

A full transcript of the webinar will be available after the NOSB meeting (April 19-21).

NOSB members present (all 15):

Harriet Behar, Sue Baird, Tom Chapman, Steve Ela, Jesse Buie, Dave Mortensen, Emily Oakley, Scott Rice, A-dae Romero-Briones, Ashley Swaffar, Francis Thicke, Dan Seitz, Asa Bradman

Didn't hear: Lisa de Lima or Joelle Mosso, but we were told all 15 members were present.

NOP staff also on the call:

Jenny Tucker, Dr. Lisa Brines, Jessica Walden, Shelly, Matt P, Devon Patillo.

Miles McEvoy was apparently not on the call.

Of the 46 scheduled attendees, 12 (26%) were no-shows.

NOTE: An endemic problem has been industry consultants and executives not disclosing to the board, or the public, who they are being compensated to represent while testifying. This had improved in recent years. However, at this webinar a number of consultants provided comprehensive background on their qualifications to speak but failed to disclose who their clients were. One executive stated he worked for an input supplier but failed to disclose the name of the corporation.

This is the first meeting for the new NOSB board chair, Mr. Chapman. We have brought this issue to his attention and hope that he will enforce a requirement for transparent disclosure of professional relationships at the formal NOSB meeting in Denver, April 19-21.

First Name:	Last Name:	Affiliation:	Subcommittee(s)	Note(s)
Harold	Austin	Past NOSB member	Crops (CS); Handling (HS)	Submitted comments for micronutrients and boron, and for herbicides, supporting their relisting. Marine algae proposal with annotation limiting it – the proposal should include red and green algae too. Not enough time to submit comments after the meeting materials posted. We need materials to control <i>E. coli</i> and fireblight. Handling: supports all substances currently up for re-listing and new petitions. Ancillary substances for cellulose as listed: vinyl chloride should not be on this list. It is an oversight.
Gerry	Robertson	Reiter Affiliated Companies	Crops (CS)	Grows organic and conventional berries in U.S. and Mexico. Hydroponics: it does not identify container production as distinct from hydroponics. Recommends removing “biologically recalcitrant” definition; adding the term “sterile” to the definition may solve the problems. Recommends that container systems have a separate definition. Their container systems depend on the same biological processes as soil-based organics
David	Martinez	Marz Farms, Inc.	Crops (CS)	Absent
Cecille	Madriz	Fennel Farms, LP	Crops (CS)	Manager of organic container blueberry farm in CA. Reiterates importance of substrate farming for organic production. There is not enough organic land available – containers are more cost effective. “Biologically recalcitrant” definition does not make sense and you can’t compare water-based and container-based systems because they have different biological activity, etc. These systems provide more organic products at an affordable price. Question from Ashley Swaffar (what would happen to those products if not organic): We can’t grow blueberries here because the soil type is not right. The container/substrate farming allows the plant to grow the best berries they can.

