# Soil Association Organic Standards for Northern Ireland

## Abattoir and slaughtering

Version 1.7 – published on 18th May 2026

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## Introduction

The Soil Association standards put the principles of organic production into practice. These organic standards encompass *EU Regulations 2018/848 and subsequent implementing and delegated acts* (referenced throughout as the EU Organic Regulation). These regulations are the legal basis for the control of organic farming, food processing and organic labelling within the EU and Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland has remained in the EU single market and continues to follow EU rules on customs requirements and the regulation of agri-food products, including the EU Organic Regulation. If you are in Northern Ireland, for the purpose of the EU Organic Regulation requirements, you need to apply these standards as if part of the EU. If you bring in products from EU member states you will not need importing on the scope of your organic license, however, if you bring products from the other parts of the UK or non-EU countries you will need to meet the importing requirements.

The Soil Association has higher organic standards than required by the EU Organic Regulation in key areas: delivering the highest levels of animal welfare, protecting human and animal health, safeguarding the environment and protecting the interests of organic consumers. These reflect our mission and vision as a charitable organisation.

Each standard has a reference which tells you which part of the EU Organic Regulation it refers to, or whether it is a Soil Association higher standard. Each Soil Association higher standard is accompanied by a 'Why?' box which explains the rationale behind the standard and why we expect our licensees to go further than required by the EU Organic Regulation.

Businesses across the world can become certified to the Soil Association standards. A 'competent authority' is authorised by EU Member States to make rulings on organic legislation. In Northern Ireland the competent authority is NICA (Northern Ireland Competent Authority). 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. Throughout these standards 'your certification body' refers to Soil Association Certification. For further definitions, please refer to the separate Glossary document on our website.

The EU Organic Regulation does not cover processing of non-food crops such as for textiles and cosmetic products and certification of inputs.

The Soil Association offers standards for areas not covered by the EU Organic Regulation. These include:

- textiles
- cosmetics

Please contact us if you would like more information or visit our website.

**Please note, we have recently updated our website, and we are aware that some hyperlinks in this document are therefore broken. We are working through to repair these but if there is something you can't find, please contact us at standards@soilassociation.org.**

## Guide to using these standards

The standards are listed in the column on the left, with a white background for EU Organic Regulation standards and a blue background for Soil Association higher standards. Where necessary, guidance is provided in the column on the right, with a grey background to differentiate it from the standard.

- Each standard is referenced with the relevant article/s of the EU Organic Regulation, or shows that it is a Soil Association higher standard.
- Each Soil Association higher standard has a Why? box to explain its purpose and rationale.
- The summary boxes in each standard section outline some of the key statutory welfare requirements.

Ⓡ This symbol shows where you need to keep a record to demonstrate that you are meeting the standard. The specific requirements for the records will be detailed in the standard or guidance.

Ⓘ This symbol shows where additional relevant information is provided.

Ⓢ This symbol shows where an extra sourcing requirement applies for processors using an organic product that is not certified to Soil Association standards or is sourced outside of the UK/EU. If you would like to know what the sourcing requirements are, you can view our annex on Sourcing Organic Ingredients. Our Working Together for Better Sourcing webpage explains the challenges surrounding the sourcing of organic ingredients and how we are working with others to address them.

### What is guidance?

Guidance provides supplementary information to the standards which explains how compliance will be assessed. It tells you where and how to provide the information required, for example through record keeping or demonstration at your inspection. The guidance may also provide examples of actions and measures to help you demonstrate compliance, and links to best practice guides and information.

| EXAMPLE Standards | EXAMPLE Guidance |
|---|---|
| 18.7.4 Livestock movement records<br>1. When you receive animals in you must record:<br>a) species, source, numbers,<br>b) organic status,<br>c) identification mark,<br>d) age,<br>e) time and date of arrival.<br>*(EC) 889/2008 Art. 76(a)(b)(EC) 889/2008 Art. 24(5)* | Ⓡ Soil Association Certification licensed farms must supply an 'organic livestock movement to slaughter' form or an equivalent delivery document with each batch of animals deli<br><br>Ⓘ Non-SA Certification lice which case you must check that each animal is listed as organic on the delivery note. You must also check that all other legally required transfer documents have |

The R symbol shows which records you need to keep to demonstrate that you meet this standard.

The I symbol shows where additional relevant information is provided.

Soil Association higher standards are clearly shown.

| EXAMPLE Standards | EXAMPLE Guidance |
|---|---|
| 19.5.1 Animals must always be pre-stunned<br>Animals must not be slaughtered without pre-stunning.<br>*Soil Association higher standard* | The permitted stunning methods and specific requirements for their operation are set out in Annex I of EC Regulation 1099/2009. These must be adhered to ensure animals are effectively stunned. |
| Why?<br>Scientific evidence strongly suggests that cutting an animal's throat while that animal is still conscious causes it significant pain and distress. Therefore to ensure that animals are treated humanely at the time of killing, Soil Association standards require that animals are stunned to render them insensible prior to slaughter. | |
| Summary of key statutory welfare requirements<br>*Any method of stunning used must cause an animal to lose consciousness immediately without distress and remain unconscious until the animal has died from blood loss. The WATOK and EC Regulation 1099/2009 stipulate the permitted methods of stunning or killing animals and lays down specific requirements for their operation. The Soil Association standards require that all animals are pre-stunned before slaughter and also set higher requirements for the gas killing of pigs.* | |

A summary box underneath each standard section outline some of the key relevant statutory welfare requirements.

Each Soil Association higher standard has a Why? box to explain its purpose and rationale.

## Summary of the Soil Association abattoir and slaughtering standards

*An operator licenced with the Soil Association for the slaughter of organic livestock must be aware of and comply with all relevant statutory legislation and industry good practice. The summary boxes in each standard section outline some of the key statutory welfare requirements. References to some of the key regulations are set out in the guidance to standard 18.4.4.*

*These standards do not include comprehensive requirements on the slaughtering process because there are detailed regulations in the EU and UK which govern the slaughter of farmed animals, which apply whether the animal is organic or not. These regulations set out the rules to safeguard animal welfare during the transport, handling, stunning and slaughter of animals. Other regulations set out rules for general hygiene, including training, cleaning, structural and maintenance requirements.*

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

# SA NI 18 General standards for abattoir and slaughtering

## SA NI 18.1 Scope

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| ### SA NI 18.1.1 Scope of the standards<br><br>1. The standards in this document set out the rules that apply for all stages of production, preparation and distribution in order for products to be labelled and marketed as organic. These abattoir and slaughtering standards cover:<br>a) handling of the live animals from their arrival through to the slaughtering process, and;<br>b) dressing, chilling and cutting of carcasses into primals.<br>They do not cover butchery and further meat processing since these may be separate operations. If you butcher and pack meat you should refer to the Soil Association organic food and drink standards.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 12(1)(2)(3)(4)* | |
| ### SA NI 18.1.2 Products from hunting and fishing of wild animals<br><br>Products from the hunting and fishing of wild animals cannot be sold as organic<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 3(2)* | |

## SA NI 18.2 Objectives and general principles

### What is this chapter about?

This section details the principles on which these organic standards are based. Organic is a 'whole system' approach to farming and food production. It recognises the close interrelationships between all parts of the production system from the soil to the consumer. This comprehensive set of organic principles guides our work and our standards.

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 18.2.1 Objectives and general principles of organic production**<br>An organic production system must meet the following principles and objectives:<br>1. To produce food of high quality and in sufficient quantity by the use of processes that do not harm the environment, human health, plant health or animal health and welfare.<br>2. To work within natural systems and cycles at all levels, from the soil to plants and animals, and contribute to the protection of the environment and the climate.<br>3. To maintain the long term fertility and biological activity of soils.<br>4. To contribute to high animal welfare standards and, in particular, to meeting animals' species-specific behavioural needs.<br>5. To respect regional, environmental, climatic and geographic differences and the appropriate practices that have evolved in response to them.<br>6. To maximise the use of renewable resources and recycling.<br>7. To design and manage organic systems which make the best use of natural resources and ecology to prevent the need for external inputs. Where this fails or where external inputs are required, the use of external inputs is limited to organic, natural or naturally-derived | |

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| substances.<br>8. To limit the use of chemically synthesised inputs to situations where appropriate alternative management practices do not exist, or natural or organic inputs are not available, or where alternative inputs would contribute to unacceptable environmental impacts.<br>9. To exclude the use of soluble mineral fertilisers.<br>10. To foster biodiversity and protect sensitive habitats and landscape features, such as natural heritage sites.<br>11. Substantially contributing to a non-toxic environment.<br>12. To minimise pollution and waste.<br>13. To use preventative and precautionary measures and risk assessment when appropriate.<br>14. To exclude the use of GMOs and products produced from or by GMOs with the exception of veterinary medicinal products.<br>15. Encouraging short distribution channels and local production.<br>16. Encouraging the preservation of rare and native breeds in danger of extinction.<br>17. Contributing to the development and use of plant genetic material adapted to the specific needs and objectives of organic agriculture, including the use of organic heterogeneous material and varieties suitable for organic production.<br>18. Fostering the development of organic plant breeding activities in order to contribute to favourable economic perspectives of the organic sector.<br>19. Ensuring the integrity of organic production at all stages of the production, processing and distribution of food and feed. | |

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| 20. The exclusion from the whole organic food chain of animal cloning, rearing artificially induced polyploid animals, and ionising radiation.<br>*EC) 848/2018 Art. 4*<br>*(EC) 848/2018 Art. 5*<br>*(EC) 848/2018 Annex II Part I(1.9.2)*<br>*(EC) 848/2018 Art. 24(5)* | |

## SA NI 18.3 Becoming Soil Association certified

### What is this chapter about?

This chapter explains which activities require certification and how you can certify your business to the Soil Association standards.

