

# NODPA NEWS

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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WWW.NODPA.COM

## Organic Industry News

### Farmers and Supporters Make Huge Impact on Pasture Requirement at D.C. Meeting

By Will Fantle

Organic dairy farmers from across the country trooped to Washington, D.C., during the first week of March to show their support for pasture as an essential part of organic farm management with ruminants. The farmers came to voice their support for enforcement of the pasture provision in the organic rules, as the matter came before the USDA's National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). Observers described the farmers' presence as the largest ever before the NOSB.

The issue was brought before the NOSB after The Cornucopia Institute, a Wisconsin-based farm policy research group, filed three separate formal complaints with the USDA charging that pasture's role as a major dietary component was being ignored by confinement dairy operations in the states of Colorado, Idaho, and California that have been certified as organic. With herd sizes ranging between 3000 and 5600 head, the three farms have been offering only token—if any—access to pasture for their lactating cows. Declaring lactation as "a stage of production" or that their farm's arid climate made pasture impractical, the farm owners have instead chosen to rely upon huge feed bunkers stocked with off-farm grain and hay (in some cases brought in by railcar) and a drylot confinement strategy for their huge milking herds.

Dairy farmers from California, Wisconsin

(Continued on page 2)

### NODPA Field Days

NODPA's Fifth Annual Field Days Event will be held Friday, August 12<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005 in Nichols NY. The Field Days will include field trips, workshops, a producers' meeting to discuss organic dairy industry issues, a trade show, and plenty of time to enjoy conversation and excellent, local organic food.

This year, the Field Days Event is being hosted by **Engelbert Farm** (Kevin, Lisa, Kris, Joe and John) and will include a field trip to the **Moore Farms** (Rob and Pam Moore). Both farms are in Nichols NY (west of Binghamton on the NY PA border). Sponsors so far this year include Horizon Organic and Organic Valley.

The Field Days will start at 1:00 PM on Friday, August 12<sup>th</sup> with a field trip to the Engelbert Farm to look at organic corn, soy and hay production and walk their pastures.

The Friday night producers' meeting and banquet will be held at the **Creamery** in Nichols. We will start with a social hour at 4:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 5:30 p.m. At 6:45 p.m., NRCS grassland specialist **Darrell Emick** will give the key note address on organic pasture management.

The producers' and NODPA members' meeting will start at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday morning, **Klaas Martens** will lead a workshop on soil fertility management. **Jim and Nancy Gardiner** will talk about medicinal and nutritional uses of herbs as part of a workshop on livestock health care. At 12:30 we will have lunch followed by our calf and door prize raffle. At 2:00 p.m. we will take a field trip to **Moore Farms** to look at milking

*Farmers and the public have until May 20 to comment on the "Livestock Committee Recommendation for Guidance Pasture Requirements".*

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from NODPA Formulates Pasture Policy, page 1)

sin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and throughout the Northeast passionately made their case before the USDA panel that the agency must enforce the pasture standard. The Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance and The Cornucopia Institute worked together to help organize farmer participation. If you would like to read the moving and compelling testimony from a number of your fellow NODPA members, you can find it on the National Organic Program (NOP) website at: [www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/transcripts/Feb2005/03\\_01\\_05.pdf](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/transcripts/Feb2005/03_01_05.pdf)

NODPA and The Cornucopia Institute also worked with the Organic Consumers Association and many other groups to encourage farmers and consumers who could not make it to Washington to send in written comments—and they sure did! More than 8000 public comments were submitted in support of strong enforcement of the USDA’s pasture standard.

NOSB members and USDA staff were most respectful of the unprecedented outpouring and concern in support of maintaining high organic integrity in terms of dairy production. “The good news is they heard what farmers said and responded,” said Mark Kastel, Cornucopia’s Senior Farm Policy Analyst, who also attended the meeting. The NOSB passed recommendations for changes in the organic regulations, and a guidance draft has now been issued to help organic certifiers enforce the law.

**Now is the time for you to comment on the draft pasture guidance document.** You can read what is being proposed on the NOP Web page: [www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/FinalRecommendations/Feb05/PastureGuidance.pdf](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/FinalRecommendations/Feb05/PastureGuidance.pdf)

**Farmers and the public have until May 20 to comment on the “Livestock Committee Recommendation for Guidance Pasture Requirements”.** In particular, the NOSB is seeking feedback on organic system plan requirements; temporary confinement; and what constitutes “appropriate pasture conditions.” In addition, the NOSB wants input on specific dry matter intake from pasture language and minimum number of days on pasture; reference to regional NRCS-prescribed grazing standards; and whether or not any of the guidance text should be recommended to the NOP for a rule change.

You can supply comments in several fashions: Mail: The National Organic Standards Board; c/o Arthur Neal; Room 4008, South Building; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, D.C. 20250-0001. E-mail:

[NOSB.Livestock@usda.gov](mailto:NOSB.Livestock@usda.gov).  
Fax: 202-205-7808.

The NOP requests that you clearly indicate if you are for or against the NOSB recommendation or some part of it and why. They ask that you include recommended wording changes as appropriate, and a copy of articles or other references supporting your comments.

Contact Cornucopia Institute at [organic@cornucopia.org](mailto:organic@cornucopia.org) or by calling 608-625-2042 or visit [www.cornucopia.org/news.html](http://www.cornucopia.org/news.html) for further details on the complaints filed against the three factory organic dairy farms. Most consumers and organic producers hold high standards and expecta-

tions about organic farming and the quality of organic food. The pasture issue is an opportunity for producers and consumers to reinforce this view and help protect the future of truly sustainable farming.

*If you would like to read the moving and compelling testimony from a number of your fellow NODPA members, you can find it on the National Organic Program (NOP) website.*

*Will Fantle is co-founder of The Cornucopia Institute, a progressive farm and food policy research group based in Wisconsin. He is the organization's Research Director.*

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### From The NODPA Desk

*By Ed Maltby, NODPA Coordinator*

During the last few months I have been busy with the transition of the administration of NODPA away from NOFA/VT to its own office. I want to thank Sarah, Lisa, Kirsten, Enid and everyone at NOFA/VT for making the transition as easy as possible and for all the volunteer work of NODPA members in producing the *NODPA News*, planning the 2005 Field Days, and the concerted action to present farmer's views on the interpretation of organic rules. NODPA has a diverse membership whose views are well represented by the farmer Reps and the NODPA Board. This ensures that all organic dairy farmer views are taken into consideration in preparing NODPA position papers.

NODPA, now in its fifth year, has built a solid infrastructure that encourages and facilitates communication among the 450 organic dairy farmers within its organization. As the new part-time coordinator, the NODPA Board has given me the task of improving the services that NODPA can offer its farmer members while making the organization more efficient and cost-effective. NODPA was started with grant funding and has been slowly building its own income stream. *NODPA News* now brings in around half of its own production costs from advertisers, and I am starting to send out reminders to members whose subscriptions have lapsed in order to ensure a steady income. The purchasers and processors of organic milk and vendors of organic supplies are generous in their support of NODPA events, and I will continue to build on the solid relationships that Sarah and Lisa have established.

We have two great and very easy ways for you to financially support NODPA and fund the services you value: *NODPA News*, maintenance and improvement of the web site, moderation of the ODAIRY List Serve, organization of the annual Field Days event and responding to member requests to distribute action items and alerts.

One way is to become a subscribing member at either the basic \$35 level or higher dollar amounts. Please check to see if your name is on the 2005 member list ( p. 21) if it is not, please fill out the form in this newsletter or go to [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com) and download the membership form

The second way you can help is to request that the company that purchases your milk deduct \$.02 per cwt from your milk check and pay it to NODPA. You can also follow the example of some farmers and just send in a donation equivalent to the 2 cents per cwt that would be deducted over a year. You can find the \$.02 check off form at [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com).

