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NOSB Votes to Prohibit Clones in Organic Production

Sustainable Food News, 3/29/2007

Straight to the Source

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) voted Thursday to ban the progeny of cloned animals from organic production.

Earlier Thursday, a USDA spokesperson told Sustainable Food News that the NOSB "tabled their [cloning] recommendation at this meeting, so we aren't doing anything right now."

Two hours later, the NOSB had voted 12-0, with one abstention and two members absent for the vote, to prohibit progeny of clones in organic production, and the USDA spokesperson sent an e-mail to SFN reading: "no progeny."

To read the NOSB's final cloning recommendation, **click here.**

Just last month, the NOSB ruled out cloning as a livestock production practice under federal organic regulations, but said progeny of animals derived from clones could be considered organic.

Regulators recognize that cloning as a production method and animal clones are incompatible with the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) and are prohibited under the NOP regulations.

The Food and Drug Administration is accepting public comment on its approval in a draft risk assessment of cloning as a production technique in agriculture. The FDA assessment said that clones are "virtually indistinguishable" from normal progeny and could enter the food supply.

The outcry from the organic dairy and foods community has been deafening. Companies lined up to denounce clones in organic production - from Straus Organic Creamery to Dean Foods.

Mounting evidence against organic cloning was highlighted by a legal analysis laying out why the existing statute and rules prohibit cloned animals and their progeny.

The white paper was explicit in terms of denying clones or their progeny any access to the organic label.

The document was forwarded to the NOSB and signed by organic dairy industry leaders and the world's largest organic and natural foods retailer, including George Siemon, chief executive officer of Organic Valley, Clark Driftmier of Aurora Organic Dairy, Margaret Wittenberg of Whole Foods Market, Rich Ghilarducci of Humboldt Creamery, and Kelly Shea, vice president of WhiteWave Foods/Horizon Organic.

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