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# Respeggt System Manual

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## 1. Introduction

Every year, **about 6 billion male chicks of egg-laying breeds are killed worldwide** because they do not lay eggs and because fattening them is economically unviable. Respeggt has developed a procedure for verifying supply chains that offer the added value of “Free of Chick Culling” by using in-ovo sexing. Through this Supply Chain Verification, Respeggt guarantees the product promise “Free of Chick Culling” to consumers. The Respeggt System Manual defines the binding rules for securing, controlling and implementing the Respeggt Supply Chain Verification.

All Respeggt partners must comply with the currently valid version of the Respeggt System Manual and implement its requirements in a responsible manner. These requirements are to be accepted by signing the Respeggt Declaration of Consent.

Through their business activities, all Respeggt partners contribute to ending chick culling.

All Respeggt partners are committed to fair and cooperative business conduct and strive to communicate openly and constructively.

Respeggt partners must comply with the applicable legal framework and, furthermore, must be constantly committed to maintaining and improving the welfare and protection of their animals.

Respeggt offers the service described in the following section to all partners in egg production and distribution.

## 2. The Respeggt Supply Chain Verification

To guarantee the added value of in-ovo sexing up until the distributed end product, whether fresh eggs or foodstuffs, Respeggt has developed a supply chain verification system that provides a guarantee for the added value of “Free of Chick Culling”. This allows transparent control and traceability along the supply chain from the process of in-ovo sexing up until the final product (i.e., Respeggt eggs or Respeggt foodstuffs). Plausibility checks, mystery shoppers at the point of sale, the regular control of all companies as well as clearly defined requirements and agreements ensure that **hatcheries of any size**. Figure 1 (see page 5) shows the Respeggt supply chain.

To make the promise “Free of Chick Culling” visible, Respeggt eggs may be marked with the Respeggt stamp and the heart-shaped Respeggt label may be printed on both the Respeggt egg boxes as well as the packaging of Respeggt foodstuffs.

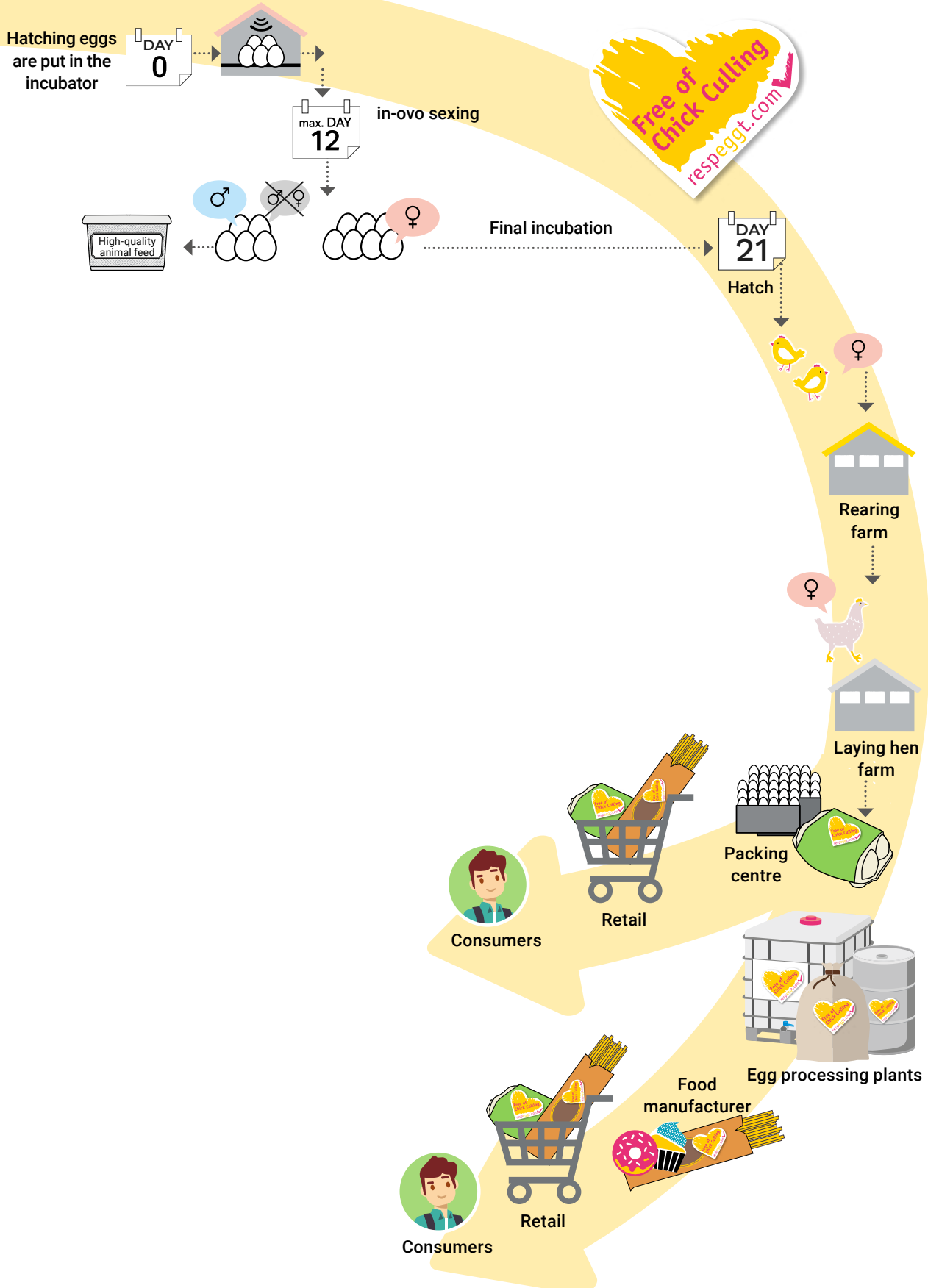
Respeggt Supply Chain Verification can be implemented for **all methods of rearing**.

