



NOFA-NY Policy Resolutions

Policy resolutions serve as the foundational guide to NOFA-NY's advocacy and policy efforts. All members are called upon each September to submit suggested policy resolutions. Resolutions are drafted by the policy committee and are presented to the Board of Directors for a vote, and then moved forward to a vote by the full membership at the annual membership meeting, typically held each January during NOFA-NY's Winter Conference. A two-thirds majority vote is necessary for passage of a resolution.

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2020

SITING OF RENEWABLE ENERGY INSTALLATIONS ON FARMLAND (adopted Jan. 2020)

Whereas, high quality farmland is a limited and invaluable resource and recently developers have proposed a large number of solar projects in New York State on thousands of acres of our most productive soils—creating a perceived conflict between food security and energy security;

And whereas, owners of farmland can derive higher rental payments from renewable energy companies than from the farmers to whom they currently rent and 24% of the farmland in New York is on leased land;

And whereas, there are many potential sites for solar, wind and other renewable energy installations (highway margins, flat rooftops, brownfields, etc.) that do not encroach on farmland;

And whereas, with good design and management, farming and energy production can co-locate on the same land in ways that are compatible with a farmer's operation so as to benefit, rather than detract from farm viability;

And whereas, community and public control of energy usually results in lower prices for electricity;

And whereas, regional least-conflict siting processes for the generation of energy for non-local use in which developers, farmers, farmland conservation organizations, environmental organizations, residents, and other stakeholders participate can result in sound decisions for renewable energy siting that also ensures that damage to wildlife is kept to a minimum.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that:

1. The siting of solar, wind and other renewable energy projects on prime and productive farmland of statewide importance should minimize the impact on current and future agricultural uses of the land;
2. Developers should be required to follow the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets guidelines on construction, operation, and decommissioning of arrays when siting on farmland to protect the future agricultural use; and,
3. Studies should be undertaken to determine the impact of the growth of renewable energy on the leasing and availability of farmland.

END

PARITY PRICING SYSTEM FOR FARM PRODUCTS (adopted Jan. 2020)

Whereas NOFA-NY favors a viable farm economy for the family-scale farmers of NYS and for rural communities, and for farms to achieve economic viability, farmers want to receive a decent price from the marketplace, not the government, and the prices they receive for their products must cover the full costs of production, including living wages for everyone who works on the farms;

And whereas, NOFA-NY is a member of national networks that have set parity as a top priority and we want to publicly support their campaigns;

And whereas current prices from most markets, especially for milk, vegetables for processing and retail, and such storable crops as grains and beans, are not high enough to maintain farm viability;

And whereas there is enough value in the food and fiber supply chain for farmers, processors, retailers and consumers to all get a fair deal;

And whereas profitability is achieved when supply and demand are in balance;

And whereas, farmers are more likely to invest resources and time in regenerative practices that mitigate climate change by removing carbon from the atmosphere while improving the health of the soil when they are not worrying about going out of business;

And whereas, the farming population in NYS is aging and beginning farmers are deterred from getting started or from making a life commitment to farming when they cannot see a way to make a decent living.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that the United States government should abandon its cheap food policies and implement parity pricing for the 21st century. Parity pricing is a system of price supports combined with supply management and conservation that is based on equity and fairness, and should emerge for today's agriculture from a country-wide process of discussion and debate among all relevant stakeholders, similar to the process that created the Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture in the 1990s. Parity pricing would be governed democratically through farmer committees in every county, and balance the needs of farmers with food access for people of all income levels.

END

RESOLUTION ON THE LOCAL REGULATION OF PESTICIDES (adopted Jan. 2020)

Whereas, synthetic pesticides and herbicides such as neonicotinoids and dicamba and have been widely proven to cause plummeting declines in populations of pollinators;

And whereas, these pollinators include ants, butterflies, birds, beetles, bats, flies, moths, wasps, and bees. Besides honeybees, which are not a native species to North America, there are over 4,000 native bee species that are at risk due to pesticides;

And whereas, the decline of pollinators has a direct economic impact on agriculture, by decreasing crop yields and threatening the food available to feed the planet;

And whereas, synthetic pesticides have been linked to human health problems, including but not limited to: Alzheimer's disease, asthma, birth defects, diabetes, cancer, endocrine disruption Parkinson's disease and miscarriage;

And whereas, the use of synthetic pesticides has a detrimental effect on groundwater, well water, and aquifers. During large precipitation events which climate change is accelerating, there is a higher risk of drinking water being breached by unwanted chemicals;
And whereas, synthetic pesticides may directly harm the health and lower the life expectancy of farmworkers, landscapers, municipal gardeners, and golf course workers.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we encourage localities and counties to pass laws regulating the use of synthetic pesticides not approved for organic production that may harm its citizens, animals and plants, so that the web of life that has evolved for millennia can continue to sustain us all.

END

RIGHT OF INDIVIDUALS TO GROW A FEW MARIJUANA PLANTS FOR PERSONAL USE

(adopted Jan. 2020)

Whereas people must have the right to grow their own food and medicine;
And whereas the current bill before the New York State Legislature prohibits individuals from growing marijuana for their own personal use.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that the legalization of marijuana in New York State must allow individuals to grow marijuana for personal use. We believe the Massachusetts model, which allows a maximum of six plants per individual or twelve per couple, is fair.

END

2019

DAIRY RESOLUTION (adopted Jan. 2019)

Whereas, many New York organic dairy farmers are no longer profitable because of the substantial drop in pay price (up to 25% for most NY farms), caused by a surplus of organic

milk coming from an increase in the number of non-New York based 'organic' concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in the western and mid-west U.S.;

And whereas, 'organic' CAFOs are able to provide organic milk at a lower price because of their non-compliance with the pasture and origin of livestock federal regulations, which has been allowed by their certifier;

And whereas, it is NOFA-NY's belief that New York State organic dairy farmers comply with requirements of the USDA National Organic Program, including access to pasture and origin of livestock;

NYS organic dairy farmers are therefore at a significant competitive disadvantage to industrial factory farm organic dairies, and are now feeling the result, causing many farms to barely stay in business and others to go out of business or surrender their organic certification;

And whereas, if actions are not taken immediately, we will see a significant loss of organic dairies and organic Grass Fed dairies in NYS;

And whereas, if action is not taken, we will see a significant loss in the integrity of the organic label which will also lead to a loss in profitability of all of our NYS organic farmers.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY demand that action be taken on multiple levels to stop the assault on the integrity of the organic label, including:

1. Organic Dairy buyers and processors should refuse to accept milk from operations whose certifiers do not comply with the letter and intent of the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, including:
 - Compliance with the 2015 Origin of Livestock Proposed Rule;
 - Full Compliance with the access to pasture requirement; and,
 - If they have been named by the USDA as having certified fraudulent domestic or imported products.
2. On the State level, we request assistance from the NYSDAM and the Governor in being an advocate at the USDA/NOP and at National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. That the NYSDAM work with PA and VT, with whom it has entered into an Agreement for Collaboration, in advocating for organic dairy farmers everywhere – and specifically at the NASDA meetings.
3. On a Federal level, that the USDA immediately and consistently enforce all organic standards, as intended by the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 and required by law.

END

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE FOR FARMWORKER FAIR LABOR PRACTICES BILL (IF carefully renegotiated with representation of family-scale organic farmers and farmworkers at the table) (adopted Jan. 2019)

Whereas, while the NYS Assembly has regularly passed the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Bill, but not the State Senate;

And whereas, the language of the Bill has changed several times, yet organic farmers and actual farm workers, both immigrant and local workers, have not been at the table when changes have been decided on;

And whereas, in 2013, NOFA-NY polled farmer members to find out what sections of the original FFLP Bill they supported, and which ones they would want to change;

And whereas, the Fairness Principles of Organic Agriculture emphasizes that those involved in organic agriculture should conduct human relationships in a manner that ensures fairness at all levels and to all parties – farmers, workers, processors, distributors, traders and, consumers.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY affirm that we stand for fairness for all of the people who work on farms, farmers and hired workers alike, and would support a revised version of FFLP IE family-scale farmers and representative farmworkers, including both NYS residents and immigrants, can be at the table to negotiate final language.

END

BAN HARMFUL SYSTEMIC INSECTICIDES (adopted Jan. 2019)

Whereas, since their introduction in 1994, neonicotinoids (neonics) have become the most popular insecticides in the U.S., with more than eight million pounds having been applied nationwide—the vast majority since 2005;

And whereas, neonics are neurotoxic and harmful to bees and other insects at even miniscule doses. A large and growing body of scientific research demonstrates that widespread neonic use is a leading cause of recent massive declines in pollinator populations that threaten global food security, the U.S. agricultural economy, and the environment;

And whereas, neonics are “systemic” insecticides, designed to be absorbed into plant tissues— including nectar, pollen, and fruit—making them poisonous. This property also allows neonics to be easily transported in rain or irrigation water, leading to broad-scale neonic contamination of soil and water, also threatening aquatic ecosystems;

And whereas, the European Union and Canada have both moved to ban outdoor use of the three most commonly used neonics given concerns regarding their injuries to pollinator populations and aquatic animals;

And whereas, preliminary results from several recent general population studies have raised human health concerns that prenatal and early-life exposure to neonics could be linked to disorders like autism, heart deformations, muscle tremors, and memory loss;

And whereas, other systemic insecticides, including fipronil, flupyradifurone, and sulfoxaflor, share many of the same harmful properties as neonics and may be used as substitutes for neonics.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY call for NYS legislation to ban outdoor uses of harmful systemic insecticides, including all neonicotinoid insecticides, in New York. Consequently, we support the Birds and Bees Protection Act, which places a moratorium on the use or sale of all outdoor-use products containing neonic pesticides or fipronil for five years.

END

IMPROVE NYS APIARY PROGRAM (adopted Jan. 2019)

Whereas, beekeepers throughout the state are opposed to any mandatory registration to require traceability of hives and their beekeepers, citing: lack of transparency by Albany, lack of services, misuse of information, and adding fees to an already costly profession;

And whereas, the current registration form states that by registering, you will be notified of bee health developments, but these have not been forthcoming from Albany;

And whereas, what is needed is to form a consensus among beekeepers of what would constitute an acceptable Apiary Program.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY call upon Governor Cuomo and Agriculture Commissioner Ball to improve the Apiary Program in the following ways:

- a. Keep hive and apiary registration voluntary in NYS.
- b. Provide notification and communication of county spraying for mosquitoes, use of bee toxic substances for tick abatement, and outbreaks of honey bee disease such as American Foulbrood, for all beekeepers and the general public.

END

BAN GLYPHOSATE-BASED HERBICIDES (adopted Jan. 2019)

Whereas, since 1974, over 1.6 billion kilograms of glyphosate active ingredient have been applied in the US, and two thirds of the total volume of glyphosate applied in the US between 1974 and 2014 was sprayed between 2005 and 2015;
And whereas, the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer working group's 2015 decision to classify glyphosate as a grade 2A probable human carcinogen followed an extensive review and evaluation of the weight of all available evidence;¹

And whereas, where testing is done, detectable levels of glyphosate are rising in the urine of people in the US and in NYS, in particular, and where found, the mean level of glyphosate is also rising;

And whereas, herbicides with glyphosate as the main ingredient are used on millions of farm acres in NYS, sprayed in parks and other public places in and around New York City, and also routinely sprayed around homes and yards by members of the public who have no training in pesticide application.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY call for NYS legislation to ban the use of all glyphosate-based formulas on farmland, parks and other public spaces, and further that Round-Up products should be removed immediately from the shelves of hardware and other stores in NYS. Consequently, we support Senate Bill S126/Assembly Bill A8889 which prohibits the sale and distribution of glyphosate and products containing glyphosate, and urge its sponsors to resubmit it in the 2019 legislative session.

END

CLIMATE VICTORY GARDENS (adopted Jan. 2019)

Whereas, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report released in Oct. 2018 predicts as few as 12 years to dramatically reduce atmospheric carbon or risk an uninhabitable planet.

And whereas, lack of action by the US Federal government (and others), leaves realistic emergency solutions to state and local governments and non-governmental organizations;

And whereas, the fossil fuel-based food economy is a significant cause of rapid climate change, due to large mechanized industrial operations, long distance transport, synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, extensive processing, refrigeration, plastic packaging, etc.;

And whereas, restoring depleted soils through regenerative practices (e.g., planting cover crops and perennials, eliminating monocultures and tilling) could sequester up to 60 tons

¹ <https://jech.bmj.com/content/71/6/613#ref-45>

of carbon per acre in the soil, increase crop productivity, and improve nutrient uptake, water retention, and pest resistance while avoiding the synthetic fertilizer and pesticide treadmill;

And whereas, the ocean has become a carbon sink, causing its acidification, which harms shellfish and coral, and disrupts the food chain;

And whereas, the sustainable offshore farming of seaweed - requiring no inputs and protecting the commons - would absorb carbon and also serve as food, fertilizer, and fuel. A 300' x 300' offshore plot can grow 24 tons of seaweed in 5 months. And a 20 acre seaweed garden can remove 134 tons of carbon a year;

And whereas, fishing communities can begin offshore vertical gardens that harvest fast-growing seaweed and also bivalves that filter seawater as they take in nutrients. Unlike salmon aquaculture, seaweed and shellfish require no fertilizers, antibiotics, pesticides, or complex infrastructure, and do not become a risk to wild fish;

And whereas, through regenerative farming and gardening, both soil and seaweed, we can drawdown CO2 and feed ourselves, while healing the planet.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we support state and local emergency solutions to the climate crisis, including a return to the successful WWII Victory Garden model where the government encouraged everyone to turn their lawns and yards into gardens. Climate Victory Gardens, as proposed by Green America, would use regenerative practices to quickly convert lawns, public spaces, and coastal waterways into carbon sponges and nutritious food. Every place for a land or marine garden, and every person can be part of this fast, low-tech contribution to victory over our climate crisis.
END

NATURE NEEDS HALF (adopted Jan. 2019)

Whereas, to avoid the worst of the two great environmental catastrophes — climate change and the sixth extinction crisis — looming on the horizon, several empirical studies suggest that we need to set aside about half of the terrestrial and marine realms.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY call for a massive, global agreement that would dramatically increase the amount of the world covered by park and indigenous protected areas — up to the Half Earth goal. Such an agreement would likely fall under the United Nation's Convention on Biological Diversity.

