

# Soil Association Organic Standards for Great Britain

## Summary of standards changes - documents updated 25 May 2023

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

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Please note that amendments to tables show only relevant updated rows

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## Updates made across all Organic and Soil Association Organic standards

Standards	Guidance
<p><b>SA GB 5.1.1 Scope of the standards</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) processing or re-processing and labelling or re-labelling of food, seed and livestock feeds;</li> <li>b) importing products from outside GB, including ensuring equivalence to production within the UK and EU; and</li> <li>c) exporting organic products.</li> </ol> </li> <li>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 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> </li> </ol>	<p>Food supplements are covered by the scope of these standards. A food supplement is defined under the Food Supplements Regulation 2003 as: <b>'food supplements' means foodstuffs the purpose of which is to supplement the normal diet and which are concentrated sources of nutrients or other substances with a nutritional or physiological effect, alone or in combination, marketed in dose form, namely forms such as capsules, pastilles, tablets, pills and other similar forms, sachets of powder, ampoules of liquids, drop dispensing bottles, and other similar forms of liquids and powders designed to be taken in measured small unit quantities;</b></p> <p>Tinctures that are classed as food products are also covered by the scope of these standards.</p> <p>Medicinal products, and any tinctures that are classed as medicinal products, are not covered by the scope of these standards. Medicinal products must have no indication on their labels that they comply with the organic regulations as this regulation relates to food and excludes medicinal products. This means the EU organic logo and certifiers certification code may not be used. If you are unsure as to whether your product is classed as a medicinal product contact the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for advice <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contact-mhra">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contact-mhra</a>.</p> <p>If you are unsure whether the activity you are carrying out requires certification, please <a href="#">contact us</a>.</p>

	<p><u>For standards regarding Aquaculture and Seaweed, Farming and Growing, and Feed Processing, please visit our website.</u></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 requirement 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><b>SA GB 5.3.2 Activities that require certification</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In GB all stages of the organic supply chain must hold organic certification.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>3. In GB you do not need certification if you only sell organic products directly to the final consumer or user <b>provided that</b> you do not produce, prepare, store organic products other than in relation to the point of sale <b>or</b> import such products <b>or</b> have not contracted out such activities. In other countries certification may be required for these activities.</li> </ol> <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 <a href="#">contact us</a>.</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"> <li>• <b>wholesaling and storing products only, both packed and loose</b></li> <li>• <b>collecting bulk products from many points, for example milk haulier</b></li> <li>• <b>supplying ingredients to others to process for you</b></li> <li>• <b>food service</b></li> <li>• <b>on-farm processing and packing</b></li> <li>• <b>importing organic products from outside the UK <u>GB</u> or the EU if you are in Northern Ireland</b></li> <li>• <b>first consignees of organic product from outside the UK <u>GB</u> (or outside NI or the EU if you are in Northern Ireland), and</b></li> <li>• <b>seed and animal feed mills.</b></li> </ul>

	<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 <b>not</b> 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> <p>For more information on the certification requirements for importing and exporting please refer to the importing standards (see section 6.8).</p>
<p><b>SA GB 5.4.6 Certification code</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each certification body is issued with a unique certifier code.</li> <li>You must use <b>Soil Association Certification's</b> 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.</li> </ol> <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 Northern Ireland), products produced or processed in the UK (including Northern Ireland), the Soil Association certifier code is GB-ORG-05.</u></p> <p><del>For products produced or processed in the UK, the Soil Association certifiers code is GB-ORG-05.</del></p>
<p><b>SA GB 5.8.7 Declaring ingredient origin</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You need to include a declaration of where the ingredients have been farmed or grown required in product packaged in GB.</li> <li><b>For products produced in GB you must use 'UK Agriculture', 'Non-UK Agriculture or UK/Non-UK Agriculture'</b></li> <li>If the EU logo is used you must also include a declaration in relation to the EU - <b>'EU agriculture', 'non-EU agriculture', or 'EU/non-EU agriculture'. This must appear:</b></li> </ol>	<p><del>The declaration should be placed directly underneath the certifier code.</del></p> <p>If the EU logo is used the declaration needs to be in the same visual field as the EU <a href="#">logo</a>.</p> <p>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 <b>agriculture ('UK or non-UK Agriculture')</b> and <b>the EU statement of agriculture ('EU or non-EU Agriculture')</b>.</p>

