

Consideration regarding ecological food certification and new contribution to the methodology of certification

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Abstract

Ecological food market represent a novel approach in a market already formed and this fact causes a slow evolution in this market compared with the situation of conventional food market. In the Romanian and European market isn't a unitary form for expression the organic products and some expression like 100% natural can give to consumers a wrong understanding of organic concept they believes that such products are similar with organic products. From the legal point of view, "natural" does not mean anything, it is just a marketing name. Anything can be naturally without legal constraints. The producers and the consumers must understand that an organic product is made in accordance with a certification system and with national and european legislation. The rol of organic certification is to protect the consumers and to help them to distinguish easily the real organic products from those that might misleading consumers.

Keywords: organic farming, organic food, operators, diagnosis.

1. Introduction

Organic agriculture should be analyzed from the point of view of producers and consumers, institutions are responsible for ensuring control, quality assurance of organic products making consumer to trust in the system of production and marketing [1]. In Romania the farmers are still practicing the subsistence agriculture, especially in rural areas, and this has prompted manufacturers from Romanian villages to practice organic farming due to a lack of sufficient resources for intensive agriculture. According to R. EC. 834/2007 producers who want to sell foodstuffs under the notion of organic products must certify their food to offer the consumer a guarantee that the products are truly organic. The typology of operator in organic agriculture is represented by the holistic approach of organic farming by small farms with diversified profile and diversified activities resulting from diversified products [1].

The association of organic producers could be a solution if organic agriculture would be a national priority and manufacturers would be educated and informed effectively about the opportunities in organic agriculture certification [5]. Producers in Romania says that organic certification system is too difficult and expensive for small farmers, for them certification means only bureaucracy and expensive documents. Because of this, many operators refuse to certify their products, even if they would be eligible for organic products.

2. Material and methods

The material used in research relates to the certification and labeling procedures used by several certifying bodies in organic agriculture in Romania [6-8]. The method used in research relates to inspections carried out on units of production, processing and sales to help operators to certify their activity in organic farming.

Inspection made by the inspection body involves assessing the food chain: production, processing, packaging, labeling, storage, import and distribution [1].

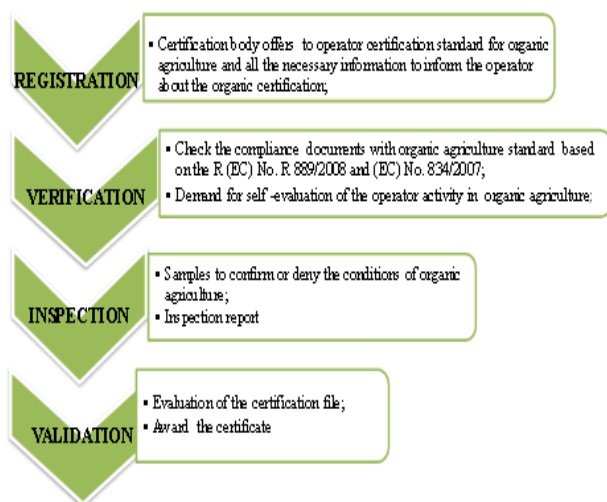


Figure 1. The main steps in the certification process

The process of certification made by private control body ensures that every stage of the process has been inspected, from producer to consumer. Inspection in organic agriculture include:

- vegetable products, processed and unprocessed farm animals and their products intended for human consumption; -other plant products unprocessed;
- processed or unprocessed herbs and nutritional supplements for cattle and aquaculture [2]. The main steps in the certification process are shown in figure.1.

