

Example of research paper on organic beef production

[Environment](#), [Animals](#)



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Summary

Organic beef production is still a new concept in the field of beef production. However, it has developed so fast and has become widely accepted all over the world. Organic beef production is somewhat similar to natural beef production but it involves additional steps of inspection and verification before the beef is sent to the organic market. The process of producing organic beef involves using natural feeds without any trace of inorganic components. Such livestock are also not exposed to any kind of growth stimulating hormones or the use of antibiotics. This research is mainly going to cover the process of organic beef production and the Do's and Don'ts in order to ensure that a given animal can be classified as a safe source of organic beef (Belstead, 1992). The process of organic beef production starts before the animal is born and continues up to the time the animal is ready to be sold to the organic market. An organic animal should be from at least a

third generation of animals that have not been fed on any kind of inorganic matter. The process of production also involves identifying the types of food that the animals are to be fed on and conditions under which an animal has to be subjected to some kinds of drugs. In case whereby an animal is treated using a prohibited drug, it is then eliminated and sold to the inorganic market. Animals under the care of an organic care attendant should not have any component of inorganic in their blood stream. In this paper, we are also going to consider factors that can make an animal be classified as suitable for organic beef production and the factors that can make an animal be eliminated from the herd to be used for organic beef production (Colby, 1991).

Introduction

Organic beef production involves the process of rearing livestock without exposing them to growth stimulating hormones or the use of antibiotics. In addition to observing these measures, organic producers should also ensure that a third party carries out inspection on the animals before they are sold off to the organic markets. The industry of organic beef production is still in the development process and the infrastructure to support it is still limited. However, it has picked up well and is developing very fast. Many components of the marketing and processing of the organic beef are in flux. In order for the industry to be more successful, there are some issues that need to be properly addressed. They include: international harmonization of the organic requirements, consistency of supply, product identification and promotion of the organic products/industry (Fritz, Sady & Andresen, 1994).

These components affect the market and production directly and unless they are adequately addressed, this industry will flop and hence become less profitable. There are some risks that producers also need to understand before venturing into the business so that they can put all the necessary measures to ensure that the business does not plunge. Domestic markets are underdeveloped and so sustained profitability of organic beef is dependent on export markets. The costs and pricing formation for organic beef are more vibrant than that of the convectional market. The costs are likely to stabilize as the market develops and becomes more mature (Fritz, Sady & Andresen, 1994).

Certified organic beef should come from a completely certifiable production system that gathers the information on the history of every livestock in the program. The information gathered here includes: its reproduction history, veterinary care and feeding program. All the cattle under this program should meet the following criteria:

Born and raised on organic pasture only

Should have never received any kind of antibiotic

Do not have any history of being given any kind of growth stimulating hormone.

Fed on only certified organic feeds (grain and grass)

Must have controlled open-air access

Challenges

Organic beef is mainly produced so as to provide beef that meets the health needs and the natural behavior of the animals. Organic livestock should be

fed on 100% organic feed. This is a requirement that is not very easy to fulfill since most of the feed are contaminated either directly or indirectly with inorganic contents.

Any shelter that is provided to such livestock must be constructed in a way that allows the animal to have as much comfort as possible and allow it to exercise. Obtaining a shelter that is spacious enough to allow the animal to exercise freely is very expensive. Animals kept for organic beef usually take up much space that could have been used for other production purposes (Fritz, Sady & Andresen, 1994).

Organic practices prohibit feeding animal parts of any kind to ruminants that eats a vegetarian diet. Therefore there is no animal byproduct of any sort that is incorporated in the organic feed at any given time. This makes it very hard to boost the growth of the animal thus making such animals to depict a very slow growth rate (Chu, 2007).

The national organic standard obliges the producer to set up an oversight of production and management systems. The production and management of operations of the organic beef has to go through some inspections which are done on site and have some farm or working strategies in order to be organic certified. This is an expensive initiative that results into a corresponding increase in the production cost.

