



Pacific Agricultural Certification Society

3402 32nd Ave. Vernon, BC V1T 2N1 phone 250-558-7927 fax 250-558-7947
admin@pacscertifiedorganic.ca Website: www.pacscertifiedorganic.ca

Guide to the *Organic Plan*: Livestock

Introduction:

- Use this guide to assist in completing the PACS **Organic Plan: Livestock**. The **Organic Plan: Livestock** **accompanies** the **Organic Plan - Crop** (or **Crop Renewal Plan**). It does NOT replace it.
- Both **Organic Plans** are required when completing a full Livestock Plan.
- **Note:** if you are filling out a **Livestock Renewal Plan**, and do not produce crops intended for human consumption (i.e. crops grown for your livestock operation only), you are **not** required to fill out the **Crop Renewal Plan**, or the **Organic Plan - Crop**.
- The **Livestock Plan** applies to organic production of **herbivores** (cattle (beef or dairy), sheep, goats and rabbits) and **insects**. It is not to be used for swine or poultry.
- **There are separate organic plans for both swine and poultry.**
- Numbers in this guide correspond to question numbers in the *Organic Plan: Livestock*. Provide as much information as possible.

You should use this form if:

- You are a new client with herbivore livestock or insects, or
- You are an existing client who is bringing new species/types of herbivores or insects into the organic program (for which you were not previously certified) or
- The standards have changed and you must report new information for a determination of compliance, as directed by PACS, or
- You have purchased an organic operation from a PACS certified member, and you are not already a PACS certified member, or it is a new scope of operation for which you have not been certified before.

Do not fill out the *Organic Plan: Livestock* if you previously submitted either a Livestock Plan or a Livestock Renewal last year, unless you have made major changes in the management of your livestock, have introduced a new species of herbivore to your operation, or have been directed by PACS to complete a new Livestock PLAN due to changes in the organic standards.

Consequences of inaccurate completion:

- The Verification Officer will wait on your farm for you to fill out incomplete areas, increasing your inspection costs. If the VO doesn't catch inaccuracies, you may be confronted with higher Certification Committee charges. Please fill out the forms as completely as possible; checking the maps and reporting all significant details.

How to complete the form:

In efforts to reduce our ecological footprint and increase efficiency, PACS operates as a paperless office. We ask if possible, to submit ALL documents electronically (via email). We understand that this may not be possible for everyone. PACS will continue to accept documents by mail and fax, however, please note that these documents will be saved electronically and then destroyed

This Plan is available in Microsoft Word and PDF format. **Do not complete using Google Docs.**

- To fill it in on the computer:
 - First: save the form to your hard drive. Fill it in then save the file again before you send it to PACS.
 - Type into the grey coloured areas: Use your mouse, arrows or tab keys to move around the form. If this form is not compatible with your computer system or you experience any problems, contact the PACS office for immediate assistance. If you need more space than is provided add additional sheets.
- **Note** – the charts expand when data is filled in, so the page numbers change from the original blank form as it is filled in. Therefore, **question** number references are given below, but page number references are not.
- **Note** – If you work with a Mac computer, you may have to print documents and fill them in manually.

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- If you are unable to complete the form electronically, you may print the form, fill it in with black or blue ink and mail it to the PACS office. Be sure to keep a copy of the completed form. If you need more space than is provided, add additional sheets.

Abbreviations used:

- VO - **Verification Officer** – an independent contractor who inspects your farm at the request of your Certification Body (CB). The VO makes a report to the Certification Committee of the CB. A copy of this report is sent to you along with the Certification Review Report. Remember, the VO does **not** certify your farm, nor set conditions for certification.
- CC - **Certification Committee** - the group authorized by your Certification Body to make decisions. The PACS Certification Committee examines your Crop Plan/Renewal and the VO's report, then decides whether you qualify for certification. Sometimes the CC sets conditions which you must meet for certification. These are itemized in the "Certification Review Report" and have deadlines for your responses.
- COR – the standards, regulations and PSL which comprise the **Canada Organic Regime**.
- COS – [Canadian Organic Standards \(CAN/CGSB 32.310-2015\)](#).
- PSL – [Permitted Substance List \(CAN/CGSB 32.311-2015\)](#).
- OPR – [Organic Products Regulations, 2009](#).
- CRR: Certification Review Report. This is the annual report that is created when the PACS Certification Committee reviews your certification (inspection report, organic plan, renewal forms, etc.). It will be sent to you as part of your certification package and is intended to provide a "snapshot" of your operation.

About this Guide:

This document highlights areas where there may be confusion or uncertainty. Not every question is explained. If you have questions that are not covered in this guide, contact the PACS office.

Name and descriptive information about your enterprise. Please complete all sections, even if the information has not changed from the previous year.

A. General Livestock Management Information:

General information about your ranch, products to be certified and basic information about livestock or insect identification.

