

**National Organic Standards Board
Livestock Committee
2011 Proposal Combined with 2009 Recommendation
Animal Welfare**

March 10, 2011

Please note that text enclosed by brackets (“[]”) and in teal text indicates animal welfare language previously recommended by the NOSB in 2009. This language is being included in this document to illustrate the combined proposed language and to provide clarity to the organic community. However, the bracketed text is not being reconsidered by the NOSB.

The language shown in the following pages is recommended for rulemaking.

§ 205.2 Terms defined.

[Stock density. The number of animals on a given unit of land at any one time. This is traditionally a short-term measurement. This is very different from stocking rate which is a long term measurement of the whole pasture.]

Caponization. Castration of chickens, turkeys, pheasants, etc.

De-snooding. The removal of the turkey snood.

Toe clipping. The removal of the two inside toes.

Dubbing. The removal of combs and wattles.

Beak tipping. The removal of the curved tip of the beak.

Cattle wattles. Created for ownership identification, wattles are made by surgically separating both layers of skin from the connective tissue for 2 to 4 inches on the dewlap, neck or shoulder.

Access to the outdoors. See Outdoor access.

Outdoor access. Animals have contact with soil and the sky overhead and without a solid roof or walls. Bedding and fencing that does not block sunlight may be used as necessary.

Soil. The outermost layer of the earth comprised of minerals, water, air, and organic matter, an abundance of animal life, fungi, and bacteria in which plants grow roots.

Willful acts of abuse. Includes but not limited to dragging non-ambulatory, conscious animals; intentionally applying prods to sensitive animal parts, e.g., anus, ears, eyes, or reproductive parts; malicious driving of livestock on top of one another with or without direct contact with motorized equipment; loading of non-ambulatory animals for transport is

excluded; beating or hitting live animals; live animals frozen to trailer floors or sides; lifting an animal by the wool or throwing the animal; and slamming gates on animals.

Livestock slip. A knee or hock touching the floor.

Livestock fall. The body touching the floor.

§ 205.238 Livestock health care practice standard.

(a) The producer must establish, maintain and describe in the organic system plan practices or procedures designed to improve health care of the livestock operation, 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), resulting in appropriate body condition;
- (3) Establishment of appropriate housing, pasture conditions, and sanitation practices to minimize indoor crowding and 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) All surgical procedures shall be undertaken in a manner that employs best management practices in order to minimize pain, stress and suffering, with the use of anesthetics, analgesics and sedatives;]
- (6) Physical alterations, absolutely necessary to improve the health, welfare or hygiene of animals; identify animals; or provide increased safety to farm personnel. Physical alterations must be performed at the youngest possible age by competent persons in a manner that minimizes pain and stress and shall be recorded in individual (or flock) animal health records with dates, reason needed, and methods used. The following practices are prohibited:
 - (i) Beak removal, castration, dubbing and detoeing of birds.
 - (ii) Tail docking of pigs and cattle, except when necessary for treatment of injury.
 - (iii) Wattling cattle .
 - (iv) Face branding cattle.
 - (v) Tail docking of sheep shorter than the caudal fold.
 - (vi) Mulesing of sheep.

[(7)Administration of vaccines and other veterinary biologics.

