

## Technical regulations for the use of elastic barn flooring in Germany (DIN) and internationally (ISO)

Elastic animal housing flooring systems are used widely in livestock husbandry. These systems tend to differ in their design, softness and intended use. A team of experts in the DIN standards committee “Elastomer Mats” has been working on defining technical regulations for this specific area of application. The goal: Uniform and binding standards for high-quality products that offer animal-friendly comfort.



### Barn flooring is the most used piece of barn equipment

The barn flooring in a cattle housing facility is the only piece of barn equipment that is used by the animals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Top-quality elastic barn flooring promotes animal health and well-being (joint health, hoof health, natural animal behavior, etc.). This obviously confirms the relevance of technical regulations for elastic barn mats.

### No technical definition of “comfort mat” or “soft, elastically deformable”

Until now, there has been a definite lack of technical rules and guidelines in both support programs and legally binding regulations for farmers. For example, there is no explanation of the term “comfort mat” in the German federal Agricultural Investment Support Program (AFP) for dairy cattle husbandry. A “soft or elastically deformable” substrate is also prescribed for calves in the latest version of the German Animal Protection - Livestock Ordinance (TierSchNutzTV). However, the terms softness and elasticity are not defined further.

### Standards DIN 3762 and 3763 for greater animal welfare and consumer protection – already internationally recognized

Specifically, two DIN standards are relevant for the use of elastic barn mats in the walking and lying areas of calves, fattening bulls and dairy cows. DIN 3763 provides clear and specific requirements regarding animal welfare. Softness is divided into various classes and minimum requirements are defined for slip and acid resistance, for example. DIN 3763 is already internationally recognized and much of its content has been adopted in the “ISO standard 22941 Rubber sheets for livestock-specification”. DIN 3762 is intended to protect animals and consumers from harmful chemicals (PAH). The integration of these standards in regulations and support programs would be of great benefit. Uniform and binding standards would provide farmers with guidance when making investments and stipulate legal regulations by which they must abide.

