

March 27, 2018

The Honorable Michael Conaway
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1305 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Committee
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
Committee
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Conaway, Chairman Roberts, Ranking Member Peterson and Ranking Member Stabenow:

The undersigned companies and business associations strongly urge you to support efforts in the next farm bill that will better position America's farmers and ranchers to meet the growing demand for organic food and fiber.

In less than two decades, sales in the organic sector have grown from \$3.7 billion in 1997 to more than \$46 billion in 2016. Despite this rapid growth, U.S. production of organic food has lagged significantly behind consumer demand. The gap between supply and demand means that many American organic food companies must often turn to foreign suppliers to meet demand for staple organic commodities like soybeans, corn and almonds as well as organic beef and pork.

We believe the next farm bill should better position America's farmers and ranchers to meet the growing demand for organic in the domestic and global marketplace by ensuring that producers interested in transitioning to organic are provided the assistance they need to manage the technical, financial, infrastructure and land-access challenges that transitioning producers face.

That is why we support the following legislative proposals:

- The Homegrown Organic Act – H.R. 3637/S. 2215 – which would make simple, no-cost or low-cost changes to existing voluntary conservation programs to better assist producers intending to transition to organic manage the technical, economic and land-access challenges they face;
- The Organic Agriculture Research Act – H.R. 2436/S.2404 – which would ensure that adequate funding is made available for organic research and extension programs to ensure that farmers transitioning to organic have greater access to high-yielding organic seeds as well as the resources necessary to address weed, pest, and soil health challenges; and
- The Organic Farmers Access Act – H.R.4671 – which would ensure that recently certified organic growers can fully utilize existing loan and grant opportunities in rural development programs, thereby allowing them to gain greater access to organic markets and build the infrastructure needed to support a growing organic marketplace.

Finally, the next farm bill must ensure that USDA's National Organic Program is provided the resources necessary to support growing the number of domestic certified organic farms, handlers and processors.

Together, we believe these proposals will go a long way toward reducing America's reliance on organic imports by expanding market opportunities for U.S. producers and better positioning America's farmers and ranchers to meet the growing demand for organic here at home.

Respectfully submitted by:

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| Amy's Kitchen | MOM's Organic Market |
| Applegate | National Co+op Grocers |
| Back to the Roots | Nature's Path |
| Bascom Maple Farms, Inc. | Naturepedic |
| Beetnik | Nutiva |
| Bhakti | Once Upon a Farm |
| Boulder Food Group | One Degree Organic |
| Clif Bar | Orgain |
| DanoneWave | PCC Natural Markets |
| Fig Food Company | Pete and Gerry's Organic Eggs |
| Forager Project | Plant Based Food Association |
| Global Organics | Plum Organic |
| Hain Celestial Group, Inc. | SeaSnax |
| Happy Family | Stonyfield Farm |
| Honest Tea | Strauss Family Creamery |
| Independent Natural Food Retailers Association | Three Twins Ice Cream |
| Late July | To Your Health Sprouted Flour Co. |
| Luke's Organic | Traditional Medicinals |
| Lundberg Family Farm | Uncle Matt's Organic |
| Mamma Chia | United Natural Foods, Inc. |
| Maple Hill Creamery | Yummy Spoonfuls |
| MegaFood | |

Cc: Members of the House Agriculture Committee
Members of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee