

Soil Association Organic Standards for Northern Ireland

Summary of standards changes - documents updated 25 May 2023

Key to text changes: (~~striketrough~~ = 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 to Organic and Soil Association Organic standards

Standards	Guidance
<p>SA NI 5.4.6 Certification code</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Each certification body is issued with a unique certifier code. 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 style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 2018/848 Art. 32 (5)</i> <i>(EC) 2021/279 Art. 3</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-OR-05.</u></p>
<p>SA NI 5.5.1 Inspection visits</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A physical inspection of your organic certified activities must be carried out once per year. You may be subject to additional announced or unannounced inspections based on an assessment of risk. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Where no non-compliances affecting organic integrity have been raised in the last three years and no additional areas of risk have been raised by us you may have a reduced frequency of inspection. The period between two physical on-the-spot inspections shall not exceed 24 months.</u> <u>Where a physical inspection does not take place an annual verification of compliance is still required where information and documentation will be requested.</u> You may also be inspected by your competent authority as part of their surveillance of our inspection procedures. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 2018/848 Art. 38 (2)(3)</i></p>	<p>We may carry out additional inspections if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you wish to add a new enterprise to your licence • you move to new premises • we receive a complaint regarding your business • it is necessary to inspect seasonal activity or at different times of year • we need to inspect again to make sure you have corrected non-compliances • you are selected as part of our additional inspection programme and/or our risk assessment of your operations suggests the need for this. <p>We may charge you for these additional inspections if they are needed because of non-compliances.</p> <p>At least 10% of a certification body's inspections must be unannounced and 10% must be risk-based extra inspections. These are based on the general evaluation of the risk of non-compliance with the organic production rules, taking into account at least the results of previous controls, the quantity of products concerned and the risk for exchange of products.</p>

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<p>SA NI 5.8.6 Using the EU organic logo</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You must display the EU logo on labels of pre-packaged organic products produced in Northern Ireland or the EU. 2. <u>Use of the EU logo is optional on product labelled in a third country.</u> You do not need to use the EU logo for products imported from third countries. 3. 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. <p>...</p> <p><i>(EC) 2018/848 Art. 2 (3); 32 (1)(2)(3) Art. 33 (1)(4)(5)</i></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> <p>You can download the EU logo in various formats from here.</p> <p>...</p>
<p>SA NI 5.8.7 Declaring ingredient origin</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the EU logo is used you must also include a declaration in relation to the EU - 'EU agriculture', 'non-EU agriculture', or 'EU/non-EU agriculture'. This must appear: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 2. The word 'Agriculture' may be replaced by 'Aquaculture' where appropriate. <p><i>(EC) 2018/848 Art. 32(1)(2)</i> <i>(EC) 2021/279 Art.3(3)</i></p>	<p>The declaration should be placed directly under the certifier.</p> <p>If the EU logo is used the declaration needs to be in the same visual field as the EU logo.</p>

Updates made to all Soil Association Organic Standards

SA NI 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 Standard

Standards			Guidance	
<p>SA NI 6.4.2 Permitted additives</p> <p>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. (EC) 889/2008 Annex VIII A</p>			<p> If you source products manufactured outside of the UK NI or the EU 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> must meet the Soil Association Sourcing Requirement.</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> <p>For Soil Association products, you must use organic additives if they are available (see standard 6.4.1).</p>	
E no.	Name	Organic foodstuffs to which it may be added	Requires non-GMO declaration form to be completed (unless used in organic form)	Specific conditions and limits
E322	Lecithins*	Products of plant origin milk products.	X	Only from organic production

