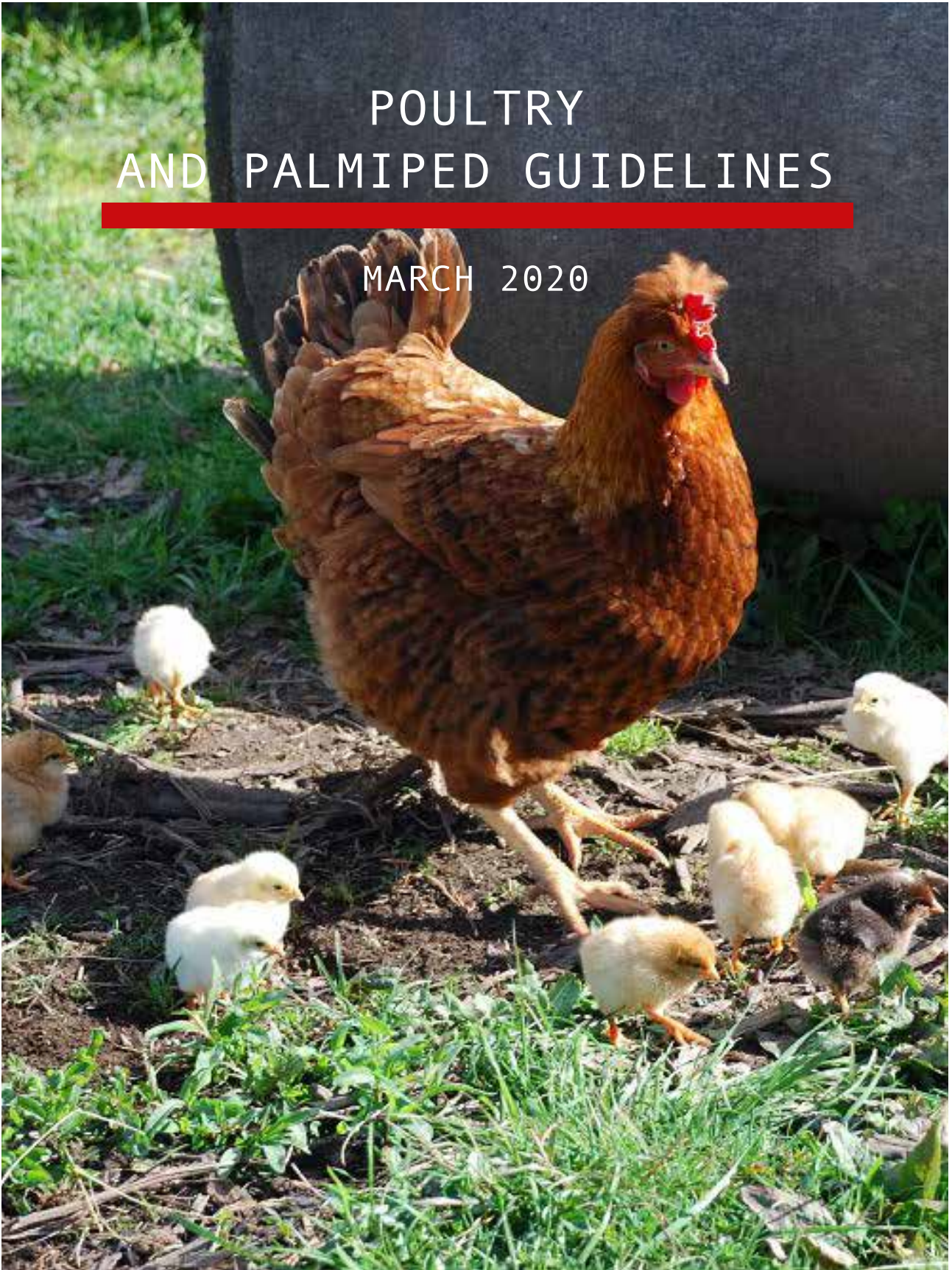




# POULTRY AND PALMIPED GUIDELINES

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Cover photo: Blue Egg Hen Slow Food Presidium (Chile), © Ana Paula Guasti Diniz

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Every step in the poultry<sup>1</sup> production chain, from breeding to processing and transformation, must take place locally and must, whenever possible, involve **native breeds** derived from the age-old process of domestication of wild species.

A native breed is one that originates from a specific territory, of which there are proven historical traces in that territory, and which has fundamental characteristics such as a medium or slow growth rate and being rustic<sup>2</sup>.

