NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Left to right: Joey Queen, Perry Clutts, Joseph Queen, Rhonda Queen

Feature Farm: Pleasantview Farm, Circleville, Ohio

Grain to grass to organic dairy – a farm with a history and a future

By Lisa McCrory, NODPA News and Web Editor

Pleasantview Farm is an organic dairy farm located in Circleville, Ohio operated by Perry Clutts and owned by his family for over 110 years. The farm consists of 545 contiguous acres, of which 450 acres are in grass/legume, 50 acres are in pine plantation, 30 acres are flood-plain river-bottom, and the remaining acres are buildings, housing, and buffers.

Just ten years into the farming experience and Perry has turned Pleasant View Farm into a self-sufficient grass-based organic dairy operation. He buys only corn and minerals to supplement the forage diet fed to the cows, and composts all his manure and waste forages to return to his land as biologically active fertilizer.

Working on the farm with Perry is the Queen family; a father, mother, and son team (Joey, Rhonda, and Joseph). Including Perry, they have 3.5 full time employees operating the farm and currently milk 150 Jersey/Holstein cross cows with plans to expand to 225 over the next couple years. Beginning in 2006 as a spring seasonal dairy, they now have spring and fall calving seasons. Last year their annual production was just over 13,000# per cow with 4.01 BF, 3.45 Protein and 312 SCC. This year, with a focus on improving milk quality, they averaged 196 SCC, 4.06 BF, andd 3.38 Protein.

The Short History

From 1988 – 2003, Pleasantview farm was focused on producing value added products such as grains for the human food-grade market. Their 400 acres of row crop production was managed in a 5-year rotation consisting of corn, beans, wheat, and alfalfa/orchard grass. Harvesting all that forage each year and ensuring that it was a quality product can be a challenge in rainy weather, and Perry felt that adding some grazing livestock into the mix (that can harvest in the rain) would be a

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA President

My name is Rick Segalla and I am the newly elected NODPA President. I have an organic dairy in Canaan, Connecticut, and I have been certified organic since 1999. I have been involved with NODPA from the first Field Days at Roman Stoltzfoos's farm in 2001 and haven't missed a Field Days since. Over the years, I have testified at three of the NOSB meetings that took place in Washington DC and State College, Pennsylvania. There, with other NODPA members, I advocated for a strong access to pasture rule. I also participated in the FOOD Farmers group that went to Cincinnati in 2009 to support the new regulation controlling the size of the exemption for producer handler's that had given Aurora Dairy a financial advantage on the national market. This, with the Access to Pasture rule will provide a level playing field for all organic dairy producers.

I would like to start by thanking Henry (NODPA past President) for a job well done. I know he has put a lot of time into NODPA over the years that benefited all of us as organic dairy farmers. I wish him much luck in the future.

I would also like to thank Richard Mathews for listening to our needs when writing the pasture rule. He put integrity back into Organic Milk that we were losing in the eyes of the consumers. We have in place, at least for the next two years, an organic friendly USDA and must push to get the origin of livestock rule clarification finished.

Our 10th Annual NODPA Field Days was a success; thanks to all the people involved and thanks to MOFGA for providing a great location. The energy workshops were great and the field trip to see projects in operation really made it easy to see how they could fit on a production farm. I was talking to a friend from California who said his sister put photocells on her house in the early 80's and hasn't paid an electric bill since. There is funding, tax incentives and grants to help you make these improvements and energy workshops to help learn more about building and finding funding for them.

I just returned from my 5th annual WODPA conference, which took place a couple weeks following the NODPA Field Days, and find that the west coast producers have the same concerns that we have. NODPA and WODPA will continue working together, through the Federation of Organic Dairy (FOOD) Farmers, to create a plan for national supply management for organic milk. If you have input, please contact me. I believe we must work at this together to get the best results.

I look forward to working with you as the new NODPA President; please call me with any concerns or suggestions.

Rick Segalla, NODPA President, Canaan, CT, (860-824-0241)

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA Desk

By NODPA Executive Director Ed Maltby

The NODPA Field Days, Expo East, the NOSB meeting and the WODPA annual meeting are over before the snow really starts to fly, although Lisa McCrory was stranded on the way back from the NOSB meeting by storms. NODPA has a new President in Rick Segalla, one of the founders of the organization and an experienced organic farmer who is very familiar with national issues and has represented NODPA at many events over the years. Dave Johnson will be Vice-President, George Wright will serve as Treasurer and Liz Bawden has agreed to continue to serve as Secretary to have a full complement of active Board members for an Executive committee.

The NODPA Field Days were very successful and we must thank our wonderful hosts at MOFGA for all their help and support. We also thank our sponsors who supported this event and support the ongoing work of NODPA as a resource to organic dairy farmers and allowing us to represent producers' interests in DC and with processors. We also thank the many presenters who made the diverse program so successful. We start planning for the next year's Field Days in the next few months and welcome suggestions for location and content. We know that folks have many different conferences from which to choose from and we know that producers carefully plan their time away from the farm. This year the schedule of activities was different from previous Field Days, although every Field Day over the last 10 years has been significantly different from the previous one. This time we had a combination of dairy production workshops, regulatory and policy presentations and interactive sustainable energy demonstrations and tours plus round table discussions. Was this successful? Should the format be different? What time of year is best for the majority of producers? Please share your thoughts and opinions so we can continue to provide excellent and relevant workshops and presentations.

The producer meeting at the Field Days are a great opportunity to set priorities that the NODPA Board can build on. The provincial nature of the Field Days means that we only have a small representation of producers with a regional bias and therefore during these meeting we do not set policy or work product, but these are very valuable for exchanging information from direct farming experience which is essential in setting policy moving forward. One particular illustration of this was the concern over access to the outdoors which it appears has caused problems for both inspectors and producers. We were able to generate some great ideas from the practical experience of producers and pass that on to the NOP and certifiers. The issues and concerns that producers raised included the uneven implementation of the Access to Pasture Rule, the need for a strong and enforceable regulation on the Origin of Livestock, fears over the increase in feed costs, pay price and concern about whether the supply and demand curve will continue to have the same volatility as in non-organic market. Also with the desire for more highly trained inspectors, more testing of soil and products, and more standard recordkeeping among certifiers, comes recognition that this will cost money and a fear that the producers will bear the brunt of the increased costs as they already do with the massive paperwork burden that makes the organic certification so strong. Organic dairy producers have no one to pass these costs onto, so there must be a reflection of any increased certification costs in the pay price. The organic industry needs qualified and committed inspectors who need to be paid a rate for their work that reflects their time, training and skills but we also need an equitable way to pay for these costs.

This is the time of year when folks look at gifts and giving, starting with family and friends. We would also like you to consider a donation to NODPA on top of your subscription, membership, advertising or sponsorship money. We run a 'lean and mean' organization at NODPA and all monies raised are used for programs, advocating for producers and as an informational resource for producers, media, organizations and consumers. We have a very diverse income stream at NODPA and operate on the same margins that our members do, with the same cash flow at times. We thank the many of you that reply quickly when renewing subscriptions and business memberships, plus those that choose to participate at the higher level of the check-off (very painless as the money comes to NODPA rather than faceless marketing campaigns). We thank our advertisers, especially those that pre-pay, for their support and we know that readers appreciate your ads. We also accept gifts of money, and for those of you that pay taxes ☺our partnership with CAIA enables us to accept a gift as a tax deductable donation. Please support NODPA with your very valuable dollars so we can continue our great work moving forward.

A very Merry Christmas and Happy and Prosperous New Year to all.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NODPA's 10th Annual Field Days: A Wrap-Up

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Exec Director and Nora Owens, NODPA Field Days Event Coordinator

NODPA's Annual Field Days and Producers' Meeting took place at the height of the autumn color on October 7th and 8th in Unity, Maine at the wonderful Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association's (MOFGA) Common Ground Fairground and Education Center. We could not have chosen a better venue or a more helpful and welcoming host.

An interested crowd learning about MOFGA's 5KW wind turbine

The program started at 1:00 pm on Thursday with a new feature for Field Days: interactive displays, demonstrations, workshops and tours showcasing practical examples of renewable energy on the farm. Before departing on the mobile wind and solar tour, participants had an opportunity to see the Small Farm Methane Digester and hear about it from its operator, Jeff Bragg who uses it on his Rainbow Valley Farm. Woods End Labs' Will Brinton was on hand to answer questions and discuss its merits for a family size dairy farm. Upstairs in the library, a workshop on Oilseed Production took place with a slide show intelligently narrated by the dulcet tones of NODPA President Henry Perkins. Following these sessions, everyone headed out on the tour. Despite the winter weather and light rain, attendees filled the buses that took them on a tour of MOFGA's wind turbine, Half Moon Gardens Solar Thermal System and the nearby 4.5 MW Beaver Ridge Wind Farm in Freedom to hear from retired organic dairy farmer Ron Price about how these three grid-scale turbines interface with his ongoing farming business on the same property. Ron also shared challenges of which farmers should be aware, such as neighbors' concerns and municipal impacts of wind turbine installations. Some participants skipped the tour and participated in a PowerPoint presentation on conducting an energy audit; a workshop about USDA NRCS' resources available to farmers; or went on the MOFGA Solar and Cool Bot Tour let by MOFGA's Vern LeCount. The schedule included many repeat sessions of these workshops so that everyone could participate.

Following the afternoon activities, attendees gathered for the social hour and a very full trade show. While feasting on delicious cheeses, crackers, vegetable plates, cider and punch, everyone visited trade show booths and networked with fellow attendees. At the same time, many folks watched the documentary film, *What's Organic about Organic?*, being shown in the library. The documentary was very well received and many viewers purchased a copy to take home. At start of the evening's dinner, Russell Libby, MOFGA Executive Director, got up from his sick bed to welcome attendees and gave some history of MOFGA and the beautiful building housing our event. He managed to start the process of corralling participants, infamously difficult, to stop chatting with each other and eat a wonderful local meal prepared by Crosstrax Catering. After dinner, Maine's Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture, Ned Porter, gave welcoming remarks and introduced the head of the National Organic Program (NOP), Miles McEvoy, with a humorous story about the production of organic marijuana in Maine. Miles gave a great keynote speech on the structure and priorities for the NOP and answered questions from the audience with a clarity and assurance that illustrated his long history with organics and his knowledge of the regulations. In responding to questions, he urged organic producers to communicate with the NOP directly, or through NODPA, their concerns about regulations or how the regulations were being interpreted and implemented. Those attending took full advantage of having the head of the program with them in person.

The NODPA business meeting kicked off with special presentations to outgoing president Henry Perkins and retired USDA NOP Director Richard Mathews, acknowledging, in different ways, their years of dedication to ensuring the success of organic agriculture. The late John Rutter was formally honored with a presentation that recognized his service to organic dairy and his legacy as a steward of the land and leader in the field of organic farming. Ed Maltby presented the NODPA Year in Review and updated everyone on FOOD Farmers' supply management work. After listening to

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Irish Research Finds Norwegian Red x Holsteins and Jersey X Holsteins Most Profitable Dairy Cows

By E. B. "Ted" Burnside, Global Technical Advisor, Geno Global, Norway
Article originally published on the Geno e-Bulletin December, 2009

A well-designed research project carried out under direction of the Moorepark Dairy Production Research Centre, in Fermoy, County Cork, Ireland, has culminated in finding clear economic advantages for the crossing of the Norwegian Red breed on Holstein-Friesians, as well as Jersey x Holstein-Friesian crosses for dairy production. Direction of this project from its beginning some 9 years ago has come from Dr. Frank Buckley, Geneticist at the Moorepark Research Centre. Data have been derived from an extensive on-farm project on 47 commercial grazing herds in Ireland, where nearly 400 purebred Holstein-Friesians, Norwegian Reds and the F1 crosses of these breeds were calved out and milked through three lactations under the same grazing management conditions on the farms. Extensive detailed records on heifer and cow fertility, calving performance, reproduction, health costs of replacements, grain and all variable costs and sales of milk as well as value of culled cows and bull calf sales, and cullings and survival of the two purebred groups and the Norwegian Red x Holstein crosses were kept throughout the 3-year, 3-lactation period. These data were then fed into the Moorpark farm planning model, leading to robust estimates of the profits to be obtained in a 40-hectare grazing operation, with seasonal block calving and limited grain inputs where one of the three breed groups was milked and managed.

The Norwegian Red x Holstein-Friesian crossbred herd produced annual farm profits of 50,356 Euros ($ 75,534 US), a 34% advantage in profits over the purebred Holstein-Friesian herd, but only a 15% advantage over the purebred Norwegian Red herd which had much lower replacement costs because of superior reproduction compared to the purebred Holstein-Friesians. The advantage of the Norwegian Red x Holstein-Friesians was in part based on higher milk returns of 161,223 Euros ($241,834 US) vs. 158,675 Euros ($238,012 US) for the Holstein -Friesian herd, as compared to 157,226 Euros ($ 235,839 US) for the purebred Norwegian Red herd. Profit/kg milk was 1.23 Euros ($1.84 US)/kg for the Norwegian Red x Holstein-Friesians crossbreds vs. 1.09 Euros ($1.78 US)/kg for the Norwegian Red purebreds and 0.92 Euros ($1.38 US) /kg for the purebred Holstein Friesians. Profit/ hectare also followed the same trend, at 1,259 Euros ($ 1,889 US) for the NR x HF crosses, 1,090 Euros ($ 1635 US) for the purebred Norwegian Reds and 938 Euros ($ 1407 US) for the Holstein-Friesians.

What are the factors that make the Norwegian Red Crosses on Holstein-Friesian superior to Holstein- Friesians in profits?
The herds were calved in the spring and aimed at calving annually, so female fertility, calf liveability and resistance to mastitis and other diseases, which have been in the Norwegian Red selection goal for more than 35 years contributed to much lower culling rates and shorter calving intervals for the NR x HF crossbreds, with a savings in replacement costs of 12,189 Euros ($18,284 US) compared to the Holstein-Friesians! Replacement rates for the Norwegian Red purebreds and the Norwegian Red x Holstein-Friesians were 18.1% versus 26.2% for purebred Holstein –Friesians and Jerseys. Annual milk yields were also higher, as the Norwegian Red x Holstein-Friesian crosses calved back faster than the purebred Holstein-Friesians, with an extra 11,386 kg milk produced per year, generating an extra 2,548 Euros ($ 3,822 US) milk sales. Similarly, the Norwegian Red purebreds

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Irish Research Finds Most Profitable Dairy Cows

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had much superior fertility and disease resistance compared to the Holstein-Friesians and as a result, the replacement costs were lower by 11,457 Euros ($17,186 US). This explains the superior profitability of Norwegian Red purebreds (+16%), and Norwegian Red x Holstein-Friesian crossbred herds (+34%) compared to purebred Holstein herds.

What About Jersey x Holstein-Friesian crossbreds? Purebred Jersey herds were the least profitable in the grazing model; - 32% below the Holstein herd, and -77% below the Norwegian Red purebred herd , even though the Jerseys fetched the highest returns for milk sales because of very high prices in Ireland for solids. Performance of Jersey x Holstein-Friesian crosses at the Moorepark Research Centre farm compared to purebred Jerseys and Holstein-Friesians, although based on limited numbers and only one farm location indicated that this crossbred will also outrank the purebreds and even the Norwegian Red x Holstein-Friesian crosses under the high solids prices for milk in Ireland. Clearly the advantage of the Jersey crosses is a result of very much higher returns for milk sales compared to all but the Jersey breed and better prices for cull cows and bull calves from the Jersey x Holstein-Friesian crosses than for the purebred Jerseys.

What AboutThree-Breed Crosses? Backcrossing either of the F1's to one or the other original breed will reduce heterosis by 50% compared to the F1. Therefore, the authors speculate that a three-breed cross should maintain the heterosis levels at essentially 100% initially in the first generation three-breed cross, gradually settling down to 87.5% of the maximum heterosis after one uses sires of each breed in the subsequent generations, particularly if they are related to the first generation sires. Therefore, the Moorepark Research team is planning another ambitious follow on trial in 20 commercial herds, by breeding Norwegian Red x Holstein-Friesian females to Jersey sires and breeding Jersey x Holstein-Friesian females to Norwegian Red sires, and comparing these three- breed crosses to Holstein-Friesians. This should allow comparisons of two- versus three-breed crosses. Geno Global has preliminary data which suggests this three-breed cross employing Holsteins, Norwegian Reds and Jerseys is the most profitable rotational cross available today.

What Can North American Dairy Operations Learn From This Research? The grass season for Ireland is a little longer than for the northern United States and Canada, but there are now many dairies in North America predominately aimed at producing milk from grass and grass silage. The results of this well designed research may be directly applicable to the grazing operations of North America. Norwegian Red crosses on Holsteins , New Zealand Friesians, Jerseys or crosses of Jerseys and Holsteins or Holstein-Friesians will be more profitable that any purebreds. Moreover, the Norwegian Red purebred is demonstrated to be superior in its additive genetic potential for calving ease and low stillbirths, fertility, and disease resistance, which means shorter calving intervals, and lower replacement costs, as well as reduced health costs and more milk for sale/ year, once it is introduced into the grazing herd. The Norwegian Red as a pure breed was substantially superior to either the Jersey or the Holstein-Friesian in this study in all pricing and cost scenarios. A three- breed rotational cross incorporating Jerseys, Holsteins and Norwegian Reds is the most logical mating approach for grazing herds. The Irish Holstein Friesians in some herds were primarily of New Zealand descent, as were the Jerseys, while in other herds they were of North American descent, so these results are robust as far as North American grazing herds are concerned.

Are These Results Relevant For Larger Intensive Dairying Operations? Geno Global has extensive trials under way in intensive dairies in both Canada and the USA, with results pending within the next 12 months. Preliminary data from the Canadian trial indicates that F1 Norwegian Red x Holstein heifers are producing as well as their Holstein herdmates, and breeding back faster. Dairy farmers were asked to rate the NR x HO crosses compared to their purebred Holstein herdmates, and rated them superior for all health traits (digestive problems, mastitis, feet and leg problems and reproductive problems), as well as for body condition score , feet and legs conformation and calving ease, and equal for fat and protein yield and overall dairy merit. University of Guelph analyses of the data are pending, but results are promising!

Edward B. "Ted" Burnside, Ph. D. , North Carolina State University, is University Professor Emeritus in Animal Genetics, University of Guelph. Ted grew up milking and showing Holstein cattle in an Eastern Ontario farm, then attended the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, returning as a faculty member after Ph.D. studies. He cofounded and Directed the Centre for Genetic Improvement of Livestock in the mid-80's, which continues to spearhead genetics research in Canada. Ted can be reached via email: tedburnside@sentex.ca, and phone: 519-787-8091 .

For additional articles about crossbreeding, the Norwegian Red breeding system and scientific research on crossbreeding, visit Geno BULLetin's electronic magazine: http://www.genoglobal.no/Home/Geno-BULLetin/ ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NODPA 2010 Field Days: A Wrap-Up

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feedback from previous years about how tired farmers were by the end of the first day of these meetings, we moved the Producer-Only meeting to 7:00 am, the following day. Instead, we ended the evening by having an open meeting on setting NODPA's 2011 priorities. A lively discussion pursued and participants raised the following:

1. That NODPA should be involved in advocating for a third party to decide what is the right standard for deciding cost of production, similar to the non-organic dairy industry. Standardize the criteria across the regions and how to judge what is fair across all the regions
2. Scientific research on safety standards quality
3. Peer mentoring from some of the leaders and pioneers in the organic dairy industry. We need the next generation to understand the history of organic dairy.
4. Many producers did not come to the Field Days because they could not find good coverage/relief help.
5. A strong and stable organic grain market (less volatility). Have a summit of organic grain and dairy producers.
6. Producers need to make themselves familiar with the regulations
7. Effect of ethanol on organic corn

An early continental breakfast chock full of delicious bakery goods, fruit, juices and plenty of coffee greeted those attending the Producer Only Meeting at 7:00 am Friday morning. During that time, other meeting attendees were able to view a second showing of *What's Organic about Organic?* The full meeting began at 9:00 am with a Pasture Rule presentation and Q & A session with Miles McEvoy and Melissa Bailey, NOP's Standards Division Director. They answered questions and shared information about the implementation of the Access to Pasture Rule, Origin of Livestock and 'The Age of Enforcement.' More about this session can be found on page 10 of the newsletter.

From 10:30 to noon, Ed Maltby moderated a session on supply management with a panel featuring Lawrence Andres, Canadian organic dairy farmer, Travis Forgue, Organic Valley farmer and Board member, and Ed's perspective as a member of the USDA's Dairy Industry Advisory Committee. Discussion focused on the various options that have been used/may be used, and how the non-organic dairy proposals for change now being discussed will affect organic dairy farmers. The outcome of these discussions will be taken to the national Federation of Organic Dairy Farmers (FOOD Farmers) committee on supply management.

Rick Segalla, NODPA President, taking a closer look at the Solar Thermal System at Half Moon Gardens

After a delicious lunch and annual door prize drawings, our featured speaker, Lawrence Andres, organic dairy farmer and owner and president of Harmony Organic Processing, Ontario, Canada, presented a short video on his farm and processing operation in Ontario and then spoke on calf care, with a special focus on nurse cows and optimal cow comfort, driving home the point that paying close attention to the cows and what they are communicating will always result in the best care and most productive farm.

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RESEARCH & EDUCATION

University of Minnesota Research Center Takes On New Leadership And Research Initiatives

After a long and illustrious career of serving dairy producers at the University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center at Morris, Dennis Johnson retired at the end of August 2010. Brad Heins has taken on the opportunity to establish a recognized research program in organic dairy production. He has just completed his PhD in dairy cattle breeding at the University of Minnesota, where his research focused on the profitability of crossbreeding dairy cattle. The study evaluated various aspects of incorporating the Normande, Montbeliarde, and Scandinavian Red breeds into a crossbreeding program. Below, Brad talks about his research, and the future of the Center.

By Bradley J. Heins

The University of Minnesota's West Central Research and Outreach Center at Morris was certified organic in June 2010, and our first organic milk was picked up June 2. At Morris, we have over 350 acres of certified organic pastures for both heifers and cows. However, only a portion of the 200-cow herd was transitioned to organic production. Currently, the organic herd has 86 milking cows and 64 replacement heifers. A majority of the herd calves in the spring, with about 20 heifers and cows calve in the fall. During the winter, the organic herd is out-wintered on a straw pack close to the 8-swing milking parlor. The conventional grazing herd has about 110 milking cows and 88 replacement heifers. Holstein Montbeliarde, Swedish Red, and Jersey crossbreds make up the conventional grazing herd managed under conventional nutrition and health conditions.

The organic herd, which is mostly crossbred, is comprised of different combinations of Jersey, Swedish Red, Norweigian Red, Holstein, and New Zealand Friesian. We have recently used the Normande breed, and we have a few heifers sired by Normande bulls. Normande is part of the crossbreeding program because of their high proportion of BB kappa casein, which is utilized for cheese production. The reproductive program is 100% AI, no clean-up bulls are used, and the average days open is120 days.

The organic herd also consists of the 1964 Holstein genetic strain from the University of Minnesota's Southern Research Center at Waseca. There is no other herd like this in the United States, and quite possibly the whole world, because their genetics are truly from the 1960s. This herd is used to determine effects of selection for milk yield on genetic, metabolic, and physiological aspects of the dairy cow. The herd is limited to 30 lactating cows and their replacements and seasonally calves in the spring.

We have two bulk tanks, and the organic herd is milked first. The herd has a yearly production average of 50 lbs/cow/day with 3.8% fat and 3.2% protein. Depending on the weather, the SCC across the year averages 325,000, and research will be conducted to determine methods to lower SCC in organic dairy systems.

The typical grazing season in Morris is from May to early November. During the grazing months, cows get most of their diet (over 80%) from pasture. During the winter months, cows are fed stored forages. The ration for the organic herd consists of corn silage, alfalfa silage, a grain mix, corn screenings, and alfalfa hay. The grain mix consists of corn, wheat, barley, kelp meal, and Redmond salts. Most of the forages are grown at the research center; however, organic grain and organic corn screenings are purchased as a concentrate supplement. Some of the crop land at the research center is still in transition to organic production.

Currently, we are researching the effect of organic whole milk feeding duration with group fed calves on growth, health, and behavior of organic dairy calves. Calves are weaned at 28, 45, or 90 day, and because there aren't any organic milk replacers, we are monitoring the effectiveness of late weaning versus early weaning.

Numerous research topics will be evaluated at this research center, and a successful applied research program in organic dairy management is relevant to the needs of the organic dairy industry. Crossbreeding will be an essential part of the research program in organic dairy production because crossbreeding can improve the fertility, survival, and health of dairy cows. The production environment at the West Central Research and Outreach Center will provide the opportunity to research crossbreeding in an organic system and compare the results to the conventional dairy system that is already established.