END

AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (adopted Jan. 2019)

Whereas, a resilient agriculture sector in New York relies on creating and retaining a well-trained and highly skilled agricultural workforce and preparing the next generation of farmers for long-term success. New York State provides some support for agricultural workforce development through currently available programs, but more can be done to provide young farmers with the training they need to work in agriculture and eventually own their own viable operations;

And whereas, New York State has an opportunity to build on existing workforce development programs to direct new resources toward supporting more agricultural workforce training opportunities, such as those in the Colorado Agricultural Workforce Development Program. This program provides a financial incentive to agricultural businesses, by reimbursing up to 50% of the cost of paid internships that provide real-world work experience of at least 130 hours and not more than 6 months.

Resolution: NOFA-NY encourages New York State to consider establishing a financial incentive program for workforce development that would complement existing resources by paying up to 50% of the cost of paid internships, plus health insurance, and be available for interns who pledge to farm in NYS.

END

STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS (adopted Jan. 2019)

Whereas, student loan debt is preventing many young people from pursuing careers in agriculture. Higher education often comes at a steep cost, leaving young graduates with tens of thousands of dollars in student debt. Managing debt is a challenge for any young person starting a career, but for farmers, this existing burden can prevent them from accessing the necessary credit to launch and grow their farm businesses;

And whereas, there is lobbying at the Federal level to include farming as an eligible profession through the Federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, but until that happens, forward-thinking state programs like the New York State Young Farmers Loan Forgiveness Incentive Program—administered by the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation—can provide some financial relief. However, as currently structured, it is difficult to qualify for the New York program. These changes could improve young farmer access to the program;

And whereas, currently, the program requires that eligible applicants be employed in a full-time managerial position on a farm, and that they apply within two years of graduating. This creates a difficult window of eligibility for an aspiring farmer to work their way into a management position within only two years after graduating. Also, if they work on a small farm, they may be performing many managerial roles without formal recognition as a manager. We recommend changing the statute to extend the window for applying for up to

twenty years from graduation, but to require that they have been farming for at least five years and commit to farming in NYS;

And whereas, the program is only available to graduates of colleges and universities within New York. Opening the program to graduates of colleges and universities from other states could help attract young farmers to launch their businesses in New York.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY call on New York State Higher Education Services Corporation to lengthen the window of application eligibility for the New York State Young Farmers Loan Forgiveness Incentive Program, broaden eligibility to graduates of colleges outside of New York, expand eligibility to include full time positions that have a management role as well as a labor role, rather than limiting eligibility to only positions that are classified as management, and require a commitment to farming in NYS.
END

IMPROVED GRANTS FOR BEGINNING FARMERS TO INVEST IN THEIR OPERATION

(adopted Jan. 2019)

Whereas, access to grant funds can be a significant boon for beginning farmers who need to invest in their operation with new equipment or farm structures, but lack the access to traditional loans to finance such investments. The Empire State Development Corporation New Farmers Grant Fund Program is an important resource for beginning farmers, having provided \$3.27 million in funding since 2014. But access to the program could be improved by adjusting some of the eligibility and application requirements;

And whereas, the minimum award amount of \$15,000 together with the minimum 50% applicant match requirement, exclude potential participants who are in need of support for smaller projects. The program could be restructured to allow for a lower tier, or tiers, that would accommodate projects under \$15,000. The match requirement could also be adjusted depending on project size. While the intent of the match requirement is clearly well intentioned—to ensure that awardees have a significant financial interest in the project—this seems duplicative since awards are also structured as reimbursements;

And whereas, many farmers grow their operations on leased land. While in some cases, long-term leases and ground leases can provide an effective solution to land access, the program does not currently allow applicants who farm on leased land to use grant funds for farm structures that are difficult to relocate;

And whereas, for some applicants, the current timing of the grant cycle creates a challenge. Farmers often make improvements to their operations in the early spring. Because awards are not announced until late spring or early summer, farmers may need to implement projects without knowing the outcome of their application, or wait a full year to move

forward. Additionally, some farmers would benefit from a shorter timeline between when a project is approved and when project cost reimbursements are received.

Resolution: The members of NOFA-NY call upon the Empire State Development Corporation to improve the New Farmers Grant Fund Program in the following ways:

- a.** Create a lower tier, or tiers, of award opportunities and adjust applicant match requirements.
- b.** Allow farmers with long-term lease arrangements to utilize funds for construction projects constructed in such a way that they can be moved from the land with the farmer.
- c.** Adjust the grant cycle to reflect the farming season and reduce processing time between awards and reimbursements.

END

FARMLAND FOR A NEW GENERATION (adopted Jan. 2019)

Whereas, beginning farmers in New York, and throughout the nation, face major barriers in getting started in farming—including finding affordable farmland;

And whereas, according to recent reports released by the National Young Farmers Coalition and the American Farm Bureau Federation, access to land is one of the biggest barriers to farming in New York and across the country;

And whereas, according to the USDA census, there were 30% fewer young farmers in New York in 2012 than in 2002;

And whereas, more than 30% of New York's farmers are 65 or older and there is evidence that over 90% of these senior farmers do not have a succession plan;

And whereas, these senior farmers own or operate nearly 2 million acres of land throughout New York State that is vulnerable to being lost to development when farmers decide to retire;

And whereas, there is renewed interest and vigor in farming, both from people who grew up in farm families and from those who did not; and, a real and immediate need to connect farmers with landowners and available land across New York State over the next decade.

Resolution: NOFA-NY supports State funding to be allocated for a Farmland for a New Generation-NY Resource Center, including a statewide website enabling farmers to find land in every region of New York and landowners to list land available for farming; and to support a Network of Regional Navigators at Cornell Cooperative extension, Land Trusts

and other organizations to provide coaching and personalized assistance to farmers and landowners across New York in order to secure land deals.

END

2018

DRIVERS LICENSES OR UNDOCUMENTED - GREEN LIGHT NY (adopted Jan. 2018)

Whereas, New York currently bars hundreds of thousands of immigrants in our state from obtaining driver's licenses due to their immigration status. Without access to licenses, many immigrants are unable to purchase, register, and insure their own vehicles. As a result, they face major barriers to meeting the most basic needs of day-to-day life: traveling to work, school, grocery shopping, medical appointments, and places of worship. Out of sheer necessity, many immigrants drive without licenses, putting them at odds with law enforcement, undermining trust between police and immigrant communities, and increasing the risk that a routine traffic stop will result in arrest, detention, or even deportation; truly or truly;

And whereas, many NOFA farmer members work side by side with immigrants in our fields and work on farms started and owned by immigrants, and recognize the huge risk farm workers take every day when they drive to work on farms without a license;

And whereas, following the lead of other states, such as our neighbors in Connecticut and Vermont, expanding access to driver's licenses will allow more immigrant New Yorkers to fully understand traffic laws, pass a road test, and operate registered, inspected, and insured vehicles;

And whereas, expanded immigrant access to driver's licenses will reduce the number of uninsured vehicles on the road, thereby lowering insurance premiums for all New York motorists;

And whereas, this will allow immigrant families to more fully participate in community life and contribute to economic growth in our state.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we support Green Light NY: Driving Together! to ensure equal access to driver's licenses for all residents of New York State, regardless of immigration status, and urge New York lawmakers to give a green light to driver's licenses for immigrants in our state.

END

HEALTH CARE FOR FARMERS AND THEIR EMPLOYEES (adopted January 2018)

Whereas, as business owners, farmers understand the challenges of providing health benefits for themselves and their employees. Insurance plans that seem to

meet the needs of staff and families turn out to have high premiums, deductibles, copays, and out-of-network costs that are hard to afford. Plans often cut costs by locking subscribers into restricted networks and drug formularies, limiting freedom to choose the right providers or get the right medications for health care;

And whereas, each year employers must brace for premium increases, often in double digits and are unable to predict health care costs year-to-year;

And whereas, an improved Medicare-for-all, universal single-payer system of health care financing would reduce and stabilize health care costs, allowing owners and managers to focus on running businesses, rather than wasting time dealing with the complexities of providing private insurance;

And whereas, private health insurance wastes hundreds of billions of dollars on administration, hurting the nation's health, while remaining unaffordable for a third of our citizens.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that it's time to have a health care system that can support business in the 21st century, an improved Medicare-for-all, a single-payer universal health plan covering every resident, with fully comprehensive coverage, funded through a simplified payroll premium clearly spelled out for both employers and employees, such as the New York Health Act or similar legislation.

END

SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD (adopted Jan. 2018)

Whereas, the authors of the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) and creators of the National Organic Program (NOP) designed the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) to enable significant citizen input and mechanisms to ensure the integrity and continuous improvement of organic standards;

And whereas, the National Organic Standards board (NOSB) is the only Federal Advisory Committee to the USDA that has specific statutory authority to approve additions to the National List of Approved Synthetics or Prohibited Naturals through public meetings and advisement from the 15 volunteer members from stakeholder groups in the community as well as direct input from comments to that Board from all interested parties. (The US Secretary of Agriculture appoints the members for five year terms from nominations from the public: the 15 volunteers include four organic farmers/growers, three environmental / resource conservationists, three consumer/public interest representatives, two organic handlers / processors, one retailer, one scientist (toxicology, ecology or biochemistry), and one USDA accredited certifier);

And whereas, recent discussions in Congress and the organic industry have called into question both the autonomy, membership and public participation of the NOSB.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we support the NOSB and oppose any efforts to change the careful balance of participants or the open public discussion of issues. The National Organic Standards Board must be maintained with the strong statutory authority outlined in the OFPA, including the 15-member stakeholder positions, and bi-annual public meetings including public comment and publicly available transcripts. The Secretary of Agriculture must appoint nominees from the public who are truly representative of their designated category.

END

STRONGER ENFORCEMENT OF ORGANIC INTEGRITY BY THE NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM (adopted January 2018)

Whereas, the integrity of the organic label is dependent on consistent standards, uniform accreditation of certification agencies, and steady, thorough enforcement; And whereas, recent reporting has revealed that the USDA National Organic Program's enforcement has been lax or failed on several accounts, both within the United States, and globally.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we support strong, enforced organic standards:

- The National Organic Program (NOP) must undergo oversight mechanisms of its own operations as outlined in International Accreditation regulations and detailed in ISO 17011.
- NOP must increase enforcement of standards on foreign imports including foreign organic certification agencies and product coming in through 3rd parties.
- NOP must improve enforcement of standards within the US by evenhanded and consistent accreditation of organic certifying agencies, both state run and private.
- The NOP must receive more funding for enforcement.

END

SHARE CANNABIS PRODUCTION AMONG MANY FAMILY-SCALE FARMS (adopted January 2018)

Whereas, following the example of states like Colorado and California, it seems likely that NYS will legalize the production of medicinal and recreational cannabis;

And whereas, cannabis is a highly profitable crop to grow organically, and a small acreage can assure the economic viability of a farm if legislation can be passed that prevents consolidation of control of this industry in just a few hands;

And whereas, the State of Massachusetts has passed legislation that provides NY with a good model for regulating the market and allowing the lucrative market for this crop to be shared among many smaller farms.(MA Bill 3818 provides for a schedule of cultivator license fees commensurate with cultivation size and regulations to create a craft marijuana cultivator cooperative system, including: (1) a limitation on ownership of interests in a marijuana cultivator cooperative; (2) a limit on the total marijuana produced by a craft marijuana cultivator by the number of plants, surface area used for cultivation or output by weight; and (3) a reasonable fee for licensure as a craft marijuana cultivator cooperative).

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that the Department of Agriculture and Markets should promote and encourage full participation in the regulated marijuana industry by self-employed farmers and businesses of all sizes.

END

RAPID ADOPTION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY (adopted January 2018)

Whereas, we, as farmers, gardeners, and consumers who notice the conditions under which our food and fiber are raised, understand the tremendous importance of making changes in the way we live in order to mitigate the effects of global climate change;

And whereas, we see how extreme weather is making farming much more difficult, but we also understand that systems operate holistically; changing the way that we get energy to renewable systems will require our best holistic thinking in order to steadily move our society from fossil fuels to renewable energy;

And whereas, we support any and all efforts that engage citizens and empower them to change as quickly as possible from fossil fuels to renewable energy. At the same time, we understand that systemic change requires more than just goals, it also requires an understanding of the interrelated nature of business trends, social mores and individual efforts to make change, and persistence in showing a good example. Just as we have slowly convinced a large portion of our country and the world that organic and regenerative agriculture can contribute to stemming the worst impacts of global climate change, so, too, can we encourage a rapid, but holistic, move toward renewable energy.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we support federal and state policies that encourage the shift to renewable energy as quickly as possible, including support for OFF Fossil Fuels for a Better Future Act (HR 3671); and for policies that incentivize use of renewable energy supplies for farmers (specifically in USDA programs) and for consumers

through energy and environmental agencies as well as ongoing tax relief for renewable energy.

