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## NOSB Meeting Report Washington, DC — May 4 – 6, 2009

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) recommended adding injectable nutrients for livestock, sulfurous acid for crops, and acidified sodium chlorite and myrrh for processing to the National List. Nonorganic agricultural ingredients for use in organic processed foods continued to make up the greatest single category of petitions, with lecithin and wheat germ the subjects of debate. Committee work continued on what is agricultural or nonagricultural as well as synthetic or nonsynthetic.

### *Processing*

The NOSB voted to add the **acidified sodium chlorite** to the National List as a processing sanitizer. It is made on demand by mixing sodium chlorite and citric acid together in water. **Myrrh** was the only new substance that was recommended to be added to the National List at §205.606. The NOSB voted to remove **bleached lecithin** from §205.605(a), where it is identified as a nonagricultural ingredient that is not subject to requirements that organic sources be used if they are commercially available. There was a lengthy debate as to whether bleached lecithin could be considered agricultural. **Unbleached lecithin** currently appears at §205.606(o). The NOSB also requested a revision to that entry so that it would read 'Lecithin—deoiled,' instead of unbleached.

### *Crops*

**Sulfurous acid** used to adjust pH in irrigation water was recommended to be added to the National List. Sulfur is burned in a generator to create sulfur dioxide gas, which is in turn injected into the water supply. The acid precipitates various cationic minerals such as calcium and sodium and lowers the pH of water. The practice is important in alkaline areas with low rainfall. A petition to allow **isoparaffinic hydrocarbon** as a solvent carrier for pyrethrum was rejected. Removal of annotations that restrict the use of **peracetic acid** in crop production was discussed, but not voted on. Some members of the NOSB expressed concern that peracetic acid might be used as a soil drench, which would oxidize organic matter and would be a broad-spectrum biocide that might kill beneficial soil organisms. **Glycine betaine** and **polycaprolactone** are waiting for a technical review.

### *Livestock*

**Injectable vitamins and minerals** were recommended to be added with an annotation that they be injected by a veterinarian or under a veterinarian's supervision. The NOSB noted that the practice is currently accepted by many certifiers, sometimes without any veterinary supervision. **Propionic acid** was rejected as a preservative.

### *Clarification of Materials*

On the program was a presentation made by the Materials Working Group (MWG) to help the NOSB interpret what is synthetic. Chairs of the MWG, Kim Dietz and Gwendolyn Wyard, were praised by several NOSB members for the quality of their work. Emily Brown Rosen and Zea Sonnabend presented examples based on materials previously reviewed. A number of commenters, including OMRI, inquired about the petitions that were on hold, in part waiting for the clarification of materials.

### *Changes at USDA*

The meeting was notable for the participation of newly appointed Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan. Merrigan was widely acknowledged as a key author of the Organic Foods Production Act in the 1990 Farm Bill as staff to the Senate Agriculture Committee. Later, as Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service, she was also responsible for the National Organic Program rule published in 2000.

Merrigan announced a new organic initiative worth \$50 million. The Natural Resource Conservation Service will administer the nationwide special initiative to provide financial assistance to certified organic producers as well as

producers in the process of transitioning to organic production. Organic producers may also apply for assistance under the general Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

#### Other Items

The NOSB passed guidances on both biodiversity and peer review.

#### Future Work

The next meeting is expected to be held in November 2009. Petitioned substances that have been referred for technical reviews include ethylene glycol, terpene polymers, tetramethyl decyne diol, for crops; glucosamine and low-methoxy amidated pectin for processing; and vaccines for livestock. Other materials remain on the committee workplans. Animal welfare standards, mushrooms and apiculture are expected to be dealt with in the Fall meeting.

Table of NOSB Votes on Petitioned Substances

| Substance                        | CAS # / Binomial                      | Petitioner                   | 7 CFR <sup>1</sup> | BR <sup>2</sup> | Vote <sup>3</sup> | Notes  |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| <i>Crops</i>                     |                                       |                              |                    |                 |                   |  |
| Isoparaffinic hydrocarbon        | 64742-47-8                            | Diatect Corp.                | 205.601(m)         | F               | 0-14-0            | Petitioned for use as an extraction solvent for pyrethrin.   |
| Sulfurous acid                   | 7704-34-9                             | Harmon Systems International | 205.601            | A               | 12-2-0            | Burned sulfur produced on-farm for use to adjust irrigation water pH.  |
| <i>Livestock</i>                 |                                       |                              |                    |                 |                   |  |
| Injectable Vitamins and Minerals | various                               | Hue Karreman                 | 205.603            | A               | 14-0-0            | To be administered under the supervision of a veterinarian when FDA approved.  |
| Propionic Acid                   | 79-09-4                               | Delst                        | 205.603            | F               | 0-12-1            | Petitioned for use as an animal feed and hay preservative (mold inhibitor).  |
| <i>Processing</i>                |                                       |                              |                    |                 |                   |  |
| Chickory root                    | <i>Cichorium intybus</i>              | Sensus                       | 205.606            | F               | 0-14-0            | Voted to take no action on the petition.   |
| Color, red corn                  | <i>Zea mays</i>                       | Suntava                      | 205.606            | F               | 0-14-0            | Other sources of red color were considered available on 205.606.   |
| Lecithin, Bleached               | 8002-43-5                             | Clarkson                     | 205.605(b)         | A               | 13-1-0            | Petition to remove from 205.605(b).  |
| Lecithin, Fluid Unbleached       | 8002-43-5                             | Clarkson                     | 205.606            | A               | 13-1-0            | Petition to remove from 205.606 was revised by NOSB to change annotation to 'Lecithin-deoiled'                               |
| Myrrh, essential oil             | <i>Commiphora myrrha</i><br>8016-37-3 | Amrita Aromatherapy          | 205.606            | A               | 11-2-1            | A proposed annotation 'for perfume only' was not recommended.  |
| Propane                          | 74-98-6                               | ConAgra                      | 205.605(b)         | F               | 0-14-0            | Petitioned as a propellant for aerosol products.   |
| Propionic acid                   | 79-09-4                               | Delst                        | 205.605(b)         | F               | 0-13-1            | Petitioned for use in animal feed.   |
| Sodium chlorite (acidified)      | 7758-19-2 (sodium chlorite)           | Ecolabs                      | 205.605(b)         | A               | 12-2-0            | Secondary direct antimicrobial food treatment and indirect food contact surface sanitizing. Acidified with citric acid only. |
| Wheat germ                       | <i>Triticum aestivum</i>              | Grandy Oats                  | 205.606            | F               | 6-7-1             | Organic wheat was considered to be commercially available by a majority of NOSB.   |

<sup>1</sup> Section of the regulation where the substance would be added.

<sup>2</sup> Board Recommendation. Key: A = 'motion to amend accepted,' D = 'deferred,' F = 'motion to add failed,' and W = 'withdrawn by petitioner.'

<sup>3</sup> Votes record in the following format: "Yes-No-Abstain." One member absent throughout meeting and one missed propionic acid vote.