

Questions and Answers Regarding National Standards for Organic Agriculture

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, in partnership with the Organic Federation of Canada, has developed the Organic Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC).

The objective of the Committee is to provide, to the Canada Organic Office, interpretive guidance on issues related to the National Standards for Organic Agriculture (CAN/CGSB 32.310 and CAN/CGSB32.311).



Below are proposed answers to questions, raised by organic stakeholders, regarding the National Standards for Organic Agriculture. The proposed responses are subject to a 30 day comment period. All comments regarding these answers should be sent to OPR.RPB@inspection.gc.ca

Comment period –October 1st to November 1st 2018

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General Principles and management standards

6 Livestock Production

Floor space in multi-aviary systems

For multi-level aviary systems for layers (6.13.10):

- a) **If winter gardens are accessible all year round, are they counted as indoor space, or part of the outdoor run/space?**

Depends where the winter garden is. If inside (e.g. greenhouse) it counts as indoor space. If outside (e.g. protected area on pasture) it counts as outdoor space.

- b) **Does space on ramps or ladders count towards useable floor space?**

No. Ramps and ladders are not floor space.

- c) **Do terraces under which manure collects and is not removed count towards useable floor space? (410)**

No. As manure collection should take place in all spaces used by animals, areas such as terraces under which manure collects and is not cleaned out does not count as useable space.

Laying hens sold for organic meat

In order for organic laying hens to be sold at the end of their laying life for organic meat or organic processing, are they required to meet the requirements in 6.13.1 h) that barn raised meat chickens have daily outdoor access by 25 days of age? (411)

Yes. The requirements described in 6.13.1 h) must be met in order for laying hens to be sold as organic meat.

Length of immunization program

Is it permissible to

a) **extend the vaccination schedule of a flock of pullets to 18 weeks even if the program does not need to be extended for any medical reason, simply to keep the birds from needing to be let outdoors?**

b) **eliminate the need for an outdoor run by extending the immunization program to 18 weeks in cases where the program can be shorter than 18 weeks? (412)**

The answer is no to both questions. "6.13: Additional requirements for poultry" apply.

Outdoor access for laying hens

Are laying hens required to have outdoor access for 1/3 of their laying-life as stated in the English translation of 6.13.1 f) in 32.310 or 1/3 of their life as stated in the French translation of 32.310? (414)

One third of its laying life (per the English version).

Calculation of poultry densities

Are the poultry densities in Table 4 of 32.310 per flock? Or averaged over a year? (415)

Typically averaged over all the flocks over the year; but consideration must be given to extremes at either end to ensure there are no animal welfare concerns; such as the birds are being given quality and quantity of feed necessary and the operation not overstocking, or overcrowding an average flock.

7.1 Apiculture

Organic beeswax

Can beeswax be certified as organic? (442)

Yes. Beeswax generated by organic apiculture operations can be certified organic (7.1.1) with two exceptions: 1) when comb foundation was not sourced from organic hives (7.1.15.3); and, 2) when hives have been treated with synthetic allopathic drugs (7.1.15.7).

7.5 Greenhouse crops

Mineral fraction of soil in contenants

For container production systems in greenhouses is the mineral fraction requirement (7.5.4) met if the "soil" contains either perlite or vermiculite? (408)

No. That was not the intention of the standard. Even though both are heated forms of mineral compounds (perlite/volcanic glass, vermiculite/expanded mica) the requirement is some sand, silt or clay would be included in soil mixes.

Permitted substances lists

Table 5.2 - Feed, feed additives and feed supplements

Lysine for livestock

What forms of L-Lysine are permitted? (420)

Preference shall be given to sourcing high lysine grains, seeds, and legumes. Other forms of lysine, if they meet the requirements of 32.311 5.1.2, are permitted, including those produced by biofermentation which may involve the use of acids during lysine production and purification (see Amino acids, 32.311 Table 5.2). Please note that this entire annotation will be reviewed by the CGSB Technical Committee at the next full revision of the standard.