

# NODPA News

## Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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## Organic pay price declines as processors panic over spring flush of milk and declining growth in sales.

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

It happens every year, as one season leads to another. A flush of milk as cows go out to grass coincides with a decline in fluid milk sales as the schools let out and consumers drink less milk during the summer months.

Why has this year caught some processors by surprise?

Organic milk sales grew by as much as 24% in 2008 and fluid milk sales are projected to grow by 5-8% in 2009, while processed organic dairy products will stay level or decline. Average retail prices for organic whole milk have increased by 9¢ over retail prices in February 2008.

Most economists predicted that sales would decrease in 2009 and some thought the drop would be more drastic. Apparently organic butter, cheese and powder inventories are high with little spare storage capacity available. This is a result of excess supply during the winter months. Why weren't the companies working with producers to reduce supply in the fall of 2008 with programs that can be applied equitably and fairly? Why didn't processors start negotiating with producers to develop

programs to match supply with projected demand? Why are farms still being transitioned?

What has happened is that Organic Valley and HP Hood have lowered their pay price and Horizon is still honoring their contracts

including the seasonal premiums that they raised by \$.75 for January, February and March 2009, although there are rumors that they are planning a drop in pay price. Horizon's seasonal premium ends in April.

On Friday February 13, Organic Valley told its farmer owners that their Board, in consultation with their producer commit-

tees, individual producers and management retroactively lowered the February 2009 pay price by \$1, followed by a further \$1 cut for the months of May, June and July to deal with the spring flush followed by a projected \$2 increase for the months of December 2009, January and February 2010. It is uncertain whether they will offer their \$1 seasonal bonus for September, October and November. There will also be an increase in the stop charge from \$75 to \$180 per month beginning in February. They will also stall

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA President

Greetings Everyone,

Sorry to say, but things are changing faster than anyone can keep up with. Last fall we all knew the economy was taking a turn for the worse, there's a new administration in control of the USDA coming on board, water shortages were a source of concern on the west coast, and the over-supply of conventional milk was beginning to put downward pressure on the price. Seems like everything got way worse way faster than anyone predicted. But I'm not telling all of you anything you don't already know.

It always seemed to me that the milk market was somewhat buffered compared with the rest of the economy, but now things are moving so fast downhill, don't be surprised if we don't take a drastic hit along with everyone else. I know I've been accused of being too negative in the past, but I don't see anything to be all that cheerful about. I do not see things turning around anytime soon, and if we all don't start working

together better than in the past, it's only going to make an already bad situation worse for a longer period of time.

So, this is my call to all of you, producers, processors, feed suppliers, coops, RETAILERS, etc. Isn't it time to start working together to solve some of these problems that could well sink this industry? How about starting with the chronic issue of the "spring flush"? Wasn't so bad in the past when conventional milk was at a more reasonable level and the organic sector was steaming along at a growth rate of 20 plus % was it? Trying to control excess spring production kind of flies in the face of the recommendation to "go seasonal to increase your profits" doesn't it? Also runs counter to the idea of a pasture based method of production.

But until there are meaningful differences in price between spring and fall production this problem will continue. A \$2.00 difference isn't going to solve anything. Supply control? Other ideas?

One last thing, the quest for "market share" is causing real chaos in the industry. Can't greed be put on the back burner for the good of the industry?

Henry Perkins, NODPA President  
Albion, Maine

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA Desk

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

I'm writing this in the middle of another "storm to end all storms," although it will probably be just another March "winter" storm by the time you read this!

It's a strange year so far, with a combination of hope, change and expectations for a better future against a background of price cuts for organic dairy producers, economic turmoil in the organic milk market and questionable priorities from processors.

The appointment of Tom Vilsack as USDA Secretary was a good sign that there could be a change in emphasis at USDA. Vilsack's recommendation of Kathleen Merrigan as Deputy Secretary is a giant leap forward for the organic industry. We hope she has a speedy confirmation and can get to work quickly in DC to bring her knowledge and understanding of OFPA to a USDA bureaucracy that has in the past struggled to understand the complexity of organic certification. NODPA and FOOD Farmers congratulates you on your appointment, Kathleen, and your willingness to return to DC for the benefit of all organic producers. Perhaps you might want to appoint an "Organic Czar," reporting directly to you, who would coordinate organic farming issues in all the different agencies at the USDA.

Added to this news is the President's commitment to change the basis of subsidy payments, a \$5.2 billion cut in crop insurance subsidies to farmers and crop insurance companies, the elimination of cotton storage payments, and a 20 percent cut in the Market Access Program that promotes US farm products overseas. There is a specific funding proposal to double the funding for the budget line items that include the Rural Microenterprise Assistance Program, Value-Added Producer Grants program, ATTRA program, and Rural Coop Development Grants. USDA Secretary Vilsack backed increases for all these programs as part of the recently passed economic stimulus legislation, but Congress did not include that proposal in the final stimulus package.

The National Organic Action Plan had its final summit meeting on February 25/26 prior to the MOSES conference. Liana Hoodes and Michael Sligh have been working diligently over the last few years to gather different ideas and inputs about the future of Organics in the USA, and this culminated in a two day meeting of about 100 producers, consumers, environmental activists, organic businesses and advocates where the draft plan received

feedback from grassroots activists. It was a fascinating couple of days that highlighted the existing connection and understanding between all levels of the organic community. What was very heartening was the universal understanding that a strong and sustainable organic farmer/producer/rancher community is an essential characteristic of a future National Organic Action Plan.

The MOSES conference, now the National Organic Conference, had its usual high turnout of Midwest participants with a smat-

tering of folks from around the country. With great workshops, tradeshow and many opportunities to network and gossip, it's a "not to miss" opportunity if you are an organic producer, consumer or advocate. While I would always recommend the conference to anyone looking to learn and get more information on organic production, MOSES could look at perhaps holding it a month later when the risk of getting stranded because of bad weather would be less and perhaps they would attract more livestock producers and those of us that have to travel -just a thought.

NODPA President Henry Perkins has very clearly laid out the concerns of producers in his column. There is good reason

for those that are already dairying organically to be confident about the long term future of organic dairy; fluid organic milk is now a standard purchase for both committed and "transitioning" organic consumers. For any dairy that is considering transitioning to organic, my advice would be to wait and see how well the organic dairy industry can re-organize itself and re-align its priorities. As the industry has matured and grown, some of the initial ideals and philosophies have been left behind in the quest for market share and a future position as market leader in a potentially profitable future.

As an organic dairy community, we need to look at supply management; determine a system for setting pay price that acknowledges costs of production while recognizing the restraints of the market, and the costs of supporting the processing, marketing and retail sector; and ensure the future integrity of the organic label through standards that are universally applied and enforced.

To do this, producers need independent representation that is not burdened by responsibilities to maintain a brand in the marketplace or the interest of shareholders. NODPA and its sister organizations stand ready to provide that assistance whenever asked. We all did a great job with the "Access to Pasture" proposed rule, let's build on our experience and provide exemplary, honest and effective representation for producers in the other areas that will ensure our future. ♦



ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Petitions Sent to USDA  
Requesting End of  
Producer-Handler Exemption

By Kathie Arnold

Producer-handlers, those vertically integrated businesses that produce and process milk, have been exempt in most Federal Milk Marketing Orders (FMMO) from paying pooling costs that other handlers have been required to pay. This exemption was put in place some 70 years ago to reduce the administrative / paperwork burden as producer-handlers were numerous at the time of the adoption of the FMMO system yet each was processing only a small volume of milk. That situation has changed over the years with some of today’s producer-handlers milking many thousands of cows and shipping milk across the country with the significant economic advantage of not having to pay the pooling costs that other processors are subject to. For January, 2009, the pooling cost would have been \$4.85/cwt of fluid utilized milk, and most producer-handlers sell all their milk on the fluid market. Efforts are currently underway to rescind that exemption.

Petitions were submitted to USDA on January 30, 2009 by the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) and the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) requesting that USDA initiate the process to amend all Federal Orders, proposing that the producer-handler exemption be eliminated while at the same time increasing the small plant exemption amount to 450,000 pounds of milk per month. This proposal would allow small producer-handlers and small processors to continue to be exempt by falling under the small plant exemption but it would mean that large producer-handlers would have to pay FMMO pooling costs.

Pooling costs result from the requirement that producers of conventional milk receive a uniform blend price—the weighted average of the price of all four classes of milk in each order. To explain by way of example using the announced class prices and milk utilization from the Northeast Federal Marketing Order #1 for January 2009, 44.2% of the milk in Order #1 was used as class I milk and the announced class I price was \$18.99/cwt. The class I contribution to the blend price in Order 1 is calculated as being \$8.39 (the % times the price or in this case .442 X \$18.99 = \$8.39). Class II milk was 18% of the utilization and the price was \$10.41/cwt so class II’s contribution was \$1.87 (.18 X \$10.41). Class III’s usage was 22.2% at \$10.78, its contribution was \$2.39, and class IV’s utilization was 15.6% at \$9.59, and its contribution was \$1.49. These four prices are added together to make the blend price. In this example, the blend price to the farmers therefore is \$14.14 (\$8.39 + 1.87 + 2.39 + 1.49 = \$14.14).

- Class I—beverage milk products**  
**Class II—soft manufactured products: ice cream, yogurt, cream products, condensed milk**  
**Class III—cheese**  
**Class IV—butter & dry milk products**

The pooling cost comes from the fact that the handler who is utilizing class I milk (fluid milk) pays their producers the \$14.14 blend price but then they are required to pay into the pool the \$4.85 difference between the blend price they paid their producers and the class I price of the milk (\$18.99 - \$14.14 = \$4.85). The processors of all the other classes of milk whose announced price is less than the blend price would draw dollars from the pool to enable them to pay their producers the blend price—in this example the class II processors would pull \$3.73/cwt, class III would pull \$.3.36 and the class IV would pull \$4.55/cwt.

Therefore, any large producer handler bringing fluid milk into the Northeast Order currently has the economic advantage of not being required to pay the \$4.85 differential into the pool for January 2009 milk that all the non producer-handler fluid processors are required to pay. Quite an economic advantage for sure!

The IDFA and NMPF petitions to amend the Federal Orders in regards to the producer handler exemption are supported by NODPA, for this issue affects the organic dairy industry as well as conventional. The effect on the organic market was first identified by the New York Organic Dairy Task Force in July of 2007, who then worked with representatives from NODPA on this issue. This included a trip by me to Washington DC last fall where I met with Dana Coale, AMS’ Deputy Administrator for Dairy Programs; John Mengel, Chief Economist; and Jack Rower, Marketing Specialist with AMS, to discuss the issue and the FMMO amendment process.

On the organic side, the largest example is Aurora Organic Dairy with 12,000 or more cows, headquartered in Platteville, CO. They are a producer-handler so all their fluid milk being brought into the Northeast, and on store shelves as private label brands of organic milk, competing with local Northeast produced organic milk, has the competitive advantage of not having paid the pooling costs while all the other major brands had to bear that cost.

The proposal submitted by NMPF and IDFA would still allow the exemption of small producer-handlers via raising the amount of production for exempt plants to 450,000 pounds of production per month.

That would allow a farm producing 15,000 pounds of milk per cow per year to have about 350 cows and still be exempt from pool requirements. It would also allow a number of small operations to process their milk together and still fall under the small plant exemption, which is not possible with the producer handler exemption.

USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has 30 days from the time of receipt of the petitions to make a decision if they will call a hearing on the matter. If so, the hearing must be held within 120 days. Then the process requires a 60 day period in which farmers can comment, 90 days can be taken for AMS to come to a recommendation, followed by another comment period of 30 days, and then 60 days to a final rule. This expedited procedure, enabled by the recent Farm Bill, means that if AMS calls a hearing, a recommendation would be out by early 2010. ♦

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic pay price declines as processors panic over  
spring flush of milk and declining growth in sales.

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transitioning producers by 60 days, during which they will continue to receive the \$2 transition payment but will then receive \$2 less than their budgeted regional pay once shipping organic. Organic Valley management and producer committees are looking at a voluntary incentive program to deal with the spring flush, as any balancing of surplus milk on the conventional market will be at record low prices.

How does the cut in pay price affect Organic Valley producers? For a producer with 60 cows averaging 14,000 lbs of milk annually, this action will cause a loss of income of approximately \$10,409 and a cut in their family living expenses to deal with the loss.

On February 24th , H.P.Hood sent out a letter to its producers saying that, “due to recent actions by our competition,” there will be a \$1 reduction in the MAP effective with March 2009 milk with the reasoning this it will allow them to stay competitive in the marketplace. They are also asking all producers to reduce production by 10-15% voluntarily--otherwise they, “will be forced to take other measures to reduce our milk supply.” They give no indication of how this will be achieved in an equitable way or who will hold producers accountable. HP Hood has also sent letters to at least 8 producers in Maine informing them they will not renew their contracts. They have also informed some producers in Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa that their contracts will not be renewed.

