

## **TALKING POINTS**

The National Organic Program (NOP) has completed its Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices Rule (OLPP) which would give them the ability to consistently enforce stronger animal welfare standards. It is now supposed to take effect on November 14.

Tell your Member: “I strongly support the new organic animal welfare regulations that were put forward on January 18, 2017. These new rules level the playing field for farmers and are critical to preserving trust in the organic label.”

When you write to your Congress Member, be sure to add your own story – it makes a difference!

Use these Talking Points (Thanks to Ohio Ecological food and Farming Association) to help with details:

- Consumers and organic farmers want livestock and poultry to have access to the outdoors and the ability to express their natural behaviors. The new Rule will mandate that for organic eggs, poultry, and meat.
- This Rule is 10 years in the making with input from organic farmers, the public, researchers and the National Organic Standards Board.
- The release of these new standards will level the playing field: Organic livestock and poultry farmers that adhere to high standards are being undercut because of loopholes that allow a small number of producers to deny meaningful outdoor access to animals.
- The majority of organic livestock farmers already comply with these rules.
- Strong, consistent standards such as these are critical to preserving integrity in the organic label
- Because the NOSB and organic community have consistently called for meaningful outdoor access for poultry dating back to 1998, it is untruthful for poultry operations that do not meet these requirements to claim that they have been taken by surprise. Operations that do not currently meet the standards will have - up to five years - to comply with the new standards.
- Scientific studies indicate that indoor confinement is a risk factor for spreading disease which also supports the benefits of outdoor access within the existing USDA and FDA health and safety framework.
- Contrary to concerns that hens are more vulnerable to predation with outdoor access, the USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) found that mortality rates are similar for organic and non-organic egg operations. Most organic producers already provide outdoor access and use a variety of practices to protect birds from predators such as overhead netting and electric fencing. The proposed rule is based on substantial public input, including from producers, on practices that improve the overall quality of life for birds.