



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

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## Korea, Republic of

### Organic Products

### Zero Tolerance for GM Content in Organic Products

**2005**

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**Report Highlights:**

On March 7, 2005, the Korean Food & Drug Administration (KFDA) revised a provision of "Labeling Standards for Food" formalizing its policy of zero tolerance for GM content in food labeled as organic.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Seoul [KS1]  
[KS]

**FOOD LABELED AS ORGANIC:** The Korea Food & Drug Administration (KFDA) announced a revision of the "Labeling Standards for Food et al." on March 7, 2005 governing raw materials for food labeled as organic. Prior to March 7, 2005, the provision stated that, "Genetically modified food or food additives shall not be used." After March 7, 2005, the provision was amended to state, "Genetically modified food or food additives shall not be used or detected."

The zero tolerance policy for GM content in foods labeled as organic has been enforced since the organic labeling standards were established by collecting random samples from retail shelves and testing them for GM content. Although KFDA has been applying a zero tolerance policy for GM content in organic product for years, only one detection of GM content in organic product, as a result of KFDA's monitoring program, has come to the attention of the U.S. Embassy in Seoul. Nevertheless, formalization of the policy prohibiting "detection" of GM content in food labeled and sold as "organic" serves as a reminder to organic exporters, importers and retailers that KFDA does not allow for the "adventitious presence" of GM content in organic product. Accordingly, there is a risk that KFDA could take action against companies, even though they are importing or selling product that has been produced and handled according to the strictest organic production and processing requirements, if their product is selected in KFDA monitoring program and tests positive for GM content.

**NON-ORGANIC FOOD WITH LESS THAN 3 PERCENT GM CONTENT:** KFDA makes an important distinction between food that is labeled as organic and food that is not labeled as organic with regard to adventitious presence. In contrast to the zero tolerance policy on GM content in food labeled as organic, KFDA allows a 3 percent tolerance for GM content in imported or domestically produced food that is not labeled as organic. Thus, such products are exempt from GMO labeling as long as supporting documents (either full IP documentation or government issued certificate) are submitted to KFDA.

**FOOD WITH MORE THAN 3 PERCENT GM CONTENT:** As of July 13, 2001, KFDA's "Labeling Standards for Recombinant Food" require a "GM Food" statement on the label of food containing more than 3 percent GM content. In such cases the label shall include the following text either on the principal display panel or ingredient panel (next to a given ingredient using parenthesis): 1) "GM Food"; 2) "Contains GM Foods" (e.g. "contains GM corn"); 3) "May Contain GM Foods".

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