NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

JULY 2008 Volume 8, Issue 4 WWW.NODPA.COM

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
Organic Industry News

Price & Availability of Corn & Forage

How should producers prepare for this fall?

By Lisa McCrory

It is a daunting task trying to make sense of the organic grain market right now; prices have been increasing in the organic and conventional sectors with no apparent end in sight. Flood waters rising in the Midwest and drought conditions in parts of the Northeast leave the 2008 crop year forecast looking less than positive which only drives the prices higher. We are in a period where we do not have enough data yet, but by the time this article makes it to your doorstep, perhaps we will have a better grasp on the number of organic crop acres and anticipated yields for this year's corn, soybeans, wheat, barley, and other small grains. Prices for various commodities seem to adjust daily as information or rumors travel the airwaves. As we all keep tight watch on the rising cost of fuel, the same sort of close supervision is taking place with our livestock feed. So far, the price hasn't gone down, and no one can yet predict the point where producers might stop buying or when the price will stabilize. All the available evidence suggests that current corn prices reflect a sustainable future for corn growers as they achieve a level of payment that reflects parity.

According to the USDA Agricultural Marketing Services (as of May 08), organic soybeans are twice what they were last year and organic corn is 70% higher according to Midwest prices and about 54% higher in the Northeast. (See graphs and charts inside, on pages 20 and 21, showing organic corn prices and organic soybean prices from February9, 2007 – June 14, 2008.)

According to AP Business Writer Stevenson Jacobs, 'the floods have engulfed an estimated 2 million or more acres of corn and soybean fields in Iowa, Indiana and Illinois and other key growing states'. This, in effect, is making the prices for grain increase at a more dramatic rate as a result of fears of a much smaller corn crop. A few other driving forces that have increased prices for organic and conventional feed is the production of ethanol as an alternative fuel source, developing countries like China and India are scrambling to feed people and livestock, and a strong international market for conventional dairy products.

To try to understand the future of organic grain prices, a number of individuals intimately involved in the organic grain world were contacted to comment on the following questions:

1. Where are we now with prices, availability and quality or organic grain?
2. What are the harvest forecasts for 2008 (after all this extreme spring weather)?
3. What factors are affecting price and availability?
4. What are the prices and availability projections based upon forward contracts?
5. What is the availability of different grains?
6. How much grain is imported for domestic organic livestock?
7. How would a 10% increase in demand for organic livestock grain effect the current picture?
8. What does the picture look like for 2012?

continued on page 20

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA President

By Kathie Arnold, NODPA President

The saga continues. Fuel prices keep rising. Vast areas of the Midwest have suffered historic rainfall, flooding, and the inability to plant and / or keep crops growing. Much of the West and South is experiencing drought and some organic grain growing areas here in New York have been drier than the farmers have ever experienced before. There seems no relief in sight to a continuing rise in organic feed prices.

Meanwhile on the conventional side of dairy, $18/ cwt milk is the new $12/cwt of two years ago because of rising input costs. Bob Wellington, economist for AgriMark, has predicted that Class 1 prices for conventional milk are expected to hit between $24 and $25 this fall with blend prices over $22. Farmers may well see a price rise of a dollar/cwt a month starting this summer.

What do organic dairy producers have to look forward to other than continued rising costs? We too should be seeing a similar price rise. So far this year, pay prices from various buyers / cooperatives have risen from around 4 to 10%, but that is woefully inadequate to keep organic dairy farms on an even economic keel given how costs continue rising at levels of much higher magnitude.

Processors / cooperatives / buyers all need to move their pay price up to reflect what has happened and continues to happen on the input side of organic dairying. They have the power and ability to do so.

Using USDA store shelf surveys as a base, (see chart on page 4), the numbers show that the Northeast organic dairy farmer is getting around 36% of the retail dollar while conventional farmers are getting about 42%. The non-farm side of the industry takes around $56/cwt of the organic milk retail dollar while getting about $25/cwt for conventional milk. Yes, I understand there are some more costs involved in picking up milk at organic farms and getting it onto store shelves, but MORE THAN DOUBLE THAT OF CONVENTIONAL MILK?

Please notice NODPA's new ad on page 29, looking for a processor willing to pay $3 per gallon base price on our organic milk. That would be a base price of $34.80.

Retailers typically take a 30% profit margin. Do they really need to take the equivalent of over $26/cwt for selling organic

continued on page 4

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA Desk

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

July already! How much progress have we made in fulfilling our goals for 2008?

Pay Price

Pay price is still where it was many months ago, despite some aggressive advocacy work both privately and publicly. Facts and debate about producers' hardship doesn't seem to work so we are resorting to humor to get our point across with the ad appearing on page 28 ... and in many newspapers. Please post it where it might have some effect and encourage folks to go to http://nodpa.com/in_press_releases_june18_2008.shtml for more information.

NOP

The access to pasture rule still hasn't left the USDA building, despite many meetings with the Under Secretary and the united position, in writing, of all processors and producers (go to http://nodpa.com/in_NOP_comments_june6_2008.shtml to see the letters). We will not stop advocating for the publication of the access to pasture and the origin of livestock rules as it's the only way to create a level playing field for all producers across the country. Now that the Farm Bill has been passed, vetoed, overridden, passed and vetoed again and finally overridden, it is now on to appropriations. The congressional leadership has made it clear they will not finalize any of the bills until there is a new administration in order to avoid the President's veto. The NOP has submitted a request for increased funding of $754,000 for 2009 with a proposed annual total budget of $3,881,000. Some of this increase will be used to employ six additional auditors, provide money to travel to foreign accrediting bodies and conduct reviews on a sample of certifiers and certified operations. The Consumers Union is also about to publish a report on organic certifiers which, together with increased NOP funding, should help direct available resources to where they can best be used.

Feed and research opportunities

The feed situation is not going to get any better quickly as Lisa McCrory's article so accurately describes. We are short on facts and long on speculation and rumor. On the morning before the Organic Summit, Horizon held a meeting of a few of its producers and some leading organic experts including Hue Karreman, Gary Zimmer, Kevin Brussell, Cindy Daley, Jerry DeWitt, Mark Lipson, and Jerry Brunetti to look at ways that organic research could increase the net income on organic dairies. It was agreed by everyone at the roundtable discussion that the pay price needs to be increased immediately to give producers the opportunity to recoup losses and to build resources to develop different farming practices. Building soil fertility and diversification of forage crops were among some of the main discussion points, plus ideas about increasing the nutrient density in forages to improve the health of livestock; testing the quality of milk to promote the nutritional difference that organic production practices can have; and encourage efficient use of labor and equipment to maximize output while creating a healthy family enterprise. This unique gathering of organic professionals were not short on different ideas on increasing the nutritional benefits of the soil as a basis for herd health and productivity, but always stressed that real change takes time to plan and implement for a likely benefit in 2-3 years.

What's next for NODPA?

You will notice that NODPA has expanded the number of state reps and has appointed at-large Board members from MODPA and WODPA to ensure that we always have a diversity of viewpoints that is reflective of all producers, both regionally and nationally. We are finalizing the results of the member telephone survey and there will be a report in the next NODPA News on the priorities and concerns that these producers have voiced. The NODPA website has been redesigned and is updated weekly so we hope you will use it as a resource tool on everything from classifieds to the NOP. If you don't yet receive our monthly email newsletter with news and pricing updates, please sign up for it at http://nodpa.com/nl_email.shtml . The Field Days are in October this year, and, of course, we continue to work for the access to pasture rule, which I'm betting will be out in late September. You might well ask which year! ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

"German Milk Goes From Cow to Drain in Dairy Strike"

How the Europeans negotiate on pay price

By Ed Maltby

Headlines like this appeared across Europe at the end of May of this year, "German dairy farmers have launched a national strike to call for higher milk prices," "Dutch farmers have launched a strike in protest against low milk prices in the Netherlands," "Dairy farmers in six countries across Europe, including Germany, Austria, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland have organized a series of protests at falling milk prices."

While the normal course of a strike or trade dispute is for the two sides closely involved in the dispute to reach agreement perhaps with assistance from mediators or government departments, this strike was ended by the unique action of a third party. The largest processors of milk refused to negotiate with the farmers, pleading that the market place could not support an increase, "Prices are determined by the dynamics of supply and demand," said a spokesman for Friesland Dairy.

It was then that major retailers intervened and gave the farmers assurances that they would increase milk prices. "Discount supermarket chain Lidl has agreed to raise milk prices by EUR0.10 a litre ($.60 a gallon) and other major supermarkets have followed suit including Rewe, Norma, Migros, Coop, Plus and Edeka."

After the intervention from retailers, processors and dairy farmer organizations started negotiations and within days reached a settlement that gave farmers an increase of the equivalent of $2.70 per cwt, about 2/3 of what the farmers had originally asked for or . "It was mainly due to the intervention of the retailers that the whole situation came back to normal," a Swiss dairy giant Emmi spokesman told just-food. "We are passing on prices to retailers [and] consumer prices will go up."

Is there anything that we can learn from what has happened in Europe? One lesson is that farmers working together can achieve much more than acting as individuals, but NODPA has also proved that in the past. I know my friends in Maine will say "let's dump some milk, systematically until someone listens" which should always remain an option, but at the same time we need to look at how we can involve our retail partners, manufacturers and consumers in educating them on what is needed on the supply side. Processors and brand owners have their own strong relationships with retail buyers but is it time for farmer organizations to have more direct relationships with our end users? Can the unique relationships within the organic community be the basis for a different model for determining what the producers gets as a farmgate price by discussion, education and respect for every level of production?

Alternatively – if more aggressive organizing works in Europe, perhaps it's time to do it in the USA. ◆

The information & quotes in this article *are from just-food.*

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA President

continued from page 3

milk when a similar margin for conventional milk is only $13? If they dropped down to take 25% margin instead, that would still be over $22/cwt and that would give over $4 that could go to the farmer base price. If that was coupled with a 12 cent rise in store shelf price per half gallon that all came back to the farmer, we would arrive at our $3/half gallon for Betsy's milk. And that would put us at just about the same percentage of retail price as the conventional farmer—42%. ◆

	Organic	Conventional
Average retail price for 1/2 gallon of 3.25 % whole milk*	$ 3.81	$ 1.88
Per half gallon prices translated to per cwt price**	$88.39	$ 43.72
Northeast base price June 2008 (approximate)	$28.00	
Average increase for components (est.)	$ 4.00	
Average mail box price June 2008 (est.)	$32.00	$18.50
% Northeast producer receives of retail price	36.2%	42.31%
Non-farm portion of retail price	$56.39	$25.22
% Non-farm portion of retail price	63.80%	57.69%
Retail share at 30% margin	$26.52	$13.12
Brand and processor share	$29.87	$12.10
* Prices taken from federal milk marketing order survey June 2008		
** Doesn't take into account income from by- products of butterfat etc.		

NODPA 8th Annual Field Days

SAVE THE DATE

NODPA's 8th Annual Field Days Event and Annual Producer Meeting
Monday October 27th at 9:00 am to
Tuesday October 28th at Noon
Holiday Inn, Auburn/Fingerlakes
New York 13021

We will be visiting Klaas and Mary-Howell Martins Farm and their Lakeview operation to gain some valuable insight into different production methods, rotations and the future for organic grain and forage (well some ideas anyway!).

There will be workshops on different aspects of marketing organic milk, some perspective on organic dairy from producers in other areas of the country and farmer panels to share their experiences of how they diversified their operations to grow more forages.

NODPA's Field Days are a great place to re-connect with friends and with what is going on in the organic dairy world. The annual producer meeting on Monday evening will be an opportunity for NODPA farmer members to be updated on the previous year's work and set the priorities for the NODPA work in 2009 -2014.

As usual, we will have a trade show for 1½ days, with many opportunities for farmers to visit the trade show, network with one another, learn about trends in the industry, and meet resource people who will be on hand.

Save the date and watch the mail for a brochure on the event; remember to check out the NODPA News and the NODPA website for further details as they develop. If you are interested is sponsoring this event, or making a donation to support it and NODPA's great work, please contact Ed Maltby in order to be included in the 3,000 brochures that will be mailed out. If you want to be an exhibitor and promote your product at the tradeshow, contact Ed Maltby quickly before the limited space disappears. For more information contact Ed Maltby by phone: 413-772-0444 or email: emaltby@comcast.net.

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Vaccination of Organic Livestock:

Goals and strategies for a first rate vaccination program.

By Guy Jodarski, DVM

Vaccination of organic livestock is a topic that receives a lot of attention. The enormous number of vaccines available is confusing. Wide ranging claims (both positive and negative) about vaccine effectiveness and safety leave many producers wondering if they should vaccinate and if so how often and with what products?

The first thing to consider is the fact that vaccination does not equal immunization. This means that just giving a vaccine does not guarantee a proper immune response to the organism being vaccinated for. To immunize an animal is the process of inoculating a vaccine into an animal that responds with a detectable immune response. This implies a level of protection against the pathogen being vaccinated for. To vaccinate on the other hand is the process of inoculating a vaccine into an animal, whether or not an immune response has occurred. Failure to immunize an individual or group can occur for many reasons; poor timing of vaccination, immune suppression (stress), wrong vaccine used, failure to give a booster and many others.

This article will outline some ideas and strategies for the vaccination (and hopefully immunization) of organic livestock with an emphasis on dairy cattle. Please remember to work with a local veterinarian to develop a specific vaccination program for your herd. There is no one ideal vaccination schedule that works in every situation. Disease challenges by infectious organisms (viruses, bacteria and parasites) vary with climate and local conditions. Dr. Ron Schultz at the University of Wisconsin Veterinary School said it well; "The first decision in the process of designing a vaccination program is choosing the correct vaccine(s). One must understand that there are not now, nor will there be in the future, vaccines to prevent all infectious diseases."

