



April 4, 2018

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National Organic Standards Board
USDA-AMS-NOP
1400 Independence Ave., SW.,
Room 2642-S., Mail Stop 0268
Washington, DC 20250-0268

Submitted via www.regulations.gov

RE: Document #AMS-NOP-17-0057

NOSB Livestock Subcommittee Proposal: Clarifying “emergency” for use of synthetic parasiticides in organic livestock production

Dear NOSB Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Proposal: Clarifying “emergency” for use of synthetic parasiticides in organic livestock production. MOSA certifies approximately 2000 organic operations throughout the United States, including approximately 900 livestock operations. Parasite prevention and treatment plans are in place on all operations we certify for livestock. While the use of parasiticides is not prevalent, in the event of parasite outbreaks, parasiticides are a necessary treatment option for farmers. Given the NOP’s recently proposed National List changes, additional clarity with regard to parasiticide use is certain to be necessary.

We appreciate the subcommittee’s new, improved proposed language in this revised proposal. At MOSA, our biggest concern with regulatory language is that it is clear and enforceable. This new language satisfies that concern. We can support the proposed additions to the rule. Our comments below suggest additional minor revisions for simplification.

The NOSB subcommittee suggests addition of the following language to 205.238(b), with the assumption that the changes in the recent NOP proposed rule become effective.

*(4) Organic breeding, dairy and fiber bearing animals when meeting the following conditions:
(i) Organic livestock has been managed according to 238(b) and 238(c)(2), 238(c)(4), and 603(a)(23) and only in the event of an emergency where management strategies have been proven insufficient to prevent or control parasites within the accepted threshold for specific parasites, age and species of the animal. These management strategies include but are not limited to, forage height and plant diversity to maintain parasite levels below treatment thresholds and monitoring with documentation of parasites through use of methods such as fecal monitoring and FAMACHA (FAffa Malan Chart—used for tracking anemia in goats and sheep).*

We can get in line with the addition to section 205.238(b) as a new number (4), however language included about the regulations (205.238(b), .238(c)(2) and .238(c)(4)) that organic livestock must be managed “according to” is unnecessary. What is the NOSB hoping to achieve with this level of specificity? Perhaps we’re missing the intent. Since this new addition is under .238(b), it’s already clear that livestock have to meet the rule (.238(b)). Additionally, it’s prohibited for any farmer to administer any medication in the absence of illness (.238(c)(2)) and also for any farmer to routinely use parasiticides(.238(c)(4), so re-stating the obvious with regard to parasiticide use is unnecessary. All livestock have to comply with the entire .238 regulation. Is it necessary to reiterate other .238 requirements such as selection of species resistant to parasites and sanitation to minimize the spread of disease and parasites? Livestock must be managed in compliance with all applicable rules for us to consider the use of parasiticides to be in compliance with the standards.

We encourage further simplification by recommending the following minor revision:

(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:

(4) Organic breeding, dairy and fiber bearing animals ~~when meeting the following conditions:~~
(i) Organic livestock has been managed according to 238(b) and 238(c)(2), 238(c)(4), and 603(a)(23) and only in the event of an emergency where management strategies have been proven insufficient to prevent or control parasites within the accepted threshold for specific parasites, age and species of the animal. These management strategies include but are not limited to, forage height and plant diversity to maintain parasite levels below treatment thresholds and monitoring with documentation of parasites through use of methods such as fecal monitoring and FAMACHA (FAffa Malan Chart—used for tracking anemia in goats and sheep).

(ii) The organic system plan is changed to prevent a similar livestock emergency in individual animals or the whole herd/flock in future years.

We can work with the requirement to update the OSP to ensure better prevention of similar circumstances in the future, but we don’t think we could affirm the same situation could *never* recur on the same farm. The farmer should adapt his or her plan to prevent recurrence, but it may happen again nonetheless, even in the best of circumstances. We keep an eye toward continuous improvement, but not allowing for negligence or abuse.

We can also support the addition of the proposed definition for “emergency (treatment for parasite control in breeding, dairy and fiber bearing animals).” We agree with the subcommittee’s statement that the use of synthetic parasiticides is a “last resort after other activities have been exhausted”.

Emergency (treatment for parasite control in breeding, dairy and fiber bearing animals). An urgent, nonroutine situation in which the organic system plan’s preventive measures and veterinary biologics are proven, by laboratory analysis or visual inspection, to be inadequate to prevent life-threatening illness or to alleviate pain and suffering.

In closing, we support the goal of the NOSB Livestock Subcommittee to better define the circumstances when parasiticides may be approved for use on organic livestock operations and can get behind these proposed additions to the standards. Additional details can be offered as guidance if needed.

Thank you for your work on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,

The MOSA Certification Team