



NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC

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Email: dairycert@nofany.org • www.nofany.org/organic-certification

ORGANIC DAIRY INFORMATION

Dairy Transition

With the publication of the USDA National Organic Regulations, the dairy herd transition time is now one year. The one-year transition period will allow farmers to become familiar with alternative health care practices, organize record keeping systems, and generally become familiar with organic production and certification requirements.

****Transition is a one-time, whole-herd conversion.** This is a one-time opportunity for a conventional dairy operation to transition their herd to organic production. All animals to be transitioned must be on farm at the beginning of the one year transition. From the beginning of transition on, no additional conventional animals may be brought to the farm to transition.

The one-year transition feed requirement is 100% organic feed for a full year. Feed harvested from fields in their third year of transition (T3) that are included in the Organic System Plan may be used as part of the 100% organic feed requirement during the one-year herd transition period. The beginning of transition should be timed so that T3 land is eligible for certification by the end of the one-year herd transition. Feed harvested from first or second year transitional land is not allowed for feed or bedding. All third-year (T3) transitional feed must be fed up or removed from the farm by the end of the transition year.

All other Certification requirements must be followed during the one-year transition period, including health care practices.

*****During transition, all National Organic Program Regulations must be followed completely*****

To Prepare for Transition, Dairy Farms Should:

- ❖ Implement organic management practices for fields, including crop rotation requirements.
- ❖ Develop appropriate housing and pasture for dairy animals, including young stock.
- ❖ Implement pasture and outdoor access in the winter for all animals over 6 months old.
- ❖ Discontinue the use of antibiotics, hormones, synthetic medications and dry cow treatments.
- ❖ Search out and implement the use of alternative health care practices.

A summary of certification requirements:

- ❖ Land must not have had any prohibited substances (synthetic pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, fertilizers, treated seeds) applied to it for at least three years to be eligible for certification.
- ❖ New installations of treated wood, including fence posts, are prohibited where it may come into contact with organic land or animals.
- ❖ A three-year history on every field and pasture must be submitted. It must include crops grown, and substances applied for the past three years including treated wood installations. If any seeds were planted, seed receipts for the prior three years will be required to show that untreated, non-GMO seeds were used.
- ❖ Maps showing all fields and pastures with ID#, acreage, buffers, roads, adjoining land use, fencing, shade locations & water sources must be submitted.
- ❖ Use of treated seeds is prohibited and will disqualify a field from certification for three years. **Certified organic seeds are required** and untreated seeds may be used **only** if organic is not commercially available. Unavailability of organic seed must be documented.

- ❖ Milking herd and young stock over six months old must have access to managed pasture with edible forage during the entire grazing season (minimum of 120 days). This must be the practice at the beginning of transition (.75 acres of pasture per 1000# animal unit is recommended.) Ruminant animals must receive at least 30% of their dry matter intake (DMI) from pasture during the grazing season. No more than 70% DMI may be from stored feeds during the grazing season.
- ❖ Tail docking is prohibited. A herd with docked tails may enter the transition program, but tail docking must be discontinued by the start of transition.
- ❖ Calves must be fed organic feeds, including organic whole milk.
- ❖ Hay, straw, corn stalks, and other agricultural products used as bedding must be certified organic.
- ❖ Replacement animals must be managed organically from the last third of gestation.
- ❖ The primary means of animal identification must be ear tags or tattoos. Neck chains may be used in addition if desired, but not as the primary ID system.
- ❖ Use of antibiotics or other synthetic substances to treat animals is prohibited; animal must be removed from the herd if antibiotics or other synthetic substances are used. All treatments must be documented on a medication record.
- ❖ Buffer zones are required where organic fields adjoin conventional fields. Wider buffer zones may be necessary where organic fields adjoin conventional fields with genetically modified crops.

To Begin the Transition Process

It is important to familiarize yourself with the National Organic Regulations.

The NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC Organic Dairy Certification is a *multi-step* process. Farmers wishing to convert a dairy herd to organic production must first apply for **Land Certification and Transition Status** with the certification office at the beginning of the one-year transition period. *There is an additional \$100 fee on top of the regular certification costs listed in the brochure for Dairy Transition Monitoring.*

In order to begin the Transition process, a sufficient amount of land that is certifiable or in its third year of transition (T3) must be available to provide adequate supplies of pasture and forage to meet the 100% organic feed requirement. Even with an organic premium, it is not always economically feasible for farms to purchase large amounts of organic forages and organic grains. To begin the Transition process, we use as a guide, a minimum of .75 acres of total certifiable land for each 1000# animal unit, or 90% of your fields.

All non-certifiable fields should be in transition at the start of the one-year dairy herd transition. It is understood that if a farm has non-certifiable fields, there must be a plan developed for segregation of crops from non-certified fields, and a plan showing what these crops will be used for. If non-certified crops are sold off the farm, sales records must be kept.

The first step in the process is to obtain an application packet and fill it out.

*****Please note: The date your application is received in the office is the date your transition officially starts, provided you are in compliance with the Organic Regulations at that time.***

If you wish to begin the transition to organic dairy production, the process is outlined below:

1) Obtain a Dairy Certification Application Packet.

2) Fill out the application and return it to the office along with certification fee payment. The application will include requirements for organic certification, including maps, equipment lists, field histories and other recordkeeping requirements. Feed supplies and sources of feed will be reviewed. Animal housing, feed storage facilities and medication usage are also reviewed. The office staff will be available to assist you with questions about your application. By the time you submit your application, you must be managing your animals organically.

3) When your application is received in the office, it will be reviewed by a staff member for completeness and compliance with the National Organic Program. If there are questions, you will be contacted by mail or phone and will have two weeks to respond.

4) Upon completion of the office review of your application, your file will be sent to an inspector. The inspector will contact you directly to schedule an appointment to visit your farm. After the inspection, the inspector will write an inspection report. Your file will then be sent to a Final Reviewer. A Final Reviewer will review your application and inspection report and make a determination on Transition status.

5) Prior to the end of the one-year Transition period, you may be asked to submit up-to-date copies of all records for a review of compliance.

Application Submission Dates

Farmers may contact the Certification Office to begin discussions regarding dairy certification at any time during the year. Farmers interested in transitioning their dairy herd to organic production may submit applications at any time; however, field inspections cannot be performed during the winter months. Applications for new producers are accepted starting January 1 and continuing throughout the year. If an application is received August - October, we will do our best to get the producer certified by the end of the year, however the producer should keep in mind that the renewal cycle will begin again in December when they will receive an update application for the next year (this maybe inconvenient to pay the certification fees twice so close together). If applications are received in November-December they will be considered applicants for the following year. For applications that are received over the winter months of November - February, an initial review of the application will be performed during the winter, however we will not be able to come out to do an inspection until the following spring to inspect the fields during the growing season.

Fees for the Certification Process

Application Packet \$50.00 (includes NOP Regulations) +tax = \$54.00

No charge if application is obtained via email or on the NOFA-NY website.

Due at the time of Application:

Crop/Livestock Certification Fee \$650.00 and up (*based on projected gross organic sales for the year*)

New Applicant Fee \$75.00

Transition Monitoring Fee \$100.00

The fees for the certification process are found in the NOFA-NY Certified Organic LLC Policy Manual and on our Fee Determination form. The fees cover office time for application review, and one farm inspection. Applicants must submit ½ of the total fee with the application; the balance is due by August 1st. If an application is received after August 1st, the entire fee must be submitted with the application. If after review of the application, it is decided to withdraw the application, the fees paid may be refunded, less the applicable fees to cover the cost of services provided up to the date of withdrawal. The applicant must request a refund in writing within 60 days of the office receiving the application. Once the inspection has been performed, fees are not refundable. Should an additional inspection be required, the applicant will be billed for the visit.

