



Design and testing  
new VET frameworks  
for the transfer and recognition  
of organic livestock  
management skills in Europe



# Practitioner in Organic Livestock Management

Pilot Course

Unit 4

## Organic Certification

MAICH Chania (GR)





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## LEGISLATION GOVERNING ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Organic production in the European Union is mainly governed by Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 and Commission Regulation (EC) 889/2008 of laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products with regard to organic production, labelling and control. These Regulations and their amendments can be found at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>

The Regulations define the responsibilities, authorities, rights and obligations of:

- The Commission of the European Communities**, which co-ordinates the system of organic production and control, gathers and evaluates relevant information.
- The Competent Authority** of each Member State, which oversees the organic control system and may introduce national implementing legislation. The Competent Authority may confer its control competences to one or more
- Control Authorities** and delegate control tasks to one or more
- Control Bodies**, also known as **Certification Bodies**, which perform inspections of and certify as organic the products of
- Operators**, i.e. the natural or legal persons responsible for ensuring that the requirements of organic production are met within the organic business under their control.



## OBLIGATIONS OF OPERATORS IN ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION - PRACTICES

In the EU there are five concerns for livestock welfare:

- Freedom from **discomfort**;
- Freedom from **hunger and thirst**;
- Freedom from **fear and distress**;
- Freedom from **pain, injury and disease**;
- Freedom to **express natural behaviour**.

Animal welfare is a priority in organic livestock farming and therefore its requirements may go beyond the above Community welfare standards.

EU requirements for organic livestock production practices may be classified in the following categories:

1. Origin of animals
2. Livestock housing and husbandry practices
3. Feed
4. Disease prevention and veterinary treatment

## **OBLIGATIONS OF OPERATORS IN ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION - PRACTICES**

### 1. Origin of animals

The breeds are selected taking into account the capacity of animals to adapt to local conditions, their vitality and their resistance to disease or health problems. Preference should be given to indigenous breeds and strains.

Organic products should originate from animals that have been raised on organic holdings since birth or hatching and throughout their life.

Non-organic animals may be brought onto a holding for breeding purposes, only when organic animals are not available in sufficient number and subject to the conditions described in Article 9 of Reg. (EC) 889/2008. These conditions may become less strict with prior approval of the national Competent Authority.

Such animals and their products may be deemed organic after compliance with the conversion period specified in the Regulation.



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## **OBLIGATIONS OF OPERATORS IN ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION - PRACTICES**

### **2. Livestock Housing and Husbandry Practices**

Personnel should have the necessary knowledge and skills regarding animal health and welfare.

As organic stock farming is a land-related activity animals should have access to open air or grazing areas whenever weather conditions and the state of the ground permit it.

Housing for livestock should satisfy the needs of the animals concerned regarding ventilation, light, space and comfort and sufficient area should be provided to permit freedom of movement and to develop the animal's natural social behaviour.

When animals are housed in buildings, there should be insulation, heating and ventilation of the building so that conditions are kept within limits which are not harmful to the animals. The building shall permit plentiful natural ventilation and light to enter.

The minimum surface for indoor and outdoor areas and other characteristics of housing for different species and categories of animals, are presented in Annex III of Reg. (EC) 889/2008.







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## **OBLIGATIONS OF OPERATORS IN ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION - PRACTICES**

### **2. Livestock Housing and Husbandry Practices**

Although non organic livestock may be present on the holding, organic livestock must be of a different species and be kept separate. However, grazing of common land by organic animals and of organic land by non-organic animals is permitted under certain restrictive conditions.

The number of livestock is limited, to minimise overgrazing, poaching of soil, erosion, or pollution caused by animals or by the spreading of their manure.

Tethering or isolation of livestock is prohibited, unless for individual animals for a limited period of time, when necessary.

Duration of transport of livestock should be as short as possible.

Any suffering, including mutilation, must be kept to a minimum during the entire life of the animal, including at the time of slaughter.

Animals reproduce by natural methods. Artificial insemination is however allowed.

Other forms of artificial reproduction, such as cloning and embryo transfer, are not allowed.



## OBLIGATIONS OF OPERATORS IN ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION - PRACTICES

### 3. Feed

The primary source of feed must be the holding where the animals are kept or from other organic holdings in the same region.

