

ORGANIC VOICE



ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION

NO. 1 • MAR 2021



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Photo Credit: David Benthall



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President's Letter

Now that 2020 is behind us I'd like to be optimistic that 2021 will be better but I know there are major challenges ahead.

Let's face it; last year was very challenging with a global pandemic making planning for the growing and marketing season somewhat of a shot in the dark. Assuming that the same trends and cautions continue I'm hopeful that increased consumers' awareness of the importance of healthy organic food is a trend that will only continue to increase in importance and value.

As we begin a new administration, there are many critical organic rules and processes that the USDA failed to act on in 2020, which OFA will be pushing forward, including:

- Origin of Livestock Rule to begin to address the unfair practices in organic dairy and close a regulatory loophole hurting family farms.
- Strengthening Organic Enforcement to reduce marketplace fraud in both domestic and imported "organic" products.
- Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices Rule to reintroduce animal welfare regulations that were ready to be implemented in 2016 but were pulled back in the last administration.
- Organic Pasture Compliance needs to be transparent and certifiers and farms not in compliance need to be rectified.
- Organic Certification Cost Share Program: we will continue to advocate for a fully funded cost-share program and a back payment for the cost-share funding that was reduced in 2020.
- National Organic Program must clarify the greenhouse standards so that all certifiers interpret the standards uniformly.

As policymakers discuss climate strategies it is apparent that agriculture will play a key role. Will these initiatives recognize the huge advantage in carbon sequestration and climate mitigation that organic farming has always contributed? OFA will work to drive the conversation representing organic farmers in those conversations, making sure organic agriculture is part of the solution.



Discussions will begin this year for a new Farm Bill in 2023. We want to ensure that the next farm bill acknowledges the success organic farmers achieved during the pandemic, while many other aspects of our nation's food system crumbled. It is important to remind people of what worked, when examining the pieces that failed, and OFA will be there to advocate for the importance and contribution of organic farmers.

OFA will be representing the policy priorities and positions of certified organic farmers on Capitol Hill and within the United States Department of Agriculture.

Organic farmers created and lead the Organic Farmers Association to MAKE SURE OUR VOICE IS HEARD on Capitol Hill and at the USDA.

Your participation and membership in Organic Farmers Association will make us a stronger advocate in Washington, D.C.

While we collaborate with other national organic organizations, we are the only farmer-led and directed organization making sure that farmers' priorities are front and center. Make a strong impact for organic farmers this year by joining and supporting at

www.OrganicFarmersAssociation.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Colson".

Dave Colson, President
New Leaf Farm, Durham, Maine



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2021 Policy Outlook

By, Patty Lovera, Policy Director

Now that the 2020 elections are finally over, and a new presidential administration and new Congress are getting down to work, we can look ahead at what OFA will be advocating for this year.

The government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic will continue to dominate attention in Washington, DC, just as it did in 2020. But renewed interest in using public policy to fight climate change is creating new opportunities to talk about organic agriculture. And the arrival of new Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, who previously served as the Secretary during the Obama Administration, is opening up a long-overdue conversation about the USDA's troubled history of racial discrimination.

What We're Working on at USDA

Organic farmers have a list of unfinished business at the National Organic Program that we will be urging the new Administration to complete as soon as possible. We will be working to make sure the agency completes several regulations we need to protect the integrity of the organic label and to ensure a level playing field for organic farmers, including:

- Finalizing the Strengthening Organic Enforcement rule
- Finalizing an enforceable Origin of Livestock rule
- Reinstating the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices rule
- Restoring the Organic Certification Cost-Share Program reimbursement level to 75%



In addition to these immediate needs, we have already suggested things to the new Administration that the USDA needs to improve in its coordination with the National Organic Standards Board, oversight of organic certifiers, ways to include organic in discussions about climate change, and educating other USDA departments and federal agencies about organic.

In addition to these specific issues for the National Organic Program, we will also be pushing the USDA to make sure that the ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic is designed to work for all kinds of farms, including organic. At the end of 2020, Congress passed a new pandemic response law that included \$13 billion for USDA to respond to impacts of the pandemic on agriculture. The law instructs USDA to do several different things with the agricultural funding, including purchasing commodities and providing direct payments to farmers and processors that have been impacted by disruptions caused by the pandemic.

What We're Working on at Congress

Both the House and the Senate are under Democratic control but have the majority by the slimmest of margins, which is likely to make it difficult to pass bills that don't have bipartisan support. As this session finally gets down to business, we are also getting used to some changes in the key committees, especially the House and Senate Agriculture Committees. In the House, the new chairman of the Agriculture Committee is Rep. David Scott from Georgia, and the new ranking member (top Republican) is Rep. G.T. Thompson from Pennsylvania. In the Senate, the chair of the Agriculture Committee is Senator

Debbie Stabenow from Michigan and the new ranking member is Senator John Boozman from Arkansas.

We hope that both of the Agriculture committees are more active this year than they were in 2020, and conduct hearings on key issues like USDA's pandemic response programs, how food and agriculture supply chains fared during the pandemic and how to design climate policy for agriculture that will work for all types of farms, including organic.

And even though it seems like we just finished the 2018 Farm Bill, this year we expect to see the beginning phases of big picture discussions about the next Farm Bill, which should be completed in 2023. You can expect to see a lot of bills introduced that lay out concepts that various groups want to be included in the next Farm Bill.

House Agriculture Committee



Chair
Rep. David Scott (D-GA)



Ranking Member
Rep. G.T. Thompson (R-PA)

Senate Agriculture Committee



Chair
Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)



Ranking Member
Sen. John Boozman (R-AR)

HOW YOU CAN HELP

As the new Administration and new Congress get down to work, we will be pushing them to address our priorities for organic, including getting the USDA moving on long-overdue rules and making sure organic farmer voices are included in debates on climate change and other issues.

One immediate way to help is to ask your members of Congress to make sure that USDA restores the reimbursement level for organic certification cost-share.

[CLICK TO TAKE ACTION](#)

LEARN MORE

Read OFA's letter to the Biden transition team about what the new Administration should focus on for organic farmers.

[CLICK TO READ OFA'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT BIDEN](#)

Read OFA's letter to the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis about how organic agriculture can help fight climate change.

[CLICK TO READ OFA'S LETTER ON CLIMATE CHANGE](#)



Patty Lovera is Policy Director of Organic Farmers Association. She is passionate about representing the policy priorities of certified organic farmers in Washington, D.C.

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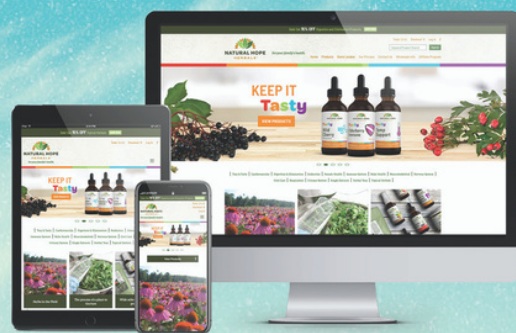
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ORIGIN OF LIVESTOCK RULE

The Origin Of Livestock Rule started in 2015. Will we finalize it this year? What must the rule do for organic dairy farmers?

WRITTEN BY: ED MALTBY, NORTHEAST ORGANIC DAIRY PRODUCERS ALLIANCE AND JILL SMITH, WESTERN ORGANIC DAIRY PRODUCERS ALLIANCE

Since 2013, the organic community has been working to fix a loophole in the organic standards regarding the Origin of Livestock (OOL) for organic cow dairies. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) needs to finalize the Origin of Livestock rule, ensuring

Origin of Livestock rule, ensuring that all organic dairy farms are being held to the same standards. If you are not in the dairy industry, you might wonder what the Origin of Livestock rule is about and why it is so important to organic dairy producers and the entire organic community.

WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF LIVESTOCK RULE?

This is the National Organic Program's guideline for transitioning conventional dairy livestock to organic dairy production. Simply put, it sets the standards for the who, what, when, and how a dairy goes into organic production. The Origin of Livestock specifies that for a calf to be considered organic when it is born, the mother cow must be raised organically for the last third of the gestation period and that once an animal leaves an organic herd, it may not return to organic.

WHAT IS THE LOOPHOLE?

The Origin of Livestock rule allows an exception for conventional dairies transitioning to organic. For a dairy farm to transition its operation to organic, it must transition its land over a 3-year period. In the third year, it may transition its dairy herd, meaning the full herd must be managed organically for a year, then the animals in that herd will be considered organic animals for milk production (but not for meat production, since the animal was not born and raised organically its entire life).

Unfortunately, for the last decade, some dairies have manipulated this loophole to continually transition cows onto an organic farm. An example of this loophole being used by some large dairies is the practice of removing their organic calves from their farm to be raised elsewhere with conventional practices, including the use of milk replacer (calf formula). Feeding calves with conventional milk replacer and feed is less expensive than feeding them with organic whole milk. A year before these animals can



Organic dairy calves drink organic milk from a group nipple feeder on pasture.

be milked, they will be transitioned back to become organic and join the milking herd. This example of continual transition into the organic herd is not allowed by most certifiers, nor does it embody the intention of organic standards. However, some certifiers continue to allow this practice.

This loophole puts farmers complying with the Origin of Livestock rule as intended at a large economic disadvantage. Truly raising organic livestock from a newborn calf to a full-producing dairy cow is much more expensive when using organic practices throughout their lives. Farms taking advantage of the existing loophole to continually transition cows into the organic system can grow and manage their organic herds at a much lower cost and are benefiting from an unfair economic advantage within the industry.

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

We need the USDA to issue a Final Rule on the Origin of Livestock that is enforceable, consistently interpreted by organic certifiers, stops continuous dairy animal transition, and provides specificity on what the transitioned animals and their progeny can be used for.



ORIGINAL INTENTION OF THE RULE IS IMPORTANT

The final rule must clearly delineate the intention of the Origin of Livestock rule that allows for a finite exemption for a one-time herd transition to organic.

The intention of the rule was laid out in both the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 (OFPA) and the preamble of the National Organic Program (NOP) Final Rule (December 2000).

OFPA established a minimum standard that dairy cows must be managed under organic production for one year. The preamble of the NOP Final Rule contains several statements that build on that minimum and can be combined under three principles:

1. The opportunity for a producer to convert a conventional herd of dairy animals to organic production is a one-time event per producer. This is clearly mentioned in two separate statements.
2. Once the operation has been certified, all animals brought onto the farm must be organic from the last third of gestation. This is clearly stated in the first and fourth statements of the preamble.
3. There is no allowance to move transitioned animals from the operation on which they were transitioned, to another certified organic operation.

The final rule must clearly delineate these principles so that all certifiers, operations, and the National Organic Program understand them the same way, without the possibility of varied interpretations, so the rule can be upheld in the court of law.

WHY ARE THE DETAILS SO IMPORTANT?

Organic farmers rely on an organic label with high integrity that consumers trust. This is achieved with high organic standards and regulations that are enforceable and upheld by law. Certified organic farmers voluntarily hold themselves to the highest standards. In fact, producers and industry stakeholders regularly share recommendations with the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) to ensure that organic integrity is upheld with high standards that continually evolve and improve.

Organic dairy farmers call on the USDA to finalize the Origin of Livestock rule this year and ensure that the rule is strong, enforceable, and able to meet these principles:

Organic Integrity: Organic milk is a building block for consumer trust in the organic seal. With this seal, consumers trust that organic milk is provided from cows free of antibiotics and do not consume feed produced with the use of chemicals or pesticides. They trust that the offspring of these cows are raised organically, and future growth of the herd is not the result of continuously bringing conventionally raised animals into the fold.

Consistency and Fairness: One consistently interpreted standard for all dairies transitioning from conventional dairy to organic dairy production, no matter the size or scope of the operation.