There are also reports that many producers have been receiving warnings about the quality of milk that had previously not concerned processors. Some of the warnings have threatened that they would not pick up their milk if the problems were not resolved. NODPA suggests that any producer who receives a bad quality report has their own testing done either by the state or by any of the local testing labs. The NODPA website gives a list of labs that do the required testing- [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com).

What happens next?

Processors have been sending many mixed messages over the years as they have existed in a market that was expanding at an annual rate of 25%. When HP Hood entered the market, processors engaged in aggressive competition and signed up producers with small herds who were located in areas with difficult routes. They also signed up producers who might have questionable quality reports.

This supply of milk was used to produce more organically certified manufactured dairy products (ice cream, butter, cheese) and fed the growth of store brand organic fluid milk. Store brand milk has increased consumption beyond the core organic consumer and into a consumer category that is influenced by price as well as the benefits of an organically certified product. While store brands have been a vehicle for growth of consumer demand, it has had a mixed

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Agriculture, Climate Change  
And Carbon Sequestration

*This article is adapted from ATTRA's new 16-page publication, which was written by NCAT specialists Jeff Schahczenski and Holly Hill. The new guide offers information about the developing market for carbon sequestration services from farmers.*

The Earth's average surface temperature increased 1.3 degrees Fahrenheit over the past century, and is projected by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to increase by an additional 3.2 to 7.2 degrees F over the 21st century. These seemingly slight changes in temperature could have profound implications for farmers and ranchers. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, an increase in average temperature can have the following effects:

- lengthen the growing season in regions with relatively cool spring and fall seasons
- adversely affect crops in regions where summer heat already limits production
- increase soil evaporation rates
- increase the chances of severe droughts

Innovative farming practices such as conservation tillage, organic production, improved cropping systems, land restoration, land use change, and irrigation and water management are ways that farmers can address climate change. Good management practices have multiple benefits that may also enhance profits, improve farm energy efficiency, and boost air and soil quality.

The Science of Climate Change

Natural shifts in global temperatures have occurred throughout human history. The 20th century, however, saw a rapid rise in global temperatures. Scientists attribute the temperature increase to a rise in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released through deforestation, agriculture and other industrial processes, and the burning of fossil fuels. Scientists refer to this phenomenon as the enhanced greenhouse effect.

The naturally occurring greenhouse effect traps the heat of the sun before it can be released back into space. This allows the Earth's surface to remain warm and habitable. Increased levels of greenhouse gases enhance the naturally occurring greenhouse effect by trapping even more of the sun's heat, resulting in a global warming effect.

The primary greenhouse gases associated with agriculture are carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O). Although

carbon dioxide is the most prevalent greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, nitrous oxide and methane have longer durations in the atmosphere and absorb more long-wave radiation. Therefore, small quantities of methane and nitrous oxide can have significant effects on climate change.

How Does Agriculture Influence Climate Change?

Agriculture's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions

Agricultural activities serve as both sources and sinks for greenhouse gases. Agricultural sinks of greenhouse gases are reservoirs of carbon that have been removed from the atmosphere through the process of biological carbon sequestration.

The primary sources of greenhouse gases in agriculture are waste management, the production of nitrogen-based fertilizers, and the combustion of fossil fuels such as coal, gasoline, diesel fuel, and natural gas. Methane emissions result from the fermentation that takes place in the digestive systems of ruminant animals.

Carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and converted to organic carbon through the process of photosynthesis. As organic carbon decomposes, it is converted back to carbon dioxide through the process of respiration. Conservation tillage, organic production, cover cropping, and crop rotations

can drastically increase the amount of carbon stored in soils.

Carbon sequestration

Carbon sequestration in agriculture refers to the capacity of agricultural lands and forests to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is absorbed by trees, plants and crops through photosynthesis and stored as carbon in tree trunks, branches, foliage, roots, and soils.

Forests and stable grasslands are referred to as carbon sinks because they can store large amounts of carbon in their vegetation and root systems for long periods of time. Soils are the largest terrestrial sink for carbon on the planet. The ability of agricultural lands to store or sequester carbon depends on several factors, including climate, soil type, type of plant, and management practices.

Farmers may be able to slow or even reverse the loss of carbon from their fields if they will minimize soil disturbance and encourage carbon sequestration (see box). In the United States, forest and croplands currently sequester the equivalent of 12 percent of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions from the energy, transportation and industrial sectors. ♦

For more information: Call 800-346-9140 , or go to the article at:

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

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effect on the long term profitability for organic producers and processors. This has become evident in the following ways:

1. Decreased profitability for processors. The competition for supplying and packaging store brands has been based on undercutting price in what some have described as a "race to the bottom" between the major companies. If a processor has a contract for the store brand, they are more likely to be able to negotiate significant shelf space for their branded product. The competition between the major processors and independent companies such as Aurora Dairy, based on price alone has affected processors profitability. With store brand organic milk being the single highest growth area, the large processors are shifting their emphasis away from promoting their branded product to building the store brand customers. For some processors, store brands are now up to 30% of their total milk sales. The decreased profitability for processors has provided them with an excellent and convenient excuse for not increasing the pay price to producers, even though the pay price is only 30% of the retail price. Decision to undercut the wholesale price to retail buyers is purely to gain market share and increase the long term profitability of the processors.
2. The growth of store brand milk and the demand for lower priced wholesale organic milk has encouraged the growth of large dairies that have exploited the inability of the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) to enforce universally applied standards for grazing. Despite the fact that organic

**The conventional milk market has shown the importance of producers having leverage with processors and the consumers to maintain an equitable return for their time, labor and capital investment.**

production has always been pastured based, the lack of a legal definition has allowed the growth of dairies with restricted land base and lower costs of production to become certified. These dairies have lower production costs and can therefore sell large volumes of organic milk to processors at lower prices than processors pay their farmer-owners and partners and subsequently enable the price cutting in the retail market. Retail buyers have thrived in this situation as increasing price competition has allowed them to increase their margins and buy at the lowest price with short term contracts for their store brand product.

Ultimately, the long term future of the organic milk market is based on providing an authentic, third-party certified product that can be easily differentiated by the consumer, and holds the qualities that consumer's value. All consumer research points to their willingness to pay extra for dairy products

that are produced without the use of herbicides, pesticides, growth hormones or antibiotics from cows that are pasture based. Organic production has always met all those qualities with the exception of a consistent and universal interpretation of how much pasture is required. Ongoing rulemaking will provide the legal language for certifiers to enforce a pasture based system and give USDA's NOP the ability to sanction those dairies that are out of compliance. While consistent application of the rules will provide a level playing field for producers and guarantee consumers a product that meets their expectations, it does nothing to ensure a farmgate price that will provide economic sustainability for all sizes and types of organic dairies. The conventional milk market has shown the importance of producers having leverage with processors and the consumers to maintain an equitable return for their time, labor and capital investment. Processors and producers need to negotiate about controlling supply to match demand and maintaining a sustainable pay price that will ensure the profitability of all levels of organic dairy. ♦

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**A message from the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance.**

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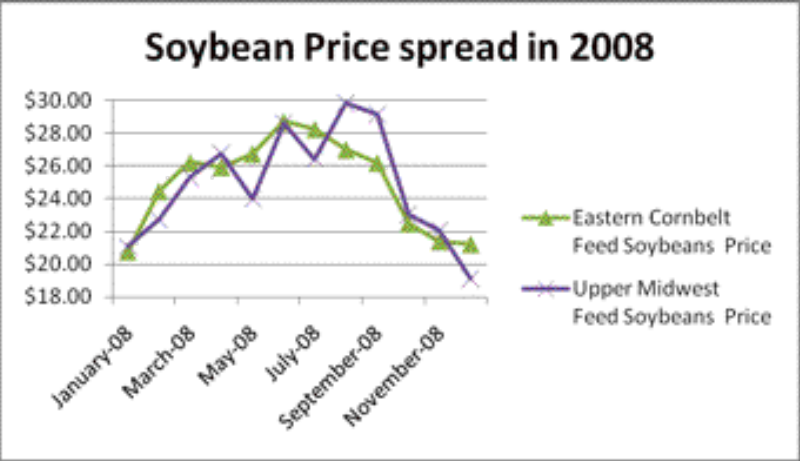
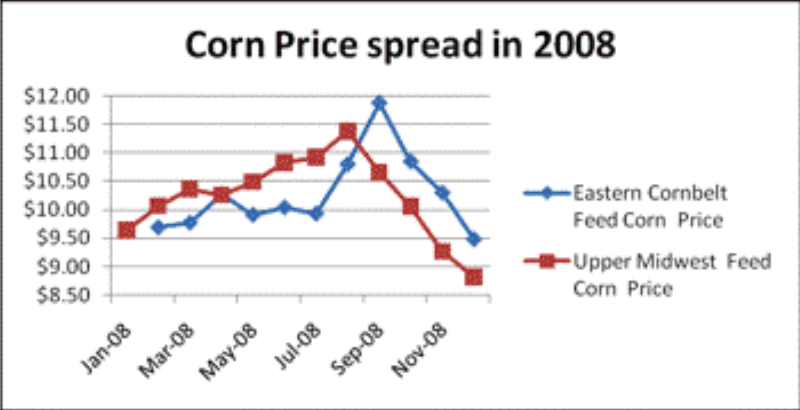
ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Grain Market Update

With spring approaching and a very soft conventional market, producers are selling their inventory at the lowest prices of the year (around \$8 per bushel for corn and \$18 for soybeans). This drop in price in the Midwest is starting to show through in feed prices in the northeast with a slight drop in prices per ton for 16% grain. There is also an increased availability of both grain and hay on the market in the northeast. Hay prices have started to weaken for alfalfa with RFQ values ranging from 170 to 190 with prices from \$165 to \$175 per ton out of the Midwest.

Grain producers are starting to think about new crop pricing as they secure funds to plant the 2009 crop. New crop feed grade corn contracts are from \$7.50 to \$8.50 per bushel and new crop feed grade soybean contracts are from \$17.00 to \$18.50. OFARM's Midwest target price for 2009 is \$9.79-\$12.24/bushel for corn and \$19-\$24/bushel for soybeans.

(An organization of producer groups dedicated to a farmers' best interest, OFARM strengthens marketing returns for members, tracks production inventories and exchanges pricing and marketing information.)



ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Update on Pasture Rule and Administration Changes

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

The new administration moved very quickly to appoint the Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, and he appointed his advisors, mostly from the Obama transition team. The Obama administration has accepted Secretary Vilsack's recommendation and nominated Kathleen Merrigan as Deputy Secretary, the number two position at USDA.

Secretary Vilsack has served in the public sector at nearly every level of government, beginning as mayor of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa in 1987, and then as state senator in 1992 and in 1998, he was the first Democrat elected Governor of Iowa in more than 30 years, an office he held for two terms. As Governor, he created the Iowa Food Policy Council to advance local food systems, enhance family farm profitability, and combat hunger and malnutrition. He led trade missions to foreign countries to market agricultural products and attended the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to push for expanded agricultural trade negotiations. In addition to serving on the National Governors Association Executive Committee, he also served as chair of the Governors Ethanol Coalition, chair of the Democratic Governors Association, and founding member and chair of the Governors Biotechnology Partnership. As chair of the National Governors Association Committee on Natural Resources, Vilsack promoted private lands conservation and advanced the concept of tying farm payments to conservation commodities. He also created a comprehensive conservation program in Iowa to encourage and assist landowners in installing buffer strips, restoring wetlands, and rewarding good conservation practices. As a hopeful sign for the future, he spent some time at the Farmers Market Consortium meeting; the first time an Agriculture Secretary has attended these regular meetings, and he promoted "A safe, sufficient, sustainable, and nutritious food supply for all."

Kathleen A. Merrigan is a longtime champion of sustainable agriculture. From 1987 to 1992, she was a staff member on the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, working for Chairman Patrick Leahy and drafting the National Organic Program legislation, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, and Biotechnology Risk Assessment Program, among others. She worked at the Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture from 1994 to 1999 and shared offices with the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. From 1999 to 2001, she was Administrator of Agricultural Marketing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Kathleen is currently an Assistant Professor and Director of the Agriculture, Food and Environment Program at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University.

Her family lives just a few miles down the road from me in Northampton, MA and we both know that Joe's Pizza is the best ever. Thank you Kathleen for agreeing to serve again in DC and best of wishes as you successfully balance the many conflicting demands within USDA.

