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As-it-happens update · November 18, 2016

NEWS

[US Advisory Board Delists Carrageenan for Organics](#)

FoodIngredientsFirst

18 Nov 2016 --- The National **Organic** Standards Board has decided to ... counter to the **National Organic Program's** mission," says director of United 4 ...



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NEWS

[Board nixes use of carrageenan in organic food production](#)

Food Safety News

"The Board's recommendation would make it difficult for organic food products ... which runs counter to the National Organic Program's mission," she said. ... "We expect the USDA will respect the input of the organic community, and ...



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Headlines for November 21, 2016



- » [How Can Agriculture Address the Growing Economic and Environmental Pressures of Climate Change? -- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition](#)
- » [Hawaii Counties Can't Regulate GMOs and Pesticides According to New Ruling -- Fortune](#)
- » [Chamber Report: Removing Barriers Would Unlock Billions in Ag Exports to China -- Politico Pro](#)
- » [Board Nixes Use of Carrageenan in Organic Food Production -- Food Safety News](#)
- » [Roberts' Staff Chief to Lead Trump's USDA Transition Team -- Agri-Pulse](#)
- » [Renewable Fuel Standard 'Solid' Through Trump Era, Vilsack Says -- Farm Journal](#)

How Can Agriculture Address the Growing Economic and Environmental Pressures of Climate Change? -- National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Source: NSAC (18 Nov 2016)

Author: Reana Kovalcik

(Article Summarized by Meridian Institute) In this article, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) writes that agriculture has an important role to play in helping us mitigate and adapt to climate change. NSAC says it believes giving farmers both the tools to invest in their soil and ways to become an active part of climate change mitigation could help us develop climate change strategies that work for farmers, the environment and the economy. NSAC cites two recent reports, the White House Office of Management and Budget's "Climate Change: The Fiscal Risks Facing the Federal Government," and the White House's "Mid-Century Strategy for Deep Decarbonization," which show we have to take significant action or climate change will cost taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars, and that reduction of greenhouse gas emissions can co-exist with a strongly growing economy. "These two recent reports," says NSAC, "raise important considerations for federal agricultural policy. Increasing the investment in agricultural research, which has stagnated, and focusing particular attention on the myriad of researchable questions tied to creating a more resilient and climate-friendly agriculture needs to be front and center." It is also critical, NSAC says, to protect the funding base for federal farm conservation programs, which help farms and ranches remain in production while investing in soil health and protecting the environment. Also needed, it says, is crop insurance reform. All farmers deserve access to an adequate safety net, writes NSAC, and such a program should include a central role for improvements in the conservation of natural resources. "Continuing to treat risk management and conservation as two separate

subjects and isolating conversations on each in policy silos is no longer acceptable. Existing federal crop insurance barriers to good conservation need to be removed. No less importantly, we need a new strategy to use the very significant taxpayer and farmer investment in the federal crop insurance program to increase resiliency and encourage climate change mitigation," NSAC says. [more](#)

Hawaii Counties Can't Regulate GMOs and Pesticides According to New Ruling -- Fortune

Source: [Fortune \(19 Nov 2016\)](#)

Author: The Associated Press

(Article Summarized by Meridian Institute) In a major victory for agriculture companies, a federal judge in Hawaii has ruled that three Hawaiian counties cannot enact their own bans or regulations on genetically modified (GM) crops and pesticides. In 2014, residents of Maui voted to ban the cultivation and testing of GM crops. Kauai County had implemented pesticide notification requirements and mandated pesticide buffer zones, while Hawaii Island had enacted, among other things, an open air testing ban of GMOs. The court upheld a lower court's decision that county laws are preempted by state laws that regulate potentially harmful plants. "This is good news for local agriculture in Hawaii, as it clears up potential confusion over who has jurisdiction in regulating agricultural operations, leaving that responsibility with the appropriate government agencies," said Bennette Misalucha, the executive director of the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association, whose members include major agricultural companies like Dow AgroSciences, DuPont Pioneer, Monsanto and Syngenta. But George Kimbrell, a senior attorney for the Center for Food Safety, said, "We will continue to stand and fight with the people of Hawaii against these chemical companies, and part of that is going to be demanding action at the state level to protect the people and the environment. We're considering all legal options, including appeal." Those who initially pushed for the increased regulation of pesticides and GMOs in Hawaii vowed to introduce new legislation. "What the decision makes clear is that it is the state's responsibility to meaningfully protect against undue harm from pesticides, whether it's to workers on a field or to kids in schools nearby, and we have an obligation to make sure that safety is paramount," said Representative Chris Lee, the chairman of the Hawaii House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection. "And looking forward, I do think there's a middle road that can satisfy everyone that ensures public safety and doesn't put an undue burden on anyone." [more](#)

Chamber Report: Removing Barriers Would Unlock Billions in Ag Exports to China -- Politico Pro

Source: [Politico Pro \(21 Nov 2016\)](#)

Author: Doug Palmer

"Resolving barriers to trade in areas such as biotechnology could boost two-way agricultural and related trade with China by an additional \$28.1 billion through 2025, says a new report by the China Center at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "Two-way agricultural trade [with China] has grown consistently over the last decade, reaching \$35.6 billion in 2015, and is expected to continue to grow, with cumulative gains over 2016-2025 forecast at \$71.2 billion," says the report, which was done in partnership with Informa Economics. But a number of barriers, including China's slow and unpredictable approval process for biotechnology products and foreign animal vaccines, are thwarting trade opportunities, the report says. "Resolving these and other barriers to trade between the United States and China would unlock additional cumulative gains of \$28.1 billion in agricultural sector products over 2016-2025," it adds. The report estimates \$10.4 billion in cumulative gains for China over the forecast period and \$17.6 billion for the United States if the barriers are removed. Other trade barriers include China's tariff-rate quotas for corn, wheat, rice and sugar. It also lists China's subsidies for domestic machinery products as well as anti-dumping and countervailing duties imposed by both

countries." [more](#)

Board Nixes Use of Carrageenan in Organic Food Production - - Food Safety News

Source: [Food Safety News \(18 Nov 2016\)](#)

Author: Cathy Siegner

"The National Organic Standards Board has voted 10-3, with one abstention, to remove carrageenan from the list of substances approved for use in food items labeled "USDA Organic." The vote came Thursday afternoon during the board's three-day fall meeting in St. Louis. NOSB members were tentatively scheduled to make a decision Friday on whether to approve the continued use of "bioponics" to produce organically certified food. Bioponics combines the production methods of hydroponics and aquaponics to grow produce using containers but without using soil. Instead, the board voted 10-4 Friday afternoon to send the controversy back to a subcommittee for more discussion and clarification of how such production processes are defined. This means that food grown using hydroponic methods may continue to be certified as organic if the production operations otherwise meet established criteria for the designation...At this week's meeting, the NOSB also rejected petitions to approve 1-Methylcyclopropane (1-MCP) for use on post-harvest apples to delay aging and ripening and the use of soy wax as plugs and sealant in organic mushroom production...On Wednesday, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack appointed five new members to the NOSB who will begin serving their five-year terms on Jan. 24, 2017. His appointees are: Asa Bradman, a California environmental health scientist; Steve Ela, who has an organic farm in Colorado; Sue Baird, an organic consultant in Missouri; David Mortensen, a plant ecology and weed management professor at Penn State, and Joelle Mosso, a product line manager for Olam International in Fresno, CA." [more](#)

Roberts' Staff Chief to Lead Trump's USDA Transition Team -- Agri-Pulse

Source: [Agri-Pulse \(21 Nov 2016\)](#)

Author: Philip Brasher

"Joel Leftwich, Republican staff director for the Senate Agriculture Committee, will lead President-elect Donald Trump's transition team at the Agriculture Department. Michael Torrey, who had been the transition adviser on USDA, resigned last week because of a five-year lobbying ban imposed by Trump. Myron Ebell, who has been director of global warming and international environmental policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute, was named to lead Trump's landing team at the Environmental Protection Agency. Ebell has been serving as the EPA transition adviser. Doug Domenech, a former deputy chief of staff at the Interior Department during the George W. Bush administration, will lead the landing team at that department. Domenech has directed the Fueling Freedom Project of the Texas Public Policy Foundation since 2015...Leftwich, a longtime adviser to Senate Agriculture Chairman Pat Roberts, R-Kan. joined the committee staff in January 2015 from PepsiCo, where he was senior director for its public policy and government affairs team. Leftwich previously served as deputy staff director for the Senate committee and also served Roberts as a legislative assistant covering agriculture, energy and transportation policy. Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin and former Texas Gov. Rick Perry, who have been mentioned in connection with USDA, Interior and other positions were scheduled to meet Monday with Trump and Vice President-elect Mike Pence, said transition spokesman Jason Miller." [more](#)

Renewable Fuel Standard 'Solid' Through Trump Era, Vilsack Says -- Farm Journal

Source: [Farm Journal \(20 Nov 2016\)](#)

Author: Bloomberg News

"The politically contentious Renewable Fuel Standard will survive a Donald Trump administration because ethanol is too well-established in rural areas to be dismantled, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said. "There's going to be a lot of saber-rattling, but it supports too many jobs and too much rural infrastructure is set up for it," Vilsack said in a Nov. 18 interview that also covered subjects such as trade and immigration. "The Renewable Fuel Standard is solid." The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is due to decide whether to raise its targets for national biofuels consumption from 14.5 billion gallons in 2016, bringing it more in line with the 15 billion-gallon mandate envisioned in energy legislation passed in 2007. Ethanol has been criticized for raising food and feed costs, but has been a boon for corn-growers and domestic jobs...Vilsack, speaking in his U.S. Department of Agriculture office in Washington, said rural support for the rest of the RFS would be enough to withstand attacks on it from other quarters. "I think it will be very difficult for it to be repealed," he said. Vilsack, the only member of President Barack Obama's original cabinet still in his post, said U.S. agriculture is in good shape heading into 2017, despite lingering crop surpluses that have pushed down prices. "Producers will make different decisions, and over time the surplus will be whittled down, and there will be a weather disaster someplace," said the former governor of Iowa. "I think the arrow is still pointing up." But his successor may need to buck Trump on trade and immigration. Those issues, on which the Republican candidate campaigned for more restrictive policies, are too important for agricultural prosperity to ignore, Vilsack said. He added that less regulation and lower taxes, two areas farmer groups have welcomed as they look forward to a Trump administration, are less important." [more](#)

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NEWS

[Organic standards will exclude next generation of GMOs](#)

Vermont Biz

Organic standards will exclude next generation of GMOs ... of Agriculture's **National Organic Program** will ensure that ingredients derived from new ... When the **USDA** approves that NOSB recommendations, consumers who want to ...



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[NOSB Recommends Delisting Carrageenan From **Organic** Food](#)

Natural Products INSIDER (blog)

The **National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)** on Nov. ... The board's recommendation is now in the hands of **USDA**, which has until November ... foods altogether, which runs counter to the **National Organic Program's** mission."



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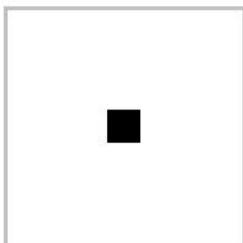
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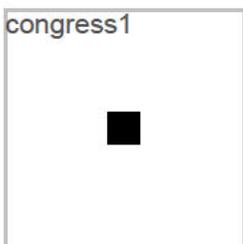
[Thankful for our members](#)



Today and every day we are thankful for the Organic Trade Association's diverse membership. Thank you for your commitment to organic and for your important work across the organic value chain. For those that celebrate, the OTA team wishes you and your loved ones a happy and restful thanksgiving, full of organic trimmings and cheer!

Government Affairs & Policy

[Congress looks to a short-term spending bill](#)



Last Thursday, House Republicans reached a plan to fund the government through March 31, 2017 through a short-term, "clean" Continuing Resolution (CR), avoiding an omnibus spending bill and final budget deal with President Obama. Congressional Republicans had been wanting a CR since the election, in order to have the new administration's input on what's included in future spending bills.

Speculation on Capitol Hill from senior leadership is that this will most likely not be a "clean" CR, meaning that it would include "riders" or added provisions. Lawmakers are out for the Thanksgiving recess, but will return next week and be hard at work passing a short-term bill which is set to expire on Friday, December 9. OTA's Government Affairs team will keep an eye on the latest developments and keep members updated.

[NOSB tackles complicated issues, makes key decisions](#)

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) met in St. Louis, MO

gwennosb



last week for its Fall 2016 meeting. Over the course of three days, NOSB, under the leadership of Chair Tracy Favre, voted or took action on 19 proposals and 15 sunset 2018 inputs and evaluated 8 discussion documents and reports. NOSB received 2,789 written comments prior to the meeting and listened to oral testimony from approximately 200 commenters (over 13 hours of oral comments) on a wide range of issues. Commenters provided wide-ranging perspectives on a number of topics including hydroponics, carrageenan, and how to ensure organic remains non-GMO as seed breeding technologies advance. The most dramatic range of commenters came to provide opinions on whether hydroponics align with organic principles or not. These opinions came from long-standing organic farmers who have grown organically in the soil for over 30 years to new entrepreneurial innovators whose high-tech hydroponic systems are testing the limits of the organic production standards. Ultimately, NOSB decided to continue its work on a formal proposal around hydroponics, but it did pass a resolution that reaffirmed what NOSB recommended in 2010 which prohibited hydroponic systems using entirely water based substrates. NOSB's crops subcommittee will continue to work on a set of recommended standards that pertain to crops grown in containers and in greenhouses. NOSB also decided to recommend removal of carrageenan from the National List. Upon approval and completion of USDA rulemaking, carrageenan will no longer be allowed in organic food products. The outcomes of the meeting reaffirm the "no growth trend" that we've seen on the National List for the last decade, with NOSB denying 9 petitions to add synthetic inputs to the National List. Additionally, NOSB extended a huge thanks to 5 members who completed their 5 year terms, and welcomed the 5 new appointments for 2017. For a complete run-down of votes, proposals, and discussion documents, take a look at [OTA's NOSB Summary Report](#). Live coverage of the meeting is also provided on [OTA's Twitter Account](#).

[Submit comments on enforcement of misleading organic claims](#)

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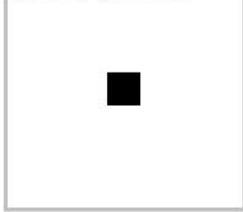


The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has [released a study](#) on consumer perceptions of organic claims, and hosted [a roundtable discussion](#) with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help the two agencies better understand how consumers perceive "organic" claims made on non-agricultural products such as personal care products and textiles. FTC welcomes [written comments](#), including further evidence of consumer perceptions. The [comment period](#) for written comments will remain open until December 1. OTA attended the roundtable, conducted a study on consumer beliefs of organic claims, and convened a task force to help shape comments to FTC on how to best address consumer deception and education. [Read OTA's Draft Comments](#). To submit feedback on these comments, contact [Gwendolyn Wyard](#), OTA's Vice President of Regulatory and Technical Affairs, as soon as possible.

The Organic Center

MOSES call for organic research posters

moses_posters

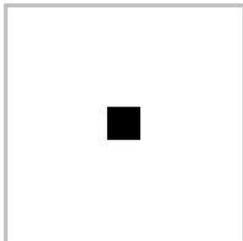


The Organic Research Forum at the 2017 MOSES Conference (Feb. 23-25) includes a poster session documenting completed and ongoing research projects related to organic agriculture. Researchers, academic faculty and staff, graduate/undergraduate students and farmer researchers may submit poster proposals, due Dec. 16, 2016. Additional information

and the [full call for posters is available online](#). Dr. Jessica Shade, Director of Science Programs at The Organic Center serves on the planning committee.

Of Note

Vetters create non-profit Grain Place Foundation



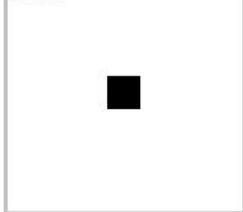
One of Nebraska's pioneering families in organic farming has formed a new non-profit foundation to advance farming in mutually beneficial relationship with nature and communities. Heirs of the late Don and Alice Vetter, who founded the Grain Place Farm, a 280-acre organic farm in Marquette, NE, have formed the Grain Place Foundation to engage in research, education and other activities. The Vetter family

will transfer the majority of stock in Grain Place Farm—a member of the Organic Trade Association—to the new foundation. "The Foundation will enable Grain Place Farm to continue as a pioneering organic farm after our generation is gone and expand its educational and scientific work to encourage the vision of farming that has guided our family," said Jay Vetter, Founding Executive Director of the Foundation. In 2016, Dave Vetter was awarded OTA's Growing the Organic Industry Award.

Canadian News

Feedback sought on Canadian organic research needs

oacc



The Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC) is looking to collect feedback on the Canadian organic research needs and priorities. Coordinating a cross-Canada research needs and priorities assessment process on behalf of the Research Needs Task Force of the Organic Value Chain Roundtable, OACC [wants to hear from you](#). The information collected will be used to guide

organic research priorities to direct organic funding (including, but not limited to, the Organic Science Cluster program). COTA urges all members to participate in this process.

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As-it-happens update · November 23, 2016

NEWS

[National Organic Board punts hydroponic decision back to committee](#)

TheProduceNews.com

By a vote of 10-4 the National Organic Standards Board sent the decision ... Since the **USDA's National Organic Program** began, however, organic ...

[USDA Removes Carrageenan from National List for Organic Foods](#) - WholeFoods Magazine
[Full Coverage](#)



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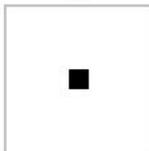
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NEWS FROM THE CORNUCOPIA INSTITUTE

NOVEMBER
26, 2016

NEWS FROM THE CORNUCOPIA INSTITUTE

Carrageenan Voted Out of Organic Food

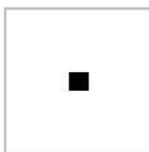


Source: Jose Luis Britz

After six years of Cornucopia's research, advocacy, and petitioning, the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) [voted last week to remove carrageenan](#), a potent inflammatory agent and possible carcinogen, from the National List for use in organics. This is a huge win! A special thank you is due to the 47,000 Cornucopia members and supporters who signed the petition and shared their personal stories with the board about how carrageenan has made them ill. It will still be some time before the additive is fully out of the organic food chain, and in the meantime, consumers can consult Cornucopia's [buyer's guide](#) to find carrageenan-free products.

[READ MORE](#)

Corporate Interests on the NOSB Wash Their Hands of Organic Soil



NOSB discusses hydroponics

Awash in alleged [conflicts of interest](#), the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) ignored farmer board member [Emily Oakley's request](#) for an immediate vote on hydroponics and chose instead to send the issue back to the crops subcommittee to differentiate between growing bare roots in solution and "container growing" (plants rooted in inert media, fed entirely by solution). Board member Francis Thicke, along with Cornucopia and others, argued that these are the same process. Without success, Oakley and Thicke attempted to include language in the final non-binding resolution to prohibit soil-less hydroponic systems that are wholly dependent on liquid fertility inputs. Follow Cornucopia for future opportunities to influence this process.

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Wildlife as Part of Farm Biodiversity

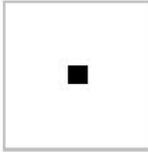


Source: Adobe Stock

Cornucopia's Marie Burcham, JD, writes that wildlife can enhance, and even increase, food production. While organic farmers cannot use synthetic pesticides to control rodents and insects, they can work towards balance of predator and prey populations within existing farm ecosystems. Coyotes and snakes feed on rodents and rabbits, and barn swallows efficiently hunt insects. Burrowing moles and mice are actually beneficial to pastureland and open spaces. Coexisting with these wild creatures requires diligent farm management practices and containment systems, but sharing the workload with them ultimately builds a vibrant ecosystem.

