



What does 'in-conversion' mean?

Primary producers go through three stages to becoming organic. In-conversion is the status given to producers when they are in the second year of converting to organic and when some start marketing their product as organic but don't have full A grade status yet.



Stage 1: Precertification

Precertified products produced during the first year of converting to organic cannot bear reference to being certified organic or use a certification body's logo.

When a farmer decides to switch to organic methods there is a period of at least two years when the land and the land management undergoes a transition to organic production. After a minimum 12-month period in precertification, growers receive another full-scale audit (audits occur annually), at which time producers may achieve 'in-conversion' certification. Landless systems (such as mushrooms and aquaculture) require two audits through an entire production cycle only prior to certification.

During precertification auditors check that the farm's Organic Management Plan is being applied. Auditors review accounts, verify inputs, seed source, labels, parallel production systems, segregation and much more. The auditor inspects the property and takes soil and/or tissue samples to test for contamination from veterinary and agricultural chemicals, heavy metals and GMO where applicable. If tests are positive it could take up to five years before produce from the land can be sold as certified organic.

The operation needs to comply with the *Australian Certified Organic Standard*. Precertification products cannot carry a logo or make claim to be in-conversion to organic in the first 12 months.

Stage 2: In-conversion

In-conversion requires a minimum of 12, and up to 24 months, verified conformance with the *Australian Certified Organic Standard* (in the past this stage was referred to as 'B grade'). In-conversion products are those on their way to becoming fully certified organic.

During this conversion period all crops are referred to as in-conversion and products can carry a stippled Australian Certified Organic logo. When Australian consumers purchase in-conversion products they are recognising the additional work and costs involved in the conversion process and it helps farmers go fully organic. In-conversion products can trade on the organic market as in-conversion to organic.

Stage 3: Certified organic (A grade)

Full certification status, also referred to as A grade, requires a minimum prior period of three years of verified conformance with the *Australian Certified Organic Standard*. Products can trade on the organic market as certified organic.

Can I sell in-conversion products as organic?

No. If an incoming product displays an in-conversion logo on the packaging, invoice, packing slip or other item it means the single agricultural ingredient is becoming certified.

It cannot be promoted as certified organic, it can be sold as 'in-conversion to organic' and carry the stippled logo.