



BEYOND PESTICIDES

701 E Street, SE ■ Washington DC 20003
202-543-5450 phone ■ 202-543-4791 fax
info@beyondpesticides.org ■ www.beyondpesticides.org

March 27, 2014

National Organic Standards Board
Spring 2014 Meeting
San Antonio, TX

Re. LS: Acidified Sodium Chlorite

These comments are submitted on behalf of Beyond Pesticides. Beyond Pesticides, founded in 1981 as a national, grassroots, membership organization that represents community-based organizations and a range of people seeking to bridge the interests of consumers, farmers and farmworkers, advances improved protections from pesticides and alternative pest management strategies that reduce or eliminate a reliance on pesticides. Our membership and network span the 50 states and groups around the world.

Beyond Pesticides supports the recommendation of the Livestock Subcommittee to deny the petition because of lack of essentiality, as noted by the subcommittee, but also because organic production should be moving away from dependency on products of chlorine chemistry.

Acidified Sodium Chlorite (ASC) was petitioned for use as a teat dip treatment in organic livestock production. The subcommittee identified other substances are available and currently in use for that purpose.

The fact that use of chlorine —as opposed to chloride— is so universally associated with the production of persistent toxic chemicals has led environmental groups to seek a ban on chlorine-based chemicals. We believe that organic production should, for the same reasons, avoid the use of chlorine as much as possible. The allowance of chlorine in the rule reflects the fact that many organic growers —like most of the rest of us— depend on water sources that have been treated with chlorine. We do not believe that organic producers should have to filter chlorine out of the water they use for irrigating, cleaning equipment, washing vegetables, or cleaning food-contact surfaces. But they should not be adding more chlorine. There are practices and products that make all uses of chlorine unnecessary.

Therefore, we urge the NOSB to reject the petition for acidified sodium chlorite. Furthermore, the new NOP policy on sunset will make it much more difficult to remove this material or annotate it in the future if the board thinks it necessary. We believe the NOP directed sunset process violates the intent, spirit, and letter of the *Organic Foods Production Act*, and will therefore not subject acidified sodium chlorite to the same threshold for re-listing in the future as is required by the petition process. Therefore, we sincerely urge NOSB members to oppose

this petition and any others where removal or annotation might conceivably be needed for health, environmental, and essentiality reasons until the sunset policy of OFPA and, historically, the Board is reinstated.

In summary, if the NOSB chooses to approve the petition for acidified sodium chlorite, it should add an annotation that causes the listing to expire in five years. The sunset process announced by USDA on September 16, 2013 reverses the previous policy and eliminates the true sunset of the National List materials. In order to restore the sunset as envisioned by the authors of OFPA, the sunset date must be annotated as an expiration date. The expiration date requires that acidified sodium chlorite be delisted on December 14, 2020 unless it is repeticioned and relisted. This will allow new information to be considered in a meaningful fashion.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Shistar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Terry Shistar, Ph.D.
Board of Directors