



Pasture-Raised Ruminant Production Evaluation Tool

To be used in conjunction with the Food Alliance Whole Farm/Ranch Inspection Tool and relevant Food Alliance livestock production inspection tool. Endnotes provide clarification.

Operation Name:	
Address:	
Evaluation Date:	
Evaluator/Inspector:	

Evaluation Criteria

Intent:

The goal of this Inspection Module is to ensure that animals are raised on pasture with minimal supplementation derived from non-forage feedstuffs.

1. All livestock production methods used meet or exceed Level 3 in each of the standards areas of the Food Alliance Whole Farm/Ranch evaluation criteria and the relevant Food Alliance livestock production evaluation criteria.

- Criteria met.
- Criteria not met.

Comments:

2. All records, including affidavits, are maintained and available for inspection for 36 months after animal is sold or harvested.

- Criteria met.
- Criteria not met.

Comments:

3. All animals are on range, pasture, or in paddocks for their entire lives.¹

Verification (check as applicable to fully document compliance with criteria):

- Producer/manager can demonstrate that the land base (combined owned and rented) contains enough acres to supply all the grazing requirements for the year, including forage-based acreage for young animals.²
- If #1 is not enough, there is sufficient hay or silage on-hand to supply the difference.
- If there is not enough hay or silage currently on-hand, then there is enough storage capacity for hay and/or silage to provide sufficient forage during the grazing shortfall for all animals.
- If forage is purchased on an as-needed basis to supply grazing shortfalls, the producer/manager can substantiate the amounts and delivery times by receipts from vendors from previous years.
- If stored forages are fed, they are fed on range, or in pastures or paddocks.
- Prior to weaning, animals may be fed mother's milk. If artificially reared animals are fed milk replacers prior to weaning, these milk replacers cannot contain antibiotics, hormones, or animal fats or other non-milk derived animal byproducts. Feedtags from these milk replacers must be retained and made available to the Food Alliance inspector.
- Other (please specify):

- Criteria met.
- Criteria not met.

Comments:

4. Animals are not raised in feedlots. If animals are raised in paddocks or pens, forages or crops are grown in those areas during the growing season.³

Verification (check as applicable to fully document compliance with criteria):

- There are no feedyard facilities on the property or on rented facilities administered by the operation.
- If there are permanent feedyard facilities on the property, where crops cannot be grown during the year, the producer/manager signs a statement indicating that pasture-raised animals are not confined in these facilities at any time during the year.⁴

- If there is feed mixing equipment designed for grain on the property, producer/manager can document that it is primarily used to prepare the protein supplements that are permitted in Criterion #6.⁵
- If there are bunkline feeders on the property that are used for pasture-raised animals, producer/manager can verify that this equipment has been utilized in ways consistent with the Food Alliance Certified Pasture-raised program.
- Any sorting, working, and loading facilities on the property are associated with short-term holding pens.
- Other (please specify):

- Criteria met.
- Criteria not met.

Comments:

5. During inclement weather, animals may be confined to short-term holding pens for not more than 45 days per calendar year.⁶ Animals in short-term confinement may be fed stored or green-chopped forages.

Verification (check as applicable to fully document compliance with criteria):

- If stored or green-chopped forages are fed in confinement, the producer/manager maintains a detailed diary that shows the beginning and ending dates, and that the total number of days in confinement for an animal cannot exceed 30 days.
- Inclement weather that forces short-term confinement must be documented.
- Other (please specify):

- Criteria met.
- Criteria not met.

Comments:

6. A limited amount of protein supplementation is permitted.⁷ The protein supplement must contain at least 30% crude protein⁸ with no non-protein nitrogen (such as urea). Animals are not fed any feed ingredients listed under the AAFCO Collective Terms “Animal Protein Products” or “Grain Products”.

Verification (check as applicable to fully document compliance with criteria):

- Producer/manager can provide nutritional analysis of any protein supplement used, or if a commercial supplement is used, producer/manager can provide the feedtag or the ingredient list on invoices for custom mixes.
- Commercial or custom protein supplements cannot contain non-protein nitrogen.
- Producer/manager maintains records showing the dates that the supplement was fed and the amounts fed.
- Producer/manager can demonstrate that amount of protein supplement offered was not more than 2 pounds/day for dry cows and growing cattle, 3 pounds/day for lactating cows, and 0.5 pounds/day for sheep or goats.⁹
- Other (please specify):

- Criteria met.
- Criteria not met.

