

# NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Featured Farm: Indian Stream Farm, Pittsburg, NH

## A Family Farm With Deep Historical Roots

By Lisa McCrory, NODPA News & Web Editor

### A Brief History of Northwestern New Hampshire

John and Cindy-Lou Amey operate Indian Stream Farm located in an historic settlement in Northwestern New Hampshire - once known as The Republic of Indian Stream. Their farm is named after the historic tributary and independent nation that once existed there.

The Treaty of Paris (1793), which ended the American Revolution, defined the U.S. Boundaries as the "Northwestern most head of the Connecticut River". With 3 streams flowing into the river, there were conflicts with boundaries between the United States and Canada that lasted for 60 years. For a short while (from

*continued on page 24*

## Renew Your Subscription to NODPA at the Beginning of Each Year

*NODPA simplifies its billing system so you can receive the news, facts and opinions from the only independent source in Organic Dairy*

Fed up with paperwork! Too much bureaucracy in organic! Prefer to be outside farming rather than filling out forms! Why can't they keep it simple!

No, unfortunately we can't change the certification process (although we did ask Secretary Vilsack in person to help us do that last week), but we can make it easier for you to support NODPA. NODPA staff are farmers first and NODPA professionals second and one thing we hate is bureaucracy. We'd prefer to get the work done and get outside.

We also want to keep it simple for our producer members and supporters.

At the last NODPA Field Days the NODPA Board and State Reps agreed that we would change our subscription from being variable throughout the year to having all subscriptions come due in January of each year. This will make it easier for producers and subscribers to budget the very competitive dues and also simplify the paperwork attached to

*continued on page 37*

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### From The NODPA President

It is funny how we move back into the familiar patterns on the farm in January. The fast pace we experienced during the Holidays ends quickly, and winter settles in. The days get a few minutes longer, and kitchen tables are brightened by the arrival of seed catalogues. We talk over the seeding possibilities for the coming year, exploring a few crazy and/or brilliant ideas. We'll have time between chores to feel like our hand is on the tiller again, steering the farm towards another season. We always feel the promise of a new season ahead.

But it can be hard to focus on the future when the day-to-day issues are clamoring for attention. In my area of northern New York, there seems to be a looming shortage of forage. Many farms that are usually self-sufficient in forage need to purchase feed this year, and the farms that often have hay to sell had lower yields due to the drought last summer. Many farms have also dramatically reduced the amount of grain fed, so they require more forage than usual. On our farm, we always figure that February 1st is the half-way mark for the feeding season. We will take stock of the feed on hand at that time, figuring on feeding for another 120 days before

#### Board Members & Representatives

##### PENNSYLVANIA

**Arden Landis, State Rep**  
1850 Bowmansville Rd.  
Mohnton, PA 19540-9427  
c2graze@dejazzd.com  
Phone: 717-484-0038

##### Dave Johnson, Vice President

1254 Black Creek Rd, Liberty, PA 16930  
provident@epix.net  
Phone: 570-324-2285

##### Roman Stoltzfoos, State Rep

Spring Wood Organic Farm  
1143 Gap Rd, Kinzers, PA, 17535  
romans@epix.net  
Phone: 610-593-2415

##### VIRGINIA

##### Rodney Martin, State Rep

Bridge View Dairy  
2773 Fadley Road  
bridgewater, VA 22812-2711

##### NEW YORK

##### Liz Bawden, President, Newsletter Contributor, Associate Editor

119 Factory Rd., Hammond, NY 13646  
bawden@cit-tele.com  
Phone: 315-324-6926

##### Siobhan Griffin, State Rep

2518 Co. Hwy 35, Schnevus, NY 12155  
raindance@baka.com  
Phone: 607-286-9362

##### Steve Kimball, Board Member

Kimvale Farm  
3456 Dry Brook Rd, Falconer, NY 14733  
716-267-9272  
steve@kimvale.com

##### Robert Moore, State Rep

Moore Farms, 2083 Moore Hill Rd.  
Nichols, NY 13812  
Phone: 607-699-7968  
cowpoke2@verizon.net

##### Bill Stine, State Rep

45540 Stine Road  
Redwood, NY 13679-3160  
Phone: (315) 482-2017  
tstine2007@yahoo.com

##### John Stoltzfoos, State Rep

1553 Hesselton Gully Rd.  
Whitesville, NY 14897  
jstribbe@yahoo.com  
Phone: 607-356-3272

##### George Wright, Treasurer

821 Pyrites-Russell Rd.  
Hermon, NY 14897  
wrightdairy@yahoo.com  
Phone: 315-347-4604

##### VERMONT

##### Craig Russell, Board Member

Brotherly Farm LLC, 570 Lavender Road  
Brookfield, VT 05036  
brotherlyfarm@yahoo.com.  
Phone: 802-272-7726  
http://www.brotherlyfarm.com

##### Jep Madison, State Rep

2806 Smith Street, Shoreham, VT 05770  
Cell: 802-349-6262  
email: jojoselixir@yahoo.com

##### Brian Wilson, State Rep

Morningside Farm, 101 Hemenway Hill Rd, Shoreham, VT 05770  
Cell phone: 802-377-1786,  
email: bpwilson@shoreham.net

##### Bonnie and Tom Boutin, State Rep

1184 Cross Road,  
Newport Ctr, VT 05857  
Phone: 802-334-2081  
bonnieboutin@yahoo.com

the cows will be on full pasture.

I hope that you find yourself comfortable with the amount of feed you have on hand. But if you will be short, it is probably best to find feed as soon as you can. If you are looking for feed or have feed to sell, check out the classified listings on the NODPA website ([www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com)). Organic Valley's "Organic Trader" is an excellent resource that is mailed to members of the coop, but is available to everyone online ([www.farmers.coop/feed-program](http://www.farmers.coop/feed-program)).

From all of us involved in the NODPA News, we wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous New 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.*

##### CONNECTICUT

##### Rick Segalla, Board Member

96 Allyndale Rd.  
Canaan, CT 06018  
mocow@earthlink.net  
Phone: 860-824-0241

##### MASSACHUSETTS

##### Morvan Allen, Board Member

Maple Shade Farm Inc.  
229 Hewins St, Sheffield, MA 01257  
morvenallen@live.com  
Phone: 413-229-6018

##### NEW HAMPSHIRE

##### Cindy-Lou Amey, State Rep

Indian Stream Farm  
81 Tabor Road, Pittsburg, NH 03592  
Phone: (603) 538-7734  
cindyloamey@gmail.com

##### MAINE

##### Steven Russell, Board Member

RR2 Box 5660, Winslow, ME 04901  
jwinrussel@roadrunner.com  
Phone: 207-872-6533

##### Steve Morrison, Secretary

Policy Committee Chair  
159 Atkinson Rd, Charleston, ME 04422  
smorrison@midmaine.com  
Phone: 207-285-7085 Fax: 207-285-0128

##### Aaron Bell, State Rep

Tide Mill Organic Farm  
91 Tide Mill Road, Edmunds, Maine 04628  
Phone: 207-733-2551  
eatlocal@tidemillorganicfarm.com  
www.tidemillorganicfarm.com

##### AT LARGE NODPA BOARD MEMBERS

##### Ed Zimba, MODPA Board Member

Zimba Dairy, 7995 Mushroom Rd  
DeFord, MI 48729  
zimbadairy@tband.net  
Phone & Fax: 989-872-2680

##### Darlene Coehoorn, MODPA President,

Newsletter Contributor  
Viewpoint Acres Farm  
N5878 Hwy C, Rosendale, WI 54874  
ddviewpoint@yahoo.com  
Phone: 920-921-5541

##### Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer

3253 150th Ave. Glenwood City, WI 54013  
bdrinkman@hotmail.com  
Phone: 715-265-4631

##### Andrew Dykstra, WODPA President

ASDYKSTRA@aol.com

##### Henry Perkins, Past President,

Box 156 Bog Rd., Albion, ME 04910  
Phone: 207-437-9279  
bullridge@uninet.net

##### Kathie Arnold, Policy Committee

3175 NYS Rt. 13, Truxton, NY 13158  
kathiearnold@gmail.com  
Phone: 607-842-6631  
Fax: 607-842-6557

#### NODPA STAFF

##### Ed Maltby, Executive Director

30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342  
ednodpa@comcast.net  
Phone: 413-772-0444 Fax: 866-554-9483

##### Newsletter and Web Editor

Lisa McCrory, 341 Macintosh Hill Rd.  
Randolph, VT 05060  
lmcrrory@hughes.net  
Phone: 802-234-5524

##### Nora Owens, Associate Editor & Event Coordinator

30 Keets Rd., Deerfield, MA 01342  
noraowens@comcast.net  
Phone: 413-772-0444  
Fax: 866-554-9483

##### Webmaster / Newsletter Layout

Chris Hill, Chris Hill Media  
368 West Duval St., Phila., PA 19144  
Phone: 215-843-5704  
chris@chrishillmedia.com

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## From the NODPA Desk January 2013

*By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

Who would have thought that having a gallon of milk cost as much as a gallon of Coca Cola would have stirred so much activity that we heard talk of falling off a dairy cliff as we entered 2013. While all sensible and informed folks knew that the price would never rise that much, it did apparently spur those in Congress to act by choosing to have a temporary and regressive extension of the 2008 Farm Bill that did not fund all the progressive conservation, organic and sustainable agriculture programs and reverted back to the Milk Income Loss Contract so milk could stay at 50% of parity.

What has become obvious and was emphasized by Secretary Vilsack when we met with him in his office for an hour in early January is that the agricultural community has lost much of its leverage in Congress. As they worked to reach a fiscal cliff compromise, the Vice-President and leaders of the House and Senate chose to ignore the by-partisan compromise Farm Bill extension reached by both House and Senate Agriculture committees. They decided to create a temporary extension that solved the 'dairy cliff' (but gave dairy farmers nothing), gave peanut and cotton farmers commodity payments and effectively unfunded all progressive programs that were developed in the 2008 Farm Bill.

Many in Washington DC are now questioning whether there will be another Farm Bill under this Congress, and the ranking Democrat on the House Agriculture committee (Collin Peterson) wanted a guarantee from Republican leadership that a Farm Bill would be brought to the floor of the House before he would start working on one. One can only hope that the House and Senate will support a "do-over" piece of legislation that would re-fund those progressive programs that were included in the temporary Farm Bill proposed by both House and Senate agriculture committees, thereby recognizing and paying attention to the real issues of climate change, depopulation of rural communities and the production of food that actually improves the environment.

With a declining rural population and greater consolidation in agriculture (both organic and non-organic) it should be no surprise that politicians pay less attention to agricultural issues and are less informed about them. Secretary Vilsack promotes the Farm Bill as a Food, Farming and Jobs bill in an attempt to more clearly define what the Bill is and to widen

the scope of support for it. With over 80% of the money from the Farm Bill going to anti-poverty programs, now might be an opportunity to move away from a 5 year Farm Bill to a series of bills similar to what Congresswoman Chellie Pingree from Maine introduced in 2011, the Local Farms, Food and Jobs Act. Her proposed bill recognized the new face of agriculture. Agriculture's new champions are those informed consumers and new entry farmers, those farmers market shoppers and urban farmers that see what they eat has political, environmental and social implications.

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) representing manufacturers, processors and consumer cooperatives continues to push their concept of how pooling money under a federally mandated Research and Promotion Program can be a success and be different from all other check-off programs in both how it is governed, administered and distributes money. With no proof of that and a history of family farms being abused by these programs to this day, producers from Maine to California and in-between are giving a resounding 'no' to the concept.

Representative Peter Welch of Vermont is championing the OTA proposal within the House and some rumors have it as playing a negative role in the temporary extension of the Farm Bill that was so fair to the progressive programs. OTA obviously doesn't represent the whole organic community and should be wary about presenting that image as it may backfire on them. OTA is characterizing the creation of an organic commodity under the federal program as just a technical fix. Unfortunately it's not that simple because once established it will be difficult to have any other national program approved by Congress and the label of organic commodity can be taken and used by others under a different administration to impose solutions on the whole organic community.

While dairy, corn and livestock producers are knowledgeable about a check-off, most organic produce growers and packers are not. Some produce growers are horrified by the thought of a check-off on the many different varieties of product they have. OTA talks about making the private label organic labels and the large conglomerates pay into a check-off, but the USDA Research and Promotion Programs were not mandated or designed for that and it would require wholesale re-writing of a program to make it suit that perspective. With all the divide and partisanship in Congress, OTA needs to be willing to take a step back, stop pushing for legislation for an organic commodity and re-open dialogue on a good process to move forward. We stand ready to participate in that discussion. For more information on the check-off please go to: [http://nodpa.com/checkoff\\_opposition.shtml](http://nodpa.com/checkoff_opposition.shtml) . ♦

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

# Weed-Eating Heifers Transition To Pasture More Easily

By Kathy Voth, *Livestock for Landscapes*

In July of 2012, the dairy heifers at Green Wind Farm did something that that farm's heifers had never done before. They transitioned to pasture without losing condition. They did it thanks to owner Julie Wolcott using a little bit of animal behavior science to not only teach the heifers to eat weeds, but to also give them the experience they needed to find food in pasture on day one.

As an organic dairy farmer Julie was looking for tools to manage her milkweed, brown knapweed and thistle in pasture. So in the summer of 2012, the Vermont Pasture Network asked me to work with her to train her herd to eat weeds. Before starting we made sure that the weeds were safe to eat and that they would not cause changes in milk flavor. Then I wrote up a training "recipe" for her, and Julie began training her heifers while they were still in the barn. Over the course of 4 days, she introduced the heifers to eight feeds with different flavors, smells, shapes and sizes, but all of them strange to her trainees. On the fifth day she began introducing them to the target weeds, and because they were just one more strange looking food in a series of strange but tasty foods, the heifers ate them too.

The day in July that I visited Julie's farm was also the day she was putting the trained heifers out on pasture for the first time. She mentioned that the first few months of a heifer's life on pasture were pretty hard, and that they typically lost condition as they adjusted to their new lives. She wondered if the training would help them transition more easily. With that in mind, we ran out to the pasture and picked a little of everything growing there. (Check out this video taken by Jenn Colby of the Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture to watch how much fun I had introducing her heifers to everything they were about to find in pasture <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdTFRJHpLVs&feature=plcp>.) Our goal was to let the heifers sample a little of everything in an environment they were used to, so that when they stepped into the pasture for the first time, they would recognize their food.

A few weeks later Julie wrote to say how well things were going for her heifers. "Their transition from dry hay and being fed to grazing was remarkable," she wrote. "They didn't get gaunt. They didn't seem lost. And they are easy to handle. A few of them had pink eye this week and I could halter each one to treat them. Now I just need to share my enthusiasm for your work with others."

Why were Julie's heifers so successful their first time in pasture? It's because Julie did for her heifers what their mothers were not there to do. She showed them what was good to eat. With each new food she brought, she stretched their palates and minds, and because they had good experiences with the internal feedback from the nutrients in the foods, they learned from experience that she was a good provider. By the time I arrived, they were

## How internal feedback determines what's palatable.

Nerves in the nose and mouth take info to the brain about the smell and flavor of a food.

Nerves in the rumen take info about a food's nutrients and toxins to the brain.

The brain matches info about the smell and taste with the food's nutritional value.

