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NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT OF AN APPLICATION FOR A LICENCE AT GOLA ENGLISH, SCOTSTOWN, CO MONAGHAN



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 REQUIREMENT FOR AN APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

This Natura Impact Assessment was prepared for a proposed agricultural development in Gola English, Scotstown, Co. Monaghan. Having regard to the location of the proposed development site within the potential Zone of Influence of designated European sites (SACs / SPAs), a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) of the proposed development was prepared in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. This NIS will allow the competent authority (in this case Monaghan County Council) to undertake an Appropriate Assessment determination of the above project.

The purpose of this AA is to determine the appropriateness of the proposed project, in the context of the conservation status of the site or sites. In Ireland, an Appropriate Assessment takes the form of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS), which is a statement of the likely impacts of the plan or project on a Natura 2000 site. The NIS comprises a comprehensive assessment of the plan or project and it examines the direct and indirect impacts that the plan or project might have on its own or in combination with other plans or projects on one or more Natura 2000 sites in view of the sites' conservation objectives.

1.2 THE AIM OF THIS REPORT

This Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared in accordance with the current guidance (DoEHLG, 2009, Revised February 2010), and it provides an assessment of the potential significant effects of a development at an existing poultry farm in Gola English, Scotstown, Co. Monaghan on designated European sites.

An NIS should provide the information required in order to establish whether or not a proposed development is likely to have a significant impact on certain Natura sites in the context of their conservation objectives and specifically on the habitats and species for which the Natura 2000 conservation sites have been designated.

Accordingly, a comprehensive assessment of the ecological impacts of this application was carried out in January 2026 by Noreen McLoughlin, MSc, MCIEEM of Whitehill Environmental. This assessment allowed areas of potential ecological value and potential ecological constraints associated with this proposed development to be identified and it also enabled potential ecological impacts associated with the proposed development to be assessed and mitigated for.

1.3 REGULATORY CONTEXT

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC) recognises that certain species of birds should be subject to special conservation measures concerning their habitats. The Directive requires that Member States take measures to classify the most suitable areas as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for the conservation of bird species listed in Annex 1 of the Directive. SPAs are selected for bird species (listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive), that are regularly occurring populations of migratory bird species and the SPA areas are of international importance for these migratory birds.

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires that Member States designate and ensure that particular protection is given to sites (Special Areas of Conservation) which are made up of or support particular habitats and species listed in annexes to this Directive.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of this Directive also call for the undertaking of an Appropriate Assessment for plans and projects not directly connected with or necessary to the management of, but which are likely to have a significant effect on any European designated sites (i.e. SACs and SPAs).

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC), which came into force in December 2000, establishes a framework for community action in the field of water policy. The WFD was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 722 of 2003). The WFD rationalises and updates existing legislation and provides for water management on the basis of River Basin Districts (RBDs). RBDs are essentially administrative areas for coordinated water management and are comprised of multiple river basins (or catchments), with cross-border basins (i.e. those covering the territory of more than one Member State) assigned to an international RBD. The aim of the WFD is to ensure that waters achieve at least good status by 2027 and that status does not deteriorate in any waters.

Appropriate Assessment and the Habitats Directive

Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora – the ‘Habitats Directive’ - provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of European Community interest, at a favourable conservation status. Articles 3 - 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as

Natura 2000. Natura 2000 sites are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive sets out the decision-making tests for plans or projects affecting Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."

Article 6(4) deals with the steps that should be taken when it is determined, as a result of appropriate assessment, that a plan/project will adversely affect a European site. Issues dealing with alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest and compensatory measures need to be addressed in this case.

Article 6(4) states:

"If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest."

The Appropriate Assessment Process

The aim of Appropriate Assessment is to assess the implications of a proposal in respect of a designated site's conservation objectives.

The 'Appropriate Assessment' itself is an assessment which must be carried out by the competent authority which confirms whether the plan or project in combination with other plans and projects will have an adverse impact on the integrity of a European site.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment shall be carried out by the competent authority as set out in Section 177U(1) and (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) as follows:

(1) A screening for appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or application for consent for proposed development shall be carried out by the competent authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.

(2) A competent authority shall carry out a screening for appropriate assessment under subsection (1) before—

(a) a Land use plan is made including, where appropriate, before a decision on appeal in relation to a draft strategic development zone is made, or

(b) consent for a proposed development is given.'

The competent authority shall determine that an Appropriate Assessment is not required if it can be excluded, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or project will have a significant effect on a European site.

Where the competent authority cannot exclude the potential for a significant effect on a European site, an Appropriate Assessment shall be deemed required.

Where an Appropriate Assessment is required, the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Report (Natura Impact Statement (NIS)) should enable the competent authority to ascertain whether the plan or proposed development would adversely affect the integrity of the European site. If adverse impacts on the integrity of a European site cannot be avoided, then mitigation measures should be applied during the appropriate assessment process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site remain. Under the terms of the

Habitats Directive consent can only be granted for a project if, as a result of the appropriate assessment either (a) it is concluded that the integrity of any European sites will not be adversely affected, or (b) after mitigation, where adverse impacts cannot be excluded, there is shown to be an absence of alternative solutions, and there exists imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project should go ahead.