END

NO ORGANIC CERTIFICATION FOR HYDROPONIC CROP PRODUCTION (adopted January 2018)

Whereas, the members of NOFA-NY in 2016 resolved that "until a clear definition of organic hydroponics in keeping with principles of organic as a soil based system based on managing ecological balance has been provided by the NOP, certifiers should not be allowed to certify hydroponic systems";

And whereas, in the two years since, the NOP has failed to develop such a definition;

And whereas, the NOP also continues to fail to implement the 2010 NOSB resolution opposing the organic certification of hydroponic crops;

And whereas, some certifiers have continued to certify hydroponic operations which have expanded significantly, grabbing markets from family-scale organic farmers who produce crops in soil.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY therefore resolve that the NOP should instruct organic certification agencies to cease the certification of hydroponic crops and other non-soil based agricultural systems, such as aeroponics, under the National Organic Program and the labelling of hydroponic crops as organic.

END

ORGANIC CHECKOFF (ratified January 2018)

Whereas checkoffs have historically been damaging to small and medium sized farmers;

And whereas, the organic checkoff proposal was made with very little input from farmers;

And whereas, organic farmers are innovative and creative and have a history of finding solid solutions to the community's problems, we can do better at organic research and promotion than a mandatory adoption of a failed federal program.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY oppose the creation of an organic checkoff.

END

2017

HEALTHY SOIL / FARMING CARBON INCENTIVES (adopted January 2017)

Whereas, soil health is an essential focus of organic farming and essential to the future of human existence on the planet earth;

And whereas, increasing carbon in the soil through building organic matter (52% carbon), reducing tillage, using cover crops, rotations and compost are basic practices on organic farms;

And whereas, to reach the world wide goal of holding temperature rise to 2 degrees centigrade, it will not be sufficient to reduce carbon emissions from fossil fuels without also restoring soil carbon through regenerative organic agriculture practices;

And whereas, over 100 developed and developing countries and not-for profits have already signed onto the "4% per 1000 Initiative: soils for food security and climate," a voluntary action plan to raise soil organic matter by .4 percent per year under the Lima Paris Agenda for Action (LPAA). The French Agriculture Ministry initiated this campaign because they have research which shows that a 0.4-percent annual growth rate in soil carbon content would make it possible to stop the present increase in atmospheric CO₂ and achieve the long-term objective of limiting the average global temperature increase to the 1.5°C to 2°C threshold beyond which the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) says would lead to a climate disaster. Visit the official 4 per 1000 website to learn more: <http://4p1000.org/>;

And whereas, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in 9 northeast states, including NY, provides funding for greenhouse gas abatement programs.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY call upon the Governments of NYS and the USA to become signatories to the "4 per 1000 Initiative," and also call upon the NY DEC to allocate funding from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to a NY Healthy Soils Initiative that will provide funding for increased research on soil health, for identifying simple measurement tools for monitoring carbon sequestration in soils to a depth of at least 1 ½ feet, and for incentives to farmers in NYS to improve regenerative soil health practices that restore soil carbon. The members of NOFA-NY also call upon DEC to expand the Climate Smart Communities model action plans for county and municipal governments to include food and agriculture.

END

JUST WAGES FOR FARMERS AND FARMWORKERS (adopted January 2017)

Whereas, wages for farmers and farmworkers are unconscionably low compared to salaries in other sectors of the economy;

And whereas, over the past 50 years, farm products have been getting a shrinking portion of the final food dollar paid by consumers.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve to work for regulations and legislation that will increase the farmer share of the food dollar so that farm income covers the full costs of production, including living wages for farmers themselves and for all of the people who work on farms.

END

APPLYING THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE TO GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (adopted January 2017)

Whereas, the precautionary principle (or precautionary approach) to risk management states that if an action or policy has a suspected risk of causing harm to the public, or to the environment, the burden of proof that it is *not* harmful falls on those taking an action that may or may not be a risk. The principle implies that there is a social responsibility to protect the public from exposure to harm, when scientific investigation has found a plausible risk. These protections can be relaxed only if further scientific findings emerge that provide sound evidence that no harm will result. In some legal systems, as in Law of the European Union, the application of the precautionary principle has been made a statutory requirement in some areas of law. The United Nations General Assembly has adopted the principle;

And whereas, the science of genomics is in its infancy, despite the disproportionate investment of public research dollars to the detriment of ecological alternatives;

And whereas, genetically engineered material (GEs/GMOs)* can be transferred to other crops and weeds, but once released it is impossible to "clean up" any unforeseen consequences;

And whereas, the collateral damage of genetically engineered crops can include the deaths of beneficial insects and other organisms, as well as the loss of usefulness to organic and conventional farmers of natural biological pesticides, such as *Bacillus thuringiensis*;

And whereas, the only potential guarantee of the safety of any specific novel or existing GMO comes from its subjection to a rigorous process of risk assessment. Such a risk assessment must protect all living beings (wild, domesticated, and human) that are necessary components of healthy farmland ecosystems. Moreover, these organisms should be protected at all stages of their life cycles, in subsequent generations, and from any substances produced by GMO crops that, even when not immediately toxic, nevertheless could interfere with the normal behavior or reduce the functioning and reproductive fitness of these organisms in other ways;

And whereas, even when individual GMO transgenes are claimed to be not harmful on the

basis of existing test results and risk assessments, GMO transgenes in combination (i.e. stacked transgenes) may be potentially harmful. Such possible hazards, which exist in vast numerical permutations and which each have potentially diverse and/or serious consequences, must all be evaluated and prevented from occurring.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that, given the proven possibilities that GMOs could cause harm, consequences of which have already been demonstrated in scientific publications, no currently existing system of risk assessment is sufficient to achieve this task. Thus, on the grounds of the Precautionary Principle, we conclude that GMO crops, animals or microorganisms cannot be adequately tested to provide sufficient assurance of safety. They are, therefore, inappropriate for use in agriculture.

*The following definition of Genetically Engineered Organisms (GEO/GMOs) has been recommended by the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) and adopted in the American Organic Standards of the Organic Trade Association: Genetically engineered is defined as: *made with techniques that alter the molecular or cell biology of an organism by means that are not possible under natural conditions or processes. Genetic engineering includes recombinant DNA, cell fusion, micro- and macro-encapsulation, gene deletion and doubling, introducing a foreign gene, and changing the positions of genes. It shall not include breeding, conjugation, fermentation, hybridization, in-vitro fertilization and tissue culture.* NOFA considers this definition to encompass new so-called gene editing technologies.

END

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY (adopted January 2017)

Whereas, Food Sovereignty asserts that the people who produce, distribute and consume food should control the mechanisms and policies of food production and distribution, rather than the corporations and market institutions that have come to dominate the global food system;

And whereas, Food Sovereignty was first introduced by the global peasant network, La Via Campesina, in 1996 in response to the United Nations World Food Summit that convened to develop a global response to growing hunger, malnutrition and concerns of agricultural capacity to feed the world;

And whereas, Food Sovereignty defines much of the work that the seven NOFA chapters have done over more than 40 years and supports NOFA-NY's mission **to create a sustainable regional food system that's ecologically sound and economically viable;**

And whereas, the Food Sovereignty framework is defined by the following original principles:

1. Food: A Basic Human Right - Everyone must have access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain a healthy life with full human dignity. Each nation should declare that access to food is a constitutional right and guarantee the development of the primary sector to ensure the concrete realization of this fundamental right.

2. Agrarian Reform - A genuine agrarian reform is necessary which gives landless and farming people – especially women – ownership and control of the land they work and returns territories to indigenous peoples. The right to land must be free of discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, race, social class or ideology; the land belongs to those who work it.

3. Protecting Natural Resources - Food Sovereignty entails the sustainable care and use of natural resources, especially land, water, and seeds and livestock breeds. The people who work the land must have the right to practice sustainable management of natural resources and to conserve biodiversity free of restrictive intellectual property rights. This can only be done from a sound economic basis with security of tenure, healthy soils and reduced use of agrochemicals.

4. Reorganizing Food Trade - Food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade. National agricultural policies must prioritize production for domestic consumption and food self-sufficiency. Food imports must not displace local production nor depress prices.

5. Ending the Globalization of Hunger - Food Sovereignty is undermined by multilateral institutions and by speculative capital. The growing control of multinational corporations over agricultural policies has been facilitated by the economic policies of multilateral organizations such as the WTO, World Bank and the IMF. Regulation and taxation of speculative capital and a strictly enforced Code of Conduct for TNCs is therefore needed.

6. Social Peace - Everyone has the right to be free from violence. Food must not be used as a weapon. Increasing levels of poverty and marginalization in the countryside, along with the growing oppression of ethnic minorities and indigenous populations, aggravate situations of injustice and hopelessness. The ongoing displacement, forced urbanization, repression and increasing incidence of racism of smallholder farmers cannot be tolerated.

7. Democratic control - Smallholder farmers must have direct input into formulating agricultural policies at all levels. The United Nations and related organizations will have to undergo a process of democratization to enable this to become a reality. Everyone has the right to honest, accurate information and open and democratic decision-making. These rights form the basis of good governance, accountability and equal participation in economic, political and social life, free from all forms of discrimination. Rural women, in particular, must be granted direct and active decision making on food and rural issues.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY hereby resolve that the concept of Food Sovereignty (food as a basic human right, agrarian reform, protection of natural

resources, domestic production and consumption of food, ending hunger, social peace, and democratic control), as understood by the world community, is in line with our basic principles and beliefs. NOFA-NY will uphold the principles and work to actualize them within the organization, among our networks and in coordination with our allies. Furthermore, we resolve to support policy initiatives that uphold the principles, as well as fight policies that threaten and undermine them. Thereby, NOFA-NY resolves to participate in the movement toward Food Sovereignty.

END

SEED SOVEREIGNTY RESOLUTION (adopted January 2017)

Whereas, Seeds are a foundation of life, and humans have a history of using and sharing seeds that have led to the creation and supported civilizations for over 10,000 years;

And whereas, “As a fundamental input in agriculture, seed serves as a farmer’s first defense against pest, disease, and other production challenges. Seed genetics also largely dictate the quality and integrity of our food – from appearance to flavor to nutritional content. In this way, seed holds endless potential for transforming the food we eat and how we farm, especially when coupled with the principles that helped build the organic movement – the principles of health, ecology, fairness, and care;

And whereas, “...seed is much more than an input. It’s a living, natural resource that demands careful management to ensure a secure and healthy food supply. Currently, the dominant seed system abuses intellectual property rights and fiercely protects them. They discourage farmers from participating in research and seed saving.” [OSA, State of Organic Seed 2016];

And whereas, Seed Sovereignty – the right of farmers, gardeners and all individuals to use, exchange, and sell their own seeds and plants – is foundational to agriculture, food production, and life on this planet.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY hereby resolve to support and initiate efforts in the education, legislative, regulatory, and other arenas on a federal, state, and local level that encourage seed saving and the principles of seed sovereignty.

BACKGROUND:

Principles Guiding an Alternative Seed Protection Model:

- Seed is a limited natural resource that must be managed in a manner that enhances its long-term viability and integrity
- The equitable exchange of plant genetics enhances innovation and curtails the negative impacts of concentrated ownership and power in decision making

- The maintenance and improvement of genetic and biological diversity are essential for the success of sustainable food systems and greater global food supply
- Farmers have inherent rights as agricultural stewards, including the ability to use, save, store and sell seed, and are key partners in seed system development
- Public research should serve the public good and remain in the public domain

Seed Libraries: Seed Libraries support the non-commercial sharing of seeds without legal barriers of labeling fees and germination testing requirements in seed library or interpersonal seed sharing.

The Federal Government must reinvigorate public, classical plant and animal breeding programs and provide farmers with publicly-available, regionally adapted seeds and breeds. Current funding streams for these research programs are massively unbalanced in favor of lab-based methods at the expense classical, field-based plant and animal breeding.

Independent Initiatives: The Open Source Seed Initiative (OSSI) is an example of a voluntary, non-legal pledge and variety-labeling platform which aims to preserve rights of farmers, to freely use, save, replant, and improve seed. Other legal structures are needed to support the development and protection of open-source seeds and end utility patents.

Future Needs of Seed Sovereignty:

- Policies that acknowledge the significance of public plant breeding, organic plant breeding and support public plant breeders.
- Education about regionally appropriate seed sources and organic equivalents.
- The maintenance and availability of Open Pollinated varieties.
- Regional networking to support resilient seed systems.
- Creation of a national organic trials network.
- Raising the bar on USDA/NOP organic seed requirement.
- Addressing problems of market concentration and restrictive intellectual property rights.

END

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING (adopted January 2017)

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY demand quick reinstatement of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements for Country of Origin Labeling for beef, pork and chicken. Citizens have the right to know the origin of all food products.

