



March 19, 2013

Ms. Michelle Arsenault  
National Organic Standards Board  
USDA-AMS-NOP  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Room 2648-So, Ag Stop 0268  
Washington, DC 20250-0268  
Docket: AMS-NOP-12-0070  
RE: Handling Subcommittee –

Dear Ms. Arsenault:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment to the NOSB. Nature's Path is North America's first and still largest certified organic breakfast cereal manufacturer, and our highest priority is to keep organic strong and credible so it can continue to provide confidence to organic consumers.

**Sugar beet fiber:**

We do not agree with the notion of allowing this input in organic production. Currently 95% of sugar beet production in North America is genetically engineered, which is expressly forbidden by NOP 205.105 (e). Only sugar beets that are produced under certified organic management should be allowed to be used as an ingredient to make sugar beet fiber, if it is to be allowed as an ingredient in organic products.

**Barley betafiber:**

This should not be approved in organic products as alternatives are available, and ethanol grown from GMO corn is used in processing it. It is not essential, and is highly refined, therefore not in keeping with organic principles.

**DBDMH:**

We agree with the subcommittee that this should be denied for use in organic production.

**Sulfuric Acid:**

We agree with the subcommittee that this should be denied for us in organic production.

**Auxiliary/"Other Ingredients"**

This is an issue with a lot of history and it is hard to understand how we got to where we are. However where we are today is that a large number of auxiliary or "other

ingredients” are used without much or any scrutiny by the organic program. Is this where NOP organic wants to be? That seems to us as the central question, and our answer is that we need to improve and find ways of effectively bringing this wild card under the control of the NOP. We are well aware of the many complications and implications for achieving this, but turning a blind eye is also not the answer. In our view the subcommittee is not proposing any solution that will deal with the challenge, but rather attempts to continue to allow a mistake that has been practiced from the start and rubberstamp it into future acceptable practice in organic.

As painful and potentially disruptive as it may be we only see one alternative, and that is to start devising a system to turn this in the right direction. This will not be able to be completely corrected overnight, so the process must leave room for continuous improvement.

Here are some of the complicating factors as we see it:

- Manufacturers of formulations most often do not divulge their ingredients, and cannot be convinced to do so.
- EPA list 4 is no longer an active classification.
- Not all formulations used contain substances of concern to organic, but the verification of this may still not be possible to undertake.
- Such a large number of formulations are currently being relied on for organic production, that losing access to them could have dire consequences.
- OFPA does not allow the current practice, and a legal challenge would be potentially damaging to the reputation of organic.
- The NOP has forced the issue by issuing a request for clarification from the NOSB.

On the positive side, Canada, nor any other international standards have successfully resolved this issue yet either. This gives the USDA/NOP an opportunity to be a world leader in solving this issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,



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