

Brief Introduction to Requirements for Organic Beekeeping

according to the European Regulation (EC) 834/07*, the US National Organic Program (NOP), and CERES interpretation

(Note: JAS does not cover beekeeping yet)

1. What organic beekeeping means:

- ❖ Takes place in unpolluted areas
- ❖ Uses natural materials, methods and feed
- ❖ Avoids use of conventional veterinary medicine and pesticides.

2. Introduction:

Rules for organic beekeeping are clearly defined by Reg. (EC) 889/08, while NOP so far does not include specific provisions for beekeeping. Certifiers are authorised, however, to certify beekeeping under NOP, adapting general NOP husbandry rules to beekeeping. Please see the CERES Policy on Organic Beekeeping under NOP for further details.

3. Apiary siting:

	Regulation (EC) 834/07	NOP
Forage area of 3 km around the apiary	Must be predominantly covered by natural vegetation and/or organic or low input farmland ; this is especially relevant for crops visited by bees for feeding (fruit orchards, rapeseed, etc.); No major sources of pollution (industry, roads, etc.) must be within this area	Must be certified organic (farmland or wild harvesting land)
Surveillance zone of 3 km beyond the forage zone	No requirements	Beekeeper must assess and prevent contamination risks
	The area must have enough sources of pollen , nectare , and clean water	
	These requirements apply for all apiaries including migration sites.	

4. Reproduction:

Stock must be built up from **own or organic colonies**, using swarms or colony division

Colonies purchased from conventional beekeepers must undergo a one year **transition period**.

5. Hives and other materials, cleanness:

- ✓ **Beehives** must be built mainly from natural materials, like unpainted wood
- ✓ **Tools, containers** and other material used for colony management, harvest, and post harvest handling, must be appropriate for foodstuff and not contain any polluting substances
- ✓ **Beeswax** must be used in a closed cycle, avoiding the risk of co-mingling with non-organic wax.
- ✓ Hives must be kept clean, harvest and postharvest handling must be performed under adequate **hygienic conditions**.

6. Feeding:

Colonies must be left **enough honey** for feeding during cold or dry seasons

Only in case that really required by climatic conditions, artificial feeding may be used. Exclusively **organic sugar** may be used for this purpose.

7. Veterinary treatments:

	EU Regulation	NOP
Prevention	The beekeeper must prevent diseases and pests , by selecting a resistant breed, controlling drones, changing queens, keeping hives and materials clean, etc.	
For allowed materials see:	Annex II to Reg. (EC) 889/08	§ 205.603
Varroa control	Reg. 889, Art. 25.6 allow Formic, lactic, acetic, and oxalic acids, menthol, thymol, eucalyptol, camphor	Formic acid (§205.603) Lactic acid (considered non synthetic)
Rodents	Rodenticides are allowed in closed traps	
In case of treatment with allopathic medicine	Colony must be separated and undergo a new conversion period. In case of synthetic acaricides, beeswax must be substituted again.	Colony must be separated and is not eligible for re-conversion to organic.

8. Conversion period:

Colonies have to undergo a **one year** conversion period

During this period, **beeswax** has to be **replaced** by wax from certified organic apiaries, or a new stock has to be built up, using only the new caps. In countries where organic beeswax is not available on the market, CERES can grant an authorisation for use of conventional wax, provided that (a) it is proven through laboratory tests to be free of acaricide residues, (b) it does not contain paraffin wax, and (c) there is sufficient evidence of non availability.

9. Colony management:

Practices such as wing clipping of queenbees, synthetic repellents, killing bees as a method of harvest are not allowed. Brood frames must not be used for honey extraction.

10. Records, traceability, and labels:

The beekeeper must present an **organic management plan**

A detailed **map** of the apiary site and its surrounding must be presented; relevant vegetation, the apiary site, and eventual sources of pollution must be marked on the map

A **diary** must be kept for each single colony, including information on general handling, reproduction, veterinary treatments, yields, and special observations

After harvest and before transporting or storing honey or other bees products, these must be adequately **labelled**; labels must include information on type and quantity of product, date of harvest, origin, organic condition, name of certifier

Traceability must be assured as far back as possible.

***Note:** Inside the EU, the Regulation has to be applied in its strictest sense. Products from third countries outside the European Union are considered "equivalent". Please refer to the CERES homepage for our Policy 4.1.1, which, combined with Regulations (CE) 834/07 and (CE) 889/08 and our other policies, make up the "CERES equivalent standard".



Please be aware that this is only a selection of essential requirements of the organic standards, meant as an introduction. The operator, of course, has to learn about and meet all requirements of the respective standard.