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International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

Proposal for the aquaculture implementing rules for Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 29th April 2008

The following refers to Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and is based on the Draft Commission Regulation Working Document on detailed implementing rules (v10.1.2008).

Chapter (?) Aquaculture production

Section 1 - Origin of animals

Article 1 Origin of organic animals

1. Youngstock for organic aquaculture operations shall originate from organic broodstock and organic hatcheries or nurseries.
2. Preference should be given to indigenous species and strains.
3. Species shall be chosen which can be bred with minimum interference to the broodstock.

Article 2 Origin of non-organic animals

1. Wild caught or non-organic animals may be brought onto a holding for breeding purposes, only when organic animals are not available in sufficient numbers, or when a change of genetic stock is required.

[Note - a conversion period for broodstock needs to be defined]

2. When organic aquatic youngstock are not available, non-organic stock may be used provided that they spend at least 2/3 of their life under organic management. Moreover the following maximum size restrictions shall apply.
 - a) Carp 15g
 - b) Trout 10g
 - c) Salmon post-smolt or 75g
 - d) Bass 15g
 - e) Bream 15g
 - f) Other species.....

[Note - these size ranges are provisional and need further discussion]

3. In addition to Article 2(2), collection of wild aquatic youngstock for organic production is not permitted, with the following exceptions:

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- a) natural influx of fish or shrimp larvae and juveniles when filling ponds;
- b) mussels seed from ephemeral settlement areas;
- c) natural settlement of shellfish larvae on the farm's collectors.

Article 3

Conversion and simultaneous production of organic and non-organic livestock

1. An organic aquaculture operation shall be run according to organic principles in its entirety. The following exceptions shall apply:
 - a) In accordance with Article 11 of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, parallel production of the same species shall be permitted for a period of three years from the start of conversion to enable stepwise conversion of the holding;
 - b) During conversion of the farm, water shall not flow directly from a non-organic unit into an organic or in-conversion unit.

Section 2 - Containment systems

Article 4

General rules

1. In accordance with the rules laid down in this regulation, organic aquaculture farms shall operate as natural environments, with natural aquatic microbial diversity. They shall operate at low stocking densities or at low levels of intensity.

[Note –the inclusion of more intensive recirculation systems for growing fish needs further discussion]

2. The design and the operation mode of the farms shall guarantee that excrements of the fish and uneaten feed are absorbed and recycled by the natural food web within the farm, broken down by natural processes in the surrounding environment, or collected and recycled as organic manure.
3. The design and construction of aquatic containment system shall allow water exchange, flow rates and physiochemical parameters that safeguard the animals' welfare and provide for their ethological and behavioural needs
4. Containment systems shall be designed, located and operated to minimise the risk and impact of escaping livestock
5. The stocking density shall provide for the comfort and well being of the animals which, in particular, shall depend on the species, the age of the animals and their behavioural needs. The optimum density will ensure

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the animals' welfare by providing them with sufficient space to make all natural movements.

6. The stocking density or operational intensity shall maintain the integrity of the aquatic environment, and not exceed its carrying capacity.

Article 5

Containment systems - specifics rules

1. Containment systems in which finfish spend their entire lives indoors are not permitted.

[Note - this has been agreed by the majority, but not all parties]

2. Containment systems, with the exception of those in open water, shall have natural substrates.

[Note - this has not been agreed by all parties]

3. Aquaculture ponds shall meet the following conditions:

a) at least half of the banks or dykes shall have natural plant cover;

b) it shall be possible to monitor and control the flow rate and water quality of inflowing and outflowing water;

c) at least 5% of the farm area shall be an undisturbed natural reserve area;

d) fertilisers and pond conditioners shall comply with Chapter 1, Article 3 (Soil management and fertilisation) of working document v10.1.2008.

4. Open-water containment systems shall:

(a) be located where water flow, depth and water body exchange rates are adequate to minimise the impact on the seabed and the surrounding water body;

b) for farmed salmonids, not be located at sites on important wild salmonid migration routes;

c) demonstrate the suitability of net-pen design, construction and maintenance to the exposure of the relevant operating environment.

[Note - It has been proposed, but not agreed, that the use of open-water containment systems should be limited to certain species]

5. Antifoulants are not permitted unless listed in Annex *[to be specified]*.

6. Predators shall be deterred by non-harmful methods.

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7. Indoor production systems may be used for the hatchery stage. Finfish must spend at least two-thirds of their lives in outdoor systems.

