



IIT KHARAGPUR



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CERTIFICATION COURSES

## **Organic Farming for Sustainable Agricultural Production**

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**Lecture 38: Organic Certification Process**

# What is Organic Certification?

Organic certification system is a quality assurance initiative, intended to assure quality, prevent fraud and promote commerce, based on set of standards and ethics. It is a process certification for producers of organic food and other organic plant products

## Why Certification?

- Third party assurance from producer to the consumer separated by distance
- Assurance to the consumers that their concern for healthy food has been addressed
- Effective marketing tool for image, credibility, visibility/transparency

# Aim and Scope for Organic Certification

## Aim

**The National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)** provides an institutional mechanism for implementation of National Standards for Organic Production through National Accreditation Policy and Programme. The aims of NPOP are

- To provide the means of evaluation of certification programmes for organic agriculture and products as per the approved criteria.
- To accredit certification programmes
- To facilitate certification of organic products in conformity to the National Standards for Organic Products.
- To encourage the development of organic farming and organic food processing

## Scope

- Policies for development and certification of organic products under National Standards for Organic Products and Processes
- Accreditation of programmes to be operated by Inspection and Certification Agencies
- Certification of organic products

# Requirements to Maintain Certification

- ❖ Develop and adhere to an ***organic system plan*** agreed to by a certification agency (Reviewed/submitted annually OR At any time that significant changes occur)

An ***organic production or handling system plan*** must include:

- 1) A description of practices and procedures to be performed and maintained.
- 2) A list of each substance to be used as a production or handling input, indicating its composition, source, location(s) where it will be used.
- 3) A description of the monitoring practices and procedures.
- 4) A description of the record keeping system.
- 5) A description of the management practices and physical barriers used to prevent contamination.

## Requirements to Maintain Certification (Contd...)

- ❖ Abstain from the use of prohibited materials for the three years immediately preceding the harvest of the product to be sold as “organic” and while certified as organic.
- ❖ Annual inspection of the site that will produce and/or handle organic products.
- ❖ The maintenance of records for a minimum of 5 years that show that the operation is adhering to their organic plan.
- ❖ Correct use of the organic label and claims of the organic integrity of the products.
- ❖ Use of organic seeds when commercially available.

# Organic Certification (Labeling of products)

## Labeling Requirements:

- Labeling shall convey clear and accurate information on the organic status of the product.
- When the full standards requirements are fulfilled, products shall be sold as "produce of organic agriculture" or a similar description.
- The label for conversion products shall be clearly distinguishable from the label for organic products by mentioning the year of conversion.

Single ingredient products may be labeled as "**Organic**" when all standard requirements have been met.

Multi ingredient products where not all ingredients, including additives, are of organic origin may be labeled in the following way (raw material weight):

- Where a minimum of 95% of the ingredients are of certified organic origin, products may be labeled "**Certified Organic**" or similar and should carry the logo of the certification programme.
- Where less than 95% but more than 70% of the ingredients are of certified organic origin, products may be labeled as "**Made with organic ingredients**".
- Where less than 70% of the ingredients are of certified organic origin, such product may not be labeled "Organic".

## NPOP is Internationally Recognized

- NPOP has equivalence agreement with European Union
- NPOP has equivalence agreement with Switzerland
- USDA has accepted NPOP conformity assessment system

**Means product certified by any Indian certification body can be exported without the need for recertification in above countries. For USA, Indian certification bodies issue certificate based on NOP standards**



# The organic quality control

## Balance of interests

- Consumer requests healthy and environmentally sound products
- Willing to pay premium price
- Trust building
- Farmer/processors producing according to certain standards (may be putting higher labour etc)
- Getting access to premium price markets



# The organic quality control

**Standards**



**Accreditation**



**Inspection**



**Certification**





## Standards

- Standards defining production methods, not the product quality
- Minimum requirements, not “best practice”
- Continuously developed and dynamic
- Can be International and National



## Accreditation

- Guarantees that the certification program is competent to carry out specific tasks
- Authoritative body defines policies, standards and checks whether a certification system is operating according to standards
- Various accreditation programs: NPOP (National Programme for Organic Production, India), EU (EN 45011), IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements), NOP (National Organic Programme, USA), JAS (Japanese Agricultural Standard)



## Inspection

- On-site visit to verify that the performance of an operation is in accordance with specific standards
- Evaluation and verification of agricultural production, processing and trading
- Inspection requires complete documentation by producers, processors and handlers
- Findings are presented in a report to the certifiers



## Certification

- Monitoring the market for misuse of certification mark or label
- Assesses the results of the inspection in relation to the requirements of the organic standards
- Decides about issuing of certificates, conditions and sanctions
- Written confirmation that a process or product is in compliance with certain standards
- Certificate is granted