

## Australia: Organic Standard Proposes Ban on Nanotechnology

The Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) has proposed organic certification only be applied to nano-free products as the technology remains untested.

Under the new proposals, which await comments from industry members and stakeholders, the addition of nanoparticle additives and ingredients will be prohibited in organic certified cosmetics, clothing and foods.

Dr Andrew Monk, BFA standards chair, said that the decision is a result of a growing body of evidence that human made nanoparticles introduce novel toxicity risks and the fact that the technology has yet to be proven safe.

"As with all technology choices, issues of consumer safety and environmental protection need to be balanced, assessing the 'need' for the technology in the first instance. At this point the organic industry is taking the view that there is no confirmed need for nanotechnologies," said BFA standards chair Dr Andrew Monk.

"We will continue to monitor and review the application of nanotechnology," he said, adding that more regulation of the technology is needed by both the broader food and industrial sectors.

The move echoes that of UK-based Soil Association, which instigated a similar ban on the use of nanoparticles in organic certified cosmetics products earlier this year.

"We are deeply concerned at the government's failure to follow scientific advice and regulate products," said Gundula Azeez, Soil Association policy manager.

"There should be an immediate freeze on the commercial release of nanomaterials until there is a sound body of scientific research into all the health impacts," Azeez added

Nanoparticles appear in a number of sunscreen products, as the efficacy of two commonly used UV filters TiO<sub>2</sub> and ZnO rely on a very small particle size. Although their use remains controversial an increasing body of researchers and industry representatives are championing their cause.

A report published earlier this month from scientists at the University of Queensland, Australia in collaboration with researchers at L'Oreal stated that nanoparticles do not pose a risk to human health.

The study reviewed much of the available toxicity data on nanoparticles in cosmetics and sunscreens and concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that nanoparticles actually penetrate the epidermis or the dermis.

The scientists therefore concluded that the fear that nanoparticles

can penetrate the skin, get access to the lymphatic system and circulate around the organism is 'simplistic and physiologically improbable'.

Source: Cosmetics Design