Section 177(V) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) outlines that the competent authority shall carry out the Appropriate Assessment, taking into account the Natura Impact Statement (amongst any other additional or supplemental information). A determination shall then be made by the competent authority in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive as to whether the plan or proposed development would adversely affect the integrity of a European site, prior to consent being given.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

This NIS has been prepared with reference to the following:

- European Commission (2018). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2021). Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2006). Nature and Biodiversity Cases: Ruling of the European Court of Justice.
- European Commission (2007). Clarification of the Concepts of: Alternative Solution, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence, Opinion of the Commission.
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities.
- The AA has also been undertaken in consideration of the European Union (CJEU) judgment on Case C323/17 (People over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta), which concluded that "it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects [mitigation] of the plan or project on that site.". Other caselaw relevant to Screening are Waddenzee (C127/02), Holohan and Others v An Bord Pleanála (C461/17) and Court of Appeal case C1/2009/0041/QBACF Citation No [2009] EWCA Civ. 1061.
- Most recent and pertinent case law pertaining to AA screening comes from *Eco Advocacy v. An Bord Pleanála* Case C-721/21. This case recently determined that "standard design measures" can be included at design stage if they are an inherent part of the plan, namely a measure: *'incorporated into that plan or project as standard features, inherent in such a plan or project, irrespective of any effect on the site'*.

The EC Guidance sets out a number of principles as to how to approach decision making during the process. The primary one is 'the precautionary principle' which requires that the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 should prevail where there is uncertainty.

When considering the precautionary principle, the emphasis for assessment should be on objectively demonstrating with supporting evidence that:

- There will be no significant effects on a Natura 2000 site;
- There will be no adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site;
- There is an absence of alternatives to the project or plan that is likely to have an adverse effect to the integrity of a Natura 2000 site; and
- There are compensation measures that maintain or enhance the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

This translates into a four stage process to assess the impacts, on a designated site or species, of a policy or proposal.

The EC Guidance states that “each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required”. Consequently, the Council may not need to proceed through all four stages in undertaking the Appropriate Assessment.

The four-stage process is:

Stage 1: Screening – The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether or not these impacts are likely to be significant;

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment – The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site’s structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts;

Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions – The process which examines alternative ways of achieving objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;

Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain – An assessment of the compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

In complying with the obligations set out in Articles 6(3) and following the guidelines described above, this screening statement has been structured as a stage by stage approach as follows:

- Description of the proposed project;
- Identification of the Natura 2000 sites close to the proposed development;
- Identification and description of any individual and cumulative impacts on the Natura 2000 sites likely to result from the project;
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on site integrity. Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects;
- Description of proven mitigation measures.

2.2 STATEMENT OF COMPETENCY

This NIS report was carried out by Noreen McLoughlin, BA, MSc, MCIEEM. Noreen has an honours degree in Zoology and an MSc in Freshwater Ecology from Trinity College, Dublin and she has been a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management for over nineteen years. Noreen has over 21 years' experience as a professional ecologist in Ireland.

2.3 DESK STUDIES & CONSULTATION

Information on the site and the area of the proposed development was studied prior to the completion of this statement. The following data sources were accessed in order to complete a thorough examination of potential impacts:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service - Aerial photographs and maps of designated sites, information on habitats and species within these sites and information on protected plant or animal species, conservation objectives, site synopses and standard data forms for relevant designated sites.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- Information pertaining to water quality, geology and licensed facilities within the area, correspondence from the EPA regarding this License application;
- Myplan.ie – Mapped based information;
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) – Information pertaining to protected plant and animal species within the study area;
- CLW Environmental Planners – Site plans, development description and information on potential emissions.
- Monaghan County Council – Information on planning history in the area for the assessment of cumulative impacts.

2.4 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The proposed development was assessed to identify its potential ecological impacts and from this, the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the proposed development was defined. Based on the potential impacts and their Zoi, the Natura 2000 sites potentially at risk from direct, indirect or in-combination impacts were identified. The assessment considered all potential impact sources and pathways connecting the proposed development to Natura 2000 sites, in view of the conservation objectives supporting the favourable conservation condition of the site's Qualifying Interests (QIs) or Special Conservation Interests (SCIs).

The conservation objectives relating to each Natura 2000 site and its QIs/SCIs are cited generally for SACs as "to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected", and for SPAs "to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA".

As defined in the Habitat's Directive, the favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range and area it covers within that range is stable or increasing;
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future;

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- The population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future;
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Where site-specific conservation objectives (SSCOs) have been prepared for a European site, these include a series of specific attributes and targets against which effects on conservation condition, or integrity, can be measured. Where potential significant effects are identified, then these SSCO should be considered in detail.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

3.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

OVERVIEW

In 2017, Monaghan County Council granted planning permission to David and Kyle McCoy for the construction of one proposed free-range poultry house (9,000 birds) on a greenfield site in Gola English, Scotstown, Co. Monaghan (Planning File No. 16/532).

This site has since been required by Gola Eggs Ltd, and they now intend to upgrade the existing house (House 1) on site to include a manure removal system. The manure removal system will reduce emissions from 0.315kg ammonia / bird place to 0.106kg ammonia / bird place. Gola Eggs are also seeking permission for the construction of one additional poultry house along with all associated works. The new house (House 2) will accommodate an additional 30,000 birds. The proposed new house barn house will operate on a multi-tier system with an inbuilt aeration system. It will have an emission factor of 0.037 - 0.055 kg ammonia/bird place. The planned upgrades will result in an overall decrease of ammonia from the site of c8%. The details of the proposed system showing evidence of reduction are presented in Appendix I.

An extract from the planning drawings as submitted for this application can be seen in Figure 1.

