

USDA Rethinking Organic Livestock Mandates

PUBLISHED ON

February 26, 2018

Producers selling livestock products under the "Organic" seal may find themselves spared from proposed animal welfare regulations thanks to a change of heart from some within the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

As the President Trump administration has delayed the effective date of the [Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices](#) final rule (OLPP) passed more than a year ago, it has prompted further studies from the USDA.

Amidst the delays, the Agricultural Marketing Service of the USDA has [proposed to withdraw OLPP](#).

Originally set to go into effect on March 20, 2017, the Trump administration's regulatory freeze [delayed](#) the effective date two months. Further extensions pushed the effective date to May 14, 2018.

The proposed rule details USDA's rationale for withdrawing OLPP. Succinctly, the USDA reads the "broadly prescriptive animal welfare regulation governing outdoor access and space, transport, and slaughter, among other things," to be beyond the scope of its authority under the statute. The USDA seems to draw the line between "health care" and "welfare."

Additionally, the USDA compared the cost to producers to comply with the regulation, versus the enhanced animal welfare through the industry's own initiative, and expresses the opinion that the cost is likely to outweigh the benefits.

Proponents of OLPP oppose its withdrawal, asserting the animal welfare standards enumerated by OLPP would help ensure the organic industry is meeting the expectations of consumers who opt organic under the impression that the animals are treated more humanely. Some organic producers also believe regulating animal welfare standards will level the playing field for those already using such methods.

If the proposed rule to withdraw OLPP is finalized, the standards for production of organic livestock will remain unchanged. However, if the USDA decides not to withdraw OLPP, those requirements will go into effect May 14.

If producers have any questions on how the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices requirements may affect them, or on how to comply with Organic standards or food laws in general, please [contact me](#) or anyone in [Barley Snyder's Food & Agribusiness Group](#).

:



EmmaRose Strohl

Associate

Tel: (484) 318-2494

Email: estrohl@barley.com