

Permitted Food Additives – Amends to the EU Organic Regulation

The list of permitted food additives and processing aids in the EU organic regulation (EC 2092/91) has been amended by Regulation (EC) 780/2006 and the changes will come into force on 1st December 2007.

The relevant OF&G Control Manual pages will be amended and issued before this date. The full details have been published in the Official Journal of the European Union (ref. L 137/9 25/5/06) and are accessible via our website.

The main changes are:-

- preservatives are now allowed in fruit wines and mead (previously preservatives have only been allowed in wines made from grapes);
- conditions of use have been specified for several additives;
- substances used in the processing of products of animal origin, (such as meat, milk, honey) are included for the first time.

Preservatives in Fruit Wines (ie wines made from fruits other than grapes)

Sulphur dioxide (E220) and Potassium metabisulphite (E224) may be used as a source of SO₂. Max levels allowed are:-

- 50 mg/litre for fruit wines without added sugar (including cider and perry) and mead
- 100 mg/litre for cider and perry made with added sugars or with juice concentrate added after fermentation.

Cured Meat Products

Sodium nitrite (E250) and Potassium nitrate (E252) are now allowed for use in organic meat products throughout the EU. (Previously each EU country was allowed to derogate the use of these preservatives as it saw fit.) Indicative ingoing amount of either substance is 80 mg/kg; maximum residual amount is 50mg/kg (expressed as NaNO₂ for nitrite and KNO₃ for nitrate).

However the new regulation includes the statement that the inclusion of these substances shall be re-examined before 31/12/07 with a view to limiting or withdrawing their use. This is in line the European Food Safety Authority's drive to reduce the use of nitrites and nitrates generally, but without compromising food safety.

Newly Permitted Additives

Sodium ascorbate (E301), sodium lactate (E325), sodium citrates (E331), calcium chloride (E509), Talc (E553b) and Helium (E939) are now permitted for specified uses.

Gums

Two gums have been removed from the permitted lists – Karaga and Tragacanth – so these may not be used in organic products produced after 1/12/07.

Colours for cheeses

Vegetable carbon (E153) will be allowed in Ashy Goat Cheese and Morbier Cheese

Annatto, (alternatively Bixin or Norbixin) (E160b) will be allowed in the following cheeses:- Red Leicester, Double Gloucester, Scottish Cheddar and Mimolette

Colours for Stamping Eggshells

Article 2 (9) of directive 94/36/EC applies.

Micro-organism Preparations (for wines, beers, yogurts etc)

Any preparation of micro-organisms normally used in food processing may be used with the exception of GMOs within the meaning of Directive 2001/18/EC. (This Directive has been updated. Previously directive 90/220/EEC applied.)

Capsules

Hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose (E464) is now permitted as encapsulation material.