



Sector Council Annual Reports

2022

A photograph of an organic farm landscape, showing rows of crops in a field with a dirt path leading through them. The background features rolling hills and a bright sun or moon in a hazy sky.

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Dairy Council Annual Report | 2022

The Organic Trade Association's Dairy Council gives members in the dairy industry an organized and ongoing forum for discussing organic-specific dairy issues, challenges, and opportunities. It seeks to work together to grow the organic industry and to utilize the Organic Trade Association member community system for networking and problem solving. The Dairy Council brings together farmers, handlers, processors, and manufacturers to discuss ideas around promotion, research, and education; to vocalize the sector's benefits; to identify opportunities for continuous improvements and advance solutions; and to advocate for dairy policy.

2022 Highlights:



Celebrated the Origin of Livestock Final Rule to amend and clarify the requirements for dairy animals eligible to produce organic milk and milk products to avoid the competitive harm caused by the continuous organic transition. The regulation came after many years of collective industry advocacy.



Participated in a collective consumer education campaign on the benefits of organic dairy during National Dairy Month in June, resulting in the hashtag #OrganicDairy reaching nearly 3.2 million consumers.



Generated a new Organic Feedstuff Trade Relief Task Force, whose advocacy resulted in language added to the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act calling for USDA to evaluate how to provide relief for organic dairy farmers. Thereafter, USDA announced a new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP) that will provide organic dairy farmers up to \$100 million to offset up to 75% of their projected marketing costs in 2023.

Welcomed new member Organic Family Farms Marketing, LLC.

Looking Ahead to 2023:

The Dairy Council plans to continue work focusing on the following:

1. Advocating for organic dairy farm and supply chain viability and sustainability in the 2023 Farm Bill
2. Improving consumer and trade awareness about the human and climate benefits of organic dairy using the Organic Opportunity Communications Toolkit
3. Increasing industry participation in the council
4. Participating in research on the benefits of organic dairy

COUNCIL MEMBERS



Fagundes
Bros. Dairy



K-n-R
Farms



The Dairy Council is led by Chair Adam Warthesen (Organic Valley) and Vice Chair Blake Alexandre (Alexandre Family Farm). Their work is supported by OTA's Legislative and Farm Policy Associate, Laura Holm. To join the Council, please contact Laura (lholm@ota.com).

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Dietary Supplements Council Annual Report | 2022

Founded in 2016, the **Dietary Supplements Council** aims to provide a forum for discussing issues, challenges, and opportunities related to the organic dietary supplement industry and to develop and grow the sector by raising awareness and increasing access to educational materials and resources.

2022 Highlights:



The Dietary Supplements Council prioritized networking and professional development opportunities through information sharing and identifying industry challenges and issues.

- Its quarterly meetings in 2022 served primarily as a roundtable for the group to convene and discuss current topics of interest and receive legislative and regulatory updates from OTA Staff.
- The hot topics of 2022 included enforcement issues and organic supply chain constraints, particularly out of India, best labeling practices for dietary supplements related to 'organic' claims, and ensuring organic certification is recognized as a gold standard within retailer sustainability and regenerative agriculture initiatives and programs.
- In all cases, the discussions informed and supported corresponding streams of OTA work and priorities. The Council welcomed two new members from NutriOriginal Corp. and Phytanico.



The Council endorsed OTA's Best Labeling Practices for Textiles and the Best Labeling Practices for Personal Care Products in conjunction with OTA's ongoing work to ensure enforcement action is taken on misleading and inaccurate organic claims made on products such as textiles, personal care, and dietary supplements.

- The best labeling practices promote and optimize compliant and truthful labeling and encourage leadership by companies committed to consumer trust.
- With respect to dietary supplements, the Council endorsed OTA's position that organic claims made on herbal (agricultural) dietary supplements fall under the National Organic Program's (NOP) scope of enforcement because they are largely agricultural and regulated as "food." Therefore, any herbal dietary supplement labeled "organic" must be certified under the USDA-NOP regulations.