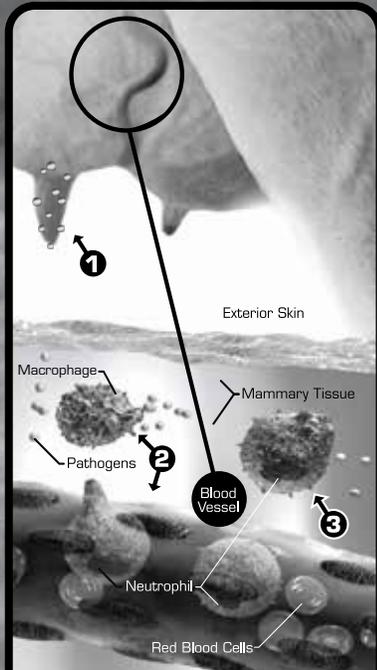
When plants, like this grazed musk thistle, meet the animal's needs they taste "good" so the animal eats more.

Foods high in toxins, or low in nutrition like this dormant grass, are less tasty so the animal eats less.

willing to taste anything we brought them. Then when we turned them out from the barn into pasture, they immediately knew what was good to eat. Thus, the weed training solved two problems for Julie; what to do with the weeds in her pasture, and how to help her heifers move to pasture without losing condition.

If you're a dairy farmer with similar issues, here's a little more background to help you understand why this works for your animals.

*continued on page 28*



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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

**Feeding Home Grown Forages: Rotating for Quality**

*By Joshua Baker, Marketing Manager at Kings AgriSeeds*

Growing your own forages has never been more important than now. After two years of tough growing conditions for the Midwest, the costs of inputs continue to rise. When you evaluate your farming systems from a holistic standpoint, you must be conscious of the inputs over which you can have the most control. In years past the traditional dairy farm model has been to grow forages and buy grains. As of late, the recommendation is increasingly to grow both your own forages and grains. This puts the 'ball in your court' and allows you to control more of your farms' inputs. By producing your own inputs, you can decide whether or not these crops feed livestock or are sold on the market. You have control.

**Crop Rotation**

A crucial consideration when growing your own forage and grain is crop rotation. Crop rotation is more than just rotating crops in response to the market demand. Rather, it is the

**Classic Livestock Farm**

- Year 1 Corn
- Year 2 Oats
- Year 3 Hay
- Year 4 Hay
- Year 5-8 Repeat

**Midwest Classic**

- Year 1 Corn
- Year 2 Corn
- Year 3 Soybeans
- Year 4 Wheat
- Year 5 Hay
- Year 6 Hay
- Year 7-12 Repeat

continuous rotation of crops for the benefit of the soil and farm management. Take a look at the crop rotation examples above.

Both the 'Classic Livestock Farm' and the 'Midwest Classic' rotations above are the more traditional rotations. The 'Midwest Classic' allows for longer production of a single species (i.e. year after year corn) and 'Classic Livestock' focuses on producing forage or grain from individual species in a given growing season. While they can be effective, depending on your needs, a different sort of rotation is needed to produce the maximum tonnage of high quality forage. Take a look at the aggressive crop rotation above and to the right.

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**Aggressive Crop Rotation**

- Year 1-3 Legume Grass Mix
- Year 4 Corn (Silage or Grain)
- Year 5 (Spring) Harvest Winter Annuals
- Year 5 (Summer) Summer Annuals
- Year 5 (Fall) Oats
- Year 6 Corn (Silage or Grain)
- Year 7-12 Repeat Year 1 to 6

**NOTE:**

*The rotation above fits well into areas such as Southern PA. You must consider your growing season when planning out these rotations. The farther north you are, the more you will need to focus on crops with shorter maturities and/or eliminating certain crops from the rotation.*

*Additionally, the legume grass mixture used in this example would be one with a planned shorter life span (3 years). This portion of the rotation can be varied to fit other perennial mixtures with the typical 5-7 year longevity.*

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**Crop Rotation Benefits:**

- Increased Yield
- Decreased Pest Pressure
- Increased Soil Health
- Increased Nutrient Balance

This example showcases a rotation that incorporates many species and relies heavily on balancing both perennial and annual production. Combining the benefits of winter

and summer annuals within the same growing season, this sort of rotation allows for maximum production of high quality forage. The diversity of forage crops (annuals and perennials) and cover crops in this rotation provide large quantities of highly digestible forages while also considering the long term potential impact on soil health. The additional benefits of a rotation such as this include; increased soil organic matter, improved tillage, increase nutrient availability, reduction in pests and reduction in infectious diseases.

**Quality Is Key**

The key to feeding your own home grown forages is to focus on quality. What is forage quality? Evaluating your forage based on NDFd (Neutral Detergent Fiber digestibility) and NEL (Net Energy Lactation) is the best way to determine forage quality. For your cows to maintain milk production, you need high tonnage of high quality forage. Typically, protein is not the limiting factor in relation to producing your own feed. Your focus should be on producing as much highly digestible forage as possible, and if protein is needed, supplementation is manageable. Your nutritionist can only work with the forages that you produce. Given this, they must be of the highest possible quality in order to make your high forage ration possible.

Adding high quality grasses to your forage system is a great way to boost your production of high quality forages. Whether you are adding grass to your alfalfa, or following corn with a cool season annual grass, quality grasses improve your rotation and yield while producing a high fiber digestibility crop. Additionally, summer annual crops such as forage sorghum, sorghum sudan and sudangrass break up continuous corn acreage and produce high quality forage during the droughty summer months.

No matter how you choose to balance your farming system, both crop rotation and forage quality should be at the forefront. Balancing these two factors, along with others, is a great way to ensure that you control as much of the input costs as possible, while preserving your land resource for the future. ♦

*You can contact Joshua Baker at Kings AgriSeeds: Email: [josh-baker@kingsagriseeds.com](mailto:josh-baker@kingsagriseeds.com), Website: [www.kingsagriseeds.com](http://www.kingsagriseeds.com) or phone: (717) 687-6224*

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# A brief history of Parity Pricing and the present day ramifications of the abandonment of a Par Economy

By Kevin Engelbert, Organic Dairy Farmer, Nichols, NY

The basic premise of parity pricing is the belief that the selling price of a product or produce should go up or down in the same amount as the prices of the inputs used in its production. Another way to phrase the idea of parity price: the parity price of a particular commodity is the price giving a unit of the commodity a comparable purchasing power to that in the base period. The concept of parity is also widely applied in industrial wage contracts as a means of preserving the real value of wages.

The concept of parity pricing first surfaced in the early 1900s, when people realized that agriculture production must exchange on par with the rest of the economy, because the US economy is based on division of labor. Once farming became proficient enough to provide more food than the individual farmer needed to feed his family, the spinoff of labor then allowed the development of an industrial economy. So even though agriculture has fewer people involved in farm production, it still has the same economic function to perform and must generate the same buying power as all other sectors of the economy. In other words, to function properly an economy in a democratic republic must be a par economy.

## Introduction of "Fair Exchange Value" or Parity Pricing

At a conference on agricultural policy called by Secretary of Agriculture Henry C. Wallace in 1922, the parity concept was introduced. Parity was also then referred to as "fair exchange value". The conference's goal was to figure out a way to maintain a fair price to farmers for the products they produced. At the

same time, many farm groups were forming in an effort to lobby the government to ensure farmers received a fair price for the agricultural commodities they produced.

As political pressure rose, the McNary-Haugen Bill was introduced in Congress in January 1924. The bill proposed to control agriculture prices by having the federal government purchase

excess supply. The bill passed Congress, but was vetoed by President Calvin Coolidge. Nothing was acted upon, and the accumulation of money into fewer and fewer hands resulted in the Stock Market crash of 1929, and the ensuing Great Depression.

Between 1919 and 1933, wholesale agricultural prices declined by 67%, and even though the Hoover administration passed the Agricultural Marketing Act in 1929, which introduced limited supply controls, the price decline continued. During that era, politicians of both major political parties realized the implications of an

unfair pricing system with regards to agriculture. They knew that having a plentiful supply of food was not just a matter of national necessity, but also a matter of national security. The U. S. Constitution authorized Congress to regulate the value of money – not in terms of simply printing, but in terms of goods, commodities, and labor that exchanged for money.

## Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933

The Agriculture Adjustment Act of 1933 (AAA of 1933) included the first use parity prices in the determination of commodity prices. Politicians and agricultural leaders realized that prices for

"Between 1919 and 1933 ... politicians of both major political parties realized the implications of an unfair pricing system with regards to agriculture. They knew that having a plentiful supply of food was not just a matter of national necessity, but also a matter of national security."



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farm products were not in themselves of primary significance. Of far greater importance was what farm products would buy in terms of clothing, energy, feed, machinery, fertilizer, services, and other items farmers needed for living and food production. The 1933 AAA authorized Congress to reestablish commodity prices that would give farmers the purchasing power, with respect to items they buy, equivalent to the purchasing power of agricultural commodities in a 'base' period.

In 1933, the Secretary of Agriculture's economic advisers stated that the period of 1909-1914 was "one of considerable agricultural and industrial stability . . . with equilibrium between the purchasing power of city and country; the most recent period when the economic conditions, as a whole, were in a state of dynamic equilibrium." As a consequence, the goal of agricultural policy for the next 45+ years was based upon the idea of raising and then maintaining farm product parity. With regard to dairy, the price support program based its values on the parity price of milk, with the Secretary given the discretion to set the price in the range of 75-95% of the parity price.

**Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1948**

By 1948, due to widespread criticisms of the parity price concept from economists and from political pressure, the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1948 (1948 AAA) was enacted. Critics charged that using the period of 1909-1914 as the constant base period did not take into account the improved technologies and methods used on farms. In spite of the flawed logic (there were even more improved technologies and methods used in industrial production), the 1948 AAA changed the base price concept from the average of 1910-1914 prices (the year 1909 was dropped) for individual commodities to "adjusted base prices" which are the most recent 10-year average prices received for the commodity deflated by the corresponding 10-year average of the index of prices received for all commodities. The "parity index" is the ratio of the general level of prices for articles and services

"By 1983 parity was completely phased out as a factor in setting the support price for milk, and that marked the end of 'cost of production' playing any role in setting the price for raw milk."

that farmers buy, wages paid for hired labor, interest on farm indebtedness, and taxes on farm real estate on a given 10-year period in relation to the general level of such prices, wages, rates, and taxes during the period January 1910 to December 1914.

So, the 1948 AAA defined the "new" parity prices as the product of the adjusted base prices and the parity index. The change allowed relative parity of individual agricultural commodities to be based on recent performance and to fluctuate in response to changing market conditions. The 1948

AAA also marked the beginning of our current state of economic conditions: the declining rate of profit for industry, the loss of liquidity in our banks, the never ending increases in inflation, and the continuing loss of farms and farm land – all from the loss of farm parity. The logic that farmers gained more from advances in technology and productivity than other sectors of the economy was flawed, but the change placated those clamoring for an adjustable parity base.

**1980 Farm Bill and the Agricultural Food Act of 1981**

The final critical event in the history of parity pricing – there are many minor laws and changes that I haven't touched upon – was the passage of the 1980 Farm Bill, which resulted in the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. By 1983 parity was completely phased out as a factor in setting the support price for milk, and that marked the end of 'cost of production' playing any role in setting the price for raw milk. Instead, the powers that be trumpeted the "free market" as the determinate in establishing the price of raw milk. We all know now that the "free market" does not exist.

When farmers do not receive parity price for the products they provide, that essentially represents a form of theft. True wealth comes from the earth's natural resources: farming, fishing, min-

*continued on page 10*



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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Parity Pricing

*continued from page 9*

ing, lumbering, etc. When the people engaged in those endeavors, and the products they are responsible for, do not receive parity price for their work, a par economy cannot function properly. The results are the situations with regard to the economy in general, and the dairy industry in particular, that we find ourselves in today.

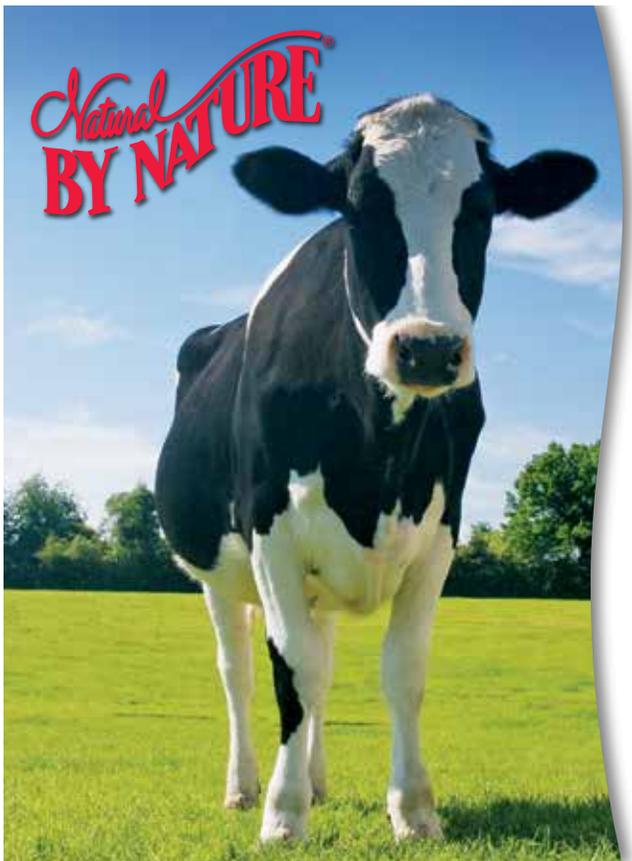
Remember, the U.S. Constitution charged the government with the responsibility to “coin the money, and regulate the value thereof”. To do so involves regulating imports so that American money could be stabilized in terms of American production costs and expenses for doing business. The flaw in government and economist’s thinking centers on the concept of a global economy. You cannot have continuous, long-term prosperity in the US while subjecting American businesses to world economic conditions. The pressure to do away with parity pricing came from businesses forced to compete with cheaper foreign products.

The argument against parity pricing in the late ‘70s and early ‘80s centered on the over production of milk in the US. In actuality, the

“When the primary producers receive a fair price for their products, the money they receive circulates in the economy, and has a multiplier effect of approximately 7. In other words, they spend their money and by doing so make money available to consumers (industrial and retail workers) who then have the means to purchase their products.”

increase in imports was the true cause. Had the government regulated imports though tariffs and other constraints, as they were required to do in the U.S. Constitution, there would have been no surplus. Abraham Lincoln once said “If we buy rails from England, we will have the rails, but England will have our money. If we make the rails here, we will have both the rails and the money.” What a disservice to our country businesses and government have committed when that line of thought has been abandon for the sake of profits and control.

When the primary producers receive a fair price for their products, the money they receive circulates in the economy, and has a multiplier effect of approximately 7. In other words, they spend their money and by doing so make money available to consumers (industrial and retail workers) who then have the means to purchase their products. When primary producers do not receive a fair price for their products, the money they would have received accumulates in the hands of a few (upper level management and politicians, via political contributions and speaking fees, for the most part). The concentration of money in the hands of a few eventually leads to an economic depression. Currently our government has embarked on



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programs of quantitative easing (printing money) to try to stimulate the economy and prevent a collapse. That approach only delays the inevitable and makes the forthcoming debacle worse.

### Lack of Parity Pricing led to increase in Government Debt

Another consequence of the lack of parity pricing has been the increase in the government's debt. In 1910-1914 the U.S. essentially had no debt – the par economy was functioning properly and earned income was generated rather than borrowed. As the percent of parity in setting prices lessened, the nation's debt increased, and since parity pricing was abandon, our country's debt has soared. The government has taken away the benefits of a par economy, and the result has been to enlarge the market for government services, and government regulations. The government services and the expansion of the private sector service industries cannot be sustained without parity for agricultural commodities unless there is unsound debt expansion.

