

Organic apples, pears to be antibiotic-free

April 12 2013, by Steven Dubois

Organic apples and pears will soon be free of a widely used antibiotic.

The National Organic Standards Board has rejected a petition to allow growers to use the antibiotic oxytetracycline beyond the existing expiration date of Oct. 21, 2014.

The U.S. [Department of Agriculture](#)'s labeling standards generally prohibit food from being certified organic if antibiotics were used during production.

But the threat of orchard-destroying fire blight led to an exception for growers of apples and pears.

That exception was revisited in Portland, Ore., this week as [consumer groups](#) urged the board to maintain next year's deadline.

They said the [use of antibiotics](#) on two fruits creates confusion for shoppers who expect produce labeled organic to be free of them.

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