

## Dear Certification Specialist...

*Dear Certification Specialist,*

*Now that I am certified I would like to make an organic claim on my website and on my other marketing materials. What should I know before I start my design process?*

*Thank you,*

**Define Design**

Dear Define Design,

Most important is that organic claims on websites, social media and other marketing materials state the truth and are not misleading regarding the status of organic and non-organic products. The organic rule does not specifically mention websites or social media and NOP 205 subpart D market information is more specific to package labeling.

However, MOFGA Certification Services does review websites and other marketing materials. MCS checks if the word "organic" as well as the USDA Organic seal, and MOFGA Certification Services logo on webpages and other marketing materials are used correctly. In the case of parallel producers MCS makes sure that it is clear for users of the website and marketing materials which products are organic and which are not. MCS checks that statements about what is certified organic reflect what appears on your organic certificate and product verification.

On your website or marketing materials you may use the USDA organic seal or the MOFGA Certification logo to represent your business as certified organic. If you also sell non-certified products

and would like to use the USDA seal or the MCS logo, it is very important that you designate a clear explanation of what is certified. Your non-organic product must be represented in such a way that a consumer will not assume that a non-organic product is organic.

Make sure to contact your organic specialist if you have any more questions about this.

Happy designing!



## Soil Test Reimbursements

The evaluation of soil quality is a major component of both our application review process and our on-site inspections for organic certification. Soil tests by the University of Maine or an equivalent laboratory are an excellent and affordable way to demonstrate that your farm practices maintain or improve soil quality.

Although MCS does not require soil tests, they are recommended to determine and prove fertility needs. Any submitted test results will be added to your farm plan records. In addition, fees for soil tests performed in the last 12 months and submitted to MCS are eligible for the 75% federal cost-sharing program administered by the State of Maine. (Note, however, that the cost share program reimburses certified producers to a maximum of 75% or \$750 per certification scope, so if you reach this limit you will not be reimbursed further for any soil tests costs.)

## Defenders of Organic Integrity Win Victory for Transparency and Open Government

On May 6th the Federal District Court in San Francisco agreed with organic farmers, consumers and animal welfare advocates that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) cannot hide communications and documents that led up to the controversial decision by the Trump administration to withdraw the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices rule (OLPP), which would have required animal welfare standards on farms producing organic meat and eggs.

Read the full article from the Center for Food Safety here: <https://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/press-releases/5590/defenders-of-organic-integrity-win-victory-for-transparency-and-open-government>

## Body Condition Score as a Nutritional Management Tool

Body condition score (BCS) is an easy-to-use tool that describes the relative fatness of beef cattle. A nine-point BCS scale can be used to manage the cow herd. For example, there is a strong correlation between body condition of a cow and her reproductive performance and productivity. Percentage of open cows, calving interval, and calf vigor at birth are all closely related to the BCS of cows both at calving and during the breeding season.

Read the full article on the Penn State Extension website: <https://extension.psu.edu/body-condition-score-as-a-nutritional-management-tool>

