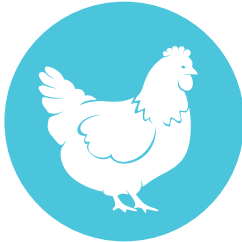


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ORGANIC LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY PRACTICES



The USDA National Organic Program (NOP) develops rules and regulations for the production, handling, and labeling of all USDA organic products. This process involves input from the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), a federal advisory committee whose members represent organic farmers, growers, handlers, and certifiers; environmental resource conservationists; public interest representatives; and scientists.

Organic is a self-regulated industry. Organic operations voluntarily participate in the certified organic program and agree to regulations that consumers demand.

NOP is in the process of finalizing the proposed rule on Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices, which was published in the Federal Register on April 7, 2016 (81 Fed. Reg. 21955 et seq.).

This proposed rule is the result of 14 years of public and transparent work and addresses four broad areas of organic livestock and poultry practices, including living conditions, animal healthcare, transport, and slaughter. The lengthy process included:

- Two NOSB recommendations, including a unanimous rec in 2011 to draft regulations;
- Six NOSB meetings with full public comment, over a three-year period; and
- A preliminary economic analysis published in the Federal Register in 2013.

The proposed rule creates standards for organic products that consumers demand and that are necessary for organic to maintain its premium position in the marketplace.

The proposed rule also considers biosecurity concerns, and ensures that compliance will not put organic poultry operations at a greater risk for exposure or infection. In particular, organic regulations allow for temporary indoor confinement during disease outbreaks or when the potential for exposure to wild birds is high.

There was an effort in the Senate appropriations process to prevent NOP from finalizing this rule, and we are concerned that effort may continue when the Agriculture Appropriations bill is considered on the Senate floor. If Congress blocks NOP from following the transparent and congressionally-mandated process to create and implement organic regulations set forth in the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, this would call into question the entire process by which organic standards deliver transparent meaning to the consumer — a process that Congress created, the industry has worked within, and consumers trust.

Specific feedback on the proposed rule should be lodged by interested parties during the notice and comment period currently underway. Report language included in the Senate Ag Appropriations report appreciates this process, and directs USDA to consider all comments received when finalizing the proposed rule.

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Please oppose any amendment that would limit the National Organic Program's ability to finalize and implement the proposed rule on organic livestock and poultry practices.

A graphic of a sunburst with rays emanating from a central point, transitioning from red on the left to yellow and green on the right. The text is overlaid on the sunburst.

**ORGANIC:
A BRIGHT SPOT**
for our FARMs,
our FOOD,
and our FUTURE