Annex: Sourcing organic ingredients
Version 1.5 updated 29th April 2022

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An introduction to sourcing organic ingredients
The Soil Association (SA) has higher organic standards than the legal minimum in the UK, EU and other parts of the world. These are in key areas such as animal welfare, conserving the environment, safeguarding public health and protecting the interests of organic consumers. Our standards put our principles into practice and are at the heart of our work. By certifying with us you can use the Soil Association symbol, which consumers recognise as a mark of integrity.

While we encourage you to source organic product certified to Soil Association standards, you may use products and ingredients certified to other organic standards, as long as they meet the requirements of this annex in addition to legal requirements. This recognises the need for a diversity of organic ingredients from global sources, many of which are certified to other organic standards. This also supports organic farmers the world over and meets consumer expectations of the organic market.

To protect the integrity of baseline UK and EU requirements on animal welfare, we have also applied sourcing requirements for livestock products imported from outside the UK or EU which can be imported under trade agreements. The guidance for each sourcing requirement explains which countries or regions would automatically meet these requirements.

Using this annex
You may have seen this symbol throughout the Food & Drink, Farming & Growing, Aquaculture, Seaweed and Abattoir standards as an indicator that an extra sourcing requirement applies to a particular standard.

If you are sourcing organic products or ingredients certified to other organic standards, you need to check this annex to determine if extra sourcing requirements apply. This annex is only applicable for Food and Drink (as per Soil Association higher standard 6.10.1 and SA NI 6.10.1) and does not apply to Feed, Textiles or Health and Beauty.

The requirements are listed by product type and include the standard references for both the Soil Association’s organic standards for Great Britain and for the Soil Association’s organic standards for Northern Ireland (prefixed by SA NI). If a sourcing requirement does apply, you will need to seek our approval of the ingredient before you use it. If you are unclear whether extra sourcing requirements apply, please contact equivalence@soilassociation.org.

Driving Change
We work in a number of ways to support you in sourcing organic ingredients that meet our extra requirements. This includes helping you to identify compliant sources and using our respective influence to drive wider change. It is important that Soil Association works with other organic certifiers and stakeholders around the world to make positive changes to factors that affect organic production and processing across the whole organic sector. We raise awareness of issues important
for animal welfare, environmental protection and health, so that the reasons behind our higher standards are well understood and they are adopted more widely.

**Using your influence**
In many cases, the best way Soil Association can increase the adoption of best practice is not just through our own standards but through influencing the practices and requirements of other organisations. As a licensee, you also have the power to influence change, particularly through the choices you make when buying organic ingredients. Very often the market can be a strong driver for change. For example, you can:

- Take steps to understand and minimise your supply chain challenges. See SA Certification's report on *The Organic Supply Chain 2017*;
- Choose ingredients from farms certified to higher organic standards, such as those of the Soil Association;
- Specify additional requirements in your contracts with suppliers;

**Supporting you**
Where other standards setters already have similar standards to us, confirming product meets SA sourcing requirements can be quick and easy. We are continuing to develop resources to help with sourcing: working in cooperation with other standards bodies and certifiers globally to develop tools to identify organic product that meets the requirements of this annex. In addition, we liaise on your behalf with other certifiers and supply chains, regarding organic ingredients you want to use, to confirm they meet the SA’s sourcing requirements.

In a perfect world, all ingredients used in Soil Association products would be verified as meeting all of the SA higher standards across the whole supply chain. However, this is currently not practically possible or proportionate for us to check for some standards and for some types of organic ingredients. Our explanatory web page ‘[Working Together for Better Sourcing](#)’ explains these challenges and how the Soil Association is working with others to address them.

**Sourcing requirements by product type**
The following sections list, by product type, the Soil Association’s sourcing requirements for organic ingredients certified to other standards. Requirements applicable to your product might be in more than one section.

