

NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Take Our Organic Dairy Survey!
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Forrest Stricker and his cows

Feature Farm: Spring Creek Farm, Wernersville, PA A 5-generation grass-based organic dairy expands to beef, poultry & value-added

By Lisa McCrory

Spring Creek Farm is a grass-based certified organic dairy farm located in Wernersville, PA; just about an hour's drive from Philadelphia. The Stricker family has been farming this land for 5 generations and for the past 10 years, they have been expanding from wholesale dairy to grass-fed beef,

poultry, eggs, value added dairy products, and raw milk. Their mission statement, 'To raise the healthiest food possible and be good stewards of the environment,' has guided them forward into an age of farming where their diversified farm can support 4.5 households, provides a working environment that makes employees

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Transitioning Organic Cows On Pasture

By Karen Hoffman, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service with some additions by Rick Kersbergen UMaine Cooperative Extension

One challenge with grazing the organic dairy herd is helping cows adjust to a new feed source in both the spring and fall. The switch from lower-quality stored feeds to high-quality pasture is much like changing silos. If the change is made too quickly, milk production drops until the cows and their rumen microbes become accustomed to the new feed. The rumen microbes are especially sensitive to sudden changes because it takes time

to shift their numbers and types to those that are more adapted to higher-quality forage.

Spring Transition

During the transition, the first day of grazing occurs when the grass is only three to four inches tall. The length of time cows are allowed out on pasture should be relatively short (one to two hours). If left out for longer than that,

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA President

Hi, it has been what seems a long winter. Here in Connecticut we have been in a snow belt. I was talking to the milk inspector yesterday and he said that over 300 agricultural structures have been reported collapsed by the snow. These range from freestall barns to hoop houses for calves to riding rings for horses. Then there are the houses and warehouses and more that couldn't take the weight of the snow and ice. We spent over a week shoveling snow off my pole barns between chores. The good news is it is now March and we can look forward to seeing the spring grass growing.

NODPA has put together a survey for the organic and transitioning dairy farmer (pages 19 & 20 of this newsletter)

that can be filled out and sent in by regular mail, or filled out on-line by going to our website (www.nodpa.com).

Our NODPA Survey team (Siobhan Griffin, George Wright, Steve Morrison, Lisa McCrory, Ed Maltby and myself) put a lot of thought and effort into this and I would like to thank them. I filled out the online survey; it was quick and simple.

The survey will be a useful tool to help set our goals for NODPA. Thank you in advance for filling this out.

Many of us have written letters against GE alfalfa, but it seems that big money has won again and got unrestricted approval for its use. We have fought for years to have the best rules in the world for our organic consumers, yet big business wants to keep putting obstacles in our way. We, with the help of the consumers, must fight back!

Rick Segalla, NODPA President, Canaan, CT

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA Desk

By NODPA Executive Director Ed Maltby

NODPA was ten years old in February! One of the founders, Lisa McCrory, continues to work her magic for NODPA with each and every newsletter, Enewsletter and the web site, although I wish she would extend some of her great powers to improve the weather! Chris Hill, a NODPA newbie by comparison with Lisa, does exemplary work on all web and printed graphics and design and responds with alacrity and accuracy to our many requests. We hope we are providing the service that you as organic dairy farm families and supporters of organic dairy see as important, in a timely and constructive way, but we always question if we have our priorities correct. To celebrate NODPA's tenth anniversary, the NODPA Board and staff have developed a print and web based survey to check in on what matters to our membership as our industry changes. We ask you all to complete the survey on pages 19 and 20 and mail, fax or email the survey in with as many comments as possible. It's also on our website.

As an incentive and to acknowledge the time spent filling out the survey (shouldn't take more than 10 minutes), everyone that completes the survey and attaches their name will be entered into a drawing for a copy of Dr. Hue Karreman's new book, 'The Barn Guide to Treating Dairy Cows Naturally', Cody Holmes book 'Ranching Full Time on 3 hours a day' and the DVD of the movie 'What's Organic about Organic.'

Genetically Engineered (GE) alfalfa has remained a dominant and time consuming issue as we work with other organizations to develop appropriate strategies and tactics that can unite the organic and sustainable agriculture community in a legal response, as well as legislative, media and grassroots educational programs. There is no doubt that contamination from GE crops will increase and challenge the profitability of US agriculture at home and abroad. We do not need GE crops to feed the world or to make alternative fuels. If we want choice for consumers and for all farmers we need to regulate GE crops and not be afraid to ask consumers to join with us to defend their choices. This will be a priority for NODPA moving forward whether assisting with legal challenges or with education of consumers, legislators and government employees.

The Agriculture Secretary has stated that it is a priority for his administration to complete an equivalency agreement on organic certification with the European Union (EU). This will make it easier for the trade of organic product between

the EU and USA. While this may be profitable and may ease the paperwork burden for certifiers, companies that market manufactured products and farmers that currently market products internationally, any equivalency on livestock standards will be almost impossible to achieve and still retain the integrity demanded by the US consumers. So far, this process, which is characterized as trade negotiations, has been shrouded in secrecy without open dialogue within or between the industry, the USDA and the US/EU negotiating team. When the EU negotiators visited the US, there was no opportunity for producers to meet with them. OTA has a Task Force on EU equivalency which hasn't met for many months and is headed up by a certifier organization rather than an industry spokesperson. This appears to be the only official and unofficial conduit for input by the industry. The producer voice was missing during the discussions between USDA and industry on GE alfalfa; therefore we will need to insist that that is not the case with EU equivalency. The integrity of organic dairy has always been a priority for NODPA and we will follow the EU negotiations closely to protect that integrity and the future of our family farms.

My time on the DIAC committee made me even more aware of how profitability is viewed by different folks in the dairy industry. For most organic dairy producers, profitability is measured very modestly by achieving family goals rather than being paid a real salary for their labor or receiving an adequate return on equity. Many folks say 'leave it to the market' to determine a producer pay price; when there is a surplus of milk, pay prices will drop and when supply is short, prices will rise. In non-organic dairy, the market signals are muted because of the method for calculating pay price. In organic dairy, there is still a direct connection with the market, so the response to market changes should be more immediate. When retail demand leveled out and surpluses were being sold at rock bottom non-organic prices, producers shared some of the pain and most processors supported producers with only small reductions in gross income. The retail market for fluid organic milk is now unexpectedly strong; the price gap between organic and non-organic retail price is not prohibitive; and supply of organic milk is short. For producers, inputs of fuel, grain and petroleum based products are rising; certifiers will be passing on increased costs and adequate health insurance for self employed and small businesses continues to be expensive. To maintain a healthy and growing organic dairy market we need reliable and adequate supply. To ensure a sustainable supply, processors need to respond to increased costs that are imposed on producers with an increase in pay price. A sustainable pay price will always be a priority for NODPA. ♦

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Springtime Challenges for the Grass Farmer

By C. Edgar Sheaffer, VMD, Feb 2011

“Honor the healing process of the patient at all times.”

Early Calving

Birthing in early spring has advantages for grass based systems because it allows for synchrony of the livestock with the cycles of the earth. As the grass is pushing upward, young calves, lambs and kids are learning to graze for the first time in their lives. As lactating mothers are increasing in milk production, the nutrition in spring forage is also increasing providing just what is needed.

In some years the concern is the weather that does not cooperate with your schedule. For example, your cows have been bred to calve in March, and this has been a late spring. A major concern would be frost bite in the newborn and on the teats of the cows. Homeopathic medicine has answers and remedies easy to use.

Aconitum napellus – Keynotes are clinical illnesses after exposure to cold and being chilled. The patient may be fearful with a rapid heart rate reflecting the intensity of the stress. Since she has not been outside the womb long enough to rally a fever, the neonate’s temperature is usually normal or sub-normal. In newborns: Dose with 200C every 15 minutes at first and hourly to follow.

Carbo vegetabilis – Frostbite with fainting and collapse are keynote symptoms. Along with warming and massage to stimulate circulation give the “great reviver” Carbo-veg 30C every 15 minutes for up to 5 doses.

Mastocream – used topically for chapped teats and inflammation of the udder, and the first stages of mastitis; Mastocream may be applied to ears and any other part of the body suffering frostbite.

Post Calving – Retained Placenta

The last two weeks of gestation are excellent days to help prepare your cow for labor and delivery. Caulophyllum 30C (homeopathic Blue Cohosh) dosed daily regulates contractions and often

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prevents a retained placenta.

For mothers that have not received Caulophyllum before labor and delivery with the result of a post-partum retained placenta, it is not too late for Caulophyllum. Dosing three times daily is recommended when delivery has been from a normal presentation. If the condition comes after an abnormal presentation with dystocia consider Pulsatilla dosed three times daily for three days.

Milk Fever and Homeopathy

Hypocalcemia can occur as a medical condition in all species and fortunately when diagnosed early is readily treatable. In dairy cattle it occurs just before calving and/ or within 72 hours after parturition. Traditional treatments involve IV electrolyte solutions containing Calcium gluconate and/or Calcium borogluconate. Organic dairy farmers have reported success dosing with Calcarea carbonica 30C and Calcarea phosphorus 30C upon observing stage I hypocalcemia. The early signs are excitability, muscle and ear twitching, head bobbing and mild ataxia.

Experienced dairy persons and veterinarians have learned to recognize Stage I Milk Fever signs. Rubbing the cow’s neck or

pinching the withers can cause her to drop her head, open her mouth and extend her tongue. Another person carefully studies the neck and spinal cord for an S shape indicating muscle weakness. Others choose touch, feeling the top of the head, ears, and down the back for cold spots. Cows in stage I will stay on their feet, and usually respond well to homeopathic medications.

Cows in recumbancy (stage II) have been successfully gotten back on their feet with homeopathic medicines as well. Holsteins and other large framed breeds should be dosed with Calc carb 30C in alteration with Calc phos 30C every 15 to 30 minutes for at least three doses of each medicine. Smaller framed cattle (Jersey, Guernsey, Devon) usually respond to Calc phos 30C in alteration with Magnesia phos 30C dosing at the same frequency.

It would be prudent to have Calcium solutions and oral preparations in the medicine chest as well. If a cow has deteriorated into stage II hypocalcemia, the blood calcium level may be below 7 mg/dl. A normal healthy cow has a level of 10 – 12 mg/dl.

Patients in stage III will always have a blood calcium level below 7mg/ dl, a life threatening condition. These cows must receive parenteral treatments quickly. Fortunately, a rapid response to therapy is usually witnessed.

Post Calving Paresis

Nerve injury can occur during delivery especially when a large fetus is forced through a small pelvic canal. Post calving paresis is more often witnessed with heifers than in older multiparous dams. The top three homeopathic treatments are as follows:

Arnica montana 30C or 200C – dose three or four times daily on day one. Keynotes calling for Arnica are bleeding, bruising, inflammation, swelling and pain.

Hypericum perforatum 200C - dosed three times daily on day two. If the heifer has considerable tissue bruising and swelling, alternate Arnica and Hypericum every 3 hours on days two and three or until the condition resolves.

Conium maculata 200C – For the animal that has not fully recovered by day four, it is recommended to alternate Hypericum with Conium mac every four hours.

A thorough physical exam is in order for any animal that is recumbent more than 24 hours. Fractured bones and torn ligaments take much longer to heal than bruised nerves.

Diarrhea

Diarrhea in mothers are usually due to feed change, stress and/or trauma. Fastrack probiotic products especially Fastrack Jump

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Nutrient Availability & Soil Tests: What Do They Tell You?

Notes by Klass Martens, 2006 PASA 3-day soil fertility workshop with Neal Kinsey

Reprinted from the May 2007 issue of the NODPA News

Next to weed control, interpreting soil tests and deciding which fertilizers to use are THE most common questions that organic farmers struggle with. There are some very important differences between fertility management strategies we use on organic farms and those used on conventional farms but the basics are still the same. When you get back soil test results, they will give you levels of calcium, magnesium, potassium, hydrogen, pH, CEC, phosphorus, and often sulfur, sodium, zinc, iron, manganese, copper, boron, and aluminum. In addition, many tests report "base saturation" percentages of the major cations. If they are all testing for the same things, then why are there such big differences between the numbers you get from different labs? Neal Kinsey explains it this way: If you see a word that is written in English, and then see the same word written in French, German, and Spanish, even though each different language uses the same 26 letters and appear similar, they will look like 4 different words and make no sense to you unless you can read the language that the word is written in. Looking at different soil test reports is a lot like seeing different languages in print. They may all say the same thing using the same set of letters and numbers but will appear different until you have learned how to read them. Even 'percent base saturations' may not be calculated the same way by each lab that reports them. For this reason, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' soil test labs to use. You just need to learn how to understand the reports from the lab you decide to use, and realize that comparing results from different labs may be confusing.

