



The **ORGANIC INTEGRITY** **QUARTERLY**

April 2013

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Organic Integrity from Farm to Table, Consumers Trust the Organic Label.

Message from the Deputy Secretary

Organic agriculture has always held center stage in my work. From the time I was a staff member on the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee helping Chairman Patrick Leahy write the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, I have had the joy of working closely with many of you. That was just the beginning.

Whether it was during my 5 year term on the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), working on organic policy papers for United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, overseeing the second and final rules establishing our national standards as USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Administrator, signing equivalency arrangements with Canada and the European Union as Deputy Secretary, and everything in between, it has been a pleasure. Hopefully you have read our results sheet from the President's first term: <http://bit.ly/organic-accomplishments>. Good stuff.

I have enjoyed being back at USDA, but it's time for me to begin a new chapter. I leave USDA May 3, confident that Miles McEvoy and our great NOP staff, Mark Lipson (Organic Policy Advisor in the Office of the Secretary), and the terrific members of the cross-agency USDA Organic Working Group will carry on and continue to produce good results for the organic community. And, if you've been lucky enough to hear Secretary Vilsack speak, you know that he values organic agriculture and is committed to helping the sector thrive.

I could list out many challenges and opportunities facing organic agriculture, but as I head out the door, I want you to know the one issue that weighs heavily on my mind. I meet too many young people who think organic status is insufficient or not relevant to them— they claim to be 'beyond organic', 'natural', better than organic, 'authentic'. They worry about the paperwork, fees, and being regulated by government.

We must change this trend. Our NOP is not perfect, but as we said when we drafted the law and the rule—organic is a process of continuous improvement—and one that requires diverse voices and transparency. I wish I had an hour to spend with each one of these budding farmers to explain the history of the organic farming movement and why it is important to act collectively. What we have done together is bigger than any one person or organization. What we have done together has mattered.



Message from the Deputy Secretary, continued from page 1

As I review the 2012 data on certified operations, I see that we have experienced 240 percent growth in the number of U.S. certified operations since 2002, when our national standards came into effect and we began collecting baseline data. I cannot think of a better reward for our hard work.

It has been an honor to be part of the organic saga. I look forward to the next episode of our story.

See you around the bend,

Kathleen A. Merrigan
Deputy Secretary



Spring 2013 National Organic Standard Board Meeting

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) held its public meeting April 9-11, 2013, in Portland, Oregon. The meeting began with an update from the NOP on its activities, priorities, and an overview of NOP's Sound and Sensible initiative. Over the course of three days, the NOSB heard comments from approximately 150 members of the public on a wide range of issues. In addition to oral testimony, the Board also received approximately 3,000 written public comments, which were discussed and considered prior to voting on its recommendations. A summary of the NOSB's subsequent votes is provided below. The final recommendations from the Providence meeting will be posted in the near future at www.ams.usda.gov/NOSBMeetings.

Note: 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. They are not part of the USDA organic regulations unless such action is taken.

Petitioned Substances. The NOSB responded to several petitions to amend the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances (National List). This section of the USDA organic regulations identifies exemptions to the following general rule: synthetic substances are prohibited unless specifically allowed and natural substances are allowed unless specifically prohibited. In organic processed products, all non-organic ingredients must be specifically allowed.

The table on the next page reflects the NOSB's recommendation on several substances. "Motion failed" indicates that less than two thirds of the NOSB members voted to make the change in question, meaning that USDA does not have the authority to amend the USDA organic regulations for that substance.



NOSB members at an organic orchard in Oregon's Hood River Valley

Spring 2013 NOSB Meeting, continued from page 2

Substance	Section	Action Considered by NOSB	NOSB Recommendation
Tetracycline	205.601	Allow to control fire blight in apples and pears only until October 21, 2016.	Motion failed (see description on page 4).
Polyoxin D Zinc Salt	205.601	Allow in organic crop production	Motion failed
Indole-3-butyric acid (IBA)	205.601	Allow in organic crop production for the purpose of plant propagation via dipping	Motion failed
Sulfuric Acid	205.605 (b)	Allow in organic handling as a processing aid in the production of seaweed extract	Motion failed
Barley beta fiber	205.606	Allow in organic handling when organic forms are not commercially available	Motion failed
Sugar beet fiber	205.606	Allow in organic handling when organic forms are not commercially available	Motion failed
1,3-dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin (DBDMH)	205.605(b)	Allow in organic handling as an antimicrobial treatment for carcasses	Motion failed
Pet Food Amino Acids	205.603	Allow use of petitioned amino acids in organic pet food	Allow taurine as a feed additive in pet food

