



AMERICERT INTERNATIONAL

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Guidance Regarding 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 requirements for the US-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement (USCOEA). If you intend to export product to the Canada under the equivalency arrangement for that country or region, or supply products into a supply chain destined for Canada, your operation must comply with the requirements described in this document. Note that this document does not include all factual situations that may occur but is intended to address the common situations.

B. General Requirements:

1. USCOEA is an Additional Certification: An operation must request in writing to have the USCOEA compliance added to their certification. Americert charges a fee for this, as stated in the current fee schedule, and the compliance certification must be updated each year on a product by product or crop by crop basis. Self-attestations of compliance are not sufficient and are not recognized. The compliance language required on certificates is that a product or crop is "Certified in accordance with the terms of the U.S.-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement."

2. Eligibility and Exclusions: This equivalence covers trade of USDA-certified and COR certified products between the United States and Canada, as well as third countries. Products produced outside of the United States or Canada must be certified through the entire supply chain to either the USDA or Canadian organic standards.

To be eligible for export to Canada, USDA certified organic products must:

- Be raised or produced in the United States; or
- Have final processing or packaging occur within the United States; or
- Be produced or have the final processing or packaging occur within a third country in compliance with the terms of this arrangement.

The allowed product categories are: crops, wild crops, livestock, and processed products.

The allowed label claims are limited to "Organic" (labels and packaging may not state "Made with Organic" or "100% Organic" as these label claims are not recognized under this agreement.)

The following restrictions and exclusions apply to products exported under this agreement:

- Agricultural products produced with the use of sodium nitrate shall not be sold or marketed as organic in Canada.
- Agricultural products produced by hydroponic or aeroponic production methods shall not be sold or marketed as organic in Canada.
- Agricultural products derived from nonruminant animals must be produced according to livestock stocking rates as set out in the Canadian organic regulations, CAN /CGSB32.310-2020.



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- The U.S.-Canada organic equivalence arrangement (USCOEA) does not extend to the USDA recognition agreements with Israel and New Zealand. USDA organic products certified by Israel and New Zealand accredited certification bodies are for direct export to the U.S. only. See the [Government of Canada website](#) for more information.
- Aquatic plants are eligible for USDA organic certification under the crop standards ([Policy Memo 12-1](#)) and may be sold or marketed as organic in Canada.

3. Trade Documentation: USDA organic products exported to Canada must be accompanied by an organic certificate issued by a USDA-accredited certifying agent recognized under the terms of the U.S.-Canada equivalence arrangement. Canadian importers (or their broker) of USDA organic products must upload a digital copy of the organic certificate in Canada's [IID system](#) when submitting an import declaration for organic products imported into Canada. The organic certificate or its associated addendum must identify which products meet the terms of the U.S.-Canada equivalence arrangement and include the following attestation statement:

"Certified in accordance with the terms of the U.S.-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement."

Please refer to this Government of Canada webpage for the [Canada Organic Regime import requirements](#), including organic operation certificate requirements.

C. 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.



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- 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 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.

D. Policy and Procedures for Review:

1. Request: Operations must request USCOEA certification in writing and must specify what products or crops the certification is being requested for. For packaged products, a copy of the proposed label must also be submitted. Operations must submit written documentation that the requirements for review described in the next paragraph are met.

2. Review: Americert personnel will review the request and confirm that the requirements stated in section B(2), B(3) and section C are met and that none of the exclusions apply. If approved, the organic system plan summary or organic certificate will be updated to reflect the product(s) or crop(s) are "Certified in accordance with the terms of the U.S.-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement."

3. Fees: Americert charges a fee for the review of USCOEA compliance as stated in the current fee schedule. These fees apply for the review, not the approval, and can be charged even if the product is denied USCOEA certification.

4. Duration of Certification: The certification lasts until the product is dropped upon initiation of the applicant, removed by Americert as being no longer eligible for USCOEA certification, or annually on the operation's annual anniversary date as determined by Americert and listed on the certificate and OSPS.

5. Duty to Disclose: Operations have a duty to disclose if any of the underlying eligibility requirements for USCOEA certification of the product or ingredient change.

E. Imports into the U.S. under USCOEA:

1. Scope: This equivalence covers trade of USDA-certified and COR certified products between the United States and Canada, as well as third countries. Products produced outside of the United States or Canada must be certified through the entire supply chain to either the USDA or Canadian organic standards.



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To be eligible for export to the U.S., COR certified organic products must:

- Be raised or produced in Canada; or
- Have final processing or packaging occur within Canada; or
- Be produced or have the final processing or packaging occur within a third country in compliance with the terms of this arrangement.

Allowed product categories: Crops, Wild Crops, Livestock, and Processed Products.

Generally, all USDA and COR certified organic products are eligible for trade under this equivalence, but there are some stipulations. The following are additional requirements for certified organic products exported to the U.S.: Agricultural products derived from animals treated with antibiotics shall not be sold, labeled, or represented as organic in the U.S.

2. Trade Documentation for Imports into U.S.: COR products imported into the U.S. must be associated with an electronic [NOP Import Certificate](#). COR-accredited certification bodies generate NOP Import Certificates in USDA's [GLOBAL Organic Integrity Database](#) (Global Integrity). Operations that export products to the U.S. under the organic equivalence arrangement are also listed in Global Integrity under the Trade Partners tab. The NOP Import Certificate must include the following attestation statement:

“Certified in compliance with the terms of the U.S.-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement.”

For all COR-certified organic products produced and/or handled in India that are exported to the U.S.:

- COR certifiers and operations are responsible for verifying the organic integrity of all shipments coming into the U.S. under the equivalence arrangement. TraceNet certificates are a [Government of India requirement](#) for products to be exported from India as organic and are an important tool in this verification.
- The NOP Import Certificate, required for all organic products imported to the U.S., is also an important tool that can help assess compliance.
- COR certifiers and operations are also expected to require any other documentation necessary to demonstrate compliance of the full supply chain, which may include COR and USDA organic certificates, and other supply chain documentation (e.g., load quantities, lot numbers, production sources, other supply chain records), and the required TraceNet certificates.

For more information about importing organic products from India to the U.S., see the NOP's [International Trade Policies: India webpage](#).

Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mexico recognizing the two national organic systems as equivalent. Mexican organic products certified to the Mexican organic standard and imported to Canada cannot be re-exported to the U.S. or used as ingredients in products destined for the U.S. market under the U.S.-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement. See [Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\)'s website](#) for an overview and more details of this arrangement.

3. 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.