

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
1-12-22	BLL calf older than a year, is BLL beef?	Can Better Life calves that are older than a year be marketed as Better Life cattle (beef)?	Legally, calves older than a year cannot be referred to as calves, so their meat is beef . Better Life beef must originate from cattle that have satisfied the Better Life criteria for cattle from birth. These stipulate, among other things, that calves must be able to suckle from the mother for at least three months, have access to grazing, that disbudding and castration is done under anaesthetic, etc. The Better Life criteria for calves diverge from this. If a Better Life calf is older than one year, it must be marketed as beef, but if this calf did not satisfy the Better Life criteria for cattle, this cattle (beef) cannot be marketed as Better Life cattle (beef).
1-12-22	A01 Certification	Foreign farms, for example, do not always have a Vital Calf (Vitaal Kalf) certificate. Can these farms also satisfy this criterion in another way?	For 1 star, the farm must always have a Vital Calf certificate. For 2 and 3 stars, one of the following is also sufficient: 1. at least an equivalent certificate (the applicant provides a cross-check that is assessed by the BLLF and submitted to the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals, which then decides if it can be accepted as equivalent or not), 2. A Vital Calf inspection is conducted at the same time as the BLL audit (without issuing a Vital Calf certificate), whereby the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals determines in advance which Vital Calf criteria are not necessarily compulsory for the foreign farm.
14-08-23	V03c Method of roughage provision from 12 weeks of age	Criterion V03c from the BLL Calves 1 star criteria states that for calves from 12 weeks of age, at least 3 roughage eating areas (of at least 0.40 m) per 6 calves must be available. This is a new requirement compared to the earlier set of criteria for calves and will require many farms to renovate or switch to a lower stocking density in order to comply. Can a transition period be used for this?	It is true there is no transitional requirement for criterion V03c. That is why the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided to still apply a transitional period with new construction or renovation, but no later than 01-01-2030.
1-12-22	V07 Drinking water	How can calves be prevented from drinking large amounts of water?	The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals believes that calves should be given permanent access to fresh drinking water, so they can drink water at times when no calf-milk is provided. The problem is that some calves will drink a lot of water which can lead to health problems. This should be prevented by limiting the quantity of water/flow rate of the drinker or drinker nipple and/or by interrupting the flow of water after a certain quantity has been drunk. However, this limitation/interruption of the water flow should not be interpreted in any way as if a temporarily lack of drinking water supply is allowed.

28-03-24	HY04 Pest control	Criterion HY04 states that pest control and prevention on the farm is performed in compliance with European standard CEN-EN 16636. Legislation regarding KBA certification has been amended since 01-01-2023. Does this mean that criterion HY04 will also be amended?	The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals complies with amended legislation. This means that KBA certification is no longer sufficient. Practically all chemical control products may only be used by trained pest controllers who work for certified pest control companies. This implies that only companies certified for CEPA or IPM Rodent Control (see Keurmerk Plaagdier Management Bedrijven - Register (in Dutch) (kpmb.nl)) may apply chemical control products.
16-03-23	H06a Space allowance per calf in a group	The BLL Calves 1 star criteria state that if not housed in individual calf hutches, the floor space allowance per calf must be at least 1.8m². A floor space allowance of 1.8m² per calf is not feasible in the short term. Can this be postponed or amended to 1.5m² per calf?	The Society for the Protection of Animals has decided to maintain the floor space allowance per calf of 1.8m². However, as the number of animal places in the suckling section is linked to the fattening section, as with criterion H06b, a transitional period will apply to H06a, namely: No later than 01-01-2025, the floor surface area must be at least 1.8m² per calf.
17-10-25	H06a Space allowance per calf in a group	Criterion H06a stipulates that calves in group housing must have a minimum area of 1.8 m² per calf. This requirement applies from the moment the calves are no longer housed individually (in individual calf hutches). In certain systems, due to passageways and the need to start with smaller groups, this is not possible. Is it permitted to keep calves at 1.5 m² per calf if they are group-housed earlier as an alternative to individual calf hutches, provided that this housing system complies with all other BLL criteria?	The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals approves of this alternative to individual calf hutches by allowing an additional option under criterion H06a: Calves may be housed in group housing on a smaller area from their arrival at the veal farm until they reach a maximum age of eight weeks, provided that: • It serves as an alternative to individual housing (individual calf hutches); • The floor area per calf is at least 1.5 m²; • No later than eight weeks of age, they are moved to group housing with a minimum of 1.8 m² per calf. This supplementary decision is intended as a step towards phasing out individual housing and aligns with the goal of improving animal welfare by enabling earlier group housing. This supplementary decision is valid until 31 December 2029. As a result, criterion H06a will be formulated as follows: <i>Interpretation: Although legislation permits calves of a lower weight to be kept on a floor surface area of 1.5 or 1.7 m², this is not permitted under the terms of the Better Life label scheme, except for calves younger than eight weeks. For calves up to eight weeks of age, group housing on a minimum floor area of 1.5 m² per calf is permitted as an alternative to individual calf hutches.</i> <i>This criterion will cease to be valid from 2030, as criterion H06c will then apply to all farms.</i> <i>Measurement method: Verify, using a number of pens, whether the group pens comply with the conditions. Record the floor surface area of these pens and number of animals per pen. Measure the pen dimensions from centre to centre. If there is a wall, use the wall as the starting point for measurement. Space under the feeder/the floor section under a slanted feed fence is not included in the measurement of floor surface area. If the area is less than 1.8 m² per calf, verify that the animals are no older than eight weeks.</i>

