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March 11, 2013

Ms. Michelle Arsenault  
National Organic Standards Board,  
USDA-AMS-NOP  
1400 Independence Ave., SW.,  
Room 2646 So., Ag Stop 0268  
Washington, DC 20250-0268

**Docket: AMS-NOP-12-0070**

**RE: Certification, Accreditation, and Compliance Subcommittee (CACS) – Proposal on Calculating Percentage Organic in Multi-ingredient Products**

Dear Ms. Arsenault,

Oregon Tilth supports and appreciates the proposal from the Compliance, Accreditation and Compliance Subcommittee regarding Calculating Percentage of Organic Ingredients in Multi-ingredient Products. It is imperative that clear, concise instructions be in place to ensure all accredited certifiers and their clients calculate the percent organic of an ingredient, or finished product in the same manner.

**We respectfully request that the Compliance, Accreditation and Compliance Subcommittee consider the following changes.**

- 1) We request that the recommendation part 6: Multi-ingredient Ingredients be changed so that the percent of organic content can be provided by the manufacturer and not just the certifier. Documentation providing the necessary information for a formulator to verify the percent organic content can be verified at several levels. We have received certificates of analysis, or specification sheets that show the exact percentage organic. We have also received several formal letters, or documents from suppliers that the ingredient in question contains a maximum of 3% non-organic ingredients, or it actually lists out each non-organic ingredient with the maximum amount that could be in the formulation (i.e. flavor <1%, citric acid <2%). We can then extrapolate that the ingredient has 97% organic content for the new product it is going into. Legal documentation from the clients supplier that allows for the extrapolation of the percentage organic should be adequate. In following with a sound and sensible approach to certification the documentation can be verified from various sources, not just the certifier of the ingredient.
- 2) We request that the recommendation part 3: Salt Excluded have the following language added. Any sodium chloride used which contains an additive on the National list that is not organic will

remove the finished product from being eligible to be labeled as 100% Organic. This is an appropriate place to add this clarification on an issue that has been inconsistent among certifiers for several years.

**In addition, we would like to offer the following comments on the proposal points for consideration by the NOSB and/or NOP:**

- We agree that ACA's should create and use a self-calculating form to determine organic content of a multi-ingredient product. If a sample is provided by the NOP, we request that it not be mandatory to use the NOP template in certification.
- When clarification and detailed guidance is provided by the NOP, we would like to see formal calculations being based on strong science and current industry practices. Calculations should be developed for items like extracts, hydrosols and flavors. If we can agree on a sensible extract calculation, we can use this calculation for a wide variety of ingredient calculations, which can then provide the buyer of an ingredient with an accurate verification of organic content. Additionally, standard calculations for soy and almond "milk" type products would provide industry standardization. We would also like to see that strong science is able to be used alongside the FDA standards of identity and not just leave the exclusion of water to outdated FDA regulations.

We believe that this recommendation is imperative to the start of unified calculation methodology and a cornerstone to forthcoming guidance on this subject. This proposal and future guidance will allow future trainings from the NOP to concentrate on specific subjects like labeling, rather than have to go back to step one to show how the calculation was made. We appreciate your hard work on this topic and look forward to future guidance from the NOP.

Respectfully submitted,

Oregon Tilth, Inc.

*Oregon Tilth, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that supports and promotes biologically sound and socially equitable agriculture. Oregon Tilth offers educational events throughout the state of Oregon, and provides organic certification services to organic growers, processors, and handlers internationally. An NOP accredited certifier since 2002, Oregon Tilth currently certifies over 1,300 farms, ranches and handlers affording us a broad perspective of current practices and challenges faced by organic producers and handlers.*