END

ORGANIC CHECKOFF (adopted January 2017)

Whereas checkoffs have historically been damaging to small and medium sized farmers;

And whereas, the organic checkoff proposal was made with very little input from farmers;

And whereas, organic farmers are innovative and creative and have a history of finding solid solutions to the community's problems, we can do better at organic research and promotion than a mandatory adoption of a failed federal program.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY oppose the creation of an organic checkoff.

END

2016

INCENTIVES FOR FARMING CAREER (adopted January 2016)

Whereas, the members of NOFA-NY believe that Farming should be honored as public service. As the National Young Farmers Coalition states in their report "Farming as Public Service" Farmers provide a public service because:

- Agriculture meets one of our most basic needs—producing the food we eat;
- Farmers manage and steward almost a billion acres of land, which is about half of the land area of the U.S.;
- Farmers support rural economies, providing jobs and income. To help bring young people into farm and ranch careers in this critical time of need, we urge Congress to add farmers to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program;

And whereas, The **Public Service Loan Forgiveness** (PSLF) Program, which provides loan forgiveness for people who enter professions that serve a public good, but have salaries too limited to manage student loan debt, is a good example of the kind of debt relief program we support. The PSLF provides debt relief for people who have proven their commitment to farming as a career by forgiving the remaining balance on Direct Loans only after a person has made ten years of payments while working in farming;

And whereas, The National Young Farmers Coalition surveyed NYFC members and supporters in the fall of 2014 to find out what impact student loans are having on young and prospective farmers. The average student loan debt carried by the 700-plus survey respondents is \$35,000. Fifty-three percent of respondents are currently farming but struggle to make their student loan payments. Nearly 30% didn't pursue farming or are waiting to start farming because their student loan payments are more than a farming salary would support.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY hereby resolve that as an incentive to encourage more people to become farmers, the Federal and State programs that provide debt relief for other public service jobs, such as teaching, medicine, public interest attorneys, etc., should include farming as an occupation eligible for student loan debt relief.

END

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND NOVEL ORGANISMS (adopted January 2016)

Whereas, Precaution is at the basis of some U.S. environmental and food and drug legislation, although the principle is not mentioned by name. These laws incorporate foresight, prevention, and care, and many give regulators authority to take action to prevent possible but unproven harm. One of the best examples of precautionary action is the National Environmental Policy Act. NEPA is precautionary in two ways: 1) It emphasizes foresight and attention to consequences by requiring an environmental impact assessment for any federally funded project, and 2) it mandates consideration of alternative plans;

And whereas, other laws are precautionary in intent. The Endangered Species Act sets the goal of protecting biodiversity. The Clean Water Act establishes strict goals to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters.

Unfortunately, precautionary action has been the exception rather than the rule in U.S. agricultural policy. Instead, even laws with precautionary intent and substance have been undermined, overridden, and poorly enforced. The application of the precautionary principle in agriculture is becoming ever more important as new and novel technologies and organisms are being promoted by industry to solve agricultural issues;

And whereas, New York is a high profile state for emerging technologies and novel organisms in agriculture. Currently, [Oxitec](#) is working with Cornell University on a plan to release GM diamondback moths (scientific name *Plutella xylostella*) as part of an experiment within the grounds of the Cornell University New York State Agricultural Experiment Station (NYSAES) in Geneva, New York. Oxitec, recently purchased by US-based Intrexon Corporation for \$160 million, has been funded by venture capital and UK government grants. In addition to GE Diamondback moths, Oxitec is developing other GM agricultural pests, such as fruit flies, bollworms and olive flies, and GM mosquitoes. All the company's GM insects are intended to be released repeatedly in large numbers (multiple millions on an experimental scale, or billions if commercialized) into the open to mate with the wild species;

And whereas, Oxitec's GM mosquitoes have been released in open experiments in the Cayman Islands, Malaysia, Panama and Brazil, but only Brazil has decided to continue with these trials. Applying the precautionary principle, no country has yet given approval for releases of GM mosquitoes on a commercial scale. Oxitec has previously sought to release GM diamondback moths in the UK, GM olive flies in Spain, and GM fruit flies in Brazil, but none of these experiments have taken place, due to concerns about potential impacts on the environment and human health and the likelihood of contaminating fruit and vegetables with GM insects. The current permit to release GM moths in New York State would therefore be the first open release anywhere in the world of GM insects with the "female-killing" trait;

And whereas, for the health and safety of humans and the environment and in order to protect the viability of New York State's organic agricultural community and its economic value to New York State, we urge the use of the precautionary principle be rigorously applied to the trials of the GE Diamondback Moth and all other emerging and novel organisms and technologies.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY hereby resolve to urge the use of the precautionary principle as the guide for the testing and implementation of emerging technologies and novel organisms to solve agronomic problems. History has shown that emerging technologies and novel organisms have the potential to cause serious and at times irreversible harm to human and environmental health when released into the wild. As a part of any proposed or current trial or implementation of emerging technology and novel organisms, we call for businesses, organizations, universities, governments, and individuals engaged in these trials/implementation to:

- **Fully explore and identify alternatives** to deploying novel organisms or other technologies, including organic and sustainable methods to addressing pest, disease, fertility, and other agronomic issues.
- **Place the burden of proof of both safety and efficacy**, as well as the liability for consequences of the technology or organism, including unintended contamination or exposure to humans or the environment, **on the proponents/owners of the activity/technology** rather than on victims or potential victims of the activity/technology.
- Set and work toward **goals that protect human health and the environment** collaboratively with other stakeholders; and
- **Bring democracy and transparency to the process** of reviewing, approving, and managing trials and implementation. This includes clear communication to all stakeholders and the community before trials are approved to allow for appropriate public discourse and comment, sharing results and impacts of any trials that occur, as well as any new information that comes forward during implementation.

END

ORGANIC AQUACULTURE (adopted January 2016)

Whereas, USDA/NOP is about to promulgate standards for organic aquaculture. It is likely to include the allowance of open-water net pens and wild caught feed. NOFA believes that there are many paths to organic aquaculture that could comply with basic principles of organic, but confining fish to pens in open water leads to unhealthy fish and adds to water pollution because confinement practices compete with wild fisheries and other marine life by reducing their opportunities for food. Open net pens also threaten marine ecosystems with the spread of disease and parasites. This is not organic, and USDA/NOP should not approve these systems just because they are approved elsewhere in the world;

And whereas, Land-based, closed-loop, recirculating aquaculture systems have the potential to meet the spirit, intent, and letter of the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA). These systems should be assessed for their compliance to promote biodiversity and ecological harmony and rely upon the system's underlying ecology to feed plants and animals. Synthetic materials must not be routinely used to fulfill or prop-up system functions;

And whereas, USDA/NOP, in consultation with the NOSB should move slowly and deliberately in allowing organic fish, and certainly make sure that any allowance fully complies with the Organic Foods Production Act.

For more background, see this Fact Sheet: *"Ocean based Fish Farming: Pollution Pathogens and Environmental Impacts"* from the Center for Food Safety:

<http://www.centerforfoodsafety.org/issues/306/organic-and-beyond/fact-sheets/3816/ocean-based-fish-farming-pollution-pathogens-and-environmental-impacts>

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY hereby resolve that open-water net pen aquaculture systems of any type cannot be organic because inputs and outputs of the system cannot be monitored or controlled and neither can the exposure of a fish raised in this system to synthetic, toxic chemicals that could be present in the marine environment. In addition, confinement of migratory and anadromous² fish (such as salmon) would not allow them to express their natural behavior, which is a requirement of organic agriculture. Finally, organic livestock production requires 100% organic feed, so wild caught fish, fish meal and/or fish oil used as feed should be prohibited as feed for organic aquaculture systems so that organic aquaculture products meet standards consistent with other organic animal products.

Anadromous: fish migrating from salt water to spawn in fresh water.

END

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION FOR HYDROPONIC PRODUCTION (adopted Jan. 2016)

Whereas, The central theme and foundation of organic farming is the maintenance and management of organic matter in the soil, along with the diverse populations of organisms that are the foundation of soil ecosystems. Macro and micro-organisms found in abundance in a well-maintained soil tie together a web of interactions that conserve and recycle the elements among all the living organisms and minerals in the system. It is the management of this ecological balance that defines organic production. Any system labeled organic, (including hydroponics) should also be based on management of this ecological balance;

² Anadromous: fish migrating from salt water to spawn in fresh water.

And whereas: Hydroponics is the most widely used term for the production of crops without soil. That system of production most often provides nutrients needed to produce a crop by suspending the roots in a nutrient rich solution grown in moist inert material. Nutrients most commonly used in hydroponic nutrient solutions are synthetic salts. Hydroponic solutions can be made using only natural materials, including natural mineral salts and organic residuals. While some certifiers believe that this makes the production system organic, other certifiers do not because they believe that there is much more to organic production than simply adding materials for crop fertilization or crop protection;

And whereas: Based on these differing interpretations, some organic certifiers are certifying some hydroponic operations, while others are not allowing the certification of hydroponics. NOC finds this differing implementation of the NOP standards by certifiers disturbing. Inconsistencies among certifiers weaken the organic label and reflect poorly on the industry. The NOSB agrees. In 2010 the NOSB made a recommendation to the NOP in which they provided guidance on which kinds of soilless production systems should or should not be labeled organic;

And whereas: The NOSB Crops Committee Recommendation "Production Standards for Terrestrial Plants in Containers and Enclosures"³ underscores this point. The recommendation stresses that organic farmers are not just tillers of the soil, but also stewards of the soil ecology on the farm and shepherds of the myriad organisms that support thriving soil ecosystems. They do not just open bags of nutrients to feed crops and then become certified organic farmers. The USDA National Organic Program recognized this foundation of organic when they wrote the Organic Rule. At the heart of the regulation of organic production (7 CFR Part 205 National Organic Program; Final Rule) is the definition:

Organic Production- A production system that is managed in accordance with the Act and regulations in this part to respond to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity;

And whereas, In organic agriculture, soils are valued for the multiple functions a biologically diverse soil food web provides, not just as a substrate for holding plant roots so the plant grows upright. Many soilless systems, including hydroponics, represent the antithesis of organic production systems because they aim to diminish the ecological complexity of the natural production systems. By reducing the living organisms in a hydroponic system to solely the crop, the ecological balance is lost. Such a 'system' merely feeds the crop with simple inputs of 'required' nutrients. On the other hand, soilless crop production that is part of a complex ecological system may fit the definition of organic as laid out in the Rule (for example, transplants which eventually are planted in soil, or a system of aquaponics

³ January 23, 2010 <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5084677>

that cycles nutrients from fish through plants and back, and adds wormcastings and compost).

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY hereby resolve that until a clear definition of organic hydroponics in keeping with principles of organic as a soil based system based on managing ecological balance has been provided by the NOP, certifiers should not be allowed to certify hydroponic systems. Certifiers need to be directed as to which systems may be certified, and which do not meet the criteria and are not eligible for organic certification. Together with the National Organic Coalition (NOC), NOFA-NY urges the NOP to write "NOP Instruction to Certifiers" that leads to Rulemaking. The instruction should include clear criteria that follow the NOSB 2010 recommendation, and adhere to the definition of organic production presented in the Rule.
END

RENEWABLE ENERGY (adopted January 2016)

Whereas, New York State is in the midst of one of the most ambitious programs in the US to accelerate the transition from the traditional way in which electric energy was generated, managed and delivered, to a completely new, less environmentally damaging, model of an electric energy system. An excellent overview of this transition, termed by the NYS Public Service Commission the REV (Reforming the Energy Vision), can be found in this recent article by David Roberts, [New York's Revolutionary Plan to Remake Its Power Utilities](#). Our support for a move to more distributed energy generation (known as "DER") and efforts to make our electric grid more efficient and ready to accept green energy from DER is essential, as the alternative to this approach is an ever-greater reliance on natural gas from fracking, which our policy identifies as a dangerous practice that should be banned worldwide. Currently, New York is experiencing a trend of increasing use of natural gas in electric generation, consistent with national trends, as explained by the [US Energy Information Agency](#). Additionally, there is an unprecedented rise in the use of natural gas for heating in New York State, as explained in this recent article by [Scott Waldman and Bill Mahoney](#). If natural gas increases continue, they will result in the need for vast networks of pipelines, compressor stations, and storage facilities to be capitalized and funded across the state. These projects represent real threats to our farmland, as so well explained in the book by past NOFA-NY Conference Plenary Speaker, Atina Diffley, in her book [Turn Here Sweet Corn](#). These pipelines, as Atina points out, seem to specifically target organic farms-- as natural gas companies recognize that those of us who do not use their synthetic fertilizers made of natural gas are less likely to support the growth of their industry. In New York, we now have the political leadership and will to transition to greener alternatives for heat and power, but the State is looking to the private sector-- which includes us -- to change the direction of the capital markets from supporting the build-out of additional natural gas delivery infrastructure to the widespread support of wind, solar and other renewable DER (distributed energy resources). Now is the time for us to urge divesting from the dirty fuels that threaten to decrease the clean land available to farm, and

encourage investment in the technologies compatible with organic farming, which can provide revenue streams to our farms, as well as cleaner energy for our communities.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY hereby resolve to support the transition to renewable energy sources and join in the call for institutions and individuals to divest from fossil fuel-based energy industries. We support investment in community-based distributed renewable electric and heat energy systems that do not harm ecosystems and that support healthy soil and clean water required for organic agriculture to thrive in our region. We particularly support community-based distributed energy generation using renewable energy sources because community-based projects allow us to keep our energy local, which results in greater system efficiency and resilience for the general public and for farmers.

