

## ASK

### NOP AND FTC SHOULD COLLABORATE ON AN APPROACH TO REGULATING “ORGANIC” CLAIMS ON NON-AGRICULTURAL ITEMS



#### THE ISSUE:

- USDA’s National Organic Program (NOP) sets the standards for the use of the term “organic” on agricultural products, and is responsible for enforcing those standards.
- However, the term “organic” is also used on non-agricultural products, such as finished textiles, mattresses and dry cleaning.
- In those situations, no government agency enforces any standards on the use of the term “organic.”
- An article by Mary Clare Jalonick of the *Associated Press* entitled “The Meaning of ‘Organic’ Hazy for Nonfood” appeared in many news outlets in October, and laid out the problem of enforcement gaps on organic non-agricultural products such as finished textiles, mattresses, personal care products, and dry cleaning.

#### WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM:

- Failure to enforce the use of the term “organic” creates consumer confusion, can be misleading or inaccurate, and can lead to consumers mistrusting the integrity of the word “organic.”

#### THE SOLUTION:

- NOP has authority to regulate “organic” claims on agricultural products.
- The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has authority—but does not exercise it—to regulate other “organic” claims under its consumer protection jurisdiction.
- NOP and the FTC should work together to identify a solution that regulates the use of the term organic on non-agricultural products.



THERE’S MORE TO **ORGANIC**  
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