

THE ORIGIN OF LIVESTOCK DEADLINE WAS MISSED... BUT DON'T GIVE UP NOW!

The organic industry will come together once again to gain movement on the Origin of Livestock rule after the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) did not meet the congressionally mandated deadline for the issuance of a final rule.

This regulation change took shape several years ago, with the NOP releasing a change to the proposed Origin of Livestock rule in 2015. In an effort to restore fairness, or "level the playing field," the proposed rule would have required dairy animals to have been organically managed since the last third of gestation. It would also clarify that converting a conventional dairy herd to organic would be a one-time allowance for a dairy producer after a one-year transition period. However, without reasoning provided, the Origin of Livestock proposed rule was passed over, leaving organic stakeholders to wonder why.

But, yet again in 2019, the organic dairy sector, with the greater organic community on its side, came together to lobby for the finalizing of the Origin of Livestock Regulation when it was reopened for public comment by the NOP. They cited the time span between public comments in 2015 and the current proposed change as reasoning for the new comment period. In addition, given the amount of time that had passed, it would allow for new organic dairy entrants to comment on the proposal. However, at this point, it was easy to see the financial harm this loophole-filled regulation had caused in the industry. From milk oversupply to a lost market for organic animals, organic dairy farms had been hurt and wondered about their future.

For some, the final verbiage was a compromise at best. But the comment period was met with almost unanimous support to finalize the OOL regulation as written. The comment period proved to be a true showing of the organic community coming together to try to restore fairness to organic dairy.

Fast forward to December 2019, and the passage of a funding bill including a requirement that the USDA NOP issue a final regulation on the Origin of Livestock within 180 days or by June 17th, 2020. (A now missed deadline). The bill was prompted by the unified voice within the organic dairy community reaching out to Congressional representatives in effort to change the existing regulation as soon as possible. We are told that the regulation is currently and has been in the Office of General Council (OGC). What is the OGC? It is the legal agency within

the USDA, providing legal advice with respect to all USDA programs, activities, and operations.

The OGC is reviewing the Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA). This is a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed rule and how the agency weighs the costs of compliance with the regulation versus the benefits to the greater community. In addition, the counsel (attorneys) will review regulations to determine the potential risks the USDA faces or potential litigation that could arise from a regulation change.

From OGC, the proposed regulation will move on to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review. (Where many thought the proposed regulation had already landed or been held up). The OMB is the largest office within the Executive Office of the President of the United States. OMB's most prominent function is to produce the President's Budget, but OMB also measures the quality of agency programs, policies, and procedures to see if they comply with the President's policies and coordinates inter-agency policy initiatives.

WHAT NOW? Missing the OOL Deadline led to organic advocates (with a coalition of 70 organic stakeholders) swiftly sending a letter to members of Congress on Thursday, June 18th. The letter points out the now passed 180-day deadline and NOP not yet finalizing the rule. "We urge you to make sure that the NOP complies with Congress' mandate and finalizes the rule as soon as possible." This sign-on letter was jointly sent out by the Organic Farmers Association and the National Organic Coalition. The WODPA board of directors voted to sign-on to this letter as well. Additionally, we are starting to see letters from Congressional members to Secretary Perdue urging finalization of OOL.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? Reach out to Congressional members in your area. Watch for sign-on letters you can lend your support to. WODPA will continue to perform outreach tasks, as well as collaborate with advocacy groups and stakeholders throughout the organic community to push for finalizing this regulation.

**JUNE
IS
NATIONAL
DAIRY
MONTH!**



President's Message

Greetings from the Northern San Joaquin Valley of California this last week of May, where we will see our first 100-degree F plus full week. While the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our world, it is how we manage our businesses through this change that will determine our success or failure. It does seem there is a silver lining in all this. We are seeing renewed energy in appreciation of "new" perspectives on how and where food is produced and how the supply chain really functions. As we have all understood for a long time, agriculture and the growing of food, like we do as organic dairymen, is inherently essential. WODPA salutes all of you producers as "ESSENTIAL" to our world and for your work to produce one of nature's most nutritious foods, organic milk.

WODPA is many things to many people i.e.: The well-respected voice for Western Organic Dairy Producers at NOP and NOSB. But, perhaps just as important as this voice, is the role that WODPA plays in connecting western organic dairymen and organic dairy stakeholders. For years, WODPA's conferences have

Have a great summer and stay healthy.

