

Certified Naturally Grown Livestock Standards

The Certified Naturally Grown livestock standards are based on the USDA National Organic Program standards with a few significant modifications, as noted below.

We clarified and strengthened the standards for **living conditions** and **access to pasture**. The organic rules were worded in such a way that agribusiness growers got away with their animals never actually going outside their whole lives. If that describes you, then you should stick to Organic, but if your animals are primarily pasture raised, then we'd love to have you.

Another very significant change is in **feed requirements**. The feed must be grown according to CNG standards - without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides or GMO seeds - but it does not have to be certified organic or certified naturally grown feed. We are trying to encourage local systems, and when you can find a local source that's grown right, even if not certified, we think you should have the option to use it. Please note: to meet CNG standards it is NOT enough that the feed contains no medications. (That is important, but not sufficient.) If you're not sure whether your feed would qualify, please review the CNG [Feed Supplier Declaration](#) which we require from CNG livestock producers.

A final change has to do with how we handle the **origin of livestock** requirement outlined in 205.236. The USDA apparently does allow non-organic livestock to be purchased and brought into an organic operation, but we are trying to be more explicit about it, and allow variances only under specific conditions when there is no organic or naturally grown source of the sought-after livestock (see 205.236(a)(3)). We allow this variance because we believe in increasing the number of farmers who choose to get involved and to grow naturally or organically. We want to minimize hurdles to taking on these practices, so long as removing these hurdles doesn't compromise the integrity of the on-farm growing practices.

CNG's modifications to the NOP standards are *indicated in italics* in the CNG standards below. The paragraph numbers here correlate with the numbers in the [USDA Organic standards](#). Definitions or referrals to paragraphs not found on this page can be clarified by going straight to the above listed USDA website. We ask all farmers who seek certification to review the [National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances](#), referenced in section 205.105.

Please contact info@naturallygrown.org if you have any questions or need clarification on anything in this document. As always, your ideas, questions and suggestions are truly appreciated.

Livestock Standards

Allowed and prohibited substances, methods, and ingredients in CNG production and handling. (205.105)

To be sold or labeled as "Certified Naturally Grown," the product must be produced and handled without the use of:

- (a) Synthetic substances and ingredients, except as provided in 205.601 or 205.603;
- (b) Nonsynthetic substances prohibited in 205.602 or 205.604;
- (e) Excluded methods, except for vaccines, Provided, That, the vaccines are approved in accordance with 205.600(a);
- (f) Ionizing radiation, as described in Food and Drug Administration regulation, 21 CFR 179.26; and
- (g) Sewage sludge.

Land requirements. (205.202)

The fields and farm parcels from which harvested crops are intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as CNG, or which are used in forage or grain production for livestock or livestock products intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as "CNG," must:

- (a) Have been managed in accordance with the provisions of 205.203 through 205.206;
- (b) Have had no prohibited substances, as listed in the 205.105, applied to it for a period of 3 years immediately preceding harvest of the crop; and
- (c) Have defined boundaries and buffer zones to prevent the unintended application of a prohibited substance to the crop or contact with a prohibited substance applied to adjoining land that is not under CNG management; and
- (d) Comprise adequate acreage to meet the grazed forage requirements for all ruminant livestock as outlined in 205.237(c)

Soil fertility and crop nutrient management practice standard. (205.203)

(a) The producer must select and implement tillage and cultivation practices that maintain and improve the physical, chemical, and biological condition of soil and minimize soil erosion.

(b) The producer must manage crop nutrients and soil fertility through rotations, cover crops, and the application of plant and animal materials.

(c) The producer must manage plant and animal materials to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances. Animal and plant materials include:

- (1) Raw animal manure;
- (2) Composted plant and animal materials produced through a process that
 - (i) established an initial C:N ratio of between 25:1 and 40:1
- (3) Uncomposted plant materials.
- (d) A producer may manage crop nutrients and soil fertility to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops,

soil, or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances by applying:

- (1) A crop nutrient or soil amendment included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in CNG crop production;
 - (2) A mined substance of low solubility;
 - (3) A mined substance of high solubility, Provided, That, the substance is used in compliance with the conditions established on the National List of nonsynthetic materials prohibited for crop production;
 - (4) Ash obtained from the burning of a plant or animal material, except as prohibited in paragraph (e) of this section: Provided, That, the material burned has not been treated or combined with a prohibited substance or the ash is not included on the National List of nonsynthetic substances prohibited for use in organic crop production; and
 - (5) A plant or animal material that has been chemically altered by a manufacturing process: Provided, That, the material is included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in CNG crop production established in 205.601.
- (e) The producer must not use:

- (1) Any fertilizer or composted plant and animal material that contains a synthetic substance not included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in CNG crop production;
- (2) Sewage sludge (biosolids) as defined in 40 CFR Part 503; and
- (3) Burning as a means of disposal for crop residues produced on the operation.

