

Farmer Advisory Council Annual Report | 2021

The Organic Trade Association (OTA)'s Farmers Advisory Council (FAC)

provides OTA with input from small- and medium-sized organic farmers, ranchers, and growers for organic agriculture's advancement. Established in 2013, FAC was designed to formalize and improve communication between OTA and organic producers. Through open dialogue, FAC gives organic farmers direct influence on the Association's policy agenda and enables OTA to better represent the diversity of organic producers in legislative and regulatory advocacy.

FAC Fact: The Organic Trade Association's Farmers Advisory Council is one of the largest coalitions in the U.S. of organic farmers and organic farming organizations, representing over 8,000 livestock, poultry, grain and specialty crop producers.

Special thanks to outgoing FAC Chair, Perry Clutts, for his steadfast leadership of FAC since its inception in 2013. We are so grateful for your dedication and all you have done for FAC!

Highlights from 2021:

- Met with 29 members of Congress and 5 USDA agencies as part of our annual (virtual) farmer fly-in. FAC members educated new leadership on the most pressing challenges facing organic farmers and amplified policy priorities identified by FAC including advancing organic standards, fighting climate change, and ensuring organic farmers get adequate support in federal COVID relief efforts.
- Hosted a listening session for USDA leadership to hear directly from FAC members on priorities for future investment in support organic transition. FAC members also engaged in discussion to inform OTA's advocacy efforts for this program.
- Voted unanimously to endorse the Continuous Improvement & Accountability in Organic Standards Act. FAC recruited co-sponsors for the bill at its annual fly-in.
- Informed OTA's policy priorities for pandemic assistance for organic producers, agricultural workforce safety, organic certification cost-share, crop insurance, and conservation programs. Many of these critical issues and the critical issues from FAC will inform OTA's farm bill platform next year.

Looking Ahead to 2022:

FAC has a key role in informing OTA's policy agenda for the 2023 Farm Bill. FAC will host a series of target meetings throughout the winter to refine policy position on a number of issues including organic transition, advancing organic standards, crop insurance, conservation and cost-share. FAC is also co-hosting a farmer workshop with the Organic Farmers Association to gather organic farmer input on core organic priorities for the 2023 Farm Bill from farmers and farming organizations from across the country.

COUNCIL MEMBERS



FAC is co-chaired by Doug Crabtree (Vilicus Farms), an organic farmer, and OTA's Board of Directors Farmer Seat, and Adam Warthesen (Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative), OTA's Board of Directors Community Relations Committee designee. FAC is supported by Johanna Mirenda, Farm Policy Director. If you are interested in joining FAC, please reach out to Johanna (jmirenda@ota.com).



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