Top: Organic dairy calves at University of Minnesota Research Center. Bottom: Cows grazing under the wind tower at the Center.

Research is also needed in the utilization of forages in an organic dairy production system. Grass as forage and access to pasture are the main components of organic dairy production; therefore, more exploration is needed to determine the best grasses for organic dairy production. Developing feeding strategies for animals during the non-pasture season in an organic dairy system will also be investigated.

Many another research questions pertaining to organic dairy production could be answered and alternative methods to treat and prevent common health disorders of dairy cattle, especially mastitis, should be researched. Pest management for animals on pasture is also another important issue where organic dairy producers have concerns. Methane and carbon dioxide production from cows could be investigated in a pasture-based dairy system, and the results of research can be used to evaluate methods to reduce the carbon footprint of organic dairy production. Of course, any applied dairy research program should focus on specific questions dairy producers would like answered to improve the profitability of their own organic dairy. ◆

Brad Heins is an Assistant Professor of Organic Dairy Production Systems at the University of Minnesota's West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC). You can contact Mr. Heins by phone at 320-589-1711 or email: hein0106@umn.edu

Organic Milk Sought!

Organic Valley/CROPP

Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative is pleased to announce our Milk Supply Management Program was successful. We are now allowing growth within our membership and giving new producers the opportunity to join our Cooperative. Please contact our Farmer Relations department at (888) 809-9297 or one of our Regional Coordinators for further information: John Cleary, New England, (612) 803-9087 or john.cleary@organicvalley.coop; David Hardy, New York, (608) 479-1200 or david.hardy@organicvalley.coop; or Peter Miller, Pennsylvania/Maryland, (612) 801-3506 or peter.miller@organicvalley.coop.

Horizon Organic

Horizon Organic is actively seeking new farmer partners to provide milk to the leading organic dairy brand. Horizon Organic offers competitive pay and long-term contracts.

Cindy Masterman (New England) 802-685-3123
Peter Slaunwhite (Eastern New York) 315-272-3218
Steve Rinehart (Western New York) 917-797-9058
Liz Amos (Mideast) 814-414-4165
Chris Cardner (Mid Atlantic) 303-656-5138
Richard Klossner (Midwest) 303-319-6899
Larry Hansen (West) 303-927-9143
www.horizonorganic.com

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Everything you asked for, and then some ...

Insights about the Pasture Rule from sessions at the recent NODPA Field Days

By Lisa McCrory, NODPA News and Web Editor

The Pasture Rule was unveiled just before Valentine's Day last February, offering many of us 'everything we asked for'. The consequence of getting what we asked for is that now we have some added record keeping to do, and producers and certifiers alike need to get used to it. There will be growing pains, but I think that we will pull through and the organic dairy industry will be better for it.

The pasture rule requires that measurable amounts of pasture is consumed by ruminant livestock during the grazing season with a minimum of 120 days and 30% dry matter averaged over the grazing season. Within the rule there are additional pieces added to the livestock feed and living conditions, and this is the area that I feel could have the greatest economic impact on some organic dairy farms.

Not everyone is interpreting the pasture rule in the same way (no surprise), but inviting NOP staff to events such as the NODPA Field Days provides an opportunity for further clarification, feedback and discussion. On day two of the NODPA Field Days, Melissa Bailey, NOP Director of Standards gave a presentation on the Pasture Rule covering the various nuts and bolts about the rule, and highlighting areas within the rule where the NOP tends to receive the most feedback.

In Livestock Feed 205.237 (a)(2)(i), she suggested that producers check with their certifier to determine if the supplements/additives that they are using are organically approved for use. In Livestock Feed 205.237 (b) (8), Melissa stated that if an operation is grazing in the daytime and keeping their cows in the barn at night (or the reverse of this), then this is allowed by the NOP provided the producer is meeting the 30% dry matter from pasture. Make sure to include this management in your OSP. In Livestock Feed 205.237 (c)(1), she wanted to make it clear to all that pasture consumption is calculated as an average over the entire grazing season for each type and class of animal.

The issue of who defines the grazing season was clearly addressed during the workshop session. It is the producer who defines the number of grazing days in their OSP. Due to topography, fertility, micro-climates and management the grazing season can vary quite a lot even within a small geographical area. Whatever the season length a producer defines, it needs to be defendable and reasonable. If a certifier does not agree with the producer, they should let the producer know and come to some sort of an agreement. In the event that an agreement is not made, a certifier could give a minor non-compliance and the producer could rebut.

Livestock Living Conditions 205.239 got some attention as the NOP has yet to take a clear stance on outdoor access. There are some farms that have roofed barnyards and others who have green house barns, and though the cows are not housed inside a building with walls, they are not able to stand outside with access to direct sunlight. Some certifiers would consider roofed barnyards as outdoor access where other certifiers would not. At this point in time, the NOP is still working on a stance, which is needed in order for producers to be treated consistently from one certifier to another. If roofed barnyards are not considered outdoor access, then there are some producers who will have to make some (potentially) costly changes to their operations before June 17, 2011.

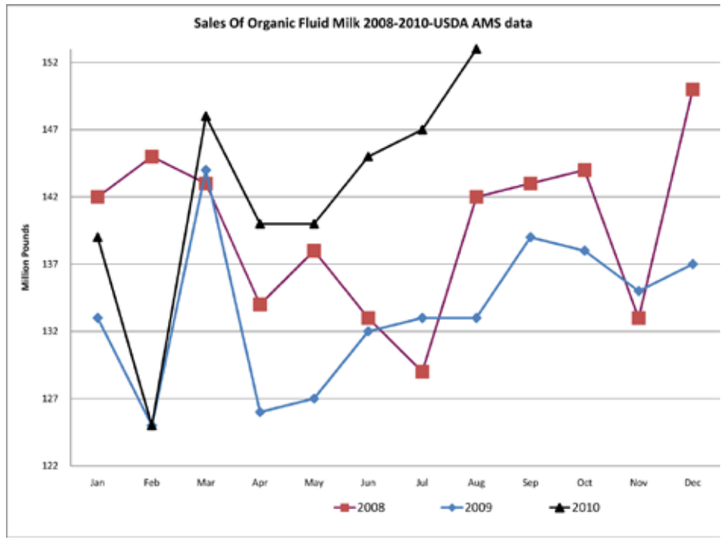
Some certifiers would consider roofed barnyards as outdoor access where other certifiers would not. At this point in time, the NOP is still working on a stance, which is needed in order for producers to be treated consistently from one certifier to another.

Following the presentation, Melissa Bailey and Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program, fielded questions. The 75-minute workshop was packed with good information, and lots of excellent questions from the audience. A couple of questions on outdoor access will soon need a formal answer, as the pasture rule implementation date is fast approaching.

NODPA is doing what it can to make sure that producers understand what is being expected of them and that accredited certifiers are enforcing the new rule fairly and reasonably. It is always best when one can ask a question directly to NOP staff. Oftentimes they are clarifying an area that producers and/or certifiers were unclear about and sometimes a question asked can highlight areas that still need to be clearly addressed by the NOP. Thank you Miles and Melissa for participating in this years NODPA Field Days. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Retail sales of organic milk and feed price update



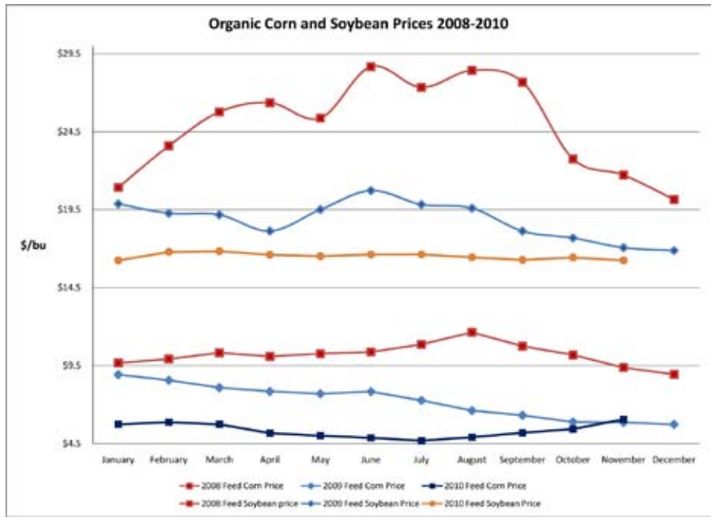
Retail sales for organic fluid milk increased higher than projected while the price for organic corn is now within cents of the non-organic bushel price. Industry projections for 2011 are for a 15% increase in sales for 2011 and processors are actively recruiting producers either by encouraging transition from non-organic or by producers changing processors. Retail price has remained steady averaging $3.70/ half gallon, with a country wide range of $1.65/half gallon, lowest in Colorado and highest in Minnesota. USDA AMS reports that the national advertised price on November 5th averaged $2.75/half gallon, down $0.71 from six weeks ago, emphasizing increased competition in key market areas. With the price of feed rising and producers being cautious about expanding after being forced to contract supply, we are headed for a shortage in supply for 2011.

AMS reports total organic milk products sales for the most recently reported month, August, were up 15.1% for the month compared with August 2009 and up 8.0% year to date compared with 2009.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Whole milk sales for August 2010 were up 31% compared with August 2009, and organic fat-reduced milk sales for August 2010 are up 11% from August 2009. Total organic milk products sales for August 2010 are the highest since December 2008.

Retail half gallon organic prices remains stable, with the highest prices in Minneapolis at $4.54 and Denver remained the lowest price at $2.99/ half gallon. The price gap between conventional and organic narrowed again by 2¢ to $2.06. The narrower the gap the more attractive organic milk will be for price conscious consumers.



Conventional soybean meal on 11/11/10 was priced $356 / ton, up 18% from August $301; soybeans was at $13.23/bushel, up 31% from August $10.09; and corn was at $5.70/bushel, up 35% from August $4.21. With organic corn and soybeans the increase has been about half that of conventional corn but very close to the conventional price with soybeans, although very little is being traded as those that haven't forward contracted are holding back to assess where prices will go. Organic soybeans meal was priced at $780 /ton on 11/11/10 , up 4% on August; soybeans was at $16.25/ bushel, lower than August by $.30/bushel; and corn was at $5.92/ bushel up 15% from August 2010.

Data is based on the excellent independent reporting by USDA AMS service. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Cost-Share Program for USDA Certified Organic Producers and Handlers

"The USDA National Organic Program, in cooperation with state governments, administers a cost-share program for USDA certified organic producers and handlers. If you are a certified producer or handler, then you may be reimbursed for up to 75% of your costs for organic certification, such as inspection and user fees. You may receive one reimbursement per year for a new certificate or a renewal of certification, provided that the annual maximum reimbursement does not exceed $750 per certificate. This is a great opportunity for organic operators to offset the cost of certification. The program is not competitive - applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis until the money runs out. To apply, contact your state's Department of Agriculture (or its equivalent) for an application. Contact names, e-mails and phone numbers can be found at http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/NOPCostShareProgramParticipants , or you can call Betsy Rakola , Grants Management Specialist at the National Organic Program: 202-720-3252.

Listing of Certified Organic Operations Now Available from the National Organic Program

WASHINGTON, Nov. 8, 2012--The National Organic Program (NOP) made available today a complete listing of organic operations certified by U.S. Department of Agriculture accredited certifying agents during the 2009 certification year.

For the first time, the listing, available at http://apps.ams.usda.gov/nop/, can be searched by keywords, name of operation, certifying agent, certificate numbers, primary and secondary scopes of certification, country, state, and products produced.

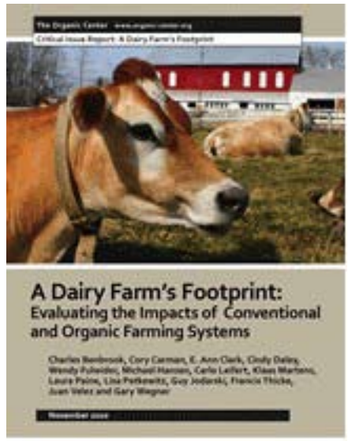
The database will serve as a useful tool to increase marketing opportunities for certified organic operations. It will also help consumers better locate sources of certified organic product.

"Information presented in the certified operations database should be very helpful in connecting producers, suppliers, and consumers of organic products," said Miles McEvoy, NOP deputy administrator. "The NOP will continue to improve the quality of information it provides to the public."

