

This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Public Meeting on Proposed Partner Vetting System

AGENCY: U.S. Agency for International Development.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: USAID will host a meeting for interested parties regarding the proposed Partner Vetting System. Following our System of Records Notice: July 17–August 27, 2007; Rulemaking Notice: July 20–Sept. 18, 2007; Paperwork Reduction Act Notices: July 23–Dec. 3, 2007; and Congressional consultations, USAID is interested in gathering feedback prior to the issuance of a final rule and initial implementation of the system. The goal of this meeting is to answer concerns raised during the public comment periods on this subject and to touch upon the results of our consultations thus far.

DATES: This meeting will be held on Friday, April 11, 2008 at 11:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at U.S. Agency for International Development, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC. Photo ID required for admittance into the Ronald Reagan Building as well as USAID.

Note: Due to security RSVP required.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: RSVP to Todd Calongne, 202–712–0059, tcalongne@usaid.gov.

Dated: March 31, 2008.

Jeffrey Grieco,

Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs.

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AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002; Notice

On May 15, 2002, Congress enacted the “Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002,” which is now known as the No FEAR Act. One purpose of the Act is to “require that Federal agencies be accountable for violations of antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws.” Public Law 107–174, Summary. In support of this purpose, Congress found that “agencies cannot be run effectively if those agencies practice or tolerate discrimination.” Public Law 107–174, Title I, General Provisions, section 101(1).

The Act also requires this agency to provide this notice to Federal employees, former Federal employees and applicants for Federal employment to inform you of the rights and protections available to you under Federal antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws.

Antidiscrimination Laws

A Federal agency cannot discriminate against an employee or applicant with respect to the terms, conditions or privileges of employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status or political affiliation. Discrimination on these bases is prohibited by one or more of the following statutes: 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(1), 29 U.S.C. 206(d), 29 U.S.C. 631, 29 U.S.C. 633a, 29 U.S.C. 791 and 42 U.S.C. 2000e-16.

This agency also prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. The right to address sexual orientation discrimination derives from Executive Order 13087.

If you believe that you have been the victim of unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, parental status or sexual orientation you must contact an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action, or, in the case of a personnel action, within 45 calendar days of the effective date of the action, before you can file a formal complaint of discrimination with the Agency. *See, e.g.,* 29 CFR 1614. If you believe that

you have been the victim of unlawful discrimination on the basis of age, you must either contact an EEO counselor as noted above or give notice of intent to sue to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) within 180 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action. If you are alleging discrimination based on marital status or political affiliation, you may file a written complaint with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) (see contact information below). In the alternative (or in some cases, in addition), you may pursue a discrimination complaint by filing a grievance through the Agency’s administrative or negotiated grievance procedures, if such procedures apply and are available.

Whistleblower Protection Laws

A Federal employee with authority to take, direct others to take, recommend or approve any personnel action must not use that authority to take or fail to take, or threaten to take or fail to take, a personnel action against an employee or applicant because of disclosure of information by that individual that is reasonably believed to evidence violations of law, rule or regulation; gross mismanagement; gross waste of funds; an abuse of authority; or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, unless disclosure of such information is specifically prohibited by law and such information is specifically required by Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs.

Retaliation against an employee or applicant for making a protected disclosure is prohibited by 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(8). If you believe that you have been the victim of whistleblower retaliation, you may file a written complaint (Form OSC–11) with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel at 1730 M Street, NW., Suite 218, Washington, DC 20036–4505 or online through the OSC Web site <http://www.osc.gov>.

Retaliation for Engaging in Protected Activity

A Federal agency cannot retaliate against an employee or applicant because that individual exercises his or her rights under any of the Federal antidiscrimination or whistleblower protection laws listed above. If you believe that you are the victim of retaliation for engaging in protected

activity, you must follow, as appropriate, the procedures described in the Antidiscrimination Laws and Whistleblower Protection Laws sections or, if applicable, the administrative or negotiated grievance procedures in order to pursue any legal remedy.

Disciplinary Actions

Under the existing laws, each agency retains the right, where appropriate, to discipline a Federal employee for conduct that is inconsistent with Federal Antidiscrimination and Whistleblower Protection Laws up to and including removal. If OSC has initiated an investigation under 5 U.S.C. 1214, however, according to 5 U.S.C. 1214(f), agencies must seek approval from the Special Counsel to discipline employees for, among other activities, engaging in prohibited retaliation. Nothing in the No FEAR Act alters existing laws or permits an agency to take unfounded disciplinary action against a Federal employee or to violate the procedural rights of a Federal employee who has been accused of discrimination.

