

Participant Name	Message
Harry E Bennett	Harry E Bennett, Central Plains Organic Farmers Association
Edward Reznicek	Ed Reznicek, Central Plains Organic Farmers
Laetitia Benador	Laetitia Benador, California Certified Organic Farmers
Steve Etko	Steve Etko, National Organic Coalition
Mark Lipson	Mark Lipson, Molino Creek Farm
Diana Underwood, PCO (she/her)	Diana Underwood, Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO)
Dan Langager	Dan Langager, Northwest Horticultural Council (NHC)
Chris Schreiner	Chris Schreiner, Oregon Tilth
Laura White	Laura White, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Odanah, WI.
Sarah Carden	Hi Everyone! Sarah Carden, Farm Action
Mark King	Hello! I'm Mark King, the Organic Program Manager for Upward Farms.
Edward Maltby NODPA	Ed Maltby, NODPA
Abbey Edel - Mercaris	Abbey Edel, Mercaris
Mike Dill	Hello from Oregon. Mike Dill, Organically Grown Company.
John Krankota	John Krankota - Torrey Advisory Group
Laura Holm	Laura Holm, Organic Trade Association
Kyla Smith, PCO	Kyla Smith (PCO) here. Happy Tuesday afternoon y'all!
Amy Bruch	Hi Everyone - Amy Bruch, Cyclone Farms Inc
Scott Rice	Greetings, Scott Rice, WA State Dept. of Agriculture Organic Program
Nora Carlton	Nora Carlton, MCCO
Darby Aherin	Darby Aherin, Mercaris
Megan DeBates	Megan DeBates, OTA
Chelsey Lenczyk	Hello, Chelsey Lenczyk from Bejo Seeds USA & Canada
Lily Hawkins	Lily Hawkins, OFA
George Szczepanski	George Szczepanski from IFPA... hello from Delaware!
Allison Johnson, NRDC (she/her)	Allison Johnson, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
Kate Mendenhall	Kate Mendenhall, OFA Greetings!
Matthew Dillon - Farmer Focus	Matthew Dillon, Farmer Focus
Liana Hoodes	Hello - Liana Hoodes, NOFA-NY
Christine Best	Christine Best Boots on The Ground North Carolina

Sara Hernandez	Good afternoon, Sara Hernandez, USDA AMS Livestock and Poultry Program, Meat and Poultry Processing Technical Assistance Program (more info: www.ams.usda.gov/mppta)
Underwood Co	Darin Konrad, Underwood Fruit & Warehouse. Washington St
Johanna Phillips	Johanna Phillips, Ecocert (USA and NICS)
Julia Barton, OEFFA, she/her	Hi all! Julia Barton, Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA)
Nicholas Rossi, NSAC	Nick Rossi, NSAC
Jessica Parr	Jessy Beckett Parr, CCOF
Brooke Gentile	Brooke Gentile - Organic Association of Kentucky (OAK)
Tara Froemming	Tara Froemming, Healthy Food Ingredients
Amy Wong	Amy Wong, Oregon Organic Coalition
Nicole Dehne	Nicole Dehne, Vermont Organic Farmers LLC
Kellee James	Kellee James, Mercaris
Ryan Burnette	Ryan Burnette ky dept of agriculture
Melinda Bratsch-Horsager	Melinda Bratsch-Horsager, Washington Department of Agriculture & Olykraut, SPC
Tom Chapman	Tom Chapman, OTA
Elizabeth Figueredo	Liz Figueredo, QAI
Mark King	Debi Zvi, Upward Farms.
Heather Spalding - MOFGA	Heather Spalding, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
Abby Youngblood, NOC (She/her)	Abby Youngblood, National Organic Coalition
Naery Kim	Naery Kim at Perfect Snacks
Wilken Louie	Wiken Louie / CA Association of Food Banks
Christina Fanta	Chris Fanta, Where Food Comes From Organic
AJ McCardell	AJ McCardell, NSF/QAI
Aimee Simpson	Aimee Simpson, PCC Community Markets
Greg Schreiner	Greg Schreiner with Silver Reef Organic Farms
DANIELLE Treadwell	Danielle Treadwell, University of Florida
Oren Holle	Oren Holle, OFARM , Pres
Keegan Athey	Keegan Athey, Certified Naturally Grown & CSU Organic Ag. Research Station
Paul Adkins	Paul Adkins, Hummingbird Wholesale based in Eugene, OR
Melissa Weyland	Allison Walent MW TOPP Program Lead Coordinator

