

NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Making the Transition to an Organic Dairy

By Lisa McCrory, NODPA News Editor

When Steve and Cathy Kimball decided to transition to organic dairy production in 2006, they knew that they would have to make a lot of changes on their farm. They were milking 350 cows, pushing them for production, and growing a fair amount of crops using conventional fertilizers and herbicides. Much of the cropland needed a 3-year transition, so

they managed to rent 500 certifiable acres that could immediately replace the transitioning acreage and started plotting their course.

Why make the transition to organic? "I became frustrated with the rat race of agricultural products for crop production as well as the endless "new" animal pharmaceu-

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Organic Trade Association (OTA) Proposal to Implement an Organic Research and Promotion Program: Organic Check-Off

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Farmer and consumer groups say:

YES on a technical regulatory fix that allows organic farmers to withdraw their check-off dollars from supporting conventional agriculture

AND

NO on regulation to support the path to establish an Organic Research and Promotion Program

OTA's proposed changes to Section 501 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (7 U.S.C. 77401) as it relates to exemption of organic products from assessment from agricultural check-off programs continues to evolve as they take their message to the organic community and Congress. OTA continues to say the discussion is on a proposed order (not on any other models) and the legislation is to allow organic to be a commodity under

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA President

Just when we were looking for the 2012 growing season in the Northeast to bring us a much needed “normal” year with no droughts, floods, hurricanes, or other such disasters, nature coughs up a plague of armyworms. Farmers gather over a cup of coffee at the general store in my town, discussing which farms have them, and where they are likely to turn up next. Every caterpillar is a suspect, until you see a field with the real thing. In addition to the usual frenzy of harvesting forage, farmers in areas across New York and other states scramble to replant corn fields, mow affected hay fields, and are scouting untouched fields for early signs of infestation.

It is always heartening at this time of year to see the silos, hay mows, and baleage yards fill up with winter feed as the cows move through the pasture rotations. Every farmer knows the long days and the extra push to get the harvest in on time will

be worth the effort. It's the time of year when we are all good neighbors: responding to the call from the farmer next door who is broke down in the field, or needs extra wagons to get the hay in before a rain, or needs a hand to get the heifers back in off the road....

Thanks for being a great neighbor, and I wish you and your family as close to that “normal” season as possible this year!

Liz Bawden, NODPA President

Hammond, NY | Phone: 315-324-6926

NODPA MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance is to enable organic dairy family farmers, situated across an extensive area, to have informed discussion about matters critical to the wellbeing of the organic dairy industry as a whole.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the NODPA Desk,
July 2012

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Climate change appears to be hitting home with a vengeance these last few months with excesses of weather that make life miserable for man and beast. My heritage is Irish-Anglo Saxon so I prefer the more moderate weather of the British Isles and have been living in a maze of fans and the occasional use of a small window air conditioner. We can find respite for ourselves and improve conditions for livestock but unfortunately can't compensate for the weeks of no rain and high temperature in the corn growing areas. As with extreme cold weather, everything takes just that bit longer and tempers tend to be more frayed, making the harsh economic conditions that organic dairy is operating under even more difficult to bear. Those hardest hit and most vulnerable to the ever-increasing costs of inputs with no relief on pay price are the new entrants that we so badly need if this type of agriculture is to survive and grow.

To quote one of the leaders of organic agriculture, Michael Sligh, “Organic farming offers multiple benefits of safeguarding the environment, increased soil quality, carbon-sequestration, reduced toxic pesticide exposures, humane livestock practices, conservation of biodiversity and healthy foods.” If this is the case then why do we treat our organic dairy producers so badly? The processors say they can't pay a price based on costs of production and return on equity, because they can't price their product to ensure enough growth in the market to make money. The Organic Trade Association says that they value our farmers more than anything else, but please don't express your opinions loudly, ‘trust us we understand the bigger picture.’ The politicians really don't understand agriculture and play party politics around anti-poverty legislation, which makes up 80% of a four year re-assessment of government support of agriculture within a Farm Bill. After 6 years, USDA-NOP can't produce a rule on the Origin of Livestock that will directly benefit producers' bottom line and bring more integrity to organic certification because they have “too much work,” – I do not understand that concept!

What do we do as producers when the farming gets difficult? I know what I did was just get up every morning and revel in the early morning barn smell and just keep moving until the end of the day knowing that I would not accomplish half of what I wanted or needed to do but enough to take me and my family forward. This prepared me for life at the NODPA Desk but without the barn smell!

The Farm Bill is winding its way through Congress and its mul-

titude of amendments and manager instruction will eventually result in a piece of legislation that will affect all farmers. Working with the National Organic Coalition, I did visits to Senators and leaders in Congress to emphasize that what they decide and vote on affects farm families and the food they eat. Regardless of whether the Senators and their staff agreed with us, every meeting was a success because we put that all-important human face in front of the overworked young staffers who live and work in the DC bubble. We will not know whether we have overall success for organic initiatives until the end of the year or perhaps early 2013, but the producer voice was heard.

The Organic Federal Research and Promotion Program as promoted by the OTA has been appearing in strange places in Congress, other than the Farm Bill, as they try to get legislative traction for their proposed language. Working with other producer groups, notably OFARM, we have been reassuring those that want to hear that the sky will not fall if we don't have legislation in place by the end of the year. Even a simple message that we can get organic check-off money out of conventional programs without setting up anything else seems to be very confusing to some who lack the imagination to see beyond replicating the corporate controlled programs that currently exist. We could not match the extensive lobbying of OTA but we again made the producer voice heard and, hopefully at some point, respected.

On pay price, we seem to have only a limited impact, despite attempts at ongoing discussion. Processors have long said, “show us the figures.” We did, and more recently, the Western producers have completed their own studies which show not only a loss of equity but a drop in net income that makes organic dairy uneconomic, which is what lenders are saying. New entrants need to be offered transitional payments, especially with the high cost of organic inputs, but they are not being offered anything. It's cheaper to import organic milk powder from New Zealand to satisfy expanding markets in yogurt. Processors choose to spend time and money on infrastructure, contributions to political campaigns and plowing money into non-dairy programs that are unviable. We continually ask about their priorities and attempt real discussions but without any real leverage – the typical producer's emasculated voice hindered by cooperative agreements and contractual restrictions.

NODPA Field Days in September has attracted a wonderful array of presenters which speaks to the depth of commitment we have in organic to sharing experiences and building viable family businesses. Put it on your calendar as a place to be this fall, hopefully to learn and educate others but also to share, visit and gossip with other organic dairy folks. Our strength is in supporting each other on many different levels as only we can understand the uniqueness of our lives and commitment to the future of the planet. ♦

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Managing For High Quality Forages, Part 3: The Cow

By Gary Zimmer, President, Chairman of the Board, Midwestern Bio-Ag

In the last two articles we've looked at our soils to be sure that they are healthy and mineralized, and then we looked at the plants we are growing to be sure that they fit our management goals. Finally, in this third and final installment, we'll consider how to address the principles of the cow: what does the cow need from that pasture to produce quality milk and meat while staying healthy and in the herd? Balancing the soils and the plants with the needs of the cow is what grazing management is all about.

Along these lines, I just read an article about a dairy in Australia where the dairyman commented on farming for the bottom line, balancing (starting in the soil) and breeding for "invisible" cows (those that just do their thing, trouble free). This farm put their efforts on the dry cow: she needs to have a healthy calf, clean, stay healthy herself, and go right to work. The milking cow was fed 14 pounds of a grain mix and was giving 44 pounds of milk. That's easy; now take away the grain or really reduce it or price it out of use. What level is that? We (meaning the dairy 'community') know a lot about the cow's requirements, know about where the level of protein should be and what kind is needed for certain diets, energy levels and sources needed for production and health. The dairy

'community' also has a pretty good idea of the minerals, vitamins, quality feed, digestive aids, etc. needed for cow health.

So with all this knowledge, why doesn't everything go perfectly on every farm? Because we stretch the 'principles.' We take the grain away, get out of balance with minerals, don't get the proper balance, or feed moldy poor quality forages, and put the cow into a stress situation.

So how far can we go without getting into trouble, or failing to get production? In the world of 'get-lots-of-milk confinement dairying,' they do the opposite of organic low-or-no grain dairy farmers. Everything is dialed to maximum, the turbo is turned up and the cow is not expected to last long and doesn't. Now with the price of grains she will be fed anything and everything except maybe ground up tires for energy. At what level are the principles of the cow being violated and with what stuff? What about the quality of the product she produces? We can keep her around a little while longer with all the drugs and hormones and supplements. (Many certainly do the same to soils: growing corn on corn can be done but at what price to the land, the environment,

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organic agriculture during the first sessions. The later sessions will concentrate on the mechanics and the application of homeopathy in farming situations and on the proper use of the situations and on the proper use of the repertory and material medica to find the remedy best suited to the situation. Included will be a material medica study of the common acute and emergency remedies used on the farm.

Participants will need to be prepared with a copy of Kent's Repertory and Clarke's Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica. These materials are available at most sites that sell homeopathy materials. Go to our website for more info.

Webinar lead by **Glen Dupree, DVM**, Author, Homeopathy in Organic Livestock Production
For more information, contact Glen at 225.709.4381 or homeopathyfortheanimals@yahoo.com
To register, go to <http://www.homeopathyfortheanimals.com/> and click on "webinars."



and the quality of feed/food being produced?) What are the main problems with this out-of-balance dairy system? Start with breeding, digestion, and just plain physical health.

Now let's go to the other extreme: no grain or extremely low levels of it, minerals out of balance, rich pastures too high in protein and digestibility: just look at the manure! Cows are short

on energy, production suffers, health suffers, breeding problems show up, the immune system really struggles. You can't violate the principles of the cow!

There was an article I read recently about an organic dairy farm with a Johnes problem and all the effort they put into testing, culling, "keeping clean", and chasing bugs. I believe it's really an immune system issue as we have stretched and stressed the limits of the cow. How far can you go without doing harm? How hard can you push? It's like smoking—you can have two cigarettes a day and do just fine. So how

about four? Or six? It's hard to know how far you can stretch the limits before you begin to see the negative consequences.

Every farm is a system, and there is no one perfect way to do

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Growing Annuals for Grazing

By Cheyenne Christianson

We have been planting several different annuals on our farm for over a decade now. They work great for extending the grazing season, fill in during warmer weather to give more options and variety, and even drought. We suffered several years of extreme drought in a pocket of Northwest Wisconsin, and the annuals helped immensely in having something to graze. It has also been a good way to mix in our bedding pack manure and renovate pastures that needed a fertility boost or change in plant species, such as knock back the orchard grass to get a better mix of more palatable grasses and legumes.

It started with an experiment to grow wheat for ourselves, and our chickens. At some point, we grazed off the field during the growing season and then let it grow back. It wasn't a great stand so I rotated it in when it got ripe and it regrew from the ripe seeds. That fall, we ran the cows through the wheat regrowth and they came up 500 pounds in milk for the four days that it lasted. I was sold on fall annuals. Our soils were low on fertility and pasture fizzled out as the cooler weather set in. With a cool season annual, we could have very high quality feed going into winter. It was not uncommon to run out of the oats and see a drop of 500 pounds of milk the next few days with 40 cows. That lessened as we put up higher quality baleage, but made a huge difference in the lacking years.

Oats for spring and fall

We started planting oats as they grow well in cool weather and have a lot of leaves. Each fall, we planted 10 to 20 acres of oats in early August to be grazed in October well into November. The oats could be wilting and brown from the frost, but still have amazing quality. I would graze oats once a day, usually at night, and any pasture that might be left during the day. I also only grazed once a day in case there were any nitrates or other nutrient imbalances in the oats. It may not be much of an issue in an organic system, but I still do that today as it is more even for the cows to not bounce back and forth from grass to an annual to grass etc. As the years went by and our grazing management and soil fertility improved, our season went from ending the first of September to the first of December, unless it snowed.

We stopped feeding grain completely in February of 2000. That spring I planted oats for grain but the mustard came in thick, so we grazed the oats out and clipped the mustard. The cows loved it, plus, it gave us a couple weeks of grazing when spring pastures slowed down and second crop hay fields weren't yet ready to add to the rotation. As pasture swards improve, it isn't as noticeable as years back, but cows love oats. We plant new seeding under oats and graze the oats off. If it turns wet it could damage new seeding, but

that has only happened once. I baled the oats off for bedding instead after it dried out.

I think Fall oats are loaded with sugars and other goodies the cows need. It is the only time our cows will be waiting at the gate. We have to get them up and chase them after milking to where they are going, but one time in the oats and they can't wait to get back. Most perennial crops are trying to survive winter so are putting reserves into the roots. Oats are trying to grow to make seed, so everything is on top. I took a sample of waist high oats in early November of 2011. They tested 344 RFQ, .80 NEL, and 81.58% digestibility on the 48 hour test. It doesn't get much better than that!



Fall oats 2005 End of October

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Turnips

We added turnips (purple top) to the mix to give us more November grazing as the cold weather would eventually kill the oats. We planted a few acres of mostly turnips to be rationed off each day with a bale of hay or baleage to make up the difference. A few pounds of seed goes a long ways, so 4 to 6 pounds per acre works good. I still plant one bushel of oats with the turnips. The turnips are a fairly small percentage of the diet in November, but offer good nutrition in the last days of the grazing season. If turnips are available close to a milking, it is possible to flavor the milk. It works best to graze them immediately after milking as we have never noticed any flavor changes doing that. We can also do an oat/turnip mix of 1 to 2 bushels of oats and a couple pounds of turnips.

Rye and triticale

Cereal rye worked good to plant in the fall and have some early spring grazing. If rye is planted early enough in the fall it could be grazed before the snow flies. A few years ago, we tried triticale and found it stays palatable longer than rye in the spring. I plant 1 1/2 to 2 bushels.

Warm Season Annuals

After a couple of passes over the rye or triticale, the field could then be covered with pack manure and planted to a warm season

crop like sorghum sudan or Japanese millet. In 2007 I planted a field half brown midrib sorghum sudan and the other half Japanese millet. The cows showed no preference as they grazed across the field. I tend to use millet as the stems are a little smaller in case I want to make baleage. I've even let a field of Japanese millet get 5 feet tall and baled for bedding. The cows will eat a lot of that as there are lots of leaves in those bales. The hard part is getting it dry. That can be difficult even for baleage at times, but as a grazing crop it always works great. If it gets warm and wet these warm season annuals can get ahead of you fast. That isn't necessarily a problem as we have grazed sorghum sudan at six feet and millet at over five feet, but if that happens, the cows will leave two to three foot stems behind. Regrowth will be much better if those stems are clipped so it starts over from the ground.

I usually till out the millet and plant fall oats in August as the cooler fall weather slows growth where oats will keep right on going, even through the first frosts. The oats will freeze out so I started mixing rye or triticale in to give a spring crop also. If the oats get tall, rye seems to come back better than triticale. Last fall we had waist high oats and this spring the triticale was thin, but the rye looked great. I've planted late August oats that only got a foot tall, and the triticale did fine the next spring.

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Storage of Homeopathic Remedies & Treatment of Common Maladies on the Dairy Farm

By Glenn Dupree, DVM

Homeopathic remedies are among the most cost effective and efficient treatment options available to the organic dairy. Their biggest drawback is how to store all those little bottles of pills and keep them organized.

My first suggestion would be to talk to your certifier and see if the remedies can be kept in the barn and, if so, how they must be labeled. The labels on most homeopathic remedies are pretty vague and if the certifier isn't familiar with homeopathy they may draw his/her scrutiny. A little education may go a long way toward making storage of the remedies easier. It is also very important to know what will be required by the milk inspector to allow storage in the barn without drawing milk inspection demerits. It may just be a matter of keeping a homeopathic instruction book right with the remedy bottles.

With this done, the only requirement for storage in order to keep the remedies effective is to find a place away from temperature extremes, direct sunlight, strong chemical odors, and strong electromagnetic influences (inside the microwave, on top of the television set, etc).

Otherwise it becomes a matter of storing them in an organized fashion so they can be easily found. Plastic ammunition boxes with internal partitions work really well. I suggest a separate box for each potency that you store. Arrange the remedies in that potency in alphabetical order in the box, then tape a key on the inside of the lid for easy reference.

For volumes of remedies larger than the standard lipstick size vials, a drawer in a file cabinet can be partitioned off in a similar manner for easy access.

Stored in this fashion it will be easy to find the remedy you are looking for without too much hassle and without wasting time.

Remedies Indicated for Common Maladies Seen on the Dairy

With your remedies organized and easy to find, you will be ready to treat any health condition that may arise on your farm. Below are some of the most commonly indicated remedies and some of the conditions they can treat.

Aconite – High dry fevers, especially when brought on by dropping temperatures, high winds and excessive stress.



Respiratory conditions with high dry fevers, sudden onsets, and clear, stringy nasal discharge. Mastitis or lamenesses brought on by these same weather conditions.

Apis – Swellings and edema, especially when red, hot and painful. Good for post-parturient edema and mastitis where there is excess swelling/edema in the udder

Argentum nitricum – Can be useful for cows that don't want to go into stanchions and who don't like to be enclosed. Will make them more willing to walk into close or enclosed spaces

Arnica – For any trauma, bruising or contusions. Should be given to both cow and calf as soon after birthing as possible

Arsenicum – Indicated in deep burns such as branding or debudding. Also for foul, volatile diarrheas especially when the cow/calf is restless and thirsty. Can be effective in gangrenous conditions such as Staph aureus mastitis where the tissues are black and in septicemias

Belladonna – For any condition where there is a high fever systemically and locally and the tissue is bright red or red streaked and painful such as acute mastitis

Bryonia – In mastitis where the udder is hard, painful, and pale. For any condition where the symptoms is made worse by motion such as a deep cough or lameness

Carbo veg – A good remedy to use for twisted intestines or displaced abomasums where there is bloating that can't be relieved

Caulophyllum – When cow is threatening to abort. Also in calving when the contractions are overly strong and

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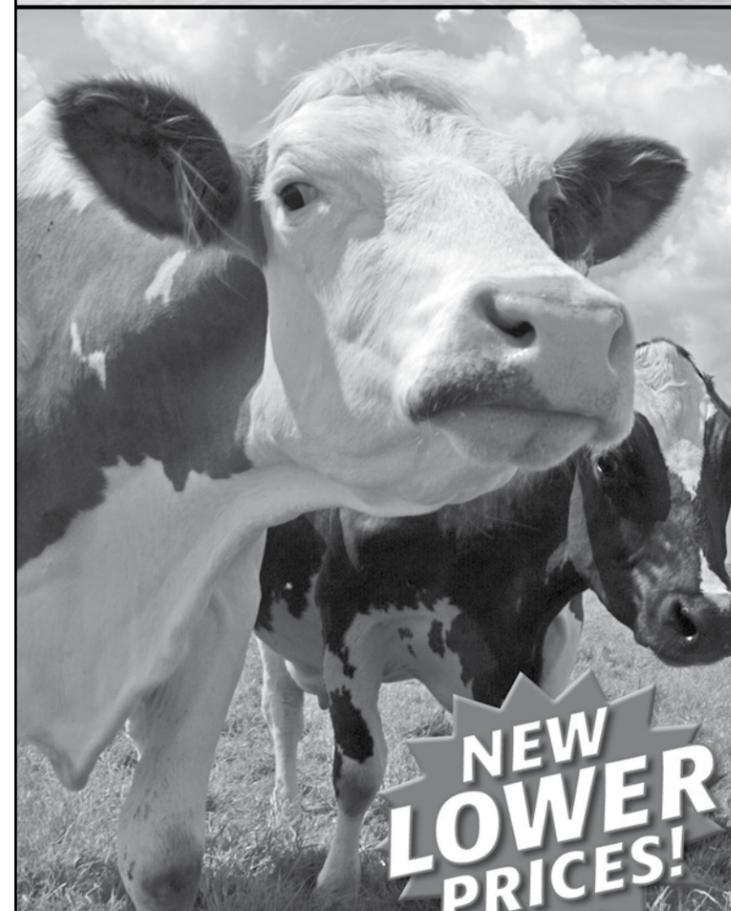


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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Homeopathy

continued from page 9

painful or too weak to expel the calf

Chamomille – Indicated in diarrhea in calves when the manure is green, watery, and excoriating, especially if it occurs when the calf is cutting teeth. Mastitis where udder is very hard and painful and where teats are swollen

China – Weakness and collapse after delivery or after loss of fluids. Good remedy for milk fever

Euphrasia – To treat pink eye and to prevent pink eye once it starts in herd

Graphites – A good hoof rot remedy when there is swelling and cracking between the claws

Hypericum – For trauma to heavily innervated tissues such as teeth, tails, and hooves. Also for deep and painful punctures such as nails, thorns, etc in hoof

Ignatia – Good to help settle the cow and calf at the time of weaning and separation

Kali carb – Weakness and paralysis after delivery

Lachesis – Septicemic infections where tissues are blue or purple, such as in mastitis, especially if the infection of the udder is left sided

Nux vomica – For digestive problem from grain overloads or overeating of concentrated feeds

Petroleum – For hoof rot where there is a foul, dark discharge between the claws

Phosphorus – Indicated in bleeding conditions to stop hemorrhage. Also for pneumonias that are deep seated and for diarrheas that are green and odorless.

Phytolacca – Good mastitis remedy when the udder is nodular, abscessed or has fistulous tracts after mastitis

Pulsatilla – For birthing difficulties when labor is ineffective and/or where calf is not positioned correctly. Also indicated in cases where cow doesn't let her milk down or where the milk decreases after calving. Can be effective in respiratory conditions where the nasal discharge is white, thick and bland. Typically the cow in a Pulsatilla

state is one that is not drinking or drinking a minimal amount

Rhus tox – For cows that are stiff and lame on first motion but walk out of the lameness

Sepia – Indicated in impending abortions or calving difficulties especially when the cow is aggressive and irritable. Can be used when the cow rejects the calf at birth

Silicea – Abscess remedy so is good for lamenesses caused by hoof abscesses or deep bruises or for mastitis where the udder abscesses. Can also be used to force the expulsion of foreign bodies

Sulphur – A good remedy for a cow that is failing without showing any particular symptoms, especially where her appearance is rough and unkempt

Urtica urens – To help the cow dry off at the end of lactation

With any of these remedies and these indications, I would suggest either a 30c or a 200c potency. Doses should be repeated based on the severity of symptoms. With fulminate, fast-moving situations the dose may need to be given 3-5 times a day. In slower, more insidious situations giving the dose once daily to

once weekly may be adequate.

For those remedies that you will be using frequently, you can mix a stock solution of equal parts of vodka (organic) and water.

To an ounce of this solution in a dropper bottle add 1-2 pellets of the remedy and shake well. Label the bottle in accordance with the dictates of your certifier.

With this liquid remedy, a dropper full will treat a cow. Or for treating the herd, a dropper full can be mixed into a larger volume of water which can then be added to a water tank or into a sprayer so the remedy can be misted onto the face/nose of the cows.

This will help preserve your stock of remedies and will cut even the minimal cost of homeopathic treatment.

Glen Dupree, DVM, CVH, author of the book 'Homeopathy in Organic Livestock Production' (available through Acres USA), has practiced veterinary Homeopathy for the past 12 years in Louisiana, Pennsylvania and New York. He received his initial training in Homeopathy from Richard Pitcairn, DVM. Further studies have been made with various human Homeopaths. Currently, Dr. Dupree's practice of veterinary homeopathy is based in St. Francisville, Louisiana. You can reach Dr. Dupree by email: drglen@homeopathyfortheanimals.com or phone: (225)709-4381.



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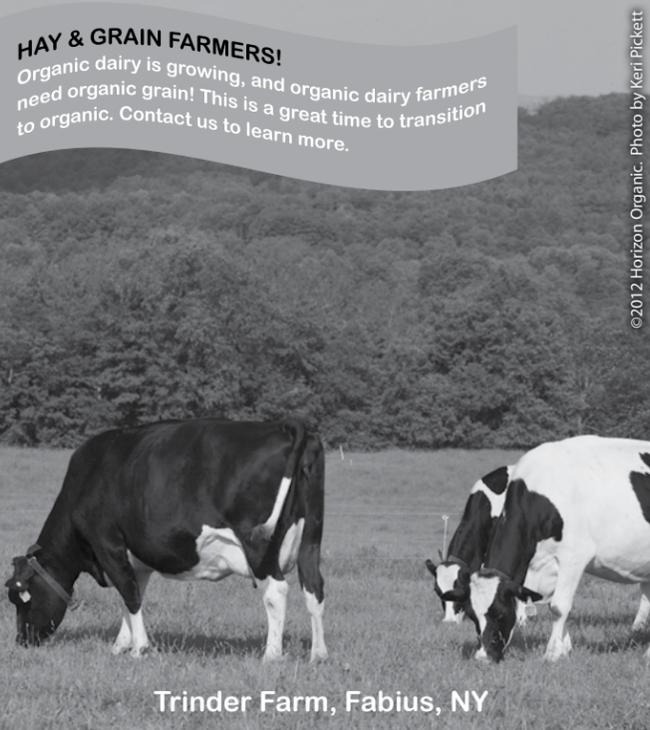
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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

The Senate Passes a Farm Bill

By Annette Higby, New England Farmers Union Policy Director

What difference does it make when Congress starts talking about your food? Plenty. All kinds of programs and priorities are debated, and amendments and tweaks to legislative language can literally move millions of dollars from one side of the country to the other. Just the two words, “regional equity” and the definition of “rural” impact New England tremendously. Without “regional equity,” New England would not receive a fair share of farm bill dollars for NRCS conservation programs, and the definition of “rural” impacts farms in urban centers throughout our region. It pays to pay attention.

As Congress considers the reauthorization of the farm bill, leading food and farm organizations based in the Northeast have weighed in with the release of A Northeast Farm Bill Agenda: Priorities for the 2012 Farm Bill. New England Farmers Union, with the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, Wholesome Wave, and more than 300 diverse, food and farm groups in the Northeast, developed the Agenda. It provides a comprehensive and concrete set of policy options to support local and regional food systems, conservation, food security, dairy, organic, and economic develop-

ment. It addresses the opportunities and specific challenges facing agriculture from Maine to Delaware. Hard and electronic copies of the Agenda were delivered to every office of the Northeast Congressional delegation as both the Senate and House agriculture committees began debating the farm bill.

The process of writing a farm bill usually happens in fits and starts and stalls. In June, the process took one giant step forward when the Senate passed its version of the 2012 Farm Bill. There are some very good things for the Northeast in the Senate bill. The Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012, the official title of the farm bill, accomplishes significant savings over the current farm bill budget while supporting many of the programs crucial to the success of family farmers in New England. It includes new resources for specialty crops and for the promotion of local and regional food markets. The bill includes mandatory funding for programs that will help farmers conserve energy and develop a new generation of biofuels.

It provides cost share assistance for nutrition incentive programs that will benefit our specialty crop producers as well as low-income

consumers in New England. It provides important support for organic certification cost share and organic research. It includes “regional equity” language.

The bill also directs the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to develop better crop insurance products for the diversified farms found here in New England. And a floor amendment sponsored by Senators Merkely (D-OR), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), John Kerry (D-MA) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) requires the RMA to complete organic price discovery by 2015 promising to finally eliminate price discrimination for organic farmers who participate in crop insurance.

An amendment offered by Sherrod Brown (D-OH) provides mandatory funding for the Value Added Producer Grant Program and the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. These programs provide important support for local and regional food producers and for the next generation of farmers in New England.

Unfortunately, an amendment sponsored by Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and supported by the New England and National Farmers Unions to allow states to require GMO labeling on all food and beverage products failed.

