



Organic Food Federation

Explanatory Note 316

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.

Arable Producers

1. Conversion time

1.1 Conversion period for land: -

- Two years for annual crops and grassland
- Three years for perennial crops

2. Rotation

2.1 Rotations must be designed so that the fertility is improved and maintained and to counteract or avoid major pest weeds and diseases.

2.2 They should contain legumes to increase nitrogen that will be used by subsequent crops and use crops with different rooting systems to utilise all the available nutrients.

2.3 The rotation should also be there to maintain or increase organic matter in the soil.

3. Seed

3.1 Seed purchased must be organic.
There are many different varieties now available and a list of varieties and the suppliers can be gained from National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB).

3.2 Seeds cannot be treated unless it is just size grading or the treatment product is listed in section 6 of the Arable Standards.

3.3 However if there is no seed available then a derogation can be requested to allow the purchase of non- organic untreated seed. These derogations must be submitted to the OFF office and a reply received **before** the purchase of the seed and must contain justification for the wish to purchase non-organic seed over organic seed. The online database www.organicXseeds.com can be used to check availability.

3.4 There are some types of seed that have separate regulations:- Ulrich text missing here

3.5 Grass seed mixtures must be a minimum of 50% organic seed by weight.

3.6 These proportions of non-organic seed can be made without the need for derogations. However proportion of organic seed to be included is being increased each year and if you have any queries over quantities contact OFF.

4. Seedlings

4.1 Any seedlings must be produced by yourself or by a licensed plant propagator. The same rules for seed apply and the request for derogation is up to the farmer rather than the propagator.

5. Weed Control

5.1 Weeds should be controlled through rotation, choice of species and variety, mechanical cultivations, hand weeding and flame weeders.

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6. Fertilisers

- 6.1 FYM, slurry or hen pen can be added to land as long as it comes from your own or related holdings.
- 6.2 FYM, slurry or hen pen sourced from other organic holdings must be justified through soil analysis or nutrient budgets.
- 6.3 FYM, slurry or hen pen sourced from non-organic holdings must be justified for why it could not be found organically and why it is needed through soil analysis or nutrient budgets. It can only come from extensive husbandry systems and should ideally be composted to break down any non-organic medical treatments. Additional medical and feed records of the extensive conventional animals are required (e.g. horses).
- 6.4 Mineral fertilisers can be added as long as they are justified by soil analysis and are in section 5 of the OFF standards.
- 6.5 Biodynamic preparations can be used without any justification.

7. Disease Control

- 7.1 Disease can be controlled through the selection of varieties, rotation design and use of the products listed in Section 6 of the standards.
- 7.2 Potato Blight – this is a difficult disease to tackle in organic farming. Copper is one of the options but the amount of copper allowed to be put on a potato crop in a year is being reduced. At the moment 6kg/ha/yr is allowed. This is subject to change by the controlling authority DEFRA, at any time.

8. Parallel production

- 8.1 This will only occur if there is both organic and non-organic land on the same holding.
- 8.2 If you are growing the same crop both organically and non-organically then the varieties of the crop must be different.
For example

A	Spring Barley Organic Spring Barley Non Organic	Chantal Dandy	✓
B	Spring Barley Organic Spring Barley Non Organic	Dandy Dandy	✗

- 8.3 With perennial crops production of the same variety both organically and non-organically is not allowed unless:-
- A conversion plan is produced which undertakes to convert the whole area concerned within five years.
 - Appropriate measures have been taken to ensure permanent separation of the products from each unit.
 - The OFF is notified of the harvest of each product at least 48hrs in advance.
 - Once the products are harvested, the producer must inform the OFF of the exact quantities of each harvest and any distinguishing features (i.e. quality, colour, size) and confirm that appropriate measures to separate the products have been taken.

- The conversion plan and separation measures must be approved by the OFF. This approval must be confirmed each year after the start of conversion.

9. Record Keeping

9.1 The following records need to be kept

10. First year In – Conversion

1. Planned Rotation
2. Cropping plan by field or area
3. Previous treatments for the last 2 crop years of agrochemicals and artificial fertilisers by field or area.

11. Second year in conversion and organic

1. Rotation plan
2. Cropping plan by field or area
3. Source, type, and rate of usage of FYM, slurry, hen pen, mineral fertilizers and products used for pest and disease control. This should be done on a field-by-field or area basis. If some small fields are managed identically, records can be kept for this “management unit”. Even if no inputs have been applied, please still note ‘no inputs’.

These records are a vital source information required by our inspectors during their annual visit to allow them to audit your farm.

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