



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
 DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate B. Multilateral relations, quality policy

Brussels,
 [redacted]/agri.ddg1.b.4(2016)6977851

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your enquiry of 28 October 2016 concerning the contamination of organic products with genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

The European Union legislation on organic production applies to those products originating from agriculture listed in Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007¹, namely to live or unprocessed agricultural products, processed agricultural products for use as food, feed, vegetative propagating material and seeds for cultivation. The legislation also applies to yeasts used as food and feed.

Cotton, however, is a processed product not intended for use as food or feed. As such it is not covered by the scope of the EU organic legislation and thus it cannot be certified as organic under Regulation (EC) No 834/2007.

The use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and products produced from or by GMOs (with the exception of veterinary medicinal products) is prohibited in organic production according to Article 9 of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007.

In the absence of specific rules in the legislation on organic production on the adventitious or unavoidable presence of GMOs, the horizontal rules on genetically modified food and feed set out in Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003² apply. This Regulation lays down a general labelling threshold of 0.9% for the adventitious or technically unavoidable presence of EU-authorised GMOs or products from EU-authorised GMOs. If the level of adventitious or technically unavoidable presence of GMOs in food or feed is higher than the set threshold, such presence should be labelled. In such cases, the product cannot be labelled as organic.

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 (OJ L 189, 20.7.2007, p. 1)

² Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2003 on genetically modified food and feed (OJ L 268, 18.10.2003, p. 1–23)

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The present information is provided on the basis of the facts as set out in your enquiry and on the understanding that 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.

Yours sincerely,