Tetracycline

The USDA organic regulations currently prohibit the use of antibiotics except to control bacterial infections (fire blight) in organic apple and pear orchards; this allowance was scheduled to expire on October 21, 2014. At the spring 2013 meeting, the NOSB considered a proposal to extend the allowance of oxytetracycline (the currently allowed form of tetracycline) until October 21, 2016. Before voting, NOSB members visited organic orchards in Oregon's Hood River Valley and listened to public comments.

The NOSB voted to phase out this antibiotic, meaning its use is prohibited after October 21, 2014. The NOSB reiterated the importance of continued research on alternatives for fire blight treatment. The NOSB also asked the NOP to investigate its authority to allow the emergency use of oxytetracycline for fire blight during the period of October 21, 2014 through October 21, 2017. The NOSB indicated that the "Emergency Spray Programs" provision of the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA, 7 USC 6518(k)(6)) and Section 205.672 of the USDA organic regulations could provide this authority.

Other Recommendations

Calculating Percent of Organic Ingredients

The NOSB recommended how certifying agents should verify the percentage of organic content in multi-ingredient organic products, ensuring they meet all criteria for the specific labeling category.

Ancillary Substances (also called "other" ingredients)

The NOSB recommended a policy by which ancillary substances, as described in the recommendation, would be reviewed by the NOSB against the OFPA criteria. These substances are contained within a select number of handling materials on the National List, including: nutrients vitamins and minerals, enzymes, animal enzymes, microorganisms, yeast, dairy cultures, natural flavors, agricultural colors, alginates, and waxes.

NOSB Policy and Procedures

The NOSB recommended updates to their New Member guide to reflect changes in policy, Subcommittee membership, and NOP staff changes. The NOSB also recommended the addition of a new policy to their Policy and Procedures Manual. This recommendation seeks to implement a public communication mechanism, which would enable the public to comment on NOSB and NOP issues year-round.

Discussion Documents

NOSB subcommittees received public comments on their published discussion documents on the following topics: genetically modified organisms and seed purity, terminology for excluded methods, materials initiation, definitions of production aids, and confidential business information (CBI) transparency and process.

Other Business

Two working groups, the inerts working group and the vaccines made without excluded methods working group, reported on their progress and next steps to the NOSB and the public. The NOSB also welcomed Francis Thicke, a new NOSB member, to his first public meeting.

For additional information about the meeting, please visit www.ams.usda.gov/NOSBMeetings.

NOSB Save
the Date



Fall 2013 National Organic Standards Board Meeting

October 22-24, 2013

Louisville, Kentucky

www.ams.usda.gov/NOSBMeetings



'Sound and Sensible' Organic Certification

The NOP has initiated a new program to reduce paperwork and other burdensome aspects of organic certification while maintaining high standards, ensuring compliance, and protecting organic integrity.

This 'Sound and Sensible' initiative involves identifying and removing barriers to certification, streamlining the certification process, focusing enforcement on egregious violations, and correcting small issues before they become larger ones.

Five Principles of Sound and Sensible

- 1 **Efficient Processes:** Eliminate bureaucratic processes that do not contribute to organic integrity.
- 2 **Streamlined Recordkeeping:** Ensure that required records support organic integrity and are not a barrier for farms and businesses to maintain organic compliance.
- 3 **Practical Plans:** Support simple Organic System Plans that clearly capture organic practices.
- 4 **Fair, Focused Enforcement:** Focus enforcement on willful, egregious violators; handle minor violations in a way that leads to compliance; and publicize how enforcement protects the organic market.
- 5 **Integrity First:** Focus on factors that impact organic integrity the most, building consumer confidence that organic products meet defined standards from farm to market.

Projects to Support 'Sound and Sensible'

Penalty Matrix

In September 2012, the NOP published a penalty matrix to promote consistent application of the USDA organic regulations. Certifying agents and others have pointed out that the matrix focuses on paperwork violations rather than practice violations. In the spirit of 'Sound and Sensible,' we have archived the September 2012 version while we incorporate this feedback. The archived documents are still available online and will likely be updated later this year.

Overall Goal

Organic certification that is accessible, attainable, and affordable.