At the time of writing there has been no announcement of any Under Secretary appointments and a 60 day hold on any final rulemaking. Most of the contact with the new administration is with Vilsack's advisors who are his point people for different priorities and agencies. They reside in what is called the "cage" because they have offices located next to the Secretary's office. Questions so far have been fairly simple around educating them about the level of grassroots support for the FOOD Farmers suggested changes to the Proposed Rule and why it is needed.

We are left to guess about what the timeline for publication of the final pasture rule and the publication of the Proposed Rule on dairy replacements will be. Luckily, all the commenting and input on the Proposed Rule was completed so there was no delay in that process because of the change in administration.

With other sustainable and organic advocates, we hope that the people appointed as Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs and the head of Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will come from the pool of the many highly qualified

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

# Managing Cereal Grains for Forage

Dr. Heather Darby, UVM Extension

Cereal grains are a versatile crop that can be harvested for forage or grain. Cereal grains can be an excellent source of forage for dairy cows. You can expect quality forage similar to that of other cool season grasses. In our region, we most commonly utilize cereal grains as a nurse crop for a new seeding of perennial forages. However, higher yields can be obtained if the small grain is seeded alone. There is a variety of spring and fall seeded cereal grains that can be grown in our region. Spring grains are planted early, before last frost - many grains will germinate and grow when soil temperatures are below 40F. Winter grains are planted in late summer or early fall, and establish themselves before going dormant when the ground freezes. If the plants aren't killed by freeze/thaw drying or frost heaving over the winter, they take off in early spring and set seed with other grasses. Wheat, oats, and barley are spring seeded grains while wheat and triticale can be planted in the fall. This article will review best management practices to produce high yield and quality forage from small grains. In addition, it will highlight the various attributes of the different grains suitable for New England agriculture.

## Small Grain Selection

There are many small grains suitable for forage in New England. It is a good idea to learn about the positive and also limiting characteristics of each grain. Ultimately, this will help you make a selec-

Table 1. Average of yield and quality of various cereal grains harvested between boot and dough stage.					
	DM Yield	CP	NDF	dNDF	IVTD
	t/ac	%	%	%	%
barley	1.9	15.2	61.2	61.7	71.6
oats	2.5	15.9	57.0	54.6	66.4
triticale	2.1	15.5	60.9	61.7	66.1
wheat	1.8	15.1	60.1	56.4	67.0

tion that is most suitable for your farm. When selecting a species, remember to make sure that it fits into your growing season and is adapted to your soil conditions. For example, do not seed grains in the fall if the winters are extremely harsh in your area. Overall, the grain species will not vary considerably in quality, although barley tends to be slightly higher in digestible energy and fiber (Table 1). However, the grains do vary in yield (Fig. 2). The following section outlines small grains that are common in this area.

**Barley** is planted in the early spring. There are winter barley varieties but they are not hardy enough for our growing region. Studies at the University of Maine have indicated that winter barley rarely survives the harsh winters of New England. Therefore spring planted barley is the best option. Barley should be planted in early to mid May to maximize yields. Barley is best established on well drained soils. It generally does not perform well when grown on heavy textured soils that are prone to saturation. Simply put barley does not like "wet feet". Barley commonly yields less forage than the other cereal grain but the overall forage digestibility is higher.

**Oats** are probably the most widely grown small grain forage in New England. Oats are better adapted to cool wet soils than barley. Oats do not over winter and therefore must be planted in the spring. The oat forage yields are higher than the other small grains as oats tend to be leafier. To get the highest yields oats should be seeded in early to mid May. Oat forage quality is exceptionally high when the forage is harvested in the boot stage.

**Wheat** is one of the most versatile small grains as it can be planted in the spring or fall. Wheat should be planted in early to mid September to ensure adequate growth for dormancy. In the spring, wheat should be seeded as soon as the soil can be prepared (April). Wheat is generally higher in quality than oats and triticale. It yields less than the other grains except barley.

**Triticale** is generally planted in the fall. This grain is a cross between rye and wheat. Some farmers have experienced varying success with wintering triticale. Generally triticale is more susceptible to winter kill than wheat. The Champlain Valley generally has good winter survival rates while the Northeast Kingdom region has reported varying success. Triticale quality is highest when harvested in the flag leaf or boot stage (prior to head emergence). Generally, yields are higher than wheat as they tend to be leafier.

**Mixed Grains** are planted to increase protein content of the forage mixture. A common mixture contains wheat, oats, and peas. A combination of cereal grain with peas can increase the protein content by 3 to 5 points.

## Production Factors

Once a cereal grain is selected there are many other production

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## For more information contact:

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Managing Small Grains

continued from page 12

factors that must be considered to maximize forage yield and quality. The following section outlines production factors that influence small grain yield and quality.

Planting Cereal Grains

It is important to plant small grains at the proper time to ensure high yields. In the case of fall seeded grains, proper planting dates will also often determine the extent of winter survivability. It is recommended to plant fall seeded grains early to mid September. Fall seeding should be early enough to allow the crown of the plant to be well developed and 3-5 tillers present before overwintering. In addition, the plants need enough time to accumulate adequate stores of nutrients for the winter. Alternatively, seeding fall grains too early can lead to over-development of the plant resulting in a lack of winter hardiness. Spring seeded grains are cool weather crops, and perform better before the heat of summer. To avoid high temperatures, and reduce exposure to insects and pathogens, planting date for spring grains should be as early as possible. Cereal grains are well adapted to cool soils and can tolerate the early planting dates. Most farmers try to seed

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wheat in mid to late April. Other spring seeded grains (barley, oats, and mixed grains) are seeded in early to mid-May.

Pure stands of small grains planted for forage are commonly seeded at 125 - 150 lbs/acre. Spring grains should be seeded at the higher rate to reduce weed competition. Higher seeding rates can also reduce stem size of the grains. A reduced stem size will increase wilting speed of the forage. If a mixed grain is seeded it contains 80% small grain and 20% peas. Grain should be seeded at a depth of 1 inch. Plant stands are most uniform when planted with a grain drill. A broadcast seeder can be used to plant small grains. However, the field should be dragged and packed to cover the seed.

Fertilization of Cereal Grains

Small grains require relatively low amounts of nutrients. A soil test is the best means to identify fertility requirements for your crops. Most of the needed fertility can be provided through adequate rotation and minimal manure or compost application. The optimal pH for small grain production is between 6.0 and 7.5.

Harvest Management

Fall seeded grains such as wheat and triticale can be grazed in the fall before winter dormancy. If grazing in the fall, make sure that the plant is well established, tillering, and 8 inches tall. This occurs 6 to 8 weeks after planting. Make sure that the plants are not over grazed before entering wintering. There should be 3 to 4 inches of stubble. Since triticale is more prone to winter kill it may be too risky to fall graze. Fall and spring seeded grains can both be grazed in the early spring. Many farmers have had success with spring grazing fall seeded triticale. Spring planting of grains can provide early season high quality pasture. Cereal grains can also be harvested for hay. However, the long curing time for cereal grain forage limits the production of hay. The feeding value of hay is generally less than that of baleage or silage. Cereal grain hay can be an excellent feed for calves, heifers, and dry cows. Grains that have awns can also cause irritation to cattle mouth, lips, gums tongue, and eyes. The best compromise

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COMMENTARY

Recipe for Achieving Higher Milk Quality ... Without Hurting The Farmer

We, as organic farmers, need to hold ourselves accountable to improve our milk quality standards. After being on quality commitments, I've witnessed farmer neglect because there is not enough emphasis on financial incentives for quality milk production. I am convinced that farmers, who wish to, can improve quality by having proper milking equipment, proper testing, and substantial financial incentives or deducts from the milk companies. This is a win, win situation for the farmer, the milk company, and the consumer.

The comment most used is this is not farmer friendly. I disagree. If more money is placed on the financial program, all farmers will benefit if they choose. This is farmer friendly. If a more meaningful amount is placed on SCC, a reduction in cow numbers should be seen and a higher quality product for the consumer will result. Farmers will sell their high SCC cows which will help to reduce milk surplus. We need to show more professionalism, accountability, and raise the bar on quality to a respectful level.

Organics should represent cleaner food. Every farmer should

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have a goal of 200,000 or less SCC. Lowering the SCC increases shelf life, improves flavor, increases cheese yield, and adds integrity to our organic product. Organics should mean cleaner food. It seems hypocritical for organic farmers to not strive for higher levels. It's all about higher priorities and expectations. For more information on milk quality improvement go to [www.milkproduction.com](http://www.milkproduction.com) and "Quality Milk Services" at Cornell University (607-255-8202). Both are very good resources.

To help achieve higher milk quality goals here is a check list.

1. Regular maintenance from your milk equipment company.
2. Strict, proper milking procedures recommended by Quality Milk Services or the service available in your state.
3. Cows should be clean and dry, have good body condition and good nutrition.
4. Cow traffic areas, pasture, and laneways need to be clean and free of mud and manure.
5. Cows should be tested by "Quality Milk Services" for individual infections.
6. Regular DHI testing will help identify high SCC cows.
7. Proper cooling of milk to 36 degrees in the bulk tank and no higher than 38 degrees when loaded onto the milk truck.
8. SPC should be under 1000.
9. PI should be under 1000.
10. LPC should be under 50.

Vaughn Sherman  
Jerry Dell Farm  
Dryden, NY

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Managing Small Grains

continued from page 12

between yield and quality occurs when small grains are harvested in the early milk stage. Silage or baleage is a popular means to harvest and store small grain forage. Harvest timing of small grains will have a significant influence on cereal grain yield and quality. Similar to cool season grasses, cereal grains will lose quality and gain yield as the plant becomes

head is enclosed by the sheath of the uppermost leaf. The milk stage is when the grain head released a white liquid substance when opened. The dough stage is when the grain head begins to turn to a doughy consistency. As the plant matures from the boot stage to the dough stage, quality decreases while yield increases. If the goal is to harvest high quality feed (digestibility and protein) then small grains should be harvested in the flag leaf to boot stage. If high yields are the goal then harvest should occur in the late dough stage. If a compromise is desired then grains should be harvested in the early dough stages. If cereal grain harvest is delayed past the late dough stage then the forage may be too dry to ensile. The grain species will differ in their time to maturity. Barley is the earliest maturing grain species. Wheat and triticale are next in line and will mature 1 to 2 weeks earlier than oats (depending on the planting dates). Unlike some crops, cereal grains will progress from boot stage to dough stage in a relatively short period of time. They must be watched closely to harvest at your target time.

Cereal grains can be a very versatile crop and provide a variety of feedstuffs for your animals.

Cereal grain selection will be based on your climate and personal preference. The type of feed harvested will be dependent on your feed needs from a quantity and quality perspective. Don't forget cereal grains also make great companion crops and cover crops. ♦

Table 2. Impact of harvest stage on yield and quality of cereal grains.		
	Harvest Stage	
	Boot	Early Dough
Dry Matter Yield (t/a)	1.5 - 2.5	3.0 - 4.0
Crude Protein (%)	16 - 18	10 - 12
Digestibility (%)	70 - 80	50 - 62

more mature. Deciding when to harvest will be determined by the farm's forage requirements. There are typically three stages of identifiable pant maturities at which small grains are harvested- boot, milk, and dough stages. The boot stage is the time when the

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

USDA Issues Final Rule On Mandatory Country Of Origin Labeling

WASHINGTON, Jan. 12, 2009 -- The United States Department of Agriculture today announced details of the final regulation for the mandatory country of origin labeling (COOL) program required by the 2002 and 2008 farm bills. The full text of the final rule will be published in the Jan. 15, 2009 Federal Register. The rule becomes effective on March 16, 2009, 60 days after the date of publication. Copies of the final rule and additional information are on display on line at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/COOL>.

The rule covers muscle cuts and ground beef, lamb, chicken, goat and pork; wild and farm-raised fish and shellfish; perishable agricultural commodities (specifically fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables); macadamia nuts; pecans; ginseng and peanuts.

Commodities covered under COOL must be labeled at retail to indicate its country of origin. For fish and shellfish, the method of production -- wild or farm-raised, -- must be specified. Commodities are excluded from mandatory COOL if the commodity is an ingredient in a processed food item.

The definition of a processed food item remains unchanged from the Aug. 1, 2008, interim final rule. Excluded from COOL labeling are items

derived from a covered commodity that has undergone a physical or chemical change -- such as cooking, curing, or smoking -- or that has been combined with other covered commodities or other substantive food components such as chocolate, breading and tomato sauce.

Also exempt are food service establishments, such as restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias, food stands, bars, lounges and similar enterprises.

The final rule outlines the requirements for labeling covered commodities and the recordkeeping requirements for retailers and suppliers. The law provides for penalties of up to \$1,000 per violation for both retailers and suppliers not complying with the law.