Economists, and most people who have never tried to earn a living by milking cows, contend that if parity pricing had not been done away with in the early '80s that the glut of milk would have been worse. I believe the oversupply of milk was forced on dairy producers by doing away with parity prices. When a dairy farm sees a drop in the price they receive for their milk, they basically have four options: 1) a lower standard of living, 2) increase their produc-

	1950	1972	1981	2012
# of dairy farms:	3,648,000	475,000	280,000	<50,000

tion, 3) develop off-farm income, or 4) sell their cows. Politicians, economist, and all the businesses that handle the milk once it leaves the farm don't care if 9 out of 10 dairies go out of business, as long as the 10th dairy expands enough to make up the difference. The short-sighted approach derives from greed as well, because again, the profits that farmers should be receiving are going elsewhere.

There has been a myriad of programs designed to keep farmers enslaved to the government and agribusinesses, among them price supports, subsidies, compelled reduced production, government purchases, land set asides, milk marketing orders, milk income loss payments, environmental grants, and other programs. All of those programs represent an attempt to substitute earned income with debt income, which cannot be sustained. They have resulted in the loss of farm land and farmers, but at a rate slow enough to avoid a much needed change in policy.

**Above, in the chart, are a few statistics that shed some light on the situation.**

Even with the price of milk determined using a percentage of parity pricing from the 1950s until the early 1980s, there was a mass exodus of people engaged in dairying in that time period.

*continued on page 30*



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RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Winter Conferences to Attend in 2013, Part 2

Lisa McCrory, NODPA News Editor

From the Editor: As promised, below is a collection of upcoming conferences taking place February and March in Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and New York. I hope that this is useful and encourages you to get out there, learn, share, network and plan for the coming growing season.

PASA's 22nd Annual Farming For the Future Conference February 6-9, 2013

Penn Stater Conference Center in State College, PA  
Conference theme: 'Starting Fresh, Starting Local, Starting Now'

Over the past two decades, the Farming for the Future Conference has secured a reputation as a premiere gathering place for leaders in the global sustainable food movement. The 2013 conference is expected to attract more than 2,000 farmers, chefs, students, business leaders and others from over 30 U.S. states and several foreign nations. There will be fodder for Dairymen, Graziers and Small Ruminant Shepherds and more. The following

conference presentations and pre-conference workshops are only a few of the many offerings geared to the dairyman, the grazer and those interested in small ruminant care.

- Abe Collins is committed to making topsoil through grazing and agricultural management and works to make connections between rural providers and urban beneficiaries, communicating an appreciation of the actual value of environmental services and benefits found in well-managed topsoil. Abe's pre-conference track is designed to help grazers manage the most complex systems imaginable: microorganisms, plants and animals, soil and society. Abe will lead attendees through a day that will combine practical grazing and land use experience with functional lessons in land and water management, including the use of Keyline plowing, and in-depth aspects of soil building.
- Giancalis Caldwell from Pholia Farm in Oregon will spend a whole day with cheesemakers in a pre-conference track that is focused on "Taking Your Cheesemaking to the Next Level". The day will be built on the products and processes for the attending cheesemakers – and will include a tasting, evaluation and coaching on building the farmstead designer cheese story. The day will also include some serious

# Graze

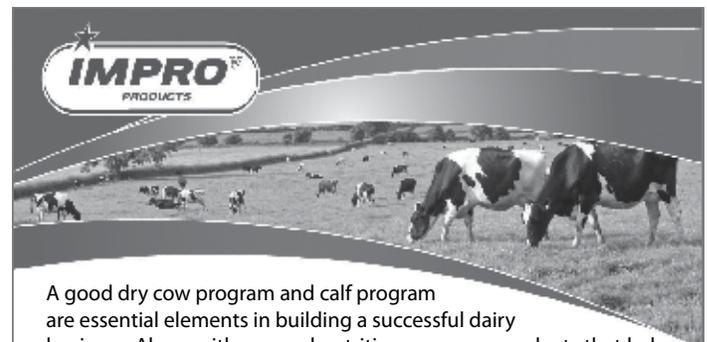
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discussion about biological monitoring, food safety plans and the finer points of buffering.

Other pre-conference tracks have Roman Stoltzfoos, Jeff Mattocks and Mary-Howell and Klaas Martens digging into the Alternatives to Feeding Corn and Soya (including fodder systems, small grains and feed formulations), and Susan Schoenian, Jeff Semler, Sandy Miller and the crew getting into the nitty-gritty of breeding and selecting small ruminant stock for parasite resilience. If those don't pique your interest, Bill Day from the Pfeiffer Centre has a day for beginning beekeepers, organized around a year for the hive; Eliza MacLean and Chuck Talbott have an all pigs - on pasture and in the woods - day and Dave Mortenson, Doug Gurian-Sherman and their colleagues will appraise the data, research and potential problems around GM crops and stock.

In addition to keynote addresses by Ben Hewitt and Charles Eisenstein, the main conference will offer over a hundred workshops. The roster of speakers is amazing and include: Jerry Brunetti, Eric Burkhart, Joan Norman, Troy Bishopp, Lee Reich, Brian Reasor, Brooks Miller, Byron Shelton, Mac Mead, Jack Algieri, Mike Brownback, Susan Beal, Melanie Dietrich Cochran and her mom, Sue, and Kim Miller.

Registration is available by going to: [pasafarming.org/conference](http://pasafarming.org/conference) or you can write or call for a printed brochure: 814-349-9856.

## Northeast Pasture Consortium Annual Meeting February 7-8, 2013

Radisson Hotel in Manchester, NH

This two-day meeting will be filled with workshops, discussions, and speakers on topics ranging from the economics of confinement vs. grazing operations, bedded packs, current research, and much more. Pasture research coordination and facilitation is a big part of the program this year. This is a new addition that we want to become an annual event. Contact Jim Cropper for more information at [jbcropper@yahoo.com](mailto:jbcropper@yahoo.com). Phone: 336-855-7594

## NH Grazing Conference Focuses on Economics of Pasture February 9, 2013

Radisson Hotel in Manchester, NH

We've all heard the joke before: The farmer has just won the lottery, and reporters ask what he's going to do with his windfall. His reply: "Reckon I'll keep farming until it's all gone."

Profitability is central to sustainability, and the seventh annual Granite State Graziers conference focuses on topics that will help grass farmers improve their bottom lines.

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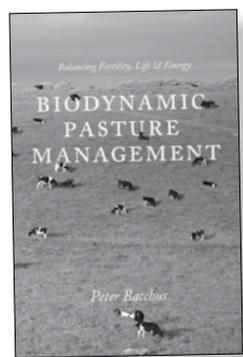
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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# January 2013 Feed & Pay Price Update

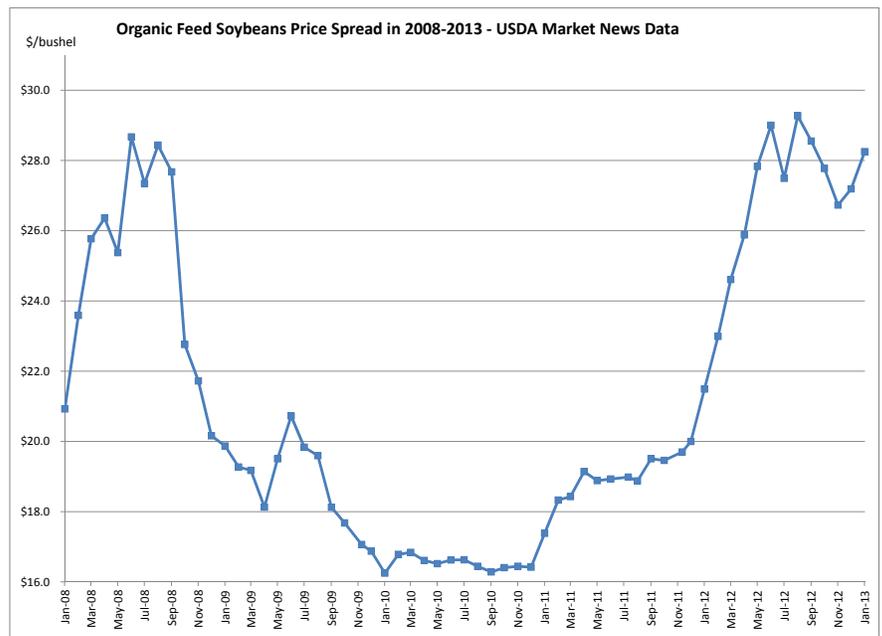
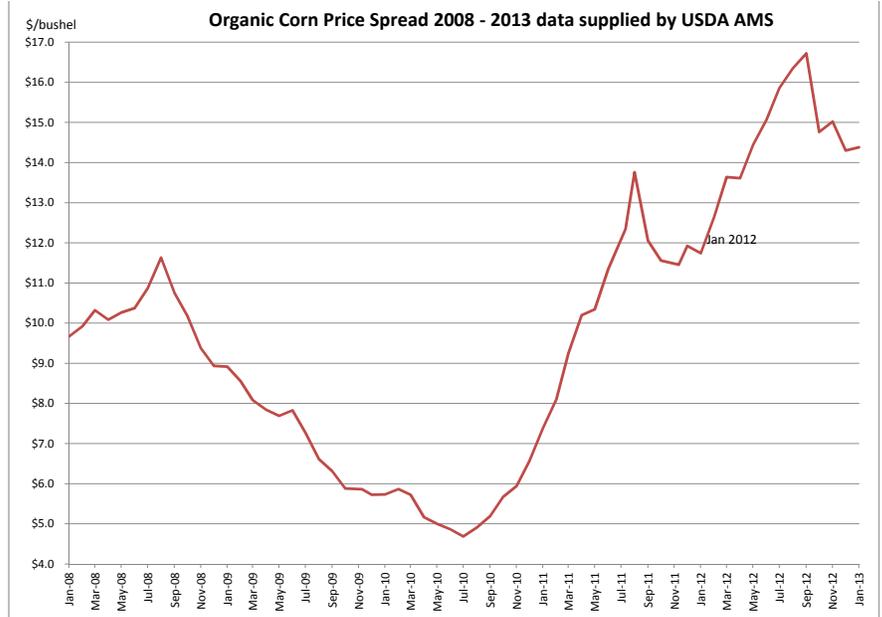
*Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

The Dairy industry was definitely thrown off the cliff by House Speaker Boehner, who decided to reject the bi-partisan agreement by House and Senate Ag committees on a Farm Bill extension and instead threw out all the funding for progressive programs, reverted back to the MILC and commodity payments for peanuts and cotton. Luckily Senator Leahy was able to ensure that the MILC was pre-September 2013 so producers should be receiving some back-dated payments soon. MILC has been extended through August 31, 2013 at a payment rate of 45%, covering 2.985 million total pounds of milk per year with a feed adjuster factor of \$7.35. In September 2013, the payment rate falls to 34%, the milk production covered drops to 2.4 million total pounds, and the feed adjuster factor goes up to \$9.50. Provisional projections have a \$0.50 payment for September 2012, and no payments for any other months. These small payments will do nothing to mitigate the organic pay price and the continuing increase in input costs.

In the Northeast, both Horizon and Organic Valley are paying the same pay price before quality premiums are added, \$29-30 per hundred pounds which is only \$2 higher than 2008. Horizon Organic increased their MAP by \$2 in February 2012 and Organic Valley increased their base by \$1 and MAP by \$1 in March 2012, to add to the \$1-1.50 increase they both gave in September 2011. Horizon Organic announced at the end of April 2012 that their MAP will be maintained at \$3 or \$3.50 /cwt (depending on geographic location) until the end of September 2012 and then announced the open ended continuation of that MAP in October. Horizon has added their 4 month seasonal payment of \$3 to the MAP to make a total MAP of \$6.50. Organic Valley is reported as proposing to take \$1 from their MAP and add it to their base for January 2013, recognizing that all input costs have risen, and will pay a \$2 seasonal payment for November 2012 milk with their usual seasonal payments kicking in December 2012. Horizon is paying their seasonal payment on top of their increased MAP and will consider continuing this seasonal payment into June 2013.

USDA Organic Dairy Market News reported that despite the increase in retail prices, organic sales are at an all-time high for October 2012, approximately 6% higher

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## How good fertility helps prepare dairy pastures for drought resistance

By Neal Kinsey

How is it possible to increase drought resistance for crops like pastures and hay meadows by increasing soil fertility? Building better soil fertility can help during times of drought no matter what crop you may decide to grow on your land. For example, on a new seeding increasing the soil's ability to capture and retain water by correctly incorporating crop residues, compost, etc. will help to increase soil moisture content and seed germination as it helps to maintain or increase nutrient levels. To illustrate this point, when wheat stubble is incorporated instead of burning it as the soil begins to dry out the leaves of silage corn will begin to roll up three days sooner where the stubble was burned than where it was incorporated.

It is emphasized in course materials on soil fertility that adequate amounts of potassium and phosphate increase water use efficiency for plant growth. Although there are still soils that lack a sufficient amount of one or both of these major elements, to be most productive soils must have sufficient levels of both to assure efficient water utilization. So if either of them is lacking, applying the correct amount for that land could be the most efficient way to improve and increase water utilization for crops to be grown there.

Time and again farmers ask, "Why, be concerned about pasture fertility when fertilizer is being spread and/or manure is constantly being deposited there?" Be careful about such assumptions, even when a soil sample showing good levels has been taken from pastures. It is possible that the manure deposited there is still fresh enough to affect and inflate fertility levels measured and reported on the soil test? In such cases, it can appear that the fertility is good - or perhaps even too high - when such is not the case. Just remember, when possible, allow enough time for grass to show where both manure and urine have been deposited and then pull soil samples in the unaffected areas.

Furthermore, the two nutrients most affected by manure in terms of building up soil fertility levels is phosphorous and potassium. In other words, though nitrogen must be used or it will leach away, the P & K supplied with it are the most likely nutrients to be built up in the soil from manure. But keep in mind, the P & K in manure produced by grazing the land is not necessarily sufficient because manure that is produced on pastures that are already lacking P & K will be more likely to be short when it comes to supplying those same nutrients. Such deficiencies tend to occur in far more pastures than most producers seem to suspect. When P & K are right, it can make a big difference in how well the plants can take up and use water.

Drawing from experience and good common sense, farmers realize that pastures need more than just N-P-K to produce at their best. N-P-K should be added in sufficient amounts if required, but not at the expense of neglecting other needed nutrients for top performance.

Sulfur, like phosphorus, can significantly contribute to root growth of plants. To the extent that the root system is expanded, the efficiency of the crop to find and utilize soil moisture will be increased. Increases of as much as 50%, in terms of extra root growth can be measured when adequate sulfur is applied to soils where it is a limiting factor. Yet it is often considered as so unnecessary that it

is not even requested on the soil test.

Most soils are low to deficient in sulfur, and thus lacking when it comes to enough for optimum root growth. For the majority of soils expect sulfur to be far more likely than P or K as a limiting nutrient for moisture utilization. When required, applying a good dry prilled (yet water soluble) elemental sulfur to growing grass will show a greener color on the youngest leaves in a week or less.

Adequate sulfur uptake to maximize root growth is another serious problem that can be overlooked to assure the most massive root systems. Excessive phosphate in the soil antagonizes sulfur uptake by the grass. And for maximum efficiency, sulfur only works properly when calcium is present in adequate amounts to assure its uptake into the grass.

Once the phosphate, potassium and sulfur are supplied, next consider the calcium levels of the soil to help aid in drought resistance. Calcium must be present in the soil for root elongation. Without sufficient calcium roots will stop growing. Farmers should require that adequate calcium is supplied to the soil for optimum root development. This would generally be accomplished by applying a sufficient amount of the proper type of lime.