Up-to-date information concerning certified organic operations may be obtained by contacting operations' respective accredited certifying agents. In January 2011, the NOP will begin receiving from accredited agents lists of operations certified as organic during 2010. Once it collects these updates, the NOP will consolidate and provide the newest information to the public.

A Dairy Farm's Footprint: Evaluating the Impacts of Conventional and Organic Farming Systems

Author(s): Charles Benbrook,, Cory Carman, E. Ann Clark, Cindy Daley, Wendy Fulwider, Michael Hansen, Guy Jodarski, Carlo Leifert, Klaas Martens, Laura Paine, Lisa Petkewitz, Francis Thicke, Juan Velez, Gary Wegner



Conventional and organic dairy farm systems differ in many respects, and in particular steps taken by to maximize milk production versus promoting cow health. This report quantifies the significant tradeoffs inherent in managing for production versus managing for cow health and milk quality. A team of dairy specialists worked with TOC to build the

"Shades of Green" (SOG) dairy farm calculator used to make the projections summarized in this report. The Center is providing, free of charge, via www.organic-center.org/SOG_Home the SOG calculator, the full results of the COFEF application of SOG, and a 100-page report providing detailed documentation and user instructions for the SOG calculator. This report provides the first comprehensive analysis of the environmental footprint of alternative dairy farm management systems based on a fully described and freely disclosed, operational model. The principal funding for the development of the SOG calculator and this report was provided by a grant from the Packard Foundation.

USDA Publishes Handbook Outlining National Organic Standards

WASHINGTON, Sept. 2, 2010—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today published the first edition of a program handbook designed for those who own, manage, or certify organic operations. Prepared by the National Organic Program (NOP), the handbook provides guidance about national organic standards and instructions that outline best program practices. It is intended to serve as a resource for the organic industry that will help participants comply with federal organic regulations.

"The handbook will provide guidance to the organic agricultural community to enable them to carry out production and handling processes in a consistent manner," said Miles McEvoy, NOP deputy administrator. "It will also reduce the burden on industry participants as they work to comply or verify compliance with the NOP regulations."

First proposed as a "program manual" a decade ago and more recently addressed in the March 2010 USDA Office of Inspector General audit report of the NOP, the publication of the program handbook marks an important step in NOP's efforts to ensure consistency in application of NOP regulations.

The inaugural edition of the handbook allows stakeholders to reference available materials from a central resource including providing guidance on the allowance of green waste in organic production systems, approval of liquid fertilizers in organic production, certification of organic yeast, processed animal manures in organic crop production, reassessed inert ingredients, and the calculation of dry matter intake for NOP's access to pasture requirements.

The handbook also includes instructions concerning organic certification, such as recordkeeping, steps to certification, and organic certificates; accreditation procedures, such as how to apply to become an accredited certifying agent; international procedures, such as how USDA determines equivalence of foreign organic standards to those of the NOP; compliance and enforcement measures, such as how to handle complaints; and appeals procedures for certified operations or accredited agents.

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

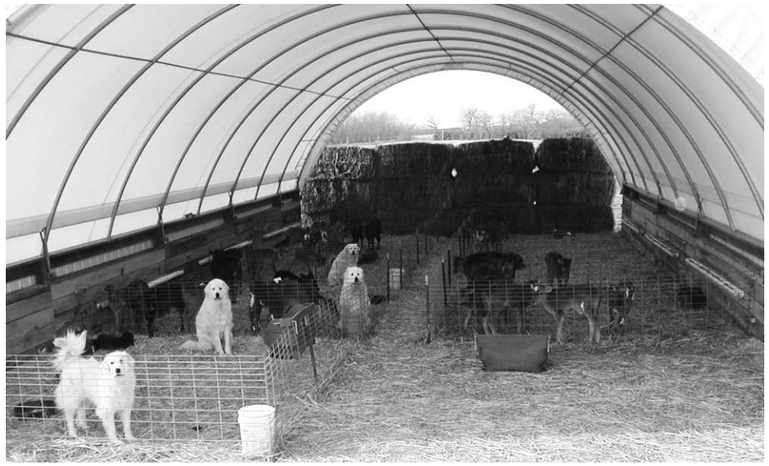
Grain to grass to organic dairy – a farm with a history and a future

Feature Farm: Pleasantview Farm, Circleville, Ohio, Perry Clutts & Family

continued from page 1

good alternative to 100 percent hay production. In 2003, he bought a group of 50 bull calves from a nearby grazing dairy. His goal was to raise calves successfully and to learn how to intensively manage their grazing on a portion of the alfalfa/orchard grass. In that same year, Asa Chester, the farm's tenant, decided that it was time he retired from farming. Growing into the livestock-grazing sector was attractive to Perry and that year they planted winter wheat as soon as the crops came off to begin contract grazing heifers and dry cows.

The soil building/fertility program for the farm consisted of good crop rotations and farm-manufactured compost using the Controlled Microbial Composting system (CMC) developed by the Lubke family in Austria. In 2000 Perry started by bringing in bedding and manure from horse racetracks and the Ohio state fair (about 8,000 cubic yards) along with 1600 cubic yards of leaves in the fall from the city of Circleville. Today they still take in the leaves and bed their livestock with them. "Those leaves mixed with winter manure makes great compost", says Perry. "With cows, we are in a carbon shortage, that's why the leaves work well – along with waste hay and any other organic matter that is around – it goes in the compost row." Perry's farm has very little manure storage, because even in winter the cows go out unless the weather is really bad. All the compost they make goes on the farmland, and regular soil tests help them stay on top of their progress and monitor how the program is working.



Calves in their pens with their guardian dogs

Perry's first organic conference was an OEFFA (Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association) conference in the mid 1990's. He was impressed with the ideas he heard and loved the energy he felt. Clutts said, "I was so inspired! Organic systems and holistic thinking seemed to jive with the way I think. I see organic systems as fixing problems not only on our farms, but in our communities and the world as a whole."

So how did he go from crop farming to grazing dairy replacements and (ultimately) organic dairy farming? "Asa had been working towards organic row crop production since the late '80's and he had worked to improve soil quality and health with reduced and eventually zero chemical inputs, making it much easier for me to transition to organic production," explains Perry. "It seemed a natural progression to begin milking." Perry bought open yearlings in April, 2005; bred them in June for spring calving in 2006; milked cows conventionally for one year; and transitioned his animals in 2006 under the 80/20 provision. The fact that Pleasantview farm started as a grass-based dairy farm helped greatly; their transition to organic production was not very noticeable.

Housing

There were no dairy barns or milking facilities on the farm when Perry decided to get into dairy production, which worked to his advantage; he was able to research grazing systems, parlor design, and housing for his cattle, and create the perfect grass-based dairy system for his piece of land. At Pleasantview Farm they milk in a swing 20 New Zealand style swing over parlor. With full prep (predip, wipe, milk, post dip) they can milk just over 100 cows per hour getting the cows back on grass as soon as possible.

The cows stay outside most of the year, but have access to a large bedded pack barn and concrete feeding area during periods of inclement weather or extreme heat. There are several freeze thaw-cycles in Central Ohio during the winter, so it is nice to have a place for the cows to be dry and comfortable when those events happen. "I feel that using the barn during these [inclement] times has definitely helped our herd health and milk quality," says Perry.

Grazing system and supplemental feeding:

Their cows are outside pretty much 24/7, 340 days of the year. Of their 440 acres of grass, about 220 acres is dedicated to milk cows with the

Cows grazing with the compost windrows behind them.

parlor being located in the center of that area and an improved lane bisecting the area. They have a 1.5" buried water line that runs beside the lane with hydrants so cows do not have to walk more than ~500 feet to water. The only permanent fence they have is the perimeter. There are semi-permanent "cell" wires and all break wires are temporary. Cows get fresh grass after each milking, and as the grass begins to taper off in the fall, they have hay feeders that are moved with the cows to make sure they are getting the feed they need. Moving into November, they will start using their feed pad to put out haylage, which the cows will eat for an hour or so before opening the gate to the pasture. As the winter arrives, the grass the cows refused earlier starts looking better, but most of their DMI comes from the barn. "They still love to get out to the pasture for some exercise and space", says Perry.

Perry has not had luck with summer annuals as part of their grazing routine as the limited rainfall does not support good germination or stands. Instead, they manage their summer slump with irrigation. The back boundary of Pleasantview farm has a large creek and they are able to irrigate with surface water, providing grass during the summer slump, and enough grass to stockpile and enable some limited grazing well into fall and sometimes winter.

Irrigation

Their irrigation system consists of a moveable center pivot for the milk cow pastures, covering about 180 acres from two locations and a hard hose traveler that covers an additional 70 acres of hay field. They use the irrigation during a critical 45-90 day period during the grazing season, depending upon how dry the summer is. The soils on Pleasantview Farm are sand and gravel deposited from the last glacier, so without consistent rainfall during the summer they are in a drought. Perry figured he had two choices to battle the inevitable summer drought: 1) buy hay and have someone else bale it and truck it to the farm, or 2) invest in irrigation and continue grazing during the summer, bale their own winter hay (and have responsibility over the quality) and keep the soil biology going strong. With those options, investing in an irrigation system was an easy decision for them to make.

Feed Rations During Grazing and Non Grazing Seasons

During the grazing season, the cows get pasture and 12 pounds of corn in the parlor. The grain ration contains 100 lbs of mineral per ton. They graze their grass a little taller than some for the purpose of keeping their MUN levels in check, and the pastures manage to maintain a considerable amount of clover in the stand. With their cows averaging 900 lbs a piece, and feeding 12 lbs of 14% moisture corn, Perry figures that the pasture is about 74% of the daily dry matter intake during the grazing season. As of the end of October (2010) they were starting to supplement some dry hay, so the milkers at that time were receiving about 46% of their dry matter needs from pasture.

In the wintertime they use a TMR wagon and have a feed pad for fence line feeding and H bunks for feeding inside the feeding area. They make sure to allow a minimum of 2 feet per cow so that everyone has plenty of room to eat. The cows get straight haylage and minerals from the TMR feeder and free choice hay on the lot, but occasionally they will mix dry hay depending on the feed requirements of the group. When cows are dried off, the mineral changes to a dry cow mineral until freshening.

Perry uses a nutritionist who also happens to be an organic grazier. "Not only does he talk about how things should work," says Perry, "but you can also witness it happening at his farm! He and his wife also organize our local grazing council of about 15 graziers, about half of which are organic." The only product Perry buys from the company his nutritionist works for is minerals but it is enough for them to provide his services for hay/hayage testing and ration building.

Breeds and Breeding

The cows are all crossbreds with Jersey currently being the predominant breed in the mix. Perry milks crossbreds for the advantages he feels that he gets from the differences between the breeds. Jerseys have great fertility and heat tolerance, while they like the bones and production of the larger dairy breeds. Next spring they plan to use Norwegian Red genetics to bring some size back into the herd and to take advantage of the polled genetics. "We would like to get to the place where we don't have to dehorn", says Perry. Breeding is done using cross bulls from neighbors in their grazing group as well as AI, depending on the time of year and the genetics that they want to bring into the herd.

Livestock Health

Since they milk Jersey crosses, milk fever is a concern. They test all hay and make feeding decisions in the fall. The low Potassium hay

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

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will be saved for late winter up close dry cows, and they always keep certifier-approved CMPK tubes on hand in case of emergency. Dry cows are fed a dry cow mineral starting at dry off, which helps with retained placentas. In the rare cases where RP's occur, they turn to garlic and aloe juice infused at least once a day for several days.

Cows calve in the spring and fall, but the main calving period is the springtime from mid March to the end of April. "The best therapy is for the grass to get going so that the cows can get out of the barn and onto fresh grass. It seems to lift their spirits as well as their immune systems", says Perry.

The main purpose of their veterinarian in the past was for pregnancy palpation, but now that they are a split seasonal herd (spring and fall calvings), they no longer preg check. If a cow is open in their short window she gets another chance six months later. Right now they are focusing on bringing the somatic cell count down on a few of their higher SCC cows. While they do not ship many cows for high SCC counts, they would like to reduce their counts even more.

Calves are started in an old block farrowing house where each stall can hold 3 calves. It is there that they receive their colostrum, get their navels dipped, are given a shot of Immunoboost, a First Defense bolus, and are trained to use the milk bar. From there they are raised in groups of 10 on milk bars in large pens inside a hoop barn. The hoop barn is built on well-drained gravel footing and it is bedded with clean, dry straw. Calves are fed hay and ground corn from day one and drink up to 2 gallons of milk per day. The milk weaning process happens at about 3 months of age and the calves are tapered off milk by gradually replacing the milk with water. They are on pasture by the time their weaning process is complete. At 6 months of age the heifers are weaned from their 4lbs of grain w/ mineral and they won't see that again until they start milking. To stay on top of calf health, they watch condition closely, keep the calf barn clean and dry, and move the calves to new pasture at the appropriate times.

