

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 (Agri-SIC).

The objective of the Committee is to provide to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency interpretive guidance on issues related to the National Standards for Organic Agriculture (CAN/CGSB-32.310 and CAN/CGSB-32.311).



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 cfia.opr-rpb.acia@canada.ca.

Public Comment Period – March 9 to April 8, 2022

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Under public comment

Protection of birds on outdoor areas

Under 32.310 Section 6.13.1, is there a requirement that the outdoor areas for poultry be fenced? (547)

There is no specific requirement that outdoor areas or pasture need to be fenced. However, the operator must be able to demonstrate that the flock is managed according to the COS at all times including 3.62 and 6.13.1 b)1 & d), by way of fencing or other effective barrier.

Transition of swine outdoor areas

Does the 36 months transition requirement of vegetated land (5.1) apply to outdoor swine exercise areas? (546)

Yes. Any outdoor exercise area other than concrete (6.15.2 a) must comply with requirement of 36 months free of prohibited substances (6.3.2).

Parallel production of sprouts, shoots and microgreens

Can organic and conventional sprouts be produced in the same facility if grown in visually distinguishable containers? (211)

~~No. Growing organic and non-organic sprouts of the same plant variety at the same time is parallel production and is prohibited. Where different varieties of the same species are produced simultaneously, the organic and non-organic crop themselves must be visually distinguishable.~~

Section 7.4 of the Standard does not contain or reference any restrictions related to parallel production; therefore, organic and conventional sprouts could be produced in the same facility. As per 4.4.3, an identification system to distinguish organic and non-organic sprouts is required, which may include visually distinguishable containers and other methods.

Polyoxin D zinc salt

Is Polyoxin D zinc salt considered a 'Biological organism' per Table 4.2, resulting in permissibility of the compound for crop production? (544)

No. Polyoxin D would be considered as a microbial product under Microorganisms and microbial products, Table 4.2; however, the addition of zinc resulting in a new compound requires Polyoxin D zinc salt to be listed in Table 4.2.

REWORDED QAS

Mutagenesis -cisgenesis

Do seeds resulting from mutagenesis or cisgenesis fall within the Standard's prohibition of genetic engineering? (255)

~~Mutagenesis and cisgenesis are not prohibited by the Standard. The use of these techniques is limited to combining plant materials that will cross or breed through natural processes"~~

Mutagenesis and cisgenesis by way of genetic engineering are prohibited by the Standard (3.31). The use of these techniques is limited to producing plant materials through traditional breeding techniques.

Does the use of a "peat moss/compost etc. mix" satisfy the requirements of 7.5.2.1 for "soil used in a container system"? (25)

No. 7.5.2.1 allows for container-grown production with soil. A compost and peat moss mixture is missing the minimum 2% mineral fraction that is required for a "soil used in a container system". See 3.73, definition of soil. ~~Soil as defined in the standard is not required for plant propagation or for transplant production. This same soil requirements applies to annual seedling production per 5.3.3.~~