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| ### SA NI 18.3.1 Certifying your business<br>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.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art 34(1)*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 37*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 40(1)* | Businesses across the world can become certified to the Soil Association standards. In GB, Defra is the competent authority and in NI NICA 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.<br><br>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 certification body in the relevant country. 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.<br><br>You must comply with all Applicable laws, and Qualifying Standards, including any conditions detailed in any non-compliances. Please refer to your organic client contract for more details. |

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| **SA NI 18.3.2 Activities that require certification**<br>1. In the UK and EU all stages of the organic supply chain must hold organic certification.<br>2. Your business must be certified if you produce, process, package, store, label, import, export, distribute organic products. This includes 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 or in-conversion products or ingredients.<br>3. You do not need certification if you only sell pre-packed organic products directly to the final consumer or user **provided that** you do not produce, prepare, store organic products other than in connection to the point of sale **or** import such products from outside the EU **or** have not sub-contracted out such activities. In other EU countries certification may be required for these activities.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 34(1)(2)(3)* | Without adequate certification at each stage of the supply chain, the products may lose their organic status.<br><br>Examples of businesses not requiring certification in the UK include supermarkets and mass caterers serving food e.g. restaurants, cafes, catering companies.<br><br>If you are unsure whether the activity you are carrying out requires certification please contact us.<br><br>For more information on the certification requirements for importing and exporting please refer to the importing standards in section 6.8 of Soil Association organic food and drink standards. |
| **SA NI 18.3.3 Organic certificate**<br>1. You must not make reference to organic, in-conversion, or use the Soil Association symbol without a valid certification document that shows that your activity complies with these organic standards.<br>2. Certification documents are issued once Soil Association Certification has inspected your organic activity and they are satisfied that your activity meets organic standards. The certification documents will list all your certified activities and the crops, livestock and/or products you are certified to produce, process, package, store, label, import, export, and/or sell as organic.<br>3. The certification document may be in electronic format.<br>4. You are not entitled to obtain a certificate from more than one control body for the same category of products in the | Soil Association Certification will issue licensees with the following documentation:<br>• An annual certificate with valid from and to dates, your name, address and licence number<br>• A Trading Schedule with your certified products, activities and status<br>• For producers, an Information Schedule listing your licensed enterprises, holdings and fields.<br><br>If you are a farmer with land or crops in conversion, these will be shown as 'in-conversion' on your Trading Schedule. Once they have gone through the relevant conversion period they will be shown as 'organic' on your Trading Schedule and you can start trading as organic. If your livestock are shown as 'converted breeding stock' they cannot be traded as organic. |

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| same country. This includes at different stages of production, preparation and distribution.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 35(1)(2)(4)*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 39* | Annual renewal of your licence is linked to you continuing to meet the relevant standards and payment of the relevant renewal fee. Within a year of your original application date we will send you a renewal invoice.<br><br>The categories are as follows (2018/848 Article 35.7)<br><br>a) unprocessed plants and plant products, including seeds and other plant reproductive material;<br>b) livestock and unprocessed livestock products;<br>c) algae and unprocessed aquaculture products;<br>d) processed agricultural products, including aquaculture products, for use as food;<br>e) feed;<br>f) wine;<br>g) other products listed in Annex I to this Regulation or not covered by the previous categories.<br><br>Examples:<br><br>An egg producer who also packs eggs, or a grower who also packs the produce could not have certification with 2 different certification bodies. This because both the production and the packing would be classed as category A products (unprocessed).<br><br>An egg producer who then processes the eggs into mayonnaise could have certification with different certification bodies as the egg production would fall under category A and the processing under category B.<br><br>Contact us if you need to add a new enterprise to your license – refer to standard 18.4.1 for details. |
| Soil Association Certification | |

Since 1973 Soil Association Certification Limited (Soil Association Certification) has certified farm enterprises, foods and other products as organic. Soil Association Certification is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Soil Association charity. We are registered with NICA to certify organic food production and processing under the terms of EU Organic Regulation No.2018/848.

Certification bodies must be able to prove that they have the expertise, equipment, infrastructure and sufficient number of suitable qualified and experienced staff to carry out the task of certification. Soil Association Certification Limited is accredited and subject to an annual inspection by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) for UK licensees and IOAS for non-EU licensees.

To uphold organic integrity and in order to work efficiently, certification bodies are obliged to communicate and exchange relevant certification information about their licensees to control authorities and other certification bodies. This includes when:

a) licensees change certification bodies
b) non-compliances are found
c) organic status of a product is lost, and
d) certification is withdrawn.

Information

If you are interested in certifying your business, contact Soil Association Certification via:

**Our website:** www.soilassociation.org/certification/get-in-touch/

**Email:** GoOrganic@soilassociation.org

**Phone:** 0117 914 2406

**Post:** Soil Association Certification, Spear House, 51 Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6AD, UK.

## SA NI 18.4 Your obligations when certified

### What is this chapter about?

This chapter explains your responsibilities and obligations when certified to these organic standards.

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 18.4.1 Description of your activities**<br>1. Before starting your organic enterprise, you must describe what practical measures you will take to ensure you will comply with these organic standards and the relevant practical measures to be taken to ensure compliance with this Regulation. If you make any changes to your activity you must update your certification body accordingly.<br>2. You must include a full description of your premises, units and activities including:<br>a) facilities used for reception, processing, packaging, labelling and storage of products before and after any processing operations, and<br>b) procedures for the transport of products.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 39* | To help you meet this requirement we have created an application form that outlines the information we need from you.<br><br>You will need to have documentation that describes what you do. If you have a quality management system already, make sure these points are included within it.<br><br>Practical measures include ensuring staff are adequately trained, having written procedures in place for dealing with organic products, an adequate record keeping system, appropriate cleaning and hygiene, separation and identification of organic products, appropriate pest control, procedures to ensure only permitted ingredients and inputs are used for organic production.<br><br>If you make any significant changes to your activities, you must inform your certification team and make sure any relevant documentation is updated. Important changes are, for example, change of location of an activity, change of ownership, or change of contact person. Another important change is alteration of certified production which means that information previously submitted about the production is no longer correct.<br><br>You must let us know if and when you plan to expand into new areas. For example, if you currently store organic products and wish to start packing or processing them, if you want to start importing products or if you have an abattoir and you want to start processing burgers and sausages. Depending on what you're adding or expanding, we will need to update your certificates and you may need an additional inspection or licence. |
| **SA NI 18.4.2 Sub-contracted operations** | |

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| If you sub-contract out your organic activity, in part or whole, to a third party, they must hold their own organic certification, unless you remain responsible for that organic production and have not transferred that responsibility to the subcontractor, in which case those activities may be covered under the scope of your organic license. The information in 18.4.1 must also include:<br>a) a list of the subcontractors, including their activities and the certification body or authority that they are certified by<br>b) a written agreement by the subcontractors that their operation will comply with the control measures required as part of organic certification, and<br>c) details of all the practical measures taken to ensure and demonstrate full traceability of products.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 34(3)(5)* | |
| SA NI 18.4.3 Declaration<br>You must sign a declaration stating that you:<br>a) have described your organic enterprise and activities as referred to in 18.4.1 accurately<br>b) will perform your operations according to organic rules<br>c) accept any enforcements in case of non-compliance<br>d) inform the buyers of loss of status of your product<br>e) accept exchange of information about your operation between different certification bodies or control authorities where subcontractors are subject to controls by different control authorities or control bodies<br>f) accept handing over information about your certification history when changing certification body or control authority | This is covered in the contract you sign when you apply for certification with us and the declaration you sign after every inspection.<br><br>You must comply with the terms of the contract at all times. |

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| g) will inform your buyer and certification body or control authority immediately in the event that a suspicion of non-compliance has been substantiated, that a suspicion of non-compliance cannot be eliminated, or that non-compliance that affects the integrity of the products in question has been established<br>h) in the case of withdrawing certification inform the certification body or control authority without delay<br>i) accept that your Certification Body or control authority retains your certification history for a minimum of 5 years<br>j) must inform the certification body of any changes to your activities.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art.39(1)(d)(iii)* | |
| SA NI 18.4.4 Employment<br>You must **not** use forced or involuntary labour or child labour that interferes with their education.<br>*Soil Association higher standard* | Note that this standard is also a requirement of several EU Directives including 94/33/EC Protection of Young People at Work, and 2011/36 Preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims. If you are outside the EU, it may be a requirement of the International Labour Organisation Conventions that have been ratified in your country. If it is not you must still meet this requirement.<br><br>Labour management tools, such as Sedex, can be a useful way of helping to ensure that you meet this standard and identify, mitigate and manage risks in your supply chain. |
| Why?<br>Organic food which has been produced in a way that compromises the basic rights of people is counter to the principles and expectations of the organic movement and organic consumers. | |
| Standards | Guidance |
| SA NI 18.4.5 Slaughtering outside of the EU | |

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| If you slaughter animals in a third country the slaughter must be done according to the requirements of *Council Directive Regulation (EC) No. 1099/2009* on the protection of animals at the time of killing or equivalent.<br>*Soil Association higher standard* | |

**Why?**

To safeguard animal welfare in countries where statutory welfare requirements are unsatisfactory we require, in addition to organic requirements, that the slaughter of animals meets the requirements of EU legislation on the protection of animals at the time of killing.

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 18.4.6 Certification code**<br>1. Each certification body is issued with a unique certifier code.<br>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.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 32(5)*<br>*(EC) 2021/279 Art. 3* | Please refer to the labelling section 18.8 for more information on labelling requirements.<br><br>In Northern Ireland, products produced or processed, the Soil Association certifier code is XI-ORG-05. |

## SA NI 18.5 Inspections

### What is this chapter about?

This chapter explains the certification and inspection process and details your obligations as a licensee and the obligations of the certification body during the inspection process.

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 18.5.1 Inspection visits**<br>1. 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.<br>a. 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.<br>b. Where a physical inspection does not take place an annual verification of compliance is still required where information and documentation will be requested.<br>2. You may also be inspected by your competent authority as part of their surveillance of our inspection procedures.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 38(2)(3)* | We may carry out additional inspections if:<br>• you wish to add a new enterprise to your licence<br>• you move to new premises<br>• we receive a complaint regarding your business<br>• it is necessary to inspect seasonal activity or at different times of year<br>• we need to inspect again to make sure you have corrected non-compliances<br>• you are selected as part of our additional inspection programme and/or our risk assessment of your operations suggests the need for this.<br><br>We may charge you for these additional inspections if we consider they are needed because of non-compliances.<br><br>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. |
| **SA NI 18.5.2 What happens at the inspection**<br>1. At your inspection Soil Association Certification will:<br>a) verify that the description of your activities provided in your declaration is accurate<br>b) verify whether your activities are compliant with organic standards, and<br>c) compile an inspection report with any possible deficiencies and non-compliances found. | As part of closing the meeting your Inspector will explain any non-compliances found during your inspection and will ask you to sign a Declaration and explain the need to complete an *Action Summary Form* (usually left with you at the end of inspection) which lists the outcomes of the inspection. This includes any areas that do not comply with the standards and asks how you will correct them. It may also ask for extra information to complete the approval process. |

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| 2. You or an appointed representative must sign the inspection declaration stating that you agree with the outcomes of the inspection and to undertake necessary corrective actions.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 39(d)*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 38(6)* | You must respond with details of the actions you will take to address non-compliances and supply any other information requested, before the deadline given. When we have received your returned form and agreed the information you have given is satisfactory, we will approve your corrective actions and issue/reissue your certificate. |
| ### SA NI 18.5.3 Access to facilities<br>You must give Soil Association Certification or your control authority:<br>a) access to all parts of your unit and all premises, including any non-organic production units and any storage premises for input products which it deems necessary in order to certify your organic activities<br>b) access to accounts and relevant supporting documents which it deems necessary in order to certify your organic activities<br>c) any information reasonably necessary for the purposes of certifying your organic activities, and<br>d) when requested, the results of your own quality assurance programmes.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 38(1)(b)(c)*<br>*(EC) 2017/625 Art. 15(1)(2)* | |
| ### SA NI 18.5.4 Sampling<br>You must allow Soil Association Certification to take samples which will be analysed for the presence of prohibited substances and checking compliance to organic standards.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 38(4)(c)*<br>*(EC) 2021/279 Art. 7(c)* | We will take samples if there is a risk that organic standards have not been complied with or to verify that sufficient measures are in place to prevent contamination of organic products. Certification bodies are obliged to take samples from the equivalent of 5% of their licensees per year. |

## SA NI 18.6 Non-compliance with the standards

### What is this chapter about?

This chapter deals with non-compliances. A non-compliance is when an activity does not comply with an organic standard.

