

Organic Dairy Certification Requirements Overview

Marin Organic Certified Agriculture

Marin County Department of Agriculture

Program Coordinator – Anita Sauber

Certifying Agent – Amanda Stephens

Certifying Agent – Jeff Stiles

National Organics Program (NOP)

- Became “Law of the Land” in October, 2002
- Governs all organic certifiers
- Founded to establish uniformity and clarity in the organic industry
- Set guidelines for what farming and processing practices are considered “organic”
- Includes National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances



The Intent of the Organic Agriculture

To enhance, restore, and promote natural systems.

- Minimal use of off farm inputs, and maximum use of on farm management practices.
- Promoting on farm biodiversity.
- Enhancing biological cycles and soil biology activity.
- Cultural – Local Product, Family, Historical

Organic System Plan (OSP)

- Describes practices/procedures for inputs used monitoring practices, record keeping, management to prevent commingling of organic/non organic products.
- Record keeping must provide transparency for all activities, i.e. seeds purchased, harvesting records, storage location, equipment cleaning, manure applications, inputs, maps.

Record Keeping

Documentation of production: maps, harvesting, of silage/hay, storage, inputs, including manure application, seeds used, equipment used, etc. to fully disclose all activities and transactions on farm.

Allowed and Prohibited Substances

Refer to 205.600 - The National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances.

OMRI is a Helpful Reference, if Unsure Consult your Certifier.

Land Requirements

- No prohibited substances for 3 years prior to harvest. Prior land use info.
- Distinct buffer zones if prohibited substance drift a problem or potential problem.
- Once Certified, no treated fence post for new or replacement use.

Soil Fertility and Biodiversity Management

- Implementation of tillage and cultivation practices that maintain or improve soil conditions and minimize erosion.
- Manure must be managed to not contaminate creeks/waterways.
- Promote biodiversity- multi species grazing, forage diversity in pasture, protecting creeks w/fencing, sensitive habitat protection.

Seeds and Pest Management

Use organic seeds unless equivalent variety unavailable:

- Non organic untreated seeds may be used.
- Keep records of attempts to find organic seeds.
- Treated seeds are prohibited.
- Use management practices to prevent crop pest, weeds, and diseases.

How can your dairy comply with the NOP?

- There are five sections that apply specifically to the dairy: Sections 205.236 through 205.239, & 205.603
- NOP Websites:
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>



How can your dairy comply with the NOP?

205.236 – Origin of Livestock.

205.237 – Livestock Feed.

205.238 – Livestock health care practice standards.

205.239 – Livestock living conditions.

205.603 – Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic livestock production.

- NOP Websites: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>

205.236 Origin of Livestock

- **The law states:** Producers must maintain records of all organically managed animals and edible and non-edible animal products produced by the operation.
- **Examples:** OSP, Forms, Computer tracking systems, Receipts, Invoices, Production, Health, and Breeding record for each animal.

205.236 Origin of Livestock

- **The law states:** Dairy Animals must be under Organic Management for at least One Year Before their Milk can be sold as Organic.
- Also, that once a herd is converted to organic, all animals shall be under organic management from the last third of gestation.



205.236 Origin of Livestock

Organic Dairy Livestock – Managed Organically from Last Third of Gestation (Last Trimester). Before birth – Death. Animal and all products from animal Organic.

Organic Milk – From an Animal Managed Organically 12 months prior to Milk Production. Animal is not organic and can not be sold for Organic Slaughter products.

205.236 Origin of Livestock

Transition:

- Continuous Organic Management for 12 months prior to Organic Milk Production.
- All Organic Pasture, Feed, and Health Practices

Prohibited: Organic Livestock removed from an operation and managed non-organically may not be represented or sold as organic.

205.237 Livestock Feed

- **The law states:** The producer of an organic livestock operation must provide a total feed ration composed of agricultural products, including pasture and forage, that are organically produced and handled.
- **Additives & Supplements:** Substances allowed under 205.603, research and document. OMRI, WSDA Organic Food Program. Not sure? Talk with your certifier.

205.238 Livestock health care practice standard

- **The law states:** The producer must establish and maintain preventative livestock health care practices, including:
 - Selection of suitable species for site and type of production.
 - Optimum nutrition.
 - Proper housing, pasture conditions, and sanitation.
 - Exercise, Freedom of Movement, & Reduction of Stress.
 - Vaccines and other veterinary biologics.

205.238 Livestock health care practice standard

- **The law states:** The producer must not withhold medical treatment in order to preserve organic status.
- **The law states:** When preventative practices & veterinary biologics are inadequate, producers may administer synthetic medication allowed under 205.603.

205.239 Livestock Living Conditions

- **The law states:** The producer must establish and maintain livestock living conditions which accommodate health and natural behavior of animals.
 - Access to Outdoors, Shade, Shelter, Fresh Air, and Direct Sunlight.
 - Shelter that provides opportunity to Exercise, Proper Temp., Ventilation, and Reduction of Potential for Livestock Injury.

205.239 Livestock Living Conditions

- **The law states:**

The producer must provide access to pasture for ruminants.

- Temporary confinement for Inclement Weather, Animals Stage of Production, Animal Welfare, and Protection of Soil & Water Quality.



205.239 Livestock Living Conditions

- **The law states:** The producer must provide clean, dry bedding.
- If there is chance the bedding material may be consumed by an animal, the bedding must comply with feed requirements of 205.237.



205.239 Livestock Living Conditions

- **The law states:** Producer must manage manure in a manner that does not contribute to the 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.

Lists in General Terms Types of:

- Disinfectants, Sanitizers, & Medical Treatment as Applicable.
- Topical Treatments, External Parasiticide, or Local Anesthetic as Applicable.
- Feed Supplements & Feed Additives.

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Helpful websites:

NOP – www.ams.usda.gov/nop

OMRI – www.omir.org

WSDA – <http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/>

CDFA – www.cdfa.ca.gov