**There is a New York State Organic Cost Share Reimbursement Program that offers 75% back or up to \$750 of certification fees (excluding the transition monitoring fee) for each scope of certification. This reimbursement is available if the fees are paid and your land is certified before September 30th of the year. We provide the proof of payment and that you are certified and paid in full. Ag & Markets will send an application to you and you will need to fill out the application with your contact info and return it to them as soon as possible as the program is on a first come, first serve basis.

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact the NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC Certification Office for assistance at 607-724-9851 or dairycert@nofany.org. Further details on requirements can be found in the NOP Regulations, available at: www.ams.usda.gov/nop or the NOFA NY website at: www.nofany.org/organic-certification .

Marketing Your Milk

*****NOFA-NY Certified Organic LLC recommends that you search out and confirm a market for your milk prior to beginning the transition and certification process. Organic certification does not guarantee a market for your milk.**

Companies handling organic milk include:

Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative

Contact: Anne Phillips, NY Pool Coordinator
Marathon, NY
607-222-3265 (cell)
888-809-9297 (OV farmer helpline)
608-625-3050 (fax)
anne.phillips@organicvalley.coop

Horizon Organic

Contact: Peter Slaunwhite
7895 Tackabury Road
Canastota, NY 13032
800-381-0980
315-272-3218 (cell)
peter.slaunwhite@whitewave.com

Maple Hill Creamery

Tim Joseph
Stuyvesant, NY 12173
518-758-7777
www.maplehillcreamery.com

Evans Farmhouse Creamery

607-334-5339
christa@sunrisefamilyfarms.com
evansfarmhouse@hotmail.com

Dairy Marketing Services (DMS)

(Procures milk for all organic markets)
Contact: Mike Damon
5001 Brittonfield Parkway
PO Box 4844, Syracuse, NY 13221
800-582-2552 ext 5403
pmd1@stny.rr.com

Upstate Niagara Cooperative

Contact: Mike Davis
700 Ellicott Street, Suite 2
Batavia, NY 14020
800-724-6455 ext 6441
585-815-6441
585-409-1544 (cell)
mdavis@upstateniagara.com

Byrne Dairy, Inc. (Organic Yogurt Plant in Cortland)

James A. Gosier, General Counsel
2394 U.S. Route 11
Lafayette, New York 13084
Direct Dial: (315) 703-9093
Telefax: (315) 471-0930
Email: jim.gosier@byrnedairy.com

Resource Information Sources

USDA AMS National Organic Program

1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 4008-S STOP 0268
Washington, DC 20250
202-720-3252 phone
202-205-7808 fax
www.ams.usda.gov/nop
-Organic regulations and information

NOFA-NY Inc.

1423 Hathaway Drive
Farmington, NY 14425
Phone: 585-271-1979 Fax: 585-271-7166
1-855-266-3269 – farmer helpline
info@nofany.org
www.nofany.org
farmerhelp@nofany.org

NODPA (Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance)

Ed Maltby
30 Keets Road
Deerfield, MA 01342
(413) 772-0444
Fax: (866) 554-9483
ednodpa@comcast.net
www.organicmilk.org or www.nodpa.com
-Organic dairy information

ATTRA (Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas)

PO Box 3657, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72702
800-346-9140 www.attra.org
This federally funded free program offers a number of extensive information packets on organic agriculture. (They offer an 11-page packet on organic dairy.)

Veterinarians

Dr. Edgar Sheaffer -Homeopathic Vet & Consultant
Clark Veterinary Clinic
PO Box 353
Palmyra, PA 17078
888-327-6838 or 717-838-9563
www.clarkvetclinic.com

Dr. Hue Karreman – Rodale Institute Vet & Consultant
1272 Mt. Pleasant Rd.
Quarryville, PA 17566
717-768-7088
penndutch@earthlink.net
www.penndutchcowcare.org

Dr. Paul Dettloff – OV Staff Veterinarian & Consultant
Dr. Paul's Labs
W20384 State Route 95
Arcadia, Wisconsin 54612
608-323-3047

Dr. Guy Jodarski – OV Staff Veterinarian & Consultant
888-809-9297 (OV farmer helpline)

