



Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry

DEPARTMENT OF COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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Coordinated text on the regulation of the ‘National Quality System for Animal Welfare’ established pursuant to Article 224 bis of Decree-Law No 34 of 19 May 2020, introduced by Conversion Law No. 77 of 17 July 2020, and the regulations with certification requirements.

HAVING REGARD TO Article 224 bis of Decree-Law No 34 of 19 May 2020, introduced by Conversion Law No 77 of 17 July 2020, on ‘Urgent health measures, support for work and the economy, as well as social policies related to the COVID-19 epidemiological emergency’, establishing the ‘National Quality System for Animal Welfare’, in order to ensure an increased level of food quality and the economic, social and environmental sustainability of livestock production processes, to improve animal welfare and health conditions and to reduce environmental emissions;

CONSIDERING that Article 224 bis of Decree-Law No 34 of 19 May 2020, introduced by Conversion Law No 77 of 17 July 2020, also establishes that:

- one or more decrees of the Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry (MASAF) and the Minister of Health, according to their respective competencies, adopted after agreement at the Permanent Conference for relations between the State, the regions and the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano, shall define the production regulations, the distinctive mark identifying compliant products, the procedures for harmonising and coordinating authorised certification and quality systems, the supervision and control measures and any additional provisions necessary for the implementation of the National Quality System for Animal Welfare
- by decree of the MASAF, adopted in agreement with the Ministry of Health, a technical scientific body is established and regulated, with the task of defining the regime and methods of management of the National Quality System for Animal Welfare;

HAVING REGARD TO Legislative Decree No 146 of 26 March 2001 implementing Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes;

HAVING REGARD TO Legislative Decree No 122 of 7 July 2011 implementing Directive 2008/120/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs;

HAVING REGARD TO Commission Recommendation (EU) 2016/336 of 8 March 2016 on the implementation of Council Directive 2008/120/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs as regards measures to reduce the need for tail-docking;

HAVING REGARD TO Legislative Decree No 181 of 27 September 2010 implementing Directive 2007/43/EC laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production;

HAVING REGARD TO Legislative Decree No 126 of 7 July 2011 implementing Directive 2008/119/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of calves;

HAVING REGARD TO Legislative Decree No 267 of 29 July 2003 implementing Directives 1999/74/EC and 2002/4/EC, for the protection of laying hens and the registration of their keeping establishments;

HAVING REGARD TO the Commission Notice on the application of the provisions of Article 26(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 (2020/C 32/01);



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HAVING REGARD TO the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system [COM(2020) 381 final];

HAVING REGARD TO the European Commission Communication on a Farm to Fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system (Doc. COM(2020) 381 final) of 20 May 2020, which states that the Commission will take action to reduce overall EU sales of antimicrobials for farm animals and aquaculture by 50 % by 2030, and that it will review animal welfare legislation, including that on animal transport and slaughter, in order to align it with the latest scientific data, broaden its scope, make it easier to apply and ultimately ensure a higher level of animal welfare. The Commission will also consider options for animal welfare labelling for better transmission of value along the food chain;

HAVING REGARD TO Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 laying down rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, which provides, inter alia, in Article 6 – Specific objective (i) to ‘improve the response of EU agriculture to society’s demands on food, nutrition and health, including healthy, nutritious and sustainable food, and animal welfare’;

HAVING REGARD TO the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on ‘The Future of Food and Farming’ (Doc. COM (2017) 713 final of 29 November 2017, which in point 3.5 states that ‘*The CAP should become more apt at addressing critical health issues such as those related to antimicrobial resistance (AMR) caused by inappropriate use of antibiotics.*’;

WHEREAS the optional animal welfare information affixed on the label by operators or organisations marketing food products must be objective and verifiable by the competent authorities and must be clear and not misleading for the consumer, as well as in accordance with existing food labelling legislation and in particular Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011;

WHEREAS the need to harmonise at national level the applicable requirements and rules for the certification of animal welfare in farming and to define the requirements, procedures and methods by which individuals and the production chain concerned may market the animal product certified according to the ‘National Quality System for Animal Welfare’ to the final consumer, with the information permitted and authorised by this Decree;

HAVING REGARD TO Note No 0218950 of 6 July 2022 in which the Ministry for Economic Development informed the European Commission of the notification of 21 June 2022 (to which the number 2022/0439/I was assigned) pursuant to Directive (EU) 2015/1535, of the draft technical regulation on the Interministerial Decree containing the regulations for the ‘National Quality System for Animal Welfare’;

HAVING REGARD TO Decree No 341750 of 2 August 2022 issued by the Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry in agreement with the Minister of Health, which defines the operating



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procedures for the management of the 'National Quality System for Animal Welfare' established pursuant to Article 224 bis of Decree-Law No 34 of 19 May 2020, No 34, introduced by Conversion Law No 77 of 17 July 2020;

HAVING REGARD TO message no. 303 by which the European Commission, pursuant to Article 5(2) of Directive (EU) 2015/1535, submitted its comments on the draft technical regulation relating to the Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022 laying down rules on the 'National Quality System for Animal Welfare';

HAVING REGARD TO MASAF note no. 0570186 of 8 November 2022, in response to message no. 303;

HAVING REGARD TO Decree No. 0122818 of 24 February 2023 of the Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry and the Minister of Health, appointing the members of the Technical Scientific Committee on Animal Welfare (CTSBA) on the basis of the provisions of paragraph 4 of Article 10 of the Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022;

HAVING REGARD TO the directorate decrees of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry No 0377557 of 19 July 2023, No 0299411 of 2 July 2025 and No 0411421 of 3 September 2025, which replaced certain members of the Technical Scientific Committee for Animal Welfare (CTSBA) on the basis of the provisions of Article 1, paragraph 3 of Decree No 0122818 of 24 February 2023;

HAVING REGARD TO the Decree of 23 October 2024 issued by the Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry in agreement with the Minister of Health concerning *'Amendment of Annexes 1 and 2 to the Decree of 2 August 2022 and approval of the certification requirements (specifications) relating to cattle and pigs for fattening reared outdoors, within the framework of the 'National Quality System for Animal Welfare' on the opinion of the CTSBA expressed at the meetings of 25 October 2023, 9 November 2023 and 13 December 2023;*

HAVING REGARD TO the Decree of 21 July 2025 issued by the Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry in agreement with the Minister of Health amending Annexes 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the Interministerial Decree of 23 October 2024;

CONSIDERING it necessary to prepare a coordinated text incorporating all the amendments to Annexes 1 and 2 of the Decree of 2 August 2022 made by the Decree of 23 October 2024 and those to Annexes 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the Interministerial Decree of 23 October 2024 made by Decree No 0337359 of 21 July 2025, in order to ensure clarity and transparency in the management of the SQNBA;

HEREBY DECREES:

Article 1 - The coordinated text of Decree of 2 August 2022 issued by the Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry in agreement with the Minister of Health, which incorporates the amendments to Annexes 1 and 2 introduced by Decree of 23 October 2024 and Decree of 21 July 2025, is reproduced in full in Annex A to this Decree.



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Article 2 - The coordinated text of the Decree of 23 October 2024 issued by the Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry in agreement with the Minister of Health, which incorporates the amendments to Annex 1 of the Decree of 2 August 2022 and the certification requirements (specifications) relating to cattle and pigs for fattening reared outdoors, within the framework of the 'National Quality System for Animal Welfare' introduced in Annexes 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 by Decree of 21 July 2025, is reproduced in full in Annex B to this Decree.

THE DIRECTOR GENERAL
Simona Angelini

Annex A

Article 1

(Purpose and scope)

1. This Decree lays down the procedure for defining the animal health and welfare requirements, in excess of those of the relevant European and national standards, for the qualification of the management of the breeding process of animals intended for food production, broken down by species, production guideline and farming method, including the management of emissions in the establishment, within the framework of the 'National Quality System for Animal Welfare', hereinafter referred to as SQNBA. Membership of the SQNBA is on a voluntary basis and the right of access is guaranteed for all operators in the Member States of the European Union legitimately concerned.
2. This Decree also governs the issue of the certification of the compliance with the requirements of the SQNBA, as well as the procedures and methods by which entities in the production chain concerned may market animals from a certified holding or the product of animal origin derived from one or more holdings covered by certification referred to in this Decree.
3. This Decree applies to primary production and food business operators referred to in Article 2, except for operators in the transport phase, unless otherwise stipulated by the certification requirements provided for under the SQNBA.
4. The SQNBA is made up of the provisions of this Decree and the certification requirements by species, production guideline and breeding method, defined according to the procedure established in paragraph 5 and taking into account the indications of Article 224 bis of Decree-Law No 34 of 19 May 2020, introduced by Conversion Law No 77 of 17 July 2020, and the identified priorities of the livestock sector.
5. By one or more decrees of the Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry (MASAF) and the Minister of Health, on the proposal of the Technical Scientific Committee for Animal



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Welfare (CTSBA) referred to in Article 10, adopted after agreement at the Permanent Conference for relations between the State, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, the certification requirements relating to the breeding of animal species of zootechnical interest shall be defined, at least on two progressive levels.

6. Without prejudice to the provisions laid down in Article 8 concerning the marketing and labelling of animals and products of primary production, the CTSBA assesses the possibility of providing for the further development of a system of welfare requirements aimed at making it more possible to exploit the various commitments made by producers, broken down by species, production guideline and farming method, in order to improve animal welfare, in accordance with Article 224 bis of Decree-Law No 34 of 19 May 2020, introduced by Conversion Law No 77 of 17 July 2020.

Article 2

(Definitions)

The following definitions shall apply in this Decree:

- **Animal welfare:** an optimal condition achieved in an integrated system that takes into account the ethological characteristics of the species, the rearing method, the density of animals per surface area, nutrition, animal health, biosafety control on the farm, monitoring of the use of veterinary medicines, animal transport conditions, and the control and management of emissions in the establishment;
- **Rearing system:** the set of structural conditions, including control and management of environmental emissions, feeding, environmental, technological, managerial and sanitary conditions under which the animal or group of animals is reared, for all or part of its life cycle, in relation to species, life stage, production guideline or others, specified by the certification requirements defined by the CTSBA and approved in accordance with the procedures laid down in Article 1(5);
- **Rearing method:** how the animal or group of animals is reared (e.g. at posts, in individual stalls or grazing etc.) for all or part of the life cycle, in relation to species, life stage, production guideline or others. It may be differentiated as indoor rearing (with or without outdoor access), outdoor rearing or other methods that may be envisaged and indicated by species, breed, and production guideline by the certification requirements defined by the CTSBA and approved in accordance with the modalities laid down in Article 1(5);
- **Establishment:** premises and facilities of any kind or, in the case of open-air rearing, any environment or place where animals are kept, on a temporary or permanent basis, for the production of food for human use;



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- **Unique registration number:** an alphanumeric code generated by the BDN referring to the establishment in which the activity takes place, the operator's tax identifier and the species of animals kept;
- **Biosafety:** the set of structural and management measures aimed at reducing and combating the risk of introduction, development and spread of diseases in animals, in an establishment or means of transport or any other site;
- **Primary production:** livestock products derived from supply chains for the production of: beef, pork, sheep, goat, buffalo, horse, poultry, and rabbit, and milk derivatives, eggs, and apiculture products, aquaculture products and heliculture products;
- **Primary production operator:** any natural or legal person responsible for animals or primary products of animal origin, including, for a limited period, identified by the Tax Code and holder of the unique registration number of the establishment, as defined by Regulation (EU) 2035/2019, registered in the National Database (hereinafter BDN). This person holds the establishment's certificate of conformity for the primary production phase. Cooperatives or other recognised forms of association of primary production operators, all of which are members of the SQNBA for the same rearing method, are equated with primary production operators. In this case, the form of association is responsible for compliance with the requirements of the SQNBA and holds the certificate of conformity for all associated establishments;
- **Food business operator:** natural or legal person holding the certificate of conformity for the Chain of Custody, responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements of food law in the food business under its control, as well as the natural or legal person responsible for transporting the live animals to the slaughterhouse;
- **Group of Food Business Operators: the set of food business operators** coordinated by a natural or legal person requesting certification and responsible for compliance with the requirements of the SQNBA as well as the certificate of conformity for the Custody Chain;
- **Chain of Custody (CoC):** a system to ensure the identification and traceability of animals and products of primary production throughout the various stages of production, processing, distribution and marketing, up to the final consumer;
- **Certification Body:** the body carrying out conformity assessment services accredited by the National Accreditation Body in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 765/2008;
- **National Accreditation Body:** the only body authorised by that State to carry out accreditation activities in a Member State. In Italy, the Decree of the Ministry for Economic Development of 22 December 2009 designates Accredia as the only Italian national body authorised to carry out accreditation and market surveillance activities;



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- **Accreditation:** attestation by an Accreditation Body that a given Certification Body fulfils the criteria established by harmonised standards and, where appropriate, any additional requirements, including those defined in relevant sectoral programmes, to carry out a specific conformity assessment activity;
 - **Conformity assessment:** procedure designed to demonstrate whether specific requirements relating to a product, process or service have been met;
 - **Certification scheme:** a set of rules and procedures identifying the subject matter of the conformity assessment and the methods for determining it, in addition to the set of requirements against which the assessment is to be carried out;
 - **Certificate of conformity:** a document issued by a Certification Body to a primary production operator or food business operator or group of food business operators, certifying compliance with the requirements specified in the certification scheme following appropriate conformity assessments;
- **Assessor:** a person who meets the minimum requirements set out in Annex 1 and is mandated by a Certification Body to perform, individually or as part of a group, the assessment of compliance of a primary sector operator, a food business operator or a group of food business operators with the requirements of the SQNBA;
- **National Database (BDN):** the national computerised database provided for in Article 109(1) of Regulation (EU) No 429/2016 already established by Article 12 of Legislative Decree No 196 of 22 May 1999 at the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale Abruzzo e Molise “G. Caporale”, accessible through the web applications of the web portal of veterinary information systems www.vetinfo.it.

Article 3

(Specific provisions)

1. For the purposes of clear and correct information to the consumer, the production and marketing of animals and products of primary production as well as foodstuffs, with information on animal welfare, farm biosafety and veterinary medicinal products, as required by the certification requirements under the SQNBA, shall take place in accordance with the provisions of this Decree.
2. If, on the date of entry into force of this Decree, such information is already being used and communicated to consumers on the basis of technical standards already recognised or authorised by MASAF, or voluntary certifications issued by Certification Bodies, the procedures provided for in those technical standards or certifications shall be adapted to the contents of this Decree, in accordance with the procedures set out in Article 7.



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3. The adaptation referred to in paragraph 2 is not provided for the information relating to the rearing system and which in any case does not concern animal welfare, biosafety on farms and veterinary medicinal products.

Article 4

(Criteria and procedures for joining the SQNBA)

1. The application for membership of the SQNBA shall be submitted by the primary production operator or a food business operator or a group of operators in the food sector, for the activities subject to certification.
2. In order to join the SQNBA, the entities referred to in paragraph 1 must comply with current sector legislation.
3. The subjects referred to in paragraph 1 must submit a specific application to a Certification Body chosen from those listed on the institutional website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry.
4. The persons referred to in paragraph 1 must ensure at all stages of rearing, production, transfer, processing, marketing and preservation that the requirements laid down in this Decree are observed and shall take measures to ensure the separation in time or space of live animals or products not certified by the SQNBA.
5. The following may apply for membership of the SQNBA:
 - 5.1. Primary production operators:
 - 5.1.1. which are identified in accordance with the specific European Union and national legislation in force;
 - 5.1.2. which participate in the risk-based categorisation system of farms by collecting and processing information relating to self-checks and monitoring activities in accordance with the indications referred to in Article 9;
 - 5.1.3. which comply, where provided for, with the requirements for access to the certification scheme for the animal species, the production guideline and the rearing method of interest laid down in the certification requirements defined by the CTSBA and approved in accordance with the procedures laid down in Article 1(5);
 - 5.1.4. which guarantee a system for the identification and traceability of animals and products of primary production to ensure compliance with the provisions of the SQNBA;



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5.1.5. in the application for membership, they must indicate:

- i. the animal species, production orientation and farming method to be certified, in addition to the unique registration number and tax code of the Operator; in the case of cooperatives or other recognised forms of association, the same data are required for each member Operator;
- ii. any direct sales activity in the farm of SQNBA certified products;
- iii. the name of the veterinarian formally appointed by the Operator to enter the evaluation data of the farm in the portal referred to in Article 9;
- iv. a commitment to meet the defined SQNBA certification requirements and procedures;

5.1.6. an individual primary production operator may submit several applications for membership relating to different species, rearing methods and production guidelines intended to be certified by the SQNBA;

5.1.7. membership to the SQNBA for an animal species, production guideline and rearing method means that all animals of the species covered by the membership, under the responsibility of the primary production operator, are managed in accordance with the procedures and conform to the certification requirements defined by the CTSBA and approved as set out in Article 1(5).

