

## 4 Organic Product and Certification



**When we go to the market to buy some organic material, how can we ensure that the product is genuinely organic?**

Paheli and Boojho were enthusiastic about participating in the Organic Fest to be organised in the school next month. They wanted to put up a stall of 'Organic Fruit Chat Corner'. They planned to use the fruits that they had grown organically in their school garden. People from nearby villages and school children from nearby schools were likely to visit the 'Organic Fest'. They needed to find out how the people and children visiting their stall would be assured that the fruits used in the *chat* they were selling are the product of organic farming.

### 4.1 WHAT IS AN ORGANIC PRODUCT?

Any produce of organic farming is called organic product. Organic farming follows certain government approved standards and norms for ensuring the hygiene and safety of the products from synthetic chemicals.

Paheli and Boojho went to Chaudhary Chacha's shop to ask him about the symbols.



**There are some symbols on the packets of organic products which ensure that the product is organic.**



Fig. 4.1 Paheli and Boojho at the shop of organic products



The packet of organic products has two logos on it. The first one is the India Organic logo and the other one is the logo of the certifying agency. The presence of 'India Organic Logo' indicates that the organic products have been produced following the government approved standards and norms or production under organic farming. The logo of the certifying agency provides the information about the certifying agency. Thus, in case of any biases or doubts, the consumers can trace back the entire certification process by contacting the certifying agency. Now-a-days, barcode is also being used on packets to help consumers trace the chain of activities involved in the production and processing of organic products.

## 4.2 INDIA ORGANIC LOGO

The India Organic logo (Fig. 4.2) is the government approved logo which can be used only by those farmers and producers who have obtained the certificate for their organic production from the certifying agency. The logo has three colours — blue, green and golden brown. The design of the logo represents nature. The cosmic forces in blue symbolise the universal purity. The golden brown colour of the logo represents the richness of soil. The blue background is the symbol for the environment of earth which is free from harmful chemicals and pollution. The green plant appearing on the one end of the wave is the resultant of synergic relationship between cosmic and earth forces which use the colour of the nature and the natural products untouched by synthetic chemicals.

Like our own national organic logo, there are logos representing specific countries. For example, National Organic Programme (NOP) of USA and Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS). The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) also has its own logo (Fig. 4.3).

Many more countries have their organic standards. You may go through the relevant websites for further details.

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Agency (APEDA) is the head agency under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in



Fig. 4.2 India Organic logo





Logo of National Organic Programme (NOP) of USA



Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS)



Logo of IFOAM

Fig. 4.3 Some other logos for organic standards

The standards and norms ensure the purity of the product as organic. It ensures that its production is as per the guidelines provided by NPOP for organic farming. It also ensures that the product is organic and free from synthetic chemicals. Certification agencies are given license by the accreditation body to carry out certification process of organic products. Once the agency is satisfied with the process and products of the farmer or processor (whoever produces organic products), certification is granted. Once the certification is granted to the farmer or the processor, he/she can use the India Organic logo on the packets of their products. Certification is essential to authenticate the genuineness of the products.



**I wonder how are the certifying agencies formed?**

our country. It monitors production, processing and export of organic products. The Government of India had formulated the National Programme on Organic Production (NPOP) in the year 2000 through APEDA. The NPOP provides the national standards and norms for organic production. These are accepted in other countries also. It means that any organic product if produced according to the NPOP standards is accepted as genuine organic product, and thus can be exported. APEDA provides accreditation to certification bodies under NPOP norms and standards.

The details of the certification agencies are available on the APEDA website ([www.apeda.gov.in](http://www.apeda.gov.in)). The process of certification standards and norms are prescribed for the production, processing, packaging and transportation of food and non-food products.

Presently, several organic non-food items such as cloth (fibre), non-timber forest products such as herbs, medicinal plants, honey, etc., are also available. The cultivation of crops, rearing of animals and processing of food and non-food items are being carried out as per the norms and standards of organic farming. Safety of food and environment is ensured through the process of certification in different ways.

As you have already learnt in the previous classes, soil fertility is the most important consideration in organic farming. All natural substances and their safe derivatives are permitted in the production and processing of organic food and non-food items. You will learn about processing of organic products later in the chapter.

#### Activity 4.1

Visit an organic product section of any departmental store. Make a list of both food and non-food organic products.

#### 4.3 IMPORTANT ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

Presently, almost every food product is available as organic. For example, organic rice, organic pulses, organic sugar, organic spices, organic turmeric, organic honey, organic fruits and vegetables, organic milk and milk-based products, and many more.

The food products obtained under organic farming are nutritious, healthy and safe.

