

SOPA Organic Standards For Production Issue 6



What has changed?

The SOPA Organic Standards for Production (Farming) Issue 6 was published on the 1st January 2026.
This ready reckoner explains what is new in Issue 6

Standard	Issue 5 Text	Issue 6 Text	Comment
1.3.4	Environment and Biodiversity Plan	Environment and Biodiversity Plan: An audit of the existing environmental and historical resources, habitats and features on the unit. A description of the measures to protect and manage these areas, and plans for enhancing the quality and management of natural and cultural interest on the farm.	To be compliant with Scottish Government requirements for Whole Farm Plans
1.4.3	Environment and Biodiversity Plan	Producers should note that the SOPA requirements for the Environment and Biodiversity Plan are equivalent to the Scottish Government Whole Farm Plan.	To be compliant with Scottish Government requirements for Whole Farm Plans
1.4.3	Livestock Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• diary of key management activities• staff responsible for health and welfare under these organic Standards• castration, tail docking and dehorning policies• euthanasia policy• strategic veterinary treatments, including a risk assessment of disease risk	Added to SOPA Livestock Plans to be equivalent to similar industry Animal Health Planning requirements
1.9.5	Use of the SOPA Logo	Permission to Use the SOPA Logo must be sought from the SOPA Board. Please contact SOPA Member Services for the Application Form and Terms of Agreement.	Updating the Policy regarding Use of the SOPA Logo

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Standard	Issue 5 Text	Issue 6 Text	Comment
2.5.3	Grass and Forage Mixes	<p>Until 31st December 2026 at least 50% (by weight) of grass seed mixes must be organic. Producers using a mix containing 50% or more of organic seed will need to apply for approval prior to sowing.</p> <p>Until 31st December 2026 at least 70% (by weight) of forage seed mixes must be organic. Producers using a forage seed mix containing 70% or more of organic seed will need to apply for approval prior to sowing. This % is reviewed periodically by Defra and the Organic Grass Seed Working Group. Please contact OF&G (Scotland) for the most up to date organic inclusion requirements.</p> <p>Forage mixes include mixes in any combination of cereals, grasses, legumes, crucifers (fodder kale, fodder radish, swede), oil and fibre plants such as fodder rape, and soya beans for use as forage in livestock diets. Forage may be grazed or conserved, for example it may be cut for silage.</p> <p>A “mix” containing a single species with a single variety must contain 100% organic seed. A mix containing a single species with different varieties of the same species can be 70% organic if a forage crop, 50% if a grass crop. A mix containing different species can be 70% organic if a forage crop, 50% if a grass crop. The same variety of seed may not be used in both organic and non-organic form within a mix.</p> <p>Forage mixes cannot be combine harvested in order to harvest the grain as organic under any circumstances unless the seed planted is 100% organic seed or a derogation has been obtained prior to planting to use non organic untreated seed.</p>	Defra have revised the non-organic allowance for Grass seed mixes only, until 31 st December 2026

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Standard	Issue 5 Text	Issue 6 Text	Comment
3.2.2	First choice; closed herds/flocks	first choice; organic closed herds/flocks	Clarifying organic status
3.2.4	Conversion period for non-organic poultry	six weeks for egg production, and only where pullets are brought onto the organic unit before the birds are 18 weeks old and have been managed in accordance with the organic feed and veterinary standards, permitted under derogation until 31 December 2026.	Defra have revised the permitted date to 31 st December 2026
3.3.4	Use of Castration Clips	the use of clips for the castration and tail docking of lambs	Permitting the use of Castration Clips in lambs
3.3.5	If it becomes necessary to urgently require poultry to be kept indoors, poultry and eggs affected will retain their organic status as long as all other provisions of these standards are complied with. Poultry products will retain their free-range status for up to 12 weeks.	If it becomes necessary to urgently require poultry to be kept indoors, poultry and eggs affected will retain their organic status as long as all other provisions of these standards are complied with. Poultry products will retain their free-range status.	Removing the date for free range status
3.4.3	Multi-flock Poultry housing	Each flock must be housed with its own dedicated air space, ventilation, feed, water and grazing.	Introducing housing specification for multi-flock poultry units
3.4.3	Pop-holes must be located on different sides of the house so as to be able to avoid adverse weather conditions affecting the environment inside.	Pop-holes should be located on different sides of the house so as to be able to avoid adverse weather conditions affecting the environment inside.	Reducing the requirements for pop hole location