Additional Information

For further information regarding the No FEAR Act regulations, refer to 5 CFR 724. You may also contact the USAID Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (EOP). Additional information regarding Federal antidiscrimination, whistleblower protection and retaliation laws can be found at the EEOC Web site <http://www.eeoc.gov> and the OSC Web site <http://www.osc.gov>.

Existing Rights Unchanged

Pursuant to section 205 of the No FEAR Act, neither the Act nor this notice creates, expands or reduces any rights otherwise available to any employee, former employee or applicant under the laws of the United States, including the provisions of law specified in 5 U.S.C. 2302(d).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lisa M. Lawler by telephone at (202) 712-0111; by FAX at (202) 216-3370; or by e-mail at llawler@usaid.gov.

Dated: March 28, 2008.

Jessalyn L. Pendarvis,
Director, Office of Equal Opportunity Programs.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Marketing Service

[Doc. No. AMS-TM-08-0021; TM-08-04]

Notice of Meeting of the National Organic Standards Board

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is announcing a forthcoming meeting of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB).

DATES: The meeting dates are Tuesday, May 20, 2008, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Wednesday, May 21, 2008, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Thursday, May 22, 2008, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Requests from individuals and organizations wishing to make oral presentations at the meeting are due by the close of business on May 5, 2008.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will take place at The Holiday Inn Inner Harbor Hotel, 301 W. Lombard Street, Baltimore, MD 21201.

- Requests for copies of the NOSB meeting agenda, may be sent to Ms. Valerie Frances, Executive Director, NOSB, USDA-AMS-TMP-NOP, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Room 4008-So., Ag Stop 0268, Washington, DC 20250-0268. The NOSB meeting agenda and proposed recommendations may also be viewed at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>.

- Comments on proposed NOSB recommendations may be submitted by May 5, 2008 in writing to Ms. Frances at either the postal address above or via the internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> only. The comments should identify Docket No. AMS-TM-08-0021. It is our intention to have all comments to this notice whether they are submitted by mail or the internet available for viewing on the <http://www.regulations.gov> Web site.

- Requests to make an oral presentation at the meeting may also be sent by May 5, 2008 to Ms. Valerie Frances at the postal address above, by email at valerie.frances@usda.gov, via facsimile at (202) 205-7808, or phone at (202) 720-3252.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Valerie Frances, Executive Director, NOSB, National Organic Program (NOP), (202) 720-3252, or visit the NOP Web site at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 2119 (7 U.S.C. 6518) of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (OFPA),

as amended (7 U.S.C. 6501 *et seq.*) requires the establishment of the NOSB. The purpose of the NOSB is to make recommendations about whether a substance should be allowed or prohibited in organic production or handling, to assist in the development of standards for substances to be used in organic production, and to advise the Secretary on other aspects of the implementation of the OFPA. The NOSB met for the first time in Washington, DC, in March 1992, and currently has six subcommittees working on various aspects of the organic program. The committees are: Compliance, Accreditation, and Certification; Crops; Handling; Livestock; Materials; and Policy Development.

In August of 1994, the NOSB provided its initial recommendations for the NOP to the Secretary of Agriculture. Since that time, the NOSB has submitted 154 addenda to its recommendations and reviewed more than 327 substances for inclusion on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. The Department of Agriculture (USDA) published its final National Organic Program regulation in the **Federal Register** on December 21, 2000, (65 FR 80548). The rule became effective April 21, 2001.

In addition, the OFPA authorizes the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances and provides that no allowed or prohibited substance would remain on the National List for a period exceeding 5 years unless the exemption or prohibition is reviewed and recommended for renewal by the NOSB and adopted by the Secretary of Agriculture. This expiration is commonly referred to as sunset of the National List. The National List appears at 7 CFR Part 205, Subpart G.

The principal purposes of the NOSB meeting are to provide an opportunity for the NOSB to receive an update from the USDA/NOP and hear progress reports from NOSB committees regarding work plan items and proposed action items. The last meeting of the NOSB was held on November 28-30, 2007 in Arlington, VA.

At its last meeting, the Board recommended the addition of 3 materials to the National List § 205.601 for use in crops and § 205.605 for use in handling. In addition, the Board also nearly completed the sunset review process for 11 of the 13 materials for use in crops and handling which are due to expire on November 3, 2008 and November 4, 2008. Of these 11 materials, there are 9 substances for use in crops and handling placed on the National List on November 3, 2003, and