



Guidance Certification of Organic Yeast

1. Purpose

This guidance provides clarification on the eligibility of yeast to be certified as organic under the National Organic Program (NOP) regulations.

2. Scope

This guidance applies to National Organic Program (NOP) certifying agents and all certified and exempt organic producers.

3. Background

There has been considerable discussion regarding the eligibility of yeast to be certified as organic under the National Organic Program (NOP) regulations. § 205.605(a) of NOP regulations includes yeast as a natural, nonagricultural substance allowed as an ingredient in or on processed products labeled as “organic” or “made with organic.”

Clarifying the definition of “nonagricultural” or other actions, such as removing a substance from the National List, would require action by the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). Until such actions occur, NOP finds it necessary to clarify that yeast may be labeled as organic and used in processed organic food products.

4. Policy

4.1 General.

Organic handling requirements (7 CFR § 205.270) allow the use of nonagricultural substances listed in § 205.605, such as yeast, to be used in or on a processed agricultural product that is represented as “organic” if the agricultural product contains at least 95 percent organically produced raw or processed agricultural products. The remaining 5 percent can be a nonagricultural substance such as those enumerated in § 205.605; this includes yeast. Therefore, for example, if yeast is added to a certified organic agricultural product such as wheat flour and processed according to § 205.270, the resulting product can be certified and labeled “organic.”

Certification of processed agricultural products which are listed as nonagricultural on § 205.605(a) is not without precedence. For example, NOP previously determined that natural flavors, though they are listed as allowable nonagricultural products in organic production, can be certified organic if processed in compliance with NOP regulations. The status of yeast has been of particular interest to livestock producers who feed yeast to livestock as a non-agricultural, non-synthetic feed supplement. Yeast is available for use in livestock feed in either certified organic form or as an allowed non-organic input specified on the National List.



4.2 Yeast.

A certified organic operation may sell, label, or represent yeast as “organic” when produced in compliance with an approved organic systems plan. Yeast products produced from certified organic inputs such as certified organic flour and certified organic corn steep liquor may be certified as organic. For yeast to be certified as organic, yeast used as a starter culture does not have to be certified as organic. However, if certified organic yeast is used as the starter culture, subsequently produced yeast is eligible for certification as “100 percent organic” as long as all other production and handling requirements are met.

4.3 Yeast used in Livestock Feed.

Certified organic livestock operations may feed non-organic yeast to their livestock as a nonsynthetic feed supplement per § 205.237(a).

5. References

NOP Regulations (as amended to date)

7 CFR § 205.237 Livestock feed.

(a) The producer of an organic livestock operation must provide livestock with...

7 CFR § 205.270 Organic handling requirements.

7 CFR § 205.301 Product composition.

(a) Products sold, labeled, or represented as “100 percent organic.”

7 CFR § 205.605 Nonagricultural (nonorganic) substances allowed as ingredients in or on processed products labeled as “organic” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s)).”

(a) Nonsynthetics allowed...

Approved on July 22, 2011