



3.5. PROCESSING AND HANDLING OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS

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3.5.1 Specific Requirements

- **Organic Production & Handling Plan (NPOP)**
- Maintain Integrity: Keep in the best possible way all processes to preserve organic product quality.
- Mandatory Plan: Operators MUST develop and implement a documented Organic Production and Handling Plan.
- Plan Components:
 - Detailed practices and procedures.
 - List of all substances/inputs (composition, source, location, availability).
 - Monitoring procedures to verify plan implementation.

3.5.1 Specific Requirements....contd.

- Record-keeping system as per NPOP requirements.
- Management and separation practices to prevent mixing with non-organic products.
- Identification and prevention of pollution sources.
- Separate processing/handling of organic and non-organic products (time or place).
- Adequate product identification throughout the process.
- Adherence to certification program regulations.
- SOP for facility decontamination and cleaning.
- Real-time notification of plan changes to Certification Bodies.

3.5.2 Raw material

- Upon receiving organic raw materials, the operator must:
 - i. **Inspect:** Check product condition and label.
 - ii. **Verify Certification:** Confirm the product's certification status against the Transaction Certificate (TC).
 - iii. **Cross-Verify & Document:** Compare label details with the TC and record any discrepancies.

3.5.3 Pest control

- i. **Prevent with Hygiene:** Maintain good hygienic practices (cleanliness) to avoid pests.
- ii. **Treatment as Last Resort:** Use pest regulating agents only when necessary.
- iii. **Recommended Treatments:** Physical barriers, sound/ultrasound/light/UV-light, traps (pheromone, bait), temperature control, controlled atmosphere, diatomaceous earth.

3.5.3 Pest control..... Contd.

iv. Pest Management Plan: A plan for pest prevention and control is mandatory.

v. Control Measures (Priority Order):

- Prevention (habitat elimination, access control).
- Mechanical, Physical & Biological methods.
- Allowed/prescribed pesticides (national standards).
- Substances used in traps.

vi. Prohibited: Irradiation/ionized radiation is not allowed.

vii. Avoid Contamination: For organic products, no direct or indirect contact with prohibited substances (e.g., pesticides).

viii. Banned Substances: Persistent or carcinogenic pesticides and disinfectants are not permitted.

3.5.4. Ingredients.

- i. **Primarily Organic:** 100% organic ingredients are required unless unavailable in sufficient quality or quantity.
 - **Limited Non-Organic Use:** Non-organic ingredients (non-GMO) can be used minimally for essential technological or nutritional needs.
 - **Max 5% Non-Organic:** Non-organic ingredients cannot exceed 5% of total ingredients in "organic" labeled products (not applicable to certified organic imports).
- ii. **No Dual Origin:** The same ingredient within a product cannot be both organic and non-organic.

Ingredients.....Contd.

- iii. **Micro-organisms & Enzymes:** Common food processing micro-organisms and enzymes are allowed (excluding genetically engineered ones); enzyme production media must be organic.
- iv. **Water & Salt:** Potable water and salt are permitted.
- v. **Minerals & Vitamins (Restricted):** Generally prohibited, exceptions may be granted by the certification program for legal or nutritional deficiency reasons.
- vi. **Ethylene for Ripening:** Ethylene gas is allowed for ripening.
- vii. **No Engineered Nanomaterials:** Foodstuffs containing engineered nanomaterials are prohibited.
- viii. **Authorized Flavors:** Flavors are not included in the organic ingredient percentage calculation.
- ix. **Flavor Requirements:** Flavors must be recognizable (e.g., lemon) and at least 95% derived from the named natural source.

3.5.5 Processing Methods

- i. Primary Methods:** Processing should primarily use mechanical, physical, and biological methods.
- ii. Maintain Quality:** Processing must maintain the vital quality of organic ingredients, limiting additives and processing aids and by using approved processes like mechanical, physical, biological, smoking, extraction, precipitation, and filtration.
- iii. Extraction Solvents:** Allowed solvents include water, ethanol, plant/animal oils, vinegar, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, or carboxylic acids (food grade quality).
- iv. Filtration Restrictions:** Filtration substances must not contain asbestos or negatively impact the product.
- v. No Irradiation:** Irradiation/ionized radiation is prohibited.

