



May 13, 2017

TO: Sonny Perdue, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture
RE: Organic Import Fraud and Removal of National Organic Program Deputy Administrator Miles McEvoy

Dear Secretary Perdue:

The Cornucopia Institute, a national nonprofit farm research organization, is compelled to again bring to your attention the need to take action to correct chronic failings with enforcement and integrity issues at the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP).

We are following up on our letter of May 2 to you in light of the [latest explosive story](#) in the *Washington Post* on gross fraud in the importing of organic livestock feeds into the U.S. The *Post's* investigation is particularly damning given that the dramatic growth in cheaper imports has shut the door to American organic farmers who are unable to sell their legitimate, organically grown grains to domestic buyers. Imports, according to our sources, now appear to make up the majority of the U.S. organic market.

This latest revelation tracks closely with the scandal surrounding the nation's largest organic dairy producer that was revealed in the May 2 [Washington Post story](#) to be engaged in alleged illegal organic livestock management activities. Many family-scale organic dairy farmers have experienced severe pay cuts this year, or the imposition of quotas, due to the current huge surplus of organic milk that operations like Aurora are responsible for creating with their suspect practices. Formal legal complaints against "organic" dairy CAFOs, and their certifiers, have languished unaddressed at the NOP for months or years.

We are again calling for you to take action and replace the NOP's current management led by USDA Deputy Administrator Miles McEvoy.

The next organic scandal is already at the door: the flood of foreign hydroponic imports that are illegal to sell as organic in their country of origin but are being sold in the U.S. as certified organic produce — even though the U.S. organic standards clearly requires soil stewardship as a prerequisite for organic certification. These foreign imports are already forcing domestic farmers in the Northeast out of retail markets for their produce grown in American soil.

Just this week you said of American farmers that if, "**they can grow it, we're here to sell it.**" That promise is fading in the organic sector for ethical organic farmers and we need your swift intervention. The organic sector has grown to more than \$40 billion/yr. But increasingly, that market belongs to foreign imports and those willing to cheat or skirt federal regulations.

Cornucopia is bringing this again to your attention because you have the ability to make the needed changes—to make a clean break from the record of corruption during the Obama administration regarding NOP oversight and management. We encourage you to do so. Our staff stands ready to brief you on the current problems at the National Organic Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will Fantle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Will Fantle, Codirector
608-625-2000