Lily Hawkins	Will a recording or transcript of this listening session be available for folks who were unable to attend?
Jennifer Tucker	https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAMS/bulletins/335f328
Brian Baker	Brian Baker, Belcain Concerns, Eugene, OR
Jennifer Tucker	1. Organic Grain and Feed
Rebecca Claypool to Lily Hawkins(Direct Message):	The session is not being recorded, so only the slides and chat will be posted to the AMS website.
Lily Hawkins to Rebecca Claypool(Direct Message):	Ok, thanks!
Kellee James	We ask for consideration of Economic Impacts of a Successful Organic Transition Effort: that if successful, supply increases can cause significant fall in prices if demand does not keep pace. This has been documented in other agricultural markets, for example the World Bank's direct support of increased coffee acreage, one of the key factors in the fall of world coffee market prices. Furthermore, given crop rotation practices of organic grain operations, new markets need to be developed for common rotational crops, not just cash crops such as organic corn and soybeans.
Kellee James	Apologies, this is Kellee James, Mercaris
Steve Etko	On-farm, or near farm, organic grain storage facilities so that organic grain farmers can sell when the price is advantageous. There should be an organic grain storage facility at every grain elevator. Also, there needs to be storage for each different organic crop, corn, soybeans, wheat, etc. Organic grain cleaning facilities should be more readily available to organic grain farmers as well, ideally self-cleaning facilities that farmers could use to get a higher price for their grain.
Chris Schreiner, Oregon Tilth	To best understand where to invest in more infrastructure, it would be helpful to map existing infrastructure across the organic sector to identify gaps (both geographic and type of infrastructure)
Edward Maltby NODPA	Regional grain storage and treatment plus investment in appropriate equipment to transition out of organic dairy
Lily Hawkins	Alfalfa growers need pellet mills to make their product more transportable. This would better support forage farmers as well as organic dairy farmers.

Lily Hawkins	Grain farmers need grain cleaning infrastructure, and grants for on-farm infrastructure like grain bins.
Ryan Dennett	Reports have shown that Maine needs processing and transportation support to build organic grain/feed production. This would build dairy resilience in the region, where grain is more expensive to procure.
Sarah Carden, Farm Action	To help increase domestic production, we need to help more farmers transition to organic. There is a significant cash-flow hurdle that farmers must overcome during the three year transition. This could look like improved credit terms or grant programs that specifically target transitioning producers during that three year window.
Brian Baker	Infrastructure and investments that prevent "adventitious presence" of non-organic / genetically modified corn and soybeans.
Kyla Smith, PCO	soybeans for poultry feed, agreed on comments on grain elevators, storage
Kellee James	Chris, we have a map of organic grain handling facilities, which can be filtered by location, transport options, processing capacity, etc. Happy to make it available to anyone interested
Greg Schreiner	At this time we need a National Data Base of Organic Bushels harvested along with a National Data Base of Organic Buyers, also by Region. This would help existing and Transitional farmers in have a better idea of pricing and who they could sell to. I think at this time it is Grain Brokers making calls to Organic producers to see if they have any crops to sell.
Keegan Athey	Yes, please make organic grain handling map available. Thanks!
Steve Etko	This topic overlaps with the dairy topic too, but small regional pelletizing operations for organic alfalfa would help to lower the cost of transporting alfalfa hay.
Allison Johnson, NRDC (she/her)	I agree with Steve Etko's note about local infrastructure above. In addition, USDA could use these funds to support organic animal operations in close proximity to grain production, to reduce transportation costs and help grain producers capture more of the crop value while also making feed more affordable.
Christine Best	Mapping areas where there is a disparity between what is grown and needed and increase growth in those areas to limit need for long transport and transmission of invasive weeds.

Kate Mendenhall	An organic processing facility map with indication of scale, marketing restrictions (USDA, state-inspected), and whether they are taking on new clients would be very helpful for farmers to know if they expand their production, will they be able to process it. This is especially important for all types of livestock-processing, but could also be advantageous to vegetable processing and other value-added processing.
Kellee James	We also favor a data driven approach to understanding where investments could be made, with Supply/Use estimates based on livestock and human consumption, to balance growth of supply (acreage) with demand centers.
Harry E Bennett	Supporting development of farmer owned and controlled cooperatives to enable organic grain farmers of different scale access to good organic markets. Attention needs to be paid to the size of the cooperatives so that they do not become too large and lose close relationships with members.
Greg Schreiner	Also, we are growing Organic crops in Regions, We need to keep manure needs and areas in mind also. If we had more research into Organic Manure sources we could grow Organic production outside of manure sources
Lily Hawkins	Incentives could encourage existing conventional processing facilities to install upgrades and become licensed to process certified organic products.
Edward Reznick	A priority for funding should be developing more, and strengthening existing, farmer grain marketing cooperatives. We also need development of cooperatives in the value added processing sector. Farmers need more information on navigating the organic supply chain. Co-ops are a good structure for this type of education. Finally, we should think more in terms of a "supply web" as opposed to a supply chain. Chains break down at the weakest link; webs provide alternative routes to bypass broken strands. Greater emphasis should be put on developments regional markets, processing facilities and supply webs.