5.2. Food business operators:

5.2.1. which are recognised or registered in accordance with the specific European Union and national legislation in force;

5.2.2. which adopt the chain of custody system for the SQNBA in accordance with the requirements of Annex 2;

5.2.3. in the application for membership, they shall give:

- i. the data and legal references of the food business operator applying;
- ii. the details relating to the approval of the food business Operator (approval number) or their registration (protocol and date of activity notification);
- iii. the relevant stage(s) in the supply chain concerned;



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- iv. a brief description of the food business operator, its organisation, the activities carried out and the number of animals/volumes treated;
- v. a commitment to meet the defined SQNBA certification requirements and procedures;
- vi. that they comply with the requirements of the current sector legislation for traceability and that they do not have pending requirements, yet to be addressed, by the competent authorities for that sector.

5.3. If membership of the SQNBA takes place through a Group of Food Business Operators, the SQNBA shall submit the application indicating each food business operator involved in accordance with the procedures set out in this Article.

Article 5

(Certification Body)

1. The Certification Body which intends to operate under the SQNBA must be accredited to standard UNI CEI EN ISO IEC 17065 in the version in force, in accordance with the SQNBA certification scheme, for the animal species and production orientation of interest and comply with the requirements and procedures for the certification process laid down in Annex 1 to this Decree.
2. The Certification Body must also be registered in a list kept by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, in accordance with the procedures set out in the aforementioned Annex 1. The registration shall last five years and may be suspended or withdrawn in the event of serious non-compliances or generalised deficiencies in the control system which may compromise the reliability and effectiveness of the system and of the certification body itself, as defined in Annex 1, Part A, paragraph 2.
3. Suspension of registration depending on the seriousness of the case may last from three to six months. At the end of the period, the Certification Body must demonstrate that it has solved the problems identified. Otherwise, the registration shall be revoked.
4. Certification Bodies shall make available to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry and the Ministry of Health, as well as to the Accreditation Body, the results of the assessment activities carried out on Operators participating in the SQNBA. The information obligations imposed on Certification Bodies are fulfilled by uploading the data to the system referred to in Article 9, which, through interoperability mechanisms, makes the information uploaded by the Certification Body available in the Supervisory Database (BDV), referred to in the Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry of 16 February 2012.



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5. In this way, the Certification Bodies shall also fulfil the obligations to upload data to the Single Register of Inspections on Agricultural Enterprises (RUCI), pursuant to Article 1(2) of Decree-Law No 91 of 2014, converted, with amendments, into Law No 116 of 11 August 2014.

Article 6

(Certification activities)

1. The Certification Body, by means of documentary and on-site checks, in accordance with the provisions of Annex 1, Part C, shall assess the requirements of the certification process and the compliance of applicants who have applied for membership of the SQNBA. Such assessments include the suitability of the primary sector operator's or food business operator's or Group of food business operators' management procedures in light of the requirements of the SQNBA, verification of the ability of the self-check system to meet the requirements of the SQNBA and maintain the identification and traceability of animals and products throughout the supply chain, records to support the entire process, as well as verification of the correspondence, proper use and transfer of labelling information pursuant to Article 8.
2. The Certification Body shall assess the fulfilment of the requirements for the required certification by means of an initial conformity assessment with the individual applicant who applies to join the SQNBA. In addition, it shall verify the non-compliance, i.e. the resolution of those found, and following a positive assessment of the requirements, shall issue a certificate of conformity attesting to the inclusion of the entity or group in the certification scheme under the SQNBA.
3. The Certification Bodies shall, over time, reassess the maintenance of the conformity of the certified entities in accordance with the timeframes and procedures laid down in Annex 1.
4. Non-compliance with the provisions of this Decree, including failure to meet the access requirements, constitutes non-compliance that must be managed and resolved by the certified parties in accordance with the instructions of the Certification Body.
5. The Certification Body shall suspend certification in accordance with Annex 1, Part C, point 10.
6. During the suspension period, the entity is required to continue to apply the requirements of the SQNBA certification process, without prejudice to the prohibition to sell animals and market products with indications referring to the SQNBA.
7. Failure to resolve the causes that led to the suspension of certification within the prescribed timeframe leads to its withdrawal and exclusion from the SQNBA, in accordance with the procedures described in Annex 1.



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8. The Certification Body shall publish on its institutional website the list of certified entities belonging to the SQNBA and subject to its own control, distinguishing between primary production and the food sector. With reference to each, it must also report:
 - a) the health registration or authorisation number or approval number of the primary production operator or the food business operator;
 - b) the identification code of the Operator or Group of Operators in the primary or food sector assigned by the Certification Body;
 - c) the species, production guideline and rearing method of the animals covered by the SQNBA certification (for primary production operators only);
 - d) an explicit reference to suspended or revoked certificates.
9. The list of certified entities participating in the SQNBA, referred to in paragraph 8, is also available on the MASAF institutional website.

Article 7

(Terms and procedures for adaptation to the SQNBA - Transitional rule)

1. In order to ensure the implementation of the provisions of Article 3(1) and (2), the adaptation must be made within 12 months of the date of entry into force of the specific certification requirements for animal species, production guideline and rearing method, as defined in Article 1(5).
2. The technical standards and voluntary certifications referred to in Article 3(2) shall be considered valid and effective at the same time as those issued pursuant to this Decree until the end of the transitional period defined in paragraph 1.
3. Failure to comply with paragraph 1 shall make it impossible to use the information covered by this Decree in the context of the aforementioned technical standards and voluntary certifications.

Article 8

(Marketing and labelling)

- 1) For the purposes of this Decree, the marketing of animals, products of primary production and food products derived therefrom must include the following information on the sales documents or on the label, indicating the level reached from progressive levels of certification:
 - a) ‘National Animal Welfare Quality System’ or, alternatively, ‘SQN Animal Welfare’. This indication may be replaced by the SQNBA identification logo, defined by a subsequent decree of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry and the Ministry of Health.



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- b) The rearing method, as may be identified in the certification scheme, relating to the species and production guideline, approved under the SQNBA.
 - c) '*Reared in.....*' to refer to the SQNBA-certified establishment in which the animal's rearing cycle is conducted in compliance with the requirements, methods and timeframes set out in the certification schemes referred to in Article 1(5). In compliance with the provisions of this Decree, the words '*From rearing facility... [nationality]... SQNBA certificate*' or '*From rearing facility ... [nationality]... SQNBA certificate*' and, if the animal was born, reared and slaughtered in the same Member State, the information may also be provided in *the* cumulative form '*Origin... [name of Member State]*', accompanied, where appropriate, by the indication of a geographical region.
 - d) Any other information required, in relation to the species, production guideline and breeding method, from the certification requirements approved under the SQNBA.
2. The information referred to in paragraph 1 shall also be accompanied by the following information:
 - a) the registration code of the Certification Body chosen by the Operator;
 - b) the identification code of the food business operator or Group of food business operators packaging the product for release for consumption or of the primary production operator where the animal or product is sold directly on the farm.
 3. The information referred to in paragraph 1 must appear in the same field of vision as the label of the pre-packed product as defined in Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011. For non-pre-packed products intended for the final consumer, this information must be clearly and prominently displayed on the counter.
 4. At the stages prior to marketing to the final consumer, the information referred to in this Article shall be indicated on the sales documents accompanying the live animals and, in the case of the product of primary production or food, may also be expressed by means of barcode or alphanumeric code or QR-code or other appropriate manner, including on their packaging.
 5. The transfer to the final consumer of the information required by the SQNBA referred to in this Decree shall take place through the chain of custody certified by an accredited Certification Body, except in the case of direct sales to the animal rearing farm.
 6. Without prejudice to other specific provisions concerning the provision of information to consumers, the particulars referred to in paragraph 1 shall be indicated:
 - a) in the main field of vision of the labelling, where components of animal origin from SQNBA-certified holdings are the only ingredient or the certified ingredients are present as a whole as a



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percentage greater than or equal to 75 % in the product obtained and placed on the market for final consumption;

- b) in the visual field of the label, the name of the ingredient, its percentage, and the SQNBA information referred to in paragraph 1(a), in all cases where the SQNBA-certified ingredients represent less than 75% provided that the same ingredient comes entirely from SQNBA-certified farms.
7. In foodstuffs, the presence of the same ingredient certified and not certified under this Decree shall not be permitted at the same time.

Article 9

(Risk-based rearing facility categorisation information system ClassyFarm)

1. ClassyFarm is the information system of the Ministry of Health, managed by the Experimental Zooprophyllactic Institute of Lombardy and Emilia Romagna (hereinafter IZSLER) and integrated into the national veterinary portal www.vetinfo.it, which defines the categorisation of farms according to risk through the collection and processing of information relating to self-monitoring and surveillance activities carried out by operators in accordance with Articles 24 and 25 of Regulation (EU) 429/2016.
2. For the correct application of the SQNBA in the holding, ClassyFarm permits the:
 - a) verification of the requirements for access to the SQNBA route referred to in Article 4 of this Decree;
 - b) the allocation of login details for access to the area dedicated to the Certification Bodies, as referred to in Article 5;
 - c) the evaluator, appointed by the Certification Body, to include the results of the verification referred to in point (a) in the appropriate section of Classyfarm for the continuation of the certification process;
 - d) the ensuring of an adequate level of interoperability with other public information systems as regards the availability and usability of information, for those entitled, relating to biosafety, drug consumption and animal welfare aspects to ensure the most appropriate sharing of such information between the public entities concerned for the purposes set out in this Decree in accordance with the rules in force for the protection of data sensitivity;
 - e) the preparation of an information flow allowing the Certification Body to obtain information on non-compliances by primary sector operators and food business operators detected by the



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Veterinary Service of ULSS Companies, together with any relevant requirements, in order to implement the provisions of Annex 1, Part C.

3. IZSLER guarantees, through the upgrading of its IT system, facilities and staff, free of charge to the Ministry for Health, the full functioning of the ClassyFarm system.

Article 10

(Technical Scientific Committee for Animal Welfare)

1. The Technical Scientific Committee for Animal Welfare (CTSBA) is hereby established, which is responsible for defining the certification requirements for the rearing of animal species of livestock interest and proposing amendments and additions. It also defines the distinctive mark used to identify compliant products, the procedures for harmonising and coordinating technical standards already recognised or authorised by MASAF or voluntary certifications issued by certification bodies on the date of entry into force of this provision, the methods for using the data available in national and regional databases in the agricultural and health sectors, as well as any additional information useful for implementing the system. The CTSBA is also entrusted with the task of evaluating the possibility of implementing a transparent multi-level labelling system, relating to compliance with the growing commitments related to animal welfare in farms.
2. On the basis of the information available in ClassyFarm, pertaining to the SQNBA, the CTSBA shall draw up a report, at least every two years, detailing the activities carried out during the reference period. These reports will be made public on the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry's institutional website.
3. The CTSBA shall ensure the participation of stakeholders, in the performance of its functions, through targeted consultations.
4. The CTSBA, which operates within the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, includes:
 - a) two expert representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry;
 - b) two expert representatives of the Ministry of Health;
 - c) six representatives of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces, including three for the Agricultural sector and three for the Animal Health sector, appointed by the Standing Conference for relations between the State, the Regions and Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano;
 - d) a representative of Accredia;



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- e) three experts in animal welfare were appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, two of whom belong to the Council for Agricultural Research and Analysis of Agricultural Economics;
 - f) three experts in the field of animal welfare, including two appointed by the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia and Emilia-Romagna, as the headquarters of the National Reference Centre for Animal Welfare (CRenBA) and manager of the ClassyFarm system, and one appointed by the Experimental Zooprohylactic Institute of Abruzzo and Molise.
5. The roles of Chair and Vice-Chair of the CTSBA are held on a rotating basis, for a term of two years, by a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry or a representative of the Ministry of Health.
 6. The CTSBA can make use of additional experts in production processes covering the entire supply chain.
 7. The secretarial functions of the CTSBA are carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry.
 8. Members of the CTSBA shall not be paid any fees, allowances or reimbursement of expenses.

Section 11.

(Supervision of Certification Bodies)

1. The supervision of certification bodies is carried out by the Central Inspectorate for Quality Protection and Fraud Prevention of Agri-Food Products (ICQRF) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry.
2. Supervisory activities shall be carried out through the organisation of audits or inspections, aimed at verifying that there are no deficiencies in requirements and deficiencies on the part of the Certification Body in the performance of certification tasks and that the Certification Body has taken appropriate and timely corrective action to resolve such deficiencies, where detected.

Section 12.

(Financial invariance clause)

1. The implementation of the provisions of this Decree must not result in new or increased burdens on public finances.
2. The Administrations concerned shall carry out the obligations provided for in this Decree with the human, financial and instrumental resources already available under current legislation.



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Section 13.

(Entry into force)

1. The entry into force of this Decree is subject to the conclusion of the notification procedure to the European Commission pursuant to Directive (EU) 2015/1535, which was last transposed by Legislative Decree No 223 of 15 December 2017.



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Annex 1

Requirements of the Certification Bodies and the Certification Process

Part A

General requirements

Certification activities are carried out by bodies accredited to the UNI CEI EN ISO IEC 17065 standard in its current version and registered in the appropriate list of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry (MASAF), as referred to in Article 5 of the Decree.

1. Procedure for registering the certification body in the list held by MASAF

In order to be registered in the list referred to in Article 5 of the Decree, the Certification Body (CB) must submit a specific application to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the same ministry and made available on the portal www.politicheagricole.it.

The application for registration, signed by the legal representative, must contain the personal and tax identification data, telephone numbers and certified email address, for any communication from the Certification Body, and must be accompanied by the following documents:

- a) Communication issued by the National Accreditation Body (ACCREDIA) certifying the positive outcome of the verification at the Body's headquarters during the initial accreditation phase for SQNBA. The certification body must send the accreditation certificate within 12 months of the date of inclusion in the list;¹
- b) a procedure prepared by the Certification Body to define the process, rules, responsibilities and methods for carrying out the certification activity at the Operators that are members of the SQNBA, including procedures for the management of non-compliances and related measures, as well as procedures for issuing certificates and handling complaints and appeals;
- c) control plan approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry on the proposal of the Technical Scientific Group responsible for drafting the SQNBA control plans, drawn up on the basis of the certification scheme for which accreditation has been requested, which defines the minimum control activities of the Certification Body with regard to Operators participating in the SQNBA, the methods and timing of assessment, the conditions that determine non-compliance (NC) and their severity (minor or major), as well as the corrective actions that the Operator must implement to restore compliance and the cases in which additional measures are applicable (removal of indications, suspension, revocation);
- d) a qualification procedure, training and monitoring of staff involved in certification activities for the SQNBA;
- e) a nominative and functional organisational chart relating to the activities of the SQNBA;



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- f) a list of assessors qualified to operate for the SQNBA, separated into primary production and/or chain of custody;
- g) curricula of the Certification Body staff involved in the work of the SQNBA and related declaration of absence of a conflict of interest;
- h) forms used for evaluation activities;
- i) the criteria for the definition and application of tariffs to operators;
- j) a model contract to be concluded for the certification activity.

The competent office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, having acquired the above documentation, following the positive outcome of the preliminary investigation, assigns an identification code to the certification body and proceeds to enter it in the appropriate list published on the institutional website of the same Ministry: www.politicheagricole.it.

The Certification Body is required to notify the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry of any substantial changes to the documents previously filed for inclusion in the ministerial list.

2. Suspension or Revocation of the Certification Body's Registration in the list held by MASAF

In accordance with Article 5 of the SQNBA Decree, the conditions determining the suspension or revocation of the registration of the Certification Bodies are defined:

a) Suspension:

- non-compliance with the rules laid down in the control plan;
- non-compliance with certification procedures;
- impediment to the exercise of supervision or failure to comply with the requirements imposed as a result of supervisory activities;
- general deficiencies in the system of controls which may compromise the reliability and effectiveness of the system and of the certification body itself;
- adoption of discriminatory behaviour vis-à-vis operators subject to control;
- failure to communicate or delay in communicating the results of the controls by entering them in the information system referred to in Article 9 of the Decree;
- failure to communicate or delay in communicating non-compliances (NC) found with the Operator;
- failure by the CB to adopt measures corresponding to the NC cases detected with the Operators.

b) Revocation:

- loss of accreditation;



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- three suspension measures or a total suspension period of more than nine months during the five-year period of registration;
- loss of the requirements for inclusion in the list referred to in Article 5 of the Decree.

The Central Inspectorate for Quality Protection and Fraud Prevention of Agri-Food Products (ICQRF), referred to in Article 11 of the Decree, shall notify the competent Office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry of the results of the supervision and critical situations for the adoption of measures to suspend or revoke registration.

Part B

Requirements for the Certification Body staff

Certification bodies that conduct SQNBA conformity assessment activities must have sufficient personnel and equipment to ensure compliance with SQNBA requirements.

