

Skal is a non-profit inspection body for the organic production in the Netherlands in accordance with the public law, based on EU-Regulations 834/2007 and 889/2008. This occurs by order of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. Skal was established in 1985 and since 1992 it operates as Foundation Skal. The office is located in Zwolle. More than 30 persons are involved in the inspection and certification of organic production in the Netherlands.

Skal's final aim is to offer certainty to the consumer that a product with the indication "organic" really originates from an organic production process. Skal realizes this by an independent survey of the organic producers by means of inspection and certification. The mission and working method are laid down in the articles of Skal. Skal has a board consisting of seven persons. Three persons including the chairman are independent and form the Executive Committee. The remaining four persons represent the organisations of companies registered at Skal. Members of the Board do not have any personal interest in these companies.

Skal has been accredited by the Dutch Council for Accreditation (RvA) for the certification scheme Process and product certification of agricultural products originating from organic production methods, based on:

- public production rules (Organic production in the Netherlands, the Agriculture Quality Decree Organic production method and EU-regulation(s) involved;
- private production rules (Organic production in the Netherlands, in conformity with Skal standards where applicable).

The survey of Skal consists first of all of inspection and certification. Inspections can be farm visits, examination of samples taken from the soil, crops or products and administrative assessments. Inspections are carried out with and without announcement. In case the production process fully meets the requirements, certification can take place. Then Skal issues a certificate as document of support. When the production does not comply with the legal standards, Skal will take sanction measures which can finally lead to decertification of the product or company.

In most cases the producer is also allowed by Skal to use the **EKO** Quality symbol on the products that originate from the production process certified by Skal.



The majority of the consumers knows and recognises this symbol of certified organic production. Apart from the individual certification Skal pays increasingly attention to the reliability of (international) production and marketing chains. Therefore Skal cooperates with other inspection bodies in the EU, in particular within the European Organic Certifiers Council (EOCC, www.eocc.nu).

At present almost 1500 agricultural units and about 1250 processing units, importers and trade and storage companies are registered at Skal. Skal keeps close contacts with relevant government institutions, organisations of organic companies and several stakeholders in the Dutch society.