

Upholding the Soul of Organics

In Defense of the Promise of Organic Food and Farming

2022 Impact Report

The Cornucopia Institute extends deep gratitude to all of our partners and supporters: Thank you for doubling down on your commitment to Cornucopia, mobilizing consumer support for authentic organic farmers and producers.

With your support last year, Cornucopia successfully transitioned into a collaborative, team-centered organization. Despite a global pandemic, [we hired a permanent Executive Director](#), created fair and transparent internal operational procedures, and fostered a positive staff culture. And our growing board (five new members in 2022) continued to evolve into a governing leadership role, providing for improved long-term sustainability of the organization.

As a major donor, your investments have solidified Cornucopia's watchdog role in the industry, supported transformative policy initiatives, and helped families and retailers across the country identify high-quality organic food and farms in the marketplace.

Marketplace Activism

Cornucopia remains a trusted source of information for farmers, good food advocates, and health-oriented consumers alike. Our consumer tools identifying authentic organic brands and farms have been used more than one million times to date. Through education and outreach, Cornucopia moves the needle on organic, while deepening the collective understanding of food systems at large.

In 2022 our educational outreach covered the benefits of pasture-raised organic beef, soil health, and organic labels, to name a few. [Scorecards rating organic brands](#) of dairy, beef, snack bars, and cereal were promoted to shoppers and retailers, driving organic marketshare away from industrial operations, rewarding authentic organic farms and processors in the marketplace.

This year, Cornucopia's research, educational materials, and other programs regularly reached our network of over 58,000 eNews subscribers, 212,000 social media followers, and 50,000 monthly website users. In the past 12 months, our scorecards were used by nearly 182,000 people. Our [Cultivator](#) newsletter, packed with independent journalism, was redesigned this year to better engage readers. It was mailed to nearly 10,000 households three times this year.

Organic-Only Independent Brands Available Nationally at Retail



Carrageenan

Since Cornucopia's advocacy on this issue began in 2011, consumer pressure has driven many companies to remove carrageenan from their products. But dozens of major organic brands continue to expose consumers to this harmful ingredient, some without listing it on the packaging. This year, Cornucopia promoted our [Guide to Avoiding Carrageenan in Organic Food](#) (consulted by more than 21,500 people so far this year), along with a video explaining how to use the guide. We built several partnerships to increase our campaign reach: Food Babe's Instagram reel referencing our research had 69,000 views in 30 minutes; the nation's largest food co-op, PCC Community Markets, asked to share our educational infographic comparing Irish moss to carrageenan; Price-Pottenger featured our carrageenan work in a full-page "In the News" spotlight in their summer 2022 issue; and My SuperHero Foods, which "teaches kids about the powers of wellness," spotlighted our carrageenan work. Also this year, we collected more than 1,000 signed copies of proxy letters calling on Costco to remove carrageenan from store brand organic products. The letters will be hand-delivered in a meeting with Costco later this month. Finally, our policy team has drafted a formal petition to the USDA to remove carrageenan from the National List of Allowed Substances. More detail in our 2023 grant proposal.

Who Owns Organic?

This popular project uncovers the truth behind consolidation within the organic food industry. The *Who Owns Infographic* was originally created by Dr. Phil Howard and details acquisitions



What the Grocery Industry Isn't Telling You



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Don't Let Factory Farms Undermine the Organic Label



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Cornucopia Releases New Local Organic Dairy Map



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and alliances among the top 100 food processors in North America. This year, Cornucopia updated Dr. Howard's research, creating a new web-based tool to make this information more accessible to the public. We will release the project in a few short weeks, complete with a press release, issue articles, and brand spotlights. As a companion piece to the *Who Owns Project*, Cornucopia created a poster containing lists and logos of independently owned, organic-only brands available at retail, nationally. The poster was printed and mailed to more than 9,000 households.

Organic Dairy

Cornucopia's longstanding work to protect authentic organic dairy farmers continued in 2022. We released an [interactive map](#) to help consumers identify local authentic organic dairy options. The map identifies 60 regional and local brands, including those that are highly rated on our Organic Dairy Scorecard. In addition to the map, Cornucopia engaged consumer volunteers with [two Action Alerts](#), helping Cornucopia track organic milk in the marketplace. We also reported out about the [dairy crisis in New England](#), promoted our [Organic Dairy Scorecard](#), and [spotlit farmers and retailers](#) in the Organic Dairy corner of our website.

Organic Eggs

Cornucopia's team is working on a refresh of our [Organic Egg Report and Scorecard](#) – bringing new research to the report and a new survey to the scorecard. The updated report will delve into the specific animal welfare and nutritional needs of laying hens, along with a breakdown of labels, among other topics. The updated scorecard will rate every organic egg brand available at retail, and

will be informed by Cornucopia's independent brand research, watchdog investigations, and responses to the new farmer survey.

