

Certifications & Labels What, Why, and How

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Know Your Market

Who are your consumers? What are their interests / values driving their food purchases?

If you are selling into local food markets

- How are the consumers in your area defining local food?

Examples of Certifications and Labels

Production Practices:

- Organic
- Certified Naturally Grown
- Animal Welfare

Processed Products:

- Organic
- All Natural

Origin of Production

- State
- Regional
- Local Brands

What are *certifications* and labels?

A **certification** provides evidence that certain determined *standards* about *agricultural practices and/or inputs* have been used in the production or processing of a product, and that this has been **verified** by a third party.

What are certifications and *labels*?

A **label** communicates to the end consumer some type of **characteristic** about a product, including if it is *certified*, but also characteristics that aren't associated with third party certification, like *the region where a product was produced, or the farm name*.

Organic Certification



- Only products that have been certified by a USDA-approved third party certifier can be called *organic*.*
- According to the USDA, Organic farms and processors:
 - Preserve natural resources and biodiversity
 - Support animal health and welfare
 - Provide access to the outdoors so that animals can exercise their natural behaviors
 - Only use approved materials
 - Do not use genetically modified ingredients
 - Receive annual onsite inspections
 - Separate organic food from non-organic food

*unless a farmer makes less than \$5,000 a year



Organic Labels for Processed / Value-Added Foods

For processed products, labels indicate the percentage of organic ingredients:

- **100% Organic** = must contain only organically produced ingredients
- **Organic** = must consist of at least 95% organically produced ingredients
- **Made with Organic** = must contain at least 70% organic ingredients; these products can't use the USDA label, but can list up to three organic ingredients on the front of the package

What is the difference between organic and "natural"?



	Organic	Natural
Growing Practices	Federal standards regulated by the USDA	Certified Naturally Grown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards developed and regulated by a private non-profit organization • Targets small-scale farmers in direct markets to minimize paperwork
Processed Food	Federal standards regulated by the USDA	All Natural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FDA is currently reviewing the "All Natural" definition • Product does not contain added color, artificial flavors, or synthetic substances

Animal Welfare Certifications and Label Claims



Label	Meaning
No added hormones	Animals that have been raised without added hormones or growth promoting drugs, both of which are frequently used in commercial farming practices to speed growth and increase weight gain for more efficient production.
Raised without antibiotics	Animals have not received routine-use or even one-time use of antibiotics throughout the animal's life. If an animal is sick and needs antibiotics to treat an illness the producer must document it and make sure that animal's meat does not end up being sold under this label.
Grassfed	The animal eats an exclusive diet of grass and other forage , such as legumes or broad leaf plants, and may be allowed to eat harvested forage (such as hay) in limited supply during poor pasture seasons. The animal does not eat grain and has access to pasture their entire lives. For a more complete definition please see American Grassfed Association or Agricultural Marketing Services' "grass fed" label.

Animal Welfare Certifications and Label Claims




Label	Meaning
Animal Welfare Approved (AWA)	AWA is a voluntary program where farms receive a third-party AWA audit to ensure that the farm is raising their animals in accordance with their standards. Among other requirements AWA requires animals to be raised on pasture or range, only works with family farmers, charges no fees to participating farmers, incorporates a strict animal welfare and environmental standards.
Pasture-Raised	Although not a regulated definition, pasture-raised implies the animal was free to roam and be raised outdoors on pasture. At this time, pasture raised does not imply any specifics to what the animal ate, leaving room for a mixture of primarily grass and forage as well as low amounts of corn or starch supplements

State and Regional Local Food Brands



State Branding

- Got to be NC



Regional Branding

- Piedmont Grown
- Appalachian Grown
- Feast Down East




Our Panelists

Melinda Roberts
Organic Certification

Emily Lancaster Moose
Animal Welfare Approved

Mention of commercial enterprises or brand names does not constitute endorsement or imply preference by NC State University or North Carolina Cooperative Extension.