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E551	Silicon dioxide gel or colloidal solution	<u>Cocoa</u> , herbs, and spices in dried powdered form. Flavourings and propolis.		<u>For cocoa, only for use in automated dispensing machines</u>
E553b	Talc	Sausage based on meat <u>Products of plant origin*</u>		<u>Only surface treatment</u>
NI 6.5.1 Permitted processing aids You may only use the processing aids in the table below. Many have specific conditions against them. You may only use a processing aid in line with the specific condition for its use. <i>(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part IV (2.2.2)</i> <i>(EC) 2021/1165 Annex V Part A Section A2</i>		See the glossary for the definition of a processing aid. An example of a processing aid is vegetable oil applied to bread tins as a release agent. This has a function during baking to help get the bread out of tin but does not have a function in the final product, although residues may remain. Conversely vegetable oil added to raisins to prevent them sticking together is not a processing aid as it is designed to have a function in the finished product. It must be declared as an ingredient. Some processing aids 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 processing aids you will need to provide additional proof that they are non-GM by completing our non-GM declaration form, signed by the processing aid manufacturer, and providing supporting information. The type of supporting information required will depend on the processing aid. Ethanol, casein and vegetable oil require a non-GMO declaration form to be completed (unless being used in organic form). If a processing aid is not listed in the table below then you cannot use it.		
Processing aid name		Only authorised for the processing of the following organic foodstuffs	Specific conditions and limits	
Hop Extract		<u>Products of plant origin</u> sugar	Only for antimicrobial purposes from organic production, if available	

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Pine rosin extract	<u>Products of plant origin</u> sugar	Only for antimicrobial purposes from organic production, if available
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*Change also made to Soil Association Organic Food and Drink Standard

Update(s) made to Soil Association Organic Food and Drink Standard

<p>SA NI 6.10.1 Products and ingredients certified to other organic standards</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. This also applies to products or ingredients you import and sell. These extra requirements may relate to any stage of the supply chain, including the primary production on farms. You must seek approval before using an ingredient/product where extra sourcing requirements apply.</p> <p><i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p>	<p>The annex 'Sourcing Organic Ingredients' 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 the SA's sourcing requirements. You can identify product certified to Soil Association standards from: a certificate with the Soil Association organic symbol; the words 'Soil Association Organic' or the Soil Association symbol on the packaging.</p> <p>If the organic ingredient you want to use or import is not certified to Soil Association standards it may need to meet extra requirements detailed in the annex 'Sourcing Organic Ingredients Annex'.</p> <p>To verify compliance with the Soil Association's requirements, we may require 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 (such as poultry, pig, fish and oil palm products detailed in the Sourcing Organic Ingredients Annex), you will need to update your specification if your suppliers of ingredients change and seek our approval prior to use. We may also require you to keep additional records, depending on the sources you use.</p>
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	<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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Updates made to the Organic Farming and Growing Standard

Standard	
NI 2.5.2 Permitted fertilisers, soil conditioners and nutrients <div>(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part I (EC) 2021/1165 Art. 2 (EC) 2021/1165 Annex II</div>	
Name of product	Description, compositional requirements, conditions for use
<u>Recovered struvite and precipitated phosphate salts</u>	<u>products must meet the requirements laid down in Regulation (EU) 2019/1009</u> <u>animal manure as source material cannot have factory farming origin</u>
<u>Sodium nitrate</u>	<u>only for algae production on land in closed systems</u>
<u>Potassium chloride (muriate of potash)</u>	<u>only of natural origin</u>


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Standard	
NI 2.6.3 Permitted pesticides and plant protection products All substances listed in this table must comply at least with the conditions for use as specified in the Annex of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 540/2011. More restrictive conditions for use for organic production are specified in the second column of the table. <div style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 2018/848 Art. 24(1a)</i></div>	
Name of product	Description, compositional requirements, conditions for use
Basic Substances	
<u>Magnesium hydrogen metasilicate silicate material (Talc E553b)</u>	<u>Must be food grade</u>
<u>ABE-IT 56 (components of lysate of <i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i> strain DDSF623)</u>	<u>not from GMO origin</u> <u>not produced by using growing media of GMO origin</u>
<u>Aqueous extract from the germinated seeds of sweet <i>Lupinus albus</i></u>	
Other Substances	
<u>Ferric pyrophosphate</u>	
<u>Deltamethrin</u>	<u>only in traps with specific attractants against <i>Bactrocera oleae</i>, <i>Ceratitis capitata</i> and <i>Rhagoletis completa</i></u>

