

Planetary Wellbeing

- Cut Pollution & Toxicity
- Ensure Animal Wellness
- Guard Water Resources
- Ocean Awareness

Protect Biodiversity

- Biodiversity in Your Backyard
- Endangered Species
- **Environmental Labels**
- Forest Protection

- Reduce Resource Consumption
- Save Energy & Climate

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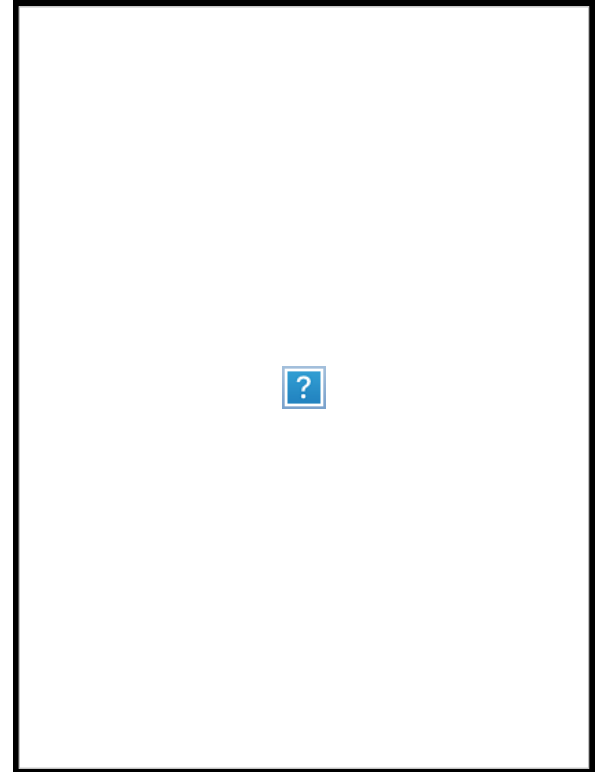


How to Recognize Organic Labels and Logos

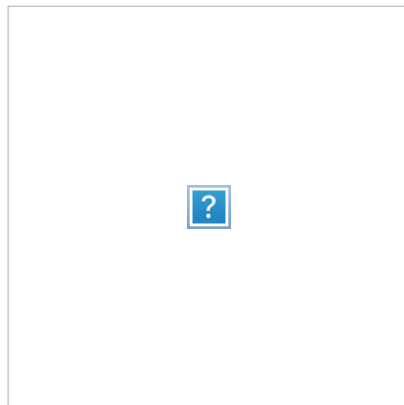
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If you're looking for a way to reduce your impact on the planet and **improve your own health** simultaneously, than choosing certified organic foods is one of the smartest choices you can make. Organic certification systems are standards and principles applied to agricultural operations in order to promote sustainable farming methods. These improvements over big business farming not only ensure a more eco-friendly food system, they also produce foods that are higher in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals and lower in toxins, which is great for your health.

However, it can be confusing to tell one organic certification from another, and that's why Hearts has developed this guide to recognizing the most reliable organic logos and labels – so that you can cut through the greenwash to make the biggest impact with your consumer dollars. We're not just about eco fashion – Hearts wants to be a catalyst for a movement of consumers who purchase with a purpose. We hope this resource will help you become a more conscious consumer so that you can create positive change in your everyday habits!



Quick Guide: Organic Farming and Certified Organic Products



- **What are organic certification systems?** Organic certified farms prohibit the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, antibiotics, and steroids (for raising animals), and work in harmony with nature to cultivate vibrant, biologically diverse ecosystems.
- **Your body will love organic food products:** Many studies have found organics are higher in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals,^[i] and lower in pesticides and steroids.^[ii]
- **Children raised on organics have higher IQ, lower disease:** The average American child is exposed to 13 pesticides everyday through non-organics.^[iii] Children raised on mostly organic produce had lower urine pesticide levels than those who ate non-organic food, and also lower rates of obesity, autism, ADHD, lower IQ, and more.^{[iv] [v] [vi]}
- **Organics protect against superpests!** 80% of antibiotics used in the US are given to animals to make them grow faster and prevent illnesses.^[vii] Overuse of antibiotics and pesticides creates antibiotic- and pesticide-resistant super pests. Organic farming helps to prevent these menaces.
- **Eco superpowers of organic farming:** Organic agriculture fights climate change, protects water and air from pollution, reduces our consumption of fossil fuel resources, saves energy, and protects wildlife.^{[viii] [ix] [x] [xi]}

Take Action! Recognize the Most Reliable Healthy Organic Food Logos

Forrester polled consumers and found that 71% would stop buying a green product if they discovered false green claims.^[xii] Therefore, having an independent (i.e. third party) inspection ensures the standards are being verified. Always look for one of the following certifications.

