

# NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

March 2008 Volume 8, Issue 2 WWW.NODPA.COM

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## Hushed Up:

### Confidentiality Clauses in Organic Milk Contracts

By Jill Krueger, Farmers' Legal Action Group, Inc.

Many organic dairy producers sign contracts to sell milk to a processor. These contracts have some common features. While producers tend to focus upon the price offered when deciding whether or not to sign a contract with a processor, organic milk contracts contain other important terms.

**"There is no federal law that specifically states that confidentiality clauses in contracts for the sale of agricultural goods such as milk are illegal."**

This article focuses upon confidentiality clauses which are included in some contracts. In preparation to write this article, contracts for sale of milk with Dairy Marketing Services (DMS), Horizon Organic, and HP Hood were reviewed. The fact that a processor uses a confidentiality clause does not necessarily mean that its contract terms are worse or better overall than those offered by other processors. It is important to read and understand all of the clauses in a contract before signing it. Future newsletters will address other common contract clauses.

### What do confidentiality clauses say?

Some contracts reviewed did not contain clauses requiring dairy producers to maintain confidentiality. But most contracts offered by HP Hood with the assistance of Dairy Marketing Services, contained something like the following clause:

Producer agrees that for the duration of this Agreement, Hood will be the exclusive customer of Producer with respect to Milk, provided however, that if Hood is unable or unwilling to purchase all of the milk produced by Producer hereunder, Producer shall be free to sell any such excess to third parties. The parties each agree not to disclose the specific

terms of this Agreement to any other party other than Dairy Marketing Services without the prior approval of the other party.

This clause establishes an exclusive agreement between the parties in the first sentence, and requires confidentiality in the second sentence. Other contracts may use different wording to create a confidentiality clause.

### What do confidentiality clauses mean?

By signing a contract which contains the confidentiality clause above, the producer agrees not to disclose the specific terms of the Agreement to any other party other than Dairy Marketing Services without approval from the processor. This means that the producer agrees not to share the specific contract terms with parties such as family members, lawyers, accountants,

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## From The NODPA President

*By Steve Morrison, NODPA President*

As an organic dairy farmer I am in the business of milking cows to produce organic milk at a profit. I am a typical producer in that I have a business partnership with an organic dairy processor whom I depend upon to process and market my milk.

Farmers without a stakeholders' interest in their processor-partner have no voice in the business decisions of the corporations they ship milk to. We trust that the processor is working on our behalf to protect, and when necessary expand the milk supply.

Last fall, producers expressed concern to processors about increasing costs of production and predicted severe cost increases for this winter. We attempted to communicate our views both as individuals and through organizations such as NODPA and FOOD Farmers.

Producers had difficulty establishing a constructive dialogue with processors on this subject. The period of oversupply, which was coming into balance near the end of '07, may have contributed

to a sense of security among processors about milk supply. Store prices remained steady or declined in '07 as brands competed for market share and the organic dairy sector grew by the same 20+% typical of the last decade.

My processor-partner behaved recklessly by not promptly responding to our concerns, by not passing some of our increased costs to consumers then, and by not setting the stage for further price increases now. As a business owner in a partnership with a processor it is my responsibility to continually evaluate the partnership, and discontinue it at the end of a contract period if the relationship puts my farm at risk.

Currently the supply of organic milk from farms meets the demand of the marketplace, and most of the major processors are in balance. This situation will likely persist through this spring but projected growth in demand combined with low numbers of transitional farms, and the affect of those leaving organic milk production due to low milk prices will tighten the supply. Organic dairy processors will have to make difficult decisions about how to secure a supply. It is in the best interest of the industry overall to have a supply that meets but does not exceed demand. Improved dialogue between producers and their processors is a first step towards keeping the industry in balance. ♦

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

**From The NODPA Desk***By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

The predictions made by NODPA and the Federation Of Organic Dairy Farmers (FOOD Farmers) last fall have become reality, no surplus of milk but spiraling costs for producers. Horizon awarded an annualized average increase of approximately \$1/ hundred pounds of milk in February in response to our advocacy. The increase is a mere drop in the bucket that does nothing to address producers well documented needs and their rapidly increasing debt load. In fact, some producers see this small and limited increase as an insult.

Young family farmers are returning to conventional production because they cannot make organic production pay and are not able to increase their debt. Those who return to conventional production, but with the idea of maintaining their heifers as organic in order to build a new organic herd within 2 years, should seriously consider the cost in genetics, losing inherited immunities, and the problems of running a split operation. Processors should understand that once these organic dairy farms are gone, they will not return. Those processors who claim to support family farms should 'walk the talk' before all we have left are large-scale organic factories that can produce low cost organic milk. The sustainability of organic dairy depends on having a high quality supply from profitable family farms.

Why should producers suffer because HP Hood lowered its wholesale packaged price to gain market share and "forced" Organic Valley and Horizon Organic to lower theirs? Why should producers suffer because processing of organic milk is less efficient than processing conventional milk? To use a phrase that has been thrown at producers for years: PROCESSORS - GET MORE EFFICIENT!

Instead of giving grants to local universities, HOPE awards to producers and transition and signing payments to new organic dairies, the companies must pay their existing producers a reasonable and fair amount for their milk. Unless they do, we will never attract and hold the next generation of organic dairy farm families because all the grants in the world cannot replace profitability.

**NOP**

Usually, it's difficult to keep a bi-monthly newsletter topical, but the snail-like pace of USDA's different departments makes it possible for us to report real time progress on the access-to-pasture rule. Rumor has it that the rule has left the USDA

NOP and has travelled down the hallway to the USDA Office of Budget and Program Analysis! We are unsure when it will make the lengthy (metaphorically, anyway) journey to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Natural Resource Division, Agriculture Branch for final approval prior to publication. The other rumor from Washington DC is that the origin of livestock rule which will mandate one clear standard for organic dairy replacement, the last third of gestation, will also contain language on prohibiting cloning within organic dairy. Unfortunately, the proposed rule is still being written so will not see the light of day for a while.

HP Hood and Horizon Organic will stop their program payments in the next few months and lower their market adjustment premiums, based on the myth that producers' costs will be lower in spring and summer. These costs are already factored into their processing expenses so these companies should continue these payments and Organic Valley should immediately give the "significant" increase in their base price that they have been promising. Producers can then pay for diesel to harvest their winter forage; pay their property taxes and pay their debt service. The companies need to enter into meaningful discussions with producer groups to devise a system for setting pay price that can quickly react to changes in production costs and low pay prices are not used to fund the development and growth of market share for the three major brands.

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Labeling law to protect against cloning risk

By Laura Crowley

**1/25/2008** - California aims to protect its consumers from the possible unknown risks of consuming food from cloned animals and their offspring by proposing a bill requiring such products to display clear and prominent labels.

The bill has been brought forward by California State Senator Carol Migden following the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) made its controversial announcement this month saying milk and meat from cloned animals are safe for sale to the public. "The federal agency charged with protecting our food supply has failed us," said Rebecca Spector, West Coast Director of the Center for Food Safety. "Consumers have the right to know that the meat and milk they feed their children is safe. Since FDA refuses to wait for science to show what's really happening with cloned animals, it is now up to individual states to protect consumers and their families. The Senator's labeling bill will protect Californians through labeling, which restores consumer confidence and choice."

The issue has been a contentious one since the draft risk assessment, published in December 2006, raised a number of questions and elicited a strong response from opposing parties and some consumers during the comment period. One of the aspects of FDA's plan that has invited significant opposition is that the labeling of meat and milk products from cloned animals would not be required. This, opponents say, would deprive consumers of the choice to opt for products not linked to the technology. According to The Washington Post, however, there is a chance the FDA would allow the introduction of labels to indicate no material from cloned animals in the product.

There has also been criticism from other safety administrations. Last year, the Center for Food Safety issued a report critical of the FDA's risk assessment on animal clones, saying it relied almost entirely on unsupported assumptions and was based more on faith than science. A 2007 national survey conducted by Consumers Union found that 89 percent of Americans want to see cloned foods labeled. Sixty-nine percent said that they have concerns about cloned meat and dairy products in the food supply.

Elisa Odabashian, director of Consumers Union's West Coast office, said: "Senator Migden's labeling bill will be a critical

*(continued on page 11)*



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Reading the NOP Leaves

*By Samuel Fromartz*

Back during the Cold War, political scientists known as Kremlinologists tried to interpret all the personnel shake-ups in the Soviet Union to figure out where policy was headed.

Well, the National Organic Program isn't the Kremlin, but given a recent reorganization and a proposed budget increase, it's worth a look to see what's happening and what it means to the organic community.

### First off, the news.

On February 5, the NOP announced that it was undergoing a major reorganization. At the same time, the Bush administration proposed to increase NOP's budget by \$800,000 in fiscal 2009 from the current level of \$3.12 million - notable given the tight climate for federal spending.

Lloyd Day, administrator of Agricultural Marketing Service, which oversees the NOP, said in a press release that the changes were made "to keep up with growth in the organic industry."

The organic industry had been advocating for a better-funded, swifter-acting regulatory body for years, but getting any movement had been difficult. But Organic food has been getting on the radar screen of lawmakers and that may have contributed to this movement.

Under the reorganization, the NOP, under the direction of the Agricultural Marketing Service's Barbara Robinson, will be reorganized into three divisions:

- Standards Development & Review, headed up by Richard Mathews, formerly deputy administrator for the NOP. This division will be responsible for the actual rule writing - a job that in the past never had a dedicated full-time person.
- Accreditation, Auditing & Training, headed up by Mark Bradley, who had followed Mathews as deputy administrator in 2006.
- Compliance & Enforcement, a post that remains unfilled at the moment.

Industry participants are guardedly hopeful, since the shake-up charges specific officials with specific tasks. In addition, the budget boost could bring much-needed personnel to the de-

partment, which had about nine people, including clerical staff.

"It's good they're bringing in resources to take care of these issues," said Dave Carter, a former chairman of the National Organic Standards board.

"In the long run it may strengthen the position of the program to have three divisions," added Jim Riddle, also a former NOSB chairman.

But Riddle also expressed concern that no one was appointed head of compliance - an area that he feels needs more attention.

Riddle and others noted that the NOP has moved at an extremely slow pace on important issues. They view the long-languishing pasture rule as a litmus test for the new effectiveness of the organization.

"It would be very helpful to the industry if we could get a dairy rule out there," said Caren Wilcox, executive director of the Organic Trade Association.

But she and others held out hope that putting the rule writing in the hands of one person - Mathews - would streamline the process. All those interviewed agreed that Mathews knows how to write rules and could be an asset. "Most agencies have a group of people who do their rules," Wilcox noted, "and until now the NOP had no one."

Robinson said in November that the pasture rule was nearly ready to go to the Office and Management and Budget for review. But as of now, it still has not been passed off to the OMB, which will take at least three months for review.

Down the road, the NOP could gain stature if Senate language for a budget increase is approved as part of the current Farm Bill. The Senate voted to grant the NOP \$5 million in the 2009 fiscal year and raise it to \$11 million by 2012.

The House, however, included no funds for the NOP administration in its version of the Farm Bill so it's an open question what the final result will be. The bill is currently in conference to merge the Senate and House versions.

Although the increased budget will help the NOP, Wilcox - a former USDA official - said it would take a strong commitment from the secretary of agriculture's office or the White House to get a significant rise in stature in the program. And perhaps the best hope of that happening is with a new administration. ♦

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Profitability for Organic Dairy Farms for 2006

*By Bob Parsons, Extension Associate Professor, University of Vermont*

The trend of the profitability in 2006 continued to show improvement for Vermont and Maine organic dairy farms as compared to 2005 and 2004 with Vermont farms not doing quite as well as those in Maine. But just as the sector is beginning to show competitive profits, the situation has dramatically changed as feed prices since October 2006 have skyrocketed, hitting the organic sector harder than conventional dairy farms. Analysis also indicates that for that average organic dairy farm to survive under today's feed and fuel prices, the base milk price needs to be nearly \$33 per cwt. And the milk price will likely need to go even higher, depending on the continuing inflationary pressure on feed, fuel, and other farm expenses.

## Profit up for Maine farms greater than for Vermont

In 2006, the average Return on Equity (ROE) for 41 northeast organic dairy farms was 4.3% as compared to a -0.3% ROE in 2005 and a loss of -1.7% ROE in 2004. This is after a charge of \$35,000 for unpaid owner/family labor. There was quite a difference in New England with Maine farms showing a 7.8% ROE vs. a 3.3% ROE for Vermont farms.

Why the difference between the Vermont and Maine farms? One big difference that the small sample of Maine farms (9) may represent is a greater proportion of well managed farms as compared to the greater number of Vermont farms (32). For size, the Maine farms were a bit larger with 65.4 cows per farm and produced more milk at 14,616 lbs per cow as compared to 62 cows per farm and 13,129 lbs per cow for Vermont dairy farms. The Maine farms also enjoyed a higher milk price, \$29.31 vs. \$28.71 per cwt. The biggest difference between the two states in regard to income was in dairy cow sales and government payments. One Maine farm sold nearly \$99,000 of bred heifers that significantly raised the average income of Maine farms.