The rule prescribes specific criteria that must be met for a covered commodity to bear a "United States country of origin" declaration. In addition, the rule also contains provisions for labeling covered commodities of foreign origin, meat products from multiple origins, ground meat products, as well as commingled covered commodities.

USDA plans to make funding available to accelerate and expand training of state cooperator employees, initiate development of an automated review tracking system, conduct a retailer survey, conduct audits of the retail supply chain and continue conducting education and outreach activities.

Currently, USDA has cooperative agreements with 42 states to conduct retail surveillance reviews. USDA will conduct the retail reviews in the states not covered by a cooperative agreement and perform the supply chain audits. ♦

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Nutritional Wisdom of the Body: Behavior-Based Management for Animal Well-Being

Presented by Fred Provenza, Acres Conference 2008

Written by Lisa McCrory

The areas covered in this article include: 1) Looking at behavior and realizing how relevant it is, 2) Identifying the processes and how they work and, 3) How we can take this information and use it to manage landscapes. Behavioral solutions cost little to implement on the farm. They are not fossil fuel intensive, and are easily transferable from one site to another. Creatures are adapting to their environment every day and it is up to humans to decide whether or not they want to participate in this process

So, why do we do the things we do?

Behavior is based upon consequences; whether it is a positive or a negative reinforcement, we are all conditioned to respond to things in a certain way. But it is more complicated than that; each individual responds differently to a given stimuli. How does that happen? Genes are an important part of the make-up of creatures and how they behave, but an animal is also constantly interacting with social influences, and the biophysical environment. These interactions, which cause genes to be expressed, influence what the individual will do or how they will react.

First we will look at the chemistry of plants and how it influences the behavior of animals, the culture, and social influences on food and habitat selection. Then we will look at biodiversity and variety and why that is so important. Chemistry and biodiversity are interacting with each other all the time, and their interplay is critical.

So why do you like a particular food? Because it tastes good, right? But is it all about taste? Let's look at a herd of goats that are offered a diet of nutritious new growth from blackbrush. The new growth is higher in energy, protein, and phosphorous than the old growth, but by itself, the goats are not interested in eating it. Why does the addition of polyethylene glycol to the diet increase the goats' preference for new growth of blackbrush? Blackbrush is high in tannins, which is a secondary compound that binds to protein and causes food aversions in ruminants. Polyethylene Glycol binds to tannins and renders them inactive, allowing the goats to increase their intake of the blackbrush.

Another study has a group of goats in a pasture that is predominantly blackbrush and instead of eating these plants they are eating woodrat houses that are in their pasture. These fibrous houses are of lower palatability and nutritional value than the plants available in their pasture. So why do the goats in this study choose to eat wood rat houses? It turns out the goats were deficient in protein and inside the wood rat houses is a lot of vegetation that is densely packed and

soaked in urine - which is high in protein. One goat discovered this protein source and taught the others in his group. Before long, they were all eating the woodrat houses. This is an example where information and culture passes on the behavior. Over a period of 3 winters with 18 different groups of goats, only one group figured out the protein source of the woodrat houses. If a goat from that one group, however, was introduced to one of the other 17 groups, then he would have taught the goats in this second group.

Palatability is more than a matter of taste. It involves feedback mechanisms traveling from cells back to the pallet telling us what we do and do not want to eat and is organic in its response to primary and secondary compounds (taste feedback loop). The way that researchers have studied this is to make animals mildly deficient in a nutrient to see if the animals can detect it in a ration - enhancing the feedback loop.

In some of Dr Provenza's research, they have looked at post-ingestive feedback based upon primary compounds (protein, energy, minerals) as well as secondary compounds thought to be toxins like alkaloids (endopyyte infected fescue), terpenes (sagebrush), and tannins (woody species and forbs like Birdsfoot Trefoil and Sainfoin). What they are finding is that all compounds are interactive and palatability is related to the balances of the primary and secondary items. The more balanced or adequate it is, relative to the needs of the animals, the greater the palatability. None of these responses are conscious; they are happening automatically below the level of conscious awareness. All of this has implications for how people can work with animals on landscapes.

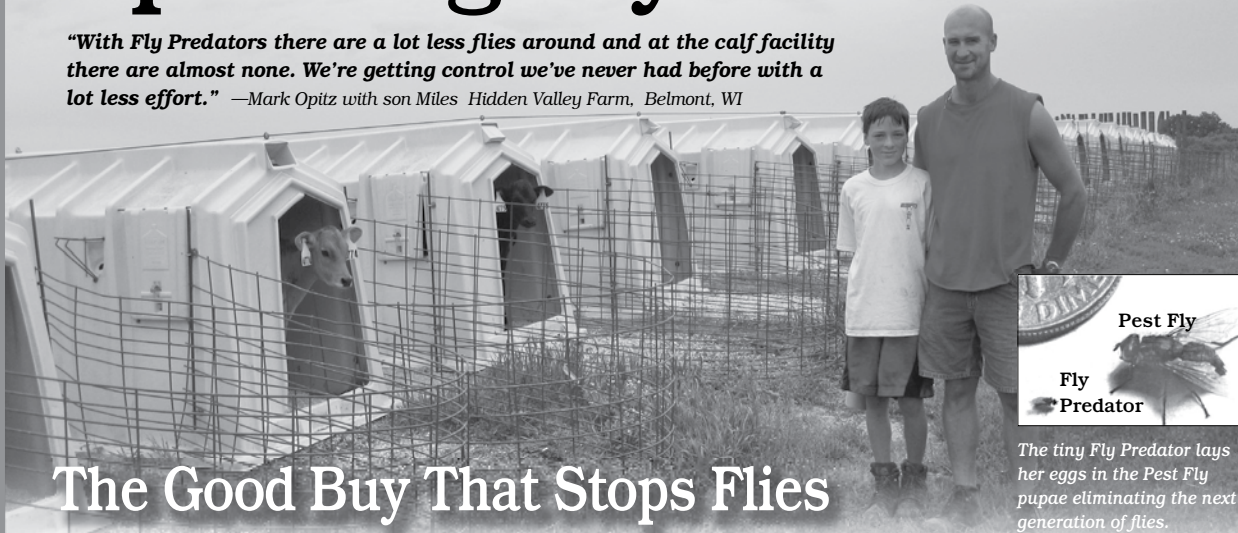
In one of their research trials, two groups of lambs were made mildly deficient in energy. On odd days, animals in group 1 got apple flavored straw for one hour and animals in group 2 were given maple flavored straw for 1 hour. After the meal, they were drenched with a quart of water, using a stomach tube. Groups 1 and 2 were then given the alternate flavored straw for one hour and following that meal, they were given a source of energy in a drench using a stomach tube.

Following these treatments, the groups were then given a choice between apple- or maple-flavored straw. The groups strongly preferred the flavored straw that was paired with the energy starch, even at only 1% of their energy requirements, and their preference became absolute at 10% of their energy needs. The flavor paired with the starch conditioned the animals to prefer a particular flavor; all they had done was change the feedback to mediate what the animals would do.

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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

# Thinking Outside The Fence

Organic Dairy Looks to Robotic Milker to Increase Family Time



By Fay Benson, Project Manager for the  
NY Organic Dairy Initiative

Originally written for Cornell University's "Dairy  
Farm Business Summary, Intensive Grazing Farms,  
New York, 2007"

Willow Creek Farm of Belmont NY, looks similar to other grazing dairies in the Northeast; cows grazing or resting in sloping pastures waiting for milking time. The big difference is that these cows don't wait for milking time. They can walk back to the barn to be milked at any time they choose. At present the herd is choosing to being milked 2.8 times daily by two Lely robotic milkers. Chuck Diechman, owner operator of Willow Creek, programs the number of milkings for each of the 75 cows into the robotic milkers. The number of milkings is based on the stage of lactation and the cow's production, any where from two to four milkings per day. He has been very happy with his decision to go to robotic milkers. Chuck estimates that they

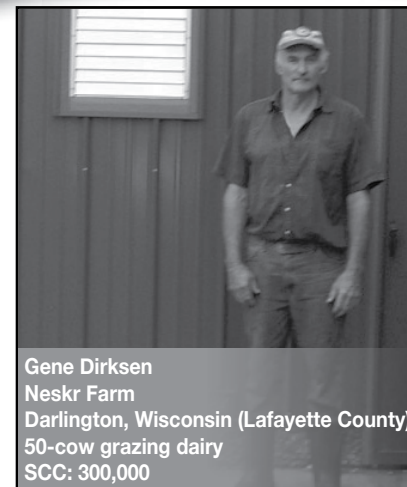
have increased his cow's production 6-7 pounds per cow and they have cut his daily chore time in half. These two benefits alone will pay back his \$210,000 investment in less than 7 years. Even though he is happy now, making the decision to purchase the robots was not an easy one, due in part to the amount of the capital required for the purchase but also the unknowns such as: how would the cows react to being milked by the robots; Willow Creek is certified organic, how would his certifier and milk purchaser react; and one of the biggest unknowns, was that robotic milkers have traditionally been used in confinement operations, would the cows come back from his pastures to be milked? His system is one of the first in the US to be on a grazing dairy.

## History of Willow Creek Farm

Chuck and his wife Julia, a teacher, purchased the farm from Chuck's father in 1995. The barn was modified to hold 36 cows in

*continued on page 22*

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it a lot this spring when I have a bunch of fresh cows coming into the herd in March. The **Mas-D-Tec** showed me which cows and quarters were contributing to the bulk tank SCC. Then I put **Udder Comfort™** on those quarters (20% of the herd) after both milkings for about a week. The result was a 100,000-drop in my Bulk Tank SCC. After seeing that, I started using **Udder Comfort™** on any cow with a hard

quarter. I was surprised. We had one here a couple weeks ago that came in with a hard quarter. I applied **Udder Comfort™** and the next day, she was in good shape again. After giving it a good try and sticking with it, I can definitely say the results are a lot better with **Udder Comfort™**."

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

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tie stalls. In 2001 he added a coverall building with 80 stalls. He milked the cows in shifts in the tie stalls for five years. By 2006, cow numbers were up to 60 and Chuck felt his knees were giving out and chores were taking 6-7 hours per day for him and a full time employee. His strongest motivation for a change was family time, there wasn't enough of it. At that time he had four children aged 3, 6, 8, and 10. Something needed to change so that he could increase his family time.

When he looked at the addition of a flat barn parlor into his existing tiestall with up-grades to his milkhous, the cost was around \$90,000. The parlor would shorten his chore time by 1-2 hour and relieve the stress on his knees. Chuck had read about dairies using robots and decided to price one for his dairy. The amount of time saving was much better with the robot. The cost was \$165,000. When he went to his banker with his comparisons the banker remarked, for the extra money that a robot cost, it was still "cheap labor". Typically one unit handles up to 55 cows milking. Chuck had the first unit installed in June of 2007. His cow numbers were at the maximum for the single unit so he ordered another unit that was installed in July of this year. The robots are

tail to tail, all cows have access to either robot. Some cows don't care which one they go through, others have a favorite. He will train all new heifers to the robot that is being used less. The robots are located along the ally of a three row existing greenhouse barn. The cows at Willow Creek are mostly Holsteins with a few Jerseys. One of the benefits of the robots is that it can handle a wide variety of cow sizes. The units remember how each cow stands in the unit, her udder position and teat placement. They are now producing 18,000 lbs of milk per year, up from less than 17,000 before the robots. During this grazing season the cows averaged 63 lbs /day.

Robots vs. Hands On

Horizon Organic purchases Chuck's milk and he was concerned there might be negative response to robotics in organic but the company encouraged him to proceed and has been interested in his progress. Chuck was asked by an organic farmer at a recent field day at Willow Creek, "doesn't he find that the elimination of the constant touching of the animals at milking time effect his abilities to identify a cow who may have a health issue beginning?" Chuck replied that with the daily reports the robot prepares, he has even better tools for diagnosing herd and individual cow health. Some of the measurements that Chuck can check at the monitor in the barn office next to the robots or at another

screen in his house:

- Conductivity of each quarter to measure SCC.
- Body temperature.
- Whether milk contains blood, if it does it is automatically diverted to a container.
- All teats have the first ounce of milk discarded.
- Milk production.
- Number of times and when each cow enters the machine.
- Body weight, (useful when tracking ration changes)
- The gates where the cows go after milking can also be changed from either of the monitors.

Each cow wears a transponder on her collar. The unit tracks and stores all information on a computer. With this information Chuck can tell if a cow is beginning a stressful time if her production drops, or her temperature changes, or her times visiting the unit varies.


