

TO: All USDA ACAs

SUBJECT: "Private Label Certification, **AMENDED**"

DATE: June 11, 2008

On the subject of the so-called "private label certification" issue, there seems to be some confusion about recent messages heard in the organic industry. NOP will issue guidance on this issue in the near future. For now, however, ACAs who perform "private label certification" are expected to use the following guidance:

1. NOP expects full accountability and traceability in the organic supply chain.
2. The final handler (private labeler/marketer/commission merchant) may choose the ACA to certify product. But that ACA appearing on that product of the final handler must be able to address any inquiries about the product, by a consumer or other interested party, and is fully responsible for ensuring that the certified operation and organically produced product meets all requirements of the NOP regulations.
3. Provided #1 and #2 are satisfied, ACAs performing "private label certification" will not have accreditation placed at risk by the NOP for this activity.

If there are any questions about this interim guidance, please contact me.

Thank you,

Barbara Robinson
Director, National Organic Program