

**Formal Recommendation**  
**From: National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)**  
**To: the National Organic Program (NOP)**

**Date:** October 29, 2015

**Subject:** Reclassification of Alginic Acid from §205.605(a) to §205.605(b)

**NOSB Chair:** Jean Richardson

**The NOSB hereby recommends to the NOP the following:**

Rulemaking Action: X

Guidance Statement:

Other:

**Statement of the Recommendation:**

The NOSB recommends reclassifying alginic acid from §205.605(a) to §205.605(b) of the National List.

**Rationale Supporting Recommendation:**

Alginic acid exists naturally in both brown seaweeds and two bacterial genera. However, alginic acid is manufactured on an industrial scale through a chemical separation process that involves the maceration, alkali treatment and acid precipitation of alginic acid from brown seaweeds. In order to separate alginic acid from its salt form, it is subjected to numerous pH adjustments to promote ion exchange. These chemical processes result in pure alginic acid. Since alginic acid is present in seaweeds in its calcium, sodium, magnesium or other salt forms, and not in the free acid form, it is clear that the free acid form does not appear in nature. (2015 Technical Review – Alginic Acid, Lines 283-286). In the 1995 TAP review for Alginic Acid, the reviewers determined that the material was non-synthetic. However, given the draft Classification of Materials document and the information presented in the 2015 TR it was determined that Alginic Acid should be considered synthetic based on the definition of "synthetic" at §205.2 of the Federal rule.

**NOSB Vote:**

Motion to reclassify alginic acid from §205.605(a) to §205.605(b) of the National List.

Motion by: Tracy Favre

Seconded by: Lisa De Lima

Yes: 13 No: 0 Abstain: 1 Absent: 0 Recuse: 0

**Outcome:** Motion Passed

**National Organic Standards Board  
Handling Subcommittee Proposal  
Re-classification of Alginic Acid to §205.605(b)  
June 2, 2015**

**Summary of Proposed Action:**

The Handling Subcommittee proposes reclassification of Alginic Acid from §205.605(a) to §205.605(b) of the National List.

**Subcommittee Review**

Alginic acid is derived from wild harvested seaweeds. Increasing demand for alginic acid and alginates has led to some concerns regarding potential for overharvesting of these wild seaweeds.

Alginic acid exists naturally in both brown seaweeds and two bacterial genera. However, alginic acid is manufactured on an industrial scale through a chemical separation process that involves the maceration, alkali treatment and acid precipitation of alginic acid from brown seaweeds. In order to separate alginic acid from its salt form, it is subjected to numerous pH adjustments to promote ion exchange. These chemical processes result in pure alginic acid. Since alginic acid is present in seaweeds in its calcium, sodium, magnesium or other salt forms, and not in the free acid form, it is clear that the free acid form does not appear in nature. (2015 Technical Review – Alginic Acid, Lines 283-286). In the 1995 TAP review for Alginic Acid, the reviewers determined that the material was non-synthetic. However, given the draft Classification of Materials document and the information presented in the 2015 TR, it could be suggested that Alginic Acid is synthetic.

There has been recent research into production of Alginic Acid and Alginates from a biological fermentation process. However, this process does not currently produce sufficient quantities to be commercially available, (2015 Technical Review – Alginic Acid, Lines 299-300).

FDA limits the use of Alginic Acid as a stabilizers, emulsifier and thickener in soups and soup mixes.

The Handling subcommittee proposes that Alginic Acid remain on the National List. However, the Handling subcommittee is bringing forward a proposal to change the listing from 205.605(a) to 205.605(b) due to the determination that Alginic Acid would likely be classified as synthetic under the new draft Classification of Materials document.

**Vote in Subcommittee**

Motion to reclassify Alginic Acid from §205.605(a) to §205.605(b) of the National List.

Motion by: Tracy Favre

Seconded by: Lisa De Lima

Yes: 6 No: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 Recuse: 0

**Approved by Tom Chapman, Subcommittee Chair, to transmit to NOSB August 25, 2015**