NEDPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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n the midst of an economic downturn and

the need to tighten our belts, there is an

daughter team - that is excited about what the

future has in store. Jennifer Breen and Louis

Hall own and operate an organic dairy farm in

Orwell, VT. This farm has been in the family for

5 generations and if everything goes as planned,

it will continue for many more generations to

come. Though they are only completing their

second year of organic dairy production, they feel that financially they are far better off then

organic dairy farm in Vermont - a father/

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FEATURED FARM Hall and Breen Farm, LLC A lifestyle, a livelihood, a partnership and a future

By Lisa McCrory



they ever were conventionally.

The farm consists of 462 owned acres and 50 rented. 250 acres are tillable and they grow primarily alfalfa/grass & clover/grass forage mixes. They have a Holstein herd with 81 milking and dry, plus 87 heifers from day old to springing.

Louis had been the primary manager for 33 years, raising 3 sons and 1 daughter with his wife Phyllis. In 1997 Louis contacted his children to see if anyone was interested

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NODPA's 9th Annual Field Days Event And Annual Producer Meeting

Thursday August 13 at Noon to Friday August 14th at 5:00 pm

Back to the Future ... in the Summer!

We're returning to Spring Wood Organic Farm, Kinzers, PA, where the first NODPA Field Days was held eight years ago, on Roman Stoltzfoos' family farm. Go to page 10 to learn more.

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for a voluntary percentage reduction in the traditional "spring

flush" period to cut the oversupply. How's that working? After

you cut the price you pay for the milk, how do you think the

business, "need more milk? Cut the price." One handler has

stated that if the voluntary reduction was not forthcoming,

other, more severe steps would be taken. Can someone tell me

how it can be verified that a producer did or did not cut their

production? What about those who have made the effort to

supply the milk in the fall to satisfy the demand at that time?

tion? To a certain extent these people have carried the spring

Albion, Maine

seasonal producers at an economic loss to themselves, because

not one handler that I'm aware of pays an adequate premium to

Henry Perkins, NODPA President

Are they also expected to reduce their already lowered produc-

farmer is going to make up the difference? Old rule in the dairy

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA Desk

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

I'm not sure what type of climate we are in with temperatures this Spring as high as 96° during the day and dropping to 32° at night. No doubt, we will adapt and change our habits and production

production costs in this issue, Bob Parsons notes that interest

payments are a higher percentage of total costs in 2007 because

producers were paying interest on money borrowed to purchase

feedback, interest costs will go even higher in 2008-2009 as they

extend their lines of credit, equity loans or operational loans to

England which, along with the good name of Stonyfield Farm,

was used to encourage many organic and transitioning produc-

ers to sign on with the company either directly or through Dairy

sors in the United States. Their treatment of producers that they

once used as 'poster boys' to sell the Stonyfield brand of organic

milk is shameful, and their targeting of producers who advocate

for their fellow farmers goes beyond any acceptable behavior,

in the milk industry. Our commentary section features letters

NODPA has been championing the cause of HOOD producers

new equipment or repair infrastructure. Based on producer

survive as pay price falls.

from HP Hood producers.

practices to suit whatever is thrown at us by the weather. On the other hand, there is an assumption by milk companies that producers will simply adapt to changes in pay price and production costs, and may even find new buyers in a time of milk surplus. Milk companies have deep enough pockets to take a 5-10% decrease in income from their products, by lumping it into other costs of production or perhaps by cutting production a bit, and still pay their workers "very well" and give the CEO a great bonus (even though 'he' didn't get 'his' full bonus...). Family farms have no fat to shave. Their wage is the net profit from their farm business, so a cut of \$2 per cwt comes straight off their bottom line or, in other words, the family's wages. In an interesting article about 2007

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA President

This time I'd like to talk about two different subjects. First, I finally got around to reading the last copy of the Nodpa News. In the past I've complained that it has gotten too big and there are too many pages, but as I read through page after page, it finally dawned on me how much stuff is in it. Each article is relevant to the current situations we find ourselves in. Nice articles from Heather Darby, Vaughn Sherman, Kathie Arnold, Fay Benson, Jody Padgham, Liz Bawden, Darlene Coehorn and Ed Maltby. They've all put a lot of effort into their work and I thank them. I don't have much to do with it, except that I'm forced to come up with one of these short little commentaries every time I turn around. This is a good newsletter.

Now, controlling the spring flush. Several handlers have asked

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compensate them for doing this.

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and trying to open as many doors as possible, but the media and advocacy organizations do not seem as interested in the name of HP Hood as they are in Dean Foods or Stonyfield. In working with a New York Times reporter on this story, I was asked if there was any truth to companies making donations to non-profits in order to buy good will and favorable reporting. I replied that it is not the case with NODPA or the other ODPA's and that I assume other organizations had the same high standards. NODPA does not have high overhead costs or large payrolls, and can

In working with a New York Times reporter on this story, I was asked if there was any truth to companies making donations to non-profits in order to buy good will and favorable reporting NODPA does not have high overhead costs or large payrolls, and can react quickly to situations while being fiercely independent from any one funder. However, in the case of HP Hood and Stonyfield Farm, we have paid the price: they no longer sponsor NODPA events or advertise in NODPA publications.

react quickly to situations while being fiercely independent from any one funder. However, in the case of HP Hood and Stonyfield Farm, we have paid the price: they no longer sponsor NODPA events or advertise in NODPA publications.

NODPA Board and State Reps have decided to move the annual NODPA Field Days back to August, and this year will return to the site of NODPA's first Field Days in 2001. The event will take place on Thursday and Friday August 13th and 14th at the farm of one of the founders of NODPA, Roman Stoltzfoos, in Pennsylvania's beautiful Lancaster County. When Lisa McCrory reported on that first Field Days, she wrote, "Members of NODPA have demonstrated their interest and drive

in representing the needs of producers, sharing information between states and educating the public on the benefits of organic milk coming from family scale, grass based enterprises." This is still true today, and NODPA remains a producer-led organization with the sole mission of representing producer and farm family interests, not brands in the marketplace. Save the date of August 13th and 14th, and join us in beautiful Pennsylvania.

"You can feel good about Hood" is a familiar catch phrase in New In looking to the future, it is easy to lay the blame of a milk surplus at the doors of factory farms, unscrupulous companies, "bad actors " that have flouted the pasture standards, or companies that deliberately undermine retail sales with highly competi-Marketing Services. HP Hood, LLC is no longer your friendly lotive pricing tactics. The truth is, all of these have contributed to cal milk company. It's now in partnership with DFA, has revenues the current situation, along with a poor economy, but so did the of approximately \$5 billion, and is one of the largest dairy procesrush to expand that had no safety net or plans in place to match supply to demand. Organic milk companies have followed the example of the conventional market and competed on size, volume of sales and continuous growth while selling on price rather than the benefits of organic production. Unless we reverse this trend even considering the sometimes brutal business tactics displayed and actively take responsibility for our own supply management, while looking at the realities of costs of production, we will end up on the roller coaster of conventional milk, and we know who suffers most in that situation – producers and their families.

PAGE 4

Profitability of Organic Dairy Farms for 2007

By Bob Parsons, Glenn Rogers and Dennis Kauppila of UVM Extension and Lisa McCrory of NOFA-VT

remont organic dairy farms had another profitable year in 2007 although down from 2006. The results of an on-going financial analysis of Vermont's organic dairy sector by UVM and NOFA-VT

indicate farms in the study averaged \$18,522 net farm earnings, a 0.5% return on owner equity. Note that this amount is the profit after a charge for depreciation and \$35,000 charge for family living.

This is down from the \$28,970 and 4.5% ROE reported in 2006. The results are from 28 Vermont farms and do not include any Maine farms as compared to earlier years. Profits were down due to several factors but feed costs can account for some of the difference as the price of a 16% feed mix went from \$330 per ton in 2005 to \$565 per ton in 2008; a 71% increase. The farms averaged

organic sector in 2007.

cows, 13,455 lbs per cow, and \$28.84 per cwt in 2006.

farm earnings of \$33,960. These farms produced 19,609 lbs

per cwt). Both organic and conventional herds faced signifi-

cantly higher feed prices in 2007. So this quick comparison indicates that the conventional sector did better than the

The reaction by farmers to the high feed prices was predict-

on purchased feed, \$15 less than the \$1172 they reportedly

spent in 2006. This is interesting as it indicates that farmers

lower profits with growing accounts feed bills.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

The Stories of "Deeply **Rooted**" Farmers

By Samuel Fromartz

Having spent time with farmers, I know the summer is probably the worst time to recommend a book. When the season is in full swing, farmers barely have time to eat, let alone read.

That said, if you do have a few minutes each day to reflect on what you do, I can think of no better place to start than Lisa Hamilton's Deeply Rooted: Unconventional Farmers in the Age of Agribusiness.

Hamilton's been writing about farming for a decade now, traveling throughout this country and also to Europe and Asia. Her work has appeared in magazines like Orion and Harper's and in more specialized organic farming venues. She's not a farmer herself, but is an astute observer who takes the time to figure out what she's seeing.

When she focuses her lens, what you really end up seeing is the relationship farmers have with the land, their families, and their communities.

While so much recent writing on farms is about those who depend on farmers' markets, Hamilton wisely focuses on folks deep in the shrinking rural pockets of this country. There are three narratives in this book: one centers on an organic dairy farmer in Texas, another on a rancher in New Mexico and then a grain and seed farmer in North Dakota.

What hooked me was her uncanny ability to capture these farmers' struggles as they hoe a different - and often smaller, more modest path - than their conventional neighbors. Being "unconventional" does not make things easy.

Harry Lewis, a black farmer in Sulphur Springs, Texas, is one of the handful of remaining dairy farmers in the county. His family's roots in the area go back to the Civil War, when former slaves migrated to the area.

But to stay viable, he's largely eschewed all big investments and fast fixes except for one - to go organic. He follows this path because it works for the scale of his farm and is in line with the way he was farming.

"From the beginning," Hamilton writes, "the Lewis farm has run on the mathematics of frugality-that's what has kept this business afloat for more than fifty years. As much as possible it runs on what's available for free: grass, rain, family members."

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NODPA NEWS

COMMENTARY

to lower cost feeds. In both years purchased grain accounted for about 92% of total feed costs.

Fuel expense, to no one's surprise, went up by 10.5% from 2005 to 2007. We all know it went up more than this. So the financial results are again showing the farmer's ability to tight-

The farm analyses to date show substantially payable. The biggest area of concern is the growing accounts payable as farmers are not able to keep up with

en their belts when needed. By the way, the average organic dairy farm spent \$122 per cow for fuel in 2007, compared to \$188 for conventional dairy farms, a whooping 54% less.

One expense that is up quite dramatically is interest. In 2007, interest was going up slowly but not by 43%. So what is going on here? During 2006 when farmers were enjoying a fairly profitable time, there was substantial reinvestment going on. Farmers were replacing machinery, making repairs, and making investments that made their work easier. This is another confirmation of a time proven belief that farmers

65.7 cows producing 13,152 lbs of milk per cow and received are quick to reinvest in their operations when profits permit. \$29.35 per cwt (including premiums). These compare to 62.7 But as shown in 2007, the higher interest costs remain after those investments.

In comparison, smaller conventional dairy farms (average of Now the question always comes up of what would the milk price 66 cows) in the Northeast Dairy Farm Summary reported net need to be if organic dairy farmers were to achieve a fair 5% return on their equity? They were close to a 5% return on equity in 2006. For 2007, the milk price received by organic dairy farmers per cow and received \$20.20 per cwt (before hauling of \$0.55 would need to hit \$30.81 per cwt, a \$1.46 extra than what was received by farmers in 2007. And this would not take into account the belt tightening in the feed and fuel expenses.

While economically the organic sector, on average, continued to show profits in 2007, initial analysis for 2008 is not so promising. The farm analyzes to date show substantially able. During 2007, organic dairy farmers spent \$1157 per cow lower profits with growing accounts payable. The biggest area of concern is the growing accounts payable as farmers are not able to keep up with feed bills. Farmers have cut back protein, were spending about the same on organic feed, but were feed

ing less grain per cow, reducing protein levels, and/or shifting

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COMMENTARY

Dear organic dairy consumers and supporters of family farms ...

TATe are two family farms in Maine that supply organic **V V** milk to HP Hood who sell it under the Stonyfield brand. We thank you for purchasing our high quality milk which is third party certified to ensure that it doesn't contain any hormones or antibiotics and the cows are fed a diet that is produced without using any herbicides or pesticides, benefiting the environment and slowing global warming.

