

## **Executive Director Report for October 2023**

### **Regional Dairy Visit – Ferndale, CA:**

1. Visited over 20 local dairy farmers.
  - a. Physically picked up checks and forms for new WODPA Farmer Members!!!
2. Spread the word about the conference and the opportunity for dehorning training.
  - a. There is a ton of interest for the conference and training for local employees.
3. There is a ton of interest for WODPA in this region now!!

### **OFA Meeting Updates (9/13, 9/20, 9/27, 9/29, 10/4):**

1. Legislative Work
  - a. Working with Welch's office on a Marker Bill.
    - i. Detailed review of the Bill
    - ii. Discussions of potential co-sponsors
    - iii. Discussions with OV and Stonyfield
    - iv. Intro after October recess (week of the 16<sup>th</sup>)
  - b. Dan Smith (NODPA) provided an update on his meeting with Dana Coale – Deputy Administrator of the AMS Dairy Program
2. ODMAP update
  - a. 2<sup>nd</sup> payment (additional 25% should have been received by all farmers who were granted the initial payment)
3. DMC Program payout – August milk margin triggered the eighth consecutive payments for dairy producers who obtains DMC for the 2023 program year.

### **Government Announcements:**

1. Farm Bill expired but federal funding has been extended to November 17<sup>th</sup>.
  - a. "Milk cliff" – the minimum for milk ("support price") is set by the Farm Bill. However, farm bill is set to expire January 1. If that happens, the minimum price reverts back to the price set over 60 years ago in the Agricultural Act of 1949 which was based on the "golden age of agriculture" – parity price is set at \$39.53 per 100 lbs. If Congress has to buy milk products and will pay about double the price, prices in the stores will drastically go up.

### **Letters & Sign- Ons:**

1. Co-authored a letter with WUD for the Point Reyes National Seashore
2. Co-authoring a letter to the FMMO 51 with Straus Creamery regarding publishing utilization of organic milk
3. Signed on to the Organic Market Development (OMD) Act – aimed at leveraging investments in new and expanded organic markets by funding and supporting increased processing capacity, market development activities, targeted equipment purchases and other activities to increase consumption of domestic organic commodities.

**Mercaris update:**

1. Mercaris NEEDS your statements ... please! We are already starting Q3 collections.
2. We are increasing the reminders being sent to producers to the 8<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of each month.
3. Meeting with Mercaris 10/9:
  - a. Since the acquisition of Mercaris by Argus, they have restructured some things. One thing that directly impacts us is that they now differentiate between the contract for access to information we have with them and the survey work they are doing with us regarding milk pricing.
    - i. With that being said, we have been offered the same price as last year for the Mercaris information access.
      1. They did note that they are merging over to use Argus' media platform which means we cannot have multiple accounts of access for members to view reports and information online. They are okay with us sending the info out in an email to paying WODPA farmers though. They did also state that they can monitor the amount of logins and clicks that WODPA members with logins are looking at the Mercaris website and viewing the offered information and it is very few people consistently. They do not think WODPA members are very interested in the information being provided.
    - b. They are hesitant to continue the survey work with us on milk statement info gathering. The interest has seemed to decrease and the amount of information they are receiving (statements being sent to them) has immensely decreased from the first report they sent out. They think there is too much time and energy on their part being invested in this project without the interest from our end. Please see below for the metrics for the Q3 preliminary report:

**WODPA Western Organic Dairy Statement Values<sup>1</sup>**

	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Q3 2022
<i>Survey Sample Metrics</i>				
Farms	12	10	8	-
States	4	3	3	-
Statements	39	34	18	-
Processors	7	5	5	-

**Financial Opportunities:**

1. USDA Announces Milk Loss Assistance for Dairy Operations
  - a. [USDA Announces Milk Loss Assistance for Dairy Operations | Morning Ag Clips](#)
2. Cost Share Announcement
  - a. [Organic Certification Cost Share Program \(OCCSP\) \(usda.gov\)](#)
  - b. Deadline is October 31<sup>st</sup>
3. Organic Dairy Exemption Request Form
  - a. [AMS-15 - Organic Exemption Request Form | Agricultural Marketing Service \(usda.gov\)](#)

**Reminders:**

1. NOSB Meeting and Comments
  - a. Day 1: Tuesday, October 17, from Noon – 5pm Eastern
  - b. Day 2: Thursday, October 19, from Noon – 5pm Eastern
  - c. Please click this URL to join the public comment webinars:  
<https://go.ota.com/e/982772/j-1603283661/bwqr1/382742790?h=EElpG1ogR3A3kAA7wu9LYaxKUxlx0ybgqAE1DFWoYuQ>  
Meeting ID: 160 328 3661
  - d. In person portion of the meeting will be held October 24 - 26
2. Strengthening Organic Enforcement Rule goes into full effect March 19, 2024.
  - a. In anyone is in need of a certifier, please visit [Organic Integrity Database \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/organic-integrity-database)
3. WODPA Annual Conference is November 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> in Ferndale, CA