

 CERES	3.2.15en Inf	Brief Introduction to Organic Certification of Groups with 100% External Inspection	01.07.2015	1/1
--	--------------	---	------------	-----

Brief Introduction to Organic Certification of Groups with 100% External Inspection

according to the European Regulation (EC) 834/07*, NOP, JAS, and CERES Policy

1. Introduction:

Smallholder group certification based on internal control systems is described in our "Brief Info" 3.2.5. In such organisations, the certification body only inspects a sample of the member farmers. However, there are cases where the certification body needs to inspect all the farmers belonging to the group. The procedure and conditions are summarised in this document.

2. Conditions:

- ✓ As opposed to smallholder group certification, there is no limit for the size of the farms
- ✓ Farms must have similar crops and cropping systems
- ✓ Farms must be in geographic proximity

3. What makes this procedure different from individual farm certification:

- ✓ Certification fee is normally paid by the group or certificate holder, not by the individual farmers
- ✓ A contract is signed between CERES and the group/certificate holder; the certificate holder signs subcontracts with the individual farms
- ✓ Under the EU Regulation (equivalent), only one certificate is issued to the group; NOP requires individual certificates to be issued to all farmers
- ✓ Only one Organic Management Plan is completed by the certificate holder
- ✓ The certificate holder is responsible for training and monitoring members; training and monitoring must be recorded
- ✓ Farmers found not to comply with organic production rules, are sanctioned accordingly; however, if severe non-compliances occur repeatedly, showing that the certificate holder is not able to monitor members properly, this may lead to suspension of the entire certificate, not only individual members.

***Note:** Inside the EU, the Regulation has to be applied in its strictest sense. Products from third countries outside the European Union are considered "equivalent". Please refer to the CERES homepage for our Policy 4.1.1, which, combined with Regulations (CE) 834/07 and (CE) 889/08 and our other policies, make up the "CERES equivalent standard".

! *Please be aware that this is only a selection of essential requirements of the organic standards, meant as an introduction. The operator, of course, has to learn about and meet all requirements of the respective standard.*