Most fertilizer programs are based on something called "The law of the minimum". This is a theory that says that crop yields will be limited by whatever element is in the shortest supply. Often an illustration of a barrel with several broken staves is used to explain this. The barrel can only hold as much water as the shortest stave, no matter how high the others are.

We all know that often the most limiting factor is not a mineral element at all, but instead is rainfall. We also know that it is possible to have so much rainfall that yields are lowered by it. That illustrates a less known and understood law called "The law of the maximum". This law states that when you have an excess of one thing, it will cause something else to become short. In the case of too much water, this causes a shortage of soil oxygen which limits yields. With fertilizers, the interactions aren't always as obvious or as simple as with too much rain, but they can hurt your crops just as much. That is why when a little is good, a lot more may not be better - it may cause a disaster instead.

Soil tests are as important for avoiding excesses as they are for determining what is deficient. Organic fertilizers like compost and manures contain many different minerals. That is usually an advantage because we put on trace elements along with the major elements whenever we fertilize with these materials. However, when we already have an excess of something, putting even more of it on can cause trouble even if the material we use contains something else that we really need. Putting on too much of something is often much worse than having a shortage and can cost you in at least three ways: First, buying the unneeded material wastes money, second it lowers yields and quality, and third it may cost even more money to correct the imbalance caused by the over-application of fertilizer.

An excess of some materials can cause things you need to leach out or be tied up. That not only costs you in lost fertility, can also impacts water quality. Excess nitrogen can cause calcium or potassium to leach out of the soil and cause loss of organic matter. Excess sulfur can leach out many of the cations on the soil colloids. Excessive phosphorus ties up zinc, excessive potassium can tie up magnesium, and excessive magnesium ties up everything including magnesium! Excessive calcium can do the same. Even something as good as organic matter can be overdone - if the organic matter has too wide a carbon-to-nitrogen ratio, it can tie up nitrogen so severely as to cause crop damage. Too much organic matter can also cause weed problems.

It is important to not put on materials unless you know what nutrients they actually contain. There is a tremendous possible range in nutrient content in materials like manure and compost. For this reason, it is important to test each amendment before application to soil. Be sure you understand whether the test results are on a 'dry matter basis' or 'as is'. If the test is on a dry matter basis, and you are putting on something with varying moisture like compost, you will have take the moisture level into account by varying the application rate. ♦

Klaas Martens, along with his wife Mary-Howell and their three children, farm 1,400 acres of organic grains in the Finger Lakes area of western New York. They also own and operate Lakeview Organic Grain, an organic feed and seed business in Penn Yan, NY. They can be contacted at kandmhfarm@sprintmail.com.

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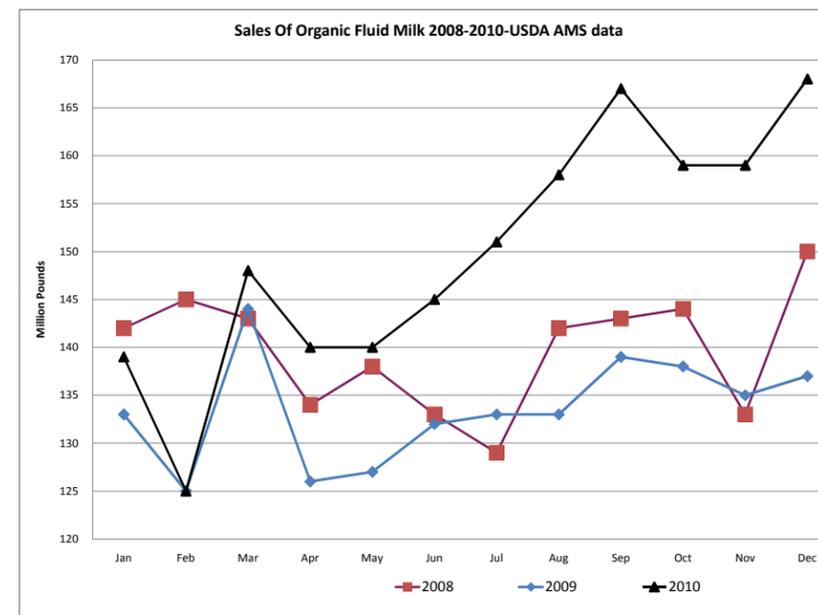
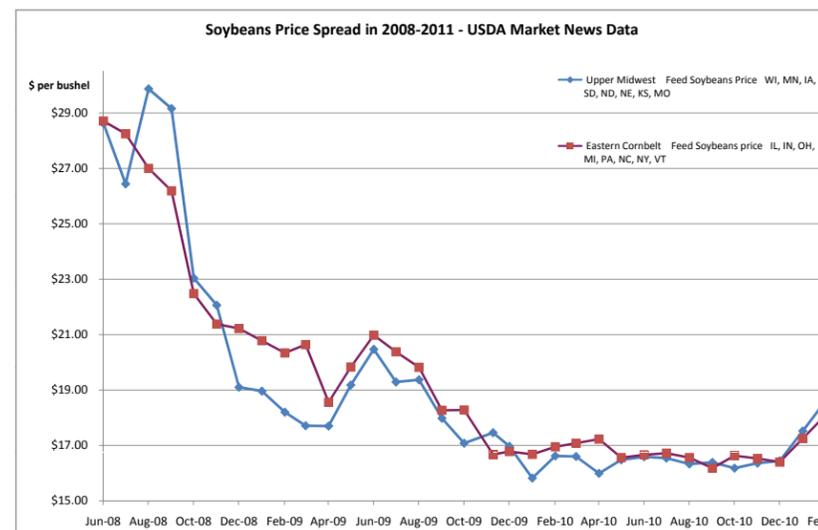
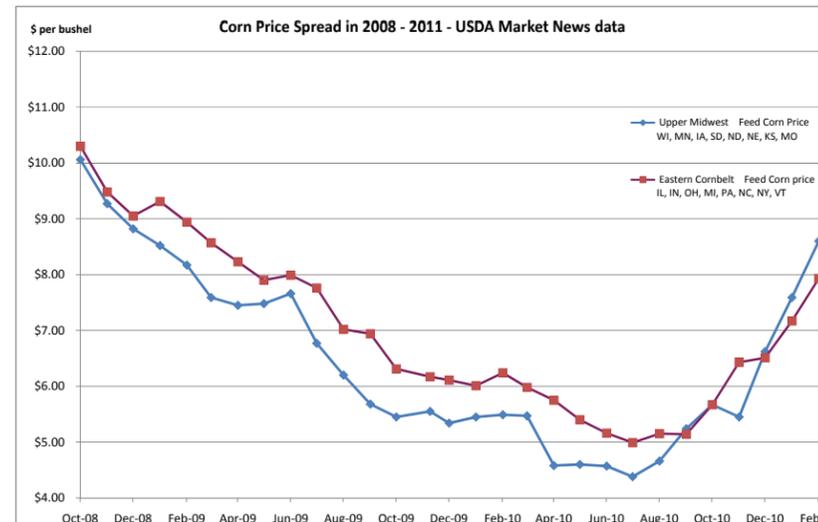
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Feed price and retail demand summary March 2011

According to the USDA's "Agricultural Prices" report released on 2/28/11, the profitability of conventional dairy is worse than a year ago with a milk-feed ratio of 1.96 down from 2.36 a year ago. The all milk conventional price has risen to \$18.40/cwt but the price of corn used for the February calculations was up 72¢ from January 2011. With feed cost rising more rapidly than the price of milk, the outlook for 2011 is not good.

From all accounts organic dairy has record retail sales, increased by 31 million pounds from December 2009 to December 2010; supply is tight and there is a steady retail price gap between organic and non-organic fluid dairy product which encourages sales. Organic Valley has sent out its 13 month check to its member owners and they are experiencing increased demand for fluid milk and from their Stonyfield Farm wholesale manufacturing account. Horizon organic is expanding retail sales and the private label market is again expanding. There has been no increase in the base pay price.

On the cost side, the organic grain market has started to respond to increased scarcity of corn and a rising conventional market. The price of feed corn has risen by approximately 36% compared to March 2010 and by 30% on November 2010, and was at \$8.60/bushel in February, 2011. Organic soybean and other proteins are slower to rise with an increase of approximately 10% from November 2010, with a bushel price of \$18.61 for soybeans and \$781/ton for soybean meal. Availability and price for organic feed in 2011-2012, will be determined by the planting decisions of organic crop producers as well as the planting conditions. With the price of non-organic corn currently at \$7 + per bushel, predictions for increased acreage of non-organic corn from 88 to 92 million acres with at least 35% going to ethanol, there will be pressure on organic grain growers to question the economics of growing organic with all its increased costs, recordkeeping and risk. The inevitable question is whether there will continue to be enough organically certified feed to supply an expanding organic milk market and at what price.



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Transitioning Organic Cows On Pasture

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they will likely eat too much and when they return to the barn, may refuse quite a bit of the ration. Another option is to “flash graze” a large area of pasture, such as a large paddock with any temporary or semi-permanent fencing removed. This is useful in cases where the ground is still wet and the potential of pugging up the pastures with too much animal pressure is a concern.

Over the next few days, the length of time the cows spend on pasture should be gradually increased until they are out full-time. At this point there will also be a gradual increase in the amount of feed they refuse in the barn. Depending upon what the “final pasture ration” is going to look like, protein forages such as haylage, baleage and dry hay should be reduced first (unless the ration will be based on one of those forages). Next the amount of protein from grain or concentrate should be cut back because the cows will be increasing their intake of protein from pasture.

If feeding a total mixed ration (TMR), the easiest way to make

the transition is to mix for five to ten fewer cows (depending on herd size) each day as they are refusing it anyway. When the TMR is being fed at a rate that is less than 70% of the full ration, begin reducing protein levels by one pound every three days. When the TMR is below 50% of normal, both protein and NFC levels should be checked to make sure they are in balance, and at this time the TMR may need to be reformulated.

Transitioning cows should always be gradual, to avoid digestive upsets. Cows need to be monitored to make sure they have adequate effective fiber in their rumen during the transition.

After 10 to 14 days of transitioning, the ration should be comprised of less than 10 pounds of dry matter from stored forage, and pasture dry matter intake should be greater than 15 pounds. Also, grain mixes should be below 16% protein (or protein concentrates should be fed at a rate of less than two pounds per cow). Mineral and vitamin intakes should be evaluated as well as often cows are less willing to consume concentrates that usually are the source of those supplements.

Producers should monitor the quality and quantity of the paddocks during the early rotations. Grasses are growing faster than cows can consume them, and often pasture quality can decline rapidly if not grazed early. It is during that period when graziers need to decide to harvest some of the pasture as a stored feed instead of including that paddock in the early rotations.

Let's hope that all this snow will melt and provide a great start to the grazing season!

References and Citations

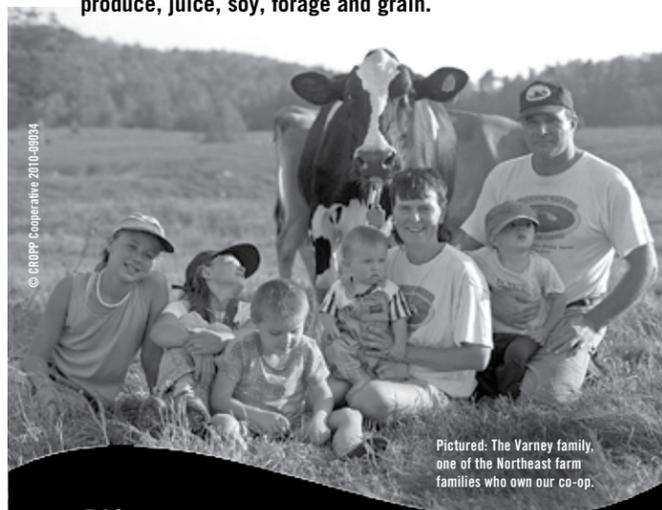
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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

GE Alfalfa Update

By Ed Maltby

On January 27, 2011, the USDA de-regulated – (in other words, they approved) – Monsanto's genetically engineered alfalfa, in order for it to be widely planted this spring. This was done despite the fact that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) identified many risks and unanswered questions.

For those that question the impact that GE alfalfa will have on non GE crops, one needs only to read the USDA EIS report, "Following 2005-2007, the alfalfa seed production firms of Dairyland and Cal/West seeds reported a number of instances where GT (glyphosate-tolerant) transgene presence was detected in non-GT alfalfa seed production fields in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and California. In 2006, Dairyland farmers reported 11 of 16 fields contained detectable levels of GT transgene; 9 fields in Montana and single fields in each Wyoming and Idaho." In 2010, Cal/West found the GMO crop in 12 percent of 200 fields where it planted non-GMO alfalfa seed.

The Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Frank Lucas, praised the USDA decision, "Genetically engineered alfalfa has been subjected to an extensive multi-year review and the conclusion has always been the same: it's safe. I am pleased that USDA used sound science and respected the limit of its statutory authority to make this decision."

On February 3, the President of Forage Genetics International, the

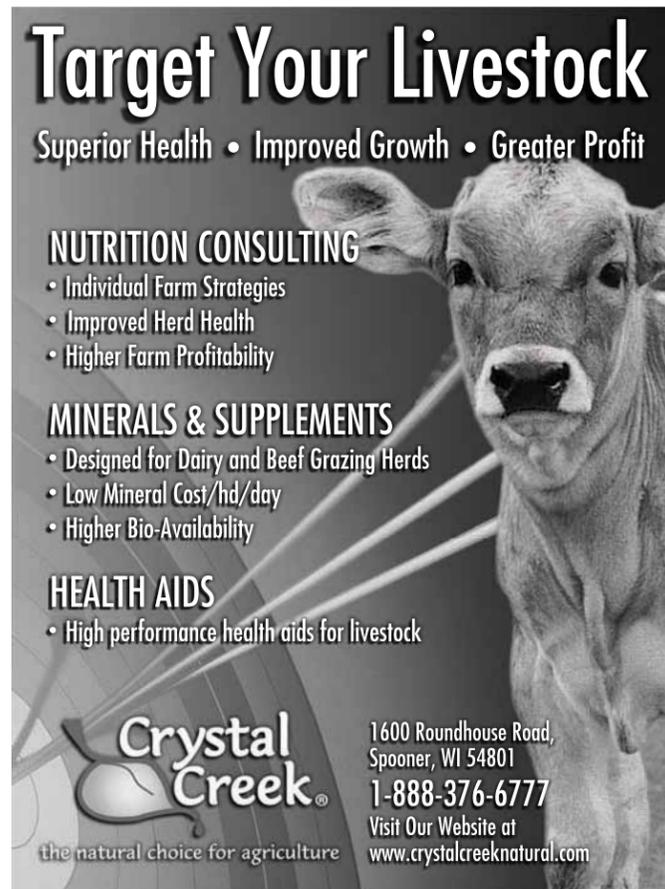
distributor of GE Alfalfa, wasted no time in encouraging farmers to purchase GE alfalfa seed by saying "Alfalfa growers can begin contacting seed dealers about ordering Roundup Ready varieties."

On February 4, 2011, the USDA partially deregulated GE sugar beets, following a court decision that called for a complete ban.

On February 11, USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced its decision to deregulate genetically modified (GM) corn that produces a common enzyme called alpha-amylase that breaks down starch into sugar, thereby facilitating a vital step in ethanol production. Known as Event 3272, Syngenta said this is the first GM output trait in corn for the ethanol industry. A joint statement issued by the Corn Refiners Assn., National Grain & Feed Assn., North American Millers' Assn., Pet Food Institute and Snack Food Association noted that during an April 2010 presentation, Syngenta conceded that one kernel of the GM corn in 10,000 kernels would be sufficient to cause significant negative impacts on food product quality. The alpha-amylase enzyme present in the biotech corn could cause food products such as corn chips, tortilla chips and breakfast cereals to break down and crumble into fine particles.

Following the announcement on January 27, there was a massive grassroots petitioning of USDA and the White House, which had a significant educational impact, though no change in any decisions.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

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Any buyers looking for organic milk who would like to be listed in this column for the March 2011 issue, please email the desired text to Lisa at lmcroory@hughes.net or call 802-234-5524.



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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Springtime Challenges for the Grass Farmer

continued from page 5

Start Gel should be dosed twice daily in all cases until the problem resolves.

Three homeopathic medicines also are to be considered:

Carbo vegetabilis 30C– indigestion, trapped gas and stalled rumen. Manure is watery and offensive; she has a depressed appetite and threatened acidosis. Dosing three or more times daily is recommended.

Nux vomica 30C – Diarrhea or constipation with bloat and straining are keynote symptoms of this medicine. Untreated cases can quickly develop ketosis followed by abomasal displacement. Dose hourly for five or more doses.

Phosphorus 30C or 200C – Patient is thirsty, fearful and easily excitable with bloody mucous in the manure. If not treated she can quickly deteriorate into nervous ketosis, and become dangerous to handle. In addition to Fastrack, complementary medicines are B-vitamins and homeopathic Lycopodium clava-

tum. Dose three times daily for up to three days.

Ketosis / Acetonemia

Metabolic illness after calving begins in the digestive tract and the liver. Even cattle in grass based systems are threatened with ketosis after the stress of dystocia or a sudden change in feed. When a person's blood glucose drops, she becomes hungry. It is the same for all non-ruminant animals. When a ruminant's blood glucose drops, she loses her appetite, and then her rumen shuts down.

Lycopodium clavatum 30C and 200C – Keynote symptoms are trapped gas, lost appetite, with easy satiety (eating a little, gives a sense of fullness).

A cow with clinical ketosis has an acetone odor to her breath, milk or urine. Farmers, helpers, and veterinarians who can smell acetone have a diagnostic advantage. For noses that cannot detect acetone, Keto-test powders and strips are available for testing milk and urine.

The cow with diarrhea and ketosis is calling for Lycopodium and Phosphorus given alternately. Conversely, ketotic cows with hard dry manure are often relieved by alternating Lycopodium with Nux vomica.

Mastitis

Pulsatilla nigricans– Symptoms manifest at freshening with thick, creamy, or stringy secretions. There may have been dystocia with a fetus in the wrong position before delivery. The cow is (presently) thirstless and has a timid personality. Dose with 30C three times daily for three to five days.

Phytolacca decandra– Mastitis is associated with Gram positive organisms like Streptococcus and Staphylococcus. There is painful inflammation, (hard swelling) with a pain that radiates to other parts of the body. The febrile patient resents nursing and milking, and cold washing, and is made worse from cold wet weather.

Dose with 30C three times daily for three to five days.

New Forrest Eye/ Pink Eye

Aconitum napellus – This is the number one homeopathic medicine for any trauma to the eye (instead of Arnica) and indicated for the first fever of any illness in animals. The patient is fearful and restless and may be exhibiting both chills and fever. In peracute conditions, dose hourly for up to 5 doses; in less acute conditions dose three or four times daily.

Euphrasia officinalis – This follows Aconite well in cases manifesting photophobia and excess tearing. Euphrasia 30C orally, and diluted tincture (5 drops in an ounce of isotonic saline) topi-

cally as a spray, mist or compress may be given concurrently.

Hypericum perforatum – topical applications (5 drops in an ounce of saline) as a spray or mist will relieve inflammation and local pain. Some homeopathic practitioners add 5 drops of calendula tincture to the wash when corneal ulceration is a threat. Apply four or five times daily.

New Forrest Eye nosode is available only from a licensed homeopathic veterinarian.

Grass Tetany

Magnesium is second only to Calcium as a beneficial mineral in livestock health. Lush green pastures or green cereal crops are the usual culprits for the developing hypomagnesemia, but grass tetany has been reported in lactating cattle being fed silage. When Magnesium is deficient in pasture it will manifest in some sort of neuromuscular symptoms along with diarrhea.

The signs of hypomagnesmic tetany in cattle and sheep are hyper-excitability, muscular spasms, convulsions, tachycardia and respiratory distress. When improperly treated collapse and death may follow in a short time.

Homeopathic treatments of Belladonna, and Magnesia phosphorica, frequently dosed may be effective as the sole therapy. However,

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*Source: IRI data ending January 9, 2011.

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Thinking About Frost Seeding?

By Dr. Darrell L. Emmick

Well, ya shoulda thought about it last fall! Why you ask? Because the secret to a successful frost seeding is in the planning. And there are a number of steps that you should have thought about and taken 6 months to over a year ago that would help ensure your frost seeding is successful.

The first thing you should have thought about was your system of grazing management. If uncontrolled grazing destroyed your pasture's productivity in the first place, and low pasture productivity is the reason you are considering doing a frost seeding, I suggest you think again. If you are not using some form of controlled grazing, where you control the frequency, intensity, timing, and duration of the grazing events so that whatever plants you have growing in your pasture can thrive, then it is not likely they will. This includes any new plants you are attempting to establish through frost seeding.

Without first having a means of controlling the negative influences of your grazing animals, doing any seeding is just a waste of your time and money. I suggest you put your seed money toward buying fence first. A well-designed grazing system does not cost, it pays.

The second thing you should have thought about is soil fertility. If your soil is not providing the plant nutrients needed to maintain your existing pasture in a high yielding state, it is not likely it will



A little hoof action is a good thing.

support your new seeding either. As with all seedings, you should first get a soil test and correct any deficiencies. And again, this should be done long before you part with your hard earned money on buying seed. For example, lime is a very slow acting soil amendment, more akin to "snail mail" than to an "overnight express." Thus if low soil pH is an issue, I recommend getting your lime spread 6 months to a year prior to seeding. For surface applications, I don't recommend spreading more than two tons of lime/ac/yr.

In many cases, simply improving your grazing management and correcting soil fertility deficiencies will be all that is required to improve your forage yields. That having been said however, some pastures will still benefit by the addition of seed to enhance production, even out seasonality of growth, or improve forage quality.

Keep in mind, frost seeding only works if the seeds you broadcast actually reach the soil surface where they can germinate and send roots into the soil. Any seed that lands on last year's dead vegetation or thatch is doomed. The seeds may germinate, but because the roots can't reach the soil, they just dry up and die like a nightcrawler that, after a night of unabashed romping around in the

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page 34.

grass on a warm spring night, finds itself over-extended on a hot dry sidewalk or driveway baking in the sun. (In case you are wondering why this happens to so many otherwise intelligent worms, you just need to keep in mind a nightcrawler is a hermaphrodite, i.e. each worm is both male and female. Thus you have one end that won't ask for directions and the other end can't read a map.)

To ensure your seeds have opportunity to reach the soil surface, you will want to graze your pasture extremely hard in the fall previous to the spring in which you want to seed. By grazing your pasture close or tightly, you are removing green vegetation before it becomes a dead vegetation problem in the spring, and by removing the leaves you are opening up a pathway for the seeds to reach the soil surface. Remember, no seed to soil contact, picture the nightcrawler.

In order to obtain the best results with frost seeding, it is best to broadcast the seed earlier rather than later. Frost seeding, as the name implies, relies on freezing and thawing temperatures to open up cracks in the soil and then close them back up burying the seed. If one waits too long in the spring to spread the seed, the chances of this happening are slim to none.

I should tell you, I am not a strong advocate of frost seeding. In the past 30 years of walking around in pastures, I have seen very little frost heaving. Some, yes, but more in hay fields on heavy clay soils. No frost heaving, no frost seeding. It is a hit or miss proposition at the best. While some have better luck with frost seeding than others, and some years are better than others, generally it takes more than



Too much hoof action is **not** a good thing.

one try to see a noticeable improvement in your pasture. The good news is, the seeding cost is so low most can afford to spin some seed on each year until the stand improves.

A better low cost seeding strategy is to use the "plop and stomp method" and let your livestock tramp the seed in the ground. No frost required.

As with frost seeding, make sure your grazing management is up to snuff and be sure to soil test and apply what is needed. Graze your pasture hard in the fall prior to the spring in which you want to seed. You may also have to graze the pasture in the spring of the year you

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Springtime Challenges for the Grass Farmer

continued from page 13

it is best to have your veterinarian slowly and carefully administer IV solutions containing magnesium if the cow or sheep is already recumbent. After treatment the patient should be quietly left alone to recover over time. Homeopathic Mag phos and Calc phos may be dosed hourly, but no violent stimulation should be applied. At no time should an electric shock prod be used.

Hypomagnesian blood reflects magnesium level of the Cerebral Spinal Fluid space. It may take hours or longer for the body to correct the CSF deficiency. If the patient is unduly stimulated at this time, a fatal convulsion will result. Subcutaneous fluids containing Mag sulfate may speed convalescence after the IV therapy. In all cases livestock should be fed dry hay before grazing lush green pastures spring and fall.

Trace Mineral Deficiency

Copper Deficiency – nerve and muscle weakness, sluggish response to stress or infection, dull bleached out hair-coats. These symptoms are worsened in the presence of high levels of iron in the drinking water and/or forage.

