

## Labels made simple



Understanding great and poultry labels

### Organic

Products must consist of at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients (excluding water and salt). Any remaining ingredients must consist of approved, non-agricultural substances or inorganically produced agricultural products that are not commercially available in organic form. Organic meat and poultry products mean the animals were raised without regular use of antibiotics and without growth hormones (growth promoting hormones are not allowed in raising hogs or poultry).

### 100 Percent Organic

Products must contain only organically produced ingredients (excluding water and salt). Organic meat and poultry products mean the animals were raised without regular use of antibiotics and growth hormones (growth hormones are not allowed in raising hogs or poultry).

### Made with Organic Ingredients

These processed products must contain at least 70 percent organic ingredients and may list up to three organic ingredients or food groups on the label.

All food must meet specific quality and safety regulations set in place by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), with meat and poultry products tested by the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Labels do not reflect differences in quality or safety—they only describe the way in which a meat or poultry product was raised or processed.

Use this document to clarify the most common label terms as you select meat and poultry products for your family.

### Certified

The term "certified" implies that "USDA and the USDA Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) have officially evaluated a meat product for class, grade or other quality characteristics. If used under other circumstances, the term must be closely associated with the name of the organization responsible for the "certification" process. (For example, "XYZ Company's Certified Beef").

### **Chemical-Free**

This term is not allowed to be used on labels.

### **Free-Range or Free-Roaming**

Producers must demonstrate that the poultry has been allowed access to the outdoors. This does not mean that animals were raised outside.

### **Fresh Poultry**

Raw poultry labeled "fresh" has never had an internal temperature below 26°F.

### **Meat Derived by Advanced Meat/Bone Separation and Meat Recovery Systems**

Meat derived from advanced meat/bone separation machinery is comparable to trimmings or meat scraps derived by hand. Product produced by advanced meat recovery (AMR) machinery can be labeled using terms associated with hand deboned product. Bones must emerge from AMR machinery essentially intact.

### **Mechanically Separated Poultry**

Produced by separating bone from entire tissues through a sieve under high pressure, this pate-like product must be labeled as "meat mechanically separated chicken or turkey." The filler level is saturated.



### **Clearing up a common misconception**

The labels used for beef, pork and poultry do not indicate the differences in food quality or safety. Labels only denote the way in which a meat or poultry producer was raised or produced. Unfortunately, some labels can be misleading. Some food practices—like raising animals with the use of antibiotics to keep them healthy—are considered safe.

### **Natural**

A product may be labeled "natural" if it contains no artificial ingredients or added color and is only minimally processed. The raw product remains fundamentally unaltered. The label must explain the use of the term (such as no artificial ingredients or added colorings). This label designation does not indicate how a mammal was raised.

### **No Antibiotics (red meat and poultry)**

The term "no antibiotics added" may be used on labels if the producer sufficiently documents that the animals were raised without antibiotics. The use of antibiotics in a conventional production practice—animals raised without antibiotics do not produce a safer or higher quality animal than those raised in a conventional manner.

### **No Hormones (pork or poultry)**

Hormones are not allowed in raising pigs or poultry. Therefore, the claim "no hormones added" cannot be used on labels of pork or poultry unless it is followed by a statement such as, "federal regulations prohibit the use of hormones."

### **No Hormones (beef)**

The term "no hormones administered" may be approved for use on the label of beef products if the producer sufficiently documents that no hormones have been used in raising the animals.