Updates made to Organic Farming and Growing and Soil Association Organic Farming and Growing standard

Standards	Guidance
SA NI 2.7.4 Using non-organic seed and vegetative propagating material When there are no organic or in-conversion seeds or vegetative propagating material of a suitable variety available you may use non-organic. Your certification body has to approve all permissions to use non-organic untreated seeds or vegetative propagating material. The conditions under	You can find details of available organic or in-conversion seeds and seed potatoes at www.organicxseeds.co.uk . You can submit derogation requests online or you can ask us for a seed derogation form. You will need to get permission before you use any non-organic seed or seed potatoes. Any derogation will only be valid for one growing season. <u>NICA</u> Outside of the UK the competent authority will approve all permissions to use non-organic untreated seeds or vegetative propagating material.

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<p>which your certification body will grant permission for non-organic seed and seed potatoes are set out in standard 2.7.5. (EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part I(1.8.5.1)</p>	<p>The use of non-organic and vegetative propagating material will expire the 31st December 2036. From the 1st January 2029 the European Commission may extend or bring forward this date based on reporting of availability of organic seed and vegetative propagating material.</p>
<p>SA NI 3.1.2 Producing organic livestock products Where non-organic animals have been brought onto the holding in accordance with the standards in section 3.2 and if their livestock products are to be sold as organic, the animals must be kept to full organic standards for at least the periods set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 6 months in the case of pigs b) 6 months for milk producing animals c) 6 weeks in the case of poultry for egg production d) 10 weeks for poultry of slow-growing strains for meat production, brought in before they are 3 days old e) for fast growing strains of poultry for meat production, refer to standard 3.12.22 for minimum slaughter ages. f) three months for rabbits. g) 12 months for cervine animals <p>(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II(1.3.4.4.4) (EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II(1.2.2)(e)(g)(h)</p>	<p>To meet standard 3.2.6 you must have authorisation from your competent authority before bringing in non-organic birds. Refer to the standard below on minimum ages when poultry can be slaughtered.</p> <p>In NI, the competent authority classifies “slow growing strains” of poultry under organic management as strains wherein 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. This may soon be supplemented by a list of particular strains classified as slow growing.</p> <p>If this daily live weight gain is exceeded, the poultry would be classified as a fast growing strain.</p>
<p>SA NI 3.1.7 Conversion period for land used for pig and poultry production</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notwithstanding the provisions in standard 3.1.6. you can use land in its second year of conversion for organic pig or poultry production. 2. In the case of treatment with substances not permitted in these standards the provision for organic pigs and poultry on second year conversion land will not apply. 	<p>If you wish to make use of the provision to reduce the conversion period to 6 months, you will need to demonstrate that no prohibited inputs have been used on the land for the last 12 months. For example, through input records, or by being part of a recognised environmental scheme which prohibits the use of these inputs. Physical evidence and records will be used to confirm compliance at inspection.</p> <p> Input records may be required</p>