Four years ago, we, amongst others, recruited approximately 33 farms in Maine to transition to organic when HP Hood was looking to work with Stonyfield Farm in establishing its own label for fluid organic milk. They made great promises about the future of the Stonyfield brand of organic milk and their commitment to their farmers. They assured us that we would "Feel Good about Hood."

By the end of December 2009 there will be a maximum of 12 family farms in Maine that sell organic milk to HP Hood as the others have been fired by HP Hood. Our two family farms were told by HP Hood that we were going to be let go because of the economic situation and "an overabundance of milk." We are not sure what made us special but we can offer some examples of HP Hood's double speak:

"You wanted to terminate your contract"

Mike Suever, HP Hood's Senior Vice President, R&D, Engineering and Procurement told us that our contracts were not renewed due to our "repeated" requests to terminate our contracts. That outright lie, according to Mike Suever, was told to him by Karen Cole, National Organic Milk Procurement Director. On May 1, 2008, we gave a 180 notice to Hood because Hood's contract states that a 180 notice would be met with negotiations. We wanted them to honor the contract and negotiate. That did not happen. We find Karen's statement to Mike Suever totally deceptive and exaggerated. When it was brought to Mike Suever's attention that the statement made by Karen was false, his response was "what's done is done." When Karen Cole was asked why we were being let go she stated " due to an over abundance of milk." We then told her that we were told by Mike Suever that we were let go due to our supposed repeated requests to be let out of our contract. We asked her which one was it. She seemed at a loss for words momentarily but then regained her composure

and stated that was true also. I then asked her for written proof of our "repeated" requests to terminate our contracts. That request was totally ignored, I'm sure, due to the fact that no proof exists.

"You were obviously unhappy with HP Hood" Karen Cole made the comment that we had gone public with our dissatisfaction with Hood and obviously we were unhappy with the relationship. We asked her if she thought we were unhappy without reason. I stated we, obviously, were not happy because our contacts, and those of other family farmers, were not renewed and that, most importantly, the livelihoods and futures of terminated family farmers and potential family farmers facing termination, are now at stake. She made it quite obvious that she could have cared less. Her statements answered the question as to why we were let go.

"There is an abundance of milk"

If there was an over abundance of milk, why is HP Hood taking on new family farmers from the Midwest? Karen Cole stated, "We are honoring our commitment to them made in November 2008." We told her that I thought it was outrageous that Hood would honor a commitment to a prospective farmer and not to the family farmers who have been loyal and committed to Hood since 2005. When we asked her about Hoods repeated requests for more organic milk that had been posted in different publications, she stated that those publications were at fault and it was their mistake for printing it. We told Karen that we now have people calling us from the Midwest wanting to buy our cows so they can fulfill a contract with, guess who, Hood!! What a slap in the face that was!! We also told her that we have names and numbers of the prospective organic producers from the Midwest that Hood is in negotiations with to put on contract in the immediate future at a lower pay price. Passing the blame to newspapers, the economic situation, oversupply of organic milk, only made it clear to us that Hood is trying to cover themselves in preparation of a potential legal problem.

We want to inform consumers about this situation so they can protest to their milk company about the targeting of family farmers because they advocate for a better standard of living for organic dairy farmers or because they are smaller operations or because they live in rural areas that are not close to processing plants. HP Hood's treatment of us, hiding behind the good name of Stonyfield, illustrates how shaky it is for the rest of the family farmers who sell organic milk to HP Hood. continued on page 24











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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Profitability of Organic Dairy, 2007

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entirely from late lactation cows.

So what is the future bringing? Even though fuel and feed costs are declining slightly, other costs continue to go up. If one assumes that farmers will try to feed a bit more grain as feed prices decline, we can expect the cash cost of production to hit \$25 per cwt. Add another \$6 per cwt for family living and we are looking at a break-even price of \$31 per cwt. An initial analysis indicates that organic dairy farmers need a price of \$31.55 per cwt to achieve a 5% return on their equity. However, with hauling costs going up and the base price declining, the outlook for profitability for 2009 is downright pessimistic.

Another concern is the impact of farmer decision on the industry. There are numerous comments from farmers making efforts to shift to spring freshening to make use of lower cost feed from pasture. However, anyone familiar with milk demand knows that fluid milk sales go down in the spring and rise in the fall. It's been that way for ages. One can just

wonder what the impact will be if a sizeable number of farmers complete this shift.

The number of Vermont organic dairy farms had grown to 210 (about 20% of Vermont's dairy farms) but has gone down to just below 200. There are many reasons why farmers decide to get out of dairying and at this point, only a couple farms have sold their cows because they cannot remain in business with this price/cost. No other state has as high a concentration of organic dairy farms as Vermont. Maine is close but has not seen the rise like Vermont has experienced in the past 2 years.

One reason for the growth in the organic sector has been the steadily increasing milk price, going from \$22.97 in 2004 to \$28.84 in 2006 to \$29.35 (average with premiums) in 2007. But now prices are headed in the wrong direction as production costs continue to rise.

What will the future bring? We have the national economy which is discouraging organic milk sales, feed prices will likely remain high for the foreseeable future, fuel prices will likely go up, other production costs will continue to go up, and family cost of living, health and education, well, let's not even go there. The organic sector is facing some tough times and farmers must stick together if they are to profitably provide consumers with quality organic milk.

Newman Turner's timeless grazing classics available once again.



Turner was one of the century's ecological and scientific farming giants . . . and deserves commemoration in a Natural Farming Hall of Fame.

– Jerry Brunetti, from the Herdsmanship foreword

FERTILITY PASTURES

In Fertility Pastures, Turner details his methods of intensive pasture-based production of beef and dairy cows in a practical guide to profitable, labor-saving livestock production. He developed a system of complex "herbal ley mixtures," or blends of pasture grasses and herbs, with each ingredient chosen to perform an essential function in providing a specific nutrient to the animal or enhancing the fertility of the soil. He explains his methods of cultivation, seeding and management. There are also chapters on yearround grazing, making silage for self-feeding, protein from forage crops, pastures for pigs and poultry and the role individual herbs play in the prevention and treatment of disease. Softcover, 224 pages. #6911 - \$30.00

FERTILITY FARMING

Fertility Farming explores an approach to farming that makes minimal use of plowing, eschews chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and emphasizes soil fertility via crop rotation, composting, cover cropping and manure application. Much more than theory, this book was written to serve as a practical guide for farmers. Turner's advice for building a productive, profitable organic farming system rings as true today as it did sixty years ago when it was written. Softcover, 272 pages.

#6909 - \$30.00

HERDSMANSHIP

In this book, Turner explains that livestock illness is a result of bad farming practices and that real livestock health begins with true natural farming disciplines such as composting, biodiverse pastures with deeprooted forages and herbs and sub-soiling, as well as the avoidance of supposed panaceas that ignore or marginalize these fundamentals such as vaccines, pesticides, antibiotics and artificial fertilizers. He teaches that the cornerstones of profitability are rooted in herd health, which in turn is rooted in: soil fertility and animal nutrition, cattle breeding for better feed efficiency and longevity. Longevity, he holds, is the most critical factor for success in livestock breeding and production. Softcover, 272 pages. #6910 — \$30.00

CURE YOUR OWN CATTLE

In this small book, Newman Turner sought to "bring within the reach of the farmer a solution to his disease problems in a way in which drug and chemical treatments have never before achieved." He relied on his lifetime of observing animals and herbs in their natural environment to guide him in his experiments, resulting in his proclamation that freedom from animal diseases may be attained by the proper utilization of nature's provisions. Softcover, 96 pages

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A message from the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance.

SAVE THE DATE!

NODPA's 9th Annual Field **Days And Producer Meeting**

Thursday August 13 at Noon to Friday August 14th at 5:00 pm

Spring Wood Organic Farm, Kinzers, Pennsylvania

Back to the Future ... in the Summer!

NODPA Field Days will return to Roman Stoltzfoos' family farm for the 2009 Field Days. The first Field Days was held at Spring Wood Farm on August 22, 2001 and we are returning to walk the fields again, with the always interesting commentary of Roman and his family. In 2001 Lisa McCrory summed up this bucolic paradise; "The cows were enjoying a fresh paddock of grasses and legumes, the chickens were foraging for bugs and grass near their mobile chicken house, swans were swimming lazily in the pond and 2,000 young turkeys were chirping a contented chorus that could be heard all the way to the farm house."

There will be workshops on different aspects of low cost production and maximizing the use of home grown forage at a time

when the profitability of organic dairy is in question. Producers from across the country will share their perspectives on organic dairy, and the farmer panels will disscuss how they are planning for the future and have diversified their operations.

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

As usual, we will have a trade show for 1¹/₂ days, with many opportunities for farmers to visit the trade show, network with one another, learn about trends in the industry, and meet resource people who will be on hand.

Save the date and watch the mail for a brochure on the event; remember to check out the NODPA News and the NODPA website for further details as they develop. If you are interested is sponsoring this event, or making a donation to support it and NODPA's great work, please contact Ed Maltby in order to be included in the 3.000 brochures that will be mailed out. If you want to be an exhibitor and promote your product at the tradeshow, contact Ed Maltby quickly before the limited space disappears. For more information contact Ed Maltby by phone: 413-772-0444 or email: emaltby@comcast.net. ◆



"You can feel good

In 2005, Mark McKusick convinced H.P. Hood to look to COMMENTARY Maine for a source of organic milk. Two companies, Horizon Organics and Organic Valley Coop., had been in the state since the mid-1990's, paying roughly \$19 CWT for about 10 about Hood"...NOT! years. Mark could see that a third party would stir up some competition and, perhaps, make a price advantage for Maine This slogan has brought smiles to the faces of young and old organic producers. It worked. Our farm started shipping alike for several generations. I remember as a youngster, in the organic milk to Hood in July of 2006 at a price of \$24.50 CWT, or about \$5.00 over what it had been for roughly ten early 1960's, my dad shipped milk on the "Boston Market." The years. More increases were promised and some came. The milk actually traveled less than 20 miles to the H.P. Hood cottage cheese plant in Newport, Maine...The best cottage cheese other processors had to bring their prices in line with H.P. in the Northeast...The biggest producer of the same on the Hood, who stated that they wanted to be the "price leader in the organic market." They wanted most of their milk to come East coast. My 4th grade class and my 4-H club both took field from Maine. They stuck their neck out at Mark's urging, and trips there. We were given Hood Dixie Cups with individual wooden "spoons" taped to the tops which told us, "You can feel went to Washington County to pick up four family farms and also to Aroostook County, doing the same. It wasn't viable, good about Hood." but it would be; the potential was there.

In the late 1960's, our farm switched to the "Maine Market," Aaron Bell of Tide Mill Organic Farm in Edmunds, ME was Maine had a unique pricing system linked directly to consumer H.P. Hood's poster child for this new generation of family demand. There were several bottlers in the Bangor area, the bigger ones being Grant's Dairy, Smiley's, Footman's and Pleasant farms. With a history of six generations on the same land, this Hill Dairy, probably more. Our milk went to Pleasant Hill, about Downeast farm had not sold milk since Aaron was born. The farm started selling to Hood the day Aaron's son was born, 40 miles from the farm. These dairies tried to bottle about 90% of what producers sent there. The price was about 1/3 higher bringing hope to aspiring farmers in Washington County on the "Maine Market" than on the "Boston Market," \$16.00 where there hadn't been a dairy farm in nearly thirty years. compared to \$12.00 per hundred weight (CWT), or about \$1.00 In February of 2009, H.P. Hood, in a certified letter, inper gallon at the farm compared to \$1.50...a big incentive to be formed Aaron that his organic milk contract would not be on the "Maine Market."

County farms...nor will those of the farms in Aroostook A similar difference today is offered by the "Organic Market" versus the conventional market. Producers of organic milk a market when H.P. Hood had gone after them as producers, receive about 30-50% more per gallon or CWT as do "convenpromising everything but a termination letter. "You can feel tional" farmers. To do this, we have to adhere to strict rules as good about Hood"...NOT! to how our land is treated, using no chemical A.K.A. synthetic fertilizers or crop protection products. Our animals must be Less than a month later, two other producers in Central Maine allowed to have access to green grass and sunshine, no unnatuwere notified that their contracts would be terminated on Ocral medications, hormones or stimulants. It is not all about the tober 1st, 2009, a six month notice. Mark McKusick and money. It is a philosophy, a paradigm of returning to a simpler, continued on page 33 more stress-free life for the family, farm and future.





NODPA NEWS

renewed...nor will the contracts of the other Washington County. Eight family farms currently find themselves without

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Puzzled by PI Counts?

