



Soil Association Organic Standards for Great Britain Seaweed

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 834/2007, 889/2008 and 1235/2008*. These regulations were the legal basis for the control of organic farming, food processing and organic labelling within the EU until 31st December 2021, and have been retained in the UK for implementation in Great Britain (GB), as set out in *The Organic Production and Control (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. They are referenced throughout this document as the GB Organic Regulation. Operators based in Northern Ireland (NI) should use our EU standards which are available on our website.

The Soil Association has higher organic standards than required by the GB 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 GB 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 GB Organic Regulation.

A 'competent authority' is authorised to make rulings on organic legislation. In GB the competent authority is Defra or one of its devolved agencies who have delegated some controls 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. 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 GB 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 GB Organic Regulation. These include:

- [textiles](#)
- [cosmetics](#)

Please contact us if you would like more information or visit [our website](#).

Guide to using these standards

The standards are listed in the column on the left, with a white background for GB 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 GB 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.

 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.

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
<p>14.3.2 Verifying certification documents You must verify the certification documents of your suppliers and check that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify your supplier, • cover the type or range of products you are purchasing, and • are valid at the time you are making the purchase. <p>You must make a record of these checks. (EC) 834/2007 Art. 29(2)</p>	<p>A certification document will be the organic certificate, or in the case of SA Certification licensees this includes the certificate and trading schedule, The name and address on the certificate must match the name and address of your supplier (the company you are purchasing from).</p> <p>When you receive goods, you will also need to make the checks detailed in standard 15.5.3.</p> <p></p>

The relevant part of the GB Organic Regulation is referenced here.

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

EXAMPLE Standards	EXAMPLE Guidance
<p>14.1.1 Scope of the standards These standards apply to packaging of products that you introduce into the supply chain.</p> <p>We define packaging as all primary (retail), secondary (grouping, display) and tertiary (transport) materials used for: containing protecting preserving handling storage delivery labelling marketing, and presentation of your products.</p> <p>Note - we include bulk bins but not transport pallets in this definition. Soil Association higher standard</p>	<p>I Packaging legislation</p> <p>Keep in mind that you must also consider any relevant legislation relating to packaging for food. These include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the European Parliament and Council Directive on Packaging and Packaging Waste (94/62/EC) the European Standard for Compostable Packaging (EN13432) – if you are using compostable or biodegradable packaging. <p>Environmental information claims and symbols on your packaging need to be clear, truthful and accurate. In the UK, you will need to make sure your packaging conforms to Defra's Green Claims code.</p> <p>Soil Association higher standards are clearly shown.</p>
<p>The production, use and disposal of packaging can have a big impact on the environment. Packaging should be packaged in ways that reduce the negative impacts of packaging. This fits with the need to protect biodiversity that underpin organic food and farming, and meets consumer expectations for organic products.</p> <p>Packaging serves an important role in preventing food waste by protecting and extending the shelf life of products. It also helps to protect consumers by preventing contamination and substitution of organic products with non-organic alternatives. These packaging standards aim to maximise the benefits and avoid the negative impacts of packaging.</p>	<p>Why?</p> <p>Each Soil Association higher standard has a Why? box to explain its purpose and rationale.</p>

The I symbol shows where additional relevant information is provided.

Soil Association higher standards are clearly shown.

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

SA GB 14.0 General standards for seaweed production

SA GB 14.1 Scope

Standards	Guidance
<p data-bbox="69 320 981 359">SA GB 14.1.1 Scope of the standards</p> <p data-bbox="69 359 981 566">This chapter details standards for the collection of wild seaweed and the farming of seaweed for food or feed products. They can be applied to the production of multi-cellular marine algae or phytoplankton and micro-algae intended for feed for aquaculture animals with the necessary modifications.</p> <p data-bbox="69 566 981 644" style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 6a</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art.1 (2)</i></p>	<p data-bbox="981 320 2179 422">Please contact us if you want to certify the production of multi-cellular marine algae or phytoplankton and micro-algae intended for feed for aquaculture animals so that we can inform you of which standards will apply.</p>

SA GB 14.2 Principles of organic seaweed production

Standards	Guidance
<p data-bbox="69 810 981 849">SA GB 14.2.1 General principles of organic production</p> <p data-bbox="69 849 981 917">An organic production system must meet the following principles and objectives:</p> <ol data-bbox="69 917 981 1415" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="69 917 981 1021">1. To produce food of high quality and sufficient quantity by the use of processes that do not harm the environment, human health, plant health or animal health and welfare.<li data-bbox="69 1021 981 1093">2. To work within natural systems and cycles at all levels, from the soil to plants and animals.<li data-bbox="69 1093 981 1165">3. To maintain the long-term fertility and biological activity of soils.<li data-bbox="69 1165 981 1236">4. To treat livestock ethically, meeting their species-specific physiological and behavioural needs.<li data-bbox="69 1236 981 1340">5. To respect regional, environmental, climatic and geographic differences and the appropriate practices that have evolved in response to them.<li data-bbox="69 1340 981 1415">6. To maximise the use of renewable resources and recycling.	

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 substances. 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. 9. To exclude the use of soluble mineral fertilisers. 10. To foster biodiversity and protect sensitive habitats and landscape features. 11. To minimise pollution and waste. 12. To use of preventative and precautionary measures and risk assessment when appropriate. 13. To exclude the use of GMOs and products produced from or by GMOs with the exception of veterinary medicinal products. 14. To sustainably use products from fisheries. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 3, Art. 4</i></p>	
<p>SA GB 14.2.2 Specific principles for aquaculture</p> <p>In addition to the overall organic principles set out in standard 14.2.1, organic aquaculture production must be based on the following specific principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The continuing health of the aquatic environment and the quality of surrounding aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 5</i></p>	

SA GB 14.3 Becoming Soil Association certified	
Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 14.3.1 Certifying your business 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. <i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 27(1)(4); Art. 28(1)</i></p>	<p>In GB, Defra is the competent authority and has delegated some control tasks to accredited organic certification bodies. The certification body that is appointed by the Soil Association to inspect and certify to Soil Association organic standards in the UK is Soil Association Certification.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>SA GB 14.3.2 Activities that require certification</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In GB all stages of the organic supply chain must hold organic certification. 2. Your business must be certified if you produce, process, package, store, label, import or export, include wholesaling, storage and warehousing, acting as the first consignee for imported products and any other activities that require the physical or financial ownership of organic products or ingredients. 3. In GB you do not need certification if you only sell organic products directly to the final consumer or user provided that you do not produce, prepare, store organic products other than in relation to the point of sale or import such or have not contracted out such activities. In other countries certification may be required for these activities. <i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 27(3); Art. 28(1); Art. 28(2)</i> 	<p>Without adequate certification at each stage of the supply chain, the products may lose their organic status.</p> <p>Examples of businesses not requiring certification in GB include supermarkets and mass caterers serving food e.g. restaurants, cafes, catering companies.</p> <p>If you are unsure whether the activity you are carrying out requires certification please contact us.</p> <p>For more information on the certification requirements for importing and exporting please refer to standard section 6.8 in the food and drink standards.</p>
<p>SA GB 14.3.3 Organic certificate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You must not make reference to organic, in-conversion, or use the Soil Association symbol without valid certification documents that shows that your activity complies with these organic standards. 	<p>Soil Association Certification will issue licensees with the following documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An annual certificate with valid from and to dates, your name, address and licence number • A Trading Schedule with your certified products, activities and status

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.
3. The certification document may be in electronic format.

(EC) 834/2007 Art. 29(1)(3)
(EC) 889/2008 Art. 63(1)(d); Art. 68

- For producers, an Information Schedule listing your licensed enterprises, holdings and fields.

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.

Contact us if you need to add a new enterprise to your license – refer to standard 14.4.1 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 Defra to certify organic food production and processing under the terms of *The Organic Production and Control (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*.