In organic production, livestock should not be fed on plastic pills for fiber, or formulas that have urea or compost. These animals cannot also be given antibiotics or growth hormones. This leads to a corresponding stagnation in the growth rate of the animal. Such animals are also likely to die out of bacterial attacks since no antibiotic should be administered to the animal. If

any kind of antibiotic is given to such animals, then they are sold off to the inorganic markets (Chu, 2007).

In order for an animal to be raised for organic beef, its mother must have been fed organic feed for at least the last third of gestation. It is quite challenging to meet this obligation in order for an animal to qualify to be raised for organic beef production.

In the processing procedures that handle both the organic and non-organic beef products, the machines must be able to separate their management of organic and non-organic meat. There are also some particular cleaning agents that are permissible or proscribed in such operations. This is a very expensive process which can further stretch on the budget of the producers thus reducing profitability for the producers and leading to setting up of higher prices for the beef products in order to meet the additional costs of production (Fitzgerald, 1999).

Organic production requires traceability of the animal from birth to marketing of the resulting meat. Therefore when a person buys organic meat, there is an assurance of traceability. Under the organic standards, when meat is sold as organic, the meat by itself is 100% organic and has no any trace of inorganic matter in it. If a consumer buys hamburger for instance, that meat must be from a pure organic process of production.

Despite the above mentioned challenges, this method of beef production is highly encouraged and its market has been on the rise in the recent past.

The cost and return for organic beef is very limited due to the increased cost of production. Even though organic producers receive a best value for their products, the amount of money offered for such products do not meet the

extra costs which are incurred during production process. The cost for finishing the production of organic beef is about 27-39% higher than the cost for finishing the production of non-organic meat. However, the amount of money which is received for organic beef is about 31% higher than the cost for non-organic beef. Therefore there is a deficit between the returns and the amount of expenditure used for production. One of the key factors that lead to such differences is the cost due to obtaining organic feed and bedding for the animals (Fitzgerald, 1999).

Solutions

Currently there are standards which have been proposed to be used in the production of organic beef. There are strict measures that need to be strongly observed in order to ensure that the beef produced is strictly organic. Most of the proposals made regarding the production of organic beef include feeding the animals on strictly organic contents and not exposing the animal to any kind of inorganic content like the use of antibiotics. The production process has proved to be quite expensive and it has been very hard for the producers of organic animals to fully recover the costs of production and make profits that can make the business sustainable. In order to make the business sustainable and increase the business profitability, the following measures have been proposed:

- i. Keeping the animals together in spacious environment

This is as opposed to the proposed system whereby each animal is kept on a spacious environment occupying about three times the space that a convectional animal could have occupied. If the organic animals are kept

together but in a spacious environment, they will help in reducing the problem of space hence make the business become more manageable.

ii. Segregating production machines

This will eliminate the problem of acquiring expensive machines used for separating the organic components from the inorganic contents. Organic animals should not be kept together with the inorganic ones. This will help in maintaining the organic nature of the targeted herd all through the system.

iii. Pure organic animals should be used in the production of other organic animals

This will help in removing any trace of inorganic species from the herd thus making the process of obtaining pure organic animals easier without much hustle.

Steps

The process of producing organic beef involves a careful analysis of the requirements for organic beef. In order to ensure quality production of organic beef, the following needs to be observed strictly:

i. Standard for Organic Requirements

Ensure that you observe the standard for organic requirements. There are usually some variations in standards of producing organic beef. Therefore the manufacturers are required to carry out a periodic check and analysis so as to ensure that they standards that are complying and highly accepted in the field of organic production (Fitzgerald, 1999).

ii. Record Keeping

There is need to have a detailed record of accounts on all the operations.