Consumers can easily verify the added value of “Free of Chick Culling” by entering the producer codes on our website <https://www.respeggt.com/en/#code-check>. In addition, they can see which solution was applied to guarantee the added value of “Free of Chick Culling,” i.e., the message “Free of Chick Culling’ thanks to in-ovo sexing using the Respeggt/PLANTegg/In Ovo/Orbem/AAT process” is displayed.



Figure: Respeggt stamp and heart-shaped Respeggt label

## The Respeggt Supply Chain Verification



## 2.1 The benefits of Respeggt Supply Chain Verification

- The heart-shaped Respeggt label stands for the **only** verification procedure that guarantees that the process of in-ovo sexing is carried out before the onset of brain activity in the embryo.
- The label offers the maximum possible competitiveness for the import, export and marketing of “Free of Chick Culling” animals and/or consumer eggs.
- The producer code check on our website <https://www.respeggt.com/en/#code-check> provides total transparency and safety to all stakeholders.
- Packing centres and self-marketers can use printers to print the Respeggt stamp onto all consumer eggs.
- Processed foodstuffs may also carry the heart-shaped Respeggt label.

## 2.2 Control of in-ovo sexing before day 13 of the incubation process

A study on the pain perception of chick embryos conducted by the Technical University of Munich in 2023 showed that the brain activity of these embryos starts on day 13 of the incubation process. EEG measurements have shown that there is no emotional pain perception before day 13 of the incubation process. Based on this study, chick culling has been prohibited in Germany after day 12 of the incubation process. At Respeggt, we use this study as a basis for our work and offer **a guarantee for in-ovo sexing before the onset of brain activity** through the requirements for our Supply Chain Verification.

Hatching practice shows that the incubation of laying hen chicks may vary significantly depending on the respective location and country. There are major differences in the duration of the incubation process as well as the temperature and moisture content in the incubator. For this reason, it is difficult to align the definition of the day of the incubation process with the development of the embryo. Respeggt has therefore developed a standard to guarantee that in-ovo sexing takes place before the onset of brain activity. Thanks to this guarantee, all partners can be assured that they offer the added value of “Free of Chick Culling” in an ethical way and can establish in-ovo sexing as the best and safest solution for ending chick culling.

The audit on day 13 of the incubation processes is carried out as follows:

1. At the location where the in-ovo sexing is implemented, **the time of completion of the in-ovo sexing process** for an order must be registered immediately after its termination through a QR code. In-ovo sexing may thus only be carried out at the latest until **day 12 and 23 hours and 59 minutes of the incubation process, or 198 hours<sup>1</sup> before hatching<sup>2</sup>**.
2. Respeggt may carry out or commission a **spontaneous audit** of the location 198 hours before the hatching of an order in order to verify whether its requirements have been respected.

Respeggt recognises **any procedure** of in-ovo sexing that is implemented before the onset of brain activity and invoices its Supply Chain Verification to the hatcheries.

<sup>1</sup> This final time point for in-ovo sexing is outlined in Annex 3 of this System Manual.

<sup>2</sup> In this context, "hatching" refers to the moment of removing the chicks from the incubator.

## 2.3 Respeggt requirements

### 2.3.1

**No viable male or female chicks may be culled during hatching and/or the rearing process.**

### 2.3.2

**No male or female embryos may be culled from day 13 of the incubation process.**

### 2.3.3

**Respeggt auditors<sup>3</sup> may visit Respeggt partners at any time.** Audits ensure that the Respeggt requirements are being respected and are conducted on a random basis for all partners. Audits may also be performed digitally. The Respeggt partners commit to submitting all the necessary documentation required for this purpose during an audit.

### 2.3.4

In-ovo sexing must always be carried out at the latest until **day 12 and 23 hours and 59 minutes of the incubation process, or 198 hours before hatching.**

### 2.3.5

**The time of completion of the in-ovo sexing** for an order must always be transmitted to Respeggt. Hatcheries and other premises where in-ovo sexing is carried out receive a QR code for this purpose.

### 2.3.6

**At the latest three weeks before hatching,** a hatchery must order the Supply Chain Verification from Respeggt through the order tool. The hatchery must indicate any information that is required for the Supply Chain Verification. Such an order is only binding after it has been digitally confirmed by Respeggt.

### 2.3.7

Male chicks that erroneously hatch after the in-ovo sexing (error rate) must be fattened **for at least 10 weeks** and may be slaughtered once they have reached an **average final fattening weight of 1,300 g**. After the Respeggt cockerels have been slaughtered, the slaughter report must be sent by the hatchery of its own account to [data@respeggt.com](mailto:data@respeggt.com). The report must identify the respective flock with the order number.

### 2.3.8

The laying hen farm receives a Respeggt certificate after the animals have been housed as soon as all the required information has been transmitted. The heart-shaped Respeggt label may only be used after this certificate has been received.

<sup>3</sup>A Respeggt auditor may be a commissioned auditor from a third-party company or an employee of Respeggt.



### 2.3.9

The hatchery must always inform interested laying hen farms about the benefits of implementing the Respeggt Supply Chain Verification. Respeggt provides all the necessary information for this purpose to the hatchery.

### 2.3.10

The hatchery is obligated to send the delivery notes for the male and female Respeggt chicks immediately after hatching, but no later than the next working day, to [data@respeggt.com](mailto:data@respeggt.com).<sup>4</sup>

### 2.3.11

Hatcheries and rearing farms must always mark any invoices for an order with Supply Chain Verification as follows:

*“Respeggt animals with Supply Chain Verification. Marketing with the heart-shaped Respeggt label ‘Free of Chick Culling’ is permitted once the laying hen farm has received the Respeggt certificate from the animals’ 17th week of life onwards from Respeggt.” This also applies when female hatching eggs or chicks are delivered from one hatchery to another.*

### 2.3.12

Hatcheries that are Respeggt partners shall mark invoices for an order without Supply Chain Verification as follows:

*“Animals without Supply Chain Verification. Marketing with the heart-shaped Respeggt label ‘Free of Chick Culling’ not permitted.” This also applies when female hatching eggs or chicks are delivered from one hatchery to another.*

### 2.3.13

The laying hen farm is obligated to send the delivery notes for Respeggt pullets immediately after housing to [data@respeggt.com](mailto:data@respeggt.com).

### 2.3.14

Any hatchery, rearing farm, laying hen farm, packing centre, egg processing plant or foodstuff producer may become part of a Respeggt Supply Chain Verification. For this, Respeggt partners must sign a **Declaration of Consent before** to confirm that they will meet the requirements described in the following sections. These Declarations of Consent will be provided via a hardcopy form or by e-mail. If this consent is revoked by a Respeggt partner, the respective supply chain may no longer use the heart-shaped Respeggt label “Free of Chick Culling” for marketing purposes from the moment of revocation.

