

Selling Live Certified Organic Livestock

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Haulers did not have enough cows to make the run worth it. So they kept the organic cows at a conventional barn for a few days while they drummed up a few organic slaughter eligible cows to fill out the load. Superior Livestock Haulers buys all its hay from certified organic farms, so it should be ok? Right? **Wrong. The organic livestock lose their certified organic status. This is an example of an uncertified handling facility.**

Please refer to the USDA's [Organic Integrity Database](#) (OID), a public search engine to verify if an operation is certified organic.

MCS will continue onsite inspections for records verification of live organic livestock transport to ensure producers are meeting the requirements of organic slaughter eligibility and maintaining organic integrity, as described in §205.103 Recordkeeping: "... producers are responsible for auditable records that demonstrate organic integrity and the origin of livestock being preserved." Please contact your specialist at MCS for specific record keeping requirements.

Certified organic producers are expected to understand their responsibility in verifying the organic slaughter eligibility of transport is met, and to utilize compliant practices when arrangements are made with slaughterhouses and haulers.

Please refer to the two guidance documents on our website, Organic Livestock Transportation (https://mofgacertification.org/wp-content/uploads/Livestock_2022_OrganicLivestockTransportation.pdf) and Buying & Selling at Auction (https://mofgacertification.org/wp-content/uploads/Livestock_2022_BuyingSellingAtAuction.pdf), for more information.

If you have any questions around selling live organic livestock, please reach out to Jacki Perkins (jperkins@mofga.org) in MOFGA's farmer programs department or your specialist at MCS.

Temporary Confinement in Organic Livestock and Poultry Production

by Jade Archer, Certification Specialist

There are circumstances when farmers feel the need to temporarily confine their livestock or poultry. Temporary confinement is when animals are restricted from the outdoors for a limited period of time. Denial of pasture is when animals are restricted from actively grazing but still may have access to the outdoors. Temporary is defined as "occurring for a limited time only (e.g., overnight, throughout a storm, during a period of illness) not permanent or lasting."

NOP §205.239 Livestock Living Conditions permits livestock temporary confinement from the outdoors and/or denial of pasture in limited instances as described below:

- Stage of life (e.g., chickens during feathering, molting). Lactation is not a stage of life.
- Inclement weather (e.g., violent weather, extreme high or low temperatures, excessive precipitation). Weather events are short-term events as opposed to seasonal patterns, which are long-term events — confinement during an entire season is prohibited.
- Risk to the health, safety, or wellbeing of the animals (e.g., predator observed).
- Risk to soil or water quality.
- Preventative healthcare procedures, such as treating an illness or injury.
- Sorting and shipping animals.
- 4-H and other youth projects — one week before, during, and one day after the event.
- Breeding — only during the act of breeding; confinement to observe heat cycles is not allowed. Animals confined for breeding (artificial insemination or a bull) must still have daily access to the outdoors, and must achieve 30% dry matter intake (DMI) from pasture for 120 days during that season.

- Prior to birthing — for three weeks, during birthing, and one week just after birthing.
- One week for drying off dairy animals (restricting pasture but animals still have outdoor access).
- During milking for dairy animals.
- Newborn dairy cattle up to 6 months old, provided that calves are not confined or tethered in a way that prevents them from standing up, lying down, fully extending their limbs, and moving freely in the space.
- Short periods for shearing fiber animals.

[NOP Policy Memo 11-12](#) "Confinement of Poultry Flocks Due to Avian Influenza, or Other Infectious Diseases" describes ways in which producers can protect their organic poultry flocks during disease outbreaks, while still maintaining organic certification. In early 2022, highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) was detected in a number of counties in the Northeast. Organic poultry may be confined on a temporary basis in areas in proximity to low or highly pathogenic avian influenza. Producers must work with their certification specialist to determine the proper method and duration of confinement. If you have any questions about HPAI please contact Jacki Perkins (jperkins@mofga.org) from MOFGA farmer programs.

Continuous confinement of livestock from the outdoors is prohibited. Livestock must have year-round access to the outdoors. Organic ruminant animals must obtain a minimum of 30% dry matter intake from pasture, averaged over the entire grazing season for each type and class of animal. The grazing season must consist of at least 120 days, but may be greater depending on regional weather conditions.

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Refresher on Synthetic Methionine Use in Organic Poultry Production

by Jade Archer, Certification Specialist

Poultry producers will notice new questions in their 2022 poultry supplement on the use of synthetic methionine in organic feed.

DL-methionine (synthetic) is an amino acid that is often found in organic poultry grain. Synthetic methionine is allowed in organic poultry production at a maximum average intake (measured as pounds per ton) over the life of the flock. The National Organic Program (NOP) Rule § 205.603(d)(1) applies to the use of methionine in organic poultry production.

DL-Methionine, DL-Methionine-hydroxy analog, and DL-Methionine-hydroxy analog calcium (CAS Numbers 59-51-8, 583-91-5, 4857-44-7, and 922-50-9)—for use only in organic poultry production at the following pounds of synthetic 100 percent methionine per ton of feed in the diet, maximum rates as averaged per ton of feed over the life of the flock: Laying chickens—2 pounds; broiler chickens—2.5 pounds; turkeys and all other poultry—3 pounds

If you are purchasing and feeding organic grain with synthetic methionine at, or under, the maximum allowed pounds per ton, the average methionine consumption over the lifespan of the flock would

be in compliance. Documentation showing how this was verified must be available at inspection. Documentation may include a statement from your feed supplier stating the amount of methionine added to the ration.

If at any time over the lifespan of the flock, the amount of methionine in the grain exceeds the allowed amount, calculations must be provided by the producer that show the average methionine consumption is below the maximum amount allowed. Calculations must be included in the Organic System Plan and will be reviewed at inspection. Please refer to the MCS Practice Manual or the fall 2021 edition of the Organic Sprout for example calculations.

Layer operations purchasing pullets from certified organic operations must provide MCS with documentation to verify synthetic methionine average intake over the lifetime of the purchased flock.

If you have any questions, please contact your certification specialist.

Temporary Confinement

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NOP §205.103 Recordkeeping:

Operators must keep records for the reason and the duration of all occurrences of temporary confinement or denial of pasture for ruminant animals. MCS recommends taking the minimal approach to recordkeeping by describing your outdoor access protocol and documenting occasional compliant confinement. Inspectors will verify records for temporary confinement at your annual inspection to confirm that confinement is temporary.

Please reach out to your certification specialist with any questions.

