American animal protectionists from earlier centuries might seem unrecognizable today. Most ate meat. They believed in euthanasia as a humane end to creaturely suffering. They justified humanity’s kinship with animals through biblical ideas of gentle stewardship. They accepted animal labor as a compulsory burden of human need. Their sites of activism included urban streets, Sunday schools, church pulpits, classrooms, temperance meetings, and the transnational missionary field. Committed to animal welfare, they strove to prevent pain and suffering. Contemporary animal rights activists, by contrast, believe that animals possess the right to exist free from human use and consumption. Consequently, current activists and their scholarly associates often miss the historical significance of earlier eras of activism. A growing historiography, however, demonstrates the centrality of animal protection to major American transformations such as Transcendentalism, Transnational Protestant revivalism and reform, the growth of science and technology, the rise of modern liberalism, child protectionism, and the development of American ideologies of benevolence.

Animal protection entered the American colonial record in December 1641, when the Massachusetts General Court enacted its comprehensive legal code, the “Body of Liberties.” Sections 92–93 prohibited “any Tyranny or Cruelty towards any brute Creature which are usuallie kept for man’s use” and mandated periodic rest and refreshment for any “Cattel” being driven or led. Puritan animal advocates believed that cruel dominion was a consequence of Adam and Eve’s fall from the Garden of Eden; kindly stewardship, however, reflected their reformist ideals, thus illuminating a long historical relationship between religion, reform, and animal protection.

Transnational Protestant revivalism and social reform in the early nineteenth century fueled the expansion of animal protectionism. In Great Britain, evangelicals and abolitionists spearheaded the earliest animal protection laws (1822) and organized societies (1824), which became a blueprint for dozens of new anticult cruelty laws in America. Social reformers and ministers became attentive to the status of animals during the Second Great Awakening (1790–1840). Embracing a new theology of free moral agency and human perfectibility, American ministers such as Charles Grandison Finney included animal mercy in their exegeses on upright Christian conduct. New transportation networks and communications technologies broadcast animal protection to far-flung audiences through classroom readers, Sunday school pamphlets, and fiction.

Antebellum abolitionists and temperance activists treated animal welfare as a barometer for human morality. Antislavery newspapers and novels, most famously Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852), stressed the incidence of animal abuse among slaveholders and animal kindness among abolitionists. Many future animal welfare leaders possessed abolitionist ties, such as George Thordike Angell, founder and president of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). Temperance advocates likewise believed that inebriates were cruel to their families and their horses. The Bands of Hope, a children’s group, stressed animal kindness as a moral complement to sobriety.

Beginning in the 1870s, animal protectionists saw the safeguarding of children and animals as equally important, as both were vulnerable creatures in need of protection. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

The History of Animal Protection in the United States

by Janet M. Davis

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Why is Animal Welfare Important?

by Jack Kittredge

Most NOFA members automatically support strong animal welfare standards. Many of us keep poultry or livestock and track their health and condition as carefully as we might that of our children or grandchildren.

But big changes are happening in the world of animal welfare and we need to be up to date on them.

1. First off, important, tighter changes in organic standards have been proposed. As organic producers, we need to understand them and help them become the best standards for us all.

2. Second, a number of the major poultry and livestock brands are voluntarily abandoning cages, crates and antibiotics in favor of pasture, free-ranging, and probiotics. Some producers, we need to understand them and help them become the best standards for us all.

Third, a Massachusetts ballot initiative in November calls for a vote on livestock standards for cows, pigs and chickens that could well ban Massachussets sales of some animal products produced in other states and shipped here for sale in our markets.

In this issue we look at the details of some of these proposals, examine how they are changing agriculture, and what the future is likely to require of us. We look at two farms that are successfully meeting high animal care standards while maintaining farm viability. We look at the animal care suggestions of world-class animal handlers, read a short history of the animal care movement in America, and consider the thoughts of various people on the topic of what a world without livestock might look like.

(continued from page 1)

(ASPICA) with the help of his influential allies, including historian George Bancroft and state senator Ezra Cornell. Days later, they spearheaded a powerful new state anticruelty law, which they amended in 1867 to prohibit additional forms of cruelty, including blood sports and abandonment. Bergh and his officers policed the streets wearing uniforms and badges to enforce the law.

By the 1870s SPCAs and anti-cruelty laws modeled after Bergh’s work in New York existed in most states. In the Gilded Age, activists directed their attention to the plight of domestic laboring animals in an urban, muscle-powered world—especially horses. Historians Clay McShane, Joel Tarr, and Ann Greene demonstrate the centrality of urban horses in building modern industrial America. Further, they treat horses as historical agents rather than passive conduits for a history of human ideas about animals. As the nation’s primary urban movers of machines, food, and people, horses suffered abusive drivers and overloaded haulage conditions with visible regularity. Animal protectionists also addressed the bleak system of livestock railroad transport from western rangelands to urban stockyards and slaughterhouses, culminating with the nation’s first federal animal welfare legislation in 1873, which mandated resthouses, culminating with the nation’s first federal animal welfare legislation in 1873, which mandated food, water, and rest stops every twenty-eight hours. They raided animal fights; they tried to end vivisection in laboratories and classrooms; and they routinely shot decrepit workhorses as a merciful end to suffering.

Animals were legally defined as property, but Bergh’s watershed legislation recognized cruelty as an offense to the animal itself—irrespective of ownership. Historian Susan Pearson argues that these laws helped transform American liberalism—from a classical conception of rights in the negative—to augur the rise of the modern “interventionist” liberal state. Pearson contends that this positive conception of rights drew animal protectionists into the history of the animal care movement in America, and consider the thoughts of various people on the topic of what a world without livestock might look like.

We hope it gets you thinking and acting on your own values!
Some scholars, most notably Steven Wise, argue that certain animals (such as this lowland gorilla pictured here) possess legal personhood, owing to their superior cognitive abilities. Photo by Ryan Vaarsi

Understanding Flight Zone and Point of Balance for Low Stress Handling of Cattle, Sheep, & Pigs

by Temple Grandin
Dept. of Animal Science
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This diagram illustrates the general flight zone of an animal. The actual flight zone of an individual animal will vary depending on how “tame” the animal is. An animal’s flight zone will vary depending on how calm it is. The flight zone gets bigger when an animal becomes excited. The flight zone is also bigger when you approach “head on.” Calm cattle are easier to move. If cattle become excited, it takes 20 to 30 minutes for them to calm back down. People should be quiet when moving animals. Yelling and loud noise is very stressful. High pitched noises are especially stressful.

This diagram introduces the concepts of the flight zone and point of balance. The two curved lines on the diagram represent a curved single file race. The flight zone diagram is especially useful for teaching people how to move cattle through single-file races and other confined spaces such as crowd pens. When cattle are handled in a single file race, the point of balance will be at the shoulder. On pastures and large pens, the point of balance may move forward and be slightly behind the eye. The behavior of groups of cattle in pasture is different because they are not confined in a single file race or small pen. The simple flight zone diagram will not work for groups in pasture or large pens because the animals are free to move and are not confined in a race (chute) or small pen. When moving groups of cattle in open spaces, refer to other diagrams on www.grandin.com.

Handlers who understand the concepts of flight zone and point of balance will be able to move animals more easily. The flight zone is the animal’s personal space, and the size of the flight zone is determined by the wildness or tameness of the animal. Completely tame animals have no flight zone and people can touch them. Tame animals should be led instead of being driven. Calm leading of groups of cattle is an excellent low stress way to move cattle on pastures. An animal that is not completely tame will begin to move away when the handler penetrates the edge of the flight zone. If all the animals are facing the handler, the handler is outside the flight zone. These principles will work on ranches, stockyards, lairages, feedlots, and many other places.

When an animal is being held in the squeeze chute in a curved chute system.

When the handler enters the flight zone the animals will turn away. The approaching handler is outside the flight zone of the light colored animal that is still lying down. However, the handler has entered the zone of awareness of the light colored animal because it is looking at the handler.

The handler steps away from the animals and turns. The handler walks in the opposite direction of the desired movement to move the animal forward.

When cattle are moving in a single file chute, the handler should back away from the animal. The principle of these two diagrams is that the handler walks inside the flight zone in the opposite direction of desired movement. When the handler returns, he or she walks outside the flight zone in the same direction.

To move only one animal, the handler should stop walking when the point of balance of the animal is crossed.

Keeping Cattle Calm in the Single File Race

People handling cattle in a single file chute (race) must learn to stay back and not continuously stand inside the flight zone when animals are waiting in line. A common cause of cattle rearing or becoming restless while waiting in line in a race is a person who continuously stands inside their flight zone.

Temple Grandin
The animals will usually calm down and stand quietly when the person backs up and removes themselves from the flight zone. The flight zone diagram is useful for teaching this concept. It is especially important when a chute (race) has open sides for people to always stand outside the edge of the flight zone. When a single animal or a group of cattle need to be moved, the handler enters the flight zone to move the animals. After the animals have been moved forward in the race, the handler should immediately back up and retreat from inside the flight zone.

**Working Crowd Pens and Tubes**

The most common mistake is putting too many pigs or cattle in the crowd pen or tub. Fill the crowd pen half full so animals have room to move. Good handling will require more walking to move small groups of animals into the crowd pen. Use the crowd pen or tub as a “passing through” pen. If animals wait in the crowd pen they are more likely to turn around. The next small bunch of animals should be brought into the crowd pen when the single file race is almost empty. This enables you to use following behavior and the animals will immediately pass through the crowd pen and enter the single file. In round tubs, never attempt to push animals with the crowd gate.

There is a species difference between cattle and pigs versus sheep. Cattle and pigs should be moved through the crowd pen in small, separate bunches. Sheeps have such intense following behavior that they can be moved in a more continuous flow. If animals fail to move through a crowd pen easily, try positioning the handler on the opposite side. In a round tub, positioning a handler with a flag outside the pen on the crowd gate pivot point often works really well. The cattle will circle around a person standing at the gate pivot and enter the single file race.

**Working Groups on Pasture**

When cattle are being handled in confined areas such as races and chutes the point of balance will usually be at the shoulder as shown in the diagrams. When a group of cattle are handled in an open pen the location of the point of balance may be more variable. Ron Gill, a cattle handling specialist, states that the point of balance may not be at the shoulder. He conducts many cattle handling demonstrations where cattle are handled in large open pens. Often a cow will move forward when the handler moves just past her eye. The point of balance on any one particular animal in a large pen or field may vary depending on how it is moving with the group. There are many situations and it is impossible to diagram all the possible angles for moving groups of cattle on pasture. The main purpose of the diagrams is to illustrate the concept that both individual animals and a group of animals have a point of balance.

**Basic Principle**

Moving inside the collective flight zone in the opposite direction of the desired movement will speed movement of the entire herd up. Moving outside the collective flight zone in the same direction will slow the herd down.

![Diagram showing movement pattern when two people are moving a group of cattle.](image)

This diagram shows the movement pattern when two people are moving a group of cattle. To keep the group moving, the triangle pattern is repeated multiple times. The dotted line with long dashes represents the outer edge of the collective flight zone. The dotted line with small dashes represents the outer edges of the animal’s zone of awareness (pressure zone). When the pressure zone is entered, the animals become aware of the handler’s presence. The handler is inside the outside edge of the collective flight zone when he walks in the opposite direction of desired movement to speed the herd up and move them forward. The handler is outside the collective flight, but still inside the pressure zone when he walks in the same direction of desired movement. This double triangle pattern diagram is adopted from the work of Guy Glossom, Mesquite, Texas. He warns that it is essential to keep the angles on the triangle sharp. Never allow the triangles to turn into circles.

Move in straight lines and do not circle around the animals. Do not chase a lone animal or a few stragglers. The motion of the herd will attract them back. A group of animals will have point of balance for the entire group. A good stock person can move the herd by working the group point of balance. The handler should avoid the blind spot behind the animal’s rear. Deep penetration of the flight zone should be avoided. Animals become upset when a person is inside their personal space and they are unable to move away. If cattle turn back and run past the handler while they are being driven down a drive alley in the stockyard, overly deep penetration of the flight zone is likely to cause. The animals turn back in an attempt to get away from the handler. If the animals start to turn back, the handler should back up and increase the distance between himself and the animals. Backing up must be done at the first indication of a turn back. If a group of animals bulk at a smell or a shadow up ahead, be patient and wait for the leader to cross the shadow. The rest of the animals will follow. If cattle rear up in the single file chute (race), back away from them. Do not touch them or hit them. They are rearing in an attempt to increase the distance between themselves and the handler. They will usually settle down if you leave them alone.

A group of cattle moving as a herd maintains eye contact with each other, that way the entire herd can move as a coordinated whole.

The next animal behind the leader is positioned just behind the leader’s point of balance. This is the same position that a person would stand in to move the animals.

Using the principles of flight zone behavior, a handler is able to move cattle into a pen in a calm and orderly way. Using the positions shown on this diagram will enable the handler to control the flow of cattle through the gate. Cattle movement can be slowed or speeded up by moving forward or backward.

![Diagram for moving cattle quietly out of a gate.](image)

Diagram for moving cattle quietly out of a gate. The handler moves in a small triangle as shown on the diagram. Sometimes the handler barely has to move after the flow is started. A good way to visualize the movement is that after the flow through the gate is started, the cattle moved around the handler on the edge of a bubble that is like a “force field” around the handler. The cattle position themselves in relation to the handler so they maintain a flight zone between themselves and the handler.

