



Specification Manual Related to Products Bearing Descriptive Labelling Referring to Organic Production Method

Part 4: Requirements for Labelling, Advertising, Display Materials and Transaction Documents for Agricultural, Aquaculture and Food Products

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Version 11.1

Last version of the requirements: January 7, 2016

Last editorial update: April 22, 2016

Since January 1, 2012, the specification manual pertaining to products produced using the organic production method has included a certification reference manual based on the National Standard for Organic Agriculture published by the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB).

The various sections of the Québec organic specification manual were updated following the publication of the National Standards for Organic Agriculture (CAN/CGSB 32.310 and CAN/CGSB 32.311) by the Canadian General Standards Board on November 25, 2015.

1. Indications Regarding Organic Production Method

- 1.1 Products shall be considered as bearing information referring to organic production method when these products or their ingredients are identified using the following indications on labels and in advertising or commercial documents:
- "Organic" and its French translation "biologique";
 - Any compound term (e.g. organic farming or organically grown) or abbreviated term (e.g. bio) included in the reserved designation regulation intended to lead retailers and consumers to understand by this reference that this product results from organic farming.
 - A PLU code beginning with 9 on a fruit or vegetable. Since the use of the PLU code is optional, if it is present on a product, all of the criteria in this specification manual must be met.
- 1.2 Section 1.1 shall not apply when these terms are used for products that are not included within the scope of the Act Respecting Reserved Designations and Added-Value Claims (hereinafter referred to as the Act).

2. Required Information and Prohibited References on Labels of Agricultural, Aquaculture and Food Products

- 2.1 All certified products having labels that mention the term organic or derivative terms indicated in Section 1.1 must be properly identified before being placed on sale. The following data elements must appear both on the product label affixed to packaging and on all transaction documents referring to the product (in addition to those required by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency):
- The trade name in use of the company to which an accredited certification body has issued an organic compliance certificate for the production or the most recent processing operation resulting in the certified product. For the article 3.1.2 of the Part 1, a code for the trade company is acceptable;
 - The full trade name of the certification body (either full name, acronym or clearly legible identification on the body's logo) to which the enterprise is subject, indicated in a clear and readable manner, immediately preceded by the terms "certified by" or "certified organic by";
 - The batch number, if applicable.

2.2 The permitted references and indications according to the product categories are as follows:

- **Product containing 95% or more organic ingredients from organic agriculture or aquaculture:** The term "organic" or one of the terms mentioned in Section 1.1 affixed to the main panel of the packaging (and all related commercial documents). Product certification by an accredited certification body is mandatory. The term "certified by" (anywhere on a product's label or packaging) must be immediately followed by the name of the certification body that certified the product (whether the full name, acronym or clearly legible identification on the body's logo) using a legible and proportional font.
- **Product containing between 70% and 95% organic ingredients:** The claim "contains X% organic ingredients" on the product's packaging. Product certification by an accredited certification body is mandatory. The term "certified by" (anywhere on a product's label or packaging) must be immediately followed by the name of the certification body that certified the product (whether the full name, acronym or clearly legible identification on the body's logo) using a legible and proportional font.
- **Product containing less than 70% organic ingredients:** Only the identification of organic ingredients in the list of ingredients of such products is permitted. Organic ingredients must be displayed with the same font, style and size. These ingredients must, however, be certified. However, the verification of these organic ingredients in the final product by a certification body is not required.
- A list of ingredients on a label affixed to a multi-ingredient product that is not an organic product may indicate which of the ingredients are organic. (*Organic Products Regulations, 2009*)

2.3 It is forbidden to use the following references on the label attached to the product packaging and on all related commercial documents:

- The term "organic" or other reference to the organic production method for the product or one of its ingredients when the product contains less than 70% organic ingredients from agriculture or organic aquaculture.
- The expression "100% organic" or another percentage when the product contains between 95% and 100% organic ingredients from agriculture or organic aquaculture.
- The expression "verified by" and the logo of the certification body which, if applicable, verified a product (voluntary) when it contains less than 70% organic ingredients.
- Notations such as product produced during a period of transition to organic production or any other similar wording referring to conversion or pre-certification granted to the operator before its products are eligible for certification.
- Any information enabling the operator to make multipurpose use of the same packaging, which may contain organic foods or non-organic foods.

2.4 Trademarks that cause confusion

- Any company that markets an agricultural, aquaculture or food product under a trademark it owns must ensure that it does not cause confusion or unfair competition when using the organic designation.
- When an agricultural, aquaculture or food product is marketed under a trademark that explicitly or implicitly refers to the organic designation, despite the fact that it does not contain any organic ingredients, the trademark appearing on the label, advertising and other product presentation materials must always be accompanied by a clear and easily readable indication that "this product is not the result of organic production" or "this product does not contain any ingredients derived from organic production."

