

Vegaplan publishes the new versions of the Vegaplan Standard for primary crop production (version 4.0) and Vegaplan Standard for agricultural and horticultural contractors (version 2.0)

Following the approval of the new versions of the Sector Guides for primary crop production and for agricultural and horticultural contractors, Vegaplan publishes the new versions of the Vegaplan Standard for primary crop production (version 4.0) and Vegaplan Standard for agricultural and horticultural contractors (version 2.0). These new versions will definitively come into force on [30 January 2021](#) and [27 January 2021](#), respectively.

As the Sector Guides are fully included in the corresponding Vegaplan Standards, the FASFC declared the new versions of the Vegaplan Standards equivalent to these Sector Guides (i.e. G-040 and G-033 respectively). This makes it possible to grant a single combined certificate to certified farmers and contractors. Farmers benefit from the bonus on the annual contribution to the FASFC as well as from a reduction of the inspection frequency of the FASFC if they are certified for all product groups of their farm.

More than 16,000 Belgian farmers and 1,230 contractors are currently certified for the Vegaplan Standard.

The main innovations of the Vegaplan Primary Plant Production Standard (V 4.0)

The main adaptation in the new version of the Vegaplan Primary Crop Production Standard (hereinafter, "PCP") is that it takes into account the new legislation on plant health. This legislation stipulates that all plants intended for planting that are sold between professionals or via e-commerce must have a plant passport. In concrete terms, this means that products that are sold with a root and can be planted, such as herbs or edible plants in pots, now fall under a new category: "industrial vegetables with plant passport". Ready-to-eat vegetables that are sold with a root ball (such as lettuce or watercress) are exempt from the plant passport requirement. For chicory roots, the obligation to have a plant passport depends on the situation: chicory roots grown in Belgium and intended for forcing in Belgium, grown for one's own account or under a cultivation contract, do not have to have a plant passport: they fall into the product group "industrial vegetables without manual intervention". On the other hand, chicory roots that are sold between professionals or that are traded between Member States fall under the category "plants" and are subject to the plant passport requirement. Operators who are licensed to issue plant passports must now keep all relevant information relating to these passports in a register to be kept for three years.

In addition to the extensive revision of the chapter on water quality from last year, it is now stipulated that if a contractor is responsible for the water and this contractor is not Vegaplan certified, the farmer must request a risk analysis of the water used. This is important to ensure that the water always meets the minimum water quality requirement as described in the Vegaplan Standard. The minimum quality of the water used for washing containers, crates and paloxes is now also described.

In order to have a better view on crop rotation, especially with regard to bee risk minimisation measures when using neonicotinoid-treated seeds, the [crop history](#) should be available for up to 5 years.

In addition, a number of minor clarifications or additions have been made. The [procedure concerning broken glass](#) has been supplemented by measures to be taken in the case of broken mercury lamps and hard plastic. When a farmer sells [pre-packaged products](#), a number of labelling requirements apply. These legal provisions are now also included in the Vegaplan Standard.

[Adaptations in the Vegaplan Standard for contractors](#)

The adaptations made to the Vegaplan PP Standard are also reflected in the Standard for Contractors, when they concern a matter that applies to both Standards. For example, a chapter on water quality has also been created in the Vegaplan Standard for Contractors. If the contractor subcontracts all or part of the contractual work to another contractor, the latter must be certified for the Vegaplan Standard for primary production or equivalent for the activities concerned. In addition, a number of minor clarifications or additions have been made.

[The new versions will be definitively in force from 27 and 30 January 2021.](#)

The Vegaplan Standard for contractors will come into force on 27 January 2021, and the Vegaplan Standard PCP on 30 January 2021. From these dates onwards, all audits must be carried out on the basis of these new versions. However, these new versions can already be used before this date if both parties (the certification body and the audited operator) so wish. It is therefore advisable to get acquainted and work with the new version as soon as possible.

The Vegaplan Standards and an overview of the adaptations of the new version are available on the vegaplan.be website. The website also contains a user's manual with pictograms, checklists and procedures to help you quickly get up to speed with the necessary requirements and registrations. Finally, every certified farmer has access to the database in which he can check his own certification status, and which also allows him to draw up electronic plot sheets and share them with his buyers. From January 2021, a tool will be available that will allow operators to generate their own personalised electronic checklist.