ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION

Sponsored by RODALE INSTITUTE

Process & Procedure for Determining Policy Positions, Priorities, and Agenda

Annual Policy Platform Process:

1. OFA Policy Committee shall solicit opinions from all U.S. certified organic farmers and ask them to submit policy position proposals and prioritize policy issues annually. The Committee shall also solicit policy position proposals from OFA organizational members. A minimum of 30 days will be allocated for this process from the date of the initial request for proposals (RFP).
2. Once the results from U.S. certified organic farmers and organizational members have been submitted, OFA Policy Committee shall review the results, identify the top priorities, and draft policy statements. The committee shall post these drafted policy statements to the membership for a ten-day comment period. The committee shall then review the comments and modify policy statements as needed over a ten-day period. These policy statements are then presented to the Governing Council for review and approval (within a ten-day period) before being submitted to OFA farmer members to vote. A minimum of 30 days will be allocated for the voting process.
3. At the end of the voting period, the Policy Committee shall tabulate the vote and analyze the voter data. For a position to become adopted as OFA policy, it must have 60% of the popular national vote *and* 60% popular support in at least two-thirds of the regions. The committee then presents the voting results to the Governing Council which will review for adherence to OFA Policy procedures, and if results meet these criteria, the policy shall be adopted. The adopted policies become part of the official OFA policy platform.

Urgent Policy Position Process:

1. Urgent policy issues may arise outside the annual policy development process. Any OFA farmer member or organizational member may propose an urgent issue for the Policy Committee to consider at any time. A 2/3's majority of Policy Committee members is needed to determine whether an issue has urgent status. Only policy issues deemed urgent will be considered for review outside the annual policy review schedule. If the policy issue is deemed to be urgent, the following shall happen:
2. If OFA already has a policy position that deals with the urgent issue in the official Policy Platform, then the Governing Council may take appropriate action immediately.
3. If OFA does not have a policy position on the urgent issue, the Policy Committee shall decide whether the issue is consistent with OFA's mission, previous policy decisions, and/or is a good use of OFA's resources.

a) If not, then Policy Committee recommends to the Governing Council that no action be taken.
b) If so, the Policy Committee shall research and create a draft policy position for consideration by the Governing Council.
c) Approval by three-fourths of the Governing Council is required to adopt an urgent policy position.
d) Any urgent policies approved by the Governing Council must be shared with the full membership and approved by OFA members as per the annual policy development process, described above, to be included in the OFA Policy Platform.

Processes for Letter Sign-Ons and Action Alerts

1. OFA Director has the authority to sign on to letters and respond to action alerts on behalf of OFA for all policy issues in the OFA policy platform.
2. Letters/statements that address policy issues in line with OFA mission, values and guiding principles but not included in the policy platform, must be approved for OFA sign-on by the Policy Committee Chair and Governing Council Executive Committee. If OFA Director is unavailable, the Policy Chair and/or Council Chair may sign on behalf of OFA.

OFA Policy Committee

Policy Committee: OFA maintains an elected Policy Committee made up of 12 voting certified organic farmer members (2 from each region) and six advisory organizational members (one from each region). The nominations and election of the Policy Committee shall take place annually. Nominees are solicited from the OFA membership and collected by a nominating committee appointed by Governing Council two months prior to the election and shall represent OFA diversity priorities, as reviewed and approved by the Governing Council. OFA farmer members elect members of the Policy Committee by direct vote. Policy Committee terms are for two years (for the first election half will be elected for a one-year term and may serve for three additional consecutive two-year terms) and Committee members may serve no more than three consecutive terms two year terms. Vacancies may be filled by the Governing Council, in consultation with nominating committee, for the full remainder of the two-year term. The chair and vice chair of the Policy Committee will be farmer members and *ex-officio non-voting* members of the Governing Council. Two members of the Governing Council will serve as ex-officio members of the Policy Committee, if they are elected they will have voting rights, if two members of the Governing Council are not elected, they will be appointed as non-voting members.

Policy Committee Nominations:
Nominations process mimics that of the Governing Council election. The Nominations Committee shall request nominations for open Policy Committee seats to the full OFA membership at least 90 days prior to the scheduled vote. The Nominations Committee will recommend candidates for each open seat to the Policy Committee that maintains the diversity of the organic farming movement (types of products,

farm size, farmland ownership, designated regions, cultures, gender, race and ethnicity) such that the full organic farming movement is clearly represented, without any one segment dominating all others. The Governing Council will vote on the nominated candidates at least 60 days prior to the vote. The Policy Committee candidates will be presented in an electronic ballot to all OFA farm members at least 30 days before the vote/annual meeting. A member can also be nominated by member-petition to represent their region. The newly elected Committee members shall take office immediately following the vote.

Policy Committee Guidelines: OFA policies in the OFA policy platform will be clearly written and include the rationale behind the decision as per OFA policy position format. Members of OFA Policy Committee and Governing Council will publicly represent only those OFA positions that have been through the OFA annual or urgent policy development process. Members of OFA Policy Committee have the right to speak in their own names on any issue of their choosing. If their personal opinion differs from that of an OFA Policy, they should explain that they are members of OFA Policy Committee (in the interest of full disclosure), while clarifying that that they are not representing OFA's position—that their opinion is independent of OFA policy. When in doubt, they will consult with the Committee chair.