Economic Equality: Applying two sets of rules or allowing for inconsistent interpretation of the rule creates an economic disadvantage for producers who follow original intentions of the Origin of Livestock rule when raising young stock for their herd. Those raising youngstock conventionally by taking advantage of the continuous transition regulatory loophole benefit financially by utilizing conventional feed and treating medical issues with antibiotics and other synthetic treatments not allowed in organic production.

Consistent application of OOL leads to a gradual growth of organic milk supply in the marketplace that doesn't undermine existing producers. The continuous transition allows herds to grow at a rapid pace and creates market surpluses forcing down the price organic producers are paid for their milk. As a result, producers are paid at a level that makes them financially unstable and without a sustainable future in the dairy industry. This impacts the dairy family not only on a business level, but leads to potentially losing their sole income, farm ground, and the home they live in.

Enforceability: A clear regulation will be an enforceable regulation, ensuring farms are held to the same legal standard by all certifiers. A final rule must be an easily enforceable rule, clearly written with easily understood standards.

Growing the Organic Footprint: If organic dairy producers can be confident that everyone is following the same rules, producers can make better informed-decisions about the future value of their organic milk and their organic dairy farms. Addressing the problem of continuous transition of livestock will also help create value for organic farms to sell organically-raised cattle, creating a new market for farmers.

Consumers of organic milk expect farms to be managed like the farm below, and the great majority are. But an increasing amount of organic milk is coming from a few farms that do not uphold high organic integrity. Fixing the OOL loophole would level the playing field. (Photo from Chico State Organic Dairy by Darby Heffner)

The national organic community has been united in calling for the OOL loophole to be closed for over a decade.

Organic dairy producers plan for the grazing season and work to balance the right number of cattle to their farms' pasture and water resources. This balance is one example of organic dairies being great stewards of the land. When farmers must make the hard decision to sell organic cattle, they currently do not receive a premium over conventionally-raised cattle. This is exacerbated by the continuous transition loophole, which some farms use to purchase conventional cattle and continuously transition them into their organic farms. The loophole is stifling industry market growth and diversification.

THE RULE IS LONG OVERDUE

The national organic community and consumers have been united in calling for this loophole to be closed for over a decade. Without consistent enforcement, organic dairy family farmers have been at an economic disadvantage for many years. Trust in the NOSB process and the USDA's National Organic Program has faded.



Many dairy farmers leading the fight for a final OOL rule can be credited as pioneers in the organic industry—they are the very people who helped build consumer trust behind the organic seal. Unfortunately, we have lost many of our model, pioneering organic dairies because of the low milk prices paid and the volatility of the organic dairy market because of this inconsistency in the rule. A stronger Origin of Livestock rule has been recommended by every National Organic Standards Board since 1994. The USDA's Inspector General recommended finalizing the OOL rule seven years ago. Congress instructed the USDA to finalize a regulation as a priority by June 2020.

However, the proposal has languished in the USDA internal review process.

Dairy producers have fought long and hard to create fairness in the organic dairy sector with Origin of Livestock. Equality and fairness are essential to our hardworking producers throughout the organic community. As we look to support fairness for existing producers, we are also supporting fairness for future organic farmers, providing encouragement for organic production methods, and ensuring consumer trust in the organic label.



Jill Smith is Director of Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA), representing 285 dairies in the Western U.S. She owns and operates an organic dairy in Washington State.



Ed Maltby is longtime Executive Director of Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA), representing 830 dairies in the Northeast U.S.



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PANDEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

ORGANIC SOLUTIONS

Resilience, Soil Health, & Community = Winning Strategies

By, Noah Cohen

2020 and the Coronavirus pandemic brought much uncertainty and upheaval to our economy, but organic farms across the country were bright spots of the COVID-19 economy. With home-bound consumers having 100% control over their food dollars, we saw a nationwide increase in organic sales. An increase of home cooking mirrored an increase in the purchase of organic whole foods. Organic farmers pivoted to shift their businesses in new directions to better serve local direct markets as well as rethink our food system for the future. Here's how a handful of organic farmers from around the country have fared.



JENNIFER TAYLOR, LOLA'S ORGANIC FARM, GLENWOOD, GA

FARM FACTS: Taylor and her husband Ron run Lola's Organic Farm, which sells organic fruits and vegetables through farmer's markets, a co-op, and a CSA program. She is also a Professor at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU) where she runs the Small Farm Program, helping farmers obtain education and training to implement organic methods.

EXPERIENCE: Lola's Organic primarily grows fresh fruits and vegetables—food categories that saw especially high sales increases nationwide during the pandemic's early phases, with consumers suddenly gravitating to products perceived to boost immune system health. ”

“That [sales boost] was true for us,” Taylor says, “and that’s still going on.” “One outcome of this whole thing,” she explains, was that “it caused everyone to slow down and reflect on what’s important to us and to our communities, and as we did that, to think about our health. Because health was an issue.” Many of Taylor’s local community members began to focus on “how to build our own immune systems, and how to eat healthy foods,” she says. “And that was why the customers are very appreciative and supportive of the farmers gearing up to share and sell their local organic produce to the customers while following COVID protocols, [through channels like farmer's markets and direct drop-off locations].



TAKEAWAYS: Taylor says the COVID crisis has “verified” the resilience of local organic farming and underscored its importance to community food systems. “Communities found that [local organics] did not stop being available [during COVID], and food from your local organic farmers was and is the reliant food resource for the community,” she explains. “It also verified [that] for us, because we knew we were essential food providers long before we were deemed that role.” While the organic farmers of Taylor’s community broadly adapted well to the pandemic restrictions, she says farms that “use direct connections from the farmer to the consumer and to the communities” have been especially successful. Taylor also observed that the pandemic’s disproportionate public health impact on communities of color drives home the need to bring the essential health benefits of organic agriculture to urban areas and underserved communities. To that end, she advocates policies to help urban farmers--and particularly Black and indigenous farmers and farmers of color, whom she notes are often key food suppliers for their communities--implement organic methods through technical assistance, education on certification, and cost-sharing. “Healthy environments, healthy food resources, pollinator habitats, the lack of toxic chemicals being used– all these are benefits that urban communities see through growing organic agriculture in the soil,” she explains. “And so expanding and enhancing resilient agriculture systems and growing [organics] in urban areas– that supports minority communities.”





