

Aquaponics in EU

Basic regulation you need to know

At the European level no specific aquaponics regulation exists. At National level, the only country we know that has issued specific aquaponics regulation is the UK: “Statutory guidance for Aquaponics business in UK”⁽¹⁾ by CEFAS (Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture). Aquaponics is therefore ruled by several regulations dealing with each and every compartment of it, being installation, production, or distribution.

Fish Farming

Fish farming, or Aquaculture, falls under the Common Fisheries Policy of the European Union. The Aquaculture Unit of DG MARE identifies ten thematic areas for aquaculture legislation⁽²⁾: food additives, animal diseases, environment, labelling and packaging, market, research, sanitary and hygiene, structures, trade, external relations. The EU member states are responsible for the implementation in their countries and do follow the national administration structure. This means that in different member states variations in regional/local regulations may apply.

Plant production

In Plant Production most important rules to follow are the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) for long-term integrated water management; regulations on (integrated) Pest Management (included in Food); as well as Site regulations.

Water & Waste Management

The nitrates directive 91/676/EEC ruling the nitrate content in effluents is one of the key instruments in the protection of water against agricultural pressures. The Water Framework Directive has been adopted as a basis for national laws in the EU member states.

Food Safety

Rules on hygiene of food are applicable since 1 January 2006 (Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, 854/2004 and 855/2004). They constitute a single, transparent hygiene policy applicable to all food and all food operators right through the food chain (“from farm to fork”). It’s called the Hygiene Package.⁽³⁾

Take note that even a free distribution of produce (at an association party for example) falls into the Hygiene Package. *Only domestic use within the family is “free” of regulation!*

Site

Each country has its own rules, and local regional or city councils may have additional rules for construction, permits, authorizations ...

**In a nutshell, ...
look into European rules
but check with your local administration what applies locally**

Resources

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.aquaponics-uk-forum.org.uk/index.php?action=downloads;sa=downfile&id=5>

⁽²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/aquaculture/guidance-documents_en

⁽³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/biosafety/food_hygiene_en

Responsible author: Agnes Joly