



JAS Certification Overview for Producers

JAS certification offered through QAI is a separate, stand-alone certification. However, participants in the program must also be certified by a certifier who is either NOP, ISO 65 or IFOAM accredited. This document covers the minimum requirements that you will need to meet in order to be eligible for JAS certification. These requirements are in addition to what is generally required under your normal organic certification.

See also the following supporting documents for further information:

1. Japanese Agricultural Standard (JAS) for Organic Agricultural Products (including inputs)
2. Technical Criteria of Organic Certification for Agricultural Products
3. QAI JAS Program Summary and Grading Manual

JAS Requirements

1. **Grading** – Grading is the formal and documented assessment of any product as JAS compliant.
2. **Grading Manager** – The Grading Manager acts much like a resident organic inspector whose responsibilities include checking that all organic procedures for production, shipping, labeling, and grading are being followed for every harvest or lot shipped. The Grading Manager performs internal audits of the farm's quality system, keeps records of these audits and ultimately decides whether or not the JAS seal should be applied to the lot in question. See also, the QAI JAS Program Summary for further details and for examples of grading records.
3. **Production Process Manager** – This person is responsible for the overall production of the crops. This person may be the same person as the Grading Manager if the farm is managed by one person.
4. **Education and Experience** – JAS requires that persons fulfilling the roles of the Grading Manager and/or the Production Process Manager must be educated/experienced up to a certain level. That is, they must meet with any of the three following requirements:
 - a) University or professional school degree relating to agricultural production or similar experience with 1 year of agricultural production, consultation, investigation, inspection, testing or research experience.
 - b) High school or secondary school degree or similar experience with 2 years of agricultural production, consultation, investigation, inspection, testing or research experience.
 - c) 3 years of agricultural production, consultation, investigation, inspection, testing or research experience.
5. **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)**¹ – SOP's need to be maintained for all stages of production, including the acquisition of planting materials, fertility, pest/weed/disease control, machines and tools used for production, post harvest handling and processing (if applicable), and shipping (post farm gate transport).

¹ While there is no set format, the SOP's will need to describe how each crop is grown and transported. In addition, a record will need to be kept that the procedure happened and when, and someone will need to go through the records checking that production followed the set procedure and record this check. A "Complaints Log" is also required under JAS certification.

6. **Standard Operating Procedures for Grading** – SOP's will also need to be maintained for the act of grading. Such SOP's would include matters related to the internal inspection of the production process, matters related to the verification that compliant farm inputs were used during production, matters related to the labeling of the grading, matters related to the shipping or disposal of the consignment after grading², matters related to the drafting and custody of the record, matters necessary for enabling inspection and verification by the certifier. Refer also to the QAI JAS Program Summary, page 4 –6 for further information and examples of grading SOP's.
7. **Records that verify SOP's were followed** – Normal production records, including input use, daily logs, harvest and sale, transport, etc will generally satisfy this requirement. Grading records that confirm that the products are eligible to have the JAS seal will need to be kept for each lot shipped. See samples of the Producer JAS Grading record in the QAI JAS Program Summary (pg 7).
8. **Labeling and Seal Use** – JAS Organic labeling is very specific and will need to be compliant with the JAS Law. Refer to Article 5 of the Japanese Agricultural Standard. All products/goods have to be approved by the grading department or grading manager before the JAS seal can be applied. For bulk goods, the JAS seal will need to appear on every bulk bag, or on shipping documentation if product is not in individual containers/bags. The use of the words "JAS Certified" in the absence of a documented grading verification and placement of the JAS seal is not compliant with the JAS Law.
- a) **JAS seal use requirements for JAS packaged retail agricultural products:**
- Must be taller than 5mm high.
 - Width must be 2 times the height.
 - The letter "JAS" in the logo must be 1/3 the size of the internal height of the mark.
 - "QAI Japan" must appear below the mark.
- b) **JAS seal use requirements for JAS bulk agricultural commodities:**
- **JAS seal must appear on all possible shipping documents.** Seal use is not required but advisable on each bag or container of bulk product.
- Seal format must meet size and format requirements listed above when placed on shipping and/or other accompanying documentation.
9. **Farm Inputs** – If you were previously compliant with the US/MAFF Export Arrangement, you would be used to the prohibition of the three materials: alkali-extracted humic acid, lignin sulfonate, and potassium bicarbonate. Similarly, for JAS certification, these three materials may not be used. In addition, the JAS Standards (in Tables 1 and 2) list materials that may be used in organic production. Most inputs include the annotation "those without chemosynthetic substance added." QAI understands "chemosynthetic" to mean "synthesized with chemicals." Essentially, anything added to an organic input to increase solubility or to act as a synergist is probably not going to be allowed under JAS (ie, fish emulsion stabilized with phosphoric acid, Chilean nitrate, or micronutrients chelated with EDTA). Inputs must be as "natural" as possible. Aside from this, there is nothing in the JAS standards that is not already covered by existing organic certification. It is however a requirement of JAS that producers focus on utilizing natural cycles rather than importing ingredients from outside the farm. Composted material is greatly encouraged and mulch material must not be "impregnated with chemical substances." While the JAS material list is supposed to be a positive list, there is provision to utilize materials other than those listed, and the criteria for such use are included on the list under "Other fertilizers and soil improvement materials." If in doubt about whether or not an input would comply with JAS, contact QAI.

² A procedure for disposing of defective products must be in place and recorded. Defective organic products (including crops harvested from bufferzones) must be managed under a properly developed disposal procedure. Records must be kept of defective or waste products and the method of their disposal.