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General Guidelines for Processing and Trade

Only the current version of the guidelines is valid.
The latest version of these guidelines is available for download at **www.biokreis.de**.

General Guidelines for Processing and Trade

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1. Introduction

The processing and trading companies within Biokreis e.V., together with farmers practicing organic farming, play an important role in protecting and preserving our natural environment for future generations. Processing and trading companies that implement the Biokreis Guidelines for Processing and Trade set out herein actively contribute to environmental protection and resource conservation. Food produced in accordance with these guidelines is of high nutritional and ecological quality. In this context, the focus on food quality is not only about good taste, but also about the benefits for our health, the environment and culture.
Biokreis processing and trading companies are committed to a maximum of transparency and provide information about their production processes. This ensures that consumers who buy organic products can trace both the origin and the method of production of these products.

2. Scope of Application

The Biokreis Guidelines for Processing and Trade apply to all companies that use the Biokreis trademark on a contractual basis and generate added value from organically farmed produce through processing or trade (including preparation, packaging, labelling, etc.).
Alongside these general Guidelines for Processing and Trade, the product-specific processing guidelines of Biokreis applicable to the respective product group must be strictly adhered to.

3. Bases

The Biokreis Guidelines for Processing and Trade are based on the legal regulations governing organic farming: Regulation (EU) 2018/848 on organic production and the labelling of organic products, as well as all associated legal acts.
In addition, all existing legal provisions governing the processing and trade of food and feed apply, in particular the German Food, Consumer Goods and Feed Code (LFGB), the Regulation on the Labelling of Foodstuffs (LMKV), the Food Hygiene Regulation (LMHV) and the Food Information Regulation (LMIV). Regulation (EC) No 10/2011 and Directive 2007/19/EC apply to the use of packaging materials.

4. Contract and Control Management

In order to use the Biokreis trademark, companies must be members of Biokreis e.V., sign a valid Biokreis trademark license agreement, and hold a valid Biokreis and EU organic certificate.
Companies in the food retail sector have to become members of Biokreis and sign a trademark license agreement if they wish to sell private-label products[1] under their own brand name using the Biokreis trademark.
Unpackaged Biokreis-certified products may only be sold by Biokreis-certified companies.
All Biokreis member companies are inspected once a year by their organic inspection body to ensure compliance with the EU Organic Regulation and the Biokreis standard.
The award of the Biokreis certificate is based on the guideline-compliant production of at least one product sold under the Biokreis trademark. This is mandatory for new businesses (from 1 April 2022).
All Biokreis member companies are obliged to keep the documents necessary for inspection (see 7.5 Documentation Requirements) and to make them available to Biokreis or to the people responsible for the inspection. Biokreis has the right to obtain, process, and store all member data used for monitoring purposes and for data collection, for example of the flow of goods.

Every member company of Biokreis must immediately contact Biokreis e.V. if:

- it has reason to believe that there have been deviations from these guidelines (violations), or
- it has reason to believe or has doubts (cases of suspicion) that farm inputs, raw materials/goods, feed,

[1] Private-label products are branded goods sold by retailers, which are mainly marketed by the respective retailer and are mainly distributed through that retailer.

products or semi-finished products do not comply with legal requirements or the Biokreis Guidelines, or are unsuitable for sale in any other way.

Any changes to the company's address, a change in management and/or the inspection body must be reported to Biokreis immediately.

4.1. Contract Processing

If a member company outsources any stages of the production or trade of Biokreis-certified products or raw materials to third parties, the company must enter into a contract processing agreement with the subcontractor. This agreement must ensure that the Biokreis guidelines are implemented and that their implementation can be monitored by Biokreis.
The purchase of raw materials required for the production of Biokreis products may only be carried out by the member company.

5. Use of the Biokreis Trademark

The labelling of products (food and feed) with the Biokreis trademark or with a reference to Biokreis or the Biokreis certification, is permitted solely on the basis of a valid trademark license agreement. The same applies to the labelling of raw materials/goods as Biokreis-approved/authorized.
The company is obliged to label all business documents (invoices, delivery notes, etc.) relating to the sale of Biokreis-certified products/goods with a reference to the Biokreis certification. Approved/authorized raw materials must be labelled with "Biokreis approved" or "approved for Biokreis processing".
Under these guidelines, raw materials from controlled organic farming must be labelled accordingly on the ingredients list of the product label. Ingredients must be declared in full and according to their proportional weight. The ingredients of compound ingredients must be listed in full. Herbs and spices may be listed under a collective name provided that their proportion of the total weight of the final product is less than 2%.

