

**Formal Recommendation**  
**From: National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)**  
**To: the National Organic Program (NOP)**

**Date:** November 18, 2016

**Subject: NOSB Resolution on Hydroponics**

**NOSB Chair:** Tracy Favre

**The NOSB hereby recommends to the NOP the following:**

Rulemaking Action:

Guidance Statement:

Other: X

**Statement of the Resolution:**

The National Organics Standards Board brings forward the following resolution:

The NOSB respects the efforts of the former NOSB that led to its 2010 recommendation on terrestrial plants in greenhouses.

The NOSB recognizes that the foundation of organic agriculture is based upon a systems approach to producing food in the natural environment, which respects the complex dynamic interaction between soil, water, air, sunlight, plants and animals needed to produce a thriving agro-ecosystem.

At the heart of the organic philosophy is the belief that our responsibilities of good stewardship go beyond production of healthy foods and include protection of natural resources, biodiversity and the ecosystem services upon which we all depend.

We encourage future NOSB to consider this wider perspective as the board undertakes the challenges of assessing and defining innovations in agriculture that may or may not be compatible in a system of organic production.

In the case of the hydroponic/bioponic/aquaponic issue, it is the will of the majority of the current members of the NOSB to prohibit hydroponic systems that have an entirely water based substrate. Although that was the original intent of the proposal before us today, the current proposal as structured does not achieve this objective. While the NOSB does not believe that the liquid substrate systems should be sold under the USDA organic label, these growers deserve the chance to promote their very commendable qualities and objectives in their own right.

**Rationale Supporting Recommendation (including consistency with OFPA and Organic Regulations):**

The NOSB voted to send the proposal on Hydroponics/Biaponics back to Crops Subcommittee for further work, but felt it was important to send a message to stakeholders who are affected by the outcome of a future recommendation. Therefore, this resolution indicates to future boards and stakeholders the direction that the current board would like to see pursued in future proposals.

**NOSB Vote:**

**Motion:** to approve the NOSB Resolution above

Motion by: Harriet Behar

Seconded by: Harold V Austin, IV

Yes: 12 No: 0 Abstain: 2 Absent: 1 Recuse: 0

Motion Passed