

**National Organic Standards Board
Policy Development Committee**

**Recommendation for an addition to the NOSB Board Policy Manual:
Committee Work Plans**

September 19, 2008

INTRODUCTION:

The Policy Development Committee is recommending a guideline on developing a committee work plan. The proposed guideline is to be included in Section VIII, immediately after the introductory subsection titled "Procedures of the NOSB, and before the subsection titled "National Organic Program Materials Review Process" of the NOSB Policy and Procedures Manual. Given that section VIII covers topics which relate to "how" the Board should manage its review process, a section on committee work plans should be a useful addition.

The recommended text of the proposed section is as follows:

COMMITTEE WORK PLANS

At the end of every NOSB meeting, each committee chair is required to present the committee's work plan. Given the nature, and number, of the issues the Board handles, it is important for a committee to follow a structured procedure for assigning priorities in the work plan. The following provides a guideline on how to develop a committee work plan.

The committee chair, working with the committee, should follow three general steps in producing a work plan: 1) List all issues before the committee; 2) Prioritize each issue; 3) set a calendar; and 4) Obtain feedback from the Executive Committee and the Program.

Step 1: Identifying all issues

The committee work plan rises out of these main situations:

- Items committed, or assigned to a committee, by the Board during an official session.
- Items that are reviewed by a committee on a regular basis such as materials sunset review or petitions submitted by members of the public.
- Special petitions from the National Organic Program such as clarifications on a particular issue or guidance on enforcement.
- Proposals stemming from the committee members' contact with the organic community.

In many cases not all issues should be the responsibility of the committee. Selecting what the committee should be reviewing can be done based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the organic community (Is this an important issues? vs. Is this an interesting issue?)
- Criticality regarding mandate (is the issue within the committee's or the NOSB's realm?)
- Feasibility in terms of the Rule (can a proposal by the committee be realistically enforced by the NOP?)

Step 2: Prioritizing the issues

After listing the issues to review, the committee should prioritize its work plan items according to the following criteria:

- Preference given to petitioned materials
- Relevance to the organic community, public at large and the environment
- Size of the population affected by the issue
- Timeline since the issue/petition was submitted

The criteria are presented in order of importance and should be used to rank or prioritize each issue accordingly. For example, a petitioned material has priority over an issue that has been waiting to be reviewed for an extended period of time.

Step 3: Setting a calendar for reviews

Once the issues are prioritized, the committee chair should define a calendar for discussion of each issue. The calendar should allow committee members to understand specific deadlines and should reflect the posting/publication target dates mandated by the Program and the Federal Regulation.

Step 4: Incorporating Input from the Executive Committee

The committee chair must present the finalized work plan at the first Executive Committee conference call following a normal NOSB meeting. This event is not only an opportunity for the EC to provide guidance to the committee chair, but it is also an opportunity to obtain input from the NOP regarding the feasibility of implementing the committee's recommendation.

Committee vote:

Moved: **H. Karreman** **Second:** **R. Delgado**

Yes-4 **No- 0** **Abstain- 0** **Absent- 0**