Two other amendments supported by the New England and National Farmers Unions didn't make the final list of the more than 70 amendments brought to the floor for a vote. Senators Sanders, Leahy and Gillibrand introduced an amendment to lift the payment limit caps on organic programs under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to the same levels as all other farmers participating in EQIP.

And Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) introduced an amendment shifting more research dollars to the development of public seeds and breeds using classical breeding techniques.

Frank Lucas (R-OK), the Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, has said his committee will begin marking up its version of the 2012 farm bill on July 11th. The House Committee bill is likely to make steeper cuts than the Senate, particularly to nutrition assistance programs for low-income consumers. Once passed out of committee, it will have to fight for floor time with a number of other major pieces of legislation, including an agricultural appropriations bill. The House is in recess for most of August leaving just a few short weeks in July to get it to the floor. House leadership, however, has not yet scheduled any floor time for consideration of the farm bill throwing in to question whether the bill can possibly be reauthorized before the current farm bill expires on September 30th.

This has been an unusual farm bill round, and by far the biggest difference to our way of thinking is that, this time around, the Northeast has a seat at the table. With four Representatives and three Senators on either the House or Senate agriculture committees, the Northeast is a force to be reckoned with in this farm bill debate. It has also been important to have the New England Farmers Union voice to bring to the discussion. To join our organization, follow this link:

<http://www.newenglandfarmersunion.org/membership/join/>

Annette Higby is the policy director of New England Farmers Union (www.newenglandfarmersunion.org)



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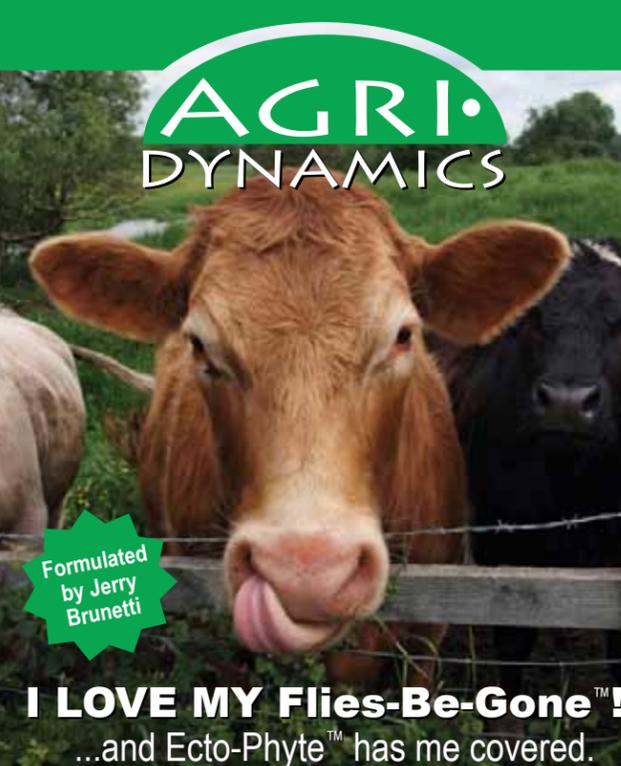
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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Corn Prices At An All-Time High. Producer Profitability Hit At Every Turn

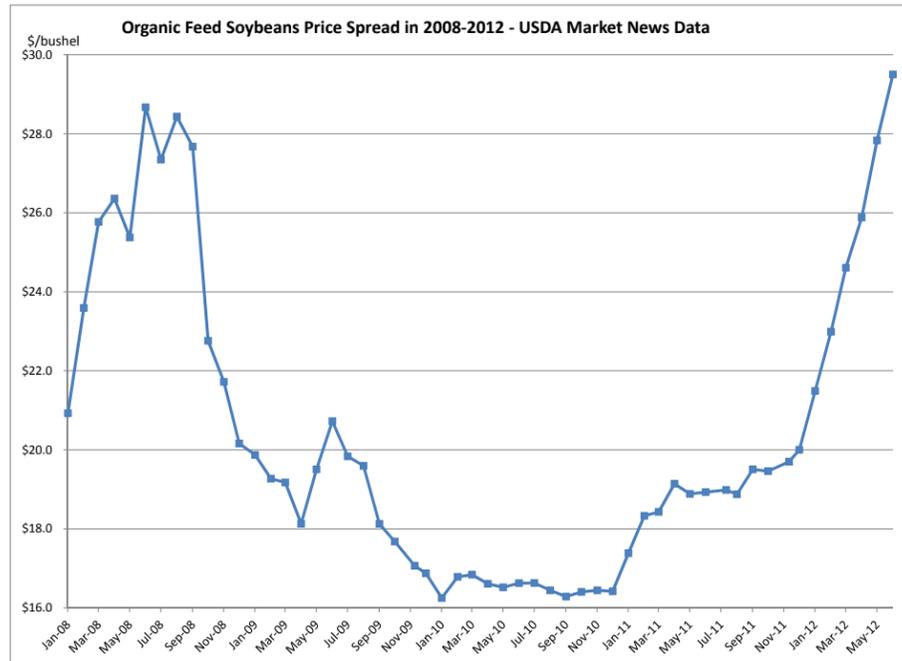
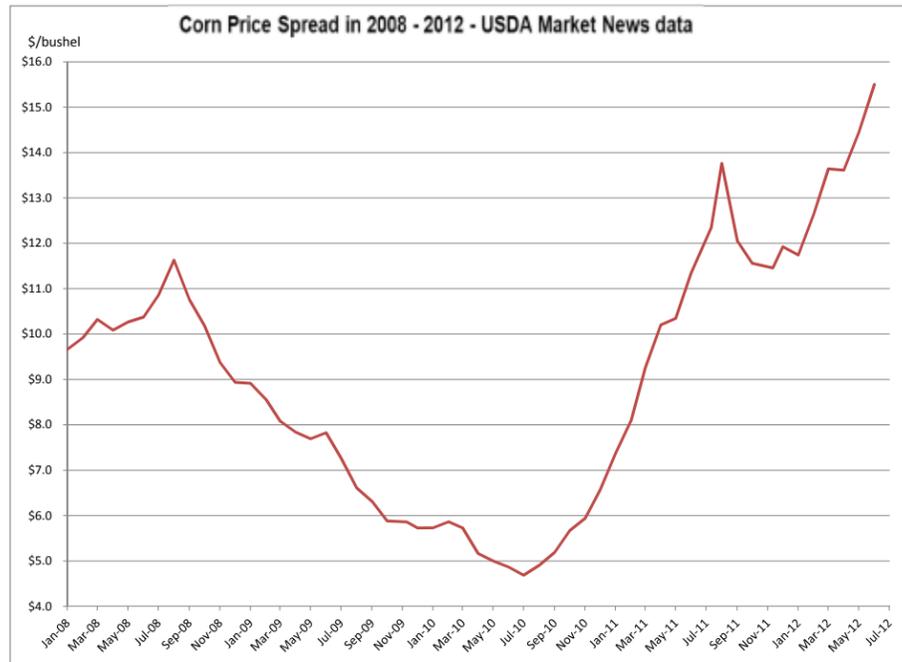
Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

The current feed situation can be summed up best with a quote from Mary-Howell Martens of Lakeview Organic on the Odairy listserv, “between the army worm and the intense drought here in New York, crops are really not looking good and pastures are terrible. Second cutting hay is virtually non-existent. And the drought/heat is even worse out in the midwest where much of our national organic grain supply comes from. We harvested our red winter wheat yesterday and got about half a crop, and it actually looked pretty good in the field. Heads up folks – if you think the organic grain price is bad now, I’m really afraid you ain’t seen nothing yet. And there isn’t going to be much hay either.”

For those producers who can find and afford to buy grain, corn prices are at an all-time high since data was collected in 2008, at \$15.50/bushel in the Midwest. Soybeans are higher than 2008 levels at \$29/bushel with soybean meal at \$1,250/ton. With uncertainty on crop yield, how much acreage has returned to non-organic production and the effect of weather and insect damage on pasture, there is no ability to predict fall prices, even with some imports and ‘green’ protein available.

The spring flush has ended and reports are that very few loads are going to non-organic sales. The heat is affecting dry matter yield from pasture and the NOP has granted a temporary variance for Wyoming for the level of dry matter required from grazing. The average pay price nationally is estimated at \$30/cwt although that will vary by region. Horizon has left their MAP in place but OV has taken the \$1 back for summer seasonal adjustment, which hit producers hard. Worse still, Organic Valley has informed their producers that there will not be any pay increase in 2013.

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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

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 certainly an important consideration because 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 an excess are the two nutrients that should be of most concern. But some compost is 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 forms in that soil properly. This will then provide the right balance of nutrients for feeding and nourishing the soil life and 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.

When a nitrogen test shows that nitrogen is the greatest limiting factor to achieve best results for pasture grasses then 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 soybean yield, 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. At that point the best reasons and purposes for being organic are not what is being accomplished.

For more information on our soil fertility program please check 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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RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Observations on alfalfa and alfalfa-grass mixtures for dairy grazing systems in North Carolina using organic or conventional management

Eileen Balz, Steve Washburn, and Sue Ellen Johnson

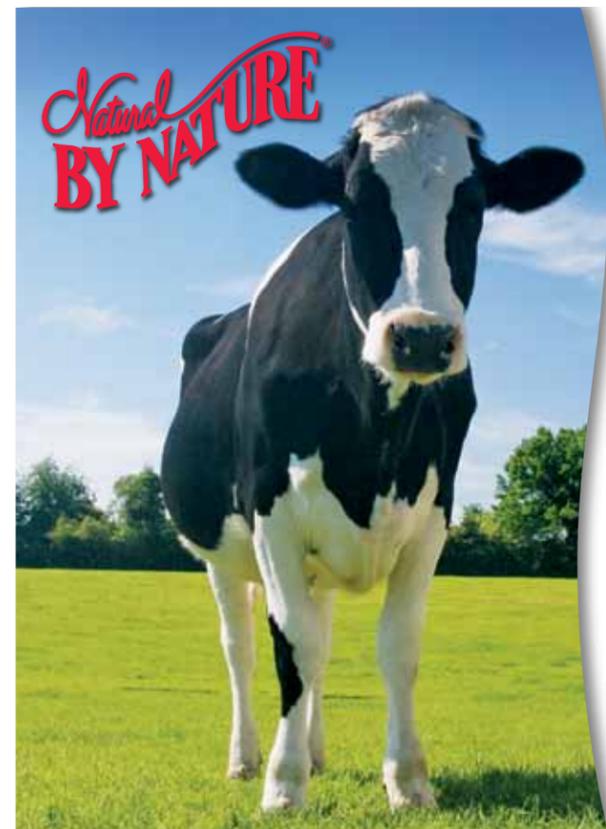
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC and the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, Goldsboro, NC

Note: Observations herein were adapted from an MS thesis completed in 2011 by Eileen Balz under the direction of Drs. Washburn and Johnson. Financial support was provided through a Southern region SARE grant: Research and educational support for organic dairy farming in the South.

Over two years, two varieties of alfalfa (Haygrazer and Arriba) were planted in replicated grazing plots of approximately 2 acres each (Field 1, Oct 2009) or about 1.25 acres each (Field 2, Oct 2010) on sandy soils under either organic or conventional management. Both fields were planted into a prepared seedbed after appropriate fertilizer and lime were applied according to soil test recommendations and following organic guidelines for the organically managed areas except that organic seed was not used. Before planting, the herbicide Eptam® was incorporated into conventional plots whereas organically managed alfalfa was planted without any herbicide. For Field 1, Matua or Lakota prairie grasses were drilled into organic and conventional plots in late winter (Feb, 2010) whereas for Field 2, Matua was planted with the alfalfa in half

of each of the organically managed plots in Oct 2010. Stands of the prairie grasses were better with fall planting. Field 1 had several years of annual ryegrass in winter and sorghum-Sudangrass hybrid in summer whereas Field 2 had been in hybrid Bermudagrass sod for several years and a smother crop of sorghum-Sudangrass was planted in May, 2010 to suppress the Bermudagrass before the field was disked and planted to alfalfa in the fall.

Because Eptam was in the conventional plots, there was more winter weed pressure in organic plots for several months after planting as well as volunteer forage grasses. This was particularly true for henbit during the first winter in Field 1. Henbit has been documented as a potential ovipositioning site for alfalfa weevil and may have contributed to higher weevil counts in organic plots earlier than in conventional plots as observed in March, 2010 (see below). Primary weed species observed in organic plots were henbit in winter and early spring, chickweed in spring, and spiny amaranth (pigweed) in late spring and summer. Forage grasses including the planted prairie grasses and volunteer ryegrass in winter and spring, and volunteer crabgrass in summer. In Field



Looking for an Organic Milk Market?

Natural Dairy Products (NDP) is actively seeking organic dairy farmers in the southeastern Pennsylvania area. On September 1st, 2011 the organic dairy farms producing milk for the Natural By Nature brand of organic dairy products started receiving more money for their efforts.

Natural Dairy Products Corporation (NDP), who produces a full line of organic dairy products under the Natural By Nature name, increased their base pay price by \$2/CWT and is also offering an extra \$2/CWT for 3 months over the winter to help offset the high cost of organic hay. The extra \$4/CWT over last year's pay price during the winter will provide welcome relief to NDP farmers.



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2, there was not much residual Bermudagrass after using the summer smother crop procedure. Presence of weeds was very low for the first winter and early spring for conventional plots but by mid summer, the amount of spiny amaranth was similar in both systems. Winter weeds during the second year were also similar across management systems in Field 1. Interestingly, the different history of Field 2 resulted in very little henbit in either conventional or organically managed plots.

