



United States
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Service

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**NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD MEETING UPDATE
November 2016**

MEETING SUMMARY

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) held its biannual public meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, November 16-18, 2016. Over the course of three days, the NOSB, under the leadership of NOSB Chair Ms. Tracy Favre, evaluated 20 proposals, 6 discussion documents, and 2 reports/updates, and completed its review of 15 materials due to sunset in 2018. The NOSB received over 2,800 written public comments and heard oral comments from 187 members of the public on a wide range of issues. Forty-six of those commenters presented testimony during a webinar held prior to the meeting, and 141 gave oral comments at the in-person meeting.

The meeting began with introductions by each Board member and acceptance of the Spring 2016 meeting summary. The Board then heard introductory remarks from Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program (NOP), who presented an update on the National Organic Program. Dr. Jean Richardson, as a member of the peer review team, presented the results of the peer review of the National Organic Program that was completed by American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Dr. Lisa Brines, NOP National List Manager, provided an update about materials under sunset review, and petitions for changes to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. A summary of the NOSB’s recommendations and actions is provided below. The final recommendations from the November 2016 meeting are posted at www.ams.usda.gov/NOSBMeetings.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Petitioned Substances/National List Recommendations. The NOSB recommended one amendment to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List). This section of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) organic regulations includes synthetic substances allowed in crop and livestock production, nonsynthetic substances prohibited in crop and livestock production, and non-organic substances allowed in the handling of organic products.

Substance	Section	NOSB Recommendation
Ivermectin	§205.603(a)(18)(ii)	<p>The motion to remove ivermectin from the National List, §205.603, passed.</p> <p>The NOSB reviewed and supported the petition for removal of ivermectin from the National List.</p>

Substance	Section	NOSB Recommendation
Aluminum sulfate	§205.601	Classified as synthetic; not recommended for National List
Soy wax	§205.601	Classified as synthetic; not recommended for National List
1-methylcyclopropene	§205.601	Classified as synthetic; not recommended for National List
Ammonium citrate	§205.601	Classified as synthetic; not recommended for National List
Ammonium glycinate	§205.601	Classified as synthetic; not recommended for National List
Potassium cellulose glycolate	§205.601	Classified as synthetic; not recommended for National List
Aluminum sulfate	§205.603	Classified as synthetic; not recommended for National List
Sodium bisulfate	§205.603	Classified as synthetic; not recommended for National List
Acid-activated bentonite	§205.603	Classified as synthetic; not recommended for National List
Sodium chlorite for the generation of chlorine	§205.605(b)	Returned to Subcommittee for further consideration
Oat protein concentrate	§205.606	Classified as agricultural; not recommended for National List
Tocopherols	§205.605(b)	Motion to add listing at 205.605(a). Returned to Subcommittee for further consideration

2. 2018 Sunset Review. The NOSB completed the 2018 sunset review for 15 substances. The NOSB considered motions to remove each of these substances from the National List. Upon completing the 2018 Sunset review, the NOSB recommended one substance for removal: Carrageenan.

Substance	Section	Action Considered by NOSB NOSB Recommendation
Carrageenan	§205.605(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List, based on the OFPA criteria “availability of alternatives,” passed. The NOSB recommended removal from the National List as a result of its sunset review.
Copper sulfate	§205.601(a); §205.601(e)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Ozone gas	§205.601(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Peracetic acid	§205.601(a); §205.601(i)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
EPA List 3 Inerts	§205.601(m)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Calcium chloride	§205.602(c)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Agar-agar	§205.605(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Animal enzymes	§205.605(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.

Substance	Section	Action Considered by NOSB NOSB Recommendation
Calcium sulfate-mined	§205.605(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Glucono delta-lactone	§205.605(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Tartaric acid	§205.605(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Cellulose	§205.605(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Potassium hydroxide	§205.605(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Silicon dioxide	§205.605(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Colors: Beta-carotene extract	§205.606	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.

3. Other Recommendations

Policy and Procedure Manual Revisions

The NOSB issued a recommendation to adopt the September 13, 2016, draft version of the NOSB Policy and Procedures Manual. The objective of the recommendation is to revise the manual to reflect the current procedures for the collaborative and productive functioning of the NOSB.

Sunset Review - Efficient Workload Reorganization

The NOSB recommended a reorganization of the sunset review schedule to distribute the workload more evenly over the course of the five-year review timeline. The new timeline was widely supported by organic stakeholders, as it also lessens the workload for stakeholders who provide public comment.

Research Priorities

The NOSB submitted a current list of research priorities that would support the organic sector, and urges researchers to consider whole farm systems when undertaking research topics. New priorities added to the 2016 list include: prevention of GMO contamination; biodegradable biobased mulch film; prevention and management of parasites for organic livestock; evaluation of methionine; a systems-based approach for organic poultry; chlorine materials for handling; and alternatives to copper for plant disease and algae control. The NOSB recommended adopting the proposal on the 2016 NOSB Research Priorities.

Excluded Methods Terminology

The NOSB passed a recommendation on excluded methods terminology that creates a structure for reviewing new technologies and disseminating the results of the review in a transparent manner. The Board voted to approve various definitions for excluded methods, and approve principles and criteria for evaluating new technologies and terminologies.

Discussion Documents, Updates and Reports

The Compliance, Accreditation and Certification Subcommittee presented a discussion document on the personnel performance evaluations of inspectors (NOP Instruction 2027), and provided a verbal report on assessment of soil conservation practices.

The Materials Subcommittee presented a discussion document on excluded methods terminology, and the NOSB voted to send a report to the Secretary of Agriculture on the progress to prevent GMO incursion into organic.

The Handling Subcommittee provided two discussion documents: one on the cumulative impacts of phosphates in organic processed foods; and the second on marine algae listings on the National List. The Subcommittee also provided an update on the possible reclassification of xanthan gum, which the Subcommittee will not pursue at this time.

The Crops Subcommittee provided two discussion documents: one on strengthening and clarifying the requirements for use of organic seed (NOP 5029), and one on further clarifications for container and greenhouse production.

Other Business

Hydroponics/Aquaponics/Biaponics

The NOSB presented a proposal on hydroponics/aquaponics/biaponics, which was referred back to Subcommittee for additional work. The Board voted on a resolution presenting its stand on hydroponics, which was to uphold the 2010 NOSB recommendation that hydroponics is not compatible with organic production systems.

NOSB Officer Elections

Tom Chapman was elected as the next Chair of the National Organic Standards Board. Ashley Swaffar was elected Vice Chair and Jesse Buie was elected Secretary.

Presentation on the State of Organic Seed

The NOSB invited a presentation by Kristina (Kiki) Hubbard of the Organic Seed Alliance on the state of the organic seed report. The presentation is available on the NOSB meeting website.

Note: The NOSB is an advisory body to the Secretary of Agriculture. NOSB recommendations are not NOP policy unless the NOP issues final rules, final guidance, final instructions, or a policy memorandum that adopts the NOSB recommendations. They are not part of the USDA organic regulations unless such action is taken.

For additional information about the meeting, please visit www.ams.usda.gov/NOSBMeetings.