In November 2021, OTA convened a task force to assist in developing a data-driven communication toolkit to educate on the benefits of organic for sustaining the health of the planet, people, and communities.

- In 2022, the Supplements Council was provided with a sneak preview of the toolkit before its launch and weighed in on its utility and how it could be further developed to meet the needs of the herbal supplements sector.
- The feedback was instrumental to the completion of the toolkit and will continue to help with the ongoing development of science-based information to support the benefits of certified organic supplements.

Looking Ahead to 2023:



In 2023, the Dietary Supplements Council will continue supporting OTA's work preventing misleading or fraudulent organic claims on dietary supplements not certified by USDA's NOP. The Council is committed to supporting OTA's efforts to ensure that NOP and the Federal Trade Commission work together to develop a shared policy on the appropriate use of organic claims on products outside USDA NOP's scope of authority.

The Council aims to ensure that herbal dietary supplements are fully recognized and adopted as agricultural food products regulated and enforced under USDA-NOP. Failure to enforce the use of the term "organic" on all products in the marketplace creates consumer confusion, can be misleading or inaccurate, and can lead to consumers mistrusting the integrity of the word "organic."

COUNCIL MEMBERS



Richard D. Siegel
Law Offices

Sheila Linderman
Consulting



Yerba Prima

The Dietary Supplements Council is led by Jeffrey Brams (Garden of Life) as Chair, Thatcher Vagts (The Synergy Company) as Vice Chair, and Genevieve Albers (Traditional Medicinals) as Secretary. Their work is supported in the interim by Libby Mucciarone, Associate Director of Education, Technology, and Member Engagement. If you are interested in joining the Council, please contact Libby (LMucciarone@ota.com).



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Diversity Council Annual Report | 2022

Formed in 2021, the **Organic Trade Association (OTA)**'s **Diversity Council** aims to make a conscious effort to ensure that our successes within the organic movement promote diversity rather than perpetuate social inequalities. Members work to develop practices and processes that embed justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) into the fabric of OTA and the organic movement.

2022 Highlights:



The Council created the Diversity Resource Library.

- The Library is a repository of over 150 resources to aid in the work of creating and more diverse and representative organic trade.
- OTA members and the public can look to this resource library as a first stop when diversifying their conferences, businesses, supply chains, marketing, and more.



The Council sponsored two events to help strengthen its coalitions with other diverse organizations.

- OTA participated in two panels and translated resources on organic transition and certification materials into Spanish for the first time for the National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Conference.
- As a sponsor of the We Are Still Here (WASH) Conference, the Council participated in a convening of 25 Black-owned farms and businesses to hear firsthand the barriers keeping them out of the supply chain and the organic trade.



The trade association entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Black Farmers Index, welcoming them to the Diversity Council.

- Black Farmers Index is the largest, free, most comprehensive directory of Black Farmers, connecting you to traditional and non-traditional growers.
- The common objective of the MOU is to promote OTA's programming.
- The goal is to increase enrollment in the Diversity and Entrepreneurship Program, which assists farmers in becoming certified organic.

Looking Ahead to 2023:

In 2023, the Council will focus on internal accountability and outreach. Among the pillars of OTA's JEDI work is to hold ourselves accountable. Along with OTA continuing its participation in a 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge, staff will complete practitioner-led work to further our collective goals towards equity and inclusion. Also, OTA will participate in more outreach by attending and speaking at conferences held by Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and other BIPOC-led organizations, with the intent of greater coalition building.

COUNCIL MEMBERS



Change Your Food - Change Your Life!™ Inc



Fig Hill Consulting



Good JuJu Brands



Karlin Strategic Consulting, LLC



Oyster Bay Farm



Plant Odyssey

Practical Botanicals



Staley Farms LLC



Kelli Tubman White



Kellee James (Mercaris) serves as the Chair of the Diversity Council, alongside Carla Balen (Organically Grown Company) as Vice Chair. Stephanie Jerger, OTA's Vice President of Administration, is the staff liaison to lead its work. To join the Diversity Council, please contact Stephanie (sjerger@ota.com).