Seeds and planting stock practice standard. (205.204)

(a) The producer must use Certified Naturally Grown or organically grown seeds, annual seedlings, and planting stock, except that,

- (1) Non-CNG or nonorganically produced, untreated seeds and planting stock may be used to produce an organic crop when an equivalent organically produced variety is not commercially available;
- (2) Non-CNG or nonorganically produced seeds and planting stock that have been treated with a substance included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production may be used to produce a CNG crop when an equivalent organically produced, Certified Naturally Grown, or untreated variety is not commercially available;
- (5) Seeds, annual seedlings, and planting stock treated with prohibited substances may be used to produce a Certified Naturally Grown crop when the application of the materials is a requirement of Federal or State phytosanitary regulations.

Crop rotation practice standard. (205.205)

The producer must implement a crop rotation including but not limited to sod, cover crops, green manure crops, and catch crops that provide the following functions that are applicable to the operation:

- (a) Maintain or improve soil organic matter content;
- (b) Provide for pest management in annual and perennial crops;
- (c) Manage deficient or excess plant nutrients; and

(d) Provide erosion control.

Crop pest, weed, and disease management practice standard. (205.206)

(a) The producer must use management practices to prevent crop pests, weeds, and diseases including but not limited to:

(1) Crop rotation and soil and crop nutrient management practices, as provided for in 205.203 and 205.205;

(2) Sanitation measures to remove disease vectors, weed seeds, and habitat for pest organisms; and

(3) Cultural practices that enhance crop health, including selection of plant species and varieties with regard to suitability to site-specific conditions and resistance to prevalent pests, weeds, and diseases.

(b) Pest problems may be controlled through mechanical or physical methods including but not limited to:

(1) Augmentation or introduction of predators or parasites of the pest species;

(2) Development of habitat for natural enemies of pests;

(3) Nonsynthetic controls such as lures, traps, and repellents.

(c) Weed problems may be controlled through:

(1) Mulching with fully biodegradable materials;

(2) Mowing;

(3) Livestock grazing;

(4) Hand weeding and mechanical cultivation;

(5) Flame, heat, or electrical means; or

(6) Plastic or other synthetic mulches: Provided, That, they are removed from the field at the end of the growing or harvest season.

(d) Disease problems may be controlled through:

(1) Management practices which suppress the spread of disease organisms; or

(2) Application of nonsynthetic biological, botanical, or mineral inputs.

(e) When the practices provided for in paragraphs (a) through (d) of this section are insufficient to prevent or control crop pests, weeds, and diseases, a biological or botanical substance or a substance included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production may be applied to prevent, suppress, or control pests, weeds, or diseases: Provided, That, the conditions for using the substance are documented by the farmer.

(f) The producer must not use lumber treated with arsenate or other prohibited materials for new installations or replacement purposes in contact with soil or livestock.

Origin of livestock. (205.236)

(a) Livestock products that are to be sold, labeled or represented as Certified Naturally Grown (or CNG) must be from livestock under continuous CNG management from the last third of gestation or hatching, except:

(1) Poultry. Poultry or edible poultry products must be from poultry that has been under

continuous CNG management beginning no later than the second day of life;

2) *Dairy animals. Milk or milk products must be from animals that have been under continuous CNG management for the past six months or longer.*

(3) *New breeds and expansion of a herd or flock. A producer who wishes to start raising a new breed of livestock or to expand a current herd or flock may buy-in non-organic or non-CNG animals under these conditions:*

(i) The producer has been unable to identify organic or naturally grown sources for this breed within the region;

(ii) The producer has contacted CNGs livestock coordinator for assistance locating an organic or CNG supplier of the sought-after breed;

(iii) The producer has received a variance from Certified Naturally Grown to include the purchased livestock among the CNG stock after the waiting period specified in item (vi);

(iv) The bought-in animals have not been treated with growth hormones;

(v) The bought-in animals are raised according to the CNG livestock standards as soon as they arrive on the farm;

(vi) No livestock products shall be sold, labeled or represented as Certified Naturally Grown until after the livestock have been under continuous CNG management for nine months or more, unless the livestock are to be used as dairy animals only, in which case their milk may be sold as Certified Naturally Grown after six months of continuous CNG management.

