended at the hens' eye level from the ground.</p>
27-01-20	V05, V05A, V05B Straw/hay/alfalfa bales	How frequently should bales be replaced? V05 and V05A state that this should be monthly; V05B states that they should be replaced if they are at floor level.	<p>The intention of this criterion is that there is one straw bale available per 1,000 hens. If the hens do not use the bales, they do not need to be replaced on a monthly basis. The bales only need to be replaced if the old bales are at floor level. As such, the stipulation of monthly in V05 and V05A does not apply.</p>
30-08-16	VV3B Feed composition	What is the definition of an animal product? Is there an exception for certain animal products?	<p>The feed used must not contain animal products. Exceptions are: - Milk/dairy products Milk/dairy products may be added to the feed.</p>
9-12-16	H05A Size of the covered shed, O01a Covered run	H05A stipulates that the shed area must cover 75% of the total usable area. Therefore, by definition, the run should cover 25% of the total usable area. However, O01a states that the covered run should cover 20% of the shed area, which was also previously the standard. Which standard should be applied now?	<p>The correct standard is outlined in criterion O01a: There is a covered run that covers at least 20% of the shed area.</p> <p>Criterion H05A does not need to be inspected and will be removed from the criteria as part of a subsequent review.</p>
2-06-21	H12 Perches	The BLL 1-star Laying Hen criteria state that laying hens must have access to 15 cm of perch per animal, of which at least 10 cm is raised. This is equivalent to 67% raised perches. However, the BLL 2 and 3-star Laying Hen criteria state that at least 50% of the perches must be raised. Why is the minimum proportion of raised perches higher in 1-star Laying Hens compared to 2 and 3-star Laying Hens?	<p>The correct percentage of raised perches is 50%. This also ties in with other chain quality systems.</p> <p>Farms with 1 star of the Better Life label meet criterion H12 if a perch of at least 15 cm per animal is available. Also, at least 50% of the perches in the house must be raised. At the next revision, the criterion in the BLL 1-star Laying Hen criteria will be adjusted.</p>
23-01-18	H14e Daylight	The criterion states that it must be possible to completely cover the skylights. What if this requirement cannot be satisfied?	<p>The skylights need to be coverable in order to deal with any issues with feather plucking. If issues with feather plucking arise, alternative measures may be taken to stop/curb the problem (see http://edepot.wur.nl/283863). If the alternative measures prove to be sufficient, the skylights do not need to be covered.</p>
12-12-12	O01a Covered run	Must a covered run (BLL 1 star) always be covered?	<p>Yes, that is part of the concept. Covering the run encourages the laying hens to go outside and improves the quality of the litter in the run (drier).</p>



2-10-18	O01a Covered run	<p>The interpretation of the criterion states, <i>'If the cold free run is counted as usable area, this area will also be included when calculating the width of the shed.'</i></p> <p>Does this mean that if the covered run is counted as available floor area, the shed + covered run may be max. fifteen metres wide as outlined in criterion O03?</p>	<p>No, that is not what is intended by the criterion. The maximum distance to the run openings may be up to fifteen metres. This means that sheds that have run openings on one side (the long side) may not be deeper than fifteen metres. The covered run does not need to be included in the shed width. This passage of text will be removed from this criterion as part of a subsequent review.</p>
12-07-17	O01a Access to the covered run	<p>KAT stipulates that laying hens must have access to the covered run starting three weeks from being housed. When must BLL 1-star laying hens gain access to the covered run?</p>	<p>The hens must first learn their way around the system (water, feed, laying nest, litter and perches) so cannot go outside immediately. Under the Better Life label, the laying hens must be given access to the covered run no later than three weeks after being housed.</p>
10-09-19	O02 Canopy	<p>For 3-star laying hens, does the entire canopy need to be permeable to daylight, and does this need to be 100% or is there a margin?</p>	<p>The entire canopy needs to be permeable. There is a maximum deviation of 5% for structural purposes (e.g. the supporting structure of the roof), which is in line with criterion O01b.</p>
24-11-17	O03 Distance to the covered run	<p>A shed wider than fifteen metres is not permitted. In a shed that is, does a wall need to be placed at the fifteen metre point?</p>	<p>There are two options for a shed that is wider/deeper than fifteen metres:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A covered run is set up along both long sides 2) The maximum distance from the farthest system row to the run openings is no more than fifteen metres This is provided the extra square metres are not included in the calculation for maximum stocking density. This option enables the hens to make use of the additional area. However, this additional area may not be used when calculating the stocking density. The stocking density may not be higher than that of a fifteen metre-wide shed.

