

Executive Director Report for November 2023

OFA Meeting Updates (10/11, 10/18, 10/31):

1. Legislative Work
 - a. Organic Dairy Assistance, Investment, and Reporting Yields Act of 2023 (O DAIRY Act of 2023) - wohoo!!
 - i. Fact sheet available
 - ii. Appropriations language suggestions (attached)
 - iii. Safety Net Program Bill?
 1. How do we put a limit on the amount of cows allowed in a program to include our farms that we represent but not the mega- farms we do not support?
 2. What would be a practical option for a safety net program?
 - a. Organic DMC?
 - b. Organic insurance program?
 - c. Crop support?
 - d. Emergency support program?
 - e. What else?

NOC's Annual Meeting & NOSB Meeting Recap 2023

1. OLPS final rule
2. USDA is focused on compliance and enforcement with their additional funding the protect the integrity of the organic seal.
3. Advancing equity at USDA
4. Next steps on containers (plastic) & hydroponic production
5. Implementation of the Strengthening Organic Enforcement Rule:
 - a. Increase the number of certified entities across the supply chain.
 - b. Strengthen recordkeeping and supply chain traceability.
 - c. Require use of import certificates
 - d. Strengthen oversight of accredited certifiers
 - e. Goal: Protect organic integrity and bolster consumer confidence in the USDA organic seal
6. Organic Marker Bills Noc is focusing on.
 - a. Opportunities in Organic Act
 - b. Continuous Improvement and Accountability in Organic Act
 - c. Strengthening Organic Agriculture Research Act (SOAR)
 - d. Organic Dairy Assistance, Investment, and Reporting Yields (O Dairy) Act of 2023
 - e. Seeds and Breeds for the Future Act
 - f. Agriculture Resilience Act
 - g. Justice for Black Farmers Act
7. Where are we with the Farm Bill?

- a. Farm Bill expired October 31st.
 - b. There is a deal for the Farm Bill to have an extension for 1 year.
This is not a done deal. There is a vote TODAY. Stay tuned ...
 - This includes “orphan programs” like the organic cost share program!!
 - c. Continuing resolution passed on September 30th to keep the government open until November 17th.
- 8. Pushing for In- person oral comments
- 9. NOSB Topics:
 - a. Inerts used in organic pesticides.
 - Coming out as a discussion document
 - b. Annotations
 - When it comes to a sunset review, no changes or annotations could be made on a material. The Board is now proposing that annotations be allowed to suggest in the Spring, vote in the Fall. The sunset of materials will be voted on separately from the annotations proposed.
 - c. Compost
 - Petition before the Board for compostable synthetics (i.e. forks, spoons, etc.)
 - d. Residue testing
 - Farms can be tested at any time. Standards are not given for handling. How can this be changed?
 - e. Geolocation to prevent fraud.
 - Proposal passed but proposal was expanded.
 - f. Crop insurance
 - Not part of the NOSB purview but the Board thought putting a discussion item out could inform the Risk Service Agency. They did indicate some changes are being made due to these comments.
- 10. Key sunset materials:
 - a. The board voted to re-list ALL sunset materials this year.
- 11. NOC suggestions for future NOSB work:
 - a. Plastic use in organics
 - b. Swine management
 - c. Fermentation and excluded methods
- 12. Farmer Panel: Land Access in the Northeast Region
- 13. Save the Date: Spring 2024 NOSB Meeting – Milwaukee April 29 – May 1, 2024

Government Announcements:

1. Organic Livestock and Poultry Standards (OLPS) Rule has officially been announced.
 - a. Effective date: January 2, 2024
 - b. Compliance date: January 2, 2025

Letters & Sign- Ons:

1. Authored a letter to the FMMO 51 regarding publishing utilization of organic milk (attached)
2. COWS Act one- pager
 - a. Meetings with Newhouse and LaMalfa

3. ODMAP one- pager
 - a. Senator Baldwin
4. Supporting Organic in the Farm Bill

Mercaris update:

1. Mercaris Q3 Statement Survey is available now
 - a. Attached: 10 farms; 33 statements; 5 processors
2. Contract renewal:
 - a. We have been offered the same price as last year for the Mercaris information access.

Financial Opportunities:

1. Organic Dairy Exemption Request Form
 - a. [AMS-15 - Organic Exemption Request Form | Agricultural Marketing Service \(usda.gov\)](#)

Reminders:

1. 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 \(usda.gov\)](#)