

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

Date	Norm no. or topic	Question	Supplementary decision or interpretation
15-10-19	UIT01 Other activities	Keeping double-muscled beef cattle with a high incidence of caesarean sections is not permitted on BLL farms. Does this also apply to veal calves, i.e. dairy cows crossed with a double-muscled bull?	This criterion does not apply to cross-bred veal calves from dairy farms (dairy cows crossed with a double-muscled bull). Dairy farmers can opt to inseminate a cow with semen from a double-muscled bull if they do not wish to keep the calf. However, dairy farmers always opt for a (double-muscled) bull with good calving ease so that a caesarean section is rarely, if ever, needed. As such, there is not a high incidence of caesarean sections among cross-bred veal calves that originate from dairy farming. Therefore, cross-bred veal calves are permitted on Better Life label farms.
28-01-22	UIT05 Standard for mega-enclosures	Criterion UIT05 states that livestock must not be kept in a mega-enclosure. According to the criterion, a mega-enclosure means one UBN (or EU registration number) with 330 NGE (Dutch size units) or more. However, based on the interpretation of criterion UIT05 it appears that exactly 330 NGE is permitted and this is not considered a mega-enclosure. When is one UBN (or EU registration number) considered as a mega-enclosure?	The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided to amend criterion UIT05. A mega-enclosure means one UBN (or EU registration number) with more than 330 NGE. For example, the following locations are classified as mega-enclosure in the context of the Better Life label, and excluded from participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beef bull farm with more than: 2,000 beef bulls ($2,001 \times 0.165 = 330.17$ NGE) • beef and pasture cattle farm with more than: 2,340 beef cattle ($2,341 \times 0.141 = 330.08$ NGE) • suckler cattle farm with more than: 1,320 suckler cattle ($1,321 \times 0.250 = 330.25$ NGE) The criterion will be adjusted in the next revision.
12-04-19	UIT09.2 All cattle present are eligible for BLL G14 Cattle breeds with a high incidence of caesarean sections	Can dairy cattle, double-muscled cattle (incl. cross-breeds) and veal calves be present on a BLL cattle farm?	Dairy cattle, double-muscled cattle (incl. cross-breeds), veal calves and others that do not satisfy the criteria for Better Life may not be present on a BLL cattle farm (UBN). The only exception is for new participants during their first year of participation. After its entry inspection, the respective livestock farm has until the next annual inspection (one year) to remove any cattle that do not satisfy the Better Life criteria as BLL-eligible. After its first year of participation, the livestock farm will be excluded from participation in the Better Life label if it is found to keep cattle that do not satisfy the Better Life criteria.



8-03-22	UIT09.1, UIT09.2 and UIT09.3 All cattle present are BLL-eligible	The criteria state that all cattle (including calves) registered at the UBN, must comply with Better Life label criteria for beef. Is it allowed to have non BLL-eligible cattle present at the same farm if the farm uses different UBNs (unique farm numbers)?	<p>Both cattle that are BLL-eligible and cattle that are not BLL-eligible may be present at the same farm provided the farm uses different UBNs (issued by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RvO)).</p> <p>Rearing BLL and non-BLL cattle on the same farm is permitted under strict conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLL cattle registered under one UBN must be kept separately from non-BLL cattle registered under another UBN on the pasture and in the barn. A physical separation must be present between cattle that are BLL-eligible and cattle that are not BLL-eligible on the pasture and in the barn. • The cattle registered at different UBNs are housed and cared for completely separately. • The plot on which BLL-eligible cattle are grazed is linked to the BLL certified farm (UBN). <p>The administrative records of the BLL participant state that the relevant plot is owned or leased by this farm (UBN). In cases where it is unclear whether the plot is owned or leased by this farm (UBN), only BLL cattle may be grazed on the plot.</p> <p>The only exception applies to new participants in the Better Life label scheme during the first year of participation. During the entry audit, non BLL-eligible cattle may be present on the UBN registered for the Better Life label in addition to BLL-eligible cattle. After the entry audit, the farmer concerned has the time until the next annual audit (1 year) to remove cattle that do not satisfy the BLL criteria from the farm as not being BLL-eligible. Under no circumstances during this period are non BLL-eligible cattle permitted to be sold/traded as BLL-eligible cattle.</p>
19-11-18	A02C Human-animal interaction course	Are there any human-animal interaction courses accredited by the Dutch Society for the Protection Animals? Where can we find them on the website?	<p>No human-animal interaction courses for cattle have been accredited so far. As such, there is no list available on the website. The weighting of this criterion is also on warning, so there is no immediate sanction for this at present.</p> <p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals is currently in talks with training institutes to have these courses accredited as quickly as possible. As soon as these courses are accredited, they will be published on the website.</p>
16-06-20	A03 Copies of cattle passports	According to the criterion, a copy of the cattle passport must be kept on record. Is requesting digital information about the provenance of animals via their unique ear number permitted?	<p>Dutch animals are not accompanied by a passport. The ear number of Dutch animals can be used to request information digitally from various databases (RVO, I&R) about the provenance of the animals in question. This will satisfy criterion A03 for Dutch animals.</p> <p>For imported/foreign animals, digital information is only available in Dutch databases from the point at which the animals arrive in the Netherlands. The full provenance of imported/foreign animals can also be verified in the relevant national databases for the animals in question in addition to copies of their cattle passports. The livestock farm must request authorisation from the database manager.</p>

