

Guidance Notes on writing an Organic Procedure

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

A documented Organic Procedure is a way of making you consider all of the areas where there is a potential risk of a loss of organic integrity. This can arise either accidentally by mixing of organic and non-organic materials, or by cross contamination or contamination from various sources.

The simplest way to approach the writing of an organic procedure is to think through the process from start to finish, from the purchase or supply of incoming materials to processing, packing labelling to despatch. Other possible contamination risks such as cleaning and pest control also need to be considered.

You also need to consider any statutory requirements and where necessary seek advice from your local Environmental Health and Trading Standards Departments.

The requirements of an Organic Procedure can be demonstrated as follows:

1. Only purchase goods from suppliers with valid organic certificates (copies of these certificates must be kept on file and must be checked to ensure they cover the goods being purchased);
2. Ensure that all orders clearly state that the items required are identified as organic;
3. Check that the incoming goods are identified as organic and have the pertinent Certification Body Code on their labels and that the goods are securely packaged;
4. Check that all accompanying delivery notes identify the goods as organic. Invoices should also identify the goods purchased as organic;
5. Where the incoming goods are bulk, i.e. there is no outer packaging such as a tanker of milk, check that the accompanying documentation such as the Delivery Note states the relevant Certification Body name and /or Certification Body Code;
6. Place incoming goods in designated storage areas with adequate identification and separation from non-organic goods. Organic and non-organic versions of the same items should not be stored adjacent to each other, but where space is limited organic goods must be stored above non-organic goods;
7. Plan processing, packing and labelling to ensure minimal risk of cross contamination from non-organic materials. This can be achieved by producing organic goods before non-organic, having dedicated facilities for organic, or by having a thorough clean-down before commencing organic production;
8. Ensure that at all stages prior to finished product labelling, i.e. when the goods have been removed from any packaging that confirms that they are organic, that there is still a method of identifying them as organic. This includes all work in progress (WIP), any re-work or waste unless it is not going to retain its organic status;
9. Ensure that all labels include the phrase "Organic Certification UK2" and identify the product as organic (provided it is compliant with the current legislation);
10. For bulk products, i.e. goods without any outer packaging such as milk tankers, ensure that the accompanying delivery documentation includes the phrase "Organic Certification UK2";

11. Place finished goods in designated storage areas with adequate identification and separation from non-organic goods. Organic and non-organic versions of the same items should not be stored adjacent to each other and where space is limited organic goods must be stored above non-organic goods;
12. Ensure that despatch paperwork and customer invoices clearly identify the goods as organic;
13. Pest control procedures throughout the site are carried out by an approved contractor who has been advised of the organic status of the site and has been provided with a copy of the Pest Control Section from the current OF&G Control Manual;
14. Cleaning contractors are aware of the organic status of the site and have been supplied with a copy of the Cleaning Section from the current OF&G Control Manual;
15. All cleaning materials used on food contact surfaces are food grade and are kept in a locked cabinet;
16. All cleaning procedures for food contact surfaces include a final rinse with potable (drinking water standard) water. If the final chemical used is 100% alcohol it must evaporate fully before the food contact surfaces can be used;
17. No fogging, spraying or fumigation without prior approval of OF&G.

There are other requirements with regard to record keeping, traceability and HACCP. However they do not have a direct impact on the organic procedure and have not been included in this leaflet. Further information on these can be found in the relevant sections of the OF&G Control Manual.

If you have any queries please contact the OF&G office on 01939 291800 / 0845 330 5122 or email info@organicfarmers.org.uk.