

SOPA Programme for Evaluating and Approving Farm Inputs

Introduction and Conditions for Issuing and Maintaining Approval

1. Introduction to Scottish Organic Producers

Scottish Organic Producers Association was founded in 1986 to promote organic food in Scotland by supporting the organic farmers.

The Association became a certification body and was approved by Defra in 1992 to inspect and certify organic farmers under the EC Regulation 2092/91. In 2001 SOPA contracted Scottish Food Quality Certification (SFQC), to carry out all the inspection and certification operations on its behalf. The SOPA Organic Certification Scheme was granted accreditation to EN45011/ISO65 by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) in 2004.

In response to pressure from farm input suppliers for a Scottish based Organic Input Evaluation Scheme, SOPA and SFQC have jointly developed a new programme for evaluating and approving farm input products.

This leaflet explains the requirements and conditions that organisations wishing to have their products Approved through SOPA/SFQC must comply with.

2. Statutory Obligations

The labelling, marketing and production of organic food is controlled by Regulation (EEC) 2092/91 and enshrined in the UK Organic Products Regulation 2004. All inputs used on organic farms must be compliant with the above Regulation, as implemented in the UK by the Defra Compendium of UK Organic Standards and the SOPA Organic Production Standards.

The Standards contain positive lists of inputs relating to the following:

- Soil conditioners & fertilising materials
- Pest & disease control materials
- Animal feeds, vitamins, minerals and trace elements
- Disinfectants for livestock buildings

Only the products listed may be used on organic farms, all other materials are prohibited

3. Conditions for Issuing and Maintaining Certification

3.1 Application Pack

The operator must obtain the Farm Input Evaluation & Approval Application Pack from the SOPA office or web site. This includes the Standards for Processing, Importing and Animal Feed Compounding.

3.2 Application

The Application form must be completed and sent in to the SOPA office with the application fee. The SOPA Certification staff will assess the Application Form for completeness and will acknowledge receipt and issue the invoice.

3.3 Evaluation

The products and the information supplied will be evaluated for equivalence against the SOPA Standards. Where required, the applicant may be asked to provide additional information.

3.4 Approval

Where the product is found to be compliant, it will be added to the SOPA list of Approved Products and a certificate issued specifying the product and any conditions attached to its use.

Where the product is found not to comply with the SOPA Standards, the applicant will be notified of the reasons. If the product can be reformulated, the revised formulation may be considered.

3.5 Notification of Changes

Any major changes to the company, including contact details, use of sub-contractors or new premises must also be notified to SOPA.

The operator must notify SOPA of any changes to the product specification prior to it being put on the market. For a new product or change to an existing product ingredient, the Application Form must be completed and the relevant information supplied again. A new certificate will be issued including the new products once approved.

3.6 Annual Renewal

Prior to the end of the first calendar year, the certification officer will notify the operator that the Approval is due for renewal and issue an Annual Questionnaire and invoice for the certification fee. The stages 3.4 to 3.6 above will be followed.