

Executive Director Report for March 2025

Legislative/Policy Work

1. Organic Dairy Assistance, Investment, and Reporting Yields Act of 2023 (O DAIRY Act of 2023) – Senate Bill 3097
 1. Some parts have been included in the Farm Bill proposals
2. “The Organic Dairy Data Collection Act” – House Bill 6937
 1. Full proposal text included in current Farm Bill proposals
3. Farm Bill update
 - i. Federal government to remain running at 2024 levels through March 14, 2025
 - ii. Farm Bill extended one year (set to expire September 30, 2025)
 - iii. No funding for “orphan programs” including organic certification cost-share, the Organic Data Initiative and the Organic Certification Trade & Tracking Program
 - iv. Final 2025 appropriations package is now due to be completed by March 14th
 - v. 2026 appropriations package is due September 30th
4. USDA Funding Freezes & Workforce reductions
 1. Programs are being froze, contracts are on pause, farmers are not being paid out currently.
 2. So far, 748 lease terminations zeroing in on the 36 NRCS offices, 13 FSA offices and 11 rural housing service offices.
 - i. In our regions:
 1. FSA offices: Madera, CA; Bakersfield, CA; Nacogdoches, TX; Clovis, NM; Monticello, UT; Roswell, NM
 2. NRCS offices: Yreka, CA; Oxnard, CA; Blythe, CA; Woodland, CA; Puyallup, WA; Dayton, WA; Renton, WA; Raton, NM; Gallup, NM; Yuma, AZ; Portland, OR; Logan, UT

3. OFA is collecting farmer stories to use when speaking with USDA and advocating with members of Congress
 4. Changing daily
 5. US doubled tariffs to 50% on Canadian steel and aluminum
 - i. President Trump is planning to impose a 25% tariff on steel and aluminum coming in from all other countries.
 6. USDA canceled \$1 billion in local food purchasing for schools and food banks. (“Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program in 2025”)
5. Avian Influenza Detection and Spread
1. [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](#)
 2. Has led to the destruction of more than 166 million birds nationwide.
 3. Secretary of Ag (Brooke Rollins) denied approval of vaccine because of ineffectiveness in other countries.
 4. Secretary of Health & Human Services (Robert Kennedy Jr.) said federal health agencies under his purview are opposed to poultry vaccines citing lack of sterilizing immunity.
 - i. Confirmed H5N1 positive test results are required for recovery assistance
 - ii. OFA Farmer Hotline to help buffer: (833)724-3834
2. NOSB Spring Meeting 2025 has been postponed. No further information has been provided at this time.
- a. [National Organic Standards Board \(NOSB\) Meeting | Agricultural Marketing Service](#)
3. Leadership changes within USDA
- a. Jenny Lester Moffitt, former Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs has left USDA.
 - i. Dudley Hoskins was nominated.
 - b. Dr. Jenny Tucker has left NOP.

- i. Christopher Purdy has taken the role of Deputy Administrator for NOP.

Letter Sign Ons:

1. OFA's OREI proposal (attached)

Mercaris/ Argus update:

1. Q4 2024's organic milk survey
2. Mercaris/Argus collecting statements for Q1 2025 (January, February, March)
 - a. Send statements to AgData@ArgusMedia.com
 - b. All organic dairy producers can submit statements. Only paying WODPA members can see the survey results.
 - c. SEND IN YOUR STATEMENTS NOW PLEASE

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](#)

Reminders/ Resources:

1. Terminated & Frozen USDA Funding: Filing an Appeal to Protect Your Rights (by NOC)
 - a. Tomorrow – March 12, 2025 @ 8am PST
 - b. [Terminated and Frozen USDA Funding: Filing an Appeal to Protect Your Rights | QuestionPro Survey](#)
2. 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 \(usda.gov\)](#)
3. Organic Livestock and Poultry Standards (OLPS) Rule.

- a. Effective date: January 12, 2024
 - b. **Compliance date: January 2, 2025**
- 4. Save the Dates:
 - a. WODPA Conference & Trade Show
 - i. October 28–29, 2025 in Santa Rosa, California
 - b. Sonoma County Regional WODPA Meeting
 - i. July 8th at the Washoe House
- 5. Resources for Navigating Farm Labor (provided by OFA)
 - a. [Farm Labor - Organic Farmers Association](#)