



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Director-General

Brussels,
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Dear Mr Choi, Hee-jong,

On 18 February 2014, Korea's National Agricultural Quality Management Service (NAQS) sent in a request to the European Commission for the Republic of Korea to be recognised as equivalent third country for the purpose of organic food production. I can now confirm that the Commission has finalised the examination of your request in accordance with Article 33(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007¹.

Based on this examination, the Commission services confirm that, subject to a final review and agreement by EU Member States, the Korean Organic System complies at this moment with principles and production rules equivalent to those laid down in Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and that its control measures are of equivalent effectiveness to those laid down in Regulation (EC) No 834/2007.

The recognition of equivalency should only apply to organic processed food products, based on the definition of processed food applicable in the EU.

The recognition of equivalency is subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1 attached to this letter.

The Commission intends to launch as soon as possible the process of amending Commission Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008 to include the Republic of Korea to the list of recognised third countries in Annex III of that Regulation, for processed products and for three years. A longer recognition should be discussed as soon as possible and could be a subject of future bilateral agreement between the EU and Korea.

Yours sincerely,

Jerzy PLEWA

¹ 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, O.J. L 189, 20.7.2007

The Honorable Choi, Hee-jong
Deputy Minister for Food Industry Policy
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Sejong-si, Republic of Korea.

Appendix 1

- A. The Korean product must be:
1. A "processed food" as defined by Article 2(1) of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004², must contain at least 95 percent organic content, and must have its final processing within Korea, using organic agricultural ingredients from Korean origin and/or imported into Korea in accordance with the Act on Promotion of Environmentally-friendly Agriculture and Fisheries and Management of and support for organic food (hereinafter "Korean Organic Food Act")
 2. Certified organic according to the "Korean Organic Food Act";
 3. Verified by Korea under the Korean Organic Food Act and its regulations to be produced and processed without the use of methods and substances prohibited under Article 9 of the Enforcement Rules of the Korean Organic Food Act, including prohibited pesticides, irradiation, and genetically modified organisms;
 4. Subject to residue testing requirements based on the general evaluation of the risk of non-compliance with the organic production rules, including testing for prohibited substances and methods, and with subsequent regulatory actions, as appropriate, in accordance with Article 30 of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, in the EU.
- B. A Korean product covered under Section A above for import into the EU as an organic processed food (hereinafter referred to as "Korean organic processed food") must be labelled according to Title IV of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and Title III of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008³, and may display the EU organic logo, or Korea's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) organic logo, or both.
- C. A Korean organic processed food imported into the EU must be accompanied by a certificate of inspection as provided in Annex V of Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008⁴ from a MAFRA-accredited certification body that attests to compliance with the terms of this Appendix.
- D. Korea's National Agricultural Products Quality Management Service (NAQS) will conduct periodic audits of MAFRA-accredited certification bodies using ISO 17011 as a reference.
- E. MAFRA will notify the European Commission in a timely manner of any instances of the following:

² Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 [on the hygiene of foodstuffs](#) (OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p.1)

³ Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 of 5 September 2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labeling of organic products with regard to organic production, labeling and control (O.J. L 250, 18.09.2008, p. 1)

⁴ Commission Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008 of 8 December 2008 laying down detailed rules for implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 as regards the arrangements for imports of organic products from third countries.(O.J. L 334, 12/12/2008, p. 25.)

1. Changes with respect to the accreditation status of MAFRA-accredited certification bodies; and
 2. Proposed and final regulations and guidelines in Korea that may affect this Appendix.
- F. Following advanced notice from the European Commission, MAFRA will permit EU officials to conduct periodic peer reviews in Korea to verify that the relevant regulatory authorities and certification bodies of Korea's organic program are carrying out the requirements of that program. MAFRA will cooperate and assist the European Commission, to the extent permitted under applicable law, in carrying out these on-site peer reviews, which include visits to offices of relevant regulatory authorities, certification body offices, processing facilities and farms that have been certified in Korea.
- G. MAFRA will provide to the European Commission the following documents on an annual basis:
1. A report that contains information regarding the types and quantities of Korean organic processed foods exported to the EU under this Appendix;
 2. A report that contains the types of non-compliances identified by MAFRA during any oversight reviews or audits, and steps taken by MAFRA to ensure that non-compliances were corrected; and
 3. A list of certification bodies of Korea's organic system accredited to Korea's organic standards.