

NOSB in Albuquerque: Spring 2012 Meeting Summary

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) held its public meeting May 22 – 25, 2012, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The meeting began with an update from the NOP about its activities, priorities, and the role of the NOSB. Over the course of four days, the NOSB heard comments from approximately 80 members of the public on a wide range of issues. In addition to the oral testimony, the Board also received approximately 1700 written public comments, which were discussed and incorporated into the recommendations. A summary of the NOSB’s subsequent votes is provided below.

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 standards unless such action is taken.

Petitioned Substances

The NOSB responded to several petitions to add the following substances to the National List:

Substance	Section	Petitioned Action	NOSB Recommendation	Notes
Gibberellic Acid	§ 205.605(a)	Add to the list (allow)	Motion failed	
Choline	§ 205.605(b)	Add to the list (allow)	Add to the list with the following annotation:	Choline chloride (CAS# 67-48-1) and Choline bitartrate (CAS # 87-67-2) for use in infant formula and medical nutritional enteral products
Inositol	§ 205.605(b)	Add to the list (allow)	Add to the list with the following annotation:	CAS # 87-89-9 (myo-inositol) and 6917-35-7 (non-specific isomer) for use in infant formula and medical nutritional enteral products
Citrus Hystrix	§ 205.606	Add to the list (allow)	Add to the list	
Curry Leaf	§ 205.606	Add to the list (allow)	Add to the list	

Sunset 2013 Substances

The NOSB must review all National List substances every five years and make a recommendation to either renew, remove, or change each listing. This process is commonly referred to as “Sunset” review. The NOSB made recommendations for the following National List substances as part of their Sunset 2013 review.

Substance	Section	NOSB Recommendation	Notes
EPA List 3 Inerts	§ 205.601	Relist with the following amended annotation:	Inert ingredients exempt from the requirement of a tolerance under 40 CFR 180.1122 that were formerly on EPA List 3 in passive polymeric dispenser products may be used until October 21, 2017.
Agar Agar	§ 205.605(a)	Relist	
Calcium sulfate	§ 205.605(a)	Relist	
Carrageenan	§ 205.605(a)	Relist with the following new annotation:	CAS # 9000-07-1 (general), 9062-07-1 (iota), 11114-20-8 (kappa), and 9064-57-7 (lambda). Carrageenan would not be allowed for use in infant formulas.
Glucono delta-lactone	§ 205.605(a)	Relist	
Cellulose	§ 205.605(b)	Relist with the following amended annotation:	For use in regenerative casing, powdered cellulose as an anti-caking agent (non-chlorine bleached) and filtering aid.

Materials review organizations. In December 2011, the NOSB recommended that all material review organizations be accredited or formally recognized in a new material review scope. At the May 2012 meeting, the NOSB recommended that the NOP develop guidance materials to material review organizations to promote consistency and uniformity in the short term. Their recommendation outlined a range of criteria and processes that these groups should use when reviewing substances.

Letter to Secretary Vilsack. The NOSB voted to send a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture regarding their establishment of a Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) ad hoc Subcommittee. The letter outlined some of the issues this Subcommittee intends to address.

Research priorities framework. The NOSB recommended a set of criteria for identifying research needs and a process for the NOSB to develop and publish a yearly recommendation on emerging research needs.

GMO vaccines. The NOSB requested additional information from the NOP before it makes a recommendation.

Policy and Procedures Manual. Based on additional information from the NOP, the NOSB intends to do additional work on its three Policy and Procedures Manual proposals before voting on them.

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