

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

No.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT STANDARDS ACT, 1990 (ACT No. 119 OF 1990)

DRAFT REGISTERED “PASTURE RAISED” SYSTEM AS A MANAGEMENT CONTROL SYSTEM FOR ANIMAL PRODUCTS INTENDED FOR SALE AND EXPORT

REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE MANAGEMENT CONTROL SYSTEM IN RESPECT OF THE SALE AND EXPORT OF CERTAIN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

It is hereby made known that the Executive Officer: Agricultural Product Standards has registered the “Pasture Raised” System as a Management Control System in terms of the Regulations Relating to the Management Control System in Respect of the Sale of Certain Agricultural Products No.R.6634 of 19 September 2025.

Further made known is that the Executive Officer: Agricultural Product Standards, in terms of the Regulations Relating to the Management Control System in Respect of the Sale of Certain Agricultural Products No.R.6634 of 19 September 2025 hereby inserts after Regulation 10, the following Annexure in respect of the “Applicable Minimum Standard for the Registered ‘Pasture Raised’ System as a Management Control System for Animal Products Intended for Sale and Export”.

ANNEXURE L

THE APPLICABLE MINIMUM STANDARD FOR THE REGISTERED “PASTURE RAISED” SYSTEM AS A MANAGEMENT CONTROL SYSTEM FOR ANIMAL PRODUCTS INTENDED FOR SALE AND EXPORT

1. Type of Agricultural Product

- 1.1 “Pasture Raised” is a type of agricultural product regulated in terms of sections 3, 4 and 15 of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 119 of 1990, and that is intended for sale and export.
- 1.2 The animals and products covered are the following:
 - (a) Broilers – Chicken meat
 - (b) Layers – Chicken Eggs
 - (c) Pigs – Pork meat
 - (d) Sheep – Mutton meat
 - (e) Cattle – Beef meat.
- 1.3 Pasture is defined as land covered with natural grass or vegetation used for grazing livestock and includes land covered with planted grass or vegetation used for grazing livestock but excludes commercial crop fields (classified as cropland).
- 1.4 “Pasture Raised” animals are raised on land with rooted vegetation, such as grasses or other plants, with access to fresh pasture for 24 hours daily and 7 days per week. “Pasture Raised” animals are moved regularly to fresh pasture that allows to practice natural behaviours.

2. Farm requirements

- 2.1 A farm map
 - (a) Must be available and regularly updated to reflect the current pasture raised operation,
 - (b) Must indicate quarantine and treatment areas, all stores containing chemicals, veterinary treatments, feed and supplements, etc.
- 2.2 Dual or split systems (i.e., “Pasture Raised” and animals not raised on pasture) shall not be allowed on the same farm for “Pasture Raised” System animals and products concerned.

3. Housing and infrastructure

3.1 Housing

- (a) Animals shall have sufficient free-roaming space to exhibit and practice natural behaviour and to have access to fresh pasture.
- (b) The schooner (movable chicken house) must provide shade, protection from rain, and adequate ventilation.
- (c) Roosting perches and nesting must be available at night, providing at least 15cm per hen.
- (d) At least 1 nest box of 1.2m long for every 100 Layers.

3.2 Stocking density

- (a) Broiler Chicks (1-3 weeks old), no more than 42 birds per square meter. Flock size limits are 2000 per cage.
- (b) Broilers (4-9 weeks old), no more than 7 birds per square meter. Flock size limits are 500 birds per schooner, with additional space outside, or the schooner must be moved at least every 2 days.
- (c) Layers no more than 4.2 birds per square meter. Herd size limits are 500 birds per schooner, plus additional access to pasture or the schooner must be moved at least every 2 days.
- (d) Pigs no more than 50 per 0.25 ha. Flock size limits are 50 pigs per enclosure and they may not live in closed confinement and cages except when farrowing (giving birth).
- (e) Sheep shall not exceed the LSU (Livestock Unit)(1 Cow or 6 Sheep) defined for the area of operation.
- (f) Cattle shall not exceed the LSU (1 Cow or 6 Sheep) defined for the area of operation.
- (g) Where High Stock Densities (HSD) and Ultra High Stock Densities (UHSD) grazing is applied, farmers must keep detailed records of the reasons why and how frequently animals were moved. This practice may not be sustained and should have a specific purpose

3.3 Animal protection:

- (a) The structure design must be secure to protect the animals from predators (jackals, hawks, snakes) and vermin.