<i>(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part I (1.7.4.2)(1.7.5)(b)</i>	
<p>SA NI 3.2.1 Breed and livestock selection</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When choosing the breed and strain of your livestock you must give preference to indigenous breeds and strains. 2. You must choose breeds or strains that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) are suitable to local conditions b) avoid the need for the mutilation of animals c) have vitality and resistance to disease, including specific health problems or diseases associated with some breeds or strains used in intensive production, such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) porcine stress syndrome ii) PSE Syndrome (pale-soft-exudative) iii) sudden death iv) spontaneous abortion, and v) difficult births requiring caesarean operations <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 2018/848 Art. 6(k)</i></p> <p><i>(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II(1.3.3)(1.3.2)(d)(1.3.4.4.5)</i></p>	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet Defra's definition of slow-growing (no more than 45g per day), or • <u>be on the RSPCA's list of welfare-approved free-range broiler breeds.</u>
<p>SA NI 3.2.5 Replacement breeding stock</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To renew a herd or flock you may bring in non-organic male and female breeding stock only if organic is not available in sufficient numbers. 2. The number of non-organic female breeding stock you bring on must comply with the following conditions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) only up to 10% of your existing number of adults in your herd, per year for equines or cows, including buffalo and bison species b) only up to 20% of your existing number of adults in your herd or flock, per year for pigs, sheep, goats, <u>deer</u> or rabbits c) only one animal if you have less than five sheep, pigs or goats or less than ten cattle, equine, <u>deer</u> or rabbits 	<p>The percentage must be calculated from the number of adult animals present on the holding prior to bringing in your replacements. The allowance is calculated as the number of replacements brought in within a 12 month period.</p>

<p>d) females must not have previously given birth, in other words, they are before their first calving, lambing or farrowing.</p> <p>3. Breeding stock brought onto your holding must be kept according to these organic standards. (EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II (1.3.4.4.2)</p>	
<p>SA NI 3.2.7 Exceptional rules for poultry</p> <p>1. When you are establishing for the first time, renewing or reconstituting a flock, non-organic poultry may be brought in only when organic poultry are not available in sufficient numbers. If you have to bring in non-organic poultry you must use in order of preference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> brought in pullets for egg production, or chicks for meat production from three days old that are less than three days old. non-organic pullets for egg production before they are 18 weeks old. Any non-organic pullets you bring in must have been reared to the veterinary and feed standards detailed in sections 3.4 and 3.10. <p>2. You must have prior authorisation from your competent authority before bringing in any non-organic poultry.</p> <p>3. The EU Commission has stated that producers may request permission to use non-organic pullets until 31st December 2021. (EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II(1.3.4.3)</p>	<p>Organic Poultry suppliers in the NI are listed here.</p> <p>If you are bringing in non-organic poultry you must have permission from your competent authority before you bring them onto the holding. In the NI, permission is granted by the competent authority and we will submit an application on your behalf. You must show us that organic poultry is not available in sufficient numbers.</p> <p>We will need the following details from you to submit to the competent authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why you cannot source organic birds • which organic suppliers you have contacted • the number of birds you need • the number of non-organic birds you plan to bring in and when • the name of your suppliers • whether any suppliers will be able to supply you with organic birds in future. <p>A form with all the relevant questions is available on our website or from the certification team.</p>

SA NI 3.10.8 Use of non-organic protein for pigs and poultry

1. Where the competent authority has confirmed organic protein feed is not available in sufficient quantity, for pigs up to 35kg and young poultry, you may feed up to 5% non-organic protein feed.
2. This percentage must be calculated per period of 12 months on the dry matter of feed of agricultural origin.
3. At your inspection you must have records to demonstrate that you have not fed more than 5% non-organic protein feed.
4. This exemption will be in place until 31st December 2026.
(EC) 2018/848 Annex II(1.9.3.1)(c)(1.9.4.2)(c)

If you are using a feed that is certified as suitable for organic production and it contains some non-organic ingredients, the feed mill will already have demonstrated that organic ingredients are not available. If you are mixing or blending your own feeds then you must demonstrate that suitable organic ingredients are not available.

Feed records

When the EU Commission reviews this exemption we will update this [page](#).

In Northern Ireland, NICA have confirmed the term 'young poultry' should be taken to mean under 18 weeks old.