Robots and Grazing

Chuck was asked how the units affected his cows grazing, "I feel that my cows get as much from grazing as they did before the robots. I have always allowed them to come back to the barn if they want to. If I am not providing them better forage in the pasture than what I have in the barn, they come back. This is

how I communicate with my cows, I watch them and they tell me how I am doing. I know some folks in the Netherlands are feeding only grass and are using it as an incentive to go through the robot. There are many ways to do this and if you want to graze it will work if you make up your mind to do it. Just like anything else, you will only get out of it what you put into it." Dry Matter (DM) from grazing has been the same since before he started using the robots; 90% DM in early spring, 30% during the hottest months when cows only go out at night and then 50% during the late summer and fall.

When the cows come back to the barn from pasture they are prevented from going back by one-way gates, the only way out is through the robots. When the cow enters the robot, the computer will determine if they are in need of being milked, if they are, it will give them a portion of their grain and milk them. If the cow doesn't need milking she will get no grain and they will be released to the laneway. They continue through a one way gate to the pasture. From there Chuck uses manual gates to direct them to one of five different grazing systems on his farm. The furthest pasture is about a half mile away. Cows returning from pastures can be affected by the condition of the laneway and the number of turns the cows have to make. Chuck realizes that closer pastures

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

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work best for a robotic system. He described the ideal situation would have the milking barn centered in the pasture system with a long driveway for the milk truck to reach it.

Supplementing the Pasture

Willow Creek is located in a high valley of western NY. They have tried to grow corn 7 years in the past 30. Five times the corn was frosted before it ripened. For that reason Chuck doesn't grow any grain crops, he instead has put a lot of management into his grass production, harvesting, and feeding. They do most of their first cutting as baleage. This is sampled and stacked in specific areas where it can be retrieved as Chuck feels that it

would fit his feeding plan best. He feeds some baleage all the time in the barn. His mixer can process two bales at once. He will decide what level of quality he needs to compliment his pastures. In early spring he will place two of his lower quality bales in the mixer. As the quality of the pasture goes down he will use one of higher quality bales to go along with a lower quality bale. When pasture is gone he uses two of his higher quality bales. This year Chuck tried a pea and oat mix as a nurse crop. He has enough of this mix to use one a day during the winter months.

Grain dispensed by the robots is an 18 percent pellet. Chuck programs the units to feed 1 pounds of grain to 6 pounds of milk during the pasture months and then reprograms them to give 1 pound to 4 pounds in the winter months.

Not Without its Glitches

Training the cows was not much different than transitioning any herd to a new milking system. It took full lactation to train the whole herd, but most cows went through by themselves within a few weeks, it was that special few that need the full lactation. Chuck or an employee put the few that won't go through on their own into the robot while they are maintaining the stalls in the freestall. These few cows don't resist, they simply need an escort up to the gate. No cows have been culled due to their inability to use the robots.



An attendee at the field day who was somewhat cynical of the new technology asked Chuck if there were no problems with the robots. "Give me a break....Tell me what doesn't break down when you least want it. It is quite reliable. Most of the alarms are from my own error. I don't get many alarms that actually shut down the system and when I do, it is usually pretty easy to correct." No technology is without

glitches; barn cleaners, tractors, silo unloaders, they all have weakness. A good manager realizes that they need to understand the technology to prevent glitches. Robotic milkers are no different just more complicated. The robots are set to call Chuck's cell phone and alert him if there are any major deviances from set parameters. He will get a call if the wash system is out of soap, the vacuum is incorrect, or a cow hasn't gone through the units in 14 hours.

Quality of Life

Chuck can now attend

his children's soccer games, attend events and meetings further from home. Chuck tells the story that last year he attended a high school reunion. He had a call on his cell phone, when he told his friends that his robot was calling, no one believed him. The message said that the unit was out of soap. Chuck was able to reset the unit from his phone, it continued milking and he refilled the soap when he got home. He figures chores take only half the time they used to and he can do them quicker but enjoys the opportunity to do a better job with the calves and the cows stalls. Not being confined to a parlor during milking time also allows Chuck to work with his children around the farm. They are now ages 12, 10, 8, and 5. He appreciates this time which allows the children to feel more of a part to the family operation. Chuck's decision seems an easy one now but when there were the unknowns, the weeks of holding the cows in the robot unit, and then having to milk in the tie stalls too, he wasn't so sure he had made the right one.

Penn State Robotic Milker Decision Tool

To see if a robotic milker would fit your farm's future you can go to: <http://farmmanagement.aers.psu.edu/MgmtTools.cfm> to fill out a spread sheet to help you with the cost and benefits of adopting this new technology. ♦

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

New Organic Agriculture Web Site Features Land-Grant University Research

State College, Penn. --A new Web site about U.S. organic agriculture production provides research, news and learning modules from land-grant universities nationwide. eOrganic launched in January and is being debuted at regional organic farming and production conferences in February. It is one of many Web communities within eXtension (pronounced E-extension), [www.extension.org](http://www.extension.org), a national initiative of the U.S. Cooperative Extension System.


"This new resource is for anyone who wants to learn more about organic agriculture, one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture," Oregon State University vegetable specialist Alex Stone said. "eOrganic is designed for farmers, ranchers, agricultural professionals, certifiers, researchers and educators seeking science- and experience-based information. Our goal is to be a reliable resource that is responsive to the changing information and technology needs of the organic industry and community. The site is focused on general organic agriculture, dairy production and vegetable production. We expect to continually expand the information available."

Organic farming systems use ecological practices that enhance and promote optimum health of soil, plants, animals and people, encourage biodiversity, rely primarily on natural inputs and largely exclude the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. The new eOrganic site features:

- **Frequently Asked Questions:** Organic agriculture experts from throughout the nation provide simple, clear answers on topics such as crop production, pest management, nutrient use, soil amendments and organic certification.
- **News and Upcoming Events:** Organic agriculture continues to gain prominence in the news. eXtension eOrganic brings together news from land-grant universities. National, statewide and local organic events are listed.
- **Ask an Expert:** Experts nationwide respond to individual organic agriculture questions within 24 hours of submission.
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ful varieties, production system practices, government rules and regulations from more than 150 articles.

Extension organic agriculture specialists from across the nation compiled the content that goes through a review before it's released. Experts from Clemson University, Cornell University, Ohio State University, Oregon State University, Penn State University, University of Florida, University of Illinois, University of Minnesota and University of Vermont worked on the new site. Farmers, personnel from organic certification agencies, organic agricultural consultants, and staff from USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service also contributed.

"eOrganic will be the place to go when a producer or resource professional is looking for information," said Vermont farmer Lisa McCrory and eOrganic dairy team leader. "Whether you are looking for an introductory article, a more technical research-based publication or a video, eOrganic has a growing collection of learning material to meet everybody's needs."

Every day, we receive requests from new and experienced farmers interested in starting or transitioning to organic production," said Debra Heleba, eOrganic coordinator at the University of Vermont Extension. "The content in the Organic Agriculture Resource Area offers a wealth of innovative strategies from the nation's most successful organic farmers and researchers. We are now able to enhance local efforts with this work to both inform and inspire others to make positive changes to improve the health of their businesses, our natural resources, and our communities."

The eOrganic site joins other eXtension sites at [www.eXtension.org](http://www.eXtension.org) including information on the financial crisis; animal manure management; beef cattle; corn and soybean production; cotton production; dairy cattle; disasters; diversity across higher education; entrepreneurs and their communities; family caregiving; geospatial technology; horses; horticulture; imported fire ants; parenting; personal finance; science, engineering and technology for youth; and wildlife damage management.

eXtension is an educational partnership of more than 70 land grant universities helping Americans improve their lives with access to timely, objective, research-based information and educational opportunities. eXtension's interactive Web site, <http://www.extension.org>, is customized with links to local Cooperative Extension Web sites. Land-grant universities were founded on the ideals that higher education should be accessible to all, that universities should teach liberal and practical subjects and share knowledge with people throughout their states.

**Contact:** Terry Meisenbach, 760-328-8260 (office), 760-641-9354 (cell), 760-328-9242 (fax), [tmeisenbach@eXtension.org](mailto:tmeisenbach@eXtension.org) ♦



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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

# Organic Dairy, Environmentalism and Community Action:

Meet John Kinsman, a Wisconsin dairy farmer who has been stewarding his land for over 50 years.

By Jody Padgham, MOSES

On a rocky and hilly 150 acre farm in south central Wisconsin John Kinsman and his wife reared 10 children, supported only by a small organic milking herd raised primarily on grass and hay. Admitting that this economic feat may not be as feasible now in the time of high land prices and overhead, John does have several suggestions to young farmers today as to how to support a high quality life while preserving and improving a farm's natural systems. John is the Secretary of the MODPA Board of Directors.

## A Look at the Farm

Over 50 years ago John and his wife scraped by enough money to buy a very overworked rental farm located about 1 ½ miles from the farm where John was raised near Lime Ridge, WI. The land is covered with steep hillsides and deep ravines, "It looks like a crumpled blanket," John laughs. "The land was so misused before we bought it that even the weeds wouldn't grow," he recalls. "It looked like a brown highway." He says they couldn't even plow, there was virtually no soil left, with rocks "the size of icebergs."

Fifty years later the pastures are lush and replanted and managed woodlands are thriving. One of John's first efforts on the struggling landscape was to plant trees to restore the woods. With sustainable forestry as a primary passion, John claims that not a year has gone by that he hasn't planted a tree. The rocky and steep hillsides are now covered with a beautiful forest. "Even the local conservationists come out to see what unique species we have here," John claims. "They say we have plants and animals they haven't seen anywhere else in the area." There are even several springs that have emerged, where there were never springs before. John's passion for the forest was fueled by an awareness of the need to put each type of land on the farm into its best use. He saw that the steep rocky hillsides should be wooded to stop erosion and build soil and habitat, and that the rolling hills would be best as pasture. The farm is now divided with about 80-90 acres as pasture and



the remainder as woodland, with the cows fenced out of the woods. Originally thinking he'd grow row crops, John soon realized that the soil couldn't support cropping systems and so he moved all his flatter ground into pasture. He hasn't planted corn on the farm in over 45 years, and says that he can grow enough pasture and hay to support his 36 cows and 38 calves and heifers on the 90 acres, with the addition of a little corn purchased from a neighbor. John has never been a high-input

farmer, and buys no fertilizer except a few pounds of rock phosphate (to lock in the nitrogen) to mix with each load of manure that he spreads in a light layer over the fields each year. The soil is now rich and darker after 50 years of careful management. Pastures are a diverse mix, an alfalfa base mixed with lots of grasses and clovers. If they need some rejuvenation he will frost seed patches. Paddocks are permanent with a series of lanes and gates that allow John to graze everything or portions at a time in the intensively managed system. Laying out the farm with a local county agent many years ago, they set hay fields into long strips, one 80 acres long, rolling up and down the hills, which makes harvest very easy.

John's 36 cows are fed only pasture, hay and mineral with a few handfuls of his partner's organic corn at milking time. He used to feed more protein, but decided to experiment with feeding less and is happy with the result. "It was scary to try it," he notes, "But I was spending thousands of dollars on buying in protein and losing money." He says that he had to be willing to have less production in order to make money. With his organic operation and low stress cows, his vet bills are negligible and the cows are healthier. "You have to get to the point that you don't feel bad about lower DHI records," he laughs. "I like to work with contented cows, in a leisurely way."

John isn't a fan of a lot of fancy management tools. He doesn't use a computer and isn't that big on fancy ration formulas. He tells the story that his old partner spent a lot of time on the computer figuring out specific rations for each cow, but



they started to lose cows. "The rations got mixed up and no one was looking at the cows," he says. After that experience he returned to his original idea that you need to judge every cow as an individual, get away from over analyzing with fancy tests and ratios and just go out there to see and feel how things are going. "You have to use common sense and instincts to see problems," he says. "If I have good cow condition, they are eating well, and the manure looks good, I know I am feeding right."

For the past several years John has co-farmed with a partner. His previous partner was a young man who eventually left to develop a larger conventional farm on his own. John points out that many folks in his area that have taken the approach of taking large bank loans, or grants from the government, to expand, are now struggling, or even being forced to go out of business. John's current partner does most of the milking and contributes about half of the farm's labor. He and John share income and expenses, as the partner also raises beef and the organic corn for all the cattle on his own farm. Since John's partner's wife has an off-farm job, it is safe to say that the two farms currently support 1+ ½



No Justice No Cheese: Following a meeting with the Cheese Exchange at the CME, Chicago

families, a total of 4 adults and two teenagers. A six week stay in the hospital 45 years ago led John into organic production. He had been farming conventionally, but suddenly lost control of his legs and had to be hospitalized. "I was in a ward with several other farmers," John says, "Many were horribly disfigured." John continues that the doctors and interns kept coming in and asking him about his use of pesticides. They never came right out and diagnosed his problem as pesticide related, but it was obvious that was what they were thinking because of the questions they asked he and the other farmers. He decided right then to go organic and hasn't looked back since. He has since worked with his neighbors to try to get them to use organic practices.