As a group, the Maine Farms were more likely to be involved in cropping and eligible for government crop program payments. Another big difference was that Maine provided dairy farmers with a supplemental payment in 2006 that was more generous than the Vermont program. In addition, Vermont

had 2 farms that did not collect any government payments due to personal reasons, lowering the average for the Vermont farms. The \$22,000 difference in government payments per farm is related directly to the difference in net farm earnings.

## Expenses

The biggest cost difference between the 2 states was in purchased feed, with the Maine farms purchasing nearly \$29,000 more grain than the average Vermont farm. The Maine farms also spent nearly twice as much on labor, \$40,277, as compared to nearly \$23,000 despite the herds being the about the same herd size. Overall, Maine farms accrual production expenses were \$45,000 higher than Vermont farms, or about \$500 per cow (\$3927 vs. \$3472). The bottom line is that production expenses per cow are quite high for organic dairy farms.

## Accrual Adjustments

There are always some non-cash expenses and receipts that the farmer does not see in the milk check but are like money going into or out of a savings account. Depreciation is the charge for wearing out equipment and buildings and Maine farms had more than \$9000 higher depreciation than Vermont farms. In addition, Maine farmers in 2006 had a decrease of feed inventories of nearly \$7230 while feed inventories for Vermont dairy farms increased by \$3720, a difference of nearly \$11,000.

## Bottom Line

For this study we added a charge of \$35,000 for family living, a charge that represents a conservative estimate for unpaid family labor and management. While some smaller farm families do live on less, many families require a much greater amount for family living. From another perspective, we doubt if any farmers in our study would be willing to work the same number of hours of management and labor for someone else for only \$35,000.

Profitability for this study is calculated by taking cash income plus accrual income changes and subtract cash expenses and accrual expenses as depreciation and changes in accounts

*(continued on page 8)*



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

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payable. We then subtract \$35,000 family living to arrive at net farm earnings. Vermont organic dairy farms averaged \$23,200 while Maine farms averaged \$49,377 (including the \$22,000 difference in government payments). Net farm earnings were \$234 per cow for Vermont while Maine farms averaged \$793 per farm (including \$494 in government payments).

The conclusion from this study is that 2006 was the first year that the average organic dairy farms in the northeast had income in excess of family living for the first time since 1999. And when we look at the farms by state, the more representative sample from Vermont indicated the organic dairy sector was healthy but still not able to achieve a 5% ROE that makes it comparable to reasonable returns. So while the farms were doing better, it's not the avenue to get rich quick as perceived by some outside observers.

### Difference between Farms

We have been examining the "average" Vermont organic dairy farm but there was considerable variation between farms. The 32 Vermont organic dairy farms ranged from 21 to 189 cows. Milk production per cow ranged from 18,691 to 7,660 lbs. Purchased grain expenses per cow ranged from \$1842 to 0. That's right, one farm does not purchase any grain and is dependent 100% on forage. This farm had the lowest milk per cow but not the lowest net earnings per cow!

Net return per cow ranged from a loss of -\$783 per cow to \$1610 per cow. The farms with more than 100 cows tended to have greater earnings per cow. For this year, 12 of the 32 farms showed negative net farm earnings. Return on Equity (ROE) ranged from -20.6% to 21.9%, with 47% of the Vermont farms showing a ROE greater than 5%.

What this tells us is that while the average numbers give a view of the organic sector, some farms are doing quite well and some are not doing as well as desired. But 100% of the farms are satisfied or very satisfied with their decision to go organic. Many have indicated that they do not think they would be in business if they had stayed with conventional production.

**"... the organic dairy sector has become a haven for smaller family operated farms that could not or would not continue with the "get bigger or get out" scenario associated with surviving in conventional dairy production. But they have not escaped the situation where rising feed, fuel, and other expenses continue to chip away at their profitability so that they are faced with the same familiar scenario as their conventional neighbors."**

### Compare to Conventional Dairy Farms

Conventional dairy farms had a much worse year in 2006 due to declining milk prices. No doubt, conventional dairy is challenging due to fluctuating prices, going from record lows in 2002 to record highs in 2004, dropping again by 2006 and soaring to record highs again in 2007. However, in 2006, the average small farm in the Farm Credit Northeast Dairy Farm Summary showed a loss of -\$307 per cow as compared to the profit of \$234 for Vermont organic dairy farms. The con-

ventional dairy farms averaged \$778 in purchased feed (grain and forage) costs as compared to \$1127 for Vermont organic dairy farms. Labor expense was \$264 per cow as compared \$308 for the Vermont dairy farms. Labor costs per cow for the Maine organic dairy farms was considerably higher at \$595 per cow.

On the income side, the smaller conventional dairy farms averaged 19,457 lbs per cow at a price of \$13.62 per cwt. So production per cow was more than 6,000 lbs higher, but the milk price was less than half. When comparing to the higher feed prices paid by organic dairy farms, both conventional and organic farms spent 29% of their milk income on purchased feed.

### Sensitivity Analysis

The problem with examining financial data is that both income and expenses change in a short time period. Beginning in October 2006, conventional corn began to climb in price due to ethanol production, exceeding \$4.00 by March 2007. Conventional commodity prices stabilized through 2007 only to take off again in late 2007 to levels of \$5 for corn, \$11 for soybeans, and wheat soaring over \$10 per bushel. Accordingly, organic prices also soared to unheard levels (Table 1). In addition, everyone knows about the soaring fuel prices.

**Table 1. Organic Feed and Milk Prices 2000-2008.**

Feed Ingredient	2001	2008	Percent Change
Shelled corn/ton	\$168	\$380	126%
Oats/ton	\$125	\$280	124%
Barley/ton	\$150	\$390	160%
Wheat Middlings	\$105	\$330	214%



To see how this would impact organic dairy farms, we ran a scenario where feed prices increased 40%, and fuel prices increased by 25% and other farm expenses increased by 4%. In this scenario we also assumed milk production per cow and cow numbers would remain the same. These are conservative estimates of the changes in expenses given the fact that the innovative Vermont dairy farmers would likely figure out some ways to reduce costs.

To achieve a 5% ROE, we estimated that Vermont organic dairy farms would see feed expenses increase by \$22,993, fuel expenses by \$1,889, and other expenses by \$5,218. Net farm earnings would be reduced from \$23,200 to a loss of -\$6899! For the average Vermont organic dairy farm to achieve a 5% ROE, milk price would have to increase nearly 15% to \$32.96 per cwt! Way more than what organic dairy farms are getting for their milk today.

## Future???

The sensitivity analysis clearly shows that organic milk price must increase if the sector is to remain viable. Since the advent of organic dairy in the 1990's until 2005, those familiar with the sector cannot remember one farm that has quit organic production and went back to conventional milk production. But in the past 9 months, several organic dairy farms have quit, primarily due to the soaring grain prices. Others are wondering about shifting back to conventional production. What will the future bring? That remains to be seen but it seems necessary that organic milk price must increase or there will be little economic incentive for farms to remain in organic production.

From a social perspective, the organic dairy sector has become a haven for smaller family operated farms that could not or would not continue with the "get bigger or get out" scenario associated with surviving in conventional dairy production. But they have not escaped the situation where rising feed, fuel, and other expenses continue to chip away at their profitability so that they are faced with the same familiar scenario as their conventional neighbors.

The situation is quite simple. If family run organic dairy farms are to survive, they need a higher payment for their milk. Or else, organic dairy farms will not be much different in size from their conventional neighbors. The organic sector has to come to grips with what they are selling to the consumer ... organic milk at the lowest possible price or a dairy production system based on family operated farms. ♦

	Vermont (32)	Maine (9)	All Farms (41)
Average # of cows	62.0	65.4	62.7
Lbs shipped total	821,037	965,620	852,775
Lbs shipped/cow	13,129	14,616	13,455
Milk price	\$28.71	\$29.31	\$28.84
Receipts			
Milk sales (a)	\$234,739	\$283,076	\$245,350
Dairy cattle sales	7,607	15,035	9,238
Cull cow sales	3,695	6,223	4,250
Bob/veal calf sales	1,666	1,809	1,698
Crop sales	1,125	2,452	1,416
Government payments	9,651	31,885	14,531
Patronage dividends	948	322	811
Other	5,089	5,768	5,238
Total Cash Receipts (b)	\$264,521	\$346,569	\$282,531
Accrual Revenue Adjustments			
Livestock inventory	10,131	5,438	9,101
Breeding livestock purchases	(3,156)	0	(2,463)
Accounts receivable (c)	2,696	4,395	3,069
Feed inventories	3,720	(7,230)	1,316
Total Accrual Revenue (d)	13,391	2,603	11,023
Total Farm Revenue (e)	\$277,912	\$349,172	\$293,554
Expenses			
Auto and truck expenses	2,255	3,682	2,569
Bedding	3,930	4,713	4,102
Breeding	2,913	3,821	3,112
Custom hire:	10,459	5,035	9,268
DHIA	889	1,275	974
Fertilizers & lime	2,544	1,014	2,208
Feed - purchased grain & other	57,482	86,541	63,861
Feed - purchased forage	9,641	4,250	8,458
Fuel and Oil	7,554	10,385	8,176
Insurance	4,859	6,220	5,158
Interest	12,108	6,819	10,947
Labor	22,971	40,277	26,770
Milk Marketing	3,849	2,186	3,484
Real estate taxes (farm portion)	3,018	4,693	3,386
Rent	3,501	3,033	3,398
Repairs	16,530	15,783	16,366
Seed and plants	1,881	2,294	1,972
Supplies	14,095	14,481	14,180
Utilities	7,457	8,391	7,662
Vet	2,195	2,365	2,232
Medicine	871	357	758
Miscellaneous	4,483	6,328	4,888
Total Cash Expenses (f)	\$195,487	\$233,942	\$203,928
Accrual Expense Adjustments			
Depreciation	26,300	32,571	27,677
Accounts payable	(1,738)	(683)	(1,506)
Pre-paid expenses/supplies	(580)	(280)	(514)
Credit card/Farm Plan	243	(756)	24
Total Accrual Expenses (g)	\$24,225	\$30,853	\$25,680
Total Farm Expenses (h)	\$219,712	\$264,795	\$229,608
Net Cash Farm Income (b-f)	\$69,034	\$112,626	\$78,603
Net Farm Revenue (e-h)	\$58,200	\$84,377	\$63,946
Family Living (i)	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
Net Cash Farm Earnings (b-f-i)	\$34,034	\$77,626	\$43,603
Net Farm Earnings (e-h-i)	\$23,200	\$49,377	\$28,946
Return on Assets	3.9%	8.6%	4.9%
Return on Equity	3.3%	7.8%	4.3%

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## University Park Pasture Research Program Faces Budget Ax

The federal government may close the agricultural research unit in central Pennsylvania because of drastic cuts in the President's 2009 budget. The Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Unit is one of 11 U.S. Department of Agriculture research sites slated for closure.

Bush's 2009 budget proposes more than \$84 million in cuts to the USDA Agricultural Research Service. The University Park location operates with an annual budget of about \$4.4 million.

Although the University Park facility is being considered for closure, no decisions will be final until Congress approves the budget later this year. The president's budget is generally a starting point for debate, and it typically takes Congress months to complete a finalized version.

More than 40 full time federal employees conduct and support research on pasture systems, watershed management, and bioenergy. Every year, 10 to 25 undergraduate and graduate students from Penn State and other universities nationally and internationally work part time or conduct graduate research to provide valuable assistance and gain scientific knowledge.

The location's origins date to 1935, when the U.S.D.A. first placed scientists on the Pennsylvania State University campus to research pasture management. The modern research program seeks to develop profitable and sustainable animal, crop, and bioenergy producing enterprises while maintaining the quality of ground and surface waters.

The research unit collaborates closely with the larger agricultural research program at Penn State and offers a unique opportunity for students to learn about federal research pro-

grams and potential career paths. The unit has a long-history of close collaboration with the Northeast region's farmers and ag groups, land-grant universities, and state and federal agencies. For example, scientists at University Park have started new collaborative research on organic pasture systems with

the University of New Hampshire Organic Research Dairy and with Alfred State College in Alfred, NY. Several current research programs address the research objectives identified by the Northeast Pasture Research and Extension Consortium.

The Research Unit has made major contributions toward improving pasture quality and utilization, developing conservation and manure management practices to protect water quality, and developing sustainable farming systems in the Northeast. In recent years, biomass production for renewable energy has emerged as an important new focus for research. In addition to the more than 600 scientific articles published by scientists at the research unit, the researchers have made more than 400 presentations and distributed numerous fact sheets to farmers.



