



NODPA & WODPA's shared statement on organic exemption from paying into the FMMO

The Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA) is the largest grassroots organization of organic dairy producers and has remained true to its original goal of advocating on behalf of producers, regardless of who they sell their milk to, for a sustainable pay price, plus protect the integrity of the USDA Organic Regulations.

The Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA) strives to preserve, protect and ensure the sustainability and integrity of organic dairy farming, representing organic dairy farms in the western United States. WODPA is committed to advocating for organic dairies, their livelihoods and issues impacting the sustainability of the organic dairy industry.

NODPA & WODPA unite under a common goal of advocating for organic dairy producers while protecting the integrity of the USDA organic seal. We believe that resources derived from organic dairy should stay in the organic dairy ecosystem. We believe this is possible through an organic dairy exemption of the FMMO but there is still a need for organic producers to be protected. We are aware that 15A petitions were filed separately with the USDA by CROPP Cooperative, Aurora Organic Dairy Corp. and Horizon Organic Dairy LLC. to exempt them, as organic milk handlers, from paying into the Pool. To view those petitions, click [here](#).

The Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) system was created in the 1930s to guarantee fair milk prices, ensure an adequate supply of milk, and prevent the exploitation of producers by milk buyers. While changes to organic dairy's role in FMMO participation should be considered, these must occur transparently, with cooperation between handlers and producers and thorough review by the USDA. WODPA & NODPA advocate that any cost savings from exempting organic fluid milk handlers from pooling should be passed directly to producers and included in any official decisions. If organic dairy handlers are exempted from the obligation to contribute to the pool, it remains essential for producers to receive the protections and administrative services offered by the Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO), which should be maintained and expanded as necessary.

The FMMO establishes a minimum price for all producers. Organic dairy producers are not paid based on the final use of their product or on a calculated All Milk price and do not have a safety net program based on the cost of organic inputs. NODPA and WODPA have noted cases where organic producers received approximately two-thirds of their agreed pay price during periods of surplus, faced quota impositions, and experienced milk disposal at prices as low as \$14/cwt. These outcomes are related to challenges in the marketing practices for organic milk by handlers.

The organic dairy industry is consolidating in a way that makes us concerned. As non-profit organizations, WODPA & NODPA are committed to continuing our work on policy measures like the [Organic Dairy Data Collection Act](#) and the [Organic Dairy Assistance, Investments, and Reporting Yields \(ODAIRY\) Act of 2025](#). We agree that data collection and reporting should be done as an administrative function. However, in the absence of paying into the pool, we ask that handlers commit to providing, supporting and funding the provision of data both currently collected and reported on as well as the data still missing that can form the basis of an organic dairy safety net program. We do expect that the FMMO will continue its monthly publication of the existing retail price of organic half gallons and provide monthly reporting of organic product that is packaged under one Order and sold at retail under another Order. This allows for accurate tracking of the volume of organic milk sold in each Order. In the event that an exemption is granted, producers do expect that the handlers will pay for the continuation of existing publication of data and tracking of organic milk by each Order and will be expanded to include all 11 FMMO Areas.

NODPA & WODPA support keeping organic dairy resources within the organic dairy sector. An exemption from the FMMO could enable this, but protection for organic producers remains necessary.

Signed,



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