

Codirector Mark Kastel's Testimony at the Fall 2015 NOSB Meeting

Thank you, Madam Chair

My name is Mark Alan Kastel.

I'm here today representing The Cornucopia Institute and our approximately 10,000 members, who passionately care about the issues before this board.

Certified organic farmers are our primary constituency.

Mark Twain once said:

Loyalty to country always ... Loyalty to the government when it deserves it.

Mark Kastel once said:

Loyalty to organics always ... Loyalty to the NOP when it deserves it.

We've wondered why there isn't more outrage on the part of people appointed to this board, who were theoretically here, as Congress had intended, to defend the integrity of the organic label and protect the ethical industry participants, and loyal organic consumers, from fraud and misappropriation of the movement many of us helped found decades ago.

We just released Cornucopia's updated voting scorecard.

We've been accused by one political appointee on this board of bullying and intimidation.

For heaven's sake, people, we've published the facts of how the people on this board are voting in view of the positions of stakeholders in this industry. On the public record.

Radical Cornucopia's policy positions, on the contested votes that we used for this scorecard, were **100%** in concert with Food and Water Watch, Beyond Pesticides, Center for Food Safety, Consumers Union, OCA, and other NGOs.

100%.

According to votes on the record, the majority of the board, at the last meeting, voted with the industry lobbyists, with scores between 9% and 33%.

Look at the slides. Do they look like organic farms?

When we paid for our unannounced aerial surveillance, **not one** egg laying operation had **any** chickens outdoors. The one broiler operation, with 40 barns, had **not one** chicken outdoors.

Access to pasture?

Of these dairies, managing as many as 18,000 head of cattle, somewhere between **zero** and 10% of their animals were outside of the feedlots.

Organic?

Let's applaud the NOP and its leadership.

Its legacy, according to recent USDA research:

- Fewer farmers
- Fewer organic acres

We now have CAFOs producing more than half of the organic milk. Seven "organic dairy farms" in Texas produce more milk than the hundreds of certified farms in Wisconsin.

For "organic eggs," 80% to 90% of are from CAFOs (up to 100K birds per building).

An estimated 80% to 90% of organic soybeans are being imported from countries like China and India.

Likely over 50% of organic corn is flooding the market from former Soviet bloc countries.

We received a phone call from one of the farmer-owned organic grain co-ops, last week. They literally cannot sell their 2015 crop corn or wheat due to the flood of imports.

Is everyone on this board 100% confident that 100% of all those commodities, shiploads, coming into the United States are really organic?

The government never lies.

Forget about Tonkin Gulf. Forget about torture. Forget about the weapons of mass destruction and hundreds of thousands of needless deaths.

Forget about USDA investigators traveling to Wisconsin and Virginia to interview our codirector, Will Fantle, and myself.

Forget that last week when we asked for copies of the sworn statements we gave under oath that we were told they would not be available until the nonexistent investigation was completed.

We have documentary evidence for all the claims we made and we shared it with some of the media.

And the charges?

- Illegally circumventing the NOSB's authority
- Violating OFPA (Cornucopia, along with 13 other organic stakeholders, are in court suing the USDA right now)

- Refusing to enforce the law when it comes to the giant CAFOs, hydroponics, nanotechnology and more
- Appointing corporate agribusiness executives to this board to fill slots Congress intended for working farmers
- And finally, **ethical concerns about violations of the FACA** law, documented with witness testimony, where the leader of the NOP has allegedly **used his influence to change the outcome of votes** on this board ... and then, when publicly criticized, reached out to stakeholders he is charged with regulating, including certifiers, asking them to write **letters of support** on his behalf.

More and more we're hearing from certified organic farmers, and consumers, that it's time to give up this fight. Concede the organic label to the industry and start all over again with something that we can all truly believe in.

They are the people who matter in this debate. Not the political appointees on this board and not most of us in this room whose livelihoods depend on, pretty much, the status quo.

I guess there are certain things about organic sausage making that is better off taking place out of the public eye.

Thank you very much.