



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

NOV 12 2019

Mr. David Colson
President
Organic Farmers Association
611 Siegfriedale Road
Kutztown, Pennsylvania 19530

Dear Mr. Colson:

Thank you for your letter of September 17, 2019, regarding concerns that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will allow discussion about the use of new technologies in organic production. I apologize for the delayed response.

During a Congressional hearing in July 2019, USDA responded to a question on agricultural innovations that mentioned new techniques in gene editing as one example. We expressed support for an ongoing open and constructive dialogue about how agricultural innovation and new technologies might play a role in the future of organic production.

We appreciate your initiative in discussing the role of gene editing with your members and sharing the outcome with USDA. Genetically modified organisms, including gene editing, are considered excluded methods and are prohibited in organic agriculture under the USDA organic regulations. This issue is not currently on the regulatory agenda for rulemaking.

Our focus at USDA is on increasing the capacity of the National Organic Program to enforce fair and consistent standards worldwide for the benefit of organic producers and consumers.

Thank you for your support of the Nation's organic industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonny Perdue". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "S" and "P" being particularly large and prominent.

Sonny Perdue
Secretary