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Glynwood: Keeping the Standards High

by Jack Kittredge

From a farmer’s point of view, soils in southeastern New York abutting Connecticut are sadly lacking in the limestones, shales, and sandstone which make central and western New York such excellent farm country. Metamorphized rather than sedimentary rock often translates into stony fields with the occasional massive boulder. This is the case in much of Putnam County, east of the Hudson River and just over 50 miles from Manhattan.

Agriculture never took off there as well as it did further north and west. Instead, commerce along the Hudson and manufacturing were important. Geological deposits throughout the river valley contain veins of magnetite iron ore. Access to these deposits, as well as trees for charcoal and steam, and water power to drive machinery, meant that from colonial times into the 19th century iron works were established along both sides of the Hudson River.

At the urging of no less a person than James Madison, the West Point Foundry was set up on the east bank of the river after the War of 1812 to improve cast iron armaments. The small-town of Cold Spring (across the Hudson from West Point) was chosen as the site. It was a crucial armaments foundry during the Civil War, producing over 2,000 cannon and 3,000,000 shells, employing 1,400 people and even visited by Abraham Lincoln in 1862. After the war, however, as steel became more important, the iron foundry declined and ultimately went out of business in 1889.

Forty years later George Perkins, a New York financier, purchased 2,500 acres in Cold Spring for a country estate. Upon the 1993 death of his wife Linn it was preserved with most of the forested uplands going to make Fahnestock State Park, while the 225 acre core farm, open land, ponds and buildings went to a land trust and was leased to the non-profit Glynwood Foundation, endowed by the Perkins family, to aid it in working for a Hudson Valley defined by food: where farmers prosper, food entrepreneurs succeed, residents are nourished, and visitors are inspired.

One of the most important ways Glynwood fulfills its mission by running the Glynwood Farm, a diverse small scale farming model where young farmers learn the practical and managerial skills needed to survive. At the Farm they raise and market produce, eggs, meat chickens, turkeys, sheep, goats, cattle and pigs. All the animals are on pasture and those who need it (poultry and pigs) receive non-GMO grain supplements. Ruminants, pigs and turkeys are already Animal Welfare Approved (AWA) and the chickens are nearing approval. The Farm’s produce is certified organic, and the animals are raised organically except they do not get certified organic feed.

In charge of the animal operations at Glynwood are Ken Kleinpeter, vice president of operations, and Don Arrant, livestock manager.

Ken joined Glynwood in 2005 and manages all of the agriculture activities, as well as buildings and grounds maintenance. He was a founding partner of Hollow Road Farms, the first sheep dairy operation in the United States, and later served as general manager of The Old Chatham Sheepherding Company. He also was the farm and genetics center manager for the Heritage Breeds Conservancy, and spent time in Bosnia as a USAID consultant. He holds a journalism degree from Louisiana State University.

Don Arrant is responsible for overseeing Glynwood’s diverse livestock operation. His previous farming experience includes working as a field manager at Red Wagon Organic Farm and apprenticing at Frog Belly Farm and Cure Organic Farm, all in Boulder CO. Don holds a degree in history from Earlham College.

AWA is an organization that audits and certifies family farms that use high-welfare methods of raising animals on pasture or range. The farms then can use the organization’s certification in marketing their animal products. AWA standards and helpful fact sheets on particular issues are available at www.animalwelfareapproved.org.

Among other things, Animal Welfare Approved:• requires animals to be raised on pasture or range• prohibits dual production (some animals AWA approved and some not)• awards approval only to family farmers• charges no fees to participating farmers• incorporates comprehensive standards for high welfare farming

Animal Welfare Approved standards try to address every aspect of each species’ lifecycle needs from birth to death and works diligently to maintain a farm’s ability to be economically viable. AWA has standards for all commonly domesticated farmed animals. A number of exotic species are managed for meat and fiber in this country but AWA will only consider accrediting other species if they are indigenous to the country where they are being produced. Currently the only uncommon species they will approve in the US is Bison.

AWA will not consider the following non-indigenous species in the US: Yak, Water Buffalo, Rattles (Ostriches, Rheas, Emus), Llamas and Alpacas, Beefalo

Glynwood’s certification by AWA was initiated because a major AWA funder, the Grace Communications Foundation, is also a supporter of Glynwood. But being able to meet the standards is important to the mission of the farm, showing that high standards of stewardship and economic viability can go together. Ken and Don are generally supportive
of AWA standards as workable, although they have some quibbles.

“I don’t know the other animal welfare certification organizations,” says Ken, “so I can’t really compare AWA to them. Most AWA standards are reasonable, but a few I have trouble with. For example, for goats, they have a square foot requirement which is fine. But you also have to build platforms for the goats to play on. (AWA Goat Standard 8.1.25 ‘When goats are off pasture, raised platforms must be provided.’) Now I’ve set some broken legs on goats from jumping off the platform. But I can live with that.

“I also don’t really have any issues with their standards on pigs or cattle or poultry,” he continues. “My only issue with the chickens is that they recommend against using [but do not prohibit - ed] very productive breeds. They define that as varieties exceeding 280 eggs per laying cycle. We have managed highly productive layers here for years and if you feed them right and they are roaming they are just as healthy as any other chicken.”

Concerning the sheep, however, Ken does have one complaint with AWA standards – tail docking.

“The sheep requirements won’t let you dock the tail,” he says, “even of ewes that you are going to save as replacement stock. If you have long tails on sheep they get very wooly, and if they are on pasture and have the slightest loose manure on them because of green grass diarrhea, you have a much higher chance of fly strike. Fly strike happens when blowflies lay their eggs in the manure adhering to an animal. Those maggots work their way to the skin and then start consuming their way inward. Fly strike is hard to spot early, but easy to spot later when the ewe’s whole rear end is infested and the skin and then starts consuming their way inward. Fly strike is hard to spot early, but easy to spot later when the ewe’s whole rear end is infested and the skin and then starts consuming their way inward. Fly strike is hard to spot early, but easy to spot later when the ewe’s whole rear end is infested and the skin and then starts consuming their way inward. 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“...when the ewe’s whole rear end is infested and the skin and then starts consuming their way inward...”

Ken adheres to the AWA standard, anyway, and Glynwood has not applied for derogation.

Regarding parasites among lambs on pasture, Ken feels that the AWA standards are quite reasonable.

“We move them every two or three days,” he says. “We try to work around the parasite cycle. After a certain amount of time, the eggs that the parasites are putting down will hatch and can re-infect the sheep. So you want to get them out of that pasture before that happens. You are never going to be perfect. Parasites are not stupid. But you can certainly reduce the parasite load with smart management.

Young animals are much more susceptible to being badly parasitized than mature ones. Those were all born this year in February, mostly.

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“We move them every two or three days,” he says. “We try to work around the parasite cycle. After a certain amount of time, the eggs that the parasites are putting down will hatch and can re-infect the sheep. So you want to get them out of that pasture before that happens. You are never going to be perfect. Parasites are not stupid. But you can certainly reduce the parasite load with smart management.

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The Natural Farmer
Fall, 2016

but graze some goats,” asserts Ken about some of
“You can’t mow it, you can’t do anything here
needs less forest and more open land.
are poor and want to go back to forest. But the farm
is difficult to maintain. It is hilly and rocky, soils
eastern New York, Glynwood has lots of pasture that
how well you are doing.
samples must be taken at least annually to assess
phosphates or similar products. And of course fecal
“Even the organic standards allow some. AWA calls
“AWA does allow some wormers,” he continues.

Of course, like much of western New England and
and Ken is happy with their standards.
AWA is happy with the farm’s poultry-raising sys-
tem, and Ken is happy with their standards.

They care about having enough ventilation, space
to move around, roosts, etc.” he relates. “I don’t find
those standards unreasonable.

“We have problems with hawks and owls, but that
is a cost of doing business if the chickens have to be
free ranging” he sighs. “We use the electronet fence
in the yard. It is expensive to put in but once it is up
the predators cannot go under or through it. Also
the layers out gradually from their winter barn
through a series of yards.

Margareth Sekera, over the years, has
expanded by his wife, scientist
Franz Sekera, carefully edited and
translated from its original German. This popular 1943 treatise
first time, this popular 1943 treatise
Sick Soils
Healthy Soils,
Margareth Sekera,
Acclaimed veterinarian Hubert
Karreman calls on his nearly thirty
years of experience in organic and
holistic medicine to guide you on
how to recognize, treat and prevent a
holistic medicine to guide you on
symptoms of unhealthy soil and the behavior of plants on non-
soils scientists in its original German. Starting with the basic
concepts of “light” and “soil structure” and moving along to the
symptoms of unhealthy soil and the behavior of plants on non-
feeble fields, Sekera investigates the complex interrelationships
in the soil as well as the practical measures to preserve and
improve soil肥

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wheelied Conestoga wagons, containing their egg
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Ken has found the pasture yards are excellent at
keeping out 4-footed predators, but not so much the
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layers of maybe 800 to 1000 at a time. The best
lay 300 for almost a year. They are in the yard from
spring to fall, however, as opposed to lambs that
grow to sale size, however, as opposed to lambs that
can be ready in 8 months.

Layers in poultry net with wagons

“We have problems with hawks and owls, but that
is a cost of doing business if the chickens have to be
free ranging” he sighs. “We use the electronet fence
so we rarely lose birds to ground predators, but we
lose them to other birds. We started putting chickens
in at night because the worst losses we got were in
the early morning from owls. They were coming at
dawn and really killing us. So after dark everyday
someone has to put the birds in.”

One other downside of open pastures is that the feed
and water is kept there, not in the moving shelters.
Which means that wild birds are often coming for
breakfast, lunch and dinner. Ken estimates that sometimes he is feeding 100 times as many wild
birds as domestic ones!

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because we don’t have the captive bolt system they want us to use for stunning. It costs $300.”

During my visit the farm was processing a batch of birds in a room in one of their buildings. They slaughtered under the federal on-farm exemption so that it doesn’t require a USDA inspector, and compost the guts, heads, feet and feathers.

“No you can do up to a thousand birds under that exemption,” explains Ken, “but you can only sell them from your own farm. You can’t put them in a store. If we were to be state licensed for slaughter, we would need two rooms, one for killing, scaling and plucking, and one for eviscerating. We have a walk-in freezer here in the processing building, and a walk-in freezer in another building just a few steps away.”

The captive bolt equipment the AWA requires is a smaller version of that used to kill large animals. Driven by either an explosive cartridge or compressed air, a metal ‘bolt’ is driven into the head of the animal a certain distance, but does not fully leave the device (thus is ‘captive’) and is reused. Although the device often kills the animal instantly, its purpose is to stun and cause immediate unconsciousness, avoiding any sensation of pain. The bird’s neck is then dislocated or cut to ensure death.

“I have the paperwork from AWA,” says Don. “We need to get the device and meet with them to inspect it. It is used for cows and pigs for the most part, large animals, but they have a small one for poultry. It runs off air pressure or a CO2 cartridge. You put it right against the animal’s head and the charge sends the bolt into the brain. It is supposed to be instantaneous, as opposed to cutting the head off, which involves some pain.”

“What we have done,” adds Ken, “is use a very sharp knife to sever the jugular vein, but not the windpipe. That way they bleed to death in a pretty peaceful way. But if you sever the windpipe they can no longer breathe and they start to panic and flop around.”

A detailed AWA fact sheet on poultry slaughter is available at: www.animalwellfareapproved.org

Glynwood Farm is certified organic for their vegeta-

able and fruit operations; the butchers are not. The cost of organic feed for the animals is the reason.

“I think that being certified organic is not necessary for us,” finds Ken. “If we were larger and selling into wholesale markets and our buyers couldn’t talk to us, then it would make sense. But at Glynwood we don’t have a lot of anything, animals or vegetables. We have 20 cows, 40 sheep, 30 goats, 6 sows. We don’t really need to certify our organic veg-

tables either. We sell them on farm at the store 3 days a week, or through the CSA. And we get dona-
tions to give a lot to food banks and farm to school groups. But veggies are so much easier to certify!

The problem with being organic for the animals is their feed input.

“What our customers are most concerned about is GMO feed,” he continues. “So we are buying transitional organic feed for our pigs and chickens. It isn’t certified organic -- it is raised without GMOs but on land which hasn’t been through the 3 year waiting period to be free of chemicals. So it is a bit less expensive than certified organic feed. But it is still expensive!)

“We were buying conventional feed from a farm in Columbia County that had chosen not to use GMOs,” he concludes. “Then a couple of years ago they started using GMOs. That is when we made the break. I felt everything else we are doing with our animals was making them more healthy – our chickens out on grass, our pigs grazing – and we were producing an affordable product for our people. When we switched to transitional and non-GMO feed (from another farm in Columbia County) we had to double the price of our pork and chicken and eggs. The chickens went from $3.50 to $6.00 a pound, because our feed prices went up so much. We stopped doing as many chickens because we couldn’t sell as many. We were doing a thousand a year and now we are down to 500 or 600.”

From a consumer point of view Glynwood, like other small farms, has to figure out what is most important. Is carbon footprint more important than organic? Is non-GMO more important than carbon footprint? Where does local fit in? Is price most important?

Kleinpeter feels that organic is not as important for the farm’s marketing as it would be if they were selling to stores or distributors, and is generally happy with the fit between AWA and organic practices, which they follow except for certified feed.

“For us, 90% of the meat we sell goes to people who drive here to buy it,” he states. “Every one can ask us about our animal management and I don’t think being organic would help. I also don’t believe there is any conflict with the organic standards on feed, medications, space allocations, etc. I think for the newly proposed organic standards for animal wel-

fare we could meet them except for the transitional feed we buy, and when our supplier goes organic we may stay with them and go organic for those ani-

mals as well.

