

# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

How organic standards affect your farm and how you can influence them



All natural materials are okay unless specifically prohibited, but synthetically derived materials are not okay unless specifically allowed.

**Who decides? How do I know what is synthetic and what is natural?**



Secretary of Agriculture-  
USDA



Agricultural Marketing  
Service  
National Organic Program



National Organic Standards Board  
A Federal Advisory Board

NOSB decisions advise federal  
rulemaking



# National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)

Volunteer, 15 person board advising USDA National Organic Program

Conduit between stakeholders and the Secretary of Agriculture

Review of practices or materials to be added or subtracted from the National List





## Organic Standards

### Practice Standards

Managing soil to maintain or improve the physical, chemical and biological condition.

### Materials

If practice standards are inadequate to control a pest or disease, improve fertility, or maintain animal health, then a synthetic material may be used if it is specifically allowed on the National List.

# Materials

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Biodegradable  
mulch/plastic mulch

Paper pots

Sanitizers

Coppers/Sulfur

Compost feedstocks



# Practices

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Compost Criteria

Biodiversity

Organic Seed Use

Soil Improvement

Risk Based Certification



# NOSB

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Meets twice per year – April & October

Proposals, discussion documents and sunset reviews are published about 60 days before each meeting

The public has 30 days to submit written and oral comments to the NOSB

Comments often change the decisions of the Board





# Effects of NOSB Decisions

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What certifiers look for

Reducing fraud

Materials available for  
use in organics

Continuous improvement



