

# ERS Peer Review Plan

Preliminary Title: The Prevalence of the Natural Claim on Food Product Packaging

Type of Report (ERR, EIB, EB) EB

Agency: Economic Research Service [X] Influential Scientific Information  
USDA [ ] Highly Influential Scientific Assessment

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Subject of Review: Food suppliers make a wide variety of claims about their production processes on food packaging, some of which are regulated and some of which are not. For example, the organic claim is regulated by USDA, with product standards, auditing of production processes by government-approved certifiers, and enforcement. USDA also authenticates claims about production methods, like No antibiotics ever, auditing suppliers' production processes on a fee for-service basis. In contrast, regulatory agencies make relatively modest requirements for use of the natural claim. Numerous studies of consumers' food choices have concluded that natural claims are often confused with verified claims, including those that signal healthier food choices and environmental stewardship. This paper offers quantitative estimates of the frequency with which food suppliers make the natural claim on food packaging. Estimates are based on scanner data and comprehensive label data. We calculated expenditure shares, unit sales shares, and Universal Product Code shares for products making the natural claim and for those that do not.

Purpose of Review: The purpose of the review is to ensure the high-quality of the economic analysis, transparent explanation of methods, objective interpretation of results, and effective communication to the intended audience.

Type of Review: [ ] Panel Review [X] Individual Reviewers  
[ ] Alternative Process (Briefly Explain):

Timing of Review (Est.): Start: 11/14/2022 Completed: 1/19/2023

Number of Reviewers: [ ] 3 or fewer [X] 4 to 10 [ ] More than 10

Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review: Economists

Reviewers selected by: [X] Agency [ ] Designated Outside Organization

Opportunities for Public Comment? [ ] Yes [X] No  
If yes, briefly state how and when these opportunities will be provided:  
How:  
When:

Peer Reviewers Provided with Public Comments? [ ] Yes [X] No  
Public Nominations Requested for Review Panel? [ ] Yes [X] No