3. Labelling of Multi-Ingredient Organic Products

3.1 It is forbidden to market certified products that have less than 100% ingredients of organic origin, unless the following labelling rules are complied with:

- a) Any mention on the label that a product is "organic" is only allowed on certified products where at least 95% (by weight or volume, excluding salt and water) of their ingredients originate from organic agriculture or aquaculture. Exceptions to this rule include alcoholic beverages produced in Québec before January 1st, 2012 with a label bearing the claim that the "product is made with an organic ingredient (e.g. grape, etc.)" or any other equivalent claim. The processing operations of these products must have been monitored by a CARTV accredited certification body. These products cannot be marketed as "organic products" on the Canadian interprovincial market if they bear this claim on their label;
- b) The claim "contains X% organic ingredients" on the packaging is obligatory for those certified products where between 70% and 95% of their ingredients originate from organic agriculture or aquaculture. The percentage of organic content is rounded down to the nearest whole number;
- c) Information on the list of ingredients pertaining to the organic nature of certain product ingredients is authorized in so far as any ingredient contained in this product is not in both organic and non-organic form;
- d) The list of ingredients must make a clear distinction between those ingredients that are organic and those that are not. However, the organic ingredients on this list shall be mentioned using a format, colour and font style similar to those used to list non-organic ingredients;
- e) The list of ingredients shall itemize all ingredients, in descending order by weight without favouring organic ingredients. All additives shall also be listed next to the ingredients. It is forbidden to dissimulate unauthorized ingredients through an overly general statement of ingredients.

3.2 All products containing 70% or more organic ingredients must have clearly displayed on their packaging the name (company name) of the body that certified the product. This refers to the organization that issued the compliance certificate to the enterprise that has carried out the most recent operation resulting in this product.

3.3 The presence on the finished product's label of the certification body's logo or address is optional.

4. Labelling of Perishable Foods by Enterprises

- 4.1 Perishable foods, including fruit and vegetables, shipped and intended for sale, shall be individually labelled (using stickers or others methods) by the enterprise holding an organic compliance certificate for these products.
- 4.2 When, due to their specific nature, products cannot be labelled individually (e.g., grapes), then it is the unit of sale (grape or broccoli bunch, parsley bundle, etc.) that shall be affixed with a label.
- 4.3 The enterprise's trade name that holds the certificate along with the name of the certification body shall be indicated on all labels attached directly to the product.
- 4.4 If no label can be affixed to each product or if its label is incomplete, then it is the certificate holder's responsibility to pack the product in a container that lists all of the information required in Section 2.1.

5. Indications Regarding Inputs and Services Approved by a Certification Body

- 5.1 When an input has been approved by an accredited certification body, the only reference authorized in related advertising, labelling, commercial packaging or documentation is the following: "approved for organic agriculture/aquaculture or organic processing," followed by the certification body's name. It is forbidden to use the term "organic" in its name or identification. When the certification body authorizes the use of the certification body's logo or seal to vouch for input compliance, it must include the mention "input approved for organic agriculture/aquaculture" or "input approved for organic processing". It is forbidden to refer to the Canada Organic Regime (logo, reference to the CFIA and terms) on the above-mentioned documents to indicate the certification requirements according to which the input has been evaluated.
- 5.2 When a service has been approved by an accredited certification body, the only reference authorized in related publicity, labelling, commercial packaging or documentation is the following: "approved for organic (identification of the type of service)" followed by the certification body's name. When the certification body authorizes the use of the certification body's logo or seal to vouch service compliance, it must include the mention "service approved for organic production".
- 5.3 Logos of certification bodies must be different from those used for product conformity to prevent confusion. The fonts used for these seals must not emphasize one term more than another.

6. Advertising and Display Materials

- 6.1 Mandatory information or claims that are allowed on a food label may also be used to advertise that food. Information forbidden on labels is also forbidden in advertising, display material, brochures, websites, etc.
- 6.2 The use of the term "organic" or the expression "certified organic", as well as any other derivative terms used to identify the type of operation (i.e., bio, organic culture, organic breeding, organic cooking, etc.) practiced by a company are only allowed in advertising and on display material when all products resulting from this operation are certified as conforming to the reference manual applying to products within this category.

7. Business developers that market organic products

- 7.1 Organizations that promote businesses that market products using the organic designation without selling such products are subject to the *Act Respecting Reserved Designations and Added-Value Claims*, specifically due to the fact that they may be a party to an offence that any other person, whose products they are promoting, may commit. They are therefore liable to the same penalty under Section 67 of the Act.
- 7.2 They must therefore ensure that the information they disseminate does not contain any claim that could mislead the public.
- 7.3 They shall include in their physical or electronic publications, including those disseminated on the Web, information that is not likely to be mistaken in the course of publication, or if this is impossible to guarantee, take reasonable steps to ensure that those who access these publications are informed of this risk and ways to access an update of published information.