The animals must be entered in breed registries (if applicable) kept by recognized breeder associations or protection consortia that carry out control visits.

If a breed standard has not been defined or there are no public registries, the testimonies of local breeders may be sufficient to launch a Presidium. In this case the Presidium will not refer to a “breed” but to a “population.”

If the Presidium aims to promote a traditional meat-based product, the meat used is not required to come from native breeds or populations (e.g. if the native breeds are extinct or no longer bred in sufficient numbers to produce a minimum quantity for the market), but must in any case come from breeds adapted to the environment and territory defined in the Presidium production protocol, which have fundamental characteristics such as medium or slow growth, ability to survive on pasture, and being rustic.

## HUSBANDRY PRACTICES

The aspects of animal welfare that must be guaranteed are access to open spaces (farmyard and pasture) and the ability to scratch and forage, perch, take dust baths, and, in the case of palmipeds, access ponds.

Farming exclusively indoors is only permitted for health and/or other reasons, e.g. social insecurity or the need to ensure health in the early stages of life.

For animals kept indoors, the surface area per animal must be below that specified in the EU regulation on organic practices (see Annex 1).

### Facilities

In general, animals must not be segregated in confined spaces and, therefore, the use of cages is prohibited. Animals must be able to move freely, spread their wings, and access open areas, both covered and uncovered.

Shelters must be adapted to the local cultural, landscape, and climate context and must be built according to biosecurity criteria. Natural materials and as little cement or plastic as possible must be used, to ensure the maintenance of soil health below the shelters.

Materials from which structures are built must not cause discomfort or possible injury to the animals, and must not expose animals to standing water, rainwater, or predators. In addition, they must limit the risk of proliferation of parasites (lice, mites, etc.). Temperature, relative humidity and air circulation, gas concentrations, and dust levels must be kept within limits that are not harmful to the animals.

Shelters should be insulated from sources of noise (especially at night), drafts, and excessive heat and cold that could disturb the animals and cause to stress and subsequent weakening of the immune system.

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<sup>1</sup> The avian species to which this document refers in a strict sense are the chicken (*Gallus gallus domesticus*), the turkey (*Meleager gallopavo*), the Guinea fowl (*Numida meleagris*), the duck (*Anas spp.*) and Muscovy duck (*Cairina moschata*), and the goose (*Anser anser domesticus*). Domestic forms of dove and pigeon (*Columba spp.*) and quail (*Coturnix coturnix*), and partially domesticated forms of pheasant (*Phasianus spp.*) and partridge (*Perdix spp.*), are not included.

<sup>2</sup> The “rustic” breeds are those that retain natural behaviors typical of the wild state, such as the ability to find food, water, and shelter (and therefore resist climatic variations), and general resilience.



A number of perches, corresponding to the group size and the size of the poultry, shall be present in shelters for species with the ability to rise above the ground.

There must be no less than 1 linear meter of perch for every 5 birds, and perches must be rounded, with an average diameter of 3.5 cm.

The litter underneath must not be wet and must be made of dry plant material (straw, husks, wood chips, leaves, etc.), avoiding the use of coconut fiber.

Nests may be individual or collective, but must be easily accessible and separated from the areas for movement, scratching, and perching/roosting.

A continuous source of fresh and clean water inside and/or outside the shelter must be guaranteed. Open-air drinking troughs must be protected with canopies or other shelters to avoid contact with wild birds or synanthropic animals<sup>3</sup>. Lighting must be as natural as possible, respecting seasonal photoperiods.

During the limited periods when animals are confined to indoor spaces, they must have permanent access to materials that allow them appropriate play and exploration activities, including straw, leaves, shavings, straw bales, dust bath tubs, perching facilities, and water bath tubs (in the case of palmipeds).

Poultry reproduction requires a first phase (in autumn-winter) of formation of the breeding families, respecting the appropriate male to female ratio (1 : 8-12 for chickens and turkeys, 1 : 2-3 for geese and ducks) in order not to generate stress. Males must be rotated, at least twice and ideally three times, through groups of females in the spring period of reproduction to increase the genetic diversity of the offspring.

Incubation of the eggs may be natural or artificial. If incubation cannot be managed on the farm, young birds may be purchased.

**Natural hatching** is recommended, as animals born on the farm are naturally accustomed to the place and to the animal group and its characteristics. Mothers are generally able to insert their young into the group hierarchy without problems.