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- a) in the same visual field as the EU organic logo;
  - b) below the certifier code, and
  - c) no more prominent than the sales description.
4. You can replace **'UK' or 'Non-UK', 'EU' or 'non-EU' with a particular country** if all ingredients were farmed or grown there. In this case only one declaration is required. You do not have to count small amounts of ingredients up to a total of 2% of the agricultural ingredients.

*(EC) 834/2007 Art. 24(1c)*

*(EC) 889/2008 Art. 58(2)*

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.

The declaration referred to in point 1 &2 is optional for products moving from Northern Ireland to Great Britain and products imported from third countries.

## Updates made across all Soil Association Organic Standards

### SA GB 5.16.1 Packaging Scope

These standards apply to packaging of products that you introduce into the supply chain.

We define packaging as all primary (retail), secondary (grouping, display) and tertiary (transport) materials used for:

- containing
- protecting
- preserving
- handling
- storage
- delivery
- labelling
- marketing, and
- presentation of your products.

Note - we include bulk bins but not transport pallets in this definition.

*Soil Association higher standard*



### Packaging legislation

This standard applies to products you process, pack or label, (including on farm), or have contract made for you, (including if **you're a contracted** symbol user). This standard does not apply if you purchase an already certified product (for example, a wholesaler buying an already certified product). In this case you do not have to supply information on the packaging of that purchased product.

Keep in mind that you must make sure your packaging meets all relevant legislation relating to packaging, packaging waste and materials in contact with food.


For example, for products sold in the EU, such legislation would include, but is not limited to:

1. the [European Parliament and Council Directive on Packaging and Packaging Waste \(94/62/EC\)](#)
2. the [European Standard for Compostable Packaging \(EN13432\)](#) – if you are using compostable or biodegradable packaging.


Environmental information claims and symbols on your packaging need to be clear, truthful and accurate. In the UK, you will need to make sure your packaging conforms to [Defra's Green Claims code](#).

For further information on what constitutes primary, secondary and tertiary packaging please refer to the Defra definitions of packaging class data.

## Updates made to Organic Food and Drink and Soil Association Organic Food and Drink standards


Standards	Guidance
<p><b>SA GB 6.4.2 Permitted additives</b>            You may only use the additives in the table below in organic foods and according to the specific conditions against them.</p> <p>Additives marked with an asterisk (*) must be included in the calculation of agricultural ingredients in order to determine the organic percentage of the product overall.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 889/2008 Annex VIII A</i></p>	<p> If you source products manufactured outside of the UK/EU <del>GB</del> they <u>may only contain additives listed in 9.3 of the Sourcing Organic Ingredients Annex. Check the label and/or technical specification to see if it contains only additives permitted.</u> <del>must meet the Soil Association Sourcing Requirement.</del></p> <p>See the glossary for the definition of a food additive.</p> <p>Some additives are a potential GM risk because they are derived from crops that can be GM or are made using processes that sometimes involve GM. For these additives you will need to provide additional proof that they are non-GM by completing a non-GM declaration form, signed by the additive manufacturer, and providing supporting information. The type of supporting information required will depend on the additive.</p> <p>If you need to use a non-organic additive or processing aid in your product, please contact the Certification Team to discuss what will be required.</p>

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			For Soil Association products, you must use organic additives if they are available (see standard 6.4.1).		
E no.	Name	Preparation of foodstuffs of plant origin	Preparation of foodstuffs of animal origin	Requires non-GMO declaration form to be completed (unless being used in organic form)	Specific conditions
E322	Lecithins*	X	X	X	For milk products. <del>Must be organic from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022. Until that date, only when derived from organic raw material. Only from organic production.</del>
<b>SA GB 6.8.7 Certificates of Inspection</b> 1. All organic products imported from a third country 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 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.			 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 country of import authority.  <b>COIs are sometimes referred to as 'transaction certificates'.</b>  For the import of organic products into Great Britain from 3 <sup>rd</sup> countries you will have to use a GB COI. You can find out more by <a href="#">visiting our website</a> .		

