

EU Animal Breeding Regulation

The new EU Animal Breeding Regulation comes into force on November 1, 2018. The Regulation replaces existing Directives and Commission Decisions.

For the cattle breeding sector this is the most important change in the legislation. The existing legislation gives some space for different interpretations by Member States and breeding organisations, the new Regulation does not.

Several Member States and breeding organisations used the freedom, given by the Directives and Commission Decisions, in the past to make the country implementing legislation as customised as possible for the breeding organisations. This created various structures in different countries. With the new Regulation the herd book organisations (to be recognised as Breed Societies) are **again** in the lead regarding the breeding policy and related breeding activities. Although Breed Societies can outsource almost every specific breeding activity (herd book registration, performance testing, evaluation), they maintain responsible for these activities. Independent milk recording organisations, evaluation bodies and AI companies are depending on recognised Breed Societies (herd book organisations) for instance for getting zootechnical certificates.

Consequently, Breed Societies cannot simply be responsible for, and carry out, herd book registration only. They need to have a breeding programme for being recognised as Breed Society. Such breeding programmes must include a breeding policy, performance testing etc.

Contrary to what many people think, the Regulation is not focussing on countries but on individual Breed Societies. Of course, within a country, Breed Societies can work together, for instance to establish national breeding values or a national breeding index, but this is not the focus of the Regulation. Each Breed Society can have its own breeding index.

In principle the Regulation does not differ very much from the existing legislation except for the pig breeding sector. For hybrid pig breeding companies with closed breeding systems (cooperatives as well as private companies) the breeding legislation changed quite substantially. On the one hand this is positive (several articles are not applicable for such Breeding Operations), on the other hand the Regulation still contains a lot of bureaucratic obstacles for these multinational pig breeding companies.

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