Amy Bruch	There has been devastating impacts to organic producers when "outside" handlers of organic grains have gone bankrupt (i.e. issuing clawback letters for organic producers to repay money received for grain deliveries or not getting paid for grain deliveries at all). There have been many recently. I would encourage the grants to be geared to support vertical integration (cleaning capabilities) for current organic producers to increase efficiency in the organic commodity supply chain versus adding in additional steps between the producer and the end user.
Matthew Dillon - Farmer Focus	Consideration should be given to infrastructure in respect to rail lines and mill mapping
Britt Lundgren	Here in the Northeast organic producers are particularly vulnerable to swings in the price of feed due to trade volatility, as most organic producers are not growing their own feed. We urge that some of these resources be dedicated both to help growers transition to organic food and feed grade grains in the Northeast, coupled with market investment to facilitate drying, storage, and transport to market. Investment in growers in this region without parallel processing capacity development is not as likely to succeed as there is not sufficient infrastructure for processing organic grains in this region. Aroostook County Maine is a good example of a region that would benefit from this kind of combined investment, as well as NY, PA and VT.
Oren Holle	Soybean processing could be well served by additional regional facilities located closer to soybean producers and in most cases also being closer to meal markets. Startups could be assisted by funding in the \$200,00 range and exiting facilities might be served by \$100,000 for facility expansions or upgrades. Those levels would still require significant investments by the entities and the support would be make entry level or improvement level investments.
Kate Mendenhall	Support for farmer-owned co-ops to share processing resources and support collective marketing so that farmers can hold on to a larger percentage of the product value.
Amy Wong	Seconding Brian Baker's comment about "adventitious presence," and expanding it to canola.

Kellee James	One idea to facilitate creative supply chain solutions based on Relationships: USDA funds could be used to convene events (conferences, summits) that connect growers, processors/handlers, and buyers/end users with the explicit goal of facilitating multi-year, multi-crop purchasing agreements. Event organizers should also have the capacity to bring in experts that educate on how to structure contracts that account for price risk, weather risk, quality risk and other key factors that mitigate marketplace risk.
Jennifer Tucker	2. Legumes and Other Rotational Crops
Christine Best	Sources of organic ingredients for compost/manure so that the high cost of OMRI certified products is not out of reach cost wise.
Steve Etko	Missing topic: Organic meat and poultry processing. Very little done for organic in the recent announcement of meat/poultry processing grants
Mike Dill	Missing area- FRESH PRODUCE. The fresh organic produce sector has been seeing flat and declining sales, in terms of volume, over the past year or more. Sales (in dollars) are up as prices have increased, but volume has decreased. We support efforts to convert more acreage and growers to organic but fear that transitioning more fresh produce growers to organic, especially in regions where strong markets already exist, could create a scenario where growers will not have outlets for their products.
Jennifer Tucker	2. Legumes and Other Rotational Crops
Keegan Athey	Yes! Agree with Mike Dill. What about produce?
Kellee James	Apologies, meant the above comment for Section #2: One idea to facilitate creative supply chain solutions based on Relationships: USDA funds could be used to convene events (conferences, summits) that connect growers, processors/handlers, and buyers/end users with the explicit goal of facilitating multi-year, multi-crop purchasing agreements. Event organizers should also have the capacity to bring in experts that educate on how to structure contracts that account for price risk, weather risk, quality risk and other key factors that mitigate marketplace risk.
George Szczepanski	Agreeing with previous commenters on fresh produce as a missing area.
Brian Baker	Another missing area is organic seed.

Allison Johnson, NRDC (she/her)	There is currently significant interest and investment in plant-based foods produced with conventional ingredients, in the name of climate progress. USDA should connect market development for organic legumes with the growing interest in climate-friendly eating and plant-based foods.
Steve Etko	Examples of rotational crops for which markets needs to be expanded include buckwheat, oats, food grade sorghum, some of the ancient grains, culturally relevant grains, pulse crops, etc. if folks could make connections with buyers for these crops, it would give them more security to add crops to their rotations, which would have soil health and pest management benefits. How could this program be used to facilitate those marketing connections?
Keegan Athey	Definitely organic seed! Organic certification is a huge barrier for new seed companies and wholesale producers
Kellee James	Agree with Allison! Plant-based foods are an opportunity to expand demand (and support prices)
Brian Baker	Markets for low-value rotation crops are a barrier to their adoption. In areas where rents are high, there is a high opportunity cost for farmers to plant cover crops.
Greg Schreiner	Again, as an Organic Farmer, the rotation years and rotation grain produced, the gross dollars are significantly less per acre. So, again, helping the organic farmer with markets, facility locations, marketing ideas, etc would help. 1,000,000 investment
Julia Barton, OEFFA, she/her	A strong crop rotation is foundational to an organic growing system. We need help in market development for organic rotational crops such as small grains (oat, spelt, barley, wheat, buckwheat, grain sorghum), sunflowers, dry beans, and others, in addition to specialty corn products (white corn, blue corn, etc.) If smaller, regional mills could have multiple storage bins (similar to the previous section's ideas) which could be used to aggregate organic rotational food crops, markets and value added processing (presses, flour mills, rolling, groat making, chips, tortillas, etc.) could better be developed to serve organic growers seeking to have robust rotations, and there for more resilient organic systems.