I look forward to meeting you all at the Field Days event in August and putting faces to a lot of names, although I don't guarantee I'll remember you all.

*NODPA has a diverse membership whose views are well represented by the farmer Reps and the NODPA Board.*

*(Continued from NODPA Field Days page 1)*

parlor design in their New Zealand style swing parlor, grazing management with a seasonal dairy herd raising calves on cows, once a day milking and strategies for reducing grain feeding. Darrell Emmick will participate in the farm walk and lead a discussion on pasture management. There will also be many opportunities for farmers to visit the trade show, network with one another, learn about resources, and meet resource people in the organic dairy industry. You will receive a brochure in a few weeks with more information and registration details or you can click on [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com) to learn more.

*It is not too late to be a Sponsor or a Supporter for the 2005 NODPA Field Days! Contact Ed Maltby for more information (email: [emaltby@comcast.net](mailto:emaltby@comcast.net) Tel: 413-772-0444). To be listed in our Brochure, we need to hear from you by **May 10th.***



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## Western Organic Dairy Conference

*By Henry Perkins*

The Western Organic Dairy Conference started with a registration's reception on Friday evening, April 1<sup>st</sup>. The opening remarks were given by Rich Ghilarduchi of Humboldt Dairy, with the after dinner presentation given by Katherine DiMatteo from the Organic Trade Association.

Drs. Hue Karreman and Joe Snyder, one from the east coast and one from the west coast, started off the second day with discussion on their varied approaches to treating a myriad of health problems.

Session 2 covered the present challenges in the feed situation in organic dairying. This session was moderated by Jule Taylor of Horizon, with a panel made up of Lynn Clarson, a grain broker, Jerry Brunetti, Agri-dynamics, and Carmen Fernholtz of OFARM. This was a fascinating and informative presentation.

Session 3 covered a variety of issues with which the NOP is currently dealing. Moderated by George Siemon, the panelists included Dave Engel, Brian McElroy, and Katherine Withey. Discussion centered around the Arthur Harvey case, the pasture issue and other problems from the certifier's point of view.

Session 4, "On Farm Challenges" was moderated by Dr. Harry Markos with panelists Dan Bansen, Jim Gardiner, Jerry Noble, Dr. Hue Karreman, and Dr. Joe Snyder. Dr. Markos brought up a number of problems associated with organic dairying and asked each panelist how they dealt

with it. This was followed with comments from the 2 vets on the methods utilized. This format illustrated contrasting solutions and was very interesting.

The day ended with Jerry Brunetti speaking at the evening dinner. He gave an excellent presentation about treating common ailments with ordinary food.

Sunday morning's producer meeting was held in order to try to form a western organic dairy farmer's organization and to explore some way of hopefully creating a national group. The Northeast and the Midwest had representatives present as did OFARM to encourage and support this idea, but the main effort must begin with the western farmers. NODPA and MODPA are willing to aid however they can.

### Western Group Formation Committee

**Mark Retzloff**, president and COO of Aurora Organic Dairy, with 4000+ organic cows in Platteville, CO and plans to open an organic dairy in TX with 4000 cows.

**Blake Alexander**, Crescent City, CA, milks 2300 with 1600 being organic.

**Case Vander Eyk Jr**, Pixley, CA, milks 10,000 cows split between organic and conventional.

**Tony Azevedo**, Stephinson, CA, milks 225 cows with his two sons Antonio & Adam

**Dan Bansen**, Dayton, OR, milks 800+ cows.

**Justin Vyn**, DeGroot Dairy, Nevada, has 10,000 cows split between organic and conventional.

**Jerome Rosa**, Gervais, OR, milks 300 cows.

**Rob Renner**, shipping to Humbolt Creamery in CA.

**George McClelland**, shipping to Clover Stornetta in CA.



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### Midwest Producers Form MODPA

The Midwest Organic Dairy Producer Association (MODPA) recently formed to represent organic dairy producers in WI, MN, ND, SD, IA, NE, KS, MO, IL, IN, OH, & MI with the mission "to promote communication and networking for the betterment of all Midwest organic dairy producers and enhance a sustainable farmgate price." Objectives are:

1. To ensure a fair and sustainable farm gate price.
2. Keep family farms viable for future generations.
3. Promote ethical, ecological and humane farming practices.
4. Networking among producers of all organic commodities.
5. Promote public policy, research and education in support of organic agriculture.

#### MODPA Board

**Steve Pechacek**, President, 715/262-5879: Steve and his family milks about 100 cows and farms 600 acres of land near Prescott, WI

**Jim Greenberg**, Vice President, 715/687-8147: Jim and his three children, Jeffery, Jerimie, and Janet, milk 500 cows and have 2000 certified acres in Stratford WI.

**Darlene Coehoorn**, Treasurer, 920/921-5541: Darlene and husband Dan milk 55 cows and run 450 acres near Rosendale, WI.

**Pam Reisgraf**, Secretary, 952/492-2074: Pam and husband Jeff and family milk 60 cows on 350 acres near Jordan, MN.

**John Kiefer**, 608/544-3702: John farms in Sauk City, WI with 75 cows on 200 acres.

**John Kinsman**, 608/986-3815: John milks 32 cows in Sauk County, WI. He is president of the national Family Farm Defenders and is VP of the National Farm Coalition.

**Ernest Martin**, 419/895-1182: Ernest and his family milk around 55 cows near Shiloh, OH on 140 acres.

**Bob Mueller**, 320/256-7337: Bob and his wife Theresa farm 400 acres in central MN and milk 100 cows.

**Jim Wedeberg**, 888/444-6455 ext. 251: Jim and son John milk 45 cows in Gays Mills, WI.

**Ed Zimba**, 989/872-2680: Ed farms near Deford, MI with 300 cows and 2000 acres.

To join MODPA, send a check for \$35 (payable to MODPA), to Steve Pechacek at N6157 1145<sup>th</sup>, Prescott, WI 54021. Include your name, address, phone number, and whether you are an organic dairy farmer or a supporting sponsor. While MODPA encourages organic dairy farmers in other regions to join MODPA and receive their newsletter, MODPA requests the respect of organic dairy farmers to vote and represent their own region.



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## Organic Dairy Farmers Forming Alliance For Promotion Assessment

*By Melissa Hughes*

In 2002, Congress passed a law granting organic farmers an exemption from the generic promotion assessment that is used to fund programs such as "Got Milk?" and "Beef, Its What's For Dinner." The USDA has now implemented rules to allow for the federal exemption to become a reality.

What does this mean for you? For dairy farmers, 15¢ of every cwt is deducted from the milk check and used for state and federal promotion programs. In order to qualify for the exemption from this assessment, dairy farmers must complete a simple form and submit it to the Dairy Promotion Board with an attached copy of the farm's organic certification. Because of this exemption, dairy farmers will receive back at least 5¢ of the deduction (10¢ may still be used towards state programs).

Many organic farmers have been involved in conversations over what should happen to the 5¢. Although some have said it should go back to the farmers, many have agreed that the time has come for a nationwide alliance of organic farmers. This alliance would be used for education, research, promotion of organic farming, and political action when necessary. To that end, a task force of farmers has worked together over the past few months to support the creation of a nationwide group, tentatively named the Organic Producers' Association ("OPA").

