

Executive Director Report for August 2024

Legislative/Policy Work

OFA Meetings (7/10, 7/24)

OTA Meetings (8/7 – Farmers Advisory Council, Farm Bill Task Force 8/9)

1. Organic Dairy Assistance, Investment, and Reporting Yields Act of 2023 (O DAIRY Act of 2023) – Senate Bill 3097
2. “The Organic Dairy Data Collection Act” – House Bill 6937
3. Farm Bill update:
 1. Congress is on summer recess until 9/9 and then elections
 2. Very low likelihood it will pass in 2024
 3. Organic Certification Cost Share Program is not guaranteed past 2024.
4. Annual Appropriations Bills
 1. Determine funding for key organic programs
 2. Both the House & Senate must pass & the President must sign new funding legislation or a continuing resolution that would allow government agencies to continue operating at current funding levels by September 30th. The House left early for summer recess after giving up on passing 2025 spending bills for the USDA. To avert a government shutdown, Congress will need to pass a continuing resolution.
 3. Programs funded through this include USDA’s National Organic Program & the Organic Transitions Program.

Government Announcements:

1. Pessimistic about the Farm Bill passing now by elections in November
2. Sonoma County Ballot Measure J
 - a. Sonoma County Family Farmers Alliance
(<https://www.sonomacountyfamilyfarmersalliance.com/>)
3. Avian Influenza Detection and Spread
 - a. [USDA to Begin Accepting Applications for Expanded Emergency Livestock Assistance Program to Help Dairy Producers Offset Milk Loss Due to H5N1 | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#)
 - i. Confirmed H5N1 positive test results are required for recovery assistance
 - ii. OFA Farmer Hotline to help buffer: (833)724-3834

4. ODMAP Update:

- i. Met with Daniel Kilgore, John Berge and Jamie White from FSA
- ii. Delayed due to ELAP funding for Avian Flu
- iii. The NOFA is drafted including some modifications from the program last year.
- iv. Remaining funds after last years' dispersal was \$83 million
 - 1. Pricing differential
 - 2. Adjustment to production cap
 - 3. USDA admitted to not having organic specific data (insert new Bills here!)
- v. "Before first snowfall"

Mercaris/ Argus update:

- 1. Mercaris/Argus collecting statements for Q3 2024 (July, August, September 2024)
 - a. Send statements to AgData@ArgusMedia.com
 - b. All organic dairy producers can submit statements. Only paying WODPA members can see the survey results.
- 2. Mercaris/Argus Q2 report is available
 - a. 33 statements; 5 Processors; 26,535,178 lbs.

Financial Opportunities:

- 1. Organic Dairy Exemption Request Form
 - a. [AMS-15 - Organic Exemption Request Form | Agricultural Marketing Service \(usda.gov\)](#)
- 2. Organic Transition Initiative Direct Farmer Assistance
 - a. [Organic Transition Initiative Direct Farmer Assistance | Farmers.gov](#)
- 3. Farmer Scholarship Opportunity to attend the NOSB meeting in Portland in October
 - a. [Farmer Scholarship Application: Fall 2024 Portland \(OR\) NOSB Meeting Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](#)
 - b. Priority given to farmers who apply by September 20th

Reminders:

1. Strengthening Organic Enforcement Rule is now in full effect March 19, 2024.
 - a. If anyone is in need of a certifier, please visit [Organic Integrity Database \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/organic-integrity-database)
2. Organic Livestock and Poultry Standards (OLPS) Rule has officially been announced.
 - a. Effective date: January 12, 2024
 - b. Compliance date: January 2, 2025
3. Save the Dates:
 - a. 2024 Annual NODPA Field Days – Nichols, NY
 - i. September 26 – 27
 - b. Fall 2024 NOSB Meeting – Portland, OR
 - i. Public comment webinar is scheduled for October 15 & 17
 - ii. Public Meeting is scheduled for October 22-24
 - c. NOC in-person public meeting – Portland, OR
 - i. October 21st