

Regional variations in standards – problem or opportunity?

I. Preliminary analysis of differences between the EU regulation and other standards/regulations

II. Areas for harmonisation, simplification and regionalisation.

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Differences in Organic Standards and Regulations - which ones are relevant?

Private Standards

National Regulations
EU-Regulation

US-NOP

IFOAM Basic Standards

Codex Alimentarius

IFOAM Criteria

(EN 45011)

(ISO 65)



Introduction

- 15 years after EU Regulation 2092/91 came into force implementation varies widely
- Private standard-setting organisations and some governments within and outside the EU already had long-established, detailed organic standards, which differ from the above mentioned EU Regulation.
 - **Are these differences
a problem
or an opportunity?**

Background for standards database

- European Action for Organic Food and farming requested to establish and maintain **an Internet database** listing the various private and national standards
- Development of a database “Organicrules” in EU project Organic-Revision (DARCO developing and hosting the database). **www.organicrules.org**
- **Objective:**
 - to analyse the differences to the EU regulation 2092/91 and
 - to identify specific areas in the standards where revisions in terms of **harmonisation, regionalisation or simplification** may be implemented in EEC Reg. 2092/91 and national standards, taking into account the basic ethical values.

Database Organic Rules – Browse differences

Organic Rules - Browse by Differences to EEC No 2092/91 - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Filer Rediger Vis Foretrukne Funktioner Hjælp

Tilbage Søg Foretrukne Medier

Adresse <http://testwww.organicrules.org/view/EU/> Gå Hyperlinks

Organic Rules

Home || About || Browse || Search || Register || User Area || Help

Browse by Differences to EEC No 2092/91

Please select a value to browse from the list below.

- **International organic regulations/standards**
 - Codex Alimentarius
 - EEC No 2092/91
 - 01. Articles 1-3. Scope
 - 02. Article 4. Definitions
 - 03. Article 5. Labelling
 - 04. Articles 6-7. Rules of production
 - 05. Articles 8-9. Inspection system
 - 06. Article 10. Indication that products..
 - 07. Article 10a. General enforcement measures
 - 08. Article 11. Imports from third countries
 - 09. Article 12. Free movement within the Community
 - 10. Articles 13-16. Administrative provisions..
 - 11. ANNEX I, Principles of organic...
 - Part A
 - 1.General principles
 - Part B
 - 1.General principles
 - 2.Conversion
 - 3.Origin of animals
 - 4.Feed
 - 5.Disease prevention...
 - 6.Husbandry management...
 - 7.Livestock manure
 - 8.Free range areas...
 - Part C
 - 1.General principles
 - 2.Conversion period
 - 3.Origin of the bees
 - 4.Siting of the apiaries

Methodology for database submissions

- Source data for this analysis consisted of **submissions from standards experts** to the Organic Rules database
- **21 national standards** are since April 06 on the database; still some missing (Scandinavia)
- Description of **differences** by experts in own words: the rule summary, the differences between a specific standard and the related articles/sections in the EU regulation as well as the **justifications** of these differences.
- Link to IFOAM principles and subject area
- **=> Need of language/consistency check in May 06 (neutral and comparative description of differences!)**
- **Technical details about the database see separate paper/poster by Hansen, Alroe and Schmid (2006).**

Methodology of content analysis

- Analysis of the rule summaries and the justification of variations in 21 standards or implementation rules for organic food and farming in different countries in Europe (Basis: April 2006, 593 submissions) + USDA-NOP, Codex Alimentarius Guidelines, IFOAM Norms.
- Differences/justifications were categorized, compared and analysed with a criteria matrix relating to national and regional circumstances