Please refer to our [Glossary](#) for an explanation of the terms used.
# 1.0 Sourcing requirements for Plant Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sourcing requirement</th>
<th>Guidance &amp; Reasons</th>
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</table>
| **1.1 Soil-based production** | *Guidance:* Plants must be grown in soil in connection with the subsoil and bedrock. Most organic production is carried out in the soil but there are some parts of the world that do not explicitly prohibit the hydroponic production of organic crops.  
Product imported from or via these countries may be at risk of not meeting this sourcing requirement:  
- Republic of Korea  
- Tunisia  
- United States  
We deem the following ingredients or products from the countries mentioned above as possible risks:  
- fresh salad,  
- greenhouse crops and  
- berries.  
If you know that, or are unsure whether, products you are buying are at risk of not meeting this sourcing requirement, please contact equivalence@soilassociation.org.  
*Reason:* Production in the soil is a fundamental principle of organic production, so where crops are grown, harvested and sold as organic they must be grown in the soil. In some instances, a stage of production of an organic plant has to be out of the soil, but this should be limited only to plant propagation. |
| **1.2 Oil palm ingredients** | *Guidance:* Information you will need to provide includes:  
- Your immediate supplier of oil palm ingredients  
- The country of origin/source of these ingredients, if known.  
- Other sustainability certifications held by these ingredients, if known.  
To check whether any of your ingredients are derived from oil palm, see endnote i.  
*Reason:* This will help us assess whether you would comply with the proposed sourcing requirement for SA Standard 2.1.7 Maintaining High Conservation |

**Information requirement:** You must provide us with information on ingredients of the oil palm tree *elaeis guineensis* used in your Soil Association certified organic food products.  
Examples of these ingredients include: palm oil, palm kernel oil, or palm fractions or derivatives (processed versions of palm oil or palm kernel oil, for example stearin, olein & glycerol) in your food or drink.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>2.0 Sourcing requirements for Lamb Products</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sourcing requirement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guidance &amp; Reasons</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Animal mutilations are restricted</td>
<td><strong>Guidance:</strong> Organic sheep farmed in the UK/EU meet this requirement. <strong>Reason:</strong> Evidence shows that some mutilations, such as mulesing, can cause considerable pain and stress, and often do not address the underlying cause of the problem which can be solved through changes in management practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked to SA Standards 3.5.2 &amp; SA NI 3.5.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheep must not be routinely subject to the mutilation mulesing.</td>
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<tr>
<th>3.0 Sourcing requirement for Beef Products</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sourcing requirement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guidance &amp; Reasons</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Encouraging anaemia is prohibited</td>
<td><strong>Guidance:</strong> Organic beef and veal farmed in the UK/EU meets this requirement. <strong>Reason:</strong> Livestock which lack nutrients such as iron can develop serious health problems and display abnormal behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked to SA Standards 3.10.3 &amp; SA NI 3.10.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>For beef or veal production, the animals must not be kept in conditions, or on a diet, which may encourage anaemia.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.0 Sourcing requirements for Pig Products</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sourcing requirement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guidance &amp; Reasons</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 The use of Colistin is prohibited</td>
<td><strong>Reason:</strong> Scientists believe that Colistin resistance is likely to be transferring from farm animals to humans. To protect its effectiveness as a life-saving human treatment of E. coli we will not accept any pig product from pigs treated with Colistin. Pigs have been identified as the highest risk species for use of this antibiotic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked to SA Standards 3.4.12 &amp; SA NI 3.4.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs must not be treated with Colistin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Animal mutilations are restricted</td>
<td><strong>Reason:</strong> Evidence shows that mutilations cause considerable pain and stress, and can reduce the ability of animals to perform natural behaviours. Pig mutilations often do not address the underlying cause of the problem which can be solved through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked to SA Standards 3.5.3 &amp; SA NI 3.5.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Pigs must not be subject, at any point in their lives, to the practices of ringing, castration, tail docking, teeth cutting or grinding.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>4.3 Pasture access</th>
<th>changes in management practices which allow them to express natural behaviours.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Linked to SA Standards 3.6.13 &amp; SA NI 3.6.13</em></td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: Providing pigs with access to pasture gives them the opportunity to express natural behaviours such as foraging, rooting and wallowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs must have permanent access to pasture or vegetated range, unless the following circumstances temporarily prevent this:</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: Providing pigs with access to pasture gives them the opportunity to express natural behaviours such as foraging, rooting and wallowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) the health or welfare of the animal</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: Providing pigs with access to pasture gives them the opportunity to express natural behaviours such as foraging, rooting and wallowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) the weather conditions and the state of the ground, or</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: Providing pigs with access to pasture gives them the opportunity to express natural behaviours such as foraging, rooting and wallowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) community or national requirements or restrictions relating to specific animal or human health problems.</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: Providing pigs with access to pasture gives them the opportunity to express natural behaviours such as foraging, rooting and wallowing.</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.4 Floor space and resting area for pigs</th>
<th><strong>Guidance</strong>: Organic pig production in the UK/EU meets this requirement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Linked to SA Standards 3.6.13 &amp; SA NI 3.6.13</em></td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: Providing animals with enough comfortable space is an important factor which affects the welfare of farm animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing for pigs must meet the following specification:</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: Providing animals with enough comfortable space is an important factor which affects the welfare of farm animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) at least half must be a comfortable clean and dry resting/lying area, which is solid and not slippery and not slatted or of grid construction.</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: Providing animals with enough comfortable space is an important factor which affects the welfare of farm animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) The resting/lying area must have ample dry bedding which is comprised of straw or another suitable natural material.</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: Providing animals with enough comfortable space is an important factor which affects the welfare of farm animals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>4.5 Housing pigs indoors</th>
<th><strong>Guidance</strong>: Organic pig production in the UK/EU meets this requirement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Linked to SA Standards 3.9.1 &amp; SA NI 3.9.1</em></td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: Pigs are highly sociable animals and housing them in groups allows them to express more natural behaviours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If pigs are housed indoors, sows must be kept in groups, except in the last stages of pregnancy and during the suckling period.</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: Pigs are highly sociable animals and housing them in groups allows them to express more natural behaviours.</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.6 Farrowing crates are prohibited</th>
<th><strong>Guidance</strong>: Organic pig production in the UK/EU meets this requirement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Linked to SA Standards 3.9.2 &amp; SA NI 3.9.2</em></td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: The farrowing crate does not and cannot satisfy the behavioural needs of a sow, particularly in terms of being able to stand up and turn around or nest-build.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs must not be kept in farrowing crates.</td>
<td><strong>Reason</strong>: The farrowing crate does not and cannot satisfy the behavioural needs of a sow, particularly in terms of being able to stand up and turn around or nest-build.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.7 Keeping piglets on flat decks or in cages is prohibited

