



Circular No. 4/2022

16 December 2022

To: Organic Operators, Organic Control Bodies and Farm Advisors

Organic Production Rules Update

1. New Organic Standards

The updated Organic Standards V2.1 is available at the following:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/fc7c8-organic-farming/>

The main amendments relate to points 2 & 3 below.

2. Non organic animals grazing on an organic holding

Non-organic livestock may use organic pasturage for a limited period of a maximum of 180 days each year, provided that they have been raised in an environmentally friendly way on land supported under Articles 70, 71, 72 and 73 of Regulation 2021/2115 and that they are not present at the same time as organic animals on that pasture, in accordance with the conditions outlined in paragraph 3.03.14 of the organic standards. All animal farm-to farm movement must comply with ERAD movement requirements as stated in the Explanatory Handbook for Cross Compliance Requirements

<https://assets.gov.ie/68365/924f1679973f421da054dd4029785404.pdf>

3. Dehorning, Castration, Hormonal Treatment

To ensure the highest organic animal welfare standards, the surgical castration of a bull over 8 months of age, dehorning of livestock over 8 months of age or administration of hormonal treatment will result in the loss of organic status for the individual livestock where these mutilations are carried out. Paragraphs 3.4.18 and 3.12.13 of the organic standards refer.

Please note that, in line with animal welfare legislation, castration of a bull over 6 months of age or dehorning of a bovine must be carried out by a veterinary practitioner acting as such.

4. Non-Simultaneous Conversion

In the case of non-simultaneous conversion, for example where housing does not meet organic legislative requirements, the conversion period for livestock can only start once the animals leave the animal housing. Details of any non-simultaneous conversion must be stated in the organic conversion plan.

5. Organic Housing requirements

A minimum of 50% of the minimum internal floor area required for the animals must be of solid floor construction and covered with straw or appropriate bedding. If it is necessary to reduce the existing slatted area, the existing slats can be removed and must be replaced with solid slabs. This is set out in the '[Minimum Specification for the Housing of Organic Animals](#)' Specification S.117 document published in May 2020. Placing a screed of concrete over existing slats is not a permitted way to reduce the existing slatted area.

6. Artificial Creation of Holding - Circumvention

Circumvention in relation to area-based schemes including the Organic Farming Scheme shall not be permitted where it is established that the conditions required for obtaining such an advantage were created artificially contrary to the objectives of the Regulations governing these Schemes.

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