

# Certification Regulations

## Better Life Label

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## 1. Introduction and scope

The Certification Regulations describe the complete process of registering, applying for, and obtaining approval to utilize the Better Life label certification mark ("**BLL**") and the associated, required Certification. For the purposes of transparency and legibility, these Certification Regulations specifically delineate the aspects of this process that are regulated by the BLL Regulations.

Furthermore, the Certification Regulations establish the provisions that govern the way in which Certification Bodies contracted by the Better Life Label Foundation ("**BLLF**"), perform their certification activities. These provisions give effect to the following articles of the Regulations, which pertain to the monitoring and inspection of the usage of the Better Life label certification mark ("**BLL Regulations**"):

- Article 6, paragraphs 3 and 4;
- Article 7, paragraphs 3 and 12.

The Certification Regulations apply to all Participants in the Better Life labelling scheme ("**BLL Participants**") and the Certification Bodies ("**CB**") accredited by the BLLF.

The Certification Regulations do not impede the authority of the BLLF in accordance with the conditions stipulated in the Regulations governing the use of and monitoring of the "Better Life" certification mark.

## 2. Definitions

The definitions pertaining to this document can be found in the "BLL Definitions" section.

## 3. Certification Regulations

The Certification Regulations are part of the BLL Regulations. The Certification Regulations describe the way in which contracted Certification Bodies audit and certify Participants within the framework of the BLL scheme. Certification Bodies must apply the applicable criteria of the Better Life Label ("**BLL criteria**") without any modifications, as published on the Better Life website, along with any supplementary decisions, during their Inspections, Audits and certification of BLL Participants.

The Certification Regulations are part of two agreements:

1. The agreement between the BLLF and the CB, along with the associated BLLF Accreditation Requirements for Certification Bodies;
2. The agreement between the CB and the Participant.

## 4. Principles

### 4.1 Obligations of the Participant

Participating Primary Participants, Secondary Participants and Chain Managers have the following obligations:

1. Adhere to all instructions or regulations set forth by the BLLF; and,
2. Provide full cooperation to the CB responsible for conducting the Inspection or Audit; and,
3. Comply with all instructions or regulations issued by the CB; and,

4. Grant full access to the Inspector or Auditor to all company premises and sites considered necessary for the proper execution of the Inspection or Audit; and,
5. Grant access to the employee of the CB to all administrative records and to provide all information deemed necessary for the successful completion of the Inspection or Audit; and,
6. Permit employees of the BLLF or the designated Supervisory Bodies to all company premises, sites, and administrative records if this is requested by the BLLF.

## **4.2 Use of the Better Life Label certification mark by the Participant**

Under these Certification Regulations, a Participant can be certified in the framework of the BLL. Upon certification, the Participant is entitled to use the BLL certification mark, subject to the conditions specified in the BLL Regulations. To be eligible for the use of the BLL certification mark, the Participant must meet the following requirements and enter into a separate agreement with the BLLF.

The Participant may only use the BLL certification mark and supply animals or products if the Participant:

1. Has a participation agreement with the BLLF; and,
2. Has a valid Certificate; and,
3. Is listed as a certified Participant in the Better Life register, which is published on the Better Life website.

The BLLF approves the use of the certification mark (logo) by Secondary Participants in accordance with the requirements described in the style guide for a specific period of time, as defined in the letter of approval. Following a successful Entry Audit at the premises of the Participant and a positive Certification Decision, the certification mark may continue to be used in accordance with the requirements of the style guide.

## **5. Exemptions**

The BLLF may grant an exemption to the CB or individual Participant for one or more components of these Certification Regulations under certain circumstances. Such exemptions can be granted in cases of force majeure, including emergencies or disasters, such as quarantine measures imposed due to an outbreak of animal diseases or mitigation measures related to the outbreak of a pandemic disease.

The exemption may apply to the following articles within these regulations:

- Article 7: Performance of Inspections or Audits at Participants.
- Article 8: BLL certification Inspections or Audits.
- Article 10: Inspection or Audit Report.
- Article 11: Review of the report.
- Article 12: Sanctions.
- Article 15: Exceptional conditions concerning the Certificate.
- Article 16: Amendments to the Certificate.

## 6. Registration

### 6.1 Registration Participants general (Primary, Chain Manager and Secondary)

Prospective Participants wishing to join the BLL scheme can register using the BLL Portal. Within the Portal, the prospective Participant can create a user account and enter the company details.

When the participation agreement has been concluded with the BLLF, the CB selected by the participant will be notified of the Participant's application for certification.

### 6.2 Certification Agreement

Upon the Participant's registration with the BLLF, the CB proceeds to process the registration as an application for BLL certification. Following approval of the Participant's application, the CB enters into a BLL Certification Agreement with the Participant. The Certification Agreement describes the conditions under which the CB inspects and monitors the implementation of, and compliance with the BLL criteria by the Participants. The content of the Certification Agreement must include, at a minimum, a description of the aspects listed in Annex C of these Certification Regulations.

Based on the Certification Agreement, the CB performs an Entry Inspection or Entry Audit at the Participant's premises. Following a successful Entry Inspection or Entry Audit in compliance with Article 8, the CB issues a certificate for a specific period of time.

### 6.3 Additional conditions according to type of Participant

Additional conditions are applicable based on the type of Participant seeking registration. These conditions are outlined in the following sub-paragraphs.

#### 6.3.1 Registration Chain Manager

After achieving certification, Chain Managers undergo annual inspections conducted by the CB. An announced inspection will be performed at the Chain Manager's premises within two to four months after the Certification Decision.

The Chain Manager ensures registration of the Primary Participants affiliated with its supply chain. The Chain Manager has an agreement with the Primary Participants affiliated with its supply chain that have been registered with the CB. This agreement describes at least the following:

1. The use of the BLL for communication items (for example, signs displayed at the farm);
2. The obligation to report any amendments or changes to the Chain Manager.

Amendments/changes are:

- Renovation.
  - Relocation.
  - Change of ownership and/or legal form of the company.
  - Change of CB.
3. The Primary Participant's autonomy to choose a CB.

### **6.3.2 Registration Primary Participant**

A Primary Participant (livestock farm) is registered for participation in the BLL scheme by their Chain Manager through the BLL Portal. A Primary Participant may be affiliated with one or more Chain Managers.

The Primary Participant has:

1. An (independent) participation agreement with the BLLF; and
2. An agreement with the Chain Manager; and
3. A Certification Agreement with the CB.

A livestock farm (Primary Participant) may only supply animals or products (e.g. milk, eggs) with a particular Better Life scope (species of animal/product and number of stars) after it has been certified for this Better Life scope (species of animal /product and number of stars) by the CB.

### **6.3.3 Registration Secondary Participant**

An unannounced audit will be performed at premises of the Secondary Participant by the CB within four months of the Certification Decision that follows the Entry Inspection. After successful completion of the unannounced Entry Inspection, the Participant will be audited by the CB on an annual basis.

### **6.3.4 Registration Logistics Service Provider 2c and Retail**

Logistic Service Providers 2c (Trader/Broker) and Retailers only have a participation agreement with the BLLF. A Logistics Service Provider 2c and a Retailer are not inspected or audited by a CB and do not have a Certificate.

## **7. Performance of the Inspection or Audit at Participants**

### **7.1 BLL criteria**

During a BLL Inspection or Audit, the applicable BLL criteria as published on the BLLF website, including supplementary decisions, are applicable.

The CB may use its own system that incorporates the BLL criteria, provided that the BLL criteria correspond precisely to the BLL criteria as published on the BLLF website.

### **7.2 General guidelines on performing Inspections or Audits**

#### **7.2.1 General**

The Inspections or Audits are executed by BLL qualified Inspectors or Auditors and under the responsibility of a contracted CB.

Unless otherwise specified by these Certification Regulations, the CB may perform announced or unannounced Inspections or Audits at the premises of the Participant.



## 7.2.2 Location of Inspection or Audit

Generally, Inspections or Audits are conducted in person, meaning they take place at the physical site(s) of the Participant's company.