#### 4.4 PROCESS OF CERTIFICATION

There are a number of steps in the process of certification. The farmers need to submit a list of documents during the process. The organic food production, processing and value addition are carried out by following standards prescribed in NPOP and or other international standards.

#### Steps of Certification

- Identification of certification agency by the farmer or processor.

ORGANIC PRODUCT AND CERTIFICATION

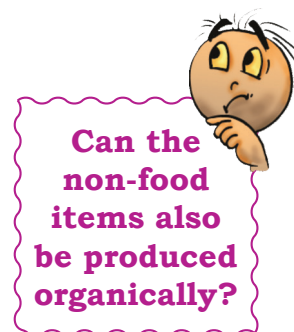


Fig. 4.4 Organic Apples



**I wonder how much time does the process take?**

- Filling up of information by the farmer in the prescribed format of the identified certification agency.
- Information and document submission by the farmer or processor to the certification agency.
- Review of information submitted by the farmer or processor by officials of the certification agency as per NPOP norms and standards.
- Inspection of farm or processing unit by officials of the certification agency.
- Approval by officials of the certification agency.
- Providing certification and seal.



1. Filling up of information by the farmer



2. Submission of documents by the farmer to the officer of the certification agency



3. Review of information submitted by the farmer



4. Award of certification to the farmer

## Activity 4.2

Perform *nukkad natak* in the annual function of your school or any organic fest organised by the school for awareness of the process of organic certification.

Important documents that a farmer should provide to the certifying agency for certification are—

- i. Field map
- ii. Field history
- iii. Activity register
- iv. Input records
- v. Harvest records
- vi. Storage records
- vii. Sales records
- viii. Pest control records
- ix. Labelling records
- x. Soil testing report



**What all documents do I need to provide to the certifying agency?**

## 4.5 CHECKLIST FOR CERTIFICATION

Under the organic certification system, there is a need to prepare checklists for submission of information by the farmer to the inspection and certification agency. The checklist ensures fair conduct of the certification process. The types of checklist depend upon the operations to be inspected. Few of the important operations are as follows—

- Farm under cultivation
- Wild harvest
- Livestock operation
- Processing and handling operation

## 4.6 TYPES OF CERTIFICATE

As you know, certification is a process in which a certificate is provided to the operator (farmer/processor), certifying that the farm or the processing unit is complying with the standards and norms for organic production system as per NPOP or other standards. There are three types of certificate issued to the operator depending upon the business.

### 1. Scope certificate

This is issued by the certification agency annually when an operator (farmer/processor) complies with the standards of production or processing.

### 2. Transaction certificate

This certificate is issued for individual operation, i.e., production, processing and handling.

### 3. Group certificate

This certificate is issued to a group of farmers who join together for organic farming.

## 4.7 CERTIFICATION AGENCIES

There are many agencies designated as certification agencies in the country. Some are government owned and others are franchise of international certification agencies. All the certifications whether they are done by a government or by a non-government organisation are accredited as per the NPOP and APEDA recommendations. The number of agencies keep on changing due to addition and deletion in the list as per the approval from APEDA. The updated list of certification agencies is available on the APEDA website ([www.apeda.gov.in](http://www.apeda.gov.in)).

## 4.8 PARTICIPATORY GUARANTEE SYSTEM (PGS)

Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) is a quality assurance initiative implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India through National Centre for Organic Farming (NCOF).

In PGS, people in similar situations (in case of small producers) assess, inspect and verify the production practices of each other and take decision on organic certification.

PGS has a number of basic elements which embrace a participatory approach, a shared vision, transparency and trust. Participation is an essential and dynamic part of PGS.



**From where can a farmer get information about the certifying agency?**



**Can we form a participatory guarantee system in school for certifying our products?**

Producers, consumers, retailers, traders and others such as NGOs, Societies, Gram panchayats, State/Central government organisations/agencies, farmers, etc., are involved in the initial design and decision-making for the operation of the PGS. In addition to this, stakeholders such as producers, consumers, retailers, etc., are engaged in a structured ongoing learning process. This helps them improve upon step by step process of organic farming. This process of certification is facilitated by the group itself or in some situations supportive NGOs, Societies, Gram panchayats, State/Central government organisations/agencies facilitate the process.

The PGS is effective for small farmers. It has distinct logos. The PGS-India Green logo is used for the products obtained from fields under conversion and PGS-India Organic logo is used for the fully certified organic products. The validity of the certificate is up to 12 months from the date of decision taken by the group.



