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Standard procedures for inspection and certification of organic products

“Balkan Biocert” Ltd standard procedures include:

1. Application procedure

Upon receipt of a written or verbal request for use of Balkan Biocert Ltd. services the terms are explained and in case there is an interest, an additional information package is sent containing brochure, standard procedures for inspection and certification and an application form.

The supplier sends Balkan Biocert Ltd. a completed application form adding any additional information that he considers important for the certification process.

Balkan Biocert Ltd. makes an offer of the price and the necessary time for inspection and certification of the farm/ unit based on the information received.

If the supplier agrees with the procedure and the price offered, a contract is signed and an advanced payment of the fee in the offer is made. A date and a program of the inspection is agreed upon with the supplier.

2. Inspection

The inspection is carried out once a year as a standard procedure. The supplier is informed at least 10 days before the visit.

In order to have an efficient inspection the supplier is required to prepare for the visit in the best possible way. People responsible for this should be present in person during the inspection, all documentation should be ready for examination, the necessary transportation should be well organized.

Supplier will be informed in advance about the inspector who will carry out the inspection of his farm/ enterprise. He can reject the appointed inspector if he can provide justified objections. The supplier is also informed about the selected subcontractor (a laboratory which will analyze soil or plant samples, if necessary) and can also reject it if justified reasons are provided.

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The physical inspection corresponds to the minimum control requirements as described in Bulgarian legislation (Reg. 22 and Reg. 35), Annex III of EC Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 and the USDA NOP Final Rule. The inspection includes series of procedures concerning documentation check and physical control of the farm/ unit, whose sequence is defined by the inspector. The result from the inspection is the preparation of a report from the inspection describing the present state of the farm/ unit.

Balkan Biocert Ltd. has the right to make unannounced spot checks or additional inspections during which certain part of the farm/ unit is checked, or in case of additional inspection the previously found non- compliances are checked.

3. Certification

The certification will be based on the inspection report which states the findings of the inspection.

The Certification Committee of Balkan Biocert Ltd. screens the inspection reports and the recommendations of the Control and Certification Manager, if any, and takes a preliminary certification decision; it imposes sanctions (certification conditions) to the supplier if there are any non- conformities. The final decision on certification, conditions and sanctions is taken by the General Manager.

The supplier will receive a certificate and a special certification letter stating the results of the inspection and the certification, the imposed conditions and sanctions as well as the deadlines for improvement of the found violations.

The last page of the certification letter containing the part “Confirmation” must be signed by the supplier and returned to Balkan Biocert Ltd. within 14 days together with a standard plan enclosed by the supplier in order to meet the required improvements. With signing the above mentioned documents the supplier confirms his agreement with the listed conditions and is obliged to fulfill them.

The supplier has the right to file a request for reconsideration of the certification decision in 14 upon receipt of the certification documents. He can also file an appeal in 30 days upon receipt of the certification documents.

The main certification prerequisites can be summarized as follows:

1. There is a signed contract for inspection and certification
2. Positive report and decision of the CC for complying with the requirements of organic agriculture regulations (Reg 22 and Reg 35, and/or EEC No 2092/91, and/or NOP Final Rule).
3. Final decision taken by the General Manager
4. Covered due sums/fees

The applicant will cover all expenses of the inspections. The invoicing of the expenses is made on the basis of the actual fees scale signed by the General Manager of Balkan Biocert Ltd. The certification can not be finalized until submission of all payments.

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