

**National Organic Standards for Dairy Operations**  
**Prepared by**

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The following standards are the sections of the National Organic Standards that most apply to dairy operations. These standards are meant to be used by operations that are considering organic certification as a guide as to what organic certification entails. Any operation that is seriously considering organic certification should familiarize themselves with all of the organic standards. The complete standards may be downloaded from the National Organic Program's website. They are also included in our Program Manual which is available for download at [www.baystateorganic.org](http://www.baystateorganic.org).

**§ 205.202 Land requirements.**

Any field or farm parcel from which harvested crops are intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as "organic," must:

- (a) Have been managed in accordance with the provisions of §§ 205.203 through 205.206;
- (b) Have had no prohibited substances, as listed in § 205.105, applied to it for a period of 3 years immediately preceding harvest of the crop; and
- (c) Have distinct, defined boundaries and buffer zones such as runoff diversions to prevent the unintended application of a prohibited substance to the crop or contact with a prohibited substance applied to adjoining land that is not under organic management.

**§ 205.203 Soil fertility and crop nutrient management practice standard.**

(a) The producer must select and implement tillage and cultivation practices that maintain or improve the physical, chemical, and biological condition of soil and minimize soil erosion.

(b) The producer must manage crop nutrients and soil fertility through rotations, cover crops, and the application of plant and animal materials.

(c) The producer must manage plant and animal materials to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances. Animal and plant materials include:

- (1) Raw animal manure, which must be composted unless it is:
  - (i) Applied to land used for a crop not intended for human consumption;
  - (ii) Incorporated into the soil not less than 120 days prior to the harvest of a product whose edible portion has direct contact with the soil surface or soil particles; or
  - (iii) Incorporated into the soil not less than 90 days prior to the harvest of a product whose edible portion does not have direct contact with the soil surface or soil particles;
- (2) Composted plant and animal materials produced through a process that
  - (i) established an initial C:N ratio of between 25:1 and 40:1; and
  - (ii) maintained a temperature of between 131 F and 170 F for 3 days using an in-vessel or static aerated pile system; or

(iii) maintained a temperature of between 131F and 170F for 15 days using a windrow composting system, during which period, the materials must be turned a minimum of five times.

(3) Uncomposted plant materials.

(d) A producer may manage crop nutrients and soil fertility to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances by applying:

(1) A crop nutrient or soil amendment included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production;

(2) A mined substance of low solubility;

(3) A mined substance of high solubility, Provided, That, the substance is used in compliance with the conditions established on the National List of nonsynthetic materials prohibited for crop production;

(4) Ash obtained from the burning of a plant or animal material, except as prohibited in paragraph (e) of this section: Provided, That, the material burned has not been treated or combined with a prohibited substance or the ash is not included on the National List of nonsynthetic substances prohibited for use in organic crop production; and

(5) A plant or animal material that has been chemically altered by a manufacturing process: Provided, That, the material is included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production established in § 205.601.

(e) The producer must not use:

(1) Any fertilizer or composted plant and animal material that contains a synthetic substance not included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production;

(2) Sewage sludge (biosolids) as defined in 40 CFR Part 503; and

(3) Burning as a means of disposal for crop residues produced on the operation: Except, That, burning may be used to suppress the spread of disease or to stimulate seed germination.

### **§ 205.236 Origin of livestock.**

(a) Livestock products that are to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic must be from livestock under continuous organic management from the last third of gestation or hatching: Except, That, (1) Poultry. Poultry or edible poultry products must be from poultry that has been under continuous organic management beginning no later than the second day of life;

(2) Dairy animals. Milk or milk products must be from animals that have been under continuous organic management beginning no later than 1 year prior to the production of the milk or milk products that are to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic, Except, That, when an entire, distinct herd is converted to organic production, the producer may:

(i) For the first 9 months of the year, provide a minimum of 80-percent feed that is either organic or raised from land included in the organic system plan and managed in compliance with organic crop requirements; and

(ii) provide feed in compliance with § 205.237 for the final 3 months.

