



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Agricultural
Marketing
Service

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MEMORANDUM TO THE NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD

FROM: Miles McEvoy
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National Organic Program (NOP)

SUBJECT: National Organic Standards Board Recommendations (October 2014)

This memorandum responds to National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) recommendations and other actions at the October 28 – 30, 2014 meeting of the NOSB in Louisville, Kentucky. The NOSB recommendations and other actions included the following:

1. 2015 Sunset Review

The NOSB completed the 2015 sunset review for three substances used in crop production and four substances used in organic handling.

The NOSB considered motions to remove each of the following substances from the National List. In order for a motion to pass, a 2/3 majority vote is required. The NOSB recommended two substances for removal: the non-organically produced fortified cooking wines marsala and sherry. The rest of the motions to remove substances from the National List failed.

Substance	National List Section(s)	Action Considered by NOSB	NOSB Recommendation
Sodium Carbonate Peroxyhydrate	§ 205.601(a)	Motion to remove from the National List	The motion failed. The NOSB completed the sunset review
Aqueous Potassium Silicate	§ 205.601(e) and (i)	Motion to remove from the National List	The motion failed. The NOSB completed the sunset review
Sulfurous Acid	§ 205.601(j)	Motion to remove from the National List	The motion failed. The NOSB completed the sunset review
Gellan gum	§ 205.605(a)	Motion to remove from the National List	The motion failed. The NOSB completed the sunset review

Marsala	§ 205.606(g)(1)	Motion to remove from the National List	The motion passed. The NOSB recommended removal of Marsala from the National List
Sherry	§ 205.606(g)(2)	Motion to remove from the National List	The motion passed. The NOSB recommended removal of Sherry from the National List
Tragacanth Gum	§ 205.606	Motion to remove from the National List	The motion failed. The NOSB completed the sunset review

Other actions:

2. The NOSB considered a proposal entitled “Livestock Vaccines made from Excluded Methods” and forwarded a recommendation on this issue to the NOP for development of guidance.
3. The NOSB submitted a list of research priorities that would support the organic community. Priorities on this list include but are not limited to: alternatives to bisphenol A (BPA), plant disease management, soil building practices, mitigation measures for residues in compost, seed purity from GMO research needs, and several livestock topics, including mastitis, parasitism, pneumonia, herd health, and plant extracts.

NOP Discussion and Response:

1. 2015 Sunset Review

The NOSB completed the sunset review for sodium carbonate peroxyhydrate, aqueous potassium silicate, sulfurous acid, gellan gum, tragacanth gum, and the non-organic fortified cooking wines, marsala and sherry.

During their review of the non-organic fortified cooking wines, marsala and sherry, the NOSB determined that the use of non-organic marsala and sherry is not essential. The NOSB received no public comments supporting the need for either non-organic marsala or sherry, and therefore recommended removal of both marsala and sherry from the National List.

This action completes the NOSB’s responsibility to review substances scheduled for the 2015 sunset review, according to the Organic Foods Production Act’s (OFPA) sunset provision (7 U.S.C. 6517(e)).

NOP Response:

The NOP accepts the NOSB’s completed 2015 Sunset review. The U.S. Department of

Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) intends to publish a proposed rule requesting comments on the removal of marsala and sherry from the National List. AMS also intends to publish a notice to renew the five substances (sodium carbonate peroxyhydrate, aqueous potassium silicate, sulfurous acid, gellan gum, and tragacanth gum) on the National List for another five years.

2. Vaccines from Excluded Methods

Vaccines are used for the prevention of disease in livestock, and the USDA organic regulations include requirements on the types of vaccines that may be used in organic livestock production. Specifically, § 205.105(e) prohibits the use of vaccines derived from excluded methods in organic production unless the vaccines are approved in accordance with the process described at § 205.600(a).

Over the course of several NOSB meetings, the NOSB has considered the characteristics of vaccines derived from excluded methods. The NOSB determined that the definition of excluded methods in the USDA organic regulations may not align with the technical terminology used by vaccine manufacturers. The NOSB vaccine recommendation outlines the central issues related to excluded methods and vaccines used in organic livestock production, and requests that the NOP provide guidance to the NOSB and organic stakeholders on how to determine if a vaccine has been produced with excluded methods.

NOP Response:

The NOP has received the NOSB's recommendation on livestock vaccines made with excluded methods. The NOP appreciates the complexity of this issue and the great amount of work that the NOSB has invested in this review. The NOP suggests that vaccines produced from excluded methods be considered on a case by case basis, using the petition process. The NOSB can then evaluate the need, benefits and any risks from the specific types of vaccines in question.

3. NOSB Organic Research Priorities

The NOSB recommended a list of research priorities in support of the organic community. Priorities on this list include but are not limited to: alternatives to BPA, plant disease management, soil building practices, mitigation measures for residues in compost, seed purity from GMO research needs, and several livestock topics, including mastitis, parasitism, pneumonia, herd health, and plant extracts.

NOP Response:

The NOP has shared the NOSB recommendations for prioritized research with the Agricultural Research Service, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, and USDA's Organic Working Group. The NOSB recommendations are referenced in USDA Requests for Applications to research grant programs.

4. **Summary**

The NOP acknowledges and sincerely appreciates the hundreds of hours NOSB members provided in developing the NOSB October 2014 recommendations. In addition, the NOP supports the NOSB's vital role in representing the diversity of the organic community to enhance organic regulatory implementation and ensure organic product integrity.

The NOP thanks retiring board members Joe Dickson, Jay Feldman, Wendy Fulwider, and John Foster for their service and thoughtful guidance. During the past five years, they demonstrated a commitment to the NOSB's role in advising the NOP on the USDA organic regulations and the OFPA. Much of the success achieved by the NOP is due to the considerable expertise and dedication of NOSB members such as Joe Dickson, Jay Feldman, Wendy Fulwider, and John Foster.