Zinc Deficiency – immune depression, rough hair on legs and feet, weak hooves, high Somatic Cell Counts in milk. Animals that are deficient in both copper and zinc are prone to infections, including foot rot, hairy hoof warts, gastro-intestinal ulcers, and mastitis.

Plants have difficulty taking up Phosphorus when Zinc is in short supply, and when soil Phosphorus is extremely high, plants are unable to take up Zinc. Therefore, it is possible for livestock on all forage diets to exhibit signs of Phosphorus - Zinc imbalance, or Calcium – Phosphorus imbalance. Such imbalances can lead to lower production, slow growth, reproductive problems, and

pica (eating sand, gravel, and other indigestible stuff).

Soil Testing and tissue testing are valuable tools to know nutrient status of fields. Soil tests reveal soil chemistry; tissue tests and forage tests tell us what nutrients that the plant is able to take from the soil. Roundup and other glyphosate herbicide application have grave consequences regarding future soil fertility. The plant detoxifies poisons by pushing the chemicals through the roots and deeper into the soil. The chemical does not disappear, but like chronic conditions in animals and people, dis-ease is forced deeper into the organism.

If your pasture field grew Roundup Ready corn five years ago, the longterm effects are still there in the soil. Quantitative deficiencies may be observed in the appearance of the forage and the health of livestock.

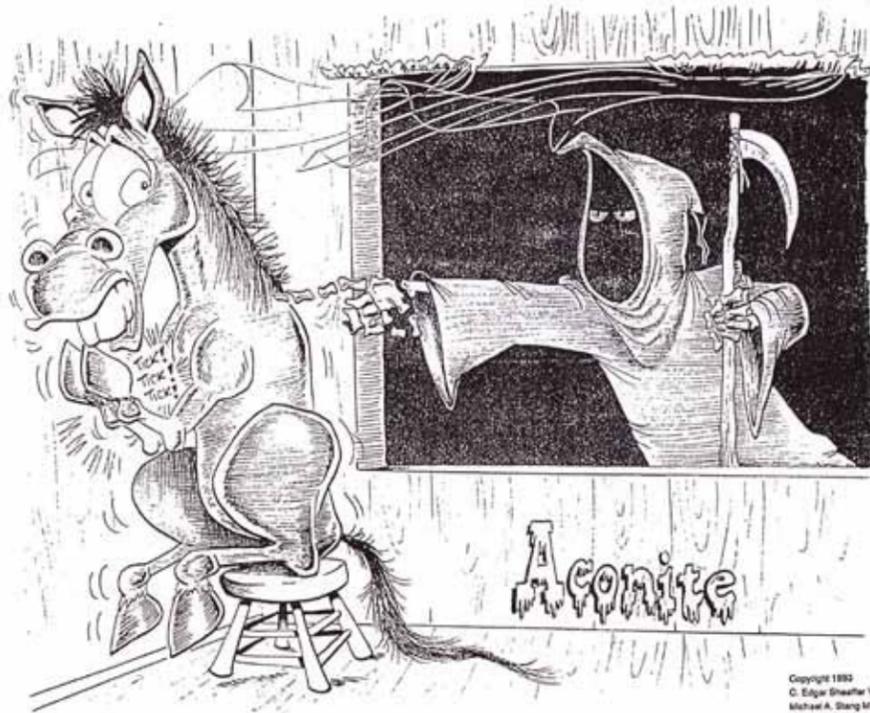
For example, glyphosate binds to Zinc so that the plant root cannot take up Zinc. Cattle eating that forage can be prone to high Somatic Cell Counts in milk, foot rot, hoof warts and an overall sluggish immune response to stress.

We are excited that certain private companies are running trials to detox the soil by non-toxic methods. Biological

programs appear to be favored over chemistry, although all improvements are gradual, taking several growing seasons, not just one year. One system plants cover crops with microbial rich compost in an attempt to return the balance and fertility that was previously disrupted by herbicides.

Concluding Remarks

Homeopathy is a system of medicine based on total symptom pictures. Whether one also doses with nutraceuticals or herbs depends on the condition of the patient and the knowledge of the prescriber. Homeopathic medicines are compatible with probiotics, ascorbates and most other vitamins. Herbal mixtures may not be and should be evaluated on a case by case basis. At no times should symptoms be suppressed. At all times the natural healing process of the body should be honored. ♦



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Supplying Sufficient Nitrogen for Organic Dairy Farms

By Neal Kinsey

Nitrogen, whether used to correctly stimulate grass for pasture and hay production, or for better yields of corn silage, is often the most limiting nutrient for organic growers to increase fertility and production.

The need for sufficient nitrogen in crop production is perhaps the most important consideration as nitrogen is required as a part of every living cell. Furthermore, because nitrogen is so volatile in the form plants can best utilize, it is necessary and worthwhile to ensure that it is supplied correctly for crop growth. But for many who wish to grow organically, if there is an insufficient supply of compost to provide the nitrogen requirements, crops will suffer accordingly. This is costly in terms of plant health and crop production and often completely unnecessary as there are other ways to supply the nitrogen requirements for those crops where more nitrogen would be truly beneficial to the crop than the judicious use of compost will provide.

Compost is an excellent source of nitrogen for crops. The problem that can result is that it requires so much compost to supply all the needed nitrogen that the rates applied will tend to build up levels of other nutrients in the soil much faster. Phosphate and potassium being built to excess are the two that should be of most concern, but some composts are also very high in calcium and/or sodium either of which can become a serious problem if not kept under control. When there is too much of one needed nutrient there will be a lack of some other needed nutrient in that soil. This is the true meaning of not having a "balanced soil."

You can't manage what you can't measure. Every organic dairyman should know the nutrient content of any compost (or any other material) that will be applied for growing feed for his cows on the farm. This does not stop at measuring the N-P-K content of compost. The calcium, magnesium and sodium content should be checked to assure they will not contribute to an excess in the soil. Sulfur would also be good to check, generally more to show that it is not there in sufficient amounts to supply what the soil and plants need for growth and yield.

Such tests should be correlated with a detailed soil analysis that determines the correct amounts of each nutrient needed for feeding the life in that soil properly. This will then provide the right balance of nutrients for growing and nourishing the plants growing there. (Feed the soil and let the soil feed the plants!)

Another test to consider is one for nitrate and ammonia content in the soil. This is particularly helpful where alfalfa or clovers are expected to add a portion of the nitrogen for the following crop. Very good alfalfa fields can provide as much as 120 pounds of nitrogen per acre, while other poor stands will not even provide half that much. Clover tends to provide less accordingly, and both can come up short of the expected average due to poor root nodulation.

What to do when a nitrogen test shows that nitrogen is the greatest limiting factor to achieve best results for pasture grasses is to consider using approximately 40 lbs. (the same as saying 40 units) of actual nitrogen per acre per ton of grass produced. Be sure to measure and consider the amount of nitrogen supplied from the soil humus – generally in good pastures this can reduce total nitrogen requirements by 75 to 100 units per acre. For pastures containing at least one-third legumes with well-nodulated root systems, raising four to five tons of grass is not considered as needing any extra nitrogen.

For corn silage a safe rule of thumb is ten pounds (units) of nitrogen per ton of silage produced, less the nitrogen supplied by the colloidal

humus in that soil. On average about 50 pounds or units of nitrogen per acre will be supplied from this source, but some poor soils provide as little as 25 pounds (units) per acre, while soils with 5% humus will supply about 100 pounds (units) per acre.

In addition if corn silage is following legumes, be sure to reduce the nitrogen requirement accordingly. For soybeans we find it is safer to figure three-quarters of a pound of available nitrogen per bushel of soybeans produced. Though other sources may advocate subtracting one pound of actual N per bushel of soybeans produced, testing will show that allowance tends to bring the crop up short later in the season based on plant analysis.

Many will maintain that this amount of nitrogen is far too much - and it is if your soil is in poor condition. But for soil with the proper nutrients to grow high yields, anything less in terms of nitrogen will limit both yield and quality.

For those with too little or no compost at all, the use of sufficient amounts of protein meal will help supply a slow release source of nitrogen. This includes products like feather meal, blood meal, soybean, cottonseed, or linseed meal. Any product that contains protein will supply nitrogen for plants. Just divide the protein content by 6.24 to determine how many pounds of nitrogen will be supplied by 100 pounds of material.

Liquid biological stimulants provide another alternative for supplying nitrogen to the soil for plants, but these are far less utilized and often misunderstood and maligned accordingly. There are several products marketed as biological stimulants, and not all of them work the same way. However, whether any specific product can supply the nitrogen required need not be based on an assumption. Most private soil testing laboratories can perform a nitrate and ammonia test on soils. To prove the worth of any one of the products in terms of its value as a nitrogen supplier, just split an area that grows evenly. Treat half according to the directions (generally applications are in ounces per acre mixed with sufficient water) and use the other half as the control. Allow a few weeks, preferably a month or more, then take several probes of soil 7-8 inches deep from the untreated area. Do the same in the treated area and have a soil lab analyze both samples for nitrate and ammonia content.

Soils will never produce top yields without sufficient nitrogen to do so. There are no shortcuts; a pound of nitrogen required by the plant is a pound of nitrogen that must be supplied from some source, or the plant suffers loss. When that loss happens, it translates to the nutrition and quality of feed for the dairy cow that eats it and those who consume what she produces. That is the point where the best reasons and purposes for being organic are not what is being accomplished.

For more information on the soil fertility program we utilize please see our web site, www.kinseyag.com, or contact us directly for your specific needs. And for those who consider the points made above of utmost importance, perhaps you will consider allowing us to help in determining the nutrient requirements of your soil for producing the crops to be grown there to best benefit the livestock and people depending on them.

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A Survey of Organic & Transitioning Dairy Producers

On February 16, 2001, in the basement of the Congregational Church in Waterbury, Vermont, a group of organic dairy farmers from New York, Maine, and Vermont gathered together to talk about milk price, feed costs, pasture standards, the need to communicate with fellow producers, and to speak as a unified voice, advocating for the rights and needs of organic dairy farmers throughout the Northeast. It was from that Regional Summit Meeting that the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA) was formed.

NODPA's mission: to enable organic dairy family farmers, situated across an extensive area, to have informed discussion about matters critical to the well being of the organic dairy industry as a whole, with particular emphasis on:

1. Establishing a fair and sustainable price for their product at the wholesale level.
2. Promoting ethical, ecological and economically sustainable farming practices.
3. Developing networks with producers and processors of other organic commodities to strengthen the infrastructure within the industry.
4. Establishing open dialogue with organic dairy processors and retailers in order to better influence producer pay price and to contribute to marketing efforts.

Ten years into the organization, with many successes behind us, we are actively seeking feedback from as many organic and transitioning dairy producers as possible; How is your farm business doing economically? Where should NODPA be concentrating its energy and resources? It is clear from phone surveys and conversations over the last 5 years that the priorities of organic integrity and pay price remain the priority of producers. The annual NODPA Field Days Event is deliberately rotated between the different states in the Northeast to allow as much in-person conversations and networking as possible but that also limits what those meeting can decide as they are obviously dominated by those that can easily

travel to the event. Our list serve, Odairy, surfaces opinions from those that are able to contribute but does not give those without the internet an opportunity to present their opinions. We use every opportunity at different meetings and gatherings to gauge producers' opinions and needs but these are necessarily limited both by our financial ability to travel, but also to those few producers who have the time and/or resources to travel to meetings.

In order to give as much opportunity to as many producers as possible to present their opinions, we developed a survey that is printed here in the newsletter and is available on-line at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/websiteMemberSurvey>. The survey looks back on the success of NODPA, who, with the Federation Of Organic Dairy Farmers (FOOD Farmers), led the fight for more defined pasture regulations. We want to know how the Pasture Rule has affected you and what help you might need in the future. Since a key part of our mission is to develop a fair pay price, we ask some questions about how successful you are so we can develop strategies and tactics to address your challenges. NODPA has become a clear force in representing producer's needs nationally through its membership with the National Organic Coalition and New England Farmers Union, presence at the NOSB, ability to meet with NOP leaders and USDA appointees, and by working with USDA staff on implementation of programs. As new policies are proposed by the NOP - from Origin of Livestock to EU Equivalency - we want to represent the present and future needs of producers no matter how and to whom they sell their milk.

The attached survey will help NODPA better represent your needs and interests. Please complete it and return either by mail, 30 Keets Road, Deerfield, MA 01342 or fax (866-554-9483).

Prefer to take the survey online? Go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/emailMemberSurvey>

Thank you for your time and if you have any comments please call 413-772-0444.



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Please send your Survey to: Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA), 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342

NODPA 2011 Member Survey!

