



Summary of standards changes

Organic standards documents updated Friday 12th February 2021 – version 18.6

This document summarises the changes made to the Soil Association Standards for version 18.6.

The changes outlined below have been applied to the relevant standards documents which are: **aquaculture, abattoir & slaughtering, feed processing, farming & growing, food & drink and seaweed.**

The main updates are as follows:

Brexit

Following the end of the transition period for the UK exit from the EU, and agreement of a UK/EU trade deal, we have amended the Soil Association Standards to reflect changes to how organic regulations will be applied in the UK. The changes to the standards affect labelling and import requirements. They explain how those aspects of the standards must be applied and implemented differently for products produced in Northern Ireland to other parts of the UK.

Maintaining High Conservation Values (HCV)

The updated guidance to standard 2.1.7 includes new resources developed to help identify high conservation values on UK farms and clarifies how the standard will be implemented.

Sourcing Organic Ingredients Annex – V1.3

There has been a small update to the Sourcing Organic Ingredients annex which will be published as version 1.3.

In addition, a small number of wording changes have been made to some standards and guidance across all Soil Association Standards documents to provide further clarification for licensees. In this document we have not included small edits that have been made to formatting, grammar and spelling.

Key to text changes: (~~strikethrough~~ = delete; underlined = new wording; normal text = no change)

Changes to All Standards Documents following Brexit – please note that these updates are from the Soil Association Food and Drink Standards but have been made across all relevant documents

Standards	Guidance
<p>5.1.1 Scope of the standards</p> <p>1. The standards in this document set out the rules that must apply for all stages of production, preparation and distribution in order for products to be labelled and marketed as organic. These food and drink organic standards cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) processing or re-processing and labelling or re-labelling of food, seed and livestock feeds; b) importing products from outside the UK (or the EU if you are in Northern Ireland), including ensuring equivalence to production within the UK and EU; and c) exporting organic products. <p>2. You must comply with these organic standards if you are involved in activities at any stage in the production, processing, preparation and distribution of organic products.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 1(1)(2)(3); Art. 8; Art. 28 (EC) 889/2008 Art. 1(1); Art. 80</i></p>	<p>If you are unsure whether the activity you are carrying out requires certification, please contact us.</p> <p>For standards regarding crop production (including wild harvesting), livestock husbandry (including beekeeping), please refer to the Farming and Growing standards on our website.</p> <p>For requirements regarding Aquaculture and Seaweed see here.</p> <p>For requirements regarding livestock feed, please refer to the Feed Processing standards on our website.</p> <p>The scope of these standards does not include catering.</p>