(b) The following are prohibited:

(1) Livestock or edible livestock products that are removed from a CNG operation and subsequently managed on a non-CNG operation may not be sold, labeled, or represented as Certified Naturally Grown.

(2) *Livestock that has not been under continuous CNG management for the most recent nine months or for animals younger than nine months, since the last third of gestation may not be sold, labeled, or represented as CNG slaughter stock.*

(3) *The milk or milk products of dairy stock that has not been under continuous CNG management for the most recent six months may not be sold, labeled, or represented as Certified Naturally Grown.*

(4) *No livestock of any kind that have ever been treated with hormones may be sold as Certified Naturally Grown.*

(c) The producer of a CNG livestock operation must maintain records sufficient to preserve the identify of all CNG managed animals and edible animal products produced on the operation.

Livestock feed. (205.237)

(a) The producer of a CNG livestock operation must provide livestock with a total feed ration composed of agricultural products, including pasture and forage, that are produced and, if applicable, handled in accordance with either Organic or CNG standards. Except, That, nonsynthetic substances and synthetic substances allowed under 205.603 may be used as feed additives and supplements.

(b) The producer of a CNG operation must not:

(1) Use animal drugs, including hormones, to promote growth;

(2) Provide feed supplements or additives in amounts above those needed for adequate

nutrition and health maintenance for the species at its specific stage of life;

(3) Feed plastic pellets for roughage;

(4) Feed formulas containing urea or manure;

(5) Feed mammalian or poultry slaughter by-products to mammals or poultry; or

(6) Use feed, feed additives, and feed supplements in violation of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.

(7) Feed meat products in any form to herbivorous livestock; or

(8) Feed meat products derived from a given species back to that same species (cannibalism); or

(9) Prevent dairy animals from grazing pasture during lactation, except as allowed under 205.239(b).

(c) For ruminants, grazed pasture must provide a significant portion of the total feed requirements, but not less than 30% of the dry matter intake on an average daily basis during the entire growing season, and for no fewer than 120 days per year (The 120 minimum is based on the short growing season of the Northeast United States. In areas with longer growing seasons, like the Pacific Northwest, the number of days on pasture should be correspondingly greater, and may be as many as 200 days or more).

(d) The producer shall moderate the use of feed concentrates (cereal grains in any form) so as not to compromise any animal's health.

Livestock health care practice standard. (205.238)

(a) The producer must establish and maintain preventive livestock health care practices, including:

(1) Selection of species and types of livestock with regard to suitability for site-specific conditions and resistance to prevalent diseases and parasites;

(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 (ruminants);

(3) Establishment of appropriate housing, pasture conditions, and sanitation practices to minimize the occurrence and spread of diseases and parasites;

(4) Provision of conditions which allow for exercise, freedom of movement, and reduction of stress appropriate to the species;

(5) Performance of physical alterations as needed to promote the animal's welfare and in a manner that minimizes pain and stress; and

(6) Administration of vaccines and other veterinary biologics.

(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

(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 produced in accordance with CNG standards; and

(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 CNG.

(c) The producer of CNG livestock must not:

(1) Sell, label, or represent as CNG 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.

(2) Administer any animal drug, other than vaccinations, in the absence of illness;

(3) Administer hormones for growth promotion;

(4) Administer synthetic parasiticides on a routine basis;

(5) Administer synthetic parasiticides to slaughter stock;

(6) Administer animal drugs in violation of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act; or

(7) Withhold medical treatment from a sick animal in an effort to preserve its CNG status.

All appropriate medications must be used to restore an animal to health when methods acceptable to CNG production fail. Livestock treated with a prohibited substance must be clearly identified and shall not be sold, labeled, or represented as Certified Naturally Grown.

Livestock living conditions. (205.239)

(a) The producer of CNG livestock must establish and maintain livestock living conditions which accommodate the health and natural behavior of animals, including:

(1) Access to the outdoors, shade, shelter, exercise areas, fresh air, and direct sunlight suitable to the species, its stage of *life*, the climate, and the environment; *in particular:*

(i) Ruminants must spend most of their time on pasture during the growing season, with a minimum of 120 days per year spent grazing on pasture (The 120 minimum is based on the short growing season of the Northeast United States. In areas with longer growing seasons, the number of days on pasture should be correspondingly greater, and may be as many as 200 days or more in areas like the Northwestern U.S. with longer growing seasons.)