LORETTA ADDERSON, ADDERSON'S FRESH PRODUCE, AUGUSTA, GA

FARM FACTS: Adderson has run Adderson's Fresh Produce since 2007, where she grows organic fruits and vegetables on her 56-acre multi-generational family farm.

EXPERIENCE: "Our biggest challenge was finding a market for our produce," says Adderson, who had ordered seedlings before the pandemic started with the expectation of selling to 12 different distribution channels, including multiple restaurants, school districts, and retail markets. "We immediately realized we had overproduced... due to the pandemic, we only had one online

market and one juice bar [to sell produce to]. "Faced with lagging sales and over 15,000 seedlings, Adderson pivoted by introducing a Grab Box Program—targeting two different communities. This transition was particularly challenging in the Veggie Park Farmers Market, an organic produce market in the Harrisburg neighborhood of Augusta. Harrisburg is a food desert—an urban area with limited access to affordable fresh food. Many Veggie Park customers, Adderson explains, could not access traditional CSAs because they had no credit or debit card, making it impossible to pay online. The farmers were not set up to receive EBT card payments either, so innovation was necessary. "The boxes were delivered to a central location, and the customers would pick up their boxes and place a check or cash in a container beside the boxes," Adderson says. While Veggie Park did get some customers for the Box program—especially when their annual Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program opened—sales remained down significantly compared to their traditional farmers market sales from previous years. Nonetheless, Adderson's Fresh Produce weathered the storm, albeit with lower sales than usual and the loss of many of their crops due to extreme summer heat.

TAKEAWAYS: "We still have a lot of work to do," Adderson says of the implementation of her Box Program. "The CSA is a new concept for our communities, families, and farmers... [so we need to] educate, and, importantly, allow EBT for online purchases." As a retired nutritionist, Adderson has been preaching the importance of building immune health since long before the pandemic. Now this commitment has begun to pay off, with consumers finally gravitating toward the vitamin-rich, immune-boosting organic vegetables she has long been committed to growing to improve the health of her community. "

Providing organic dark leafy greens and other high-nutrient vegetables to help reduce nutrition-related diseases is our mission," she says. "Broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, mustards, and spinach are full of vitamins and minerals. Excellent sources of Vitamin A and C, too." Adderson plans to keep using her platform as a staple food resource for her community to drive home the connection between health and diet and encourage her customers to consume more fresh, nutritious, and vitamin-rich foods to protect their health, both during the pandemic and beyond.



MARYROSE LIVINGSTON, NORTHLAND SHEEP DAIRY, MARATHON, NY

FARM FACTS: Livingston runs Northland Sheep Dairy, a 177-acre farm that produces “completely handmade” aged sheep cheese and lamb using 100% grass-fed sheep, and primarily sells wholesale to restaurants and retail outlets.

EXPERIENCE: Livingston considers herself incredibly lucky that due to the production timeline for both aged cheese and lamb, her sales dropping off precipitously during the pandemic has not hugely affected her livelihood. “I make aged cheeses, so I’m usually selling the previous year’s cheese,” she explains. “I’m mostly wholesale—we make whole wheels that go to a couple of distributors, mostly to restaurants. But of course [this year] the restaurant sales went kaputt, as did my distributors... so I have a couple of really small retail outlets I sell to, but other than that I’m really not selling much cheese. So, therefore, I haven’t weaned my lambs... I’m not milking, I’m not making cheese, yet.”



As for the lamb, Livingston does direct sales to customers, which were, as usual, concentrated around November 2019. “So we sold all our lambs at once and had a nice nest egg from that, so we were fine,” she says. “We used last year to do lots of projects we’ve never had time to do, we made the most of it, and it went pretty well.” And for the 2020 slaughter season, she says, “I’m fortunate that I have a wonderful relationship with a great USDA butcher that’s certified organic, and I had my appointment, and I was good to go.” Livingston again sold all her lambs in November and December so she is prepared for what the 2021 season brings.

TAKEAWAYS: “Being small has made us resilient,” Livingston says, “and so has making aged cheese [which can be stored rather than sold for a long time]. If I were producing a ton of fresh cheese, I’d be really under the gun to keep them moving.”





NATE POWELL-PALM, COLD SPRINGS ORGANICS, BELGRADE, MT

FARM FACTS: Powell-Palm is a millennial farmer who has been running his own organic cattle-growing operation since the age of 12, and the owner of Cold Springs Organics, an 875-acre ranch where he produces grains and grass-fed beef.

EXPERIENCE: “In Montana, we sort of socially-distance natively, so it wasn’t all that much of a change for us. And in the summertime, I and my crew don’t really leave the farm, it’s just too busy for that,” quips Powell-Palm, who I finally reached after several weeks during a 30-minute break between marathon sessions of combining wheat. The biggest impact of COVID on his day-to-day operation, he says, is that it “disrupted some of the supply-chain, so ordering parts [for machinery like combines] was kind of tricky.” With meat processing plants shutting down en masse during COVID, many meat growers were left unable to sell last summer. Powell-Palm, however, was able to “inch by,” thanks to Montana’s robust system of local, family-run slaughter plants, which have fared much better than the industrial-scale processors elsewhere. “The plants here don’t have very many employees, so they’re pretty resilient as far as surviving [the pandemic],” he explains. But this year, Cold Springs will be better prepared: last year’s shutdowns inspired them to open their own processing plant. “We had mostly been selling our cattle to Whole Foods, which goes through a larger processor that’s experienced disruptions throughout the pandemic,” Powell-Palm explains, “so it’s kind of inspired us to take the jump.”

