

**Guideline No. POS2/2020
Replaces POS1_2013 and POS1_2018
Pacific Organic Standard (POS): Organic Seeds**

1. Purpose

This guideline provides an extension on EXEMPTION for conventional seeds under the Pacific Organic Standard.

2. Scope

This guidance applies to all POETCom Approved Certification Partners (ACPs) and Registered Participatory Guarantee Systems (RPGS).

3. Background

The POS states:

4.1.1 Seeds and planting materials shall be propagated under organic management for one generation in the case of annuals, and for two growing periods, or 12 months, for perennials, whichever is longer, before being certified as organic seed and planting material.

4.1.2 Operators shall use organic seed and planting material of appropriate varieties and quality. The following exemption will apply until 2013: if organic seeds, seedlings and planting materials are not commercially available, then conventional seed (not chemically treated), seedlings and planting material may be used. Seeds treated with chemicals shall be used only as a last resort and shall be cleaned of any chemicals before they are brought on to the property.

The original exemption expired in 2013 but due to the continued difficulty for Pacific producers to source organic seeds an extension was granted.

The extension to the exemption expired at the end of 2020 and was reviewed by the POETCom Technical Committee in November 2020. The Committee determined that the situation in the Pacific has not changed significantly and it remains difficult for Pacific producers to source organic seeds.

4. Guidelines

The exemption to 4.1.2 will be extended after 2020. It will be reviewed in 2021 as part of the POETCom Governance and structure review under the Protégé Project.

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Systemic seed treatments are not allowed as the substance cannot be cleaned, (it enters the system of the seed, the sprout, all part of the plant, up to harvest and stay in the soil, and contaminates the next crops). Before use of treated seeds farmers must identify and maintain records of the treatment substance.

5. References

Pacific Organic Standard (2008)

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