



# *What is* **ORGANIC?**

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

# What is Organic?

“**ORGANIC**” refers to the way agricultural products – including foods and fibers such as cotton – are grown and processed. The word “organic” on the label stands for a commitment to a system of agriculture which strives for a balance with nature, using methods and materials which are of low impact to the environment.

Organic foods are minimally processed to maintain the integrity of the food without artificial ingredients, preservatives or irradiation.



## *Organic production systems:*

- Replenish and maintain soil fertility
- Eliminate the use of toxic and persistent chemical pesticides and fertilizers
- Encourage biological diversity

# Organic Certification

**CERTIFIED ORGANIC PRODUCTS** are available throughout North America. With full implementation of U.S. national organic standards in October 2002, all agricultural products labeled as organic in the United States must be in compliance with the national organic law. As part of that regulation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has approved four categories of organic labels, based on the percentage of organic content.



1. **100% Organic**—all of a product's content is certified organic; may display USDA seal.
2. **Organic**—at least 95% of content by weight excluding water and salt is organic; may display USDA seal.
3. **Made With Organic**—at least 70% of content is organic. The main product panel may display the phrase “Made with Organic” followed by up to three specific ingredients.
4. **Products containing less than 70% organic** content may identify organic content only in the ingredient panel.



**WHEN A GROWER OR PROCESSOR** is certified organic, a public or private organization verifies that it meets or exceeds defined organic standards. These standards include:

**Land** on which organic food or fibers are grown must be free of prohibited substance for three years prior to certification.

**Farmers** and processors must keep detailed records of methods and materials used in growing or processing organic products.

**All** methods and materials are annually inspected by a third-party certifier approved by the United States Department of Agriculture.

**All** farmers and handlers are required to maintain a written farm plan detailing their management practices.

Quality Certification Services is a USDA-accredited certification program operating under the direction of **Florida Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc.**



GREEN BEANS

GREEN PEPPERS

LIMES

MANGOES

ORANGES

PARSLEY

RADISHES

SQUASH

STRAWBERRIES

SWEET CORN

TANGERINES

TOMATOES

[www.florida-agriculture.com](http://www.florida-agriculture.com)



# When You Can't Buy Local, Buy Florida

Consumers who choose to buy organic products know the value of freshness. They want the option to buy foods that are grown as close to home as is possible. Florida's organic produce can be picked fresh and delivered to most of the U.S. population within approximately 24 hours. This includes products that are often imported, like tropical fruits and fresh seafood. Florida's mild winters mean farmers in the state stay busy all year long, bringing a wide variety of products to market earlier than almost anywhere in the United States.

## What's Available?

**Organic Produce** – Growing citrus is a part of Florida's heritage, and many of the certified organic farms in Florida today have operated for decades as small family farms. Generations of farmers have taken great pride in preserving biodiversity. In Florida, you will find:

### Organic Oranges

Navel  
Ambersweet  
Hamlin  
Parson Brown  
Pineapple  
Sunstar  
Valencia  
Temple



### Organic Grapefruit

Duncan  
Marsh  
Foster  
Thompson  
Redblush  
Star Ruby

### Organic Satsuma

Minneola  
Orlando  
Nova  
Robinson  
Sunburst

Dancy  
Murcott  
Osceola  
Lee  
Fallglo

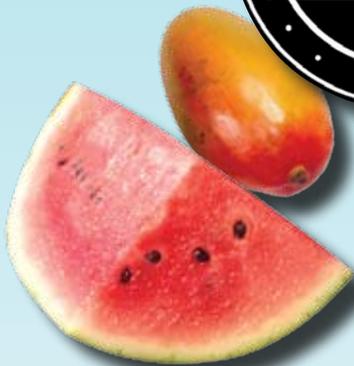
### Other Organic Citrus

Ponkan tangerines  
and tangelos  
Meyer and Bearss lemons  
Persian and Key limes



### Other organic produce

blueberries                      bananas  
strawberries                    pineapples  
melons                            mangos  
and other tropical fruits



Vegetables thrive in the three major temperate zones, as do organic herbs and nuts. Fresh organic eggs are available all year.

**Organic Processed Foods** – Florida producers supply organic tofu, sugar, cheese, juice, extracts and teas.

**Organic Aquaculture** – Surrounded by salt water, and hosting 11,000 miles of rivers, streams and fresh waterways, Florida is nature's choice for seafood. Florida is also home to state-of-the-art aquaculture facilities that operate in compliance with the organic standards for livestock production. These operations are modeling the future of organic aquaculture and are being observed closely by the USDA National Organic Program as it develops aquaculture standards of its own.



The United States' organic industry is a rapidly growing niche market. Currently Florida makes an important contribution to the organic industry. From livestock to produce, our organic industry is thriving. We invite you to try Florida's organic products to taste the "Fresh from Florida" difference.

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*For information or a list of certified operations in Florida, visit [www.qcsinfo.org](http://www.qcsinfo.org), or call 352-377-6345.*

Information on **organic certification** provided by the Organic Trade Association.