'Sound and Sensible,' continued from page 5

New Technical Assistance Instruction

Certifying agents and inspectors must provide enough information to allow operations to meet the organic standards without providing advice or "consulting." However, many certifying agents and inspectors worry about being perceived as "consulting" if they provide this technical assistance to help their clients come into compliance. The NOP published a new instruction to outline what certifying and inspectors can and can't do to assist organic operations.

Updated Certification Instructions

We are updating our Instructions related to the "5 Steps to Certification," recordkeeping, certificates, and other topics to reflect sound and sensible principles based on certifier feedback and accreditation audit results. These will be released as they are completed.

Auditor Training

The NOP is holding a series of "recalibration" training sessions with NOP accreditation auditors at the end of April. This training will teach our auditors to audit using sound and sensible principles and help increase consistency across our audit team.

"Removing Barriers" Project

The NOP is currently working on a project focused on identifying the key barriers to organic certification encountered by small businesses, and determining paths forward for removing these barriers. This project has included a number of interviews with certifiers, feedback from the Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA), and discussions with many others in the organic community.



Want to become an organic insider?

Sign up to receive email updates from the NOP

<http://bit.ly/NOPOrganicInsider>



Protecting Organic Crops from Synthetic Fertilizers

Given the renewed interest in previous cases of fertilizer fraud, the NOP has published questions and answers to help stakeholders respond to inquiries about fertilizers in organic agriculture. www.ams.usda.gov/NOPTopics.

Why are fertilizers used in crop production?

Plants require a variety of nutrients in order to grow. Farmers may use crop rotation, cover crops, compost, manure, and fertilizers to provide required plant nutrients, including nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, and other trace elements.

Which fertilizers are allowed in organic crop production?

The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 prohibits the use of synthetic fertilizers—including ammonia salts and urea—in organic crop production. Organic farmers typically use natural fertilizers as needed, including chicken litter, compost, and fish meal. Sustainable management practices, such as crop rotation and cover crops, reduce the need for fertilizers and other inputs on organic farms. For example, a farmer may plant a crop that needs a lot of nitrogen (such as corn) on a field one season, and then a nitrogen-fixing crop (such as alfalfa) the next to replenish the soil.

How are fertilizers overseen?

All fertilizers. Unlike pesticides, which are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency, fertilizer labeling is not overseen by a single Federal agency. Instead, each U.S. State has its own fertilizer regulatory program that registers allowed fertilizers. The registration process ensures that farmers get fertilizers that meet the labeled specifications (such as 5 percent nitrogen). The Association of American Plant Food Control Officials provides a forum for consistent definitions and enforcement of fertilizers by State regulatory agencies.

Fertilizers for Organic Farms. Certifying agents are responsible for evaluating all substances proposed for use on an organic farm, including fertilizers. Before these substances can be used, the certifying agent must verify that the fertilizer doesn't contain prohibited substances (such as ammonia salts or sewage sludge). The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) and many organic certifying agents have review programs that evaluate substances, including fertilizers, to determine if they comply with the organic regulations and can be used on organic farms.

What about cases of fertilizer fraud in organic crops?

There have been two major cases of fraud related to liquid organic fertilizer from companies based in California. In



Protecting Organic Crops, continued from page 7

both, an individual committed mail fraud by submitting false applications and documentation during the fertilizer review process. The falsified documents stated that the fertilizers were made with approved substances (such as fish meal) and the fertilizers were approved for organic use. Organic farmers then paid premium prices for these fertilizers.

Auditors and investigators later confirmed that Kenneth Nelson, Jr. (of Port Organic Products) and Peter Townsley (of California Liquid Fertilizer) had spiked their “organic-approved” fertilizers with prohibited synthetic nitrogen sources, such as ammonia salts and urea. Mr. Nelson is currently serving a 6.5-year prison term and was ordered to pay \$9 million for fraud committed through 2009. Mr. Townsley is serving a 1-year prison term and was ordered to pay a \$125,000 fine for fraud committed through 2006.

Were products treated with fraudulent fertilizer affected?

Unlike pesticides, fertilizers don’t leave residues on crops. Therefore, it can be very difficult—if not impossible—to determine if a crop was treated with a synthetic fertilizer through field or laboratory testing. Instead, auditors uncovered the fertilizer fraud by observing growing practices and reviewing records. Although fertilizers with synthetic nitrogen sources aren’t allowed in organic crop production, the affected products posed no threat to the health of consumers or the environment.