Hens must be able to brood in a suitable nest that is quiet and separated from other hens, and must have adequate water and food available. When the eggs hatch, the young must remain in a safe area (barnyard or other enclosure) equipped with fine-meshed perimeter netting (mesh size about 2 cm) so that they cannot escape the control of the hen, which would generate stress and put the young in danger (from predators, dogs, agricultural vehicles, etc.). It may be useful to install a covering net, of the same mesh, in areas frequented by winged predators or those that are able to climb (mustelids and canids).

For breeds or populations that do not exhibit good brooding behavior, turkeys or hens of other breeds may be used to incubate the eggs.

Even when **artificial incubation** is used, the eggs must come from the farm; only if there is no other option may eggs be obtained from other producers authorized by the Presidium.

After hatching, the young should be kept in the incubator until the plumage (down) is dry (24 hours from the expected hatching day) and then taken to the weaning area.

After about 48 hours, the hatchling can feed itself, and should be given a more protein-rich food than that used for breeding females. The young must be kept dry, sheltered from the cold and drafts, and protected from rodents and predators. If the ambient temperature is not warm enough, a heating lamp must be used (during the first 3 weeks of life).

Young chickens must be brought into the henhouse when they reach 3 months of age.

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<sup>3</sup> *Synanthropic animals are those that, although not domesticated, live in close association with humans. They are usually rodents, insects, or reptiles.*

The **introduction of new animals** into the henhouse must be planned in such a way as to avoid hierarchical clashes (the pecking order must be preserved and respected) and consequent injuries or mortality. If young birds are purchased in order to replace animals or increase the overall number of poultry on the farm, it is suggested that they already be used to grazing and that they come from other local or regional producers authorized by the Presidium.

The introduction of new animals into a henhouse is an extremely delicate process, as the animals already present claim control of the territory by attacking and injuring (sometimes fatally) the new arrivals. These situations are detrimental to animal welfare and must be avoided.

New animals must also be quarantined (minimum 21 days) in a facility physically separate from the henhouse to avoid the introduction of new diseases or parasites to the farm.

At the end of the quarantine period the newcomers must be isolated from the group already present in the henhouse with a dividing net so that the birds can see each other but cannot have physical contact until they interact in a non-violent manner. Single animals or small groups of newcomers should not be introduced to the henhouse; it is recommended that the new group account for at least one third of the total animals present.

When the interaction between the original group and the new arrivals is no longer aggressive, the dividing net can be removed, the number of feeders and drinking troughs should be increased (these are points of confrontation, especially if overcrowded), and visual barriers, escape areas, and perches should be installed in case of any residual aggression.

Poultry are active, social animals, accustomed to living in relatively stable groups. Therefore, in keeping with the natural behavior of these animals and in order to favor recognition between all members of the group, thus reducing the likelihood of hierarchical struggles, it is recommended that groups not contain more than 130-150 individuals. The presence of manipulable materials such as ladders, perches, or straw bales is recommended in outdoor areas.

Suppressing or reducing molting is not allowed. **Molting** is essential for the proper development of the plumage, which is important for coping with seasonal weather changes. Molting lasts about 2 months and generally begins in late summer/early autumn. Techniques that aim to "force" molting are likewise prohibited.

## PASTURE

The Presidia promote the improvement of soils in pasture areas through the adoption of permaculture, agroforestry, and other agroecological techniques.

Pastures must have adequate minimum vegetation, good permanent grass in which to sow other species that are useful and pleasing to poultry (e.g. purslane), and hedges and trees to guarantee part of the food supply (e.g. insects and fallen fruit) and to provide relief from the heat in the form of shade, as well as potential hiding places to escape from birds of prey.

Grazing areas must not be deteriorated by trampling and overgrazing, and ecosystems in general must not be weakened by grazing. The size of the grazing area must therefore be adapted to the number of animals (at least 10-15 m<sup>2</sup> per animal), and the flock should be rotated over different areas to prevent damage to the permanent turf. The density of animals on the stoniest soils must be less than in very grassy areas, and densities should always be lower than those indicated in the organic production specifications (see Annex 1).

