

Certification

Frequently asked questions about organic certification under the Mexican Organic Produce Law (LPO)

What is organic certification?

It is the process through which the certification organization authorized by the SENASICA assesses compliance with the Mexican Organic Produce Law (LPO) during the production, processing and commercialization processes, and issues a certification that will still confidence in consumers.

What is the scope certified under the Organic Produce Law?

Any organic operator can be certified in any of the following scopes:

- Vegetable production
- Wild vegetables recollection
- Animal production (domestic animals)
- Animal production from natural ecosystems or non-domestic animals
- Insect production
- Mushrooms production
- Processing of products from agricultural and livestock breeding activities
- Commercialization of products from agricultural and livestock breeding activities

How can I obtain the organic certificate of the product that I cultivate and/or process?

The organic operator must do the following to obtain the organic certification:

1. Be aware of and implement the principles, criteria and requirements for organic production established in the Guidelines Agreement.

2. Prepare and implement the specific organic plan for organic operations.
3. Cover the conversion period.
4. Check the list of organic certifications organizations authorized by the Secretariat.
5. Apply for organic certification before an authorized certification organization.
6. Submit to the organic inspection carried out by the selected certification organization.

The SENASICA will follow-up and supervise compliance with the LPO.

What is the Organic Plan?

According to article 3, section XV of the Organic Produce Law, an Organic Plan is the instrument that details the stages of production and organic management, and includes the description of all activities to be carried out and the inputs that will be used in the organic production unit: source of the animals, seeds and/or propagation materials, inputs for fertilizing or nurturing plants, and pest management, animal production and feeding, manure and cattle management, fodder production plan, and all actions to preserve the soil and water, crop rotation, environmental conditions, and parallel processing, among others.

Additionally, this instrument must describe the management history or precedents, including any inputs used in the agricultural and livestock breeding production unit for the past three years.

Articles 7 and 217 of the Guidelines ACCORD for organic operations, establish the minimum and specific aspects that the Organic Plan must contain depending on the activities to be carried out.

What is the conversion period?

It is the time frame, of up to 3 years, from the implementation of organic practices by the interested party, described in the Organic Plan, until the first harvest certified as organic.

During this time frame, no product may be sold as, or labeled with, or display the term “organic” or ecologic, and/or the bio- and eco- prefix, and cannot use the National Label for organic products until the conversion period ends and the product has been certified as organic.

When can the retroactive recognition for the conversion period be authorized?

The retroactive recognition for the conversion period is an exception for anyone who submits information about the history of the field and/or analyses from the soil and/or plants, as evidence to demonstrate that no forbidden materials and/or substances have been used in the parcels, and that no risk of contamination stemming from forbidden materials or substances has occurred, either because the parcels have been at rest or they are used for conventional agriculture without the application of substances or materials excluded from the National List of Authorized Substances for Organic Operations.

What is the validity period for an organic certificate?

Organic certificates are valid for up to a year, in accordance with article 27 of the Regulations.

The Organic Produce Law requires brokers to be certified thereunder?

The Organic Produce Law and its Regulations do not have the scope to certify brokers.

Companies that trade organic products through their own brands need to be certified under the LPO?

In the current version of the LPO, the company in question does not require to be certificated under the Law, provided that it does not handle or participates in any part of the productive process (production, manufacturing, packaging, etc.); however, the operator in charge of the preparation/processing of the finished product must be certified, and article 44 of the Regulations and articles 201 to 205 of the Guidelines Agreement must be observed.