Revised marketing standards for poultrymeat

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Updated marketing standards for poultrymeat apply from March 2026

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2026/343 of 6 October 2025 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards marketing standards for poultrymeat, and repealing Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2026/344 of 6 October 2025 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards marketing standards for poultrymeat

Update

The European Union (EU) has revised the marketing standards for poultrymeat. The new rules apply a risk-based approach to controls of the water content in poultry, and introduce new definitions and flexibility for labelling to encourage innovations that support the EU's sustainability goals.

Impacted products

poultry

What is changing?

The new rules replace the current marketing standard (Regulation 543/2008). The major changes are as follows.

Regulation 2026/343

Definitions

- Extends the scope of poultrymeat products covered by the marketing standard to include: inner fillet, feet, paws, neck, head; supreme, wishbone, scapula (Art. 2).
- Extends the definition of "carcase" to include the neck when relevant (Art. 3(a)).

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Optional labels

The new rules allow operators greater flexibility in the labelling that they may use to promote types of farming (particularly, sustainable practices). In addition to standard terms such as “fed with”, “extensive indoor”, “free range” (defined in Annex VI), EU Member States and non-EU competent authorities may permit operators to indicate other farming methods (Art. 10.5). For example, this creates the possibility to label “no use of antibiotics”. Non-EU country authorities must send a request to the Commission to use optional labels, and must certify that the products are compliant (Art. 13).

Free range poultry

Poultry may be marketed as “free range” even when the birds have been housed to prevent the spread of avian flu; the current restriction that poultry may only be housed for 12 weeks is deleted (Annex VI, last sentence). This aligns free range requirements with rules on organic eggs.

Regulation 2026/344

Water content in poultry

The new rules allow only the chemical method for checking water content (Art. 5; Annex I). The drip method is no longer permitted due to its unreliability. Controls of water content in poultry will be carried out on the basis of risk analysis, including for imports from non-EU countries (Art. 6.7).

Reducing food waste

When a batch is not compliant, it can be corrected by removing only the defective units, rather than the whole batch (Art. 3(5)).

Why?

The review of marketing standards reflects the changes linked to innovation, societal concerns, and policy developments described in the European Commission’s Farm to Fork Strategy, such as supply of sustainable products, and improving information for consumers.

Timeline

The revised marketing standard applies from **9 March 2026**.

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What are the major implications for exporting countries?

The changes are not expected to have a significant impact on poultry exporters. The main practical adjustments required relate to the method for controlling water content in poultry. Exporters of inner fillet, feet, paws, neck, head, supreme, wishbone, and scapula will have to ensure that products fully comply with the revised marketing standards.

Recommended Actions

Poultry suppliers may wish to open a dialogue with their competent authorities to consider requesting relevant optional labelling indications, such as “no use of antibiotics”.

Background

The main low- and middle-income countries exporting poultry products to the EU are Brazil, China, Thailand, and Ukraine.

For more information see EU marketing standards explained.

Resources

Commission Staff Working Document: Executive Summary of the Impact Assessment Report, Revision of EU marketing standards for agricultural products to ensure the uptake and supply of sustainable products [download]

Commission Regulation (EC) 543/2008 of 16 June 2008 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 as regards the marketing standards for poultrymeat

Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products

Sources

Commission Delegated Regulation 2026/343 as regards marketing standards for poultrymeat

Commission Implementing Regulation 2026/344 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 as regards marketing standards for poultrymeat

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