How did USDA address affected products?

The USDA organic regulations cover organic products throughout their lifecycle. These standards specify to farmers which seeds and substances they can use, and how they must support the environment through sustainable practices. Generally, if organic farmers use a prohibited substance—such as synthetic fertilizer—they can’t sell their crops as organic for three years. Farmers that intentionally use prohibited substances have their certification revoked and are ineligible to get recertified for five years. Farmers that mistakenly use prohibited substances are suspended for 3 years.

In both of the above cases—whether the use of the prohibited substance was intentional or unintentional—the farmer was responsible. The farmer’s use of the fertilizers that were fraudulently sold as organically approved, however, poses a different scenario. These fertilizers were reviewed by organic sector’s substance review organizations and were approved for organic use (based on falsified information). Organic farmers selected and paid premium prices for the fertilizers. And, as required as part of the organic certification process, each farmer’s certifying agent approved all substances—including organic fertilizers—used on the farm. Adulterated fertilizers typically look the same and are virtually indistinguishable in laboratory tests. Therefore, neither the farmer nor the certifying agent could have been reasonably expected to know the fertilizer had been adulterated and represented as organic.

The USDA took immediate action once it determined that the fertilizers were fraudulently approved for organic use, notifying certifying agents and organic farmers to stop using these products. In addition, USDA established new inspection and approval procedures to ensure all fertilizers used in organic production would comply with USDA organic regulations. USDA did not penalize organic farmers who, while meeting a rigorous array of requirements,



Protecting Organic Crops, continued from page 8

were defrauded by the fertilizer manufacturers. It would be unfair to suspend or revoke a farmer's organic certificate because he or she was defrauded by an unscrupulous fertilizer manufacturer. Additionally, due to the testing limitations, it would have been virtually impossible to detect which products were affected. Also, since most affected products would already have been consumed, USDA instead focused on bringing the defrauders to justice and preventing future fraud in the organic sector.

What steps have been taken to prevent future fertilizer fraud in organic crops?

USDA National Organic Program. The National Organic Program now requires additional scrutiny for all organic-approved liquid fertilizers containing more than 3 percent nitrogen. Before a farmer can use these fertilizers, OMRI or a certifying agent must determine if they are organic-approved. OMRI or the certifying agent must analyze each fertilizer ingredient, fully test the finished fertilizer, and inspect the manufacturing facility. Once approved, OMRI or the certifying agent must inspect the manufacturing facility at least two times per year (one scheduled and one unannounced) and audit the manufacturer to ensure that all nitrogen comes from natural sources.

California. California implemented a new law, AB 856, which requires the registration, inspection, and review of all organic input materials marketed in the state for use in organic agriculture.

This additional scrutiny and oversight sends the message that fraudulent fertilizers won't be tolerated in the organic sector. USDA understands that consumers pay premium prices for organic products and deserve products that meet all organic requirements, such as protecting natural resources, conserving biodiversity, and using only approved substances.

In 2009, USDA announced that organic agriculture was in the "age of enforcement," to better protect the integrity of organic products. Farmers that violate these regulations are subject to financial penalties up to \$11,000 per violation and loss of their organic certificate. Since 2009, audits and investigations have led USDA to issue 38 civil penalties totaling more than \$525,000.

We invite you to report suspected violations to the National Organic Program's compliance and enforcement team at NOPCompliance@ams.usda.gov and appreciate your help in protecting organic integrity.

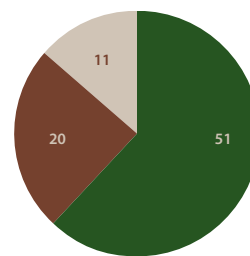


Organic Integrity Update: Fiscal Year 2013

The NOP is committed to protecting the integrity of USDA organic products and creating a level playing field for certified operations. To accomplish these goals, the NOP enforces the USDA organic regulations to the fullest extent possible while protecting compliant operations from undue harm.

2013 Compliance and Enforcement Actions

So far in Fiscal Year 2013, NOP has issued 9 penalties to willful violators totalling over \$195,000 thousand. The NOP has also opened 67 complaint cases received from members of the public and closed 82 cases of suspected regulatory violations, taking enforcement action when the complaint was validated. The distribution of closed case types is shown to the right. The NOP is currently developing outreach information to help operations understand if they need to be certified and how to correctly label their products. These efforts will allow staff to focus their resources on fraud and other complex cases.