Carmela	Beck	Driscolls	Crops (CS)	Organic program manager of Driscolls. Organic is 14% of business. The discussion document does not mention container in the title. Mixing container-based and water-based was very confusing. Only 14 days were allowed for comment. Crops subcommittee submits new definitions without letting us know their process and evolution of definition. Please provide rationale for modification. Why are coconut and peat “biologically recalcitrant”? Please invite container producers to your next meeting. Organic was written to encompass new technologies. Francis: What percent of that 14% is organic container/liquid nutrients? Answer: All our in-ground and container berries rely on liquid nutrients.
Steve	Etko	NOC	General/Other	Policy director of NOC. Clarified that the far right Freedom Caucus in the House is not canceling the NOP, but the new Livestock Rules instead. Biodegradable mulch – concerned about the breakdown of the mulch. These mulches are not ready. NOC supports copper remaining on the list. However, copper products are toxic and elemental copper is persistent. Certifiers should require monitoring of coppers to watch for toxic accumulation. Should be high priority research topic.
Amber	Pool	CCOF	Crops (CS)	Farm technical specialist for CCOF. Fireblight is a huge problem and many farmers had to go back to antibiotics, leaving organic. Supports strengthening the organic seeds guidance. We advocate for a comprehensive seed database – this would help growers and certifiers. Large growers often use excuse that “quantity” of seed is not available.
Kelsey	Maben	CCOF	Livestock	Skipped after several requests; was online before.
Zea	Sonnabend	CCOF	Crops (CS); Materials (MS)	Marine materials: the crops version is lacking in discussion of impacts. There are already red and green seaweed products on the market. It would create major work for certifiers. This is a major change – we need explanation for that in the document! Thinks they should scrap it. The Handling version of marine materials is fine but the listing for kelp is problematic. Seeds: She was the main author of seed proposal. Needs to consider stakeholder needs more. It is over-prescriptive in a few areas. You should take the proposal back to subcommittee for more work. “Recalcitrant” as a term: this is a bad term because soil can be recalcitrant. Just list what you want in or out without using this bad term.
Bill	Stoneman	W.F. Stoneman Company LLC, Organic Advisory Consultant	Crops (CS); Materials (MS)	Independent crop inspector. Worked with regulatory affairs for biological inputs. Wants to expand the allowance of ammonia for weed control.
Mark	Russell	citizen	Crops (CS)	Agricultural crops and businesses for 30+ years. Soap-based herbicides need to be expanded for use, especially where tilling is very destructive.
Kye	Witek	Compost	Crops (CS);	Skipped
Julia	Barton	Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association	General/Other	Grassroots coalition working to build sustainable food system and a certification group. Add the impact of oil and gas industry on organic farms to work agenda. Fracking water has toxins. Water issues – farmers have stopped being organic because they couldn’t be sure of the safety of their food (Starline Family Farms).
Joe	Gabriel	Gilbert Orchards, Inc.	Materials (MS)	Organic standards have compromises for when there are no alternatives, like sanitizers.
Marie	Burcham	The Cornucopia Institute	General/Other	Advocated for a strict definition of “emergency” for parasiticides use. These substances should be approached with caution and only used as a last result when an animal is suffering. Strongly advocated for de-incentivizing the conversion of high-value lands.
Dain	Craver		Materials	Absent
Anne	Ross	The Cornucopia Institute	PDS	The use of BPA has known risks and acts in low doses. BPA should be banned for use in all food-contact materials, not just infant bottles. The US should follow the EU’s movement to ban this product. Question from Asa Bradman: Have you considered food contact issues for other substances? Yes, but the adverse health effects of BPA in particular are well documented.

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Michael	Collins-Frias	Certified Organic Sustainable	CACS; General/Other; PDS	Absent
Karen	Archipley	Citizen and HydroOrganic Farmer	CACS	With Archie's Acres. Proud hydro-organic growers since 2006. Live in San Diego where water is expensive so they use very little. They put hydro-organic on labels and it increases their sales. Biology is the key to organics, whether you are in dirt or other systems it is all about biology. Francis Thicke question: What is your rooting medium, does it contain soil, what % is your liquid feed? We use NFT – soil-less system, bare-root delivery of nutrients. Container is byproduct of coconut industry. They brew their own nutrient tea, but need to add fish emulsion for NPK.
Colin	Archipley	Citizen and HydroOrganic Farmer	CACS	Skipped initially then circled back to him. We are dealing with the future, climate change, access to organic food. Francis Thicke question: What is your rooting medium, does it contain soil, what %/makeup is your liquid feed? Answer: Basis for liquid feed is compost and worm castings to make compost tea and apply that to media. Is that sufficient for feeding plant? When we have fruiting crops like tomatoes we do supplement with something like fish emulsion or molasses. Steve Ela question: Enabling legislation requires soil fertility... curious how would you comply? If you were to ban liquid nutrients/hydroponics today it would hurt many businesses.
Larry	Griffis	Citizen	CACS	Absent
Jane	Sooby	CCOF	General/Other; Handling	CCOF supports a clear regulatory environment. Supports handling subcommittee recommendation to tocopherol and ancillary substances in cellulose. Organic manufacturers need clear guidance on these issues.
Barry	Flamm		General/Other	Eliminating incentive to convert native ecosystems. Former NOSB member and Board chair. Worked on this issue with WFA and Cornucopia as their board member. In 2008 chaired a joint CAC discussion document. There should be no management that threatens high conservation areas and sensitive aquatic environments. Organic should mean the products did not come from high conservation value lands. There has not been an attempt to figure out the number of acreage involved. Especially as the organic market increases, we should adopt the policy of at least 5 years to obtain organic status.
Andrew	Tomes	WISErg Corporation	Crops (CS)	Very difficult to hear. Bioponics: indoor cultivation methods are compatible with organics: lower pesticides, sustainability. It can also be done in urban areas. Container methods differ from hydroponics. Organic nutrients are processed the same way whether liquid or not.
Reyna	Ventura		Crops (CS)	Absent
Tim	Mann	Friendly Aquaponics, Inc	CACS; Crops (CS)	Skipped initially then circled back to him. First organically certified aquaponics farm in the world. Use no prohibited substances. The only difference is their plants use a small amount of soil and less water. They only use 2-3% of the water needed for those grown in soil. Water is no longer a guaranteed right. Aquaponics can use marginal land that is not useful for organic farmers. Some organic farmers are cheating and the public is becoming aware of it. You can't cheat at aquaponics because the fish are sensitive.
Esteban	Macias	Organic Growing Technical advisor	CACS; Crops (CS); PDS	Absent
Thomas	Laginess	BASF Corporation	Crops (CS)	Senior sustainability specialist. Scientist and stewardship for our products. Biodegradable mulch films: do not have to be bio-based to be biodegradable? This has been a confusion around the regulation of biodegradable mulch films. Microbes will eat any material they see as food. Now these mulches are made specifically because they are edible to microbes. Bio-based content isn't necessarily more sustainable or safe. Asa Bradman question: some of the fully 100% bio-based materials are less sustainable – could you comment more on that? My concern is pesticides/organophosphates are still consumable by microbes, and that's not necessarily good. Answer: you would have to look at each

