

# Use your voice to defend ORGANIC food and farming

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## U.S. Department of Agriculture moves to holdback animal welfare in organic standards

### THE ASK

Calling all eaters! Use your voice to protect organic! We know that when you choose to buy organic products, you have clear expectations about what that means. Unfortunately, hoping we are all too busy during the holidays and New Year to notice, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has rolled back organic standards regarding animal welfare and given the public a scant 30 days to speak our minds.

All we are asking is that organic chickens have access to the outdoors, space to move around, sunlight and fresh air, and that animals on farms be protected from unnecessary and potentially harmful procedures like tail docking of cows and unrestricted beak trimming on birds. USDA's indefensible rollback of organic standards is the biggest attack on organic in almost 20 years (when it tried to allow GMOs in the original standard). We protected organic then, and we can protect organic now.

Organic farmers, ranchers, and food makers already overwhelmingly support these animal welfare standards, but we need you to help us halt this rollback. With less than 30 days to act, NOW is the time to fight back. It only takes ONE MINUTE to weigh in for organic farmers, animals, and consumers everywhere.

### [TAKE ACTION NOW](#)

### SUMMARY

In an outrageous move, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has said that they intend to withdraw the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule. This USDA action goes against the overwhelming support of organic farmers, businesses, and consumers to advance animal welfare standards in organic. **The deadline to submit a comment to USDA regarding this action is January 17, 2018.**

[Learn more about what's happening now and how we got here.](#)

"The organic sector does not take for granted the trust of the consumers we serve, and we work hard every single day to maintain it. Organic is an opt-in regulated marketing program that ensures products bearing the USDA organic seal meet strict consistently applied standards and provide the consumer a meaningful choice. The future of the organic market rests on consumer trust, and the organic sector depends on the USDA to set organic standards fairly and according to the law."

*—Laura Batcha, CEO, Organic Trade Association*

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Let your followers know that NOW IS THE TIME to fight to keep organic strong.

- Tell them your business will not stand aside while government holds back the meaningful and transparent choice organic provides.
- Share news stories that accurately cover the magnitude of this issue.
- Ask everyone to submit a comment expressing strong opposition to the proposed withdrawal of the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule.

**Let's flood the Federal Register (yet again) with public comments that demand fundamental government fairness in organic standards setting! Share these articles and calls to action on your social media channels, in a blog post, an e-newsletter to your mailing lists or in a statement of support on your website.**

## TAKE ACTION!

Please use these talking points as inspiration for sharing on any of your social channels. We recommend pairing this copy with graphics from the graphic library (next page). If you have ideas on how you would like to position your support of this action or if you would like help in crafting custom posts, please contact Kelly Taveras ([ktaveras@ota.com](mailto:ktaveras@ota.com)).

## LINKS

- Consumer action direct link: <http://bit.ly/2BGznsy>
- Background information: <https://ota.com/livestockpractices>

## SOCIAL TALKING POINTS

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture has launched an assault on ORGANIC food and farming. It's time to fight back! Comment now.
- Use your voice to defend organic! Tell USDA that you oppose the proposed withdrawal of the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule.
- The deadline to submit a comment to USDA opposing the outrageous withdrawal of organic animal welfare standards is January 17, 2018. Act now!
- Take Action! Tell USDA its baseless decision goes against the overwhelming support of organic farmers, businesses, and consumers to advance animal welfare standards in organic.
- Go on the record to defend organic! Tell USDA that you oppose the withdrawal of organic animal welfare standards. Act now.

## SHAREABLE NEWS

### [Civil Eats:](#)

- *"Today's announcement is a subversion of comprehensive federal animal welfare standards approved by the USDA," said Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States, "and it will prove crippling to family farmers all across the nation who treat their animals well and want to be able to market their products under an authentic 'organic' label."*

### [Washington Post:](#)

- *This decision "is going to be destructive to the whole organic field," said Jesse Laflamme, co-owner and chief executive at Pete and Gerry's Organics, an egg company that requires farmers to meet higher standards. "What's so upsetting is that there is such a gap between what organic consumers expect and what these factory farms are producing."*

### [NPR:](#)

- *"It's an unusual situation, because in this case the demand for regulation is coming from the very organic farmers who would need to meet those new rules. But those farmers say those rules are [needed](#) to maintain a level playing field in the organic industry."*

### [Feedstuffs:](#)

- *National Farmers Union senior vice president of public policy and communications Rob Larew said there currently is too much inconsistency in how organic certifiers apply animal welfare standards to farming and ranching operations. "This, in turn, endangers the organic label's integrity and leads to consumer confusion. The OLPP rule would have helped mitigate these concerns by standardizing organic livestock and poultry practices for the voluntary National Organic Program," he said.*

### [New Hope:](#)

- *"The success of thousands of family organic farms and decades of hard work by consumers, farmers and food companies is at stake. While the organic community doesn't always align on everything, we all agree that the future of feeding*

*Americans with healthy, sustainable food requires a robust and trustworthy organic seal. The American public has spoken."*

## GRAPHIC LIBRARY

You can [download our graphic library](#) now and begin sharing on your social networks. Choose the images that best speak to your brand. If you would like to customize these graphics in any way (such as custom sizing for use in an email template or on your website, adding your company logo, adjusting language, etc.) please contact Kelly Taveras ([ktaveras@ota.com](mailto:ktaveras@ota.com)).



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Contact Kelly Taveras, Digital Specialist if you would like further assistance.](#)