The New Pasture Rule

Having attended one of the Pasture Rule trainings last spring and the fact that Perry's dairy farm has always been grass-based, Perry feels prepared for the new rule and the documentation required by his certifier. Perry's certifier, is OEFFA (Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Assoc.), and they sent out a packet of information early in the grazing season with instructions on how to determine dry matter intake. OEFFA used materials and suggestions provided by the NOP and reviewed it during Perry's annual inspection.

Perry documents his grazing by making 4 calculations of DMI over the grazing season: Mid-April, mid-June, mid-August and mid-October. They also keep track of where the cows graze each day by filling out the information on their clipboard (with map, field numbers and a calendar) and keeping the information in the milk house so that is easy to find and document no matter who is managing the cows.

When asked how he feels about the pasture rule, Perry says "I think it's a good rule. Good for the cows in that they are able to express their natural grazing behavior! And good for the consumer in that they are getting milk that is fed at least 30% of their diet from pasture during the grazing season. It would be good to find out how this grazing affects milk quality over the entire organic category."

Resources

The primary resources that Perry turns to includes the members of his local grazing group, and his farm nutritionist. He has also benefited over the years by attending conferences where he has met fellow organic producers around the country. "While I don't' attend as many conferences as I used to, I feel they were critical in my learning about organic systems and developing a "way of thinking" that serves me well today. For farmers starting a new enterprise, meeting like-minded people at conferences is a great way to find the energy that it will take to get your business started." ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NODPA Field Days Wrap-Up

continued from page 7

Next, Mary Ann Hayes of Maine Rural Partners moderated a panel discussion entitled "What's In Your Farm's Energy Tool Room?" Farmers Jeff Bragg, Anne Weston, Lance Gatcomb and Henry Perkins, and applied technology educators from Farm Energy Partners Mick Wormsley (Unity College) and Andrew Plant (University of Maine Extension) shared their experiences using wind, solar, manure, oilseeds and grass in new ways. The panel, which looked at energy as a potential asset on a dairy farm, each shared stories of energy innovation journeys, many with surprising twists and turns; and provided practical answers to questions from the audience.

Rounding out the afternoon was Heather Darby, Agronomist and Nutrient Management Specialist with University of Vermont Extension, who brought great energy to the topic of renewable energy and the production of small grains and oil seed. She shared practical information and current field-based research that indicates how local farmers have a significant opportunity to produce more of their own liquid fuel, livestock feed, and other high value co-products through oilseed crop production in a crop rotation that is compatible with forage production.

The Field Days ended late Friday afternoon but not before everyone had an opportunity to network with industry personnel, fellow farmers, certifiers and USDA NOP's current and former leaders. We were all fortunate to have a wide array of learning opportunities, great local food and good conversation in a warm and wonderful setting at the main hall of MOFGA's beautiful Education Center.

Thank you to all our wonderful sponsors who made this Field Days possible: Horizon Organic, Lakeview Organic Grain, Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative, American Organic Seed, Farm Energy Partners, Fertrell & Fedco, Unity College and Hannaford Supermarkets. ◆

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Enterprise Budgets in Organic Dairy Production

by Robert Tigner, UN-L Extension Educator

Enterprise budgets can be used as an important decision tool for farm owners and managers. An enterprise budget is an organized listing of gross income and expenses for a specific part of the farm or ranch. An enterprise is defined as a profit center that produces a single main product. There are numerous decisions that can be made with the help of an enterprise budget. These are cost of production, changing production practices and product mix. The Organic Dairy Production Budget is a way to use a spreadsheet to make this decisions. The chart below can be found at **http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/livestock/xls/b1-21dairyp21.xls**.

Enterprise budgets can be used to compare your costs to other

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Organic Dairy Production - One Cow Unit

Ag Decision Maker -- Iowa State University Extension

For more information see the Organic Dairy Production Information File.

Place the cursor over cells with red triangles to read comments.

Enter your input values in shaded cells.

16,500 lbs of milk per cow annually

			Price	Unit		Quantity	Unit		Total
Income									
Milk sales*			$33.00	per cwt	x	165	cwt	=	$5,445.00
Cull cow	0.2	head x	$0.68	per lb	x	1000	lbs	=	$135.00
Bull calf			$80.00	per head		1	head	=	$80.00
Miscellaneous								=	$100.00
Gross Income									$5,760.00
Variable Costs			**Price**	**Unit**		**Quantity**	**Unit**		**Total**
Feed Costs									
Corn			$7.40	per bu	x	80	bu	=	$592.00
Protein supplement			$0.35	per lb	x	1000	lbs	=	350.00
Hay equivalents			$125.00	per ton	x	6.4	tons	=	800.00
Other									225.00
Total Feed Costs									$1,967.00
Veterinary and health									$40.00
Supplies									180.00
Utilities									80.00
Repairs									140.00
Taxes									75.00
Fuel-oil									50.00
Bedding									50.00
Breeding									35.00
Marketing									0.00
Miscellaneous									85.00
Interest on variable costs			8%			12	months		226.59
Hired labor			$12.00	per hour		10	hours		120.00
Total Operating Costs									$3,048.59
Income over Variable Costs									$2,711.41
Fixed Costs									
Machinery, equipment, facilities									$125.00
Cattle									500.00
Land			$2,500	per acre		3	ac per cow		300.00
Owner/Operator labor			$12.00	per hour		30	hours		360.00
Total Fixed Costs									$1,285.00
Total of All Costs									$4,333.59
Income over All Costs									$1,426.41
Break-even selling price for variable costs									$16.57 per cwt
Break-even selling price for all costs									$24.38 per cwt

**Milk price per cwt. is a total based on the following price components: butterfat, protein, other solids, producer price differential, quality, volume, and capital payout.*

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Minnesota economists will study the economic costs associated with transitioning from traditional to organic farming through a new $1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The four-year project is aimed at gathering data about costs and returns for farmers making the switch to organic farming, said Robert King, professor of applied economics at the University of Minnesota and leader of the project. Data will come from transitioning and recently certified organic farmers who enroll in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Farm Business Management Education program. The project also will develop print and online educational materials that will help transitioning farmers make long-term planning decisions.

U.S. producers are turning to certified organic farming systems as a potential way to lower input costs, decrease reliance on nonrenewable resources, capture high-value markets and boost farm income. While organic farming is among the fastest-growing segments of agriculture, few public studies have been done on the economic costs and returns for those who make the transition.

"As more and more farmers consider making the transition to organic production, we're seeing that uncertainty about the costs of transitioning and the return on those costs is a significant impediment," King said. "Data about the experiences and lessons learned from those who have made the transition will help other farmers decide whether to make this change."

The project will include training on fundamentals of organic transition for the 71 instructors in the state colleges and universities system's Farm Business Management Education program. The instructors will work closely with about 80 participating farmers over the life of the study to track farm financial records, offer advice and develop benchmarks for future organic transitions. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture will help identify and recruit transitioning farmers to participate in the project and will administer scholarship awards, which will cover up to 90 percent of the farmers' participation costs. Individual farm data will be aggregated to ensure confidentiality, then analyzed and shared locally and nationally through the Center for Farm Financial Management's FINBIN website, as well as through publications and presentations developed specifically for this project.

"The farmers who participate will gain a deeper understanding of their own financial condition during the years of transition," King said. "Their shared experiences will also help other farmers developing transition plans, lenders evaluating business plans and loan applications from transitioning farmers, and policymakers assessing program needs."

For more information, contact:

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Margaret Hart, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, (651) 201-6131

Melinda Voss, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, (651) 201-1804

Patty Mattern, University News Service, mattern@umn.edu, (612) 624-2801 ◆

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Enterprise Budgets in Organic Dairy Production

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producers' costs or industry averages to determine if the individual farm's costs are high or low. If costs are high, then the budget will point to specific areas that need to be analyzed for cost control. Budgets also indicate where key costs occur. If key cost items appear too high, changes in production practices or input sources could be made to lower per unit costs.

Enterprise budgets are usually completed per acre, per cow or sow basis and then scaled-up to reflect actual or expected production.

Typically there are several sections to an enterprise budget. These include:

- Gross income
- Variable costs
- Fixed costs
- Net income after specified costs

Often a section that includes break-even analysis is included. The sections referred to above are the same as the sections of the organic dairy budget hosted at the AgDecisionmaker web site hosted At Iowa State Extension.

Gross Income

Gross income is calculated by multiplying output times the price per unit of output. Determining expected yield and price for a new enterprise can be challenging. Base output levels on realistic yield expectations. For enterprises already in place, milk production, or other products, yields should be realistic when using an enterprise budget for planning. Planning to increase milk production by 15% next year when on average a herd is only adding 4% annually is unrealistic. One method to do that is to use a 5-year Olympic average yield for an enterprise that is already part of the farm or ranch. This type of average takes in to account the management choices that are already in place. But for a new organic dairy operation, milk production needs to be below what the producer expects to reach when the system is completely in place.

Price is the other part of income that must be carefully set when using enterprise budgets as planning tools. Using recent milk prices can be deceiving, they have declined at times. However organic milk prices are more predictable for a year than conventional milk prices. A big advantage in our volatile economy.

Variable Costs

Variable costs are those incurred due to the production of organic milk. All feed, veterinary care, supplies, breeding fees, utilities and repairs are variable costs. Variable costs are the first ones that must be covered to continue dairying.

Fixed Costs

Fixed costs are incurred regardless of whether milk is produced in the short-run. Land and unpaid labor are two big examples. Of course all fixed costs can be shed, but then the farm operator really is out of milk production. Unpaid labor costs used in the organic dairy budget should be enough to pay the needed family living.

Break Even Calculation

This section calculates the net return, or loss, to both variable costs and all costs. As mentioned earlier, dairy producers must first have a net to variable costs. Then the net return, or loss, to all costs is calculated. In the long-run, this last calculation must be at least zero in order to pay for the investment made in organic milk production.

One of the advantages to computers and spreadsheets is the ease with which calculations are made. The spreadsheet available for organic dairy producers at www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm can assist organic dairy producers in their management and profitability comparisons. It is a useful tool for both planning future production and calculating past production costs. ◆

Robert Tigner is an Extension Educator with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Before his current position he was a farm management field specialist for Iowa State University Extension in Northeast Iowa. He worked with conventional and organic dairy producers in dairy marketing and financial analysis. Tigner has a BS in Dairy Science from Iowa State University and a MS in Agricultural Industries from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. Tigner grew up on a small dairy farm in North Central Iowa. After college he operated a dairy farm with a mixed Holstein and Ayrshire herd in Northeast Iowa.

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

eOrganic Dairy Team Receives Funding to Offer Webinars, On-line Courses and More!

By Deb Heleba

It's official! The eOrganic Dairy Team has recently received a three-year grant from the USDA Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI). Led by Heather Darby, University of Vermont Extension, and Cindy Daley, California State University—Chico, the national eOrganic Dairy Team will be developing online materials on certified organic dairy production systems including articles, webinars, videos, and two online courses.

eOrganic is an online community of more than 600 farmers and agricultural service providers who are providing science, experience, and regulation - based on a range of certified organic information - on the web at www.extension.org/organic_production . Our eOrganic Dairy Team is made up of about 60 farmers, agronomists, veterinarians, grazing and certification specialists, animal scientists, and other professionals who are working together to publish peer-reviewed content at eXtension.org, a national initiative among the Land Grant Universities to increase collaboration and provide online education.

Recently the eOrganic Dairy Team has focused its efforts on developing content specifically related to the Access to Pasture Rule. With our new funding, we will continue to develop Pasture Rule content and, in addition, we will be offering articles and webinars on a range of topics, from herd health and milk quality to genetics and business management. We also plan to create several demonstration and farm profile videos.

The culmination of our efforts will be the development of two online courses, which will be offered to farmers; Extension, NRCS personnel and other service providers (who will be able to earn Continuing Education Credits); and undergraduate students interested in organic dairy farming.

We are also very excited about our "regional learning hubs." These hubs will present opportunities for farmers and service providers to get together in small groups around the U.S.. They will be able view and discuss webinars and other content, and apply what they learn on their own farms within their local communities.