Dr. Cynthia Lankenau – Holistic Veterinarian
Holistic Center for Veterinary Care
9002 Sunset Drive
Colden, NY 14033
716-941-9477

Dr. Susan Beal – Holistic Homeopathic Vet & Consultant
Laughing Oak Farm
807 Filtering Plant Road
Punxsutawney, PA 15767
814-952-6821
alchemy@penn.com

Dr. Judith Edoff, DVM - Holistic Veterinarian
PO Box 840
Woodstock, NY 12498
845-679-9445

Dr. James O'Krepki & Dr. Chistina Ochrymowych
Knoll's End Animal Hospital
106 Hartwell Rd
Berkshire, NY 13736
607-657-8555
- Holistic Veterinarians

Dr. Margaret Ohlinger - Holistic Veterinarian
Animal Trax Veterinary Service
3950 McIntyre Rd
Trumansburg, NY 14886
Phone: 607-387-5104
Fax: 607-387-5104

Suppliers of Natural Health Care & Fertilizer Products

Crystal Creek
1600 Roundhouse Road
Spooner, WI 54801
(888) 376-6777
www.crystalcreeknatural.com

Fertrell
PO Box 265
Bainbridge, PA 17502
(717) 367-1566
www.fertrell.com

Lancaster Ag Products
340 Beechdale Road
Bird In Hand, PA 17505
(717) 293-9701
www.lancasterag.com

Agri Dynamics
-Feed Supplements, fertilizers, healthcare products
PO Box 735
Easton, PA 18044
(610) 250-9280
www.agridynamics.com

Washington Homeopathic Products
260 J R Hawvermale Way
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411
(800) 336-1695
304-258-2541
www.homeopathyworks.com
info@homeopathyworks.com

Organic Grain Sources

Lakeview Organic Grain

119 Hamilton Place
PO Box 361
Penn Yan, NY 14527
315-531-1038
mh@lakevieworganicgrain.com
www.lakevieworganicgrain.com

Cold Springs Farm

379 Slate Hill Road
Sharon Springs, NY 13459
518-234-8320
csfarm@wildblue.net
www.coldspringsfarm.com

Green Mountain Feeds

PO Box 505, 65 Main Street
Bethel, VT 05032
802-234-6278
www.greenmountainfeeds.com

Homestead Organics

1 Union Street, County Rd 9
Berwick, ON K03 1G0
Canada
613-984-0480
www.homesteadorganics.ca

Morrison's Custom Feeds

28 Creamery Lane
Barnet, VT 05821
802-633-4387
www.morrisonfeeds.com

Book Sources & Recommended Reading

The Organic Dairy Handbook & Workbook

A comprehensive guide for the Transition and beyond
By Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York
www.nofan.org/files/TheOrganicDairyHandbook.pdf

Acres USA

P.O. Box 301209
Austin, TX 78703-0021
1-800-355-5313
www.acresusa.com
info@acreausa.com

(A good source for books on all types of organic agriculture. Also an excellent monthly magazine)

Chelsea Green Publishing

85 North Main Street, Suite 120,
White River Jct., VT 05001
Orders: 800.639.4099
Offices: 802.295.6300
<http://www.chelseagreen.com>

Graze Magazine

PO Box 48
Belleville WI 53508
608-455-3311
www.grazeonline.com

Stockman Grassfarmer

PO Box 9607
Jackson, MS 39286
1-800-748-9808
www.stockmangrassfarmer.com

Recommended Reading – Available from Acres USA

Alternative Treatments for Ruminant Animals

By Dr. Paul Dettloff, DVM

Treating Dairy Cows Naturally

By Dr. Hubert J. Karreman, VMD

Homeopathy for the Herd

By Dr. C. Edgar Sheaffer, VMD

Eco-Farm An Acres USA Primer

By Charles Walters

Greener Pastures on Your Side of the Fence: Better Farming with Voisin Grazing Management

By Bill Murphy

A New Troubleshooters Guide to Dairy Cows

By Dr. David Hoke, DVM
Contact: NOFA VT
PO Box 697
Richmond, VT 05477
(802) 434-4122