

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			
Date	Norm no. or topic	Question	Supplementary decision or interpretation
17-10-17	UIT01 Other activities	With effect from 1 January 2018, double-muscled breeds are no longer permissible on BLL-certified pig farms. What is the approach for existing pig farms that have already been certified for the Better Life label and also keep double-muscled breeds?	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals does not want Better Life-certified farms to keep double-muscled breeds as this could imply that the Society also permits double-muscled breeds under the Better Life label.</p> <p>The only option for keeping double-muscled breeds on a BLL farm is to register them under a different UBN.</p> <p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals grants BLL-certified pig farms that currently keep double-muscled breeds a two-year transition period. In the opinion of the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals, this gives these farms sufficient time to finish and remove the double-muscled breeds that they currently have, or to accommodate them under a different UBN.</p>
21-11-19	UIT01 Other activities	<p>Keeping meat cattle with a double-muscle factor, with a high incidence of caesarean sections, is not permitted on BLL farms.</p> <p>Does this also apply to veal calves: dairy cows crossed with a double-muscled bull?</p>	<p>This criterion does not apply to cross-bred veal calves from dairy farms (dairy cows crossed with a double-muscled bull).</p> <p>Dairy farmers who inseminate a cow, whose calf they do not wish to keep can opt to inseminate that cow with the sperm of a double-muscled bull. However, dairy farmers always opt for a (double-muscled) bull with such ease of delivery that a caesarean section is rarely, if ever, needed. As such, with cross-bred veal calves (originating from dairy farming), there is not a high incidence of caesarean sections. As such, cross-bred veal calves are permitted on Better Life label farms.</p>
04-11-19	A01a All pigs present are BLL-eligible	If a BLL pig farm chooses to end BLL production, the farm will, at some point, produce non-BLL-eligible piglets. Does this make the entire farm non-BLL-eligible? BLL-eligible pigs are still present. Can the BLL-eligible pigs still be dispensed of as BLL-eligible pigs?	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided that a BLL pig farm that produces non-BLL piglets and wishes to end BLL production may still sell pigs as BLL-eligible for a certain period of time under certain conditions, such as the Dutch Cessation Scheme (Stoppersregeling).</p> <p>The following conditions apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BLL pigs from the farm wishing to end BLL production may be sold for a maximum of three months after producing the first non-BLL piglets. It is no longer permitted after that point. The end date of the BLL pig certificate will be set as the same date (date of producing the first non-BLL piglets + three months).</li> <li>2. The farm may only make use of this rule if it actually ends BLL production. The farm is then prohibited from registering for BLL for a minimum of one year. In the event of re-registration, a new entry inspection must be carried out and all animals present on the farm must once again be BLL-eligible.</li> </ol>

27-2 17	A04 IKB certificate	Not all farms, for example foreign farms, have an IKB certificate. Can such farms satisfy this criterion in any other way?	<p>For 1-star farms must always have an IKB certificate.</p> <p>For 2 and 3 stars, one of the following is also sufficient:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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)</li> <li>2. An IKB audit that is carried out at the same time as the BLL audit (without issuing an IKB certificate), whereby the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals determines in advance which IKB criteria are non-compulsory for the foreign farm.</li> </ol>
11-01-18	AV04e Water quality analysis	Can water be acidified without the intervention of a vet, for example as long as the standards are not exceeded?	<p>Provided the applicable national standards (in the Netherlands, these are the quality requirements imposed on drinking water for pigs by the Animal Health Service) are not exceeded when pre-treating water, this can be carried out without the intervention of a vet.</p>
11-01-18	G13a Pest control	<p>Which extermination and control companies are certified for the European CEN label?</p> <p>Do extermination and control companies that are certified for the Dutch label for pest management companies also satisfy this criterion?</p>	<p>Extermination and control companies that are certified for the European CEN standard have a 'CEPA' certificate. These companies can be found here: <a href="https://www.kpmb.nl/register/cepa-gecertificeerd">https://www.kpmb.nl/register/cepa-gecertificeerd</a></p> <p>Yes, extermination and control companies that are certified for the Dutch label for pest management also satisfy this criterion. These companies can be found here: <a href="https://www.kpmb.nl/register/keurmerk-plaagdiermanagement">https://www.kpmb.nl/register/keurmerk-plaagdiermanagement</a></p> <p>Further information on the Dutch label for pest management can be found here: <a href="https://www.kpmb.nl/stichting-kpmb/kwaliteitssysteem">https://www.kpmb.nl/stichting-kpmb/kwaliteitssysteem</a></p>
