



# Guide to Abattoirs and Meat Processors

## Do I need to be licensed?

If you are slaughtering organic livestock or processing organic meat products, EU regulations require you to be licensed. The term 'processing' includes: dressing, chilling and cutting of carcasses into primals and cuts, packing or re-packing, storing, importing, wholesaling/trading, and labelling organic products. Operations such as warehousing, storage and distribution will also need to be licensed, if handling products.

## Why choose to certify with Soil Association Certification?

### Who are Soil Association Certification?

Soil Association Certification Ltd is the largest and most experienced organic certification body in the UK. As a not-for-profit business, any surplus income is gift aided to the Soil Association charity to raise awareness, develop and safeguard the organic sector.

Soil Association Certification certifies over 70% of organic products in the UK. Coupled with our years of experience in organic certification, this means we are able to offer an unrivalled, high-quality and straightforward service to our licensees.

### What certification with us offers

- A designated Certification Officer to guide you through the certification process
- Use of the Soil Association symbol, the most trusted and recognised organic mark in the UK
- **Training & learning opportunities** – discounts for events, workshops & programmes
- Exclusive opportunities to **develop your supply chain** and reach new markets
- Free membership to the **Food For Life Served Here Supplier Scheme** (for processing licences, worth £1,100)

- Free sector specific print and digital **marketing materials** to support you in telling customers about organic
- The opportunity to get involved in our public facing campaign designed to increase awareness of organic and drive sales, such as Organic September and Organic Christmas
- Free copy of the **Organic Market Report** - the industry recognised publication (worth £100)
- Optional, additional services (see below)

### Additional food industry schemes

Along with organic certification, we also offer a range of optional schemes, including:

- BRC and SALSA (applicable to annual audits)

To help sell your products into export markets, we offer the following certification:

- Bio Suisse, PWAB, JAS, NOP, COR and AB Logo

For further information on export and supporting your business, please [see our website](#).

Supplementary schemes may be subject to additional fees - please contact us for further information

## Soil Association Organic Standards

The Soil Association Organic Standards cover the EU's organic regulations (EC 834/2007 & EC 889/2008) and include some additional, higher standards in some key areas e.g. livestock production, GM, additives and packaging - this makes Soil Association's standards recognised as amongst the highest in the world.

Due to our higher standards, if you want to use the Soil Association organic symbol, pig and poultry products may be subject to additional checks to make sure they meet our standards. You can find details in the Sourcing Organic Ingredients annex of the standards. The Soil Association organic standards can be accessed [on our website](#).

The Soil Association standards for Abattoir and Slaughtering do not include comprehensive requirements on the slaughtering process because there are detailed regulations in the EU and UK that govern the slaughter of farmed animals, and apply whether the animal is organic or not.

Statutory regulations that are relevant to slaughter of livestock include, but are not limited to:

- Council Regulation (EC) 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing
- Welfare at the Time of Killing regulations for Scotland, Wales and England (2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively)
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations
- Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin
- Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of food stuffs
- Regulation (EC) No. 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 (Animal by-products Regulation)

Soil Association Certification certified operators must also comply with all the organic requirements set out in our standards. These include requirements that go beyond statutory obligations in key areas, for example: requiring that all animals are pre-stunned to render them insensible before being slaughtered, and requirements to ensure that organic products are not contaminated, and are adequately separated from non-organic products.

## Preparing for certification

Certification involves us making an assessment of your operation to check how you meet the Soil Association standards, so it's important that you have read and are familiar with them. There are some key areas to consider:

**Animal welfare (19.1):** The Soil Association organic standards require that animals must be handled with particular concern for their welfare and to ensure minimum stress and damage. Please refer to the standards for details of the requirements related to general animal welfare, unloading, lairage and waiting.

**Slaughtering procedures (19.5 & 19.6):** You must slaughter and dress organic stock as the first operation of the day.

For abattoirs processing more than one species, organic livestock can be slaughtered as first of the species on that day straight after a thorough clean down of the line.

After processing, carcasses, sides, quarters or cuts must be labelled as organic and stored on a separate labelled rail/shelf in a cold store so they are not touching non-organic meat.

If you don't have enough space to dedicate a rail to organic, you could use a plastic curtain to separate organic from non-organic.

