SPRING 2025 NOSB MEETING

AT-A-GLANCE SUMMARY OF AGENDA TOPICS & SUBCOMMITTEE VOTES

The spring 2025 National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) Meeting will be held virtually April 29-May 1. The Meeting Agenda and Meeting Packet (all proposals, discussion documents, and Sunset Reviews to be considered at the meeting) are available, and the comment period is open. The virtual oral comment webinars will occur on April 22 & 24 in advance of the in-person meeting. While OTA will be submitting comments, we encourage you to submit your own comments on the issues that affect your business. The deadline to sign up for oral comments is April 9, 2025. The deadline to submit written comments is April 28, 2025. Visit OTA's webpage for more information.

QUICK REFERENCE

PRESENTATIONS AND PANELS

- **USDA/AMS/National Organic Program Update, and NOP-NOSB Q&A** – Deputy Administrator Christopher Purdy will provide an update on program operations and topics, including organic seed, risk-based oversight, and residue testing.
- **West/Southwest Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP) Presentations** – Members of the West/Southwest TOPP program, led by CCOF, will present on their activities.

HANDLING

TO BE VOTED ON

Proposals

- **Ethylene Annotation to Expand Use** – petition requests annotation expansion to allow use for sprout inhibition in potatoes and onions.

  Motion to amend the listing of ethylene at § 205.605(b)(14) to read:

  Ethylene—allowed for postharvest ripening of tropical fruit, degreening of citrus, and postharvest sprouting inhibition of potatoes and onions.

  Subcommittee vote: **9 Yes**, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

- **Fish Oil CAS Number Correction** – proposal to remove the two fatty acid Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) numbers associated with fish oil in the National List as fish oil itself does not have a CAS number. This issue was raised by a stakeholder at the Fall 2024 meeting and aims to avoid confusion with the reference.

Motion to eliminate the CAS numbers included in the fish oil listing at 7 CFR § 205.606(f), as a technical correction, to read:

Fish oil—stabilized with organic ingredients or only with ingredients on the National List, §§ 205.605 and 205.606.

Subcommittee vote: **8 Yes**, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 1 Absent

SUNSET REVIEWS (5-year review cycle)

Handling Sunset Summaries – refer to this document for a summary of use, OTA draft position, public comments from last sunset review, and the Board vote at last sunset review

OTA Handling Sunset Survey – link to complete the Handling sunset surveys to inform OTA's position

MATERIAL	SUBCOMMITTEE VOTE AT LAST REVIEW	SUBCOMMITTEE QUESTIONS
Cornstarch (native)	**Significant vote to remove**	In the past 5 years, the number of suppliers of organic cornstarch has nearly tripled. Does this mean that there is a sufficient supply of organic cornstarch? Are there *any* barriers to using organic cornstarch instead of the non-GMO based conventional cornstarch? We are especially interested in understanding why there organic and conventionally produced cornstarch would not be completely interchangeable. Is there sufficient supply of non-GMO based conventional cornstarch?
Carnauba wax	**Majority vote to renew**	What is the current organic availability of carnauba wax?
Kaolin	**Unanimous vote to renew**	1. Does kaolin appear in more Organic System Plans that it has during previous reviews? In other words, is the substance in growing or declining use? 2. Does the community have additional information about the presence of heavy metals in some kaolin products?
Sodium bicarbonate	**Unanimous vote to renew**	1. Is there any new information related to environmental concerns, human health, or use that would cause this substance to be considered for delisting?
Waxes-nonsynthetic (wood rosin)	**Unanimous vote to renew**	1. Could damaged trees from hurricanes be used to produce wood rosin?
Ammonium Bicarbonate	**Unanimous vote to renew**	
Ammonium Carbonate	**Unanimous vote to renew**	
Calcium Phosphates (monobasic, dibasic, tribasic)	**Unanimous vote to renew**	1. Should calcium phosphates be annotated in alignment with potassium phosphates to limit use to "made with" only?
Low-acyl gellan gum	This is the first sunset review for this substance	1. What types of organic products are low-acyl gellan (synthetic) used in compared to high-acyl gellan gum (nonsynthetic)?