Case Distribution

- Uncertified operations
- Labeling violations
- Prohibited substances and methods

Certifying Agent Audits

The NOP audits certifying agents around the world to ensure they are applying the USDA organic regulations in an appropriate, fair, and consistent manner. Since October 1, 2012, USDA staff audited the following certifying agents in the indicated location, requiring corrective actions where appropriate:

- ARGENCERT – Argentina
- Control Union Certifications – Netherlands
- Georgia Crop Improvement Association – Georgia
- IMO – Switzerland
- Kentucky Department of Agriculture – Kentucky
- LACON – Germany
- LETIS – Argentina

Help Us Protect Organic Integrity!

Suspended/revoked organic operations
<http://bit.ly/suspended-revoked>

Fraudulent organic certificates
<http://bit.ly/fraud-certs>

Suspected violation complaints
NOPCompliance@ams.usda.gov



Improving Crop Insurance for Organic Farmers

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) has provided coverage for organic crop producers since 2001. Over the past few years, USDA has worked to improve the Federal crop insurance program for organic crop and livestock producers in the following ways:

Eliminating 5 Percent Surcharge for Crop Year 2014

Beginning in crop year 2014, organic crop producers will no longer have to pay a 5 percent premium surcharge on their policy. In 2011, the 5 percent surcharge was removed for 10 crops:

- Figs
- Macadamia tree
- Nursery
- Pears
- Peppers
- Prunes
- In Florida: citrus fruit and fruit trees
- In Texas: citrus fruit and citrus trees

Justification. Earlier this year, USDA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) evaluated RMA's controls over Federal crop insurance coverage for organically produced crops. The OIG evaluated the current program, which uses the same "T-Yield," or average yield for a county, for both conventional and organic crops. Growers may use T-Yields to substitute for low yields in their yield history or to ensure an overall minimum level of insurance coverage. OIG found that T-yields overstated actual production capabilities of farmers producing crops using organic farming practices and that excessive payments were made to farmers. The February 2013 report recommended that, for organic crops, RMA reduce T-yields by 35 percent or by an appropriate crop-specific amount. This change facilitates the elimination of the 5 percent surcharge beginning in crop year 2014. View report: <http://www.usda.gov/oig/rptsauditsrma.htm>

AGR-Lite: "Whole Farm" Insurance

While traditional crop insurance is focused on one crop, Adjusted Gross Revenue- Lite (AGR-Lite) plans cover the whole farm (even some livestock). Potential loss values are based on a five-year history of farm production and sales. AGR-Lite is available in 35 states, so check with an insurance agent for availability. Agent listings: www.rma.usda.gov

Premium Prices for Additional Organic Crops

RMA currently offers premium prices for the following certified organic crops:

- Corn
- Cotton
- Processing tomatoes
- Soybeans
- In California: avocados, plums, fresh freestone peaches, and fresh nectarines.

Learn More

<http://bit.ly/organic-insure>

Preview. Organic crops showing potential for premium price election in crop year 2014 or 2015 include:

- Almonds
- Apples
- Barley
- Blueberries
- More stonefruits
- Oats
- Pears
- Table grapes
- Wheat



U.S. Organic Exports Grow in 2012 - USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

Exports of “selected” organic products expanded to nearly \$450 million in 2012, with apples accounting for virtually all of the growth. Canada and Mexico remain top markets for the vast majority of the selected organic trade, although exports to the European Union (EU) could expand following the recently implemented Organic Equivalence Arrangement. U.S. imports plunged on weaker demand for organic coffee.

The market for organic commodities has grown in recent years, although it remains a small proportion of the total food market. According to NOP, “Organic is a labeling term that indicates that the food or other agricultural product has been produced through approved methods that integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity.”

U.S. harmonized tariff codes for 23 organic commodities for export and 20 for import were established in January 2011; an additional 3 export and 3 import codes were introduced in January 2012. Exports of the original 23 organic commodities grew by 8 percent in 2012 to \$446 million, as a rise in apples more than offset a decline in grapes and cherries. The three additional codes added in 2012 (cucumbers, grapefruit, and cabbage) contributed another \$2.6 million to total “selected” exports.

Organic Exports Up On Strong Apple Shipments

The price premium for organic apple exports over conventional fell in 2012, making organic apples relatively more affordable. As a result, the organic share of the market doubled to 9 percent by volume, while conventional shipments remained relatively unchanged. On the other hand, the organic share of exports for grapes and cherries fell against greater conventionally produced exports.

The Lion’s Share of Selected Organic Exports Stay in North America

The majority of U.S. organic product exports continue to go to Canada, facilitated by an organic equivalence arrangement, under which organic products certified under either system can be sold as organic in both markets. Although shipments are relatively unchanged from 2011, more than 75 percent of organic vegetables were exported to Canada.



U.S. Organic Exports Grow in 2012, continued from page 12

Organic exports to Mexico have more than doubled in just a year, spurred by consumer demand. About half of the organic fruit is destined for Mexico. Apple exports more than tripled in 2012, representing more than half the total selected organic shipments to that market. Grape, pear, and cherry trade to Mexico also more than doubled.

Although only 1 percent of organic exports go to the EU, there is opportunity to expand. The organic equivalence arrangement, which took effect in June 2012, could open the door for additional trade between the two markets. Certified organic products in the United States or EU can now be sold as organic in either market, eliminating the need for multiple certification processes.

The United States is working towards organic equivalence with Japan. Under current arrangements, U.S. organic products are allowed, but must go through a JAS (Japanese Agricultural Standard) certifier or importer in order to affix the required JAS logo. Equivalence arrangements are also being sought with Switzerland and South Korea.

Organic Imports Fall as Coffee Takes a Big Hit

Organic coffee imports, which represented nearly 80 percent of the “selected” organic imports in 2011, plunged roughly 45 percent to \$280 million in 2012 as volumes and unit values fell. The volume drop was mostly offset by rising imports of conventionally-grown coffee, based on price differential. Organic soybean imports have more than doubled, supported by skyrocketing volume from China.

For more information, including list of “selected” organic tariff lines and instructions for accessing organic trade data from the FAS Global Agricultural Trade System, visit www.fas.usda.gov/http/organics/organics.asp.



Standards Update

Over the last few months, the NOP has announced several policy updates: <http://bit.ly/insider-archive>.

The Use of Kelp in Organic Livestock Feed (NOP 5027)

This final guidance clarifies that any kelp used in organic livestock feed must be certified organic by March 4, 2014.

Seeds, Annual Seedlings, and Planting Stock in Organic Crop Production (NOP 5029)

This final guidance describes how these materials may be sourced, treated, and which records are necessary.

Evaluating Allowed Ingredients and Sources of Vitamins and Minerals for Organic Livestock Feed (NOP 5030)

This final guidance clarifies which ingredients may be used in organic livestock feed.

Responding to Results from Pesticide Residue Testing (NOP 2613)

This instruction outlines what certifying agents should do if they detect a pesticide residue on an agricultural product. The NOP also updated its memo to certifying agents regarding residue testing.

National List Proposed Amendments

The NOP is currently reviewing public comments on the following proposed changes to the National List:

Potassium hydroxide: would be allowed for peeling any processed peaches, rather than limited to peaches that are Individually Quick Frozen.

Silicon dioxide: would be prohibited except (1) if used as a defoamer or (2) if organic rice hulls aren't commercially available in the appropriate form, quality or quantity to replace its use.

Beta-carotene extract color: would be allowed from algae sources if organic beta-carotene isn't commercially available.

Annatto extract color: would be required to be sourced from organic annatto only.

Peracetic acid: would be allowed in hydrogen peroxide formulations and as currently allowed.

Cell Fusion

In response to inquiries, the NOP published a policy addressing when cell fusion is considered an excluded method.

What About Organic Apiculture Standards?

We've made a lot of progress towards a proposed rule and look forward to your comments once it's published!

Standards Update, continued from page 14

Comment Opportunity: Draft Guidance Documents

View resources and submit comments by visiting <http://bit.ly/org-mat-guidance>

Classification of Materials (NOP 5033)

This draft guidance helps material reviewers classify substances synthetic versus non-synthetic and agricultural versus non-agricultural. These distinctions are necessary for determining a substance's eligibility for and/or placement on the National List.

Materials for Organic Crop Production (NOP 5034)

While not intended to be comprehensive, this guidance helps producers understand which materials (natural and synthetic) are allowed in organic crop production.

Want to provide feedback?

