

**ANDHRA PRADESH STATE ORGANIC PRODUCTS CERTIFICATION AUTHORITY
(APSOPCA), GUNTUR-522034**

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

1. Complaints

All quality-related complaints, whether received orally or in writing, should be recorded and investigated according to a written procedure.

1.1.1. Complaint records includes

- Name and address of complainant;
- Nature of Complaint
- Date of receipt of complaint
- Action initially taken (including dates and identity of person taking the action)
- Any follow-up action taken
- Response provided to the complainant (including date and reply sent)
- Final decision

Records of complaints should be retained to evaluate trends, product-related frequencies, and severity with a view to taking additional, and if appropriate, immediate corrective action.

1.1.2. Complaints Related to Products

- The responsibility for complying with standards and other requirements of certification lies with the Operators. Therefore, any complaint about a product coming directly to APSOPCA is referred to concerned operators within 48 hours of receipt of complaint for taking required corrective action and APSOPCA later, shall evaluate the operator whether he has taken corrective action to resolve the complaint if necessary.
- Operators maintain a record of such complaints and corrective actions taken, which are made available to inspectors during their annual visits. Operators shall inform the Authority about the outcome of the complaint and how the complaint had been resolved.

1.1.3. Complaints Related to Certification System

- APSOPCA accepts signed, written complaints (other than appeals) which may cover such matters as the conduct or decision of personnel, inspectors, the Certification Committee and any staff of APSOPCA. The subject matter of the complaint is under the APSOPCA Authority.

- On receipt of a written complaint regarding the certification process the Quality Manager refers the matter to the Director for necessary action. All the complaints will be dealt in a speedy and efficient manner.
- The Director considers the complaint within a week of the receipt of the complaint to him or fix a time scale depending on the nature of the complaint for further investigation.
- It is ensured that all complaints are submitted in writing and accompanied by documented evidence and contains full explanation of the problem including dates, name(s) of the involved parties and signature of the complainant. APSOPCA does not accept anonymous complaints.

1.1.4. Dispute with APSOPCA

Any dispute between any of the APSOPCA personnel and operators or other affected parties is considered, investigated, and resolved by a committee constituted by the Director, APSOPCA.

1.1.5. Records for Complaints and disputes

- Quality Manager maintains a record of all complaints and disputes pertaining to APSOPCA operations, the corrective actions taken, and their effectiveness.
- APSOPCA retains the file containing complaints, its investigations and corrective actions for a minimum period of five years after the case has been closed.
- The resolution regarding complaint has to be documented and forward to the complainant or the party concerned once the complaints are resolved.

2. Appeals Procedure

- If the Operator is not in agreement with the decision of the Certification Committee and/or is not in agreement with the sanctions imposed by APSOPCA, there is an Appeal Process where the operator can appeal against the decision of the Certification Committee and against the decision of Authority imposing sanctions.
- All Appeals are examined by an “Appeals Committee” constituted for the purpose. Appeals Committee is independent of inspection, evaluation and certification process and is impartial and act in a non-discriminate manner. The person responsible for the decision making appealed against is not

involved in the final decision on the appeal.

2.1.1. Submission of Appeal

All Appeals are submitted / filed in writing addressed to the Director, APSOPCA along with applicable fee in the form of a demand draft. The Appellant must state the reason for the appeal accompanied by documented evidence.

2.1.2. Filing Period

All Appeals shall be filed within 30 days from the date of communication of certification decision to the Operator. Appeals received after the stipulated time i.e. beyond 30 days are not accepted. However, Director may accept the Appeal in specific situations duly justifying the reasons for acceptance.

2.1.3. Examination of Appeal

- On receipt of Appeal, the Quality Manager examines the appeal papers and compiles all the details of the case. Once accepted, the Quality Manager acknowledges the same to the operator and forward the file to Appeals Committee within a week. Quality Manager gathers any additional information / document required by the committee and submits in the next meeting of Appeals Committee.
- The Director, APSOPCA convenes meeting of the Appeals Committee within two weeks from the date of filing of appeal to deliver final verdict on the Appeal.
- The Appeals Committee is impartial and non-discriminate while examining and delivering final decision on the appeal. The decision of Appeals Committee is final and binding on both the parties.
- The result of the Appeal will be documented and informed to the “Appellant” in writing within 3 days of final decision by Appeals Committee. In case of rejection of the Appeal by the Appeals Committee, the operator is informed of the decision with reasons for rejection.
- In the event, that the Appeal is withheld / upheld, the fee will not be refunded to the Appellant. All the decisions of APSOPCA shall remain in force until the Appeal is rejected.
- Quality Manager maintains a Register of Appeals which includes the name and address of the operator/appellant; date of receipt of appeal; date of forwarding of appeal to Appeals Committee; date of final decision; result of the appeal; and date of communication of decision to the appellant.