

Keeping Organic Strong



National Organic Standards Board Spring 2026 Meeting

The [Spring 2026 National Organic Standards Board meeting](#) will be held in Omaha, NE and virtually, May 12th, 13th and 14th 2026.

[See the Spring 2026 issues here](#)

[Written comments](#) on the Spring 2026 issues are due by **11:59 pm ET on May 4, 2026.**

Public Comment Webinars will be held on Tuesday, May 5 from Noon - 5:00 pm ET and Thursday, May 7 from Noon - 5:00 pm ET ([access link here](#))

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meeting is scheduled from May 12th-14th, 2026. The public meeting of the NOSB is preceded by an opportunity for public comments.

Beyond Pesticides will provide draft language and urges public participation through this Keeping Organic Strong webpage.

Stay tuned for further coverage of the issues before the Board by Beyond Pesticides, and take a deeper dive on the [Spring 2026 issues page](#) for in-depth background on priority topics!

Here is the schedule (at this time):

Public Meeting

- Day 1: May 12, from 9 am - 5 pm CT
- Day 2: Wednesday May 13, from 9 am - 5 pm CT
- Day 3: Thursday May 14, from 9 am - 3 pm CT

A draft meeting agenda is available [here](#); a more detailed document with proposals and discussion documents is available [here](#).

[See the Spring 2026 issues here](#)

For more information on prior NOSB meeting issues, please see the materials below.

Public Comment

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) invites the public to submit written comments and/or provide oral comments on the Spring 2026 meeting issues.

Written Comments:

- Written comments can be submitted via [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov). The deadline to submit written comments is **11:59 pm ET on Monday May 4, 2026**. **Please get them in as early as possible!**
- **Click here to access Beyond Pesticides' Action page to submit comments: Link will be here shortly.**

Links to the public meeting will be posted on this [webpage](#)

Questions? Email [Michelle Arsenault](mailto:Michelle.Arsenault@nosp.gov), NOSB Advisory Committee Specialist, or call 202-997-0115.

About the Board

The 15-member board, consisting of four farmers, three environmentalists, three consumers, two food processors, one retailer, a scientist, and a certifying agent, votes to allow or prohibit substances and practices in certified organic food and farming. The NOSB acts as a lifeline from the government to the organic community as it considers input from you, the public—the concerned citizens upon whom organic integrity depends. That is why your participation is vital to the development of organic standards. Rest assured, if you submit a public comment in person or online, the Board will consider your concerns. *Remember that the NOSB can't take serious action to protect organic integrity without your input!*

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A Framework to Keep in Mind When Commenting to the NOSB:

According to the *Organic Foods Production Act*, a [synthetic](#) substance may *only* be allowed for use in organic production if it meets the following criteria [[7 USC 6517\(c\)\(1\)\(B\)](#)]:

- It contains an active synthetic ingredient in the following categories: copper and sulfur compounds; toxins derived from bacteria; pheromones, soaps, horticultural oils, fish emulsions, treated seed, vitamins and minerals; livestock parasiticides and medicines and production aids including netting, tree wraps and seals, insect traps, sticky barriers, row covers, and equipment cleansers.

- It contains synthetic inert ingredients that are not classified by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency as inert ingredients of toxicological concern.

Additionally, it must be fully established that the use of the substance [[7 USC 6517\(c\)\(1\)\(A\)](#)]

- would not be harmful to human health or the environment;
- is necessary to the production or handling of the final product because natural substitutes are not available; and
- is consistent with organic farming and handling (see the NOSB's [Principles of Organic Production and Handling](#)).

Structuring your comments on synthetic substances around these points and referencing the specific stipulations in the law will help the members of the NOSB to understand your argument and will make your input more effective.

[View issues that were before the Board at the January 2026 meeting](#)

Also, see our [NOSB archives pages](#) to read about current and past opportunities for public involvement in the development of organic standards.

Organic vs. Conventional: Don't forget the big picture

As we raise our voices in defense of the integrity of the organic label it is important to bear in mind the differences between organic farming and conventional, chemical-intensive agriculture. Organic agriculture embodies an ecological approach to farming that focuses on feeding the soil and growing naturally healthy crops. Conventional, chemical-intensive agriculture depends on toxic chemicals that poison the soil, as well as the air, water, and consumers of the crops.

Organic farmers can use natural pesticides, after exhausting other strategies including crop rotation, cultural practices, beneficial species, etc. However, synthetic chemicals can only be used in organic farming and processing if they are approved by the USDA National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), a process that includes a detailed checklist of possible health and environmental impacts and considers the need for the chemical. In contrast, the process for registering pesticides for crops explicitly does not consider the need for the chemical.

Currently about 50 entries are included on the "National List" of allowable synthetic materials. These include alcohols used as disinfectants, soap-based insecticides, newspaper weed barriers, and vitamins. On the other hand, there are tens of thousands of synthetic chemicals, including over 200 pesticide "active ingredients," approved for use in conventional systems, not to mention chemical fertilizers, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), antibiotics, sewage sludge and irradiation.

The organic regulatory process provides numerous opportunities for the public to weigh in on what is allowable in organic production. USDA maintains a [National List](#), set by the NOSB, of the synthetic substances that may be used and the non-synthetic substances that may not be used in organic production and handling. OFPA and NOP regulations provide for the sunseting of listed substances every five years and rely on public comment in evaluating their continuing uses. Sunset review, the process of reviewing substances on the [National List](#) every five years, is mandated by the *Organic Foods Production Act*. To be added to the list of allowed synthetics, it must be shown that the use of such substances – (i) would not be harmful to human health or the environment; (ii) is necessary to the production or handling of the agricultural product because of the unavailability of wholly natural substitute products; and, (iii) is consistent with organic farming and handling. The public may also [file a petition](#) to amend the National List, either by removing a material currently on the list or adding a new one. In both cases, sunset and petition, the NOSB is authorized by OFPA to determine a substance’s status.

For more information on the history of organic agriculture and why it is the best choice for your health and the environment, please see Beyond Pesticides’ [Organic Food Program Page](#).