



WESTERN ORGANIC DAIRY PRODUCERS
ALLIANCE

It is my privilege and honor to represent WODPA as your new Executive Director. I thank the hiring committee and WODPA Board for the confidence they have shown in hiring me. Thank you to Richard Mathews for his many years of invaluable service and his support in my transition over the next few months. The impact and positive changes that the WODPA leadership has accomplished, for you and the industry, over the years is truly amazing. I also thank Darby Heffner for all she does and her support as I learn the ropes. She is really the glue behind the scene that keeps things moving in a positive direction. I look forward to working with you all to keep the momentum moving forward.

Let me give you a little back ground about my journey: I grew up on a dairy farm in Western Washington. I am the eldest of four bothers and the son of a Dutch immigrant. I studied at Washington State University and earned a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Economics with an emphasis in animal science and marketing. While attending WSU, I played football and baseball for the Cougs and served as President for FarmHouse Fraternity. I was also a member of CUDS (Cooperative University Dairy Students) where I helped manage the University Dairy herd.

I meet my wife of 21 years, Kami, at WSU while studying the same degree. We are blessed with two children; a daughter, Mika, and a 13-year-old son, Robbie. Mika is 20 and in her senior year at WSU. Robbie is eating everything we can put in front of him and drinking a lot of Organic milk! In 2005 Kami and I started our own small organic farming operation in Eastern Washington on the farm she grew up on. We grow organic hay, corn, silage and small grains.

After graduation from WSU in 1997, I worked as a feed consultant for Cargill Feeds in Washington, and then in California. We then moved a little closer to the PNW, where I took a nutrition feed consultant position with Land O'Lakes Purina Feeds in Idaho in 1999. In 2006, I joined Agri-King and soon after entered management, where I helped grow the brand in the new PNW area. Working as a consultant with Dairy Nutrition Management Consulting and International Stock Foods also kept me connected with the dairy industry over the past several years.

I have been active with important organizations such as the Washington State Farm Bureau, Washington State FFA Foundation Board, Washington State Hay Growers Association Board, and the Washington Ag Forestry Leadership Program as a Class 37 graduate. These experiences have shaped me and laid a great foundation for this opportunity with WODPA.

WODPA has done a great job bring value to its members and the industry. WODPA's 2019 priorities include:

1. Continuing our efforts for improved and consistent pasture enforcement.



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2. Advocating for publication of the Origin of Livestock final rule to end the practice of continuous transition of conventional dairy animals on organic operations.
3. Advocating for the elimination of unforeseen livestock regulatory defects (real or fabricated) that allow practices that undermine organic integrity and organic dairy sustainability.
4. Commenting and advocating for dairymen on all proposed changes to the National List of approved livestock materials.
5. Supporting removal of the word “MILK” from plant based products.
6. Growing membership and program support.
7. Identifying and working to resolve issues impacting organic dairy sustainability.

With your help, we can work together to maintain a noble and honest quality of life for our families, customers, and communities. It's important that we stand together united and work as much as possible to support the organic dairy sector and let the public hear our stories. Valuing and protecting our endeavors as organic farmers/dairymen is important to me. I want to do all I can in my power to preserve and provide a sustainable way of life for WODPA members and their families. Being a champion for this industry is in my DNA. I believe my drive, leadership, flexibility, and location in the West allows me to network and grow the membership for WODPA, and “spread the WODPA message.”

To continue working for organic dairy sustainability, it is vital that WODPA increase revenues with new members, current members and allied sector supporters. Through the generous support of dairymen and allied sector representatives, WODPA is able to get its message out and have a positive impact on organic dairy sustainability. **I humbly request your financial support of WODPA.**

I ask for your support in the year ahead. I ask for your input, patience, and prayers as I do my best to meet your needs for WODPA. I believe that if we are able to tell our stories, hold each other up and accountable, and support our WODPA family, we will be successful.

Thank you,

Robert J Mensonides
Executive Director
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