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NEW ORGANIC FARMING LABEL IN EUROPEAN UNION MANDATORY

The market for organic products grows steadily in Europe. These products offer high food quality, low levels of residues as well as sustainable and environmental friendly agricultural methods. Consumers want to be sure of the organic origin of the products because they see benefits in the mentioned features and also since organic products are more expensive in most cases compared to conventional farmed alternatives. Therefore, the European Union (EU) has introduced a new label for organic products which is mandatory for all packed food since July 1st 2010. This label ensures that 95% of the ingredients of the product have been organically farmed following the EU organic farming regulations, the product complies with the official inspection scheme, and has a clear classification on it.

The market for organically grown agricultural products increases steadily in many regions of Europe. Organic farming is a holistic approach with the aim of a sustainable and environmental friendly agriculture. In short the consumer shall be supplied with fresh, tasty, and authentic food produced under controlled conditions.

Several principles and common practices have been installed to achieve this goal:

- very strict use of synthetic pesticides and fertilisers, antibiotics, food additives, processing aids and other chemical compounds,
- prohibition of genetically modified organisms,
- animal friendly livestock breeding including open-air and free-range facilities and organic feed,
- use of crop and animal species well adapted to the specialities of organic farming and naturally resistant to diseases,
- use of agricultural techniques like crop rotation and animal manure for an efficient use of the resources.

These strict directives lead generally to lower yields with the consequence of higher prices on the market for organic products.

The average consumer of organic products is well informed and wants to be sure of the origin of their purchases. Therefore the organic logo and labelling system of the

EU has been installed, which is mandatory since July 1st. It ensures the customers that the product has been completely produced according to the [EU organic farming regulations](#) or – for imported goods – an equivalent strict set of rules.

Labelling regulations

The EU regulation includes strict rules in order to assure the customers and to minimize potential misuse as stated in the [communication of the European Commission](#).



Figure 1: New EU organic farming logo

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“Any terms such as organic, bio, eco, tec., including terms used in trademarks, or practices used in labeling or advertising liable to mislead the consumer or user by suggesting that a product or its ingredients satisfy the requirements set out under this regulation shall not be used for non-organic products.”

All products labeled as organic must include at least information about the last operator who handled the product, e.g. the farmer or the distributor, and the name or code number of their inspector.

According to the European Commission the logo will make sure that:

- at least 95% of the product's ingredients of agricultural origin have been organically produced;
- the product complies with the rules of the official inspection scheme;
- the product has come directly from the producer or preparer in a sealed package;
- the product bears the name of the producer, the preparer or vendor and the name or code of the inspection body.

The logo is mandatory for pre-packaged food. It remains voluntary for imported products at the moment.



The new mandatory EU organic logo is available as a [download version](#). Additional logos – either private or national – may be placed by the producer but not as a replacement of the EU logo.

Controls

Every producer has to undergo a thorough inspection by EU inspection bodies or authorities to ensure their compliance to the rules of organic farming. Conventional farmers must show in a conversion period of at least 2 years that they are completely switching their production and can at the earliest achieve the logo after this period.

Once the label has been given to a producer the compliance with the rules will be controlled on a yearly basis. These inspections may include view of

the documentation over inventory, livestock, medication etc., taking of samples, on-site examination of the livestock conditions and control of the farms and production facilities. The inspection systems are established by each EU Member State, which designate a number of public authorities or approved private inspection bodies for the inspection and certification process. In case the requirements are not fulfilled, the certification can be withdrawn and the right to put the label on the products can be removed.

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