OPA is planned to be a non-profit corporation, with a

farmer-run board of directors. Funding for OPA would come primarily from the 5¢ deduction, and would rely on the farmers' commitment to divert the money to the network, through a milk check assignment or their cooperative. OPA will act as a receiving house for the diverted promotion assessments, and the farmers on the board will receive and assess proposals for using the money for the benefit of all organic farmers. Proposals could range from funding for commodity sector groups such as NODPA, MODPA or OFARM, research on herd health or soil quality, to promoting farmers to transition to organic farming, or for lobbying efforts to protect and strengthen organic standards. OPA hopes to operate with very little administrative overhead, and therefore obtain the biggest benefit out of the promotion money.

For dairy farmers who are part of a cooperative, the board of directors will most likely decide whether or not to participate in OPA. Independent farmers' participation is strictly voluntary, however it is thought that these independent farmers will see the benefits of joining in a national group using the promotion assessment for the benefit of the whole movement. Steve Morrison and Jim Gardiner, NODPA President and NODPA Board Member, have both agreed to work on the task force forming OPA, and would be happy to discuss your thoughts or concerns regarding the association. In the coming months you can expect to see more about OPA, and information on how to apply for the exemption.

*Melissa Hughes is the Cooperative Counsel for Organic Valley Cooperative.*

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## 2004 Milk Quality Award Winners

Each year NODPA likes to recognize organic dairy quality award winner. Congratulations to the 2004 winners!

### Lancaster Organic Farmers Cooperative

**Gold Quality Winners:** Ivan Brubacher, Narvon, PA; John Hartranft, Bernville, PA; Levi King, Quarryville, PA; Levi Miller, Bird-In-Hand, PA.

**Quality Winners:** Amos Beiler, Christiana, PA; David Fisher, Narvon, PA; Alvin Stolfus, Paradise, PA

### Organic Valley Cream of the C.R.O.P.P. Milk Quality Awards

**East Region:** North Hardwick Dairy-Meyer Family, North Hardwick, VT.

**Midwest Region:** Dan & Darlene Coehoorn, Rosendale, WI

### Horizon Organic Exceptional Quality Award Winners

**Maine:** Wayne & Patricia Bragg, Sidney, ME (2nd year); Henry & Henrietta Perkins, Albion, ME (4th year).

**Vermont:** David & Susan Childs, Orange, VT; Gene & Pamela Manning, East Barre, VT; David & Charlene Rooney, Morrisville, VT.

**Pennsylvania:** John K. & Melinda Lapp, Ephrata, PA (3rd year); Forrest Stricker, Wernersville, PA; Henry & Emma Zook, Newmanstown, PA (2nd year).

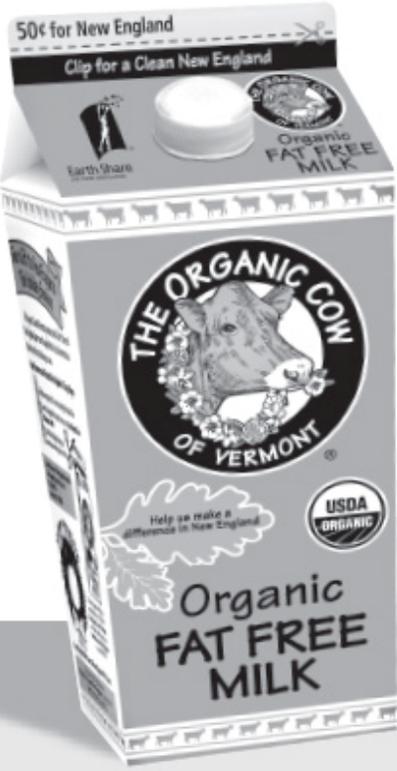
**New York:** Doug & Penny Bratt, Memphis, NY (2nd year); Charles Deichmann, Belmont, NY (3rd year); David Detweiler, Richfield Springs, NY; Ernest Girod, Jr., Houghton, NY; Thomas & Wendy Hayes, Richville, NY; Robert Kathmann, Delhi, NY; Diane Kistler, Evans Mills, NY; Donald Kraeger, Vernon, NY; Daniel Miller, Fillmore, NY; Gerald Snyder, Alfred Station, NY (2nd year); George & Linda Wright, Hermon, NY (2nd year).

**Michigan:** Harley & Linda Thomas, Henderson, MI.

**Minnesota:** Roger & Michelle Benrud, Goodhue, MN (2nd year).

**Wisconsin:** Roger & Verna Klefstad, Ridgeland, WI; Steve & Glorianne Pechacek, Prescott, WI (2nd year); Lowell Volkert, New Richmond, WI.

**\*\*2004 National winner is Henry & Henrietta Perkins of Albion, Maine\*\***



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## More Organic Milk Sought in Northeast

**Upstate Farms Cooperative**, a member owned cooperative headquartered in LeRoy, NY, is establishing their own supply of organic milk. Upstate Farms Cooperative and their owner-members operate 3 milk plants in Buffalo and Rochester, NY. Our members are interested in producing organic milk. If you are in the Finger Lakes/Western NY area and are interested in learning more about Upstate Farms Coop, please contact Bill Young at 800-724-6455 x 6225, [byoung@upstatefarms.com](mailto:byoung@upstatefarms.com) or visit our website at [www.upstatefarms.com](http://www.upstatefarms.com).

**LOFCO** continues to look for milk in PA/MD, particularly southeast PA. The market is strong. Please contact Levi Miller at 717/661-8682 or Jerry McCleary at 717/577-8809.

**Dairy Marketing Services (DMS)** is looking for organic milk for its customers - H.P.Hood and Horizon Foods - at very competitive prices. We also have very attractive packages available for farms transitioning into organic dairy farming. Please contact Diane Bothfeld at 1-888-589-6455 extension 5546.

**Horizon Organic** continues to grow its producer partner network in the Northeast states of ME, MD, NH, NY, PA, VA & VT and also its Midwest base and is pursuing relationships in IN, IA, IL, KY, MI, MN, OH & WI. Horizon Organic offers competitive pay and long-term contracts.

Producers in the east should contact Cindy Masterman at 888-648-8377. Producers in the Midwest should contact Neal Forsthoefel at 800-237-2711, x-159.

**United Ag Services** in Seneca Falls, NY is looking for organic milk in NY and northern PA. Please contact Jim Patsos at 315-568-2750 or 800-326-4251.

**HP Hood** is starting new organic milk routes in a number of Northern Tier States and would like to hear from you. Our support of sustainable agriculture, a signing bonus and transition assistance have helped many already. Please call Mike Suever at 617-887-8419.

**CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley** is interested in growing our producer regions in the Northeast & New England now and into the future. Please contact Peter Miller, East Region Pool Coordinator, at (888) 444-6455, x407 to leave a voice message, or mobile at (612) 801-3506, [peter.miller@organicvalley.coop](mailto:peter.miller@organicvalley.coop).

*Any buyers looking for organic milk who would like to be listed in this column for the August issue, please email the desired text to Kathie at [randkarnold1@juno.com](mailto:randkarnold1@juno.com) or call 607/842-6631 by July 15<sup>th</sup>.*



**Thank you,  
organic dairy farmers,  
for all that you do.**

**From all the folks at Stonyfield Farm**



### New Pennsylvania Program Focuses on Organic Dairy

Responding to the increased interest in organic dairy, Pennsylvania Certified Organic has developed a project to address the concerns of transitioning and existing organic dairy producers-- "Focus on Organic Dairy: An Integrated Program for Pennsylvania Producers".

The project will employ an organic dairy program specialist who will enroll new producers into the organic certification program. The specialist will begin working with producers when they apply to help them identify any changes that must be made before they can be certified.

The program will also support new and experienced organic milk producers by providing workshops, on-farm field days, farmer-advisor connections, written guidance materials, business planning worksheets and staff assistance.