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Standard	Issue 5 Text	Issue 6 Text	Comment
3.5.6	5% non-organic protein allowance for non-ruminants	The maximum percentage of conventional protein feedingstuffs authorised over of 12 months is 5%, up until 31 December 2026.	Defra have revised the permitted date to 31 st December 2026
3.6.3	Vet visit	An annual visit must be undertaken by a qualified veterinary surgeon. The vet is required to review the animal health/livestock management plan, review the use of veterinary medicines, assess the health and welfare of the livestock and the competence/ability of those looking after the livestock to identify health and welfare issues including the relevant treatments required. The vet will be required to produce a signed report detailing the findings of the visit.	Added to SOPA Livestock Plans to be equivalent to similar industry Animal Health Planning requirements
3.6.3	Animal Health Plans	The Animal Health Plan should include euthanasia policy, risk assessment of disease threats, incidents of microbial resistance, and the staff responsible for the health and welfare of livestock on the holding.	Added to SOPA Livestock Plans to be equivalent to similar industry Animal Health Planning requirements
3.6.3	Additional Industry Guidance	Best Practice should be the aim for organic producers, and guidance may be sought from SCOPS, NADIS, and similar independent livestock resources.	Adopting Best Practice

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Standard	Issue 5 Text	Issue 6 Text	Comment
3.6.8	<p>Controlling and Preventing Sheep Scab</p> <p>In Scotland sheep scab is a notifiable disease and members must comply with the Sheep Scab (Scotland) Order 2010. SOPA recognise that sheep scab is a highly contagious disease that significantly affects flock management practices. It is for this reason that the 'sheep scab control programme', a strategy initially proposed by the Scottish Sheep Scab Initiative, has been adopted and is recommended for SOPA members who have identified a high risk of Sheep Scab in their flock. However, participation by an organic producer in a scab control programme will be subject to strict control measures.</p> <p>If a producer is at high risk to infestation by the sheep scab mite, <i>Psoroptes ovis</i>, it would be beneficial to coordinate treatment with neighbours to prevent/control the spread of scab and a 'sheep scab control programme' may be granted approval by OF&G (Scotland).</p>	<p>Controlling and Preventing Sheep Scab</p> <p>In Scotland sheep scab is a notifiable disease and SOPA Members must comply with the Sheep Scab (Scotland) Order 2010. SOPA recognise that sheep scab is a highly contagious disease that significantly affects flock health and welfare. It is recommended that SOPA Members join local Sheep Scab Control groups, where a high risk of sheep scab is suspected.</p> <p>It is recommended that if a SOPA producer is at high risk to infestation by the sheep scab mite, <i>Psoroptes ovis</i>, it would be beneficial to coordinate treatment with neighbours to prevent or control the spread of scab as part of a Sheep Scab Control group.</p> <p>The risk of scab and proposed management of the risk, including treatment, should be recorded in the SOPA Livestock Management Plan and approved by OF&G (Scotland).</p>	<p>To update the Control of Sheep Scab in organic systems and to permit the use of Dips in Controlling and Preventing Sheep Scab</p>

