NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Featured Farm: Dykstra Farms, Burlington, WA

Finding Ways to Stay Profitable in Organic Dairy

By Lisa McCrory, NODPA News Editor

Andrew Dykstra and his family have a certified organic vegetable, seed and dairy farm located in Burlington, Washington (Skagit County). Their farm consists of about 600 acres of which 500 are tillable. In any given year, about 500 acres are used for pasture and/or silage with 30-40 acres committed to vegetable and seed production. The vegetables have been a large part of the farm for the past 20 years and seed production has been in place for the last 15 years. Due to increased regulation around human food crops (Food Safety Modernization Act), the cost of growing vegetables has increased significantly with little increase in market pay price. Andrew finds crops that pay well, and grows them; "Whatever people

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SAVE THE DATE

The 13th Annual NODPA Field Days

September 26 & 27, 2013

Mansfield, PA

NODPA's 13th annual Field Days' program, *Organic Dairy: Innovative Strategies to Stay Profitable* is coming together and promises to have activities and educational sessions that will interest everyone. This year's event will be at the Mansfield Hose Company Banquet Hall

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the NODPA President

Several years ago at a NODPA Field Days, a group of farmers were discussing how they managed their different soil types. Some of them had great soil, some had more challenging soil. As we were talking about the difficulties of farming on clay, one farmer said, "I know all about clay. In the spring, you wait and wait until it is ready, and you get a total of about eleven minutes of perfect conditions to get your whole crop in!"

I thought about that statement today (in mid-April in way-up Northern New York), when a small part of my vegetable garden was dry enough to work quickly and plant some peas. In just that one spot, the heavy clay was just right to hit with the tiller. The wind was fiercely blowing up some rain, and I felt it spitting on my back as I ran the seeder over the narrow tilled row. Yup, eleven minutes.

It is exciting to get the planting done in these windows of opportunity. Spring makes our hearts feel alive again, looking forward to the promise of another growing season. And as the pasture fields green up and wave with their new growth, we know that we have made it through another winter. This was a difficult winter for many producers as last summer's drought impacted the region's feed supply. Thankfully, farmers are like the land. We are resilient. Like the pasture field that was burned and brown last year, and emerges in spring bright green with new growth, the farmer looks with optimism to the new seasons ahead.

All the best for your spring work!

Liz Bawden, NODPA President

Hammond, NY

Phone: 315-324-6926

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA Desk May, 2013

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

The Federal Farm Bill is starting to ramp up as we go to press and, although it will be mostly a repeat of the 2012 process (especially for dairy), we stay committed to ensuring that the needs of producers are protected and at least heard. The Organic Trade Association (OTA) continues to lobby directly for an organic check-off, a study of the feasibility of one is included in the draft of the Senate Agricultural Farm Bill and we anticipate an amendment in the House Bill. Despite overwhelming protests from producers and producer groups, the inclusion of this type of language in a Farm Bill fully illustrates that OTA will not follow its own process or listen to the wider community. We do not have the leverage and luxury of large coffers or a dedicated Washington DC presence but we have developed successful partnerships with consumer and environmentalist groups that not only present our positions but assist with monitoring policy development in DC. I will be advocating directly to House and Senate folks as part of the National Organic Coalition Annual Policy Day in DC in early June (couldn't afford to attend the OTA's policy conference on May 14-15th) plus I will be participating on a panel at the National Workshop for Dairy Economists and Policy Analysts in Boston. Please watch out for updates and action alerts, especially around the organic check-off and GMO friendly amendments being introduced. It is only by participating that we can affect decisions being made on our behalf.

The committee of producers is working hard to put together a great educational agenda for the 13th NODPA Field Days, which returns to northern Pennsylvania this year with a theme of *Organic Dairy: Innovative Strategies to Stay Profitable*. Trying to balance new ideas with good practical knowledge that can be used daily on an organic farm is always challenging and NODPA's mission is to educate producers on production practices that can be readily applied without large capital investment and will assist in a profitable bottom line. Academic research is necessary but we also need conferences that introduce new ideas and perhaps some more radical thinking on both production practices and policy ideas. If we don't provide that formally from panelists or workshop presenters, it will happen during the networking, gossiping and consumption of good food and beverages (no non-dairy milk juices though!). We hope that you will join us in the last week of September as we chart the future for organic dairy. See the article and NODPA Field Days ad in this issue of the NODPA News.

The White House has named Michael Scuse as Acting Deputy Agriculture Secretary to replace Kathleen Merrigan, who recently resigned. Darci Vetter will fill Scuse's former post as Undersecretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services. Vetter is from an organic farm family in Nebraska.

