

**Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance**  
**Fall Conference**  
**General Session October 21-21, 2008**

President Tony Azevedo called the general Session of the Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance to order 10:20 a.m. in the Chehalis Grand Ballroom, at the Great Wolf Lodge, Grand Mound, WA.

President Tony opened the meeting by stating WODPA would like to hear from you the farmer on the issue and asking for reports.

**Reports**

**Consumer Groups:** Tony Azevedo reported a number of consumer groups support us. The question is what do you want the consumer groups to do for us?

**FOOD Farmers:** Jon Bansen updated the group on the status of the FOOD Farmers group and efforts to get a fair farm gate price. Some joint actions ( WODPA, MODPA and NODPA) were taken as the processors were encouraged to send a letter on behalf of the producers asking the USDA to include 120-day/30% dry matter wording in the pasture rule. Rick Segalla NODPA member from Connecticut gave a summary of NODPA efforts. They have been working on the pay price issue and pushing for money for organic in the farm bill.

**One Cent Program:** Ward Burroughs updated the membership on the 1-cent program. As of today we have only nine members contributing. It was suggested that we have a flat fee per year, which some of the producers are already doing. Sharon Sinko reported there has been difficulty getting the processors to cooperate and the WODPA form is not accepted. Each processor requires their own assignment form.

**Officers and Board Members:** Tony Azevedo, CA; Arden Nelson, CO; Blake Alexandre, CA; Sharon Sinko, OR; Joe Ficher, OR; Cindy Daley, CA; David Roberts, ID; Jon Bansen, OR; Andrew Dykstra, WA, Joe Doornenbal, OR

**Minutes:** Sharon Sinko read the minutes from the September 25 – 26, 2007 Fall Conference in Corvallis, OR

**Financial Report.** Joe Ficher gave the treasurers report. We have a balance of \$ 19,700 with budget conference expenses of \$16,500. The Trade Show has generated an income of \$8,300. The voluntary 1-cent program has collected \$2600. The processor donated 3,800 and the remainder of our income came from ads from the “Integrity” and a carry over balance of \$2,200.

**Motion to accept the minutes and treasurer’s report by Frank Coelho and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Zeb Burroughs 2<sup>nd</sup>, Motion carried**

## Issues

President Tony Azevedo opened the floor to a discussion of some of the following issues:

- Bring people together
- For or against confidentiality contracts
- National involvement – FOOD Farmers
- Should we rate certifiers?
- Do we need to be our own police?
- How do we motivate overseers of the NOP to enforce it?
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### Discussion of WODPA'S role in setting Pay Price:

- Show the consumer who is really getting the largest percent of the dollar.
- Does the grocers store operator really understand the farmer?
- Better communication needed in all phases of the chain
- PR Campaign from our industry to the public
- Need a well-funded effective campaign to make our point to the consumer.

**Statement: We need to put together a statement of the plight of the organic dairy producer to show the distribution of income between the farmer, processor, and retailer, in a way to effectively communicate our situation. .**

### Resolutions:

- Did we use the resolution's
- Working with FOOD farmers had a direct impact on the upcoming pasture rule. We are now working on the origin of livestock (thus using the 2<sup>nd</sup> resolution
- The following position statement was developed using the heifer replacement and pasture resolutions:

**WODPA supports all organic dairies regardless of size as long as they follow the intent of the NOP, including our pasture use and replacement heifer resolutions.**

### FOOD Farmers role:

- WODPA, MODPA & NODPA working together
- Push for enforcement of new USDA Pasture Rule
- Encourage certifiers to enforce pasture rule
- Producers need to comment on new pasture rule
- Producers need to articulate that grazing is good for the organic producer

### How do we motivate a higher pay price for farmers - without turning off consumer?

- Collective bargaining
- Working together as a group to negotiate price
- If everyone is moving the price increase together than the retailer will not switch processors. Move the base price in unison.