In my opinion, the goals of a vaccination program should be to;

1. Produce a good immune response similar to natural infection.
2. Provide protection against clinical disease and reinfection.
3. Give long lasting protection.
4. Result in minimal side effects or reactions.
5. Allow for vaccine to be given in a humane and labor efficient manner.
6. Provide a positive cost/benefit ratio compared to risk of disease.

The last point is important to consider. It makes little sense to vaccinate for diseases that do not generally occur in the area where the herd is kept. On the other hand, diseases common in the population that cause serious losses when they occur should be vaccinated for on a regular basis. Bovine Virus Diarrhea (BVD) virus and Leptospira bacteria are two pathogens that are common in cattle herds and wildlife populations. These two organisms cause millions of dollars in damage to the dairy and beef cattle industries. It is my belief that most if not all cattle producers should vaccinate for BVD and lepto. Likewise, sheep and goat producers should seriously consider vaccinating their herds and flocks for Clostridium (overeating and tetnus) with a CD/T vaccine on a regular basis. Some organic cattle producers also use a different combination vaccine for Clostridium because blackleg is common in their area.

Vaccine Types

The large number of vaccines available is often a point of confusion for livestock producers. Let's start by breaking it down into types of vaccine – one way to classify vaccines is whether or not they contain living organisms. Modified Live Vaccines (MLV) contain living disease organisms that have been changed from their wild form to a form that is less likely to cause disease. An example of an MLV is the intranasal vaccine for cattle that contains the IBR and PI3 viruses. This vaccine has been altered so that it will not grow in temperatures above 85 degrees Fahrenheit. The viruses in this vaccine multiply on the surfaces of the nasal passages but can't grow inside the body (and cause lung infection) because of its' higher temperature.

Killed vaccines on the other hand, contain disease causing organisms that are not alive. Heat or other methods are used to kill the viruses, bacteria or parasites present in the vaccine. Some vaccines like Lepto. and Clostridium containing products are only available in the killed form.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of MLV and killed vaccines?

MLVs stimulate a more complete and lasting immunity than do the killed vaccines. Vaccination with an MLV provides a wider spectrum of coverage for a given pathogen. BVD for example, is a large family containing many different strains of the virus

continued from page 6

and MLVs for BVD will provide immunity to more strains than a killed vaccine will. MLVs do not require multiple doses for good immunity to develop whereas killed vaccines require a booster (2 to 4 weeks after the first dose) to be effective. MLVs stimulate both antibodies (humoral immunity) and T-cell lymphocyte responses (cellular immunity) killed vaccines stimulate only antibodies for the most part. MLVs contain less antigen load than their killed counterparts and therefore cause less vaccine reactions such as fever, off feed animals and decreased milk production following vaccination.

Differences in Vaccine Types

Characteristic	MLV	Killed
Duration of Immunity	Longer	Shorter
Spectrum of Coverage	Many Strains	Narrow
Need to Booster	Less	Yes, Required
Amount of Antigen	Less	More Vaccine Reactions
Safety	Can Cause Disease	Safer

A potential downside to MLVs is that they can cause disease in an immune compromised individual. The MLVs should also not be used in pregnant animals as they can cause abortion. Farmers and Veterinarians that remember the first MLVs to be marketed are reluctant to use them because the early versions did cause problems such as abortion in cattle that were kept close to vaccinated cows. The old vaccine was not very "tame" and could pass from an open cow that was recently vaccinated to one of her pregnant neighbors and cause an abortion in a cow that wasn't even vaccinated. Fortunately, modern MLVs have been altered sufficiently or "attenuated" so that this is not a problem. Still, one should not use an MLV on cows or heifers within 3 weeks of their breeding date.

The table above summarizes the important differences of vaccine types – MLV vs. Killed

In general, MLVs provide better immunity than killed vaccines but some vaccines like Lepto., Clostridium, and mastitis vaccines are only available in a killed form. Some producers prefer the convenience of killed vaccines because an entire herd can be vaccinated at once and open bottles can be kept in a refrigerator for later use.

Timing of Vaccination

This is a critical part of a successful program. Times of stress

continued on page 8

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Vaccination

continued from page 7

should be avoided. Dairy cows have three well known stress periods – at dry off, precalving and just recently fresh. Cortisol levels will be high in cows at these times, cortisol is a natural stress hormone that decreases immune system function. Avoid vaccinating cows until they have been dry at least 10-14 days and also do not vaccinate cows from 2 weeks precalving to 4-6 weeks fresh. Calves should probably not be vaccinated until they are 4 to 6 months old as antibody received from colostrum can interfere with vaccination in younger calves.

How many Vaccines should be given at once?

In order to optimize the immune response to vaccination it is better to limit the number of antigens given to an animal at any one time. Combinations of more than one vaccine containing multiple antigens should be avoided. Vaccines that are derived from gram negative bacteria (E. coli, Salmonella, Leptospira, etc.) contain small amounts of endotoxin. Endotoxin is very stressful to all animals and one should not vaccinate with combination vaccines containing more than one (gram negative) endotoxin source. Use as few antigens as possible when vaccinating. It is better to give a second vaccine at a later time than to overload the immune system with multiple antigens.

Reducing Vaccine stress – preventing milk production drops after vaccination

Avoid vaccinating the whole herd at once with killed vaccine. It is more convenient to vaccinate all cows at once but this approach results in all of the cows experiencing vaccine stress at the same time. Use MLVs on open animals only or better yet, do a good job of vaccinating heifers with MLVs before they enter the milking herd.

Many herds can stop vaccinating cows for the viral diseases (IBR, BVD, PI3 and BRSV) if they do a good job with MLVs in the youngstock. Cows will still need to be vaccinated with Lepto., as it is a killed vaccine that requires periodic boosters – probably twice per year in cattle.

> **In order to optimize the immune response to vaccination it is better to limit the number of antigens given to an animal at any one time. Combinations of more than one vaccine containing multiple antigens should be avoided.**

What about pregnancy losses (abortions) after vaccination?

One should never use vaccines containing live virus to vaccinate pregnant animals. Killed vaccines are considered "safe" but contain more antigen and also materials called adjuvants. My personal belief is that the "loading" of killed vaccines with adjuvants and increased amount of antigen leads to vaccine reactions (fever, off feed, abortion) more often than occur with modified live vaccines. For these reasons I recommend giving MLVs to open cows instead. If one must vaccinate pregnant cows, limit the number of vaccines and antigens to as few as possible.

Example Program – Dairy Herd

One should always consult with a local Veterinarian and design a vaccination program specific for your operation. The following is a basic program for a dairy herd that I recommend as a starting point. This is not a "one size fits all" program that every dairy ought to use but rather a simple program that should provide coverage against the most common and sometimes devastating infectious diseases of dairy cattle.

Calves at ~6 months of age (4-8 mos.) – One dose of live (MLV) 4-way virus vaccine (IBR, BVD, PI3 and BRSV) Examples include; Bovi-Shield 4, Bovi-Shield Gold 5, Express 5, Pyramid 5 Titanium 5 and Vista 5

Heifers at 10-12 months of age (Pre-breeding) - One dose of live 4-way (as above) plus 5-way lepto (killed) Examples include; Bovi-Shield Gold FP5+L5, Express 10, Pyramid 10, Titanium 5 + L5, Vista 5 L5 SQ

Repeat 5-way Lepto 2 to 4 weeks after the dose listed immediately above. Examples include; Leptoferm-5, Lepto Shield 5

Cows – Booster 5-way Lepto twice per year, can give to all cows as this is a killed vaccine. A booster dose given at the time of pregnancy check boosts immunity to help protect the calf at the most common time of abortion caused by Lepto.

Optional Vaccines for Cattle – Clostridium 7 or 8-way (includes Blackleg and overeating disease), Intranasal IBR + PI3 (Nasalgen or TSV-2), E coli or endotoxin – J-5, J-Vac or Enodovac-bovi BVD (w/IBR, etc.) for cows, Scours vaccines (rota- and corona-virus, E coli) Leptospira Hardjo-bovis, Salmonella (SRP)

continued on page 28

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Promiseland Doesn't Keep Promise to Allow Access to Records

Two year suspension proposed for the operation that has supplied thousands of animals to Aurora Organic Dairy and other large organic dairies

By Kathie Arnold

Promiseland Livestock, LLC, a Missouri / Nebraska livestock and crop operation owned and managed by Anthony Zeman, has supplied over 13,000 head of livestock to Aurora Organic Dairy from 2004 to 2006. A continued stream of animals from Promiseland to Aurora Organic Dairy and others may be in jeopardy. In June of 2007, the National Organic Program (NOP) Manager proposed that the organic certification of Promiseland be revoked for failing to comply with NOP regulations. Zeman's appeal of the proposed revocation was denied last October by the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) but the sanction was reduced from revocation to a two year suspension.

On June 4, 2008, NOP filed a formal administrative complaint against Promiseland and Zeman, alleging willful violation of NOP regulations for failure to allow USDA access to records. However, Promiseland currently continues to have a valid organic certificate. The complaint must be adjudicated in front of a law judge before suspension can be enforced, and that may take months.

NOP / AMS had repeatedly asked Promiseland for specific records starting in January of 2007, a year and a half after their certifier, QAI, began repeatedly notifying them that their records were inadequate to verify organic compliance. However, instead of upgrading their record keeping to meet QAI's requests, Promiseland moved to a different certifier, Indiana Certified Organic (IOC).

After months of Promiseland not producing the records requested by AMS / NOP, an onsite visit was made requesting access to records in general. Access was denied on the initial and subsequent visits. Eventually a small volume of records were supplied to NOP but full access to Promisland records has been denied. Certified operations are required by NOP regulations to allow USDA to inspect and copy organic certification records during normal business hours.

When asked if livestock purchased while Promiseland's certification is in place will be recognized as organic if their certification is suspended, Barbara Robinson, Acting National Organic Program Director, replied: "*We cannot advise farmers about the purchase of cows from Promiseland.…Promiseland does continue to have a valid certificate until suspended, revoked, or surrendered. Even though we have filed a complaint--this matter has not been adjudicated before a law judge. The complaint is about access to records. Nothing in this complaint references the organic nature of the animals. We cannot comment or advise farmers about that matter.*" ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

CROPP Co-op Considers Northeast Organic Dairy Beef Program

CROPP Cooperative plans to hold informational meetings and tour potential farms in August to determine the interest and potential for an organic cull cow and standard steer program in the Northeast. CROPP sells organic meats under the Organic Prairie label and would like to expand their production into the Northeast region.

The increasing sales of Organic Prairie's trim-based products have created a strong demand for lean animals, generating an opportunity for organic dairy producers to become a major part of our cooperative's beef program. This program would not be limited to Organic Valley dairy producers- any certified organic dairy farmer, regardless of their dairy market could participate.

The Organic Prairie standard steer program is an excellent way for dairy producers to keep their bull calves in an organic market. These animals are raised on forages with minimal levels of grain, if any.

If you are interested in learning more about this potential new organic market, please contact CROPP Cooperative at: 1-888-809-9297 8-5 PM Central Monday through Friday. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Methane Production in Grassfed Livestock

By Shannon Hayes, author of The Farmer and the Grill, and The Grassfed Gourmet Cookbook

As debates about how to save the planet rage on, grass farmers are suddenly faced with an onslaught of questions about… believe it or not, cow burps and farts. Any of us who've sat quietly and milked our family cow can attest to the simple fact that, yes, grassfed cattle do belch quite a bit.

Enteric fermentation, the fermentation of forage in the rumen, is a natural part of the digestion process for ruminant animals such as cows, sheep, goats or buffalo. As Matthew Rales points out in his excellent article in the Spring 2008 journal Wise Traditions, rumen fermentation "is the process that gives us fats like conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), and bone building nutrients like vitamin K"(1) Grassfed livestock belch more than factory-farmed animals because they have a higher amount of roughage in their diet, which comes from grasses, and less starch. Grainfed livestock have a higher percentage of starch, since much of their feed comes from corn (the production of which, as we know, is also responsible for a fair amount of greenhouse gas). The natural fermentation process is unnaturally suppressed in factory farmed livestock…but grainfed animals still burp and fart quite a bit. In addition, factory farming results in considerable carbon emissions owing to the fuel intensive production practices. Concentrated animal production can also cause very serious pollution problems.

Unfortunately, this natural process of emitting methane is causing a lot of folks to raise their arms in alarm, to forego their local grass-fed burgers, and to opt instead for a bowl of rice and veggies. Whoa! Stop right there….rice field methane emissions are a major source of atmospheric methane. Further, research is starting to indicate that vegetation is also a source of methane. Trees, too. On another note, those blessed wetlands that we regard as bastions of environmental health and wealth comprise 80% of all natural methane emissions (2). Still, human-made sources of methane exceed natural sources, and in the United States, the culprits are oil, coal and gas extraction, landfills, rice cultivation, biomass burning and, yes, ruminant livestock and waste treatment.

On her website eatwild.com, Jo Robinson reports on research that was conducted by Dr. Rita Schenck at the Institute for Environmental Research and Education which shows that, when we account for the carbon sequestration resulting from grazing animals (where well-managed pastures help to pull

continued on page 16

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 DMS

Dairy Marketing Services (DMS) continues to market more than 50 percent of the organic milk produced 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. The DMS trained staff can assist you through organic certification process and help you explore your organic market options. At DMS we offer 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

The Word from CROPP

CROPP Cooperative~Organic Valley Family of Farms is the nation's largest farmer-owned organic cooperative and our continued growth offers new opportunities for dairy farmers throughout the Northeast and New England. We offer a stable, competitive organic milk pay price once certified and a complete year of Transitional Funding for new farmers during the herd's transitional year. We also offer farmers veterinary support, quality services, strong membership services, the Organic Trader Newsletter, inclusive communications and ownership of a cooperative with 20 years of organic farming and marketing experience. In addition, our Farm Resources Team can help source organic feed purchases for your operation. We are also looking for new organic forage/grain producers throughout the region.