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Farmers Advisory Council Annual Report | 2022



The Organic Trade Association's Farmers Advisory Council (FAC) provides the Organic Trade Association Board of Directors and staff with input from small- and medium-sized organic farmers, ranchers, and growers on matters pertinent to advancing organic agriculture, with a specific focus on OTA's policy agenda. Established in 2013, FAC was designed to formalize and improve communication between OTA and organic producers. Through open dialogue, FAC gives organic farmers a voice to directly influence OTA's policy and enables OTA to better represent the diversity of organic producers in its policy and advocacy.

The Organic Trade Association's Farmers Advisory Council is one of the largest coalitions of organic farmers and organic farming organizations in the United States. It represents nearly 9,500 organic livestock, poultry, grain, and specialty crop producers.

2022 Highlights:



FAC informed and unanimously endorsed OTA's 2023 Farm Bill policy priorities that will ensure responsive organic standards that move at the speed of the marketplace, thriving American farmers supported by equitable and appropriately tailored USDA programs, and resilient organic supply chains that promote organic transition and facilitate international trade.



The Council hosted USDA for a briefing on the new \$300 million Organic Transition Initiative to help build the next generation of organic producers and strengthen organic supply chains.

FAC welcomed National Latino Farmers and Ranchers, Green Heffa Farms, and Knowledge Quest as new members.

Looking Ahead to 2023:

With the Farm Bill back on the Congressional agenda in 2023, much of FAC's work will focus on championing OTA's Farm Bill policy priorities by advocating in D.C., virtually and through on-farm visits. The Council looks forward to working with its new members Florida Organic Growers and the Organic Association of Kentucky, which joined FAC in early 2023. The Council will also form working groups to dig into organic administrative issues, including market development, technical assistance, conservation and climate-smart programs, and research.

COUNCIL MEMBERS



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FAC is co-chaired by Doug Crabtree (Vilicus Farms) and Adam Warthesen (Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative). FAC is supported by OTA's Legislative and Farm Policy Associate Laura Holm. If you are interested in joining FAC, please reach out to Laura (lholm@ota.com).



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Fiber Council Annual Report | 2022

The Organic Trade Association (OTA)'s Fiber Council successfully works to strengthen and grow the organic fiber and textiles sector. Formed in 2015, the Council aims to create a cohesive voice across fiber categories within the trade association, advance the promotion and protection of the organic brand, and grow the organic fiber sector overall. The Fiber Council includes representatives from companies across the supply chain, from farmers to manufacturers, certifiers, researchers, retailers, and more. Members also include representatives from the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) and Textile Exchange, two leading organizations focusing on organic textiles, allowing continuous interaction and dialogue between the organizations.

2022 Highlights:



Produced a webinar on the benefits of organic textiles and certification

The Council formed a working committee in 2022, bringing together brands, certifiers, farmers, and industry partners to formulate a strategy to engage and inform the textile sector on the benefits of certified organic fiber and textiles.

- The effort was in response to media coverage inaccurately representing organic textile fraud in the marketplace and downplaying the merits of organic certification.
- Members on this committee spent over half the year collaborating with OTA's staff on the best content and message for a webinar they ultimately hosted with great success in January 2023.
- The webinar brought together reports and fact sheets written by members of the Council with OTA's Organic Opportunity Communications Toolkit to highlight the multitude of benefits that organic textiles offer to the planet, people, and business.
- The webinar also spoke to the strengths of the organic certification system, how to read organic labels, and how to buy and sell confidently in today's marketplace.



ORGANIC WEEK
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.
AN ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION EVENT

Reconnecting in person at Organic Week

For the first time in 3 years, members of the Council delightfully connected at Organic Week DC in March 2022. Before COVID-19, members met all over the country at various industry events and were missing this in-person face time.