By Linda Tikofsky, DVM *Quality Milk Production Services, Cornell University* lg40@cornell.edu

A variety of bacteria counts are available to today's dairy producers and processors to provide information about the quality of milk on our dairies, the health of our cows or the adequacy of milk harvest-

ing practices. For years our single measure for bacteria counts has been the Standard Plate Count (SPC). The SPC is used to determine the total bacteria count in raw milk (expressed as the number of colony forming units in a milliliter of milk or cfu/ ml). The maximum level for Grade A milk is 100,000 cfu/ml; counts under 10,000 cfu/ ml are achievable for every farm. There are many possible sources for bacterial contamination and increases in the SPC. The most common ones are:

1. Mastitis: Cows with strep, and sometimes coliform infections have been shown to shed more than 10 million bacteria per ml of milk. One infected cow, especially in small herds, can have a tremendous im-

the potential to contaminate bulk milk.

intermittently.

nate future milkings.

pact on bacteria counts in bulk milk. Bacteria can be shed

2. Teat and udder cleanliness: Manure and mud clinging to the

3. Milking and milk storage equipment: Milk is the perfect

Recently, some processors have begun to place more importance

on additional measures of quality and what is most frustrating to

PICs are used in conjunction with the SPC to further understand the

causes of high bacteria count milk. A sample of milk is incubated

at 55 0F for 18 hours and an SPC is performed on that sample of

milk. No universal PI limit has been scientifically established but a

common industry recommendation is to have a PIC that is not any greater than 3-4 times the SPC and no greater than 50,000. How-

producers is the Preliminary Incubation Count (PIC).

surface of teats will contain millions of bacteria as well and if udder prep at milking time is inadequate, these bacteria have

food for humans and for bacteria, so residues on equipment

surfaces supports the growth of bacteria that will contami-

common industry recommendation is to have a PIC [preliminary incubation count] that is not any greater than 3-4 times the SPC [standard plate count] and no greater than 50,000.

No universal PI limit

has been scientifically

established, but a

ever, PI limits can vary among processors.

PICs detect bacteria that grow well under cooler storage. Mastitis bacteria do not grow well under cool conditions; however, bacteria from manure contamination, poor cleaning and contaminated water will increase the PIC. Failure to cool milk below 40° F will also potentially increase PIC so issues with bulk tank cooling or warm environmental

> temperature will have an impact. High PI counts are most commonly caused by Gram negative bacteria, such as Pseudomonas.

> Because the bacteria that cause high PICs are usually contaminan ts, it is not unusual for PICs to fluctuate widely. Opportunities for contamination of milk may vary day-to-day so it is not unusual for a farm to have low PI counts for several days and then suddenly have a count that is in the millions. On that particular day, there may have been contamination of the milk from a dirty udder, an issue with the milk cooling (forgetting to turn the bulk tank on), cleaning problems or even a swing in environmental temperatures. It's easy to understand why PICs give EVERYONE headaches.

What are some practices you can implement on your farm to reduce the risk of having a high PIC? Since high PICs are most commonly affected by deficiencies in hygiene, cleaning and cooling consider these:

- Evaluate the cleanliness of cows and their udders. Hairy udders should be clipped or flamed so that mud and manure do not cake on the surface. Teats should be washed or predipped and dried before units are attached. Attaching units to wet teats increases the chance that droplets of contaminated water will enter the milkline and contaminate the bulk tank. Avoid hosing down udders or spraying excessive amounts of water in the parlor.
- Regularly evaluate the temperature of your wash and rinse waters. One of the most common causes of high PI counts is not having hot enough water or not having a sufficient amount of hot water. An electronic cooking thermometer is an inexpensive, easy to use tool for your dairy. Wash water should enter the milking system at approximately 160-165°F and return water should be no cooler

continued on page 16

When trouble hits, it hits fast. Why not use the same pathway that mother nature provides, with a little extra boost? Immunoboost.

Immunoboost stimulates the immune system to combat invading germs. It signals the calf's own defenses to seek out the source of infection and recruits the required immune cells to rapidly deal with the disease. Rapid recovery results, returning the calf's focus to gaining weight, rather than fighting infection.

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With immunologic stimulation so critical to maintaining or enhancing health. I believe it is a wise choice to use Immunoboost as a therapeutic agent for all kinds of livestock production systems." - Hubert J. Karreman, VMD

> See your veterinarian for more information or visit www.immunoboost.info for administration details.

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fields - where you have to rake together several windcan also increase the feed value by improving protein, rows to get enough for the baler, and the hay only tests energy, and digestibility. Finally, a legume-grass mix 12% protein. Seeding legumes into these fields can lengthens the harvest window for hay, since legumes improve yield and quality of your forages. In general a generally mature later than grasses. legume/grass stand having 25 - 50 % legume, will pro-So, what are the costs and benefits you might expect from vide grass with up to 150 lb/acre of actual N. First, leimproving hay fields? We looked at 3 different options for gumes "fix" nitrogen from the air and make it available to the grasses, often increasing grass yields. Legumes continued on page 30

	Option 1:	Option 2:	Option 3:	
	Permanent	Frost	6-year crop	[Detail descriptions of each option follow on
	Grass Hay	Seeding	rotation	page 30.]
Income:	2.5 ton/a hay	3 ton/a hay	3 ton/a hay	Notes
Нау	\$400	\$480	\$480	Hay @\$160/T
Peas/oats silage			\$210	1.5 T/A @\$140/T, in seeding year
Total income	\$400	\$480	\$690	
Direct expenses:				
Clover frost seed		\$14		5 lbs clover, 2.88/lb, seeded every other year
Forage seed			\$8.5	20-lb seeding, \$1.70/lb, over 4 years
Nurse crop seed			\$11	60 lbs/A peas/oats @ 42 \$/bag
Lime		\$27	\$27	2 T/A, spread every 3rd year
Manure spreading	\$50	\$50	\$50	estimate from custom rates
Plow rye			\$4.5	18 \$/A, amortized over 4 years
Harrow			\$11	3X @ \$14/pass, over 4 years
Seeding			\$4.3	17 \$/A, amortized over 4 years
Mowing	\$30	\$30	\$30	2X at 15 \$/A
Raking & tedding	\$36	\$36	\$36	4X at 9 \$/A
Baling	\$39	\$47	\$47	\$5.50 /bale
Bale wrapping	\$39	\$47	\$47	\$5.50/bale
Total expenses:	\$194	\$251	\$276	
Income - expenses (net/acre)	\$206	\$229	\$414	
Income:				
Corn silage			\$600	12 T/A @\$50/T
Direct expenses				
Corn seed			\$52	\$130/bag, 2.5 A/bag
Winter rye/vetch seed			\$40	100 lbs rye year 1, 100 lbs rye year 2
Lime			\$27	2 T/A, spread every 3rd year @ 40 \$/T
Manure spreading			\$50	estimate from custom rates
Plow rye			\$18	18 \$/A
Harrow			\$45	3X @ \$15/pass
Plant corn			\$18	
Cultivate			\$45	3X @ \$15/pass
Chop, haul and fill silo			\$120	12 tons/A @ \$10/ton
Seed cover crop			\$10	
Total expenses			\$425	
Income - expenses (net/acre)			\$175	
Average net for 6-year rotation	\$206	\$229	\$250	
% increase from option #1		10%	18%	

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

What's the Value of High Quality Forage?

Heather Darby, Agronomist Dennis Kauppila, Economist University of Vermont Extension

n my travels around farms this winter, I've noticed a wide variation in what farmers are feeding for grain. The quality and of course price have ranged anywhere from a 12% protein mix costing \$535/ton, to high-protein mixes costing over \$608/ton. This really affects the farm's yearly income. For example, 50 milking cows eating 15 lbs grain per day, paying \$100 per ton more for grain will cost an additional \$8,000 over a typical winter. That's not pocket change!

So what was the major difference between these farms? The farms feeding cheaper grain had put up higher-quality forage, even in a tough cropping summer. Their feed tested over 16% crude protein, with good energy and digestibility (45-50% NDF on the forage test). The cows made milk on good homegrown forage, instead of pricey organic grain. So, what does it take to make good quality forage, year after year? The basics to producing high quality feed include a combination of good management practices and of course good fortune. I am sure we all remember how difficult it was to make high quality forage last year! Forage can lose 10 to 20 % of its CP and digestibility if it is damaged by rain. However, since we can not control the weather we should focus on the things we do have control over. Listed below are some of the key management factors influencing forage yield and quality.

1. Getting forage harvested on time is the first principle in producing good-quality forage. As plants mature, go



to head, and then flower, the forage increases in fiber, reducing the CP and digestible dry matter content of the resulting hay. Hay digestibility decreases between 0.33 and 0.50 percentage points per day. The optimum harvest date will vary across the state so watch the growth stage of the grasses to determine when to start making first cut hay. Hay should be cut when grass is in the late-boot to early-head emergence stage. This stage provides the best compromise between yield and quality. This usually means late May here in Vermont for 1st cut. Later harvests should be made based on the growth stage of the legume. For highest quality, harvest when the legume is in the late-bud growth stage.

- 2. Providing plants with the proper nutrition is critical to high yield and quality. Maintaining adequate soil fertility will start with soil testing. If some fields have high fertility and some are low, focus on the low ones first. Soil pH must be corrected to at least 6.5 for alfalfa, 6.2 for red clover. Potassium is the most important nutrient for stand maintenance and yield retention. Phosphorus is very important in stand establishment. Don't forget to pay attention to neglected nutrients like calcium, sulfur, and boron. Manure, compost, and mineral applications can address immediate nutrient needs and build organic matter for longer term nutrient supply.
- 3. Including legumes such as clover, alfalfa, or birdsfoot trefoil in your forage stands. Old grass hayfields, evenwith manure applied, can lose yield and quality as less favorable forage species take over. You know those



PAGE 16

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Puzzled By PI Counts?

continued from page 12

than 115-120° F.

- Be sure your cleaning chemicals are appropriate for your water's hardness. Have your supplier test your water and find soaps and acids that are compatible.
- Have your milking system function evaluated. If your pump is not sized adequately for your system, there may be inadequate airflow for slug formation. Slugs are the necessary 'elbow grease' required to scrub the system clean. Dead ends in pipelines, dips and too many elbows impede drainage. Blind spots in the bulk tank can allow for residues and may need to be cleaned manually. Be sure rubber parts (inflations, gaskets, etc) are changed according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Water quality can also impact PIC. Well water may contain coliforms or water lines may become contaminated with Pseudomonas. If sanitized equipment is rinsed with water, milk may become contaminated. There are ultraviolet (black light) water treatment systems that kill bacteria found in well water; these systems are quite effective.
- Rapidly chilling milk will help prevent PI spikes so for

farms that have consistent issues with counts, installing a precooling system can help.

Finally, sampling and handling errors can cause PI spikes. Partial pickups will leave a residue on the sides of a bulk tank that will contaminate the next milking. Bulk tank drivers should be educated to always take samples from the top of the tank (not the outlet valve) and to be sure that samples are promptly chilled. Old samples will have increases in the PI count. Dipping household containers to retrieve milk for the evening meal may introduce bacteria.

There are proactive measures farmers can take to help diagnose causes of PI spikes on their farms. Have your hauler take an extra vial and label it with the date. Freeze this sample IMMEDIATELY. If you should have a bacteria count spike on your next report, you'll have a little bit of 'history' in your freezer. This frozen sample can be sent to an independent laboratory for confirmatory testing and to help you troubleshoot issues. Additional information on sampling may be found here (http://gmps.vet.cornell.edu/Services/bulktank. htm) or by calling the Canton QMPS laboratory at 315-3798-3930.

PIC spikes are frustrating for everyone. Although the organisms causing PI spikes are killed by pasteurization, consistently high counts indicate there may be some deficiencies in milk harvesting practices, cooling of milk or cleaning of equipment that require further investigation.



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INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT ORGANIC DAIRY?

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic Dairy Research and Outreach at WCROC

Dennis Johnson, Professor and Dairy Scientist, University of Minnesota, West Central Research and Outreach Center, Morris, Minnesota, 56267 dairydgj@morris.umn,edu, 320.760.4431

The 2008 decision to transition a portion of the dairy herd at the University of Minnesota, West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC) to the organic production system provides an opportunity to

A 2005 survey of organic dairy producers by Jim Riddle, extension orset new directions in research, teaching and outreach at the Morris site. ganic coordinator at UM, identified perceived needs for research in or-The University of Minnesota will become the first land grant in the ganic dairy that will serve as a starting point for considering research Midwest to manage an organic dairy herd that is dedicated to rein organic dairy farming, Participants in the four Organic Dairy 101 search and education. The other universities with organic dairies are for Professionals workshops offered during winter 2008 asked many the University of New Hampshire and Chico State University (CA). questions relating to health in organic herds and the economics of or-The growing organic sector in Minnesota will soon benefit from ganic dairy production. Nationwide research collaborators and fundinformation that is tested by rigorous science. ing sources are being sought. Minnesota scientists have visited the New Hampshire and California sites to coordinate activities. A plan-Why adopt this program now? ning grant proposal for future research and extension outreach has 1. Growing demand for organic/local food products has fueled been submitted to USDA. Further coordination will occur whenever a need for information to manage systems for production of possible, starting with participation in NOFA-Vermont's Understandmilk that is identified as local or organic. ing Organics conference which took place in Auburn, NY last fall.

