

CURRENT ORGANIC HEALTH AND BEAUTY CARE CERTIFYING SYMBOLS AND THEIR STANDARDS

Company's displaying these symbols do not make independent claims regarding their organic status. Certification symbols show and guarantee the consumer that a product has been produced in an organic way according to organic standards. Certification is the formal and documented procedure by which a third party assures that the organic standards are followed.

Certification leads to consumers' trust in the organic production system and the product itself.

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USDA

There is no specific standard applicable to non-food products in the USA. After years of uncertainties, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a memorandum on August 23, 2005, in order **"to clarify the NOP's position"** with respect to **"products that meet the NOP program standards for organic products based on content, irrespective of the end use of the product"**.

Three different types of labels and claims may be used:

- **"100 percent organic"** for products containing 100% organically produced ingredients
- **"organic"**, where the product contains at least 95% organic ingredients
- **"made with organic ingredients"**, for products containing less than 95% organic ingredients, but in that case it is not possible to use the USDA Organic label.

The National Organic Program (NOP), has been developed for agricultural products. Its applicability to non-food products is very limited. This led some companies to submit their products to other standards bodies and to get a certification from EcoCert for instance. Of course, in such a case, the USDA Organic logo cannot be used. Because they don't specifically address cosmetics and skin care products, the USDA standards aren't ideal. Some common cosmetic ingredients, like emulsifiers or foaming agents, can't be certified organic under the food-specific standards, and they don't specify which non-organic synthetics are safe to use and which are not.

FRANCE

The main certifier is EcoCert, which started to control cosmetic products in 2003. EcoCert has created its own standard for both natural and organic cosmetics:



- **"EcoCert ECO"**: 95% of total ingredients have a natural origin, 5% of total ingredients are certified organic and 50% of total vegetal ingredients are certified organic.
- **"EcoCert BIO"**: 95% of total ingredients have a natural origin, 10% of total ingredients are certified organic and 95% of total vegetal ingredients are certified organic.

To promote natural and organic products in France, some companies have formed a trade association and signed the **"Charte Cosmébio"**, which embraces the main principles of EcoCerts standards and allows them to label their products with another specific logo **'BIO'** below.

Note:

1. these standards permit added water in the overall calculation of organic content of water based organic ingredients
2. supposedly **'organic'** products can contain unbelievably low percentages of organic ingredients, sometimes as low as 40% and under
3. their standards permit the use of essential oils from endangered species



THE COSMÉBIO LOGO

The EcoCert logo can only be applied on a duly certified product, however the **"Cosmébio logo"** can also be used on a product which is not certified, provided that a minimum of 60% of the company's products have obtained the **EcoCert** certification.

UNITED KINGDOM

The UK Soil Association was founded in 1946 by a far-sighted group of farmers, doctors and concerned citizens.

They wanted to link good farming practice with plant, animal, human and environmental health. In 2002, they launched their organic health and beauty care product standard. In 2006, the UK accounted for 5% of the 1600 organic cosmetics launched in Europe. But, in the first quarter of 2007, 19% of the new 1053 organic cosmetics products in the EU were launched in the UK. The **Soil Association** has certified 80 manufacturers with 2600 products.

There is public demand for a chemical-free world. The **Soil Association** standard means a maximum amount of organic ingredients, minimally processed, complete traceability and avoidance of cross-contamination, minimum damage to the environment and clearly labelled information. The standard applies the precautionary principle. Therefore parabens, phthalates sodium laureate sulphate, nanotechnology and GM technology are not permitted.

Often described as the **'Rolls Royce of eco symbols'**, they have two levels of certifications: **"Organic"** where 95% of ingredients are organic, and **"With Organic Ingredients"** where 70% or more of the product consists of organic ingredients. The standards also covers manufacturing processes and labelling claims regarding the products overall organic content so only the truth can be told.

The remaining ingredients that are permitted in the products must be proven to be non-GM and can only be used

- if the organic version of that **ingredient is not yet available**, or
- they are from a **restricted list of synthetic chemicals** that have been assessed against criteria to demonstrate they have no detrimental impact on human health and minimum environmental impact.

Of course, not all products use these - some are 100% organic and will be displayed on the label.

Note:

In many cases these strict standards make it technically challenging for chemists and manufacturers to achieve certification, Resulting in many company's electing to go for the less stringent **EcoCert** certification.

ITALY

The **Italian Organic Farming Association (AIAB)** and the **Institute for the Ethic Certification (ICEA)** together with a group of manufacturers, have developed guidelines for natural and organic cosmetics.



Certification and control procedures have to be carried out by an external independent certification body. Once certified, products can claim to be **"AIAB Organic, environmental friendly beauty products"** (i.e. Bio Eco cosmesi AIAB), and be labeled with the **AIAB logo**.

It is still a small market but growing fast. For the **AIAB** norm, raw materials must be natural, and the use of organic ingredients is compulsory whenever possible. The product must be derma-compatible and eco-compatible. Forbidden is OM, PEG, PPG, ethoxylated compounds and surfactants known to be aggressive. All substances that are ecologically doubtful or from animals are forbidden. For example Tea Tree is not permitted in cosmetics in Italy. Animal testing is forbidden; human testing is allowed.