Allison Johnson, NRDC (she/her)	Missing topic: Regional approach to market development. Specifically, many producers in the South do not pursue organic certification because of limited market opportunities. A portion of these market development funds be used to support diverse, regional approaches to market development.
Mark King	Missing Area-Fresh Produce: Agree with Mr. Dill's comments regarding inclusion of such. Produce has long been the gateway to organic product purchase, especially for new to the category consumers. And given the potential risk and challenges for organic produce production, the inclusion of urban, climate smart and controlled environment ag should be considered.
Kate Mendenhall	Research support to identify market development opportunities for a large diversity of rotational crops, educational resources to encourage increased consumption of these rotational crops. Also- incentives for government and institutional purchasing of organic rotational crops- especially for vulnerable consumer audiences like schools and hospitals. Processing, storage, and technical assistance is needed to make this a reality as well.
Amy Bruch	Agree with Brian Baker regarding markets for low-value rotation crops are a barrier. organic rotational crops are important to find markets as well developing markets for transitional rotational crops
Kyla Smith, PCO	I think investments in production / knowledge gaps for producers that may not know how to grow a particular crop to add into their rotations or need info on equipment modification or sharing even
Julia Barton, OEFFA, she/her	Agreed regarding missing topic of produce processing. Regional flash freezing, canning, drying opportunities abound.
Chris Schreiner, Oregon Tilth	I agree with Kellee James suggestion of funding to connect different buyers interested in purchases at similar scale / volume across a multi-year crop rotation implemented by farmers with organic acreage at matching scale. Finding reliable markets across multi-year rotations to effectively manage pests / weeds is essential to organic farmer success
Kim Huseman	Support for feeding program research at the university level with alterative feed inputs for both ruminant and monogastric livestock to better understand digestibility, etc.

Greg Schreiner	Continue to look and follow the Carbon Markets for Organic Farmers to get paid for Cover Crops. Once the dust settles and we have a clear path on how all of this is going to work I would like the USDA to consider being the leader in helping existing and Transitional Organic farmers with info or payment opportunities. 500,000
Amy Bruch	*crop insurance (outside of this listening session) as well as market outlets need to be developed to support organic rotational crops
Abbey Edel - Mercaris	This goes along with what Kate said, but undertake a study that highlights areas where demand exceeds US supply: for various certified organic crops, to give guidance to OTI TOPP participants on categories of producers to focus efforts towards. This should be completed at as local of a level as possible and take into account regional processing capacities.
Julia Barton, OEFFA, she/her	Agreed with Kyla regarding the educational component that accompanies the rotational crops. We need both the education and the infrastructure to market the rotational crops. Ed's comments regarding Cooperative marketing present promising opportunities in that regard!
Steve Etko	I agree with Brian Baker that organic seed is a missing topic
Edward Reznick	Forage legumes and minor grains such as oats and barley, along with others, have great use on-farm as feed. One of the biggest systemic holes in both organic and conventional farms is that livestock of all kinds have been largely removed from grain and forage farms into confinement facilities. USDA needs to provide long term support to helping agriculture move livestock out of confinement and back to grain and forage farms. This will entail greatly expanding the entry of new, beginning farmers into agriculture. Agriculture generally, as well as individual farms, need more people to provide the management and labor for more highly diversified farms.
Greg Schreiner	I agree, crop insurance for rotational crops would be huge
Mark King	Ditto regarding inclusion of organic seed
Harry E Bennett	Rotations are the basis of organic farming and must be a part of the equation, prices for the "popular" grains and crops must remain robust to help fund the rotation crops that are vital to soil health but have relatively low yields or market prices.