## Suggestions for Success

John has several recommendations to share regarding how to be successful as an organic dairy farmer and farm advocate:

- To succeed you must WANT to farm. You must realize that it will be hard work, but that you can succeed if

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## FEATURED FARM

you don't worry about keeping up with the neighbors. John points out that you can't listen to the "get bigger" recommendations, as they can make your operation precarious. He adds, "The work is what is satisfying about farming. You have to use or lose your body!" He sees tractors as playthings, and recommends anyone stick with older machinery that can still be fixed in the yard. Computers and other complicated mechanisms on new tractors can lead to a lot of expense and down time when you have to get someone else to fix it.

- **Focus on net income.** Most folks like to look at a high gross income, but John emphasizes that the net is what counts. Keep costs low so that you can run an operation that is low stress for both you and your animals (and the land).
- **Work with nature.** Being organic is the only lasting way to farm, especially if you have challenging soil conditions such as John started with. You have to partner with nature, don't try to change nature to what you want. It will take nature awhile to stabilize after it has been misused, and organic is the only way to bring it back. We must focus on making things better for the next, and all, generations.
- **Learn from others, especially internationally.** For the past several years John has travelled the world, as a dairy farmer volunteer educator and as a representative of several organizations. Counting farming friends on several continents, John notes that he has learned an incredible amount by talking to and visiting dairy farmers from all over the world. John is the one of the founding members of the Family Farm Defenders, which he and 15 others started in the early 1990s as an alternative to other national farm organizations. "Family Farm Defenders is one of the best regarded farm organizations internationally," he notes. "We have been committed to working with, not against our international partners." He has an incredible view of the rise (and hopeful fall) of industrial chemical agriculture in many countries. He sees hope in the large number of farmers that are reclaiming the best of their native traditions and go-

**“Local and national consumer groups are desperate to hear the farmer voice,” John states. He recommends any farmer shouldn’t be shy to get up and talk. “Just tell your story in your own words, don’t try to be someone else. They want to hear your voice.”**

ing back to farming the way that people have farmed sustainably for thousands of years. John comments that the negatives of GMOs and chemicals are becoming readily apparent in many countries. The new high expenses they generate are creating huge farming debts and even the destruction of families as debt-ridden farmers sell their own organs or commit suicide.

John stresses that we need to not only visit other countries, but also encourage people from other places to visit our farms. You will not only learn a lot, but the local media can also become interested and run a story about what you are doing on your farm. Neighbors that hadn't expressed interest previously may even be enticed to come hear about your farm as part of an international group tour.

- **Become involved!** John is a stellar example of the impact one can have by gathering with others to educate and create change. He recommends that

anyone can start to generate support for what they do and believe locally by just attending meetings or participating on local committees. He emphasizes the importance of getting consumers involved. "Urban people are the farmers' best allies," he notes. They have tremendous power, both in the market place and as strong voices. Developing local partnerships with consumers is well worth your time. "Local and national consumer groups are desperate to hear the farmer voice," John states. He recommends any farmer shouldn't be shy to get up and talk. "Just tell your story in your own words, don't try to be someone else. They want to hear your voice." He also advocates that pretty much any farmer can tell their story through the print media. Write a letter, an editorial or an article, he says. "If you aren't comfortable doing it yourself, ask someone to help you. Your voice is very important."

As you can tell by now, John is a man of many interests and passions. It is hard to know where to stop when relaying all of the important things he has learned and is willing to share. He is excited to have done what he has done and be doing what he is doing, and is an inspiring example of how one farm, one family and one farmer can have a huge, positive impact on the world. ♦

*Jody Padgham is the editor of the Organic Broadcaster newspaper and also the financial manager at MOSES. She owns a 60-acre grass based farm in central Wisconsin where she raises sheep and organic poultry.*

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

*continued from page 11*

candidates that have a good understanding of the National Organic Program, some of whom played a leading role in the establishment of the program. The growth of organic production and the increasing sophistication of the program makes it essential that there is a champion for it at the highest level possible and hopefully a permanent point person in the Secretary's office.

Once the announcements are made, we can all work with the appointees to ensure the future success of the program and towards a sustainable future for organic dairy producers. The National Organic Coalition, of which NODPA is a member, has sent recommendation to the Obama administration that can be viewed at: [www.nationalorganiccoalition.org](http://www.nationalorganiccoalition.org). ♦

## FDA Approves Medicine from Genetically Engineered Goats

Earlier this month the U.S. government approved the first drug produced by genetically engineered livestock. The drug, meant to prevent fatal blood clots in people, is a protein

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extracted from the milk of the genetically modified goats. The goats producing this 'milk medicine' live under quarantine on a high-security farm in Massachusetts. This is the first drug to be cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration under guidelines adopted just recently concerning the regulation of transgenic animals in the nation's drug and food supply.

To make its protein, GTC took the human gene for anti-thrombin and linked it to goat DNA that normally controls production of a protein found in milk. That insured that the antithrombin would be produced only in the milk.

There are obvious concerns about the animal drug; that the animals could be harmed, that animal germs might contaminate the drug, and that the milk or meat from genetically engineered drug-producing animals might enter the food supply. There is also a concern that such animals might escape and breed with other animals, spreading the gene, with unpredictable consequences.

Still, it is not clear to what extent the use of the animals will catch on, but showing that approval could be obtained is a major reason the drug was developed. ♦

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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

## Nutritional Wisdom

continued from page 19

## Understanding how palatability and plant biochemistry works:

Horses and cattle can be trained to avoid eating toxic plants, to eat weeds, or to avoid plants that they otherwise would prefer. Kathy Voth, who studied under Fred Provenza, has videos and other training packets, which can be found on her website: ([www.livestockforlandscape.com](http://www.livestockforlandscape.com)). One video titled ‘We’d Eat It!’ shows you how to teach your cows to eat a number of unwanted pasture weeds such as thistles, leafy spurge, black mustard, and knapweed. One of the first things to do, of course, is to make sure that the plants you want your livestock to eat are not poisonous.

An example of how some sheep were trained can be seen at organic vineyards in California and Colorado. The owners were interested in using sheep to eat the under story and grass beneath the grapes, and they needed to find a way to make the grapes unpalatable. The way they trained the sheep was to allow the sheep to eat some grapes, followed by feeding them something that causes nausea. The feedback loop was implemented, and the sheep left the grapes alone.

Livestock can also be used to rejuvenate landscapes. Sheep and cattle

have been trained to increase their intake of sagebrush. Sagebrush provides critical habitat for soil, plants, and wildlife, but the shrubs have over populated in some areas, which in turn has decreased the volume of herbaceous plants, and reduced the biodiversity and habitat it once provided. Chemical and mechanical controls are costly and less desirable, and there are risks with burning. Researchers have found that one can train sheep and cattle to graze the sagebrush in the fall and winter using a high stocking rate complemented with a protein and energy supplement. The protein and energy supplement helps the sheep and cattle detoxify the toxins (terpenes) found in the sagebrush, which allows them to eat more of the plant. With this management, the sagebrush population is reduced. This in turn increased grasses and forbs, which increases the biodiversity and improves wildlife habitat for sage grouse and other birds.

There is one more angle to consider when trying to influence what an animal does and does not eat, and that is culture. A culture develops when habits contribute to the group's success in solving problems, and cultures can change as individuals in groups discover new ways of behaving – such as finding new foods or habitats or better ways to select a nutritionally balanced diet.<sup>(1)</sup> (Social Organization in Bison and Habitat Selection, [www.behave.net/projects/range-bison.html](http://www.behave.net/projects/range-bison.html))

A colleague of Dr. Provenza's, Dr. Randy Wiedmeier, is a nutritionist who years ago was interested in feeding ammoniated straw to a group of 5 year old beef cows as a way to reduce the cost of feed over the winter (December – May). About 1 month into the study, half of the



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cows were performing very well, and half were not. The cows were all the same breed, so why was this happening?

The researcher had a technician who remembered that a bunch of the cows that were in this study were exposed to ammoniated straw earlier in life for a one month period of time. Body weight and condition was significantly higher for those cows that had that one-month exposure early in life. It took 3 years for the cows in this research group to show no difference in their eating behavior. When we change management, it takes time for behaviors to change. For soils it takes 3-5 years and things oftentimes tend to get worse before they get better.

## Culture is a part of landscape

What does it mean for animals to be locally adapted to the landscape that they inhabit? It means possessing anatomical and physiological adaptations that they need as well as behavioral knowledge that enables survival in particular environments. Which foods to eat and where to forage are experiences early in life that have an effect on habitat preferences.

In domestic animals and wild animals, mom is the critical trans-generational link who adds stability, showing her offspring what to eat, what not to eat and where to go. Young animals (offspring) add creativity by exploring the unknown. They bring new behaviors to the group by trying other things once they have learned

from mom what to do. This dynamic brings a balance between stability and creativity.

Experiences early in life increase intake of poorly nutritious foods and foods high in secondary compounds. Many research studies with cattle and sheep (cross-fostering studies) have shown that even animals reared by a foster mother will learn what to eat and where to go based on how and where they were reared.

The impacts of experiences in utero and early in life have been termed Predictive Adaptive Responses. These responses, which are induced by the environment where the animal is born and raised, cause changes neurologically, morphologically and physiologically that lead to ongoing adaptation to the local environment. An example of this type of adaptive response is shown in a study in Western Australia where the landscape is dominated by saltbrush. This plant is very high in salt and can cause toxicities. In utero exposure enabled lambs to be able to handle salt brush in larger volumes than lambs from mothers raised on pasture. They were able to excrete salt more rapidly, drink less water and maintain higher intake when eating saltbrush.

Fossil fuels have enabled people to select for animals that lack the ability to thrive on the foods and habitats in the landscape. Cultural

*continued on page 37*

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INDUSTRY NEWS

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

**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

**CROPP Cooperative ~ Organic Valley ~ Organic Prairie** is the nation's largest farmer-owned organic cooperative with members throughout the Northeast and New England. We offer a stable, competitive organic milk pay price to members and a complete year of Transitional Funding for new farmers during the herd's transitional year.

We also offer veterinary support, quality services, organic food, the Organic Trader Newsletter, inclusive communications and ownership of a cooperative with 20 years of organic farming and marketing experience. Our Farm Resources Team can also help source organic feed purchases for your operation. We have recently expanded our cooperative membership to include a Grower Pool; offering long term, stable pricing & marketing opportunities for organic forage/grain producers and our Organic Cull Cow & Dairy Steer Program is also looking to grow into the region. Please contact our Regional Coordinators or Membership Services for further details.

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@organicvalley.coop. In the Great Lakes Region contact Jake Schmitz, (270)779-1526 or jake.schmitz@organicvalley.coop. In the Southeast contact Gerry Cohn, (919) 537-8447 or gerry.cohn@organicvalley.coop. Membership Services - 1-888-809-9297 Monday through Friday 8-5 PM Central and online at [www.farmers.coop](http://www.farmers.coop).

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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.

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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

**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.

**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.

**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](http://www.upstatefarms.com) or contact me. Enjoy your day.....Bill Young 800-724-6455 byoung@upstateniagara.com

**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 May 2009 issue, please email the desired text to Ed at [ednodpa@comcast.net](mailto:ednodpa@comcast.net) or call 413-772-0444 by April 16th 2009.**

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- Certified Organic Hay For Sale: 1st cutting grass, dry 4x4 \$40/bale; 2nd cutting grass, dry 4x4 \$50/bale; cow-candy baleage, grass-clover 4x5 \$65/bale. NY/PA border. Rob Moore 607-699-7968
- For sale: 100 ton of triticale, 60 ton of rye, & 2 ton shell corn all at \$300/ton; 7000 bales of straw @ \$3.50/bale. Bob Munson, Groton, NY, 607/327-1656.

**Livestock**

**Looking for cattle:** Interested in purchasing several Normande cross or purebred heifers and/or steers to raise starting this spring. If you have any available or know where I might be able to obtain them, please contact me. Peter Burmeister, Montpelier, VT, (802) 223-4165 (office), (802) 249-8143 (mobile).