		2. Are there additionally ancillaries present in low-acyl gellan gum that the board should be aware of?
Ozone	**Unanimous vote to renew**	
Sodium hydroxide	**Unanimous vote to renew**	
Beet juice extract color **Beta-carotene extract color** **Black/purple carrot juice color** **Chokeberry, aronia juice color** **Elderberry juice color** **Grape skin extract color** **Purple sweet potato juice color** **Red cabbage extract color** **Red radish extract color** **Saffron extract color**	**Unanimous vote to renew (beet juice extract, beta carotene extract, black/purple carrot juice, grape skin extract, purple potato juice, red cabbage extract, red radish extract); Majority vote to renew (chokeberry-aronia juice, elderberry juice, saffron extract)**	Which of these colors are now commercially available in organic form? Where information about commercial availability is mixed (i.e. where some, but not all, commenters note that the organic color is available), should those colors be removed from the National List to ensure adequate market pressure to complete the transition to organic? How essential are the colors that remain on the list? For example, could a different anthocyanin be substituted for red radish? Are there any other specific barriers to organic transition for individual colors (e.g., grape skin extract supply is limited by constraints on organic winemaking)?
Glycerin	**Unanimous vote to renew**	
Inulin-oligofructose enriched	**Unanimous vote to renew**	Is there adequate supply of inulin derived from organic sources? Are there technical or other barriers to using inulin derived from organic sources in place of inulin derived from conventional sources?
Orange shellac	**Unanimous vote to renew**	• Is orange shellac necessary for use in organic production (i.e. should it remain on §205.606)? Why?

FOR INFORMATION GATHERING

Discussion Documents

L-Malic Acid Reclassification – discussion document looks to resolve confusion and ensure consistency in use of L-malic acid by recommending the addition of synthetic L-malic acid to 7 CFR § 205.605(b) with a commercial availability limitation, in addition to retaining the nonsynthetic listing currently included at 7 CFR § 205.605(a). This change would align the regulations with current use practices, as well as codify a preference for the nonsynthetic version. The subcommittee poses one question for stakeholders:

> Organic processors currently use L-malic acid derived from synthetic fumaric acid, and there does not appear to be sufficient supply of nonsynthetic L-malic acid to meet demand. The Subcommittee recommends updating the National List to align with current practice and attaching a commercial availability requirement to the use of synthetic L-malic acid, to drive use toward the nonsynthetic form if it becomes more widely available. Are there any alternative approaches to addressing this issue that the Subcommittee should consider?

Other topics of interest to Handling community

ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION

Parties might be interested in these topics found elsewhere on this agenda: Research Priorities, Risk-based Certification, and Residue Testing for a Global Supply Chain: Regulation Review.

LIVESTOCK

TO BE VOTED ON

Proposals

- **Annotation Change – Iodine** – proposal to restrict iodine to formulations that do not contain nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPEs) as these are known endocrine disruptors.

  Motion to amend the listing for iodine at § 205.603(a)(16) and § 205.603(b)(4) to read:
  Iodine, must be produced without the use of nonylphenol ethoxylates

  Subcommittee vote: **5 Yes**, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 1 Absent

SUNSET REVIEWS (5-year review cycle)

Livestock Sunset Summaries – refer to this document for a summary of use, OTA draft position, public comments from last sunset review, and the Board vote at last sunset review

OTA Livestock Sunset Survey – link to complete the Livestock sunset surveys to inform OTA's position

