



ORGANIC TRUST CLG

Organic poultry production – what you need to consider prior to entering organics?

Organic poultry and poultry products are in great demand in Ireland due to limited supplies at present. Commercial organic poultry enterprises are specialised businesses which requires high management skills and high feed costs.



Feed: Some producers rely on home mixes of organic cereals - primarily cereals and pulses, supplemented with full fat soya, and prairie meal or poultry balancer. Producers without access to tillage ground use complete diets supplied by specialist organic millers who attempt to fully meet the nutrient requirements of the particular species. These mixes are expensive and return will be lower. At present a small percentage (i.e. 5%) of the poultry feed may be non-organic but must be guaranteed GM-free.

Housing: There are strict size requirements and maximum flock sizes. Access to outside pastures and appropriate shelter is required. Mobile housing is allowed but if using tunnels they must be double skinned.

Specific management requirements

Layers: Max of 6 birds/m² /house and flock size of 3,000 birds. If buying non-organic point of lay birds (up to 18 weeks of age) the producer must firstly obtain permission

from the Organic Trust in relation to same – the Organic Trust must then seek a derogation from the Organic Unit of the Department of Agriculture, Food & The Marine on behalf of the producer. The producer is required to ensure the birds were managed to the full organic standards regarding feedstuffs and veterinary inputs prior to entering the farm. In this regard, proof will be required by the Organic Trust that the pullet producer purchased organically certified feed and a full audit of the veterinary inputs will be undertaken.

If selling to shops the applicant needs to meet the EU regulations regarding egg packaging and labelling, in addition to the organic labelling requirements.

Broilers: Max 10 birds/ m² fixed housing and 16 birds/ m² mobile housing. Slow growing breeds are required. Some producers sell meat weekly and access to a local abattoir which kill small quantities on an on-going basis will be required – the Organic Trust must then inspect this abattoir.

Some organic operators produce 2 or 3 large batches of table birds per year and their customers will buy 6 or 12 birds at a time (for the freezer). Again the abattoir and the packaging facilities must be fully inspected by the Organic Trust.

Turkeys & Geese: Max 2 birds/ m² fixed housing and 3 birds/m² mobile housing. Normally produced for the Christmas market and marketed by individual farmers. Slow growing strains are a must. Complex ration formulations means most people buy-in organically certified compound mixes. Marketing and organisation of customers can prove demanding, however, it has been established that a market exists for those who fully research their potential consumer base.

Manure: Excess poultry manure may only be exported to other **organically certified** farms.

Poultry Charts

The Organic Trust have formulated specific poultry charts which stipulate the full requirements as regards housing and management of poultry – please telephone the office at 01 8530271 for an up to date poultry chart which will allow you to stipulate the system which exists on your farm – this can then be reviewed by the Organic Trust for conformity with the standards.

Further information is available from the Organic Trust office at 01 8530271 or www.organictrust.ie



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