Sincerely,



Ward Burroughs, President



THE STRENGTHENING ORGANIC ENFORCEMENT PROPOSAL

This proposal has yet to be released by the NOP. It has been lauded as the biggest change to the National Program in many years.

A 30-day comment period is anticipated. Watch for more to come.

brought us together to meet, connect, network, celebrate and commiserate with not only organic dairy producers, but all kinds of great people who support our industry. Each month, WODPA board meetings reflect this same goal to connect the organic dairy producers representing you from all parts of the west. The regional reports given by board members connect members with the "good, bad & ugly" facing their regions. These conversations help bring us together to help each other through these trying times by sharing ideas and information.

Become involved in WODPA. WE need you and you need us!

At the May board meeting your WODPA board voted to cancel the "in person" WODPA annual meeting/conference which was to be held this fall. Instead WODPA is moving forward with plans for a virtual meeting to be held in November. Please look for more information about this event as we go further into the summer and fall. We look forward to your participation.

IN THIS ISSUE

WODPA 2020 CONFERENCE	PAGE...3
WODPA BOARD & ELECTIONS	PAGE...4, 8
DAIRY MARKET NEWS	PAGE...5
FSA PROGRAMS	PAGE...5, 6
ORGANIC CONSUMERS	PAGE...6
ZOOM	PAGE...6
PPP CHANGES	PAGE...7
COVID-19 SALES IMPACT	PAGE...9
LEADERSHIP	PAGE...9
RACISM	PAGE...10
ANIMAL ACTIVISM	PAGE...10, 11



SAVE THE DATE...
2020 WODPA
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 18, 2020 - HOSTED ON ZOOM

FEATURED PRESENTERS INCLUDE:

- DR. JENNY TUCKER
NATIONAL ORGANIC PROGRAM
- NATIONAL ORGANIC COALITION
- ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION

For all information visit wodpa.com



WESTERN ORGANIC DAIRY PRODUCERS
ALLIANCE

2020 WODPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE GOES VIRTUAL

Based on the COVID-19 pandemic, the WODPA Board of Directors made the difficult decision to cancel the in-person annual conference. Instead, we are looking forward to a “Virtual WODPA Conference” in its place. This will be a shortened version of our usual conference, but we hope it will create the opportunity for even more members to participate. We anticipate a 3 to 4 hour event with a live business meeting, speakers, and the ability to share information. A Virtual Conference Planning Committee has been formed to prepare for this event. If you are interested in being part of the committee, please contact Darby Heffner.

DATE: Wednesday, November 18, 2020

TIME: TBD

PROPOSED AGENDA:

- A Live Business Meeting: to include WODPA work updates, industry updates, and elections.
- To date, we our confirmed speakers include: ***Dr. Jennifer Tucker of the National Organic Program, Abby Youngblood of the National Organic Coalition and Megan DeBates of the Organic Trade Association.***
- Presentations will be recorded and be available to watch at any time in the future.
- A meeting program with an agenda and highlighted vendor sponsorship will be sent out prior to the virtual conference.
- More information will follow as plans are finalized. See Zoom tips included in this newsletter.

Registration Information will follow soon!

CONFERENCE SPONSORS AND VENDORS: There will still be opportunities for sponsorship and participation. We welcome our dairy industry partners and stakeholders to be part of the virtual conference. We will have advertising, promotional spots, and segment sponsorships available during the virtual meeting. We will send a full program out to our membership and participants prior to the actual event. Please consider utilizing these new sponsorship options as we adapt to a virtual setting. We are so appreciative of your past and continued support of WODPA.

**THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS AND VENDORS!
YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT MAKES OUR CONFERENCE HAPPEN!**

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2019-2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As we welcome the new WODPA Board Members, voted in at the 2019 Annual Conference and Trade Show, we say THANK YOU to those outgoing members who served on the WODPA Board. Your service was appreciated. We look forward to the following new members bringing their voice to the Board:

Dean Wesen, At Large Representative: The Wesen's farm in Bow, Washington. They are located in the northwest corner of the state and are only about an hour from Canada. Dean is in a partnership with his three brothers as well as his parents. They farm around 1,200 acres for feed for their 800 mostly Holstein herd. The Wesen's are able to grow around 300 acres of corn silage and the rest is in grass for pasture and silage. The Wesen's started selling organic milk to Organic Valley in 2008. Dean really likes seeing cows out on pasture again, and so do hundreds of passerbys every summer who stop to take pictures. The Wesen's belong to a meat coop and Dean is President of the local conservations district in Skagit County. Dean was also in the army reserve for 28 years and recently retired as an LTC.

