



# Organic Food Federation

## Explanatory Note 303

*These notes are intended to help applicants comply with Organic EC Regulation 2092/91. They are not exhaustive and are for explanation only. In cases of doubt the Regulation or the OFF should be consulted.*

### Imports from Third Countries

It is a legal requirement to seek authorisation from DEFRA in order to import organic plant products and foodstuffs from countries outside the EU.

In order to obtain an authorisation you must first be registered with an organic certification body such as OFF.

Once registered you can obtain an OB8 form from DEFRA. *(Address given at the end of this document).*

In the OB8 you will be expected to record details of the product, the producer and the certification in the country of origin must be given. This information must be as detailed as possible in order to avoid delays in processing the authorisation.

The application will usually be accepted if DEFRA is satisfied of the equivalence of the organic standards applied in the third country with Regulation 2092/91 and that the certification body in the third country has EN45011 or ISO65 accreditation. (Internationally recognised standards for accreditation bodies).

The following countries are currently exempt from the need for this procedure and their organic products are treated as if they had originated within the EU. However you still need to be registered with a certification body (such as us) in order to import from them.

COUNTRY	AUTHORISED BODIES
Argentina	Argencert, OIA, LETIS
Australia	AQIS, BDRI, BFA, OVAA, OHGA, OFC, NASAA
Costa Rica	Eco-LOGICA and BCS Oko-Garantie
Israel	PPIS
New Zealand	Biogro
Switzerland	IMO, SQS
India	

The situation is constantly under review and confirmation that they still have this status must be obtained from DEFRA OSB before engaging in importation from these countries.

Goods imported from within the EU, that are certified by an EU sector body do not need registration with a UK sector body, unless the importer is breaking bulk or carrying out further processing. This is because all approved EU certification bodies work from the same EC Regulations.

#### **Inspection requirements for importers of organic products from third countries**

At the time of registration, you and your inspection body must draw up a full description of your premises and the scope of the import activities, indicating as far as possible the points of entry of the product into the community and any other facilities that you intend to use for the storage of imported products.

Where a third party warehouse is used to store the imported goods the warehouse must be registered and inspected. A full description of the warehouse and the materials stored must be prepared and records of all receipts (goods-in) and deliveries (to customers) of imported organic produce or products must be readily accessible for inspection.

This description and the measures concerned must be contained in an inspection report, which you need to countersign.

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## Records.

Precise and up to date records must be kept to enable us to trace each lot of organically produced products imported from a third country, these records must include

- The origin, nature and quantity of the lot concerned, and any details of the transport arrangements from the exporter in the third country to your premises or storage facilities.
- The nature, quantities and consignees of the lot concerned, and details of the transport arrangements from your premises or storage facilities to you customers.

## Warehousing/Storage

If you intend to store imported organically produced products in storage facilities where conventionally produced agricultural products or foodstuffs are also packaged, processed or stored: -

- The organically produced products must be kept separate from other agricultural products or foodstuffs; and
- Every measure must be taken to ensure identification of lots and to avoid mixtures with conventional products.

Apart from random unannounced inspection visits, we are required to make a full physical inspection at least once per year at each of our operator's premises. This includes where appropriate, your storage or warehousing facilities.

If we have reason to believe that organic imports contain substances not authorised under the Regulation, we are required to take samples for analysis.

It is a legal requirement that importers seeking organic certification must, for inspection purposes, give the inspection body access to his or her premises and to the written records and relevant supporting documents, in particular any import certificates. Any information necessary for the purposes of the inspection must be provided.

Organically produced products shall be imported from a third country in appropriate packaging or containers, closed in a manner preventing substitution of the content and provided with identification of the exporter and with any other marks or numbers serving to identify the lot with an inspection certificate. Bulk grains and liquids must be transported in ship's holds or bulk containers that have been thoroughly cleaned and a certificate to this effect must be included with the shipping documents.

Control of organic imports is carried out by the designated Port Health Authorities. With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2001 the European Import Certificate for the import that is raised by the certification organisation in the country of origin must be available for inspection by the Port Health Authority. (Only an original certificate is accepted.) Furthermore the Port Authority will check their lists from DEFRA OSB to validate the import authorisation. If the documentation is not in order the goods cannot be admitted.

On receipt of an organically produced product from a third country you need to check that the packaging or container is still sealed and that the identification of the lot corresponds with the EC certificate. If the documentation does not correspond with the identification of the product/s the latter cannot be sold as organic.

Organically produced products may be transported to other units including wholesalers and retailers, only in appropriate packaging or containers closed in a manner preventing substitution of the content and providing a label stating, without prejudice to any other indications required by the law:

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- Your company name and address, or a statement which enables the receiving unit and any inspection body to identify unequivocally the importer of the product;
- The name of the product including a reference to the organic method of production

\*DEFRA (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) The Organic Farming Branch, Imports Section is responsible for authorising imports of organic products from third countries.

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 Organic Strategy Branch  
 Imports Section  
 DEFRA  
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