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*Testimony by  
Beyond Pesticides/National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides  
Before the National Organic Standards Board  
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**RE: Synthetics and Processing**

Beyond Pesticides/NCAMP believes strongly in organic agriculture and food production and has for nearly two decades promoted it as the real alternative to conventional chemical intensive agriculture. We view organic processes as providing a viable alternative to practices which have polluted our land, air, water and food, and imposed severe hazards on farmers and farmworkers.

We have seen tremendous growth in the organic sector as a result, in large part, to pressures in the marketplace from consumers who believe in the importance of safe food, clean air and water, and a safe workplace. Farmers are responding in large numbers to the growing revolution in food production that is occurring.

In an effort to reduce the pollution currently associated with conventional food production practices, we would like to see the expansion of the organic sector. Assisting farmers to make the transition and reduce their hazardous inputs is essential. The question of how we can best expand organic production by assisting food producers to make the conversion to organic farming is a very different question from how we ultimately define organic.

After two decades of work in this area, and having been through numerous pesticide crises where the "chemical tools of production" were taken away or restricted in ways that were described as detrimental to agriculture, we realize how important it is to maintain a clear distinction between the conversion towards organic FARMING (or less pesticide/synthetic chemical use) and the definition of organic FARMING.

OFPA strikes this balance and incorporates the distinction described here by offering a variety of options for different degrees of organic processed food --three categories of labeling here, less than 50% "organically produced" product, at least 50% "organically produced" and "organically produced" products. While there are no distinctions within the process or organic farming; there are distinctions within handling operations and thus labeling options.

This was thoroughly discussed at the time the language was developed, with drafters feeling strongly that the law should offer consumers and producers

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*Comments to NOSB 6/8/99 continued*

the options necessary to respond effectively to marketplace pressures and help grow the organic sector --which we all want to do.

And so, the law provides for labeling that allows for the description of products "MADE with organic ingredients." In so doing, the label does not dilute the meaning of organic and gives consumers the option of supporting the production of organic ingredients until such time (if ever) that the processed food product can be HANDLED in a manner that meets the definition of organically produced.

The progress that has been made in the organic sector and the growth in consumer support for it is incredibly gratifying and gives us a great sense of hope for future opportunities. We realize that we still face enormous challenges in many areas of food production. Our greatest hope is that consumers and food producers will continue to work together to meet these challenges rather than define them away.