

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 5, 2024

The Honorable Bruce Summers
Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
200 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Administrator Summers,

We write regarding the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) proposed rule: National Organic Program: Market Development for Mushrooms and Pet Food, AMS-NOP-22-0063. This rule is well-intentioned, but our offices have heard from constituents with concerns about the rule. It's imperative that PA mushroom growers' voices are heard to improve the final rule that AMS issues.

We represent all or part of Pennsylvania, which is known in the agricultural community as the "Mushroom Capital of the World¹." Southeastern PA represents the vast majority of U.S. mushroom production across all 50 states². Because of this relevance to our Commonwealth, it's crucial that you review PA mushroom growers' comments with this importance in mind when updating the final rule.

As some commenters explained, including some of our constituents, mushrooms are grown in a very similar manner to crops with their own specific organic standard, and, for that matter, are functionally the same as other crops when viewed in the grocery store by consumers. We appreciate the work you and AMS put into the proposed rule and hope you will continue this important work by taking all comments into consideration for the final rule. Mushroom growers have already been growing certified organic mushrooms predominately under the organic crop standard. An entirely new standard for mushrooms may not be ideal, so we request that you consider whether standards for organic mushrooms may actually be more appropriate under the existing organic crop standard.

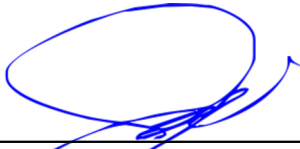
These new standards could prove to be an economic win for PA mushroom growers when accurately reflective of their growing processes, and also provide more consistency for consumers seeking certified organic produce—like mushrooms. When consumers go to the store, they want to trust that the certified organic food they purchase is grown under reliably and transparently organic conditions, and growers hope their comments are reviewed in that pursuit for their success in meeting demand. The final rule must reflect that consumer interest, while creating market conditions to continue growing the organic mushroom industry.

¹ Mencia, A. (2022). Pennsylvania's "Mushroom Capital of the World" sees demand soar. *Axios*. <https://www.axios.com/local/philadelphia/2022/08/09/mushroom-capital-world-kennett-square>

² Gorgo-Simcox, M. (2022). Pennsylvania Mushroom Farmers Lead U.S. in Mushroom Production. *Penn State Extension*. <https://extension.psu.edu/pennsylvania-mushroom-farmers-lead-u-s-in-mushroom-production>

Thank you for your consideration of our priorities for this rule. Please contact our offices directly with any questions.

Sincerely,



John Fetterman
United States Senator



Dan Meuser
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress