

Self Assessment Procedure for Using Approved Potash Fertilisers

Organic requirements are in addition to other statutory requirements
Statutory information is for guidance only and is correct at time of going to print

Introduction

The organic agricultural industry is not large enough to be self sufficient in many raw materials and other inputs and, for the time being, has to be reliant on materials and livestock brought in from conventional agriculture.

In addition, some practices, which are not fully compliant with the principles of organic production, are also only permitted during a conversion period or for specific reasons.

Most of these practices and inputs require the approval of the certification body responsible for inspecting and certifying the producer concerned. This is identified in the Standards by the term – **Must be approved by Certification Body before use**. As the organic industry becomes more self sufficient, the Standards are slowly being tightened up and advanced approval is being demanded for more practices and materials, which were formerly permitted without restriction.

The Self Assessment Approach

This self-assessment form has been written to allow producers to give themselves approval to use a potash fertiliser **without contacting the certification office**.

To use this procedure, the Self-Assessment Questionnaire must be used for each restricted practice or input. The questions must be completed in sequence and the relevant 'Yes' or 'No' boxes ticked for each. Completing the Self-Assessment Questionnaire will arrive at one of the following results:

- Where there is an unequivocal approval, the producer may go ahead and use the practice or input in compliance with the conditions stated in the questions.
Keep the form on farm for future inspection.
- Where any question comes up with a 'Not approved' answer the producer may not use the practice or input.
Keep the form on farm for future inspection.
- Where the producer is uncertain over the process or result, an OF&G Record Sheet 9 can be sent to the certification office with a copy of the soil analysis.

Control Manual

This procedure must be used in conjunction with the criteria set out in sections 7.15 and 7.16 of the OF&G Control Manual.

Soil Analysis

Before an approved water-soluble potash fertiliser can be used, a soil analysis must be completed for each field or group of fields with the same soil type and management history. The analysis must also measure the clay content of the soil.

Period of Eligibility

This Self-Assessment procedure applies to potash fertilisers to be brought in during the current calendar year only. An additional procedure must be completed each year.

Recording and Auditing

This procedure puts the responsibility on the producer to carry out the self-assessment process correctly and to keep the results for checking by the certification body at the following inspections.

To facilitate this, a special file must be established called the Restricted Practices and Inputs File.

The attached Self-Assessment Questionnaire must be kept as a master document and copies made for the completion of the self-assessment and general record keeping.

The Self-Assessment Questionnaire and the accompanying documents mentioned in the Questionnaire (eg soil analyses) must be kept in this file.

The file must be made available to the OF&G Inspectors, Defra inspectors, Trading Standards Officers and any other officials entitled to check your records.

Penalties for Misuse of the System

To date, the failure to obtain prior approval to use a restricted practice or input from the certification office is a non-compliance and has been recorded as such by the inspector. The same procedures will apply if this self-assessment system is used and if the procedure is ignored or the producer fails to complete the Record Sheet correctly, this will be recorded as a non-compliance in each case.

The certification officers will apply the appropriate penalty in such cases, which may involve an additional inspection at the producer's expense or, in more serious cases, the withdrawal of organic status from the affected land, crop or livestock.

Self Assessment Questionnaire for Using Approved Potash Fertilisers

Producer: **Year of Application:**

Completed by:	Position (Producer or manager):	Signed:	Date:
Approved by:	Position (Inspector or certification officer):	Signed:	Date:

Questionnaire and Assessment

	Question	Yes		No	
1	In the case of an Arable Rotation, have any problems with the rotation been highlighted in the Compliance Notice that have not been resolved.		Not Approved Resolve these issues		Go to next question
2	Are the fields given applications of manures or slurries to replace nutrients lost in the crops or forage?		Go to question 5		Go to next question
3	Is there justification why the fields cannot be given manures or slurries to maintain the nutrients lost in crops or forage?		Give the reason and go to next question		Not approved Use Manure and or Slurry
4	Give justification eg; Stockless rotation NVZ	(when completed go to next question)			
5	Has a soil analysis been done for each field or a representative number of fields?		Go to next question		Not approved Obtain soil analysis including K index and clay content
6	Indicate the field reference numbers for each field on which you wish to apply the potash fertiliser	(when completed go to next question)			
7	Is the K index for each field 2- or below?		Go to next question		Not approved
8	Does the soil have a high clay content (more than 20%)		Go to next question		Application approved

	Question	Yes		No	
9	If the soil clay content is above 20% are you in-conversion or is the soil K index at 0?		Application approved		Not Approved

If this self-assessment is approved, the use of a potash fertiliser is approved at an application rate sufficient to raise the K index to 2-.

Silvinit/Meadow Salt or Sulphate of Potash from natural origin, not chemically refined, and possibly containing magnesium salts, can be used.

Do not send this form to the OF&G office unless you are having difficulty completing it.