2-09-20	AM02a, AM02a3, AM02a4, AM02a5 Emergency power generator	Is it necessary to have an emergency power generator at the farm if it already has 2 different power supplies; namely, in addition to the option of using power from the regular network, also the option of an alternative form of power supply other than a generator?	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided that an alternative form of (emergency) power supply must be available at a farm. However, this does not have to be an emergency power generator, but should be an alternative power supply to the regular network power supply. Electricity may be generated using renewable energy or combined heat and power.</p> <p>In accordance with criteria AM02a3, AM02a4 and AM02a5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• there must be an emergency power supply when the farm has mechanical ventilation with negative pressure;</li> <li>• an emergency power supply must be available within 4 hours in all other cases of mechanical ventilation;</li> <li>• the emergency power supply can be connected to the mechanical ventilation</li> <li>• and the emergency power supply must be tested every 2 months.</li> </ul>

06-12-19	AM03 Fire safety	Is an agricultural electrical inspection that is accepted by the insurer also considered acceptable for the Better Life label?	Any new installation must be tested in accordance with NEN 1010 before operation. A re-inspection must be carried out every five years in accordance with NEN 3140 (Scios scope 8). However, other types of electrical inspection requested by the insurer (such as the Netherlands Technical Agreement, NTA, 8220, Scios scope 10) are also permitted.
07-10-20	AM03 Fire safety	The AREI electrical inspection is included in Belgian legislation. Does the AREI electrical inspection also meet the conditions set for the Better Life label regarding inspections of electrical systems?	The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has established that the Belgian AREI electrical inspection is equivalent to the requirements in accordance with NEN 1010 (entry control) and NEN 3140 (recovery control). It has therefore been decided that an AREI electrical inspection also meets the AM03 criterion.  Belgian pig farms can have an AREI electrical inspection carried out and meet the AM03 Fire Safety criterion upon obtaining a valid certificate.
22-11-17	AG04b 'Action plan for dealing with mortality at two years and above', AG12e 'Action plan for dealing with structural causes of euthanasia at two years and above'	Criteria AG04b and AG12e stipulate that a farm must consult an expert in the event of prolonged excessive mortality and excessive euthanasia. What is meant by 'consult'? AG08d clearly specifies guidance and an action plan. These are essentially different.	In criterion AG08d 'Guidance by pig specialist in the event of excessive antibiotics use', the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has deliberately decided that the farm (after two successive years outside of the SDa target level) must receive active guidance by an independent expert.  Within criterion AG04c 'Action plan for dealing with mortality at two years and above', AG12e 'Action plan for dealing with structural causes of euthanasia lasting two years or more', the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals considers it acceptable for a veterinary expert to provide advice on how the mortality rate or percentage of euthanased animals can be reduced. There does not, however, need to be active guidance.
23-05-18	AG08a, AG08ab Antibiotics policy	For these criteria, the interpretation states that describing the antibiotics policy and reviewing it annually is not necessary if: 'The antibiotics policy on the farm lies within the SDa (Netherlands Veterinary Medicines Institute) target level from a structural standpoint (a minimum of three consecutive periods from 1 Jan to 1 Jan and 1 Jul to 1 Jul).' The requirement to draw up a farm health plan applies to all pig farmers, irrespective of the antibiotics used on the farm. This is stipulated in the Dutch Veterinary Medicine Regulation, Art. 5.1, paragraph 1g and Art. 5.22, paragraph 1, among others.	Under the Better Life label, there is a legal obligation to draw up a farm health plan and assess it annually. See BLL criterion AG02a. Consequently, having a farm health plan and reviewing it annually is also compulsory under BLL. As the interpretation included for these two criteria now leads to confusion, it will be removed as part of a subsequent review of these criteria.

