



Newsbytes

NEWSBYTE: USDA Accepts GOTS Certification for Organic Textile Fibers

On May 20, 2011, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a Policy Memorandum to advise that textile products which are produced in compliance with the *Global Organic Textile Standard* (GOTS) are now allowed to be sold in the US as “organic.” GOTS is a voluntary global standard for the processing of textile products (including the spinning, knitting, weaving, dyeing and manufacturing) made with organically grown fibers.

Previous to the above mentioned memorandum, the USDA allowed only products made from raw natural fibers such as cotton, flax and wool, which meet the USDA’s National Organic Program (NOP) Regulation (7 CFR Part 205), to be labeled as “organic.” NOP regulations do not specify processing or manufacturing standards for textile products. A product can be labeled as “organic” and make reference to NOP certification if production complies with both the NOP production standards for the growing of the fibers, and the NOP handling standards for processing of the finished product. This includes processing methods allowed in 7 CFR 205. However, most of these methods and ingredients are not applicable to textile processing, so NOP labeling is not likely to be achievable for most textile products since dyestuffs and other agents are used in production.

The USDA policy memo confirms that textile products which are produced in accordance with GOTS can be sold as “organic” in the US. However, such products cannot refer to the USDA NOP certification or display the USDA organic seal.

It should be noted that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) labeling requirements must be followed to as well.

Additional Information

To view the USDA Memorandum: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5090967>

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