



USDA BIOPREFERRED® PROGRAM OVERVIEW

USDA's BioPreferred® Program

Managed by USDA, BioPreferred was initiated and reauthorized in the two most recent "Farm Bills," the Food Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 and the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

The goal of BioPreferred is to increase the purchase and use of biobased products through two initiatives: procurement preference by federal agencies and their contractors and voluntary certification and labeling for consumer marketing.

Biobased Products Defined

Biobased products are commercial or industrial products (other than food or feed) that are composed in whole, or in significant part, of biological products, renewable agricultural materials (including plant, animal and marine materials) or forestry materials.

The 2008 Farm Bill extended the definition of biobased products to include biobased intermediate ingredients or feedstocks. Biobased products do not include fossil fuels such as coal or petroleum, motor vehicle fuels, heating oil and electricity produced from biomass (biological material from living or recently living organisms, most commonly used as a renewal energy source).

Federal Procurement Preference

The 2002 Farm Bill requires the U.S. government and its contractors to buy and use products that are biobased. BioPreferred designates which types of products must be afforded this procurement preference. As a part of this process, a minimum biobased content is specified for each product category, and information on the technical, health and environmental characteristics of these products is made available on the BioPreferred website (www.biopreferred.gov). Products that had a significant market share in 1972 do not qualify for federal procurement preference. For example, cotton T-shirts are biobased but are considered a mature market product since a significant portion of the T-shirt market, as of 1972, consisted of cotton-based products.

Voluntary Certification and Labeling

The consumer-focused portion of BioPreferred is designed to empower the consumer to take into account the verified amount of biobased content in a product and to assure them of the accuracy of biobased content of products that include the official "USDA Certified Biobased Product" label. The USDA certified biobased label is intended to be:

- Easy to understand
- Transparent by way of percent biobased content
- Cost-effective to the end user
- Proprietary and controlled

The USDA Certified Biobased Product Eligibility

Products must be biobased to be eligible for certification. Products that fit into one of the designated federal procurement preference categories must meet or exceed the required biobased content minimum for that category. All other products must be at least 25 percent biobased unless the label applicant applies for and receives an alternative minimum biobased content. Mature market products, which are excluded from the federal procurement preference program, will be considered for label certification on a case-by-case basis.

WHAT ARE "FARM BILLS"?

U.S. Farm Bills are the primary agricultural and food policy legislation of the federal government. The bills are revised every few years and can affect farm production practices, food safety, environmental trade and many other agricultural areas.

The 2002 Farm Bill established the BioPreferred program to increase the purchase and use of biobased products made from renewable agricultural materials. The program was reauthorized in the 2008 Farm Bill.

Application Requirements

Applicants must provide a variety of information about the product, the company supplying it and themselves. This information includes:

- Product details
- Contact information
- Website address
- Documentation supporting claims about the environmental and human health effects, life-cycle costs, sustainability benefits and performance of the product

Product Certification

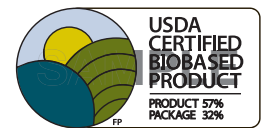
USDA will evaluate each application to determine if the product meets the above certification criteria, and a sample of the product must be tested for biobased content. USDA will certify products that meet the criteria and deny certification to those that do not. Applicants of certified products may begin using the USDA Certified Biobased Product label. Explanations of denials will be provided to applicants, and applications may be revised and resubmitted.

Certification will remain valid as long as the product is manufactured in accordance with the information supplied in the approved application. If USDA revises the applicable required minimum biobased content for a product, manufacturers and vendors may continue to label their previously certified product only if it meets the new minimum biobased content level.

USDA Certified Biobased Label Artwork

The emblem in the label is meant to represent the sun, soil and farm, and aquatic environments. The certification label is intended to be used only to represent products and packaging approved for the voluntary labeling program, including:

- On a qualifying product or package
- In product literature, for a qualifying product or package
- On a website to identify a qualifying product or package
- In advertisements where it is used near to or on a qualifying product or package
- On point-of-purchase materials



USDA Certified Biobased Product Label

About the Certified Products

By the end of 2011, BioPreferred had received applications for the certification of more than 800 products. More than 500 of them had been certified, and more than 300 had been under review. One hundred and fifty different types of products are represented in these applications, ranging from industrial supplies to personal care items. BioPreferred has identified more than 25,000 products available on the market today.

KEY TERMS

Proposed rules are part of the federal rulemaking process. After a rule is proposed, it is published in the *Federal Register* and made available for public comment for 60 days. These comments are taken into consideration before the rule is finalized.

Biobased products are commercial or industrial products whose main ingredients are renewable plant or animal materials.

Section 9002 of the 2002 Farm Bill requires federal government officials and their contractors to purchase biobased products as often as possible.

Federal procurement preference requires the U.S. government to buy products that meet certain standards, such as being biobased.

Mature market products are products that had a significant market share in 1972. For example, cotton T-shirts are biobased but are considered a mature market product since a significant portion of the T-shirt market, as of 1972, consisted of cotton-based products.