- (8) Monitoring of lameness and keeping records of the percent of the herd or flock suffering from lameness and the causes.
- (b) When preventive practices and veterinary biologics are inadequate to prevent sickness, the provision of prompt treatment for animals with detectable disease, lesions, lameness, injury and other physical ailments shall be instituted.
- (1) Phytotherapeutic (i.e. herbal or botanical substances), homeopathic or similar products are encouraged to be used in preference to chemical allopathic veterinary drugs, provided that their therapeutic effect, for the condition which the treatment is intended, is improving.
 - (2) If the use of phytotherapeutic, homeopathic or similar products are not promptly alleviating illness or injury, synthetic medications may be administered: Provided, That, such medications are allowed under §205.603.
 - (3) Organic livestock operations shall have a comprehensive plan to minimize internal parasite problems in livestock. The plan will include preventive measures such as pasture management, fecal monitoring, and emergency measures in the event of a parasite outbreak. Parasite control plans shall be approved by the certification body. Parasiticides allowed under §205.603 may be used on:
 - (i) 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
 - (ii) 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. Milk from animals undergoing treatment with prohibited substances cannot be sold as organic or fed to organic livestock. Milk from animals undergoing treatment with substances having withholding time cannot be sold as organic or fed to organic livestock during the withholding time.
 - (2) Administer any animal drug in the absence of illness; with the exception of vaccinations and other veterinary biologics, and anesthetics, analgesics and sedatives used in surgical procedures;
 - (3) Administer hormones to for growth promotion or production;
 - (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.
 - (8) Withhold individual treatment designed to minimize pain and suffering for injured, diseased or sick animals, which may include forms of euthanasia as recommended by the American Veterinary Medical Association.
 - (9) Neglect to identify and record treatment of sick and injured animals in animal health records.
 - (10) Practice forced molting or withdrawal of feed to induce molting.
- (d) Organic livestock producers must provide their certifier with the following lists each year:
- (1) All animals on the operation during the current year, including a separate list of all purchased animals
 - (2) All animals that have left the operation during the past year, and the reason for their departure
 - (3) All animals that have had a health issue, including hoof care, and the treatment(s) the animal received.]

§ 205.239 Livestock living conditions. (Mammal section)

- (a) The producer of an organic livestock operation must establish and maintain year-round livestock living conditions which accommodate the health and natural behavior of animals, including:
- (1) Year-round access for all animals to the outdoors, shade, shelter, exercise areas, fresh air, clean water for drinking, and direct sunlight, suitable to the species, its stage of life, the climate, and the environment: Except, that, animals may be temporarily denied access to the outdoors in accordance with §§ 205.239(b) and (c). If animals are temporarily denied access to the outdoors, the indoor space provided shall meet the minimum indoor space requirements of the chart at the end of this document. Space is calculated by floor space on the inside of the animal's living space. Yards, feeding pads, and feedlots may be used to provide ruminants with access to the outdoors during the non-grazing season and supplemental feeding during the grazing season, but shall be large enough to allow all ruminant livestock occupying these spaces to feed simultaneously without crowding and without

competition for food. Continuous total confinement of any animal indoors, in yards, on feeding pads, and feedlots is prohibited. If yards, feeding pads, and feedlots are used, the outdoor space provided shall meet the minimum outdoor space requirements of the chart at the end of this section. All areas contributing to outdoor access must allow contact with the soil during the grazing season.

- (2) For all ruminants, management on pasture and daily grazing throughout the grazing season(s) to meet the requirements of § 205.237, except as provided for in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section.
- (3) Appropriate clean, dry bedding, sufficient to keep animals reasonably clean, comfortable and free from lesions. When roughages are used as bedding, they shall have been organically produced in accordance with this part by an operation certified under this part, except as provided in § 205.236(a)(2)(i), and, if applicable, organically handled by certified organic operations.

[(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.
- (iv) At least one stall per animal in the facility at any given time
- (v) The confinement of animals in cages is not permitted under any circumstance.

(5) Housing, pens, runs, equipment and utensils shall be properly cleaned and disinfected as needed with approved materials in accordance with § 205.603 and § 205.604 to prevent cross infection and build-up of disease-carrying organisms.]

(6) Calves may be housed in individual pens under the following conditions:

- (i) Until weaning, providing that they have enough room to turn around, lie down, stretch out when lying down, get up, rest and groom themselves; individual calf pens shall be designed and located so that each calf can see, smell and hear other calves present on the farm.
- (ii) Calves shall be group-housed after weaning during the non-grazing season, and on pasture after six months of age during the grazing season.
- (iii) Calves over six months of age shall have access to the outdoors at all times, except as allowed under § 205.239(c).

[(7) Swine must be housed in groups, except:

- (i) Sows may be housed individually at farrowing and during the suckling period;
- (ii) Boars.

(8) Piglets shall not be kept on flat decks or in piglet cages.

