



## **Are you wondering what products labelled as in-conversion are?**

In-conversion produce can't be traded on the organic market as 'certified organic', as it is the status given to producers when they are in their second year of converting to organic. While some growers start to market their product as organic during this stage, they don't have full A-grade status yet, so they can't sell their product under the fully 'certified organic' label for both domestic and export markets.

## **What does in-conversion mean?**

In-conversion is the period of time a farmer is in before they can be fully certified organic. It is like training wheels – they're transitioning to certified organic. During the in-conversion period they must adhere 100% to an organic Standard such as the Australian Certified Organic Standard (ACOS).

In-conversion farmers cannot use prohibited chemicals and other inputs, livestock must be free range on natural pasture, use of antibiotics or hormones is prohibited and they must adhere to the strict animal welfare guidelines as required by the Standard.

## **How long are products in-conversion?**

Farmers must be in-conversion for two years before being fully certified organic. If a farmer can prove through detailed management plans and soil tests that they've been farming organically for at least three years then they only need to be in-conversion for one year.

## **How do you know farmers aren't using chemicals?**

Farmers are audited onsite each year and undergo spot checks to make sure they're not using chemicals. They need to show paperwork to organic auditors to show all their inputs and outputs to prove this.

Organic auditors test hundreds of certified organic fresh and dried products each year for pesticide residues to make sure they are what they say they are.

## **How do I know that the farm hasn't got contaminated soil?**

As part of the very first audit that takes place on a farm, auditors test the soil for chemical residue. If there are residues in the soil, the farm can't be certified organic.

If the residue only affects a small part of the property, for example an old sheep dip, the rest of the farm can be certified organic, but the contaminated area must be fenced off from the rest of the property.

## **Why are in-conversion products on the market?**

It makes sense to support farmers who are already growing organically and allow them to sell in-conversion products on the marketplace. The only difference between their product and one that is fully certified organic is time.



Farming organically can significantly increase their costs because they can only use organic inputs (such as certified organic animal feed) or manually weed crops - so why not support their efforts?

### **How can I tell if a product is in-conversion?**

In-conversion organic products will wear a stippled version of the Australian Certified Organic logo, see below example.



Contact your Certification Body for more information.