MATERIAL	SUBCOMMITTEE VOTE AT LAST REVIEW	SUBCOMMITTEE QUESTIONS
Oxytocin	**Unanimous to remove**	1. Is oxytocin an essential material for safe and humane treatment of animals in organic production and why? 2. Are there nonsynthetic alternatives, or other methods that can be used to accomplish the same results as oxytocin?
Sucrose octanoate esters	**Significant to remove**	1. Is there current information on the use of SOE formulations by farmers? Is there a large demand for SOE formulations by livestock producers?
EPA List 4 Inerts	**Significant to remove**	1. Do stakeholders agree that List 4 Inerts should be relisted until they are replaced with a new listing via the rulemaking process currently underway?
Butorphanol	**Unanimous vote to renew**	1. In what circumstances is Butorphanol commonly used on organic livestock operations? 2. Is the pain relief material toolbox for managing pain in surgical applications sufficient?
Flunixin	**Unanimous vote to renew**	1. What are the common applications of this material? 2. Are the tools available for surgical pain relief sufficient to manage pain in organic animals?
Magnesium hydroxide	**Unanimous vote to renew**	

Poloxalene	**Unanimous vote to renew**	Are there any non-synthetic, approved, and effective bloat remedies for ruminants that are commercially available to ranchers?
Formic acid	**Unanimous vote to renew**	Are the options for controlling Varroa mites in beehives sufficient or redundant? Are there natural ways to combat mites that could reduce the dependency on parasiticides?
Excipients	**Unanimous vote to renew**	Is the current annotation sufficient for effective use by certifiers? Is the current review process sufficient to ensure that excipients meet OFPA criteria? If not, are there alternative methods, lists, or classifications that could comply?
Strychnine	**Unanimous vote to renew**	

Other topics of interest to livestock community:

Parties might be interested in these topics found elsewhere on this agenda: Research Priorities, Risk-based Certification, and Residue Testing for a Global Supply Chain: Regulation Review.

CROPS

TO BE VOTED ON

Proposals

- **Pear ester** – addresses a petition to add pear ester to the National List at § 205.601 as a synthetic substance allowed for use in organic crop production. Pear ester has been in use in organic production as an allowed pest management tool in orchard crops (apple, pear, walnut) to control coddling moth and was previously grouped with pheromones, a group of allowed synthetic substances already listed at § 205.601. However, grouping pear ester with pheromones was found to be incorrect, and the proper classification of this substance is as a kairomone, which are chemical signals produced by plants or other organisms that are detected by a distinct species, often insects. Because it has been an established pest management tool to date, and because there was confusion regarding its classification that it is not a pheromone, pear ester continues to be allowed for use as the NOSB reviews this material. Board discussion focused on whether a need exists for a broader kairomone listing, however it appears many other kairomones are nonsynthetic and would not require a broader listing. Also noted was the need for further review of the potential safety concerns with exposure to the dispensers used to emit kairomones in the field.

  Motion to classify pear ester as synthetic.

  Subcommittee vote: **7 Yes**, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 1 Absent

  Motion to add pear ester to the National List at §205.601(j).

  Subcommittee vote: **6 Yes**, 0 No, 1 Abstain, 0 Absent

- **Compost, Feedstocks, and the National List** – responds to a request from NOP to the NOSB to address a petition from the Biodegradable Products Institute to allow certain materials in organic-compliant compost. The Subcommittee recommends a clarification that compost feedstocks be subject to

the National List evaluation process, just as any other materials considered for use in organic production.

Motion to accept the proposal stating synthetic substances intentionally included as feedstocks in organic compliant compost must be evaluated by the NOSB, recommended for addition to the National List by a two-thirds vote of the NOSB, and added to the National List through the Federal Register process of notice and comment rulemaking by the NOP.