END

2015

NANOTECH MATERIALS (adopted January 2015)

Whereas, IFOAM defines nanomaterials as follows: *"Substances deliberately designed, engineered and produced by human activity to be in the nanoscale range (approximately 1-300 nm) because of very specific properties or compositions (e.g. shape, surface properties, or chemistry) that result only in that nanoscale. Incidental particles in the nanoscale range created during traditional food processing such as homogenization, milling, churning, and freezing and naturally occurring particles in the nanoscale range are not intended to be included in this definition";*

And whereas, there are more than 1,600 consumer products containing man-made nano-ingredients on the market today and the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies database lists 96 food items currently on US grocery shelves that contain unlabeled nano-ingredients; and,

And whereas, research indicates that they can have a high toxicity to aquatic life, bacteria and human cells and tissues in vitro due to the ability of nanoparticles to be directly taken up by individual cells and cell nuclei (where they may cause DNA mutation and even cell death), especially through the respiratory system, and to pass the blood brain barrier; and Whereas, the US Food and Drug Administration which oversees the safety of the food supply, acknowledges in a 2012 draft report, that 1. nanoparticles pose risks that are substantially different from those of their regular-sized counterparts and 2) "particle size, surface area, aggregation/agglomeration, or shape may impact absorption, distribution, metabolism and excretion (ADME) and potentially the safety of the nano-engineered food substance," and

And whereas, nanomaterials are advertised as a component of market-available fertilizers—designed to increase the effectiveness of fertilizers by making them the same size as plant and root pores—but there is no pre-market safety assessment, therefore:

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY hereby resolve that manufactured nanomaterials are intentionally transformed in new and novel ways that render them unnatural or 'synthetic' by most common forms of understanding, and should be defined as one of the "excluded methods" as defined in the regulations of the National Organic Program (7 CFR § 205.2), and be considered as inputs excluded from organic production, processing and packaging, even if they are identical in name and chemical composition to natural and permitted substances and materials. In the future, these materials could be reconsidered if they have been proven safe through peer reviewed science and compatible with the principles of Organic Agriculture.

END

FOOD HUBS AND FOOD PROCUREMENT POLICY (adopted January 2015)

Whereas, Food Hubs facilitate the ability of small and mid-sized farms to gain access to wholesale and institutional markets and distribution channels, as well as to add value-added services that cannot easily be accomplished on-farm, such as peeling, chopping, freezing, drying and packaging;

And whereas, farmers selling to these larger markets often are subject to unfair pricing and contracts, "take it or leave it," without negotiation, and are unable to cover their full costs of production;

And whereas, far too many of the jobs in the food system do not provide living wages, forcing people who work long hours to resort to government support programs like SNAP to be able to provide for their families, therefore:

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that whenever public monies are invested in the development of food hubs or similar improvements in the food supply chain and when municipal, county and state government create food procurement policies, NOFA-NY shall advocate that there be the requirement that farmers will be paid fairly negotiated prices that fully cover their costs of production and any jobs created will be living wage jobs with market competitive benefits.

END

TRADITIONAL CHEESE MAKING (adopted January 2015)

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that in making value-added products, farmers should be free to use traditional materials such as wooden boards to age and store cheeses.

END

GMO LABELING (adopted January 2015)

Whereas, bona fide GMO labeling is not currently the law of the land;

And, whereas, we support and encourage local, state and national food campaigns to promote GMO awareness, therefore:

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we support and encourage local, state and national food campaigns to promote GMO awareness by communicating to the public that over 75% of processed foods already contain a GMO.

END

SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY (adopted January 2015)

Whereas, Synthetic biology (Synbio) broadly refers to the use of computer-assisted, biological engineering to design and construct new synthetic biological parts, devices and systems that do not exist in nature and the redesign of existing biological organisms. While synthetic biology incorporates the techniques of molecular biology, it differs from recombinant DNA technology in that synthetic biology introduces synthetically constructed parts and is not limited to the modification of natural organisms, but also extends to the construction of new life forms with no natural counterpart. Additionally, synthetic biology is working at an increased level of complexity not seen in “traditional” genetic engineering. [Issue Brief, FOE]. Like genetic engineering, synbio involves tinkering with DNA, except instead of transferring genes between unrelated species—such as putting genes from a bacteria into corn—synbio involves synthesizing entirely new life forms or gene constructs in a laboratory that are sometimes released into the environment, which happens with no real regulatory oversight or labeling;

And whereas, The ways in which synthetic organisms will interact with the natural environment are unpredictable and potentially devastating and permanent. While other types of pollution can be cleaned up and do not breed, synthetic biological creations are designed to self-replicate and, once released into the environment, they will be impossible to recall. A synthetic organism designed for a specific task, such as eating up oil from oil spills in the ocean, could swap genes with naturally occurring organisms and outcompete them, potentially disrupting entire ecosystems as a new class of invasive species.

EXAMPLES of a few of the current uses of synbio: Evolva is planning to market its synthetic biology version of vanillin this year and plans to market synthetic biology copies of stevia and saffron flavors. Solazyme is developing a “synthetized in algae” version of cocoa butter, as well as an oil designed to mimic the properties of palm oil. Amyris, the first company in the field, is already marketing its farnasene oil to a Japanese pharmaceutical company and to the US military as “jet fuel.” [Jaydee Hanson, CFS blog, May 5, 2014];

And whereas, These potential threats underscore the need for a precautionary approach. As a first step, we are pushing for a moratorium on the release and commercial use of synthetic organisms until there is a better understanding of the risks and appropriate regulations are in place;

And whereas, "Synthetic biology is an extreme form of genetic engineering that is developing rapidly with little oversight or regulation. A strict adherence to the Precautionary Principle is fundamental in guaranteeing the safe development of synthetic biology. A precautionary approach requires mandatory, synthetic biology-specific oversight mechanisms to account for the unique characteristics of synthetic organisms and products of synthetic biology. Within those mechanisms, ensuring public health, worker safety and ecosystem resilience requires a committed focus on critical risk research and immediate action to mitigate potential exposures until safety is demonstrated. Protection of the public includes a ban on using synthetic biology to manipulate the human genome in any form. Decisive action must also be taken to protect the environment and human health, and to avoid contributing to social and economic injustice. Developers and manufacturers must be responsible for the safety and effectiveness of their processes and products, and must retain liability for any adverse impacts. Throughout, oversight must be transparent and provide public access to information regarding decision-making processes, safety testing and products. Open, meaningful and full public participation at every level is essential and should include consideration of synthetic biology's wide-ranging effects, including ethical, social and economic" [FOE petition]; therefore;

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that manufactured synbio materials are intentionally transformed in new and novel ways that renders them unnatural or 'synthetic' by most common forms of understanding, and should be defined as one of the "excluded methods" defined in the regulation at § 205.2 Terms defined, and should be considered as a process excluded from organic production, processing and packaging, even if Synbio products are identical in name and chemical composition to natural and permitted substances and materials. In the future, these materials could be reconsidered if they have been proven safe through peer-reviewed science and compatible with the principles of Organic Agriculture. For more information see: <http://www.foe.org/projects/food-and-technology/synthetic-biology>.

END

2014

NEONICOTINOIDS (adopted January 2014)

Whereas, these newer chemical compounds were introduced as substitutes for older insecticides such as carbamates and organophosphates that have proven to be high risk for people and the environment, neonicotinoids are poisonous to birds and are implicated in colony collapse syndrome that has ravished populations of honey bees;

And whereas, neonicotinoids are relatively persistent in the environment and mobile in water so that they can find their way into streams, wetlands, and lakes where they may harm aquatic life as well as birds and bees;

And whereas, seed for major crops like corn, grown on over 90 million acres in the U.S., is now routinely coated with these systemic chemicals that travel through the plant and end up in pollen (and the edible parts of the crop) where they are picked up by pollinators, or the treated seeds are eaten by birds, where they may cause mortality or reproductive problems, therefore:

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY hereby resolve that the EPA should ban the use of neonicotinoids and other agri-chemicals that harm bees, pollinators so essential to our food supply.

END

CSA AND SNAP (adopted January 2014)

Whereas, NOFA-NY members agree that people of all income levels should have access to organically grown food from our NY organic farms. To increase access by low-income people, NOFA-NY has been providing information to help organic farmers gain authorization from USDA to accept SNAP benefits (formerly called Food Stamps). For several years, SNAP benefits have come in the form of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) swipe cards that resemble credit cards. While USDA allows farms that do Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) to accept SNAP payments with an EBT card, USDA does not allow payment in advance for more than two weeks at a time and prefers that farms process weekly payments. This results in a greatly increased administrative burden for CSA farms;

And whereas, in order to qualify to administer food stamps, Community Based Organizations have to supply a social security number of an executive director or board member. As this person is not the owner of a business, we feel it is unreasonable to require them to supply this information as this may stop some organizations from moving forward with licensing, therefore:

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that USDA should simplify the process for EBT customers to participate in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). Two possibilities for EBT policy changes that would address this are: 1) allowing EBT customers who are joining a CSA to pay ahead one month at a time for their share, or 2) allowing EBT customers to sign and post-date enough vouchers for the entire CSA season. Both of these changes would allow the farmer to bill for each CSA share on the day it is delivered rather than having to connect with the customer every week.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that the USDA should allow CSA farms to keep their EBT machines year-round, even during months of no income.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that the USDA should allow Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to use their Federal EIN number on the SNAP licensing application, rather than an individual's social security number, to increase the ability for CBOs to support EBT customers participating in CSA.

END

FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS (adopted January 2014)

Whereas, our government has been engaging in secret trade negotiations with the other governments around the Pacific Rim and across the Atlantic;

And whereas, the NAFTA promised an increase of 200,000 jobs in the United States, but resulted in a job loss of over 250,000;

And whereas, since the NAFTA and other free trade agreements, imports of fresh produce from Canada, Mexico and Central America have grown faster than US exports to those countries resulting in serious economic damage to the farmers of the Northeast;

And whereas, the Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Rim Treaties may allow corporations the right to sue legal local, state and national governments for control of public resources, such as the fresh waters of the Great Lakes;

And whereas, the Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Rim Treaties may allow corporations to sue legal governments for the removal of standards or laws designed to protect public health and safety if those laws or standards increase corporate operating costs or reduce profits; therefore;

RESOLUTION: The membership of NOFA-NY resolves that the United States government should withdraw from the Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Rim Free Trade negotiations, and that our representatives in government should vote against the fast track process and against ratifying the Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Rim Treaties.

END

FORCE MAJEURE BY GAS COMPANIES (adopted January 2014)

Whereas, the "*force majeure*" clause is a common contractual clause that frees both parties from liability or obligation when an extraordinary event or circumstance beyond the control of the parties, such as a war, strike, riot, crime, or an event described by the legal term act of God (such as hurricane, flooding, earthquake, volcanic eruption, etc.), prevents one or both parties from fulfilling their obligations under the contract;

And whereas, most force majeure clauses do not excuse a party's non-performance entirely, but only suspend it for the duration of the force majeure; therefore:

RESOLUTION: The membership of NOFA-NY opposes the application of "force majeure" by gas companies to extend gas leases when the delay in drilling is due to government regulation.

END

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED APPLES (adopted January 2014)

RESOLUTION: The membership of NOFA-NY opposes the introduction of GE Arctic Apples in the United States of America and requests APHIS to extend the comment period.

END

2013

GLYPHOSATE BAN (adopted January 2013)

Whereas, glyphosate (commonly marketed under Monsanto's brand name Roundup) is already used heavily in agriculture, and scientifically has been shown to be a powerful soil biocide, resulting in the increase of microbial plant pathogens, some of which form mycotoxins. Through natural selection, glyphosate is creating the rapid development of herbicide-resistant weeds, limiting the longevity of this chemical as a weed control tool. Glyphosate is being implicated as a possible threat to animal health and ecological diversity, both through its direct effects and through the effects of mycotoxins in our food. Given the real and documented risk of these toxic effects, there is no valid justification to increase the use of glyphosate in the environment by growing or developing new glyphosate-resistant plants, or by any other means;

And whereas, the discovery of glyphosate in the bloodstream of unborn babies suggests that everyone in North America may have glyphosate in their systems due to the enormous agricultural, suburban and urban acreage around the country doused with this herbicide. This presence, persistence and the consequent problems from glyphosate use are inconsistent with industry-funded research and claims resulting in U.S. Food & Drug Administration approval of this herbicide and the patented crops genetically-engineered to tolerate it.

And whereas, there are much better ways to control weeds, improve soil health, grow healthy nutrient dense crops, and make for productive, profitable farms than increasing the use of glyphosate, 2,4-D, dicamba and other synthetic herbicides. Rather than increasing the volume of these chemicals used by perpetuating unwise farming practices and the continuing development of herbicide-resistant GMOs, it is much more important for government to encourage farmers to adopt alternative practices that improve soil

health, soil microbial diversity and competition, natural weed control and crop health, and produce healthy, reasonably priced food and feed.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY resolve that in view of the many troubling questions about livestock and human infertility, health and environmental impacts linked to the production and consumption of round-up ready GMOs, the precautionary principle requires us to ban glyphosate until it is proven safe. We support mandatory disclosure of all glyphosate-related research findings, including any industry-funded research that may reveal threats to public well-being. We support government mandates allowing independent research of genetically-engineered crops, including any patented chemicals these GMO's have been engineered to work with. We urge testing for glyphosate be made a regular procedure that doctors can prescribe for their patients.

