



Organic claims on websites and other marketing

Organic claims on websites, social media, and other marketing must be truthful about the status of organic and nonorganic products. Websites and social media are considered market information and can be reviewed using [NOP 205 Subpart D Labels, Labeling, and Market Information](#) (205.300-311). As the regulations are more specific to package labeling, website review is often somewhat subjective. CCOF reviews websites, social media, and other marketing using the guidelines outlined below. We may purchase products online or subscribe to services to review online and virtual marketing claims. Operations who do not follow these guidelines may receive notices of Noncompliance.

What CCOF reviews:

1. We review all websites for CCOF certified operations with online sales.
 - a. For businesses that only sell to consumers online, your website will be part of your Organic System Plan (OSP). Changes to organic products or business representation on the website must be disclosed to CCOF.
 - b. For businesses with physical and online sales, we review websites during annual inspections.
2. We review any website or marketing information related to a complaint or investigation.
3. We may review social media marketing including online ads and search engine results.
4. We may review third party online sales channels managed or established by the CCOF certified operation, such as Amazon marketplace stores.
5. We may review other marketing, such as consumer-facing signs at retail locations.
6. Website, social media, and other marketing reviews of over one hour will be billed the rate for technical services per [CCOF Certification Services Manual](#).
7. We do not generally review sales channels that the CCOF certified operation does not manage, such as resellers or distributors.
8. We do not generally review promotional materials such as T-shirts, cooking utensils and other marketing materials.

What CCOF looks for:

1. Use of the word "organic", the USDA Organic seal, CCOF's name, and CCOF's logo on webpages and other marketing, especially webpages where product can be purchased, including the "shopping cart".
2. Where consumers can purchase products on your website, each individual product must have accurate, specific claims at the point of sale. A consumer must be able to determine whether a specific product is organic or not prior to purchase.
 - a. Listing an organic product on your website before CCOF has approved the product and added it to your Client Profile Certificate Addendum may result in a Noncompliance.
3. True statements about what is certified organic may be made on your website home page, other pages on your website, and other marketing. Claims must be specific and reflect what appears on your organic certificate and Client Profile Certificate Addendum.
 - a. Compliant example: "Our handling of all organic items is certified."
 - b. Noncompliant examples:
 - i. "Organic ingredients" when not all ingredients being sold are certified organic.
 - ii. "We strive to use organic ingredients" does not specifically disclose to consumers what is certified.





4. Organic percentage statements must be verified. If you make a statement about the percentage of organic products offered, your claim must be specific and either your website or OSP must explain how you calculate that percentage.
 - a. Compliant example: “70% of the total number of products we purchase are organic. Actual quantity of organic ingredients in your delivery may be less than 70%.”
 - b. Noncompliant example: “We strive for at least 70% organic ingredients.” It is unclear to the consumer what percentage of ingredients they receive are organic.
5. You must be able to describe to a CCOF inspector how you verify organic claims. You may be required to include your verification process on your website and in your OSP.
 - a. Example of a compliant claim requiring verification: “We always source organic eggs.”
6. For businesses that *only* sell to consumers online: the “Certified Organic by CCOF” (or similar phrase) **must** appear on website at least once in legible font, as the website functions as retail labeling.

Use of the USDA Organic seal or CCOF logo:

1. The [USDA seal](#) must only appear in the form and colors allowed per 205.311.
2. For products that are only sold to consumers online, the USDA seal or CCOF logo may be used on shipping boxes, packing slips, invoices, or ingredient lists only if the website itself (place of purchase) and product packaging, packing slip, invoice, or ingredient list makes a clear and conspicuous organic claim at the point of sale. Use of the USDA seal is allowed on shipping boxes only if the box contains at least one certified “Organic” or “100% Organic” product.
3. The USDA seal or CCOF logo may be used to represent your business as certified organic.
 - a. The USDA seal may only be used if you have at least one “Organic” or “100% Organic” product. The USDA seal cannot be used if you only offer “Made with Organic...” products.
 - b. The CCOF logo may be used by any CCOF certified operation, including those that only offer “Made with Organic...” products.
 - c. If using both USDA seal and CCOF logo, the USDA seal should be more prominent.
4. If you offer both organic and nonorganic products, your use of the USDA seal or CCOF logo on your website should be accompanied by a clear and conspicuous explanation of what is certified. This includes use of the USDA seal or CCOF logo on the home/landing page as well as headers, footers, and navigation menus. Explaining your organic claim allows the consumer to understand the degree to which your business offers organic. Your claim must be supported by your organic certificate.

Best practices:

- a. Written statement of your organic claim appears *next* to the USDA seal or CCOF logo.
 - b. Written statement is legible and similar in size to the USDA seal font size.
 - c. When both USDA seal and CCOF logo are used, the written statement appears near the USDA seal.
 - d. Include a hyperlink to a separate webpage that more fully outlines your organic claim.
5. The organic status of *each product* must be clear when individual products appear on your website or can be purchased from a page that displays the USDA seal, CCOF logo or other organic claim. Everyday consumers must be able to clearly distinguish nonorganic products from organic products. Compliant examples include:
 - a. The USDA seal appears in the webpage header next to statement “Products below are all organic,” and all products on the page are certified organic. A separate page for nonorganic products does not include the USDA seal in page header.





- b. Organic and nonorganic products are displayed on the same page, and the USDA seal next is only next to individual organic products and not next to conventional products. There is no USDA seal in header.
 - c. The USDA seal in the webpage header is next to the statement “We offer both organic and nonorganic products,” and “organic” is only written next to organic products and not next to nonorganic products.
- 6. The USDA seal may only be used on “Organic” and “100% Organic” products, when used in direct relation to specific products, including on ordering pages or shopping carts.
- 7. When the USDA seal or CCOF logo appears in an image or photo, all products or ingredients in that image must be eligible to display the seal/logo, i.e. be certified “100% Organic” or “Organic” to use the USDA seal, or certified as “Made with Organic...” to use CCOF logo only.
 - a. If not all products or ingredients in the image are certified, neither the USDA seal nor CCOF logo can be used unless there is a clear and conspicuous explanation of what is certified organic, as described above.
 - b. Compliant examples:
 - i. Prepared organic chicken wrap or prepared organic smoothie containing only certified organic ingredients, all disclosed within your OSP. The USDA seal or CCOF logo may be used without additional explanation.
 - ii. Prepared or disassembled Salmon Veggie Bowl meal kit. All vegetables are organic, while the salmon is not organic. The USDA or CCOF logo may be used only if there is a clear and conspicuous claim attached to the certified products, e.g. “Proudly made with only Organic produce.”
 - iii. Prepared yogurt parfait containing organic strawberry jam and nonorganic yogurt. Image may contain a photo of the organic jam jar, which shows the USDA logo and Organic claim visibly on the jam label. No other organic claims would be permitted.