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Danone/WhiteWave Merger Delayed

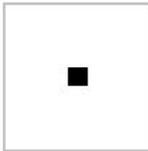


Source: Yeonsang

WhiteWave projects its proposed merger with France's Groupe Danone (Dannon) will likely be delayed until the first quarter of 2017, pending regulatory approval. Cornucopia called on the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to scrutinize this deal as Dannon seeks to acquire WhiteWave Foods. WhiteWave owns the Horizon Organic and Wallaby organic yogurt brands, and the merger would give Dannon an unprecedented share of the organic dairy market in the United States. [Read more about Cornucopia's opposition](#) to this merger, and sign the [petition](#) asking the DOJ and the FTC to carefully examine the proposal.

[READ MORE](#)

New Technology May Revolutionize Egg Industry



Source: Kabsik Park

As consumers become more interested in where their food comes from, many express concerns about the fate of male chicks in the egg business. Most are incubated in large hatcheries where they are slaughtered at birth because they will never lay eggs and are not considered ideal meat birds. Vital Farms has recently developed the technology to determine the sex of the egg on the day it is laid. Male eggs can then be sold in the marketplace, making hatcheries money while preventing the killing of newborn chicks. The technology is slated to be available commercially within a year.

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is a nonprofit organization engaged in research and educational activities supporting the ecological principles and economic wisdom underlying sustainable and organic agriculture. Through research and investigations on agricultural and food issues, The Cornucopia Institute provides needed information to family farmers, consumers, stakeholders involved in the good food movement, and the media.

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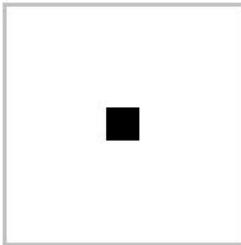
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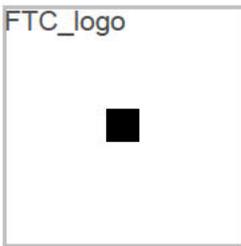
Government Affairs & Policy

Last call for OTA's Farm Bill Survey



We are pleased to announce that the OTA Farm Bill survey now has over 500 respondents from a diverse group of organic stakeholders! Thanks to all who have already submitted feedback, and to the many partner organizations that have helped us share the survey. If you have not yet weighed in, please do so before **the survey closes on December 1**. [Take the survey now.](#)

Comment by Thursday on organic claims enforcement



The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has [released a study](#) on consumer perceptions of organic claims, and hosted [a roundtable discussion](#) with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to help the two agencies better understand how consumers perceive "organic" claims made on non-agricultural products such as personal care products and textiles. FTC welcomes [written comments](#), including further evidence of consumer perceptions. The [comment period](#) for written comments remains open until December 1. OTA attended the roundtable, conducted a study on consumer beliefs of organic claims, and convened a task force to help shape comments to FTC on how to best address consumer deception and education. [Read OTA's Draft Comments](#). If you need assistance submitting comments, contact [Gwendolyn Wyard](#), OTA's Vice President of Regulatory and Technical Affairs.

Submit comments on animal-raising claims

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is accepting comments through December 5 on an updated version of its

comment



compliance guideline on documentation needed to support animal-raising claims on product labels that must be submitted for Agency approval before they can be used on product labels. The updated guideline reflects FSIS's current position and procedures for reviewing animal-raising claims, and includes explanations of animal-raising claims that FSIS may approve and the types of supporting documentation that the Agency requires to be submitted to support these claims. [Read more](#). Written comments can be submitted electronically through [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) and should be identified with the document number.

OTA's Fall 2016 NOSB Report

nosb



The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) recently met in St. Louis, MO, for its Fall 2016 meeting. Over the course of three days, NOSB, under the leadership of Chair Tracy Favre, voted or took action on 19 proposals and 15 Sunset 2018 inputs, and evaluated 8 discussion documents and reports. NOSB received 2,789 written comments prior to the meeting and listened to oral testimony from approximately 200 commenters (over 13 hours of oral comments) on a wide range of issues. Commenters provided wide-ranging perspectives on a number of topics including hydroponics, carrageenan, and how to ensure organic remains non-GMO as seed breeding technologies advance. For a complete run-down of votes, proposals, and discussion documents, take a look at [OTA's NOSB Summary Report](#). Live coverage of the meeting is also provided on [OTA's Twitter Account](#). Contact [Gwendolyn Wyard](#) if you have any questions.

OTA at Work For You

Talking organic at influencer conference

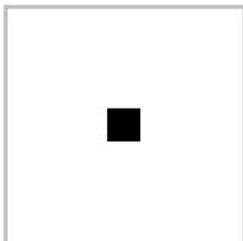
shiftcon



The Organic Trade Association and The Organic Center will sponsor an Organic Track including two sessions focused on the health and environmental benefits of organic at the [ShiftCon Conference](#) in New Orleans this Thursday through Saturday. The sessions will be moderated by OTA's CEO Laura Batcha and presenters will include The Organic Center scientists Dr. Jessica Shade and Dr. Tracy Misiewicz, as well as Dr. Asa Bradman, a University of California Berkeley scientist and Board member of The Organic Center. ShiftCon is the only social media conference focusing on food, wellness, health and the environment. The conference blends workshops, networking, parties, and intense collaboration of change-makers, with over 500 leading social media influencers attending.

The Organic Center

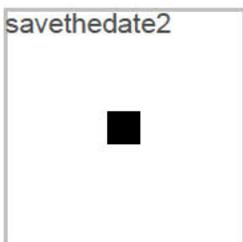
The Organic Center celebrates #GivingTuesday



Did you know that #GivingTuesday is a global day dedicated to giving back? Fueled by the power of social media and collaboration, today kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving. Join us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) this #GivingTuesday! We are sharing some of our research on soil, water and pollinators. As a gift to you, we are also [sharing a video](#) with

easy step-by-step instructions to make a delicious organic pie. We hope you will consider [supporting The Organic Center's important research](#).

Looking ahead: The Center's annual Benefit Dinner



Meet old friends and make new ones, be inspired and entertained, and enjoy a fantastic organic meal—all in support of The Organic Center. The Organic Center's 14th Annual Benefit Dinner will be held Thursday, March 9, 2017, from 6 to 11 p.m. at the Anaheim Marriott in conjunction with Natural Products Expo West. You can count on a thought-provoking program highlighting what science says about the

benefits of organic. Returning chef Matthew Raiford is planning a menu that will delight your senses. Learn about The Center's important work to facilitate research and communicate credible, evidence-based science on the environmental and health benefits of organic food and farming. Contact [Amy Bovaird](#) now to become [a Sponsor](#) or to [reserve a VIP Table](#). Individual tickets will go on sale in January.

International Trade

Save the date: Webinar on international organic product prices



On December 21 at 2 p.m. EST, OTA's International team will present analysis on organic product prices from store shelves around the world using a digital photo library gathered in country by OTA staff. The analysis includes information on over 2,000 products. We will also share the 2016 U.S. Organic Worldwide Program Calendar. [Register now](#).

Sign Up for the Buyers Mission at Expo West

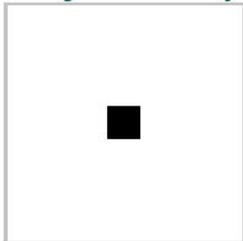
Meet with qualified international buyers off the hectic trade show floor at Natural Products Expo West. OTA will once again host several international buyers from around the world at Expo West 2017. [Sign up](#) to receive buyer profiles, contact information, and

foreignbuyers

have up to ten one-on-one meetings with organic-focused buyers interested in USDA certified organic products. Participation fee is \$100. This is a great opportunity to showcase your product to multiple export markets without leaving the United States. Buyers from Europe, Asia, Middle East and Latin America will be present.

Opportunities

Get your company in the Organic Report

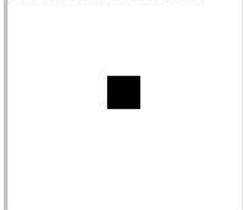


The Organic Trade Association is now beginning production of its Winter 2017 *Organic Report*—OTA's print and digital magazine—for release in January. Want your company's new products or milestones included? Submit items to [Barbara Haumann](#). Note: there is still room for additional new product descriptions. Interested in placing an ad? [See advertising rates and details](#). The deadline for

both editorial copy and ad placement is this Thursday, December 1.

Annual Fund: Get involved!

annualfund2017



As the New Year approaches, the Organic Trade Association is in the process of launching its 2017 Annual Fund campaign. Each year, an amazing and committed group of Annual Fund Host Committee volunteers reach out to hundreds of OTA members and ask for additional funds to support the work that OTA does on the organic industry's behalf. With the uncertainty that exists following

this year's election, OTA will call on its membership to unite behind our common goals, now more than ever. **The volunteer structure is the key to success of the Annual Fund.** Historically, the vast majority of donations are secured when an industry peer requests the support. One of the many benefits of becoming a Host Committee Member is the opportunity for your organization to move up from its 2016 level of support to a higher one. We hope that you consider joining us this year. Please [contact us](#) if you wish to help advance organic in this way.

Canadian News

Sign up at COTA Organic Pavilion for SIAL 2017 Show

COTA will host the Organic Pavilion at the 2017 SIAL Canada trade show taking place May 2-4 at Toronto's Enercare Centre.

SialCanada2016



Come meet the players in the retail, food-service and food-processing sectors from Canada, the United States, and 60 other countries. COTA members are eligible for an exclusive 18.5% discount. [Register now.](#)

Support COTA's 2017 Annual Fund

cota



Become an investor in the future of organic by supporting the Canada Organic Trade Association's 2017 Annual Fund. Your investment supports COTA's key initiatives and enables COTA to lead the organic conversation on your behalf through its government relations, consumer education and media outreach initiatives. [Pledge your support for COTA today!](#)

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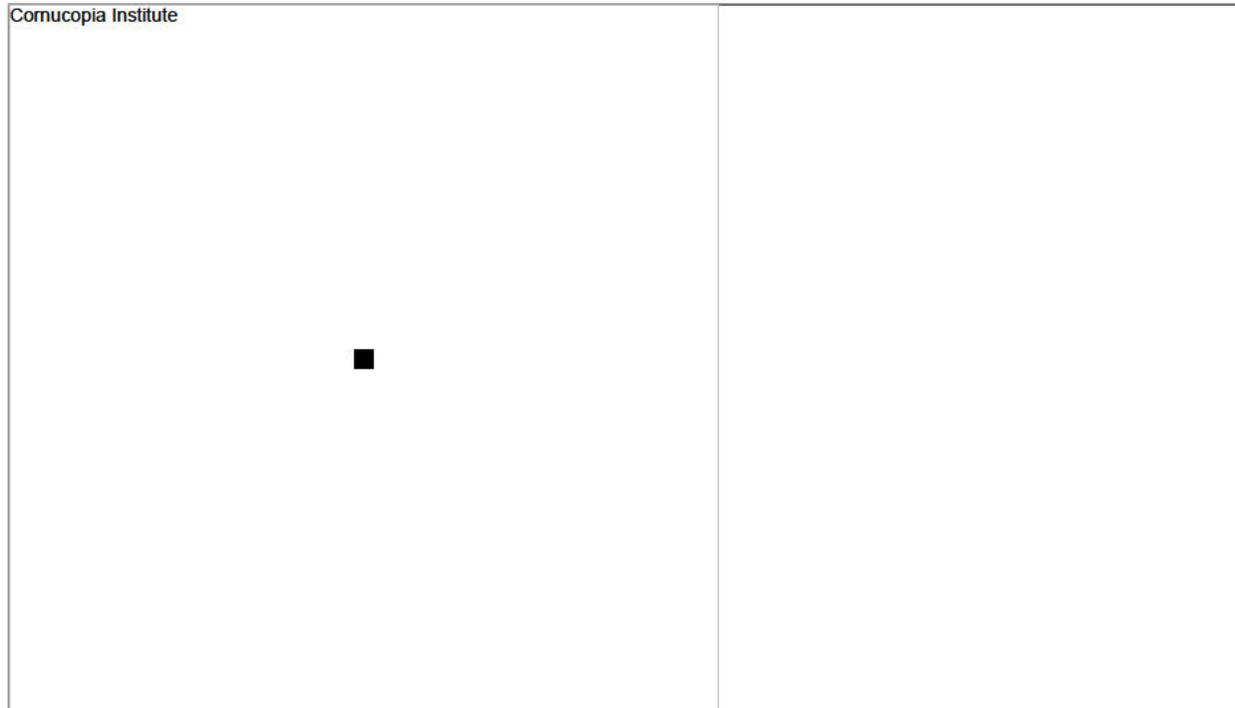
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From: The Cornucopia Institute
To: [Tucker, Jennifer - AMS](#)
Subject: [CAUTION: Suspicious Link] How much do you care about organic/ local farms and food?
Date: Tuesday, December 6, 2016 7:02:05 PM

PROCEED WITH CAUTION: This message triggered warnings of **potentially malicious web content**. Evaluate this email by considering whether you are expecting the message, along with inspection for suspicious links.

Questions: SpamAbuse@wdc.usda.gov



DECEMBER
6, 2016

Dear Friends,

WOW!

I was blown away by the outpouring of generosity from people who deeply care about the best food and best farms across the country — Giving Tuesday set a new one-day record for Cornucopia. Seeing all the online donations come in is a big morale boost for our entire staff — we are humbled!

With about a dozen staff members here at Cornucopia, it's exciting for us to connect with all of the passionate advocates across the country who join with us in this work morally and financially.

From all of us—a huge THANK YOU!

Like my good friend, Cornucopia's co-director Will Fantle, said last week: "They may have the lobbyists, but we have the people power!"

It's important to remember that we're part of a movement, *the good food movement*. In this spirit, I want to share with you a few of the comments that long-time and brand new Cornucopia members wrote in with their donations last Tuesday:

- "We have a Certified Organic Produce farm & grow for a local co-op. We also have a farm market on the farm. So keep up the good work. In the end it supports us and our market." - *Ohio member*
- "I wouldn't know where to go to find what is REALLY happening with organic production if it weren't for Cornucopia Thank you!" - *Alaska member*
- "I am so thankful for your victory over carrageenan." - *California member*
- "As a mother to two young children, I am passionate about safe, organic food. Thank you for the work you do to protect the integrity of organics, and thanks for supporting organic farmers!" - *Maryland member*

I know you care about local and organic food and farms, so if you're not yet a member, [please join us](#). Or if you are a member, **please encourage your**

friends to join us by forwarding this message! Members directly support policy and informative marketplace work that defends authentic organic and local food and farming, plus they receive action alerts and a quarterly hardcopy newsletter full of interesting original stories from our great staff.

In gratitude for your support,



Mark A. Kastel
Codirector



P.S. If you didn't have a chance to donate on Giving Tuesday, I hope you'll start this festive month off by making a donation today, in any amount, to defend the integrity of organic food in support of family-scale farmers. [Leave us a comment on the donate page](#)—we read them all!

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The Cornucopia Institute

is a nonprofit organization engaged in research and educational activities supporting the ecological principles and economic wisdom underlying sustainable and organic agriculture. Through research and investigations on agricultural and food issues, The Cornucopia Institute provides needed information to family farmers, consumers, stakeholders involved in the good food movement, and the media.

P.O. Box 126 Cornucopia, Wisconsin 54827
TEL: 608-625-2000 | FAX: 866-861-2214 | www.cornucopia.org



From: The Cornucopia Institute
To: [Tucker, Jennifer - AMS](#)
Subject: [CAUTION: Suspicious Link]A CORNUCOPIA OF NEWS: Protect Yourself from Gut Poison, Cornucopia Asks OIG to Investigate "Outlaw" USDA Program, and more...
Date: Sunday, December 11, 2016 11:01:45 AM

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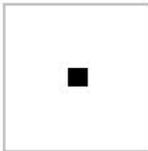
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PROMOTING ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR FAMILY-SCALE FARMING
NEWS FROM THE CORNUCOPIA INSTITUTE

DECEMBER
11, 2016

NEWS FROM THE CORNUCOPIA INSTITUTE

Cornucopia Requests Audit of National Organic Program

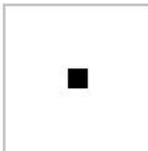


The Cornucopia Institute has requested an independent audit of the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) by the USDA's Office of Inspector General. Cornucopia alleges that the National Organic Program has failed to enforce the laws governing organic agriculture thereby allowing multinational corporate agribusinesses to squeeze out family-scale farmers, compromising the integrity of the organic label. "By failing to vigorously enforce the organic standards, USDA political appointees and NOP management have betrayed ethical family farmers and businesses, along with consumer trust," said Mark A. Kastel, Cornucopia's codirector.

Cornucopia's audit request to the Office of the Inspector General also asked them to look into financial mismanagement, conflicts of interest, and illegal withholding of public documents by the National Organic Program.

[READ MORE](#)

Bathed in Love at Butterworks

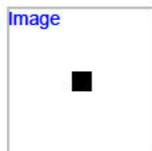


Anne and Jack Lazor

Jack and Anne Lazor have been farming in Vermont since the late 1970s, when they processed milk from their two family cows on the stovetop in their farmhouse kitchen. Today, their [Butterworks Farm](#) yogurt is well known throughout New England and holds the coveted 5-spoon rating on Cornucopia's [yogurt scorecard](#). "Developing the whole farm organism is the most important thing here," says Jack. The Lazors have spent decades feeding the soil, and they have kindly shared their story with Cornucopia on [our website](#).

[READ MORE](#)

Have a Cup of Carrageenan?



Source: Rick Ostwell

Fewer hours of light and cold temperatures encourage the drinking of creamy beverages like hot chocolate and eggnog, many of which contain carrageenan. Petitions signed by thousands of good food advocates, along with Cornucopia's research and advocacy resulted in the National Organic Standards Board vote to [remove carrageenan](#) from use in certified organic food. Still, it will take some time before the additive is fully out of the organic food chain, and in the meantime, Cornucopia offers consumers a [buyer's guide](#) to help find carrageenan-free products to share with their loved ones and friends during the festive season.

From: McEvoy, Miles - AMS
To: [Zuck, Penelope - AMS](#)
Subject: FW: Year End Organic News
Date: Sunday, December 11, 2016 11:19:03 AM

Did you see the NRCS organic champion announcement?
Interesting

From: National Organic Coalition [mailto:info@nationalorganiccoalition.org]
Sent: Wednesday, December 07, 2016 4:23 PM
To: McEvoy, Miles - AMS <Miles.McEvoy@ams.usda.gov>
Subject: Year End Organic News

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National Organic Coalition Participates in St. Louis NOSB Meeting

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) made key decisions about the future of organic at their November meeting in St. Louis. The NOSB voted to prohibit carrageenan as an ingredient in organic foods and unanimously passed a recommendation to help clarify which new genetic engineering techniques are prohibited in organic.

 NOC delivered [oral and written testimony](#) supporting these actions. Nearly 200 people presented oral testimony at the NOSB meeting, including 17 members of the National Organic Coalition.

Photo of Kiki Hubbard from Organic Seed Alliance expressing support for moving forward with a proposal to clarify which genetic engineering techniques are prohibited in organic.

