

# Welfare Potential by Production System for Meat Rabbits

Level of Welfare	Example System	Space allowance (per rabbit)	Confinement	Enrichment and flooring
<b>1 = Bad</b>	Standard barren cages (inside or outside in hotter climates)	Typical cage 450 – 600cm <sup>2</sup>	Barren cages with height <35cm	No enrichment
<b>2</b>	Enriched cages/ 'Welfare' cages	< 5 animals - ≥ 700cm <sup>2</sup> > 5 animals - ≥ 600cm <sup>2</sup>	Cage with height at least 40cm for a quarter of the cage	Platform, gnawing block, plastic cover over 25cm <sup>2</sup> of wire floor
	Park system	< 800cm <sup>2</sup>	Indoor cage-free system with no height restriction but operating at high stocking density	Limited enrichment
<b>3 = Better</b>	Outdoor mobile runs <sup>1</sup>	≥ 2000 cm <sup>2</sup> (Italy) <sup>2</sup> to 4000 cm <sup>2</sup> (France) <sup>3</sup>	Mobile outdoor cage on grass with a covered area, moved daily to provide fresh grass. Height ≥ 50 cm according to organic standards <sup>4</sup> .	Grazing opportunity Preferably with other enrichment provided (e.g. hay)
	Park system / Barn system	≥ 800 to 1500 cm <sup>2</sup> <sup>5</sup> and above	Cage-free indoor pen with no height restriction	Platforms, gnawing blocks, hiding tubes, hay rack/compressed straw tube, non-wire flooring, natural light <sup>6</sup>
<b>4 = Best</b>	Free Range <sup>7</sup>	≥ 1 m <sup>2</sup> (Italy) to 5 m <sup>2</sup> (France) <sup>8</sup>	Large outdoor enclosure with covered shelters and good fencing against predators	Outdoor access to pasture, gnawing items, tubes (preferably), shelter with solid flooring, hay rack, bedding material (preferably)

<sup>1</sup> Such as systems used in organic production; only when management conditions minimise mortality.

<sup>2</sup> Italian organic standards for rabbit production:

[http://www.ambienteterritorio.coldiretti.it/tematiche/Ogm/Documents/2102\\_disciplinare-coniglio\\_def.pdf](http://www.ambienteterritorio.coldiretti.it/tematiche/Ogm/Documents/2102_disciplinare-coniglio_def.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> French organic standards for rabbit production:

[http://www.capbio-bretagne.com/ca1/PJ.nsf/TECHPJPARCLEF/13286/\\$File/CDC-production%20biologique%20des%20lapins.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.capbio-bretagne.com/ca1/PJ.nsf/TECHPJPARCLEF/13286/$File/CDC-production%20biologique%20des%20lapins.pdf?OpenElement)

<sup>4</sup> See Italian and French organic standards above.

<sup>5</sup> Belgium : 800cm<sup>2</sup> (Belgian legislation):

[http://www.health.belgium.be/filestore/19082320\\_EN/Eng%20Advies%20WG%20Konijnen.pdf](http://www.health.belgium.be/filestore/19082320_EN/Eng%20Advies%20WG%20Konijnen.pdf); Germany: 750 to 1500cm<sup>2</sup>; Beter Leven one star : 600 cm<sup>2</sup> (≥5 per group), 700 cm<sup>2</sup> (<5

per group): <http://beterleven.dierenbescherming.nl/fileupload/20111219-konijnevlees-1-ster.pdf>; Four Paws : 1500cm<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Compassion Good Rabbit Award: natural light is stipulated for new builds, dawn/dusk lighting transition periods are required in all systems.

<sup>7</sup> Such as systems used in organic production; only when management conditions minimise mortality.

<sup>8</sup> See Italian and French organic standards above.

# Welfare Potential by Production System for Does

Level of welfare	Example System	Space allowance (per doe)	Enrichment and flooring	Access to does' litter
<b>1 = Poor</b>	Standard barren cages (inside or outside in hotter climates)	Single housing $\leq 2000\text{cm}^2$	Nesting material only	Restricted to 2 minutes per day in nest box
<b>2 = Insufficient</b>	Enriched cages/ 'Welfare' cages	Single housing $\leq 4900\text{cm}^2$	Nesting material, platform, plastic cover over $25\text{cm}^2$ wire flooring, gnawing block	Unrestricted with nest box
<b>3 = Better</b>	Outdoor mobile runs <sup>9</sup>	Single housing $\geq 5000\text{cm}^2$ (Italy) <sup>10</sup> to $2\text{m}^2$ (France) <sup>11</sup>  Height $\geq 50\text{cm}$ according to organic standards <sup>12</sup>	Nesting material, bedding in winter, shelter, grass access, wooden unit for gnawing	Unrestricted access to doe made nest
	Park system (cage-free; not widely practiced)	Non-lactation group housing  Beter Leven one star <sup>13</sup> : $4500\text{cm}^2$ per rabbit for individual phase & $1.5\text{m}^2$ for group phase	In development, likely to include the components: nesting material, platform, non-wire flooring, gnawing block, tubes	Access to individual nest box
<b>4 = Best</b>	Free Range <sup>14</sup>	In development	In development	In development

<sup>9</sup> Such as systems used in organic production; only when management conditions minimise mortality.

<sup>10</sup> Italian organic standards for rabbit production:

[http://www.ambienteterritorio.coldiretti.it/tematiche/Ogm/Documents/2102\\_disciplinare-coniglio\\_def.pdf](http://www.ambienteterritorio.coldiretti.it/tematiche/Ogm/Documents/2102_disciplinare-coniglio_def.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> French organic standards for rabbit production:

[http://www.capbio-bretagne.com/ca1/PJ.nsf/TECHPJPARCLEF/13286/\\$File/CDC-production%20biologique%20des%20lapins.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.capbio-bretagne.com/ca1/PJ.nsf/TECHPJPARCLEF/13286/$File/CDC-production%20biologique%20des%20lapins.pdf?OpenElement)

<sup>12</sup> See Italian and French organic standards above.

<sup>13</sup> Beter Leven standards for rabbit production: <http://beterleven.dierenbescherming.nl/fileupload/20111219-konijnenvlees-1-ster.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Such as systems used in organic production; only when management conditions minimise mortality.