



Japan and US Export Arrangement Modified

The National Organic Program has announced a change in the export arrangement between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in Japan. Since 2002, Japan has allowed US certified organic products to be imported into Japan, provided the products have not used potassium bicarbonate, lignon sulfonate, and alkali extracted humic acid in the production of the crops. These three materials are allowed for use under US organic standards.

In the fall of 2008 MAFF notified USDA that they are removing the prohibition on one of the materials and modifying the restriction on another material. As a result, USDA recently announced that the use of potassium bicarbonate and lignon sulfonate, as a binder or anticaking agent in crop production materials, is now allowed for products that are exported to Japan.

Under the revised agreement, US organic products may be exported to Japan if they have not been produced with alkali-extracted humic acid or lignon sulfonate as a flotation agent. A USDA export document (TM-11) verifying the conditions of the agreement must accompany all shipments of bulk agricultural products that are to be sold in Japan as "organic." WSDA Organic Program is authorized by USDA to issue this export document to WSDA certified operations for a fee of \$40 each.

WSDA Organic Program also offers a Japan Compliance Program for producers and handlers of organic crops. Through this evaluation program, WSDA inspectors and office staff review the input materials used by a certified operation and issue a Japan Compliance Affirmation to those operations that have not used alkali extracted humic acid or lignon sulfonate as a floatation agent with their organic crops. This additional evaluation provides the documentation necessary for a TM-11 to be completed by the certifier of the exporting company.

New Requirements for Exporting Organic Products to Taiwan

At the beginning of 2009 Taiwan implemented a new national organic standard and shipments of US organic products were blocked due to differences in the two country's organic requirements. However, the Agriculture and Food Agency of the Council of Agriculture (COA) announced on March 18, 2009, that the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Organic Program (NOP) has officially been recognized by the COA as equivalent to Taiwan's new organic standards. This announcement will allow U.S. organic food products to resume shipments into the Taiwan market under an export arrangement between USDA and COA.

The new export arrangement allows a USDA certification agency to sign off on shipments of products that meet the 95% and above organic composition requirements. Livestock and meat products must obtain additional verification that the organic animals were managed and produced without the use of systemic pain killers or analgesics, including the use of Lidocaine or Procaine. These two materials are allowed for use under US organic standards.

In order to meet the requirements of the new export arrangement, shipments of US organic products must be accompanied by a USDA export document (TM-11). WSDA Organic Program is authorized by USDA to issue this export document to WSDA certified operations for a fee of \$40 each.

For further information on the above export arrangements, or to obtain a TM-11 for a shipment of organic products to Japan or Taiwan, contact Brenda Book at (360) 902-2090, email: bbook@agr.wa.gov.