The board did not make any decisions at this meeting about hydroponic, aquaponic, or aeroponic production. They sent a proposal on this topic back to the crops subcommittee for additional work and passed a resolution stating that current NOSB members believe production systems with water-based substrates should be prohibited from organic certification.

NOC Hosts Pre-NOSB Meeting



Nearly 80 members of the organic community gathered in St. Louis for NOC's "Pre-NOSB" meeting on Tuesday, November 15 in advance of the National Organic Standards Board meeting. We discussed what a new administration means for organic, growing domestic production of organic, organic imports, the importance of organic seed, and other critical organic integrity issues.

Senior Policy Staff Member to Take Helm as Policy Director for NSAC



The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) announced the appointment of Greg Fogel as the Coalition's next Policy Director, effective January 3, 2017. Together with Jeremy Emmi, NSAC's Managing Director since 2013, Fogel will help lead the organization into the future.

Read the [full press release](#).

Message from IFOAM – Organics International



IFOAM's Organic 3.0 initiative is about bringing organic out of its current niche into the mainstream and positioning organic systems as part of the multiple solutions needed to solve the tremendous challenges faced by our planet and our species.

IFOAM has received hundreds of comments, ideas, questions, critiques and praise for Organic 3.0 following first publication at the Organic Expo in Gyeongsang, Korea at the end of 2015. This input has resulted in a [revised version of this publication](#).

The Organic 3.0 process isn't over yet. Organics 3.0 will be discussed further in November 2017 in New Delhi at the IFOAM General Assembly meeting.

Organic Vegetable Breeding Priorities Survey

Deadline: December 10th



Organic Seed Alliance has created a survey designed to better understand plant breeding priorities for organic vegetable growers.

Completing this should only take ten to fifteen minutes of your time and your input will directly influence trailing and breeding programs to enhance organic seed options in the future.

[Link to Survey](#)

NRCS to Appoint Organic Champions in Each State



NRCS has released an announcement informing states of the option to appoint an organic champion to better assist organic producers and transitioning producers in accessing NRCS programs and technical assistance.

[See the Full Announcement](#)

Help Strengthen the Future of Organic!



The unified voice of the National Organic Coalition members is one of the ONLY national efforts to work comprehensively on both legislative and regulatory issues that affect organic production from the perspective of farmers, consumers, environmentalists, and business.

[Donate Online](#)

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From: The Cornucopia Institute
To: [Tucker, Jennifer - AMS](#)
Subject: [CAUTION: Suspicious Link]A CORNUCOPIA OF NEWS: Big Victory for Organic Integrity, More Challenges Ahead
Date: Saturday, November 26, 2016 7:01:51 AM

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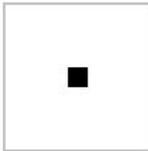
PROMOTING ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR FAMILY-SCALE FARMING

NEWS FROM THE CORNUCOPIA INSTITUTE

NOVEMBER
26, 2016

NEWS FROM THE CORNUCOPIA INSTITUTE

Carrageenan Voted Out of Organic Food

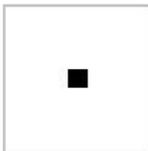


Source: [Jose Luis Britz](#)

After six years of Cornucopia's research, advocacy, and petitioning, the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) [voted last week to remove carrageenan](#), a potent inflammatory agent and possible carcinogen, from the National List for use in organics. This is a huge win! A special thank you is due to the 47,000 Cornucopia members and supporters who signed the petition and shared their personal stories with the board about how carrageenan has made them ill. It will still be some time before the additive is fully out of the organic food chain, and in the meantime, consumers can consult Cornucopia's [buyer's guide](#) to find carrageenan-free products.

[READ MORE](#)

Corporate Interests on the NOSB Wash Their Hands of Organic Soil

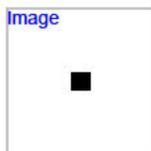


NOSB discusses hydroponics

Awash in alleged [conflicts of interest](#), the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) ignored farmer board member [Emily Oakley's request](#) for an immediate vote on hydroponics and chose instead to send the issue back to the crops subcommittee to differentiate between growing bare roots in solution and "container growing" (plants rooted in inert media, fed entirely by solution). Board member Francis Thicke, along with Cornucopia and others, argued that these are the same process. Without success, Oakley and Thicke attempted to include language in the final non-binding resolution to prohibit soil-less hydroponic systems that are wholly dependent on liquid fertility inputs. Follow Cornucopia for future opportunities to influence this process.

[READ MORE](#)

Wildlife as Part of Farm Biodiversity

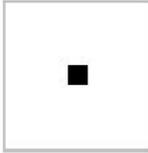


Source: [Adobe Stock](#)

Cornucopia's Marie Burcham, JD, writes that wildlife can enhance, and even increase, food production. While organic farmers cannot use synthetic pesticides to control rodents and insects, they can work towards balance of predator and prey populations within existing farm ecosystems. Coyotes and snakes feed on rodents and rabbits, and barn swallows efficiently hunt insects. Burrowing moles and mice are actually beneficial to pastureland and open spaces. Coexisting with these wild creatures requires diligent farm management practices and containment systems, but sharing the workload with them ultimately builds a vibrant ecosystem.

[READ MORE](#)

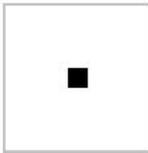
Danone/WhiteWave Merger Delayed



A Washington state judge has imposed a historic \$18 million fine on the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA) for [violating campaign finance laws](#). In 2013 the GMA set up a special fund to conceal corporate sources of money spent to narrowly defeat Initiative 522, Washington's GMO labeling measure. The fine for them is merely a cost of doing business. In 2015 alone, the GMA [spent over \\$10 million](#) lobbying to defeat GMO labeling. The GMA has announced its intention to appeal the judge's decision.

[READ MORE](#)

Over Half of Americans Say Organic is Better for Your Health



A new Pew Research Center survey finds that 55% of Americans believe organically grown produce is healthier than conventionally grown, and 39% see health risks in genetically modified foods. There was no significant relationship between these findings and political affiliation, education, income, geography, or having children, suggesting that good food issues are a unifying force across the country. In fact, even when asked about all the conflicting news reports and studies about health and food, 72% of U.S. adults agreed that, "the core ideas about how to eat healthy are pretty well understood."

Source: [Zoe](#)

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The Cornucopia Institute

is a nonprofit organization engaged in research and educational activities supporting the ecological principles and economic wisdom underlying sustainable and organic agriculture. Through research and investigations on agricultural and food issues, The Cornucopia Institute provides needed information to family farmers, consumers, stakeholders involved in the good food movement, and the media.

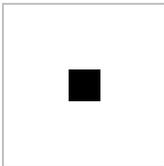
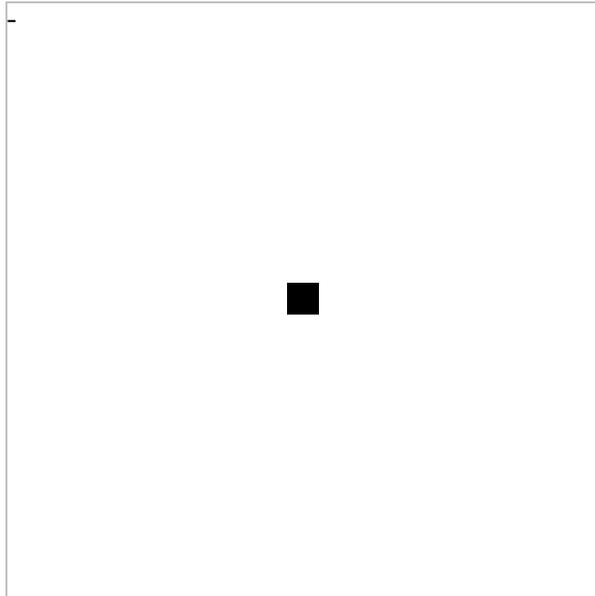
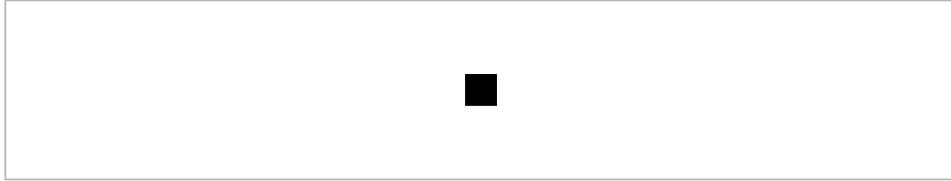
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TEL: 608-625-2000 | FAX: 866-861-2214 | www.cornucopia.org



From: newsletter@organic-market.eu
To: [Guo, Ruihong - AMS](#)
Subject: [CAUTION: Suspicious Link]Russia: Successful event for beauty bloggers at InterCharm
Date: Thursday, December 22, 2016 3:24:58 AM

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Dear readers,

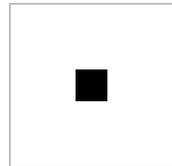
The international community of beauty industry met in Moscow for the largest perfumery and cosmetics exhibition, the InterCharm 2016. It was visited by 69 864 unique visitors within the 4 days. This is definitely the most professional place to be for all cosmetics players and their fans in Russia. But what about natural and organic cosmetics at the fair? Dr.Kirsten Hüttner, former consultant for natural and organic cosmetics and editor-in-chief of the online magazine *ekokosmetika.ru* reports from the "green side" of the show and two seminars.

Please find more informations on our [website](#) and continue to read the details there.

Russia: Successful event for beauty bloggers at InterCharm

International News

NOSB does not allow Carrageenan any longer



BNN: "We're doing organics because we don't want pesticides in the environment!"

Glyphosate: EFSA shares raw data from risk assessment

BNN: "We're doing organics because we don't want pesticides in the environment!"

Latest topics of the week

Kenya: organic farming is productive and resource-conserving

Refugees welcome!

Pural: "active for 20 years in the wholefood industry"

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Interview with IFOAM President André Leu: ["We must join forces"](#)

[Monsanto Tribunal & People's Assembly The Hague](#)

Watch an interview with Zhou Zeijang and Markus Arbenz: [Organic in China](#)

and a documentation about [China's Organic Tea - A Journey to Yunnan](#)

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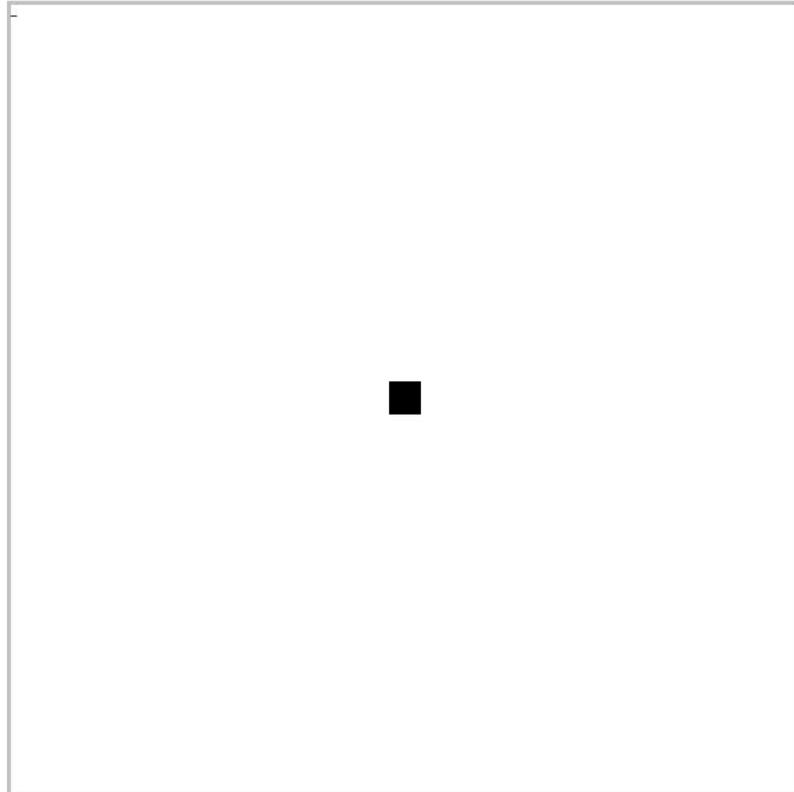
For suggestions and wishes to organic-market.info, please visit www.bio-markt.info or contact mail@bio-markt.info

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From: The Cornucopia Institute
To: [Tucker, Jennifer - AMS](#)
Subject: [CAUTION: Suspicious Link] Are You Being Taken Advantage of in the Grocery Aisle?
Date: Thursday, December 29, 2016 5:01:28 PM

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Cornucopia Institute

DECEMBER
29, 2016

Dear good food advocates,

Instead of a grand 2016 overview as the year closes, I'd rather ask you about your food shopping habits.

Yes, food shopping. You probably buy food pretty regularly (unless you've got a really diverse farm and a very well stocked pantry). You care about supporting family farmers, humane animal husbandry, and the environment—so you likely buy organics pretty regularly too.

And, if you're like me, you might bristle at the idea of being called a consumer. You are not just a consumer. But your purchasing has power—there is no denying it.

Cornucopia's strategy has long been to apply policy pressure by asking you to take action like commenting on organic animal welfare standards or writing a letter to stop a giant dairy company merger AND to apply marketplace pressure by helping you to shop with knowledge.

Vote with your voice and vote with your forks!
Policy Watchdogging + Marketplace Pressure = Power

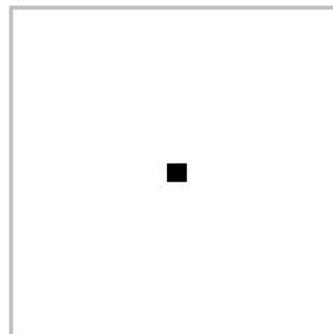
Your power as a consumer is needed now more than ever to protect organics! The public/private regulatory process is so broken that our path to victory traverses grocery store aisles more often than halls of power in Washington lately.

That's why in 2017 Cornucopia is renewing our focus on supporting you to exert marketplace power.

[Please help us ensure that organics remains a haven for real, nutritious food that also supports the land and farmers, and make a donation to support this vital marketplace work in 2017.](#)

Farmers make up less than 2% of the U.S. population, organic farmers even fewer.

I hope you see why it's so important for organic and ecological farmers and their customers to band together to make our voices heard in policy forums and in the marketplace.



I use Cornucopia's scorecards at my local co-op in Viroqua to support the best organic food brands. I hope you use them too to exert some power while you shop. — Mark

Cornucopia's reports and scorecards on [organic eggs](#), [dairy](#), [yogurt](#), [breakfast cereal](#), [soy](#), [pet food](#), and [food additives](#), help you make wise choices while shopping. And when you **vote with your wallet**, that helps all of us, as a group, put pressure on industry and policy to support authentic organic farms and ethical food companies.

As I've said before, together, we can do this! Thank you for joining with me by using our scorecards to shop and by donating whatever you can to support his work in 2017 — and look for new scorecards in a new format next year.

Ever forward,

Mark Kastel
Codirector
The Cornucopia Institute

P.S. It's natural this time of year to want to take stock. There are many things I'd like to tell you about—finally getting a harmful food additive out of organics (carrageenan), lawsuits against the USDA's secrecy, the slow down we caused in the Dannon/WhiteWave merger—but you can read about all of that in my [end of year letter \(PDF\)](#) to members. **I hope you'll see what an impact your donations make.** Thank you!



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P.O. Box 126 Cornucopia, Wisconsin 54827
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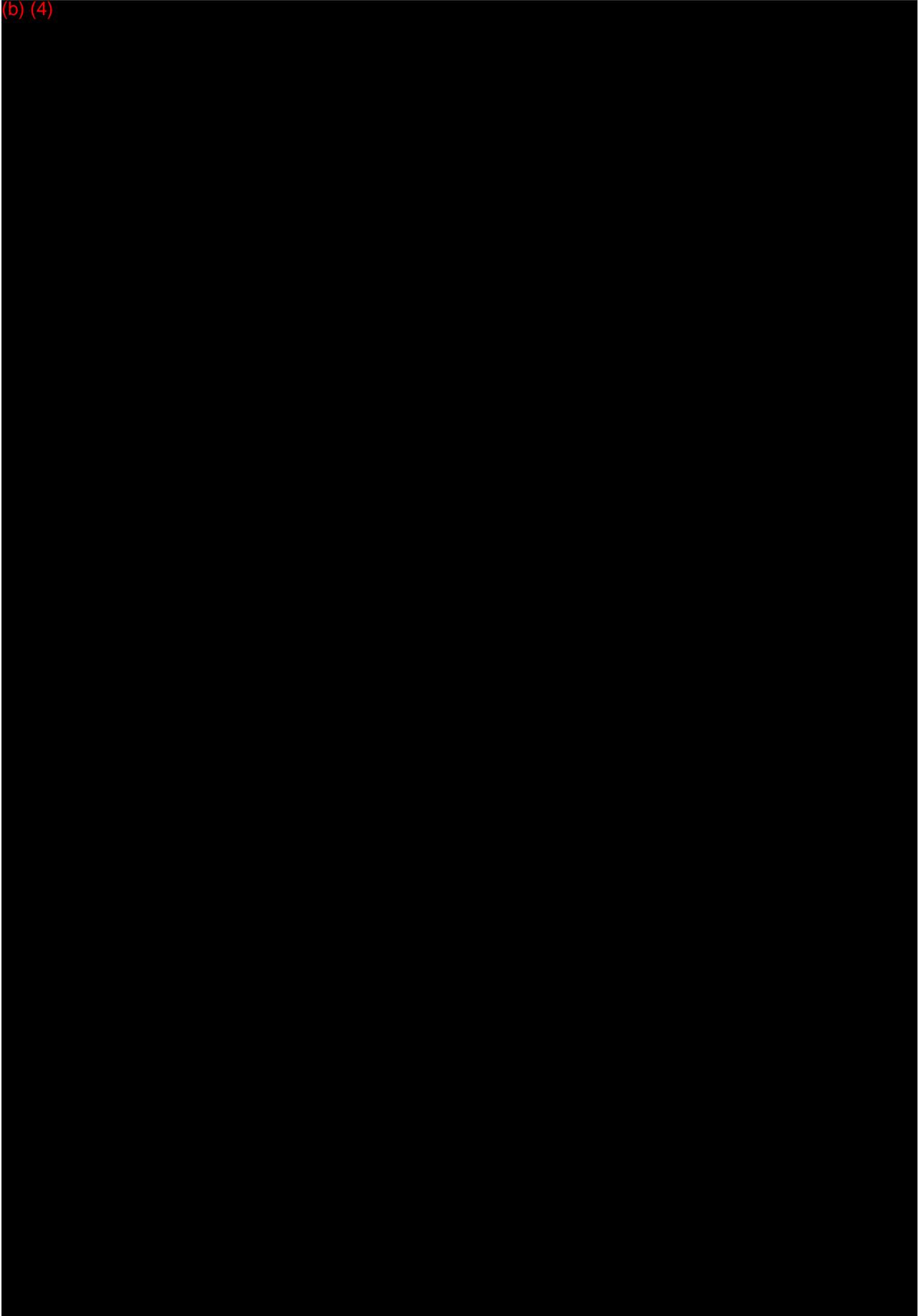
From: Starmer, Elanor - AMS
To: [McEvoy, Miles - AMS](#)
Cc: [Rakola, Betsy - AMS](#)
Subject: FW: Nutrition block grants, fights over Obama food policies among top predictions for 2017
Date: Thursday, December 29, 2016 9:46:30 AM

Note NOP component below...