Fig. 4.5 Logos of Participatory Guarantee System

### Activity 4.3

Organise an awareness campaign with your peers for village organic growers about the process of certification of organic products.

### 4.9 ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN ORGANIC FARMING

Government of India has recognised the importance of organic agriculture and the need to strengthen the sector through putting rules and regulations in place. This includes creating national organic standards and inspection and certification bodies. There are presently two bodies which regulate the policies, production and training in organic farming. These are—

- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)
- National Centre for Organic Farming (NCOF)



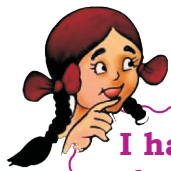


## **The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)**

The main functions of APEDA are—

- Promoting the export-oriented production and development of organic agri-products.
- Fixing the standards and specifications for the scheduled products for the purpose of export.

APEDA provides licence to certification agencies operating in the country. It also monitors them as and when required. The agricultural products are allowed to be exported as 'organic' only if they fulfil the norms and standards prescribed for them.



**I have seen farmers of our village assembled at one place and sharing their experiences regarding organic production.**

## **National Centre for Organic Farming (NCOF)**

This is a training institute under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India. There are six regional centres at Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Hisar, Imphal, Jabalpur and Nagpur.

The main functions of NCOF are—

- Promotion of organic farming in the country through technical capacity building of all stakeholders including human resource development, transfer of technology, promotion and production of quality organic and biological inputs.
- Certification of organic products.

NCOF is also involved in awareness generation, capacity building, training and demonstrations, providing financial support to organic inputs and market development for farmers.

Apart from these two bodies, research institutions and extension bodies also play an important role in strengthening organic agriculture.



**Do these institutions share their research findings with the farmers?**

## **Research Institutions**

Research institutions include universities, research centres, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institutions, Central Research Institutes, etc. These institutes are involved in the research on the inputs of organic farming and improvement of organic production technologies.

## Activity 4.4

Visit a research laboratory nearby and collect information about the new researches and developments going on for the improvement of organic production.

### Extension bodies

These include Agricultural Extension Institutes, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), State Departments, Regional Agricultural Extension Organisations (RAEOs), Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), etc. The role of these bodies is to make the technology and knowledge available to the producer (farmer). They also compare the production costs, yields and income in organic and conventional farming systems and make the results available to the producers, scientists and policy-makers.

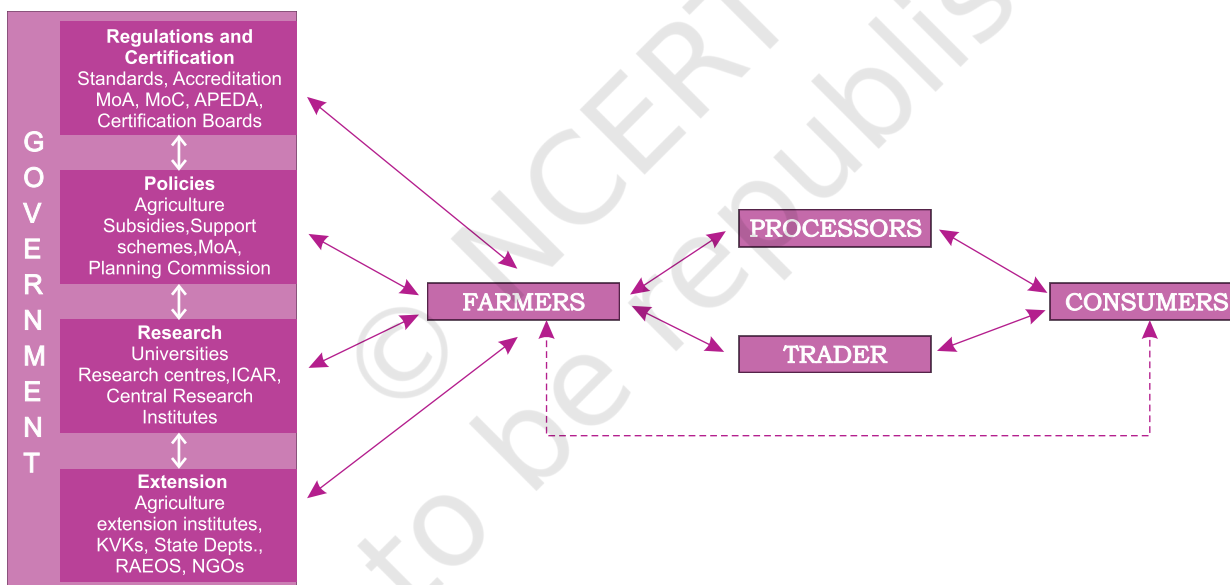


Fig. 4.6 Understanding government framework for organic farming

## Activity 4.5

- Identify the agricultural research institute in your state.
- Locate National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF) and Regional Centres of Organic Farming (RCOFs) on the map of India.