4. Pasture management

4.1 Pasture rotation

- (a) Poultry:
 - (i) There should be rotational grazing by moving animals to a new, clean pasture at least every second day to minimise parasite buildup and allow the vegetation to recover. Animals may not return to the same vegetation within 60 days after the first use.
 - (ii) Mobile housing shall be moved every two days to ensure access to fresh pasture.
 - (iii) Open cages shall have permanent access to fresh pasture
 - (iv) Broilers and Layers may stay at the same spot for no longer than 2 consecutive days.
- (b) Pigs:
 - (i) Pigs ideally move every 2 weeks, depending on the vegetation, but no longer than 4 consecutive weeks in the same spot.
- (c) Cattle and sheep:
 - (i) Cattle and Sheep are moved according to pasture quality and regrowth ability of the pasture.

- 4.2 Ensure at least 50% living vegetation cover is present (bare soil, including those between the vegetation, should not exceed 50%).

5. Animal management

5.1 Raising the young

- (a) Animals should be kept in a controlled, enclosed brooder/farrowing pen/enclosure for the first weeks until they are fully developed and capable of handling outdoor temperatures.
 - (b) Broilers and Layers must be kept inside for at least the first 3 weeks until they are fully feathered.
 - (c) Pigs ideally should stay up to day 28 with the Sow.
- 5.2 Introducing the young into the system
- (a) Broilers and Layers must have free access to vegetation from the age of 21 days or earlier.
 - (b) Piglets must have access to vegetation from the age of 21 days or earlier.
- 5.3 Introducing new animals into the system
- (a) All flocks and herds must be treated as a closed herd, which means that no animals may be added to the herd or flock from external sources.
- 5.4 Health and treatment
- (a) The use of antibiotics is prohibited for animals.
 - (b) Sick animals must be treated, and records must be kept of such animals. Those that received antibiotics may not be sold as pasture raised.
 - (c) For each animal type, there should be a dedicated quarantine area to separate sick animals from the main herd or flock. These areas must be clearly marked.
 - (d) Due to the risk of parasites in pasture systems, consistent monitoring of animals and natural or chemical controls (as advised by a vet) is necessary
- 5.5 Practices
- (a) Prohibited:
 - (i) De-beaking (beak clipping, tipping and trimming).
 - (ii) De-clawing.
 - (iii) De-spurring.
 - (iv) De-toeing and toe trimming.
 - (v) Hole punching.
 - (vi) Pinioning.
 - (vii) Notching.
 - (viii) Comb trimming.
 - (ix) Castration is prohibited.
 - (x) Teething and teeth grinding of pigs are prohibited.
 - (xi) Tail docking of pigs is prohibited.
 - (b) Allowed:
 - (i) Trimming feathers is permitted. Skin or flesh must not be cut.

6. Feed and Water

- 6.1 Animals should be allowed to forage for insects, worms, and grasses, which provides a natural, varied diet.
- 6.2 In addition to the rooted grass and plants, feed, bales or pelleted feeds may also be used.
- 6.3 Feed must be free from:
- (a) Growth hormones.
 - (b) Animal protein.
 - (c) Medicine or antibiotics.
- 6.4 Certificates from the manufacturer shall be available confirming that the feed is hormone free, medicine free and antibiotic free.
- 6.5 Animals must have access to clean, fresh water, which is critical and should always be available.

7. Traceability

- 7.1 The producer must be able to trace labelled products back to cage and batch numbers.

7.2 All animals shall be traceable and where required, identifiable as prescribed by the Animal Identification Act, 2002 (Act No.6 of 2002) and the regulations published in terms of this Act, provided that lesser harmful applications of identification marks shall take preference if allowed.

7.3 The producer must have a documented method in place to receive, record and address complaints.

8. Labelling and claims

8.1 The type of agricultural products mentioned in point 1 may be presented as “Pasture Raised” system only if it complies to this minimum standard for the registered “Pasture Raised” system.

8.2 The “Pasture Raised” System require compliance with other management control system standards registered in terms of the Regulations Relating to the Management Control System in Respect of the Sale of Certain Agricultural Products No.R.6634 of 19 September 2025. These and other management control systems may be referenced together with “Pasture Raised” on the label provided that the product in question complies with all the standards required, and where the standards differ, compliance to the stricter requirement shall be adhered to.

8.3 Products derived from the “Pasture Raised” system shall also be labelled in accordance with the regulations and standards for the mentioned products published in terms of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990.

9. Enforcement

9.1 The designated assignee/inspectors shall ensure that only farms registered with the Department for the “Pasture Raised” System as a Management Control System are allowed to pack and label the product, container or outer containers as “Pasture Raised”.

9.2 The List of registered farms will be placed on the department website at <https://www.nda.gov.za/index.php/core-business/agricultural-production/inspection-services/food-safety-quality-assurance>

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT STANDARDS