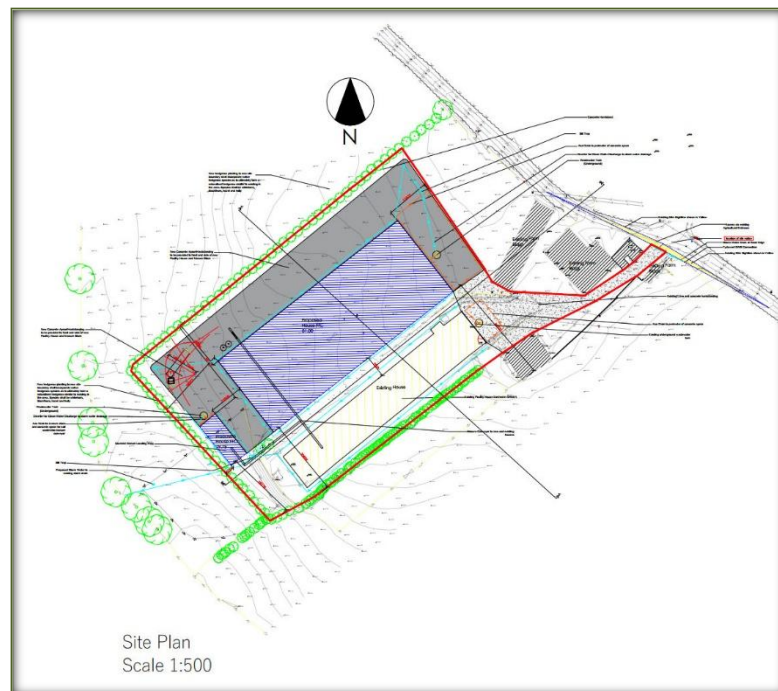


Figure 1 – Extract from Planning Drawing (As Prepared by McCarron Charter Building Surveyors)

The poultry farm will operate for the production of eggs, with birds moved in at approximately 16 weeks and moved out at end of lay approximately 56-60 weeks later. The houses will be cleaned down at the end of each 13-14 month cycle.

The spent poultry litter and manure will be removed from the farm by specialised contractors where it will be composted and used in the mushroom industry or it will be used as an organic fertiliser in accordance with S.I. 588 of 2025. All records for the movement of fertiliser will be kept on site and presented to the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine as requested.

Soiled water from the poultry houses will be directed to an underground storage tank, whilst clean roof water will be directed to a local land drain via a silt trap.

S.I. 588 OF 2025

The European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2025 provides a basic set of measures to ensure the protection of waters, including drinking water sources, against pollution caused by nitrogen and phosphorus from agricultural sources, with the primary emphasis being on the management of livestock manures and other fertilisers. The purpose of these Regulations is to give effect to Ireland's Nitrates Action Programme. This directive outlines measures that must be followed during the land-spreading of manure. These measures are summarised in the points below.

- The amount of livestock manure applied in any year to land on a holding, together with that deposited to land by livestock, shall not exceed an amount containing 170 kg nitrogen per hectare.
- The spreading of any organic fertiliser during certain times of the year is prohibited (The prohibited spreading period, generally between Mid-October and Mid-January).
- Farmers must keep within the overall maximum fertilisation rates for nitrogen and phosphorus.
- Farmers must have sufficient storage capacity to meet the minimum requirements of the regulations.
- All storage facilities must be kept leak proof and structurally sound.
- Records for the movement of fertilisers must be kept.
- Chemical fertilisers, livestock manure and other organic fertilisers, effluents and soiled water must be spread as accurately and as evenly as possible.
- An upward-facing splash plate or sludge irrigator on a tanker or umbilical system must not be used for the spreading of organic fertiliser or soiled water.

- Chemical fertilisers, livestock manure, soiled water or other organic fertilisers must not be spread when:
 - The land is waterlogged;
 - The land is flooded, or it is likely to flood;
 - The land is frozen, or covered with snow;
 - Heavy rain is forecast within 48 hours;
 - The ground slopes steeply and there is a risk of water pollution, when factors such as surface run-off pathways, the presence of land drains, the absence of hedgerows to mitigate surface flow, soil condition and ground cover are taken into account.
- Chemical fertilisers must not be spread on land within 2 metres of a surface watercourse.

Table 1 shows the buffer zones for various water bodies (lakes, rivers, wells etc.). Soiled water, effluents, farmyard manures or other organic fertilisers must not be spread inside these buffer zones.

Water Feature	Buffer Zone
Any water supply source providing 100m ³ or more of water per day, or serving 500 or more people	200m (or as little as 30m where a local authority allow)
Any water supply source providing 10m ³ or more of water per day, or serving 50 people or more	100m (or as little as 30m where a local authority allows)
Any other water supply for human consumption	25m (or as little as 15m where a local authority allows)
Lake shoreline or a turlough likely to flood	20m
Exposed cavernous or karstified limestones features	15m
Any surface watercourse where the slope towards the watercourse exceeds 10%	10m
Any other surface waters	5m

Table 1 – Requirements for the Application of Fertilisers and Soiled Water as set out in S.I. 588 of 2025

3.2 SITE LOCATION AND SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

The site in question is 1.24 hectares and it located in a rural area, in the townland of Gola English. The site will be accessed via an existing access road into the farm and this entrance is just off a local, third-class road. The site is 2.2km south-west of Scotstown and 4.1km south-east of Knockatallan.

The dominant land-use surrounding the application site is agriculture and improved agricultural grassland is the dominant habitat locally and this habitat largely surrounds the site. Other natural habitats represented locally include areas of wet and neutral grasslands, small areas of broadleaved woodland and scrub, along with hedgerows, treelines and watercourses. Site location maps can be seen in Figures 2 and 3 whilst an aerial photograph of the site and its surrounding habitats can be seen in Figure 4.

