

# RAFI - USA

Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA

21 Hillsboro Street \* P.O. Box 640 \* Pittsboro, NC 27312 \* Tel: 919-542-1396 \* Fax 919-542-0069

P.O.Box 4672, Chapel Hill, NC 27514 \* Tel: 919-929-7099 \* Fax: 919-929-7099

Dear NOSB Friends,

Please find enclosed a very rough and crude list of priorities for the NOSB, which I gleaned out of the final rule, appendix and preamble. The National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture (National Organic Committee) intends to help host a 1-2 day meeting prior to your June meeting and hopes that you can attend to help further develop a more productive process. In the meantime, here are some immediate issues for the NOSB.

## **References and referrals to the NOSB from the Final USDA Rule:**

### **A. NOSB and public input needed:**

Manual is to be run through the NOSB – USDA requests input on what needs to be clarified. We need to know how to best engage with the NOSB in this process?

### **Processing/Handling:**

1. Retailers and processors are mostly exempt from certification – reason given - lack of consensus
2. Transitional label prohibited – lack of consensus

### **Livestock**

1. Provisions for confinement – request for species specific guidelines- temporary confinement – seeks finishing guidelines
3. Mutilations – lack of consensus – need public debate and guidelines for psychological welfare?
2. Factory farm manure allowed – no definition
3. Density and stocking rates – seeks additional NOSB guidance
4. Pasture-based has not been sufficiently defined – seeks NOSB input
5. Stage of production - not enough specific guidance from the NOSB

### **Inputs**

1. Amino acids not allowed but NOSB position needed to clarify
2. Compost teas not provided for- request input via NOSB
3. Sodium Nitrate – request additional input from NOSB regarding highly soluble mined materials

4. Farmers can rotate in and out of organic by fields but, this does not address possible residual contamination – USDA requests evidence of dangers?
5. GE vaccines to be a case-by-case approval by NOSB
6. List 4 inerts – call for petitions to NOSB if concerns are known.
7. Call for input via NOSB regarding UREC – principles, etc.
8. Biotech threshold – no consensus
9. USDA call for input on restructuring national list

#### **New regulations requested**

2. Bees, fish, mushrooms, greenhouses, commercial availability, and reasonable security – to be accomplished in the next 18 months through the NOSB.

#### **Additional Clarifications and NOSB leadership needed:**

1. Private seal use & additional claims need immediate clarification.
2. “Reasonable connected” via conflict of interest for farmer-run certifiers.
3. How farmer groups will be treated / especially small farmers in the Global South?
4. Compost must be turned 5 times within 15 days within proper temp range? Need recognition of other acceptable methods.
5. Whole herd conversion per site is scale bias for big Corp farms who have multiple sites – need NOSB help to narrow benefits to family-size operations?
6. Access for pasture of ruminants required but stage of production is still not defined within the reg. – scale bias loophole! NOSB feedback needed.
7. Peer review process needs NOSB input and clarification.
8. Processing plants can use non-NOSB approved prohibited pesticides – violation of organic integrity.
9. Fumigation can be allowed. Food not clearly required to be removed before spraying.
10. Processors can wash and reuse pesticide sprayed food storage containers.
11. Excluded methods are only based on “intentional use only” as a basis for loss of certification - Drift not covered off- rule does not give a Fed. Right of action. GE prohibition remains solely based on “perceived consumer preference” and not that it is incompatible w/ organic Ag. NOSB needs to re-confirm its incompatibility.
12. NOSB needs to establish process to monitor impacts of the rule on family farmers (US and Global South), farmer-run certifiers and NGO accreditation. USDA has currently no plans to track any of this!
13. Cotton / flax, products etc. --fiber products not covered by the rule.
14. Organic non-food animal products – Oked by rule- but need NOSB debate on organic fur, leather, etc.?
15. Essentiality – loophole in synthetics criteria in processing – NOSB needs to clarify.

On top of the above monumental tasks is the very real possibility that USDA will be forced to move ahead on NOP policy developments because the NOSB was unable to provide timely input. It is critical that this not happen. If necessary we must be

prepared to develop a SWAT team - kind of - rapid response mechanisms to ensure public input and NOSB leadership continues through the implementation process.

Good Luck @ the CA meeting and please keep us informed as to how we can best help the NOSB with this very timely and critical work. We look forward to your response.

For Family Farms,

Michael Sligh