Organic salt production

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European Parliament rejects Commission's proposed rules on organic sea salt

Draft Commission Delegated Regulation amending Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards detailed production rules for organic sea salt and other organic salts for food and feed

Update

In July 2023 the European Parliament objected to the Commission's proposed rules on organic sea salt. This proposal will therefore not enter into force.

The Parliament considered that the new rules would "make the production of organic table salt from rock salt unattractive and lead to a very limited availability of organic rock salt on the market" (European Parliament 2023).

Impacted products

salt

What is changing?

As the Commission's proposal for specific rules on organic sea salt was rejected, nothing will change and the situation for exporters of organic sea salt remains the same as today (see Implications section).

Why?

Regulation 2018/48 on organic production and labelling applies from 1 January 2022 for all foods, including sea salt and other salts.

The Commission considered it necessary to determine the specific methods that are permitted for producers to label salt as organic salt. However, the European Parliament objected to both the technical details of the Commission's proposal, and the basic principle of regulating salt, a mineral, in a similar way to an agricultural product.

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Timeline

Due to the European Parliament's objection, the proposed Regulation cannot enter into force. The Commission can choose to put forward a new proposal.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

In the absence of specific production rules for organic sea salt, exporters of organic sea salt must continue to follow, as they do today, the general principles (Arts. 5–7) and production rules (Arts. 9–11) for organic products set out in Regulation 2018/48.

Background

In May 2023, the European Commission proposed production rules to be applied at every stage of production, preparation and distribution in order to place salt on the market as "organic salt".

These detailed rules, set out in the Annex to the proposed Regulation, included the following.

General requirements

- Organic salt must be obtained from the sea, rock salt deposits, natural brine or salt lakes, not as a synthetic product from chemical reactions.
- Production must be conducted in locations not subject to contamination with substances unauthorised in organic production.
- Operators must comply with a conversion period of at least 6 months before the production of organic salt, allowing producers time to adjust to organic methods.
- Organic salt, salt in conversion, and non-organic salt must be kept separate from each other in time or space.

Specific requirements

- Certain practices are prohibited, e.g. rock salt mining with explosives, solution mining, reconstituting salt through recrystallisation, drying salt using non-renewable energy.
- Agricultural ingredients added to the salt must also be organic.
- No additives or processing aids may be used.
- Minerals must not be added except iodine.

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Resources

European Parliament (2023) Objection to a delegated act: detailed production rules for organic sea salt and other organic salts for food and feed.

EUsalt (2023) Feedback from European Salt Producers' Association

EGTOP (2021) Organic sea salt and other salts for food and feed. Final Report. European Commission, Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production.

Sources

Draft Commission Delegated Regulation and Annex

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