



AMERICERT INTERNATIONAL

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Labeling Guidance for the US-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement

v.080726

A. Background: The USDA National Organic Program has negotiated a number of international equivalency arrangements whereby products certified to the USDA National Organic Program can be represented as organic in certain other countries. Each equivalency arrangement has its own requirements and restrictions, including requirements for labeling. This document is intended to summarize the labeling requirements for the US-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement (USCOEA). All labels and printed packaging materials must be submitted to Americert for review and approval prior to printing to ensure they are compliant.

B. Labeling & Packaging Requirements:

1. Available Label Claims: Certified organic products shipped to Canada under the equivalency arrangement may only make an "Organic" label claim. The label claims "100% Organic" or "Made With Organic (Specified Ingredients or Food Groups)" may not appear on the label. Canada does not recognize these label claims and they cannot be used for products to be exported to Canada.

2. Identification of Certifying Agent (All Labels): All labels that identify the products as organic (retail and bulk) must contain the phrase "Certified Organic by Americert International." (The certifier declaration does not have to be bilingual.) If packed by a copacker or distributed by a certified distributor, the operation may instead use the COB statement of the certifying agent of that copacker or certified distributor, instead of the COB statement of Americert.

3. Bilingual in English and French (Retail Labels): The name of the product, the ingredient list, and the identification of the product as organic must be in both English and French. (The certifier declaration does not have to be bilingual.)

4. All Organic Ingredients Must Be Identified as Organic in the Ingredient List (Retail Labels): Note that the ingredients must be in both English and French, as well.

5. Use of USDA Seal Optional: The use of the USDA seal on products labeled for the US-Canada market is purely optional. If used, it must be compliant in colors and design.

6. Non-Retail Containers and Packaging: Product not packaged for retail sale (e.g., bulk or wholesale products) must contain:

- The name and address of the certified operation.
- The name of the product and its organic status.
- Identification of Americert as the certifying agent (i.e., "Certified Organic by Americert International"). If packed by a copacker or distributed by a certified distributor, the operation may instead use the COB statement of the certifying agent of that copacker or certified distributor, instead of the COB statement of Americert.
- Traceability Information (e.g., lot numbers and weight).

Non-retail containers (identified as "shipping containers" in the Canada regulations) do not need to be bilingual unless they are offered for sale to consumers at retail.

7. Use of the Canada Organic Seal: The use of the Canada organic seal is purely optional and specific additional requirements apply if it is to be used. Contact Americert for more information if you choose to use the Canada Organic Seal.

8. Shipment Must Be Accompanied with Certificate: Each shipment to Canada under the equivalency must be accompanied with a copy of the USDA organic certificate and OSPS issued by the certifying agent for the product



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which clearly states that the product is “Certified in accordance with the terms of the U.S.-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement.” Additional inclusion of this statement on the BOL is purely optional.

9. Labeling for COR Imported Products: Labels or stickers must state the name of the U.S. or Canadian certifying agent and may use the USDA organic seal or the Canada organic logo.