TAKEAWAYS: Powell-Palm says the pandemic has made it clearer than ever that organic grass-fed beef is not only the only ecologically sustainable beef production system but also a critical solution for consumer health and a bulwark against devastation for farmers during economic crises. Unlike other beef, which is loaded with the blood pressure-spiking Omega-6 fatty acids that spur nutritionists to warn against too much red meat, grass-fed beef largely replaces these fats with the much more heart-healthy Omega-3s. “Grass-fed beef actually has nearly the same Omega-3 [fatty acid] profile as salmon... so when you talk about salmon’s ability to bolster brain function and heart health, grass-fed beef does that as well,” Powell-Palm says. With consumers becoming unusually health-conscious during the pandemic, he says, many have started to take stock of these benefits. “There’s also been a lot of studies about farm economic liability and grazing,” Powell-Palm says, “and the farms that graze [their livestock] as opposed to using feedlots, they’re really the ones that survive the bad times, like this pandemic. They’re the really resilient model.” Reflecting on his decision to open his own meat processing plant as well as his own feed mill—which he says is “kind of as a service” for members of his community who want to raise their own food—Powell-Palm says local processing infrastructure and self-sufficient local food systems are key to keeping food available to communities during crises like COVID. “Thinking about the wake-up call of [COVID],” he says, “we’ve had a lot of food going unused at the local level right now, so we’re trying to figure out how you make [our local commodities] more accessible, more able to utilize at the local level, and more available to consumers and to communities.”



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Most organic farmers seem to agree on one thing: that COVID-19 has exposed fundamental flaws in the food system status quo. Organic Farmers Association will be lifting up stories of organic farmers expanding businesses and overcoming challenges during the pandemic to highlight organic farmers as solutions to the failures of our national food system.

Several farmers we interviewed recommended specific policy priorities, which OFA has been sharing with Congress as they analyze the affect of the pandemic.

- Establishing federal dairy quotas to stabilize dairy prices, protecting dairy farmers from market shocks like the pandemic
- Establishing robust certification processes for the grass-fed label on meat to ensure uniform standards and increase consumer transparency
- Allowing EBT cards to be used for online farm & CSA purchases, to enable consumers without access to credit or debit cards to access fresh produce delivery
- Bringing the crucial soil health benefits of organic farming to cities by supporting urban organic farmers
- Improving nutritious food access for Black, indigenous, and people of color communities by supporting underrepresented organic farmers via technical assistance, organic certification education, and increased funding for the organic certification cost-share program
- Enforcement of antitrust laws to combat meat/dairy industry concentration, which many have stated as “the root cause” of COVID-related processing supply chain disruptions
- Fixing the Origin of Livestock enforcement loophole, which has tanked organic dairy prices
- Mitigating the farm workforce’s vulnerability to border closures by introducing a new longer-term farmworker visa for immigrants and an agriculture-centric path to citizenship
- Prioritizing local farms and disproportionately impacted communities when distributing stimulus money
- Making federal investments into organic sector development
- Revising eligibility restrictions for SNAP, creating incentives to buy fresh, local foods



PANDEMIC STIMULUS 2021

USDA DIRECT PAYMENTS

At the end of 2020, Congress passed a new pandemic response package that included new funding for USDA to make payments to producers and processors impacted by the pandemic. As of February 15th, we were still waiting to hear the details of how that program will work. You can keep an eye on this program at:

<https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus>.

PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM (PPP)

Another round of PPP loans was announced in late 2020. The DEADLINE to apply is MARCH 31, 2021.

Eligibility: First-time PPP loans & second loans will be accepted. Businesses must have less than 300 employees and also be able to show a 25 percent loss in revenue for at least one quarter of 2020 (as compared to 2019.) Contact your bank to apply.

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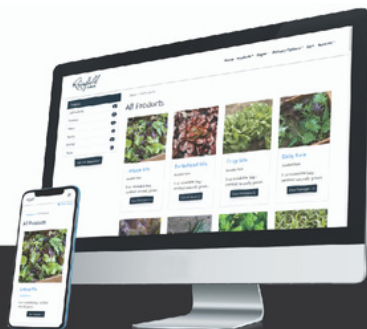
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CONVENTIONAL

Rodale Institute's Farm Systems Trial Celebrates 40 years

Shows Regenerative Organic is a Concrete Solution to Climate Change

By, Caroline Barry

Since 1947, Rodale Institute, a regenerative organic research nonprofit based in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, has hypothesized that healthy soil is required for healthy people. Over the past 7 decades, Rodale Institute's research has connected the dots between how we produce our food, the state of our planet, and our own well-being.

40 YEARS OF SCIENCE

This year, Rodale Institute celebrates 40 years since establishing the Farming Systems Trial (FST), the longest-running side-by-side comparison of organic and conventional grain cropping systems in North America. Since its inception, the FST has inspired other long-term trials on organic agriculture all over the world. FST has also led to advancements in other research areas, initiating similar comparison trials studying nutrient density in produce, water quality, and more. The groundwork established in this trial continues to be replicated and validated in the wider academic and agricultural community.

FST contains three core farming systems: a manure-based organic system, a legume-based organic system, and a synthetic input-based conventional system. In 2008, the Institute took it one step further by splitting each of these systems into two, comparing traditional tillage versus no-tillage practices and adding GMOs to the conventional system.

Over the past four decades, FST scientists have collected data measuring differences in soil health, crop yields, energy efficiency, water use and contamination, and nutrient density of crops grown in organic and conventional systems.

Rodale Institute's rigorous research has shown that regenerative organic systems:

- Are competitive with conventional yields (after a 5-year transition period)
- Produce yields up to 40% higher in times of drought
- Release 40% fewer carbon emissions
- Do not leach chemicals like atrazine into waterways
- Use 45% less energy
- Earn 3-6x greater profits for farmers
- Improve soil health (Figure 1.)

These promising FST results demonstrate that regenerative organic agriculture can feed the world while improving the health of our soils, protecting clean water, and have a positive impact on the climate crisis.

