

**National Organic Standards Board  
Crops Committee  
Sunset 2012 Proposed Recommendations  
Mulches and Compost Feedstocks**

**March 3, 2011**

**List § 205.601 Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production**

- (b) As herbicides, weed barriers, as applicable
  - (2) mulches
    - (i) Newspaper or other recycled paper, without glossy or colored inks

**Committee summary**

Although there are many alternatives to the use of newspapers as mulch, they are relatively cheap, biodegradable, and effective and the known adverse effects are minimal. When the requested technical report is received, the Crops Committee may reconsider its decision.

**Committee Recommendation**

Relist newspaper or other recycled paper, without glossy or colored inks on § 205.601(b).

**Committee Vote**

Motion by: Barry Flamm    Second: Tina Ellor  
Yes: 6            No: 0            Absent: 1            Abstain: 0            Recuse: 0

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**List § 205.601 Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production**

- (b) As herbicides, weed barriers, as applicable
  - (2) Mulches
    - (ii) Plastic mulch and covers (petroleum based other than PVC)

**Committee Summary**

OFPA Section 6508 prohibits the “use plastics mulches, unless such mulches are removed at the end of each growing or harvest season ..” The Crops Committee requested a technical report for this use and thus new information might result in the revision of this recommendation. Biodegradable plastic is apparently available and might be an alternative for some applications. Because of the long use as a substitute for herbicides and other benefits to

growers and the belief that adverse effects are minimal, the CC believes continued use is acceptable.

### **Committee Recommendation**

Relist plastic mulches and covers on § 205.601(b)(2)(ii).

### **Committee Vote**

Motion by: Barry Flamm    Second: John Foster  
Yes: 6            No: 0            Absent: 1            Abstain: 0            Recuse: 0

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### **List § 205.601 Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production**

- (c) As compost feedstocks- newspapers or other recycled paper, without glossy or colored inks.

### **Committee Summary**

The record lacks technical information on the listing and relisting of this use. CC has not received the requested TR and subsequent to reviewing it, may wish to revise this recommendation. It appears from committee discussion newspaper feedstock use is incidental mixture with other compostable material such as livestock bedding. The Crops Committee has no basis for not allowing the continued use at this time.

### **Committee Recommendation**

Relist on § 205.601(c)

### **Committee Vote**

Motion by: Barry Flamm    Second: Tina Ellor  
Yes: 6            No: 0            Absent: 1            Abstain: 0            Recuse: 0