The National Organic Program (NOP) is reporting that organically certified operations have increased 240% since tracking began in 2002. Today, USDA counts 17,750 certified organic farms and processing facilities in the US, up from about 7,400 in 2002. USDA also estimates that there are now close to 25,000 certified organic operators in more than 100 countries worldwide. According to NOP Deputy Administrator Miles McEvoy, most USDA certified organic operations are on the West Coast, in New England, and in the upper Midwest. In 2012, there was significant growth in the number of operations in California, Iowa, and New England, and slight growth in the number of operations in the southeastern US. There were decreases in the number of operations in parts of the Midwest and some Mountain states. The number of organic dairy operations is not increasing and now one third of all organic milk is produced in the West. Organic milk powder is shipped across country and from abroad to Northeast consumers and manufacturers. Now we have to take into account the effect a drought in Australasia will have on organic cheese. This will all sound familiar to those that milked cows conventionally. We are well down the conventional road where only larger operations can use economies of scale to be profitable The smaller, family owned operations, that are the basis of the survival of the rural economy, must diversify and take non-farm jobs to support their organic dairy habit. Private label organic milk will soon have the largest share of retail sales of fluid product so the hope that pay price can match increases in production costs becomes increasingly difficult. What are the answers to the long-term conundrum of growing and being profitable in the organic dairy wholesale market? Our Field Days keynote speaker, Kevin Engelbert, will have some of the answers which will guarantee to stimulate more spirited discussion from producers.

I am hearing and seeing a lot of winter damage to the hay and forage crops as well as to some pastures. In the Midwest and some areas of the Northeast, winter small grains didn't come through this winter in good shape. Supplies of hay and forage may well be short this year as farmers have been forced to use the entire inventory with a slow spring in many areas. Purchased grains are going to remain high with forward contracts at the same or slightly higher than 2012. There's no sign of any other costs being lowered so we trust that organic processors will appreciate the real economic conditions and maintain their pay prices at the current level into the fall, when seasonal payments will start to kick in again. ◆

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

An Introduction to Holistic Management

By Ann Adams

At Holistic Management International (HMI) we work to make our curriculum even more accessible and useful to farmers and ranchers, whether we're working with beginning women farmers in the Northeast or experienced ranchers in Texas. As a Whole Farm/Ranch Planning process, Holistic Management helps farmers and ranchers better manage agricultural resources in order to reap sustainable environmental, economic, and social benefits. This "triple bottom line" of benefits can be achieved by more effectively managing resources. There are two key principles and 6 key practices that help people manage holistically. These principles and practices, as a comprehensive adaptive management process, have helped thousands of people around the world achieve some pretty amazing results.

Results

- 300% increase in plant species
- 100% increase in soil carbon
- 400% increase in stocking rate
- 40% decrease in labor
- 50% decrease in bare ground
- 800% increase in soil permeability
- 300% increase in profitability (some as high as 1400%)
- 500% increase in riparian bird population
- 900% increase in rooting depth of plants

*** Note:** These results are compiled from multiple research sources (some on farm by the producers themselves). Not everyone who practices Holistic Management has achieved these results.

The Principles

Holistic Management is based on two key principles:

1. Nature functions in wholes
2. Understand your environment

The first principle focuses on the idea of holism, helping us to shift our paradigm to focus on building symbiotic relationships in all our management decisions. We have to pay attention to the relationships between the different aspects of the whole. Anytime you change one thing, it impacts other areas of your life. We keep that in mind with Holistic Management by using a holistic goal to help us keep focused on the big picture and reduce unintended consequences.

The second principle is to help people focus on understanding that all tools do not have the same effect in different environments. We must determine where the environment we are managing is on the brittleness scale (a scale linked to humidity and how quickly dead vegetation breaks down). In a rainforest (a 1 on the scale) there's lots of humidity and vegetation decomposes quickly. In a desert (a 10 on the scale), there's little humidity and vegetation decomposes slowly. With this principle we remember that there are no one size fits all solutions. What may be a "best management practice" in one area of the world could cause problems in another area.

The Practices

Let's take a closer look at the six key steps to practicing Holistic Management.

Practice One—Define what you manage

Define what you manage is looking at the inventory that you are managing. The two key areas of that inventory to define are your

6 Key Practices

1) **Define what you manage**
2) **State what you want**
3) **Aim for healthy soil**
4) **Consider all tools**
5) **Test your decisions**
6) **Monitor your results**

management team (decision makers) and your assets. When defining the management team you focus on who is making management decisions at the various levels of managements. Those people are the ones that should help create a holistic goal and who must have ownership in it. All your assets include what some people refer to as your "resource base," which includes clients and vendors, tangible assets like buildings, equipment, and livestock, and money. Knowing what your inventory is then allows you to better manage it. This step can make you further aware of the influences impacting the inventory that you manage and how you affect them.