<p>5.3.1 Certifying your business</p> <p>To become certified to these organic standards you must have a certification contract with an independent, accredited certification body and comply with all relevant organic standards for your organic activity.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 27(1)(4); Art. 28(1)</i></p>	<p>Businesses across the world can become certified to the Soil Association standards. In the UK GB, Defra is the competent authority and in Northern Ireland DAERA is the competent authority, they have delegated some control tasks to accredited organic certification bodies. The certification body that is appointed by the Soil Association to inspect and certify to Soil Association organic standards in the UK is Soil Association Certification.</p> <p>In the EU, businesses can only become certified to the Soil Association standards if they are already certified to the EU Organic Regulation by another approved</p>
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	<p>certification body in the country their business is registered and operating in. We can only act as the second certifier.</p> <p>Additionally, Soil Association Certification is accredited by IOAS (International Organic Accreditation Service) and authorised to offer organic certification in specific countries outside the EU for certain types of products. Please contact Soil Association Certification for more details.</p>
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<p>5.3.2 Activities that require certification</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the UK and EU all stages of the organic supply chain must hold organic certification. 2. Your business must be certified if you produce, process, package, store, label, import or export, include wholesaling, storage and warehousing, acting as the first consignee for imported products and any other activities that require the physical or financial ownership of organic products or ingredients. 3. In the UK (including Northern Ireland) you do not need certification if you only sell organic products directly to the final consumer or user provided that you do not produce, prepare, store organic products from outside the EU other than in relation to the point of sale or import such products or have not contracted out such activities. In other countries certification may be required for these activities. <p><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 27(3); Art. 28(1); Art. 28(2)</i></p>	<p>Without adequate certification at each stage of the supply chain, the products may lose their organic status. If you are unsure whether the activity you are carrying out requires certification, please contact us.</p> <p>You need certification if you manufacture, trade, wholesale, distribute, store, break down, pack, repack, re-label or process organic materials out of sight of the final customer. This includes (this is not an exhaustive list):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wholesaling and storing products only, both packed and loose • collecting bulk products from many points, for example milk haulier • supplying ingredients to others to process for you • food service • on-farm processing and packing • importing organic products from outside the EU <u>UK (or outside NI or the EU if you are in Northern Ireland)</u> • first consignees of organic product from outside the <u>UK (or outside NI or the EU if you are in Northern Ireland)</u> EU, and • seed and animal feed mills. <p>This covers all wholesalers, storage premises, including warehouses and distribution centres. It applies to those storing products in bulk, and those storing products that are already packed and labelled for the final consumer. However you do not need certification if you sell directly to the end consumer or user, or are a warehouse owned by or operating under contract to retailers or a store attached to a retail operation.</p>
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	For more information on the certification requirements for importing and exporting please refer to the importing standards (see section 6.8).
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<p>5.4.6 Certification code</p> <p>1. Each certification body is issued with a unique certifier code. In the UK the Soil Association Certification's code is GB-ORG-05.</p> <p>2. You must use this code if you are packing and labelling products yourself or if another Soil Association certified business in the UK is packing or labelling the product on your behalf.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 27(10)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 58</i></p>	<p>Please refer to the labelling sections 5.8 and 5.10 for more information on labelling requirements.</p> <p><u>In the UK (including in Northern Ireland) for product produced or processed in the UK, the Soil Association certifiers code is GB-ORG-05.</u></p> <p><u>A different certifier code may be required for some products being imported into GB and sold onto the EU market, for example product that is imported from a third country and re-exported to the EU without any further processing in GB will need to have the certification code GB-BIO-142 on the labels instead of GB-ORG-05.</u></p> <p><u>The Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the UK & EU includes unprocessed agricultural or aquaculture products produced in the United Kingdom/EU or processed agricultural products for use as food or feed that have been processed in the United Kingdom/EU with ingredients that have been grown in the United Kingdom/EU or that have been imported into the United Kingdom/EU in accordance with United Kingdom/EU laws and regulations. This means that products imported into GB from a 3rd country which are not further processed are not included in the scope of the agreement, (for the purposes of the agreement products that are re-labelled or re-packed are not considered to have been processed). So for those products to be exported to the EU, (or NI) from GB they would need to be certified by a GB certifier recognised by the EC under annex IV of regulation 1235/2008. (Refer to standard 6.8.6 for details). Soil Association Certification are recognised under this annex and have been issued the code GB-BIO-142 for these activities.</u></p>
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<p>5.8.2 Products with 95%-100% organic ingredients</p> <p>1. Food products containing 95%-100% organic agricultural</p>	<p>Guidance for each point is set out below:</p> <p>a) Identifying organic ingredients</p>
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<p>ingredients can be labelled as organic provided that they meet the composition requirements in standard 6.3.1 and the labelling includes the following:</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 23(4)(a)</i></p> <p>a) An indication of which ingredients are organic in the ingredients list.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 23(4)</i></p> <p>b) <u>For Northern Irish Operators the EU organic logo must be used</u> on pre-packaged food. <u>For operators in GB the use of the EU logo is optional.</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 25; Art. 24(1)(b)</i></p> <p>c) <u>For GB a statement of agricultural origin (see standard 5.8.7)</u></p> <p>d) When the EU logo is used, an indication of where the ingredients were farmed or grown (see standard 5.8.7).</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 24(1)(c)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 58(2)</i></p> <p>e) The code of the certifier who certifies the company that applies the labels (which may or may not be you). This must appear in the same visual field as the EU organic logo <u>if the EU logo is used.</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 24(1)(a)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 58(1)(d)</i></p> <p>f) A traceability code, such as a batch or date code.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 31(1)(d)</i></p> <p>g) The EU logo, statement of agricultural origin and code of the certifier must be marked in a conspicuous place in such a way as to be easily visible, clearly legible and</p>	<p>If any non-organic ingredients are used, make a clear indication on the ingredients panel as to the organic status of each ingredient. This includes water and salt as these are non-organic. This also includes non-organic top notes used in juice from concentrate, which must be identified on the retail label of the juice. Note that a derogation to use non-organic top notes must be obtained as per standard 6.7.1.</p> <p>For example: Ingredients: Organic flour (fortified with calcium carbonate, iron, niacin, thiamin), water, organic eggs, organic sunflower seeds, yeast, salt.</p> <p>Or, Ingredients: Flour (fortified with calcium carbonate*, iron*, niacin*, thiamin*), water*, eggs, sunflower seeds, yeast*, salt*. *Non-organic.</p> <p>b) Using the EU logo The EU sets the rules for the use of the EU leaf logo. Its use is optional on foods imported from outside the EU. It cannot be used on non-food products. See EU logo standard DL a for details.</p> <p>c) Statement of agricultural origin See standard 'declaring ingredient origin' (5.8.7) for details.</p> <p>d) Certifier code Each certification body has its own code, which its operators need to use on pack. The code for Soil Association Certification in the UK is GB-ORG-05. If you are packing and labelling the product yourself, or a Soil Association certified company in the UK is packing or labelling the product on your behalf, this is the code which must be used.</p> <p>However, if you use another company to apply packaging or labels to your product(s), you need to use the code of their certification body on pack, even if the product carries the Soil Association symbol. For example, if you are using a French contract packer certified by Ecocert, use the Ecocert code FR-BIO-01, do</p>
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<p>indelible.</p> <p>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 24(2)</p>	<p>not use GB-ORG-05. The certification code of your subcontractor is usually featured on their organic certificate.</p> <p>If your product is labelled outside the EU and you are not using the EU logo then you do not have to use the certifier's code, but you must include the name of the certifier.</p> <p>If you are in any doubt as to what certifier code you should use on your labels please contact your Certification Officer for guidance.</p> <p>Labels of non-food products, such as textiles and health and beauty care, or medicinal products must not include the code of the certifier. This is because they fall outside the scope of the EU Organic Regulation.</p> <p>e) Traceability code Your labelling must include a traceability code. Please refer to the record keeping standard 5.7.1 for details.</p> <p>g) Identifying non-organic ingredients of ingredients You must list any non-organic ingredients of ingredients. For compound ingredients you can either list the individual non-organic ingredient in the compound ingredient, or use a generic description such as 'contains a non-organic ingredient'.</p> <p>If you are using an organic flavouring in a product, you do not need to list the non-organic components of the organic flavouring, provided the non-organic components account for less than 1% of the final product.</p>
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<p>5.8.6 Using the EU organic logo</p> <p>1. You must display the EU logo on labels of packaged organic products produced in Northern Ireland or the EU.</p>	<p>The use of the logo is mandatory for all organic pre-packaged food produced within Northern Ireland or the European Union. The terms of its use are set by the EU and more information can be found online.</p>
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2. The EU logo is published for use in green as shown below. The reference for single colour printing is Pantone 376, or if you print using four colour process, 50% cyan, 100% yellow.