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 18.6.1 Non-compliances**<br>1. Where you are found not to comply with organic standards Soil Association Certification will issue you with a non-compliance. The level of sanction will be proportionate to the severity and extent of the non-compliance and the risk it poses to the integrity of the organic product. Soil Association Certification will always apply the precautionary principle when making decisions on compliance to organic standards.<br>2. Depending on the severity of the non-compliance Soil Association Certification may suspend or even withdraw your licence. If your licence is suspended or withdrawn you must **not** trade as organic.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 37*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 38(1)*<br>*(EC)2018/848 Art. 41(3)*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 42* | After your inspection we will draw up an *Action Summary Form and Declaration* (either at inspection or we will send it to you afterwards). This lists areas that do not comply with the standards and asks how you will correct them.<br><br>The different grades of sanctions are as follows:<br>• minor non-compliance<br>• major non-compliance<br>• critical non-compliance, or<br>• manifest infringement.<br><br>You are required to complete the *Action Summary Form and Declaration* with the actions you will take to comply with the standards, and return it to us with any other information we request before the deadline given. When the Certification Team has received your completed form and agreed that the information you have given is satisfactory they will approve the *Action Summary Form and Declaration* and renew your licence.<br><br>We may suspend or withdraw your licence in the following cases:<br>• if you are in breach of your contract with us<br>• if you do not pay your fee within the deadlines<br>• failure of licensee to return certified sales declaration (CSD)<br>• we are unable to arrange an inspection<br>• an Inspector is refused access to premises<br>• an Inspector is refused permission to take a sample<br>• if you do not send the completed *Action Summary Form and Declaration*, or the information we request, within the deadlines<br>• severe or repeated non-compliance resulting in loss of organic integrity of an operation, product or batch<br>• if fraudulent activity is reported by an authority. |

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| | The classification of the non-compliances falls into three categories: minor, major and critical, and takes into account the following criteria:<br><br>• the measure in place to prevent non-compliances<br>• the impact on the integrity of the organic or in-conversion status of product<br>• the ability of the traceability system to locate the affected product(s) in the supply chain<br>• previous non-compliances. |
| SA NI 18.6.2 Reporting non-compliances<br><br>If you suspect that a product you have produced, prepared, imported or received from another operator does not meet organic standards you must:<br><br>(a) identify and separate the product concerned<br>(b) check whether the suspicion can be substantiated<br>(c) not place the product on the market as organic or in-conversion and not use it in organic production, unless the suspicion can be eliminated<br>(d) where the suspicion has been substantiated or where it cannot be eliminated, immediately inform us and provide us with available information, where appropriate<br>(e) fully cooperate with us in verifying and identifying the reasons for the suspected non-compliance.<br><br>If we have a substantiated suspicion that you intend to place a product on the market as organic which does not meet organic standards, we will tell you to withhold the product whilst we investigate. We will complete the investigation in a reasonable time period taking into account the complexity of the case and the durability of the product. Before we make | Suspicion can originate from a number of sources including (but not exclusively):<br>• a positive residue detection showing contamination with a substance not permitted in organic production (please see standard 5.6.3)<br>• a complaint from a reliable source<br>• you have not been able to verify the organic status of goods you have received (see section 5.7 for further information)<br>• not being able to verify valid certification of a product or supplier. For example, if your supplier's certification has been revoked<br>• knowing that an element of the production did not meet organic standards, for example a prohibited substance has accidentally been applied to your crop or a non-organic ingredient has been used by mistake.<br><br>You must stop any further sale/use of the product as organic (or in-conversion if applicable) until any doubt over its organic status can be eliminated.<br><br>You must inform the certification team if you have substantiated suspicion or where you have not been able to eliminate suspicion that the product may not meet organic standards and stop any further sale of the product as organic until any doubt over its organic status can be eliminated. |

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| this decision we will give you opportunity to comment. You will need to cooperate fully with any investigation to resolve the suspicion.<br><br>If the suspicion is confirmed, then you must remove any reference to organic from the product. If the suspicion is not confirmed, then you no longer have to withhold the product from sale.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 27; Art. 41 (1)(2)* | An investigation will be carried out to determine if the product has met organic production rules. Once this has been determined you will be informed if the product can be put back on the market as organic or not.<br><br>If you are unsure what action to take, please contact the technical team at sacl.notifications@soilassociation.org. |
| ### SA NI 18.6.3 Actions to be taken in the case of suspicion of the presence of non-permitted products or substances<br><br>1. If you suspect that a product does not meet these organic standards due to the presence of a substance not authorised for use in organic production, you must:<br>a) identify and separate the product concerned<br>b) check whether the suspicion can be substantiated<br>c) not market the product as organic or in-conversion<br>d) not use the product in organic production<br>e) fully cooperate with Soil Association Certification in identifying and verifying the reasons for the positive residue detection.<br><br>2. To check whether the suspicion of a positive residue detection can be substantiated you must take account of the following elements:<br>a) where the suspicion concerns an incoming organic or in-conversion product check that the information provided on the label of the product matches the information on the accompanying documents and that the information on the organic certificate | The non-permitted products and substances referred to in this standard can include any product or substance not permitted in these organic standards. Such products and substances not authorised for use in organic production and processing can include but are not limited to:<br>• active substances used in plant protection products<br>• pest control products for use in agriculture and storage facilities<br>• fertilisers soil conditioners and nutrients<br>• non-organic feed material of plant, algal, animal or yeast origin or as feed material of microbial or mineral origin<br>• feed additives and processing aids<br>• food additives and processing aids<br>• cleaning and disinfection products<br>• non-organic ingredients not authorised for use in organic products<br>• processing aids for yeasts and yeast products.<br><br>The presence of non-permitted products or substances also includes and may be referred to as residue detections. Suspicion of contamination must be followed by the procedure outlined in this standard.<br><br>If you are unsure what action to take, please contact the technical team at sacl.notifications@soilassociation.org. |

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| provided by the supplier relates to the product purchased<br>b) where there is suspicion that the cause is under the control of your business you must examine any possible cause for the positive residue detection.<br><br>3. Where the suspicion has been substantiated or where it cannot be eliminated you must immediately inform Soil Association Certification and provide:<br>a) information and documents relating to the supplier (delivery note, invoice, the supplier's organic certification and the Certificate of Inspection (COI) if relevant)<br>b) information relating to the traceability of the product (lot identification or batch number, stock quantity and the quantity of the product already sold)<br>c) the laboratory results, from an accredited laboratory when relevant and available<br>d) the sampling sheet detailing the time, place and method used to take the sample<br>e) any information regarding a previous suspicion or substantiated residue detection for the specific product or substance<br>f) any other relevant documentation that will help clarify the case.<br><br>4. If your product has a positive residue detection for a substance not authorised for use in organic production Soil Association Certification will carry out an investigation to determine:<br>a) if products or substances not authorised in organic production have been used<br>b) if sufficient precautionary measures have been taken | |

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| c) if sufficient measures following previous requests from certification body have not been taken.<br><br>You will be given the opportunity to comment on the investigation and you may be required to take corrective measure to avoid future contamination.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 28 (2); Art. 29 (1)(2)(3)(4); (EC) 2021/279 Art. 1 (1)(2)* | |
| SA NI 18.6.4 Exceptions<br>Exceptions to certain production rules will only be allowed when explicitly referenced in these standards. Permission must be granted or confirmed by your certification body or competent authority.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 40(4)(b)* | |
| SA NI 18.6.5 Appeals and complaints<br>We appreciate there may be occasions when you wish to make a formal complaint to us. This could be regarding service, standards, policy, another licensee or an unlicensed company. We have formal complaints and appeals procedures which are available on request. You can make a complaint in writing, by email or by telephone. | If you have a complaint please send details in writing to cert.complaints@soilassociation.org or telephone Client Services on 0117 987 4564.<br><br>If you wish to appeal a certification decision please send full details to the certification team. |

## SA NI 18.7 Record keeping

### What is this chapter about?

This chapter details all the records that you will need to keep and have available at your inspection.

| Standards | Guidance |
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| **SA NI 18.7.1 General record keeping**<br>1. You must have a record keeping system in place which allows you to prove the organic status of your products. Your records need to cover all production stages from everything produced or bought in through to all goods sold or dispatched and must allow you to demonstrate the balance between input and output. They must also allow retrospective traceability.<br>2. You must keep stock and financial records at your unit or premises which make it possible to verify the following information for every product:<br>a) the suppliers, sellers or exporters<br>b) the nature and quantities of organic products delivered, including where relevant:<br>i) nature and quantities of all materials bought and the use of such materials<br>ii) the composition of compound feed stuffs<br>c) the nature and quantities of organic products held in storage<br>d) the nature, quantities, and consignees or buyers (other than final consumers) of any products which have left your unit, premises or storage facility.<br>3. If you do not store or physically handle organic products, you will still need to keep records of:<br>a) the nature and quantities of organic products bought and sold<br>b) the suppliers, and where different the sellers or the exporters | (R) Your records need to be sufficient for us to be able to carry out successful mass balance (input and output) and traceability exercises at your inspection. You will need to be able to demonstrate that you have bought/received sufficient organic material for the quantity you have sold/dispatched.<br><br>(R) To comply with the standard, your records could include:<br><br>• quantities, batch codes, invoices and delivery notes of organic livestock received<br>• evidence that you checked organic status of livestock delivered as per standard 19.2.1 and 18.7.4.<br>• kill number, kill date, kill time, batch code/ear tag number and weight of each carcass<br>• quantities produced in each production/packing run<br>• evidence that you processed organic and non-organic separately (this can be achieved by recording the kill order and start time)<br>• evidence that you cleaned according to these standards before production<br>• what you have sold/dispatched, how much and to whom. These need to refer to the delivery note or invoice and be able to confirm that the meat is organic<br>• the sale value of the organic products<br>• any pest control treatments used<br>• training records to demonstrate staff competency in organic requirements<br>• records to show that organic feed has been given, when required<br>• any relevant SOPS, or quality control manuals which refer to organic production. |

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| c) the buyers, and where different the consignees.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 39(1)(a)*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part IV(1.5)(d)* | (I) You do not have to record sales value if you do not sell the product, for example, if you provide a contract slaughter or butchery service for another licensed organic company and do not sell that product to anyone.<br><br>It is up to you to choose a traceability code system that works for you and your products. Some companies will use a batch code system, whereas others may be able to use the best before date on a product.<br><br>(R) You need to keep all records for at least 12 months. You will also need to make sure that your records comply with any other legally required time scales that might be specific to your products. |
| SA NI 18.7.2 Verifying certification documents<br>1. You must verify the certification documents of your suppliers and check that they:<br>a) identify your supplier,<br>b) cover the type or range of products you are purchasing, and<br>c) are valid at the time you are making the purchase.<br>2. You must make a record of these checks.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 35(6)* | A certification document will be the organic certificate, or in the case of SA Certification licensees This includes the certificate and trading schedule of the company supplying you with the organic livestock.<br><br>The name and address on the certificate must match the name and address of your supplier (the company with whom the financial transaction is taking place).<br><br>The term 'suppliers' also covers businesses supplying a service, e.g. storing organic product.<br><br>If you are purchasing organic ingredients through a wholesaler, then that wholesaler must also hold their own organic licence.<br><br>When you receive goods or livestock, you will also need to make the checks detailed in 19.2.1 and 18.7.4. |