- 2. A research position for an animal scientist in sustainable and organic dairy production systems is coming available.
- 3. Over the past 13 years the WCROC dairy has focused on grazing, crossbreeding, and out-wintering with reduced inputs so the adjustment to organic will be less than transition from fully conventional.
- 4. The organic/sustainability/local food advocates in Minnesota are strong supporters for research and outreach at the U of M.
- 5. Sustainable systems resonate with University of Minnesota and College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences priorities.

The transition that is required for organic certification of cropping and dairy management has started. We anticipate certification of the herd in the fall of 2009 with cropland certification phasing in over





three years. A conventional herd will also be maintained at the site but managed separately so the outcomes of conventional and organic methods can be compared. Research on the effects of transitioning is underway. Milk samples from individual cows are being analyzed for mastitis-causing bacteria through and following transition. As antibiotics are not used in organic systems both the incidence and severity of mastitis during transition is an important concern. Also, the cost and level of production is closely monitored. Conventional reproductive management utilizing hormonal manipulation is being contrasted with organic methods focused on heat detection by observation. The Minnesota organic project is unique to organic research herds in being the only one to transition an existing herd and to have a conventionally managed dairy herd for controlled studies.

Future research topics may include:

- 1. Multiple benefits benchmarking of organic and conventional systems to include biological and economic efficiency, product quality, carbon footprint, emissions, quality of life, etc.
- Appropriate treatments for disease in organic herds. 2.
- 3. Nutrient flows including field, feed, and animal
- Dairy forage production and utilization
- 5. Development of best management practices for organic dairy

Extension/outreach activities will include grazing management, best management practices for organic dairy production and animal health in organic systems.

continued on page 37

Base price

Short (3/4 months)

Long (8 months)

Trucking charge/yr

Short (Dec, Jan Feb)

MAP

Long

Short

2009

25.30

2.00

2.00

_

-

27.80

HP Hood

2008

24.90

2.50

2.00

-

-

27.90

2006

26.00

2.00

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-

_

26.50

Overview Of Pay-Price In New England

2006

24.00

2.00

1.50

0.75

Average year round price *** 26.50

26.50

Horizon Organic

2008

25.00

2.50

3.00

_

1.50

28.50

28.50

2009

25.00

2.00

4.00

1.50

_

_

28.00

28.33

2009

27.25

_

(1.00)

-

2,160

_

27.17

2.00

Organic Valley*

2008

28.25

-

-

-

28.25

900

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2006

26.00

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-

-

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900

26.00

MAY	2009
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Grain Market Update

May is when we move into planting season and assessment of any winter kill which will affect any projections for this year's harvest. There appears





consultation offered by DMS quality specialists

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PAY PRICE UPDATE

The last few months have seen the pay price drop by all milk companies, from some smaller cooperative and individual producers to the "Big Three." We are now in the time of year when all the seasonal bonuses end and everything reverts back to the base price. There is no anticipation of any increases in the next few months and no commitments for any fall seasonal payments.

The table above shows the New England pay price since 2006. The chart at right shows trends in organic fluid milk sales for the past four years.

* Organic Valley requires producers to purchase preferred stock equivalent

to 5.5% of their annual base gross income; historically this investment has an 8% return on required amount in Class B Stock. Profit sharing is activated if Organic Valley's 2.2% profit goals are met or exceeded.

** \$1.00/cwt for milk produced in Oct, Nov, Dec, provided the average is greater than the average for May, June, July.

*** Seasonal bonus paid is multiplied by the number of months and divided by a complete calendar year. Horizon's MAP for 2009 was changed in May 2009, Hood in *March and OV in February*

Trends in Organic Fluid Milk Sales



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NODPA NEWS

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

with prices from \$165 to \$175 per ton out of the Midwest.

** From Northeast organic farmers to Northeast organic farmers **

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Animal Welfare Regulations

Almost inevitable for organic livestock but will producers need their own humane standards of treatment as they get buried in paperwork?

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

t seems that it is no longer "the eye of the producer" that measures Livestock husbandry standards but an increasing amount of paperwork and checklists.

The NOSB's spring meeting took place in Washington DC in the first week of May and, as usual, there were many topics under discussion and much networking between all the different attendees. Some of the topics discussed by the NOSB were Nano Technology, Peer Review Panels, Biodiversity, Retail Certification and Organic cosmetics and Personal Care Products.

Of most interest to livestock producers was the discussion document on animal welfare that was published prior to the meeting by the NOSB Livestock committee.

THE RIGHT APPROACH:

- Education of new entrant producers who have limited knowledge;
- Education of inspectors to be able to assess livestock management and apply any non-compliance through existing rules:
- More education of veterinarians
- Higher levels of profitability for organic livestock operations that provide an adequate return for the costs of organic production and recordkeeping.

consider and debate potentially related standards on minimum roost and nest space as well as other attributes of housing? Ideally, the NOSB would have the luxury of time to move forward and recommend all health and welfare standards as they pertain to layers, since at some level, there is an interconnectivity that makes a holistic appraisal appealing. But we argue that a 'holistic' strategy is ill-advised."

ers, before it has had the opportunity to

Given the time consuming nature of standard setting, and the likely challenges to animal health and welfare standards, NODPA agrees with Merrigan and Lockeretz recommendation that the NOSB move forward and adopt discrete standards as consensus emerges. We share their reasoning for this approach in

the following two areas:

NODPA submitted comments to the NOSB stressing that it is in the best interest of the organic livestock community to wait until after the publication and implementation of the Final Access to Pasture Rule to move forward with other issues around animal welfare. Mandatory pasture for a minimum of 120 days during the growing season where livestock consumes at least 30% of their required dry matter is the most basic of animal welfare standards and needs to be implemented across the whole sector. Similarly we also asked the NOSB livestock committee to first provide recommendations for standards relating to organic dairy replacements prior to considering more definite standards addressing animal welfare.

NODPA recognizes the need to look at animal welfare standards as they relate to organic livestock and wishes to work with the NOSB Livestock Committee on different proposals. In looking at the best way to proceed with this discussion we would like to highlight the advice and recommendations from the presentation made by Kathleen Merrigan and William Lockeretz at the November 2007 NOSB meeting:

"In approaching the domain of animal health and welfare issues, the NOSB must make a critical strategic decision. Should the Board recommend, for example, that perches be required for lay-

- 1. By law, the rulemaking process must consider the impact a proposed rule will have on the regulated industry. The organic livestock sector is still in its infancy but is growing rapidly so now is the time to time to carve out an organic standard that elevates science over economics and consumer emotion.
- 2. Rulemaking is a dynamic process and standards may be amended as science emerges to suggest alternative strategies.

Merrigan and Lockeretz's recommendations made nearly two years ago predates the intense discussion and commenting on the Proposed Access to Pasture Rule that included many areas of animal welfare, livestock care and basic livestock husbandry that has always been assumed was left up to the individual producer and their certifier. While there was overwhelming agreement on the basic access to pasture standards (a minimum of 120 days on pasture with a minimum consumption of 30% DM) there was a divergence of opinion on both the need for encapsulating these livestock care and detailed grazing plans in rulemaking given the many production practices in different geographic areas and the enforceability of such detailed standards. The issue of the qualifications of inspectors to

continued on page 34





that I wasn't satisfied with, and I kept seeing these interviews about Udder Comfort™ with a hard guarter. I applied Udder **Comfort™** and the next day, she was

in the newspapers. Then I decided to test **Udder Comfort™** on 7 of my cows to see what would happen with the cell counts. I was surprised at the results. I could see it in the bulk tank. **MAS-D-TEC** is a My SCC was 400,000 and it dropped battery-operated right away to around 300,000," says portable cow-side Gene Dirksen, who milks 35 cows at meter for checking his 50-cow Neskr Farm. Darlington. milk conductivity Wisconsin. "I used the Mas-D-Tec of individual guarters (hand held conductivity meter) to check the whole herd. That thing really works good, and it's easy to use. I'll be using 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 guarters were contributing to the bulk tank SCC. Then I put **Udder Comfort™** on those guarters (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 guarter. I was surprised. We had one here a couple weeks ago that came in AMPIONS THE CHOICE OF CHAMPIONS





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"The result was a 100,000-drop in my **Bulk Tank SCC**" ~ Gene Dirksen

"I was using another lotion

LIST 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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MAY 2009

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

SHADES OF GREEN: Quantifying the Benefits

of Organic Dairy Production

By Charles Benbrook

Chief Scientist

March 2009

The Organic Cente

Shades of Green: Quantifying the **Benefits of Organic Dairy Production**

The calculator is composed of a series of 10 Steps, each corresponding to a table in a Microsoft Excel workbook. Users of the calculator may add data reflecting conditions on a specific farm or set of farms, replacing the national average default values currently in the calcualtor.



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



ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Humboldt Creamery **Announces Chapter 11 Filing**

From The Humboldt Beacon Posted: 04/22/2009 10:22:54 AM PDT

On Tuesday, April 21, the Humboldt Creamery, LLC, announced that it has filed for protection under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code with the United States Bankruptcy Court in Santa Rosa, Calif. The bankruptcy filing was necessitated by its impaired financial condition, which was discovered after the resignation of its former Chief Executive Officer, Richard Ghilarducci. Mr. Ghilarducci had been the President and Chief Executive Officer of Humboldt Creamery since 1997, and resigned on Feb. 20, 2009.

Since that resignation Humboldt has appointed Mr. Len Mayer as its Chief Executive Officer, and conducted an investigation as to the background of these matters. While the investigation is ongoing, Mr. Mayer and Humboldt have concluded that the core ongoing operations of Humboldt are profitable and will be preserved.

The major secured lenders to Humboldt are CoBank and American AgCredit. These lenders have cooperated with Humboldt in negotiating the terms of a debtor in possession loan agreement providing an ad-

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ditional \$3 million facility for Humboldt, which will allow Humboldt to reorganize its business in Chapter 11. CEO Len Mayer stated as follows:

"We have today concluded a new debtor in possession financing arrangement with our lenders. This loan agreement will allow us to pay on a current basis all of our suppliers for goods, supplies and services delivered to us after the filing of the bankruptcy case, and to at the same time find a strategic buyer who can continue the operations of this business that was started in 1929."

Humboldt has a brand name that is well known and carries a significant market share. Humboldt has engaged the investment banking firm of Duff & Phelps to work with it in selling the business as a going concern. With the support of its existing lenders, Humboldt expects to find a new partner who will work with it to continue the business and solve the problems caused by the former lack of financial reporting. The reorganization will be for the benefit of the employees, local dairy farmers, and creditors and suppliers of the company.

Humboldt is based in Fernbridge (Humboldt County), California and has additional facilities in Stockton and Los Angeles.

Founded in 1929, Humboldt Creamery is the oldest independent dairy cooperative in California and specializes in pasture based and organic dairy farming. It is owned and operated by approximately 50 family farmers and produces high quality fluid milk products, ice cream, and milk powder shipped nationally and internationally.



Author(s): Charles Benbrook, Ph.D., Chief Scientist, The Organic Center

A calculator has been developed to help consumers, dairy farmers, and food companies estimate the avoided environmental, public health, and animal welfare impacts associated with shifting dairy cows from conventional to organic management.

The "avoided impacts" stemming from applications of synthetic nitrogen fertilizer, herbicides and insecticides, and several classes of animal drugs can now be estimated for a single milking cow, a given herd of milking animals, across all cows in a region or all farms shipping to a given dairy processing company, or even for a gallon of milk.

The design of the calculator, the equations in it, and sources of input variable values are described in the "Shades of Green" report:

http://www.organic-center.org/reportfiles/Shades_of_Green_03302009_final.pdf

Individuals who wish to work with the calculator can receive the Excel workbook free of charge by sending an email to Charles Benbrook at cbenbrook@organic-center.org.



