

National Organic Standards Board Meeting Update

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) held its biannual public meeting in Denver, Colorado, April 19-21, 2017. Over the course of three days, the NOSB, under the leadership of NOSB Chair Mr. Tom Chapman, evaluated 8 proposals, 4 discussion documents, heard two Subcommittee updates, and began its review of 35 listings under the Sunset 2019 process. The NOSB received 2,044 written public comments and heard oral comments from 148 members of the public on a wide range of issues. Thirty-five (35) of those commenters presented testimony during a webinar held prior to the meeting, and 113 gave oral comments at the in-person meeting.

The meeting began with introductions by each Board member and acceptance of the Fall 2016 meeting minutes. The Board then heard introductory remarks from Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program (NOP), who presented an update on the National Organic Program. Tom Chapman, NOSB Chair, provided an update on the NOSB. Dr. Lisa Brines, NOP National List Manager, provided an update about materials under sunset review, and petitions for changes to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. During the course of the meeting, the NOSB considered a variety of topics including the continued use of a number of material as part of the Sunset 2019 review process, and the certification of hydroponic systems as organic. A summary of the NOSB's recommendations and actions is provided below. Discussion documents and updates are presented for information purposes, and the Board does not take action at this time. The final recommendations from the April 2017 meeting will be posted at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/event/nosb-spring-2017-meeting-denver-co>.

Note: The NOSB is an advisory body to the Secretary of Agriculture. NOSB recommendations are not NOP policy unless the NOP issues final rules, final guidance, final instructions, or a policy memorandum that adopts the NOSB recommendations. They are not part of the USDA organic regulations unless such action is taken.

Petitioned Substances. The NOSB reviewed two petitions to amend the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List). This section of the USDA organic regulations identifies the synthetic substances that may be used and the nonsynthetic substances that are prohibited in organic crop and livestock production. For organic processed products, the allowed non-organic ingredients and processing aids are also included on the National List. If an NOSB proposal receives a decisive vote (2/3 majority) by Board members in favor of the proposed motion, it becomes a recommendation to the USDA, and is provided to the Secretary through the AMS National Organic Program.

Petitions			
Use Area	Substance	National List Section	NOSB Recommendation
Handling	L-methionine - petitioned	§205.605(b)	Classified as synthetic; recommended for the National List, with annotation
Handling	Short DNA tracers - petitioned	§205.605(b)	Classified as synthetic; not recommended for the National List

Other National List Recommendations			
Use Area	Substance	National List Section	NOSB Recommendation
Crops	Marine algae listings	Multiple sections	Referred back to Subcommittee
Handling	Tocopherols annotation change	205.605(b)	Referred back to Subcommittee
Handling	Marine algae listings	Multiple sections	Referred back to Subcommittee
Handling	Cellulose - ancillary substances permitted	205.605(b)	Referred back to Subcommittee

Sunset 2019 Review. The NOSB must review every substance on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances every five years to determine whether it continues to meet all required criteria under the Organic Foods Production Act and the USDA organic regulations. This review is called “sunset review.” At this meeting, the NOSB began its review of 35 listings as part of the Sunset 2019 review. Proposals to remove any of these substances will be considered and voted on at the Fall 2017 NOSB meeting.

Use Area	Substance	National List Section
Crops	Chlorine Materials (Calcium hypochlorite, Chlorine dioxide, Sodium hypochlorite)	205.601(a)
Crops	Herbicides, soap-based	205.601(b)
Crops	Biodegradable biobased mulch film	205.601(b)
Crops	Boric acid	205.601(e)
Crops	Sticky traps/barriers	205.601(e)
Crops	Copper sulfate	205.601(i)
Crops	Coppers, fixed	205.601(i)
Crops	Humic acids	205.601(j)
Crops	Micronutrients (Soluble boron products)	205.601(j)

Crops	Micronutrients (Sulfates, carbonates, oxides, or silicates of zinc, copper, iron, manganese, molybdenum, selenium, and cobalt)	205.601(j)
Crops	Vitamin B ₁ , Vitamin C, Vitamin E	205.601(j)
Crops	Lead salts	205.602(d)
Crops	Tobacco dust (nicotine sulfate)	205.602(i)
Livestock	Chlorine Materials (Calcium hypochlorite, Chlorine dioxide, Sodium hypochlorite)	205.603(a)
Livestock	Chlorhexidine	205.603(a)
Livestock	Glucose	205.603(a)
Livestock	Oxytocin	205.603(a)
Livestock	Tolazoline	205.603(a)
Livestock	Copper sulfate	205.603(b)
Livestock	Lidocaine	205.603(b)
Livestock	Procaine	205.603(b)
Handling	Attapulgite	205.605(a)
Handling	Bentonite	205.605(a)
Handling	Diatomaceous earth	205.605(a)
Handling	Nitrogen	205.605(a)
Handling	Sodium carbonate	205.605(a)
Handling	Acidified sodium chlorite	205.605(a)
Handling	Carbon dioxide	205.605(b)
Handling	Chlorine Materials (Calcium hypochlorite, Chlorine dioxide, Sodium hypochlorite)	205.605(b)
Handling	Magnesium chloride	205.605(b)
Handling	Potassium acid tartrate	205.605(b)

Handling	Sodium phosphates	205.605(b)
Handling	Casings	205.606
Handling	Konjac flour	205.606
Handling	Pectin (non-amidated forms only)	205.606

Discussion Documents, Updates and Reports

The Compliance, Accreditation and Certification Subcommittee presented a discussion document on eliminating the incentive to convert native ecosystems into organic crop production. Work will continue on this project.

The Handling Subcommittee considered a discussion document on Bisphenol A (BPA) in packaging materials. The Handling Subcommittee expects to develop a proposal on this topic for the Fall 2017 meeting, pending completion of a technical evaluation report on BPA.

The Crops Subcommittee considered a discussion document on Aeroponics/Hydroponics/Aquaponics, and will develop a proposal on this topic for the Fall 2017 meeting. The Subcommittee also presented a proposal to strengthen the organic seed guidance (NOP 5029), which was sent back for further work.

The Livestock Subcommittee discussed a document on clarifying “emergency” for use of synthetic parasiticides in organic livestock production. The Subcommittee will continue to develop this work and will be soliciting additional public comment.

Other Business

This was the first meeting for the five new NOSB members who began their terms in January 2017: Asa Bradman, Sue Baird, Steve Ela, Joelle Mosso, and Dave Mortensen