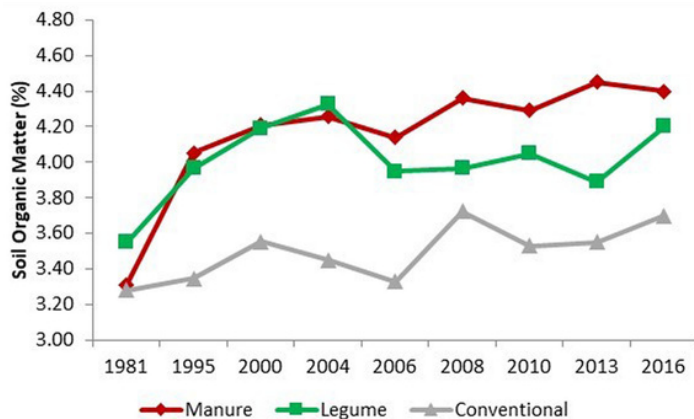


Figure 1: Changes in soil organic matter between tilled organic and conventional systems from 1981 to 2016.

THE NEXT 40 YEARS

Healthy soil is the foundation of our global food system, but currently, it is at extreme risk. As FST moves into its fourth decade, it is clear that soil affects more than just our food—it affects our climate, our water, and our health.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The four decades of FST trials have demonstrated that regenerative organic agriculture is a concrete solution to climate change, capable of sequestering carbon, backed by peer-reviewed research and the observations of agronomists working around the world.

Throughout the FST, soil carbon concentration differed significantly between organic and conventional systems. (1) Soil organic carbon (SOC), microbial biomass carbon (MBC), active carbon (PoxC), and water extractable carbon (WEC) were all higher in the Rodale's organic manure system compared to the conventional system, while SOC and MBC were higher in the organic legume system than the conventional system.

To harness soil carbon sequestration and its co-benefits, farmers choose interlinking management strategies that increase biodiversity above and below ground. A systematic review of over 50 international studies found nearly 60% more biomass from soil microorganisms in organically-managed farm systems versus conventional. (2) This is not surprising, as most organic systems, and all regenerative systems, are built on interlinking practices designed to increase biodiversity and support soil health. An abundance of biodiversity above ground results in greater soil health and soil carbon sequestration below ground.(3,4)

Equally as important, yields under organic systems are more resilient to the extreme weather accompanying climate change. As found in the FST, during drought years, yields are 30% to 100% higher in the organic systems. Crop resilience in a changing climate is an important economic co-benefit because "climate-resilient soil can stabilize productivity, reduce uncertainty, and produce an assured yield response even under extreme weather conditions."(5)



LOOKING FORWARD

Rodale Institute plans to release their FST 40 Year Report this fall, outlining the latest research initiatives including advances in nutrient quality and density, crop yields, soil health evaluations from the Soil Health Institute, a closer examination of tillage vs. no-tillage practices, and more data around soil organic carbon origins and chemical structure.

The 40 Year Report will also include an expanded economic analysis of regenerative organic farming, showcasing the financial benefits for farmers who transition to organic and the advantages these practices can have for our food system.

LEARN MORE

Find the full white paper on regenerative agriculture's role in combatting the climate crisis and download for free at:

RodaleInstitute.org/Climate2020.

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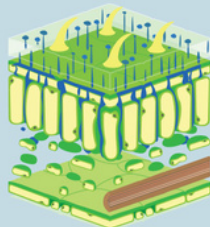
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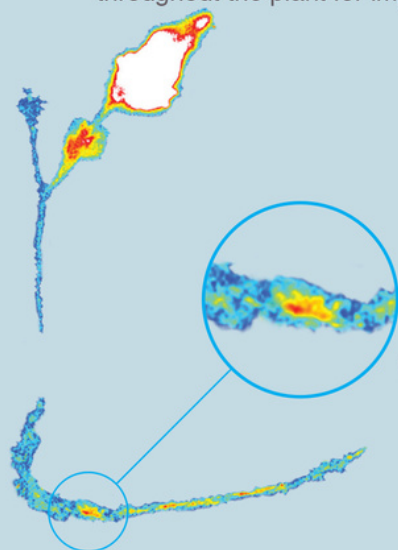
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OFA Policy Positions

Each year, Organic Farmers Association solicits input on policy priorities and policy positions from all U.S. certified organic farmers and organic farm organizations. The OFA Policy Committee reviews the results and OFA members make comments on the drafted policies. Farm members of Organic Farmers Association vote on these policy positions.

For a position to become adopted, it must have 60% of the popular national vote and 60% popular support in at least two-thirds of the six regions. Each year, newly adopted policies become part of the Organic Farmers Association Policy Platform.



OFA Policy Platform

ANIMAL WELFARE

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS animal welfare requirements as proposed in the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices Rule (as withdrawn 2018). (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

BEGINNING FARMER & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS a robust nationwide farmer-driven program that offers technical, financial and marketing assistance to help existing organic, conventional, beginning, and underserved farmers expand and/or convert to organic production, and provide continuing education on the benefits of organic farming systems. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the USDA prioritizing technical and financial assistance for the use of organic soil-based strategies in urban agriculture, including through the NRCS Office of Urban Agriculture and NRCS EQIP Organic Initiative. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS legislation which adds certified organic farmers to the “public service loan forgiveness program”. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the preservation of agricultural lands for organic production through programs such as agricultural land trusts, agricultural land easements, and agricultural land use protections. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS targeted outreach, training, information, technical assistance, land access and ownership on organic farming systems, USDA organic certification and transition, and organic market development to historically underserved, minority and beginning farmers through USDA agency programs, land grant institutions and NGOs. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS organic transition incentive programs that provide financial and technical assistance to non-organic farmers to help them convert land to certified organic management systems. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA urges Congress to include a Beginning Farmer & Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) funding priority for projects focused on providing organic technical assistance to beginning farmers. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS targeted outreach, training, information and technical assistance on organic farming systems, USDA organic certification and transition, and organic market development to historically under-served, minority and beginning farmers through USDA agency programs, land-grant institutions, and NGOs. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS providing targeted support to organic farmers for soil organic matter/carbon sequestration, soil health and other ecosystem services. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the NOSB recommendation to eliminate the incentive to convert native ecosystems to organic production and urges the NOP to take immediate action to implement this regulatory change and guidance to protect the biodiversity and essential environmental services offered by these unique lands. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES (Continued)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the vision of a Green New Deal that recognizes the vital role of organic agriculture as a part of the solution to climate change and asks that Organic Farmers Association has a seat at the table. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