Quantitative analysis of differences related to EU Reg/country

A: EC Council Regulation No. 2092/91	593	B: Europe	519
Preamble and principles	12	Austria	66
Scope - Art.1-3	1	Belgium	-
Definitions - Art.4	3	Czech Republic	32
Labelling and claims - Art.5	13	Denmark	-
Rules of production and preparation - Art.6	20	Finland	-
Requirements for inclusion of substances in Annex II - Art.7	-	France	46
Inspection and certification system - Art.8-9	2	Germany	141
Inspection schemes and general enforcement measures - Art.10	2	Italy	14
Import from third countries - Art.11	-	Norway	-
Free movement and administrative provisions - Art.12-16	-	Poland	-
Annex I. Principles of organic production and processing	516	Slovenia	12
Annex II. Permitted substances for the production of organic foods	67	Spain	12
Annex III - Minimum inspection Requirements/precautionary measures	35	Sweden	-
Annex IV. - Information to be notified	-	Switzerland	89
Annex V. Labelling	1	The Netherlands	27
Annex VI. Processing	20	UK	79
Annex VII. Maximum numbers of animals per ha	16		
Annex VIII. Minimum livestock surface areas indoor and outdoors	23		

Quantitative analysis of differences related to subject areas/principles

C: Subject Areas	598	D: IFOAM's principles of organic agriculture	596
Animal husbandry	226	Ecological principle	213
Collection from the wild (plants and animals)	11	Principle of care /precaution	302
Conversion	59	Principle of fairness	147
Crop production	114	Principle of health	250
Definitions	3		
Environmental care/environmental impact	67		
Fibre production	4		
General areas of Organic Agriculture	35		
Horticulture	45		
Inspection and certification	17		
Labelling provisions	16		
Perennial crops	20		
Permitted inputs (positive lists)	33		
Pollution risks/non permitted inputs	56		
Processing	32		
Renewable resources	1		
Social justice and fair trade	7		
Specific animal standards	105		

Main differences found in several standards

- **Animal husbandry issues**
(71% of all standards in the database);
- **Specific plant production requirements**
(52% of all standards);
- **Prohibited inputs in plant production**
(52% of all standards);
- **Whole farm conversion requirement**
(42% of all standards).

Qualitative analysis of the legally justified differences

=> 5 reasons, why are these differences

- 1. Specific national legislation and policies***
- 2. Areas, which the EU regulation 2092/91 does not cover at all***
- 3. terms, which are not exactly defined in the EU regulation***
- 4. Areas, which only can be implemented which significant pre-investments and important financial funds.***
- 5. Livestock area : possibility to have differing stricter rules based on EU Regulation***

Examples of differences in livestock rules in several standards

Paragraph EU Reg. 2092/91	Topic/ subject area	Nature of differences in standards	Summary of standard text (ratio: No. of standards/ total no. evaluated)
Animal feed/ Animal nutrition - Annex IB4	Fodder from own farm	Minimal share of fodder has to be produced on farm.	Farms are required to produce at least 50 % of fodder for ruminants (6/21)
Housing and free- range Annex I B8, Annex VIII	Flock sizes in poultry	Max. number of individuals per stable and maximum flock size for poultry	Flock size is limited to 500/1000 individuals (6/21)
Free range ANNEX I B 1.4 and 8.3	Regular access to pasture/ outdoor area	Min. number of days of access to outdoor area/ pasture	Pasture/ outdoor runs for ruminants to be provided on at least 180 and up to 300 days per year. (6/21)

Other Justification for differences

History in organic agriculture

- Countries with a long history in organic agriculture often clearer profile
- Competition with non-organic and other organic labels

Market development stage

- Generally more detailed in countries with a well-developed domestic market for organic food.
- In more export-oriented countries, local regulations basically meet the EC Regulation requirements

Influence of national stakeholder groups

- Strong national lobby and interest groups (e.g. animal protection, consumer organisations)

Main subject areas with comparable more detailed rules

- Many detailed rules can be found in the following areas, which might be **considered for harmonisation**:
 - - Whole farm conversion requirement (10 of 21 standards)
 - - Detailed standards on wild harvesting, mushroom production (7/21)
 - - Specific production rules for perennial crops (7/21)

Differences related to specific regional conditions

Some differences were found in several countries with comparable macro-climatic and structural conditions, which might be **considered for regional variation:**

- Limitation of nutrients/fertilisers per ha (9/21)
- Detailed crop rotation requirements (7/21)
- Limitation on copper application per ha/ year, differentiated according specific crops (6/21)

Subject areas with quite differing rules

- Further issues can be found in many standards. Some of these issues might be resolved either by **allowing for regional variations*** or by relying more on private Codes of Practice as in the case of processing.
- - **Non-organic animals brought into the farm***
- - **Poultry production (housing, etc.)***
- - Beekeeping (siting of hives, wax, etc.)
- - **Stable size/housing standards (tethering, etc.)***
- - **Brought in fodder***
- - Veterinary treatments
- - Mutilations, dehorning
- - Transport and slaughtering
- - Processing (product group-specific rules)

When are differences a problem?

