

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is organic agriculture?

- It is a system of farm design and management to create an eco system, which can achieve sustainable productivity without the use of artificial external inputs such as chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

2. What is Organic Certification

- Organic Certification is a Certification process including registration, inspection, evaluation and even the issuing of certificates as per NPOP norms for producers, processors and traders/ handlers. It is based on a system of farm design and management which creates an ecosystem leading to sustainable productivity without using artificial external inputs including chemicals. The Organic Certification involves a set of production standards for cultivating the crops, storage, processing, packaging and transporting for which a written assurance is given by a Certification body.

3. Basic Steps of Organic Farming

Organic farming approach involves following five principles:

- Conversion of land from conventional management to organic management
- Management of the entire surrounding system to ensure biodiversity and sustainability of the system.
- Crop production with the use of alternative sources of nutrients such as crop rotation, residue management, organic manures and biological inputs.
- Management of weeds and pests by better management practices, physical and cultural means and by biological control system
- Maintenance of live stock in tandem with organic concept and make them an integral part of the entire system

4. Conventional Farming vs Organic Farming

Organic and conventional agriculture are two different farming systems.

Organic Farming	Conventional Farming
Decentralization of resources	Centralization on limited sources
Independence from monitory inputs	Dependence on monitory inputs
Community participation and healthy competition	Competition only for maximum production by individuals
Harmony with nature for sustainable production	Dominance on nature for maximum output
Ecological diversity	Monopoly with limited crops
Restraint and tolerance	Exploitation and exertion

5. What is NPOP

- It is the National Program for Organic Production (NPOP), launched by Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India. It provides information on standards for Organic Production Systems, criteria and procedure for accreditation of inspection & certification Bodies, use of National Organic Logo and other Regulations. APEDA is administering the scheme.

6. Where can I get a copy of the National Program for Organic Production?

- You can download it from the website i.e. www.apeda.gov.in

7. What does it mean to be certified organic

- Certified organic means that organic product has been certified by an accredited certification agency and the product has been produced and /processed according to National/Or International standard for organic production

8. What is conversion?

- The process of changing an agricultural farm from conventional to organic farm. This is also called transition.

9. What is the requirement of conversion period for organic certification

- The conversion period is the time between the start of organic management (the date of first inspection) and the certification of crops as organic. Generally it is 3 years.

10. What is part conversion?

- Shall be when part of a conventional farm or unit has already been converted to organic production or processing and a part is in the process of conversion

11. What is parallel production?

- Shall mean any production where the same unit is growing, breeding, handling or processing the same products both in a certified organic and a non-certified organic system. Similarly a situation with “organic” and “in conversion” production of the same product is also parallel production.

12. How long does it take for my land to be certified organic?

- It depends on the history of your operations and your current compliances with certification standards and regulations. It takes two years for annual crops and three years for perennial crops to be certified as organic.

13. How long is my organic certificate valid for?

- Your organic certificate remains valid for one year only; it has to be renewed every year

14. What is the frequency of inspections carried over by the certification agency?

- Minimum one announced inspection shall be done once in a year. Additional inspections can be conducted whenever found necessary

15. What types of certification is done

- Farm (Individual)
- Group (ICS)

16. What is internal control system?

- A documented quality assurance system that allows the external certification body to delegate the inspection of individual group members to a body identified from within the operators of the group

17. What is transaction/import certificate?

- Document issued by a certification body declaring that the specified lot or consignment of goods is derived from production and / or processing system that has been certified.

18. What is Buffer Zone?

- A clear defined and identifiable area boarding an organic production/site from that of conventional production unit.

19. Activities under ICS

