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# Brief Introduction to Requirements for Processing of Organic Food

according to the European Regulation (EC) 834/07\*, the US National Organic Program (NOP) and JAS

## 1. Processing of organic food:

- ❖ Must assure traceability and transparency
- ❖ Requires a good documentation system
- ❖ Must not contaminate organic products through inappropriate post harvest handling
- ❖ Restricts the use of additives and processing aids and does not allow GMOs for any purpose.

## 2. Who needs to be certified as organic processor:

- ✓ **All handlers** who process, dry, freeze, clean, mix, pack, or label organic products after harvest, need to be certified. Acc. to European Regulation (EC) 889/08\* packaging or labelling operations are not considered as `processing`, but `preparation` operations.

## 3. Origin of organic raw materials:

- ✓ **Only certified organic raw materials** can be processed into organic products.
- ✓ Only **EU certified** raw material can be used for products for the EU market, only **JAS certified** for the Japanese market, while raw materials for the US market must be **NOP certified** – so please always ask your supplier of raw materials for a **copy of a valid certificate**, issued according to the respective standard.
- ✓ Beyond having copies of all relevant supplier certificates, processors must have a reliable procedure for ensuring that any product batch received with an organic claim, complies with the requirements. This includes, among others, verification of packaging, labelling, invoices and transport documents
- ✓ Processors must conduct a supplier risk analysis. Products from high risk suppliers should be subject to residue testing; supplier audits should be considered.

## 4. Separation:

- ✓ Some processors produce only organic, but most do both: organic and conventional.
- ✓ These latter handlers must set up a **good system for separating organic products from conventional** ones: from the moment of reception of the raw material, through all steps of processing, storage rooms, etc., until sale. Separation must also be safeguarded between organic and "in conversion" products, or products certified according to different standards (e.g. NOP / EU).
- ✓ The best separation, of course, is **in space**: separate warehouses and processing lines for organic.
- ✓ However, this may often not be possible; in this case, you can separate **in time**: you process organic at different times on the same line as conventional; before processing organic, you have to **clean** the line.
- ✓ In case of **continuous processes** (e.g. mills), the operator must ensure that at the beginning of organic processing, a reasonable quantity of organic product is used for "flushing" the line and sold as conventional.
- ✓ Where separate warehouses are not feasible, an adequate **separation within the existing storage** room may be sufficient: e.g. rows separated by a line on the floor, or separate shelves, properly labelled.

## 5. Documentation and labelling:

- ✓ An organic processor needs an **organic management plan**. In case the company has a quality management system, the quality handbook should contain a chapter referring specifically to processing of organic food.
- ✓ Wherever parallel production of organic and conventional products takes place, bags, containers, boxes with organic products have to be **labelled**, at all steps throughout your facility.
- ✓ The operator has to keep and file **supplier certificates, waybills, reception notes, processing records, storage books, and invoices**; all these records have to refer to "organic".
- ✓ For products certified equivalent or according to the EU standard, the CERES certifier code **Countrycode-BIO-140** (for Chile: CL-BIO-005) should be used on all labels, delivery notes, invoices and other relevant documents related to organic sales.

- ✓ Organic processors need a good **bookkeeping** system, allowing evaluating whether the quantity of purchased raw material is consistent with the quantity of finished product sold.
- ✓ Except for open raw material arriving directly from the field, only **packed or sealed** and labelled products must be accepted for organic processing, unlabelled products should be returned to the supplier.
- ✓ In addition, **JAS** requires "**grading**" records: before selling products with the JAS logo, the producer has to double-check and record fulfilment of JAS standards.

## 6. Traceability:

- ✓ Everything mentioned under (3), (4), and (5), has to do with traceability, but since this is such a crucial point, here again: the organic market can develop only if the consumer trusts that the origin of what is on his/her plate, can be traced back to the organic farm.
- ✓ It is impossible to require the same level of traceability for such different processes as fresh fruit packers (where traceability back to the field level should be easy), dairies, oil mills, or noodle factories. The **highest possible level of traceability** should be pursued in every given situation.

## 7. Additives, processing aids

- ✓ Non-agricultural additives and processing aids, which can be used for organic products, are restricted to those allowed by the respective standard. Please refer to the following:

EU-Regulation	NOP	JAS
Annex VIII.A and B to Reg. (EC) 889/08	§ 205.605	Table 1 of Notification 1606

## 8. Labelling of multi ingredient products:

The following table gives an overview of **labelling** requirements for the different categories\*:

### NOP:

100% organic	Organic	Made with organic	(Only reference to organic ingredients)
Only organic agricultural ingredients, no processing aids	Minimum 95% of organic agricultural ingredients	Minimum 70% of organic agricultural ingredients; no use of USDA seal	Less than 70% of organic ingredients; no use of USDA seal or certifier's logo
	non-organic ingredients without use of excluded methods or substances; agricultural non-organic ingredients according to § 205.606; non-agricultural ingredients and processing aids only according to § 205.605.		

### EU:


Organic	With organic ingredients
Minimum 95% of organic ingredients;	According to Reg. 834/07, there is no minimum percentage of organic ingredients
Rest of 5 % nonorganic (agricultural) ingredients only according to Annex IX of Reg. (EC) 889/08	No restrictions for non-organic agricultural ingredients, as long as they are not genetically modified.
Non-agricultural ingredients and processing aids only according to Annexes VIII A and B	
	Reference to organic only on the list of ingredients, not on the general label.

**JAS:** There are only the categories of "organic" and "organic in conversion" products, which must contain at least 95% of organic / in conversion ingredients. The remaining 5% must not contain the same ingredients as the organic ingredients and must not be genetically modified.

\* percentages discounting salt and water

## 9. Post harvest pest control, sanitation, polluting substances:

- ✓ The operator must make sure that the organic product at **no moment** comes into touch with **polluting substances**, such as fuels, pesticides, wood preservatives, detergents, moulds etc.
- ✓ For **pest control on stored products**, only substances mentioned in Annex II of Reg. (EC) 834/08 or the National List (NOP) can be used. JAS lists allowed pest control substances in Table 2 of Notification 1606. For cleaning, sanitation, and pest control of processing lines and rooms, NOP § 205.271 contains detailed provisions. For equivalent implementation of the EU Regulation in third countries, refer to the CERES Policy 4.1.1. The processor must take the necessary measures in order to avoid contamination by detergents, disinfectants or pesticides.

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- ✓ Beyond this, CERES determines that after application of conventional pesticides in a processing facility, the **waiting time** until bringing organic products into the respective room has to be **doubled**, as compared to the time officially indicated for the respective substance; all surfaces which enter into contact with the organic product have to be rinsed with abundant clear water.
- ✓ Although this is not very explicitly required by the abovementioned organic standards, CERES requires that organic products are handled under **appropriate hygienic** conditions.

**\*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.*