Our overall goal for this project is to provide relevant, timely information to organic dairy farmers and service providers. Ultimately, we hope to build a network of agricultural service providers who are knowledgeable and confident about organic dairy production systems, and who are better able to provide direct assistance to current and/or aspiring organic dairy farmers.

Our steering committee is made up of Heather Darby, Cindy Daley, Ed Maltby, Harriet Behar, Sarah Flack, and Lisa McCrory, and we are currently forming an advisory group for the project. If you have questions about and/or would like to be involved with the project, please contact Deb Heleba, eOrganic Dairy Team Coordinator, at debra.heleba@uvm.edu or 802.656.4046. ◆

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Grant Opportunities:

Pennsylvania Direct Farm Sales Grant Program

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Food Distribution is now accepting applications for the Direct Farm Sales Grant Program project year 2011. The Program provides funds to Pennsylvania-based businesses that manage or operate a farm stand or farmers' markets, non-profit organizations, farmers and local governments for projects intended to promote new or existing farmers' markets. Projects must pertain to specialty crops. The maximum Grant amount per farm stand or farmers' market location shall be $7,500 and applicants shall be expected to provide 25% of the approved Grant amount in matching funds or in-kinds goods or services. Proposals are due November 23, 2010. For more information, call: (717) 787-4737

Ohio Agriculture Revolving Loan Fund

Business owners can now apply for their share of $2 million in low-interest loans funded by the Ohio Department of Agriculture through a newly created Agriculture Revolving Loan Fund. The Agriculture Revolving Loan Fund will make loans available for the creation and expansion of businesses and industries that support agriculture and rural Ohio that focus on aquaculture, food processing and biofuels in Ohio. Loans will range from $10,000 - $100,000, and the revolving loan fund will finance up to 90 percent of the total project cost. No application deadline is specified. For more information about the Agriculture Revolving Loan Fund, visit www.agri.ohio.gov under Promotional Programs.

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RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Research Updates from the University of New Hampshire

By Dr. Andre Brito

We have been very busy at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) this whole year. Two research studies were completed, and we are presently conducting a feeding experiment investigating the effects of kelp meal on growth and body weight gain of organic and conventional calves. Preliminary results of these studies are shown below:

Effects of Flaxseed Meal and Molasses on Milk Production of Organic Dairy Cows

This study was conducted during this last winter at the UNH-Organic Dairy Research Farm. Dr. André Brito and his graduate student Shara Ross used 16 lactating organic Jersey cows in this experiment. Dr. Helene Petit from the Dairy and Swine Research and Development Centre, Sherbrooke, Quebec is collaborating with UNH on this project.

A component present in flaxseed meal known as lignans has been associated with prevention of menopausal symptoms, breast and prostate cancers, cardiovascular diseases, and, possibly, osteoporosis. We believe that cows fed flaxseed meal will produce milk rich in lignans, which can potentially improve human health. Metabolites resulting from the rumen degradation of lignans have been also associated to stimulate the activity of antioxidant enzymes resulting in improved immune system helping cows fight diseases including mastitis. It is well known that sugarcane molasses is a rich source of sugars, particularly sucrose, and may be a viable energy supplement to organic dairy cows. Compared to starch from corn meal, sucrose from molasses has a faster rumen degradation rate, which may increase nitrogen utilization in lactating dairy cows. We hypothesize that feeding energy sources with different carbohydrate profiles and rate of rumen degradation (molasses vs. corn meal) would affect microbial utilization of flaxseed meal-lignans resulting in different output of lignans metabolites in milk and blood of cows. To test our hypothesis, 16 cows were randomly assigned to four different diets all containing (% of total diet dry matter) 70% grass baleage plus 2% minerals and vitamins supplemented with: 1) 12% liquid molasses and 16% flaxseed meal; 2) 12% liquid molasses, 11% soybean meal, and 5% sunflower meal; 3) 12% corn meal and 16% flaxseed meal; or 4) 12% corn meal, 11% soybean meal, and 5% sunflower meal. Each cow was assigned a different diet at each period of 21 days, and each cow was on each of the four diets by the end of the study. We collected several samples including feedstuffs, milk, urine, feces, and blood. Our preliminary data showed no statistical difference in milk production comparing diets containing molasses vs. diets containing corn meal, which averaged 29.2 and 29.8 lb/day, respectively. Although milk components were also not affected by these two different energy supplements, milk urea nitrogen (MUN) was significantly lower in cows fed molasses suggesting improvement in nitrogen utilization. We also observed that milk production was 3-lb higher in cows fed diets containing the mixture of soybean meal plus sunflower meal (mean = 31 lb) compared to those containing flaxseed meal (mean = 28 lb), showing that flaxseed meal impaired milk production under the conditions of our study.

Molasses as an Alternative Energy Feed Source for Organic Dairies

In this past summer Dr. Brito and his students Shara Ross and Kristen Greene in collaboration with Dr. Kathy Soder from the USDA-ARS conducted at the UNH-Organic Dairy Research Farm a grazing study to investigate the effects of feeding molasses vs. corn meal on milk production and nitrogen utilization of organic dairy cows, and profitability of these two supplemental sources. According to Karen Hoffman (USDA-NRCS), the amount of molasses typically fed on organic dairies ranges from 3 to 7 lb per cow daily depending on milk production. However, on-farm data collected during 2009 grazing season by Hoffman and Soder showed mixed results with molasses

supplementation with some organic farmers using it successfully while others reporting major milk production or body condition losses. We fed in our summer study either liquid molasses or corn meal as the sole energy supplements (12% of total dry matter intake) to 20 lactating organic Jersey cows (10 cows in each diet). Cows had free access to pasture and were also supplemented with grass-silage baleage. Our preliminary results showed that cows fed molasses produced 1.8 lb more milk (mean = 28.9 lb/day) than those fed corn meal (mean = 27.1 lb/day), suggesting that molasses can replace corn meal when cheaper to feed. Feeding molasses rather than corn meal also resulted in reduced MUN (13.4 vs. 15.1 mg/dL) indicating improvement in nitrogen utilization.

Feeding Kelp Meal to Organic and Conventional Dairy Calves

Dried seaweed (kelp meal) is widely used in the organic dairy industry as a source of minerals to animals. However, no scientific research is available to help dairy farmers make informed decisions regarding kelp supplementation to calves. Dr Brito and his undergraduate students Lindsay Chase and Ashley Miranda have been investigating the use of kelp meal for organic Jersey calves at the UNH-Organic Dairy Research Farm and for conventional Holstein calves at the UNH Fairchild Dairy Farm. So far a total of 12 dairy heifer calves, 6 organic Jerseys, and 6 conventional Holsteins, were used to study the effects of kelp meal (SeaLifeTM) on performance and growth measurements (body weight, wither and hip height, and body length). Calves were randomly assigned to one of two diets: 1) Control (calf starter grain plus 3% hay); or 2) Kelp (calf starter grain, 3% hay, plus 1 ounce of kelp meal). No statistical differences were observed between diets for feed intake and daily body weight gain, which averaged, respectively, 1.61 and 1.42 lb/day for Jerseys, and 1.85 and 1.81 lb/day for Holsteins. Similarly, growth measurements were not affected by feeding Control vs. Kelp.

In general, it is important to note that conclusive answers cannot be obtained from our preliminary results because we are still conducting laboratory and data analyses, and collecting data in the case of the kelp study. Therefore, all these preliminary results should be interpreted carefully. Look out for future NODPA News issues. ◆

Dr. André Brito is an assistant professor of organic dairy management at the UNH. He has 15 years of research experience focused on enhancing nitrogen utilization in dairy cattle to minimize environmental impact of dairy farming. Since August 2009, he has been actively conducting research on different supplementation strategies for organic dairy cows.

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

OFRF To Compile Science On Organic Farming Benefits

Names Team to Lead Research Review

Santa Cruz, CA -- The Organic Farming Research Foundation today announced the launch of a sweeping research initiative to investigate the potential benefits of organic agriculture. The non-profit foundation recently hired a team to lead the inquiry and intends to release results in the spring of 2011.

OFRF Deputy Director and project manager Maureen Wilmot says, initially, researchers will scope existing scientific literature and analyze data.

Carolyn Dimitri

"There is an accumulating body of research suggesting organic agriculture delivers many benefits to society beyond the obvious advantages of enhancing soil quality and reducing the level of toxins entering our food supply," said Wilmot. "We will document those benefits and share our results widely."

Carolyn Dimitri, a former senior economist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will direct the literature review. Dimitri is currently a visiting associate professor in the Department of Nutrition, Food Studies and Public Health at New York University.

Loni Kemp

Loni Kemp, a Minnesota-based agriculture and conservation policy analyst, will synthesize results and offer policy recommendations on how new policies might recognize and reward benefits provided to society by organic farms. The team will also identify gaps in organic research to help set the stage for future study.

"The team of Dimitri and Kemp brings a tremendous depth of expertise and experience to the study. We are pleased they have agreed to join us in this groundbreaking work," said Wilmot.

"The past decade or more of sustained growth in the organic sector indicates that consumer support of organic food is strong and growing. The time is right for a comprehensive assessment of the state of organic research and policy regarding the benefits of organic production," said Dimitri.

The researcher's literature review is already underway, and Dimitri will discuss the scope of the project in a public forum this week at the Agronomy, Soil Science and Crop Science Societies of America annual meeting in Long Beach, CA.

OFRF is working with a five-member advisory panel to produce the Multiple Benefits of Organic Agriculture Project. Panel members include George Boody, Executive Director of the Land Stewardship Project in Minnesota; Cornelia Flora, the Charles F. Curtiss Distinguished Professor of Agriculture and Life Science and Sociology at Iowa State University; Kim Haddow, President of Haddow Communications, Inc.; Elysa Hammond, Director of Environmental Stewardship at Clif Bar & Company.; and Ann Thrupp, an OFRF Board member and Manager of Sustainability and Organic Development at Fetzer Vineyards in Hopland, CA.

Additional advisory panel biographical information available at OFRF.org.

About the Organic Farming Research Foundation

Founded in 1990, the Organic Farming Research Foundation is celebrating 20 years of advancing organic agriculture. OFRF sponsors organic farming research and education projects and disseminates the results to organic farmers and others interested in adopting organic production systems. The foundation also educates the public and policymakers about organic farming issues. The majority of OFRF's board members are organic farmers. Learn more at ofrf.org.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

OMRI Products List Exceeds 2000 Products

The OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute) Products List reached a milestone on October 7, 2010, for the first time exceeding 2000 listed products. OMRI, a global leader in materials review, performs comprehensive verification and listing of materials suitable for use in organic production.

"The OMRI Products List has grown steadily over the last 13 years, and we thank OMRI's clients and supporters for working to ensure solid and consistent standards within the organic industry, and for helping us reach this milestone," said Peggy Miars, OMRI Executive Director. "We at OMRI are proud to support the organic label through our history of solid integrity and reliable reviews."

While OMRI staff may have paused to celebrate the landmark occasion, the organization is processing applications quicker than ever. A new streamlined review process has completely eliminated the initial wait time for new applications while retaining the same rigorous standards that have made OMRI a cornerstone of the organic industry. "Now is a great time to submit an application, since we have made great strides in customer service," added Miars. OMRI welcomed Miars in September, when she began her tenure as OMRI's new Executive Director/CEO.

To celebrate this new chapter in OMRI's history, the organization is soliciting comments and stories from members of the organic community. Simply click the link below to contribute your thoughts. Confidential comments are welcome, but participants who include their names may have their comments considered for publication in the next OMRI Materials Review Newsletter.

Tell your OMRI story. Send an email to info@omri.org or call: 541.343.7600. ◆

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

NESARE Farmer Grants

Are you a farmer with a new idea you would like to test using a field trial, on-farm demonstration, or other technique?

Funding is available to support your on-farm research via a Farmer Grant from Northeast SARE(Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education).The deadline for SARE Farmer Grants is December 7th , 2010. SARE Farmer Grant funds can be used to explore new marketing and production techniques, pest management, cover crops, composting, agroforestry, new crop trials, bee health and alternative pollinators, new tool development, and a very broad range of other topics that improve profitability, stewardship, and the rural community.

Grant awards are capped at $15,000. Grant funds may be used to purchase materials specific to the project, to pay you, the farmer, for your time, to compensate consultants and service providers, and to pay project-specific expenses like lab, travel, and outreach costs.

