

National Organic Standards Board Meeting, September 17 – 19, 2002, Washington, D.C.

Processing Committee: Recommendation Calcium Stearate

Introduction: A petition was received for calcium stearate used as an anti-dusting agent in enriched baking products from the manufacturer of enzymes and vitamins used to enrich certain products.

Background: The committee unanimously agreed (as did the reviewers) calcium stearate is synthetic. The petitioners' stated use for calcium stearate is specifically for reducing dust in the work environment while facilitating the use of enzymes and vitamins to fortify baked goods. One reviewer noted, "This presumes that organic consumers want baked goods fortified with enzymes and vitamins", while another reviewer noted, "No empirical evidence that calcium stearate is effective in reducing dust from flour is provided..." and the committee felt the effectiveness of calcium stearate as an anti-dusting agent was not conclusive. Plus the TAP review indicates alternatives have not been thoroughly explored by the petitioner (maltodextrin, lecithin and some silicates). Further, mechanical ventilation systems were not mentioned or explored as an alternative.

Through application of the criteria the committee found information on environmental impact was inconclusive, that some human toxicity concerns are present through the use of calcium stearate and that alternatives have not been adequately explored.

Recommendation:

205.605 (b) Synthetics allowed:

Prohibited for products labeled as "organic."

Prohibited for products labeled as "made with organic."

Committee Vote:

Approve – 6
Disapprove - 1
Recuse – 0
Absent - 0
Abstain - 0

Conclusion: This recommendation prohibits the use of calcium stearate for products labeled as "organic" and "made with organic."