- Those Fiber Council members in attendance in DC met to discuss current issues facing the sector, enjoyed lunch with OTA staff, welcomed new organizations to the Council, and even met the new CEO of OTA, Tom Chapman.
- The week of networking allowed the Council to dream big about opportunities for the textile sector in 2022 and beyond!

Looking Ahead to 2023:



On January 18, 2023, OTA and the Fiber Council hosted our highly anticipated webinar, *Follow the Thread: From Farm to Finished Product*, with over 500 registrants, over 250 live and recorded views and eight Council member organizations speaking.

Our members rallied to bring together their contacts around the world to celebrate and educate them on the benefits of organic textiles. Most attendees were non-OTA members who engaged and voiced interest in additional learning opportunities from the Council and OTA.

With so much still to share on the complex labeling requirements for organic textiles, the Council is excited to host a follow-up webinar focusing on understanding labels and organic claims in the marketplace. Members are energized to extend the reach of their work further, grow Council membership, and continue highlighting the benefits of organic textiles throughout the supply chain.



We anticipate 2023 to be another year of growth in the sector and our Council. If you are not yet a member, join us now!

COUNCIL MEMBERS



Michael Twer (Delilah Home) serves as Chair of the Fiber Council, with Elizabeth Tigan (Oregon Tilth) serving as Vice Chair, and George Mathew (Avocado Green Brands) as Secretary. Their work is supported in the interim by Libby Mucciarone, Associate Director of Education, Technology, and Member Engagement. If you are interested in joining the Council, please contact Libby (LMucciarone@ota.com).



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Grain, Pulse and Oilseed Council Annual Report | 2022

The Organic Trade Association (OTA)'s Grain, Pulse and Oilseed Council is made up of member companies with a role in the organic grain, pulse and oilseed space covering the entire supply chain from growers to processors to manufacturers. Council members are committed to ensuring the resilience and profitability of organic grain, pulse, and oilseed production in the United States. The Council was first established in 2015 in response to concerns about organic grain shortages, both for food and animal feed, which had forced companies to import large amounts of organic grain and limited new product development. Within the Council, members work together to identify and overcome barriers to domestic organic grain acreage growth by understanding key challenges and providing recommendations for pre-competitive supply chain solutions.

2022 Highlights:



Facilitated work to incentivize and remove barriers to transitioning to organic production, including:

- Hosted a guest presentation from Mallory Krieger of the Organic Agronomy Training Service (OATS) about recent accomplishments and upcoming program opportunities.
- Discussed and informed OTA's priority areas for the NOP Pinpointed Organic Market Development Program and Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP).



Hosted a guest presentation from Ryan Koory of Mercaris about the organic grain market to garner production-level data resources for business decision-making and supply chain transparency.



Promoted organic as a solution to climate change and worked to position organic as a leader among other climate label claims:

- Hosted a guest presentation from Anna Teeter of Cargill on Cargill's regenerative agriculture program, "RegenConnect," to gain insights into the program's goals, how climate outcomes are measured and how certified organic supply chains could utilize a similar framework.
- Reviewed components of OTA's recently launched Organic Opportunity Communications Toolkit and discussed how grains sector companies are already integrating pieces into their marketing, education and advocacy efforts.

Looking Ahead to 2023:

The Grain, Pulse and Oilseed Council plans to continue work in areas such as supporting the successful implementation of the forthcoming Strengthening Organic Enforcement final rule within the grains sector, promoting consumer demand for organic grains, and other topical sector-specific issues.

COUNCIL MEMBERS



The Grain, Pulse and Oilseed Council is led by Edward Fish (Bay State Milling Company) as Chair and Tobi Strohan (Sunrise Food International) as Vice Chair. Their work is supported in the interim by Libby Mucciarone, Associate Director of Education, Technology, and Member Engagement. If you are interested in joining the Council, please contact Libby (LMucciarone@ota.com).