6. General Provisions

6.1. Genetic Engineering

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and their derivatives are incompatible with organic farming practices. Products produced in accordance with the Biokreis guidelines must be produced without the use of genetically modified organisms and/or GMO derivatives. A GMO derivative is any substance produced from or by GMOs, but which does not contain GMOs. "Use of GMOs and GMO derivatives" means their use as food, food ingredients (including additives and flavors) or processing aids (including extraction solvents), feed, compound feed, feed materials, feed additives, processing aids for feed, certain products for animal nutrition, plant protection products, fertilizers, soil improvers, seeds, vegetative propagating material and animals (see Regulation (EU) 2018/848, Article 11).

6.2. Anthropogenic Nanomaterials

The effects of anthropogenic nanomaterials on the environment and human health are not yet fully understood. Therefore, anthropogenic nanomaterials are not permitted in the production and processing of Biokreis products. This includes packaging that contains nanomaterials. Nanomaterials are characterized by their very small size (1–300 nanometers) and an altered surface-to-volume ratio. Consequently, they may have novel properties. Due to their small size, they can also react more easily with other substances and penetrate organisms. Biokreis defines nanomaterials as substances that are deliberately and intentionally designed, technically manufactured or produced through human intervention (anthropogenically), with the aim of obtaining very specific properties that exist exclusively at the nano level.
Excluded from this definition are naturally occurring nanomaterials in the environment (e.g. volcanic dust), in food

(e.g. simple sugars, amino acids or fatty acids) and unintentionally formed nanoparticles (e.g. in flour).

6.3 Ingredients

6.3.1 Raw Material Sourcing

Biokreis products may contain raw materials that are certified by Biokreis e.V. or an association with equivalent guidelines and quality standards (hereinafter referred to as "equivalent association raw materials" – see the list of recognized associations) and that comply with the requirements of the relevant product group (see product-specific guidelines).

The production of products labelled with the Biokreis trademark requires that the majority of raw materials used are of Biokreis or equivalent association quality.

Should Biokreis or equivalent association raw materials not be available in sufficient quantity or quality, non-Biokreis/equivalent association raw materials may be purchased/processed – subject to approval by Biokreis Quality Assurance. These must at least comply with the requirements of the EU Organic Regulation. The purchase/processing must be approved by Biokreis Quality Assurance. The application for this must be submitted well in advance of the purchase. If available, domestic and, where possible, regional sources are preferred over imported goods.

Only up to a maximum of 5% of conventional raw materials (excluding water and salt) may be used in the final product. This requires that no organic sources are available and that the raw materials have not been genetically modified.

6.3.2 Water and Salt

- Drinking water
- Sea salt, table salt (preferably rock salt), including iodized salt, with no anti-caking agents added. Calcium carbonate (E 170) and magnesium carbonate (E 504) are permitted as anti-caking agents.

6.3.3 Microorganisms

The use of microorganisms is permitted if the product-specific guidelines are followed. Whenever possible, microorganism cultures should be propagated on organic substrates.

6.3.4 Enzymes

The general use of enzymes is not permitted. Certain enzymes may only be used with special authorization from Biokreis or in accordance with the product-specific guidelines.

6.3.5 Food Additives

The general use of food additives is not permitted. Certain food additives may only be used with special authorization from Biokreis or in accordance with the product-specific guidelines.

6.3.6 Minerals, Trace Elements and Vitamins

The general use of minerals, trace elements and vitamins is not permitted. Certain minerals, trace elements and vitamins may only be used with special authorization from Biokreis or in accordance with the product-specific guidelines.

6.3.7 Flavors

The general use of flavors is not permitted. Certain flavors may only be used with special authorization from Biokreis or in accordance with the product-specific guidelines.

6.4 Storage, Transport and Processing

Biokreis-certified ingredients may be stored and processed together with raw materials of the same quality that meet the standards of recognized equivalent organic farming associations. Mixing Biokreis-certified goods with goods certified under the EU Organic Regulation is prohibited. Appropriate building and logistical measures must

be implemented to ensure the separation of goods.
Biokreis-certified products must be clearly and unambiguously labelled during storage and transport.
Only those processing methods listed as permitted in the relevant product-specific guidelines may be used.

