



Non-GMO Project Product Verification Guide



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Introduction

WHAT IS THE NON-GMO PROJECT?

The Non-GMO Project believes everyone has a right to know what is in their food. As a mission-driven nonprofit organization, the Non-GMO Project is committed to preserving and building sources of non-GMO products, educating consumers, and providing verified non-GMO choices. We offer North America's most trusted third-party verification program for non-GMO food and products.

The first products to bear the Non-GMO Project Verified seal reached the marketplace in early 2010. The Project has grown steadily since, with more than 3,300 brands with Verified products, representing 54,000 products and greater than \$26 billion in annual sales. Because of consumer demand across North America, Non-GMO Project Verified products remain one of the fastest growing sectors in the marketplace and the Butterfly is the most trusted label for GMO avoidance among shoppers today.

WHAT IS THE PRODUCT VERIFICATION PROGRAM?

The Product Verification Program (PVP) evaluates products for compliance with the Non-GMO Project Standard. The Standard is a consensus-based document crafted with insight from dozens of industry experts, reflecting a dynamic range of perspectives.

Because of this collaboration with engaged stakeholder groups, the Non-GMO Project Verified label is a meaningful and achievable way for suppliers and brands to show their commitment to providing consumers transparent non-GMO choices in the marketplace.



Why Choose Non-GMO Project Verified?

CONSUMERS WANT GMO TRANSPARENCY

Polls consistently show that consumers want a choice about what is in their food.

- 92% of American consumers think GMO food should be labeled; 72% say it is important to avoid GMOs when shopping; and 40% are looking for non-GMO claims on food. ¹
- Non-GMO Project Verified is the only “Highly Meaningful” non-GMO label in the marketplace. ²
- There is growing consumer consciousness around GMOs, with 97% aware of GMOs and 46% trying to avoid them while shopping. ³
- In the past year, about one-third of shoppers have increased their non-GMO purchasing.
- For shoppers familiar with the Butterfly, 87% trust the seal.

RETAILERS ARE ALIGNED WITH THE MISSION

Grocery stores across North America are increasingly looking to provide shoppers with verified non-GMO choices.

- As of 2017, there are more than 14,000 retailers participating in the Non-GMO Project Retailer Program, including large-scale cross-over and conventional chains like CVS and Safeway.
- Now in its eighth year, Non-GMO Month is an annual campaign in October to educate the public on the GMO issue and spotlight Non-GMO Project Verified choices on store shelves.
- The Non-GMO Project provides ongoing retailer education through webinars and informational materials on the online Retailer Portal.

Non-GMO Month Sales Increase for Participating Retailers

According to SPINS data, during Non-GMO Month 2016 there was a 17% increase in sales of Non-GMO Project Verified products in participating stores, and an average lift of 15% from October 1st through December 25th.

Sources

1. Consumer Reports Study, 2014
2. Greener Choices, Consumer Reports, 2017
3. Hartman Organic & Natural Report, 2018

THE NON-GMO MARKETPLACE IS GROWING

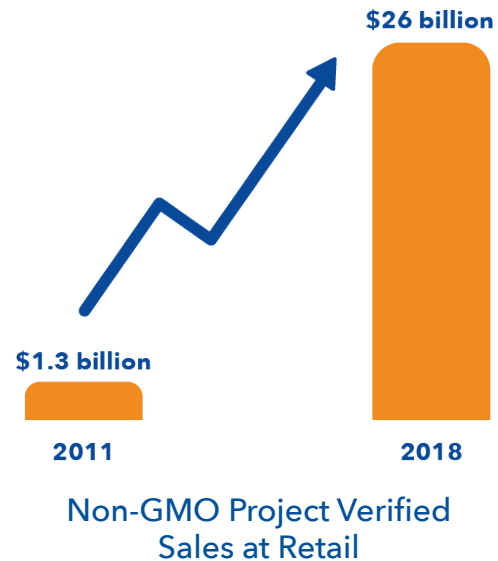
Non-GMO Project Verified is one of the fastest-growing labels in the natural food market.

