



Australian Government

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service

Mr Chen Wen-Deh
Director General
Agriculture and Food Agency, Council of Agriculture
8 Kuang-hwa Rd., Chung-Hsing New Village
Nantou 54044
TAIWAN

Dear Mr Chen

I understand that Agriculture and Food Agency requires an assurance from the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) that it will take action to ensure that organic and biodynamic produce exported to Taiwan under a recognition of equivalence between the applicable Taiwan standards and the Australian National Standard for Organic and Biodynamic Produce (the National Standard) meets Taiwan's requirements with respect to chemical residues. I am advised that clause 3.1.9 of the National Standard dealing with the possible presence of contaminants, even at low levels, is unacceptable under Taiwanese organic standards and you require a zero tolerance of contaminants in organic produce.

In order to provide a high degree of confidence in compliance with your requirements AQIS will:

- Issue a notice to all AQIS Approved Certifying Organisations indicating that they need to ensure that all of their certified operators are aware of the zero tolerance for chemical residues in products exported to Taiwan and have in place measures to ensure compliance with this requirement. A copy of the Notice is attached.
- As part of its ongoing annual audit program of AQIS Approved Certifying Organisations and a selection of their certified operators, AQIS will ensure that operators producing organic products for the Taiwanese market are represented in the program.

I trust that the compliance measures indicated above will assist your agency in finalising the assessment of equivalence for organic exports to Taiwan and I look forward to the development of a strong working relationship between our two agencies.

Yours sincerely

Greg Read
Executive Manager
Exports Division
18 December 2008

Attachment: AQIS Notice Number 2008/7



AQIS NOTICE

Issue Export of Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce to Taiwan		Date issued: 19 December 2008
AQIS Notice Number: 2008/7		AQIS File Number: AFFA01/7727
Date of Effect: 29 January 2009	Date of Expiry: Until further notice	AQIS contact: Edwina Mulhearn ☎ 02 6272 4152 ✉ organic@aqis.gov.au
Distribution Category		Last Notice in the category
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved Certifying Organisations cc <input type="checkbox"/> Manager AQIS Horticultural Export Program <input type="checkbox"/> Manager AQIS Grain Export Program <input type="checkbox"/> Manager AQIS Meat Export Program <input type="checkbox"/> Manager AQIS Dairy Export Program <input type="checkbox"/> Manager AQIS Export Fish Program		nil
Instruction issued under: <i>Export Control (Organic Produce Certification) Orders</i>		

PURPOSE

1. To advise Approved Certifying Organisations (ACOs) of requirements for the export of organic and bio-dynamic produce to Taiwan

BACKGROUND

2. On 29 January 2009 Taiwan is introducing a new regulatory regime governing the certification of organic foods.
3. Australia has been negotiating with Taiwan's Agriculture and Food Agency (AFA) for an equivalence arrangement in relation to the import of organic produce into Taiwan.

ISSUES

4. While the AFA has indicated that it is generally satisfied with the Australian system for managing certification for organic produce for export one issue remains outstanding.

5. Taiwan has a zero tolerance for the presence of contaminants in organic produce. This requirement is contrary to section 3.1.9 of the National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce as shown below.

3.1.9. Where product has been contaminated with non-permitted substances as a result of factors beyond the control of the certified operator, then:

- a. chemical residue tests of the product must register below 10% of the Maximum Residue Limit before the product can be sold as in-conversion, organic or bio-dynamic.*
- b. Product...*

6. AQIS has undertaken to ensure that Taiwan's requirement for zero tolerance for contaminants in organic produce destined for Taiwan is met. This will be achieved through:
 - a. The issue of this Notice to ACOs requiring compliance to Taiwan's requirement.
 - b. Including the review of this requirement in audits of ACOs and certified organic operators conducted by AQIS.

INSTRUCTION

AQIS approved certifying organisations are required to:

7. **ADVISE** all certified organic operators of Taiwan's requirements, including that the operators QM manual must be amended to reflect this requirement.
8. **AMEND** ACO QM manuals to reflect this requirement.
9. **ASSESS** compliance of certified organic operators during routine audits and
10. **DOCUMENT** evidence of findings in operator inspection reports.

11. From the **1st February 2009**, AQIS will review compliance with this instruction during audits of the certifying organisations.