23-10-19	V04C1 Analysis of drinking water quality from private wells	How can the drinking water quality of ditch water be adapted to satisfy the drinking water limit values?	<p>Criterion V04C states that an analysis of drinking water quality does not need to be carried out on mains water or surface water (rivers, streams, ditches, seepage water, etc.) This also applies to the limit values specified in criterion V04C1. The criteria also apply to well water, for example.</p> <p>Water from ditches and other sources does not need to satisfy this criterion.</p>
9-09-19	V04F Flow	The new BLL criteria for cattle and dairy cows specify a minimum flow rate. However, is this flow rate really necessary for the drinking speed of cattle? This could require a large investment.	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided that this criterion is not workable in practice and demands large investments from participants.</p> <p>The criterion no longer needs to be verified and will be removed from the BLL criteria for cattle as part of a subsequent review.</p>
25-11-19	AM03 Agricultural electrical inspection	Is an agricultural electrical inspection required if the farm does not have any electrical installations on site (except lighting).	<p>Criterion AM03 does not apply if the farm does not have any electrical installations on site (except lighting).</p> <p>Electrical installations include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feed system - Straw distribution system - Mechanical ventilation and air scrubbers - Solar panels and heat exchangers
20-01-21	G01 Contracted veterinary practitioner	The G01 Contracted veterinary practitioner criterion states that the cattle farmer has a one-to-one agreement with a specialist certified cattle veterinary practitioner. How should the collaboration between livestock farmers and veterinary practitioners be established if, as may be the case with foreign cattle farms, it is not possible to use a veterinary practitioner from the regulations of the Guaranteed Veterinarian Foundation?	<p>Foreign participants can meet this criterion by means of a signed one-to-one agreement with the specialist cattle veterinary practitioner. An English version of this agreement can be found on the website of the Better Life label, under the relevant animal species. This agreement must be adhered to. In France, the so-called <i>Bilan Sanitaire d'Élevage</i> can be used for this.</p>
11-12-20	G06F Disposal of faeces in the sickbay	Criterion G06F Disposal of faeces in the sickbay states that urine and manure from the sickbay must not come into contact with other animals. How is physical separation of manure and urine ensured and does this apply to all types of diseases?	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided to further explain the physical separation of the sickbay by means of an additional decision.</p> <p>The sickbay must be constructed in such a way that manure, urine and animals from the sickbay cannot come into contact with other animals. This can be achieved, for example, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separating the sickbay from the other animals by means of a walkway/free space. • Preventing manure or urine from the sickbay from running off in the direction of the other animals. • Moving the sickbay to another building. The animals in the sickbay must be able to make eye contact with other animals (criterion G06D). <p>For non-infectious diseases, for example, in the case of injuries, strict physical separation of manure and urine from the sickbay from other animals does not apply.</p>