CONTAMINATION

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the NOP formally accepting and implementing the National Organic Standards Board's (NOSB) excluded methods determination and technology framework as well as the continuing work of the NOSB in these determinations. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA supports prevention of, and compensation for losses associated with, damage caused by genetic engineering and pesticide contamination of organic crops and other affected areas. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

CROP INSURANCE

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS allowing organic farmers to use organic prices for all federal farmer support programs. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS crop insurance policies that do not require the organic certificate be dated prior to July 15 of the crop production year for which an organic producer receives the organic price. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the creation of new crop insurance tools that serve the needs of diversified organic growers. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS equitable and fair-market insurance programs that are accessible and relevant for all sectors of diversified organic (and transition-to-organic) producers. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS Congress to direct the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to prioritize development of additional organic price elections for crop insurance coverage, and review policies that cap Contract Price Addendums at two-times the conventional price election for any specific crop. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS allowing organic transition producers to calculate the Actual Production History Yield (APH) for acres under organic transition using the APH of other organic acres on their farm, rather than the county T-Yield for the acres under transition. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS continuation of Whole-Farm Revenue Protection established in the 2014 Farm Bill and recognize the change in farm revenue after a farm has transitioned to organic. Raise the cap to 50% on increased production value under the expansion provision. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)



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CROP INSURANCE (Continued)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS Congress to direct the Farm Service Agency to develop organic price elections for storage loans offered. Producers will then have the ability to access working capital based on the actual value of their crops to cash flow their operations. Utilize existing organic price data developed by RMA to establish storage loan prices. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS extension of the Dairy Margin Protection Program to cover organic dairy operations by using the cost of organic dairy feed and inputs to calculate organic milk margin. This change would make the program relevant for the needs of small to midsize dairy operations. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

ECONOMIC VIABILITY

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS implementation of a simpler mechanism for organic farmers to avoid paying into federal and state commodity checkoff. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS a federal Dairy Supply Management program, to stabilize milk supply and prices for both conventional and organic dairies and their processors. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS legislation such as the PRIME ACT, which permits state-inspected meat to be sold within that state, thus eliminating the intrastate marketing barriers placed on livestock farmers by the requirement for USDA inspected livestock slaughter and processing facilities which are few and far between. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the USDA prioritizing the collection of accurate organic commodity, poultry, dairy, livestock, and specialty crop pricing data, adjusted for inflation, so that market decisions can be made on accurate pricing information. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS programs that facilitate the creation of small farmer production, processing and marketing cooperatives. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS reauthorization of the Organic Data Initiative (ODI) to provide \$5 million per year in mandatory funding for USDA organic data efforts, as well as a continuation of existing language authorizing additional funding through the annual appropriations process. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

FOOD SAFETY

POSITION: OFA supports improvements to the Food Safety Modernization Act, providing science based and practical guidelines that are in line with organic practices and standards. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

HYDROPONICS / CONTAINER GROWING

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the NOP requiring a three year transition period after the use of prohibited substances on any part of a location that will produce certified organic crops or livestock, including the land under containers, inside greenhouses, or inside other (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA OPPOSES organic certification of hydroponic production. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA urges the National Organic Program (NOP) to revoke the organic certification of currently certified hydroponic systems and cease certification of new hydroponic operations. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

IMMIGRATION

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS immigration reform that 1) legalizes the existing farm labor force, 2) retains the current H-2A program as is for those who need it, and 3) adds an agriculture work visa program that would require a specified number of years of at-will agricultural work for a specified minimum number of days per year that could lead to a green card if desired. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

NATIONAL ORGANIC STANDARDS BOARD (NOSB)

POSITION: OFA OPPOSES any efforts to reduce the authority and role of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) in the overall standard-setting process, or to seek statutory changes to the delicate balance of stakeholder slot allocations for the Board membership. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) PROGRAMS

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS raising the six-year payment limit from \$80K to \$450K under the Organic Initiative within the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) making these payments equal to the rest of the EQIP program, and thereby ensuring full opportunity for organic farmers to participate in the program. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)



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NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) PROGRAMS (Continued)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS Congress to direct USDA to recognize required organic practices within the full suite of conservation programs including the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and expand CSP organic bundles to transitioning organic farmers. CSP transition bundles will assist farmers with implementing organic practices, provide technical assistance during the transition period, and offset the financial costs of transitioning. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS reform of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to include organic producers and producers planning to transition to organic as additional allowed applicants to be eligible to participate in CRP Transition Incentive Payments (TIP). (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS renewal of organic certification cost-share programs, with adequate mandatory funding to meet projected demand. Additional flexibility should be given to the Secretary to support programs beneficial to transition and ongoing organic production. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

ORGANIC INTEGRITY

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS full and equitable enforcement of NOP standards: USDA should take immediate action to focus first on high risk operations and to bring non-complying operations and their organic certifying agents into compliance or exclude them from the program. USDA should be required to provide more transparency about the enforcement actions taken by NOP and their accredited certifying agents. Congress should use its oversight authority to ensure that USDA takes the necessary actions to tighten enforcement. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS strengthening USDA import inspection, review, and testing protocols to ensure organic label integrity. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the Organic Farmer and Consumer Protection Act, which includes new Farm Bill requirements for USDA, in coordination with Customs and Border Protection, to implement enhanced procedures to track organic imports and ensure that imported products fully comply with U.S. organic standards. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS a consistent interpretation and implementation of §205.237 Livestock feed and §205.239 Livestock living conditions that uphold the intention of the rule; requiring access to pasture during the pasture season and a minimum of 120 days on pasture and 30% daily dry-matter intake from pasture for each herd subgroup (milking cows, dry cows, heifers). There must be a consistent and required policy and calculation matrix for pasture dry matter intake and pasture consumption for the 120-day organic dairy pasture rule. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the USDA hiring leadership that has demonstrated expertise and experience in organic production, and USDA providing staff education that results in organic knowledge and proficiency. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS that USDA develop specific qualification criteria, expertise, and testing to illustrate proof of knowledge and that this be required of all accredited certifiers, inspectors and review staff to result in consistent oversight and interpretation of the rule for each scope of production. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the clarity and integrity of organic standards in the marketplace. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

