

**Texas and New Mexico Livestock Operations
National Organic Program (NOP) Trip Report**

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Between July 24 and July 27, 2012, NOP Deputy Administrator Miles McEvoy and NOP Compliance and Enforcement Director Matthew Michael visited nine organic livestock operations in the Texas panhandle and Eastern New Mexico. The purpose of the tour was to assess the implementation of the pasture rule by accredited certifying agents and organic ruminant operations; and evaluate the 2012 drought and effects of the temporary variances issued to ruminant livestock producers in 2011. While touring organic poultry, beef and dairy farms, other issues were evaluate including how organic dairy farms are sourcing replacement heifers; how farms and dairy processors coordinate sanitizer use of bulk milk trucks, and outdoor access for poultry.

We visited six dairy farms, two replacement heifer operations and one egg producer. Five certifying agents certified the operations and representatives from each, with the exception of CCOF, accompanied us on our visits.

Name	Location	Type of Operation	Certifier
Natural Prairie Dairy	Channing, TX	Dairy	Texas Department of Agriculture
Cottonwood Cattle	Dalhart, TX	Heifer Replacement	Quality Certification Services
Aurora Dairy	Stratford, TX	Dairy	Quality Assurance International
Native Pastures Dairy	Clovis, NM	Dairy	New Mexico Department of Agriculture
Lake Ridge LLC	Portales, NM	Heifer Replacement	New Mexico Department of Agriculture
Redland Dairy	Farwell, TX	Dairy	Texas Department of Agriculture
Hilltop Dairy	Earth, TX	Dairy	Texas Department of Agriculture
Boehning Dairy Farm	Earth, TX	Dairy	Texas Department of Agriculture
Idalou Egg Ranch	Idalou, TX	Egg Production	CCOF

Our observations at each operation follow, along with a summary of general findings.

Natural Prairie Dairy

Natural Prairie is certified by TDA. TDA supervisor (b)(6) met us at the farm and accompanied us during the visit. Natural Prairie was first certified as an organic dairy operation in 2005. It is certified for livestock, handling and crops. (b)(4)

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Cottonwood Cattle

Cottonwood is a heifer replacement operation certified for livestock production by Quality Certification Services (QCS) of Gainesville, Florida. Ramkrishnan Balasubramanian, QCS Certification Director, accompanied us during the visit. (b)(4)

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Aurora Dairy

Aurora Dairy is certified by QAI. (b)(6) from QAI met us at the dairy and accompanied us during the visit. Aurora Dairy has been certified since 2007 for livestock and crops (although it cultivates only pasture). (b)(4)

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Native Pasture Dairy

(b)(6) NMDA, met us at the farm and accompanied us during the visit. (b)(4) (b)(4)
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operation is certified for livestock and handling (the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA)
requires organic milk producers to be certified for handling). (b)(4)

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Lake Ridge, LLC

(b)(6) NMDA, met us at the farm and accompanied us during the visit. (b)(4)

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Redland Dairy

TDA supervisor (b)(6) met us at the farm and accompanied us during the visit. Redland Dairy

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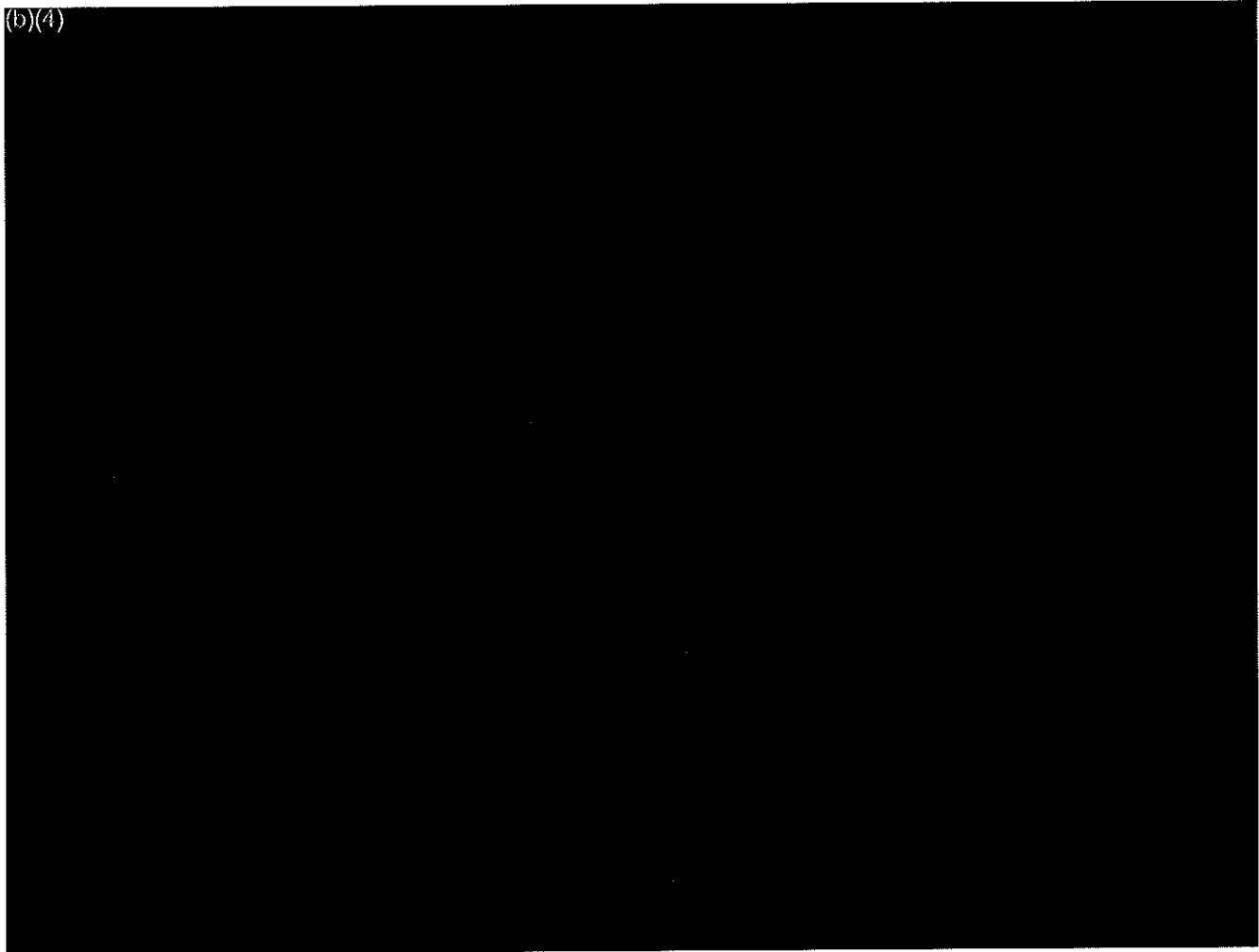
All of Redland Dairy's pasture was irrigated and thus in good grazing condition. (b)(4)

