

National Organic Standards Board Meeting Update

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) held its biannual public meeting in Jacksonville, FL, October 31 - November 2, 2017. Over the course of three days, the NOSB, under the leadership of NOSB Chair Mr. Tom Chapman, evaluated 12 proposals and 3 discussion documents, heard five Subcommittee updates, and reviewed 35 substance listings under the Sunset 2019 process. The NOSB received 2,301 written public comments and heard oral comments from 142 members of the public on a wide range of issues. Fifty-two (52) of those commenters presented testimony during two webinars held prior to the meeting, and 90 commenters provided oral comments at the in-person meeting. There were approximately 150 members of the public in attendance at the meeting.

The meeting began with introductions by each Board member and acceptance of the Spring 2017 meeting minutes. The Board then heard introductory remarks from Jennifer Tucker, Associate Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program (NOP), who presented an update on the NOP. Tom Chapman, NOSB Chair, provided an update on the NOSB, and Dr. Lisa Brines, NOP National List Manager, provided an update about materials under sunset review and petitions for changes to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. The NOP hosted a panel of experts on imports to help inform future work by the NOSB. During the course of the meeting, the NOSB considered a variety of topics, including the continued use of a number of materials as part of the Sunset 2019 review process, and the certification of hydroponic systems as organic. A summary of the NOSB's recommendations and actions is provided below. Discussion documents and updates are presented for informational purposes, and the Board does not take action on those items at this time. The final recommendations from the Fall 2017 meeting will be posted at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/event/2017-national-organic-standards-board-nosb-meeting>

Note: The NOSB is an advisory body to the Secretary of Agriculture. NOSB recommendations are not NOP policy unless the NOP issues final rules, final guidance, final instructions, or a policy memorandum that adopts the NOSB recommendations. NOSB recommendations are not part of the USDA organic regulations.

Petitioned Substances. The NOSB reviewed four petitions to amend the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List). This section of the USDA organic regulations identifies the synthetic substances that may be used and the non-synthetic substances that are prohibited in organic crop and livestock production. For organic processed products, the allowed non-organic ingredients and processing aids are also included on the National List. If an NOSB proposal receives a decisive vote (2/3 majority) by Board members in favor of the proposed motion, it becomes a recommendation to the USDA, and is provided to the Secretary through the NOP.

Petitions			
Use Area	Substance	National List Section (7 CFR Part 205)	NOSB Recommendation
Livestock	Sulfur	205.603	Voted to add this material to the National List
Livestock	Hypochlorous acid	205.603	Not recommended for addition to the National List for medical treatment
Crops	Fatty Alcohols (octanol/decanol mix)	205.601	Classified as synthetic. Not recommended for addition to the National List
Crops	Anaerobic Digestate	205.203	Classified as non-synthetic. Vote to amend raw manure restrictions failed.
Other National List Recommendations			
Use Area	Substance	National List Section	NOSB Recommendation
Handling	Potassium acid tartrate	205.605(b) and 205.606	Voted to reclassify potassium acid tartrate as an agricultural substance and move its listing from §205.605(b) to §205.606

Sunset 2019 Review. The NOSB must review every substance on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances every five years to determine whether it continues to meet all required criteria under the Organic Foods Production Act and the USDA organic regulations. This review is called “sunset review.” At this meeting, the NOSB reviewed 35 listings and recommended four be removed from the National List. The four substances recommended for removal were: vitamin B₁ for crop production, oxytocin and procaine for livestock production, and non-organic konjac flour for handling.

Use Area	Substance	National List Section	NOSB Recommendation
Crops	Chlorine materials (calcium hypochlorite, chlorine dioxide, sodium hypochlorite)	205.601(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Crops	Herbicides, soap-based	205.601(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.

Crops	Biodegradable biobased mulch film	205.601(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Crops	Boric acid	205.601(e)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Crops	Sticky traps/barriers	205.601(e)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Crops	Copper sulfate	205.601(i)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Crops	Coppers, fixed	205.601(i)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Crops	Humic acids	205.601(j)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Crops	Micronutrients (soluble boron products)	205.601(j)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Crops	Micronutrients (sulfates, carbonates, oxides, or silicates of zinc, copper, iron, manganese, molybdenum, selenium, and cobalt)	205.601(j)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Crops	Vitamin B ₁	205.601(j)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List passed . The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Crops	Vitamin C, Vitamin E	205.601(j)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Crops	Lead salts	205.602(d)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.

Crops	Tobacco dust (nicotine sulfate)	205.602(i)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Livestock	Chlorine materials (calcium hypochlorite, chlorine dioxide, sodium hypochlorite)	205.603(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Livestock	Chlorhexidine	205.603(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Livestock	Glucose	205.603(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Livestock	Oxytocin	205.603(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List passed . The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Livestock	Tolazoline	205.603(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Livestock	Copper sulfate	205.603(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Livestock	Lidocaine	205.603(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Livestock	Procaine	205.603(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List passed . The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Attapulgate	205.605(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Bentonite	205.605(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Diatomaceous earth	205.605(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.

			review.
Handling	Nitrogen	205.605(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Sodium carbonate	205.605(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Acidified sodium chlorite	205.605(a)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Carbon dioxide	205.605(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Chlorine materials (calcium hypochlorite, chlorine dioxide, sodium hypochlorite)	205.605(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Magnesium chloride	205.605(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Potassium acid tartrate	205.605(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Sodium phosphates	205.605(b)	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Casings	205.606	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Konjac flour	205.606	The motion to remove this substance from the National List passed . The NOSB completed its sunset review.
Handling	Pectin (non-amidated forms only)	205.606	The motion to remove this substance from the National List failed. The NOSB completed its sunset review.

Non-National List Recommendations, Discussion Documents, Updates and Reports

The Compliance, Accreditation and Certification Subcommittee (CACS) presented two proposals: eliminating the incentive to convert native ecosystems to organic crop production; and excluded operations in the supply chain (uncertified handlers). The CACS also had a preliminary conversation regarding imports. The proposal to eliminate the incentive to convert native ecosystems to organic crop production was sent back to Subcommittee for additional work.

The Handling Subcommittee considered a discussion document on marine materials, and provided three verbal updates: two on tocopherols and one on ancillary substances in cellulose. The Handling Subcommittee agreed to suspend further work on tocopherols and ancillary substances at this time.

The Crops Subcommittee considered one discussion document on field and greenhouse container growing, and brought forth two proposals: One to strengthen the organic seed guidance (NOP 5029), and one on hydroponics, aeroponics, and container growing. The proposal to strengthen the organic seed guidance (NOP 5029) was referred back to Subcommittee for additional work. The proposal to prohibit hydroponics from organic certification did not pass, and the proposal to prohibit aeroponics did pass NOSB. The Subcommittee also provided a verbal update about an annotation change to the newspaper listing and indicated that they will suspend further work on this topic.

The Livestock Subcommittee discussed a proposal on clarifying “emergency treatment” for use of synthetic parasiticides in organic livestock production, which was referred back to Subcommittee for additional work.

The Materials Subcommittee presented a discussion document on non-GMO organic seed integrity, and brought forth two proposals on 2017 NOSB Research Priorities and excluded methods terminology.

Other Business

The NOSB held elections for the three NOSB officer positions. Tom Chapman was re-elected Chair, Harriet Behar was elected Vice Chair, and Scott Rice was elected Secretary.

Francis Thicke was recognized with a certificate of appreciation for serving a five-year term on the NOSB. His term ends in January 2018. Dr. Thicke provided remarks on his time as a member of the NOSB.

Lisa Brines, National List Manager, was awarded the NOP Employee of the Quarter award.