16-03-23	H08a Frequency of regrouping calves	In order to give calves with insufficient weight the opportunity to eat and drink enough, calves are sometimes regrouped according to how quickly they eat and drink, and their body condition. Criterion H08a states that calves should only be regrouped in the first 12 weeks of their lives. However, in practice, this is also done at a later date, because the calves are only moved from the suckling section to the fattening section when they are older. May calves also be regrouped at an age of more than 12 weeks?	Criteria H08 and H08a are intended to prevent recurring conflicts in the social ranking order of calves and to prevent any spread of pathogens. The age of 12 weeks stated in criterion H08a is based on the assumption that BLL 1 and 2 star calves are moved from the suckling section to the fattening section at an age of 12 weeks. As calves can also be moved from the suckling section to the fattening section at an age of more than 12 weeks, the Society for the Protection of Animals has decided to relax the age limit of 12 weeks for BLL 1 and 2 stars. The criterion will be amended as follows: Calves should only be regrouped in the suckling section and once again when they are moved to the fattening section. However, the principle that calves should be regrouped as little as possible remains unchanged.
2-05-25	M05 Smoke and heat detection in technical area	According to the interpretation of criterion M05, the fire detection system must comply with NEN 2535. It is unclear which systems comply with the NEN standard and whether there are any companies that install systems in accordance with this standard. Could clarification be provided on this matter?	Due to the lack of clarity, the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided to extend the transition period to 01-01-2027. The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals will provide clarification regarding criterion M05 in 2025, after which veal farmers will have the year 2026 to make the necessary adjustments in order to comply with the criterion by 01-01-2027. As a result, criterion M05 will be formulated as follows: <i>Criterion: The technical area must be equipped with a smoke and fire detection system no later than 01-01-2027.</i> <i>Method of measurement: Verify from 01-01-2027 whether there are smoke and heat detectors in the technical area. Record the findings.</i>
2-05-25	M06 Fire extinguisher technical area	It is unclear what the requirements are for the fire extinguisher in the technical area and whether there are any companies that install systems according to the applicable standard. Could clarification be provided on this matter?	Due to the lack of clarity, the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals has decided to extend the transition period to 01-01-2027. The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals will provide clarification regarding criterion M06 in 2025, after which veal farmers will have the year 2026 to make the necessary adjustments in order to comply with the criterion by 01-01-2027. As a result, criterion M06 will be formulated as follows: <i>Criterion: No later than 01-01-2027 the technical area is equipped with an automatic fire extinguisher that, in the event of smoke and/or heat, can extinguish a small fire.</i> <i>Method of measurement: Verify from 01-01-2027 whether there is a fire extinguisher in the technical area. Record the findings.</i>

2-05-25	M08 Lightning protection	The NEN 1014 standard for lightning protection referred to in the criterion is outdated and there was uncertainty about the placement of the lightning protection at the highest structure. This is often the feed silo and the question is: is it also allowed to install the lightning protection system at a different location?	The Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals would like to clarify criterion M08 on lightning protection by means of this supplementary decision. The following aspects will be amended: - Addition of new NEN standard - Adjustment concerning the highest structure Initially, lightning protection equipment had to comply with the NEN 1014 standard. As of 2006, this was changed to NEN EN IEC 62305. Lightning protection installed after 2006 has to comply with this new standard. Within BLL, there are veal farmers who had already installed a lightning protection system that complies with NEN 1014 before 2006, and veal farmers who had to install a lightning protection system after 2006. This last group will therefore have to install lightning protection that complies with NEN EN IEC 62305. The criterion stated that the lightning protection has to be installed at the highest structure of the block of buildings. After some research and the consultation of experts, we came to the conclusion that installation at the highest structure does not automatically offer the best protection for the calves. This resulted into adjusting the criterion. As a result, criterion M08 will be formulated as follows: <i>Criterion: From 01-01-2025, the block of buildings must be equipped with an external lightning protection system, installed according to NEN 1014 or NEN EN IEC 62305. The installation of the lightning protection system is carried out in accordance with the guidelines and in compliance with the NEN standard.</i>
16-03-23	B03 Haemoglobin measurement	Criterion B03 states that an HB measurement is taken at the age of 20 weeks and that if HB values are too low, iron must be administered as a supplement. It is not usual practice to monitor the HB level of rosé calves. How does this relate in practice to rosé calves where the HB level never had to be monitored in the past?	The Better Life criteria for calves include various criteria aimed at ensuring that calves are fed enough forage to provide them with sufficient iron. As a result, further monitoring of the HB level (at an age of 20 weeks) of Better Life calves is not necessary to realise the intended target of an average HB level of 7.0 mmol/l. This criterion therefore does not need to be verified. It will be removed from the BLL criteria at the next revision.

27-02-24	T01 Electric cattle prods	The 'Electric cattle prods' criterion states that no electric cattle prods are used on the veal farm and during the transport of calves. 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?	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. 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 and during unloading at the BLL certified abattoir for which the relevant BLL participant is responsible. This aspect will be inspected (unannounced) by the CB.
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