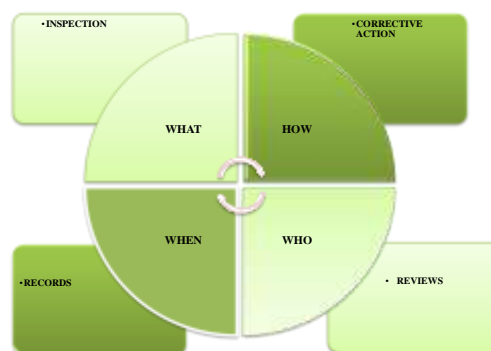


Figure 2. Self-evaluation process for the certification body

3. Results and discussion

The results of the research is a new methodology of organic products certification based on two procedures: a labelling procedures on organic products and a certification procedure for the organic food products (figure 6). To achieve a new methodology for certification of organic products to simplify the certification process I consider that is necessary to make a connection between certification body and operator through a self-evaluation mechanism like in figure 2.



Figure 3. Self-evaluation process for the operator

Organic food labelling. References to "organic" or terms derived like (bio, org, ecological, ...) are prohibited in the following cases:- On non-biological product labels;- On labels and advertising regarding content products consisting of or derived from GMOs [3-4]. Reporting obligations are set out in the general regulations of the EU (in particular Directive EC 13/2000 relating to the labeling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs) and the regulations related to specific foods.

A.Organic Products (unprocessed agricultural products and food products containing at least 95% organic agricultural ingredients).

Sales Description: Can be used references to organic farming in describing of products sale , this can be displayed anywhere on the label. List of ingredients: organic origin of the ingredients must be specified.



Figure 4. European Logo

B. Foods containing a variable percentage of organic ingredients products. Sales description: no reference to <<organic >> can not be included in description of the product sales. List of ingredients: references to organic farming may be used only in the list of ingredients which must be specified organic nature of designated agricultural ingredients, must be indicated the total percentage of organic ingredients in proportion to the total quantity of ingredients of agricultural origin [8].

C. Products containing ingredients mainly fishing or hunting wild animals. Description of sales: The origin of organic agricultural ingredients designated can be displayed in the same field of vision as the name for sale (provided that all other ingredients of agricultural origin are organic, otherwise the product will be included in the Section B from above).

List of ingredients: <ecological> status of designated agricultural ingredients and the total percentage of organic ingredients in proportion to the total quantity of ingredients of agricultural origin, must be displayed. D. vegetable origin products in conversion. Description of sales: unprocessed or processed products containing only one crop ingredient of agricultural origin in conversion can be called "product under conversion to organic farming 'name must be printed in a color, size and font that is no more evidenced than the sales description of the product.

For product description should be used the same size (eg "product under conversion to ORGANIC farming 'is prohibited). The **EU logo** can only be used for the following products:- unprocessed agricultural products;-foods containing at least 95% of agricultural ingredients;-ecological products in the wine sector.

The logo is mandatory from 1 July 2010 on packaging pre-packaging products manufactured in the EU; for products imported into the EU from third countries is optional. On the other hand, the EU logo, may be used for the following products:

- products containing a variable percentage of organic agricultural ingredients;
- products containing ingredients mostly hunting or fishing;
- products in conversion to organic farming;
- wine-wine vinegar <made from organic grapes> in conversion.

Conditions of use: the geographic origin of agricultural raw materials. If the EU logo is used, where the agricultural raw materials (biological and non-biological) of the product were obtained must be displayed as follows:

- agriculture EU, where agricultural raw material has been farmed in the EU;
- agriculture outside the EU, where the agricultural raw material has been farmed in third countries outside the EU;
- EU non-EU agriculture, where part of the agricultural raw material has been farmed in the EU and part of it has been farmed in a third country.

The references from above must appear on the label immediately, below the code number of the Control Body and the same visual field with the EU logo.

Characters charts Dimensions: Height of at least 9 mm and a width of 13.5 mm (height of 6 mm and a width of 9 mm for very small packages).

