



**Il sistema di controllo e certificazione dei prodotti biologici italiani  
nel mercato globale:  
problematiche di armonizzazione delle norme internazionali**

**The italian organic products certification in the global market:  
the difficulties to harmonize with international rules**

## **USDA – NOP Certification Scheme**

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MINISTERO DELLE POLITICHE AGRICOLE  
ALIMENTARI E FORESTALI



In collaborazione con

**FEDERBIO**  
FEDERAZIONE ITALIANA AGRICOLTURA BIOLOGICA E BIODINAMICA



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# History of U.S. Public Standard

- Organic Trade Association (OTA) Founded – 1985



- Passage of The Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) – 1990
- National Organic Program (NOP) final rule published - 2000





# Size of U.S. Program

- 28,000 operations worldwide certified to USDA-NOP
  
- 98 Accredited Certifying Agents (ACAs) Worldwide: Competent Authorities
  - 53 Based in U.S.
  - 44 Based outside the U.S.

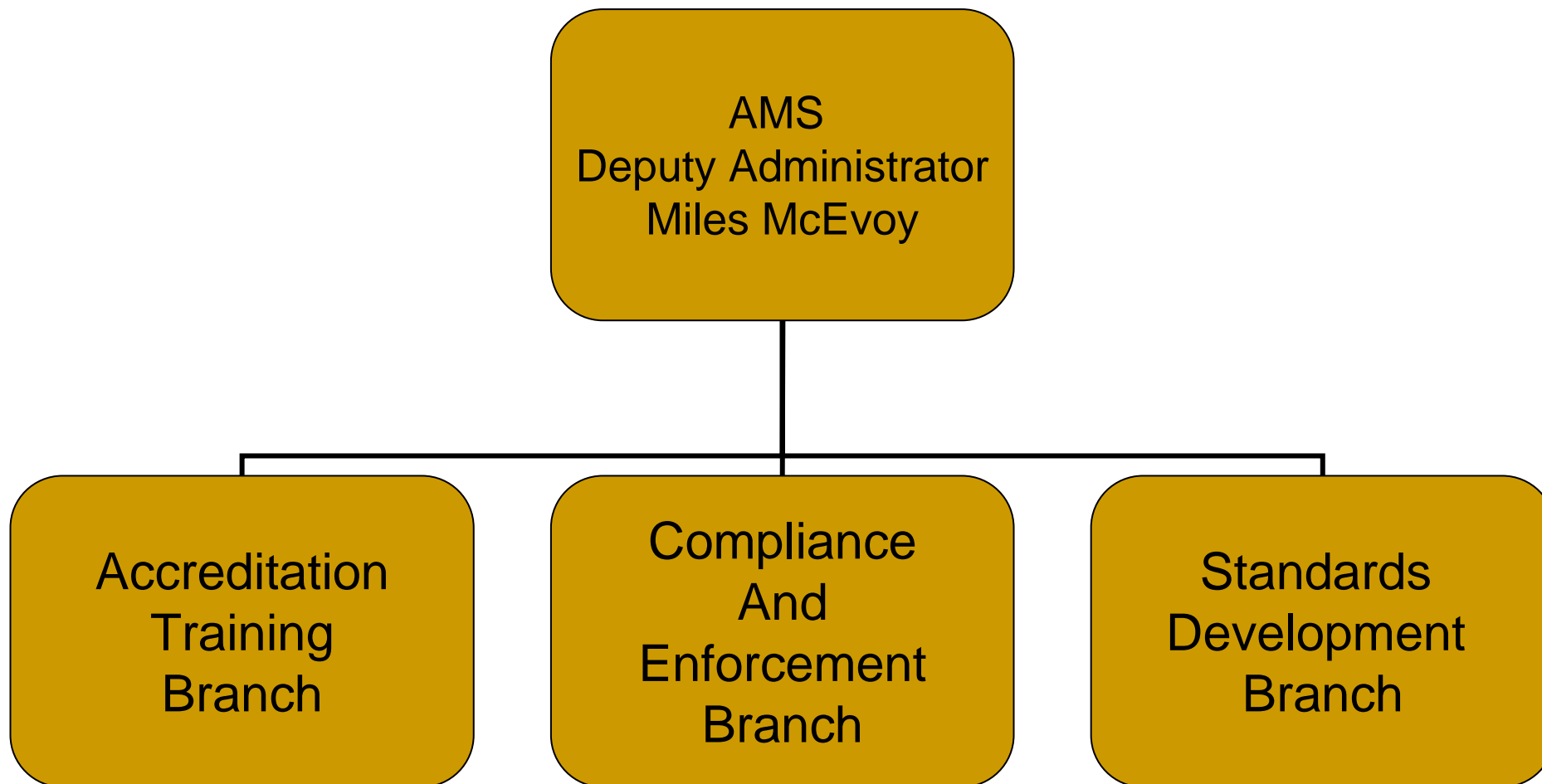


# USDA Accreditation

- Agents submit application and documentation to AMS' Audit, Review and Compliance Division
- NOP committee reviews ARC report and if approved grants accreditation
- Accredited certifiers are audited once every 2.5 years. Audits consist of review of quality system management, records, decisions, witness audits – usually take 3-4 days.



# NOP Structure





# National Organic Standards Board

## ■ **Mission of NOSB**

- ❑ Advise the Secretary of Agriculture on standards development
- ❑ Recommend materials for inclusion on National List(s).

## ■ **Structure of NOSB**

- ❑ 15 person citizen advisory board appointed by the Secretary
- ❑ 4-farmers/growers, 2 handlers/processors, 1-retailer, 1-scientist, 3-consumer/public interest advocates, 3-environmentalists, 1-certifier.

## ■ **Meet twice a year over 3-days**

- ❑ Make recommendations
- ❑ Hear public Input
- ❑ Vote on recommendations



# Formal Role of Public Comment

- **USDA-NOP Regulation Formalizes Role for Public Comment**
  - NOSB recommendations posted in advance of meeting- allows public comment in writing and in person
  - NOSB recommendations sent to NOP
  - NOP publishes Advance Notice of Proposed Rule Making (ANPR) – provides period of time for public comments in writing, may include listening sessions
  - NOP publishes Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPR) – provides period of time for public comments in writing, may include listening sessions- again
  - Legal review of final rule to determine if public comments were addressed