Subcommittee vote: **8 Yes**, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 0 Absent

SUNSET REVIEWS (5-year review cycle)

Crop Sunset Summaries – refer to this document for a summary of use, OTA draft position, public comments from last sunset review, and the Board vote at last sunset review

OTA Crop Sunset Survey – link to complete the Livestock sunset surveys to inform OTA's position

MATERIAL	SUBCOMMITTEE VOTE AT LAST REVIEW	SUBCOMMITTEE QUESTIONS
Sucrose octonoate esters	**Significant to remove**	1. Are there EPA-registered products formulated using SOEs? 2. Is there current information on the need and use of SOE formulations in crop production? 3. Is there a need to keep SOEs in the crops toolbox to be rotated with other products?
EPA List 4 Inerts	**Significant to remove**	1. Do stakeholders agree that List 4 Inerts should be relisted until they are replaced with a new listing via the rulemaking process currently underway?
Aquatic plant extracts	**Majority vote to renew**	1. Should NOSB consider an annotation change to aquatic plant extracts to ensure that extractants are not used for their nutrient content? If yes, please provide suggestions for annotation changes and rationale.
Potassium hypochlorite	This is the first sunset review for this substance.	Is the substance used in concentrations that do not exceed the maximum limits spelled out in the Safe Drinking Water Act? Is there interest in introducing an annotation to ensure that only potassium hypochlorite produced using environmentally friendly chlorine production methods is allowed for use in organic production in the United States? Are there effective alternatives?
Soap-based algicide/demossers	**Unanimous vote to renew**	
Ammonium carbonate	**Unanimous vote to renew**	1. Is there new research determining the effects of ammonium carbonate bait on non-targeted insect species?
Soaps, insecticidal	**Unanimous vote to renew**	
Vitamin D3	**Unanimous vote to renew**	
Lignin sulfonate	**Unanimous vote to renew**	1. Are lignin sulfonates still used as chelating agents or dust suppressants?

Fatty alcohols	This is the first sunset review for this substance.	1. Are approved organic herbicides, such as those made with organic acids, effective to de-sucker tobacco?
Sodium silicate	**Unanimous vote to renew**	Is sodium silicate still an essential tool as a floating agent for small tree fruit producers? Are the alternative methods and substances indicated in the updated TR being used by organic producers? The limited TR indicates that sodium silicate prevents the rapid decomposition of chlorine materials. Does its use as a flotation agent in pear processing have impacts on the efficacy and longevity of chlorine materials that may be used for food safety reasons in pear packing?
Paper - production aids; paper-based crop planting aids	This is the first sunset review for this substance.	Are our stakeholders aware of materials of concern (like phthalates or PFAS) that could be appearing in paper planting and production aids like paper pots? Is there soil contamination concerns unique to paper pots because of the potential to use paper pots multiple times in concentrated areas over the course of a single growing season? Are the restrictions on paper pot composition applicable to the paper feedstock issues that have been raised in the context of compost?
Arsenic	**Unanimous vote to renew**	
Strychnine	**Unanimous vote to renew**	

FOR INFORMATION GATHERING

Discussion Documents

- **Synthetic Compost Feedstocks: Compostable Synthetic Food Packaging Plastics and Cellulosic Fiber-Based Materials** – addresses the synthetic materials that enter the waste stream and may be used in the production of compost compliant with organic production. The discussion document also addresses the difference between contamination, the material that can be removed from compost, and unavoidable residual environmental contamination (UREC), the material which cannot be avoided.

The subcommittee poses the following questions for stakeholders:

1. Does the current listing for newspapers or other recycled paper, without glossy or colored inks, as a synthetic compost feedstock adequately address the contamination concerns related with these types of products? Are there suggestions for improving this annotation to better reflect the role that paper has as a compost feedstock?
2. What are the risks and benefits to allowing all compostable polymers to be included as compost feedstocks in organic compost?
3. What are the risks and benefits to continuing the current prohibition on compostable polymers' inclusion in organic compost?
4. There have been suggestions to create an allowance for compostable food contact labels (e.g. fruit stickers) and compostable waste collection bags in order to reduce contamination in compost and get more food waste out of the landfill and into compost facilities, but to prohibit compostable plastics in organic compost when they're used in single-use service wear (e.g. cups, clamshells, utensils). What are the risks and benefits to this approach?
5. What are the unique contamination risks associated with composting food waste and the associated compostable polymers that typically come with food waste?