Each year scouting for Alfalfa weevil started in February and continued through April as needed. For organic management, alfalfa was grazed by lactating cows at an economic threshold of 3 weevil larvae per stem regardless of the maturity of the alfalfa. Otherwise, plots were grazed when maturity reached late bud to early bloom. Alfalfa weevil counts did reach 3 larvae per stem in some of the conventional grazing plots in Field 1 on April 6th, 2010 and on March 29, 2011 but because of the 14-day withdrawal time for the insecticide, we chose not to spray. In 2012, plots in both fields were scouted a few times and as weevil larval counts began to rise, it was decided to graze both conventional and organically managed alfalfa plots relatively early when alfalfa plants averaged between 15 and 20 inches in height (Figure 1, March 28, 2012). Re-growth about 3 weeks after an early grazing is shown in Figure 2 (April 19, 2012). Cows used for the grazing system included Jerseys, Holsteins, and Jersey-Holstein crosses and were separated into organically or conventionally managed groups.

We did observe in late April, 2011 that many pupating alfalfa wee-

vil larvae had been parasitized with *Bathyleptes anurus*, (Figure 3) a parasitic wasp first imported to Utah from Italy in 1911 for biological control of the alfalfa weevil. Because we managed some of the alfalfa using organic principles and managed the conventional alfalfa using scouting data rather than spraying at the first sign of feeding damage, we likely facilitated greater survival of parasitic wasps as well as other beneficial insects.

Yields of alfalfa and total forage yields were examined for both conventional and organically managed areas. In the spring of 2010 and again during the summer, we experienced periods of mild to moderate drought and the alfalfa varieties we used were nearly dormant for a while. Therefore, overall yields in Field 1 were lower than expected in the first year. Yields of alfalfa by itself were similar for both organic (2.53 vs. 2.48 +/- 0.2 tons DM/acre) and conventional (across 4 grazing periods in 2010. However, there was a tendency for yields of all forage species (alfalfa + forages grasses including ryegrass, prairie grass, and crabgrass) tended to be greater for organically managed areas vs. the conventional system (3.12 vs. 2.56 +/- 0.2 tons DM/acre, P = 0.06). Weed yields were only 8.9% and 8.7% of the total biomass for organically vs. conventionally managed areas, respectively and the respective proportions of those weeds were 80.9% vs. 87.9% spiny amaranth (pigweed) observed in the summer. Common chickweed was the second most common weed and in grazing systems, cows readily consume it.

continued on page 33

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Real Supply Management

The history and politics of a successful program in Canada

By Mike Larsson

Northeast organic dairy farmers were gathered together for their annual field days on a cold day in October 2010 in central Maine. A pioneer of organic dairy farming was giving a summary of how his small organic milk company shipped milk under a buy-back arrangement to the State sanctioned milk monopoly, paying himself and his fellow dairymen \$40/cwt plus a 20% premium for organic.

At the time in New York and New England, the going price for organic milk at the farm gate was in the mid \$20's. Needless to say the farmers in the audience were somewhere between disbelief and envy. Was the speaker from some northern European country that heavily subsidized it's farm sector?

No, the producer was from Ontario, Canada. The State protected dairy sector he was describing is called supply management. There are no taxpayer subsidies to support the milk pricing & quota system coming from the public pockets in Toronto, Montreal, or Ottawa.

Supply management controls oversupply, protects from cheap imports, gives processors stable pricing and supply, costs nothing to the taxpayer, guarantees cost-of-production to the farmer, and

allows rural areas to have prosperity not depending on tourism or call centers. What's not to like?

Beginnings of Supply Management

Dairy supply management started in the early 1970's in Ontario and Quebec partly because the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau wanted the support of those two provinces. Quebec had been advocating for home rule for their province and the Quebecois value their farming as a key part of their heritage and culture, with agri-food as their largest industry. Ontario has a large dairy industry and Trudeau wanted the rural vote. In the national capital of Ottawa, governments in power have usually had to win 2 of 3 regions: the West, Ontario or Quebec.

Supply management in dairy and later in poultry, was a way to confer prosperity to rural areas through the control of milk volumes and prices. Prices and volumes were set through negotiation between the dairy producers' federation and the milk processors federation, with arbitration by the State representatives if required. All existing producers were granted a quota and their children had

the opportunity for a one time quota transfer to aid generational transfer. Prices were set yearly based on current costs-of-production that factored farm input costs, plus a return for the farm labor. A new entrant to dairy farming would have to buy quota from a farmer and for the retiring farmer this was an asset to cash out at retirement. Initially there was no control of the value of quotas, which were traded freely, and the certainty of profits in the system made quota a hot commodity. Banks and financial institutions saw the dairy business as a safe investment because of the consistency of incoming cash flows, which raised the value of the quota and consequently the cost of entering dairy. The cost of the quota also saw an increase in larger herds that could manage a high level of debt. This problem for new entrants is now being addressed through quota price caps and even mandatory quota value rollbacks.

Opposition to Supply management

Criticism of supply management came from the West which grew hard wheat, canola, beef and hogs. None of these commodities were covered by supply management, and westerners saw it as another example of Ottawa prioritizing Ontario & Quebec concerns at their expense. Manufacturers, the food service and processors also opposed it as they feared that their competitiveness was hindered by the protection given to the dairy and poultry business. Supply management did not initially impact treaties as free trade agreements were signed and global deals were held up by bigger issues between USA, Asia, and Europe. The 1988 USA-Canada

FTA (Free Trade Agreement) was signed allowing an exemption for supply management in dairy and poultry. Supply management also was exempt from the NAFTA agreement in 1994. At a large protest rally against NAFTA in 1993 (organized in part by the national farmers union), a crowd of 10,000 Quebec farmers marched across the bridge to Ottawa from Quebec to join the protest. You didn't mess with Quebec's dairy farmers!

The food processors and the foodservice & restaurant associations oppose supply management essentially because it stopped big American processors like Kraft Foods and Unilever from having free access to sell imported dairy products and ingredients into Canada. It also stopped the buyers at the big dairy processors from being price-makers. Processors complain that consumers paid more for cheese and poultry than their American counterparts. While the argument had truth, the defenders of supply management pointed out that pricing was stable and predictable under the system. Also, farmers didn't have to compete with artificially cheap farm products from Europe, America, and New Zealand. While consumers might pay marginally more for their dairy and poultry food, they at least were not subsidizing the farm sector with taxes.

Effect on other commodities of limited supply management and Free Trade treaties

The free trade era has not been helpful to farmers in most of the non-supply managed commodities within Canada and there is not enough

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

OTA proposes legislative language for an Organic Check-off

continued from page 1

the Federal Research and Promotion Order (FRPO). Farmer and consumer groups that oppose OTA's legislative agenda on a FRPO say that a series of one-sided webinars and a few meetings at Trade Shows and the NOSB do not constitute a community discussion; that there are many better and more representative organizational and governance models under which funds can be pooled for organic research and promotion. Legislative language is very premature without even a definition of what is meant by 'Organic' as a commodity under an FRPO and who will be assessed and therefore vote on any proposed order.

There is complete agreement within the organic community that legislative language that will allow all organic products to be exempt from the non-organic check-off programs should be supported and moved through Congress. This technical fix will stop organic dollars from being used to promote non-organic products and will allow that money to be used by producers and processors to promote and support organic production.

This is all that is needed to stop organic farmers from being unfairly taxed by conventional check-off programs.

There is disagreement between DC lobbyists and experts as to whether the technical regulatory fix would pass as a standalone amendment. The Podesta Group, hired by OTA, who has very limited experience on agricultural issues, says that it would not. But many other industry professionals differ in their opinion and say a stand-alone amendment would be more easily accepted. Unfortunately farmers do not have deep pockets to hire lobbyists to give their professional opinion.

OTA's regulatory language and proposal for An Organic Research and Promotion Program is "Not Ready For Prime Time."

Farmer and consumer groups do not support extending authority or steps that would ultimately lead to a Federal, USDA mandated, 'Organic Research and Promotion Program' with a governing committee appointed by the Agriculture Secretary. They believe that OTA's proposed program is following the same path of the conventional advertising, research and promotion orders with their many short-comings and pitfalls. They believe that the strategies, tactics and attitude adopted by OTA in its process of consulting the organic community about an Organic Check-off Program has been top-down and confirms that OTA will lead the community down a predetermined path where governance of the program and control of disbursement of funds will be invested in the processors and manufacturers, rather than the producers.

Here is what is needed to unite the organic community behind the goals of more dollars for research and promotion of organic and restore the trust that is so essential for future discussions:

1. OTA should agree that the compromise language they have in the Senate Farm Bill asking for an independent feasibility study on an ORPP is enough regulatory language on establishing an ORPP at this time. Any future language can always be attached as an amendment to any bill in Congress. OTA should instruct the Podesta Group to stop lobbying to have their language to establish organic as a commodity under an ORPP included in the House Farm Bill, the House Appropriations Committee or any other House or Senate bills.
2. OTA should work with other groups to use the 2012 Farm Bill to promote the technical fix that will allow all organic products to be exempt from a conventional check-off.
3. We need an industry wide discussion that includes all stakeholders in a process similar to that used to develop the Organic Action Plan. This would examine the benefits or need to pool any check-off funds, the different models that can be used to organize and govern the decisions on assessments and disbursement of funds, (some have suggested a more regional response similar to the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education model - SARE), that would not duplicate the mistakes of the Federal programs. Until we have details on who will be assessed, what will be assessed, how the assessment will be collected, who will govern the program and how it will be managed, it is impossible to make a decision on any Organic Check Off program and whether it will be beneficial to pool all funds, have regional pools, have commodity pools, regional governance or buy into the Federal program.

In the evaluation of the benefits and disadvantages of the existing check-off programs, the following questions need to be answered:

- Simple basic questions that are so integral to discussions of any proposed program: Who will be assessed? How will they be assessed and on what basis? Will the assessment be at many levels of the supply chain? How will representation on the governing committee be determined? Will a program be based in states and regions, feeding limited dollars back to a national program or vice-versa?
- Are the advantages of pooling check-off funds within the federal program outweighed by the restrictive guidelines, heavy bureaucracy, lack of accountability, cost of ad-

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

ministration, a history of using check-off funds inappropriately, and poor representation of farmer priorities in the granting of research dollars? The investigation by the Office of the Inspector General of the Research and Promotion Check-Off Programs highlighted the failing of the existing programs and confirmed farmers' distrust of those programs.

- Who gets the benefits from commodity promotions? The success of the Federal Research and Promotion Programs have often been judged by consumer recognition of advertising slogans rather than its impact on sales of product and effect on farm families across the country through relevant research and promotion programs.
- Does the existing check off programs keep family farm producers in business? There have been declining farm numbers and an increasing concentration in agriculture while these commodity research and promotion programs have been in effect. 'Got Milk?' - 'The Incredible Edible Egg' - 'Beef, It's What's for Dinner' and 'Pork, The Other White Meat', to name a few, may be nice sounding promotional terms but producers legitimately ask what is in it for them. Below are some examples of changes under the existing 18 Federal Research and Promotion Programs:
 - Between 1992 and 2004, U.S. farms with hogs declined from over 240,000 to fewer than 70,000. Currently 20 pork entities produce 50 percent of all the hogs in the U.S. Very few independent hog producers remain in business and the market is dominated by the integrated meatpackers. The pork checkoff fund will generate \$72 million in 2012. (Source: USDA)
 - The wheat checkoff was designed to increase wheat exports. Current wheat exports are in fact below the 10-year average, with the wheat check off having been in place since 1980. (2011/2012 crop year exports are projected to be 27.9 million metric tonnes vs. the 10 year average of 28.3 million metric tonnes.) (Source: Wheat Growers Association)
 - "Beef, it's what's for dinner," campaign. This advertising effort is funded by a \$1.00 per head checkoff assessed every time a live animal changes hands. This checkoff program has been in effect since 1989 and millions of dollars have been "checked off" and millions spent on very creative advertising. What has happened to beef per capita consumption during the time of the campaign?

Beef per capita consumption has declined from 88 pounds per person to less than 60 pounds today (USDA, ERS beef per capita consumption, boneless equivalent weight basis).

- Since the start of the 'Got Milk' campaign in October 1993, the consumption of fluid milk has dropped year by year (per capita US consumption of fluid milk in 1993 was 24.37 gallons, in 2010 it was 20.69 gallons), as have the number of dairy farms (1993 there were 124,945 dairy farms but only 51,481 in 2011). (Source USDA AMS)
- The "Incredible Edible Egg" campaign was started in 1977. Since then, consumption of eggs has declined. In 1987, there were around 2,500 operations with flocks of 75,000 hens or more. In 2012, there are 179 egg producing companies with flocks of 75,000 hens or more.

In the face of OTA's continued lobbying of the House of Representatives to include their own legislative language, the Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM Inc.) and the Federation Of Organic Dairy Farmers (FOOD Farmers) submitted a letter to the leadership of the House on Monday, July 9 2012, that explains the position of organic farmers, producers, ranchers, growers and consumer groups. This letter can be downloaded from [WEB LINK HERE](#).

Some of the other organizations that support this position and signed on to the letter are: Beyond Pesticides (DC), Buckwheat Growers Association of Minnesota (MN), Cornucopia Institute (WI), Food and Water Watch (DC), Elizabeth Henderson, Farmer, (NY), Hoosier Organic Marketing Education (IN), Kansas Organic Producers Association (KS), Midwest Organic Farmers Cooperative (IL), Montana Organic Producers Cooperative (MT), National Farmers Organization (NFOrganics), NOFA Interstate Council (New England and New York), Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, Inc. (NOFA-NY), Organic Consumers Association (DC and MN), Wisconsin Organic Marketing Alliance (WI)

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“... glad we tried it because we are totally happy with it.”

— Leon Corse



CORSE FARM DAIRY, LLC, Whitingham, VT
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“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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The 12th Annual NODPA Field Days and Annual Meeting
September 27 & 28, 2012

Farming Smarter: A Nutrient and Energy Dense Agenda to Help Farmers Become More Self-Reliant

The 2012 NODPA Field Days and Annual Meeting returns to Vermont! We will gather in southern Vermont at the scenic Vermont Agricultural Business Education Center (VABEC) in Brattleboro on Thursday and Friday, September 27th and 28th, for a program that’s packed with compelling, practical topics, 2 farm tours, a large trade show, delicious local and organic meals, a social hour, and plenty of time for networking with your fellow farmers.