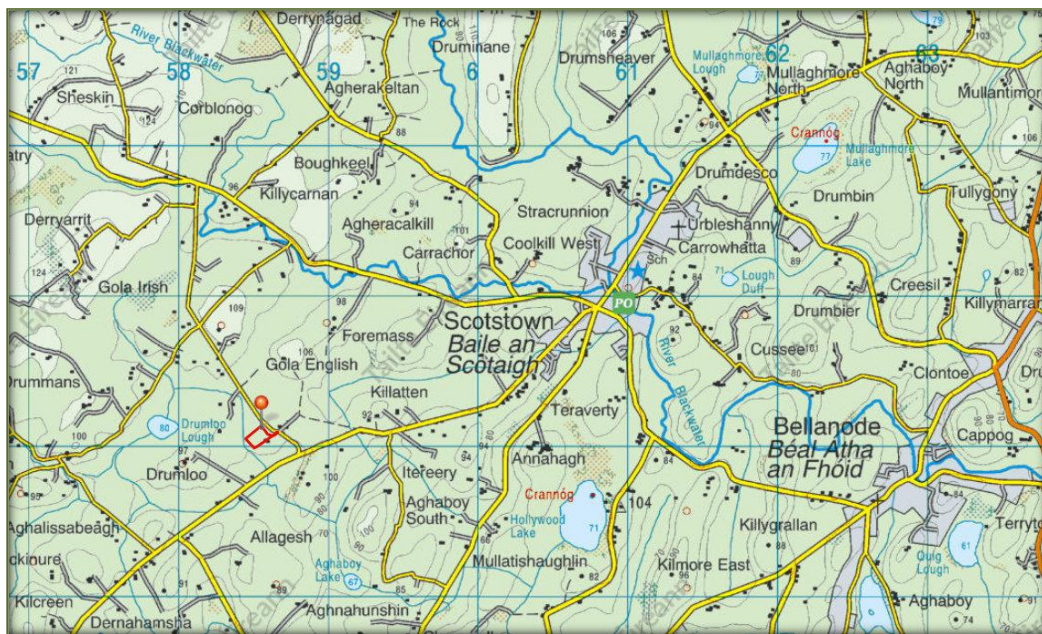


Figure 2 – Map showing the Location of the Proposed Development Site (Pinned)



Figure 3 – Map showing the Location of the Proposed Development Site (Outlined in Red).

HABITATS WITHIN THE SITE

The site encompasses an existing poultry house that was constructed post 2017. The main habitats within the application site include Buildings and Artificial Surfaces, along with the Improved Agricultural Grassland Habitats that remain surrounding the existing poultry house (House 1). There are no natural boundaries within the site.

The range area of the birds (for existing and approved development only) will extend to the grassland habitats that surround the site. The proposed additional house is not free range.

WATER FEATURES AND QUALITY

The application site lies within the Erne Hydrometric Area (36) and Catchment (36), the Finn (Monaghan) Sub-Catchment (010) and the Magherarney River Sub-Basin (010). The Derrylusk Stream lies c20m east of the site. This stream rises in lands to the north of the site. It flows in a southerly direction until it joins the Magherarney River. The Magherarney River continues south and east until it meets the River Finn. The River Finn is a tributary of the Erne system.

The EPA have defined the ecological status of the Derrylusk Stream and the Magherarney River at points close to the application site as poor. Under the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, this is unsatisfactory and all waterbodies must achieve good ecological status by 2027.



Figure 4 – Aerial Photograph of the Site (Outlined in Red) and its Surrounding Habitats.

3.3 NATURA 2000 SITES IDENTIFIED

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, a list of Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development have been identified and described according to their site synopsis, qualifying interests and conservation objectives. In addition, any other sites further than this, but potentially within its zone of interest were also considered. The zone of impact may be determined by an assessment of the connectivity between the application site and the designated areas by virtue of hydrological connectivity, atmospheric emissions, flight paths, ecological corridors etc.

For significant effects to arise, there must be a potential impact facilitated by having a *source*, i.e., the proposed development and activities arising out of its construction or operation, a *receptor*, i.e., the European site and its qualifying interests and a subsequent *pathway* or *connectivity* between the source and receptor, e.g., a water course. The likelihood for significant effects on the European site will largely depend on the characteristics of the source (e.g., nature and scale of the construction works), the characteristics of the existing pathway and the characteristics of the receptor, e.g., the sensitivities of the Qualifying Interests (habitats or species) to changes in water quality.

There are five Natura 2000 designated sites within 15km of the application site. These sites are summarised in Table 2 and maps and an aerial photograph showing their locations relative to the application site is shown in Figures 5 and 6. A full description of the sites can be read on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (www.npws.ie) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (jncc.defra.gov.uk).

Site Name & Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Potential Significant Effects
Slieve Beagh SPA 004167	3.9km north-west	Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	No potential hydrological impacts. Potential significant effects arising from atmospheric emissions will be considered further.
Slieve Beagh-Mullaghfad-Lisnaskea SPA UK9020302	6.7km north-west	Hen Harrier <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	No potential hydrological impacts. Potential significant effects arising from atmospheric emissions will be considered further.
Magheraveely Mark Loughs SAC UK0016621	4.7km south-west	Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic	No potential hydrological impacts. Potential significant effects arising from atmospheric emissions

		vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. • Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the Caricion davallianae • Alkaline fens • <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish)	will be considered further. RECEIVED: 05/03/2026
Slieve Beagh SAC UK0016622	8km north-west	• Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds • European dry heaths	No potential hydrological impacts. Potential significant effects arising from atmospheric emissions will be considered further.
Kilroosky Lough Cluster SAC 001786	11.5km south-west	• Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. • Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the Caricion davallianae • Alkaline fens • <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish)	No potential hydrological impacts. Potential significant effects arising from atmospheric emissions will be considered further.

