

(Pub. L. 101-624, title XXI, §2116, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3944; Pub. L. 102-237, title X, §1001(5), Dec. 13, 1991, 105 Stat. 1893; Pub. L. 113-79, title X, §10005(b)(1), Feb. 7, 2014, 128 Stat. 944; Pub. L. 115-334, title X, §10104(d), Dec. 20, 2018, 132 Stat. 4900.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (i)(1). Pub. L. 115-334, §10104(d)(1)(A), inserted “or an entity acting as an agent of the certifying agent” after “a certifying agent”.

Subsec. (i)(2), (3). Pub. L. 115-334, §10104(d)(1)(B), (C), added par. (2) and redesignated former par. (2) as (3).

Subsec. (j). Pub. L. 115-334, §10104(d)(2), added subsec. (j).

2014—Subsecs. (c) to (j). Pub. L. 113-79 redesignated subsecs. (d) to (j) as (c) to (i), respectively, substituted “subsection (c)” for “subsection (d)” in introductory provisions of subsec. (d), and struck out former subsec. (c) which related to maintenance of, access to, and transference of records of certifying agents.

1991—Subsec. (j)(2). Pub. L. 102-237 substituted “such certifying” for “certifying such”.

§ 6516. Peer review of certifying agents

(a) Peer review

In determining whether to approve an application for accreditation submitted under section 6514 of this title, the Secretary shall consider a report concerning such applicant that shall be prepared by a peer review panel established under subsection (b).

(b) Peer review panel

To assist the Secretary in evaluating applications under section 6514 of this title, the Secretary may establish a panel of not less than three persons who have expertise in organic farming and handling methods, to evaluate the State governing official or private person that is seeking accreditation as a certifying agent under such section. Not less than two members of such panel shall be persons who are not employees of the Department of Agriculture or of the applicable State government.

(Pub. L. 101-624, title XXI, §2117, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3945.)

§ 6517. National List

(a) In general

The Secretary shall establish a National List of approved and prohibited substances that shall be included in the standards for organic production and handling established under this chapter in order for such products to be sold or labeled as organically produced under this chapter.

(b) Content of list

The list established under subsection (a) shall contain an itemization, by specific use or application, of each synthetic substance permitted under subsection (c)(1) or each natural substance prohibited under subsection (c)(2).

(c) Guidelines for prohibitions or exemptions

(1) Exemption for prohibited substances in organic production and handling operations

The National List may provide for the use of substances in an organic farming or handling operation that are otherwise prohibited under this chapter only if—

(A) the Secretary determines, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, that the use of such substances—

(i) would not be harmful to human health or the environment;

(ii) is necessary to the production or handling of the agricultural product because of the unavailability of wholly natural substitute products; and

(iii) is consistent with organic farming and handling;

(B) the substance—

(i) is used in production and contains an active synthetic ingredient in the following categories: copper and sulfur compounds; toxins derived from bacteria; pheromones, soaps, horticultural oils, fish emulsions, treated seed, vitamins and minerals; livestock parasiticides and medicines and production aids including netting, tree wraps and seals, insect traps, sticky barriers, row covers, and equipment cleansers; or

(ii) is used in production and contains synthetic inert ingredients that are not classified by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency as inert of toxicological concern; and

(C) the specific exemption is developed using the procedures described in subsection (d).

(2) Prohibition on the use of specific natural substances

The National List may prohibit the use of specific natural substances in an organic farming or handling operation that are otherwise allowed under this chapter only if—

(A) the Secretary determines, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, that the use of such substances—

(i) would be harmful to human health or the environment; and

(ii) is inconsistent with organic farming or handling, and the purposes of this chapter; and

(B) the specific prohibition is developed using the procedures specified in subsection (d).

(d) Procedure for establishing National List

(1) In general

The National List established by the Secretary shall be based upon a proposed national list or proposed amendments to the National List developed by the National Organic Standards Board.

(2) No additions

The Secretary may not include exemptions for the use of specific synthetic substances in the National List other than those exemptions contained in the Proposed National List or Proposed Amendments to the National List.

(3) Prohibited substances

In no instance shall the National List include any substance, the presence of which in

food has been prohibited by Federal regulatory action.