Vanessa Alexandre, At Large Representative: Vanesa Farms with her siblings on the Alexandre Family Farm in Del Norte and Humboldt counties in Northern California. The organic pasture-based dairies are spread between four milk facilities, milking 3,500 total organic milk cows. The family ships their milk to Humboldt Creamery, Rumiano Cheese and to their own AFF milk brand. Vanessa graduated from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo with a BS in Agriculture Business and a Minor in Dairy Science in 2015. Leaving for five months to study pastured dairy farms in New Zealand, Vanessa solidified her love for cows and lush pasture. Pursuing her passions, Vanessa is currently working at the farm overseeing the calves and transition heifer areas, and as well as the farm marketing. Vanessa represents the family and business on the Del Norte County Rural Human Services Board, 41st District Fair Board, and also utilizing her love for youth and service as the Del Norte County 4-H executive lean leader and citizenship leader.

Stewart Kircher, Oregon State Representative: Stewart dairies in Dayton, Oregon with his brother Robert, and the Bansen family. Forest Glen Oaks dairy and Forest Glen Jerseys dairy have been organic since 1992 and ship milk to Organic Valley. The farms consist of 100% Jersey cows, more than one thousand acres of irrigated pasture for grazing, and two thousand acres of organic land for corn, alfalfa, grass, and grain production. Stewart graduated from Oregon State University in 2006 with a degree in Agriculture sciences and has been on the dairy since 2013. Stewart is also involved in the Oregon Dairy Farmers Association leadership program.

2019 WODPA CONFERENCE – RENO, NV

See Page 8 for 2020 WODPA Board Elections



DAIRY MARKET NEWS

(AMS Data June 12, 2020, Volume 87, Report 2)

June is National Dairy Month. However, milk producers continue to be impacted by COVID-19. Organic milk was discarded. Amid safety concerns, during the current protests, an organic milk distribution facility opted to temporarily discontinue operations. Consequently, a substantial amount of organic milk was dumped. Also, sources pointed out that the volatile protest triggered panic buying, which emptied milk coolers and created dairy shortages at some retail outlets in the vicinity of the protests.

The Organic Dairy Retail Overview showed a \$3.66 premium for a gallon of organic milk over the conventional milk price. Average prices for conventional and organic milk gallons were \$2.59 and \$6.25, respectively. This is a decline in the organic premium by \$0.52 from last year.

Organic dairy retail advertisements declined over the previous survey period, though regionally, the Northwest had the largest volume of ads. Percentage of total organic ads by commodity were: Milk 74%, Yogurt 14%, Cottage Cheese at 5%, Butter at 4% and Cream Cheese at 3%.

Based on the USDA Dairy Market News for June 1 – 12, 2020, the national retail organic dairy weighted average advertised prices: Butter was down \$.03, ½ Gallon Milk was up \$.06 versus prior year, and Gallon Milk was down \$.52 versus prior year.

Previous reports for the Western Region examined seven areas including: Dallas, TX, Denver, CO, Houston, TX, Phoenix, AZ, Portland, OR, Sacramento, CA and Seattle, WA.

- Average Western region price: \$3.62 for ½ gallons
- These areas ranged from a low of \$3.14 in Houston, TX to a high of \$4.34 in Portland, OR



WESTERN ORGANIC DAIRY PRODUCERS
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FSA PROGRAM UPDATES

FARMERS AND RANCHERS CAN NOW APPLY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH USDA'S CORONAVIRUS FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CFAP)

Agricultural producers can now apply for the CFAP program, which provides direct payments to offset impacts from the coronavirus pandemic. The application and a payment calculator are now available online, and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff members are available to help you complete the applications. If you've never worked with your FSA office or completed any of their forms, they will walk you through the process. Now more than ever, it is important to see how FSA can help your operation.

Applications for CFAP will be accepted through August 28, 2020. The USDA has allocated \$16 billion for financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered declines in price and are suffering from other commodity disruptions.