### 2.3.15

The Respeggt hatching eggs/chicks/laying hens/eggs/egg products must be **permanently separated** from conventional hatching eggs/chicks/laying hens/eggs/egg products. The Respeggt partners may agree to the use of labels, boxes and brood trays in different colours for this purpose. On its website, <https://www.respeggt.com/respeggt-partners/>, Respeggt provides a barn sign (that can be downloaded as a PDF file) for the correct marking of barns housing Respeggt flocks in rearing and laying hen farms. A laying

<sup>4</sup>If an order is KAT-certified, the KAT batch number must be specified.

hen farm may only rear conventional laying hens and Respeggt laying hens at the same time if it uses a **separate producer code** for the Respeggt flock. The producer code of a Respeggt flock may not be used for any conventional flock.

### 2.3.16

All Respeggt partners in a supply chain shall always mark any relevant documentation, e.g., labels, delivery notes, transport documents and invoices with either of the references **“Respeggt OKT”** („Ohne Kükentöten“) or **“Respeggt-FCC”** (**“Free of Chick Culling”**), or with the Respeggt document stamp. Additionally, a specification for **“Respeggt Free of Chick Culling”** must be created and used in the merchandise management system by Respeggt partners. The use of the reference **“OKT”** or **“Free of Chick Culling”** as a marking is insufficient.

### 2.3.17

\*The Respeggt partners will receive the **Respeggt material** from Respeggt by mail. This material comprises the Respeggt rules poster **“The 7 respeggt rules”** in the applicable version and the Respeggt document stamp. The main requirements for each Respeggt partner are listed on the Respeggt rules poster (<https://www.respeggt.com/respeggt-partners/>). The Respeggt partners must display the Respeggt rules poster permanently in a convenient place in their company where it is easy to see for all employees.

### 2.3.18

The Respeggt partners must properly inform and **train** concerned **employees** on the special character of Respeggt hatching eggs/chicks/laying hens/eggs/egg products and the special handling that is consequently required for these eggs/animals/products.

### 2.3.19

\*The **Respeggt flock passport** is a hardcopy document that allows the verification of the added value of **“Free of Chick Culling”** across the supply chain. It is issued by Respeggt per flock and must **accompany the Respeggt animals during their entire life cycle**. The employees of the rearing farms and laying hen farms must enter the delivery data of Respeggt flocks into the Respeggt flock passport and subsequently send a photograph of the updated passport via email to [data@respeggt.com](mailto:data@respeggt.com). Respeggt will forward the Respeggt flock passport with the Respeggt material to the rearing farm, and the employees of the rearing farm will forward the passport with the transport documents for the Respeggt pullets to the laying hen farm. The employees of the rearing farm and the laying hen farm will control the Respeggt flock passport and supplement it with additional relevant data. Upon the removal of the Respeggt laying hens, a photograph of the fully completed Respeggt flock passport must be sent via email to [data@respeggt.com](mailto:data@respeggt.com) by the laying hen farm.

**Important note:** If a Respeggt partner does not receive the flock passport together with the respective flock, it must request this flock passport directly from the supplier or by sending an email to [data@respeggt.com](mailto:data@respeggt.com).

### 2.3.20

In the few exceptional cases where there are insufficient female Respeggt chicks in a hatch, the hatchery may supplement this hatch. If a hatch is to be used to supplement an order with Respeggt Supply Chain Verification, the Respeggt flocks may be supplemented with **“Free of Chick Culling”** chicks.

\*This requirement does not apply to companies that are KAT-certified.

**Important note:** The supplemented “Free of Chick Culling” chicks may not exceed a maximum of 10% of the total targeted volume of the order. The evidence proving that these chicks are “Free of Chick Culling” chicks and delivery note of these supplemented “Free of Chick Culling” chicks must be sent by the hatchery of its own accord to [data@respeggt.com](mailto:data@respeggt.com).