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| **SA NI 18.7.3 Complaints register**<br>You must keep a complaint register for your business. This must record:<br>a) all complaints you make or receive<br>b) any response to the complaint<br>c) the action taken.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 2(4)(5); Art. 39(1)(a); Art 46(2)(d)* | (I) Keeping a record of any complaints you receive encourages transparency. It allows businesses to monitor issues and encourages good practice by ensuring there is a documented system for dealing with complaints. |
| **SA NI 18.7.4 Livestock movement records**<br>1.. When you receive animals in you must record:<br>a) species, source, numbers,<br>b) organic status,<br>c) identification mark,<br>d) any quarantine measures taken,<br>e) age,<br>f) veterinary history,<br>g) date of arrival<br>h) dates of conversion.<br>2. When your animals are sold or leave your holding you must record:<br>a) species<br>b) destination<br>c) numbers sold<br>d) slaughtered weight where appropriate<br>e) identification mark<br>f) age<br>g) date of departure and destination.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II(1.3.4.5)*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II(1.7.12)* | (R) Soil Association Certification licensed farms must supply an 'organic livestock movement to slaughter' form or an equivalent delivery document with each batch of animals delivered which contains the relevant information.<br><br>(I) Non-SA Certification licensed farms do **not** have to use these forms, in which case you must check that each animal is listed as organic on the delivery note. You must also check that all other legally required transfer documents have been completed. |
| **Summary of key statutory welfare requirements**<br>(R) *Along with the organic record keeping requirements you will also need to keep records to comply with EC Regulation 1099/2009. These include:* | |

*Equipment maintenance records*

*A maintenance record for all restraining and stunning equipment must be kept and the records retained for at least one year.*

*(EC) 1099/2009 Art. 9(1)*

*Records of remedial actions taken to improve animal welfare*

*For slaughterhouses slaughtering 1,000 or more livestock units of mammals or 150,000 birds or rabbits per year the animal welfare officer must keep a record of the action taken to improve animal welfare in the slaughterhouse in which he/she carries out his/her tasks. This record must be kept for at least one year.*

*(EC) 1099/2009 Art. 17(5)*

*Gas stunning equipment records**

*Gas stunning equipment must measure continuously, display and record the gas concentration and length of exposure. It must be clearly visible to the operator of the equipment and give a visual and audible warning if the concentration of gas falls below the required level. These records must be kept for at least one year.*

*(EC) 1099/2009 II, Art. 6(2)*

*Electrical stunning equipment records**

*All electrical stunning equipment must be fitted with an instrument which displays and records the details of key electrical parameters for each animal stunned. The instrument must be clearly visible to the operator of the equipment and give a visual and audible warning if the duration of exposure falls below the required level. These records shall be kept for at least one year. The regulation also requires all electrical stunning equipment (except waterbath stunning equipment) to record the details of key electrical parameters.*

*(EC) 1099/2009 Annex II, Art. 4(1)*

**Effective from 8 December 2019, operators must have installed equipment capable of recording and storing the required data. This is unless prior to that date operators have made changes to the layout of the slaughterhouse, engage in any construction or purchase new equipment, any or all which relate to either gas or electric stunning equipment.*

*Waterbath stunning equipment records*

*Waterbath stunning equipment must be fitted with a device which displays and records the details of the electrical key parameters used. These records shall be kept for at least one year.*

*(EC) 1099/2009 Annex II, Art. 5(10)*

## SA NI 18.8 General labelling

**What's this chapter about?**

This section contains the labelling standards which need to be met if you wish to label your product as organic.

| Standards | Guidance |
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| **SA NI 18.8.1 Using the term organic**<br>If you wish to refer to organic in relation to an agricultural food or feed product anywhere on a label, in advertising materials or commercial documents, you must meet the requirements of these standards.<br><br>Terms and their derivatives listed in Annex IV, whether alone or in combination (including terms used in the EU to describe organic products – see guidance), may be used throughout the European Union and in any language listed.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 2*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 30(1)* | Labelling refers to the way in which you identify your products and show their organic status. The labelling standards apply to:<br>• carcasses<br>• primals<br>• information on delivery notes or invoices for products that are transported in bulk marketing materials<br>• web content.<br><br>This includes reference to organic not just in the product name or sales description, but also in relation to ingredients of a food or feed product. For example, a cereal bar making organic claims about some of the ingredients may only do so if the cereal bar is certified to the organic regulation.<br><br>Examples of other references to organic include, "organically grown"; "organically produced"; "grown/produced using organic principles"; "grown/produced using organic methods".<br><br>If you sell organic products and non-organic products, any use of the word organic, or organic logos (certifier logos such as the SA Symbol, or the EU Organic logo), must be clear and unambiguous as to which products they apply. Use of references to organic or logos on email footers, invoices, websites should be accompanied by an explanatory wording e.g. "We have a range of organic products, see our product listings for more details", and within the product listing a clear identification of products. For contract manufacturers/packers wording describing the certified service offered should be included e.g. "We offer certified packing of organic products". |

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| | If your company name includes the word organic you may not use this on the labels of non-organic products - e.g. labels of non-organic products sold by 'XXX Organic Farm' could replace their branding with 'XXX Farm'. On websites and marketing materials 'XXX Organic Farm' can be used provide it is clear and unambiguous to buyers which products are organic and which are not.<br><br>**Labelling legislation**<br>Along with meeting these standards for labelling, you will also need to make sure your labels meet other relevant labelling legislation such as *Regulation 1169/2011* on the provision of food information to consumers, and the *Food Information Regulations*.<br><br>**List of terms for organic (annex IV of (EC) 2018/848)**<br>BG: б и о л о г и ч е н.<br>ES: ecológico, biológico, orgánico.<br>CS: ekologické, biologické.<br>DA: økologisk.<br>DE: ökologisch, biologisch.<br>ET: mahe, ökoloogiline.<br>EL: β ι ο λ ο γ ι κ ό.<br>EN: organic.<br>FR: biologique.<br>GA: orgánach.<br>HR: ekološki.<br>IT: biologico.<br>LV: bioloģisks, ekoloģisks.<br>LT: ekologiškas.<br>LU: biologesch, ökologesch.<br>HU: ökológiai.<br>MT: organiku.<br>NL: biologisch.<br>PL: ekologiczne.<br>PT: biológico. |

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| | RO: ecologic.<br>SK: ekologické, biologické.<br>SL: ekološki.<br>FI: luonnonmukainen.<br>SV: ekologisk. |
| SA NI 18.8.2 Meat stamp<br>Once your operation is certified, you may be issued with a meat stamp for stamping organic carcasses, sides, quarters and primals. The use of a meat stamp is optional. If using a meat stamp you must:<br>a) ensure anyone applying the stamp has been trained to understand how it can be used and maintain training records to demonstrate this.<br>b) **only** apply the 'Soil Association organic symbol' stamp to carcasses which are Soil Association certified or those approved as produced to standards equivalent to Soil Association Organic standards. See guidance for more details.<br>c) apply the 'Organic' stamp to carcasses which are certified as organic but which are **not** Soil Association certified. See guidance for more details.<br>d) apply the meat stamp to all such primals as soon as possible after slaughter, and<br>*Soil Association higher standard* | We have two types of meat stamp available. One featuring the 'Soil Association Organic symbol', or one with the wording 'Organic'.<br><br>You may use the stamp as part of your operating procedures and/or for organic marketing purposes. You must make the stamp's purpose clear in the relevant procedural and training documents.<br><br>The organic stamp can be used when:<br>• you have performed a contract kill for an organic farm who is not certified to Soil Association organic standards.<br><br>The 'Soil Association organic symbol stamp' **can only** be used when:<br>• you have performed a contract kill for livestock produced on a Soil Association organic certified farm<br>• when you have purchased livestock from the producer and are selling the carcass (there are exceptions for pigs, see below for further guidance on this)<br>• you have purchased pigs certified to other organic standards, the supplier has been approved by us as meeting SA Sourcing Requirements and is listed on your 'SA-*Accepted Products*' schedule.<br>• If you have any questions, please contact the certification team. |
| e) only use colours in accordance with Article 17 of Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex IV(2,2.2)(c)* | |

## Why?

Meat stamps can contribute towards a clear and easy method of identifying organic carcasses through processing and storage. They must be used in conjunction with all requirements outlined in standard *18.7 Record keeping*.

### SA NI 18.8.3 Using accurate descriptions

1. The term 'organic' can only be used to describe products (in labels, advertising and commercial documents on products) that meet the requirements of these standards, unless the term is not being used in relation to agricultural products in food or feed, which fall under the scope of these standards.
2. You must not use any terms, including terms used in trademarks, company names and practices, labels or advertising, that could mislead consumers into believing products are organic when they are not.

*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 30(2)*

Your sales description and product name will need to accurately describe your product. You can't use the word organic, even if it is part of your company trade name, in relation to non-organic products (e.g. on labels). Refer to standards 18.8.1 for further details.

**Substantiating claims**

You will need to be able to substantiate any claims that you make on your labels.

For example:
You should not use phrases such as 'GMO free' unless you can prove this, if challenged. Instead you could use:

- 'organic standards prohibit the use of GM materials', or
- 'non-GM'.

You should not use phrases such as 'pesticide free' unless you can prove this, if challenged. Instead you could use:

- 'Less pesticides, or
- 'Organic farming uses virtually no pesticides, or
- 'No system of farming has lower pesticide use'

We worked closely with the Advertising Standards Authority to draw up a document of approved advertising claims you can make when selling organic. You can find a copy on our website.

