



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Organics Stakeholder Update

Defra Organics Team – 7-9 December 2020



Equivalence

- The 6 UK organic control bodies have now been recognised by the EU as Equivalent until 31 December 2021
- The Commission published the regulation recognising the UK's 6 control bodies as equivalent as of 1 January 2021
- This means that GB organic businesses will be able to export goods to the EU during 2021.
- GB organic businesses retain the option to use the EU organic logo



- Raw materials imported from third countries equivalent with the EU and processed in GB can also bear the EU organic logo.

Equivalence

- To ensure a smooth transition process, the UK in respect of Great Britain (GB) will recognise the EU as equivalent for the purpose of trade in organics until 31 December 2021.
- This temporary measure will give some certainty to the organics sector, as organics imports from the EU to GB will remain unaffected until at least 31 December 2021.
- The UK Government proposed an organics equivalence agreement, as a technical annex, in its Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) proposals. Equivalence agreements for organic products, such as the UK has proposed, are a common tool in international trade. These negotiations are ongoing.
- It remains our objective to negotiate a durable, long-term organics equivalence agreement with the EU.

Northern Ireland and Organic Equivalence

- In regards to organic goods, NI will follow EU rules.
- NI will be able to send its organic goods to the EU as it does now.
- The EU has confirmed control bodies established in NI can continue to certify NI organic businesses.
- NI may send organic goods to GB and the goods will not require a certificate of inspection (Col).
- Organic products exported from GB to NI will require an EU Col.
- GB companies who wish to export organic products to NI must register on the EU's Trade Control and Expert System New Technology (TRACES NT) for exporting and be approved by their control body.

International Equivalence Arrangements

- The EU has equivalence arrangements with 13 countries.
- These are being rolled over so that they will apply to the UK and trade may continue as now.
- Businesses are advised to contact the exporting control body in the country they are importing food from if they have any questions.
- GB products will need to comply with the labelling requirements, including logos, of the third country

International Equivalence Arrangements

The UK currently has organic equivalence agreements with the following countries

Reciprocal Agreements:

- Australia
- Canada
- Chile
- Israel
- Japan
- New Zealand
- South Korea
- Switzerland
- Taiwan
- Tunisia
- USA

Non-Reciprocal Agreements*

- Argentina
- Costa Rica
- India

*These countries can export products to the UK but the UK cannot export to them

Labelling

- You have the option to use the EU organic logo on any GB organic food from 1 January 2021 if your control body has been recognised by the EU for that product
- Organic goods produced in Northern Ireland must continue to use the EU organic logo.
- You can continue to use your approved UK organic control body logo in the UK.
- Goods for export to the EU produced after 31 December 2020 must be labelled with your control body's new EU export code. The format is GB-BIO-XXX. Please contact your control body for specific details.
- For operators certified to GB standards who sell in GB and the EU/ NI, they will need to include both the GB-ORG-XX code to confirm they meet the GB domestic standards and the EU code GB-BIO-XXX to confirm they meet the equivalent EU standards for export.
- For operators who export to other third countries, they will require the GB-ORG-XX code as this states that they are certified to the GB domestic standards.
- Some products from some control bodies are not authorised to export to the EU. Please contact your control body for specific details.

Statement of Agricultural Origin (Labelling)

GB must use the following

- UK Agriculture
- Non UK Agriculture
- UK/ Non UK Agriculture

NI must use the following where the EU logo is used:

- EU Agriculture
 - Non EU Agriculture
 - EU/ Non EU Agriculture
- You can use more specific references if 98% of ingredients are grown in a specific area for example Milk from NI could be Northern Irish Agriculture, or Welsh lamb could be Welsh Agriculture.
 - For export to third countries, we need to meet their labelling requirements.
 - For export to the EU, if the EU organic logo is used it will need the GB statement of agriculture and the EU statement of agriculture. i.e. UK/Non UK plus EU/Non EU

Organic Imports and COIs

- All imports from third countries, except from the EU, must be accompanied by a GB Certificate of Inspection (CoI) from 1 January 2021.
- Imports from the EU will be required to be accompanied by a GB COI from 1 July 2021.
- We are implementing this phased approach to endorsing EU COIs to reduce unnecessary barriers to trade.
- By 1 July all EU organic exporters must be certified by a control body and the control body must issue the COI for export to GB. This is a significant change and we decided to waive this requirement to reduce the risk of delays at the ports and resultant spoiled food. This decision is in line with a number of other phased approaches designed to simplify import procedures in the short term.

Organic Imports and GB Import System

- From 1 January 2021, we will use a paper-based import system for all imports. This is the same system previously used in the EU until 2017.
- This is a temporary solution that will be replaced with an electronic system as soon as available.
- Control Bodies in third countries must continue to endorse the certificates before the consignment leaves. As allowed now, transport documentation can be provided after the Col has been endorsed, but it must be received before the consignment can be cleared.
- Organics team has revised the documentation for the import system to have the certificate of inspection, step by step guidance and a FAQs document to be used from 1 January 2021.
- To request these import documents, contact your organic control body.

Organic Imports and GB Import System

- The COI will need to be endorsed when the organic goods arrive either at a GB border control post (BCP) or by local trading standards. If the consignment needs a physical check or testing, this will need to go to a port that is able to carry out these checks. Further information can be accessed via the Defra step by step guidance.
- Importers must ensure that all organic imports from third countries meet the requirements laid out in retained Commission Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008.
- Consignments that arrive without an endorsed COI (except from the EU from 1/1/21 until 30/06/2021) will not be able to be cleared as organic. The organic goods would have to be either re-labelled (removing all reference to organics), re-exported as non-organic or destroyed.
- All exporters and will need to be certified as organic. They will need to register with their control body who will issue the COI. The phased implementation allows for this change.

Organic Imports – Revised documents and guidance

- Defra has published step by step guidance and an FAQ on importing organic products from third countries into GB at the end of the transition period. The following documents relating to imports of organic goods from 1 January 2021 are also available:
- GB Certificate of Inspection (Col) template
- GB Certificate of Inspection (Col) explanatory notes
- Extract of the GB Certificate of Inspection (Col) template
- Extract of the GB Certificate of Inspection (Col) explanatory notes
- These documents are available from your control body and must not be used until 1 January 2021.

Organics Legislation

- The Agriculture Act 2020 includes powers to ensure we can update our organic legislation after the transition period ends and to create new legislation.
- GB will retain the following organic regulations at the end of the transition period with operability amendments:
 - Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products;
 - Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products with regard to organic production, labelling and control; and
 - Commission Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008 laying down detailed rules for implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 as regards the arrangements for imports of organic products from third countries.

New EU Organics Regulation

- New EU Organics Regulation was due to come into force in January 2021. This regulation has been postponed and will now come into force 1 January 2022.
- NI will operate to the new EU rules and regulations for organics.
- Postponing the enforcement date of the Regulation (EU) 2018/848 will make things easier in terms of NI enforcement.
- This delay was welcomed by the UK as GB and NI will be operating substantively to the current regulations and will not diverge immediately.

Next Steps

- If you want to contact the team directly – please email Organic.Standards@Defra.gov.uk



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Any questions, thoughts or reflections?



Forestry Commission
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