



BEYOND PESTICIDES

Protecting Health and the Environment with Science, Policy and Action

February 26, 2015

Make Sure that Organic Supports Biodiversity, as Required by Organic Law

Comments Due Tomorrow, February 27, 2015 at Midnight

It not just what we eat, it's how it is grown in a world where species decline, including pollinator decline, is a real threat to the planet.

Agriculture can protect bees, pollinators, and the delicate balance of ecosystems. But, only if we [send a comment to the National Organic Program](#) (NOP) to make sure that happens. And, it will only happen if we **tell USDA that habitat is critical to protecting against species decline.**

>>[Send your comment today! The deadline is tomorrow, February 27, at midnight.](#)

As biologist and author Dave Goulson, Ph.D. says:
"We need worms to create soil; flies and beetles and fungi to break down dung; ladybirds and hoverflies to eat greenfly; bees and butterflies to pollinate plants to provide food, oxygen, fuel and medicines and hold the soil together, and bacteria to help plants fix nitrogen and to help cows to digest grass. . .[yet] we often choose to squander the irreplaceable, to discard those things that both keep us alive and make life worth living."

Under the organic rule, organic production is defined as "[a] production system that is managed in accordance with the Act...to respond to site-specific conditions by integrating

Biodiversity and Organic Should Go Hand in Hand!

[Click here to provide a public comment to NOP by midnight tomorrow, February 27th](#)

[See sample comments](#)

Resources

[Keeping Organic Strong](#)

Stay informed on what you can do maintain the integrity of the organic label.

[Save Our Organic](#)

Take action to oppose changes that would weaken the organic label.

[Beyond Pesticides' Tools for Change](#)

Links to online resources and campaigns, also [pest management](#) information

cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity."

Without **specific direction and guidance** requiring attention to biodiversity conservation in organic systems plans (OSP) and a checklist of practices in the organic certification, these are just words on a page. In 2005 and 2009, the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) adopted recommendations for biodiversity conservation. It is only now that NOP is proposing to act.

>>[Urge that organic be a model for protecting and enhancing biodiversity by sending a comment to NOP today!](#)

Use the sample comment below as a guide [for your submission](#). As always, individualized comments carry more weight.

To the National Organic Program:

Thank you for releasing this long-awaited draft guidance regarding biodiversity and organic production. We appreciate the Program's work in towards fulfilling the intent of the organic statute as "[a] production system that is managed in accordance with the Act...to respond to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity." In ensuring that this intent is adequately addressed, I ask the Program consider the following points.

- 1) The OSP must list and describe measures that the producer will take to conserve ecological balance, biodiversity, and natural resources.*
- 2) NOP must prevent natural habitat from being turned to agriculture. Conservation of biodiversity is an essential part of organic production.*
- 3) Terms must be defined. Words such as riparian*

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habitat, high conservation value areas, biodiversity, invasive species and other terms used in the guidance.

4) NOP' s Accreditation Division must ensure that certifiers do their job. Certifiers must implement biodiversity standards through clear and consistent documentation.

5) NOP must prescribe criteria for conservation practices on adjacent land.

6) Biodiversity conservation includes action to mitigate global climate change.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments,

Sincerely,

[Click here to send your comment to NOP today!](#)

Thank you for taking action to encourage biodiversity in organic production.

Please forward this email to your friends and family!



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