Table 2 – Natura 2000 Sites within 15km of Application Site

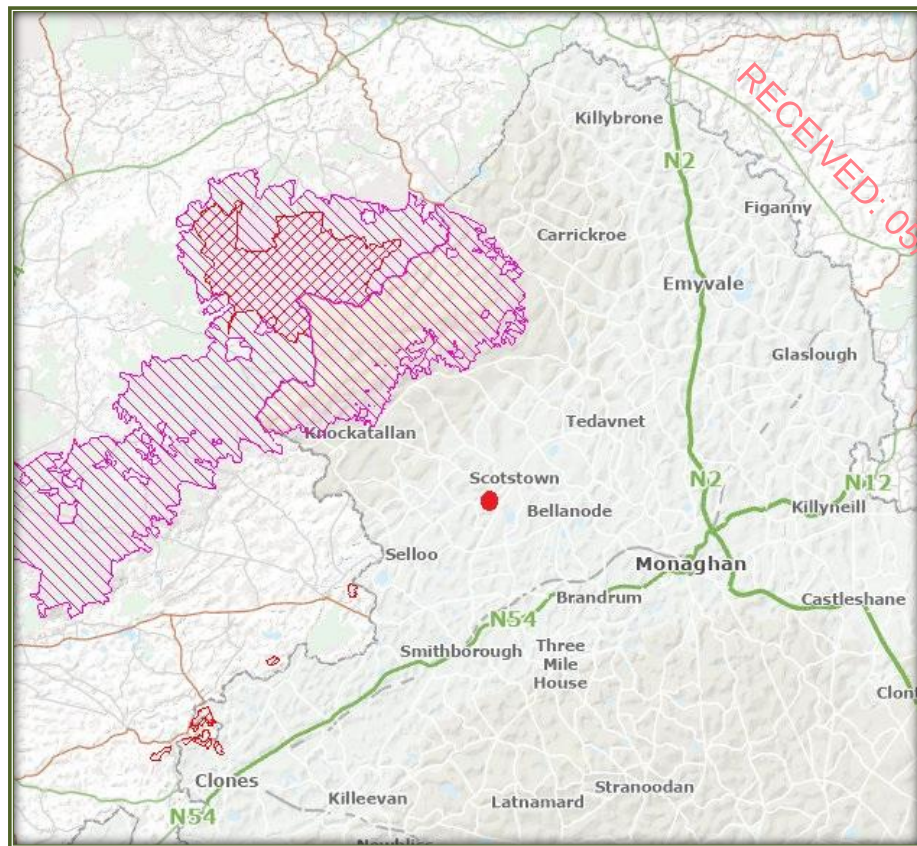


Figure 5 – The Application Site (Red Dot) in relation to the Natura 2000 sites. SACs – Brown Hatching, Hatching, SPAs – Vertical Hatching

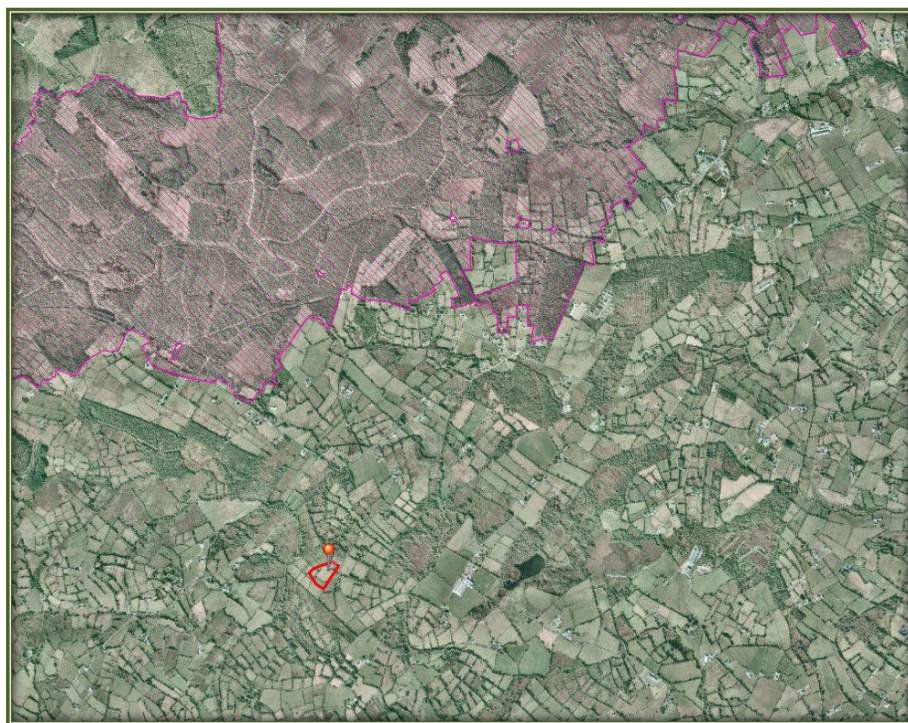


Figure 6 – The Application Site (Outlined in Red) in relation to the Slieve Beagh SPA (Pink Hatching)

4 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

4.1 SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON NATURA 2000 SITES ARISING FROM ATMOSPHERIC EMISSIONS

The EPA have recently produced guidance documents for the assessment of impacts of emissions on Natura 2000 sites (*Assessment of the Impact of Ammonia and Nitrogen on Natura 2000 sites from Intensive Agriculture Installations*, EPA 2021, updated 2024). This document contains a step-by-step assessment process which allows the applicant to ascertain the level of assessment and information needed when determining potential effects from emissions on Natura 2000 sites. Step 6c of the flow chart (Figure 7) makes a provision for applicants to demonstrate that the emissions from the new installations will result in an overall reduction in emissions from the baseline numbers.