During a year of grain shortages, high feed prices and dramatic weather patterns, the Field Days organizing committee created a very topical agenda to help farmers become more self-reliant by growing more of their own feed in healthy, rich soil. Our Keynote Speaker will be Cheyenne Christianson, an organic no-grain dairy farmer from Chetek, Wisconsin, who will describe his experiences taking a conventionally managed farm to a vibrant biological system that is practically self-sufficient.

We kick off on Thursday morning, September 27th with not one but two farm tours. The tours will feature David and Mary Ellen Franklin’s farm in Guilford VT, and the Miller Dairy in Vernon, VT. We will see two types of dairy farms based on land-base and soil (small valley and hill-farm vs. Connecticut River flat silt-loams), as well as their approaches to dairy farming over the past 20 years, and how they came to be certified organic. Diversification, extended season grazing, summer annuals, and multi-generation, inter-generation, and external partnerships are all parts of these farming operations. Both farms have herds of fewer than 100 cows; feed very different rations; and aim for different production results.

Starting on Thursday afternoon and ending on Friday afternoon, educational session topics will include:

- **Productive Pastures** with Sarah Flack (VT), Cindy Daley (CA), and Kathy Soder (PA)
- **Maintaining Cow Health while having realistic production goals**

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REGISTRATION

NODPA’s 12th ANNUAL FIELD DAYS & PRODUCER MEETING & DINNER

| Cost | | Qty. | Total |
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| Registration: Thursday & Friday | | | |
| Free | Organic dairy & transitioning producers & families | | |
| \$30 | All who aren’t organic dairy producers | | |
| Meals | | | |
| \$25 | Thurs. dinner (under 11, half price) | | |
| Free | Transitioning farm member, Thursday evening dinner | | |
| \$5 | Friday breakfast (7:30-9 am) | | |
| \$10 | Friday lunch (under 11, half price) | | |
| \$35 | NODPA News Subscription (6 issues) | | |
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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

Steve & Cathy Kimball, Kimvale Farm, Falconer, NY Transitioning in 2006 under the 80/20 Rule

continued from page 1

tical products that were “necessary” for milk production”, explains Steve. “It seemed that the agribusinesses were the only ones making any profits. The producer was left to the whims of the markets and government.” Steve thought that organic milk production was a better alternative. Also, his cooperative (Upstate-Niagara) ventured into the organic processing business and was looking for producers who would transition.

Kimvale Farm was able to transition its herd under the ‘80:20 rule’, meaning that for the first 9 months of the whole herd transition, 80% of the feed fed (on an as-fed basis) needed to be organic, while the remaining 20% could come from non-organic sources. For the final 3 months of the whole herd transition, 100% of the feed needed to be organic. Compared to today’s transition requirements, this was a walk in the park; but it was still quite an investment for any farm to take on. As the whole herd transition took place, Steve did a heavy culling of his conventional herd “so that I did not have to give any organic feed to cows that would not stay in the herd”. They culled older cows, and any cow that they knew would not survive without their non-organic treatments (crutches); from those needing breeding hormones to the occasional antibiotic for those chronic issues. Eventually the herd number settled to just under 200 cows.

Brief History

Steve went into partnership with his father on the family farm in

1970; the 5th generation to work the farm, which was homesteaded in 1847. He applied what he learned in college and eventually grew the farm to be a 350-cow confinement dairy operation, using Bst, and managing about 600 acres of cropland. After 9-10 years of confinement dairying, Steve started building pasture fence, began grazing his cows, and gave up using Bst. He found his cows were burning out way too fast on Bst and felt that his animals needed to be outside harvesting some of their own feed. Perhaps he knew that these steps were just the first in a series of larger changes that were to come, as 10 years later he started his transition to organic.

Shortly after his transition was complete, the price of grain started to rapidly increase. As a result, Steve decided to keep all his rented land and started growing all his own grains and forages. There was a learning curve for all of this, but he turned to people like Klaas Martens (Lakeview Organic Grain) who not only helped him bring his conventionally cropped acreage to decent organic production levels, but also helped him find some necessary field equipment such as a combine, tine weeder and a cultivator.

Total acres (owned and rented) today is about 1,131. Most of the land is tillable and about 750 acres are cropped each year, growing about 250 acres of hay, 250 acres of corn, 100 acres of soybeans, 150 acres in oats, wheat and new seeding, and the rest is pasture. The farm transitioned with OCPP (now known as OC-Pro) out of Canada, but they now use NOFA-NY as their certifier, and ship their milk to Upstate Niagara.



KIMVALE CALVES



COWS IN THE LANE AT KIMVALE

The Cows

The majority of the cows at Kimvale Farm are Holsteins, but they also have some Lineback, Jersey, Milking Shorthorn, and one token Dutch Belted. Milk quality and components usually run about 200,000 SCC, 4.0% Butterfat, 3.0% Protein and 5.4% other solids, and the average annual production per cow is about 13,200 pounds. The production has been 14,000 – 15,000 lbs in the past, but the cows are consuming mostly forages and the cost of energy is rather high.

For breeding, Steve uses AI for his high producing group and has a bull with the low producing group. Typically they breed for production, but recently crossbred some Jersey, Brown Swiss and Milking Shorthorn for better grazing. They find that their Holsteins get thin on a high pasture diet and they cannot afford the additional grain they would require.

Steve keeps most of his heifer calves and this year they have more than they need. They definitely have a number of 10 year old cows in the herd, but Steve believes it is more marketable to have a younger herd, plus they tend to have a lower SCC. Now that they are breeding for improved grazing genetics, there is an added incentive in keeping all their heifers.

Housing and Feeding

Cows are housed in a free stall barn with a feed alley in the middle (known as the ‘Pennsylvania Drive-Thru’). Newborn calves are started in hutches or individual pens in the calf barn. After weaning they move to pens of about 6, and then they are moved to pens of 20. After that they go to the free stall heifer barn into two groups of 65, from there they go to the cow barn into two groups of 90 or so. They milk in a double 10 side by side parlor built in 1990.

During the grazing season, the dairy cows are supplemented with some haylage or corn silage and high moisture ear corn. They usually get at least 70% of their dry matter from pasture, but this year they have had to increase the supplemental forages due to drought conditions. During the winter months, the cows receive a TMR that consists of high moisture ear corn, corn meal, roasted ground soy, haylage, cornsilage, salt and minerals.

Heifers (6 months to bred), and dry cows receive 100% pasture during the growing season and a TMR that is mostly haylage with a little corn silage, roasted ground soy and minerals in the winter months. This year, they have had to supplement the pasture with some stored forages.

Grazing System

Kimvale Farm has two milking groups (‘low cow’ and ‘high cow’) of about 90 cows each that are rotationally grazed; their grazing season started April 22nd this year. Sometimes the cows are moved daily, but more often it is every couple days. There is usually enough pasture growth to graze day and night and not touch stored feed, but not this year. It has been so dry that they are back to feeding more forages in the barn to supplement the pasture. Steve will be subdividing his pastures some more to slow down his grazing rotation; his pastures tend to run a little large, so some tighter management could add some additional days of rest to the pieces, providing some additional, much-needed production.

Annual rye is planted on corn stubble after chopping each fall, which provides some excellent early grazing the following spring - usually 7 to 10 days ahead of the established pastures. “If it’s wet and muddy in the spring it doesn’t matter if we muddy up a rye field as it will be plowed up and seeded anyway”, says Steve.

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FEATURED FARM

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Calf health

“If a woman takes care of the calves, the calves do better”, says Steve, whose main defense against health problems in his calves is his ‘calf nanny/employee’ named Rae. “She treats them all as if they are her kids or family. The calves get off to a good start.” Usually when they have a lot of heifer calves and the barn & hutches are overcrowded they have the most problems. Pneumonia & calf scours are the main problems and sometimes a calf that is just “behind”; either born early, difficult birth, was injured.

When they do have an occasional problem, Rae is quick to come up with a solution. For pneumonia, she has a garlic tincture concoction that seems to work well. She uses so much garlic that she grows it in a garden outside the calf barn. For calf scours they use electrolytes plus a mixture of butter, ground up cheese, garlic, & sometimes yogurt to get the digestion back to normal.

Calves are weaned at 70 – 90 days depending upon how they look. They are supplemented with grain from the high TMR cow ration and hay as soon as they will eat it. Calves are vaccinated based upon the recommendations of their veterinarian and as part of a total herd vaccination program.

Cow Health

When Steve had a conventional herd, he found that the health problems seemed to come very rapidly as did the cures “that were almost miraculous”. The organic cures, he finds, take much more patience and Steve feels that prevention is the key. “There’s no magic genie in a bottle on the shelf that will make up for a week or month of neglect. Get animals off to a good start and they have a better chance their whole life. It’s not the one thing that takes the cow out; it is the accumulation of things”, he says.

For mastitis, they have used Phytomast on more stubborn cases and use a quarter milker for milking out infected quarters. They occasionally order products from Crystal Creek or other like-minded companies, and have several books on organic management that they can turn to for treatment ideas and options.

They use their local veterinarian primarily for emergencies and pregnancy checks. “All the rest of her clients are conventional, so her first response [to a health situation] is to say ‘if we could use ____’. But she is very internet savvy and has gone the extra mile to take care of a client who has apparently gone off the deep end”, says Steve. His Vet has consulted with Dr Hubert Karreman on occasion and he has been very responsive to her.

Resources

As Board Member of the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA), Steve attends the annual NODPA Field Days where he can learn with his peers, stay on top of the organic dairy issues, and steer NODPA in the direction that it needs to be headed. Steve is good at reaching out to others when he has a question, and attends educational events for additional learning and inspiration. He recalls one year when he and his wife attended an Acres Conference and had an opportunity to talk with Dr Paul Detloff (over breakfast) about stray voltage. Steve and Cathy got some good pointers and came home and made some worthwhile changes on their farm. Another example is turning to Klaas Martens (Lakeview Organic Grain) for information when Steve decided to start growing organic grains. He received a lot of great advice on cultivation techniques and transitioning crop fields to organic production in just a few years. “Everyone in organic agriculture is willing to share their experiences and what they know,” says Steve. “They don’t have secrets and are pretty open about their successes and failures.”

“There’s no magic genie in a bottle on the shelf that will make up for a week or month of neglect. Get animals off to a good start and they have a better chance their whole life. It’s not the one thing that takes the cow out; it is the accumulation of things”, says Steve.

Future of the Farm

When asked how much longer he sees himself dairy farming, Steve isn’t sure. He’s 64 years old now, and with kids in college, he sees himself milking cows for another 5-10 years unless something interesting crops up. If the price of milk increased by at least another \$3.00/cwt, then the farm might last even a little longer. “I think I am the end of the 5th generation”, he concedes. Steve is the only family member who works on the farm today and none of his kids have expressed an interest in being the 6th generation farmer. Steve employs 5 full time people, and is starting to consider a few different scenarios for the family farm once he is ready to retire.

To add to the mix, 300-400 acres of the rented land that they have been using has recently been purchased by Amish farmers, and it looks like more of his rented land may be heading in that direction. With less land available and a drought this year, Steve won’t have the land base to grow all his own grain concentrates and may be looking to purchase some grain - that is, if he can find it or afford to purchase it. Maybe he will have to reduce his herd size instead.

Steve feels strongly that the organic industry needs to address the current pay price that organic dairy producers are receiving. “We need at least a \$3/cwt increase in pay in order to break even and more to sustain the production over the next few years”, says Steve. “Organic grain prices are too high but competition for ethanol has driven up all the commodity prices (conventional & organic). Anytime the government starts messing with the market place, unintended consequences occur.” ♦

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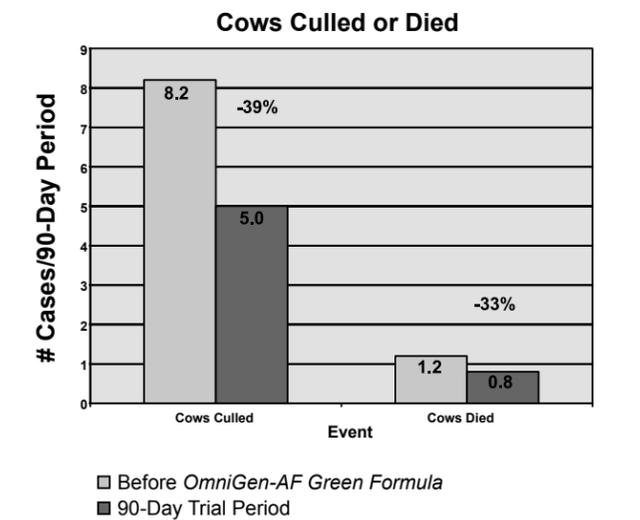
An Evaluation of Herd Health Parameters and Somatic Cell Count on Organic Dairies Fed OmniGen-AF® Green Formula

Ken Brubaker, Dairy Technical Specialist and
Ken Zanzalari, Dairy Technology Manager, Prince Agri Products, Quincy, IL.

Dairymen and nutritionists that raise organically fed dairy cows know that healthy cows are more productive and profitable. Recently, animal scientists have begun to understand the relationship between the innate immune system, the “first responding” immune cells, and many transition cow disorders, mastitis, reproduction, and milk production. The concept of feeding dairy cows for improved immune health to promote optimal productivity is now becoming a reality through a better understanding of the relationship between the gastro-intestinal (GI) tract and the immune system and how specific dietary components augment immune cell activity and function. This concept would seem to have greater significance for organic dairies because of the lack of treatment options if animals become sick or debilitated.

study initiation. During the trial period, all diets were consistent and not altered. Diets consisted of corn silage, haylage, dry hay, or baleage, alone or in combination as forages; and dry shell corn, high moisture corn, roasted soybeans, mineral mix, commercial protein mix, or commercial complete feed, alone or in combination as grain supplements. Cows were housed and milked in tie-stalls (three herds) or housed in free-stalls and milked in a milking parlor (two herds). Records were analyzed using PC-Dart and PC-Dart Herd Detective analysis software.

