

DRAFT TECHNICAL STANDARD FOR THE ORGANIC PRODUCTION OF DRIED COCHINEAL INSECTS IN THE CANARY ISLANDS.

Whereas:

- (1) Cochineal rearing in the Canary archipelago has a history spanning almost 195 years. It consists of the natural drying of adult female hemipteran insects of the Coccidae family (traditionally known as cochineal), once harvested from the pads of the prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia ficus indica*).
- (2) The cochineal feeds on the host plant (*Opuntia ficus indica* also classified as *Opuntia maxima*, *Opuntia tormentosa*), introduced to the Canary Islands before the 19th century and naturalised on all the islands due to its agricultural value for the rearing of the insect.
- (3) Currently, a regulatory framework exists for the production of dried cochineal:
 - It forms part of the definition of a raw product of animal origin. This definition is contained in the SINGLE DOCUMENT 'COCHINILLA DE CANARIAS' (Cochineal of the Canary Islands) EU No: ES-PDO-0005-01302 - 22/01/2015 in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council.
 - There is an ORDER, of 16 September 2013, approving the quality standard for dried cochineal, for the use of the graphic symbol of the Outermost Regions.
 - It has a set of specifications as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) 'Cochinilla de Canarias' (Cochineal of the Canary Islands).
 - Commission Regulation (EU) 2018/1472, of 28 September 2018, amending Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the Annex to Commission Regulation (EU) No 231/2012 as regards the additive E120 (cochineal, carminic acid, carmines), establishes the inclusion of cochineal as an authorised food additive for use in foods, and its conditions of use.
- (4) Furthermore, Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 30 May 2018, on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 does not define the requirements for the organic production of insects, nor for the specific case of cochineal of the Canary Islands. Furthermore,

Article 20 states that, where no additional general rules are adopted for other reared animal species other than those regulated in Point 1.9 of Part II of Annex II, in accordance with Article 14(2)(e), Member States may apply detailed production rules for specific animal species or groups of species with regard to the elements to which the measures referred to in Letters (a), (b) and (c) are to relate, provided that such national rules are in accordance with this Regulation, and provided that they do not prohibit, restrict or prevent the commercialisation of products obtained outside their territory and that comply with this Regulation.

DRAFT TECHNICAL STANDARD FOR THE ORGANIC PRODUCTION OF DRIED COCHINEAL INSECTS IN THE CANARY ISLANDS.

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A. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This regulation applies to dried cochineal produced in the territory of the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, obtained from the pads of prickly pear cacti (*Opuntia ficus indica*) and belonging to dried cochineal processing facilities located in the Canary Islands that wish to use the Organic Production designation.

Dried cochineal is defined as the raw product of animal origin obtained in the Canary Islands, resulting from the natural drying of adult female hemipteran insects of the Coccidae family *Dactylopius coccus* (traditionally known as cochineal), once harvested from the pads of the prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia ficus-indica* spp.).

B. ORGANIC PRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS

B.1. FOR PROCESSING FACILITIES

These processing centres that produce dried cochineal and wish to use the Organic Production Logo must comply with the following requirements:

- a. They must be located in the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands.
- b. They must dedicate their activity to the production of dried cochineal, carrying out the packaging of this exclusively in said Packaging Centres located in the Canary Islands, authorised for this activity by the Canary Islands Institute for Agri-food Quality (hereinafter "ICCA").
- c. They must be registered as producers in the register of organic farming operators, certified by the ICCA.

B.2. FOR PRICKLY PEAR CACTI PLOTS

These prickly pear cacti farms intended for the organic production of cochineal in the Canary Islands must meet the following requirements:

- a. They must be located in the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands
- b. They must dedicate their activity to the cultivation of prickly pear cacti (*Opuntia ficus-indica*) for the production of organic cochineal, on farms authorised for this activity by the ICCA.
- c. They must be certified as organic plant producers by the ICCA

B.3. FOR PRODUCTS: COCHINEAL

For dried cochineal to be commercialised under organic production regulations, the animals must have been reared in accordance with the general rules and principles established in Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 30 May 2018, on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and all

subsequent regulations supplementing and amending it, and according to the specific rules detailed in this standard.

C. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ORGANIC PRODUCTION OF COCHINEAL

C.1. GENERAL ASPECTS

- 1.1. Only cochineal originating from exclusively organic farms may be commercialised as organic.
- 1.2. The simultaneous production of organic and non-organic livestock on the same farm must comply with the provisions of Article 9(7) of Regulation (EU) 2018/848, and the production of both conventional and organic cochineal on the same farm is prohibited.

