



AI3 NASAA CONCISE STANDARDS FOR GROWER GROUPS

Version 21/5/10

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These standards are suitable for translation into local indigenous languages by Grower Groups and others requiring a basic understanding of the main requirements for organic certification.

It is the responsibility of the Grower Group head licensee to ensure that all growers meet all requirements of the complete NASAA Standards.

For further clarification, or for details on the NASAA standards additional to these concise standards, please contact the NASAA Certified Organic office.

WHAT IS ORGANIC FARMING?

Organic farming means growing food or fibre crops in a way that copies natural systems as much as possible. The use of chemical fertilisers or pesticides is not allowed. Weeds are controlled by hand, slashing, or by mulching the ground. No genetically modified organisms, (GMOs) are permitted in organic farming.

THE SOIL

The soil used for growing organic food or fibre must be kept fertile by using compost, mulch and good rotations of plants. It is good to grow different plants together to help to replace soil nutrients as the plants drop leaves and eventually die. Leguminous trees and annual plants help to provide nitrogen, which is needed for good growth. Weeds and prunings and some animal manures can be composted together for a few months before applying to the soil. Worms are encouraged by the application of organic material, which is essential for a healthy growing system.

Soil testing for nutrients is necessary to understand what deficiencies may exist, in order to correct them.

CROP ROTATIONS

Rotations are needed to maintain diversity in the soil. The same type of crop cannot be grown again each year in the same place. For instance, corn should be followed by a different crop, such as beans. It is always good to have legumes following crops that take a lot of nutrients from the ground. No crop can be grown more than twice in the same ground in five growing cycles. All seeds and planting material must be organic.

For perennial crops, such as coffee or tea, the spaces between the trees should be planted with legumes or food crops to assist in maintaining diversity.

WEEDS, PESTS and DISEASES

Weeds can take nutrients from the crop, so they may need to be controlled. On organic farms, the weeds may be pulled out, slashed or mulched to stop them growing. The weeds may be composted, or simply left to rot back into the soil. No synthetic herbicides may be used to control weeds. Burning of weeds and other unwanted growth causes nutrients to be lost, and is not recommended.

Pests will usually flourish if the plant is weak. Mixtures of plants and good soil management will help to keep plants strong. Predators of pests should be encouraged by growing plants that attract the predators. No chemical pesticides are allowed to be used.

Diseases may occur in certain climates, and it may not be easy to get rid of them. It is acceptable to take diseased plants and to burn them, but chemicals may not be used to control diseases. Strong and healthy plants have a resistance to diseases, and diversity helps to stop diseases spreading.

For some fungal diseases there may be organically acceptable methods of control, but these may also affect natural predators as well. Caution should be used if using a control method may upset the natural balance.

CONTAMINATION FROM CHEMICALS

Organic farms must be protected from chemicals. This means that all neighbours must be aware of the status of the organic farm, and if chemicals are used nearby, there must be protection from any spray drifting onto the organic area. If chemicals are used next to organic crops, there will be a buffer zone, where the harvest may not be sold as organic.

Anyone harvesting, transporting and storing organic produce must make sure that it does not get contaminated with chemicals or dirt, and it must not get mixed with produce that is not organic.



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RECORDS

The farmer must keep a record of major activities on his farm. Things such as plantings, harvesting, and any use of treatments for pests and diseases must be recorded. Sales of produce must also be recorded. The farmer must know how much land there is, and how many trees or plants there are on the farm or garden.

In a grower group, the head licensee may assist with keeping some of these records. The records must be available for inspection.

PARALLEL PRODUCTION

Parallel production is when a farmer grows both Organic and Conventional or Organic and In Conversion crops of the same type on the same land. This is not permitted because it can lead to mistakes and mixing of produce. For most small growers, this will not be applicable, but larger farms may convert their operations gradually to organic production, and must make sure that parallel production does not occur.

LIVESTOCK

These Concise Standards exclude livestock certification, but the following applies to animals kept as part of the farm system.

Animals are encouraged in organic farming systems. Animals should be fed on organic feed or natural vegetation and their manures may be composted. Chicken manures must always be hot composted before use on organic areas. Animals that are treated with prohibited substances are not allowed to graze or walk on organic farms for three weeks.

All livestock must be allowed to practise natural behaviour as much as possible. During the day, animals must not be locked up, and must be allowed to graze on vegetation. Animals must have shelter from extremes of climate according to the needs of the animal.

Animals brought onto the organic farm must also spend three weeks in the quarantine area before mixing with the existing animals unless they are from another organic farm.

For further details about livestock and slaughtering requirements, please see the full NASAA Organic Standards.

PROCESSING, PACKAGING, STORAGE and TRANSPORT

Simple processing may be carried out on or near the farm. This includes things such as pulping coffee cherry, washing, hulling or husking of nuts, drying and packing into bags or sacks. All these processes must be kept clean and birds and animals must be kept away from the organic produce. There must be no mixing of organic with non-organic goods.

All equipment must be carefully cleaned first before organic produce is processed. This means washing all pulp and other material from the equipment if it is a wet process, and brushing and scraping all equipment if it is a dry process.

Any bags or boxes used for temporary storage of carting must be new or very clean, and there must be no residues from previous loads. Final packaging of processed goods must be in new bags or boxes. Each bag or box used for storing organic goods must be labelled 'organic'.

All organic storage must be clean, dry, and free from other goods. There must be no chance that organic goods can be mixed with non-organic goods. All organic storage must be easy to clean, without cracks and holes. If wet cleaning is done, all chemicals must be washed off with clean water.

Organic storage must have signs that say 'organic only'. No chemical pest controls are allowed.

Any transport vehicle must be thoroughly clean. Organic produce must not be carried with other goods that may contaminate the organic goods. Contamination by mixing with other goods, by splashing with liquids or by strong smells is not permitted.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THESE CONCISE STANDARDS ARE ONLY A SUMMARY. FOR SITUATIONS NOT COVERED BY THESE CONCISE STANDARDS, PLEASE CONSULT THE FULL NASAA ORGANIC STANDARDS, OR THE NCO OFFICE.