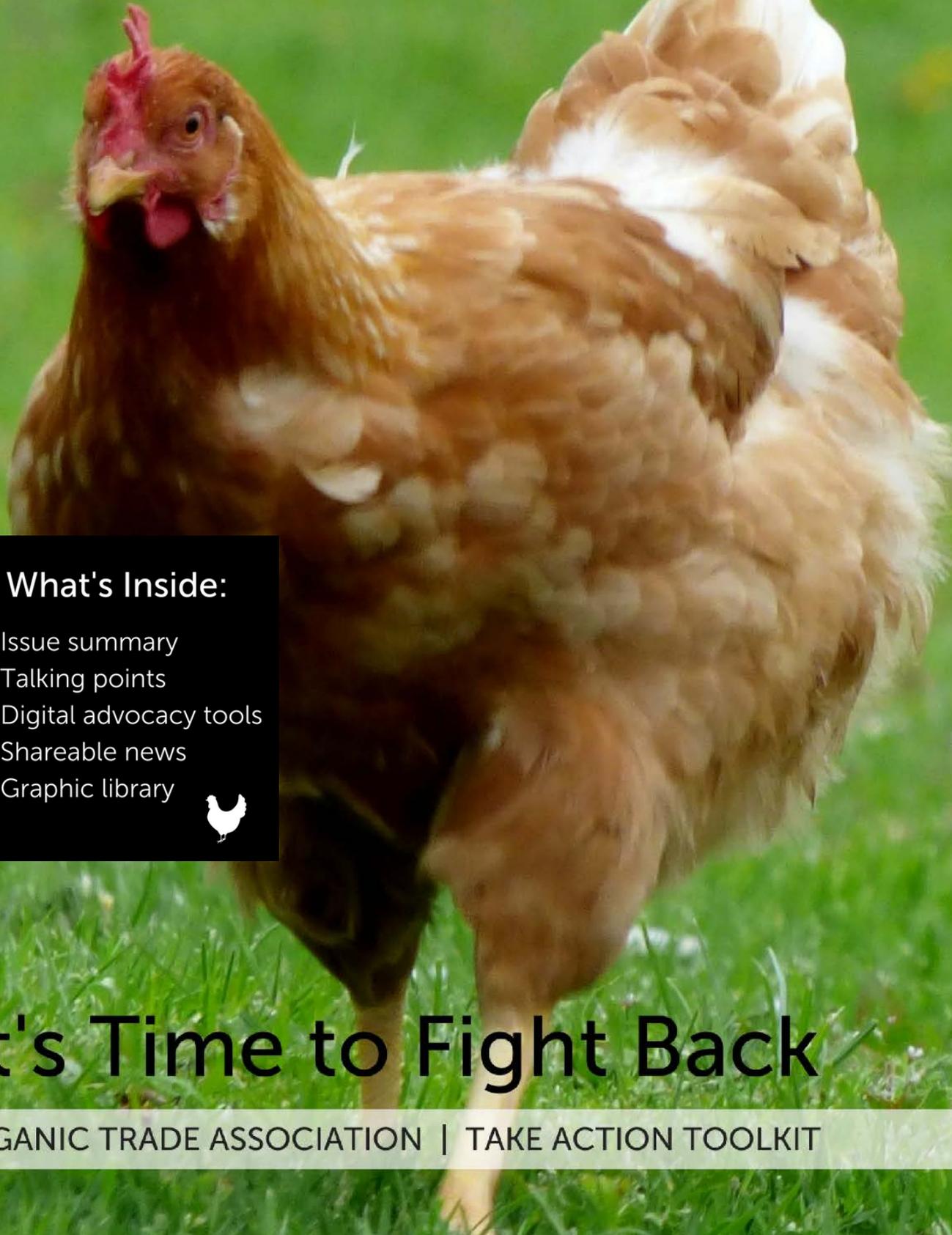


The Trump Administration launched an assault on ORGANIC food and farming



What's Inside:

- ✓ Issue summary
- ✓ Talking points
- ✓ Digital advocacy tools
- ✓ Shareable news
- ✓ Graphic library



It's Time to Fight Back

ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION | TAKE ACTION TOOLKIT

Trump Administration moves to holdback animal welfare in organic standards

In an outrageous assault on the USDA Organic label, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is moving fast to kill the industry-developed standards that would provide organic livestock and poultry with real outdoor access, ample space to move around, and protection from unnecessary physical alterations. **These meaningful production practices differentiate you to the millions of consumers who care about food transparency.** Now we need your help to stop USDA from withdrawing the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule that sets you apart. When USDA first wrote the organic standards back in 2000, they proposed that GMOs should be allowed. The public responded with over a quarter million comments demanding GMOs be prohibited in organic. We won the fight then, and now we need to rally again to stop this newest attack on the organic movement. **Take action now to keep organic standards strong and consumer confidence high.**