Funds /cannot/ be used for capital costs or to buy durable equipment, nor can funds be use to buy land, start a farm, or expand an existing operation. Utility, food, and meal costs are also generally excluded except under certain limited circumstances, and clothes--hats, tee shirts, aprons, etc.--are not permitted. In the same vein, giveaways or imprinted promotional items are excluded.

If you think a SAREfarmer grant might be the right fit for you, a great way to start is to download and read "How to Write a SAREFarmer Grant" at the link: http://nesare.org/downloads/2010%20farmer%20how%20to%20write.pdf

Next, find out what Northeast SARE has funded in your interest area. Is your idea new, interesting, and addressing an important question about sustainable farming? Previously funded projects are posted at: http://nesare.org/get/farmers-examples/

A technical advisor--often an extension agent, crop consultant, or other service professional--is required as a project participant. Projects should seek results other farmers can use, and all projects must have the potential to add to our knowledge about effective sustainable practices.

To communicate with NESARE, send e-mail to nesare@uvm.edu or call 802-656-0471. ◆

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance Producer Milk Check Assignment Form

I, _____ (please print name on your milk check)

request that _____ (name of company that sends your milk check)

deduct the sum of :

_____ $0.02 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA

_____ $0.05 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA (the amount that has been deducted in the past for national milk marketing but can now be 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 per hundredweight (the $.05 marketing check-off plus $0.02)

as an assignment from my milk check starting the first day of _____, 201____. 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 Coordinator, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342

Producer signature: _____ Date: _____

Producer number/ member no: _____ E-mail:_____

Number of milking cows: _____ Tel #:_____

Certifying Agency: _____

Farm Address: (please print) _____

Producers—please send this to NODPA, Attn Ed Maltby, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342, so we can track who has signed up and forward this form to the milk handler. Thank you.

Subscribe to the NODPA News and support NODPA!

By becoming a subscriber you will receive 6 copies of the NODPA News and help support the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance. NODPA depends on your contributions and donations. If you enjoy the bi-monthly NODPA News; subscribe to the Odairy Listserv (ODAIRY-subscribe@yahoogroups.com); visit our web page (www.nodpa.com) or benefit from farmer representation with the NOP and processors that NODPA provides, please show your support by making a generous contribution to our efforts.

Note that if you sign up for the NODPA Voluntary Organic Milk Check-Off, you will be automatically signed up as a NODPA News subscriber.

_____ $35 to cover an annual subscription to NODPA news

_____ $50 to become an Associate member (open to all)

_____ $100 to become a supporter of NODPA

_____ $150 to become a Business Member

_____ $300 to $500 to become a Friend

_____ $500 to $1,000 to become a Patron

_____ $1,000+ to become a Benefactor

Name: _____ Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date: _____ Are you a certified organic dairy producer? YES NO

Number of milking cows _____ Milk buyer _____

Are you transitioning to organic? YES NO If yes, anticipated date of certification: _____

Please mail this form with a check to: Ed Maltby, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342, or by fax: 866-554-9483 or by email to ednodpa@comcast.net. Please make your check payable to: NODPA

Credit card: Master Card Visa Card #: _____

Name on Card: _____ Expiration Date: __ __ 201__ Security Code on Card: _____

NET UPDATE

Recent ODAIRY Discussions

By Liz Bawden, NODPA News co-Editor, NODPA Producer Representative

Many farmers were concerned this month with the new tax law changes for 2012 that would make it mandatory for farmers (and any other small business person) to issue an IRS form 1099 for every non-payroll expenditure greater than $600. Faced with burdening small businesses with overwhelming amounts of paperwork, several Congressmen are attempting to scale back the rule.

A farmer asked the group if HoofMate is effective for heel warts and foot rot. Most certifiers allow this product; but since it is not OMRI listed anymore, it is best to check to be sure. A veterinarian mentioned that after scrubbing off the outer layer of the wart, almost anything will work. He has had great success with a mixture of Betadine and sugar (he suggests 20cc Betadine to 1/2 cup sugar). Some certifiers have decided that Betadine is not allowed, and one farmer pointed out that there are two formulations of Betadine: one is a surgical scrub that has detergent additives in it, and the other does not. Be sure your certifier has reviewed the right one. Another veterinarian suggested the use of honey to dress a hoof; and a few producers said the honey had worked well for them. Several farmers vented a bit and hoped for the day that certifiers will be all on the same page, and allow the same products. It is especially confusing to "pull the plug" on a product that has been allowed for years.

After her cow had aborted a dead calf a month before her due date, a producer asked if there was anything she could do to bring her into milk. A number of producers encouraged her just to keep milking her -- it can take her a couple of weeks to come into milk. The consensus was that some of these cows will milk well, others not so well. For some cows, it will just be a matter of getting them bred back as soon as possible, knowing that you'll have to write off this lactation. A vet suggested the homeopathic remedy Lac canimum and herbal Fenugreek. He also suggested an herbal product from Mammal Mama in Colorado that encourages milk production. It was suggested to use warm hands and warm compresses as well.

A 4-week old Jersey calf was found on its side bloating. After walking her around, the bloat diminished, but she was dehydrated and had a small amount of yellow diarrhea. It was recommended that the calf receive at least 4 feedings per day, alternating milk (with added probiotic) with electrolytes. Feed from a bottle if she will suck, or carefully with a stomach tube. Do not freely drench; it leads to aspiration pneumonia.

There was a long discussion around the new Pasture Rule as most of us have received new paperwork over the summer for our organic inspections. Many of the questions centered on how to calculate the length of the grazing season. Some producers were under the false impression that if you graze for the minimum of 120 days, that's good enough. We heard from a variety of sources that the grazing season is defined as that period of time when there is pasture available for grazing in a region. The length of that season will vary geographically. It was recommended that producers use supportive data to determine the length of their grazing season, usomg NRCS, county extension, university figures, and personal data. The length of your farm's grazing season may also reflect the farm's microclimate and management style.

There was a good discussion on how the Pasture Policy is affecting farms with a smaller land base for pasture. It was suggested that these farms had the following options:

- Reduce the size of the herd to the carrying capacity of the existing pastures.
- Purchase/rent additional pasture land to bring the carrying capacity up to the needs of the herd .

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Web Sponsorship Advertising Now Available on NODPA.COM

Support NODPA's Work On Behalf Of Organic Dairy Farmers. Take Advantage Of This Opportunity NOW!

At the request of advertisers, NODPA is now exploring the placement of web sponsorship advertising on selected pages of the NODPA web site.

The ads will be displayed on the 10 pages of the web site which receive the most traffic. There are around 3,000 visits to the NODPA site each month, and there are between 2.5 and 3 pages per visit.

Each ad will link to another page on the web site where a longer message of up to 200 words can be displayed.

The cost of our sponsorship ads: $125 per month for display-ready ads. Those without display-ready ads will be charged an additional $50.

Be one of the first to take advantage of this opportunity to reach a committed farming membership while supporting an organization that courageously advocates for organic farmers.

Go to the following web page for more information:

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

Subscribing to ODairy:

ODairy is a vibrant listserv for organic dairy farmers, educators and industry representatives who actively participate with questions, advice, shared stories, and discussions of issues critical to the organic dairy industry.

To sign up for the Odairy listserv, go to:

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

Calendar

November 30, 2010
Nutrient Dense Crop Production Discussion
Dartmouth, Massacusetts
This two-hour educational evening will introduce you to innovative principles and practices for producing more nutritious food to nurture healthier human lives. The lecture provides an introduction to a 5-part, year-long course on using soil biology, mineralogy and energy dynamics to grow better crops. The course takes place in 8 locations throughout the Northeast. The speaker, Dan Kittredge, is a life-long organic farmer, Director of Real Food Campaign, and instructor of a 5-part course in Dartmouth in 2011. Link: http://semaponline.org/semap/classes-events/ Visit www.farmandfood.org for a listing of other Nutrient Dense Farming workshops happening in the Northeast, or email:info@farmandfood.org for informaiton

December 3-4, 2010
Sustainable Agriculture Pest Management Conference
San Luis Obispo, California
The 9th Annual Sustainable Pest Management Conference will feature innovative pest management practices for sustainable agriculture. The purpose of the conference is to educate you on the use of innovative practices in the management of pests in sustainable agricultural systems. Special focus will be given to certified organic regulations, materials and production practices. A special Soil & Water Testing workshop on Day 2 instructs attendees on how to assess the need for, sample, and evaluate the results of basic soil and water tests.
Link: http://www.ccof.org/pcaconference.php

December 3-5, 2010
CFSA Sustainable Agriculture Conference
Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association is hosting its 25th annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference, with the theme "Local & Organic Arrives: Our Opportunity is Now." The agenda includes master classes, tours, classes, panels, workshops and presentations, and networking opportunities.
Link: http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org/sac10.shtml

December 9-11, 2010
Acres U.S.A. Conference and Tradeshow
Indianapolis Marriott Downtown, Indianapolis, Indiana
Come to the premier event nationwide for commercial-scale sustainable and organic agriculture. Several hundred eco-minded individuals from around the world gather together to tap
the knowledge of some of agriculture's brightest minds.For more information, call 800-355-5313 or visit the webiste: www.acresusa.com

January 15, 2011
24th Annual NOFA MASS Winter Conference
Worcester Tech High School
60 workshops on organic farming, gardening, landscaping and sustainable living. For more information, contact Michal Lumsden, workshop coordinator, at 413-528-8016 or michal@nofamass.org, or Cathleen O'Keefe, conference coordinator, at 413-584-6786 or wc@nofamass.org

January 21 & 22, 2011
15th Annual VT Grazing & Livestock Conference
Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, VT
Plan now to make a weekend of this popular event--now located at Lake Morey Resort for a whole family experience. Featuring keynote speaker Tom Wessels of Antioch New England University, and a Friday all-day intensive on working with processors and carcass break down with Joe Cloud of True & Essential Meats. Contact: Jenn Colby, (802) 656-0858, jcolby@uvm.edu, www.uvm.edu/pasture

January 21-23, 2011
NOFA-NY Winter Conference
Saratoga Springs, NY
Diggin' Diversity as the theme for our 2011 Conference. To address this theme, we're fortunate to be joined by keynote speakers Miguel Altieri and Malik Yakini (full bios below). Our Board of Directors has also selected farmer and National Organic Standards Board member Kevin Engelbert to deliver the NOFA-NY Farmer Keynote. For more information: www.nofany.org/events/winter-conference, Phone: (585) 271-1979.

January 28 & 29, 2011
The Third Annual Winter Green-up, Grass-fed Beef Grazing Conference
Century House in Latham, NY.
This year's speakers include:

- Joel Salatin, Polyface Farm, Swoope, Virginia
- Ray Archuleta, NRCS Soil Conservationist and Holistic Management Educator
- Dr. Mike Baker, Extension Beef Specialist, Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Brett Chedzoy, Senior Extension Educator, CCE Schuyler County

Contact: Tom Gallagher or Lisa Cox at Cornell Cooperative Extension Al**bany** County. Phone: (518) 765-3512 or Tom's email: tjg3@cornell.edu, Lisa's email: lkc29@cornell.edu

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NOP Handbook

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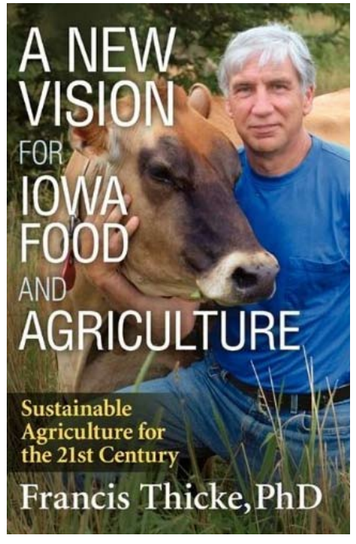
Additionally, the handbook explains the difference between NOP guidance and instruction documents and outlines their purpose, legal effect, and the process by which they are authorized, reviewed, revised and disseminated to the public. Future guidance documents will be issued through the notice and comment process outlined in the handbook.

Printed copies will be made available upon request to Standards Division, National Organic Program, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Room 2646-S, Ag Stop 0268, Washington, D.C. 20250-0268; telephone: (202) 720-3252; fax: (202) 205-7808. Copies can also be downloaded from the Internet. For more information, contact Melissa Bailey, Director, Standards Division of NOP, at (202) 720-3252.