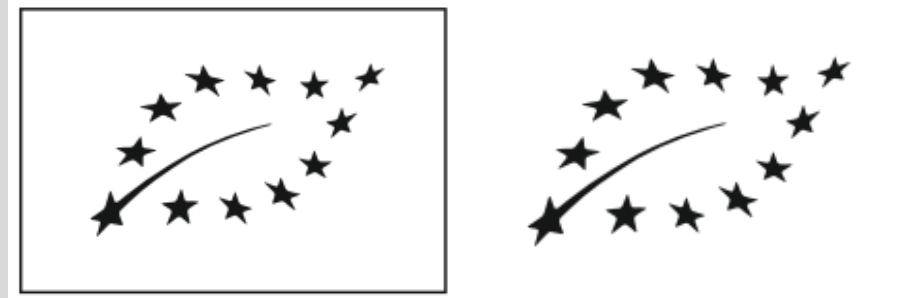
3. Where colour is not possible you may use black & white.



4. The EU organic logo must:
- a) appear at least 9mm high and 13.5mm wide, or
 - b) appear 6mm high for very small packages, and
 - c) have a proportional height to width ratio of 1:1.5.
5. The EU organic logo may appear:

You can download the EU logo in various formats from [here](#).

The white EU logo with the black stars is designed to be used on a dark background only. When the EU logo is used it must appear within a box or a black outline.



If your product is being packed outside the EU, you do not need to apply the EU logo. However, due to the widespread recognition of the EU logo across Europe you may wish to apply it if the products are destined for the EU market.

Products without packaging do not need to display the EU logo (see standard 5.14.2 for details of what you need to include).

Pre-packed products for export only and not for sale on the EU market do not have to use the EU Leaf logo. However, operators must have measures in place to ensure the product cannot be placed on the EU market.

<p>a) in negative, if the background of your packaging is dark.</p> <p>b) in the single colour of your packaging if you are only able to print one colour.</p> <p>c) with an outer line around it to improve how it stands out on coloured backgrounds.</p> <p>d) in conjunction with other logos and text referring to organic, providing this does not overlap, obscure or change the logo.</p> <p>6. You do not have to use the EU organic logo on products produced in GB or imported from countries outside the EU, but if you do, you must also use the declaration of where the ingredients have been farmed and the certifier code. If you do not use the EU logo and code, you must identify your certifier by name.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 24(1)(b)(c); Art. 25 (EC) 889/2008 Art. 57; Annex XI (1)(2)(3)(4)(5)(6)(7)(8)</i></p>	
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<p>5.8.7 Declaring ingredient origin</p> <p>1. Where the EU logo is used You need to include a declaration of where the ingredients have been farmed or grown.</p> <p>2. <u>For products produced in GB you must use 'UK Agriculture', 'Non-UK Agriculture or UK/Non-UK Agriculture'</u></p> <p>3. <u>If the EU logo is used you must also include a declaration in relation to the EU</u> - 'EU agriculture', 'non-EU agriculture', or 'EU/non-EU agriculture'. This must appear:</p> <p>a) in the same visual field as the EU organic logo;</p> <p>b) below the certifier code, and</p> <p>c) no more prominent than the sales description.</p> <p>4. You can replace <u>'UK' or 'Non-UK'</u>, 'EU' or 'non-EU' with a particular country if all ingredients were farmed or grown there. <u>In this case only one declaration is required.</u> You do</p>	<p>The declaration should be placed directly underneath the certifier.</p> <p><u>If the EU logo is used the declaration</u> needs to be in the same visual field as the EU <u>logo</u>.</p> <p><u>If you are in GB and use the EU organic logo for exports to the EU, you need to include both the GB statement of agriculture ('UK or non-UK Agriculture') and the EU statement of agriculture ('EU or non-EU Agriculture').</u></p> <p><u>If the product contains 98% ingredients grown in a particular constituent nation of the UK, it can be labelled either as that specific country or UK Agriculture. For example, lamb produced in Wales could be labelled either as Welsh Agriculture or UK Agriculture. If you use this, it complies with both the UK and EU requirements.</u></p>
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<p>not have to count small amounts of ingredients up to a total of 2% of the agricultural ingredients. <i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 24(1c)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 58(2)</i></p>	
<p>6.8.2 Importing products from within the EU <u>If you are in Northern Ireland</u> you do not need to be licensed as an importer to import organic products from within the EU, or the European Economic Area (EEA), provided those products are certified in accordance with the EC organic regulations. However, you will still require certification to trade, wholesale, distribute, store, break down, pack, repack, re-label or process organic product.</p> <p><u>If you are in GB and importing from anywhere outside the UK you will need to be licensed as an importer.</u> <i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 34(1)</i></p>	<p>EEA countries are Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.</p> <p>Refer to standard 5.1.1 for details of which activities require certification.</p>
<p>6.8.4 Importing products from outside the EU UK (or outside the EU or EEA if you are in Northern Ireland)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you wish to import products from a third country (outside the EU or EEA), you will need certification in order to do so. 2. If you use a sub-contractor to import on your behalf, they will also need certification. 3. You will also need certification if you wish to export your products. <p><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 28(1)</i></p>	<p>Importer means the natural or legal person within <u>UK or EU or EEA if you are in Northern Ireland</u> who presents a consignment for release for free circulation into the <u>UK (or EU or EEA if you are in Northern Ireland)</u>, either in person, or through a representative (e.g. a clearing or forwarding agent).</p> <p>The first consignee also needs to be licenced. First consignee means the natural or legal person to whom the imported consignment is delivered and who will receive it for further preparation and/or marketing.</p>
<p>6.8.6 Importing products certified by approved certifiers or from equivalent countries outside the EU You may import organic products from suppliers, including exporters, certified by a certification body recognised and</p>	<p>The <u>UK and</u> EU publish lists of approved countries and certification bodies and also the categories each is approved for.</p> <p>Recognised third countries</p>