"Experience has taught us that farmers learn best in an integrated program that includes presentations from experts, plenty of opportunity for discussions with other farmers, preferably on-farm, and follow-up materials that they can refer to when problems later arise," says Leslie Zuck, Executive Director of Pennsylvania Certified Organic. "In addition, producers would like to have

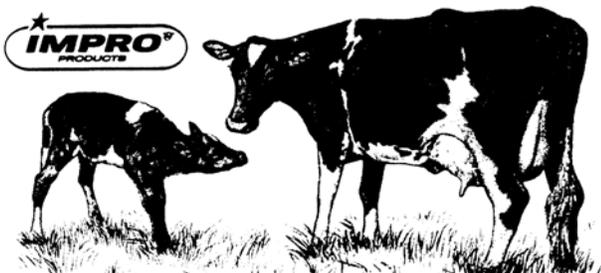
'someone' they can call or email to get resources and information when they need it - such as when they have a sick animal or an urgent crop problem. The organic dairy program specialist will be the 'someone' producers can contact for answers." For more information about the project or to inquire about the dairy specialist position, contact Pennsylvania Certified Organic, (814) 364-1344, [pco@paorganic.org](mailto:pco@paorganic.org).

### Richard Mathews Leaves NOP

Word spread through the organic grapevine in late March that Richard Mathews was leaving the National Organic Program. He has been administrator of the NOP since it's inception. As of April 1, he became Associate Deputy Administrator for Transportation at USDA.

At the NOSB meeting in early March, Richard went on record in support of strengthening the pasture requirement. Although the public comment period was only scheduled from 8 to noon, just over half of the people signed up to speak had been to the podium. When it appeared that it was possible that the public comment period would be cut off and the rest would not have the opportunity to speak, Richard grabbed his microphone and said, "These producers have traveled long distances to get here and they need to have the opportunity to speak."

Thank you, Richard, for all your work.



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# Commentary



*'Commentary' is an open forum for sharing thoughts, opinions, concerns, and whatever else inspires you. Please send your submissions to any of the Editors (see page 22 for contact information)*

## Why I Filed Suit Against 80/20 and Lawsuit Updates

*By Arthur Harvey*

My civil suit against USDA was filed in October 2002, aimed at nine Provisions in the organic Rule, which I believed violated the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990. Finally, the First Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with me on 3 counts. One of these was the dairy herd Exception: NOP rule 205.236. This allowed, instead of the Act's requirement of 12 months organic management before selling a cow's milk as organic---only 3 months, with the previous nine months a blend of organic and conventional feed. This was the so-called 80/20 provision.

The reason I complained about this was two-fold: 1) 80/20 was deceptive, in that the 20% could be fed as grain, while the 80% could be hay, and so half of the cow's nutrients were conventional. 2) Dairy farmers who buy conventional feed nowadays are almost certainly buying genetically modified corn and soybeans, since there is no way to segregate those crops from other conventional sources. Cows should not be fed GMO feed until 90 days before selling milk as organic.

As a result of the court's verdict, 80/20 is history. In discussing how this verdict will be implemented, I consulted many dairy farmers and other Industry people. Eventually, we agreed on the Harvey-Siemon resolution, which states that the Rule should be left as it is, after removing the words "a minimum of 80-percent". I am suggesting a phase-in period of 24 months. George Siemon feels the industry can live with this.

I am still dickering with USDA about the precise terms of implementing the appeals court decision about the dairy conversion matter. If anyone has influence with USDA, it can be exerted until April 28, after which USDA will follow their own course if we cannot agree on a joint motion to the court. I am asking for the Harvey-Siemon resolution with a phase in of 24 months from the court order (which will come within a month or so if USDA and I agree on a joint motion). After that, no further non-conforming dairy products could enter the stream of commerce. That would also mean that any conversions under the existing Rule would have to begin 12 months prior to the 24-month deadline.

If a joint motion is not agreed, then I will file my motion and USDA will file theirs, and no one knows exactly what it will contain, or what the judge will decide to issue.

On March 30, the First Circuit Court of Appeals did amend its ruling in *Harvey v. Veneman*. In response to my motion for clarification, the following footnote was added on Count 3: "The ban on the addition of synthetic substances in handling applies only to those products labeled 'organic' or '100% organic.' The statute does not prohibit the addition of synthetic substances to foods labeled 'made with organic [ingredients]' provided the other requirements of the Act are met."

*Arthur Harvey is an organic inspector and organic blueberry grower from Maine.*

*As a result of the court's verdict, 80/20 is history... I am suggesting a phase-in period of 24 months.*



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# Organic Production

## Feature Farm - /

### Engelbert Farm

**Kevin & Lisa Engelbert, Nichols, NY**

*By Kevin Engelbert*

My forefathers came from Germany in 1848 and began our family tradition of farming in the southern tier of New York. At present, we have 140 acres of pasture and 150 acres of crop land of our own plus rent an additional 400 acres of ground suitable for row-cropping and 150 acres of grass hay ground.

My father attended Cornell in the 1940's, and was entrenched in 'high production per acre' philosophy. Our land, while very fertile, is also very prone to flooding. My dad was the first farmer in the area to use chemicals extensively. They allowed him to keep the low-lying fields in continuous corn, while keeping the higher elevation ground in continuous hay/alfalfa production. He irrigated, fertilized heavily, sprayed for pests with abandon, and grew some incredibly high-yielding crops.

I graduated from college in 1979, and by that time some serious problems were surfacing on our farm. Our soils, hard as a rock, plowed up as blocks of compacted, lumpy, lifeless, dirt. We could no longer grow high yielding, weed-free crops, even though we rotated chemicals and used them at their highest recommended levels. We were spending over \$25,000/year on chemicals of all kinds, and also spending \$1,000 month on vet bills. My dad was the first to start a weekly herd-health check due to the increasing health problems we were encountering. We no longer made culling decisions--we simply kept the cows we could keep alive, get bred back, that didn't lose quarters, that could keep their feet and legs under them, etc.

The key event that got me thinking seriously about the shape of our farm, and the direction we were headed, was the purchase of 20 bred heifers in the summer of 1979. I was quite proud of the fact that we were doing so, because up until then we had had a closed herd, and I thought purchasing heifers was a sign of progress! My grandmother opened my eyes when she learned of our need to purchase heifers to maintain cow numbers by saying "Well, we al-

ways had extra heifers to sell--sure helped our bottom line. Just think how much better off you would be if you were selling heifers instead of buying them!" And she was, of course, right.

I spent that winter doing a lot of thinking, and came to the obvious conclusion that there had to be a connection between the amount of money we were spending on chemicals and all the problems we were having. As an experiment in 1980, we used oats as a nurse crop for our alfalfa seedings, instead of clear seeding with Eptam, and surprise,

*It didn't take long to realize that managed grazing was also going to be a key in our long-term sustainability.*

surprise - we had a good crop of oats and a nice stand of alfalfa. Who would've thunk it?

That was all the success I needed. In 1981 we quit using chemicals cold-turkey, and haven't used any since. Seven years later, after our herd health checks had gradually been reduced to an as-needed basis, I finally had the confidence to sell all of our spraying equipment. In spite of all the nay-sayers, we have seen with our own eyes the truth about soil health, plant health, animal health, and, in turn, human

health. We have learned that the more you work with Mother Nature, the more successful you will be in the long run, and that's what we try to do with our crops and our animals, as much as our location and facilities allow.

A huge step in that direction was rotational grazing, which we began in the late 1980's. Getting the cows out of the barn and off concrete was another eye-opening experience. It didn't take long to realize that managed grazing was also going to be a key in our long-term sustainability. Our herd's health had been continuously improving since we converted to organic crop production, and it improved even more once we started pasturing again. (By the late 60's, in an effort to push milk production even higher, my dad had stopped pasturing the milking cows, and by the middle 70's, he had stopped pasturing dry cows and bred heifers.)

