

Dear USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and NOSB Chairman Barry Flamm,

The will of Congress, and the rule of law, has been ignored for too long in the management of the USDA's organic program. This problem predates the Obama administration. But after the election of President Obama, we had hopes for "change" at the USDA.

We ask that you both immediately take charge of investigating improprieties at the National Organic Program (NOP) and address the following problems/issues:

1. Based on intentional misinformation provided the NOSB, and incompatibility with the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA), we ask that the National Organic Program return to the NOSB, for reconsideration, its recommendation approving Martek Biosciences' genetically mutated algal/fungal oils, containing many synthetics.
2. The NOSB should remove carrageenan from the list of approved non-organic food substances due to serious health and environmental concerns, including being classified as a "possible carcinogen."
3. The initial Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) review of carrageenan, and a subsequent review at sunset, took an industry-friendly perspective by ignoring well-documented health and environmental concerns. Because these reviews by agribusiness-affiliated scientists were not aberrations, we request that all future sunset reviews be required to include new Technical Reviews, until the integrity of the process can be assured.
4. The process of choosing individuals or organizations to conduct future Technical Reviews needs to be revamped to assure reviews by truly independent scientists. The current contract with The Organic Center, an offshoot of the industry's largest trade/lobby group, must be immediately discontinued.
5. All future NOSB appointments should be made respecting the letter of the law and congressional intent. "Farmer" board representatives must, as is written in the law, *own or operate a certified organic farm*. Further, the independence of NOSB members must be maintained by refraining from appointing farmers, scientists, environmentalists, and consumers who are simultaneously employees of corporate agribusiness.
6. We call on the Secretary to immediately remove the new NOSB "farmer" representative who in reality is a full-time employee of Driscoll Strawberry Associates, Inc. and replace this individual with a **legitimate** farmer meeting the definition of the law. (We have no objection to her future appointment to a board seat reserved for a handler.)
7. The provisions for declaring Conflicts of Interest by NOSB members must be refined and enforced.

8. Recent rules reducing individuals with public interest groups to 3 minutes of public testimony during NOSB meetings, and limiting direct correspondence with NOSB members, give corporate agribusinesses a disproportionate advantage, since they can afford to be represented by numerous executives and lobbyists. Public participation should not be shortened. The process should be more inclusive.

9. And, finally, 2 ft.² for poultry outdoors, and other woefully inadequate animal husbandry recommendations, need to be revisited. We all want to be proud of the integrity of humane organic livestock production.

Thank you for considering my concerns. I urge you to take action to prevent embarrassment to the USDA and the organic industry, preventing organic stakeholders from being compelled to sue the USDA to enforce the law.

Name: _____

Signature: _____


Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Additional Comments:

Please return by mail to: The Cornucopia Institute, PO Box 126, Cornucopia, WI 54827



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<i>Your financial contribution is voluntary, but we hope you will support the campaign to protect authentic organics.</i> No donation is necessary to hand-deliver your proxy letter to USDA, but please consider supporting the campaign!						