In New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia contact Peter Miller, (612) 801-3506, peter.miller@organicvalley.coop. In New England contact John Cleary at (612) 803-9087, or email at john.cleary@organcivalley.coop . In the Great Lakes Region contact Jake Schmitz, (270) 779-1526 or jake.schmitz@organicvalley.coop. Membership Services- 1-888-809-9297 Monday through Friday, 8-5 PM Central www.farmers.coop.

The Word from Horizon

Interested in transitioning to organic dairy? At Horizon Organic, it all begins on the farm. As America's leading organic dairy brand, we owe our success to the growing community of family farmers who support our mission, one organic acre at a time. We believe that farmers deserve to know where their milk is going – and consumers deserve to know where it originated. Over the years, we've maintained a dedicated milk supply and nurtured a direct relationship with each of the hundreds of farms in our network. And we're committed to keeping it that way.

Horizon Organic produces a full line of products from cheese to yogurt to fluid milk, and is the leading brand in the grocery store, as well as the number one source for bringing new organic milk consumers into the category.

Join Horizon Organic, the leading brand in one of the fastest growing categories within the number one segment of agriculture, and enjoy the experience, stability and competitive pricing that we have come to be known for.

Contacts: Cindy Masterman (New England) (888) 648-8377; Peter Slaunwhite (Northeast) (800) 381-0980; Steve Rinehart (Mideast) (866) 268-4665; Michelle Sandy (Mid Atlantic) (866) 412-1380; Mike Bandstra (Midwest) (877) 620-8259; Greg Dabney (West) (800) 588-9283 x4747

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 or at 1-866-383-1026.

The Word from LOFCO

Lancaster Organic Farmers Cooperative (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 Upstate Niagra

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 3 milk plants in Buffalo 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.upstatefarms.com or contact me. Enjoy your day…..Bill Young 800-724-6455 byoung@upstateniagara.com

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.

Any buyers looking for organic milk who would like to be listed in this column for the September 2008 issue, please email the desired text to Ed at ednodpa@comcast.net or call 413-772-0444 by August 16th 2008

NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

By Liz Bawden

A broad spectrum of topics were discussed over the last month. It began with some concerns about how consumers will change (or not change) their purchasing decisions in the marketplace driven by the tightening economy. On the one side, it is felt that some consumers will eliminate purchasing the more costly organic foods for their cheaper, conventional equivalents. But on the other side, other consumers will cut back their restaurant budget, and eat better at home, thereby increasing their purchasing of groceries, including organic products.

A farmer asked if there was any research that would support that transition to organic production does not necessarily mean a drop in milk production. Another farmer believed that the drop in production comes from simply cutting back the grain in the diet, or from changes to the ration based on the availability of organic ingredients. Another individual posted a link to a Canadian study that outlines a 35% drop in milk production during the transition year, then regaining some of that production over the next 2 years as certified organic. This study maintained that milk production on organic dairy farms is generally 20% lower than conventional dairies. The study noted that calves are fed milk on organic farms, and fed milk replacer on the conventional farms, and it was unclear in the study if this was part of the 20% difference in production.

The topic of fly control always emerges at this time of year. Soybean oil was mentioned as toxic to flies by itself or in combination with essential oil products like No-Fly. A farmer shared his recipe for fly spray: 1 oz citronella oil, 1 pint water, 1 pint vinegar, 1 oz vegetable oil.

Asking if whole feed corn sold from a feedmill could be sown for a crop, a farmer prompted a discussion on selecting seed from hybridized strains of corn. One helpful farmer suggested that he test for viability of the seed (put 100 seeds between damp paper towels, and see how many sprout). Since feed corn is often dried at high temperatures, the seed may have poor viability. Another issue is that the seed is probably a hybrid, so if it is planted, it will likely not breed true. But it would express the genetic makeup of its "parents". Seed saving of the best plants, done over many years, was encouraged by a few farmers. After all, this is how our ancestors developed locally-adapted crops!

Asked about the source of the infectious organisms that cause shipping fever, Dr Karreman confirmed that it is brought on by a weakened immune system (through the stresses associated with moving and re-grouping) and contact with other animals that are infected with the PI3 or IBR viruses. These pathogens then gain a foothold in the respiratory tract, allowing bacteria to colonize. If not treated early and aggressively, it can lead to permanent damage or death. Nasal vaccine administered a few days before moving the animals is highly recommended.

A farmer asked about the control of bedstraw. Others added their experiences: it was reported to test at 19% protein; sheep eat it on pasture; one farmer said that after intensively grazing (dairy cattle) for 13 years, they have almost none anymore.

Is it better to compost chicken litter before spreading it on the fields? All agreed that the Carbon/Nitrogen ratio of chicken litter would inhibit composting unless mixed with other materials. Spread on cool, cloudy days to minimize N loss, or incorporate into the soil if this is possible. Spreading with a lime spreader seems to work well for several farmers, just the calibration requires some attention. One farmer brought up the point that litter from layer houses contain quite a lot of calcium (his tested 10%).

An important bit of information to always remember: bull calves become sexually active at 7 to 8 months of age. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

A personal view of the Organic Summit Boulder, June 25-27 2008

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

This year's Organic Summit was again conducted in downtown Boulder at the foot of beautiful mountain ranges. It featured some of the thought leaders of the organic community, including Fred Kirschenmann, Bob Scowcroft, and Andy Fisher with their usual words of wisdom but also there were some new faces from the farming, media and corporate side of the organic community. John Ikerd, University of Missouri, gave his usual insightful, direct and forceful presentation and one can understand why he is not always welcomed in some university programs! Tom Philpott from Grist gave his own perspective as a blogger and journalist on the perception of organic and how he sourced his information. He was impressed by the level of passion from the session attendees and had some spirited discussion about his views after the session ended. Robynn Shrader, CEO for the National Cooperative Grocers Association, and Michael Hanson, Consumers Union, gave great presentations on the topic of "Who Represents Organics" and highlighted the untapped resources available to the organic community in order to market itself more positively to consumers. In an adventurously named session, "Crisis and Scale," which I thought was going to be about the internal conflicts of size and scale within organics (I would have known better if I had actually read the program!), was, in fact about managing crises, like the leafy greens and tomato recalls. It was interesting that prominent among the advice for dealing with crises is transparency, honesty and integrity, the hallmarks of a successful organic operation. Perhaps organic as a brand needs a crises plan in preparation for the inevitable time when systems fail or organic as a brand comes under the same concerted attack that the rbST has from Monsanto. We need to be pro-active as a community on behalf of our farmers and consumers.

There were many sessions that I missed because of the conflicting times but with presenters like Joe Mendelson (Center of Food Safety), Neil Hamilton (Drake University), Steve Gilman (NOFA), Kevin Brussell (UNH Organic Dairy) and many others, I'm sure the sessions were well presented and interesting. As always, the networking time was the more productive area for discussions and honest exchange of views, and for putting a face and personality to the many people who I have only related to by phone and email. The criticism of the 2007 Summit was that it was too corporate. Perhaps this year the organizers swung too far the other way and didn't provide enough content to attract representatives from the many corporations that play an important role in organics. The title for the Summit was "Cultivating Innovation and Transparency in the Organic Community" and while there was a consistent restatement of the many points of agreement about the difficulties and problems the organic community faces, the organizers missed the opportunity to utilize the excellent presenters in finding some solutions to the many "elephants in the room." ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

METHANE *continued from page 12*

excess carbon out of the atmosphere), even with the increased enteric fermentation, the net result is still a reduction in greenhouse gases. Jo Robinson also reports on a study demonstrating that keeping ruminants on high quality pastures (using the management intensive grazing practices that most of our nation's grassfarmers employ) can reduce ruminant methane emissions by as much as 20% (3). To learn more about how your consumption of local grassfed meats can help save the planet, check out the article titled *Moving the World Toward Sustainability* in the Green Money Journal, where grazing advocate and environmentalist Allan Savory shows us how we could stop global warming within 15 years using Holistic Management and management intensive grazing practices (4). Yes, despite their burps and farts, those grazing cattle, sheep and goats are still going to play a major role in saving the planet…so enjoy tonight's cookout. ◆

1. Rales, Matthew. "An Inconvenient Cow: The Truth Behind the U.N. Assault on Ruminant Livestock." Wise Traditions, Vol. 9, no. 1, Spring 2008: 16-23.
2. www.eoearth.org/article/Methane
3. DeRamus, H. A., T. C. Clement, D. D. Giampola, and P. C. Dickison. "Methane Emissions of Beef Cattle on Forages: Efficiency of Grazing Management Systems." J Environ Qual 32, no. 1 (2003): 269-77.
4. Savory, Allan and Christopher Peck, "Moving Our World Towards Sustainability," Green Money Journal, Spring 2008.

Shannon Hayes is the host of grassfedcooking.com, and the author of The Farmer and the Grill and The Grassfed Gourmet. She holds a Ph.D. in sustainable agriculture and community development from Cornell University. Her family farm is Sap Bush Hollow, it is located in Upstate New York.

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Call for Proposals

Understanding Organics and Grazing Herds: Livestock Health and Management will feature a poster session at its 2nd annual conference 28-30 October 2008 in Auburn, NY. The purpose is to highlight recently completed and ongoing research impacting organic and grazing dairy farms. Prospective presenters are invited to submit a one-page abstract summarizing their research by mail or email to:

Linda L. Tikofsky, DVM
Quality Milk Production Services
Cornell University
22 Thornwood Drive
Ithaca, NY 14850
LG40@cornell.edu

Abstracts should be sent no later than August 31, 2008. Graduate and undergraduate students whose work has been accepted for presentation will be eligible for reduced registration to the conference. ◆

Don't Miss NODPA's
8th Annual Field Days
October 28 to 30, 2008

NODPA's Field Days are a great place to re-connect with friends and with what is going on in the organic dairy world.

MORE DETAILS ON PAGE 5 OF THIS NEWSLETTER!

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Making Organic Dairy Farms Energy Independent

University of New Hampshire researchers have received a significant grant to study UNH's organic dairy research farm as a sustainable closed agroecosystem, exploring viable strategies for becoming energy independent. The $380,000 three-year grant, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education (SARE) program, aims to explore whether closing energy and nutrient cycles could help small family dairy farms in the Northeast survive economic vulnerabilities.

The study comes as rising energy, feed and capital investment costs shrink the already narrow profit margin of dairy agriculture in the Northeast, threatening the regional sustainability of the industry. "In a closed system, the only thing leaving the farm is the milk," says John Aber, professor of natural resources at UNH and the principal investigator on the grant. "The goal is to see whether we can have a closed-nutrient-cycle and energy-independent organic dairy."

In a closed system, for instance, cow manure fertilizes the fields on which the herd grazes. Sawdust from woodlands on UNH's 300-acre farm in Lee might be utilized for animal bedding, which is becoming increasingly expensive; woodlands might also provide fuel for small cogeneration plants. Methane digestion could produce usable methane from manure.

The first step for Aber, his faculty co-investigators, and UNH students who are working on the project is to assess energy and nitrogen budgets and balances. Nitrogen, he says, is the nutrient more critical to plant growth in the Northeast than any other; it comes from rainfall but can also be replaced by legumes like soybeans or clover. "If you want to maximize dairy production and dairy output, you need to replace the nitrogen leaving the farm in milk," he adds. In the second and third years of the grant, the researchers will look at alternative ways to close the energy and nutrient cycles.

This past spring, five UNH undergraduates and a graduate student worked with Aber to study nitrogen flows and energy inputs and outputs. Results of those studies suggested that both energy independence and a closed nitrogen system could be achieved through intensive management of manure; changing the bedding method of the farm's 40 cows; increasing the cows' time on pasture; and growing grain, hay bedding and silage on-site instead of purchasing them from external sources.

This research will point UNH -- and, Aber and his collaborators hope, organic dairy farmers from around the Northeast -- toward alternative farm management practices that could lead to more stable economic outcomes for small family farms. "We're moving toward a sustainable, closed system," says Aber, "and toward best-practices to achieve that goal."

Such an ecosystem-level approach to a commercial organic dairy production is unique, at least in the United States, where UNH's organic dairy farm is the first commercial-scale research organic dairy. Aber and co-investigator William McDowell, also a professor of natural resources, bring to the project forest ecosystem experience as investigators on the National Science Foundation's Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) program.

Other co-investigators are associate professor of hydrogeology Matt Davis, Charles Schwab, professor of animal and nutritional sciences and a leader in the founding of the organic dairy, and organic dairy project director Kevin Brussell. "The synergy of ecosystems expertise and dairy expertise is far greater than the sum of its parts," says Aber.

"Family dairy farms are a vital part of the landscape and legacy of the Northeastern United States," says UNH chief sustainability officer Tom Kelly, who conceived of this project. "This research will help small farmers in this region make informed decisions in the face of an uncertain energy and economic future and contribute to a more resilient food system." ◆

For more information *on UNH's Organic Dairy Research Farm, go to www.organicdairy.unh.edu.*

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Price & Availability of Corn & Forage

continued from the cover

Individuals contacted were Klaas and Mary-Howell Martens of Lakeview Organic Grain in Penn Yan, New York, Rick Dutil of Green Mountain Feeds in Bethel, Vermont, Lynn Clarkson of Clarkson Grains in Cerro Gordo, Illinois and Oren Holle, Organic Farming Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM) President in Kansas and Darlene and Dan Coehoorn, organic dairy and grain producers in Rosendale, Wisconsin.

