



Washington State Department of Agriculture

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WSDA advises organic consumers to look for the “certified” label

OLYMPIA – Farmers markets are in full swing prompting more consumers to consider buying locally produced, organic products, but [the Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) is advising those consumers to be sure and look for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Organic seal or the WSDA Organic logo – both proof that the product was grown on a certified organic farm.

In Washington, WSDA’s Organic Food Program provides the inspection and certification service that establishes a grower, rancher or food processor has complied with national organic standards. The USDA Organic certificate is only issued once these stringent requirements have been met.



Products displaying the certified organic label have met requirements that include:

- Annual inspections of farms
- Using organic, GMO free seeds
- Use of natural pesticides and fertilizers
- Providing organic feed to livestock
- Ample time for livestock to graze and exercise
- Use of crop rotation and cover crops



“Sometimes, claims of organic production are made by farmers who are just unaware of organic standards,” said Brenda Book, Organic Food Program manager, “But there are also some who make such claims to reap the benefits of the word “organic” without following all the requirements a certified organic farmer must follow. Certification is the only way to make sure the product you buy was grown in accordance with organic standards.”

Created in 1988, WSDA’s Organic Food Program is one of the oldest programs of its kind in the United States. Today, there are more than 1,100 certified organic farms, handlers, and processors in Washington, growing and processing a wide variety of products. Visit www.agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic for a list of current WSDA certified organic operations or more information on the organic certification process. For more information, review [USDA’s fact sheet](#) on organic labeling at farmers markets.

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