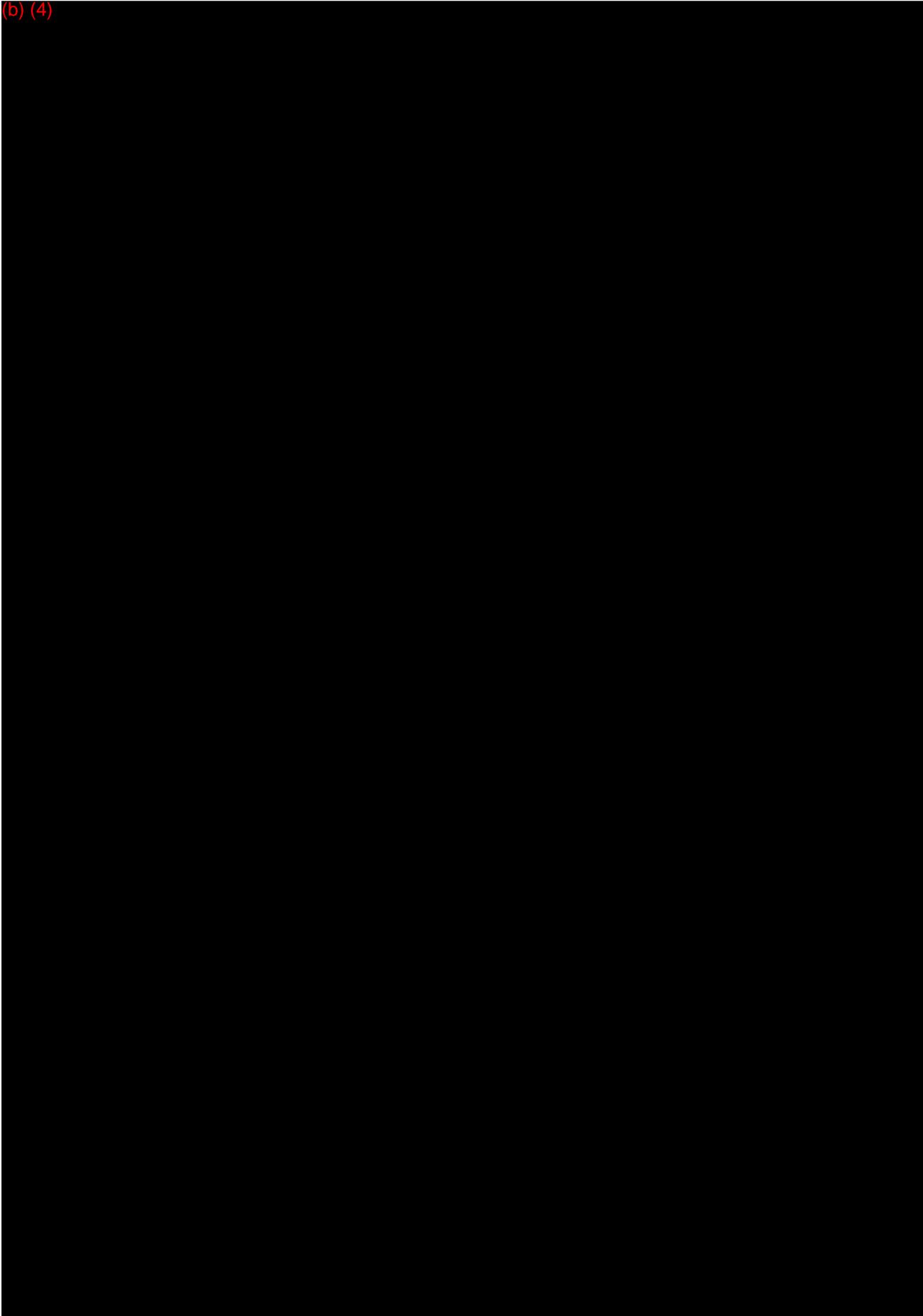
From: POLITICO Pro Agriculture
Sent: Thursday, December 29, 2016 11:27:40 AM (UTC+00:00) Monrovia, Reykjavik
To: Chandran, Kumar - OSEC
Subject: Nutrition block grants, fights over Obama food policies among top predictions for 2017

(b) (4)

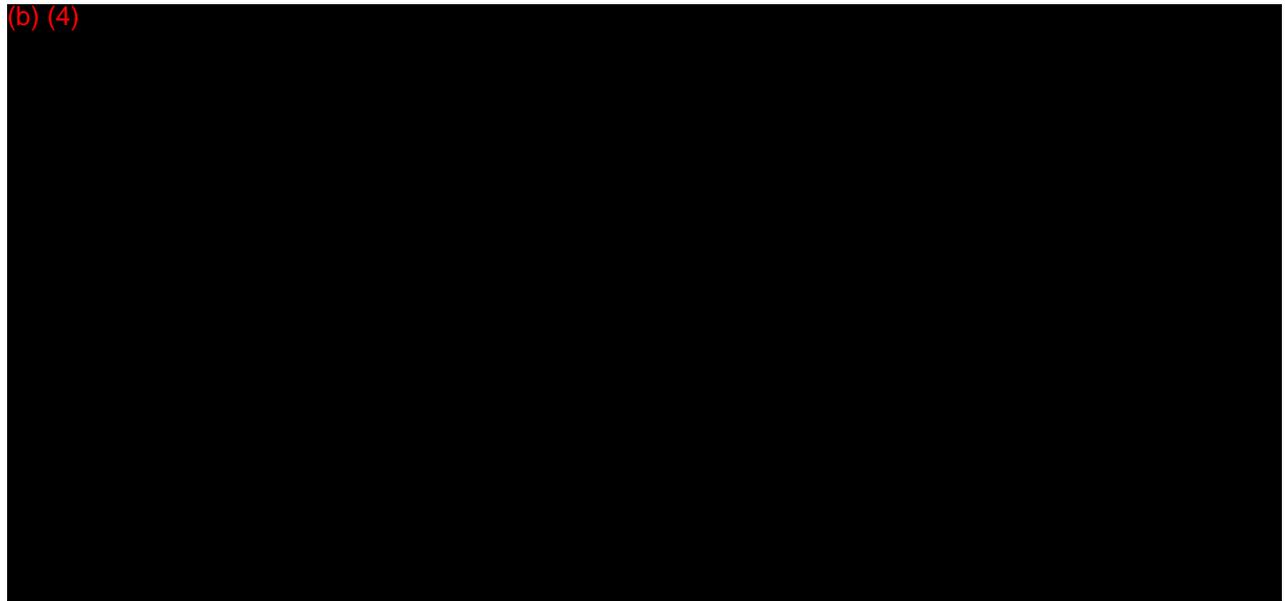
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To: [Tucker Jennifer - AMS](#)
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Date: Saturday, January 7, 2017 2:02:25 AM

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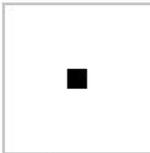
NEWS FROM THE CORNUCOPIA INSTITUTE



NEWS FROM THE CORNUCOPIA INSTITUTE

JANUARY
7, 2017

Join Cornucopia's Cofounder in Dallas Next Week

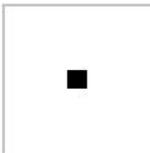


Mark Kastel

If you are in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, you're invited to join Mark Kastel for an informal talk about organic food, health, and agricultural policy on Saturday, January 14 at 5:30 PM at [Smoke restaurant in Dallas](#). Mark will be in town for the [2017 Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association Conference](#) in Mesquite. He will present the banquet keynote on Friday, January 13, and will lead a workshop on Saturday morning. There is still time to register to attend the banquet and/or the full conference. RSVP for the Saturday evening reception at Smoke by contacting Jason Cole at (608) 625-2000 or cole@cornucopia.org.

[READ MORE](#)

Seed Patents Slow Breeding



Source: Pam Corey

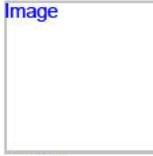
Seed patents allow breeders to own intellectual property rights not only to varieties of plants, but also to plant traits like coloration or resistance to a particular disease, making it illegal for farmers to save seed to plant the next season. There is a growing movement of "open source" seed breeders working with the genetic material left in the public commons. Their work is especially important now, given changing weather patterns and decreasing biodiversity in agricultural fields.

[READ MORE](#)

Biotech Industry Scientists in Sheep's Clothing

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine help guide U.S. government policy, often through written reports from its scientific committees. Seven of the 13 members of the National Academies' biotech panel have alleged potential conflicts of interest. The study director who identified the panel's scientists, Douglas Friedman, was applying for a leadership position in the biotechnology industry as he made his recommendations. Friedman denies wrongdoing, but the National Academies are currently reviewing the selection process.

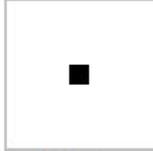
Image



Source USDA

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What's In a Name?



Source Adobe Stock

Astroturf groups are organizations of, or created by, industry players that masquerade as grassroots citizen-based groups. “Coalition for Sustainable Organics” is a front group for industrial-scale hydroponic operations. Industrial-scale hydroponic production, which is also called container growing, requires large inputs of electricity, structures, and fertilizer, and does nothing to improve soil health in contrast to truly sustainable, soil-building, organic production.

Likewise, “Food Science Matters” is primarily a carrageenan industry lobby group, proclaiming the health of their product. Cornucopia works for a healthful, transparent organic program and helps consumers do their own research to determine what is, and is not, credible.

[READ MORE](#)

Astroturfing 101



Source John

“Sense About Science USA” has a homey ring to it, but its director Trevor Butterworth has consistently supported deregulation and championed the safety of troubling chemicals and food products in his writing. Butterworth has positioned himself as a scientific expert via several innocuously named, industry-funded front groups, and contributes to *Forbes*, *Newsweek*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. He offers a workshop on his media relations techniques for students and young scientists.

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TEL: 608-625-2000 | FAX: 866-861-2214 | www.cornucopia.org



From: Walden, Jessica - AMS
To: [Ashley Swaffar](#) (b) (6); [Carmela Beck](#); (b) (6); [Emily Oakley](#); (b) (6); [Francis Thicke](#); [Harold Austin](#); [Harriet Benar](#) (b) (6); [Jean Richardson](#) (b) (6); (b) (6); [Lisa de Lima](#) (lisa@momsorganicmarket.com); [Scott Rice](#); [Tom Chapman](#) (tchapman@clitbar.com); [Tracy Favre](#); [Vena Romero-Briones](#) (b) (6); [Zea Sonnabend](#)
Cc: [Arsenault, Michelle - AMS](#); [Pattillo, Devon - AMS](#); [Lewis, Paul I - AMS](#); [McEvoy, Miles - AMS](#); [Nally Yanessa, Shannon - AMS](#); [Brines, Lisa - AMS](#)
Subject: RE: NOSB Materials Report - January 2017
Date: Monday, January 9, 2017 2:10:33 PM
Attachments: [NOSB Materials Report - Jan17.xlsx](#)

Hello NOSB:

Please see attached for the latest status report on outstanding petitions and technical reports. As usual, if you have any updates or corrections, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Lisa Brines is back as of today!!! Welcome back Lisa! We have missed you.

- **Petition Process Reminder and TR Requests.** If the Subcommittee determines that a petition is sufficient or requests a TR, the Chair can now go back to emailing Lisa Brines after the determination so she can update our records and change the status.

The next report will be distributed on or around February 3, 2017.

Sincerely,

Jessica Walden
Materials Specialist, Standards Division
National Organic Program
Agricultural Marketing Services
United States Department of Agriculture
Tel: (202) 720-3252
Direct: 202-740-4923
jessica.walden@ams.usda.gov
www.ams.usda.gov/nop

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NOSB Materials Report: Petition & Technical Report Status

Updated: 11/18/2016

Aquaculture Overdue items in red
Changes since last report in yellow
Petitioned Inerts - on hold

NL Section	Substance	Type	Technical Report	Next Step	Due Date	NOSB Meeting	Notes
Handling	Bisphenol A (BPA)	See Notes	First draft in review by the program	TR expected mid-September. First Draft Submitted 10/01 (delayed). Initial review by NOP. Sent to HS on 10/19/16. TR Rejected 12 20 16. To be reassigned to non-governmental agency.		TBD	NOP memo on Packaging Nov 2014
Handling / Crops	Marine Plants / Algae	Special Review	Marine Plants (PDF)	TR sufficiency review. TR deemed sufficient 9/6/16. NOSB meeting. Discussion Document Accepted by Board.		Fall 2016	TR request received 2/5/2016; sent to contractor 3/4/2016; TR sent to HS on 8/10/2016; TR approved 9/6/16
Handling	L-Methionine	Petition Add to 205.605	Technical Report Handline 2012 (PDF)	No TR Needed. SC review/proposal needed.	10/23/16	TBD	Petition sent to HS on 8/25/2016; petition determined sufficient on 10/4/2016; no TR needed;
Livestock	Glycolic acid (PDF)	Add to 205.603	TBD	TR Request Received. TR assigned 11/18/16		TBD	Sent to LS on 6/6/2016; TR requested 7/19/2016
Crops	Newspaper and other recycled paper	Special Review 205.601	In development	NOP approved request 01 12 16. TR request sent to NOP 06 21 16. TR received 11/30/16. Second draft under development by contractor.		TBD	TR draft received by NOP 11/30/16. Feedback sent back to contractor
Crops	Ammonium Nonanoate (2016)	Petition Add to 205.601		CS to determine petition sufficiency and request TR if applicable. CS rejected petition 12 20 16. NOP to not fy petitioner		TBD	This is a re-petition
Crops	Biodegradable Biobased Mulch Film	Sunset 2019	Limited scope TR request sent to NOP 08 02 16. TR contracted on 9/19/16. TR received 12/23/16; sent to CS 12/28/16.	TR Sufficiency review due 2/27/17		Spring 2017 (first meeting)	
Crops (via Materials)	Anaerobic Digestate			New petition sent to MS 04 22 16. Under review for eligibility at request of NOP. TR request sent to NOP 07 05 16		TBD	NOP email re: eligibility; Petition not posted online; TR Request Received
Crops	Polyoxin D Zinc Salt (PDF)	Add to 205.601	2012 (PDF)	NOSB Review to determine sufficiency/eligibility. . CS requested Lmt'd scope TR 10 04 16	8/16/16	TBD	Sent to CS on 6/16/2016. . CS requested Lmt'd scope TR 10 04 16
Handling	Sodium dodecylbenzene sulfonate (SDBS)	Add to 205.605(b)		TR in development - expected late December 2016/Early January 2017 (delayed)		Spring 2016; TBD	Petition sent to HS on 11/2/15; petition determined sufficient on 12/1/2015; no TR needed; referred back to SC at April 2016 NOSB Mtg; TR requested on 5/17/16
Handling	Sodium Chlorite for production of chlorine dioxide gas	Add to 205.605	Not requested	NOSB Meeting. Board agreed to take this back to sub committee at Fall 2016 meeting.		TBD	Petition sent to HS on 12/02/2015; Pet determined incomplete on 4/13/2016; add'l info sent to HS on 5/5/2016; Petition determined sufficient on 6/7/16; Proposal vote 8/16/16; taken back to subcommittee for further work
Handling	Phosphates	Supplemental Review	Phosphates 2016 (PDF)	NOSB Meeting. Discussion Document passed.	9/14/16	Fall 2016	TR Request rec'd 7/28/15; TR sent to HS on 2/10/2016; TR found sufficient on 3/15/2016
Handling	Short DNA Tracers	Petition to add to 205.605		Petition sufficiency Review and TR request f applicable	1/4/16	TBD	Petition sent to HS on 10/21/16
Crops	Natamycin (PDF)	Petition to classify as nonsynthetic	Handline 2006 (PDF)	Petition Sufficiency Review and TR request f applicable. TR requested on 11/17/16.	11/8/16	TBD	Petition sent to CS on 9/9/2016. TR requested on 11/17/16.
Crops	Allyl Isothiocyanate (AITC)	Crops Add to 205.601	Ltd TR Request	Ltd TR request 10/04/16. TR assigned 11/18/16	9/6/16	TBD	Sent to CS on 7/6/2016; Ltd TR request 10/04/16
Crops	Polyoxin D Zinc Salt (PDF)	Add to 205.601	2012 (PDF)	Ltd TR request 10/04/16. TR assigned 11/18/16	8/16/16	TBD	Sent to CS on 6/16/2016; Ltd TR request 10/04/16
Crops	Fatty Alcohols	Add to 205.601	First draft reviewed by the program	TR received 12/23/16. Feedback sent back to contractor for further revision.		TBD	Petition sent to CS on 1/27/2016; TR request rec'd 3/15/2016; sent to TR contractor 3/22/2016. First draft received 12/23/16.
Crops	Sodium Citrate	Petition Add to 205.601	Handline 2015 (PDF)	NOSB Review to determine sufficiency/eligibility; Full TR requested 10/04/16. TR assigned 11/18/16	9/26/16	TBD	Petition sent to CS on 7/28/16; Full TR requested 10/04/16

NOSB Materials Report: Petition & Technical Report Status

Updated: 11/18/2016

Aquaculture Overdue items in red
 Changes since last report in yellow
 Petitioned Inerts - on hold

NL Section	Substance	Type	Technical Report	Next Step	Due Date	NOSB Meeting	Notes
Livestock	Sulfur	Petition Add to 205.603		TR in development - expected late December 2016/Early January 2017 (delayed)		TBD	Petition sent to LS on 3/9/16; Petition sufficient and TR requested on 4/18/2016
Livestock	Hypochlorous acid	Petition Add to 205.603		NOSB Review to determine sufficiency/eligibility; LTD. TR requested 10/04/16	10/4/16	TBD	Petition sent to LS on 8/5/2016; TR requested on 10/04/16.

