



Policy Memorandum

To: Stakeholders and Interested Parties

From: Miles V. McEvoy, Deputy Administrator

Subject: Electrolyzed Water

Date: Approved on June 9, 2014

This memorandum clarifies the status of electrolyzed water under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) organic regulations at 7 CFR Part 205.

Issue:

The National Organic Program (NOP) has received requests to clarify whether electrolyzed water is allowed as a sanitizer and antimicrobial agent for the production and handling of organic products. This memo resolves a conflict in interpretation among certifying agents (certifiers) and material evaluation programs by clarifying that electrolyzed water is not currently permitted by the USDA organic regulations.

The NOP is aware that some certifiers and material evaluation programs have approved the use of electrolyzed water based on an incorrect interpretation of the allowance for chlorine materials on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances at 7 CFR §§ 205.600-606. The following chlorine materials are included on the National List:

- Calcium hypochlorite, §§ 205.601(a)(2)(i), 205.603(a)(7)(i), and 205.605(b);
- Chlorine dioxide, §§ 205.601(a)(2)(ii), 205.603(a)(7)(ii), and 205.605(b);
- Sodium hypochlorite, §§ 205.601(a)(2)(iii), 205.603(a)(7)(iii), and 205.605(b); and
- Acidified sodium chlorite, § 205.605(b).

Electrolyzed water contains the active ingredient hypochlorous acid (HOCl) and is generated from the electrolysis of salt (sodium chloride) in water. Hypochlorous acid is a synthetic substance that is not included on the National List.

Certifiers and material evaluation programs may need to take steps to ensure that electrolyzed water is not used in organic production or processing.

Any party interested in further consideration of electrolyzed water for organic production or handling should submit a petition according to the current National List petition guidelines published in the Federal Register.



If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Lisa M. Brines at (202) 720-3252 or lisa.brines@ams.usda.gov.

References:

Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, as amended

7 U.S.C. § 6517 National List

USDA Organic Regulations ([7 CFR Part 205](#))

7 CFR § 205.2 Terms defined.

Allowed synthetic. A substance that is included on the National List of synthetic substances allowed for use in organic production or handling.

7 CFR § 205.601 Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production.

7 CFR § 205.603 Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic livestock production.

7 CFR § 205.605 Nonagricultural (nonorganic) substances allowed as ingredients in or on processed products labeled as “organic” or “made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s)).”

Other Laws and Regulations

Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 ([40 CFR Part 142](#))

NOP Program Handbook: Guidance and Instructions for Accredited Certifying Agents and Certified Operations

NOP 5026 The Use of Chlorine Materials in Organic Production and Handling

PM 11-4 Evaluation of Materials Used in Organic Crop, Livestock, and Handling Operations