

Final Project Report:

## **ORGANIC LIVESTOCK HANDBOOK, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**

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Submitted by:



## Project Summary

Canadian Organic Growers (COG) is a charitable organization whose mandate includes the publication of handbooks about organic growing methods, targeted at both organic and transitioning producers. COG published the original *Organic Livestock Handbook* in 2000 which was very popular at the time. In the decade following its publication, organic livestock production practices have significantly changed in Canada and in 2009 the Canadian Organic Standards were enacted. Recognizing these changes, authors Laura Telford and Anne Macey set out to produce a second edition of this handbook reflecting these new livestock production methods and standards and profiling successful organic livestock operations. In depth research of these methods were conducted by the authors and interviews with dozens of organic farmers across Canada were undertaken. The end result is now one of the most thorough and up-to-date publications of its kind that includes over 65 more pages of new information and with case studies on 16 of the most successful livestock operations in Canada.

## Introduction to Topic

In the 10 years since the first publication, organic livestock production practices in Canada have evolved considerably. In the 2000 publication, the fact that there were very few Canadian certified-organic pasture-based operations meant that we were forced to rely on examples from other countries. However there now exist many excellent examples of successful certified-organic pasture-based livestock systems in Canada. Since 2000, new information about organic livestock husbandry has also become available and considerable progress has been made in documenting best practices for animal welfare.

The regulatory context for organic production in Canada has also changed dramatically in 10 years. The Canadian Organic Standards have been completely rewritten and the greatest change has been in the livestock section. There is also a growing interest in organic livestock production and a lack in available resources that include references to the organic standards.

Our authors are two people intimately involved with standards development and the organic sector. Anne Macey is an experienced organic livestock farmer, a member of the Organic Livestock Working Group of the Organic Standards Committee and a member of the Animal Welfare Task Force. Anne is the original author of COG's highly acclaimed *Organic Livestock Handbook* (2000). Laura Telford was the national director of Canadian Organic Growers for 7 years and is now an Organic Marketing Business Development Specialist for the Government of Manitoba. Laura's science background and extensive writing experience complement Anne's technical knowledge of livestock production. With these two authors expertise and the help of contributing authors E. Ann Clark and Roger Henry, the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the *Organic Livestock Handbook* is a now one of the most thorough resources available on organic production and management methods. It includes references to the current the organic standards that apply to livestock and meat production for various types of animals: dairy, beef, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry. The new handbook explores principles of animal husbandry, animal welfare, nutrition and health care within the context of pasture-based management systems. It will provide tools related to housing, pasture, nutrition, health, handling, marketing, certification and record keeping. Unlike the previous book, this version focuses on and promotes pasture-based production systems where possible and includes profiles of organic farms that successfully demonstrate leading-edge pasture management systems.

### Objectives Statement

COG originally published the *Organic Livestock Handbook* in 2000. Since then organic production methods have improved and national organic standards have been regulated (and harmonized) in the USA and Canada. The current project is a complete overhaul of the *Organic Livestock Handbook* to focus more on pasture-based livestock systems, improve the format and make it consistent with that of our other Practical Skills books, incorporate the latest advances and innovations in organic livestock production, and set it in the context of the new regulatory framework.

The *Organic Livestock Handbook* is not a text on basic livestock management, since there are many good references available. It does fill an information gap for those interested in introducing livestock to an organic mixed farm or those transitioning to organic production. It addresses both principles and regulations of organic animal husbandry by presenting practical information based on research results and farmer-tested best practices.

The objective of the Practical Skills handbooks is to get technical production information into the hands of as many farmers and ranchers as possible. This will be measured by:

- sales, both direct and wholesale;
- reviews and recommendations given in various farm media and resource centres for organic and conventional farms; for instance, newsletters and magazines specific to livestock producers;
- addition of new distribution channels.

Informed producers will be enabled to increase their production, acreage and/or markets – which is also a COG objective. This will be measured by:

- COG's annual survey of organic production;
- Statistics Canada (federal government) census data.

Both of these sources will capture any increase in the number of growers or acreage. While this would be indicative rather than directly attributable to the handbook, it would show achievement of COG's overall objectives and efforts.

#### Measurable Outcomes:

At this time the Organic Livestock Handbook has only just been published. Delays were experienced in the production of this book but we are extremely pleased with the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition and we look forward to distributing it across the country. We expect that this publication will also play a role in increasing the number of organic livestock operations in Canada and look forward to reviewing census data in the years to come.

## Educational Approach

The target audience for the *Organic Livestock Handbook* includes organic, transitioning and conventional livestock producers of all scales – anyone interested in introducing livestock to their mixed farm, transitioning existing herds to organic methods, or expanding their production capacity. The handbook is also an invaluable resource for organic inspectors and those undergoing inspection.