Our feeding program evolved to the point that we feed only 8-10 lbs. of high moisture ground ear corn per milking cow per day, along with pasture, supplemented with bale-



*Engelbert Family: Front row, left to right: Lisa, Angela Hill (Kris' fiancée) Deidre Jacobus (Joe's fiancée), Maggie (Joe and Deidre's daughter). Back row, left to right: Kevin, John, Kris, Joe*

*(Continued on page 12)*

(Continued from Feature Farm— Engelbert page 11)

age as needed throughout the year. We feed kelp at a rate of 2 oz. per cow per day, and offer some free choice during stressful times of the year.

By and large, we have moved to seasonal milk production, to time our peak milk production with peak pasture production. We do milk all year, but the majority of our cows freshen in the spring and early summer, and we don't normally freshen any animals from December thru February. Our herd health strategy basically involves keeping our soils healthy and in balance as best we can.

We also don't push the cows for production and we keep them outdoors all the time, which helps them stay healthy. There has never been a barn designed and built by cows. They are meant to be outdoors. We don't have a cow in our herd that has ever had her feet trimmed, or that has ever been examined by a vet for anything other than a pregnancy check. We spend less than \$2/cow/year on purchased feed (kelp), and less than \$2/cow/year on vet expenses (dehorning calves). We did not reach these numbers overnight, but gradually as our soil health continued to improve over the years.

We became involved with NOFA-NY in its early years, and obtained our first certification in 1984/85. We had hoped to put in our own processing plant, but were unable to convince a bank that organic farming was not simply a fad and that demand for organic dairy products was sure to increase dramatically at some point. In the early 80's, there

***Our herd health strategy basically involves keeping our soils healthy and in balance as best we can.***

were no set organic standards for dairy operations, since all organic farms then were small vegetable or fruit farms. We explained our entire operation to the NOFA-NY Administrator at the time, she came to see our farm, and then declared we were organic! I served on the NOFA-NY Standards Board for a number of years, and our farm helped serve as a role model for NOFA-NY's dairy standards.

The biggest challenge we face now involves trying to increase our land base and our income level so that we can support two more families--our oldest sons have both decided they want to farm. We have decided that milking more cows is not the direction we want to go in, and doesn't lend itself to true organic production in my opinion. We are going to try to expand our cash crop sales, and we have begun to diversify into beef, veal, and pork production.

To be truly sustainable though, farmers need a fair price (namely, parity price) for their products, and I'm hopeful that organic dairy production can help achieve that worthwhile goal. As our sons take over more and more of the workload, I would like to devote more of my time to helping maintain the strict organic standards that have enabled small, family farms to survive. The past 25+ years have been very enjoyable watching the organic movement grow and develop, and I hope more and more people come into the fold!

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# Feature Farm — //

## Moore Farms Rob & Pam Moore, Nichols, NY

### Tell us about your farm.

We farm approximately 350 acres of heavy clay soils along the Pennsylvania border of central New York with 250 acres of improved perennial pastures and 100 acres of rented hayfields. Our seasonal herd of about 55 crossbred cows freshen from mid-April to May, and are usually dried off in late December. We raise about 14 heifers each year, which allows plenty of discretionary culling while still growing the herd.

The dairy is designed to be run by a single operator milking up to 80 head in a swing 10 milking parlor housed in a solar barn. All cattle feed is grown on the farm and custom harvested, enabling us to manage with little more equipment than an aging 65 HP tractor. We also raise certified organic pigs and chickens, and direct market a variety of products, which keeps us both fully employed on the farm. An energetic cattle-herding border collie, and three well-meaning "guard dogs" round out our work crew.

*Last year we had no vet bill.*

### How did you get started in farming?

Rob grew up on the dairy, which his father and uncle took over from their father. Over the last 150 years his family owned and operated farms on most of the surrounding land too. Today he's the only one still farming. We have three children between us--a math teacher, an accountant and a carpenter--who live nearby and occasionally lend a hand. Since none of them are presently interested in milking cows we're taking on an apprentice.

### Tell us about your transition to organic.

Rob purchased the Moore Farms registered herd in 1980 and managed with an emphasis on improving genetics, cow comfort and milk production. In 1986, after hearing NRCS agent Darrell Emmick promote the virtues of self-harvested quality forage, Rob began rotationally grazing. Herd health expenses dropped, and the grain bill was cut in half (with no decrease in milk production).

As Rob became more intensive in his use of grass, he phased out a lot of medical interventions, like mastitis treatments. During this period, neighbor Kevin Engelbert was developing organic cropping and dairying practices on

*(Continued on page 14)*

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*(Continued from Feature Farm—Moore page 13)*

his farm and the close friendship influenced both farms. Corn and alfalfa growing ceased in 1990, when Rob's dad and uncle retired, and the farm essentially lost its cropping, equipment and mechanical expertise. Committing the entire farm to pasture and hay eliminated most chemical use, ended plowing on our highly erodible hill top soils, and enabled Rob to focus on the cows and milking.

In 1991, after a severe drought, crop failure, burn out, and bottoming-out of the registered cattle market, Rob sold the fancy milking herd and started a fence business. Five years building high tensile horse fences, raising other people's heifers, and reading about New Zealand style grass dairying convinced Rob to get back into milking--without the long hours, machinery-dependence and materials-handling struggles of the old farm. By 1996 his management approach was nearly organic, the only changes needed for certification being fly control alternatives and stopping the now rare dose of antibiotics. He bought 50 Holstein and Jersey cross heifers from a nearby grass dairy, purchased and certified 125 acres of the farm, and by 1998 was milking in a new parlor and shipping organic milk.



**Rob & Pam Moore, Carly Arnold (short term intern)**

adapted to our farm and management. We stopped vaccinating altogether in 1999. Last year we had no vet bill.

The original herd of Holsteins and Jersey crosses were bred to Dutch Belts (for reproduction), Normande (for good temperament, milk and meat characteristics), Milking Shorthorn, Brown Swiss, Ayrshire and Jersey for other genetic traits of value in our system. We've moved to a more dual-purpose cow that holds her body condition better through winters outside, grazes well, calves with ease in early spring, is healthy, calm in the parlor, and delicious to eat.

**Talk about raising your calves with their moms and how that works.**

Under most circumstances cows give birth, bond with and begin nursing their calves without our getting involved. They're out on pasture and we observe them from a distance (through binoculars) and up close at milking time (we skip the first milking or two after birth). Vigilance ensuring calves nurse and get their colostrum shortly after birth is critical, can be time-consuming, and sometimes requires

*(Continued on page 15)*

**What are your basic farm guiding philosophies and management strategies?**

Nature is the guiding principal in Rob's low input approach to dairying, which includes year round pasturing/outwintering, high quality perennial forages, seasonal milk production without feeding grain, custom hay harvesting, breeding with bulls, no barns, no employees and time for other pursuits in winter.

We no longer produce large volumes of milk, nor do we have the expenses, health problems and headaches that went along with it. When milk production drops we milk only once a day. We're totally grass-based and feed our cows only pasture, hay and grass baleage. When there isn't sufficient grazing, we haul baleage out to the fields, feeding it in ring feeders and sometimes unrolling the bales for feed and dry bedding. Winter chores after dry off take about an hour/day.

**Describe your herd health strategies.**

We promote and maintain cattle health and vigorous immune systems through low stress handling, outdoor living and birthing, crossbreeding with bulls, providing nourishing forage grown on clean biologically active soils, allowing cows to raise calves, and using cattle genetically and socially

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(Continued from Feature Farm—Moore page 14)

helping the calf nurse or bottle-feeding colostrum. Last year we lost no calves. Allowing calves to drink as much milk as they want gives them a strong start in life. We estimate ours average 2 gallons/day and their vitality more than compensates for any "loss" in milk income.

