

Non-GMO and Organic Labeling

In today's marketplace, more education is clearly needed in helping consumers understand product label definitions and what they actually mean. MOFGA is aware of this issue and is working on it. Some recent studies point to specific confusion in distinguishing between "non-GMO" and "organic" claims. A study by the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (link: <http://scipol.duke.edu/content/consumers-are-confused-about-organic-and-non-gmo-labels>) confirms that non-GMO and organic labeling claims are not necessarily clear in the shopper's mind, finding consumers were willing to pay more for a packaged product — granola bars — with a "Non-GMO Project Verified" label versus the same product with a "USDA Organic" label. The outcome for fresh produce was slightly more in favor of the USDA Organic label.

Certified organic foods are by definition non-GMO, as stated by the NOP rule (and enforced by MOFGA Certification Services): "farmers and processors must show they aren't using GMOs and that they are protecting their products from contact with prohibited substances from farm to table." Alternatively, not all non-GMO verified products are certified organic. As an organic producer you are allowed to label your product as non-GMO with a simple claim in your label design.

Organic Valley's "Organic Always Means Non-GMO" labeling campaign and logo, below, is a great example of this messaging. <https://www.organicvalley.coop/why-organic-valley/organic-always-non-gmo/>

Note: you are not allowed to use the "Non-GMO Project Verified" claim or logo unless you have undertaken their verification process.

Whenever you develop a new label design we strongly encourage you to submit it to your specialist in order to have the label approved before printing.



The Real Organic Project (ROP), a proposed "add-on" label to the USDA National Organic Program, continues to move forward in progressing toward finalization. The goal of the ROP, from their website, is to "help educate and connect those who care about organic farming as practiced around the world. Our mission is to grow people's understanding of traditional organic values and practices. One of our goals is to create an add-on label to USDA certified organic to provide more transparency on these farming practices. USDA organic certification is a prerequisite to

participate in the add-on program. We believe that crops grown in soil and livestock raised on pasture-based systems are fundamental to organic farming. The Real Organic Project is family farmer-driven and embraces centuries-old organic farming practices along with new scientific knowledge of ecological farming. Healthy soil equals healthy crops and livestock, which equals healthy people and a healthy climate."

Provisional Standards have been established (www.realorganicproject.org/

www.realorganicproject.org/) and pilot farms will begin working with the standards this summer. Projections for finalized standards available to eligible farms will likely be ready in 2019.

To view who the members are, members of the ROP Advisory Board and the Executive Board, or view the standards, visit their website (www.realorganicproject.org/).



real
Organic
project

