

Plant Based Foods Association Certified Plant Based Claim Certification Program



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1 Background

The Plant Based Foods Association's mission is to promote the plant-based foods industry by removing obstacles to a fair and competitive marketplace for alternatives to animal ingredients and products.

1.1 Purpose

Products with this certification will be easily identifiable in the marketplace as alternatives to animal-based products or products containing 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 food is defined as a finished product consisting of ingredients derived from plants that include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, seeds and/or legumes. Additionally, fungi and algae, although not technically plants, will also be counted towards the percentage of plant-based ingredients.

The scope includes any product traditionally produced from animal ingredients. Additionally, plant-based ingredients that are used as a primary ingredient in a product that meets the above criteria are eligible for certification under this protocol.

1.2.1 Products or ingredients eligible for certification fit into the following categories and do not contain any animal-derived ingredients:

- 1) Tofu and Tempeh
- 2) Meat Alternatives to Beef, Pork, Chicken, Fish, etc.
- 3) Milk Alternatives
- 4) Other Dairy Alternatives:
 - Cheese
 - Yogurt
 - Ice Cream, Novelty and Frozen Desserts
 - Butter
 - Dips, Dressings and Sour Cream
 - Other Beverages
 - Creamers
- 5) Egg Substitutes and Mayo
- 6) Meals with meat or dairy alternatives (including pizza)
- 7) Baked goods
- 8) Protein powders
- 9) Additional product categories, as deemed acceptable by PBFA.



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1.2.2 Ingredients, not of plant or animal origin, 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). Examples include:

- Flavors and Colors
- Leavening Agents such as Baking Soda, Potassium Bicarbonate and Sodium Acid Pyrophosphate
- Acids such as Citric, Ascorbic, Lactic and Malic
- Gums such as Xanthan or Gellan
- Vitamins and minerals such as in enriched wheat flours
- Mined minerals such as Calcium Carbonate and Potassium Chloride
- Microorganisms such as probiotics and yeast
- Enzymes
- Proteins produced by biotechnology
- Additional ingredients as approved by PBFA.

1.2.3 The following product types are excluded from the scope:

- Products that are inherently plant based such as single ingredient vegetables, nuts, etc.
- Products that contain any amount of animal derived ingredient(s), including honey or casein
- Alcohol
- Tobacco products
- Dietary Supplements (with the exception of protein powders)
- Pet Food

2 Terms and Definitions

Animal product – any material derived from an animal or insect.

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.

Certified Entity – the business/company/facility/operation responsible for achieving and maintaining compliance with this certification program.

Certified Product – the finished packaged item for sale, which has been evaluated for compliance with this certification program.



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

Compliant – produced in accordance with the protocol.

Evidence – documents, records, test reports and other means that may be used to validate claims regarding origin and traceability.

Formula – a list of ingredients and their % composition in a finished product.

Ingredient – a component of the formula.

Other Ingredients – an ingredient not derived from animals but acceptable for use in a Plant Based Foods Certified product (See Section 1.2.2).

Plant-Based Food – plant-based food is defined as a finished product consisting of ingredients derived from plants that include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, seeds and/or legumes and meets the criteria specified in this protocol.

Primary Ingredient – an ingredient that constitutes more than 50% of the food.

Processing Aids – a) are substances that are added during processing but are removed with good manufacturing practices; b) substances added during processing but do not have a technical or functional effect; c) are substances added for their technical or functional effect but are present at insignificant amounts. [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 final retail sale packaging.

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



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3.1 Certification Requirements

3.1.1 Documents and Records

Documentation of each plant-based food 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. Certification decisions are valid for one year, prior to which, 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 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.



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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.

3.3.4 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 one of the “certified plant based” logos, shown below, is optional and is intended for use on approved products marketed for sale in North America. An all-white version of the logo is also acceptable.

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.