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Standard	Issue 5 Text	Issue 6 Text	Comment
3.6.8	<p>Controlling and Preventing Sheep Scab continued</p> <p>Before a control programme and any treatment can begin a sheep scab control programme agreement must be submitted to OF&G (Scotland) for prior approval. A guide to the information required to be included in a sheep scab control programme agreement is available from SOPA.</p> <p>The use of Organo-phosphorus and Organo-chlorine (gamma HCH) compounds: As dips for external parasites for the blanket treatment of a whole flock is not permitted by these Standards.</p> <p>With OF&G (Scotland) approval or this has been approved as part of your health plan you may use the following treatments for sheep scab:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two treatments of moxidectin ten days apart when you suspect infection, and • doramectin as a single injection to treat flocks that are showing signs of infestation 	<p>Controlling and Preventing Sheep Scab continued</p> <p>Where a SOPA Member identifies a high risk of sheep scab, for instance due to extensive hill grazing or wild sheep, this should be identified in the Livestock Management Plan for OF&G (Scotland) approval.</p> <p>These Standards recommend the use of the ELISA blood test to identify the presence of the sheep scab mite.</p> <p>Where testing is positive, treatment should be applied without delay.</p> <p>Strict biosecurity controls should be observed between testing (based on suspicion of infection) and treatment. Strict biosecurity means suspected animals should be isolated and not permitted to mix with other stock.</p> <p>Suspected animals should not move off the holding.</p> <p>If a high risk of scab is identified, SOPA Producers should also inspect and repair fences where possible to ensure biosecurity controls are effective.</p>	

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Standard	Issue 5 Text	Issue 6 Text	Comment
3.6.8	<p>Controlling and Preventing Sheep Scab continued</p> <p>With OF&G (Scotland) approval organo-phosphorous compounds may be used for the treatment of sheep scab or in order to comply with statutory requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only breeding animals may be treated and retain their organic status. • the animals must not be used for organic meat production. • all treated animals must be marked at the time of treatment. • Where animals not intended for breeding are treated, they must be permanently marked at the time of treatment and must not be used for organic meat. 	<p>Controlling and Preventing Sheep Scab continued</p> <p>With OF&G (Scotland) approval organo-phosphorous compounds may be used for the treatment of sheep scab or in order to comply with statutory requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only breeding animals may be treated and retain their organic status. • all treated animals must be marked or their identity (by eartag) recorded, at the time of treatment. • Where animals not intended for breeding are treated, they must be permanently marked at the time of treatment and must not be used for organic meat. • Where organophosphate (OP) treatments have been administered the fleece may not be marketed as organic for at least 12 months, during which time the livestock must have undergone at least one complete clip. 	

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Standard	Issue 5 Text	Issue 6 Text	Comment
3.6.8	<p>Controlling and Preventing Sheep Scab continued</p> <p>With OF&G (Scotland) approval organo-phosphorous compounds may be used for the treatment of sheep scab or in order to comply with statutory requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only breeding animals may be treated and retain their organic status. • the animals must not be used for organic meat production. • all treated animals must be marked at the time of treatment. • Where animals not intended for breeding are treated, they must be permanently marked at the time of treatment and must not be used for organic meat. 	<p>Controlling and Preventing Sheep Scab continued</p> <p>Dipping must be conducted by an authorised operator holding an NPTC Certificate of Competence in Safe Use of Sheep Dips and all dip disposed of according to legal requirements.</p> <p>Jetter or shower dipping is not permitted.</p> <p>These Standards recognise that resistance to some veterinary medicines is evident. In certain circumstances it may be that veterinary advice is to treat with injectables. If this is the case, the withdrawal period must be at minimum two times the legal requirement.</p>	
3.6.9	Storage of Veterinary Medicines	Out of Date veterinary medicines should not be kept on the holding and should be disposed of through a recommended facility, usually the vet.	Added to SOPA Livestock Plans to be equivalent to similar industry Animal Health Planning requirements
3.9.1	Domesticated deer are those that are farm bred and reared for at least four generations. They MUST not be wild deer.	Domesticated deer are usually those that are farm bred and reared for at least two generations.	Reducing the number of generations from four to two

