

Comments to the FTC Regarding Consumers' Perception of Personal Care Products Labeled "Organic" – Why is the National Organic Program law only selectively enforced?

We submit these comments on behalf of our company and on behalf of the millions of citizens of the United States who seek genuine USDA certified organic personal care products, but have been deceived and cheated out of billions of dollars by unethical and predatory manufacturers and retailers over the past twenty years.

It is a travesty that regulators ignore their duty to protect the integrity of organic. The National Organic Program (NOP) federal law has a clear definition of the word "organic" and detailed instructions on the growing and processing of organic ingredients, and on the handling, processing and labeling of finished products. However, for too long, regulators have ignored the rampant, long-term personal care products organic labeling fraud to the detriment of the consumers and organic farmers who they are charged to protect, and to the benefit of cheating companies. It is sad that regulators allow consumers to be exploited by cheating companies selling conventional personal care products labeled as organic when such products do not meet the organic certification criteria.

It is disturbing to hear regulators express concern about the cost to big business of complying with the organic law rather than hearing them express concern for the small, honest certified organic companies who are losing significant sales to cheating companies. It's tragic that small honest companies do not have a fair or level playing field, and are burdened with expectations that other, larger companies are not required to meet. Indeed, it is disheartening when regulators fail to investigate anti-competitive business practices and the absurdly large amount of personal care products evidence documenting how consumers have been cheated. It is sad to observe regulators ignore a false advertising scam of such epic proportions. What good is a law that's not enforced?

Recently, tax payer dollars were spent on a carefully orchestrated "public discussion" in which the claim was made that there has not been enough research presented or collected that conclusively determines whether there is significant evidence of consumers' perception of the word "organic" being skewed. **It should be noted that not a single small certified organic business or educated consumer sat at the table at the discussion.** Instead, personal care industry lobbyists and experts who have no experience in the field of certified organic personal care supplied the primary commentary. It's discouraging to see regulators seek the opinions of industry trade groups, lobbyists and big companies (some involved in class-action lawsuits that claim that the company's personal care products labeled as organic do not meet the NOP organic criteria and/or consumers' expectations of organic) as to whether or not they should enforce the use of the word organic (or the NOP law) in the personal care products marketplace.

It is a sad day for us all when regulators fail to protect the public from being cheated by false advertising claims made by unethical companies that abuse our laws.