

**FORMAL RECOMMENDATION BY THE
NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD (NOSB)
TO THE NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM (NOP)**

Date: March 18, 2005

Subject: NOSB Livestock Committee Recommendation for Guidance – Pasture Requirements for the National Organic Program

Chair: Jim Riddle
(sign)

Recommendation

The NOSB hereby recommends to the NOP the following:

Rulemaking Action: _____
Guidance Statement: X
Other: _____

Statement of the Recommendation (including Recount of Vote):

NOSB voted to post the Livestock Committee Recommendation for Guidance on NOP Pasture Requirements for public comment. 11 yes, 3 no, 0 abstain.

NOSB chair recommends a 60-day comment period to commence as soon as possible.

Rationale Supporting Recommendation (including consistency with OFPA and NOP):

Rationale stated in text below.

Response by the NOP:

NOSB ITEM FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) is seeking public comment on recommendations regarding its “Livestock Committee Recommendation for Guidance Pasture Requirements” until May 20, 2005. With respect to receipt of comments by the NOSB during the comment period, the following provisions have been established to ensure that your comment has the greatest probability of being received and reviewed by the Board:

- Mail: Persons may submit comments on listed Board recommendations by mail to: The National Organic Standards Board; c/o Arthur Neal; Room 4008 - South Building; 1400 and Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20250-0001.
- E-mail: Comments may be sent via internet to NOSB.Livestock@usda.gov.
- Fax: Comments may be submitted by fax to (202) 205-7808.

Clearly indicate if you are for or against the Board recommendation or some part of it and why. Include recommended wording changes as appropriate. Include a copy of articles or other references that support your comments. Only relevant material should be submitted.

NOSB Livestock Committee Recommendation for Guidance Pasture Requirements for the National Organic Program March 2, 2005

Introduction

The USDA National Organic Program (NOP) has requested NOSB provide guidance concerning the pasture requirements of the National Organic Program that the NOP can review and distribute to accredited certifying agents and post on the NOP website.

The NOSB is seeking comments on organic system plan requirements; temporary confinement; and what constitutes “appropriate pasture conditions.” In particular, the NOSB seeks input on specific dry matter intake from pasture language; reference to regional NRCS prescribed grazing standards; and whether or not any of the text below should be recommended to the NOP for rule change.

Guidance for interpretation of §205.239(a)(2)

A. Organic System Plan

Ruminant livestock shall graze pasture during the months of the year when pasture can provide edible forage. *The Organic System Plan shall have the goal of providing grazed feed greater than 30% dry matter intake on a daily basis during the growing season but not less than 120 days.* The Organic System Plan shall include a timeline showing how the producer *will satisfy the goal to maximize* the pasture component of total feed used in the farm system. For livestock operations with ruminant animals, the operation’s Organic System Plan shall describe: 1) the amount of pasture provided per animal; 2) the average amount of time that animals are grazed on a daily basis; 3) the portion of the total feed requirement that will be provided from pasture; 4) circumstances under which animals will be temporarily confined; and 5) the records that are maintained to demonstrate compliance with pasture requirements.

B. Temporary Confinement

Temporary confinement means the period of time when ruminant livestock are denied pasture. The length of temporary confinement will vary according to the conditions on which it is based (such as the duration of inclement weather) and instances of temporary confinement shall be the minimum time necessary. In no case shall temporary confinement be allowed as a continuous production system. All instances of temporary confinement shall be documented in the Organic System Plan and in records maintained by the operation.

Temporary confinement is allowed only in the following situations:

- 1) During periods of inclement weather such as severe weather occurring over a period of a few days during the grazing season;
 - 2) Conditions under which the health, safety, or well being of an individual animal could be jeopardized, including to restore the health of an individual animal or to prevent the spread of disease from an infected animal to other animals;
 - 3) To protect soil or water quality
- C) Appropriate Pasture Conditions

Appropriate pasture conditions shall be determined in accordance with the regional Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Practice Standards for Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) for the number of animals in the Organic Systems Plan.

Board Vote to post for public comment:

11 – yes, 3 – no, 0 - abstain