- Plan a visit to an organic agri-farm nearby. Ask the farmer about his/her association with regulation and certification agency, research institute and extension bodies. Make a report on how the farmer is associated with them and how these agencies are helping him/her.

#### **4.10 PROMOTING ORGANIC FARMING**

##### **Government Initiatives**

The Government of India is promoting organic farming through various schemes and programmes.

##### **1. National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) (2014)**

The National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture is Government of India's mission under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Some of the schemes to encourage organic farming, as resourced from the website of NMSA (<http://nmsa.dac.gov.in>), are given here.

- Financial assistance up to 50 per cent of the cost, subject to a limit of ₹5,000 per hectare and ₹10,000 per beneficiary is provided for promotion of organic input use in the cultivation.
- Further, the scheme envisages financial assistance of ₹20,000 per hectare subject to maximum of ₹40,000 per beneficiary for a three-year term, provided for adoption of organic farming through cluster approach as well as through adoption of organic village under Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) certification.
- Financial assistance of ₹10 lakh per village is provided for organic village adoption (maximum 10 villages per annum/state).

##### **2. Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) (XII Plan, Operational Guidelines, April 2014)**

This is a centrally sponsored scheme under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India for the holistic growth of

horticulture. The details about this scheme are mentioned below and are also available at <http://midh.gov.in>.

- The government provides financial assistance for adoption of organic farming — ₹10,000 (maximum) for 4 hectare land (50% of total cost) while ₹300 per hectare up to 4 hectare (limited to 50% of cost) — for promotion of use of liquid bio-fertilisers.
- For adopting organic farming for perennial and non-perennial fruit crops, vegetables, aromatic plants, spices, etc., additional assistance is given of 50% of cost over and above the area expansion programme for a maximum area of 4 hectare per beneficiary, spread over a period of three years.
- For organic cultivation of vegetables, assistance is limited to ₹10,000 per hectare spread over a period of three years. Financial assistance is provided for establishing vermicompost units and High Density Polyethylene (HDPE) vermi-beds at 50% of cost subject to a maximum of ₹50,000 per beneficiary for a unit having size of 30' × 8' × 2.5'. For smaller units, assistance is given on prorate basis.

### **3. Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) (Revised Guidelines as on 10 December 2015)**

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana has been launched by the Government of India to support and promote organic farming and thereby improving soil health. This scheme encourages farmers to adopt eco-friendly methods of cultivation and reduce their dependence on fertilisers and agricultural chemicals to improve yield. Organic farming is promoted through adoption of organic village by cluster approach and PGS certification. Organic farming is promoted in hilly, tribal and rainfed areas where utilisation of chemical fertilisers and pesticides is less.

The main objectives of the programme are—

- Farmers and the local people are motivated to form cluster for adoption of organic farming through cluster approach and they are provided certification. Assistance is provided for a three-year term.
- Meetings and discussions with farmers are conducted in targeted areas to form organic farming cluster.
- Exposure visits for members are arranged by the State Government to create more practical knowledge and awareness about organic farming.
- The State Government identifies one lead resourceful person (LRP) from the cluster who represents the cluster and becomes Trainer of Trainer (TOT).
- The State Government in association with experts of NCOF/RCOF/ICAR/State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) organise three trainings for the members of the cluster within 6 months of the project period.

Under this scheme there is a provision for organisation of the training programme for the farmers on the following issues—

- Raising seedlings and plants in nurseries.
- Organic seed production.
- Green manure plantation and bund planting.
- Production and use of compost and vermicompost.
- Production and use of *Panchagavya*, *Beejamruth*, *jeewanamrutha*, etc.
- Use of bio-fertilisers (seed/seedling treatment, drip irrigation, spraying/ handling of bio-fertilisers and bio-pesticides).

Training is also given to the farmers in the following areas—

- How to get registered under the scheme.
- Organic production and process documentation.
- Preparation of annual action plan.
- Maintenance of meeting and training register, data management.

11. Administration, roles and responsibilities of cluster in promotion of PGS certified organic farming.
12. Soil sample collection and quality control .
13. Packaging, labelling, branding and marketing of organic produce.
14. Community infrastructure required for preparation of bio-pesticides and bio-fertilisers.

More details about this scheme are available at <http://nmsa.dac.gov.in>

#### **4. Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North-eastern Region (MOVCD NER) (January 2016)**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has launched a central scheme called Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North-eastern Region (MOVCD NER) in the twelfth plan.