The NODPA board is reviewing its priorities for the new calendar year and is seeking input from organic and transitioning dairy producers on several important issues. Will you please take a few minutes to share your views? Space is provided at the end of the survey for sharing additional feedback. Instructions on where to send the survey are also at the end of the survey. Thank you.

1. **Please enter your zip code. It will help us analyze responses.**
Zip Code: _____
2. **Please provide us with information about your state and email address. Phone number is optional.**
State: _____
Email Address: _____
Phone: _____
3. **How many cows are you milking?**
 0-33
 34-66,
 67-100
 101-200
 201 or greater
4. **Who do you ship to? (If you are transitioning, who do you plan to ship to?)**
 Horizon Organic
 Organic Valley
 Other (insert the name of milk buyer)

5. **How would you describe the financial condition of your business?**
 Great- paying our bills and saving for retirement
 Good- paying the bills, but not saving for the future.
 Fair- barely covering the direct cost of production, routine maintenance is being put off, no health insurance.
 Poor- borrowing to stay in business, and falling behind on bills.
 Bad- on the brink of bankruptcy, would sell out if we could.
6. **Are you satisfied with the way your milk handler does your milk sample testing for Quality and Components?**
 Yes
 No
 Transitioning; don't know yet
7. **Do you feel that the new pasture rule will benefit your business if it helps to control the supply of milk from feed-lot operations which were certified but were not grazing at all?**
 Yes
 No
8. **Summer feed supply: How would you rate the pasture available for your animals in light of the new NOP pasture rule?**
 Great- plenty of quality pasture for all the animals. Meeting the new NOP standard of 30% DMI from pasture for a minimum of 120 days should be no problem.
 Good- we can meet the new standard if we have a good season.
 Fair- we can meet the new standards if we make some adjustments to our program and if we have a good season.
 Poor- will have to make serious adjustments to the program like renting more land for pasture and/or contracting with other farms to graze heifers and dry cows.
 Bad- will have to contract graze heifers and dry cows and/or cut back on the number of milk cows to meet the standard.
9. **Do you have a need for technical assistance to upgrade your pastures in order to comply with the new pasture rule?**
 Yes
 No
10. **If YES, what kind of assistance are you needing? Check all that apply:**
 Fencing, water system, laneways
 Technical assistance (to design/implement fencing, water, laneway)
 Advice from a mentor
 Creating a grazing plan for my Organic System Plan
 Capital (\$\$ for implementing)
 Other:

Continued on the next page >

continued from previous page >

11. How do you measure your Dry Matter Intake (DMI) from pasture?

- Subtraction Method (winter feeding ration – summer feeding ration = pasture fed)
- Pasture pre-grazing measurements (using pasture stick, rising plate, forage samples, or other dry matter measurement device)
- Nutritionist recommendation
- Educated guess
- Don't know

12. Which resource person(s) do you turn to for making these calculations? (Check all that apply)

- NODPA
- NRCS
- Education Branch of Certifier
- Cooperative Extension
- Private Consultant
- Fellow Producer/Peer
- I don't know my resource person

13. Generally does your farm have animals to sell?

- Yes we sell quality milkers or heifers every year.
- Yes but we are expanding our herd and are not selling now.
- Yes but we keep all our replacements and only sell cull cows.
- No, we keep losing cows as fast as our replacements freshen.
- No we are keeping everything and buying cows to expand
- No we are keeping everything and buying cows to maintain our herd size.

14. Is there a premium price for organic cows and heifers in your area?

- Yes certified organic cows are worth more in our area.
- No, they seem to be selling for about the same as conventional cows.
- I don't know

15. Currently the NOP allows certain organic dairy operations to purchase conventional young stock and transition them for organic production. Would a new rule preventing the sale of conventional heifers to all certified organic dairy farms help your business by making your certified cows and calves worth more?

- Yes No I don't know

16. Do you support NODPA's position that the NOP should develop a rule requiring that all certified organic dairy replacements must be born from cows being managed organically from the last 1/3 of their gestation?

- Yes No I don't know

17. Do you get the NODPA News?

- Yes No

18. If you don't get the NODPA News, would you like to subscribe?

- Yes No

To subscribe to the NODPA News, please send \$35 to the address at the bottom of the page. The NODPA News is published 6 times a year.

19. Have you been to NODPA's Website (www.nodpa.com)?

- Yes No

Do you receive the NODPA e-Newsletter? To subscribe, go to http://nodpa.com/nl_email.shtml

- Yes No

20. Are you subscribed to the Odairy Listserv? To subscribe, go to http://www.nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml

- Yes No

21. What is the most important thing NODPA could focus on to benefit your farm specifically?

Surveys like this help NODPA's Board of Directors better understand the needs of organic and transitioning dairy producers. **Thank you for your time.**

Please provide additional comments here:

Please send your Survey to:
 Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)
 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342

Please send your Survey to: Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA), 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

New Beginning Farmer Website Unveiled

After a year of development, the Northeast Beginning Farmer Project is pleased to unveil a colorful new website with expanded tools and a wealth of new resources. Point your browser to <http://nebeginningfarmers.org> to find the enhanced site, which will extend high quality support to aspiring, new and diversifying farmers across the entire Northeast.

Do you wonder how other farmers breed pigs, process chickens and transplant seedlings? The new site features a growing selection of video footage capturing experienced farmers and their successful production techniques in action. You'll also find our popular library of video interviews with farmers sharing advice on profitability, choosing an enterprise, evaluating land, and much more. Looking for upcoming classes, events and trainings? You can browse our events calendar, subscribe to our monthly e-news, follow our blog, or visit us on Facebook and Twitter, all from the homepage of the new site: <http://nebeginningfarmers.org>.

Enter the 'New Farmer Hub' to start drafting your business plan with the help of tutorials and interactive worksheets. Find answers

to common questions, browse the Guide to Farming, and check out the latest beginning farmer online courses which can help you turn your dreams into action right from your home computer. Need some face-to-face guidance in your neck of the woods? Visit the 'Who Can Help Me?' map to locate organizations that serve new farmers near you.

The Northeast Beginning Farmer Project is part of the Cornell Small Farms Program and is funded by a Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. With the help of our team of partners, we are:

- Developing new online courses and how-to videos for new farmers on production-oriented topics.
- Working with middle and high schools to develop classroom and on-farm learning opportunities to recruit young people into farming as a career.
- Analyzing the hurdles that challenge new farmers when trying to grow their operations
- Making training opportunities more visible to all new farmers in the Northeast
- Assisting organizations serving beginning farmers with publicity, evaluation, training and information to enhance the success of the new farmers they serve.

To learn more about the Northeast Beginning Farmer Project, visit <http://nebeginningfarmers.org>.

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Thinking About Frost Seeding?

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wish to seed in order to eliminate competition. I recommend you wait until the frost is out of the ground, and broadcast your seed on a warm spring day. The soil should be soft and damp but not muddy. Once the seed has been broadcast, use temporary wire to herd your livestock on to small sections of the pasture at a time. Hoof action, rather than frost action, does all of the work. Caution! Do not churn the soil into a muddy mess. You will likely do more harm than good. A light stomping is a good thing, but keep in mind when we conventionally seed pastures, we are generally looking to place seeds in the soil less than one-half of an inch deep.

So what should you seed? As most livestock prefer legumes over grass by a 70:30 margin, and animal performance is higher on legumes than on grass, if I were you, I would be seeding my favorite legumes. The grass is up to you. However, the ryegrasses, especially Italian and annual varieties, establish the fastest. They just don't persist very long. I am also a strong advocate for plant diversity. Seeding several grasses and legumes is better than just



Getting the competition out of the way is key to getting seeds to land on soil where they can germinate and attach.

spinning on a single species.

Seeding rates are a bit tricky. Some have found success with using less seed per acre than what would be recommended for a conventional seeding, but plan to spin on seed several years in a

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Have you heard the news about the health benefits of Grass-Fed Beef?

Have you heard that it's not true? Are you confused by the conflicting reports from researchers around the country? If so, it's easy to see why consumers might be confused by all the mixed messages.

Although this is not a "pasture management tip", it is important to understand whether or not grass-fed has any benefit, so that you can explain it to customers and others in the industry. Recently, USDA-NRCS in the East Region held a webinar with Dr. Susan Duckett from Clemson University. Dr. Duckett has done a lot of research on the human health benefits of grass-fed beef, and presents an overview of the science and the results in this webinar.

You can access the webinar replay by visiting www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/ntsc/east/workshops.html. Enjoy!

row. Other folks take the view that because frost seeding is a less sure method of seeding, they spin on more seed than what would be recommended for a conventional seeding. Which strategy you choose is up to you. People have found success doing it either way.

Naturally, you will want give the new plants a chance to establish before you graze them. If you can grab a handful of 6 to 8 inch tall new plants and give them a hard tug and they come out of the ground roots and all, so can your livestock. Thus, do not graze them. When the new plants stay rooted and all you get is a handful of leaves, it is generally safe to graze the new seeding.

Keep in mind, frost seedings and stomp and plop seedings are not as effective as more conventional seedings, but they are cheap, and you can do them many times for the cost of a conventional seeding. They can and do work, just remember you need to have your planning and preparation work done 6 months to a year ahead of time, and when the plants begin to grow, protect them from your grazing animals until they are well-established. ♦

Dr. Darrell L. Emmick is a Grazing Land Management Consultant and can be reached at the following address, phone and Email: 57 Michigan Hill Rd., Richford, NY 13835, Telephone - 607-844-3211, Email - beaglesnest1@peoplepc.com.

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by Hubert J. Karreman, V.M.D.

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

Spring Creek Farm, Wernersville, PA

About an hour from Philadelphia, this 5th generation farm takes advantage of the growing interest in fresh and local.

continued from page 1

want to stay, and draws more and more people to the farm who are interested in buying fresh and buying local.

Transition to Organic

Forrest and his family decided to transition to organic because they did not want to handle chemicals anymore and were very interested in focusing on caring for the environment and improving the biological life and health of their farm. They knew that by caring for the farm that the farm would in turn provide them with healthy animals and nutrient dense food.

The transition to organic started in 1996 and they were certified organic in August, 1999.

The farm was a traditional crop and dairy farm until 1993 when they started grazing and then in 1999 when they completed their transition to organic. Working with Pennsylvania Certified Organic, their transition took 3 years for the land and 90 days for the livestock (this was pre-NOP Rule). The farm consists of 450 acres of which 200 acres are in pasture; 130 acres are in hay, and the remaining acreage is woods, streams, wild life habitat, and buildings. They milk 140 head of cattle and plan to grow to 170 head by this spring.

The hardest part of their transition was in learning how to treat their cows organically. It probably wasn't until Forrest was in his second year of being certified organic that he felt he had a handle on his new management style and approaches to keeping his organic herd healthy.

Forrest's preventative health program includes providing a stress-free environment for the cows, not pushing for production, making sure that the animals are well bedded, and providing access to shade during the hot points of summer. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," says Forrest. Dealing with foot problems (punctures, sore feet, abscesses) and mastitis were the issues that seemed to crop up once in a while, so it was important to find effective treatments. For sore feet, they have had success soaking the cow's foot in epsom salts; this is done while the cow is in the parlor getting milked, and they have found their cows recover well when this is used.

Prior to being organic, they would have a veterinarian come to the farm every month. Now, they have a vet come in for a fall herd



Cows on pasture at Spring Creek Farm.

health check, annual TB/Brucellosis tests (requirement with raw milk permit) and emergencies. Vet bills used to be \$100/cow/yr and are now about \$15-\$20/cow/yr. Forrest works with Dr. Karreman if he has questions about mastitis, but his need for a veterinarian, now that he is an experienced organic dairy, has gone down significantly.

They have a closed herd and use AI for breeding using one of their own bulls for clean up. Prior to being certified organic, Forrest followed a vaccination program that included IBR, BVD and Lepto. They stopped vaccinating their cows when they became certified organic; Forrest felt his cows were healthier with stronger immune systems and no longer saw the need. The cows calve primarily in the spring when the grazing season gets started, though they still milk about 60 cows through the winter. If their milk buyer were to provide an incentive for fall milk, Forrest would consider milking more cows in the winter months.

Grazing Management: Grazing Tall

Cows are moved twice a day to new pasture during the growing season in an intensively managed grazing system. They used to graze their pastures when they reached 6-8 inches (leaving a residual of 3-4 inches), but found that the pastures were starting to thin out and become less productive. Two years ago, Forrest switched his management to a taller pre-grazing height of 12-16 inches for his milking herd, leaving a residue of 6-8 inches, and found that pasture and cow performance improved. The higher pre-grazing height also creates plant with deeper roots systems. Plants recover more quickly, greater amounts of moisture and organic matter is retained, and the pastures

have become more productive.