When we began raising calves on cows, bringing the cows in to be milked could take a long time (because all the calves would start nursing and the cows stopped moving). After a couple years we solved that problem with a herding dog. Cows are very protective when there are calves with the herd, and we've never had a predator problem even though there are bear, coyote and dogs in our area. Our border collie had to learn not to get as close when herding a cow with her calf.

We allow young calves to come through the milking parlor with their mothers.

Temple Grandin says if cattle are frightened the first time they experience something new (like the parlor) they will re-experience that that fear in subsequent encounters. This may



*Moore's youngstock*

help explain why milking fresh heifers isn't as stressful as it used to be, and why milking in general is relatively uneventful.

Another reason we like raising calves on cows is it allows us to rotationally graze very young calves with three strand high tensile and single strand polytape fencing. The calves can easily get through those fences, but they don't want to if mom's inside.

Weaning is not a fun time, but thankfully it doesn't drag on for too long. We've tried different methods of separating cows and three month old calves, while allowing them to see one another. In the past we've used two strand polytape which the most determined calves could breach to reunite with their mothers. At milking time we separated off those calves and

herded them back to the calf area (a sequence occasionally repeated for 2 or 3 days). Last year Rob fenced the calf yard with polynetting and there were no escapes.

## Meet Your NODPA Representatives

**Liz Bawden:** Liz farms in Hammond, New York, and has been organic since 2000. She milks 50 Holstein and Brown Swiss cows with husband Brian and their milk is currently marketed to Hood.

**Annie Claghorn** farms in Leicester, VT and has been involved with NODPA since the first year of its formation. She farms with her husband Catlin and has been certified organic since 1996. Annie and Catlin milk a herd of 30 Jerseys seasonally and ship their milk to Organic Valley.

**Jim and Nancy Gardner** farm in Otselic, New York, and Nancy is NODPA Secretary. They milk up to 50 mixed breed cows and ship to Organic Valley.

**Siobhan Griffin:** farms in Schnevus, NY and has been involved with NODPA for 3 years. Her operation has been certified organic since 1997, and she milks 80 Holstein cows but is making changes to shift her herd to seasonal production. Her milk goes to Organic Valley.

**Dave Johnson:** farms in Liberty, Pennsylvania and has been involved with NODPA for 2 years as a Representative and Vice President since the fall of 2003. David's farm has been certified organic for 4 years, milking a mixed breed seasonal herd of 50 cows and shipping his milk to Organic Valley.

**Arden Landis:** farms in Kirkwood, Pennsylvania and has been involved with NODPA for 3 years. He has been certified organic since 1999 and milks 85 cows. The breeds on

his farm are Holstein, Jersey, Brown Swiss/Holstein crosses and numerous other crosses. Arden ships his milk to Horizon Organic.

**Steve and Mia Morrison:** farm in Charleston, Maine and have been certified since 1997. They milk about 50 Jerseys and ship to Horizon Organic. Both have been involved with NODPA since its inception, Steve serves as President and Mia as a NODPA News editor and board member.

**Henry Perkins:** farms in Albion, Maine and milks 70 Dutch belted, Holstein, & Dutch belted/Holstein crosses and has been shipping organic milk to Horizon Organic since 1999. Henry became NODPA treasurer in 2003.

**Steve Russell:** farms in Winslow, ME and has been involved with NODPA from the beginning. He was certified organic in 1989 for vegetables and in 1997 for dairy. Steve milks about 50 cows, mostly Jerseys with some Aryshires and crosses. Steve ships his milk to Organic Valley.

**Beverly Rutter:** farms in Bridport, Vermont, where she and her husband John milk 140 Jerseys. They ship their milk to Organic Valley.

**Rick Segalla:** farms in Canaan, Ct and has been involved with NODPA since the first summer conference. He has been certified organic since 1999. Rick milks 100 Holsteins and ships his milk to Calabro Cheese.

**John Stoltzfus:** farms in Whitesville, New York. Their Be-A-Blessing Farm milks about 80 Holsteins and Holstein cross Normande. They ship their milk to Organic Valley.

## Integrated Parasite Management for Organic Dairy Cattle

By Ann Wells, DVM

Parasite control with minimal or no chemical dewormer use requires a combination of extremely good management techniques and possibly some alternative therapies. Organic producers must be aware of the incidence of parasites in their animals. Cattle will be easier to manage than sheep or goats and older animals will be easier to manage than younger animals. Observation, testing and monitoring animals will be crucial to determining progress and success. Alternative parasite control is an area that is receiving a lot of interest and attention. Programs and research will continue in the pursuit of parasite control, using alternative and more management-intensive methods.

For organic dairy cattle producers, the parasite of most concern is *Ostertagia ostertagi*, the brown stomach worm. Type 1 disease occurs in calves and causes green diarrhea, bottle jaw, weight loss, unthriftiness and low vitality. Type 2 disease occurs when arrested larvae in the abomasal lining descend due to weather conditions conducive to survival. This form will affect adults primarily. The life cycle of the *Ostertagia* is shown in the accompany-

*Poor nutrition will mimic parasite problems. Good nutrition will prevent parasite disease even if animals have parasites.*

ing graphic.

### Determination of parasites

The producer needs to figure out if internal parasites or worms are actually a problem. If they are a problem, then, what can be changed about the farm to make these parasites less of a problem?

Worms become a problem when calves are raised on the same ground year after year. This is due to the survival of overwintering larvae from the previous year. Immunity to the worms starts at weaning and may take up to two years for *Ostertagia*. This immune response can be enhanced by good nutrition. Fecal egg counts (FECs) can be run to see if the levels are indicative of parasitic disease. Keep in mind though, that due to that immune response and to genetic resilience, some calves may have high egg counts and show no signs of parasites. Calves with FECs of 300-600 are usually going to show other

signs of parasites.

If worms are a problem, the first thing to do is to move calves to a different area. Letting a piece of ground rest for one year will make it safe again for calves. The goal is to limit exposure to the worm larvae when calves are young

*(Continued on page 17)*



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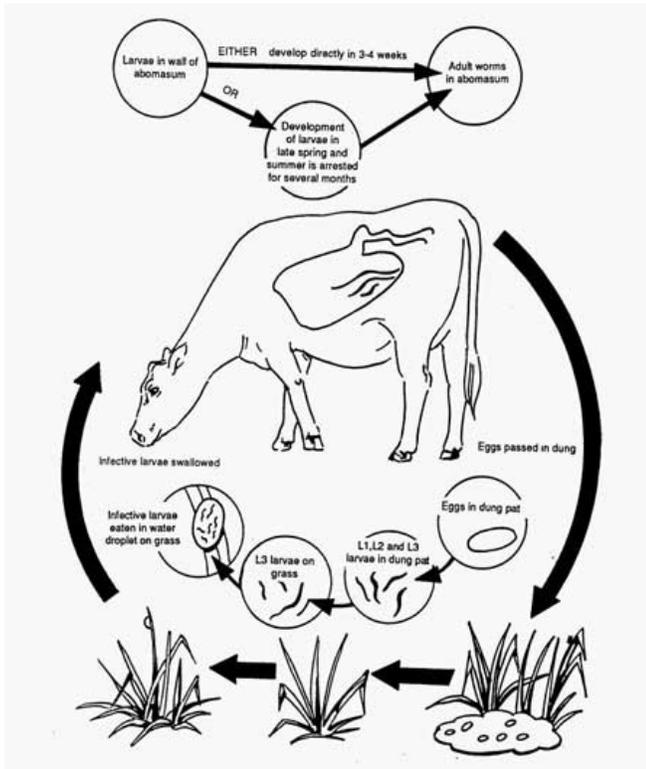
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(Continued from Parasite Management page 16)



before their immune system can handle the worm burden. In addition, high levels of nutrition, controlled rotational grazing, certain pasture plants and possibly certain herbal products will lessen the problem of worms in calves.

