



Annex: Sourcing organic ingredients

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An introduction to sourcing organic ingredients

The Soil Association (SA) has higher organic standards than the legal minimum in the UK, EU and other parts of the world. These are in key areas such as animal welfare, conserving the environment, safeguarding public health and protecting the interests of organic consumers. Our standards put our principles into practice and are at the heart of our work. By certifying with us you can use the Soil Association symbol, which consumers recognise as a mark of integrity.

While we encourage you to source organic product certified to Soil Association standards, you may use products and ingredients certified to other organic standards, as long as they meet the requirements of this annex in addition to legal requirements. This recognises the need for a diversity of organic ingredients from global sources, many of which are certified to other organic standards. This also supports organic farmers the world over and meets consumer expectations of the organic market.

To protect the integrity of baseline UK and EU requirements on animal welfare, we have also applied sourcing requirements for livestock products imported from outside the UK or EU which can be imported under trade agreements. The guidance for each sourcing requirement explains which countries or regions would automatically meet these requirements.

Using this annex

- ⑤ You may have seen this symbol throughout the Food & Drink, Farming & Growing, Aquaculture, Seaweed and Abattoir standards as an indicator that an extra sourcing requirement applies to a particular standard.

If you are sourcing organic products or ingredients certified to other organic standards, you need to check this annex to determine if extra sourcing requirements apply. This annex is only applicable for Food and Drink (as per Soil Association higher standard 6.10.1 and SA NI 6.10.1) and does not apply to Feed, Textiles or Health and Beauty.

The requirements are listed by product type and include the standard references for both the **Soil Association's** organic standards for Great Britain and for the **Soil Association's organic standards for** Northern Ireland (prefixed by SA NI). If a sourcing requirement does apply, you will need to seek our approval of the ingredient before you use it. If you are unclear whether extra sourcing requirements apply, please contact equivalence@soilassociation.org.

Driving Change

We work in a number of ways to support you in sourcing organic ingredients that meet our extra requirements. This includes helping you to identify compliant sources and using our respective influence to drive wider change. It is important

that Soil Association works with other organic certifiers and stakeholders around the world to make positive changes to factors that affect organic production and processing across the whole organic sector. We raise awareness of issues important for animal welfare, environmental protection and health, so that the reasons behind our higher standards are well understood and they are adopted more widely.

Using your influence

In many cases, the best way Soil Association can increase the adoption of best practice is not just through our own standards but through influencing the practices and requirements of other organisations. As a licensee, you also have the power to influence change, particularly through the choices you make when buying organic ingredients. Very often the market can be a strong driver for change. For example, you can:

- Take steps to understand and minimise your supply chain challenges. See **SA Certification's report on 'The Organic Supply Chain 2017'**;
- Choose ingredients from farms certified to higher organic standards, such as those of the Soil Association;
- Specify additional requirements in your contracts with suppliers.

Supporting you

Where other standards setters already have similar standards to us, confirming product meets SA sourcing requirements can be quick and easy. We are continuing to develop resources to help with sourcing: working in cooperation with other standards bodies and certifiers globally to develop tools to identify organic product that meets the requirements of this annex. In addition, we liaise on your behalf with other certifiers and supply chains, regarding organic ingredients you want to **use, to confirm they meet the SA's sourcing requirements**.

In a perfect world, all ingredients used in Soil Association products would be verified as meeting all of the SA higher standards across the whole supply chain. However, this is currently not practically possible or proportionate for us to check for some standards and for some types of organic ingredients. Our explanatory web page '[Working Together for Better Sourcing](#)' explains these challenges and how the Soil Association is working with others to address them.

Sourcing requirements by product type

The following **sections list, by product type, the Soil Association's sourcing requirements** for organic ingredients certified to other standards. Requirements applicable to your product might be in more than one section.

Please refer to our [Glossary](#) for an explanation of the terms used.