Heifers and dry cows are managed more intensively in the 'mob grazing' approach. These groups go into pastures when the forage is 2-3 feet tall and they are moved one or two times a day. A higher volume of feed per acre allows them to 'mob' their livestock into tighter (smaller) paddocks, which leads to more manure deposited per unit area, and increased hoof action which tramples what is not eaten.

This is just the second year that Forrest has been grazing higher with their dairy cows, but anecdotally he has been very happy with the improvements he has seen in soil organic matter, forage quality, and plant density.

Historically, there was a certain amount of pasture acreage that would be seeded down each year, then with BMR Sorghum Sudan, then in late summer they would seed it to a pasture mix. This practice has been in place to increase forage regrowth during the hot summer months and to renovate pastures that are not as productive anymore. By grazing his pastures higher (referred to as "Tall Grazing"), Forrest hopes that his pastures will continue to improve and that he will no longer have the need to grow warm season grasses or reseed pastures.

While on pasture, all groups of cows (milkers, heifers, dry cows) are supplemented with baleage (tall fescue, alfalfa, red & white clover, orchard grass). During the winter months, the baleage is provided free choice and a little bit of dry hay is offered in the diet. Milk cows also get about 5-6 pounds of organic shell corn. It is Forrest's goal to eliminate concentrates all together, but it is not something that he is going to do overnight. As they make improvements on their livestock genetics, Forrest hopes to have a cow that has a better sized body and an ability to maintain good body condition on a no-grain, all forage diet.

Genetics

The Strickers milk Holsteins, Jerseys, Ayrshires, and H/J crosses. They have been breeding their cows to New Zealand genetics for 5 years, maintaining both Holstein, Jersey and Ayrshire lines. They have been breeding their H/J crosses to NZ Ayrshires for 3 years and are very happy with the offspring that they are producing from this cross. Forrest feels like they are producing a better sized body for their grass-based system. The first crop of Ayrshire/Jersey/hHolstein crosses will be milking this year, so we look forward to hearing about this new group of cattle.

Diversifying the farm

Forrest sees selling directly to customers as a growing market for them. Seeing happy, satisfied customers who are interested in where their food comes from and how it is grown brings an added level of satisfaction – and the retail price brings in a significantly higher return. Though a majority of their milk is sold to Natural by Nature,

about 100 gallons of milk a week is sold as raw milk (sold at \$7/gallon) and 40 gallons per month is used in making cheeses that they sell from the farm, their website, and at farmers markets.

In 2010 the Strickers added 400 broilers and 70 layers to their operation. And Forrest's son Greg returned to the farm as a full time employee, handling a lot of the marketing & promotion including their website, selling products at farmers markets, and promoting their growing list of on-farm retail products. Products that they sell from



Cows and poultry at Spring Creek Farm.

their farm store include: hamburger from their cull dairy cows, retail cuts of beef from their Jersey/Holstein steers, eggs, chicken, and a long line of cheeses produced for them by the Lauren Weaver cheese plant.

A lot of time is spent on the retail end of things for their eggs, raw milk, chicken, beef and cheese and they are finding that this added time is definitely worth the effort. Being only 10 miles West of Reading, PA (a major metropolis), they are finding that a growing number of customers enjoy coming to the farm to purchase products.

They like to see the hen house with chickens free ranging on pasture and can't get enough of the eggs with deep yellow yolks (sold at \$4/dozen). Some of his customers claim that they can't eat store-bought eggs anymore. This year, Forrest has decided to increase his laying flock to 200 this year (280% growth) to meet the growing demand.

Treating Employees Well

In talking to Forrest, one thing that was very impressive was the fact that all the employees on the farm have been working there for 3-8 years. How does he keep good staff? "Treat them fairly, kindly, pay well, and give them time off when they need it," says Forrest. "Do unto others as you have them do unto you," he adds. "Once you start

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FEATURED FARM

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treating employees well, they are drawn to you". His current team is hardworking, reliable, conscientious, and they make sure that they understand instructions clearly. Chad, Rachel and Forrest's son Greg work full time, and Sarah and Matt work part time, offering weekend relief from milking, calf, and poultry chores. Everyone gets along very well with each other. As a result of his good employer reputation, Forrest gets lots of inquiries about job opportunities at Spring Creek Farm.

Resources

Along the way, it is always good to have people, professionals or organizations to turn to that can keep us on our path of learning. Resources that Forrest takes advantage of include the NODPA-Odairy

on-line discussion list, Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) meetings, consultations with Dr. Hubert Karreman, and the support and experience of other dairy farmers.

There are a lot of challenges that have cropped up for the organic industry recently – namely the GE Alfalfa and GE Sugarbeets. "We need the industry to stand together," says Forrest. He sees the Pasture Rule as a great triumph for organic dairy producers; Forrest supported the rule and knows that his farm easily surpasses the 30% dry matter minimum. Spring Creek Farm definitely has the land base needed to meet these requirements. Forrest is interested to see if the pasture rule will have an impact on total organic milk production, as he feels some of the larger farms that did not use pasture adequately may not be able to market their milk as organic once the Pasture Rule comes into effect in June, 2011. Forrest believes the next thing that the NOP needs to address is Livestock Replacements, and he is watching closely, awaiting the NOP's next steps. ♦

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Stonyfield Awards the 2011 Organic Farmers Grant-a-Wish Program

There is tremendous consumer demand for authentic organic dairy products and it takes time and money to take those products from idea to reality. In order to assist with that process Stonyfield Farm launched the Stonyfield Organic Farmers Grant-a-Wish Program to help fund innovative organic farming projects that can make a strong environmental impact or improve the

long-term viability of organic farming.

Judges from Stonyfield and Organic Valley selected six finalists from a pool of 72 farmer submissions representing 17 states from California to Maine. Consumers were able to learn about the six finalists on Stonyfield's Facebook page where project details and videos created by the six farmers themselves were featured. They were then able to vote online for the grant amounts to be awarded to each farmer.

Stonyfield Farm awarded a total of \$31,000 in grants to the six finalist farmers for the following projects:

First place: \$10,000

The Teagues – Their wish is to install an energy efficient feed mill on their farm to process certified organic grains for the other members of Organic Valley's dairy pool in the southeast, as well as livestock growers and small farmers across the state who want a local source of organic feed.

Second place: \$7,500

The Mahaffys – Their wish is to get assistance in constructing a covered compost shed as part of their nutrient recycling system.

Third place: \$7,500

The Beidlers- Their wish is to purchase seed cleaning equipment which would allow them to increase quality by producing seed free of weed seed and other debris. They would also be able to sort seed by size and weight which would allow them to select the highest quality seed for saving.

Fourth place: \$2,000

The Snyders – Their wish is to build a one-acre pond to serve as water supply for a hydro-electric generator. The generator will be used to power the dairy and house. The pond will also provide gravity fed water supply for six pastures and help to promote drainage, lengthening the amount of time each year the cows can be out to pasture, grazing.

Fifth place: \$2,000

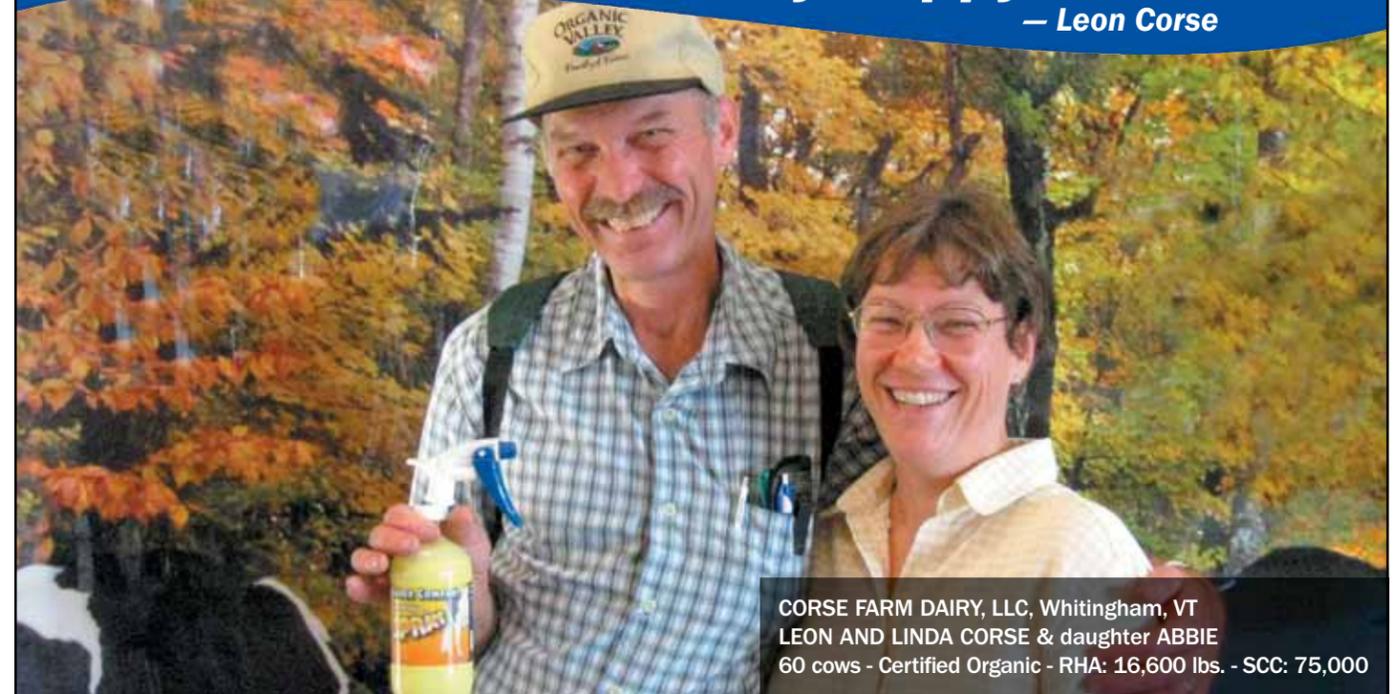
The Bansens – Their wish is to install an innovative walk-through fly-trap designed to reduce cow stress.

Sixth place: \$2,000

The Shirks -Their wish is to excavate and create an aquifer-fed farm pond on his land to support pasture irrigation and provide livestock gravity flow drinking water.

"... glad we tried it because we are totally happy with it."

— Leon Corse



CORSE FARM DAIRY, LLC, Whitingham, VT
LEON AND LINDA CORSE & daughter ABBIE
60 cows - Certified Organic - RHA: 16,600 lbs. - SCC: 75,000

"The main benefit of Udder Comfort™ is the milk quality," says fifth generation dairy farmer Leon Corse. He and his wife Linda and their daughter Abbie milk 50 to 60 cows at Corse Farm Dairy in southern Vermont, which was certified organic in 2008. "Since we've been organic, we get pretty terrific quality premiums, and that made SCC an even greater focus than it was before.

"Historically, our SCC was up in the 150 to 200,000 range. Our numbers for the last 12 months show averages of 95,000 and as low as 75,000 in the first few months of 2010. It's been a gradual decline since we've been using Udder Comfort consistently.

"We use Udder Comfort on any cow with a known high SCC, unusual swelling or any flakes. We apply it after both milkings for a few days. We monitor bulk tanks and cell counts from the milk company, and we test suspicious quarters and also all fresh cows for SCC levels. If high, we put Udder Comfort on for 2 to 4 days to take care of it.

"I was asked to give a quality milk presentation at the NOFA Vermont Winter Conference in 2010. Part of my preparation was to figure out our quality results for 2009. The interesting number I came up with was: On 956,000 total pounds shipped, we received \$26,187 in quality premiums for all 4 measures—SCC is a very significant portion of that.

"Initially, I was somewhat skeptical about what to expect from using Udder Comfort, but I'm glad I was willing to give it a try because we are totally happy with it.

"The best way to see what it does, is to pick out a couple cows that have got a cell count problem and try Udder Comfort on them, and see what you get for results."

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RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Alternative udder health management research in progress at North Carolina State University

Keena Mullen, Claire McPhee, Leslie Gentry, Roberta Lyman, Steve Washburn, and Kevin Anderson.

The College of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University (NCSU) have been investigating alternative udder health management strategies for dairy cattle. This work is being done in partnership with the pasture-based dairy unit at the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) in Goldsboro, North Carolina and with cooperating pasture-based and organic farms in the state.