**Labelling must not be misleading**

You need to make sure that the way you label your products is not misleading. For example, if:

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| | • you label your product as 'organic mint biscuits', it must contain organic mint.<br>• your product does not contain organic mint, you can only label it as 'organic biscuits with mint'.<br>• you label your product as 'organic strawberry ice cream' it needs to contain organic strawberries.<br>• your product does not contain organic strawberries but uses a natural strawberry flavouring instead, it could only be labelled as 'organic ice cream with strawberry flavour'.<br>• your company name includes the word organic, you cannot use it on non-organic products. For example, you could not use the name 'Brown Farm Organics' on non-organic products.<br><br>You will need to seek guidance from Trading Standards on any other claims you make on your product labels.<br><br>**Labelling legislation**<br><br>Food labelling legislation is harmonised at an EU level. In England, responsibility for food labelling legislation and policy is split across Defra, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Department of Health (DH). For Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all domestic standards legislation is the responsibility of the FSA.<br><br> Visit this website for details. |

## SA NI 18.9 Preserving organic integrity

### What is the chapter about?

The standards in this section cover which substances are prohibited and what you need to do to prevent contamination.

| Standards | Guidance |
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| **SA NI 18.9.1 Reducing the risk of contamination**<br>You must identify any risk of contamination to your organic products by any unauthorised or prohibited substances and ensure measures are in place to reduce the risk of contamination. When new risks are identified you must review the measures you have in place and ensure they remain appropriate. The risks identified and the measures in place must be documented.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art.39(1)(d)*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex IV(1.2)(1.4)* | Examples of ways in which organic products may become contaminated and which you must take steps to avoid, include:<br>• through cross contamination with non-organic ingredients<br>• accidental substitution with non-organic ingredients<br>• exposure to cleaning chemicals<br>• pest infestations<br>• exposure to pesticide treatments<br>• machinery that has not been thoroughly cleaned<br>• residues or contaminants from packaging, such as synthetic coatings for cheese if they contain fungicides or wood that has been treated with preservatives.<br><br>(R) You must document how you manage organic integrity, for example through your HACCP or quality management system.<br><br>Staff training is an important way to ensure that risk of contamination is minimised. Ensure that new staff are adequately trained and that all staff are trained as and when changes are made to the Soil Association organic standards and your own operational procedures. |
| **SA NI 18.9.2 Genetic modification**<br>1. If a product contains GMOs, consists of GMOs or is produced from GMOs it must not be labelled or advertised with reference to organic production.<br>2. GMOs, products produced from GMOs, and products produced by GMOs shall not be used in food or feed, or as food, feed, processing aids, plant protection products, fertilisers, soil conditioners, plant reproductive material, | In the EU, if a product contains GMOs or their derivatives then it must be labelled as such, (as described in 18.9.2.3) so the regulation allows labels to be relied upon as evidence to indicate whether food contains GMOs or their derivatives. This would apply to products such as agricultural crops, like maize and soya, or their derivatives like lecithin or starch. However, Directive 2001/18/EC, Regulation (EC) 1829/2003 and Regulation (EC) 1830/2003 do not extend to the use of ingredients produced by genetically modified micro-organisms. For example, enzymes and vitamins. This means that it cannot be automatically assumed that a product |

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| micro-organisms or animals in organic production. You must be able to demonstrate the above.<br>3. For food and feed products in the EU, Directive 2001/18/EC, Regulation (EC) 1829/2003 or Regulation (EC) 1830/2003 are applicable, and you may rely on labels or any other accompanying documents to confirm that they are non-GM, unless you have other information that the products do not meet the Directive and Regulations listed above.<br>4. For products that are not food or feed, or products that could be produced by GMOs or for products we are certifying outside the EU, you will need to get confirmation from your suppliers, in the form of a non-GM declaration, that the products supplied have not been produced from or by GMOs.<br>*EC) 2018/848 Art. 11* | complies with the specific GMO requirements of the organic regulations. For this reason, we require a completed GMO declaration for all products that may be a GM risk.<br><br>Our GMO declaration form explains which additives, processing aids and ingredients are GMO risks. The Certification Team can also confirm any other ingredients which are a GMO risk.<br><br>There is a specific form to be used for licensees producing products under a Soil Association Standards license and a separate form to use for licenses producing product under an EU-only licence. This is because the Soil Association has additional requirements in this area, as outlined in 18.9.2.5.<br><br>Please contact us if you need a blank template of the non-GM declaration form for your suppliers to complete. |
| For Soil Association products and ingredients you will need to provide additional information to demonstrate their non-GM status.<br>*Soil Association higher standard* | **Please note:** The GMO declaration expires 12 months from the date signed. Supporting information must be dated within 12 months of sending to SA Certification. If older than 12 months you must check with the supplier that the statement is still valid and provide evidence of this to SA Certification. An updated GMO declaration is not required if you have not re-ordered the product since originally submitting evidence.<br><br>18.9.2.3 also says, if you have other information that the products do not meet the GM labelling requirements then you cannot rely on the information stated on the label. For example, test results which show GM DNA in the product. If you or a third party tests any of your organic products and gets a positive result, you must inform us of that result as soon as possible.<br><br>Farmers purchasing animal feeds may rely on the information provided on the labels, or accompany documents. Feed used must be certified organic so any checks on GM status will have been done by the feed processors. |

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| | As part of due diligence and controlling risks, operators who import/process/trade GM risk organic ingredients may wish to carry out testing for GMOs. For example, soya or maize products. Testing must be to the lowest limit of quantification (0.1%) and not just to 0.9%.<br><br>The European regulations and directives referred to in the standard only apply to product within the EU market. This means that if we are certifying your business outside the UK/EU, supplier declarations will be required for all GM risk ingredients and feed to confirm the products have not been produced from or by GMOs. |
| Why?<br>GM ingredients have no place in organic food. In order to provide additional assurance that Soil Association certified products and ingredients do not contain GM, we require suppliers of risk products and ingredients to provide additional verification to prove their non-GM status | |
| SA NI 18.9.3 Nanoparticles<br>1. Organic food must **not** contain or consist of engineered nanoparticles.<br>2. This standard does not apply to incidental nanoparticles.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 3 (63) (definitions); Art. 7(e)* | The definition of engineered nanomaterial, as stated in (EC) 2015/2283 is as follows:<br>'engineered nanomaterial' means any intentionally produced material that has one or more dimensions of the order of 100 nm or less or that is composed of discrete functional parts, either internally or at the surface, many of which have one or more dimensions of the order of 100 nm or less, including structures, agglomerates or aggregates, which may have a size above the order of 100 nm but retain properties that are characteristic of the nanoscale.<br><br>Properties that are characteristic of the nanoscale include:<br>(i) those related to the large specific surface area of the materials considered; and/or<br>(ii) specific physico-chemical properties that are different from those of the non-nanoform of the same material.<br><br>Examples of products that we know may contain manufactured nanoparticles and that are commercially available include titanium dioxide and zinc oxide used in health and beauty products. The manufactured nanoparticle versions of these products are transparent. |

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| SA NI 18.9.4 Nanoparticles in organic products<br><br>3. In addition to standard 18.9.3, all other organic products (including feed) within the scope of these standards must not contain engineered nanoparticles.<br>*Soil Association higher standard*<br>4. This standard does not apply to incidental nanoparticles.<br>*Soil Association higher standard* | The definition of engineered nanomaterial, as stated in (EC) 2015/2283 is as follows:<br>'engineered nanomaterial' means any intentionally produced material that has one or more dimensions of the order of 100 nm or less or that is composed of discrete functional parts, either internally or at the surface, many of which have one or more dimensions of the order of 100 nm or less, including structures, agglomerates or aggregates, which may have a size above the order of 100 nm but retain properties that are characteristic of the nanoscale.<br><br>Properties that are characteristic of the nanoscale include:<br>(i) those related to the large specific surface area of the materials considered; and/or<br>(ii) specific physico-chemical properties that are different from those of the non-nanoform of the same material.<br><br>Examples of products that we know may contain manufactured nanoparticles and that are commercially available include titanium dioxide and zinc oxide used in health and beauty products. The manufactured nanoparticle versions of these products are transparent.<br><br>Incidental nanoparticles not prohibited by this standard include:<br>• Substances that are incidental by-products of other manufacturing processes (such as milling or homogenisation).<br>• Naturally occurring nanoparticles, for example, from volcanic eruptions, in wood smoke or sea spray. |
| Why?<br>Nanomaterials may introduce new or heightened risks of toxicity, which are currently little understood. The possible effects of these nanomaterials on the environment, human and animal health are currently unknown.<br>Nanotechnology involves the manipulation of materials and the creation of structures and systems at the scale of atoms and molecules. This can be either through simple physical processes or by specific engineering.<br><br>Nanomaterials include: | |

- nanoparticles and nanoemulsions
- nanostructures including nanocapsules, nanotubes, fullerenes (buckyballs), quantum dots and nanowires.

The properties of nanomaterials can differ significantly from those at larger scales because quantum effects start to occur at the nanoscale. These differences may be in chemical reactivity and biological activity, solubility and mobility, colour and transparency, among others.

These are examples of known and developing uses of nanotechnology:

- food additives, such as for flavouring, enhanced absorption of nutrients or modifying texture
- in health and beauty products, such as in transparent mineral sunscreens and make-up products
- in packaging, including quantum dots for traceability, UV light filters, nanoclays as gas barriers and carbon nanotubes to alter strength-to-weight ratio
- medicinal, such as drug delivery, DNA vaccines and advanced therapies
- environmental, such as soil remediation
- pesticides, such as pesticide delivery in nanoemulsions, and
- textiles, such as stain and water resistant coatings.

## SA NI 18.10 Cleaning

### What is this chapter about?

The standards in this section which cleaning products and measures are permitted for different organic activities in order to minimise the use of chemical substances and risk of contamination.

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 18.10.1 Cleaning measures**<br>1. You must have suitable cleaning measures in place to avoid contamination and maintain the integrity of your products throughout production, processing and storage.<br>2. You must monitor your cleaning measures to make sure they are effective, adjusting measures where appropriate and keep records to show that you have done this.<br>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.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 28*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part IV(1)*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex III (7)(7.4)(c)* | You will need to ensure your staff are trained to carry out effective cleaning.<br><br>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). Your procedures must limit the risk of contamination of organic product from microbial contaminants, from cleaning chemicals and from non-organic product.<br><br>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, loading equipment and vehicles need to be cleaned and the risk of contamination minimised.<br><br>**Records of cleaning measures**<br><br>**Cleaning chemicals**<br>Detergents, disinfectants, sterilants and terminal sanitisers allowed for use in the food industry may be used for cleaning your production areas, storage areas and all equipment used for organic. Residues of these chemicals must be removed from surfaces in contact with organic food so that they do not contaminate organic products.<br><br>Sanitisers containing quaternary ammonium compounds or QACs/QUATs, such as Benzalkonium Chloride (BAC) or Didecyl Dimethyl Ammonium Chloride (DDAC) are designed to remain on surfaces so are difficult to remove, and if not |

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| | adequately rinsed will result in residues in the organic product.<br><br>If you use these to clean equipment and surfaces which are in direct contact with organic food you need to take measures to ensure they are not contaminating your organic product. For example:<br>• Switch to a cleaning product that does not contain QACs<br>• Check whether your rinsing procedures are sufficient by testing food contact surfaces to ensure no QAC residues remain. For example, a cold water rinse may not be sufficient to remove residues.<br><br>Please note that QACs can be difficult to detect in some products. For example, if used on dairy equipment, QACs may not appear in milk but may appear in butter that has been made from the milk. This is because the QAC adheres to the fat molecules in the butter.<br><br>QACs are used throughout the supply chain including farms. If you are a farm you should consider all areas where you use QACs, and ensure you have measures in place to prevent contamination of your organic product. This includes harvesting equipment, milking equipment, vats, bulk tanks, meat processing areas, veg packing areas or any other equipment or surfaces that come into contact with your organic product. If you are unsure if your cleaning product contains QACs speak to your cleaning supplier or review the technical data sheet for the product.<br><br>If you use alcohol wipes, swabs or sprays, be aware that some may leave a residue after the alcohol has evaporated. Most contain other substances such as surfactants, sanitisers and emollients. These must not be used on product contact surfaces without rinsing them off because they may leave a residue. You may use denatured alcohol (e.g. isopropanol, methanol or ethanol) without rinsing, providing sufficient time is given for the alcohol to evaporate before surfaces come into contact with organic product.<br><br>All cleaning chemicals need to be stored safely in closed containers away from |

