



ALBERT LEA SEED

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January 13, 2018

Paul Lewis, Ph.D., Director, Standards Division
National Organic Program, USDA-AMS-NOP
1400 Independence Ave. SW, Room 2642-So., Ag Stop 0268
Washington, DC 20250-0268

Docket No.: AMS-NOP-15-0012; NOP-15-06

Dear Director Lewis,

I am writing to urge you to support the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices rule.

Since 1923 Albert Lea Seed has been a family-owned business providing seed and information to farmers across the upper Midwest. We began producing Organic seed in 1998. Last year we shipped over 9 Million pounds of certified Organic seed to farmers in 47 States.

As a major supplier of certified Organic farm seed in the United States, we are writing to express our dismay at the decision of the USDA to withdraw the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (OLPP) final rule. The OLPP final rule was developed in a thoughtful and deliberate public process with input from farmers, consumers, and stakeholders throughout the supply chain. It balances real-world farming considerations with animal welfare concerns in a way that is strongly supported by organic consumers. The proposed withdrawal of this carefully-developed rule is not only undemocratic, it threatens the livelihood of thousands of organic farm families across the United States.

The USDA Organic seal is a voluntary, opt-in regulation system with substantial value-addition for family farms, rural communities, and natural systems. The economic power of the Organic label depends entirely on consumer trust and buy-in. Any effort to weaken Organic rules damages the credibility of the Organic label and therefore damages the family farmers that depend upon the Organic marketplace to buy their products and support their families and rural America. We strongly urge you to let the final OLPP rule become effective on May 14, 2018 and keep the USDA Organic label meaningful and transparent for generations to come.

Respectfully,

Mac Ehrhardt, Pres.