ORGANIC INTEGRITY (Continued)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS a fully funded certification and accreditation process that is transparent, risk-based (prioritization of problem areas) and requires producers and handlers to uphold high integrity in their organic production practices. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the certification of all non-transport handlers and brokers of bulk, non-retail certified organic products including importer-handlers of organic products and ingredients. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the reactivation of the 2015 Origin of Livestock Proposed Rule and the publication of a Final Rule in 2019 that revises the current regulation so that it aligns with the principles expressed in the preamble of the December 21, 2000 Federal Register National Organic Program Final Rule (page 80570). (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS an immediate implementation of the Final Origin of Livestock Rule and asks the USDA to prioritize the following prior submitted comments in the writing of the Final Rule:

- A producer as defined by the USDA NOP may transition bovine dairy animals into organic production only once.
- A producer is eligible for this transition only if they convert an entire established non-organic dairy operation to organic production at the same geographic location within a defined 12-month period. Once that transition has started, other non-organically certified animals cannot be added to the herd.
- This transition must occur over a continuous 12-month period prior to production of milk or milk products that are to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic.
- A producer must not transition any new bovine dairy animals into organic production after the end of the 12-month transition period.
- A producer is not eligible for the exemption if it has been used by a Responsible Connected person who has 20% or more ownership share in their legal entity.
- The certifying entity will file an organic system plan prior to the start of transition and the transition process is overseen by the certifier as part of their accountability.
- Transitioned animals must not be sold, labeled, or represented as organic slaughter stock or organic bovine dairy animals.
- If organic management of the dairy animal, starting at the last third of gestation or at any other time it has been organic, is interrupted, the animal cannot be returned to organic certification.
- Split bovine conventional and organic milking herds at the same location are prohibited.

Once the regulation is finalized all entities will be required to immediately meet the requirements of the Final Rule. There will be no implementation period. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)



ORGANIC INTEGRITY (Continued)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS that all National Organic Program materials go through the OFPA required independent five-year sunset review by the NOSB to remain on the National List and that the USDA immediately stop labeling a material listing as an “invalid listing” as no definition nor explanation of procedures for determination and management for the term exists. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS requiring that the farmer-seat on the NOSB is filled by a farm operator (according to USDA-ERS definition). (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.) support to organic farmers for soil organic matter/carbon sequestration, soil health and other ecosystem services. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS a consistent interpretation and implementation of §205.237 Livestock feed and §205.239 Livestock living conditions that upholds the intention of the rule; requiring access to pasture during the pasture season and a minimum of 120 days on pasture and 30% daily dry-matter intake from pasture for each herd subgroup (milking cows, dry cows, heifers). There must be a consistent and required policy and calculation matrix for pasture dry matter intake and pasture consumption for the 120-day organic dairy pasture rule. Risk based unannounced additional inspections must be routinely conducted to ensure compliance. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS strict consequences for Accredited Certifying Agencies (ACA) implicated in domestic or foreign fraud and significant non-compliance including: immediate significant monetary fine, required three years of expanded training and audits, three-year suspension of any new clients, and notification to their existing clients and to the public. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS NOP implementing, with input from the community, the use of transaction certificates to verify the organic integrity of product sales by producers, handlers, and brokers. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS strengthening the requirements to increase the days on pasture and percentage of pasture required, except in cases of weather disaster. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA supports strengthening integrity throughout the organic supply chain by increasing the NOP budget and holding the NOP accountable to do the following:

improve inspection, review, and testing protocols using existing USDA inspection and auditing entities, develop new unique-to-organic strategies including spot reviews of high-risk operations, and improve the Organic Integrity Database for greater transparency of acreage, production records and transaction records. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)



ORGANIC LIAISON AT USDA

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS funding and filling the Organic and Sustainable Agriculture Policy Advisory staff position to serve as a communications link between the National Organic Program (NOP) and the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture to work directly with the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, and the agency leaders within USDA to coordinate organic policy and educate the Department's personnel about organic farming and what the National Organic Program (NOP) does and why it is important to the other goals of USDA. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

ORGANIC RESEARCH

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS increasing funding of federal organic agricultural production research to at least the same percentage represented by retail organic sales within the US marketplace. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS passage of the Organic Agriculture Research Act (HR2436/ S2404). (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)

PUBLIC SEEDS & BREEDS

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS dismantling the current concentration and consolidation in the breeding of seed and livestock genetics, to protect farmers' access to reliable crops and livestock adapted to their situations. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS dismantling the current concentration and consolidation in the breeding of seed and livestock genetics, to protect farmers' access to reliable crops and livestock adapted to their situations. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS NOP adopting the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) recommendations on organic seeds and developing a plan to eliminate the use of non-organic seeds in the production of organic crops by 2030. This will require uniform enforcement by Accredited Certifying Agencies (ACAs) of the requirement to use organic seed and adequate oversight of certifiers by (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS amending NOP Rule §205.204(a)(1) to add "and microgreens" after "edible sprouts". (Adopted by the farmer membership 2020.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS increased and dedicated funding for organic public seeds and breeds research. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2019.)

POSITION: OFA SUPPORTS the new Farm Bill requiring USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to use its existing competitive grants research programs to collectively allocate \$50 million annually to public plant and animal breeding programs, with a priority focus on developing regionally adapted organic cultivars and animal breeds excluded from the Plant Protection Act. (Adopted by the farmer membership 2018.)





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