- (b) The producer of an organic livestock operation may provide temporary confinement for an animal for the following reasons. Temporary confinement may last no longer than necessary to safely perform the procedure or address the condition:
- (1) Milking, shearing, breeding, hoof trimming, birthing, health care procedures and recuperation from illness;
 - (2) Dangerous weather;
 - (3) Conditions under which the health, safety, or wellbeing of the animal could be jeopardized;
 - (4) Risk to soil, water, or plants.
 - (5) During the non-grazing season or during times of temporary confinement:
 - (i), the stocking rates listed in the chart in this document shall be provided.

§ 205.239 Livestock living conditions. (Avian section)

- (c) The operator of an organic poultry operation shall establish and maintain poultry living conditions that accommodate health and natural behavior:
- (1) Access to:
 - [(i) Materials for dust bathing
 - (ii) Adequate floor space areas, and outdoor run areas to escape from predators and aggressive behavior
 - (iii) Perches must be provided for all laying hens at not less than 6" per hen. Perch area can include the alighting rail immediately in front of nest boxes. Multi-tier operations are required to provide perch space for 55% of birds at one time.]
 - (iv) the outdoors, at the rate of 2 square feet per bird. Enclosed spaces that have solid roofs overhead, such as those typically described as "porches", do not meet the definition of outdoor access and cannot be included in the calculation of outdoor access. Pullets will be provided outdoor access at 12 weeks. Broilers will be provided outside access from 4 weeks of age providing they are fully feathered and weather permits. Once layers are accustomed to going outdoors, a brief confinement period to allow for nest box training is permitted. Direct access to outdoor areas will be provided when temperatures are above 50°F.
 - [(2) Access to the outdoors, shade, shelter, exercise areas, fresh air and direct sunlight suitable to the age of the poultry, climate and the environment.
 - (3) Ventilation must be adequate to prevent buildup of ammonia. Ammonia levels of 10 ppm are considered acceptable while 25 ppm is considered to be high.

- (4) For layers and mature birds, artificial light may be used to prolong the day length up to 16 hours. Light intensity should be lowered gradually to encourage hens to move to perches or settle for the night. Natural light should be sufficient indoors on sunny days so that inspector can read/write when lights are turned off.
- (5) Birds may not be confined to the house due to a “threat” of an outbreak of disease. There must be a documented occurrence of an outbreak in the region or relevant migratory pathway, or state or federal advisory in order to confine birds.
- (6) Producers must maintain records documenting periods of confinement. Producers must identify in the OSP how they plan to protect birds from disease and predators.
- (7) For pasture based systems birds must be provided with access to a variety of vegetation. Management of pasture areas must be in compliance with § 205.203 – § 205.206. Birds must be protected from natural predators.

(d) Suitable Flooring

- (1) Mesh or slatted flooring under drinking areas to provide drainage;
 - (2) Houses with slatted floors must have 30% minimum of solid floor area available with sufficient litter available for dust baths;
 - (3) Litter must be provided and maintained in a dry manner.
- (e) Birds must have sufficient exit areas, appropriately distributed around the building, to ensure that all birds have ready access to the outdoors. Exit areas must allow the passage of more than one bird at a time.
- (f) Complete clean out of a poultry house is required if there have been adverse health issues with the previous flock; otherwise litter should be refurbished between flocks to maintain a sanitary environment.]
- (g) Space Allowance. Poultry housing must be sufficiently spacious to allow all birds to move freely, stretch their wings and engage in natural behaviors. Perching areas and nest boxes may not be used in the calculation of floor space. The following are required:
- (1) Birds in mobile poultry units are subject to the same minimum space requirement as housed birds.
 - (2) Minimum total door opening length is 5 feet per 1,000 laying hens. Minimum door opening height is fourteen inches.

[(h) Health Care – specific to avian species

- (1) All requirements of the National Organic Program §205.238 Livestock health care practices must be met.

(2) Withdrawal of feed to induce molting is prohibited.

(i) Euthanasia

(1) Producers must have plan for prompt humane euthanasia for sick or injured birds.

(2) The following methods of euthanasia are permitted¹:

- (i) Hand held electrical or percussive stunning followed by neck cutting;
- (ii) Cervical dislocation must involve stretching the neck to sever the spinal cord and cause extensive damage to the major blood vessels.
- (iii) Carbon dioxide or a mixture of nitrogen and argon gases, delivered in an appropriate container at acceptable concentrations.
- (iv) Decapitation

(j) The following methods of euthanasia are not permitted²:

- (1) Suffocation
- (2) Blow to the head by blunt instrument
- (3) Equipment that crushes the neck including killing pliers or burdizzo clamps³

¹ Based on American Veterinary Medical Association guidelines.

² Animal Welfare Approved, 3.2

³ Humane Farm Animal, H. 13.c

(k) Carcass Disposal

Carcass disposal, whether from daily mortality or emergency euthanasia, must be promptly addressed, both to reduce the incidence of disease transmission, and to avoid degradation of soil and water. Following a euthanasia procedure, birds must be carefully examined to ensure that they are dead. Producers must maintain carcass disposal records to include flock identification, type of euthanasia, where disposed of. Carcass disposal can be either on or off the farm, but must be in accordance with state and local laws. If disposed of on farm, process must not degrade soil and water quality. On farm composting of carcasses is permitted. Incineration of carcasses is permitted.

(l) 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.]

Mammalian Stocking Rate Charts

Livestock	Indoor Bedded Space	Outdoor Runs and Pens
Bison weight (pounds)	Square feet / animal	Square feet /animal
Up to 220	NA	70.0
220-440	NA	120.0
440-770	NA	190.0
Over 770	NA	400 .0
Beef cattle weight (pounds)		
Up to 220	15.0	10.0
220-440	25.0	20.0
440-770	40.0	30.0
770-1100	50.0	40.0
over 1100	10.0 per 220 pounds	8.0 per 220 pounds
Dairy cattle weight (pounds)		
Up to 220	15.0	10.0
220-440	25.0	20.0
440-770	40.0	30.0
770-1100	50.0	40.0
over 1100	10.0 per 220 pounds	8.0 per 220 pounds

Mammalian Stocking Rate Charts (continued)

Livestock	Indoor Bedded Space	Outdoor Runs and Pens
Sheep and goats (pounds)	Square feet / animal	Square feet /animal
Adults up to 225	20.0	30.0
Adults over 225	25.0	40.0
Nursing lamb or kid	4.0	20.0
Weaned kid or lamb	10.0	30.0
Swine		
Sow and piglets	48.0	40.0
Sows	30.0	30.0
Boars	64.0	85.0
Growing pigs (pounds)		
Up to 24	1.0	0.5
24—47	2.0	1.0
47—109	3.0	1.5
109—157	4.0	2.0
157—225	5.0	2.5
225—255	6.0	3.0
Rabbits		
Adult rabbits	3.0	20.0
Pregnant does	5.0	20.0
Doe and litter	8.0	20.0
Young rabbits 5-12 weeks	1.0	N/A

Avian Stocking Rate Charts

Livestock	Indoor Bedded Space	Outdoor Runs and Pens
Chickens	Square feet / animal	Square feet /animal
Laying hens and breeders	<i>With perch space for 20% of birds: 1.5</i> <i>With 6 inches perch space per bird: 1.2</i>	2.0
Pullets	<i>With 3 inches perch space per bird: 1.0</i>	1.0
Broilers	1.0	1.0
Other poultry		
Turkeys and Geese—breeding, laying, or meat birds (pounds)	1.0 per 7.5 lbs.	1.0 per 7.5 lbs.
Ducks-meat	1.0	3.0
Ducks-laying hen	2.5	6.0
Ducks—breeder	1.5	6.0
Mobile poultry units	Square feet per bird in mobile unit	Maximum number of birds per acre
Laying hens and breeders	1.5	800
Broilers	1.0	1,000
Turkeys	1.0 per 7.5 pounds	540
Geese	1.0 per 7.5 pounds	540
Reserved for additional species		