



# Organic Food Federation

## Explanatory Note 330

*These notes are intended to help applicants comply with OFF Organic Aquaculture Standards (Salmonids and Gadoids). They are not exhaustive and are for explanation only. In cases of doubt the Regulation or the OFF should be consulted.*

### Key Requirements in Organic Aquaculture

1. To describe a fish or shellfish as organic it must have been reared and farmed in accordance with an approved Organic Aquaculture Standard and the hatchery, farm and feed suppliers involved must be registered and certified by an organic certification body on an annual basis.
2. The land surrounding the aquaculture operation must be free from sources of pollution from natural, industrial or agricultural activities that may contaminate the water that is used for the operation.
3. Water quality to be continuously optimal for the healthy rearing of the species farmed, and must be free from pollution by run-off from the land or from marine activities.
4. The stocking density of the farmed finfish species must not exceed the limits given in our standards (Salmonids 10kg/metre<sup>3</sup> Cod and similar species 15kg/metre<sup>3</sup>).
5. It is not permitted to farm to organic standards and conventional methods on the same site and the total biomass of the farmed species on site must not be allowed to irreversibly deplete the benthic community.
6. The uses of synthetic anti-fouling or other chemical preservatives on nets, wooden support posts, floats or any other equipment are forbidden and only physical cleaning processes are permitted.
7. The feed used on most farmed finfish species must be based on fishmeal from sustainable sources or from trimmings (from food fish processing). The use of farmed fish for fishmeal is not allowed. For omnivorous species, organic cereals and plant products should be used if the fish are able to metabolise them. Feed plants supplying organic aquaculture operators must be certified.
8. Oils must be primarily from fish and the quantities used must not exceed the amount required for normal development. Organic vegetable oils may be used to partly substitute for fish oils, if the fish are able to metabolise them, however there can be adverse effects on flavour and omega fatty acid content.
9. The use of synthetic pigments in the diet of organic salmonids is not permitted. Natural astaxanthins from shrimps and krill are part of the normal diet of wild salmon, which gives them their typical pink colour. Natural astaxanthin obtained from Shrimp meal and natural yeasts are permitted in the feed for farmed salmon because they are essential antioxidants and necessary for the health of the fish.

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10. The use of antibiotics and pesticides (lice treatment) is strictly controlled to cases of need. Normal withdrawal periods are doubled for organic fish. It must be noted that certain retailers will not accept fish that have been treated with antibiotics, and traceability systems must be capable of differentiating stock that has been treated with them.
11. Notwithstanding para 10 above, the welfare of the farmed species is paramount and failure to treat diseased or injured fish when practicable, or the use of prohibited substances may result in the farm's organic certification being cancelled.
12. The grading and harvesting of the farmed species must be carried out in a manner that minimises stress and avoids injury (i.e. passive grading).
13. The slaughter of mature fish for market or the culling of diseased or injured fish (where treatment is not viable) must be carried out quickly and humanely.

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