

OFARM Actions on Organic Import Fraud and U.S. Producer Losses Timeline-2014-March, 2018

Date:	
Late 2014	OFARM member coop grain marketers begin reporting falling domestic organic grain prices due to imports
2015	Organic grain prices continue to fall Ukraine is listed as the largest exporter to the U.S.
	Andrew Trump, Organic Arable CEO-United Kingdom contacts OFARM Discussions begin on mutual exchange of market information
	U.S. organic prices continue to fall with reports of buyers not needing U.S. grain due to imports
December, 2015	European Commission publishes guidelines for countries deemed “high risk of import fraud.”
January, 2016	>USDA Foreign Agricultural Service publishes, “Turkish Organic Market Overview” citing rampant fraud in the country. >Turkey becomes the largest exporter listed by USDA of organic grains to the U.S.
February, 2016	>OFARM Executive Director speaks at a White House conference on the future of the U.S. Food System >Bryce Cook, USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) speaks to OFARM’s Annual Meeting, providing extensive data on organic grain imports >Andrew Trump in the U.K. brings to OFARM’s attention the decertification of ETKO, Turkey’s largest accreditation agency by the European Union.
March, 2016	OFARM Executive Director John Bobbe, speaks at the Organic Poultry Farmers of America annual conference, St. Paul, MN about organic import fraud.
April, 2016	>USDA reaches a settlement with ETKO regarding accreditation while ETKO continues to be decertified by the EU and Canada. >OFARM Executive Director John Bobbe meetings in the U.K. with Andrew Trump, Organic Arable CEO to discuss mutual interests including organic fraud.
May, 2016	>An OFARM member cooperative, Midwest Organic Farmers Coop, IL gets the first documentation of the ship, Nakagowa porting in Burns Harbor, IN to unload 450,000 bushels of supposed organic corn
June, 2016	OFARM suggests workshops on the organic grain fraud problem at the MOSES Planning Conference, LaCrosse, WI
July, 2016	>OFARM Executive Director, John Bobbe, makes OFARM’s first public presentation to an organic field day at Lamberton, MN on potential organic grain fraud. >USDA NOP issues a reminder to importers 10 days later to follow USDA guidelines.
August, 2016	OFARM publishes one of the first articles on organic grain fraud in the Organic Broadcaster
September, 2016	>Food and Water Watch (Washington, D.C.) along with OFARM, file a formal letter of complaint with USDA’s Office of Inspector General asking them to investigate whether the NOP has the capabilities of policing international supply chains worldwide. OFARM uncovers the second shipload of potentially fraudulent organic grain porting in Olympia, WA. >OFARM files complaints with the USDA’s National Organic Program (NOP) on both ships.
October, 2016	>OFARM Executive Director, John Bobbe confronts Miles McEvoy at the National Organic Coalition meeting, St. Louis, Missouri on what NOP is doing regarding potentially fraudulent imports. >John Bobbe publicly testified to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) on organic import fraud and submitted public comments.
January, 2017	>Sources provide OFARM with information on USDA’s Audit Peer Review