The proposed development consists of the conversion of an existing poultry house (House 1) to include a system for the weekly removal of manure. The new house (House 2) will be a barn house operating on a multi-tier system with an inbuilt aeration system

Despite the increase in numbers of birds from 9,000 to 39,000, the more modern and efficient upgraded houses will lead to an overall reduction in emissions from the farm from that currently permitted as per the details below (Specifications presented in Appendix I):

- Existing: House 1 – 9,000 birds @ 0.315kg/yr/bird = 2,835kg ammonia / year.
- Proposed House 1 – 9,000 birds @ 0.106kg/yr/bird = 954kg ammonia / year.
- Proposed House 2 – 30,000 birds @ 0.037-0.055kg/yr/bird = 1,650kg ammonia / yr (maximum)
- Combining Proposed House 1 and Proposed House 2 = 2,604kg ammonia / year.
- Therefore, the existing level of ammonia is 2,835kg ammonia / year and the proposed level is 2,604kg ammonia / year, which represents a reduction of circa 8% overall.

As the final emissions from the farm upon completion of the development will be lower than the prescribed baseline levels, detailed atmospheric modelling is not required in this instance and it can be concluded that significant effects arising from the development will not arise.

APPENDIX 1. FLOWCHART

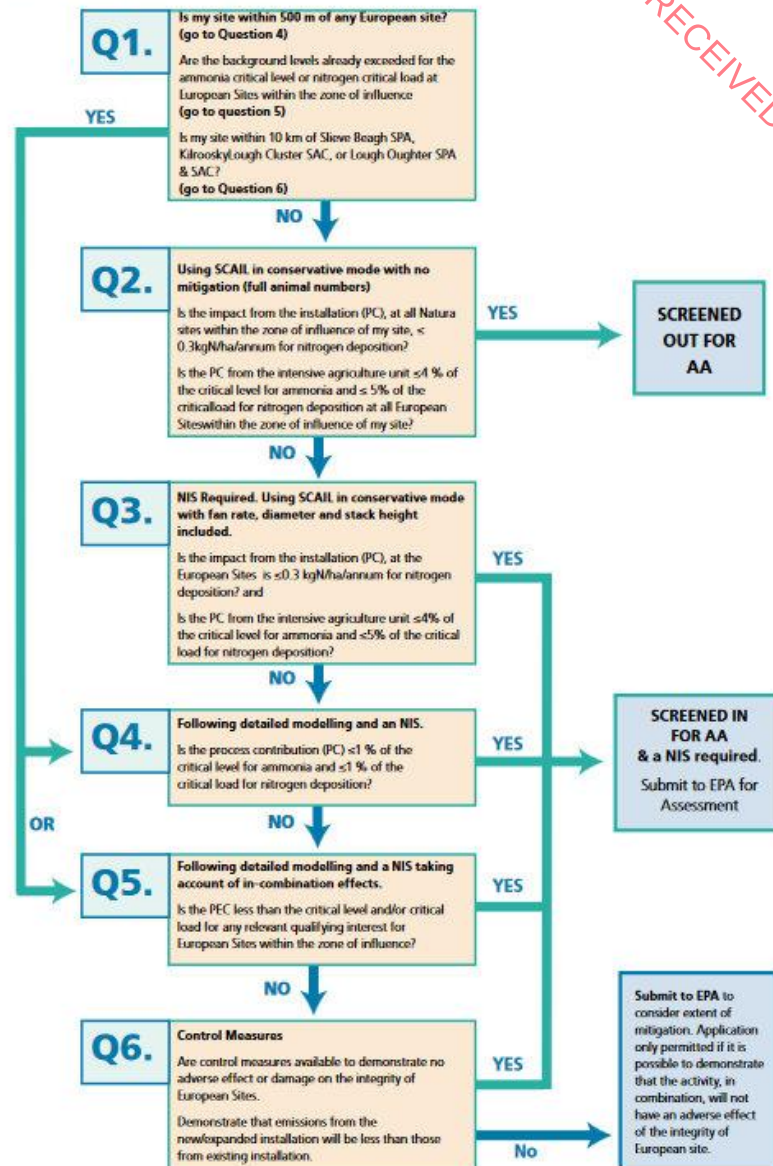


Figure 6 – EPA Flow Chart, Taken from Annex I of the Assessment of the Impact of Ammonia and Nitrogen on Natura 2000 sites from Intensive Agriculture Installations, EPA 2024

4.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

There are other agricultural activities ongoing close to the current application site, therefore cumulative impacts arising from the operation of these farms together were considered. All farms, regardless of whether licensed by the EPA or not, are required to operate within the legalisation defined in S.I. 588 of 2025 regarding manure storage, minimisation of soiled water and general good agricultural practice, etc. Therefore, cumulative impacts arising from the combined operation of these activities with the proposed operation of the poultry farm at Gola English will be negligible.

The land-spreading of the poultry manure produced at the proposed facility has also been considered as part of this process. Records for the distribution and movement of all the manure produced will be kept on site and presented to the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine if necessary. All organic fertiliser will replace the use of chemical fertiliser; therefore there will be no overall increase in the amount of nutrients spread.

All farmers that receive the manure from the proposed farm will do so under the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations 2022 (S.I. 588 of 2025). Upon the receipt of the manure, they will be informed of their obligation under this legalisation. Compliance with these regulations will minimise cumulative impacts as well as any impacts

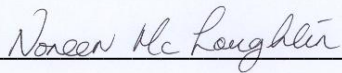
5 MITIGATION MEASURES

In order to further minimise emissions from the poultry facility at Gola English, a number of mitigation measures should be implemented and followed.

