

National Organic Program Cloning and Organic Livestock Production

On Jan. 15, 2008, FDA released final versions of three documents on animal cloning: A Risk Assessment, a Risk Management Plan, and Guidance for Industry. These documents are the final versions of drafts released for public comment in December 2006. These documents represent FDA's conclusions regarding the health of animals involved in the cloning process, and the safety of food from four species of livestock that have been cloned, as well as food from the offspring of clones from any species traditionally consumed as food.

FDA's Final Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan on Animal Clones and their Progeny concludes that according to all available science, food from clones of cattle, swine, and goats, and the offspring of clones from any species traditionally consumed as food, are as safe to eat as food from conventionally bred animals. FDA concludes that it has insufficient information to reach a conclusion on the safety of food from clones of other animal species, such as sheep.

Last year, when FDA announced its approval of the draft risk assessment of cloning as a production technique in agriculture, many questions were raised about cloning and animals produced using cloning technology (called clones) respecting organic production and their allowance under the National Organic Program (NOP) regulations. The following questions and answers explain the position of the NOP regarding cloning and animals produced using cloning technology for organic livestock production.

Q: When consumers hear that USDA will *not* certify products from cloned animals or their offspring as ORGANIC, doesn't that indeed send the signal that the products are not healthy?

A. No, it simply reflects the fact that organics is a marketing program. As such, by consensus of the market participants, many production methods and materials are excluded from use.

Q: Is cloning as a livestock production practice allowed under the USDA National Organic Program regulations?

A. No. Cloning as a production method is incompatible with the Organic Foods Production Act and is prohibited under the NOP regulations.

Q: Can animals produced using cloning technology, or clones, be considered organic under the National Organic Program regulations?

A. No. Animals produced using cloning technologies are incompatible with Organic Foods Production Act and cannot be considered organic under the National Organic Program regulations.

Q: What about the progeny of animals produced using cloning technology or clones – can they be organic under the NOP regulations in organic livestock production?

A. Based on a recommendation of the National Organic Standards Board, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service is preparing the necessary public rulemaking to address the organic status of the progeny of animal clones.