

# NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARD BILL 2024

Submission to Senate Inquiry

January 2025





ABN 66 003 160 638

10 January 2025

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: [rrat.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:rrat.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Committee Secretary,

**RE: National Organic Standard Bill 2024**

The Australian Seed Federation (ASF) appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Senate inquiry into the National Organic Standard Bill 2024. As the peak industry body representing the Australian seed sector, the ASF advocates for a thriving, inclusive seed industry that underpins sustainable agriculture, biodiversity, and food security.

This submission provides insights into the implications of the Bill for the seed industry, focusing on strengthening the organic sector while ensuring equitable opportunities for all seed systems—organic, conventional, and gene tech. We support regulatory reforms that enhance consumer confidence, promote transparency, and facilitate market growth without disadvantaging any segment of the industry.

The ASF supports the objectives of the National Organic Standard Bill 2024 to enhance transparency, consumer confidence, and market access for organic products. By adopting a balanced and inclusive regulatory framework, the Bill can strengthen the organic sector while maintaining fairness and viability across all segments of agriculture and food industry.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Delbridge  
**Chief Executive Officer**

Key considerations and recommendations from the seed industry:

### **Seed supply**

Demand for certified organic seed continues to rise. However, in some instances limited availability remains a barrier to growth. ASF recommends maintaining transitional arrangements that allow for the use of untreated, non-organic seeds where certified organic seed is unavailable, ensuring continuity in supply chains. This is in line with the current National Standard for Organic and Bio-Dynamic Produce.

To support trade and competitiveness, organic standards must align with international frameworks, such as those of the EU and USDA. This will reduce barriers to market access and streamline compliance for Australian producers.

The Bill should include clear and precise definitions of organic standards and certification criteria to minimise ambiguity and ensure practical implementation.

### **Coexistence of production systems**

The Australian agriculture industry has long upheld the coexistence of organic, conventional, and gene tech production systems. Effective coexistence safeguards consumer choice, protects market access, and promotes sustainable agriculture.

As this Bill states, Australia is the last nation in the OECD to not have a regulatory framework for the use of the word 'organic' in a domestic context.

This Bill will assist with consumer confidence in organic products and assist businesses to appropriately and accurately market their produce and products, potentially leading to market growth. This can – and must – be achieved without diminishing market access for other segments of industry.

ASF supports policies that promote fairness and equity across all seed and or production systems, ensuring no sector experiences a disproportionate loss of market share.

### **Research and development**

Another benefit of the National Organic Standard Bill 2024 could be future investment in R&D to meet the needs of organic farming systems, including the development of high-performing organic seed varieties tailored to Australian conditions. Such initiatives could lead to more diverse and resilient varieties available to producers and consumers.



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### **Compliance and market confidence**

Strong enforcement of organic standards is critical to maintaining consumer trust. However, compliance measures must remain practical and cost-effective, particularly for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

ASF recommends proportional compliance mechanisms and transitional support for businesses adapting to new regulatory requirements.