



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate B. Quality, Research & Innovation, Outreach  
Director

Brussels,  
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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your e-mail of 14 February 2019 (Int. Ref. ARES (2019)905580) asking whether a conversion period should be applied by a non-organic certified farm that brought beehive from an organic operator.

I would bring your attention to Article 38(3) of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008<sup>1</sup>, which lays down that *“Beekeeping products can be sold with references to the organic production method **only when the organic production rules have been complied with for at least one year**”*. In this regard, I make reference to the production rules on beekeeping laid down in Article 14(1)(b)(ix) of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007<sup>2</sup> and Article 13 of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008.

Even if the beehive bought was organic, the area in which the apiaries is placed has also to comply with the organic production rules and fulfil a period of conversion before the product can be sold as organic.

In this regard, Article 37 of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 lays down *“specific conversion rules for land associated with organic livestock<sup>3</sup> production”* and in particular, paragraph (1) lays down that the conversion rules under Article 36 apply to the whole area of the production unit on which animal feed is produced. This provision requires from two to three years of conversion depending on the type of organic crops the apiaries source the nectar or pollen. However, this conversion period can be shortened to **one year** in case nectar and pollen sources consist of pasturages and open air areas used

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<sup>1</sup> Commission Regulation (EC ) n° 889/2008 of 5 September 2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products with regard to organic production, labelling and control (OJ L 250, 18.9.2008, p. 1–84)

<sup>2</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91, (OJ L 189, 20.7.2007, p. 1).

<sup>3</sup> According to Article 2(f) of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008, ‘livestock production’ means the production of domestic or domesticated terrestrial animals (including insects).

by non-herbivore species, or to **6 months** where the land concerned has not during the last year, received treatments with products not authorised for organic production.

In conclusion, whether a land associated with beekeeping production needs to undergo conversion, and the length of the conversion period, has to be assessed by the national competent authorities taking into account the areas in which the apiaries are placed.

The present opinion is provided on the basis of the facts as set out in your e-mail of 14 February 2019 and expresses the view of the Commission services and does not commit the European Commission. In the event of a dispute involving Union law it is, under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, ultimately for the European Court of Justice to provide a definitive interpretation of the applicable Union law.

Yours sincerely,



Nathalie SAUZE-VANDEVYVER