Policy Action & Industry Watch

Cornucopia's policy team is deep in regulatory work: This year has been a big one for rulemaking at the USDA National Organic Program (NOP). Effective in June of 2022, the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) [amended the Origin of Livestock requirements](#) for dairy animals under the organic regulations. Cornucopia and our partners have been advocating to close this loophole for years. While we pause to recognize this win, we continue our push for fair rules and USDA enforcement. Activities included:

National Organic Standards Board

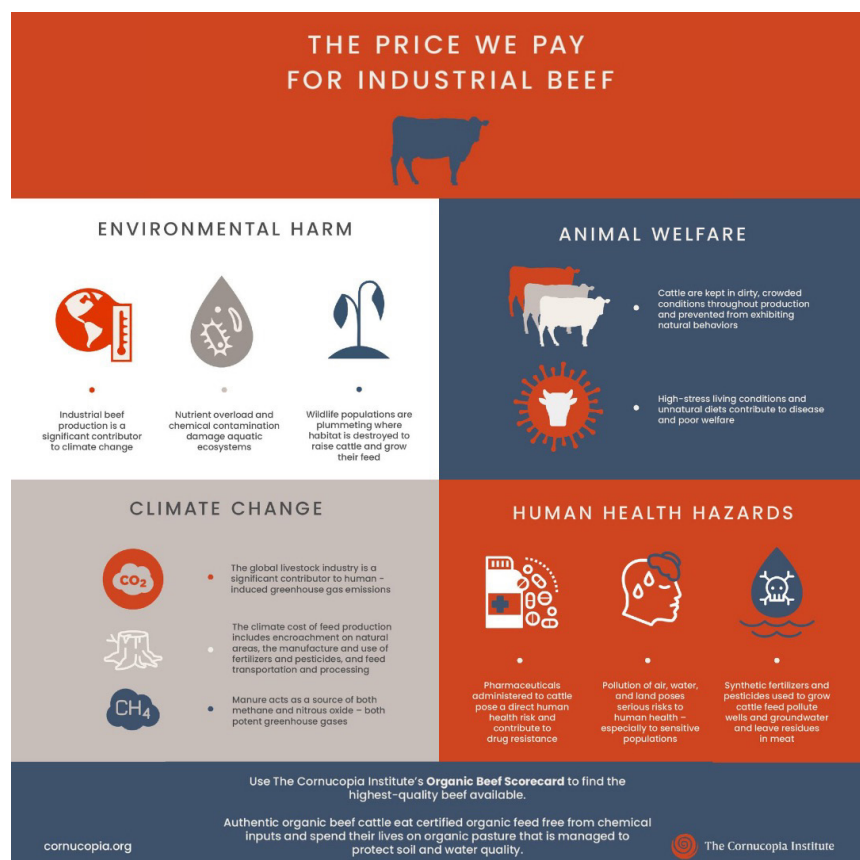
Again this year, [Cornucopia advocated for organic rulemaking](#) prior to the biannual meetings of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). Cornucopia encouraged farmer testimonies, promoted public comment, and made formal recommendations to the board regarding materials on the National List (e.g., distilled tall oil, Cetylpyridinium Chloride, squid byproducts, and biobased mulch film). Cornucopia also commented on the Policy and Procedures Manual (PPM) revisions. The NOSB added troubling new language to its PPM

regarding the public comment process, potentially limiting free speech at its public meetings. Cornucopia spoke out against this change and encouraged the public to do the same. Also this year, the NOSB unanimously voted to limit the use of all highly soluble nitrogen - something Cornucopia advocated for and a win for organic integrity. Cornucopia reported out live from the NOSB meetings, posting a play-by-play on our website and Twitter feed. We are the only organization in the organic space providing this service to the public.

National Organic Program

This spring, the USDA NOP announced a public listening session, with request for comment, regarding upcoming standards development activities. [Cornucopia provided talking points and encouraged organic advocates to submit comments](#) in the Federal Register. Also this year, in early August, the long-awaited Organic Livestock and Poultry Standards (OLPS) proposed rule dropped. OLPS is a new proposed rulemaking that would bring badly needed improvements to the livestock regulations. The proposal would outlaw the use of chicken porches as the birds' only outdoor access, a practice that has allowed industrialization into the organic egg marketplace. (Due to existing administrative case law, it is nearly impossible to outlaw porches without rulemaking. It would require an act of Congress.) [Cornucopia completed very nuanced public](#)

[comments, as well as an in-depth legal analysis and comparison of the OLPS proposal](#). Cornucopia worked in coalition with several nonprofits to oppose [industrialized interests](#) that want to kill this rule forever. We published [multiple Action Alerts](#) to boost public comments and understanding of this rulemaking. Retailers were also encouraged to comment. Cornucopia has reached out individually to farms and brands most affected by this proposed rule, encouraging them to share their perspectives in the public process. Cornucopia argues that the organic livestock standards must reflect organic consumers' expectations for meaningful animal welfare practices.



Cornucopia recently released the [Organic Beef Report and Scorecard](#). Attendant articles included: *Everything You Wanted to Know About Organic Beef*; *10 Reasons to Buy Authentic Organic Beef*; and *Why Processors Matter*. The Executive Summary was mailed to more than 500 supporters in February 2022.

Your Continued Support

For 16 years, Cornucopia has pursued our mission with the ongoing trust and support of more than 10,000 contributors. Together, we have fought to safeguard the integrity of the USDA organic seal in order to preserve the ecological principles and economic wisdom underlying authentic organic agriculture. Thank you for doing this work with us! For additional materials documenting the value of your support, please contact me directly.

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