After needed major and secondary elements are supplied, there is yet another nutrient that is absolutely necessary in specific amounts for optimum moisture utilization. Without it, plants will not use water, whatever the source, most efficiently. That nutrient is the trace element zinc. Sufficient zinc is necessary for moisture absorption into the plant. Just keep in mind that if the soil is lacking in adequate amounts of phosphate, potassium, sulfur, or calcium then applying needed zinc will still not do the best possible job.

Too often the effect of zinc, if admitted to be needed at all, is discounted in its importance to drought resistance because the farmer or grower is told the soil already has enough, when it is not actually the case. Even after all the aforementioned nutrients are supplied, zinc is often overlooked or not correctly recognized as needed, because the level necessary for proper utilization is set too low on the soil test being used. Soils with barely enough phosphate need only barely enough zinc but soils rich in phosphate also must be rich in zinc to accomplish the proper results. Using the correct form of zinc to keep it available in the soil until used by the plant is also important.

Correcting soil nutrient levels is one of the best methods for assuring excellent water use for optimum crop response on limited water. The more dairymen rely on growing the feed used for their livestock, the more critical it is to know what fertility levels are actually present in the soils that will produce it. Too many producers neglect the nutrients in the soil, even if they are testing levels in the feed. You cannot properly manage what you do not correctly measure to assure correct pasture fertility levels for optimizing moisture use.

Please let us know if we can help.

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## RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

**Winter Conferences, Part 2**

*continued from page 13*

“In planning this conference, we asked farmers for feedback about where their businesses could do better in terms of either generating revenue or reducing costs,” said Bill Fosher, conference coordinator and GSG board member. “We located speakers who could talk about some of the key areas, and have developed a program to try to address those concerns.”

Steve Taylor, New Hampshire’s retired commissioner of agriculture who also happens to be a dairy farmer and ag journalist, will kick off the day with a keynote address. Taylor is a student of his state’s farm economy both in the current day and through history, and he’ll provide us with historical perspective on the topic.

In the workshop sessions, the following topics will be covered:

- Livestock health and the immune system
- Alternative pasture crops and tillage systems
- Pasture Economics
- Pastured pork production
- Grazing season extension and winter feeding strategies
- Grazing management in drought
- Soil Health for Graziers
- Managing parasites in small ruminants

The conference is being held in conjunction with the New Hampshire Farm and Forest Exposition, and is supported by the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. Additional support comes from Organic Valley Cooperative. Registration is free with a \$25 annual membership in Granite State Graziers (including those who join at the door) or \$15 for non-members. Pre-registration is not required. Registration opens at 8 a.m., and the main session starts at 9 a.m.

*A full program, including descriptions of each session and a schedule of events, is available on Granite State Graziers’ website, <http://www.grazenh.com>. For more information, contact Bill Fosher, [news@grazenh.com](mailto:news@grazenh.com) or 603-399-9975*

## **NOFA-NY’s 2nd Annual Organic Dairy and Field Crop Conference March 1, 2013**

*Holiday Inn in Auburn, NY.*

Featuring experienced organic keynote speaker: Jerry Brunetti, founder of Agri-Dynamics. Jerry will share his perspective on how we as organic dairy and field crop farmers can address the current challenges in agriculture. Learn how building soil health can help protect your farm with increased sustainability in your land, crops and livestock. Find ways to utilize warm season grasses, perennial polycultures, silvopasturing and sprouting for

increased feed efficiency. Hear about new successes for capturing the retail market with third generation “co-ops” and raw milk cooperatives. Here is a preview of some of the many workshops to look forward to:

### ***Transition to Organic Dairy Farm Management***

Join Lisa Engelbert of NOFA-NY Certified Organic LLC, and Organic Dairy Farmers: Paul Tillotson of Cottonwood Dairy, Paul Knapp of Cobblestone Valley Enterprises LLC, Kevin Engelbert of Engelbert Farm and Ryan Murray of TBD for a half day intensive workshop focusing on the Transition to Organic Dairy Farm Management, including on-farm experiences, livestock management changes, crop, herd health, pasture systems and more.

### ***Farm Transfer: What’s Right for Your Business***

There is no time like the present to begin planning for your future! Join Ed Staehr director of NY FarmNet/FarmLink to learn how to plan for your Farm Transfer. Hear farm business model options, ways to transfer assets, and how to successfully transfer ownership of your operation.

### ***Improving your Pasture Management Decision-Making with a Planned Grazing Chart***

Join Troy Bishopp, the Grass Whisperer, as he describes how they use their daily grazing planning chart to maintain high quality pastures, improve fertility and biological life, take vacations, and keep more money in the checking account.

### ***Sprouting Fodder for Feed***

John Stoltzfus of B-A Blessing Farm and his wife, Tammy, have been farming together for 22 years, became certified organic in 2000. Four years ago, they began soaking grains they were feeding to their herd and researching ways to produce barley fodder. Currently they produce 600 to 650 pounds of fodder daily and feed their milking herd at a rate of 10 pounds per cow.

### ***Annual Forages to Enhance and Extend the Grazing Season***

This session will be broadcast live from our friends in Vermont, with thanks to eOrganic.info. A panel of Vermont farmers will share their experiences, facilitated by University of Vermont Extension agronomist Heather Darby.

### ***Bio-Diversity in the Paddock: The Keystone of Farm Resilience***

Perennial prairies once were hosts to hundreds of plant species that nurtured the largest grass fed beef herd in the world, the bison. Join Jerry Brunetti, founder of Agri-Dynamics, to learn how diversifying your paddock species can provide a natural pharmacy for your grazing herd.

*continued on page 21*

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Meet Your NODPA Board Members

**N**ODPA would like to present to its readers the inner workings of this fantastic organization. Only organic dairy farmers can be members and the members elect the Board of Directors who control the priorities and direction of the organization, hiring and firing its Executive Director.

NODPA members are continuously contributing their thoughts and opinions informally and formally through State Representatives and Board members. The Board and State Representatives guide NODPA and make sure that it is staying true to its mission of “enabling organic dairy family farmers, situated across an extensive area, to have informed discussion about matters critical to the well being of the organic dairy industry as a whole.” They spend countless hours on conference calls, usually after 8:00 pm; they contribute financially through the NODPA check-off program; they attend Field Days and other events to represent and promote NODPA and organic dairy farmers; they work on editing position papers, articles and press releases; they travel to meet with processors to advocate for a higher pay price and better contractual conditions and they provide support for NODPA staff.

We have decided to introduce you to the Board of Directors for this issue and for the March issue we will introduce you to the

other representatives and committee members. To see the complete list, please go to page 2 of any *NODPA News* publication.

## Board Members

**Liz Bawden (NODPA Board President, NY):** Liz farms in Hammond, New York, and has been organic since 2000 and involved with NODPA since 2002. She milks 50 Holstein and Brown Swiss cows with her husband Brian and son Nathan. Their milk is currently marketed to Horizon Organic.

**Dave Johnson (NODPA Board Vice President, PA):** farms in Liberty, Pennsylvania and has been involved with NODPA since 2003. David’s farm has been certified organic since 2001. He recently sold his dairy herd, but used to milk a seasonal herd of 50 cows and shipped his milk to Organic Valley.

**Steve Morrison (NODPA Board Secretary and Policy Committee Chair):** farms in Charleston, Maine with his partner Sonja and has been involved with NODPA since its inception (February, 2001). His farm has been certified since 1997. Steve and Sonja milk about 50 Jerseys and ship to Organic Valley, and will soon be joining MooMilk.

*continued on page 22*

## Molds and Mycotoxins - Effects on Dairy Cattle

We are receiving numerous calls from dairymen about aflatoxins in their corn and small grains supply which is causing milk quality issues. Many have even had to dump milk. Hydrated sodium calcium aluminosilicates have been known to help with these types of problems.

**Please give us a call if you have a dairy, feedlot, or a mill.**



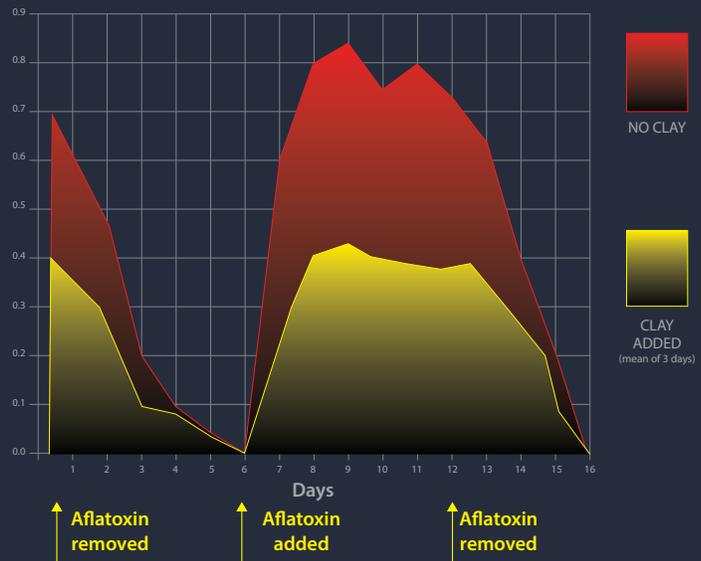
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Milk Aflatoxin, ppb



Clearance & Appearance of Aflatoxin in Milk Associated With Consumption of Aflatoxin Contaminated Corn in Diets With or Without the Addition of Clay Products

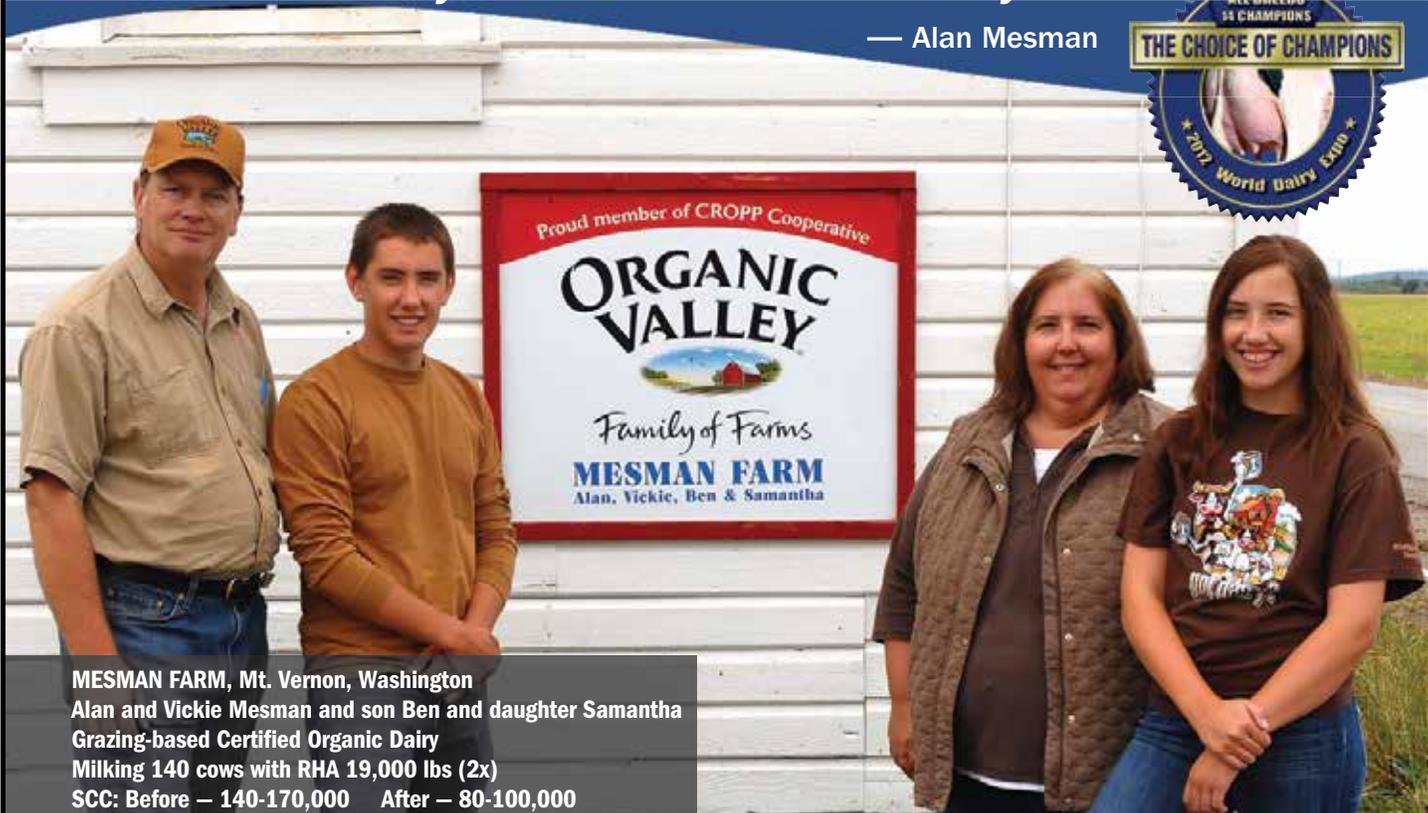


↑ Aflatoxin removed      ↑ Aflatoxin added      ↑ Aflatoxin removed

Lon W. Whitlow, North Carolina State University

**“We were surprised by the results. We maintain our tank SCC down at 80-100,000 by spraying every fresh udder for 4 to 5 days.”**

— Alan Mesman



MESMAN FARM, Mt. Vernon, Washington  
 Alan and Vickie Mesman and son Ben and daughter Samantha  
 Grazing-based Certified Organic Dairy  
 Milking 140 cows with RHA 19,000 lbs (2x)  
 SCC: Before – 140-170,000 After – 80-100,000

The Mesman family (l-r) Alan, Ben, Vickie and Samantha.

“We were surprised by our results with Udder Comfort™. We used the new yellow spray, which has a natural coloring. Our SCC had been running 140-170,000, we could not believe how squirting this spray on the outside of the udder would cut our somatic cell count down by 70,000. But it worked. It softens the udder, which relaxes the cow. This helps with edema and irritation when they come fresh,” says Alan Mesman. He and his wife Vickie and son Ben and daughter Sammy milk 140 cows at their Certified Organic dairy near Mt. Vernon, Washington.

“At first we sprayed Udder Comfort on the whole udder of 39 identified cows (out of 140 milking). As a result, the tank SCC dropped down to 80,000. This boosted our quality premium another 29 cents.

“We do not dry-treat any animals here. We are able to maintain our bulk tank SCC down at 80-100,000 by spraying every fresh udder after both milkings for 4 to 5 days after they calve.”

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Cornell Dairy Farm Business Summary: Organic Dairy Farm Results

*Richard Overton, Cornell Cooperative Extension & Linda Putnam, Extension Support Specialist*

The Dairy Farm Business Summary is completed annually and is used to measure the progress of the farm business. Financial, herd and crop data are gathered to give the user an accurate picture of the farming operation at a specific point in time, usually the end of the year. The program used is web based on a secure server to preserve the confidentiality of the information. Cornell Cooperative extension personnel usually assist the producer in completing the data input, but with some training producers who are comfortable with computers can easily complete the program themselves. Data is reviewed by Cornell University farm management faculty for completeness and accuracy before being accepted as part of the database.

The report gives the producer beginning and ending balance sheets, an income statement, a cash flow statement and a reconciliation of owner equity. Additionally, herd production results are compiled along with crop yields and dry matter conversions. The producer is able to compare their farm with similar farms in the data base. The report can be used by the producer to compare year to year operational results so that plans for improvement can be established for the farming operation

Organic dairy farm operators throughout New York State submitted business records for summarization and analysis through Cornell Cooperative Extension's Farm Business Management Program. For the years 2010 and 2011 we have published reports of the results from certified organic milk producers. In addition, we have compared the organic farms with average data for similar sized non organic dairy producers. This article contains excerpts from the reports and commentary on the data collected and observations on the management styles for organic producers. Copies of the complete report are available for a nominal charge and can be obtained by contacting Cornell University at 607-255-8429.

