

Standards Interpretation Committee Questions and Answers Regarding National Standards for Organic Agriculture

Report on Comment Period – June –August 2014

Q&A revised & archived	1
Q&A archived as Final Q&A.....	2
6. Livestock production	2
7.2 Maple products	2
7.4 Sprout production	3
8. Preparation and Handling of Organic Products.....	3
Permitted Substances Lists.....	3

Q&A revised & archived

What are the restrictions to the offspring if a non-organic animal is bred using embryo transfer and brought onto an organic farm? (214)

Previous answer

The offspring would be organic if the restrictions in 6.2.2 d and 6.2.3 are met.

Revised answer

Yes, if the origin of the animal complies with the restrictions in 6.2.2.d and 6.2.3.

Can hens be confined for part of each day during the laying period? (226)

Previous answer

No. Restricting outdoor access of laying hens may only occur during onset of lay as per 6.8.11.1e or for reasons outlined in 6.8.2. Further restriction of outdoor access is not permitted.

Revised answer

Restricting outdoor access of laying hens, during day time hours, may only occur during onset of lay as per 6.8.11.1e or for reasons outlined in 6.8.2 . Further restriction of outdoor access is not permitted.

Q&A archived as Final Q&A

6. Livestock production

Can immunological castration of pig in finishing phase be used to replace castration of young pig? (218)

No. The substance used would have to be listed on 5.3 of the Permitted Substances Lists in order to be acceptable.

When a beef cow herd is being transitioned to organic, does 6.3.3 give permission to use the transitional feed being produced on the farm, to feed gestating animals whose offspring will be eligible for sale as organic? (179)

The subject of this Q&A is under review by the 2014 CGSB Technical Committee. The current SIC interpretation remains in effect until the revision has gone to ballot and the revised COS version been posted by CGSB (Anticipated for August 2015).

Yes. Provided that the timing of the completion of the transition of the land on which the feed has been grown coincides with or precedes the birth of the organic offspring

Does the requirement for a 36-month transition of land for crop production apply to the outdoor runs required to permit poultry access to the outdoors? (225)

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Yes. Poultry eat when they go outside, even ingesting small amounts of soil. Since organic feed is required, the 36 month transition period for outdoor runs is mandatory. (6.4.1) However, in the final year of transition the pasture is usable for organic birds (6.3.3)

Can oxytocin be used to treat postpartum complications? If so what are the withdrawal rules? (78.6)

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Yes. 6.7.7 specifies that hormones are acceptable if the use is therapeutic, not preventive. For oxytocin, the animal does not lose status for use as organic meat. The withdrawal time is as stated on the label or 14 days, whichever is longer. (Table 5.3 Oxytocin and 6.7.6 d - 32.310.)

7.2 Maple products

Can the filtrate be used to clean evaporators during the season? (215)

Yes. The filtrate (water that passes through the membrane in the osmosis technique of removing water from sap) may be used to clean the evaporator.

7.4 Sprout production

Q&A 191, about the production of organic shoots, has been withdrawn from the Final Q&As section; the SIC interpretation is under review.

8. Preparation and Handling of Organic Products

Is the use of a microwave oven in organic food preparation compliant with the Standard? (220)

Yes. While the Standard prohibits ionizing radiation, the use of non-ionizing radiation such as that generated by a microwave oven is not prohibited. For maple products cooking using microwaves is forbidden. (7.2.14)

Does the prohibition against using both the organic and non-organic form of an ingredient (8.2.5) apply to different varieties of grapes used in a wine, or different flours (e.g. barley and wheat) used to bake a single bread? (173)

Yes, under 8.2.5, ingredients recognized as having distinct qualities may be considered separate ingredients, even when they fall into the same general category of ingredients such as "flour" or "grapes". In the examples given, it would be possible to use one ingredient in its organic form and the other in its non-organic form without violating 8.2.5 provided the following restrictions are satisfied. For organic products equal to or >95%, the non-organic content must be less than 5% of the total and commercial unavailability must be confirmed annually for any non-organic agriculture ingredients. For products containing between 70-95% organic content, commercial availability does not apply.

Does 8.4.3 only apply to substances for pest control used inside facilities or also to substances used on the exterior? (212)

Section 8.4 applies to both indoor and exterior pest control. Note additional restrictions on indoor use. (8.4.3)

Permitted Substances Lists

Must biological organisms be living in order to be compliant under table 4.3 "Biological organisms"? (224)

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No. Either living, dead or non-viable biological organisms are compliant.

Peracetic Acid (peroxyacetic acid) is listed on table 7.3 PSL. Are all forms of this substance allowed, regardless of method of production? (221)

Yes. There are no restrictions on the method of production in the annotation for peracetic acid

Is calcined kaolin clay a permitted substance under Canadian Organic Standards? (223)

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Yes. There are no restrictions on the form of kaolin clay allowed.