*Linked to SA Standards 3.9.3 & SA NI 3.9.3*

Piglets must not be kept on flat decks or in piglet cages.

**Guidance:** Organic pig in the UK/EU meets this requirement.

**Reason:** Flat decks and piglet cages prevent pigs from expressing natural behaviours.

### 5.0 Sourcing requirements for Poultry Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sourcing requirement</th>
<th>Guidance &amp; Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **5.1 Additional rules for the sourcing of non-organic poultry**  
*Linked to SA Standards 3.2.7 & SA NI 3.2.8* | **Guidance:** Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote ii.  
**Reason:** Using cage reared birds not only conflicts with organic principles but also presents a welfare risk to birds by predisposing them to a range of behavioural problems which can be carried over to their new free-range environment. Beak tipping or clipping birds, which is standard practice in non-organic systems, is a mutilation which is unnecessary when the birds are kept under conditions which satisfy their behavioural needs. |
| **5.2 Poultry mutilations are prohibited**  
*Linked to SA Standards 3.5.4 & SA NI 3.5.4* | **Guidance:** Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote ii.  
**Reason:** Evidence shows that mutilations cause considerable pain and stress and can reduce the ability of animals to perform natural behaviours. Poultry mutilations often do not address the underlying cause of the problem which can be solved through changes in management practices which allow them to express natural behaviours. |
| **5.3 Keeping poultry in cages is prohibited**  
*Linked to SA Standards 3.12.1 & SA NI 3.12.1* | **Guidance:** Organic poultry production in the UK/EU meets this requirement.  
Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients see endnote ii.  
**Reason:** Using cage reared birds conflicts with organic principles. |
### 5.4 Number of birds permitted in each house

*Linked to SA Standards 3.12.2 & SA NI 3.12.2*

The number of birds in a poultry house must not exceed: 3000* for laying hens; or 1000 for other poultry species.