FIGURE 1
Average reduction in cows culled and cows that died between the two 90-day periods for all herds combined



An innovative feed product (OmniGen-AF® from Prince Agri Products, Inc.) was shown to affect¹ markers of the innate immune system in livestock. In October, 2010 OmniGen-AF became OMRI listed and began to be marketed under the name *OmniGen-AF Green Formula*. To demonstrate the benefits of feeding *OmniGen-AF Green Formula* to organically fed and managed dairy cattle, a study was conducted with five organic dairies located in Jefferson County, NY. The trial consisted of a 90-day feeding period where *OmniGen-AF Green Formula* was fed at the recommended rate of 56 g/hd/day to both dry and lactating dairy cows. The trial commenced in mid-January of 2011 and included a total of 502 cows. All herds used DHIA to monitor individual animal performance including somatic cell count (SCC). The purpose of the trial was to compare herd health metrics measured during the 90 days of the study against the herd performance of those same metrics the 90 days prior to

Table 1 shows the combined average SCC and mastitis parameter data from all five farms analyzed through the Wisgraph feature of the PC-Dart Herd Detective program. The Herd Detective Program uses 200,000 SCC per ml as the threshold level for mastitis infection. All parameters declined except the “% Prevalence From Chronic” which is a

¹ Proceedings, Western Section, American Society of Animal Science, Vol. 55, 2004 IDENTIFICATION OF THE MECHANISMS BY WHICH OMNIGEN-AF, A NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENT, AUGMENTS IMMUNE FUNCTION IN RUMINANT LIVESTOCK, (Wang, Forsberg).

PAID ADVERTISING

consequence of the lower "Herd New Infection Rate".

TABLE 1

| Parameter | Before OmniGen-AF Green Formula | 90-day Trial Period | % Change Between Feeding Periods |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| Weighted Mean SCC x 1000 | 176,000 | 145,600 | -17% |
| Prevalence Rate (%) ¹ | 19.9 | 17.5 | -12% |
| % Prevalence From Chronics ² | 45.4 | 47.6 | 5% |
| Herd New Infection Rate (%) ³ | 9.6 | 7.9 | -18% |
| Fresh Cow Contribution To New Infection Rate (%) ⁴ | 3.6 | 2.1 | -42% |
| % Of New Infections From Fresh Cows | 43.6 | 30 | -31% |

¹Percent of animals with milk containing greater than 200,000 SCC per ml.
²Cows that had a SCC above 200,000 cells/ml on both current and previous test days.
³Percent of animals testing above 200,000 SCC on current test day that was below 200,000 SCC on the previous test day.
⁴Cows less than 45 days in milk that had a SCC greater than 200,000.

Figure 2 shows other mastitis parameters that showed significant change between the time periods analyzed. The "% Fresh Cows with Mastitis", and "# Mastitis Cases" use the >200,000 SCC as the indicator of mastitis infection. The "1st Test Linear Score" parameter is taken from the 1-40 DIM LS table from each individual herd, and then averaged across all five herds.

FIGURE 2

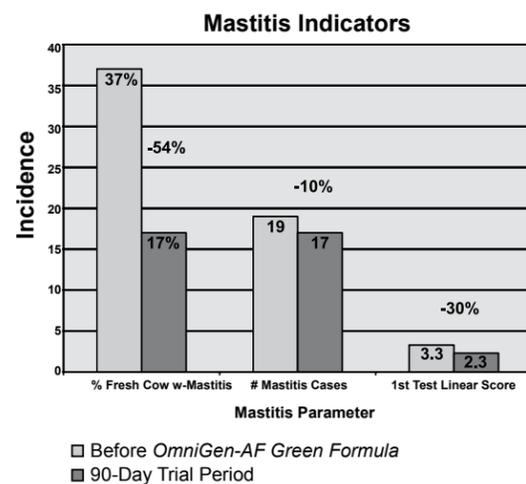
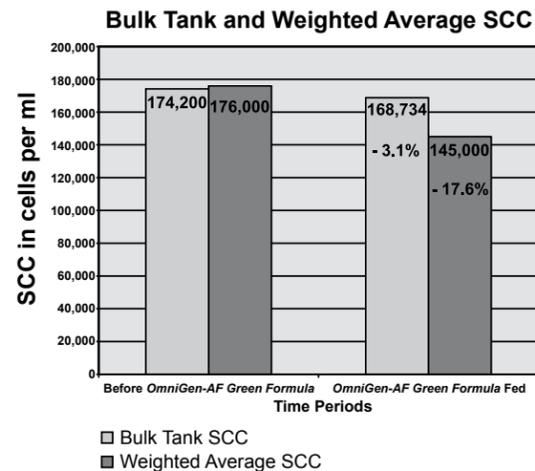


Figure 3 shows the average reduction of bulk tank SCC and weighted average SCC for all five dairies. On average, bulk tank SCC decreased by three percent or 5,466 cells/ml. Three herds experienced slightly higher BTSCC (average increase of 12,778 cells/ml) during the *OmniGen-AF Green Formula* feeding period, while two herds experienced lower BTSCC (average decrease of 32,833 cells/ml). Weighted average SCC changed during the *OmniGen-AF Green Formula* feeding period going from 176,000 SCC/ml of milk to 145,000 SCC/ml of milk for the before *OmniGen-AF Green Formula* feeding period and during the *OmniGen-AF Green Formula* feeding period, respectively.

FIGURE 3



SUMMARY

Cows in this study exhibited lower mortality, culling and mastitis incidence rates and weighted SCC after being fed *OmniGen-AF Green Formula* for 90 days.

This information has been prepared for industry technical professionals only, and may be presented and discussed with them only upon request.

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- In New York, contact David Hardy at (608) 479-1200 or david.hardy@organicvalley.coop.
- In Pennsylvania/Maryland, contact Jeremy Bertier at (717) 476-0868 or Jeremy.bertier@organicvalley.coop
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Any buyers looking for organic milk who would like to be listed in this column for the September 2012 issue, please email the desired text to Lisa at lmcrrory@hughes.net or call 802-234-5524.

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Growing Annuals for Grazing

continued from page 7

Examples of annual rotations

- Spring; plant oats (not seeded down), graze off in June at knee high or taller, graze some diminished regrowth in late July, till and replant oats early August for October grazing.
- Take first cut hay, manure and plant Japanese millet around June first (for northern WI). Till out the millet in August and plant oats or oats and turnips mix. That can also include rye or triticale.
- In 2009 I had triticale in early spring that was grazed twice. The field was planted to Japanese millet and that was grazed twice. I then planted triticale again, but it was so dry it didn't get tall enough to graze that fall. This was in a year of almost no rain the whole growing season. The millet grows slow, but it does keep growing. The key is to get it in as soon as frost potential is past. I planted May 23 on a couple of the dry years and did well, but others that planted mid June didn't get much of a crop.
- Early August till a field and plant oats and/or turnips with or without rye or triticale mixed in.

Dealing with drought

In drought conditions annuals can provide much needed feed. In 2006, I planted barley and peas on some acres in addition to spring oats. Somehow, they grew when the pastures turned brown which kept us grazing something green until the sorghum sudan was ready. We got one two-inch rain in early August so I planted some oats. The pastures didn't regrow much, but the sorghum sudan regrew and the oats did great. I have many examples from 2005 - 2009 of annuals providing tons of feed we would not have had otherwise. It can be hard to decide whether to plant anything in dry conditions, but I've learned that if I plant nothing, I get nothing, but if it does rain some in September, the oats will grow. At that point, it would be too late to plant. In 2009 the oats and turnips didn't get very tall or thick, but it was something live and green, full of vitamins and enzymes for the cows to eat. The rye and triticale mixed in got started for the following spring.

Tillage

I know tillage isn't always a popular subject amongst graziers, but on our farm it has worked great to boost fertility by mixing in bedding pack and plant residue, reseed more desirable species of plants, and level fields that are also used for hay production. Our earthworm population is increasing every year, and pastures that were patchy from refusal are now grazed evenly. There seems to be something about mixing it up and reseeding, and the yield from a newly seeded field is amazing.

I use a rotovator for tillage, which keeps the sod and manure in the top few inches. This may help in wet conditions to hold the cows up better than plowed ground. I am a believer in using what you have for equipment and trial and error. Try little things and adjust.

Cheyenne Christianson is an organic dairy farmer living in Chetek, Wisconsin. Cheyenne will be our Keynote Speaker at the 2012 NODPA Field Days taking place September 27 & 28, 2012 in Brattleboro, VT. To learn more about Cheyenne and his farm, read NODPA's May 2012 Feature Farm article which can be found in the May 2012 NODPA News or online at: http://www.nodpa.com/ff_may_2012.shtml

Clarifications and Additional Resource Recommendation

I would like to make a couple of comments on last edition's article of our Farm [May 2012 Feature Farm]. I sent pictures that showed the extreme of grazing height. We do graze very tall and push the limits, and last year we did that most of the season. I am grazing some a little less mature this year to compare. I encourage anyone pushing grazing height to do it slowly and carefully.

Also, I didn't list Graze Magazine as a resource I think it is valuable for all graziers and organic dairy farmers.

*Cheyenne Christianson
Organic Dairy Farmer, Chetek, WI*

NODPA FIELD DAYS 2012

NODPA Field Days & Producer Meeting

continued from page 23

- **and a good cash flow** with UVM Ag Economist Bob Parsons and USDA Resource Conservationist Karen Hoffman, Klaas Marten, Lakeville Organic Grain, NY, and Les Morrison, Morrison Feeds, VT
- **Nutrient Dense Forage Production and Soil Health** with Jack Lazor, Butterworks Farm, VT, Dr. Cindy Daley (Chico University, CA), and Dr. Heather Darby (UVM Extension)
- **Diversification and Your Farm's Future:** the opportunities and challenges with a panel of Organic Dairy Farmers: Jeanette Fellows, MA; Dave Johnson, PA; Henry Perkins, ME (retired); and Cheyenne Christianson, WI. Along with Faye Benson team leader for the Cornell University Small Dairy Team.
- **The 2012 Farm Bill: what's happening behind the scenes in Washington** – with Annette Higby (NEFU) and Ed Maltby (NODPA)
- **The Organic Trade Association's Organic Check-Off Proposal:** what you need to know

Don't miss NODPA's annual meeting and year in review right after Thursday's dinner followed by our Keynote Speaker, acclaimed Wisconsin Organic Dairy Farmer Cheyenne Christianson, who will describe his experiences taking a conventionally managed farm to a

vibrant biological system that is practically self-sufficient.

An early morning Producer-Only meeting will be held at 7 am on Friday, where producers can speak about their concerns, challenges and successes without fear of their views and opinions hindering their relationships with processors. This is a unique opportunity for producers to help direct the future activities of NODPA and clearly express their views on topics that they feel are important.

This year, participants are encouraged to make plans for lodging early. There are a number of very cost-effective hotels and inns in and around the Brattleboro area but these will be filling up fast with the 'leaf-peeping' tourists, so please plan ahead.

Watch your mailbox for your NODPA Field Days brochure, which will be mailed out in early August and will be available for download from NODPA's website. Visit the NODPA Field Days webpage regularly for updates on speakers, sponsors and other program details as they become available:

www.nodpa.com/fielddays_registration_2012.shtml

The September NODPA News will have more articles by some of our terrific presenters. With the generous backing by our supporters, we've been able to continue to offer free registration for transitioning and organic producers plus free Thursday banquet dinners for transitioning producers and their families.

Save the date and plan to attend this year's NODPA Field Days for up-to-date information and learning opportunities, good food and plenty of time to meet with fellow NODPA members. Have questions? Call Nora Owens, Field Days Coordinator, 413-772-0444 or email her at noraowens@comcast.net.

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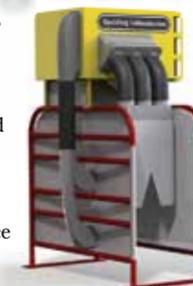
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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

High Quality Forage, Part 3

continued from page 5

things. To be safe, since you as an organic farmer can't go to the drug-supplements cabinet (it should be empty), a 65-75% forage diet of a variety of foods is a good range. Now watch the protein to energy ratios and the quality of the forage. Make sure dry matter intake is good. Supply the balanced minerals, vitamins and other supplements and it works!

We know it's not all that easy and the topics of my last two articles—the soil and the plant—affect 75% of the cow's diet. With every farm being different, I can't give you an exact formula, you have to find your own. But bench marks help you reach what's achievable.

The informed consumer wants to have products from healthy, drug and chemical free cows. They want that animal to be comfortable and grazing. So what is achievable?

How the system works at Otter Creek Organic Farm

On my own family farm, this is what we do to make our system work. Yes, we would always want more milk, we're farmers, but we do have lots of "invisible" cows. We calve out on pasture (dry cow lots in the winter), pick the calves up usually within the first 12-24 hours, and put the cow or heifer in the milking group pretty much trouble free. Transition is easy from low grain to just a little more. Conception rate is high, cell count is low. During the dry period we have revved up her immune system. Quality feed, watching excesses and deficiencies along with balanced minerals, great vitamin levels and a lot of extras like kelp and DFMs have her ready.

We have no need for wormers, antibiotics or any kind of hormones to get cows pregnant and keep them performing. We do vaccinate but don't need a drug. We are milking 250 cows and will raise 150 heifer calves this year. We are overloaded! (And aren't those things signs of cow health?) Mastitis is not a big deal, cell count runs between 100-150,000, butter fat and protein are good. Doesn't it sound like quality milk is being produced?

Management is by a team of people who work well together. The calves are taken care of to the maximum. We don't wean them until they're really doing well, even if that's not until they're three months old. They have fresh air, a comfortable and dry place to live, and are fed quality forages that are 'produced' and selected just for the heifers. It's not the junk or poor quality feed. A small amount of grain, supplements including the extras like kelp, direct fed microbials, yeast and a little CharCal, along with natural salt, round out the diet.