NOSB Materials Report: Petition & Technical Report Status

Updated: 6/2/2016

Aquaculture Overdue items in red
 Changes since last report in yellow
 Petitioned Inerts - on hold

NL Section	Substance	Type	Technical Report	Next Step	Due Date	NOSB Meeting	Notes
Livestock	Carbon dioxide (PDF)	Aquaculture - Plants	Carbon Dioxide, Processing, 2006 (PDF)	Revised Subcommittee Proposal		TBD	Initial petition insufficient; Petitioner notified 8/10/11; revised petition sent to MC on 4/17/12; sent to CS on 5/30/2012; petition & TR determined sufficient on 11/20/12; Spring 2014 Agenda
Livestock	Chlorine (PDF)	Aquaculture - Plants	Chlorine, Crops (2011) (PDF)	Revised Subcommittee Proposal		TBD	Petition sent to Crops on 5/30/2012; Petitioner notified of more info needed on 11/20/12; chlorine TR determined sufficient on 11/20/12; On Spring 2014 agenda - referred to SC
Livestock	Chlorine (PDF)	Aquaculture - Animals	Chlorine, Livestock (2006) (PDF)	Revised Subcommittee Proposal		TBD	Petition sent to Livestock on 5/30/2012; petition determined to be sufficient on 7/3/2012; no TR requested; LS vote complete; On Spring 2014 agenda - referred to SC

NOSB Materials Report: Petition & Technical Report Status

Updated: 6/2/2016

Aquaculture Overdue items in red
 Changes since last report in yellow
 Petitioned Inerts - on hold

NL Section	Substance	Type	Technical Report	Next Step	Due Date	NOSB Meeting	Notes
Livestock	Lignin Sulfonate (PDF)	Aquaculture - Plants	Lignin Sulfonate (2011) (PDF)	Revised Subcommittee Proposal		TBD	Note: there are two petitions for lignin sulfonate for aquaculture (plants and animals). Petition sent to CS on 7/3/2012; additional Q for petitioner and TR request received 12/4/12; clarification requested from CS on 1/7/13; petition accepted as sufficient on 7/2/2013; On Spring 2014 agenda - referred to SC
Livestock	Micronutrients (PDF)	Aquaculture - Plants	Micronutrients (2010) (PDF)	Revised Subcommittee Proposal		TBD	Petition sent to CS on 6/8/2012; additional Q for petitioner and TR request received 12/4/12; clarification requested from CS on 1/7/13; petition accepted as sufficient on 7/2/2013; Spring 2014 Agenda

NOSB Materials Report: Petition & Technical Report Status

Updated: 6/2/2016

Aquaculture Overdue items in red
 Changes since last report in yellow
 Petitioned Inerts - on hold

NL Section	Substance	Type	Technical Report	Next Step	Due Date	NOSB Meeting	Notes
Livestock	Tocopherols (PDF)	Aquaculture - Animals	Technical Report (2013) (PDF)	Revised Subcommittee Proposal		TBD	Petition sent to LS on 5/30/12; TR requested on 8/6/12; TR sent to LS on 4/16/2013; TR determined complete 6/4/2013; Spring 2014 Agenda
Livestock	Vitamins (PDF)	Aquaculture - Animals	Technical Report (2013) (PDF)	Revised Subcommittee Proposal		TBD	Initial petition insufficient; Petitioner notified 8/10/11; revised petition sent to MC on 1/9/2012; sent to LS on 5/30/2012; TR requested on 8/6/12; TR sent to LS on 4/29/2013; TR accepted as final 6/18/2013; On Spring 2014 agenda - referred to SC
Livestock	Trace minerals (PDF)	Aquaculture - Animals	Technical Report (2013) (PDF)	Revised Subcommittee Proposal		TBD	Petition sent to LS on 6/8/2012; TR requested on 8/6/12; TR sent to LS on 6/25/2013; TR accepted on 7/16/2013; LS vote complete; On Spring 2014 agenda - referred to SC

NOSB Materials Report: Petition & Technical Report Status

Updated: 6/2/2016

Aquaculture

Overdue items in red

Changes since last report in yellow

Petitioned Inerts - on hold

NL Section	Substance	Type	Technical Report	Next Step	Due Date	NOSB Meeting	Notes
Livestock	Vaccines	Aquaculture - Animals	Technical Report (2014) (PDF)	Revised Subcommittee Proposal		TBD	Petition sent to LS on 6/14/2012; petition sufficient on 5/21/2013; TR req sent to contractor on 6/14/2013; TR accepted as sufficient on 2/12/2014; On Spring 2014 agenda - referred to LS
Livestock	Vitamins, B1, B12, H (PDF)	Aquaculture - Plants		Revised Subcommittee Proposal		TBD	Petition sent to CS on 8/10/2012; accepted as sufficient by CS on 6/18/13; On Spring 2014 agenda - referred to SC

NOSB Materials Report: Petition & Technical Report Status

Updated: 11/18/2016

Overdue items in red

Changes since last report in yellow

NL Section	Substance	Type	Technical Report	Next Step	Due Date	NOSB Mtg 1	NOSB Mtg 2	Notes
Handling	Carrageenan	Sunset 2018	2016	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	TR Request rec'd 7/6/15; TR sent to HS on 1/22/2016; revised TR sent to HS on 2/10/2016; TR approved 2/16/2016; voted for removal at the Fall meeting
Handling	Cellulose	Sunset 2018	2016	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	TR Request rec'd 7/6/15; TR sent to HS on 2/11/2016; TR approved 2/16/2016; voted for re-listing
Handling	Glucono delta-lactone	Sunset 2018	2016	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	TR Request rec'd 7/6/15; TR sent to HS on 2/10/2016; TR approved 2/16/2016 11/18/2016; voted for re-listing
Crops	Peracetic acid	Sunset 2018	2016	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	2 listings - 205.601(a) and (i); TR sent to CS on 3/4/2016; LS and HS reports also developed; TR approved 3/15/16; voted for re-listing
Handling	Potassium hydroxide	Sunset 2018	2016	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	TR Request rec'd 7/6/15; TR sent to HS on 1/22/2016; TR approved 2/2/16; voted for re-listing
Handling	Agar-agar	Sunset 2018	2011	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	No TR needed; voted for re-listing
Handling	Animal enzymes	Sunset 2018	2015	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	No TR needed; voted for re-listing
Handling	Beta-carotene extract color	Sunset 2018	2011	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	No TR needed; voted for re-listing

NOSB Materials Report: Petition & Technical Report Status

Updated: 11/18/2016

Overdue items in red

Changes since last report in yellow

NL Section	Substance	Type	Technical Report	Next Step	Due Date	NOSB Mtg 1	NOSB Mtg 2	Notes
Handling	Calcium sulfate-mined	Sunset 2018	2001	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	No TR needed; voted for re-listing
Handling	Silicon dioxide	Sunset 2018	2010	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	No TR needed; voted for re-listing
Handling	Tartaric acid	Sunset 2018	2011	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	No TR needed; voted for re-listing
Crops	Calcium chloride	Sunset 2018	2001	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	listing on 205.602; voted for re-listing
Crops	Copper sulfate	Sunset 2018	2011	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	2 listings - 205.601(a) and (e); 2015 report available for livestock use; voted for re-listing
Crops	EPA List 3	Sunset 2018	None	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	TR request rec'd 7/10/15; TR requested - on hold pending work with EPA; voted for re-listing
Crops	Ozone gas	Sunset 2018	2002	Final Recommendation		Spring 2016	Fall 2016	listing on 205.601(a); voted for re-listing

NOSB Materials Report: Petition & Technical Report Status

Updated: 11/18/2016

Overdue items in red

Changes since last report in yellow

NL Section	Substance	Type	Technical Report	Next Step	Due Date	NOSB Mtg 1	NOSB Mtg 2	Notes
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NOSB National Organic Standards Board
NOP National Organic Program
TR Technical Report
ES Executive Subcommittee
NL Section Crops Subcommittee
LS Livestock Subcommittee
HS Handling Subcommittee
SD Standards Division
NL National List

205.601 [§ 205.601 Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic crop production.](#)

205.602 [§ 205.602 Nonsynthetic substances prohibited for use in organic crop production.](#)

205.603 [§ 205.603 Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic livestock production.](#)

205.604 [§ 205.604 Nonsynthetic substances prohibited for use in organic livestock production.](#)

205.605 [§ 205.605 Nonagricultural \(nonorganic\) substances allowed as ingredients in or on processed products labeled as "organic" or "made with organic \(specified ingredients or food group\(s\)\)."](#)

205.606 [§ 205.606 Nonorganically produced agricultural products allowed as ingredients in or on processed products labeled as "organic."](#)

	Date work assigned/started	Material	Contractor	Notes	Completed?	
	7/29/2015	Hypochlorous acid	Ag Analytics	Petition	Y	
	7/23/2015	Squid and Squid Byproducts	Ag Analytics	Petition		
	12/5/2014	PGME - supplemental	Ag Analytics	Petition	Y	
	9/2/2014	Parasiticides	Ag Analytics	Sunset 2017	Y	
	8/15/2014	Whey protein concentrate	Ag Analytics	Sunset 2017	Y	
	8/15/2014	Potassium bicarbonate	Ag Analytics	Sunset 2017	Y	
	8/8/2014	Copper Sulfate	Ag Analytics	Sunset 2017	Y	
	8/8/2014	Zinc sulfate	Ag Analytics	Petition	Y	
	2/14/2014	Hydrogen chloride	Ag Analytics	Sunset 2016	Y	
	6/14/2013	Vaccines for Aquaculture	Ag Analytics	Petition	Y	
	4/4/2013	Aqueous Potassium Silicate	Ag Analytics	Sunset 2015	Y	
	4/4/2013	Sodium carbonate peroxyhydrate	Ag Analytics	Sunset 2015	Y	
	4/4/2013	Sulfurous acid	Ag Analytics	Sunset 2015	Y	
	2/26/2013	Glycerin	Ag Analytics	Petition	Y	
	2/26/2013	PGME (original)	Ag Analytics	Petition	Y	
FY2016	3/4/2016	BPA	Ag Analytics	Special	y	Rejected
FY2016	3/4/2016	Marine Plants & Algae	Ag Analytics	Special	y	
FY2016	3/22/2016	Fatty Alcohols	Ag Analytics	Petition		
FY2016	4/15/2015	Biobased Biodegradable Mulch	OMRI	Sunset 2019	y	
FY2016	5/3/2016	Sulfur	Ag Analytics	Petition		
FY2016	6/24/2016	SDBS	Ag Analytics	Petition		
FY2016	6/23/2016	Magnesium chloride	OMRI	Sunset 2019	y	
FY2017	12/6/2016	Glycolic acid (livestock use)	Ag Analytics	Petition		
FY2017	12/6/2016	Sodium citrate (crop use)	Ag Analytics	Petition		
FY2017	12/6/2016	Natamycin (crop use)	Ag Analytics	Petition		
FY2017	12/6/2016	Hypochlorous acid (livestock use)	Ag Analytics	Petition		
FY2017	12/6/2016	Polyoxin D zinc salt (crop use)	Ag Analytics	Petition		
FY2017	12/6/2016	Allyl isothiocyanate (crop use)	Ag Analytics	Petition		

From: McEvoy, Miles - AMS
To: [Lewis, Paul I - AMS](#)
Cc: [Nally Yanessa, Shannon - AMS](#); [Tucker, Jennifer - AMS](#)
Subject: FW: Technical Reports for NOSB
Date: Monday, January 23, 2017 4:59:07 PM
Attachments: [Seaweed TR review 26 Dec 2016.xlsx](#)

Not sure if you saw this from Jean.

Miles

From: Jean Richardson [mailto:(b) (6)]
Sent: Thursday, January 12, 2017 12:38 PM
To: McEvoy, Miles - AMS <Miles.McEvoy@ams.usda.gov>
Cc: Jean Richardson (b) (6); Tom Chapman <tchapman@clifbar.com>; Ashley Swaffar (b) (6); Walden, Jessica - AMS <Jessica.Walden@ams.usda.gov>; Pattillo, Devon - AMS <Devon.Pattillo@ams.usda.gov>; Brines, Lisa - AMS <Lisa.Brines@ams.usda.gov>; Arsenault, Michelle - AMS <Michelle.Arsenault@ams.usda.gov>; Zea Sonnabend <zea@well.com>; Tracy Favre <tfavre@favrehouse.com>; Lisa deLima <lisa.delima@momsorganicmarket.com>; Francis Thicke (b) (6)
Subject: Technical Reports for NOSB

Good morning Miles

This e-mail is intended to encourage the NOP to reconsider the sourcing of Technical Reports which are requested by the NOSB and to stop using the AMS Analytics Division for TRs for the NOSB.

When I first began my 5 year term on the NOSB I was very concerned at the low level of support for NOSB work and the highly variable nature of documents generated by the NOSB. The NOSB is not a Technical Advisory Board, and thus it is very dependent on technical reports and accurate scientific analysis in order to evaluate substances for the National List. Such reports must be balanced, accurate, and in sufficient detail to allow rational, well written decisions/recomendations by the NOSB. Without an accurate, reliable TR it is difficult to sort through the different perspectives which Stakeholders provide in the Public Comment. The NOSB is mandated to conduct this work and must seek public comment from a broad range of stakeholders.

In 2014 the NOP responded to our concerns by providing dedicated staff for our regular subcommittee conference calls, feed back from those staff on our work in progress on materials and, with a new Farm bill, more money in the budget for many more TR's based on NOSB requests. The NOSB worked incredibly hard to undertake a 5 year Sunset Review of about 200 materials and these TR's were critical to that work which was time consuming for us all even with the TR's in hand. This support made our Sunset Review and review of Petitions much more professional, better written and more likely to move as expeditiously as possible through Rule Making with higher levels of confidence in the scope of analysis.

Recently, perhaps as a cost savings, the NOP, has been contracting "in-house" with the USDA, AMS, Agricultural Analytics Division to prepare Technical Reports. I strongly

recommend that this group no longer be contracted for NOSB TR work for a number of reasons:

1. Accuracy: Using the Marine Plants and Algae TR, dated Aug 9 2016, as an example, the NOSB received detailed analyses from both industry and the conservation community as to inaccuracies in the Analytics Division TR. (An example of Seaweed TR review is attached below. I believe IFAC submitted a similar one as part of public comment in Fall 2016.)
2. Bias: Public Comments, and NOSB review indicate an economics bias in these Analytics Division TR's, which is to be expected from a Division dedicated to agricultural marketing, but not necessarily helpful to the NOSB in its mandated work. The NOSB needs to be able to use peer reviewed scientific research articles when reviewing substances, and have in front of them a literature review which is as complete and as up to date as possible.
3. Perception: Each year the NOSB hears concerns from stakeholders about authorship of TR's. Stakeholders expect a balanced TR provided by known authorship. When a TR is provided by the AMS there is a perception of bias. This is not good for the organic industry, especially with a new Administration. The NOSB does not expect to have the names of individual scientists listed in a TR, but the contracted group must an external group of scientists.

If the NOP has determined that it cannot afford to contract with outside contractors for TR work then I would urge that the NOP simply tell the NOSB they must do their own work without a TR. The present Analytics Division TR's are causing more problems than helping the NOSB. So having no TR would be better than having TR's from the Analytics Division. As volunteers we need reliable documents to work with.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Very Best
Jean

Jean Richardson Ph.D.
NOSB 2012-2017
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Consultant & Organic Inspector
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(b) (6)

LINE	TEXT from the Technical Report	COMMENT	Weakness	
76-77	Public comment provided to the NOSB has described serious concerns for potential conservation issues for wild marine algae species	The concerns are about valid conservation issues not "potential" conservation issues.	Inaccuracy	
91-92	The industry uses 7.5-8 million metric tons of wet seaweed annually which is harvested either from naturally growing (wild) seaweed or from cultivated (farmed) crops	Important to distinguish between landings (tons) of wild vs farmed.	Gap/omission	
93-94	Seaweed farming has expanded rapidly with demand outstripping the supply available from natural resources.	Confusing: the sentence actually means "Seaweed farming has expanded rapidly because of demand for seaweed outstripping the supply available from wild-harvested species". Author should stick to the terminology established - "wild" vs "farmed" to reduce confusion.		
96-100	A few species dominate algal culture with 98.9 percent 96 of world production in 2010 coming from Japanese kelp (Saccharina/Laminaria japonica—mainly in the coastal 97 waters of China) Eucheuma seaweeds (a mixture of Kappaphycus alvarezii formerly known as Eucheuma cottonii 98 and Eucheuma spp.) Gracilaria spp. nori/laver (Porphyra spp.) wakame (Undaria pinnatifida) and unident fied 99 marine macroalgae species (3.1 million metric tons mostly from China).	Why is only one country of origin China mentioned? Indonesia and Philippines are sources for the large carrageenan industry for example.		
103-110	paragraph about classification Although these products are shared across many algal species screening and development for commercial products in wild and cultured algal species has often been disconnected from environmental and physiological data and concerns associated with marine habitats and their inhabitants.	Seaweeds (macroalgae) should also be distinguished on whether they provide habitat or not as this has consequences for later discussion about sustainability. This is the key theme of the NOSB's and the public's concerns and should be highlighted as the key issue somewhere earlier in the report.		
116-118	page 4 - Table 1 Examples of Algal Species Uses*	Seaweed manure and extract: 7 species or species groups are listed	It would be extremely helpful to know the % contributed to "seaweed extract" by each species	
189-190	page 4 - Table 1 Examples of Algal Species Uses*	Seaweed manure	The term "seaweed manure" is not defined anywhere - the reader has no idea to what this refers. And the term never occurs anywhere else in the report.	
189-190	191	Increasing demand over the last fifty years outstripped the ability to supply the market from natural (wild) stocks.	REF?	
191	191	a different type of seaweed has traditionally been eaten	different from what?	
Fig. 1	World aquaculture production of farmed aquatic algae grouped by nature and intended use (FAO 2014)	what does "grouped by nature" mean?		
224	Alginates production (US\$ 213 million) is from brown seaweeds	which species? What % from which species?		
227-229	Agar production (US\$ 132 million) is principally from two types of red seaweed one of which has been 227 cultivated since the 1960-70s but on a much larger scale since 1990 and this has allowed the expansion of the agar industry (FAO 2004).	Nothing about the 2015 crisis in declining agar-producing species http://www.themalaymailonline.com/features/article/agar-agar-destroy-why-chiles-green-gold-is-in-danger-of-extinction#sthash.Z4eCF2yv.dpuf. Quoting a reference from 2004 is not adequate.		
227-229	Agar production (US\$ 132 million) is principally from two types of red seaweed	"types" of seaweed? Which species?		
233-235	237	Today most of the 233 seaweed used for carrageenan production comes from cultivation although there is still some demand for 234 Irish moss and some other wild species from South America (FAO 2004).	Does not explain that the species used for carrageenan production are now farmed and different species than wild-harvested Irish moss (Chondrus crispus) in part because of the decline in wild populations of Chondrus crispus in the NW Atlantic (Canada and New England). REF: "evidence for growth and recruitment over-harvesting was presented (Pringle and Semple 1984)." http://www2.umb.ca/chopinlab/articles/files/2006.SeaweedResourceso fCanada.pdf	
252-253	237	It is made from brown seaweeds that are collected	which species of brown seaweeds?	
GENERAL	319	Cosmetic products such as creams and lotions sometimes show on their labels that the contents include "marine extract" "extract of alga" "seaweed extract" or similar.	If the species used for these products are not listed that should be noted.	
GENERAL	319	common names are used throughout	Latin names should have been used in addition to common names to clearly identify to which species the author is referring.	
GENERAL	321	much of early algae production	means "much of early algal product manufacture"	
GENERAL	321	has been harvested commercially since 1959	to what country does this refer? No since 17th century according to "Seaweed Sustainability: Food and Non-Food Applications edited by Brijesh K. Tiwari Declan Troy"	
321-322	325	Overharvesting of this cold water species has led to regulatory limitation of the harvest to 17% of harvestable biomass	Only in one province NB Canada and in one bay Cobscook Bay in ME USA. omits the important word "annually"	
323-324	325	Harvesting methods also evolved from automated suction cutters to simple manual cutter rakes (Ugarte et al. 2006 2012)	only in Canada is this true. Machine cutters are active in Maine USA; Iceland and Norway at least. (Maine media accounts and personal observation); Iceland YouTube video; Norway: http://www.seaweed.ie/irish_seaweed_contacts/doc/Filieres_12p_UK.pdf	contradicted by the Technical Report itself on lines 894-895
327-329	325	Although much of the cut rockweed grows back before it may be subjected to reharvest taking about six years	Disputed and no data provided or referenced here	
330-331	326	the effect of the harvest on plant and animal species living in and on the rockweed forest is still under study.	Some studies underway other studies completed (Binin et al. 2008)	
331-334	327-329	after rockweed harvest found no evidence linking rockweed harvest to changes in the ichthyoplankton component or the juvenile and adult fish of that community (van Guelpen and Pohle 2014).	Unpublished study not peer-reviewed and not available to anyone (study results deemed "proprietary" by Pohle to Seeley personal communication since it was done in conjunction with Acadian Seaplants Ltd.)	
331-334	330-331	the effect of 17% rockweed harvest on some species including seabirds was negligible (Beal 2015).	Reference is an unpublished document not peer-reviewed. It is a statement of opinion submitted to the state of Maine (USA) by a biologist who collaborates in research with Acadian Seaplants Ltd.	
347-350	331-334	Companies and organizations involved in the harvest of brown algae used for alginates production work with international regulators and environmental advocates to harvest responsibly to sustain regrowth preserve their resource and provide economic development for the communities involved in wild crafting and harvest (FMC 2003; Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat 2013; Maine Seaweed Council 2014).	Not supported by the cited reference. The Canadian Science document [2013] only has one statement about alginates - that it was "harvested in southwest Nova Scotia in the 1930s and 1940s". See: http://waves-vagues.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/348493.pdf. Maine Seaweed Council is an industry group and FMC is a processing company.	
354	354	They form the standing crop and determine the productivity of all communities. (Van Ginkel and De Vries 2016)	The reference is from a journal on a predatory publishing list and the journal http://www.fisheriessciences.com/fisheries-aqua/towards-a-seaweed-based-economy-the-global-ten-billion-people-issue-at-the-midst-of-the-21st-century.pdf. The article is written in badly mangled English and is labeled as "commentary". Fisheriessciences.com is part of a company (OMICS Group) being sued by the US FTC.	FTC says "many articles are published with little to no peer review and numerous individuals represented to be editors have not agreed to be affiliated with the journals."
357-358	359	Any cutting of rockweed can produce an effect on the supported ecocommunities.	Don't know where this statement comes from - not from Seeley and Schlesinger 2012 a paper I know well. I	
454-455	359	brown algae "forestry" industry... (Seeley and Schlesinger 2012) and are "state of the art" for their habitats.	This term was never used in the cited reference.	
460	460	algae are plants that live in the ocean	What does this even mean? Sloppy.	
514-515	526	Aquatic Plant Extracts incorporating Ascophyllum nodosum Sargassum spp. and Laminaria spp. are used as fertilizers for organic and non-polluting terrestrial farming	Basic misunderstanding of the current view of algae: they are not plants.	"...most of the algae were actually among the earliest organisms to be removed from the Plantae along with the single-celled organisms the fungi and the molds". NSF supported project: http://scienline.ucsb.edu/getkey.php?key=904
529-530	526	Fertilizer applications are similar to farmyard manure wildlife including other algal species marine animals and many species of protozoans and bacteria (Seeley and Schlesinger 2012).	what is "non-polluting terrestrial farming"? Does this mean seaweeds are only used on farms that don't pollute? What is the basis for this statement?	author misunderstood or did not read carefully
536-538	529-530	the three marine algae species Irish moss (Chondrus crispus) rockweed (Ascophyllum nodosum) and giant kelp (Macrocystis pyrifera) are now harvested primarily using a hand rake rather than powered devices	Seeley and Schlesinger 2012 said nothing about protozoans and bacteria. I speak with deep knowledge of this paper. I	
536-538	536-538	the three marine algae species Irish moss (Chondrus crispus) rockweed (Ascophyllum nodosum) and giant kelp (Macrocystis pyrifera) are now harvested primarily using a hand rake rather than powered devices	No reference no data and likely not true. Not true in Maine USA by personal observation. Misspelling of "devices". Ascophyllum is harvested by machine in Maine USA; in Norway and Iceland.	

