MLA Training

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MLA Organic Management Plan Training Manual

# Overview

This unit covers the implementation and monitoring of an Organic Management Plan for Beef production. It will define the applicable standards, identify how to manage certification and continued compliance with organic standards and assist develop and maintain organic produce supply chains. It is designed to meet the needs of owners and managers of organic beef farming enterprises.

# Objectives

By the end of this training you will be able to:

* Design the organic farming system to be described in the Organic Management Plan
* Design and manage organic soil fertility/improvement
* Develop and design an integrated pest and disease management sub-plan
* Develop animal health sub-plan
* Integrate and finalise Organic Management Plan
* Prepare the enterprise for organic certification

# Introduction

Organics is an emerging industry. Global demand is rising with increasing health consciousness, growing concern for the environment and the income growth.

However one of the main consumer concerns is authenticity of organic food. Certification of organic production is one way to show consumers you are serious about providing food that complies with all organic certification requirements.

This program will provide you with the tools to ensure your organic production meets all the requirements of standards, legislation and your consumers. The manual is to be used in conjunction with resources available on the website www.???????????

# Definitions

There are common abbreviations used on the Organic industry. These along with some definitions are listed below.

The US legislation for Organic Production identifies the requirements for an Organic Management Plan (OMP):

### § 205.201   Organic production and handling system plan.

(a) The producer or handler of a production or handling operation, except as exempt or excluded under § 205.101, intending to sell, label, or represent agricultural products as “100 percent organic,” “organic,” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))” must develop an organic production or handling system plan that is agreed to by the producer or handler and an accredited certifying agent. An organic system plan must meet the requirements set forth in this section for organic production or handling. An organic production or handling system plan must include:

(1) A description of practices and procedures to be performed and maintained, including the frequency with which they will be performed;

(2) A list of each substance to be used as a production or handling input, indicating its composition, source, location(s) where it will be used, and documentation of commercial availability, as applicable;

(3) A description of the monitoring practices and procedures to be performed and maintained, including the frequency with which they will be performed, to verify that the plan is effectively implemented;

(4) A description of the recordkeeping system implemented to comply with the requirements established in § 205.103;

(5) A description of the management practices and physical barriers established to prevent commingling of organic and nonorganic products on a split operation and to prevent contact of organic production and handling operations and products with prohibited substances; and

(6) Additional information deemed necessary by the certifying agent to evaluate compliance with the regulations.

(b) A producer may substitute a plan prepared to meet the requirements of another Federal, State, or local government regulatory program for the organic system plan: Provided, That, the submitted plan meets all the requirements of this subpart.

### System Documentation

These documents support the Organic Management Plan (OMP).

* Procedures Manual - Outlines the Company’s / Property’s policies and procedures.
* Work Instructions - Detailed instructions for staff on how to perform tasks. These may be supplemented with instructions for additional tasks in keeping with the Company’s quality policy.
* Recording Forms - Standard forms used throughout the Company.
* Organic Management Plan - Describes the Company’s organic management system policies and procedures.

- Appendices, anything specific to property and system. Eg spelling yards, other operations such as cropping, stud?

# Abbreviations:

Throughout this Organic Management Plan and associated Procedures Manual, we use the following abbreviations:

LPA Livestock Producer Assurance Scheme

NLIS National Livestock Identification Scheme

OH&S Occupational Health and Safety

OMP Organic Management Plan

Welfare Codes Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals

# Section 1: What is organics?

## First let’s identify what is organic?

The industry definition of organic food *is produce that is grown without the use of synthetic/artificial chemicals, pesticides or fertilizers or GMOs, with a focus on environmental sustainability*.

Organic food is produced using environmentally and animal friendly methods. The basic tenet of organic food production is: *Organic food is pesticide free.*

The perception is that Organic food is chemical free BUT it is free of ***synthetic*** chemicals.

The organic tag can cover any agricultural produce and value added products. Consumers place high expectations on organic produce. They require produce that:

* Is free from pesticides and synthetic chemicals
* Is produced in a more environmentally sustainable way
* Where animals are treated humanely
* Where products are free from artificial and food additives
* Gives them control over their food choices.

***Checkpoint: How would you explain organic produce to a colleague?***

# Why Organic?

Organic production is an emerging industry. The consumer’s desire for healthier food that is natural and free from:

* chemical residues or preservatives,
* antibiotics,
* animal growth hormones and
* irradiation

is the primary determinant of demand. The organic farming Industry has been one of the best performing industries over the past 5 years.

To sum it up, the main reasons for this growth in global demand are:

* health consciousness,
* concern for the environment,
* income growth and
* the increased convenience of organic goods.