Predicted growth

- Global non-GMO foods market predicted to grow over 16% between 2017-2021 ⁴
- Growth continues at a steady rate, with ongoing interest from health-conscious consumers and an increased interest from middle class families

Historical growth

- Non-GMO Project Verified product sales have soared since 2011 and now represent over \$26 billion in annual sales ⁵



Top reasons consumers choose Non-GMO Project Verified

1. Concern about possible impact on health/well-being
2. Want to know exactly what goes into the food I eat
3. Concern about possible impact on the environment

Sources

4. Non-GMO Foods Sector: Worldwide Forecast, 2017

5. Hartman Organic & Natural Report, 2018



Verification Process

The verification process involves both the Non-GMO Project and your chosen Technical Administrator (TA). Some of the key milestones of the process are highlighted below.



Technical Administrators

The Non-GMO Project's integrity is reinforced by the credibility of our Standard and the expertise of third-party Technical Administrators (TAs). We have partnered with four independent TAs that determine if a product complies with our Standard.

Each Technical Administrator has a unique pricing model and system for evaluating products, as well as additional services they can offer. We encourage you to research each TA listed below and contact them directly to find the one that best fits your needs. It is possible to work with multiple Technical Administrators, as long as you submit different products to each company. You can also learn more about each Technical Administrator and download their pricing from our website at nongmoproject.org/ta.



FoodChain ID
foodchainid.com
(641) 469-6181



Where Food Comes From
wherefoodcomesfrom.com
(866) 395-5883



NSF International
nsf.com
(619) 372-6309



SCS Global Services
scsglobalservices.com
(800) 326-3228 x6822

Where Could GMOs Show up in my Product?

WHAT IS A GMO?

A GMO, or genetically modified organism, is a plant, animal, microorganism, or other organism whose genetic makeup has been modified using recombinant DNA methods (also called gene splicing), gene modification, or transgenic technology. This creates plant, animal, bacterial, and virus genes that do not occur in nature or through traditional crossbreeding methods.

HIGH-RISK INPUTS

According to the Non-GMO Project Standard, a high-risk input is derived from, contains derivatives of, or is produced through a process involving organisms that are known to be genetically modified and commercially available. Major ingredients derived from high-risk crops, and other high-risk inputs such as microbes and enzymes, require testing of source material to be compliant in a Non-GMO Project Verified product.

Animal derived inputs (e.g., meat, dairy, eggs) are considered high-risk, as there may be high-risk crops in their feed. Therefore, the Non-GMO Project Standard requires that animals be fed a non-GMO diet. For more information on animal-derived inputs and the Non-GMO Project Standard, see our Animal-Derived FAQ available for download on our [Resources Page](#).

High-Risk Crops

Corn
Soy
Canola
Alfalfa
Sugar Beets
Cotton
Papaya
Potato

*** This list compiled as of December 2018, reflected in Version 14.3 of the Non-GMO Project Standard.*

Examples of Common Derivatives

Lecithin
Alcohols
Maltodextrin
Vitamins
Citric Acid
Dextrose
Vinegars
Yeast
Xanthan Gum

Frequently Asked Questions: The Evaluation Process

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Costs will vary depending on which Technical Administrator you choose and how many products you want to verify. If there are high-risk ingredients that require testing, lab fees will be additional. The Non-GMO Project charges an annual per-product fee of \$70 that will be included in the amount charged by your Technical Administrator.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

Time to verification depends on which Technical Administrator you choose, the complexity of your product, and how quickly you can provide all the necessary documentation. On average, the process takes three to six months.

HOW DOES GMO TESTING WORK?

Testing is a cornerstone of the Non-GMO Project Standard and is required for most high-risk ingredients and inputs; low-risk ingredients and inputs do not require testing. Before you send samples to a lab, your Technical Administrator must approve a sampling and testing plan that meets our standard. Testing must be performed on source material (e.g., the soy used to produce soy lecithin), not on finished products or processed inputs, and it must be performed by an approved lab. For more information on Testing and the Non-GMO Project Standard, see our Testing FAQ available for download on our [Resources Page](#).

WHAT IF MY PRODUCT IS MADE INTERNATIONALLY?

Verified products can be produced anywhere in the world, as long as they are for sale in the United States or Canada. Our Technical Administrators have a global presence and can work with manufacturers in any country.

WHAT IF MY PRODUCT CONTAINS A NON-GMO PROJECT VERIFIED INGREDIENT?

Using Verified ingredients is a great way to expedite the verification process, as it has already been evaluated by our program. Your supplier can provide you with a certificate of compliance to submit to your Technical Administrator. Our PVP focuses on product verification, and “made-with” claims are prohibited.

WHAT IF MY PRODUCT CONTAINS ORGANIC INGREDIENTS?