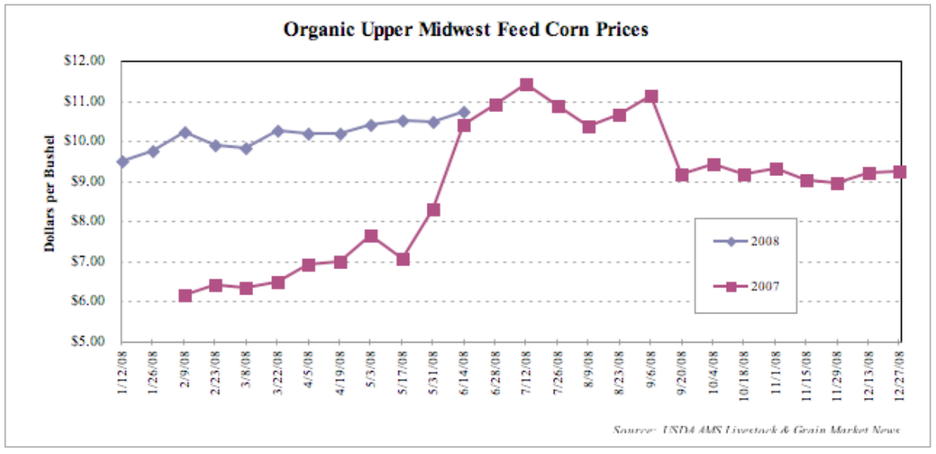
In the Northeast, both Rick Dutil and Mary-Howell Martens agreed that there is plenty of corn and tonnage is lasting longer because producers are feeding less grain. Producers are also reducing the protein levels in their grain mixes now that their animals are out on pasture, which is helping the small amounts of available protein feed to stretch until the 2008 crop harvest. Rick said farmers are having a hard time paying for their feed and their receivables are reaching levels that are unacceptable and threatening their ability to run his businesses..

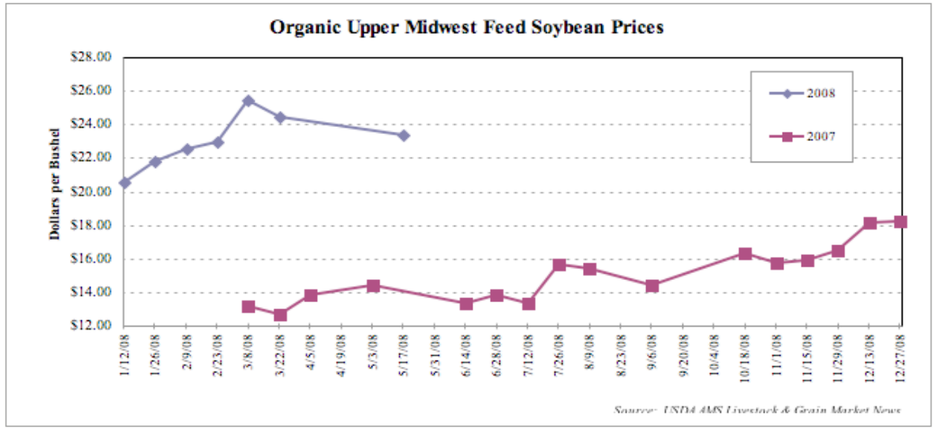
It was agreed by all that it is hard to tell what the crop year is going to look like this early, but the lower the yields, the higher the prices will go – and many are guessing that the crops this year will be less than 100%. "This is a year where we could have used 200% of a normal crop and we are facing only 70% of a normal crop right now", says Lynn Clarkson of Clarkson Grains, referring to cropland between Colorado and Ohio.

Rainy weather delayed planting for some, which will put an additional cost on potential yield. Ponding of water in areas of flooding and excessive rains are indicating that a percentage of the crops (5-10%) may be drowned out. Some fields needed to be replanted and there is a concern that there may not be enough seed available for this. Oren Holle, President of OFARM agreed that there is a shortage of organically certified replanting seed (corn and soybeans) and that, to the extent that the NOP rules will allow, farmers who cannot find the seed they are looking for will turn to untreated, non-gmo conventional seed. With additional field work to cultivate and re-plant (sometimes including sub soiling to break up compacted soil from flooding) and the investment in extra seed (which is getting more expensive every day), an additional burden will be placed on the final cost of grain for this year.

New Land Transitioning In?

Klaas and Mary-Howell of Lakeview Organic Grains were the only ones to report an increase in organic acreage. Organic crop acres have increased by about 50% in NY over the past 2 years, and the crops were planted in a timely way this spring. "NY has the largest [organic] corn crop year than ever before", says Klaas. "If we have a normal year, we will be looking for markets [exporting outside of the state]." But the eastern US has been experiencing drought conditions, so that will have an effect on the success of the crop year and there is a lot of the growing season remaining.





In the Midwest, there has been zero growth in organic crop land and in fact some producers have switched back to conventional production because the prices are so good and "there's nothing convenient about organic agriculture" says Lynn Clarkson, "you have high management, limited markets, and it is difficult to find more land resources in North America"The same pressures on agricultural land are happening around the world right now. With the escalating price for fertilizers and chemicals, we may see organic production methods looking more and more attractive, which may or may not lead to an increase in organically certified crops.

May 2008 organic grain prices compared to February/April 2007

% INCREASE	
Eastern Cornbelt, April 2007 to May 2008	
Corn	54.02%
Soybean	101.76%
Soybean Meal	71.89%
Wheat	115.45
Barley	16.67%
Oats	75.64%
Upper Midwest, February 2007 to May 2008	
Corn	70.13%
Soybean	44.71%
Wheat	167.40%
Barley	85.61%
Oats	69.12%

Factors Affecting Price and Availability

So what is affecting price and availability? In general, people are assuming that tonnage will be short this year and much of the corn that is for sale is, in a sense, being set aside to wait and see. Other factors affecting price include speculators and Hedge Fund investors who are joining the commodity market as they exploit the uncertainty and short fall in supply against rising markets. There is also an increased level of opportunism, some might say an increased level of greed, on the part of the sellers to maximize their profits. Grain growers also realize that their cost to grow corn in the future years will dramatically increase and they are hedging their risk by maximizing their profit this year. 'If there is a drop in feed prices, it probably won't happen until the fall of 2009", says Rick Dutil, "Grain farmers [and speculators] will hold onto the high pay price as long as they can."

Oren Holle, a grain producer in Kansas and President of OFARM, felt that there is no reason to apologize for the fair price being paid to grain producers; it is a long time coming. He also said, however, that we need to find ways to bring other sectors within organic into balance with grains, recognizing that organic dairy is probably at between 50-65% parity right now.

Forward contracting is difficult to arrange at this point in time; producers are holding a little longer to see what the growing season has to offer. Rick Dutil has been successful with forward contracting, but calls it a betting game and at one point or another, he admits his betting career could take a dive. Lakeview Organic Grain contracts with a couple farmers as a safety net. If farmers decide to store and not sell at harvest, they will have their contracted acreage to fall back on.

Oren Holle and Lynn Clarkson work mostly with corn and soy producers. The typical rotation in the Midwest is a 3-year rotation of corn, soy and wheat. To venture off of that rotation is rare for most producers, though there are a small percentage of more diversified farms growing forages and small grains as well. For Lakeview Organic Grain, 95% of their small grains, 75% of their corn and 80% of their soybean come from New York. They are hoping that these percentages will increase this year with the additional organic acreage in the state. Green Mountain Feeds gets the majority of their corn and soy tonnage from Nebraska and their small grains from Canada and New York. With trucking costs, it is cheaper to buy grain by rail out of Nebraska than it is to buy grain closer by in Western New York.

Volume of Imported Grain

None of those interviewed had a strong sense of the volume of grain imported for domestic livestock, though they all try very hard to source their grain from the North American Continent and if they have to reach further, they will turn to South America. Clarkson Grains imports about 10% of their grains from Argentina and used to import from China, but hasn't for 2 years. There is always a concern about the integrity of the imported grains as there are not enough inspections in place to make sure that the USDA NOP standards are being met. It was also explained that there are plenty of large livestock operations and other entities that purchase large quantities of grain and they will purchase imported grains if the price is right.

If the imported grains were to start driving down the price of domestic grains, then we would be hearing a much larger outcry about their use. This could happen sooner that we think, as it is cheaper to freight grains to US coasts than it is to transport

continued on page 23

COMMENTARY

After 10 Years: Evaluating the Organic Dairy Industry In the Northeast

An address by Henry Perkins, Maine organic dairy farmer and President of Maine Organic Milk Producers (MOMP) to the MOMP annual meeting

About ten years ago the organic milk industry in this area was just starting up. It was promoted as;

1. More stable price
2. Less stressful
3. Better for the cows
4. Better milk
5. More profitable

Let's take a look--- this is from my perspective, mind you.

1. More stable price,

In the early years there were two major players in this area, Organic Cow of Vermont and Organic Valley. Hood bought the Organic Cow of Vermont and after a brief time sold it to Horizon. Shortly after, Horizon asked it's producers to take a voluntary price cut from $21.25 down to $20.00 per cwt with the implied hint, although never verbalized, that when contracts came up for renewal, they would be at a lower price if individual farmers did not comply. Some did, some shifted to Organic Valley, and at least one refused to take a cut (to their credit, Horizon kept on paying him $21.25). This is what precipitated the formation of NODPA.

Always, there was, and continues to be, the issue of an unreliable feed supply of questionable quality. Grain suppliers come and go. Vermont Organic Grain was one of the early ones. Lots of quality issues. P.A. Lessard out of Canada entered the market and things stabilized for awhile. Morrison Feeds of Vt. came and went. Green Mountain Feeds, Cargill, Blue Seal, UCF, Homestead, Anthony Eastwood, have also played a role. Prices always seemed to go up. Sometimes the price of milk increased to cover the cost, sometimes it didn't. We have tried to get a local supply started but so far, this has been disappointing.

Hood reentered the market; processors started competing for a limited supply. Prices rose.

Then, along came "Arthur Harvey". This changed everything. The old "80/20"program on transitioning new milk was thrown out. A deadline of June of last year came into effect, after which, transitioning new milk would be much more difficult. Processors went on a "mad scramble" to secure a future supply, because, with the demise of "80/20", new milk to supply a growing market was going to be hard to come by. This caused an oversupply which put downward pressure on the milk price. All the while feed costs kept climbing.

Now, we are faced with an "energy from grain" situation. Few, if any, acres are being shifted from conventional to organic production, some are going back. Prices are skyrocketing for grain and forage and don't look to come down. All other inputs are increasing and some are becoming increasingly scarce.

We have been pushing for prices of milk to rise to cover costs, but they seem to be coming up far too slowly. Fortunately, they haven't dropped.

Now, yes the price of organic milk is more stable, but it still isn't keeping pace with the cost of production. The only time it comes close is when the MILC program and the Maine Tier program kick in.

2. Less Stressful

I have not found this to be the case for the following reasons:

- Lack of clarity on NOP rules
- Unreliable and questionable quality of feed supply
- Limited availability of proper seed varieties
- Lack of common sense in interpreting organic standards
- The fact that when certain people in agricultural circles find out that you're organic, instantly, your ethics come into question. This state's full of rumors and incidents reported by veterinarians, grain dealers, fertilizer, and seed dealers, farm supply stores, and YOUR NEIGHBORS, attesting to the lack of any integrity in the organic milk industry. I've heard estimates all the way from 30% to 70% of people who are following the standards. All depends on who you talk to.

With the shortage of feed and bedding and high prices without corresponding increases in milk prices, this only gets worse. Desperate people will do desperate things.

3. Better for the cows

Maybe so, maybe not. All depends on management. The pasture requirement is a good thing. Access to direct sunlight, fresh air and exercise is good. Slogging around in belly deep mud and shit isn't. Cows forced to go outside on a frozen area with frozen jagged surface or one slick as a skating rink isn't. Frozen tits aren't. Dung balls on a cow clear up to her hip

continued on page 37

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic Grain Pricing

continued from page 21

grains by rail car to the concentrated populations on the East and West coasts.

What if we see a 10% increase in demand for grain?

If demand for organic grain was to increase by 10%, its effect on the current prices would be dependent on who was looking for the grain; small individual dairy operations or large operations such as a poultry farm or one of the large scale dairies. Large outfits will most likely import grains directly, and that won't affect the demand for local grains, but greater purchasing from small family farm operations would increase the need for domestic grains. Others felt there Just isn't room for a 10% increase; the grain is not there and probably wouldn't be there internationally either. The organic grain market just does not ramp up that quickly.

Farming in Equilibrium

There are some producers who are not feeling the pinch like others; they are the producers who grow their own forages and grains and rely very little (if at all) on purchased feed. Darlene and Dan Coehoorn would be one such example. Of the 550 acres that they crop, less than 200 of that acreage is needed to feed their herd of 55 cows. The remaining acreage is used to grow canning crops, human feed, and livestock feed. Even in this situation the Coehoorns have reduced the amount of grain that they feed their cows. It does not make sense to feed their cows much grain at such a high price; the return is just not there. With corn and wheat, it is more cost-effective to sell it as feed rather than use it, though Darlene was quick to point out that they continue to feed a certain amount of grain to maintain body condition and to make sure they don't damage the lactation of their cows. Increasingly organic producers are looking to build relationships with their neighbors to start building their own local supply by forward contracting. One such producer is Paul Tillotson from New York who has started to work with neighbors to ensure their long-term supply of feed. Alternatively some organic dairies, like Arden Landis, are maximizing their ability to graze pasture at peak production times and drying their cows off to minimize winter feeding and work.

Future Outlook

Will an economic alignment of prices happen with the increased worldwide demand for conventional grain and the current energy policies of the US? Conventional prices for milk and beef are projected to remain high until the fall of 2009 so it's reasonable to project that grain and forage prices will not level out until the fall of 2009. Organic Valley is working with corn farmers to put together a farmer pool to produce corn for sale to OV livestock

continued on page 33

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

(Almost) Year Round Grazing in the Northeast

by Mary-Howell and Klaas Martens, Lakeview Organic Grain, Penn Yan, NY

I came home for lunch several days ago to see Klaas, talking on the phone, again, with organic dairy farmer friends. It's a pretty common story this year, they had come for advice because they are finishing the winter - out of forage, out of money, unable to afford the extremely expensive organic grain, and the grass isn't growing fast enough to feed their hungry cows. They know they need to make some changes on their farm, but aren't sure where to start.