The Certification Body must define tasks and responsibilities for access, with the assignment of credentials, to the dedicated area of the information system referred to in Article 9 of the Decree and assumes responsibility for the incoming and outgoing communications necessary for the control and supervision of the SQNBA.

Certification activities must be carried out in an impartial manner by Certification Body personnel not involved in self-assessment (for primary production operators) and consultancy activities at the establishments and/or holdings being assessed.

The assessment of primary production operators must be carried out by a veterinarian, with regard to the sectors of animal health, biosecurity, animal welfare and veterinary medicine, and by a graduate in agricultural science and technology or equivalent qualifications with regard to the macro-area of 'Environmental Protection'; these figures may operate within a verification group, each according to their own competencies, coordinated by the veterinarian.

The Certification Bodies must use staff dedicated to the assessment, review and decision-making phases meeting the following competence requirements, for the different functions:

- Minimum competence requirements for assessment functions

Requirements	Primary production - veterinary	Primary production - other professional figures	Supply chain
Educational qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Degree in Veterinary Medicine: LM42;- Enrolment in the respective professional order-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Degree in:<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Agricultural Sciences and Technologies: LM69;· Food sciences and technologies: LM70;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Degree in:<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Veterinary Medicine: LM42;· Agricultural Sciences and Technologies: LM69;



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Requirements	Primary production - veterinary	Primary production - other professional figures	Supply chain
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Zootechnical Sciences and animal technologies: LM86; · Agri-forestry sciences and technologies: L25; · Food sciences and technologies: L26; · Zootechnical sciences and animal production technologies: L38; - Other equivalent qualifications. - Registration with the respective professional associations, if the qualification does not qualify. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Food sciences and technologies: LM70; · Zootechnical Sciences and animal technologies: LM86; · Biology: LM6; · Agri-forestry sciences and technologies: L25; · Food sciences and technologies: L26; · Zootechnical sciences and animal production technologies: L38; · Biological Sciences: L13; · Agricultural biotechnology: LM 7; · Industrial biotechnology: LM 8; · Medical, veterinary and pharmaceutical biotechnology: LM 9; · Natural Sciences: LM 60; · Science and technology for the environment and the territory: LM 75; · Science and technology for the environment and



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Requirements	Primary production - veterinary	Primary production - other professional figures	Supply chain
			nature: L 32. - Professional degree: · Agricultural, food and forestry technical profession: LP02 - Higher secondary education diploma in agricultural policy; - Other equivalent qualifications.
Work experience	- Work experience of at least 1 year in rearing facilities related to the certified species. The required experience is reduced to 6 months in the cases indicated in the 'Practical training' box.	- Work experience of at least 1 year in rearing facilities related to the certified species. The required experience is reduced to 6 months in the cases indicated in the 'Practical training' box.	- For graduates: work experience of at least 1 year on traceability in the certified supply chain. - For graduates: work experience of at least 2 years on traceability in the certified supply chain.
Theoretical training	- A training course, lasting at least 16 hours, on the protection of animal health and welfare, biosafety standards and the correct use of the drug, traceability and epidemiological monitoring systems and networks of veterinary public health. - A training course on	- A training course on the ClassyFarm information system for the certified section and the animal species. - A course of at least 16 hours on audit techniques for compliance assessment according to UNI EN ISO 19011.	- A training course aimed at understanding and using the ClassyFarm information system. - A course of at least 16 hours on audit techniques for conformity assessment according to UNI EN ISO 19011 - Training on traceability and the



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Requirements	Primary production - veterinary	Primary production - other professional figures	Supply chain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ClassyFarm information system for the certified animal species. - A course of at least 16 hours on audit techniques for compliance assessment according to UNI EN ISO 19011. - Knowledge of the National Quality System for Animal Welfare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of the National Quality System for Animal Welfare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> chain of custody. - Knowledge of the National Quality System for Animal Welfare.
Practical training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is not necessary for assessors already qualified by the Certification Body to operate in the field of primary livestock production. - For new assessors with at least 1 year work experience, a shadowing period shall be required for at least 3 evaluation activities carried out in the context of primary livestock production of the species concerned, or more, if deemed necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is not necessary for assessors already qualified by the Certification Body to operate in the field of primary livestock production. - For new assessors with at least 1 year work experience, a shadowing period shall be required for at least 3 evaluation activities carried out in the context of primary livestock production of the species concerned, or more, if deemed necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is not necessary for assessors already qualified by the Certification Body to operate in the field of traceability and the chain of custody. - New assessors are required to shadow a qualified assessor for at least 3 assessment activities conducted in the area of traceability and the chain of custody.



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Requirements	Primary production - veterinary	Primary production - other professional figures	Supply chain
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For new assessors with at least 6 months of work experience, an additional shadowing period of at least 6 months in primary livestock production of the species in question is required, with a number of shadowing periods appropriate to training needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For new assessors with at least 6 months of work experience, an additional shadowing period of at least 6 months in primary livestock production of the species in question is required, with a number of shadowing periods appropriate to training needs. 	

A specific circular from MASAF and the Ministry of Health will guide the theoretical training of assessors, including the criteria, content, and duration of the training courses, as well as the minimum requirements that bodies/companies providing the training must meet.

- B. Minimum competence requirements for review and decision-making functions:

Requirements	Primary production	Supply chain
Educational qualification	The same as for assessors.	The same as for assessors.
Work experience	The same as for assessors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work experience on traceability.
Theoretical training	The same requirements as for assessors, as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A course on audit techniques for compliance assessment according to UNI CEI EN ISO/IEC 17065; - Training on the certification process and the procedures of the Certification Body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of the ClassyFarm information system and the National Quality System for Animal Welfare. - Training on traceability and the chain of custody.

Part C

Certification Process Requirements



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1. Application for membership and review:

- a. the application submitted by Operators to join the SQNBA must contain at least the information referred to in Article 4 of the Decree.

2. Initial certification assessment:

- a. the initial certification assessment must be agreed by the Certification Body with the Operator where the contents of the application have been deemed complete and exhaustive. The initial assessment is aimed at verifying the conformity of each Operator to join the SQNBA certification system. The initial assessment shall always include at least one in situ assessment;
- b. for primary sector Operators, initial assessments must consider all areas of each establishment where animals of the same species, production guideline and rearing method for which membership is requested are bred;
- c. the evaluations carried out by the Food Business Operators must consider all products, processes and production sites involved in the scope of application required for SQNBA certification, including subcontracted activities.
- d. for the certification of a Group of food business operators, the Certification Body must carry out an assessment at the headquarters of the coordinator and group manager and in a sample of Operators that form part of the group equal to at least the sum of $\sqrt{N_i}$, where N_i is the number of subjects who carry out the same activity in the group for producing the product;
- e. The Certification Body, during the initial assessment at:
 - Primary production operators, must:
 - verify that the system for the identification and traceability of animals and products of primary production ensures compliance with the provisions of the SQNBA;
 - ensure that they are capable of meeting the defined SQNBA certification requirements and procedures;
 - verify the effectiveness and reliability of the self-check system implemented.
 - Food business operators, must:
 - carry out and document the performance of a traceability test;
 - carry out and document the performance of a mass balance;
 - verify the effectiveness and reliability of the self-check system implemented.

3. Initial assessment time:



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- a. The Certification Body must establish the rules for calculating the initial assessment times for Operators based on company size and any complexity factors, in accordance with technical provisions to be issued by MASAF, in line with ACCREDIA's opinion.

4. Management of non-compliance:

- a. Any deficiencies found by the Certification Body during the assessment activities must be notified to the Operators concerned as non-compliances. The Certification Body shall classify the non-compliance as Slight or Serious in relation to its importance, nature, systematic nature and the circumstances that led to its occurrence, except in cases where specific indications are provided in the certification schemes of the individual species; in any case, the following definitions apply:
 - *Minor*: partial satisfaction of the SQNBA requirement, a deficiency that does not compromise the conformity of the breeding and production process, and/or the self-control system, and/or the management of company documentation and/or the requirements for the identification and traceability of animals and products; characterised by having no prolonged effects over time and not causing substantial changes in the company's status and/or the compliance of animals and products and/or the reliability of certified entities;
 - *Serious*: failure to meet the SQNBA requirement, a substantial deficiency that compromises the compliance of the breeding and production process and/or the self-control system, and/or the management of company documentation and/or the identification and traceability requirements for animals and products, and/or the loss of the requirements for access to the SQNBA; characterised by prolonged effects such as to cause substantial changes in the status of the company and/or the compliance of animals and products, and/or the reliability of certified entities.
- b. The description and classification of non-compliances shall be notified to the Operators concerned following review and a decision by Certification Body staff. The Operator to whom a non-compliance has been notified must define, in agreement with the Body, the actions and timing for the resolution thereof, as well as actions to prevent its recurrence. The CB must define the ways (documentary and/or in situ) and the timing with which it intends to verify that compliance has been restored. In the case of group certification, the actions identified to resolve the non-compliant situation must be extended by all members of the group carrying out the same activity.
- c. During the initial assessment stage, all serious non-compliances must be closed with verification of the effectiveness of the proposed actions before the certificate is issued and before subsequently being included in the certification system.



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- d. Any non-compliance with current legislation, detected during animal welfare assessment activities, must be communicated to the Local Veterinary Service in accordance with the procedures defined by the Ministry for Health.

5. Review and decision on certification:

- a. The review and decision must be made by staff who were not involved in the assessment process.
- b. The review and decision may be taken by a Committee, composed of one or more persons, at least one of whom is a veterinarian meeting the same minimum requirements as the assessor.

6. Certificate of conformity:

- a. The certificate of conformity is issued to the primary production Operator, food business Operator or group of food business Operators following the positive outcome of the initial assessment.
- b. The certificate shall include the following information:
 - for Primary production operators:
 - the company name of the Primary sector operator, or of the cooperative or other recognised forms of association,
 - the Unique Registration Number of the Operator responsible for the establishment; in the case of cooperatives or other recognised forms of association, the same data are required for each member Operator.
 - for Food business operators:
 - the name of the Food business operator and the natural or legal person coordinating the group;
 - the VAT number or tax code;
 - the initial date of the certification decision, the date of the current issue of the certificate, following changes made;
 - the reference to the certification standard;
 - the name, address and logo of the Certification Body; other marks (e.g. the accreditation symbol) may be used provided they are not misleading or ambiguous;
 - the unique identification code of the SQNBA Certified Operator, established by the Certification Body;
 - the scope of the certification, distinguishing:



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- for Primary production operators:
 - o references to the animal species reared and, where applicable,
 - o the production guideline, the method of rearing, the breeding phase;
 - o any direct sales in the form of products of animal origin;
 - for Food business operators: references to the activity (products, services) subject to certification, the animal species, the processing.
- c. All activities carried out by a group for the production of SQNBA certified products, including those involved in subcontracting activities, must be included in the certificate of conformity, together with a list of the group's members.

7. Maintenance assessment

- a. The Certification Body certifies the maintenance of compliance by the Operators included in the system by carrying out assessments, including unannounced ones, as described below:
- Primary production operators: at least one annual verification and, if grouped in cooperatives or other recognised associative forms, at least one annual verification at the premises of the group manager (associative form) and a sample of Operators who are members of the group equal to \sqrt{N} , where N is the number of Operators determined once a year according to the actual number of members.

In the case of an associative form, the manager must ensure that the group complies with SQNBA requirements by carrying out verifications on all member operators at least once a year, on the basis of the self-check system implemented during membership.

The CB's verifications must always take into account all the areas of each establishment where animals of the same species, production guideline and rearing method for which membership has been requested are reared, as well as take into account the data contained in the information system referred to in Article 9 of the Decree;

- Food business operators: at least one annual verification and, if organised as a group, at least one annual verification at the premises of the manager and a sample of Operators belonging to the group equal to at least 60% of the subjects determined during the initial assessment and not previously assessed, for the first maintenance assessment. From the second assessment, the number of subjects to be checked must be determined once a year, depending on the actual number of participants and must be at least the sum of the $\sqrt{N_i}$, where N_i is the number of subjects carrying out the same activity in the group for the production of the product.

8. Assessment times for maintaining certification



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- a. The Certification Body must establish rules for calculating assessment times for maintaining certification with Operators, based on company size and any complexity factors, in accordance with technical provisions to be issued by MASAF, in accordance with ACCREDIA's opinion.

9. Non-Conformance Management

- a. The Certification Body must have prepared a procedure for the management of references to certification on non-compliant products placed on the market, following serious non-compliances.
- b. The Certification Body, upon the third notification of a slight Non-Compliance related to the same requirement within a 12-month period, shall classify it as serious. In cases of serious non-compliance, the animal and/or products not complying with the requirements of the SQNBA shall not include references to certification in the sales documents, labelling and advertising of the certified animal or product of animal origin, including those placed on the market. Where serious non-compliances are related to the whole farming or production system, or if the appropriate identification and traceability systems are not maintained, the deletion of the references to certification should be extended to all the animals in the establishment and to the farm products present at the time of the finding.
- c. The Certification Body must define the procedures for carrying out the additional checks on Operators who have been notified of a serious non-compliance in order to attest to the correct implementation of the treatments and corrective actions and the conformity of the entire farming and production system. The third notification of a serious Non-Compliance relating to the same requirement within a 12-month period must provide for the issuance of a measure suspending the certification.



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10. Suspension and revocation of certification

- a. The Certification Body shall suspend certification for a maximum of 6 months whenever:
 - there are general and repeated deficiencies in the system of self-checks that may compromise the reliability and effectiveness of the system;
 - the causes that led to the issuance of a Serious Non-Compliance are not resolved within the prescribed time limits;
 - the Certification Body is prevented from accessing the facilities to carry out the assessment, without justification.
- b. During the suspension period, the Operator is obliged to continue to apply the provisions of the certification procedure without prejudice to the prohibition to sell the animals and market the products with indications referring to the SQNBA in sales documents, labelling and advertising, and must define how to communicate to customers the removal of certification references from their products, including those already placed on the market.
- c. At the end of the suspension period, in accordance with the certification procedure, the Certification Body must assess, if all certification requirements have been satisfied, how compliance can be restored.
- d. In the absence of the restoration of the suspended Operator's compliance within the deadlines agreed with the Certification Body, and in the event of failure to implement the correct procedure during the suspension period, the Certification Body shall apply a measure revoking the certification, resulting in the exclusion of the Operator from the SQNBA system.
- e. The measures adopted by the Certification Body must be communicated to the Operators concerned within 14 working days of the evaluation and the information relating to the measure must be uploaded to the IT system referred to in Article 9 of the Decree within the same time frame.
- f. In the event of revocation, the Operator may submit a new application for SQNBA membership, provided that at least six months have elapsed from the date of the measure and provided that it has resolved the causes that led to the issuance of such a measure.

11. Handling of complaints and appeals

- a. The Certification Body defines the procedures for managing (timing, procedures and costs) complaints and appeals against decisions taken during the certification process.



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Annex 2

Requirements for food business operators

All food business operators, with the exception of primary production operators who sell SQNBA-certified products directly on their premises, who handle or label food products using SQNBA references, must be certified in accordance with the SQNBA Chain of Custody by a Certification Body registered in the list kept by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, as provided for in Article 5 of the Decree.

The purpose of the Chain of Custody, hereinafter CoC, is to provide assurance on the origin of raw materials or products that can be labelled with references to the SQNBA, from certified holdings.

The CoC must be applied throughout the production chain until it is sold to the final consumer and the non-inclusion of an entity in the supply chain makes it impossible to use the references to the SQNBA and the sale of the product as a certificate.

a) General requirements

The Food Operator shall submit an application for certification for the SQNBA CoC to a Certification Body following the implementation of an in-company identification and traceability system, adapted to the size, type and complexity of the activities carried out, attesting to:

- its position and role in the production chain;
- foodstuffs included in the SQNBA CoC;
- the list of food business operators involved in the production (for the stages of supply, processing, trade and distribution), including for processing carried out on behalf of third parties;
- how products are managed in order to ensure proper separation, identification and traceability to prevent possible mixing with products that do not comply with the requirements of the SQNBA. In the processing stages of SQNBA-certified products, the food business operator shall demonstrate the identified methods for separating processes at each individual processing stage and during storage.

Food business operators may apply for group certification; operators belonging to the group carry out successive and consecutive stages in the production of the product, or carry out the same activity. In cases where group certification is required, a natural or legal person must be designated to coordinate the activities of the entire group and verify the effectiveness of the CoC system of all members. In such cases, provision must be made for an agreement between the Parties identifying their responsibilities and tasks, requiring express willingness of the members to submit to the Organisation's controls.

b) Supply management

Each food business operator shall identify suppliers holding a valid individual or group certificate against the SQNBA CoC for the products of interest. In addition, a method must be defined to verify the



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correspondence of the incoming material with that actually purchased. Sales documents or accompanying documents for certified products must always include references to the certification.



