

Message from Colehour Bondera

NOSB Board Member

Appointed by Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack as an organic farmer member of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) beginning January 25, 2011, for a five-year term, Colehour Bondera of Honaunau, Hawaii is always open to hear the voices and opinions of other Hawaiians. From other farmers to all parts of the Hawaii organic industry, Colehour seeks to hear and will listen to you all!

Colehour and his wife Melanie Bondera live with their two children on a five-acre farm, which is half Kona coffee and the remainder is diverse over-story trees (primarily avocados), non-coffee mid-story trees (such as cacao, citrus, papaya and tamarillo), and under-story crops including white pineapples and vegetable gardens.

The 15-member National Organic Standards Board is made up of organic farmers and growers, handlers and processors, retailers, environmentalists and conservationists, consumer and public interest advocates, a scientist, and a USDA-accredited certifying agent. The NOSB advises the Secretary of Agriculture on allowed and prohibited substances in organic production and handling and other issues related to the implementation of the Organic Foods Production Act.

Mr. Bondera currently serves on the Crops Committee and the Livestock Committees. The various committees (there are six in all) meet regularly throughout the year, and twice a year the whole NOSB comes together and hears public commentary and subsequently as a whole makes decisions about Committee recommendations.

The NOSB invites you to reserve five-minute public comments slots on Tuesday, April 26 or Thursday, April 28 in Seattle, Washington. Reserve your time online through this link:

<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07e355gdd3e0f78733&oseq=>

The National Organic Standards Board welcomes your written comments on their spring agenda items and other topics. Please submit your comments electronically via regulations.gov. Written comments received after April 10, 2011 may not be reviewed by the NOSB before the meeting.

Feel free to contact Colehour Bondera directly via email at colemel@efn.org or by phone at 808/640-1643. The position held is not designated for a Hawaii farmer, but as Colehour Bondera is the first Hawaii resident to serve on the NOSB in any capacity, there is better opportunity for understanding of issues for residents of Hawaii since Mr. Bondera lives in Hawaii as a farmer and thus “speaks the language” from the perspective of understanding...

That said, if you have questions or comments or issues you want addressed, do contact Colehour. Whereas if you want your input considered by the whole NOSB for the upcoming public meeting, it is necessary to use the same protocol that all people use, so submit your written or schedule a public time slot. Hawaii needs on organics are different that those on the mainland, and we need to hear your voices!