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 GB 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 products is lost, and

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: Spear House, 51 Victoria Street, Bristol, BS1 6AD

SA GB 14.4 Your obligations when certified	
Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 14.4.1 Description of your activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before starting your organic enterprise, you must describe what practical measures you will take to ensure you will comply with these organic standards. If you make any changes to your activity you must update your certification body accordingly. 2. You must include a full description of your premises, units and activities including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) a full description of the installations on land and at sea b) facilities used for the receipt of goods, processing, packaging, labelling and storage of seaweed c) procedures used for transporting seaweed d) the environmental assessment as outlined in standard 14.7.1. e) the sustainable management plan as outlined in standard 14.7.2. f) for wild seaweed a full description and a map of shore and sea collection areas and land areas where post collection activities take place. <p><i>(EC) 889/2008 6b (3) (4) (5) (6), Art.63 (1a), Art. 73a (a,b,c,d) Art. 80</i></p>	<p>To help you meet this requirement we have created an application form that outlines the information we need from you.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>If you make any significant changes to your activities, you must inform the 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.</p> <p>You must let us know if and when you plan to expand into new areas. For example, if you wish to add land, keep new livestock species or enterprises, or start a box scheme or start to pack or process food or feed. Depending on what changes are made, we might need to update your certificates and you may need an additional inspection or licence.</p>
<p>SA GB 14.4.2 Contracted operations</p> <p>If you contract out your organic activity, in part or whole, to a third party, the information in 14.4.1 must also include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) a list of the subcontractors, including their activities and the certification body or authority that they are certified by 	<p>This would include contractors used for agricultural work, such as harvesting, spraying, seed cleaning or storage.</p> <p> To comply with control measures contractors will be required to supply copies of any records of the work they have carried out for example field records, cleaning records of any storage areas or equipment and details of any separation measures they have in place to prevent contamination.</p>

<p>b) a written agreement by the subcontractors that their operation will comply with the control measures required as part of organic certification, and</p> <p>c) details of all the practical measures taken to ensure and demonstrate full traceability of products.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 28(1)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 86</i></p>	<p>Subcontractors premises and facilities may be subject to inspection to comply with control measures. You may need an appropriate agreement or contract with the subcontractor to allow these control measures to take place.</p>
<p>SA GB 14.4.3 Declaration</p> <p>You must sign a declaration stating that you:</p> <p>a) have described your organic enterprise and activities as referred to in 14.4.1 accurately</p> <p>b) will perform your operations according to organic rules</p> <p>c) accept any enforcements in case of non-compliance</p> <p>d) inform the buyers of loss of status of your product</p> <p>e) accept exchange of information about your operation between different certification bodies or control authorities where dual certified</p> <p>f) accept handing over information about your certification history when changing certification body or control authority</p> <p>g) will inform your certification body or control authority immediately of any breaches affecting the organic status of your product or organic products received from other operators or subcontractors</p> <p>h) in the case of withdrawing certification inform the certification body or control authority without delay</p> <p>i) accept that your Certification Body or control authority retains your certification history for a minimum of 5 years,</p> <p>j) must inform the certification body of any changes to your activities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 63(2); Art. 64</i></p>	<p>This is covered in the contract you sign when you apply for certification with us and the declaration you sign after every inspection.</p> <p>You must comply with the terms of the contract at all times.</p>
<p>SA GB 14.4.4 Employment</p> <p>You must not use forced or involuntary labour or child labour that interferes with their education.</p>	<p>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.</p>

Soil Association higher standard	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? 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.	
<p>SA GB 14.4.5 Certification code</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Each certification body is issued with a unique certifier code. You must use Soil Association Certification's code if you are packing and labelling products yourself or if another Soil Association certified business in the UK is packing or labelling the product on your behalf. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 27(10)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 58</i></p>	<p>Please refer to the labelling section 14.9 General Labelling and 15.3.2 Labelling & Transporting Products for more information on labelling requirements.</p> <p>Products certified by Soil Association Certification and produced, packed or processed in GB must use the certifier code GB-ORG-05.</p>

SA GB 14.5 Inspections	
Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 14.5.1 Inspection visits</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A physical inspection of your organic certified activities must be carried out once per year. You may be subject to additional announced or unannounced inspections based on an assessment of risk. If you are a wholesaler dealing only with pre-packaged products you may be subject to a reduced frequency of inspections. You may also be inspected by your competent authority as part of their surveillance of our inspection procedures. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 27(3)(5)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2009 Art. 65(1)(4); Art. 92c(2)</i></p>	<p>We may carry out additional inspections if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you wish to add a new enterprise to your licence • you move to new premises • we receive a complaint regarding your business • it is necessary to inspect seasonal activity or at different times of year • we need to inspect again to make sure you have corrected non-compliances • you are selected as part of our additional inspection programme and/or our risk assessment of your operations suggests the need for this. <p>We may charge you for these additional inspections if we consider they are needed because of non-compliances.</p> <p>At least 10% of a certification body's inspections must be unannounced and 10% must be risk-based extra inspections. These are based on the general evaluation</p>

	of the risk of non-compliance with the organic production rules, taking into account at least the results of previous controls, the quantity of products concerned and the risk for exchange of products.
<p>SA GB 14.5.2 What happens at the inspection</p> <p>1. At your inspection Soil Association Certification will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) verify that the description of your activities provided in your declaration is accurate b) verify whether your activities are compliant with organic standards, and c) compile an inspection report with any possible deficiencies and non-compliances found. <p>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.</p> <p><i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 63(2); Art. 65(3); Art. 82(3)</i></p>	<p>As part of closing 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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>SA GB 14.5.3 Access to facilities</p> <p>You must give Soil Association Certification or your control authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 b) access to accounts and relevant supporting documents which it deems necessary in order to certify your organic activities c) any information reasonably necessary for the purposes of certifying your organic activities, and d) when requested, the results of your own quality assurance programmes. <p><i>(EC) 899/2009 Art. 63(3); Art. 67(1); Art. 73; Art. 79; Art. 79d</i></p>	
<p>SA GB 14.5.4 Sampling</p>	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


<p>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. <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 65(2)</i></p>	<p>contamination of organic products. Certification bodies are obliged to take samples from the equivalent of 5% of their licensees per year.</p>
<p>SA GB 14.5.5 Specific requirements for inspecting bivalve mollusc production You must inform your certification body when maximum bivalve biomass production occurs so that inspection visits can take place before or during this period. <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 79(c)</i></p>	


SA GB 14.6 Non-compliance with the standards	
Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 14.6.1 Non-compliances</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. <i>(EC) 834 Art 27(2)(6)(12); Art. 30(1)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 92d</i> 	<p>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.</p> <p>The different grades of sanctions are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minor non-compliance • major non-compliance • critical non-compliance, or • manifest infringement. <p>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.</p> <p>We may suspend or withdraw your licence in the following cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if you are in breach of your contract with us • if you do not pay your fee within the deadlines • failure of licensee to return certified sales declaration (CSD)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we are unable to arrange an inspection • an inspector is refused access to premises • an inspector is refused permission to take a sample • if you do not send the completed Action Summary Form and Declaration, or the information we request, within the deadlines • severe or repeated non-compliance resulting in loss of organic integrity of an operation, product or batch • a fraudulent activity is reported by an authority.
<p>SA GB 14.6.2 Reporting non-compliances</p> <p>1. If you consider or suspect that any of your products do not meet organic standards, then you must inform Soil Association Certification immediately and share all relevant information to assist with any further investigation to determine the organic status of the product. You must also either:</p> <p>a) Withdraw any reference to organic in relation to the product.</p> <p>b) Separate or identify the product and only allow it to be further processed or sold as organic once any doubt has been eliminated and this has been agreed with us. <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 91(1)</i></p> <p>2. If we have a substantiated suspicion that you intend to place a product on to the market as organic which does not meet organic standards, we will tell you to withhold the product for a set time period whilst we investigate. Before we make this decision we will give you opportunity to comment. You will need to cooperate fully with any investigation to resolve the suspicion.</p> <p>If the suspicion is confirmed, then you must remove any reference to organic from the product. If the suspicion is not confirmed within the set time period, then you no longer have to withhold the product from sale. <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 91(2)</i></p>	<p>You must inform the Certification Team if you have any suspicion that a 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. Suspicion can originate from a number of sources including (but not exclusively):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive residue detection showing contamination with a substance not permitted in organic production (any detection, at any level, will initially be regarded as suspicion until an investigation has taken place). You must inform us in all positive residue detection cases. • A complaint from a reliable source. • You have not been able to verify the organic status of goods you have received (see section 14.8.1 for further information). • Not being able to verify valid certification of a product or supplier. For example, if your supplier's certification has been revoked. • 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. <p>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.</p> <p>*Note: If you receive a positive detection, but from the information you have, you believe that the product still meets organic standards, then you do not have to inform us of the detection. You need to have justification as to why you believed it still met organic standards and keep that information on file so that we can</p>

	check it at inspection if necessary. If you are unsure what action to take, please contact the technical team at sacl.notifications@soilassociation.org .
<p>SA GB 14.6.3 Exceptions You may only deviate from the standards when explicitly permitted in these standards. Permission may be granted or confirmed by your certification body. <i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 27(7)(b)</i></p>	
<p>SA GB 14.6.4 Appeals and complaints 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. <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 92(c)</i></p>	<p>If you have a complaint please send details in writing to cert.complaints@soilassociation.org or telephone Client Services on 0117 987 4564.</p> <p>If you wish to appeal a certification decision please send full details to the Certification Team.</p>

SA GB 14.7 Planning and managing your organic system	
Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 14.7.1 Environmental assessment If your site produces more than 20 tonnes of organic aquaculture product per year including seaweed, you must draw up an environmental assessment proportionate to the production unit. The assessment must be based on Annex IV to Council Directive 85/337/EEC which is the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive. It requires you to consider the conditions of the site, its current and future likely effects on the immediate environment. If the unit has already been subject to an equivalent assessment then it can be used for this purpose. <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 6b (3)</i></p>	<p>Measure whether your site produces more than 20 tonnes of aquaculture product on a fresh weight basis. Council Directive 85/337/EEC can be accessed online here Details of the environmental impact assessment should include descriptions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the production unit, including physical characteristics, construction, production processes, inputs and the period when the unit will be in use • the aspects of the environment that the production unit will affect, such as aquatic flora and fauna, air, climatic factors, material assets including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between these factors the pollutants emitted by the unit including the elimination of waste measures adopted to prevent, reduce and where possible offset significant adverse effects on the environment.

