

Dawn Meats Welfare Program “Black Premium”

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Husbandry level 3/ Haltungsform 3

**Examination concept 2026
producer criteria**

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1 Introduction

With the quality program “Dawn Meats Welfare program”, which will be presented under the logo of “Black Premium”, Dawn Meats aims to address consumer requirements for more animal welfare assurance, in addition to our sustainability and premium quality of our beef offering. The quality meat goes under the title “Dawn Meats Welfare program”, which illustrates, on the one hand, the responsible treatment of the animals by adhering to the criteria for husbandry type 3 and, on the other hand, the close cooperation with our producers.

The “Dawn Meats Welfare program” products come from farmers who run their businesses with passion and innovation, ensuring that the beef is of the best quality in addition to the high animal welfare added values, such as housing with sufficient comfort, whilst outdoors for the majority of the year.

Animal welfare-oriented animal husbandry for food production is becoming increasingly important. The food retail trade, which includes REWE, has established the system for uniform labeling of the type of husbandry together with the Society for the Promotion of Animal Welfare in Farm Animal Husbandry (Haltungsform.de). The individual stages of the husbandry system are intended to convey to consumers the conditions in which animals are kept by producers in a transparent and understandable manner. Accordingly, the program “Dawn Meats Welfare program” is a contribution to a beef offering that implements greater animal welfare in cattle farming in accordance with the requirements of the level 3 “outdoor climate” farming system.

The test concept presents: Dawn Meats Welfare program which, – at husbandry level 3” represents the framework for the controlled implementation of the corresponding product criteria.

2. Test concept “Dawn Meats Welfare program” Producer criteria

The defined criteria for products of the “Dawn Meats Welfare program” brand should be checked regularly and independently in order to ensure the implementation of the husbandry criteria of husbandry type 3 “Outdoor climate” in agricultural rearing.

2.1 Requirements for testing centers

Farmers participating in “Dawn Meats Welfare program” are checked by an independent testing body (also called a certification body) for the implementation of the criteria defined for “Dawn Meat Welfare program”. For inspections of the “Dawn Meats Welfare program” operations, the independent inspection body must already have experience in carrying out inspections or certifications in agricultural cattle production and for this be accredited.

2.2 Participants

Participants in the Dawn Meats Welfare Program may be any company established in a Member State of the European Union provided they meet the program requirements. The participation requirements are linked to prior certification in accordance with the Bord Bia quality assurance specifications and the animal husbandry requirements described in the program. In addition, participation in the Dawn Meats Welfare Program requires a formal application and the conclusion of a participation agreement with Dawn Meats.

2.3 Requirements for auditors and releasing persons

The testing body commissioned to check the “Dawn Meats Welfare program” criteria on the producer farms ensures that the on-site auditor, or the person releasing the information, is a qualified expert for the criteria to be checked.

2.4 Auditing of agricultural businesses

2.4.1 Initial inspection

Before participation in the “Dawn Meats Welfare program” is possible and deliveries of “Dawn Meats Welfare program” products can be accepted, the producing farm must be checked against the “Dawn Meats Welfare program” producer criteria in an announced initial inspection.

The commissioning of the initial inspections carried out by the Dawn Meats procurement team. The final and all further audits of the participant of the “Dawn Meats Welfare Programme Black Premium” will be carried out by an independent accredited auditor.

2.4.2 Follow-up inspections

Farmers must be audited every year with regard to the implementation of the “Dawn Meats Welfare program” criteria as part of an audit. Combined audits with other standards are permissible.

2.4.3 Preparation of audits

To prepare for the audits, the relevant checklists must be checked to ensure they are up-to-date and complete. The audits must be planned in such a way that an expert person from the farm being audited is on site and that animals are kept on the farm at the time of the audit.

2.4.4 On-site audit implementation

The audits to check the “Dawn Meats Welfare program” criteria for producers include:

- an introductory conversation with an explanation of the audit plan
- a recording of the criteria to be met in operational implementation
- the evaluation of the operational implementation of the “Dawn Meats Welfare program”
- Documentation of the recorded and evaluated criteria.
- If necessary, agree on corrective actions for the relevant criteria and create an appropriate action plan
- a final discussion as to whether the inspection was provisionally passed or failed and, if necessary, a discussion of an action plan for the implementation of corrective measures.

