



Repair the Public Private Partnership in Organic

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN STANDARDS

A healthy market for organic products requires a clear market distinction backed by a level playing field and a trusted, verified, and enforced claim. This burgeoning industry requires critical support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Organic Program (NOP) for uniform and robust standards.

USDA IS NOT ADVANCING ORGANIC STANDARDS

The failure of government to keep pace with consumers and the industry is harming and fragmenting the market. Inconsistent standards are becoming the status quo. Accountability in advancing the voluntary organic standards is essential to a healthy market and opportunity for farmers in the future.

In the past 10 years, industry has advanced 20 consensus recommendations for improvements to the organic standards. USDA has not completed rulemaking on a single one of them.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPING VOLUNTARY ORGANIC STANDARDS

A new framework must be set for advancing federal organic standards to keep up with the marketplace and ensure the credibility of the USDA Organic seal.

Industry and private stakeholders own the voluntary standards and reach consensus on developments to those standards through deliberation at the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). USDA should rely on NOSB consensus recommendations as the will of the industry developed in collaboration with environmental, scientific, and public stakeholders.

The voluntary, opt-in organic program is unique, and standards should advance in a way that is different than mandatory regulations.

- ✓ NOSB consensus recommendations should be included on the Unified Regulatory Agenda with a published timeline for action.
- ✓ Removal from the Unified Agenda must require public and congressional notification with the rationale as to why the agency is not moving forward on widely supported standards questions.
- ✓ The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) review must consider the costs when standards are inconsistent or not robust enough to meet the market demand.
- ✓ Economically insignificant rulemaking, based on a consensus NOSB recommendation, should not be designated a **"novel policy"** that requires OMB review since it is agreed to by industry—this would shorten the timeline to develop final standards significantly.

ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION
Bold Steps to
PROMOTE and PROTECT
ORGANIC

FOCUS
ON SOLUTIONS

CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT

EMBRACE
INNOVATION

PLAN FOR
THE FUTURE

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IS A BEDROCK OF ORGANIC



USDA must collaborate with accredited certifiers to advance the outcomes on farms, ranches, and facilities certified to the USDA National Organic Program.

- ✓ Continuous Improvement in organic standards should be defined in the law and regulations in order to foster soil health, biodiversity, and natural resource conservation.
- ✓ To improve oversight, USDA accreditation of third-party certification agents should include the specific evaluation of uniform compliance to regulations, guidance, and instructions—including annual reporting.

ASK:

Support from Congress for continuous improvement and accountability in organic standards.