Does this sound familiar? As I listened to Klaas guide them through an evaluation of their pasture needs and resources, I realized that this is information that needs to be shared. If you adopt some of this advice, you should be able to buy less grain. Yes, that does sound like a strange thing for a couple of grain farmers and feed mill owners to say, but it isn't really. We honestly want to see you and your farm be more profitable, your pastures more productive, and your cows be healthier.

Evaluating your forage needs

The first step is to determine how much forage you need throughout the year. For dairy cows, the basic 'rule of thumb' is generally 1/2T of forage dry matter/cow/month, but that can vary considerably with forage quality and other feedstuff available. If a cow consumes 3-4% of her bodyweight in pasture forage dry matter per day, that amounts to 24-62 pounds of dry matter for cows weighing 800 – 1300 lb. Since pasture forage usually contains 25% dry matter, that means that cows can eat up to 100-200 lb of high quality palatable green forage daily! When you become truly committed to improving the production from your pasture, it might be a good idea to get a pasture specialist from Cooperative Extension or GrazeNY to come out to your farm and evaluate your needs, your current pasture resources and plant species, your fencing possibilities and make specific pasture suggestions for your situation. This is a very valuable service that is available to farmers in New York. Cost-sharing money may also be available for fencing and improving pasture, especially if it is near waterways.

Matching Consumption to Production

As anyone pasturing animals knows, there are some times of the year when there is more growth than what the cows can eat and there are times when there is not enough. In the spring and early summer, forage provides lots of high quality nutrition, but as summer progresses, especially if it is dry, the cows may not be getting the quantity they need, even if quality is high. Because most young forage plants are much higher in nutrients, especially protein and minerals, and are much more palatable than more mature plants, the challenge is getting young plants in front of the cows for as many days during the year as absolutely possible. This requires planning out different pastures so they contain plant species that mature at different times of the year. There is a physical limit of how many bites a cow can take in a day. The amount of dry matter she eats depends on many things, including the number of bites per minute of grazing time, the amount of forage eaten in each bite, and the total grazing time. For her to get the most out of her pasture and save you the most money on purchased inputs, each mouth-full needs to contain as much high quality forage as possible.

You can get much more good out of a well-managed rotational grazing system than continuous grazing. Cows use only about 35% of available forage under continuous grazing, and this tends to lead to overgrazing some areas, undergrazing others, resulting in weakened stands, loss of desirable species, and declining productivity. Under rotational grazing management, cows can harvest over 65% of the available forage, and legumes and other desirable species will thrive.

Balanced Rotational Pasture System

A balanced rotational pasture system should provide enough pasture to meet forage needs over a long grazing season and also permit the harvesting of surplus during peak growing periods as hay or baleage. It is based on a series of sequential perennial pastures supplemented with several annual pastures so that the cows can be eating peak quality pasture for most of the year. Planned out well, this can result in pasture forage that extends the productive grazing season from early spring into early winter. We can extend the length of time when pastures grow fastest by seeding fields with different mixtures to stagger their periods of peak growth. Each pasture is grazed when the plant quality is highest, and then allowed sufficient time to regrow before harvest as stored forage or being grazed again later. The cows can be intensively grazed in each pasture, using a polywire that is advanced once or twice each day and a chase-wire to keep them off the grass they have already grazed.

In late spring/early summer, pasture can 'get away from you' and produce more than what the cows can eat each day. If cows can't keep up with the growth rate of a pasture, it quickly becomes over-mature and drops both in feed value and palatability. Pasture should be clipped and harvested as hay or baleage before it becomes over-mature. If pasture plants

continued on page 30

A Complete Guide to Pasture Species		
Perrenial Species		
Birdsfoot Trefoil	4-8#/A	tolerates wet and dry soils, slow to establish, good midseason growth, needs fall rest, does not cause bloat, palatable even when mature
Red Clover	8-15#/A	lasts 2-3 years, will tolerate wetter locations, good regrowth, will cause bloat, frost seeding works well
Alsike Clover	6-10#/A	tolerates wet and acid soils, not good in drought, short lived, good regrowth, will cause bloat, can be toxic to horses
Ladino Clover	4-10#/A	high quality pasture, taller than other white clovers, prefers frequent rains to drought, good regrowth, will cause bloat
Alfalfa	12-15#/A	drought tolerant, needs deep fertile soils, not suited to wet or acid soils, better for rotational grazing or hay than for continuous grazing, high yielding, choose disease resistant varieties, can have problems with winter heaving
Reed Canarygrass	6-12#/A	tolerates dry & wet soils, needs frequent grazing or mowing to maintain quality, mature plant growth is much less palatable, choose low alkaloid varieties
Timothy	2-8#/A	works well in mixtures, well-adapted and long lasting, lower in protein, little regrowth, tolerates wet and acid soils but not drought
Smooth Bromegrass	4-12#/A	works best where one of the cuttings is grazed, does best on fertile soil, good regrowth, good spring and fall production
Orchardgrass	8-12#/A	produces more summer regrowth than timothy & bromegrass, heads quickly - mature growth not very palatable, best in early pastures, reduces bloat in mixtures with alfalfa and clover, does not tolerate wet soil well
KY Bluegrass	5-20#/A	low yield potential but most productive in spring and periods of cool, moist weather, not tolerant to drought, heat and wet soil
Perennial ryegrass	10-25#/A	excellent palatability - finer stemmed than other forage grasses, stops growing in dry weather, short lived perennial, may not be fully winter hardy in northern locations, excellent regrowth, not tolerant to wet soils
Tall Fescue	15-30#/A	long lived, high yielding, excellent regrowth, will produce during summer, be sure to get endoplyte free varieties
Festulolium	15-20#/A	cross between fescue and perennial ryegrass, combines nutritional value and high yield of ryegrass with hardiness and summer regrowth of fescue, does well for rotational grazing, easy to establish, fast recovery, great in mixtures, may not be fully winter hardy in NY
Annual Species		
BMR Sorghum/ Sudangrass	65-70#/A	does best in well-drained locations, good for pasture, balage and silage, but won't dry well for hay, needs good soil fertility for best yield, do not graze regrowth that develops after a frost, it is toxic, but it can be safely dried or ensiled.
Millets	15-20#/A	lower yielding than small grains & S/S. heat & drought tolerant , cut at boot stage or graze after 6-8 weeks when plants are 18-24"
Annual ryegrass = Italian ryegrass	25-35#/A alone; 4#/A as nurse crop	similar in feed quality to perennial ryegrass, not well adapted to extremely wet or dry soil, highly palatable
Teff (Eragrostis tef)	4-5#/A	sow tiny seed no more than 1/4" deep when soil is warm, harvest before flowering in 50-55 days, heat & drought tolerant
Spring Small Grains	60-70 #/A	includes oats, triticale, spelt, barley, wheat. Can be pastured 5-7 weeks after planting. For baleage, harvest at boot stage. Good source of NDF. Can be planted with forage peas for higher protein forage. Will grow well in cooler weather of spring or fall.
Winter Small Grains	100-120#/A	includes wheat, spelt, triticale, barley for early-mid spring grazing. Can be planted with winter peas for higher protein forage.
Forage Brassicas	1.5-3#/A	includes turnip, kale, rape, swede. Seed in mid-late summer for fall forage, with or without oats, high in protein, highly palatable.

ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

Desperation Acres: A Haven of Sustainability

3rd Generation Farmers Bruce & Mari Drinkman of Desperation Acres Farm in Western Wisconsin are in their 3rd year of organic certification, but have always farmed sustainably

By Lisa McCrory

Desperation Acres, home and farm of Bruce and Mari Drinkman, lies in the 'rolling and somewhat rugged hills' of western Wisconsin. The farm is an hour east of Minneapolis St Paul and a reasonable drive to the annual MOSES Organic Farming Conference that takes place every February.

Bruce is the third generation on his farm; he purchased Desperation Acres from his father (who purchased it from his father) and has been farming on this land all his life. He and Mari have 5 grown children, all living off the farm and at this point it does not look like any of them will be coming back to become the 4th generation; they have all seen too many hard times on the farm. The agrarian lifestyle, however, works for Bruce and Mari. They like the fact that they can have a day off in the middle of the week if they need it, avoiding weekend crowds.

The Art of Self-Sufficiency

The Drinkmans have always farmed sustainably; their goal is to meet all the concentrate and forage needs of their livestock from their acreage, which calls for a diversified grass-based system. To their 300-600 cow confinement dairy neighbors, their model of farming stands out as rather odd and nonconformist. Their farm consists of about 300 total acres of which 120 is owned and the rest is rented. About 140 acres is used for pasture, 90 acres is used for hay, and 85 acres is used for growing annual crops. The annual crops grown include 30 acres corn, 30 acres oats/barley/wheat, 10 acres field peas/small grain for forage and 15 acres of a soybean open pollinated milo blend or soybean sorghum sudan blend – also for forage. A farm of this size and scale is able to support a herd of about 60 cows; with 55 cows milking year round.

To meet the concentrate needs of their 55 cow dairy, Bruce and Mari grow a minimum of 25 acres of small grains and 15 acres of cob corn. Their small grains consist of 50% oats, 25% wheat and 25% barley. They make haylage small and large dry hay bales and are usually able to meet all their forage and grain needs, trying only to purchase their salt, minerals, kelp and vitamins.

The last 3 years have been very dry, however, and last year, for the first time in the 45 years that Bruce has been on the farm, they had to purchase 2 semi loads of hay. Mother Nature, it appears, is trying to make up for the 3-year drought by giving them all the precipitation at once. In the last month they have received 20 inches or rain, which has allowed the water tables to recover, but has interfered with getting hay crops in.

Transition to Organic

Desperation Acres is coming upon its 3rd year of organic certification. They market their milk to Organic Choice, a company that markets cheese and sells fluid milk to Horizon and Organic Valley. They are certified by MOSA (Midwest Organic Services Association) who is very helpful with any of the little questions that are sure to pop up in the organic industry.

They transitioned their herd to organic when the 80/20 rule was still in effect , allowing them to feed 20% conventional ration for the first 9 months of their one year whole herd transition. Management changes were very minimal, as they have always pastured their cows did not use dry treatment products, rarely used antibiotics or penicillin, and 250 of their 300 acres already qualified as organic.

Even though they were able to save some money with the 80/20 rule, their transition was costly. The pay price for conventional milk was the lowest it had been on record and the first year of a 3-year drought was upon them. Once on the organic truck, their milk check doubled. The joy was short lived, however, as cost of fuel and feed was rapidly increasing while the payprice for organic milk was lagging far behind.

Barn Design and Milking Herd

Their barn is a 48 year old 55-stall stanchion barn with a pipeline. It was rebuilt where the old barn had been and is designed to provide excellent air flow and lots of good light. The dairy herd consists of Holsteins, Jerseys, Guernseys, and various crosses of those 3 breeds. They do not get too involved with testing and their herd average is lower than most, but they take the milk that their feed will give them. Bruce does not believe in 'buying the milk' (laying out thousands of dollars towards feed in order to get milk to pay for the feed). Their herd is basically a closed herd with the exception of bringing in a bull or two for breeding. The cows freshen year round and the bull runs with the cows the bulk of the time. They have been able to maintain calving intervals of 12-13 months.

Grazing System and Feed Rations

Bruce and Mari's cows have access to 40 acres of permanent pasture and they add hay ground as needed after the first cutting has been taken. At the end of the grazing season, they are using 75 acres for their milking cows. Cows are rotated onto new pasture every 2- 4 days. Their young stock have access to the other 100 acres of permanent pasture and woods.

In the summer Bruce and Mari feed 4-6 pounds of a 13% protein grain, some haylage or oatlage, and pasture for the cows. They try to feed an average of 50% DMI from pasture during the grazing season (May- October). In the winter they increase their grain ration to 6-8 pounds on average. The balance of the winter ration consists of haylage,, baled dry hay and either corn silage or one of the bean and milo or sudax mixes.

Calf Care

Calves are fed fresh colostrum as soon as possible and the newborns are allowed to suck for 3-4 days longer if it seems they need it. Calves are started with 1.5 gallons of milk a day and they build them up to 2 gallons. Hay is available almost immediately and grain is introduced after the first couple of weeks. They do not vaccinate the calves except for Pinky eye in season.

Livestock Health

Since transitioning to organic production, Bruce and Mari have seen very little change in their animal health. The basic health plan on Desperation Acres is to keep the nutrition at the optimum level and to remove any stress that they can. This requires having a balanced ration, a clean environment and comfortable cows. 'The cows will tell you what they need if you watch them', says Bruce, 'it is much better to prevent than to treat.' They seldom see the vet except for some pregnancy checks. They have a nutritionist that they work with on a regular basis meeting monthly and sometimes more. The nutritionist is very good at helping them stay on budget without cheating the cows

The only vaccination that they provide their animals is for pink eye. Mastitis rarely occurs, but when it does, they use Udder Comfort, strip out the quarter frequently and occasionally use a sucker calf. Milk Fever has only happened once on their farm in the past 3 years and they have had success with the calcium supplements that are available. For pneumonia and calf scours they turn to probiotics, electrolytes, plenty of liquids, and warm dry living conditions. To stay on top of reproduction issues, they check their feed ration not once, but twice.

Bruce's turnover rate (cull rate) is 15 – 20% which includes some voluntary culling. Age is usually the major reason for

continued on page 28

FEATURED FARM

continued from page 27

culling; their cows last well into their 8th or 9th lactation. "If you can't keep your cow for at least 4 lactations, you aren't getting your return on them", says Bruce.

Resources

The Drinkmans rely on a variety of people and tools for resources. Among them are their nutritionist, other farmers, ODAIRY's on-line discussion list, the NODPA website, Dr Hubert Karreman's monthly newsletter and pretty much any thing else they can find on the internet. They have attended the Organic Conference in LA Crosse and some other events in their area. Bruce's recommended reading is the series of books from James Herriot about his vet work in the 40's to 60's. This is proof for him that herd health and nutrition can be maintained without the fancy medicines of today.