Comments:

7. Animals are not fed grain or grain byproducts¹⁰, except as permitted in emergency or temporary situations, or in incidental amounts in mineral and vitamin supplements, as outlined in this module. Roughage byproducts such as cottonseed hulls, peanut hulls, almond hulls and other roughage products (which are high in fiber (NDF¹¹) or listed as roughage products by the AAFCO¹²) are permitted.

Verification (check as applicable to fully document compliance with criteria):

- Producer/manager verifies that s/he has not purchased or fed grain or grain supplements to the animals at any time during the year.
- If there are grain-feeding bunks, bunkline feeders, grain mixing equipment, or grain storage equipment on the property, producer/manager can verify that these are used primarily in conjunction with the feeding of small amounts of protein supplement, not grain-feeding, as permitted in Criteria #6.
- If bags of grain or grain supplements are on the property, other non-Food Alliance Certified Pasture-raised animals must also be on the property, and the producer/manager verifies that these bags are not fed to any animals in the Food Alliance Certified Pasture-raised program.

- If there are grain storage facilities on the property, the producer/manager can verify that grain or grain byproducts were not fed to pasture-raised animals during the year.
- Producer/manager can show feedtags or receipts from all feeds purchased since the last inspection.
- Other (please specify):

- Criteria met.
- Criteria not met.

Comments:

8. Consumption of seeds naturally attached to herbage, forage and browse is considered incidental and is acceptable. Producer/manager verifies that animals have not grazed grain crops or pulse crops¹³ containing mature seeds.

Verification (check as applicable to fully document compliance with criteria):

- Producer/manager can describe all the forages that animals have consumed during the year.
- If livestock grazed crop residues, including residues from seed production, the producer/manager can show records that show dates of crop harvest and dates of grazing, and can demonstrate that grazing occurred after seed/crop harvest.¹⁴
- Grazing corn residues is permitted.
- Other (please specify):

- Criteria met.
- Criteria not met.

Comments:

9. Exceptions to the feed-related provisions are limited to incidental supplementation due to inadvertent exposure to non-forage feedstuffs, or to temporary situations where it is necessary to make exception to the feed-related provisions to ensure the animals' well being at all times during adverse environmental conditions and/or other situations that may threaten the welfare of the animals.

Verification (check as applicable to fully document compliance with criteria):

- Producer/manager describes in detail any inadvertent exposure to non-forage feedstuffs that occurred since the previous inspection.
- Producer/manager maintains a detailed diary that lists the beginning and ending dates of each inadvertent exposure and the activities he undertook to cope with that exposure.
- Producer/manager describes in detail any adverse environmental/physical situations that occurred since the previous inspection.
- Producer/manager maintains a detailed diary that lists the beginning and ending dates of each adverse environmental/physical situation and the exceptional activities he undertook to cope with that emergency.
- If a government agency had declared an emergency for that area, the producer/manager can provide documents that corroborate that declaration.
- Producer/manager can list the names and amounts of all the non-forage feedstuffs fed during such periods.
- Producer/manager provides feedtags and receipts of any such supplements that were consumed under these conditions.
- Producer/manager maintains a diary that contains information about these unusual situations, including dates, descriptions of the situations, the names and amounts of the feeds consumed, and any actions undertaken to avoid or prevent a reoccurrence in the future.
- Other (please specify):

- Criteria met.
- Criteria not met.

Comments:

10. Mineral and vitamin supplements may be provided free choice to adjust the animal's nutrient intake and to correct deficiencies in its total diet. Receipts, ingredient lists and/or feedtags are retained from any supplements provided .

Verification (check as applicable to fully document compliance with criteria):

- Producer/manager can provide feedtags from all mineral and vitamin supplements.
- Ingredient lists can include feedtags from commercial products or ingredient lists on invoices for custom mixes.
- Incidental use of molasses, grains, and grain byproducts in mineral and vitamin supplements is permitted.¹⁵
- Other (please specify):

- Criteria met.
- Criteria not met.

