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1400 Independence Avenue, SW
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March 7, 2016

Dear Dr. Ngouajio and members of the OREI evaluation team:

The Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA) is writing to express its strong support for the Oregon State University (OSU) proposal "Development of Online Graduate Certificate in Organic Agriculture."

WODPA is a nonprofit Mutual Benefit Corporation. Our purpose is to enable organic dairy farmers, situated across an extensive area in the west, to maintain the sustainability of organic dairy farming. We represent nearly 250 organic dairy farm families.

We view organic agricultural education to be paramount to the future growth and success of organic farming. To our knowledge, OSU's graduate certificate program would be the first of its kind. The online nature of this program will make graduate course work in organic agriculture available to agricultural professionals seeking organic knowledge while maintaining their current positions. It will also provide advanced learning for organic professionals and recent graduates with an organic background. This will be a diverse program addressing the organic management of soils, crops, and livestock. In addition to benefiting current organic dairy producers, we believe this program will be very beneficial to the next generation of organic dairy producers. For these reasons we strongly advocate for approval of OSU's funding request.

Thank you for your consideration of our support for OSU's proposal "Development of Online Graduate Certificate in Organic Agriculture."

Sincerely

Richard H. Mathews
Executive Director