

VERB-01 — What the mark stands for

Consumer information on the certification mark ECO-CERTIFIED · FAMILY BUSINESS SINCE ...

What the mark means

The mark stands for three verified statements about the product and the company behind it:

ECO-CERTIFIED — This product is certified to a recognised organic standard, for example Ecogarantie, Ecocert or Nature Care Product. These standards set requirements for ingredients, raw material sourcing, environmental impact and packaging that go beyond what the law requires. Which certification applies in a given case is shown on the packaging and in our register.

FAMILY BUSINESS — Behind the product is a company in which one family holds the majority of the voting rights and at least one family member sits on the management board. This follows the definition used by the Institut für Mittelstandsforschung Bonn and the European Commission: ownership and management in the same hands. Only for listed companies is a quarter of the voting rights sufficient, and then only if the family can also determine the composition of the company's leadership and is represented on the supervisory board. This is verified against corporate and governance documents and in an interview with the management. Where actual control lies with a group, an institutional investor or a private equity investor, where the family holds no voting rights, or where a domination or profit transfer agreement is in place, the mark is not granted. In addition, the company must show that the family is involved for the long term, for example across several generations or through a settled succession.

SINCE [YEAR] — The company has been on the market without interruption since that year. The year must be supported by at least two independent documents, for example register entries or historical business records. A company that has merely acquired an old brand may not use that brand's founding year.

Two designs, one and the same assessment. New packaging carries only the current design, with the circular text "ECO-CERTIFIED" at the top and "FAMILY BUSINESS SINCE [YEAR]" at the bottom. On older packaging you may still come across an earlier design until the end of 2028, in which the year is placed differently. The same requirements and the same assessment lie behind both. In either case the year refers to the founding year of the company, not to the organic certification.

Who carries out the assessment

The assessment is carried out neither by the company itself nor by us as the standard owner, but by an independent certification body accredited to the international standard DIN EN ISO/IEC 17065 for product certification, which may have no ties to the company assessed or to us. The assessment takes place before the mark is first used, is repeated every year, and is carried out in full every three years. Where there are concrete grounds for suspicion, the certification body may also carry out an unannounced on-site assessment.

What the mark does not mean

- It says nothing about whether other products of the same company are organically certified. The statement applies only to the product carrying the mark.
- It is not a statement about climate neutrality and not an assessment of product quality.
- The founding year is a plain factual statement, not a statement of quality.

If something is not right

If a company breaches the rules, the mark is suspended or withdrawn. Goods already delivered must then be taken back or relabelled. Suspensions and withdrawals remain in our public register for at least 24 months.

You can submit a complaint at any time, anonymously if you prefer, if a use of the mark appears questionable to you.

Looking things up and reporting

Register of all mark users, the full standard and the complaint form: **gaico-solutions.de/standards**.

For each company the register shows the assessed scope by product category; which individual articles carry the mark we will tell you on request, free of charge.

Complaints may also be sent by e-mail to info@gaico-solutions.de or made by telephone on +49 174 779 70 47.

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