17-04-18	AG08c Level of antibiotics use	<p>Use of antibiotics must be within the target level set by the SDa within two years. However, different animal categories have different target levels. The SDa has set target levels for the following animal categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sows/(suckling) piglets: daily dosage/year between 0 and 10</li> <li>- Weaning piglets: daily dosage/year between 0 and 20 DDDA</li> <li>- Fattening pigs: daily dosage/year between 0 and 10 DDDA</li> </ul> <p>Does this criterion apply per farm or per animal category?</p>	<p>This criterion may be interpreted as per animal category. For each animal category, the pig farmer has two years to reach the target level set by the SDa.</p> <p>Example: On a closed pig farm, the SDa target level has been exceeded for the animal category 'fattening pigs'. This problem was resolved within two consecutive years. At the next inspection, the SDa target level for the animal category 'weaning piglets' was recorded as exceeded. Consequently, the farm has had excessive antibiotics use in three consecutive years, although since the problem occurred in a different animal category in the third year, it is not yet necessary to call in an independent expert. The pig farmer also has two consecutive years for the animal category 'weaning piglets' to resolve the problem in that category.</p>
19-02-19	AG08c Level of antibiotics use	<p>The SDa has published amended benchmark values. This removes the signalling level and lowers the boundary between action and target level even further. As a result, some farms that were previously at the target level are now in the action level due to the change of system. How is this dealt with under the Better Life label?</p>	<p>Criterion AG08c has been adjusted accordingly. The obligation for pig farms to keep use of antibiotics under the SDa action level has been scrapped.</p> <p>The SDa, pig industry (POV) and government have jointly agreed that the new benchmark values will be phased in gradually. The Better Life label approach is in line with the sectoral approach to antibiotics use. Consequently, the same phased introduction of the new benchmark values will also apply under the Better Life label when checking and evaluating the aforementioned BLL pig criteria.</p>
28-11-17	AH07 Enrichment material	<p>What examples are there of enrichment material for pigs that satisfies the characteristics and requirements as specified in criterion AH07?</p>	<p>See the information booklet on enrichment materials with further information and examples. This booklet is published on the business section of the Better Life website (<a href="http://beterleven.dierenbescherming.nl">beterleven.dierenbescherming.nl</a>), see 'Participants', 'Criteria and info', 'BLL 1, 2 and 3-star pigs' under 'Additional documents for pig farms'.</p> <p>A transition period of one year applies to the 'edible' characteristic. The enrichment material used must therefore also satisfy the 'edible' characteristic with effect from 1 January 2019.</p>
7-01-19	AH07 Enrichment material	<p>Can enrichment material be offered in the feed trough?</p>	<p>Pen enrichment must be offered in a place other than where the animals eat, rest or defecate. Different functional areas are very important for pigs. Unless it is impossible to do otherwise, as in the case of sows in a farrowing crate or pen, it is not permitted for the enrichment material to be provided through the feed trough.</p> <p>The booklet 'Pen enrichment for pigs', produced by WUR on behalf of LNV, also specifies that: 'Pen enrichment must be offered in a place other than where the animals eat, rest or defecate.' (see pages 13 to 15 of the booklet). This booklet will form the basis on which the NVWA will carry out checks and enforcement.</p>

9-01-18	AH07 Enrichment material and AH08.1 Provision of straw to groups >40	Is there a difference between criterion AH07.1 Enrichment material and AH08.1 Provision of straw to groups >40?	Both criteria AH07 and AH08.1 have been largely comparable in their formulation since 1 January 2018. The only difference is that for groups larger than 40 (AH08.1), <u>permanent, loose</u> straw must be provided. For example, providing straw manually (not permanently present) in combination with a permanent enrichment material or straw chute (with compressed straw) complies with AH07.1 but not AH08.1.
16-03-18	AH11 Drinking water meter	It was previously assumed that the health of pigs could be monitored on the basis of water meters in each section. However, in practice, it would appear that pigs tend to eat less when they become ill. Water consumption does not differ enough between sections to be able to determine whether or not the pigs are ill. Monitoring water consumption has not, therefore, proved useful in practice.	Following confirmation from WUR that drinking water meters at section level have insufficient added value, the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals will remove this criterion from the BLL criteria for 1, 2 and 3-star pigs as part of a subsequent review.
25-03-21	Z04A.2 and Z04A.3 Tails of breeding animals	The criterion states that the tail of sows and gilts is intact and that docking of the tail, or part of it, is not permitted. It is stated that starting BLL 2 or 3-star pig farms find it virtually impossible to purchase breeding sows and gilts with intact tails. Are docked 2 or 3-star sows and/or gilts allowed to be present during the entrance check for BLL?	The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided that sows and gilts that are present at the entrance check at a 2 or 3-star Better Life pig farm can have a docked tail.  After the entry check, the tails of sows and gilts may no longer be docked. The new breeding sows and gilts must have an intact tail. Other pigs present (boars, piglets and finishers) must have an intact tail during and after the entry check.  After the entry check, the relevant livestock farmer has until the next annual check (1 year) to dispose of the docked breeding sows and gilts as non-BLL worthy. After the first year of participation, a suspension follows, based on criterion A01a, if sows and gilts with docked tails are found on the farm.
