



GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIC PRODUCE CERTIFICATES BY APPROVED CERTIFYING ORGANISATIONS

Issued by the Department of Agriculture - Export Organic Program - May 2014

Purpose

1. This guideline provides information for the control, distribution and reconciliation of organic produce certificates (OPC) by Approved Certifying Organisations.

Background

2. Approved Certifying Organisations issue official certification on behalf of the department. This certification provides assurance to the importing country that the certified Australian product has been produced in accordance with the requirements of Australia's export legislation, the National Standard, the Administrative Arrangements and/or importing country requirements.
3. The export of certified Australian organic produce can occur under one of two arrangements:
 1. For all countries except where a conformity assessment arrangement exists, certified products must conform to the National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce; or
 2. Under a conformity assessment system between the certifying organisation and the relevant importing country authority
 - certified products are produced in accordance with the legal requirements of the importing country; or
 - Department has been notified that the approved certifying organisations conformity assessment arrangement complies with the National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce.
4. Products produced and/or processed under a conformity assessment system cannot be exported to other countries unless written advice from the importing country's competent authority managing this direct recognition system confirms this is acceptable.

General Information

5. There are three types of organic produce certificates;
 1. **Organic Produce Certificate EX1399** (OPC) used for all countries other than those within the European Union and Switzerland.
 2. **Certificate of Inspection for Import of Products from Organic Production into the European Community EX11300** (EU), used for European Union member state countries only. The member states of the EU include Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France (includes Guadeloupe, Martinique,

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Reunion Island, French Guiana [Cayenne], St Pierre and Miquelon, Mayotte, and French Southern Territories), Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain (includes Canary Islands and Gibraltar), Sweden and United Kingdom.

3. **Swiss Confederation Import Certificate** (Swiss) used for the import of organic farming products to Switzerland.
6. Approved certifying organisations and exporters are advised to first confirm importing country requirements prior to the export of Australian certified produce.
7. Only products &/or ingredients produced in Australia by Australian certified operators and which have been certified to comply with the National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce by an approved certifying organisation are eligible to be detailed on an organic produce certificate.
8. Products and/or ingredients/inputs that are certified under a private standard or produced and certified in another country are not eligible for an organic produce certificate.
9. *Guidelines for the Issue of Organic Produce Certificates* (May 2014 version or as amended) must be applied by approved certifying organisations in addition to this document.

Definitions

10. Aborted means bringing something to an end at an early stage.
11. Cancelled means to stop the use of an OPC.
12. Certification means an official document / process that gives proof and details of something.
13. Conformity assessment arrangement is an agreement between an individual Australian certifying organisation and an overseas government entity for eligibility of that certifying organisation to certify goods for export to the importing country under the agreement.
14. Export documentation means a document from the department required to facilitate an export arrangement (e.g. health certificate, request for permit (RFP), and phytosanitary certificate).
15. Exporter means a person who exports, or intends to export, certified organic produce.
16. Issue, in relation to export certification means "signing and stamping" of the organic produce certificate by the approved certifying organisation.
17. Made in Australia means a product that is made from local and imported ingredients that has been substantially transformed in the production process in Australia.

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18. National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce means the Standard that needs to be met for product to be eligible for export (the Standard, National Standard, NS).
19. Organic produce certificate means an official government certificate used to facilitate a consignment of Australian certified organic produce to an overseas country (refer: Order 1.06 of the Export Control (Organic Produce Certification) Orders).
20. Product of Australia means a product that has been produced with ingredients that are all of Australian origin.
21. Request for Permit (RFP) means the request for an export permit which provides the legal permission to allow goods to leave Australia.
22. Third Party Trader means an exporter that obtains organic goods for export from other organically certified businesses.

Management of organic produce certificates as accountable forms

23. Organic produce certificates are accountable forms. They are official Government documents that are sequentially numbered with no inherent value.
24. Department is the jurisdiction having responsibility for any organic produce certificate issued by a certifying organisation and has strict requirements for the management of these forms.
25. Approved certifying organisations and certified organic operators who hold unused organic produce certificates must:
 - maintain a register of their receipt and issue;
 - Reconcile the register of certificates on a regular basis and report any losses or deficiencies to the department immediately via the certifying organisation.
26. Approved certifying organisation that issue organic produce certificates to exporters (for example third party traders) upon request, must have a system in place to ensure the organic produce certificate is managed as an accountable form.
27. In the event that the organic produce certificates are surplus to requirements, obsolete, damaged or spoilt, they must be returned via the approved certifying organisation to department to prevent their misuse. Where the approved certifying organisation has provided OPCs to operators or exporters, the organisation must ensure that all OPCs are recovered from the operator or exporter to allow reconciliation.
28. Management of organic produce certificates as accountable forms must be documented in the approved certifying organisation's QM system describing how the certifying organisation manages this process both at the certifier level and at the operator and exporter levels. Certifying organisations must keep records to

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demonstrate how they manage organic produce certificates as accountable forms.

29. The organic produce certificates have been re-developed and are available in an electronic format thus capable of being transferred via email. The department has provided to the certifying organisations the re-developed electronic copies of the OPCs.
30. Exporters / certified operators must apply in writing to an approved certifying organisation for an organic produce certificate(s).
31. The organic produce certificates can be transferred via email to the exporter/certified operator.
33. The certifying organisations must document and implement a system for the use and reconciliation of organic produce certificates, and system for providing monthly reports to the department via email. A code/cipher system must be developed by the certifying organisation for uniquely identifying each organic produce certificate. This includes cancelled or damaged certificates.
34. The certifying organisations must document and implement a system for providing monthly reports to the department via email. The format of these monthly reports must be in MS Excel format or MS Word, or other program capable of being converted to one of these software programs. The end of month report must include details as specified in 3.3
35. These requirements will be assessed during the annual audit of the certifying organisation by the authorised officer from the department.

Management of organic produce certificate(s)

36. Approved certifying organisations must document procedures for the control and reconciliation of organic produce certificates, taking into account the requirements set out in the *Export Control (Organic Produce Certification) Orders* and the Administrative Arrangements. This must include the maintenance of a register for OPCs identifying:
 - (i) type of certificate (Ex 11300 or Ex 1399 or Swiss);
 - (ii) exporter and importer details;
 - (iii) country of destination
 - (iv) certificate number(s);
 - (v) date of issue (date of signing and stamping by the approved certifying organisation) ;
 - (vi) consignment departure and arrival dates; and

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- (vii) type and quantity of goods exported

Retention of issued organic produce certificate(s)

37. Each approved certifying organisation must retain *copy* of any issued organic produce certificate for a period of not less than 5 years. This includes cancelled certificates.
38. Exporters / certified operators should retain a *copy* of the *original* organic produce certificate (including a *copy* of cancelled certificates) for traceability purposes for a period of not less than 5 years.
39. Sample OPCs are attached to the *Guidelines for the Issue of Organic Produce Certificates to all Markets* document. These may be used as reference when the delegated person of the approved certifying organisation is verifying that an organic produce certificate has been correctly completed. This verification should include the calculation of each item listed on the OPC against the recorded total weight for that item.

For example: 6 cartons of 12 x 250gm jars of pasta sauce = $12 \times .250 \times 6 = 18\text{kg}$

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