

## **PUBLISHED NEW EU ACT INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT**

### **Published New EU Act to be added to Annex 2 to the Windsor Framework**

Regulation (EU) 2023/2419 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 on the labelling of organic pet food (OJ L, 27.10.23)

[Regulation \(EU\) 2023/2419 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 October 2023 on the labelling of organic pet food \(europa.eu\)](#)

Legislation falls under Annex 2, point 33 Food; this EU Regulation implements measures under the current organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848, which already applies in Northern Ireland.

The rest of the UK continues to implement the previous EU Organic Regulations which were retained.

### **Summary of the Act**

This Regulations extends the labelling and production requirements that are in place for organic food for human consumptions and livestock feed under EU Regulation 2018/848 to organic pet food.

For pet food to be labelled as organic, it needs to be produced with at least 95% organic agricultural ingredients. Pet food marketed this way will need to display the EU organic production logo. If there are less than 95% organic agricultural ingredients, then only reference to organic ingredients should be included in labelling and the EU organic logo cannot not be used.

### **Department(s) Responsible**

Although organic production and labelling are devolved matters, the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is the Competent Authority (CA) for implementing Organic Policy across the UK including Northern Ireland.

DAERA officials engage regularly with Defra on the implementation of organic policy in NI.

### **Initial Assessment of Impact**

Defra as the NI Competent Authority for organic has assessed the impact and prepared a UK Explanatory Memorandum.

From the information provided by Defra, it does not appear likely that the application of the proposed Regulation would have any significant impact to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland, there are very few relevant pet food producers, with most organic pet food sold in NI moved from GB.

Currently, if producing organic pet food in Northern Ireland, producers must meet more stringent requirements and ensure that 100% of ingredients used are organic in order to market their pet food as such. This could be extremely challenging to comply with due to the lack of availability of appropriate organic ingredients especially vitamins and minerals.

In Great Britain, those producing organic pet food can already market pet food as organic as long as 95% of ingredients are organic.

This Regulation introduces flexibility by allowing use of 95% organic agricultural ingredients which may benefit Northern Ireland producers as it brings the EU regulatory framework in line with the rules applied in Great Britain. Therefore, it would have the effect of creating a common production standard across the UK.

In addition, the small number of pet food producers identified in Northern Ireland also appear to market and sell their products in the Republic of Ireland extensively. It is clear this sector benefits significantly from EU market access and consequently there is a strong case to ensure that single labels and production standards can be maintained.

In assessing the impact Defra has consulted with organic certification bodies operating in Northern Ireland, pet food trade associations and businesses who are involved in the manufacturing of pet food.

No businesses or trade associations have raised concerns with this Regulation. UK Pet Food, the trade body, representing pet food manufacturers across the UK, has engaged with their membership who have raised no issues.

Specifically, Defra has consulted with the following organic certification bodies - the Organic Food Federation, the Organic Trust, the Soil Association, Organic Farmers and Growers and the Irish Organic Association.

Additionally, Defra has contacted three pet food companies in Northern Ireland. It is Defra's understanding that the majority of producers of organic pet food in the United Kingdom are already complying with the requirements of this regulation in order to produce goods that can be sold in both the UK and EU markets.

Ultimately the Regulation does not mandate any business to decide to classify themselves as producing 'organic pet food'. Therefore any impact on business is

a voluntary choice dependent on decisions by individual traders as to how they choose to market their products.

## **UK Government Explanatory Memorandum**

Defra have prepared a UK Government Explanatory Memorandum and DAERA officials were consulted. DAERA officials also had the opportunity to comment on this EU Regulation in 2022 and no concerns were raised at that time. The full UK Government Explanatory Memorandum is included as **appendix A**.

## **Analysis by the European Commission on its Impact Assessment**

The purpose of this EU Regulation is to establish specific labelling rules enabling pet food, in particular for cats and dogs, to bear the organic production logo of the EU. This will support those producers who wish to market and promote their products as EU Organic.

The Explanatory Memorandum completed on the proposal for this EU Regulation does not include any impact assessments.

[EUR-Lex - 52022PC0659 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

## **Departmental Engagement**

DAERA officials meet with the other Devolved Administrations on a monthly basis through the Four Nations Working Group, to discuss organic policy across the UK. DAERA officials also attend the UK Organic Control Group (NI) which includes Defra and the Organic Certification bodies who operate in Northern Ireland. This enables all parties to participate in decision making at a policy and implementation levels. The governance arrangements are laid out in the Common Framework for Organic Production.

There is also regular engagement between Defra (NI Competent Authority) and DAERA officials as and when required.