1.0 Sourcing requirements for Plant Products

Sourcing requirement	Guidance & Reasons
<p>1.1 Soil-based production <i>Linked to SA Standards SA GB 2.7.10 & SA NI 2.7.10</i></p> <p>Plants must be grown in soil in connection with the subsoil and bedrock.</p> <p>The following are excluded from this requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) plant propagation products b) aquatic plant products c) sprouted seeds, as long as they are produced only with the addition of water 	<p>Guidance: Plants must be grown in soil in connection with the subsoil and bedrock. Most organic production is carried out in the soil but there are some parts of the world that do not explicitly prohibit the hydroponic production of organic crops.</p> <p>Product imported from or via these countries may be at risk of not meeting this sourcing requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Republic of Korea • Tunisia • United States <p>We deem the following ingredients or products from the countries mentioned above as possible risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fresh salad, • greenhouse crops and • berries. <p>If you know that, or are unsure whether, products you are buying are at risk of not meeting this sourcing requirement, please contact equivalence@soilassociation.org.</p> <p>Reason: Production in the soil is a fundamental principle of organic production, so where crops are grown, harvested and sold as organic they must be grown in the soil. In some instances, a stage of production of an organic plant has to be out of the soil, but this should be limited only to plant propagation.</p>
<p>1.2 Oil palm ingredients <i>Linked to Standards SA GB 6.6.13 SA NI 6.6.14</i></p> <p>Oil palm production must protect High Conservation Values.</p> <p>Products of the oil palm tree must hold certification to a standard that is recognised by the Soil Association for verifying the protection of High Conservation Values.</p> <p>This requirement applies to single-ingredient oil palm products for food & drink including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • palm oil 	<p>Guidance: Oil palm products certified to Soil Association organic standards will meet this requirement</p> <p>Other certifications recognised as meeting this requirement include these RSPO standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSPO Supply Chain Certification Standard** • RSPO Principles & Criteria Certification Standard** • RSPO Independent Smallholder Standard** <p>Certificate validity must be checked on the RSPO website: https://rspo.org</p> <p>** Only RSPO product certified to the 'Identity Preserved' (IP) or 'Segregated' (SG) supply chain models are recognised.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • palm kernel oil • palm derivatives, such as palm olein, palm stearin or E422 glycerol (palm)/ glycerine (palm). <p>This requirement does not apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multi-ingredient products that may contain oil palm ingredients. 	<p>Certifications to these standards are also recognised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair For Life • Bio Suisse • Rainforest Alliance - Rainforest Alliance is phasing out its certificates for oil palm by 30 June 2023 <p>Some products, such as glycerine or 'vegetable' oils, may be derived either from palm or from other plants, such as soybean. Products not derived from the oil palm tree do not need to hold an additional certification.</p> <p>Reason: Expansion of agriculture globally has resulted in the destruction of millions of hectares of forests and other natural or important ecosystems to make way for farming, with negative impacts on biodiversity, climate, and indigenous peoples. This requirement adds an additional safeguard for high-risk ingredients.</p>
<h3>1.3 Critically endangered species</h3> <p>Linked to SA GB 2.10.4 & SA NI 2.10.4</p> <p>Information requirement: If you purchase products derived from, or containing, critically endangered species you must provide us with further information.</p> <p>This requirement applies to species classified as 'critically endangered' on the IUCN's red list of threatened species www.iucnredlist.org.</p> <p>We have identified the critically endangered species most likely to be traded internationally for food or medicine, where the IUCN indicates collection from the wild is a threat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Commiphora wightii</i> • <i>Nardostachys jatamansi</i> • <i>Saussurea costus</i> • <i>Chlorophytum borivillianum</i> • <i>Gentiana kurroo</i> 	<p>Guidance: Information you will need to provide includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your supplier • your supplier's certifier • the product you, or your subcontractor, are buying. <p>And, if known, details on the original source, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether the species is gathered from the wild or is cultivated. • whether the product holds any sustainability certification in addition to organic. For example, FairWild certification <p>You can download a form to complete from here.</p> <p>If you have any questions on this requirement, please contact: equivalence@soilassociation.org</p> <p>Reason: The Soil Association is considering developing a new sourcing requirement for products derived from critically endangered species.</p>

2.0 Sourcing requirements for Lamb Products	
Sourcing requirement	Guidance & Reasons
<p>2.1 Animal mutilations are restricted <i>Linked to SA GB 3.5.2 & SA NI 3.5.2</i></p> <p>Sheep must not be routinely subject to the mutilation mulesing.</p>	<p>Guidance: Organic sheep farmed in the UK/EU meet this requirement.</p> <p>Reason: Evidence shows that some mutilations, such as mulesing, can cause considerable pain and stress, and often do not address the underlying cause of the problem which can be solved through changes in management practices.</p>

3.0 Sourcing requirement for Beef Products	
Sourcing requirement	Guidance & Reasons
<p>3.1 Encouraging anaemia is prohibited <i>Linked to SA GB 3.10.3 & SA NI 3.10.3</i></p> <p>For beef or veal production, the animals must not be kept in conditions, or on a diet, which may encourage anaemia.</p>	<p>Guidance: Organic beef and veal farmed in the UK/EU meets this requirement.</p> <p>Reason: Livestock which lack nutrients such as iron can develop serious health problems and display abnormal behaviour.</p>

