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A Lifestyle Publication
www.organiccpamagazine.com

What's in a Certification?

The range of natural and organic seals, standards and certifying bodies for personal-care products can be confusing. Here is the latest update on **who they are and what they mean**

By Mark Wuttke

Around the world, there are a growing number of organizations that seek to certify natural, organic and/or sustainable products and processes. To date, there are eight major organizations with certification standards. Here is a thumbnail guide to understanding each organization and its distinct standards.

NPA

www.npainfo.org

Certification Type: Natural

NPA requires a minimum of 95 percent natural origin for the "Natural" standard.

Limited amounts of synthetics are allowed. It does not have a standard for organic certification.

Country of Origin: USA

Business Type: Non-Profit. Membership required.



NATRUE

www.natrue.org

Certification Type: Natural, Organic, and Natural with organic portion

NATRUE is a cosmetic standard that requires 100 percent certified pure natural and derived natural (natural origin) ingredients. "Organic cosmetics" guarantees at least 95 percent of the natural ingredients stem from controlled organic production. "Natural with organic portion" guarantees at least 70 percent of the natural ingredients stem from organic production. It excludes water and salt in calculation of natural and organic content. NATRUE has an equivalency agreement / recognition with NSF/ANSI 305.

Country of Origin: Belgium

Business Type: Non-Profit



SOIL ASSOCIATION

www.soilassociation.org

Certification Type: Organic, and made with Organic ingredients

Soil Association is a standard for organic and made-with-organic ingredients. "Organic" must contain at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients. "Made with Organic Ingredients" must contain at least 70 percent organic ingredients. Limited amounts of synthetic preservatives and ingredients are allowed. It excludes water in calculation of organic content.

Country of Origin: UK

Business Type: Non-Profit



NSF/ANSI 305

www.nsf.org, www.ansi.org, www.qai-inc.com

Certification Type: Contains Organic

NSF ANSI 305 standard requires 70 percent organic ingredients to comply with the "contains organic" standard. Limited amounts of synthetics are allowed. It excludes water and salt in calculation of organic content.

Country of Origin: USA

Business Type: Non-Profit



ECOCERT

www.ecocert.com

Certification Type: Natural and Natural/ Organic

EcoCert requires a minimum of 95 percent natural origin as a baseline entry and a minimum of five percent organic content for the "Natural" standard, and a minimum of 10 percent organic content for the "Natural / Organic" standard. Up to five percent of ingredients can be synthetic. Limited synthetic preservatives are allowed. Water can be included in its calculation of organic content.

Country of Origin: France

Business Type: For-Profit



USDA NOP

www.ams.usda.gov

Certification Type: 100 percent Organic, Organic, and Made with Organic

USDA NOP is a food standard for organic and made with organic ingredients. "100 percent organic" must contain only organically produced ingredients. "Organic" must contain at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients. "Made with Organic Ingredients" must contain at least 70 percent organic ingredients. Limited amounts of synthetics are allowed in the "Organic" and "Made with Organic" standard. It excludes water and salt in calculation of organic content.

Country of Origin: USA

Business Type: Government



COSMOS

www.cosmos-standard.org

Certification Type: Organic and Natural

COSMOS is a cosmetic standard for organic and natural ingredients. "Organic" must contain at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients. "Natural" may contain natural/organic ingredients, but does not allow active marketing of organic content. Limited synthetics are allowed in the "Organic" and "Natural" standard for some product types. Excludes minerals in calculation of organic content.

Country of Origin: Brussels

Business Type: Non-Profit



BDIH

www.bdiht.org

Certification Type: Natural

BDIH requires 100 percent natural origin/nature identical* to gain the "natural" standard. It does not have a standard for organic certification.

Country of Origin: Germany

Business Type: For-Profit. Membership req.



In addition to these longer established certification organizations, two newer ones – Demeter and Oregon Tilth – are noteworthy.

DEMETER USA

www.demeter-usa.org

Certification Type: Biodynamic

Demeter Association, Inc. is the United States' representative of Demeter International whose mission is to enable people to farm successfully in accordance with Biodynamic® practices and principles. The Demeter Biodynamic® Farm Standard reflects the Biodynamic principle of the farm as a living organism: self-contained, self-sustaining, following the cycles of nature. In order for a farm to refer to itself as Biodynamic, it must have achieved certification through Demeter by adhering to the Demeter Farm Standard for a minimum of three years if conventionally farmed, or a minimum of one year if organically farmed. The entire farm must be certified, not just a portion of land within the farm. Demeter provides the legal definition of BIODYNAMIC in the U.S. marketplace. In order for a commercial farm or agricultural-based product to legally use the term in reference to its farm or products, it must have obtained certification through Demeter, and be re-certified every year.



Country of Origin: Germany **Business Type:** Not-for-Profit

OREGON TILTH

www.tilth.org

Certification Type: Organic

Oregon Tilth exists to support and promote biologically sound and socially equitable agriculture through education, research, advocacy, and certification. It advocates sustainable approaches to agricultural production systems and processing, handling and marketing. Oregon Tilth's purpose is to educate gardeners, farmers, legislators, and the general public about the need to develop and use sustainable growing practices that promote soil health, conserve natural resources, and prevent environmental degradation while producing a clean and healthful food supply for humanity. Oregon Tilth Certified Organic (OTCO) is an internationally recognized symbol of organic integrity. OTCO provides a system that combines strict production standards, on-site inspections, and legally binding contracts to protect the producers and buyers of organic products. It is now accredited to offer the NSF 305 standard for personal-care products containing organic ingredients.



Country of Origin: USA **Business Type:** Non-profit

MARK WUTTKE heads Wuttke Group, a business development consultancy for natural, organic and sustainable spas and boutiques in the luxury market. He works with LOHAS, Green Spa Network and the Natural Beauty Summit in the United States and Europe.

**Nature-identical ingredients are those that are 100 percent identical in composition to their counterparts in nature, but are created in the laboratory to ensure stability, safety, and sustainability. Nature-identical substances may only be used when natural substances cannot be recovered from nature using reasonable technical effort.*