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MAY 2009

NODPA NEWS

COMMENTARY

Dear organic dairy consumers ...

continued from page 6

What is the future of the other family farmers whose contracts are up for renewal in the near future? HP Hood will undoubtedly double talk. They seem to have that down to a science. They will prevaricate, intimidate and use their legal muscle to lower the price they pay to farmers to a point where organic milk is uneconomic for small to moderate size family farms. Unfortunately, it is the family farmer who has to worry whether or not he has a market or a future in the dairy business but we strongly feel that consumers have a right to know that HP Hood selling under the Stonyfield label, does not treat family farmers fairly.

If nothing else, this experience can prove to other family farmers and consumers on how to be black balled!! Stand up for what you believe in and out the door you go. Get your name and picture in the Bangor Daily News, wait a month and get terminated. Ask for a negotiation meeting and you have "repeatedly" asked to be let out of your contract. Ask why you have been terminated and any of the above scenarios will do. Maybe all of them. It depends on who you are talking to at the moment. Apparently, any excuse will justify termination. Family farmers need to be very very careful in their

dealings with HP Hood. We are living proof of what can happen

We met with 2 media students from the Salt Institute in Portland. These gentlemen would like to publish and also broadcast our story. They were both very enthusiastic and interested in what Hood has done to the family farmers not only in Maine but around the country. They were appalled by the overall picture of the future of organic dairy farmers and found Hood's involvement in this unfortunate and ugly situation very interesting and agree that the consumers, potential family farmers and general public should be informed and educated. We hope that they will help us in presenting our case to the public.

We hope that you will help us in presenting our case to the public and put pressure on those that have the power to effect changes.

Thank you for your time and your continued support.

Mark and Cheryl McKusick and Richard Lary

To contact Mike Suever to demand that HP Hood treats its family farmers fairly call: (617) 887-3000 or email: m_suever@hphood.com

Contact Karen Cole at: (315) 243-1744 or karen.cole@hphood.com

To ask Gary Hirschberg or Nancy Hirshberg of Stonyfield farm to intercede with HP Hood on behalf of family farms: GHirshberg@ stonyfield.com or NHirshberg@stonyfield.com ◆

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Update on Dairy Management Research at Cal State Chico

C.A.Daley, Ph.D., Organic Dairy Teaching and Research Program *California State University, Chico, College of Agriculture*

Project Update: The CSU Chico Organic Dairy Unit is now into

it's 3rd lactation as a seasonal, managed intensive grazing, organic dairy operation. The program was designed to provide a "hands-on" learning environment for students interested in developing and maintaining a biological farming system. Students learn about the importance of systems integration, e.g., soil quality impacts the nutritional composition of the forages, the nutritional composition of the forages dictates herd health and animal performance. All aspects of the system are critical to cash flow and economic sustainability.

Currently the Dairy Management Team is comprised of 10 paid students and 6 student volunteers who work for class credit. Each student takes a lead in some aspect of the program (calves, nutrition, herd health, etc.) and are responsible for team reports at our biweekly meetings. This program has been very successful, with a waiting list of students who would like to become members of the team. The program is overseen by a group of organic dairy producers from the Western Region. They provide necessary feedback on our management plan and applied research program.



sugar using a refractometer.

Production Statistics: The herd is primarily a

cross-bred Jersey herd, with an average milk production at 50 lbs/ cow/day (3rd lactation cows) at 10 lbs of grain and 70% of DMI from pasture. Our milk quality has been excellent with a number of bulk tank SCC reports below 100,000. In 2008 we received 90% of all milk quality bonuses and received the "Silver Award" for milk quality through Organic Valley, and we are looking to do the same in 2009. In fact, the students have set their sights on the "Gold Award" for 2009. Keep in mind this is with 16 different milkers, so training is a big part of our program.

Our conventional neighbors are not particularly impressed with our milk production although our net return/cow is very favorable. Our cow costs drop significantly during the grazing season and are a key factor to our overall profitability and success as a program. A second key factor for financial success is the fact that we can grow winter forage to supplement cows throughout the winter. We are working to grow our organic program from 85 acres to 125 acres so we can produce more of our stored feeds while building our soil profile through organic methods.

Herd Health Statistics: We have been tracking our herd health sta-

tistics, to fully appreciate how this system of production differs from our conventional roots. Over the course of the last 3 years, we have had no DA's and one case of student-induced acidosis (long story ... they are kids). As a conventional program, we had a number of DA's and acidosis each year. The organic program reports a 2.3% incidence of milk fever; 2.8% retained placentas and 4.2% lameness issues, at least until this spring. We decided to change up our mineral program and what a difference that can make. This spring our incidences have changed to 1.4% RP, and 0% lameness's.

> Our incidence of high SCC runs between 2-5 % of the herd on any test day. Each month we take the elevated SCC cows from our DHIA test data and treat with garlic to prevent clinical mastitis. This treatment works about 80% of the time on subclinical mastitis. We are more successful in treating our subclinical cases than clinical mastitis using organic tools.

Applied Research Program: We are currently funded through the Farmers Advocating for Organics Program and the Applied Ag Research Initiative, to study the economic impact of soil amendments on forage quality and dry matter production. We have set 18 soil sample sites throughout our irrigated pastures using GPS to fully characterize our soils. Based on these reports, we have treated 5 of our 9 paddocks (randomized to treatments) to contrast amended vs. non-amended soils for forage quality and dry matter production. Producers in this region want to know if there are any economic advantages to this practice.

Advanced grazers testing forages for

In addition, we are ready to publish a research report on the economic impact of grain supplementation under intensive

grazing management, the bulk of which will be presented at the American Agriculture Economic Association Conference this summer. In a nutshell, we were able to reduce the grain from 12 lbs to 6 lbs without an impact on milk production and saved \$1.10/cow/day, under managed intensive grazing. The caveat is that you need quality pastures and lots of it.

We have a number of student-based projects on-going, primarily to assess the effectiveness of organic treatments, for example, the efficacy of herbal de-wormers and systemic treatments for high SCC. This is great way to teach students about scientific methodology and applied research while generating some meaningful data for the industry.

In addition to our applied research program, we are working to establish some grazing schools for both the advanced and startup grazer complete with some economic tools to track their profitability as they develop their grazing programs at home.

It's been a busy 3 years and we are looking forward to further developing the program with an option in organic dairy production, and a strong internship and international exchange program.

MAY 2009

ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

Hall & Breen Farm, LLC

continued from page 1

coming back to the farm as he was approaching retirement and wanted a farm partner. The only one with an interest was Jennifer, who felt very strongly that the farm should continue as a productive family enterprise. She returned in September 1997 and has been learning the in's and out's of dairying from her father ever since. While away from the farm, Jennifer went to college to study Communications and from there started a career at an alarm company. She moved up the ranks to a supervisory role where she was introduced to (and found that she loved) business management, which has been very helpful with her current position as partner to the farm business.

Transition to Organic:

It was initially Louis's idea to go organic. He started managing the land organically as early as 2003 and then one day 'out of the blue', he announced that they were going to transition the dairy herd to organic. Jennifer thought that he was out of his mind, but knowing that he was not going to back down, she started to do her research and did not hesitate to approach neighboring organic dairy producers whenever she had a question.

The support from fellow organic dairy producers, NRCS and the resources from the certification staff has been phenomenal. From answering questions, to passing on some organically approved medicines to try, and even coming to the farm to do some field work, Jennifer and Louis have been very impressed and extremely thankful.

Admittedly, their motivation for transitioning to organic was financial at first, but despite Jennifer's Doubting-Thomas attitude, their transition experience was very good. Jennifer, like many farmers prior to transition, was worried about not being able to use hormones on problem breeders, and handling sick cows without antibiotics.

Jennifer and Louis have learned to take proactive/preventative approaches with their cows and calves. Some of the things that they have done and are planning to do are:

- They experimented with offering free choice kelp and minerals, but the free-choice kelp was getting too expensive. Now they add kelp and minerals to their grain mix and organic salt blocks are always available.
- Go on a vaccination program to prevent some breeding and aborting problems that may have been caused by Lepto. Cows today are showing good heats and overall herd health has improved.
- They offer probiotics and Bio-Mos (Alltech product) to their calves to prevent incidence of coccidiosis.
- They improved the ventilation in the calf barn to reduce the incidences of chronic coughing and pneumonia and they make sure that the calves have clean dry bedding at all times.
- They keep their calves on milk for the first 3-4 months of life (longer than they did as conventional farmers).

• They pay attention to milk quality and individual SCC counts so that they can address issues early on and capture added premiums from high quality milk. DHIA and CMT testing are relied upon heavily.

2006 was a tough year for them to transition; it was a very wet growing season, which made it a challenge to harvest their forages when they wanted to and the conventional pay price for their milk was down.

Milk production per cow prior to their transition averaged 18,500 (60#/ cow). They are averaging 17,200 #/cow now and hope to return to their past production levels. Milk quality has been excellent (84,000 SCC) and butterfat and protein runs about 3.7 and 3.0 respectively. With all their quality and component premiums, Jennifer has calculated that they are currently making about \$32-\$33/cwt.

"I feel that organically we are financially far better off than we were conventionally", says Jennifer. "I am able to purchase things I need to purchase. We can now afford a hired man (15 months now); it's nice to have time off."

Feeding, Housing and Milking System:

The milk cows are housed in a freestall barn with computer grain feeders. They wear a transponder on their neck and the computer system feeds out and tracks what the cow is eating on a daily basis. Wrapped round bales or dry hay is always available to the cows in the manger. This system requires little effort and time; Jennifer can have her cows fed in about 15 minutes. They milk in a double 4 parlor and offer just a little grain to encourage the cows to go through each milking.

To supplement pasture, the 65 milk cows are offered about 1 round bale a day, and a 12% protein grain. The cows are moved to a new pasture at least once a day. With their more intensive approach to managing their pastures, they are seeing a lot more clover. In the winter, they feed 4 round bales a day supplemented with the grain formulation. They work with their nutritionist (Diane Norris of Poulin Grain) and alter the grain formulation whenever there is a significant change in forage quality. This summer they will be feeding corn meal as a second feed available in their computer feed system to try to keep the cows' energy levels higher.

Calves:

From birth to 12 months the heifers stay in the main barn and are managed in freestall pens from day one. Bio-Mos is mixed in the milk from day one and continues to be added in the water for a short while after weaning. If they get a case of coccidiosis (which is rare now), they treat it successfully with a coccidiosis nosode (homeopathic remedy) from the Woodard Vet Clinic in Waterbury Ctr. For scours, they feed the calves yogurt and/or eggs. Calf grain is offered after 1 week of age.

Cows are bred AI exclusively to Holstein genetics. They breed for feet and legs, high udder, good teat placement, and low SCC.

They plan to use robotic milkers in the near future, so they want to make sure that they have udders on their cows that will work well for this system.



Government Cost-Share Programs, Transition payments and a Cash Flow Plan:

Taking a proactive approach to their land management has also been worthwhile. Jennifer and Louis utilized the government programs that were available to them, using AMA, CRP and NRCS funds to improve their perimeter fencing, add some pasture acreage, developed their water systems, have a nutrient management plan and transition their land to organic production. The total value for the improvements made to the pastures and water system was around \$40,000 of which approximately \$30,000 was covered by the cost share funds. Now that the cows have access to fresh water in tubs, they are noticing that the cows will no longer drink out of the creek if there is a choice; they have experienced something far superior. Taking advantage of all the resources offered by the state and government programs has allowed Jennifer and Louis to make huge improvements to the value of their business.

Future plans:

The Hall and Breen Farm, LLC was created in 2006. This did not hapseeking financing from FSA and VACC, which would allow them to pen overnight; it took about 3 years of research, talking with family lease 2 robotic milkers, (\$375 K installed), and build a freestall and members, business planning, and finalizing details with their attorney. manure storage system. They started by enrolling in a Transferring the Farm series of classes Why Robotic Milkers? When they started considering expansion, offered by Bob Parsons of UVM. Through these classes, they learned Jennifer started thinking about how she was going to run the farm that to do it right, it takes lots of planning and time, time, time; wills and have time to spend with her family. Her children are still young have to be written, and life insurance policies and a business plan (Kaitland is 8 and Bethany is 6) and her husband Paul would like to created and continually revised. "Don't just make a business plan - use spend more time with her as well. "I grew up in a time when 'mom' it", says Jennifer. They consulted with their tax accountant whom they didn't work at all or in my case not until the kids were older. Times have used for many years, and they found a lawyer familiar with both farming and taxes. The LLC was a good avenue to transfer the farm continued on page 37 from one generation to the next for their particular situation.