Johanna Phillips	Compiling market demands/ needs and finding a way to connect needs with producers would support targeted production. This is similar to other comments, but identifying marketplace needs and connecting growers with buyers (and expectations for product quality, type, and features) would lessen risk.
Christine Best	Planning guides on how to maximize crop rotation and connections with buyers to help alleviate overproduction in regional areas.
Oren Holle	Rotational crops, often a minor crop in volume, typically has marketing challenges. Cooperative development can serve to aggregate these smaller volumes of production into available markets with cooperative marketing agreements. Support for development of these existing cooperative initiatives as well as development of new regional entities would be an excellent place for part of these resources.
Allison Johnson, NRDC (she/her)	Echoing comments that seed is a missing topic as well. Seed treatments are a major undertracked use of dangerous pesticides.
Melissa Weyland	To attract farmers and land owners in particular to transition, we need more regionally focused market/marketing development. Market opportunities drive decisions on the farm.
Jennifer Tucker	3. Organic Ingredients
Brian Baker	Every item on §606 should be commercially available in an organic form.
Julia Barton, OEFFA, she/her	#2- Agreed with Amy Bruch that crop insurance for rotational crops is a huge barrier to their production.
Jennifer Tucker	3. Organic Ingredients
Brian Baker	Some items on §605 can also be made from organic agricultural ingredients, e.g. natural flavors

Steve Etk	<p>Organic ingredient market challenges. Some examples: Rice Brown Flour (Short Grain) is not broadly available, and buyers have been struggling to source it. Middle/Long grain rice flour seems to be much more available. White Corn is being treated almost as a specialty, like blue corn. Many farmers do not want to plant it before a commitment that it can get sold. Organic Raspberry. Currently most organic raspberries are grown in Europe and Chile and suppliers have struggled to get the required demand of raspberry into US. Can this program be used to help expand domestic organic raspberry production? Organic pectin, which is tied to the citrus greening problems facing organic citrus, since citrus is a source for organic pectin. Sausage casings, which is tied to the conversation about expanding organic meat processing capacity.</p> <p>?</p>
Kate Mendenhall	<p>Farmer-owned cooperatives is key here to capitalize on storage, aggregating, processing, and transportation logistics. More access to food-grade testing labs would also be helpful (example- mycotoxin testing for food-grade wheat)</p>
Greg Schreiner	<p>Organic Ingredients are vital to the food supply. Sourcing of these ingredients is a struggle for most companies. Again, a data base of growers with a data base of customers.</p>
Brian Baker	<p>Major import crops that can be grown in a temperate / Mediterranean climate, e.g. olives and olive oil.</p>
Kyla Smith, PCO	<p>An NOSB research priority topic is “Evaluation of the essentiality of 205.605(a), 205.605(b), and 205.606 substances and the suitability of organic alternatives in applicable food formulations via laboratory testing, sensory evaluation, and/or market analysis.” - This was intended to focus in at Food Science programs as universities to perhaps incorporate this type of learning, evaluation and research into those programs that appears to be a big gap</p>
Julia Barton, OEFFA, she/her	<p>Agreed on the missing topic of organic meat processing. #3-This topic is closely related, as Steve Etk notes, to organic casings for sausage, and other missed opportunities for value-added offal. It will also have impacts for bull calves and dairy steers in #4.</p>
Steve Etk	<p>I agree with Brian Baker that sec, 606 shows us a list of which organic ingredients are in demand, but not available organically.</p>

Kate Mendenhall	Education for state value-added extension agents to understand what is required for certified-organic processors. Also- training and support for certified organic processors for how to seek organic ingredients and better support and encouragement from their certifiers to do so--to better support producers' ability to certify organic products as organic after processing (i.e. organic spices for organic sausage at processing facilities)
Christine Best	Organic ingredients that are also a specialty crop that can be contracted to a regional cooperative would provide opportunities to the small farm units Sec 606 Agree with Kate and Brian.
Brian Baker	Edible oils that are currently used in "made with" organic product because the price point for organic oils are too high, e.g. safflower and canola oils.
Mike Dill	Consideration- GROWING the market is necessary, but how can we also PROTECT the [produce] market from potential catastrophe? Major domestic growing regions are experiencing extreme drought, water shortages, labor issues, etc. Many crops are grown in specific regions (i.e., apples in Washington state, salad greens in California & Arizona, etc.). Much of the country is reliant on a handful of regions for its produce production. We need support for developing/shifting/expanding growing regions to take the pressure off states/regions that are experiencing water shortages or increased natural disasters. We should be proactively preparing for what will happen to the food supply chain when/if California, Arizona, and other states can no longer produce crops at their current level or at the levels needed to support a growing population. In OR potato growers are having their water allotments greatly restricted. The region is growing only half of what it has historically grown and many farmers are quitting.
Allison Johnson, NRDC (she/her)	Another overarching comment: USDA should be proactively connecting other funding opportunities (e.g., regional business centers, meat processing, regional food systems, land access) with these market development goals, to maximize participation of organic producers across USDA initiatives.