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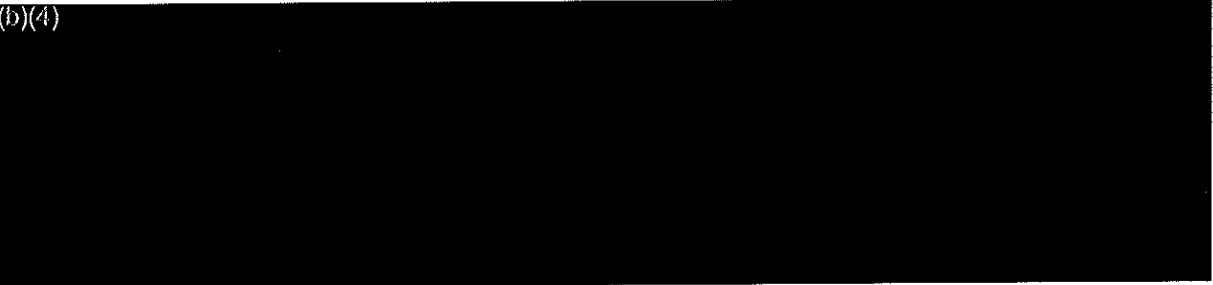
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Hilltop Dairy and Boehning Dairy Farm

TDA supervisor (b)(6) accompanied to the farm and during the visit. These two large dairies, owned jointly, are situated next to each other near Earth, Texas. (b)(4)



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Idalou Chicken Ranch

This operation is certified by CCOF for livestock, processing (feed) and crops. (b)(4)

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During our visit, we focused on outdoor access for the birds.

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Summary Findings

- For the most part, dairy and heifer replacement operations in West Texas and Eastern New Mexico are meeting the requirements of the pasture rule, despite the drought.

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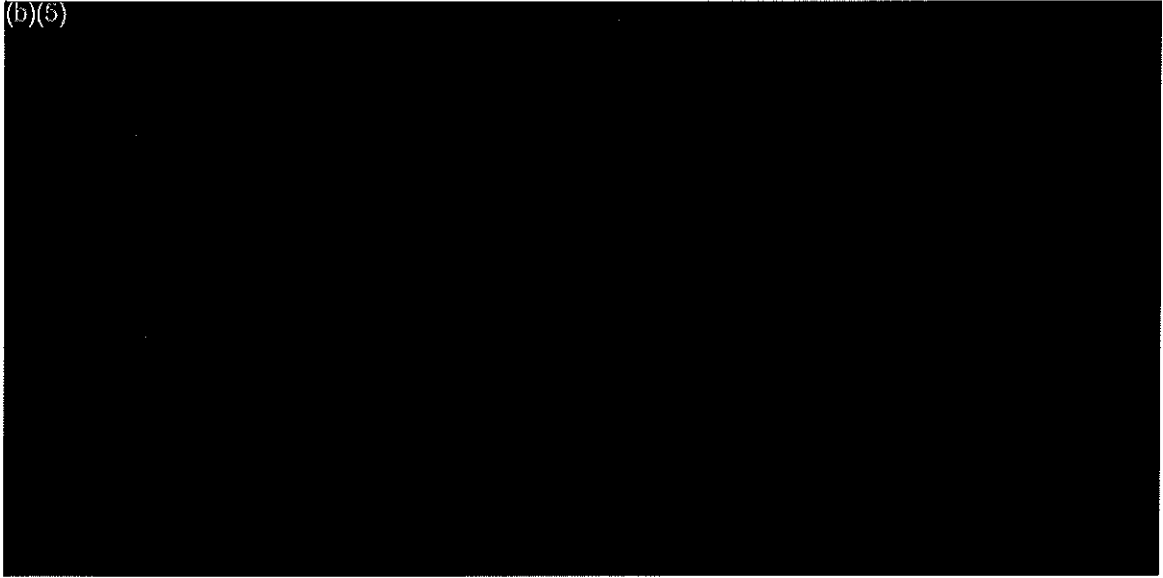


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- The organic livestock producers requested more information about the specific requirements.

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