<p>SA GB 14.7.2 Sustainable management</p> <p>You must provide us with a sustainable management plan drawn up in verifiable coordination with neighbouring operators for aquaculture. The plan must be proportionate to the production unit and include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The environmental effects of the operation Details of environmental monitoring Measures to minimise negative impacts on the surrounding aquatic and terrestrial environment Where applicable, details of nutrient discharge into the environment per production cycle or per annum Details of how technical equipment will be surveyed and repaired where necessary A waste reduction schedule to be put in place at the start of organic production <p>Defensive and preventative measures taken against predators (in line with national rules and the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC)</p> <p>If you produce bivalve molluscs your plan must include a summary of the survey and report required in aquaculture standard 13.13.9</p> <p><i>(EC) 889/2008 6b (2) & (4), Art.25b (2) & (3), Art. 25q, Art. 79a</i></p>	<p>At inspection we will check this is appropriate to your system. Ensure you review and update your plan annually and include details of neighbouring operations.</p> <p>Your plan needs to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy and water use; impact on wild species, for example seals and Eider ducks, which are a species of conservation interest Risks identified through environmental monitoring and how these will be managed How mortalities will be managed; identification and recapture of escapees; measures to minimise waste feed The impact of any nutrient and effluent build up on the surrounding aquatic environment and how this is managed. Consider important habitats such as calcified seaweed (maerl) beds Procedures to log and maintain all technical equipment How site waste is managed to avoid environmental damage, protect animal health and avoid attracting pests. For example using nets and ropes made of durable material that is suitable for re-use Identification of potential predators e.g. seals, birds, biofouling organisms, and the steps you take to prevent and deter them in line with national rules and the Habitats Directive.
<p>SA GB 14.7.3 Renewable energy and recycling</p> <p>You must preferably use renewable energy sources and recycled materials. Where possible, the use of residual heat should be limited to energy from renewable sources.</p> <p><i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 6b (5)</i></p>	<p> Record any measures you have in place</p>

<p>SA GB 14.8 Record keeping</p>	
<p>Standards</p>	<p>Guidance</p>
<p>SA GB 14.8.1 General record keeping</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<p> Standards 14.3.1 to 14.3.3 apply to all licensees. More specific record keeping requirements for agricultural operations follow below.</p>

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.

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:
 - a) the suppliers, sellers or exporters
 - b) the nature and quantities of organic products delivered, including where relevant:
 - i) nature and quantities of all materials bought and the use of such materials
 - ii) the composition of compound feed stuffs
 - c) the nature and quantities of organic products held in storage
 - d) the nature, quantities, and consignees or buyers (other than final consumers) of any products which have left your unit, premises or storage facility.
3. If you do not store or physically handle organic products, you will still need to keep records of:
 - a) the nature and quantities of organic products bought and sold
 - b) the suppliers, and where different the sellers or the exporters
 - c) the buyers, and where different the consignees.

*(EC) 889/2008 Art. 26(1)(2)(3); Art. 31(1)(d); Art. 66(1)(2)
(EC) 834/2007 Art. 27(13)*



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/produced sufficient organic material for the quantity you have sold/dispached.

You need to have a system to keep track of procedures and records to ensure they are correct, up-to-date and effective.




Your records need to include:

- checked organic status of goods delivered as per standard 15.5.3
- quantities, batch codes and invoices and delivery notes of goods received
- quantities and batch codes of ingredients used in production/packing
- quantities produced in each production/packing run
- evidence that you processed organic and non-organic products separately
- evidence that you cleaned according to these standards before production
- batch codes of goods out
- what you have sold/dispached, how much and to whom
- the organic products sale value
- annual stock takes
- any pest control treatments used
- Certificates of Inspection (COIs) if applicable.

You do not have to record sales value if you do not sell the product, for example, if you store product on behalf of another licensed organic company and do not sell that product to anyone.

You need to carry out at least annual stock takes and record these (however, if you are handling a large volume of goods it may be beneficial to you to do this more frequently). These are necessary for our Inspector to have a starting point to conduct a mass balance.

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.

	<p>You need to keep all records for at least shelf-life plus 12 months. With the exception of Certificates of Inspection which must be kept for 2 years. Please refer to the importing standards in section 6.8 of the food and drink standards for further information.</p> <p>Also, make sure that your records comply with any other legally required time scales that might be specific to your products.</p>
<p>SA GB 14.8.2 Verifying certification documents</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You must verify the certification documents of your suppliers and check that they: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) identify your supplier, b) cover the type or range of products you are purchasing, and c) are valid at the time you are making the purchase. 2. You must make a record of these checks. <i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 29(2)</i> 	<p>A certification document will be the organic certificate, or in the case of Soil Association Certification licensees this includes the certificate and trading schedule. The name and address on the certificate must match the name and address of your supplier (the company you are purchasing from).</p> <p>The term 'suppliers' also covers businesses supplying a service, e.g. storing organic product.</p> <p>When you receive goods, you will also need to make the checks detailed in standard 15.5.3.</p> <p> Records of verification checks</p>
<p>SA GB 14.8.3 Complaints register</p> <p>You must keep a complaint register for your business. This must record:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) all complaints you make or receive b) any response to the complaint c) the action taken. <p><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 27((5)(c)</i> <i>ISO65 (4.1.2.2)</i></p>	<p> A complaints record encourages transparency. It allows businesses to monitor issues arising and encourages good practice by ensuring there is a documented system for dealing with complaints.</p>
<p>SA GB 14.8.4 Specific seaweed production records</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You must keep records in the form of a register which is available at all times on the premises of your holding. These records must provide the following information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) list of species, date and quantity harvested b) date of application, type and amount of fertiliser used 2. If you collect wild seaweeds the register must also contain: 	<p> Plant production records</p>

- a) the history of harvesting activity for each species in named beds
- b) harvest estimate (volumes) per season
- c) sources of possible pollution for harvest beds
- d) sustainable annual yield for each bed

(EC) 889/2008 Art. 73b

SA GB 14.9 General labelling

What is this chapter about?

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

Standards

SA GB 14.9.1 Using the term organic

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.

(EC) 834/2007 Art. 23(1)

Guidance


Labelling refers to the way in which you identify your products and show their organic status. The labelling standards apply to:

- retail packaging
- bulk packaging
- the labelling of loose produce for sale in retail outlets
- information on delivery notes or invoices for products that are transported in bulk, such as milk
- marketing materials
- web content.

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.

This only applies to food and feed products. However, if you make such claims on non-food and feed products, (such as textiles, health and beauty products, pet food), your claims must still be true. In the UK all products are governed by the *Trade Descriptions Act*.

Examples of other references to organic include, "organically grown"; "organically produced"; "grown/produced using organic principles"; "grown/produced using organic methods".

	<p>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 to. 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".</p> <p>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.</p> <p> Along with meeting these standards for labelling, you will also need to make sure your labels meet other relevant labelling legislation such as <i>Regulation 1169/2011</i> on the provision of food information to consumers, and the <i>Food Information Regulations</i>.</p>
<p>SA GB 14.9.2 Using the EU organic logo</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You must display the EU logo on labels of packaged organic products produced in Northern Ireland or the EU. 2. The EU logo is published for use in green as shown below. The reference for single colour printing is Pantone 376, or if you print using four colour process, 50% cyan, 100% yellow. 	<p>The use of the logo is mandatory for all organic pre-packaged food produced within Northern Ireland the European Union. The terms of its use are set by the EU and more information can be found online.</p> <p>You can download the EU logo in various formats from here.</p> <p>The white EU logo with the black stars is designed to be used on a dark background only. When the EU logo is used it must appear within a box or a black outline.</p>



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



4. The EU organic logo must:
 - a) appear at least 9mm high and 13.5mm wide, or
 - b) appear 6mm high for very small packages, and
 - c) have a proportional height to width ratio of 1:1.5.
5. The EU organic logo may appear:
 - a) in negative, if the background of your packaging is dark.
 - b) in the single colour of your packaging if you are only able to print one colour.
 - c) with an outer line around it to improve how it stands out on coloured backgrounds.
 - d) in conjunction with other logos and text referring to organic, providing this does not overlap, obscure or change the logo.
6. You do not have to use the EU organic logo on products produced in GB, but if you do, you must also use the declaration of where the ingredients have been farmed and the certifier code.



