



National Organic Coalition

www.NationalOrganicCoalition.org

NOC NEWS

June 1, 2011

See News below about these topics:

[NOSB Membership Nominations due July 17, 2011](#)

[GE Victory for Farmers and the Environment](#)

[Tester says "GMO Hurts Family Farms"](#)

[GE News From Europe](#)

[Protecting Our Poultry Farmers](#)

[SARE Grant Deadlines for 2011](#)

[Beyond Pesticides Youtube Channel](#)



NOSB Nominations for 2012

[Press Release](#)

**Grassroots candidates needed for 5 positions on
the
[National Organic Standards Board](#)**

Application Deadline: July 17

The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) is a 15-member volunteer USDA board responsible for developing a proposed National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances, and to advise the Secretary on all other aspects of the National Organic Program.

Five slots are open on January 24, 2012 for a 5-year term that will run until January 24, 2017. USDA encourages eligible individuals who can demonstrate an ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities to apply for membership on the NOSB.

The 5 categories to be filled (1 person for each slot):

- **Organic producer**
- **Scientist**
- **Organic handler**
- **Environmentalist**
- **Consumer/public interest**

For more information, see the [Federal Register Notice](#),
[See the NOSB nomination process page for more information, including information about how NOSB members are selected, membership Application, and criteria for NOSB membership.](#)

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## **Victory for Farmers and the Environment -- Court of Appeals Dismisses Monsanto's Appeal of Biotech Beets Case**

*Upholds Lower Court's Rulings Requiring New USDA Approval Decision And Rigorous Review of the Crop's Impacts*



Litigation Over USDA's Interim Approval of Planting Continues

*SAN FRANCISCO, CA- May 20, 2011* - The U.S. Court of Appeals concluded a long-standing lawsuit over the impacts of genetically engineered (GE) "Roundup Ready" sugar beets. As a result, **previous court rulings in favor of farmers and conservation advocates will remain, including the order requiring the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to prepare a rigorous review of the impacts of GE sugar beets**, before deciding whether to again allow their future commercial use.

Center For Food Safety (CFS), Organic Seed Alliance, High Mowing Organic Seeds, and the Sierra Club, (represented by CFS and Earthjustice) challenged the USDA approval in 2008. They argued that **GE sugar beets would contaminate organic and non-GE farmers of related crops, such as table beets and chard, as well as increase pesticide impacts on the environment and worsen the current Roundup-resistant "superweeds" epidemic in U.S. agriculture.**

Earthjustice attorney Paul Achitoff: "Dismissal of the appeal confirms that the district court rightly concluded that in this case, as in every other case that has challenged USDA's oversight of genetically engineered crops, **the agency has flouted the law, favoring the interests of Monsanto over those of American people.** With every court decision the need for fundamental reform in this area becomes ever more obvious."

USDA said it expects to finish the GE sugar beets Environmental Impact Statement and have a new decision on commercialization in 2012.

While this case was being heard, USDA actually approved 2011-2012 planting of GE sugar beets under a "partial deregulation" scheme while it conducted the court-ordered analysis. That decision is the subject of separate litigation that is ongoing.

Monsanto's "Roundup Ready" crops withstand the herbicide Roundup (active ingredient glyphosate). **Growing previous Roundup Ready crops such as soy, cotton, and corn have led to greater use of herbicides. It has also led to the spread of herbicide resistant weeds on millions of acres throughout the United States and other countries where such crops are grown, as well as contamination of conventional and organic crops, which has been costly to U.S. farmers.**

Read the full press release on [Center for Food Safety](#) website:  
<http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/2011/05/20/court-of-appeals-dismisses-monsantos-appeal-of-biotech-beets-case-preserves-victory-for-farmers-environment/>

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Tester says U.S. Agriculture Policy, Genetically Modified Crops Hurt Family Farms - From the Billings Gazette, May 4, 2011

Misguided federal farm policies and genetically modified crops are undermining family farm security, Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., said at a high-profile food conference Wednesday in Washington, D.C.

Sharing a Georgetown University stage with Prince Charles and "Fast Food Nation" author Eric Schlosser, Tester told the audience that federal farm programs favoring some crops over others had undermined farm diversity. Those policies, along with an ever-shrinking group of buyers for farm products were making it harder for family farms to get by, he said.

"Over the past 100 years, we've seen far less diversity as far as crop rotations go and far less diversity and competition as far as marketing our crops," Tester said at the Future of Food conference.

But Tester reserved his sharpest criticisms for patented, genetically modified organisms, or GMOs, which he said undermine plant diversity and take seed ownership from farmers for the first time in history.

"With GMOs, farmers don't control the seed, multinational agribusiness does," Tester said. "You and I have heard over and over that our only hope to feed the planet as our population grows is GMOs. Well, I'm here to tell you I don't buy it. What it has done, and what it continues to do, is take away options from family farmers and options away from consumers. Farms won't be able to control seeds, and you won't know what you're eating."

