



BIOPREFERRED PROGRAM STATUS

AS OF JANUARY 2013



Program Overview

Congress created the Biobased Markets Program (BioPreferred Program) in Section 9002 of the 2002 Farm Bill, and reauthorized the program in the 2008 Farm Bill. The two key elements of the BioPreferred program are a mandatory Federal government procurement preference initiative and a voluntary product certification effort. USDA identifies (designates) products with a minimum biobased content, and offers tools to manufacturers and to Federal buyers to increase the purchase and use of these designated biobased products. There are currently 9,000 designated biobased products in 89 different categories available for preferred Federal purchasing.

BioPreferred launched biobased product certification and labeling in February 2011. Certified biobased products have been tested at an independent laboratory to meet USDA-published minimum biobased content, and third-party certified as to this tested content. Certified products may feature/display a USDA biobased product label. In nearly two years, USDA has certified 900 biobased products in more than 50 different categories, from construction, janitorial, and grounds keeping products specified and purchased by the Department of Defense and Federal agencies, to personal care and packaging products used by consumers every day.

Current Program Status

Due to the absence of funding in the Farm Bill extension legislation (i.e., the “American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012”), USDA has had to suspend the processing of applications for voluntary certification of biobased products. All existing biobased product label certifications -- 900 ‘USDA Certified Biobased Products’ as of December 31, 2012 -- are and will remain valid. USDA staff will continue working on limited activities for the Federal procurement preference program, as staff resources allow.

Preferred Federal Government Purchasing Initiative – Specific Projects

Key projects are outlined in the table below. Status and/or next steps are summarized as well.

Project	Information	Next Steps
Presidential Memorandum (2012) on biobased products www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/02/21/presidential-memorandum-driving-innovation-and-creating-jobs-rural-ameri	Seven of the eight goals outlined in this memo have been completed. The survey on biobased job creation has not been completed.	Additional progress will continue as staff resources allow.
Designated Products Listed in USDA Catalog	There are currently about 3,000 designated products listed in the BioPreferred catalog at www.biopreferred.gov/bioPreferredCatalog/faces/jsp/catalogLanding.jsp . The catalog remains visible and is being updated as staff resources allow.	Visit www.biopreferred.gov/ProductSubmissionNew.aspx to add your designated biobased product to the catalog. USDA staff will respond as resources allow.
Designating Additional Biobased Products / “Rounds”	Round 10 will designate eight additional product categories.	Expected to publish as a Final Rule March 2013.
Federal Agency/Government Biobased Product Reporting	Federal Acquisition Requirements (FAR) / USDA reporting tool on web site for May-October 2013 reporting is available at www.biopreferred.gov/FARReporting/FARReporting.xhtml	The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is working on a permanent government-wide reporting system through the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS).

Project	Information	Next Steps
BioPreferred Program Guidelines Revision	USDA staff is analyzing public comments on the May 2012 Proposed Rule www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=OPPM-2012-0002-0001 and is developing positions on issues raised.	USDA staff will publish program guidelines as a Final Rule following analysis of comments, drafting of a final rule, and appropriate reviews.
BioPreferred Program Training	Participating in requests for USDA training on program and resources via webinar is possible; USDA program staff may personally attend Washington, DC-based training events.	Visit www.biopREFERRED.gov/Training_Resources.aspx to download/view/use training tools, including taped seminars.

Biobased Product Certification and Labeling – Specific Questions

USDA has received many questions about the validity of the existing ‘USDA Certified Biobased Products’. See table below for answers to the most common questions.

Question	Answer	Comment
What does “existing certified products are still active/valid” mean?	Companies may continue to label certified product(s)/packaging, and market/sell them as USDA certified biobased products.	More than 900 USDA certified biobased products are listed in the BioPreferred catalog at www.biopREFERRED.gov/bioPreferredCatalog/faces/jsp/catalogLanding.jsp
How do I submit an application for certification?	It is not possible to submit a new application at this time.	USDA will notify companies via this website page (www.biopREFERRED.gov/Label_Application.aspx) when applying for certification becomes available.
I have already submitted an application for certification, what is the status?	If you weren’t notified by January 18, 2013 about certification of your product, then your application will remain in “submitted” status until it’s possible for USDA to process.	Companies can continue to login to their account here www.biopREFERRED.gov/Label_Application.aspx with an existing eAuth user ID and password.
What is ASTM International’s role in the process now?	ASTM won a competitive bid in 2010 to provide certification services as a contractor to USDA. ASTM is not currently funded to provide assistance to USDA or to biobased product manufacturers on the certification process.	General information about ASTM’s role as USDA’s biobased product certifier, and the certification requirements can be found here www.astm.org/CERTIFICATION/filtrexx40.cgi?-P+PROG+2+cert_detail.frm .
Should/Can I still get my biobased product tested?	Yes, this is possible, but companies may not utilize test results as a proxy USDA certification, or use test results to apply the label to products/packaging.	Laboratories that test biobased products using the ASTM D6866 method and that are recognized by USDA’s certification initiative can be found here www.astm.org/CERTIFICATION/filtrexx40.cgi?-P+PROG+2+cert_detail.frm#Accepted-Laboratories-to-Conduct-Testing-of-Biobased-Products

Additional Information

Many general questions about the BioPreferred program can be answered at our FAQ page here (<http://www.biopREFERRED.gov/FAQ.aspx>). Please visit this page and review it before emailing USDA personnel.

For questions on the BioPreferred program generally or on the Federal procurement initiative:
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For questions on the biobased certification and labeling initiative or on biobased product audits:
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