

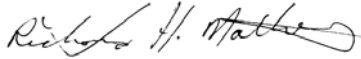


United States
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1400 Independence Avenue, SW.
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INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM TO USDA-ACCREDITED CERTIFYING AGENTS

FROM: Richard Mathews 
Associate Deputy Administrator
National Organic Program

SUBJECT: Documented Source of Approved & Prohibited Materials for Use
in Organic Operations

DATE: July 16, 2004

We have received many inquiries from accredited certifying agents and from producers of organic operations about the use of materials listed in the Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) lists of generic materials and brand name products.

The National Organic Program (NOP) recognizes that many certifying agents, having performed such certification work for many years prior to becoming accredited certifying agents (ACAs) for USDA, were accustomed to relying on OMRI's published lists as a source of information about generic materials and brand name products for use in organic operations.

We recognize that many ACAs find the OMRI lists more "user friendly" than the National List (7 CFR 205.600-606) as published in the regulations, and we do not disagree with ACA's use of the OMRI lists as a readily available source of information on generic materials and brand name products. The *OMRI Generic Materials List* (GML) contains information not found in the regulations, such as allowed natural (non-synthetic) substances and prohibited synthetic substances that are not specifically cited in the NOP Standards (7 CFR Part 205).

Since the NOP Standards became effective on October 21, 2002, ACAs are bound to cite the listing of materials in the National List, and other applicable sections of the regulations, as the official source for decisions concerning approved and prohibited materials for organic operations. No other citation is allowed. All documentation related to the certification of a certified organic operation must reference this regulation.

Where questions arise or conflicts appear, ACAs cannot substitute a reference to the GML in place of a citation from the National List of Approved and Prohibited Materials or other applicable parts of the regulations. ACAs who do so and whose decision is challenged by a producer risk having their decision overturned by the NOP.

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The OMRI listing of generic materials allowed for or prohibited for use in organic operations must be in compliance with the National List as contained in 7 CFR 205.600-606 and other applicable sections of the regulations. Toward that end, NOP has consulted with OMRI and will engage in a cooperative review of the GML. The review will commence later this summer, beginning with priorities identified mutually by NOP and OMRI.

Questions about materials that cannot be easily answered by referring to the National List should be referred to the NOP, or where appropriate to the State Organic Program.

NOP welcomes input from its certifying agents and all interested parties at any time. You may contact the program by calling 202-720-3252 or by fax at 202-205-7808.

cc: Laura Morrison
Executive Director, OMRI

T. Mark King, Chair
National Organic Standards Board