Livestock shall be fed with organic feed that meets the animal's nutritional requirements at the various stages of its development. A part of the ration may contain feed from holdings which are in conversion to organic farming.

Livestock shall have permanent access to pasture or roughage.

Non organic feed materials from plant origin, feed materials from animal and mineral origin, feed additives, certain products used in animal nutrition and processing aids may be used only if they have been authorised for use in organic production, while growth promoters and synthetic amino-acids are not allowed.

Suckling mammals shall be fed with natural, preferably maternal, milk.

If processed feed is used, it may not contain GMOs.



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## OBLIGATIONS OF OPERATORS IN ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION - PRACTICES

### 4. Disease Prevention and Veterinary Treatment

Animal-health management should be based on disease prevention. Disease prevention is based on breed and strain selection and practices which enhance the immune system and strengthen the natural defence against diseases.

The use of chemically synthesised veterinary products or antibiotics for preventive treatment, the use of substances to promote growth or production and the use of hormones or similar substances to control reproduction or for other purposes are prohibited.

Housing equipment and utensils must be cleaned and disinfected to prevent cross-infection and the build-up of disease carrying organisms. Faeces, urine and uneaten or spilt feed shall be removed to minimise smell and to avoid attracting insects or rodents.

In the event of a sickness or injury of an animal requiring an immediate treatment and when the use of hytotherapeutic, homeopathic and other products is inappropriate, chemically synthesised veterinary medicinal products including antibiotics may be used where necessary and under strict conditions, including supervision by a veterinarian.







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## **ADMINISTRATIVE OBLIGATIONS OF OPERATORS IN ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION**

Any operator of an organic holding must, before placing on the market any products as organic or in conversion to organic:

1. Submit the following information to the competent authorities of the Member State where the activity is carried out:
  - a. Name and address of operator, and if a legal entity, the name of its legal representative.
  - b. Location of premises where operations are carried out.
  - c. Nature of operations and products.
  - d. Undertaking by the operator to carry out the operation in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations.
  - e. The name of the approved Control Body which the operator has contracted.
2. Submit his undertaking to the control system, which is implemented by Control Bodies. These are mainly private Certification Bodies (CBs), which must be approved by the national Competent Authority and accredited by the National Accreditation Body according to the ISO 17065 Standard on product certification. Other criteria for selection of a CB include:
  - a. Reputation, including technical competence and administrative procedures, and preference by prospective clients.
  - b. Cost, which may be affected by the location of the holding and its proximity to central or regional offices of the CB.
  - c. Any additional requirements the CB might impose on the Operator.





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## ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION – CONTROL SYSTEM

When the control arrangements are first implemented, the operator shall draw up and subsequently maintain:

- a. A full description of the buildings, pasturage, open air areas, etc., the premises for the storage, packaging and processing of livestock, livestock products, raw materials and inputs and a full description of the installations for the storage of livestock manure.
- b. all the practical measures to be taken to ensure compliance with the organic production rules and a management plan for the organic-production livestock unit.
- c. the precautionary measures to be taken in order to reduce the risk of contamination by unauthorised products or substances and the cleaning measures to be taken.

The above information is included in a declaration in which the Operator undertakes to:

- a. perform the operations in accordance with the organic production rules;
- b. accept, in the event of infringement or irregularities, the enforcement of the measures of the organic production rules; and
- c. inform in writing the buyers so that the indications referring to the organic production method are removed from this product.

This declaration is signed by the representative of the operator and submitted to the Certification Body, which verifies the information and indicates any deficiencies or non-compliances.





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## ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION – CONTROL SYSTEM

### Control Visits

The control authority or CB must carry out at least once a year a physical inspection of all holdings of an operator. Moreover, the CB will carry out additional inspection visits, primarily unannounced, either randomly or based on of the risk of non-compliance with the organic production rules, taking into account at least the results of previous controls, the quantity of products concerned and the risk for exchange of products.

During visits the CB may take samples for testing to detect substances not authorised for organic production. in conformity with the organic production rules.

The operator must give the CB access to all parts of the unit and all premises, as well as to the accounts and relevant supporting documents and provide it with any information necessary for the purposes of the control.

In case the operator manages more than one production units, the units which produce non-organic livestock or livestock products shall also be subject to the control system.