approved by the [UK \(or EU if you are in Northern Ireland\)](#) or a country which has an equivalence agreement with the [UK \(or EU if you are in Northern Ireland\)](#)

(EC) 834/2007 Art. 32; Art. 33
(EC) 1235/2008 Annex III; Annex IV

Countries whose national organic standards and control systems are recognised as equivalent to EU organic standards are known as 'recognised third countries'. A list of countries and approved certification bodies operating in each country can be found in [Annex III of EU Regulation 1235/2008](#). **These countries are:**

[Argentina](#)
[Australia](#)
[Canada](#)
[Chile](#)
[Costa Rica](#)
[India](#)
[Israel](#)
[Japan](#)
[New Zealand](#)
[Switzerland](#)
[Tunisia](#)
[United States of America](#)


Each country is approved for specific product categories, (see below for details). This means not all product types can be imported, for example wine from Argentina. Before you arrange to import anything from these countries please contact your Certification Officer so they can let you know about any restrictions.

Categories

You will often see categories referred to on the organic certificates of companies from outside the UK. These categories indicate the products which the company is allowed to export to the EU. Below is what each category means:

- A: Unprocessed plant products
- B: Live animals or unprocessed animal products (includes honey)
- C: Aquaculture products and seaweeds
- D: Processed agricultural products for use as food
- E: Processed agricultural products for use as animal feed
- F: Seeds and propagating material

	<p>Recognised certification bodies Control bodies whose standards and control system have been recognised as equivalent to EU organic standards are known as 'recognised certification bodies'. Just like recognised third countries, each certification body is approved for specific product categories. The list of these certification bodies is in Annex IV of EU Regulation 1235/2008.</p> <p>When obtaining certificates from suppliers certified by recognised certification bodies, you will need to check that the documents state that the supplier is certified to the EU regulation and that they make explicit reference to regulations 834/2007 and 889/2008. You will also need to check that the scope of the company's certification includes export.</p> <p>The list of approved certifiers occasionally changes. If you are unsure about whether a prospective supplier is certified by an approved certifier, please contact your Certification Officer and forward them a copy of your supplier's organic certificate.</p> <p>Compliant certification bodies Control body whose standards have been recognised by the EU as compliant. Meaning it follows all aspects of the EU regulation.</p> <p>There are currently no countries recognised as compliant to EU organic regulations.</p>
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<p>6.8.7 Certificates of Inspection</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All organic products imported into the EU <u>from a third country</u> must be accompanied by an original endorsed Certificate of Inspection (COI) issued in the third country. 2. If transport documents are not available in time to fully complete the COI before the goods leave the third country, provisional information available at the time of issuing the COI may be included. Final transport documents must be included by the certification body within 10 days from the 	<p> COIs need to be issued and endorsed (signed and stamped in box 14) by the certification body of the exporter and need to be available at the port of entry for further endorsement by the <u>country of import</u> member-state authority.</p> <p><u>COIs are sometimes referred to as 'transaction certificates'.</u></p> <p><u>If you are in Northern Ireland, Great Britain is regarded as a third country for the duration of the Northern Ireland Protocol. However, for products moving</u></p>
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issuance of the COI and, in any case, before endorsement of the COI from the importing authority.

3. The endorsed COI must accompany goods to the premises of first consignee and then must be kept by the importer for at least two years.
4. The first consignee or importer (where relevant) can make a copy of the COI in order to fulfil the record keeping requirements listed in 6.8.10, provided it is printed or stamped 'COPY' or 'DUPLICATE'.

(EC) 834/2007 Art. 33

(EC) 1235/2008 Art. 13

from Northern Ireland to Great Britain, Northern Ireland is within the UK and so no COI will be required.

For the import of organic products into Great Britain from 3rd countries you will have to use a GB COI. You can find out more by visiting our website.

For the import of organic products into Northern Ireland and the EU there is an electronic system called TRACESNT, this is the electronic system used by the European Commission to issue and monitor all COIs. You can find out more at https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/electronic-certificate_en

In Northern Ireland, the EU, and the EEA (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) importers, and exporters in the country of origin, must register for a TRACES NT account. Note: Switzerland also uses TRACESNT system for organic imports.