“So ultimately we could certify our pigs and chick-

ens organic,” Ken continues. “But there is no uni-

verse in which we could buy organic hay for our ru-

minants. We don’t have a lot of hayfields. We have a lot of grazing land that is not at all suited to making hay. It’s rocks and steep slopes. We just don’t have enough extra to make the hay we need. And it actu-

ally pencils out better to buy hay than make it when you figure the costs of fertilizer, the free hay waste from the barn to use back on the fields when you buy it, and the fact that apprentices don’t come here knowing how to make hay. It’s a special skill and takes a lot of training. We have some pretty steep hills here and it can be dangerous. Plus the haying equipment we have here is ancient and needs serious upgrades if we are going to continue to make hay. Our haybine is 50 years old.”

In some places, he notes, one can make agreements with people to hay their land. But Putnam County doesn’t have estates with fields people want kept open. Besides all the houses there is a lot of rocky and forested land, but very little of it is open. And for organic ruminants in the winter you need certi-

fied organic hay.

“Hay is already expensive where we are,” explains Ken. “We’re not in deep farm country, so if we want to buy hay we are trucking it an hour to two hours. So you get your hay, and then your trucking adds another third on the cost of the hay. If we were in Columbia County where I used to farm, people would call up and ask me to make hay. They had 50 or 60 acres they wanted cut. It doesn’t exist here. Not in Westchester and Putnam Counties.”

Of course at Glynwood Center the farm is only part of the operation. There is a whole regional food initiative aimed at shining a light on different value added area products – hard apple cider, for instance. There is a new incubator project in New Paltz, where Glynwood manages 400 acres and of,

Lambs graze in electronet fencing

Eviscerating chickens using the on-farm exemption.
bers land, shared equipment and other help to new food-related ventures – two livestock businesses and a compost operation. They also do a lot of training of chefs and are working on charcuterie, promoting food-connected activities. None of these really need Glynwood farm itself, but because they have it and it is a nice place to come, people can meet there as a group and work on ideas and projects.

Facilities exist at the Center to sleep about 30 guests and have meetings of 50 or 60 attendees. In order to help support the costs of maintaining 15 heated buildings, another 8 or 9 unheated ones, and almost 3 miles of private roads, Glynwood offers retreats, locations for weddings, fashion photo shoots for New York advertisers, and other entrepreneurial ventures.

“You can’t really ask donors to give money for maintenance,” Kleinpeter explains. “They want to do programs to help people. We have an endowment to help with maintenance, but it is not adequate. So from strictly financial practicality we have to use the site to make some money.”

One of the most important missions at Glynwood is training apprentices.

The apprenticeship program is almost a year in length. Apprentices are paid the minimum wage and housed as well (which is crucial in this high rent area an hour from Manhattan). So it gets really good candidates, and a lot of them. But there are currently only a few slots – three for veggies, two for livestock. A third for livestock is currently a goal.

In Ken’s analysis, the apprenticeship program is pretty costly.

“If someone said the whole mission on the farm is to make a profit,” he sighs, “then I would get rid of all these other ventures and just graze a few more cattle. I would need one helper, we would just graze. We wouldn’t make as much gross income, but we would make a profit on what we took in because I would have so much less labor, no feed costs, and just graze the cows.

“But of course they want us to train farmers here,” he adds, “so to train farmers you have to have a lot of different enterprises. When our apprentices come they are going to get a taste of goats, of sheep, of chickens for meat and eggs, beef, pork – all of it. And we don’t do too much of any one thing in farming because we don’t want to be competing too hard with private farms. Not that there are many private farms here to compete with. But doing a little bit of a lot of things is not a good way to make money!”

Glynwood gets philanthropy to help support the program so they can pay minimum wage and meet the labor laws. But Kleinpeter feels that if you are a normal farmer and you have a choice between paying an unskilled apprentice a minimum wage or some Mexicans that same minimum wage, you are going to pay the Mexicans.

“I hate to put it so bluntly,” he explains, “but they are going to work a lot more, they know what they are doing. So if these laws keep pushing the minimum up they are going to eliminate the ability of young people to get trained on this farm. I’m not saying apprentices should be taken advantage of. They shouldn’t. But the truth is that if farmers are going to have to pay apprentices a high minimum wage they are not going to hire apprentices. Or they are going to do it completely under the table and treat them however they want to treat them.”

Kleinpeter has a long history working with animals. For awhile he was employed with a group trying to focus attention on and find an alternative to the inhumane conditions experienced by calves raised for veal.

The way most veal is produced is by keeping calves in little crates so they can’t move and keeping their blood iron deficient. It is the iron that makes the blood and the muscles red, considered an undesirable trait in veal.

“I’ve been in those operations,” he recalls. “They pull blood on them and are always monitoring them. It is this grim kind of choice – can you keep them as anemic as possible but still keep them alive? Versus do you need to give them a little iron to keep them alive until slaughter. You would see the calves licking the wood where the nail heads were, trying to get iron. It was horrible.”

But he believes that animal welfare advocates, to be taken seriously, need more real-world experience with livestock and farming.

“You have all these misinformed vegetarians,” he says, “saying: ‘Meat is environmentally bad, veg-gies are environmentally good!’ I’m like: ‘No, you can’t say that. It depends on how they are produced!’ Feedlot beef on every level is bad. But broccoli grown in the Imperial Valley, where they are depleting the aquifers, salinating the soil, growing monoculture crops that require pesticides, and then shipping it across the country – how is that more sustainable than these little fish put up on these fields and eat grass? They reply: ‘But it takes 8 pounds of grain to raise a pound of meat. That grain should be going to people!’ Do they think they can grow grain on this hill? The soil would all be in the Hudson River mighty quick! So you either use ruminant animals to make food here, or its woods. They don’t think through it.”

“If someone wants to be a vegetarian because that is their moral calculation,” he concludes, “that is fine. But think through what you are doing and how the world works. I don’t think the animal rights people have thought through what would happen if they won and became a political majority. All this open, rolling land would go back to woods. The farm animals that didn’t end up in zoos would go extinct. And zoos aren’t very humane!”

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A Brief History of the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices Rule

On April 7, 2016, USDA posted a proposed rule -- the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (OLPP) Rule -- to clarify existing federal organic regulations related to animal welfare standards. The rule was published in the Federal Register on April 13, and the comment period closed on July 13. The department is now evaluating those comments and will likely publish a final rule in the next few months.

This rulemaking was based on a 2011 National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) recommendation, which sets standards for indoor and outdoor space requirements for organic poultry and livestock, and adds definitions to which practices are allowed and prohibited under organic regulations.

Key Changes to Current Regulations in the Proposed Rule

The detailed list of the proposed changes from the Federal Register is printed in this issue of The Natural Farmer, but a short summary is:

- Distinct welfare provisions are provided for mammalian and avian livestock
- Outdoor access for poultry cannot have a solid roof overhead
- Outdoor space requirements for poultry must be less than 2.25 pounds of hen per square foot of outdoor space
- Outdoor space must have 50% soil cover
- Indoor space requirements for poultry must be less than 2.25 pounds of hen per square foot of indoor space
- Outdoor space is made for pasture-based and avian-stype production systems
- Further clarity is given on justifications for confinement indoors for livestock and poultry
- Further clarity is provided on outdoor alterations that are allowed and prohibited
- Proposal implementation timing following the issuance of a final rule is: 1 year for all new organic operations; 3 years for new livestock housing construction; 5 years for all certified operations to be in full compliance

Background

These USDA's proposed rules have been a long time coming. In 2002, when the National Organic Program (NOP) was finally established, the NOSB, a committee that includes farmers, processors, retailers, and environmentalists, overwhelmingly approved recommendations specifically stating that "bare surfaces other than soil (e.g., metal, concrete, wood) do not meet the intent of the National Organic Standards."

But that wasn’t binding—it had the legal effect of a suggestion. Thus the 2011 NOSB clarifications, after years of debate and input from stakeholders, in which the board put more specific recommendations that would guarantee the hens a minimum of 2 square feet each, both inside and outside, and access to soil.

After considering all these concerns, the USDA finally presented the rule to the public last spring.

In the fourteen years since the NOP was established, tremendous changes have taken place in the marketplace. Growing at double digits the whole time, sales increased an astonishing 119.8 percent. Up to now processors have been able to purchase organic eggs from very large suppliers (one hates to call them "farmers") with 100,000 or more layers. But growers at that scale cannot realistically give their birds access to soil. The amount of land they would be required to own to physically do so would be uneconomical, without even figuring the costs of security, food and water delivery, manure management, and personnel.

While an estimated ninety-five percent of organic egg producers are already following the proposed rules, according to the Organic Trade Association (OTA), the 5 percent who haven’t been following the USDA’s lead just happen to sell one in four organic eggs on the market.

How have they been able to remain certified when the current standards call for “access to outdoors”?

“We wrote “access to outdoors,” but somehow the words we tried weren’t clear enough,” said George Siemon, chief executive of Organic Valley, the largest U.S. cooperative of organic farmers, with more than 1,800 members producing dairy, eggs, and produce and a key advocate of the 1990 Organic Food Production Act. “We’ve had a bunch of people start up egg houses that have a little screened porch,” he said. “We had nothing like that in mind.”

Right from the beginning of the NOP, in the fall of 2002, The Country Hen, a Hubbardston, Massachusetts egg producer, was turned down for organic certification by the NOFA/Mass certification program. The program recognized that the company’s 5 acre operation was not large enough to provide outdoor access for their thousands of layers.

Owner George Bass, unwilling to be so easily deterred, immediately called Washington, set up a meeting with Richard Mathews, the NOP head at the time, and emerged from that meeting the next day with a ruling that porches would meet the outdoor requirement.

Although the NOFA/Mass certification program still refused to back down and the matter was ultimately settled by a lawsuit (in which the judge ruled the USDA had the ultimate authority to waive it’s own rules), other large egg producers quickly adopted the screened porch approach. These were usually on pavement, under a roof, and without a large enough door or floor space to admit many birds at a time.

The new rules by the U.S. Department of Agriculture finally eliminate this option, specifying that outdoor access must include soil (as opposed to asphalt), open air without a roof, and no more than 2.25 pounds of bird for every square foot of outdoor space.

It is understandable that the egg producers who have used this “porch” waiver to the rules are now up in arms. The changes they must make to their operations to accommodate these new rules will be expensive. That is why organic eggs raised in a truly pasture-based or free range system, which is possible on smaller farms, sell for $5 a dozen and up. The care and management to maintain such a system is not cheap.

In addition to having to pay more for organic eggs, processors might find that suppliers of such eggs may not as easily produce to the volume and timing standards required for industrial food production. Industrial organic egg production, a strange phrase, is not cheap. Herbruck’s poultry ranch as an example of inadequate outdoor access.

Greg Herbruck, executive vice president of the company, stands by their housing system. “A porch is an approved method, approved by the USDA and National Organic Program,” he said. “We have been certified every year.” His company’s Green Meadow site in Saranac, Mich., will eventually house 2 million hens in 18 houses and currently holds about 1.7 million to 1.8 million hens.

Herbruck also appears to be one of the largest of the industrial organic egg producers in the country, saying his company alone has at one point or another produced almost 20 percent of all organic eggs sold in the U.S.

Herbruck has been in Washington raising concerns about the rule. He says that 70 percent of organic egg production would have significant trouble meeting the regulations and that his 2-million-hen operation doesn’t have enough land to meet the requirement. He also argues that his hens, if living outside, would be exposed to diseases and predators.
In his comments to the NOSB he says: "We fear these changes will limit consumer access to organic products rather than encourage growth of the organic market." The requirements for soil-based, uncovered living areas, he said, both "assaults hen health" and "greatly increase[s] the risk to public health." Similar concerns were raised in 2010 by a group of commercial-size egg farms, including Herbruck’s, as well as Cal-Maine Foods, Krecher’s Farm Fresh Eggs, and Oakdell Egg Farms.

Even though the early Congressional opposition to the changes through an appropriation rider did not pass, there are still plenty of opportunities for Congress to throw a monkey wrench into the mix. Rumors of them abound and the financial interests at stake are significant. We probably have not heard the end of the lobbyists’ complaints about how these are too burdensome!

Opponents of the Agriculture Department’s organic animal welfare proposal also have allies among state veterinarians. In comments filed on the rule the National Association of State Animal Health Officials and several individual state veterinarians say “outdoor access” provisions would undermine biosecurity instructions that the USDA gave to poultry producers after the avian influenza outbreak last year, as well as FDA requirements for preventing salmonella. The USDA in the proposal acknowledged that direct outdoor exposure and contact with wild birds and animals is a known risk, wrote Susan Keller, president of the NASAOH. “It must be questioned whether this proposal emphasizes marketing above poultry health, and if so, whether the risk to the entire national poultry industry has been considered.”

While it’s the impact on the egg industry that has drawn the loudest complaints, the opposition to the new standards isn’t just about eggs. The proposed update includes stricter requirements for the production of poultry, beef, pork, and dairy as well. Some groups representing these industries, including the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association and the National Pork Producers’ Council, filed requests for more time.

“... that there is a direct impact on organic beef and pork farmers, that’s not what these concerns are about, said Andrew DeCoriolis of Farm Forward. “Those industries are not worried about the small percent of organic operators they represent,” he said. “They are more concerned with having [animal welfare] standards be part of a federal livestock program.”

Some in the organic food sector, meanwhile, were embroiled in a furious lobbying battle over a possible amendment to block or weaken the proposed new regulations. Shortly after the proposals were released, a one-page rider was slipped into a congressional appropriations bill. Although it was ultimately defeated, it would have eliminated all funding for the stricter new rule.