B. Livestock Origin:

The expectation of the organic standards is that livestock must be born organic. Purchased animals must come from organic sources. Derogation is possible if organic sources cannot be found but an adequate search must be conducted beforehand. If suitable organic breeding stock is not commercially available, non-organic, non-gestating breeder animals and males may be brought onto an organic operation and integrated into the organic system. **Meat from purchased non-organic animals will always be considered non-organic.** Breeding stock for meat production must be managed organically from the last third of their gestation period in order for their offspring to be certified organic.

#22 When purchasing conventional animals for breeding stock, be sure to confirm that the purchased animals were not produced using embryo transfer, cloning or other genetic engineering techniques.

#23 Artificial insemination of organic livestock is allowed. Sexed semen is allowed as long as it is sexed via centrifugal (mechanical) means and not synthetic or chemical means.

#25 Non-organic breeding stock for meat production will always be considered non-organic. However, please answer this question accurately in order to determine the eligibility of organic certification of calves born, following the transition of an operation.

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C. Feed

#30 The VO is required to conduct feed audits during the inspection of livestock producers. **Be sure** that you have detailed records of the DAILY feed rations and the total YEARLY rations to show the VO. The categories of feed shown in this question (hay, fresh or dried fodder, silage and grain) have particular requirements under the standard. Silage is further broken down into **corn** and **non-corn** silage. You can expect the VO to review these matters at length.

#32 During the grazing season, herbivores must be on pasture and a **minimum** of 30% of the total forage intake for sexually mature animals must comprise grazed forage. During high-growth periods, grazed forage is expected to rise above 30%.

#37 The 2015 Standards require that livestock water be tested annually. The initial test must include bacteria and all potential toxins (heavy metals and ions). The subsequent annual tests can be for bacteria only. Contact your local ag supply, health authority, well supply store or the Ministry of Agriculture for potential laboratory names.

#40 & 41 You must develop a PLAN to deal with an **emergency** feed shortage caused by a catastrophic farm-scale or local event (i.e. barn fire, forest fire, flood, etc.). If your geographical area is affected by a long-standing drought or by annual flood cycles, be prepared to show the VO that you have considered the matter and planned strategies to mitigate the situation.

D. Livestock Handling and Transportation:

The 2015 Standards make it clear that organic livestock producers must be familiar with and must employ the requirements and recommendations of the **Codes of Practice** for the species of livestock under their management. A number of the questions in this section refer to the *Codes of Practice* as well as to the organic standards.

E. Health Care:

The VO will evaluate **preventative** health measures as well as disease, injury and parasite **treatments**. The VO will audit all the medications, supplements, minerals, botanicals and livestock salt products that you use and that you have on-site. Be sure to have ingredients lists, product spec sheets, written instructions from your veterinarian, etc. on hand for the VO to review. You must maintain written birth and treatment records for livestock. Organic offspring may not consume milk from treated dams.

F. Living Conditions:

#88 The stocking density of organic livestock must be considered when they are on pasture. Please complete the table accurately.

#90, 91 The organic standards specify the amount of indoor and outdoor space that must be provided for all organic livestock. The space allotments must meet the minimum requirements, even during emergency confinements (i.e. protection from predators or quarantine for illness).

#94 Acceptable air quality is a requirement of the 2015 Standards. Humidity, dust and ammonia must be considered, at a minimum. Be prepared to demonstrate that you have considered the issue.

#97 Temporary restrictions from outdoor access or confinement of movement for any reason must be documented in your organic records as to the cause and the duration.

#100 Restriction from pasture access during the grazing season or access to open air or outdoor exercise areas during other periods must be documented in your organic records as to the cause and the duration and the (group of) animals affected.

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#101 When beef cattle are confined to outdoor finishing lots, the space allotments per animal must **increase** as the sizes and weights of the animals increase. Be sure that your records demonstrate that the stocking density in a finishing feedlot are commensurate with the sizes of the animals enclosed.

G. Requirements for Rabbits:

#106 Rabbits are classed into groupings which have different requirements for space allotments in indoor, outdoor, exercise area, pasture and mobile pen enclosures. Please record the details of your provisions accurately.

H. Requirements for Dairy Animals:

Dairy animals have very detailed and specific requirements that pertain to the animals, their living conditions, their health treatments and the milking facilities. Additionally, equivalency between the Canadian organic standards and those of other countries with which Canada holds **organic equivalency arrangements** must be considered and reported on by the VO. Do not leave any blank questions. Be accurate in your answers. If your barns and facilities are not compliant with the 2015 Standards, you will have **1 year** to develop a plan for renovations or new construction and **up to 5 years from 25 November 2015** to complete the renovations or new construction.

I. Manure and Pest Management:

J. Recordkeeping:

Organic records must be detailed and comprehensive and must be kept for a minimum of 5 years. Be specific as to the records you maintain (question #157).

K. Attachments:

Identify any attachments included and then sign in the appropriate space.

L. Organic Operator Affirmation:

Sign and date the form. Don't forget to identify the type of certification you are seeking.