Some interesting industry facts

1. The demand for organic products had expanded more than threefold in the past 10 years and is expected to grow at 10% per annum to become a $59 billion global industry.
2. In Australia the sales of organic foods has increased from $324.4 million in 2004 to $461.5 million in 2010 and it is expected to reach $578.9 million in 2012-2013.
3. Improvements in product quality and presentation in recent years has attracted more consumers. However two factors, availability and price, continue to impact on demand.
4. Large supermarkets stocking organic produce have increased the convenience of purchasing organic products. It is estimated that over 60% or all organic food sales are attributable to supermarket.

Source: (Brennan 2013)

## Who buys organic?

* 78% of US families are buying organic food. This has increased from 73% in 2009.
* Four in ten families say they are buying more organic products than they were a year ago.
* ‘Healthier for me and my children’ was the number 1 motivator cited by parents for choosing organic.

Source: (Anon 2011)

***Checkpoint: What reasons are consumers giving for buying organic produce?***

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Notes

# What are the standards that apply to organic food?

The following standards govern food production and organic food production in Australia:

* National Standards Organic & Biodynamic Produce V3.5

INSERT FAMEWORK DIAGRAM

#

# **Why do we need to know about the standards and legislation?**

The National Standard (NS) outlines the requirements for marketing produce as certified organic. This is an Australian standard but companies outside Australia may choose to use this certification.

Some certifiers also have additional standards that cover the basic requirements outlined in the Standards Australia Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Products (NS). This is also a linking document to key international Organic Standards.

This standard is based upon and consistent with various guiding standards worldwide. These include:

* the European Union Regulations
* International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)
* Codex Alimentarius
* USDA NOP Full List

# What exactly is Organic food?

Under Codex Alimentarius – under the auspices of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation:

*Organic is a labelling term that denotes products that have been produced in accordance with organic production standards and certified by a duly constituted certification body or authority. Organic agriculture is based on minimising the use of external inputs, avoiding the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides. Organic agriculture practices cannot ensure that all products are completely free of residues, due to general environmental pollution. However, methods are used to minimise the pollution of air, soil and water. Organic food handlers, processors and retailers adhere to standards to maintain the integrity or organic agriculture products.* ***The primary goal of organic agriculture is to optimise health and productivity of interdependent communities of soil life, plants, animals and people.***

***Checkpoint: What organic standard do you need to follow?***

Notes:

# So how do organic farming practices differ?

Organic farming is a process of farming that fosters soil life (aerobic bacteria, micorrhiziae and other beneficial fungi) to improve soil nutrients and soil texture through increased humus levels. It requires the use of crop rotation, green manure crops and fallow/ley processes. Organic farming does not use synthesized chemical inputs such as herbicides, pesticides or fertilisers. These products are often toxic to soil micro organisms.

The aim of the operator is to comply with the National Standard to achieve optimum quantities of quality produce while enhancing the sustainability of natural agricultural resources.

With organic beef production, livestock treatments are strictly controlled. Synthetic drenches are not allowed. Vaccines may be used.

Notes:

### As a producer, what are you aiming for?

1. Compliance with the National Standard to achieve optimum qualities of quality produce.
2. Enhance the sustainability of natural agricultural resources.
3. Management practices that emphasize renewable resources, conservation of energy soil and water.
4. Creating soils with enhanced biological activity.
5. Provision of organically grown feed.
6. Livestock husbandry practices that reflect the behavioural needs, ethical treatment and national standards.
7. Welfare and management of livestock in accordance with standards.
8. Sustainability of natural agricultural resources.

Notes:

# Conversion to Organic

This program will support you through the development of an Organic Management Plan. The OMP forms part of the application process. Once this OMP has been developed and reviewed an audit will be undertaken to confirm compliance. A Statutory Declaration form will also be required.

An Auditor will be appointed and an audit date advised. Your 12-month Pre-Certification period begins on approval of the certifier and receipt of payments.

After 12 months your operation will move into the Conversion phase, known as *‘in conversion’* and after three years your operation can be called Organic. During the ‘*in conversion’* phase livestock can be labelled as *‘in conversion’*.

There is comprehensive information available in the Certification Flowchart of the National Standard.

# Conversion to Organic under -

- 2009 National Standard for Organic & Biodynamic Produce V3.4

## Livestock

3.12.1 Livestock products can only carry the same in-conversion or organic or bio-dynamic labelling status as currently held by the production unit.

3.12.2 Livestock used for organic or bio-dynamic products must be born or hatched on farms that comply with this Standard. Such livestock must remain on organic or bio-dynamic holdings to maintain their organic or bio-dynamic status.

3.12.3 Carcases of livestock born before a farm is subject to inspection and certification must not be presented or sold as bio-dynamic, organic or in-conversion.

