

Testimony of

Rose Marie Burroughs (Rosie) Matriarch ~ Special Projects, Hedgerows, Education, Outreach and Research

To the

United States House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture; Subcommittee on Livestock and Foreign Agriculture

At the hearing, on

Sustainability in the Livestock Sector: Environmental Gain and Economic Viability

Thursday, February 3, 2022

Good Morning subcommittee Chairman Costa, Ranking Member Johnson, and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you about my family's farms and how we strive to be the best stewards of our land. I am Rosie Burroughs of Burroughs Family Farms. My husband Ward and I have always felt a strong responsibility for taking care of the land and passing it down to the next generation in better condition than we inherited it. For our forefathers, my husband and I, and our children, we are proud to have continued the stewardship of our farms over the course of five generations.

With my husband Ward, we farm with 3 of our children and their families, in the rolling foothills of the San Joaquin Valley of California in Northeastern Merced County and Bonanza, Oregon. We are carrying on the Burroughs family farming legacy which spans over a century. Over the last 20 years we have formed partnerships with our children in ~ Full Circle Dairy, Burroughs Family Orchards and California Cloverleaf Farms

We are committed to Organic/Regenerative family farming practices and to promoting the preservation of quality farmland in a way that nourishes and regenerates the land & enhances the soil, air, water and the overall environment.

We have integrated regenerative farming practices into our farms including cover crops & management intensive grazing livestock in our minimum/no till orchards that enhance our interrelated holistic systems to reduce water use and improve soil fertility by focusing on nourishing soil biology and increasing biodiversity. We rely on no synthetic inputs of any kind, and maintain a sustainable loop of resources.

Hedgerows of more than 60 varieties of native plants, trees and shrubs, have been planted to provide habitat for pollinators and other beneficials across all farms. We have something in bloom every day of the year.

Burroughs Family Farms is the marketing flagship for Organic/Regenerative, grass-based, pasture-raised added value products produced by the family enterprises including almonds, beef, chickens, dairy, eggs, sheep, olive oil, walnuts, meat birds, & turkeys.

Farming/Ranching organically using Regenerative Practices and management intensive grazing is the key to the future. To do this, we are using the practices to build soil health: minimum or no-till the soil, cover the soil with a diversity of plants for as long as possible, use as many plant species as possible, integrate livestock grazing when possible. We use compost and manure for our fertility.

Ecdysis Foundation and Cal State East Bay have conducted research on our farm over the last 3 years. The research on our orchards has shown that we have improved organic matter, increased water holding capacity and infiltrations rates, significantly increased our carbon sequestration, increased our insect biomass, increased soil microbial activity, used less water and our yields are improving.

On December 31, 2020, we milked for the last time, at our California Cloverleaf Farms Dairy. California Cloverleaf Farms Dairy was closed because it was no longer financially viable. We have always followed the National Organic Program (NOP) rules but could not survive doing it. The organic dairy industry doesn't have a level playing field because the NOP has not enforced the pasture rule uniformly across the nation. Congress has directed the NOP to publish the final rule on Origin of Livestock, which NOP has NOT done. Having the NOP make the origin of livestock final rule will ensure all dairy farms are operating under the same rules.

Our other family organic dairy, Full Circle Dairy, is headed down the same road.... because the pay price is too low and the costs are too high to be economically viable. There is too much supply of cheap organic milk which lowers the pay price because the NOP has not done its job. This creates an unfair advantage for those operating under the intent of the National Organic Program and the intent of the organic rules. The following information is a short summary of our work and Congress's directive to issue the final rule in 2020 and has still not been addressed. In 2008, dairy producers across the country worked together to establish meaningful and enforceable standards for dairy cows and their progeny to be on productive grassland. Congressional Support required USDA to issue a final rule by including the following language in both the House and Senate passed Agriculture Appropriations bills for Fiscal Year 2020:

“No later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall issue a final rule based on the proposed rule entitled “National Organic Program; Origin of Livestock, “ published in the Federal Register on April 28, 2015 (80 Fed. Reg. 23455); Provided that the final rule shall incorporate public comments submitted in response to the proposed rule.”