It said funding can’t be used “to write, prepare, or publish” the final rule on organic animal welfare, or “to implement or enforce the proposed rule” pending an independent economic assessment.

“This sort of rider is not that uncommon with rule-making,” said Cary Cognolati, a law professor at the University of Pennsylvania and director of the Penn Program on Regulation.

The USDA, for its part, stood by its embattled proposal. “Strengthening standards for organic livestock and poultry will ensure that we meet consumers’ demand for transparency and integrity,” the agency said in a statement. “The proposed rule meets the recommendations of the National Organic Standards Board and USDA’s own Inspector General, setting needed standards for organic animals... and establishing a level playing field for all producers.”

Charges that producers cannot afford the new standards are disputed by proponents of the new rules. “Producing food that meets the USDA Organic label is a choice for farmers. And consumers who choose to buy certified organic foods want that label to mean something. If any producers choose not to update their production practices to fall in line with the proposed Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices, there are new programs for farmers to fill any gap in supply that may occur with some producers exiting the organic market,” says the Organic Trade Association.

As for the risk to public health, OTA’s Senior Crop and Livestock Specialist Nate Lewis points out that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has reviewed the proposed rule and concluded that there wouldn’t be a negative impact on biosecurity related to avian flu or other poultry diseases.

Animal welfare groups also see the new rule as an improvement, though they would like provisions on pain relief for dehorning animals and space requirements for pigs, among other things. Farm Forward, the ASPCA, and the Animal Welfare Institute, for example, have all expressed their support. “No system is perfect,” said Suzanne McMillan, content director of ASPCA’s farm animal welfare campaign. “[But] the rules are a significant leap forward for animal welfare.”

A number of other farm groups also support the rule. During the scare about the Appropriations rider, the National Farmers Union and 36 other farm, consumer, wildlife, and environmental groups sent a letter to the committee urging the senators to leave the rule alone. The rule “will provide certainty about what procedures are allowed under the organic program ... and maintain the integrity of the organic seal,” the groups say.

The Organic Trade Association was actively involved in fashioning and pushing for the rule, both behind the scenes and in public action alerts and letters to members.

During the concern about a blocking rider in Congress, the group developed a “Don’t Play Chicken with Organic” slogan that brought it a lot of attention. It pointed out the voluntary nature of organic certification, reviewed the long study period taken to deliberate on new standards, and concluded that strong welfare standards are critical to preserving trust in the organic label.

In response to USDA’s request for comments, OTA convened a task force to analyze the proposed rule. The mandate of the task force was to assist OTA in developing comments to USDA-NOP on the rule that would reflect the current perspectives of the organic livestock sector. The focus of the task force was to ensure that the specifics within the proposed rule accurately reflect NOSB recommendations, lent themselves to consistent implementation and enforcement by Accredited Certifying Agencies and USDA, and leveled the playing field for organic livestock and poultry producers across the nation.

Over the course of the spring and summer task force subcommittees comprised of organic livestock operators representing eggs, broilers, beef, dairy, and swine, along with accredited certifiers, have met and discussed the proposed revisions and their impact on the organic sector.

Most of the smaller organic farmers were represented in this process by their own groups, such as the NOFAs, which in turn were members of, or actively consulted by, the National Organic Coalition (NOC). NOC ultimately called for support for the rule and suggested several amendments to make it stronger, such as requiring that the 50% of poultry outdoor space which must be soil but also be covered in green vegetation and require reoccupation of the outdoor space for layers than the suggested level of 2.25 pounds of bird per square foot.

An article by NOC executive director Abby Youngblood is being printed in this issue for those interested in their position.
The Proposed Organic Livestock & Poultry Practices Rule  

### Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section title</th>
<th>Current wording</th>
<th>Type of action</th>
<th>Proposed action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>Terms Defined.</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Beak trimming. The removal of the curved tip of the beak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Caponization. Castration of chickens, turkeys, pheasants and other avian species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Cattle wetting. The surgical separation of two layers of the skin from the connective tissue along a 2 to 4 inch path on the dewlap, neck or shoulders used for ownership identification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>De-beaking. The removal of more than the beak tip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>De-snooding. The removal of the turkey snood (a fleshy protuberance on the forehead of male turkeys).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Dubbing. The removal of poultry combs and wattles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Indoors. The flat space or platform area which is under a solid roof. On each level the animals have access to food and water and can be confined if necessary. Indoor space for avian species includes, but is not limited to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Pasture housing. A mobile structure for avian species with 70 percent perforated flooring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Aviary housing. A fixed structure for avian species which has multiple tiers/levels with feed and water on each level. Slatted/mesh floor housing. A fixed structure for avian species which has both: (1) A slatted floor where perches, feed and water are provided over a pit or well for manure collection; and (2) litter covering the remaining solid floor. Floor litter housing. A fixed structure for avian species which has absorbent litter covering the entire floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Mulesing. The removal of skin from the buttocks of sheep, approximately 2 to 4 inches wide and running away from the anus to the hock to prevent fly strike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Outdoors. Any area in the open air with at least 50 percent soil, outside a building or shelter where there are no solid walls or solid roof attached to the indoor living space structure. Fencing or netting that does not block sunlight or rain may be used as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Perch. A rod or branch type structure that serves as a roost and allows birds to utilize vertical space in the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New Term ......</td>
<td>Pullet. A female chicken or other avian species being raised for egg production that has not yet started to lay eggs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Poult. The same structure as for a pullet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Roost. A flat structure over a manure pit that allows birds to grip with their toes as they would on a perch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Soil. The outermost layer of the earth comprised of minerals, water, air, organic matter, fungi and bacteria in which plants may grow roots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Stocking density. The weight of animals on a given unit of land at any one time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>New term ......</td>
<td>Toe clipping. The removal of the nail and distal joint of the back two toes of a male bird.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Livestock Health Care Practice Standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section title</th>
<th>Current wording</th>
<th>Proposed action</th>
<th>Proposed wording</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>205.238</td>
<td>Livestock Health Care Practice Standard</td>
<td>No Change.</td>
<td>No Change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(a)</td>
<td>(a) The producer must establish and maintain preventive livestock health care practices, including:</td>
<td>No change.</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(a)(1)</td>
<td>(1) Selection of species and types of livestock with regard to suitability for site-specific conditions and resistance to prevalent diseases and parasites;</td>
<td>No change.</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(a)(2)</td>
<td>(2) Provision of a feed ration sufficient to meet nutritional requirements, including vitamins, minerals, protein and/or amino acids, fatty acids, energy sources, and fiber (rumenants); Revision</td>
<td>(2) Provision of a feed ration sufficient to meet nutritional requirements, including vitamins, minerals, protein and/or amino acids, fatty acids, energy sources, and fiber (rumenants), resulting in appropriate body condition.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(a)(3)</td>
<td>(3) Establishment of appropriate housing, pasture conditions, and sanitation practices to minimize the occurrence and spread of diseases and parasites; No change.</td>
<td>No change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(a)(4)</td>
<td>(4) Provision of conditions which allow for exercise, freedom of movement, and reduction of stress appropriate to the species; No change.</td>
<td>No change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(a)(5)</td>
<td>(5) Performance of physical alterations as needed to promote the animal’s welfare and in a manner that minimizes pain and stress; and Revision</td>
<td>(5) Physical alterations may be performed to benefit the welfare or hygiene of the animals, or for identification purposes or safety. Physical alterations must be performed on livestock at a reasonably young age, with minimal stress and pain and by a competent person.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(a)(5)(i)</td>
<td>New</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(a)(5)(ii)</td>
<td>New</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(a)(6)</td>
<td>(6) Administration of vaccines and other veterinary biologics. No change.</td>
<td>No change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(a)(7)</td>
<td>New</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>205.238(a)(8)</td>
<td>New</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(a)(9)</td>
<td>New</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(b)</td>
<td>(b) When preventive practices and veterinary biologics are inadequate to prevent sickness, a producer may administer synthetic medications: Provided, that, such medications are allowed under § 205.603. Parasiticides allowed under § 205.603 may be used on:</td>
<td>No change.</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(b)(1)</td>
<td>(1) Breeder stock, when used prior to the last third of gestation but not during lactation for progeny that are to be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced; and No change.</td>
<td>No change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(b)(2)</td>
<td>(2) Dairy stock, when used a minimum of 90 days prior to the production of milk or milk products that are to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic No change.</td>
<td>No change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(b)(3)</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>(3) Synthetic medications may be administered in the presence of illness or to alleviate pain and suffering. Provided, that such medications are allowed under § 205.603.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section title</td>
<td>Current wording</td>
<td>Proposed action</td>
<td>Proposed wording</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(c)</td>
<td>(c) The producer of an organic livestock operation must not:</td>
<td>No change. Revision</td>
<td>(1) Sell, label, or represent as organic any animal or edible product derived from any animal treated with antibiotics, any substance that contains a synthetic substance not allowed under § 205.603, or any substance that contains a nonsynthetic substance prohibited in § 205.604.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(c)(1)</td>
<td>(1) Sell, label, or represent as organic any animal or edible product derived from any animal treated with antibiotics, any substance that contains a synthetic substance not allowed under § 205.603, or any substance that contains a nonsynthetic substance prohibited in § 205.604.</td>
<td>No change. Revision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(c)(2)</td>
<td>(2) Administer any animal drug, other than vaccinations, in the absence of illness;</td>
<td>Revision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(c)(3)</td>
<td>(3) Administer hormones for growth promotion;</td>
<td>Revision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(c)(4)</td>
<td>(4) Administer synthetic parasitocides on a routine basis;</td>
<td>No change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(c)(5)</td>
<td>(5) Administer synthetic parasitocides to slaughter stock;</td>
<td>No change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(c)(6)</td>
<td>(6) Administer animal drugs in violation of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act; or</td>
<td>No change.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.238(c)(7)</td>
<td>(7) Withhold medical treatment from a sick animal in an effort to preserve its organic status. All appropriate medications must be used to restore an animal to health when methods acceptable to organic production fail. Livestock treated with a prohibited substance must be clearly identified and shall not be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced.</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>(8) Withhold individual treatment designed to minimize pain and suffering for injured, diseased, or sick animals, which may include forms of euthanasia as recommended by the American Veterinary Medical Association.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Mammalian Livestock Living Conditions

205.239(a) Livestock Living Conditions
(a) The producer of an organic livestock operation must establish and maintain year-round livestock living conditions which accommodate the health and natural behavior of animals, including:

(1) Year-round access for all animals to the outdoors, shade, shelter, exercise areas, fresh air, clean water for drinking, and direct sunlight, suitable to the species, its stage of life, the climate, and the environment; Except that, animals may be temporarily denied access to the outdoors in accordance with §§ 205.239(b) and (c). Yards, feeding pads, and feedlots may be used to provide ruminants with access to the outdoors during the non-grazing season and supplemental feeding during the grazing season. Yards, feeding pads, and feedlots shall be large enough to allow all ruminant livestock occupying the yard, feeding pad, or feedlot to feed simultaneously without crowding and without competition for food. Continuous total confinement of any animal indoors is prohibited. Continuous total confinement of ruminants in yards, feeding pads, and feedlots is prohibited.

No change.

205.239(a)(2) For all ruminants, management on pasture and daily grazing throughout the grazing season(s) to meet the requirements of § 205.237, except as provided for in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section.

No change.

205.239(a)(3) Appropriate clean, dry bedding. When roughages are used as bedding, they shall have been organically produced in accordance with this part by an operation certified under this part, except as provided in § 205.239(a)(2)(i). When, and if applicable, organically handled by operators certified to the NOP.

No change.

205.239(a)(4) Shelter designated to allow for:

(i) Natural maintenance, comfort behaviors, and opportunity to exercise;

(ii) Temperature level, ventilation, and air circulation suitable to the species;

(iii) Reduction of potential for livestock injury.

New

205.239(a)(5) The use of yards, feeding pads, feedlots and lancements that shall be well-drained, kept in good condition (including frequent removal of wastes), and managed to prevent runoff of wastes and contaminated waters to adjoining or nearby surface water and across property boundaries.

New

205.239(a)(7) Housing, pens, runs, equipment, and utensils shall be properly cleaned and disinfected as needed to prevent cross infection and build-up of disease-carrying organisms.

New

205.239(a)(7)(i) Dairy young stock may be housed in individual pens under the following conditions:

(i) Until weaning, providing that they have enough room to turn around, lie down, stretch out when lying down, get up, rest, and groom themselves; individual animal pens shall be designed and located so that each animal can see, smell, and hear other calves.

New

(10) Piglets shall not be kept on flat decks or in piglet cages.

New

(11) Exercise areas for swine, whether indoors or outdoors, must permit rooting, including during temporary confinement events.

