

Drought Relief

Written by USDA Office of Communications
Wednesday, 15 August 2012 14:42

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The drought of 2012 is the most serious to impact U.S. agriculture since 1988. As of August 15, 2012, Secretary Vilsack has designated 1,670 U.S. counties as natural disaster areas due to severe drought.

While these severe conditions affect all farms in these counties, organic ruminant livestock operations--unless their pasture has access to irrigation--may not be able to meet the organic pasture requirements in the USDA organic regulations.

In addition to USDA's other drought relief efforts, AMS Administrator David Shipman is granting a temporary variance in affected counties to support Secretary Vilsack's efforts to provide relief to affected farmers during this challenging time.

Drought Relief: Organic Ruminant Farmers

Organic ruminant livestock--such as cattle, sheep, and goats--must consume at least 30 percent of the

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Due to the severe drought, USDA is granting a temporary variance from these requirements (Sections

- This temporary variance [applies only to organic primary natural stock producers](#) by [Secretary Vilsack](#)
- This temporary variance applies to non-irrigated pasture only.
- Producers must supply at least 15 percent of their dry matter intake (on average) from certified organic feed.
- This temporary variance applies to the 2012 calendar year only.

[List of Affected Counties](#)

[Letter Granting Temporary Variance](#)

[USDA Drought Relief Efforts](#)

About Temporary Variances

Temporary variances from the production and handling requirements of the USDA organic regulation

- Natural disasters declared by the Secretary
- Damage caused by severe weather or other business interruption,
- Practices used for the purpose of conducting research in organic production or handling.

Procedures for requesting [NOP 2006 Provariance Requests for Temporary Variances](#).

[2012 Temporary Variances](#)

About the National Organic Program (NOP)

The NOP facilitates trade [learn more](#) and ensures integrity of organic agricultural products by consistently implementing

About the NOP Organic Insider

The NOP Organic Insider is intended to inform the organic community on a wide range of NOP functions

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