

Questions and Answers Regarding National Standards for Organic Agriculture

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, in partnership with the Organic Federation of Canada, has developed the Organic Standards Interpretation Committee (SIC). The objective of the Committee is to provide, to the Canada Organic Office, interpretive guidance on issues related to the National Standards for Organic Agriculture (CAN/CGSB 32.310 and CAN/CGSB32.311).



Public Comment period – from November 2 to December 2, 2020

REPORT

All of the following questions and answers were uploaded to the [Final Questions and Answers](#) section of the OFC website on December 18, 2020.

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Organic Principles and management practices

5. Crop production

External buffer zone

COMMENTED – REVISED WORDING

Can a buffer zone be established on land not owned by the operation? 499a

Yes. The buffer zone is measured from the edge of the area treated with a prohibited substance to the edge of the organic crop, regardless of the entity owning/managing the land in the buffer zone, but the CB must be able to verify compliance of such a buffer.

Buffer zone – immature hedgerow

Does a newly planted, immature hedgerow eliminate the requirement for an 8m buffer zone? 499b

No. When a risk of contamination is present, this new planting is insufficient, and an 8 m buffer zone will need to be put in place until the hedgerow fills in. An effective physical barrier does not have to be 8 metres wide.

7.1 Apiculture

Wax for foundation and comb foundation

Can plastic foundation that has been dipped in non-organic beeswax be used when organic beeswax dipped plastic foundations are not commercially available? 506a

No. The wax covering the plastic foundation must be organic (7.1.13.3).

Can non-organic wax comb foundation be used when organic sources are not commercially available? 506b

No. Non-organic comb foundation may not be used. Organic comb foundation from the operation or from another source is required. (7.1.15.3)

Vitamins and minerals added to organic products

COMMENTED – REVISED WORDING

Can vitamins and minerals be used to fortify organic products if not legally required? 500a

No. Organic products may not be voluntarily fortified with vitamins and minerals even if legally permitted. The only exceptions permitting voluntary fortification of organic products are a) dairy substitutes that are plant based, and b) fortification with ferrous sulphate when legally required or voluntarily if legally permitted. Unless legally permitted in dairy substitutes that are plant-based. See Vitamins and mineral nutrients, PSL 6.4.

Do vitamins and minerals have to be certified organic to be used in organic products with 95% or above organic content? If yes, are commercial availability searches required? 500b

No. Vitamins and minerals are not agricultural products and hence are not certifiable to organic standards. Vitamins and Minerals used in organic products are ingredients classified as food additives and are listed in PSL 6.4. Per 9.2.1 a, ingredients classified as food additives are subject to substance listing annotations and restrictions specified in 6.2 of CAN/CGSB-32.311. As there are

no organic commercial availability requirements listed in the annotation for Vitamins and Minerals in PSL 6.4, commercial availability is not applicable. However, there are restrictions in the listing annotations on when they may be used. Commercial availability is not applicable as per 9.2.1 a, but there are restrictions in the listing annotations on when they may be used. See Vitamins and mineral nutrients, PSL 6.4.

Permitted substances lists

Potassium nitrate not allowed

Can potassium nitrate be an allowed fertilizer in organic production, if the nitrogen was derived from compliant anaerobic digestate? 502

No. It no longer is a digestate, and neither is it listed in the Potassium listing in PSL, Table 4.2.

Corn steep liquor as an amendment

Is non-organic corn steep liquor allowed as a soil amendment/fertilizer in organic production? 503

No. However, organic corn steep liquor would be permitted. Refer to SIC Q&A 60a for further insight.

Revised wording

Chlorine to disinfect poultry carcasses

Can peracetic acid or chlorine be used to disinfect all types of livestock carcasses? Are there alternative substances or processes? (254) (476)

Peracetic acid may be used in wash or rinse water in direct contact with plant and food including livestock and poultry carcasses (Table 7.3). Chlorinated water may also be used if chlorine level does not exceed maximum limits for safe drinking water (See Table 7.3 - Chlorine compounds). Alternative physical processes for disinfection such as steam, hot water or High-Pressure Processing (HPP) are allowed.