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c) Responsibility of the management of the establishment

The management of the food establishment must be involved and it must document its commitment to implement and maintain chain of custody requirements in accordance with the SQNBA.

d) Management of non-compliance

The food business operator must document the management of non-compliance detected during the activities related to the production and marketing of SQNBA products. The documentation must include actions to be taken as a result of non-compliant results derived from self-checking assessments or by the Certification Bodies.

The food business operator shall establish a procedure to ensure and document that non-compliant products are identified, segregated and supervised in order to prevent them from being traded or marketed as SQNBA products. The procedure must also define how to inform other Operators affected by the non-compliance and determine actions to remove references to certification on products destined for the final consumer.

e) Corrective actions

The Food Operator must document the procedures for recording, implementing and the outcome of corrective actions following non-compliance, identifying the type of intervention, the responsibilities for carrying out the operation, the timing, and the verification of effectiveness:

f) Complaints handling

The food business operator shall provide evidence of the registration and handling of complaints.

g) Management of documentation and records

The documentation of the CoC system shall include at least:

- documents attesting the supply of incoming products and sales of finished products intended to be marketed with references to the SQNBA.
- the documents and records attesting to the activities and flows of the production process and the results of the checks and verifications carried out.
- the documents and records necessary for the proper implementation and monitoring of the CoC.

In the case of group certification, the documentation shall also include a description of the production chain, the responsibilities and the methods of management and verification of the processes and products managed by the Group Operators, and of the subcontracted activities. In addition, it is necessary to enter into an agreement with the entities entrusted with subcontracting activities in order to define the supply criteria and responsibilities.

The food business Operator must indicate the responsibilities for issuing, reviewing and approving the documents of the CoC system, the site where they are stored, those who can access and how they can be managed and stored.

All documents and records must be updated, stored, traceable and archived for a minimum time equal to the lifespan of the product plus one year.



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h) Training and instruction

The food business operators should appropriately train, instruct, raise awareness among and involve staff who may have an influence on the CoC, in order to ensure the proper implementation of the system. Staff must be made aware of the importance of their function and the consequences of their behaviour.

i) Internal inspection and review

Each food business operator or Group of Food Business Operators shall reassess the effectiveness of its CoC system at least every 12 months in order to monitor and improve its effectiveness. This assessment shall include the recording of mass balances and traceability tests.

In the case of group certification, the internal audit shall be carried out by the Responsible Organisation on all members of the group.

The assessment of the CoC and any documentary updates must be carried out whenever changes in production flows occur, or new products are included, or in view of the results of internal inspections, self-checks, any complaints received and non-compliance detected by the Certification Body.

j) Use of other certifications of traceability of the supply chain

For the purpose of communicating the certified origin in light of the SQNBA of products or raw materials, any other product traceability certifications held by the Operator will not be considered equivalent.



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ANNEXE B

The coordinated texts of the specifications for certification under the National Quality System for Animal Welfare referred to in Annexes 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the Decree of 23 October 2024 are set out below:

- Regulations governing certification requirements for fattening pigs (over 50 kg) raised outdoors (Annex 3);
- Regulations governing certification requirements for dairy cattle kept in stalls (Annex 4);
- Regulations on the welfare of beef cattle kept in stables (Annex 5);
- Regulations for the welfare of cattle in family farms (Annex 6);
- Regulations for the welfare of cattle raised with or exclusively on pasture (Annex 7).



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Annex 3

REGULATIONS FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF FATTENING PIGS (OVER 50 KG) OUTDOOR FARMING

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➤ GENERAL PART

1. Foreword

Primary production operators and all personnel involved in the management and care of animals and livestock facilities must be aware of the complex relationships among animal health, human health, and the environment, and that welfare can only be achieved through careful integration of these components and the various factors that constitute them.

Therefore, welfare must be achieved and maintained by allowing the animal to maximise its ability to adapt to the environment and by reducing stressors through effective farm management, prophylaxis, biosecurity, and livestock facility enhancement programmes. An appropriate level of animal welfare on the farm also means a lower incidence of disease.

The reduction and rationalisation of antimicrobial consumption, integrated with veterinary activities and advice, are direct consequences of optimal managerial/structural management and represent one of the main tools for containing the spread of antimicrobial resistance in animals, the environment, and food, with a view to *One Health*.

2. Area of application

The requirements set out below apply to all pig farms, starting at 50 kg live weight and, in any case, for a continuous period of not less than the last 4 months of life, reared in outdoor fattening conditions.

3. Definitions

- **Outdoor fattening:** in pigs, this refers to a permanent outdoor rearing method in which pigs are mainly reared on land enclosed by fences to prevent contact with wild pigs, with areas equipped for drinking, feeding, and resting.
- **Primary production operator:** this refers to the farmer, as defined in Art. 2 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022.
- **Employee:** a person who works at the facility on a full-time or part-time basis (minimum half-day) to carry out daily feeding and care of animals and environments, excluding those who work exclusively in the fields.
- **Facility:** refers to the farm

4. Membership of the SQNBA

In order to join the SQNBA, primary production operators must submit a specific application to a Certification Body listed on the institutional website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry (MASAF) and satisfy, among other things, pursuant to Article 4, paragraph 5, point 5.1.3. of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, the following access requirements:

- absence of pigs with docked tails (10% tolerance);



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- compliance with legislative requirements, i.e. the absence of open non-conformities, as per the latest official public health inspection for the sectors relating to animal welfare, pharmacosurveillance and biosecurity, when available;
- compliance with legislative requirements in the last self-assessment carried out in the previous 12 months.

The verification of prerequisites carried out by the Certification Body is recorded in the dedicated area of the ClassyFarm risk-based farm categorisation information system, referred to in Article 9 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, by consulting the access traffic light on the specific Certification Page of the individual primary production operator.

A green traffic light indicates that the access requirements have been met and allows the Operator to proceed with the certification process. Conversely, a red traffic light blocks the certification process as it indicates that the access requirements have not been met.

5. Assessment requirements

The multifactorial nature of wellbeing must necessarily integrate three MACRO AREAS relating to:

- **MACRO-AREA 'BA', ANIMAL WELFARE:** includes the presence of suitable facilities (*Facilities Area*), conscious farm management (*Management Area*) and attention to animal conditions through the monitoring of direct welfare indicators (*Direct Animal Measures Area - ABMs*).
- **MACRO-AREA 'BS', BIOSAFETY:** based on the control of farm biosafety. Biosecurity is one of the main prevention tools available to primary production operators to prevent the introduction, development and spread of diseases in animals on the farm. A suitable biosecurity plan must be developed in consultation with the veterinary surgeon.
- **MACRO-AREA 'MV', CONSCIOUS USE OF VETERINARY MEDICINES:** Conscious use of medication, with particular attention to antimicrobial treatments. Primary production operators who are aware of the integrated approach to achieving a high level of animal welfare on farms use veterinary medicines responsibly and in consultation with veterinarians to ensure appropriate therapeutic support for animals and combat antibiotic resistance.

To obtain certification, primary production operators who meet the prerequisites for access to SQNBA must satisfy the certification requirements for the MACRO AREAS Animal Welfare (BA) and Biosafety (BS), as well as those set out in the MACRO-AREA Conscious Use of Veterinary Medicines (MV).

6. Labelling requirements

The information relating to the farming method, as provided for in Article 8(1)(b) of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, must be reported, in accordance with the farming system adopted, as: **Outdoor farming**.



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➤ ANIMAL WELFARE MACRO-AREA (BA)

- **MANAGEMENT AREA**

1. Training of employees

Operators and employees must be aware of the meaning of welfare and the measures necessary to ensure it. Among these, the training, experience, skills and awareness of management personnel significantly influence animal welfare conditions. Therefore, in addition to experience, training is also necessary, which can be acquired through a specific course, to be repeated every 3 years to keep up to date.

During the first year of entry into force of these Regulations, the training course may also be attended within 12 months of applying for SQNBA membership.

Operators who have completed the course must pass on what they have learnt to all operators who work in direct or indirect contact with animals.

Training of employees

At least one employee with at least 5 years' experience and training in animal welfare, to be repeated every 3 years, in accordance with the Ministry of Health's guidelines on animal welfare training. The 5-year experience requirement is not necessary if the employee has a degree in: LM42 (Degree in Veterinary Medicine), L25 (Agricultural and Forestry Sciences and Technologies), L38 (Animal Production Technologies), LM69 (Agricultural Sciences and Technologies), LM86 (Animal Sciences and Technologies).

- **STRUCTURE AREA**

2. Infirmary area - Treatment of sick or injured animals - Slaughter of animals

The farm must implement an effective system for identifying animals that are suffering, sick or injured, and determine in which cases isolation, including preventive isolation, is necessary for their treatment. The shelter area, called the infirmary, must be adapted to the condition of the animal requiring assistance. The presence of a dedicated, enclosed infirmary area, marked with appropriate signage or other written indications and documented on the farm layout plan, is assessed. In the event of animal slaughter, the presence of a documented procedure specifying the methods, the personnel performing the operations, and the equipment used, including its maintenance, shall be assessed. Access to the infirmary is only granted to animals whose clinical condition requires specific treatment; otherwise, it must remain empty. An assessment is made of whether the infirmary has comfortable, dry, and clean bedding (straw or similar materials) and/or mats (made of soft rubber), as required by the clinical condition.

Infirmary

Identified room, specially prepared to accommodate sick or injured animals with dry bedding and/or comfortable mats where required by clinical condition.

Euthanasia of animals

Existence of written procedures and training of personnel



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3. Animal density

Animals must have sufficient free space to meet their physiological needs.

Animal density: free space

The minimum housing area for outdoor farming of pigs weighing more than 50 kg is at least 250 m² per animal, without prejudice to the provisions of current environmental protection regulations.

In the case of shelter, the minimum covered housing areas for the different categories of pigs are as follows:

- ≥ 0.55 m² per animal from 51 to 85 kg;
- ≥ 0.65 m² per animal from 86 to 110 kg;
- ≥ 1 m² per animal over 110 kg

4. Shelter and resting area

Animals must have access to a sheltered resting area that adequately protects them from adverse weather conditions and health risks, and is appropriate for the season and location.

Sheltered resting area

Presence of both natural shelters (trees, ravines, caves, etc.) and artificial shelters (roofs, shelters, etc.) appropriate to the season and location, protecting from adverse weather conditions and/or environmental hazards.

Both natural and artificial shelters must be easily accessible to all animals and capable of simultaneously protecting all pigs on the same farm.

5. Microclimate conditions check

Animals must have access to shelters that guarantee their welfare even in adverse weather conditions.

Microclimate conditions check

Natural or artificial ventilation; cooling (e.g. water pools, cooling devices such as sprinklers, showers, or drippers, or shade cloths for heat); shelters for cold weather.

- ANIMAL MEASUREMENT AREA (ABMS)

6. Underweight animals

Assessing the body condition of animals is a tool for monitoring their health and welfare. Underweight animals can have multiple causes and, when found, must be investigated as a manifestation of a hidden, indirect problem, such as the inability to feed properly, competition for food/or the presence of disease.



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The Body Condition Score (BCS) is measured on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicates a very thin (cachectic) animal, and 5 indicates a very fat (obese) animal.

Underweight animals

Presence of a monitoring plan for animals classified as underweight, in accordance with the Body Condition Score (BCS).

The number of animals with a BCS < 2 must be less than 7% of the total number of animals.

If it exceeds 4%, the farmer is expected to analyse the causes and risk factors and identify and implement appropriate corrective actions.

Any underweight animals (with insufficient BCS) are housed in the infirmary or in a separate area.

➤ **BIOSAFETY MACRO-AREA (BS)**

The Decree of the Ministry of Health, in agreement with the Ministries of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry, and Ecological Transition, dated 28 June 2022, entitled 'Biosecurity requirements for establishments keeping pigs', establishes comprehensive and high-level conditions.

Given the above, it is considered sufficient to supplement the requirements set out below.

1. Danish customs

The Danish concept of customs is inherent in a series of practices adopted to ensure proper access to the 'clean zone' of the farm in order to minimise the risk of contact from the 'dirty zone' of the farm and from outside.

Danish customs

Based on the risk analysis of the establishment, the Operator has identified and documented the characteristics of the Danish customs and the procedures for correct implementation and maintenance.

Isolation and quarantine

In the event of new pigs being introduced, an isolation area must be identified for their control and observation. This area must be suitably separated from the rest of the farm, both structurally and functionally.

➤ **MACRO-AREA CONSCIOUS USE OF VETERINARY MEDICINES (MV)**

Any non-compliance with the requirements for this macro-area must be classified as serious unless it can be proven that it was used to safeguard the animal's health and life. In this case, references to certification must be deleted only for the animal or group of animals treated, appropriately identified.

1. Consumption of the veterinary medicinal product

DDD values (*)

The consumption of antibiotics on farms during the observation period provided for in paragraph 2 bis of the Ministerial Decree of 23 December 2022, laying down national provisions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of



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DDD values (*)

2 December 2021 and subsequent amendments and additions, expressed in DDD by ClassyFarm, must fall within one of the following conditions with respect to the national distribution of veterinary medicine consumption:

- a) the Defined Daily Dose (DDD) values are maintained or fall within the threshold value reported, in the first instance, in Annex XI of the Ministerial Decree of 23 December 2022 laying down national provisions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021, as amended and supplemented, with regard to direct payments for pigs intended for fattening;
- b) DDD values remain above the threshold mentioned, but are 10% lower than in 2022.

(*) Any changes to the national threshold, the percentage reduction referred to in point (b) and the reference year may be made by Decree of the Ministry of Health and the MASAF.

2. Prescriptions and company health monitoring

Antibiotic treatments

The Operator provides evidence of having administered antibiotic treatments only following a veterinary prescription issued as a result of company health monitoring, which involves assessing the sensitivity or resistance of company pathogens to antibiotic active ingredients through antibiotic sensitivity tests. Health monitoring is considered valid for multiple treatments, provided it is carried out at least once a year.

3. Sensitivity testing for antibiotic use

Use of specific veterinary medicinal products

In the event that antibiotics belonging to the Fluoroquinolone and third- and fourth-generation Cephalosporin classes are used, the Operator shall provide documented evidence that the treatment was carried out only following the indications provided by *in vitro* antibiotic sensitivity tests, indicating that other classes of molecules were not effective *in vitro* against the bacterial agent causing the disease.

In the event that antimicrobials belonging to the **Polymyxin (Colistin)** class are used, the Operator shall provide documented evidence through annual health monitoring that the treatment was carried out only following the indications provided by ***in vitro* sensitivity assessment tests**.



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Annex 4

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➤ GENERAL PART

1. Foreword

Primary production operators and all personnel involved in the management and care of animals and livestock facilities must be aware of the complex relationships between animal health, human health, and the environment, and that welfare can only be achieved through careful integration of these components and the various factors that constitute them.

Therefore, welfare must be achieved and maintained by allowing the animal to maximise its ability to adapt to the environment and by reducing stressors through effective farm management, prophylaxis, biosecurity, and livestock facility enhancement programmes. An appropriate level of animal welfare on the farm also means a lower incidence of disease.

The reduction and rationalisation of antimicrobial consumption, integrated with veterinary activities and advice, are direct consequences of optimal managerial/structural management and represent one of the main tools for containing the spread of antimicrobial resistance in animals, the environment, and food, with a view to *One Health*.

2. Area of application

The farms are structured for the rearing of cattle for milk production. Within this type of farm, different groups of animals will be evaluated:

- calves (both male and female) from birth to 6 months of age,
- young 'unproductive' animals, such as heifers aged between 6 months and their first calving,
- cows 'in production', such as dry cows, cows in the peripartum period and lactating cows.

The requirements set out below apply to all dairy cattle farms with more than 50 head of cattle, increased to 90 head for farms located in mountain areas, where all animals are kept in free-range housing for 365 days a year with a stable housing system without recourse to grazing:

- free-range on litter,
- free-range housing in cubicles.

3. Definitions

- **Employee:** a person who works in the establishment on a full-time or part-time basis (minimum half-day) to carry out daily feeding and care of the animals and the environment, excluding those who work exclusively in the fields and in the milking parlour.
- **Dairy cattle:** females reared for the production of milk intended for human consumption.
- **Veal:** bovine animal (female or male) from birth to 6 months of age.
- **Heifer:** bovine over 6 months of age that has not yet calved.



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- **Lactating cow:** a cow that produces milk after giving birth.
- **Dry cow:** a cow that has finished lactation.
- **Primary production Operator:** as defined in Art. 2 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022.

4. Membership of the SQNBA

In order to join the SQNBA, primary production operators must submit a specific application to a Certification Body listed on the institutional website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry (MASAF) and satisfy, among other things, pursuant to Article 4, paragraph 5, point 5.1.3. of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, the following access requirements:

- Compliance with legislative requirements, i.e., the absence of open non-conformities, as per the latest official public health inspection for the sectors relating to animal welfare, pharmacovigilance, and biosecurity, where available.
- Compliance with legislative requirements in the last self-assessment carried out in the previous 12 months.