Effectiveness of Phyto-Mast™ as compared to control or conventional therapy in dry off treatments

This study compared an organic botanical intramammary product (Phyto-Mast™, Penn Dutch Cow Care) to either no treatment or to conventional dry treatment (Quartermaster + Orbeseal, Pfizer Animal Health). A total of 150 Holstein, Jersey and crossbred pasture-based dairy cattle at CEFS were assigned to the three treatments, with 40 cows and 10 late-gestation heifers receiving each treatment. Milk samples were taken directly before treatment at dry off and three days post-calving. Milk was cultured at dry off and again at freshening to determine the effect of treatment. The focus was on measuring the cure rate of existing bacterial infections or preventing new infections during the dry period (or both). First test date milk production and somatic cell scores were also measured, but no significant difference was observed between treatments for either milk production or somatic cell score.

Milk samples which were missing or contaminated at collection were removed from the analyses, thereby lowering the total numbers of quarters available for paired comparisons at dry off and at freshening. The percentage of quarters that were cured between dry off and freshening was significantly higher for those treated conventionally (18.5%)

whereas cure rates for quarters treated with Phyto-Mast™ (7.2%) did not differ from untreated controls (9.7%). Percentages of new infections present at freshening were lowest (6.6%) for conventionally-treated quarters and highest (20.1%) for untreated quarters whereas the rate of new infections (13.7%) was intermediate for quarters receiving Phyto-Mast™ treatment.

Phyto-Mast™ was not as effective as the conventional treatment at curing existing infections or in preventing new dry period infections. Though the herbal therapy was similar to untreated controls for curing existing infections over the dry period, Phyto-Mast™ was promising as a dry treatment in reducing the rate of new infections compared to untreated controls.

Evaluation of the efficacy of Phyto-Mast™ and Essential Cinnatube™ as compared to control or traditional therapy in dry off treatments

In the dry-treatment study described above, the combination of an intramammary antibiotic and a teat sealant may have provided the conventional treatment an advantage over the Phyto-Mast™ treatment. Currently, another dry treatment study is in progress to compare 5 treatments: 1. conventional (Quartermaster + Orbeseal) treatment; 2. no treatment; 3. treatment with Phyto-Mast™; 4. treatment with Essential Cinnatube™ (New AgriTech Enterprises); and 5. treatment with Phyto-Mast™ and Cinnatube™. Cinnatube™ is an herbal intramammary product that acts as a teat sealant. All treatments will be tested in the CEFS herd. Three organic dairies in North Carolina are also participating in the study, evaluating every treatment except the conventional treatment. The results of this study are expected in late 2011.

Milk quality comparisons between organic and conventional pasture-based dairies in North Carolina

The summer of 2010 was one of the hottest on record for North Carolina, but that did not deter veterinary student, Leslie Gentry, and graduate student, Keena Mullen, from collecting milk samples and somatic cell count information from 14 dairies (7 organic, 7 pasture-based conventional) for microbiological comparison. A total of 4988 quarter milk samples (2608 conventional, 2380 organic) were collected from 1247 cows (652 conventional, 595 organic).



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Results from this study will be presented at the American Dairy Science Association 2011 meeting in July, but here's a sneak peek: the proportion of cows with some type of bacteria present in the milk samples did not differ between organic (56.1%) and conventional (52.9%) dairies. Conventional herds had a lower proportion of infected quarters (27.0% versus 36.3%), but somatic cell scores (SCS) did not differ between organic and conventional herds (3.0 +/- 0.1). Despite differences in herd management, milk culture results and SCS measurements were remarkably similar between organic and conventional NC dairies compared for this study.

Phyto-Mast residues in milk and blood of dairy goats using thymol as a marker (Claire McPhee, contributing author)

Despite the recent growth of the organic dairy industry, organic producers and veterinarians have limited information when choosing mastitis treatments for animals in organic dairy production. Organic producers commonly administer homeopathic or other plant-based products without research showing that they are effective. These products do not have known withholding times, even though they may contain components that could get into the milk. At the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine, we performed a study to identify the active chemicals in Phyto-Mast™, and to measure the residues in milk and blood samples following intra-mammary infusion.

A method was developed to detect thymol, the active chemical component of *Thymus vulgaris* (garden thyme)—one of the active ingredients in Phyto-Mast™ in milk and blood samples. As a model for dairy cows, five, healthy, lactating alpine dairy goats were dosed with 5 mL in each teat. Following this infusion, thymol residues were measured in the milk and blood samples in the laboratory. Thymol was detected in the blood for about 4 hours, and for 12 hours in the milk. There was no inflammation in the udder after infusing Phyto-Mast™, and the goats did not show any signs of systemic illness.

At the dosage used in dairy goats, thymol was eliminated in a relatively short time, but residue information for other Phyto-Mast™ ingredients was not investigated. In future work, we would like to repeat this study using dairy cows, and also look for residues of the other ingredients. This type of research will ensure the safety of organic milk in the future.

Future Work: testing individual herbal extractives against mastitis-causing bacteria

This summer, Keena Mullen plans to test commonly used herbal extracts, like those included in the formulation of Phyto-Mast™ and Cinnatube™, against specific mastitis-causing bacteria in the laboratory. This research will specify which extracts have strong activity against specific pathogens, helping strengthen the ability of intramammary treatments to combat infection.

Summary:

Use of antibiotics is not an option for treating or preventing udder infections in organic dairy production. Therefore, many organic dairy producers have interest in having access to effective alternatives to antibiotics to use as needed. At NCSU, we are investigating some of the available alternative products to determine their efficacy

in controlled studies under applied conditions. There is potential, especially with the current concern over antibiotic resistance, for the dairy industry as a whole to start using effective alternatives to antibiotics to treat mastitis. To that end, organic dairy producers collaborating in such studies on alternative therapies will be truly leading the way to reduce the chance of antibiotic resistance. Quantification of the efficacy under farm situations can be established by cooperating with university researchers and may lead to more industry-wide use of some "organic" practices.

We really appreciate the staff at CEFS and the dairy producers involved in our studies for their cooperation.

Bios

Keena Mullen is a second-year PhD student at NCSU with a BS in Animal Science from Washington State University. Working under the guidance of Dr. Steve Washburn and Dr. Kevin Anderson, she is interested in evaluating the efficacy of alternatives to antibiotics both on-farm and in the laboratory.

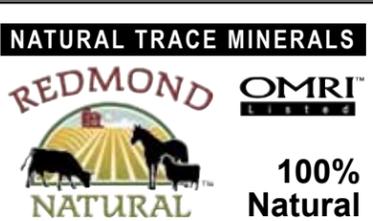
Claire McPhee grew up in Iowa, has a BA from Wesleyan University, MSPH in Epidemiology from UNC-Chapel Hill and currently is a third year veterinary student at NCSU. She plans to become a dairy veterinarian, and is interested in working with organic and pasture-based clients. Her major interests in the dairy industry are udder health and cow welfare, and she hopes to continue to investigate alternative mastitis treatments.

Leslie Gentry is a third year veterinary student at NCSU after receiving her BS in Animal Science from NCSU.

Roberta Lyman is a Research Technician in the NCSU Mastitis and Milk Quality Laboratory coordinated by Dr. Kevin Anderson.

Dr. Steve Washburn is Extension Specialist and Professor of Animal Science at NCSU. He coordinates research and educational programs associated with the pasture-based dairy system at the Center for Environmental Farming Systems in Goldsboro, NC.

Dr. Kevin Anderson, Professor of Ruminant Health Management, is a dairy veterinarian and researcher at the College of Veterinary Medicine at NCSU. He focuses on mastitis and milk quality and has maintained a Mastitis and Milk Quality Laboratory at the College for over 20 years. ♦



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

Recent ODAIRY Discussions

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

A young, start-up farmer asked the list for advice about custom heifer raising. It was suggested that he keep his contract with the heifer grower as simple as possible. One producer shared that he had very good luck by raising his own calves up to 6 months, to make sure they are off to a good start. Then he moves them to the heifer raiser, where he pays a flat \$2/head/day until they return as springers, usually at 24 months. The fee includes the cost of grain and minerals. He leases the bull, and puts it in with the heifers to be bred, so the heifer-raiser does not incur any breeding costs. He also pays for a de-wormer (he uses Crystal Creek Pivot) and any other health products that become necessary. Another farmer who raises heifers for others charges a bit less at \$1.80 per day, including grain. He feels that it is a benefit to his farm's fertility to have the extra manure. This gives him a way to recycle his extra hay and straw on the farm and keep all the nutrients cycling on his own land. From a veterinarian's point of view came one post that reminded us to use an intranasal vaccine about a week before moving animals onto or off of your farm to avoid the "train wreck" that shipping fever can cause. He mentioned Nasalgen and TSV-2, and there is a new one out there as well. He also cautioned that homeopathic nosodes don't work well as a prevention for shipping fever. Another farmer added that the new intranasal vaccine is called Inforce.

A producer asked what software people are using to keep track of their herds. One farmer uses Scout from Dairy One; another has outgrown Scout and is changing to DairyCom; another farmer is happy using DairyLive; several farmers highly recommended PCD-ART from DHIA. Two producers are using grazing software; they recommended Endeavor from Computer Concepts and Agrinet.

There was a lengthy discussion that began with questions raised in a newspaper article about flunixin (Banamine). Flunixin is allowed for use in organic production and is available only by prescription. We were reminded of the requirement to double all milk and meat withholding times. Flunixin is prescribed usually as an IV, and that is the only withholding time mentioned on the bottle. But it is often administered in the muscle, and that greatly effects the withholding. It was suggested that you ask your vet for an appropriate withholding for the route you will use, and then you can double it accordingly.

Having a lengthy withholding time brought up the subject of feeding calves the waste milk from these cows that have been treated with allowable substances. The NOSB has recommended that this practice be allowed, but this has not been adopted by the NOP. There was a spirited discussion that followed, and it became clear that a few certifiers allow withheld milk to be fed

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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

to calves. A retired NOP rule-maker clarified that the current regulations prohibit feeding milk from an animal whose milk is being withheld due to being treated with a substance that has an established withholding period.

A producer had a cow abort a calf prematurely. There remained behind a mummified calf in one horn of her uterus, and the cow cannot be bred back. The response from a vet was not very hopeful; he suggested that surgery is sometimes an option or an infusion of herbal abortifacients may work. Rarely, they may dump it out on their own.

Another producer asked why mummified calves happen in the

continued on page 33

Calendar

March 24, 2011

Hudson Mohawk Grass Masters: Holistic Financial Planning

6:30 pm to 9:00 pm

East Greenbush Community Library, East Greenbush, NY

This workshop is for people with an understanding of basic financial planning and want to take it a step further to increase profitability. Topics to include: crafting a simple farm family goal, identifying your weak link in the chain of production, and understanding what wealth generating expenses are. The workshop is free, but you must pre-register by contacting Elizabeth Marks at 518-828-4385 x105 or elizabeth.marks@ny.usda.gov.

April 13-14, 2011

Kentucky Grazing School, Princeton, Kentucky

The grazing school includes sessions on forages, fencing, designing a rotational grazing program, extending the grazing season, grazing math, and more. The second day includes a producer panel and field exercise and tour of demonstration plots.

For more information, contact Dr. Ray Smith, UK Plant and Soil Sciences, phone 859 257 3358, email: raysmith1@uky.edu, Website: www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/

April 14-16, 2011

Food for Thought Conference, Portland, Oregon

This conference at the University of Portland includes a food film festi-

val, keynote speaker Michael Pollan, and plenary sessions on indigenous food, social justice and food, genetically modified organisms and food, and sustainable and local food. For more information, go to: <http://college.up.edu/envscience/default.aspx?cid=10905&pid=3084>

April 21-23, 2011

Mob Grazing Conference, Mill Spring, Missouri

Ian Mitchell-Innes will be at Fuchs Farms for a spring Mob Grazing Conference. Ian will cover all the important steps in implementing high density planned grazing. The workshop is three full days, and considers fencing, herding, water, the trample to graze ratio, holistic planned grazing, and more. For more info, Contact Eric Fuchs at 573-429-1383 or efuchs9988@gmail.com

April 27-29, 2011

Dr Paul Detloff's Organic Veterinary Workshop

Viroqua, WI

Let Dr Detloff's more than 40 years of veterinary experience help you become a better livestock manager. This is a unique opportunity for you to learn from and interact with world-class veterinarians while gaining knowledge about organic herd health techniques and tools. For more information, contact Edward Lemar, 608-625-3130 or email: Edward.lemar@organicvalley.coop

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic Valley Farmer-Owners Honored with National Dairy Quality Awards

Honorees were recognized at the National Mastitis Council Annual Meeting Jan. 23-26 in Arlington, Va.

Organic Valley, the nation's largest organic farmer-owned cooperative, is proud to announce that 10 of its farmer-owners received National Dairy Quality Awards for 2010 at the National Mastitis Council's annual meeting in Arlington, Va.