If crucial documents for checking the criteria cannot be viewed for the audit, they can be submitted to the auditor or testing body up to a maximum of 3 days after the audit date, as long as it can be credibly demonstrated to the auditor or testing body that the documents are only available for a short period of time are available or viewable.

2.4.5 Audit assessment and corrective actions

Assessed and documented according to “fulfilled” or “not fulfilled” according to the “Dawn Meats Welfare program” producer criteria checklist (see Chapter 3 – Catalog of criteria for producer companies for “Dawn Meats Welfare program” and paragraph 4.1 – Requirements for husbandry form 3). If a criterion is not met, the situation must be documented in detail in the audit report with a description of the deviation, where appropriate and possible using photo documentation.

If criteria are marked with non-compliance, no corrective measures are possible and a “not met” of these non-compliance criteria will result in a failed inspection. In such cases, no certification may be issued or renewed. A new initial audit may only be conducted after a minimum of four weeks from the failed audit. If severe, unacceptable non-conformities are identified during a follow-up inspection, the existing certificate

shall be suspended with immediate effect for at least four weeks. Suspension or withdrawal of the certificate leads to a temporary prohibition on marketing products under the Dawn Meats Welfare Program and using the Black Premium welfare logo. A new follow-up audit may only take place four weeks after the last audit. If the new audit is failed again, the certificate is permanently withdrawn and full re-certification is required. Corrective measures can be agreed upon for other producer criteria. In order to create an action plan with the necessary corrective measures, the audited producer company makes appropriate suggestions for corrections and correction deadlines to the auditor.

The corrective measures must be implemented immediately by the farmer. The implementation of the corrective measures is checked by the testing center and documented in the action plan.

2.4.6 Audit results and communication of results

The audit result describes the final status of the audit as “passed”, “passed with reservations” or “failed”.

The audit for the “Dawn Meats Welfare program” producer criteria is **passed** if all criteria are rated as “fulfilled”.

The audit for the “Dawn Meats Welfare program” producer criteria is **conditionally passed** if all criteria are rated as “fulfilled” and appropriate corrective measures for non-compliance criteria have been agreed in the action plan.

As soon as the corrective measures specified in the action plan have been implemented **completely and on time, the audit has the status passed**.

If agreed corrections to the audit are not implemented completely or on time, the audit is **not passed**.

If criteria were assessed as “not met” during the audit, the audit was **not passed**. If non-compliance criteria are rated as “not met” and no corrective measures are agreed in the action plan, the audit is considered **failed**.

After approval by the releasing person, the audited farmer, as well as Dawn Meats, will be informed in writing of the audit result with the corresponding audit report and, if necessary, the action plan.

Only producers with an audit result of “passed” or “passed conditionally” are allowed to participate as suppliers for the production of “Dawn Meats Welfare program”.

2.4.7 Suspension and withdrawal of certification and logo use

Where there are sufficient indications that a participating producer or processor is in breach of the requirements of the Dawn Meats Welfare Program in a manner that

endangers the integrity of the program, consumer health and/or animal welfare, this may lead to a provisional or permanent exclusion from the Dawn Meats Welfare Program. In cases of provisional exclusion, the conditions and timeframe for possible re-entry shall be set out in a corrective action plan and verified by an audit. In cases of permanent exclusion, participation rights and the right to use the Black Premium logo shall cease.

The certification body may suspend and render ineffective a certificate with immediate effect where:

- there are indications that food safety, animal welfare or the integrity of the Dawn Meats Welfare Program is endangered, or
- the current audit has not been paid despite due invoicing.

Dawn Meats shall be informed without delay. Suspension or withdrawal of a certificate by the certification body automatically leads to a temporary prohibition on marketing products as part of the Dawn Meats Welfare Program or using the Black Premium welfare logo. Where the certification body decides to withdraw a certificate, the certificate may only be regained through a full re-certification, i.e. by conducting a new initial or full follow-up audit.

