**Understanding NOP Import Certificates**

The NOP Import Certificate is a transaction certificate or data set containing detailed information about the quantity and origin of organic product being imported into the United States. The purpose of the NOP Import Certificate is to document the organic status and quantity of imported organic products as they travel from a certified organic exporter in a foreign country to a certified organic importer in the United States. NOP Import Certificate ensure auditable business transactions by documenting that imported products are organic and may be sold, represented, and distributed as organic within the United States.

**NOP Import Certificate Requirements.** After the implementation of the Strengthening Organic Enforcement final rule on March 19, 2024, any organic agricultural product imported to the United States must be associated with a valid NOP Import Certificate, generated by the certifying agent of the final certified exporter sending the product to the United States. This requirement applies to products certified as USDA organic or traded under an established equivalence arrangement. Section §205.273 of the USDA organic regulations detail the requirements for imports to the United States.

**Requesting a NOP Import Certificate from QCS.** Organic exporters certified by QCS must request a NOP Import Certificate *prior to exporting* organic products to the US by providing relevant details on the QCS NOP Import Certificate Request Form. NOP Import Certificates must be requested for a specific volume of a single organic product that is listed on the operation’s Product Verification Form. The certified organic exporter must time the request to allow sufficient time for QCS to verify its validity and generate the NOP Import Certificate, and for the exporter to deliver it to the importer or Customs broker before the CBP filing requirements for the product. The operator can export the entire volume listed on the NOP Import Certificate in a single shipment, or in multiple shipments within a specified period of time.

QCS verifies the validity of the NOP Import Certificate request to ensure the product to be exported is certified organic and organic integrity is maintained. Approved NOP Organic Certificates are generated within the Organic Integrity Database (OID). Organic products may not be imported into the United States without an approved NOP Import Certificate.

**Data entry at time of import.** The certified organic exporter provides the NOP Import Certificate to the U.S. importer. The importer or their designated customs broker enters the NOP Import Certificate data into the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) as part of its standard import filing process.

**Importer responsibilities.** Organic importers must have a documented organic control system to verify that organic products they receive are associated with a valid NOP Import Certificate and that they not been treated with a prohibited substance as a result of fumigation or treated with ionizing radiation.

**Records and documentation.** As certified organic products move from the exporting country into the United States, all entry documentation including, but not limited to bills of lading, bills of sale, commercial invoices, and packing lists must clearly state that the product is organic. Exporting and importing operations must maintain records required under § 205.103. This includes sufficient records to provide an audit trail to determine the source, type and quantity, transfer of ownership, and transportation of any agricultural product labeled as organic.

**NOP Import Certificate Process Overview**