

THE

GUIDE TO
ORGANIC
LABELLING
IN CANADA



Your labels must still be approved by your organic Certification Body.

This publication is for information purposes only and is sourced from the Organic Product Regulations, 2009 (SOR/2009-176) and accompanying Canadian Food Inspection Agency Directives.

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For more information please visit: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/labelling/food-labelling-for-industry>



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What is organic?

Only products with 95% or more organic content may carry the Canadian Organic Logo.

Having the logo is not mandatory, but it is a trusted symbol that is helpful for consumers.

There are no restrictions as to size or location of the logo on your label.

Obtaining the Canada Organic logo for your Product:

You must obtain the Canada Organic logo from Certification Bodies accredited by the CFIA or Certification Bodies recognized under an organic trade arrangement with a foreign competent authority.

Using the Canada Organic logo for Imported Products:

Imported products carrying the Canada Organic logo on their labels or PLU stickers must indicate 'product of' immediately preceding the name of the country of origin, or the statement 'imported' in close proximity to the logo.

NB: If you are looking to use the logo for purposes other than labelling a product, you must request permission from the CFIA.

Name of certification body

The product must be certified by a CFIA-accredited Certification Body and the name of that certifier **MUST** appear on the label.

The name of the Certifying Body can appear anywhere on the product, including the front label, except the bottom of the container. Minimum type size for the certifier's name is 1.6mm based on the lower-case letter "o". If an organic claim is made on a PLU sticker, the name of the Certification Body must also appear on the PLU.

The statement "Certified Organic" is not acceptable, only "Certified by X Certifying Body" is acceptable. This may seem minor, but if products are labelled 'Certified Organic' and others are not, it may lead the consumer to believe only products claiming to be 'Certified Organic' are certified.

Organic claims for multi-ingredient products

Products with 95% or greater organic content:

Multiple-ingredient products greater than or equal to 95% may be labelled as organic and may display the Canada Organic logo.

Only products with 95% or greater organic content may label or advertise using the words:

- Organic;
- Organically grown;
- Organically raised;
- Organically produced.

Or similar words including abbreviations of, symbols for, or phonetic renderings of those words. There is no limit to print size or font for these statements.

A maximum of 5% of non-organic ingredients may be used only if not commercially available in organic form. The cost of organic ingredient(s) is not a criterion for 'commercially available'.



You cannot claim that the product is '100% organic' under the Organic Product Regulations (OPR). Though, you may see the '100% organic' claim on a US certified product. You can say the product is "98% organic" if that claim is true, but it must be verifiable.

Multi-ingredient products with 70-95% organic content:

These products may carry the declaration "Contains XX% organic ingredients," with the percentage rounded down to the nearest whole number. All numbers, signs or symbols in this declaration must be of the same size and prominence. Minimum print size is 1.6mm, based on the lowercase letter "o". There is no maximum print size. The declaration can appear on any panel, including the front panel.

They must identify the organic ingredients in the list of ingredients. Unlike in the 95% or greater organic category, non-organic ingredients may be used (even if there is a commercially available

organic alternative). However, the use of organic and non-organic versions of the same ingredient is not permitted.

Must be certified by a CFIA-accredited Certification Body and the certifier's name must appear on any label or PLU making an organic claim.

Multi-ingredient products with less than 70% organic content:

- May only carry organic claims in the product's ingredient list.
- May NOT be labelled as 'organic' or carry the Canada Organic logo.

These products do not require certification. However, the organic ingredients contained within these products must be certified, and the manufacturer must keep records identifying the certifier.

Determining the percentage of organic ingredients

The percentage of organic content in a multi-ingredient product is determined in accordance with the Canadian Organic Standards (CAN/CGSB32.310) which are incorporated into law by reference in the OPR .

Only single ingredient products can be used to determine the percentage of organic content in a multi-ingredient product.



For example, all the multi-ingredient products making up organic bread must be broken down into their component ingredients to calculate the product's final percentage of organic content. Organic bread could contain a four-grain mix, with some grains organic, some not however this would not be used to determine the percentage. The four-grain mix must be broken down into individual grains - barley, oat, rye and spelt.

It gets trickier:

Solid Products: Divide the total net mass of combined organic ingredients in the formulation or finished product, whichever is more relevant, by the total mass of all ingredients.

Liquid Products: Divide the fluid volume of all organic ingredients by the fluid volume of all ingredients if the product and ingredients are liquid. If the liquid product is identified on the principal display panel as reconstituted from concentrates or by similar phrases, the calculation uses the single-strength concentrations of the ingredients or finished product.

Solid and Liquid Products: Divide the combined mass of solid organic ingredients and the mass of the liquid organic ingredients by the total mass of all ingredients in the finished product.

Livestock feed: If you are producing livestock feed, it must contain 100% organic agricultural ingredients and the necessary feed additives or supplements (see s. 5.2 of CAN/CGSB32.311). Divide the total net mass (excluding calcium compounds) of combined organic ingredients in the formulation or finished product, whichever is more relevant, by the total mass (excluding calcium compounds) of all ingredients.

NB: For the purposes of calculating ingredients, water and salt are not included.

Other labels and import/export requirements

As a consumer, you will often see other products with labels, other than the recognized Canada Organic logo, on the shelves. This is mostly facilitated by equivalency arrangements, which Canada has with five other countries

- United States;
- European Union;
- Switzerland;
- Japan; and
- Costa Rica.



Equivalency arrangements make trading in organic products easier, by eliminating the need for dual certification. These arrangements state that Canada's products, if certified to the OPR, do not need to be certified to the trading country's standards. However, each arrangement is unique and may have additional criteria.

For products being traded to the US, "Certified in compliance with

the terms of the US-Canada Organic Equivalency Arrangement” must appear on documentation accompanying shipments of organic products, produced under the terms of the arrangement. Depending on what documentation is used, this statement may appear on the organic certificate, transaction certificate, bill of lading, or purchase order.

Canadian products exported to the EU under the Canada-EU Organic Equivalency Arrangement must be accompanied by a “Certificate of Inspection for Import of Organic product into the European Community”.

At all times, when importing a product to Canada, you must be able to demonstrate that the product meets the requirements of the OPR, or the terms of the relevant equivalency arrangement.

Regardless of which standard a product is certified to, organic products must meet the labelling requirements of the country in which they are sold. Different countries also have different rules for using their organic logos. If you are seeking to sell your products in other countries, contact your certifier for full information.

Provincial logos

Two provinces also have organic logos for products that are produced and sold within that province.



You must comply with provincial regulations to use these logos. More information can be obtained from the respective provincial government websites.



For general information from COTA on organic methods, trends and news, we can be reached at:



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