



Slow-growing broiler breeds

APPLICABILITY

Theme/Keywords

Slow-growing broilers

Context

Organic regulations, extensive label production

Geographical coverage

Worldwide

Required time

-

Period of impact

Full life cycle

Equipment

Not required

Best in

Extensive, free-range and organic broiler production systems

Problem

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

Solution

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

Benefits

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

Practical recommendations

Examples:

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



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



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

On-farm application

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



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

About this practice abstract and *mEATquality*

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mEATquality:

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

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

Project website: www.meatquality.eu/

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further readings

Article: Slower growing broilers are healthier. T. Mcdougal, Poultryworld.net, 2020

<https://www.poultryworld.net/health-nutrition/slower-growing-broilers-are-healthier>

Weblinks

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