Submit public comments on both draft guidance documents through June 3rd
<http://bit.ly/org-mat-guidance>



National List Update

National List Petitions. The following petitions to amend the National List were recently sent to the NOSB for review:

Magnesium oxide, petitioned to § 205.601

Streptomycin, petitioned amendment on § 205.601

Technical Reports

All recent technical reports have been previously reported in the Organic Integrity Quarterly.

View petitions and technical reports
www.ams.usda.gov/NOPNationalList

Trade for Sustainable Development

In 2009, the International Trade Center—a joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations—initiated the Standards Map. This online tool enables users to analyze and compare aspects of multiple standards, such as content requirements, related verification and certification mechanisms, product scope, market outreach, and standards-related research results.

The project aims to enhance transparency on voluntary sustainability standards and increase opportunities for sustainable trade. The information on 100 voluntary standards is currently available to producers, exporters, trade promotion organizations, trade support institutions, policy-makers, and intermediate private or public buyers. The NOP recently collaborated with the International Trade Center to add USDA organic certification to the Standards Map. Learn more at <http://www.standardmap.org>.



Spotlight: Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship, a formal Apprenticeship in “managed grazing” dairy production, is the first accredited, legally recognized apprenticeship for farming in the United States. It combines on-farm employment with paid related instruction in order to prepare individuals for independent dairy farm ownership.

Program Basics

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship (DGA) is composed of 4,000 paid hours of training over two years (the equivalent of a full time job). 3,712 of those hours are on-the-farm experience under the guidance of an approved Master Dairy Grazier. The other 288 hours are paid related instruction, which include courses through the Wisconsin Technical College System and University of Wisconsin. Apprentices also do pasture walks, attend farming conferences, and participate in peer-to-peer discussion groups.

After starting as Dairy Grazing Apprentices, participants then become Journey-level Dairy Graziers and finally Master Dairy Graziers. This path draws on existing support structure and places experienced farmers at the center of the educational process. DGA provides Apprentices and Master Dairy Graziers financial planning services through Cadwallader Consulting, LLC, and is developing models of equity building, start-up, and farm transfer.

Background

DGA is an initiative of GrassWorks, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that provides outreach, education and resources to help livestock farmers transition to sustainable grass-based agriculture. The program was developed in 2010 and 2011 through a partnership between GrassWorks and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development-Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards. DGA received financial support from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture’s Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program.

Know of another program that serves organic farmers? Let us know! Lisa.Ahramjian@ams.usda.gov.

Interested in Participating?

Visit www.dairygrazingapprenticeship.org or email info@dairygrazingapprenticeship.org.



NOP Web Updates

2012 List of Certified Operations. As of the end of 2012, 17,750 organic farms and processing facilities in the U.S. were certified to the USDA organic standards. Worldwide, there are now approximately 25,000 certified organic operators in more than 100 countries. View the updated list at <http://apps.ams.usda.gov/nop>.

Response to October 2012 NOSB Recommendations. At its October 2012 meeting, the NOSB made several recommendations addressing allowed and prohibited substances, organic research priorities, and updates to its Policy and Procedures Manual. View the NOP's formal response at www.ams.usda.gov/NOPCorrespondence.

New Livestock Fact Sheet. The NOP has developed a new livestock fact sheet, which summarizes the standards for all livestock, ruminant pasture requirements, allowed and prohibited substances, and the benefits of organic and pasture-based management. View this new resource at <http://bit.ly/organic-livestock>.

Modernized Certified Organic Operations Database Report. This report describes the primary needs that would guide technology design and development efforts for a modernized certified organic operations database system. View report at <http://bit.ly/organic-database>.

Biotech Test Methods and Protocols for Use in Organic Compliance. This report provides guidance to help farmers and certifiers take samples and test them for genetically modified material. View report at <http://bit.ly/biotech-test>.

NOP Staff Update



Rita Meade

Since March, Rita Meade is serving as Organic Certification Cost Share coordinator on a temporary basis. The previous coordinator, Patricia Atkins, is on an interim assignment at the Pentagon. Contact Rita at Rita.Meade@ams.usda.gov or 202-260-8636.



Joan Avila

If you call the NOP, you will likely be greeted by Joan Avila, who is serving as NOP's secretary on an interim basis. She comes to us from a 12-year stint as a secretary at the USDA Livestock, Poultry and Seed program. Contact Joan at Joan.Avila@ams.usda.gov or 202-260-8636.