

From QM+ to QM++: Which additional requirements need to be met?

Certification to QM++ has been available for dairy farms since July 2022. Its aim is to make milk production on farms more animal friendly and sustainable, with a particular focus on further enhancing animal welfare. In Germany, the label for husbandry conditions (Haltungsform) on these products categorizes them as being level 3. Which additional requirements have to be met for QM++ certification compared to the existing additional module QM+? We have listed the key criteria below.



No tying stalls, focus on outdoor husbandry

In contrast to QM+, QM++ forbids tying stalls all together. Further, the focus of the module is on greater access to outdoor husbandry conditions. These requirements can be met, for example, through the use of exercise yards (> 3 m² for each animal), pasture land (> 120 days, 6 hours / day) or open-front barns (at least 25% of the outer barn walls must be open, wind protection is acceptable).

Greater amount of space and compulsory soft lying areas for every animal

The animals must have a place to lie down at all times – this is now a decisive criterion. Lying areas must be clean and dry as well as soft or elastically deformable, e.g. by means of a suitable rubber mat.

Feeding, hoof trimming, pregnancy status, animal health management

Only GMO-free feed is allowed on QM++ farms. Moreover, appropriate measures must be applied to determine the pregnancy status. Proof of professional, functional hoof trimming (at least once a year) must be provided. Documentation of animal health data is recommended.

How can rubber mats help?

Farms face numerous challenges when leading their animals out to pasture. Simple and fast help is provided by the LOMAX rubber mats with holes: Installed with sturdy cable ties, they ensure soil stabilization and less mud-holes. If farms are unable to put their animals out to pasture, an exercise yard is the next best option. Exercise yards only fulfill their true purpose if the flooring conditions are designed appropriately for cows. The profiKURA P rubber mats provide animals with a pleasant and slip-resistant ground to walk on, thereby boosting overall popularity of the exercise yard. For outdoor areas with extreme solar radiation, profiKURA P SUN is best suited, as it features fine expansion slits in the mat that compensate for thermal expansion in strong sunlight.

Explanation: The QM Milch standards define requirements for quality-oriented and animal-friendly milk production that are uniform throughout Germany and go beyond the legal requirements. 90% of German dairy farmers currently participate in the QM Milch program.

Source: Handbuch QM-Milch, Zusatzmodul QM++; version 2022; December 2022, <https://qm-milch.de/qm-plus-plus/>

