



Organic Livestock and Poultry Standards (OLPS) Final Rule Client Summary

The OLPS Final Rule is intended to:

- Clarify how producers and handlers must treat livestock and poultry to ensure their health and well-being throughout life, including transport and slaughter.
- Specify which physical alterations are allowed and prohibited in organic livestock and poultry production.
- Establish minimum indoor and outdoor space requirements for poultry.

The Timeline

This rule is to be fully implemented by January 2, 2025 for all operations, with a few exceptions:

1. Layer operations certified before January 2, 2025 have until January 2, 2029 to comply with OUTDOOR stocking density and soil and vegetation requirements.
2. Broiler operations certified before January 2, 2025 have until January 2, 2029 to comply with INDOOR and OUTDOOR and soil and vegetation requirements.
3. All poultry operations certified before January 2, 2025 have until January 2, 2029 to comply with exit area requirements.

The Rule

- New terms added to § 205.2: beak trimming, caponization, cattle wattling, de-beaking, de-snooding, dubbing, indoors or indoor space, induced molting, mulesing, non-ambulatory, outdoors or outdoor space, perch, pullets, Religious (or ritual) slaughter, stocking density, toe clipping, and vegetation.
 - Most noteworthy are:
 - Beak trimming = no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$ of upper and lower beaks.
 - Indoors = inside the building and includes mobile housing, which must allow birds to access areas outside the structure during the day, aviary housing, slatted/mesh floor housing, and floor litter housing.
 - Induced molting = any molting that is artificially initiated.
 - Outdoors = outside! And includes pasture pens (pastured poultry). Outdoor area can have a roof, but must be open to outside. Freestall barns are not outside. Soil and vegetation are required for poultry.
- Clarifies when and how certain physical alterations may be performed on organic livestock and poultry in order to minimize stress. Additionally, some forms of physical alterations are prohibited.
 - Needle teeth clipping and tail docking of pigs are allowed when alternative methods to prevent harm fail. Documentation of failed methods is required. No more than the top $\frac{1}{3}$ of the tooth can be clipped.
 - Beak trimming after 10 days of age is prohibited.
- Clarifies how producers and handlers must treat livestock and poultry to ensure their wellbeing.
 - Lameness monitoring including an OSP plan for the timely and appropriate treatment as well as mitigation of the causes of lameness.
 - Induced molting of any kind is prohibited.
 - Parasite management plan is now required and preventative measures must be part of the plan.

- Producers must have written plans for humane euthanasia for sick or injured livestock suffering from irreversible disease or injury.
 - Euthanasia by suffocation, manual blow to the head by a blunt instrument or manual blunt force trauma, use of equipment to crush the neck, including killing pliers or Burdizzo clamps are prohibited.
- Mammalian and non-avian livestock living conditions must:
 - Over a 24 hour period, shelter must provide sufficient space to lie down, turn around, stand up, fully stretch, and express normal behavior.
 - For group housed cattle, bedded packs, compost packs, tie-stalls, free-stalls and stanchion barns are all acceptable as part of the overall OSP (no animals may be housed for the entire day in a confined way).
 - If indoor housing is provided (not required), it must be bedded and sufficiently large to provide for comfortable areas for resting.
 - Dairy calves can be individually housed until the completion of the weaning process. Dairy calf pens must provide enough room for the calf to turn around, lie down, stretch out lying down, get up, rest, groom, and be located so calves can see, smell and hear other animals.
 - In any stall housing, there must be enough stalls for the animals to exhibit natural behaviors. Cages, gestation crates, and farrowing crates are prohibited.
 - Outdoor space must be provided year round. When the outdoors includes soil, vegetation must be included, as appropriate for the season, climate, geography, species of livestock, and stage of production.
 - Hogs specifically must:
 - Be group housed except farrowing/suckling sows, boars, and hogs with multiple documented instances of aggression or recovery from an illness.
 - Flat decks or cages for piglets are prohibited.
 - Rooting materials must be available for all hogs including during periods of temporary confinement, except during the farrowing and suckling period.
 - For group housed swine, there can be less feeding stalls for the number of animals, but animals must all eat sufficiently over a 24 hr period.
- Adds a new Avian living conditions section 205.241
 - Year round living conditions to accommodate the natural behaviors of poultry including outdoors, shade, shelter, exercise areas, fresh air, direct sunlight, clean water, **materials for dust bathing** and adequate outside space. The rule confirms that continuous total confinement of any [fully feathered] poultry indoors is prohibited.
 - Indoors must be sufficiently spacious to allow all birds to move freely, stretch both wings simultaneously, stand normally and engage in natural behaviors.
 - Producers must monitor ammonia levels at least weekly and measurements must be taken at the height of the birds' heads. Levels must be kept below 20 ppm and must not exceed 25 ppm. Monitoring plans will be needed.
 - For layers and fully feathered birds (pullets), artificial light can be used to provide up to 16 hrs of continuous light a day. (8 hours of continuous darkness per 24-hr period is required) Artificial light intensity should be lowered gradually. Artificial light spectrum may not be manipulated to increase feed intake and growth rate.
 - Exit areas must have at least 1 linear foot of exit area for every 360 birds; measured across the base of the exit, but no less than one linear foot of exit area for flocks with fewer than 360 birds. Exit areas must be appropriately distributed and sized to ensure all birds have ready access to the outdoors. If exit areas are not provided at a ratio of at least 1 linear foot per 360 birds, a certifier may approve practices that provide less than 1 linear feet per 360 birds only if an operation describes its practices (in the organic system plan) and demonstrates that ready

access to the outdoors is provided for all birds. *{Exit area requirements for all poultry are an implementation timeframe exception}*

