



# **EXPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFIED ORGANIC/BIODYNAMIC PRODUCE**

## Background:

The Federal Government Department of Agriculture's Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce was first implemented in 1992 as the Australian Export Standard for products labelled organic or bio-dynamic. The Standard provides a framework for our organic industry and aims to ensure conditions of fair competition in the market place by distinguishing those products produced according to this Standard from those produced by other means.

Certifying organisations which have been accredited by DoA apply this Standard as a minimum requirement to all products produced by operators certified under this system. This Standard therefore forms the basis of equivalency agreements between approved certifying organisations and importing country requirements.

## Requirements:

Under the Export Control Act 1982 and the Export Control Orders 1997, it is prohibited to export organic produce unless an **Organic Produce Certificate (OPC)** or **Transaction Certificate (TC)** has been issued under these Orders for the produce. These documents are a requirement of the Australian Government and require authorisation from Certification Bodies such as Australian Certified Organic. **For all organic exports, 10Kg or 10L and over, an OPC or TC is required**, irrespective of whether the importing country requires it or not.

The primary objective of the Organic Export Program is to ensure that organic and bio-dynamic produce exported from Australia meets the requirements of importing countries, ensuring that international market access is maintained.

Requirements for the export of organic product vary dependent on the level of recognition between trading countries of certification and product origin. There are differing requirements for those based within Australia, which fall within the provisions of the Department of Agriculture (DoA), as to those based outside Australia.

In addition, there are specific requirements for the export of products to **Japan**, **Canada**, **Korea** and the **US**, where stand-alone national organic programs are administered. Additional requirements apply for **EU** shipments.

For the EU, all stages of the supply chain must be certified, including manufacturers, importers, exporters and wholesalers.

Exporters of organic product, whether bulk or processed, must ensure the product is certified by DoA accredited certification organisations and meets the requirements of the DoA Guidelines for the Issue of Organic Produce Certificates.

***It is a DoA requirement that OPCs are submitted to ACO prior to departure of the shipment. Clients can contact ACO if they require an OPC post departure for assistance.***

There are three types of OPCs:

1. **EU (EX11300);**
2. **Switzerland; and**
3. **All other countries (EX1399).**

For approval of an OPC, **the product must be made in Australia or meet the requirement of being significantly altered, so as to be made in Australia.**

For example, imported coffee beans which are now crushed, roasted and blended therefore changing their original form are considered significantly altered. Bottling and re-packaging is not.

If a product **is imported or has not been significantly altered from its original format,** then a **TC is required** for export.

There are three types of Transaction Certificates:

1. **All other countries Transaction Certificate;**
2. **EU Transaction Certificate; and**
3. **Korean Transaction Certificate (only available for clients with Korean Certification).**

An OPC or Transaction Certificate is required to be **issued by either the exporter or producer/handler, on behalf of the exporter.** If the latter, clients generally build the cost of the OPC processing into their fees.

### **ACO Zoho Exports Portal**

ACO is the only certifying body in Australia who has an online lodgement of OPCs and Transaction Certificates, which allows easy access for our clients to upload their export documentation 24/7, essential for our international clients. OPCs uploaded into our system prior to 2pm, Monday and Friday, will be processed the same day.

The online export system is available direct from the home page of the ACO website **[www.aco.net.au](http://www.aco.net.au)**, by clicking on the exports circle (please scroll down the website to find). Once on the exports page, our clients can read important information relevant to exports.

**OPC APPLICATION**

A click on our OPC Application button (shown above) will take clients to **Step 1** – where they can request an initial template. This step is only required once, as clients can re-use the same document for other shipments. Please tick the required OPC or TC and complete the information requested and submit. First time users can list their Operator Code as non-allocated.

For the benefits of record keeping, we issue an export number (Operator Code) to all exporters. Upon receipt of a request for a template from a new client, ACO set up a profile in our database as an exporter and allocate an Operator Code. When using their Operator Code, some of the client information is auto-filled in our system.

## STEP 1: (Example)

**Send Form to Exporter**

Operator Code \*

If you do not have a code, please select "Not Allocated", and complete Exporter name and contact details below.

Exporter name

Contact Details

Contact Email \*

Choose form \*  
 Organic Produce Certificate (EX 1399) Non-EU Countries  
 European Commission Certificate of Inspection  
 Swiss Confederation Import certificate  
 Transaction Certificate  
 EU Transaction Certificate

**Step 2**, (below Step 1 on the website), is where our clients upload their export documentation for each shipment. The compulsory fields are a requirement of DoA, and are shown with an asterisk. Other compulsory documents required include a copy of the completed OPC, a packing slip or invoice and an RFP (Request for Permit) for fresh dairy and meat, etc. An additional requirement for EU is the bill of lading or airway bill.

## STEP 2: (Example)

### Upload Export certificate

Operator Code \*

Contact person name \*

Contact email \*

Contact Phone Number \*

Importer Details \*

Country of Destination \*  
  
Albania  
Algeria  
Andorra

Select relevant product categories as stated on the certificate annex. Use Ctrl to choose multiple categories

Product type \*  
  
Processed Products  
Ready-to-eat & Snacks  
Sauces & Condiments

Description of Goods \*

Total weight (please calculate shipment total in kgs) \*

Clients are required to list as much information as possible on OPCs and TCs, i.e. batch numbers, expiry dates, certification numbers etc. **No PO Boxes are to be used for export documents.**

Once an OPC or TC has been uploaded into our system, clients receive an automatic response advising their export lodgement has been received. If the advice of lodgement has not been received, please contact ACO.

If an OPC or TC has been lodged with ACO prior to 2.00pm, Monday to Friday, the export form will be approved the same day. The export documents undergo many checks prior to approval, including checking all products are certified organic. This is why it is important to ensure all exported products are listed correctly on Organic Certificates. If there are any problems relating to the export document submission, ACO will advise via return email or phone.

Any produce or products being exported to the EU require EU certification. If you don't currently have EU certification, and need to export to this market, please contact the ACO office.

There are many issues and problems which can occur with exports, however ACO's friendly export staff are always happy to assist clients to resolve any issues as they arise.

For further information, please email [Jenny Allen](#), Exports Officer or [Janine Heinemann](#), Exports Manager, or alternatively, phone (07) 3350 5706.