During control visits the CB inspects the premises, observes practices and examines records.





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## **ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION – CONTROL SYSTEM - KEY INSPECTION SUBJECTS**

### **General Documentation**

Documents that verify the legal status of the operator and his ownership or right to use the premises, including a license issued by the responsible authority, if required.

If the operator contracts out any of the activities to a third party, documentation that proves that subcontracted activities are subject to the control system.

Any printed or electronic advertising materials and any labels used on packaged products which refer to the organic method of production .

A record of complaints submitted to the operator regarding the organic method of production.

### **Livestock Identification**

The livestock must be identified permanently using techniques adapted to each species, individually in the case of large mammals and individually or by batch in the case of poultry and small mammals.

### **Livestock records**

The operator must compile and retain on the premises livestock records, which are made available to the CB. Such records must include at least the following information:

a. The origin and date of arrival, conversion period, identification mark and veterinary record of animals arriving at the holding.







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## **ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION – CONTROL SYSTEM - KEY INSPECTION SUBJECTS**

### **Livestock records (continued)**

- b. The age, number of heads, weight in case of slaughter, identification mark and destination of livestock leaving the holding, including the sales / consignment records and indications therein of the organic method of production. Verification that the conversion period, i.e. the time interval between notification of activity to the competent authority and the time products may be marketed as organic, has been observed.
- c. Details of any animals lost and reasons thereof.
- d. The type of feed, including feed supplements, proportions of various ingredients of rations and periods of access to free-range areas, periods of transhumance where restrictions apply. Also records of purchase and / or production of feed, including documentation of its organic origin.
- e. If animals were treated with veterinary medicines, they must be clearly identified, individually in the case of large animals and individually, or by batch, or by hive, in the case of poultry, small animals and bees. The details of the diagnosis, the prescription, including justification, the treatment product and its active ingredients and the relevant withdrawal periods must be recorded and communicated to the CB before livestock products can be marketed as organic.







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## ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION – CONTROL SYSTEM - POST INSPECTION ACTIONS

### General

At the conclusion of each visit, the CB inspector compiles a report, which contains a summary of the findings and a presentation of any non-compliances. The report is countersigned by the operator of the unit or his representative, who have the right to note any objections to and comment on the findings of the inspection. A copy of this report remains with the operator.

The inspection findings are reviewed by a person or persons other than the inspector, and a decision is reached regarding certification.

If no non-compliances are detected, certification is granted and certification documents may be issued to the operator upon demand.

### Handling of Non-Compliances

Any non-compliances are evaluated. If the non-compliance does not cast doubt on the organic method of production, the operator is informed that he is obliged to present within a specified time interval, documentary evidence that corrections and / or corrective actions have been implemented. The evidence may be sent to the CB, or an additional inspection visit may be implemented, if necessary. No certification documents are issued during that period, but certification is not suspended or withdrawn.





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## ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION – CONTROL SYSTEM - POST INSPECTION ACTIONS

### Handling of Non-Compliances (continued)

If a non-compliance with the organic method of production is detected, the CB may require that the operator does not market the products of the particular batch or run as organic and that he withdraws and / or recalls any products of that batch or run that are already in the market. In such a case, all relevant certification documents are withdrawn.

In case of a serious non-compliance, or one with lasting effects, the CB may suspend certification, that is prohibit the operator from marketing products which refer to the organic production method in the labelling and advertising for a period to be agreed with the competent authority of the Member State. No certification documents are issued during this period, and any existing ones are withdrawn.

If a finding causes suspicion of a non-compliance with the organic method of production, but the objective evidence is not sufficient to document the non-compliance, the CB may require that the operator does not market the products of the particular batch or run as organic for a specified period of time during which the case is further investigated. If the suspicion is not confirmed within that time period, the decision referred to above must be cancelled.



## ORGANIC LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION – CONTROL SYSTEM - POST INSPECTION ACTIONS

### Appeals

The operator is entitled to submit an appeal regarding inspection findings and CB decisions. If the appeal concerns the results of a laboratory analysis, then the analysis is repeated on the same sample.

In other cases, the appeal is evaluated by CB personnel who were not involved in the inspection and certification process. The CB has the responsibility to collect and evaluate available information relevant to the appeal and come to a documented decision. This decision is communicated to the appellant.