  - NOP publishes final rule
  
- **Principles for Public Comment**
  - Open for comments for a set period of time
  - During ‘Comment Period’ no direct communication on issue between industry/public and regulators – to avoid undue influence
  - All comments must be considered and addressed



# Office of Inspector General Report

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# International Trade Agreements

## ■ Section 205.500

- (c) In lieu of accreditation under paragraph (a) of this section, USDA will accept a foreign certifying agent's accreditation to certify organic production or handling operations if:
- (1) USDA determines, upon the request of a foreign government, that the standards under which the government authority accredited the foreign certifying agent meet the requirements of this part; or
  - (2) The foreign government authority that accredited **the foreign certifying agent acted under an equivalency agreement negotiated between the United States and the foreign government.**



# Types of Trade Agreements

## ■ **Equivalence – Objectives are Equal**

- “The acceptance that different standards or technical regulations on the same subject fulfill common objectives” \*
- A mutual recognition in the form of bilateral agreements between key trading partners that allows for successful trade by reducing trade barriers and supporting the strengthening of the supply chain.



# Types of Trade Agreements

- **Recognition -“Compliance” to NOP**
  - Acknowledges that the “Recognized” country has accreditation systems in place to assure COMPLIANCE to the National Organic Program.
  - The “Recognized” country has authority to accredit certifiers to certify to the NOP within the countries boundaries.



# Current Trade Agreements

- Equivalence Arrangements
  - US/Canada
  - Many other countries have expressed interest in recognition or equivalency. European Union, Switzerland, Chile, Thailand, Japan, Poland
  
- Recognition Agreements
  - 6 agreements with –
    - Japan
    - New Zealand
    - United Kingdom
    - India
    - Denmark
    - Israel



# Reaching Trade Agreements

## ■ NOP

- ❑ Regulatory/Competent Authority
- ❑ Technical Expertise
- ❑ Enforcement

## ■ FAS

- ❑ International Arm of USDA
- ❑ Market Assessments
- ❑ Diplomatic Communication
- ❑ Monitor & negotiate agreements
- ❑ Market Development





# Reaching Trade Agreements

## ■ Trade Involvement

- ❑ OTA task force involved in US / Canada agreement
- ❑ Sharing data, priorities and insight critical





grazie per l'attenzione  
thank you for your attention

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