END

MANUFACTURER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSEQUENCES OF 2-4D and DICAMBA

(adopted January 2013)

Whereas, there is a likely increase in the use of 2-4D and Dicamba as Round-up's effectiveness as an herbicide decreases and GMO varieties resistant to 2-4D and Dicamba are commercialized;

And whereas, organic and conventional farms that choose to grow non-GMO crops should not suffer crop losses or contamination due to the actions of these herbicides and should be able to seek compensation from the manufacturer.

And whereas, 2-4D and Dicamba must be used much more carefully than Round-up and have a significant risk of volatilizing, causing problems well beyond the buffer zone. For example, a sprayer could be some distance from the damaged crop and it may not be possible to identify which farm actually did the spraying, which impacted the crop on a nearby organic or non-GMO farm.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY reaffirm our position that the manufacturers of 2-4D and Dicamba herbicides must be held responsible and liable for the consequences of the spraying of these herbicides. The farm that suffers damage should be able to claim compensation that reflects the farm's actual losses; i.e., if the farm is 100% retail, the loss in retail sales, not an arbitrary wholesale value.

END

STATE MINIMUM WAGE FOR FARMWORKERS (adopted January 2013)

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY support linking the floor for farmworkers' hourly wage to the state minimum wage or the federal minimum wage, whichever is higher.

END

LIQUID NATURAL GAS EXPORTATION (adopted January 2013)

Whereas, the extraction and production of natural gas puts our soil, and water at risk, adding greenhouse gases to the air;

And whereas, developing a non-renewable resource that will be exported does not increase US energy independence while it harms all farmers, both organic and conventional, endangering the purity of locally produced food.

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY oppose the international export of Natural Gas derived from sources within the United States and the development of Liquid Natural Gas international export facilities in the United States.

END

FEDERAL ETHANOL PURCHASING MANDATES (adopted January 2013)

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY oppose federal ethanol purchasing mandates because these mandates raise the price of feed and food.

END

EXTENSION OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT & FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT (adopted January 2013)

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY call for an extension of the National Labor Relations Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act to all currently exempted groups and for the expansion of unemployment insurance coverage to all workers with a change in the funding mechanism to make the expense more affordable to small-scale employers.

END

2012

RESOLUTION ON RESIDUE TESTING BY ORGANIC CERTIFIERS (adopted Jan 2012)

Whereas, we support the National Organic Program's (NOP) progress towards defining residue testing, we note that the National Organic Program is a process-based standard, rather than a product-based claim:

“The organically-produced label authorized under this bill therefore pertains to the production methods used to produce the food rather than the content of the food.”
[Senate Report Accompanying S. 2830, the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act, S. Report 101-357, p. 292].

And a mandatory product residue testing program as outlined in the NOP rule on residue testing comes perilously close to re-defining organic as a product claim;

And whereas, the NOP has not been clear as to the actual purpose of testing. Is it simply to avoid fraud or to also evaluate the possibility of contamination, either purposeful (through use of a prohibited substance or excluded method) or inadvertent (such as through drift, soil contamination, hygiene, or adventitious presence)?;

And whereas, by requiring that 5% of all operations be tested, the costs related to this rule are not scale neutral. Data from the Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA) shows that the NOP estimate of this testing regime reflecting 1% of an ACA's operating budget is only accurate for the larger certifiers, but can range to as high as 11% for the smallest of certifiers. In addition, given economies of scale, it will be the smaller certifiers who will pay more for tests, and will also be the ones who will need to increase their certification fees to implement this;

And whereas, the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) states that the National Organic Standards Board shall advise USDA "on the testing of organically produced agricultural products for residues caused by unavoidable residual environmental contamination."

RESOLUTION: We thereby resolve: The NOP should withdraw its Rule on Residue Testing and ask the National Organic Standards Board to propose a residue testing regimen for Accredited Certifiers that includes the full range of testing of organic farms, including plant tissue, soil, water, inputs, or feed, that is needed to assure the organic integrity of the USDA Organic label and to discourage fraud. This testing should not be random, but based on careful risk assessment or complaints from the public, consistent among all certifiers, including the certifiers of organic products imported into the US, and not place an undue financial burden on the smaller certification programs.

END

PURE HONEY LAW (adopted January 2012)

Whereas honey is defined the natural sweet substance produced by honey bees from the nectar of plants or excretions of plant sucking insects on the living parts of plants, which bees collect, transform by combining such substance with specific substances of their own, deposit, dehydrate, store, and leave in the honeycomb to ripen and mature;

And whereas, approximately 60% of honey consumed in the United States is imported; domestic supply cannot meet demand. Unfortunately, some of this imported honey has been tested and found to be adulterated with other components such as corn and rice syrups, or beet sugar. There have also been contamination issues, as antibiotics such as chloramphenicol and quinolone have been found in some imported honeys;

And whereas, in New York State, if honey is tested and found to be adulterated, there is no definitive recourse, because there is no law in New York that technically describes what honey is. The current regulation, section 205: defining honey, is a one sentence dictionary style definition of honey, dating back to 1902, and has never been revised.

RESOLUTION: We thereby resolve: We support the upgrade of the honey detailed in law S3321/A5164 that lists the parameters by which any item labeled pure honey, must meet. These parameters include sucrose level, moisture content, fructose/glucose levels, and floral exceptions and give the consumer confidence that when they buy a jar labeled “pure honey” there is truth in labeling in New York State.

On July 24 2010, the Empire State Honey Producers Association, the state beekeeping organization of New York, voted to adopt as a resolution the proposed honey definition. Other NY beekeeper groups voiced their support: Western New York Honey Producers Assn., Southern Tier Beekeepers, Southern Adirondack Beekeepers Assn. The Ontario Finger Lakes Beekeepers, with almost 500 members, also favor a new honey law.
END

ADDITIONAL RESOLUTION TO THE 2009 RESOLUTIONS ON THE SGEIS-METHANE MITIGATION (adopted January 2012)

New number 11 Added to Existing Policy 1-10:

RESOLUTION:

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York condemns the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s (“DEC’s”) draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (“SGEIS”) concerning hydraulic fracking of horizontal gas wells as not protective of New York State’s agriculture, environment and people. We demand that DEC:

1. Include in the SGEIS a comprehensive cumulative impact assessment of the numerous gas wells planned, not limit the SGEIS to the environmental impact of one well at a time (as currently is the case).
2. Include in the SGEIS a comprehensive assessment of impacts on human health by numerous gas wells.
3. Include in the SGEIS an assessment of the environmental impacts on the environment and human health of a vast pipeline, condenser and compressor system needed to service numerous gas wells.
4. Develop a practical plan for the disposal of all waste water (currently estimated to be in the billions of gallons) that will be generated by hydraulic fracking of numerous horizontal gas wells, inclusive not only of fracking fluids, but the

radioactive waste that will be generated by drilling and fracking of the Marcellus Shale (which itself is radioactive).

5. Expand the parameters for testing of water from gas well sites, as well as explicitly declare that all mandated water monitoring and testing costs be the financial responsibility of gas companies.
6. Declare that all expenses to county and local government to implement the SGEIS be the responsibility of gas companies.
7. Ban the use of water from aquifers for the purpose of hydraulic fracking of horizontal gas wells.
8. Fully disclose to the public the complete list of chemicals to be used in fracking fluids.
9. Ban the use of carcinogenic or suspected carcinogenic chemicals in fracking fluids, as well as chemicals in fracking fluids that act as endocrine disrupters or mutagens.
10. Develop and publish DEC's strategy to train and hire the many additional staff needed to enforce the SGEIS, as well as a description of penalties to empower the DEC to protect the public.
11. Understand and determine the means to prevent methane migration in the Marcellus Shale from horizontal hydrofracking before any horizontal hydrofracking occurs in New York State. Since the first SGEIS was presented in 2008, a 2011 peer reviewed and published study from Duke University of contamination of aquifers in the Marcellus Shale determined that about 50% of the 68 wells studied in Pennsylvania were severely contaminated with methane from the Marcellus Shale, because they were within a kilometer of horizontal hydrofracking. The use of water in one's home must never be the source of explosive and dangerous gas.

END

HORIZONTAL HIGH-VOLUME SLICK WATER HYDROFRACKING BAN POLICY (adopted January 2012)

Whereas through the process of careful consideration of the scientific evidence pertaining to the recovery of gas from shale or "tight gas" formations, and listening to the direct experiences of farmers from regions where shale gas recovery is underway and under consideration;

And whereas, Shale gas formations, despite being located deep, deep underground, host thriving communities of anaerobic bacteria adapted to life at these depths. While little is known by biologists about the specifics of this ecological system, due to its remote and difficult to access location, some experts in the field estimate that the sheer volume of living material located in this ecosystem exceeds the volume of living matter located on the

earth's surface. In keeping with our organic principles, we believe that the injection of massive amounts of biocides (poisons) into functioning ecosystems, to accomplish a wholesale eradication of all life in the area, is always counter-productive. When we, as humans, work within and with respect for the ecosystems around us, rather than as poisoning conquerors obliterating those ecosystems, we maintain the delicate web of sustainable life on which we, as well as other creatures, depend for our survival as a species. Horizontal high-volume slick water hydrofracking gas extraction technology depends upon the injection of tons of poisons into the little-studied underground ecosystems, as well as the application of tremendous physical force to crack and crush the rock environment in which the ecosystem is situated. Although little is known to science about the effects of this particular onslaught on the impacted ecosystem, we can extrapolate from other, similar human attacks on biotic communities to conclude that no good can come from proceeding in such a violent and death-dealing manner;

And whereas, the introduction of manufactured poisons into ecosystems inevitably has unintended consequences, as natural cycles move air, water, soil and living germplasm from place to place. Human transportation and industrial practices often accelerate this geographic mixing, as well. We therefore understand that, while we may somewhat limit ecosystem damages locally by calling for a prohibition of the practice within our own municipality, state or country on the practice of horizontal high-volume slick water hydrofracking, it is ultimately necessary to stop the practice world-wide;

And, whereas, in keeping with our concerns regarding the serious problem of global climate change, already having devastating effects on farmers around the world, we assert that it is absolutely necessary that we, as a species, find ways to decrease our dependence on the fossil fuels that create the greenhouse gases that cause the problem, rather than devise ever more destructive technologies to extract more fossil fuels.

RESOLUTION: We hereby resolve that:

We reject horizontal high-volume slick water hydrofracking technology as an acceptable human activity. We call for a world-wide agreement to cease the horizontal high-volume slick water hydrofracking technology because it is an unconventional, and unwise, means of extraction of fossil fuels. We support and encourage all local, state and federal efforts to end the practice of horizontal high-volume slick water hydrofracking technology, as well as all efforts at every level of government to contain and mitigate the environmental damages associated with the practice of horizontal high-volume slick water hydrofracking. We support institution of laws that will protect taxpayers, farmers, and owners of rural natural areas from unfairly being forced to shoulder financial or other responsibilities for environmental damages caused by horizontal high-volume slick water hydrofracking. The state of NY, the USA, and the world should accomplish a drastic reduction in the use of natural gas by effecting an orderly and rapid conversion to organic farming methods, obviating the need for natural gas and other petrochemical inputs for use in synthetic fertilizers. The experienced organic community of NOFA-NY stands ready to assist in this

essential transition through education, outreach, and certification of compliance with organic methods.

END

2011

NEW FARMER TRAINING PROGRAM (adopted January 2011)

RESOLUTION: NOFA-NY should cooperate with other organizations in NYS to establish a new farmer training program that is recognized by the State Government (the appropriate departments of Labor and Education) such that the contributions of farmers as mentors and teachers will be recognized, compensated and legal.

END

GARDEN AT EVERY PUBLIC SCHOOL (adopted January 2011)

RESOLUTION: We support funding to allow as many children as possible to have the opportunity to learn how to grow food. NOFA-NY members should work with their communities to create a garden at every public school and to encourage teachers to include the gardens in every relevant aspect of the curriculum.

END

RE-INSTATEMENT OF HOME RULE (adopted January 2011)

RESOLUTION: We support the reinstatement of home rule for gas and oil drilling in New York State.

END

MORATORIUM ON HYDROFRACKING (adopted January 2011)

RESOLUTION: We support a moratorium on hydrofracking of horizontal gas wells unless the environment, land and water are fully protected.

END

2010

RAW MILK (adopted January 2010)

RESOLUTION:

1) We support funding for education and research supporting the production, consumption, marketing and distribution of raw milk intended for consumption and/or use as raw

2) We encourage the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets to regularly meet with and participate in the Raw Milk Working Group for purposes including review and potential revisions to existing regulations for improved support of the production, testing, marketing and distribution of raw milk intended for consumption and/or use as raw

3) We support development of a New York Certified Raw Milk Program and we request the support of the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets to develop this program

END

FOOD POLICY COUNCIL (adopted January 2010)

Whereas, The present NYS Food Policy Council was established by executive order of the governor. A new governor will be free to eliminate it. Therefore:

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY urge the passage of legislation establishing a NYS Food Policy Council by law. This legislation should provide modest funding for staff support for the council so that it will function effectively to coordinate increased production and sale of NYS farm products and increased access to those products by people of all income levels.