The certificate of inspection must be issued by the certification body of the exporter before the consignment leaves the country of export. The certification body will carry out the necessary documentary checks before signing box 18. However, Box 13, Box 16 and Box 17 of the COI may be filled in with the provisional information available at the time of issuing the COI. Final transport documents must be included by the certification body within 10 days from the issuance of the COI and, in any case, before endorsement of the COI from the importing authority. So it is important to check that your exporter is aware of this and able to meet this requirement to ensure you do not experience any problems on import.

Control bodies and control authorities will be able to update the information in Boxes 13, 16 and 17 after the signature of Box 18 and before the COI is endorsed by the Member State (in Box 20).

In the UK, the Port Health Authority (PHA) is responsible for checking documentation of organic produce at the port of arrival. They have the authority to stop entry of organic product not accompanied by a valid COI and the goods

may be held at port or lose their organic status. The PHA checks that the information on the COI matches with the goods being imported and other documents associated with the shipment e.g. the Airway Bill or Bill of Landing. If the information is correct they endorse the COI (they complete box 20 on the form) & the goods are allowed to enter as organic.

If products are imported without the endorsed COI then the competent authority will not allow them to be endorsed retrospectively. If you do not have an endorsed COI for each consignment, the product may lose its organic status.

Whilst the exporter is responsible for getting the COI issued and endorsed by their certification body before the product is exported, it is the importer's responsibility to ensure that the valid COI is presented at port for each consignment. You need to ensure that each section of the COI is endorsed by the relevant party and that you retain the stamped originals for a minimum of two years. If you or the first consignee make a copy of the COI then it must be marked as 'COPY' or 'DUPLICATE'.

Any products without original COIs may lose organic status.

UK Port Health Authorities charge for endorsing COIs. Please check with the PHA at your proposed port of arrival for details of their costs. [There will also be charges for issuing COIs. For guidance on importing and COIs visit https://www.soilassociation.org/certification/preparing-your-organic-business-for-brex-it/importing-after-brex-it/#CoI](https://www.soilassociation.org/certification/preparing-your-organic-business-for-brex-it/importing-after-brex-it/#CoI)

First consignee means the natural or legal person to whom the imported consignment is delivered who will receive it for further preparation and/or marketing.

Changes to farming and growing standards

2.1.7 Maintaining High Conservation Values*

Any conversion of land undertaken for organic production must maintain:

- a) any High Conservation Values, or
- b) any sites or resources necessary to maintain those High Conservation Values.

There are six High Conservation Values. Only one category needs to be met for an area of land to have High Conservation Value. These are:

HCV 1: Concentrations of biological diversity including endemic species, and rare, threatened or endangered species that are significant at global, regional or national levels.

HCV 2: Intact forest landscapes and large landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are significant at global, regional or national levels, and that contain viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

HCV 3: Rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems, habitats or refugia.

HCV 4: Basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes.

HCV 5: Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities of local communities or indigenous peoples (for livelihoods, health, nutrition, water etc.), identified

This standard applies to the maintenance of High Conservation Values (HCV) identified on your land, during any change of land use, irrespective of whether the land was previously managed or unmanaged, organic or non-organic.

You must identify High Conservation Values on your land using the guidance below.

You must inform us if any planned changes of land use are likely to affect the High Conservation Values you have identified on your land. By the term 'land use change', we mean for example meadow becoming woodland, permanent pasture becoming arable, hedges being removed, buffer strips along a watercourse being removed, undisturbed land being cultivated.

If your planned changes are likely to have an impact on High Conservation Values, you must inform us prior to the changes taking place. We will ask you to demonstrate that your proposed changes will have a positive impact (or not negatively impact) the identified conservation values. A template is available on request.

Guidance on the presence of HCVs in the UK

In the absence of a National Interpretation for High Conservation Values, we have developed the following guidance which acknowledges that in the UK, there are a range of legal safeguards in place to protect HCVs complemented by agri-environment scheme requirements, some of which are monitored by statutory bodies. A checklist is available online or on request.

HCV 1: SSSIs and ASSIs are monitored by statutory nature conservation bodies who would need to give consent prior to land use changes. You are also responsible for protecting Protected Species.

HCV 2: There are no HCV 2 sites in the UK.

through engagement with these communities or indigenous peoples.

HCV 6: Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological, economic or religious/sacred importance for the traditional cultures of local communities or indigenous peoples, identified through engagement with these local communities or indigenous peoples.

Soil Association higher standard

***This Standard comes into effect from April 2021. Standard may be revised within this period.**

HCV 3: The lists of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and SSSIs can help you identify any statutory designations or rare ecosystems on your land. These are monitored by statutory nature conservation bodies who would need to give consent prior to land use changes.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs, also known as SNCIs or Local Wildlife Sites) are non-statutory sites with locally identified conservation value.

Land use changes of uncultivated land and semi-natural areas are subject to the Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) Regulations.

The UK BAP Priority Habitats list includes hedgerows, ponds, arable field margins, traditional orchards, wetlands, and several types of woodland/meadows/grassland/heathland as Priority Habitats for conservation. Any habitat on this list counts as HCV3.

HCV 4: HCV 4 areas can largely be protected through compliance with the organic standards (which address risks such as low ground cover, pollution, soil disturbance, soil erosion) though additional management not specifically mentioned may be required e.g. effective slope management and effective water catchment management.

HCV 5: You must consider the impact of your land use change on local communities – particularly if communities are reliant on your land for livestock fodder, renewable energy (e.g. biofuel feedstock), satisfying their basic food security needs (e.g. by fishing, hunting, gathering wild foods), or if your changes could impact the quality or volume of local water resources necessary for drinking or sanitation. HCV 5 is most relevant in places with little or no water or electricity infrastructure, and greater degrees of subsistence farming.

HCV 6: Statutory-recognised and -enforced designations exist for UNESCO World Heritage Sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, scheduled monuments in fields, Conservation Areas, AONBs, National Scenic Areas, National Parks and UNESCO cultural landscapes. Any religious or sacred sites, burial grounds or sites at which traditional ceremonies take place which do not hold official designations would also count as HCV 6 if the site is important to local people.

If you are planning to convert land, describe any planned changes to land use or habitats which are part of the land. For example, converting grazing pasture to arable production, removing a hedge or removing a buffer strip along a watercourse. You will need to undertake a High Conservation Value (HCV) assessment if you are planning to change the land use or any habitats within it. The scale of assessment required will be dependent on the level of risk associated with the proposed change.

If you are not changing what the land is used for or any habitats within in it, then you do not need to perform a HCV assessment.



A sourcing requirement applies for SA processors.

Guidance for assessing the presence of HCVs in the UK:

The following guidance may assist with the application of the core HCV definitions in the UK context, but the core definition in the standard is the primary definition. If you would like further assistance or guidance on how to apply the HCV definition outside of the UK contact your Certification Officer.

HCV 1: Habitat for vulnerable, threatened or endangered plant, animal or insect species as identified by the *IUCN Red List*, including the [national and regional lists](#). The UK red list can be accessed [here](#).

HCV 2: A large landscape-level ecosystem which is significant at global, regional or national levels, and that contains viable populations of the majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance.

HCV 3: Rare ecosystem as declared by local law or defined by the [IUCN Red List of Ecosystems](#). In the UK, please refer to the [UK Biodiversity Action Plan \(BAP\) list](#) of priority habitats and any statutory, non-statutory or local wildlife sites. You can use the [MAGIC website](#), which provides geographic information on protected site designations and habitat types across the UK, to help identify the presence of rare ecosystems. For many of the UK BAP Priority Habitats, the continuation or reintroduction of sympathetic agricultural management may be

	<p>essential for the maintenance of their ecological value. In the UK uncultivated land and semi-natural areas are protected against agricultural activities that might damage them by the <i>Environmental Impact Assessment (Agriculture) Regulations</i>. For areas larger than two hectares a screening decision by the national agency responsible (Natural England, Scottish National Heritage and Countryside Council for Wales) may be used to demonstrate compliance to this standard.</p> <p>HCV 4: Areas that provide critical ecosystem services, such as air quality, watershed protection or erosion control.</p> <p>HCV 5: Areas fundamental to meeting the basic needs of local communities which are protected by legitimate land use rights or via the Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) principle.</p> <p>HCV 6: Areas critical to local communities' traditional, cultural identity, which are protected by legitimate land use rights or via the FPIC principle, including public recreation areas. In the UK, scheduled ancient monuments in fields are protected under the provisions of the <i>Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979</i>.</p>
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<p>3.2.3 Establishing a herd or flock</p> <p>When you are establishing a herd or flock for the first time you may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) on a converting holding, convert existing animals on the holding; b) on organic land you may bring in non-organic animals, only if organic are not available in sufficient numbers. They must be reared organically from weaning and must comply with the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) calves must be less than six months old (ii) lambs and kids must be less than 60 days old 	<p><u>Where you are establishing a new livestock enterprise on an in-conversion holding you may bring in non-organic animals, these must be converted once the land becomes organic.</u></p> <p><u>Please refer to standards 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 for the livestock conversion requirements</u></p>
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(iii) piglets must weigh less than 35kg.
(EC) 889/2008 Art. 9(2)

1.12.1 Cleaning measures

1. You must have suitable cleaning measures in place to prevent contamination and maintain the integrity of your products throughout production, processing and storage.
2. You must monitor your cleaning measures to make sure they are effective and keep records to show that you have done this.
3. If you process or store both non-organic and organic at the same site, you must ensure organic processing or storage is only carried out once suitable cleaning of the equipment and/or storage area(s) has been carried out.
(EC) 889/2008 Art. 63(1)(c); Art. 26(4)(a)(b)(5)(e); Art. 35(4)(c)

For farms this would include cleaning of harvesting or handling equipment, crates and boxes used to store organic produce, grain silos, use in dairies and fruit and vegetable packing areas.

~~For cleaning chemicals permitted in livestock housing refer to standard 1.12.2 and for aquaculture facilities please refer to the aquaculture standards.~~

You will need to demonstrate at inspection that your cleaning procedures are appropriate and effective. We will look at how you clean harvesting/handling equipment, storage areas and equipment used for organic production, and how you limit the risk of contamination of organic product from microbial contaminants, from cleaning chemicals, non-permitted substances and from non-organic product.

You will need to ensure your staff, or contractors using their own equipment, are trained to carry out effective cleaning to prevent contamination of your organic products.

