

National Organic Standards Board votes to remove sodium nitrate and sulfur dioxide to extend the use of streptomycin and oxytetracycline until October 2014 and relist numerous other currently approved synthetics for organic production

The last week of April, the National Organic Standards Board, as well as a wide variety of others in the organic community met in Seattle. Almost two full days of public comment centered on the use of streptomycin and oxytetracycline for fire blight control on apples and pears, extending the limited use of sodium nitrate, and the proposed animal welfare standards. In addition, even though GMOs were not on the agenda, farmers, consumers and handlers all gave testimony expressing the risks that these novel life forms present to the integrity of organic.

NOSB votes must be reviewed by the National Organic Program and published in the Federal Register before they are actual requirements in USDA organic production. For all items that appear on the National List of approved and non-approved substances in organic production, the NOSB must vote to approve or deny inclusion on the list. The NOP cannot put on or take off any materials without NOSB action.

Both **Streptomycin and Oxytetracycline were approved for fire blight control** in apples and pears only **until October 2014**. These materials could have been removed as early as October 2012, but the NOSB gave fruit tree growers a few more years to find viable alternatives. The organic tree fruit growing community has been given clear warning from the NOSB, that these two items are not popular and the NOSB would like to see them removed permanently.

Sodium nitrate, or Chilean nitrate, was being reviewed as part of the 5 year "sunset" provision, where all items must be reviewed again by the NOSB and voted to be kept on the list. This product was **NOT RELISTED**, and will probably have this notification in the Federal Register sometime before the sunset date of October 2012. Growers who are currently using this product have 2 more growing seasons before they need to find an alternative source of nitrogen. The fact that this product is not allowed in the European Union, Japan or Canada on organic crops, was one factor in the board's decision to remove the limited use in USDA organic production.

Sulfur Dioxide, for underground rodent control (smoke bombs), was also **NOT RELISTED**, and it is anticipated it will be off the approved list, October 2012.

Synthetic nickel was petitioned for inclusion on the crops listing and the NOSB voted to not allow it.

The following items that were up for their 5 year renewal, were all approved for another 5 years on the National List of approved synthetics in crop production: Chlorine dioxide and sodium hypochlorite, Copper, Alcohols, Newspapers (mulch), Plastic Mulch, Pheromones, Vitamin D3, Lignon Sulfonate (both listings), Magnesium Sulfate, Ethylene gas, and Sodium Silicate.

Two contentious items, the animal welfare/animal slaughtering recommendation and the discussion on corn steep liquor's status as a synthetic or nonsynthetic were not decided and will be brought up again at the November meeting in Savannah Georgia. For processed products, Attapulgate was voted to be added as a nonsynthetic to 605a. Calcium Acid Pyrophosphate and Sodium Acid Pyrophosphate did not receive enough NOSB votes to be added to approved synthetics in organic food processing. Enzymes, Potassium Iodide, Nutrient vitamins and minerals, Tocopherols, and Chlorine Materials were all voted to be relisted for another 5 years.