Table 1 above is a comparison for the same 13 organic farms who participated in both the 2010 and 2011 years. The data

**Table 1. PROGRESS OF THE FARM BUSINESS**  
Same 13 New York Organic Dairy Farms, 2010 & 2011

Selected Factors	Average 13 Organic Farms	
	2010	2011
<b>Size of Business</b>		
Average number of cows	150	158
Average number of heifers	116	128
Milk sold, pounds	2,180,798	2,301,633
Worker equivalent	4.57	4.60
Total tillable acres	624	618
<b>Rates of Production</b>		
Milk sold per cow, pounds	14,569	14,589
Hay DM per acre, tons	2.5	2.9
Corn silage per acre, tons	11.4	11.6
<b>Labor Efficiency</b>		
Cows per worker	33	34
Milk sold per worker, pounds	477,199	500,355
<b>Cost Control</b>		
Grain & concentrate purchased as % of milk sales	16%	17%
Dairy feed & crop expense per hundredweight milk	\$6.04	\$7.29
Labor & machinery costs per cow	\$2,252	\$2,307
Operating cost of producing hundredweight milk	\$16.77	\$23.33
<b>Capital Efficiency*</b>		
Farm capital per cow	\$13,118	\$13,703
Machinery & equipment per cow	\$2,707	\$2,992
Asset turnover ratio	0.41	0.41
<b>Profitability</b>		
Net farm income without appreciation	\$187,313	\$122,567
Net farm income with appreciation	\$218,068	\$226,833
Labor & management income per operator/manager	\$62,090	\$22,169
Rate of return on equity capital with appreciation	9.4%	9.4%
Rate of return on all capital with appreciation	8.3%	8.1%
<b>Financial Summary</b>		
Farm net worth, end year	\$1,575,384	\$1,707,745
Debt to asset ratio	0.24	0.24
Farm debt per cow	\$3,158	\$3,283

summarized are fairly consistent for the two years studied. The most significant factor is the increase in the cost to produce a hundredweight of milk, \$16.77 for 2010 versus \$23.33 for 2011. Most of this cost increase is attributed to the increase in the cost of feed along with increases in petroleum related expenses. The increased cost most likely lead to the \$64,000 reduction in net income as production levels and the milk price remained relatively stable. The farming operations appear to be relatively stable with a 24 percent debt to asset ratio, a significant ending net worth and a reasonable rate of return on equity.

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Cornell Dairy Farm Business Summary

*continued from page 19*

Care should be exercised when using these averages as there are wide differences in the data from the 13 farms, but the trends are important. These differences are primarily due to the different management styles of farmers submitting the information. The tradeoffs exhibited seem focus on being low cost by limiting feed purchases and relying on grazing and growing their own feedstuffs. This practice tends to reduce herd production and the margins seem to be tighter. Managers who focus on higher production seem to rely more on purchased feed to supplement what is grown on the farm. This group tends to have higher costs but also higher revenues. Whatever management style is employed financial analysis, careful budgeting and ongoing cost monitoring seem to be one of the keys to success.

In 2011 we had 16 organic milk producers participate in the Dairy Farm Business summary. In Table 2 at right we have divided those producers into two groups, farms with less than 100 cows and farms with more than 100 cows. Of significance in this table is that farms with less than 100 cows had lower production per animal and higher per unit expense costs. While it may indicate the larger farms may be more profitable the farms with less than 100 cows appear to be in a stronger financial position as they have more equity on a percentage and better debt coverage. The data does not necessarily indicate that herd size is important but we have observed that no matter the herd size management is the key to farm profitability.

The final two tables (Tables 3 and 4, on page 21) compare the 16 organic Dairy farms in our 2011 data with 64 Non-organic farms of similar average herd size. The data seems to indicate

**Table 2.: SELECTED BUSINESS FACTORS FOR TWO ORGANIC GROUPS BY HERD SIZE**

16 New York Organic Dairy Farms, 2011

Item	8 Organic Dairy Farms with Less Than 100 Cows	8 Organic Dairy Farms with More Than 100 Cows
<u>Cropping Program Analysis</u>		
Total acres	517	1,179
Tillable acres	303	939
Hay crop acres*	212	465
Corn silage acres*	50	86
Hay crop, tons DM/acre*	1.9	2.8
Corn silage, tons/acre*	8.7	12.4
Forage DM per cow, tons*	6.9	6.5
Tillable acres/cow*	4.8	3.9
Fertilizer & lime expense/tillable acre*	\$21.66	\$17.62
Machinery cost/tillable acre*	\$226	\$299
<u>Dairy Analysis</u>		
Number of cows	64	239
Number of heifers	46	202
Milk sold, pounds	739,016	3,496,477
Milk sold/cow, pounds	11,638	14,637
Operating cost of producing milk/cwt.	\$19.28	\$23.72
Total cost of producing milk/cwt.	\$37.31	\$32.04
Price/cwt. milk sold	\$29.18	\$31.96
Purchased dairy feed/cow	\$876	\$816
Purchased dairy feed/cwt. milk	\$7.53	\$5.57
Purchased grain & concentrate % of milk receipts	21%	17%
Purchased feed & crop expense/cwt. milk	\$8.63	\$7.09
<u>Capital Efficiency</u>		
Farm capital/worker	\$356,251	\$512,535
Farm capital/cow	\$15,709	\$13,174
Real estate/cow	\$9,386	\$5,408
Machinery investment/cow	\$2,512	\$2,891
Asset turnover ratio	0.27	0.43
<u>Labor Efficiency</u>		
Worker equivalent	2.80	6.14
Operator/manager equivalent	1.65	1.81
Milk sold/worker, pounds	264,013	569,768
Cows/worker	23	39
Labor cost/cow	\$1,293	\$1,021
<u>Financial Measures</u>		
Percent equity	86%	73%
Debt/asset ratio - long term	0.12	0.30
Debt/asset ratio - intermediate & current	0.17	0.25
Change in net worth with appreciation	\$45,204	\$217,409
Total farm debt per cow	\$2,139	\$3,571
Debt payments made per cow	\$662	\$823
Debt payments as % of milk sales	18%	17%
Amount available for debt service	\$53,533	\$207,690
Debt coverage ratio for 2011	1.71	1.31

there is not a significant advantage for either organic or non-organic milk producers. The net income without appreciation is higher for the Non-organic farms both on an actual basis and per cow basis.

On the expense side in 2011 the Organic producers had significantly higher costs per cwt. than the conventional producers. The Organic producers on the average had a negative income on a hundredweight basis when considering total costs of \$32.96 per cwt. and income of \$31.16 per cwt.

## Research &amp; Education

**Table 3. NET FARM INCOME**

New York Organic Dairy Farms and Non-Organic Dairy Farms, 2011

Item	16 Organic Dairy Farms	64* Non-organic Dairy Farms
Total accrual receipts	\$ 724,435	\$ 761,564
+ Appreciation: Livestock	-5,187	3,399
Machinery	17,395	5,472
Real Estate	75,121	18,750
Other Stock & Certificates	-331	-428
= Total Including Appreciation	\$ 811,434	\$ 788,756
- Total accrual expenses	606,617	615,785
= Net Farm Income (with appreciation)	\$ 204,816	\$ 172,971
Per cow	\$ 1,355	\$ 1,177
Net Farm Income (without appreciation)	\$ 117,817	\$ 145,778
Per cow	\$ 779	\$ 992

\*These are 64 non-organic dairy farms in New York that are similar in size and location to the organic farms.

**Table 4. COST OF PRODUCING MILK AND ACCRUAL RECEIPTS FROM MILK**

New York Organic Dairy Farms and Non-Organic Dairy Farms, 2011

Item	16 Organic Dairy Farms		64 Non-Organic Dairy Farms	
	Total	Per Cwt.	Total	Per Cwt.
<u>Accrual Cost of Producing Milk</u>				
Operating cost	\$485,875	\$22.94	\$486,556	\$15.51
Purchased input cost	\$548,711	\$25.91	\$533,436	\$17.01
Total cost	\$697,978	\$32.96	\$657,306	\$20.96
<u>Accrual Receipts from Milk</u>	\$666,529	\$31.47	\$679,214	\$21.66
Net Milk Receipts	\$659,873	\$31.16	\$649,126	\$20.70

**Conclusions**

Our 2011 data seems to indicate that there does not seem to make much difference in total returns for either organic or non-organic producers. What is important is the need for financial management and systems in place for effective cost control. One of the best systems is completion of the Dairy Farm Business Summary. As can be seen from the tables above the summary will give the producer data on most facets of the farming operation and the ability to compare with similar sized producers both organic and non-organic.

More information and a sample report is available on the website at <http://dfbs.dyson.cornell.edu/>. To complete the summary please contact your local Cornell Cooperative office or Cornell University directly at 607-255-8429 or email at [rko5@cornell.edu](mailto:rko5@cornell.edu).

**Winter Conference Part 2***continued from page 16***Soil Sampling and Test Interpretation for Improved Crop Performance**

CROPP Cooperative's soil agronomist Mark Kopecky will explain how to properly sample soil, read, and understand the results so you can put that information to work in your crop and pasture fertility management plan. Bring in your soil test results and learn from Mark what might be the missing in the link to soil health and crop productivity.

**Oats and Peas and Barley Grows: The Real Dirt on Filling the Grain Bin**

Join Klaas Marten of Lakeview Organic and Troy Sherman of Jerry Dell Farms as they explain the key elements in high yield grain production on an organic farm. With changing weather patterns, drought, and increasing seed and input costs, attention to detail is critical. Fertility, seed, and weed control are what determine success.

**Marketing: Discovering Value in Your Cereal Grains**

Producing organic grains for markets that demand consistent quality comes naturally to veteran farmers Mary Howell Marten of Lakeview Organic and Joel Steigman of Small Valley Milling in Pa. Join them in this discussion on growing high value grains and what separates livestock feed from the value added grains we eat.

And be sure to attend the Pre-Conference Field Day, Cornell University, Ithaca NY on February 28th covering Organic Cereal Grains Seed Production and the NYS Certified Foundation Seed Program. A full day short course on producing and processing organic seed grade grain in New York State will be conducted at Cornell University on February 28th, 2013 from 10:00am until 4:00pm in Ithaca, New York.

For more program details visit our website at: [www.nofany.org/dairyconference](http://www.nofany.org/dairyconference) or contact NOFA-NY directly: 585-271-1979 email: [bethany@nofany.org](mailto:bethany@nofany.org)

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

**NODPA Board of Directors***continued from page 17*

**George Wright (NODPA Board Treasurer, NY):** George and Linda Wright farm in Russell N.Y. about thirty miles from the Canadian border. "It's not the end of the world, but you can see it from here!" says George. The Wrights have been milking about 60 cows at their current location since 1995. They became certified organic in the fall of 2000 and have always shipped to Horizon Organic.

**Steve Kimball (NODPA Board, NY):** Steve farms in Falconer, NY, and has shipped organic milk since 2006 and has been involved with NODPA since then. He and his wife Cathy have 5 children. He currently has 6 employees (3 full time and 3 part time) and attempts to produce his grain as well as forage for about 170 cows and 170 youngstock. His milk is marketed through Upstate-Niagara and currently is mostly Wegmans organic dairy products.

**Steve Russell (NODPA Board, ME):** farms in Winslow, ME and has been involved with NODPA since 2001. He was certified organic in 1989 for vegetables and in 1997 for dairy. Steve milks about 50 cows, mostly Jerseys with some Ayrshires and crosses and ships his milk to Organic Valley.

**Rick Segalla (NODPA Board, CT):** farms in Canaan, Ct and has been involved with NODPA since 2001. He has been certified organic since 1999, milks 100 Holsteins, and ships his milk to Organic Valley.

**Craig Russell (NODPA Board, VT):** Craig farms in Brookfield and Randolph Center, VT, has shipped organic milk since 2006, and has been involved with NODPA since then. He and his wife Angela have 3 children. Their milk is marketed through Organic Valley. They currently milk 50 cows and are raising 70 replacements to slowly grow back the herd. Both Craig and Angela have a BA in accounting and Angela is a CPA. Angela also markets organic beef, chicken and turkey under the Brotherly Farm organic label, and is a huge advocate for the farm to school program.

**Morven Allen (NODPA Board, MA):** Morven has been certified organic for seven years and milks 230 cows of every breed. He farms 1100 acres in Massachusetts and New York. He currently ships milk to Organic Valley has two full time employees and two part-time employees. He is assisted by his 15 year-old son and has been involved with NODPA for many years. ♦

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

**The organic community welcomes the appointment of Francis Thicke to the NOSB**

In a move that has drawn praise from producers, consumers and environmentalist alike, the U.S. Department of Agriculture appointed environmentalist and farmer Francis Thicke, Ph.D. to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) on January 15, 2013, adding the valuable perspective of a working farmer, scientist and activist to this 15-member advisory Board. Francis and Susan Thicke own and operate Radiance Dairy, a grass-based organic farm in southeast Iowa that follows ecological principles in the management of farmland & livestock, the utilization of renewable energy systems for their home and farm, and the production and marketing of their value added dairy products. The Thicques have been farming organically since 1975, got certified in 1992, and moved to a new farm in 1996 changing it from a crop farm (corn and soybeans) to a grass based enterprise. The Thicques restored the hilly fields to productive pasture, and planted the tillable land to perennial grasses and legumes.

Prior to establishing his current organic dairy farm, Francis earned a Ph.D. in soil fertility and has served as a National Program Leader for Soil Science for the USDA Extension Service in Washington, D.C.; he authored a book, titled 'A New Vision for Iowa Food and Agriculture'; ran for Iowa Secretary of Agriculture in 2010; on the board for the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF); he has been active in many environmental organizations including the Iowa Environmental Protection Commission, the Leopold Group Sierra Club in Southeast Iowa, the Iowa Environmental Protection Commission, and Food Democracy Now and was keynote speaker at the 2011 NODPA Field Days, and at the 2011 Acres USA Conference and Trade Show. He was named the 2012 Farmer of the Year by the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service, and is a current member of the Cornucopia Institute's Policy Advisory Panel.

Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan noted that "Dr. Thicke brings a wealth of knowledge of the environmental attributes and is a valuable addition to the NOSB as it carries out its duties."

When asked in an interview with the Lisa McCrory, NODPA News editor, what he thought the organic dairy industry needs to address in order to better serve organic livestock producers, Francis said, "I think we need a concerted research effort focused on organic livestock health. There are lots of practices and products used by organic livestock producers for which we have little or no verification of efficacy. I would like to see researchers team up with organic farmers to verify what works best. I also think that organic livestock producers need to continue sharing their new innovations with each other and with researchers, because most innovations in organic farming come from the farm level." ♦



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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

## Indian Stream Farm, Pittsburg, NH

### A Family Farm With Deep Historical Roots

*continued from page 1*

1832 to 1835), the area was declared a sovereign nation and ran as a Republic with its own currency, stamps and standing militia. But in 1835 the Republic of Indian Stream voted to join New Hampshire and became a part of the United States.

John has strong ties with the area through his heritage and love for the land. One of his descendants, John C. Haynes, was instrumental in the settlement of the area in the late 1700's and in the creation of the Republic of Indian Stream.