16-03-18	Z09.1 Group housing for sows	For farms with fewer than e.g. 400 sows, the standard specifying 'groups of 20 sows or more' cannot always be maintained.	The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided to permit smaller groups of sows provided that there is more area per sow: - Groups of 1 to 10: min. 2.75 m <sup>2</sup> per sow - Groups of 11 to 19: min. 2.50 m <sup>2</sup> per sow - Groups of 20 to 39: min. 2.25 m <sup>2</sup> per sow - Groups of 40 or more: 2.25m <sup>2</sup> minus 10% = min. 2.03 m <sup>2</sup> per sow

13-02-18	Z18 Number of drinking places for sows	Why is it necessary to have one drinking place for twelve sows? Most sow farmers currently have around one drinking place for twenty sows.	<p>Sows drink a large quantity of water, more than fattening pigs, for example. Having sufficient water available is an important condition for good animal welfare in sows.</p> <p>Under the Better Life label, one drinking place for twelve fattening pigs has long been prescribed. With the last amendment, effective on 1 January 2018, a minimum of one drinking place for twelve sows is also now prescribed. This standard of one drinking place for twelve sows is consistent with the standard included in the criterion for sustainable livestock farming.</p> <p>Since this is a completely new criterion, the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals is granting affected sow farmers a transition period of one year. This means that sow farm that do not satisfy criterion Z18.1 at their initial inspection (after 1 January 2018) will have until the next regular annual inspection to make the changes needed to satisfy the overall criterion on the basis of the new criteria.</p>
5-09-18	Z18 Number of drinking stations for sows	Does there need to be one drinking station for every twelve sows if water is added to their feed at feed stations?	The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided that for feed stations where water is added to the feed, the same standard may be applied as for supplementary feed. In that case, one drinking station per 24 sows would be sufficient. The feed station does not count as a drinking station.
6-12-19	B02a Floor design	For newly-built or rebuilt sheds, the solid floor section for weaned piglets must be covered with straw or fitted with underfloor heating. Would other forms of heating, e.g. heat lamps, be sufficient?	<p>Young animals (suckling piglets) have a greater need for warmth. In sheds with high ceilings, the heat rises and does not reach where it is needed, i.e. the animals themselves. To properly regulate the temperature for piglets, a heat lamp is also suitable alongside underfloor heating.</p> <p>From the point of view of fire prevention, underfloor heating is preferred.</p>
6-12-19	B06 Castration of boar piglets	Castrated piglets may not be present on BLL 1-star pig farms. Does this ban only apply to surgical castration? Or does the ban also apply to immunocastration?	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals prohibits all forms of castration among BLL 1-star pigs, including immunocastration. All forms of castration are a serious intervention into the hormonal system and bodily functions of male pigs and are an attack on the intrinsic value and physical integrity of the animal.</p> <p>Information has been collated for several years now on how to keep boars. The risk of boar taint has been reduced to less than 4% through breeding, feeding and care. On the slaughter line, potential carcasses with an abnormal odour are removed. Research indicates that additional inulin in the feed in the last three weeks before slaughter can reduce the risk of board taint to virtually 0%.</p>
1-01-15	B06.1 Prohibition on castration of boar piglets	If a new farm commences participation in BLL 1-star pig scheme but there are still castrated piglets/fattening pigs on the farm, can the farm participate in BLL? If yes, can the castrated animals be delivered under BLL?	New participants may not castrate any further piglets after the entry inspection; only piglets that were castrated before the BLL entry inspection may be present on the farm and delivered under the Better Life label.



13-03-17	B06 Castration of boar piglets	Why is the castration of 1-star piglets prohibited, but not 2 and 3 stars?	<p>Considerable research has been carried out in the Netherlands into ceasing castration. Based on that research, the castration of 1-star piglets is prohibited under the Better Life label and has been for several years</p> <p>Research has also been carried out into ceasing castration of 2 and 3-star piglets on pig farms under the Better Life label. The natural conditions under which 2 and 3-star animals are held seem more likely to lead to problematic behaviour in boars and a higher incidence of boar taint. It is, therefore, harder to cease castration in these cases. If 2 and 3-star pigs are castrated, this must be done under anaesthetic and with pain control afterwards per the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals guidelines.</p>
14-12-18	V01B Group size, 20 animals or more	Can fattening pigs be kept in groups of fewer than 20 animals?	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided to permit smaller groups of fattening pigs provided that there is more area per pig:</p> <p>For 1 star: Group up to and including 10: average of 1.3 m<sup>2</sup> and no single pig with an area smaller than 1.25 m<sup>2</sup>. Group 11 to 19: average of 1.25 m<sup>2</sup> and no single pig with an area smaller than 1.2 m<sup>2</sup> Group of 20 or more: average of 1 m<sup>2</sup> and no single pig with an area smaller than 0.95 m<sup>2</sup></p> <p>For 2 stars: Group up to and including 10: average of 1.5 m<sup>2</sup> and no single pig with less than 1.45 m<sup>2</sup> Group of 11 to 19: average of 1.3 m<sup>2</sup> and no single pig with less than 1.25 m<sup>2</sup> Group of 20 or more: average of 1.2 m<sup>2</sup> and no single pig with less than 1.15 m<sup>2</sup></p> <p>For 3 stars: Group up to and including 10: average of 1.7 m<sup>2</sup> and no single pig with less than 1.65 m<sup>2</sup> Group of 11 to 19: average of 1.5 m<sup>2</sup> and no single pig with less than 1.45 m<sup>2</sup> Group of 20 and more: average of 1.3 m<sup>2</sup> and no single pig with less than 1.25 m<sup>2</sup></p>
29-05-18	T00B Downgrading pig farms/abattoirs	It must be verified that a pig farm is only delivering to BLL-eligible pig farms and abattoirs. This information is not always available at the pig farm. It may be the case that a breeder delivers to a dealer who does not know where the piglets will ultimately end up. Any deliveries to non-BLL farms must be downgraded as the purchasers do not have a BLL certificate and cannot supply BLL pigs. Is it necessary to verify transfers to BLL-eligible pig farms?	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided that this criterion will be amended as part of a subsequent review. A check only needs to be carried out to determine whether or not pigs are transferred as BLL-eligible to a BLL-eligible abattoir. Checking whether BLL-eligible pigs are only transferred to BLL-eligible pig farms will be abolished.</p>

6-12-19	T05A Means of transporting piglets over distances in excess of 50 km	With effect from 1 January 2020, it is compulsory for piglets being transported over a distance of more than 50 km to be transported exclusively within closed, climate-controlled cattle trucks to ensure that they are delivered in a healthier condition. Does this apply to all piglets?	<p>No, this only applies to weaning piglets (average age of 25 days, no younger than 23 days). Typically, these are piglets transported from a sow farm to a weaning piglet farm. This criterion does not apply to fattening piglets (average age of 75 days) that are being transported to a fattening pig farm.</p> <p>Weaning is a sensitive time for piglets and can lead to stress, which has a major impact on the resilience of weaning piglets. This transition must be handled as carefully as possible, which includes transportation in closed, climate-controlled cattle wagons.</p>
2-04-12	PL01 to PL17 Platforms	Can platforms be used in a farrowing pen? This would give the piglets more space.	Under the Better Life label, platforms are not permitted in a farrowing pen. The piglets are still too young to climb, so a platform does not provide any usable floor area. If the piglets do use a platform, it could lead to separation from the sow, for example if the piglets are not brave enough to get back down, which is not ideal.
4-06-14	Floor feeding	Is floor feeding permitted within BLL?	<p>Floor feeding is not currently included in the BLL criteria.</p> <p>For floor feeding in groups of six to twelve animals, the space is too limited. For floor feeding in a small group, there is a risk of the pen becoming dirty and that the animals will have to eat their feed off the dirt.</p> <p>Under the Better Life label, working in larger groups is encouraged. For newly-built and rebuilt sheds, sows or fattening pigs must be kept in groups of 20 or more. Larger group sizes allow more room for exercise while allocating the same amount of area per animal. In addition, it is easier for the pigs to distinguish between functional areas (lying, exploring, feeding, defecating) in the larger space.</p> <p>Another point in relation to floor feeding is mutual feeding competition and whether all the pigs get enough feed with this method, which can be resolved by providing more ration.</p>
30-04-14	Animal protein/fats/blood plasma in pig feed	Are animal protein/fats and blood protein permitted in feed for pigs under the Better Life label?	<p>We have set limited criteria on animal feed under BLL.</p> <p>Under the Better Life label, we base feed quality primarily on the GMP+ certificate. There are currently no additional criteria or banned products under the BLL 1-star pig scheme with regard to animal protein/fats/blood plasma in pig feed. As such, they are permitted.</p> <p>However, it is possible that the chain itself imposes additional criteria over and above the Better Life criteria. To ensure that animal protein/fats/blood plasma may be used in a particular chain, you may consult the chain manager (usually the abattoir).</p>