- Techniques for the reduction of emissions from the poultry houses must be employed on the farm. These are outlined in the document *Best Available Techniques Reference Document for the Intensive Rearing of Poultry or Pigs* (http://eippcb.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reference/BREF/IRPP/JRC107189_IRPP_Bref_2017_publiched.pdf).
- It is vital that there is no deterioration in water quality in the water courses that are close to the development site. This will protect non-designated but locally important habitats and species that are sensitive to pollution. Therefore, strict controls of erosion, sediment generation and other pollutants associated with the construction process should be implemented where necessary, including the provision of attenuation measures, silt traps or geotextile curtains to reduce and intercept sediment release into these local watercourses.
- Post construction surface water run-off from hardcore / concreted / tarmac areas should be directed into a soak-pit. If soak-pit disposal is not viable or practical, then surface water run-off from these areas should be treated via serviced sediment and oil interceptor traps, prior to discharge into the local watercourse.
- The applicant must follow the guidelines set out in the Department of Agriculture's *Explanatory Handbook for Good Agricultural Practice Regulations*.

6 NIS CONCLUSIONS

This Natura Impact Statement has concluded that with the mitigation measures outlined in this document and with the construction of the houses to a low emissions specification, the proposed operation of the poultry farm at Gola English will not lead to any significant impacts upon the designated sites identified. Although the stock numbers on the farm will increase, the upgrading of the houses to low emissions spec will lead to an overall reduction in atmospheric emissions from the farm.



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Ecologist.

(PI Insurance details available on request)

APPENDIX I – LOW EMISSION HOUSING

Annex V, to Articles 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, first and second paragraphs, 6.14, fourth and fifth paragraphs, 7.124, second paragraph, 8.31, fourth and fifth paragraphs, and 9.3, third paragraph, of this Regulation (housing systems and emission factors)

[Future change(s) foreseen as of: 01-04-2026. See the [change overview](#).]

Code	Housing system description	System Description Number	Emission factor per animal place		
			ammonia (kg NH ₃ /year)	Smell (ouE/sec)	particulate matter (g PM ₁₀ /year)
HE2 Animal category laying hens aged 18 weeks and older, animal category parent animals of laying hens 18 weeks and older					
HE2.1	Cage housing				
HE2.1.1	Enriched cages with manure belt aeration	OW 2005.11.V1	0,030	0,35	23
HE2.1.2	Colony housing with manure belt aeration	OW 2009.10.V1	0,030	0,35	23
HE2.2	Ground housing				
HE2.2.1	Approximately 1/3 litter floor and approximately 2/3 slatted floor	OW 2001.09.V1	0,402	0,34	84
HE2.2.2	With aeration under partially raised slatted floor	OW 2010.21.V1	0,110	0,34	84
HE2.2.3	With manure aeration via pipes under hopper	OW 2001.10.V1	0,125	0,34	84
HE2.2.4	With single tube under hopper on both sides of laying nest	OW 2011.09.V1	0,150	0,34	84
HE2.2.5	With manure aeration via vertical ventilation chimneys	OW 2011.10.V1	0,150	0,34	84
HE2.2.6	Two floors with manure belts under grids	OW 2004.11.V1	0,068	0,34	84
HE2.2.7	With frequent manure and litter removal	OW 2004.12.V1	0,106	0,34	84
HE2.3	Aviary housing				
HE2.3.1	At least 50% grid with manure belt	OW 2004.09.V1	0,090	0,34	65
HE2.3.2	45–55% slats and manure belt aeration				
HE2.3.2.1	Aeration at least 0.2 m ³ /hour per animal place	OW 2004.10.V1	0,055	0,34	65
HE2.3.2.2	Aeration at least 0.5 m ³ /hour per animal place	OW 2004.10.V1	0,042	0,34	65
HE2.3.3	30–35% slats and manure belt aeration 0.7 m ³ /hour per animal place	OW 2005.04.V1	0,025	0,34	65
HE2.3.4	55–60% slats and manure belt aeration 0.7 m ³ /hour per animal place	OW 2005.05.V1	0,037	0,34	65
HE2.100	Other housing systems		0,315	0,34	84

Proposed Housing System House to be upgraded

Options for new house outlined in green. Selected system OW2004.10.V1

Existing House to be upgraded

6. Recording equipment

7. Manure storage

1. Housing standards

Alternative housing (animals can move freely in the barn).

2. Floor design

a. 45 - 55% of the living area is designed as floors with slatted floors.

b. 45 - 55% of the living area is made as litter flooring.

3. Feed and drinking water

The facilities for feed and drinking water are installed above the slatted floor.

4. Manure collection facility

The manure belts are located under the slats.

5. Aeration

a. Manure belt aeration is available.

b. The supply of air to the manure belts takes place via pipes under/next to the grids. The location of the discharge openings of the pipes ensures an even drying of the manure on the manure belts.

c. An alternative aeration system, instead of aeration with a flow rate of 0.2 m^3 per hour through pipes, is an aeration system that uses movement of air through a rotor system with blades which is designed for drying manure on the manure belts.

The rotor system with blades should be designed as follows:

- o The length of the rotor blades is 15 cm with a distance of 5 cm between them
- o The diameter of the rotor system (including impellers) is 8.25 cm
- o The speed is 120 revolutions per minute

6. Recording equipment

The following recording equipment is provided:

1. Temperature gauge for measuring the temperature of the aeration air, measuring in the main supply duct of the aeration.
2. Equipment for recording the aeration on (hour meter, kWh meter, tachometer or measuring fan).
3. Equipment for recording the rotation frequency of the manure belts.
4. Equipment for measuring the capacity of the aeration, measuring at the beginning of the aeration pipes above the manure belts.

7. Manure storage

Short-term or possibly post-drying in a downstream technology or long-term manure storage. This system does not impose any requirements on the method of manure storage or further processing (extra drying) of the manure. However, the form of storage or processing does determine the level of ammonia emissions of the company. The emission factor ammonia per animal place per year determined for this barn system applies to the situation in combination with short-term storage on the farm (removal of the manure from the tyres directly from the farm or storage in a covered container for a maximum of 14 days).