"If you don't have a plan [for your farm business], you don't have a future" says Jennifer. Going through the steps of designing a business plan was painful, but it forced them to think about what they were doing, what they want to do, how they are going to do it and how they are going to keep doing it. Jennifer and Louis are very appreciative of the help that they reeceived from Al Curler and UVM staff. The business plan also helped Jennifer think about how she wants to include her children – the next generation – into the business. Agri-tourism is hopefully going to become a part of their business plan, but those ideas are still young. "A business plan", says Jennifer, "shows [to lenders] that you have sat down and thought about what you are doing and what you want to accomplish."

For the immediate future, Jennifer and Louis are proposing to borrow 1 million dollars to build a 130-stall freestall with robotic milkers, to be located across the road from Jennifer's house. Theircurrent barn, which is located across the road from Louis's home and 100 yards from Jennifer's, would be used for young stock. They are

MAY 2009

NODPA NEWS

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Bringing Idle Land into Organic Production

By Mary-Howell and Klaas Martens

Tith the high price of organic grains right now, many farmers are eyeing abandoned land, thinking about the profit it might produce. Some of those people have never farmed organically, but they realize that a piece of abandoned land could be certified without a transition period, allowing them to benefit from organic farming immediately. If you are thinking about doing this, there are many things you should understand first to achieve organic success.

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

Nearly everyone knows that organic farming means not using a lot of things that conventional farmers do, such as synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, antibiotics, growth hormones or genetically modified crops, and that for land to be certifiable, it must be three years away from the last use of prohibited materials. However, many people don't understand that organic certification is not just about what we don't do. To be successful at organic farming, organic farmers put strong emphasis on intentional improvement of soil health and biodiversity on the farm. This includes crop rotation (we are not allowed to grow the same crop in succession in the same field) and use of cover crops, approved soil amendments, compost and other natural materials that stimulate and enhance soil organic matter and microbial activity.

If we make over \$5,000 on organic sales, or if we sell to organic processors or organic livestock farmers, all our crops labeled as "organic" must be certified by an agency licensed by USDA. There are over 100 such agencies in the United States and Canada. You should contact such an agency operating in your area. Ordinarily, the process of certification consists of the following steps: First, you obtain and complete a fairly extensive "Farm Plan" application in late winter. You will probably benefit from asking an experienced organic farmer to help you fill out your initial application, for better understanding of the intent of the questions and the goal of the process. During the summer you will undergo an on-farm inspection, and in the fall, you receive your certification. The process always takes longer than you expect, on average about 6-8 months. In the first year, you will probably not to be able to sell your organic crops until the entire process is complete. This will may mean that you have to store some crops for several months until your certification is finalized.

Keep in mind that organic certification requires fairly extensive recordkeeping, and for many farmers, this can be a challenge. The goal of organic certification is traceability: your paperwork



documenting everything that happens with your organic crops from planting to sale, including all field operations, inputs, harvest and storage records, sales receipts, etc. All purchased inputs must be approved, and all labels must be saved. Before embarking on the organic certification journey, it is a good idea for you or someone else on your farm to take full responsibility for this detailed and careful record-keeping process. If you are parallelproducing both organic and non-organic crops of the same type on your farm, you should plan now how they will be kept clearly separate to prevent commingling.

Organic certification is not cheap. Before starting the process, you may wish to compare the likely added value from organic crops to the additional costs. It is possible that certifying a small piece of abandoned land will not pay, even at today's grain prices.

EVALUATING THE LAND

First you must evaluate the land you are interested in certifying. The plant species present can tell you a lot about your potential success and what you will need to do. Land growing mostly goldenrod, sumac and other semi-woody plants probably has been abandoned for awhile, and the soil will contain mostly recalcitrant non-cycling organic matter that won't readily break down to release fertility. Old sod fields are much the same - very high in organic matter, but little of it is actively cycling, resulting in low microbial activity and low available fertility. Such land can usually be "awakened" with a few years of appropriate amendments and crop rotations, but you will really have to focus on providing enough nutrients to your crops in the first year. Also, woody growth will need to be mowed and plowed under, and may still create machinery challenges until it decomposes.

Idle land with weeds such as lamb'squarter, pigweed and vel-

vetleaf indicate high fertility soil, perhaps land that received dards, does not mean that it is what you need, nor does it mean ample manure in the past. Such land should be adequately fertile, that it is the most cost-effective way to address your problems. but weed control may be a real challenge. If there is quackgrass In many cases, nutrient availability and crop performance will be greatly improved by application of lime or gypsum, or from additional drainage, but before you start investing in amendments or installing tile that will pay off over a number of years, you may want to firm up rental or ownership agreements to last more than one year. Don't try to fix all the nutrient problems in the first year - not only will that often be unsustainably expensive, but adding massive amounts of any product at one time, even something as beneficial as lime, will also "shock" the soil and create nutrient tie-ups and microbial disruptions. Lime recommendations based solely on soil pH have led a lot of farmers into trouble, largely because of this factor. Plan on correcting the problems over several years, taking soil tests as you go to monitor improvement. Unfortunately, we have seen some farmers who had doing OK before they started "improving the soil" but who actually bought themselves serious and expensive soil problems by trying to fix things too fast.

on the land, a pass or two with a spring-tooth harrow on a dry sunny day after the field is plowed will help to remove as many of the roots as possible. Before the season starts, it is a good idea to conduct soil tests. We organic farmers highly value the information we get from soil tests, not just the usual NPK and pH, but also calcium, magnesium and trace elements such as copper, boron and zinc. Make sure the lab you choose will provide this detailed information, and find out from them how they want the soil tests taken and prepared before you head out to the field. Soil tests alert you to the limiting factors, to potential weed and crop problems, and help you plan appropriate inputs effectively and economically. It is very important that your fertilizer recommendations be made by someone who understands organic farming and eco-

agriculture. If at all possible, talk with someone, another farmer perhaps, who has successfully brought similar land into productive organic farming. Many experienced organic farmers are willing to help you evaluate your soil test results and suggest which nutrients are needed and what products are allowed under organic standards. Just because you spend a lot of money on crop inputs, or that a particular product is allowed under organic stan-



PLANNING YOUR FIRST CROP

Many new organic farmers want to start with corn, but that is probably not a good choice on abandoned land. Corn has high fertility needs, especially nitrogen, so unless you have a good

contnued on page 32

THE HISTORY OF & THE SOLUTION to Vermont's Farm Problem.



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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Value of High Quality Forage

continued from page 15

managing crop fields: low-input, frost seeding (see the February 2005 NODPA News for more information), and crop rotation. The values to produce the figures were adapted from published Northeast custom-hire rates, local seed and fertilizer costs, and our own best estimates. This figures only consider direct costs, and do not include fixed costs like land ownership or rent. We hope this is 'food for thought' as you think about the upcoming cropping season.

Option #1: Permanent Grass Hay - the 'basic' option 2 cuts per year, 1 cut wrapped silage, 1 cut dry hay. Yield is 2.5 tons/acre. No new seed, manure as fertilizer.

Option #2: Frost-seeding - the "low-input" option Clover frost-seeded every other year. Yield is 3 tons/acre. Manure and lime as soil amendments.

Option #3: A 6-year crop rotation

2 years corn silage, 4 years hay with a field peas and oats nurse crop in the seeding year.

Interestingly, if organic protein costs \$0.46/lb (\$920 per ton for 46% soybean meal) then every 1% increase in forage protein content will be worth \$20/T (2000 lbs x 1% x 1.0). Therefore in option #2, increasing the hay protein by over 1% per ton, even without any yield increase, is profitable. An increase of 1% protein could easily be attended by increasing the legume content of the field to 30%. Also, the net increase with just a new hay seeding in option #3 (no corn silage) would be 42%.

The cost of organic energy concentrate is about \$0.24/Mcal (\$460 per ton for 0.93 Mcal per lb). Growing corn silage can displace the purchase of energy and costs \$0.03/Mcal (\$35 per ton for 0.75 Mcal per lb) to produce. Corn silage supplies about 18% less Mcal per lb of feed, however, it is 8 times cheaper than grain corn. Although, corn silage in a crop rotation can reduce off-farm energy purchases it will not fit into every farm's cropping system. Growing corn adds some complexity to the cropping system. Certainly there is additional equipment and time requirement that comes with growing corn. In addition, for those who have not grown corn organically there is a learning curve to managing weeds and fertility. If you are interested in adding annual crops to the rotation consider trying small acreages initially.

There are other ways to increase the energy value of perennial forages, including proper harvest time. Late harvested forage can result in energy value of 0.39 Mcal per lb feed. If this same forage was harvested prior to "heading" the energy value could be increased 0.51 Mcal per lb of feed. Interestingly, it costs \$84 per ton to produce the forage regardless of the amount of Mcal you harvest per acre. As the energy content of the forage declines the cost of producing these energy Mcals increases. Other practices such as wide-swath haylage practices can increase for energy by 6%.

With extremely high grain prices it is essential to produce the highest quality forages on your own farm. Ultimately, improving forage quality and yield will improve your bottom line. In both the frost-seeding and crop rotation options, it seems that improving hayfields should be worthwhile and profitable. But there is always risk in farming - if you do not get the yield or hay quality increases, you may lose money. Remember that these numbers are averages; you will find better figures for your own farm by doing a little experimenting with your cropping. Have a good crop season! ◆

This article was updated from an earlier version written by Nat *Bacon and Heather Darby*







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*For cattle, we recommend releasing a shipment of Fly Eliminators every 1-2 weeks under a fly control program that lasts throughout the duration of the fly season. Releases ranging from 3-6 weeks, however, are not uncommon. Customers' experiences may vary: the quantity required and frequency of application can differ according to the size and condition of the property or barn, the severity of the fly problem, neighbors, manure management, number of animals and start date of program

COMMENTARY

In The Hood

continued from page 11

Richard Larry, the two producers who had worked so hard to get Hood into the area now find themselves cut off. They are very forthright with their opinions and everybody knows where they stand. They had not been quiet regarding Hood's aboutface to its farmers.

Our farm was wooed by Hood to renew our contract with them in July of 2008, but at a lower price than my earlier contract had paid. I chose to go with Organic Valley and terminated my relationship with Hood.

H.P. Hood has gone back on its word to the organic family farms of Maine. They told us a story to get us to sign with them. Once we signed a contract, when renewal came up, they wanted us to be puppies, to "rollover" and sacrifice for the good of H.P. Hood.

Hood's organic milk is labeled under the trade name of "Stonyfield Farms." For the solidarity of the Maine daily in-

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Bringing Idle Land Into Organic Production

continued from page 29

source of manure, crop growth may be weak, and the weeds will come on strong. Even with adequate fertility, weed control in corn will take a lot of attention. Without extra manure, we figure that corn on first-year organic land isn't likely to make more than 50-70 bu/A, so if you do choose to plant corn, it is wise to have fairly modest expectations.

We have found that soybeans are a particularly good pioneer crop on new organic land because they are tolerant to low fertility and can compete well against the species of weeds you are likely to have. Usually, row-crop type weeds are not a serious problem the first year on abandoned land. We usually plant soybeans with a corn planter and then cultivate them for weed control, but you can drill soybeans if you plant later in the season at a fairly heavy rate.

Buckwheat is a terrific crop to bring abandoned land back into production and health, though there may not be a strong market for the buckwheat grain. Because buckwheat tolerates low fertility, controls weeds, loosens and improves the soil, and makes minerals in the soil more available for subsequent crops, it is a great green manure that, when plowed under, will prepare the soil for planting a winter small grain in the fall or other crops the following spring. Buckwheat is also a good forage when grazed.

Of the small grains, oats or spring triticale, with or without field peas, are probably your best bet. Oats particularly usually produce a good crop on first-year land. Oats can also be used as a nurse crop to establish alfalfa or other hay mixes. Spring barley has high fertility needs and often requires a more experienced eve for weed control because the young seedlings are vulnerable to damage, but it can be successful with sufficient amendments. Under our conditions, we use caution planting winter small grains since they often need more fertility and different conditions than first-year land can usually provide.

GETTING STARTED

Let's start with a crop of soybeans. We would plow the land in the spring (or in the fall if possible), disk it once, apply a halfton of composted chicken manure and perhaps 150 pounds per acre potassium sulfate, depending on the soil test results. If the soil has a pH of 6.5 or lower, layer manure would be fine, but on higher calcium soils, we prefer to use broiler manure with its lower calcium content. After applying the compost, we disk it in and then plant the soybeans.

Adjust your planter and check to make sure you are getting uniform seed depth placement — uniform emergence is critical to effective weed control.

WEED CONTROL

In organic grains, weeds are going to be your biggest challenge. You will need certain types of specialized equipment, and timing is extremely critical, so before you start the season, make sure that you have the right equipment available and in good repair for early season weed control (coil-tine harrow or similar tool) and midseason weed control (betweenrow cultivator). For soybeans, we usually use a coil-tine harrow weeder once just before emergence and again between the unifoliate and trifoliate stages. We then will cultivate once at mid-trifoliate and a second time about one week later.