**Guidance:** Organic poultry production in GB meets the sourcing requirement for laying hens. Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnoteii.

**Reason:** Flock size is limited to help ensure consistently high levels of animal welfare.

### 5.5 Floor area for poultry

*Linked to SA Standards 3.12.4 & SA NI 3.12.4*

At least 50% of the floor area of poultry housing must be solid, that is, not of slatted or grid construction.

**Guidance:** Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnoteii.

**Reason:** Giving poultry access to dry, loose litter provides them with a vital material for foraging and dust bathing, allowing them to express these natural behaviours. This reduces the risk of welfare problems developing. Feather pecking is thought to be a redirected foraging or ground-pecking behaviour which can arise when birds do not have the opportunity to express these natural behaviours.

### 5.6 Housing requirement and aerial perches

*Linked to SA Standards 3.12.5 & 3.12.6, SA NI 3.12.5 & SA NI 3.12.6*

Poultry perching must meet the following requirements:

a) laying hens: 18 cm aerial perch space per bird  
b) guinea fowl: 20 cm aerial perch space per bird  
c) Muscovy ducks: 40cm aerial perch space per bird  
d) turkeys: elevated perches or surfaces provided

**Guidance:** Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnoteii.

**Reason:** Most species have a behavioural motivation to perch. Providing aerial perches allows birds to exhibit a greater range of natural behaviours, reducing the risk of feather pecking and enabling birds to escape from any ground level harassment from other birds. Wild turkeys roost in trees at night and domestic turkeys retain this strong instinct to perch. Similarly, Muscovy ducks, unlike other domestic ducks, have not descended from the wild mallard and have long claws which allow them to perch and they will roost in trees in the wild.

### 5.7 Artificial light

*Linked to SA Standards 3.12.9 & SA NI 3.12.9*

If artificial light is used to prolong day length, measures must be in place to allow birds to anticipate changes in light levels. For example:

- gradual dimming of the lights. A period of at least 10 minutes to dim the lights for laying hens and at least 30 minutes for table chickens.  
- a stepped lighting programme, to guide the birds to the perches

**Guidance:** Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnoteii.

**Reason:** Poultry use a reduction in light intensity as a signal for night roosting. Gradually dimming the lights allows birds to anticipate changes in light which may prevent stress. In particular, it allows laying hens to find a suitable perch for the night without causing injury. It has been shown to stimulate feeding behaviour in broilers and laying hens which may prevent hunger during the night.
### 5.8 Access to the outdoor range
*Linked to SA Standards 3.12.11 & SA NI 3.12.11*

Table birds must have easy daytime access to the outdoor range by the following ages:

- **a)** 10 weeks for geese or two thirds of their life, whichever is earlier
- **b)** 10 weeks for turkeys or two thirds of their life, whichever is earlier
- **c)** Two thirds of their life for other species

**Guidance:** Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote ii.

**Reason:** Giving poultry early access to the range encourages birds to use the range more. The range provides birds with plenty of opportunities to express natural behaviours, such as ground pecking and foraging. Improved range use has been shown to decrease the risk of injurious feather pecking.

### 5.9 Stocking density on the range
*Linked to SA Standard 3.12.12 & SA NI 3.12.12*

a) For laying hens, the outdoor stocking density must not exceed: 1,000 birds/ha over the life of the flock.

b) For ducks, guinea fowl, turkey and geese in mobile housing, the outdoor stocking density must not exceed:
   - i. ducks: 2,222 birds/ha
   - ii. guinea fowl: 2,500 birds/ha
   - iii. turkeys: 1,000 birds/ha at any one time
   - iv. geese: 666 birds/ha at any one time

c) For ducks, guinea fowl, turkey and geese in static/fixed housing, the outdoor stocking density must not exceed:
   - i. ducks: 2,222 birds/ha
   - ii. guinea fowl: 2,500 birds/ha
   - iii. turkeys: 1,000 birds/ha at any one time
   - iv. geese: 666 birds/ha at any one time

d) For table chickens, the outdoor stocking density must not exceed:
   - i. Static/fixed housing: 2,500 birds/ha (1 bird/4 m²)
   - ii. Mobile housing: 4,000 birds/ha (1 bird/2.5 m²)

