



Notification:	2102
Date:	20th October 2021
Category:	Certification Body Guidance
Title:	Domestic Only Drought Derogation End

Background

Australian Organic Limited (AOL), as owner of the Bud Organic Scheme and the Australian Certified Organic Standard (ACOS), made available a Derogation from the normal requirements of the ACOS, related to feeding requirements for certified organic livestock. This was in response to the extensive and ongoing drought in large parts of Australia leading to an exhaustion of supplies of organic grain for livestock feed.

Despite our recommendation to the Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE) at the time, and despite many trading partners allowing similar exceptions in exceptional circumstances such as drought, no such allowance or exception was issued by DAWE relating to the National Standard for Organic and Bio-dynamic Produce, and as a result, any livestock products derived from livestock fed additional non-organic feed would not be eligible for export as organic, under the Export Control Act (2020).

In recognition of the dire need for action to support Australian Organic livestock producers, a Derogation was made available by AOL, to Bud certified operators, which was clearly stipulated via our licensed Certification Body (CBs) that such produce would be eligible for domestic organic sales only, and not eligible for export as organic.

Several certified organic livestock operations received Derogation approval from their CB for the use of up to 25% of daily dry matter intake to be from non-organic sources, provided it was verified to be non-GMO, and free from pesticide residues.

Weather, and grain availability circumstances have been reviewed periodically since the Derogation was made available.

Considerations

Above average rainfall to much of Australia throughout the winter, and the start of winter crop harvest, with a bumper Organic Grain harvest expected for the 2021/22 season.

- AOL consulted with the Organic Grain Committee and were advised that Organic grain has become generally available
- ABARES have predicted above average grain harvests for the 2021/22 season
- Majority of Queensland is still drought declared as per Queensland Government Update on the 1st of August 2021
- There exists a real possibility that the National Standard becomes mandatory for application Australia wide. In line with this, drought derogations of this magnitude are not allowed under this



standard and need to end to ensure future consistency of domestic and export market requirements.

Consultation

In addition to AOL keeping abreast of weather conditions and organic grain availability, as well as maintaining regular contact with Federal and State Departments of Agriculture, AOL contacted every certified organic operator issued with a Derogation approval during August 2021, to help AOL fully understand their situation as it relates to drought and feed availability.

Direction

Given the significant change of fortune regarding weather and the large winter grain crop in NSW, the Derogation use of up to 25% non-organic feed by all Australian organic livestock operators has officially ended as of 1/11/2021. Accordingly, no new applications from operators can be accepted or permitted to continue by CBs from the date of this Notification. Produce such as milk or eggs derived from livestock utilizing the Derogation may be exported as organic following 6 months of the source livestock being fed on a fully organic diet, in line with the National Standard, subject to approval from the CB.

Due to the ongoing domestic regulatory review, AOL does not intend to make available such derogations in future, where they would fall outside of the current allowances for the National Standard for livestock and cropping.

END