National Organic Standards Board
Certification, Accreditation, Compliance Subcommittee (CACS)
Oversight to Deter Fraud: Residue Testing for a Global Supply Chain
Discussion Document
February 6, 2024

Introduction:
The Certification, Accreditation, & Compliance Subcommittee (CACS) presented a discussion document at the Fall 2023 NOSB meeting on Residue Testing for a Global Supply Chain (RTGSC). Many commenters supported continuous improvement in testing to ensure integrity, considering the size of the organic marketplace and the program's global reach.

The RTGSC series aims to work with the community to provide a recommendation that ensures testing remains a relevant and effective tool for compliance verification in the organic global supply. A fall public commenter in support wrote, "An updated and more rigorous testing program will augment the ability for both ACAs and certified operations to verify compliance, deter fraud, and prevent contaminated/fraudulent products from entering organic supply chains."

Foundational Focus and Timing:
Foundational work is needed first to accomplish the goals. Therefore, this document will focus on working with the organic stakeholder community to update the foundational elements found in the respective related guidance and instruction documents. As one commenter stated, "...ensure there can be clarity and consistency in the testing and response practices."

Next Steps:
CACS is open to general feedback about the importance of residue testing, suggestions for incorporating residue testing more thoroughly in the organic compliance verification process, and barriers to implementing residue testing programs in the organic supply chain. Additionally, CACS has several questions about residue testing document instructions in the NOP Handbook.

CACS will consider all general and specific comments in developing recommendations to NOP.

Stakeholder Questions:

NOP 2610: Instruction Sampling Procedures for Residue Testing

1. Does this document instruction provide adequate information for certifiers and inspectors to collect samples in the field?
2. Are there areas pertaining to sample collection (sample size, when to collect samples, sample selection, etc.) that need to be developed or improved? Please provide suggestions.
3. How can additional instruction or guidance on sample collection support the voracity of testing results so that adverse actions are more defendable?

NOP 2611: Instruction Laboratory Selection Criteria for Pesticide Residue Testing

1. Section 4.1 describes one type of residue screen that can be used for testing. What additional tests should be included in this section (e.g., heavy metals, synthetic solvents, fumigants,

herbicides, etc.)? What should be the threshold for validating additional testing methodologies in this section to ensure results are actionable?
2. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 describe laboratory selection criteria and suggested laboratory practices. Do either of these sections need to be updated to align with current best practices?
3. How can additional instruction or guidance on laboratory selection criteria and testing methodology support the voracity of testing results so that adverse actions are more defensible?

NOP 2611-1: Prohibited Pesticides for NOP Residue Testing

1. Does this list of prohibited substances provide value to certifiers in evaluating organic compliance?
2. How can this document be improved?
3. Would certifiers find value in developing a decision tree to determine which tests should be conducted depending on the commodity, geographical location, and position within the supply chain? Please describe how a decision tree could assist certifiers with testing and compliance verification.

NOP 2613: Instruction Responding to Results from Pesticide Residue Testing

1. Section 5.3.3 describes how to respond to positive results when there is no EPA tolerance or FDA action level. Please describe experiences attempting to respond to results in this type of situation. How can this section be improved to facilitate and support sampling and testing for prohibited substances that do not have EPA tolerances or FDA action levels (e.g., synthetic solvents)?
2. Are additional sections within this instruction needing updating or improvement? Please provide suggestions.

Subcommittee Vote:
Motion to accept the discussion document on Residue Testing for a Global Supply Chain
Motion by: Nate Lewis
Seconded by: Kim Huseman
Yes: 7 No: 0 Abstain: 0 Recuse: 0 Absent: 1