<http://www.jontester.com/news/2011/billings-gazette-tester-says-u-s-agriculture-policy-genetically-modified-crops-hurt-family-farms/>

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### **GE News From Europe**



#### **Germany: Federal Council Supports GMO-Free Seeds**

"The protests by farmers and citizens have had an effect," says Felix Prinz zu Löwenstein, President of BÖLW, welcoming the recent decision by the German Federal Council. A proposal to water down the zero tolerance ruling failed. There were protests in many of the German states after the now rejected proposal had become public at the beginning of March.

Löwenstein called on the German government to support the continuation of zero tolerance for seeds in Brussels too. It must also be ensured that the person responsible for unwanted contamination can be held liable. In case of doubt, the owner of the modified genetic sequence should be regarded as the person responsible. The industry has, however, applied to Brussels for licences to grow another 28 genetically modified plants. Licences are about to be granted for three plants. BÖLW has therefore drawn up a petition for the German parliament. See: [www.boelw.de/petition](http://www.boelw.de/petition)

**Germany: More than 100,000 people sign petition against agricultural genetic engineering.** See original article at: <http://www.boelw.de/pm+M507548de422.html>

#### **IRISH CALL FOR MORATORIUM ON GM CROPS:**

- GMO is "biggest threat" to island's farmers
- Scientists accuse European Food Safety Authority of corruption and fraud
- Doctors invoke the Precautionary Principle
- Consumers want GM-free Irish label to support responsible farmers

[www.gmfrireland.org/press/GMFI53.pdf](http://www.gmfrireland.org/press/GMFI53.pdf)

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Protecting Our Poultry Farmers

Farmers risk their livelihoods making a public statement criticizing the companies that have almost total control over their operations

Last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture proposed a rule that would level the playing field between poultry and livestock producers and the companies that hold their contracts. More than 60,000 people sent in comments on the rule. The majority were in support of the badly needed reforms.

These new rules were written in response to well-documented problems in the poultry and livestock industry. Numerous reports have concluded that regulation needed to be tightened and that concentrated ownership gave companies too much control over the market.

In recent days, nine members of North Carolina's 13-member delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives signed on to a "Dear Colleague" letter urging the USDA to withdraw the rule and re-propose a revised version at a later date. These representatives acted against the interests of North Carolina farmers.

It has been almost three years since Congress told the USDA to address unfair practices by livestock and poultry companies. The rules were subject to a five-month public comment period. Hundreds of farmers sent in personal letters in support of the rules. These farmers risked their livelihoods by making a public statement criticizing the companies that have almost total control over their operations.

Read the full op-ed written by Becky Ceartas, program director of the Contract Agriculture Reform Program of RAFI-USA (the Rural Advancement Foundation International) on NewsObserver.com

<http://www.newsobserver.com/2011/05/25/1222583/protecting-our-poultry-farmers.html>

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## SARE Grant Deadlines

A number of important deadlines for pre-proposals and proposals to USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program lie ahead this spring, summer, and fall.



SARE, part of the National Institute for Food and Agriculture, is a national competitive grants and education program operating in every state and island protectorate. The program is operated regionally - North Central, Northeast, South and West - each branch guided by a volunteer Administrative Council that makes grants and sets regional priorities. The councils include farmers and ranchers along with representatives from universities, government, agribusiness and nonprofit organizations. Since 1988, SARE has funded more than 4,200 projects, including research and education grants, professional development grants and producer grants.

In the North Central region, pre-proposals for Research and Education grants are due June 9. Pre-proposals for Professional Development Program grants are due May 18.

In the Western region, Research and Education pre-proposals are due June 10, Professional Development proposals are due November 4, and Producer grant proposals and Producer + Professional grant proposals are due December 2.

In the Southern region, Research and Education pre-proposals, Professional Development program pre-proposals, and Graduate Student proposals are all due June 1.

In the Northeast region, Graduate Student proposals are due May 31. Research and Education and Professional Development pre-proposals are both due August 1.

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Beyond Pesticides Launches Youtube Channel

The recently launched Beyond Pesticides YouTube Channel features presentations from the 29th National Pesticide Forum held April. This is a great educational resource for individuals and groups working to change pesticide policies.

Featured videos included with the initial launch include:

Pesticides 101: An introduction to pesticide issues (Caroline Cox)

Protecting Pollinators from Pesticides: Stopping the demise of honeybees(Tom Theobald, James Frazier, PhD, Marygael Meister)

Genetically Engineered Food: Failed promises and hazardous outcomes (George Kimbrell)

Health and Science Panel (John Adgate, PhD, Dana Boyd Barr, PhD, Christine Parks, PhD, Changlu Wang, PhD) **Beyond Lists: Where did all those pesticides come from?** (Theo Colborn, PhD)

The Polluters: The making of our chemically altered environment (Ben Ross, PhD)

Organic Land Management: From lawns to landscapes and beyond (Chip Osborne, Tom Kanatakeniate Cook, Timothy Lee Scott, Rella Abernathy, PhD, Lani Malmberg)

Organic: United We Stand (Maria Rodale)

Additional videos will be posted in the coming weeks. Individuals and organizations are invited to submit their own videos to be included on the Beyond Pesticides' channel.

Click the yellow "subscribe" button on the YouTube page to be automatically notified of new content. [Go to the Beyond Pesticides Channel now!](#)