**Guidance:** Organic poultry production in NI & the EU meets sourcing requirement 5.9b. Organic poultry production in GB, NI & the /EU meets sourcing requirements 5.9c & d

Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote ii.

**Reason:** These poultry species range extensively and are kept on ranges for sustained periods of time. Requiring a lower stocking rate helps prevent damage to the range, ensuring the birds have access to a stimulating environment where they can express their natural behaviours. Some organic standards outside the UK/EU do not have minimum outdoor spacing requirements for poultry.
5.10 Range quality and cover  
*Linked to SA Standard 3.12.16 & SA NI 3.12.16*

a) The outdoor stocking density requirements above must be provided within:
   - 100m of the house for layers, turkeys, geese, and guinea fowl
   - 50m of the house for table chickens and ducks

Guidance: If geese or ducks are walked out to pasture, narrow paddocks or fields may be appropriate.

‘Natural cover’ may include trees, perennial shrubs, bushes, hedgerows, or cover crops, such as artichokes, kale, millet, fodder rape and corn. To be included as part of the 5% requirement, natural cover must be accessible to the poultry. Long grass does not count towards natural cover provision because it does not encourage birds to range and can cause harm if eaten. If deciduous trees or other forms of natural cover are used, that only provide shelter for part of the year, supplementary cover or shelter must be provided. The supplementary shelter can be artificial, for example arcs, or natural, for example piles of brashings. The supplementary cover must make up the 5% natural cover requirement when the natural cover is not providing shelter. For trees the 20m can be calculated from the outer most branch of a tree. If the total range provided is larger than the minimum required area, the additional space does not need to be included when calculating the 5% natural cover requirement.

Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote ii.

Reason: The provision of natural shelter, particularly trees, is an effective method to encourage birds to range and range further, which in turn will lead to animal welfare and environmental benefits. Shelter helps protect poultry from adverse weather conditions and predators, as well as providing birds with more choice and variation in their environment. Tree cover in particular can also provide other environmental benefits.

b) The area of natural cover provided must be at least 5% of the minimum range area required in 5.9.

c) The range of shelters must provide adequate protection from inclement weather and overhead predators all year round.

d) Shelters or natural cover must be distributed at least every 20m across the whole of the range.

e) At least one area of natural cover or shelter must be available within 20m of the pop-holes.

5.11 Resting the range for laying poultry  
*Linked to SA Standards 3.12.17 & SA NI 3.12.17*

For laying poultry, the pasture must be rested for at least nine months between each flock of laying birds.

Guidance: Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote iii.

Reason: Laying poultry require a longer resting period because they live for longer and range more widely than table birds, which puts more pressure on the range in terms of vegetation depletion and manure deposition. Giving a nine-month fallow period allows vegetation to fully recover between flocks, using up the excess nutrients in the soil and also helps break disease cycles.
## 5.12 Access to water for waterfowl
*Linked to SA standards 3.12.21 & SA NI 3.12.21*

Waterfowl must have access to a stream, pond, lake or pool, whenever weather and hygiene conditions allow. The water must be maintained and managed to prevent the build-up of disease.

**Guidance:** Organic poultry production in the UK/EU meets this requirement.

Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote ii.

**Reason:** Waterfowl need access to water to meet their species-specific needs and welfare requirements, for example ducks require full body access to water.

## 5.13 Enrichment in the house
*Linked to SA standard 3.12.22 & SA NI 3.12.22*

Flocks of more than 500 laying hens (Gallus gallus) must be provided with enrichment material in the poultry house which meets the following requirements:

- a) Sufficient enrichment material across the whole house to enable all birds to access it.
- b) No fewer than two items of enrichment per 500 birds.
- c) Frequent changing of enrichment items to maintain the birds’ interest.
- d) Any enrichment items which contain feed materials must be organic.
- e) Destructible enrichment, including forage. For example, lucerne bales, bagged chopped alfalfa, hanging vegetables or cardboard egg trays.

