



Innovative New Uses for Soy

Biobased Product Label Offers Marketing Opportunities for Companies



Now manufacturers and vendors of biobased products, like soy-based products, may apply for the [U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Certified Biobased Product Label](#), which offers new marketing opportunities for companies. While many companies claim to be biobased, this label will provide a credible certification of biobased products.

"Manufacturers of biobased products can use this label to help encourage sales," says Ron Buckhalt, program manager, USDA BioPreferred. "The biobased label can help create and add to market share, with the name recognition of USDA to certify that these products are made from biobased content."

Dale Profit, United Soybean Board New Uses program vice chair and an Ohio soybean farmer, says that, in addition to the market opportunities, the label may also open doors to the company for government procurement programs. "This label may give an opportunity to makers of soy-based products to get into government procurement, and the government is one of the largest buyers of products in the nation."

Soy-based materials can help replace petrochemicals in many products, and U.S. soybean farmers, through their farmer-driven U.S. soy research and marketing program, commit to funding the research, development and commercialization of new industrial uses for soybeans. A number of companies using soy in their products can take advantage of the benefits from the biobased label.

"Soy-based products need to perform as well and be as cost-effective as petrochemical products," says Profit. "Soy-based products that get over that hurdle have an opportunity for rapid adoption by consumers that are looking for alternatives to petrochemicals. Soy offers advantages like being sustainable, renewable and environmentally friendly while replacing petrochemicals."

In January, USDA launched the new labeling initiative. Under the voluntary labeling program, biobased product manufacturers and distributors will be able to affix a USDA Certified Biobased Product label on qualifying products. The label indicates the product meets or exceeds the required 25 percent of renewable carbon content required for product certification. All applicants, even if they are currently identified within a BioPreferred product category must meet the minimum biobased content of the product category. This content varies according to the type of biobased product certified. Mature market products that had a significant market share in 1972 are currently excluded from the program. An example of a mature market product would be cotton in articles of clothing.

Applicants should submit a web-based application to USDA, and the agency will then evaluate each complete application to determine if the product meets the certification criteria and will respond to applicants within 60 days. Applications that have been rejected may be revised and resubmitted.

There is no application fee, but applicants will bear the cost of having products tested for biobased content. Products tested between February 20, 2010, and February 20, 2011, by a participating biobased content laboratory will not be required to re-test their products but should notify USDA in the "Legacy Tests" section of the online application. Applicants will be certified by ASTM International, a globally recognized leader in the development and delivery of international voluntary consensus standards.

"In the first few weeks of eligibility, we have had more than 300 applications and I anticipate a substantial number of applications in the future," says Buckhalt. "It's my fervent hope that this becomes the international standard for biobased products, and one of these days we will be able to see this label on many store shelves."

Buckhalt adds that this label can help create a new biobased economy. "It's great to be a part of the program, and I feel like it's making the world a better place for our children and grandchildren," says Buckhalt. "If we begin the process of replacing petrochemicals, we can recreate an economy that features biobased products."

To learn more about the BioPreferred program, [click here](#) and to learn more about soy-based products [click here](#).

USB is made up of 69 farmer-directors who oversee the investments of the soybean checkoff on behalf of all U.S. soybean farmers. Checkoff funds are invested in the areas of animal utilization, human utilization, industrial utilization, industry relations, market access and supply. As stipulated in the Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service has oversight responsibilities for USB and the soybean checkoff.