We are losing or have lost the very pioneers of the organic dairy movement. We've lost those who were models of pasture-based organic dairy production, working with the land, environment, and Mother Nature to provide the organic milk consumers were looking for. The organic dairy industry was built on the backs of producers following the true INTENT of organic rules. To reduce organic dairy production to just numbers, minimum guidelines, and methodologies takes away from those working to keep integrity in the organic seal.

Despite these challenges and building on our successes outside of organic dairy, during this past year of 2021 we have started our transition out of each business partnership and will complete our succession to the next generation and to our grandchildren in 2022.

We believe that our greatest legacy is passing down the farm, the most precious of natural resources, to future generations, in better condition than when we inherited the land.

Our Nation's greatest resource is the family Rancher/Farmer who are the stewards of our farmlands and grasslands and are devoted to producing our country's food and fiber!

Investors from China are purchasing farm land with water in Merced County. We were told by one realtor that when s/he asked "why are you interested in purchasing farm land"? The person replied we are preparing for the future to ensure we have food to send to our people of China. Our Country needs to have the same priority about food, farming, ranching and the land that sustains our lives. How can we let food grown on our farm land be exported to feed other countries?

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and share my experiences about our family's farms. I hope and pray that you will take this information in this hearing to support by ensuring the sustainability of livestock systems so that more Farmers and Ranchers can get the support they need to become more resilient and do our part to produce food and fiber as climate change creates extreme weather challenges.

We are hosting a farm field day on February 17, 2022, we offer our farm to educate farmers and our community about the practices we are using. Please join us.

<https://noregretsinitiative.activehosted.com/index.php?action=social&chash=e3796ae838835da0b6f6ea37bcf8bcb7.4596&s=10f642e253f53f2b312c0217a0ddcf73>

www.burroughsfamilyfarms.com ~ <https://www.facebook.com/BurroughsFamilyFarms>

Ecdysis Foundation

<https://f1000research.com/articles/10-115>

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsufs.2021.664359/full>
<https://peerj.com/articles/4428/>
www.ecdysis.bio

Center for Regenerative Agriculture and Resilient Systems – CSU, Chico (csuchico.edu)

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Rosie Burroughs

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Rosie Burroughs 2022

Rosie and Ward Burroughs with their children own and operate sustainable farms in California's Central Valley. The Burroughs work hard to lower their carbon footprint, and to create nutrient rich soil that will benefit the future generations that will make a life and living from their farmland.

The Burroughs family has always had a commitment to provide quality dairy products to their customers. The family's dairy roots started out with Benjamin Burroughs, who moved from Illinois to Oakland in 1896 to start Walnut Grove Creamery. Over 120 years later, Benjamin's grandson Ward and his family now own Burroughs Family Farms in California's Central Valley, a flagship for marketing products that are produced by each of their family members' individual farms, including grass-based, organic milk and cheese, pasture-raised beef and eggs, and organic almonds and olive oil.

With three generations currently involved in Burroughs Family Farms, there is a deep connection between the family and the industry that has such deep ties to their heritage. As modern-day organic farmers they look at the whole system with a belief that everything has a purpose, and they embrace a responsibility to protect and nurture the environment that they rely on. They've integrated systems into their farm that protect not only their cows, but the entire biological cycle that is so involved in their business.

On the rolling foothills of the Central Valley the Burroughs have adopted a French drain system that channels excess water into storage ponds for later use. By channeling the water in this way, they are able to side-step the topsoil erosion and drainage problems that many farmers face on their land. Not only does this process replenish the aquifers beneath the fields, it also recycles all water for irrigation so that none of it leaves the farms.

Though management intensive grazing, they've cut down their costs of importing feed inputs from off the farm, which also reduces the greenhouse gas emissions created when transporting feed across the country. In fact, almost everything that is done on the Burroughs farms has sustainability and soil in mind, including their composting practices. By avoiding commercial and synthetic fertilizers and pesticides and using their manure and compost instead, they are also reducing their carbon footprint, building and protecting their soil and its essential microbiology to a more natural input.

On their almond farm, solar panels provide 80% of the power needed to irrigate the trees during the summer, offsetting some of the rising fuel and energy costs that are plaguing farmers around the country. The almond farm is also equipped with a weather station and soil moisture meters that are able to accurately detect moisture content, a technology that helps create the optimal conditions to grow.