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Produce Council Annual Report | 2022

The Organic Trade Association's Produce Council is a community of diverse stakeholders across the organic produce value chain that convenes on issues of importance to the organic produce sector. Founded in 2020, the Council amplifies the needs of the produce community within the Organic Trade Association and serves as a venue for shared learning and advancing outcomes to support a thriving and resilient organic produce sector.

2022 Highlights:



Engaged in roundtable discussions on the following issues facing the organic produce sector:

- Opportunities to increase the consumption of organic produce through the private sector, institutional purchasing, and the USDA Organic Transition Initiative.
- Streamlining certificates and audits across certification schemes (organic, food safety, supply chain traceability, etc.)
- Increasing organic seed usage



Participated in a produce sector-specific meeting about the Organic Industry Survey hosted by OTA's Director of Education and Insights. The meeting reviewed the survey process and gathered feedback from Produce Council members on improving the survey's Produce Report to serve the sector better.



Received technical briefings from OTA's regulatory staff on several federal policies and rulemaking in progress, including:

- FDA's proposed rule on agriculture water requirements
- USDA National Organic Program's (NOP) proposed rule on paper-based crop planting aids
- Comment period on NOP's rulemaking priorities
- National Organic Standards Board meeting topics

Looking Ahead to 2023:

The Produce Council plans to continue work focusing on; 1) Developing consumer education resources on the benefits and value of organic produce to promote organic consumption and increase market share; 2) Supporting the successful implementation of the forthcoming Strengthening Organic Enforcement final rule within the produce sector with a particular focus on imports and labeling; 3) Addressing additional topical produce-specific issues.

COUNCIL MEMBERS



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TRUE ORGANIC



The Produce Council is led by John McKeon (Taylor Farms) as Chair and Todd Linsky (Todd Linsky Consulting) as Vice Chair. Their work is supported in the interim by Libby Mucciarone, Associate Director of Education, Technology, and Member Engagement. If you are interested in joining the Council, please contact Libby (LMucciarone@ota.com).



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Retailer Council Annual Report | 2022

The Organic Trade Association's Retailer Council gives the Organic Trade Association (OTA) retail members an organized and ongoing forum for discussing organic-specific retail issues, challenges, and opportunities. Established in 2019, the Council seeks to work together to grow the organic industry and to utilize the member community for networking and problem solving.

2022 Highlights:



The Retailer Council completed a full update of the Organic Trade Association's Good Organic Retail Practices (GORP) Guide. The existing resource was updated to reflect various industry developments, including online marketing and sales. The document was shortened dramatically to increase readability. With the release of the new Strengthening Organic Enforcement regulations, the Council looks forward to leveraging the new guide and positioning the retail sector for successful compliance with the new rules.



As identified by its members, a primary benefit of the Retailer Council is the facilitation of networking and discussion of current retail conditions and trends. The group met four times throughout the year to discuss a range of issues specific to the retail environment for organic products.

Looking Ahead to 2023:

The Retailer Council will leverage the work invested in the GORP manual to assist retailers in achieving best practices with their organic products.

OTA will continue to help facilitate conversations among this group regarding current issues, including evolving regulations and the impacts of emerging technologies on organic.

COUNCIL MEMBERS



Mark Squire (Good Earth Natural Foods) serves as the Chair of the Retailer Council, alongside Ann Marie Hourigan (Whole Foods Market) as Vice Chair, and Pat Sheridan (INFRA) as Secretary. Angela Jagiello, OTA's Director of Education and Insights, supports the work of the Council. If you are interested in joining the Retailer Council, please contact Angela (ajagiello@ota.com).

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Sustainability Council Annual Report | 2022

The Organic Trade Association's Sustainable Food Trade Action (SFTA) Council joined forces with two Organic Trade Association (OTA) Task Force groups to form the new OTA Sustainability Council in 2023. By the end of 2022, 92 companies had representatives on the Council!