4.0 Sourcing requirements for Pig Products	
Sourcing requirement	Guidance & Reasons
<p>4.1 The use of Colistin is prohibited <i>Linked to SA GB 3.4.12 & SA NI 3.4.13</i></p> <p>Pigs must not be treated with Colistin</p>	<p>Reason: Scientists believe that Colistin resistance is likely to be transferring from farm animals to humans. To protect its effectiveness as a life-saving human treatment of E. coli we will not accept any pig product from pigs treated with Colistin. Pigs have been identified as the highest risk species for use of this antibiotic.</p>
<p>4.2 Animal mutilations are restricted <i>Linked to SA GB 3.5.3 & SA NI 3.5.3</i></p> <p>Pigs must not be subject, at any point in their lives, to the practices of ringing, castration, tail docking, teeth cutting or grinding</p>	<p>Reason: Evidence shows that mutilations cause considerable pain and stress, and can reduce the ability of animals to perform natural behaviours. Pig mutilations often do not address the underlying cause of the problem which can be solved through changes in management practices which allow them to express natural behaviours.</p>
<p>4.3 Pasture access <i>Linked to SA GB 3.6.1.3 & SA NI 3.6.1.4</i></p> <p>Pigs must have permanent access to pasture or vegetated range, unless the following circumstances temporarily prevent this:</p>	<p>Reason: Providing pigs with access to pasture gives them the opportunity to express natural behaviours such as foraging, rooting and wallowing.</p>

<p>a) the health or welfare of the animal b) the weather conditions and the state of the ground, or c) community or national requirements or restrictions relating to specific animal or human health problems.</p>	
<p>4.4 Floor space and resting area for pigs <i>Linked to SA GB 3.8.5 & SA NI 3.8.5</i></p> <p>Housing for pigs must meet the following specification:</p> <p>a) at least half must be a comfortable clean and dry resting/lying area, which is solid and not slippery and not slatted or of grid construction.</p> <p>b) The resting/lying area must have ample dry bedding which is comprised of straw or another suitable natural material.</p>	<p>Guidance: Organic pig production in the UK/EU meets this requirement.</p> <p>Reason: Providing animals with enough comfortable space is an important factor which affects the welfare of farm animals.</p>
<p>4.5 Housing pigs indoors <i>Linked to SA GB 3.9.1 & SA NI 3.9.1</i></p> <p>If pigs are housed indoors, sows must be kept in groups, except in the last stages of pregnancy and during the suckling period.</p>	<p>Guidance: Organic pig production in the UK/EU meets this requirement.</p> <p>Reason: Pigs are highly sociable animals and housing them in groups allows them to express more natural behaviours.</p>
<p>4.6 Farrowing crates are prohibited <i>Linked to SA GB 3.9.2 & SA NI 3.9.2</i></p> <p>Pigs must not be kept in farrowing crates.</p>	<p>Guidance: Organic pig production in the UK/EU meets this requirement.</p> <p>Reason: The farrowing crate does not and cannot satisfy the behavioural needs of a sow, particularly in terms of being able to stand up and turn around or nest-build.</p>
<p>4.7 Keeping piglets on flat decks or in cages is prohibited <i>Linked to SA GB 3.9.3 & SA NI 3.9.3</i></p> <p>Piglets must not be kept on flat decks or in piglet cages.</p>	<p>Guidance: Organic pig in the UK/EU meets this requirement.</p> <p>Reason: Flat decks and piglet cages prevent pigs from expressing natural behaviours.</p>

5.0 Sourcing requirements for Poultry Products	
Sourcing requirement	Guidance & Reasons
<p>5.1 Additional rules for the sourcing of non-organic poultry <i>Linked to SA GB 3.2.7 & SA NI 3.2.8</i></p> <p>Poultry must not be brought in from cage systems and poultry beaks must not be clipped or tipped.</p>	<p>Guidance: Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnoteⁱ.</p> <p>Reason: Using cage reared birds not only conflicts with organic principles but also presents a welfare risk to birds by predisposing them to a range of behavioural problems which can be carried over to their new free-range environment. Beak tipping or clipping birds, which is standard practice in non-organic systems, is a mutilation which is unnecessary when the birds are kept under conditions which satisfy their behavioural needs.</p>
<p>5.2 Poultry mutilations are prohibited <i>Linked to SA GB 3.5.4 & SA NI 3.5.4</i></p> <p>Poultry must not have been subject, at any point in their lives, to any mutilations including, the practices of pinioning or clipping primary flight feathers; de-snooding; de-toeing; dubbing; de-spurring; caponising or any other mutilations.</p>	<p>Guidance: Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnoteⁱ.</p> <p>Reason: Evidence shows that mutilations cause considerable pain and stress and can reduce the ability of animals to perform natural behaviours. Poultry mutilations often do not address the underlying cause of the problem which can be solved through changes in management practices which allow them to express natural behaviours.</p>
<p>5.3 Keeping poultry in cages is prohibited <i>Linked to SA GB 3.12.1 & SA NI 3.12.1</i></p> <p>Poultry must not be kept in cages.</p>	<p>Guidance: Organic poultry production in the UK/EU meets this requirement. Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients see endnoteⁱ.</p> <p>Reason: Using cage reared birds conflicts with organic principles.</p>
<p>5.4 Number of birds permitted in each house <i>Linked to SA GB 3.12.2 & SA NI 3.12.2</i></p> <p>The number of birds in a poultry house must not exceed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. 2000 for laying hens, unless the poultry production is certified to a scheme the Soil Association recognises for independent welfare outcome assessment: in which case 	<p>Guidance: Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnoteⁱ.</p> <p>Reason: Flock size is limited to help ensure consistently high levels of animal welfare.</p> <p>The Soil Association recognises the following scheme's independent welfare outcome assessment for laying birds: RSPCA Assured.</p>