For grandparents like Rosie and Ward, leaving their farm better off than when they got it is the single most important thing that they can accomplish for their family.

Rosie and Ward are involved in several organizations including the advisory board of California Climate and Agricultural Network (CalCAN), the Leadership Council of the Center for Regenerative Agriculture & Resilient Systems at CSU Chico, the organic panel for the California Almond Board, Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA). These groups have brought awareness to different issues and have worked to promote climate-friendly farming and also advocate for organic production.

**Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Information Required From Nongovernmental Witnesses**

House rules require nongovernmental witnesses to provide their resume or biographical sketch prior to testifying. If you do not have a resume or biographical sketch available, please complete this form.

1. **Name:** Rose Marie Burroughs (Rosie)
2. **Organization you represent:** Our Marketing: Burroughs Family Farms Farm Partnerships: Burroughs Family Orchards, California Cloverleaf Farms, Full Circle Dairy.
3. **Please list any occupational, employment, or work-related experience you have which add to your qualification to provide testimony before the Committee:** We are carrying on the family farming legacy of farming/ranching for over 120 years. My husband Ward and I have been farming/ranching since 1974. We started farming with our children in 2000.
4. **Please list any special training, education, or professional experience you have which add to your qualifications to provide testimony before the Committee:** We left Cal Poly SLO in 1974 and have spent our career 50 years taking classes, workshops, fielddays, seminars specializing in Management Intensive Grazing, Holistic Management, Organic and Sustainable Farming/Ranching, Organic Dairy Care of Livestock, Grazing, and Regenerative Practices. We have participated in Research the last 50 years.
5. **If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list the capacity in which you are representing that organization, including any offices or elected positions you hold:** N/A

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM OR YOUR BIOGRAPHY TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.

Truth in Testimony Disclosure Form

In accordance with Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5)* of the *Rules of the House of Representatives*, witnesses are asked to disclose the following information. Please complete this form electronically by filling in the provided blanks.

Committee: Agriculture

Subcommittee: Livestock and Foreign Agriculture

Hearing Date: 02/03/2022

Hearing Title :

"Sustainability in the Livestock Sector: Environmental Gain and Economic Viability"

Witness Name:

Rose Marie Burroughs (Rose)

Position/Title:

Matrunk ~ Special Project

Witness Type: Governmental Non-governmental

Are you representing yourself or an organization? Self Organization

If you are representing an organization, please list what entity or entities you are representing:

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

FOR WITNESSES APPEARING IN A NON-GOVERNMENTAL CAPACITY

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

Are you a fiduciary—including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent—of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing? If so, please list the name of the organization(s) or entities.

NO

Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) related to the hearing's subject matter that you, the organization(s) you represent, or entities for which you serve as a fiduciary have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

1. USDA Value Added Producer grant - \$250,000 10/2020
2. Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 1 & 2 (CFAP 1 - CFAP 2). I didn't read the email with this form until late afternoon today. Office staff left for the day - I do not know the amount received.

Please list any contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government and related to the hearing's subject that you, the organization(s) you represent, or entities for which you serve as a fiduciary have received in the past thirty-six months from the date of the hearing. Include the amount and country of origin of each contract or payment.

We have no contracts, grants or payment with a foreign government.

Please complete the following fields. If necessary, attach additional sheet(s) to provide more information.

- I have attached a written statement of proposed testimony.
- I have attached my curriculum vitae or biography.

* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(5), of the U.S. House of Representatives provides:

(5)(A) Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof.

(B) In the case of a witness appearing in a non-governmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include— (i) a curriculum vitae; (ii) a disclosure of any Federal grants or contracts, or contracts, grants, or payments originating with a foreign government, received during the past 36 months by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness and related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (iii) a disclosure of whether the witness is a fiduciary (including, but not limited to, a director, officer, advisor, or resident agent) of any organization or entity that has an interest in the subject matter of the hearing.

(C) The disclosure referred to in subdivision (B)(iii) shall include— (i) the amount and source of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) related to the subject matter of the hearing; and (ii) the amount and country of origin of any payment or contract related to the subject matter of the hearing originating with a foreign government.

(D) Such statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the privacy or security of the witness, shall be made publicly available in electronic form 24 hours before the witness appears to the extent practicable, but not later than one day after the witness appears.