



# CHAPTER 8

## ORGANIC AND FANMEAT CERTIFICATION

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# ORGANIC AND FANMEAT CERTIFICATION



Farm Assured Namibian Meat (FANMeat) and the associated Namibian Livestock Identification and Traceability System (NAMLits) are legal requirements for Namibian livestock owners.

FANMeat does not take the production system into account; the intention is to provide “farm to fork” traceability and thus producer accountability of all beef, sheep and goat production in Namibia. As such it is a highly worthwhile system as in the end it provides a guarantee to the consumer of how animals have been treated throughout their lives and in the slaughtering process.

Organic certification does much the same, defining the production system more closely, ensuring that prohibited inputs, such as synthetic agro-chemicals and genetically modified organisms, are not used on organic livestock enterprises. It is a voluntary system in Namibia, defined by virtue of the NOA Organic Standards. Producers wishing to claim that their production is in compliance with organic standards therefore

need to be assessed by the NOA PGS or be certified by an international certifier.

There are many general similarities between organic and FANMeat standards, the most significant of which are the livestock welfare, record keeping and traceability.

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## 8.1. General comparison

*Table 2.1* is a general comparison of the NOA Organic Standards and the FANMeat Standards.

*[click here to view table 2.1](#)*

## 8.2. Detailed comparison

*Table 2.2* is a detailed comparison of the NOA Organic Standards and FANMeat Standards, showing both similarities and

differences. In some instances the NOA has adopted the FANMeat wording to further emphasise principles and practices. *click here to view table 2.2*

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## 8.3. The impact that FANMeat has on the certified organic producer

FANMeat is a bonus to the certified organic livestock producer in that the three main aspects, animal welfare, record keeping and traceability, are an integral part of both systems. There are standard record keeping templates and the associated NAMLits system aids in traceability.

Namibia's strong meat export orientation, facilitated in many ways by FANMeat, will assist organic producers in finding international markets.

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## 8.4. Conversion to organic production

Conversion, changing from your current production practices to "new" ones which are compliant with the requirements of organic standards, can be an unsettling experience – letting go of what you know and catching hold onto the unknown. Conversion requires careful planning to ensure the continued viability of all aspects of the enterprise. There are resources available via the internet to assist you with planning – most probably the two best being:

- US Department of Agriculture's National Centre for Appropriate Technology

(NCAT) and their ATTRA website:

<http://attra.ncat.org/publication.html>.

This is the link to their Master Publication List. You will find many useful resources, which although they are orientated towards US producers, provide invaluable tools for all and which can be adapted to meet your specific needs. Look for the "*Organic Livestock Workbook*" and "*Organic System Plans: Livestock Production*"

- The Rodale Institute is one of the US' oldest organic agriculture organisations. Over the years they have done much good work and continue to do so, including research and offering online courses. Go to [www.rodaleinstitute.org](http://www.rodaleinstitute.org) and click on the "Farm" menu option for resources, including the "*Organic Transition Course*". The term "*Transition*" is an alternative term to "*Conversion*".

Although these web resources make specific reference to the US NOP Standards, the principles and requirements are essentially the same as any other standard with which you may work.

The organic standards should always be seen as a source of guidance as much as being the rules of certified organic agriculture. They explain the basic requirements for converting your enterprise to organic methods. The ATTRA and Rodale resources will help you work out how.

### 8.4.1. Conversion requirements

#### 8.4.1.1. Need for conversion – NOA Organic Standards Section 4.7

All land, plants and livestock have to undergo a conversion period during which the organic management practices are implemented and the organic character of the farm develops. The length of the conversion period is defined by the standards and depends on previous production history, and the types of

plants and livestock being farmed. There are concessions which may be made resulting in the shortening of the conversion period. This is at the discretion of the certifier, who may also extend the conversion period.

#### **8.4.1.2. Conversion planning – NOA Organic Standards Section 4.8**

It is advisable to develop a conversion plan for the conversion period. This will detail the steps which will be taken to change from the current management practices to those which are acceptable by the organic standards. The ATTRA and Rodale websites referred to earlier will help you develop a conversion plan which in turn should be submitted to the certifier that you will be approaching. It is not advisable to convert the whole farm in one go in order to maintain economic viability, give yourself and your staff the opportunity to learn the new ways in which things will be done and allow the soils, rangeland and livestock the time to adapt to the new practices. It also allows time to gain experience and adapt your plans based on experience gained. The standards specify the time period in which the whole farm should be converted.