- Producers subject to requirements in 21 CFR part 118 – Production, Storage, and Transportation of Shell Eggs, must take steps to prevent stray poultry, wild birds, cats, and other animals from entering poultry houses.
- Perches above the floor or ground for layers are required. 6 inches of perch space per bird and may include the alighting rail in front of nest boxes. All layers must be able to perch at the same time, except in aviary housing where only 55% of the birds must be able to perch at the same time. Floors in slatted/mesh floor housing cannot be counted as perch space.
- All birds must have access in the house to areas for scratching and dust bathing; except that mobile housing may meet this with the outdoor space. Litter must be provided and be maintained in a dry condition in the house.
- Non-mobile houses with slatted / mesh floors must have 15% solid floor available with sufficient litter available for dust bathing without crowding.
- Sets maximum indoor densities for organic chickens (only chickens; not other avian species), which vary depending on the type of production and stage of life. Indoor calculations may be done two ways:

- Include all flat areas available to the birds, excluding the inside square footage of the nest boxes. Flat top areas of nesting boxes may be included.
- Include enclosed porches and other structures as long as all birds always have access to the space, including during temporary confinement.
 - Indoors for layers =
 - Mobile housing = 4.5 lbs/sq ft or 1.5 sq ft/bird
 - Aviary housing = 4.5 lbs/sq ft or 1.5 sq ft/bird
 - Slatted/mesh floor = 3.75 lbs/sq ft or 1.8 sq ft/bird
 - Floor litter housing = 3 lbs/sq ft or 2.2 sq ft/bird
 - Other housing = 2.25 lbs/sq ft or 3 sq ft/bird
 - Indoors for pullets = 3 lbs/sq ft or 1.7 sq ft/bird
 - Indoors for broilers = 5 lbs/sq ft or 2 sq ft/bird

{Indoor stocking density requirements for broilers is an implementation timeframe exception}

- Sets maximum outdoor densities for organic chickens (not other species), which vary depending on the type of production and stage of life. Calculations may be done two ways.
 - Outdoors for layers = 2.25 lbs/sq ft or 3 sq ft/bird
 - Outdoors for pullets = 3 lbs/sq ft or 1.7 sq ft/bird
 - Outdoors for broilers = 5 lbs/sq ft or 2 sq ft/bird

{Outdoor stocking density requirements for layers and broilers is an implementation timeframe exception}

- Access to outdoors and door spacing for **all poultry** must encourage access for all birds on a daily basis. Access must be provided at a young age to train birds to go outside. Outdoors must be 75% soil. Vegetation cover - as appropriate for the season, climate, location, type of poultry and stage of production - on the soil is required. Shade can be provided. Outdoor space may include structures which are not enclosed (roof + no walls; not a screened in porch) and allow birds to freely access outdoor space with soil. *{Soil and vegetation requirements for layers and broilers outdoor access areas are an implementation timeframe exception}*

- Birds may be temporarily confined because of:
 - Inclement weather, including air temps under 32 and over 90 degrees F.
 - Broilers may be confined to 4 weeks.
 - Pullets may be confined to 16 weeks.
 - Until birds are fully feathered.
 - Conditions which jeopardize their health, safety or well being.
 - Risk to soil or water quality.
 - Preventative health care practices, illness, or injury.
 - Sorting or shipping birds for sale.

- Nest box training, only long enough to establish proper behavior, not to exceed five weeks.
- For fairs, 4-H/FFA, youth projects (1 week before, during, and 24 hrs after). Birds can be sold as certified organic if their organic management is maintained at the event.
- Manure must be managed so that it does not contribute to contamination of natural resources.
- For all livestock, the final rule adds new requirements for transporting organic livestock and poultry to sale or slaughter.
 - During transportation animals must be clearly identified as organic and identity traceable. We have the Livestock Slaughter Eligibility form for clients to use.
 - Livestock must be fit for transport and slaughter.
 - Calves must have a dry navel cord and stand/walk without human assistance.
 - Seriously crippled and non-ambulatory animals (can't rise from a lying down position, can't walk - may include broken legs, severed tendons or ligaments, nerve paralysis, fractures spine, metabolic conditions) must not be transported for sale or slaughter. Animals may be treated or euthanized.
 - Adequate and season appropriate ventilation is required in transport vehicles.
 - Bedding can be provided, organic is required if agricultural.
 - For transport that exceeds eight hours, measured from the time all animals are loaded onto a vehicle until the vehicle arrives at its final destination, the operation must describe how organic management and animal welfare will be maintained.
 - Whomever is responsible for overseeing transport must provide records to demonstrate that transport times are not detrimental to the welfare of animals. Transport time will be verified.
 - Whomever is responsible for overseeing transport must have an emergency plan in place to adequately address any possible animal welfare problems that may occur.
- Clarifies that slaughter facilities must be in line with FSIS and PPIA requirements or other regulatory authorities, accordingly.
 - Slaughter facilities must provide any records showing noncompliances from those agencies and how they have been resolved.
 - Poultry slaughtered by PPIA exempt facilities specifically:
 - Lamé birds may not be shackled, hung or carried by their legs.
 - Shackled birds on a chain or automated system must be stunned before exsanguination, except for religious slaughter.
 - All birds must be irreversibly insensible prior to being put in the scalding tank.

Please see the NOP website for more information about the OLPS Final Rule:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic-livestock-and-poultry-standards>