1. **USDA Organic:** This is perhaps the most recognizable organic certification in the US. Its guidelines for organic farm produce are set by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). To qualify, prepackaged products must have 95% of its ingredients organically grown. This label is also applied to eggs, milk, and meat.^[xiii]
2. **Demeter Certified Biodynamic:** This certification system focused on biodynamic principles, with the goal of actually healing the planet through agriculture. They work with the cycles of nature, using techniques like soil fertility management, crop protection, and greenhouse management. They also provide standards for animal welfare to prevent **animal cruelty**.
3. **Food Alliance (FA) Certified:** These farms prohibit the use of added hormones or antibiotics and encourage practices that protect wildlife habitat. The label also assures safe and fair work practices. The FA Certified seal is normally found on vegetables, grains, nuts, poultry, and fruit.
4. **Oregon Tilth:** This organization promotes both biologically sound and socially equitable agriculture. The certification system is 30 years old and covers both national and international standards for farms large and small.
5. **Quality Assurance International:** This California organization works with farmers to assess whether they have achieved other certifying standards like USDA Certified Organic, giving you the added assurance that your organic food is sustainable.
6. **Certified Naturally Grown:** This label is especially tailored to small-scale organic farmers who sell locally. Fees are low (more sustainable for small farmers), but this label still ensures USDA Certified Organic farming processes are used.^[xiv]
7. **Migratory Bird Friendly Shade-Grown Certification:** This certification is used mostly on coffee, chocolate, and tea products. It is provided by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC) and requires that each product go through a Shade Certification Check List.^[xv]
8. **No Antibiotics Administered:** To qualify for this label, which is administered through the USDA, animals (including beef cattle, dairy cows, laying hens, sheep, pigs, and chickens) must never receive antibiotics throughout their entire lives. This label can be placed on the animal's meat, eggs, and milk.^[xvi] There is no actual logo for this standard, but producers of such goods can label their packaging with "no antibiotics administered."
9. **Push your government to increase organic food production funding:** Speak to your elected officials to tell them that you want to make organic agriculture the norm in your community by funding research, labeling and standards, and subsidizing small-scale organic farms.

Dig Deeper: Organic Food Products and their Labels

- Discover even more organic labels through the **Greener Choices Label Index**, including international ones that are sometimes found on foods sold in America. Several regional organic labels can be found through this site, such as Vermont Organic Farmers, Washington State Certified Organic, Texas State Certified Organic, and the Rainforest Alliance.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization has a detailed document on **labeling and its effect on sustainability**.

Read up on [US Organic Policy](#) news.

- Find out more about the impacts of pesticides on your child's health through these articles: [Prenatal pesticide exposure tied to lower IQ in children](#), [Does This Chemical Make Me Look Fat? 'Obesogens' Lurk All Around Us](#), and [Children & Pesticides](#).

Images By: [rachelulgado](#)

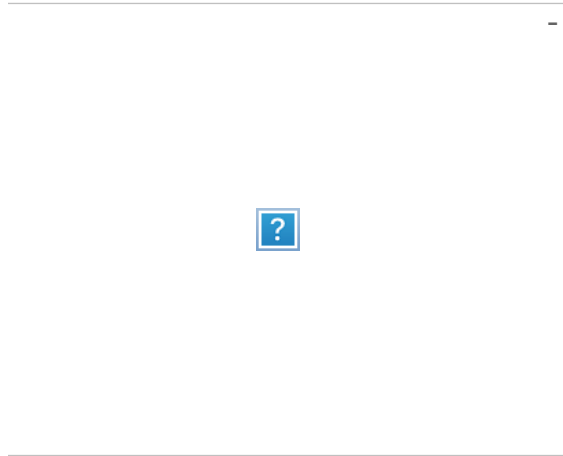
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