



IMPORTING ORGANIC PRODUCTS INTO THE U.S.



Organic agriculture is a fast growing sector in U.S. agriculture, creating jobs, economic growth, and entrepreneurial opportunities. The National Organic Program (NOP), part of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), establishes international organic import and export policies to facilitate trade and expand market opportunities for certified organic farms and businesses around the world.

Imported organic products must be certified to one of the following standards to be sold in the United States:

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 accredited certifiers at: www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/becoming-certified.

2. An **authorized international standard**

The U.S. has established organic trade arrangements with Canada, the European Union, Japan, Republic of Korea and Switzerland. These arrangements help food producers located in the U.S. import organic ingredients that are not produced within the U.S. View details: www.ams.usda.gov/NOPInternationalAgreements.

CANADA

Effective June 30, 2009: Products produced worldwide and certified to the Canada Organic Products Regulations can be sold as organic in the U.S.

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

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

Labeling Requirements. Products must comply with the **USDA organic labeling requirements**. For packaged retail products, labels or stickers must state, "Certified Organic By (insert name of Canadian certifier)," and may display the USDA organic seal and/or the Canada organic logo.

EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

Effective June 1, 2012: Products certified to the EU organic standards can be sold as organic in the U.S.

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, or a product that includes ingredients derived from organic livestock, without the use of antibiotics.
- Meet **additional specifications for wine**.
- Ship imports with an **NOP Import Certificate** and organic certificate completed by an EU-authorized certification body.

Excluded Products. Aquatic animals.

Labeling Requirements. Products must comply with the **USDA organic labeling requirements**. For packaged retail products, labels or stickers must state, "Certified Organic By (insert name of EU certification body)," and may display the USDA organic seal and/or the EU organic logo.

JAPAN

Effective January 1, 2014: Plants, including mushrooms, and plant-based processed products (such as grape juice or corn meal) certified to the Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS) can be sold as organic in the U.S.

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

Terms of the Arrangement. Only plant and plant-based products are covered under the trade arrangement. To trade products under the partnership, certified operations must:

- Ship imports with an **NOP Import Certificate** and organic certificate completed by a JAS-authorized certifier.

Labeling Requirements. Products must comply with the **USDA organic labeling requirements**. For packaged retail products, labels or stickers must state, "Certified Organic By (insert name of JAS certifier)," and may display the USDA organic seal and/or the Japanese organic logo.

Excluded Products. Non-plant-based products, such as meat, dairy products and alcoholic beverages, are outside the scope of the trade arrangement and need to be certified to the USDA organic standards.

IMPORTING ORGANIC PRODUCTS INTO THE U.S. (continued)



REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Effective June 1, 2014: Processed food products certified to the Korean organic regulations can be sold as organic in the U.S.

Products must have had final processing occur in Korea.

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

- Produce “processed food products” as defined by the Korean Food Code (see www.ams.usda.gov/NOPTradeKorea).
- Produce products with at least 95 percent organic ingredients.
- Be sure products do contain ingredients derived from animals produced with the use of antibiotics.
- Ship imports with an **NOP Import Certificate** and an organic certificate completed by a Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA)-accredited certification body. The NOP Import Certificate must state, “Certified in compliance with the terms of the US-Korea Organic Equivalency Arrangement.”

Excluded Products. Non-processed agricultural products, such as fresh pears or onions, are outside the scope of the arrangement and need to be certified to the USDA organic standards.

Labeling Requirements. Products must comply with the **USDA organic labeling requirements**. For packaged retail products, labels or stickers must state, “Certified Organic By (insert name of Korean certification body),” and may display the USDA organic seal and/or the MAFRA organic seal.

SWITZERLAND

Effective July 10, 2015: Products certified to the Swiss organic ordinances can be sold as organic in the U.S.

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

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

- Produce livestock, or a product that includes ingredients derived from organic livestock, without antibiotics.
- Product and label organic wine to the **regulations of the importing country**.
- Ship imports with an **NOP Import Certificate** and an organic certificate completed by a Swiss-authorized certification body.

Labeling Requirements. Products must comply with the **USDA organic labeling requirements**. For packaged retail products, labels or stickers must state, “Certified Organic By (insert name of Swiss certification body),” and may display the USDA organic seal. The Swiss Government does not administer an organic seal.

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) is not on the exterior of the shipping box, shippers should review the:

- Document (e.g. bill of lading) detailing sales of organic goods and specifying terms of delivery.
- Commercial invoice representing a complete record of the business transaction.
- Any import/export certificate or attestations, as required (see above).
- Organic certificate(s)

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIC LOGOS



United States



Canada



European Union



Japan



Korea

There is no Swiss organic seal

Switzerland