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

Products without packaging do not need to display the EU logo (see standard 15.5.2 for details of what you need to include)

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 24(1)(b)(c); Art. 25 (EC) 889/2008 Art. 57; Annex XI (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8)</i></p>	
<p>SA GB 14.9.3 Declaring ingredient origin</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You need to include a declaration of where the ingredients have been farmed or grown. 2. For products produced in GB you must use 'UK Agriculture', 'Non-UK Agriculture or UK/NON-UK Agriculture' 3. If the EU logo is used you must also include a declaration in relation to the EU - 'EU agriculture', 'non-EU agriculture', or 'EU/non-EU agriculture'. This must appear: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in the same visual field as the EU organic logo; b) immediately below the certifier code, and c) no more prominent than the sales description. 4. You can replace 'UK' or 'Non-UK, 'EU' or 'non-EU' with a particular country if all ingredients were farmed or grown there. In this case only one declaration is required. You do not have to count small amounts of ingredients up to a total of 2% of the agricultural ingredients. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 24(1c) (EC) 889/2008 Art. 58(2)</i></p>	<p>If the EU logo is used the declaration needs to be in the same visual field as the EU logo.</p> <p>If you are in GB and use the EU organic logo for exports to the EU, you need to include both the GB statement of agriculture ('UK or non-UK Agriculture') and the EU statement of agriculture ('EU or non-EU Agriculture').</p> <p>If the product contains 98% ingredients grown in a particular constituent nation of the UK, it can be labelled either as that specific country or UK Agriculture. For example, lamb produced in Wales could be labelled either as Welsh Agriculture or UK Agriculture. If you use this, it complies with both the UK and EU requirements.</p>
<p>SA GB 14.9.4 Using the Soil Association symbol on products</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You can only use the Soil Association symbol on organic products that meet the Soil Association standards. 2. You must reproduce the symbol from original artwork and it must appear: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) complete and upright b) in proportion to the product description c) at least 10mm in diameter (example 'A') d) in black or white (examples 'B' and 'C') e) clearly visible f) clear and legible over the whole of a background, for example if used over a photograph (example 'D') 	<p>For more information on how to become certified to the Soil Association standards and the use of our symbol, please refer to section 14.3. Retailers who are exempt from being certified (standard 14.3.2) may sell Soil Association certified products which include the SA symbol on their labelling, and make use of the Soil Association symbol in the marketing of those products provided it is clear and unambiguous as to which products the symbol applies.</p> <p>You can download the symbol pack directly from our website. We also have the symbol available for use in Welsh.</p> <p>If you are using a Soil Association certified sub-contractor to label your product they may apply the Soil Association symbol to your packaging. Organic operators certified by other certification bodies can also apply the Soil</p>

g) no less prominent than the EU logo



If you wish to use the symbol at a smaller size than 10mm in diameter (for example on very small packaging) or in a colour other than black and white, you must seek permission first.

3. The symbol must not appear:
 - a) against a background that affects the legibility of the **symbol (example 'E')**
 - b) incomplete
 - c) at an angle
 - d) within an extra circle either of an outline or solid **colour (example 'F')**
 - e) **in more than one colour (example 'G')**
 - f) **with a different font or typeface (example 'H')**

Examples of how not to use the symbol are shown below:

Association symbol on your packs, but only if there is a *Contract Symbol User Agreement* in place with them. Please talk to the Certification Team to find out more.



Soil Association higher standard

Why?

The Soil Association symbol is the most recognised organic certification mark in the UK and has gained the trust, respect and confidence of consumers and producers across the globe. The Soil Association symbol demonstrates that an organic food or non-food product meets our higher standards for animal welfare, health, consumer protection and the protection of the natural environment.

Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 14.9.5 Using the Soil Association symbol off-product</p> <p>You may use the symbol on company stationery, promotional literature and websites if we certify a range of your products, providing it is not misleading to buyers as to which products the symbol applies.</p> <p><i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p>	<p>If you sell SA certified products and also non-SA certified products (including non-organic products), any use of the SA symbol must be clear and unambiguous as to which products it applies. Use of the symbol on email footers, invoices, websites should be accompanied by an explanatory wording e.g. "We have a range of products which meet the Soil Association standards, see our product listings for more details", and within the product listing a clear identification of products. For contract manufacturers/packers wording</p>

	<p>describing the certified service offered should be included, e.g. "We offer packing of products certified to Soil Association standards".</p> <p>You can download the symbol pack directly from our website. We also have the symbol available for use in Welsh.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Why?</i></p> <p>The Soil Association symbol should only be used in relation to products or enterprises certified to Soil Association standards to avoid misleading consumers.</p>	

SA GB 14.10 Making claims on your labels	
Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 14.10.1 Using accurate descriptions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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, or clearly have no connection to organic production. You must not use any terms, including terms used in trademarks, labels or advertising, that could mislead consumers into believing products are organic when they are not. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art.23(2)</i></p>	<p>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 14.8.1 for further details.</p> <p>You need to make sure that the way you label your products is not misleading.</p> <p>For example if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> you label your product as 'organic mint biscuits', it must contain organic mint. your product does not contain organic mint, you can only label it as 'organic biscuits with mint'. you label your product as 'organic strawberry ice cream' it needs to contain organic strawberries. 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'. 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.



The standards in this section outline the requirements in relation to certain labelling claims. As well as meeting the requirements of these standards, you will need to make sure your products comply with statutory labelling legislation.

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 and Wales all domestic standards legislation is the responsibility of the FSA.

Visit this [website](#) for details.

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:

- 'organic agriculture aims to avoid the use of artificial pesticides and fertilisers'
- 'organic standards restrict the use of artificial pesticides and fertilisers', or
- 'grown under organic standards which minimise the use of artificial pesticides and fertilisers'.

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

SA GB 14.11 Labelling in specific scenarios

Standards

Guidance

SA GB 14.11.1 Labelling requirements for licensees (including retailers, farm shops and farmers' market stalls) selling direct to consumers

You must display your certificate of registration in a way that is clearly visible to your customers. If only some of your products are organic or if your organic supply is sporadic, you also need to provide additional information so that it is clear which products or produce the organic certificate refers to.

Soil Association higher standard

In order to make it clear which products your organic certificate relates to, you could also display your trading schedule which lists all the products you are certified to sell. If your organic supply is sporadic, or if the certificate only relates to some items that you are selling, you could add an explanatory note making it clear which products the certificate relates to, and how these are indicated.

Display the certificate in a sensible location in store. For example, if your store is only licensed to cover the loose fruit and vegetables you sell, then put the certificate near the produce.

Online retailers do not have to include their certificate of registration on their website, but they must indicate which products are covered by their Soil Association organic certification. Refer to use of Soil Association symbol in standard 14.5.2.

Why?

This standard helps to avoid misleading consumers by making it clear which products on sale are organic.

SA GB 14.12 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

SA GB 14.12.1 Reducing the risk of contamination

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.

(EC) 889/2008 Art. 26(1)(2); Art. 63(1)(c)


Guidance

You must consider what you do to reduce the risk of contamination at all stages of production, including processing, storage and transport, including how you determine that the measures you have in place are sufficient and how you monitor that they remain effective. You could use details of any sampling and testing that you carry out.

Examples of risks include:

- feed containing non-permitted ingredients
- other local non-organic sites
- local pollution events e.g. oil spill, sewerage outlets, flooding
- non-permitted cleaning products.

Containers for storage or transport must be of food grade quality.

	<p> All procedures must be consistently followed and appropriate records must be maintained to evidence this. Your Inspector will be checking that the procedures you have in place are adequate to reduce the risk of contamination.</p> <p>Staff training is an important way to ensure that the risk of contamination is minimised. Ensure that all new staff are adequately trained, particularly when changes are made to these organic standards and your own operational procedures.</p>
Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 14.12.2 Genetic modification</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Products labelled as consisting of or made from GMOs must never be described as organic. <i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 23(3)</i> 2. You must not use GMOs or products made from or by GMOs or their derivatives. You must be able to demonstrate that any food, feed, processing aids, additives, micro-organisms, plant protection products, fertilisers, soil conditioners, seeds, vegetative propagating materials and animals used in organic production do not contain any GMOs or their derivatives. 3. For food and feed products in the UK and 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. 4. For products that are not food or feed, or products that could be produced by GMOs 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. <i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 9(1)(2)(3)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 69; Annex XIII</i> 	<p>In the UK and EU, if a product contains GMOs or their derivatives then it must be labelled as such, (as described in 14.13.3.3) 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 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>There is a specific form to be used for licensees producing products under a Soil Association Standards licence and a separate form to use for licensees producing product certified to the GB Organic Regulation only. This is because the Soil Association has additional requirements in this area, as outlined in 14.13.3.5.</p> <p>Please contact us if you need a blank template of the non-GM declaration form for your suppliers to complete.</p>

<p>5. For Soil Association products and ingredients you will need to provide additional information to demonstrate their non-GM status.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p>	<p>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.</p> <p>14.13.3.3 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 should be to 0.1% or lower* and not just to 0.9%.</p> <p>* Some laboratories can provide testing to a limit of quantification (LOQ) below 0.1%. Please refer to standard 5.6.2 for action to take if you detect GMOs in an organic product, or organic ingredient.</p>
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Why?