Even though they were able to save some money with the 80/20 rule, their transition was costly. The pay price for conventional milk was the lowest it had been on record and the first year of a 3-year drought was upon them. Once on the organic truck, their milk check doubled. The joy was short lived, however, as cost of fuel and feed was rapidly increasing while the payprice for organic milk was lagging far behind.

Future Needs of the Organic Dairy Industry

Without hesitation, Bruce states that we need to get the pasture and origin of livestock rules in place as soon as possible. The viability of the organic dairy industry relies upon it.

Bruce and Mari has been involved in many of the leading producer organizations that represent organic dairy and advocate for these rule changes including NODPA, WODPA, MODPA and FOOD Farmers. Bruce is current Treasurer for MODPA and encourages everyone to get involved. "We have a voice now and we need to use it", he says. "You can't be heard if you don't speak [and] if you don't speak up, you have nobody to blame bur yourself". Bruce gets great satisfaction in knowing that he can make a difference and ended his interview with his famous tagline "Parity Not Poverty". ◆

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Vaccinations

continued from page 8

Not Recommended – Haemophilus, Pasteurella, Manheimia, Pinkeye, Hairy Heel Wart (Serpens species bacterin)

Homeopathic Nosodes or Conventional Vaccines?

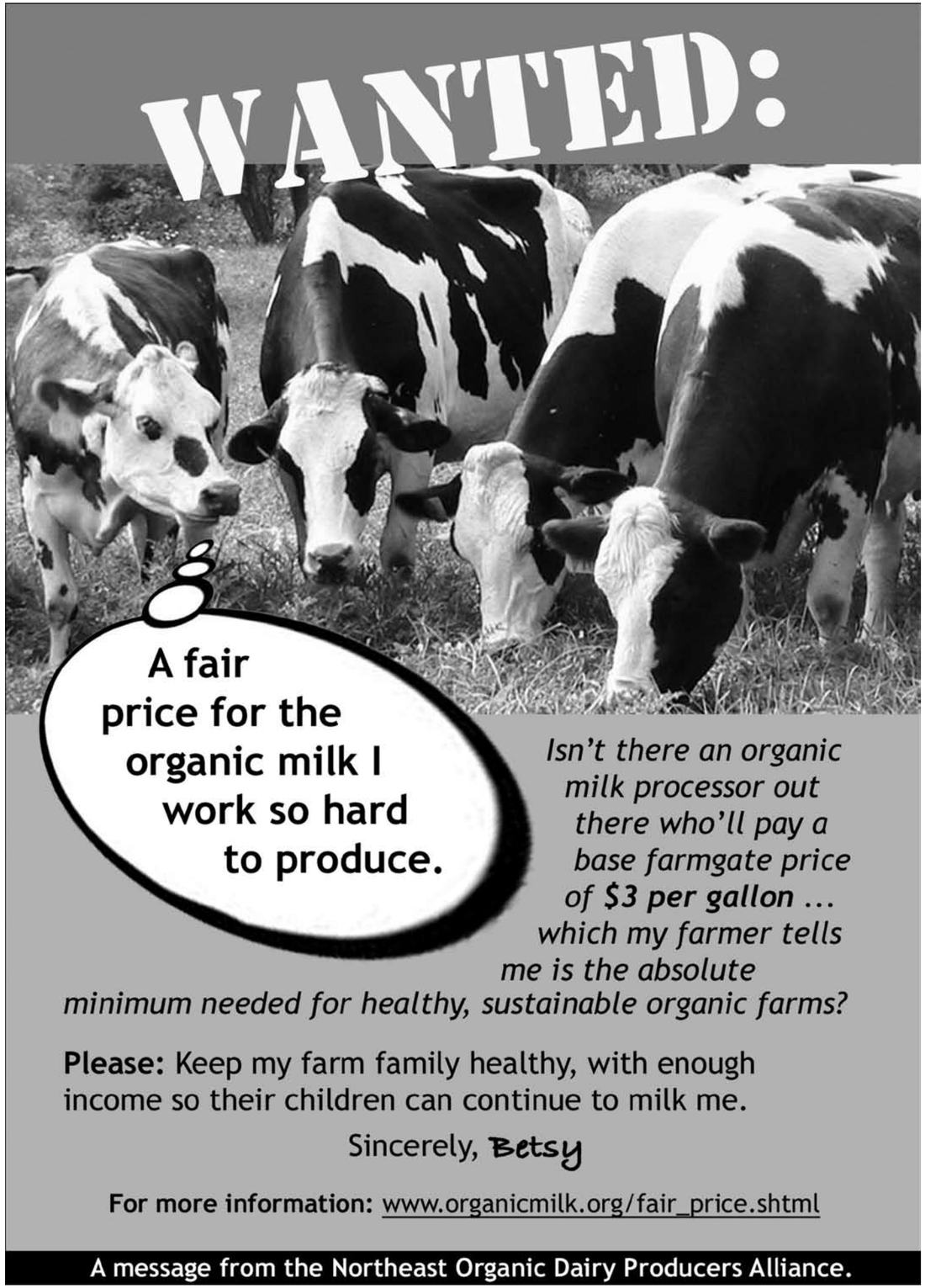
The topic of homeopathic nosode use for immunization is controversial. Some feel that all conventional vaccines are bad and they prefer to use nosodes instead of vaccines.

Conventional vaccines work at the molecular and cellular levels and produce responses that can be measured with laboratory tests such as antibody titre (humoral response) or white blood cell assays (cellular response). Homeopathic nosodes work at an energetic level. The activity of homeopathic nosodes does not produce immunologic responses that can be measured in a laboratory. My personal preference is to use nosodes at the time a herd or individual is challenged by a pathogen but not as a preventative measure to immunize animals. Homeopathic nosodes for herpes, mastitis and ringworm are examples of preparations that producers have had good success with in the face of a disease outbreak. In my experience the use of homeopathic nosodes to immunize cattle against respiratory viruses (and bacteria such as Lepto.) has produced mixed results. Some producers report problems with pneumonia and abortions after using homeopathic nosodes to immunize their animals that resolve after they return to using conventional vaccines. Others feel satisfied that they have achieved good results using homeopathic nosodes exclusively in place of conventional vaccination.

Vaccines are a Management tool, not a "Silver Bullet"

Please keep in mind that vaccines are not a cure-all. Many people have overly optimistic expectations of vaccination as an aid to animal health. Vaccines are sometimes used as a crutch to avoid making management changes. The first line of defense against infectious diseases is to have a healthy immune system. Organic production methods emphasize disease prevention by providing excellent nutrition, good sanitation and an environment that minimizes stress. Taking care of these basic needs will promote excellent natural immunity and decrease the incidence of sick animals. However, vaccination can be a useful addition to overall herd management by helping to prevent and limit the severity of disease. The National Organic Program both allows and encourages the judicious use of vaccines as a livestock health aid. ◆

Guy Jodarski, DVM, is an independent veterinary consultant based in Neillsville, WI. He works in an organic and sustainable livestock practice with an emphasis in dairy cattle herd health. Phone: 715-743-4703. Email: gjodarski@tds.net



ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Almost Year Round Grazing

continued from page 24

begin to head out, it is time to get the cows off and mow for harvest. Weeds, brush and coarse grasses are more likely to gain a foothold if a pasture is not grazed or mowed sufficiently, but they can also become a problem if a pasture is overgrazed and therefore weakened. It is important to graze at a rate and an intensity that keeps quality high but allows the grass a chance to recover and regrow. If the grass is grazed too short or too often, feed quality may be still good, but yield is reduced and the roots will become depleted, shortening the life of the stand.

Perennial Pastures

The core of the system involves a series of several perennial pastures. Each one is planted with a different combination of grasses and legumes that will mature together. The best species to use in a pasture will vary from farm to farm, and even from field to field. Every farm is unique, having different strengths and challenges to work with. Often the soils that warm up first and are best for early grazing are also the ones that become droughty and go dormant in the summer. Those fields are a great place for the earliest maturing species as they can be grazed when other land is still too wet or cold. Wetter fields, north facing slopes, and lower areas start growing later but will still be actively growing after the early soils have are too dry. Here are some general suggestions of species mixes for the Northeast:

1. **Early spring pasture (April/May)** – cool season grasses like orchardgrass, bluegrass, quackgrass, bromegrass, Reed canarygrass (especially in wet areas) with red clover. These plant species should also be productive in the fall.
2. **Mid-Spring pasture (May/June)** – perennial and intermediate ryegrass, timothy, festulolium, Alice white clover, ladino and other white clovers
3. **Late spring/early summer pasture (June/July)** – birdsfoot trefoil, tall fescue, switchgrass, Indiangrass, big bluestem

We need to manage the pastures and cows so that we get the most profitable milk production we can from them. Rather than thinking in terms of bushels per acre and pounds of milk per cow we need to think about pounds of milk per acre. When pasture growth slows to the point where cows can't eat enough per day to maintain their production or when they graze the perennial pastures too close, the amount of time each day that they are allowed to graze on that pasture should be reduced to prevent overgrazing or they should be moved to the next maturing pasture.

Supplemental Annual Pastures

These are designed to provide large amounts of high quality feed to supplement the perennial pastures at times when the perennial growth isn't sufficient. Each of us knows from experience when our main pastures grow best and when they are likely to fall short of meeting the cows' needs. We can plan ahead and plant some extra grazing land with annual forage crops to be ready when we anticipate the main pastures will not produce enough.

Having supplemental annual forage available also gives you the flexibility you need to make more efficient use of your perennial pastures. Perhaps you will only want to allow the cows to graze a few hours each day in the annual pastures and then move them back to the perennial pastures, or harvest some of each for hay. For the most part, the annual species do not dry well, so if they are not needed for grazing, they are better suited for harvest as baleage.

1. **Winter / Very early spring (January/April)** – corn stalks in last year's silage or grain corn (the cows will eagerly find dropped ears and early weeds like chickweed, and get valuable late winter exercise and sunshine). Some fall brassicas, such as marrowstem kale, can provide winter grazing when there isn't too much snow cover.
2. **Early spring (April/May)** – winter triticale, barley, spelt or wheat with Austrian winter peas (planted last September). In 2006, we found that by the end of May, spelt and winter peas were nearly 3 feet tall and by mid June, they were over 5 feet. Winter rye can also be used, but it gets mature and unpalatable very quickly and has been shown to affect the flavor of the milk if the cows get too much of it.
3. **Mid spring/early summer** – spring small grains like oats, barley, or triticale mixed with forage peas. If planted at several times during the spring, this can provide pastures with sequential maturities into the summer. We are also experimenting this year with yellow mustard as an early spring-planted brassica forage that can be mixed with spring small grains. Warm season annual grasses, like Italian ryegrass and teff, sown spring through early summer can provide late summer and fall grazing.
4. **Summer (July/August)** – BMR sorghum/sudangrass or Japanese millet mixed with soybeans will do well in dry periods or on droughty soils. Field corn can be grazed during this time. Buckwheat can also provide high quality forage.
5. **Fall/early winter (Sept – early Dec)** – forage brassicas like turnip, rape, swede or kale, mixed with oats. Brassicas can be planted in the spring to provide forage in August and September, or planted in August to provide forage from October-December. We have found that grain oats, planted in the fall, do not try to reproduce and will grow like vigorous forage oats. Later plantings of brassicas and oats can go in on fields that produced the early spring triticale/winter pea pasture earlier in the year. Turnips and rape are the fastest growing brassicas, reaching maximum production in 80-90 days, while swedes and kale require 150-180 days. Of the brassicas, rape is best suited to multiple grazings.

Can I remove all grain from the ration when my cows are on good pasture?

This probably depends on your expectations for your cows

continued on next page

and their milk production, their breed, and on the quality of your forage. Certainly young forage can provide the protein and many other nutrients, but it may be short on energy. Most nutritionists agree that cows on excellent pasture will probably need a reduced amount of grain concentrate, such as cornmeal, to maintain high production and body condition.

How can I improve the nutritional quality of the forage?

The mineral content and nutritional quality of your forage depends directly on the mineral content of your soil. How often do you take soil tests on your pastures? If your soil is well supplied with minerals, your forage quality and productivity will be higher, and you will save money on purchased feed supplements. The biologically active minerals that a cow gets through forage are usually more easily absorbed in her body than the mined minerals found in most supplements, which means she should get more good out of them.

Taking Soil Tests

Soil tests can be taken at any time of the year when the soil isn't frozen, but if you sample cold, wet soil, you will probably underestimate the phosphorus level which is highly dependent on microbial action. Take several soil cores from each section of the field, avoiding obviously different areas such as gullies, knolls, next to hedgerows, and wet spots. If areas of the field have had significantly different management over the past 10 years, sample them separately. Use a soil sampling tube or auger, and core at least to a 2 inch depth, with a minimum of 20 randomly selected sites. Mix the samples together in a clean pail and send about a pint of the mixed soil in for analysis. Make sure you use a lab that will give you readings on N,P, K, Ca, Mg and trace minerals. pH is a measure of soil acidity, and does reflect the availability of some of the nutrients, but determining the actual nutrient levels are generally more useful than pH.

Correcting soil nutrient deficiencies

Adequate fertility management will often dramatically increase the yield of forage, improving the vigor, nutritive value and palatability of the plants. Many soils in the Northeast will benefit from additional lime or gypsum. Gypsum or calcium sulfate is a valuable source of both nutrients which are needed for a healthy animal immune system, We know of several NY organic dairy farms who report significant reductions in somatic cell counts in the years after they spread gypsum on their pastures. If your soil test results indicate the need for lime or gypsum, it is important to add it slowly, no more than a ton or two per acre per year. Larger amounts, even if indicated as needed, can 'shock' the soil and tie up other nutrients as the lime moved through the soil. If soil tests indicate deficiencies, pastures may benefit from potassium and phosphorus in organically acceptable forms, such as rock phosphate and potassium sulfate. If there are sufficient legumes in the plant mix, added nitrogen may not be needed, but liquid fish,

continued on page 32

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Almost Year Round Grazing

continued from page 31

chicken and cattle manure can supplement nitrogen organically if necessary. Depositing nutrients by grazing and removing nutrients by haying can unevenly move nutrients around the farm, possibly depleting some fields. Grazing animals that are heavily fed indoors or supplemented with hay can result in a net localized increase in fertility in some areas, while other areas may be impoverished.