3.5.6 Packaging

- i. Eco-Friendly Packaging:** Use biodegradable, recyclable, and reusable packaging whenever possible.
- ii. Prevent Contamination:** Packaging material must not contaminate the product; certain additives in packaging films are allowed for restricted use. (Refer: Annex- 3 (19) NPOP)
- iii. Tamper-Evident Seals:** Packages must be sealed to prevent content substitution without damage.
- iv. Certification Approval:** The Certification Body must approve the packaging material used.

3.5.7 Labelling

3.5.7.1 Labelling Requirements

- i. **Clear Organic Status:** Labels must provide clear and accurate information about the product's organic status.
- ii. **"Produce of Organic Agriculture":** Products meeting all standards can be labeled as "produce of organic agriculture" or similarly.
- iii. **Distinct Conversion Labels:** Labels for products in conversion must clearly state the year of conversion, making them distinguishable from organic product labels.

3.5.7.1 Labelling Requirements....Contd.

- iv. **Responsible Party:** The label must include the name and address of the producer or processor. Private labeling for export needs Certification Body approval based on the importing country's regulations, ensuring traceability.
- v. **Processing & Additives:** Product labels should list processing procedures affecting product properties and declare all components of additives and processing aids.
- vi. **Additional Information:** Additional product information must be available upon request.
- vii. **Wild Production:** Ingredients derived from wild production must be declared as such on the label.

3.5.7.2

Processed products

i. **Single-ingredient products** meeting all standards can be labeled "Organic."

ii. **Multi-Ingredient Labeling (by weight):**

- 95% or More Organic: Label as "Certified Organic" or similar, with the certification program logo.
- 70% to <95% Organic: Cannot be called "Organic," but "made with organic ingredients" is allowed on the main display with the percentage clearly stated and certification program indication.
- Less than 70% Organic: The word "organic" can only appear in the ingredients list, not as the product name.

iii. **Water & Salt Exclusion:** Added water and salt are not included in organic ingredient percentage calculations. Aquaculture products using iodized salt must mention it on the label.

3.5.7.2 Processed products.....contd.

- iv. Ingredient List:** List all raw materials by weight percentage, clearly indicating which are organic. List all additives with their full names.
- v. Herbs & Spices (<2%):** If herbs and/or spices are less than 2% of the product weight, they can be listed as "spices" or "herbs" without stating the percentage.
- vi. GMO-Free Claims:** Avoid labeling as GE/GM-free unless required by the importing country to prevent misleading claims, as GMOs are prohibited under NPOP.
- vii. Mandatory Label Information:** Certified organic product labels must display the name and logo of the Certification Body, accreditation number, and the India Organic Logo.
- viii. Certification Body Approval:** The Certification Body must verify and approve all labels before they are used.

3.5.8 Storage

- i. **Clear Identification:** Organic, in-conversion, and conventional products must be clearly identifiable at all handling and storage stages.
- ii. **Storage Conditions:** Organic products should be stored at ambient temperature, with permitted special conditions like controlled atmosphere, cooling, freezing, drying, and humidity regulation.
- iii. **Maintain Integrity:** Product integrity must be maintained during storage by preventing commingling with non-organic products and contact with prohibited substances.
- iv. **Separate Storage:** In facilities handling both organic and non-organic products, organic products must be stored and handled separately to maintain their identity.

3.5.8 Storage....contd.

- v. **Separate & Labelled Bulk Stores:** Bulk storage for organic products must be separate from conventional product stores and clearly labeled as such.
- vi. **No Organic & Conventional Mix:** The same ingredient cannot be present in both organic and conventional forms within the same facility/product.
- vii. **No In-Conversion Mix:** The same ingredient cannot be present in organic, in-conversion, and conventional forms simultaneously.
- viii. **Clean Organic Storage:** Organic product storage areas must be cleaned using permitted methods and materials to prevent contamination from prohibited substances. **Annex -3(2).**

3.5.9 Transport

- i. **Simultaneous Transport (with separation):** Organic, in-conversion, and conventional products can be transported together only if separation measures prevent contamination or commingling.
- ii. **Record Keeping:** The Operator must maintain records of harvest/procurement dates, transport details, arrival time, and storage.
- iii. **Clean Transport Containers:** Transport containers for organic products must be cleaned using permitted methods and materials to prevent contamination from prohibited substances. **Annex -3 (2).**

The End