(iii) Once an entire, distinct herd has been converted to organic production, all dairy animals shall be under organic management from the last third of gestation.

(3) Breeder stock. Livestock used as breeder stock may be brought from a nonorganic operation onto an organic operation at any time: Provided, That, if such livestock are gestating and the offspring are to be raised as organic livestock, the breeder stock must be brought onto the facility no later than the last third of gestation.

(b) The following are prohibited:

(1) Livestock or edible livestock products that are removed from an organic operation and subsequently managed on a nonorganic operation may be not sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced.

(2) Breeder or dairy stock that has not been under continuous organic management since the last third of gestation may not be sold, labeled, or represented as organic slaughter stock.

(c) The producer of an organic livestock operation must maintain records sufficient to preserve the identity of all organically managed animals and edible and nonedible animal products produced on the operation.

#### **§ 205.237 Livestock feed.**

(a) The producer of an organic livestock operation must provide livestock with a total feed ration composed of agricultural products, including pasture and forage, that are organically produced and, if applicable, organically handled: Except, That, nonsynthetic substances and synthetic substances allowed under § 205.603 may be used as feed additives and supplements.

(b) The producer of an organic operation must not:

(1) Use animal drugs, including hormones, to promote growth;

(2) Provide feed supplements or additives in amounts above those needed for adequate nutrition and health maintenance for the species at its specific stage of life;

(3) Feed plastic pellets for roughage;

(4) Feed formulas containing urea or manure;

(5) Feed mammalian or poultry slaughter by-products to mammals or poultry; or

(6) Use feed, feed additives, and feed supplements in violation of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

#### **§ 205.238 Livestock health care practice standard.**

(a) The producer must establish and maintain preventive livestock health care practices, including:

(1) Selection of species and types of livestock with regard to suitability for site-specific conditions and resistance to prevalent diseases and parasites;

(2) Provision of a feed ration sufficient to meet nutritional requirements, including vitamins, minerals, protein and/or amino acids, fatty acids, energy sources, and fiber (ruminants);

(3) Establishment of appropriate housing, pasture conditions, and sanitation practices to minimize the occurrence and spread of diseases and parasites;

(4) Provision of conditions which allow for exercise, freedom of movement, and reduction of stress appropriate to the species;

(5) Performance of physical alterations as needed to promote the animal's welfare and in a manner that minimizes pain and stress; and

(6) Administration of vaccines and other veterinary biologics.

(b) When preventive practices and veterinary biologics are inadequate to prevent sickness, a producer may administer synthetic medications: Provided, That, such medications are allowed under § 205.603. Parasiticides allowed under § 205.603 may be used on

(1) Breeder stock, when used prior to the last third of gestation but not during lactation for progeny that are to be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced; and

(2) Dairy stock, when used a minimum of 90 days prior to the production of milk or milk products that are to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic.

(c) The producer of an organic livestock operation must not:

(1) Sell, label, or represent as organic any animal or edible product derived from any animal treated with antibiotics, any substance that contains a synthetic substance not allowed under § 205.603, or any substance that contains a nonsynthetic substance prohibited in § 205.604.

(2) Administer any animal drug, other than vaccinations, in the absence of illness;

(3) Administer hormones for growth promotion;

(4) Administer synthetic parasiticides on a routine basis;

(5) Administer synthetic parasiticides to slaughter stock;

(6) Administer animal drugs in violation of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act; or

(7) Withhold medical treatment from a sick animal in an effort to preserve its organic status. All appropriate medications must be used to restore an animal to health when methods acceptable to organic production fail. Livestock treated with a prohibited substance must be clearly identified and shall not be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced.