Conversion may well involve “split production” where different parts of the farm and livestock will be managed according to the two different systems. This necessitates strict record keeping as organic have to be kept separate from non-organic livestock. The standards also specify additional conversion conditions.

Entering conversion implies a long-term commitment to organic production. The standards do not allow for land and livestock to be switched back and forth between certified and non-certified organic production.

### **8.4.2. Source of organic animals – NOA Organic Standards Section 6.1**

#### **8.4.2.1. Well adapted breeds – NOA Organic Standards Section 6.1a**

Organic production principles are based on the production of livestock and practices which are well adapted to the farm’s conditions. This implies optimisation and not maximisation of production potential, which in turn may imply that breeds used by non-organic farmers, supported by practices such as supplemental feeding and excessive use of veterinary medicinal inputs, are not necessarily the best suited to organic production. The challenge to organic producers is that this may mean that perceptions of desirable qualities, such as cut size, are not necessarily satisfied by organically produced livestock.

The aim of organic philosophy is to ensure that the healthiest animals are produced with the least amount of managerial intervention, resulting in produce of high *qualitative and quantitative* quality, such as nutrient density, health promoting properties and flavour as well as visual appeal, size and storage life.

#### **8.4.2.2. Breeding methods – NOA Organic Standards Section 6.1b, c and d**

All livestock breeds must be able to copulate and give birth naturally. Artificial insemination is allowed, without there being any restriction to the origin of the semen used. Embryo transfer and other forms of “assisted reproduction” are not allowed.

#### **8.4.2.3. Establishing a herd or flock – NOA Organic Standards Section 6.1e**

The question arises – “*How does a producer obtain certified animals, especially if there are no certified animals available to purchase?*”

The NOA's standards are specific about bringing non-organic livestock onto an organic farm:

- Lambs and kids as soon as they are weaned and less than 60 days old, which must then be reared under organic management for at least six months before they are slaughtered
- Calves which have received colostrum and are fed a diet consisting mainly of full milk, as soon as they are weaned and must be younger than six months. They must then be reared under organic management for a further period of 12 months, which must represent 3/4 of their life. Therefore they have to be at least 16 months old before they are slaughtered

It is significant that this applies to "once-off" establishment of a herd or flock for the first time or if there has been a high mortality of animals following catastrophic events and if organic livestock are not available.

#### 8.4.2.4. Breeding stock – NOA Organic Standards Section 6.1f, g, h, i and j and Annex IV

Non-organic livestock may be brought into a certified enterprise for breeding purposes on an annual basis. The NOA standards define the numbers of each type of animal which may be brought in annually and the circumstances under which they may be brought into the enterprise. These animals and their offspring will have to undergo the same conversion requirements as for those used for establishing the herd or flock for the first time.

All brought-in livestock must come from extensive husbandry practices, as defined by stocking densities (A.IV), given in the table below:

	INDOOR AREA - net area available to animals		OUTDOOR AREA – exercise area excluding pasturage – m <sup>2</sup> /head
	Live weight – minimum Kg	m <sup>2</sup> /head	
Breeding and fattening bovine	Up to 100	1.5	1.1
	Up to 200	2.5	1.9
	Up to 350	5.0 with a minimum of 1 m <sup>2</sup> /100kg	3.0
	Over to 350	4.0	3.7 with a minimum of 0,75 m <sup>2</sup> /100kg
Bulls for breeding		10.0	30.0
Sheep and goats		1.5 sheep/goat	2.5 sheep/goat
		0.35 per lamb/kid	2.5 with 0.5 per lamb/kid

### 8.4.3. Conversion practices – NOA Organic Standards Section 6.3

The farmland, crops used for feed and the non-organic livestock used for establishing a herd or flock or for breeding purposes have to undergo conversion:

#### 8.4.3.1. Conversion of lands, crops used for feeding and grazing – NOA Organic Standards Section 6.3a and S5.3

The NOA standards (S6.3a) refer the livestock farmer to the plant production standards to determine the conversion periods of the land, crops used for fodder production as well as grazing areas:

- Annual plant production has to undergo a minimum 24 month conversion (S5.3a)
- Perennial plants which may be used as fodder sources have to undergo a 36 month conversion period (S5.3b)
- Perennial grazing areas have to undergo a 24 month conversion (S5.3c)

The conversion periods may be adjusted at the discretion of the NOA (S6.3d, e and f).