**Above:** Kathy Soder discussing animal management on pasture at Ag Progress Days (Rock Springs, PA).

**Send Letters of Support:**

**Senator Spector**, 711 Hart Building, Washington, DC 20510 Tel: 202-224-4254; Fax: 202-228-1229; email [Josh\\_Stull@spector.senate.gov](mailto:Josh_Stull@spector.senate.gov)

**Senator Casey**, 383 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 Phone: (202) 224-6324; Fax: (202) 228-0604

**House sub-committee:** [http://appropriations.house.gov/Subcommittees/sub\\_ardf.shtml](http://appropriations.house.gov/Subcommittees/sub_ardf.shtml)

**Senate sub-committee:** <http://appropriations.senate.gov/agriculture.cfm>

Research accomplishments benefit farming systems across the entire northeastern U.S. and have direct impacts on water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and the New York City watershed. To help meet the research needs of northeastern farmers, additional resources are needed to strengthen programs at the Research Unit.

The closure of the Unit will leave a gaping hole in sustainable agriculture research for the northeast U.S. A sad legacy for a research institution that has served farmers for more than 70 years.

Josh Stull (Sen. Spector's Ag Aide) has filed a petition to restore the \$4.42 million appropriation to the Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Unit. They need letters of support for this effort. Please send letters to Josh Stull at Sen. Spector's Wash. DC office, as well as to Sen. Casey's office in DC or to members of the House and Senate. **(See box for details.)** ♦

## RESEARCH / EDUCATION

## The Midwest Organic Research Symposium

The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Agriculture Educational Service (MOSES) and Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) organized a Midwest Organic Research Symposium that was held in conjunction with the Upper Midwest

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

(continued from page 4)

step in providing consumers with the information they are demanding about these foods." The Center for Food Safety and Consumers Union are co-sponsors of the bill. Last year Senator Migden authored a similar bill (SB 63) that was passed by the entire California legislature before being vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger. He said he could not sign the bill as it is pre-empted by federal law, which governs labeling on a national level. "It is our hope that the legislature will stand behind this bill. Its passage is needed now more than ever since the FDA has cleared the way for food from cloned animals to enter the market unlabeled," said Odabashian. ♦

Organic Farming Conference Feb. 21-23, 2008, in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. This symposium offered a unique opportunity for students and scientists investigating organic topics to engage with a knowledgeable audience. Individuals were invited to submit papers for presentation at the symposium and posters to be displayed at the poster session.

**Some topics that would be of interest to the NODPA News readers included:**

- Are perennial grain crops feasible for Midwest organic crop-livestock production?  
*Sieglinde Snapp, Michigan State University*
- Use of an oilseed press to make edible meal for livestock.  
*Paul Porter, University of Minnesota*
- Rotational grazing of cattle.  
*Reg Destree, DRAMM Corporation*
- Organic and conventional dairy farms in SE Pennsylvania: are there differences in production and reproduction?  
*Hubert J. Karreman, DVM, Pennsylvania*
- Is the organic corn price right?  
*Alexandra Fehring, Rodale Institute*
- Economic and environmental comparison of three organic systems common to the Upper Midwest.  
*Janet Hedtcke, University of Wisconsin*

(continued on page 18)



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## NET UPDATE

## Recent Discussions On ODairy

By Liz Bawden, NODPA Rep and Newsletter Co-Editor

The need for the adjustment of the organic milk price steadily continued to be the big topic on ODairy for the past 6 weeks. Many farmers participated in some frank discussions over the pay price. It was stressed that although FOOD Farmers (the umbrella group representing organic dairy farmers from across the country) came together with one voice to stress the importance of a 20% increase in pay price over 2007, the processors have fallen far short of that target, leaving farmers in a less-than-comfortable state. With escalating costs, no one has escaped the erosion of their farm's profitability to a greater or lesser extent. Some expressed concern that a rapid increase in the pay price would radically alter the consumer support in the marketplace.

There was much discussion centered around striving to become more self-sufficient. Grain growing on farms brought about discussion on the techniques, machinery, type of crops and land base required for growing grains to augment or replace purchased feed. Many farmers noted that they simply did not have the land base available to expand into grain grow-

ing. Others felt that the investment in the required machinery was a significant hurdle. Many farmers that grow some grain already will probably attempt to grow more. Seasonal production with intensive pasturing supplemented with no (or at least very little grain) was also promoted as a path to self-sufficiency.

Discussions on the quest for high protein, high energy forages explored different strategies for improving existing pastures and hay fields. Frost seeding legumes into existing grass hay fields and pastures to raise protein levels was discussed. This method also works well for establishing perennial ryegrass and trefoil. One farmer shared experiences using sorghum-sudan and millet for hot weather grazing. Some farmers relayed experiences making silage in different forms from grain crops. Head chop barley or triticale was suggested as a good energy and protein source; small grain baleage was also suggested.

Some farmers, searching for a historical perspective, wondered how our recent ancestors managed a century ago. There was some insight on the turn of the century-style mixed farm. Dairy cows were more dependent on oats; seasonal production was more common; and cows were certainly bred differently than modern breeding. Farms with older buildings usually have the remnants of grain bins and corn cribs. Poor

(continued on page 15)

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### More Organic Milk Sought in Northeast

*Farms should be sure to have a market secured before beginning the 12 month herd transition.*

#### The Word from CROPP

CROPP Cooperative~Organic Valley Family of Farms, the nation's largest farmer owned organic marketing cooperative, continues to grow its dairy producers base now and into the future in New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia and all of the New England States. Current market conditions underscore the need for our founding principles of supply management. Near term, we have ample milk supply and we are now directing producers interested in transitioning to organic dairy production to begin their 12 month transition no sooner than the Fall of 2007. We offer a stable, competitive organic milk pay price once certified organic and a complete year of Transitional Funding for new farmers during herd's transitional year as well as Staff Veterinarians, Farmers Relations staff support, the Organic Trader, and inclusive communications. In addition, our Farm Resource department can help refer, source and finance feed purchases for your operation.

In New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia contact Peter Miller, Northeast Region Dairy Pool Coordinator, at (888) 444-6455, x3407 to leave a voice message, or mobile at (612) 801-3506, [peter.miller@organicvalley.coop](mailto:peter.miller@organicvalley.coop). In New England States contact John Cleary, New England Dairy Pool Coordinator, at (888)-444-6544 x3330 to leave voice mail, or mobile at (612)-803-9087, or email at [john.cleary@organcivalley.coop](mailto:john.cleary@organcivalley.coop)

#### The Word from DMS

Dairy Marketing Services (DMS) continues to market more than 50 percent of organic milk in the Northeast. DMS was established to deliver efficiency in services and enhance returns from the market directly back to producers at a minimal cost. It offers a wide range of services to producers such as health insurance and workers compensation through Agri-Services Agency, leases and loans from Agri-Max Financial, farm inputs and supplies through Eagle Dairy Direct, and herd management software from Dairy One. For more information, please contact Dave Eyster at 1-888-589-6455, ext. 5409 or [david.eyster@dairymarketingservices.com](mailto:david.eyster@dairymarketingservices.com).

#### The Word from Horizon

Horizon Organic continues to grow its producer partner network in the East and Midwest. Horizon Organic offers

competitive pay, transitional funds during the 12 months transition of the herd and long-term contracts. Producers in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Michigan, Virginia and Kentucky contact Cindy Masterman 888-648-8377; New York, Maryland, Ohio and Pennsylvania contact Peter Slaunwhite 800-381-0980; Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana contact Mike Bandstra 877-620-8259.

#### The Word from HP Hood

HP Hood continues to look for high quality farms for our organic milk supply. We are eager to talk to farms that are ready to begin their herd transition in the fall of 2007. Our routes encompass a number of Northern Tier States (ME, NH, VT, NY, PA, OH, MI, WI, MN, IA) and we would like to hear from you. Our support of sustainable agriculture, a signing bonus and transition assistance have helped many already. Please call Karen Cole, HP Hood Milk Procurement, [karen.cole@hphood.com](mailto:karen.cole@hphood.com) or at 1-866-383-1026.

#### The Word from LOFCO

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.

#### The Word from United Ag

United Ag Services in Seneca Falls, NY is looking for organic milk in NY and northern PA. Please call 800-326-4251.

#### The Word from Upstate Niagara

Upstate Niagara Cooperative, a dairy farmer owned, full service cooperative headquartered in Buffalo, NY is continuing to grow its supply of organic milk. The members of Upstate Niagara Coop own and operate 4 milk plants in Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Rochester. Our members are interested in producing organic milk and processing organic dairy products. We currently process & package fresh, not ultra-pasteurized organic milk in our Rochester Milk Plant. If you are interested in learning more about Upstate Niagara Coop, please visit our website at [www.upstatedfarms.com](http://www.upstatedfarms.com) or contact me. Enjoy your day ... Bill Young, 800-724-6455, [byoung@upstateniagara.com](mailto:byoung@upstateniagara.com). ♦

*Any buyers looking for organic milk who would like to be listed in this column for the May 2008 issue, please email the desired text to Ed at [ednodpa@comcast.net](mailto:ednodpa@comcast.net) or call 413-772-0444 by April 20th, 2008*

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## NMC Honors Area Dairy Farmers Griffin, Randall and Meyer with National Dairy Quality Award

*Award Recognizes 'Very Best Dairy Producers for Quality Milk Production'*

NMC (formerly known as the National Mastitis Council) has named Siobhan Griffin, of Raindance Farm in Schenectady, New York, Jason and Ashley Randall of Randall View Farm in Westfield, Vermont and Nick and Taylor Meyer of Northhardwick Dairy, LLC in Hardwick, Vermont among the nation's top innovators for quality milk production in its 14th annual National Dairy Quality Awards (NDQA).

The NDQA honors dairy producers nationwide who successfully implement practices and strategies that place a distinct priority on producing milk of the highest quality. Judges considered milk quality measures (somatic cell count and standard plate count), udder health monitoring systems, milking routine, sub-

clinical and clinical mastitis detection and treatment protocols, and overall herd health and animal well-being strategies.

Ms. Griffin who placed in the awards' silver category, operates a 333-acre farm which she works with her son Dale, daughter Keira and boyfriend Rob Grassi. Currently she looks after 86 cows and raises milk-fed pigs. Ms. Griffin, the daughter of Irish immigrants, was first introduced to the concept of pasturing cows during the summers she spent in Ireland visiting family. Today, she attributes the pasturing of her herd to their fine health and the quality of the milk that they produce. The Randalls, who placed in the awards' Silver category, operate a 208-acre dairy farm with 94 cows. They both come from families that have been farming for several generations. The Meyers' who placed in the awards' Silver category, operate a 300-acre farm with a closed herd of 67 milkers and 65 young stock. They attribute their win to the overall health of their cows, which is a result of good feed, their providing the animals with free choice minerals and a commitment to keeping their surroundings clean.

All three farms are members of Organic Valley Family of Farms, a cooperative of nearly 1,200 organic farmers nationwide. Six other members of the Organic Valley cooperative won in this year's NDQA.

"All Organic Valley member dairy farmers produce organic milk of the highest standard – practicing in harmony with nature without antibiotics, synthetic hormones or pesticides," said George Siemon, chief executive officer of Organic Valley. "We congratulate Ms Griffin, the Randalls and the Meyers – who in addition to meeting the day-to-day demands of operating an organic dairy farm – takes extraordinary measures to innovate and inspire others to ensure quality milk production."

More than 100 producers were nominated. The top 43 nominees were asked to complete a more detailed application that was used for final judging, with the finalists placing in three categories: Platinum, Gold and Silver. A recent issue of Hoard's Dairyman included a feature article on all NDQA winners. ♦

### The National Mastitis Council

*The National Mastitis Council is a not-for-profit professional organization devoted to reducing mastitis and enhancing milk quality. The NMC promotes research and provides information the dairy industry on udder health, milking management, milk quality, and milk safety. Founded in 1961, NMC now has close to 2,000 members in more than 40 countries throughout the world. The NMC is headquartered in Verona, Wisconsin.*



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For more information,  
call Karen Cole at 866-383-1026.



## NET UPDATE

(continued from page 12)

land was pastured, good land was cropped. Herd sizes, of course, were much smaller; several posts mentioned a range of 15 to 30 cows on an average family farm.

A farmer asked for a good electrolyte formula, and received two different recipes. The first combines 1 liter of boiled water (that has cooled) mixed with 1 Tblsp sugar and 1 tsp salt. The second combines 2 quarts of warm water with 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp baking soda, 1/4 cup honey and 2 Tblsp psyllium hulls. Put it through a blender to avoid lumps.

