

This is a **Sunset Preliminary Review** by a Subcommittee of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). Sunset preliminary reviews are posted for public comment and the NOSB will refer to them to complete the sunset review process. They are not final Board recommendations or NOP policy. For more information, see [the Sunset Review and Renewal Process](#) fact sheet, and [Federal Register notice of Sept. 16, 2013](#).

Sunset 2015 Review
Meeting 2 - October 2014
Handling Subcommittee Review
Tragacanth
August 22, 2014

As part of the National List Sunset Review process, the NOSB Handling Subcommittee has evaluated the need for the continued allowance for or prohibition of the following substances for use in organic handling.

Tragacanth Gum

Agricultural

Use – As nonorganically produced agricultural product allowed as ingredient in or on processed products.

Listing: Tragacanth gum (CAS #-9000-65-1).

Technical Report: none

Original Petition: [Tragacanth Gum \(PDF\)](#) (2007)

Past NOSB Actions: NOSB review and recommendation for addition to the National List [5/08](#)

Regulatory Background:

Proposed for addition to National List 6/3/09 ([74 FR 26591](#))

Added to National List 12/13/2010 ([75 FR 77521](#))

Sunset Date: 12/14/2015

Reference: 7 CFR 205.606(x)

Subcommittee Review

This substance was originally reviewed by the handling committee and added to 205.606 by the NOSB in May, 2008. The committee noted at the time that due to limited growing regions (Turkey and Iran) and relevant trade embargoes, the supply of conventional tragacanth gum was fragile and limited, and organic tragacanth gum was not known to be in production. The Board Summary from the 2008 recommendation is reprinted here:

Tragacanth gum, water-extracted is an exudite gum and is harvested and processed in a manner which is identical to other exudite gums already included on §205.606 of the National List. The Board considered whether it is necessary to add another gum to the National List and was persuaded that although Tragacanth gum is derived by an identical process to gum Arabic, it has sufficiently different functionality to justify its inclusion on the National List.

The Board also considered the reasons for this material being commercially unavailable in an organic form and the prospects for such availability in the future. At present this tree is primarily cultivated in Iran and the current embargo which exists on U.S. trade with this country had disrupted the supply of even the conventional form of this material. Turkey has increased its production of conventional Tragacanth gum and also is expanding its organic production. The petitioner is working closely with their Turkish supplier and believes that a supply of this material in an organic will be made available in the next several years. The Board feels that this material meets evaluation criteria in all four categories required for listing on section 205.606 of the National List.

Commercial Availability

While the petition and 2008 recommendation note that Turkey is expanding organic production of

tragacanth gum, a thorough search of internet sources and ingredient supply catalogs provided no suggestion that the ingredient is available in organic form. This aspect is specifically highlighted here in order to elicit comments from any suppliers or other stakeholders who are aware of organic sources of the ingredient. At the Spring 2014 meeting, the NOSB only heard from one certifier verifying that this material is in current use in non-organic form. We invite any other users of this substance to verify its necessity through written or oral comment.

Safety and Regulatory Acceptability

A search of the medical literature shows no new safety or other medical data related to tragacanth gum since the original petition and review process. We were unable to locate any relevant regulatory changes related to this ingredient among the world's regulatory bodies.

In summary, this may be a material with few current users and with possibly functional organic alternatives available. If there are users of this material out there with compelling arguments as to its necessity, we encourage them to comment on this material for the fall meeting.

Motion to Remove:

This proposal to remove will be considered by the NOSB at its public meeting.

Based on the Subcommittee's review, the Subcommittee proposes removal of this substance from the National List based on the following criteria in the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) 7 U.S.C. 6158(m)(6) the alternatives to using the substance in terms of practices or other available materials; (7) its compatibility with a system of sustainable agriculture.

Subcommittee Review

The Handling Subcommittee believes that the full Board should have the opportunity to complete the review of each sunset material by voting. The NOP has stated that to do this a motion to remove should be brought from the Subcommittee for each substance. If the Subcommittee motion to remove fails to receive a majority, the motion will still be put forward to the full board for review. The motion to remove is voted by the full Board and needs to receive a 2/3 majority to recommend removal.

Motion to remove Tragacanth Gum from §205.606(x)

Motion by: Joe Dickson

Seconded by: Harold Austin

Yes: 0 No: 6 Abstain: 0 Recuse: 0 Absent: 2