

INTERNATIONAL EXPORT AND IMPORT OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS

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Exporting Organic Products

In order to facilitate international trade of organic goods, the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) has established trade partnerships or equivalency agreements with other countries. Below is a summary of the trade rules for Canada and for the 28 member countries of the European Union (EU). For more information please refer to the NOP factsheet: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/publications/content/exporting-organic-products-us>. The MCS 2018 Practice Manual lists requirements for export of organic products. Please contact MCS if you have any questions.

Canada

The USDA NOP has an equivalency arrangement with Canada. Transaction certificates are not required. Organic products for export must meet the following requirements:

1. Crops grown without use of sodium nitrate fertilizer.
2. Crops not produced using hydroponic or aeroponic methods.
3. Non-ruminant livestock must meet relevant Canadian stocking rates.
4. Retail labels must comply with Canadian labeling requirements, including its dual language requirement (English and French). Labels must identify MCS as the certifier. Labels may display the USDA organic seal and/or the Canada organic logo.
5. The producer's organic certificate must state: "Certified in compliance with the terms of the US-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement". Contact MCS if you need this statement added to your certificate.

European Union (EU)

The NOP has an equivalency arrangement with the European Union, which currently has 28 member countries. A "Certificate of Inspection" document must accompany all organic shipments to the EU. These certificates are now generated via the online TRACES (TRAdE and Control Expert System) system. Producers wishing to export to the EU must set up a TRACES account and submit requests for export certificates within this system. MCS can provide assistance in setting up and navigating the TRACES system.

Organic products must meet the following requirements for export to the EU:

1. Products must be produced or have final processing/packaging within the US
2. Crops must be produced without the use of antibiotics
3. Retail labels must display the MCS certifier code (US-ORG-027) and identify MCS as the certifier. Labels may display the USDA organic seal and/or the EU organic logo

Switzerland

The NOP has an equivalency arrangement with Switzerland, which is not a member of the EU. Shipping documents must include a "Swiss Import Certificate" completed by MCS. Organic products must meet the following requirements:

1. Products must be produced or have final processing/packaging within the US
2. Retail labels must display the MCS certifier code (US-ORG-027) and identify MCS as the certifier. Labels may display the USDA organic seal.
3. Exported products meet Swiss organic labeling requirements.

Japan and Taiwan

The NOP has an equivalency arrangement with both Japan and Taiwan. Shipping documents must include a "TM-11 Export Certificate" completed by MCS. For more details on shipping products to these and other countries please contact MCS or refer to the MCS 2018 Practice Manual.

Importing Organic Products

This section applies only to those who import organic products or ingredients directly from a farm or business located in another country. Imported organic products must be certified to the USDA NOP organic standard or to an international organic standard recognized by the NOP. All imported products must meet the NOP organic labeling requirements.

If importing organic product from Canada the shipment must be accompanied by documentation that states "Certified in compliance with the terms of the US-Canada equivalency arrangement." You must also obtain the current organic certificate for each Canadian supplier.

If importing organic product from the EU, Japan, Korea, Switzerland or Mexico the product must ship with both an "NOP Import Certificate" signed by the supplier's certifier and the supplier's organic certificate.

Please contact MCS for more details on importing organic products.