(4) Notice and comment

Before establishing the National List or before making any amendments to the National List, the Secretary shall publish the Proposed National List or any Proposed Amendments to the National List in the Federal Register and seek public comment on such proposals. The Secretary shall include in such Notice any changes to such proposed list or amendments recommended by the Secretary.

(5) Publication of National List

After evaluating all comments received concerning the Proposed National List or Proposed Amendments to the National List, the Secretary shall publish the final National List in the Federal Register, along with a discussion of comments received.

(6) Expedited petitions for commercially unavailable organic agricultural products constituting less than 5 percent of an organic processed product

The Secretary may develop emergency procedures for designating agricultural products that are commercially unavailable in organic form for placement on the National List for a period of time not to exceed 12 months.

(e) Sunset provision

No exemption or prohibition contained in the National List shall be valid unless the National Organic Standards Board has reviewed such exemption or prohibition as provided in this section within 5 years of such exemption or prohibition being adopted or reviewed and the Secretary has renewed such exemption or prohibition.

(Pub. L. 101-624, title XXI, §2118, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3946; Pub. L. 102-237, title X, §1001(6), Dec. 13, 1991, 105 Stat. 1893; Pub. L. 109-97, title VII, §797(b), Nov. 10, 2005, 119 Stat. 2165.)

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2005—Subsec. (c)(1). Pub. L. 109-97, §797(b)(1)(A), inserted “in organic production and handling operations” after “substances” in heading.

Subsec. (c)(1)(B)(iii). Pub. L. 109-97, §797(b)(1)(B), (C), struck out cl. (iii) which read as follows: “is used in handling and is non-synthetic but is not organically produced; and”.

Subsec. (d)(6). Pub. L. 109-97, §797(b)(2), added par. (6). 1991—Subsec. (c)(1)(B)(i). Pub. L. 102-237 substituted “parasitoides” for “paracitoides”.

§ 6518. National Organic Standards Board

(a) In general

The Secretary shall establish a National Organic Standards Board (hereafter referred to in this section as the “Board”) in accordance with chapter 10 of title 5 to assist in the development of standards for substances to be used in organic production and to advise the Secretary on any other aspects of the implementation of this chapter.

(b) Composition of Board

The Board shall be composed of 15 members, of which—

(1) four shall be individuals who own or operate an organic farming operation, or employees of such individuals;

(2) two shall be individuals who own or operate an organic handling operation, or employees of such individuals;

(3) one shall be an individual who owns or operates a retail establishment with significant trade in organic products, or an employee of such individual;

(4) three shall be individuals with expertise in areas of environmental protection and resource conservation;

(5) three shall be individuals who represent public interest or consumer interest groups;

(6) one shall be an individual with expertise in the fields of toxicology, ecology, or biochemistry; and

(7) one shall be an individual who is a certifying agent as identified under section 6515 of this title.

(c) Appointment

Not later than 180 days after November 28, 1990, the Secretary shall appoint the members of the Board under paragraph (1) through (6) of subsection (b) (and under subsection (b)(7) at an appropriate date after the certification of individuals as certifying agents under section 6515 of this title) from nominations received from organic certifying organizations, States, and other interested persons and organizations.

(d) Term

A member of the Board shall serve for a term of 5 years, except that the Secretary shall appoint the original members of the Board for staggered terms. A member cannot serve consecutive terms unless such member served an original term that was less than 5 years.

(e) Meetings

The Secretary shall convene a meeting of the Board not later than 60 days after the appointment of its members and shall convene subsequent meetings on a periodic basis.

(f) Compensation and expenses

A member of the Board shall serve without compensation. While away from their homes or regular places of business on the business of the Board, members of the Board may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as is authorized under section 5703 of title 5 for persons employed intermittently in the Government service.

(g) Chairperson

The Board shall select a Chairperson for the Board.

(h) Quorum

A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting business.

(i) Decisive votes

(1) In general

$\frac{2}{3}$ of the votes cast at a meeting of the Board at which a quorum is present shall be decisive of any motion.

(2) National list

Any vote on a motion proposing to amend the national list shall be considered to be a de-