The Certification Body verifies compliance with the prerequisites in the dedicated area of the ClassyFarm risk-based farm categorisation information system, as referred to in Article 9 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, by consulting the access traffic light on the specific Certification Page of the individual primary production Operator.

A green traffic light indicates that the access prerequisites have been met and allows the Operator to proceed with the certification process. Conversely, a red traffic light blocks the continuation of the certification process, indicating that the access prerequisites have not been met.

5. Assessment requirements

Primary production operators who meet the SQNBA access requirements must satisfy the certification requirements of these Specifications for the four MACRO-AREAS listed below to obtain certification.

The multifactorial nature of wellbeing must necessarily integrate the MACRO-AREAS relating to:

- **MACRO-AREA 'BA', ANIMAL WELFARE:** includes the presence of suitable facilities (Facilities Area), conscious farm management (Management Area) and attention to animal conditions through the monitoring of direct welfare indicators (Direct Animal Measures Area - ABMs).
- **MACRO-AREA 'BS', BIOSAFETY:** based on the control of farm biosafety. Biosecurity is one of the main prevention tools available to primary production operators to prevent the introduction, development and spread of diseases in animals on the farm. A suitable biosecurity plan must be developed in consultation with the veterinary surgeon.



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- **MACRO-AREA 'MV', CONSCIOUS USE OF VETERINARY MEDICINES:** Conscious use of medication, with particular attention to antimicrobial treatments. Primary production operators who are aware of the integrated approach to achieving a high level of animal welfare on farms use veterinary medicines responsibly and in consultation with veterinarians to ensure appropriate therapeutic support for animals and combat antibiotic resistance.
- **MACRO-AREA 'AM', ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:** conscious water management. Since human health, animal health, and the environment are closely linked, it is considered necessary to also understand the broader environmental context through the *One Health* approach.

6. Labelling requirements

The information relating to the farming method, as required by Article 8(1)(b) of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, must be reported, depending on the farming system adopted, as: **free-range farming system**.

If products from free-range farms without grazing are marketed together with products from farms that follow other SQNBA regulations for cattle, the label must not include the information relating to letter b) *Farming method* provided for in Article 8, paragraph 1, of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022.

➤ ANIMAL WELFARE MACRO-AREA (BA)

MANAGEMENT AREA

1. Number of employees

The number of staff must be appropriate for the number of animals present on the premises to ensure proper control of their health and welfare.

When counting, the following should be taken into account:

- Those who work full-time should be counted as one person,
- those who work half-days should be counted as 0.5.

Number of employees

Optimal number of staff caring for animals:

- At least one Operator for every 80 animals (if the same person also performs milking operations)
- at least one Operator for every 200 animals (if the same person does not perform milking)

2. Training of employees

Operators and employees must be aware of the meaning of welfare and the measures necessary to ensure it. Among these, the training, experience, skills and awareness of management personnel significantly influence animal welfare conditions. Therefore, in addition to experience, training is also necessary, which can be acquired through a specific course, to be repeated every 3 years to keep up to date.



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During the first year of entry into force of these Regulations, the training course may also be attended within 12 months of applying for SQNBA membership.

Operators who have completed the course must pass on what they have learnt to all operators who work in direct or indirect contact with animals.

Training of employees

At least one employee with at least 5 years' experience and training in animal welfare, to be repeated every 3 years, in accordance with the Ministry of Health's guidelines on animal welfare training. The 5-year experience requirement is not necessary if the employee has a degree in: LM42 (Degree in Veterinary Medicine), L25 (Agricultural and Forestry Sciences and Technologies), L38 (Animal Production Technologies), LM69 (Agricultural Sciences and Technologies), LM86 (Animal Sciences and Technologies).

STRUCTURE AREA

3. Size and operation of drinking troughs

There must be an appropriate number of drinking troughs for the animals present and for the farm's capacity. In particular, the location of the drinking troughs must facilitate water intake by all animals in the different areas of the farm.

Lactating cattle

At least one drinking trough for every 10 animals; in the case of troughs, 6-7 cm per animal and located in different areas.

4. Number of places available in the feeding trough

Equipment and areas used for feeding cattle must be appropriately sized and constructed of suitable materials to ensure easy access and the ability to ingest the amount of feed necessary for their needs.

Check how many animals can access the feeding trough simultaneously.

Lactating cattle - dry cows - heifers

Each animal requires at least 68 linear centimetres of space (50 linear centimetres for heifers). Access to feed must comply with the following conditions:

- for split rations (non-unifeed): 100% of the animals can feed at the same time;
- for unifeed rations: more than 70% of animals can feed simultaneously.

5. Freedom of movement for animals

The animal housing area must be correctly sized to ensure maximum comfort and hygiene, and must not cause unnecessary suffering or injury.

In particular, animals must have access to a covered area that is accessible and usable by each bovine animal, allowing them to lie down and move around normally without impediment.

When calculating the available lying area, it must be taken into account that, for adult cattle, when the lying and feeding areas coincide, the feeding access area must be excluded for 1.5 m (1 m for heifers).



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Lactating, dry and peripartum cattle
Freedom of movement is ensured by an available area, with permanent bedding, of more than 6 m ² per animal or by a number of usable cubicles exceeding 90% of the number of animals present.
Heifers
Freedom of movement is ensured by an available area, covered with permanent bedding, of more than 3.5 m ² per animal or by a number of usable cubicles exceeding 90% of the number of animals present.
Calves from 8 weeks to 6 months old
Freedom of movement is ensured by an available area greater than: 1.70 m ² per animal for animals with a live weight of less than 150 kg; 1.90 m ² per animal for animals with a live weight between 150 and 220 kg; 2.00 m ² per animal for animals with a live weight exceeding 220 kg Furthermore, animals must not be tethered at any time, including during feeding.
Calves aged between 3 and 8 weeks (*)
Calves must be reared in pairs or groups. The enclosure housing two calves must have a minimum area of 1 m ² per animal. For larger numbers, the area per animal (1 m ²) must be multiplied by the number of calves present, with a minimum length of 130 cm for the shortest side of the enclosure.

(*) The requirement 'Calves aged 3 to 8 weeks' shall apply 24 months after the publication of the specification.

6. Pavement

Cattle hooves are a key factor in ensuring animal welfare, and walking areas must be suitable for preserving their integrity. Flooring refers to the walkable surfaces used by cows in production in the various areas of the establishment (e.g. feeding lanes, corridors, passageways, access points, exercise areas, etc.). The materials used for the design and construction of floors must be of appropriate quality. They must be chosen in accordance with the category of animal being reared, so that they are neither too slippery nor too abrasive.

The flooring must be rough over the entire surface available to the animals to prevent slipping while they move, run, stand, lie down, or engage in social behaviour. It must be safe and free of obstacles to prevent injury.

Particular attention must also be paid to outdoor access.

Lactating and dry cows
The flooring (solid or slatted) must be suitable and rough on all surfaces where cattle walk, or there must be bedding made of suitable organic material, i.e. abundant, non-abrasive, well-preserved and absorbent.
Heifers
The flooring (solid or slatted) must be suitable and rough (e.g. due to the presence of suitable grooves, rubber coating or a small amount of bedding) for most of the surfaces on which the animals walk.



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7. Nutrition

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- 2.
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- 7.

7.1 Management of feed and daily rations

Food systems should enable every individual to meet their needs in terms of food quantity and quality.

Cattle over 6 months of age

Presence of a suitable ration for the animals, specific for each basic group (heifers, dry cows, lactating cows) and composed of healthy feed.

7.2 Type of feeding

Feed should also be provided ad libitum to ensure that each animal can feed in accordance with its needs throughout the 24 hours. In split feeding, feed should be available almost continuously over a 24-hour period, including both fibre and concentrate (the latter must be administered at least twice).

Cattle over 6 months of age

Animals must have access to feed at appropriate intervals, guaranteed 24 hours a day and divided correctly (concentrates administered at least twice).

8. Inspection and control of adult animals and calves

Daily inspections, either in person or via remote monitoring systems, are intended to supplement food distribution and daily management activities and involve observing all adult cattle and any calves housed in stables, with subsequent recording of their condition.

The inspection covers all groups of animals on the farm, divided into adult animals and calves. Highly specialised activities or those relating to the performance of specific tasks (e.g., milking with specific tasks assigned, feed distribution, preparation of the unifeed wagon, etc.) are not considered daily inspections. Any observations made (e.g. health, behaviour, etc.) must be recorded.

Cattle over 6 months of age



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Animals must be inspected at least twice or more per day, and observations must be recorded.
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Calves up to 6 months of age

Animals must be inspected at least twice a day, and observations must be recorded.
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9. Infirmary area

The establishment must implement an effective system for identifying animals that are suffering, sick or injured, and determine in which cases isolation, including preventive isolation, is necessary for their treatment. The recovery area, known as the infirmary, must be adapted to the condition of the animal requiring care.

Only animals with clearly identified pathologies should be present in the infirmary, and they must have access to food and fresh water ad libitum.

Infirmary

Presence of a specially prepared and identified room to accommodate sick or injured animals

ANIMAL MEASUREMENT AREA (ABMS)

10. Annual mortality of adult animals

This requirement applies only to farms with more than 50 animals, increased to 90 animals for farms located in mountainous areas. The data to be collected and recorded must take into account adult cows (over 6 months of age), whether lactating or dry, that have died spontaneously on the farm, been euthanised, or emergency slaughtered (MSU) in the last 12 months, compared to the number of adult cows (lactating and dry) present on the day of assessment.

Lactating and dry cattle

Mortality must be less than 5%.

Udder health

Mastitis in dairy cattle is a multifactorial condition that has significant consequences for animal welfare.

One method for assessing udder health and monitoring herd infection prevalence is to measure somatic cell count in bulk milk.

Maintaining low somatic cell counts in bulk milk is desirable, as they are indicators of the health and welfare of dairy cows, and is achieved through a combination of good management practices, control of mastitis-causing bacteria, and, above all, good hygiene and milking management.

Udder health

Moving geometric mean of somatic cells in milk less than 300,000 cells/ml, calculated over 3 months, with at least one sample taken per month

11. Hygiene and cleanliness

All surfaces used for lying down and walking, such as paddocks, floors, corridors and passageways, whether used to house young and unproductive animals or adult animals, must be kept clean, dry and



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hygienically adequate to avoid health problems and/or disturbance in the movements and behaviour of cattle. In addition, the facilities and surfaces available should ensure easy and safe access for staff to facilitate regular cleaning and access to bedding.

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12.1 Floors and walking areas are not used for lying down

The assessment must consider hygiene, cleanliness, and floor management at the time of the farm visit, as well as the conditions in which the majority of the animals live.

Corridors, passageways and exercise areas must be taken into account.

Lactating cattle, dry cattle and heifers

The environments must be reasonably clean and sufficiently managed in almost all groups.

12.2 Housing environments and bedding

The hygiene of equipment and milking operations is of considerable importance, both for the health and welfare of animals and for the hygiene and health of milk, with obvious repercussions on public health.

To ensure appropriate conditions, it is necessary to consider hygiene, cleanliness, and the management of housing environments, flooring, and bedding (cubicles, stalls, or permanent bedding), as well as the frequency of restoration and replacement of materials.

Calves, heifers, lactating cows, dry cows, peripartum cows

Housing and/or bedding areas must be reasonably clean, dry and appropriately managed through the appropriate replacement of bedding material, which must prevail over faecal material. When it comes to grates, they must be clean and free from faecal matter on as much of the available surface area as possible.

12.3 Milking rooms and equipment

Assess the general hygiene of premises and milking equipment (e.g. milking parlour) without confusing this with their technological level. If a milking robot is present, assess the environment's hygiene and the robot's hygiene.



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Lactating cattle

Assess whether the milking units are appropriately cleaned, even if there is faeces on the floors and walls.

12. Environmental conditions

13.

13.1 Temperature and humidity

The thermal insulation of the structure, heating and ventilation must be capable of protecting the animals from heat and cold and at the same time ensuring good air quality, allowing air circulation, dust levels, temperature, relative humidity and gas concentrations (carbon dioxide, ammonia, etc.) to be kept within limits that are not harmful to the animals.

Dairy cattle stables can vary greatly, so the appropriate conditions must be assessed according to the type of stable and the cooling equipment available.

All groups

Presence of microclimatic conditions suitable for animals: e.g. natural ventilation (e.g. open stable) or suitable ventilation/aeration systems without automatic control systems, and, for calves, the possibility of protecting animals from heat and cold depending on weather conditions (e.g. insulation of cages, shade or windbreak tarpaulins, etc.).

13.2 Illuminance

Cattle need natural lighting or lighting programmes that respect the circadian rhythm of the day to orient themselves in their housing environments, engage in normal behaviour and social contact, and satisfy their physiological needs.

All groups

Animals housed without access to natural light must have an uninterrupted period of light of at least 8 hours (with a minimum intensity of at least 40 lux) and an uninterrupted period of darkness (or dim night lighting) of at least 8 hours.

➤ BIOSAFETY MACRO-AREA (BS)

The biosecurity plan can be entrusted to a specialised company or managed internally, with your vet's agreement. The plan must include product specifications, safety data sheets, bait monitoring and follow-up actions with treatment records. In addition, orderly warehouse management and orderly removal of dirt are required.



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1. Rodent and insect control

The presence of rodents and insects (flies, parasites) is a major source of risk for the introduction and spread of infectious pathogens within the farm, and therefore, their spread must be controlled.

Biosafety plan

Presence of defined and organic procedures, written in a biosecurity plan and implemented.

2. Water control

The quality of water intended for animals is essential to maintaining homeostasis of physiological and metabolic functions and to preventing damage to equipment and facilities. In addition, poor microbiological quality of drinking water could pose a risk to animal health and, consequently, to consumers.

Control of water not supplied by the public water supply

To ensure good drinking water quality, it is necessary to check the farm's water sources once a year through bacteriological analysis of the following parameters: *E. coli*, Enterococci, Total bacterial count.

3. Visitor access

All visitors entering the farm, including regular visitors and those entering for work reasons, may represent a vehicle for contamination; therefore, access must be managed.

Veterinarians, business consultants, and others are also considered visitors.

Visitor access

All visitors are required to wear disposable shoe covers before entering the premises, or they must wear boots that they leave at the company for their exclusive personal use.

➤ MACRO-AREA CONSCIOUS USE OF VETERINARY MEDICINES (MV)

Any non-compliance with the requirements for this macro-area must be classified as serious unless it can be proven that it was used to safeguard the animal's health and life. In this case, references to certification must be deleted only for the animal or group of animals treated, appropriately identified.

1. Consumption of the veterinary medicinal product

DDD values (*)

The consumption of antibiotics on farms during the observation period provided for in paragraph 2 bis of the Ministerial Decree. 23 December 2022, laying down national provisions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 and subsequent amendments and additions, expressed in DDD by ClassyFarm, must fall within one of the following conditions with respect to the national distribution of veterinary medicine consumption:



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DDD values (*)

- a) the Defined Daily Dose (DDD) values are maintained or fall within the threshold value reported, in the first instance, in Annex XI of the Ministerial Decree. 23 December 2022 laying down national provisions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 and subsequent amendments and additions, as regards direct payments for dairy cattle;
- b) DDD values remain above the threshold mentioned, but are 10% lower than in 2022.

(*) Any changes to the national threshold, the percentage reduction referred to in point (b) and the reference year may be made by decree of the Ministry of Health and the MASAF.

2. Prescriptions and company health monitoring

Antibiotic treatments

The Operator provides evidence of having administered antibiotic treatments only following a veterinary prescription issued as a result of company health monitoring, which involves assessing the sensitivity or resistance of company pathogens to antibiotic active ingredients through antibiotic sensitivity tests. Health monitoring is considered valid for multiple treatments, provided it is carried out at least once a year.

3. Sensitivity testing for antibiotic use

Use of antibiotics belonging to the class of fluoroquinolones and third and fourth-generation cephalosporins

If antibiotics belonging to the fluoroquinolone and third- and fourth-generation cephalosporin classes are used, the Operator shall provide documented evidence that the treatment was carried out only following the indications provided by in vitro antibiotic sensitivity tests; the test must indicate that other classes of molecules were not effective in vitro against the bacterial agent causing the disease.

Use of antibiotics belonging to the macrolide class

If antibiotics belonging to the macrolide class are used, by means other than injection for single treatment, the Operator shall provide documented evidence that the treatment was carried out only following the indications provided by in vitro antibiotic sensitivity tests; the test must indicate that other classes of molecules were not effective in vitro against the bacterial agent causing the disease.

➤ MACRO AREA: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (AM)

The environment is one component to be protected from a One Health perspective. In this vision, human, animal, and environmental health are inextricably linked.

Taking care of the environment means avoiding pollution and waste of primary resources.



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1. Techniques for limiting water waste

Aware of the importance of protecting the environment, the farmer takes measures to reduce water waste.

Water use

Presence of flooring covered with litter or self-cleaning flooring and/or equipped with mechanical cleaning tools capable of minimising the use of water for washing surfaces.