National or private logos. These logos can be used on product labels that comply with national legislation in accordance with the terms of use. For example: logo **ae** in Romania



Figure 5. Romanian Logo

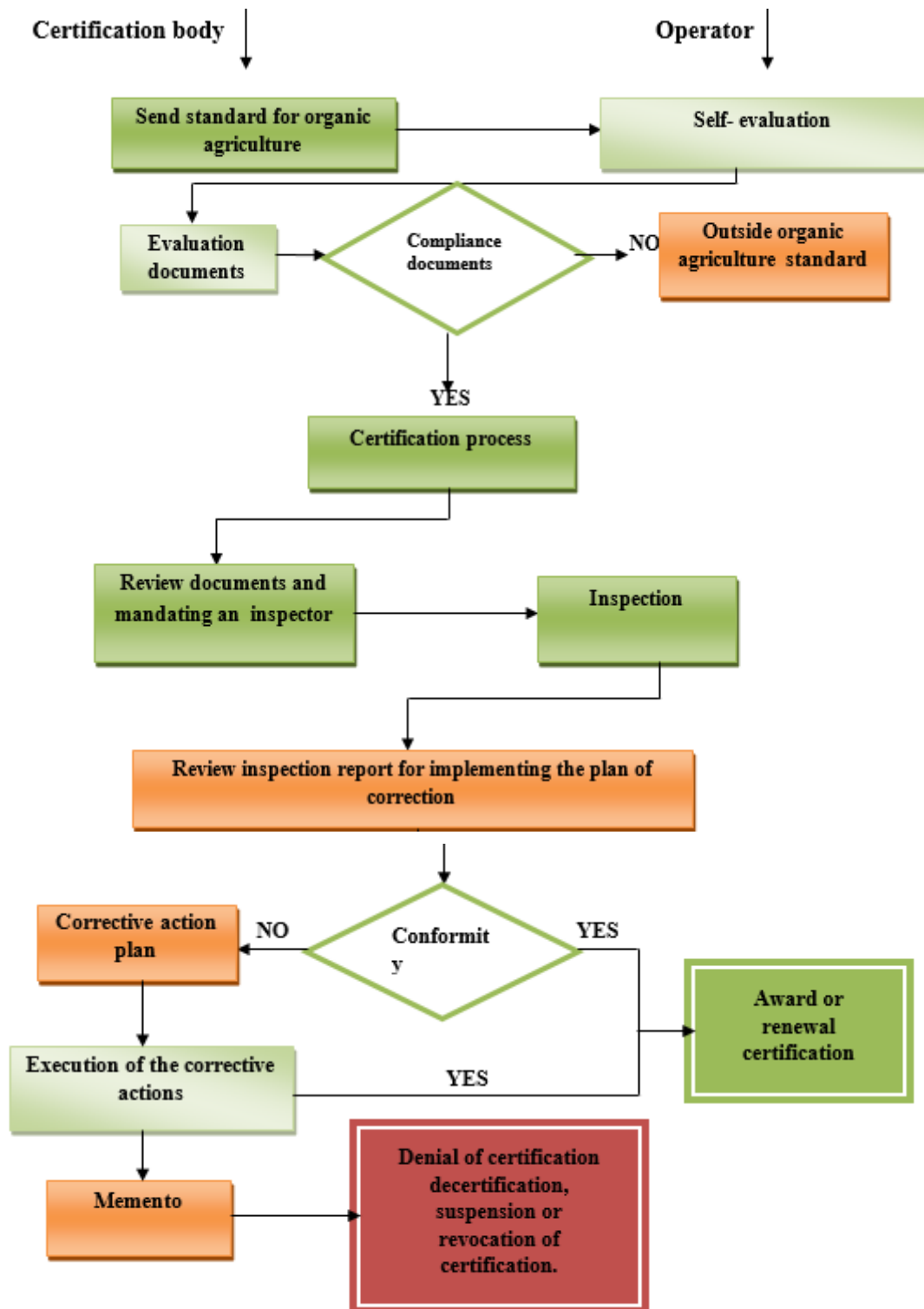


Figure 6. The simplified process for organic certification

4. Conclusion.

The new methodology of ecological products certification are more closer to the operators possibilities and the consumer needs by efficiency and simplifying the process of organic certification.

Compliance with Ethics Requirements. Authors declare that they respect the journal's ethics requirements. Authors declare that they have no conflict of interest and all procedures involving human / or animal subjects (if exist) respect the specific regulation and standards.

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