[Note - this has been agreed by the majority, but not all parties]

8. Heating or cooling of water shall only be permitted in hatcheries.

[Note - this has been agreed by the majority, but not all parties]

9. With the exception of hatcheries, or where a known disease risk occurs, water shall not be treated with chemicals, ultraviolet light or ozone for microbial control.

[Note - this has been agreed by the majority, but not all parties]

10. Production of filter feeding organic animals shall require a carrying capacity study demonstrating that the local ecosystem will not be significantly affected by the farm.

Article 6

Management of animals

1. Spawning shall be carried out with minimal interference to the breeding stock. Fish shall be anaesthetised before manual stripping.
2. Physical mutilation of aquatic livestock shall not be permitted.
3. With exception to Article 6(2), single eyestalk ablation of female Penaeid shrimp shall be permitted on 90% of the breeding stock until 2015. 10% of the females must be spawned without ablation as part of a domesticated breeding programme.
4. Artificial light shall only be permitted in hatcheries, and used to influence reproduction and to improve survival and welfare of youngstock. The following restrictions shall apply:

a) the use of artificial light to prolong natural day-length shall not exceed a maximum that respects the natural behaviour, geographical conditions and general health of the animals;

b) the use of artificial light shall be limited to prolonging natural light up to a maximum day length of 16 hours;

[Note: It was proposed, but not agreed, that 16 hours was arbitrary and a more relevant time (for example 20 hours) should be set. This point needs further discussion]

c) Sudden changes in light intensity at 'dusk' or 'dawn' shall be avoided by the use of dimmable lights or background lighting.

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[Note - It was proposed (but not agreed) that all organic animals should have a day/night cycle, even if it was only a short 'night-time' for larvae which need continuous light for feeding and high survival]

5. With exception to Article 6.4.(b), to enable the development of organic cod farming, artificial light may be used in grow-out to extend the natural day length beyond 16 hours until 2015.
6. Stocking densities shall not exceed those stated in Annex xx.

Annex xx to include:

Animal group or species	Maximum stocking density in kg fish per cubic meter (1000 litres) of water
Salmon in freshwater	10
Salmon in net pens	10
Trout in running freshwater	20
Trout in net pens	10
Arctic Charr	20
Carp and tench	0.5 (or 5 tonnes per hectare)
Cod	15
Seabass	15
Seabream	15
Tilapia	20
Pangasius	10

[Note - These values are provisional; also, it was not agreed by all parties that these values should also apply to hatcheries]

7. For species not listed in Article 6(6), a maximum stocking density of 20kg per cubic metre shall apply.
8. When livestock are grown from stocking to harvest without grading or reductions in density, the maximum densities specified in Article 6(6) may be applied as an average over the production cycle.

[Note – the aquaculture working group and other parties did not agree on this point, but have left it in for further comment]

9. The duration, stocking density and water quality management during transportation shall avoid unnecessary stress.
10. Slaughter techniques shall render the fish immediately unconscious and insensible to pain, a condition that must persist until death.

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Section 3 - Feeds

Article 7

General rules

1. Organic aquaculture shall operate at an extensive level or at a low intensity, with the aquatic environment supplying natural food to the farmed animals. Where this is not possible, supplemental feed for organic production shall comply with Article 8.

Article 8

Specific rules

1. Organic aquaculture feeds shall be composed of natural aquatic feed organisms or certified organic feed ingredients grown on the organic holding. If these are not available or not in sufficient quantities then other certified organic feed materials, or sustainably sourced non-organic aquatic ingredients laid down in Annex V(2.2) may be used.
2. Feeds shall be formulated and feeding regimes designed with the following priorities:
 - a) animal health;
 - b) product quality;
 - c) low environmental impact.
3. 100% of ingredients of agricultural origin shall be organic.
4. The culture of microalgae, microcrustacea, rotifers, worms or other feed organisms (listed in Annex V (2.1 and 2.2)) shall comply with all the relevant sections of this regulation.

[Note - we propose that 'microalgae' be added to Annex V (2.1), 'Microcrustacea', 'Rotifers', 'worms', should also be added to Annex V (2.2)]

5. Subject to Article 8(7), non-organic feed ingredients of animal origin listed in Annex V(2.2) shall not exceed the following maximum levels of total feed:
 - a) Carp: 0%;
 - b) Tilapia: 20%;
 - c) Pangasius species: 20%;
 - d) Penaeid shrimp: 20%.
6. Carnivorous animals may be fed sustainably harvested aquatic ingredients according to Article 8(7).