END

MEAT PROCESSING (adopted January 2010)

RESOLUTION:

1) We recommend that the NY Farm Viability Institute make expansion of small scale meat processing facilities a priority issue

2) We recommend that the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets allow separation by time instead of space for dually licensed 5A & USDA custom exempt facilities

3) We recommend that the USDA pre-approve processing facility blueprints to assist processors through the requirements associated with constructing a plant.

END

PROTECTING STATE FROM IMPORTED DISEASED PLANTS (adopted January 2010)

Whereas, During the 2009 growing season, the importation into the Northeast states of tomato plants that were diseased with late blight and their sale by several large-scale retailers, led to the rapid spread of the disease all over the region. As a result, farmers and gardeners lost entire crops of tomatoes and potatoes. Late blight caused significant financial losses to farmers. Therefore:

RESOLUTION: NOFA-NY calls upon the NY Department of Agriculture and Markets to inspect shipments of “starts” that are imported into the state and to ban the importation of diseased plants. If disease shows up on plants already for sale at garden departments in the state, Ag and Markets should have the power to require the immediate withdrawal of those plants from sale and their destruction.

END

FARM LABOR LEGISLATION (adopted January 2010)

RESOLUTION: We oppose the current Farmworkers Fair Labor Bill (as of January 23rd, 2010) in the New York Legislature because it creates new law on a mix of labor issues that are historically identified, debated and crafted with separate legislation: collective bargaining, minimum wage, workers compensation, unemployment insurance. However, we strongly support legislation that would grant collective bargaining rights to farmworkers, and legislation that would establish the same minimum wage for all employees regardless of age.

END

NATURAL GAS DRILLING (adopted January 2010)

RESOLUTION: We support HR 2766, FRAC Act (Fracing Awareness and Responsibility Act), which would repeal the exemption of hydraulic fracturing in the Safe Water Drinking Act, and require the public listing of all chemicals in hydraulic fracturing fluid.

END

NATURAL GAS DRILLING-DEC’S SGEIS (adopted January 2010)

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York condemns the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s (“DEC’s”) draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (“SGEIS”) concerning hydraulic fracking of horizontal gas wells as not protective of New York State’s agriculture, environment and people. We demand that DEC:

1. Include in the SGEIS a comprehensive cumulative impact assessment of the numerous gas wells planned, not limit the SGEIS to the environmental impact of one well at a time (as currently is the case).
2. Include in the SGEIS a comprehensive assessment of impacts on human health by numerous gas wells.
3. Include in the SGEIS an assessment of the environmental impacts on the environment and human health of a vast pipeline, condenser and compressor system needed to service numerous gas wells.

4. Develop a practical plan for the disposal of all waste water (currently estimated to be in the billions of gallons) that will be generated by hydraulic fracking of numerous horizontal gas wells, inclusive not only of fracking fluids, but the radioactive waste that will be generated by drilling and fracking of the Marcellus Shale (which itself is radioactive).
5. Expand the parameters for testing of water from gas well sites, as well as explicitly declare that all mandated water monitoring and testing costs be the financial responsibility of gas companies.
6. Declare that all expenses to county and local government to implement the SGEIS be the responsibility of gas companies.
7. Ban the use of water from aquifers for the purpose of hydraulic fracking of horizontal gas wells.
8. Fully disclose to the public the complete list of chemicals to be used in fracking fluids.
9. Ban the use of carcinogenic or suspected carcinogenic chemicals in fracking fluids, as well as chemicals in fracking fluids that act as endocrine disrupters or mutagens.
10. Develop and publish DEC's strategy to train and hire the many additional staff needed to enforce the SGEIS, as well as a description of penalties to empower the DEC to protect the public.

RESOLUTION: If the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York does not believe that the final SGEIS is fully protective of New York State's agriculture, environment and people, NOFA-NY may join a lawsuit with other like-minded organizations and individuals to force the Department of Environmental Conservation to create a fully protective and enforceable SGEIS.

END

2009

FAIR LABOR STANDARDS (adopted January 2009)

Whereas, in recent years Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has dramatically increased workplace and community raids resulting in widespread detentions of immigrant workers and their families;

And whereas, New York's farmers are facing a serious labor shortage exacerbated in large part by this increase in ICE raids;

And whereas, the federal government has failed to pass comprehensive immigration reform that will satisfy farmers' labor needs while at the same time respecting fundamental workers' rights, therefore:

RESOLUTION:

We support legislative proposals that establish humane alternatives to detention for illegal immigrants, respect due process, and grant farmworkers currently in the U.S. the opportunity to work here legally. We further support legislative reforms to the current H2A guest worker program, such as AgJobs, that will provide farmers with needed labor and reform current guestworker programs to make them more accessible to small-scale farmers, while correcting the injustices of the current program by granting such farmworkers legal rights equal to resident workers and providing a path to citizenship.

END

FAIR EMERGENCY COMPENSATION TO ORGANIC FARMERS (adopted Jan 2009)

Whereas, there have been repeated weather disasters that destroy farm crops;

And whereas, the USDA makes disaster payments based on the commodity rate that it sets for each crop, including different rates for different end uses (processing as distinct from fresh market);

And whereas, USDA refuses to differentiate payments based on differences in production systems; therefore:

RESOLUTION:

USDA should make disaster payments to farmers based on rates that take into consideration the production systems used in producing those crops so that organically grown crops or grass-fed livestock that command a higher price in the market receive an appropriately higher payment than conventional products.

END

SELF-EMPLOYED RIGHTS (adopted January 2009)

Whereas the majority of New York Farmers are self-employed and the viability of the self-employed as the largest agricultural producer in New York State is directly related to the regulations covering the self-employed;

And whereas, the self-employed farmer should not be the New York citizen who bears the greatest regulatory and tax burdens while receiving the fewest legislative and regulatory protections;

And whereas, the right to be one's own boss is as fundamental to American democracy as the right to privacy; therefore:

RESOLUTION:

Policy towards all legislative and regulatory changes shall be shaped by their impact on the self-employed and the rights of the self-employed shall be one of our highest priority issues.

END

FOOD SAFETY (adopted January 2009)

Whereas, organic farmers are committed to supplying consumers with safe food and to taking appropriate measures to ensure sanitary conditions in crop handling;

And whereas, repeated incidents of illness and even death from food contaminated with pathogens have resulted in proposals for regulations that will drive small-scale farms out of business while failing to address the root causes of these foodborne illnesses; therefore:

RESOLUTION:

We support the mandatory use of potable water for washing produce. We further oppose mandatory chemical treatment of wash water, particularly with chlorine, for fruits and vegetables for the purpose of disinfecting crops. We oppose livestock setbacks and requirements for farmers to destroy natural areas on their farms in order to protect the public from food pathogens; such regulations do not serve public health, but, instead, eliminate integrated farms and reduce biodiversity.

END

LOCAL MEAT PROCESSING FACILITIES FOR NEW YORK (adopted January 2009)

Whereas, there is a shortage of USDA inspected slaughtering and meat processing facilities in New York State, requiring livestock farmers to drive all the way to Pennsylvania for the services they need if they want to sell packaged cuts of meat;

And whereas, the regulations for slaughterhouses were written for large scale facilities; therefore:

RESOLUTION:

State and federal regulations for facilities that slaughter and process meat should be revised to be scale appropriate, and NOFA-NY calls on the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to revise its regulations to encourage existing plants to certify organic.

END

NATURAL GAS DRILLING (adopted January 2009)

RESOLUTION:

We support passage of legislation that would restore the statutes in the federal Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Safe Water Drinking Act that were dropped in the 2005 Energy bill that exempted these laws from applying to oil and gas drilling. Until these statutes are restored on a federal level, we support making these provisions and protections New York State law. We support passage of state legislation that would require oil and gas drilling companies to report publicly all chemicals used to drill oil and gas wells, and how and where waste material and products are disposed of. We support the passage of state legislation that prohibits the use of water from aquifers for the purpose of oil and gas drilling or fracking.

END

RAW MILK (adopted January 2009)

Whereas, there are many citizens who would like to purchase raw milk for their personal consumption;

And whereas, dairy farms that are certified by NYS to produce raw milk are currently selling raw milk that meets the highest safety standards, yet they are prohibited from selling that milk except directly from the farm; therefore:

RESOLUTION: We support legislation that would allow dairy farms to sell raw milk through off-farm retail outlets.

END

2008

LOCAL FAIR TRADE (adopted January 2008)

RESOLUTION: The members of NOFA-NY hereby resolve that we would like our organization to work for the implementation of local fair trade. We believe that everyone involved in the organic supply chain from seed to plate is entitled to living wages, a safe workplace and respectful treatment. Farm prices should enable farmers to cover the costs of production, sustain their families and farms, including a living wage for all farm workers, and additional revenues to ensure the continuing development of the farm. Farm workers should enjoy the rights to freedom of association that are protected by law for workers in other sectors. Fair and transparent negotiations should provide long-term contracts between the buyers of organic products and farmers, and between farmers and farm workers.

END

GROWER (FARMER) GROUP CERTIFICATION (adopted January 2008)

Whereas, a few large corporate retailers are claiming that their corporate organic plan ensures that every branch store is in full compliance with organic standards in order to take advantage of the grower (farmer) group clause in the National Organic Program regulations to cut certification costs by avoiding annual inspections of every branch store;

And whereas, the National Organic Program requires annual inspections of all certified entities; therefore:

RESOLUTION:

The grower (farmer) group regulations should apply only to groups of small farms that are geographically proximate, organized into cooperatives that have strong internal control systems and marketing similar crops as a group.

END

NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM PROPER PROCEDURES MANUAL (adopted January 2008)

Whereas, after years of repeated consumer complaints about the farming practices of mega-dairies that have managed to qualify for organic certification;

And whereas, a few certification Programs that have certified these mega-dairies appear to be held to different NOP standards than the vast majority of certification programs; therefore:

RESOLUTION:

We believe that the National Organic Program should write a proper procedures manual as required for the proper functioning of an accreditation system that protects organic integrity and is necessary for ISO compliance; and That the National Organic Program should implement accreditation in a fair and even-handed way.

END

UPHOLDING STRICT ORGANIC STANDARDS (adopted January 2008)

Whereas, the negotiations and the resulting Consent Agreement between USDA and Aurora Organic Dairy (AOD), after USDA issued a Notice of Proposed Revocation to AOD, were completely outside the procedures for noncompliance spelled out in 205.662 of the National Organic Program Regulations;

And whereas, the Consent Agreement allows AOD to continue to be certified and produce organic milk after 14 "willful violations" were listed in the document attached to their Notice of Proposed Revocation;

And whereas, these actions exhibit disregard by USDA in following the regulations, demonstrates special treatment afforded very large scale operations, reveals uneven and unfair enforcement of the regulations, and jeopardizes the integrity of the USDA organic seal;

And whereas, organic rules are meaningless without scale neutral, unbiased, proper enforcement;

Whereas improper enforcement of the National Rule undermines consumer confidence in the USDA organic label, and proper enforcement remains one of the primary responsibilities of the USDA; therefore:

RESOLUTION:

The US Government Accountability Office (GAO), the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress, should undertake a thorough, systemic investigation into the compliance and enforcement procedures and practices of the USDA with regard to upholding strict organic standards.

END

2007

NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (NAIS) (adopted January 2007)

The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we oppose the National Animal Identification System because it would be unduly intrusive and burdensome to family farmers.

END

NATIONAL UNIFORMITY FOR FOOD ACT (adopted January 2007)

The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we oppose the proposed National Uniformity for Food Act because it takes away the right of states to protect their food and citizens.

END

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOs) (adopted January 2007)

The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we believe if a farm that does not intentionally grow GMO crops becomes contaminated with GMO genetic materials, the farmer should not be held liable for possession of that GMO genetic material. Liability for contamination should be the responsibility of the manufacturer of the GMO seeds.

END

ANIMAL CLONING (adopted January 2007)

The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we call upon the FDA to ban the use of animal clones in food production until the food safety and animal cruelty problems in cloning have been resolved, and until public discussions have addressed the troubling ethical issues that animal cloning brings. In the event that those conditions can be met, we call upon the NOP to consider cloning among the excluded methods.

END

2006

ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTION ACT (adopted January 2006)

The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we condemn the unilateral and surreptitious method used by the Organic Trade Association (OTA) to amend the Organic Food Production Act. NOFA-NY is a dues-paying member of OTA and has depended upon the organization, comprised of individuals, farmers, food processors and organizations, to represent our interests, NOFA-NY believes that to maintain organic integrity and consumer confidence in the organic label, it is essential to preserve high standards. We affirm that any changes to the OFPA must occur through an open and participatory process that includes all stakeholders in organic foods.

END

NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD (NOSB) (adopted January 2006)

The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we believe the NOSB should review all substances to be used in organic processing through the national list process. As in organic production, there should be a very limited list of categories of allowable substances, including ingredients. NOFA-NY further resolves that the Secretary of Agriculture should not have the power to allow emergency use of non-organic agricultural ingredients, if organic forms are not commercially available, thus by-passing the NOSB process. And NOFA-NY resolves that once a dairy herd has converted to organic production, organic management from the last third of gestation should be required for all replacement livestock.