What should I do about weeds in my organic pasture?

This all depends on which weed species are present. Broadleaf weeds are more easily controlled by mowing than are grassy weeds. Many weeds have vulnerable point in their life cycle. Perennial species, like Canada thistle, expend much of their stored food reserves between early spring and bloom. If you mow off these perennial weeds just before full bloom, often they won't come back or will be much weaker when they do. Correcting soil mineral deficiencies, especially if lime is needed, can reduce the vigor of common 'poverty weeds'. Remember though that some 'weeds' can be just as nutritious and palatable as the intentional forage species, they may even have medicinal benefits. Having a few dandelions in a pasture isn't necessarily a bad thing!

Should I 'renovate' my older pastures?

Older pastures can develop thin spots where weeds move in. There is usually a good reason why this happens. Before you just replant, it is best to figure out what caused the pasture to fail in those particular areas. Take soil tests to see if additional nutrients are needed, and consider if there are drainage or traffic problems that need to be improved. Sometimes overseeding with species better suited to the conditions, especially in wet or droughty areas, may be all that's needed. If so, 'rough up' the area with a disk or cultivator, add lime, manure and other fertilizer materials, smooth it down, and reseed with a suitable mixture. Keep animals off the renovated area until the plants become well-established.

Establishing new pastures

Before you establish a new pasture, take soil tests and apply needed amendments. In the Northeast, most people plant their pasture grass mixtures with a nurse crop of a small grain, such as oats. Sometimes the legume seed is mixed into the grass seed mixture, but because legume seeds are considerably heavier and of different size, this can result in them settling out and not being uniformly spread. It is often a better idea to overseed the legume seed in a separate pass for more uniform coverage. Make sure you use the correct type of Rhizobium inoculant for the legume species - there are different inoculants for (1) alfalfa/clover, (2) birdsfoot trefoil and (3) pea/vetch. We have seen interesting results with using oats and forage peas as a pasture nurse crop – this can then be harvested as baleage during the summer.

Not sure what mix of pasture plant species will work best for you?

Cornell University maintains an excellent website on forages - <www.forages.org>. You just type in your county, soil conditions and intended use and get recommended pasture species mixes, along with lots of information on management and yield expectations. This is a really great tool!

And finally, don't forget the water, shade and other creature comforts

As good as pasture is, cows need more to be optimally productive when grazing. These include access to clean water, shade, and shelter from inclement weather. Elimination of wet areas, and piles of manure and moist spilled grain are important for controlling flies since the organically approved fly repellents won't probably be satisfactorily effective without limiting fly breeding habitat. Periodically dragging the pasture to break up manure piles may help during fly season.

As I drove home from the mill yesterday, our 12-year old son, Daniel, noticed that Fifi, one of our spirited heifers, had apparently snuck under the polywire and was happily grazing in the middle of our wheat field! She knew that the grass was much greener on the other side of the fence, and as we encouraged her back in with the others who were grazing old cornstalks and

weeds, she kept taking one last tongue-full of the sweet, lush wheat. Fortunately, soon their early spring pasture will be ready and then the grass WILL be greener inside the fence – and that will be better for everyone! ◆

We hope that this information helps you - and your cows - this summer!

Mary-Howell Martens and your friends at Lakeview Organic Grain

LAKEVIEW ORGANIC GRAIN
Box 361, Penn Yan, NY 14527
Phone:315-531-1038

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Organic Grain Pricing

continued from page 23

farmers, principally dairy and poultry, but Darlene Coehoorn has her concerns as to whether or not that can work. As a grower wanting a parity price for her grains and as a dairy producer wanting a reasonable price for her milk (at this point at 50% parity in WI), she feels that the grower pool is counter productive to both sides.

What she wants to see is an increased pay price for the milk so that organic dairy producers can continue to operate the dairy portion of their farm. It is good that the grain producers have achieved parity for their grains – it is a long time coming - and we should not try to drive their price down just when they are getting a fair price.

As a result of the high feed and energy prices, we will see producers changing their production practices and increase their use of grazing and high forage diets for ruminant livestock. Most producers will take 2-3 years to build the fertility, productivity and their production knowledge to replace purchasing grain and forage. Klaas Martin projects that we will also see a more local and regional infrastructure for grain and forages develop. "Farmers [in general] will need to become more innovative and self-reliant and will turn to the pioneering spirit of organic dairy producers", says Klaas. He feels that organic dairy and crop farmers could be setting an example and need to reach out to others in their community as they make adjustments in these rapidly changing times. Others aren't quite so positive that organic dairy producers will be able to survive long enough to make those changes unless there is an immediate increase in pay price followed by regular increases that will allow them the time and resources to make the significant changes in their production practices. While some are, again, calling this "a perfect storm" of circumstances that will not be replicated, we have had three years of "perfect storms" that have seen organic dairy producers losing profitability. It is time to look at organic dairy and work together to devise a systems approach to compensating all levels of the industry. ◆

More information and updates on feed prices: go to www.nodpa.com

RESEARCH / EDUCATION

So You Want To Learn More About Organic Dairy?

By Karen Hills, Crop and Soil Technician, University of Vermont Extension

There is a wealth of information in the field of organic dairy that can be accessed on the web, or by connecting with seasoned organic dairy farmers. However, for those in search of more directed educational opportunities, there are several options to choose from including university programs, workshops, and internships. Before considering your options, ask yourself the following questions. What do you want out of this experience? A college degree? Practical knowledge that will allow you to better manage your existing organic herd? A career as an agricultural service provider? The knowledge to go into business for yourself? How much time and money do you plan to spend? Are you willing to relocate?

The following is a summary of the results of a search for educational opportunities in the field of organic dairy in the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain. Included are universities with an organic dairy on campus and/or an organic dairy component of their curriculum. Some universities have a conventional dairy herd, but have academic programs in organic agriculture or extension programs related to organic dairy. Since the field of organic dairy is not well established as a topic of study at universities, resourceful students can round out their education by pulling together relevant coursework, become involved with organic dairy extension or certification programs, and find practical hands-on experiences. Remember to always be a discerning customer. Do your research on a program before you sign up!

Degree Programs

Alfred State SUNY College of Technology (Alfred, NY)
All agriculture students participate in the Professional Practice Program, which includes hands-on experience working with the crops, plants, animals, facilities, and equipment. Alfred State has recently established a Center for Organic and Sustainable Agriculture and a new facility will house New York's first on-campus organic dairy herd. Associates Degrees in Agricultural Business, Ag Technology, Ag Science, Animal Science, Veterinary Technology are offered.

www.alfredstate.edu, 1-800-425-3733

California State University—Chico (Chico, CA)
Offers bachelor's degrees in agricultural business, agriscience and education, animal science, environmental studies, as well as crops, horticulture and land resource management. The campus has an organic dairy farm.

www.csuchico.edu/agr/farm/dairy/, 530-898-6343

Colorado State University (Fort Collins, CO)
Offers Interdisciplinary Studies Program in Organic Agriculture, and includes coursework in ecology, soils, crop production, entomology, business management, and an internship. Participating students are enrolled at Colorado State University and receive their Bachelor's degree from their home department (Agricultural and Resource Economics; Bioagricultural Sciences and Pest Management; Horticulture and Landscape Architecture; or Soil and Crop Sciences), with completion of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program recorded on their transcripts.

organic.colostate.edu/, 970-491-6501

Cornell University (Ithaca, NY)
Cornell's College of Agriculture offers 24 major fields of study, including Animal Science, Plant Sciences, Natural and Environmental Sytems, among others. Cornell has a large conventional dairy research farm. Cornell Extension organizes the New York Organic Dairy Initiative (www.organic.cornell.edu). A 30-acre farm dedicated to organic crop production, and Cornell offers a Summer Sustainable Agriculture Scholar program where students study biology of organic cropping systems.

www.cals.cornell.edu, 607-255-2036

Aberystwyth University (Aberystwyth, England)
The Institute of Biological, Environmental & Rural Sciences (IBERS) offers undergraduate programs in Organic Agriculture and Animal Science. Opportunities are available for undergraduate and graduate students to participate in research on agriculture and the environment.

www.aber.ac.uk/en/ibers/

Michigan State University (East Lansing, MI)
Offers a one-year Organic Farming Certificate Program. While it does have a horticulture focus, the program's goal is to prepare students to operate their own farm and helps participants connect with the greater sustainable and organic community.
www.msuorganicfarm.org/certificateprogram.htm, 517-230-7987

Nova Scotia Agricultural College (Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada)
Offers a Certificate of Specialization in Organic Agriculture to participants who successfully complete four distance courses. Courses to choose from include: Transition to Organic Agriculture, Composting and Compost Use, Principles of Organic Horticulture, Organic Field Crop Management, and Organic Livestock Production.

www.nsac.ca, 902-893-6666

University of Florida (Gainesville, FL)
The Horticultural Sciences Department offers a Bachelor's degree in Organic Crop Production. They also offer an Organic and Sustainable Crop Production minor open to all UF students.

www.hos.ufl.edu, 352-392-4711 ext. 224 (Dr. Rebecca Darnett)

University of Guelph (Guelph, Ontario, Canada)
Guelph offers an Bachelor's and Master's degree programs in organic agriculture. French speaking students may specialize in organic agriculture within a 2-year diploma program at the Alfred campus, while the undergraduate students at the main campus in Guelph can major in Organic Agriculture. Interdisciplinary research programs approaching questions ranging from composting and nutrient management, to crop breeding, weed control, and marketing. Research positions are available to undergraduate as well as graduate students.

www.uoguelph.ca/organics, 519-824-4120 ext. 52508 (Dr. Ann Clark)

University of Minnesota (St. Paul, MN)
Offers undergraduate programs in Animal Science at the St. Paul campus. UMN has recently committed to converting the 70-cow dairy herd at UM-Morris to organic, along with 110 acres of land at the site. Currently, research has focused on intensive rotational grazing, crossbreeding, and out-wintering. In addition, the UMN Organic Ecology program offers education opportunities for college students interested in learning about agroecology and organic farming systems, and partners with the MN Institute for Sustainable Agriculture. UMN's Southwest Research and Outreach Center in Lamberton leads an extensive program dedicated to exploring agriculture alternatives and the science of organic systems.

www.cfans.umn.edu, 612-624-6768

University of New Hampshire (Durham, NH)
Offers a bachelor's degree program in dairy management. This is the first land grant university to start an organic dairy farm with plans to include teaching and research on: profitability, health-promoting properties of milk, evaluation of alternative health therapies, innovative husbandry practices, alternate cropping systems, grazing, soil health, and weed management.

www.organicdairy.unh.edu, 603-862-1450

University of Vermont (Burlington, VT)
Bachelor's degree in Ecological Agriculture in the Department of Plant and Soil Science. Bachelor's degree in Animal Science. The UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture and NOFA-VT offer resources and training related to organic dairy production, although no courses in organic animal management are currently available at UVM.

www.uvm.edu/cals, 802-656-2980

University of Wisconsin—Madison (Madison, WI)
Bachelor's degree in dairy science. Also home to the Babcock Institute, which conducts international dairy research and development, and the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems

www.cals.wisc.edu, 608-263-3495 (Dr. Pamela Ruegg)

Washington State University (Puyallup, WA)
WSU's Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Re

continued on page 37

Calendar

July 29, 2008, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Organic Crops and Dairy Field Day, Bawden Family Farm, Hammond, NY

Brian and Liz Bawden will discuss combinations of grains and planting dates. They grow and process oats, peas, beans, spring wheat, Japanese millet, triticale and more for their on-farm grain supply. $5 NOFA members, $10 non members. For more info Contact NOFA-NY: 607-652-6632

August 8 - 10, 2008
The 34th Annual NOFA Summer Conference: Fruits of Our Labor

University of Massachusetts Amherst, MA (Note the location change). For more information, contact: Email: nofa@nofamass.org, or call: 978-355-2853

August 9, 2008: Grazing School

Learn about the tools and resources needed to develop grazing systems and how to improve animal growth or production through better pasture management. Part of the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) Summer Conference on Saturday, August 9th. **Contact Kate Rossiter, (413) 498-2721, or krossiter@nofamass.org.**

Sunday, August 10, 3 - 5 PM
Pasture Walk at Orchard Hill Farm, Woodland, Maine
Sponsored by the Maine Grass Farmers' Network

Stan Maynard will show his grazing system for his herd of Scottish Highland cattle. After calving in May he expects to have about 90 head of cattle, which graze on 9 paddocks at the home farm and on two other nearby farms. For more info, call 498-8541 or email at orchhill@ainop.com.

Tuesday August 12th 10am-2pm
Balancing High Dairy Production with Creative Forage Crops
Howacres Farm, Tunbridge, VT

Part of the 2008 NOFA-VT Organic Pasture & Livestock Management Workshop Series. Contact NOFA-VT: 434-4122; info@nofavt.org, www.nofavt.org

Wednesday, August 13: Intensive Livestock Grazing and Pasture Management @ Gerry Lyness's Farm, Pittstown, NJ

With plans to be certified organic and experience with EQUIP, Gerry's farm is a great place to learn about pasture management, manure disposal, fencing, facilities, and more. For farm address and contact information, visit http://www.nofanj.org

August 18, 2008, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Small Scale Dairies and Alternative Forages
Bostrom Farm, 95 Green River Road, Greenfield, MA
Part of the 2008 Grazing Workshop/Pasture Walk Series

For more information on any of the sessions, contact Winton Pitcoff, NOFA/Mass, at winton@nofamass.org or 413-634-5728.

