Simplification of organic rules

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Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) 2018/848 as regards certain production, labelling and certification rules and certain rules on trade with third countries

What is changing and why?

The European Commission proposes the following changes to the Organic Regulation 2018/848 to clarify and simplify the current rules.

Group of operators rules:

- Currently, to be a member of a group of operators, there are strict limits on the size of each group member, assessed either by their holding size or the turnover associated with their organic sales through the group. This proposal removes the criteria relating to organic sales and turnover. Members of a group will only have to meet the specified limits for holding size, and these limits are increased compared to the current levels: a member of a group must have a holding less than 10 ha, or 1 ha in the case of greenhouses, or 30 ha in the case of permanent grassland.
- Currently, a group of operators must have a legal personality. The Commission proposes to amend this so that the group either has its own legal personality, or is part of a farmer cooperative association, operator cooperative, association, federation, or organisation that has legal personality.

Recognition of non-EU countries as equivalent: Some countries outside the European Union (EU) are recognised as having organic rules that meet production standards equivalent to those in the EU. These recognitions expire at the end of 2026. New equivalence agreements are being negotiated, but may not be completed by that date. The Commission proposes to extend this recognition until **31 December 2036** to avoid disruptions to trade.

Use of the EU organic logo on products from equivalent non-EU countries: Products from equivalent non-EU countries can use the EU organic logo, but only if they follow additional specific requirements. These include no hydroponic farming, better animal welfare rules, rules on animal handling, and adding vitamins or minerals to foods only when EU or national law requires it.

EU organic logo on processed products with imported ingredients: Processed food made in the EU can use the EU organic logo if at least 95% of the ingredients are organic. Imported ingredients coming from non-EU countries recognised as equivalent must meet the additional specific requirements referred to above, unless making up less than 5% of the weight of the food.

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Use of organic terminology like "bio" or "eco": Products from equivalent non-EU countries may use organic terms such as "bio" or "eco". Unlike use of the EU organic logo, these terms do not require compliance with additional specific requirements.

Cleaning and disinfection products: The current Regulation requires a list of approved cleaning and disinfection products to be established for organic food facilities and equipment. Because this is too complex to manage due to the number of products and range of uses, the Commission proposes to remove this requirement.

Conversion period for quail meat: Conversion rules do not currently cover quail meat. The Commission proposes a conversion period of 5 weeks and a minimum slaughter age of 42 days for organic quail meat.

Withdrawal periods for veterinary medicines: Organic rules currently require a minimum withdrawal period of 48 hours after using certain medicines, even when not required by marketing authorisations. The Commission proposes to remove this minimum period and align the rule with general EU veterinary medicine law.

Treatment and housing of poultry: The Commission proposes to modify the requirements on open-air access for poultry to apply only when birds are sufficiently feathered (to avoid health risks). It also proposes to limit the size of each poultry house to 1,600 m² and apply this limit per house, not per production unit, to allow farm development without harming animal welfare.

Actions

Stakeholder feedback to the WTO closed on 22 March 2026.

Timeline

In its notification to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Commission foresees the adoption of this Regulation in 2026.

For more information see the full record on the AGRINFO website – where you can also view the latest AGRINFO Update newsletters and search the database.

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