



BioGro Organic Standards

Amendment No.2

EXPLANATORY NOTE:

This amendment to sections 4.5 and 4.6 of module 5 of the BioGro Organic Standards has been issued as a result of recommendations from the BioGro Livestock Technical Committee to:

- Align poultry requirements with best practice

IMPLEMENTATION REQUIRED:

These standards changes:

- Must be covered in your next annual update of your organic management plan (OMP), your next renewal application and your next audit
- Must be fully implemented by **31 November 2015** at the latest

ACTION REQUIRED:

Please transfer the following standards changes into your copy of the BioGro Organic Standards.

4.5 Breeds, breeding, and incoming stock

4.5.1 Guiding principles

Health problems will be minimised by selecting appropriate breeds and breeding livestock which suit the region, the farm, and organic production.

4.5.2 Recommendations

- a. Select breeds which are hardy and suited to the region, the farm, and organic production.
 - b. Select breeding livestock for their suitability to organic production, in particular their resistance to health problems.
 - c. Aim to source brought-in livestock from other certified organic farms, preferably in the same region to ensure they are suited to organic production and the farm.
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4.5.3 Requirements of the standards

a. Animal health plan and breeding systems

If livestock health problems are prevalent on the farm then there must be a documented breeding plan to reduce this problem. Livestock breeding systems must be based on breeds that are able to copulate and give birth naturally.

For meat chicken production, breeds selected should be those which suit free ranging and organic production and will mature satisfactorily without the use of prohibited feed ingredients and/or practices.

b. Conversion of existing stock and certification of offspring

- i. Stock on a certified property at the start of registration can never gain certification for their meat, but can gain certification during conversion for their progeny and products such as milk and wool.

Note: Dairy herds converting to USDA NOP certification must be managed to the NOP standards for at least 12 months before the herd can gain NOP status. During that period they must only graze NOP certified land and be fed NOP certified feed, except they may graze BioGro C2 status land on the farm they belong to, but not other C2 land.

Beef and sheep breeder stock to produce USDA NOP certified progeny must be managed to the NOP and on NOP certified land for at least the last third of the gestation of their progeny.

- ii. Stock born to certified (organic or conversion) livestock and reared on certified land take the same status as the lowest status land they are born and reared on. If stock are born onto and run on conversion land then the stock can take certified organic status when the land completes conversion and becomes certified organic.

Note the requirement for USDA NOP certified dairy herds in (4.5.3b.i) above.

- iii. Subject to the requirements of section 4.5.3 f. below and/or section 4.7.3 g. vii., stock born onto certified land from uncertified stock (either stock which were brought on as conventional, or stock which have lost certification for 12 months due to being treated) can gain the certified status of the land at birth, this is provided the uncertified mother has been on the certified land and her management has complied with the requirements of the standards from at least the time of conception onwards. The progeny can be reared on the mother. The progeny takes the status of the lowest status land that the mother has been on since the conception of the progeny and the land it is born and reared on.

Note that this is not allowed for dairy herds certified to the USDA NOP.

c. Incoming certified livestock

- i. Conversion (C1 or C2) livestock brought onto conversion land will retain their conversion status while they remain on the conversion land. If the land they are grazing gains organic status, then they will retain conversion status for the remainder of the period that they would have remained as conversion status on the previous property or for 12 months, whichever is the lesser.
- ii. Conversion (C1 or C2) livestock brought onto certified organic land will retain conversion status for the remainder of the period that they would have remained as conversion status on the previous property or for 12 months, whichever is the lesser.
- iii. Organic livestock brought onto conversion (C1 or C2) land will be downgraded in status to conversion. Subject to prior written approval from BioGro these livestock can return to organic land and regain organic status 3 months after returning to the organic land.

Note that this is not allowed for dairy herds certified to the USDA NOP.

For dairy herds certified to the USDA NOP there are supplementary requirements for bringing in certified livestock from other certified farms, including other farms certified to the NOP. This must be applied for in writing to BioGro, and only stock which qualify under the NOP rules will gain approval to be brought into the dairy herd.

d. Incoming conventional livestock

For all conventional livestock brought onto certified land, other than up to 2-day-old chicks, the following requirements must be met:

- i. All such livestock must be clearly and permanently marked; and
- ii. All treatments administered in the 3 months prior to their arrival on the certified property, and any internal bolus treatments during their lifetime, must be recorded; and
- iii. At least double the withholding period must have elapsed since any animal health treatments (including internal boluses) they have received; and
- iv. They must be quarantined for at least 2 days on the quarantine paddock of the certified farm; and
- v. The dates of quarantining must be recorded.

e. Certification of incoming conventional livestock

Any conventional stock, other than up to 2-day-old chicks, brought onto a certified property will be restricted to partial certification status. After 12 months their progeny (note the exceptions to this in section 4.5.3 b. iii. above), fibre, milk or other products can be certified. Meat from this stock can never gain certification.

Note that dairy herds certified to the USDA NOP cannot bring in any conventional stock to add to the herd and replacements; they can only bring in stock to add to the herd and replacements from other NOP certified farms which qualify under the NOP rules, and only subject to BioGro's written approval.

f. Conventional breeding stock

Female breeding stock must ideally be bred on the farm or obtained from certified sources. If certified breeding stock are not available then a maximum of 10 percent of uncertified adult female breeding stock of the same species may be able to be brought in during any twelve month period, subject to written approval from BioGro. These uncertified breeding stock are subject to sections 4.5.3 d. and e. above. A derogation to this requirement can be applied for where the farm is undergoing a significant change of management, e.g. from dairy farming to beef farming.

Breeding sires must be certified where suitable sires are available, otherwise section 4.5.3 d. above must be complied with.

The percentage above does not apply to production units with less than 10 equine, bovine or cervine (ie farmed deer) animals, or with less than five porcine, ovine or caprine animals. For these units, any renewal is limited to a maximum of one animal per year.

Note: The above requirements are also subject to market requirements.

g. Chicks

Up to 2-day-old chicks (layer and meat) may be brought in from any source. A written declaration must be obtained from the supplier of the chicks of any vaccines used and a GMO free statement for these.

Subject to BioGro approval, up to 18 week old laying hens may be brought in from any source. The following requirements must be met:

- i.. Chickens must come on the property in one batch per year;
- ii. Chickens must undergo a six week conversion period to the BioGro Organic Standards before eggs can be sold as organic;
- iii. The application for approval must include the following;
 - Source and numbers of chickens; and
 - A written declaration from the supplier that the hens have not been debeaked or beak trimmed. Infra-red beak tipping may be approved subject to evidence that no other suitable source of point of lay pullets is available; and
 - A written declaration from the supplier that the hens have received non-GMO feed before entering the certified property
- iv. If there are other organic hens on the property, then;
 - The new converting flock must be kept in a separate area; and
 - Eggs must be kept separate through egg collection, cleaning and sales as non-organic; and
 - Records must be maintained and provided to BioGro to verify this. If this is not possible then the hens should be purchased at 10 - 12 weeks of age. If records are inadequate, then BioGro may require hens to be purchased at 10 - 12 weeks.
- v. The Hens can never gain organic certification for meat

Note: Application to bring in up to 18 week old hens will only be approved until New Zealand has the capacity to raise day old chicks to 16 week old laying hens as certified organic. The approval only applied to poultry products sold in New Zealand and unregulated organic markets. Specific requirements apply to regulated markets.

h. Artificial insemination

Artificial insemination using BioGro certified/approved semen is allowed. Written approval must be obtained from BioGro prior to using non-certified semen. The application to BioGro must include information on why the certified/approved semen options aren't suitable, and a written declaration from the supplier of the semen that :

- The bull is non-GMO and not cloned, and
- The semen preparation doesn't contain any ingredients which are GMOs or are the product of GM/GE, and that the manufacturing process of the semen preparation does not use GM/GE.

Embryo transfers and/or other reproductive manipulations are prohibited.

Artificial synchronisation and induction are prohibited unless applied to individual animals for veterinary reasons, and prior written approval is obtained from BioGro.

Cloning is prohibited.

i. Genetic engineering

Genetically engineered breeds and livestock, and the progeny of genetically engineered breeds and livestock, are expressly prohibited.

j. Raising livestock

Animals must be raised organically from birth apart from the exceptions listed in this module Section 4.5 Breeds, breeding, and incoming stock.

4.6 Housing and management

4.6.1 Guiding principles

Adequate housing should be provided for those livestock that require housing to ensure their welfare and wellbeing.

The management of all livestock should enable them, as far as is possible, to exhibit their natural behaviour and to forage.

4.6.2 Recommendations

- a. Provide clean, dry housing with adequate space for poultry, pigs and other livestock requiring housing.
- b. Provide all livestock with adequate pasture, water, shade, and shelter.