### 2.3.21

The trading of Respeggt eggs is permitted between different packing centres and between packing centres and egg processing plants. During the **control of incoming goods**, the company that receives the Respeggt eggs must verify the authenticity of the traded Respeggt eggs by checking their producer codes on the website <https://www.respeggt.com/en/#code-check> or must verify the Respeggt certificate for the respective producer codes. Additionally, it must be simultaneously ensured by the company that the producer code on the delivery note is the same as the producer code on the eggs.

### 2.3.22

The use of the heart-shaped Respeggt label on packaging for end consumers, whether fresh eggs or foodstuffs, is only permitted following compliance with the requirements of the **Respeggt Style Guide** and after **approval** of the packaging to be used by Respeggt (see Annex 3.1). Respeggt must also be notified if there is a change in the packaging design. When using the heart-shaped Respeggt label on egg boxes, it is also possible to mark the Respeggt eggs individually by printing the Respeggt stamp on their head side. For this purpose, Respeggt may deliver printing equipment to the packing centres and self-marketers (see Annex 3.2).

### 2.3.23

**Only Respeggt eggs** may be used for the production of Respeggt egg products. To achieve a higher output, it is possible to mix different batches of Respeggt eggs. In these cases, the producer codes of the respective egg batches need to be recorded in the merchandise management system of the egg processing plant.

### 2.3.24

Foodstuffs may only display the heart-shaped Respeggt label if the eggs or the egg products that they contain are verifiably at least **95% Respeggt eggs** or have verifiably been made with at least 95% Respeggt eggs.

### 2.3.25

If end products, e.g., foodstuffs or fresh eggs, are distributed without the heart-shaped Respeggt label on packaging for end consumers, references to the added value of “Free of Chick Culling” on packaging or on any other advertising material **shall be without reference to Respeggt** and shall not in any way allow conclusions to be drawn about Respeggt.

### 2.3.26

In the event of a violation of the Respeggt requirements described in the Respeggt System Manual or the Declaration of Consent, Respeggt will decide on the extent and degree of the resulting **penalties** and/or possibly the withdrawal of the right of use of the heart-shaped Respeggt label as well as a corresponding notification to its partners in the food retailing industry.

## 2.4 Financial framework conditions

The Respeggt supply chain verification service is invoiced to the client (hatchery) and contractually agreed on an individual basis. If an order concerning supply chain verification is cancelled or forgotten, the following applies:

### 2.4.1

If an order with Respeggt supply chain verification is cancelled or somehow made impossible for Respeggt to perform by the client or any third parties within clients supply chain between 3 weeks before the planned hatch and the tenth (10) day of the incubation, client shall pay a **cancellation fee to Respeggt of EUR 500.**

### 2.4.2

If the aforementioned cancellation or impossibility to perform occurs after the tenth (10) of the incubation, client shall pay a **cancellation fee to Respeggt of EUR 1000.**

### 2.4.3

If Respeggt is notified of the cancellation or impossibility to perform up to four (4) weeks before the planned hatch, Respeggt shall not incur cancellation charges.

### 2.4.4

The cancellation fee represents a genuine pre-estimate of the Respeggt's losses and risks due to short notice cancellation or inability to perform the verification.

### 2.4.5

The cancellation fee shall be payable within 14 days of the cancellation date.

### 2.4.6

If the timely ordering of the Supply Chain Verification is delayed, it is possible to order in exceptional cases a subsequent verification using data@respeggt.com. A subsequent verification is carried out in cases where Respeggt receives the order after the date of the in-ovo sexing. The prerequisite for this is the submission of the evidence of the in-ovo sexing (including the analysis day) as well as the delivery note for the male and female chicks and, if applicable, for the pullets. The **subsequent verification** is invoiced to the ordering party at an amount of **EUR 0,15** per ordered laying hen.

### 2.4.7

In case Respeggt discovers non-verified eggs in an egg packaging with the Respeggt label on it, the entire relevant flock shall be post-verified, using the procedure described in 2.4.6, for price of **EUR 0,20** per female laying hen. Latter only applies if the flock comes from a supply chain without chick culling. If chick culling was involved, Respeggt will decide on the extent and degree of the resulting penalties.

### 2.4.8

There are **no additional costs** for the use of the Respeggt heart label.

## 3. Annexes

### 3.1

Respeggt Style Guide

### 3.2

Marking of Respeggt eggs with a stamp

### 3.3

Rules for in-ovo sexing before day 13 of the incubation process