

Brief Introduction to Requirements for Organic Livestock Production

according to European Regulation (EC) 834/07*, the US National Organic Program (NOP), and CERES standard interpretation

(Note: CERES is not accredited for livestock certification under JAS)

1. What organic livestock production means:

- ❖ Organic feed
- ❖ No genetically modified organisms (GMO)
- ❖ Number of animals linked to available land
- ❖ High priority for animal welfare (e.g. adequate housing)
- ❖ Priority for natural veterinary medicine; use of allopathics only when no other solution exists
- ❖ Livestock manure must not become a source of pollution
- ❖ Healthy, good quality milk, eggs and meat, instead of maximum quantities.

2. Feeding:

- ✓ **NOP:** Only organic feed, only those additives and supplements mentioned in the National List (§ 205.603), no manure, urea or plastic pellets. Ruminants **must** have access to pastures, at least during part of the year.
- ✓ **NOP:** For dairy livestock: during 1 year transition time (see below point 5.) the feed (including roughage for bedding) may come from land which is in its 3rd year without illicit input
- ✓ **EU-Regulation:**

	Herbivores (ruminants, horses)	Pigs	Poultry
Raising of young stock	Natural milk (3 months for cows, 45 days for sheep and goats)	Natural milk for 40 days	No specific provisions
Grazing	Maximum use of grazing , according to local possibilities	Desired, but no requirements defined	
Roughage	Minimum 60% of dry matter	Roughage must be added to daily ration	
Feed from own farm	Minimum 60% of dry matter (except for transhumance)	Minimum 20% of dry matter	
Feed from land in conversion	Maximum 30% of dry matter (100% in case that the land in conversion belongs to the same farm); maximum 20% from own perennial grassland in first year of conversion		
Conventional feed	Not allowed (the only allowed conventional ingredient is molasses)	Not allowed. Derogation can be granted for protein components (max. 5%) if not available from organic origin	
Additives	Only those listed in Annex VI to Reg. (EC) 889/08		

3. Housing:

- ✓ Both **NOP** and **EU-Regulation** require appropriate housing, including **freedom of movement** and comfort behaviour, adequate **bedding** and temperature. Animals must have access to **fresh air**, direct sunlight, shade, and **shelter**. Stables must be kept **clean**, to prevent diseases and pests. Only those substances may be used for cleaning, disinfection and pest control in stables, which are mentioned in the National List (NOP) respectively in Annex VII to Reg. (EC) 889/08.
- ✓ Reg. (EC) 889/08 gives further details for stables and outdoor exercise areas, like e.g.:
 - o Livestock must **not be tethered**

- o Livestock housing must have **smooth, but not slippery floors**. At least half (mammals) or one third (poultry) of the total floor area must be solid, that is, not of slatted or of grid construction
- o Calves must not be kept in individual boxes after the age of one week
- o Sows must be kept in groups, piglets may not be kept on flat decks or in piglet cages
- o Poultry must be reared in **open-range** conditions and cannot be kept in cages
- o Water fowl must have access to a stream, pond or lake
- o A maximum number of animals per poultry house is established in Art. 12 of Reg. (EC) 889/08
- o For further details, see Annex III to Reg. 889.

4. Management practices:

✓ EU-Regulation:

- o In principle, natural reproduction should be used. Artificial insemination is permitted. Other forms of artificial reproduction (for example embryo transfers) and the use of hormones are prohibited.
- o Attaching elastic bands to the tails of sheep, **tail docking**, cutting of teeth, trimming of beaks and **dehorning** must not be carried out systematically. Some of these operations may be allowed in exceptional cases, for reasons of safety or animal health.
- o Calf fattening conditions may not encourage anemia
- o Minimum age at slaughter for poultry is defined in Art. 12 of Reg. 889
- o Animals must be transported, loaded and unloaded in a way, which minimizes stress. Allopathic tranquillisers or electrical animal driving devices are forbidden
- o Livestock and livestock products must be **identified**
- o Stocking densities for different species are defined in detail in Annex IV to Reg. 889.