Calf pneumonia (unfortunately, 'tis the season) discussions brought good recommendations from our good friend, Dr Hue Karreman. Paying attention to the surroundings first, it is vital that the calf be in a well-ventilated area on clean, dry bedding material (but not on sand, since it does not insulate). Put on a calf jacket and increase the amount of milk fed if it is

cold. Dr Hue's homeopathic recommendations were: Phos 30C for the bright, alert calf that doesn't know she's sick; Antimonium tart 30C for the calf with a "wet" cough; Bryonia 30C for a "dry" cough: Aconite given at first signs, then switch to Belladonna. BoviSera or similar product is a beneficial source for passive antibodies. Anti-bacterial tinctures given orally can be a great help. And by all means have your vet listen to the calf's lungs to determine the extent of infection. (Just my personal

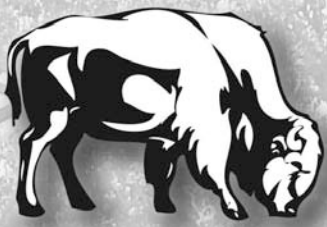
note here: I remember a workshop where Dr Hue was asked when you throw in the organic towel and resort to antibiotics to save the calf. He suggested that if a calf was up and eating, she'd likely get better with alternative treatments, but if the calf was down and refusing to get up to eat, she needs antibiotics to turn her around.)

**To subscribe to Odairy,** follow the instructions on our website, [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com) or email: [odairy-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:odairy-subscribe@yahoo.com)

### OMILK: FARMERS ONLY

Join the Omilk email discussion, send a letter of introduction to: [wrightwaydairy@yahoo.com](mailto:wrightwaydairy@yahoo.com)

A farmer had an outbreak of coccidiosis. Recommended remedies were Ferro and a hematinic from Agri-Dynamics. One farmer related her experience with Ferro, a mixture high in tannins that make it unpalatable: she was told to mix it with molasses to get the animals to eat it, but found that infected animals ate it free-choice until they did not need it. ♦



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## RESEARCH / EDUCATION

## The Use of Rotational Grazing And Two Herbal Treatments To Control Parasitism In Sheep And Goats

*Ann Wells, DVM*

### Introduction

Internal parasites are, notably, the biggest disease problem of sheep and goats. Warm, humid climates in the South allow internal parasites to thrive, causing disease for most months of the year. Anthelmintics used to kill these internal parasites are losing their effectiveness due to resistance of the parasite to the chemical compound.

For sheep and goat producers to be profitable, these two problems must be solved. It is imperative that we design new management systems that include efficacious alternative therapies and practices. Organic and conventional management programs face the same problems.

While internal parasites are not as much of an overall problem for cattle, management of calves must include some parasite control. Alternative therapies are needed for conditions that overwhelm the grazing and management system.

This project grew out of three previous years' work at the Heifer Ranch in central Arkansas, utilizing rotational grazing and animal selection techniques to reduce the level of parasitism and the need for chemical dewormers. The Ranch is interested in certifying the livestock as organic yet is concerned that parasites can't be controlled without the use prohibited chemical dewormers. The Ranch also has internal parasites with multiple chemical resistance which has increased the urgency for different control strategies and therapies. A small trial was first carried out using a commercial dried herbal product on 16 goats, but it failed. A garlic juice product was then found to work sufficiently but was not evaluated in a controlled setting needed to clearly assess its efficacy.

### Objective

The objective of this season-long study was to examine two

grazing strategies and three deworming treatments for the control of gastrointestinal nematodes in sheep and goats.

### Materials and methods

**Location: Heifer Ranch, Perryville, AR:**

- 61 Katahdin ewes lambled in March 2007
- 96 lambs grazed with dams on rotationally managed cool season forages (vetch, chicory, clovers) then warm season grasses, clover, and broad leaf forbs. One group of ewes with 28 lambs grazed chicory for 7 of 28 days monthly
- Lambs weaned at 120 d of age
- Treatments: Lambs were randomly assigned to groups treated with copper oxide wire particles (COWP), Garlic Barrier, or ground papaya seeds; one group was grazed on the chicory pasture
- Lambs dewormed if FAMACHA score >3

**"... good management and animal selection can provide much of the needed control against internal parasites for all livestock, including cattle. However, we also know we need effective alternative treatments during times such as mild, wet summers or when livestock are unavoidably stressed."**

**Location: Cooperator farm in Marianna, AR**

- 29 meat goat does and their kids rotationally grazed on 35 acres of cool season forages, warm season forages and crop aftermath, rotating weekly.
- Buck kids weaned and removed but doe kids remained with does.
- One enterprise within a larger vegetable gardening enterprise
- Treatments: Randomly assigned goats dewormed with either papaya seeds or Ivermectin if FAMACHA score > 3

**Location: Cooperator farm in Wagoner, OK**

- 50 ewes and lambs on 10 acres of pastureland reclaimed from neglected and brushy overgrowth.
- Rotation occurred every 5 days at start of project, reduced to daily in middle of project.
- Treatments: Randomly assigned sheep dewormed with Garlic Barrier or Ivermectin
- Sheep dewormed when FAMACHA score was > 3 at start of project, reduced to FAMACHA score ≥ 3 in middle of project.

Fecal egg counts (FEC) and FAMACHA scores were recorded every two weeks with FEC additionally recorded 7 days post treatment. Animals were visually evaluated daily.

FAMACHA scores determine only the level of *Haemonchus*



*contortus* infestation and thus only useful in small ruminant operations.

## Results

### Heifer Ranch

- 3 dewormed with COWP with a 0 – 70% reduction in FEC
- 3 dewormed with garlic with a 48 – 95% reduction in FEC
- 3 dewormed with papaya with a 0 – 100% reduction in FEC
- 18% of lambs required deworming but there were no post treatment samples collected 7 days later, so that data is not included in the results above.
- No effect of rotational grazing management on FEC or FAMACHA score
- 11 deaths: 5 related to parasites, 6 went missing, although the presumption is that parasites had a role in their disappearance.
- 6.3% of those grazed on chicory died, while 11.9% of those in the control grazing system died.
- 2 of the 3 lambs treated with Garlic Barrier and 2 of the 3 lambs treated with COWP died while only one of the papaya seed group died.

### Cooperator farm in Marianna, AR

- Only two goats had a FAMACHA higher than 3 and only one of those was treated; from the papaya seed group with its FAMACHA score reduced after treatment

### Cooperator farm in Wagoner, OK

- 19 sheep died, with 16 of them dying before July 15.
- 11 of 19 sheep were given Garlic Barrier, 8 were given chemical dewormers. Over the course of the summer, the chemical dewormer was changed three times, due to resistance of the parasites.
- Excessively high rainfall occurred from May till July 15th.

A sire effect was seen at Heifer Ranch and the cooperator farm in OK.

## Discussion

This project gave us some useful results and insights. The goal is to have resilient animals who do not require treatment for internal parasites. There were too few sheep treated at Heifer Ranch to adequately determine efficacy of any of the alternative treatments, including the chicory grazing treatment. This can be seen as a success, even though more information is still needed to determine consistency in efficacy. We continue to see that management is the foundation for successful preven-

tion of parasites in livestock. This was especially seen at the cooperator farm in Marianna, AR, where the low stocking rate and rotational system kept parasitism to a minimum.

The OK farm experienced above average rainfall, which greatly increased the number of parasites. We also discovered that these sheep had internal parasites with multiple chemical dewormer resistance.

Garlic Barrier, which has shown efficacy in previous drought years was not as effective in this high rainfall year. With higher than average rainfall in OK and at Heifer Ranch, FAMACHA testing had to be done bi-weekly to identify animals at an early stage of clinical parasitism.

We are more assured that good management and animal selection can provide much of the needed control against internal parasites for all livestock, including cattle. However, we also know we need effective alternative treatments during times such as mild, wet summers or when livestock are unavoidably stressed. Pasture plantings appear to have good promise or possibly products that can be harvested from those pasture plantings.

## Future studies

This project will be repeated in 2008 at Heifer Ranch and at two Oklahoma farms, including the one that participated last year. Chicory will be grazed for a longer period of time. The papaya seed treatment will use an increased dose. Garlic will be used as a tonic but not as a dewormer. ♦

*Dr. Ann Wells has more than 20 years experience in livestock production, including producing and selling natural lamb and now grass finished beef. Involved in organic livestock production on her own farm and working with other organic producers for 15 years, Dr. Wells has her own business, Springpond Holistic Animal Health, in Prairie Grove, AR. developing and educating on sustainable animal wellness plans for producers and educators.*

*Dr. Wells has been working with Heifer International for the last three years, researching parasite management strategies to reduce the need for anthelmintics. She also works with Heifer projects in the U.S. to improve their livestock production by focusing on animal well-being. Her philosophy is to focus on the health of the animal through controlled grazing management and stress reduction techniques and strategies.*

**Contact Ann by email: [annnw@pgtc.com](mailto:annnw@pgtc.com)**

## NET UPDATE

## NODPA Website and Redesign

The NODPA website took on a new look a few weeks ago and we hope you will find it easier to navigate and find more information about organic dairy.

The website is regularly updated with:

- Breaking news on production and pay price that is critically important to organic producers - when Horizon raised its pay price, we immediately had it on our website,
- As the Farm Bill and the President's budget moves through Congress, we will post updates and threats to the future of our slim resources - when the Penn State pasture lab was threatened we gave quick, easy advice on how to show your support,
- NODPA regularly represents its members by responding to issues as they come before Congress and these are posted in the "Comments to NOP" page - see NODPA's support for research dollars and conversion assistance,
- News stories that you may not have had time to read,
- Events that may have slipped your mind,
- New classified ads for the availability of forage, grain and labor

Remember we welcome your feedback on our changes. Be sure to make regular visits to the website to check on the happenings in organic dairy and to read about feature farms, articles on production and cow health, pay price, industry news and much more.

[www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com) and [www.organicmilk.org](http://www.organicmilk.org)

## RESEARCH / EDUCATION

### Research Symposium

(continued from page 11)

- The economics of organic dairy farms.  
*Tom Kriegl, University of Wisconsin*
- Transitional dynamics in converting conventional cropping systems to certified organic.  
*Andrew T. Corbin, Michigan State University*
- No-tillage organic soybean production in winter rye for improved weed management in South Central Wisconsin.  
*Emily Bernstein, University of Wisconsin*
- The effect of an organic no-till system on organic corn, soybean and tomato weed management and production.  
*Kathleen Delate, Iowa State University*
- Weed control using a propane burner.  
*Erin Taylor, Michigan State University*
- Management of Canada thistle with summer annual cover crops and mowing.  
*John Masiunas, University of Illinois*
- Cover crop management with specialty equipment for organic no-till.  
*Jeff Moyer, Rodale Institute*
- Directions for Grazing Research: Agronomic Recipes or Ecological Principles?  
*Alexandra Lyon*
- Reducing Off-Farm Grain Inputs on Northeast Organic Dairy farms: An Evaluation of Alternative Forage Cropping and Concentrate Feeding Systems. (Two separate studies done on a Jersey herd and a Holstein herd.)  
*Authors from UMaine and UNH*
- Perennial Crop Mixtures for Organic Grain Production.  
*Wilke, Flemming, Picasso, Snapp*
- A Summary of the Boundary Waters Veterinary Conference: Food Animal Production without Antibiotics.  
*David Bane, DVM, Ph.D.*

### MORE INFORMATION

For a copy of the symposium proceedings, you can download the 67-page pdf from the MOSES Website:  
[www.mosesorganic.org/researchsymposium/index.html](http://www.mosesorganic.org/researchsymposium/index.html)



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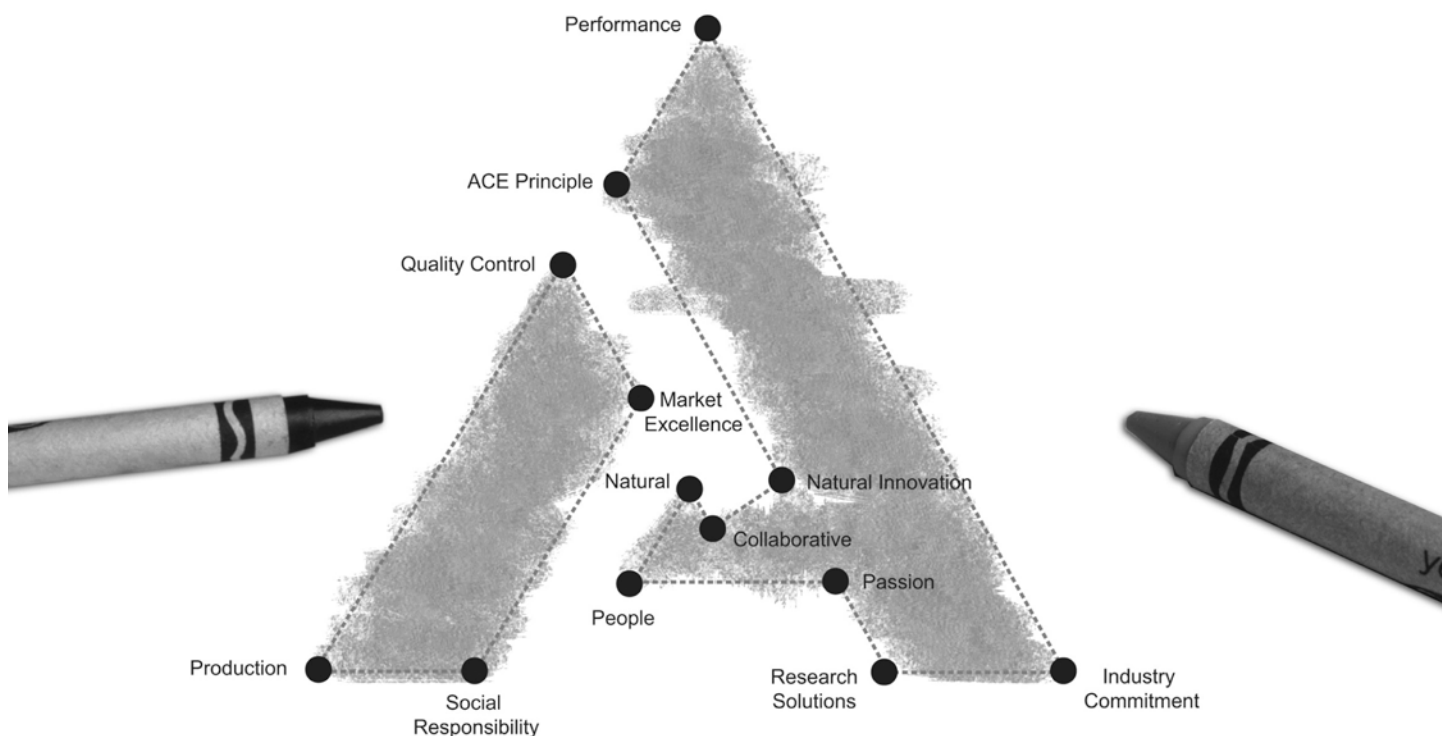
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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Hushed Up

*continued from page 1*

lenders, other producers, another processor, or farmer organizations without first seeking approval from the processor. The clause does not explain what factors the processor will consider when it decides whether to grant or deny approval for the producer to disclose the specific terms of the contract to another party.