**Guidance:** Enrichment items can include pipe or barrel ‘tunnels’, hanging items, pecking materials and innovative feeders. For more information on enrichment materials see the [Featherwel website](#).

Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote ii.

**Reason:** One of the most important welfare outcome measures is feather loss due to feather pecking. Producers have found that a variety of inexpensive objects in the house can promote positive indoor foraging behaviour, which can reduce feather pecking in their flocks.

## 5.14 Welfare outcome assessment
*Linked to SA Standards 3.5.1 & SA NI 3.5.1*

**Information requirement:** Information must be provided regarding the following:

Does the poultry production undergo independent welfare outcome assessment? If so, details must be provided of the scheme in which the farm participates.

**Guidance:** Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote ii.

**Reason:** As well as complying with SA Standards, SA poultry producers undergo independent welfare outcome assessment and benchmarking of their flocks. This provides an additional safeguard to ensure that measures in place at the farm result in good animal welfare. Further information is available on the [Assurewel website](#).
# 6.0 Sourcing requirements for Aquaculture Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sourcing requirement</th>
<th>Guidance &amp; Reasons</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6.1 Sodium metabisulphite</strong>&lt;br&gt;Linked to SA Standards 6.4.4 &amp; SA NI 6.4.4</td>
<td><strong>Reason:</strong> Sodium metabisulphite is used to prevent microbial spoilage and the appearance of unsightly marking on crustaceans after harvesting. However, sodium metabisulphite can cause allergic reactions in some people so should be avoided. Sodium metabisulphite must not be used as an additive, including for crustaceans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.2 Withdrawing feed</strong>&lt;br&gt;Linked to SA Standards 13.5.2 &amp; SA NI 13.5.2</td>
<td><strong>Reason:</strong> If feed is not withdrawn before handling or transport this can lead to poor water quality which has health implications for the fish. However, farmed fish become used to being fed regularly so the withdrawal of feed for prolonged periods is a welfare concern. One of the principles of good animal welfare is freedom from hunger, therefore the Soil Association sets a limit on the permitted withdrawal period for feed for farmed fish before harvest. We use degree days as a measurement because in the wild, fish naturally eat less in colder waters. The maximum starve period before harvest, for salmon, trout and Arctic charr, is 50 degree days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.3 Calcified seaweed is prohibited</strong>&lt;br&gt;Linked to SA Standards 13.8.2 &amp; SA NI 13.8.3</td>
<td><strong>Reason:</strong> Calcified seaweed, lithothamne and maerl refer to a group of coralline algae, primarily of the species <em>Phymatolithon calcareum</em>, <em>Lithothamnion glaciale</em> and <em>Lithothamnion corallioides</em>. Calcified seaweed beds are relatively scarce and are important habitats which hold impressive levels of biodiversity, harbouring many rare and commercially valuable species. Owing to their extremely slow growth rate, calcified seaweed beds are very fragile and cannot sustain even limited extraction without deterioration. Commercial extraction from the sea has already led to the destruction of several beds in Europe and current levels of protection provided are unlikely to prevent further destruction and deterioration. Aquaculture livestock must not be fed calcified seaweed, lithothamne or maerl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.4 The use of organophosphates and avermectin is prohibited</strong>&lt;br&gt;Linked to SA Standard 13.10.6 &amp; SA NI 13.10.6</td>
<td><strong>Reason:</strong> Organophosphates (OPs) are the basis for a wide and commonly used range of insecticides and in veterinary medicine are used to treat external parasites. OPs are acutely toxic and have been linked with a range of problems including decreasing male fertility, foetal abnormalities, chronic fatigue syndrome and Parkinson's disease. OPs are especially toxic to the aquatic environment and have a detrimental effect on marine species. Avermectins are a group of drugs (e.g. ivermectin) used to treat insect infestations in livestock. When used on aquaculture animals, residues are excreted with the faeces and have detrimental effects on the aquatic environment, particularly on sediment-dwelling organisms. Fish must not be treated with organophosphate or avermectin-based veterinary medicines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 7.0 Sourcing requirements for All Animal Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sourcing requirement</th>
<th>Guidance &amp; Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **7.1 Genetic modification**  
*Linked to SA Standards 5.11.2 & SA NI 5.11.2*  
For meat, eggs and aquaculture animal products, procedures must be in place to:  
a) control genetically modified organisms (GMOs), derivatives of GMOs or contaminants in the feed of organic livestock. This includes organic feed ingredients and non-organic feed ingredients. (Note any testing that takes place should be to the lower limit of quantification 0.1%)  
b) ensure action is taken if they are detected in the animal feed.  
*Guidance:* Organic animal production in the UK/EU meets this requirement.  
*Reason:* GM ingredients have no place in organic food and feed. |
| **7.2 Natural casings**  
*Linked to SA Standards 6.6.3 & SA NI 6.6.3*  
Non-organic casings, such as for sausage skins, must be of natural origin.  
*Reason:* Natural casings are more in line with consumer expectations and there is potential for them to be certified organic if there was a market demand, unlike other casing-types which use processing aids and techniques that are not allowed under the organic regulation. |
| **7.3 Animals must always be pre-stunned**  
*Linked to SA Standards 19.5.1 & SA NI 19.5.1*  
Animals must always be stunned before slaughter. This process must cause unconsciousness and insensibility instantaneously, without distress, and until the animal dies.  
*Guidance:* Animal slaughter in the UK/EU meets this requirement.  
*Reason:* Scientific evidence strongly suggests that slaughtering animals while still conscious causes them significant pain and distress. |