However, there are circumstances where a CB may opt for a Remote Inspection or Remote Audit. The conditions for conducting such remote assessments are as follows:

1. The Certification Regulations explicitly state that a Remote Inspection or Remote Audit may be chosen as an option;
2. The BLLF has granted written consent for a Remote Inspection or Audit prior to the Inspection or Audit.

The BLLF reserves the right to establish additional regulations regarding the execution of a Remote Inspection or Remote Audit.

## 7.2.3 Authorisations

The following authorities may be exercised during the performance of an Inspection or Audit:

### 1. Assessment of documents

Pursuant to article 6. 1 of the BLL Regulations, the Participant is obliged to provide all documents necessary for the certification of their company to the Inspector or Auditor. These documents must be provided to the Inspector or Auditor upon request, during the Inspection or Audit. The Inspector or Auditor may also take copies of these documents if, in the opinion of the Inspector or Auditor, this is deemed necessary for the assessment by the CB.

Pursuant to article 6. 1 of the BLL Regulations, the CB may also request certain information from the Participant prior to the Inspection or Audit, so this information can be assessed by or on behalf of the CB prior to the Inspection or Audit. In principle, the Participant must comply with this request (authorisation), unless the Participant can provide reasonable grounds to substantiate why this information cannot be shared.

The request to provide information may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Defined daily dose per animal (DDD) of a Primary Participant,
- EU recognition of a Secondary Participant,
- Private certification of a Primary or Secondary Participant,
- The participation agreement with the BLLF.

The Inspector or Auditor will be informed of the results of the assessment of the documents prior to the Inspection or Audit. The findings and any shortcomings that were established based on the assessment of the documents prior to the Inspection or Audit are verified during the Inspection or Audit. The results of the assessment of the documents by the CB and any verified shortcomings are included in the Inspection or Audit report.

### 2. Physical inspection

An inspection of the Participant's company site(s) by the Inspector or Auditor. Pursuant to article 6. 1 of the BLL Regulations, the Participant is obliged to authorise the Inspector or Auditor to enter their trading companies, company premises and sites.

### 3. Interview

The CB is authorised to conduct interviews to assess whether the Participant operates in compliance with the relevant BLL criteria.

## 7.2.4 Performing an Inspection or Audit according to type of Participant

### 7.2.4.1 Primary Participant

The CB conducts interviews at the Primary Participant's premises during the Inspection to assess whether the animals are housed and kept in compliance with the relevant BLL criteria. An interview is held with at least the following person(s):

- The animal keeper who accompanies the Inspector.

The physical inspection at a Primary Participant's premises is performed at a time when animals are present at the company site(s) to enable the way in which the animals are kept to be observed and assessed.

### 7.2.4.2 Secondary Participant

The CB conducts interviews at the Secondary Participant's premises during the Audit to assess whether the Participant operates in compliance with the relevant BLL criteria. An interview is held with at least the following person(s):

- The employee(s) who accompanies(accompany) the Auditor;
- Employees from the various departments/production lines relevant to the Audit. An interview with only the quality assurance employee is not sufficient.

The time at which the Audit is performed depends on the type of Participant:

- An Audit at a Secondary Participant's premises that is an abattoir or egg packing centre, is performed when slaughter- or packing activities are taking place, irrespective of whether these activities concern BLL or non-BLL animals or eggs. The entire slaughter- and packing process is observed in practice and audited.
- An Audit at a Secondary Participant's premises that is a production site, i.e. a processor, is performed when production- or processing activities are taking place at the time of the Audit. The entire process is observed in practice and audited.

### 7.2.4.3 Chain Manager

During the Audit at a Chain Manager's premises, the employee(s) accompanying the Auditor are interviewed to assess whether the Chain Manager operates in compliance with the relevant BLL criteria.

#### **7.2.4.4 Multi-Site Organisations**

A different procedure applies to Multi-site Organisations. Multi-site Organisations can receive one certificate through multi-site certification. Multi-site certification is only possible for company types of Secondary Participants and Better Life scopes that have been approved by the BLLF. Appendix A of these Certification Regulations describes the applicable conditions for multi-site certification.

The head office of a Multi-site Organisation also registers the sub-sites and/or branches that are covered by its multi-site certificate with the BLLF and the CB at the same time as its own registration.

## **8. BLL Certification Inspections and Audits**

### **8.1 Initial certification Inspection or Audit**

The CB plans the Entry Inspection or Entry Audit after the Participant has signed a Certification Agreement with the CB in compliance with the conditions stated in Article 6.2. The Entry Inspection or Entry Audit is the initial Inspection or Audit for the participant's BLL certification. It is performed based on the Certification Agreement.

The CB performs the Entry Inspection or Entry Audit based on the BLL criteria, including supplementary decisions, for the relevant company type(s), species of animal(s) and BLL scope(s). The Entry Inspection or Entry Audit is always a complete Inspection or Audit. This means that during this Inspection or Audit, the Inspector or Auditor assesses all the BLL criteria, including supplementary decisions, that apply to the company type and species of animal. The operational aspects (working methods) and the procedures and administrative records are inspected or audited. Certification will only be issued to Participants who comply with all the requirements.

The Entry Inspection or Entry Audit is always an announced Inspection or Audit.

#### **8.1.1.1 Primary Participant**

In the case of a Primary Participant (livestock farm), an Entry Inspection is only performed if the Participant:

1. Has an agreement with a Chain Manager and has been registered with a CB by the Chain Manager; and
2. Has a Participation Agreement with the BLLF; and
3. Has a Certification Agreement with the CB.

During an Entry Inspection at a Primary Participant's premises, the Inspector verifies whether the animals at the farm site(s) are housed and kept in compliance with the relevant BLL criteria, including supplementary decisions.

#### **8.1.1.2 Secondary Participant**

In the case of a Secondary Participant, an Entry Audit is only performed if the Participant:

1. Has a Participation Agreement with the BLLF; and,
2. Has a Certification Agreement with the CB.

During an Entry Audit at a Secondary Participant's premises, the Inspector verifies whether work is performed in compliance with the relevant BLL criteria, including supplementary decisions.

### **8.1.1.3 Chain manager**

In the case of a Chain manager, an Entry Audit is only performed if the Participant:

1. Has a Participation Agreement with the BLLF; and,
2. Has a Certification Agreement with the CB.

### **8.1.1.4 Multi-Site Organisation**

Appendix A of these Certification Regulations describes the applicable conditions for multi-site certification.

A different audit procedure applies to Multi-site Organisations. Different audit procedures apply to the head office and to the sub-sites and/or branches of the Multi-site Organisation:

- The head office is always audited by an Auditor who is qualified for the company type in question.
- The sub-sites and/or branches can be audited by BLL qualified Inspectors or Auditors under direct supervision of the Auditor who audited the head office.

The Auditor who audited the head office draws up the audit report. The Inspectors and Auditors who audited the sub-sites and/or branches report directly to the Auditor who audited the head office. The audit report consists of:

1. The audit report of the head office; and,
2. As appendices, the audit reports of sub-sites and/or branches; and,
3. A conclusion based on the reports described in points 1 and 2; and,
4. An overview of the Shortcomings and Sanctions for the Multi-site Organisation.

If a Shortcoming is observed at a sub-site and/or branch, the Auditor who audited the head office assesses whether the shortcoming is an incident at the sub-site and/or branch, or whether it is a structural Shortcoming for all sub-sites and/or branches. The head office is responsible for resolving the Shortcomings observed at that site or at sub-sites and/or branches.

## **8.2 Re-certification Inspection or Re-certification Audit**

A Re-certification Inspection or Re-certification Audit performed to assess whether a Certificate can be re-issued for a new period of validity, is always a complete Inspection or Audit in the same way as an Entry Inspection or Entry Audit. This means that during the Inspection or Audit, the Inspector or Auditor assesses all the BLL criteria, including supplementary decisions, that apply to the company type and species of animal. The operational aspects (working methods), the procedures and administrative records are inspected or audited. The CB re-issues the certificate for a new period of validity, provided there is continued compliance with all of the criteria.

The Re-certification Inspection or Re-certification Audit may be announced or unannounced.