OUR ASKS

1. Submit a custom comment (using our talking points if it is helpful) [directly to the Federal Register](#). *(Page 3)*
2. If you don't have 5 minutes to craft a unique comment, take 1 minute to [submit our form comment](#). *(Page 4)*
3. Encourage your neighbors, friends, and networks to weigh-in. This affects everyone. *(Pages 5 -7)*

SUMMARY

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

ASK 1. Submit a custom comment (using our talking points if it is helpful) directly to the Federal Register.

A unique comment from everyone is critical. You can [comment by going to the Federal Register](#) (Docket # AMS-NOP-15-0012; NOP-15-06). Here are some talking points to help you write a comment to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Writing from your own point of view will make the biggest impact.

1. State clearly that as an organic producer, handler, or consumer you **oppose** USDA's action to withdraw the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule.
2. Say who you are, where you are from, and share some details about your farm, ranch, or business.
3. The Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule represents over a decade of discussion, feedback and support from our industry and ensures that we operate on a level playing field and meet a consistent standard, regardless of operation size.
4. The move to withdraw the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule goes against all overwhelming evidence to advance animal welfare standards in organic. Out of the more than 47,000 comments the department received in the last public comment period, 99 percent were in favor of the rule becoming effective without further delay.
5. Nullifying 14 years of policymaking, and ignoring public feedback to proceed with the final rule, is indefensible. Withdrawing the final rule would damage a marketplace that is giving American farmers a profitable alternative, creating jobs, and improving the economies of our rural areas.
6. This attempt to withdraw the animal care standards was done without consultation from the National Organic Standards Board- the very group of farmers, processors, scientists, and public representatives, designated by Congress to advise USDA on organic standards.
7. The decision to become certified organic is voluntary not mandatory. If consumers lose confidence in organic it will have catastrophic impacts throughout the industry. The final rule strikes the right balance between meeting consumer expectations and the reality of commercial scale food production.

ASK 2. If you don't have 5 minutes to craft a unique comment, take one minute to submit our form comment.

We have pre-loaded the following [form comment on our Advocacy Action page](#). All you need to do is input your name, address, and e-mail and it will post directly to the Federal Register. (The comment is fully editable, if you are feeling inspired).

I am outraged by the move to withdraw the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule. As an organic livestock producer, I demand USDA implement this farmer-friendly, animal-friendly, and economy-friendly rule without further delay.

The USDA Organic seal was born out of a public outcry for a healthier, safer and more transparent food system. USDA's rollback of organic standards is a preposterous assault on our nearly \$50 billion industry. There is no reasonable justification for this USDA action.

The organic sector has been advocating for these advancements in animal welfare for many years. After over a decade of stakeholder input, unanimous National Organic Standards Board recommendations, and a thorough rulemaking process that yielded overwhelming support for the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule, the only logical step is to implement the rule.

Withdrawing the rule would damage a marketplace that is giving American farmers a profitable alternative, creating jobs, and improving the economies of our rural areas.

As an organic farmer, my livelihood depends on the trust that I have built with the American consumer. I am proud to be delivering a product that meets the highest standards possible and is in line with consumer expectations of what the USDA Organic seal means.

The decision to become certified organic is voluntary. If consumers lose confidence in the Organic seal, it will have catastrophic impacts throughout the industry.

The last comment period showed nearly universal support among organic businesses and consumers for the fully vetted Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices final rule, with 99 percent in favor of the rule becoming effective. USDA's indefensible proposed action would nullify 14 years of policymaking and ignore the overwhelming feedback from organic job-creators to proceed with the final rule.

It is simple- the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices rule expands and clarifies existing requirements for livestock care and production practices; it is not government overreach. The organic industry supports the final rule. The organic consumer supports the final rule. Now we need USDA to do its job and implement the final rule.

ASK 3. Encourage your colleagues, neighbors, and friends to weigh-in. This affects everyone. Let your networks know that NOW IS THE TIME to fight to keep organic strong.

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.

- Tell them you 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 animal care standards.

Please use these talking points as inspiration for sharing on Facebook or Twitter. We recommend pairing this copy with graphics from the library (Page 7). 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](#).

