



Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance and Northeast Organic Farming Association Massachusetts Chapter



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For Immediate Release
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Dairy Task Force members, USDA National Resource Conservation Service and UMass leaders and Acting Commissioner of Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources will tour organic dairy on Friday, August 17

On Friday August 17th at 10:30 am leaders of the Massachusetts agricultural education and conservation services will tour the organic dairy farm of Morven Allen in Sheffield MA, as a prelude to the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA) annual field days event. This tour is being hosted by NODPA and Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) Massachusetts chapter.

With the crises facing the future of dairy farmers in Massachusetts, the tour of Morven's farm will provide participants with a hands-on experience of the profitability of organic dairying, its applicability to commercial dairy farms and the benefits that organic farming provides in building a healthy environment. The tour will be lead by Kathy Soder of USDA Agricultural Research Service, Lisa McCrory and Sarah Flack from NOFA Vermont and Tom Akin from USDA NRCS

Morven has a 1,200 acre grass-based dairy that finished its transition to organic certification earlier this year. Morven will explain how he financed the purchase and start-up of this farm deep in the Berkshires where land is expensive and in high demand. The tour will cover his extensive, intensively managed pasture, some of which is in the flood plain that experienced widespread flooding this year. What excites Morven is supporting the next generation of organic farmers, **"I started farming with just two cows and was lucky enough to buy land under the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program, (APR) and I want to ensure that other farmers have the same opportunities that I did."**

Tour participants will include Scott Soares, Massachusetts Acting Commissioner of Agriculture; Christine Clarke, USDA NRCS State Conservationist; Steve Goodwin, Dean, UMass College of Natural Resources and the Environment; Steve Herbert, UMass; Rick DeVergilio, USDA NRCS State Resource Conservationist; Diane Petit, USDA NRCS Public Affairs; Tom Akin, USDA NRCS Agronomist Grazing Coordinator; Kate Parsons, NRCS District Conservationist, Berkshire County; Mary Jordan, MDAR Director of Agricultural Development and Kate Rossiter NOFA Mass Organic Dairy coordinator

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More:

Directions to Morven Allen, Maple Shade Farm:

Take the Mass Pike, Rte 90, west to exit 2, go to Route 20 toward Stockbridge/ Rte. 102/Great Barrington. Turn slight right onto MA 102-W; turn left onto South Street/US-7 South/MA-23/MA-41 in Great Barrington. Travel 6.5 miles; turn left onto Maple Street, travel for .9 mile and turn right onto Hewins Street.

Morven Allen's farm is at 229 Hewins Street, Sheffield, MA 01247. Barns are on the right and the house is on the left side of the road.

What is NODPA?

The mission of NODPA: **enable organic dairy family farmers, situated across an extensive area, to have informed discussion about matters critical to the well being of the organic dairy industry as a whole.**

NODPA is the largest grassroots organic dairy farmer organization in the country that is dedicated to organic dairy farmers' interests, not to creating new bureaucracy. It is not aligned with any one processor or cooperative and is therefore able to represent the views of many different farmers.

- NODPA is able to promote the interest of all organic farmers in the northeast without favoring any one production system that meets USDA organic standards.
- By logging onto the ODAIRY and OMILK list serve, farmers can share information and make up their own minds on different issues.
- The annual NODPA Field Days provide an educational setting with good food and good company.

NODPA supports:

1. Dairy farms in the northeast that farm organically.
2. Farmers' ability to network, and to exchange ideas, information and news.
3. Being an active part of organizations that represent all organic dairy farmers in the nation.

NODPA started in February 2001 at a summit meeting of organic dairy producers in the Northeast. These producers came together to discuss critical issues within the organic dairy industry including maintaining a sustainable milk price, the National Organic Program, alternative milk markets, and building effective communication lines between fellow producers in the Northeast and beyond. Since that first meeting, NODPA has:

- Administered NODPA which is the largest grassroots farmer organizations in the country that is dedicated to organic dairy farmers' interests, not to recreating new bureaucracy.
- Provided leadership in analyzing the activities of the National Organic Program and communicating that information to farmers, processors, industry representatives and consumers.
- Represented the interests of organic producers at national meeting and work closely with its sister organization in the Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA), and the Midwest Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (MODPA).
- Organized an Annual Meeting and Field Days Event each year at different locations in the northeast.
- Produced and distributed the *NODPA News* quarterly newsletter that goes out to over 1,300 subscribers and many different casual readers at events.
- Moderated Odairy, the organic dairy electronic discussion group, which has over 850 subscribing members. To become an Odairy subscriber, email: odairy-subscribe@yahooogroups.com.
- Updated and maintained a web site filled with resources including educational information on animal health and grazing management, industry news, certification, classifieds, calendar events, and a business directory. (www.organicmilk.org, www.nodpa.com)
- Become an active member of the Organic Trade Association, the National Organic Coalition and the Accredited Certifiers Association and promote producers interests nationally and in Washington DC.
- Been instrumental in forming the national Federation Of Organic Dairy farmers.
- Worked constantly to retain the integrity and consistent application of organic dairy standards in order to uphold consumer expectations and provide a sustainable future.
- Started and administered NODPA's Farmer Emergency Fund to assist organic dairy farmers.