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.

<p>14.12.3 Nanoparticles</p> <p>1. Organic products must not contain or consist of engineered nanoparticles.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p> <p>2. This standard does not apply to incidental nanoparticles.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p>	<p>Incidental nanoparticles not prohibited by this standard include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substances that are incidental by-products of other manufacturing processes (such as milling or homogenisation). • Naturally occurring nanoparticles, for example, from volcanic eruptions, in wood smoke or sea spray. <p>The definition of manufactured nanoparticles reflects the definition of nanomaterials in the Food Information for Consumers regulation 1169/2011.</p>
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	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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Why?

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.

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.

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 GB 14.13 General rules on cleaning	
Standards	Guidance
<p style="color: #4F81BD;">SA GB 14.13.1 Cleaning measures</p> <p>1. You must have suitable cleaning measures in place to prevent contamination and maintain the integrity of your products throughout production, processing and storage.</p>	<p>For cleaning chemicals permitted in aquaculture facilities please refer to 15.3.4.</p> <p>You must be able to demonstrate your cleaning procedures, with details of how you clean harvesting/handling equipment, storage areas and equipment used</p>

2. You must monitor your cleaning measures to make sure they are effective and keep records to show that you have done this.
3. If you process or store both non-organic and organic at the same site, you must ensure organic processing or storage is only carried out once suitable cleaning of the equipment and/or storage area(s) has been carried out.

(EC) 889/2008 Art. 63(1)(c); Art. 26(2)(b)(3)(e); Art. 35(4)(c)

for organic production. Explain how you limit the risk of contamination of organic product from microbial contaminants, from cleaning chemicals, non-permitted substances and from non-organic product.

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

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

Cleaning chemicals

Detergents, disinfectants, sterilants and sanitisers allowed for use in the food industry may be used for cleaning equipment and storage areas. Residues of these chemicals must be removed from surfaces in contact with organic food so that they do not contaminate organic products, by carrying out a final rinse with potable water.

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

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

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

Non dedicated equipment

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

If you process or store non-organic you will need to have a system for checking that cleaning has been undertaken and that it is effective to remove residues of non-organic material and/or previous production. This could involve visual inspection, micro-biological testing, testing to ensure sanitisers have been removed from organic food contact surfaces, ATP testing.

SA GB 15.0 Specific standards for organic seaweed	
SA GB 15.1 Specific rules on antifouling measures and cleaning of aquaculture equipment and facilities	
Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 15.1.1 Bio-fouling You must remove bio-fouling organisms only by physical means and, where appropriate, return them to the sea at a distance from the farm.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 6e (1)</i></p>	<p>You need to be able to demonstrate how you manage the removal of bio-fouling organisms.</p>
<p>SA GB 15.1.2 Cleaning equipment 1. You must only clean equipment and facilities by physical or mechanical measures. Where this is not satisfactory, only the substances in standard 15.1.4 may be used.</p> <p>2. Storing any non-permitted input product on the organic production unit is prohibited. This includes, but is not exclusive to non-permitted fertilisers, cleaning and disinfection products and anti-fouling substances.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 15g</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 6e (2)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 35</i></p>	
<p>SA GB 15.1.3 Cleaning and disinfecting You must properly clean and disinfect the holding systems, equipment and utensils on the production unit. You may only use products allowed in these standards.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 25s (2)</i></p>	<p>At inspection we may ask you to demonstrate how you clean and disinfect the holding systems using the products allowed, for example frequency of cleaning.</p>
<p>SA GB 15.1.4 Products for cleaning and disinfection for aquaculture animals and seaweed production You may only use products which contain the following active substances, for cleaning and disinfection of equipment and facilities in the absence of aquaculture animals (*):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ozone 2. sodium hypochlorite 3. calcium hypochlorite 	<p>Your cleaning procedures must document what techniques and products you use.</p>

4. calcium hydroxide
5. calcium oxide
6. caustic soda
7. alcohol
8. copper sulphate: only until 31 December 2015
9. potassium permanganate
10. tea seed cake made of natural camelia seed only for shrimp production
11. mixtures of potassium peroxomonosulphate and sodium chloride producing hypochlorous acid.

You may use only products which contain the following active substances, for cleaning and disinfection of equipment and facilities **in the presence and absence** of aquaculture animals (**):


1. limestone (calcium carbonate) for pH control
2. dolomite for pH correction (use restricted to shrimp production)
3. sodium chloride
4. hydrogen peroxide
5. sodium percarbonate
6. organic acids (acetic acid, lactic acid, citric acid)
7. humic acid
8. peroxyacetic acids
9. peracetic and peroctanoic acid
10. iodophores (only in the presence of eggs).

The use of these substances must comply with relevant EU and national provisions as referred to in *Article 16(1) of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007*, and in particular with [Regulation \(EU\) No 528/2012](#) and [Directive 2001/82/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council.

(EC) 889/2008 Annex VII

(*) Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2012 concerning the making available on the market and use of biocidal products (OJ L 167, 27.6.2012, p. 1)

(**) Directive 2001/82/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to veterinary medicinal product (OJ L 311, 28.11.2001, P. 1).

SA GB 15.2 Pest control	
Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 15.2.1 Preventing contamination by pests and pest control products</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You must design and operate your buildings and controls to reduce the risk of contamination by pests. 2. You must ensure when implementing preventative measures in organic areas that you take precautionary measures to reduce the risk of contamination of organic products. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 889/2007 Art. 63(1)(c)</i></p>	<p>You will need to be able to demonstrate the measures you have in place to reduce the risk of contamination by pests. This should include measures to prevent and control wild birds, rodents and insects from getting into your buildings such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flyscreens • pheromones in traps and dispensers, for monitoring pest levels or as attractants and sexual behaviour disrupters • effective covers of waste bins • sealing gaps and entry points
<p>SA GB 15.2.2 Treating infestations in organic products or areas used for organic products</p> <p>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.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 26(2)</i></p>	<p> If you use pest control methods, you will need to keep records of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>For example, if you plan to use pyrethrum as a spray or fog to control insects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if product is unpackaged, remove all organic products from the area to be treated and you will 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. <p>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</p>

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 describe the additional safeguards you will put in place 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.

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 15.2 of Soil Association standards.



Control methods on organic products

Control methods which are appropriate for use on organic products include:

- carbon dioxide or nitrogen
- freezing and heating
- vacuum treatment



Control methods in organic areas

Control methods which are appropriate for use in organic areas include, but are not limited to:

- desiccant dusts such as diatomaceous earth and amorphous silica, preferably from naturally occurring sources
- electric flying insect control units, with shatterproof tubes that are positioned and cleaned correctly
- tamper resistant bait stations that contain legally approved pesticides
- sticky boards for insects
- humane electronic rodent repellents such as floor mats

SA GB 15.2.3 Using glue boards

1. You may only use glue boards for rodents as a last resort and you must:

- a) provide evidence to show that other methods of trapping have failed or are not appropriate, before you use the glue boards
- b) use them according to industry best practice
- 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
- d) keep a record of each check.

Soil Association higher standard

The use of rodent glue boards is now prohibited in Wales by The Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023. In England, the Glue Trap (Offences) Act 2022 also prohibits the use, unless the glue trap is set by a pest controller granted a license by the Secretary of State as outlined in the legislation.

At the time of publication, the Scottish Parliament had voted to ban the sale of glue traps, but the implementation date had not been announced.

Glue boards should only be used as a last resort and you will need permission from the Certification Team **before using them. You'll need to let us know what measures you've already tried, such as bait stations and proofing the unit.**

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.



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 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.

