



## **Organic production according to the EC-Regulation 2092/91 Plant Production and Inspection**

### **1. Introduction**

Production and labeling of organic products in the European Union is regulated by the "Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2092/91 on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs", as amended. The regulation covers unprocessed agricultural crop and livestock products and processed foodstuffs but is limited to certain animal species and excludes aquaculture. The regulation defines a minimum standard for production, processing and marketing of organic products. It also describes the inspection system to which every producer, collector, processor or importer of organic products has to submit his undertaking. It prohibits the use of genetically modified organisms (GMO) and their derivatives at any level of production or processing (exception: livestock medication). This pamphlet gives a short overview on the requirements of the regulation for plant production and inspection. Further study of the regulation is required for anyone involved in organic production.

### **2. Rules of production for plants and plant products (art. 6 and 7, annex I A)**

#### 2.1 Conversion period (annex I A, 1)

To be allowed to label plant products organic the production method must follow the regulation for at least two years before sowing or, in the case of perennial crops, at least three years before the first organic harvest. After one year of organic production a product may refer to the organic production as in conversion to organic farming. Duration of the conversion period may be reduced in certain cases, e.g. if there is sufficient proof that no non-conform products were used for a sufficient period of time (e.g. virgin land).

#### 2.2 Fertilization (annex I A, 2)

The fertility of the soil must be maintained by:

- cultivation of legumes, green manuring together with an appropriate rotation system;
- incorporation into the soil of composted or non composted organic material from holdings producing according to the rules of the regulation (also by-products of livestock production);
- if the preceding methods are not sufficient, additional soil conditioners and fertilizers mentioned in annex II, part A may be applied. There are amongst others: farmyard manure and dried farmyard and poultry manure originating from extensive husbandry; composted animal excrements, slurry and urine (not of factory farming origin); composted mixture of vegetable matter; certain animal products and by-products (e.g. horn and bone meal, fish meal and hair) and guano; certain vegetable fertilizers like oilseed cake meal, seaweed and certain seaweed products; certain products (e.g. sawdust) of wood not chemically treated after felling; certain mineral fertilizers, e.g. soft ground rock phosphate, magnesium and calcium carbonate of natural origin, crude potassium salt and mined salt, stone meal; trace elements. The use of most of these fertilizers has to be approved by the inspection body prior to their application.

The total amount of nitrogen (N) provided by fertilizers from animal origin must not exceed 170 kg N / hectare agricultural land and year as average.

#### 2.3 Control of pests, diseases and weeds

The plants should be protected by following measures: appropriate rotation, choice of species and varieties, protection of natural enemies, mechanical cultivation procedures and flame weeding.

Only in cases of immediate threat to the crops may the products mentioned in annex II, part B be used. These are amongst others: natural pyrethrins; preparations from *Derris elliptica*, *Quassia amara* and *Ryania speciosa*; propolis; sulphur; certain copper preparations; soft soap; pheromone preparations; *Bacillus thuringiensis* preparations; plant oils, paraffin oil.

#### 2.4 Seeds, vegetative propagating material and seedlings

Seeds, vegetative propagating material and seedlings have to be produced according to the rules of organic production. If no organic seeds and vegetative propagation material are available on the market (this has to be proved to the control body) conventional non chemically treated seeds may be used by way of derogation (art. 6 (2), expires Dec. 31, 2003).

#### 2.5 Collection of wild edible plants

Collected edible plants are considered as organic if it is proved that the collection areas have received no treatments with products prohibited by the regulation for a period of three years before the collection. Furthermore the collection must not affect the stability of the natural habitat or the maintenance of the species in the collection area (annex I, 4). All other requirements must be as for organic production. The registration of the collecting persons and plots is necessary for inspection (annex III Specific Provisions, A.1.1).

### **3. Inspection requirements for organic production on farms or wild collection (annex III General Provisions and Specific Provisions A and A.1)**

Every operator who produces or collects organic products has to submit his undertaking to the inspection system (as do processors and importers/exporters of organic products). For producers and if applicable for collectors, the following minimum inspection requirements apply:

#### 3.1. Initial inspection / Description of the unit (annex III General Provisions 3 and 4, Specific Provisions A.1.1, 2 and 3)

For the first inspection the operator must draw up a full description of the unit and his activities, including all conventional parts related to the organic one. The description includes ground plans of facilities, maps of all fields together with a list indicating the last application of products not permitted by the regulation. Also the measures to be taken to ensure compliance with the regulation must be described. A declaration containing the above mentioned information and the acceptance to the measures in case of infringement or irregularities (annex III, General Provisions 9) must be signed. If any change occurs regarding the description or of the practical measures, the inspection body needs to be informed in due time. Each year the producer must notify the production schedule and the transport schedule.

#### 3.2 Separated production unit (annex III Specific Provisions A, A.1. 3)

The fields and all production and storage locations have to be clearly separated from conventional units.

#### 3.3 Bookkeeping (annex III General Provisions 6)

Written and/or documentary accounts must be kept to trace the origin, nature and quantities of all raw materials purchased. The nature, quantities and consignees of all agricultural products sold have to be recorded also.

#### 3.4 Packaging and labelling of organic products (annex III General Provisions 7)

Transported products have to be closed in a manner preventing substitution of the content. Clear identification of the producer, the product and the inspection body must be assured by labelling.

#### 3.5 Parallel production (annex III Specific Provisions A.1. 3)

Where an operator runs organic and conventional production units in the same area all relevant data of the conventional unit (e.g. purchased inputs, cropping schedule) are subject to the inspection. The same or similar varieties in organic and conventional production units may not be cultivated at the same time.

#### 3.6 Frequency of inspections, sample taking and access (annex III General Provisions 5 and 10)

The production unit has to be completely inspected at least once a year, additional random visits are advised. Samples may be taken but they must be taken where the use of non allowed products is suspected. The producer shall provide the inspection body with any information deemed necessary for the purpose of the inspection and shall give full access to facilities. He also shall inform the inspection body about all doubts on organic origin of purchased products and inform his clients about all delivered products later found to be non-conform.