### Meat stamp and labelling requirements

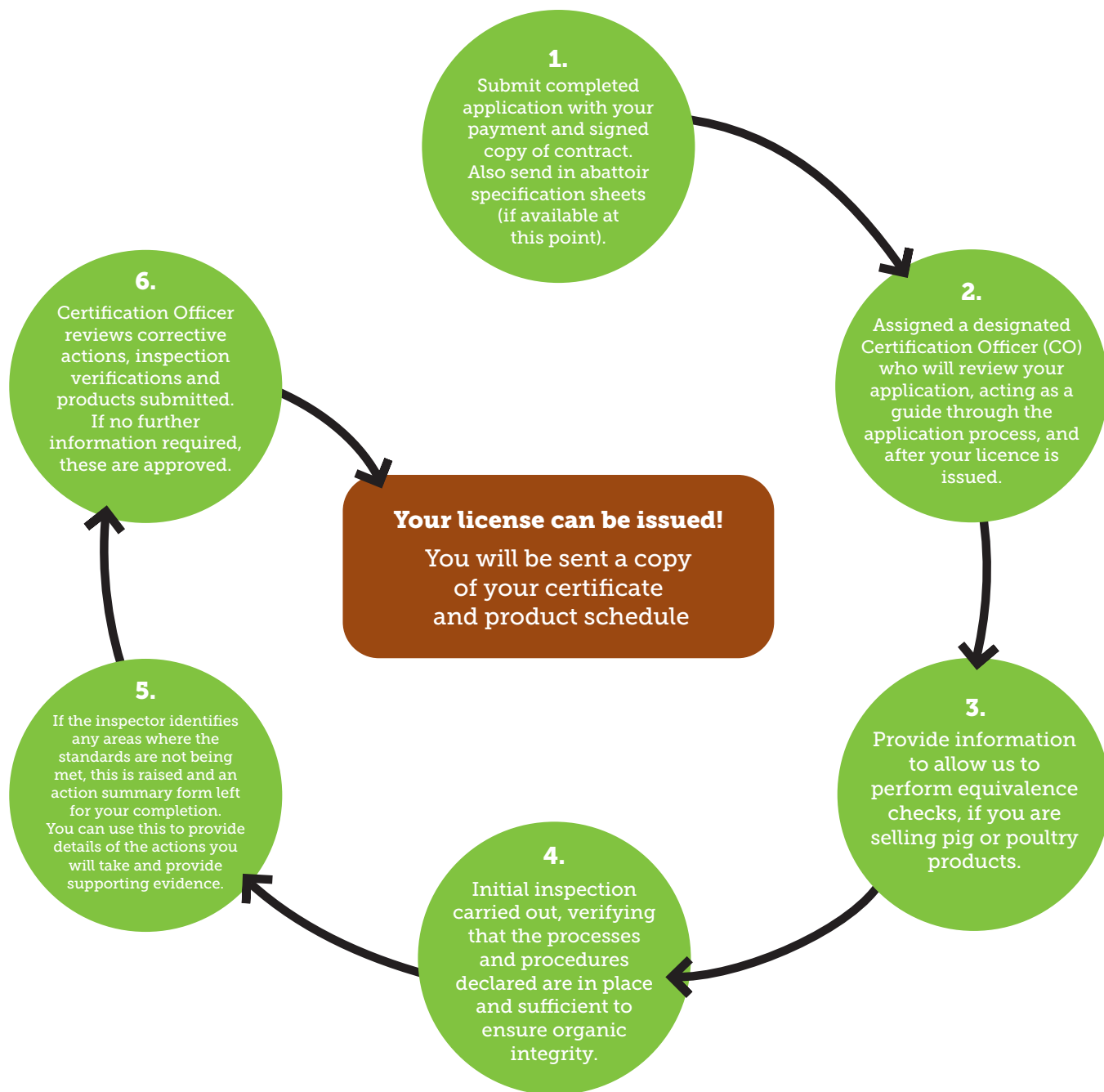
**(18.8.2 & 18.8):** Once certified, we will send you a Soil Association meat stamp for stamping the organic carcasses - this includes the Soil Association symbol and a number unique to your abattoir

**Record-keeping (18.7):** You will need to implement records to show:

- Goods-in records - this must include delivery dates, farm name, species and a traceability code
  - Quantities, batch codes, invoices and delivery notes of organic livestock received
  - Evidence that you checked organic status of livestock delivered as per standard 19.2.1 and 18.7.5
- Processing records - an organic record sheet must accompany all organic batches through the abattoir to record:
  - Kill number, kill date, kill time, batch code/ear tag number and weight of each carcass
  - Quantities produced in each production /packing run
  - Evidence that you processed organic and non-organic separately
  - Evidence that you cleaned according to these standards before production
- Completed abattoir specification sheets listing the organic animals you wish to slaughter and their suppliers
- Sales and goods-out records - to show dates and quantities of all carcasses that you sell, so these can be reconciled with the animals that have been delivered, to ensure that organic meat has not accidentally been substituted with non-organic
- What you have sold/dispached, how much, and to whom - these need to refer to the delivery note or invoice, and be able to confirm that the meat is organic
- The sale value of the organic products

We have examples of record keeping templates [available on our website](#).

# The Application Process



**Please note:** You're only able to slaughter organic animals once you're certified. This means that at your first inspection, your inspector won't be able to see your organic production in process; instead, they'll look to see that you have the systems and records in place for when you begin organic production.

## How long does certification take?

We advise applicants to allow between 8 and 12 weeks from start to finish, but the more detail and more promptly you can respond, the shorter the time it takes to complete the process. Please let us know if you are working towards a specific deadline and we will do our best to help you meet it.

## Once your license is issued

### Changes to business set up

You will be issued with a certificate and product schedule detailing the company name, address, enterprises/activities and products that you are certified for.

If any of these are to change, you will need to inform us as soon as possible. If the site changes, or you wish to add additional enterprises that we haven't previously inspected (e.g. if you wanted to start packing organic product), an additional inspection may be required.

Products must be approved and added to your licence before marketing. You can add products to your licence at any point during the year through your Certification Officer, and there is no additional cost for doing this.

## Annual inspections

Processing licensees will be inspected annually to ensure that organic standards are upheld. While we aim to inspect around the same time of year, this may change slightly due to when organic production runs happen.

## Fees

For a list of our current fees, please go to the [Applications page](#) on our website.

## Contact us

If you have any queries or need any help, please get in touch with our Go Organic team and we'll be happy to help.

### Soil Association Certification

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