**CHANGE@USDA:** The National Organic Program has failed its Congressional mandate to protect ethical organic farmers and consumers. The growth of “organic” factory farms and unsupervised imports from China is unacceptable. Send the Obama administration the message we want *change* at the NOP by visiting: [www.cornucopia.org/changeUSDA](http://www.cornucopia.org/changeUSDA)

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**Positions Available**

**Organic Dairy Herd Manager Position** Available at Alfred State College - Job Description: responsible for day-to-day management of the Alfred State College Organic dairy herd. The manager will work closely with the farm manager, faculty and farm staff to implement decisions affecting organic dairy herd management. Qualifications: Individuals with an Associate's/Bachelor's degree in dairy or animal science OR significant organic dairy management experience will be considered. Individuals must have proven ability to manage a 60 cow organic dairy, rotational grazing, organic feed and forage management and replacement heifer care. Apply on-line at: [Jobs.alfredstate.edu](http://Jobs.alfredstate.edu) or call the Human Resources Department at 607-587-4025

**HERDSPERSON WANTED:** Seven Stars Farm, a 350 acre certified Biodynamic/Organic farm in Southeast Pennsylvania, is in search of a herds person to manage our 70 cow herd of Jersey and Jersey crosses. We are looking for an energetic, self-motivated individual with excellent communication and leadership skills. The herds person is responsible for the production of high-quality milk for our yogurt processing plant. The herds person oversees all aspects of the feeding, milking, breeding and health care of the dairy herd and young stock. Responsibilities, also, include the routine maintenance and cleanliness of the milking equipment, dairy barns, and coordination with field manager for rotational grazing and winter feed needs. This individual must oversee milking procedures and coordinating milk or schedules in addition to their direct responsibilities. The herdsman assists and all aspect of the farm as needed. Only those who

*continued on page 38*

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RESEARCH & EDUCATION

BREEDING DIVERSITY:  
1st International IFOAM  
Conference on Organic Animal  
and Plant Breeding  
  
Sante Fe, New Mexico,  
August 25-28 2009

Conference Topic

The time is right to bring together all endeavors to focus on organic breeding. Fostering the sustainable development of new successful low input breeds is urgent in the face of future challenges of food in- security and massive threats to the livelihoods of millions of people caused by climate change. Through the conservation and promotion of Agro-Biodiversity of both animal and plant genetic resources, organic agriculture will again prove to be a viable alternative to ge- netically modified organisms. Both organic plant and animal breed- ing are therefore gaining momentum in several parts of the world. Successful organic breeding is the basis of organic production, but it is only in early phases of development.

Organic breeding includes efforts of both professional companies involved in the organic market, as well as participatory farmers’ initiatives from all around the world. The conference is aiming at encouraging the dialogue between commercial and subsistence farmers; scientists and practitioners; professional farmers and hobby gardeners/animal keepers to promote the lively exchange of experi- ences and perspectives on organic breeding. Even though technical aspects may differ dramatically, each field can inspire the other to develop and build upon successful strategies.

This conference provides for the opportunity to revive traditional knowledge from the global North and South and connect it with the current international organic research. Through the fusion of traditional breeding knowledge and newly developed organic breed- ing methods, there is a great opportunity of intercultural learning and also valuing knowledge which was kept through generations for the well-being of communities. Because of the key role women play in the selection of seeds and management of small livestock the conference will center around their knowledge and contribu- tions. Bringing all together in one international conference explicitly highlights important thematic and geographic interdependences and strengthens the holistic approach of organic agriculture in respecting and including the voices of the world’s regions in their full diversity.

The conference will be divided into three sections for both animal and plant breeding:

- 1. **Methods**
  - Technical aspects
  - Breeding techniques
  - Genotype environment interaction

- Selection criteria
  - Breeding for farmers and hobby gardeners
2. **Socio Economic aspects**
- Participatory approach
  - Financing
  - Indigenous knowledge
  - Gender related aspects
3. **Legal aspects**
- Registration
  - Intellectual Property Rights
  - Farmers Rights

Target Groups

- Animal and plant breeders and seed savers
- Governments and intergovernmental agencies
- Researchers and universities
- The organic sector
- Like-minded organizations
- Foundations and funding agencies

Conference language is English  
Conference Venue and Location

The conference will take place in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in the central part of the US. Santa Fe is easily accessible from anywhere in the World, via a major airport only 40 minutes away (Albuquerque, NM). This city has a very active Slow Food, Farmer Market, Garden- ing, Organic breeding and farming and Culinary movement. There is also a very strong traditional agriculture movement amongst the northern Native American tribes of New Mexico, who have an active traditional agriculture movement and seed sovereignty plan. More: <http://www.santafe.org/>

Sponsored Participants Program

IFOAM aims at including the voices of the world’s regions in their full diversity. Therefore 10% of all sponsorship donations will fund the Sponsored Participants Program. Interested persons in applying for a travel grant are invited to complete and submit the application form. Please note, that funds are limited and contributing partici- pants will be considered with preference.

IFOAM’s partner is “Seeds of Change”. Celebrating its 20th Anniver- sary in 2009, this is in fact the oldest organic seed company in the United States of America and it will act as the ongoing and on-site local organizer. More: <http://www.seedsofchange.com/>

Plant Demonstration Plots

Seeds of Change has an Organic Research Farm and Gardens just North of Santa Fe. They offer the opportunity to plant demonstration plots of your plant and seed varieties to be able to showcase these during the conference. A field day to the location will be organized for this purpose. ♦

NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

By Liz Bawden

Wide ranging discussions this month began with a farmer’s query about a newborn Jersey calf with contracted tendons causing her to walk on her ankles. Several farmers have experienced the same thing on rare occasions; a few said that it tends to straighten out in a week or so. Several connected it with selenium deficiency and a scouring calf. A veterinarian on the list noted that contracted tendons may be congenital in Jerseys, or acquired by selenium defi- ciency, malnutrition, joint disease, or local neurological conditions. Selenium injections were suggested as well as the use of splints, or at least setting them up on their feet to stretch the tendons.

Sub-clinical hypocalcemia

A long thread began with a farmer’s problem of a purchased cow on and off feed, losing condition, and milk production way down. She had been given magnets and treated for sub-clinical ketosis. Tem- perature and manure were normal, lungs clear, rumen functioning, no displacements. The veterinarians agreed it was likely sub-clinical hypocalcemia. They suggested IV calcuim, and noted that many cow problems trace back to sub-clinical hypocalcemia. Probiotics were also suggested and a caffeine source to stimulate gut motil- ity. A researcher suggested the solution to the problem lay in the addition of dietary boron. Even if added just during the dry period, it can have effects throughout lactation. He told of a herd that was studied in Florida. They had a dry-cow ration that was sky-high in potassium, but the western alfalfa they fed also contained high levels of boron. Where this farmer should have experienced large num- bers of downed cows and milk fever, he had virtually none. Another farmer suggested that the western alfalfa would likely have high levels of sodium to keep the potassium in check, and he noted that mineral interactions are so complex that looking at one single ele- ment without considering the bigger picture can get us into trouble and/or wrong conclusions. He suggested that boron is called a “gate keeper” for other minerals. That makes its effects on other minerals very important in ways that are not always obvious.

Bale processors

A brief discussion of bale wrappers moved into a discussion about bale processors. A farmer noted that it has become difficult to ob- tain wood shavings used for traction in holding areas and in a bed- ded pack. He thought to look at bale processors to chop up old hay for this purpose. One farmer said he likes the Teagle 8080 as it can handle both round or big square bales. Another likes the Kvernland which can handle either dry or silage bales; 2 round bales or 1 big square bale at a time. Others pointed to the round balers that cut the forage at that step; they liked it for bedding packs as the bale breaks up and can be moved around with a skidsteer.

Subscribing to ODairy:

We transferred this listserve from Yahoo to the NODPA website because we value your contact information and want to ensure that you can express your thoughts and ideas on Odairy without fear that they will be hijacked by others. We have also trans- ferred all the archives from Yahoo and they are easily accessible once you have signed in. We know you are busy and this process might seem overly complicated, but it is designed to protect you email in-box from SPAM and unsolicited emails. NODPA is working every day to ensure that we protect you, your email address and access to your computers from those that might exploit them for their own use. Odairy is an un-moderated listserve, please respect each other in your postings. To sign up for the Odairy listserv, go to:

[http://www.nodpa.com/list\\_serv.shtml](http://www.nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml)

Dealing with that “deal”

Some good suggestions for those of you considering buying cows that are a “deal”: a farmer was making a decision to buy a herd that had been poorly managed for a while, but otherwise had good genetics and most of them were in calf. Several other farmers sug- gested that he test all the prospective cows for Johnnes, do a full milk culture to rule out introducing pathogens to the milking herd, isolate the incoming animals for a few weeks if possible, consider drying them off early to allow them to put on condition, and feed lots of kelp and minerals and good quality forage. But there were warnings of “train wrecks” from other farmers that had disastrous experiences; several felt strongly that with the organic limitations in veterinary drugs, a closed herd is a safer approach.

Miscellaneous issues

A farmer was surprised by Staph aureus in several cows. Sugges- tions included shipping them before it spreads any farther, use them for nurse cows, and milk them last. One farmer pointed out that there are several strains of Staph aureus, some of the environmental ones may self-cure. But it is impossible to know if an animal has it without testing as they do not generally display clinical symptoms. Farmers with a strategy for controlling Staph aureus tested regularly.

Uterine infections, or pyometria, were discussed. One farmer sug- gested infusing the cow with caulophylum and garlic tinctures with aloe vera. Another infused a weak iodine solution with aloe vera. One of the verterinarians felt the best product he’s used is Utre-Sept infused with aloe.

The mid-February announcement that CROPP/Organic Valley was lowering the pay price was met by a flurry of posts. Farmers expressed their anger, fears, frustrations, resignation, and support.

Flukes appeared in the liver of an otherwise healthy steer at slaughter. The farmer wondered if she must assume that the rest of the herd was

*continued on page 39*



# Calendar

**March 19, 2009**  
**Growing Grains in the Northeast**  
**Vermont Technical College, Randolph Ctr, VT**

Join us for a day long conference on Growing & Processing Grains in the Northeast! Topics to be covered will include small scale grain production – the why’s and how to; What’s happening locally with organic grains; Top 10 strategies for growing organic cereal grains; Science of baking; Dry bean and seed production; Growing and processing ‘hulled grains’ and more. For more information or to register, contact Heather Darby, 802-524-6501 or email: heather.darby@uvm.edu.

**March 20-21, 2009**

**Jim Gerrish Returns: Advanced Grazing Clinic, 8:30 a.m. start with a 4:00 p.m. finish on March 21, Three Miles Lake Lodge, Afton/Creston.**

This clinic will cover year-around grazing, designing systems and forages to accomplish extended grazing and limiting or eliminating hay feeding. Register by March 9 or pay higher fee at the door. Contact: Tom Ger- man, PFI Grazing Cluster Organizer, (712)830-3281

**March 20, 2009**  
**Homeopathy for Livestock, Unity, Maine**

Featuring Glen Dupree DVM from Georgia. The workshop will include a thorough overview on the principles of Homeopathy and case studies. Homeopathy works for all species of animals, even humans. This work- shop will be valuable to anyone caring for livestock who would like to use a holistic method of animal care. Workshop from 10-2pm, \$30/farm or household and \$15/ additional member from same farm. Registra- tion includes local organic lunch. For more information, contact Diane Schivera, email: dianes@mofga.org or call: 207-568-4142.

**March 24, 2009**  
**Soils for Farmers, Marlboro College Technical Ctr, Brattleboro, VT**  
This intensive one-day class will provide a hands-on learning environ- ment designed to provide farmers with a basic understanding of the soil science principles that underlie soil health. Topics will include: What is a Health Soil; Biology Matters; Getting Physical; pH and CEC - What?

For more information or to register, contact Karen Hills, UVM Extein- sion, email: karen.m.hills@uvm.edu, phone: 802-524-6501.

**March 26, 2009**  
**Midwest Dairy School Transitioning to Organic**

Northeast Iowa Community College and The Northeast Iowa Commu- nity Based Dairy Foundation will be hosting an important and timely school for the dairy producer who is currently producing organic milk or exploring transitioning to organic production. The primary focus of the School will be helping existing producers in all areas of organic dairy

production and giving those who are considering converting to organic and want learn more about it, a good overview. For more information, please contact NICC Program Manager Mary Steen, 800.728.2256 ext. 341 or steenm@nicc.edu

**May 4-6, 2009**  
**National Organic Standards Board Meeting, Washington DC**  
Actual Location TBA

**June 5-6, 2009**  
**The 8th Annual Strolling of the Heifers Parade, Dairy Festival & Green Expo, Brattleboro, VT**

Strolling of the Heifers has announced its 2009 schedule! The 8th annual Strolling of the Heifers Parade, Dairy Festival and Green Expo promises to be bigger and better than ever! Be sure to save the dates—mark your calendars now!

For further information, visit [www.strollingoftheheifers.com](http://www.strollingoftheheifers.com).

**August 25-28 2009**  
**1st International IFOAM Conference on Organic Animal and Plant Breeding, Sante Fe, New Mexico,**  
The time is right to bring together all endeavors to focus on organic breeding. Fostering the sustainable development of new successful

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## Advertise With Us!

