



# The obligation to use organic seed – farmers' awareness

## Problems

According to European organic regulations, organic farmers must use organic seed when available. The availability and specific rules for derogations differ per member state. In the Netherlands, farmers converting to organic farming are often not aware of these rules. This causes a relatively high number of deviations during control visits by the certifier.

## Solutions

**Biodatabase:** In the Netherlands, the availability of organic seed and vegetative propagating material can be found on the Biodatabase<sup>1</sup> managed by the Naktuinbouw. Seed suppliers must inform the Naktuinbouw about changes in their offer.

**National Annex:** The Netherlands is one of the countries that implemented a National Annex listing crops and sub-crops for which sufficient organic seed is available in their territory and thus no derogation is granted. Based on seed availability per crop, crops are put on category I. (no derogation), II. (derogation possible) or III. (general derogation). Expert groups, consisting of seed suppliers and farmers, advise the government each year on the category classification.

**Derogations:** Farmers that want to use conventional seed or vegetative propagating material must request a derogation at the national certifier Skal. The reasons for derogation and additional rules for vegetative propagating material can be found on the national organic seed database<sup>1</sup>

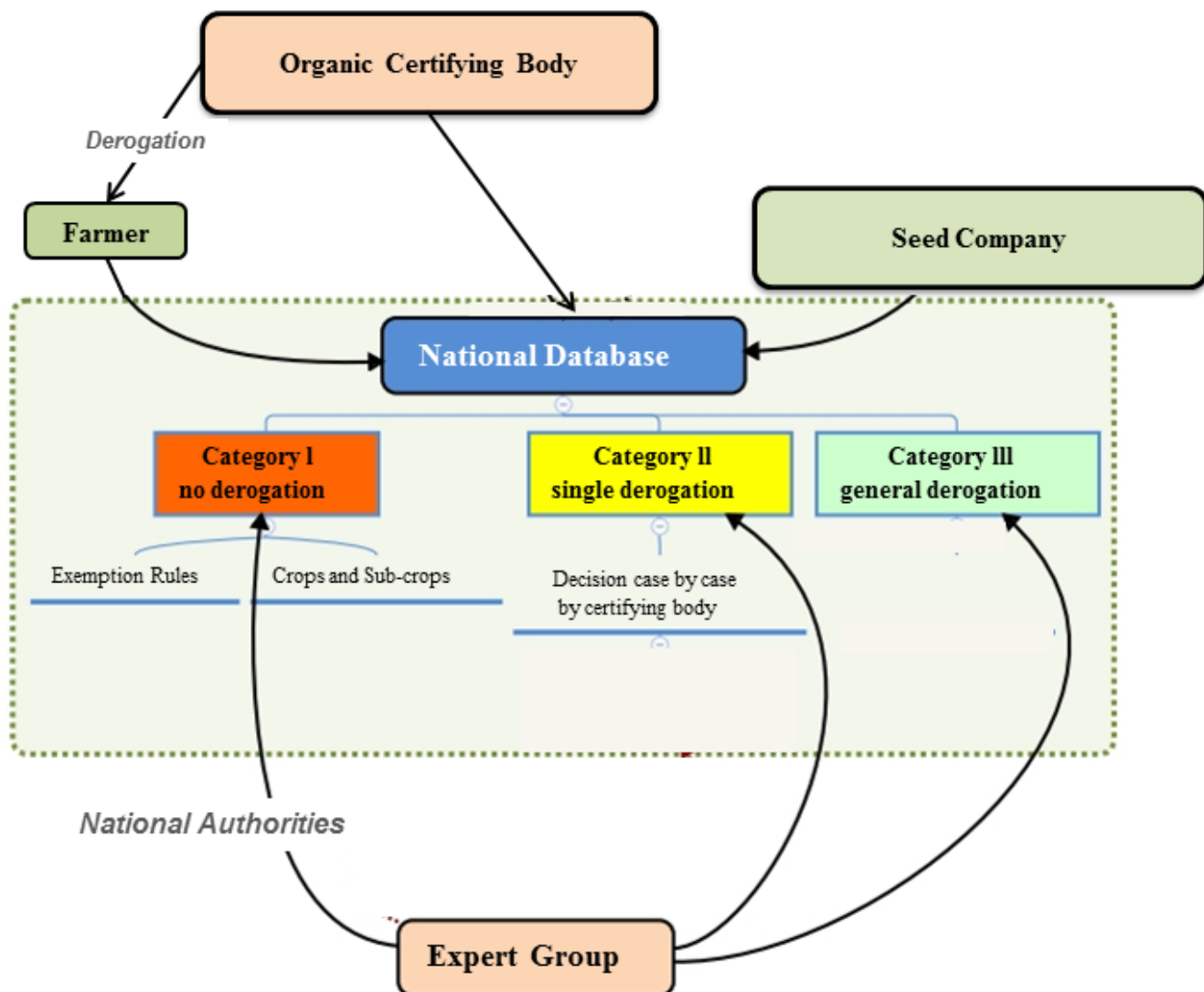
## Practical recommendations

- Farmers are recommended to check the database in their country<sup>2</sup> before asking derogation for a certain crop.
- Farmers are recommended to ask their certifier if there are additional rules concerning organic seed use.

## Further information

1. Dutch national organic seed database, including National Annex: [www.biodatabase.nl/en](http://www.biodatabase.nl/en)
2. List of organic seed databases in Europe: <https://www.liveseed.eu/tools-for-practitioners/eu-organic-seed-databases/>





Schematic overview of the regulating system on organic seed use in the Netherlands

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**LIVESEED:** Boosting organic seed and plant breeding across Europe. LIVESEED is based on the concept that cultivars adapted to organic systems are key for realising the full potential of organic agriculture in Europe. Research project 2017-2021.

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