

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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**Report Name:** New Mandatory Animal Husbandry Labeling Law

**Country:** Germany

**Post:** Berlin

**Report Category:** Livestock and Products, Policy and Program Announcements

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**Report Highlights:**

In August 2023, after more than a decade of political discussions on the restructuring of livestock farming, a new German law on mandatory animal husbandry labeling went into effect. It requires hog farmers to report their husbandry practices and food businesses to label goods accordingly. The label is part of the overall aim of the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) to transform the livestock sector. Imported products are not affected by the new law.

## Background

The new law on mandatory animal husbandry labeling was approved by the German Federal Parliament (Bundestag) on June 16, 2023, and went into effect on August 24, 2023. As a result, Germany is taking the lead with this law in the European Union (EU). Initially, the German government aimed for domestic mandatory labeling standards for imported products, but the EU and World Trade Organization trade laws prevented it. The European Commission notified the bill ahead of its adoption and the final law does not apply to products from other EU countries or countries outside the bloc. Labeling corresponding to imported goods for the German market can be done voluntarily but will not become mandatory.

## The Label

The label differentiates between five types of housing: (1) Barn, (2) Barn + Extra Space, (3) Fresh Air Barn, (4) Outdoor/Pasture, and (5) Organic (please refer to the table below for detailed information on the different barn systems). The labeling requirement initially only applies to fresh pork (chilled or frozen, packed or unpacked) from animals raised, slaughtered, and processed in Germany. The determining factor for labeling is how the animals are kept during the fattening phase. Distribution channels affected are retail, e-commerce, as well as farmers markets. An extension of mandatory labeling for out-of-home catering and gastronomy is planned for 2024. Furthermore, the label is supposed to be extended to other animal species and products (e.g., processed products).

Figure 1: The new label indicating the different husbandry systems.



Table 1: Overview of criteria for the five types of husbandry systems.

<b>Barn</b>	The pigs are kept in enclosed warm housing in accordance with the minimum legal requirements (legally prescribed minimum floor area and occupational material).
<b>Barn + Extra Space</b>	The animals have at least 12.5 percent more space. In addition, there is roughage and different elements for structuring the pens.
<b>Fresh Air Barn</b>	The stalls are 45 percent larger than required and open on at least one side such that the outdoor climate has a significant influence on the climate in the barn.
<b>Outdoor/Pasture</b>	In addition to the predominantly enclosed barn with a larger floor area (twice as much space as required by law), the animals have access to outdoors all day or live permanently outdoors.
<b>Organic</b>	Meets the requirements of the EU Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848 with even more indoor and outdoor space than in the other types of housing.

### **Germany's Intention of the New Law**

Technically, no new animal husbandry requirements are associated with the labeling. However, there is immense social pressure on livestock farmers with the demand for more animal welfare. The new mandatory label aims to highlight the accomplishments of farmers and gives consumers a chance to make an informed purchasing decision. Politically, the conversion to more ambitious animal husbandry systems is supported by legal privileges in construction law for farmers who want to convert their livestock facilities to the "fresh air barn," "outdoor/ pasture," or "organic" systems.

### **Outlook**

Germany has seen an immense decrease in hog stocks in recent years. Never since German unification in 1990 have fewer pigs been kept in Germany. This has been the consequence of multiple crises at different levels. In general, the economic situation of hog farmers has been difficult for years, mainly due to decreased demand and closed export markets because of outbreaks of African Swine Fever in Germany. But even though profitability has now been restored (after more than two years), many hog farmers are quitting the business because of the political and financial uncertainty they are facing. The BMEL envisages the introduction of the new mandatory label as a first step in setting directions in the transformation process of the livestock sector. However, the recently made public federal budget plans for 2024 do not include financial resources for the support of farmers willing to convert their barns. This indicates that the difficult economic situation for hog farmers is likely to remain the same.

*Note: A comprehensive GAIN report on the transformation of the German livestock sector will follow.*

### **Attachments:**

No Attachments.