



July 13, 2016

Paul Lewis, Ph.D.
Director, Standards Division, National Organic Program
USDA-AMS-NOP
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 2646-So., Ag Stop 0268
Washington, DC 20250-0268

Docket: AMS-NOP-15-0012: NOP-15-06PR

RE: National Organic Program; Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices Proposed Rule

Dear Dr. Lewis:

As the Organic Ambassador for General Mills and a former member of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the National Organic Program (NOP) proposed rule to amend the organic livestock and poultry production requirements in the current USDA organic regulations.

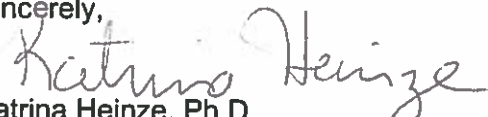
Every year General Mills provides USDA Certified Organic products to over 10 million American households. With popular brands like Annie's Homegrown, Cascadian Farm, Muir Glen, and Liberté Yogurt, our company has a vested interest in ensuring that the USDA Organic seal maintains a high level of consumer confidence. To that end, General Mills supports the National Organic Program's efforts to create greater consistency in organic livestock practices and ensure that consumer expectations for organic are met.

This proposed rule is based on 14 years of public input and recommendations from consumers, farmers, processors, retailers, veterinarians, and experts in animal welfare and animal science including a NOSB recommendation, passed unanimously in 2011. In fact, as a member of the NOSB during that time, I voted in favor of moving forward to bring greater consistency to organic livestock practices.

While we understand and appreciate all perspectives in this discussion, we know that confidence in the organic seal and trust in the process is critical to our consumers. Given that, it is critical that USDA move forward with this rule to ensure consistent compliance and enforcement of the livestock standard, but also to maintain consumer confidence in the USDA Organic seal.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our perspective. If you have any questions or would like further comment, please contact me at 763-764-7600.

Sincerely,


Katrina Heinze, Ph.D.
Organic Ambassador, General Mills
NOSB Member, 2007-2012