<p>the number of birds in a house may reach, but not exceed, 3000 birds.</p> <p>ii. or 1000 for other poultry species.</p>	<p>The Soil Association has developed rigorous welfare outcome assessments for farm animals. These assessments are now part of all Soil Association and RSPCA Assured farm assessments for laying hens. They provide an additional safeguard to ensure that measures in place at the farm result in good animal welfare. Further information is available on the Assurewell website.</p>
<p>5.5 Floor area for poultry <i>Linked to SA GB 3.12.4 & SA NI 3.12.4</i></p> <p>At least 50% of the floor area of poultry housing must be solid, that is, not of slatted or grid construction.</p>	<p>Guidance: Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnoteⁱ.</p> <p>Reason: Giving poultry access to dry, loose litter provides them with a vital material for foraging and dust bathing, allowing them to express these natural behaviours. This reduces the risk of welfare problems developing. Feather pecking is thought to be a redirected foraging or ground-pecking behaviour which can arise when birds do not have the opportunity to express these natural behaviours.</p>
<p>5.6 Housing requirement and aerial perches <i>Linked to SA GB 3.12.5 & 3.12.6. SA NI 3.12.5 & SA NI 3.12.6</i></p> <p>Poultry perching must meet the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> laying hens: 18 cm aerial perch space per bird guinea fowl: 20 cm aerial perch space per bird Muscovy ducks: 40cm aerial perch space per bird turkeys: elevated perches or surfaces provided 	<p>Guidance: Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnoteⁱ.</p> <p>Reason: Most species have a behavioural motivation to perch. Providing aerial perches allows birds to exhibit a greater range of natural behaviours, reducing the risk of feather pecking and enabling birds to escape from any ground level harassment from other birds. Wild turkeys roost in trees at night and domestic turkeys retain this strong instinct to perch. Similarly, Muscovy ducks, unlike other domestic ducks, have not descended from the wild mallard and have long claws which allow them to perch and they will roost in trees in the wild.</p>
<p>5.7 Artificial light <i>Linked to SA GB 3.12.9 & SA NI 3.12.9</i></p> <p>If artificial light is used to prolong day length, measures must be in place to allow birds to anticipate changes in light levels. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gradual dimming of the lights. A period of at least 10 minutes to dim the lights for laying hens and at least 30 minutes for table chickens. - a stepped lighting programme, to guide the birds to the perches 	<p>Guidance: Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnoteⁱ.</p> <p>Reason: Poultry use a reduction in light intensity as a signal for night roosting. Gradually dimming the lights allows birds to anticipate changes in light which may prevent stress. In particular, it allows laying hens to find a suitable perch for the night without causing injury. It has been shown to stimulate feeding behaviour in broilers and laying hens which may prevent hunger during the night.</p>

<p>5.8 Access to the outdoor range <i>Linked to SA GB 3.12.11 & SA NI 3.12.11</i></p> <p>Table birds must have easy daytime access to the outdoor range by the following ages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10 weeks for geese or two thirds of their life, whichever is earlier 10 weeks for turkeys or two thirds of their life, whichever is earlier Two thirds of their life for other species 	<p>Guidance: Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote¹.</p> <p>Reason: Giving poultry early access to the range encourages birds to use the range more. The range provides birds with plenty of opportunities to express natural behaviours, such as ground pecking and foraging. Improved range use has been shown to decrease the risk of injurious feather pecking.</p>
<p>5.9 Stocking density on the range <i>Linked to SA GB 3.12.12 & SA NI 3.12.12</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> For laying hens, the outdoor stocking density must not exceed: 1,000 birds/ha over the life of the flock. For ducks, guinea fowl, turkey and geese in mobile housing, the outdoor stocking density must not exceed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ducks: 2,222 birds/ha guinea fowl: 2,500 birds/ha turkeys: 1000 birds/ha at any one time geese: 666 birds/ha at any one time For ducks, guinea fowl, turkey and geese in static/fixed housing, the outdoor stocking density must not exceed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> ducks: 2,222 birds/ha guinea fowl: 2,500 birds/ha turkeys: 1000 birds/ha at any one time geese: 666 birds/ha at any one time For table chickens, the outdoor stocking density must not exceed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Static/fixed housing: 2,500 birds/ha (1 bird/4 m²) Mobile housing: 4,000 birds/ha (1 bird/2.5 m²) 	<p>Guidance: Organic poultry production in NI & the EU meets sourcing requirement 5.9b. Organic poultry production in GB, NI & the /EU meets sourcing requirements 5.9c & d</p> <p>Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote¹.</p> <p>Reason: These poultry species range extensively and are kept on ranges for sustained periods of time. Requiring a lower stocking rate helps prevent damage to the range, ensuring the birds have access to a stimulating environment where they can express their natural behaviours. Some organic standards outside the UK/EU do not have minimum outdoor spacing requirements for poultry.</p>

