



Slow growing broiler breeds

APPLICABILITY

Theme/Keywords

Slow growing broilers

Context

Organic regulations, extensive label production

Geographical coverage

Worldwide

Required time

-

Period of impact

All life cycle

Equipment

Not required

Best in

Extensive, free-range and organic broiler production systems

Problem

In conventional intensive broiler production fast growing breeds with a daily growth of 50 – 55 grammes are common. In organic agriculture (EU 2018/848) fast growing breeds have a minimum slaughter age of 81 days. So called “slow growing” breeds are used in these systems, as normal breeds would become too big too early, which may result in major health issues. There is no common definition of slow growing in the EU member states, but there are various slow growing broiler breeds available for various free-range systems.

Solution

For free range systems (organic and extensive label production) slow growing breeds with a daily growth of 30 – 45 grams are preferred.

Benefits

Slow growing breeds are recommended or obligatory in organic and extensive label production. Slow growing birds seem to be healthier and seem to behave better in organic production than conventional fast-growing broilers.

Practical recommendations

Examples:

- **Fast growing breeds (50-55 g daily growth)**
Ross 308, Ross 508, Hubbard Classic, Hubbard Flex
- **Slow growing breeds (30-45 g daily growth)**
Hubbard JA 757, Hubbard JA 787, Hubbard Colouryield, Hubbard Naked Neck, Ranger Gold, Rowan Ranger, Sasso X44, Sasso T44, T44NI, Kabir
- **Dual purpose breeds (only male for fattening, 25 – 35 g daily growth)**
Lohmann Dual, Coffee&Cream, Regio-Huhn
- **Old breeds (20 – 25 g daily growth)**
Brahma, Cochin



Figure 1: Hubbard JA 757 in the veranda (Source: K. Rath, Naturland e.V.)



Figure 2: Slow growing birds in a mobile house (L. Vogt, Naturland e.V.)

On-farm application

Please investigate further regarding a national list of slow-growing breeds and/or other criteria to see which slow-growing breeds are available in your country.



Figure 3: Slow growing breed Hubbard Colouryield (Source: L. Vogt, Naturland e.V.)

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further readings

Article: Slower growing broilers are healthier. T. McDougal, Poultryworld.net, 2020
<https://www.poultryworld.net/health-nutrition/slower-growing-broilers-are-healthier>

Weblinks

[Regulation](#) (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on organic production

About this practice abstract and *mEATquality*

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mEATquality:

The *mEATquality* project aims to provide consumers with better-quality pork and broiler meat and animals with a high level of welfare by developing scientific knowledge and practical solutions together with farmers and chain partners.

The *mEATquality* project, an H2020 project, is coordinated by Wageningen Research (The Netherlands) and is a multidisciplinary team of 17 partner organisations representing 7 EU countries. The project is running from October 2021 to September 2025.

Project website: www.meatquality.eu/

Social media: Facebook and LinkedIn (@mEATquality) & X @mEATqualityEU

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