Johanna Phillips	To Greg's point- the OI DB is a great resource, but often not reflective of what is actually available, and manufacturer specifications for ingredients could be important. Industry groups, retailer outreach, and incentives to grow market utilization of organic ingredients. Incentivizing increased use of organic ingredients would possibly increase demand.
Kate Mendenhall	Changes to expand state-inspected meat to be match USDA inspected livestock slaughter and processing facilities to expand meat ingredients across state lines. This would make investments in infrastructure like processing facilities more worthwhile and support market expansion.
DanielleTreadwell	It would be helpful to know which ingredients have the most significant premiums (due to limited supply, supply chain interruptions, reliance on imports, etc.) and focus the efforts on those ingredients to reduce cost to processors. That would require a survey.
Jennifer Tucker	4. Ensure Market for Organic Dairy
Brian Baker	#3 Mike Dill raises a good point. For some produce, there are seasonal gaps in market windows.
Jennifer Tucker	4. Ensure Market for Organic Dairy
Steve Etko	1) Great caution should be taken to NOT incentivize more organic production in markets experiencing over supply, such as organic dairy. This would not only set up these transitioning farmers for failure, but would also undercut existing organic dairy farmers, who are struggling with pay prices below cost of production. 2) The Market Development grants should be used to help existing organic dairy farmers, and to expand and diversify those markets. How can these grants be used to help expand and diversify processing infrastructure for dairy in areas, such as the Northeast? Are there opportunities to use grants to help dairy farmers put in their own on-farm bottling facilities to allow them to market directly to consumers?
Kate Mendenhall	The USDA-Northeast Regional Task force (Dec 2021) offered a list of necessary infrastructure investment to strengthen and sustain regional dairy- these should be entered into this review and can be extrapolated across the nation.

Kate Mendenhall	Organic dairy farmers need diversified processing facilities that can package milk for use in institutional markets like schools and hospitals. Revision to AMS requirements for Regional Dairy Innovation Centers would make grants more useful for farmers to fully implement necessary on-farm infrastructure needs, modernize existing facilities for a changing market, and fully-utilize the support from the Regional Dairy Innovation Centers.
Kate Mendenhall	Solar panels on farm roofs could help offset energy costs and allow farmers to put more disposable income into on-farm infrastructure needs. Also- infrastructure for water conservation is essential for dairy farmers.
Steve Etko	Also, the regional Dairy Business Innovation Centers are helpful in providing small grants to dairy farmers, but the DBIC limitations on grants for anything perceived as being “construction” has limited the benefits. Can the OTI market development grants be used in ways that complement the DBIC grants?
Allison Johnson, NRDC (she/her)	Milk remains a school meal staple, and USDA should use the market development program to increase public procurement of organic milk.
Oren Holle	#2 More local or regional investments would have the greatest impact and would serve to counter the continuing consolidation by some of the major companies attempting to dominate the organic market in all sectors. These investments could be smaller grants which would serve more producers in local or regional supply chain units. Again, cooperative initiatives would service a larger number of producers and provide benefits to more smaller family size operations.
Nicole Dehne	Current DBIC funding does not cover construction costs. This is problematic for producers that want to ship milk to cheese makers but need to switch from fermented feed to dry hay for cheese quality, for example. Having a funding source that allowed producers to fund construction projects that address new market opportunities like the example above would be critical.
Johanna Phillips	This applies to all questions: https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2011/09/21/industry-insight-checkoff-programs-empower-business-development/ demand. Checkoff programs support market

Kate Mendenhall	Organic Dairy currently cannot expand without 1. support for expansion of MORE BUYERS and more regional buyers in particular, 2. investment into processing facilities that open organic dairy into new markets like school milk. Support for organic milk for schools from USDA.
Mike Dill	General- provide grants to institutional purchasing (hospitals, nursing homes, hotels, schools/universities) to cover the cost difference between organic and conventional. Current institutional contracts are largely focused on purchasing through major distributors and are based off [lowest] price. It would be great if contracts could be structured to encourage more diverse participation- local, direct and organic.
Kate Mendenhall	MORE ENFORCEMENT OF THE PASTURE RULE and strong enforcement of Origin of Livestock to ensure equitable marketplace for real organic farmers.
Britt Lundgren	The report from the Northeast Organic Task force submitted to the Secretary in December 2021 outlined a number of areas where investments could enable organic dairy to be distributed to institutional markets. Some examples are: 1. support for processing organic dairy in bulk formats (bag in a box milk, yogurt in tubs or bags) could facilitate use of organic dairy in schools and other institutional cafeterias. 2. USDA could also pilot a reimbursement program for schools to purchase local/regional organic dairy, and 3. expand budget allocation under TEFAP for purchase of local/regional organic dairy products.
Chris Schreiner, Oregon Tilth	Agree with comments about food service / institutional buyers (schools, health care) as potential market expansion for organic. Price constraints are a limitation. An organization called the NW Food Buyers Association as well as Healthcare Without Harm's Healthy Food in Healthcare program have both produced some good reports on attempts to access these types of buyers / markets, including barriers and possible solutions to overcome them
Steve Etko	Could the SNAP healthy fluid milk incentive program be expanded to include incentives for organic milk?