5. Origin of animals and conversion period:

- ✓ Hardy, locally adapted **breeds** must be chosen
- ✓ Animals must be purchased **from organic operations** and be managed according to organic standards **from birth, with some exceptions**. Livestock or livestock products can be sold as organic, in case of organic management during at least:

	EU-Regulation	NOP
Poultry	Laying hens 6 weeks, other poultry 10 weeks, from 3 rd day of life on	From 2 nd day of life on
Animals for meat	6 months for goats, sheep, pigs, 12 months for beef (at least ¾ of their lifetime)	From birth
Dairy animals	6 months prior to selling milk as organic	1 year prior to selling organic milk and milk products in case of complete herd transition to organic (only allowed once); Adding new animals: Milk and Milk products only in case last third of gestation under organic management
Non edible products	Not defined	1 year prior to selling organic (e.g. wool)
Conversion of land for forage	Whole forage land of the farm must be converted, conversion for pastures can be reduced to 1 year (6 months in case of grassland without use of chemicals)	No use of chemicals during at least three years One-time transition exception allows third-year transitional crop

	EU-Regulation	NOP
Breeder stock	Only male breeder stock may be purchased from conventional farms without further restrictions	Purchase of non-organic breeder stock is allowed. Females must not be brought onto the farm later than the last third of the gestation, if offspring are to be raised as organic

In case of the EU-Regulation, purchase of conventional animals is limited by several further restrictions. Please contact CERES for further details!

- ✓ During the **conversion period**, livestock products must be **sold as conventional!**

In case of the NOP regulation, the term “**Transitional animal**” is defined more clearly by the **Origin Of Livestock (OOL)** rule, published 05 April 2022.

- ✓ Dairy animal not having been under Organic management during last third of gestation
 - ✓ Offspring of a transitioned animal, that consumes third-year transitional feed during the last third of gestation
 - ✓ Offspring, born during the one-time transition exception that is fed with third-year transitional feed
- ➔ Certified operators may **not source** transitioned animals after 05 April 2023

6. Veterinary treatments:

- ✓ Diseases and pests must be **prevented** through selection of hardy breeds, adequate feeding, housing, sanitary conditions, and vaccines
- ✓ In case that animals, in spite of prevention, fall ill, they must be treated; preference is to be given to **natural** or homeopathic **treatments**
- ✓ In case of allopathic treatments, the **waiting time** has to be **doubled** in case of the **EU-Regulation**; under **NOP**, whenever livestock is treated with a substance not listed under §205.603, the **animals become conventional** and can not be re-converted to organic
- ✓ **Preventive use of allopathic medicine** is forbidden. This refers especially to antibiotics, coccidiostatics or hormones used as growth promoters.

7. Records:

- ✓ Before the first inspection takes place, the farm has to present an **organic management plan** to the certifier; this plan has to be updated annually
- ✓ A stock **diary** must be kept, recording at least birth, purchase, sales, and death of animals, besides all veterinary treatments
- ✓ Invoices for **purchase** of feed, veterinary medicine, animals, etc., must be filed
- ✓ **Quantities** of produced livestock products must be recorded
- ✓ The farm needs at least a simple system of **bookkeeping** for sales of organic products

8. Knowledge:

- ✓ The farmer has to keep a **copy** of the respective **standards** and has to study them
- ✓ The farmer needs adequate **knowledge** on organic livestock production rules and technologies.

***Note:** Inside the EU, the Regulation has to be applied in its strictest sense. Products from third countries outside the European Union are considered "equivalent". Please refer to the CERES homepage for our Policy 4.1.1, which, combined with Regulations (CE) 834/07 and (CE) 889/08 and our other policies, make up the "CERES equivalent standard".

! Please be aware that this is only a selection of essential requirements of the organic standards, meant as an introduction. The operator, of course, has to learn about and meet all requirements of the respective standard.