

**Question for written answer E-003219/2022  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Jan Huitema** (Renew)

Subject: Energy saving opportunities in poultry farming

Poultry farming requires a lot of energy for heating the housing. Placing temporary inflatable walls in poultry houses in the first part of the fattening period can save a lot of energy as it reduces the area to be heated. However, this innovation cannot be used by extensive poultry farmers, as Regulation (EU) No 543/2008 provides that no more than 15 birds per square metre may be kept, and does not take account of only the number of kilograms liveweight per square metre. As a result, this innovation is hardly made use of, despite research showing that higher stocking rates in the first weeks of the fattening period do not affect animal welfare negatively<sup>1</sup>.

1. Is it correct that Regulation (EU) No 543/2008 does not allow free-range poultry farmers to keep more than 15 birds per square metre?
2. Does the Commission agree that keeping more animals per square metre in the first weeks of the fattening period can save a lot of energy without affecting animal welfare, as long as the stocking density remains below 25 kg liveweight per square metre?
3. Is the Commission prepared to find a solution for extensive poultry farmers who wish to increase the stocking rate in the first weeks, for example by tolerating higher stocking rates in the first weeks or changing the requirements of Regulation (EU) No 543/2008?

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<sup>1</sup> De Jong, I., Workel, L., Gunnink, H. (2010); Effect of stocking density on the behaviour of young broiler chickens; Wageningen UR Livestock Research; <https://edepot.wur.nl/154211>