### **8.2.1.1 Frequency**

The CB conducts the BBL Re-certification Inspection or Re-certification Audit on an annual basis. It is understood that the Participant is inspected or audited by the CB at least once (1) per calendar year.

The BLLF reserves the right to amend the frequency of Inspections or Audits.

### **8.2.1.2 Planning**

It is the responsibility of the CB to plan the Re-certification Inspection or Re-certification Audit in a timely manner. This ensures that the participant does not find themselves in a situation where they lack a valid Certificate during the interim period between the expiration date of the current BLL Certificate and the issuance of a new one.

- For Primary Participants, this entails conducting the annual Re-certification Inspection between 4-12 weeks prior to the Certificate's expiration date.
- For Secondary Participants, and Chain Managers, this means that the annual Re-certification Audit must be performed 6-12 weeks prior to the expiration date of the Certificate.

## **8.2.2 Specific types of Re-certification**

Specific conditions apply to Re-certification Inspections and Re-certification Audits for a number of designated company types. These company types are:

1. Abattoirs;
2. Company types where multi-site Audits can be performed with the consent of the BLLF.

The BLLF can amend this list and its conditions.

### **8.2.2.1 Abattoirs**

In derogation from Article 8.2, the annual Re-certification Audit at an abattoir consists of two components:

1. An unannounced Audit;
2. An announced Audit that is performed within a period of no more than 4 weeks after the unannounced Audit was performed.

Both audits are preferably performed by the same Auditor or Audit Team. Both components must be performed within a period of 6-12 weeks prior to the expiration date of the Certificate. One audit report is drawn up for both components.

#### **8.2.2.1.1 Component 1. Component unannounced Re-certification Audit**

The Re-certification Audit at an abattoir starts with an unannounced Audit.

After the Auditor has reported to the abattoir, they must proceed to the workplace within half an hour to assess the entire slaughter process from the lairage to the hanging up of the slaughtered animal. In addition, camera footage is also assessed by the Auditor.

#### **8.2.2.1.2 Component 2. Component announced Re-certification Audit**

The second component of the Re-certification Audit at an abattoir is an announced Audit. This component of the Audit may be performed on site at the abattoir or as a Remote Audit.

The announced Re-certification Audit is performed within a period of 4 weeks after the last day of the unannounced Audit component. During the announced Re-certification Audit, components are audited that could not reasonably be audited during the first unannounced Audit visit.

#### **8.2.2.2 Unannounced Audit assessment of camera footage**

The Audit during which camera footage of the slaughter process from the lairage to the hanging up of the slaughtered animal is assessed, is always unannounced. These Audits are carried out in an interim period and are independent of the annual Re-certification Audit.

The abattoir must be informed no more than 24 hours in advance that camera footage will be assessed by an Auditor on the next working day.

#### **8.2.2.3 Procedure Multi-Site Organisations**

In addition to the provisions of article 7.1, the different procedures described in 7.0.1.4 must be followed for re-certification of Multi-site Organisations.

### **9. Additional BLLF Inspections or Audits**

Pursuant to article 7.3 of the BLL Regulations, additional Inspections or Audits (such as unannounced Audits on request and tracking and tracing audits) can be coordinated by the BLLF in the form of an additional instruction from the BLLF to the CB. Additional Inspections or Audits must also be performed based on the BLL criteria, including the BLL Sanctions Framework (Appendix G), whereby the BLLF can identify specific focus points for the Inspection or Audit.

The Participant will not be charged for the costs of an additional Inspection or Audit performed on behalf of the BLLF. However, the costs of a recovery Inspection or recovery Audit performed as a result of the imposition of a Sanction will be charged to the Participant.

The CB is entitled to charge the costs of performing an additional Inspection or Audit to the BLLF, in line with the fees established by the BLLF. The costs of Additional Inspections or Audits are covered by the participation fee paid by Participants to the BLLF. The CB that performs the Inspection or Audit charges the costs directly to the BLLF.

#### **9.1 Unannounced Inspection or Audit on the request of BLLF**

The CB performs unannounced Inspections or Audits at Participant's premises on behalf of the BLLF. An unannounced Inspection or Audit can only be performed if the Participant has a valid Certificate and a Participation Agreement with the BLLF. Unannounced Inspections or Audits are performed without the Participant having been informed of the Inspection or Audit in advance (in any way).

The purpose of this Inspection or Audit is to assess whether a Participant remains in compliance with the BLL criteria between regular Inspections or Audits. The BLLF requests the unannounced Inspections or Audits and provides the CB with the following information:

1. The number of unannounced Inspections or Audits required per period and for each company type; and,
2. Any specific focus points, risk areas, and/or requirements for assessment related to Participants, products or companies.
3. Whether specific companies must be assessed.

Unannounced Inspections or Audits are planned by the CB based on signals received by the BLLF and/or the CB or upon the request of the BLLF.

The CB informs the Participant and the BLLF of its findings. Any Shortcomings observed during the unannounced Inspection or Audit, are classified according to the BLL Sanctions Framework (Appendix G of these Certification Regulations). The CB performs the subsequent actions and/or recovery Audit(s)/Inspections(s). A report of the Inspection or Audit is sent to both the Participant and the BLLF.

## **9.2 Tracking and Tracing**

The CB performs Tracking and Tracing audit at Participant's premises on behalf of the BLLF. Tracking and Tracing can be performed announced or unannounced. Tracking and Tracing is performed based on BLL products originating from a Participant with a valid Certificate or approval.

The purpose of Tracking and Tracing is to establish whether:

1. BLL products traded in the Netherlands can be traced back to BLL-eligible raw materials and vice versa;
2. Separation of BLL- and non-BLL products is guaranteed during all stages of production;
3. BLL products in the chain of production are certified or approved for the relevant BLL scope.

The BLLF requests the CB to perform Tracking and Tracing and informs the CB:

1. Where tracking and tracing must be performed, i.e. which Participants;
2. Of any additional information such as the scope, product and period.

The CB informs the Participant and the BLLF of its findings.

Any Shortcomings observed during tracking and tracing are classified according to the BLL Sanctions Framework (Appendix G of these Certification Regulations) and dealt with accordingly. A report of the tracking and tracing investigation is sent to both the Participant and the BLLF as well as any subsequent actions and/or recovery Audit(s)/Inspections(s).

## 10. Report of the Inspection or Audit

### 10.1 General

The Inspector or Auditor is responsible for preparing a report of each Inspection, Audit or investigation. The report is a complete report that meets the requirements outlined in Appendix B of the Certification Regulations, as well as the following additional requirements:

1. The report is prepared in either Dutch or English.  
The report may also be in a language agreed upon by the CB with the Participant. The CB always ensures that there is a report available in Dutch or English. In the event of ambiguities or discrepancies between reports, the Dutch report takes precedence, followed by the English report if available.
2. The Inspection or Audit was conducted based on the BLL criteria and any supplementary decisions.
3. All (relevant) BLL criteria, including any supplementary decisions, have been demonstrably inspected or audited.
4. Each criterion describes the way in which objective conformity or non-conformity with the BLL criteria is demonstrated. The substantiation must at least describe how the interpretation of the criterion was verified, using the corresponding measurement method. Where possible, images of the observed Shortcoming should be included.
5. A finding that leads the Inspector or Auditor to establish failure of the Participant to comply with the BLL criterion, is considered to be a Shortcoming.
6. The Shortcomings observed are accurately and described in detail and verified.
7. If certain BLL criteria are not applicable, this is substantiated in the report.
8. Shortcomings are verbally explained to the Participant. The Inspector or Auditor discusses their findings with the Participant during and/or at the end of the Inspection or Audit.
9. The Inspector or Auditor leaves a report of the Inspection- or Audit findings with the Participant.
10. The Participant and the Inspector or Auditor sign the report. By signing the report, the Participant declares that they are aware of the contents of the report as explained by the Inspector or Auditor.

The CB may use its own report template. However, it must include at least the elements stated in this paragraph and in Appendix B of these Certification Regulations.

The inspection and audit reports are submitted digitally to the BLLF in a format to be determined by the BLLF.

