

ITEM FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

NOSB Aquaculture Working Group Interim Final Report

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) at its October 12–14, 2004, meeting recommended the formation of an aquatic animal taskforce to develop proposed production, handling, and labeling standards for food and animal feed products derived from aquatic animals. The taskforce would be divided into two working groups—one for animals that live and are harvested in the wild or open-sea (wild-caught working group) and another for animals that live and are harvested under aquaculture (aquaculture working group).

On January 24, 2005, the National Organic Program (NOP) published a Federal Register notice that called for nominations for members to the taskforce. On May 26, 2005, the NOP named 12 diverse and experienced individuals, with backgrounds in aquaculture production and nutrition, environmental science, and organic principles, to the aquaculture working group of the aquatic animal task force. Members for the wild-caught working group have not yet been named, because of a low response to the call for nominations.

On January 13, 2006 the National Organic Program received the interim final report of the aquaculture working group for the production and handling of organic aquaculture products. The NOP has submitted the interim final report to the NOSB for review and acceptance at its April 17-19, 2006, NOSB meeting in Pennsylvania. After acceptance of the report by the NOSB, the NOSB's Livestock Committee will commence work on developing a recommendation for the full NOSB to consider as a recommendation to the Secretary.

In the meantime, the NOSB is seeking public comment on the aquaculture working group's interim final report, until April 10, 2006. With respect to receipt of comments by the NOSB during the comment period, the following provisions have been established to ensure that your comment will be received and reviewed by the Board:

- **Mail:** Persons may submit comments on listed Board recommendations by mail to: The National Organic Standards Board; c/o Valerie Frances; Room 4008 - South Building; 1400 and Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20250-0001.
- **E-mail:** Comments may be sent via internet to NOSB.Livestock@usda.gov.
- **Fax:** Comments may be submitted by fax to (202) 205-7808.

In reviewing and commenting on the aquaculture working group's interim final report, please consider and respond to the following criteria:

Do the recommended standards:

1. Communicate effectively?
2. Provide clear and adequate context of scope, product coverage, and production systems?
3. Identify and address key stakeholders and their concerns and challenges?
4. Include vision and strategy for achieving consistency with organic principles demonstrated in the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 and its implementing regulations?
5. Present measurable objectives that are enforceable?
6. Present a clear expectation of targets and goals?

7. Suggest a system of production that reduces or minimizes the need for off-farm inputs?

Clearly indicate if you are for or against the recommended standards or some part of it and why. Include recommended wording changes as appropriate. Include a copy of articles or other references that support your comments. Only relevant material should be submitted.