

Organic food: new rules for EU label agreed

- **Stricter checks in the supply chain**
- **new EU anti-contamination rules**
- **Imported food to comply with EU standards**

New rules to increase consumer trust in organic foodstuffs and unleash the sector's potential for growth were informally agreed with Council' negotiators on Wednesday.

To increase consumers' trust:

- **Strict, risk-based controls along the supply chain** that, on Parliament's insistence, will be on-site and for all operators, at least annually or one every two years if no fraud is found in the last three years.
- **Imports to comply with EU standards:** current "equivalence" rules, requiring non-EU countries to comply with similar but not the same standards, will be phased out within five years; to avoid sudden disruption of supply, Commission could, for a renewable period of two years, allow imports of specific products, even if not fully compliant with EU standards (e.g. due to specific climate conditions).
- **Contamination with pesticides:** farmers will be obliged to apply precautionary measures to avoid contamination; in case of suspected presence of e.g. a non-authorized pesticide or fertiliser, the final product should not bear the organic label until further investigation; if contamination was deliberate or farmer failed to apply newly introduced precautionary measures, it will lose its organic status.
- Member states currently applying **thresholds for non-authorized substances** in organic food, such as pesticides, could continue to do so, if they allow other EU countries' organic foodstuffs complying with EU rules to access their markets.

Four years after entry into force of this regulation, the Commission would report back on the efficiency of the EU anti-contamination rules and national thresholds and, if need be, come up with a draft law to harmonise them.

To boost EU organic food production:

- **Increasing supply of organic seeds and animals:** better data gathering on the availability of organic seeds and animals should increase their supply to meet the needs of organic farmers. Derogations allowing the use of conventional seeds and animals in organic production would expire in 2035, but the end-date could be pushed back or forward, depending on increased availability of organic seeds and animals.
- **Mixed farms:** farms producing both conventional and organic food would be allowed on condition that the two farming activities are clearly and effectively separated.
- **Easier certification for small farmers:** group certification for small farmers would make their life easier and attract more of them into the organic farming business.

Rapporteur and chief EP negotiator [Martin Häusling \(Greens/EFA, DE\)](#) will hold a [press conference on Thursday at 09:30 on the outcome of the negotiations](#) (Anna Politkovskaya room - PHS 0A50).

More detailed information about the content of the deal are available in the [background note](#).

"After 20 months of negotiations we have managed to reach an agreement, which will help organic sector grow and will increase consumers' trust in organic foodstuffs. It was a laborious task but I believe new rules will bring benefits to both EU consumers and organic farmers. "

rapporteur Martin Häusling (Greens/EFA, DE)

Next steps

The agreed text now needs to be approved by the Agriculture Committee, the Parliament and the Council before it can enter into force. It shall apply from 1 July 2020. (Art 45)

Procedure: Ordinary legislative procedure (co-decision), 1st reading agreement

Type of the document: Regulation

Further information

[Watch the press conference with EP rapporteur \(live on 29.06.2017 at 09.30\)](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Martin Häusling \(Greens/EFA, DE\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[EP Research: Organic farming legislation \(20 October 2015\)](#)

[EP Research: Organic food - Helping EU consumers make an informed choice \(May 2015\)](#)

[EP Research: Organic production and the European Union \(February 2015\)](#)

[Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development](#)

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