Poor nutrition will mimic parasite problems. Good nutrition will prevent parasite disease even if animals have parasites. Poor sanitation will worsen parasite problems. Changing basic animal management will often take care of what was thought to be parasites. High stock density in an area will increase the chances of harmful levels of larvae.

Healthy adult cattle should have enough immunity that parasites won't be a problem. If they are a problem, then the worms should be used as a symptom that something else is wrong in the farming system. Other diseases, poor nutrition, poor weather or some other management mistake needs to be considered.

**Grazing Management**

It has been stated that goat producers who don't rotationally graze their goats will end up with insurmountable worm problems. Ten years ago, Dr. Louis Gasbarre received a SARE grant to study the impact of parasites in dairy cattle that were being intensively grazed (McBride, 1998). Research in both the U. S and internationally shows that controlled rotational grazing is the best defense against internal parasites in cattle. It's important to put calves on ground that hasn't had cattle on it for at least six

(Continued on page 18)

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*(Continued from Parasite Management page 17)*

months. Rotating them through pastures so they aren't overexposed to larvae, keeps infestation to a minimum. Having pasture heights in the 6-10 inch range, removing them when grass is no shorter than 2 inches and not forcing the calves to graze close to manure piles will also prevent infestation.

A better way of grazing these pastures, and one that will also allow more utilization of forage is to have the young calves graze through, followed by older cows whose immune systems are fully developed. Calves will be more selective than older cows, grazing the most nutritious and most palatable forage. Older cows will still get excellent nutrition but will eat more of the available forage. The rest period will allow forages to regrow and soil organisms to degrade and remove manure. Calves under the age of 5 months should not regrow those pastures that year.

This management strategy has been used successfully on organic farms in Switzerland (Hertzberg, 2002). These farms grazed different age groups separately and moved them among different pastures. Those farms unable to carry out this grazing strategy had high FECs in their calves and the calves showed unthriftiness.

North Carolina State University carried out a study on dairy steers in 2004. Calves born in fall of 2003 hadn't been dewormed at all and showed no rise in FECs compared to a control group of calves given a dose of Ivermectin in the spring. These calves were pastured starting at birth,

but on pasture that did not have any cattle on it from March to mid-September (Washburn, personal communication).

### Herbal leys

Herbal leys are pastures that have a combination of grasses, legumes and forbs, plants most of us know as weeds. The concept was developed in the early 1900s in Clifton Park. Although all the plants are important for nutritional purposes, it's the forbs and some of the legumes which are the focus for those of us looking for alternatives for chemical dewormers.

Most of the plant research has been aimed at sheep and goats, as they are the animals most severely affected by worms. But the concepts will fit all ruminants. There are a number of plants that have been researched, but I will discuss the ones most apt to have application in the northeast U.S.

These plants contain either condensed tannins, or sesquiterpenes as the compounds showing anti-worming activities. The plant which research shows has the most definitive effect on worms is sericea lespedeza. Goats grazing sericea had FECs drop to extremely low levels in two days time (Min, 2004). Within two weeks after the goats were removed from the sericea, the FECs had climbed back to pregrazing levels. Sericea has high levels of condensed tannins. Now sericea is a noxious weed in the cen-

*(Continued on page 19)*



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Bethel, Vermont**

(Continued from Parasite Management page 18)

tral U.S. In the eastern U.S., it's hard to establish and hard to maintain stands. However, birdsfoot trefoil, which can be grown in the northern U.S., appears to have the same effect. The condensed tannins prevent the adult worms from laying eggs. There is some preliminary evidence that they also have an effect on the vigor of the worms, but that has not been substantiated. Chicory is another pasture plant that has been shown to have a negative effect on internal parasites (Marley, 2003). Puna chicory is a forage variety that can be grown in the U.S.

These plants can be planted within pastures or hedgerows or most preferably in an herbal pasture that animals have access to periodically. Many of the herbal forbs are highly palatable, have a longer rest period than the grasses, and can be more easily overgrazed. By having an herbal "medicinal" pasture, the animals can be offered it for a short period of time, and rested otherwise.

#### Animal Selection

Research for all ruminant species is showing that 80% of parasite problems occur in only 20% of a particular herd or flock. While it can be difficult to cull an organic animal based on its parasite status, doing so may benefit the farm by improving the overall health of the herd, increase the amount of milk produced and sold and decreasing contamination of pastures for newborn calves.

Keep records of animals with high FECs. If an animal does need to be dewormed with ivermectin, seriously consider culling that animal and any offspring or siblings. Do not overlook the genetics of the bulls. If one calf crop has more problems with worms, consider the possibility it is due to the bull used that year.

Producers who add parasite susceptibility to their list of culling factors find that in 2-3 years they have greatly decreased the incidence of parasite problems in their herds or flocks.

#### Herbal Deworming Products

There are several herbal deworming products, besides diatomaceous earth, which may have some potential. There has been on farm studies of several of these (Allen, 1998, Drazenovich, 2003, Murphy, 2001). All have been carried out on sheep farms. Grazing management, with clean pastures at the beginning of the season, has been one of the primary strategies seen to be effective. However, there is some indication that some of these products may have a beneficial effect. The effect may be due to something other than direct effect on the worms.

Most of these products have wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*) as the main ingredient, which should be used with caution, if at all, on pregnant animals. Some also require a tonic to be given on weeks when the deworming treatment is not given. For producers with many animals, using these products may be prohibitive. However, dairy producers who are handling their animals individually

every day will have an easier time of administering these products.

The latest product to be tested on sheep for deworming is a garlic product called Garlic Barrier (Noon, 2003). Garlic has known antibacterial effects, which may be the effect responsible for its success as a deworming product. Bacterial enteritis often accompanies parasitic disease. This study showed that egg counts went down after sheep were treated with the garlic product.

While I have not tried any of these products, I am working with a farm in central Arkansas for the second year that is interested in transitioning their sheep flock to organic production. Parasites are their biggest concern. Last year we managed the sheep flock strictly with rotational grazing and mixed grazing with beef cattle. This year we will be adding in an herbal dewormer plus seeding some pasture area to sericea lespedeza this spring and puna chicory this fall. I also want to try planting *Artemisia absinthium* and allow the sheep access to it to see if they will willingly graze it.

#### Ivermectin Resistance

The reason that management strategies, pasture plant research and alternative dewormers are such hot topics for the sheep and goat industry is that parasite resistance to all the currently available chemical dewormers has reached a crisis point. There are farms around the world, including

(Continued on page 20)

***Chicory is another pasture plant that has been shown to have a negative effect on internal parasites.***

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*(Continued from Parasite Management page 19)*

the U.S., which no longer have a single chemical dewormer that is effective. Under NOP, Ivermectin is to be used only in an emergency situation and never routinely and must have a 90 day milk hold out and cannot be used on slaughter stock.. Couple that with the fact that cattle have more body capacity than sheep and goats, and resistance should be less of an issue. But since Ivermectin is the only available dewormer to legally use at this time, resistance by the worms has to be considered as a possible occurrence over time.

Keep in mind that Ivermectin will kill the dung beetle larvae, although for a short period of time. Manure from animals treated with Ivermectin is slower to degrade.