August 21, 2008, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Organic Crops and Dairy Field Day, Sto-Ridge Farm, Cazenovia, NY

Organic farmers Hank and John Stoker will share their farm and crop experiences with very special guest, Jerry Brunetti. The Stokers produce grain crops for their dairy, while developing a whole farm system incorporating composting, alternative fuel, and intensive grazing. Contact NOFA-NY: 607-652-6632

August 22, 2008, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (lunch provided)
Organic Dairy Field Day, Swendsen Family Farm, Akron, NY

Field day with Jerry Brunetti and other guest speakers discussing soil health and quality forages, pasture management, herd health, and quality milk. FREE workshop. Contact NOFA-NY: 607-652-6632

Wednesday August 27th 10am-2pm: Holistic Planned Grazing in Action
Maplewood Natural Organics, Highgate, VT

Part of the 2008 NOFA-VT Organic Pasture & Livestock Management Workshop Series. Contact NOFA-VT: 434-4122; info@nofavt.org

August 28, 2008: Pasture Walk in Lebanon County, PA
Time: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Place: Willis and Rhoda Horst Dairy Farm, Myerstown, PA

Part of Penn State's 2008 Grazing Walks in SE and South Central PA **Series. Call Dan Ludwig, NRCS, at 717-274-2597, Ext. 119**

Sunday, August 31, 2 PM
Pasture Walk at Cold Spring Ranch, North New Portland, Maine
Sponsored by the Maine Grass Farmers' Network

Gabe Clark will provide demonstration and training in the use of the new MGFN Manure Spreader and No-Till Drill including proper use and calibration, and applying BMP (best management practices) when using the equipment. $25 suggested donation. Contact Gabe: (207) 340-0098

September 2, 2008, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Organic Dairy and Field Corn Trial, Twin Oaks Dairy, LLC, Truxton, NY

Rick, Kathie and Bob Arnold milk an average of 20,000 lbs of milk a year with 130 cows on their organic dairy. They grow 100% of their forage and 50% of their grain needs. Also learn about their SARE research project on reducing cultivation needs of organic field corn. Contact NOFA-NY: 607-652-6632

Monday, September 4, 11 - 3 PM
Pasture Walk at Springside Farms, New Vineyard, Maine
Sponsored by the Maine Grass Farmers' Network

Randall and Jill Bates started shipping milk in 1989, became certified organic in 2005. They milk milk 35 cows, and are setting up a grazing system with fences and water to individual paddocks this summer. Other plans include seeding a couple of acres to sudan/sorghum. Call 652-2375 for more information.

September 4: Organic Grain & Forage
@ Rutgers Agricultural Research & Extension Center, Bridgeton, NJ

With data from multi-year trials of organic corn and soybeans, this workshop will feature research findings and recommendations for equipment and techniques, yield and price expectations for organic grain production. For farm address and contact info:, www.nofanj.org

continued on page 40

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

continued from 35

sources offers an Organic Agriculture Systems major (Bachelor's degree within Agricultural and Food Systems) as well as an academic certificate program in organic agriculture for undergraduates and non-degree students. On-line courses as well as on-site internships are offered.

www.csanr.wsu.edu/organic, 253-445-4626

Non-Degree Programs

University of Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers
The school offers a short course focused on pasture-based dairy and livestock farming through traditional classroom activities, hands-on internships, and farm tours of pasture-based farms managed by successful graduates and mentors. Classroom instruction at the school runs from the middle of November through the end of March and students typically participate in internships from April through July.

www.cias.wisc.edu/dairysch.html, 608-265-6437

Internships

ATTRA Internships
Provides a service to connect apprentices/interns with farms in the US and Canada. Terms of internships vary. The site lists individual farms and other organizations that offer internships.

www.attrainternships.ncat.org/

Small Dairy.com
Dairy and creamery internships, apprenticeships and jobs with small-scale operations.

www.smalldairy.com/dairy%20work.html

World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF)
Connects those interested in volunteering on farms to those farms looking for help – both within the US and international. Room and board is provided by farm. **www.wwoof.org**

Northeast Workers On Organic Farms
NEWOOF is a regional Farm Apprenticeship Placement Service. Sponsored by the New England Small Farm Institute, and coordinated from their offices in Massachusetts, NEWOOF annually publishes an annotated list of farms (generally in the Northeast) seeking apprentices. The list is made available to interested workers who are responsible for contacting the farm(s) of their choice, and directly arranging for interviews.

www.smallfarm.org/newoof

Regional Organic Certification Agencies (NOFA, Oregon Tilth, Soil Association (UK))

Many certification agencies and/or organic farming associations keep lists of farms who are seeking interns and/or offer internship programs. In the Northeast, these include the following.
Northeast Organic Farming Association: www.nofa.org.
Of the NOFAs, NOFA-VT (www.nofavt.org) and NOFA-MA (www.nofamass.org) offer more formal apprentice programs. The other NOFAs offer listings of farming opportunities.

Maine Organic Farming and Gardening Program
(MOFGA) offers farm apprenticeship and journeyperson programs. **www.mofga.org**

You may find additional programs on the Growing New Farmers website at www.growingnewfarmers.org. And don't forget to check the NODPA website for farming opportunities as well! ◆

COMMENTARY

Organic Industry Evaluation

continued from page 22

bones isn't. In the past, some of the grain passed off as organic was nothing short of poison, this certainly is not better for the cows.

4. Organic milk is better

This is the quickest way to piss off a conventional dairy farmer, or anyone else connected with the conventional dairy industry. At one time I thought that the more vocal proponents of this opinion had learned to shut up, but I guess not. The fact that it's produced using a different process and that there is a significant number of people willing to pay more for it, doesn't necessarily mean its better. Every time someone says this, it causes a lot of angst.

5. More profitable

There are times when it is and times when it isn't. This has always been promoted as an industry that has as one of its goals, paying a fair and sustainable price to preserve the family farm. There are several differences between organic and conventional. One is, that if we bitch enough processors will raise the price. Another is, that there's enough bookkeeping to choke a hippo. There are other differences that I have alluded to earlier, and it's my opinion that we need to be compensated for the extra effort and unique knowledge and skill that it requires to follow the required processes.

There are those whom have done well because they are excellent at what they do and are in a very fortunate situation, and will do well even when times get tough, but I ask you do honestly think a young family would be dumb enough to enter this industry under the present conditions. If this industry is to remain viable for the long term, it must be attractive enough for the coming generation to consider investing the time, effort and capital it's going to take. ◆

Calendar

continued from page 36

September 9, 2008, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Organic Dairy Field Day, Willow Creek Farm, Belmont, NY

Join Chuck Deichmann at his organic dairy farm to discuss high quality forage production, forage testing, determining rations, and pasture on a progressive grasslands farm and robotic milking. Contact NOFA-NY: 607-652-6632

September 9, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Infrastructure on Mixed-Livestock Farms
Tufts University Farm, North Grafton, MA
Part of the 2008 Grazing Workshop/Pasture Walk Series

For more information on any of the sessions, contact Winton Pitcoff, NOFA/Mass, at winton@nofamass.org or 413-634-5728

Wednesday September 10th 10am-1pm
Organic Dairy Grazing and Animal Health Management
Taconic End Farm, Leicester, VT

Part of the 2008 NOFA-VT Organic Pasture & Livestock Management Workshop Series. Contact NOFA-VT: 434-4122; info@nofavt.org

Thursday September 11th 10am-12pm: Organic Dairy Grazing
Maple Lane Farm, Cabot, VT

Part of the 2008 NOFA-VT Organic Pasture & Livestock Management Workshop Series. Contact NOFA-VT: 434-4122; info@nofavt.org

September 17, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.: UMass Pasture Management Research
UMass Research and Education Center Farm, Deerfield, 413-545-2250
Part of the 2008 Grazing Workshop/Pasture Walk Series

For more information on any of the sessions, contact Winton Pitcoff, NOFA/Mass, at winton@nofamass.org or 413-634-5728

continued on page 40

Classified Ads

These are some of the most recent classifieds that have been sent to us. Many more can be found on the NODPA web site:
www.nodpa.com/classifieds.shtml

Animals

Two Certified Organic Holstein Cows Due August 18 & 24. Reason for selling, won't lay in our freestalls. Asking $1500 & $1800. Location: Whitingham, Vemont. Leon Corse, llcorse6@gmail.com, 802-368-7192.

10 organic milking cows for sale. Jersey, Ayreshire, & Lineback, $2500 and up. Need to make room. (802) 948-2675. Brian and Patty Wilson, Morningside Farm, Orwell, VT.

For Sale: Organic bred heifers due this fall. Excellent grazing herd,planned cross-breeding for 25 years, good selection of style from small fine boned Jersey crosses to larger Holstein/Swiss crosses. Well fed in excellent condition. Select 10 out of 50 for $3200/ea or up to 20 for $3000/ea. Telephone or email: Journey's Hope Farm Telephone: 802-758-2615. Email: brutter@gmavt.net

Equipment

Unverferth 3 point hitch round bale wrapper in very good shape; asking $1100. Location: Hartwick. N.Y. Michael Huestis, saramikeduo@peoplepc.com, 607 547 1314.

Very nice Allis K2 combine for sale. Small compact, runs great. View pics at www.dairyequipmentsales.net or call: cell 570-721-1144. Located in Wyalusing, Pa.

Employment

Applecheek Farm, a sustainable, organic, diversified multi-species grazing farm with agri-tourism business and direct marketed products is looking for a full time employee. People, dairy, mechanical, and carpentry skills a plus. Location: Hyde Park , Vermont. Contact John or Rocio Clark at 802-888-4482, or email resume to: applecheek@pshift.com. See www.applecheekfarm.com for more information

continued on page 39

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, MODPA President
Rosendale, Wisconsin

MODPA held their pasture walk June 28th at the farm of Jim and Justa Small. The Small's farm is located in Wilton, WI. While the turn out was less than anticipated, those who did attend, enjoyed some good discussion and a lovely pasture walk despite the rain!

Jim and Justa shared their experiences with rotational grazing and pasture restoration. They spoke about foliage feeding of liquid fish and calcium.

The event also featured a power point presentation created by Dr. Paul Detloff on reading bovine hair coats. You can tell a lot about bovine health just by reading the animal hair. The hair coat can give you indications of health, production, components, reproduction and behavioral traits!

Finally, NRCS specialists talked about local projects--from watershed programs to alternative energy options--and answered

questions about the impact of the Farm Bill on these programs. ◆

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
Darlene Coehoorn, President
Viewpoint Acres Farm
N5878 Hwy C
Rosendale, WI 54974
viewpoint@dotnet.com
Phone: 920-921-5541

Jim Greenberg, Vice-President
EP 3961 Drake Avenue
Stratford, WI 54484
greenbfrms@tznet.com
Phone: 715-687-8147

John Kinsman, Secretary
E2940 County Road K,
La Valle, WI 53941
Phone: 608- 986-3815
Fax: 608-986-2502

Bruce Drinkman, Treasurer
3253 150th Ave
Glenwood City, WI 54013
bdrinkman@hotmail.com
Phone: 715-265-4631

John Kiefer, Director
S10698 Troy Rd,
Sauk City, WI 53583
taofarmer@direcway.com
Phone: 608- 544-3702

Michigan
Ed Zimba
Zimba Dairy
7995 Mushroom Rd
DeFord, MI 48729
zimbadairy@tband.net
Phone: 989-872-2680

Ohio
Ernest Martin, Director
1720 Crum Rd,
Shiloh, OH 44878
Phone and Fax: 419-895-1182

continued from page 38

Forages & Grains

4x4 certified organic baleage for sale. Have between 50-75 for sale. Orwell, VT. Susan Balfe, farmersue38@yahoo.com, 802-989-3134.

Certified organic hay, 2008 first crop. $3.50/bale. Warren Shaw, warren@shaw-farm.com, 978 957 3011. Location: Dracut, MA

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

Prsrt Std
US Postage Paid
Permit 183
Turners Falls, MA

CALENDAR

continued from page 38

September 20, 2008: Pasture Walk in Lehigh County, PA
Place: Barry and Barb Byler Dairy Farm, New Tripoli, PA
Part of Penn State's 2008 Grazing Walks in SE and South Central PA Series

Highlights: Calves started on grass very early. Second year of no grain for milking herd. Manages grazing based on no water in paddocks. For more information or questions, call Dan Ludwig, NRCS, at 717-274-2597, Ext. 119

September 26 – 28, 2008: 2nd Annual Northeast Animal Power Field Days
Tunbridge Fair Grounds, Tunbridge, VT

Featuring working animal and equipment demonstrations in field and forest settings, workshops, exhibits, networking sessions, and an auction and swap meet on Sunday. For more information, go to: www.animalpowerfielddays.org, email: info@animalpowerfielddays.org, Phone: 802-234-5524. Join our discussion forum; www.draftanimalpower.com

October 27 & 28, 2008
NODPA's 8th Annual Field Days Event and Annual Producer Meeting
Holiday Inn, Auburn, NY

Reconnect with friends and find out what if going on in the organic dairy world. The annual producer meeting on Monday evening will be an opportunity for NODPA farmer members to review the previous year's work and set priorities for NODPA work in 2009-2014. Contact Ed Malby, 413-772-0444 or email: emaltby@comcast.net

October 28-30, 2008. Understanding Organic and Grazing Herds: Livestock Management and Health Conference
Holiday Inn, Auburn, NY

A continuation of the 2007 Understanding Organics conferences and organized by NOFA-VT and QMPS, this 3-day conference is designed to educate extension personnel, veterinarians, NRCS agents and other professionals working with organic and transitioning livestock producers. Contact Lisa McCrory, lmccrory@together.net, phone: 802-434-4122 or Linda Tikofsky, lg40@cornell.edu, phone: 607-255-8202.