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Standard	Issue 5 Text	Issue 6 Text	Comment
3.9.1	Domesticated Deer continued	Wild deer may be considered domesticated when they have been caught humanely and managed to the organic standards for a minimum of two generations. Progeny of Wild Deer that have been managed to the organic standards for a minimum of two years may be considered organic. This means the Wild Deer must be converted as per Standard 3.9.2.	
3.10.1	has had a period of 3 months (or 3x the legal withdrawal period, whichever is the greater) between the last treatment with an external veterinary product and shearing, e.g. vetrazin, crovect, spot on.	has had a period of 3 months (or 2x the legal withdrawal period, whichever is the greater) between the last treatment with an external veterinary product and shearing, e.g. vetrazin, crovect, spot on.	Reducing the withdrawal period for ectoparasitic treatments under the SOPA Wool Standards
4.2.4	The Use of Digestate For digestate to be permitted it must only contain the following products; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm yard manure and slurries from organic systems; • Farm yard manure and slurries from non-organic systems as defined in section 4.2.5 of the SOPA standards; 	The Use of Digestate Biogas digestate containing animal by-products co-digested with material of plant or animal origin as listed in this table is not permitted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By-products of animal origin (including by-products from wild animals) of category 3 and digestive tract content of category 2 (categories 2 and 3 as defined in Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council). 	Allowing the Use of Digestate and Composts from Green Waste and Food Waste, subject to controls

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Standard	Issue 5 Text	Issue 6 Text	Comment
4.2.4	<p>The Use of Digestate continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other plant-based products as defined in section 4.2.5 of the SOPA standards (including energy crops); • Dairy products from organic and non-organic production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal by-products must not be from factory farming origin. • The processing must have been done in accordance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 142/2011. • Dairy products from organic and non-organic production must not be applied to edible parts of the crop 	
4.4.1	<p>Seaweed and Seaweed Products: Prior written approval from OF&G (Scotland)</p> <p>As far as directly obtained by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Physical processes including dehydration, freezing and grinding; (i) Extraction with a water or aqueous acid and/or alkaline solution; (i) Fermentation 	<p>Seaweed and Seaweed Products:</p> <p>As far as directly obtained by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Physical processes including dehydration, freezing and grinding; (i) Extraction with a water or aqueous acid and/or alkaline solution; (i) Fermentation 	Permitting the Use of Seaweed Products without seeking Prior Permission
4.4.1	<p>The Use of Potassium Sulphate, possibly containing magnesium salt: Prior written approval from OF&G (Scotland)</p> <p>Only where exchangeable K levels are defined as 'low' and clay content is less than 20%, following soil analysis. Use must be supported by a FACTS qualified recommendation.</p>	<p>The Use of Potassium Sulphate, possibly containing magnesium salt:</p> <p>Only where exchangeable K levels are defined as 'low' and clay content is less than 20%, following soil analysis. Use should be supported by a FACTS qualified recommendation.</p>	Permitting the Use of Potassium Sulphate Products without seeking Prior Permission

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Standard	Issue 5 Text	Issue 6 Text	Comment
4.4.1	Leonardite (Raw organic sediment rich in humic acid); Prior written approval from OF&G (Scotland) Only if obtained as a by-product of mining activities	Leonardite (Raw organic sediment rich in humic acid); Only if obtained as a by-product of mining activities	Permitting the Use of Leonardite without seeking Prior Permission

This Ready Reckoner is a only simple guide to changes from Issue 5 to Issue 6 of the SOPA Organic Standards for Production

It is the SOPA Member's responsibility to familiarise themselves with the specific wording of the SOPA Organic Standards

Where the SOPA Member has any query regarding to the implementation of these Standards,
you should contact your OF&G (Scotland) Certification Officer

Issue 6 of the SOPA Organic Production Standards is available in PDF or digital form
please contact SOPA Member Services for your PDF format
or download the digital version from the SOPA Website www.sopa.org.uk

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