

March, 1998

USDA National Organic Standards
USDA, AMS, Room 4007-S
AgStop 0275, POB 96456
Washington, DC 20090, 6456
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>

Docket #TMD-94 -00-2

Representative Martin Meehan
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

President Clinton
The White House
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Senator John Kerry
US Senate
Washington DC 20510

Hello:

I am concerned with the proposed rules just released with regard to organic standards. As written, they fail to protect consumers and are not consistent with the principles and practices used by organic farmers or organic food producers today.

I have been waiting for seven years for organic standards to be set by my government, and I can't believe that after seven years all input from the National Organic Standards Board has been ignored, watered down or rendered meaningless.

In particular, I am concerned that the USDA has chosen to ignore current organic practices with regard to the following:

**Irradiation: referred to as "ionizing radiation," comment topic heading: Handling/
National List; 62, Federal Register, page 65884, section 205.17.**

Organic food is currently not irradiated. Your proposed standards would allow radiation after harvest. As you know, irradiation is controversial. It exposes food to radioactive material and long-term effects of irradiation on our food supply are still unknown. Today, when I buy organic, I know it's not been irradiated. *I want to be assured of the same tomorrow and the day after tomorrow!*

Genetic engineering: referred to as "genetically engineered organisms," comment topic heading: General/Crops/Handling/National List; 62 Federal Register, page 65875

Presently, organic means food has not been genetically engineered.. The USDA's proposed standards would allow for genetic engineering, which involves taking DNA from one organism like bacteria, viruses, animals and plants and inserting it into another. It is a risky process with possible detrimental effects on the environment and food safety. I want to know that organic means no genetically engineered food.