	<p>conducted in 2016 where a minority report questions USDA's organic integrity in handling a fraud cases.</p> <p>> OFARM was made aware of the settlement reached in April, 2016 by USDA with ETKO</p> <p>>OFARM files a Freedom of Information Request (FOIA) with USDA with any and all documents related to USDA's settlement with Turkish certifier ETKO.</p> <p>OFARM member organization, Kansas Organic Producers grain marketer Martin Eddy addresses the Mid-America Organic Conference in Kansas City, MO on organic grain import fraud.</p>
February, 2017	<p>>Miles McEvoy attends OFARM's annual meeting in LaCrosse for a dialogue on NOP and organic fraud</p> <p>>MOSES hosts an organic import forum which 200 farmers attend. Speakers were</p> <p>>Miles McEvoy, Andrew Trump from Organic Arable, U.K. and John Bobbe. John Bobbe presents a list of "asks" OFARM would like USDA to pursue and implement to cut down on organic fraud.</p> <p>>John Bobbe and OFARM's officers meet with Washington Post investigative reporter Peter Whoriskey and Cornucopia's Ann Ross, Will Fantle and Mark Kastel about the import fraud situation.</p>
March, 2017	<p>OFARM sends a formal letter of OFARM "asks" at the MOSES forum to USDA at Miles McEvoy's request</p>
April, 2017	<p>>Miles McEvoy responds to OFARM's March letter.</p> <p>>Martin Eddy, Kansas Organic Grain Marketer requests time to speak at the Denver, CO meeting of the NOSB. He is told that everything is under control at USDA regarding imports and all the paperwork is in order.</p>
May, 2017	<p>>Washington Post investigative reporter Peter Whoriskey publishes his investigation documenting rampant fraud on three shiploads of supposed organic grain.</p> <p>>OFARM and Food and Water Watch re-file a second letter with USDA's Office of Inspector General questioning NOP's competence in handling massive organic import fraud.</p>
June, 2017	<p>Organic Trade Association forms a Global Organic Supply Chain Integrity Task Force for best practices on preventing import fraud.</p>
July, 2017	<p>>John Bobbe, Patty Lovera, Food and Water Watch Assistant Director and Michael Sligh, Rural Advancement Foundation North Carolina meet with NOP Administrator Miles McEvoy, at USDA in Washington, D.C. to discuss organic import fraud and what NOP is doing.</p> <p>>Capitol Hill visits to Senate and Congressional Offices about NOP and the organic fraud situation.</p> <p>NOP issues interim guidelines to certification agencies regarding organic grain imports.</p> <p>Miles McEvoy responds in writing to the early July meeting in his office regarding NOP efforts on organic fraud</p>
August, 2017	<p>USDA AMS NOP sends a formal request to the NOSB to provide recommendations on improving oversight and control procedures used by AMS on organic imports</p>
September, 2017	<p>>OFARM's fall board meeting, Ames, IA, Miles McEvoy addresses the group on the most recent developments with NOP regarding organic fraud via USDA's electronic meeting system with questions and answers.</p> <p>>OFARM provides information of a shipment of organic corn and soybean meal projected to arrive in the Bellingham, WA port two weeks in advance of its arrival.</p> <p>>OFARM received the information from Organic Arable in the U.K.</p> <p>The ship anchors offshore while USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) agents board the ship. The corn cargo was refused entry into the U.S.</p> <p>>OFARM Executive Director John Bobbe is invited to address the International</p>

	<p>Conference “Improving Integrity of Organic Supply Chains.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> >John Bobbe discussed Organic Trade Associations actions on import fraud with OTA Executive Director Laura Batcha at the Ukraine Conference >OFARM establishes contacts on-the-ground in Ukraine, Kazakstan, Turkey and Europe to exchange information on organic fraud.
October, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >John Bobbe calls USDA to get on the agenda to speak about fraudulent organic grain imports. He is told that if there is no room on the fall schedule, it could be done in spring, 2018. >USDA NOP requests public comments on its interim guidelines for certifiers for imports
November, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >National Organic Coalition devotes an entire session to discussion of organic import fraud. >USDA’s Interim Deputy Administrator Jennifer Tucker claims USDA even stopped a ship of imported grain in comments to the NOSB meeting at NOSB’s Jacksonville, FL meeting. >John Bobbe presents both written and public comments at the NOSB meeting. >John Bobbe spoke at the “Save Organic” rally in conjunction with the NOSB meeting about organic fraud. >NOSB devotes an entire session to organic fraud prevention with a panel discussion by representatives of Customs and Border Patrol, AMS and APHIS
December, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >OFARM submits public comments on “Interim Instruction Maintaining Integrity of Organic Imports” to USDA’s NOP. >Nerd Wallets, an investigative journalism firm issued its report on rampant organic fraud in organic pineapple. Ann Ross from Cornucopia worked extensively with them and they also consulted with OFARM’s John Bobbe >Washington Post’s Peter Whoriskey published an article about the Faso Bill introduced in the House of Representatives to address import fraud concerns quoting John Bobbe
January-March, 2018	<p>OFARM will be making presentations at organic conferences in the Midwest and southwest. (MOSES, LaCrosse, WI; New Mexico Organic Conference; National Farmers Organization national convention, Cincinnati, OH; Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association winter conference, Dayton, OH; OGRAIN, Madison, WI; and Northeast Organic Farming Association-New York. John Bobbe will be the keynote speaker at the NOFA -NY conference</p>

Additional acknowledgements

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Patty Lovera and Food and Water Watch as well as Ann Ross, Will Fantle and Mark Kastel from Cornucopia have been valuable partners each in their own right on combatting organic grain import fraud and fighting for organic integrity. Cornucopia has published numerous articles to their audience on the organic import fraud situation. Michael Sligh from Rural Advancement Foundation, Inc., North Carolina has also contributed extensively in giving us direction in our efforts and personally been involved in meetings with us.