July 8, 2009

I commend the gentle lady for her work on the bill and thank her for supporting my amendment to protect the USDA's organic standards and labels and to enter into a colloquy now.

We must ensure that the Department of Agriculture's Inspector General has the resources to complete a thorough investigation, already underway, into whether current inspectors are upholding the most rigorous standards for organic certification and receiving adequate oversight. The Inspector General also needs resources to investigate whether nonorganic substances inappropriately remain in USDA-certified products. The number of nonorganic substances has ballooned from 77 in 2002 to 245 today, and only one has been removed. If we want the organic label to mean something, then there must be strong standards for organic certification and we must uphold them.