

The OF&G Certification Scheme for Foodservice Operations

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

There is currently no legal requirement for catering operations to be certified under the EC Regulation (EC) No. 834/2007. However, given the tight regulation of other parts of the organic sector, it seems likely that this may be addressed in the future and that regulations will be introduced. In the meanwhile, OF&G has been asked to provide standards for foodservice, so that Licensees can understand the requirements and use the OF&G logo to gain credibility for their products.

The requirements of the EC regulation are fairly straightforward for processors to work to, because they make the same products every day. However, these requirements can seem more complicated for foodservice enterprises. The organic ethos encourages the use of local seasonal produce, to reduce food miles and increase the availability of fresh foods, so restaurants need the freedom to be able to change their menus according to the availability of fresh produce.

If the EC Regulations are interpreted too strictly, this will restrict a sector where flexibility is required. However the rules applied must be rigorous enough to ensure that credibility is maintained. OF&G has developed these Standards to provide robust systems which are credible whilst allowing chefs the flexibility to use local conventional produce when organic is not available.

Types of foodservice establishments include:

Public sector catering (eg schools, hospitals)	Delicatessens in supermarkets
Restaurants	Bakeries
Pubs	Sandwich shops
Cafes	Farm shops
Mobile catering vans	

Principles

Organic raw materials should be used wherever possible, ideally of local origin.

There must be sufficiently robust procedures and records to ensure that it is always possible to trace organic ingredients back to the supplier and to correlate quantities of organic products sold with quantities of organic ingredients bought in.

Menus and other marketing materials must make it clear to customers, which items/ingredients are organic and which are not.

Cleaning products and other items should be of low environmental impact where possible.

Organic requirements - Compositional and processing requirements, as detailed in the OF&G Control Manual (Sections 10 and 11) apply to products for which an organic claim is made.

Legal Requirements - There are legal requirements and industry codes of good practice for most types of foodservice operations. These must be complied with in every case. The organic certification requirements are in addition to these requirements, they do not replace them.

Different Types of Approval

The purpose of organic inspection and certification is to ensure and demonstrate that the organic regulations are understood and complied with. There is a very wide range of establishments under the “foodservice” banner and each type may be evaluated differently by OF&G, depending on the potential risk to the integrity of the organic products being served.

1) Establishments selling both organic and non-organic products

Low Risk

Bakeries baking off organic bread
Delicatessens cutting organic cheeses and meats
Coffee shops selling coffee “made with organic beans”
Cafes/restaurants re-heating pre-prepared products in original packaging

Some low risk establishments will not require annual inspection but each enterprise must provide proof that sales of organic items correlate with quantities of bought-in organic ingredients

Example - Where clearly identified part-baked organic bread is baked. The loaves must be sourced from bakeries with full organic certification and must be clearly identified (eg by the word “organic” imprinted in the dough, or with rice paper baked into the dough). The loaves should be baked off on trays that are dedicated, or freshly cleaned and rinsed or lined with fresh paper. Clear procedures must be in place to ensure there is no contamination from cleaning or pest control chemicals, or from other non-approved items.

There are similar requirements for the other scenarios listed above as low risk.

Medium Risk

Establishments producing dishes using ingredients that are clearly different to those used in non-organic dishes

These establishments may sell both organic and non-organic dishes and even mixed dishes (eg organic roast chicken with local, non-organic, potatoes and vegetables) but they never sell both organic and non-organic versions of the same item. It is important that menus make it very clear which items are organic and that controls and records can demonstrate traceability back to the supplier. They require annual inspection and maybe subject to unannounced interim inspections.

High Risk

Establishments producing dishes using ingredients that are not clearly different to those used in non-organic dishes. These establishments require annual inspection and may be subject to unannounced interim inspections.

2) Establishments selling only organic products

Medium Risk - Dedicated organic restaurants can either have fixed menus (eg organic pizza restaurants), where the recipes are pre-approved by OF&G, or they can undertake to keep full records of all dishes cooked and make these available to OF&G, whenever required.

3) Multiple Outlets / Chains

Where an organisation has several outlets selling a partly or fully-organic menu, OF&G will review the procedures and inspect the outlets on a sampling basis and frequency appropriate to the risk posed to the organic integrity of the products sold.

Application for Organic Certification

The OF&G Foodservice Standards and an application form may be obtained from our office, or downloaded from the website. (See details below).

It may be useful to read Technical Leaflet 201 (Introduction to Organic Certification for Processors), which explains the inspection and certification process.

It is also necessary to be aware of the requirements for processors laid down in the OF&G Control Manual. This can be accessed on the website or is available in CD or paper format from the office.

To apply for organic certification of foodservice establishments, the completed application form and details of product formulations should be submitted to OF&G. (This information is kept confidential).

When the application form has been evaluated and approved by the Processor Certification Officer and the appropriate fee received, an evaluation (for Low Risk enterprises) or an inspection (for Medium and High Risk enterprises) will be arranged.

Please contact us to discuss fees. These will be agreed on a case by case basis depending on the nature and complexity of the operation.

If any non-compliances are raised, they must be resolved before certification can be awarded. Certification must be renewed on an annual basis.

Contact Details

Organic Farmers & Growers - Processor Certification

The Old Estate Yard, Shrewsbury Road, Albrighton, Shrewsbury, SY4 3AG

Tel: 01939 291800 / 0845 3305122 ext 230 or 235 Fax: 01939 291250 / 0845 330 5123

Email: processors@organicfarmers.org.uk

Website: www.organicfarmers.org.uk