6. What other factors should NOSB consider when evaluating compostable polymers for inclusion on the National List?
7. Is the approach to evaluating UREC and contamination, as described in this document, consistent with organic principles?

Other topics of interest to crops community:

Parties might be interested in these topics found elsewhere on this agenda: Research Priorities, Risk-based Certification, and Residue Testing for a Global Supply Chain: Regulation Review.

OTHER TOPICS INCLUDING MATERIALS, COMPLIANCE, ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION

TO BE VOTED ON

Proposals

- **Risk-based Certification** – explores how to best focus risk-based oversight considering the unintended regulatory burdens placed on low-risk operations as a result of the Strengthening Organic Enforcement rule. The subcommittee asks where and how can the community can focus on high-risk operations and reevaluate the certification process for low-risk operations, and answers this question through four points:

1. **Definitions**: proposes the use of a common set of definitions to direct a risk-based approach.
2. **Risk Criteria**: proposes certifiers use a baseline of common risk criteria while allowing flexibility to adjust based on operation types.
3. **Oversight Activities Process and Matrix**: proposes that NOP, in coordination with Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA), develop a process by which certifiers can evaluate the regulatory text and use critical thinking to determine the opportunities to approach the certification of operations with different risk level differently.
4. **Training & Resources**: proposes that NOP and ACA develop and revise resources and training materials to support certifiers in conducting risk-based certification.

Subcommittee vote to accept proposal: **5 Yes**, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 1 Absent

- **Residue Testing for a Global Supply Chain** – continuing the Board's ongoing work around residues and testing as means of upholding organic integrity and deterring fraud, proposes updates to Guidance Documents in the NOP Handbook pertaining to sample collection, lab selection criteria, the list of prohibited pesticides sampled, and responding to lab test results.

Subcommittee vote to accept proposal: **4 Yes**, 0 No, 0 Abstain, 2 Absent

FOR INFORMATION GATHERING

Discussion Documents

- **Residue Testing for a Global Supply Chain: Regulation Review** – continuing the Board's ongoing work around residues and testing, explores areas of the regulation that may benefit from revision. The

discussion addresses updating the regulation to clarify that an intentional application of a prohibited substance or excluded method should exclude the crop from organic sale, regardless of whether a tolerance level is established. The discussion also addresses a revised response to Unavoidable Residual Environmental Contamination (UREC), seeking to clarify that such presence is not cause for requiring an investigation by certifiers and response by certified operations, which expends limited time and resources of both parties. Also addressed is the need to review who must cover the cost of residue testing depending on whether the testing is part of the required 5% of certified operations, or is a result of a compliance investigation.

The subcommittee poses a number of questions relating to these three primary focus areas.

- **Research Priorities 2025** – proposal details the Board's annual list of research priorities, which includes an effort to categorize and differentiate highest priority topics from the ongoing list.

DEFINITIONS

NOSB conducts its business via a few types of documents and actions described below.

- **Proposal:** This is a formal recommendation to be voted on and could be a petitioned material, a proposed change to the standards or a more general recommendation to the USDA. It takes a two-thirds vote of NOSB members present to pass.
- **Sunset Review:** NOSB is required to re-evaluate materials currently on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances every five years to determine if new information indicates they are harmful to human health or the environment, are not necessary because natural or organic alternatives are available, and/or incompatible with organic production. It takes a two-thirds vote of NOSB members present to pass a recommendation to delist (No votes = a recommendation to remain listed).
- **Discussion Document:** This is a document that outlines NOSB's work and thoughts on a particular issue. Often questions are included to solicit feedback from stakeholders. These items are not typically voted on.

ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION