

SANITIZERS, ORGANIC PRODUCTION, AND COVID-19

The COVID-19 epidemic has presented a new and sometimes confusing layer of consideration for the use of sanitizers in organic operations. To help cut through some of the confusion, MCS recently reviewed the EPA's list N of disinfectants approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19, and provided a list of products approved for organic production. The list can be found at https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zp7YWmDFL_R7c-zxZDpP4HRTHTP3xwLiw8-mdVkef-TUg/edit.

Here are a few additional reminders to help you sort through sanitizers for your organic operation during this time:

- Any sanitizer that comes into direct contact with organic product (wash water additives, food contact surfaces, or no-rinse sanitizers) must be approved for use in organic production.
- Many sanitizers that are not approved for direct food contact use may be acceptable if a rinse step takes place before organic products come into contact with the surface. *Please contact your MCS Specialist for a review of the product and its use.*
- Many sanitizers that are not approved for use in contact with organic products may be acceptable for use on non-food contact surfaces like floors, walls, or counters. *Please contact your MCS Specialist for a review of the product and its use.*

OMRI (omri.org) can be a helpful resource for evaluating if a sanitizer is approved for use in organic production, though not every product on the market is OMRI listed. Your MCS Specialist can review products further to verify approval through other approved material review bodies.



Please remember that you must contact your MCS Specialist if you need to change sanitizers or make any changes to your operation's cleaning protocols. Your Specialist must approve any changes before the new product or process is put into place. If you have any questions about sanitizers for your organic operation, please contact us!



Updated Policy for the Use of Sanitizers Containing Quaternary Ammonium Compounds

While the long-lasting residual effects of sanitizers containing quaternary ammonium compounds (also known as quats) make them reliable and efficient sanitizer options, *quats are prohibited from contact with organic products, ingredients, or packaging.*

MCS recently reviewed and updated its policy on the use of these materials, which now reads:

Quats must be thoroughly rinsed after use to completely remove residues from surfaces that contact organic products. Following removal, test strips must verify quat residues are no longer present. A zero residue result is required. All rinse procedures (including water pressure, temperature, quantity and timing of the rinse) must be documented. All test results must be documented.

Or, after establishing a protocol that reliably removes quats residues and is approved by MCS, testing with strips can be performed on a periodic basis. Periodic testing must be recorded and must verify the efficacy of the established protocol.

Remember, before using any new material, including quats, in your operation, you must get approval from your MCS Specialist.



MCS Revises Organic Mushroom Guidelines

In order to bring our mushroom certification process in line with those of other certifiers in the Northeast, MCS has issued a revised mushroom guidance document. We will now certify mushrooms under the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) Crop Standard. Mushrooms are fungi which are neither plants nor animals but instead members of the Fungi Kingdom, which also includes yeasts and molds. In the absence of a specific NOP mushroom standard, it has been left up to individual certifiers as whether to treat mushrooms more as crops or animals.

The revised guidelines will allow our producers to grow mushrooms under a standard similar to that applied to other mushroom producers in the Northeastern U.S. Please contact your MCS specialist to review the revised mushroom guidance or if you have any questions or concerns. The guidelines can be accessed here:

https://mofgacertification.org/wp-content/uploads/Mushroom_2020_Guidelines.pdf