**Conversion to organic**

* Ruminant and mono-gastric animals for meat
* From last trimester (excludes embryo transfer and clones)

Under USDA NOP livestock may be eligible to become USDA compliant fin the last trimester prior to the certification date.

# Quarantine

Quarantine areas are required and must be clearly marked on the property map. Quarantine areas allow non-organic livestock, such as bulls, to be introduced onto an organic property.

- 2009 National Standard for Organic & Biodynamic Produce V3.4

3.12.4 Any livestock introduced from outside sources, other than certified organic livestock, must be quarantined from organic stock and the production system for a minimum period of three weeks.

3.15.6 Where specific disease or health problems occur and no alternative permissible treatment or management practice exists under this Standard, or where treatment is required by law; the following applies:

a. Therapeutic use of allopathic veterinary drugs or antibiotics is permitted. After such treatment, livestock cannot be sold as organic or bio-dynamic. Their products and/or progeny can be marketed as organic or bio-dynamic after a minimum management period as outlined in Table 1 of 3.12.3.

b. Livestock treated with substances not listed in this Standard must be **identified and quarantined from other livestock for at least three** **times the withholding period or three weeks**, which ever is the greater, specified for the treatment under relevant laws.

# Conversion to Organic under usda nop

**205.237   Livestock feed.**

Under the USDA NOP regulations the total livestock feed ration must be certified organic. This is different to the National Standards which regulate 95% and 5% allowed.

(a) The producer of an organic livestock operation must provide livestock with a **total** feed ration composed of agricultural products, including pasture and forage, that are organically produced and handled by operations certified to the NOP, except as provided in § 205.236(a)(2)(i), except, that, synthetic substances allowed under § 205.603 and non-synthetic substances not prohibited under § 205.604 may be used as feed additives and feed supplements, *provided that*, all agricultural ingredients included in the ingredients list, for such additives and supplements, shall have been produced and handled organically.

Checkpoint: In your own words, summarise these points.

# section 2: Organic Management Plan

The organic management plan (OMP) forms part of the quality system. It describes how you will operate and ensure you meet the obligations required by the relevant legislation. There are multiple steps in developing the plan so let’s get started.

Your plan will consist of multiple sections and contain comprehensive information on the structure and operations of your farming venture. In addition there is documentation and records that must be maintained. A template for this plan is available on the website along with additional resources.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT |
| **1.1 Organisation and Responsibility**: this chart will identify all personnel and include a position description for each employee. This will include a job description, responsibilities and resources available. A Management representative must be appointed to act as the person responsible for the maintenance of the OMP and is titled the *QA Coordinator*. This is a key role and the responsibilities are outlined in the OMP.Notwithstanding the appointment of the QA Coordinator, everyone within the organisation is responsible and should embrace the concept of minimising risks to organic integrity, food safety, animal welfare and the environment. |
| **1.2 Training:** You will need to identify the training needs of all personnel performing activities that may affect organic integrity, animal welfare or the environment. |
| **1.3 Nonconforming Product and Correcting Problems:** This procedure outlines the steps that will be taken to deal with products or processes that do not conform to specified requirements. The purpose of these steps is to ensure that nonconforming product is prevented from unintended use or that appropriate remedial action is taken when non-conformances impacting on organic status, welfare or the environment are identified and to ensure that the ongoing problems are corrected. |
| **1.4 Internal/External Reviews:** It is necessary to regularly review the Organic Management Plan to verify that it complies with established procedures. Organic certification is maintained through external audits conducted by Australian Certified Organic. Checkpoint: How does your property / operation currently manage job responsibilities and training?Notes: |
| 2. CATTLECARE AND PROCEDURES MANUAL LPA: It is a legal requirement for every beef producer to adhere to the LS producers assurance scheme. |
| **2.1 Cattlecare** It is imperative to ensure that organic integrity and quality of the product are maintained while addressing all relevant LPA animal welfare, legislative and environmental issues. The Organic Management Plan is to be regularly verified and amendments made to improve it as the situation occurs in accordance with the LPA requirements. Checkpoint: Consider your current LPA Risk Assessment documents. Are there any issues that may potentially impact on your organic status? |
| 3. OPERATIONS |
| **3.1 Equipment and Vehicles:** Equipment is a potential organic integrity hazard on each property and is to be properly cleaned and maintained. When equipment is brought onto the property it shall be cleaned before use. All incoming vehicles, including vehicles used for delivering feed, and those used for the transport of cattle, are a potential biosecurity hazard and must not be allowed to contaminate the property.Equipment is to be maintained to ensure proper functioning.Checkpoint: What vehicles could potentially bring contaminants onto your property? |
| **3.2 Feed:** will only purchase feed and feed ingredients from an Approved Supplier. Current Organic Certificates will be held on file for each supplier. Care must be taken to ensure NOP accreditation is current and valid for all livestock feed.On receipt of feed, a sample of the delivery should be visually inspected to check for visible signs of contamination or incorrect specification. The feed is then identified by batch number / delivery date.Feed ordered is to be of appropriate nutritional value for the intended use.Checkpoint: * What LS feed do you currently use?
* Is it sourced off-farm?
* What LS supplements do you currently use?
* Have you identified any potential sources of organic off-farm feed and supplements?

