

Please deliver my signed proxy letter, below, to the office of the President of the United States of America. [Add personal comments on back.] This is also an official comment on pending "animal welfare" rulemaking AMS-NOP-21-0073.

PLEASE DO NOT DETACH PROXY LETTER
We will mechanically cut letter off before submitting.

Dear President Biden,

Support for organic food and farming practices cuts across all political ideologies. Whether it's because of environmental stewardship, humane animal husbandry practices, fairness for the people who produce our food, or the desire for safer and more nutritious food for our families and children—we really care!

I hope you will prioritize these concerns moving into the midterms and the next presidential campaign.

Some of us have contacted you and USDA Secretary Vilsack in the past to articulate our concerns. Thus far, the USDA continues to collaborate closely with the industry's primary lobby group, the Organic Trade Association, while not doing much more than creating the impression that they are listening to the public and NGOs representing the interests of farmers and consumers—the citizens who built the organic movement. The agency is disrespecting our heartfelt and convicted positions.

1. The current laws mandating access to the outdoors for all livestock, pasture for ruminants, and soil-based fruit and vegetable production are not being enforced.
2. The pending draft rulemaking (AMS-NOP-21-0073) will codify the abuses currently taking place on industrial-scale "farms" producing organic eggs and meat birds. The proposal would only afford 1-2 ft.² per animal indoors (effectively even less, because outdoor porches, with little realistic access, will be counted in). Outdoors, birds will be afforded the same amount of space, after being required to pass through tiny doors and a porch, greatly interfering with their access—and then 50% of the space outside can be covered with concrete or gravel! These anemic requirements depriving the birds of the opportunity to express their natural instinctual behaviors, which is required by law, are coupled with a rule allowing exclusive confinement for the first 21 weeks of the laying hen's life—straight from the wish list of corporate lobbyists.
3. A new approach needs to be developed as an alternative to the tens of millions of dollars currently spent on annual inspections. The vast preponderance of documented fraud—what we assume is only the tip of the iceberg—is being discovered by OrganicEye and others outside of the certification/inspection process. Resources should be focused on hiring experienced agriculturalists/forensic accountants for more comprehensive/periodic audits (punctuated with liberal unannounced inspections and testing).
4. The department needs to prioritize listening to the NGO community rather than corporate lobbyists who have been appointed to key leadership positions at the USDA and on the NOSB.

We sincerely hope you will take substantive action related to our concerns.

Respectfully yours,

NAME

SIGNATURE

ADDRESS

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Q3-2022