



# National Organic Program





# Basic Organic Certification Steps

- Establish and implement an **Organic Farm and Livestock System Plan (OSP)**.
- Have an on-site **annual inspection**.
- Be approved by an **accredited certifying agent**.
- Comply with the **National Organic Program**.



# Organic System Plan (OSP) Farm and Livestock

- Description of farm practices and procedures to be performed and maintained.
- List of all materials used as production inputs.
- Description of record-keeping systems.



# Land Certification Requirements

- Land (crops, pastures) qualifies as organic 36 months after the last application of prohibited inputs.
  - Includes commercial fertilizers, pesticides and genetically engineered crops/inputs.
  - Seed must be untreated and organic, unless commercially unavailable.



# Herd Certification Requirements

- 12 months feeding 100% organic feed and pasture to the entire herd or a group of heifers before they can be certified organic.
- Home-grown feed and pasture after 24 months of organic management qualifies during this period only.
- Purchased feed must be certified organic.
- Applies to entire herd; baby calves raised on whole milk, etc.



# Organic Herd Management

- **Pasture management** to optimize pasture's contribution to the operation.
- **Preventive nutrition** includes feed with high levels of naturally-occurring antioxidants and sound vitamin and mineral fortification.
- Organic dairies typically report **increased vitality and fewer herd health problems, thanks to pasturing!**



# NOP Pasture Rule



- Implementation date was June 17, 2011.
- All organic dairy operators now need to include a thorough pasture plan as part of their organic system plan.
- Farmers are allowed to establish their own grazing season. Your certifier must approve your season as typical to your region.
- The grazing season does not necessarily have to be continuous, but it must be at least 120 days total.
- All cattle groups over 6 months of age must receive an average of at least 30 percent dry matter intake from pasture during the grazing season.



# Pasture Rule cont'd



## Other requirements

- Year-round outdoor access for all livestock.
- Roughages used for bedding must be certified organic.
- Failure to comply may mean decertification for the class or group of livestock out of compliance.



# Consumer-driven





# Pasture Record-keeping



## HOW?

- Certifiers provide forms
- NOP website (use the Search feature)
- Graziers use their own records
- Joe's Pasture Calculator spreadsheet ---  
(on Organic Valley website farmers.coop)



# Support for our grazing farmers

- Dr. Silvia Abel-Caines, Organic Valley Ruminant Nutritionist
- Regional grazing groups (GrassWorks, Great River Graziers, Practical Farmers of Iowa, etc.)
- Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) pasture walks
- NRCS grazing specialists, Extension, etc.
- Farmers helping other farmers—willing to share information



# Challenges to Grazing

- Getting started: believing in the benefits of grazing, setting up paddocks & lanes, choosing seed varieties, watering systems, shade, etc.
- Weed Control
- Internal Parasites
- Fly Control
- Pinkeye
- Drought



# Solutions to Grazing Challenges



**Challenge:** Getting started (setting up paddocks and lanes, choosing seed varieties, watering systems, providing shade, etc.)

## **Helpful Suggestions:**

- Contact local grazing specialist
- Go to lots of pasture walks



# Solutions to Grazing Challenges

**Challenge:** Weed Control

**Helpful Suggestions:**

- Graze immature plants
- Keep nice, thick stands
- Clip pastures as needed



# Solutions to Grazing Challenges



**Challenge:** Internal Parasites

**Helpful Suggestions:**

- Rotate paddocks (28 days minimum)
- Avoid overgrazing (leave at least 4")
- Seed a wide variety of plant species
- For very young calves, whole milk acts as a natural de-wormer



# Solutions to Grazing Challenges



## Challenge: Fly Control

### Helpful Suggestions:

- Use flytraps, Sticky tapes, etc.
- Keep cowyards clean/free of manure buildup
- Eliminate areas of standing water
- Harrowing or dragging pastures (to kill fly larvae)
- Embrace the dung beetles



# Solutions to Grazing Challenges

**Challenge:** Pinkeye

**Helpful Suggestions:**

- Do our best to control flies
- Feed kelp – iodine is secreted thru tears
- Avoid grazing tall rough stuff (can scratch corneas, causing irritation)
- May need to clip pastures

