

Dear Mr. Mathews and Mr. Pooler,

I am writing you both, to try and prevent a terrible mistake that I am hearing might happen within the NOSB.

I am the owner of a wholesale distribution business in Washington State for the past 25 years. As a distributor of hundreds of high quality products, we have always prided ourselves on going to extraordinary lengths to distribute products that we know a lot about (it drives our suppliers crazy, but by the time we carry something, we know as much about it as they do).

We only carry products that we consider healthy, ethically produced, and would use ourselves as consumers.

One of these products is Organic Spirulina Algae from Cyanotech, a aquaculture company on the Big Island in Hawaii. We have visited their facility (<http://www.cyanotech.com/html/spir/prod/prod.html>), used their product (my family uses Spirulina regularly), and been quite happy with it for many years. Recently the grower sent us a letter saying that, because of their use of Chilean Nitrate in the production of their organic spirulina, that they may not be able to be organic after October, 2002.

As a gardener and Washington State Certified Organic Food Handler, I am familiar with the arguments against the use of Chilean Nitrate in land-based agriculture. I agree with these totally and feel it should be banned.

However, to use those arguments against Spirulina production is absurd. It a completely different "niche" system, that actually turns all these negatives around, and make them into positives. Spirulina grows in closed salt water runways. There is no better or more ORGANIC nitrogen source for this than Chilean Nitrate!

I have read the materials review and NOSB TAP discussions of this issue <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/MaterialsReview/ChileanNitrateGeneral.pdf> <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/MaterialsReview/ChileanNitrateSpirulina.pdf> and I do not see any valid reasons why they are not recommending an exemption for its use in spirulina aquaculture (not even a phase out, but an outright exception for this narrow use).

Banning Chilean Nitrate use in Organic Spirulina production will--

- Hurt the American retailers of Spirulina since there are no other certified organic sources.

- Hurt the American producers of Spirulina since they have spend years of time and money perfecting organic production.

-Hurt many companies using organic Spirulina as a raw material in their products since they will have to change labels and substitute an inferior nonorganic product.

-Hurt the American consumer of Spirulina, since the highest quality Spirulina is from domestic organic production.

Please forward this immediately to NOSB for their consideration, along with your recommendation that this small but important use be allowed for Chilean Nitrate in organic Spirulina production.

My understanding is that a final decision is being made at the Sept. 18 NOSB meeting, so time is of the essence.

Thank you,
Saul Fortunoff
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