

Risk Based Oversight for Integrity Act



Modernizing USDA Organic Oversight

THE PROBLEM

The current organic oversight system applies uniform requirements to all operations regardless of risk level, resulting in **unnecessary costs and administrative burdens without improving organic integrity**. Since 2020, certified organic operations in the U.S. have declined by 10.4 percent for crop certifications and 6.2 percent for livestock certifications. In some cases, this has led to domestic supply challenges, with much of this production picked up by foreign producers. Meanwhile, oversight resources are not strategically focused on operations that pose the greatest risk.

KEY PROVISIONS

- Defines “Risk to Organic Integrity:” Establishes a product - focused definition centered on the likelihood that products marketed as organic fail to meet federal organic standards.
- Modernizes Inspection Requirements: For U.S.-based operations, allows flexible inspection schedules based on risk assessment - requiring on-site inspections at least once every three years with annual virtual inspections for lower-risk operations. International operations continue to require annual on-site inspections.
- Mandates Comprehensive USDA Study: Requires USDA to conduct a 12-month study on risk-based oversight protocols, examining feasibility and implications of reforms. USDA is also required to consult with certified organic farms and businesses, certifying agents, the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), organic consumers, and other stakeholders throughout the study process.
- Authorizes Regulatory Reform: Based on study findings and congressional consultation, grants USDA authority to implement risk-based oversight regulations.

THE SOLUTION

The **Risk-Based Oversight for Integrity Act** directs USDA to modernize organic oversight by scaling requirements based on risk to organic integrity. The legislation maintains strong enforcement where risk is highest, while reducing unnecessary burdens on low-risk operations, cutting red tape, and keeping organic certification accessible for all farmers and producers.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES



Reduced oversight costs and administrative burdens for low-risk domestic operations.



Strategic prioritization of oversight resources towards higher-risk operations.



Support for a more resilient domestic organic sector.



Enhanced clarity and consistency in USDA organic programs guidance without additional red tape.

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