The restriction on the producer is not limited to sharing the written version of the contract with another party. The producer agrees not to “disclose the specific terms.” This means that a producer who orally discusses the terms of the contract, or part of the contract such as the pay price or premiums offered, is likely violating the contract by disclosing its specific terms.

## Why might a processor want to enforce a confidentiality clause?

The main reason put forward by a processor for a confidentiality provision would likely be protection of trade secrets and other confidential business information. The processor might state that it is concerned that disclosures regarding pay price or other terms might be made to its competitors.

Processors may have a variety of other reasons to seek to enforce confidentiality clauses in their contracts. For example, the processor may want to prevent producers from comparing the terms they were offered with their fellow producers, or from discussing the terms with a bargaining association. The processor may also wish to prevent the producer from discussing the terms offered with consumers or the media.

## Why might producers object to a confidentiality clause?

Producers might wish to disclose the specific terms of their

contracts with other farmers or members of their associations for a variety of reasons—to find out whether they have been offered a fair price, to seek advice and mentoring on how to negotiate the terms of the contract and minimize their risks, or to participate in collective bargaining.

## Possible consequences of violating a confidentiality clause

**“A breach of confidentiality would be a breach of contract, and it is hard to imagine how a producer could correct a breach of confidentiality. Thus, the processor would have the right to terminate the contract and stop buying the producer’s milk if the producer violated a confidentiality clause. A processor could also seek money damages from the producer, particularly if it believed it had been harmed by the violation of the confidentiality clause.”**

Most contracts reviewed for this article include clauses that allow for early termination of the contract in certain circumstances. (In fact, the processor in the contract clause quoted near the beginning of this article already has the right to terminate the contract, in effect, since it is not required to buy all of the producer’s milk whenever it is unable or unwilling to do so.)

The contract which contains the confidentiality clause quoted near the beginning of this article states that either party may deliver written notice of its intention to terminate the contract in 30 days to the other party, if the other party has breached the contract and failed to correct that breach. A breach of confidentiality

would be a breach of contract, and it is hard to imagine how a producer could correct a breach of confidentiality. Thus, the processor would have the right to terminate the contract and stop buying the producer’s milk if the producer violated a confidentiality clause. A processor could also seek money damages from the producer, particularly if it believed it had been harmed by the violation of the confidentiality clause.

## Can’t producers just deal with all of that later, if a problem comes up?

By signing a contract that contains a confidentiality clause, the producer agrees to be bound by the clause. However, if the processor later denies approval to disclose contract terms to another party, or if the processor alleges the producer has violated the contract by disclosing contract terms, then the producer may have few alternatives but to face the processor in court. Going to court is costly, time-consuming, and tends to damage relationships. It is often hard to predict the chance of success in court. Producers will be better served by preventing problems and addressing any potential difficulties before the contract is signed.



## Are confidentiality clauses legal?

There is no federal law that specifically states that confidentiality clauses in contracts for the sale of agricultural goods such as milk are illegal. Nor are there any such laws in any northeastern states (though some Midwestern states have laws prohibiting confidentiality clauses in contracts for the production or sale of some agricultural commodities.)

## What about freedom of speech?

In general, the United States Constitution prevents the federal government from placing limits upon freedom of speech. The contract clause is an agreement between two private parties. There is likely no violation of freedom of speech, because the restriction is not imposed by the government.

## Packers and Stockyards Act

The federal Packers and Stockyards Act was passed by Congress in 1921 to protect farmers against the concentrated market power of the meatpackers. In general, the Packers and Stockyards Act regulates unfair and deceptive practices.<sup>1</sup> Its protections have been expanded to include production contracts for poultry and hogs. However, it has not been amended to address

contracts for the sale of milk or to protect dairy farmers.

## Law barring confidentiality clauses in production contracts

As part of the 2002 Farm Bill, Congress passed a new federal law that directly addressed confidentiality clauses in livestock production contracts.<sup>2</sup> Technically, this law is not part of the Packers and Stockyards Act, but like the Packers and Stockyards Act, its protections do not extend to dairy producers. This is because the law defines a "producer" as any person engaged in the raising and caring for livestock or poultry for slaughter. And the law defines a "processor" as any person engaged in the business of obtaining livestock or poultry for the purpose of slaughtering the livestock or poultry.

The law states that in spite of such a contract clause, a producer may not be prohibited from discussing any terms or details of the contract with a federal or state government agency, an attorney, a lender, an accountant, a farm manager, a landlord, or an immediate family-member. The confidentiality law applies even if a contract between a "producer" and a "processor" states that information contained in the contract is confidential.

*(continued on page 22)*



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Hushed Up

*continued from page 21*

Though the law does not currently protect dairy producers, dairy producers should be aware of it for two reasons. First, they may find it helpful in negotiations with processors. Second, they may wish to contact their Congressmembers about providing similar protection to dairy producers.

## Agricultural Fair Practices Act

The federal Agricultural Fair Practices Act, known as AFPA, protects the right of farmers to join together in associations for the purpose of bargaining with handlers who acquire agricultural products for the purpose of processing or sale.<sup>3</sup> Under AFPA, a “producer” means a person engaged in the production of agricultural products as a farmer, planter, rancher, dairyman, fruit, vegetable, or nut grower. Thus, dairy producers are specifically included under AFPA. AFPA defines an “association of producers” as any association of producers of agricultural products engaged in marketing, bargaining, shipping, or processing their products.

In general, it is a violation of AFPA for a handler, including a milk processor, to attempt to coerce a producer not to join and belong to an association, or to discriminate against a producer because he or she belongs to an association of producers.

This law could apply to contracts for the sale of organic milk, if a producer were a member, or interested in becoming a member, of a producer association that engaged in marketing and bargaining on behalf of its members. It seems clear that such an association would expect its members to disclose the terms of contracts offered to them, so that the association could negotiate more effectively. If a processor denied approval to a producer to disclose specific terms of the contract to its association, one could argue that the processor was attempting to coerce the producer not to join the association or to breach his or her membership agreement with the association, in violation of AFPA. But it is very difficult to predict whether this argument would prevail in court.

The version of the Farm Bill passed by the Senate and currently awaiting action by a Congressional conference committee contains a Livestock Title that would strengthen the

provisions of AFPA.<sup>4</sup> The Livestock Title would broaden the definition of “association of producers” to include an organization of agricultural producers dedicated to promoting the common interest and general welfare of producers of agricultural products. Thus, the association would not have to be directly engaged in negotiations on behalf of its members in order for members to be protected under AFPA if this change were adopted.

## State laws barring confidentiality clauses in specified agricultural contracts

A number of midwestern states have state laws that make confidentiality clauses in some agricultural contracts unenforceable. These states include:

- Arkansas<sup>5</sup>
- Illinois<sup>6</sup>
- Iowa<sup>7</sup>
- Minnesota<sup>8</sup>

Organic dairy producers in these states should seek legal advice to determine which types of contracts and agricultural commodities are addressed. Research for this article did not reveal any similar laws in northeastern states.

## State laws against restraint of trade

Most states have court decisions addressing “restraints on trade” imposed by contracts. It is possible that an organic dairy producer could argue that a confidentiality clause was too broad and restricted the producer’s actions unreasonably. Again, it is very difficult to predict whether this argument would prevail in court.

## Options for producers when offered a contract containing a confidentiality clause

Producers have a variety of options when offered a contract for the sale of organic milk which contains a confidentiality clause. Producers may want to consider one or more of the following strategies:

- **Consult an attorney in the producer’s state.** The producer is not bound by the contract until he or she has signed it. Producers should keep in mind that even though they are not bound by the contract until they sign it, processors may be displeased if they learn a producer has disclosed contract terms before signing the contract. Disclosure to an attorney with whom the producer has an

attorney-client relationship should not present a problem, because attorneys owe a duty of confidentiality to their clients.

- **Negotiate with the processor for the removal of the clause.** Research on whether the processor's competitors require confidentiality might help in the negotiations.
- **Cross out the clause** (the producer should initial and date the change) **and sign the contract.** The processor may accept the cancellation of the clause, or reject the change proposed by the producer.
- **Negotiate with the processor for limits on the clause.** The contract could set forth factors the processor will consider when granting or denying approval to disclose contract terms. Or the contract could list parties to whom the processor approves disclosures in advance. Or the contract could list specific parties to whom disclosure is forbidden.
- **Decline to sign the contract.** Search for another processor.
- **Sign the contract with the intention of complying with the confidentiality clause.** Complying with the clause might include seeking approval from the processor for disclosure of contract terms to certain parties.

A producer might be tempted to sign the contract with the intention of freely disclosing its specific terms. Such a plan is risky, because disclosing the terms would violate the contract, and is not recommended. ♦

## END NOTES

1. 7 U.S.C. § 192.
2. 7 U.S.C. § 229b.
3. 7 U.S.C. §§ 2301-2306.
4. The bill number in the Senate was S.2302. It is also referred to as an engrossed amendment to the House bill, H.R. 2419. The Livestock Title is Title X.
5. Ark. Code Ann. § 2-32-201(b) (applies to contract production of livestock and poultry, but milk not specifically included).
6. 505 Ill. Comp. Stat. § 17/30 (applies to production of commodities including milk, if the company has or exercises some control or direction over the production process).
7. Iowa Code § 202.3 (applies to contract production of commodities including milk, but application to sales contracts unclear).
8. Minn. Stat. § 17.710 (application to production of milk unclear).



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## RESEARCH / EDUCATION

## 'Understanding Organics' Organic Livestock Conference Returns this Fall!

In February and March, 2007 the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont and Cornell University's Quality Milk Production Services organized two 3-day conferences on organic livestock health and management. These conferences, funded in part by NESARE, provided the comprehensive nuts and bolts of organic livestock production to an audience of veterinarians, extension agents, nutritionists, NRCS agents, loan officers and other professionals catering to the needs of organic livestock and dairy producers.

The conferences provided the attendees with a greater understanding of the National Organic Program rules for organic meat and milk production; a deeper understanding and appreciation for holistic preventive management strategies; greater access to organically approved complementary treatments; models for on-farm research; and a broader network of resources, products and professionals to turn to when working with organic livestock farms.

As a continuation of the NESARE Professional Development Grant, NOFA-VT and QMPS will be organizing another 3-day conference to take place in Auburn, NY on October 28 - 30, 2008. This fall's event will build upon the information covered in the first year with the purpose of encouraging further learning and networking. Please encourage your veterinarians, extension agents, and other resource professionals to attend!

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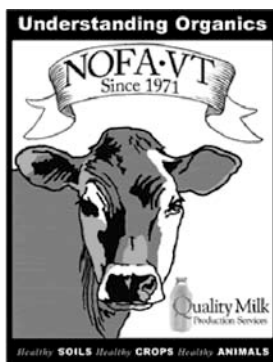
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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

# Diversified NH Farm Ships First Organic Milk

**Luke and Catarina Mahoney plan on selling meat, eggs and vegetables to local markets to supplement the dairy income from Brookford Farm, the conserved farm they rent.**

*By Lisa McCrory*

There are a growing number of organic dairy farms cropping up in New Hampshire; from 5 certified dairies in 2006, the numbers more than doubled to 12 farms in 2007. This may not seem like a lot to some, but realize that there are only 140 total dairy farms in the state, making organic dairy 9% of the total dairy farms.

