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Headquarters
Sustainable Food
News
P.O. Box 17683
Portland, ME 04112
office: 207.749.5249



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Trade group seeking industry definition of 'natural' hosts first nat'l conference

Organic & Natural Health Association takes next steps to develop voluntary regulatory compliance and certification program for 'natural' products

by Sustainable Food News
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The [Organic & Natural Health Association](#), poised to establish a new standard for the market claim "natural" on food and other products, said it will

host its first national conference Jan. 26-27 in Cape Coral, Fla.

The Washington, D.C.-based trade group said its definition of "natural" will be comparable to the definition of "organic," in that it will that all natural-labeled food not contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs), artificial preservatives, colors, flavoring or sweeteners.

In October, [O&N released results of a national survey](#) confirming "more confusion in the marketplace" among consumers over the food marketing claims "natural" and "organic." The survey of 1,005 U.S. consumers found that about 33 percent of U.S. consumers do not make a quality distinction between the two terms.

In response to the survey results, O&N said that, in some cases, its definition of "natural" will require additional criteria beyond organic standards. For example, beef products labeled as "natural" must meet the requirements of the USDA's national organic standards but must also be grass-fed and pastured to earn a natural designation. The USDA issued a [voluntary standard for grass-fed marketing claims](#) in October 2007.

O&N's inaugural conference, taking place at the [Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village](#), will kick off with O&N's board meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 26, followed by morning business sessions on Wednesday, Jan. 27. On the agenda are next steps to develop a voluntary regulatory compliance and certification program for the term "natural" to be released during the first half of 2016. The group will then launch a consumer education campaign.

O&N's founding members include Aker BioMarine, American Nutrition Association, BGG, Capsugel, Dr. Mercola Premium Supplements, Hay House Inc., IFOAM-Organics International, Jigsaw Health, Organic Consumers Association, Quality of Life Labs and RFI Ingredients.

The trade group's founding board members include Todd Harrison, partner at Venable, LLP, Joe Sandler, partner of the Sandler Reiff Lamb Rosenstein & Birkenstock, and Charles Brown, national counsel for Consumers for Dental Choice, founder and president of the World Alliance for Mercury-Free Dentistry and former attorney general of West Virginia.

Other board members include Steve Rye, CEO of Mercola Health Resources; Alan Lewis, director of food and agriculture policy at Natural Grocers by Vitamin Cottage; Todd Norton, vice president of business development at Aker BioMarine; Reid Tracy, president and CEO of Hay House Inc.; Dan Lifton, CEO for Quality of Life Labs; Chris Holland, vice president of sales and marketing for Beijing Gingko Group North America (BGG); and Patrick Sullivan, Jr., president and co-founder of Jigsaw

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Health.

"Our leadership and membership is comprised of first-rate companies and consumer organizations that understand we have to put the integrity of the industry first as part of a long-term strategy," said Karen Howard, O&N CEO. "It's the only way we will ultimately win consumer trust and loyalty."

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