Now in its 17th year, the national award program is designed to honor dairy farmers who produce milk of the highest quality. Nominees are evaluated on their systems of monitoring udder health, milking routine, protocols for detection and treatment of clinical and subclinical cases, treatment protocols, and strategies for overall herd health and welfare.

Organic Valley farmers are among 53 farmers nationwide to be recognized with awards. Approximately 175 farmers were nominated.

The following Organic Valley farmers are being recognized:

Gold Awards

- Greg Bingham of Weston, Idaho milks 200 cows on 300 acres; Organic Valley farmer-owner since 2007
- William McMahan of Randle, Wash. milks 115 cows on 375 acres; Organic Valley farmer-owner since 2007

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NOSB Spring meeting 2011

The next meeting of the National Organic Standards Board will take place on **April 26-29, 2011, at the Red Lion Hotel on Fifth Avenue, 1415 5th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101-2313.**

For those of you in the region that can attend some of the days, the public comments session are on April 26 and 28 and the livestock committee will present its discussion documents on Poultry Diet, and recommendations on Stocking Rates and Animal Handling, Transit, and Slaughter on April 27 and 29. Those recommendations are not posted publically yet but will probably be based on the discussion document proposed at the previous NOSB meeting (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRD C5086584#nameddest=stocking>). Of particular interest will be the space allocation for housed dairy cows, how it will be measured and whether it will recognize the existing size of tie stalls that are common in many areas of the country. There has been pressure in the past to ban tie stalls, especially from Whole Foods, but we hope that the education over the past few years has persuaded those that are making recommendations that tie stalls are humane and respectful of the cows comfort and well being.

The Crops Committee will report on their recommendations on petitioned materials, Tetracycline and Nickel. There will be sunset recommendations on § 205.601 and 602 plus corn steep liquor and sodium nitrate recommendations.

The Handling Committee will have petitioned Materials Recommendations on Attapulgit, Calcium Acid Pyrophosphate, Silicon Dioxide, Sodium Acid Pyrophosphate, . There will be Sunset 2012 Recommendations on § 205.605(a) and (b) and there will be Nutrient Vitamins and Minerals Recommendation and Chlorine Materials Annotation recommendation.

The other committees have reports and recommendations on NOSB process, evaluations and policy manual.

The fall 2011 NOSB Meeting will take place November 29 – December 2, 2011 at 15 East Liberty Street, Savannah, Georgia 31401.

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Know who your representatives are on the NOSB Livestock Committee:

Wendy Fulwider, Chair, is the Animal Husbandry Specialist for CROPP.

Tina Ellor, VC, is a mycologist and Technical Director of Phillips Mushroom Farms.

Joe Dickson is the Food, Organic and Environmental Quality Standards Coordinator for Whole Foods Markets in Austin, Texas.

Colehour Bondera, is a farmer of his five-acre farm in Honaunau, Hawaii.

C. Reuben Walker is a Professor and Program Leader of Animal Science at Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center (SUAREC) and Southern University-Baton Rouge (SUBR).

NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

continued from page 31

first place, and what does it mean if a farmer sees quite a few of them. If it is just a one-time event, many things relating to the health of the cow or her calf could have caused it. But it could also be a sign of BVD, especially if there is a history of mummified calves in the last 2 years. Then the cows should be tested for Persistent Infected BVD status. Vaccines will not work for those individuals, but will help to stop the problems from spreading.

A farmer has been injecting hydrogen peroxide in the water for eight months to combat high iron levels; she started with 150ppm for six weeks, then reduced it to a maintenance level of 25-30ppm. But she is now seeing water leaks in taps and faucets - and the o-rings in the valves are very worn. One producer explained that peroxide will degrade rubber, and suggested replacing the old rubber parts with silicone parts. He also suggested that since she has reduced the concentration of peroxide, there should be less damage. ♦

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Full Page Ad (7.5" W x 10.25" H) = \$450

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1/4 Page Ad (3.5" W x 4.75" H) = \$130

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For advertising information call Lisa McCrory: 802-234-5524 or email Lmccrory@hughes.net

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

Classified Ads

Positions Available Or Wanted

Education

IOIA Organic Livestock Training under development for June 6-10 in Waitsfield. For more details or an application, contact the International Organic Inspectors Association at 406-436-2031 or see www.ioia.net.

Position Available

Shelburne Farms is seeking an Assistant Dairy Manager. The primary responsibility is providing operational support in all farm operations, with special emphasis on the dairy herd. Knowledge of grazing and organic herd health practices is a plus. This is a salaried position including housing and benefits, including health insurance. For a job description, please send your resume and cover letter to:

Shelburne Farms, Attn: Sam Dixon
1611 Harbor Road, Shelburne, VT 05482
Or you may email: tnold@shelburnefarms.org.

Additional information about this position may be found at www.shelburnefarms.org.

Job Opportunity

Organic dairy farm is seeking an intelligent and skilled heavy equipment mechanic & operator who loves farming and a farming lifestyle. Responsibilities include: repair, maintenance, and operation of our front end loaders, excavator, bulldozer, screener plant, dump trucks, tractors, balers, mowers, rakes, wrapper, tedders, and other assorted pieces of farm machinery. In other words, ya gotta be really good at fixing 'em and ya gotta be really good at running 'em. And ya gotta like cows, 'cuz they give everybody a paycheck! Knowledge of logging, carpentry and maple sugaring is helpful. Intelligence, however, is a must! Open-minded, forward thinking, problem solving individuals who want to be challenged, will love being part of this farm. \$60,000 annual starting salary package, which includes benefits and housing in a well maintained 1850's farmhouse house 1-802-644-5138 or email: shoebbox2004069@yahoo.com (Jeffersonville, VT).

Looking For a Dairy Job

I am looking for a dairy job (milking, grazing, cheesemaking, etc.) at a dairy in New England. I have been working at the James Ranch in Colorado milking cows and making cheese, but I am moving back to New England in March or April (I'm from Maine). Amber Reed, Email: amberfreed@gmail.com, Phone: 207-680-6207

Equipment

Ten 5-nipple peach teat feeders for sale. Switched to calf hutches, so these are no longer needed. If interested, call Paul at 607/756-7843. Price negotiable, near Cortland, NY.

2007 Ford Ranger XL 2wd, 6'bed, regular cab, AC, 5sp, 31HMPG, overload springs, alum.cap. 87k. Our delivery truck, sadly outgrown. \$7,500. Email: 12brown cows@gmail.com Phone: 207.223.5525. Location:Frankfort, Maine

FEED

Certified Organic (NOFA-NY) 4x4 baleage, small square 1st cut Timothy hay, stray, mulch or bedding hay. Feed oats and feed triticale by the ton. Also Timothy seed, cleaned and bagged. Contact Jeff at Mitchell Farms – Avoca, NY (607)566-8477 or Mitchellorganics@hotmail.com

Organic Hay for Sale: 4 x 4 Dry Round Bales, certified organic by VOF. Approximately 550 #, unwrapped and stored inside. Cost is \$40 per bale at the barn. Located in Barnard, VT. Contact Joe Ladouceur, email: ladouceurlj@aol.com, Phone: 802-763-7454

For Sale: NOFA-certified organic hay. 4 x 4 round bales, wrapped

and some dry; first, second and third cuts. Small square dry bales, second cut. Delivery available. Call for details. Name: Tamarack Farm. Email: twyla.deneergaard@ahs.state.vt.us. Phone: 802-563-2107. Location: Cabot, Vermont

Livestock

Organic Dairy Cows for sale: 4-5 cows from Butterworks Farm need to go; not enough room in the barn. Most are fresh within the last couple weeks and some are heifers. For more information, contact Jack Lazor, Phone: 802-744-6855 or email: jack@butterworksfarm.com

Certified Organic Bred and Bagging Heifers, Holstein, Jersey's and Crosses. A very nice deep bodied heifer due very shortly. \$1500. Cuyler New York 607-591-2171. Name: Bill Sullivan. Email: william_sullivan@hotmail.com

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

GE Alfalfa Update *continued from page 10*

The Center for Food Safety has announced they would seek an injunction to stop the planting of GE Alfalfa this spring. Their legal work has been at the forefront of this fight, and is the reason that USDA had to admit the health and environmental impacts from GE crops. NODPA and other groups are considering joining the lawsuit. There continues to be universal condemnation of the USDA decision and many organizations are working together to develop strategies and tactics to turn back the GE tide that will deny consumers and farmers the choice of what to eat and how to farm. More news, facts and resources can be found at the following websites:

www.nodpa.com • www.NationalOrganicCoalition.org
<http://www.nationalorganiccoalition.org/GMO/GMOContaminationPrevention.pdf> • www.truefoodnow.org
www.centerforfoodsafety.org • <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/>
www.fooddemocracynow.org • www.nongmoproject.org

Organic Cow Milk Brand Changing to Horizon

You may have noticed some changes in the milk aisle lately. The Organic Cow®, a respected New England organic milk brand, is changing to Horizon®. The Organic Cow packaging will transition to Horizon packaging in the coming months. The Organic Cow has been a partner of the Horizon family for more than ten years, sharing the same milk supply. As the two brands consolidate, the milk now sold under the Horizon brand will remain exactly the same, coming from the same family farms it always has. Horizon is proud to work with nearly 600 family farms throughout the US, including almost 100 right here in New England.



From the MODPA Treasurer

As I write this I can't help but feel that spring must be right around the corner. We attended the MOSES conference this past week, a sure sign that spring is close. It is always good to get out and see old friends and make new ones. I strongly encourage each and everyone to attend these conferences when they are in the area. I always come home feeling refreshed and ready to take on the world.

Word at the conference is that milk will continue to be short in most areas. Tough on the processors but good from a farmer's point of view. This is a much better situation than we had two years ago. The last two years have been tough on everybody with price cuts, quotas and the like. We need to look to the future and do our best to not get back in that situation. With the pasture rule coming in to full play in June it is likely that we will continue to have a much better handle on balancing with demand. However we cannot afford to be complacent. We need to get ourselves ahead of the curve and make sure we have a system in place to deal with this issue. It would be much better for the producers to control their own destiny than to leave it all in the hands of the processors.

Another hot topic at the conference was wondering what the cost of our

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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inputs will be for the coming year. In my area the cost of fuel has been rising drastically. It is up over 30% from last fall. The processors need to be quicker to respond to the needs of the producers. A price adjustment a year later does not help today's bills. I think it is time for the processors to make certain they make adjustments for the input costs no less than on a 6 month rotation. With all of the information available it is possible to make an informed decision as to how much costs have changed. If the consumer knows that the farmer is being treated fairly I truly believe they will pay a few cents more if necessary.

The release of Roundup Ready alfalfa has many people concerned about where the future is in organic crops. If you have not already done so please take the time to contact your representatives in congress and let them know how you feel. It is never too late to tell them your thoughts and feelings. After all, they do work for us. Sometimes they just need to be reminded.

I think is important for all of us to remember that we are all in this together. Too much of the recent press by some in the organic community has done more to create division than we should ever tolerate. If we do not have some competition, we will all suffer. With the loss of Organic Choice, Humboldt, LOFCO etc in the last year, options are limited for most producers.

Lastly, I wish for all of you to have a safe and productive spring. Also remember that MODPA has many resources available to help you on many issues. Feel free to contact any board member if you need assistance. ♦

Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer

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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: _____

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Certified Organic Dairy? Yes No # of cows: _____

Transitioning: _____

I wish to support MODPA (check whatever applies):

___ By becoming a state rep or director.

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

___ By providing a donation to support the work of

MODPA. \$_____ enclosed.

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

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)

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Deerfield, MA 01342

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Silver Awards

- James Austin of Oakville, Wash. milks 175 cows on 350 acres; Organic Valley farmer-owner since 2006
- Walter and Irene Abplanalp of Ethel, Wash. milk 245 cows on 150 acres; Organic Valley farmer-owners since 2007
- Andy and Linda Styger of Chehalis, Wash. milk 130 cows on 250 acres; Organic Valley farmer-owners since 2004
- Randy and Kimberly Peterson of Arlington, Wash. milk 150 cows on 150 acres; Organic Valley farmer-owners since 2005
- Bob Grenon of North Troy, Vt. milks 12 cows on 35 acres; Organic Valley farmer-owner since 2009
- Paul and Michele Philbrick of Knox, Maine milk 13 cows on 40 acres; Organic Valley farmer-owners since 2008
- Meyer Family/North Hardwick Dairy of Hardwick, Vt. milks 65 cows on 350 acres; Organic Valley farmer-owners since 2003

Honorable mentions were given to Garry Trudell of East Fairfield, Vt. and Tyler and Melanie Webb of Enosburg Falls, Vt.



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