#### About the Farm

Indian Stream Farm has been in the Amey family for over 100 years. John has had Cindy-Lou by his side for the past 10 years. "We have mutual farming backgrounds and work well together", says Cindy-Lou. Though she brings in off-farm income from teaching, Cindy-Lou also takes care of the farm recordkeeping and certification paperwork, fills in for absent workers, cares for the chickens, pigs, sheep, horse and contributes to evening chores a few times a week. In the springtime the Amey's host visits from school groups and Cindy-Lou helps to organize these day-long activities.

The farm today consists of 1,550 acres of which 300 acres are tillable, and 150 acres are used for pasture. Though the dairy farm is the largest income generator, the Amey's have a diversified farm bringing in revenue from their timber stand (hard and soft wood lumber, firewood and pulp wood). They also produce about 30-40 gallons of maple syrup and manage a small herd of beef and a flock of sheep for a small local market. John loves to work in the woods; he envisions making a living from his woodland someday, and finding someone else who could be in charge of managing the dairy.

John and Cindy-Lou farm with John's brother, Mark, who works there

part time, along with two college kids who are also part-time. They milk 50 cows, in a tie-stall barn with a pipeline milking system. Average production per cow is about 13,000 and their milk quality and components tend to run around 185,000 SCC, 3.76% Butterfat, 3.1% Protein and 5.51% Other Solids. John has been farming there for 49 years, and Cindy-Lou spent most of her childhood on her grandparent's farm in Canada. Her father's dairy farm is just 2 hours North of Pittsburg, in Ste. Victor de Beauce, PQ Canada. "I had been teaching in Foreign Language here in Pittsburg" explains Cindy-Lou. She even jokes that she came with a dowry when she married John, "a white-faced Hereford with calf, a goat, a Morgan mare, 60 acres with a small barn, and 4 children."

#### Transition to Organic

The roller coaster ride of the conventional market was not an enjoyable one and John and Cindy-Lou were ready to try something different. They had been noticing that organic producers seemed more enthusiastic about their chosen career than conventional producers and decided to take a serious look at transitioning to organic. They initially started talking to Organic Valley about picking up their milk but their farm was too far north for the current OV truck route. They soon had an opportunity to ship to HP Hood, and once they had their

contract they completed the final stages of their transition.

Making the switch only took them a year, as their land was already certifiable, and their livestock management practices were very much in accord with the organic production standards. They started their transition just *after* the 80:20 rule went away, which was one of the most financially challenging years they had ever experienced. Their farm is certified organic through the NH Dept of Agriculture, Markets & Food



Everything was going fine until the day that Hood decided to leave the fluid milk market. Hood producers in VT, NH, NY and Maine were scrambling for someone else to take their milk. Thanks to the valiant effort of Organic Valley, many producers were picked up -



including the Ameys. Over this transition time, Organic Valley made sure that the new producers felt welcome. They organized regular conference calls, helping them get fully on board and integrated into the Organic Valley community of producers. “John participated in almost every single [call], and that’s when he began to truly understand the difference in the ‘OV experience’ from what he’d known up until this point in his farming career”, explains Cindy-Lou.

## Grazing System

The milking herd is moved every 24 hours to a new pasture, except in times of extreme weather when they may need some shade. Heifers and calves are grazed in larger paddocks and are moved less frequently, making sure that they have access to adequate shade, water and feed. “All pastures are improved by pasture mowing, chain harrowing, and the fertility is addressed through the application of manure and wood ash, as indicated through soil testing”, explains John.

About 64% of the total dry matter intake comes from pasture for the milking cows. To supplement the pasture, they feed an average of 10# of a 10% concentrate and offer a small amount of dry hay during the evening milking. Heifers, calves and dry cows are fed hay, baleage and a very small amount of grain. Salt and minerals are offered to all animals and they are looking into the prospect of adding kelp.

The winter ration for the milk cows consists of a 14% concentrate and all the baleage and dry hay that they can eat. The cows are usually offered equal amounts of baleage and dry hay.

## Livestock Health

Since transitioning to organic, the Ameys have found that milk production has gone down a little as a result of feeding a high forage diet. The decrease in production is easily outweighed by the fact that the animals are healthier, herd longevity has increased, and there is a significant reduction in veterinary bills.

Reproductive issues and cases of mastitis have also decreased significantly. They have had great success in reducing cases of milk fever and retained placentas by making sure to supplement their dry cows with dry cow minerals. Products that they commonly turn to on the farm for the occasional mastitis or milk fever include organic garlic, topical udder ointments, aspirin, calcium electrolytes, and CMPK boluses.

Calves are raised indoors and are fed milk for 3-4 months along with free choice hay and the eventual introduction to grain. Calves are started on the Triangle-9 vaccination program at the age of 6 months. For the occasional case of calf scours, their calves are given electrolytes, and a red-clay based powder, added to the milk.

When asked how the ideal veterinarian would work on their farm, John shared a vision of a veterinarian who would be able to stay current on allowable treatment options and medical product information; a veterinarian who would be willing to send out the occasional bulletin or newsletter regarding organic veterinary issues seen in their

*continued on page 27*

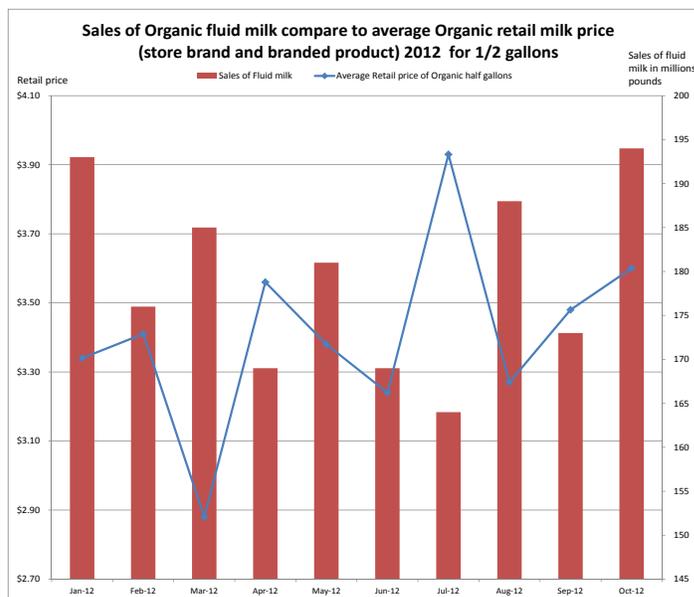
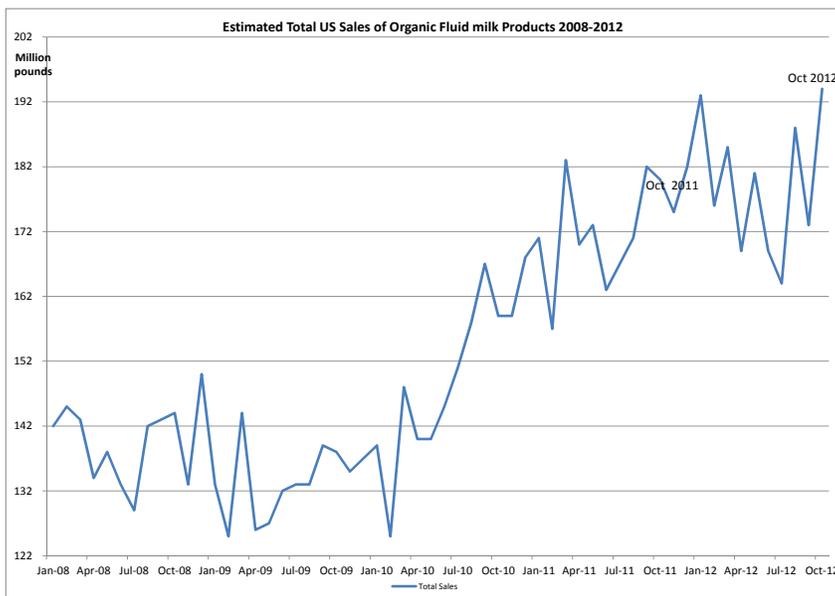
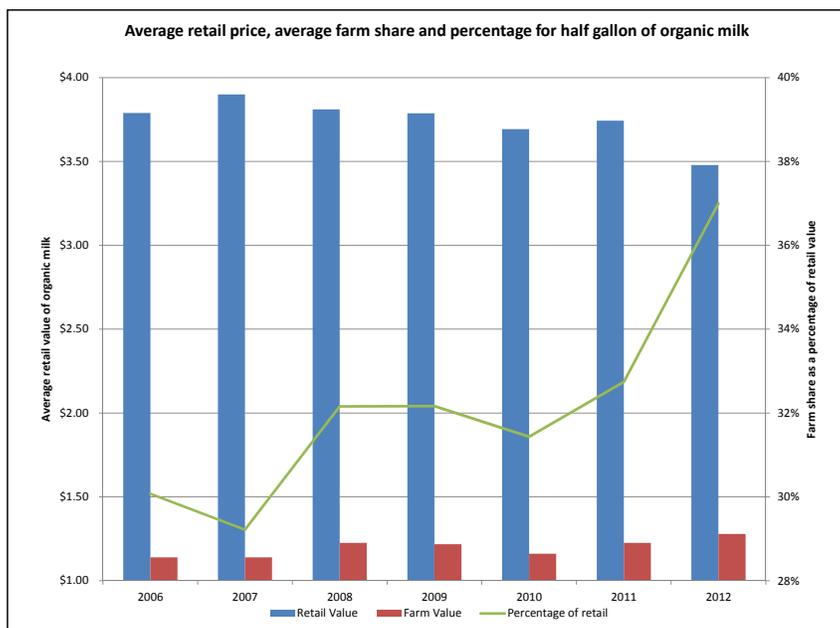
**ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS**

**Feed & Pay Price Update**

*continued from page 14*

that October 2011 and 5% higher over the last 12 months. The trend towards an increase in retail price for store brand organic milk and a shrinking gap between the store brand and branded product has slowed as store brand retail prices are reduced. USDA AMS reported that the national weighted average advertised price of organic half gallons of milk is \$3.29, with a price range of \$2.59 (store brand) to \$4.99 (national brand). The weighted average advertised price for national brands has increased to \$3.92 and for store brands the price has dropped to \$3.10. The advertised price spread between organic and conventional half-gallon milk has increased slightly to \$0.99. The average price spread this year has been \$1.24.

There seems to be no break in the price for feed with 16% crude protein organic feed nearly double what it was in 2010, even with imports of soybeans and substitution of other grains and alfalfa in pelleted mixes. There's not much change in the price of corn and soybeans, but many project an increase in product from Canada, China and South America to provide for the US livestock market. The bushel price for corn and soybeans has remained steady at \$15 and \$28 respectively. The price of soybean meal is steady at \$1,175- \$1,300 per ton depending on location, but still \$400 higher than last year. Corn meal ranges from \$600-700 per ton depending on location. Hay is increasingly more difficult to find and prices are around \$300 per ton. ♦



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## FEATURED FARM

*continued from page 25*

area and elsewhere. In reality, the closest veterinarian is 140 miles away, making frequent visits or emergency calls cost-prohibitive. They currently use their veterinarian once a month for herd health checks.

### Animal Genetics, Breeding, Replacements

The major dairy breed on Indian Stream Farm is Holsteins, but they also have Holstein/Milking Shorthorn and Holstein/Jersey crosses. They breed almost exclusively using AI, focusing on ease of calving, legs and feet. If every cow was bred to dairy genetics, the Ameys might have some surplus dairy replacements to sell, but John and Cindy-Lou have a different approach. They breed some of their lower class cows to a beef bull and raise those calves for their small retail beef market. They have about 30 dairy cross beef and purebred beef animals of all ages most of the time, selling about 10 animals each year.

### Looking to the Future

Though dairy is the primary income-stream from the farm, the Ameys bring in revenue from the sale of timber, beef, sheep, a little maple syrup, and Cindy-Lou's off-farm teaching income. The sheep

enterprise is there partly because "no one has ever not had sheep on our farm", says John.

The side enterprises are small, but the timber enterprise has room for growth. John loves working in the woods and he and Cindy-Lou are starting to look at ways in which they could continue dairy farming without being the primary laborers. For example, Cindy-Lou dreams of one day putting together a "Children's Introduction to Farming" program that they could offer on their farm. They don't want to sell the farm, but finding a young aspiring farmer looking to build some equity or to gain some experience might be the perfect fit for their operation

John and Cindy-Lou attended their first NODPA Field Days in 2005, when it convened at the University of New Hampshire. They have been members and supporters of NODPA since that time and Cindy-Lou recently agreed to become a NODPA Representative. When looking at the organic dairy industry as a whole, they note that issues that concern individual regions within the U.S. are not addressed by the 'one size fits all' regulations being promoted at the federal level. They often turn to NOFA Vermont if they have questions and are very grateful for all the support that they have provided them over the years. They are happier now with farming than they have ever been; the organic pay price has allowed the Ameys to hold at a herd size that suits them. They can't compete with the speed of their neighbors, nor do they have to. "I am a 3-tractor farm with a 2-horse attitude", says John with a grin. ♦

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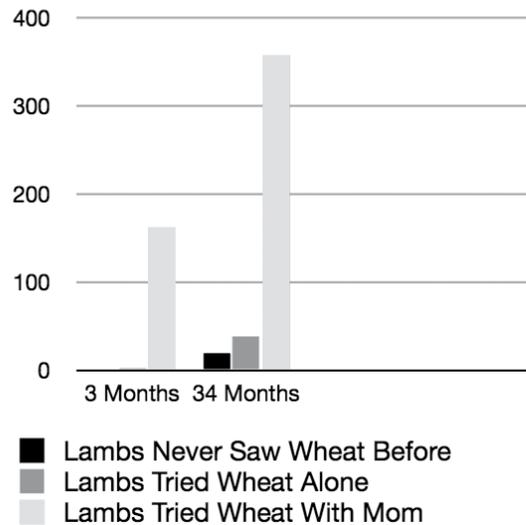
**Weed-Eating Heifers**

*continued from page 4*

Over the last two decades researchers studying how animals choose what to eat have found that mother is the single most important factor in determining what the offspring will eat. For example, in this graph, the lambs that tried wheat with their mothers at 3 months ate more then, and later at 34 months of age, they ate significantly more than the lambs who had not eaten with their mothers or had never seen it before. What this shows us is that without Mom to show them what's safe, they won't do as well with new foods.

Since we can't show our livestock what to eat by grazing with them in pasture, we have to use different ways to demonstrate good choices to them. When I was learning how to teach cows to eat weeds, I noticed how quickly they got used to a routine of being fed and decided that I could use that to my advantage. So I created a routine where I showed up with something good to eat every morning and afternoon for four days. You can modify the routine to fit your own schedule, just be sure to come at the same time every day, and give

**Lambs learn best from Mom and remember for years**



them 8 different foods to try over the course of the introduction period. I drew the number of feedings from research that showed that it takes 5 to 10 tries before an animal is comfortable with a new food.

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(see picture). For training I give them the “candy” of the livestock world: things high in protein. Fortunately weeds are quite nutritious, and often are equivalent to alfalfa, so they are very palatable. When I introduce weeds, they’re just one more, kind of strangely shaped candy. So, with these few steps, we can almost replace Mom for our trainees, and teach them what’s good to eat.