Where a certificate is withdrawn due to deregistration or termination by a participant, a new initial audit is required if the participant applies for re-admission to the program.

2.5 Traceability and goods flow documentation

The system participation in “Dawn Meats Welfare program” corresponds to the standards of Bord Bia Quality assurance scheme. The participants in the “Dawn Meats Welfare Program” are certified accordingly in accordance with Bord Bia Quality assurance specifications and thereby guarantee quality assurance, as well as traceability and goods flow documentation in the goods chain.

Animals for the “Dawn Meats Welfare program” marketing must be clearly and comprehensibly marked by the producing companies. Mixing with goods that are not intended for “Dawn Meats Welfare program” marketing must be excluded. Traceability must be ensured through complete documentation.

3. Catalog of criteria for producer companies for Dawn Meats Welfare Program

3.1 Participants in antibiotic usage and diagnostic data program

Demonstrably certified as a participant in a **quality assurance system (QS, Bord Bia Quality Scheme)** for production and delivery for the “Dawn Meats Welfare program”.

In particular, for the “Dawn Meats Welfare program” program, this means that the participating producers take part in a slaughter results data program and antibiotic monitoring.

Antibiotic Usage:

All members of the Dawn Meats Welfare Program must supply a history of antibiotic usage when presenting cattle for slaughter to include the following information:-

- The date and duration of application
- The ailment
- The antibiotic administered (active ingredient)
- The quantity used
- The farmer's herd number
- The number of animals treated

Form 1 (see attached) for the purpose of collecting the above data, will be provided to the participating farms by Dawn Meats for evaluation.

Dawn Meats will create a benchmark for farmers to compare their antibiotic usage – positively or negatively – with that of their fellow scheme members.

Every member of the scheme shall be aware that the information given by them will be cross referenced with their Farm Medicine Records at the time of their farm audit.

The first evaluation will take place as soon as the data for the first six months of the scheme is captured and scheme members will receive six monthly updates thereafter.

During our pre-audit visit we will explain to all potential members that our aim regarding antibiotic usage is to “minimise” and not to “ban” their usage.

Diagnostic Data:

All cattle entering the food chain thru Dawn Meats receive anti and postmortem inspections by Government controlled veterinarians. Where diseases are identified they are recorded along with the animals 'identification in a portal on the factory floor. The collection of diagnostic data takes place at the abattoir in accordance with EU Reg 2019/627.

The information collected is sent electronically to Animal Health Ireland who make the outcomes available on the Beef Health Check platform and the livestock owner has

access to their data and can download it. The data shown on the platform also provides information about the data of an individual farmer compared to the regional or national average – see example attached (Beef HealthCheck Data at Cattle Slaughter).

Farmers do not receive the results and analysis of their data from Animal Health Ireland on a regular and unsolicited basis. For this reason, participants in the Dawn Meats Welfare Program are required to download and file the evaluations at least as often as they send cattle to Dawn Meats.

Every member of the Dawn Meats Welfare Program must be aware that the auditor will cross check that these evaluations have been downloaded regularly at the time of their farm audit.

Dawn Meats encourages farmers to share the results from the abattoir with their on-farm veterinarian as they work together to develop and update the annual farm health plan based on the current year's events. The farmer always receives the results within days of slaughter and can use them to develop and update the annual health plan for the herd, which is based on the results of the last three years and is discussed once a year with the farm veterinarian. If, however the farmer is concerned at anytime he should defer to his vet.

The information presented to the farmer is constantly updated and is available at individual, county and national levels and is in compliance with the EU Reg 2019/627– see example attached.

3.2 Usable area

During cattle fattening, the animals must have the following space in the free stalls depending on their live weight:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| – up to 150 kg minimum area | 1.5 m ² /animal. |
| – over 150 to 220 kg | 2 m ² /animal. |
| – over 220 to 400 kg | 3 m ² /animal. |
| – over 400 kg | 4 m ² /animal. |

3.3 Housing with constant access to the outdoor climate area

As part of the “Dawn Meats Welfare program”, the animals when housed with access to the outdoor climate area during fattening. The animals have a secure perception of the outside climate through appropriate opening areas in the housing.

