FORMAL RECOMMENDATION BY THE
NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD (NOSB)
TO THE NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM (NOP)

Date: March 2, 2005

Subject: Revision to "natural resource" sections of organic farm plan

Chair: Jim Riddle

Recommendation

The NOSB herby recommends to the NOP the following:

Rulemaking Action: _____
Guidance Statement: _____
Other: X

Statement of the Recommendation (including Recount of Vote):

Motion: The Board accepts the provided enhancement of the Natural Resource Component of the Organic System Plan with the understanding that ATTRA will revise the provided information in to a format consistent with the existing Plan template and that the revised format will come back to the Board for final consideration.

Vote: 14-0-0

Rational Supporting Recommendation (including consistency with OFPA and NOP)**:**

The existing Organic System Plan does not provide sufficient guidance to farmers about the natural resource component of their farm plan. The revisions are consistent with OFPA and the NOP Final Rule.

Response by the NOP:

NOSB Crops Committee
Organic System Plan Amendment
Natural Resources of the Operation
Adopted by NOSB March 2, 2005
14 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain

On a vote of 2 yes, 0 no, 1 absent, the NOSB Crops Committee recommends that the following language be accepted to enhance the Natural Resource Component of the Organic System Plan previously adopted by the NOSB with the understanding that ATRA will revise the provided information in to a format consistent with the existing Plan template and that the revised format will come back to the Board for final consideration.

D. NATURAL RESOURCES:

NOP Rule 205.200 and 205.203(a) requires that production practices maintain or improve the natural resources of the operation, including soil and water quality. Natural resources also include wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife. Practices and measures that conserve biodiversity and maintain and improve native species and habitats must be incorporated in the farm system. Practices must minimize erosion. Depending on certifying agent policy, water tests may be required for nitrate and coliform bacteria if water is used for washing/processing organic products or for organic livestock. Irrigation water should not contaminate organic crops with prohibited materials. Methods to conserve water usage should be part of the irrigation plan.

Create a map and inventory of your farm and the important natural resource features nearby using the following checklist to develop your map and inventory: ☐ topography; ☐ soils; ☐ hydrological and drainage conditions; ☐ cropped areas; ☐ native plant and animal communities and habitats such as woodlands, grasslands, and hedgerows; ☐ ecological values such as habitat linkages in larger conservation network, bird and beneficial insect habitat; ☐ perennial cover; ☐ invasive species problems; ☐ native habitats converted or otherwise altered in the last 5 years; and ☐ legal designations such as flood plain, wetland, riparian area, Wild and Scenic River, public natural resource lands, and protected areas.

Assess the farm for opportunities to support priority species and sensitive habitats, including protected threatened and endangered species, species of special concern, many of which are candidates for protection, and keystone species which are known to profoundly influence their landscape; migration and movement of native species; invasive species control; ecosystem processes; regional conservation goals; and conservation of activities of other land mangers in the watershed.

Based on your assessment, describe your economically feasible conservation goals and practices, and indicate priority and timeline for implementation (items 1-4):

1) CROPLAND AREA

Conserve and provide habitat

Time farm practices to enhance viability or prevent damage to wildlife

Manage the water needs of crops, native species and ecosystems

Prevent water contamination

Control invasive species and pests

Current:

Planned (indicate top priorities):

Implementation partners (if appropriate):

Timeline:

How will you refrain from harming biodiversity?

2) NON-CROP AREAS

Provide habitat for pollinators, natural enemy insects, birds and bats

Protect existing natural areas and manage non-crops fallow areas for habitat and wildlife diversity

Conserve and restore habitat in riparian areas

Control invasive and pest species

Current:

Planned (indicate top priorities):

Implementation partners (if appropriate):

Timeline:

How will you refrain from harming biodiversity?

3) LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Conserve and restore ecosystem and riparian habitat

Improve rangeland pastures

Implement predator-friendly practices

Current:

Planned (indicate top priorities):

Implementation partners (if appropriate):

Timeline:

How will you refrain from harming biodiversity?

4) WILD HARVEST OPERATIONS

Maintain and improve the sustainability of the harvested species

Current:

Planned (indicate top priorities):

Implementation partners (if appropriate):

Timeline:

How will you refrain from harming biodiversity?

Develop a plan to monitor or evaluate the success of top priority biodiversity practices you have implemented. What is the timeline and frequency for monitoring success, and for reviewing and revising your biodiversity conservation plan? Assess the biodiversity success using photo monitoring, water quality analysis, plant, mammal, bird, reptile, amphibian or insect surveys, and partner collaboration. The monitoring should help determine whether the natural resources of the farm or surrounding area have benefited from the conservation measures, and if the farm meets the broader biodiversity goals.

What soil conservation practices are used? ☐ terraces ☐ contour farming ☐ strip cropping ☐ winter cover crops ☐ undersowing/interplanting ☐ conservation tillage ☐ permanent waterways ☐ windbreaks ☐ firebreaks ☐ tree lines ☐ retention ponds ☐ riparian management ☐ maintain wildlife habitat ☐ other (specify)

What soil erosion problems do you experience (why and on which fields)?

Describe your efforts to minimize soil erosion problems listed above.

Describe how you monitor the effectiveness of your soil conservation program.

How often do you conduct conservation monitoring? ☐ weekly ☐ monthly ☐ annually ☐ as needed ☐ other (specify)

WATER USE: ☐ none ☐ irrigation ☐ livestock ☐ foliar sprays ☐ washing crops ☐ greenhouse ☐ other (specify)

Source of water: ☐ on-site well(s) ☐ river/creek/pond ☐ spring ☐ municipal/county ☐ irrigation district ☐ other (specify)

Attach current water tests for nitrates and coliform bacteria, per certifying agent policy.

Type of irrigation system: ☐ none ☐ drip ☐ flood ☐ center pivot ☐ other (specify)

What input products are applied through the irrigation system?
☐ none

What products do you use to clean irrigation lines/nozzles?
☐ none

Is the system shared with another operator?
☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what products do they use?

Is the system flushed and documented between conventional and organic use?
☐ Yes ☐ No

What practices are used to protect water quality?

☐ fencing livestock from waterways ☐ scheduled use of water to conserve its use ☐ tensiometer/monitoring ☐ laser leveling/land forming ☐ drip irrigation

☐ micro-spray ☐ other (specify)

List known contaminants in water supplies in your area. *Attach residue analysis and/or salinity test results, if applicable.*

Describe your efforts to minimize water contamination problems listed above.
☐ Not applicable

Describe how you monitor the effectiveness of your water quality program.

How often do you conduct water quality monitoring? ☐ weekly ☐ monthly ☐ annually ☐ as needed ☐ other (specify)