From: Morris, Erin - AMS
To: [Summers, Bruce - AMS](#)
Subject: Fwd: Morning Agriculture: The Cabinet crawl: Senate Dems stall Trump's nominees — Hundreds of farm groups support Sonny — What does USDA's organic program have in common with Star Wars?
Date: Friday, February 3, 2017 5:59:01 AM

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: POLITICO Pro Agriculture <politicoemail@politicopro.com>
Date: February 3, 2017 at 5:48:58 AM EST
To: <erin.morris@ams.usda.gov>
Subject: Morning Agriculture: The Cabinet crawl: Senate Dems stall Trump's nominees — Hundreds of farm groups support Sonny — What does USDA's organic program have in common with Star Wars?
Reply-To: POLITICO subscriptions <reply-fe91127375660d7f7d-630336_HTML-637932605-1376319-0@politicoemail.com>

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From: Bailey, Shayla - AMS
To: [AMS - Washington DC OA Pub Aff](#)
Cc: [Summers, Bruce - AMS](#)
Subject: Fwd: Morning Agriculture: White House names ag policy expert to economic council — See what Trump said about food safety in secret recording — Sources: Pruitt could cut EPA budget by one-quarter
Date: Tuesday, February 28, 2017 6:37:59 AM

--Shayla

Shayla Mae Bailey
Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
202-720-9771
202-604-0047

Begin forwarded message:

From: POLITICO Pro Agriculture <politicoemail@politicopro.com>
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Subject: Morning Agriculture: White House names ag policy expert to economic council — See what Trump said about food safety in secret recording — Sources: Pruitt could cut EPA budget by one-quarter
Reply-To: POLITICO subscriptions <reply-fe8c12737d66047472-630336_HTML-723729951-1376319-0@politicoemail.com>

By Jenny Hopkinson | 02/28/2017 05:45 AM EDT

WHITE HOUSE NAMES AG POLICY EXPERT TO ECONOMIC COUNCIL: Ray Starling may be the agriculture industry's newest darling. The former chief of staff to Sen. [Thom Tillis](#) (R-N.C.) has joined the White House's National Economic Council, where he'll be special assistant for agriculture, trade and food assistance. Starling's role, which the White House announced on Monday along with those of a dozen others joining the NEC, gives him a channel to advise President Donald Trump on economic policy as it relates to the farm bill, food aid programs, agricultural exports, market development, and other food and international trade issues.

"We have assembled a best-in-class team of policy advisers to drive President Trump's bold plan for job creation and economic growth," NEC Director Gary Cohn said in a statement. "With their diverse backgrounds and deep knowledge of key policy issues, they will make significant contributions to the nation."

North Carolina roots: Starling was general counsel and senior agricultural adviser to Tillis during the senator's tenure as speaker of the North Carolina General Assembly; he also served as general counsel for the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. After Tillis won election to the U.S. Senate

in 2014, Starling followed him to Washington, D.C., to be his chief counsel. Tillis said Trump's decision to appoint Starling is a "testament to how respected North Carolina's agricultural community is across the nation."

Starling's appointment also is a sign of Trump's commitment to reverse regulations that burden livestock producers, given Starling's upbringing on a hog farm in North Carolina and his "distinguished career in agriculture policy," said John Weber, president of the National Pork Producers Council.

HAPPY TUESDAY, FEB. 28! Welcome to Morning Ag, where we prefer our [\\$54 steaks without ketchup](#). You know the deal: Thoughts, news, tips, herb butter recommendations? Send them to jhopkinson@politico.com or @jennyhops. Follow the whole team at [@Morning_Ag](https://twitter.com/Morning_Ag).

TRUMP TOYS WITH FOOD SAFETY CRACKDOWN TO PRESSURE

JAPAN: Donald Trump likes the idea of cracking down on food safety to get back at trading partners like Japan, a leaked audio conversation posted by [Gizmodo](#) late Monday suggests.

The audio reportedly captures part of an exchange from December between Trump and Wilbur Ross, who won [confirmation](#) in the Senate on Monday night and will be sworn in as Commerce Secretary this morning. Ross appears to have brought up the idea, though his initial comment was cut off. "Well, I love it," Trump replies, adding: "If you look at Japan, what they do with food — they say it's not clean enough, and you have to send it back, and by the time it comes back, it's all gone."

"Exactly," Ross responded. "And we oughta let them know we're gonna start playing the same game."

Trump suggests he'd prefer to use food safety as a cover: "I think you let them know that we're going to do that. Without saying that, you say, 'We're gonna inspect you so closely — bop bop.'" Ross seems to agree, saying it's important to not say such an action is "punitive, but in the interest of American safety."

Free trade what?: The conversation, which appears to have been somewhat edited, also features Trump lambasting "free trade bulls--t," arguing that Japan is "the most protected. That's why they're doing well."

Partners in tariffs? At the end of the exchange, Trump asks Ross what he thinks about a 10 percent, across-the-board tariff or tax to do business in the U.S. Trump praises the idea, but the audio ends before Ross responds to the question.

Food safety fodder: A recent study by researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that U.S. foodborne illness outbreaks associated with imported food are on the rise as the American diet has become more global. More from Food Safety News [here](#).

WHITE HOUSE COULD SHRINK EPA BUDGET BY ONE-QUARTER:

The budget guidance the Trump administration sent to federal agencies on Monday proposed slashing EPA's budget by about a quarter and eventually

eliminating 1 in 5 of the agency's workers, sources familiar with the proposal told Pro Energy's Alex Guillén. "That budget proposal would set EPA's budget at \$6.1 billion, down from its current level of \$8.1 billion, according to two sources outside the agency," Guillén adds. "EPA's budget hasn't been that low since 1991, according to agency records. One of those sources also said that the White House has proposed reducing EPA's 15,000-strong workforce to 12,000, a level not seen since the mid-1980s." More [here](#).

Trump's guidance calls for cuts to discretionary spending across the government to offset a planned \$54 billion increase in military spending. Officials at the Office of Management and Budget didn't outline how deep proposed cuts would be for certain non-security agencies or programs, only that most would take a hit. Medicare and Social Security would not be touched.

Foreign aid a target. OMB officials said "large reductions" in spending on foreign aid are being sought, putting the U.S. Agency for International Development as well as the Agriculture and State departments in the crosshairs. One official said: "This budget expects the rest of the world to step up in some of the programs this country has been so generous in funding in the past."

Less than 1 percent of the federal budget is currently spent on foreign aid, including food assistance and anti-hunger and agricultural development projects carried out by USAID and USDA. So, given the \$54 billion price tag of Trump's defense agenda, budget cuts would have to spread far and wide in the federal government, likely hitting staffing levels and programs at USDA, USAID, FDA, EPA and other agencies.

Symbolism and battle lines. The president's budget is largely a symbolic move — a kind of wish-list — since Congress has the ultimate say in matters of the purse. Many presidents before Trump have proposed sweeping changes to the federal budget, only to have Congress reject most of them. By not touching entitlement programs, Trump has seemingly set up a battle with congressional Republicans. Speaker Paul Ryan, for one, has continuously proposed cuts to Social Security and Medicare. Democrats, meanwhile, framed Trump's budget guidance as an attack on everyday Americans. POLITICO's Rachael Bade, Sarah Ferris and Shane Goldmacher have more on the backlash from the House GOP [here](#).

ADIOS, WOTUS: President Trump will sign an executive order this afternoon to begin the process of unwinding the Obama administration's controversial Waters of the U.S. rule, said an agricultural industry source. Trump vowed during the campaign to eliminate "some of our most intrusive regulations, like the Waters of the U.S. rule," as well as climate rules limiting greenhouse gas emissions from the power sector.

But don't get too excited if you're a WOTUS hater. The executive order is unlikely to have much immediate effect, since a court put WOTUS on hold nationwide while legal challenges play out. And withdrawing the rule would require the agency to go through the formal rulemaking process, with a proposal, notice and comment period, and a final rule. Environmental groups and states supportive of the rule would almost certainly mount a fierce legal battle to defend

it.

SCOTT PRUITT GOES DOWN TO THE FARM: Well, at least to the Farm Bureau. The new EPA administrator will address the group's Advocacy Conference at 4 p.m. today at the Gaylord National Harbor Hotel, in what will likely be a victory rally of sorts among WOTUS opponents. Pruitt and the Farm Bureau have been among the measure's loudest critics. Details [here](#).

HEMP GETS SERIOUS: The industrial hemp industry is taking off the gloves. While the industry saw some success in the 2014 farm bill's provisions allowing cultivation for research purposes, among other things, its push for full legalization has stalled. And recent moves by the Drug Enforcement Administration that the Hemp Industry Association claims limit its members ability to move and sell their products aren't helping. As a result, HIA is declaring a two-front war to protect its members.

One of those fronts will be on full display today, the first of a two-day lobbying push on Capitol Hill. More than 100 hemp farmers and business owners will be in Washington today and Wednesday to urge lawmakers to pass a law legalizing the crop for cultivation. The Industrial Hemp Legalization Act has been introduced in every Congress since 2005. The last [iteration](#) was introduced in the House and Senate in January 2015, had 75 and 16 cosponsors, respectively, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, but went nowhere. Today will feature a hemp products expo in the Rayburn foyer in advance of meetings Wednesday between HIA members and lawmakers.

The second front is playing out in the courts. HIA has sued the DEA twice this year, both times in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in an effort to curb what the group says are overreaches of the law. A [suit](#) filed in January argues the DEA should be held in contempt of court for violating a February 2004 ruling by the same court that barred the administration from enforcing a rule that would have classified non-psychoactive parts of the plant, including the stalk, fiber, sterilized seed and seed oil, as controlled substances.

The other [challenge](#) stems from a DEA announcement in December that "marijuana extracts," including Cannabidiol, better known as CBD, are subject to the administration's oversight as controlled substances. That decree runs afoul of farm bill provisions legalizing hemp production for research permits, HIA says. Hemp growers have extracted CBD from their crops for use in body lotions and supplements.

'FORCES OF DARKNESS' EYE ORGANIC PROGRAM: The future of USDA's organic program could be at risk in the 2018 farm bill. While supporters are digging in to defend the voluntary regulatory program that supports the \$40 billion industry, conservative thinkers say Congress should give it the ax and let private groups develop their own standards.

"Organic marketers mislead consumers into believing that organic growers don't use pesticides (they do) and that organic foods are more healthful ([they're not](#))," Henry Miller, a fellow at Hoover, wrote recently in a yet-to-be published op-ed that he shared with POLITICO. "Their fear-mongering appears to influence

shoppers, especially those with lower incomes, in an unconstructive way." With the "radical foodies who held sway in the Obama administration" out of office, Miller, who held several positions at the FDA during the Ronald Reagan and George H. Bush administrations, wrote, "the Donald Trump administration and GOP-controlled Congress have a golden opportunity to make the federal government's actions and programs more rational and cost-effective."

But that's not the only flashpoint. Some in the industry are calling for considerable changes to how the program operates, especially to the 15-member National Organic Standards Board, which is tasked with making recommendations about what should and should not be used in the program.

"When NOSB was put in place under the 1990 act, it made sense, [because] the industry didn't trust USDA as far as they could throw it," one organic policy watcher said. "But now, to have 15 people" with no scientific expertise "out of a \$40 billion industry drive policy is totally ridiculous." More on the fight from yours truly [here](#).

NO, THE FREEDOM CAUCUS ISN'T GOING AFTER ORGANIC: While we are talking about potential threats to the organic program as a whole, let's take the Freedom Caucus off the list. In December, the caucus, led by Rep. [Mark Meadows](#), listed the National Organic Program among the regulations that Congress should [revoke](#) in the first 100 days of this session. That sent supporters of the program into a tizzy, and was one of the "forces of darkness" that Kathleen Merrigan and other advocates pointed to.

The problem? Meadows wasn't talking about the program as a whole. Instead, the caucus' listing refers to USDA's recently issued organic animal-welfare standards, which have drawn the ire of large organic egg producers, who say compliance is cost-prohibitive. Those complaints have caught the ear of many GOP lawmakers, including Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman [Pat Roberts](#), even though the industry's main lobbying group, the Organic Trade Association, backs the measure.

While Republicans clearly don't like some organic rules, it's unlikely they'll go after the program as a whole. The \$9 million program isn't expensive enough to carry a large target, and the fact that it's [voluntary](#) sits well with regulation-averse lawmakers.

DUVALL: PERDUE NOT WORRIED: Sonny Perdue isn't rattled over the amount of time that's elapsed in the process of securing confirmation as the next Agriculture secretary, American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall said in [a letter](#) late last week to POLITICO Editor-in-Chief John Harris. Sources close to Perdue told POLITICO [last week](#) that the Agriculture nominee was among several of President Trump's Cabinet-level picks who are worried they're not getting enough help from the White House to prepare for a grueling confirmation process.

"Your continued coverage alluding to a degree of nervousness among Trump Cabinet nominees, specifically, Secretary of Agriculture nominee Gov. Sonny Perdue, is a bit of a mystery," Duvall wrote. "I have spoken personally with Gov.

Perdue, and he maintains a full level of confidence in his nomination successfully moving forward, and in the confirmation process that lies ahead in the Senate."

The agriculture industry is in a hurry to see a new Agriculture secretary confirmed, but such delays are par for the course, Duvall said in his letter. Senate Agriculture Chairman Roberts said late last week that his panel had [yet to receive the paperwork](#) necessary to schedule a confirmation hearing for Perdue.

KETURAKIS TO LEAD CNFA BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture, a nonprofit that promotes farming in foreign countries, has appointed Eddie Keturakis as its new VP of business development. Keturakis most recently served as a senior agribusiness specialist for the International Finance Corp., part of the World Bank Group, where he worked with the ministries of agriculture and commerce in more than 20 Asian and African nations, according to a [statement](#) from CNFA.

MA'S INSTANT OATS:

— [The New York Times](#) tries to read the tea leaves on how President Trump and the first lady will approach the White House Kitchen.

— Technology is changing maple syrup production, The Associated Press [reports](#).

— A federal appeals court has rejected a suit that sought to require that egg containers be labeled to reflect the conditions in which the chickens were raised, the AP [reports](#).

— The Trump administration has been slow to fill key antitrust positions, causing concern among companies involved in mergers, The Wall Street Journal [reports](#).

CALENDAR: Please let us know what we missed at agcalendar@politico.com.

10 a.m. House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry holds a hearing on conservation in the next farm bill. The location is 1300 Longworth House Office Building. Details [here](#).

10 a.m. House Appropriations Committee's agriculture panel holds a hearing on Farm Credit Administration oversight. The location is 2362-A Rayburn House Office Building. Details [here](#).

2 p.m. House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Livestock and Foreign Agriculture holds a hearing on international market development in the farm bill. The location is 1300 Longworth House Office Building. Details [here](#).

THAT'S ALL FOR MA! See you again soon! In the meantime, drop your host and the rest of the team a line: cboudreau@politico.com and [@ceboudreau](#); jhopkinson@politico.com and [@jennyhops](#); hbottemiller@politico.com and [@hbottemiller](#); ikullgren@politico.com and [@IanKullgren](#); bgriffiths@politico.com and [@BrentGriffiths](#); and jhuffman@politico.com and [@jsonhuffman](#). You can also follow [@POLITICOPro](#) and [@Morning_Ag](#) on Twitter.

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Ross gets Senate approval to head Commerce in expanded trade role [Back](#)

By Doug Palmer | 02/27/2017 08:16 PM EDT

The Senate voted Monday night to confirm billionaire Wilbur Ross as Commerce secretary, putting in place another key member of President Donald Trump's trade and economic team.

The 79-year-old businessman is expected to play a leading role in trade policy as Trump looks to renegotiate NAFTA with Canada and Mexico and reduce the \$500 billion trade deficit with China.

The nomination — which passed 72-27, with Sen. [Johnny Isakson](#) (R-Ga.) absent — drew relatively little fire from Democrats compared to many of Trump's other nominees.