<p>5.10 Range quality and cover <i>Linked to SA GB 3.12.16 & SA NI 3.12.16</i></p> <p>a) The outdoor stocking density requirements above must be provided within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100m of the house for layers, turkeys, geese, and guinea fowl • 50m of the house for table chickens and ducks? <p>For laying hens, table chickens, turkeys, and guinea fowl:</p> <p>b) The area of natural cover provided must be at least 5% of the minimum range area required in 5.9.</p> <p>c) The range of shelters must provide adequate protection from inclement weather and overhead predators all year round.</p> <p>d) Shelters or natural cover must be distributed at least every 20m across the whole of the range.</p> <p>e) At least one area of natural cover or shelter must be available within 20m of the pop-holes.</p>	<p>Guidance: If geese or ducks are walked out to pasture, narrow paddocks or fields may be appropriate.</p> <p>'Natural cover' may include trees, perennial shrubs, bushes, hedgerows, or cover crops, such as artichokes, kale, millet, fodder rape and corn. To be included as part of the 5% requirement, natural cover must be accessible to the poultry. Long grass does not count towards natural cover provision because it does not encourage birds to range and can cause harm if eaten. If deciduous trees or other forms of natural cover are used, that only provide shelter for part of the year, supplementary cover or shelter must be provided. The supplementary shelter can be artificial, for example arcs, or natural, for example piles of brushings. The supplementary cover must make up the 5% natural cover requirement when the natural cover is not providing shelter. For trees the 20m can be calculated from the outer most branch of a tree. If the total range provided is larger than the minimum required area, the additional space does not need to be included when calculating the 5% natural cover requirement.</p> <p>Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote¹.</p> <p>Reason: The provision of natural shelter, particularly trees, is an effective method to encourage birds to range and range further, which in turn will lead to animal welfare and environmental benefits. Shelter helps protect poultry from adverse weather conditions and predators, as well as providing birds with more choice and variation in their environment. Tree cover in particular can also provide other environmental benefits.</p>
<p>5.11 Resting the range for laying poultry <i>Linked to SA GB 3.12.17 & SA NI 3.12.17</i></p> <p>For laying poultry, the pasture must be rested for at least nine months between each flock of laying birds.</p>	<p>Guidance: Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote¹.</p> <p>Reason: Laying poultry require a longer resting period because they live for longer and range more widely than table birds, which puts more pressure on the range in terms of vegetation depletion and manure deposition. Giving a nine-month fallow period allows vegetation to fully recover between flocks, using up the excess nutrients in the soil and also helps break disease cycles.</p>

<p>5.12 Access to water for waterfowl <i>Linked to SA GB 3.12.21 & SA NI 3.12.21</i></p> <p>Waterfowl must have access to a stream, pond, lake or pool, whenever weather and hygiene conditions allow. The water must be maintained and managed to prevent the build-up of disease</p>	<p>Guidance: Organic poultry production in the UK/EU meets this requirement.</p> <p>Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote¹.</p> <p>Reason: Waterfowl need access to water to meet their species-specific needs and welfare requirements, for example ducks require full body access to water.</p>
<p>5.13 Enrichment in the house <i>Linked to SA GB 3.12.22 & SA NI 3.12.22</i></p> <p>Flocks of more than 500 laying hens (<i>Gallus gallus</i>) must be provided with enrichment material in the poultry house which meets the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient enrichment material across the whole house to enable all birds to access it. No fewer than two items of enrichment per 500 birds. Frequent changing of enrichment items to maintain the birds' interest. Any enrichment items which contain feed materials must be organic. Destructible enrichment, including forage. For example, lucerne bales, bagged chopped alfalfa, hanging vegetables or cardboard egg trays. 	<p>Guidance: Enrichment items can include pipe or barrel 'tunnels', hanging items, pecking materials and innovative feeders. For more information on enrichment materials see the Featherwel website</p> <p>Different requirements apply for some specialist egg ingredients, see endnote¹.</p> <p>Reason: One of the most important welfare outcome measures is feather loss due to feather pecking. Producers have found that a variety of inexpensive objects in the house can promote positive indoor foraging behaviour, which can reduce feather pecking in their flocks.</p>

