



Policy Memorandum

To: Stakeholders and Interested Parties

From: Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator

Subject: Placement of “Certified Organic By ****” Statement

Date: Revised – January 9, 2013. Original Issue Date – September 12, 2012.

The USDA organic regulations require that packaged products include a statement similar to, “certified organic by (name of certifying agent that certified the handler of the finished product).” Specifically, this statement must be placed below the information identifying the handler or distributor of the product in all three organic labeling categories:

- Organic, per Section 205.303(b)(2).
- 100 percent organic, per Section 205.303(b)(2).
- “Made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s)),” per Section 205.304(b)(2).

However, previous NOP correspondence and training modules addressing the placement of the “certified organic by ****” statement deviated from the USDA organic regulations. The NOP received several related questions from certifying agents and has corrected these errors on its website. The NOP understands that many certified operations’ certifying agents have approved product labels based on these incorrect NOP resources and would incur financial hardship to print new labels.

The “certified organic by ****” statement plays a critical role in ensuring the integrity of organic products, allowing consumers and the organic trade to verify the certification status of final product handlers. Its placement below the statement identifying the handler or distributor of the product helps it stand out from other label elements, but does not affect its utility.

Certifying agents should ensure that all new product labels include a statement similar to “certified organic by (name of certifying agent that certified the handler of the finished product).” This statement must be placed below the information identifying the handler or distributor of the product as required by the USDA organic regulations.



NOP is granting a transition period regarding the placement of the “certified organic by ***” statement for existing product labels:

Before January 1, 2016:

- Packaged product labels must comply with all USDA organic requirements *except* for the placement of the “certified organic by ***” statement.
- The “certified organic by ***” statement must still be present on the package.
- Certifying agents must identify and address non-compliant packaged product labels.

On and after January 1, 2016:

- Packaged product labels must meet all USDA organic regulations, including the placement of the “certified organic by ***” statement.

For additional information, certified operations should contact their certifying agent and certifying agents should contact their NOP Accreditation Manager.