Luke and Catarina Mahoney, with their growing workforce Oliver (5) and Emanuel (2), have an organic dairy farm located a short (and convenient) distance from the University of New Hampshire in the town of Rollinsford. They rent their 500-acre farm, which includes 200 acres of wooded land, and 270 acres of open fields from which 70 acres are used for pasture and 60 acres are tillable. Luke and Catarina grow baleage and plan on growing some small grains this year to complement the forages that they are growing, hoping to reduce the need for purchased feed.

The farm that they are renting is conserved and included in their rental agreement is the house, barns, equipment, milking parlor, 3 tractors and the land. Though much of what was provided needed some attention, it was a perfect opportunity for the young couple to get started with their own dairy herd.

Though Luke and Catarina are in their first year of shipping organic milk, they are not new to the world of organic dairy farming. Luke has worked on a number of dairy farms over the past 10 years; from a biodynamic social/therapeutic working farm in Pennsylvania to another biodynamic farm in Russia where Luke worked on the dairy and Catarina worked in the vegetable production part of the farm. It was at Svetlana Farm in Russia that Luke and Catarina first met. With their combined experience in animal husbandry and vegetable



Luke and Catarina and their two sons Oliver(5) and Emanuel (2).

production, the Mahoneys plan to diversify their farm and sell meat, vegetables, and eggs to local markets and through their farm store, adding to the income they receive from shipping their milk to Organic Valley.

All the farms that Luke and Catarina have worked on were Biodynamic and organic and they apply many of the management practices and philosophies learned on their own farm. They keep the horns on the cows and as time goes on, plan to apply the biodynamic preparations on the fields and to the composting manure. One of the things Luke would like to have established first, however, is to achieve the appropriate number of livestock on the farm (fertility source) to match the land base (fertility needs).

## Transition

The farm that the Mahoneys are renting was already certifiable and the cows that they purchased were certified organic, so they did not have a transition process to deal with; just some up-front costs in purchasing livestock and making sure the land was certified and the house, barns and equipment received the necessary tune-ups and upgrades. The cows that they purchased came from two organic dairy farms located in Northern Vermont; Butterworks Farm in Westfield and the

Norris Farm in Canaan and 9 unbred heifers from two farms in July, 2007. From this young start-up herd of 15 cows (1st lactation) and 13 heifers, Luke and Catarina will grow their herd to a number that they consider to be sustainable for their land base and their personal needs. The farm is certified by the State Department of New Hampshire and they have been shipping milk to Organic Valley since May, 2007.

Farming organically in Germany is very different than in US. Antibiotics are allowed for use on the certified organic farms Luke worked on provided it was vet prescribed. When talking to their vet friends in Germany, they cannot believe that animal health without antibiotics is possible. For Luke and Catarina, they have had to learn about approved livestock health and management practices under the USDA standards. This has not been as challenging as they thought it would be. "It is amazing how well they can come up with solutions if you say 'no' to antibiotics." Says Luke.



Dairy cows in one of the pastures of the Brookford Farm.

## Housing

During the winter months the cows are housed in a bedded pack and weaned calves and bred heifers are kept in a freestall. Calves newborn to weaning age roam freely in a bedded pack with access to the south. Reed Canary from a nearby certified organic farm has proven to be a great bedding source and they continue to look for abandoned fields for additional bedding for the coming year.

## Grazing System

The Mahoneys have long paddocks or 'pasture strips' that they use, giving the cows a new section of grass after each milking. Some of the strips are very long and the cows could be on it for a week, so they try to use a back fence whenever possible. Water is made available in each paddock using black plastic pipe and portable water tubs. The cows were grazing well into November last year on some winter rye that they planted. 2007 was the first complete grazing season on this farm and the pastures had a lot of weeds in them as the farm has not had animals on it for a while. They are looking forward to seeing how the pastures come in this year, and also plan to add red and white clover to their pastures through frost seeding or no-till application. They have been thinking about adding lime to the land but at the same time are trying to focus on increasing soil biology so that the soil organisms can make

calcium and other nutrients more available to the plants. Bio-dynamic preparations will play a role in making this happen.

To supplement the pasture, cows are offered free choice hay, kelp, salt, plus 6 lbs of a 12% protein high energy grain. In the winter, the dairy cows are fed first cut alfalfa silage and second cut alfalfa mixed grass hay, 8 lbs of an 18% grain, free choice

kelp, and Redmond salt and conditioner. Heifers and dry cows get pasture, salt and kelp (no grain). And in the winter they get first cut dry hay, and alfalfa baleage.

## Calves

Calves receive milk for up to 4 months of age. With that they get calf starter grain and high quality second cut hay/grass/alfalfa. Early weaned calves get 18% calf starter with whole oats and molasses plus some high quality hay and weaned heifers get 1.5 lbs of a 14% grain plus the same forages ration as bred heifers and dry cows.

## Livestock Health

A major part of their livestock health plan is to have a good prevention plan in place. Cows are not pushed for production and are fed a high forage, low grain ration. They offer free choice kelp, salt and conditioner to their cows and have chosen not to vaccinate their cows unless there is a problem. Calves are left with their mom for the first 7 days of life. Cows and calves stay together in the barn at night and the cows go out to graze during the day (during the growing season). The cows are still milked two times a day.

*(continued on page 28)*

## FEATURED FARM

(continued from page 27)

Health problems such as mastitis, calving issues, and milk fever have not been an issue on this farm. There were a few nervous heifers, however, who were not breeding back right away, so they tried Spectra 305 and had great success with that. The heifers started showing their heats and a lot of them were bred in the first breeding.

### Resources

Luke is a regular contributor to O dairy and uses this discussion list as a place to learn from other farmers, veterinarians and professionals as well as an avenue to buy/sell feed, livestock or other things that may be of interest to the organic dairy crowd. He also turns to Dr Hubert Karreman's book, 'Treating Dairy Cows Naturally', Dr Paul Detloff's book 'Alternative Treatments for Ruminant Animals', Pfeiffer's book on Soil Fertility, and 'World of the Soil' by Russell. They have had challenges with finding a veterinarian that is supportive and are actively looking for other veterinarians who are interested in working with an organic livestock operation. Their current vet, though not

supportive of organic dairy, is very big on management and comes to the farm for herd checks and emergencies.

### Future of the Organic Dairy industry

Luke and Catarina have felt the impact of the current grain and fuel prices and agree that the pay price for organic milk needs to be addressed. Though the price for organic milk was fair a year ago, it is no longer sustainable. The Mahoneys are interested in growing more of their own feed and are looking into equipment, attending workshops and networking with other producers in preparation for the coming growing season.

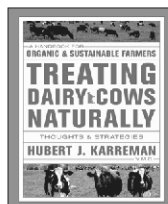
### Diversifying

Brookford Farm is doing a lot more than selling organic milk. Realizing the interest and demand for locally grown product, they are marketing their cull cows and bulls for organic beef, selling eggs and plan to grow more vegetables this year. These products are sold at the store-front on their farm and at local farmers markets. They feel that the more diversified they are with what they have to offer the local market, the better they can remain viable and live the lifestyle that they would like on their small farm. ♦

## TREATING DAIRY COWS NATURALLY THOUGHTS & STRATEGIES

— BY HUBERT J. KARREMAN, V.M.D. —

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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

## Diversifying Forages at the Stoltzfus Farm, Whitesville, NY: A Follow-Up

By Mary-Howell Martens

As initially reported in NODPA News, John and Tammy Stoltzfus of Whitesville, in southwest New York, opened their dairy farm for a Forage Field Day event on Sept. 28, 2007 showing a field trial of four different varieties of forage turnips with different varieties and seeding rates of oats. With the assistance and sponsorship of Lakeview Organic Grain, Bejo Seeds, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Allegany County Graziers and Organic Valley, they planted 18 acres of hayland to 25 plots of various seed/crop combinations.

On August 16, 2007, a 18-acre field was planted cross-wise. Forage oats and Keuka oats were planted in one direction at several different rates. The brassica varieties over-seeded in the other direction were 1) Pasja Turnip, 2) Purple Top Turnip, and 3) Fodder Kale. Pasja turnip is a hybrid multi-graze forage brassica from Bejo seeds, designed for multiple grazings, with excellent drought tolerance. It is early maturing, leafier, and higher yielding than many other forage brassicas. Purple top turnip is the common garden turnip that also works well for grazing. Fodder kale is used widely in Europe for grazing.

Conditions were dry at the time of seeding, but the next day they got half an inch of rain and 3 weeks later they got another 4-5 inches of rain. With this extra moisture, the planting really took off! The cows were grazed on the turnips and oats until the end of November. John says that when out in the pasture, the cows would hardly ever lay down – they eagerly ate as much as they could and came into the barn reluctantly. In late November, when the pastures were thoroughly eaten and snow was 4-5 inches deep, he brought them in and fed clover/timothy baleage changing nothing else in the ration.



Cows grazing forage turnips and oats in late November at Stoltzfus farm

Almost immediately, the cows dropped in milk over 10#/cow!

The mixed oat/turnip forage was tested one week before the field days event in late September. At that point, the forages were running about 30% crude protein and 75-80 Net Energy Lactation (NEL). The Keuka oats alone were running nearly 30% protein at that time! Some of oats and turnips were harvested as baleage at the end of October, after the first hard

frost because forage turnips become sweeter then. "Forage turnips can handle 4 nights of 20-degree weather before they actually stop growing", says John. Normally John would have preferred to reserve more of the crop for grazing, but in 2007, there was such a shortage of forage that they needed to harvest more as baleage for winter feeding.

Forage turnips have a large tall leaf that grows nicely with the oats allowing for a thick healthy stand of both. The feed quality is excellent, allowing dairy

farmers to reduce the grain in their winter rations. John and Tammy feel that with the oat/turnip baleage, they have been able to reduce their winter grain feeding to 5-8 # grain (oats & cornmeal), 20# oat/turnip baleage, some poorer quality baleage and dry hay.

Estimated yield per acre was estimated at 11.8 tons of as-fed forage, probably 2.8 tons of dry matter. John says that the volume of plant material doubled between end of September and when he made baleage at the end of October. Additional forage testing will be done on the stored baleage later this winter.

In 2008, John and Tammy intend to plant at least 12 of their planned 50 acres of oats and turnips closer to the barn to make it easier to let the cows out for several hours each day as colder weather comes. They intend to graze the cows well into December and then harvest the rest as baleage. Based on what they've learned, they intend to plant 1/2 lb per acre of turnips with 3 bushels per acre of oats because the density of the turnips in this year's crop (at 1 lb per acre) was a little too heavy. Turnips tend to be pretty stalky when planted thick, which could put some stress on the mower. For 2008, John recommends seeding no later than the first week of August to allow for better establishment. ♦

### Tenure-Track Position in Organic Dairy Agriculture

The College of Life Sciences and Agriculture (COLSA) at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) seeks applicants who are interested in taking a leadership role in the research and academic programs associated with the UNH Organic Dairy Research Farm. The University of New Hampshire is the first land-grant university in the nation to have an organic dairy research farm. This farm has been developed to be a regional research and demonstration center for organic dairy farmers, farmers undergoing or considering transition to organic production, and students of sustainable agriculture. The University of New Hampshire is committed to advancing sustainable food and agricultural systems through education, demonstrating sustainable agricultural practices, and investigating and facilitating broad collaborative efforts for sustainability. The position is an open rank, academic year tenure-track faculty position. Individuals at the Associate or Full Professor levels are encouraged to apply.

The successful candidate is expected to collaborate with other on-going programs in animal and plant sciences,

natural resources and resource economics and provide national leadership in program development. We seek an individual to provide leadership and oversight of collaborative research in areas such as organic dairy systems and marketing, animal health and disease, forages, soils, grazing, and agroecology. Applicants must have a PhD or its equivalent with outstanding achievements in research and teaching, demonstrated leadership, experience with external funding, and program expansion skills.

**Applicants should send a cover letter**, curriculum vitae, summary of current and future research plans, statement of teaching interests, and vision statement outlining your academic and research plans for the organic dairy at UNH. The names and contact information for three to five references should also be sent to: Paul C. Tsang, Search Committee Chair, University of New Hampshire, Department of Animal and Nutritional Sciences, 129 Main Street, Kendall Hall, Durham, New Hampshire 03824 (paul.tsang@unh.edu, 603-862-3479). Review of applications will begin March 31, 2008 and will continue until the position is filled. Information about the University of New Hampshire, the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture, and the organic dairy can be found at the following websites: <http://www.unh.edu/>, <http://www.colsa.unh.edu/welcome.html> and <http://www.organicdairy.unh.edu/index.html>.

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## Why Organic Dairy Farmers Should Learn To Love High Organic Grain Prices

By Kevin K. Engelbert

I've read with a great deal of interest the announcements about meetings, conferences, work shops, etc. that are being held to help organic dairy farmers deal with the high cost of organic grain, as if there is something fundamentally wrong with the way we are farming. When I first heard last August about organic shelled corn selling for \$500/ton, if you could even find any, I reacted the same way most people did. Namely, with disbelief, and that such a high price is no more sustainable than an extremely low price. After more thought, I eventually came to a different conclusion.