Updates to Organic Feed Standard

Standards		
NI 9.1.11 Products and substances permitted for use in livestock feed		
(EC) 2018/848 Art. 24; Annex II V (EC) 2021/1165 Art. 3; Art. 4; Annex III(A); Annex III(B)		
Feed Material		Conditions of use
<u>Yeast</u>		<u>When not available from organic production</u>
<u>Yeast products</u>		<u>When not available from organic production</u>
Minerals		
Phosphorus		Defluorinated monocalciumphosphate Defluorinated dicalciumphosphate Monosodium phosphate Calcium magnesium phosphate Calcium sodium phosphate <u>Monodicalcium Phosphate</u>
<u>Emulsifier, thickener and gelling agents</u>		
ID no. or functional group	Product or substance	Conditions of use
<u>E415</u>	<u>Xanthan gum*</u>	
<u>E412</u>	<u>Guar gum*</u>	
Binders and anti-caking agents		
ID no. or Functional Group	Product or substance	Conditions of use
E412	Guar gum	
<u>E563</u>	<u>Sepiolitic Clay</u>	
<u>1g599</u>	<u>Illite-montmorillonite-kaolinite</u>	
<u>Substances for reduction of the contamination of feed by mycotoxins</u>		
ID no.	Product or substance	Condition of use
<u>1m558</u>	<u>Bentonite</u>	

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Standards		Guidance
NI 10.2.1 Permitted feed additives You may use the following feed additives or products in animal nutrition and processing aids: <div style="text-align: right;"> <i>(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part III(3.1.3)</i> <i>(EC) 2021/1165 Art. 3;</i> <i>(EC) 2021/1165 Art. 4</i> <i>(EC) 2021/1165 Annex III Part A</i> <i>(EC) 2021/1165 Annex III Part B</i> </div>		
Feed Material		
Product or substance		
<u>Yeasts</u>		<u>When not available from organic production</u>
<u>Yeast products</u>		<u>When not available from organic production</u>
Emulsifying and stabilising agents, thickeners and gelling agents		
ID number or Functional Group	Substance	Description/conditions for use
<u>E412</u>	<u>Guar gum*</u>	
<u>E415</u>	<u>Xanthan gum*</u>	
Binders, anti-caking agents and coagulants		
ID number or Function Group	Substance	Description/conditions for use
E412	Guar gum	

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<u>E563</u>	<u>Sepiolitic Clay</u>	
<u>1g599</u>	<u>Illite-montmorillonite-kaolinite</u>	
<u>Substances for reduction of the contamination of feed by mycotoxins</u>		
<u>1m558</u>	<u>Bentonite</u>	
Nutritional additives		
<u>3a920</u>	<u>Betaine anhydrous</u>	<u>Only for monogastric animals. From organic production; if not available, from natural origin.</u>

*_Change also made to Soil Association Organic Feed Standard

Updates to Organic Aquaculture Standard

Standards	
NI 13.8.1 Products and substances permitted for use in aquaculture feed You may use the following feed materials or products in animal nutrition and processing aids: <div style="text-align: right;"> <i>(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part III(3.1.3.1)(d)(e)</i> <i>(EC) 2021/1165 Annex III(A)(B))</i> </div>	
Feed material	
Product or substance	
<u>Yeasts</u>	<u>When not available from organic production</u>

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<u>Yeast products</u>		<u>When not available from organic production</u>
Emulsifying and stabilising agents, thickeners and gelling agents		
ID number or Functional Group	Substance	Description/conditions for use
<u>E412</u>	<u>Guar gum*</u>	
<u>E415</u>	<u>Xanthan gum*</u>	
Binders, anti-caking agents and coagulants		
ID number or Function Group	Substance	Description/conditions for use
E412	Guar gum	
<u>E563</u>	<u>Sepiolitic Clay</u>	
<u>1g599</u>	<u>Illite-montmorillonite-kaolinite</u>	
<u>Substances for reduction of the contamination of feed by mycotoxins</u>		
<u>1m558</u>	<u>Bentonite</u>	
Nutritional additives		
<u>3a920</u>	<u>Betaine anhydrous</u>	<u>Only for monogastric animals. From organic production; if not available, from natural origin.</u>

*Change also made to Soil Association Organic Feed Standard

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