This program aims to ensure availability of funds to all who apply. Therefore, it has been structured to give producers 80% of their maximum total payment upon approval of their application. The remaining 20% of the maximum payment amount is expected to be paid at a later date to be determined, as funds remain available through the program.

You can download the CFAP application and other required eligibility forms at farmers.gov/cfap. On this webpage, you can work through your milk, livestock, and crop production to determine information necessary to apply as well as a payment calculator. Your CFAP application will be handled by your local FSA office. They are there to help you get through the forms and details. Additionally, USDA one-on-one help is available at (877) 508-8364.

Keep in mind, this is where WODPA and your fellow producers can also be of help. Many of our members have long-standing relationships with their county FSA offices and are well-versed in USDA forms and programs. Let's help each other work through these programs!

IMPORTANT FSA DEADLINE FOR ARCPLC!

The ARCPLC deadline is quickly approaching. Enrollment must for the 2020 program year must be completed by JUNE 30TH. This means ALL signatures must be submitted by this date. FSA staff has been able to work with producers over the phone, via email and mail whenever possible.

From FSA: "REMEMBER, the financial health of your farming operating for 2020 may be greatly affected by failure to enroll in ARCPLC by the June 30th deadline."

ACREAGE REPORTING DEADLINES APPROACHING:

As planting season winds down, producers are encouraged to contact their FSA to report your planted acres. Almost every program administered by FSA requires an acreage report as part of the application process. The final reporting date for spring planted crops is July 15, 2020. In addition, the Livestock Feed Program requires you to have a timely filed report on your grazing acreage, with a July 15, 2020 deadline.

KEEPING IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH YOUR LOCAL FSA OFFICE IS ESSENTIAL AS WE DEAL WITH WEATHER, CROP, AND LIVESTOCK VOLATILITY.



DO YOU KNOW THE VARIED LEVELS OF ORGANIC CONSUMERS?

PERIPHERY CONSUMERS 14%: People who are starting to lean towards organics, but not purchasing all organic foods.

MID-LEVEL CONSUMERS 65%: These make up the bulk of organic consumers and are people changing attitudes and habits and buying organic products.

CORE CONSUMERS 21%: A smaller group who is personally invested in organics. They show this in their behavior and often talk about organic products and buy them.

BEYOND THIS....

PARENT & KID CONSUMERS: families who buy organic sometimes

NEW & POTENTIAL CONSUMERS: they require product education

LABEL CONSUMERS VS. BRAND CONSUMERS: they generally don't look for a specific organic brand

SAVVY ORGANIC CONSUMERS: they have bought organic for awhile now

HEALTH MINDED CONSUMERS: see it as a healthier choice

SUSTAINABLE & LOCAL CONSUMERS: they see eco-perks or want to support local

ANTI-GMO CONSUMERS: they choose organic for this purpose

SKEPTICAL CONSUMERS: they may be skeptical of organics, but sometimes have a health issue or lifestyle change to choose organic

PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY ACT (PPPFA)

The PPPFA was signed into law on June 5, 2020. This act is an effort to address concerns expressed by small businesses utilizing the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). New rules address flaws in the original PPP program created under the CARES Act.

- PPPFA changes the amount of loan used for payroll from 75% to 60%.
- PPPFA extends the time period to use the PPP funds from 8 weeks to 24 weeks. Plus, PPPFA does not require businesses to wait for 24 weeks to apply for forgiveness and still do so after 8 weeks.
- PPPFA pushes back a June 30 deadline to rehire workers to December 31, 2020.
- PPPFA eases rehire requirements.
- PPPFA extends the repayment term from 2 years to 5 years. In addition, talk to your accountant about deferment of certain payroll taxes for Social Security with changes in PPPFA.
- Guidelines still provide for SBA loan audits. Loans can be audited at the SBA's discretion. Documentation of the loan amount calculation and a detailed tracking of the loan funds should be kept.
- Calculation of the forgiveness amount rests with the borrower, making documentation and tracking necessary.

PPPFA may provide relief for small businesses and be less burdensome. There are still many questions to be answered as we work through the PPP program, so more regulations and changes are certain to come.

