



ORGANIC FACT SHEET

AN INTRODUCTION TO ORGANIC LIVESTOCK CERTIFICATION

QUICK FACTS

- Outdoor access is required for organic animals. Pasture is required for ruminants.
- An operation may transition dairy animals one time to organic production.
- Feed must consist of organic, natural and approved synthetic ingredients.
- Preventive and natural health care practices are required.



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INTRODUCTION

The global market for organic dairy products was 20 billion dollars in 2020 and is projected to grow to 28.7 billion dollars by 2024. The organic eggs market was \$3.4 billion in 2020, and is estimated to reach \$11.2 billion by 2030. The global organic meat products market is expected to grow from \$15 billion in 2020 to nearly \$21 billion in 2025.

The rapid growth of the organic livestock industry is a great opportunity for farmers looking for new markets. To raise and sell organic dairy, meat, eggs, and fiber, you must get certified to the [USDA National Organic Standards](#). MOSA Certified Organic has certified thousands of livestock operations in the United States since 1999. We can help you understand the requirements and make a successful transition to certified organic livestock production.

MAKING THE TRANSITION - DAIRY ANIMALS

Dairy animals can be transitioned to organic production. The organic standards require that dairy animals be managed organically for one year before their products can be certified organic. Your herd, and 3rd year transitional pasture land, can complete their transitions simultaneously. All feed purchased during that transitional year must be certified organic.

Only one transition is allowed per operation. Once you complete your one-time transition, you will not be able to transition more animals into organic production. You must produce your own organic replacement animals or purchase certified organic replacements (raised organically from the last third of gestation after 04/05/2023).

ORGANIC BY BIRTH - MEAT & FIBER ANIMALS

Conventional meat animals cannot be transitioned to organic. Meat and fiber producing livestock must be raised organically from the last third of gestation. During that time, and if offspring are nursing, the mothers must be fed 100% certified organic feed and be managed without prohibited materials. The mothers do not have to be organic stock, but these brood animals can never be sold for organic meat or fiber.

ORGANIC POULTRY - MEAT & EGGS

Chicks, poults, ducklings and all other poultry must be raised organically from the second day of life. This allows for the purchase of conventional baby birds from most commercial hatcheries. Starting on the second day of life, you must feed them certified organic feed and manage them according to the National Organic Standards. Pullets, and any older bird, must be purchased from a certified organic source if intended for organic production.

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FEED REQUIREMENTS

All organic livestock must be fed certified organic feed. Ruminant animals require an average of 30% Dry Matter Intake from organic pasture over the length of the grazing season for your geographical area, which must be not less than 120 days per calendar year.

All organic livestock farmers' records must include records of feed as fed, dates livestock were confined from outdoor access and why, feed inventory, health treatments, and other records depending upon the species. MOSA provides forms to record this information.

If you do not currently have enough pasture to meet the rule, or if your facilities do not allow outdoor access, you should begin converting some fields to pasture, researching rotational grazing, and modifying your infrastructure so you are prepared for certification.

OUTDOOR ACCESS & SHELTER

All organic livestock must have year round access to the outdoors. The land used for outdoor access must be managed organically. To be certifiable, that land must be free of prohibited materials, such as conventional fertilizers and pesticides, for 36 months. Once certified, never allow organic animals to access land that is not certified as organic. All new land must be inspected and approved before use as pasture or outdoor access.

Adequate shelter(s) are required for the type of livestock housed. Shelters must allow livestock the opportunity to express their natural behaviors, including exercise, while keeping them safe from injury and providing adequate ventilation. Periods of temporary confinement are allowed, though only for specific reasons, and must be noted in daily records.

LIVESTOCK HEALTH INPUTS

Generally speaking, most natural inputs are allowed, and most synthetic inputs are prohibited, but there are exceptions for both. Synthetic materials that are allowed for use in livestock organic production are generically listed in section 205.603 of the Organic Standards, also referred to as the **National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances**. Never use an input when you are not sure of its status. Be sure to contact MOSA to verify if a particular input is allowed for organic use. Three key pieces of information will help MOSA staff review your input: a copy of the label or exact name of the input, manufacturer information or contact person, and your requested use.

Some examples of inputs that are prohibited in organic production are all antibiotics, some feed additives, growth hormones, and most synthetic parasiticides. Vaccines are considered preventative health inputs and are allowed.

RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS

The National Organic Standards require that operations maintain records regarding their organic production. Some examples include, but are not limited to: pasture rotation, livestock lists, livestock identification systems, all rations and ration changes, synthetic methionine in poultry feed, temporary confinement, medical treatments, input inventory, and harvest records. If you are unsure of where to start, MOSA has templates that you can use.



READY TO CERTIFY?

Contact MOSA first to determine if we can offer service in your geographical area and on your timeline. It generally will take 3-6 months from completed application to certification. Expedited service is available for an additional fee. Please contact MOSA for more information about the application process.

As a non-profit certification agency, we strive to make certification affordable. For first time livestock applicants, annual fees are \$1298. This fee includes a \$300 Inspection Deposit. After the first year, annual certification fees are based upon gross organic sales (tier system).

Certified Organic clients transferring from another certification agency also use the tier system based on your previous year's organic sales. Please refer to **MOSA's Fee Schedule** to determine your tier.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) is available through your local FSA Office. Through this program, a portion of your certification fees may be eligible for reimbursement. Contact MOSA for more information.

CONNECT WITH MOSA

Our experienced Client Services Staff are ready to assist you with your questions, and to help you get started with the certification process. We have the livestock certification experience you need to access the rapidly growing organic marketplace. Give us a call, toll-free, at 844-637-2526, or email us at mosa@mosaorganic.org.

RESOURCES:

MOSES Guidebook for Certification: <https://mosaorganic.org/images/documents/MOSES-Guidebook.pdf>

USDA "Is Organic an Option for Me" <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/is-it-an-option>