Possible Housing:

- Free-stall housing with a play yard that can be used all year round (at least 3 m²/animal in the play yard)
- Free-stall housing with grazing (at least 120 days / 6 h)
- Open front playpen

Definition: An open-front stable must be permanently open/open either on one long side of the stable (at least 60% of the wall height) or on both long sides over the entire length (at least 30% of the wall height). In addition, a 10% deviation tolerance of the calculated portion of the opening area is possible. An operating plan showing the calculated open area must be included in the audit.

Closure may occur temporarily (outside area and open-front stable) if weather conditions could affect animal health. Windbreaking nets or rolling walls made of tarpaulins (curtains) as well as movable diaphragm walls (spaceboards) can be used for this. The times and duration of the closure must be documented in all cases, stating the reason.

The exercise and/or lying area and/or the bays should directly border the open side. The ventilation of the stable must be designed as gravity ventilation. Furthermore, functional rubbing/scratching facilities, minimum one per 60 animals, are available and accessible at all times, with the exception of pasture. Those facilities are at least 90cm long and 30cm wide.

Tethering posture excludes "Dawn Meats Welfare program" entirely.

3.4 Interventions on animals

If calves are dehorned on the audited farm, this is carried out by the farmer with pain relief before the animal reaches six weeks of age.

3.5 Feed used

The cattle fatteners participating in "Dawn Meats Welfare program" only use GMO free feed during the fattening phase, but at least 6 months before slaughter.

The verification of the GMO-free nature of the feed is ensured through document checking as part of the tests carried out by the relevant testing center and adheres to the following [guidelines for control of GMO in feed](#).

4. Appendix

4.1 Type of husbandry Level 3 Criteria: Cattle fattening

The requirements and criteria in the level 3 husbandry form for cattle fattening operations can be found in their current form under the following link on the website haltungsform.de of the Society for the Promotion of Animal Welfare in Farm Animal Husbandry mbH.

<https://haltungsform.de/kriterien-5stufig/>

Selection: cattle fattening

4.2 Documents for antibiotic use

Form 1

Pre Slaughter Antibiotic Usage Statement

Date of Slaughter	
Farmer Name:	
Herd Number:	
Tel no.	
Email:	

[illegible]

Form 2

Antibiotic Benchmarker

Year:

Quarter:

Aliment	Antibiotic Used	Number of Animals	Average Dosage

Beef HealthCheck Data at Cattle Slaughter

What health data is available for cattle at slaughter?

Health data is obtained at slaughter by veterinary inspectors and captured digitally on the line in the abattoir. They capture information on liver and lung conditions as part of their inspection which form part of this programme. Nationally controlled diseases, such as TB, are captured and reported separately directly by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine.

Where to find this data?

Farmer's can access information for any animals they send to slaughter within a few days online at ICBF, which is free to access but requires a login to protect their information. Individual animal and summarised batch and herd data is available since the programme began in 2016 to easily look for trends.

County and national data is freely available online on the Animal Health Ireland website and in quarterly reports distributed in newsletters and available on their website. Farmers can easily compare their results to that summarised and reported nationally.

Veterinarians can access a farmer's data with their permission, which can help the individual but also help the veterinarian understand the trends in their area.

An example of slaughter health data available to a beef farmer from County Laois for 2024 to end July:

	Total animals	Healthy animals	Abnormal liver	Abnormal lung
Farm	76	50 (66%)	19 (25%)	7 (9%)
County		86%	12%	2%
National		83%	16%	2%

Specific diseases:

	Abnormal animals	Liver fluke	Liver abscess	Other liver disease	Pneumonia	Other lung disease
Farm	26	8 (11%)	2 (3%)	10 (13%)	6 (8%)	1 (1%)
County		5%	4%	3%	1%	1%
National		9%	4%	4%	2%	1%

4.3 Application to Programme

Farm Approval Applications: [Dawn Meats Black Premium Welfare Programme – Farm Approval Application – Fill in form](#)

Processor Applications: [Dawn Meats Black Premium Welfare Programme Application – Fill in form](#)