Notes: |
| **3.3 Water:** Water from surface supplies such as dams, streams, open tanks and “turkey nests” shall be potable and freely available. Water Systems must be designed and operated to minimise spills and leakages.Checkpoint: Do you have any potential sources of contaminant from upstream water sources?Notes: |
| **3.4 Quarantine Paddocks:** It is necessary to ensure that quarantine paddocks are designated on the property maps and recorded in the Paddock Book Record, Muster Summary and SMA. All non – organic cattle upon arrival to the properties will be immediately moved to a designated quarantine paddock upon unloading from transport.Checkpoint: Where you could locate quarantine paddocks?Notes: |
| **3.5 Chemicals and Veterinary Medicines / Treatments:** 3.15.7 Use of vaccines is permitted only where the operator can demonstrate that management practices are insufficient to guard against disease and illness.All chemicals and veterinary medicines are to be used and stored in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions or professional veterinary advice and Australian Standards 2507-1998 and 1940-2004 (flammable liquids). Only chemicals and veterinary medicines required for use will be purchased or stored. Only minimal quantities are to be stored on-site and only staff with appropriate training are to handle chemicals and veterinary medicines.Checkpoint: Do you currently keep a register of all chemicals, medicines and treatments that are kept on the farm? |
| **3.6 Pest and Animal Control:** It is necessary to ensure that organic integrity is addressed in animal welfare and environmental issues associated with control of pest infestation.Checkpoint: What pests do you currently have? How do you control them? |
| **3.7 People:** Staff should be trained in animal management, organic integrity, environmental sustainability and hygienic practices relevant to their tasks. Work practices should be developed so as to minimise hazards.Appropriate signs should be posted to indicate areas of restricted access or activities (e.g. non-smoking or non-eating areas).If staff are absent unexpectedly, the remaining staff shall be able to determine which tasks are urgent and which can be completed as time becomes available.The entry of Visitors should be controlled and movements on the Farm should be monitored.  |
| Checkpoint: Do you currently have a staff training record?3.8 Facility Setup – This one is for you Marg |
| **3.9 Identification of Livestock**: It is necessary to ensure that a system is in place that allows for the identification and traceability, of all livestock on the properties. All livestock are individually identified and identification will clearly separate organic from non-organic cattleCheckpoint: How do you currently identify livestock? How will you identify organic from non-organic cattle?  |
| **3.10 Transport of Livestock:** It is necessary to ensure organic integrity; animal welfare and environmental issues associated with transport of cattle are addressed.Planning of transport shall be in accordance with the Livestock Land Transport Standards. Care will be taken to ensure the best and safest possible route to destination, in a time efficient manner. Abattoirs and other final destinations will be chosen on location to facilitate this requirement.Checkpoint: Where is your nearest organic abbatoir? |
| **3.11 Biodiversity:** Visual inspection of pastures is required to ensure appropriate ground cover is maintained. Movement of stock to another paddock will occur based on the decision made by the Manager. Checkpoint: How do you currently manage vegetation? |
| 4. PURCHASING & DOCUMENTATION |
| **4.1 Purchasing**: When purchasing goods, every reasonable effort should be made to prevent any misunderstanding by the supplier in relation to the goods and services being purchased. Farms shall only purchase for use, products which are compliant to the standards and approved by your organic certifier.Checkpoint: When would you need to advise your organic certifier when purchasing goods? |
| **4.2 Selection of Approved Suppliers:** Should be selected so that the company can be confident that purchases meet the requirements for organic production. When selecting suppliers, organic status, quality assurance, food safety, animal welfare and environmental issues must all be considered.Checkpoint: What documents do you need to from suppliers to meet organic requirements? |
| **4.3 Document Control**: To maintain quality assurance all aspects of the operation must be documented and controlled. Relevant documents within the system must be controlled to ensure staff operate under current versions. |
| Checkpoint: Where do you keep your documents?**4.4 Records:** These must be maintained to establish methods for the identification, maintenance and storage of all food safety, biosecurity, animal welfare, product identification and environmental records. |

Checkpoint: How long do you need to keep your records?

# References

Anon, 2011, *Organic Trade Association US Families Organic Attitudes and Beliefs 2011 Tracking Study*

Brennan, A 2013, *Cultivating revenue: Organic produce is rapidly gaining popularity with consumers*, IBISWorld.

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