26-10-18	O07a Daylight and air permeability	Can a rollable cover/tarpaulin be used for the ventilation/windbreak mesh in the long wall of the covered run? Rolling the cover down would prevent wet areas in the covered run in the event of adverse weather conditions such as a strong wind/draught or rain.	<p>The ventilation opening can be made from a windbreak mesh that breaks a maximum of 80% of the wind and has a maximum shadow effect of 80% – this is fairly dense mesh, which would break plenty of wind as well as some rain.</p> <p>Since the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals does not advocate closing the run openings in bad weather, a rollable cover may be used for the long side of the run on the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The cover is only used in bad weather (cold, wet, windy) to prevent rainwater from entering the covered run, for example. Usage is recorded in the run diary; - The cover must be made from a daylight-permeable material; - The animals can look out, even with the cover down; - Each use of the cover is automatically recorded; - If a rollable cover is present, the covered run must be accessible to the hens during the designated opening times, under all conditions, including bad weather. The run openings may remain closed overnight.
13-03-20	O08 Opaque edge between compartments	Should there be a transparent wall between different compartments of the covered run as specified in criterion O08?	<p>This criterion stipulates that the height of the opaque edge between compartments is a maximum of 25 cm so that the animals can look over the raised edge and see other hens. The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided that this requirement no longer needs to be verified. This criterion will be removed from the Better Life label for laying hens as part of a subsequent review.</p>
28-01-20	O09 Height of covered run	Can the covered run slope to 1.5 m as stated in H020?	<p>O09 and H020 contradict one another. H020 takes precedence in this case and the same exception will be added to O09 in the future. The covered run may, therefore, slope to 1.5 m at the edge.</p>
19-04-19	O14 Drinking towers in the covered run	Is it agreed that drinking nipples may be placed in the covered run, rather than drinking towers?	<p>Drinking nipples are sufficient as drinking towers for the laying hens' water supply. Since drinking nipples have a smaller capacity than drinking towers, one drinking tower is equivalent to ten drinking points or nipples. For a maximum of 6,000 hens, there must be a minimum of two drinking towers, which equates to 20 drinking points or nipples.</p>

11-07-18	O15 View from the covered run	<p>In many cases, a sheet of plexiglass or windbreak mesh (which may become clogged with dust) is used to facilitate this.</p> <p>In practice, however, there are diverging interpretations of when a view outside is/is not possible. Can the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals provide clarity on this?</p>	<p>The material used must offer an unobstructed view to the outside.</p> <p>In practice, plexiglass (matte/ribbed) is sometimes used, which distorts the view, thus rendering an unobstructed view to the outside impossible.</p> <p>Criterion O15 is only satisfied if the hens have an unobstructed, unrestricted view that extends outwards for a minimum of five metres. The view must not be distorted or otherwise hindered.</p> <p>The BLL does not prescribe any specific materials. Windbreak mesh, plexiglass or another material may be used to ensure visibility, but it must be sufficiently open/clear to allow the animals an unrestricted view of the outside that extends at least five metres.</p> <p>Plexiglass sometimes loses its clarity due to being pecked by the birds. Potential alternatives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scratch-resistant plastic sheets, of which there are different types • Hardened safety glass • Coarse mesh in which dirt cannot become lodged • Coarse mesh fitted a few cm in front of the transparent material (e.g. plexiglass) to prevent the birds from pecking <p>Whichever material is chosen, it is important that it is well made and that there are no sharp edges or protrusions that could harm the birds.</p> <p>If the material used does not satisfy this requirement, the poultry farmer will have to replace it before the next batch of hens is housed in order to satisfy the aforementioned criterion in future.</p>
3-05-19	O15 View from the covered run	Can perforated sheet piling be used in the outer wall of the covered run?	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has deemed sheet piling to be insufficiently open/clear to provide the animals with an unrestricted view of the outside. As such, it cannot be used.</p> <p>If the material provides a maximum of 80% shade and wind protection (20% light and air penetration), it may be used as windbreak mesh (in accordance with criterion O07a).</p>