If you’re an organic producer with weed issues, you might consider training your replacement heifers to eat them, or you might simply consider introducing pasture forages to your heifers while you’re feeding them in the barn. ♦

*For more on the training process we used, you can visit Kathy Voth’s website at [www.livestockforlandscapes.com](http://www.livestockforlandscapes.com). You can contact Kathy Voth by: phone: (970) 663-6569, or email: [kvoth@livestockforlandscapes.com](mailto:kvoth@livestockforlandscapes.com).*

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**FACT’s Fund-a-Farmer Project:  
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Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) is now accepting grant applications for its Fund-a-Farmer Project! The Fund-a-Farmer Project provides small grants to qualifying humane farmers who need assistance in improving the welfare of their farm animals. Grants of up to \$1,500 will be awarded for projects that (1) help farms transition to pasture-based systems, (2) improve the marketing of their humane products, or (3) more generally enrich the conditions in which farm animals are raised. Working, independent family farmers that raise pigs, broiler chickens, laying hens, dairy cows and/or beef cattle are eligible to apply for any of the three types of grants. Projects involving goats and sheep are only eligible for marketing grants. Applications must be submitted online or postmarked by May 1, 2013 for awards made in August 2013. View guidelines and apply online at [www.fundafarmer.org](http://www.fundafarmer.org). Contact Lisa at [grants@food-animalconcerns.org](mailto:grants@food-animalconcerns.org) or 773-525-4952 with questions. ♦

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Parity Pricing

*continued from page 11*

From the 1980s on the exodus has been forced by the government. Dairy farming is a very hard, demanding occupation, and the continued loss of dairies does not bode well for the long-term food security of our nation. The US continues to lose over 3,000 acres of farm land per day, 365 days per year, and that's not land in set-aside programs or land allowed to revert to forest, that's prime, productive land lost to either development or mining – permanently removed from agriculture. Politicians are so oblivious to the seriousness of the situation that some actually tell FFA students to not get involved in agriculture because food production will be moved overseas in the near future. Can you imagine the lives lost if we depend on foreign countries for our food in the same manner we depend on foreign sources of oil?

Are CAFO's the Answer?

Some will argue that the move towards larger and larger farms results in more efficient production, and that parity pricing would slow the inevitable. Let's look at what we have with large Confined Animal Feedlot Operations (CAFOs):

- They are dependent on cheap, abundant energy

- Free, plentiful water is a must
- Much of the labor force is made up of immigrants, willing to work for minimum wage or less, rather than a living wage
- Huge dependency on herbicides, pesticides, chemical fertilizers, hormones, and antibiotics
- Many environmental concerns with large concentrations of animals in a small area.

Many of the systems CAFOs use in their operations are financed or even paid for by the government (methane digesters, manure storage facilities, heat exchangers, etc.) through grants or cost/share programs. And paying immigrants less than the actual value of their labor is the equivalent of importing cheaper food. Does anyone honestly believe that these types of operations are truly sustainable for many generations? Even though CAFOs may make relatively large profits now, the dependency on cheap, abundant energy and water, along with government subsidies, makes their long-term future virtually impossible. Small family dairy farms, paid parity price for their milk, are truly sustainable with no government payments and no risks to the environment, either short or long term. Also, consumption of conventional fluid milk has been trending downward for decades, which I contend must be influenced to at least a small degree by the taste and quality of the milk being produced on the large CAFOs.

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## Our Government's Cheap Food Policy

What else do we have to show for the government's long standing cheap food policy? We have a country becoming more and more dependent on imported foods. Not only that, but a country where one out of six children suffers from hunger. When you include those that go unreported and those who are malnourished, the numbers are even higher. The cheap food policy gives the government more control, and more reasons to tax, but also leads to additional debt from the programs created that try to deal with hunger in the United States. In short, all the benefits promised by doing away with parity pricing for agriculture have not been born out. In fact, the results have been an absolute disaster when studied against the context of our history.

With the concern regarding the upcoming Farm Bill and the 'Fiscal Cliff', I doubt there's enough wisdom and courage in Washington to do what should be done; there hasn't been for over 30 years. Before there's any hope of the right action being taken, at least three major changes would have to be made in our political system: 1) term limits for Congressmen and Senators, 2) politicians would have to abide by the laws they write for the populace, and 3) no monetary gain in any form

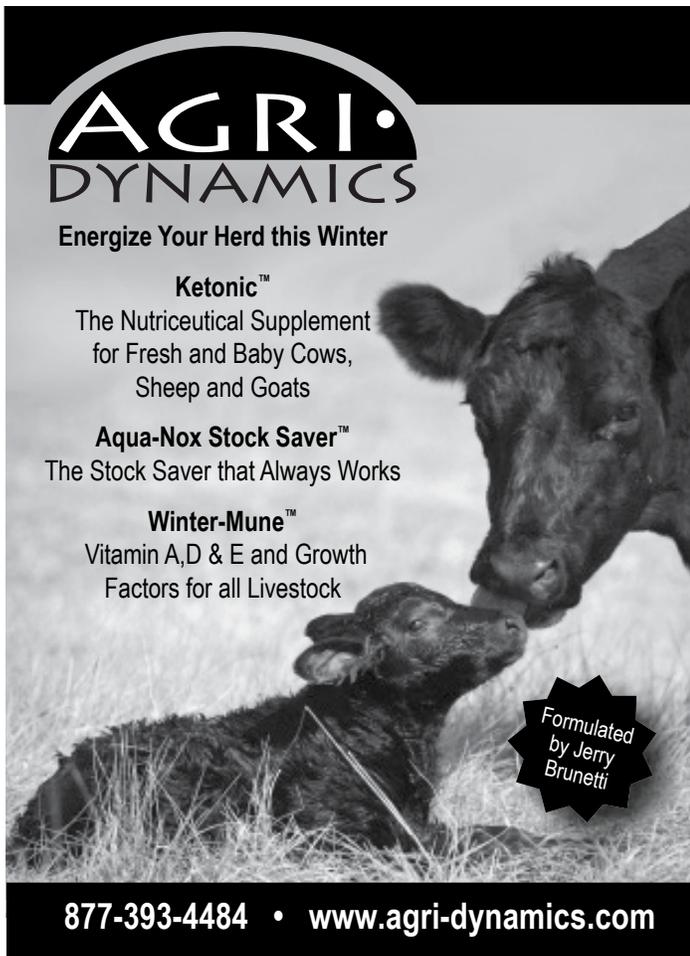
"Even though CAFOs may make relatively large profits now, the dependency on cheap, abundant energy and water, along with government subsidies, makes their long-term future virtually impossible."

from the government once a politician leaves office. Our founding fathers never envisioned the noun 'career' being used as an adjective for the noun 'politician', and that represents the biggest problem with our State and Federal governments. They also never envisioned food being taken for granted in the US and the disastrous policies that would result.

So, with regard to conventional milk production, I doubt we will see a return to parity pricing in our lifetimes. Organic farming has always held out the hope that farmers would be more fairly compensated for their efforts. Presently, that is not the case. Consumers have shown they are willing to pay a higher price for organic food, which doesn't have any hidden costs like conventional food. The

fact that organic dairy farmers receive an even smaller percentage of the consumer dollar than conventional dairy farmers does not bode well for the future. Parity pricing, or at least 90% of parity, would allow organic farmers to compete for land, encourage young people to return to the family farm, and provide consumers with the money to be able to purchase organic products. Currently, that money is being stolen from organic farmers and heading them down the same path as conventional dairies.

*continued on page 32*



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**ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS**

**Price Parity**

*continued from page 31*

On another note, I'm sure everyone has read about the impending financial crisis our country faces. The massive debt that we continue to accumulate will lead to the collapse of our economy and eventually, not just the steady inflation we've had since doing away with a par economy, but hyper-inflation. On the present course our country will go into receivership. No one can agree on what to do because none of the politicians want to give up the power and control the government has accumulated. Many of the more pessimistic economists believe that the collapse should be happening right now. Oddly enough, there are some signs that the economy is improving, such as the unemployment rate edging downward and industrial output edging upward. The reason for the surprising trends, which none of the experts seem to know why, is that conventional grain prices and a lot of other agricultural commodities have been rising towards their parity price for over a year. Organic grain farmers are actually receiving parity price, so they are justly compensated for the raw materials they provide. That in turn provides the money for the people employed in the industrial and service sectors to purchase the end products that use those commodities. A par exchange between all sectors of the economy would eventually result in balanced government budgets, and a restoration of our freedoms.

**Conclusion**

To summarize, parity prices for agriculture will not result in over supplies of raw materials. The only time in the last 100 years that there have been agricultural surpluses is when prices were at less than parity, because at less than parity the income needed to consume the production is not created – there isn't enough earned income moving through the economy. Instead, the income is being concentrated in a few hands and the government is forced to borrow money to operate. With the subsequent inflation and at less than parity prices, farmers are forced to increase the supply of the products they produce if they want to stay in business. The parity price for raw milk in November of 2012 was \$52.10/cwt., or about \$4.50/gallon. Consumers are paying well over \$8.00/ gallon for organic milk, but organic dairy farmers are only receiving about \$2.75 out of that approximately \$8.50. The selling price could remain the same while \$4.50/gallon was paid to organic dairy farmers, based on the markups used with conventional milk. Currently, for all practical purposes that additional \$1.75/cwt., which should be paid to the producer of the raw material, is being stolen. If organic dairy farmers were paid parity price for their milk, the way organic grain producers currently are for their grain, then organic agriculture, and the United States, would have a bright future. ♦

*Kevin Engelbert farms in Nichols, NY with his wife Lisa. He recently completed a five year term on the NOSB, from 2006 to 2011.*

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- In New York, contact David Hardy at (608) 479-1200 or [david.hardy@organicvalley.coop](mailto:david.hardy@organicvalley.coop).
- In Pennsylvania/Maryland, contact Peter Miller, at 612-801-3506 or [peter.miller@organicvalley.coop](mailto:peter.miller@organicvalley.coop)
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# Calendar

January 31-February 2, 2013

**Soil and Nutrition Conference: Putting Principles into Practice**

First Churches, 129 Main St, Northampton, MA

Sponsored by NOFA/Mass and Bionutrient Food Association, this conference aims to grow the movement for enhancing soil fertility as a basis for the long-term ecological and economic sustainability of farming, the environment, and society as a whole. The lead speaker is John Kempf from Middlefield, OH, with Dan Kittredge and Derek Christianson as co-panelists. A detailed outline of the conference can be found online. For more information, Contact: Ben Grosscup at 413-658-5374 or e-mail ben.grosscup@nofamass.org.

**Feb 6 - 9, 2013, PASA's 22nd Farming for the Future Conference**

State College, PA

For more information, contact Kristin: Kristin@pasafarming.org, call (814) 349-9856 or go to: [www.pasafarming.org](http://www.pasafarming.org).

**February 7-8, 2013, 2013 Northeast Pasture Consortium Annual Meeting**

Radisson Hotel, Manchester, NH

This two-day meeting that precedes the NH Grazing Conference will be filled with workshops, discussions, and speakers on topics ranging from the economics of confinement vs. grazing operations, bedded packs, current research, and much more. Pasture research coordination and facilitation is a big part of the program this year. Contact Jim Cropper for more information at [jbcropper@yahoo.com](mailto:jbcropper@yahoo.com), Phone: 336 855-7594

**February 9, 2013, 2013 Granite State Grazing Conference**

Radisson Hotel, Manchester, NH

The conference will tackle the tough issues surrounding making a pasture-based farming enterprise economically viable, looking at ways to reduce costs and increase incomes. Keynote speaker Steve Taylor, New Hampshire's retired Commissioner of Agriculture, will discuss the history and future of farm economics in the Granite State. Topics for the day include pasture economics, winter feeding strategies, drought grazing strategies, alternative pasture plants and tillage methods, soil health, and more. More information go to [www.grazenh.com](http://www.grazenh.com) or contact Bill Foshier at 603-399-9975 or [news@grazenh.com](mailto:news@grazenh.com).

**February 10-12, 2013**

**'It Takes a Region' Annual NESAWG Conference and 20th Anniversary Celebration, Saratoga Hilton in Saratoga Springs, NY**

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, go to: [www.nefood.org/page/annual-conference](http://www.nefood.org/page/annual-conference) or contact Ruth Katz: Phone (914) 231-9206, Email: [ruthkatz@nesawg.org](mailto:ruthkatz@nesawg.org).

**February 16 - 17, 2013**

**NOFA VT's 31st Annual Winter Conference: "Generations of Innovations", University of Vermont, Burlington, VT**

For more information, go to: <http://nofavt.org/annual-events/winter-conference>, or call: 802-434-4122.

**February 16-17, 2013**

**Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) 34th Annual Conference, Granville, OH**

The theme for this year's conference is "Growing Opportunities, Cultivating Change". For more information, call 614-421-2022, ext. 205 or visit [www.oeffa.org](http://www.oeffa.org).

**February 21-23, 2013, 24th Annual MOSES Organic Farm Conference**

Lacrosse, Wisconsin

For more information, call 715-778-5775 or visit the website: [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org)

**March 1, 2013**

**NOFA NY's 2013 Organic Dairy and Field Crop Conference**

Auburn, NY

For more information, please go to: [www.nofany.org/dairyconference](http://www.nofany.org/dairyconference) or call: (585) 271-1979

**March 10-12, 2012, California Small Farm Conference**

Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, Fresno, CA

This 3-day educational conference includes day-long short courses and on-farm tours; focused workshops; engaging keynote addresses; and numerous networking opportunities. For more information call 916-231-2141 or visit [www.smallfarmconference.com](http://www.smallfarmconference.com).

**March 16, 2013, Biodynamic Animal Husbandry**

Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oks, CA

Explore the meaning of animal care from the biodynamic perspective. The class will discuss the role of the domestic animal and the role of the farmer in relation to the animal and the farm organism. Topics include proper nutrition, organic animal shelters, economics of raising animals, and how to develop an eye for your animals. For more information visit: [www.steinercollege.edu](http://www.steinercollege.edu).

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*continued on page 40*

## NET UPDATE

### Recent ODairy Discussions

*By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Producer,  
NODPA President*

#### **Robust discussions about temporary variances in pasture regulations, herd management software, and how to control a Staph aureus infection.**

There was an energetic discussion on the merits and consequences of the NOP's temporary variances granted last fall. These variances in the pasture regulations were granted due to the widespread drought conditions last summer to operations in certain counties throughout the U.S. There was an additional variance for non-irrigated operations in New Mexico, where the prolonged drought led to significant pasture deterioration. Some producers were surprised that the New Mexico dairies were given such a variance, and they brought up the very touchy subject that certain areas of the country just may be unsuitable for organic production. One commenter suggested that if dairies in the desert cannot meet the requirements, then they should not exist there. Another producer asked that we look at what is extreme in an area, and what is normal. The process of adapting regulations to truly extreme and unusual weather conditions is a benefit to all; but if variances occur regularly, then perhaps the climate there makes organic production too precarious. There were other farmers who felt very affected by the drought, but were not included in the list of affected counties.

A farmer asked for suggestions about software others might be using to manage their herds. He was looking for something not "crazy expensive". Another producer suggested Tamboro, an on-line system for organizing herd information.

Half of a 65-head herd was infected with Staph aureus. Since it can only be controlled, not cured, the farmer asked of a way to kill off a quarter using allowable substances. A farmer suggested that iodine will do the job, but proposed that the certifier be questioned about this method. A veterinarian on the list suggested that the problem is really not how to kill off a quarter, but how to clean up the herd. He recommended that producers with this problem should "honestly look at yourself, your facilities/equipment, management and milking procedures, cleanliness, etc and put together a team (vet, nutritionist, extension/university, specialists, industry, etc) to build a plan. In reality, and with a holistic view, culling is the only answer." For all of us, culling half the herd is just not a reasonable option. Make culling choices based on age, chronicity, stage of lactation, physical palpation (lumpy quarter), and other factors such as lameness, demeanor, difficult to breed, etc.

