

DAIRY BUYER'S GUIDE

Assumptions

Points	Production Aspect
	1. Market Area
	2. Ownership Structure:
100	Farmstead dairy (owned and operated by farm family)
90	Farmer-owned cooperative
80	Family-owned business—close ties/partnership with farmers
70	Corporate/investor owned—deep roots/ties with farmers
65	Stonyfield—unique governance policy with Hirshberg family
60	Investor-owned corporation and LLCs
25–50	Investor-owned corporation with questionable track record
0–25	Any ownership structure with history as “bad actor.”
0	No answer
	3. Milk Supply
100	Farmstead dairy
95	Farmstead dairy—buys additional milk from neighbors
90	Cooperative/small corporation/multiple farms—own patrons
80	50% own patrons plus a highly rated supplier
70	Purchases some outside milk from highly rated suppliers
50	Purchases farm out without direct control
0-30	Purchases some percentage of milk from “open market”
0-30	Purchases some percentage of milk from confinement dairies (depending on percentage)
0	No answer
LOFCO	Lancaster County Organic Farmers Cooperative
CROPP	Cooperative Regions of Organic Produce Pools
	4. Disclosure/farm contact information for verification
100	Full disclosure
0-90	Partial disclosure
0	No contact information provided
	5/6. Certifier—farms
	Ratings for certifiers are based on the history and integrity of the certifying organization and its history of approving certification of farms that are suspected of creating/exploiting loopholes in the current regulations.
Baystate	Baystate Certifiers
CCOF	California Certified Organic Farmers
COFA	California Organic Farmers Association

COI	Certified Organic Incorporated
GOA	Globe Organic Alliance
ICO	Indiana Certified Organic
IDALS	Iowa Dept of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Integrity	Integrity Certified International
MOFGA	Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
MOSA	Midwest Organic Service Association
NCIA	North Carolina Crop Improvement Association
NMOCC	New Mexico Organic Commodity Commission
NOFA-VT	Northeast Organic Farming Association–Vermont
OC	One Cert
OEFFA	Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
OTCO	Oregon Tilth
PCO	Pennsylvania Certified Organic
QAI	Quality Assurance International
Stellar	Stellar Certification Services (Demeter)
Texas	Texas Department of Agriculture
VOF	Vermont Organic Farmers
Washington	Washington Department of Agriculture

7. Pasture provided

Rating is based on the following criteria: (a) policies requiring pasture in addition to USDA regulations, (b) enforcement/oversight, (c) amount of acreage available per cow on the firm's largest farms, (d) average days cows are on pasture per year, (e) permissible exemptions

8. Cull rate

Rating is based on the health and longevity of a farm's cattle, taking into account the farm's slaughter rate/cull rate.

100 Annual cull rate under 10%

9. Management history of replacement animals (calves and heifers)

100 Closed herd—no purchases of outside animals
90 All replacement animals managed organically from last third of gestation
0-50 Conventional animals purchased (depending on percentage of herd)
5 Calves shifted off to contractors who raise them with conventional feed/drugs for first year of life, then shift them back to organic production
0 No answer

10. Antibiotic use on young cattle

100 All antibiotic use prohibited
75 Not regulated by firm (default to USDA standards)50 Antibiotic use allowed during first year of life

- 60 Milk withheld for one year before considering organic again
- 25 Commercial replacement cattle purchased—antibiotic use unknown
- 5 Calves are sold, to take advantage of loophole, and managed conventionally for first year of life
- 0 No answer

11. Hormone usage

It should be noted that hormones for increasing milk production (genetically engineered bovine growth hormone—rBGH/rBST) are prohibited in organic dairy production. Some farms choose to use therapeutic hormones during reproduction (oxytocin).

- 100 No hormones used on farm
- 50 Hormones used therapeutically
- 0 No answer

12. Farm support/oversight/supervision

In the words of one farmstead producer, “We live here.” Characteristically, these farmers are with their cows every day and personally supervise the production of the dairy products. Some organizations have a dedicated field staff, or the owner visits with the organic farmers regularly.

- 100 Farmstead dairies (owner farms/lives on-site)
- 90 Cooperative/corporation that sets standards and has a staff that visits farms regularly
- 75 Depends on third-party for supervision
- 5 No direct supervision/no personal relationship with farm
- 0 No answer

13. Procurement of outside ingredients

- 100 100% of dairy products come from within the organization—full control
- 90 Outside purchases are from other highly rated dairy organizations
- 50 Dairy ingredients purchased from a number of different vendors, with less direct control
- 25 Purchases from anonymous suppliers—“open market”
- 0-25 Purchases ingredients from confinement factory farms (depending on percentage) or imports
- 0 No answer
- N/A Raw milk supplier-no need to purchase ingredients