3-05-19	O15 View from the covered run	The opaque, upright edge of the covered run is higher than the maximum permitted 25 cm (e.g. reverting from 2-star BLL to 1-star BLL. The closed run openings have an edge that is higher than 25 cm). How can this be resolved?	<p>The hens must be able to look outside from the covered run. This must be possible in both a seated and lying position. If the opaque, raised edge is higher than 25 cm, the view is impeded and the requirement is not met.</p> <p>If it is not immediately possible to lower the edge to the maximum 25 cm, a solution would be to place a platform or plank (not a perch) against the wall to allow the hens to see outside. This platform/plank must meet the following specifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- It is a permanent construction and cannot be dismantled- Length: Spanning the entire length of the shed- Height: No more than 25 cm below the opaque edge and no more than 25 cm above the ground (excluding litter)- Width: At least 30 cm- The platform/plank may not be used to keep more hens in the same shed. The platform/plank is not counted as additional floor area when calculating the stocking density.
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13-03-20	O16 Distance from other buildings	On existing laying hen farms, it is not always possible to create a covered run with sufficient distance from other buildings (a minimum of five metres for 1-star BLL farms). How can existing laying hen farms still be eligible for the Better Life label?	<p>For BLL 1-star broilers, the BLL criteria already include a provision that allows for a covered run between two existing buildings . The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals came to a decision to permit this under the same conditions for BLL 1-star and 2-star laying hens.</p> <p>A covered run sandwiched between two buildings is only permitted for existing sheds. This is not permitted for completely new constructions.</p> <p>If a run is configured in this way, the following must be in place between the wall of the adjacent building and the roof of the covered run spanning the entire length:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An overhead clearance of at least one metre on both long sides of the run, or - An overhead clearance of at least two metres on one side of the run <p>This must be achieved by using a daylight and air-permeable material that has a maximum windbreaking capacity of 80% and a maximum shading capacity of 80% (e.g. windbreak/ventilation mesh).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there is a space between the covered run and the adjacent building of at least one metre that is open and freely connected to the outdoor air without obstacles, the roof of the covered run does not need to be raised. <p>In addition, for each of the aforementioned scenarios, there must be a daylight-permeable area in the roof of the covered run that equates to at least 3% of the floor area and is evenly distributed over the surface of the roof.</p> <p>Where a covered run is sandwiched between two buildings, only the upper storey of a multistorey shed can satisfy the Better Life label.</p>
29-01-19	BLL 3 star, O13 Additional shed provision	The sanction applied when there is no peat dust or sand present is exclusion from participation in the Better Life label for one year – is this not excessive? Can this sanction be reviewed?	This sanction is indeed excessive, considering the problem can be rectified relatively easily and quickly. The sanction will be reduced to a suspension. The criterion will be amended as part of a subsequent review of the criteria.
30-08-16	BLL 3-star, O18b Number of system rows, scenario 2	The name of this criterion refers to scenario 2, but should this not be scenario 1?	Yes, the name of criterion O18b is ‘Number of system rows, scenario 2’ when it should be ‘scenario 1’.
30-08-16	BLL 3-star, O18b Number of system rows, scenario 2	As far as we understand, this relates to one system row per shed wall so that the hens can access the left-hand day area from the left-hand row on the left-hand side of the shed and the right-hand day area from the right-hand row. Is this correct?	The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided to amend this criterion: <i>There is a maximum of one system row per access partition that provides access to the day area.</i>

30-01-19	BLL 3 star, O20a Rollable/collapsible access partition	In O01a, the interpretation indicates that the covered run is connected to the shed by a fully rollable partition. However, in the two scenarios, a rollable/collapsible wall is only referenced in scenario 1 (with wooded area). In scenario 2 (free range), should there also be a rollable/collapsible partition between the shed and the covered run?	No, in scenario 2 (free range), there does not need to be a rollable/collapsible partition between the shed and the covered run. Criterion O19b stipulates that in scenario 2, there may be run openings to the covered run. The interpretation in O01b will be amended the next time the criteria are amended.
21-03-17	G01A Sick bay	There is not currently a sick bay on laying hen farms Seriously ill or injured animals are euthanised.	This criterion does not need to be verified and this will be removed from the criteria as part of a subsequent review.
16-10-17	G01B Euthanasiation of untreatable animals	What does the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals accept as a humane method for euthanising poultry under the Better Life label?	<p>The legally permitted methods of euthanasiation can, in principle, be accepted as humane methods under the Better Life label.</p> <p>Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing states the following (inter alia):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poultry with a live weight up to 3 kg may be killed by manually breaking the neck: manual stretching and torsion of the neck resulting in a cerebral ischemia. - Poultry with a live weight up to 5 kg may be killed by a percussive blow to the head: a powerful and accurate blow to the head with serious brain damage.
21-03-17	T01 Catching	Can family, friends and own personnel be used to catch/load?	<p>Family and friends are permitted to do this if an exemption has been issued by the IKB Ei scheme administrator beforehand.</p> <p>If loading is carried out exclusively by the poultry farmer's personnel, there is no need to apply for an exemption. During the inspection, the poultry farmer must demonstrate that the work is carried out by his or her own personnel (via payroll). The work must be carried out by a reasonable number of the farmer's own personnel.</p>