

# THE ORGANIC & NON-GMO REPORT

Information to help you capitalize on markets  
for organic and non-genetically modified products

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## The Non-GMO Project seeking industry input to develop non-GMO standard

Since being launched at Natural Products Expo West in Anaheim, California, in March, The Non-GMO Project has generated strong interest among organic and natural food companies, says Megan Thompson, project director. "There has been a lot of positive response, and we are engaged in a productive discussion to address all of the questions and concerns that come up around this complex issue," she says.

The Non-GMO Project board members are speaking with a number of key organic and natural food companies to get their input and encourage them to participate. "We expect that many of them will choose to include their products in the verification program," says Thompson.

### Developing non-GMO standard

Currently, the main focus of The Non-GMO Project is gathering feedback from all sectors of the industry, which will be used in refining the non-GMO verification standard. Thompson says that, in addition to collecting data and working with technical experts, a key part of this process is working with a number of proactive companies, who are taking their products through the product verification process. This will provide useful information

that will be used in optimizing the non-GMO standard and designing the rollout program for the verification process. "We want to complete a revised standard that reflects input from across the industry and then we will engage in the verification process based on that standard," says Thompson.

The goal is to create a non-GMO standard that is rigorous, yet practical, so that it is benefits both industry and consumers. "We are committed to having a standard that is simultaneously meaningful and achievable," says Thompson.

Non-GMO verification will first focus on natural and organic food products and then expand to include vitamins and supplements.

### "Now is the time"

Thompson says there is a lively dialogue happening with industry members. "We're getting input from as many companies and sectors in the industry as possible, including farmers, millers, and public advocacy groups," she says. "People are interested in talking about the issue, and there is a strong resonance that now is the time to do non-GMO verification," she says.

The Non-GMO Project Board members include Michael Funk, CEO, United Natural Foods, Inc.; Joe Dickson, quality

standards and organic program coordinator, Whole Foods Market; Arran Stephens, CEO, Nature's Path Foods; Michael Potter, CEO, Eden Foods; Grant Lundberg, CEO, Lundberg Family Farms; George Siemon, CEO, Organic Valley; Mark Squire, owner, Good Earth Natural & Organic Foods; Bob Gerner, owner, Berkeley Natural Grocery; Julie Daniluk, member/owner, The Big Carrot Natural Foods Market (Toronto, Canada); Megan Thompson, executive director, The Non-GMO Project; and John Fagan, chief scientific officer, FoodChain Global Advisors.

Arran Stephens says Nature's Path is proud to be part of The Non-GMO Project. "I felt it important for Nature's Path to come on board and be an active participant, as we have always opposed genetically engineered food crops because of the risks to health and environment," he says. "This is going to take a broad coalition of organic farmers, certifiers, processors, distributors, retailers and consumers to bring about necessary change."

Straus Family Creamery, Whole Foods Market, United Natural Foods, Eden Foods, Lundberg Family Farms, and Nature's Path Foods are the first companies to participate in The Non-GMO Project's verification process. The participation of other companies is expected to be announced at All Things Organic tradeshow this month.

**For more information about The Non-GMO Project, visit [www.nongmoproject.org](http://www.nongmoproject.org).** ■