



# USE OF FILTERS & FILTERING AIDS IN ORGANIC PROCESSING & HANDLING

## Guidance

Filters and filtering aids are often used in organic processing and handling in order to remove impurities or unwanted solid particles in the process flow. This guidance document discusses the differences between filters and filtering aids, what materials are allowed, and any applicable restrictions.

### DEFINITIONS

- Filter- a device used to remove any unwanted material from a product.
- Filtering Aid- Filters that are added to a product or otherwise interact with the product would be considered filtering aids (i.e. processing aids).

### NOP REGULATIONS AND PCO POLICY

A filter may be considered equipment if it is not added to the product and only acts as a physical barrier. A filter that meets these criteria and is food grade is considered outside the scope of PCO material review and is allowed without restriction. Examples of allowed filters include depth filters, textile filters, and paper filters. This type of filter will have no impact on the organic labeling category of a product.

Filtering aids must be reviewed and approved by PCO prior to use on an organic operation. Ingredients allowed in a filtering aid are dependent on the labeling category of the final product (i.e. “100% Organic”, “Organic”, or “Made With Organic”):

		Requirements for ingredients in filtering aids	
		Agricultural Ingredients	Non-agricultural Ingredients
For final products labeled	“100% Organic”	Must be certified organic	Not permitted
	“Organic”	Must be certified organic or listed at §205.606	Must be listed at §205.605 and allowed for use in a filtering aid
	“Made with Organic...”	Not required to be certified organic	Must be listed at §205.605 and allowed for use in a filtering aid

All filtering aids must be produced without excluded methods, sewage sludge, or ionizing radiation. Be sure to check with PCO prior to using a filtering aid to ensure it will not affect the labeling category of your product.

Commonly used non-agricultural (non-organic) materials allowed as filtering aids for products labeled as “organic” or “made with organic” include diatomaceous earth, perlite, activated charcoal from vegetative sources, and cellulose.

Non-agricultural (non-organic) materials allowed as filtering aids per their annotation on §205.605 will have the following restriction: *Filtering Aid*. For use as a filtering aid only. §205.605