(ii) Poultry must be provided a minimum of five square feet per bird outdoors, or at least two square feet per bird if poultry is moved at least once per day to fresh new pasture. All poultry must have at least 1.75 square feet per bird when indoors for short periods of time (such as overnight or during extreme weather).

(2) Appropriate clean, dry bedding. If the bedding is typically consumed by the animal species, it must comply with the feed requirements of 205.237;

(3) Shelter designed to allow for:

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

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

(iii) Reduction of potential for livestock injury;

(b) The producer of CNG livestock may provide temporary confinement for an animal because of:

(1) Inclement weather;

(2) *Certain short-term conditions related to the animal's stage of life such as:*

(i) Final finish stage for slaughter stock, not to exceed 90 days;

(ii) Birthing;

(iii) Dairy animals up to 6 months of age.

Note: Lactation is NOT a stage of life that may be used to justify denying pasture for grazing;

(3) Conditions under which the health, safety, or well being of the animal could be jeopardized; or

(4) Risk to soil or water quality.

(c) The producer of CNG livestock 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.

Facility pest management practice standard. (205.271)

(a) The producer or handler of a CNG facility must use management practices to prevent pests, including but not limited to:

- (1) Removal of pest habitat, food sources, and breeding areas;
- (2) Prevention of access to handling facilities; and
- (3) Management of environmental factors, such as temperature, light, humidity, atmosphere, and air circulation, to prevent pest reproduction.

(b) Pests may be controlled through:

- (1) Mechanical or physical controls including but not limited to traps, light, or sound; or
- (2) Lures and repellents using nonsynthetic or synthetic substances consistent with the National List.

(c) If the practices provided for in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section are not effective to prevent or control pests, a nonsynthetic or synthetic substance consistent with the National List may be applied.

(d) If the practices provided for in paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this section are not effective to prevent or control facility pests, a synthetic substance not on the National List may be applied, Provided, That, the handler and certifying agent agree on the substance, method of application, and measures to be taken to prevent contact of the CNG produced products or ingredients with the substance used.

(f) Notwithstanding the practices provided for in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (d) of this section, a handler may otherwise use substances to prevent or control pests as required by Federal, State, or local laws and regulations, Provided, That, measures are taken to prevent contact of the CNGally produced products or ingredients with the substance used.

Commingling and contact with prohibited substance prevention practice standard. (205.272)

(a) The handler of a CNG operation must implement measures necessary to prevent the commingling of CNG and nonCNG products and protect CNG products from contact with prohibited substances.

(b) The following are prohibited for use in the handling of any CNG produced agricultural product or ingredient labeled in accordance with subpart D of this part:

- (1) Packaging materials, and storage containers, or bins that contain a synthetic fungicide, preservative, or fumigant;
- (2) The use or reuse of any bag or container that has been in contact with any substance in such a manner as to compromise the integrity of any CNG produced product or ingredient placed in those containers, unless such reusable bag or container has been thoroughly cleaned and poses no risk of contact of the CNG produced product or

ingredient with the substance used.

Temporary variances. (205.290)

(a) Temporary variances from the requirements in 205.203 through 205.206, 205.236 through 205.239, and 205.271 through 205.272 may be established by consultation with a CNG representative.

(e) Temporary variances will not be granted for any practice, material, or procedure prohibited under 205.105.

Product composition. (205.301)

(a) A raw or processed agricultural product sold, labeled, or represented as "Certified Naturally Grown" must contain (by weight or fluid volume, excluding water and salt) 100 percent CNG produced ingredients.

(e) Livestock feed:

(1) A raw or processed livestock feed product sold, labeled, or represented as "Certified Naturally Grown" must contain (by weight or fluid volume, excluding water) not less than 100 percent CNG produced raw or processed agricultural product.

(2) A raw or processed livestock feed product sold, labeled, or represented as "Certified Naturally Grown" must be produced in conformance with CNG crop standards or Certified Organic standards.

(f) All products labeled as "Certified Naturally Grown" and all ingredients identified as "Certified Naturally Grown" in the ingredient statement of any product must not:

(1) Be produced using excluded methods, pursuant to 201.105(e);

(2) Be produced using sewage sludge, pursuant to 201.105(f);

(3) Be processed using ionizing radiation, pursuant to 201.105(g);

(4) Be processed using processing aids not approved on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances in subpart G of this part;

(5) Contain sulfites, nitrates, or nitrites added during the production or handling process,

(6) Be produced using nonCNG ingredients when CNG ingredients are available; or

(7) Include CNG and nonCNG forms of the same ingredient.