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| | food and labelled with the name of the product and safety information.<br><br>A list of products for cleaning and disinfection substances and products will be made available in 2026.<br><br>**Monitoring your cleaning measures**<br><br>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, adenosine triphosphate (ATP) testing.<br><br>The European Commission will be releasing detailed rules for cleaning and disinfection of processing and storage facilities in 2026. |
| SA NI 18.10.2 Additional rules for the cleaning and disinfection of livestock buildings and equipment<br><br>1) For the cleaning and disinfection of livestock buildings and equipment you may only use the following products:<br>a) potassium and sodium soap<br>b) water and steam<br>c) milk of lime<br>d) lime<br>e) quicklime<br>f) sodium hypochlorite (for example, as a liquid bleach)<br>g) caustic soda*<br>h) caustic potash*<br>i) hydrogen peroxide<br>j) natural essences of plants<br>k) citric, peracetic, formic, lactic, oxalic and acetic acid<br>l) alcohol<br>m) phosphoric acid* (dairy equipment only) | The approved products list for the cleaning and disinfection of livestock buildings is undergoing a review, an updated list will be published and applicable from 1st January 2026. |

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| n) nitric acid* (dairy equipment only)<br>o) formaldehyde<br>p) cleaning and disinfection products for teats and milking facilities<br>q) sodium carbonate*.<br>*must not be used as a biocide.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 24 (9); Annex II Part II(1.5.1.6)(1.5.1.7)*<br><br>2) These products may only be used if they are authorised for your use in your country.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 9(3); Art. 24*<br>*(EC) 2021/1165 Art. 5(1)(2)* | |

## SA NI 18.11 Pest control

### What is this chapter about?

The standards in this section detail how pests are controlled in and around facilities where you carry out organic activities. Pest control in organic production and storage areas should prevent birds, rodents, insects or other pests contaminating organic foods or spreading disease. Pest control should aim, in the first instance, to prevent infestation rather than depend on treatments.

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 18.11.1 Preventing contamination by pests and pest control products**<br>1. You must design and operate your buildings and controls to reduce the risk of contamination by pests.<br>2. You must ensure when implementing preventative measures in organic areas that you take precautionary proportionate and appropriate measures to avoid the risk of contamination of organic products.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 28*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II(1.5.1.7)* | You should include measures to prevent and control wild birds, rodents and insects from getting into your buildings such as:<br>• fly screens<br>• pheromones in traps and dispensers, for monitoring pest levels or as attractants and sexual behaviour disrupters<br>• effective covers of waste bins<br>• sealing gaps and entry points. |

### SA NI 18.11.2 Treating infestations in organic products or areas used for organic products

If you find infestation in organic products, on sacks or containers, in areas used for handling/storing organic products or in areas not used for organic products, you must only use pest control methods which do not contaminate the organic product.

*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 28*

(R) If you use pest control methods, you will need to keep records of:

- what pests you have found
- what chemicals, methods and equipment you used on them
- who did the treatment, when and which area or equipment was treated, and
- what precautions you took to prevent contamination of organic products.

For example, if you need to use pyrethrum as a spray or fog to control insects:

- if product is unpackaged, remove all organic products from the area to be treated and not put organic products back into the treated area for at least 24 hours after the treatment
- if product is in sealed packaging it can remain, but additionally wrap the product with impermeable layer and not remove the wrapping for at least 24 hours after the treatment.
- you will clean all product contact surfaces in the area (using methods allowed in Soil Association standards), after the treatment and before you process or store organic product there again.
- Provide evidence that these measures were undertaken.

Please note that some products have a long residual activity and must only be used in such a manner that the residues will not contaminate the organic product. For example, if you plan to use products that migrate easily, or have longer residual activity such as synthetic pyrethroids, organo-phosphorous, carbamate or organo-chlorine compounds then you must implement additional safeguards to prevent migration or contamination.

Rodenticides must be used only in tamper-proof bait stations and in places where there is no risk of contaminating products.

If you use pest control treatments in areas not used for organic production or storage, you must still assess the risk of contamination and take appropriate preventative measures.

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| | You should make your pest control contractor aware that your unit is handling organic products and that you must comply with pest control procedures in section 18.11 of Soil Association standards.<br><br>**Control methods in organic areas**<br>Control methods which are appropriate for use in organic areas include, but are not limited to:<br>• desiccant dusts such as diatomaceous earth and amorphous silica, preferably from naturally occurring sources<br>• electric flying insect control units, with shatterproof tubes that are positioned and cleaned correctly<br>• tamper resistant bait stations that contain legally approved pesticides<br>• sticky boards for insects<br>• humane electronic rodent repellents such as floor mats. |

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| SA NI 18.11.3 Using rodent glue boards<br>You may only use glue boards for rodents as a last resort and you must:<br>a) provide evidence to show that other methods of trapping have failed or are not appropriate, before you use the glue boards<br>b) use them according to industry best practice<br>c) check rodent glue boards at least once every 12 hours including at weekends and Bank Holidays, as required by the *Pest Management Alliance* code of practice, and<br>d) keep a record of each check.<br>*Soil Association higher standard* | Rodent glue boards should only be used as a last resort and you will need permission from the Certification Team before using them. You will need to let us know what measures you've already tried, such as bait stations and proofing the unit.<br><br>**Records of checks**<br><br>Rodent glue boards should not be viewed as a permanent solution to a pest problem. The Certification Team is able to give permission to use glue boards but only for short periods of time to allow you to deal with the pest issue. Your pest controller will be able to make recommendations for how many trappings will be required.<br><br>This standard applies to the whole licensed unit. However, we recognise that in some cases you may not have ownership or control over the whole site – e.g. if |

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| | you are renting a room in a storage facility. In these cases you must make all efforts possible to create a dialogue with the building manager and/or the pest control company responsible for the site to ensure that you are consulted prior to use of glue boards, or other pest control measures which could affect your organic status, such as fogging.<br><br>See the *Code of Practice on the Humane Use of Rodent Glue Boards* for more information. |

### Why?

In order to protect public health within high-risk environments, the use of rodent glue boards remains an important last option when all other control methods have been considered and deemed ineffective. However, their use does raise serious animal welfare concerns. This standard ensures that glue boards are only used as a last resort and only by persons who have been given adequate training and are competent in the effective and humane use of this technique.

## SA NI 18.12 Transport, dispatch and receipt of goods

### What is this chapter about?

This section details all the standards that need to be met for the transport, dispatch and receipt of organic products.

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 18.12.1 Collection of products and transport to preparation units**<br>If you are collecting organic, in-conversion and non-organic products at the same time, you must have measures in place to prevent any possible mixing or exchanges and you must be able to clearly identify the organic products. Your collection records need to indicate the collection days, hours, collection circuit and the time and date when products were received.<br>*(EC) 20128/848 Art. 23(1)*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex III(1)* | (R) Collection records |

## SA NI 18.12.2 Labelling & transporting products

1. If you send an organic or in-conversion product to another company, including retailers, wholesalers and other licensees for further processing, packing or re-labelling then you must:
   a) ensure it is transported in a way that would prevent alteration, including substitution, of the content cannot be achieved without manipulation or damage of the seal.
   b) label it clearly, either on the product or on accompanying documentation undeniably linked to it so that the recipient can easily identify:
      (i) the product and its organic status
      (ii) the name and address of the operator, and, if different, the seller or owner of the product.
   c) include your certification code, traceability code and % organic content of the product (if less than 95%). If this information is provided on the accompanying documentation, it must also include information on the supplier and/or transporter.
2. You do not need to use closed packaging, containers or vehicles if:
   a) transportation is between two organically certified operators
   b) products are accompanied by a document containing the information required in point 1b above
   c) both the sending and receiving operators keep records of the transportation.

*(EC) 2018/848 Annex III(2.1)*

Ⓡ If you are transporting whole carcasses, or quarters without any packaging, the contact surfaces in the vehicle being used must be fully cleaned and rinsed according to standard 18.10.1. The information listed in point 1, must be shown either on the luggage tag/label, or on the delivery documentation. If it is shown on the documentation, then there must be a clear link between the documentation and the carcass/quarters. For example, the uses of ear tag numbers or batch codes on both. This also applies if you are labelling or transporting bulk product i.e. boxed chickens or trays of primals.

Where possible, unpacked carcasses or quarters should be transported in a dedicated vehicle. If this is not possible and the vehicle you are using also contains non-organic meat or other products then you must ensure that the requirements for adequate separation are met, as detailed in standard 18.12.1.

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| 3. For Soil Association certified products which are not pre-packaged, (bulk labelling) the label must include either the Soil Association symbol or the words 'Soil Association Organic'. For unpackaged product, (e.g. grain, milk, dispatching unprocessed fruit and vegetables from farm) this information must go on the accompanying paperwork. Refer to standard 5.8.3 for the requirements for use of Soil Association symbol on pre-packaged product (retail packed).<br>*Soil Association higher standard* | |

### Why?

Soil Association certified products have been produced and processed to organic standards that are higher than the EU organic regulation. Writing 'Soil Association Organic' on the packaging helps to identify products that have met these higher standards.

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| ### SA NI 18.12.3 Receiving organic products<br>When you receive an organic or in-conversion product you must check, upon delivery that the product is labelled according to standard 18.12.2 above and packed appropriately so that it cannot be mistaken or mixed up with other products. You must crosscheck that the label on the product matches the information on the accompanying documents and provide an account of how you check goods upon receipt.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex III Part V(5)* | When receiving goods from other units or operators you need to have a system in place for checking the organic status of the products and have records to show these checks are always made.<br><br>Ⓡ Please see the record keeping standards (18.7) for details of the information you will need to record.<br><br>If you cannot be sure about the organic status of a delivery, for example if information is missing or incorrect, you will need to either:<br>• get written confirmation from the supplier<br>• send it back<br>• sell it as non-organic<br>• use it in non-organic products. |

## SA NI 18.13 Storage of products

### What is this chapter about?

This section details the standards for storing and handling organic products.

