

## Brief Info

### **Beekeeping**

#### **Principles:**

The EU organic regulation specifies the following principles for organic beekeeping: The husbandry practices must be bee-friendly, and special attention must be paid to hygiene. Breeds of bees adapted to the site are used and only suitable sites for the hives are selected.

Great attention is paid to the prevention of diseases. Nevertheless, diseases that occur are treated only with active substances that are approved for organic beekeeping. The same applies to disinfection and cleaning.

For overwintering, extensive honey and pollen stocks are left in the colony, supplementary feeding is only done with organic feed.

Clipping the wings of queens is not allowed.

#### **Provisions in detail:**

##### **Material for hives and beekeeping accessories**

The EU organic regulation requires that hives and beekeeping accessories must be made of natural materials as a matter of principle. This means that only untreated wood and straw as well as clay and loam are used for hives.

There are no restrictions regarding the materials used for fasteners, feeders, grid floors and roof covers for protection from the weather.

Only propolis, wax or vegetable oil may be used inside the hive.

Only products that do not leave residues in the products or the bees can be used for exterior painting. Ensuring this is the responsibility of the beekeeper.

##### **Wax**

Beeswax for new center walls must come from organic apiaries.

##### **Cleaning**

Only the following substances are allowed for cleaning and disinfecting materials, buildings, equipment, tools and products used in beekeeping:


Potash and soda soap, caustic potash, water and steam, natural plant essences, milk of lime and lime, alcohol, quicklime, formaldehyde, sodium hypochlorite (e.g. as lye), sodium carbonate (soda), caustic soda, hydrogen peroxide, citric acid, peracetic acid, formic acid, lactic acid, oxalic acid, acetic acid.

In addition, sodium hydroxide is allowed for cleaning and disinfection of frames, hives and combs.

Physical treatments to disinfect hives (such as steam or flaming) are permitted.

##### **Bee breeds and additional purchase**

The choice of breeds should take into account the ability of the animals to adapt to environmental conditions, their vitality and resistance to diseases. Preference should be given to European breeds (*Apis mellifera*) and their local ecotypes.

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If an additional purchase is necessary, organic colonies are to be purchased. However, a maximum of 20% conventional queen bees and/or swarms (calculated from the existing colonies) may be used annually for stock renewal if these are not available in organic quality. These must be placed on organic combs/organic wax bottoms. In any case, one swarm or queen per year can be replaced by a non-organic swarm or queen.

VO (EU) 2020/2146):

(7) When a high mortality of animals, including bees or other insects, occurs in a holding or a production unit and operators cannot have access to organic animals, bees or other insects to renew or reconstitute their herd or flock, it is necessary to provide for the possibility for those operators to use non-organic animals under certain conditions.

### **Location of the hives**

The location of the hives must be such that there are sources of nectar and pollen within a radius of 3 km consisting essentially of organically produced plants or, where appropriate, wild plants or non-organically managed crops or forests managed only by methods with a low environmental impact. The location of the hives must be at a sufficient distance from sources of pollution that may contaminate the apiculture products or affect the health of the bees. The beekeeper must take appropriate precautionary measures to avoid contamination.

VO (EU) 2020/2146):

(12) As certain events such as extreme climatic conditions, fires or earthquakes may drastically reduce the sources of nectar and pollen in certain areas, it is necessary to provide for the possibility for the operators affected to move bee colonies to areas that may not consist essentially of organically produced crops, or of spontaneous vegetation or non-organically managed forests or crops that are only treated with low environmental impact methods, where the survival of the colony is endangered.

### **Feeding**

Feeding of bee colonies is only permitted if the survival of the colony is endangered due to climate conditions or other reasons (e.g. natural disasters). In this case, organic honey, organic sugar syrup, organic sugar or organic pollen may be fed. Pollen substitutes are prohibited. Records must be kept of the feeding (type of products used, time of feeding, quantities and hives affected).

### **Pest control and disease prevention**

The vitality and self-healing power of the colonies shall be maintained and promoted. If, despite all precautionary measures, the colonies become diseased or infested, they shall be treated immediately and, if necessary, the hives may be placed in isolation. In the case of interventions, preference shall be given to biological and biotechnical measures.

#### Varroa control:

In case of varroa infestation, the following substances may be used:

Oxalic acid, lactic acid, acetic acid, formic acid, menthol, thymol, eucalyptol, camphor

In contrast to the control of other diseases and pests, treatments against varroa with these agents do not require wax exchange and new conversion.

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Male brood may only be destroyed to control infestation with Varroa mites.

Control other diseases and pests (eg, wax moth):

Currently, only the following substances may be used:

Bacillus thuringiensis and sulfur

If chemical-synthetic allopathic agents are administered, the treated colonies must be placed in isolation during this period and all wax must be replaced with wax from organic beekeeping. The affected colonies must undergo the 12-month conversion period again after completion of such treatment.

Control of rodents:

Agents against rodents (rodenticides) may be used only in traps.

**Purchase of operating resources**

Whenever organic products (wax, feed, bees) are purchased, the current organic certificate must be requested from the seller and the goods must be correctly declared on the invoice/delivery bill.

**Records**

Records are a central area in organic beekeeping. On the one hand they provide important information for the farm manager, on the other hand they are essential for organic control. The following points must be documented in the records:

- Purchase of inputs (purchase of feed, purchase of bees)
- Animal treatment/medication use/Varroa treatment.
- Processing/Marketing

Special records concerning beekeeping must be kept separately in the form of a hive register. This must contain:

- Peoples management
- Feeding (feed, timing and quantity)
- Harvest quantities, timing (honey, pollen...) - Removal of the combs and honey extraction
- Cleaning/Disinfection
- Hives
- Bee accesses

The hives must be identifiable.

The site plans of the locations of the hives must be kept up to date. The flight radius of 3 km around the respective location must be drawn in these site plans. Please select a scale for the site plans that allows the 3-km radius to be displayed.

Please note that you do not have to keep duplicate records. The form is also up to you. Only the required contents must be kept ready for the organic control at any time and up-to-date.

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### **Conversion to organic beekeeping:**

The conversion begins with the conclusion of the organic control contract. The requirements must be met for at least 1 year from this date. Only then can bees and their products be labeled organic. Please note that animal products cannot be declared as conversion goods. There is therefore no conversion honey or conversion mead.

#### Wax:

In the course of the conversion, the wax must be replaced with certified organic wax. As a rule, before the end of the 12-month conversion period, CERES takes a wax sample and sends it to an accredited laboratory for analysis. If the result of this analysis shows no residues, the organic recognition can be pronounced 12 months after the conclusion of the control contract.

As proof of this, you will receive a corresponding organic certificate and the products may be marketed with organic credentials.