

Continuous improvement is a core tenet of the USDA organic label. The very purpose of the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) is to “establish national standards” and “assure consumers that organically produced products meet a consistent standard.”

Unfortunately, the federal regulatory apparatus has stifled avenues of continuous improvement within the industry. Consumer trust in organic relies on strong and regularly updated standards that reflect the latest understandings on environmental and ecological data, consumer demands, and innovative best practices emerging in organic.

By adopting elements of a process which already exists in OFPA to update the permissible substance list, the CIAO Act will improve regulatory actions:

- **Clarifies a stakeholder-informed process for organic rulemaking.**

1. At least once every five years, the National Organic Program (NOP) requests public input on organic rules needing updates;
2. Based on that public input, and in consultation with the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), NOP publishes a list of regulatory priorities;
3. NOP ensures it has a sufficient NOSB recommendation on each priority;
4. NOP implements notice and comment rulemaking according to the priorities list.

- **Creates a predictable process informed by current realities.**

CIAO establishes a five-year working period, empowering stakeholders to prepare for and respond to evolving standards. CIAO will ensure rulemaking reflects current research and market demands.

Organic is a voluntary private-public partnership for farmers and businesses who choose to meet a strict federal standard thereby incurring additional costs. These producers market their products at a premium using the USDA organic seal to consumers who value those qualities in their purchases. The organic industry is ready to move forward with clear standards to meet producer and consumer expectations. CIAO is the path.

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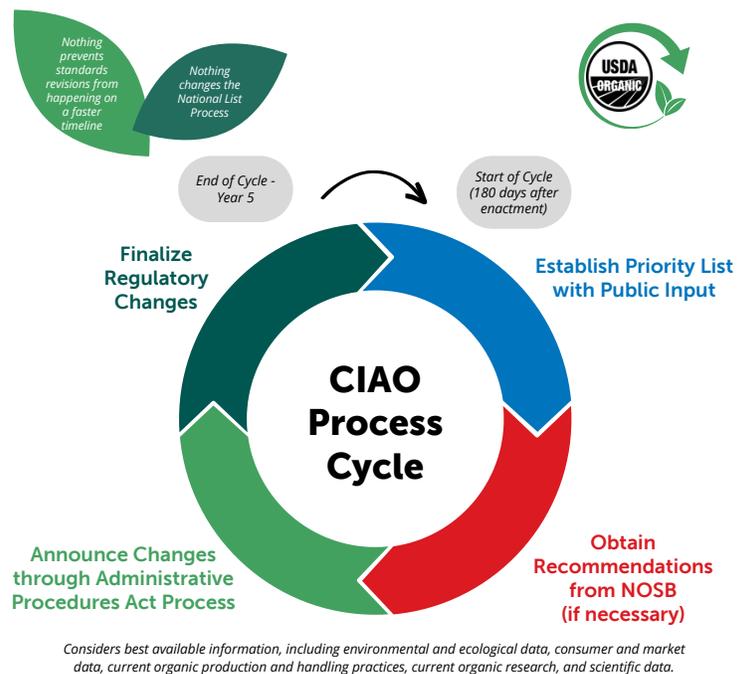
In the last 20 years, USDA completed rulemaking on only

**5**

out of 19 topics.

**80%**

of those required, a lawsuit or Office of Inspector + congressional intervention to force rulemaking



**The Rural Prosperity and Food Security Act of 2024**  
OTA supports language in the act that includes elements of CIAO that would promote more efficient and transparent rulemaking:

- **NOP:** solicits public input on the prioritization of organic regulation updates;
- **USDA:** publishes an annual report with recommendations received from the NOSB, all regulatory and administrative actions, and why actions were or were not taken; and
- **GAO:** requires a study on the efforts of the NOP to improve organic standards and recommendations on how the NOP can ensure that organic program standards evolve in a timely manner.

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