However, [Bill Nelson](#) (D-Fla.), the top Democrat on the Commerce Committee, criticized the White House for refusing to release Ross' written responses to [questions](#) about his role as vice chairman of the board of directors for the Bank of Cyprus, which has done business with Russian investors, including at least one with ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"[Ross] has verbally reiterated to me that he only had one meeting, approximately an hour, with one of the bank's Russian investors and that it occurred in 2014," Nelson said on the Senate floor. "The timing is important — 2014 — because that was before the presidential campaign."

"He also assured me that he knows of no loans or interaction between the bank or anyone affiliated with the Trump campaign or organization," Nelson continued. "Mr. Ross has been forthcoming to me and I believe him."

But the White House's decision not to release Ross' written answers ahead of the vote cost him support among the chamber's Democrats, Nelson said. In all, 26 Democrats and one independent, Sen. [Bernie Sanders](#) (I-Vt.), voted against Ross. Republicans held firm, with all 51 senators present voting to confirm along with 20 Democrats and the upper chamber's other independent, Sen. [Angus King](#) (I-Maine).

But Nelson said the White House's decision not to release Ross' written answers ahead of the vote cost him support among the chamber's 46 Democrats, a group that reaches 48 in number when one includes two independents who caucus with the chamber's minority party.

"The White House is sitting on Mr. Ross' written response to Sen. Nelson's letter,"

Minority Leader [Chuck Schumer](#) complained ahead of the vote. "It is another example of this administration abandoning transparency and trying to jam their nominees through without making all the relevant information public and available."

Ross, who made his fortune turning around companies in distressed industries like textiles and steel, advised Trump on trade issues during last year's campaign. That sets him apart from many of Trump's other Cabinet nominees who joined his team after he was elected.

Reflecting that close relationship, Ross is expected to have more influence over trade policy than previous Commerce secretaries, who usually play second fiddle on that issue to the U.S. trade representative.

Along with Peter Navarro — a former University of California-Irvine economics professor who now leads the White House's new National Trade Council — Ross helped craft "the Trump Trade Doctrine," which requires that any new trade deal increase the economic growth rate, decrease the trade deficit and strengthen the U.S. manufacturing base.

Trump, who prides himself on being a great businessman and negotiator, has gushed over Ross, who is well known on Wall Street for his investing skills. "Everybody calls him Wilbur," Trump crowed at a White House meeting with industry officials, held to discuss plans for creating jobs and boosting the economy.

Ross' job will be to execute some of the plans most often talked about by his new boss. He told the Commerce Committee at his confirmation hearing last month that renegotiating NAFTA was the administration's first trade priority, along with leveling the playing field with China to help bring manufacturing jobs back to the United States.

During the campaign, Trump threatened to accomplish the latter goal by imposing a 45 percent tariff on imports from China. But that seems to be off the table, as does a similar Trump threat to impose a 35 percent tariff on goods from Mexico.

That's a relief to many Republicans who have played important roles in passing trade deals over the last 25 years.

NAFTA "is not a dirty word," [John Cornyn](#) (R-Texas) said Monday during floor debate, adding that he was grateful Ross was only interested in updating the pact with Canada and Mexico rather than throwing it out.

Although Democrats have delayed action on many of Trump's nominees, Ross is taking office almost a full month earlier than former President Barack Obama's first Commerce secretary, Gary Locke, did. Locke was Obama's third choice for the job after two previous nominees backed out.

Meanwhile, Trump's nomination of veteran trade attorney Robert Lighthizer to be U.S. trade representative is now stalled because his past work on behalf of foreign governments requires Congress to approve a waiver for him to serve in the new

role.

A group of Democrats, led by West Virginia's [Joe Manchin](#), is demanding that a bill providing health care and pension benefits for miners be passed along with the waiver, further complicating the approval process for Lighthizer.

The Finance Committee passed the bill last year on a bipartisan vote of 18-8, but the conservative Heritage Foundation has blasted it as an unprecedented federal bailout of a private pension fund on behalf of the United Mine Workers of America.

The proliferation of high-powered trade positions within the Trump administration has caused some confusion about who will ultimately be calling the shots.

Ross acknowledged that uncertainty during his confirmation hearing and said the White House intends to respect the congressionally mandated responsibility of the U.S. trade representative to take the lead in the trade negotiations.

But Ross added: "I think it's important to bring all the intellectual resources and experience that we can, to helping solve the trade issues. I view that there will be a collaborative process among the U.S. trade rep, myself and Peter Navarro, the White House director of the National Trade Council. We will try our best collectively to do what's best for this country. So that's how we visualize the interaction of those parties working."

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Sources: White House proposes to cut EPA budget by quarter, shrink staff

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By Alex Guillén | 02/27/2017 07:00 PM EDT

The White House has proposed slashing EPA's budget by about a quarter and eventually eliminating 1 in 5 of the agency's workers, according to sources familiar with the budget proposal sent to EPA on Monday.

That budget proposal would set EPA's budget at \$6.1 billion, down from its current level of \$8.1 billion, according to two sources outside the agency. EPA's budget hasn't been that low since 1991, according to agency records. One of those sources also said that the White House has proposed reducing EPA's 15,000-strong workforce to 12,000, a level not seen since the mid-1980s.

The White House declined to confirm the figures.

One source told POLITICO that the proposed cuts were "far more severe than anyone imagined." And an EPA employee said staff were buzzing on Monday about the possibility of such a massive cut to the agency's budget.

In a brief interview, a senior EPA official refused to confirm the proposed cuts, adding that he was "not in a position to discuss it publicly." The official said the

budget blueprint is part of a "deliberative process" between the White House and EPA, adding that the Office of Management and Budget is expecting a response from the agency by Wednesday afternoon.

The White House said Monday it is seeking to hike defense spending by \$54 billion, a jump offset by shrinking spending at non-security agencies across the federal government.

Monday's proposal is part of the initial stages of the Trump administration's budget-crafting process. Agencies will return the proposals with comment in the coming days, and the Office of Management and Budget will release a "budget blueprint" on March 16, OMB Director Mick Mulvaney said. A full, detailed budget plan will not be released until May.

It remains unclear whether congressional Republicans will be willing to make such drastic budget shifts, but Democrats and environmentalists are already blasting the Trump proposal's domestic spending cuts.

"Reckless cuts to the EPA — the agency responsible for protecting public health and our environment — are not what Americans voted for in November," said Sen. [Tom Carper](#) (D-Del.).

"Here's what cutting EPA's budget means in the real world: more air pollution, more asthma attacks for kids, more health problems. This isn't about budget savings. It is about giving big polluters a license to pollute without consequences," said Elizabeth Thompson of the Environmental Defense Fund.

Andrew Restuccia and Esther Whieldon contributed to this report.

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Trump budget faces GOP resistance [Back](#)

By Rachael Bade, Sarah Ferris and Shane Goldmacher | 02/27/2017 07:31 PM EDT

Congressional Republicans on Monday panned Donald Trump's call to finance a military buildup by slashing domestic agencies and ignoring entitlement programs — undermining the president's budget even before it's been finalized.

The consternation spanned the party's ranks just one day before Trump addresses Congress for his first time Tuesday evening: House GOP fiscal hawks said it was ludicrous to think they'd pass a budget that did not address ballooning costs in Medicare and Social Security, the main drivers of the national debt. Pragmatic-minded GOP appropriators scratched their heads over where Trump would siphon off \$54 billion in domestic cuts. And GOP defense hawks said the Pentagon budget boost doesn't go nearly far enough.

Republican sources in leadership and on the Budget and Appropriations committees, meanwhile, quietly assured reporters that this was just an opening bid and that Congress, ultimately, has the power of the purse.

Make no mistake, they say: They'll be writing their own budget plans.

"The president will propose and the Congress will dispose," said House appropriator Charlie Dent (R-Pa.) "We'll look at his budget, but at the end of the day we in Congress write the appropriations bills, and I am not one who thinks you can pay for an increase in [military] spending on the backs of domestic discretionary programs, which constitute 13 or 14 percent of all federal spending."

Senior GOP aides echoed that sentiment. One noted, for instance that "few if any Democrats voted for President [Barack] Obama's budget the first time around. ... It's a blueprint." Another added, "it's the White House budget request — and 'request' is the key word here."

While most Republicans declined to be quoted on record criticizing Trump's budget before it has even been released, their initial reaction is a warning sign for the White House: If Trump wants to fortify the military, he has to give Republicans on the Hill something they can work with.

It's not that Republicans don't want to boost the Pentagon, but if they're going to pay for it, they'd rather not do it all on the backs of domestic agencies that have already seen their budgets gutted in recent years. They also are itching to do entitlement reform — a key pillar of the traditional GOP platform.

"There have been many attempts made to try to balance the books of the U.S. government on the backs of the discretionary dollar, and we all know that's a fantasy because the drivers of the debt are on the mandatory side: Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security," said Rep. Steve Womack (R-Ark.), who also sits on both the Budget and the Appropriations committees. "Trying to solve for a deficit in the hundreds of billions of dollars cannot be accomplished through deeper cuts to discretionary programs without terrific harm to both the economy and a lot of innocent people."

That's to say nothing of the practical problem Trump's plan would face in the Senate, where at least eight Democrats will be needed to overcome a filibuster and pass any spending bill. Senior Democrats on both sides of the Capitol greeted Trump's initial budget plan with furious opposition, and one Senate Democratic aide said "it's pretty hard to imagine" a single member of their party backing the proposal.

"Democrats will not help pass laws that shift more economic burdens onto hardworking American families," said House Appropriations Committee ranking member Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) in a statement. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer equated the plan to "taking a meat ax to programs that benefit the middle class."

The White House on Monday unveiled the proposed spike in military spending and vowed to offset it dollar-for-dollar with cuts to domestic programs that have nothing to do with defense. Those agencies and departments, including State and the Environmental Protection Agency, could face severe cutbacks on average of more than 10 percent if veterans' benefits remain unchanged.

The White House sources said the domestic offsets were necessary because Trump does not intend to go after entitlements to pay for spending increases, a promise he made on the campaign trail. And therein lies the first problem: The Republican budget playbook in recent years has always relied on entitlement reforms to achieve the party's fiscal gold standard: balancing the budget within 10 years.

House Republicans are already prodding their leaders to maintain that pledge in their coming budget — even if Trump doesn't in his.

"We can't abandon long-term reforms and entitlement and maintain any kind of credibility at all," Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.) said in an interview last week. "We've always had reforms in there, we need to keep reforms there."

Republicans will also find themselves under heavy pressure from outside conservative groups to rein in entitlements, which compose about half of annual federal spending. In an interview last week, FreedomWorks policy director Jason Pye noted that Republicans could "cut every single bit of nondefense discretionary spending, and you're still going to run a budget deficit." The entire budgets of the State Department and EPA, for instance, barely exceed the proposed \$54 billion increase in defense-related spending.

"You're effectively only taking 12.5 percent of federal spending. I don't think that's tenable. You actually have to do more," Pye said.

Hill Democrats spent all of Monday accusing the president of putting the burden on everyday Americans. Sen. Chris Coons (D-Del.) argued that foreign aid — which is on Trump's chopping block — isn't "charity" but "directly advances U.S. national interests by fostering a safer and more stable world." Schumer said Americans under Trump's domestic cuts would be breathing "dirtier air and drinking dirtier water." And House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (R-Calif.) said the cuts could mean "1,000 grants to medical researchers" are cut and "100,000 low-income kids would be cut out of" federal education programs.

Meanwhile, defense hawks like Sen. John McCain said there wasn't enough spent on defense. Other defense-minded Republicans quietly fretted that cuts to State, the key department heading up the nation's diplomacy, would mean less security for the country, not more.

Not everyone dreads the idea of offsetting a military boost with cuts to domestic spending. One Freedom Caucus source believed its group members could be receptive to such reductions; they feel the government is too bloated anyway. Other budget hawks like Rep. Todd Rokita (R-Ind.) said there "certainly" is enough waste on the domestic side that it could offset the defense boost.

Like Democrats, Republicans on the appropriations panel — and most if not all moderate Republicans — also worry about what such those cuts would mean for their constituents. Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho) says he doesn't think the House could pass such cuts, and "I think you'd see even appropriators voting against those bills." Asked if he worried Trump might tweet shame him for opposing his idea, Simpson said no.

"There is just not that much spending in the rest of [the agencies]" to offset the military increase, he told reporters during a House vote Monday night. "There is more to our government than just defense."

Appropriations Committee spokeswoman Jennifer Hing said Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.) "strongly agrees that more investment in our national defense is needed, and that all federal programs should be reviewed as to their worth and value."

She notably added this caveat, however, echoing the theme of the day on the Hill: "As always, the power of the purse lies with Congress, and any budget decisions will go through the regular budget and appropriations process."

Jennifer Scholtes and Burgess Everett contributed to this story.

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Organic supporters braced for farm bill battle with 'forces of darkness' [Back](#)

By Jenny Hopkinson | 02/28/2017 05:02 AM EDT

Longtime supporters of organic foods are girding for a battle with forces from both outside and inside their ranks who see the next farm bill as a chance to make major changes to the Agriculture Department's National Organic Program.

Conservative groups, who have President Donald Trump's ear, say the government shouldn't be in the business of running a marketing program, especially one that they say misleads consumers to think the more expensive products are healthier. Meanwhile, some organic producers want the program updated in a way that reflects the needs of a now \$40 billion industry that's struggling to keep up with demand.

"There are a number of people who are saying, 'This is our opportunity; we've not liked all that's gone on in organic,'" said Kathleen Merrigan, a former USDA deputy secretary and one of the architects of the 1990 Organic Foods Production Act, who described the mounting efforts as "forces of darkness" at an event last month. "There are different business interests, there are different lawmakers who are sharpening their knives."

While the 2018 farm bill is still more than a year away, groups across agriculture are jockeying for their priorities to be included. Those with an interest in killing or reshaping the National Organic Program are no different. The NOP was created as part of the 1990 farm bill, which makes every reauthorization of the law a prime venue for changes.

However, what was once a niche sector with products reserved for coastal specialty stores, ignored by much of conventional agriculture, is now the fastest-growing part of the food industry. Organic food sales have increased more than 10 percent annually over the past few years, according to the Organic Trade Association. That's lured large food giants, like General Mills and Kellogg, to

launch their own organic brands, while consumers of all socioeconomic backgrounds now buy organic products at Kroger and Walmart.

Merrigan, who is now the director of sustainability at George Washington University, and others who have long advocated for a strong federal organic program are wary of any changes that they say could erode consumer confidence in the premiums they now pay for everything from coffee and milk to salt and bananas. They argue that government-backed certification provides a level playing field for food makers and prevents consumer confusion that would result from having many different standards.

"When the facts are on the table, most folks would understand that it would be short sighted to dismantle programs that create opportunity and choice," said Organic Trade Association Executive Director Laura Batcha.

Conservative taxpayer groups, like the Hoover Institution and Cato Institute, however, say the USDA's green and white label is nothing more than a marketing tool and not an accurate indicator that products are better than their conventional counterparts, as consumers now often believe. They'd like to see the \$9 million program, operated by USDA's Agriculture Marketing Service, dismantled and the job of certifying when products satisfy organic standards taken over by private groups, potentially offering consumers several different definitions for organic.

"Organic marketers mislead consumers into believing that organic growers don't use pesticides (they do) and that organic foods are more healthful ([they're not](#))," Henry Miller, a fellow at Hoover, wrote in a yet-to-be published op-ed that he recently shared with POLITICO. "Their fear-mongering appears to influence shoppers, especially those with lower incomes, in an unconstructive way."

Miller, who held several positions at the FDA during the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations before serving as the founding director of the agency's Office of Biotechnology in 1989, has called for the dismantling of the program several times in pieces for Forbes, The Wall Street Journal and other publications over the past several years. With the "radical foodies who held sway in the Obama administration" out of office, Miller wrote in his recent op-ed, "the Donald Trump administration and GOP-controlled Congress have a golden opportunity to make the federal government's actions and programs more rational and cost-effective."

While Miller declined to be interviewed for this story, he said in an email to POLITICO that he has "communicated [his] views on the organic program and its subsidies to members of the transition and landing teams," adding: "They seemed quite receptive."

Miller is not alone in his call to end the USDA's program.

"If you interviewed a shopper about what organic means and legally what it means, I think there would be a very large discrepancy," said Peter Van Doren, editor of the Cato Institute's quarterly journal Regulation. Private companies should be able to create their own definitions for organic so consumers can pick the one that is best for them, he argues.

"I want rivalry and I want competition," Van Doren said. "I don't think there is any right definition of what is or isn't organic, and I want that fought out in the marketplace."

To be sure, the taxpayer groups might find some friends in Congress where Republicans often take issue with parts of the organic program. GOP lawmakers, including Senate Agriculture Chairman [Pat Roberts](#), have blasted USDA recently for its new organic animal welfare standards, which they say could put many organic egg and other livestock producers out of business.

But in general, the small price tag for the program, which accounts for less than .01 percent of the USDA's \$150 billion budget, means that organic rarely falls as a target for Republicans. In fact, House Speaker [Paul Ryan](#) flagged the program in his June 2016 economic plan as an example of good uses of regulation.

While conservative groups are out for the elimination of USDA's program, many organic producers want it to stay, albeit with some changes to help deal with the growing pains.

Certified U.S. farmland has not increased with demand, requiring huge imports of organic products, which some worry might not be held to the same high standards as those produced domestically. Meanwhile, organic food manufacturers find themselves increasingly trapped between strict requirements on what ingredients they can use and the need to make products that meet consumer expectations.

But any attempts to change the standards draw loud complaints from organic watchdog groups who want the program to stay as pure as possible.

The fight has played out during the hours-long meetings of the National Organic Standards Board, a 15-member panel of farmers, producers and consumers that advise the USDA on what should or shouldn't be used in organic products. The board has come under criticism following several high-profile decisions that some organic producers say were made due to public pressure and sound science.

The most recent fight: NOSB's 10-3 vote at its November meeting to recommend that the USDA prohibit the use of carrageenan, a thickening agent and stabilizer derived from seaweed, in foods labeled as organic.

The vast majority of research and health groups, including the World Health Organization and FDA, say carrageenan is safe for human consumption. However, the NOSB instead leaned on the Cornucopia Institute, an aggressively purist organic watchdog group that led a campaign to get the ingredient banned following some of its own research that found links to stomach inflammation.

That's not how decisions for the program should be made, many argue.

"When NOSB was put in place under the 1990 act, it made sense, [because] the industry didn't trust USDA as far as they could throw it," one organic policy watcher said. "But now, to have 15 people" with no scientific expertise "out of a \$40 billion industry drive policy is totally ridiculous."

Stronger criteria for serving on the NOSB, curbs on misleading advertising, sustainability requirements and provisions to ensure decisions are based in science would all help to dramatically improve the program and the consistency of its requirements, Marshall Matz, a long-time agriculture lobbyist with OFW Law, argued in a recent blog [post](#).

"Proven evidence gleaned from rigorous scientific inquiry must remain the key factor in the regulatory review and decision-making process for all programs, including the USDA organic program," wrote Matz, who represents carrageenan maker FMC Corporation. "That is especially true when it comes to judgments affecting the health and well-being of Americans, and something as essential as the quality and safety of our food supply."

However, the effort to reform the NOSB will face considerable opposition from within the industry, especially from OTA.

"[Organic] standard setting simply cannot just be given to the government," Batcha said. "There is absolutely the essential role for industry, stakeholders, the public to weigh in. There is just no way around that the success of the marketplace relies on that.... You have to be really careful about upsetting the underpinnings that create that value."