### 8.4.3.2. Conversion of livestock – NOA Organic Standards Section 6.3c

The conversion period for cattle is 12 months which must also be three quarters of their expected lifetime and six months for sheep and goats.

### 8.4.3.3. A concession – NOA Organic Standards Section 6.3d

If a complete farm, i.e. land for annual and perennial crop production, grazing and livestock, undergoes conversion the conversion period is reduced to 24 months and applies only to existing livestock, the land and grazing normally used for feed and grazing and if the animals are fed mainly with food grown on the farm. This concession thus embraces many of the first principles of organic production.

## 8.5. Record keeping

The FANMeat system has a detailed list of records that a farmer must keep and documents that must be submitted to the relevant Namibian authorities on a regular basis.

Much of the FANMeat submissions may be made on-line at the NamLITS website <http://www.namlits.com>.

Some of the forms may also be downloaded from:

- The FANMeat website – <http://www.nammic.com.na>
- The agriculture related interactive blog for Namibia, AgriAlert – <http://agrialert.blogspot.com/p/namibia-agricul.html>

The organic livestock producer however needs to ensure that their records also satisfy the requirements of their certifier. The NOA application form, which provides them with essential information about your enterprise and is based on the NOP system, will give the producer general guidance as to what the minimum record requirement is.

Both the FANMeat and organic records are discussed and compared below.

[click here to view Livestock Application.doc](#)

### 8.5.1. Records summary – NOA

The NOA application form gives a list of the records that are the minimum (9) requirement for an organic livestock producer to maintain.

[click here to view Records Summary.doc](#)

### 8.5.2. Organic Livestock Operation Profile – NOA

An organic requirement, this provides the certifier with the numbers of the different types of livestock, sexes and castrated males, age and certification status.

[click here to view Organic Livestock Operation Profile.doc](#)

### 8.5.3. Source of animals – NOA

This form identifies the sources of your livestock, including purchases, identification, date of purchase and whether the animals were from certified

sources. It also requests a (brief) description of your breeding program. [click here to view Source of Animals.doc](#)

#### 8.5.4. Stock card – FANMeat

Although the FANMeat Stock Card and the organic Source of Animals form record very similar information, the Stock Card requires different detail reflecting the different purposes of the two. [click here to view FANMeat - Stock Card.pdf](#)

#### 8.5.5. Feed and Purchased Feed – NOA

The standards are very specific on the source of feed, the certification status thereof and the amount fed to the animals. This table enables the producer to give a brief summary thereof. [click here to view Feed.doc and Purchased feed.doc](#)

#### 8.5.6. Supplements – FANMeat and NOA

The FANMeat Lick/Supplementation register and the organic Feed Supplements and Additives form record very similar information. The organic one includes the source of ingredients (whether synthetic / GMO or not) and the reason for their use. [click here to view FANMeat - Lick Supplementation.doc and Supplements.doc](#)

#### 8.5.7. Veterinary On-Farm Drug and Treatment Register – FANMeat and NOA

Organic certification requires two

additional data fields, viz. “Health problem/Disease” and “Prevention and Management Practices” in addition to the data required by FANMeat. These must specifically include the use of antibiotics, parasiticides and vaccinations. [click here to view FANMeat - Drug Treatment.pdf and Veterinary Treatments.doc](#)

#### 8.5.8. Predator control – NOA

Predators are seen as an integral part of the bio-diversity that should find expression on organic farms. However it is recognised that predators can cause severe losses and action needs to be taken. These records record those actions and the control methods used. [click here to view Predator Control.doc](#)

#### 8.5.9. FANMeat calendar

While not strictly record keeping and aimed more at production planning, the FANMeat livestock calendar can be an invaluable tool for production planning. As plans can also be seen as records of what is anticipated in the future, the calendar is mentioned here. [click here to view FANMeat - calendar.pdf](#)

#### 8.5.10. Ear tag set replacement notice – FANMeat

This is an essential record used to maintain the identification of animals and thus forms the basis of the “farm to fork” audit trail which is integral to both FANMeat and organic certification. [click here to view NamLITS.pdf](#)