Comments:

11. Animals are traceable by written record throughout their entire life from birth to harvest back to the farm or ranch they originated. This system is designed so that inquiries can trace any animal within 48 hours. Records include sale date, number sold, and destination.

Verification (check as applicable to fully document compliance with criteria):

- All animals for which it is normal, reasonable, and acceptable to have individual identifications have individual and unique identifications.¹⁶ For sheep and goats, individual identifications are not required; group identification is acceptable.
- Producer/manager has birth records for all animals. These records include individual or group identification, birth date, and where possible, dam identification.
- If animals were not identified at birth, producer/manager can show that animals were given individual or group identifications as soon as practical and can explain why this delay was unavoidable.
- Producer/manager has sale records of all animals sold from the operation. These records include sale dates and the individual or group identification of animals sold on those dates.
- Individual identification is required for every postweaning animal purchased and brought into the Pasture-raised system.

- Producer/manager can demonstrate that the identification and record-keeping system will allow a 48-hour trace-back.
- Other (please specify):

- Criteria met.
- Criteria not met.

Comments:

12. For all purchased animals, affidavits are provided by the seller attesting to compliance with all criteria contained in the relevant Food Alliance livestock evaluation criteria and the Food Alliance Pasture-raised Inspection Module.

Verification (check as applicable to fully document compliance with criteria):

- For all animals purchased, producer/manager must provide purchase documents showing date of purchase, individual identification, and appropriate Affidavits.
- Other (please specify):

- Criteria met.
- Criteria not met.

Comments:

Endnotes

¹ This means that all animals must be maintained at all times on unbroken ground or on land with forage cover. Unbroken ground is rangeland, vines or any other non-tilled acreage. Forage cover includes crop residue on farmed acreage (pea, aftermath straw, vegetable residues, etc).

² The provisions of this section do not preclude commonly used grazing practices such as high-density/ low-frequency or strip grazing, when large numbers of animals may graze growing forages in small paddocks for short periods of time.

³ Forage is defined as any herbaceous plant material that can be grazed or harvested for feeding, with the exception of grain.

⁴ These facilities can be used in emergency situations or during periods of adverse environmental/physical conditions.

⁵ Mixing or pelleting forages with or without minerals is permissible.

⁶ If the safety and well-being of the animals is threatened, a longer period of confinement may be warranted. However, the appropriateness of a longer confinement period will be determined by the Certification Manager on a case-by-case basis.

⁷ One situation could be with animals grazing low-quality forages, which usually don't contain enough protein to support a highly active population of rumen microbes. Under these conditions, adding a small amount of true protein to the diet will enhance the rumen microbial environment, increase the population of fiber-fermenting microbes, and improve fiber fermentation in the rumen. This can increase the digestibility and intake of low-quality forages. Another situation could occur for the health of the fetus(es) in grazing animals during late gestation.

⁸ Dry matter basis.

⁹ These upper limits are based on a protein supplement containing 50% crude protein (such as soybean meal). Daily amounts of actual crude protein needed are 0.5-0.75 lb for dry cows, and 0.9-1.2 lb for lactating cows. Amount of supplement actually fed can be adjusted higher or lower depending on the level of crude protein in the supplement.

¹⁰ Except for the situations listed elsewhere in this Inspection Module, the diet of pasture-raised animals must be derived solely from forage consisting of grass (annual and perennial), forbs (e.g., legumes, Brassica), browse, or cereal grain crops in the pre-grain state.

Animals also may be fed hay, haylage, baleage, silage, crop residue without grain, and other roughage sources while on pasture during periods of low forage quality or inclement weather. Animals may be fed crops normally harvested for grain (including but not limited to corn, soybean, rice, wheat and oats) only if they are foraged or harvested in the pre-grain state.

¹¹ Neutral Detergent Fiber

¹² Association of American Feed Control Officials

¹³ Pulse crops are grain legumes such as soybeans, field beans, lentils, lupins, peas, peanuts, and other similar plants.

¹⁴ If an unusual situation develops that a seed field (grass, clover, or other crops) becomes available to grazing prior to seed harvest, the livestock producer/manager cannot graze his animals on these fields because this is equivalent to grazing wheat or oats in the grain stage.

¹⁵ Molasses cannot be used as a primary energy source.

¹⁶ For sheep, participation in the Scrapie Flock Certification Program (SFCP) satisfies this requirement.