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## **USDA will come to Gap, PA on December 11, 2008 to Hold Listening Session on New Organic Livestock Regulations**

### **PCO Will Hold Conference Call On Pasture Rules on Dec. 15, 2008**

The USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) will be hosting a listening session on Thursday, December 11, from 9:30 am-12:30 pm, concerning proposed changes to the national organic livestock regulations. The meeting will be held at The Family Center of Gap, 835 Houston Run Drive, Gap PA 17527.

The new regulation was written to help clarify pasture requirements for ruminants and to address public concerns about inadequacies in the current regulations. Sources of replacement stock, beef finishing, feed rations, shelter, and water are all addressed in the new regulation. Beef, sheep, goat and poultry producers will be affected as well as those with dairy operations.

As written, the proposal includes a requirement that organic dairy and livestock farmers provide access to pasture 365 days per year, and maintain a 'sacrificial pasture' for periods when ruminant animals may damage pasture sod. The proposed regulation also bans the use of dry lots for finishing organic beef cattle. A copy of the proposed changes in the regulation is available at <http://www.paorganic.org>.

The NOP will give a presentation on the proposed rule change, and will then listen to public commentary. Farmers and other interested parties are also encouraged to submit written comments before December 23rd at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov); search for the term "organic pasture." Following the public comment period, the USDA will issue revised final rules for organic livestock, not expected before mid 2009.

For more information, visit the National Organic Program website [www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop) or the PCO website at: <http://www.paorganic.org>, or call the PCO Office at 814-422-0251.

Directions to Family Center of Gap: From Lancaster, follow Route 30 East towards Gap until reaching Brackbill Road on the Right, (located diagonally across from Black Horse Animal Hospital.) Follow Brackbill Road for roughly 0.7 of a mile until Houston Run Drive. Turn right onto Houston Run Drive and the Upper Parking Lot will be just ahead on the right. Phone is 717-442-2300

Coffee, beverages, and snacks will be provided. No charge to attend

### **PCO CONFERENCE CALL ON PASTURE RULES**

December 15, 1:30 - 3:00 pm

For all PCO members: Call 1-219-509-8111, then access code: 796539

PCO will discuss the impacts of this proposed rule and suggested comments and fixes.

Comments are due December 23, 2008. Call PCO for more info 814-422-0251