When the weather conditions are right and our equipment is properly adjusted, these four passes are generally enough to control the weeds. Weed control in small grains or drilled soybeans is a little simpler — a pass with the coil-tine harrow at emergence and than again at the four-leaf stage. (For more information on weed control equipment, timing, and decision-making, see our three online weed control articles at www.newfarm.org/features/2005/0105/earlyweeds.)

HARVESTING & SELLING

Before harvest comes, start making contacts with potential markets. It is not difficult to sell most organic grains, and the price is quite high right now, but you still will be expected to deliver a high-quality, stable product on your buyer's schedule. This may entail storing the crop for a while after harvest, so be sure you have a location, bin or other facility where your organic grain can be held in good condition, clearly separated from any conventional grain. The grain also must be harvested and handled to prevent the possibility of commingling with conventional grain or prohibited materials. If your combine, trucks, grain dryer, augers and storage facilities are not "dedicated organic," this will involved complete and documented cleanout before organic grain is handled. Be sure when you deliver the grain to your buyer that you bring along a completed bill of lading, fully identifying the product, and a copy of your organic certificate. Our article at www.newfarm.org/columns/martens/2004/0904 can give you more tips on preserving grain quality and positive long-term marketing relationships.

Successfully growing organic grain is certainly not rocket science, and there is no doubt that we need substantial additional supplies of grain to stabilize price and availability for organic livestock farmers. With a little careful planning, and productive cooperation with other experienced organic grain farmers in the area, bringing a piece of idle land into production this year may be a great way for conventional farmers to learn that they really do want to become organic farmers after all!

With their three children, Mary-Howell and Klaas Martens have farmed 1,400 acres of organic field crops for the past 15 years in Penn Yan, New York. They also own and operate Lakeview Organic Grain, an organic feed and seed operation serving dairy and grain farmers in the Northeast.

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NODPA NEWS

dustry, Maine farmers as a group, and the citizens of this great state, please join me and my family as we organize to boycott all Stoneyfield milk and H.P. Hood labeled products until our voices are heard.

> Fred Sherburne Maine Dairv Farmer

Milk Wanted

In light of the current oversupply of organic milk we have decided not to print the milk wanted from processors as they are not currently looking for more milk.

Remember: Before you start Transitioning, sign a contract with a milk processor and have your lawyer look at the contract they ask you to sign.

If you want a list of processors, please go to:

http://nodpa.com/milk sought.shtml



the journal of organic agriculture

Keep up with what's happening at the root hairs! The Natural Farmer is where organic farmers throughout the Northeast talk to each other.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Animal Welfare Regulations

continued from page 20

assess livestock living conditions was also raised as another concern in measuring precise operational standards. In looking at the suggestions within this discussion document, there are many livestock producers that are not conversant with the detailed application of the technique of body scoring and we would doubt that many inspectors would have the experience or knowledge to body score livestock at various stages of breeding and lactation.

Merrigan and Lockeretz predicted these difficulties by their comments in their presentation: "No one knows better than NOSB members the difficulty encountered when designing standards and building consensus for their adoption. It takes time, more time than we ever seem to anticipate, to develop standard recommendations and guide them through the process of rulemaking."

In order to recognize the realities of organic production, the many different production systems and the emotional connection that producers have with their livestock, we recommended to the NOSB the formation of an Animal Welfare Taskforce to examine this issue in more detail and provide guidance to the Livestock Committee on the ongoing need for any changes in guidance and rulemaking. This would ensure that the development of more guidance to existing rules would be moved forward through consensus within the organic livestock community rather than the perception of livestock standards being imposed by the USDA NOP program.

We strongly believe that organic animal welfare guidance and standards must be sensible and reasonable standards that are based in the realities of farming, good husbandry, grazing, natural animal behavior, and natural healing.

In looking at the discussion document, NODPA would like to make some specific comments which highlight the need for more discussion, research and input from producers:

- We agree and have actively advocated for all possible measures to be used to treat sick animals, even at the expense of their organic status. We do not believe that having more defined standards that are part of a checklist for producers and inspectors will have the desired effect. We believe that the following ways to address this situation will be more effective and not penalize the majority of producers who have the knowledge and husbandry skills to implement 205.238 section (c):
 - ⁰ Education of new entrant producers who have limited knowledge;
 - Education of inspectors to be able to assess livestock management and apply any non-compliance through existing rules;
 - More education of veterinarians at college and at educational workshops of organically permitted ways to treat

sick livestock to give producers more choices in forming an ongoing relationship with a veterinarian who can provide the support needed in developing and implementing preventative measures and knowing when to intervene with prohibited medications.

- Higher levels of profitability for organic livestock operations that provide an adequate return for the costs of organic production and record keeping.
- We advise that the intent of the proposed organic animal welfare guidance and standards be changed from "the organic livestock industry must meet and exceed those (animal welfare standards) set by the conventional industry" to meeting and being comparable with the larger industry standards. The conventional animal agriculture industry is very cognizant of the need for establishing animal welfare standards and are working diligently to create and institute strong standards and guidelines. To require organic livestock farmers to exceed all conventional industry welfare standards sets up an unrealistic paradigm-that organic livestock farmers have far fewer tools and materials to work with in terms of healthcare and more encumbrances than the conventional livestock industry, yet must achieve higher benchmarks in all areas. The organic livestock industry already has higher standards of audit and enforcement than the conventional industry as organic certification mandates third party auditing of operations and most conventional standards are either self certifying or voluntary guidelines.
- We understand the need to ensure that organic livestock are properly and adequately fed, but we disagree with the suggestion that 95% of all livestock should not have any rib or vertebrae visible. Rather than introduce a revised body condition score (BCS), the one already established in the industry should be used (i.e. in the current BCS of 3, vertebrae and rib are still visible—not invisible as the draft document states). It is normal and proper for dairy cows to move 1 point in body condition scoring during the course of their lactation and that fact must be recognized and allowed in any guidance on BCS. During the lactation cycle, normal and allowable should be seen as anywhere from 2 to 4 BCS, acknowledging the fact that grazed cows expend more energy in walking than do confinement cows and will have more athletic bodies and tend toward lower BCS. Also, it should be recognized that obesity in cows can be as unhealthy, although in different ways, as being too thin.
- There must be recognition that nature can heal itself and does for many conditions but that time is necessary. For example, ringworm is a condition that can affect the skin of livestock but it is almost always self-limiting and will heal over time without treatment. However, when an outbreak occurs, a large number of animals can be affected with total areas of bald spots larger than six inches and it may take a few months for nature to work her magic. To require farmers to treat a condition that is self-limiting, that will heal on its own, and that will then provide a measure of immunity to the animal, is unappreciative of the natural healing ability of the livestock.

NET UPDATE

Recent Discussions On ODairy

By Liz Bawden

Not surprisingly, the current state of supply and demand in organic dairy and worry about how the spring flush will play out were common threads in discussions this month. Farmers aired their solutions, frustrations, and worries as they see our market stability slipping in some areas across the country. As some farmers face terminations of their contracts, others are facing increased pressures over quality issues, and most of us are accepting a lower price this spring and have been asked to reduce production by 10 to 15%.

MILK FEVER: One discussion revisited the common problem of milk fever, and its cause. We were reminded that the familiar malady strikes a fresh cow that is unable to pull enough calcium from her bones quickly enough, and develops low blood calcium. A farmer wondered why one couldn't simply apply more calcium to the fields, to increase the available calcium in the plants. It was explained that it is not quite as linear as that -- a relationship exists between certain anions and cations in the feed ration called Dietary Cation Anion Difference (DCAD). It involves the balance of potassium (K), sodium (Na), chloride (Cl), and sulphur (S). In the proper proportions, the cow's calcium level can remain constant, and milk fever is avoided. Other methods to avoid milk fever were also discussed; they included feeding dry cows hay that tests low in potassium, feeding magnesium sulfate prior to calving, vitamin D3 injection, and feeding apple cider vinegar for 2 weeks prior to calving.

DEHORNING PROBLEM: A farmer had to dehorn an adult cow, and the wound at the horn began to smell, indicating an infection. The farmer had tried pouring on hydrogen peroxide, but felt that it was causing pain. Some suggestions from others included: washing off the area well so the peroxide could more effectively get into the area of infection and could have room for the expansion as it bubbles up, using a wound wash solution or calendula solution as an alternate, and homeopathic calendula or arnica given 3 times a day. It was explained that the horn is connected into the sinuses, so the cow may drain out of one nostril.

SICK CALVES: Calves were becoming ill with scours at 5 to 7 days after birth on one farm. They were eating, but weak. Suggestions from other farmers were: feeding oatmeal in the milk (you would have to open up the nipple on the bottle a bit), using Calf Shield (Crystal Creek product), always feeding milk at cow body temperature, or allowing calves to nurse from their mother. One producer suggested

THE SOMATIC CELL COUNT was jumping around at one that scouring calves that young may indicate a problem with the health farm. The high count he received from the plant was his official test, of the cow; he suggested feeding extra kelp or other mineral "tonic" to but was far higher than his DHI test that morning. Some others the dry cows. mentioned that they had noticed that an increased SCC test usually came with a high butterfat test as well. One farmer believed that this HIGH PI COUNTS: Some farmers were chasing high PI counts. was due to the driver failing to agitate the milk before the sample They were searching in the usual places: checking cooling times in was drawn. Another reason for wild swings in the SCC is a cow with the bulk tank, checking hot water temperatures and recovery time Staph aureus, who will shed intermittently. of their water heater, checking gaskets and connections, looking for

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 transferred 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 your 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 listsery, go to:

http://www.nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml

hidden cleanliness problems, checking for dips in the pipeline. One farmer says his secret to good counts is "Calgon" in his rinse and soap cycle. Another farmer said the temperature in the parlor had to be raised in the cold weather or the wash water was cooled too soon.

FARM RENEWAL: A new farmer received some good advice on bringing back a farm that had been rented out for many years. He suggested that the farmer enlist biology to work for them --- manure, cover crops, compost, and rotation. He reasoned that the farm had been mined of minerals, had a large amount of organic matter in the soil, and the decomposition that should be happening was moving along only very slowly. So by feeding the soil microbes, the soil could start working again. He suggested buckwheat as a crop to get the soil working again; follow that with a spring grain like oats or fall grains like rye, spelt, or triticale. Interplant the grain with clover; as clover has lots of sugar and protein, when it is plowed down, it increases the earthworm population, helping the soil come back to life.

NEW PARLOR PROBLEMS: Things were not quite as perfect as what you see in the glossy brochures advertising new milking parlors on one farm. Having some trouble acclimating her cows to the new parlor, she asked for suggestions. All responses mentioned that time and patience would cure most of the problems, but there were some technical suggestions as well. To fill the first positions, keep the cows moving in quickly. One farmer said he dropped grain in the first four positions to encourage the first cows to go all the way in. Packing the cows tightly was suggested, and the cow's hindquarters should be in contact with the kick rail.



May 23, 2009 Prigel Farm Fest 2009 4 pm – 8 pm, Glenarm, Maryland

The Prigels are facing a group of local home-owners who have initiated a costly legal battle to stop their creamery. The Farmer to Consumer Legal Defense Fund is organizing a benefit to support the Prigel Family. Great food, games, family activities and music by local band Release. To learn more or for advance ticket purchase, contact Eric Daxon: 443-790-4069. Donations can be made at: www.friendsoffarming.net.

Homeopathy Webinar in June

Dr Glen Dupree will be launching a livestock based webinar series on the use of homeopathy in organic livestock production systems in June, 2009. If anyone is interested, the information for this webinar should be posted to Glen's website: www.homeopathyfortheanimals.com

For more information, contact Dr Glen Dupree, email: drglen@homeopathyfortheanimals.com, Phone: 255-721-1481

Friday, June 5

Rodale Institute Field Day - Kutztown, Berks County, PA

10:00am—3:00pm, \$15 all registrants, lunch will be provided.

Learn soil-building techniques and other sustainable practices during this day of tours and presentations highlighting the numerous resources available to farmers interested in transitioning to organic production-Register online, or by calling Rodale's bookstore at 610-683-6009.

June 6, 2009, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Silvipasture: Grazing Livestock in Your Forest Agroforestry Resource Center, 6055 Route 23, Acra, NY (Greene

County).