2. Harmful gases

The gases considered most harmful to the health and welfare of farm animals are ammonia (NH₃) and carbon dioxide (CO₂); numerous management or structural factors can influence the levels of these gases (e.g., animal size, animal density, flooring, bedding, etc.).

Adult animals

The concentration of gases in adult animal housing must remain within the following limits:

- NH₃ < 20 ppm;
- CO₂ < 3000 ppm.



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Annex 5

REGULATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF BEEF CATTLE INDOOR FARMING

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➤ GENERAL PART

1. Foreword

Primary production operators and all personnel involved in the management and care of animals and livestock facilities must be aware of the complex relationships between animal health, human health, and the environment, and that welfare can only be achieved through careful integration of these components and the various factors that constitute them.

Therefore, welfare must be achieved and maintained by allowing the animal to maximise its ability to adapt to the environment and by reducing stressors through effective farm management, prophylaxis, biosecurity, and livestock facility enhancement programmes. An appropriate level of animal welfare on the farm also means a lower incidence of disease.

The reduction and rationalisation of antimicrobial consumption, integrated with veterinary activities and advice, are direct consequences of optimal managerial/structural management and represent one of the main tools for containing the spread of antimicrobial resistance in animals, the environment, and food, with a view to *One Health*.

2. Area of application

The farms are structured for the breeding of cattle for meat production. Within this type of farm, different groups of animals will be evaluated:

- calves (both male and female) from birth to 6 months of age;
- Cattle 'in production'.

The requirements set out below apply to all red meat farms with more than 50 head of cattle, increased to 90 head for farms located in mountain areas, reared in stables without access to pasture, as specified in more detail below:

- free stabling on bedding;
- free-range housing on solid flooring;
- Free-range housing on slatted flooring.

Cattle must be reared in accordance with the requirements set out below for a minimum period of six months prior to slaughter. If this period exceeds 6 months, the relevant information may be included in the marketing of animals, primary production products and food products derived from them, in accordance with Article 8 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022.

3. Definitions

- **Employee:** a person who works in the establishment on a full-time or part-time basis (minimum half-day) to carry out daily feeding and care of the animals and the environment, excluding those who work exclusively in the fields and in the milking parlour.



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- **Beef cattle:** male or female cattle over 6 months of age, reared for the production of red meat, including suckler cows and bulls.
- **Veal:** bovine animal (female or male) from birth to 6 months of age.
- **Primary production Operator:** as defined in Art. 2 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022.

4. Membership of the SQNBA

In order to join the SQNBA, primary production operators must submit a specific application to a Certification Body listed on the institutional website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry (MASAF) and satisfy, among other things, pursuant to Article 4, paragraph 5, point 5.1.3. of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, the following access requirements:

- Compliance with legislative requirements, i.e., the absence of open non-conformities, as per the latest official public health inspection for the sectors relating to animal welfare, pharmacovigilance, and biosecurity, where available.
- Compliance with legislative requirements in the last self-assessment carried out in the previous 12 months.

The Certification Body verifies compliance with the prerequisites in the dedicated area of the ClassyFarm risk-based farm categorisation information system, as referred to in Article 9 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, by consulting the access traffic light on the specific Certification Page of the individual primary production Operator.

A green traffic light indicates that the access prerequisites have been met and allows the Operator to proceed with the certification process. Conversely, a red traffic light blocks the continuation of the certification process, indicating that the access prerequisites have not been met.

5. Assessment requirements

Primary production operators who meet the SQNBA access requirements must satisfy the certification requirements of these Specifications for the four MACRO-AREAS listed below to obtain certification.

The multifactorial nature of wellbeing must necessarily integrate the MACRO-AREAS relating to:

- **MACRO-AREA 'BA', ANIMAL WELFARE:** includes the presence of suitable facilities (Facilities Area), conscious farm management (Management Area) and attention to animal conditions through the monitoring of direct welfare indicators (Direct Animal Measures Area - ABMs).
- **MACRO-AREA 'BS', BIOSAFETY:** based on the control of farm biosafety. Biosecurity is one of the main prevention tools available to primary production operators to prevent the introduction, development and spread of diseases in animals on the farm. A suitable biosecurity plan must be developed in consultation with the veterinary surgeon.



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- **MACRO-AREA 'MV', CONSCIOUS USE OF VETERINARY MEDICINES:** Conscious use of medication, with particular attention to antimicrobial treatments. Primary production operators who are aware of the integrated approach to achieving a high level of animal welfare on farms use veterinary medicines responsibly and in consultation with veterinarians to ensure appropriate therapeutic support for animals and combat antibiotic resistance.
- **MACRO-AREA 'AM', ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:** conscious water management. Since human health, animal health, and the environment are closely linked, it is considered necessary to also understand the broader environmental context through the *One Health* approach.

6. Labelling requirements

The information relating to the *farming method*, as provided for in Article 8(1)(b) of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, must be reported, in accordance with the farming system adopted, as: **Indoor farming**.

If products from indoor farming are marketed together with products from farms that follow other SQNBA regulations for cattle, the label must not include the information relating to letter *b) Farming method* provided for in Article 8, paragraph 1, of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022.

➤ ANIMAL WELFARE MACRO-AREA (BA)

- **MANAGEMENT AREA**

1. Number of employees

The number of staff must be appropriate for the number of animals present on the premises to ensure proper control of their health and welfare.

When counting, the following should be taken into account:

- Those who work full-time should be counted as one person,
- those who work half-days should be counted as 0.5.

Number of employees
The number of staff caring for the animals must be at least one operator for every 400 animals.

2. Training of employees

Operators and employees must be aware of the meaning of welfare and the measures necessary to ensure it. Among these, the training, experience, skills and awareness of management personnel significantly influence animal welfare conditions. Therefore, in addition to experience, training is also necessary, which can be acquired through a specific course, to be repeated every 3 years to keep up to date.

During the first year of entry into force of these Regulations, the training course may also be attended within 12 months of applying for SQNBA membership.



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Operators who have completed the course must pass on what they have learnt to all operators who work in direct or indirect contact with animals.

Training of employees

At least one employee with at least 5 years' experience and training in animal welfare, to be repeated every 3 years, in accordance with the Ministry of Health's guidelines on animal welfare training. The 5-year experience requirement is not necessary if the employee has a degree in: LM42 (Degree in Veterinary Medicine), L25 (Agricultural and Forestry Sciences and Technologies), L38 (Animal Production Technologies), LM69 (Agricultural Sciences and Technologies), LM86 (Animal Sciences and Technologies).

3. Inspection and control of adult animals and calves

Daily inspections, either in person or via remote monitoring systems, are intended to supplement food distribution and daily management activities and involve observing all adult cattle and any calves housed in stables, with subsequent recording of their condition.

The inspection covers all groups of animals on the farm, divided into adult animals and calves. Highly specialised activities or those relating to the performance of specific tasks (e.g. feed distribution, preparation of the unifeed wagon, etc.) are not considered daily inspections. Any observations made (e.g. health, behaviour, etc.) must be recorded.

Cattle over 6 months of age

Animals must be inspected at least twice a day, and observations must be recorded.

Calves up to 6 months of age

Animals must be inspected at least twice a day, and observations must be recorded.

4. Nutrition

4.1. Management of feed and daily rations

Food systems should enable every individual to meet their needs in terms of food quantity and quality.

Cattle over 6 months of age

Presence of a suitable ration for the animals, specific to each group and composed of healthy foods.

4.2. Type of feeding

Feed should also be provided ad libitum to ensure that each animal can feed in accordance with its needs throughout the 24 hours. In split feeding, feed should be available almost continuously over a 24-hour period, including both fibre and concentrate (the latter must be administered at least twice).



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Cattle over 6 months of age

Animals must have access to food at appropriate intervals, guaranteed 24 hours a day and divided correctly (concentrates administered at least twice).

5. Hygiene and cleanliness of surfaces used for lying down and walking

All surfaces used for lying down and walking, such as paddocks, floors, corridors and passageways, whether used to house young or adult animals, must be kept clean, dry and hygienically appropriate to avoid health problems and/or disturbance in the movements and behaviour of cattle. In addition, the facilities and surfaces available should ensure easy and safe access for staff to facilitate regular cleaning and access to bedding.

To ensure appropriate conditions, it is necessary to consider the hygiene, cleanliness, and management of the housing areas, flooring, and any bedding, and to assess, where appropriate, the frequency of restoration and replacement of the materials.

All groups

All surfaces used for lying down and walking must be reasonably clean, dry and appropriately managed. In the case of bedding, this must be managed by replacing the bedding material as necessary, ensuring it is more prevalent than faecal material. When it comes to grates, they must be clean and free from faecal matter on as much of the available surface area as possible.

• **STRUCTURE AREA**

6. Number of places available in the feeding trough

Equipment and areas used for feeding cattle must be appropriately sized and constructed of suitable materials to ensure easy access and the ability to ingest the amount of feed necessary for their needs.

Cattle over 6 months of age

The following linear spaces are required for each animal:

- for animals under 200 kg live weight ≥ 0.4 m per animal;
- for animals weighing between 200 and 300 kg, live weight ≥ 0.5 m per animal;
- for animals between 300 and 400 kg live weight ≥ 0.6 m per animal;
- for animals between 400 and 500 kg live weight ≥ 0.65 m per animal;
- for animals over 600 kg live weight ≥ 0.7 m per animal.

Access to feed must comply with the following conditions:

- for split rations (**non-unifeed**): 100% of the animals can feed at the same time;



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Cattle over 6 months of age

—for **unifeed** rations: more than 70% of animals can feed simultaneously.

7. Size and operation of drinking troughs

There must be an appropriate number of drinking troughs for the animals present and for the farm's capacity.

In particular, the location of the drinking troughs must facilitate water intake by all animals in the different areas of the farm.

Cattle over 6 months of age

At least one drinking trough for every 13 animals. For troughs, 6 cm per animal.

8. Freedom of movement for animals

The animal housing area must be correctly sized to ensure maximum comfort and hygiene, and must not cause unnecessary suffering or injury.

In particular, animals must have access to a covered area that is accessible and usable by each bovine animal, allowing them to lie down and move around normally without impediment.

When calculating the available lying area, it should be noted that, for adult cattle, when the lying and feeding areas coincide, the feeding access area should be excluded from the calculation. In the case of pens or boxes that are square or similar in shape, or with the feeding trough located on the shorter side, approximately 1.5 metres of depth must be excluded from the area calculation.

In the case of enclosures with a distinctly rectangular shape with a feeding trough front at least 1.5 times the depth (short side) of the enclosure itself, the space to be excluded from the calculation of the available area may be reduced to 1 metre.

Cattle over 6 months of age

Freedom of movement is ensured by an available area greater than:

- 2.5 m² per animal for animals with a live weight of less than 500 kg;
- 3.0 m² per animal for animals with a live weight between 500 and 600 kg;
- 3.5 m² per animal for animals with a live weight between 600 and 700 kg;
- 4.0 m² per animal for animals with a live weight between 700 and 800 kg;
- 4.5 m² per animal for animals with a live weight exceeding 800 kg

Calves from 8 weeks to 6 months old

Freedom of movement is ensured by an available area greater than:

- 1.70 m² per animal for animals with a live weight of less than 150 kg;
- 1.90 m² per animal for animals with a live weight between 150 and 220 kg;



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- 2.00 m² per animal for animals with a live weight exceeding 220 kg

Furthermore, animals must not be tethered at any time, including during feeding.

Calves aged between 3 and 8 weeks (*)

Calves must be reared in pairs or groups. The enclosure housing two calves must have a minimum area of 1 m² per animal, with a minimum length of 130 cm on the shortest side. For larger numbers, the area per animal (1 m²) must be multiplied by the number of calves present, with a minimum length of 130 cm for the shortest side of the enclosure.

(*) The requirement 'Calves aged 3 to 8 weeks' shall apply 24 months after the publication of the specification.

9. Pavement

Cattle hooves are a key factor in ensuring animal welfare, and walking areas must be suitable for preserving their integrity. Flooring refers to the surfaces used by cattle in the various areas of the establishment (e.g. feeding lanes, corridors, passageways, access points, exercise areas, etc.). The materials used for the design and construction of floors must be of appropriate quality. They must be chosen in accordance with the category of animal being reared, so that they are neither too slippery nor too abrasive.

The flooring must be rough over the entire surface available to the animals to prevent slipping while they move, run, stand, lie down, or engage in social behaviour. It must be safe and free of obstacles to prevent injury.

Particular attention must also be paid to outdoor access.

Cattle over 6 months of age

The flooring (solid or slatted) must be suitable and rough (e.g. due to the presence of suitable grooves, rubber coating or a small amount of bedding) for most of the surfaces on which the animals walk.

10. Infirmary area

The establishment must implement an effective system for identifying animals that are suffering, sick or injured, and determine in which cases isolation, including preventive isolation, is necessary for their treatment. The recovery area, known as the infirmary, must be adapted to the condition of the animal requiring care.

Only animals with clearly identified pathologies should be present in the infirmary, and they must have access to food and fresh water ad libitum.

In the case of farms with no more than 100 animals, where the need to isolate sick or injured animals is sporadic, the infirmary may only be identifiable, i.e. the farmer must demonstrate that such an area can be created at any time, if necessary.

Infirmary



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Presence of a specially prepared and identified room to accommodate sick or injured animals

11. Environmental conditions

11.1. Temperature and humidity

The thermal insulation of the structure, heating and ventilation must be capable of protecting the animals from heat and cold and at the same time ensuring good air quality, allowing air circulation, dust levels, temperature, relative humidity and gas concentrations (carbon dioxide, ammonia, etc.) to be kept within limits that are not harmful to the animals.

Beef cattle housing can vary widely, so appropriate conditions must be assessed based on the type of housing and the available cooling equipment.

All groups

Presence of microclimatic conditions suitable for animals: e.g. natural ventilation (e.g. open stable) or suitable ventilation/aeration systems without automatic control systems, and, for calves, the possibility of protecting animals from heat and cold depending on weather conditions (e.g. insulation of cages, shade or windbreak tarpaulins, etc.).

11.2. Illuminance

Cattle need natural lighting or lighting programmes that respect the circadian rhythm of the day to orient themselves in their housing environments, engage in normal behaviour and social contact, and satisfy their physiological needs.

All groups

Animals housed without access to natural light must have an uninterrupted period of light of at least 8 hours (with a minimum intensity of at least 40 lux) and an uninterrupted period of darkness (or dim night lighting) of at least 8 hours.

- **ANIMAL MEASUREMENT AREA (ABMS)**

12. Skin lesions

All groups

Less than 20% of animals with minor skin lesions on hocks, bone protrusions and soft tissue

➤ BIOSAFETY MACRO-AREA (BS)

The biosecurity plan can be entrusted to a specialised company or managed internally, with your vet's agreement. The plan must include product specifications, safety data sheets, bait monitoring and follow-up actions with treatment records. In addition, orderly warehouse management and orderly removal of dirt are required.



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1. Rodent and insect control

The presence of rodents and insects (e.g. flies) represents a significant risk for the introduction and spread of infectious pathogens on the farm. Therefore, their spread must be controlled.

Biosafety plan

Presence of defined and organic procedures, written in a biosecurity plan and implemented.

2. Water control

The quality of water intended for animals is essential to maintaining homeostasis of physiological and metabolic functions and to preventing damage to equipment and facilities. In addition, poor microbiological quality of drinking water could pose a risk to animal health and, consequently, to consumers.

Control of water not supplied by the public water supply

To ensure good drinking water quality, it is necessary to check the farm's water sources once a year through bacteriological analysis of the following parameters: *E. coli*, Enterococci, Total bacterial count.

3. Visitor access

All visitors entering the farm, including regular visitors and those entering for work reasons, may represent a vehicle for contamination; therefore, access must be managed.

Veterinarians, business consultants, and others are also considered visitors.

Visitor access

All visitors are required to wear disposable shoe covers before entering the premises, or they must wear boots that they leave at the company for their exclusive personal use.

➤ MACRO-AREA CONSCIOUS USE OF VETERINARY MEDICINES (MV)

Any non-compliance with the requirements for this macro-area must be classified as serious unless it can be proven that it was used to safeguard the animal's health and life. In this case, references to certification must be deleted only for the animal or group of animals treated, appropriately identified.

1. Consumption of the veterinary medicinal product

DDD values (*)

The consumption of antibiotics on farms during the observation period provided for in paragraph 2 bis of the Ministerial Decree of 23 December 2022, laying down national provisions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 and subsequent amendments and additions, expressed in DDD by ClassyFarm, must fall within one of the following conditions with respect to the national distribution of veterinary medicine consumption:



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DDD values (*)

- a) the Defined Daily Dose (DDD) values are maintained or fall within the threshold value reported, in the first instance, in Annex XI of the Ministerial Decree of 23 December 2022 laying down national provisions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 and subsequent amendments and additions, as regards direct payments for beef cattle;
- b) DDD values remain above the threshold mentioned, but are 10% lower than in 2022.

