

Our Responsibility

At Whole Foods Market® we do all we can to protect integrity of our products, once the decision is made an organic peat, loaf of bread, or pound of coffee, the and the protection of its organic integrity — passes into the customer. At this time, it becomes each individual's decision as to what steps they wish to take regarding purchases. You may choose to separate your organic produce selection from conventional prior to placing it on the produce scales, in the bin, or onto the register belt. Whole organic coffee beans at home since our grinders are both conventional and organic coffees. patient when our team members need to clean their before giving you a special cut of organic chicken or

Know more?

visit at www.wholefoodsmarket.com for a comprehensive guide to the USDA Organic Rule, organic agriculture, the why and why we are committed to providing organic products. For more information about the Organic Rule, contact the National Organic Program at 202-720-3252 or www.usda.gov/nop.

Our Commitment

At Whole Foods Market®, we are committed to bringing you high quality organically produced foods. This commitment reflects our concern for the health and quality of our lives, the improvement of our environment, and the sustainability of our food system. Be sure to look for the organic label throughout our stores — your purchase of organic products supports those farmers, producers, and handlers who have a strong commitment to good health, quality foods, and earth-friendly, sustainable agricultural practices. It also encourages others to make their way toward organic farming as the industry continues to grow. At Whole Foods Market®, we believe that all of us, as well as future generations, have the right to take nutritious foods and a healthy environment in which to live.

Our Quality Standards

Whole Foods Market® is proud to offer natural and organic products because we believe food in its purest state is the best tasting and most nutritious food available.

- We carefully evaluate each and every product we sell.
- We feature foods that are free of artificial preservatives, colors, flavors, sweeteners, and hydrogenated fats.
- We are passionate about great tasting food and the pleasure of sharing it with others.
- We are committed to foods that are fresh, wholesome and safe to eat.
- We seek out and promote organically grown foods.
- We provide food and nutritional products that support health and wellbeing.

Reasons to Buy Organic

- Organic farming meets the needs of the present, without compromising the needs of future generations.
- Growing organically supports a biologically diverse, healthy environment.
- Organic farming practices help protect our water resources.
- Organic agriculture increases the land's productivity.
- Organic production limits toxic and long-lasting chemicals in our environment.
- Many organic farms are small, independent and family-run.
- Organic farmers are less reliant on non-renewable fossil fuels.
- Organic products meet stringent USDA standards.
- Buying organic is a direct investment in the long-term future of our planet.
- Organic farmers preserve diversity of plant species.
- Organic food tastes great.

organics and you

www.wholefoodsmarket.com



The Foods Market® we are committed to bringing you high quality organically grown produce, milk, and convenience foods.

Does "Organic" Mean?

Agriculture is a production method that emphasizes the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality. Organic food products are produced using:

- natural management practices that promote healthy ecosystems;
- and prohibit the use of genetically engineered seeds (e.g., sewage sludge, long-lasting pesticides, herbicides or fungicides);
- and outdoor access while using no antibiotics or growth hormones.

Organic practices that protect the integrity of the product and disallow irradiation, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or synthetic preservatives.

Organic Standards Evolved

Congress passed the Organic Foods Production Act in 1990 to create a set of national regulations for "organic" agriculture. The rapid, consistent growth of organic movement over the previous decades had created a set of national organic standards that would serve as a model for the industry and its customers as to what constituted organic. Many individuals and groups involved in the industry (including Whole Foods Market®) worked with congressional representatives, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), and its National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) to help shape what eventually—after 11 years of revision—became the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Organic Rule, which became effective on January 1, 2002.

The Organic Rule applies mainly to organic food products. The USDA and the organic industry are working to develop additional standards for other products such as personal care products, seafood and pet supplies.

Reading Organic Labels

All products labeled as "organic" must be certified by a USDA-accredited certifying agency. Understanding organic labeling may be a bit confusing at first. Here's a quick reference:

100% Organic

- **Product must contain only organically produced material, excluding water and salt.**

- The name of the certifying agent must appear on packages. Use of the USDA "organic" seal is optional.

Organic

- **Product must be at least 95% organically produced ingredients.**

- Remainder must consist of nonagricultural substances approved on the USDA's National List of non-organically produced agricultural products that are not commercially available in organic form.
- The label may also state the percentage of organic ingredients.
- The name of the certifying agent must appear on packages. Use of the USDA "organic" seal is optional.

Made with Organic Ingredients

- **Product must contain at least 70% organic ingredients.**
- Remainder can consist of conventionally grown agricultural ingredients or approved nonagricultural substances from the USDA's National List.
- Product may display the term "Made With Organic..." and then list up to three of the product's organic ingredients or types of food. (For example: "Made with organic dates, raisins and apricots" or "Made with organic grains, nuts and berries.") The label may also state the percentage of organic ingredients.
- The name of the certifying agent must appear on packages. Use of the USDA "organic" seal is prohibited.

Other Labeling Provisions

- Products made with less than 70% organic ingredients may make no claim other than designating specific organic ingredients in the ingredients list.

- No restrictions are made upon the use of truthful labeling claims, such as "pesticide free," "no drugs or growth hormones used" or "sustainably harvested."

- "Transitional" products are those grown in accordance with the Organic Rule regulations on farms that are in transition from conventional to organic. A certified three year transitional period must be completed before these products can use the word "organic" on their label.

Organic Integrity

The word "integrity" means "a quality or state of being whole, unimpacted and in perfect condition." When we say that something has "organic integrity," we mean none of the factors that went into making it "organic" have been compromised by contamination, commingling or mishandling.

Whole Foods Market® has been protecting organic integrity for years, and we are pleased to have the Organic Rule as a guiding standard. We created a comprehensive program called "Good Organics," consisting of merchandising, product storage and handling, as well as cleaning and sanitation procedures for every team that deals with organic products. All team members are trained on the basics of specific Good Organics procedures. We monitor all stores to ensure compliance and act diligently to address any concerns. The Good Organics program is designed to ensure that everything we offer as "organic" is truly organic.

Certified Organic

The term "Certified Organic" indicates that the product you purchase has been certified by either a private certifying agency or a state government agency that is fully accredited by the USDA. All certifying agencies must act consistently, competently, and impartially in the certification process. This ensures consumers that production and handling practices always meet national organic standards.

While retailers who sell organic products are one of the few businesses exempt from the requirement for certification, Whole Foods Market® decided to become certified—making us the first

national certified organic grocer. This voluntary certification is one more example of our commitment to the organic consumer and the preservation of the integrity of organic products.

Whole Foods Market® is certified by Quality Assurance International (QAI), an independent, USDA-accredited, third-party certifier. QAI's Organic Certification Program for retailers verifies that we handle organic goods according to stringent USDA guidelines. The QAI audit process confirms that we:

- examine the current organic certification status of our organic products
- maintain an extensive record-keeping process that demonstrates a fully traceable audit trail for our organic products
- ensure our organic products are appropriately protected from commingling with conventional products and contamination with prohibited materials
- train store team members in the handling practices of organic product
- open our stores to on-site inspections by QAI inspectors

All Whole Foods Market® retail stores in the United States are "certified organic." Additionally, we have facilities and product lines that have also been "certified organic" through their own organic handling plans, including:

- All of our regional distribution centers
- Our 365 Organic Everyday Value™ private label product line
- Our Allegro Coffee™ line
- Our Whole Kids Organic™ private label product line
- Several of our bakerhouses
- Many of our Authentic Food Artisan™ (AFA) vendors