The Sustainable Food Trade Association integrated with OTA in 2020 with the concept of a 1+1=3 consolidation. We incorporated their members into the SFTA Council, and the group met quarterly while welcoming new members each year. During that time other OTA members assembled task forces focused on the need to engage in climate advocacy and create resources to educate the industry on the value of organic and the intersection of organic and sustainability. Both the Climate Change Task Force and Advocating for Organic within National Retailer Sustainability Initiatives Task Force concluded work on their specific projects, but the need for climate advocacy and communication toolkit development remains a top priority for OTA members. Establishing the OTA Sustainability Council encompassing these groups allows this work to continue at a larger scale on an ongoing basis.

The Sustainability Council is a hub for all member stakeholders engaged in sustainability management strategies. The Council meets quarterly with additional opportunities to connect and collaborate throughout the year.

2022 Highlights:

The SFTA Council, Climate Change Task Force, and Advocating for Organic within National Retailer Sustainability Initiatives Task Force merged to form the new OTA Sustainability Council under the OTA Board of Director's approval in November 2022. The SFTA Council spent much of 2022 analyzing takeaways from each group's previous work and outlining its 2023 work plan and project goals that allow for OTA Board engagement from Council members in the coming year. Key takeaways identified from their previous two years of work included:

- Council members value opportunities to share successes and challenges, collective advocacy and impact, and benchmark progress through mandatory reporting
- Structured conversations and collective data points help keep a large group engaged and progressing toward a shared goal
- Climate-focused initiatives are the biggest focus for most Council members
- There is a need for clearer and consistent messaging around organic and sustainability; OTA's Organic Wheel of Sustainability and other Organic Opportunity Communications Toolkit resources were identified as a good starting place.

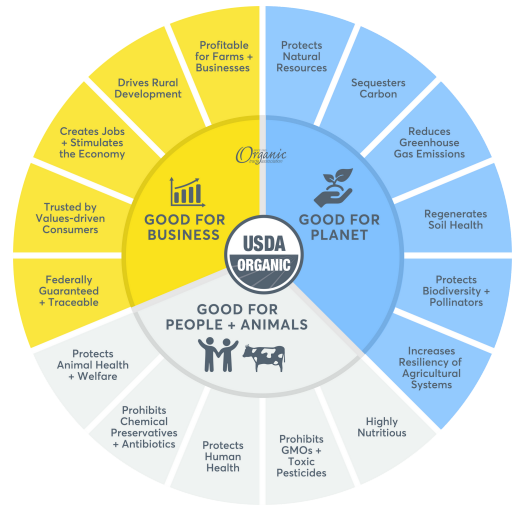
The Sustainability Council also hosted engaging breakout groups and guided discussions in council meetings around questions and topics of interest to the Council members:

- Measuring and reporting on the positive impacts of organic purchasing and climate action
- Engaging the farmer supply chain in advancing organic and regenerative practices, and sustainability
- Materiality assessments
- Science-based targets
- Social responsibility
- Sustainable development broader than climate change
- Leveraging industry partnerships and supplier engagement for sustainable packaging improvements

Looking Ahead to 2023:

The Sustainability Council's goal for 2023 is to use the Organic Wheel of Sustainability as a framework for discussing the true cost accounting of organic. The Council will identify member initiatives and collect data points to enhance clear and consistent messaging around organic and sustainability and showcase council member achievements. The Council will review one section of the Organic Wheel of Sustainability at each meeting.

- February Council meeting – Good for Planet
- April Council meeting – Good for People & Animals
- July Council meeting – Good for Business
- October Council meeting – Report out of collective council member contributions within each of the wheel spool topics, including specific initiatives and collective data points



COUNCIL MEMBERS



The Council is led by Joseph Brinkley (Bonterra Organic Estates) as Chair, John Foster (Wolf & Associates: The Organic Specialists) as Vice Chair, and Beth-Ann Roth (R|K Invest Law) as Secretary. Their work is supported by OTA's Associate Director of Events and Solutions, Adrienne Messe. If you are interested in joining the Sustainability Council, please reach out to Adrienne (amesse@ota.com)



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