	3-2-749_EN Inf	Brief Information Livestock: Grazing requirements for herbivores according to Reg (EU) 2018/848	v 04.10.2022	1/4
--	----------------	---	--------------	-----

## Brief Info

### **Grazing requirements for certified organic herbivores (cattle, sheep, goats, horses...)**

The minimum requirements for implementing the grazing requirements for herbivores, which could be applied until December 31, 2021 in accordance with nationally issued requirements (grazing 50% of the LU (Livestock Unit) or 1 LU per hectare of grazing area), have no longer been valid since January 1st, 2022.

The grazing requirement for herbivores from 2022 under the new EU Organic Regulation 2018/848 follows the principle that the animals must have constant access to open-air areas and access to pasture during the grazing period whenever circumstances permit.

Access to open-air grounds and pastures from 2022 is regulated in the circular issued by the responsible ministry (BMSGPK) on March 17, 2021 and includes the following:

#### **1. Grazing requirement:**

Grazing shall be granted to herbivores whenever weather, soil and seasonal conditions permit.

Therefore, the calendar year is now also divided into a grazing period (April to October) and winter months (November to March).

In concrete terms, this means that during the grazing season, all animals must be granted daily access to pasture and that there are no grazing requirements in the winter months, but there is also no grazing ban.

#### **2. Temporary exceptions to the grazing requirement:**


2.1. Examples of weather, seasonal and soil conditions include:

- Extreme drought and lack of water, which would lead to permanent damage to the turf during grazing
- Long-lasting rainy season and as a result very soft pastures
- Snow conditions extending beyond the winter months
- Onset of winter in the grazing season (e.g. in alpine pastures)
- Storm and severe weather events

Other reasons such as operationally insufficient availability or accessibility of the pasture land cannot be taken into account.

2.2. Individual animal exemptions for sick or injured animals or for other veterinary reasons:

- Veterinary reasons - Grazing young animals:
- A restriction is particularly possible during the minimum drinking time (for cattle, horses: 90 days from birth; for sheep and goats: 45 days from birth).
- If the young animals are mainly fed with milk beyond this phase, this must be justified in a comprehensible manner.
- After the milk drinking phase, access to pasture can be restricted for a further four weeks with a view to targeted conversion feeding. In these cases, individual pasture documentation is required.

	3-2-749_EN Inf	Brief Information Livestock: Grazing requirements for herbivores according to Reg (EU) 2018/848	v 04.10.2022	2/4
--	----------------	---	--------------	-----

Routine measures – Examples of animals being temporarily brought into the barn for understandable veterinary reasons can also be:

- Sales preparation
- Claw care
- Prove
- Drying off
- Calving

A temporary exemption from access to pasture for the drying off process does not mean for the entire drying period of 6 to 8 weeks.

2.3. Union legal restrictions and obligations to protect human and animal health - quarantine regulations due to animal diseases or similar.

### 3. Requirements for pasture and open-air areas depending on the type of husbandry:

According to Reg. (EU) 2018/848, husbandry systems must ensure a certain level of grazing, depending on the availability of pasture at different times of the year.

Due to the different specific provisions of the EU organic regulation, the required access to pasture or open space depends on the type of husbandry in which herbivores are kept. Therefore, a distinction is made between:

- Husbandry form A – Freestall housing with a permanently accessible and guideline-compliant outdoor area
- Husbandry type B – Freestall housing without (guideline-compliant) outdoor exercise
- Housing type C – temporary tethering for cattle older than six months
- Husbandry type D – year-round free-range husbandry

In order to assess the required access to pasture or open-air grounds, each animal category or group on a farm must be assigned to one of the husbandry types (A, B, C or D) described below:

#### Type of husbandry A:

Since the animals also have access to minimum outdoor areas during the grazing period, before and after grazing and on those days when grazing is not possible due to the circumstances, this type of husbandry requires optimum grazing. Unrestricted access to minimum outdoor areas must be granted whenever weather permitting.

The specifications must be observed for every animal that is kept in husbandry form A. There is an exception for male cattle (bulls, oxen) over one year old, which do not need access to grazing land – constant access to a minimum outdoor area is sufficient.


#### Type of husbandry B:

Since this form of husbandry is exempt from the need to provide outdoor areas during the winter months and temporarily during the grazing time, whenever grazing is not possible due to circumstances, this must be compensated with a maximum of grazing if grazing is possible during the grazing time due to the circumstances.

The requirements must be observed for every animal that is not given access to outdoor areas (minimum outdoor areas) during the winter months.

#### Type of husbandry C:

Since the cattle > 6 months in tethered housing during the winter months and temporarily during the grazing time, whenever grazing is not possible due to the circumstances, only limited - at least twice a week - outdoor areas must be granted and the stalls do not offer the animals

	3-2-749_EN Inf	Brief Information Livestock: Grazing requirements for herbivores according to Reg (EU) 2018/848	v 04.10.2022	3/4
--	----------------	---	--------------	-----

freedom of movement, a Maximum grazing offered if grazing is possible during the grazing season.

The specifications must be observed for every cattle kept in tethered housing.

Type of husbandry D:

According to the EU Organic Regulation, stables are not required in areas with climate conditions that allow the animals to live outdoors. In these cases, the animals must have access to shelters or shaded areas to protect them from extreme weather.

In this context, the "optimal" and "maximum" of pasture were defined:

- Optimum grazing:
  - Applies to animals in husbandry form A.
  - The movement pasture is sufficient, whereby a predominantly recognizable turf must be present on the area.
  - The pasture is primarily used for movement.
- Grazing maximum:
  - Applies to animals in husbandry types B, C and D
  - In addition to exercise, pasture is also used for fodder intake, whereby exercise and fodder intake must be maximized, taking into account the typical regional conditions.
  - Rabbits and antlers must also be given maximum pasture.

You can read all the details and requirements in our INFO sheets "Keeping organic rabbits" and "Keeping organic antlers" (see [www.abg.at](http://www.abg.at) -> Documents).

#### **4. Grazing plan for 2022**

The grazing plan is a unique representation of how grazing will be individually implemented on the farm from 2022. It must be kept ready by the company for the 2022 inspection.

There is freedom of form - it is important that it describes briefly and comprehensibly which animals will be grazed on which areas in 2022, over what period of time. Farms that have previously grazed all herbivores can use the corresponding grazing records as a grazing plan.

#### **5. Records:**

During the specified grazing period (April - October), grazing records must be kept, which must be made available to the inspection body at all times and provide up-to-date and complete information on compliance with the grazing specification.

It must be clear from this when which animals are on the pasture. It is freely selectable whether the days with pasture (positive documentation) or the days on which pasture is not possible (negative documentation) are recorded.

Circumstances or restrictions on compliance with the grazing requirement that are prescribed by EU law must be justified.


In any case, days without pasture must be documented with justification!

#### **6. Grazing during the final fattening of cattle and breeding bulls:**

- Final fattening of cattle:

The previous regulation of keeping beef cattle exclusively in the barn for a limited period of time during the final fattening period can no longer be used when the new organic regulation comes into force on January 1st, 2022.

Cattle for which grazing is planned during this period (female calves, male cattle over a year in

 CERES	3-2-749_EN Inf	Brief Information Livestock: Grazing requirements for herbivores according to Reg (EU) 2018/848	v 04.10.2022	4/4
--	----------------	---	--------------	-----

husbandry types B and C) must be allowed to graze at least once.

- Breeding bulls kept in tethers or in loose housing:

The bulls do not have to be allowed to graze.

However, if these breeding bulls are not allowed to exercise, they lose their organic status and must be sanctioned accordingly.