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 18.13.1 General separation**<br>You must manage your organic storage areas and containers in such a way to a) ensure identification of lots and b) avoid any mixing with or contamination from products or substances that we do not allow in these standards. Your organic storage areas, containers and products must be clearly identifiable at all times.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex III(7.1)* | Demonstrate that your organic products and lots are clearly identified and separated for non-organic products or substances not permitted in these standards. Examples include, but are not limited to:<br>• Hanging organic and non-organic meat on separate rails, or leaving adequate space between them on a single rail.<br>• Labelling carcasses with the word 'organic' on luggage tags.<br>• Labelling and hanging organic offal as soon as they are removed from the carcass, to ensure they are not mixed up with non-organic.<br><br>Describe in your procedures how you avoid any mixing or contamination from products or substances not permitted in these standards.<br><br>Also refer to the 'preserving organic integrity' section 18.9, for details of contamination, and products and substances we do not allow. |
| **SA NI 18.13.2 Handling and separating organic and non-organic products**<br>1. When you use the same equipment and premises to store and handle both organic and non-organic products you must:<br>a) avoid the risk of mixing and exchanging organic and in-conversion products with other products and foodstuffs by clearly identifying and separating them during the production process, and<br>b) effectively clean equipment and storage areas used to handle or store non-organic products before handling or storing organic products.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part IV(1.5)*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex III(7.4)* | Also refer to the 'preserving organic integrity' section 18.9 and 'cleaning' section 18.10 for details of contamination and products and substances we do not allow. |

## SA NI 19 Specific standards for abattoirs and slaughter

## SA NI 19.1 Animal welfare

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 19.1.1 Maintaining good animal welfare**<br>1. You must ensure your husbandry practices and housing, including stocking densities, meet your animals species-specific developmental, physiological and behavioural needs at all time.<br>2. The persons looking after your animals must possess the necessary knowledge and skills to satisfy this standard, and shall have followed adequate training, as required in particular in Council Regulation (EC) No 1/20051 and Council Regulation No (EC) 1099/2009.<br>3. Any suffering must be kept to a minimum during the entire life of the animal, including at the time of slaughter.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art 5; Art 6; Art 14; Annex II Part II(1.7)* | Regularly assess your animals to ensure their health and welfare and watch for signs of distress, disease and injury. Routine monitoring of the welfare of your animals will allow you to recognise problems and identify areas for improvement. If you would like more information and support on monitoring the welfare of your animals see the AssureWel website or contact Producer Support or the Certification Team.<br><br>If you find a welfare problem prompt action must be taken and the effectiveness of which must be reviewed and altered if necessary. |
| **SA NI 19.1.2 Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)**<br>1. Where no national legislation on CCTV use is applicable, this standard must be followed.<br>2. A CCTV system with good visibility must be in operation for the following activities:<br>a) unloading from vehicles into the lairage<br>b) lairaging, including the movement of animals out of the lairage towards the stun point | Operators must comply with national legislation, for example in England you must comply with the 'Mandatory Use of Closed Circuit Television in Slaughterhouses (England) Regulations. Guidance is available here. If you are unsure if this legislation applies to your operation, for example some on-farm slaughter operations, please contact your local authority.<br><br>Documented standard operating procedures must detail how the footage will be |

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| c) stunning, including animals approaching the stun area<br>d) shackling, including the shackling of animals following gas killing<br>e) sticking<br>f) entering a Controlled Atmosphere System (CAS).<br>3. CCTV footage must be recorded at all times and be:<br>a) retained for a minimum of 3 months, and<br>b) available for viewing on site by the organic control body for control purposes.<br>4. Animal welfare officers (and/or other authorised abattoir staff) must use CCTV footage on a regular basis to observe and review all activities involving live animals.<br>5. A CCTV system is not required for abattoirs slaughtering fewer than 1,000 livestock units (1,000 cattle or equivalent) or 150,000 birds a year.<br>*Soil Association higher standard* | used and reviewed to monitor all activities involving live animals.<br><br>Review of footage may be performed in real-time or from recordings.<br><br>CCTV is not an appropriate tool to assess the signs of unconsciousness or consciousness or sensibility in animals and should not be used as the sole tool for carrying out monitoring checks of the stun operation as required by EC Regulation 1099/2009.<br><br>It is strongly recommended that CCTV footage is also used for in-house staff training programmes at the abattoir.<br>Employees and visitors should be informed that CCTV is in use. |

## Why

The use of CCTV in areas where live animals are present is a useful additional tool to help those responsible for monitoring and enforcing animal welfare ensure that standards are maintained. The use of CCTV is not required in small plants where physical observation of all activities involving live animals is possible. We use the *Council Regulation (EC) No. 1099/2009* definition of a small abattoir which defines a small abattoir as one slaughtering fewer than 1,000 cattle (or equivalent) or 150,000 birds a year.

## Summary of key statutory welfare requirements

*The welfare of animals during the slaughtering process is paramount. The handling, stunning and slaughter of animals must comply with the statutory requirements of EC Regulation 1099/2009 on the Protection of Animals at the Time of Killing and The Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing Regulations 2014 (WATOK).*

*All operators must prepare and implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for killing and all operations involving live animals. The management systems and SOPs in place must ensure that animals are spared any avoidable pain, distress or suffering at any stage of the slaughter process.*

*All persons working with live animals at any stage of the slaughtering process from the lairage, restraining, stunning, slaughtering or killing, pithing, shackling or hoisting, and bleeding of any animal that is not dead are required to hold an approved Certificate of Competence (CoC).*

*At least one Animal Welfare Officer (AWO) must be appointed for every slaughterhouse slaughtering over 1000 livestock units of mammals or 150,000 birds or rabbits per year. The AWO is responsible for ensuring that the welfare of animals is protected and promoted at all times and for ensuring the operator complies with the slaughter regulations.*

### Guides to good practice

*In accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No. 1099/2009 good practice guides have been developed by industry and have been validated by the Competent Authority (in the UK this is Defra). Examples include guides by the British Poultry Council and British Meat Processors' Association. The Humane Slaughter Association also has up-to-date technical guides and can provide advice on all aspects of animal handling, transport, slaughter and killing.*

## SA NI 19.2 Arrival and unloading of animals

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 19.2.1 Transport and handling**<br>1. Any suffering, pain and distress shall be avoided and shall be kept to a minimum.<br>2. The duration of transport must be minimised.<br>3. You must not use allopathic tranquilisers on any of your livestock before or during transport.<br>4. The loading and unloading of animals shall be carried out without the use of any type of electrical or other painful stimulation to coerce the animals<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 14*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art 14.3*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II* | The welfare of animals in transport is the responsibility of the producer, or the haulier as a sub-contractor of the producer. Once they enter the curtilage of the slaughterhouse, welfare becomes the joint responsibility of the producer and the slaughterhouse. After unloading, their welfare is the responsibility of the slaughterhouse.<br><br>A planned arrival system will ensure that the animals are unloaded as soon as they arrive at the abattoir. You should be able to demonstrate that you liaise with farmers and transporters to make sure the animals leave the farm and arrive at the abattoir on time. You should aim to keep the waiting time as short as possible.<br><br>Ⓡ The welfare of animals at transport is protected by law. Information on the legal requirements in the UK can found here.<br><br>The export out of the UK or other unnecessary long distance transport of organic animals is not compliant with this standard. For example, you cannot transport organic animals long distances for slaughter when a suitable slaughter facility is available closer to your farm. |

### Summary of key statutory welfare requirements

*Slaughterhouses must have suitable equipment and facilities for unloading animals. Animals must be carefully unloaded from vehicles as soon as possible after they arrive. The welfare and health of animals must be assessed upon arrival in order to prioritise those animals with specific*

*welfare needs. If an animal has been injured during transportation and cannot be unloaded without causing it pain, it must be humanely killed or slaughtered on the vehicle, using an appropriate emergency method.*

## SA NI 19.3 Lairaging animals

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 19.3.1 Separating and identifying organic livestock**<br>1. Organic livestock must be kept separate from other livestock.<br>2. You must not tether or isolate livestock unless it is for a limited period of time, and in so far as this is justified for veterinary reasons. The isolation of livestock may only be authorised, and only for a limited period, where workers' safety is compromised or for animal welfare reasons.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 14.3*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II (7.4)(a)* | In the lairage you will need to label pens holding organic animals to show that the animals are organic. You must not mix organic and non-organic animals in the same pen or in the slaughter area.<br><br>If animals have been delivered together they should be penned in their social groups. Horned cattle are **not** necessarily fractious and therefore it may be better to keep them in their identified social groups with sufficient extra space. |
| **SA NI 19.3.2 Identification of livestock**<br>You must identify your livestock at all stages of their production, preparation, transport and marketing using techniques adapted to each species. This must be done individually in the case of large mammals and individually or by batch in the case of poultry and small mammals.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II(1.3.4.5)* | The methods you use to identify your livestock must meet the legal requirements of country. In the UK you must follow **Defra requirements**. |

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| **SA NI 19.3.3 Feeding organic livestock**<br>Organic livestock must only be fed organic or in-conversion feed.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 14.3*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II* | (R) If animals are likely to be held longer than 12 hours in the lairage you will need to have organic feed available. If you do not have access to organic feed ask the producer in advance to bring feed along with the animals. Evidence must be kept to prove organic status of feed given. Acceptable evidence could include:<br>• Records on pen signs or livestock intake forms detailing when organic feed was given.<br>• Copies of invoices/delivery docs, for organic feed you have purchased.<br>• Written contracts with farmers confirming they will always provide their own organic feed, when required.<br>• Evidence of organic feed being stored on site. |

**Summary of key statutory welfare requirements**

*Animals not taken directly to the place of slaughter must be lairaged. Animals should be lairaged for as short a time as possible and slaughtered without undue delay. Every animal should be protected from adverse weather conditions and provided with adequate ventilation. Every animal kept in the lairage must have enough space to stand up, lie down and turn around without difficulty.*

*Water must always be available to all animals in the lairage. Any animal that has been on the site for 12 hours or more must be provided with food, for organic animals this must be organic feed. If animals are kept in the lairage for more than 12 hours, they must be given bedding (such as straw), or equivalent material (such as rubber slats), suitable to the species of animals, their number and what they are accustomed to.*

*The condition and state of health of every animal must be inspected at least every morning and evening by a competent person. Any animal judged to be experiencing pain for any reason must be slaughtered immediately. Animals that are unable to walk must not be moved or made to move, but must be killed where they are.*

## SA NI 19.4 Handling and moving animals

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 19.4.1 Use of electric goads is prohibited**<br>The loading and unloading of animals must be carried out without the use of any type of electrical or other painful stimulation to coerce the animals.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II* | In the UK, as interpreted by the competent authority, the use of electric stimulation to coerce animals at any stage of organic production is prohibited. |

**Summary of key statutory welfare requirements**

*Animals must always be moved with care and using as little force and noise as possible. No person may strike or kick animals or handle them in any way that would cause them pain or suffering. If handling aids are used, contact with animals should be avoided.*

## SA NI 19.5 Stunning and killing equipment

| Standards | Guidance |
|---|---|
| **SA NI 19.5.1 Animals must always be pre-stunned**<br>Animals must not be slaughtered without pre-stunning.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 4*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 5*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 14.3*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part II* | The judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 26 February 2019 found that the requirements of EC Regulation 834/2007 Articles 3 and 14 (b)(viii) would not authorise slaughter without pre-stunning as that would not be minimising suffering.<br><br>The permitted stunning methods and specific requirements for their operation are set out in Annex I of EC Regulation 1099/2009. These must be adhered to ensure animals are effectively stunned.<br><br>The exception is electrical water bath stunning of chickens. If chickens are stunned using this method frequencies greater than 800 Hz, even at 200 Ma, must not be used.<br><br>This is because available research suggests that frequencies greater than 800 Hz (EC Regulation 1099/2009 permits frequencies up to 1500 Hz) sometimes fail to |

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| | effectively stun chickens. Based on available research, it may be preferable to use 50 - 200 Hz, maximum, for chickens and perhaps even for turkeys. The table below produced by the Humane Slaughter Association, sets out additional suggestions for good practice electrical parameters. |

| Waveform & frequency (Hz) | Chickens | Ducks |
|---|---|---|
| 50– 199 Hz (Sine AC) | 100 mA | |
| 200 Hz (Sine AC) | 150 mA | |
| 400 Hz (Sine AC) | 200 mA | |
| 50 Hz (Square AC) | | 170 mA* |

* It is possible that ducks and geese may require greater current amplitude for sine and square wave frequencies up to 200 Hz but scientific evidence is lacking. Unit for current given as root mean square.