<p>6.0 Sourcing requirements for Aquaculture Products</p>	
<p>Sourcing requirement</p>	<p>Guidance & Reasons</p>
<p>6.1 Sodium metabisulphite <i>Linked to SA GB 6.4.4 & SA NI 6.4.4</i></p> <p>Sodium metabisulphite must not be used as an additive, including for crustaceans.</p>	<p>Reason: Sodium metabisulphite is used to prevent microbial spoilage and the appearance of unsightly marking on crustaceans after harvesting. However, sodium metabisulphite can cause allergic reactions in some people so should be avoided.</p>
<p>6.2 Withdrawing feed <i>Linked to SA GB 13.5.2 & SA NI 13.5.2</i></p> <p>The maximum starve period before harvest, for salmon, trout and Arctic charr, is 50 degree days.</p>	<p>Reason: If feed is not withdrawn before handling or transport this can lead to poor water quality which has health implications for the fish. However, farmed fish become used to being fed regularly so the withdrawal of feed for prolonged periods is a welfare concern. One of the principles of good</p>

	<p>animal welfare is freedom from hunger, therefore the Soil Association sets a limit on the permitted withdrawal period for feed for farmed fish before harvest. We use degree days as a measurement because in the wild, fish naturally eat less in colder waters.</p>
<p>6.3 Calcified seaweed is prohibited <i>Linked to SA GB 13.8.2 & SA NI 13.8.3</i></p> <p>Aquaculture livestock must not be fed calcified seaweed, lithothamne or maerl.</p>	<p>Reason: Calcified seaweed, lithothamne and maerl refer to a group of coralline algae, primarily of the species <i>Phymatolithon calcatum</i>, <i>Lithothamnion glaciale</i> and <i>Lithothamnion corallioides</i>. Calcified seaweed beds are relatively scarce and are important habitats which hold impressive levels of biodiversity, harbouring many rare and commercially valuable species. Owing to their extremely slow growth rate, calcified seaweed beds are very fragile and cannot sustain even limited extraction without deterioration. Commercial extraction from the sea has already led to the destruction of several beds in Europe and current levels of protection provided are unlikely to prevent further destruction and deterioration.</p>
<p>6.4 The use of organophosphates and avermectin is prohibited <i>Linked to SA GB 13.10.6 & SA NI 13.10.6</i></p> <p>Fish must not be treated with organophosphate or avermectin-based veterinary medicines.</p>	<p>Reason: Organophosphates (OPs) are the basis for a wide and commonly used range of insecticides and in veterinary medicine are used to treat external parasites. OPs are acutely toxic and have been linked with a range of problems including decreasing male fertility, foetal abnormalities, chronic fatigue syndrome and Parkinson's disease. OPs are especially toxic to the aquatic environment and have a detrimental effect on marine species. Avermectins are a group of drugs (e.g. ivermectin) used to treat insect infestations in livestock. When used on aquaculture animals, residues are excreted with the faeces and have detrimental effects on the aquatic environment, particularly on sediment-dwelling organisms.</p>

7.0 Sourcing requirements for All Animal Products	
Sourcing requirement	Guidance & Reasons
<p>7.1 Genetic modification <i>Linked to SA GB 5.11.2 & SA NI 5.11.2</i></p> <p>For meat, eggs and aquaculture animal products, procedures must be in place to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> control genetically modified organisms (GMOs), derivatives of GMOs or contaminants in the feed of 	<p>Guidance: Organic animal production in the UK/EU meets this requirement.</p> <p>Reason: GM ingredients have no place in organic food and feed</p>

<p>organic livestock. This includes organic feed ingredients and non-organic feed ingredients. (Note any testing that takes place should be to the lower limit of quantification 0.1%)</p> <p>b) ensure action is taken if they are detected in the animal feed.</p>	
<p>7.2 Natural casings <i>Linked to SA GB 6.6.3 & SA NI 6.6.3</i></p> <p>Non-organic casings, such as for sausage skins, must be of natural origin.</p>	<p>Reason: Natural casings are more in line with consumer expectations and there is potential for them to be certified organic if there was a market demand, unlike other casing-types which use processing aids and techniques that are not allowed under the organic regulation.</p>
<p>7.3 Animals must always be pre-stunned <i>Linked to SA GB 19.5.1 & SA NI 19.5.1</i></p> <p>Animals must always be stunned before slaughter. This process must cause unconsciousness and insensibility instantaneously, without distress, and until the animal dies.</p>	<p>Guidance: Animal slaughter in the UK/EU meets this requirement.</p> <p>Reason: Scientific evidence strongly suggests that slaughtering animals while still conscious causes them significant pain and distress.</p>