The term silvipasture is currently being used to describe an interactive, complementary combination of high-value timber, high-quality forage, and highly efficient livestock enterprises. Cost: \$15/person, \$25/family, includes lunch - registration deadline June 4th. Directions available at www.agroforestrycenter.org - to register or for more info call 518-622-9820

Sat, June 27, 11am - 5pm Small-Scale Dairies and On-Farm Processing

Sidehill Farm and Sangha Farm, 137 Beldingville Rd., Ashfield MA. and

For more information, call 413-628-0026.

July 9, 2009

SWROC's Organic Field Day, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

The University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center will host its annual Organic Field Day and will include Field tour stops. Hear presentations on Tricks and Trades for Weed Control, Farm Business Management, and UMN Organic Research Reports, as well as brief presentations by exhibitors.

If you, your organization, or company are interested in having an exhibit, please contact Molly Werner at 507-752-7372.

Tuesday, July 21, 10:00am—3:00pm **Diversifying Your Farm with Small Grains** White Frost Farm - Danville, Montour County, PA

Cathy and Kit Kelley are taking the next step in farm diversification and adding small grains to the mix. Check out small-scale flour mills with Elizabeth Dyck, and hear about options for larger scale milling. Spend the day touring farm and field, discussing failures and successes, and learning about small grain production - from seed to crop to mill, to tasting the finished flour. For more info: www.pasafarming.org or call 814-349-9856.

Aug 7 – 9 2009 **NOFA Summer Conference 2009** University of Massachusetts at Amherst, MA

Paul Stamets and Will Allen will be our two keynoters. They have very different expertise and experience - but at least one thing in common - the desire to see the next generation inherit a healthier, cleaner, more sustainable world. Contact NOFA Mass at (978) 355-2853.

August 13-14, 2009 NODPA's 9th Annual Field Days Spring Wood Organic Farm, Kinzer's PA

NODPA's Field Days will return to Roman Stoltzfoos's farm for 2009. For more information, go to page 10 in this newsletter, or contact Ed Maltby, Phone: 413-772-0444 or emaltby@comcast.net.

August 12, 2009, 10:00am-3:00pm Adding Value to Dairy: Ideas for Expanding Your Markets Milky Way Farm - Troy, PA - Bradford County

Three generations are doing their part on this innovative 4th generation family farm, home of PASA Board President Kim Seeley. On their way to becoming a full-fledged creamery, Milky Way Farm has transitioned

continued on page 40

Advertise With Us!

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September & November

Ad rates and sizes listed below: deadline for advertising in July issue is June 15, 2009.

Full Page Ad (7.5" W x 10.25" H) = \$450 **1/2 Page Ad** (7.5" W x 4.5" H) = \$230 1/4 Page Ad (3.5" W x 4.75" H) = \$130 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 Imccrory@hughes.net

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

NOTE: Ads requring typesetting, size changes or design 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).

MAY 2009

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

"Deeply Rooted" Farmers

continued from page 4

When Hamilton notices young calves still with their mothers, Lewis tells her: "The mothers take care of the calves better than we can. I mean, we could bottle-feed them, but that's more labor on our part." It's minimalist farming.

The second profile focuses on Virgil Trujillo, rancher in Abiquiu, New Mexico, who is trying to maintain cattle on land that has gotten increasingly pricy and divorced from its four-century role as ranchland.

Trujillo's certainly a maverick in this community, one of just seven families still ranching what was once a commons -- a 16,708 acre-parcel dating back to 1754, when the King of Spain granted it to the families in the area.

While he dreams of expanding the livestock on the ranch and working on it full time, he works a salaried job to make ends meet. You can't but help feel that he's swimming against the tide, no matter how pure his vision and close his ties are with this land. He's clearly a dying breed.

The last profile is perhaps the most optimistic, focusing on the Podolls in LaMoure, North Dakota. David Podoll set out in the 1974 to prove organic agriculture wrong, but he became convinced it was right. He now grows organic grains on the farm - wheat, triticale, and millet, as well as organic vegetable seeds, selected for breeding at the dinner table by what tastes good.

He likes to get close to the soil, to smell it, to see it, bemoaning the "brute-force agriculture" where farmers rely on numbers with nary a thought to the land.

"Farmers today with the big machinery go from one half-section to another without ever getting out of the cab, without ever smelling or feeling the soil, or even getting it on their boots," he says.

For these kind of farmers in a kind of permanent dance with the land, such distance is impossible. But what's also certain is how difficult - and how necessary -- it remains to be deeply rooted in the age of agribusiness.

As Podoll tells the author, what he's doing isn't about "organic" or "sustainable" farming, it's about farming that endures.

FEATURED FARM

Hall & Breen, LLC

continued from page 27

have changed, but kids still need their parents around." Robots, she feels will help her address this situation; there are still more than enough things to do on the farm, but now Jennifer can make a ball game if she wants to.

"Jennifer feels that robots are the perfect match for any small or organic farmer who needs to address labor or health issues". She went on to share a couple stories about farms that would not have continued dairying, due to bad knees or a bad back, had it not been for the robotic milking system

that they installed on their farm. Another farm expanded into Agri-tourism due to his new system and he makes more money from farm tours then he does from his milk check.

Financially, one robot installed would cost about \$200,000. If a farmer were to pay for hired help at \$15/hour including taxes and benefits, the robot milker (the worker's replacement), would be paid off in seven vears. Jennifer and Louis have been to Canada and have looked at robots from two different manufacturing companies and have visited at least 12 farms with all types of setups. They have spoken to farms in NY and have kept close tabs on the robot that was installed in NH. There is another robot milker going to a farm in Vermont right now and Jennifer is getting almost daily reports on how that is going. "Do you know that they sample every quarter from every cow every time they get milked?" says Jennifer. "It is like having DHIA on retainer with milk sample results available in minutes, plus the cows are weighed every time they get milked. You can tell who is in heat without even seeing the cow; just based on behavior and visiting the robot. If betsy is normally running a 200 SCC and today she spikes a 350 SCC, the robot will throw her milk away if you program it to do so."

With this new barn, Jennifer and Louis would increase their herd size to 130 cows. Will it cash flow? Their business plan, production history and good credit show that the project is within their means. While Jennifer and Louis both want to build this barn with all their hearts desire they also recognize the importance in listening to their advisers. They truly believe this expansion is needed for the family business to continue, however they are aware of the importance of being incredibly realistic about such a huge venture.

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

WCROC Organic Dairy Research

continued from page 17

Ongoing research emphases on identifying appropriate genetics for modest input systems will be continued. Three genetic groups include Holsteins bred for high milk yield, Holstein x Swedish Red x Montbeliarde bred for high yield with improved fitness and Jersey x Normande x Scandinavian Red bred for milk quality, fertility and fitness. We anticipate that future dairy production will need to utilize durable cows that eat a foragebased diet while producing milk that is tailored for consumer preferences. The herd will be grazed as much as possible and will be out-wintered.

Dairy has been one of the fastest growing segments of the organic foods industry. According to the Organic Trade Association, sales of organic milk in 2007 were over \$1.3 billion but only accounted for 2.7 percent of the nation's total milk sales, up from 1.7 percent the previous year. The United States produced 186 billion pounds of milk in 2007. Organic dairy farming will be a profitable alternative for dairy farmers that want to use less a less intensive production system that caters to a growing market niche.

Dennis Johnson is a Professor of Dairy Production Systems a the University of Minnesota's West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC). You can contact Mr. Johnson by phone at: 320-760-4431 or email: dairydgj@morris.umn.edu. To learn more about WCROC, please visit: http:// wcroc.cfans.umn.edu/home.html

Become a Subscribing NODPA Member!

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

- \$35 to cover NODPA news
- \$300 to become a Friend
- \$500 to become a Sponsor member
- \$100 to become a supporter of NODPA \$1,000 to become a Patron
- \$2,000+ to become a Benefactor

Name:		
Farm Name:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:		- 1
Email:		
Are you a certified organic d	lairy producer? Yes	No
Number of milking cows:		
Milk buyer:		
Are you transitioning to org	anic? Yes No	
If Yes - proposed date of cer	tification	

Mail this form with a check payable to NODPA to: Ed Maltby,

30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342. Thank you.

NODPA Check-Off Producer Milk Check Assignment Form

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

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

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

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

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

Producer signature:	Date:
Producer #/member #: _	# of milking cows:
Farm Address:	

Classified Ads

Feed and Seed

CERTIFIED ORGANIC FEED AND BEDDING: Baleage 4x4 Clover/Timothy - Forage Tested. Timothy Hay - 4x4 Round. Mulch/bedding and Straw - 4x4 Round and small squares. Also Triticale for feed - Approximately 22 Tons. Contact: Jeff Mitchell Avoca, NY (Steuben County) 607-566-8477 Mitchellorganics@ hotmail.com

High quality San Luis Valley Colorado cert. organic hay, baled in 3x3x8' bales. Contract now for 09 crop. Bob Butler, 11791 N Hwy 285, Center CO 81125. 719-580-7643. bobbo84@Ymail. com.

CERTIFIED ORGANIC SEED: Timothy 95% germination. Oats and Spring Barley. Cleaned and bagged. Contact: Jeff Mitchell Avoca, NY (Steuben County) 607-566-8477 Mitchellorganics@hotmail.com

Equipment

12 foot pull-type Gentil Aerator. Excellent condition; Paint like new. Asking \$9,800. Rodney Martin, Bridge View Dairy, Oxford, PA, Phone, 717-529-2720, Email: bridgeviewdairy@juno.com



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

From the MODPA President

Darlene Coehoorn, Rosendale, Wisconsin

Also we need to do our part in supply management to help In these changing times with an organic milk "surplus" we hold our organic premium. Start thinking outside the box need to be proactive in working to protect our market. It seems and keeping as much of the surplus on the farm as possible with the current supply situation we have to be extra careful to so it doesn't destroy the organic premium for all producprotect our place on the truck. We need to ensure the loyal contion. Feed more milk to calves--either a larger volume or for sumers who are willing to pay the organic premium that they a longer time. By doing this you can lower feed grain costs. are truly getting what they are paying for. We need to maintain Dry cows up a little early, giving them time to rest and recover our integrity and their trust by ensuring we surpass their expecpossibly increasing output in their next lactation. Find tations for pasture and quality of our product. another alternative use for some of your production. Give a Check your cooler temperature setting, possibly lowering it percentage of your production to your local food pantry or before summers heat sets in. Have a systems analysis done the like, stimulating interest and taste buds for future organic to ensure all is working properly. Do all you can do to keep milk sales.

your cattle clean and healthy and keep abnormal milk out of the supply chain-increasing your quality premium. Check the temperature of your wash water and use adequate amounts of

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.
- Keep family farms viable for future generations. 2.
- Promote ethical, ecological and humane farming practices. 3.
- Networking among producers of all organic commodities. 4.
- 5. Promote public policy, research and education in support of organic agriculture.

MODPA Board

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detergent, acid, and sanitizer. Always sanitize prior to milking.

Do all you can to keep your milk on the truck. These actions are truly important as we hear of producers being put off the truck if they have lower volumes and any type of quality issue.

Do your best to promote organic milk sales. Let's turn this surplus into a blessing. \blacklozenge

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

Name:
Address:
City:
State: Zip:
Phone:
Email:
Certified Organic Dairy? Yes No # of cows:
Transitioning:
I wish to support MODPA (check whatever applies):
By becoming a state rep or director.
By supporting MODPA with a %/cwt check-off.
By providing a donation to support the work of
MODPA. \$ enclosed.
Please send this form to: 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 Prsrt Std US Postage Paid Permit 183 Turners Falls, MA

CALENDAR

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from selling excess fluid milk to turning it into chocolate milk, heavy cream, butter, cheese, and ice cream for added value.

We'll tour the milking barn, processing areas, restaurant, and enjoy a home-cooked local foods lunch. Then we'll take a pasture walk and discuss fencing, watering, nutrition, pasture maintenance, and controlled grazing, including grazing standing green corn. \$15 PASA members, \$25 all others. Lunch will be provided. Contact PASA at 814-349-9856 for more information.

August 25-28 2009 1st International IFOAM Conference on Organic Animal and Plant Breeding

Sante Fe, New Mexico,

For more information, contact 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

October 17 & 18, 2009 2009 Northeast Animal Power Field Days Tunbridge Fair Grounds, Tunbridge, VT

Keynote speaker will be organic dairy farmer, Author, Editor, and Amishman, David Kline of Fredericksburg, Ohio. 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, 802-234-5524. Or visit www.animalpowerfielddays.org.



Get Your NODPA Gear Today!

Hat = \$15.50 T-shirt = \$13.50 Bumper Sticker = \$1.25 each (or) 25 for \$19.75 *Shipping Included* Make check payable to: NODPA. Send to: NODPA, c/o Ed Maltby 30 Keets Rd., Deerfield, MA 01342