(*) Any changes to the national threshold, the percentage reduction referred to in point (b) and the reference year may be made by decree of the Ministry of Health and the MASAF.

2. Prescriptions and company health monitoring

Antibiotic treatments

The Operator provides evidence of having administered antibiotic treatments only following a veterinary prescription issued as a result of company health monitoring, which involves assessing the sensitivity or resistance of company pathogens to antibiotic active ingredients through antibiotic sensitivity tests. Health monitoring is considered valid for multiple treatments, provided it is carried out at least once a year.

3. Sensitivity testing for antibiotic use

Use of antibiotics belonging to the class of fluoroquinolones and third and fourth-generation cephalosporins

If antibiotics belonging to the fluoroquinolone and third- and fourth-generation cephalosporin classes are used, the Operator shall provide documented evidence that the treatment was carried out only following the indications provided by in vitro antibiotic sensitivity tests; the test must indicate that other classes of molecules were not effective in vitro against the bacterial agent causing the disease.

Use of antibiotics belonging to the macrolide class

If antibiotics belonging to the macrolide class are used, by means other than injection for single treatment, the Operator shall provide documented evidence that the treatment was carried out only following the indications provided by in vitro antibiotic sensitivity tests; the test must indicate that other classes of molecules were not effective in vitro against the bacterial agent causing the disease.

➤ MACRO-AREA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (AM)

The environment is one component to be protected from a One Health perspective. In this vision, human, animal, and environmental health are inextricably linked.

Taking care of the environment means avoiding pollution and waste of primary resources.



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1. Techniques for limiting water waste

Aware of the importance of protecting the environment, the farmer takes measures to reduce water waste.

Water use

Presence of flooring covered with litter or self-cleaning flooring and/or equipped with mechanical cleaning tools capable of minimising the use of water for washing surfaces.

2. Harmful gases

The gases considered most harmful to the health and welfare of farm animals are ammonia (NH₃) and carbon dioxide (CO₂); numerous management or structural factors can influence the levels of these gases (e.g., animal size, animal density, flooring, bedding, etc.).

Adult animals

The concentration of gases in adult animal housing must remain within the following limits:

- NH₃ < 20 ppm;
- CO₂ < 3000 ppm.



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Annex 6

REGULATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF CATTLE IN FAMILY-RUN FARMS

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➤ GENERAL PART

1. Foreword

Primary production operators and all personnel involved in the management and care of animals and livestock facilities must be aware of the complex relationships among animal health, human health, and the environment, and that welfare can only be achieved through careful integration of these components and the various factors that constitute them.

Therefore, welfare must be achieved and maintained by allowing the animal to maximise its ability to adapt to the environment and by reducing stressors through effective farm management, prophylaxis, biosecurity, and livestock facility enhancement programmes. An appropriate level of animal welfare on the farm also means a lower incidence of disease.

The reduction and rationalisation of antimicrobial consumption, integrated with veterinary activities and advice, are direct consequences of optimal managerial/structural management and represent one of the main tools for containing the spread of antimicrobial resistance in animals, the environment, and food, with a view to *One Health*.

2. Area of application

The farms are structured for the rearing of cattle for milk and/or meat production in small establishments. Within this type of farm, different groups of animals will be assessed:

- calves (both male and female) from birth to 6 months of age;
- Cattle in production (both male and female), over 6 months of age.

The requirements set out below apply to all cattle farms with up to 50 head of cattle, increased to 90 head for farms located in mountain areas, as specified below:

- free-range housing on litter or in cubicles, with or without access to pasture;
- fixed housing in which all non-lactating animals have access to at least 60 days/year of grazing or free-range housing.

Cattle must be reared in accordance with the requirements set out below for a minimum period of six months prior to slaughter. If this period exceeds 6 months, the relevant information may be included in the marketing of animals, primary production products and food products derived from them, in accordance with Article 8 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022.

3. Definitions

- **Employee:** a person who works in the establishment on a full-time or part-time basis (minimum half-day) to carry out daily feeding and care of the animals and the environment, excluding those who work exclusively in the fields and in the milking parlour.



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- **Small-scale farming (so-called family farming):** farming consisting of a maximum of 50 animals raised in the same epidemiological unit, regardless of ownership, increased to 90 animals for farms located in mountain areas.
- **Animal-Based Measures (ABMs):** direct measures, i.e. standard criteria for determining the welfare status of animals based on their conditions.
- **Body condition score (BCS):** a method for assessing the physical condition of animals.
- **Cattle in production:** animals over 6 months of age, such as beef cattle, dairy cattle, dry cows, lactating cows, heifers and breeding cattle.
- **Beef cattle:** animals over 6 months old, male or female, reared for red meat production, including suckler cows and bulls.
- **Dairy cattle:** females raised for the production of milk intended for human consumption.
- **Heifer:** bovine over 6 months of age that has not yet calved.
- **Lactating cow:** a cow that produces milk after giving birth.
- **Dry cow:** a cow that has finished lactation.
- **Pasture:** grassland or other vegetation that can fully or partially cover daily feed requirements, with a total size of no less than 500 m² per Adult Livestock Unit, freely accessible or with rotational grazing, equipped, depending on needs and possibilities, with natural shelters (trees, ravines, caves, etc.) or artificial shelters (roofs, shelters, etc.) appropriate to the season and location.
- **Veal:** bovine animal (female or male) from birth to 6 months of age.
- **Primary production Operator:** as defined in Art. 2 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022.

4. Membership of the SQNBA

In order to join the SQNBA, primary production operators must submit a specific application to a Certification Body listed on the institutional website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry (MASAF) and satisfy, among other things, pursuant to Article 4, paragraph 5, point 5.1.3. of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, the following access requirements:

- Compliance with legislative requirements, i.e., the absence of open non-conformities, as per the latest official public health inspection for the sectors relating to animal welfare, pharmacovigilance, and biosecurity, where available.
- Compliance with legislative requirements in the last self-assessment carried out in the previous 12 months.



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The Certification Body verifies compliance with the prerequisites in the dedicated area of the ClassyFarm risk-based farm categorisation information system, as referred to in Article 9 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, by consulting the access traffic light on the specific Certification Page of the individual primary production Operator.

A green traffic light indicates that the access prerequisites have been met and allows the Operator to proceed with the certification process. Conversely, a red traffic light blocks the continuation of the certification process, indicating that the access prerequisites have not been met.

5. Assessment requirements

The multifactorial nature of welfare must necessarily integrate different MACRO-AREAS.

Primary production operators who meet the prerequisites for access to SQNBA must satisfy the certification requirements of these Regulations relating to the MACRO-AREAS listed below in order to obtain certification:

- **MACRO-AREA 'BA', ANIMAL WELFARE:** includes the presence of suitable facilities (Facilities Area), conscious farm management (Management Area) and attention to animal conditions through the monitoring of direct welfare indicators (Direct Animal Measures Area - ABMs).
- **MACRO-AREA 'BS', BIOSAFETY:** based on the control of farm biosafety. Biosecurity is one of the main prevention tools available to primary production operators to prevent the introduction, development and spread of diseases in animals on the farm. A suitable biosecurity plan must be developed in consultation with the veterinary surgeon.
- **MACRO-AREA 'MV', CONSCIOUS USE OF VETERINARY MEDICINES:** Conscious use of medication, with particular attention to antimicrobial treatments. Primary production operators who are aware of the integrated approach to achieving a high level of animal welfare on farms use veterinary medicines responsibly and in consultation with veterinarians to ensure appropriate therapeutic support for animals and combat antibiotic resistance.

6. Labelling requirements

The information relating to the rearing method, as provided for in Article 8, paragraph 1, letter b) of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, must be reported as follows:

- *family farming with the use of pasture;*
- *family farming.*

The distinction between the two farming methods is based on the actual use of grazing as provided, regardless of whether the animals are kept in free-range or fixed housing.

Where products from family farms or family farms with grazing are marketed together and/or jointly with products from farms that follow other SQNBA specifications for cattle, the label must not include



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the information referred to in point (b). *Farming method* provided for in Article 8, paragraph 1, of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022.

➤ ANIMAL WELFARE MACRO-AREA (BA)

- **MANAGEMENT AREA**

1. Training of employees

Operators and employees must be aware of the meaning of welfare and the measures necessary to ensure it. Among these, the training, experience, skills and awareness of management personnel significantly influence animal welfare conditions. Therefore, in addition to experience, training is also necessary, which can be acquired through a specific course, to be repeated every 3 years to keep up to date.

During the first year of entry into force of these Regulations, the training course may also be attended within 12 months of applying for SQNBA membership.

Operators who have completed the course must pass on what they have learnt to all operators who work in direct or indirect contact with animals.

Training of employees

At least one employee with at least 5 years' experience and training in animal welfare, to be repeated every 3 years, in accordance with the Ministry of Health's guidelines on animal welfare training. The 5-year experience requirement is not necessary if the employee has a degree in: LM42 (Degree in Veterinary Medicine), L25 (Agricultural and Forestry Sciences and Technologies), L38 (Animal Production Technologies), LM69 (Agricultural Sciences and Technologies), LM86 (Animal Sciences and Technologies).

2. Inspection and control of adult animals and calves

Daily inspections, either in person or via remote monitoring systems, are intended to supplement food distribution and daily management activities and involve observing all adult cattle and any calves housed in stables, with subsequent recording of their condition.

The inspection covers all groups of animals on the farm, divided into adult animals and calves.

Any observations made (e.g. health, behaviour, etc.) must be recorded.

Adult cattle (dairy, beef)

In the stable: During stable rearing, animals must be inspected at least twice or more per day, and observations must be recorded.

Calves

In the stable: During stable rearing, animals must be inspected at least twice a day, and observations must be recorded.



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- **STRUCTURE AREA**

3. Freedom of movement for animals

Assess the covered area used for lying down (bunks or permanent bedding). Where the lying and feeding areas coincide, exclude the feeding access area (approximately 1 m).

Adult cattle (dairy, beef)
<p>In the stable – Free housing (excluding temporary shelters used for emergencies). A minimum available area ensures freedom of movement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 m² per animal on bedding for adult cows, or by a number of usable cubicles exceeding 90% of the number of cattle present;• 3.5 m² per animal on bedding for dairy heifers or a number of usable cubicles exceeding 90% of the number of heifers present;• 2.5 m² per animal up to 400 kg live weight and an additional 0.5 m² per animal for every 100 kg up to 800 kg live weight for beef cattle. <p>In the stable - Fixed housing: all animals have a designated place to lie down, and none are placed in areas that are not intended or unsuitable. All cattle must be free for at least 60 days per year, using a grazing area or ensuring that they have access to an exercise area of 6 m² per head for the same period.</p> <p>Grazing: When animals are kept at pasture, the entire grazing area available to the animals is assessed.</p>
Calves from 8 weeks to 6 months old
<p>In the stable - Freedom of movement is ensured by an available area greater than:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1.70 m² per animal for animals with a live weight of less than 150 kg;• 1.90 m² per animal for animals with a live weight between 150 and 220 kg;• 2.00 m² per animal for animals with a live weight exceeding 220 kg <p>Furthermore, animals must not be tethered at any time, including during feeding.</p>
Calves aged 3 to 8 weeks (*)
<p>In the stable, Calves must be reared in pairs or groups. The enclosure housing two calves must have a minimum area of 1 m² per animal, with a minimum length of 130 cm on the shortest side. For larger numbers, the area per animal (1 m²) must be multiplied by the number of calves present, with a minimum length of 130 cm for the shortest side of the enclosure.</p>

(*) The requirement 'Calves aged 3 to 8 weeks' shall apply 24 months after the publication of the specification.

4. Flooring of the stable

Cattle hooves are a key factor in ensuring animal welfare, and walking areas must be suitable for preserving their integrity. Flooring refers to the walkable surfaces used by cows in production in different areas of the facility (e.g. feeding lanes, corridors, passageways, access points, exercise areas,



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etc.). The materials used for the design and construction of floors must be of appropriate quality. They must be chosen in accordance with the category of animal being reared, so that they are neither too slippery nor too abrasive.

The flooring must be rough over the entire surface available to the animals to prevent slipping while they move, run, stand, lie down, or engage in social behaviour. It must be safe and free of obstacles to prevent injury.

Particular attention must also be paid to any access points to external enclosures.

Adult cattle (dairy, beef)
In the stable - The floor (solid or slatted) must be suitable and rough on all surfaces where cattle walk, or there must be bedding made of suitable organic material, i.e. abundant, non-abrasive, well preserved and absorbent.

- **ANIMAL MEASUREMENT AREA (ABMs)**

5. Nutritional status measured using *Body Condition Score (BCS)*

The assessment of animals' body condition, carried out using the Body Condition Score (BCS), is a tool for monitoring their health and welfare.

Monitoring this parameter is important for assessing the health status and ensuring the nutritional needs of the animals are met.

BCS is measured in animals not undergoing treatment on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicates a very thin (cachectic) animal and 5 a very fat (obese) animal.

Adult dairy cattle
BCS values must be between 2 and 4.25. The number of animals with BCS outside the limits must be less than 10%.
Adult beef cattle
BCS values must be above 2. The number of animals with a BCS below the limit must be less than 10%.

➤ BIOSAFETY MACRO-AREA (BS)

The biosecurity plan can be entrusted to a specialised company or managed internally. The plan must include product specifications, safety data sheets, bait monitoring and follow-up actions with treatment records. In addition, orderly warehouse management and orderly removal of dirt are required.

1. Rodent and insect control

The presence of rodents and insects (e.g. flies, etc.) represents a significant risk for the introduction and spread of infectious pathogens on the farm. Therefore, their spread must be controlled.



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Biosafety plan

In the stable - Presence of defined and organic procedures, written in a biosecurity plan and implemented.

2. Water control

The quality of water intended for animals is essential to maintaining homeostasis of physiological and metabolic functions and to preventing damage to equipment and facilities. In addition, poor microbiological quality of drinking water could pose a risk to animal health and, consequently, to consumers.

Water control

In the stable - To ensure good drinking water quality, the farm's water sources and supply must be checked once a year through bacteriological analysis of the following parameters: *E. coli*, Enterococci, Total bacterial count.

3. Visitor access

All visitors entering the farm, including regular visitors who enter for work reasons, can be a vehicle for contamination, and it is therefore necessary to manage access.

Veterinarians, business consultants, and others are also considered visitors.

Visitor access

All visitors are required to wear disposable shoe covers before entering the facility, or to wear boots they leave on the farm for personal use only.

➤ MACRO-AREA CONSCIOUS USE OF VETERINARY MEDICINES (MV)

Any non-compliance with the requirements for this macro-area must be classified as serious unless it can be proven that it was used to safeguard the animal's health and life. In this case, references to certification must be deleted only for the animal or group of animals treated, appropriately identified.

1. Consumption of the veterinary medicinal product

The consumption of antibiotics on farms during the observation period provided for in paragraph 2 bis of the Ministerial Decree. 23 December 2022, laying down national provisions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 and subsequent amendments and additions, expressed in DDD by ClassyFarm, must fall within one of the following conditions with respect to the national distribution of veterinary medicine consumption:

- a) the Defined Daily Dose (DDD) values are maintained or fall within the threshold value reported, in the first instance, in Annex XI of the Ministerial Decree. 23 December 2022 laying down national provisions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 and subsequent amendments and additions, with regard to direct payments for cattle farms in small establishments producing milk and/or meat;



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b) DDD values remain above the threshold mentioned, but are 10% lower than in 2022.

(*). Any changes to the national threshold, the percentage reduction referred to in point (b) and the reference year may be made by decree of the Ministry of Health and the MASAF.

2. Prescriptions and company health monitoring

Use of antibiotics

The Operator provides evidence of having administered antibiotic treatments only following a veterinary prescription issued as a result of company health monitoring, which involves assessing the sensitivity or resistance of company pathogens to antibiotic active ingredients through antibiotic sensitivity tests. Health monitoring is considered valid for multiple treatments, provided it is carried out at least once a year.

3. Sensitivity testing for antibiotic use

Use of antibiotics belonging to the class of fluoroquinolones and third and fourth-generation cephalosporins

In the event that antibiotics belonging to the Fluoroquinolone and third- and fourth-generation Cephalosporin classes are used, the Operator shall provide documented evidence that the treatment was carried out only following the indications provided by in vitro antibiotic sensitivity tests, indicating that other classes of molecules were not effective in vitro against the bacterial agent causing the disease.

Use of antibiotics belonging to the macrolide class

In the event that antibiotics belonging to the Macrolide class are used, by means other than injection for single treatment, the Operator shall provide documented evidence that the treatment was carried out only following the indications provided by in vitro antibiotic sensitivity tests indicating that other classes of molecules were not effective in vitro against the bacterial agent causing the disease.



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Annex 7

REGULATIONS FOR THE WELFARE OF CATTLE RAISED ON OR EXCLUSIVELY ON PASTURE

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➤ GENERAL PART

1. Foreword

Primary production operators and all personnel involved in the management and care of animals and livestock facilities must be aware of the complex relationships among animal health, human health, and the environment, and that welfare can only be achieved through careful integration of these components and the various factors that constitute them.

