ORGANIC CROP PRODUCTION

Compliant with Sections 4.1 - 4.8 of IFOAM Norms 2014
(updated June 2019)

Organic agriculture is based on 4 principles:
Health · Ecology · Fairness · Care

Organic farming returns microbial, plant or animal material to the soil to increase its fertility and biological activity. Soil health and quality are the basis of soil management practices and are critical to successful pest, disease, and weed management.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Species and varieties cultivated in organic agriculture systems are selected for adaptability to the local soil and climatic conditions and tolerance to pests and diseases. All seeds and plant material are organic (IFOAM Norms Section 4.1). However, exceptions to these requirements can be granted if it is proven that suitable organic varieties are not available, as is often the case in Namibia. Organic agriculture is based on the precautionary principle and should prevent significant risks by adopting appropriate technologies and rejecting unpredictable ones. The deliberate use or the negligent introduction of genetically engineered organisms or their derivatives is prohibited. Species and varieties cultivated in organic agriculture systems are selected for adaptability to the local soil and climatic conditions and tolerance to pests and diseases.

Hydroponic and aquaponic production is not regarded as organic production.

SOIL FERTILITY MANAGEMENT

Organic growing systems are soil-based, care for the soil and surrounding ecosystems, provide support for a diversity of species, are based on nutrient recycling, and mitigate soil and nutrient losses. Soil fertility is ensured by applying organic fertilizers of plant or animal origin, such as compost, green manure, or mulch. Organic operations must ensure the prevention of the accumulation of heavy metals or other pollutants. Mineral fertilizers must only be applied in their natural form and must not be chemically treated. All synthetic fertilizers, including urea, are prohibited. Other inputs allowed in organic production are described in the organic standards. Crop rotations have to be established and must contain soil-improving plants such as legumes, green manure, and deep-rooting plants. In the production of perennial crops, soil cover of inter-row spaces is required.

For mushroom production, substrates shall be made of products of organic agriculture, or other non-chemically treated natural products such as peat, wood, mineral products, or soil.

PEST, DISEASE, AND WEED MANAGEMENT

The organic production system shall include biological, cultural, and mechanical mechanisms to manage pests, weeds, and diseases. These may include crop rotations, intercropping with pest-repellent plants (herbs), and encouraging or maintaining habitats for beneficial insects and other predatory species. Only once these measures are implemented and prove not to be sufficient, pest, disease and weed management substances listed under Appendix 3 of the IFOAM International Organic Norms may be used. Products not listed in the Appendix are not allowed in organic production.

CONVERSION PERIOD

If the assessment outcome under NOA's Participatory Guarantee System for organic certification is positive, first-time applicants will proceed to complete a two-to-three year conversion period. Producers or processors can sell their products under the "Namibian Organic in Conversion" label after the first year of conversion is complete. Full organic status is achieved after the conversion period, when products can be sold under the "Namibian Organic" label. Retrospective recognition of organic management is possible. It is possible for the conversion period to be shortened or waivered for virgin land or for land that can be proven to have been under organic production for a minimum of three years.

AVOIDING CONTAMINATION

All relevant measures have to be taken to ensure that organic soil and organic products are protected from contamination. The operator must take appropriate measures including barriers and buffer zones to avoid potential contamination and limit contaminants in organic products. (Potential) contamination of products, soils and water must but monitored adequately.

Required buffer zone characteristics according to different drift risk categories

Type and management of conventional neighbour field	Minimum width of buffer zone with .... vegetation	
	Vegetation < 80cm	Vegetation > 80cm
Field or vegetable crop with manual knapsack sprayer	1 - 2 m	Hedgerow or 3 rows of high growing annual plants (sunflower, maize) – must exist before spraying season
Field or vegetable crops with tractor pulled field crop sprayer in good technical shape and adequately managed	2 - 4 m	Hedgerow or 6 rows of high growing annual plants (sunflower, maize) – must be established before spraying season
Field or vegetable crop with poor equipment or poor handling for spraying	4 - 8 m	Hedgerow or 6 rows of high growing annual plants (sunflower, maize) – must be established before spraying season
Fruit orchards with high pressure motor sprayer	10 - 20 m	2 m wide, 2 m high dense hedgerow
Aerial spraying	30 - 100 m	At least 5 m high hedgerow plus 20 m wide space. Or 15 m high tress complemented by lower bushes, to form a high and dense hedgerow, at least 3 m wide.

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.

KCOA Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Africa

KHSA Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture and Agroecology in Southern Africa

german cooperation DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

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