### 10.2 Inspection/Audit scope clause in report

The report must include a clause stating the following:

The Inspection/Audit<sup>1</sup> is based on a selective observation of the operational management process/management system<sup>1</sup> of your organisation. The results of the Inspection/Audit<sup>1</sup> are based on

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Delete as appropriate



the findings of the Inspector/Auditor<sup>1</sup> with the purpose of demonstrating the conformity of the components that have been inspected/audited.

No rights can be derived by the Participant from Inspections(s)/Audit(s)<sup>1</sup> that were performed in the past. During an Inspection/Audit<sup>1</sup>, a limited number of components are inspected/audited using a selection of documents. The scope of the Inspection/Audit<sup>1</sup> is described in the report of the Inspection findings or Audit findings.

The Inspection/Audit<sup>1</sup> is not a guarantee that any non-conformities that currently exist in the operational management process/management system<sup>1</sup> have been observed. Each Inspection/Audit<sup>1</sup> is an independent assessment of the conformity of the inspected/audited components, documents and systems at the time of the Inspection/Audit<sup>1</sup>.

### **10.3 Retention period report**

The CB retains the Inspection- and Audit reports for at least five (5) years.

### **11. Review of the report**

The Inspection- or Audit report is assessed by a BLL-qualified Reviewer.

The Reviewer is at all times a person other than the Inspector or Auditor who performed the Inspection or Audit in question.

The Inspection- or Audit report is assessed according to the following procedure:

1. The Reviewer assesses the report and reviews the following elements:
  - a The completeness of the report, whereby all (relevant) BLL criteria, including supplementary decisions, have been inspected;
  - b Whether objective conformity or a Shortcoming has been established for each BLL criterion (according to the BLL criteria and the measurement method specified in the criteria);
  - c Whether any Shortcomings observed have been correctly described in detail and verified, where possible with camera footage of the Inspection/Audit.
2. If the Reviewer finds any inconsistencies in the report, the Reviewer instructs the Inspector or Auditor to correct the report. The corrected report is assessed by the Reviewer. A new, amended report is sent to the Participant.
3. The results of the review of the report are recorded by the CB.
4. After the review has been completed, the CB informs the Participant about any corrections made in the report and any Shortcomings observed.

### **12. Sanctions**

After the Inspection- or Audit Report has been finalised, the CB will impose a Sanction for any Shortcomings observed. This sanction is in accordance with the relevant BLL criterion and the procedures prescribed by the BLL Sanctions Framework (Appendix G of these Certification Regulations).

## 12.1 Sanction Letter

A separate Sanction letter is sent to the Participant informing them that a Sanction has been imposed. The CB sends the Sanction letter to the Participant. The Sanction letter complies at least with Appendix E of these Certification Regulations. The Sanction letter also specifies how and within which timeframe the Participant must resolve the Shortcomings in order to retain the Certificate.

## 12.2 Resolving Shortcomings

The Reviewer lifts the Sanction when the Shortcoming has been resolved. The Sanctions Framework (Appendix G) describes how sanctions are lifted. The framework states whether a Sanction can be lifted by an administrative recovery by the Participant or following a recovery Inspection or recovery Audit.

### 12.2.1.1 Procedure

The Inspector or Auditor assesses whether the Shortcoming has been resolved based on the documentation submitted by the Participant. The Inspector or Auditor records the results of the assessment in an Inspection- or Audit report that is assessed by the Reviewer. By accepting the report, the Reviewer can lift the Sanction.

The Inspector or Auditor can also assess whether the Shortcoming has been resolved during a recovery Inspection or recovery Audit. During a recovery Inspection or recovery Audit at the Participant's company site(s), the Inspector or Auditor verifies whether the Shortcoming has been resolved. The Inspector or Auditor records the results of the recovery Inspection or recovery Audit in an Inspection- or Audit report that is assessed by the Reviewer. By accepting the report, the Reviewer can lift the Sanction.

### 12.2.1.2 Period of time

Observed Shortcomings must demonstrably be resolved, closed and the Sanction lifted by the Reviewer within the period of time designated for recovery established by the BLLF and stated in Appendix G of these Certification Regulations.

If observed Shortcomings are not resolved within the stated period of time, the Shortcoming will be increased to the next Sanction level in accordance with the BLL Sanctions Framework ( Appendix G), including all of the associated consequences and actions.

### 12.2.1.3 Consequences

Written confirmation is sent to the Participant informing them that the Shortcoming has been resolved and the Sanction has been lifted. When the Reviewer has lifted all of the imposed Sanctions, a Certification Decision can be taken by the Decision Maker.

## 12.3 Suspension or exclusion

Major or Critical Shortcomings result in Suspension or Exclusion.

A Suspension or Exclusion letter (in accordance with the template in Appendix F) is sent to the Participant and the BLLF informing them that a Sanction has been imposed for a Major or Critical Shortcoming.

- For 'Critical' Shortcomings, within three (3) days after the day of the Inspection or Audit;
- For 'Major' Shortcomings, within five (5) days after the day of the Inspection or Audit.

After the Suspension or Exclusion letter has been sent, the Participant will be blocked in the portal and the BLL register by the BLLF.

### **12.3.1 Deviating from the Sanction Framework**

If the CB wishes to deviate from the Sanction Framework (Suspension or Exclusion), the CB must submit a substantiated request to the BLLF. The BLLF takes a decision on the request submitted by the CB within three (3) working days. The CB is informed in writing of the decision of the BLLF. No appeal or objection can be lodged against this decision.

### **12.3.2 Recovery following Suspension**

After a Suspension, recovery must be demonstrated during a physical Inspection or -Audit. If this Inspection or Audit, followed by the Review, reveals that the Participant complies with the BLL criteria again, the Decision Maker can lift the Suspension and the Participant can still receive the Certificate or the Participant will be unblocked in the portal and register.

If the Decision Maker lifts a suspension, in accordance with Article 13, the CB can decide to issue a Certificate. In this case, the Participant and the BLLF are informed of the decision and the validity period of the new Certificate by e-mail by the CB within 24 hours.

- In case of an Entry Inspection/Audit or Re-certification Inspection/Audit, the Participant will receive a Certificate.
- In case of Suspension following an interim Inspection or Audit, the Participant will be unblocked in the portal and the BLL register by the BLLF.

## **13. Certification decision**

Based on the final result of the review, and after all Sanctions have been lifted, the Reviewer submits a proposal for a Certification Decision to the Decision Maker. The Decision Maker can then decide whether to perform another review of the proposed Certification Decision (possibly based on random sampling).

The Certificate Decision is taken by the Decision Maker. The Certificate is then issued by the CB.

The CB must take a Certification Decision in time to ensure that the new Certificate is issued before the period of validity of the existing Certificate expires. The date of issue of the new Certificate cannot be earlier than the date of the Certification Decision.

The First Issue Date of the Certificate is used as a reference date for the validity period of the Certificate.

1. The CB informs the Participant of the result of the certification process, including the Certification Decision, the final report and confirmation that all Shortcomings have been resolved and the Sanctions have been lifted.
2. The CB informs the BLLF of the result of the certification process, including the Certification Decision and the final report.

## **14. Certificate**

The Participant will receive a Certificate if all the requirements for certification are complied with.

The Certificate can only be issued by a CB approved by the BLLF. The Certificate will not be issued until an Entry Inspection or Entry Audit or a regular Re-Certification Inspection or Re-Certification Audit has been performed:

1. Whereby no Shortcomings were observed; or,
2. After the observed Shortcomings have been closed by the CB.

The certificate is drawn up in Dutch as standard. The certificate may also be drawn up in English.

If a new certificate is issued after a regular Re-Certification Inspection or Re-Certification Audit, the issue date of this Certificate is sequential to the end date of the previous Certificate, whereby the CB ensures that:

1. The Participant's certification status is uninterrupted; and,
2. The date of issue is always later than the date of the Certification Decision.

### **14.1 Validity period of the Certificate**

The Certificate is valid for a period calculated from the date of issue of the Certificate. The First Issue Date of the Certificate issued to the Participant serves as the date of reference for the validity period of all the (subsequent) Certificates of the Participant. It acts as a benchmark to assess whether the Certificate has been renewed annually and following a Re-Certification Inspection or Re-Certification Audit within the designated timeframe.