Therefore, welfare must be achieved and maintained by allowing the animal to maximise its ability to adapt to the environment and by reducing stressors through effective farm management, prophylaxis, biosecurity, and livestock facility enhancement programmes. An appropriate level of animal welfare on the farm also means a lower incidence of disease.

The reduction and rationalisation of antimicrobial consumption, integrated with veterinary activities and advice, are direct consequences of optimal managerial/structural management and represent one of the main tools for containing the spread of antimicrobial resistance in animals, the environment, and food, with a view to *One Health*.

2. Area of application

The farms are structured for the rearing of cattle for milk and/or meat production, using pasture. Within this type of farm, different groups of animals will be assessed:

- calves (both male and female) from birth to 6 months of age;
- Cattle in production (both male and female), over 6 months of age.

The requirements set out below apply to all cattle farms:

- free stabling on litter or cubicles with access to pasture for at least 30% of the animals for 60 days/year
- full grazing farming;

Cattle must be reared in accordance with the requirements set out below for a minimum period of six months prior to slaughter. If this period exceeds 6 months, the relevant information may be included in the marketing of animals, primary production products and food products derived from them, in accordance with Article 8 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022.

3. Definitions

- **Employee:** a person who works in the establishment on a full-time or part-time basis (minimum half-day) to carry out daily feeding and care of the animals and the environment, excluding those who work exclusively in the fields and in the milking parlour.
- **Farming with the use of pasture:** Farming in which at least 30% of cattle have access to pasture for at least 60 days per year.



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- **Fully pasture-based farming:** animals do not have access to indoor housing areas, except in exceptional circumstances, and are kept permanently on pasture.
- **Animal-based measures (ABMs):** Direct measures, i.e. standard criteria for determining the welfare status of animals based on their condition.
- **Body condition score (BCS):** Assessment of the body condition of animals.
- **Cattle in production:** animals over 6 months of age, such as beef cattle, dairy cattle, dry cows, lactating cows, heifers and breeding cattle.
- **Beef cattle:** animals over 6 months old, male or female, reared for red meat production, including suckler cows and bulls.
- **Dairy cattle:** females raised for the production of milk intended for human consumption.
- **Lactating cow:** a cow that produces milk after giving birth.
- **Dry cow:** a cow that has finished lactation.
- **Breeding cattle:** male animals reared for breeding.
- **Veal:** bovine animal (female or male) from birth to 6 months of age.
- **Heifer:** bovine over 6 months of age that has not yet calved.
- **Primary production Operator:** as defined in Art. 2 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022.
- **Pasture:** grassland or other vegetation that can fully or partially cover daily feed requirements, with a total size of no less than 500 m² per adult Livestock Unit, freely accessible or with rotational grazing, equipped, depending on needs and possibilities, with natural shelters (trees, ravines, caves, etc.) or artificial shelters (roofs, shelters, etc.) appropriate to the season and location.

4. Membership of the SQNBA

In order to join the SQNBA, primary production operators must submit a specific application to a Certification Body listed on the institutional website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry (MASAF) and satisfy, among other things, pursuant to Article 4, paragraph 5, point 5.1.3. of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, the following access requirements:

- Compliance with legislative requirements, i.e., the absence of open non-conformities, as per the latest official public health inspection for the sectors relating to animal welfare, pharmacovigilance, and biosecurity, where available.
- Compliance with legislative requirements in the last self-assessment carried out in the previous 12 months.



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The Certification Body verifies compliance with the prerequisites in the dedicated area of the ClassyFarm risk-based farm categorisation information system, as referred to in Article 9 of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, by consulting the access traffic light on the specific Certification Page of the individual primary production Operator.

A green traffic light indicates that the access prerequisites have been met and allows the Operator to proceed with the certification process. Conversely, a red traffic light blocks the continuation of the certification process, indicating that the access prerequisites have not been met.

5. Assessment requirements

The multifactorial nature of welfare must necessarily integrate different MACRO-AREAS.

Primary production operators who meet the prerequisites for access to SQNBA must satisfy the certification requirements of these Regulations relating to the MACRO-AREAS listed below in order to obtain certification:

- **MACRO-AREA 'BA', ANIMAL WELFARE:** includes the presence of suitable facilities (Facilities Area), conscious farm management (Management Area) and attention to animal conditions through the monitoring of direct welfare indicators (Direct Animal Measures Area - ABMs).
- **MACRO-AREA 'BS', BIOSAFETY:** based on the control of farm biosafety. Biosecurity is one of the main prevention tools available to primary production operators to prevent the introduction, development and spread of diseases in animals on the farm. A suitable biosecurity plan must be developed in consultation with the veterinary surgeon.
- **MACRO-AREA 'MV', CONSCIOUS USE OF VETERINARY MEDICINES:** Conscious use of medication, with particular attention to antimicrobial treatments. Primary production operators who are aware of the integrated approach to achieving a high level of animal welfare on farms use veterinary medicines responsibly and in consultation with veterinarians to ensure appropriate therapeutic support for animals and combat antibiotic resistance.
- **MACRO-AREA 'AM', ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION:** conscious water management. Since human health, animal health, and the environment are closely linked, it is considered necessary to also understand the broader environmental context through the *One Health* approach.

6. Labelling requirements

The information relating to the *farming method*, as provided for in Article 8(1)(b) of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022, must be reported, in accordance with the farming system adopted, as:

- *farming with the use of pasture;*
- *full grazing farming;*



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Where products from grazing farms or fully grazing farms are marketed together with products from farms that follow other SQNBA regulations for cattle, the label must not include the information relating to letter b) Farming method provided for in Article 8, paragraph 1, of the SQNBA Interministerial Decree of 2 August 2022.,

➤ ANIMAL WELFARE MACRO-AREA (BA)

• MANAGEMENT AREA

1. Number of employees

Requirement applicable only to farms with more than 50 head of cattle, increased to 90 head for farms located in mountain areas. The number of staff must be appropriate for the number of animals present on the premises to ensure proper control of their health and welfare.

When counting, the following should be taken into account:

- Those who work full-time should be counted as one person,
- those who work half-days should be counted as 0.5.

Dairy cattle
In the stable: The number of employees must take into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- At least one Operator for every 80 animals (if the same person also performs milking operations)- at least one Operator for every 200 animals (if the same person does not perform milking)
Beef cattle
Grazing: The number of employees must take into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- One operator per 400 animals

2. Training of employees

Operators and employees must be aware of the meaning of welfare and the measures necessary to ensure it. Among these, the training, experience, skills and awareness of management personnel significantly influence animal welfare conditions. Therefore, in addition to experience, training is also necessary, which can be acquired through a specific course, to be repeated every 3 years to keep up to date.

During the first year of entry into force of these Regulations, the training course may also be attended within 12 months of applying for SQNBA membership.

Operators who have completed the course must pass on what they have learnt to all operators who work in direct or indirect contact with animals.

Training of employees
At least one employee with at least 5 years' experience and training in animal welfare, to be repeated every 3 years, in accordance with the Ministry of Health's guidelines on animal welfare training. The 5-year experience requirement is not necessary if the employee has a degree in: LM42 (Degree in Veterinary Medicine), L25 (Agricultural and Forestry Sciences and



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Training of employees

Technologies), L38 (Animal Production Technologies), LM69 (Agricultural Sciences and Technologies), LM86 (Animal Sciences and Technologies).

3. Inspection and control of adult animals and calves

Daily inspections, either in person or via remote monitoring systems, are intended to supplement food distribution and daily management activities and involve observing all adult cattle and any calves housed in stables, with subsequent recording of their condition.

The inspection covers all groups of animals on the farm, divided into adult animals and calves.

Highly specialised activities or those relating to the performance of specific tasks (e.g., milking with specific tasks assigned, feed distribution, preparation of the unifeed wagon, etc.) are not considered daily inspections.

Any observations made (e.g. health, behaviour, etc.) must be recorded.

Adult cattle (dairy, beef)

in the stable: During stable rearing, animals must be inspected at least twice or more per day, and observations must be recorded.

Calves

in the stable: During stable rearing, animals must be inspected at least twice a day, and observations must be recorded.

- **STRUCTURE AREA**

4. Freedom of movement for animals

Assess the covered area used for lying down (bunks or permanent bedding). In the case of free-range housing, if the lying and feeding areas coincide, exclude the feeding access area (approximately 1 m).

Adult cattle (dairy, beef)

In the stable - Free-range housing (excluding temporary shelters used for emergencies): A minimum available area ensures freedom of movement:

6 m² per animal on bedding for adult cows or by a number of usable cubicles exceeding 90% of the number of cows present;

3.5 m² per animal on bedding for dairy heifers or a number of usable cubicles exceeding 90% of the number of cows present;

2.5 m² per animal up to 400 kg live weight and an additional 0.5 m² per animal for every 100 kg up to 800 kg live weight for beef cattle.

Grazing: When animals are kept at pasture, the entire grazing area available to the animals is assessed.

Calves from 8 weeks to 6 months old

In the stable: Freedom of movement is ensured by an available area greater than:

- 1.70 m² per animal for animals with a live weight of less than 150 kg;



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- 1.90 m² per animal for animals with a live weight between 150 and 220 kg;
 - 2.00 m² per animal for animals with a live weight exceeding 220 kg
- Furthermore, animals must not be tethered at any time, including during feeding.

Calves aged 3 to 8 weeks (*)

in the stable: Calves must be reared in pairs or groups.

The enclosure housing two calves must have a minimum area of 1 m² per animal and a minimum length of 130 cm on the shortest side.

For larger numbers, the area per animal (1 m²) must be multiplied by the number of calves present, with a minimum length of 130 cm for the shortest side of the enclosure.

(*) The requirement 'Calves aged 3 to 8 weeks' shall apply 24 months after the publication of the specification.

5. Flooring of the stable

Cattle hooves are a key factor in ensuring animal welfare, and walking areas must be suitable for preserving their integrity. Flooring refers to the walkable surfaces used by cows in production in different areas of the facility (e.g. feeding lanes, corridors, passageways, access points, exercise areas, etc.). The materials used for the design and construction of floors must be of appropriate quality. They must be chosen in accordance with the category of animal being reared, so that they are neither too slippery nor too abrasive.

The flooring must be rough over the entire surface available to the animals to prevent slipping while they move, run, stand, lie down, or engage in social behaviour. It must be safe and free of obstacles to prevent injury.

Particular attention must also be paid to outdoor access.

Adult cattle (dairy, beef)

in the stable: The flooring (solid or slatted) must be suitable and rough on all surfaces where cattle walk, or there must be bedding made of suitable organic material, i.e. abundant, non-abrasive, well-preserved and absorbent.

6. Infirmary area (Requirement applicable only to farms with more than 100 animals).

The shelter area, called the infirmary, must be adapted to the condition of the animal requiring assistance. Only animals with clearly identified pathologies should be present in the infirmary, and they must have access to food and fresh water ad libitum. Even during the grazing phase, the operator/attendant must implement an effective system to identify and capture animals that are suffering, sick or injured, and determine in which cases isolation, including preventive isolation, is necessary to treat them.

Infirmary

In the stable presence of a designated room specially prepared to accommodate sick or injured animals, equipped with dry bedding or a comfortable mat, where the clinical condition so



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requires.

On pasture: presence of containment or capture areas, including mobile ones, capable of accommodating sick or injured animals for treatment (does not apply to grazing on land adjacent to the stable).



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- **ANIMAL MEASUREMENT AREA (ABMs)**

7. Nutritional status measured using *Body Condition Score (BCS)*

The assessment of animals' body condition, carried out using the Body Condition Score (BCS), is a tool for monitoring their health and welfare. Monitoring this parameter is important to ensure the health status and nutritional needs of the animals are met.

BCS is measured on a scale of one to five, where one means a very thin (cachectic) animal and five means a very fat (obese) animal.

Adult dairy cattle
BCS values must be between 2 and 4.25. The number of animals with BCS outside the limits must be less than 10%.
Adult beef cattle
BCS values must be above 2. The number of animals with a BCS below the limit must be less than 10%.

8. Annual mortality of adult animals, over 6 months of age

This requirement applies only to farms with more than 100 animals.

The data to be collected and recorded must take into account adult cows (over 6 months of age), whether lactating or dry, that have died spontaneously on the farm, been euthanised, or emergency slaughtered (MSU) in the last 12 months, compared to the number of adult cows (lactating and dry) present on the day of assessment.

Adult cattle (dairy, beef)
Mortality must be less than 5%

➤ BIOSAFETY MACRO-AREA (BS)

The biosecurity plan can be entrusted to a specialised company or managed internally. The plan must include product specifications, safety data sheets, bait monitoring and follow-up actions with treatment records. In addition, orderly warehouse management and orderly removal of dirt are required.

1. Rodent and insect control

The presence of rodents and insects (e.g. flies, etc.) represents a significant risk for the introduction and spread of infectious pathogens on the farm. Therefore, their spread must be controlled.

Biosafety plan
in the stable: Presence of defined and organic procedures, written in a biosecurity plan and implemented.



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2. Water control

The quality of water intended for animals is essential to maintaining homeostasis of physiological and metabolic functions and to preventing damage to equipment and facilities. In addition, poor microbiological quality of drinking water could pose a risk to animal health and, consequently, to consumers.

Water control

In the stable: to ensure good quality drinking water, it is necessary to check the farm's water sources once a year through bacteriological analysis of the following parameters: *E. coli*, Enterococci, Total bacterial count.

3. Visitor access

All visitors entering the farm, including regular visitors who enter for work reasons, can be a vehicle for contamination, and it is therefore necessary to manage access.

Veterinarians, business consultants, and others are also considered visitors.

Visitor access

In the stable all visitors are required to wear disposable shoe covers before entering the facility, or they must wear boots that they leave on the farm for their exclusive personal use.

➤ MACRO-AREA CONSCIOUS USE OF VETERINARY MEDICINES (MV)

Any non-compliance with the requirements for this macro-area must be classified as serious unless it can be proven that it was used to safeguard the animal's health and life. In this case, references to certification must be deleted only for the animal or group of animals treated, appropriately identified.

1. Consumption of veterinary medicinal products: DDD values

DDD values (*)

The consumption of antibiotics on farms during the observation period provided for in paragraph 2 bis of the Ministerial Decree. 23 December 2022, laying down national provisions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 and subsequent amendments and additions, expressed in DDD by ClassyFarm, must fall within one of the following conditions with respect to the national distribution of veterinary medicine consumption:

- a) the Defined Daily Dose (DDD) values are maintained or fall within the threshold value reported, in the first instance, in Annex XI of the Ministerial Decree. 23 December 2022 laying down national provisions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021, as amended and supplemented, with regard to direct payments for bovine animals for milk and/or beef production;



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DDD values (*)

b) DDD values remain above the threshold mentioned, but are 10% lower than in 2022.

(*) Any changes to the national threshold, the percentage reduction referred to in point (b) and the reference year may be made by decree of the Ministry of Health and the MASAF.

2. Prescriptions and company health monitoring

Antibiotic treatments

The Operator provides evidence of having administered antibiotic treatments only following a veterinary prescription issued as a result of company health monitoring, which involves assessing the sensitivity or resistance of company pathogens to antibiotic active ingredients through antibiotic sensitivity tests. Health monitoring is considered valid for multiple treatments, provided it is carried out at least once a year.

3. Sensitivity testing for antibiotic use

Use of antibiotics belonging to the class of fluoroquinolones and third and fourth-generation cephalosporins

If antibiotics belonging to the fluoroquinolone and third- and fourth-generation cephalosporin classes are used, the Operator shall provide documented evidence that the treatment was carried out only following the indications provided by in vitro antibiotic sensitivity tests; the test must indicate that other classes of molecules were not effective in vitro against the bacterial agent causing the disease.

Use of antibiotics belonging to the macrolide class

If antibiotics belonging to the macrolide class are used, by means other than injection for single treatment, the Operator shall provide documented evidence that the treatment was carried out only following the indications provided by in vitro antibiotic sensitivity tests; the test must indicate that other classes of molecules were not effective in vitro against the bacterial agent causing the disease.

➤ MACRO AREA: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (AM)

The requirements of this MACRO-AREA are applicable only during the stages of rearing in stables. The environment is one component to be protected from a One Health perspective. In this vision, human, animal, and environmental health are inextricably linked. Taking care of the environment means avoiding pollution and waste of primary resources.

1. Techniques for limiting water waste

Aware of the importance of protecting the environment, the farmer takes measures to reduce water waste.



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Water use

in the stable: Presence of flooring covered with litter or self-cleaning flooring and/or equipped with mechanical cleaning tools capable of minimising the use of water for washing surfaces.

Annexes:

- *DM coordinated text SQNBA + disciplinary text;*
- *SQNBA notification request file control sheet;*
- *SQNBA technical standard project report.*