Amy Bruch

3. market outlets for ingredients need to provide backups for producers that grow very specialized products i.e. if organic white or organic blue corn is impacted by weather (i.e. hail) then crop insurance adjustors use Conventional FEED Grade standards to adjust for the quality impact - which is devastating for producers. This leads to more risks for growers of specialty products (corn in this case). If a grower has specialty corn that doesn't meet contract specs (due to weather) then it's a double problem as there is no outlet (many feed grade markets do not want white or blue corn as it will discolor the egg yolks) and producers do not get crop insurance payouts either (as organic speciality corn quality is not recognized - ie. adjusted on number 2 conventional feed grade standards).

Greg Schreiner

More inspectors needed for enforcement of Origin of Livestock audit

Edward Maltby NODPA

Organic milk production is more expensive in the northeast. To be sustainable farmers need to be paid for their costs of production. To achieve this there needs to be an investment in regional and size-specific organic milk infrastructure and marketing channells. Organic milk that is produced, processed and marketed in the northeast, taking full advantage of the large and discriminating consumer base and would have a large impact. Local milk would guarantee an adequate return to northeast organic dairies while providing environmental and economic benefits to the region, rather than exporting them to Colorado. CThe start up costs for a northeast organic milk for a consumer-facing regional brand and entrance into the institutional market is high. This unique brand would be owned and controlled by producers. It would have short supply lines to both processing and distribution. It will guarantee consumers will pay for what they get, instead of the marketing exaggerations used by brands owned by multinationals.th

Edward Reznick

Livestock production generally needs to be more regionalized. There is little organic dairy production in the central plains region, for example. More regionalized livestock production would create more regional markets for minor grain crops and forages and would help reduce transportation costs and could create more regional processing and distribution opportunities. We need to do more to create intermediate models for livestock production and processing. Organized cooperatively these intermediate models could be scaled up.

Edward Maltby NODPA	The business plan shows that it will cost \$2.3 million.
Melissa Weyland	Organic dairy market opportunities would best be suited focused on safeguarding our EXISTING organic supply as the market struggles. One strategy would be to assist existing organic dairy farmers in obtaining more land that to transition to crops - allowing them to diversify income, grow their farm and support previously mentioned efforts of this program (such as growing grains/feed).
Harry E Bennett	The supply could be managed better if the organic dairy world were not dominated by the large organic dairy operations that count cows in the hundreds and even thousands. A return of dairy to organic standards that require pasture access and sound manure handling on more diversified organic farms with a larger farmer component with smaller herds would ease some of the over supply problems and help return organic integrity to the organic dairy industry.
Jennifer Tucker	5. Fiber
Allison Johnson, NRDC (she/her)	#4, agree with Britt - California has done some promising work with bulk organic milk dispensers in schools
Jennifer Tucker	5. Fiber
Steve Etko	Missing topic: Concentration of organic distributors and difficulty of smaller farms and process to get access to markets because of bias of large distributors for larger suppliers. Can this program be used to help expand distribution channels regionally?
Britt Lundgren	Topic 4 cont'd. Food banks would like to be able to offer shelf stable fluid organic milk. Investment in UHT processing for organic milk in the Northeast coupled with incentive payments to support Food Banks in procuring regional shelf stable organic dairy could open up new demand for organic dairy in this region.
Kate Mendenhall	Support for organic wool processing by supporting farmer-owned cooperatives. Babies love organic wool. Same with farmer-owned cotton processing facilities so that U.S. farmers capture more of the dollar and can afford to grow it domestically.

Brian Baker	The main barrier to the production of organic cotton in the San Joaquin Valley is the lack of effective tools to desiccate and defoliate plants prior to harvest. A reliable method for harvest preparation will require investment in new technologies that use physical, mechanical, and biologically based methods that do not rely on synthetic chemicals.
Mike Dill	General comment- Distributors would love to expand their reach but many rural areas and farther-away communities are cost-prohibitive to service (fuel, driver hours, etc.). Funding to offset the losses that result while expanding service areas would be helpful during the time it takes to build a program and increase customer base in a new region.
Kate Mendenhall	Topics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5: Organic farmers across the board, from vegetable growers, to grain producers, to livestock and dairy farmers would all benefit from investments in processing facilities, water infrastructure, and better access to storage and processing facilities, funding for farmer coops, and funding to study where the bottlenecks are in moving organic products to market.
Brian Baker	Dedicated gins are needed to prevent "adventitious presence" of cotton grown with "excluded methods". Excluded methods are used with almost 100% of the US cotton crop. It is seen as practically no risk and cotton producers have no incentive to take the risk to transition.
Kyla Smith, PCO	3. smaller processors are challenged with small quantity orders of a particular ingredient and larger distributors are unwilling to do business with them
Danielle Treadwell	In the SE conventional producers don't grow cotton unless they can get .85/lb. Increasing availability of processing infrastructure, and educating the industry on market options for cotton, hemp and other plant fibers would help facilitate transition to organic and keep these farmers in business.
Elizabeth Tigan	Regional organic production facilities for Wool Scouring in the all sheep raising areas. Regional organic production facilities for decortication of hemp for processing into fiber. More training for farmers in cotton growing regions to help encourage organic production. Support for non-GMO cotton breeding. Support for smaller scale spinners to take on organic production runs.