I realized that never before in my lifetime had any agricultural commodity sold for parity price, never. And yet, here I was bemoaning the fact that organic crop producers were indeed receiving parity price for their grains, or higher. I had a sense of disgust come over me, almost to the point of becoming a sense of guilt. Why? Because I, like so many other dairymen, have had it drummed into my head for so long that farmers didn't deserve any type of windfall, that I reacted in the fashion expected. I've always believed that receiving a fair price for your product was one of the tenets of organic agriculture, and instead of expressing gratitude that at least one group of organic farmers was doing so, I instinctively condemned the situation. Not any more.

A speaker at the NOFA-NY winter conference, John Bobbe, president of OFARM, stated that in agriculture, low prices always bring down high prices. I hope that in organic agriculture a new set of expectations will arise, and high prices will bring up low prices. I think we have reached a turning point in all of agriculture, brought on mainly by the world reaching 'peak oil'. The perfect storm of high oil prices, a burgeoning world economy, the low value of the US dollar, and poor weather have all combined to change the pricing dynamics in all of agriculture, organic included. I don't see any of the variables returning to the old standards, ever. The land devoted to supplying ethanol plants with 'fuel' will continue to do so, even if the 'fuel' changes to crops other than corn. Those

multi-million dollar plants weren't built to sit idle.

While everyone points to organic grain prices as the culprit, they are an easy and visible target, the fact of the matter is, grain prices are a small part of the economic squeeze facing organic dairymen. Here are conventional milk parity prices for a few key months over the last five years:

Jan. '03	\$33.00
Jan. '04	\$34.10
Jan. '05	\$35.10
Jan. '06	\$37.90
Jan. '07	\$38.80
Aug. '07	\$40.50
Dec. '07	\$41.50
Jan. '08	\$43.80

In five years, parity price has gone up almost \$11/cwt., and in just one month, almost \$2.50/cwt. Organic grain prices have risen, but they are but a small part of the economic crunch facing organic dairymen, because the USDA parity prices for conventional milk do not take organic grain prices into account. If organic grain prices influenced the calculation of parity prices, they would be even higher. The situation on most organic farms is even more serious than grain prices alone indicate. Parity price represents an unbiased, accurate basis for establishing an organic pay price. The USDA publishes parity prices at the end of every month, and they represent a level of worth that would allow farmers to live like 1st class citizens, rather than the 2nd, or even 3rd, class people we are now. A true measure of our worth to society should be reflected by receiving a fair share of what consumers spend on organic dairy products. The fact that organic dairy farmers receive a smaller percentage of the consumer dollar than conventional dairy farmers is simply disgraceful.

On our farm, we are dealing with high grain prices the same as everyone else; namely, we're feeding less. Even though we grow our own grain, we still push a pencil and feed as if we had to purchase our supply. So, we feed only 2.5 lbs. of roasted soybeans, and no shelled corn, ear corn, or any other grain to our milking string. Due to the extremely dry weather last year, we had to hire some corn silage chopped to have enough forage, so we're feeding 20-25 lbs. per day to our animals. If parity prices were 'reversed', that is, if organic grain prices

(continued on page 37)

**"I've always believed that receiving a fair price for your product was one of the tenets of organic agriculture, and instead of expressing gratitude that at least one group of organic farmers [grain producers] was doing so, I instinctively condemned the situation. Not any more."**

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Subclinical Mastitis—What you can't see CAN hurt you

*By Dr Linda Tikofsky*

Somatic cells are one of the indicators of milk quality and, in the healthy udder, are epithelial cells from the lining of the mammary gland and some types of white blood cells. A healthy gland should have cell counts less than 100,000 cells/ml and typically, counts will be much, much lower than that (<25,000 cells/ml).

When bacteria invade the gland, the few white blood cells that are normally present send out an 'alarm' to the rest of the body and recruit thousands of additional white blood cells from the blood stream and into the mammary gland to fight infection. Infected glands will have SCC's greater than 250,000 cells/ml and often the counts will reach into the millions. If all goes well, these white blood cells will kill the invading bacteria and the SCC of the gland will decreased to less than 100,000 cells/ml within 30 days.

We can estimate the number of infected quarters in a herd and the impact on production from the bulk milk SCC. See table below.

**Estimating production lost and percent of infected quarters in a herd by bulk milk SCC**

Bulk tank SCC	Percent infected quarters in herd	Percent production loss
200,000	6	0
500,000	16	6
750,000	25	12
1,000,000	32	18
1,500,000	48	29

Mastitis is commonly divided into two categories: clinical and subclinical mastitis. Clinical mastitis is those infections that are typically accompanied by the classic signs of inflammation: redness, swelling, heat and pain and abnormal milk. Subclinical mastitis are infections which call high somatic cell counts but the udder and the milk appear normal and can only be detected with methods that measure the number of somatic cells in milk

Annual losses per cow for subclinical mastitis are estimated at

\$200 year in conventional herds. For organic producers the losses are likely greater because of the higher pay price per hundredweight and the loss of larger premiums. For every clinical case of mastitis in a herd, there are likely 15-40 cases of subclinical mastitis and these cases may be responsible for up to 70% of production losses associated with mastitis.

There are various monitoring systems that detect SCC available and likely one of them is appropriate for your farm:

Electronic cell counting is performed by the Dairy Herd Improvement Associations and combines herd and cow data with SCC to provide more data for analysis. This information is especially useful for determining which cows contribute most to total bulk milk SCC. It is also easier to use the data to pinpoint potential management areas that may be influencing new mastitis cases. Are all high SCC cows fresh? This would indicate a management deficiency during the dry period. Are cows' cell counts increasing over lactation? Milking time management or contagious mastitis may be the likely culprits in this scenario.

There are some electronic cell counters that are available for on farm use. The Direct Cell Counter (DCC) can return accurate results in a range of 10,000 to 4,000,000 cells/ml. A small cassette is filled a sample of milk and inserted in the DCC and results are available in <1 minute. The results from the DCC are in nearly perfect agreement with DHIA cell counting.

Drawbacks to this unit are price of the units and individual cassettes but some organic farms are using this machine to fine tune their bulk milk SCC and achieve their SCC premiums monthly. For them the benefits outweigh the cost.

Recently the Protect has been introduced as another cow-side SCC measurement device. A drop of milk is placed on a test strip which incubates at room temperature for 45 minutes and then is read in small handheld machine. Accuracy is similar to DHIA testing. The advantage to this unit is a lower cost than the DCC but time to result is lengthy. This test must be done on fresh milk; as milk ages, the test becomes less accurate.

The simplest cowside tests are the Wisconsin and California mastitis tests. Milk from each quarter is stripped into a special paddle and an equal amount of detergent reagent is added to the milk and then paddle is gently swirled. A thickening and color changed indicates mastitis in one or more quarters. A slight change in consistency and color (1+) is associated with cell counts of (400,000-1,500,000), more thickening is associated with SCC of 800,000-5,000,000 and very thick (egg white) means that quarter has an SCC>5,000,000. . These

tests are quite good at detecting cows with very high SCC but may miss those cows with cell counts less than 500,000.

Once cows with subclinical mastitis are identified, action can be taken to improve milk quality. Cows with high SCC two months in a row should have milk samples cultured to determine what bacteria are responsible. Some of the most common bacteria causing subclinical mastitis are the contagious bacteria, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Streptococcus agalactiae*. The longer these bacteria remain undetected in a herd the more likely they are to spread, causing bulk milk SCC to increase over time. Another major cause of subclinical mastitis, especially in fresh cows is environmental *Streptococcus* spp. These infections may remain subclinical for months but eventually will have clinical episodes. We know that the earlier we identify and *Strep* spp., the less likely they will become chronic.

The benefits of taking action on subclinical mastitis in the herd outweigh the costs of added labor and expense. Every dollar invested in a mastitis control program will return \$15-20 in production, premiums, and reduced death and culling. ♦

*Dr Linda Tikofsky is an extension veterinarian with Quality Milk Production Services at Cornell University. She works with organic and conventional dairy farmers on milk quality and udder health. She can be reached at: lg40@cornell.edu, or 607-255-8202.*

## COMMENTARY

### Cows Like Music, Too

Hello! My name is Nathan and I'm new to this group. I'm originally from Ann Arbor Michigan where I grew up on a horse farm, and I now live in Nashville TN where I am finishing up my last semester of college.

This summer I am planning a trip to go to dairy farms in each state (with the exception of Hawaii and Alaska) to sing to cows in fields as a way to help spread the message that every creature should be valued and respected for the simple fact that it exists, and that we should not look at animals (or other people) only for what we can get from them. You probably know that in the case of most commercial dairy farms, cows are treated very poorly and looked at as not much more than milking machines - they are exploited for the sake of mass production. Similarly, I think that many big businesses take advantage of people for efficiency's sake while producing low quality products.

Organic farmers such as yourselves seem to look at their animals in a much better way, and I think it is a very important thing you are doing for society, even though it is very difficult. I think that part of the reason why it is difficult is because of the way our society values different things.

As a kid, I used to sing to the horses on the farm, and I also found out that cows like music (moosic?) as well. I believe that if people can grasp the idea that it would be worthwhile to sing to cows simply because cows like music, People would start to look at animals differently and realize that there is more to them than what we can get from them. If people realize this, then we might also start to see the reality that we could - and should - treat our fellow humans better too.

I am writing to ask if you might be willing to let me come to your farm and sing to your cows to help spread this message. I have talked some organic farmers already but still need to find some farms in many states. Please send me an email at [dearnathank@gmail.com](mailto:dearnathank@gmail.com) or reply to this if you are willing to let me come to your farm this summer. It would be great to meet you and your animals and I would love to hear your thoughts about what I am doing. Thanks so much. I hope you all are doing well today.

- Yours in compassion, Nathan

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# Calendar

## Maximizing Milk on Home Grown Grains and Forages

March 13 – Newport, VT

March 14 – Sheldon, VT

March 18 – Springfield, VT

March 19 – Rutland, VT

This traveling one-day workshop, organized by NOFA-VT and UVM Extension, is designed to meet the needs of dairy producers wanting to maximize the use of their forages systems and/or learn about incorporating home grown grains to offset the costs of purchased feeds. For more information, contact NOFA-VT, 802-434-4122 or UVM Extension, 802-524-6501

## Agroforestry Workshop

March 20, 2008.

The workshop will be repeated in Lanesboro, June 5, 2008 Agroforestry has great potential to both provide environmental benefits, such as decreased soil loss to wind and water erosion, and to increase income as an alternative farmerenterprise. For an introduction to agroforestry, see "Discovering Profits in Unlikely Places: Agroforestry Opportunities for Added Income", a publication developed by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and University of Minnesota Extension, available to view in full text online at: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/naturalresources/DD7407.html>

## 14th Annual Northeast PA Grazing Conference

Wednesday, March 26th - 8:30 am to 3:45 pm

**Today's Grass-Based Agriculture: Grazing Systems, Healthy Soils & Healthy Livestock**

Harford Volunteer Fire Company, Harford, PA.

Presentations by Dr. Hubert Karreman, VMD, author of "Treating Dairy Cows Naturally", Dr. Jerry Cherney of Cornell University on biomass energy, and many others. For more information, contact Kris Ribble at 570-784-4401 ext. 111 or [kris.ribbon@pa.usda.gov](mailto:kris.ribbon@pa.usda.gov)

## Organic Dairy 101 workshops for dairy support professionals:

March 25, 2008 in Rochester and

March 27, 2008 in McIntosh, MN

The number of organic dairies is increasing to meet a booming consumer market for organic dairy products. Learn about successful organic dairying and how you can serve a growing clientele. For more information or to register, go to: [http://www.sfa-mn.org/organic\\_dairy101.php](http://www.sfa-mn.org/organic_dairy101.php)

## Northeast Pasture Consortium Annual Meeting

March 27th and 28th

Holiday Inn Arena, Binghamton, NY.

Featuring research updates from Northeastern Universities, USDA-ARS laboratories, and others. Identification of future research and outreach priorities by farmers. Additional information available at [www.umaine.edu/grazingguide](http://www.umaine.edu/grazingguide)

## Northeast Grasstravaganza 2008

March 28th and 29th, 2008

Holiday Inn Arena, Binghamton, NY

Featuring a symposium on grazing behavior research and practical application with Kathy Voth, Darrell Emmick, and NY farmers who have learned how to use grazing behavior to their advantage! For more information contact Central NY RC&D, 607-334-3231 ext.4 or email Phil Metzger - [phil.metzger@ny.usda.gov](mailto:phil.metzger@ny.usda.gov)

## Organic Livestock Feed Production

March 29 - Organic Valley Headquarters

April 1 - Country Inn and Suites, Decorah IA

April 7 - St Charles Community Center, St Charles, MN

April 8 - Stone Mill Coffeehouse and Eatery, Cannon Falls, MN

Sponsored by MOSES. Please preregister with Harriet Behar, [Harriet@mosesorganic.org](mailto:Harriet@mosesorganic.org) or 608-872-2164

April 9 & 10, 2008

**"Whole-Farm Approaches to Parasite Prevention and Control on Organic Dairy and Livestock Farms"**

Wednesday, April 9th -- Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center.