New

(12) In confined housing with stalls, at least one stall must be provided for each animal in the facility at any given time. A cage must not be called a stall. For group-housed swine, the number of individual feeding stalls may be less than the number of animals, as long as all animals are fed routinely over a 24-hour period.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>205.239(a)(12)</td>
<td>(b) The producer of an organic livestock operation may provide temporary confinement or shelter for an animal because of:</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(b)</td>
<td>(1) Inclement weather;</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(b)(1)</td>
<td>(2) The animal’s stage of life: Except, that lactation is not a stage of life that would exempt ruminants from any of the mandates set forth in this regulation;</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(b)(2)</td>
<td>(3) Conditions under which the health, safety, or well-being of the animal could be jeopardized</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(b)(3)</td>
<td>(4) Risk to soil or water quality;</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(b)(4)</td>
<td>(5) Preventive healthcare procedures or for the treatment of illness or injury (neither the various life stages nor lactation is an illness or injury);</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(b)(5)</td>
<td>(6) Sorting or shipping animals and livestock sales: Provided, that, the animals shall be maintained under continuous organic management, including organic feed, throughout the extent of their allowed confinement;</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(b)(6)</td>
<td>(7) Breeding: Except, that, ruminants shall not be denied access to the outdoors and, once bred, ruminants shall not be denied access to pasture during the grazing season;</td>
<td>Revision (7) Breeding: Except, that, animals shall not be confined any longer than necessary to perform the natural or artificial insemination. Animals may not be confined to observe estrus; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(b)(7)</td>
<td>(8) 4-H, Future Farmers of America and other youth projects, for no more than one week prior to a fair or other demonstration, through the event and up to 24 hours after the animals have arrived home at the conclusion of the event. These animals must have been maintained under continuous organic management, including organic feed, during the extent of their allowed confinement for the event.</td>
<td>Revision (8) 4-H, National FFA Organization, and other youth projects, for no more than one week prior to a fair or other demonstration, through the event, and up to 24 hours after the animals have arrived home at the conclusion of the event. These animals must have been maintained under continuous organic management, including organic feed, during the extent of their allowed confinement for the event. Notwithstanding the requirements in § 205.239 (b)(6), facilities where 4-H, National FFA Organization, and other youth events are held are not required to be certified organic for the participating animals to be sold as organic, provided all other organic management practices are followed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(c)</td>
<td>(c) The producer of an organic livestock operation may, in addition to the times permitted under § 205.239(b), temporarily deny a ruminant animal pasture or outdoor access under the following conditions:</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(c)(1)</td>
<td>(1) One week at the end of a lactation for dry off (for denial of access to pasture only), three weeks prior to parturition (birth), parturition, and up to one week after parturition;</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(c)(2)</td>
<td>(2) In the case of newborn dairy cattle for up to six months, after which they must be on pasture during the grazing season and may no longer be individually housed: Provided, That, an animal shall not be confined or tethered in a way that prevents the animal from lying down, standing up, fully extending its limbs, and moving about freely;</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(c)(3)</td>
<td>(3) in the case of fiber bearing animals, for short periods for shearing; and</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(c)(4)</td>
<td>(4) in the case of dairy animals, for short periods daily for milking. Milking must be scheduled in a manner to ensure sufficient grazing time to provide each animal with an average of at least 30 percent DMI from grazing throughout the grazing season. Milking frequencies or duration practices cannot be used to deny dairy animals pasture.</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(d)</td>
<td>(d) Ruminant slaughter stock, typically grain finished, shall be maintained on pasture for each day that the finishing period corresponds with the grazing season for the geographical location: Except, that, yards, feeding pads, or feedlots may be used to provide finish feeding rations. During the finishing period, ruminant slaughter stock shall be exempt from the minimum 30 percent DMI requirement from grazing. Yards, feeding pads, or feedlots used to provide finish feeding rations shall be large enough to allow all ruminant slaughter stock occupying the yard, feeding pad, or feed lot to feed simultaneously without crowding and without competition for food. The finishing period shall not exceed one-fifth (1/6) of the animal’s total life or 120 days, whichever is shorter.</td>
<td>Revision (d) Ruminant slaughter stock, typically grain finished, shall be maintained on pasture for each day that the finishing period corresponds with the grazing season for the geographical location: Except, that, yards, feeding pads, or feedlots may be used to provide finish feeding rations. During the finishing period, ruminant slaughter stock shall be exempt from the minimum 30 percent DMI requirement from grazing. Yards, feeding pads, or feedlots used to provide finish feeding rations shall be large enough to allow all ruminant slaughter stock occupying the yard, feeding pad, or feed lot to feed simultaneously without crowding and without competition for food. The finishing period shall not exceed one-fifth (1/6) of the animal’s total life or 120 days, whichever is shorter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205.239(e)</td>
<td>(e) The producer of an organic livestock operation must manage manure in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, heavy metals, or pathogenic organisms and optimizes recycling of nutrients and must manage pastures and other outdoor access areas in a manner that does not put soil or water quality at risk.</td>
<td>No change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Avian Living Conditions

205.241 New Avian Living Conditions.
(a) The producer of an organic poultry operation must establish and maintain year-round poultry living conditions which accommodate the health and natural behavior of poultry including: year-round access to outdoors; shade; shelter; exercise areas; fresh air; direct sunlight; clean water for drinking; materials for dust bathing; and adequate outdoor space to escape from the elements and aggressive behaviors suitable to the growth stage of life, the climate and environment. Poultry may be temporarily denied access to the outdoors in accordance with §205.241(d).

205.241(b) New Indoor space requirements.
(1) All birds must be able to move freely, and engage in natural behaviors.
(2) Ventilation must be adequate to prevent buildup of ammonia. Ammonia levels must not exceed 25 ppm. Producers must monitor ammonia levels on a monthly basis. When ammonia levels exceed 10 ppm, producers must implement additional practices to reduce ammonia levels below 10 ppm.

205.241(b)(3) New For layers and mature birds, artificial light may be used to prolong the day length up to 16 hours. Artificial light intensity must be lowered gradually to encourage hens to move to perches or settle for the night. Natural light must be sufficient indoors on sunny days so that an inspector can read and write when all lights are turned off.

205.241(b)(4) New (4) The following types of flooring may be used in shelter provided for avian species:
(i) Mesh or slatted flooring under drinking areas to provide drainage;
(ii) Houses, excluding pasture housing, with slatted/mesh floors must have 30 percent minimum of solid floor area available with sufficient litter available for dust baths so that birds may freely dust bathe without crowding.

205.241(b)(4)(ii) New (ii) Houses, excluding pasture housing, with slatted/mesh floors must have 30 percent minimum of solid floor area available with sufficient litter available for dust baths so that birds may freely dust bathe without crowding.
(5) Poultry houses must have sufficient exit areas, appropriately distributed around the building, to ensure that all birds have ready access to the outdoors.

205.241(b)(6) New (6) Flat roost areas must allow birds to grip with their feet. Six inches of perch space per bird must be provided per bird. Perch space may include the slighing rail in front of the nest boxes. All birds must be able to perch at the same time except for multi-tiered facilities, in which 55 percent of birds must be able to perch at the same time. Facilities for species which do not perch do not need to maintain perch and roost space.

205.241(b)(7) New (7) For layers, no more than 2.25 pounds of hen per square foot of indoor space is allowed at any time, except:

205.241(b)(7)(i) New (i) Outdoor housing; no more than 4.5 pounds of hen per square foot of indoor space; 
(Avian housing; no more than 4.5 pounds of hen per square foot of indoor space; 

205.241(b)(7)(ii) New (ii) Slatted/mesh floor housing; no more than 3.75 pounds of hen per square foot of indoor space; and

205.241(b)(7)(iv) New (iv) Floor litter housing: no more than 3.0 pounds of hen per square foot of indoor space.
(8) For pullets, no more than 3.0 pounds of pullet per square foot of indoor space may be allowed at any time.

205.241(b)(9) New (9) For turkeys, broilers, and other meat type species, no more than 5.0 pounds of birds per square foot of indoor space is allowed at any time.

205.241(b)(10) New (10) All birds must have access to scratch areas in the house.

205.241(b)(11) New (11) Poultry housing must be sufficiently spacious to allow all birds to move freely, stretch their wings, stand normally, and engage in natural behaviors.

205.241(c) New Outdoor Space Requirements.
(1) Outside access and door spacing must be designed to promote and encourage outside access for all birds on a daily basis. Producers must provide access to the outdoors at an early age to encourage (train) birds to go outdoors. Outdoor areas must have suitable enrichment to entice birds to go outside. Birds may be temporarily denied access to the outdoors in accordance with §205.241(d).

205.241(c)(2) New (2) Exit areas for birds to get outside must be designed so that more than one bird at a time can get through the opening and that all birds within the house can go through the exit areas within one hour.

205.241(c)(3) New (3) For layers, no more than 2.25 pounds of hen per square foot of outdoor space may be allowed at any time.

205.241(c)(4) New (4) For pullets, no more than 3.0 pounds of pullet per square foot may be allowed at any time.

205.241(c)(5) New (5) For turkeys, broilers, and other meat type species, no more than 5.0 pounds of bird per square foot may be allowed at any time.

205.241(c)(6) New (6) Space that has a solid roof overhead and is attached to the structure providing indoor space does not meet the definition of outdoor space and must not be included in the calculation of outdoor space.

205.241(c)(7) New (7) Shade may be provided by structures, trees or other objects in the environment.

205.241(c)(8) New (8) At least 25 percent of outdoor access space must be soil.

205.241(d) New (d) The producer of an organic poultry operation may temporarily confine birds. Each instance of confinement must be recorded. Producers may confine birds because of:
(1) Inclement weather, including, when air temperatures are under 40 degrees F or above 90 degrees F.

205.241(d)(2) New (2) The animal's stage of life, including the first 4 weeks of life for broilers and other meat type birds and the first 18 weeks of life for pullets; and

205.241(d)(3) New (3) Conditions under which the health, safety, or well-being of the animal could be jeopardized; however, the potential for disease outbreak is not sufficient cause. A documented occurrence of a disease in the region or relevant migratory pathway must be present in order to confine birds.

205.241(d)(4) New (4) Risk to soil or water quality.

205.241(d)(5) New (5) Preventive healthcare procedures or for the treatment of illness or injury (neither various life stages nor egg laying is an illness or injury).

205.241(d)(6) New (6) Selling or shipping birds and poultry sales: Provided, the birds are maintained under continuous organic management, throughout the extent of their allowed confinement.

205.241(d)(7) New (7) Nest Box training: Except, that, birds shall not be confined any longer than two weeks to teach the proper behavior.

205.241(d)(8) New (8) 4-H, National FFA Organization, and other youth projects, for no more than one week prior to a fair or other demonstration, through the event, and up to 24 hours after the birds have arrived home at the conclusion of the event. These birds must have been maintained under continuous organic management, including organic feed, during the extent of their allowed confinement for the event. Notwithstanding the requirements of paragraph (d)(8) of this section, facilities where 4-H, National FFA Organization, and other youth events are held are not required to be certified organic for the participating birds to be sold as organic, provided all other organic management practices are followed.

205.241(e) New (e) The producer of an organic poultry operation must manage manure in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, heavy metals, or pathogenic organisms and optimizes recycling of nutrients and manure.
Transportation and Slaughter

205.242
205.242(a)
205.242(b)(1)

New
New
New

Transportation and Slaughter.

(6) Transportation.

(1) Certified organic livestock must be clearly identified as organic and transported in pens within the livestock trailer clearly labeled for organic use and be contained in those pens for the duration of the trip.

(2) All livestock must be fit for transport to auction or slaughter facilities.

(3) Calves must have a dry navel cord and be able to stand and walk without human assistance.

(4) Sick, injured, weak, disabled, blind, and lame animals must not be transported for sale or slaughter. Such animals may be medicinally treated or euthanized.

(5) Adequate and season-appropriate ventilation is required for all livestock trailers, shipping containers and any other mode of transportation used to protect animals against cold and heat stresses.

(6) Bedding must be provided on trailer floors and in holding pens as needed to keep livestock clean, dry, and comfortable during transportation and prior to slaughter. Poultry crates are exempt from the bedding requirement. When roughages are used for bedding they must have been organically produced and handled by certified organic operations.

(7) Arrangements for water and organic feed must be made if transport time, including all time on the mode of transportation, exceeds twelve hours.

(8) The producer or handler of an organic livestock operation must transport livestock in compliance with the Federal Twenty-Eight Hour Law (49 U.S.C. 80502) and the regulations at 9 CFR 89.1–89.5.

The producer or handler of an organic livestock operation must provide all non-compliant records and subsequent corrective action related to livestock transport during the annual inspection.

(9) Organic producers must have in place emergency plans adequate to address possible animal welfare problems that might occur during transport.

Mammalian Slaughter.

Producers and handlers who slaughter organic livestock must be in compliance with the Federal Meat Inspection Act (21 U.S.C. 603(b) and 21 U.S.C. 610(b) and the regulations at 9 CFR part 313 regarding humane handling and slaughter of livestock.

Producers and handlers who slaughter organic exotic animals must be in compliance with the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621, et seq.) and the regulations at 9 CFR parts 313 and 352 regarding the humane handling and slaughter of exotic animals.

Producers and handlers who slaughter organic livestock or exotic animals must provide all non-compliant records related to humane handling and slaughter issued by the controlling national, federal, or state authority and all records of subsequent corrective actions during the annual organic inspection.

(10) Avian Slaughter.

(1) Producers and handlers who slaughter organic poultry must be in compliance with the Poultry Products Inspection Act requirements (21 U.S.C. 453(g)(b) and the regulations at 9 CFR 381.10(v), 381.90, and 381.65(b)).

(2) Producers and handlers who slaughter organic poultry must provide all non-compliant records related to the use of good manufacturing practices in connection with slaughter issued by the controlling national, federal, or state authority and all records of subsequent corrective actions during the annual organic inspection.

(3) Producers and handlers who slaughter organic poultry, but are exempt from or not covered by the requirements of the Poultry Products Inspection Act, must ensure that:

(i) No lame birds may be shackled, hung, or carried by their legs;

(ii) All birds shackled on a chain or automated system must be stunned prior to exsanguination; and

(iii) All birds must be irreversibly insensible prior to being placed in the scalding tank.
National Organic Coalition Calls on NOP to Strengthen and Move Forward with Organic Animal Welfare Standards

by Abby Youngblood, NOC executive director

Organic regulations currently require year-round outdoor access for all livestock raised in organic systems. Despite this requirement, not all organic producers are providing true outdoor access. This lack of consistency in the organic standards hurts both consumer and producer trust in the organic label. And organic livestock and poultry operations that already adhere to high standards are being undercut economically because of loopholes that allow a few very large operations to deny meaningful outdoor access.

