

## Brief Information on “Novel Food” in the European Union






### 1. Definition and regulation:

The term “**Novel Food**” refers to products that do not have a “significant” history of consumption in the European Union. Food can be “new” because the plant was unknown in Europe before, or because of a new method for processing, which changes the chemical characteristics of a product. In the present context, we only refer to the first case: new plants or crops.

The legal basis is Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/2470. Through this regulation, the EU wants to protect consumers from possible health risks. The year **1997 is established as reference**: food that was already on the market before this year, is not considered “novel food”. Products that entered the European market for first time after this year, are to be considered “novel food”, and must undergo an approval process. The person or company that wants to sell the product in Europe, must apply for its approval to the food authority in his/her member state.

### 2. Where to find information, current legal situation:

At <https://ec.europa.eu/food/food-feed-portal/screen/novel-food-catalogue/search> you find a database of products, for which approval as “novel food” has been requested in one of the EU member states. When it comes to plant species, you must use the Latin name, if you want to find it in this list. The database shows you if a product has been approved as:

- not novel food\*  : product for which it was possible to determine that it used for human consumption to a significant degree within the Union before 15<sup>th</sup> May 1997;
- not novel in food supplements\*  : product was used in food supplements in the EU before 15<sup>th</sup> May 1997;
- novel food  : this product was not consumed in the EU to a significant degree as a food before 15<sup>th</sup> May 1997;
- authorised novel food  : authorized novel food that has been included in the Union list by Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/2470;
- subject to a consultation request  : product is currently the subject of a consultation to a Member State submitted.

\* other legislation may restrict the placing on the market of this product as a food in the EU or in some Member States. It is necessary to check with the competent authorities of the Member State.

Legally, the term “novel food” is relevant only for **food in the stricter sense**. A non-processed crop is legally not “food”, because potentially it could also be used for other purposes (a potato can be used for making starch for industrial purposes, Melissa leaves can be used for natural medicine, olives for making cosmetics, etc.).

### 3. CERES’ responsibility:

CERES responsibility as organic certifier in third countries (non-EU members) **is limited to verifying** and confirming through a certificate **compliance with the relevant regulation**. Products that do not fall under this Regulation, cannot be certified by CERES under the equivalent scheme.

We are **not responsible for compliance with other laws** or European or national regulations, not related to organic production rules.

We recommend our clients who produce, process or export products that might potentially belong to the novel food category, to verify the status of these products in the above-mentioned database and discuss the subject with their European customers and/or food authorities in the country of destination – possibly before deciding about organic certification of the respective products!