Quality pastures, rotated, fertilized and managed for the heifers provide a high quality, balanced diet. Our grain levels are usually 3-5 pounds per day. In the winter, with older heifers, the corn silage provides most of the grain. (Corn silage and bad hay is not a heifer diet!)

Then there are the dry cows, the number one, major, most important job on the farm—I can't overemphasize the importance of getting them right. Grow or provide the right feeds for them. What is that? We set aside acres just for dry cows and fertilize, harvest and select seed varieties just for this group. With the dry cow, you always need to watch the excesses. Too much protein, grain and minerals of certain kinds and you will pay the price with trouble down the road.

If you aren't sure what the guidelines are, know that the cow should be "invisible"—unnoticed because she doesn't need your attention. She calves, she cleans, she breeds back and she produces quality milk without intervention. Visit farms that appear to have it right. Accept no or very little trouble as your standard.

I have always said, give me your dry cows and your forages (which start in the soil) and I will change your farm.

I wish I could give you a recipe for success, something you could dial in and everything would be great. But that's not farming, and just like soils, cows can't be fixed overnight -- it's best not to 'break' them in the first place.

I will leave you with questions, rather than answers, for looking at your own farm: are you a good enough manager? Do you have the right quality forages and know how to manage them? Are the soil minerals right and your animals healthy? Do you have the right genetics and management? Have you earned the right to pull the supplements away and feed little or no grain? ♦



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RESEARCH & EDUCATION

SARE Research

continued from page 17

For Field 1 in the second spring (2011), a grazing was done in early February in both organically and conventionally managed systems to potentially reduce egg masses of alfalfa weevil in alfalfa stems and in henbit. Two additional grazings for each plot were done in March, April, or May with timing based on alfalfa weevil pressure and/or alfalfa maturity. In this situation, collective spring alfalfa yields tended to be greater for conventionally managed alfalfa (1.43 vs. 1.21 +/- 0.06 tons DM/acre, P = 0.09) but yields of ryegrass and prairie grass more than offset the difference (1.43 C vs. 1.58 O +/- 0.07 tons DM/acre, N.S). Weeds made up 15.8% of the total biomass in the conventional plots but only 8.4% in the organic plots. Primary weeds were henbit in February and chickweed in March to May with over 80% of the weed biomass being chickweed.

For Field 2, winter weeds were not as much an issue nor were the alfalfa weevil the first spring after planting. Yields for one grazing period were collected in both organically and conventionally managed plots in early May. Yield of alfalfa alone was actually greater for the organic area (0.64 vs. 0.49 +/- 0.02 tons DM/acre, P= 0.004)

Feed & Pay Price

continued from page 14

One of the leading buyers of organic milk reports that in 2012 more milk is being sold as bulk loads rather than branded product which has reduced their profitability. Producer's profitability is being hit at every turn and by every calculation and some new entrants (they must be crazy to be transitioning right now) are rightly insisting on transitional payments. With the introduction of the new dairy margin program in the 2012 Farm Bill the margin of milk price over feed costs using the formulae in the Bill but with organic data, would give a margin of just under \$1 (the estimated profitability level for a non-organic 200 cow herd is a margin of \$6 and upwards)! For those that claim MLC, payments for April, May, and June are predicted at \$1.20/cwt, dropping to an estimated \$0.60 in July and August.

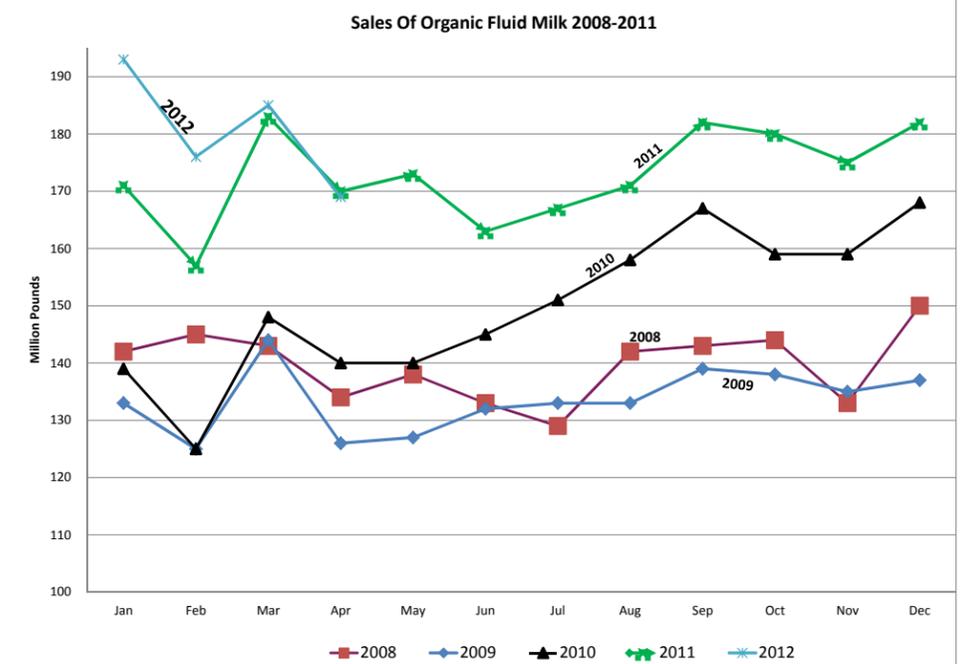
Consumers have not been discouraged by higher retail prices although some have moved to private label rather than branded product. Sales of fluid milk for April 2012 are at the 2011 level but with an average retail price for branded product 22¢ higher than 2011. USDA AMS Dairy Market News reports that

suggesting that use of Eptam may have an inhibitory effect on new alfalfa stands. When yields of total forage species (alfalfa + ryegrass + prairie grass) were included, differences were even greater in favor of organically management: 0.69 vs. 0.49 +/- 0.03 tons DM/acre, P = 0.001). Primary weed was chickweed which made up 3.1% of the total biomass in organic areas and 7.5% in conventional areas.

Because organically managed alfalfa was planted with or without prairie grass, those yields were compared but differences were not significant. Alfalfa yields were numerically greater for plots without prairie grass (0.65 vs. 0.61 tons DM/acre) whereas total forage yields were numerically greater (0.73 vs. 0.66 tons DM/acre) for plots with prairie grass. Weeds (mostly chickweed) were only about 3.1% of total biomass for that single spring grazing.

Summary: Conventional management generally produced more actual yields of alfalfa than organic management. However, alfalfa grass mixtures yielded as much or more useable forage without the need chemical control of weeds and insects. Interseeding prairie grass may be useful in suppressing weed production but may or may not boost total forage production. Less weed pressure (particularly henbit in fall/winter) could reduce ovipositioning sites for alfalfa weevil. Longevity of stands and productivity over time remain to be determined. However, it is clear from our initial efforts that managing organic stands of alfalfa and alfalfa-grass mixtures is a feasible option in eastern North Carolina.

the national weighted average advertised price of organic milk half gallons in June 2012 was \$3.27, and the price range was \$4.49 to \$2.99/ ½ gallon, with an organic-conventional half-gallon milk advertised price spread of \$1.14, below the average price spread for 2012 of \$1.24 (the lower the spread, the more attractive the price is for consumers, especially new consumers). During 2012 the spread has ranged from \$0.96 to \$2.46. ♦



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NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Producer, NODPA President

There was great interest in the technique involved in sprouting barley for fodder. A farmer sets out 80 pounds of barley seed each day in a hydroponic growing facility and harvests about 650 pounds of fodder (at 17% protein, 680 calories, and 92% digestibility). Cows receive 10 to 12 pounds of the barley fodder per day. There were many questions on when the fodder was at its nutritional peak. The farmer's suggested website said that the fodder reaches its peak nutrition 4 days after germination, and declines thereafter.

A producer asked for a good ratio for using 35% hydrogen peroxide as a sanitizer. A responding farmer said she uses it at a rate of one ounce per gallon as a teat spray and dairy sanitizer. Another producer related to the group that his milk inspector told him it is not an approved sanitizer because it is not effective against certain pathogens. A milk inspector on the list verified that hydrogen peroxide is not approved as an equipment sanitizer, but may be used as a teat spray. Paracetic acid (combination of hydrogen peroxide with acetic acid) is allowed as a sanitizer. Another producer suggested the use of electrolyzed water (approved in PA).

There was much discussion about the armyworms. One producer had them in a hay field, another producer had them in a pasture. Both immediately mowed the field, and the caterpillars ate the standing hay around the fence and seemed to disappear. Another producer had a small patch in his corn; the geese were attracted to feast on the caterpillars, and the damage seemed not to be spreading. He thought the area was small enough to hand spray.

The use of organically-approved insecticidal sprays was discussed. NOFA-NY compiled a list of approved substances that may be used on an infestation: these products include Entrust Naturalyte Insect Control from Dow Agro-Sciences, Monterey Garden Insect Spray (Spinosad) from Lawn and Garden Products, Pyganic Crop Protection 1.4 II and 5.0 II from Pyganic, Bull's Eye from Gardens Alive, TheraNeem from Organix South, Ahimsa Organic Neem Oil from the Ahimsa Alternative, and Dyna-Grow Neem Oil from Dyna-Grow Nutrition Solutions. As one farmer pointed out, spraying will not undo any damage, it is expensive, and will harm beneficial insects. So unless you can count on spraying early to control economic damage, it is not likely that it will pay to spray.

A farmer is working with an intern who wants to know where to go to learn all the "cutting edge" information about dairy and row crop organic production. One producer suggested looking backwards to the day when all farming was organic -- she suggested

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Two ad spaces are located at the top of each E-Newsletter, going out monthly to 2,000 individuals through our E-Newsletter, the NODPA-ODairy discussion forum, and NODPA's Facebook page.

Ad Design: Display-ready ads should be 300 pixels wide by 125 pixels tall. Your ad can link to a page on your website.

Cost: Display-ready ads are \$100 per month.

Interested in one or both of these opportunities? For more information, contact Lisa McCrory, NODPA News and Web Editor, at:

Email: Lmccrory@hughes.net

Phone: 802-234-5524

Go to the following web page for more information:

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

Subscribing to ODairy:

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

To sign up for the ODairy listserv, go to:

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

Calendar

July 24, 2012

Integrating Oilseeds into Diversified Agriculture

3pm-6pm, Wood's Market Garden – 93 Wood Lane, Brandon, VT

Jon Satz and the crew at Wood's Market Garden will describe how they have integrated oilseed production into their vegetable operation, and the benefits and challenges they have had in doing so. Satz harvested about 5 acres of sunflowers for oil and meal in 2011, and will talk about some of the production, management, harvesting, and processing issues that are specific to his operation. Contact Heather Darby at (802) 524-6501 or heather.darby[at]uvm.edu. To see the full listing of events for 2012, please go to: www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil/wp.../2012_NWCS_events.pdf

July 25-27, 2012

Mid-Atlantic Dairy Grazing Conference and Organic Dairy Field Day

Chestertown, MD

Presentation/discussion topics will include: Value-added dairy enterprises; Once daily milking/tall grass grazing; Economics of dairy grazing systems; Health practices for grazing farms; Optimal strategies for supplements; Management of organic pastures/cows; Genetics and reproduction; Multiple family-owned grazing farms; and Pasture species. To download the brochure go to: www.cefs.ncsu.edu/.../2012midatlanticdairyconferenccebrochure.pdf. For more info, contact: Becky Casteel, WVU Extension Service Phone: 304-293-2565, email: becky.casteel@mail.wvu.edu

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Ad rates and sizes listed below.

**Deadline for advertising in the
September, 2012 issue is August 15, 2012.**

Full Page Ad (7.5" W x 10.25" H) = \$500

1/2 Page Ad (7.5" W x 4.5" H) = \$260

1/4 Page Ad (3.5" W x 4.75" H) = \$145

1/8 Page Ad/Business Card:

(3.5" W x 2.25" H) = \$75

Classified Ads: Free to organic dairy farmers and business members. All others \$20 for the first 30 words; \$.20 per word over 30

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).

August 3-4, 2012

Pennsylvania Organic FarmFest

Centre Hall, Pennsylvania

FarmFest celebrates the broad organic community, including growers and consumers. This two-day festival features live music, educational workshops, children's programming, hands-on demonstrations, a farmers market, organic food, and vendors. For more info: www.farm-fest2012.paorganic.org or email Erin at: ecovents@gmail.com

August 7, 2012

2012 University of Minnesota Organic Dairy Day

The University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center Morris, MN from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Educational programs will feature Francis Thicke, Iowa Organic Dairy producer; Fly Management for Organic Dairies by Roger Moon, UMN; and Nutrition for Grazing and Organic Cattle by Dr. Silvia Abel-Caines, Organic Valley. There will be field tour stops that will focus on supplementation of grazing cows; fly management; group feeding of organic dairy calves; and raising organic dairy steers.

The Organic Dairy Day is free and open to the public. If you plan to attend, or would like more information, contact WCROC at 320-589-1711 or by sending an email to: hein0106@umn.edu

August 9, 2012

Annual UVM Extension Crops & Soils Field Day

10am-4pm, Borderview Farm – 146 Line Road, Alburgh, VT

The Northwest Crops and Soils Program, under the leadership of Dr. Heather Darby, has been conducting research on grains, forage crops, hops, oilseeds, nutrient and fertility management, water quality, and soil health for 8 years! The Field Day will give you an opportunity to tour Borderview Research Farm, where many of the experiments are conducted, as well as getting an overview of research results. It is also a chance to check in and celebrate the year's experiences with fellow farmers, educators, researchers, service providers, and policymakers. Contact Heather Darby at (802) 524-6501 or [heather.darby\[at\]uvm.edu](mailto:heather.darby[at]uvm.edu). To see the full listing of events for 2012, please go to: www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil/wp.../2012_NWCS_events.pdf

August 21, 2012

Midwestern BioAg's 21st annual Field Day

BioAg Learning Center, Southwestern Wisconsin.