The objective of this scheme is to bring about development of certified organic production and develop link between growers and consumers and support the whole system of organic production.

Various capacity building programmes for farmers and for the development of skilled manpower are organised from time to time by MOVCD NER. Farmers are provided support and training on ICS management, documentation and certification of crop production through service providers.

#### **Activity 4.6**

Make awareness campaign in various localities about all the schemes for promotion of Organic Farming initiated by the Government of India.

#### **GLOSSARY**

*Accredited certification body for organic farming*— An organisation with legal entity complying with NPOP accreditation criteria and recognised by the National Accreditation Body for certifying organic products and for

granting the right to use the Certification Trade Mark to the operators on behalf of the Accreditation Body.

*Beejamrutha* — It is a traditional preparation for seed treatment using cow dung, cow urine, handful of soil in water and lime.

*Certification for Organic Farming*—The procedure by which the accredited certification body by way of a Scope Certificate assures that the production or processing system of the operator has been methodically assessed and it conforms to the specified requirements as envisaged in the National Programme for Organic Production.

*Conversion period*— This is the time between the start of organic management and the certification of crops as organic.

*Cosmic*— Relating to the universe.

*Franchise*— An authorisation granted by a government or company to an individual or group enabling them to carry out specified commercial activities, for example, acting as an agent for a company's products.

*Jeewanamrutha*— It is a traditional manure preparation using water, cow dung, cow urine, jiggery, flour of any pulse and one handful of soil from the same land.

*Labelling*— Written, printed or graphic representation depicted on the label of the certified organic product for the purpose of promoting its sale.

*National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)*—This programme by the Government of India provides an institutional mechanism for implementation of the National Standards for Organic Production.

*National Standards for Organic Production (NSOP)*— This body sets out the standards to be followed in the cultivation, harvest, production, processing and trading of organic products.

*Operator*—A farmer, processor, trader, handler or exporter who is under organic certification.

*Panchagavya*— It is a mixture of five cow products. The three direct constituents are cow dung, urine and milk. The two derived products are curd and ghee. These are mixed in proper ratio and are then allowed to ferment.

*Producer*—A producer shall mean an individual farmer or group of farmers and business enterprise practising organic farming or organic processing.

*Synergic*— Working together.

### WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

1. Organic farming follows certain government approved norms and standards.
2. These norms and standards ensure hygiene and safety of the products from synthetic chemicals.
3. Packets of organic products have two logos on it. One is the India Organic logo and the other one is the logo of the certifying agency.
4. Design of the India Organic logo represents nature.
5. There are logos representing specific country.
6. Packaging and labelling of organic food is very important for marketing.
7. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Agency (APEDA) is the head agency under the Ministry of Commerce in our country. It monitors production, processing and export of organic products. The NPOP provides the national norms for organic production.

### Exercises

#### 1. Answer the following questions in detail.

- i. What is the significance of the India Organic logo? Describe the elements of the logo and what they signify.
- ii. What are the steps involved in the certification procedure of an organic product?
- iii. What are the roles and functions of APEDA and NCOF?
- iv. What do you understand by participatory guarantee system? What are the basic elements and benefits of this system?
- v. Write briefly about the schemes launched by the Government of India for the implementation of organic farming.
- vi. What are the various types of assistance provided to the farmers under Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North-eastern Region?



- vii. What are the objectives of *Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana*?

## 2. Project Activities

- i. Prepare a project on any one of the following schemes launched by the Government of India for the adoption and implementation of organic farming in India.
  - Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North-eastern Region (MOVCD NER)
  - *Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana* (PKVY)
  - Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)
  - National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)
- ii. Visit a nearby farm. Take an interview of the farmer and make a list of assistance that s/he gets for organic farming.
- iii. Visit the department of agriculture of your state and discuss with the officials responsible for implementing various agricultural schemes, e.g., MOVCD, PKVY, about the activities done under each scheme. Prepare a report on them.
- iv. Design an invitation to an Organic Festival in your school.

Invitation for Organic Festival

You are cordially invited to join us in the organic festival organised by \_\_\_\_\_.

Date :

Venue:

Students of Class VIII

- v. Hold an inter-house competition on organisation of organic farming practices.
- vi. Organise a seminar in your school on various schemes launched by the Government for promoting organic farming. It can be done individually in each topic or in a group. Try to give presentation on maximum number of schemes.
- vii. Write an article on importance of various schemes for the promotion of organic farming.
- viii. Write a slogan for organic farming and put it on the school display board.