LINKS

- Farmer action direct link: <http://bit.ly/2BGRzCn>
- Consumer action direct link: <http://bit.ly/2BGznsy>
- Business action direct link: <http://bit.ly/2z6rTvS>
- Federal Register direct link: <http://bit.ly/2BPI5qR>
- Background information: <https://ota.com/livestockpractices>

SOCIAL TALKING POINTS

- The Trump Administration just 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 the Trump Administration that you oppose the withdrawal of organic animal welfare standards. Act now.

SHAREABLE NEWS

Civil Eats: [Years in the making, organic animal welfare rules killed by Trump's USDA;](#)

- *"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."*
- *"This is a clear case of the Trump Administration ignoring public feedback to follow through on its own politicized wishes," said a joint statement from four members of Congress, including Representative [Chellie Pingree](#), a Maine organic farmer and a Democrat on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture. "This undermining of the public process is absolutely indefensible and should not be allowed to stand."*

Washington Post: [Should 'USDA Organic' animals be treated more humanely? The Trump Administration just said no.](#)

- *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: [Trump Administration moves to kill rules for organic eggs](#)

- *"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: [USDA puts final ax on organic livestock rule](#)

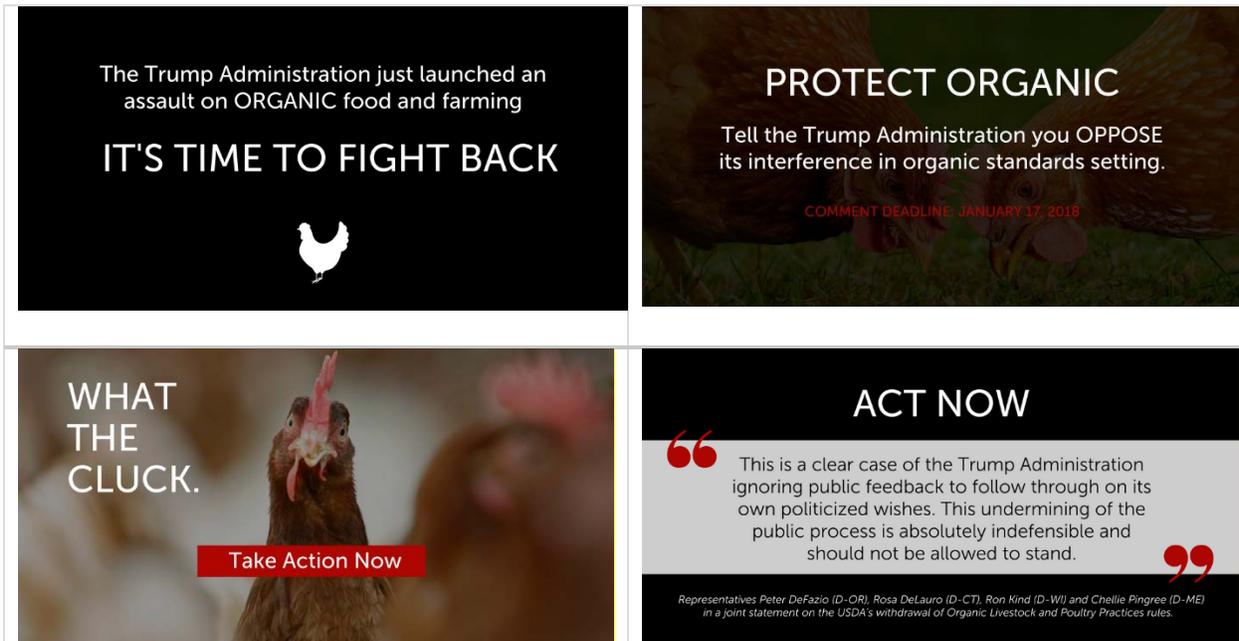
- *National Farmers Union senior vice president of public policy and communications Rob Larew said there currently is too much inconsistency in how organic certifiers apply animal welfare standards to farming and ranching operations. "This, in turn, endangers the organic label's integrity and leads to 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: [USDA is ignoring its customers—the American public—on animal welfare](#)

- *"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 (there are nine images currently available). If you would like to modify 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](#).



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Contact the [Organic Trade Association Team](#) for support:

For communications and outreach support: **Kelly Taveras:** ktaveras@ota.com; 802.289.9186

For technical questions and comment support: **Kelley Poole:** kpoole@ota.com; 202.403.8511

Plus, find [all the background you could ever need](#) on our web site.

THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO TO ADVANCE ORGANIC!