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POLICY

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Electronic Certificate of Inspection Required for EU Organics Trade

Report Categories:

Special Certification - Organic/Kosher/Halal

SP2 - Prevent or Resolve Barriers to Trade that Hinder

U.S. Food and Agricultural Exports

Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

The European Union (EU) has implemented a new system of electronic Certificates of Inspection for imports of organic products in the EU. The electronic certificates replace the paper-based certificates of inspection. The electronic certificates have been accessible through the EU's Trade Control & Expert System (TRACES) since April 19, 2017. During a transitional period until October 19, 2017 both the paper and the electronic certificate are valid. However, as of October 19, 2017 only the certificates initiated via the electronic system will be valid. In March of this year, the USDA/AMS National Organic Program informed accredited certifiers of the new requirements for trade with European Union. U.S. certifiers have received training from the EU on the new system.

General Information:

The European Union (EU) has implemented a new system of electronic Certificates of Inspection for imports of organic products in the EU (see [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2016/1842 of 14 October 2016 amending Regulation \(EC\) No 1235/2008 as regards the electronic certificate of inspection for imported organic products and certain other elements, and Regulation \(EC\) No 889/2008 as regards the requirements for preserved or processed organic products and the transmission of information](#)). The electronic certificates replace the paper-based certificates of inspection. The electronic certificates have been accessible through the EU's Trade Control & Expert System (TRACES) since April 19, 2017. During a transitional period until October 19, 2017 both the paper and the electronic certificate are valid. However, as of October 19, 2017 only the certificates initiated via the electronic system will be valid. The benefits of an electronic system exist for both the traders and the competent authorities ranging from improved traceability, a decrease in the administrative burden, better protection against fraud and an improved accessibility to statistical data on organic imports.

The certificate must be initiated by the certifier of the exporter (last operator in the exporting country) or by the importer in the EU. Once filled out with the requested information, the certificate is issued (signed) by the certifier of the exporter and endorsed by the competent authority at the point of entry into the EU. U.S. exporters, producers and growers have no active role in the certificate workflow. In March of this year, the USDA/AMS National Organic Program informed accredited certifiers of the new requirements for trade with European Union. In the meantime, U.S. certifiers have received training from the EU on the new system.

The countries of the European Economic Area (EEA) are also implementing the electronic certification system in TRACES. Norway and Iceland follow the same timeline as EU countries. Switzerland will start using the new system as of 1 January 2018 onwards.

For more information see also https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/electronic-certificate_en