

Executive Director Report for March 2023

1. Strengthening Organic Enforcement Rule update
 - a. USDA is planning to launch an SOE overview course this summer
 - b. Accredited Certifier Association is doing a certifier training to try to create consistency in interpreting the new rule
 - c. All brokers (including hay brokers) have to be organically certified ... let them know!
 - i. [Strengthening Organic Enforcement | Agricultural Marketing Service \(usda.gov\)](#)
2. OFA's National Organic Dairy Call 2/27/2023
 - a. Farm Bill Priorities:
 - i. Immediate support to address dramatically increased input costs for organic dairy farms
 - ii. Investment in organic milk processing infrastructure that serves major US organic dairy producing regions.
 - iii. Improved data collection for organic dairy
 - iv. Propose a safety net program for organic dairy farms, based on organic – specific milk and input cost data (create and enact a safety net program within 1 year of bill passage)
3. OTA's Farmers Advisory Council 3/2/2023
 - a. Work Plan items for 2023 include:
 - i. SOE Implementation support
 - ii. Improve Organic Crop insurance offerings.
 - iii. Market development:
 1. Protect existing organic producers who are experiencing a price halt.
 2. Vertical integration
 3. Work up the value chain for alternative ways to market organic crops.
 4. Legal changes to allow more direct marketing to consumers.
 - iv. Expand cost share for producers.
 - v. Keep organic standards high.
 - vi. Address core issues causing organic dairy challenges.
 - vii. Address farm labor access and wages
 - viii. Encourage organic seed usage.

- b. SOE Summary: [Strengthening Organic Enforcement | OTA](#)
 - c. Farm Bill focuses:
 - i. Continuous Improvement and Accountability in organic standards
 - ii. Conservation and climate
 - iii. Research and Data Collection
 - iv. Crop Insurance Risk Management
 - v. Certification Cost- Share
 - vi. Technical Assistance
 - vii. Market and Infrastructure Development
4. Mercaris update
- a. Follow up meeting was February 16th at 11am PST.
 - b. Non-disclosure agreement is now in place between WODPA and Mercaris
 - c. Mercaris has started receiving statements. If you sent your statement in, you should have received a confirmation email in return.
 - d. Please submit every statement to data@mercaris.com
 - e. We are providing a list of “paid producer members” who will gain access to Mercaris.
 - f. First quarterly report should be out the first week of May!
5. WODPA Exchange e-mail has been updated and old emails/fake emails have been deleted.
- a. Funding opportunities/ deadlines will be sent through this email so please keep an eye out.
6. Ag Funding Assistance Meeting
- a. Annual Subscription with a focus on Federal and 12 Western States
 - b. In-House Services:
 - i. \$30,000 for year 1. \$20,000 for subsequent years.
 - ii. They complete all of the applications and paperwork for 1 site/ operation.
 - iii. Benefit to our members!!
 - iv. Facebook updates: [Ag Funding Assistance | Cottonwood CA | Facebook](#)