

Bipartisan Bill Introduced to Support Domestic Organic Farmers

Bill would protect growing organic sector from fraudulent imports

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, April 9, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Groups representing diverse organic stakeholders applaud the introduction of the Organic Imports Verification Act of 2025 (OIVA). Introduced by Sen. Pete Ricketts, R-NE and Sen. Tina Smith, D-MN, the legislation would promote organic integrity and a level playing field for domestic organic producers by requiring the USDA to test high-risk bulk imports of organic feedstuffs for residues of substances that are prohibited in organic production. In addition to adequate funding for core organic programs to meet the needs of the rapidly growing organic sector, they are advocating for the inclusion of OIVA in the upcoming Farm Bill.



Specifically, the bill would do the following:

1. Establish Risk-Based Protocol: The USDA Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security and the "organic agricultural product imports interagency working group," shall develop and regularly update risk-based protocols for determining the high-risk status of organic feedstuffs.
2. Establish an Annual List of High-Risk Organic Feedstuffs: Each year, the USDA Secretary, using the established risk-based protocol, shall create a confidential list of high-risk imported organic feedstuffs that will require additional residue testing that year.
3. Establish Parameters for Residue Testing: The USDA Secretary will create residue testing parameters for the established list of high-risk imported organic feedstuffs. Parameters would outline necessary testing frequency, quantity to be tested, the type of testing, who is responsible for the testing, and other necessary parameters.

4. Require Annual Testing: Annually, the USDA Secretary will be required to conduct residue testing for each covered organic feedstuff.

5. Establish Corrective Action: If required residue testing indicates a prohibited substance over the permitted level for organic, the shipment of that organic feedstuff will be excluded from organic sale.

6. Require an Annual Report to Congress: The National Organic Program (NOP) would be required to present an annual report to Congress on the residue testing carried out during the year prior for each high-risk organic feedstuff and imported organic feedstuff shipped in bulk. The report would include information on the frequency of the applicable residue testing, residue testing methods used, testing results, standards used to analyze the test results, and any actions taken due to the residue testing.

In the past 10 years, the U.S. demand for organic products has consistently grown. U.S. farmers have invested in organic transition to meet this demand with increased domestic organic production, yet a large increase of imported organic products also surged to meet U.S. demand. The increased price for organic over conventional commodities and high demand for organic grains has lured some fraudulent players into the marketplace, raising questions about the quantities and organic integrity of some imported organic feedstuffs. Farmers report that fraud has caused significant price fluctuations in recent years, destabilizing the organic grain market for U.S. producers who have invested in the 3-year transition to organic production.

"As a farmer, I urgently call for immediate action to include OIVA in the upcoming Farm Bill," said Amy Bruch of Cyclone Farms. "The U.S. organic market has been inundated with imported organic feedstuffs from questionable origins, and it is crucial that we act swiftly to ensure integrity and establish that all farmers are playing by the same rules. I am grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Senator Ricketts and his team in developing OIVA, which will play a crucial role in maintaining organic integrity. OIVA will facilitate the necessary testing to confirm compliance and exclude from organic sale fraudulent organic feedstuffs. Its implementation will address the demands of organic producers for a level playing field in the organic grain market, grow domestic organic acres, and enhance consumer confidence in the organic seal. OIVA represents a victory for American organic producers and consumers!"

While import fraud can appear across commodities in the organic sector, imported organic feedstuff commodities (like whole soybeans, soybean meal, corn, cracked corn, rape, rape meal, whole sunflowers, hulled sunflowers, sunflower oil, and sunflower meal) enter the U.S. market through high-risk (complex and opaque) supply chains. This bill would build off of the recently finalized Strengthening Organic Enforcement rule and provide the USDA with an additional tool to crack down on fraud.

"Preventing fraud is consistently a top priority of organic producers. Organic is the fastest

growing sector of U.S. agriculture and the U.S. leads the world in organic food sales at nearly \$70 billion annually. OFA applauds this initiative to protect the integrity of the U.S. market for organic grain. By testing imported organic feedstuffs for prohibited chemicals, and excluding from the organic supply chain those which fail testing, this bill will level the playing field for domestic organic farmers and will strengthen consumer confidence in the integrity of the USDA organic seal," said Pryor Garnett of Garnetts Red Prairie Farm, President of the Organic Farmers Association."

"While Strengthening Organic Enforcement will continue to have a positive impact on mitigating fraud, the import of bulk feedstuffs remains a high-risk activity for organic integrity and warrants increased scrutiny. Periodic residue testing is an additional incremental step. This bill would level the playing for organic handlers and producers who are already acting with integrity," said Matthew Dillon, Co-CEO of the Organic Trade Association.

Nearly 700 organic farmers, organizations, and consumers have [signed a letter in support of the legislation](#). Endorsers include the National Organic Coalition, the Organic Farmers Association, the Organic Trade Association, and organic grain farmers Amy Bruch (NE) and Nate Powell-Palm (MT).

"A fair marketplace is essential for organic farmers to thrive," said Abby Youngblood, Executive Director at the National Organic Coalition. "We are grateful to Senator Ricketts and Senator Smith for their leadership in listening to the needs of organic grain producers and introducing legislation to help address fraud using a risk-based approach. NOC urges legislators to include this legislation in the Farm Bill, along with adequate Farm Bill funding for core organic programs to provide more opportunities for the growing organic sector."

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