<p>8.0 Sourcing requirements for bottles or containers of Alcohol</p>			
<p>Sourcing requirement</p>		<p>Guidance & Reasons</p>	
<p>8.1 Free sulphur dioxide levels <i>Linked to SA GB 6.4.3 & SA NI 6.4.3</i></p> <p>The free sulphur dioxide (SO₂) levels in bottles or containers of fruit wines, cider, perry or mead for recertification/re-sale must not exceed 30 mg/l.</p>		<p>Reason: Free SO₂ can cause allergic reactions in people with a sensitivity to sulphur dioxide, especially affecting people with asthma, so should be minimised as much as possible.</p>	
<p>8.2 Free sulphur dioxide levels for Soil Association certified wine <i>Linked to SA GB 6.9.4 & SA NI 6.9.4</i></p> <p>The sulphur dioxide levels in bottles or containers of wines must not exceed the following levels:</p>		<p>Reason: Free SO₂ can cause allergic reactions in people with a sensitivity to sulphur dioxide, especially affecting people with asthma, so should be minimised as much as possible.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Maximum sulphur dioxide (SO₂) levels</p>			
	<p>Wine with a residual sugar level < 2 g/l</p>	<p>Wine with residual sugar level of 2 – 4.9g/l</p>	<p>Wine with sugar level of ≥5g/l</p>

Red	90 mg/l (25mg/l free SO ₂)	100 mg/l (30mg/l free SO ₂)	130 mg/l (50mg/l free SO ₂)
White & rosé	100 mg/l (30mg/l free SO ₂)	140 mg/l (30mg/l free SO ₂)	160 mg/l (50mg/l free SO ₂)
Sparkling Wine	100mg/l (10mg/l free SO ₂)		
Other wines as listed in Annex IB of EC Regulation 606/2009	270-370 mg/l (50mg/l free SO ₂)		

9.0 Sourcing requirements for All Products	
Sourcing requirement	Guidance & Reasons
<p>9.1 Nanoparticles <i>Linked to SA GB 5.11.3 & SA NI 5.11.3</i> Organic products must not contain or consist of engineered nanoparticles (incidental nanoparticles are exempt).</p>	<p>Guidance: We are not aware of any organic food products currently at risk of containing nanoparticles. However, we will monitor and update this requirement accordingly, should we become aware of risk products or ingredients.</p> <p>Reason: Nanomaterials may introduce new or heightened risks of toxicity, which are currently little understood. The possible effects of these nanomaterials on the environment, human and animal health are currently unknown.</p>
<p>9.2 Using organic additives <i>Linked to SA GB 6.4.1 & SA NI 6.4.1</i> Organic additives must be used, if available and in sufficient quantity. Organic forms of the following additives must be used:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Locust bean gum Guar gum Arabic gum Lecithins Extracts of rosemary Tara gum powder Glycerol Beeswax Carnauba wax Erythritol <p>In cases where the above organic additives are unavailable in that country or organic additives are available, but not suitable for</p>	<p>Guidance: Organic products only containing ingredients processed in the UK/EU currently meet this requirement.</p> <p>Reason: Organic ingredients should always be used where they are available and are of sufficient quality and quantity. This helps to grow the market for organic ingredients and by doing so, increases the positive impacts of organic production.</p>

the product, the Soil Association Certification Committee may review whether sufficient justification is provided for using a non-organic form of the above additives.			
9.3 Permitted additives <i>Linked to SA GB 6.4.2 & SA NI 6.4.2</i> Products may only contain additives listed in the table below and according to the specific conditions against them.		Guidance: Organic products only containing ingredients processed in GB, NI and the EU meet this requirement. Reason: These are GB & EU organic standards, but not all organic products or ingredients imported into GB, NI & EU from equivalent third countries will necessarily meet this requirement.	
E no.	Name	Organic foodstuffs to which it may be added	Specific conditions and limits
E153	Vegetable carbon	Only in ashy goat cheese and Morbier cheese	
E160 b	Annatto, bixin & norbixin	Only in Red Leicester, Double Gloucester, Cheddar and Mimolette cheeses.	
E170	Calcium Carbonate	May be used in any product of plant and animal origin.	Shall not be used for colouring or calcium enrichment of products
E220	Sulphur dioxide	fruit wines (wines made from fruits other than grapes, including cider and perry) and mead with and without added sugar) (See 8.1 for additional SA sourcing requirement related to free sulphur dioxide levels).	100 mg/l (Maximum levels available from all sources, expressed as SO ₂ in mg/l)
E224	Potassium metabisulphite	Fruit wines (wines made from fruits other than grapes, including cider and perry) and mead with and without added sugar): (See 8.1 for additional SA sourcing requirement related to free sulphur dioxide levels).	100 mg/l (Maximum levels available from all sources, expressed as SO ₂ in mg/l).
E250	Sodium nitrite	meat products	Maximum ingoing amount expressed as NaNO ₂ : 80 mg/kg, maximum residual amount expressed as NaNO ₂ : 50 mg/kg
E252	Potassium nitrate (saltpetre)	meat products	Maximum ingoing amount expressed as NaNO ₃ : 80 mg/kg, maximum residual amount expressed as NaNO ₃ : 50 mg/kg
E270	Lactic acid	products of plant and animal origin	
E290	Carbon dioxide	products of plant and animal origin	
E296	Malic acid	products of plant origin	