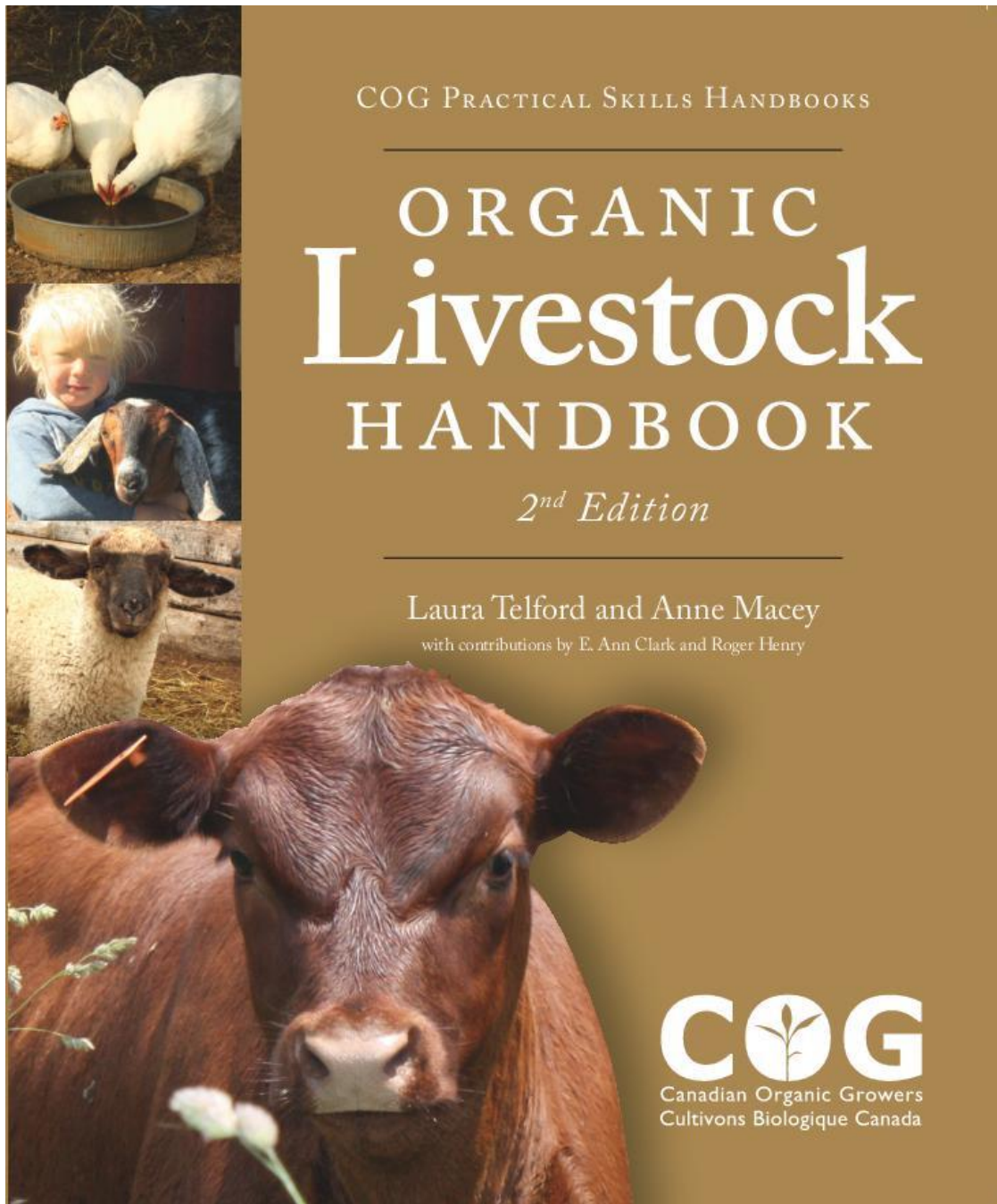
COG’s experience with earlier publications indicate that our audience wants and appreciates our combination of applied advice from farmer stories and case studies, along with theory and research reports. This format is successful because its information is immediately usable. Reference books such as COG’s handbooks are still sought out, despite the amount of information available online. As such, a significant part of the research for this book included dozens of interviews with Farmers across the country to collect their expert advice and to create profiles of their operations for the book.