STAY UP TO DATE WITH THESE IMPORTANT LINKS:

(they will also be available on the WODPA website)

<https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares>

<https://www.sba.gov/document/sba-form-paycheck-protection-program-loan-forgiveness-application-revised-6-16-2020>



ARE YOU NEW TO ZOOM? Here are some tips to access the 2020 WODPA Virtual Conference and others. Once registered for the conference, WODPA will send you an email invite to join the meeting. If you haven't use Zoom before, you'll be prompted to download the Zoom app when you click the "Join" link sent in the email. From there, you can enter the meeting ID from our email if prompted. Or, if you're joining by phone, you can use the teleconferencing phone number provided in the invite.

Thank you, Associate Members!

WODPA thanks its Associate Members for their support of WODPA and its mission to preserve, protect, and ensure the sustainability and integrity of organic dairy farming across the west.

If you and/or your company would like to become an Associate Member, please visit wodpa.com. Associate Members as of May 29, 2020.

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WODPA BOARD ELECTIONS 2020:

WODPA is looking for leaders. WODPA is an organization of, for and by organic dairy producers. We need your help to proactively address the most important issues facing our industry and your family dairy business. A valuable and rewarding way to help is to actively serve as an officer or director. Officer and director elections will be held during the business meeting at WODPA's 2020 Fall Virtual Conference on November 18, 2020.

Elections will be held for the two-year officer positions of President and First Vice President. We will also be electing Directors, as State Representatives and Member At Large to three-year terms. State Representative positions are available for the State of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, and Utah. Producers may self-nominate.

Nominations, for all positions, will also be taken from members during the virtual annual meeting and added to the ballot as write-in candidates. Only Western Organic Dairy Producers can vote, with only one vote per active dairy. If a State Representative moves into an Officer position, their vacated position will become available for election. Producers interested in running for any of the positions should notify Darby Heffner. Job Descriptions can be found on our website at www.wodpa.com.

Board Member Qualifications: WODPA is looking for leaders who will:

1. Bring their interests and ideas to WODPA, especially as they relate to enhancing fulfillment of WODPA's mission. That mission being to preserve, protect, and ensure sustainability and integrity of organic dairy farming across the west.
2. Serve Western Region organic dairy farmers by actively participating in WODPA activities intended to fulfill WODPA's mission.
3. Lend their voice, time, and energy to help WODPA address the important issues affecting our members and drive the process so that our opinions and positions are heard.
4. Represent WODPA to the membership by acting as goodwill ambassadors for WODPA as they educate, inform, and recruit support.
5. Assist in fundraising from members and businesses.
6. Financially support WODPA.
7. Serve with the intent of enhancing WODPA's management effectiveness.

Left: Dairy pictures shared by our WODPA members



COVID'S IMPACT ON ORGANIC SALES:

During the Organic Trade Association's (OTA) Annual Conference Webinar on June 9, 2020, Laura Batcha, Executive Director/CEO of OTA presented data on the organic industry for 2019 and the first quarter of 2020. The organic sector showed its resilience in the face of the pandemic. However, we must delve into the entire supply chain from farm labor to distribution, retail and consumers as we face many unknowns moving forward.

In response to the pandemic, restaurants saw a 70% decrease in their business. By contrast, grocery stores were up by \$17 Billion dollars in sales, organics being a top choice for consumers.

In 2019, the U.S. organic sector reached a new high of \$55 Billion in total sales, which was a 5% growth rate over the prior year. Growth for organic dairy in 2019 was at almost 2% with \$6.6 Billion in sales. This is in comparison to the conventional dairy market that grew at only .2% year over year. Organic dairy and eggs accounted for 8% of the total dairy and egg markets. The organic meat, poultry and fish sector is the smallest category, though it saw the highest growth percentage of any food category with 10% growth.

In the first quarter of 2020, organic dairy sales had approximately a 19% growth rate. Produce had a 17% rate of growth and packaged and frozen goods saw 21% growth. Previously, categories such as cereal and frozen foods were declining.

Ms. Batcha presented information showing the relationship between organic sales and GDP, which have moved together in the past. Thus far, this trend has changed in the first quarter of 2020. Organic sales have been up even with GDP falling to a negative 10% growth rate. 2020 are estimates expect GDP to be down to a negative 5% growth rate but are estimating organic sales to be up 20% overall. However, we are still facing many unknowns in the marketplace.

Organic consumer polls indicate consumers are "home" focused, leading to the increased sales. When this organic consumer group was polled, it reflected consumers expanding their definition of "home" to be "the planet is our home." Many food choices are being based off a broader meaning, including production practices.

