

## Executive Director Report for July 2024

### Legislative/Policy Work

OFA Meetings (6/12, 6/26)

OTA Meeting (6/14 – Farm Bill Task Force)

1. Organic Dairy Assistance, Investment, and Reporting Yields Act of 2023 (O DAIRY Act of 2023) – Senate Bill 3097
  1. Changes in the Bill including allowing USDA greater flexibility/ leniency by saying “to the extent practicable.”
  2. Organic Data is now one of the top goals for OTA
2. “The Organic Dairy Data Collection Act” – House Bill 6937
  1. House Ag Committee passed their version (after 13 hours of mark-ups)
3. DFA ending relationship with Horizon – effecting the East Coast
  1. Interest from a West Coast company to expand to the East Coast
4. Potential to present with OFA at the EcoFarm Conference in January
  1. National Farmer Engagement to Create Policy: Organic Farmers Association was created by organic farmers, for organic farmers to have a voice on national policy making. For the past three years, OFA has used national organic farmer workgroups as a mechanism for farmers to identify specific problem areas, identify solutions, and then OFA supports putting these farmer-driven solutions into policy. OFA's National Organic Dairy Coalition has met regularly from 2021-present and resulted in the O-DAIRY marker bill which identifies a need for organic dairy specific data in hopes of one day creating a safety net for organic dairy farmers. Join Kate Mendenhall, OFA Executive Director, and Lia Sieler, WODPA Executive Director and workgroup member, to learn about the OFA Farmer Workgroup model, and see how the Dairy Farmer Workgroup identified a problem and collaborated to find a solution by using the Farm Bill process.
5. House appropriations FY25 update: USDA funding has been cut by 1% & AMS is funded at \$30.7M less than FY24
6. OTA’s organic market development grant application was accepted for a project entitled “Growing Organic Markets through Consumer Education and Promotion”.
  1. WODPA will be part of the Industry Advisory Committee
7. Update on Meloxicam petition: OFA is hesitant to support because of implications in other species. They want a clear withholding for both milk and meat.

### **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. Increase biosecurity & decrease allowance of visitors
  - b. [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:
  - a. “Due to competing priorities, it’s taking them longer to get ODMAP 24 rolled out and they are now targeting mid to late summer.”
  - b. We are putting pressure on the administration/ Congress now.
    - i. Those that responded: Andrea Salinas (Rep., OR), Alex Padilla (Senator, CA), Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (Rep., WA), Mik Thompson (Rep., WA), Jared Huffman (Rep., CA)
    - ii. No response yet: Kim Schrier (Rep., WA), Jim Costa (Rep., CA), Yadira Caraveo (Rep., CO), Ro Khanna (Rep., CA), Suzanne Bonamici (Rep., OR)

### **Mercaris/ Argus update:**

1. Mercaris/Argus collecting statements for Q2 2024 (April, May, June 2024)
  - a. Send statements to [AgData@ArgusMedia.com](mailto:AgData@ArgusMedia.com)
  - b. All organic dairy producers can submit statements. Only paying WODPA members can see the survey results.

### **Financial Opportunities:**

1. Organic Dairy Exemption Request Form
  - a. [AMS-15 - Organic Exemption Request Form | Agricultural Marketing Service \(usda.gov\)](#)
  - b. [Renews each June so send yours in now ... don't forget your organic certificate!](#)
2. Organic Transition Initiative Direct Farmer Assistance
  - a. [Organic Transition Initiative Direct Farmer Assistance | Farmers.gov](#)

**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 Date: Fall 2024 NOSB Meeting – Portland, OR
  - a. Public comment webinar is scheduled for October 15 & 17
  - b. Public Meeting is scheduled for October 22-24
4. Milk & Cookies with the Cows (and their farmers, too!) is in Sonoma County on 7/17
5. Sonoma County Regional Meeting on 7/18