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<p>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'.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 33</i> <i>(EC) 1235/2008 Art. 13</i></p>	<p><u>PDF versions of COIs are accepted. Defra no longer require a paper copy of COIs.</u></p> <p>...</p>
<p><b>SA GB 6.10.1 Products and ingredients certified to other organic standards</b></p> <p>You may use products and ingredients that are certified to other organic standards, however some will have to be checked to verify that they meet Soil Association extra requirements so that the Soil Association logo can be used. These extra requirements may relate to any stage of the supply chain, including the primary production on farms.</p> <p>You must seek approval before using an ingredient/product where extra sourcing requirements apply.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p>	<p>The annex '<a href="#">Sourcing Organic Ingredients</a>' details the types of product that need to be checked and the Soil Association requirements that apply.</p> <p>Organic ingredients that are certified to Soil Association standards already meet <b>the SA's sourcing requirements. You can</b> identify product certified to Soil Association standards from: a certificate with the Soil Association organic <b>symbol; the words 'Soil Association Organic' or the Soil Association symbol</b> on the packaging.</p> <p>If the organic ingredient you want to use is not certified to Soil Association standards it may need to meet extra requirements detailed in the annex '<a href="#">Sourcing Organic Ingredients</a>'.</p> <p>To verify compliance with the <b>Soil Association's requirements, we may require</b> information from organic operators in your supply chain and their certifiers.</p> <p> On your product specification form you need to indicate your supplier for each organic ingredient and their certifier. For ingredients where SA has extra sourcing requirements (<del>such as poultry, pig, fish and oil palm products</del> <u>detailed in the Sourcing Organic Ingredients Annex</u>), you will need to update</p>

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	<p>your specification if your suppliers of ingredients change and seek our approval prior to use. <del>We may also require you to keep additional records, depending on the sources you use.</del></p> <p><u>If we have approved meat, egg or aquaculture animal ingredients certified to other organic standards for your Soil Association standard licence, we will issue you with an 'SA-Accepted Products' Schedule. This will list the type of organic ingredient, the supplier, and may also state additional criteria you have to meet when using this supply, for example keeping specific records. Organic beef, lamb and goat meat produced and slaughtered in the UK do not need to be listed on this schedule. We will send you an updated copy of this document if any details change, for example if approval is withdrawn or a new supplier is added.</u></p> <p>If you are unclear whether extra sourcing requirements apply, please contact the Certification Team</p>
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## Update(s) made to Organic Farming and Growing and Soil Association Organic Farming and Growing Standards

Standards	Guidance
<p><b>3.2.1 Breed and livestock selection</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When choosing the breed and strain of your livestock you must give preference to indigenous breeds and strains.</li> <li>2. You must choose breeds or strains that:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) are suitable to local conditions</li> <li>b) avoid the need for the mutilation of animals</li> <li>c) have vitality and resistance to disease, including specific health problems or diseases associated</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Welfare issues, mortality and disease levels for all animal species can indicate that the breeds and strains chosen for your system are not suitable. The inspector will use your mortality and disease records and welfare outcome to inform a decision on compliance to this standard.</p> <p>Some breeds and strains of chicken are not suitable for organic systems because research has shown them to be predisposed to welfare problems.</p> <p>The breed you use must either:</p>

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with some breeds or strains used in intensive production, such as:

- i) porcine stress syndrome
- ii) PSE Syndrome (pale-soft-exudative)
- iii) sudden death
- iv) spontaneous abortion, and
- v) difficult births requiring caesarean operations

*(EC) 834/2007 Art. 5(g)(j); Art. 14(1)(c)(iv)*

*(EC) 889/2008 Art. 8(1)*

- **meet Defra's definition of slow-growing** (no more than 45g per day), or
- be on the RSPCA's list of welfare-approved free-range broiler breeds.