

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) on Organic Foods

Q.1 What are Organic Foods?

A.1 Organic foods are products of holistic agricultural practices focusing on biodiversity, soil health, chemical free inputs etc. with an environmentally and socially responsible approach and are produced in accordance with organic production standards.

Q. 2 Which legislation regulates Organic Food in India?

A. 2 Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has the mandate to regulate manufacture, distribute, sell or import "organic foods" as per the provisions laid under Section 22 of the Food Safety Standards Act, 2006. Organic foods are regulated by Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017 notified under the provisions of the Act.

Q. 3 Which system of certification is prerequisite for all organic foods as per the provisions in the Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017?

A. 3 The Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017 recognize already established two systems of certification i.e. Participatory Guarantee System (PGS - India) implemented by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare and National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) implemented by Ministry of Commerce and Industry. All organic foods should be certified by any one of the systems.

Q. 4 Who is exempted from Certification?

A. 4 Organic food which is marketed through direct sales to the end consumer by the small original producer or producer organisation is exempted from certification. Small original producer or producer organisation is the one whose annual turnover is not exceeding Rs 12 Lakhs per annum.

Q. 5 What are the residual limits of Insecticides in Organic Foods?

A. 5 For residues of insecticides in organic food, limits are 5% of the maximum limits prescribed or Level of Quantification (LoQ) whichever is higher for various foods specified under Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011.

Q. 6 What are the limits for other Contaminants in Organic Foods?

A. 6 The organic food should comply to the maximum limits of contaminants (Metal contaminants, Naturally Occurring Toxic substances, Aflatoxins etc.) as specified for various foods under Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011.

Q. 7 Organic foods should comply with which Microbiological parameters and their limits?

A. 7 For Microbiological parameters, organic foods should comply with parameters and limits specified in Appendix B of Food Safety and Standards (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011.

Q. 8 Organic foods should comply with which other standards besides food safety parameters?

A. 8 Besides Food Safety parameters, organic foods should comply with the requirements of various quality parameters prescribed under the Food Safety and Standards (Food Product Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011.

Q. 9 Which additives or processing aids are permitted in Organic Food ?

A. 9 Only additives or processing aids permitted in National Standards for Organic Production or PGS India are permitted in organic food.

Q. 10 Who is responsible for certifying Organic Food?

A. 10 The Accredited Certification Bodies in case of NPOP and Local Groups in case of PGS-India are responsible for certifying the organic food.

Q. 11 What is required to be done by an existing FBO dealing with organic food if he is already registered or licensed under FSSAI?

A. 11 The Food Business Operator (FBO) who is already Registered/Licensed under FSSAI, is not required to take a separate licence under FSSAI. The FBO should get his existing Registration/License endorsed for organic foods. The endorsement can be done online through Food Licensing and Registration System (FLRS). It can be accessed via link which is <https://foodlicensing.fssai.gov.in/index.aspx>

Q.12 What a FBO is required to do if he wants to start new organic food business?

A. 12 Certification under NPOP/PGS-India is a pre requisite for organic food and is a requirement for taking Registration or License under FSSR.

Q. 13 Are foods which are 'In-Conversion' to organic covered under the FSS (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017?

A. 13 No, foods which are 'In-conversion' to organic are not covered under FSS (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017.

Q. 14 Can 'In-Conversion' to organic food use Jaivik Bharat Logo?

A. 14 No, organic foods which are 'In-conversion' cannot use Jaivik Bharat Logo.

Q. 15 Do 'In-Conversion' to organic foods need to take Registration/License under

FSSR for Organic Food?

A. 15 No. Such foods are treated as non organic foods.

Q. 16 How is traceability maintained in Organic Food System?

A. 16 Traceability to ensure integrity of organic foods is maintained as required in NPOP or PGS-India through whichever system it is certified. Both the systems have well defined traceability systems.

Q. 17 Which food products can be labelled as 'Organic'?

A. 17 Under NPOP system:

- In case of single ingredient product where all requirements have been met as per the specified standards can be labelled as 'Organic'.
- In case of multi ingredient product where minimum 95% of ingredients are of certified origin, can be labelled as 'Certified Organic'.

Under PGS-India system:

- In case of single ingredient product where all requirements have been met, may be labelled as 'PGS- Organic'.
- In case of multi ingredient product where minimum 95% of ingredients are organic, may be labelled as 'PGS- Organic'.

Q. 18 Which logo FSS (Organic Foods) Regulations, 2017 refers to as FSSAI's Organic Logo?

A. 18 The FSSAI's Organic Logo is 'Jaivik Bharat' Logo.

Q. 19 Which logos should a consumer look on the label of Organic Food?

A. 19 The consumer should look for Food Safety and Standard Authority of India's organic logo (Jaivik Bharat) and FSSAI Logo and License number.



In addition, the label may carry India Organic Logo (NPOP certified) or PGS-India Organic Logo (PGS-India certified) under whichever system it is certified.



Q. 20 What are the labeling requirements applicable for Organic products?

A. 20 Labelling on the package of the organic food shall convey full and accurate information on the organic status of the product. All organic food shall comply with the packaging and labeling requirements specified under Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011 and Food Safety and Standards (Packaging) Regulation, 2018 in addition to the labeling requirements under one of the applicable systems i.e., NPOP or PGS-India.

Q. 21 Is there any provision for seller of organic food for keeping their organic foods distinguishable from the conventional food products in their shops?

A. 21 There is a provision in the Regulations that all the organic products need to be displayed distinguishable from conventional foods at the shelves. The seller of organic food either exclusively or as part of his retail merchandise shall display such food in a manner distinguishable from the display of non-organic food.

Q. 22 Does cotton come under the purview of this regulation?

A. 22 No, non-food items are not covered under the mandate of FSS Act, 2006.

Q. 23 What are the requirements for imported organic products?

A. 23 Organic products are not required to be re-certified on import to India if there is bilateral or multilateral agreement between India and exporting country based on equivalence of standards as per National Programme for Organic Production. All organic food consignments are required to be accompanied by a Transaction Certificate issued by an Accredited Certification Body.

Q. 24 What are the provisions for punitive action for FBO not complying with the Regulations?

A. 24 The Offences and Penalties for the Food Business Operators who do not comply with the requirements of FSS Act, Rules and Regulations are provided in Section 48 and 49 of the FSS Act.