Your cleaning procedures need to be clear and need to set out what will be cleaned, how, with what frequency (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly or annually), who is responsible, what chemicals and equipment needs to be used and details of the final rinse of food contact surfaces with potable water (where appropriate).



Records of cleaning measures

Cleaning chemicals

Detergents, disinfectants, sterilants and sanitisers allowed for use in the food industry may be used for cleaning equipment and storage areas. Residues of these

chemicals must be removed from surfaces in contact with organic food so that they do not contaminate organic products.

Sanitizers containing quaternary ammonium compounds or QACs/QUATs, such as Benzalkonium Chloride (BAC) or Didecyl Dimethyl Ammonium Chloride (DDAC) are difficult to remove from surfaces, and if not adequately rinsed will result in residues in the organic product. Brand names include Deosan, Detsan, Foamsan and Quatsan.

If you use these to clean harvesting/handling equipment, storage boxes, dairy equipment or work surfaces, which are in direct contact with organic products, you need to take measures to ensure they are not contaminating your organic product. For example:

- Switch to a cleaning product that does not contain QACs or other substances difficult to rinse and likely to contaminate products that come in contact with them.
- Check whether your rinsing procedures are sufficient by testing food contact surfaces to ensure no residues remain. For example, a cold water rinse may not be sufficient to remove residues.

Non-dedicated equipment

Where non-dedicated equipment or storage is used you must be able to demonstrate that the cleaning carried out before it is used for organic products is effective. This may require sampling or swabbing for analysis to demonstrate that the procedures you have in place are effective.

Sprayers

If you use a non-dedicated sprayer on farm, including any contract sprayers, you will need to demonstrate that the cleaning procedures you have in place eliminate residues of any non-permitted substances to prevent contamination. The normal three rinse procedure may not be effective for many substances.

Even if you do not produce organic, for example, if you just wholesale or transport, cleaning is still important to minimise the risk of contamination. For example,

	<p>loading equipment and vehicles need to be cleaned and the risk of contamination minimised.</p> <p>If you process or store non-organic you will need to have a system for checking that cleaning has been undertaken and that it is effective to remove residues of non-organic material and/or previous production. This could involve visual inspection, micro-biological testing, testing to ensure sanitisers have been removed from organic food contact surfaces, ATP testing.</p>
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<p>3.5.5 Dairy calves</p> <p>You must have a system in place to minimise the production of male dairy calves that are unsuitable for rearing for meat production.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p>	<p>R <u>In your livestock management plan you must detail the breeding and management strategy that you have in place to prevent the routine euthanasia of bull calves.</u></p> <p><u>To minimise the number of unwanted male dairy calves you need to show in your livestock management plan that you have considered:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Using sexed semen (you must detail in your livestock management plan if there are reasons you cannot use sexed semen)</u> • <u>Identifying a market for your dairy bull calves,</u> • <u>changing your breeding strategy to use more robust breeds more suited to rearing for beef.</u> <p><u>We recognise that in certain situations, such as when farms are under TB movement restrictions, it may be difficult to avoid culling male dairy calves when the facilities or means to rear them are not available due to the inability to move any animals off farm. You should have a strategy for calf rearing in the event of TB or other movement restrictions.</u></p> <p>If you have no option other than to cull them at birth, you must document the reasons for doing so and explain how you plan to move away from this practice in the future.</p> <p>We recognise that in certain situations, such as when farms are under TB movement restrictions, it may be exceedingly difficult to avoid culling male</p>
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	<p>dairy calves when the facilities or means to rear them are not available due to the inability to move any animals off farm. We also understand that there is not always a commercial market for beef from dairy breed calves which covers their production costs.</p> <p>To minimise the number of unwanted male dairy calves, you need to show that you have considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changing your breeding strategy to use more robust breeds more suited to rearing for beef • using sexed semen to reduce the number of male calves being born. <p>We are working with industry partners to support the development of markets for these animals. If you would like to be involved or to support this work, please contact us.</p>
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Why?

The Soil Association wants to see an end to the slaughter of male dairy calves at a young age that are currently judged unsuitable for meat production. We encourage and support our producers to consider their breeding strategy to minimise the number of unsaleable calves being born.

3.8.6 Minimum housing area for cattle

1. When housing your animals you must give them at least the following space:

Class of animal	Minimum lying area indoor space m ² per head (net area available to animals)	Additional area required m ² per head * (indoors or outdoors, excluding pasture)	Total m ² per head
Breeding and fattening cattle:			
Up to 100 kg	1.5	1.1	2.6
Up to 200 kg	2.5	1.9	4.4
Up to 350 kg	4.0	3.0	7.0
Over 350 kg	5.0 with a minimum of 1m ² /100kg	3.7 with a minimum of 0.75m ² /100kg	8.7 with a minimum of 1.75m ² /100kg
Dairy cows	6.0	4.5	10.5


Bulls for breeding	10	30*	40
* This additional area is not required if the bulls are housed with cows.			
2. Open air areas may be partially covered.			
<i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 10(4); Art. 14(1)(3); Annex III</i>			
3. The additional area must always be provided.			
<i>Soil Association higher standard</i>			
Why?			
Providing animals with enough space is an important factor which affects the welfare of farm animals. Cattle are typically kept indoors during the winter months to shelter them from the weather and to protect the pasture from damage. During these months it is important that cattle are given enough space to lie down, walk, feed and perform other behaviours, but also enough space for behavioural choice and freedom. We therefore require that our Soil Association producers always provide additional space at all times of the year.			