Thursday, April 10 -- Applecheek Farm, Hyde Park

Presented by Dr. Ann Wells, DVM of Spring Pond Holistic Animal Health, Ann will provide attendees with a whole-farm management approach required to control internal parasites in organic livestock. Dr. Wells is a highly regarded and nationally recognized expert and workshop presenter on parasite control and prevention in organic systems. Every grazer of dairy and non-dairy livestock -- organic and conventional -- will benefit from attending this important and timely workshop. Contact NOFA-VT at 802-434-4122, [info@nofavt.org](mailto:info@nofavt.org), for further information and registration details.

(continued on page 40)

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## Parity Price for Grains

*(continued from page 33)*

were only 50-60% of parity and organic milk was at parity or above, we would be feeding more grain, to try to maximize the return on our time and investment. Instead, rather than put grain through our cows, we recognize more profit by selling most of the supply we produced.

Much of the discussion I hear about how to deal with the situation revolves around changes farmers should make in their operations. I would urge everyone to give serious thought before making any major adjustments. While everyone should do their utmost to produce high quality pasture and forage crops, most farms in the Northeast don't have land that lends itself well to grain production, and to fight to grow crops where they aren't suited usually leads to trouble. Growing grains requires a lot of time, investment in machinery, many purchased inputs, enough storage facilities to hold a year round supply, and detailed planning, even for small grains. Most farmers who concentrate on their cows will suffer if they start expending a lot of effort to grow grain. Milking times will become more shuffled, herd health may not be tended to as well as in the past, family activities will lessen, and stress levels will rise. There are many factors to growing grain that are easy to overlook and hard to put into an equation. Breeding animals that require less grain takes time, and may result in a reduced cash flow situation, unless more are milked. In short, growing grain may make many farms unsustainable in terms of finances, soils, and family life, which usually plays a large role in determining whether the next generation takes over the family farm.

The problem then, comes back to the same old story – dairy farmers are not receiving enough money for their efforts. The

best, long term solution remains receiving a fair price for our organic milk. The price wars going on are a result of the milk companies still not understanding the organic consumer. Some are losing market share, and in the conventional world the standby answer to that problem has always been to lower prices. Most consumers of conventional dairy are looking for the lowest cost products, and don't have a great deal of brand loyalty. Organic consumers do not follow that mindset. The truth continues to spread about companies who 'talk-the-talk', but do not 'walk-the-walk', and when organic consumers learn the truth, they switch brands and do not return, no matter how low the price. In fact, lowering the retail price during times such as these actually may have the opposite effect. Organic consumers begin to wonder why such a huge difference in selling price, and when they find out they've been 'had', they change brands, permanently.

So, what the present situation all boils down to has been stated before: the organic milk market cannot develop properly when fraudulent, illegal milk is allowed to be marketed as organic. The corruption at the upper levels of the USDA has resulted directly in hardship for organic dairy farmers who follow the letter, and the intent, of the Rule. If the courts take the correct action, "organic" feedlot operations will be closed down, and the organic milk supply can once again develop in the proper fashion. If the courts are also corrupt, and thereby fail to protect the citizens, then in all likelihood, we will begin making plans to exit the business of commercial organic milk production. Organic agriculture, to fulfill its promise to all who have placed their trust in its ideals, must follow a different model than conventional agriculture, not only in how food is produced, but also in how farmers are compensated for their time, effort, and investment.

These comments were written as an organic dairy farmer, not as a member of the NOSB. Nothing should be construed to represent the NOSB, the NOP, nor the USDA in any way, shape, form, or manner. ♦



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# Classified Ads

## Organic Livestock for Sale:

We have a variety of **heifer calves** for sale: 4 (month-old and less) "Toystory" Holstein calves, 2 (6 month old) Holstein heifers, some older Brown Swiss and Holstein/Swiss crosses. Northern New York 315-324-6926. Certified Organic (of course)! Liz and Brian

MOSA certified **Organic Jersey cows** and springing heifers. \$1800 to \$2200. Brian Voelker, Menomonie, WI. Phone: 715-664-8827.

12 Certified **Organic Jerseys** for sale. Some recently fresh, most due in March, April, and May. Asking \$1,850 a piece or \$21,000 for all. Cincinnati, New York. Phone: 607-345-2855, email: jasontuning@yahoo.com

78 certified **organic holstein dairy cows**, 55# per-cow year round production. Half of herd is 1st and 2nd calf heifers. All animals AI sired. \$2500 each (firm). Must take all. Jefferson County, N.Y. Phone: 315-482-3898

**4 organic 10 month old heifers**, jersey lineback crosses, \$1000; 4-12 month old normande, lineback, jersey, fresian bulls, \$750. Jim Phillips, Cortland, NY, email: jasra@earthlink.net; phone: 607-591-0562.

## Organic Feed for Sale:

**Large square bales hay** for sale. Contact Scott Stokie (585) 330-3050 Avon, NY

**Shell corn for sale.** Contact Craig Phelps (585) 738-8683 Groveland, NY

**Organic corn for sale**, \$450/ton at the farm. The feed is certified both in US and Canada. Contact: Lloyd Wicks, 6780 Campobello Rd. Mississauga, ON

L5N2L8. Phone 905-821-8970 Fax 905-821-3160. e-mail: lwicks@milk.org

**Certified organic alfalfa and corn.** Some left from 2007 and will have 4 to 5 circles of 2008 crop in 3X4 square bales, Jehorek Organic Farms, Brule, Nebraska. Phone: 308-280-4260, Email: kjehorek@atcjet.net,

**Certified organic baleage.** semi loads available. 4 loads left. 4 cents per pound. alfalfa, timothy, brome, clover mix. Jonathan Boland, Ottawa, Ontario, email: alfalfafarmer@gmail.com; phone: 613 889 3859

**Organic grass first cutting hay** suitable for dry cows or live stock. \$3.25 per bale. 40 minutes north of Watertown, New York. 315-322-1176, jmmorrison\_51@yahoo.com

**Sudan Grass balage** 1st and 2nd cut. 4'x4' bales Analysis available. Mayline Farms, Wellsville, NY. Email: maylinefarms@wildblue.net, ph: 585-610-0490

**Certified Organic Alfalfa Hay:** Small square bales, 5th cutting, no rain, green & leafy, R.F.V. 210. \$7. Call 712-660-0046, Seth Smith, Coon River Farms, Nemaha, Iowa.

## Looking For Livestock

Certified organic dairy farm **looking for 10-15 Holstein cows** (certified organic, of course) Prefer animals in 1st or 2nd lactation and parlor trained. Please contact Ed Robinson directly at 802-893-2514

## 2008 Feed Available

**70 acres certified organic alfalfa** and 25 acres brome grass available in 2008 season. Feed will be available in 3x3 bales. Farm is located about 1.5 hours NW of Omaha, NE. Contact: Tim Cada, Clarkson, NE. Email: organicfarmer@hotmail.com.

## NODPA Check-Off Producer Milk Check Assignment Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (please print name on your milk check) request that \_\_\_\_\_ (name of company that sends your milk check) deduct the sum of: (choose one below)

\_\_\_ \$0.02/cwt to support the work of NODPA

\_\_\_ \$0.05/cwt to support the work of NODPA (the amount that has been deducted in the past for national milk marketing but has now been returned to you as an organic producer if you have applied for the exemption.) If you need assistance in applying for the exemption, check here \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ \$0.07/cwt (the \$.05 marketing check-off plus \$0.02) as an assignment from my milk check starting the first day of \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_. The total sum will be paid monthly to NODPA. This agreement may be ended at any time by the producer by sending a written request to their milk buyer with a copy to NODPA. Milk handlers please send payments to:

**Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA), Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342.**

Producer signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Producer #/member #: \_\_\_\_\_ # of milking cows: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Become a Subscribing NODPA Member!

By becoming a subscribing member you will receive NODPA News and help support the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance. NODPA depends on your contributions and donations. If you enjoy this newsletter, visit our web page, and benefit from the education and farmer representation that NODPA has been providing, please show your support by making a generous contribution to our efforts. Note that if you sign up for the NODPA Milk Check- Off, you will be automatically signed up as a NODPA News subscriber.

\_\_\_ \$35 to cover NODPA news

\_\_\_ \$300 to become a Friend

\_\_\_ \$500 to become a Sponsor member

\_\_\_ \$100 to become a supporter of NODPA

\_\_\_ \$1,000 to become a Patron

\_\_\_ \$2,000+ to become a Benefactor

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a certified organic dairy producer? Yes No

Number of milking cows: \_\_\_\_\_

Milk buyer: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you transitioning to organic? Yes No

If Yes – proposed date of certification \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail this form with a check payable to NODPA to: Ed Maltby, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342. Thank you.**

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

### From the MODPA President

*By Darlene Coehoorn*

Here in Wisconsin we are experiencing a REAL winter with extra cold temperatures and lots of snow. On the organic front, fuel prices have risen to new highs and we are forced to push the white stuff around to feed our animals or get the milk truck in and out. All this is doing further damage to the bottom line as we try to keep things running and from freezing solid. As we anticipate a wonderful spring, we are ordering fertilizer, which is also higher than we would like. Add on the trucking fee and you would think they should be sending the fertilizer to you with armed guards. Everything is up except the temperature and milk prices.

With that in mind, it is time we put the value on our product it deserves and then ask for it in the marketplace. If we don't no one else will. If you don't value what you produce and then

ask for that value in the market place, it is like stepping in the batters box without a bat and hoping the pitcher is good to you. You can step up to the plate without a bat and you might get lucky and the pitcher will bean you and give you a free pass to first base or you might get a walk and end up on first, if he is generous. But more than likely you will strike out as he can throw anything by you; you are not a threat. You will never hit a home run or get past first-no matter how hard your head is. You can live in the tighten-the-belt mentality of conventional agriculture or you can say enough is enough, we need that 20% increase.

We all try to support fair trade when it comes to coffee, tea, and other foreign goods why not then for our own farms and farmers?

We all need to join together and ask our processors for the raise and tell them to tighten their belts this time because we need it. Quoting Dr. Levins, "Only the strong have pricing power, and that strength comes from working together, not from trying to get the best of each other. Those who do not have market power will always be at a disadvantage in pricing their products."

The time is now for you to become active in your ODP group and also to communicate your needs with your processor. That's the way things look from my side of the fence. ♦

### About MODPA

The Midwest Organic Dairy Producer Alliance (MODPA) represents 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

#### Wisconsin

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#### Ohio

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Shiloh, OH 44878  
Phone and Fax: 419-895-1182

### Become a Member of MODPA!

Member dues are \$35 per year, for which you receive our newsletter and become part of our team working for the best interests of all organic dairies.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Certified Organic Dairy? Yes No # of cows: \_\_\_\_\_

Transitioning: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to support MODPA (check whatever applies):

\_\_\_ By becoming a state rep or director.

\_\_\_ By supporting MODPA with a %/cwt check-off.

\_\_\_ By providing a donation to support the work of MODPA. \$\_\_\_\_\_ enclosed.

**Please send this form to: Darlene Coehoorn, MODPA Treasurer, N5868, Cty Hwy C, Rosendale, WI 54974**

## Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)

c/o Ed Maltby  
300 Keets Road  
Deerfield, MA 01342

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## CALENDAR

*(continued from page 38)*

### 2nd Annual Northeast Animal Power Field Days September 26 – 28, 2008

Tunbridge Fair Grounds, Tunbridge, VT

The Northeast Animal Power Field Days will feature working animal and equipment demonstrations in field and forest settings, workshops, exhibits, networking sessions, and an auction and swap meet on Sunday. Workshop topics will include grazing management, working with draft animals, livestock health, getting started with animal power and more. For more information, go to: [www.animal-powerfielddays.org](http://www.animal-powerfielddays.org) or contact Carl Russell and Lisa McCrory, [info@animalpowerfielddays.org](mailto:info@animalpowerfielddays.org), 802-234-5524. Join our discussion forum; [www.draftanimalpower.com](http://www.draftanimalpower.com).

### Understanding Organics: Livestock Management and Health Conference

October 28-30, 2008

Holiday Inn, Auburn, NY

A continuation of the 2007 conferences held in NY and NH, this 3-day conference is designed to educate extension personnel, veterinarians, NRCS agents and other professionals working with organic and transitioning livestock producers. For more information, contact Lisa McCrory, [lmccrory@together.net](mailto:lmccrory@together.net), phone: 802-234-5524 or Linda Tikofsky, [lg40@cornell.edu](mailto:lg40@cornell.edu), phone: 607-255-8202.



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