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Module-3

National Standards for Organic Production



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Conversion Requirements



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1. General Principles

- Organic agriculture means a process of developing a viable and sustainable agroecosystem. The time between the start of organic management and certification of crops and/or animal husbandry is known as the conversion period. The whole farm, including livestock, should be converted according to the standards over a period of three years.



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2. Recommendations

- For a sustainable agro-ecosystem to function optimally, diversity in crop production and animal husbandry must be arranged in such a way that there is an interplay of all the elements of the farming management.
- Conversion may be accomplished over a period of time. A farm may be converted step by step.
- The totality of the crop production and all animal husbandry should be converted to organic management. There should be a clear plan of how to proceed with the conversion.



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- This plan shall be updated if necessary and should cover all aspects relevant to these standards.
- The certification programme should set standards for different farming systems so that they can be clearly separated in production as well as in documentation, and the standards should determine norms to prevent a mix up of input factors and products.



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Standards

- The standards requirements shall be met during the conversion period. All the standards requirements shall be applied on the relevant aspects from the beginning of the conversion period itself.
- If the whole farm is not converted, the certification programme shall ensure that the organic and conventional parts of the farm are separate and inspectable.
- Simultaneous production of conventional, organic in conversion and/or organic crops or animal products which cannot be clearly distinguished from each other, will not be allowed.



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- To ensure a clear separation between organic and conventional production, a buffer zone or a natural barrier should be maintained. The certification programme shall ensure that the requirements are met.
- A full conversion period is not required where de facto full standards requirements have been met for several years and where this can be verified through several means and sources. In such cases inspection shall be carried out with a reasonable time interval before the first harvest.



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Maintenance of Organic Management

- Converted land and animals shall not get switched back and forth between organic and conventional management.
- Landscape The certification programme shall set standards for a minimum percentage of the farm area to facilitate biodiversity and nature conservation.
- The certification programme shall develop landscape and biodiversity standards.