				different film and the makeup of the microbes in each area of the country. Area, temperature, water all effect the biodegradability. Bio-based things might not actually degrade. Are the monomers petroleum based? Yes.. We need more research to know what these products actually breaks down into
Mabell	Rivas	QAI Inc.	General/Other	Chlorine comment. (Couldn't hear comment.)
Davey	Miskell	webinair	Crops (CS)	Grows greens and tomatoes in greenhouses. NOP has not required labeling that a product comes from hydroponics – they should (especially if they are so proud of their methods). You should get answers to the following questions; What liquid fertilizers are they using? No more than 10% of liquid feeding should be allowed. He fertilizers less with materials each year. How much soil do you require? Recommendation that at least 50% should be soil, rather than coconut or other fibers. Container crops: if there is a problem you can discard the crops more easily. Question: what's the recommendation for a 10% liquid fertilizer/ That's the amount 9or less0 he uses in his crop.
Jane	Bell	Citizen	CACS; Crops (CS); Handling (HS)	Part of 9 th generation organic dairy/beef/pork/vegetable farm. Marine algae proposal. NOP should provide further guidance, urge to vote yes on motion 2. There is gross discrepancy in the rigor of the inspections they go through. For green algal harvesting – its on an honor system. The difference in inspection process is problematic, especially with respect to protecting threatened/endangered animals in the wild seaweed crop. It's going to be hard to document and ensure that contaminants are not being exposed to the algae when harvested.
Lynne	Haynor	MOSA	Crops (CS)	More recordkeeping requirement should not be required – it burdens producers and certifiers. Support strengthening organic seed guidance. Proposed additions to role of certifying agents. Without meaningful shared responsibility the organic label is harmed.
Kelly	Taveras	Organic Trade Association	General/Other	Digital specialist for the OTA. Describes the background of the OTA. Unlike many trade associations, this one includes all segments from farm to marketplace in the organization. OTA created an electronic survey addressing the necessity of materials.
Chris	Cervini	Lakeside Produce	CACS; Crops (CS);	Absent
Guillermo	Martinez	Kingdom Fresh Produce	Crops (CS); General/Other	General manager of Kingdom Fresh. Grower of tomatoes. Container growing is more sustainable than growing in soil. They capture the water they use. Nurture each plant – no waste. They use certified organic compost; there is active biology in the container. Using containers uses less land. Better yield for the land. More affordable price. Questions from Emily Oakley: You mentioned you recycle materials in containers onto other fields? Where do you source those materials? From different venders of materials, but all of them are certified organic materials. What materials do you use in your containers? Mix of coconut husk, soil w/ other things mixed in. What % soil is the container mix? Around 50% of the mix, not sure. What percent of the nutrients come from the soil vs. liquid feeding? Hard to determine because they do incorporate microorganisms into the mix.
Nathan	Brown	Montana Organic Association	Crops (CS)	Absent
Aviva	Glaser	National Wildlife Federation	CACS	Skipped initially. Senior policy specialist. Comment specifically for the discussion document on converting native ecosystems. It's critical that organic certification does not incentivize this conversion – but the 3 year waiting period does have the potential to incentivize this. Urged to close this loophole. Compromises integrity of organic label. Other certifications take these issues into account.
Freeman	Allen	Certified NOFA-VT grower	CACS	Absent
Steven	Branch	Zirkle Fruit Co.	Crops (CS); Handling	Grow organic grapes, apples, pears and berries. The retailer requirements are needed for sanitizing equipment and products.

