



# Documentation Forms for Organic Livestock Producers

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### Pasture Practice Standard and Ruminant Feed and Grazing Synopsis

NOP Sections 205.237, 239, and 240 require producers of ruminant livestock to provide daily grazing during the grazing season. Producers must provide enough quality pasture for organic ruminant livestock to graze throughout the grazing season and to consume at least 30% of their Dry Matter Intake, on average, from grazing over the course of the grazing season, which must be at least 120 days per year. They must manage pasture resources to support livestock health and to protect soil and water quality.

In addition, producers must maintain records to show that the above requirements have been met. The information that must be captured in records includes a description of the total feed ration for each type and class of animal; the percentage of each feed type in the total ration—purchased or farm-raised (including pasture) and all feed supplements and additives; the amount of each type of feed actually fed to each type and class of animal; any adjustments made to all rations throughout the year in response to seasonal grazing changes; and the method for calculating Dry Matter Demand and Dry Matter Intake.

### Terms Defined

**Dry matter.** The amount of a feedstuff remaining after all the free moisture is evaporated out—the moisture-free content of a feedstuff.

**Dry Matter Demand (DMD).** The expected Dry Matter Intake for a class of animal.

**Dry Matter Intake (DMI).** Total pounds of all feed (expressed as dry matter), devoid of all moisture, consumed over a given period of time.

**Grazing season.** The period of time when pasture is available for grazing because of natural precipitation or irrigation. Grazing-season dates may vary because of mid-summer heat/humidity, significant precipitation events such as floods, hurricanes, droughts, or winter weather events. The grazing season may be extended by the grazing of residual forage as agreed in the operation's Organic System Plan. The grazing season may or may not be continuous because of weather, season, or climate. The grazing season may range from 120 days to 365 days, but not less than 120 days, per year.

Dry Matter Content of Common Feedstuffs	
Feedstuff	% dry matter
Hay (sun-cured grass, legume, and mixed)	90%
Grain (corn, small grains, roasted soybeans)	89%
Soybean Meal	88%
High-Moisture Corn	76%
Haylage/Baleage	35–60%
Corn Silage	30–40%
Small Grain Silage	25–35%





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### Dry Matter Demand

The NOP website provides resources for calculating Dry Matter Demand (DMD) and Dry Matter Intake (DMI), including DMD tables for beef, dairy cows, and dairy goats. Organic certifiers and educational organizations also provide explanations and examples of ways to estimate DMD and calculate DMI for different types of ruminant livestock. The table below provides a summary of averages and ranges of DMD values published in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Dry Matter Demand Tables and the sources referenced below. Producers may choose DMD references that best fit the characteristics of each type and class of ruminant livestock they manage and describe their methods for calculating DMI.

All estimates are just that. Many factors influence actual DMD in real livestock, including forage quality, weather, animal condition, genetics, health, and activity.

Dry Matter Demand by Percentage of Body Weight for Ruminant Groups	
Ruminant group	% body weight (DMD = % x animal body weight)
Beef cattle, lactating (demand increases with animal size and milk production; see DMD Tables for Dairy Cattle)	2.0 – 2.5 **
Beef cattle, growing and finishing slaughter stock (demand decreases with increasing age / size / weight gain and slower growth; see also DMD Tables for Beef Cattle)	2.75 – 3.35 *
Dairy heifers (see DMD Tables for Dairy Cattle)	2.5 *
Dairy cows, dry (small and large breed)	1.8 *
Dairy steers	See beef slaughter stock
Goats, weaned, slaughter or replacement stock	2.25 *
Goats, brood or lactating (see DMD Tables for Dairy Goats)	4.0 *
Sheep, weaned, slaughter or replacement stock	3.3 *
Sheep, brood or lactating stock	3.65 *
Sources: (**) NOP tables; (*) Pennsylvania Certified Organic, 2010	

### References

National Organic Program Dry Matter Demand Tables For Classes of Dairy Cattle. USDA. March 29, 2010. <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5087124>. 202-720-3252

National Organic Program Dry Matter Demand Tables For Classes of Dairy Goats. USDA. December 1, 2010. [www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5087914&acct=noprulemaking](http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5087914&acct=noprulemaking). 202-720-3252

National Organic Program Dry Matter Demand Tables For Classes of Beef Cattle. USDA. February 12, 2010. <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5087125>. 202-720-3252.

Access to Pasture: Guidance for Organic Ruminant Operations. Access to Pasture Rule Guidance Document. Pennsylvania Certified Organic. August 1, 2010. [www.paorganic.org/pdf/2010/Access%20to%20Pasture%20Rule%20Guidance%20Document\(New\).pdf](http://www.paorganic.org/pdf/2010/Access%20to%20Pasture%20Rule%20Guidance%20Document(New).pdf). 814-422-0251

How to Comply with the Pasture Rule on Your Organic Dairy Farm: A 10 Step Summary. Last updated October 20, 2010. [www.extension.org/article/30340](http://www.extension.org/article/30340). The summary's eOrganic authors include the following: Harriet Behar, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES); Cindy Daley, California State University, Chico; Heather Darby, University of Vermont Extension; Sarah Flack, Sarah Flack Consulting; Ed Maltby, Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance; Lisa McCrory, Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

Pasture for Organic Ruminant Livestock: Understanding and Implementing the National Organic Program (NOP) Pasture Rule. 800-346-9140