System usage requirements

1. Living area
2. Aeration capacity

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3. Dry matter content
4. Drying air temperature
5. Rotation frequency of manure belts
6. Registration

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1. Living area

The living area is at least 1,111 cm² per animal when set up (9 animals per m²).

2. Aeration capacity

- a. The aeration capacity is at least 0.2 or 0.5 m³ per animal per hour.
- b. The aeration capacity does not apply to the rotor system with blades.

3. Dry matter content

The manure reaches a dry matter content of at least 41.5% within 72 hours of drying.

4. Drying air temperature

The temperature of the drying air is at least 18 °C.

5. Rotation frequency of manure belts

At least twice a week, turn the manure to a covered container for short-term storage, downstream technology or other form of storage.

6. Registration system

To check the operation of the manure belt turning and the drying system, the following data must be recorded automatically:

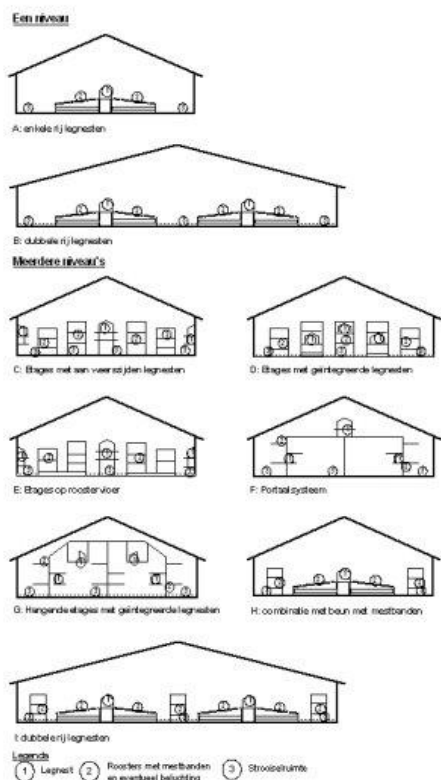
- The temperature of aeration air.
- The aeration is on.
- The rotation frequency of the manure belts.
- The capacity of the aeration.

A printout of the current and previous production period of the registered values must be available during the inspection.

Measurement reports

Report 2002-16 of IMAG (www.stalemissies.nl).

Images



Cross-sections of houses with different systems for aviary housing for chickens

Description of the image showing the different systems

The image shows different types of housing for chickens in cross-sections. Each type of housing is marked with a letter, from A to I. There are housing types with laying nests on 1 level and housing types with laying nests on several levels.

The image has the following legend:

1. Laying nest
2. Slats with manure belts and possibly aeration
3. Litter room

Laying nests on 1 level

A: Single row laying nests. In the middle of the barn is an elevation, with a row of laying nests on top. On both sides of these laying nests there are grids with manure belts. There is litter space on the ground, on both sides of the barn.

B: Double row of laying nests. This type is similar to type A, but with 2 raised rows of laying nests next to each other.

Laying nests on more levels

C: Floors with laying nests on both sides. In this section, laying nests can be seen against the left and right side wall of the barn. In the middle of the barn are several modules with floors. There is room for slats with manure belts on the floors. The litter area is located on the floor of the barn.

D: Floors with integrated laying nests. In the cross-section, the barn is filled with modules with tiers, in which the laying nests are integrated. In addition, there are grids with manure belts in the modules. The litter area is located on the floor of the barn.

E: Floors on slatted floor. In this section, laying nests can be seen against the left and right side wall of the barn. In the middle of the barn are several modules with floors. These modules are placed on a slatted floor.

F: Portal system. In this cross-section, 2 rectangular pens are placed on their sides against each other in the middle of the barn. On top of these pens you can see a laying nest. Horizontal grids have been installed on both sides of the coops, on which the chickens can sit. The litter room is located on the ground.

G: Suspended floors with integrated laying nests. In the middle of the barn is a construction from which several platforms hang. There are laying nests on those platforms. Platforms with laying nests and grids with manure belts are also attached to the construction. There is a litter area on the floor of the barn.

H: Combination with hopper with manure belts. In the middle of the barn is an elevation as in type A. On both sides of the elevation is a module with floors. Grids with manure belts have been installed on these floors. There is a litter area on the floor of the barn.

I: Double row of laying nests. In the middle of the barn is a module with floors. On both sides of this module there is an elevation as in type A. On both sides of the barn there is another module with floors.

Previous version

Description BWL 2004.10.V3 of March 2016.

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OW 2004.10 - Housing description laying hens

System description of an aviary housing with 45 - 55 % slats with a manure belt aeration of at least 0.2 (HE2.3.2.1) or 0.5 m³/hour per animal place (HE2.3.2.2).

Version number: OW2004.10.V1 of January 2024.

On this page

- [Animal category](#)
- [Emission factors](#)
- [Working principle](#)
- [The technical implementation of the system; Architectural](#)
- [The technical implementation of the system; technical provisions](#)
- [System usage requirements](#)
- [Measurement reports](#)
- [Images](#)
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Animal category

Laying hens aged 18 weeks and older and parent chickens of laying hens aged 18 weeks and older (HE2.3.2).

Emission factors

For the emission factor of the housing system, see [Annex V of the Environmental Regulations](#)  (<https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0045528/#BijlageV>).

Working principle

Ammonia emission reduction is based on the rapid drying of the manure on the manure belts under the grid and the frequent removal of the manure from the barn.

The technical implementation of the system; Architectural

No specifics.

The technical implementation of the system; Technical facilities

1. Housing
2. Floor version
3. Food and drinking water
4. Manure collection facility
5. Aeration