We obviously had challenges in our food chain prior to the pandemic, but pandemic made them visible to a larger audience, including consumers. Expect reflection on changes to our supply chain versus "going back to the way we were."

***Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** is the monetary value of all finished goods and services made within a country during a specific period. GDP provides an economic snapshot of a country, used to estimate the size of an economy and growth rate. GDP can be calculated in three ways, using expenditures, production, or incomes.



The Best Way to Set Employees Up for Success? USE THE 5-FINGER RULE by Inc.com

Work is complicated. But employees should not be confused about what to concentrate on to be successful. That is why every leader needs to use the "five-finger rule" described in *Fewer, Bigger, Bolder*, the book by Sanjay Khosla and Mohanbir Sawhney.

The rule is a lesson the Khosla – who later went on to become the (very successful) president of Kraft Foods' developing-markets – learned early. Although Khosla had graduated from a prestigious Indian university, he needed to work close to home to take care of his ailing mother. So, he found a job as a salesman in India for the Anglo-Dutch company Unilever.

Khosla's assignment "was to peddle soaps and detergents on a handcart to mom-and-pop stores. The routine was humbling." He would "slog from one shop to another, then stand around, hoping to place products, while the proprietor waited on customers."

Despite the unglamorous nature of his job, Khosla wanted to demonstrate to his boss that he was doing meaningful work. So, he prepared a big file of data, facts, figures, projections, sales, to present during his first review meeting. But his boss was not impressed. "How many fingers do you have on your left hand?"

The answer was obvious. But Khosla hesitated when he responded. "Five," he said.

"Right," said Khosla's boss. And then he explained. "Here's the point. We will decide on five things we want you to do. That's all we will measure. And I want you to put the results on one page. Five things, that's it."

That's when Khosla had a revelation about how he'd been spending his time.

"I was going to have to stop doing a lot of things," he recalls. "By targeting only five, I was being given a strict, simple way to track his progress. My life quickly changed."

In short, Khosla's boss set him up for success – because Khosla was suddenly very clear what he needed to do to achieve his objectives.

What can every leader learn from this story? Khosla, who has carried this early lesson through his entire career, gives this advice: "Whether you are talking about goals, directions, rules or metrics, keep the number small and focused."

As focused, in fact, as the five fingers on your left hand.



**WESTERN ORGANIC DAIRY PRODUCERS
ALLIANCE**



8 Tips to Avoid the Perpetuating of Racism

Racism is making headlines now more than ever. While we may often equate racism to racial slurs or violent acts toward others, covert racism remains an on-going issue. Covert racism is underlying in our society and tends to come through in passive ways.

As progressive minded individuals, we want to be sure we are aware of our actions and not contribute to the discrimination. Here are some tips to combat underlying or passive racism or discrimination.

1. Recognize and understand racial privilege: Acknowledge and recognize that white Americans can move through society differently. This is not to imply that you have not worked hard or had to overcome obstacles in your own life. Instead, it means that communities of color must face a different set of obstacles completely out of their control and must deal with it on a daily basis.
2. Educate yourself: Learn about what people of color have experienced. Understanding those experiences will help you find ways to combat racism rather than feeding it.
3. Amplify the voices and experiences of people of color: Give credit where deserved. Give credit to people of color for their hard work in combating racism. Be an uplifting voice in an environment of negativity.
4. Grow your circle: We want positive interpersonal relationships regardless of skin color. However, your circle needs diversity. With diversity, we hold each other accountable for our actions and do not contribute to oppression.
5. Be a good listener: Listen and understand the experiences those of color have gone through. In turn, examine your own actions and recognize personal changes you can make.
6. Step up and address racism when you witness it: Call people out on racist remarks or passive racism. Challenge those around you who spur on racism. Open conversation about what is being said can help someone else realize changes they need to make.
7. Get involved: As with anything else, get involved with organization or issues you are passionate about. You are a leader and manager. Share your strengths and skills where you can.

“The most powerful leadership tool you have is your own personal example.” – John Wooden

ANIMAL ACTIVISM

6/12/20 DAIRY FARMERS OF WASHINGTON INDUSTRY ALERT:

PROJECT COUNTERGLOW

Shared by Kimmi Devaney, Dairy Farmers of Washington
Several farmers have reached out to us this week about the initiative referred to as “Project Counterglow,” and we wanted to send an update with what we know at this point and what is being done to address it.

