

Brief Information on Organic JAS

CERES GmbH is accredited by the competent Japanese authority (MAFF = Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries), as ROCB (= Registered Overseas Certification Body for Organic JAS).

1. What is organic production according to JAS?

Organic production for the Japanese market, as part of the Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS) is regulated by the following documents published by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (MAFF):

Standards: JAS for Organic ...

Area	Standard	Technical Criteria	Covered by CERES accreditation
Agricultural Products	JAS 1605	1830	X
Processed Foods	JAS 1606	25 (former 1831)	X
Feed	JAS 1607	for unprocessed: 1830 for processed: 25 (former 1831)	X
Livestock Products	JAS 1608	1832	
Algae	JAS 0018	for producer: 2079 for repacker: 2082	
Repackers		26 (former 1833)	X
Alcoholic beverages*	JAS 1606	25	X
*JAS certification will be mandatory after October 1, 2025			


Q & A: The answers to many frequently asked questions give detailed explanations about the implementation of the Organic JAS rules, where the standards and technical criteria lack precision.

The responsible authority for Organic JAS is the Dept. of Standards and Labelling at MAFF. The English version of JAS, including Q & A, is published at https://www.maff.go.jp/e/policies/standard/specific/organic_JAS.html

2. Differences with EU Regulation and NOP

Some differences between Organic JAS and the EU regulation and NOP are:

- Except for the substances explicitly listed in one of the tables, JAS 1605 does **not** allow the use of natural fertilisers which have undergone chemical transformation. This includes e.g. alkaline extracts of humic acids from **leonardite**.
- The first year of conversion of a farm needs not be monitored by a certifier. No certificate may be issued for the first year in conversion.
- Fallow or virgin land can be certified organic only after it has been cultivated organically during at least one year.
- The **main difference**, however, is that JAS requires a formally established "**Grading System**". This must be understood as an **internal auditing system**, established to best assure compliance with the standard. While the Operation Manager ("Production Process Manager") supervises the organic production, the so-called **Grading Manager** performs internal audits for each production lot, before authorising the use of the JAS label. Before the product is sold with the JAS seal to another company or directly exported to Japan, the Grading Manager goes through all relevant documents, to verify compliance of the product with Organic JAS. This "grading" must be documented in a checklist.

 CERES	3-2-11_EN Inf	Brief Information on Organic JAS	v 26.05.2025	2/3
---	---------------	----------------------------------	--------------	-----

3. Who needs to be certified

3.1. Equivalent countries

Some countries or regions have "**equivalence agreements**" with Japan (including the EU member countries, Canada, the USA, the UK, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland and Taiwan).

Organic operators in these countries or regions have two options:

- The Japanese importer holds a JAS certificate and conducts the "grading". In this case, the exporter (e.g. in an EU member country) can sell EU certified products directly, without additional certification.
- Or the final processor in the country with an equivalence agreement is certified according to JAS, while their suppliers "only" need to hold a valid certificate according to the organic standard of the respective country.

The following operation and products are **not covered by the equivalence agreement**:

- Repackers
- Livestock products except from EU member countries, USA, Australia, Switzerland, and Canada
- Alcoholic beverages except from EU member countries, Canada and Taiwan

3.2. Other countries

In all **other countries**, **all operators** involved in the supply chain must be JAS certified.

3.3. Farmer groups

Farmer groups can be certified as such, provided they have an internal control system. A processing or export company can take care of the internal control system and grading procedure for their group of suppliers.

3.4. Exporters or traders

Exporters or traders, who are NOT involved in any part of the production, processing, packing or labeling, and who don't subcontract such activities, cannot get JAS certification, but they can of course trade JAS certified products. If exporters or traders subcontract all above-mentioned activities, they can get JAS certification, but this is not mandatory. However, if they are directly involved in any part of the above-mentioned activities, JAS certification becomes mandatory.

Also, if exporters or traders with subcontractors want to use the JAS logo with their own certification number when trading, JAS certification is mandatory.

Remark: Repackers with subcontractors


Under JAS, Repackers are not allowed to have subcontractors, so the applicants with such structures are required to obtain Joint Certification.

In Joint Certification, all entities that constitute the certification (hereinafter referred to as "constituent entities") are considered members of the certification, and all constituent entities must be inspected annually. Applicants must sign the Agreement for JAS Joint Certification which lists the necessary requirements.

4. Formal steps required to obtain and maintain JAS certification

For general steps to organic certification, please see our "Brief information: Steps to Certification". Here we only describe those steps which are specific to JAS.

- As a first step, the interested producer must submit a **JAS application** to CERES.
- In addition to the certification contract, a **JAS agreement** must be signed.
- The production manager and all grading staff attend a **JAS seminar** organised by CERES. In some cases, this can be done online.

	3-2-11_EN Inf	Brief Information on Organic JAS	v 26.05.2025	3/3
---	---------------	----------------------------------	--------------	-----

- In addition to the Organic Management Plan, the company, farm or group must describe their **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for grading** (see section 2 above; operator can use document 4-3-17 as Grading SOP by filling out the contents of this document completely).
- Even in case the operation should hold a valid EU or NOP certificate, an onsite JAS inspection must take place, to verify implementation of the grading system.
- Once all requirements are fulfilled, CERES will issue a JAS certificate. Together with the certificate the unit will receive the CERES "**JAS mark**" (see below section 7). JAS certification **remains valid**, i.e. certificates do not have an expiry date, but must be renewed annually.
- All JAS certified operators must **inform** the inspection body **annually** about the quantities of "graded" JAS products. The reference year is the Japanese economic year (April 1st through March 31st). The summarized information for the previous year must be submitted to the certifier by June 30th. Recertification is not possible if this information is not submitted in time.

5. Documents required for JAS certification

Additional records required for JAS certification, besides those which are necessary according to EU Regulation or NOP:

- **Application** for JAS certification, JAS **Agreement**
- JAS **seminar** attendance **certificate**
- **SOP** for JAS grading
- **Grading checklist**, showing that the SOP are being implemented for each lot labelled with JAS mark
- Records summarising the products graded as JAS products by June 30th

6. Labelling requirements

All products sold as "JAS organic", **must carry the JAS logo** (also called "JAS mark" or "JAS seal"). A certification number assigned by CERES must be placed under the logo. Together with the certificate, CERES provides clients an electronic version of the JAS CERES logo. For **packed** products, **the JAS seal must be on each package**, or a **JAS seal tag** must be attached. For **bulk** containers, the JAS seal must appear on the **invoice or bill of lading**. If the official shipping document cannot be altered, a page bearing the JAS seal can be attached.



This is the **certification number** assigned by CERES. You find it on your JAS certificate.

The seal **may not be altered**. However, any colour is permitted. The position of the JAS mark on the label is not regulated by MAFF. Certified clients may use the JAS seal in advertising material.

In addition to the JAS-CERES logo, the label must include information on the kind of product, the organic condition, quantities, the company or farm name, a lot number and the country of origin.

7. Transaction Certificates

Transaction certificates are not compulsory, but are **recommended** for each sale of organic products to Japan.

8. Recent Changes

Please refer to Info "Client Update on Recent Changes of JAS Standards".