	Superfici coperte (superficie netta disponibile per gli animali)			Superfici scoperte (m <sup>2</sup> di superficie disponibile in rotazione per capi)
	Numero di animali per m <sup>2</sup>	cm di trespolo per animale	per nido	
Galline ovaiole	6	18	7 galline ovaiole per nido o, in caso di nido comune, 120 cm <sup>2</sup> per volatile	4, a condizione che non sia superato il limite di 170 kg N/ha/anno
Avicoli da ingrasso (in ricoveri fissi)	10, con un massimo di 21 kg di peso vivo per m <sup>2</sup>	20 (solo per faraone)		4 polli da ingrasso e faraone 4,5 anatre 10 tacchini 13 oche In tutte le specie summenzionate non deve essere superato il limite di 170 kg N/ha/anno

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From: COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 889/2008 of 5 September 2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labeling of organic products with regard to organic production, labeling and control.

## FEEDING

The diet must be composed of quality, simple foodstuffs reflecting what the area offers: whole grain cereals and legumes, de-oiled seeds (sunflower, peanut, flax, cotton, rapeseed), dehydrated alfalfa meal, fruit, and vegetables. It is necessary to limit the use of soy, which is excessively protein-rich, in favor of corn, whose ration percentage must always be higher than that of soy.

Feed should be produced on the farm, to the extent possible. If it is necessary to buy part of the feed, it should be sourced from as close as possible, and not from outside the region.

Foodstuffs containing GMOs are prohibited.

In general, feed must come from ethical and sustainable agriculture based on natural management of fields and pastures, without the use of herbicides, pesticides, and other chemicals.

Where pre-mixed feed has to be administered, only certified organic or certified non-GMO or symbiotic feed may be used.

Forced feeding is absolutely forbidden.

## THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS

Therapeutic interventions should be based on phytotherapeutic and homeopathic products.

Only vaccinations, scheduled pest treatments, and mandatory national eradication plans are permitted.

The withdrawal time for allopathic medicinal products must be twice as long as that laid down for the

prescribed medicine or, if not specified, at least 48 hours.

The use of hormones, coccidiostats, histomonostats, and other artificial additives is prohibited. Preventive antibiotic treatments (including those applied to the egg before hatching) and the administration of antibiotics to promote weight gain are prohibited.

## MUTILATIONS

Mutilation of animals (debeaking, wing trimming, cutting of spurs, removal of crests and wattles) is forbidden. Castration is permitted in order to maintain product quality and traditional production practices (e.g. capon farming), but must be practiced in such a way as to avoid suffering on the part of the animal.

## SLAUGHTERING AND PROCESSING

Slaughter must take place when the animal has reached an optimum weight to age ratio, taking into account the breed's specific characteristics. In any case, growth times must be longer than those provided for in the organic specification, which are:

- 81 days for chickens
- 150 days for capons
- 49 days for Peking ducks
- 70 days for female Muscovy ducks
- 84 days for male Muscovy ducks
- 92 days for mallard ducks
- 94 days for Guinea fowl
- 140 days for male turkeys and roasting geese
- 100 days for female turkeys

Slaughter must take place within the Presidium's traditional production area and, in any case, no more than a few dozen kilometers from the farm, in authorized public or private slaughterhouses where pre- and post-mortem veterinary inspections are carried out.

In order to avoid stressing the animals, special care must be taken during loading, transport, and unloading.

Transport cages must be washable so as to avoid soiling and possible injury.

Slaughter must take place within a maximum of 6 hours of loading.

## RULES FOR PROCESSED MEAT PRODUCTS

For any processed meat products, reference should be made to the guidelines for the processed meats supply chain. Products must contain the meat of the Presidium animals as a characteristic ingredient (minimum percentage of raw meat 65%). In addition to meat, only high-quality natural ingredients may be used in processed products.

Secondary ingredients must be primarily of local origin (with the exception of certain ingredients, such as spices, which have historically been purchased on foreign markets).

Salt must be of national origin when possible; oil must be extra virgin olive oil except where local gastronomic traditions have always used locally produced oils.

For cooking, techniques must be adopted that best regulate the physical variables of the process (free water, pH, etc.) in order to guarantee the biological value and sensory quality of the ingredients, while ensuring food safety and commercial stability of the finished product.

The use of freeze-dried ingredients, additives (including preservatives, synthetic flavorings, sweeteners,

thickeners, gelatinizers, emulsifiers, stabilizers, antioxidants, colorants, sulfites, and zeolites) and processing aids is prohibited.

All rules in force in the country of production concerning food safety and traceability of the product must be respected.

## LABELING

Presidia producers must adopt narrative labeling for their products.

Annex 1

Minimum indoor and outdoor surface areas



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