

Plant Based Foods Association Certified Plant Based Claim Certification Program



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1 Background

The Plant Based Foods Association is the first and only trade association in the US representing plant-based food companies with the mission to champion, strengthen, and elevate our members and the plant-based foods industry.

1.1 Purpose

Products with this certification will be easily identifiable in the marketplace as foods made from plants with no animal derived ingredients.

1.2 Scope

This protocol specifies criteria that must be met in order for products to make a plant-based claim. The plant-based claim is based on the final product and not the process used to produce the product. Plant-based foods are defined as foods made from plants that do not contain any animal derived ingredients. Plant-based foods include foods from whole grains, nuts, seeds, and/or legumes (peas, beans, and other pulses), vegetables, fruits, fungi, and algae. Single raw or single frozen ingredients, such as produce (e.g. frozen broccoli) are not included in the scope of the certification. Additionally, fungi and algae, although not technically plants, are considered ingredients of plant origin for purposes of this protocol and, specifically, Section 1.2.2.

1.2.1 Examples of products or ingredients eligible for certification that do not contain any animal derived ingredients:

- Tofu and Tempeh
- Plant-Based Meat (Beef, Pork, Chicken, Fish, etc.)
- Plant-Based Milk
- Plant-Based Dairy, including:
 - Cheese
 - Yogurt
 - Ice Cream, Novelty and Frozen Desserts
 - Butter
 - Dips, Dressings and Sour Cream
 - Other beverages
 - Creamers
- Plant-Based Eggs and Mayonnaise
- Plant-Based Meals (e.g., meal delivery kits, pizza, refrigerated or frozen meals, pot pies, etc.).
- Baked goods
- Protein powders
- Snacks
- Cereal (Hot/Cold)
- Multi-component products that contain soybeans, dry peas, chickpeas, lentils or dry beans, or a combination of these
- Pet Food
- Additional product categories, as deemed acceptable by PBFA.

1.2.2 Ingredients, not derived from plants or animals, are allowed for use in a “Certified Plant Based” product as long as individually or combined they do not exceed 10% by weight of the product formula (excluding water and salt). No percentage of the product may contain animal derived ingredients.

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Examples include:

- Flavors and Colors
- Leavening Agents (e.g., Baking Soda, Potassium Bicarbonate and Sodium Acid Pyrophosphate)
- Acids
- Gums
- Vitamins and minerals
- Mined minerals (e.g., Calcium Carbonate and Potassium Chloride)
- Microorganisms (e.g., Probiotics and Yeast)
- Enzymes
- Additional ingredients as approved by PBFA

1.2.3 The following product types are excluded from the scope:

- Any product with any amount of animal derived ingredients.
- Single ingredient raw foods (e.g., fresh strawberries, a bag of fresh spinach, bananas, etc.)
- Products that contain any amount of animal derived ingredient(s), including honey or casein, or ingredients that are molecularly identical to animal-derived ingredients are not eligible for certification (e.g., casein, whey, myoglobin)
- Alcohol
- Tobacco products
- Dietary Supplements (with the exception of protein powders)

2 Terms and Definitions

animal: Organism in the animal kingdom.

certification: The official result of successful activities pertaining to compliance evaluations including certification request, desk audit, payment of fees, and any other necessary compliance evaluation activities.

certification request: The initial inquiry made by the entity seeking certification for their product(s).

certified entity: The business/company/facility/operation responsible for achieving and maintaining compliance with this certification program.

compliant: Produced in accordance with the protocol.

formula: A list of ingredients and their % composition in a finished product.

ingredient: A component of the formula.

processing aids: As defined in 21 CFR 101.100 (a) (3) (ii).

3 Certification Overview

The certification process requires that the applicant initially submit a certification request by completing an application, and submitting the documents required in Section 3.1.1. This information is required for each product seeking certification. The applicant shall be the brand owner responsible for the final retail sale or foodservice packaging of the product.



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Entities found to be in compliance with program requirements shall be issued a certificate that includes the products certified. Only those products listed on the certificate may claim certification.

3.1 Certification Requirements

3.1.1 Documents and Records

Documentation of each plant-based product seeking certification shall be submitted to NSF for review and shall include:

- Product Formula – the third-party verifier will review the current product formula to ensure it is comprised of a minimum of 90% plant-based ingredients by weight (excluding water, salt, and processing aids) and any criteria as defined by the applicable Voluntary Standards for the Labeling of Plant-based foods by PBFA.
- Specification sheet or similar document for each ingredient that discloses the source material and/or sub-ingredients to show they were not derived from animal sources.
- Current Product Label – the third-party verifier will review the current product label for claims or logos associated with this program and applicable Voluntary Standards for the Labeling of Plant-based foods by PBFA.
- When the manufacturing facility also produces foods made with animal ingredients, a third-party certificate or SOPs that address traceability and segregation to prevent commingling and contamination at the facility.

Following initial certification, any changes to the product formulation, including a change in ingredients, supplier(s), or percentages shall be submitted for review and approval by the third-party verifier prior to use in a certified plant-based product.

Documents and records shall accurately describe the current products produced. The certified entity shall demonstrate a product's identity matches the claim regarding its plant-based status and content.

3.2 Certification Decisions

The Plant Based Foods Association may designate a third party to conduct certification desk audits resulting in certification decisions. All decisions made by the third party are final. The certified products shall undergo annual monitoring to guarantee continued compliance.

3.3 Non-Compliant Product

3.3.1 In the event that changes are made to product formulas or labels, prior to approval by a third-party verifier, that results in a non-compliant product, the company is responsible for implementing a disposition plan for any non-compliant product(s) that bears the Plant Based approved logo.

3.3.2 The certified entity shall have a written procedure for:

- controlling non-complying product
- notifying their customers/retailers and other related entities when the finished product is determined to be eligible for a withdrawal or recall.

3.3.3 A certified entity that consistently cannot meet the requirements of the program is eligible for suspension or involuntary withdrawal from the program.



4 Labeling

Use of the “certified plant based” logo is optional and is intended for use on approved products marketed for sale in North America.

See the *Plant Based Food Association Style Guide* for additional details.

Other plant-based claims may be permitted, pending review and written approval by the third-party verifier and the Plant Based Foods Association.

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