

ORGANIC STANDARDS FORUM
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**CODEX GUIDELINES ON ORGANICALLY
PRODUCED FOODS**

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**Guidelines on the Production, Processing, Labelling
and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods**

- Codex standards, guidelines and related texts: recommendations reflecting consensus at the international level
- Objectives of Codex
 - consumer's health
 - fair trade practices
 - coordination of international food standardization work
- Organic as a labelling claim: Codex Committee on Food Labelling



**The Codex Guidelines (CAC/GL 1999,
Revised 2001, 2003, 2004): Objectives**

- to protect the consumer against misleading claims
- to protect organic producers : fair trade practices
- to ensure that all stages of the process are subject to inspection and to harmonise applicable to all stages
- to provide international. Guidelines for organic control systems in order to facilitate recognition of national systems as equivalent for the purpose of imports
- to maintain and enhance OA systems in countries so as to contribute to local and global preservation

The Codex Guidelines: Main provisions

- Purpose and scope
- Description and definitions
- Labelling and claims (including “conversion”)
- Rules of production and preparation, including criteria and lists of substances
- Inspection and certification systems
- Livestock and livestock products
- Beekeeping and bee products



**The Codex Guidelines: Criteria for
evaluating substances**

- Consistent with the principle of organic production
- The substances are necessary/essential for their intended use
- Manufacture and use do not result in harmful effects on the environment
- Lowest negative impact on human or animal health
- Criteria to be used for adding substances to the current LISTS OF PERMITTED SUBSTANCES (currently under revision)



Criteria for specific substances

- Fertilisers
 - Products will of plant, microbial or mineral origin . Only when these processes have been exhausted, *chemical processes may be considered*
- Plant Protection
 - essential for the control of pests or diseases
 - take into account potential impact on the environment
 - if chemically synthesised products, such as pheromones, are used in exceptional circumstances, it should not result in residues in the edible part of the plant
- Additives and processing aids in the preparation or preservation of food



Organic Inspection and Certification

- Import requirements should be based on the principles of equivalency and transparency as set out in the *Principles for Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification* and other general Codex texts on inspection and certification
- In accepting imports of organic products, countries would usually assess the inspection and certification procedures and the standards applied in the exporting country

Organic Inspection and Certification

- Competent authorities should establish an inspection system
- complying with Minimum Inspection Requirements: prerequisite to inspection procedures; information on the characteristics of production, processing, storage units; schedule of production (land - livestock)- written accounts - physical inspection
- operated by official or officially recognized inspection/certification body

Organic Inspection and Certification

- Approval as an officially recognized I/C body/authority by the competent authority:
 - standard I/C procedures, including detailed description of inspection measures applied to operators
 - penalties in case of infringement
 - availability of resources, inspection experience and reliability
 - objectivity towards operators subject to inspection

Organic Inspection and Certification

The competent authority should :

- ensure that inspections carried out by the I/C body are objective and verify their effectiveness
- take cognizance of infringements and penalties applied
- withdraw approval when the requirements and criteria specified are not met

Organic Inspection and Certification

- Country ↔ Competent authority ↔ approval and supervision of inspection/ certification (I/C) bodies
- Assessment and supervision of private I/C bodies may be delegated to a third party (“designate”)
- importing country may recognize a third party accrediting body

Labelling and claims

- General Labelling requirements: General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods
- No misleading claims: “organic” claim refers to the process, not the end product
- Labelling of products in conversion: criteria to prevent confusion
- Labelling of products with less than 95% organic ingredients, calculation of percentage, ingredients in conversion: criteria but no detailed provisions



Other requirements for organic foods

- Food safety and quality provisions apply to organically produced foods as to other foods
- Food Hygiene: Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene – all stages of the food chain
- Contaminants: mycotoxins, heavy metals
- Essential quality requirements
- For the purpose of export/import:
 - Animal health
 - Plant Protection

Codex and FAO technical assistance

Codex standards may be used as a basis for:

- Updating national regulations
- Harmonisation with intl. standards and compliance with the WTO Agreements
- Establishing efficient food control systems
- Updated national regulations and efficient inspection systems ↔ facilitate equivalence agreements between exporting and importing countries

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