The National Organic Coalition (NOC) has long advocated for regulatory action by USDA’s National Organic Program (NOP) to address animal welfare standards for organic poultry and livestock operations. We strongly support the passage of new rules to create clarity and consistency in the standards and to facilitate level enforcement.

Because the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) and organic community have consistently called for meaningful outdoor access for poultry dating back to 1998, it is disingenuous for poultry operations that do not meet these requirements to claim that they have been taken by surprise. Furthermore, the proposed rule provides ample time to comply. NOC is urging the USDA to move expeditiously with the rulemaking process and implement the much-needed changes to the organic standards that will assure consumers and producers alike that farms meet basic animal welfare standards, including meaningful outdoor access for organic poultry.

In our detailed comments we suggest significant changes to strengthen the proposed rule and also list parts of the proposed rule that we support.

For poultry:
- NOC urges the NOP to require that at least 50 percent of outdoor areas are covered with vegetation, rather than bare soil. The NOSB recommended for outdoor space requirements for poultry was developed in concert with their belief that the area would also be vegetated. This vegetation is a cornerstone of providing a healthy, beneficial environment for the birds.
- Pasture-based systems of poultry production provide a high level of animal welfare because birds have access to vegetative cover, are moved frequently to new pasture, and are not left to sit in excrement. These systems are distinct in several key ways from poultry production that relies on stationary houses. The NOP must put forward a separate set of requirements for pasture-based operations pertaining to space, perches, and dust baths, and we have provided specific language and suggestions in our draft comments.
- We support the clarification in the proposed rule that perches cannot be considered outdoor space (§ 205.241(c)(6)), that outdoor areas must include enrichment (§ 205.241(c)(11)), that producers are required to introduce birds to outdoor spaces early in life (§ 205.241(c)(11)), and that forced molting is prohibited (205.238(c)(10)).
- We urge the NOP to require more outdoor space for laying hens in systems that rely on stationary poultry houses. 2.25 pounds of hen per square foot of outdoor space is simply not enough space to allow for freedom of movement and living conditions that accommodate the natural behaviors of laying hens.
- For cattle:
  - Requiring that 50 percent of outdoor access be on soil is not appropriate during much of the non-grazing season and would create permanent conditions that threaten soil and water quality. This issue was grappled with and ultimately addressed via the “pasture rule.” We suggest changes to ensure that this proposed rule does not conflict with the “pasture rule.”
  - We also ask for clarification through the regulatory language that bedded packs, compost packs, tie-stalls, free-stalls and stanchion barns are all acceptable as housing systems for dairy cattle.

For swine:

The proposed rule is inadequate in addressing the range of production systems for swine in a holistic way. While NOC supports the parts of the rule that do address animal welfare for swine, including sections 205.239(a)(8 - 11) and 205.239(a)(14), we believe the NOP must more fully address stocking densities and minimum space requirements, swine production in hoop houses, wallowing, types of bedding, pasture farrowing, and issues around soil and water quality.

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Consider Bardwell Farm:

Raising Gourmet Foods for the Animal Welfare Market

by Jack Kittredge

The village of West Pawlet is a third of the way up the state of Vermont, on the New York border. Pawlet itself was chartered to 62 residents in 1761, held its first town meeting in 1775, by 1800 contained almost 2000 souls, and peaked ten years later, in 1810, with a population of 2233. Now it is around 1438, almost half of whom are in West Pawlet. The town lies in the foothills of the Taconic Range, in the Champlain Valley, and has always been very rural. Nearby lakes are Lake St. Catherine, Little Lake, Lake Bomoseen, and Cosayuna Lake.

Here is where Angela Miller, a successful Manhattan literary agent, and her architect husband Russell Glover, who had been visiting friends in neighboring Dorset in 2000, checked out some available properties and bought themselves a 305 acre farm!

“I was a child in Pennsylvania and grew up in a rural area,” she relates. “We lived near the Rodale Institute and my mother was a part of that early organic movement. I developed a career in book publishing in New York City and stuck with it, but I always wanted to get into small scale farming.

“My husband,” she continues, “is a city boy. He grew up in London, went to Cambridge, studied architecture, and ran a business in New York doing architecture for the rich people on Long Island. I always wanted to get into small scale farming. I grew up in London, went to Cambridge, studied architecture, and ran a business in New York doing architecture for the rich people on Long Island.

“I like my cows comfortable, so I spray udders once or twice a day for 2 to 3 days before calving and the first few days after. Edema leaves quickly for calmer milking and better milkout. The faster I can get the edema out, the quicker they take off milking,” he explains, appreciating the “natural healing and good results on SCC also.”

“Nothing beats comfort for cow comfort,”Justin Pavlot says. Since starting Pavlot’s Pride, a dairy farm in New York, in 2010, he’s added a dozen dry cows and heifers to freshen and yearlings to breed, his herd on May 2, 2015. In his first year, he’s now milking 38 cows with a dozen dry cows and heifers, says Justin Pavlot. After several years working for other dairy farms, he rented a farm and started milking his own Pavlot’s Pride herd on May 2, 2015. In his first year, he’s now milking 38 cows with a dozen dry cows and heifers to freshen and yearlings to breed, his grazing herd’s production has increased from 50 lbs. last Nov. to 60 lbs./cow/day this June.

“In the 1860s the Civil War and the industrial boom was draining the area’s farms of men-folk and cooperatives were forming as a way to more efficiently manage some of the farmwork. In 1863 Bardwell started the state’s first cheese-making coop, drawing from among the 40 or so neighboring dairy farms. Morning milk was all brought to Bardwell’s farm, where he had erected a cheese factory. A spring-fed pond he built was used to power the factory and there was a railroad running through the property that enabled them to ship cheese to the city.

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Bardwell eventually sold the farm to his sons-in-law. It continued as a cheese operation, although no longer a cooperative, until the Depression. In 1931 or 1932 it failed and returned to being just a dairy farm selling to larger coops. The last owner got ill, auctioned off the cows, and closed the farm down in the late 1990s.

Half of the farm’s land is in Vermont and half is actually in New York. The buildings are all in Vermont, however, and the New York land has no access from New York roads, so for all purposes beyond taxation it is treated as a Vermont farm and its purchase in 2000 caught the eye of local officials.

Taking Care of the Land

“Because it is a relatively big property,” explains Miller, “it was very much under the nose of the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). We weren’t here for a month before the NRCS people were down here to show us what we needed to do to keep the river clean, asking what would we be willing to do to maintain the water quality? We didn’t even have animals then. But they told us we had a big responsibility, which scared the life out of my husband.”

The couple began working actively with the NRCS as they built up their herd of goats.

“They were giving us grants to build fences,” she relates, “so the goats on pasture aren’t getting in the streams and wrecking the banks. Every time we did something with the NRCS, part of the deal was that we transition to organic management. We have a lot of water around here they are concerned about protecting. We had to build 50 foot riparian buffers to protect the waterways and plant native trees and bushes there.

“We did a tremendous amount of that work as we were building the herd,” she continues. “We were the Sustainable Farm of the year in 2013. But we have pretty much exhausted all we can do with them in terms of projects. We sold a perpetual easement to the USDA to keep our land in grass. Even if we sell the land, it has to remain in grass. No one can plant annuals on it. It is designed to bring the soil back from when they were rotating corn on it. Our whole farm is now grassland reserved.”

The Animals

Angela and the farm staff currently milk 142 dairy goats (no longer by hand), have 5 bucks for breeding, raise 50 male kids for meat, and have 25 or so female dairy goat replacement kids. In addition they have 50 laying chickens, as well as 2 breeding sows and 50 piglets to drink the whey that the cheese operation produces. They also graze 27 Jersey cows owned by a neighbor and make cheese from that milk.

The goats are bred seasonally, the bucks moving in with them in October and the kids then being born in February and March -- the busiest time of year on a goat or sheep farm. Goats born in February can be bred in the fall (or slaughtered if male) so fit neatly into an annual cycle.

Angela explains: “We market the pork and goat meat in the fall (at 7 or 8 months). We also market the veal from the Jersey cows -- it is rose veal, not white veal. It is from very young calves that are fed milk and grain for a time, and then put on grass. Their movement is not restricted and they are not bled or denied iron. The chickens are layers. We market the eggs.


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“After the goats have been on a paddock 12 hours,” she continues, “we move them to a new one. Once they have eaten that down to about 6 inches we put the Jersey cows on it. They will graze after the goats and chomp it down lower. We do that because the goats like the higher grasses but also they are susceptible to intestinal parasites. Those parasites are mostly in the lower 4 to 6 inches of the grass. The cows will eat that without any problem. After another 12 hours we move the cows off and then put chickens on. They eat up all the manure and the parasites too. The goats don’t go back for 65 days, which is how long it will take for the parasites to disappear. We haven’t had to use any wormer for three years since we have been doing this rotation.”

Miller’s farm manager is Peter Brooks, son of one of the neighboring farmers from whom she buys Jersey milk. Having grown up on a grass-based dairy farm, Pete is used to the complex issues involved in managing grazing -- time of year, expected weather, conditions in a field (wetness, type of grass, height of grass), haying needs, condition of animals -- which need to be juggled. Rather than have a fixed plan for an extended period, he will determine the size and placement of a paddock almost on the spot.

“I never go by size,” he says, “but by pasture quality. We keep an eye on the bulk tank reading for each milking so we know if they have gotten enough pasture. If not, their milk average drops and I’ll give them a little more. It all depends on quality of pasture, too. There are a lot of variables. I grew up on a dairy farm raising cows. So I’ve been around pasture my whole life. And I’ve been here for four years, learning.”

Goats prefer browse to grass, but Peter doubts if they do better on it. They eat hedgerows down to nothing, but when given good pasture their milk average is definitely higher. He says he likes to put goats onto a pasture that is between a foot and a foot and a half tall. That seems best for milk production. Too tall and much of the grass is lignified, too short and there is too much protein. They seem to love orchard grass, which grows well in West Pawlet.

Peter describes some of the thinking that goes into his management of the pastures: “Pasture management is a huge part of my job. We have a 65 to 70 day rest between grazings. So there is a lot of management of when to cut the hay on pastures so that when the goats get back into it, it is growing back. Which is what we did with this field. Last night’s paddock was the first half of this strip. Today we opened up the other half. Tonight this strip will basically get moved sideways down the field. We will either take a cutting of hay between grazings, or we’ll put the cows in. The field the cows are in now is wet and it’s hard to get in with tractors, so that’s why we have the cows there. They’ll graze it down.

“We rotate the chicken coop on these fields, too,” he continues. “They go into a wagon at night with egg boxes and roosts. Right now they are on a field we want to get more nitrogen on. We move them a couple of times a week. Everywhere they have been there is this dark green grass coming up!”

“We cut the hay on 170 acres,” he concludes. “This field the goats are on now was never grazed for many years, just used for hay. But it is nice having so many fields near the barn that we can graze on. It makes the fields way more productive to have them grazed and animals spreading their manure on them. It works pretty well, but there is a lot of time spent moving flexnet around! These two fields are on one plug-in fencer. We have other fields that are run off solar fencers.”

The pigs were down in one of the back fields the day I visited. They are brought feed a couple of times a day and rotated from field to field every season, generally into fields that aren’t productive for hay or pasture. They root the fields up pretty badly and Peter replants them by frost seeding. Red clover does well for that, as well as orchard grass. He has put in trefoil with a no-till drill and that is doing well. The trefoil makes a nice hay which is also high in tannins, helping with parasites for the goats. The goats don’t seem to prefer the trefoil, but they eat it. The farm works with UVM on seeding research and is currently trialing red clover and forage chicory.

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Building the Goat Dairy

Although knowing nothing about building a goat dairy, Angela set to work to do it once they bought the farm and tended to some badly needed repairs.

“I connected with a woman who had been milking dairy goats in Provence, France,” she recalls. “She had come to Vermont and wanted to do her own dairy. She helped me find goats of the same breed she used, build a primitive milk stand, and taught me to milk them by hand. We started by buying 6 dairy goats from a farm in New Hampshire in 2002. She made cheese with me in my kitchen so I could learn how to make fresh goat cheese. It was just one kind of soft cheese – chevre.

“But she decided she didn’t like Vermont,” Miller continues. “The food wasn’t good enough! So she moved to Maine to be near seafood. Green Mountain College is nearby, however, so then I got a young girl from there who would come and take care of the goats if I couldn’t be here. I bought more goats and gradually grew the herd to where it is now. But we don’t milk by hand anymore. It isn’t really clean enough, and it’s hard on your hands!”

In 2004 the Consider Bardwell plant was certified by the state.

To get enough milk for a while they bought in goat milk from a local goat farmer. Since goats are seasonal breeders they need to be bred in the Fall and then stop lactating until they pick up again until the Spring when they kid. So in order to have a product you can sell all year, you need cow’s milk. Angela started buying milk from a cow dairy called Jersey Girls 50 miles away.

“We also hired a guy who was a professional cheese maker,” she relates, “who had trained in Europe. I didn’t think I would ever be able to develop my skill to the point where I could make an outstanding cheese. So we hired him to help us develop the different cheeses.

“Fresh goat cheese can’t be stored,” she continues. “It will go bad after a week. Once I got the professional cheese maker, we developed 3 different kinds of goat cheese. My husband built a cave or big room in the barn where you can age cheese. So pretty soon we were aging three cow cheeses and 3 goat ones.”

