



How Citrefine's USDA Certified BioPreferred® status benefits customers and the consumer

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With demand for natural products at an all-time high, it is more important than ever for companies to clearly demonstrate evidence that their products and processes are environmentally-friendly so consumers can make informed purchasing decisions.

All too often, products marketed as 'natural' are anything but, and greenwashing (a form of marketing to falsely persuade the public that a company is using natural products and processes) has become a serious issue. This problem is only getting more complex, and consumers are left confused about whether the products they are buying are truly sustainable.

For Citrefine, certification through the USDA BioPreferred® Program is one of the tools we use to showcase the sustainability credentials of our naturally-derived active substance for insect repellents, Citriodiol®.

This certification, which we have obtained for our Mosi-guard® spray containing 30% of Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (Citriodiol®), provides assurance that 50% of the carbon content of the product comes from a bio-based source. In this instance, it is from Citriodiol® being present in the product. This means that insect repellent manufacturers who use Citriodiol® in their own products can also apply for BioPreferred® accreditation. And, because we have already been through the process of approval and accreditation, our team is well-placed to advise customers on the application process.

What are the benefits of the accreditation?

USDA BioPreferred® accreditation has benefits not just for Citrefine and our customers but for the consumer too.

Firstly, for insect repellent manufacturers, the ability to label products with a trusted accreditation from a legitimate source, based on a clearly defined standard, provides a competitive edge in a market where consumers are choosing what to buy based on ethical considerations.

In addition, all products granted an accreditation are placed in the BioPreferred® Program Catalog - a list of USDA approved products - which means that the product qualifies for mandatory federal purchasing and has greater visibility. Federal law and the Federal Acquisition Regulation direct that federal agencies purchase bio-based products in categories identified by the USDA. The USDA has identified 139 categories (e.g. cleaners, carpet, lubricants, pest control) of bio-based products for which agencies and their contractors have mandatory purchasing requirements.

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For consumers, the accreditation and the accompanying label means they can clearly see which products are truly green in accordance with the USDA's BioPreferred® standard. By choosing products with this label, the consumer can be assured that the USDA stands behind the accuracy of the claim that the product contains biological ingredients in the amounts stated on the label.

How Citrefine can advise customers on the process

Due to the nature of insect repellent regulation, Citrefine has a robust regulatory team in place which can advise on all aspects of regulation. We have end-use product registrations and approvals in key jurisdictions around the world, with a similar standard of rigorous safety and efficacy tests as the USDA BioPreferred® Program (Citriodiol® has also been extensively tested in field and laboratory trials and has passed rigorous safety assessments.) Customers can apply as an additional trade name to our end-use products, depending on the circumstances from which they buy through Citrefine.

Manufacturers and our customers also have the option to apply for the BioPreferred® certification on their own. The certification itself is free, and the fee for testing for the bio-based content is fairly inexpensive. The process is also very simple. Manufacturers can apply for certification on the BioPreferred® website, where the process is laid out step-by-step. The online form includes basic information about the product such as formulation details and expected bio-based carbon content, as well as the type of product and some basic marketing information.

Once the application meets the initial criteria and has been approved by the USDA, manufacturers will need to send a sample to an approved testing lab to determine the bio-based content of their product. With this established, they will receive a certification email.

The USDA routinely audits USDA Certified BioPreferred® Products to ensure that they contain the content – or percentage of bio-based material – that is displayed on the label. There is no formal renewals process, with the product remaining certified as long as it continues to be manufactured and marketed in accordance with the approval.

Our regulatory experts are here to help. Leveraging our extensive research and testing knowledge base, our in-house technical and regulatory affairs teams facilitate rapid ingredient and product registration and approvals processes, and the USDA certification is no different. We know how to help customers with every step of this process if our customers need assistance or advice.

To build further trust in our products and active substance and to support our sustainability credentials, we are currently exploring similar accreditations, such as the EPA's Safer Choice certification in America for our lotion and spray products. The additional recognised and measurable endorsements will continue to benefit both our customers and the consumer with their clear indication that products with these labels contain substances that have a net beneficial carbon footprint, are safer for human health and the environment, and involve practices that reduce, eliminate or prevent pollution at its source. As a result, families across the world can be protected at home, enjoy their travels and lead happier, healthier lives.