## 8.0 Sourcing requirements for bottles or containers of Alcohol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sourcing requirement</th>
<th>Guidance &amp; Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **8.1 Free sulphur dioxide levels**  
*Linked to SA Standards 6.4.3 & SA NI 6.4.3*  
The free sulphur dioxide (SO₂) levels in bottles or containers of fruit wines, cider, perry or mead for recertification/re-sale must not exceed 30 mg/l.  
*Reason:* Free SO₂ can cause allergic reactions in people with a sensitivity to sulphur dioxide, especially affecting people with asthma, so should be minimised as much as possible. |
8.2 Free sulphur dioxide levels for Soil Association certified wine

Linked to SA Standards 6.9.4 & SA NI 6.9.4

The sulphur dioxide levels in bottles or containers of wines must not exceed the following levels:

**Reason:** Free SO₂ can cause allergic reactions in people with a sensitivity to sulphur dioxide, especially affecting people with asthma, so should be minimised as much as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum sulphur dioxide (SO₂) levels</th>
<th>Wine with a residual sugar level &lt;2 g/l</th>
<th>Wine with residual sugar level of 2 – 4.9g/l</th>
<th>Wine with sugar level of ≥5g/l</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red</strong></td>
<td>90 mg/l (25mg/l free SO₂)</td>
<td>100 mg/l (30mg/l free SO₂)</td>
<td>130 mg/l (50mg/l free SO₂)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White &amp; rosé</strong></td>
<td>100 mg/l (30mg/l free SO₂)</td>
<td>140 mg/l (30mg/l free SO₂)</td>
<td>160 mg/l (50mg/l free SO₂)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sparkling Wine</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>100mg/l (10mg/l free SO₂)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other wines as listed in Annex IB of EC Regulation 606/2009</td>
<td></td>
<td>270-370 mg/l (50mg/l free SO₂)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.0 Sourcing requirements for All Products

9.1 Nanoparticles

Linked to SA Standards 5.11.3 & SA NI 5.11.3

Organic products must not contain or consist of engineered nanoparticles (incidental nanoparticles are exempt).

**Guidance:** We are not aware of any organic food products currently at risk of containing nanoparticles. However, we will monitor and update this requirement accordingly, should we become aware of risk products or ingredients.