Johanna Phillips	Relevant to all questions: State market development programs (commerce development) can be really effective resources, which can be targeted regionally by markets (Strong regions/ states in each category, or where production AND demand can be increased reasonably for each category). States under the TOPP initiative that are targeted for increased production- likely lack production due to lower demand regionally or limited market access. These agencies can bridge relationships and support solutions for market challenges, like in the case of school lunch programs, too.
Steve Etko	#4- Since \$25 million of this program will be focused on product procurement, some of that should be used for organic milk procurement
Johanna Phillips	Expressing support for Elizabeth Tigan's comment
Jessica Parr	5. Cotton. Marketing campaign targeting US brands for US grown organic cotton. Current organic cotton grower cooperatives in the US (TX) have not yet sold 2021 harvest- not to mention 2022. US organic cotton cost of production far outstrips international production costs. Part of it is scale, but much of it is the lower cost of labor in India and Turkey. How can we incentivize US brands to pay more for US grown organic cotton? Also- several cotton gins in TX that are currently certified for organic handling are considering dropping the certificate b/c of the low volume and paperwork burden. Significantly more delicate community development work needs to be done across the cotton supply chain. CCOF is working with partners through TOPP to address the transition area- but we'll need the market access piece crystal clear before supporting additional transition.
Chris Schreiner, Oregon Tilth	Hemp could be a promising organic fiber crop because of the lack of EPA-approved pest control inputs for this crop, it's almost by default managed organically. However, a cautionary tale from OR was severe over-planting that flooded the market and a total lack of sufficient storage and post-harvest handling infrastructure. Hemp grown for fiber (as opposed to Hemp for CBD) also requires different varieties and specialized harvest equipment and post-harvest processing equipment
Brian Baker	Hemp definitely has an advantage as a fiber crop over cotton or flax / linen, but I know growers who are sitting on unsold inventory. The bottleneck appears to be processing.

Edward Reznick	Expanding production, processing and use for organic hemp may make the most sense in terms of a crop better adapted to a changing climate. What are the lessons learned so far regarding fiber hemp production and marketing that might be useful in charting a course for the future? Would greater cooperative organization of hemp production, processing and marketing improve the prospects of this crop?
Harry E Bennett	Organic hemp production for fiber needs the investment in processing equipment to make it a viable crop for organic farmers. This would be a good fit for an organic hemp growers cooperative that could take on the task of owning and operating hemp fiber processing equipment for the members.
Brian Baker	What Chris Schreiner said! :)
Edward Maltby NODPA	#4 Agree with Steve Etko - investment could kick start institutional sales
Kellee James	Common concern across 1-5. Facilities and processing capacity are owned by entities (whether individual businesses or coops). A challenge will be to disburse funds in a way that does not warp the ecosystem of small and large organic businesses (whether farms for buyers/processors), and create anti-competitive results
Danielle Treadwell	Yes to organic hemp fiber cooperative!
Mike Dill	General comment- would love to see a stronger effort by USDA to join businesses in promoting the benefits of organic- good for business, good for planet, good for people/animals.
Kate Mendenhall	#4- yes for support of organic milk procurement. Organic dairy is really important and needs support right now- and that is the milk all kids should be drinking in schools.
Christine Best	Regional processing facilities seems to be a key factor and for the small farms to be able to have a collective in order to compete with larger growers.
Steve Etko	Broadly, one of the big challenges facing farmers who want to do on-farm processing for direct consumer sales is food safety regulation. Who can this program help farmers face those challenges?
Allison Johnson, NRDC (she/her)	Overall comment, similar to others above: USDA should focus a portion of these resources on recruiting existing processing facilities to establish processes for handling organic and become certified organic.
Allison Johnson, NRDC (she/her)	Thank you Jenny!!

Laetitia Benador, CCOF, she/hers	Thank you for this well-facilitated session!
Mike Dill	Love these sessions. Keep 'em coming
Kellee James	Thank you!
Chris Schreiner, Oregon Tilth	Thank you!
Josie Quevedo	Thank you!
Mike Dill	Thank you!
Oren Holle	Generally, the various topics have comments about regional cooperative development. Support of cooperative development is an important basic ingredient. We do better together.
Steve Etko	Thanks!