

Guidance for Crop and Wild Harvested Crop Production

ECOCERT ICO

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This guideline does not replace the current Regulation.

It provides some explanations on main requirements for organic Crop production and Wild harvested crops. To know the organic production requirements, it is necessary to download and read carefully the NOP Regulation available on the USDA website:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/NOP>

1. Introduction

This abstract summarizes the NOP requirements for crop production and wild crop harvesting. A more detailed study of the standard is required for anyone involved in organic production. As explained in the [NOP Certification Process \(TS02\)](#), the Organic System Plan must include all information needed to show how the NOP requirements will be met.

2. Prohibited practices (§ 205.105)

- The use of **genetically modify organisms (GMOs)** is prohibited.
- The use of **ionizing radiation** and the application of **sewage sludge** are not allowed.
- **Burning** must not be used as a means of disposal for crop residues, except that, burning may be used to suppress the spread of disease or to stimulate seed germination.

3. Conversion period and land requirements (§ 205.202)

- Any field whose crops shall be certified organic must have had no prohibited substances applied to it for a period of 3 years immediately preceding the harvest of the crop.
- ⇒ **A verifiable field history of at least 36 months must be provided to ECOCERT ICO.**
- The fields must also be managed in accordance with the part 205.203 and 205.206
- The fields must have distinct, defined boundaries and buffer zones to prevent any contact with prohibited substances applied to adjoining conventional land.

4. Soil Fertility and Crop Nutrient Management (§ 205.203)

A basic requirement of the NOP is that the natural resources of a certified organic operation, including soil and water quality, must be maintained or improved.

The following practices are required:

- Cultivation and tillage that enhances the biological condition of the soil and minimizes soil erosion;
- Rotations, cover crops, and application of plant and animal material;
- The crop rotation may include sod, cover crops, green manure, etc. and provide for maintenance or improvement of soil organic matter, pest management, plant nutrients, and erosion.
- The NOP has specific requirements for use of raw and composted animal manure (see TS06).

Other inputs allowed are:

- Some synthetic substances as allowed in the NOP (§205.601) for use in organic crop production
- Natural Substances not listed in the §205.602
- Mined substances (when in compliance with the conditions in the NOP)
- Ash from burning of plant or animal material (if not treated or combined with prohibited substances).

5. Seeds, vegetative propagating material, and seedlings (§ 205.204)

- Seeds, planting stock and seedlings must be organically produced (by preference certified organic).
- If these are not commercially available on the market, **non-organic seeds or planting stock may be used as long as they are untreated, or – if not available - only treated with materials listed in the NOP and non-GMO.**

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- Non-organic planting stock (for perennial crops) must have been maintained under organic management for at least one year before the resulting crop may be considered organic.
- The use of seeds treated with not allowed synthetic materials equals application to the ground of prohibited substances so the fields must undergo conversion again (3 years).

⇒ *The operator must document his attempts to source organic seeds to ECOCERT ICO (sheet available).*

6. Control of pests, diseases and weeds (§ 205.206)

In order to control crop pests, weeds, and diseases, the operator shall apply appropriate measures such as crop rotation, sanitation measures, and choice of appropriate varieties.

- **Pests** may be controlled by mechanical or physical methods such as the introduction of predators, lures, traps, and repellents.
- Weeds may be controlled by cultivating, mulching, mowing, grazing, hand weeding, heat, and plastic mulches (must be removed at the end of growing or harvest season).
- **Diseases** may be controlled by management practices that suppress the spread of diseases or by the application of natural biological, botanical, or mineral inputs.
- **Only if the practices mentioned above are insufficient**, may the producer use materials as allowed by the NOP
- The materials allowed by the NOP are either natural substances not listed in the § 205.602 or synthetic substances listed in the §205.601

⇒ *If operators use commercial inputs, ECOCERT ICO must check in detail all active and non-active ingredients in order to verify their compliance, prior to the input's use.*

7. Collection of wild-crops (§ 205.207)

WILD CROP = any plant or portion of a plant that is collected or harvested from a site that is not maintained under cultivation or other agricultural management.

- These are considered organic if harvested from a designated area that has had no prohibited substance applied to it for a period of 3 years immediately preceding the harvest.
- Furthermore, the harvesting/ gathering may not be destructive to the environment, and must sustain the growth and production of the wild crop.

⇒ *Relevant verifiable proofs about the history of the harvest area must be provided to ECOCERT ICO.*

8. Post-harvest handling (§ 205.270 – 205.272)

- Harvest, transport, and storage of organic products must be done in a manner that avoids commingling with nonorganic products and protects organic products from **contact** with prohibited substances.
- Special care must be taken not to use or re-use (without thorough cleaning) **packing materials** that has been in contact with substances which might compromise the integrity of organic products.

You will find information about the NOP on the USDA-NOP homepage:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/nop>

You can check the compliance of many inputs for use under the NOP on the OMRI website

www.omri.org.

If you need further information, we are available to answer technical questions.

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