E300	Ascorbic acid	products of plant origin meat products	
E301	Sodium ascorbate	meat products	may only be used in connection with nitrates and nitrites
E306	Tocopherol rich extract (Vit E)	products of plant and animal origin	Anti-oxidant
E322	Lecithins	products of plant origin milk products.	only from organic production
E325	Sodium lactate	products of plant origin milk-based and meat products	
E330	Citric acid	products of plant and animal origin	
E331	Sodium citrates	products of plant and animal origin	
E333	Calcium citrates	products of plant origin	
E334	Tartaric acid (L(+)-)	products of plant origin mead.	
E335	Sodium tartrates	products of plant origin	
E336	Potassium tartrates	products of plant origin	
E341 (i)	Monocalcium Phosphate	self raising flour.	raising agent
E392	Extracts of rosemary	products of plant and animal origin	only from organic production
E400	Alginic acid	products of plant origin milk products	
E401	Sodium alginate	products of plant origin milk products sausages based on meat	
E402	Potassium alginate	products of plant origin milk-based products	
E406	Agar	products of plant origin milk-based products and meat products	
E407	Carrageenan	products of plant origin milk-based products	
E410	Locust bean gum	products of plant and animal origin	only from organic production
E412	Guar gum	products of plant and animal origin	only from organic production
E414	Arabic gum	products of plant and animal origin	only from organic production
E415	Xanthan gum	products of plant and animal origin	
E417	Tara gum powder	products of plant and animal origin	Thickener. Only when derived from organic production.
E418	Gellan gum	products of plant and animal origin	High-acyl form only

			Only when derived from organic production. Applicable as of 1 January 2026
E422	Glycerol	plant extracts Flavourings For E422 derived from oil palm, see additional SA sourcing requirement 1.2.	Only from plant origin solvent and carrier in plant extracts and flavourings humectant in gel capsules surface coating of tablets only from organic production
E440 (i)	Pectin (non amidated)	products of plant origin milk-based products	
E464	Hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose	products of plant and animal origin	Encapsulation material for capsules
E500	Sodium carbonate	products of plant and animal origin	
E501	Potassium Carbonates	products of plant origin	
E503	Ammonium Carbonates	products of plant origin	
E504	Magnesium carbonates	products of plant origin	
E509	Calcium chloride	milk-based products	Milk coagulation
E516	Calcium sulphate	products of plant origin	Carrier
E524	Sodium hydroxide	'Laugengebäck'	Surface treatment
		flavourings	acidity regulator
E551	Silicon dioxide gel or colloidal solution	Cocoa, herbs, and spices in dried powdered form. Flavourings and propolis.	For cocoa, only for use in automated dispensing machines
E553 b	Talc	sausages based on meat	Surface treatment
E901	Beeswax	As a glazing agent for confectionery only. Beeswax from organic beekeeping.	glazing agent only from organic production
E903	Carnauba wax	confectionery	glazing agent
		citrus fruit	mitigating method for mandatory extreme cold treatment of fruit as a quarantine measure against harmful organisms
			Only from organic production
E938	Argon	products of plant and animal origin	
E939	Helium	products of plant and animal origin	

E941	Nitrogen	products of plant and animal origin	
E948	Oxygen	products of plant and animal origin	
E968	Erythritol	products of plant and animal origin	Only from organic production without using ion exchange technology
9.4 Ingredients which must be organic <i>Linked to SA GB 6.6.2 & SA NI 6.6.2</i> Products must use the following list of ingredients in organic form: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> gooseberries (<i>Ribes uva-crispa</i>) watercress (<i>Nasturtium officinale</i>) spirulina (<i>Arthrospira platensis</i>) chlorella 		Reason: The GB and EU Organic Regulations allow some specific ingredients to be used as non-organic because they are not thought to be widely available in organic form. However, the GB & EU lists of permitted non-organic ingredients are outdated, and some of the items are now available as organic. Where this is the case, licensees must use the organic version. This meets consumer expectations of organic products, helps to grow the market for organic ingredients and by doing so, increases the positive impacts of organic production.	

ⁱ At present, for the following organic egg products, there is a shortage of product that meets **the SA's sourcing requirements: egg yolk, albumen & dried whole egg and organic processed liquid whole egg**. Therefore, you may apply to us to use non-compliant organic products of these types in processed SA standard products to a maximum of 30% of the total end product and must be identified on the ingredients panel as meeting the GB Organic Regulation (or the EU Organic Regulation for products made outside GB). You will need to provide written justification for your use of organic egg ingredients that do not meet SA higher standards. And, in addition for liquid whole egg, demonstrate that you have attempted to source organic product compliant with SA higher standards, for example by providing evidence from suppliers.