

Organic Farmers & Growers

Briefing Note

27 Jan 2012



Monogastric Feeds

Following a recent meeting with Defra we are providing this update regarding the non-organic feed allowance for pigs and poultry, for the benefit of organic operators.

The derogation allowing up to 5% non-organic feed to be fed to organic pigs and poultry was due to expire on the 31/12/11 at which time we expected to be moving to 100% organic feeds or at least to be stepping up to that level over time. Unfortunately, due to delays at the EU Commission the new feed standards were not agreed in time. As a result both the Commission and Defra have confirmed that organic operators can continue to feed organic pigs and poultry as under the previous standards until the new regulation is published. We now have a draft of the new regulation, which is not expected to come into force before the end of February 2012 but may in fact not be effective until March depending on progress at the Commission.

The intention of the draft text is to extend the provision allowing a limited amount of non-organic feed to be fed to pigs and poultry. It is, however, slightly different to the current wording of the regulation and as such some further clarification is needed. OF&G has requested this clarification from Defra on a number of points and will issue further updates as soon as is possible.

Below we have quoted the relevant sections of the draft text (in italics) and provided our interpretations and comments.

Regional Sourcing

'In case of pigs and poultry, at least 20% of the feed shall come from the farm unit itself or in case this is not feasible, be produced in cooperation with other organic farms or feed business operators in the same region.'

OF&G understand this to mean that in order to bring the implementing rules more in line with the principles of the regulation, operators will have to ensure that 20% of the feed for pigs and poultry comes from the region. The three key points that require further clarification by the European Commission and Defra are the definition of a 'region', the meaning of 'feed business operator' and the interpretation of 'produced in cooperation with'. Whilst the definition of a region will be left to the individual member states (Defra) to define, the Commission may amend the wording of the 'feed business operators' as it has been pointed out to them that this is open to wide interpretation. The implications of this are hard to assess until we get a clearer steer from the Commission on how they intend to interpret 'feed business operators' and what impact that will have on the sourcing of organic feed materials.

Non-organic feed

The draft regulation would allow the following:

'non-organic spices, herbs, and molasses, provided that:

- I. their organic form is not available,*
- II. they are produced or prepared without chemical solvents, and*
- III. their use is limited to 1% of the feed ration of a given species, calculated annually as a percentage of the dry matter of feed from agricultural origin.'*

This will provide an on-going derogation (not time limited) for herbs, spices and molasses of up to 1% of the annual dry matter of products of agricultural origin, however, this does not include feed ingredients used for colouring egg yolks and some other materials. OF&G has asked Defra to check with the Commission to see if these types of ingredients can be used.

'Where the conditions laid down in Article 22(2)(b) of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 apply and where farmers are unable to obtain protein feed exclusively from organic production, the use of a limited proportion of non-organic protein feed is allowed for porcine and poultry species.

The maximum percentage of non-organic protein feed authorised per period of 12 months for those species shall be 5% for calendar years 2012, 2013 and 2014.

The figures shall be calculated annually as a percentage of the dry matter of feed from agricultural origin.'

As an addition to the 1% allowance for herbs etc. a time limited derogation for a maximum of 5% of the annual dry matter intake of agricultural origin may be fed provided this is limited to only protein feeds. We are, at present, unsure of the definition of a protein ingredient and are seeking further clarification on this.

As the derogation is now proposed to expire at the end of 2014 there is a need to continue to develop suitable organic raw materials to supply the growing needs of the pig and poultry sector. The Commission has proposed to ask the EU organic expert group (EGTOP) to undertake research in this area.

We will provide further updates as the position comes clearer but in the meantime if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

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