

CERES Policy

Use of Conventional Poultry Manure by Organic Farmers

1	Aims	Define the conditions, under which conventional poultry manure can be used by organic farmers under regulation (EC) 834/07*.
2	Background	<p>Organic farming requires (almost) closed nutrient cycles and optimum use of natural resources, including mechanisms like biological nitrogen fixation.</p> <p>On the other hand, unlike Central Europe, where mixed farms with crop production and animal husbandry predominate among organic producers, organic growers in many regions of the world do not have own animals with their respective dung. In many regions, especially in dry areas, poultry manure is the only dung, which is commercially available in major quantities.</p>
3	Normative framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Regulation (EC) 889, Annex I, farmyard manure and composted farmyard manure are allowed, as long as they are not from "factory farming". o Several sources, which define the term "extensive" livestock production (a term, which was used in the old Reg. (EC) 2092 /91), may be useful in this context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation (EEC) 1999/74 establishes a maximum of 9 laying hens/m² o Regulation (EEC) 1991R1274 establishes a maximum of 7 laying hens/m² for extensive indoor barn rearing o Regulation (EEC) 1538/91, annex IV: extensive indoor barn reared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Broiler chicken: 12 animals/m² and max. 25 kg weight/m²; minimum slaughter age of 56 days o Turkeys: 25 kg/ m², minimum slaughter age of 70 days o Austrian Regulation on animal protection, No. V1-430, 1995 03 03: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Broiler chicken: 30 kg weight/m², = 12 animals/m² calculated at a base of 2,5 kg of maximum weight; used light requirements, need for straw in the stables o Turkey: 40 kg/m² o Animal protection report 2001 of the German Ministry of Consumer Defence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Broiler chicken: 35 kg/m² is a compromise between chicken producers and animal protection demands. o Turkey (females): 45 kg/ m2 o Turkey (males): 50 kg/ m²

4	Terms, clarifications, abbreviations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factory farming (There is no legal or official definition of this term; CERES interpretation is the following): Factory farming does not respect the minimum requirements of animal welfare. • Composting: Aerobic decomposition of organic waste, during which humic substance concentration increases and C/N ratio decreases. A minimum humidity is required for composting, thus dried manure cannot be accepted as "composted". For proper composting with low nutrient losses, among others a high initial C/N ratio is required. This can be obtained only, when poultry manure is mixed with materials rich in C, like sawdust or straw. Depending on climatic conditions and previous decomposition inside the stable, minimum composting time varies between two and six months.
5	Policy	
5.1	Minimum requirements for poultry manure from non organic husbandry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poultry manure may be used from intensive farming, if the following minimum criteria are fulfilled (i.e. such production is not regarded as factory farming): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o No animals in cages. o No landless operations. o No use of highly fluorized aromatic substances as antibiotics. o No regular preventive, only occasional therapeutic use of coccidistatics. o Latest use of insecticides or acaricides at least 5 months before application of the manure on the field. o The manure must not be disinfected with formaldehyde or potentially harmful disinfectants. o Not more than 30 kg broiler chickens/m², i.e. 12 animals per m² for broiler chicken in the last fattening period or the corresponding number of animals for a younger stage. o 40 kg/m² for turkey o Not more than 9 laying hens/m² o Floor needs to be covered with straw or another appropriate material. o The stables have to receive light, if there is artificial light, the animals must have a night dark break of at least 6 hours.
5.2	Maximum quantities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of poultry manure or other manures from external sources may not exceed 100 kg N/ha/year. • The operation has to prove in their fertilisation planning that they are making serious efforts to reduce external fertiliser inputs. Except in well arguable cases, the external nutrient input from poultry manure should not exceed 50% of the total N requirement of the crop.
5.3	Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poultry unit has to be inspected. In case of different suppliers, representative farms of each type/size need to be visited. • All important information on animal husbandry and manure production has to be gathered, covering all the above listed minimum requirements for animal protection and manure production/application. The findings have to be described in the inspection report (or internal reports). • In critical cases, samples of the poultry manure must be taken for analysis.

* **Note:** For the time being, products outside the European Union can be certified only as "equivalent to", not as "compliant with" Reg. (EC) 834/07. for further details, please see the CERES Policy on Third Country Certification.