[Note: The aquaculture working group did not reach full agreement on this point. One member considered it unacceptable to use fishmeal made from whole fish in feeds for organic animals beyond the hatchery]

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7. The following restrictions shall apply to the use of the non-organic aquatic feed ingredients listed in Annex V(2.2) in organic aquaculture feeds:
 - a) Fishmeal and oil shall be made from trimmings or other processing wastes of fish already caught for human consumption in sustainable fisheries;
 - b) If this is unavailable, or of insufficient quality, fishmeal and oil may come from sustainable fisheries dedicated to fishmeal and oil production. In addition to the sustainability definition of Article 5(o) of Regulation (EC) 834/2007, fisheries supplying fishmeal or oil made from whole fish shall be independently certified to meet the following criteria:
 - i) A fishery must be conducted in a manner that does not lead to over-fishing or depletion of the exploited populations and, for those populations that are depleted, the fishery must be conducted in a manner that demonstrably leads to their recovery
 - ii) Fishing operations should allow for the maintenance of the structure, productivity, function and diversity of the ecosystem (including habitat and associated dependent and ecologically related species) on which the fishery depends.
 - iii) The fishery is subject to an effective management system that respects local, national and international laws and standards and incorporates institutional and operational frameworks that require use of the resource to be responsible and sustainable.
8. With exception to Article 8(7), until 2012, 30% of fishmeal and oil may come from other fisheries that satisfy Article 5(o) of Regulation (EC) 834/2007.
9. Natural sources of carotenoid pigments listed in Annex V may be used provided they have been cultured according to relevant sections of this regulation.

[Note - we propose that Phaffia yeast (Phaffia rhodozyma) and 'Crustacean shell meal (except from non-organic aquaculture)' be added to Annex V of the implementing rules]
10. Providing pigments in excess of the animal's physiological requirement for aesthetic/cosmetic purposes shall not be permitted after 2012.

[Note - this point was not agreed by all parties]
11. Only natural antioxidants based on tocopheroles, galic acid, ascorbic acid or other natural plant extracts shall be permitted to preserve the feed.

Section 4 - Disease prevention and veterinary treatments

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General rules on disease prevention

1. Organic farms shall have a veterinary management plan detailing biosecurity and disease prevention practices.
2. Production sites shall be chosen that minimise the risk from water-borne pathogens and parasites from non-organic farms or other sources.
3. Special measures such as screening tests or quarantine periods may apply, depending on local circumstances.
4. Where appropriate, holding systems, equipment and utensils shall be properly cleaned and disinfected to prevent cross-infection and the build up of disease carrying organisms.
5. Hatcheries shall be emptied between production cycles. The buildings and fittings shall be cleaned and disinfected at this time.
6. Uneaten food, faeces and mortalities should be removed as often as necessary to maximise water quality, minimise disease risks, and to avoid attracting insects or rodents.
7. Open water containment systems shall be emptied after each production cycle of fish and left fallow. Member states shall establish the duration of the fallow period based on benthic recovery and parasite life cycles.
8. Vaccination shall be permitted where a known disease risk occurs.
9. Moribund fish shall be removed promptly and dispatched humanely.

Article 10

Veterinary treatments

1. With the exception of vaccinations and compulsory eradication schemes, where an animal or group of animals receive more than three courses of treatments with chemically-synthesised allopathic veterinary medicinal products or antibiotics during their lifecycle, the livestock concerned or produce derived from them, may not be sold as organic products.

[Note - this is stricter than the terrestrial livestock rules]

2. Chemically synthesised allopathic veterinary medicinal products or antibiotics shall not be permitted for aquatic animals whose production cycle is less than one year. Where veterinary treatment is required according to Article 14(e)(ii) of regulation 834/2007, the livestock concerned or produce derived from them, may not be sold as organic.

[Note - this is stricter than the terrestrial livestock rules]

3. The withdrawal periods between the last administration of an allopathic veterinary medicinal product to an animal under normal conditions of use, and the production of organically produced foodstuffs from such



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animals, is to be twice the legal withdrawal period or 140 degree-days
whichever is longer.