**NODPA News is Published Bi-Monthly**  
January, March, May, July,  
September & November

Ad rates and sizes listed below;  
deadline for advertising in  
May issue is April 16, 2009.

**Full Page Ad** (7.5” W x 10.25” H) = \$450  
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**1/8 Page Ad/Business Card:**  
(3.5” W x 2.25” H) = \$60

**Classified Ads:** Free to Northeast organic farmers. All others \$10 for the first \$30 words; \$.10 per word over 30

For advertising information call Lisa McCrory:  
802-234-5524 or email [lmccrory@hughes.net](mailto:lmccrory@hughes.net)

Please email your electronic ad (.eps, .tiff, .jpg, .gif) to [chris@chrishillmedia.com](mailto:chris@chrishillmedia.com) or send your ad to: Lisa McCrory, Nodpa Newsletter, 341 Macintosh Hill Rd., Randolph, VT 05060

**NOTE:** Ads requiring typesetting, size changes or de- sign work will be charged additional fees, according to the service (minimum charge \$30.00).

Please send a check with your ad (made payable to NODPA).

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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

### Nutritional Wisdom

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knowledge of people and environments; knowing which plants are poisonous, etc. are pieces of wisdom that we as humans have lost. The same thing has happened with animals. It just makes sense ecologically and economically to match what an animal needs based upon what is on hand; retaining animals that can survive on the landscapes that you have: matching produc- tion cycle to forage resources; matching cow size and type to the forage resource.

### Primary and Secondary Compound Satiety

Animals satiate on forages – they get sick and tired of eating the same old foods day after day, just as people do. Satiety is influenced by interactions among flavor, nutrients and secondary compounds. Nutrient-Specific Satiety research looks at the ratios of protein to energy in the diet and how they influence what an animal chooses to eat. An example of nutrient satiety research is the work that Darrell Emmick did in New York where groups of cows were supplemented with diets high in protein or energy in the barn and then took note of what the cows grazed when they went out to pasture. Cows fed a high-protein diet in the barn do not want to eat clover as it is high in protein and their protein needs have been met. Instead, they preferred the grass. Conversely, when the amount of protein fed in the barn is reduced, the cows eat much more of the clover.

Secondary compound satiety: All plants have secondary compounds that limit how much of any one food an animal can eat. As a result they are considered plant defenses against herbivory. In animal science literature, we have considered these compounds to be toxins and have selected against them so that the animal can consume more food. What researchers have learned is that there are a huge number of roles that the secondary compounds play that are critical for the health of plants and for our bodies and we need to step back and think of biodi- versity versus monocultures and where that has brought us. Tannins, for example, are valuable in nutrition and health. They can decrease internal parasite loads and bind the compounds that create bloat. Birdsfoot trefoil is a good complement to a ration with alfalfa, because the tannins reduce the chances of bloat. Tannins can also bind protein and release it in a way that is better for the animal to absorb.

### Complementary Species and Sequence

A diverse diet encourages animals to encounter certain plants that, when mixed with others can stimulate appetite and increase intake.

French herders have come to recognize complementary species of plants that offer this reaction provided they are eaten in a particular sequence. This knowledge was gained while ‘out on the job’, watch- ing their animals while they graze and has been passed down from generation to generation.

An example of complementary species and sequence comes from the US Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, Idaho. They found that sheep that eat a lot of sagebrush also eat a huge amount of bitter- brush. Bitterbrush has tannins in it and the sagebrush has terpenes, and the tannins evi- dently are binding with the terpenes alleviating their aversive effects. Sheep have learned to mix these plants by eating the bitterbrush first.

These same sorts of things are happening with the managed grazing of pasture plants. For example, if you were to start grazing your cattle or sheep on a stand of tall fescue followed by a meal of birdsfoot trefoil (high in tannins) and alfalfa (high in saponins), over a couple week period, they will stop eating the tall fescue all together. But if you reverse the sequence and offer them birdsfoot trefoil and alfalfa first,

then they will continue to eat large quantities of the tall fescue. What’s probably happening is the saponins and tannins are binding with the alkaloids in the tall fescue and having those plant compounds in the gut allows the animal to graze greater quantities.

Currently, Dr Provenza is looking at the linking of secondary com- pounds from soil through plant through herbivore, and through people. How does the health of the soil influence the compounds in diverse stands versus monoculture? Do plants growing in healthy soil produce the same amount of secondary compounds? How does diversity of plants impact nutrition and the health of livestock? And then, how does that link to our health? A group in Italy is the first to start looking at how secondary compounds in forages influences the quality of meat, milk, and cheese for human consumption. Their research is hoping to determine the influence of secondary com- pounds on flavor and nutritional characteristics of cheese and other dairy products and this is proving to be very interesting research. ♦

*Fred Provenza studies dietary behavior of range animals and has learned much about nature’s program for full nutrition. It is clear there is an inherent “nutritional wisdom” within these animals, wisdom that can be taught as well. In order to farm and ranch more sustainably, we must learn to appreciate diversity, live in an evolutionary spirit and develop agricultural management strategies that enable us to adapt quickly to change. [www.Behave.net](http://www.Behave.net)*

*Reprinted with permission from eOrganic Extension; see page 25 for more details.*

## Homeopathic Medicine

**Keep your herd healthy,  
Effectively treat:**

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- Pink Eye
- And More



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# Classified Ads

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truly love cows and treat them in a gentle, quiet manner need apply. This is a good opportunity to work in an established small farm/processor (Seven Stars Farm Yogurt) environment with mature and respectful co-workers. Housing, health insurance and competitive salary. Tie stall barn with automatic takeoff milkers and rail system. Added January 24, 2008. Contact: David Griffiths, Email: svenstrs@gmail.com, Phone: 610-933-1222, Location: 501 West 7 Stars Rd, Phoenixville, PA 19460, Website: www.sevenstarsfarm.com

**Executive Director Sought.** Merck Forest & Farmland Center, a not-for-profit corporation located in Rupert, VT, is seeking candidates for the position of Executive Director.

The director leads and collaborates with the Board of Directors, staff, local communities, and regional leaders in the areas of natural resource management and sustainable organic agriculture. Teaching and demonstration of innovative forest and farm management techniques are particular areas of focus. The director handles all aspects of human resource management, financial management, and operational oversight of all programs initiated by the organization.

A bachelor's degree and demonstrated success in resource management and environmental education are essential qualifications. Competency with fiscal management tools and the ability to communicate complex ideas effectively will be assumed. We seek a candidate who can continue

the programmatic initiatives already under way while looking to the future with a vision as to what may be added.

A Position Description and additional information may be found at www.merckforest.org. Applications including a cover letter and resume should be mailed to: Search Committee, Merck Forest & Farmland Center, PO Box 86, Rupert, VT 05768, not later than April 30, 2009.

**Unique Dairying Opportunity.** Progressive Grade A GOAT DAIRY and milk processing facility is looking for an honest and motivated Assistant Herdperson to join our dairy team. Assistant herdperson must have dairy farming experience, excellent communication skills and a strong work ethic. Job will include all aspects of dairy herd management. Assistant Herdperson will be expected to work as a team member and also independently. Position to be filled by May 15, 2009. Send resume to: Oak Knoll Dairy, P.O. Box 443, Windsor, VT 05089, 802-674-5426

## In search of a farm

We are looking to buy a small grazing dairy farm capable of milking up to 50 cows. This situation preferably would be for a retired person wishing to finance a committed grass based animal loving dairyman with vast experience into this opportunity who in return would sustain the land and graze all animals outside. I have a family and am originally from New Zealand but have managed an absentee owned grass based transitional organic dairy in central New York for 2 years. New Zealand grazing experience is over 20 years.We would look at all options and look forward to hearing from anyone with any ideas. Contact Ashley Clements, Cherry Valley, NY, Ph 607 267 2407 ♦

## 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
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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

*Darlene Coehoorn, Rosendale, Wisconsin*

It's been a busy winter coping with what the weather brings into Wisconsin; a lot of cold and snow. As February slips away, the Organic Farming Conference is the bright spot on many calendars. With it comes the opportunity to meet with many friends, to learn a lot, and exchange ideas and insight. As the conference recharges and excites it gives much hope for the future of organic farming and good eating. There will be much to talk about as the recent developments have left us wondering about the stability of the organic market. I am sure the organic rule will be the subject of many conversations, as we need a fair rule that is enforceable. We all know that family-farm-scale agriculture is vital to our rural economy, as a strong, healthy farming community sustains and supports a strong local economy. This is especially true for smaller farms (typically the type that are organic). These farms pump life into our rural communities. We don't need a stimulus program/payment; what we need is a cost of production with a reasonable profit. With a sustainable pay price we can keep our communities healthy too. We all need to work together to ensure the best

## 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

<b>Wisconsin</b> 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 greenbfirms@tznnet.com Phone: 715-687-8147  John Kinsman, Secretary E2940 County Road K, La Valle, WI 53941 Phone: 608- 986-3815 Fax: 608-986-2502  <b>Bruce Drinkman, Treasurer</b> <b>3253 150th Ave</b> <b>Glenwood City, WI 54013</b> <b>bdrinkman@hotmail.com</b> <b>Phone: 715-265-4631</b>  John Kiefer, Director S10698 Troy Rd,	Sauk City, WI 53583 taofarmer@direcway.com Phone: 608- 544-3702  Jim Small, Director\ 26548 Locust Ave. Wilton, WI 54670 Tel: 608-435-6700  <b>Iowa</b> Andy Schaefers, Director 25037 Lake Rd Garnavillo, IA 52049 Tel: 563-964-2758  <b>Michigan</b> Ed Zimba Zimba Dairy 7995 Mushroom Rd DeFord, MI 48729 zimbadaairy@tband.net Phone: 989-872-2680  <b>Ohio</b> Ernest Martin, Director 1720 Crum Rd, Shiloh, OH 44878 Phone and Fax: 419-895-1182
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possible price and conditions for all organic producers. ♦

## NET UPDATE

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infected, and what course of action to take. Spreading ferric phosphate in bands next to wet areas was suggested to keep snails, which are the vector, away. A vet related his experience that the immune system of a healthy cow eventually kills the fluke, but it leaves scar tissue and an absess in the liver. If multiple flukes are involved, it may be enough to damage liver function, but this usually only occurs in youngstock and sheep. There were no known organic treatments for liver fluke. The vet recommended that there is no real cause for alarm as it appears that a healthy animal can handle a few flukes.

A farmer asked about others' experiences re-bagging corn silage. There were pro's and con's. A vet reminded her that if not done correctly, listeria and botulism were both real possibilities. One farmer suggested to do it while air temperatures are low, and to pack it tightly. Several others said they did this successfully, but it had to be done as fast as possible to minimize air exposure. Another farmer reported that he mixed his silage into a TMR as he refilled an upright silo. The usual recipe was haylage and high moisture ear corn; then he mixed in whatever ground grains he had that year - barley, oats, soybeans, minerals, etc. That prompted another farmer to recall that he used to mix ground grain into haylage as it loaded into the silo to add carbohydrates to the fermentation; he felt the end product was a much better feed. ♦

## 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):  
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**Please send this form to: Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer, 3253 150th Ave, Glenwood City, WI 54013**



## Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)

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

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Turners Falls, MA

## CALENDAR

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low input breeds is urgent in the face of future challenges of food insecurity and massive threats to the livelihoods of millions of people caused by climate change. Through the conservation and promotion of Agro-Biodiversity of both animal and plant genetic resources, organic agriculture will again prove to be a viable alternative to genetically modified organisms. Both organic plant and animal breeding are therefore gaining momentum in several parts of the world. Successful organic breeding is the basis of organic production, but it is only in early phases of development.

**Ms Zoe Heuschkel at the IFOAM Head Office.**

**Tel: +49 (0) 228 92 650 12**

**Fax: +49 (0) 228 92 650 99**

**e-mail: [z.heuschkel@ifoam.org](mailto:z.heuschkel@ifoam.org)**

**October 17 & 18, 2009**

**2009 Northeast Animal Power Field Days**

**Tunbridge Fair Grounds, Tunbridge, VT**

Dedicated to working draft animal enterprises supporting local communities and a land-based economy, this two-day trade fair and conference will feature workshops, equipment demonstrations, working demos, exhibitors, local food, swap meet, and more. Join the free on-line discussion list: [www.draftanimalpower.com](http://www.draftanimalpower.com). Interested in Volunteering? Please contact Kristen Gage at [kristengage@comcast.net](mailto:kristengage@comcast.net) or call: 802-431-1029. For more information, contact Carl Russell or Lisa McCrory at: [info@animalpowerfielddays.org](mailto:info@animalpowerfielddays.org) or call: 802-234-5524. Visit the website for program updates: [www.animalpowerfielddays.org](http://www.animalpowerfielddays.org). ♦



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