Another farmer has battled Staph aureus for years. She began by leg banding all the positive cows so they could always be milked last. Then all the milking equipment was washed and sanitized before the next use. They became aware of different strains of the

*continued on page 37*

## Website & E-Newsletter Advertising

NODPA is pleased to provide additional advertising opportunities for our organic dairy supporters and resource individuals through our Website and our monthly E-Newsletter.

### Website Advertising

Three ad spaces are located at the top of the home page and at least 10 other pages on NODPA's website. NODPA.com receives over 2500 visits each month navigating to an average of 3 pages per visit.

**Ad Design:** Display-ready ads should be 275 pixels wide by 100 pixels tall. Your ad can link to a page on your website.

**Cost:** Display-ready ads are \$150 per month.

### E-Newsletter Advertising

Two ad spaces are located at the top of each E-Newsletter, going out monthly to over 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 \$125 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](mailto:Lmccrory@hughes.net)

**Phone:** 802-234-5524

Go to the following web page for more information:

[http://www.nodpa.com/web\\_ads.shtml](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](http://www.nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml)

## Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance Producer Milk Check Assignment Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (please print name on your milk check)  
 request that \_\_\_\_\_ (name of company that sends your milk check)  
 deduct the sum of :

\_\_\_\_\_ \$0.02 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$0.05 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA (the amount that has been deducted in the past for national milk marketing but can now be returned to you as an organic producer if you have applied for the exemption.) If you need assistance in applying for the exemption, check here \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$0.07 per hundredweight (the \$.05 marketing check-off plus \$0.02)

as an assignment from my milk check starting the first day of \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_\_\_. The total sum will be paid monthly to NODPA. This agreement may be ended at any time by the producer by sending a written request to their milk buyer with a copy to NODPA.

**Milk handlers please send payments to:**  
 Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA), Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342

Producer signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Producer number/ member no: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of milking cows: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Certifying Agency: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Farm Address: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Subscribe to the NODPA News and support NODPA!

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

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

_____ \$35 to cover an annual subscription to NODPA news	_____ \$300 to \$500 to become a Friend
_____ \$50 to become an Associate member (open to all)	_____ \$500 to \$1,000 to become a Patron
_____ \$100 to become a supporter of NODPA	_____ \$1,000+ to become a Benefactor
_____ \$150 to become a Business Member	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Are you a certified organic dairy producer? YES NO  
 Number of milking cows \_\_\_\_\_ Milk buyer \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Credit card: Master Card Visa Card #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_ \_\_ 201\_\_ Security Code on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

**Subscription Renewal***continued from page 1*

sending out renewal reminders. Shortly after you receive this newsletter you will receive an invoice reminder for an annual subscription to support NODPA's work and continue receiving NODPA's bi-monthly print publication.

As you consider how to support NODPA you may be wondering where your money goes and what it supports. We believe our job is to devote all our resources to representing the views and needs of organic dairy farm families, especially around pay-price and organic integrity; to provide producers and all those interested in organic dairy with information, opinion, news, production advice and support; to represent producers' opinions to USDA NOP and to Congress; and to be that squeaky wheel or loud megaphone that reminds folks that without organic dairy producers there is no product to process, package, market, distribute, sell and consume.

**What will your dues, subscriptions and donations be used for in 2013?**

**Pay price and net farm incomes:** with only two national buyers of organic milk, producers are left with few choices when selling their milk and very little leverage in any negotiations on pay-price. NODPA will continue to advocate directly to processors, retailers and consumers about the need for a fair price for producers and a fair share of the retail dollar. NODPA will continue to meet with processors and will provide the media with information that highlights the inequity that organic dairy producers face: loss of net income, no return on equity, increased input costs, and feed prices which are double what they were in 2010. At the very least, organic dairy producers should have the same share of the retail dollar as conventional dairy.

**DC and USDA Representation:** with Congress in disarray and many different interest groups advocating for their positions, NODPA as an executive committee member of the National Organic Coalition and as a member of the National Sustainable Agricultural Coalition, New England Farmers Union and Accredited Certifiers Association, will ensure that the producer voice is heard and paid attention to as policy and regulations are made. In 2013 we will see lots of important activity within the National Organic Program which will include: the Origin of Livestock Proposed Rule; vaccines; simplifying organic certification; GE testing and contamination of organic crops; GE labeling; availability of organic seed; and cost share for certification expenses.

**Six issues of the NODPA News delivered to your door or your email:** Under the expert editorial control of Lisa McCrory and the dedicated graphic design of Chris Hill, we are committed to continuing the high quality and independence which the NODPA News has become known for. The article and opinions expressed will be relevant and carefully researched and we will continue to feature articles from leaders of the organic community.

**Twelve E-Newsletters and a website that is regularly updated**

**and easy to navigate:** As the NODPA News provides information for those that enjoy the printed format, the newsletter and website carry most of our published articles plus other reference documents that are useful to both producers and the media. NODPA is a primary source of information for many media outlets and our website provides an independent analysis of organic dairy plus many features on farm families that actually produce the organic milk.

**NODPA-ODAIRY Listserv:** NODPA moderates and provides technical support to this unique and highly respected list serve that allows civil discourse on everything of interest (or not) to organic dairy producers, consumers, regulators, reporters and professional administrators. Posts to the listserv can be highly opinionated views or simple exchange of information similar to those conversations that usually take place in the parking lot after a meeting, where the peer mentoring and education really happen. All posts are archived on the NODPA website for future reference.

**13th Annual NODPA Field Days and Annual Meeting:** In 2013 we will build on the success of the 2012 Field Days and provide an educational event that allows for folks to visit, eat well and express their opinions within a relaxed setting. ♦

*When that invoice comes through your door do not hesitate to write out a check and send it back immediately, before it gets lost on the pile. Or, go to the NODPA website and pay online. Thank you for your support; we can't do this without you!!*

## NET UPDATE

**Odairy Discussion Updates***continued from page 35*

bacteria, and now mark the cows with another color leg band -- one for new cases, and one for chronic cases (had it for a year or so). They milk the new cases before the chronic cases as some of these new cases will self-cure. Cows are sampled and cultured at dry-off and at freshening, and the whole herd is sampled and cultured twice a year. They use a separate dip cup for Staph cows.

A farmer reported that there are vaccines available for Staph aureus, and asked if they work. One producer put her herd on the vaccine schedule recently, and it is a bit early to say if it is a great success. Her vet believed it to work as long as the farmer is committed to following the schedule of shots. Her vaccination protocol is as follows: Heifers - vaccinate at 6 months with a booster 4 weeks later, then vaccinate again at 18 months. Vaccinate cows and heifers 2 to 3 weeks before freshening. Vaccinate cows at dry off.

In a summary, it was recommended to "leave no stone unturned" in the vigilance required to keep a Staph aureus problem in check. Change inflations every 90 days. Check procedures, equipment, facilities, nutrition, stray voltage, vaccination, mycotoxins, fly control, water quality, etc. The organism can become sequestered in multiple organs. It is the environment and management practices in which the animal lives that allow organisms like this to get settled into the animal. ♦

# Classified Ads

## Feed and Bedding:

**For Sale:** NOFA-NY Organic Certified Medium Red CLOVER SEED and TIMOTHY SEED. Germination tested. Cleaned and bagged here at farm. Call Mitchell Farms (Jeff) @ 607-566-8477 or Mitchellorganics@hotmail.com (Avoca, NY)

**First cut round bale hay and baleage** \$50ea and Second cut baleage \$60ea. All hay net wrapped and currently stored inside.

Contact: Brendan Holmes  
 Email: mistybrookorganicfarm@yahoo.com  
 Phone: 413-477-8234  
 Location: Albion, ME & Barre, MA

## Livestock for sale:

**Organic Dairy Herd For Sale:** 10 Jersey, 10 Holstein, 17 Crosses. Somatic cell count 125K, currently shipping 1900# every other day from 30 cows. Haylage, grain, and dry hay diet. Price: asking \$50,000 for all 37 head - Owner: Darrin VanOrsdale is selling because of a personal health issue, but is keeping his youngstock because he wants to get back into production in another year. Phone: 315-729-8399. Other contact: "Huck" Heintz, NYFarmNet, 607-792-3676; Also has about 75 bales of balage for sale.

**Short on forages and need to sell some springing organic**

**heifers.** I have nine holstein and two jersey-holstein crosses first calf heifers. All are bred to a jersey bull. Asking \$1700 each or best offer. I also have a few more due to freshen in about 30 days. A good time to call is between 10 am till 11 am. Bill Casey, Apulia Station, NY email: bill5308@aol.com Phone:315 683-5674

**Organic dairy herd for sale:** 24 first calf heifers, 18 holsteins, rest are color breeds. Some are recently fresh; 5 due in April, 5 due in May. Milked in tie stall, low SCC. Steve Lyon 2153 Farmer's Valley Road, Troy PA 16947 (Bradford County) 570-297-4269

## Looking for:

**Looking for an A2 polled genetics home dairy cow** that I will be milking by hand. Spring, early or late, calving. Seasonal milking. I would like a dual purpose dairy type, Jersey, or similar. Am looking for polled because the cattle pasture with my Haflinger mare who is currently pregnant. Also, as a certified biodynamic farm, I cannot remove horns from cattle. Charlie Greene, Phone: 315-246-5727

Email: cgreene@greenemeadow.com, (location) Moravia, NY.

## Employment:

**Wanted:** Organic Crop Management and Implementation Specialist at Adams Dairy, Eleva, WI. Full-time, salaried position. Becky (715) 287-3274 or adamsdairy@hotmail.com

### 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



**Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc.**  
GENERATIONS OF QUALITY

**ATTENTION ORGANIC DAIRY FARMERS:**

Upstate Niagara is a member owned dairy cooperative dedicated to only the highest quality dairy products.

If you are interested in membership with our award winning team, please contact Mike Davis at 1-800-724-MILK  
[www.upstateniagara.com](http://www.upstateniagara.com),





## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## From The MODPA Treasurer

Greetings to all of my fellow organic farmers. I hope this winter has been kind to you so far. Here in the Upper Midwest it has been a bit of a roller coaster ride. It has been cold, but seems to break every few days, which is nice for the chores. Things have been thawing out about the time that the real winter freeze seems to be taking effect. Last week we barely made it to 20 degrees most days, and this week it will be above freezing everyday. My hands and feet will enjoy working this week.

This will be a tough winter for many with the lack of feed and the lack of a more suitable pay price to afford the feed many of you may be short of. We will be one of the victims of this year's woes. Our cows are scheduled to go to sale on the 18th of January. We are hoping to salvage some of our youngstock for the future. I am hoping that this is only a hiatus from milking for the short term. It will give me the opportunity to get my shoulder reconstruction

surgery; I am looking forward to reduced pain. I plan to continue to be active with MODPA. This time might actually benefit MODPA as most of us have been very busy. I plan to use some of my time to get MODPA more involved on many of the issues facing organic dairy farmers.

The current pay price will not be sustainable into the future. I don't feel it is fair to expect crop farmers to be in the same boat as dairy farmers where we are basically forced to belly up to a trough and hope that the processors throw us a few crumbs to live on. We cannot afford to go down the same path as conventional dairy. The processors have a golden opportunity to make the most of the current situation to return some of the profit to their farmers. The widespread publicity about this year's drought can be used to our advantage. We all need to educate the consumer on how little of their food dollar is returned to the farmer as I believe the majority of people who buy organic are not aware of how little is actually returned to us. I have heard for years about how there is no more money in the marketplace to pay the farmer more for the food they produce. I truly believe that if the consumer knows that their food dollars are going back to the farmer they will dig a little deeper in their pocket. I think this is one of the biggest flaws in the organic community in general.

One of the ideas being kicked around in the organic community is for an organic check-off. I believe the farmer is already burdened enough. Our processors and marketers already have a budget to promote our products. They have the ability to control a lot of their costs, a farmer does not. Most farmers do not have the ability to add onto their bottom line to allow for this type of expense. If this is put into effect, we need to make certain that the farmers who will be paying the bill for this also have the ability to have control over such a venture. Otherwise it becomes little more than a tax on us. If the conventional check-off is any indication, this is a waste of our time and money.

I hope that many of you have the opportunity to take in some time at one or more of the many conferences that are scheduled throughout the winter. They are usually a good time and many times I have come with new ideas that were beneficial. Maybe I will see some of you at one of them.

May you all have a safe, healthy and prosperous balance of the winter!

*Bruce Drinkman*

*MODPA Treasurer*

*Glenwood City, Wisconsin*

## About MODPA

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

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

## MODPA Board

## Wisconsin

Darlene Coehoorn, President  
Viewpoint Acres Farm  
N5878 Hwy C  
Rosendale, WI 54974  
ddviewpoint@yahoo.com  
Phone: 920-921-5541

Jim Greenberg, Vice-President  
EP 3961 Drake Avenue  
Stratford, WI 54484  
greenbfms@tznnet.com  
Phone: 715-687-8147

John Kinsman, Secretary  
E2940 County Road K  
La Valle, WI 53941  
Phone: 608-986-3815  
Fax: 608-986-2502

Bruce Drinkman, Treasurer  
3253 150th Avenue  
Glenwood City, WI 54013  
bdrinkman@hotmail.com  
Phone: 715-265-4431

John Kiefer, Director  
S10698 Troy Rd

Sauk City, WI 53583  
taofarmer@direcway.com  
Phone: 608-544-3702

Jim Small, Director  
26548 Locust Ave.  
Wilton, WI 54670  
Tel: 608-435-6700

## Iowa

Andy Schaefer, Director  
25037 Lake Rd  
Garnavillo, IA 52049  
Tel: 563-964-2758

## Michigan

Ed Zimba  
Zimba Dairy  
7995 Mushroom Rd  
DeFord, MI 48729  
zimbadairy@tband.net  
Phone: 989-872-2680

## Ohio

Ernest Martin, Director  
1720 Crum Rd  
Shiloh, OH 44878  
Phone and Fax: 419-895-1182

## Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)

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

Prsrt Std  
US Postage Paid  
Permit 8  
S. Deerfield, MA

### CALENDAR

*continued from page 34*

#### **March 14, 2013, The 9th Annual Grain Growers Conference**

Essex Resort and Spa, Essex, VT

Stephen Jones, Ph.D. will be joining us to highlight the challenges and successes of bringing small grains back to areas that have been without them. Stephen is a wheat breeder and the Director of The Northwestern Washington Research Center of Washington State University in Mount Vernon. Julie Miller Jones, Ph.D. CNS, LN will discuss William Davis' book "Wheat Belly: Fact and Fad" and will discuss the ways wheat has changed for the better. Klaas and Peter Martens will lead workshops including soils and cover crops, small grain processing and hulling, and much more.

For more information or questions about the 2013 conference, call 1-802-524-6501 or email Heather Darby, [heather.darby@uvm.edu](mailto:heather.darby@uvm.edu) or Erica Cummings, [erica.cummings@uvm.edu](mailto:erica.cummings@uvm.edu).

#### **March 2-5, 2013**

**National Farmers Union Convention: Making Waves in Agriculture**  
Springfield, MA

This is the first time in NFU's 111-year history that its convention will be held in New England. Come help us showcase the diverse agriculture of this region. Tell 600 farmers from around the country how vital and important New England agriculture is. For more information, go to [www.newenglandfarmersunion.org](http://www.newenglandfarmersunion.org) or call: 413.625.3051. Register today for early bird specials!



### Get Your NODPA Gear Today!

**Hat = \$15.50**

**T-shirt = \$13.50**

**Bumper Sticker = \$1.25 each**

(or) 25 for \$19.75

*Shipping Included*

**Make check payable to: NODPA.**

**Send to: NODPA, c/o Ed Maltby**

**30 Keets Rd., Deerfield, MA 01342**