(S) A sourcing requirement applies for SA processors.

| Standards | Guidance |
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| SA NI 19.5.2 Carbon dioxide stunning and killing of pigs<br>If pigs are slaughtered using carbon dioxide the system must have:<br>a) a regular cycle side<br>b) group entry which requires minimal handling<br>c) a system to ensure pigs enter the gondola only when ready to be dropped<br>d) sufficient lighting for animals to see but not too bright<br>e) rapid exposure of pigs to high levels of carbon dioxide<br>f) sufficient dwell time to ensure adequate stunning/killing<br>g) a regular rotation of staff<br>h) signs of recovery regularly checked<br>i) a back-up stunning system available at exit and sticking | Guidance for each point is set out below:<br>a) If there is a break in the line in in excess of 10 minutes, the gas must be mixed in order to ensure good gas distribution within the chamber before any pigs enter the chamber<br>b) Group entry means that the walkways are wide and at no point require pigs to move forward in single file.<br>c) Pigs must not be lowered into the chamber until the $CO_2$ concentration is at least 85 percent at the point of maximum concentration.<br>d) Sufficient lighting must be provided in the conveying mechanism and the chamber to allow pigs to see other pigs and their surroundings and to encourage the movement of pigs into the chamber.<br>e) The average minimum $CO_2$ concentration must be 90 percent. Once a pig enters the chamber, it must be conveyed to the point in the chamber of maximum concentration of $CO_2$ within 30 seconds, or within 20 seconds if a dip-lift system is in use.<br>f) UK law requires that pigs are not removed from the system until they are |

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| j) feedback from shacklers to loaders<br>k) a contingency plan in place for factory breakdown, fire alarms, etc. to remove and immediately kill animals in system<br>l) clear details of the alarm system on display, in addition to contingency plans etc.<br>*Soil Association higher standard* | dead or irrecoverably stunned. Pigs must remain at the point of maximum concentration of $CO_2$ for long enough to ensure that there is no possibility of any pigs displaying signs of recovery prior to bleed-out being completed.<br>g) Staff must be regularly rotated to avoid the effects of fatigue.<br>h) The effectiveness of the stun/kill must be monitored and carried out on a sufficiently representative sample of animals. The frequency of these checks must take into account the outcome of previous checks and any factors which may affect the efficiency of the stunning process.<br>i) For practical purposes, captive bolt is recommended as the preferred back-up method for re-stunning.<br>j) Staff responsible for shackling must be able to communicate quickly and easily to staff responsible for loading the pigs into the chamber.<br>k) The alarm system must be clearly visible to the operator of the equipment and give a visual and audible warning if the concentration of gas falls below the required level. |

### Why?

Animal welfare is important right up to the end of an animal's life. Stunning before slaughter is vital to protect their welfare. Carbon dioxide is aversive to pigs and high concentrations can cause severe distress. However, gas systems can have welfare benefits when compared with other slaughter methods. The benefits can include:

- reduced risk of human error in the stunning process
- pigs remain in groups during the process
- reduced handling of the pigs
- pigs do not need to be restrained
- consistency and effectiveness of stunning at high throughputs

| Standards | Guidance |
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| **SA NI 19.5.3 Emergency killing**<br>The following methods must not be used in slaughterhouses except as an emergency method for stunning and/or killing:<br>a) Percussive blow to the head<br>b) Manual cervical dislocation<br>*Soil Association higher standard* | In this context 'emergency killing' means the killing of animals which are either injured or have a disease associated with severe pain or suffering, or where back-up slaughter methods fail, to minimise pain, distress or suffering to the animals. These methods must not be used as the primary back-up method. The use of these methods must not be a substitute for proper planning.<br><br>Please refer to EC Regulation 1099/2009 for the full list of conditions of use and specific requirements related to these methods. |
| **Why?**<br>To ensure that animals are given the most humane death possible, the use of physical methods such as cervical dislocation should be avoided through proper planning and be restricted to emergency situations only. | |
| **Summary of key statutory welfare requirements**<br>*Any method of stunning used must cause an animal to lose consciousness immediately without distress and remain unconscious until the animal has died from blood loss. The WATOK and EC Regulation 1099/2009 stipulate the permitted methods of stunning or killing animals and lays down specific requirements for their operation. The Soil Association standards require that all animals are pre-stunned before slaughter and also set higher requirements for the gas killing of pigs.* | |

## SA NI 19.6 Bleeding, sticking and monitoring

### Summary of key statutory welfare requirements

*All animals must be bled without delay after being stunned. To ensure that the loss of consciousness and sensibility is maintained until the death of the animal a maximum stun-to-stick interval of:*

- *15 seconds is recommended for all pigs, sheep and goats*
- *60 seconds is recommended for cattle when using penetrative captive-bolt*

*All operators must implement appropriate monitoring procedures to ensure that regular checks on restraining and effectiveness of stunning are being carried out on each slaughter line and for each species being slaughtered. The frequency of the checks must take into account the main risk factors and the procedure must detail what the corrective action should be if stunning fails.*

| Standards | Guidance |
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| **SA NI 19.6.1 Thoracic stick**<br>1. After stunning cattle, deer and pigs must be bled using a thoracic stick<br>2. You may only use a neck cut when it has been formally evaluated for reasons of health and safety of the persons performing the stick.<br>*Soil Association higher standard* | Any slaughter houses built after 2017 must allow the safe use of a thoracic stick and will not be exempt from this requirement.<br><br>If it is only possible to bleed cattle using a neck stick, research suggests that a high neck cut is preferable over a low neck cut. When performing a neck cut a responsible member of staff should check that both carotid arteries are severed. This can be done by checking for two jets of blood arising from the arteries. Blood flow from the arteries should be checked again after 30 seconds. If blood flow has ceased it could be a sign that the arteries have developed a false aneurysm, which could delay blood loss from the brain. In this case the arteries should be cut again immediately to resume blood flow.<br><br>In order for us to evaluate health and safety reasons for not performing a thoracic stick we will ask you to submit a written description of the associated risks, and details of your procedures for monitoring that the stun is effective through to the point of death. We will verify the risks and monitoring procedures at your inspection. |

**Why?**

A thoracic stick severs the vessels arising from the heart and ensures a rapid and profuse bleed, minimising the risk that an animal regains consciousness after being stunned.

## SA NI 19.7 General manufacturing

### What is this chapter about?

This chapter covers the basic requirements that must be met by all licensees involved in manufacturing organic products.

| Standards | Guidance |
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| **SA NI 19.7.1 Ensuring organic integrity**<br>To ensure organic integrity you must:<br>a) Have procedures to maintain the organic integrity of your products, from buying raw materials to goods out, and which also ensure that non-organic products are not produced or sold as organic.<br>b) Always work to the principles of good manufacturing practice for your sector of the food industry.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part I*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part IV*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part V* | Your procedures will need to cover all the critical processing steps in the manufacture of your products. This includes making sure staff are fully trained for the tasks they carry out and understand the importance of maintaining organic integrity.<br><br>Please also refer to the standards on contamination (section 18.9), cleaning (section 18.10) and record keeping (section 18.7) as these are all related to ensuring organic integrity. |
| **SA NI 19.7.2 General production methods**<br>1. You may only use techniques for processing organic food that is in line with the specific principles for organic production as well as the requirements of these standards.<br>2. Organic food must be produced with care and preferably with the use of biological, mechanical and physical methods.<br>3. Use of permitted food additives, non-organic ingredients, micronutrients and processing aids must be kept to a minimum and only used where necessary.<br>4. Substances and processing methods which could mislead consumers about the true nature of a product must not be used.<br><br>*EC 2018/848 Art. 7*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part IV (1.6)* | If you further process meat, refer to the food and drink standards for details of permitted non-organic ingredients, processing aids and additives. |

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| **SA NI 19.7.3 Prohibited techniques**<br>Techniques must not be used to modify or restore attributes lost during the processing or storage process.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part IV(1.6)* | You can only use substances, re-constitution techniques, additives and processing aids in ways allowed by the law and by these standards. |
| **SA NI 19.7.4 Processing organic and non-organic**<br>1. If you process organic and non-organic products, either using the same equipment or at the same site, you must:<br>a) assess the risk of contamination and mixtures or exchanges, and put in place controls to avoid those risks<br>b) process and store organic products separately, in time or space, from non-organic products<br>c) ensure that the cleaning of your facilities and equipment is sufficient to remove residues of non-organic product before you start processing<br>d) finish the whole run of organic products before you start to process non-organic products<br>e) keep a record of all organic and non-organic operations and the quantities processed.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part IV(1.5)* | There are many ways in which you can ensure separation of organic and non-organic at your facility and as each business is unique it is your responsibility to ensure you have systems and procedures in place that are right for you and your business.<br><br>Some businesses may have dedicated organic production days, following a thorough clean down of equipment, whereas others may judge it best to carry out organic processing first thing in the morning followed by non-organic production. The important thing is that you manage risk in such a way that is appropriate for your operation. Examples of controls include:<br>• Hanging organic and non-organic meat on separate rails, or leaving adequate space between them on a single rail<br>• Including suitable traceability information and the word 'organic' on luggage tags<br>• Cutting and packing organic meat in a continuous batch, using separate equipment or following a full clean down<br>• Labelling and hanging organic offal as soon as they are removed from the carcass, to ensure they are not mixed up with non-organic<br><br>Please also refer to the standards on storage (section 18.13), contamination (section 18.9) and cleaning (section 18.10). |
| **SA NI 19.7.5 Using organic and non-organic versions of the same ingredients**<br>You must **not** use organic and non-organic versions of the same ingredient in the same product.<br><br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 19*<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Annex II Part V* | This also applies to products made with less than 95% organic ingredients. |

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| SA NI 19.7.6 Irradiation<br>You must **not** use ionising radiation for the treatment of organic food or feed or for the treatment of raw materials used in organic food or feed.<br>*(EC) 2018/848 Art. 9* | This standard applies to all ingredients used in organic products – including ingredients you buy in and non-organic ingredients.<br><br>Ionising radiation occurs at frequencies that are potentially responsible for cell damage. Ionising radiation is defined as: the transfer of energy in the form of particles or electromagnetic waves of a wavelength of 100 nanometres (nm) or less or a frequency of 3 x 1015 Hertz or more, capable of producing ions directly or indirectly.<br><br>You may use ultra violet radiation (UV light), provided it has a wavelength of 100nm to 400nm for:<br>• water treatment<br>• surface sterilisation of products<br>• to treat mould growth on the surface of dough and baked goods<br>• to treat fruit and vegetable juice as an alternative to pasteurisation.<br><br>The prohibition of ionising radiation does not apply in the case of:<br>• foodstuffs exposed to ionising radiation generated by measuring or inspection devices, provided that the dose absorbed is not greater than 0.01 Gy for inspection devices which utilise neutrons and 0.5 Gy in other cases, at a maximum radiation energy level of 10 MeV in the case of X-rays, 14 MeV in the case of neutrons and 5 MeV in other cases<br>• the irradiation of foodstuffs which are prepared for patients requiring sterile diets under medical supervision. |