1. When **consumers** feel insecure and distrust organic products as not being “organic” or coming from “organic production, the way they perceive it.
2. When **competitive disadvantages** do occur, this can create cost-advantages or disadvantages.
3. When organic **principles** are violated

Furthermore:

When the implementation of rules for operators are not clear – **insecure legal situation** => demotivation

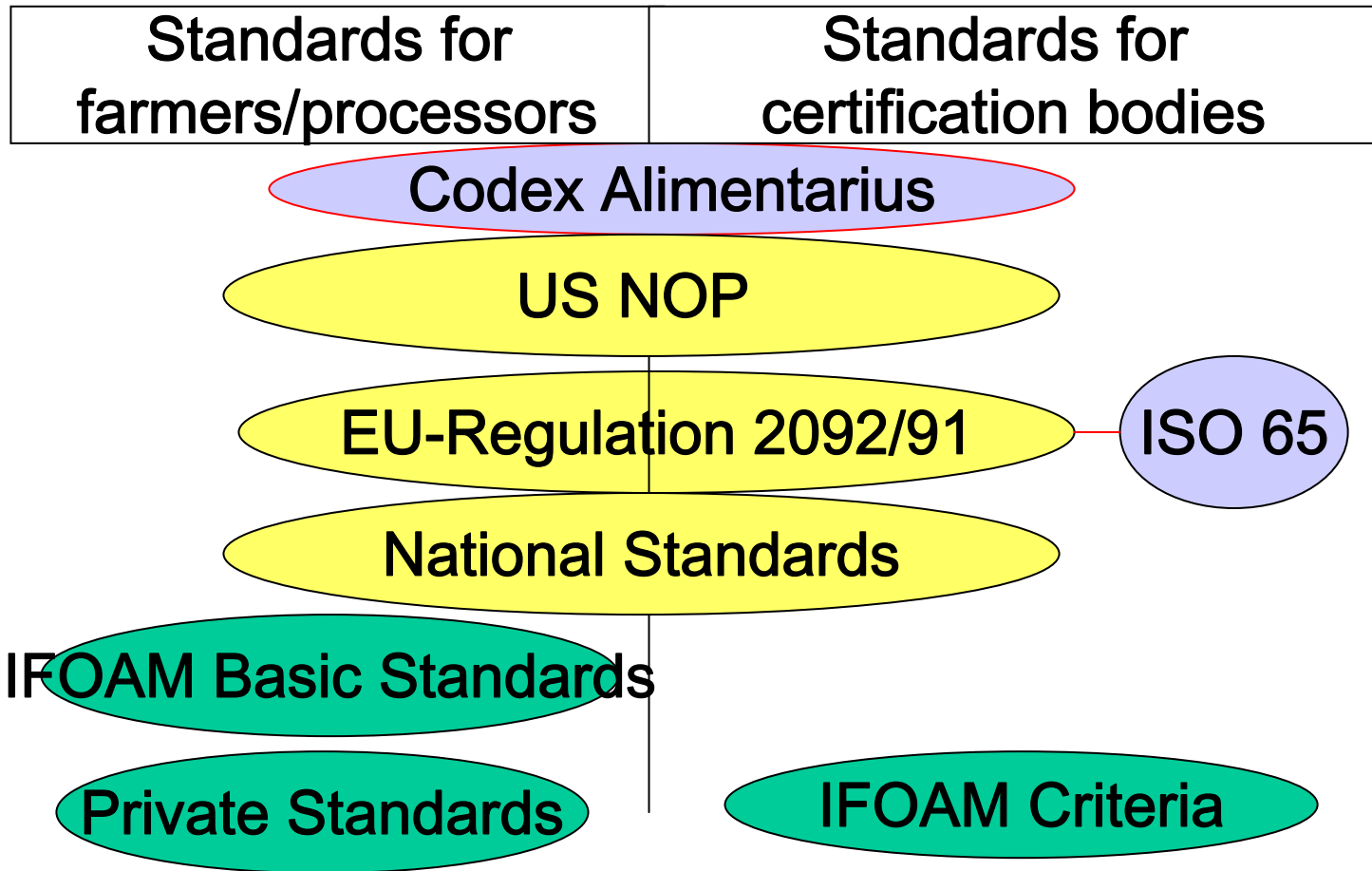
Potential areas for harmonisation

What is meant by “harmonisation”?

Process to develop one standard for similar subjects which will be commonly recognised by national and private standard setters, with the goal to grant exchangeability of the commodity produced according to this standard.

Attention: Quite different viewpoint regarding harmonisation!

International Standards for Organic Agriculture



Potential areas for regional variation/regionalisation

- The term regionalisation linked to local constraints caused by geography, climate or governmental regulations as well as national support policies
- However, the implementation of regional flexibility in the EU Regulation must be a transparent process with clear restrictive criteria.
- Should not create consumer distrust, market distortion or violate the organic principles

Potentials for harmonisation, simplification & regionalisation – approach chosen

Rule text (N° of submissions in the database in brackets)	Har	Sim.	Reg.	Consumer	Market	Principles	Remarks
Conversion - Annex I A1 (40)	yes	yes	no	*	*	*	
Seeds and seedlings - see Art. 6a (10)	yes	yes	(yes)	*	**	*	
Fertilizing - Annex I A2 (77)	no	yes	yes	*	*	*	
Plant pests and diseases, and weeds control - Annex I A3 (17)	yes	no	(yes)	*	**	*	National registration, EU Render4
Collection of wild plants - Annex I A4 (14)	yes	no	no	*	*	**	On int. level
Special plant production standards - NEW (33)	yes	no	yes	*	**	**	

Assessment: weak () or strong (**) impact on: consumer perception /market distortion / principles OP*

Potentials harmonisation (H), simplification (S) & regionalisation (R)

Rule text (N° of submissions in brackets)	Har.	Sim.	Reg.	Con	Mar.	Prin.	Remarks
Conversion animals - Annex I B2 (45)	yes	no	no	0	*	*	Clear rules
Origin of animals/livestock sources - Annex I B3 (20)	no	no	(yes)	*	*	*	
Animal nutrition - Annex I B4 (68)	yes	no	yes	**	**	*	
Disease prevention and veterinary treatment/health care - Annex I B5 (22)	(no)	no	no	*	0	0	Harm. with US, Other legislation
Livestock manure - Annex I B7, see also Annex VII (21)	no	yes	no	0	0	*	Simplify, set criteria (N; P)
Housing and free-range conditions - Annex I B8, see also Annex VIII (68)	(yes)	no	yes	*	**	*	Minimal criteria animal welfare
Soil and water conservation (11) Biodiversity and landscape (16)	(yes) *	no	yes	* *	* *	* *	Other EU instruments.
Contamination with residues/GMO	yes	no	(Yes)	**	**	*	dito

Assessment: weak () or strong (**) impact on:
consumer perception /market distortion / principles OP*
Has still to be further elaborated and discussed

Conclusions

- Differences in the implementation should not be overestimated.
- Some problems such as seed and feed can be solved in a medium term perspective, with more transparency and development projects
- **Biggest challenge: to maintain consumer confidence** in the future: e.g. problems with contamination risks.
- **Focus more on the wider fields** where costumers have high expectations: biodiversity, landscape, socials justice, environmental orientation as well as food safety and GMO.

Conclusions II

- More detailed analysis in the project until August 2006 (Final report October 2006)
- Not primarily more rules are necessary but supporting projects, better communication, more transparency and cooperation in the most crucial areas.
- A regional adapted organic agriculture, which is based on broadly agreed values and guiding principles and a harmonised implementation of the EU Regulation 2092/91 or other national or international agreed standards for organic agriculture do not contradict
 - ⇒ **Equivalence and not similarity should be the aim!**

Thank you, make your choice!



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