			(HS)	Non-Chlorine sanitizers may be used, but only in rotation because pathogens become resistant. Necessary to prevent food-born outbreaks (like <i>e.coli</i>). David Mortensen question: What are water flumes? We use water to transfer fruit to one area to another and there can be contamination. They use chlorine in the water at low levels (higher than drinking waste standards) to limit contamination.
Jaydee/Clar e	Hanson/Jordan	CFS	Materials (MS)	Skipped initially. BPA in packaging is endocrine disrupting and makes it unsuitable for all organics. FDA does not allow BPA in baby packaging. Studies show that preference of organics did not affect levels of BPA in urine. Food related nanotechnologies are being used to increase shelf life. The authority exists in the organic rule to prohibit these substances and they should be prohibited. Request that there is clarity in the NOP that these nano-tech is not allowed in organic production.
Damon	Seawright	AmeriCulture, Inc.	CACS	OFPA does not require the use of soil and does not prohibit containers. Question from Ashely Swaffar: What % of lettuce in the organic sector is produced hydroponically/ Don't have that number. Francis: system of agriculture – what do you use as rooting medium. 20% water feed/aquaponics – 100% of the nutrients provided through the fish.
Douglas	Doohan	The Ohio State University	Crops (CS)	Skipped initially, then circled back. Professor of horticulture and crop science. Clear that the organic industry needs access to new weed control methods. Physical controls include natural and synthetic mulches, specifically plastic. Right now tillage and pulling are the main method Soap –based herbicides would provide farmers with better tools. Question from Francis Thicke: if we had soap-based herbicide that was universal, would be spraying everywhere (like glyphosphate)? Conventional farmers use these things as risk-management tools
Simi	Summer	Citizen	General/ Other; Materials (MS); PDS	There is a strong need to maintain 100% organic standards. Important to replace ALL the non-organic and synthetic materials with organic alternatives. A leading cause of death is from industrialized inputs. Encourage more R&D on the health hazards of the non-organic substances. Encourage greater transparency. The current process for challenging non-organic ingredients is too slow. For example, pectin sources from non-organic apples, is one of the “dirty dozen” in produce.
Colehour	Bondera	citizen	General/ Other	Organic farmer who served on NOSB. How to protect organic: You need the NOSB to advise, especially when those who are not on the inside are pushing for interpretations that are not in organics best interest. The NOSB MUST be independent from the NOP. NOSB members can and should strive to advise the NOP. There needs to be an executive director that serves as a liaison between NOSB and NOP. Everything is NOT organic, let us strive to define and protect what is organic.
Robert	Hoffman	Shenandoah Growers, Inc.	Crops (CS)	Controlled environment greenhouses have high microbe action. Nutrient solution is recycled through filters and re-used. Only utilize NOP-approved pest management strategies. Supports continued use of container-growing practices. Q from Emily: What substances are in your containers? Peat, poultry litter, coconut, organic fertilizer, beneficial microorganisms, gypsum. All are NOP certified inputs. None of it works unless you have the microbiology in the soil. Follow up Q: poultry litter – what %? It's a small percentage otherwise soluble salt would be too high. What % of fertility needs are provided by liquid feeding? About half and half with liquid and soil.
Brian	Lehmann	Individual citizen	General/ Other; Materials (MS)	Commenting as organic consumer. Aeroponics/hydroponics/aquaponics issue – not profoundly against including these in organic, but would want to see them identified with additional labeling. The organic consumer should be informed of the source. Label or even QR code should suffice. In general he would object to the organic seal being conferred to things not grown in soil.