17-08-18	G12A Disbudding	Must disbudding always be carried out by a vet?	Anaesthesia must be administered by a vet or an organisation or person authorised to perform veterinary procedures in accordance with national legislation. The livestock farm may subsequently carry out disbudding under instructions from the vet. Retrospective pain relief may be administered by the livestock farm with a veterinary prescription.
16-03-17	G12B Disbudding method	Is disbudding paste permitted as a disbudding method?	Disbudding paste is not permitted under the Better Life label on account of the afterpain it causes and the risk of it running and either getting into the animal's eyes (e.g. if it is raining) or being licked by another animal. Partly for this reason, Dutch law only permits the use of a hot iron.
4-09-18	HB01 Pasture grazing HB02 Indoor fattening of beef cattle	HB01 specifies that cattle must have access to grazing pasture for twelve hours per day on a minimum of 180 days or for 24 hours per day for a minimum of 135 days. HB02 specifies that beef cattle must not be fattened indoors for more than 1/5 of their life over four months. Which criterion now has precedence?	The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided that criterion HB01.2 'Minimum number of days for pasture grazing' takes precedence and that criterion HB02 'Indoor fattening of cattle' will be scrapped. So long as all beef cattle achieve the minimum number of days of pasture grazing each year, they may be housed/fattened indoors for the remainder of the year, with the exception of cattle that are fattened indoors during (part of) the grazing period. Cattle must not be fattened indoors for a continuous period any longer than four months during the grazing period. At the end of the fattening period, the cattle must be taken away for slaughter.
12-04-19	H01A Pasture grazing HB01.2 Minimum number of days of pasture grazing	From what age are bull calves allowed to be housed indoors?	All fattening bulls over one year old are exempt from (compulsory) pasture grazing. During their first year of life, the pasture grazing requirement applies. Pasture grazing is only possible for part of the year, however. During their first year of life, bull calves may be housed indoors in winter. In practice, this means that as soon as a bull calf has achieved a minimum of 180 or 135 days of pasture grazing (depending on the grazing method – 12 or 24 hours per day) during the first year of its life, it can be housed indoors. Consequently, a BLL bull calf can be housed indoors from six months old provided the compulsory pasture grazing requirement has been satisfied. During the next grazing season, when the animal would be over one year old, it would be exempt from the grazing requirement.
17-08-18	HB03 Housing bulls	Why is it that Better Life bulls are allowed to be housed indoors permanently from the age of one year?	Bulls reach puberty at around six months of age, which means that they can become a danger to their environment. Fattening bulls should therefore only have access to grazing pasture for the first year of their lives. If a bull calf has access to pasture grazing from birth, it can be permanently housed indoors in groups as soon as the required number of days of pasture grazing has been reached, until it is heavy enough to go to slaughter. Sheds must be spacious and have a soft sleeping area, fresh air and daylight.



10-11-14	H06A2 Solid floor covered with straw	Why should there be a soft sleeping area with a solid floor covered with straw? Why is a sleeping area with a slatted floor not permitted?	<p>For indoor housing, beef cattle are best kept in a straw pen. With sufficient space for each animal, a thick layer of straw and daily replenishment with fresh straw offers the best comfort and necessary grip when standing up, lying down and walking.</p> <p>On slatted floors, beef cattle usually have less space per animal to encourage them to work their own manure and urine through the slats. Grip on a slatted floor is also lower. Lying down and standing up on a slatted floor are visibly more difficult. Since the floor is often soiled with faeces, the animals are usually less clean, which is in contrast with their self-cleaning behaviour. There is also the risk of a tail becoming caught, which could lead to infection (without prompt intervention into the spinal cord).</p>
27-09-18	H07 Height of indoor housing	The BLL criteria for cattle state that there must be a clearance of 2.5 metres from the floor above the entire pen. Where there is a pitched roof or sloping shed, a height of 2 metres around the edge of the shed is acceptable. Does this also apply to a straw loft above part of a pen?	<p>The pen height can be under 2.5 metres in up to 1/3 of the pen area. This applies to a pitched roof or sloping shed but also for a hay loft construction, for example. However, the roof, ceiling or support beams must not be lower than 2 metres in this section. The other 2/3 of the pen area must have a clearance of at least 2.5 metres to allow the cattle in this section of the pen to engage in their natural (jumping) behaviour.</p>
24-06-19	ST05 Length of stay at the fattening location	In some cases, Better Life label cattle (e.g. female cattle) do not need to be fattened for a long period and do not need to remain at a fattening location for very long (i.e. up to three months). Is it possible to keep cattle at a Better Life label fattening location for less than three months?	<p>If:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The cattle farm in question has been certified for the correct Better Life cattle scope (1, 2 or 3 stars) 2. The cattle remain at the certified Better Life label cattle farm for a minimum of nine months 3. The cattle are only moved to another location so that they can be fattened there for a specific period 4. That fattening location is also Better Life label certified (same number of stars) <p>In this case, the eligible cattle can remain at the Better Life-label certified fattening location for less than three months.</p>
23-04-18	T01 Travel time for young cattle	How should the AR sanction for this criterion be interpreted if the travel time is exceeded?	<p>If the travel time/distance is exceeded, these cattle are no longer BLL-eligible. The shortcoming can be remedied administratively by providing evidence that the non-BLL-eligible cattle were also transferred as non-BLL.</p> <p>If the cattle cannot (all) be transferred within the period prescribed for AR (six weeks), the sanction will change to RI.</p> <p>If the cattle cannot then (all) be transferred in the subsequent prescribed period (6 weeks), the sanction will change to a suspension.</p> <p>The livestock farm will then have a further three months to demonstrate the remedy before they are excluded.</p> <p>In theory, the livestock farm has six months to remove the cattle as non-BLL. If this requirement is not met, the livestock farm will be excluded.</p>