Synthetic substances allowed for use in CNG livestock production. (205.603)

In accordance with restrictions specified in this section the following synthetic substances may be used in CNG livestock production:

(a) As disinfectants, sanitizer, and medical treatments as applicable.

(1) Alcohols.

(i) Ethanol-disinfectant and sanitizer only, prohibited as a feed additive.

(ii) Isopropanol-disinfectant only.

(2) Aspirin-approved for health care use to reduce inflammation.

(3) Biologics-Vaccines.

(4) Chlorhexidine - Allowed for surgical procedures conducted by a veterinarian. Allowed

for use as a teat dip when alternative germicidal agents and/or physical barriers have lost their effectiveness.

(5) Chlorine materials - disinfecting and sanitizing facilities and equipment. Residual chlorine levels in the water shall not exceed the maximum residual disinfectant limit under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

(i) Calcium hypochlorite.

(ii) Chlorine dioxide.

(iii) Sodium hypochlorite.

(6) Electrolytes-without antibiotics.

(7) Glucose.

(8) Glycerine - Allowed as a livestock teat dip, must be produced through the hydrolysis of fats or oils.

(9) Hydrogen peroxide.

(10) Iodine.

(11) Magnesium sulfate.

(12) Oxytocin - use in portparturition therapeutic applications.

(13) Paraciticides. Ivermectin - prohibited in slaughter stock, allowed in emergency treatment for dairy and breeder stock when preventive management does not prevent infestation. Milk or milk products from a treated animal cannot be labeled as provided for in subpart D of this part for 90 days following treatment. In breeder stock, treatment cannot occur during the last third of gestation if the progeny will be sold as organic and must not be used during the lactation period for breeding stock.

(14) Phosphoric acid - allowed as an equipment cleaner, Provided, That, no direct contact with organically managed livestock or land occurs.

(b) As topical treatment, external parasiticide or local anesthetic as applicable.

(1) Copper sulfate.

(2) Iodine.

(3) Lidocaine - as a local anesthetic. Use requires a withdrawal period of 90 days after administering to livestock intended for slaughter and 7 days after administering to dairy animals.

(4) Lime, hydrated - as an external pest control, not permitted to cauterize physical alterations or deodorize animal wastes.

(5) Mineral oil - for topical use and as a lubricant.

(6) Procaine - as a local anesthetic, use requires a withdrawal period of 90 days after administering to livestock intended for slaughter and 7 days after administering to dairy animals.

(c) As feed supplements - Milk replacers - without antibiotics, as emergency use only, no non-milk products or products from BST treated animals

(d) As feed additives

(2) Trace minerals, used for enrichment or fortification when FDA approved, including:

(i) Copper sulfate

(ii) Magnesium sulfate

(3) Vitamins, used for enrichment or fortification when FDA approved

(e) As synthetic inert ingredients as classified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), for use with nonsynthetic substances or a synthetic substance listed in this section

and used as an active pesticide ingredient in accordance with any limitations on the use of such substances.

Nonsynthetic substances prohibited for use in CNG livestock production. (205.604)

The following nonsynthetic substances may not be used in CNG livestock production:

(a) Strychnine

Emergency pest or disease treatment. (205.672)

When a prohibited substance is applied to a certified operation due to a Federal or State emergency pest or disease treatment program and the certified operation otherwise meets the requirements of this part, the certification status of the operation shall not be affected as a result of the application of the prohibited substance, provided that:

(b) Any livestock that are treated with a prohibited substance applied as the result of a Federal or State emergency pest or disease treatment program or product derived from such treated livestock cannot be sold, labeled, or represented as Certified Naturally Grown, except that:

(1) Milk or milk products may be sold, labeled, or represented as Certified Naturally Grown beginning 12 months following the last date that the dairy animal was treated with the prohibited substance; and

(2) The offspring of gestating mammalian breeder stock treated with a prohibited substance may be considered CNG: Provided, That, the breeder stock was not in the last third of gestation on the date that the breeder stock was treated with the prohibited substance.

Definitions

Growing season for pasture. The time(s) of year when pasture growth is possible from natural precipitation or irrigation.

Dry matter intake (livestock feed). The quantity of total feed intake, measured on a moisture-free basis in order to provide a consistent basis for comparison.

Pasture. Land used for livestock grazing that is managed to provide feed value and maintain or improve soil, water, and vegetative resources.