<p>3.14.3 Breeds</p> <p>The breeds that you choose for table poultry breeding flocks must be suitable for organic, free range management and produce offspring that are hardy and 'slow growing'.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 14(1)(c)(iv)</i></p>	<p><u>Some breeds and strains of chicken are not suitable for organic systems because research has shown them to be predisposed to welfare problems.</u></p> <p><u>The breed you use must either:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>meet Defra's definition of slow-growing (no more than 45g per day), or</u> • <u>be on the RSPCA's list of welfare-approved free-range broiler breeds</u> <p>In the UK, Defra regards "slow growing strains" under organic management if the live weight gain per day does not exceed 45g or in the case of turkeys, 55g per day, averaged over the life of the bird. In due course this may be supplemented by a list of particular strains regarded as slow growing.</p>
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<p>3.13.8 Moving between houses</p> <p>If you are rearing pullets and then moving them to another location before they start laying, you must keep the stress of moving to a minimum.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p>	
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<p>3.14.9 Moving between houses</p>	
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<p>If you move batches between housing systems, you must make every effort to ensure that both systems are similar to minimise stress on the birds. <i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p>	
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<p>3.12.5 Housing requirements for all poultry species The buildings for all poultry species must meet the following conditions: <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 10(4); Art. 12(3)(c); Annex III</i></p>	<p>When calculating the internal stocking rate you must exclude the area taken up by nest boxes.</p> <p>If you move batches between housing systems, you must make every effort to ensure that both systems are similar to minimise stress on the birds.</p> <p> A sourcing requirement applies for SA processors.</p>
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Indoor area (net area available to animals)			
	Perch	Nest	No animals/m ²
Laying hens	18 cm/bird	7 birds per individual nest box, or 120cm ² per bird in communal nests	6
Table chickens			In fixed housing: 10, with a maximum of 21 kg liveweight/m ² In mobile housing*: 16, with a maximum of 30 kg liveweight/m ²

Indoor area (net area available to animals)			
Turkeys	Elevated perches or surfaces must be provided. <i>Soil Association higher standard</i>		In fixed housing: 10, with a maximum of 21 kg liveweight/m ² In mobile housing*: 16, with a maximum of 30 kg liveweight/m ²
Ducks	40 cm/bird (only for Muscovy ducks) <i>Soil Association higher standard</i>		In fixed housing: 10, with a maximum of 21 kg liveweight/m ² In mobile housing*: 16, with a maximum of 30 kg liveweight/m ²

Summary of changes - Organic standards documents updated Friday 12th February 2021 – version 18.6

Geese			In fixed housing: 10, with a maximum of 21 kg liveweight/m ²
			In mobile housing*: 16, with a maximum of 30 kg liveweight/m ²
Guinea fowl	20 cm/bird		In fixed housing: 10, with a maximum of 21 kg liveweight/m ²
			In mobile housing*: 16, with a maximum of 30 kg liveweight/m ²

*only in mobile housing not exceeding 150m² floor space

Why?

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. It is therefore important to provide these species with perches to give them the opportunity to exhibit their behavioural needs.

Changes to the aquaculture standards

13.12.1 Aquaculture conversion periods

The following conversion periods for production units must be applied for the following types of aquaculture facilities including the existing aquaculture animals.

Defra, the competent authority in the UK, has confirmed that the conversion of the production unit can take place when the site is stocked and being managed to organic standards. This allows the animals and the site to convert to organic production simultaneously. Requests for a reduced conversion period must be submitted to your Certification Officer who will seek approval from the competent authority.

The conversion period cannot begin until your application has been approved.

Your application will be assessed via an application review stage. The application review will cover a full assessment of your application documentation and management plans. This review will ensure that we have assessed that organic certification is appropriate for your operation, and that you are able to meet the organic standards. We estimate that the application review will take 6 weeks to complete, this is based on submission of all the required information. This timeframe may vary depending on the scope of the application.

13.5.4 Lighting

You may only prolong natural day-length to levels that respect the ethological needs, geographical location and general health of the aquaculture species. You may only prolong natural day-length to beyond 16 hours per day for reproductive purposes. You must avoid abrupt changes in light intensity at changeover time by using dimmable lights or background lighting.

(EC) 889/2008 Art.25h (2)

In your aquaculture management plan, detail for which reproductive purposes you are prolonging natural day length to beyond 16 hours per day for, and the light intensity levels used.

Artificial lighting of any level is not permitted for non-reproductive purposes beyond 16 hours in outdoor facilities.

Changes to Sourcing Organic Ingredients Annex for version 1.3

<p>5.1 Number of birds permitted in each house (SA Standard 3.12.2)</p> <p>The number of birds in a poultry house must not exceed: 2000 for laying chickens; or 1000 for other poultry species other laying birds and table chickens.</p>	<p>Guidance: Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote Error! Bookmark not defined.</p> <p>Reason: Flock size is limited to help ensure consistently high levels of animal welfare. Larger flock sizes can be more difficult to manage and data from organic flocks shows that larger flocks are associated with a higher risk of bird welfare being compromised. Giving birds a truly free-range life is important and evidence suggests that smaller flocks make more use of the range than larger ones.</p>
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