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 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 GB 15.3 Transport, dispatch and receipt of goods

Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 15.3.1 Collection of products and transport to preparation units</p> <p>If you are collecting organic 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.</p> <p><i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 30</i></p>	<p> Collection Records</p>
<p>SA GB 15.3.2 Labelling & transporting products</p> <p>1. If you send an organic product to another company, including retailers, wholesalers and other licensees for further processing, packing or re-labelling then you must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ensure it is transported in a way that would prevent substitution. label it clearly, either on the product or on accompanying documentation undeniably linked to it so that the recipient can easily identify: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the product and its organic status the name and address of the operator, and, if different, the seller or owner of the product 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. <p>2. You do not need to use closed packaging, containers or vehicles if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> transportation is between two organically certified operators products are accompanied by a document containing the information required in point 1b above 	<p>For additional requirements for labelling of retail packed products, please refer to chapter 15.7.</p> <p>If your product is not repacked for retail, or it goes on for further processing, you can put ingredient information either on the label, or on a document with the product provided it can be clearly linked with the product. For example, grain moved from a dryer to a mill would need to be accompanied by a delivery note with full supplier address, product information (including organic status), batch, haulier and vehicle identification and consignee address.</p> <p>Labelled packaging helps identify organic products and keeps them sealed which limits the risk of contamination and substitution. However, there are products that need to be transported in loose bulk, for example milk on a tanker or fruit and vegetables in open top boxes.</p> <p> Records of transportation of loose organic products.</p> <p>However you choose to transport your products, you will need to make sure you have minimised the risk of contamination or substitution with non-organic products using clear labelling and separation. For example, if you are transporting loose fruit and vegetables in open top boxes, consider transporting the organic or non-organic in separate vans. Or, close the tops of the boxes containing organic to prevent accidental contamination.</p>

<p>c) both the sending and receiving operators keep records of the transportation. <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 31(1)(2)</i></p>	
<p>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). <i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p>	

Why?

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

<p>SA GB 15.3.3 Receiving organic products When you receive an organic product you must check, upon delivery that the product is labelled according to standard 15.3.2 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. <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 33; Art. 66(1)(2)</i></p>	<p>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. Please see the record keeping standards (chapter 14.3) for details of the information you will need to record.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get written confirmation from the supplier • send it back • sell it as non-organic • use it in non-organic products.
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SA GB 15.4 Storage of products	
Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 15.4.1 General separation You must manage your organic storage areas and containers in such a way to avoid any mixing with or contamination from products or substances that we do not allow in these</p>	<p>Demonstrate that your organic products are clearly identified and separated from areas used for other purposes. Examples include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the room, area, or racking with the word 'organic' to show that it is for storing organic products

<p>standards. Your organic storage areas, containers and products must be clearly identifiable at all times. <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art.35(1)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify all organic materials clearly to avoid accidental contamination • have sufficient space or barriers around the organic storage area to stop accidental contamination • only use stores, bins and containers that are made of materials suitable for contact with the food they are to store • dedicate and identify bins and containers as organic • prevent contamination by birds, insects and vermin • clean the stores regularly so that there are no residues which could contaminate organic products or encourage pests. <p>Also refer to the 'preserving organic integrity' section, for details of contamination, and products and substances we do not allow.</p>
<p>SA GB 15.4.2 Handling and separating organic and non-organic products When you use the same equipment and premises to store and handle both organic and non-organic products you must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> minimise the risk of mixing organic products with other products and foodstuffs by clearly identifying and separating them during the production process, and effectively clean equipment and storage areas used to handle or store non-organic products before handling or storing organic products. <p><i>(EC) 889/2008 Art.35(4); 26 (3)</i></p>	<p>Also refer to the 'preserving organic integrity' section (chapter 14.3), for details of contamination and products and substances we do not allow.</p>
<p>SA GB 15.4.3 Storing unauthorised inputs on organic units is prohibited The storage of inputs in organic plant, seaweed, livestock and aquaculture production units, which are not permitted under these standards is prohibited. <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art.35(2)</i></p>	<p>Storing any non-permitted input product on the organic production unit is prohibited. This includes, but is not exclusive to non-permitted fertilisers, cleaning and disinfection products and anti-fouling substances.</p>

SA GB 15.5 Packaging

Following feedback from licensees we have paused the implementation of our 2024/25 updated packaging standards. Whenever we review our higher standards, the process is focused on achieving impact through best practice and reasonable implementation. The implementation of the updated packaging standards has highlighted challenges with conveying technical information about packaging through supply chains and so has been paused until further notice whilst we undertake a further review. This is an important topic which we are committed to getting right. Please direct any feedback to standards@soilassociation.org.

Standards

SA GB 15.5.1 Scope

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

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

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

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

Soil Association higher standard

Guidance



Packaging Legislation

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

You must make sure your packaging meets all relevant legislation relating to packaging, packaging waste and materials in contact with food. For example, for products sold in the UK and EU such legislation includes, but is not limited to:

1. the [Defra regulations on extended producer responsibility](#) for packaging products.
2. the [European Parliament and Council Directive on Packaging and Packaging Waste](#) (94/62/EC)
3. the [European Standard for Compostable Packaging](#) (EN13432) – if you are using compostable packaging.
4. applicable legality legislation for cellulose based materials, this means the [UK Timber Regulations](#), in GB, and the [EU Deforestation Regulations](#), in Northern Ireland and the EU.

Environmental information claims and symbols on your packaging need to be clear, truthful and accurate. In the UK, you will need to make sure your packaging conforms to [Defra's Green Claims code](#). For further information on what constitutes primary, secondary and tertiary packaging please refer to the [Defra definitions of packaging class data](#).

	<p>These standards do not apply to outer packaging used to deliver the product to consumers via postal/courier service, such as postal bags/envelopes, boxes and other packaging materials used to protect contents.</p> <p>These standards do not apply to retail bags used by licensed operators, for example, bags for loose fruit and veg used by a retailer or farmers' market.</p> <p>To ensure that your packaging products are as widely recycled as possible we recommend using the OPRL guidelines on labelling to communicate whether products are recyclable at kerbside across the UK.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Why?</p> <p>The production, use and disposal of packaging can have a big impact on the environment and human health. We believe that organic products should be packaged in ways that reduce the negative impacts of packaging. This fits with the principles of protecting the environment and biodiversity that underpin organic food and farming, and meets consumer expectations of organic products.</p> <p>Packaging serves an important role in preventing food waste by protecting and extending the shelf life of products. It also helps to protect consumers by preventing contamination and substitution of organic products with non-organic alternatives. These packaging standards aim to maximise the benefits and avoid the negative impacts of packaging.</p>	
<p>SA GB 15.5.2 Chlorine bleached paper or cardboard If you use corrugate, bleached paper or cardboard, it must be totally chlorine free (TCF) or elemental chlorine free (ECF). Recycled paper must be process chlorine free (PCF).</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p>	<p>Demonstrate that you have not used these chlorine-based processes in manufacture, for example with a packaging specification for all materials used kept on file.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Why?</p> <p>The use of chlorine bleaching has a high environmental impact and its manufacture can result in the release of toxic chemicals such as dioxins and other pollutants.</p>	
<p>SA GB 15.5.3 Paper, card and wood-pulp packaging products* Any paper, card and pulp packaging materials from forest ecosystems must be sourced responsibly.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p>	<p>Adequate evidence of compliance with this standard is demonstration that packaging products carry certification from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).</p> <p>You must ensure that the invoices for paper, card and wood-pulp products you purchase include a valid chain of custody claim from FSC or PEFC.</p> <p>Licensees can:</p>

<p>* The implementation of this standard is paused while a review is undertaken.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • source products which carry source FSC or PEFC certification from suppliers, • obtain an independent FSC or PEFC chain of custody certificate, • establish FSC or PEFC group certification with other businesses (suitable for small businesses). <p>See the FSC website and/or the PEFC website for more information on the certification process and to obtain approved materials.</p> <p>When using recycled paper/card material your packaging must be compliant with the approved certification schemes from PEFC or FSC, for example for FSC these include 'FSC Mix' and 'FSC Recycled' labels, more information on FSC labelling is available here.</p> <p>This requirement does not apply when paper/card is derived from outside of forest ecosystems, this can include from agricultural wastes and grasses such as miscanthus.</p>
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Why?

Forests are fundamental in responding to the challenges we face, and to ensure a sustainable future. They regulate ecosystems, protect biodiversity, support livelihoods and help stabilise the climate. Paper packaging makes up more than half of the paper and pulp used in Europe, and this is projected to rise as many look to transition away from plastic packaging. Ensuring that products are deforestation-free is a core goal for the organic movement.