**Reason:** Nanomaterials may introduce new or heightened risks of toxicity, which are currently little understood. The possible effects of these nanomaterials on the environment, human and animal health are currently unknown.

9.2 Using organic additives

Linked to SA Standard 6.4.1 & SA NI 6.4.1

Organic additives must be used, if available and in sufficient quantity. Non-organic forms of the following additives must not be used:

a) Locust bean gum  
b) Guar gum  
c) Arabic gum

**Guidance:** Organic products only containing ingredients processed in the UK/EU meet this requirement. If importing a product from outside the UK/EU, or using processed ingredients from outside the UK/EU, check the label and/or technical specification to confirm that these additives are from organic production.
| d) Lecithins | This is an EU & UK organic standard, but not all organic products or ingredients imported into the EU or UK from equivalent third countries will necessarily meet this standard. |
| e) Extracts of rosemary | **Reason:** Organic ingredients should always be used where they are available and are of sufficient quality and quantity. This helps to grow the market for organic ingredients and by doing so, increases the positive impacts of organic production. |
| f) Tara gum | |
| g) Glycerol | |
| h) Beeswax | |
| i) Carnauba wax | |
| j) Erythritol | |

In cases where the above organic additives are unavailable in a country outside the UK & EU or organic additives are available, but not suitable for the product, the Soil Association Certification Committee may review whether sufficient justification is provided for not using them.

### 9.3 Permitted additives

**Linked to SA Standards 6.4.2 & SA NI 6.4.2**

Products or ingredients used may only contain additives permitted in standard 6.4.2. and SA NI 6.4.2.

**Guidance:** Organic products only containing ingredients processed in the GB, NI & the EU meet this requirement. If using a product imported from outside GB, NI & the EU, or using processed ingredients from outside GB, NI & the EU, check the label and/or technical specification to see if it contains only additives permitted in standards 6.4.2. and SA NI 6.4.2.

**Reason:** These are GB & EU organic standards, but not all organic products or ingredients imported into the GB, NI & EU from equivalent third countries will necessarily meet this standard.

### 9.4 Ingredients which must be organic

**Linked to SA Standards 6.6.2 & SA NI 6.6.2**

Products must use the following list of ingredients in organic form:

- a) gooseberries (*Ribes uva-crispa*)
- b) watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*)
- c) spirulina (*Arthrospira platensis*)
- d) chlorella

**Reason:** The GB and EU Organic Regulations allow some specific ingredients to be used as non-organic because they are not thought to be widely available in organic form. However, the GB & EU lists of permitted non-organic ingredients are outdated, and some of the items are now available as organic. Where this is the case, licensees must use the organic version. This meets consumer expectations of organic products, helps to grow the market for organic ingredients and by doing so, increases the positive impacts of organic production.

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1 List of oil palm derivatives which may be present in organic food & drink

- Palm Oil
- Palm Kernel Oil
- Palm Fruit Oil
- Palm Kernel Expeller
• Palm Olein
• Palm Stearin
• Elaeis Guineensis
• Vegetable Oil*
• Vegetable Fat*
• E306 Tocopherol Rich Extract*
• Tocopherols (Vitamin E)*
• E422 Glycerol*
• Glycerin*
• Glycerine*
• Glycerol*

* These ingredients may be derived from oil palm or may be derived from other plant sources, such as soybean. We only require information on these ingredients if you know them to be oil palm derived.

If you use an ingredient that is not listed above in your organic food or drink, and you know that it is derived from oil palm, please let us know.

ii At present, for the following organic egg products, there is a shortage of product that meets the SA’s sourcing requirements: egg yolk, albumen & dried whole egg and organic processed liquid whole egg. Therefore, you may apply to us to use non-compliant organic products of these types in processed SA standard products to a maximum of 30% of the total end product and must be identified on the ingredients panel as meeting the GB Organic Regulation (or the EU Organic Regulation for products made outside GB). You will need to provide written justification for your use of organic egg ingredients that do not meet SA higher standards. And, in addition for liquid whole egg, demonstrate that you have attempted to source organic product compliant with SA higher standards, for example by providing evidence from suppliers.