

Fraudulent 'organic' food imports overwhelming USDA, investigation finds

The U.S. Department of Agriculture fails at regulation of organic food as fraudulent products overwhelm the agency's conflicted, compromised system, a [NerdWallet investigation has found](#).

The USDA's National Organic Program has not kept up with the explosive growth of organic food production and sales — either in staffing or enforcement, NerdWallet found.

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The system today enables high-dollar fraud, as swindlers exploit high premiums charged by honest players for the risks, expense and hard work of producing genuine organics.

The USDA's failings undermine authentic producers and tarnish the agency's organic seal, jeopardizing its promise as an emblem of trust.

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The USDA creates conflicts of interest by allowing cozy relationships between growers/processors and the companies that certify their operations as organic. The USDA accredits 80 certifiers worldwide. However, those certifiers are paid not by the agency, but by the growers and processors they certify. And the growers and processors get to choose their certifiers from the list.

It does not require certifiers to be neutral arbiters. Instead, certifiers are allowed to advocate on behalf of the companies they certify, harass critics and lobby for changes in rules governing the organics industry.

The agency often asks and trusts certifiers to look into alleged violations by their customers, instead of investigating independently.

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Read full, original post: [The USDA's Organic Certification Program: A Litany of Failures](#)