<p>SA GB 15.5.4 Plastic materials, coatings, dyes or inks containing phthalates*</p> <p>You must not use plastic materials, coatings, dyes or inks that contain phthalates.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p> <p>*The implementation of the changes to this standard are paused while a review is undertaken.</p>	<p>Demonstrate that you have not used these materials, for example with a packaging specification for all materials used kept on file.</p> <p>The restriction applies to plastic materials, coatings, dyes, or inks in contact with foodstuffs.</p> <p>To avoid phthalates in packaging materials we recommend:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> avoid PVC and use plastics that do not require plasticizers for flexibility, such as polyethylene, e.g., PET, HDPE, and LDPE. using non-phthalate-based plasticizers which are widely available on the market, see the ChemSec marketplace for more options.
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	c. consider whether packaging is necessary or if there are non-plastic alternatives.
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Why?</i></p> <p>Phthalates are a group of chemicals used as a plasticizer in the manufacture of many plastics, giving flexibility to more brittle materials. Phthalates can have a negative impact on human and environmental health, including endocrine disruption in humans and effects on reproduction in all studied animal groups. They are not chemically bound to the material to which they are added meaning they can continuously leach into food products as a food contact material or into the environment.</p>	
<p>SA GB 15.5.5 PVC and other chlorinated plastics* Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or any other chlorinated plastics can only be used when alternative materials that deliver a technically (or legally) required function are not available. See guidance for more details. <i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p>	<p>You must demonstrate that you have not used these materials, for example with a packaging specification for all materials used kept on file.</p> <p>This restriction applies to all chlorinated plastics which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • polyvinyl chloride (PVC) • vinyl chloride <p>There are some specific circumstances where we are aware that no functional alternatives to PVC or chlorinated plastics currently exist. For example, in cases where packaging must have adequate barrier properties to comply with food safety requirements. These must be demonstrated as part of the packaging submission form.</p> <p>Packaging applications where the use of PVC or chlorinated plastics can be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • metal jar lids or caps (e.g. for jams, sauces and baby food) • tamper evident seals on jar lids or caps, and • linings or seals of coffee capsules or pods <p>We will keep these exceptions under review as innovation for functional alternatives develops.</p>

Why?

The production, use and disposal of PVC are associated with a range of environmental and human health issues. PVC often contains additives which are added to improve flexibility and plasticity, including phthalates. PVC can also contain other toxic substances such as chlorinated paraffins, organic tin compounds and alkyl phenols. Chlorinated plastic materials are very difficult to recycle and can act as a contaminant when added to other plastic recycling systems, rendering output materials unfit for use.

The environmental hazards of PVC go beyond those associated with other plastics. Some of today's most worrying environmental contaminants are released during the production of PVC or its feedstocks and during the disposal of PVC products.

SA GB 15.5.6 Non-GM packaging

You must **not** use packaging materials or substances that contain, have been derived from, or manufactured using genetically modified organisms or genetically engineered enzymes, unless alternative materials are or not available, or not possible to verify as indicated in the guidance section of this standard.

Soil Association higher standard

You must seek non-GM sources of packaging materials. This applies to all materials derived from plant-based sources, including:

- polylactic acid (PLA)
- polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHA)
- polybutylene succinate (PBS)
- different starch blends.

To mitigate the risk of GM source material in packaging products we recommend you request product specification lists for any compostable or biodegradable packaging products. Biopolymers are often made from natural sugar sources derived from crops such as maize and sugarcane, which are both considered GM risk crops. When sourcing materials it is important to request confirmation from your supplier of the source crop material and whether it is from a country where GM crops are permitted.

Adequate demonstration of non-GM for packaging materials includes:

- Raw materials from certified organic production
- Non-GMO Project certification ([more info here](#))
- IP or PCR testing results for the raw materials

It is not technically possible to verify the non-GM status of certain components at different stages of the packaging manufacturing process. As a result, such components are exempt from the requirements of these standards. The exempt components are:

- glues,
- labels,
- inks and dyes applied to packaging products,
- biodegradable coatings,

- lids containing epoxydised soybean oil (ESBO),
- starch used in paperboard manufacture, and,
- enzymes used in the packaging manufacturing process.

This standard also applies to cotton teabag strings. Using organic teabag strings means you automatically meet the requirements of this standard. If your tea bag strings are non-organic you will need to provide details of the country of origin of the cotton used in them, and/or an IP certificate to prove they are not made with genetically modified cotton.

Why?

Genetic modification is counter to the principles and practice of organic food and farming and does not meet consumer expectation of organic products. Whilst most packaging derived from GM materials no longer contain GM DNA, they are still derived from raw materials which have been genetically modified. Considering the increased global demand for plant-based plastic materials and future projections for growth in the sector, there is a risk that packaging may become a significant driver of GM agriculture.

SA GB 15.5.7 BPA and other bisphenols in food-contact materials

You must not intentionally use Bisphenol A (BPA) or other bisphenols in materials that will be in direct contact with foodstuffs.

Soil Association higher standard

Demonstrate that you have not used BPA or other bisphenols in your food contact materials, for example with a packaging specification for all materials used kept on file.

Bisphenol A (BPA) is a chemical found in some plastics and used in the manufacture of epoxy resins. It is commonly found in the linings of some food and beverage cans. Alternatives to BPA include epoxy-phenolic, modified polyester and acrylic.

The wording 'intentionally use' refers to the fact that some materials are classified as BPA-NI, where "NI" stands for 'non-intentional'. This classification means that although there is no BPA added as a constituent of a lacquer, BPA may be present in the pipework, raw material packaging, processing equipment etc. and small amounts may be picked up by the finished product during production. Although you should avoid them where possible, you can still use BPA-NI materials for the time being. We will monitor the situation with BPA-NI materials with a view to totally eradicating BPA from all food contact materials in due course.

Type 7 plastics may be made from BPA. Type 3 plastics (PVC) could also contain BPA, but only in the case of flexible PVC which is prohibited under 15.5.5 of these standards.

Why?

Studies have shown that BPA has endocrine disrupting properties and toxic effects on our ability to reproduce. Studies have also raised serious concerns over other bisphenols that are sometimes used as an alternative to BPA, such as BPAF, BPB and BPZ. The toxic effects of Bisphenols are evident even at low concentrations.

SA GB 15.5.8 Oxo-degradable Plastics*

You must **not** use oxo-degradable plastics.

Soil Association higher standard

* The implementation of this standard is paused while a review is undertaken.

Demonstrate that you have not used these materials, for example with a packaging specification for all materials used kept on file.

Oxo-degradable plastics are not bio-based or compostable plastics; they are **conventional plastics with 'pro-degradant' additives that accelerate the fragmentation process**. To avoid oxo-degradable packaging products we recommend:

- use of recyclable plastic formats such as LDPE, or,
- **use of certified compostable plastics (see 'Packaging Scope' for more guidance)**

For more information and evidence on oxo-degradable plastics see this statement from the [New Plastics Economy Initiative](#).

Any packaging purchased from September 2025 must be compliant. Packaging purchased prior to September 2025 may be used until stocks are exhausted.

Why?

Oxo-degradable plastics are considered a 'problematic plastic' owing to their environmental impacts. They contribute to microplastic pollution as they are conventional plastics that fragment by design and are not suited for long-term reuse, recycling at scale or composting. They can undermine recycling systems when captured.

SA GB 15.5.9 Polystyrene*

You must **not** use polystyrene plastics in primary packaging materials.

Soil Association higher standard

* The implementation of this standard is paused while a review is undertaken.

Demonstrate that you have not used these materials, for example with a packaging specification for all materials used kept on file.



This restriction includes all types of polystyrene plastics, these include Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) and Extruded polystyrene (XPS). They are defined as Type 6 plastics (PS) and can be in rigid or film forms as well as the more common expanded foam.


This restriction is limited to **primary product packaging**, that is packaging contained in a single sales unit to customers. It does not apply to polystyrene used in a business-to-business supply chain where there is greater opportunity

	<p>for reuse and recycling. For more information on what constitutes primary packaging see Defra definitions of packaging class data.</p> <p>We will keep the scope of this restriction under review on an annual basis.</p> <p>Any packaging purchased from September 2025 must be compliant. Packaging purchased prior to September 2025 may be used until stocks are exhausted.</p> <p>Further government guidance is available here.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Why?</i></p> <p>Polystyrene is considered a 'problematic plastic' owing to its negative impact on the environment and human health. Polystyrene is made using the chemical styrene, which has been linked to cancers and nervous-system effects. It is not readily recycled and is persistent in the environment once disposed of. It is a consistent component of marine and coastal litter, breaking up into smaller pieces and releasing toxins, presenting hazards to marine species.</p>	
<p>SA GB 15.5.10 PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) *</p> <p>You must not use per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) chemical substances in your packaging products.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Soil Association higher standard</i></p> <p>* The implementation of this standard is paused while a review is undertaken.</p>	<p>Demonstrate that your products have not used PFAS chemicals in their manufacture, for example with a packaging specification for all materials used kept on file, if you use the following materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greaseproof or water-resistant paper packaging (e.g., bread / pastry bags), • baking paper or cake cases, • takeaway pizza boxes and card clamshells, • butter and cheese papers, <p>There are PFAS-free market ready alternatives to all these applications and/or opportunities to consider reusable or removal options. For alternatives, please review the ChemSec marketplace.</p> <p>Any packaging purchased from September 2025 must be compliant. Packaging purchased prior to September 2025 may be used until stocks are exhausted.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Why?</i></p> <p>PFAS are a group of chemicals known as 'forever chemicals' because they are extremely persistent in the environment. PFAS have been shown to disrupt hormone systems in animals and are classed as endocrine disruptors. Studies have shown links between PFAS exposure and a wide range of human health concerns including cancer, immune system disorders and fertility problems.</p>	