Francis Thicke Book Now Available

Francis Thicke, PhD, is a scientist, an expert on sustainable agriculture, and a practicing dairy farmer. He is widely consulted for his clear explanations of the economic and ecological forces that are changing the way we produce food in the modern world. This book draws from his background as an organic dairy farmer, and as a soil scientist who has served at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. as National Program Leader for Soil Science. This introductory book addresses topics from industrial farming (including CAFOs — Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) to the ongoing conflicts between factory farms and family farms, to how family farms can be profitable after peak oil. He also examines industrial agriculture and nature's own ecological methods, and shows how, in his own dairy operation, new sustainable approaches can be less costly, more productive, and return more profits to farmers. Dr. Thicke is an advocate for the systematic improvement of agricultural technology and farming methods, and for the effective use of sustainable, renewable sources of energy to achieve self-sufficiency in food production. His insights have proven increasingly relevant in the development of new public policy for Iowa, with profound implications for the United States as a whole.



Read reviews or order the book on Amazon.com. Download an electronic version of the book (free) at: http://www.radiancedairy.com/new-book/ ◆

National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) Meeting Highlights

By Lisa McCrory, NODPA News and Web Editor

It was my pleasure to attend the NOSB meeting on behalf of NODPA in Madison, WI from October 25 – 28, 2010 and be part of industry conversations, certifier technical arguments and a layman frustration with the 'sausage making' of organic regulations. This was the last meeting for New York dairy farmer and organic pioneer, Kevin Englebert, who has provided such an insightful and consistent producer voice in maintaining the strength and veracity of the USDA organic seal. Kevin could only have done this with the support of his family and we thank them all for their dedication to the future of organic agriculture. Organic sales are now in the $25 billion range and the workload of being a representative on the NOSB is equal to having another job. While OFPA and FACA rules may dictate that these representatives of our industry cannot be paid, we need to address the issue of how to maintain a diverse and representative Board, including working farmers, who have no private income or stable salary. If we don't, the candidates for the Board will self select to be salaried industry personnel and we will lose the experience and insights of the practitioners of our noble science.

Fortunately, under this new administration the National Organic Program (NOP) publishes a great deal of information about NOSB meetings. Please go to www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/NOSB for all the details of the meeting. Issues that got a lot of attention in both the comment periods and during meeting sessions were Corn Steep Liquor and Hops. A number of livestock health products will return to the Sunset list (205.603) for another 5 years and they are: Aspirin, Chlorine materials (calcium hypochlorite, chlorine dioxide, sodium hypochlorite), Copper sulfate (as topical treatment, external parasiticide), Alcohols (ethanol, isopropanol) Furosemide, Glucose, Glycerine (as livestock teat dip), Magnesium sulfate, and EPA List 4-inerts of Minimal Concern.

Comments on the NOSB Livestock Committee Discussion Document on Animal Welfare, which suggested measurable stocking densities for various types of confined livestock showed that there was general support for strong animal welfare standards within organic farming systems. NODPA, and many others, felt that any regulations must steer away from prescriptive elements, and create reasonable standards determined more by the realities of farming, good husbandry, grazing, natural animal behavior, and natural healing. See NODPA and NOC comments at www.nodpa.com/in_NOP_comments.shtml

Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator for the NOP gave a report on the NOP highlighting the accomplishments over the past year as well as their goals for 2011. They are preparing for the next OIG audit, which will evaluate organic milk, determining whether milk marketed as organic meets NOP requirements, and assessing if there is adequate oversight of certifying agents by AMS.

The NOP has a list of rulemaking that it will be working on for 2011, of which Origin of Livestock is number two (pesticide residue testing is number one). They intend to present a proposed rule on Origin of Livestock by 2011. NODPA continues to push for a Proposed Rule early in 2011 so that the confusion over organic status of livestock can be settled in a timely way.

Classified Ads

Livestock

We have 2 really nice heifers for sale due in January. Preg checked. They will be about 2 ⅔ yrs each and have been bred to Milking Shorthorn. Certified organic. Really nice sturdy cows. These are from 2 really nice Dams. One heifer is a Milking Shorthorn, Normande with a little Jersey cross and the other heifer is Jersey, Normande, Holstein cross. These are out of our calving window since we are seasonal. Patty Laskowski Morren, Dancing Cow Farm, Hillsboro, WI, pmlaskowski@mwt.net

30 certified organic cross-bred cows for sale. Cows consist of heavy New Zealand genetics, brown Swiss, Jersey, milking shorthorn, and line back. Prefer to sell as group or two groups of 15. Somatic cell 152,000. Herd on DHIA.These cows outside on grass and excellent grazers. $1,500 each. Wyalusing, Bradford County, PA, Paul Hails, 570-721-1144

10 crossbred organic heifers to sell, ready to breed at 14-16 months old. asking $900 each. Hardy mowing machines, Raised on grass, outside from birth. Dave Johnson, Provident Farms, Liberty, PA , provident@epix.net, 570-324-2285.

Two nice 10 month old Holstein heifers $1100.00 gets the pair. Would be interested in trading toward certified organic springing or fresh heifers. Shaw Farm, Dracut, MA 978 957 0031, email: warren@SHAWFARM.COM

Equipment

Gehl flail chopper for sale. Unit has good knives, spout is good, however to swing spout binds some times.Not a big problem. Great for taking that last bit of forage to far from the barn. 2200.00 OBO Paul Hails 570-721-1144

NH358 Grinder mixer for sale, took on trade a year ago and put 1000.00 intopatching a few holes, putting new blower housing on front. Hammers have never been turned. It needs a oil and filter change and should be ready to roll. This is a hydro machine. price 2000.00 call 570-721-1144 Paul Hails

Position Available
Herd Manager

Job Description: The Grey Barn and Farm is looking for a full-time, year-round Herd Manager that is open to new ideas and interested in small scale organic dairy farming. We are in need of an outgoing and creative individual who is dedicated to the cultivation, production and preparation of local food seasonally and organically. This position will oversee livestock, dairy farm hands and the day-to-day operations of the dairy and upkeep of the facilities at the dairy with the Farm Manager and Creamery Manager. This person will also manage the grazing and breeding program for all cattle, pastured swine and poultry.

The Grey Barn and Farm is a 70 acre organic-in-transition 100% grass-fed dairy and farm located on Martha's Vineyard. We are committed to sustainability for the land and our community and hope that any individual applying for this position has the same aspirations. Compensation is competitive and includes benefits. For the full job description and more information please contact Molly Glasgow at farmer@thegreybarnandfarm.com.

NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

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- Employ management practices that increase the carrying capacity of the pasture land - maximizing pasture yields through the use of soil and crop nutrients, weed control, the use of annual crops, irrigation, etc.
- Convert existing cropland into pasture to increase the carrying capacity.

Several farmers chimed in that once they started to "do the math", they found that the 30% DMI figure was pretty easy to reach for nearly everyone who already pastures their cows.

A survey from the University of Vermont about weeds started a lively discussion. Since cows eat a great variety of plant species in the pasture, it becomes difficult to label a great many plants as "weeds". One veterinarian listed a variety of weeds that are very palatable, especially when young. Another listed a group of herbaceous plants preferred by her sheep. Another contributor listed weeds that were medicinal species, or species that gathered and then concentrated certain minerals from the soil. It was suggested that cows need a wide variety (one producer said we should aim for 40 to 100) of plant species in the pasture to properly meet the cow's nutritional needs.

A producer shared his experience in trying some high-density grazing this summer. At their peak time in the spring, the stocking rate was 250 to 300 cows/Acre with 5 to 7 moves per day. During this time, this no-grain, spring seasonal, once-a-day milking herd achieved a 42lb/day average. There were pitfalls in the system as the season progressed, and he made changes both to shorten the recovery time and lower the animal density and # of moves per day. After the first season of high-density grazing, this producer clearly sees the biological benefits, but the pasture recovery did not proceed as expected, and he felt that it entails a great risk to the family business until we know how to achieve higher levels of animal performance under this system.

A farmer wanted information on a piece of equipment to inject molasses into round hay bales to increase the energy. Another producer responded that Haymaster Systems makes a bale spear on a 3-pt hitch with a pump attached to inject diluted molasses into a round bale.

There was a question from a producer about using treated lumber in a machinery building. Naturally, most of the responses suggested he contact his certifier. Others pointed to the fact that the arsenic in the CCA-treated wood leaches into soil or water, and there are other treatment alternatives that are becoming more available --- some treated wood is ACQ-treated (Alkaline Copper Quat), a paint-on preservative called Lifetime Wood Treatment was suggested, and a website called the Healthy Building Network lists many other alternatives.

To increase pasture yields, a producer asked about irrigation equipment. One farmer/veterinarian highly recommended the K-Line system. Another farmer recommended the Keyline system. ◆

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

From the MODPA President

As the seasons change, both political and growing, it seems we are in for changes too. Winter chores are soon to be the norm. As far as politics go only time and our diligent oversight will tell those changes. Along with the changes hopefully comes time to evaluate this year's successes and failures. As weather will always be a challenge we will have to better manage those things we can control if we hope to continue. We need to reflect on all aspects of the dairy business – choosing the best pasture mixes and balanced rations to ensure the girls are getting what they need for maximum production. Further evaluation of milking equipment and handling to ensure we are not giving away dollars in possible premiums. Checking on breeding schedules and sires to make sure we are again on the right genetic track to get the most possible from the girls either in timed milk production or in salable offspring.

Just as we need to be watchful of our government and stay involved to get the changes we desire, we also need to spend some time/research into the marketing of our milk – evaluating whether our existing market is best. Don't just sign on the line and forget it, for if we don't pay attention to marketing our product we are no different than conventional - taking whatever is offered and then struggling to manage on that income level. We need to take the time to watch our marketing in much the same way we would watch a springing heifer or an emerging crop. Wanting to ensure we get them off to the best possible start. But after that start we still need to be diligent in watching so that we can prevent problems and can get her bred back. We monitor our crops for best times to harvest for best yield and quality. We should also monitor our milk marketing strategy to maximize there also. WE need, as farmers, to work to control production on the farm ensuring we maximize all available dollars.

As it seems milk is short in our part of the country (at least that's the impression we get from all the processors), now is the time to be proactive in planning for when supply goes beyond demand so that we have a plan in place to protect our price. We need to work with the conventional side and come up with a program that will benefit all farmers.

The time for sitting on the sidelines is done, we need all your great ideas and help to put through a program that is focused on profitability for the small farm or there will be no small farms.

May GOD bless you with enough this Holiday Season!! Make sure you take some time for family. ◆

Darlene Coehoorn, MODPA President
Rosendale, Wisconsin

About MODPA

The Midwest Organic Dairy Producer Alliance (MODPA) represents organic dairy producers in WI, MN, ND, SD, IA, NE, KS, MO, IL, IN, OH, & MI with the mission "to promote communication and networking for the betterment of all Midwest organic dairy producers and enhance a sustainable farmgate price." Objectives are:

1. To ensure a fair and sustainable farm gate price.
2. Keep family farms viable for future generations.
3. Promote ethical, ecological and humane farming practices.
4. Networking among producers of all organic commodities.
5. Promote public policy, research and education in support of organic agriculture.

MODPA Board

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Become a Member of MODPA!

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Certified Organic Dairy? Yes No # of cows: _____

Transitioning: _____

I wish to support MODPA (check whatever applies):

___ By becoming a state rep or director.

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

___ By providing a donation to support the work of MODPA. $_____ enclosed.

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

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

Prsrt Std
US Postage Paid
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CALENDAR

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February 12-14, 2011
NOFA Vermont's 29th Annual Winter Conference
University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
The 2011 winter conference will feature Shannon Hayes and Bill McKibben as keynotes, along with over 65 workshops, our famous children's conference, and of course, lots of time for networking and making new friends. In addition, we'll be celebrating our 40th anniversary! Conference details can be found on our website: http://nofavt.org/annual-events/winter-conference For more information about workshops or sponsorship, please contact Olga Moriarty at olgamoriarty@gmail.com.

February 13-15, 2011
The 19th annual Grazing Conference
Wisconsin Dells, WI

Join your fellow graziers, neighbors, colleagues and friends at the 2011 GrassWorks Grazing Conference. The theme, "Grounded in Grazing," reflects this year's focus on soil as well as the down to earth nature of the event and its participants. We've decided to designate an entire workshop session track to dung beetles and the vital microscopic world that is so inextricably linked to our own. Additional tracks address topics related to financial management, marketing/distribution, policy/program support, research and, as always, getting started in grazing. For more info, contact Bridget O'Meara info@grasswork.org or 715-808-0060.

February 24-26, 2011
22ne Annual MOSES Organic Farming Conference, Lacrosse, WI
For more information, contact MOSES at: 715-778-5775 or go to their website: www.mosesorganic.org