

March 19, 2012

TO: National Organic Program Accredited Certifying Agents  
FROM: Miles V. McEvoy, Deputy Administrator  
SUBJECT: NOP Certification for Operations Based in Canada



On June 17, 2009, the U.S. and Canada established an equivalency arrangement that allows organic products certified to one country's standards to be sold as organic in the other country. All products traded under the partnership must meet the terms of the arrangement. For details on the arrangement, please visit [www.ams.usda.gov/NOPTTradeCanada](http://www.ams.usda.gov/NOPTTradeCanada).

Previously, Canadian operations had to obtain certification to the USDA organic standards in order to access the U.S. organic market. This required a second set of fees, inspections, and paperwork. The equivalency arrangement has streamlined trade and reduced these barriers, especially for small and medium organic operations.

While updating the list of certified organic operations, the National Organic Program (NOP) noted that some Canadian organic operations are still certified to the USDA organic standards. This creates an oversight issue for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), which administers the Canada Organic Regime. Therefore, NOP accredited certifying agents should not renew the organic certification of any operation based in Canada.

NOP-accredited certifying agents with Canada-based clients should take the appropriate action below depending on the operation's certification status:

If the Canadian organic operation is certified to:	NOP-accredited certifying agents should:
Canada Organic Regime and USDA organic regulations	1. Contact their Canada-based clients and request that they surrender their USDA organic certificate.
USDA organic regulations only	1. Contact their Canada-based clients and request that they obtain organic certification to Canada Organic Regime. List of CFIA-accredited certification bodies: <a href="http://bit.ly/cor-certifying-agents">http://bit.ly/cor-certifying-agents</a>  2. Request that their Canada-based clients surrender their USDA organic certificate.

Thank you for playing a key role in ensuring organic integrity from farm to market.