24-02-20	T02 Travel time for cattle	The new BLL criteria for 1, 2 and 3-star cattle stipulate a transport duration as well as a transport distance. What if the prescribed travel duration is met but the distance is not?	<p>The maximum number of kilometres (e.g. 625 km in ten hours) is not consistent with the reality. It has been decided to dispense with the transport duration (number of hours) and to verify transport only on the basis of distance (number of kilometres).</p> <p>Transport only needs to satisfy a maximum transport distance of 850 km. The departure and arrival address will be obtained from the official transport document (signed by an official vet). The transport distance will be verified using Routenet.nl on the condition that the route is calculated using a 40-tonne truck as the vehicle.</p>
7-01-19	T03 Temporary receiving farm	If the cattle are placed temporarily on a receiving farm for a minimum of 21 days during one single stay, does that farm also need to be BLL certified?	<p>No, the reception farm does not need to be BLL certified provided that criterion ST05 Length of stay at the fattening location (nine months average, no single animal for less than seven months) is satisfied.</p> <p>In the near future, the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals will be examining how these cattle farms can also be BLL certified.</p>
27-05-21	T03 Temporary alternative meat cattle farm	<p>Criterion T03 of the BLL Cattle criteria states that if the distance from the birth address to the fattening address is more than 850 km, the cattle may temporarily stay at a (certified) alternative meat cattle farm once for a minimum of 21 days.</p> <p>Due to (foreign) legislation and animal registration, animal movements shorter than 3 days between the birth address and alternative meat cattle farm are not registered. As a result, it is not (always) possible to check where the cattle stayed during the 3 days prior to arrival at an alternative meat cattle farm. How is this handled?</p>	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals believes that sufficient information must be available about animal movements, including the 3 days prior to arrival at an alternative meat cattle farm. Since this cannot be sufficiently checked, the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided that the T03 criterion is no longer in force and is therefore deleted from the BLL Cattle criteria.</p> <p>A transitional period of 12 months is applied for this additional decision. This means this measure comes into force 12 months after this supplementary decision comes into force (i.e. as of 27/05/2022).</p> <p>This means that transporting cattle after 27/05/2022 can only take place directly from birth address to fattening address. A maximum transport distance applies, as formulated in the supplementary decision on T02.</p> <p>The criterion will be deleted from the BLL Cattle criteria after the transitional period.</p> <p><i>Addition 25-05-2022:</i> <i>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals and the BLLF have decided to postpone the abolition of T03, based on the assumption that an assessment in June will determine a final decision.</i></p>



27-05-21	T04 Travel time cattle to the abattoir	<p>The BLL Cattle criteria state that transporting cattle to the abattoir should not take more than 4 hours or 250 km. Assuming an average speed of 70 km per hour, a transport distance of up to 280 km can be achieved within a maximum transport time of 4 hours. What transport time and distance should be observed for transport to the abattoir?</p>	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided that the transport to the abattoir must comply with a maximum transport distance of 280 km.</p> <p>The maximum transport distance of 280 km corresponds to a maximum transport time of 4 hours, assuming an average speed of 70 km per hour based on the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) guidelines for livestock transport.</p> <p>The transport distance between the livestock farm and the abattoir must be checked on the basis of Routenet.nl with a 40T truck selected as the vehicle.</p>
27-02-24	T05 Electric cattle prods	<p>The 'Electric cattle prods' criterion states that no electric cattle prods are used on the farm and during the moving/transport of cattle.</p> <p>Imposing sanctions on farmers for using an electric cattle prod during transport is illogical. Once the animals have left the farm, they are no longer the farmer's responsibility. How can we deal with this aspect?</p>	<p>The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals emphasises that the use of electric cattle prods is not permitted under the conditions of the Better Life label. However, the 'during transport' section is worded in a way that may cause confusion. It will therefore be removed from the criteria at the next revision.</p> <p>In the context of the Better Life label, no electric cattle prods must be used while the animals are housed at the BLL certified farm, while the animals are kept at the BLL certified reception site and during unloading at the BLL certified abattoir for which the relevant BLL participant is responsible.</p> <p>This aspect will be inspected (unannounced) by the CB.</p>