#### **§ 205.239 Livestock living conditions.**

(a) The producer of an organic livestock operation must establish and maintain livestock living conditions which accommodate the health and natural behavior of animals, including:

(1) Access to the outdoors, shade, shelter, exercise areas, fresh air, and direct sunlight suitable to the species, its stage of production, the climate, and the environment;

(2) Access to pasture for ruminants;

(3) Appropriate clean, dry bedding. If the bedding is typically consumed by the animal species, it must comply with the feed requirements of § 205.237;

(4) Shelter designed to allow for:

(i) Natural maintenance, comfort behaviors, and opportunity to exercise;

(ii) Temperature level, ventilation, and air circulation suitable to the species; and

(iii) Reduction of potential for livestock injury;

(b) The producer of an organic livestock operation may provide temporary confinement for an animal because of:

(1) Inclement weather;

(2) The animal's stage of production;

(3) Conditions under which the health, safety, or well being of the animal could be jeopardized; or

(4) Risk to soil or water quality.

(c) The producer of an organic livestock operation must manage manure in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, heavy metals, or pathogenic organisms and optimizes recycling of nutrients.

**§ 205.603 Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic livestock production.**

In accordance with restrictions specified in this section the following synthetic substances may be used in organic livestock production:

(a) As disinfectants, sanitizer, and medical treatments as applicable

(1) Alcohols

(i) Ethanol - disinfectant and sanitizer only, prohibited as a feed additive

(ii) Isopropanol - disinfectant only

(2) Aspirin - approved for health care use to reduce inflammation

(3) Biologics-Vaccines

(4) Chlorhexidine - Allowed for surgical procedures conducted by a veterinarian.

Allowed for use as a teat dip when alternative germicidal agents and/or physical barriers have lost their effectiveness

(5) Chlorine materials - disinfecting and sanitizing facilities and equipment. Residual chlorine levels in the water shall not exceed the maximum residual disinfectant limit under the Safe Drinking Water Act

(i) Calcium hypochlorite

(ii) Chlorine dioxide

(iii) Sodium hypochlorite

(6) Electrolytes - without antibiotics

(7) Glucose

(8) Glycerine - Allowed as a livestock teat dip, must be produced through the hydrolysis of fats or oils

(9) Hydrogen peroxide

(10) Iodine

(11) Magnesium sulfate

(12) Oxytocin - use in postparturition therapeutic applications

(13) Parasiticides

Ivermectin - prohibited in slaughter stock, allowed in emergency treatment for dairy and breeder stock when organic system plan-approved preventive management does not prevent infestation. Milk or milk products from a treated animal cannot be labeled as provided for in subpart D of this part for 90 days following treatment. In breeder stock, treatment cannot occur during the last third of gestation if the progeny will be sold as organic and must not be used during the lactation period of breeding stock.

(14) Phosphoric acid - allowed as an equipment cleaner, Provided, That, no direct contact with organically managed livestock or land occurs.

(b) As topical treatment, external parasiticide or local anesthetic as applicable.

(1) Copper sulfate

(2) Iodine

(3) Lidocaine - as a local anesthetic. Use requires a withdrawal period of 90 days after administering to livestock intended for slaughter and 7 days after administering to dairy animals

- (4) Lime, hydrated - as an external pest control, not permitted to cauterize physical alterations or deodorize animal wastes.
- (5) Mineral oil - for topical use and as a lubricant
- (6) Procaine - as a local anesthetic, use requires a withdrawal period of 90 days after administering to livestock intended for slaughter and 7 days after administering to dairy animals
- (c) As feed supplements
  - Milk replacers - without antibiotics, as emergency use only, no nonmilk products or products from BST treated animals
- (d) As feed additives
  - (1)DL Methionine, DL - Methionine - hydroxy analog, and DL-Methionine - hydroxy analog calcium - for use only in organic poultry production.
  - (2) Trace minerals, used for enrichment or fortification when FDA approved.
  - (3) Vitamins, used for enrichment or fortification when FDA approved
- (e) As synthetic inert ingredients as classified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), for use with nonsynthetic substances or a synthetic substances listed in this section and used as an active pesticide ingredient in accordance with any limitations on the use of such substances.
  - EPA List 4 - Inerts of Minimal Concern.
- (f)-(z) [Reserved]

**§ 205.604 Nonsynthetic substances prohibited for use in organic livestock production.**

The following nonsynthetic substances may not be used in organic livestock production:

- (a) Strychnine
- (b)-(z) [Reserved]