Lawmakers are also likely to be leery of overhauling the NOSB. Such a major reform would inevitably trigger ire from the likes of Cornucopia and internet celebrity Food Babe, who have proven adept at inundating offices with phone calls and emails on food legislation they don't like, warns the organic policy watcher.

That's what happened last summer when lawmakers were working on GMO labeling, a fight still fresh in the minds of many on Capitol Hill. For now, members of Congress say they are waiting for the organic industry to present its list of asks for the reauthorization before they start making changes to the organic law.

"It's really early at this point in time" to be talking about what will be included in the next farm bill, said Michigan Sen. [Debbie Stabenow](#), ranking member on the Senate Agriculture Committee and a strong supporter of the organic program. "We are just beginning the process of listening to everybody. We want to hear about improvements [to organic], but ... I think what's happening is that they are formulating ... what they want to ask for."

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Trump's nominees gripe the White House isn't protecting them [Back](#)

By Tara Palmeri and Andrew Restuccia | 02/21/2017 05:04 AM EDT

Candidates for top jobs in President Donald Trump's administration are getting spooked after Andrew Puzder's nomination was scuttled, and they fear the White House isn't doing enough to protect them from grueling confirmations, according

to several sources involved in the process.

The concerns are affecting not only some of the highest-profile nominations, including agriculture secretary pick Sonny Perdue, but also candidates for ambassadorships, judicial positions and other posts. The chill that's settled in even has some people considering bowing out of contention, meaning Trump's attempt to quickly fill his government could drag out even more.

Some potential nominees are especially focused on the botched and slow-moving confirmation process of Puzder, the former labor secretary nominee, as a cautionary tale of what could go wrong if the administration isn't closely engaged in nomination fights.

While nominees like Perdue don't have the same sort of baggage Puzder had. Perdue and others are concerned about his lack of contact with White House chief of staff Reince Priebus and his office, according to two sources close to him. They're also concerned about what their critics might dig up if their nominations linger in the Senate for weeks amid slow-walking by Democrats.

"It's been a month since inauguration. Why are some Cabinet nominees waiting on return calls from the White House?" said a GOP operative with knowledge of the process, who, like other people quoted in this story, requested anonymity to speak freely about the issue.

"We're reaching a point where nominees like Perdue are concerned. Potential ambassadors and judges are wondering how are you going to handle my confirmation? Very few people at that level don't have skeletons in their closet, so you [need to] get confirmations done lickety-split."

Others have complained that the White House has not mounted a strong enough defense of its nominees amid a string of negative stories — including the tape that POLITICO resurfaced of Puzder's ex-wife appearing on a 1990 "Oprah" program in disguise to accuse him of domestic violence, allegations she later recanted. They say the White House is often taking hours to respond to requests for comment from reporters and sometimes not responding at all.

Like most administrations, Trump's has barred nominees from talking to reporters, leaving them unable to defend themselves. And many of the nominees' staffers are not authorized to speak to the media on record either.

A White House official strongly disputed the notion that the administration isn't supporting the nominees, adding that there are staff dedicated to working with Trump's picks. "The slow-moving process is due to the Democrats constantly blocking our nominees," the official said. "We are very proud of our nominees and looking forward to having all of them confirmed."

Many of Trump's Cabinet picks have already been confirmed, but several await the green light from the Senate, including former Sen. Dan Coats, Trump's pick for director of national intelligence; investor Wilbur Ross, his choice for commerce secretary; and Florida law school dean Alexander Acosta, his new pick for labor secretary.

Acosta is expected to win Senate approval, but he could face tough questions from Democrats about allegations that, when he was a prosecutor, he cut a sweetheart plea deal with a billionaire accused of having sex with underage girls.

Democrats are likely to put many of Trump's remaining nominees through the wringer as they seek to undercut the White House. Republicans held up many of Barack Obama's second-tier nominees for months over disagreements with his policies.

Trump himself seems to have taken personal offense at the rough treatment many of his nominees have gotten.

"I've also worked to install a Cabinet over the delays and obstruction of Senate Democrats," Trump said during his news conference on Thursday. "You've seen what they've done over the last long number of years. That will be one of the great Cabinets ever assembled in American history."

But allies of some of the nominees believe they're being put in unnecessarily vulnerable positions — and that the situation has gotten worse.

During the transition, Trump's aides set up a "[war room](#)" to help prepare his Cabinet hopefuls for their confirmation hearings, recruiting dozens of outside policy experts and public relations veterans to run nominees through a [grueling](#) series of practice sessions.

Since Trump took office, nominees have received less attention from top White House officials, who are focused on managing a chaotic first few weeks in office, according to people close to the process. With the transition team winding down, and the duties of getting nominees confirmed falling more heavily on the White House chief of staff and his deputies, potential ambassadors and other nominees say they fear their reputations will be tarred.

Puzder's decision Wednesday to withdraw as nominee for labor secretary after a series of damaging revelations came to light in recent weeks has further rattled some people considering taking Senate-confirmed jobs.

They worry that Democrats' efforts to delay votes on nominees give opponents more time to shine a light on embarrassing opposition research and put pressure on moderate Republicans to vote "no."

"We knew Puzder was going to be tough; there should have been a strategy to move ahead on the other ones," said a former Trump transition official. "If you hang out on the ridge line, you're going to get shot."

One person working for a Cabinet nominee complained that the nominee struggled to get White House officials on the phone and saw little public support from Trump even as the nominee was coming under constant fire from Senate Democrats.

An executive at a group that worked closely with one of Trump's nominees said the White House made little effort to coordinate its message with outside

organizations.

"It's their nominee. They have to run point. And they just weren't," the person said. "Usually you've got a White House political and communications operation that is reaching out to their allies as the ebb and flow transpires and asking groups to amplify or downplay or recharacterize certain things that are happening to their nominees. And that just wasn't happening."

Trump has only occasionally used his Twitter feed, which often sets the day's agenda in Washington, to defend his Cabinet nominees, something that hasn't gone unnoticed among the team of people hired to shepherd his nominees through the Senate confirmation process.

"How many tweets were sent in December and January and how many were focused on the Cabinet picks?" asked another person close to one of the nominees, noting that Trump used his Twitter feed to opine on everything from Meryl Streep's Golden Globes speech to the size of his inauguration crowd.

Indeed, in the run-up to a vote on Betsy DeVos' confirmation as secretary of education, Trump's personal account was largely silent about her confirmation, save for a Jan. 17 tweet saying DeVos has the "talent, commitment, and leadership capacity to revitalize our public schools."

The morning of the Senate vote on whether to confirm DeVos, during which Vice President Mike Pence would cast a historic tie-breaking vote, Trump's official Twitter account called DeVos "a reformer, and she is going to be a great Education Sec. for our kids!"

One former transition official blamed Trump's lobbying ban for what he called an "ad hoc" process of preparing nominees, arguing the restriction cuts out experienced former congressional aides who are now lobbyists.

"That means that people have been left trying to navigate congressional meetings, congressional hearings and congressional votes," the person said, "mostly without the help of anyone who knows anything about Congress."

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From: Lewis, Paul I - AMS
To: [McEvoy, Miles - AMS](#)
Subject: RE: NOSB sunset review process
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 10:55:16 AM

I have a call with Bill @ 11. Will be a few minutes late to NOP staff meeting.

Paul

Paul I. Lewis, Ph.D.
Director, Standards Division
National Organic Program
Agricultural Marketing Service
Marketing and Regulatory Programs
Department of Agriculture
202 260 9294

From: Allen, William - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 10:53 AM
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I'm available from 11 to 11:30 if that works for you. (b) (6) Thank.

On Mar 28, 2017, at 10:43 AM, Lewis, Paul I - AMS <PaulI.Lewis@ams.usda.gov> wrote:

What is your number so we can chat. I do not want to take up time for important (b) (6) so will make it short.

Paul

Paul I. Lewis, Ph.D.
Director, Standards Division
National Organic Program
Agricultural Marketing Service
Marketing and Regulatory Programs
Department of Agriculture
202 260 9294

From: Allen, William - AMS
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 10:40 AM
To: Lewis, Paul I - AMS <PaulI.Lewis@ams.usda.gov>; Nally Yanessa, Shannon - AMS <Shannon.NallyYanessa@ams.usda.gov>
Subject: Fwd: NOSB sunset review process

Hi there. What's the latest on carrageenan? Has the board made in recommendations

lately? I'm on (b) (6) today but can make myself available for a call if needed.
Thanks.

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Miller, Pam" <Pam.Miller@mail.house.gov>
Date: March 28, 2017 at 10:01:19 AM EDT
To: "Allen, William - AMS" <William.Allen@ams.usda.gov>
Subject: RE: NOSB sunset review process

Hey Bill

I can do a call between 3:30-4:30 if any time that hour works?

From: Allen, William - AMS [<mailto:William.Allen@ams.usda.gov>]
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2017 8:39 PM
To: Miller, Pam <Pam.Miller@mail.house.gov>
Subject: Re: NOSB sunset review process

Think I'm booked until noon. Let me check my schedule in the morning.

On Mar 27, 2017, at 5:42 PM, Miller, Pam <Pam.Miller@mail.house.gov> wrote:

Hey Bill

I was out on Friday so I apologize for the delay. It will probably be easier to talk over the phone. In particular this relates to carrageenan. I'm pretty flexible in the morning after 9:30 if you have time for a call? Thanks
pam

From: Allen, William - AMS
[<mailto:William.Allen@ams.usda.gov>]
Sent: Friday, March 24, 2017 11:30 AM
To: Miller, Pam <Pam.Miller@mail.house.gov>
Subject: RE: NOSB sunset review process

Hi there and thanks for your patience. Not sure what you're asking here, so I'm sending you info. on the upcoming NOSB meeting and a recent sunset press . The sunset review process is working the way it has for the last several years and I have not heard much on it. I'm around later today or feel free to send me specific questions. Thanks.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/content/usda-publishes->

[national-organic-standards-board-meeting-proposals-and-discussion-documents-0](#)

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/content/usda-publishes-2017-sunset-review-notice>

From: Miller, Pam [<mailto:Pam.Miller@mail.house.gov>]
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2017 10:38 AM
To: Allen, William - AMS
Subject: NOSB sunset review process

Hey Bill

Hope all is well. I wanted to check in on where things stand with NOSB sunset review process please? We had some report language in our FY17 ag approps report and I'm trying to make sure I'm up to speed. I know there were meetings in Nov, and now what happens? Feel free to email or call me at 226-1097. I'm leaving in about an hour to go to an event at (b) (6) this afternoon so we can also talk Monday.

Thanks!

Pam

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From: Lewis, Paul I - AMS
To: [Gebault King, ReneeA - AMS](#)
Cc: [McEvoy, Miles - AMS](#); [Tucker, Jennifer - AMS](#); [Nally Yanessa, Shannon - AMS](#); [Brines, Lisa - AMS](#)
Subject: FW: Meeting Request Next Week
Date: Wednesday, April 5, 2017 5:52:19 PM

Renee,

I am out of the office next week. However, please work with Shannon and Lisa to attend such a meeting. I am meeting with Shannon and Lisa tomorrow and will discuss with them.

Thanks.

Paul

Paul I. Lewis, Ph.D.
Director, Standards Division
National Organic Program
Agricultural Marketing Service
Marketing and Regulatory Programs
Department of Agriculture
202 260 9294

-----Original Message-----

From: McEvoy, Miles - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 5:49 PM
To: Gebault King, ReneeA - AMS <ReneeA.GebaultKing@ams.usda.gov>
Cc: Lewis, Paul I - AMS <PaulI.Lewis@ams.usda.gov>
Subject: FW: Meeting Request Next Week

Please respond. You may need to refer to Paul. Also let FAS know about the request.

Miles

-----Original Message-----

From: Josyline Javelosa (Agriculture) [<mailto:joy.javelosa@philippinesagriculture.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 12:12 PM
To: McEvoy, Miles - AMS <Miles.McEvoy@ams.usda.gov>
Cc: Avila, Joan - AMS <Joan.Avila@ams.usda.gov> (b) (6)
Subject: RE: Meeting Request Next Week

Miles McEvoy
USDA-AMS Deputy Administrator

Dear Miles,

I hope this email finds you well. It's been a while since we last met 3 years ago at Anaheim.

We'd like to re-connect with you, this time to seek advice with regard to the sunset review of all ingredients (including carrageenan) on the US' National List approved for use in organic foods.

May we possibly visit you at USDA on Monday (Apr 10) or the afternoon of either Tuesday or Wednesday (April 11 or 12) for a brief meeting?

We look forward to hearing back from you at your soonest convenience.

Thank you and best regards,
Joy

Josyline C. Javelosa, Ph.D.
Agriculture Attaché

Embassy of the Philippines on BATAAN STREET corner; 1600 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Tel : (202) 467-9422

Email: (b) (6); joy.javelosa@philippinesagriculture.org

From: McEvoy, Miles - AMS
To: [Avila, Joan - AMS](#)
Subject: RE: Meeting Request Next Week
Date: Wednesday, April 5, 2017 5:55:25 PM

Rgk is handling, thanks.

From: Avila, Joan - AMS
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 3:46 PM
To: McEvoy, Miles - AMS <Miles.McEvoy@ams.usda.gov>
Subject: FW: Meeting Request Next Week

Miles:

Should I set up a meeting next week with this person?

Thanks.

Joan

-----Original Message-----

From: Josyline Javelosa (Agriculture) [<mailto:joy.javelosa@philippinesagriculture.org>]
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 12:11 PM
To: McEvoy, Miles - AMS <IMCEAEX-MILES+2EMCEVOY+40AMS+2EUSDA+2EGOV@xmailgateway.local>
Cc: Avila, Joan - AMS <Joan.Avila@ams.usda.gov>; (b) (6)
Subject: Meeting Request Next Week

Miles McEvoy
USDA-AMS Deputy Administrator

Dear Miles,

I hope this email finds you well. It's been a while since we last met 3 years ago at Anaheim.

We'd like to re-connect with you, this time to seek advice with regard to the sunset review of all ingredients (including carrageenan) on the US' National List approved for use in organic foods.

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Thank you and best regards,
Joy

Josyline C. Javelosa, Ph.D.
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Embassy of the Philippines on BATAAN STREET corner; 1600 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington,
D.C. 20036. Tel : (202) 467-9422

Email: (b) (6); joy.javelosa@philippinesagriculture.org

From: Favre, Tracy
To: [Zuck, Penelope - AMS](#); [McEvoy, Miles - AMS](#); [Lewis, Paul I - AMS](#); [Melvin, Jonathan - AMS](#)
Cc: [Randolph, Alexis](#); [Courtney, Cheri - AMS](#)
Subject: RE: QAI visit with the NOP - May 26th?
Date: Thursday, April 13, 2017 4:43:28 PM
Attachments: [image007.png](#)

Thanks Penny,
Looking forward to visiting with you.
Tracy

Tracy Favre | Director | Phone: 1 (209) 814-1010 | Email: tfavre@qai-inc.com
QAI | 9191 Towne Centre Dr. Suite 200 | San Diego | CA | 92122 | www.qai-inc.com

From: Zuck, Penelope - AMS [mailto:Penelope.Zuck@ams.usda.gov]
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2017 3:09 PM
To: Favre, Tracy; McEvoy, Miles - AMS; Lewis, Paul I - AMS; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS
Cc: Randolph, Alexis; Courtney, Cheri - AMS
Subject: RE: QAI visit with the NOP - May 26th?

Hi Tracy,
We are in receipt of your list and talking with staff about schedules to make sure we have someone available to discuss each topic. I will be in touch soon to schedule the meeting date and time with you.

Thank you,
Penny



PENNY ZUCK | USDA-NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM | ACCREDITATION MANAGER |
USDA • AMS • NOP | 1400 Independence Ave SW | 2649-S | Washington DC 20250
☎ 202.260.9444 | Fax 202.205.7808 | (b) (6) | ✉ Penelope.Zuck@ams.usda.gov
[Subscribe to the Organic Insider](#)

From: Favre, Tracy [mailto:tfavre@qai-inc.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 13, 2017 4:05 PM
To: McEvoy, Miles - AMS <Miles.McEvoy@ams.usda.gov>; Lewis, Paul I - AMS <Paull.Lewis@ams.usda.gov>; Zuck, Penelope - AMS <Penelope.Zuck@ams.usda.gov>; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS <Jonathan.Melvin@ams.usda.gov>
Cc: Randolph, Alexis <Randolph@qai-inc.com>
Subject: RE: QAI visit with the NOP - May 26th?

Hi Miles,

Any feedback on the proposed topics I sent you last week?

Tracy

Tracy Favre | Director | Phone: 1 (209) 814-1010 | Email: tfavre@qai-inc.com
QAI | 9191 Towne Centre Dr. Suite 200 | San Diego | CA | 92122 | www.qai-inc.com

From: Favre, Tracy

Sent: Friday, April 07, 2017 3:59 PM

To: 'McEvoy, Miles - AMS'; 'paul.lewis@ams.usda.gov'; Zuck, Penelope - AMS; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS

Cc: Randolph, Alexis

Subject: RE: QAI visit with the NOP - May 26th?

Hi Miles,

We have quite a few items we're interested in chatting with the Program about. Knowing we probably won't get to all topics, here are a few topics of interest:

1. Status of 5 year re-accreditation
2. Adding Wild Crop accreditation back to QAI's portfolio
3. Mexico equivalency agreement update, including import/export certs
4. US/Canada Equivalency verification requirements
5. OLM investigation update
6. Vitamins, Chilean nitrate and carrageenan updates to NL
7. Animal Welfare standard status
8. Open complaints
9. Pesticide Residue issues
10. % organic calculation guidance
11. USDA Transitional Program pause update
12. Taiwan "blacklist" discussion
13. Origin of Livestock update

Should you have any questions or need clarification, please let me know.

Thanks!

Tracy Favre | Director | Phone: 1 (209) 814-1010 | Email: tfavre@qai-inc.com
QAI | 9191 Towne Centre Dr. Suite 200 | San Diego | CA | 92122 | www.qai-inc.com

From: McEvoy, Miles - AMS [<mailto:Miles.McEvoy@ams.usda.gov>]

Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 5:17 PM

To: Favre, Tracy; paul.lewis@ams.usda.gov; Zuck, Penelope - AMS; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS

Cc: Randolph, Alexis

Subject: RE: QAI visit with the NOP - May 26th?

Hi Tracy –

Please provide topics that you would like to discuss so we can prepare for the meeting. I am not available at those times but other NOP staff should be able to assist you.

Best,
Miles

Miles V. McEvoy
Deputy Administrator
Agricultural Marketing Service – National Organic Program

From: Favre, Tracy [<mailto:tfavre@qai-inc.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 9:00 PM

To: McEvoy, Miles - AMS <Miles.McEvoy@ams.usda.gov>; paul.lewis@ams.usda.gov; Zuck, Penelope - AMS <Penelope.Zuck@ams.usda.gov>; Melvin, Jonathan - AMS <Jonathan.Melvin@ams.usda.gov>

Cc: Randolph, Alexis <Randolph@qai-inc.com>

Subject: QAI visit with the NOP - May 26th?

Hi Miles, Paul, Penny and Jonathan,

Alexis Randolph and I will be in Washington DC the week ending May 26 and wanted to know if you might have availability for a visit? We could meet either the morning of May 26 or the afternoon of May 25 (preferred Friday morning).

Please let me know if either of those dates might work for you. Thanks and I look forward to catching up!

Tracy

Tracy Favre | Director | Phone: 1 (209) 814-1010 | Email: tfavre@qai-inc.com
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