The period of validity of the Certificate depends on the type of company.

1. Primary Participants who are not Chicken Farmers:  
The Certificate is valid for a period of one (1) year calculated from the date of issue of the Certificate following the Certificate Decision taken by the Decision Maker.
2. Primary participants who are Chicken Farmers:  
The Certificate is valid until 31 December of the following calendar year calculated from the date of the Certification Decision.  
This means that these Certificates are synchronised with the IKB certificates in the poultry sector.
3. Secondary Participants  
The Certificate is valid for a period of one (1) year calculated from the date of issue of the Certificate following the Certificate Decision taken by the Decision Maker.

4. Chain Managers:

The Certificate is valid for a period of one (1) year calculated from the date of issue of the Certificate following the Certificate Decision taken by the Decision Maker.

5. Wholesaler 2b

The Certificate is valid for a period of one (1) year calculated from the date of issue of the Certificate following the Certificate Decision taken by the Decision Maker.

## 14.2 Types of Certificate

There are two types of Certificates for Participants in the Better Life label scheme, namely:

1. Individual Certification
2. Multi-Site Certification

Certification is only possible for Better Life scopes for which BLL criteria have been established. All scopes for which a Participant has registered and that have been approved by the BLLF, will be included by the CB during the certification process. A scope is also included if there was no BLL production for that particular scope in the previous period.

### 14.2.1 Individual Certification

Individual certification applies to Participants that have been individually approved by the BLLF and that have a Certification Agreement with a CB. With individual certification, the Participant receives their own Certificate in accordance with the template in Appendix D.

### 14.2.2 Multi-Site Certification

Multi-site Certification is issued to the head office of a Multi-site Organisation that has been approved by the BLLF and has a Certification Agreement with a CB, when all the conditions specified in Appendix A of these Certification Regulations are met.

All of the registered sub-sites and/or branches of this Multi-site Organisation are listed in an appendix to the Certificate.

With Multi-site certification, the head office receives a Certificate in accordance with the template in Appendix D.

## 15. Exceptional conditions concerning the Certificate

### 15.1 Certificate not issued in time

#### 15.1.1 Participant

A Participant must provide full cooperation to the CB to ensure that the Re-Certification Inspection or Re-Certification Audit can be performed and completed in time so their Certificate can be extended before the expiry date of the Certificate.

If the Re-Certification Inspection or Re-Certification Audit process cannot be completed in time and/or the Shortcomings cannot be resolved before the expiry date of the Certificate, certification may not be recommended and the Certificate must not be extended. The status of the Certificate will change to "Expired". The Participant must be informed and the consequences must be explained.

#### **15.1.1.1 Expired Certificate**

The status of the Certificate will change to “Expired” if the new Certificate is not issued in time before the period of validity of the existing Certificate expires. The status of the expired Certificate can be restored if a (new) Certification Decision is made within 3 months. If no decision is taken within the period stated here, the Certificate will be revoked and the agreement with the CB will expire. An expired Certificate cannot be extended pending a Certification Decision by the CB.

#### **15.1.2 CB**

The CB must do everything within its power (duty of care) to ensure that the Re-Certification Inspection or Re-Certification Audit can be performed in time and that the process can be completed so the Participant’s Certificate can be extended before the expiry date of the Certificate.

In the event that the Re-Certification Inspection or Re-Certification Audit process cannot be completed on time, and the Shortcomings identified cannot be resolved before the Certificate’s expiration date due to the fault of the CB, an extension of the Certificate can only be granted with the consent of the BLLF. To initiate this process, the CB must submit a request to the BLLF at least one week before the Certificate’s expiry date. The BLLF may impose a sanction on the CB due to their failure to complete the certification process of the Participant in a timely manner.

#### **15.1.3 Force Majeure**

In cases of force majeure or illness of the Auditor/Reviewer and/or Decision Maker, the validity of the Certificate may be extended by a maximum period of 3 months. The CB must record the reason for issuing an extension. The term of validity of the current Certificate cannot be amended.

### **15.2 Revoking the Certificate**

The CB may revoke a Certificate for various reasons. Revoking a Certificate is a Certification Decision. When a Certificate is revoked, the Participant no longer complies with the conditions for participation established in the BLL Regulations, these Certification Regulations and/or the BLL criteria that apply to the Better Life scope of the Participant.

The CB informs the BLLF by e-mail when it decides to revoke a Participant's Certificate. The Participant’s Certificate will be removed from the BLL register from the date on which the certificate was revoked.

### **15.3 Extending the period of validity of the Certificate**

#### **15.3.1 Force Majeure**

In exceptional situations, but limited to:

- Restrictions on visiting sites resulting from an outbreak of animal disease or a pandemic; or,
- Illness or death in the family (1<sup>st</sup> degree) of the Participant; or,
- Unoccupied barns/houses; or,

- Natural disasters,

the CB may independently decide to temporarily extend the validity of the BLL certificate once for a period of up to three (3) months. The Inspection or Audit must be performed within this extension period and the Certificate must be extended before the new period of validity expires. Extending a Certificate has no influence on the original First Issue date of the Participant's Certificate. The CB must record the reason for issuing an extension.

### **15.3.2 Synchronising the Certificate with other certificates held by the Participant**

Upon the request of the Participant, the CB may extend the validity of the Certificate so it can be synchronised with the periods of validity of other certificates issued to the Participant by the same CB. In this case, the validity of the Certificate may be extended once for a period of up to three (3) months pending the performance of the Re-Certification Inspection or Re-Certification Audit by the CB.

The Inspection or Audit must be performed within this extension period and the Certificate must be extended before the new period of validity expires. Extending a Certificate has no influence on the original First Issue date of the Participant's Certificate. The CB must record the reason for issuing an extension.

### **15.3.3 Other reasons**

Other reasons for extending the validity of the Certificate must be submitted to the BLLF for approval. After approval from the BLLF, the validity of the Certificate may be extended once for a period of up to three (3) months.

The Inspection or Audit must be performed within this extension period and the Certificate must be extended before the new period of validity expires. Extending a Certificate has no influence on the original First Issue date of the Participant's Certificate. The CB must record the reason for issuing an extension.

### **15.3.4 Further extension of the period of validity of the Certificate**

If further extension is needed after the three-month period, the CB must contact the BLLF. The BLLF can decide whether to approve further extension of the validity of the Certificate and the conditions that apply to this extension.

## **16. Amendments to the Certificate**

### **16.1 Expanding the scope of the Certificate**

Approved and certified Participants can apply to the BLLF to expand their Approval to include new Better Life scope(s). The Participant must submit a request to the BLLF and provide amended protocols/work instructions for administrative inspection and approval. If the BLLF comes to a positive assessment, the BLLF can instruct the CB to grant approval to expand the Certificate to include the relevant Better Life scope.

The Inspection or Audit of the expansion of the Approval will be performed at the next Re-Certification Inspection or Re-Certification Audit by the CB. The new Better Life scope(s) will be

added to the Certificate if all the conditions are met. Until that time, the new Better Life scope(s) will continue to be listed in the BLLF register as “Approved”.

Upon the Participant’s request, the CB may, following the request to expand the scope(s), perform an interim Inspection or Audit to establish whether the Participant complies with conditions for the requested expansion of the scope. This Inspection or Audit is not a complete Inspection or Audit and does not replace the Re-Certification Inspection or Re-Certification Audit. The purpose of this Inspection or Audit is to establish whether the Participant complies with the conditions for the requested expansion of the scope. Following the interim Inspection or Audit, the CB can issue an amended Certificate that includes the new scope. The validity period of the amended Certificate is identical to the validity period of the original Certificate.

## 16.2 Transfer to a different CB

A Participant can only transfer to a different, approved CB if the Participant has a valid Certificate and there are no unresolved Shortcomings that were observed during the previous Inspection or Audit.

A Participant that transfers to a different CB, must register this change with the BLLF. The BLLF informs both the current, and the new CB about the Participant’s intention to transfer. The current and the new CB will both be given the opportunity to object to the transfer if the conditions listed above for transfer have not been complied with.

