

## The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals)(Scotland) Regulations 2021

### SCHEDULE 8 – BREEDING RABBITS

#### Interpretation

1. In this schedule—  
“adult rabbit” means a rabbit aged 3 months or more,  
“nesting box” means a fully-enclosed indoor area in which a rabbit can rest and sleep.

#### Advertisements and sales

2. (1) No kit aged under 8 weeks may be—  
(a) sold, or  
(b) permanently separated from its biological mother.  
(2) Sub-paragraph (1)(b) does not apply in relation to a kit if—  
(a) separation of the kit from its biological mother is necessary for the health or welfare of the kit, other kits from the same litter or its biological mother, or  
(b) the kit’s biological mother is deceased.  
(3) Any advertisement for the sale of a rabbit must—  
(a) include the number of the licence holder’s licence, and  
(b) specify the local authority that issued the licence.

#### Number of breeding female rabbits

3. (1) The number of breeding female rabbits kept in relation to the licensable activity of breeding rabbits at any time on the premises specified in the licence and on which the licensable activity is carried on must not exceed the maximum number specified by the local authority in the licence.

#### Suitable environment

4. (1) Each rabbit must have access to—  
(a) a clean, dry and warm sleeping area which is free from draughts, and  
(b) an exercise area.  
(2) Each rabbit must be provided with sufficient space in the sleeping area to—  
(a) lie down fully stretched out,  
(c) hop, and  
(d) turn around,  
without touching another rabbit or the walls of the sleeping area.  
(3) The exercise area must not be used as a sleeping area unless the rabbit chooses to do so.  
(4) For each breeding female rabbit, there must be—  
(i) a nesting box to give birth in and which is lined with suitable nesting material such as dust-free wood shavings or grass hay, or  
(ii) a plentiful supply of such nesting material available to the rabbit.  
(5) The nesting box must not be accessible to other rabbits when being used by a breeding female rabbit to give birth in.  
(6) In this paragraph, “exercise area” means a secure area where rabbits can hop, scratch, forage and stretch to their full height.

#### Training and exercise

5. (1) Opportunities to exercise which benefit the rabbits’ physical and mental health must be provided, unless advice from a veterinarian suggests otherwise.

- (2) All kits must be given suitable and adequate opportunities to—
  - (a) learn how to interact with people, rabbits and other animals where such interaction benefits their welfare, and
  - (b) become habituated to noises, objects and activities associated with a domestic environment.
- (3) All rabbits must have at least daily opportunities to interact with people where such interaction benefits their welfare.

#### **Suitable diet**

6.
  - (1) All adult rabbits must have continuous access to clean and safe drinking water.
  - (2) Each adult rabbit must be provided with feed appropriate to its needs.
  - (3) Each kit must be provided with feed appropriate for its stage of development.

#### **Protection from suffering, injury and disease**

7.
  - (1) All rabbits for sale must be in good health.
  - (2) Any rabbit with a condition which materially affects, or is likely to materially affect, its quality of life must not be—
    - (a) transferred in ownership,
    - (b) offered for sale, or
    - (c) moved from the premises specified in the licence and on which the licensable activity is carried on, other than to an isolation facility or veterinary care facility where the animal is in need of isolation or treatment, until it has recovered, ceased to require isolation or, where there is no need for the rabbit to be isolated, been certified by a veterinary surgeon as being in a condition that is suitable for such transfer, sale or movement.
  - (3) The licence holder must ensure that no female rabbit—
    - (a) is mated or artificially inseminated if aged less than 5 months,
    - (b) gives birth to more than 4 litters of kits within 12 months,
    - (c) gives birth to more than 16 litters of kits in her lifetime,
    - (d) is mated or artificially inseminated if aged 6 or more years,
  - (4) No rabbit may be kept for breeding if it can reasonably be expected, on the basis of its genotype, conformation, behaviour or state of health, that breeding from it could have a detrimental effect on its health or welfare or the health or welfare of its offspring.
  - (5) Where any other activity involving animals is undertaken on the premises on which the licensable activity of breeding rabbits is carried on, it must be kept entirely separate from the area where that licensable activity is carried on.
  - (6) No adult rabbit may be isolated or separated from others rabbits for longer than is necessary.