



IMPORTING ORGANIC PRODUCTS TO THE U.S.



There are two ways for foreign organic products to be sold as organic in the United States. Imported organic products must be certified to one of the following:

1) The USDA organic regulations

USDA authorizes organizations around the world to certify farms and businesses to the USDA organic regulations. Learn about the certification process and view a list of certifiers by name or by country:

www.ams.usda.gov/NOPFAQsHowCertified

2) An authorized international standard

The U.S. has established trade partnerships with the following international countries. View details at www.ams.usda.gov/NOPIInternationalAgreements.

CANADA

Products produced worldwide and certified to the Canada Organic Product Regulations can be sold as organic in the U.S. (effective June 30, 2009).

Terms of the Arrangement. To trade products under the partnership, certified operations must:

- Produce livestock without antibiotics.
- Ship imports with documentation that states, "Certified in compliance with the terms of the US-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement."

Labeling Requirements. For packaged retail products, labels or stickers must state the name of the Canadian

certifier and may use the USDA organic seal and/or the Canada organic logo.

EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

Products certified to the EU organic standards can be sold as organic in the U.S. (effective June 1, 2012).

Products must be either produced or have had final processing or packaging occur within the EU.

Terms of the Arrangement. To trade products under the partnership, certified operations must:

- Produce livestock without antibiotics.
- Meet additional specifications for wine.
- Ship imports with a National Organic Program (NOP) **import certificate**, completed by an EU-authorized certification body.

Excluded Products: Aquatic animals.

Labeling Requirements. For packaged retail products, labels or stickers must state the name of the EU certification body and may use the USDA organic seal and/or the EU organic logo.

JAPAN

Products certified to the Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS) can be sold as organic in the U.S. Plants, including fungi, and plant-based processed products (such as grape juice or corn meal) are eligible



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for JAS certification (effective January 1, 2014).

Products must be either produced or have had final processing or packaging occur within Japan.

Terms of the Arrangement. To trade products under the partnership, certified operations must:

- Ship imports with an **NOP import certificate**, completed by a JAS-authorized certifier.

Labeling Requirements. For packaged retail products, labels or stickers must state the name of the JAS certifier and may use the USDA organic seal and/or the Japanese organic logo.

Other Products. Organic products regulated by the JAS law may be imported to the U.S. if they are certified to the USDA organic regulations. Examples of such non-plant-based products include meat, dairy products, and alcoholic beverages. These products do not require an NOP import certificate.

GENERAL IMPORT REQUIREMENTS

In addition to organic requirements, traded agricultural products must meet all general or commodity-specific import requirements. U.S. importers and customs services can provide detailed guidance.

Labeling. Organic products sold in the U.S. must meet all Federal labeling requirements (general and organic).

Import Codes. For certain organic products, traders must use harmonized tariff schedule codes for tracking purposes. <http://bit.ly/organic-codes2>

Grading. Imported agricultural commodities must often meet product size, grade, quality, and maturity requirements. www.ams.usda.gov

Health Inspection. Shipments must include permits, sanitary certificates (animal products), and phytosanitary certificates (plant products) to ensure the product is healthy and free from pests requiring quarantine. www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export

Meat, Poultry, and Processed Egg Products. The USDA only allows imported meat, poultry, and processed egg products from countries with inspection standards equivalent to U.S. standards. <http://bit.ly/imports-fsis>

IDENTIFYING ORGANIC PRODUCTS

If an organic logo (see below) isn't on the exterior of the shipping box (not required), shippers should review the:

- Receipt (bill of lading) detailing receipt of organic goods and specifying terms of delivery.
- Commercial invoice representing a complete record of the business transaction.
- Any import/export certificate or required statement as required (see above).

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIC LOGOS



USDA organic seal (U.S.)



Canada organic logo



European organic logo



Japanese organic logo