



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments



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

PERMITTED SUBSTANCES LISTS

Below are proposed answers to questions, raised by organic stakeholders, regarding the Permitted Substances Lists under the National Standards for Organic Agriculture. All comments regarding these answers should be sent to **OPR.RPB@inspection.gc.ca**

Q3: What is the pathway for approving cleaners, or substances used?

Operators should approach their Certification Bodies for approval of their cleaners. Approval of individual substances is the mandate of CGSB Technical Committee, through Permitted Substances List working groups (Reference, PSL).

Q5: Can chlorine be used to wash organic produce?

Chlorinated water, up to the concentration used in the closest municipal water system, is acceptable for washing organic vegetables and does not require rinsing. Use of higher concentrations requires rinsing (Reference, PSL 7.4).

Q9: Is copper sulphate allowed as a treatment for fence-posts on pasture?

The use of copper sulphate is permitted for use as a fungicide (wood preservative) for wood (e.g. fence posts) on organic production units.

Q10: Are approved cleaners applicable only to food contact surfaces or to the whole processing facility?

The restrictions on cleaners, disinfectants and sanitizers provided in the PSL do not apply to parts of the facility where there is no direct or indirect contact with the food products or food contact surfaces (Reference, PSL Tables 7.3 and 7.4).

Q13: Which forms of lecithin are acceptable, according to the organic standard?

The current standard should be interpreted to allow organic lecithin both bleached and unbleached, and non organic where organic is not commercially available. Non organic lecithin must still comply with 1.4.1 (Reference, PSL 6.3).

Q18: Can a farmer irrigate land from an irrigation system that uses Magnicide?

Active substances included in Magnicide are not allowed for application to organic production units. If equipment that has been in contact with prohibited substances is thoroughly cleaned and can be shown to be free from such substances, it may be used to irrigate organic farms. Although irrigation equipment is not specifically mentioned in the standard, the principle outlined in 5.6.3 should apply.

Q19: Can a non-organic processing aid be used in the production of a category 2 (70 - 95%) product?

The PSL listing of processing aids (6.6) does not apply to processing aids used in the non organic ingredients used to produce the 70-95% organic products. However section 1.4.1 does apply. Use of non agricultural processing aids in the production of the final product is limited to those listed on 6.6.

Q20: Do clauses 7.3 and 7.4 apply to the cleaning of: dedicated and non dedicated spraying equipment; of irrigation systems; and non-food contact surfaces such as floors, windows, staff toilets etc.?

See answer #10. Tables 7.3 and 7.4 of the Permitted Substances List generally apply to food contact surfaces, food, and equipment in contact with food, unless otherwise annotated. While the cleaners listed in these tables may be used in other applications, cleaning of non-food contact surfaces is not restricted to these cleaners. In the case of use of substances not listed in 7.3 & 7.4, the operator is responsible to ensure that no residual contamination occurs on land and crops.

Q21: Does the prohibition of sulphates produced with sulphuric acid apply to cobalt sulphate used as a mineral supplement and for medical use?

A.21: No. Table 5.2 of the PSL allows for Trace elements from any source for feed. Table 5.3 allows them from any source for medical use.

Q22: Is the use of fish products as feed supplements prohibited?

A 22: Table 5.2 of the PSL allows for protein feeds from organic sources. Fish products would thus not be permitted as feed supplements unless organic.

Q27: Is it acceptable to inject meat animals with vitamin B for the purpose of improving meat color?

A27: No. Table 5.3 lists vitamins for “enrichment or fortification.” Injection to improve the colour of meat is for cosmetic purpose, not enrichment or fortification.

Q28: Under the Canadian Standards for Organic products it is listed that water is permissible. Can you please tell me if Seawater would be included in this definition?

A28: Table 4.3 of the PSL allows for water (and wetting agents) to be used as crop production aids. Sea water, in all its various forms of concentration, is acceptable.

Q29: Is clove oil allowed as an organic sprout inhibitor for potatoes?

A29: Table 4.3 of the PSL lists “plant extracts, oils and preparations” as acceptable crop production aids. Clove oil would be acceptable for use on seed potatoes.

Q31: Is the end product from an anaerobic digester or biogas digester acceptable for use as a soil amendment?

A 31: The products of anaerobic digestion cannot be considered compost under the standard since the definition specifies aerobic decomposition. The product may be used as compost feedstock (see table 4.2, 32.311 “composting feedstocks”). If only manure is used in the digester, the end product could be applied to fields under the conditions applying to raw manure. If other materials such as abattoir waste were used as raw material, the final product of the digester would still not be acceptable for use on organic soil unless composted.

Q33: Is tractor exhaust, injected into the soil, acceptable under the standard?

A33: Tractor exhaust may be injected into the soil only if all the components of the tractor exhaust comply with the standard and PSL.