



# agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Agriculture, forestry & fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Directorate Food Safety and Quality Assurance, Private Bag X343, PRETORIA, 0001**

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**TO:**                    **A. All producers, packers and traders of Eggs and Poultry meat**  
                              **B. Agency for Food Safety (Assignee)**

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Subject

## **DISPENSATION: RELAXATION OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR FREE RANGE EGGS AND FREE RANGE POULTRY MEAT DUE TO AVIAN INFLUENZA**

### **1. Background**

Both regulations, i.e. Regulations regarding control over the sale of poultry meat (published by Government Notice No. R. 946 of 7 March 1992, as amended) and Regulations regarding the grading, packing and marking of eggs destined for sale in the Republic of South Africa (Government Notice No. R. 725 of 16 September 2011, as amended), provide for minimum requirements which apply when eggs and poultry meat are presented for sale as "free range". Free range eggs as set out in the regulations shall be obtained from poultry which have continuous daytime access to open air runs for at least 6 hours per day and free range poultry meat shall be obtained from poultry which had continuous daytime access to open air runs and are able to scratch and take a dustbath.

In June 2017 South Africa experienced its first outbreak of High Pathogenic Avian influenza (HPAI) which continues to affect the country. One of the control interventions is indoor housing of "free range" animals to prevent them from coming in contact with wild birds and water birds.

The SA Poultry Association approached the Executive Officer with a request to consider a dispensation to allow for a longer indoor housing period of the flocks during the high risk periods (autumn and winter) due to the Avian Influenza challenge. After careful consideration of the motivation provided as well as consulting similar international rules available in this regarding, the Department has decided to issue the following industry dispensation:

### **2. Dispensation**

Permission is hereby granted by the Executive Officer: Agricultural Product Standards in terms of section 3(1)(c) of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, 1990 (Act No. 119 of 1990) to all producers, packers and traders selling free range eggs and free range poultry meat to relax the requirements for "free range" set out in regulations R. 725 of 16 September 2011 (as amended) and R. 946 of 7 March 1992 (as amended) respectively, as follows:

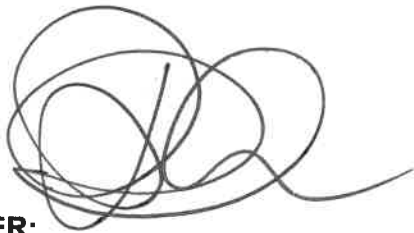
Egg and poultry meat producers may during the high risk period for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), house free range flocks indoors for a maximum continuous period of 24 weeks during a year (instead of having continuous daytime access to open air runs as required by

regulation 13(4) of the poultry meat regulations or at least 6 hours continuous daytime access to open air runs as required by regulation 11(2)(a) of the egg regulations): Provided that –

- (i) this permission applies at producer/flock level and the commencement of the 24 week period shall start on the date on which the flock concerned is confined to the shed/ barn;
- (ii) the egg and poultry meat producers shall on or before the first day of commencement inform the designated Assignee (i.e. Agency for Food Safety) that the flock is/will be confined indoors; and
- (iii) each egg and poultry meat producer shall keep accurate records about the dates on which the flock is confined to the shed/barn and allowed to roam outdoors again.

This permission is subject to the following conditions:

- (a) All other conditions of the relevant regulations shall be complied with.
- (b) It may be withdrawn at any time should a valid complaint be received.
- (c) All producers, packers and traders of free range eggs and free range poultry meat indemnify this Directorate and the Department from any detrimental effect, financially or otherwise, which may emanate as a result of this permission.
- (d) Termination date: Until the egg and poultry meat regulations have been amended.



**EXECUTIVE OFFICER:  
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT STANDARDS**

Copy: SA Poultry Association (SAPA)