C.2. CONVERSION

- 2.1. Conversion of the land associated with the rearing of cochineal.

The entire surface area of the unit dedicated to animal feeding must comply with organic farming standards during the conversion period indicated in Point 1.7. of Part 1 of Annex II to Regulation (EU) 2018/848 and Article 10 of the same Regulation.

- 2.2. Conversion of the cochineal.

Any non-organic cochineal entering an organic farm must undergo a conversion period of at least three months on that farm, and must be clearly identified. During this time, organic production standards must be fulfilled, and any movement made will be recorded in the activity log. When organic animals coexist on the same farm with animals undergoing the conversion period, the latter must be identified to ensure they are harvested only after completing the conversion period.

C.3. ORIGIN OF THE ANIMALS

- 3.1. Cochineal insects intended for commercialisation will have been born and reared according to the standards for organic cochineal production. Consequently, they must come from production units that comply with the organic production standards, maintaining this production system throughout the animal's life.
- 3.2. Notwithstanding the provisions of the preceding section, and subject to prior authorisation from the Competent Authority, non-organic cochineal insects may be introduced into an organic farm only when:
 - 3.2.1. an organic cochineal production farm is established for the first time, or a significant expansion of the farm is carried out,
 - 3.2.2. or when a sufficient number of organic cochineal insects are not available on the market, or when the availability of organic animals does not meet the producer's qualitative and quantitative needs.

3.3. The maximum percentage of non-organic animals that may be introduced into the farm, according to Section 3.2.2, is 20 % of the total weight of organic production per species per year.

3.4. In any case, if cochineal insects are introduced from outside the farm, the conditions set out in the following sections must be met:

- a) They must be produced in the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands,
- b) Non-organic cochineal insects must be introduced into an organic farm in order to be used in the inoculation phase and complying with the specifications of Section 2.2 of the technical standard. Once the conversion period has passed, the farm can be used for the commercialisation of organic cochineal.

C.4. FEEDING OF THE ANIMALS

4.1. The cochineal must feed exclusively on prickly pear cacti from the farm itself, which have completed the conversion period.

4.2. Artificial supplementation in the feeding of cochineals is prohibited.

C.5. HOUSING AND REARING METHODS

5.1. The production of both organic and non-organic cochineal on the same farm is prohibited.

5.2. The prickly pear cacti on which the cochineal insect develops must be maintained in a suitable vegetative state to ensure that the animal can feed properly.

5.3. Soil management and fertilisation, as well as pest management and prevention, will be carried out in accordance with Points 1.9 and 1.10 of Annex II Part I of Regulation (EU) 2018/848. The use of fertilisers and plant protection substances will be carried out in accordance with Article

24 of Regulation (EU) 2018/848, using only the substances listed in Annex I and Annex II of Regulation (EU) 2021/1165, and the justification for their use must be recorded in the activity register.

5.4. Population densities must respect the natural behaviour of the cochineal insect.

C.6. ANIMAL WELFARE

6.1. It is not permitted to perform any mutilation operation on the cochineal.

6.2. Transport conditions and other handling procedures must respect the insects' physiological needs as much as possible and avoid animal stress.

6.3. The culling of the cochineal insects must be carried out at the operator's registered premises and must be as quick, effective and careful as possible to avoid unnecessary suffering to the insects. The procedure and tools used must not cause harm to the insects.

C.7. PROCESSING AND COMMERCIALISATION

7.1. The cochineal will be harvested in its adult phase at 3 months.

7.2. Harvesting and cleaning will be done manually.

7.3. Drying will be done naturally in the sun.

7.4. The final product will be packaged in jute or cotton textile bags, preferably.

7.5. Labelling: the product label may include the following information, referring only to organic production:

- Organic Cochineal or Organically Produced Cochineal
- Organic Production Logo of the Canary Islands
- Control Authority Code: ES-ECO-014-IC
- Product origin: EU Agriculture or Spanish Agriculture

C.8. IDENTIFICATION AND TRACEABILITY

8.1. Organic cochineal insects will be identified by batch and be fully tracked throughout the production and commercialisation chain, ensuring traceability and compliance with organic production regulations. The origin, size and date of each batch will be clearly specified.

8.2. Where there are organic animals and animals that have not yet completed the conversion period on the same farm, the latter must always be identified to prevent their harvesting before the conversion period is complete.

8.3. As a minimum, information relating to the following must be recorded:

- Animal entry: location where the animals enter, date of entry, origin
- Harvesting: plots or locations harvested; harvest date
- Drying: start and end dates of drying

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**THE DIRECTOR OF THE CANARY ISLANDS INSTITUTE
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