4.6.3 Requirements of the Standards

a. Intensive livestock farming

Factory farming or intensive livestock farming in enclosures with no pastoral access is prohibited. All planned housing must be submitted to BioGro for approval prior to it being used for organic production. Herd animals must not be kept individually.

b. Shade and shelter

Where a farm has inadequate shade or shelter for livestock then a documented plan must be in place to address this.

c. Disinfection

Disinfection of housing can only be done with materials allowed in these Standards.

d. Artificial lighting

Artificial lighting to prolong daylight requires prior written approval from BioGro. A total daylight period of 16 hours must not be exceeded, and it must commence and end with a dimming period. Fluorescent lights are not permitted. The maximum hours of artificial light used to prolong natural day length must be set to respect the natural behaviour, geographical conditions and general health of the animals.

e. Stocking rate for laying hens

The stocking rate for laying hens in the hen houses must not exceed:

- i 6 birds/m² usable space under covered roof, including perches, excluding the nesting area of nest boxes.
- ii A minimum of 18 cm perch space should be provided for each bird.
- iii Nesting space should be provided at a minimum of 7 birds per nest, with a common nest area of 120 m² / bird.

f. Stocking rate for meat birds

Stocking rate for meat birds in houses must not exceed

- i. 10 birds/m² for fixed housing, or maximum of 21 kg/m²
- ii. 16 birds/m² or maximum of 30 kg/m² - only in mobile sheds less than 150m², which remain open at night.

Perch space should be available for 20% of the meat birds

g. Poultry runs

- i. Poultry must have unrestricted access to outside runs, which must provide access to fresh grass or a forage crop containing a diversity of species
- ii. Exit/entry openings (popholes) from the hen house must be a minimum height of 450mm and width of 1m wide. The overall combined width of the openings (popholes) must be at least 4m/1000 birds. The hens should have unrestricted visual contact with the opening (pophole) and it should be positioned so that the hens should not have more than 20m to the opening (pophole)
- iii. Feed must be made available outside the house on a daily basis to encourage free ranging
- iv. At least 50% of the free range area must be covered with vegetation
- v. Poultry runs must provide adequate natural shelter and provision for dust bathing.
- vi. Both meat and layer chicks must be encouraged to forage as soon as possible, weather permitting, ideally within their first week.
- vii. Meat chickens must have ongoing access to fresh pasture.

h. Mutilations

All mutilations, including tail docking of cows, debeaking, beak trimming or toe cutting of chickens, etc., are prohibited except for the following:

- i. Tail docking of lambs is permitted.
- ii. De-horning of cattle is permitted, and should preferably be done at the bud stage. Relevant national regulations must be complied with. An animal that has been anaesthetised for de-horning must be quarantined and will lose its certification for twice the withholding period of the product used plus the subsequent 12 months.
- iii. Mulesing of merino type sheep may be allowed as a restricted practice, and only after written approval by BioGro. Breeding towards wrinkle-free sheep must be an objective.
- iv. Velveting of deer is prohibited on certified animals.
- v. Nose ringing of grazing pigs is a restricted practice and requires prior written approval from BioGro.
- vi. Castration of cattle, pigs, and lambs is permitted at an early age.
- vii. Vasectomising of teaser bulls is a restricted practice and requires prior written approval from BioGro.

i. Housing

Housing design, construction, and operation must provide for insulation, heating, cooling and ventilation of the building, that ensures air circulation, dust levels, temperature, relative air humidity, and gas concentrations to within levels that are not harmful to the livestock. It must also protect the livestock from predation by feral animals.

Poultry sheds should be mobile to improve access to good pasture, and allow for rotation of grazing areas. Shed sizes will be limited by access to continuous grazing and health and welfare of birds to prevent the need to debeak.

Perches must be available in all laying hen housing to a minimum of 18cm perch space per bird. It is also recommended that perch space is available for 20% of meat birds.

Refer to clause 4.6.3gii for requirements for poultry shed openings (popholes).

j. Housing Conditions

Housing conditions must ensure:

- The conditions of 4.6.3gii are met;
- Ample access to fresh water and feed according to the needs of the animals;
- Animals have sufficient space to stand naturally, move around, lie down easily, turn around, groom themselves and assume all natural postures and movements such as stretching, and wing flapping;
- Where animals require bedding, adequate natural materials are provided.

k. Treated timber

Use of timber treated with arsenate and/or other prohibited materials is a restricted practice and requires BioGro written approval. All alternatives must be evaluated first.

Note that properties producing certified products to be exported to the US (including products which will be ingredients of processed products to be exported to US) must comply with the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) requirements for treated timber.

I. Construction materials

The operator must ensure that the environment, the facilities, stocking density and flock/herd size provides for the behavioural needs of the animals and provides for:

- Construction materials and production equipment that do not significantly harm human or animal health



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