The BLLF applies the following principles for transferring to a different CB:

1. The Participant has a valid Certificate.
2. The “new” CB requests certification data from the “old” CB on behalf of the Participant. The “old” CB is obligated to share all of the requested data with the “new” CB.
3. Based on the data shared by the “old” CB, the “new” CB takes a Certification Decision to accept the Participant.
4. The “new” CB can perform an interim Inspection or Audit at the Participant’s premises to establish whether the Participant complies with the relevant BLL criteria.
5. After the Certification Decision to accept the Participant, the “new” CB issues a Certificate. The validity period of this Certificate is identical to the validity period of the Certificate issued by the “old” CB.
6. The “new” CB informs the “old” CB that a new Certificate has been issued, after which the “old” CB can revoke the existing Certificate.

The status of the Participant's Certificate will be “Expired” if the validity period of the current/old Certificate expires during the transfer process and no valid Certificate has been issued yet by the “new” CB. The new Certificate must be issued within three months of the expiration date stated on the old Certificate. The Participant's Certificate will be revoked if this condition is not complied with.

## 16.3 Expansion, relocation or renovation of Participant’s premises



### **16.3.1 Primary Participant (farm)**

The Primary Participant must inform the CB in writing (by e-mail) whether there are any changes in relation to the existing situation, and what these changes are, in the following situations:

1. New construction and/or renovation;
2. (UBN) expansion and/or change
3. New construction and/or renovation that impacts animal welfare aspects and compliance with the BLL criteria.

From the date of informing the CB, the Participant may temporarily not supply animals or products under the Better Life scope. The CB must first perform a complete Inspection at the Participant's premises and issue a new Certificate before the Participant may supply animals or products under the Better Life scope.

### **16.3.2 Secondary Participant**

The Secondary Participant must inform the BLLF in writing (by e-mail) whether there are any changes in relation to the existing situation, and what these changes are, in the following situations:

1. Relocation to a new site
2. New construction and/or renovation at the existing site
3. Expansion at the existing site.

Depending on the changes, a new application may have to be submitted to the BLLF, including a Chamber of Commerce form and EU recognition.

If no amendments have been made to the protocols/work instructions used by the Secondary Participant, the BLLF will issue an Approval valid for three months from the date of relocation. If amendments have been made to the protocols/work instructions used by the Secondary Participant, the BLLF must approve the changes before an Approval valid for three months from the date of relocation can be issued. A complete Audit must be performed within the period of three (3) months stated here.

## **16.4 Transfer of shares or change of board composition**

A Participant that transfers their operational management and/or shares to another party, whether a natural person or legal entity, or in the case of a new board composition, for example due to the appointment of new board members, must inform the BLLF and the CB in writing (by e-mail) of these changes including an amended extract from the Chamber of Commerce. The BLLF will assess whether there are any consequences of the transfer of shares, or appointment of new board members, and what these consequences are, based on the information supplied. If the changes involve new registration with the Chamber of Commerce (new Chamber of Commerce number), the current Participation Agreement must be terminated, and a new agreement must be concluded with the BLLF. If there is no change to the Chamber of Commerce registration (number), at least a new

Declaration of Good Conduct (Appendix 1 to the Participation Agreement) must be signed by the currently authorised person.

If, after the transfer, there is a change to the Chamber of Commerce registration, and the company wishes to continue to be eligible for the BLL, the new party must inform the BLLF in writing (by e-mail) of these changes including a Chamber of Commerce form and EU recognition.

As soon as the BLLF has fully assessed the application and considers that the new Participant complies with the conditions, an agreement will be concluded between the BLLF and the new Participant. The Participant is registered in the BLL Portal with the status "Approved". The CB selected by the Participant will be notified of the new Participant's Approval.

The CB then assesses the extent to which the transfer/change affects certification.

1. If no amendments have been made to the protocols/work instructions and the employees/site remain unchanged, an Approval valid for three months from the date of transfer will be issued to bridge the time until an eventual transfer to a different CB. The Participant must be Inspected or Audited and issued certification by the CB within 3 months.
2. If the CB does not change, the BLLF and CB will change the name in their administrative records.
3. If amendments have been made to the protocols/work instructions, the BLLF must approve the changes first before BLL production can start at the new site. The Participant may start BLL production from the moment of approval (date of BLLF Approval). After approval by the BLLF, the Participant must be Inspected or Audited and issued certification by the CB within 3 months.

## **17. Uploading data in the BLLF Portal**

The Certificate must be listed in the BLL register within 48 hours after a Certificate has been issued or extended. This also applies to deregistration and/or amendments to Certificates.

The Inspection report or Audit report must be published on the BLLF Portal within 48 hours after a Certificate has been issued or extended.

### **17.1 BLL register**

The publicly accessible BLL register lists all companies that have received Approval from the BLLF and that have been issued with a valid Certificate by an approved CB. The BLLF maintains the register and processes the certification data as provided by the CBs. The BLLF publishes the publicly accessible register on its website.

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

The CBs must provide at least the following certification data to the BLLF for listing in the BLL register:

- 1 CB number
- 2 Registration number of the company (BL number)
- 3 UFN or KIP number (if applicable)

- 4 Type of company
- 5 Type of Inspection (EI, RI)
- 6 Better Life scope(s)
- 7 Validity period of Certificate (DATE to DATE)
- 8 Unique Certificate Number

## **18. Confidentiality**

The CB has a duty of confidentiality with respect to information obtained during the performance of its tasks. Information may only be disclosed to a third party when required by law.

An exception to this duty of confidentiality is the information provided by the CB to the BLLF, as described in the BLLF Acceptance Conditions for Certification Bodies and the agreement with the CB.

## **19. Complaints, objections and appeals**

### **19.1 Complaints, objections and appeals to the CB**

#### **19.1.1 Complaints**

If a Participant has a complaint concerning the performance of an Inspection or Audit, the Participant may lodge a complaint with the CB. The CB has established a complaints procedure for this purpose.

#### **19.1.2 Objections and appeals**

If a Participant disagrees with a Shortcoming observed by the CB, the Participant may lodge an objection with the CB. The CB has established an objection procedure for this purpose. Certification Decisions will remain in force until the outcome of the objection procedure.

### **19.2 Objections and appeals to the BLLF**

A participant may lodge an objection or appeal with the BLLF. The procedure as described in the 'Procedure for Objection and Appeal of the Better Life Label Foundation' must be followed. The procedure can be found at <https://beterleven.dierenbescherming.nl/zakelijk>.

#### **19.2.1 Objection**

An objection can be lodged with the BLLF against the following decisions:

- A refusal of the BLLF to grant the applicant the right to use the collective logo;
- A 'major' Sanction decision taken by or on behalf of the BLLF;
- A 'critical' Sanction decision taken by or on behalf of the BLLF;
- A refusal of the BLLF to take a written decision.

#### **19.2.2 Appeal**

An appeal can be lodged with the BLLF against the following decisions:

- A decision taken by the BLLF regarding an objection.

## 20. Final provision

1. These Certification Regulations can be found at <https://beterleven.dierenbescherming.nl/zakelijk>.
2. The Dutch text of the most recently published version always prevails regarding the interpretation of these Certification Regulations.
3. The BLLF has the right to make interim amendments to the Certification Regulations.
4. CBs that have an agreement with the BLLF will be consulted by the BLLF regarding any proposed amendments to the Certification Regulations. CBs will be given the opportunity to express their views on the proposed amendments to the BLLF. The BLLF will take the input of the CBs into account where possible.
5. The BLLF will inform the Participants and the CBs about the amendments and the date on which they come into force. Participants will be informed of amendments via the BLL website and the BLL newsletter. CBs will be informed of amendments by e-mail and phone, in addition to the newsletter, or through regular consultation with the BLLF.
6. These Certification Regulations are cited as: The BLL Certification Regulations or the abbreviation BLL-CR.

## 21. Effective Date

This document was last adopted by the Board on 1 December 2022 and was published on 1 March 2023.

This document enters into force on 1 September 2023. It has been published and is publicly accessible on the BLL website.

## 22. Overview of Appendices

- A. Conditions for multi-site certification
- B. Template Inspection or Audit report
- C. Template certification agreement
- D. Types of Certificates
- E. Template Sanction letter
- F. Template suspension letter
- G. BLL Sanction Framework
- H. Diagram of BLL certification process

## A. Conditions for multi-site certification

The following conditions apply to multi-site certification:

- a. The organisation has a head office from which all BLL activities are planned and managed.
- b. The organisation has a network of sub-sites and/or branches.
- c. The head office has a contract or declaration with the sub-sites and/or branches.
- d. All sub-sites and/or branches are of the same nature (e.g. retail formula).
- e. All sub-sites and/or branches are subject to the same quality assurance system (methods and procedures), which has been established by the head office and is managed by the head office. The relevant procedures are available at the head office and at the sub-sites and/or branches.
- f. All sub-sites and/or branches of the multi-site organisation are audited annually by the head office.
- g. Prior to the Audit being performed by the CB, an internal BLL Audit must have been performed at all registered sites. Reports of this internal Audit are available for the Auditor.
- h. The head office collects and analyses all data obtained from the internal BLL Audits.
- i. Based on the findings of internal BLL Audits, the head office imposes corrective and preventive measures that must be implemented at the sub-sites and/or branches of the multi-site organisation where shortcomings were observed.
- j. The head office safeguards that shortcomings observed during the internal BLL Audit are demonstrably resolved.
- k. The head office must demonstrably prove its ability to collect and analyse data from all of the sub-sites and/or branches, and to implement any changes where necessary. The data to be collected must be recorded in a document and the results from each site must be clear and traceable.
- l. The head office and at least 25% of the affiliated sub-sites and/or branches are audited by the CB annually. Depending on the activities at the sub-sites and/or branches, a smaller random sample may be permitted by the BLLF in order to arrive at a well-considered Certification Decision. This exemption is demonstrable and issued by the BLLF.
- m. In order to properly assess the role of the head office during the Audit, the affiliated sub-sites and/or branches are audited first. The audit cycle of the group is completed by the Audit of the head office.
- n. All sub-sites and/or branches that sell Better Life products during an Audit, have been registered with the CB before the Audit. It is not possible to add or deregister a sub-site and/or branch during an audit cycle.
- o. To demonstrate this, the head office provides the CB with an up-to-date list of participating sub-sites and/or branches before the Audit. Any changes to the participating sub-sites and/or branches must be clearly indicated. New sub-sites and/or branches must always be included in the random sample.
- p. Audits performed by the CB may be announced or unannounced.
- q. All sub-sites and/or branches, and the head office, must comply with the conditions for multi-site certification and the associated BLL criteria. If shortcomings are observed, the BLL Sanctions Framework will apply in accordance with Appendix G.

- r. Sub-sites and/or branches that do comply with the conditions will be registered in an appendix to the Certificate. Sites with Shortcomings and that fail to comply with the certification conditions may only be added to the Certificate after the Shortcomings have been resolved.
- s. If Shortcomings with a suspension and/or exclusion Sanction are observed at 5% or more of the sub-sites and/or branches of the multi-site organisation, the multi-site Certification of the head office, including all affiliated sub-sites and/or branches, will be revoked.

Only the main site will be issued with a multi-site Certificate with a list of the sub-sites and/or branches covered by the multi-site Certificate in the appendix.

## B. Template inspection or audit report

The inspection or audit report must contain at least the following information:

### General company information:

1. BL number/ /UFN/ /KIP number
2. The name of the company
3. Visiting address
4. Contact person(s) present at the Inspection or Audit (attendance list)
5. Type of company
6. Better Life scope(s)

### Company Structure:

Provide a brief description of the company site and its activities.

For example:

**Primary Participant:** several species of animals, various husbandry systems, multiple UFNs, vertical integration, breeding or rearing farm, weaning piglets, finishers, rosé or white veal calves, etc.

**Secondary Participant:** family business, part of a larger holding, several production areas (1x pork and 1x beef), multiple production lines. The company produces various types of products. Activities not covered by BLL such as other animal husbandry systems, other species of animal, slaughtering, packing etc.

### Inspection data

1. Name of Inspector
2. Type of Inspection
  - a. Entry Inspection (EI)
  - b. Entry Audit (EA)
  - c. Annual Re-Certification Inspection (ARI)
  - d. Annual Re-Certification Audit (ARA)
  - e. Recovery Inspection (RI)
  - f. Recovery Audit (RA)
  - g. Unannounced Inspection (UI)
  - h. Unannounced Audit (UA)
  - i. Tracking and Tracing Inspection (TTI)
3. Inspection/Audit date
4. Criteria used, including version number
5. Checklist criteria with findings

Reports of various Inspections/Audit types are submitted in a recognisable form to the BLLF.

## Reports

For each BLL criterion, the Inspector or Auditor must substantiate:

- a) The findings based on which the Participant complies with the criterion; or,
- b) The findings based on which the Participant fails to comply with the criterion; or,
- c) The findings based on which the criterion does not apply.



## C. Certification Agreement

In the Certification Agreement, at least the following subjects must be described and agreed upon between the CB and the Participant:

1. The scope of the present Certification Regulations;
2. The CB is the owner of the Certificate and Inspection- and Audit reports;
3. The regulations for Participant regarding reference to the Certification status, use of Certification documents, BLL or Inspection- or Audit reports;
4. The CB has the right to share all information relating to the Certificate and Inspection- or Audit reports it receives in relation to the Certification Agreement with the BLLF;
5. The conditions under which the Certification Agreement may be terminated;
6. The confidentiality with respect to the information obtained by the Inspector or Auditor, or the CB, during an Inspection or Audit;
7. The procedure for the handling of Shortcomings observed by the Inspector or Auditor during an Inspection or Audit;
8. The complaints and appeals procedure of the CB;
9. The publication of the Certification status on the website of the BLLF;
10. Providing full cooperation during Inspections and/or Audits performed by the accreditation body, representatives of the BLLF, the Society for the Protection of Animals and/or the Competent Authorities;
11. The following information must be shared with the CB within three days:
  - a. Changes or developments that may directly or indirectly affect the Certification status of the organisation;
  - b. The recall of products or emergencies (e.g. fire, natural disaster, outbreak of disease etc.);
  - c. Change of name, contact address, details of the site;
  - d. Changes in the legal entity, trading status, organisational structure or ownership;
  - e. Organisation and management;
  - f. Changes in working methods, scope and product categories;
  - g. Any other change or development that is likely to affect the certification status of the organisation.
12. The agreement with Secondary Participants is that they may use the BLL logo in accordance with the guidelines described in the 'User Protocol and Style Manual'.
13. All of the registered sub-sites and/or branches of this Multi-site Organisation are listed in an appendix to the Certification Agreement.

## D. Types of certificates

There are two types of certificates:

1. Individual Certification
2. Multi-site Certification

### 1. Certification for individual participation

A Certificate stating at least the following information is issued for each set of BLL criteria:

- 1 Name of the company
- 2 BL number of the Participant (Farm: KIP number and/or UFN)
- 3 Address of the Participant
- 4 Inspection-/Audit date (based on which the Certificate was awarded)
- 5 Type of company and, in case of livestock farms, the species of animals kept
- 6 Scope of Certification in words, e.g. BLL pig 1 star, BLL chicken 2 stars
- 7 BLL logo; the logo may be displayed with the number of stars that correspond to the BLL scope. If the Certificate states various scopes with different numbers of stars, the logo with the lowest number of stars is displayed.
- 8 If BLL is stated in full, the following spelling is used: "Better Life label"
- 9 Name and address of the CB, possibly with logo
- 10 Validity period of Certificate, from < DATE> to <DATE>
- 11 Unique Certificate Number
- 12 Signed by authorised Decision Maker or Certification Manager
- 13 Listing: This Certificate is only valid when combined with a statement of Certification as listed in the BLL register on the BLL website.

### 2. Certification for companies that participate according to the multi-site principle

With a multi-site, a Certificate is only issued to the head office. This certificate states at least the following information:

- 1 Name of the head office
- 2 BL number of the Participant
- 3 Address of the head office
- 4 Inspection-/Audit date head office (based on which the Certificate was awarded)
- 5 Type of company
- 6 Scope of Certification in words, e.g. BLL pig 1 star, BLL chicken 2 stars
- 7 BLL logo; the logo may be displayed with the number of stars that correspond to the Better Life scope
- 8 If BLL is stated in full, the following spelling is used: "Better Life label"
- 9 Name and address of the CB, possibly with logo
- 10 Validity period of Certificate, from < DATE> to <DATE>
- 11 Certificate number
- 12 Signed by authorised Decision Maker or Certification Manager
- 13 Listing: This Certificate is only valid when combined with:

1. A statement of Certification as listed in the BLL register on the BLL website;
2. A valid participation agreement with the BLLF.

All the registered sub-sites and/or branches that are covered by the Certificate of this Multi-site Organisation are listed in an appendix to the Certificate, possibly with registration numbers. When a new Certificate is issued, an up-to-date list is included as an appendix.

## F. Template Sanction letter

The Sanction letter must contain at least the following elements.

### General

The Sanction letter:

1. Describes the Shortcomings and the corresponding Sanctions;
2. Describes the recovery measures/actions;

### Template

Your company site(s) was/were inspected/audited<sup>2</sup> by Mr/Ms<sup>4</sup> [name] in the framework of the BLL criteria with the scope [description of scope] on [date].

An overview of the Shortcomings observed and the corresponding Sanctions appears below. The Sanctions imposed are in accordance with the BLL Sanctions Framework.

#	Description of Shortcoming	BLL criterion	Sanction	Term of sanction
1.				
2.				
3.				

The Sanction(s) imposed must be lifted within the stated Sanction period. This means that you must report the corrective measures to the Certification Body in good time so the Sanction can be lifted within the period stated above.

If the Sanction cannot be lifted in time and/or during a recovery Inspection on site or the observed Shortcomings were not resolved sufficiently, the Shortcoming will be increased to the next Sanction level, including all the associated consequences and actions.

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<sup>2</sup> Delete as appropriate.

## E. Template suspension letter or exclusion letter

The suspension or exclusion letter must contain at least the following elements.

### General

The letter:

1. Describes the Shortcomings and the corresponding Sanctions (suspension or exclusion);
2. Confirms the commencement date of the suspension or exclusion;
3. Describes the recovery measures/actions;
4. States that the Participant must inform the supplying and receiving links in the chain of the suspension or exclusion;
5. Describes the consequences of the suspension or exclusion; No BLL animals and/or products may be purchased, produced or supplied during the period of suspension or exclusion. See the BLL Sanctions Framework (Appendix C).

### Template

Your company site(s) was/were inspected/audited<sup>3</sup> by Mr/Ms <sup>5</sup> [name] in the framework of the BLL criteria with the scope [description of scope] on [date].

One or more Shortcomings have been observed that result in a suspension or exclusion. An overview of the Shortcomings observed and the corresponding Sanctions appears below. The Sanctions imposed are in accordance with the BLL Sanctions Framework.

#	Description of Shortcoming	BLL criterion	Sanction
1.			
2.			
3.			

In addition to this letter, you may receive a separate letter stating the other Shortcomings that were also observed during this Inspection/Audit.

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<sup>3</sup> Delete as appropriate.

## G. BLL Sanctions Framework

The Sanction is stated with the relevant criteria. This Sanctions Framework describes the content of the Sanction and also indicates which Sanction will be imposed if there is a repeat of the same Shortcoming.

SANCTION LEVEL	BASIC SANCTION	CONTINUE PRODUCTION WITH BLL LABEL?	RECOVERY INSPECTION/ AUDIT NECESSARY?	INCREASED LEVEL OF MONITORING	SANCTION WITH REPEAT SHORTCOMING
<b>OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT</b>	<b>Improvement point</b> can be indicated in one of the following ways:				
	<b>Warning *</b> for a very minor non-conformity (determined by CB) that must be resolved by the Participant at the next regular inspection.	Yes	No (regular inspection)	No	Sanction prescribed by BLL criteria
	An <b>Action Plan (AP) **</b> (determined by CB) established to resolve a Shortcoming that takes more time, also from the perspective of animal welfare. Recovery takes place within the time stated in the AP.	Depending on sanction for this non-conformity in the criteria	Depending on sanction for this non-conformity in the criteria	Depending on sanction in the criteria	Sanction prescribed by BLL criteria
	<b>Recommendation ***</b> relates to an amendment to the criteria in the future (determined by CB), which applies until the actual amendment to the criteria has come into effect.	Yes	No (regular inspection)	No	The same Recommendation again until actual amendment
<b>MINOR</b>	<b>Recovery</b> (remote/on site determined by CB).	Yes	<b>Yes, asap, and no later than within 6 weeks</b>	<b>No, perform RI</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> repeat</b> <b>Minor</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> repeat</b> <b>Major</b>
<b>MAJOR</b>	<b>Suspension</b> until recovery.	<b>No, until positive result RI</b> , downgrading of compromised products	<b>Yes, asap and no later than within 3 months ****</b>	<b>Yes</b> , in addition to RI, unannounced inspection at Participant's own cost	<b>Exclusion</b>
<b>CRITICAL</b>	<b>Exclusion</b> for 1 year (followed by reapplication, entry inspection and proof that the issues have been resolved).	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> (also after reapplication, also unannounced inspection at Participant's own cost)		n/a

## Explanations with Sanctions Framework:

1. The Sanctions Framework shows the Sanctions that can be imposed by the CB in accordance with these Certification Regulations and is without prejudice to the authority of the BLLF to monitor and inspect the use of the Better Life label in accordance with the BLL Regulations.
2. When Shortcomings are observed during an Entry Inspection or Entry Audit, all Shortcomings must always be resolved, and the Sanctions lifted, before production may start (with the exception of fraud and animal abuse). The Participant will not be issued with a Certificate until all Sanctions have been resolved.
3. Sanctions will be listed in the Participant's file and will continue to be included for 3 years. Deregistering is not a reason to destroy the file.
4. If a minor/major shortcoming is observed during a Re-certification inspection or Re-certification audit, the Certificate will not be extended until the Shortcoming has been resolved and the Sanction has been lifted. With a minor shortcoming, the Participant retains the old Certificate during the recovery period unless the validity period of the Certificate expires during the recovery period.
5. The first time a Shortcoming is observed, it will be considered to be an incident unless determined otherwise by the CB. A repeat of the Shortcoming will result in the Sanction being increased to the next level in accordance with the Sanctions Framework.
6. If there is demonstrable evidence of *force majeure* (e.g. a calamity), in derogation from the Sanctions Framework, the CB may impose a Sanction in the Opportunity for Improvement level. *Force majeure* is in any case a quarantine imposed due to an outbreak of animal diseases or mitigation measures in relation to the outbreak of a pandemic animal disease.  
  
\*A CB may issue a warning with a very minor Shortcoming instead of imposing the basic Sanction in the BLL criteria. The CB must inform the BLLF so they can manage this accordingly.  
  
\*\* A CB may impose an Action Plan (AP) with a Shortcoming (provided the BLL criteria permit) instead of imposing the basic Sanction in the BLL criteria, if the non-conformity takes time to resolve. The CB must inform the BLLF so they can act accordingly.  
  
\*\*\* A CB can impose a recommendation for a change if an amendment to the criteria is likely in the future and is indicated as such in the criteria.  
  
\*\*\*\* A Participant can reduce the duration of suspended BLL production by implementing a very fast recovery and ensuring a positive recovery inspection within a reasonable time for the CB (at least 3 days). With Minors and Majors, a Participant may request a longer period of time for recovery if necessary.
7. A repetition of the Shortcoming will result in the Sanction being increased to the next level (see Sanctions Framework). For example, from minor to major or from major to critical). A repeat is in any event considered to be when a Shortcoming is observed at the same Participant within three years of a Shortcoming for the same criterion being observed. The BLLF may also decide that there is a repeat if, within the period of three years, a similar Shortcoming with the same Sanction is observed.

## H. Diagram of BLL Inspection/Audit process

