



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate B. Quality, Research & Innovation, Outreach  
**Director**

Brussels,  
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Dear Mr Rzytki,

You asked in your email of 9 November 2017 if organic production of insects is possible. In particular you are interested in rules that would apply to the production of fly larvae to be used as feed for organic poultry. Please accept my apologies for the late reply.

This issue was already discussed in two meetings of the Committee for Organic Production and this letter summarizes the conclusions and clarifications given by the experts from the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety present in those meetings.

The production and use of insects as feed is regulated under Regulation (EC) No 183/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 January 2005 laying down requirements for feed hygiene (OJ L 35, 8.2.2005, p. 1–22), Regulation (EC) No 767/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on the placing on the market and use of feed (OJ L 229, 1.9.2009, p. 1), Commission Regulation (EU) No 68/2013 of 16 January 2013 on the Catalogue of feed materials (OJ L 29, 30.1.2013, p. 1–64). Also, Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the prevention, control and eradication of certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE)<sup>1</sup> and Regulation (EU) No 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on animal by-products<sup>2</sup>. These legal acts regulate the production and use of insects and products derived thereof, in particular processed animal proteins (PAPs), in animal feed.

Currently, products derived from insects, including PAPs originating from farmed insects (processed insect proteins) may be used in feed for no other food producing animals than aquaculture species according to Commission Regulation (EU) No 2017/893 amending Annexes I and IV to Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Annexes X, XIV and XV to Commission Regulation (EU) No 142/2011 as regards the provisions on processed animal protein<sup>3</sup>. This Regulation also establishes a list of insect species eligible for the production of processed insect proteins. Furthermore,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32001R0999>

<sup>2</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32009R1069>

<sup>3</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32017R0893>

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the EU legislation requires that the insects shall be fed with feed grade substrates. Catering waste or manure are substrates prohibited for insects intended for feed use.

As regards **live insects**, their use is not allowed as feed for ruminants but may be used as feed for non-ruminant animals in accordance with entry 9.16.1 ('Terrestrial invertebrates, live') in Part C of the Annex to Commission Regulation (EU) No 68/2013 and under responsibility of the feed business operator placing the live insects on the market for their safety and under control of the competent authority in the respective Member State.

Therefore, products derived from insects (including processed insect proteins) cannot be used as feed for poultry. Live fly larvae, however could be used as feed for poultry subject to certain conditions as explained above.

With respect to organic farming, live animals (including insects) are agricultural products falling within the scope of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, under point (a) of Article 1(2) – live or unprocessed agricultural products. In addition, insects are domestic animals and fall under the definition of livestock production as set out in Article 2(f) of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, which states that '*livestock production*' means the production of domestic or domesticated terrestrial animals (including insects). However, no specific rules exist for organic insect production other than bees.

Without prejudice to the rules for (conventional) production of live insects for feed, the general principles and the relevant rules with regard to organic livestock production have to be applied. Also, according to the second subparagraph of Article 1(2) of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008, the detailed production rules laid down in Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 apply mutatis mutandis on a case by case basis when those rules are relevant and fulfil the animal's species needs.

According to Article 42 of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, for certain animal species in the absence of detailed production rules laid down at EU level, national rules, or in absence of these, private standards accepted or recognised by the Member States, should apply. Therefore, Member States have the possibility to lay down detailed production rules for the production of organic live insects such as fly larvae on their territory<sup>4</sup>.

As regards the use of organic live insects as feed, please note that Article 22 of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 authorises the use of "organic feed material of animal origin" as feeding of organic animals.

The present opinion is provided on the basis of the facts as set out in your email of 9 November 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 Court of Justice of the European Union to provide a definitive interpretation of the applicable Union law.

Sincerely yours,



Nathalie SAUZE-VANDEVYVER

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<sup>4</sup> See interpretation note n° 2015-01 distributed by the Commission on 8.7.2015.