



WESTERN ORGANIC DAIRY PRODUCERS
ALLIANCE

January 29, 2024

To the USDA OREI – Proposal Review Panel,

We are pleased to write this letter in support of Dr. Sushil Paudyal's research proposal entitled "Evaluating Genetic and Farm Management Strategies to Improve Resiliency in Organic Dairy Cows". We believe that the development and evaluation of approaches to improve the resiliency of cows is very important to the overall sustainability of the organic dairy industry.

The mission of the Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA) is to preserve, protect, and ensure the sustainability and integrity of organic dairy farming across the West. WODPA represents the collective voice of our producers at the local, state and national levels. We share the organic dairy producers' perspective when lobbying on crucial issues currently facing dairy producers, and we work in collaboration with national organic advocacy groups and industry stakeholders to provide perspective on what matters most to organic producers. Our producers strive to excel in cow well-being and animal welfare. We believe the research proposed by Dr. Paudyal is relevant to this industry to improve the overall sustainability of the industry.

This proposal depicts the need for improving the longevity of cows, as this is an important aspect to improve the economic and social concerns of early cow culling. As genetic technologies become more available, they have been utilized with different focuses on many farms. Therefore, there is a need to understand genomic tools that present benefits specific to organic dairy herds (for example Grazing Merits). That said, grazing, metabolic diseases, udder health, and reproduction are all important areas that need focus on to minimize cows that leave the herd. Therefore, in our point of view, the research rationale and experiments proposed by Dr. Paudyal are relevant to organic dairy operations and will improve the genetic and management approach in which producers manage cows, especially in the organic herds.

We, as stakeholders in the organic dairy industry, are committed to promoting dairy farm sustainability. The proposal evaluates strategies directly applicable to our farmer members. If funded through the USDA, we will be willing to collaborate with the team by disseminating project findings to a large audience through our e-newsletters and annual conference. We recommend the review committee to favorably consider this proposal for funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lia Sieler".

Lia Sieler

Executive Director, Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA)

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