Making Cheese

In order to visit the cheese plant I had to go through some standard food safety steps – put on a disposable coat and hairnet, change my shoes, wash my hands before entering every room, refrain from touching anything, wear no jewelry, carry no food or drink, and wipe down my camera and recorder with a sanitizer. Then, once they had read me the list of prohibited activities, I was allowed in.

It is easy to see why such precautions are taken. Cheese making is all about which microbes are present. This has to do a lot with how hot it is and how damp, but also with how clean and sanitary it stays. Since the proper microbes are continually purchased and reintroduced, the best environment for them to thrive is a totally sanitary one.

First I visited the packing room, where the finished cheeses, once ready for market, are wrapped and labeled. All the Consider Bardwell cheeses are named after towns in Vermont, currently: Manchester (goat), Danby (goat), Dorset (cow), Pawlet (cow), Slyboro (goat), and Rupert (cow). Once wrapped and labeled with the cheese variety – and the Animal Welfare Accredited (AWA) label that the farm has earned -- they are sent to a cooler to await

To organic farmers everywhere for treating their animals and the earth with care and treating us with some of the finest organic ingredients around, thanks.
shipment. Here they are kept below 40˚F to arrest the further development of the cultures the cheese maker has been so careful to introduce. There is a recipe for each cheese, and certain microbes or cultures will develop the specific flavors wanted for each one.

“Cheese making starts,” explains Angela, “with raising the temperature of milk in big several hundred gallon vats. The outside wall of the vat contains water in a jacket that is heated to warm the milk to whatever temperature the recipe calls for. A rotary machine in the middle has stirrers or paddles or knives that you can put on. When the milk gets to the right temperature you put your cultures in. Those are bacteria that create the flavors you want. We get them freeze-dried from France. They ferment the milk sugar or lactose into lactic acid. For about a half an hour they do their work while the milk is stirred. Then you put in rennet to make the milk form a curd. We use a synthetic chymosin that is a vegetarian alternative to the original rennet – which comes from the stomach of calves. Europeans say calf rennet is the only one to use, but we have many vegetarian customers who would object to an animal product being used. Then knives are mounted on the stirring machine and the curd is cut, which releases the whey. Then the curd is packed into hoops (actually into linen cloths in the hoops which leave a nice pattern) and the whey is drained off. The total process takes about four hours.”

Once the whey is drained, the hoops are removed and the cheeses placed in a brine for a few days. That brings down the pH to the right level, adds salt, stops the growth of bacteria, and hardens the skin to start a rind.

The recipe for each cheese is designed for a specific size and age, as well as flavor. The moisture level in the cheese will affect how long it takes to age properly. The Manchester, for instance, is a 3 pound cheese called a tomme and is dryer and ages out longer (90 days) with less water activity than, say, a Dorset (2 pounds and 60 days). The Dorset has what is called a washed rind and has more moisture than many other cheeses. It gets tastier faster. But if you made the Dorset bigger, it would not ripen all the way through properly because of its higher moisture level. You don’t want the outer edges to be different from the center.

The skin or rind of a cheese begins to develop while it is in the brine. When it is removed from the salt solution, mold spores are brushed on the rind and the cheese is stored in a cool “cave” where it continues to develop. The cheeses in the cave get almost daily attention. They’re washed twice a week, brushed with bacterial solutions to form the mold, turned. That is part of why they are expensive!

As they get older they develop more of a rind. You can tell how old each is because the shelf it is on is marked. The rind of the Dorset turns bright orange and is super active. The Manchester is covered with a black and blue mold, which acts more slowly. Each cave has a dehumidifier that controls the humidity and brings it to the proper level for that cheese. The caves are kept at 50˚F to 55˚F, and 85% to 90% humidity to help the cultures develop the best flavors.

“Each batch will have a somewhat different flavor,” adds Miller, “because of slight differences in the production process — the temperature or humidity in the air, the cheese maker was in a bad mood, etc. We try to record every thing we can think of just so we can determine what affects the taste. Each batch has a wheel that is devoted to testing. We insert a probe, pull out a piece of cheese, and taste test it. We have tastings on Friday — three of us taste them and grade each cheese. We save out cheese batches in which the flavor profile is perfect for the competitions. We haven’t lost a cheese for any reason for a while. We used to, sometimes a batch would go bad. But now we seem to know what we’re doing!”

Angela Miller holds Dorset cheese ready for shipping.

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In Your Future.
Cheeses soaking in a brine.

Marketing

The cheeses, meat and eggs from Consider Bardwell Farm are marketed locally, regionally, and nationally in various ways. There is a farm store at which all their products are sold. Because the farm is in somewhat of a tourist area, and has such a history, up-scale people stop by almost every day. When I was visiting a middle aged couple from Philadelphia who was in the store. They were just staying nearby for the week, they said, and heard about the farm at the local farmers market. They wanted to visit and buy some cheese.

They also do a large business in the New York City Green Market system, which is the city’s farmers markets. Those markets serve 75 neighborhoods. Angela had always been a customer of them when living in the city. Once she was making goat cheese and had a product to sell, she wanted it at those markets. When she was making cheese, she wanted it at those markets. She was from Brooklyn and just the chevre at the time, but I sold out! It was all sold in the space. I didn’t have to go anymore.”

“The FDA is involved with us,” she sighs, “because we are a food business. And anyone buys artisanal cheese by the pound. You have to sell it to them as organic, and then they will go to other restaurants and ask for goat meat. It tastes very similar to lamb, but is less fatty. It is very, very good. I don’t know what old goat tastes like. We make sausage out of ourulls, when we have to do that. But that is a little sensitive for me because I know some of these old goats and babied them and milked them for a while. I hated seeing my old girls go off. But it is a business!”

On the expense side, their $52,000 a month payroll is the farm’s biggest expense. Milk supply is second, which they buy in from two neighboring farmers raising a total of 67 Jerseys, Brown Swiss, and a few Holsteins. Insurance is third (including workers compensation), then feed is next.

“We have 20 people on the payroll,” sighs Angela. “We’ve been growing every year for the last 12 years. Every year we up our production and have to up our payroll and infrastructure. Now we have caves in our barn. Very shortly we are going to have a new plant altogether. I want to stop at 300,000 pounds of cheese a year – I want a nationally recognized brand, making top notch products. Then maybe one day one of my employees or someone else will want to buy it.”

So far Miller hasn’t taken any money from the farm for her services, choosing instead to plow it back in. While the farm is marginally profitable, she says, there is so much to do she doesn’t want to impede its growth.

“I had an unexpected second career,” she smiles, “and I’m very proud of what we have done.”

One of the hassles of owning a food business is needing to pay attention to the strict standards required to protect public health. Angela doesn’t have any problem with the requirements for sanitation and testing with which any cheese maker must comply, but she feels it is extra burden having to deal with federal as well as local inspectors.

“The FDA is involved with us,” she signs, “because we make raw milk cheeses. Their inspectors visit us, as well as the state ones. They are mostly concerned with listeriosis. It has actually been more prevalent in pasteurized cheeses and meat, but they are still wary of us not pasteurizing.

“We test our milk four times a month,” she continues, “once for the state and 3 times for their food safety quality. If anything is wrong we will have already made the cheese that batch and have the finished product tested.”

Largely at the suggestion of NRCS and UVM advice to consider organic certification, in 2009 Miller cut of the 2 farmers who were leasing some of their land so she could make the 3-year transition. The farm was certified organic for its pastures and hay in 2012. That means they could sell their hay as organic, but in the beginning all they sold was cheese. So they don’t really sell anything as organic. But as long as they are keeping everything in grass, Miller feels, organic seems the right thing to do.

The animals aren’t certified, however, nor is the milk. Angela says there are two barriers to organic certification for the livestock and animal products.

“I can’t get over the problem of not being able to treat them if they are sick,” she explains. “I would have to stop selling them. We have five Holsteins. We are having a closed herd and not bringing in other animals, and breeding for high production instead of raising the population up as high as possible. We get sick with an untreated mastitis and we d all her. But if a goat had a treatable mastitis we’d take her out of the line, give her the antibiotic, put her on hold for the required amount of time and dump her milk, and then when she is ready to go back online she is still a really good goat. Organic means we would not be able to put her back into the milking string and would have to cut or sell her.”

The other problem with having the animals organically certified is the price of organic grain. Although the goats on Consider Bardwell Farm and the cows whose milk they buy in are all grass-fed, they do get a small amount of grain at the time of milking – a cupful each when they are on the milk stand. Right now that is from a local dealer who grows GMO crops. Just going non-GMO is a big hoop to jump through, but Miller is committed to doing that.

“The executive director of AWA, Andrew Miller. “The executive director of AWA, Andrew "AWA spoke at the luncheon and Talked about the benefits of the program. The more I thought about it the more I liked the idea, so the following year I applied. It has been quite beneficial because we can put the logo on our products. The people in New York City want to know how the animals are raised and believe in animal welfare certification.”

AWA standards are strict and are based on research into animal care and treatment. The standards are designed to minimize stress and pain on the part of the animal, even if they impose new expenses or management responsibilities on the farm. Not everyone can or is willing to abide in these practices.
Peter would rather leave it to the farmer, or have be bred at 8 months. It would be like a thirteen year early. Over a lifetime they will be healthier produc. vets I have talked to say it is better to breed them. This is somewhat controversial, says Miller: “The born at the end of February could not be bred until can’t be bred before she is 8 months old. So a goat is that a doe can’t kid before she is 13 months old. Also, the AWA standard on reproduction for goats the farm has lost baby goats because of it. Also, the AWA standard on reproduction for goats is a doe can’t kid before she is 13 months old. Since gestation takes 5 months, that means a goat can’t be bred before she is 8 months old. So a goat born at the end of February could not be bred until November. This is somewhat controversial, says Miller: “The vets I have talked to say it is better to breed them early. Over a lifetime they will be healthier producer. On the other hand, there is a very strong continuent of goat people who feel it is bad for a goat to be bred at 8 months. It would be like a thirteen year old girl having a baby.” Peter would rather leave it to the farmer, or have a weight standard rather than an age one, because goats vary so: “If there is one that is really small at nine months, I wait until she is a little bigger. They will keep coming into heat for several months.” Because goats originated in mountainous areas, AWA wants them to have chances to climb. To certify goat operations they require the farm to have some sort of platform or other device to enable climbing. “We put some of the original milk stands out for them to jump on,” laughs Angela, “when they are loaﬁng in the barn. No comment! We’re trying to run a business!” AWA also requires that all slaughter occur at AWA certiﬁed slaughterhouses. Peter struggles to meet this one. “I don’t know the exact standards for slaughter,” he says. “I know the unloading process has to be stress-free, so it feels more like you are just taking them to a different farm. That just has to do with the gates and the way they are set up. It cuts down on the adrenaline. But ﬁnding slaughter dates is hard, especially for goats as a lot of the slaughterhouses don’t like working with goats. Both of the ones we use are in New York state, an hour or more away. But we’re on the buck burner for them.” “Another one of the things that we have been frustrat with,” he continues, “is that AWA wants us to give the goats constant access to the barn. That means we would have to leave the gates open all the time so they could go back to the barn whenever they want. If they are on pasture they are making milk, but if they are just laying in the barn they aren’t making anything. AWA is particularly interested in that access if it is raining. They don’t want goats to be in the rain. They don’t mind if cows are in the rain. They say it is scientiﬁcally proven that goats don’t like the rain.” So he has developed moveable shelters for all the young goats, but ﬁnds that to give a shelter to every 40 goats in the milking herd, along with moving them every 12 hours and changing fences, etc. is impractical. So they leave a gate open if the weather is really bad. “To us,” he says, “it seemed a management thing that we should be able to decide, based on the weather -- hot or stormy. Our argument is that this time of year (early July) the pasture is so good that they make way more milk when they are out on pasture.” I asked if AWA has much to say about the types of grasses used in the ﬁelds. No,” Angela replied, laughing. “Don’t suggest it to them!” Perhaps the most upsetting standard, as far as Miller is concerned, is that AWA wants them to take fecal samples from all the animals, including the chick enus! “How am I going to go around,” she wonders, “and catch chicken poop? I think most of the AWA standards are things that we would be doing anyway -- pasturing the goats, having them outdoors, doing fecals on them and the young kids -- things that any good farmers would do. Except for taking chicken fecal samples!” AWA inspections occur once a year. Angela is impressed by the knowledge of the inspectors: “One guy who has inspected us twice is a former conventional dairy farmer. A woman has inspected us twice, too, who is super thorough! She is a vet in the south, I believe. They are really nice people.” They seem to want to schedule the inspections, however, for the exact time when Miller is most busy -- kidding time in February. “Twice they wanted to schedule when we were kid ding,” she groans. “That is a terrible time, when all the goats are having babies. I pleaded with them that I couldn’t spare a minute with them. That guy said: ‘What do you have to hide?’ I said, ‘All right, come. But don’t expect to talk to me!’” AWA seems to have no need for money. They give competitive grants to certiﬁed farms to help them design and upgrade housing and other facilities for the animals. Consider Bardwell got a grant for a doeling house on wheels. (Doelings are baby girl goats who have not reached reproductive age.) “We give them their mothers colostrum right after birth,” Angela explains, “then move them to a separate barn where we have an AWA required square -- a bucket with ten nipples -- per pen. For the meat goats they get goat milk for the ﬁrst 2 weeks, then cow’s milk. For the replacement does they get goat milk throughout. “But AWA is amazing,” she continues. “They stay very involved with their farms. They do any kind of marketing assistance you need and don’t charge a fee. They are the only certiﬁer who doesn’t charge a fee. I believe they are funded by a foundation formed by a very wealthy couple. The woman was distressed about animal use and suffering in medical research and brought a lot of attention to that.” Another humane label is Certiﬁed Humane, which is also pretty well established. But you have to pay for their certiﬁcation, and Miller feels the onus of pay ing has a little taint on it. It is like you have to buy your way in, she says. I asked Angela if what she has wrought in West Pawlet is what she was hoping when she decided to buy the farm 16 years ago. “My intention at the outset was just to dabble with animals and cheese making,” she laughs. “The hardest part of building this business has been managing and keeping all the people necessary to make it work. I didn’t have to do that in New York. I guess I didn’t really have a vision of something of this size at all.”
Th e N a tu r a l F a r m e r  Fall, 2016

Thoughts on Killing and Eating Animals

by Jack Kittredge

There are many individuals and groups with strong feelings on the topic of raising animals for food. In preparing for this issue I contacted probably a dozen animal welfare groups and asked them if they would write, or could recommend something already written, that I could publish about how the world would be different if veganism were adopted as the prevailing practice.

