



## National Organic Program Proposes Periodic Residue Testing; Invites Comments to Proposed Rule

AMS No. 079-11

Soo Kim (202) 720-8998  
Soo.kim@ams.usda.gov

WASHINGTON, April 29, 2011—The National Organic Program (NOP) is seeking comments to a proposed rule requiring that certifying agents conduct periodic residue testing of organically produced agricultural products.

The rule, published today in the *Federal Register* ([www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), docket number AMS-NOP-10-0102; NOP-10-10), proposes amending the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) organic regulations to make clear that accredited certifying agents must conduct periodic residue testing of agricultural products represented as "100 percent organic," "organic," or "made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))." Provisions in the proposed rule would require that certifying agents conduct periodic residue testing for a minimum of five percent of the operations they certify annually. This would be in addition to pre-harvest or post-harvest testing they conduct when there is reason to suspect contamination with a prohibited substance. Further, applicable certifying agents would bear the additional costs for residue testing.

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is issuing this proposed rule in response to an audit of the NOP, conducted in March 2010 by the USDA Office of Inspector General. The USDA intends for these amendments to provide a means of monitoring compliance with the NOP regulations and discouraging the mislabeling of agricultural products. This proposal would help further ensure the integrity of products produced and handled under the NOP regulations.

The USDA invites interested parties to submit written comments on the proposed rule by visiting [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) (search for docket number AMS-NOP-10-0102; NOP-10-10, and follow instructions for submitting comments). Persons can also submit their comments by mail to Lisa M. Brines, Agricultural Marketing Specialist, National Organic Program, USDA-AMS-NOP, Room 2646-So., Ag Stop 0268, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-0268. To be considered by the NOP, all comments must be submitted by June 29, 2011.

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