



Announcement

June 12, 2012

Changes to the Organic Documentation Requirements

The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) is committed to processing applications for label approval as efficiently as possible without impacting the quality of that review. To address the resource and workload challenges TTB is facing today, we are proactively evaluating our work processes as well as the regulations to focus on ways to streamline our operations.

On June 3, 2010, TTB renewed our agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) through a memorandum of understanding (MOU); which clarifies and delineates the enforcement responsibilities of each agency with respect to the labeling and advertising of alcohol beverages produced under the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (OFPA) (7 U.S.C. 6501-6522) and National Organic Program (NOP) regulations (7 CFR part 205) and for other related purposes.

The MOU outlined AMS's policy with respect to the labeling and advertising of alcohol beverages as "100% organic", "organic", or "made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))", which must comply with the NOP regulations and clarifies the responsibilities of each agency related to the review and approval of alcohol beverage labels that contain organic claims.

Currently an industry member submitting a Certificate of Label Approval (COLA) application for alcohol products in the "100% Organic", "Organic", and "Made with Organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))" labeling categories is required to submit the following documentation: (1) the organic certificate for the handling operation that makes the finished product, and (2) the Accredited Certifying Agent's (ACA) preview. The ACA preview contains the actual images of the product label and the stamp or signature of the certifying agent or control body/authority which verifies that the product label complies with the USDA NOP organic labeling requirements.

Effective immediately, a copy of the organic certificate is no longer required to accompany any COLA application for alcohol beverages labeled as "100% Organic", "Organic", and "Made with Organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))". The ACA preview is still required to accompany COLA applications for these products.



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Organic alcohol beverages produced in the European Union (EU) and imported into the United States under the U.S.-EU organic equivalence arrangement must include the label preview with the COLA application. The label preview needs to be signed or stamped for approval by the EU authorized body that certified the product. Likewise, COLA applications for alcohol beverages imported into the United States under the U.S.-Canada organic equivalence arrangement need to be accompanied by a label preview that is signed or stamped by the applicable Canadian certification body.

Industry members who submit alcohol beverage labels that only identify the organic contents in an ingredient statement are still required to submit organic certificates for each ingredient identified as organic with their COLA application(s). An ACA preview is not required for label applications for products in this category.

If you have any questions, please contact the Advertising, Labeling and Formulation Division:

By phone at 202-453-2250 or toll free at 1-866-927-2533
option 4: Distilled Spirits and Malt Beverage Labeling, or
option 6: Wine Labeling; or

By email at alfd@ttb.gov.