



National Organic Coalition

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NOC NEWS

See News below about many organic topics:

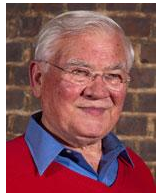
- ~ Liana Hoodes and Roger Blobaum on Food Sleuth Radio*
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NOC on Food Sleuth Radio

[Hear Liana Hoodes](#) talk about Organic and Food Access, Climate Change, and Why Organic Costs More on [Food Sleuth Radio](#)

[Hear Roger Blobaum](#), NOC member, talk about Earth Day, DDT and other Organic Topics on [Food Sleuth Radio](#).



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### **WIC and Organic**



Despite the growing body of peer-reviewed research demonstrating the human health benefits of organic food, particularly for pregnant mothers and small children, many States have greatly limited or prohibited access to organic foods as part of the WIC program. WIC recipients are able to use their fruit and vegetable vouchers to buy organic, but USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has permitted States to disallow organic foods on their Basic Approved Food list. Some of the

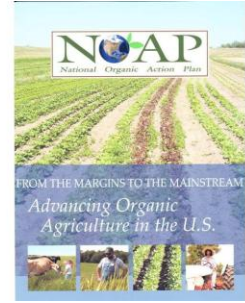
barriers are explicit, some states prohibit use of WIC certificates or vouchers for organic versions of WIC foods. Other barriers are indirect, such as rules that make it difficult for retail stores that carry organic foods from participating in the program.

As work has continued on the Child Nutrition Reauthorization, NOC has sent [letters](#) to the appropriate committee chairs in the House and Senate urging them to include language in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization bill to remove the barriers of access to organic foods within the WIC program.

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National Organic Action Plan Presented to USDA

On April 16, Liana Hoodes and Michael Sligh were at the USDA Organic Working Group to present the National Organic Action Plan to representatives of all USDA agencies. USDA agencies have been tasked with developing their own organic agendas for their agencies, and the USDA as a whole. They used the NOAP to help begin these discussions.



The National Organic Action Plan: From the Margins to the Mainstream -- Advancing Organic Agriculture in the U.S. (NOAP)

presents a shared vision and blueprint for an organic future for the US -- "To establish organic as the foundation for food and agriculture in the US." It represents the culmination of a 5-year dialogue process with organic stakeholders across the country. The NOAP describes the current status of organic in the U.S. and provides a concrete framework for the development of organic food and agriculture practices, programs and policies for the next decade and beyond. It informs and empowers the grassroots to engage in public policy debates on organic by providing a detailed plan of actions that can be adapted to meet community, state and national needs.

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## **NOC Comments on "Access to Pasture Rule" and Grassfed Label - April 19, 2010**



After years of uncertainty, the National Organic Coalition commented to USDA that its final "Access to Pasture Rule" provides the clear and specific language needed to enforce one of the central tenets of organically produced livestock -- the requirement that organic livestock spend a considerable part of their lives in their natural pasture habitat and receive a significant portion of their food needs from fresh, green, growing pasture. In addition, NOC commended the department for clarifying that USDA organic standards prohibit the continual confinement of all animals

While NOC supports the proposal in the USDA Rule to allow for some grain finishing in organic beef, we have also proposed that the USDA National Organic Program work out an agreement with the AMS Grassfed program which would provide a *verified* "grassfed" label for those organic producers who meet that standard, under their organic certification. This would provide consumers with a clear and transparent Organic Grassfed label that gives assurance of independent, third-party verification of both "Grassfed" and other organic values which do not exist in other labels.

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NOC Supports USDA/OIG Report on National Organic Program



March 19, 2010. NOC expressed enthusiasm for reinvigorated and ongoing oversight of the National Organic Program (NOP), as recommended by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) in its evaluation of the Program (<http://www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/01601-03-HY.pdf>). This report presents data from several years of audit and review of the NOP and outlines several gaps and outstanding areas in need of improvement.

Most of the shortcomings identified in the OIG report have been routinely raised by NOC in its communications to NOP for more than a decade. "The OIG report is gratifying not only because it documents the holes in organic oversight that we have identified but also because it shows that the new NOP leadership is taking these concerns seriously, quickly acting upon them, and fixing the critical problems that are the legacy of the Bush Administration," said Liana Hoodes, Director of the National Organic Coalition. See the full [Press Release](#)

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## U.S. Bullying World on GE Labeling



At a meeting in early May of the Codex Committee on Food Labeling (an arm of Codex Alimentarius, the United Nations food standards agency), the United States fought for a guideline that Codex would not "suggest or imply that GM/GE foods are in any way different from other foods."

Consumers Union, and more than 80 farmers, public health, environmental, and organic food organizations (including NOC) sent a [letter](#) to FDA and USDA expressing serious concerns that this U.S. position on food labeling would create major problems for American producers who want to label their products as free of genetically modified (GM)/genetically engineered (GE) ingredients. A copy of the letter can be found online[[link here](#)]. In addition, more than 111,000 concerned citizens signed a petition urging officials to change their position. A recent Consumers Union poll found that two-thirds of consumers would be concerned if they thought that GE/GM ingredients were in organic food.

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Remove the GM clause from the Global Food Security Act

NOC joins over 140 organizations signing on to a [letter](#) submitted by Pesticide Action Network North America (PANNA) to make sure that The Global Food Security Act (H.R.3077) remains technologically neutral and does not include a clause mandating research funding for one particular agricultural technology (genetically modified crops).



Concerns have been voiced that when H.R.3077 is merged into the Senate version of this bill (S.384), it will lose this provision:

The Senate Bill -- Sec. 202 of S.384 would amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to read "Agricultural research carried out under this Act shall . . . include research on biotechnological advances appropriate to local ecological conditions, including gm technology". This mandate directs federal funds towards genetically modified (GM) crop research, while mentioning no other type of agricultural technology or approach. This would undermine the good intentions behind H.R. 3077's broader focus on reducing hunger and supporting countries' identification of locally appropriate solutions, without undue pressure and influence from US interests. The trouble with a mandate for GM crop research in a foreign aid bill is simple: it will not solve world hunger.

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## NOC Testimony to House on FY 2011 Appropriations

Each year the National Organic Coalition presents [testimony](#) to the Appropriations committees working on the federal budget. See the proposal for the upcoming FY 2011 (which begins on October 2, 2010).

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