### Conclusion

There are a number of steps to take when evaluating the impact of parasites on your farm and then determining a management plan.

- Determine if parasites are problem
- Fecal egg counts
- Overall physical condition
- Body condition scores
- Change location of calves
- Keep area dry and clean
- Divide pastures to rest more
- 6 months between calf crops
- Don't graze older cattle with calves
- Rotate pastures
- Observe manure degrading soil organisms
- Plant forages with deworming activity

Try herbal dewormers

It is essential to first determine if parasites are actually your problem. Fecal egg counts, physical and body condition and nutritional status will help you decide. Second, figure out if something simple like changing the location of calves will eliminate the problem. If changing the location is impossible, such as in a barn, make sure that the area is as dry and clean as possible. If a pasture is grazed and can't be rested for at least 6 months, divide it in half so that half can rest for a longer period of time. Keep older cattle off the pastures used for calves. Divide calves into smaller age groups and don't mix the groups until they are over five months of age. Rotate pastures as much as possible. Observe the presence of dung beetles and earthworms which degrade manure. Notice how quickly manure disappears from pasture. Explore the possibility of planting some of the listed plants as a way of decreasing the number of eggs and larvae contaminating the pasture. Lastly, try some of the herbal dewormers available.

There is still a great need for more research in the areas of forage plants and herbal deworming products. If herbal

pastures can be developed that are effective in keeping pasture contamination and parasite numbers to a manageable level, this would be an effective and more applicable deworming strategy. The herbal deworming products are often dry material, require weekly or even daily treatments, and can difficult to administer if animals are all fed together. If farmers try any of these products, they need to keep careful records to ensure that credit goes to the correct thing. As one farmer told, his calf disease problems went away when he just increased the tender loving care he was giving his calves. Many producers unconsciously change their management when they start using a different product, yet still give the credit to the product.

*Ann is a veterinarian with 15 years experience in organic livestock production. She has her own consulting business working with producers and educators across the country on sustainable animal health management. She feels very strongly that the health of the animal is tied to healthy soils/plants and that decreasing stress is important in enhancing health. She believes that controlled (management-intensive) grazing is the best way to achieve healthy animals. Contact info: Ann Wells, DVM, Springpond Holistic Animal Health, Prairie Grove, AR, 479-846-5794, [annw@pgtc.com](mailto:annw@pgtc.com)*

### Many Thanks to Our 2005 Members

NODPA cannot do the work it does without the monetary contributions and volunteer time given by many. We are now in the 2005 subscription year. We realize that some of you cannot recall if you have made your annual contribution, so we are going to make it easy for you. If you can't remember if you have subscribed it must be time to renew, and you'll be receiving an invoice as well. Our Annual subscription rate is a minimum of \$35 but please consider giving more.

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### Renew your membership for 2005

In order for NODPA to continue as a viable organization, it is necessary for NODPA to raise fund through grants and membership contribution. If you enjoy this newsletter, visit our web page, and/or benefit from the education and farmer representation that NODPA has been providing, please let us know by making a generous contribution to our efforts.

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# Calendar

**May 24-24**

**Symposium on Composting Mortalities and Slaughterhouse Residuals**

Sheraton Hotel, Portland, ME  
Themes to be addressed will include field demonstrations of composting options, rendering costs and availability, mortality management, biosecurity on farms, and more. Cost is \$175 and includes lunch and proceedings. Contact Bill Seekins, (207) 287-7531 or [bill.seekins@maine.gov](mailto:bill.seekins@maine.gov), [www.composting.org](http://www.composting.org)

**June 4**

**Herb Fest 2005**

Topmost Herb Farm, Coventry, CT  
For more info : (860)742-8239

**August 11, 9:30-11:30**

**IPM Fly Management in Dairy Operations**

Place, County  
Cost: \$10 PASA and PCO Members, \$15 Non-Members. Light refreshments will be served.  
Contact: Heather House, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Tel 814-349-9856 ext. 2

**August 12-13**

**NODPA'S Fifth Annual Field Days Event**

Nichols, NY  
The Field Days will include field trips, workshops, a producer meeting and a tradeshow with plenty of time to enjoy conversation, network and eat delicious local food. For more information, contact Ed Maltby, (413) 772-0444, [ed-nodpa@comcast.net](mailto:ed-nodpa@comcast.net), [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com)

**September 24, 10am-3pm Value-Added Dairy and Grass-Fed Beef**

Milky Way Farm, Bradford County  
Cost: \$15 PASA Members, \$25 Non-Members. Lunch will be prepared by Penn College of Technology Culinary Students. Contact: Heather House, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Tel 814-349-9856 ext. 2

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# Net Update



## ODAIRY

With over 480 people on the list here are some of the diverse views represented:

- \* "Hello o'dairy farmers, Great to hear all the discussion of raising calves on cows. I've learned a lot from the posts. Way to farm, Rodney! Is the next pasture walk at your place?"
- \* "A friend of mine thinks farming is the greatest job. He always said if it paid well everyone would want to do it"
- \* "In the world of ag finance, net farm income is almost always measured as the return on the farmer's labor and management skills. Most farms are proprietorships, not corporations (where management is included in the labor expense). In my example, the farmer's income would be \$35,000 or \$50,000. They would not be working for nothing."
- \* "I am wanting a price on a trailer load of organic shelled corn shipped to upstate NY."
- \* "You don't need a lot of HP, because of the magic of hydraulics. But you do need a 3 pt lift and a front axle rated for a ton load. A lot of the older tractors can carry a ton on the back, but can't handle that much weight on the front."
- \* "FOR SALE : Ap. 10 first calf heifer purebred jerseys that were fresh in Dec.-Jan. Originally from excellent herds in Vermont."
- \* "Also consider this, any foreign substance (honey, egg-whites, lactobacillus cultures, other folk remedies and antibiotics) introduced into the udder will act as an irritant and cause a non-specific inflammatory response (NSIP), with a concurrent increase in white blood cells."
- \* "On a parallel note, think of the most famous image from chaos theory. Based on the idea of "sensitive dependence on initial conditions," the image is that the patterns of flow induced in the atmosphere by the flapping of a single butterfly's wings in, say, the Amazon, can lead to a violent storm in Boston."

To subscribe to ODAIRY, follow the instructions on our Web Site [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com) or email: [ODAIRY-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ODAIRY-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

## OMILK Small But Effective Group

OMILK has been active this winter discussing the pasture policy and a few other small issues. Most things we discuss are not earth shattering. OMILK is just a group where just farmers can talk to other farmers, so if you make your living milking organic cows feel free to join us. We are not a think tank but that doesn't stop us from thinking!!!

To learn more about the OMILK group, please visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/OMILK> or email me and I will send you the info to join.

George Wright, Moderator  
[wrightwaydairy@yahoo.com](mailto:wrightwaydairy@yahoo.com)



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### Forages

-Looking for a price on a trailer load of organic shelled corn shipped to upstate NY.

Would consider a contract for approx. 130 tons delivered through the summer. Loyal Martin, [loyalanesha@five95.net](mailto:loyalanesha@five95.net), Tel: 315 642 3604.

-OFI Certified Organic Balage in Penn Yan, New York (Finger Lakes area). 40 bales - clover hay, 250 bales - alfalfa hay, 19% protein, 52% moisture. Good quality, Approx 1100# each. Asking \$40 or best offer, must sell. Ron Simons, Tel: 315-536-9830

-Early cut grass hay, small squares or round. Can deliver. NOFA/NY Certified, Carl Crispell, 1152 Coddington Road, Ithaca, NY 14850, Tel: 607-272-4065, [cac22@cornell.edu](mailto:cac22@cornell.edu)

### Animals

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