



National Organic Standards Board



The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) is a U.S. Department of Agriculture Federal Advisory Board comprised of dedicated public volunteers from the organic community.

Established by the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) and governed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), the NOSB provides recommendations on the implementation of the OFPA and USDA organic regulations.

Who Serves on the NOSB?

The NOSB is comprised of 15 volunteers from across the organic community: four organic farmers/growers, three environmental/resource conservationists, three consumer/public interest representatives, two organic handlers/processors, one retailer, one scientist (toxicology, ecology or biochemistry), and one USDA accredited certifying agent.

Each NOSB member is appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for a five-year term.

What are the Duties of the NOSB Members?

Serving on the NOSB requires a significant commitment of time and effort. Each NOSB member sits on several subcommittees and attends many subcommittee calls each month; attends two in-person NOSB meetings per year; reviews materials and recommends changes to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances; and advises the Secretary on the OFPA and other aspects of USDA organic regulations.

NOSB subcommittees discuss specific work agenda topics and develop discussion papers and proposals which are presented to the full Board and the general public. The NOSB meets regularly to discuss proposals, listen to comments and testimony, and vote on recommendations for the Secretary of Agriculture.

The Agricultural Marketing Service's National Organic Program (NOP) manages the work of the NOSB, and provides technical and administrative staff and resources to support its work.

The impact of the NOSB work is significant. The NOSB considers and makes recommendations on a wide range of issues involving the production, handling, and processing of organic products. The NOSB also has special responsibilities related to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances.

How Can I Get Involved?

The NOSB actively encourages public participation in meetings and the comment process. NOSB meetings are open to the public and meeting agendas are published in the Federal Register. Approximately four weeks before each NOSB meeting, members of the public may submit written comments or sign up to deliver oral comments. To help facilitate public attendance, NOSB meetings are held in different parts of the country.

For those interested in serving on the NOSB, the 5-year terms of service are staggered among the 15 members. Terms begin in January of any given year. As such, the Call for Nominations for new members is usually issued in the spring. More information on the application process is available at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/NOSBNominationProcess>

To Learn More

Visit the AMS National Organic Standards Board homepage at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nosb> or contact:

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