



# National Organic Coalition

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## National Organic Coalition ‘Gravely Disappointed’ With USDA Decision To Allow Unrestricted Planting Of Genetically Engineered Alfalfa

### *Resolute in Continuing to fight for Organic Integrity*

January 27, 2011. The National Organic Coalition (NOC) today is shocked and disappointed over the decision by USDA Secretary Vilsack to de-regulate Genetically Engineered (GE) Alfalfa.

"We appreciate the measures that the Secretary has announced to explore ways to develop the science to protect organic and other non-GE alfalfa farmers from contamination. However, to institute these measures after the GE alfalfa is deregulated defies commonsense," said Michael Sligh, founding member of NOC. "Logically, efforts to develop the science of prevent GMO contamination should precede, not follow, any decision to deregulate GE crops."

De-regulation with no oversight, enforcement or penalties by USDA is a green light for business as usual. Potential contamination from yet another genetically modified crop without independent health and environmental testing, or plans for liability, compensation, and labeling is of grave concern to organic farmers and consumers alike, according to NOC spokespersons.

"Organic and others are now left, once again having to take all the precautions while biotech takes little responsibility," said Liana Hoodes, NOC Director.

In December, Secretary Vilsack brought some stakeholders together to discuss organic, non-GE, and biotech "living together", but no conclusions were reached. The National Organic Coalition participated in some of these meetings and presented concrete recommendations. "We remain resolute in our pursuit of full implementation of these recommendations to protect the interests of organic growers and consumers, said Hoodes.

"It is time for the US government to support more than just the biotech approach to agriculture. Approving the unrestricted planting of GE alfalfa is clearly a case of USDA caving in to special interests over public good."

NOC spokespersons went on to state that the American public has noted in poll after poll that they want the right to know how their food is produced, and demand that GE foods be labeled to preserve their choice.

The National Organic Coalition has a detailed paper outlining its necessary pre-requisites to any approval entitled: *GMO Contamination Prevention: What Will It Take?* available at: <http://www.nationalorganiccoalition.org/GMO/GMOContaminationPrevention.pdf>

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