

**Formal Recommendation by the  
National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)  
to the National Organic Program (NOP)**

**Date:** April 29, 2011

**Subject:** Review of NOSB Vice Chair and Policy Development Committee  
Job Descriptions

**Chair:** Tracy Miedema

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

Rulemaking Action  
Guidance Statement  
Other

**Statement of the Recommendation (Including Recount of Vote):**

The recommendation proposes a change to the NOSB Policy and Procedures Manual (PPM) to clarify the job descriptions of the NOSB Vice Chair and the Policy Development Committee with regard to the responsibility for maintaining the PPM. The NOSB voted unanimously to accept the recommendation.

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

The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, 7 USC 6518 (a), directed the Secretary of Agriculture to establish the National Organic Standards Board and described its composition, authority and duties. The NOSB Policy and Procedures Manual govern the operations and policies of the board.

**Committee Vote:**

<b>Moved:</b> Barry Flamm		<b>Second:</b> Joe Dickson		
<b>Yes:</b> 14	<b>No:</b> 0	<b>Abstain:</b> 0	<b>Absent:</b> 0	<b>Recusal:</b> 0

**National Organic Standards Board  
Policy Development Committee  
Proposed Recommendation  
Review of NOSB Vice Chair and  
Policy Development Committee Job Descriptions**

**April 29, 2011**

## **Introduction**

The Policy and Procedures Manual (PPM) of the NOSB represents the board policies on committee responsibilities, board procedures, and other matters of board operational policy. The language of PPM is currently unclear on who is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the PPM, since the descriptions of the responsibilities of both the Policy Development Committee and the NOSB Vice Chair include direct responsibility for maintaining the PPM. This recommendation clarifies the respective roles of the PDC and NOSB Vice Chair with regard to the maintenance of the PPM.

## **Background**

It was noted by members of the PDC and the board in Fall 2010 that the PPM is not clear as to whether the maintenance of the PPM is the ultimate responsibility of the PDC or the NOSB Vice Chair.

Section II of the PPM describes the responsibilities of the NOSB Vice Chair:

### **Vice Chair**

The Vice Chair shall act in the absence of the Chair. The Vice Chair shall also be responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the Policy and Procedures Manual.

Section IV of the PPM describes the responsibilities of the Policy Development Committee:

### ***Policy Development Committee (PDC)***

The Policy Development Committee makes draft recommendations for consideration by the Board to provide guidance, clarification or proposed standards of Board operations, policies and procedures. The PDC maintains the content and updates to the NOSB Policy and Procedures Manual and New Member Guide. The PDC occasionally works with other committees to develop joint recommendations where policy issues are involved.

These two sections assign responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the PPM to both the VC and the PDC.

## Relevant Areas in the Rule

The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, 7 USC 6518 (a), directed the Secretary of Agriculture to establish the National Organic Standards Board and described its composition, authority and duties.

## Discussion

The guidelines contained in the Policy and Procedures Manual directly impact the internal operation and policies of the NOSB, and each board member has a vested interest in the PPM's content and integrity. The participation of the Vice Chair in the maintenance of the PPM serves the interests of the Executive Committee in the smooth and effective operation of the overall board. However, the PDC is charged with matters of internal board policy, and the PPM clearly also falls within this sphere. In consideration of these equally important interests in the maintenance of the PPM, the Policy Development Committee proposes that the responsibility be shared collaboratively between the PDC and the NOSB VC. It is essential that the work of the maintenance of the PPM occur within the PDC, so that proposed changes are subject to the standard procedures regarding committee recommendations, votes, and presentation to the overall board.

The Vice Chair of the NOSB typically serves as a member of the PDC, because of the shared interest in board operations between the VC and the PDC described above. The committee recommends that the VC job description be updated to reflect that she or he should serve as a member of the PDC, and should work collaboratively with the members of the PDC to facilitate the ongoing maintenance of the PPM. The PDC description should be updated to reflect this collaborative relationship with the VC on the maintenance of the PPM.

## Recommendation

The PDC recommends that Section II of the NOSB Policy and Procedures Manual be amended as follows:

### **Vice Chair**

The Vice Chair shall act in the absence of the Chair. The Vice Chair shall serve as a member of the Policy Development Committee, and work collaboratively with the PDC's members on the ~~also be responsible for~~ maintenance and upkeep of the Policy and Procedures Manual.

The PDC recommends that Section IV of the NOSB Policy and Procedures Manual be amended as follows:

### ***Policy Development Committee (PDC)***

The Policy Development Committee makes draft recommendations for consideration by the Board to provide guidance, clarification or proposed standards of Board

operations, policies and procedures. The PDC maintains the content and updates to the NOSB Policy and Procedures Manual (in collaboration with the NOSB Vice Chair) and New Member Guide. The PDC occasionally works with other committees to develop joint recommendations where policy issues are involved.

### **Committee Vote**

Motion: to accept the proposed amendment to the Policy and Procedures Manual

Motion by: Joe Dickson    Second: Jay Feldman

Yes: 5            No: 0            Abstain: 0            Absent: 0            Recuse: 0