

ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION

# Dairy Council

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



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trade association

The Organic Trade Association (OTA)'s Dairy Council brings together farmers, handlers, processors, and manufacturers to discuss ideas around promotion, research, and education; to vocalize the benefits of the sector; to identify opportunities for continuous improvements and advance solutions; and to advocate for dairy policy.

### ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION FORMS COUNCIL FOR DAIRY INDUSTRY

On September 12, 2018, the Organic Trade Association (OTA)'s Board of Directors unanimously voted to establish the Dairy Council. Organic dairy is the second largest food category for the organic industry and has grown rapidly over the last two decades. The Council brings the entire dairy supply chain together to participate in a productive conversation to help move the sector forward.



**Britt Lundgren, Chair**  
Stonyfield Farm, Inc.



**Melissa Hughes, Vice President**  
Organic Valley



**Perry Clutts, Secretary**  
Pleasantview Farm

### ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION STAFF

Director of Legislative Affairs and Coalitions, Megan DeBates, and Farm Policy Director, Jo Miranda, lead the Dairy Council. To get involved please email them at [mdebates@ota.com](mailto:mdebates@ota.com) or [jmirenda@ota.com](mailto:jmirenda@ota.com).

### Council Membership

In order to be eligible to join the Dairy Council, you must be an Organic Trade Association member. Are you a small-to-medium-sized farmer? You may be eligible to join the Organic Trade Association as a farmstead member and receive full OTA membership benefits and voting rights for only \$50 per year. This membership category is for small-scale organic farmers with annual organic sales less than \$250,000 who are also current members of one of the participating organizations in the Organic Trade Association's Farmers Advisory Council. To find out more about OTA's farmstead membership, please contact Jo Miranda ([jmirenda@ota.com](mailto:jmirenda@ota.com)).

### Spotlight On: Origin of Organic Livestock

Efforts to advance the Origin of Organic Livestock rule proposed by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2015 but never finalized, has been the biggest success of the Council to date. The current lack of uniform enforcement by USDA regarding the

### Council Members



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SHEFFERS GRASSLAND DAIRY LLC



origin of livestock regulations has resulted in direct economic harm for organic dairy farmers. In February 2019, the Dairy Council sent a letter to the USDA urging the agency to publish a final rule. The signatories on the letter represented over 90 percent of the U.S. organic dairy market.

The Council also successfully advocated for Congress to include language in the Fiscal Year 2020 House Agriculture Appropriations bill that would require USDA to issue a final rule on Origin of Livestock within 180 days of the bill being signed into law. Members of the Dairy Council and OTA staff are actively working to include identical language in the Senate bill to ensure that all organic dairy farmers are complying with consistent standards around transitioning livestock to organic production.

### Work Plan

The Dairy Council unanimously approved an ambitious work plan:

1. Develop and implement a strategy for collecting data related to the organic dairy sector
2. Advocate for clear regulations and consistent enforcement of organic dairy standards
3. Explore opportunity to host an Organic Dairy Summit as a means of opening lines of communication within the industry
4. Improve consumer awareness about the benefits of organic dairy
5. Improve risk management tools for the organic dairy sector

### Organic Trade Association Sector Councils

Our Councils provide ongoing opportunities for networking, leadership development, and education. They communicate sector issues, ideas, and concerns to OTA staff and its Board of Directors.

Submit a Sector Council application online at [OTA.com](http://OTA.com) after you've met these requirements:

- Identify at least seven OTA members committed to participating in the Council.
- Identify at least one member who will act as the primary contact until officers are elected.
- Review the Sector Council Operating Guidelines and agree to operate within the requirements required by OTA for councils it approves.



### LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

The Dairy Council will identify important research needs for the sector; develop resources for participating members on consumer trends and educational opportunities; engage with stakeholders and producers outside the OTA member community and across all regions; continue to advance standards for organic dairy such as origin of livestock rulemaking; strengthen the voice of the organic dairy sector in federal rulemaking and legislation; and, advocate for producer risk management.



**The current members of the Organic Trade Association's Dairy Council collectively represent over 90% of the U.S. organic dairy market.**

COVER PHOTOS CREDITS:

(top left): Ghee processing, Organic Valley

(bottom): Curious Cows, Perk Farm Organic Dairy, Frankford, WV

*The Organic Trade Association's Dairy Council is chaired by Britt Lundgren of Stonyfield Farm, Inc., Melissa Hughes of Organic Valley serves as Vice Chair, and Perry Clutts of Pleasantview Farm is its Secretary. The Dairy Council is supported by OTA's Director of Legislative Affairs and Coalitions, Megan DeBates, and Farm Policy Director, Jo Mirenda.*



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