6.5. Documentation Requirements

The following documents must be available on site in their latest versions and presented during the inspection:

- Product list: This list must include not only a list of all products that carry the Biokreis trademark, but also all other products produced by the company with their respective organic certifications.
- List of suppliers/raw materials: This list must include all companies from which raw materials for the production of Biokreis products are sourced. The raw materials must be listed with details of their quality standards and certifications.
- Product release certificates for all Biokreis-certified retail products (does not apply to animal feed)
- List of ingredients for Biokreis-certified products (ingredients/raw materials must be specified in terms of quantity and certification)
- Biokreis equivalence check
- List of contractors involved in the production of Biokreis products and the corresponding Biokreis contract processing agreements

6.6 Packaging Materials, Packaging Components and Packaging

The choice of packaging materials, packaging components and packaging must be made in accordance with legal requirements such as the EU Organic Regulation, Regulation (EC) No 10/2011 or Directive 2007/19/EC.
In addition to the provisions set out herein, the requirements of the product-specific guidelines shall apply.
When packaging organic products, it is important to use raw materials economically and to minimize the environmental impact caused by the manufacture, use and disposal of packaging materials. Packaging should therefore be limited to ensuring hygiene standards and preserving the health and sensory quality of the products. Environmental considerations must be given priority in marketing decisions (e.g. waste prevention has priority over waste recycling).
Moreover, when choosing packaging materials, it is important to ensure that there is no migration of substances from the packaging onto the product, for example from printing ink or plasticizers.
The effects of anthropogenic nanomaterials on the environment and human health are not yet fully understood. Therefore, such materials should not be used to package Biokreis products.
The use of bioplastics as a packaging material is permitted. However, it must be ensured that they have not been produced using genetically modified organisms or their derivatives.
Reusable packaging should only be avoided if it is not possible or practical to use it. Packaging materials should be recyclable to facilitate waste management (e.g. single-material packaging or separable two-material packaging).

6.7 Cleaning and Hygiene

The cleaning and disinfection of farm premises, equipment and machinery must comply with the hygiene standards commonly applied in food processing (Food Hygiene Regulation, LMHV). At the same time, cleaning methods must be as environmentally friendly as possible.
Mechanical and physical methods are generally preferable to chemical disinfection.
When using cleaning and disinfectant products, the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/1165 must be observed. In general, the hygiene plan (e.g. HACCP) must be presented at the initial inspection; the latest reports from official hygiene inspections must be kept at hand and handed over at the request of the person conducting the inspection or Biokreis.
Any contamination of organic products caused by the migration of unauthorized substances from cleaning agents and disinfectants must be ruled out. It must also be ensured that the cleaning agents used do not pose a health risk. In case of doubt, cleaning procedures and cleaning agents must be approved by Biokreis.

6.8 Pest Control

Careful and comprehensive preventive measures must be taken to prevent the occurrence of pests. If a pest infestation is nevertheless detected, biological or biotechnological methods, as well as mechanical and physical methods, should be preferred. If fogging or fumigation is necessary, an application for approval must be submitted to Biokreis.

The use of chemical storage protectants is prohibited (e.g. ethylene oxide, methyl bromide, aluminum phosphide and lindane).

The following mechanico-physical, biological and biotechnological measures are permitted as pest control methods:

- Fostering and using natural enemies of pathogens and pests (e.g. predatory mites, parasitic wasps, microorganisms)
- Insect traps
- Mechanical control methods (e.g. pressure disinfestation, impact damage, sieving, traps)
- Thermal measures (e.g. heat treatment of storage areas, cooling)
- Non-chemical, non-synthetic deterrents and repellents (e.g. scents)
- Use of inert natural gases (carbon dioxide fumigation, nitrogen fumigation)

The following products can be used for pest control:

- Oil emulsions based on plant oils, essential oils (e.g. lavender oil), herbs and herbal extracts
- Pyrethrum (Chrysanthemum cinerariaefolium) without the synergist piperonyl butoxide (PBO)
- Geraniol
- Diatomaceous earth
- Azadirachtin (neem extract)
- Spinosad in depot formulations
- Anticoagulant rodenticide baits (coumarin derivatives) in a non-scatter formulation for rodent control
- Rodenticide gel baits (in bait stations)

When carrying out pest control, it must be ensured at all times that products manufactured in accordance with Biokreis guidelines are not directly or indirectly exposed to unauthorized substances.

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