

Guidance for treating organic and alternative animals

Organic farmers and ranchers need to follow the National Organic Program (NOP) when treating their crops and animals. While some medications are prohibited, many common substances are allowed. This stepwise approach provides general guidance when choosing treatments for USDA certified organic animals.

Is there an all-natural, allowed treatment* that would be effective?

Allowed examples include acupuncture, botanicals, chiropractic, and homeopathic therapies.

*Remember that strychnine is natural but prohibited.

Is there an all-natural, allowed supportive therapy that would be helpful?

Allowed examples may include fluids/electrolytes, vitamins/minerals, and nutritional therapy*.

*Remember to check with the certifier that all ingredients are allowed.

Find out if the substance can be used without jeopardizing the animal's organic status:

- 1. Ask the farmer if it is approved in their OSP
- 2. Check the following resources:
 - Practical guide to working with organic farms
 - National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances
 - Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) database
- **3.** Ask the farmer to contact their certifier and request it be added to their OSP

Are your recommended treatments synthetic but allowed in the farm's Organic System Plan (OSP)?

Allowed examples include glucose, propylene glycol (for ketosis only), lidocaine*, and formic acid (for honey bees only).

*Remember to allow the necessary withdrawal period.

Are you unsure if your recommended treatment is allowed or prohibited?

Examples that are sometimes not allowed include oxytocin, dextrose, and epinephrine.

Do you need to use a prohibited substance* to prevent death and suffering of the animal?

Prohibited examples include acepromazine, antibiotics, furosemide, ivermectin, and steroids.

*Remember, farmers cannot withhold treatment from a sick animal. However, this will result in the loss of the animal's organic status and conventional treatment may not align with herd health goals, so discuss if the farmer wishes to treat or cull the animal.

Can further illnesses and losses be treated in a timelier manner or prevented altogether by addressing the underlying cause(s)?

Allowed examples include changes to husbandry practices, nutritional therapy, probiotics, selective breeding, and vaccinations.

This information is not guaranteed beyond 5/12/2023. Follow current substances allowed by the farmer's certifier and 7 CFR 205.603.