Featuring four 90-minute educational tracks, each offered in both the morning and the afternoon. Topics will be Soils, Row Crops, Dairy/Livestock, and Vegetable/Specialty Crops. Each track will offer both sit-down sessions and field sessions. We'll start at 9 a.m. and the day ends by 4 p.m. The event is free, including lunch. (More details will be posted on our website, www.midwesternbioag.com)

August 28, 2012

Nutrient-Dense Forages and Soil Health

10am-3pm, Butterworks Farm – 421 Trumpass Road, Westfield, VT

Jack and Anne Lazor have been operating a dairy farm in the Northeast Kingdom since 1979, and are proud to open their farm to visitors who would like to learn more about forage crops, nutrient-dense land

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Canadian Supply Management

continued from page 19

political support or critical mass to introduce the program to other commodities. Pork and beef have both been subject to low profitability and crippling trade challenges by the US livestock industry. The livestock business in Canada has become concentrated over the decades, and the bigger players and the big packers don't want government controls. Smaller beef and pork producers in Ontario have asked the government to underwrite "risk management" programs to guarantee cost-of-production base prices but without some control of supply, overproduction follows, and taxpayers are on the hook for the subsidies to make up the difference.

Renewed Media Attacks on Dairy Prices

The media debate in Canada has started anew in the last year. The current government of Canada is conservative, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper is an Albertan who would prefer to end supply management. The government is participating in the Asia-Pacific trade deal talks which include New Zealand - a big dairy exporter. The fear in Canada is that the system will be sacrificed so that western Canadian commodities can gain more export markets and the ageing demographics of the farm sector doesn't bode well for the future. Despite the price and production controls in Canada, the farm population is shrinking and the farms are getting bigger and fewer.

However the termination of the system wouldn't be easy and the system is deemed worth fighting for, due to its benefits to farmers and rural economies. Ending the program could cause a major split between Ottawa and Quebec, which could contribute to another electoral referendum for Quebec independence from Canada, and the cost of a buy-out of production quota would cost billions of dollars to the federal treasury.

Therefore, the question that Canadian voters need to ask themselves is: why "fix" something that isn't broken? Supply management works well for everybody - except the parts of the economy the processors and end users - that are used to being price-makers.

Next in series: Canadian Organic milk under supply management Originally from Ontario, Canada, Mike Larsson has worked in the Quebec and Ontario agriculture & farm products sector for 20 years. He is a recent immigrant to New York State on a spousal visa, married to Dr Pam Corey DVM who is a large animal veterinarian. Mike has worked as a dairy farm inspector (IOIA trained) for NOFA-NY in northern New York during 2011, is a member of NODPA, and a strong supporter of fair pricing for northeast organic dairy producers. ♦

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Armyworms On The March

The early warm weather has brought an invasion of true armyworm (as opposed to Fall armyworm) to New York and Vermont, causing damage in young corn crops, pasture and hay fields. Armyworm will eat anything

grassy in vast quantities, they feed at night so your pasture may look fine this afternoon and be virtually gone by morning. They will also eat alfalfa, and bean, cabbage, carrot, onions, pea, pepper, and radish leaves and other broad-leafed plants when the grasses are exhausted.

They get their name from moving through a field in an "army-like" fashion, devouring plants as they go.

Armyworms do not overwinter in the northeast but adult moths fly north from Southern states in the spring along storm fronts. Moths lay their eggs on weeds and/or grasses along the edge of a field, on leaves of corn, or on small grains. Larvae hatch about a week later and develop over a 3 week period, feeding mostly at night. True armyworm larvae appear smooth, cylindrical, pale green to brownish when they are still small. Mature larvae are smooth and marked with two orange, white-bordered strips on each side. Larvae range in size from 1/8 inch when they first hatch out to 1 1/2 inches long at the end of the 3-week period. Larger larvae eat more, with 80% of the feeding damage happening in the last 7 days before the pupation stage.

When the first armyworm larvae are done feeding they will burrow down into the soil and pupate. In 10 to 14 days they will emerge as adult moths and mate. Females will begin to lay eggs all over again. In past seasons we have not seen any economic damage from this second generation. The natural enemies have traditionally built up their populations and the armyworm population is kept in check. But this has been a very non-traditional year so far! There will certainly be more predators than there were back in June, but there is also the potential for a very large second brood, given the size of the first brood, especially in western NY. The one "good" thing is that most of the grass in pastures and lawns in Western New York are totally dormant in the severe drought, so there won't be as much for the worms to eat this second time around.

The effectiveness of spraying and being able to spray at the correct time makes it marginally economical. To be successful with any spray the larvae have to be young. Spray may be justified if there are 4 or more larvae per square foot in pasture or 3 per leaf in corn. For organic farmers, Entrust and Pyganic, the 2 organically approved materials, are expensive. Dipel is labeled for armyworm but field reports suggest that this particular invasion seems to be fairly immune to Bt perhaps because they have built immunity by eating genetically modified Bt resistant crops. GMO's making life difficult again for organic producers.

It may be best to leave it to the natural predators; larger populations of true rmyworm predators will be present with the second batch of larvae. A major natural enemy to the armyworm is a large parasitic fly that lays a white egg on the back of the armyworm. The emerging maggot burrows into the armyworm, feeding on it and finally killing it. A second natural enemy is a virus that infects the armyworm. The virus causes the armyworm to crawl to the top of the plant and die. The wind spreads the virus to other nearby plants.

To learn more about true armyworm, and its impact in your general area, contact your local extension office. New York Cooperative Extension has put together quite a lot of information regarding spray materials, thresholds, insect life cycle, and more.

Here is a link to one of their articles:

senecacountyce.org/pdfs/hot%20topic/Armyworm%20infestation.pdf

Classified Ads

Livestock

Fly Parasites: Fly parasites prevent adult fly emergence. These tiny beneficial insects kill fly pupae and use the killed pupae as "nurseries" to grow new parasites. Natural! Reduces Chemical Use! IPM Laboratories, Inc., Email: orders@ipmlabs.com, Phone: 315-497-2063

Feed, Seed & Bedding

Certified Organic HAY - Round 4 1/2 X 4, 650# bales. Timothy, and Alfalfa/grass mix - stored inside and out. Also Organic TIMOTHY SEED. Contact Jeff @ 607-566-8477 (Avoca, NY)

Certified organic dry round bales, unwrapped, approximately 550# and stored inside. Cost is \$40/bale at the barn. Located in Bamard, VT. Contact Joe Ladouceur, Email: ladouceurj@aol.com, Phone: 802-763-7454.

Approximately 100 bales of baleage for sale. Mostly grass, harvested the first week of June, 2011. \$55/bale, Twin Oaks Dairy LLC, Truxton, NY, Phone: 607-842-6631, Email: randkarnold1@JUNO.COM.

Wrapped Round Bales, certified organic by VOF, 1st, 2nd and 3rd cut round bales available, \$40 each. Contact Jack Lazor, Butterworks Farm: 802-744-6855 or cell: 802-999-7722 or email: Jack@butterworksfarm.com

Open Pollinated Corn Seed - Silage, Grain, Wild life plots * Available Certified Organic * Early Varieties, Wapsie Valley 85 Day, Dublin 87 Day MN (13) 87 Day, Reid Yellow dent 90 Day, Silver King 100 day Reid Yellow Dent 100 day and Lancaster sure crop 120 Day, Golden Bantam Sweet corn, Black Jack pop corn, Japanese Hulles Pop corn*Free Catalog * Green Haven Open Pollinated Seed Group 607 566 9253, www.openpollinated.com

Certified Organic Small Square Bale Hay in Berkshire, NY 13736. 1st cutting certified organic small square bale hay, \$3.50 per bale or \$175 ton (quantity discounts). Taking orders for 2nd /3rd cutting hay. \$4.50 bale or \$225.00 ton. All hay is stored indoors. Forage tests available. We ship throughout the northeast and have multiple delivery quantities available or pickup at the farm. Free samples are available. Average bale weight 40-45lbs. Located in NY Southern Tier between Binghamton and Ithaca, Tioga County. Contact Tony Marzolino: 607-657-8534 farm, 315-378-5180 cell, or tmarzolino@yahoo.com

Employment:

Seeking New England Organic Herd Manager position. Motivated with 3.5+ years pastured organic dairy and beef experience, cheesemaking, holistic management, pasture improvement, low stress stock handling, fencing. Contact: amberfreed@gmail.com or 207-680-6207.

NET UPDATES

ODairy Updates

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that old farming manuals and books from the early 1900's were valuable references. Another suggestion was the website eOrganic. It was suggested she might visit Alfred State College in NY or California State at Chico as they both have an organic dairy program. NODPA's publications and website were suggested. And it was also recommended that she simply "get out there and learn by doing". ♦

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Massachusetts Raw Milk Producers' Handbook Published

The NOFA/Mass Raw Milk Network has published the Massachusetts Raw Milk Producers' Handbook, a guide to compliance with the MA laws and regulations around the production, handling and sales of raw milk. This is the first guide of its kind, and is intended to answer most of the questions asked by farmers interested in selling raw milk. The book includes sections on subjects such as cleaning equipment, the milking process, bottling, inspections, and more, as well as an annotated copy of the existing state regulations.

The book is available online at http://www.nofamass.org/programs/organicdairy/pdfs/2012_producers_handbook.pdf and a limited number of hard copies are available upon request (email winton@nofamass.org).

The publication was written in collaboration with many raw milk farmers, and was reviewed by staff at the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (MDAR) to ensure that the guidance offered reflects the agency's oversight practices. The handbook was published thanks to a grant from the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program of the USDA. ♦

Become a Member of MODPA!

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Certified Organic Dairy? Yes No # of cows: _____

Transitioning: _____

I wish to support MODPA (check whatever applies):

___ By becoming a state rep or director.

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

___ By providing a donation to support the work of

MODPA. \$_____ enclosed.

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

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The MODPA Desk

As we celebrate the 4th of July and our independence we remember those who went before us and made the sacrifices to get us to where we are today. When I think about those who fought and died to protect and preserve our freedoms, I sometimes question why they would do it. The answer seems simple to me; their love and commitment for the belief that freedom was important enough to die for. Take the time to thank them for their sacrifice and service as well as our freedom! We would not be able to enjoy the freedom to farm as we choose without them.

We have had organic pioneers and freedom fighters that persevered, stood firm and helped shape our organic rules - thank them also for their hard work and sacrifice.

Just as our freedoms need to be maintained and protected, so to does the organic program. We all need to be engaged and involved to ensure we stay true to our beliefs. It is important that the organic seal has the integrity necessary to give the consumer confidence in their purchases and helps keep organic from becoming a commodity

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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zimbadaairy@tband.net
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1720 Crum Rd
Shiloh, OH 44878
Phone and Fax: 419-895-1182

based solely on the purchase price. If we don't value the organic ideals enough to stand ready to protect and defend them, we cannot expect the consumer to value them enough to pay the price necessary to provide the profit we need to farm into the future.

We have seen those who would like to regulate all freedom to farm away from you, be that by the price controls or sometimes crazy additional hoops to satisfy some element that has no knowledge of what is involved in farming. We, as organic farmers, need to be involved, active, and ever watching for additional regulations that would be harmful to family farming and organics. With that I encourage you to become more involved in your ODDPA group; let everyone involved in organics know we are willing to fight for the right to farm organically.

We as farmers are often facing battles that seem insurmountable, like the drought and heat hitting much of the Midwest right now. We have seen cutworms wipe out some of what we thought would be our best crop this year, and yet we reworked the ground and replanted in our effort to let that little worm know that we feel that our farm is worth fighting for. He may have won the first round but we will keep fighting. That being said, we need to work together to funnel information to certifiers and processors about the real situation out here and our need for relief. We have planted much of our corn acreage twice this year and are watching it burn up for lack of moisture in windy 100+ degree days, making feed short and expensive in this area, cows are being culled further reducing milk income and future potential. In other words, farmers are hurting and are in need of a unified voice to communicate on their behalf. I am sure that every area of the country has its challenges and all could benefit from a little relief, be that in the form of increased income making these storms easier to weather or another form of help.

Just one more reason to join in with your fellow organic farmers. Work to make the necessary changes so that we all can survive and thrive.

Thanks for your time, become engaged and may you be blessed with enough this summer.

Darlene Coehoorn, MODPA President

Rosendale, Wisconsin

Email: ddviewpoint@yahoo.com

Phone: 920-921-5541



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

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CALENDAR

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management, soil health and amendments, and ongoing research and collaboration with UVM Extension. Joining them will be John Kempf of Ohio's Advancing Eco- Agriculture who will answer questions about whole-farm health and explain some of his work with nutrient-dense soil amendments. Contact Heather Darby at (802) 524-6501 or heather.darby[at]uvm.edu. To see the full listing of events for 2012, please go to: www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil/wp.../2012_NWCS_events.pdf

September 27-28, 2012

12th Annual NODPA Field Days

Vermont Agricultural Business Education Ctr, Brattleboro, VT

Keynote speaker will be Cheyenne Christianson, organic dairy producer from Chetek, Wisconsin. More details can be found on pages 23 of this newsletter. For sponsorship and tradeshow information, contact Nora Owens at 413-772-0444 or email: noraowens@comcast.net

October 29-30, 2012

It Takes a Region 2012: Celebrate NESAWG's 20th Anniversary

(Pre-Conference Trainings Sunday, October 28, 1:00-5:00 pm)

Saratoga Hilton, Saratoga, New York

Sponsored by the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, *It Takes a Region...* is the conference for everyone doing food system change work! For more information, about the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group's event, go to: <http://www.nefood.org/page/annual-conference> or Phone: (413) 323-9878, Email: nesawg@nesawg.org



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Make check payable to: NODPA.

Send to: NODPA, c/o Ed Maltby

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