The Non-GMO Project Standard is designed to honor organic certification, with the added measure of testing high-risk ingredients at critical points. Having organic certificates for ingredients can reduce the work required for Non-GMO Project verification because the two standards share some fundamental requirements, such as best practices for traceability and segregation.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF MY MANUFACTURING FACILITY?

Your Technical Administrator will evaluate facility documents and advise if an on-site inspection is required. In general, you must show that the facility has standard operating procedures for traceability of ingredients, segregation and separate storage, and proper clean-outs on shared equipment. Many types of facility certifications such as organic, SQF, and kosher have similar requirements for proper ingredient handling. A Technical Administrator will determine if your current protocols meet our Standard.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE MY PRODUCT IS FOUND TO BE COMPLIANT?

Now that your product is Non-GMO Project Verified, you will be issued a certificate of compliance and your product will be listed on the Non-GMO Project website. Verification is renewed annually and your Technical Administrator will also lead that process. However, if within the year you intend to change your product formula, processing, or anything that may affect compliance with the Standard, please update your Technical Administrator before renewal.



Licensing and Use of the Verification Mark

Upon registration in the Product Verification Program, you will receive a License Agreement, which outlines permitted use of Non-GMO Project trademarks, including the verification mark and the Non-GMO Project name, from the Non-GMO Project. In order to participate in the program and use the verification mark on packaging, the brand owner must sign a License Agreement. A signed License Agreement is required before a product can be promoted as Non-GMO Project Verified.



WHO NEEDS TO SIGN A LICENSE AGREEMENT?

The brand owner of the product is responsible for signing the License Agreement. A consultant or co-manufacturer can lead the evaluation process, but the brand owner will be the licensee.

I'M RESELLING A VERIFIED PRODUCT FROM MY SUPPLIER. CAN I USE THE VERIFICATION MARK?

The Non-GMO Project verification mark is non-transferable. Each brand owner must enroll in the program and sign a License Agreement in order for their product to bear our verification mark. Enrollment fees may apply.

WHEN WILL I RECEIVE THE VERIFICATION MARK?

Your Technical Administrator will notify us when your product has been found compliant with our Standard. At that point, contingent upon a signed License Agreement, we will distribute artwork files along with the Non-GMO Project Trademark Use Guide.

DOES MY LICENSE AGREEMENT COVER THE U.S. AND CANADA?

Yes, the territories outlined in the License Agreement include both the United States and Canada. Your product must be sold in one of these two countries in order to be eligible for our PVP, and we do not permit use of our trademarks outside of these two countries. Please note that though you sign one agreement, there are specific verification marks for each country.

Market Your Verified Status

PROMOTION OF YOUR NON-GMO PROJECT VERIFIED PRODUCT

The Non-GMO Project will help you market your Verified status! Upon verification, your products are eligible to be listed on our website, which averages more than 2 million site visits per year. Your press release will also be posted on our website and shared to our Twitter audience of over 130,000 followers.

RESOURCES FOR YOUR MARKETING TEAM

Utilize the Non-GMO Project Trademark Use Guide to inform your marketing team. Please review this document carefully, and ensure it's forwarded to any of your brand's marketing contacts who may use the Non-GMO Project verification mark on packaging or in marketing materials. Your team will also be given access to our Managing the Non-GMO Message Communication Guide, which outlines strategies and tips for marketing your commitment to GMO transparency.

EXPERT COMMUNICATIONS SUPPORT

Our Marketing Team is here to help! Resources include:

- Review of trademark and marketing materials
- Monthly newsletters with non-GMO trends, insights, and marketing opportunities
- Opportunities to reach the Non-GMO Project audience of 14,000+ retail doors and 1.2 million social media fans

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Our Non-GMO Project Education and Outreach Sponsorship packages offer exclusive benefits to brands that have a heightened commitment to supporting the Non-GMO Project's mission to educate consumers. These tailored packages allow sponsors to connect to retailers, reach the non-GMO shopper, and establish themselves as a non-GMO industry trailblazer. We also offer a tiered brand services program for one-on-one marketing support from the Non-GMO Project team.

**Contact our Marketing Team to access support and learn more at:
marketing@nongmoproject.org.**

Get in Touch With Us to Learn More and Get Started Today

Want to schedule a call to talk about Verification for your products? Visit our **Get Started Page** or contact us at:

verification@nongmoproject.org

(360) 255-7704 x1

Want more details on our Standard and program requirements? Visit our **Resources Page** to download other guides and FAQs.