- Does that eliminate a competitive market?
- Input costs are coming down
- Farm gate price vary from the West to the East
- East & West retailer should pay the same thing
- West needs a minimum of \$30.00 base price versus East at \$35.00
- A vote was taken WODPA membership confirmed that \$30.00 is the base price needed to be sustainable

**Statement: WODPA would support an internal audit of costs by processor and suggest cost control methods that would provide farmers with a price that would be sustainable.**

**. Should we rate certifiers?**

- Certifiers are variable
- Cheapest are not necessarily best
- Rank them and publish results
- USDA certifies the certifier

**Statement: Put together a statement on the rating certifiers for professional conduct; enforcement of the rules, etc.**

**Proxy Vote: Ward Burroughs discussing position taken at Santa Nella: You need to be present to vote.**

**Frank Coelho: I move that we accept proxies from dairymen that were here today (1<sup>st</sup> day of conference) and can't be here tomorrow (2<sup>nd</sup> day of conference), they should have a vote. John Boere 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed 15 to 10.**

**Elections:**

**Joe Doornenbal Chair Elections Committee: Opened the floor to nominations:**

**President:** Nominated Tony Azevedo, Arden Nelson

**First Vice President:** Nominated Arden Nelson, Blake Alexandre, and Tim Miranda  
Tim Miranda Decline

**Second Vice President:** Nominates – Blake Alexandre; Ward Burroughs

**Secretary:** Sharon Sinko – runs uncontested

**Treasurer –** Joe Ficher – runs uncontested

**WODPA Board Elections**

**CA State Representative** Tim Miranda, Ward Burroughs

**WA State Representative** Tony Schilter, Andrew Dykstra

**OR State Representative** – Joe Doornenbal

**ID State Representative** – Dave Roberts

**UT State Representative** – Mike Wangsgard

**WY State Representative** – Scott Forrest

**Representative At Large** – Jon Bansen, Guy Stueve, Paul Staehley, Andrew Dykstra; Tony Schilter, John Boere

**Move to close nominations Blake Alexandre 1<sup>st</sup>; Ward B. 2<sup>nd</sup>; Motion carried.**

**Wednesday – October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008**

**Resolutions passed:**

**Dairy Size Resolution:** WHEREAS organic dairy operations may be of variable size, scope and geographic location, And WHEREAS all organically certified dairies, regardless of size, are expected to uphold the full intent of the NOP, THEREFORE be it resolved that the Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance supports all organic dairies, regardless of size, that adhere to WODPA policies regarding pasture use and replacement females as stated in the WODPA Replacement Ruling Resolution and the Pasture Ruling Resolution.

**Arden Nelson made the motion to accept. Second Tony Shelter. 31 yes; 0 no; motion passed.**

**Statements passed:**

- **Position on Base Price:** WODPA producers require a minimum base price of \$30/cwt (on a 3.5% BF and 8.7% SNF basis) to be sustainable. Dated October 22nd, 2008. **Bob Baker moved to accept; Frank Coelho 2<sup>nd</sup>; 21 yes: 10 no; motion passes.**
- **Position on Certifiers:** WODPA will work with the other ODPAs to develop a rating structure for all organic certifying agencies in order that we eliminate the substantial damaging variability in the certification process. **Andrew Dykstra moved to accept; Ross McMahan 2<sup>nd</sup>; 29 yes: 1 no; motion passes.**
- **Position on Costs:** Organic dairy producers receive 24% of the retail milk price, an unacceptably low percentage of the food dollar. WODPA will work with consumer groups toward a higher return to producers. **Frank Coelho moved to pass; Tony Schilter 2<sup>nd</sup>; 25 yes: 6 no; motion passes.**

- Position on Confidentiality: WODPA supports the elimination of confidentiality contracts (between producers and processors) to improve the level of transparency in organic milk pricing. **Andrew Dykstra moved to pass; Frank Coelho 2<sup>nd</sup>; 28 yes; 0 no; motion passes.**

**Election outcome:**

**President** – Tony Azevedo

**First Vice President** - Arden Nelson

**Second Vice President** - Ward Burroughs

**Secretary** - Sharon Sinko

**Treasurer** Joe Ficher

**CA State Representative** - Tim Miranda

**OR State Representative:** - Joe Doornenbal

**WA State Representative** - Tony Schilters

**ID State Representative** – David Roberts

**WY State Representative** - Scott Forrest

**UT State Representative** – Mike Wangsgard

**At Large:**

**WA** - Andrew Dykstra

**OR** - Jon Bansen

**CA** - Guy Stueve

**OR** – Paul Staehely

President Tony Azevedo closed the general session by thanking Fall Conference Chairman Andrew Dykstra for hosting the conference. He announced next years conference would be held in Idaho. David and Kayla Roberts will be hosting.

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Sinko, Secretary