

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 – June 20 to July 20, 2022

Table of contents

Under public comment

Organic Principles and management standards

| | |
|--|---|
| Planting stock for sweet potato | 2 |
| Conventional heifers converted to organic operation..... | 2 |
| Management of organic breeding stock | 2 |

Permitted Substances Lists

| | |
|--|---|
| Silicon fertilizer..... | 2 |
| Hydrated lime in mushroom production | 2 |

REWORDED Q&As

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Soil/soil-less mix..... | 3 |
| Tractor exhaust | 3 |

Under public comment

Organic Principles and management standards

Planting stock for sweet potato

When sourcing planting stock for sweet potato production, and considering they are classified as a perennial, what requirements need to be fulfilled? (554)

Sweet potatoes may be perennial in a sub-tropical setting but in the North American climate, sweet potatoes do not produce a crop beyond the first season, are not perennial per 3.54 and shall be considered an annual crop. Seedlings would need to be organic. Cuttings, if organic are not commercially available per 5.3.2, may be treated with substances listed in PSL Tables 4.2 or 7.3 as per 5.3.1

Conventional heifers converted to organic operation

Is it permitted for an organic operation to purchase conventional heifers to convert to organic over the 12-month transition period, and then sell as an organic animal? (555.1)

No. Per 6.2.3.3, the exception to 6.2.3.1 permits for the conversion of conventional herds and individual animals from outside the operation to organic breeding stock for the operation. Per 6.2.4 b), if transitioned breeding stock is transferred outside the operation, they shall be considered non-organic.

Management of organic breeding stock

Is it permitted for an organic dairy operation to sell organic calves or heifers born on-farm instead of keeping them as replacement breeding stock while purchasing non-organic breeding stock to convert to organic with a 12-month transition period for organic milk production (as per 6.2.3.3 a)? (555.2)

No. Per 6.2.4 a), breeding stock shall be organic unless not commercially available. In the example questioned, replacement breeding stock is available from within the operation.

Permitted Substances Lists

Silicon fertilizer

Is a synthetically derived silicon fertilizer permitted under Table 4.2 Silicon, silica and silicates listing? (561)

No. The listing says silicon products from mined sources.

Hydrated lime in mushroom production

Can hydrated lime be used as a spot treatment, disease control or disinfectant in organic mushroom production? (562)

Hydrated lime is permitted for disease control as indicated in Table 4.2 listing, but it is not a disinfectant.

REWORDED Q&As

Soil/soil-less mix

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

It depends. 7.5.2.1 allows for container-grown production with soil. A compost and peat moss mixture may not contain the mineral fraction that is required, depending on the compost feedstocks. This fraction of the mix needs to contain at least 2% minerals by dry weight or volume. This same soil requirements applies to annual seedling production per 5.3.3. Compliant soil is not required for early propagule stages before nutrition is necessary. (Ref Q&A 204.2).

Tractor exhaust

Is tractor exhaust, injected into the soil, acceptable under the standard? (32)

No. Tractor exhaust, regardless of the fuel source, may not be injected into the soil. Components in tractor exhaust do not comply with the standard as required by 32.310 - 1.5a).