END

UNPASTEURIZED CIDER (adopted January 2006)

The members of NOFA-NY resolve that we strongly support rescinding the 2005 state law, which prohibits the sale of un-pasteurized cider as of January 2006, to once again allow the direct sale by producers of un-pasteurized cider to the general public.

END

PATENTING OF LIFE FORMS (adopted January 2006)

Whereas, the plants, animals and microorganisms comprising life on earth are part of the natural world into which we are all born, the conversion of these species, their molecules or parts into corporate property through patent monopolies is counter to the interests of the peoples of this state, this country and of the world. With the temporary exception of a patent on an original cultivar of a plant, no individual, institution or corporation should be able to claim ownership over species of living organisms. Nor should they be able to hold patents on organs, cells, genes, or proteins, whether naturally occurring, genetically altered or otherwise modified.

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:

As part of a world movement to protect our common living heritage, we call upon the Congress of the United States to enact legislation to change existing law and override judicial interpretation of this law to exclude living organisms and their component parts from the patent system.

END

2003

INDUSTRIAL HEMP (adopted January 2003)

Whereas the cultivation of Industrial Hemp was ended in the United States with the passage of the 1937 Marijuana Tax Act;

And whereas, Industrial Hemp is the same species as marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*), but does not have enough of the psychoactive ingredient, THC, to intoxicate people;

And whereas, Industrial Hemp was grown for hundreds of years throughout the colonies and the United States to meet diverse needs of the American people; including rope, paper, fabric, fuel and food oil;

And whereas, many times more pulp may be harvested from an acre of Industrial Hemp than an acre of managed forest, and this pulp may be used to make high quality paper without the ecologically unfriendly bleaching process required of pulp from timber;

And whereas, hemp cloth is one of the strongest plant fibers on earth three times stronger than cotton, but unlike cotton, now the most herbicide and pesticide intensive crop on the planet, hemp needs no pesticides or herbicides to cultivate;

And whereas, there are thousands of uses for Industrial Hemp and many more would be discovered if farmers, private investment and the imaginations of the American people would be allowed to produce Industrial Hemp to meet the needs and demands of the market;

And whereas, Canada, the European Union, Australia, Russia, India, China and many other nations produce Industrial Hemp, much of which is imported into the United States in the form of clothing and paper;

And whereas, worldwide Industrial Hemp sales have grown from 5 million dollars in 1993 to approximately 500 million dollars in 2000;

And whereas, Industrial Hemp also incorporates more phosphorous in its harvested product than most crops, and this ability to uptake phosphorous makes Industrial Hemp the ideal crop to plant in the New York's watersheds where the water quality is suffering from an excess of phosphorous;

And whereas, the future of rural America should be tied to sustainability.

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:
NOFA-NY calls upon the New York State Legislature and Congress to legalize Industrial Hemp.
END

2002

CHEMICALS BANNED FOR USE IN THE USA (adopted January 2002)

Whereas foods produced with chemicals banned for use in the United States are regularly imported into the USA and consumed by the American people;

And whereas, the forbidden chemicals that produce these foods originate both in foreign nations and in the United States (nine tons of domestically banned pesticides are produced in the United States and shipped overseas for use on foreign lands every day).

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:
NOFA-NY supports an Act of Congress that would prohibit the import of food produced with chemicals banned in the USA.
END

USE OF THE WORD ORGANIC BY NON-CERTIFIED ORGANIC FARMERS (adopted January 2002)

Whereas organic farmers whose farms are certified organic have more in common with organic farmers who have not certified their farms than they have differences;

And whereas, the implementation of the Organic Food Production Act may cause hardship for uncertified farmers because they will not be able to describe themselves as organic in commercial speech;

And whereas, the justification for federal control of the word organic is not based on food safety.

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:

NOFA-NY favors amending the Organic Food Production Act because this Law replaces voluntary organic certification with mandatory certification, and prohibits the use of the word "organic" for commercial use if farmers are not certified organic by USDA accredited organic certifiers. We believe this is a violation of free speech, and has the effect of turning the use of the word organic into a mandatory licensing fee. We believe that the National Organic Program's Final Rule undermines communication between farmers and consumers, and will hurt many of the farmers and consumers that have participated and encouraged the growth of organic agriculture.

END

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (NAFTA) (adopted January 2002)

Whereas, our government has been engaging in secret trade negotiations with the other governments of this hemisphere since 1998 to expand the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to include 31 countries of Central and South America in the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA);

And whereas, the NAFTA promised an increase of 200,000 jobs in the United States, but resulted in a job loss of over 250,000;

And whereas, since the NAFTA, imports of fresh produce from Canada and Mexico have grown faster than US exports to those countries resulting in serious economic damage to the farmers of the North East;

And whereas, the FTAA may allow corporations the right to sue legal local, state and national governments for control of public resources, such as the fresh waters of the Great Lakes;

And whereas, the FTAA may allow corporations to sue legal governments for the removal of standards or laws designed to protect public health and safety if those laws or standards increase corporate operating costs.

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:

The United States government should withdraw from the FTAA negotiations, and that our representatives in government should vote against ratifying the FTAA.

END

RIGHTS OF THE SELF-EMPLOYED (adopted January 2001)

Whereas the vast majority of New York farmers are self-employed and the economic viability of the self-employed is directly related to the regulations covering the self-employed;

And whereas, the right to be one's own boss is as fundamental to American democracy as the right to privacy;

And whereas, today's agricultural economic climate is one of increasing corporate concentration and record low commodity prices, forcing more and more farmers to sell their produce to large scale processors, brokers and retail chains, which have much greater economic power than any individual farm.

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:

NOFA-NY policy towards all legislative and regulatory changes shall be shaped by their impact on the self-employed, and the rights of the self-employed shall be one of our highest priority issues; and, We support the strong enforcement of antitrust laws; and, New York State should pass legislation that will protect the right of farmers to form bargaining associations or cooperatives to negotiate contracts, and ensure that processors, brokers and retail chains bargain with the farmers in good faith. The legislation should make it an unfair practice for processors to retaliate or discriminate against farmers who exercise their rights and/or join farmer associations. Contracts should be in plain language, be free of confidentiality clauses, and disclose any material risks. Contract growers should have a three-day contract review period. Contractors should be obliged to negotiate any changes in contracts with the farmers. The legislation should guarantee farmers a first-priority lien on payments should the contractor go out of business. The Department of Agriculture and Markets should accredit the voluntary associations of farmers, provide mediation to resolve impasses in bargaining, investigate instances of unfair or deceptive practices on the part of processors, brokers or retailers, and protect producers from having contracts terminated for no real reason as a form of punishment of some kind.

END

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR AGRICULTURAL Workers (adopted January 2001)

Whereas, addressing the need for both farmers and farmworkers to gain institutionalized rights and dignity in their workplace is vital to the future sustainability of our food system;

And whereas, "small farmers will earn fair incomes only if farmworkers on large farms are paid fair incomes," (from A Time to Act, the USDA National Commission on Small Farms report).

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:

NOFA-NY supports amending the National Labor Relations Act to include agricultural workers under its collective bargaining protections.
END

FOOD SAFETY (adopted January 2001)

Whereas, the increase of food borne illnesses has led to an increase in government regulations aimed at eliminating pathogens by using high tech methods, instead of cleaning up the large scale industrialized food production system that causes the increase of pathogens in foods.

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:

NOFA-NY is opposed to the use of ionizing radiation, and opposes any laws requiring the mandatory irradiation of food; and

NOFA-NY opposes the mandatory processing of fresh juice and vegetable products, such as the pasteurization of apple cider.

Producers should follow strict food safety guidelines based on the organic principle of reducing "pollution that may result from farming and processing systems" (NOFA-NY 2000 Certification Standards, p. 2).

END

MUNICIPAL AND STATE SPRAYING (adopted January 2001)

Whereas, the spraying of pesticides by county and municipal authorities to attempt to control the mosquitoes which carry West Nile Virus threatens the integrity of crops on New York State farms, and may destroy the farmer's ability to market those crops, whether organic or conventionally grown.

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:

Local and county authorities should maintain lists of all farms and be obliged to notify those farms of any planned pesticide spraying. We oppose spraying by government or other entities of synthetic chemicals on people, their dwellings and their property without their consent. We also oppose spraying crop land without explicit permission from the farmer. Local, county and state authorities should invoke the precautionary principle in dealing with public health emergencies. We support protecting the public from mosquito borne illness through 1PM practices

END

2000

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOS) (adopted January 2000)

Whereas Genetically Engineered Organisms (GEO/GMO's)* may affect our lives and the environment in many ways: The science of Genomics is in its infancy, despite the disproportionate investment of public research dollars in this area, to the detriment of ecological alternatives. While scientists may have identified the function of particular genes, there is very little understanding of the complex interrelationships of genes, and there has been very little research done to assess the health and safety implications to humans from ingesting genetically engineered organisms. Genetic engineering may result in the creation of new toxins (examples already exist). Unexpected allergic reactions can be triggered (a Brazil nut gene inserted into soya resulted in a reaction in people allergic to nuts). There are concerns that genetically engineered soya may contain higher estrogen levels. There is a risk of increasing the incidence of antibiotic resistance in humans and livestock;

And whereas, due to current Food and Drug Administration labeling policy, consumers have lost their right to choose whether or not to eat products that contain genetically engineered ingredients;

And whereas, genetically engineered material can be transferred to other crops and weeds, but once released it is impossible to "clean up" any unforeseen consequences, and no legislation exists to protect the crops of farmers who want to stay GEO/GMO free from GEO/GMO tainted pollen, resulting in all crops being contaminated over time;

And whereas, genetically engineered plants which are designed to kill pests can kill beneficial insects and other organisms as well, and thus genetically engineered crops may have unpredictable effects on the ecological balance;

And whereas, genetic engineering to develop insect resistant crops is expected to destroy the usefulness to organic and conventional farmers of natural biological pesticides, such as *Bacillus thuringiensis*.

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:

There should be an immediate moratorium on the planting of Genetically engineered crops; No new genetically engineered crops should be commercialized until such time as adequate research has been done to assure the safety of such crops to humans and the environment; and

The Food and Drug Administration should require the labeling of all foods containing genetically engineered ingredients, as they are already mandated to do for food additives. These labels should state precisely what genes have been added. The federal government should develop a comprehensive framework for the regulation of genetically engineered organisms that protects the natural environment, the farm environment and public health.

*The following definition of Genetically Engineered Organisms (GEO/GMOs) has been recommended by the NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD (NOSB) and adopted in the American Organic Standards of the Organic Trade Association:

Genetically engineered is defined as: made with techniques that alter the molecular or cell biology of an organism by means that are not possible under natural conditions or processes. Genetic engineering includes recombinant DNA, cell fusion, micro- and macro-encapsulation, gene deletion and doubling, introducing a foreign gene, and changing the positions of genes. It shall not include breeding, conjugation, fermentation, hybridization, in-vitro fertilization and tissue culture.

END

1999

COMPREHENSIVE FOOD LABELING (adopted January 1999)

Whereas consumers have the right to know what they are eating, where food comes from and how it was produced;

And whereas, we want to be able to vote with our dollars for a sustainable, regional food system.

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:

All foods sold in the United States should be labeled as to country of origin, any irradiated ingredients, any ingredients derived from genetically modified organisms, any foods grown on sludge-amended soils, and, for dairy, any products from cows treated with synthetic bovine growth hormone (Bst or rBGH).

END

SEWAGE SLUDGE (adopted January 1999)

Whereas in New York State, 360,000 dry tons of sewage sludge are produced every year;

And whereas, the Clean Water Act amendments (Federal Code section 503) passed in 1992 lower the standards for land-application of sludge, allowing higher concentrations of heavy metals to be applied to soils;

And whereas, unlike the organic components of sludge, the heavy metals do not decompose, but remain in the soil, accumulating to levels that eventually make the soil unfit for food production;

And whereas in addition to heavy metals, sludge may contain a host of synthetic organic compounds, including dioxins, PCBs, and pesticides;

And whereas, heavy metals and synthetic organic compounds accumulate and "biomagnify" in the food chain, and livestock eating forages grown on sludge-amended soils can absorb these substances, including dioxins and PCBs into their fat and transfer these chemicals to their milk.

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:

Industries should be required to remove all chemical pollutants from any waste stream that enters sewage treatment systems. In addition, manufacturers should be required to remove hazardous ingredients from household products that make their way to drains and sewage treatment systems. Until that is done, sewage sludge should not be used on land for crop and forage production, or for grazing. The sale of all sewage based biosolid products should be prohibited. As an alternative to this source of contaminated biosolids, farmers should be encouraged to use green manures, cover crops, and animal manures through tax exemptions or other incentives.

END

NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM (adopted January 1998)

Whereas for 11 years, the NOFA-NY Organic Certification Program has certified organic farms and processors according to clear, high published standards that earn the confidence of NY consumers;

And whereas, the National Organic Program Proposed regulations threaten the integrity and the very existence of the NOFA-NY Organic Certification Program.

The membership of NOFA-NY therefore resolves that:

USDA should withdraw the proposed regulations and rewrite them fundamentally following the recommendations of the National Organic Standards Board, adhering to the Organic Food Production Act and consistent with accepted organic principles.

END