SA GB 15.6 Site selection	
Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 15.6.1 Site suitability for farming and collection of wild seaweed</p> <p>Your production units and/or collection areas must be sited in locations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that meet the criteria for Class A or Class B areas as defined in Annex II of Regulation (EC) No. 854/2004 (laying down specific rules for the controls on animal products for human consumption) 2. are free from contamination by substances not permitted in organic production 3. are free from pollution or pollutants that would affect the organic integrity of the product. 4. where the cultivation or collection of seaweed does not affect the stability of the natural environment or existing species within it. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 13 (1)(2)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 6b (1)</i></p>	<p>When you start your aquaculture operation, or when you add new sites, we will require details of the assessments you have made. Demonstrate that the water quality meets this standard.</p> <p>Defra ,the competent authority in GB, will provide further guidance. We expect it to reflect the criteria below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality assessment could be based on the Bathing Water Directive which is available from the Environment Agency website. • This should include details of neighbouring operations and an assessment of the contamination risk these pose and how this will be minimised. <p>Where there is no data available you should use other methods to assess your water quality. This should be based on risks and may require analysis depending on the nature of those risks. Water testing may be required.</p>

SA GB 15.7 Seaweed production	
Standards	Guidance
<p>SA GB 15.7.1 Organic and non-organic production</p> <p>Organic and non-organic production units must be adequately separated based on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the natural situation 2. separate water distribution systems 3. distance 4. tidal flow 5. upstream and downstream location of the organic production unit. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 889/2008 Article 6b (2)</i></p>	<p>Your competent authority may designate locations or areas unsuitable for organic seaweed harvesting and may establish minimum separation distances between organic and non-organic production units.</p>

<p>SA GB 15.7.2 Seaweed harvesting biomass estimate For seaweed harvesting sites, you must conduct a one-off biomass estimate at the start of production. <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 6b (6)</i></p>	<p> Show how you have estimated your biomass and justify how the methodology that you use is appropriate for your environment.</p>
<p>SA GB 15.7.3 Sustainable harvesting of wild seaweed</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You must harvest wild seaweed without significant impact on the aquatic environment. 2. You must put in place measures that ensure seaweed regeneration, taking into account: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) harvesting technique b) minimum sizes c) minimum ages d) reproductive cycles or e) size of remaining seaweed. 3. You must keep records that demonstrate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the history of harvesting activity for each species in named beds b) that the seaweed harvested is wild seaweed and that it is harvested according to these standards c) that where you harvest seaweed from a shared or common harvest area, the total harvest complies with these standards. 4. Your records of harvest estimates and sources of potential pollution must provide evidence that you are managing the harvesting areas sustainably with no long term impact. <p><i>(EC) 834/2007 Art. 13 (1)(b)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 6c, Art 73b (2)(b)(c)</i></p>	<p> You must be able to demonstrate how you manage and monitor the sustainability of your operation. You need to provide a map of the harvest area and keep records of the species you harvest.</p>
<p>SA GB 15.7.4 Seaweed cultivation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable practices must be used in all stages of production, from collection of juvenile seaweed to harvesting. 2. Seaweed cultivation at sea must only utilise nutrients naturally occurring in the environment or from organic aquaculture. 3. Where seaweed is cultivated in coastal areas, these must 	

<p>meet the criteria for Class A or Class B areas as defined in Annex II of Regulation (EC) No. 854/2004 (laying down specific rules for the controls on animal products for human consumption)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Where seaweed is cultivated on land using external nutrient sources, the outflowing water must have the same or lower nutrient levels than the inflowing water. You may only use nutrients of plant or mineral origin as listed in Annex I. 5. You must ensure that the culture density or operational intensity does not exceed the amount which can be grown without negative effects on the environment. 6. Where possible, you must re-use or recycle ropes and other equipment used for growing seaweed. 7. Seaweed cultivation should preferably form part of a polyculture system. 8. You must record the culture density or operational intensity. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834 Art. 13 (2)(c)</i> <i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 6d</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> Records of culture density or operational intensity.</p>
<p>SA GB 15.7.5 Cultivated seaweed conversion period</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The conversion period for a seaweed harvesting site shall be six months. 2. The conversion period for a seaweed cultivation unit shall be the longer of six months or one full production cycle. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 889/2008 Art. 36a</i></p>	
<p>SA GB 15.7.6 Ensuring genetic diversity in indoor culture stock</p> <p>To ensure that a wide gene-pool is maintained, the collection of juvenile seaweed in the wild should take place on a regular basis to supplement indoor culture stock.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(EC) 834 Art. 13 (2)(b)</i></p>	
<p>SA GB 15.7.7 Seaweed cleaning and drying</p>	

1. If your final product is fresh seaweed you must only flush it with seawater.
2. If your final product is dehydrated seaweed you may also use potable water for flushing, and salt may be used for moisture removal.
3. You must not use direct flames for drying seaweed.
4. If you use ropes or other equipment when drying seaweed, they must be free from anti-fouling treatments and cleaning or disinfection substances, except those listed in standard *15.1.4*

(EC 889.2008 Art.29a)

Annex I – fertilisers and nutrients

The following substances can be used in seaweed cultivation on land using external nutrient sources in line with standard 15.7.4.

Name – Compound products of products containing only materials	Description, compositional requirements, conditions for use	Soil Association additional conditions
Mushroom culture wastes	This must be initially made from products permitted in this table.	
Composted or fermented mixture of vegetable matter	Composts obtained from mixtures of vegetable matter which has been submitted to composting or to anaerobic fermentation for biogas production.	
Products and by-products of plant origin for fertilisers	Examples: oilseed cake meal, cocoa husks, malt culms	
Hydrolysed proteins of plant origin		
Seaweeds and seaweed products	As far as directly obtained by: (i) physical processes including dehydration, freezing and grinding (ii) extraction with water or aqueous acid and/or alkaline solution (iii) fermentation	You must not use calcified seaweed, lithothamne or maerl if extracted from the sea.
Sawdust and wood chips, composted bark and wood ash	Wood not chemically treated after felling	
Soft ground rock phosphate	Product as specified in point 7 of Annex 1 A.2 of Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003 . The cadmium content must be less than or equal to 90 mg/kg of P ₂ O ₅	
Aluminium-calcium phosphate	Product as specified in point 6 of Annex 1 A.2. of Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003 . The cadmium content must be less than or equal to 90 mg/kg of P ₂ O ₅ . Use only allowed where the soil pH is greater than 7.5.	
Basic slag	Products as specified in point 1 of Annex 1 A.2 of Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003 .	
Crude potassium salt or kainit	Products as specified in point 1 of Annex 1A.3. of Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003 .	
Potassium sulphate, possibly containing magnesium salt	Product obtained from crude potassium salt by a physical extraction process, containing possibly also magnesium salts	
Stillage and stillage extract	Ammonium stillage excluded.	

Calcium carbonate	Only of natural origin, for example chalk, marl, ground limestone, Breton ameliorant, phosphate chalk.	
Mollusc waste	Only from sustainable fisheries, as defined in Article 4 (1) (7) of <i>Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013</i> or organic aquaculture	
	Guidance You should also comply with Animal By-Product Regulations, for example in the UK.	
Egg shells	Must not be of factory farming origin.	
	Guidance You should also comply with Animal By-Product Regulations, for example in the UK.	
Magnesium and calcium carbonate	Only of natural origin e.g. magnesian chalk, ground magnesium, limestone	
Magnesium sulphate (kieserite)	Only of natural origin	
Calcium sulphate (gypsum)	Only of natural origin Products as specified in point 1 of Annex I D of Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003 .	
Industrial lime	Only as a by-product of sugar production from sugar beet or sugar cane, or vacuum salt production from brine found in mountains.	
Elemental sulphur	Products as specified in Annex I D.3 of Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003	
Trace elements	Only the inorganic micronutrients listed in Annex I, part E of Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003	
Sodium chloride		Only sea and rock salt.
Stone meal and clays	For example, ground basalt, bentonite, perlite and vermiculite.	
Leonardite (Raw organic sediment rich in humic acids)	Only if obtained as a by-product of mining activities	
Organic rich sediment from fresh water bodies formed under exclusion of oxygen (e.g. sapropel)	Only organic sediments that are by-products of fresh water body management or extracted from former freshwater areas When applicable, extraction should be done in a way to cause minimal impact on the aquatic system Only sediments derived from sources free from contaminations of pesticides, persistent organic pollutants and petrol like substances Maximum concentrations in mg/kg of dry matter must not exceed: cadmium: 0,7; copper: 70; nickel: 25; lead: 45; zinc: 200; mercury: 0,4; chromium (total): 70; chromium (VI): not detectable	
Xylite	Only if obtained as a by-product of mining activities (e.g. by-product of brown coal mining).	