This will help in obtaining a certification from the certification agency since one of the requirements by the agencies is that, a comprehensive record keeping must be kept and regularly updated. The standards are then polished by the certification agency and a third party carries out an inspection of the operations of the producer. Finally there is an appraisal follow-up from the first to the final product (Fitzgerald, 1999).

iii. Stock Replenishment

Beef to be sold as organic beef needs to be kept under continuous organic management. A non-organic breeder stock can be introduced into an organic operation as long as the animals, are brought into the organic setup before the third trimester incase of a gestating animal. The practice of artificial insemination is highly dejected (Fitzgerald, 1999).

iv. Animal health care practices

The producers of organic livestock should set up, uphold and document the protective health care practices employed incase of an illness. This also includes the protocol for determining when a sick animal should receive forbidden drug. In case any forbidden drug like an antibiotic is used, the animal is identified and sold into non-organic markets. A detailed record of the occurrence is then retained. Hygiene should be highly regarded so as to reduce the breaking and spreading of diseases. If a shelter is provided, it must have enough space for the animal to exercise and move freely (Fitzgerald, 1999).

v. Vaccinations and Antibiotics

There are some vaccinations that are permitted to be used on organic animals. However, in order to preserve the organic nature of the animals,

antibiotics are highly forbidden. Any animal that receives this kind of medication is identified and sold to non-organic markets (Fitzgerald, 1999).

vi. Parasite control

Diatomaceous earth is the most common method used for controlling parasites. This product can be administered in the feed as a feed ingredient. Diatomaceous earth can also be used externally in form of dust as lice dust (Fitzgerald, 1999).

vii. Feed requirements

All sources of feed for this type of animals should be that which is allowed and certified by the organic certification agency. Slaughtering and processing of such beef, should also be done under certified facilities (Fitzgerald, 1999).

viii. Growth hormones

The use of growth hormones is strictly forbidden and any animal discovered with an element of the growth hormones is identified during the inspection process and eliminated or sold to the inorganic market.

ix. Manure management

It is necessary for the producers of organic animals to manage the manure produced in a manner that will not contaminate crops and water. Processing and administering such manure should also be done in a way that guarantees that nutrients are properly used. Composting is highly encouraged but the use of raw manure highly discouraged. It is the

obligation of the organic animal producers to ensure that all the practices conform to the standards proposed by the certification agency.

Issues

There are very few problems that are likely to occur as a result of the proposed shifts. Most of the proposals made on the shifts are just modifications and improvements to the already existing principles. The proposals made are meant at improving the overall business of organic beef production and ensure that the produced beef is purely organic. Proper hygiene should be highly observed so as to prevent the occurrence of any kind of disease. This will help in eliminating the use of any kind of prohibited drug that could have otherwise rendered an animal inorganic.

The proposed timely vaccinations also will help in controlling the entry of disease causing pathogens that could have otherwise forced the organic animal producers to use prohibited drugs trying to control the diseases.

The introduction of inorganic animals into the herd of other organic animals at the gestation period can also jeopardize the attempts of obtaining an inorganic free herd. It is therefore necessary for such stock to be avoided and a pure organic stock be used in the production process hence obtain the ultimate goal of a pure organic stock.

Conclusion

The organic livestock industry is in the early stages of development but is rapidly gaining some acceptance all over the world. This research paper is going to provide general information on the production and marketing of organic beef. A person intending to consider organic beef production should

gather information on the requirements for production, cost of production and the conditions of the organic standards. The rancher or producer should also have adequate information about the organic beef marketplace. Having a mixed operation between organic grain farming and organic beef production can harmonize the holistic approach of organic agriculture as it has an advantage of nutrient recycling (Roderick, Short, and Hori, 1996). Although domestic markets may be underdeveloped, continued prosperity of organic beef production emerge to be dependent on export markets. It is alleged that the price structures for organic beef are much more vibrant than in the conservative market, as depicted by the unpredictability of organic grain prices. As the market and the industry develop, the costs and returns may stabilize and provide greenhorns to this sector with a more vivid picture of the hazards and benefits of organic beef production.

There are some differences between an organic product and a natural product. An organic product must comply with the strict production process, animal husbandry and processing requirements of the organic standard. Natural beef on the other hand is produced without the incorporation of antibiotics or any kind simulated growth hormones. Organic production also involves the use of an audit and verification procedure on top of the production using natural means (Roderick, Short, and Hori, 1996).

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