WHAT IS IT?

A coalition of animal rights activists published an interactive map, which aggregates the locations of more than 27,000 farms of all types and animal facilities across several different industries, including dairy.

However, this information was already publicly available on the internet. They simply organized it into a single website. The website encourages activists to locate farms in their areas and create a paper trail of photos and videos documenting animal cruelty and health violations. The site has about 76 registered users as of this morning. Why anyone can view the map, visitors must register to add content. Activists have used similar tactics in Australia and the UK as well.

Dairy Management Inc. (DMI) is closely tracking news coverage and social dialogue on the topic, which to date has been light.

WHAT IS THE INDUSTRY DOING ABOUT IT?

The Animal Agriculture Alliance, of what Dairy Farmers of Washington (DFW) is a member, is taking the lead on this and your dairy checkoff organizations are working with them wherever possible. They contacted the FBI and Department of Homeland Security and are pursuing other measures on behalf of farmers as appropriate.

The map includes many farms that are no longer in operation, and it seems like one of the goals of the project is to confirm where the active farms are. However, there are very few registered users at this time.

(ACTIVISM CONT.)

WHAT CAN FARMERS DO?

We recognize that having your personal information on the internet can be terrifying, especially where activists are involved. We encourage farmers to take the following actions:

- **Remain vigilant and aware** of what is happening on your farm(s).
- Encourage family members and employees to **report anything out of the ordinary** to farm management.
- Add additional security measures on the farm where appropriate.
- Build relationships with local law enforcement and others than can help in the case of trespassing or other incidents.
- **Avoid sharing or discussing the map/initiative on social media**, as this give it more traction and allows more people to see it. This also provides an introduction point for activists to add your farm to the map.

ANIMAL ACTIVISM & OUR YOUTH

4-H and FFA have always gone hand in hand with agriculture, allowing youth to participate in showing animals, public speaking and representing the agriculture industry. The programs are near and dear to our hearts. Unfortunately, our children are being targeted by animal activist groups more so than ever. Not only do we see a growing group of activists at youth livestock shows, but we see our youth targeted on online via social media.

A recent article by AgDaily provided tips for youth to deal with activists. A summary of these tips may be helpful to all of us as we face this growing group and the challenges they present.

1. **DON'T SHARE THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT:** Their message may be untrue, entirely unbelievable, and beyond comprehension, but activists rely on you to share their material. It is exactly what they want you to do. Sharing content now equates to donating money to their organization. *Every like, share, view, and comment will help spread their message.*
2. **TAKE THE HIGH ROAD AND BE KIND:** We are used to conflicting views as organic dairy producers. If facts are on your side, there is no reason to stoop to their level of name-calling, threatening messages, or any other sort of attack. *Be respectful even when they fail to be.*
3. **WE'LL NEVER CHANGE EVERYONE'S MIND:** Everyone has and is entitled to their own opinion. Again, something we are used to in organic dairy. However, when facts are on your side, your words may hit home with someone when shared. Pick your battles carefully to avoid fueling their fire (as mentioned in item #1) and spreading their messages.
4. **USE YOUR PLATFORM FOR GOOD:** We are in a new world of communication with younger generations expressing themselves. Whatever social media platform you choose, feature information you can attest to. Be real. Be respectful. Being rude or condescending challenges your credibility and the message you are trying to spread.
5. **STRENGTH IN NUMBERS:** Hashtags attract like-minded followers and interaction. The more good news you can spread the better. #organicdairy, #organicmilk, #FFA are examples of hashtags you can use. Use positively worded hashtags. *You can attract more flies with honey than with vinegar.*
6. **RESEARCH AND REALNESS:** Really listen to questions when they are asked. You can answer many questions from your personal experience or research. Resources are available to provide valid information if you do not know the answer. It's okay to say you don't know the answer to a question and get back to someone later with credible, researched information. *Above all, people recognize and are drawn to someone who is being real and honest with them. Honest, open discussions lead to understanding other's perspectives.*

Simply Put: Keep your emotions in check, recognize we don't all agree and be kind.



THANK YOU WODPA DAIRY PRODUCERS!

WODPA would like to thank its dairy producer sponsors for their much-valued financial contributions to WODPA's mission. It is through their generous financial support that WODPA is able to pursue its mission. Below is a list of Producer Sponsors as of October 22, 2019.

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