In order to arrive at the final version of this publication the following steps were taken which are outline in the table below:

<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
<b>1.0 FIRST DRAFT</b>	Writer
1.1 research	contributors
1.2 writing	contributors, Writer
1.3 photography	contributors
<b>2.0 SECOND DRAFT</b>	Writer
2.1 editing	Editor
2.2 expert reviews	contributors
2.3 final edit	Editor, PM*
<b>3.0 PRODUCTION</b>	PM/Writer
3.1 graphics	Writers
3.2 layout and design	Writers
3.3 proofreading	PM
3.4 printing	contractor
<b>4.0 SALES</b>	PM/COG Admin
4.1 marketing and promotion	PM/ COG admin
4.2 distribution	COG admin
<b>5.0 MANAGEMENT</b>	PM/COG Admin
5.1 administration	COG admin
5.2 project management and series coordination	PM/COG Admin

## Project Results

The outcome of this project was the production of a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Organic Livestock Handbook. It is a valuable educational resource that includes fully updated references to the Canadian Organic Standards with numerous case studies from successful organic livestock producers in Canada. A hardcopy of this text will be mailed to the Organic Farming Research Foundation.



A quantitative assessment of the additions to this publication can be viewed in the table below. All livestock sections doubled in length with the exception of the Beef Section and considerable revisions were made to the Dairy Section. In total 16 farms were profiled in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, something that had not been done in the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, and the Canadian Organic Standards are now fully referenced in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

Quantitative Results:

	OLH 1 <sup>st</sup> Edition	OLH 2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition
Total Page Count	174 pages	242 Pages
Dairy Section	12 pages	42 pages
Beef Section	11 pages	16 pages
Sheep Section	10 Pages	20 pages
Goat Section	6 pages	12 pages
Pig Section	13 pages	27 pages
Poultry Section	15 Pages	33 pages
No. of Farmer Case Studies	0 Case Studies	16 Case Studies
2009 Cdn. Organic Standards	Not Referenced	Fully Referenced

### Conclusions and Discussion

Publishing the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *the Organic Livestock Handbook* was a not an easy feat however the end product is a masterfully written, comprehensive, and accessible educational resource for livestock producers, students, workshop participants, and organic inspectors. We anticipate that similar to the other books in our Practical Handbook Series, the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the *Organic Livestock Handbook* will become the go-to reference guide for suitable organic practices and procedures.

Delays were experienced in the production of this book due to changes in staff at COG, unexpected professional hurdles encountered by one of the authors and an uncompromising determination by the authors to produce an exceedingly comprehensive book. Furthermore, condensing hours of farmer interviews and synthesizing research took longer than expected as did the layout work and the final stages of printing. As COG looks to the future and the publishing of another title in the

series (on the horizon is Growing Garlic Organically) it would be wise to allocate a more generous timeline to the publishing of this book to allow time for resolving unexpected challenges. We do feel that certain unique circumstances played a significant factor in the delay of this book and are unlikely to happen again with our next publication.

Following the publishing of this text, COG would like to develop a workshop curriculum that references this book. We have done this with the other books in the practical handbook series and found that both in-class and webinar workshops help increase the accessibility of the information in the text while also raising the awareness of the new resource.

### Outreach

The *Organic Livestock Handbook* will be available for purchase from COG, its affiliates and distribution partners, as well as new channels with conventional agriculture organizations.

The hardcopy book price will be set at \$30.00 which we feel is an appropriate and fair amount considering the additions to the length of the book which increase printing cost significantly (1<sup>st</sup> Edition of OLH original price was \$49.95). The Digital book price will be set at \$20.00 and complimentary copies will be available to public information centers such as libraries and farm organizations. When used as part of a workshop curriculum, the book will be included in workshop tuition.

Although COG books are written with the Canadian producer in mind, we have found that there is a market for our books outside of Canada. All of our books are widely distributed in the US, largely through Acres USA, MOSES, Growing for Market, NOFA and the University of South Dakota. In Canada, our existing distribution network includes COG (website, magazine, workshops and conferences), COG chapters and affiliates (in all provinces and the Yukon Territory), The Canadian Farm Business Management Council, and le Centre de référence en agriculture et agroalimentaire du Québec.

New distribution channels, both organic and conventional, will be developed during the marketing phase, using various farm media and producers associations. To



raise the profile the book, our next steps will include dissemination of press releases, advertising the book in our magazine, *The Canadian Organic Grower*, spotlighting the book at upcoming bothing events and conferences. COG will also send review copies of the publication out to our regular bulk book clients. We expect to receive positive reviews about the book from these organizations and will post their comments on our website and in additional press releases.

So as not to compete immediately with printed book sales, we will delay the release of a digital version of the text. COG has produced digital versions of the other books in our Practical Handbook Series which have increased international sales because shipping costs have been eliminated. We expect that this book will do quite well in digital format.

### **Financial Accounting**

Not yet available.

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