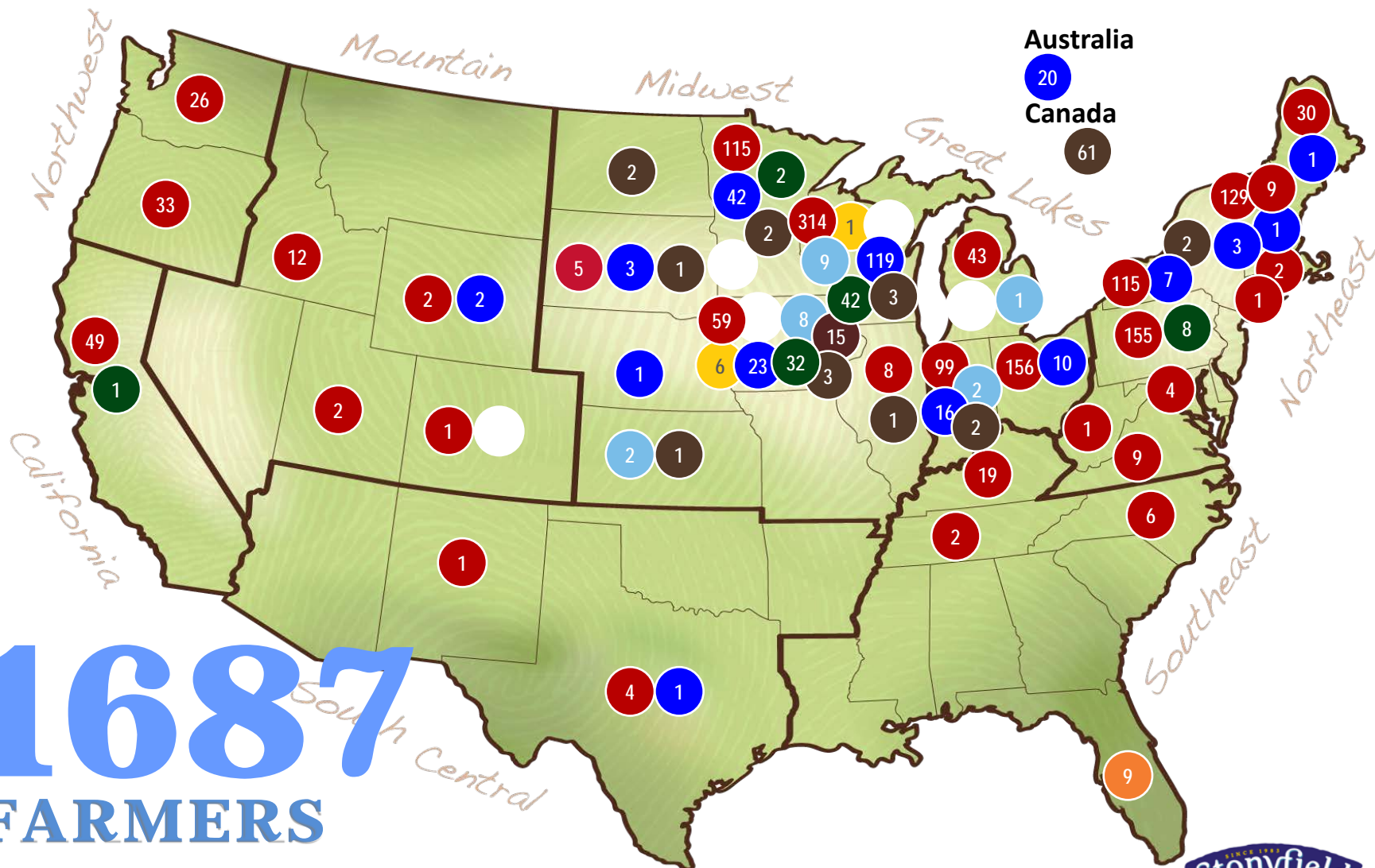


# Solutions to Grazing Challenges

**Challenge:** Drought

**Helpful Suggestions:**

- Plant drought tolerant species (sorghum/sudan, millet, grass-types, etc.)
- Keep soil fertility up there/mineral-balanced
- Avoid overgrazing to keep the ground shaded
- Contact your certifier for an NOP Temporary Variance



Australia








20

Canada

61

# 1687

## FARMERS

 DAIRY	1,411	 JUICE	9	 BEEF	249
 EGG	85	 PRODUCE	124	 PORK	22
 SOY	15	 GROWER	78	 POULTRY	7



# Cutting Edge Technology



12/4/09





# 600 Cows Milking, 1,000+ Acres Pasture



**THE FUTURE  
IS ORGANIC**





Thank you for your time  
and attention.



**Joe Klein, Organic Valley  
Midwest Dairy Pool Coordinator**

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