I acknowledged that sometimes fundamental changes come rapidly and there are certainly people who have strong moral concerns about how we treat animals, just as there were people opposed to slavery long before it became a critical national issue. I thought readers would look, so much that changes would come about if we made such a major alteration in the way we live.

No one was interested in writing such a piece, and only one previously written piece (below) was suggested. I was surprised at this. I expected that responsible organizations would have some sort of program for how the changes they are recommending might take place, and what the world would look like afterward.

Nevertheless, I have drawn together a few short existing pieces relevant to killing and eating animals. They are from all points of view. I hope they get you thinking.

Excerpts from: Will Animals Go Extinct If The World Becomes Vegan?

by Stian Karlsen

A very common question from meat eaters is that of what would happen to animals if vegans had their way. Would they become extinct if we all stopped eating them?

First, this makes the assumption that a life in captivity, torture and slaughter is beneficial over not being born in the first place.

Second, people often act like we’re doing the animals a big favor, and that we’ve created some sort of mutual bond, wherein we breed and house them, and in return, they “give” us their flesh and skin to eat and wear. I don’t recall them ever signing up for that.

The reason there are so many farm animals to begin with is because humans create (breed) them. While I can’t speak for any individual cow, I assume that being bred, abused and killed isn’t very desirable. If the cow was never born, she’d never have any thoughts on the matter. So please don’t act like we’re doing this because it’s the best thing for the animals. That’s a preposterous justification at best.

If there were no money in farm animals anymore, the meat and dairy industry wouldn’t bother breeding and feeding them either. That makes sense, and is likely a reality we would have to face. Not breeding such extreme numbers, the animal populations would definitely dwindle into smaller numbers. Some animals could make it in the wild, while others couldn’t. To those lucky enough to be released, at least they’d have a chance compared with none at all. Most, though, would probably be killed. But if the world went vegan, there at least wouldn’t be another batch of animals ready to take their place, only to be bred, abused and killed.

There are many individuals and groups with strong feelings on the topic of raising animals for food. In preparing for this issue I contacted probably a dozen animal welfare groups and asked them if they would write, or could recommend something already written, that I could publish about how the world would be different if veganism were adopted as the prevailing practice.

If there were no money in farm animals anymore, the meat and dairy industry wouldn’t bother breeding and feeding them either. That makes sense, and is likely a reality we would have to face. Not breeding such extreme numbers, the animal populations would definitely dwindle into smaller numbers. Some animals could make it in the wild, while others couldn’t. To those lucky enough to be released, at least they’d have a chance compared with none at all. Most, though, would probably be killed. But if the world went vegan, there at least wouldn’t be another batch of animals ready to take their place, only to be bred, abused and killed.

Regardless of what would happen to the animals if we all went vegan, asking about extinction isn’t really what the question is about. The bottom line is that if some species went extinct, that does nothing to justify the cruelty taking place here and now. Nor does it do anything about the detrimental effects the meat and dairy industry has on our air, water and environment. And it certainly doesn’t address the animals we are driving to extinction through ruining natural habitats to make room for this industry to stay alive.

These are the things we should focus on, not the possible extinction of some of the species we eat today.

If you were guaranteed a life of misery and death, would you say that’s a life worth living?

Over the years I have done lots of thinking and have come to the conclusion that our relationship with the animals we use for food must be symbiotic. Symbiosis is a mutually beneficial relationship between two different living things. We provide the farm animals with food and housing and in return, most of the offspring from the breeding cows on the ranches are used for food. I vividly remember the day after I had installed the first center-track conveyor restrainer in a plant in Nebraska, when I stood on an overhead catwalk, overlooking vast herds of cattle in the stockyard below me. All these animals were going to their death in a system that I had designed. I started to cry and then a flash of insight came into my mind. None of the cattle that were at this slaughter plant would have been born if people had not bred and raised them. They would never have lived. All people forget that nature can be very harsh, and death in the wild is often more painful and stressful than death in a modern plant. Out on a western ranch, I saw a calf that had its hide ripped completely off on one side by coyotes. It was still alive and the rancher had to shoot it to put it out of its misery. If I had a choice, going to a well-run modern slaughter plant would be preferable to being ripped apart alive.

Excerpt: “Animals Make Us Human”

by Temple Grandin

Over the years I have done lots of thinking and have come to the conclusion that our relationship with the animals we use for food must be symbiotic. Symbiosis is a mutually beneficial relationship between two different living things. We provide the farm animals with food and housing and in return, most of the offspring from the breeding cows on the ranches are used for food. I vividly remember the day after I had installed the first center-track conveyor restrainer in a plant in Nebraska, when I stood on an overhead catwalk, overlooking vast herds of cattle in the stockyard below me. All these animals were going to their death in a system that I had designed. I started to cry and then a flash of insight came into my mind. None of the cattle that were at this slaughter plant would have been born if people had not bred and raised them. They would never have lived. All people forget that nature can be very harsh, and death in the wild is often more painful and stressful than death in a modern plant. Out on a western ranch, I saw a calf that had its hide ripped completely off on one side by coyotes. It was still alive and the rancher had to shoot it to put it out of its misery. If I had a choice, going to a well-run modern slaughter plant would be preferable to being ripped apart alive.

UN Urges Global Move To Meat And Dairy-Free Diet

by Felicity Carus in The Guardian

A global shift towards a vegan diet is vital to save the world from hunger, poverty and the worst impacts of climate change a UN report says.

As the global population surges towards a predicted 9.1 billion people by 2050, western tastes for diets rich in meat and dairy products are unsustainable, says the report from United Nations Environment Programme’s (UNEP) international panel of sustainable resource management.

It says: “Impacts from agriculture are expected to increase substantially due to population growth increasing consumption of animal products. Unlike fossil fuels, it is difficult to look for alternatives: people have to eat. A substantial reduction of impacts would only be possible with a substantial worldwide diet change, away from animal products.”

Professor Edgar Hertwich, the lead author of the report, said: “Animal products cause more damage to the environment than other products of comparable nutritional value.”

The Steller’s sea cow, the passenger pigeon and the New Zealand moa all went extinct because people developed a taste for their meat.

But other animals are going their way precisely because they are no longer a preferred table fare. The Livestock Conservancy, a North Carolina organization that advocates for the preservation of rare and vanishing breeds, keeps an official list of nearly 200 domesticated birds and mammals which today are at risk of vanishing. The group is trying to generate interest in these breeds, among both consumers and farmers, to keep the animals from going extinct.

“We sometimes say, ‘You need to eat them to save them — just don’t eat them all,’ “ says Ryan Walker, the marketing and communications manager of the conservancy.

The Red Wattle, a pig with exceptionally juicy flesh, and the Randall Lineback, a cow that’s tender and beautiful — the red-veined roe-rose — are two success stories — breeds that were close to oblivion but that foodie ranchers have revived.

But others haven’t been so lucky. And it may be because lately no one has wanted to eat them.

There are fewer than 200 Choctaw hogs left, for example. This pig was prized by the Native American Choctaw tribe as a meat source. But displacement of the tribe led to the breed’s downfall. Today, Choctaw hogs live on just a few farms in a single county in Oklahoma. The animals are still extremely vulnerable to inbreeding and, Walker says, to natural disasters. “They could potentially get wiped out by one tornado,” he says.

But Walker says the conservancy has received calls from people around the country interested in rearing pigs, and he guesses that within several years the breed’s population will start to increase. If the Choctaw is lucky, it should start appearing in butcher shops for the first time.

Many, if not most, heritage food animals are said to have a flavor that’s distinct from modern mainstream breeds — flavor that can now be appreciated by foodies seeking novelty and quality. But many of these breeds have been swiftly declining since about 70 years ago, when certain breeds began to dominate industrial livestock production.

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Meat-Eating Is the Number One Cause of Worldwide Species Extinction
by Natasha Geffen from Think Progress

According to a recent study published in Science of the Total Environment by researchers at Florida International University in Miami, livestock production’s impact on land use is “likely the leading cause of modern species extinctions” — a problem the researchers think will only get worse as population growth increases the global demand for meat.

The study is particularly interesting to scientists because research linking livestock’s relationship to biodiversity loss has been lacking, says Gidon Eshel, a geophysicist at Bard College who was not involved in the study.

“Now we can say, only slightly fancifully: You eat a steak, you kill a lemur in Madagascar... You eat a chicken, you kill an Amazonian parrot,” Eshel said.

To understand livestock production’s impact on biodiversity, researchers at Florida International University mapped areas that have exceptionally high percentages of native plants and animal species — known as biodiversity hotspots.

The researchers then mapped areas where livestock production is expected to increase in the future, and determined how much land would be lost as a result of expanding meat operations, using data from the Food and Agriculture Organization and other studies about historic livestock production and land use conversion in those areas. Then, they compared the biodiversity hotspots with the expected expansion of meat production.

They found that of the areas expected to have the greatest conversion of land use for agriculture — from forest to land dedicated to livestock production — 15 were in “megadiverse” countries that have the greatest diversity of species. The study concludes that in the 15 “megadiverse countries,” land used for livestock production will likely increase by 30 to 50 percent — some 3,000,000 square kilometers (about 741 million acres).

“These changes will have major, negative impacts on biodiversity,” said Brian Machovina, the study’s lead author. “Many, many species will be lost.”

And though meat consumption in the United States has fallen steadily since peaking in the 1970s, meat consumption worldwide continues to rise, driven by technological advancements, liberalized trade, and growing economies. Livestock production is also an incredibly important source of economic security for millions of the world’s poor, providing stable income for 987 million around the world.

Machovina and his colleagues do suggest some mitigation efforts that could curb the loss of biodiversity from meat production — namely, eat less meat. The study says that in order to limit the worst biodiversity losses, the average diet should get no more than 10 percent of its calories from meat, and that pork, chicken, and fish are less resource-intensive options for meat eaters.

But while meat production can have a negative impact on species biodiversity and climate change, it’d be unwise to quit meat production altogether says Clayton Marlow, a grassland ecologist at Montana State University, Bozeman. He argues that the real issue facing biodiversity loss isn’t the expansion of meat production, but the expansion of urban sprawl, which takes away land that could potentially be used for agricultural production.

This is the time of year when people would slaughter, back when people did that — Rollie and Eunice Hochstetter, I think, were the last in Lake Wobegon. They kept pigs, and they’d slaughter them in the fall when the weather got cold and the meat would keep. I went out to see them slaughter hogs once when I was a kid, along with my cousin and my uncle, who was going to help Rollie.

Today, if you are going to slaughter an animal for meat, you send it to the locker plant and pay to have the guys there do it. When you slaughter pigs, it takes away your appetite for pork for a while. Because the pigs let you know that they don’t care for it. They don’t care to be grabbed and dragged over to where the other pigs went and didn’t come back.

It was quite a thing for a kid to see. To see living flesh, and the living insides of another creature. I expected to be disgusted by it, but I wasn’t — I was fascinated. I got as close as I could. And I remember that my cousin and I sort of got carried away in the excitement of it all and we went down to the pigeon and we started throwing little stones at pigs to watch them jump and squeal and run.

And all of a sudden, I felt a big hand on my shoulder, and I was spun around, and my uncle’s face was three inches away from mine. He said “If I ever see you do that again I’ll beat you ‘til you can’t stand up, you hear?” And we heard.

I knew at the time that his anger had to do with the slaughter — that it was a ritual and it was done as a Ritual. It was done swiftly, and there was no foolishness. No joking around, very little conversation. People went about their jobs — men and women — knowing exactly what to do. And always with respect for the animals that would become our food.

And our throwing stones at pigs violated this ceremony, and this ritual, which they went through. Rollie was the last one to slaughter his own hogs. One year he had an accident; the knife slipped, and an animal that was only wounded got loose and ran across the yard before it fell. He never kept pigs after that. He didn’t feel he was worthy of it.

It’s all gone. Children growing up in Lake Wobegon will never have a chance to see it. It was a powerful experience, life and death hung in the balance. A life in which people made do, made their own, lived off the land, lived between the ground and God. It’s lost, not only to this world: but also to memory.

The Choctaw hog needs someone to eat it...
Pete Brooks, farm manager of Vermont’s cheese-making Consider Bardwell Farm, shows the goat herd he manages on organic pasture. The farm raises goats, pigs, and chickens and is certified by Animal Welfare Approved for its humane and animal-appropriate practices.

This newspaper contains news and features about organic food and farming in the Northeastern US as well as a Special Supplement on Animal Welfare.