Practice Two—State what you want

Working with your other decisions makers on your management team, begin the process of creating your holistic goal—describing the life you want to live, based on your deepest values. To create your holistic goal, ask your management team to describe and create the following statements:

1. **Quality of Life:** The quality of life desired
2. **Behaviors & Systems:** What to create or produce to live that life
3. **Vision:** What must exist to sustain that life in the future

These three different pieces of a holistic goal help the team define the quality of life they want right now which motivates them to manage toward the common ground articulated. It also helps them identify the behaviors, systems, and processes they must put in place to get there. Lastly, it helps them articulate their vision for the future with the legacy they want to leave in regards to their relationships with their communities and the land by describing:

1. How you have to behave
2. The future landscape
3. The future community

In this way the holistic goal provides guidance for both short and long-term decision-making in a way that focuses on desired outcomes and less on problem solving that can lead to unintended consequences.

If you are part of an organization, department, division, or other unit formed for a specific purpose, you will also need to create a mission statement that articulates and clarifies that purpose. Doing so will improve internal alignment and decision making. You must answer the question, "What were we formed to do?" Individuals and farm families do not need to create a mission statement but may choose to do so. The mission should then be addressed in some fashion in your Behaviors & Systems statement to be sure you have a means to fulfill that mission.

Practice Three—Aim for healthy soil

This practice uses four fundamental ecosystem processes in Nature, so you can begin to assess the health of your land and consider it in your management decisions. The four ecosystem processes are:

1. Water cycle
2. Mineral cycle
3. Energy Flow
4. Biological communities

The earliest indicator of ecosystem health is soil cover and soil health. If there is 100% soil cover, made up of living and decaying plants and a great diversity of species, you likely have a healthy

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

environment. You must have a good understanding of ecosystem health to be able to do the next practice effectively.

Practice Four—Consider all tools available

Available Tools to Manage Land

1. Human Creativity
2. Technology
3. Rest
4. Fire
5. Animals and Living Organisms
6. Money & Labor

The tools for managing ecosystem processes fall into six broad categories from which we can select the most appropriate tools to create the outcomes we want based on our knowledge of current ecosystem health while keeping in mind the environment within which we are managing (what natural rules are at play).

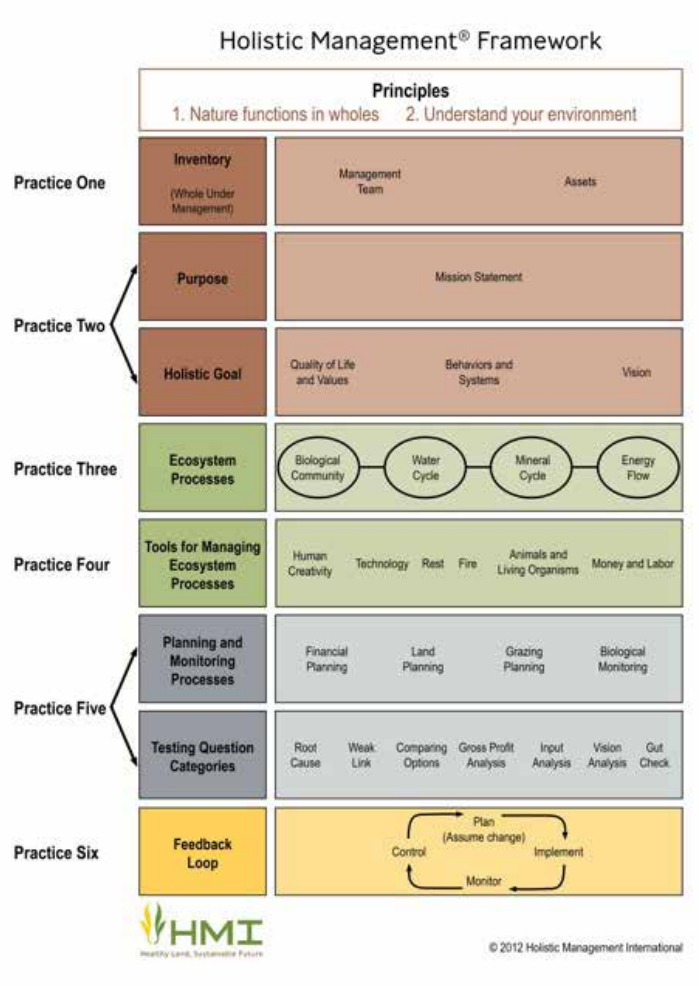
Human creativity and money and labor are required in using the other tools. We have found that Holistic Management helps family farmers improve their creativity and explore how they can better manage resources. In land management, fire, rest, and technology are the most used tools to modify our ecosystem. However, the impact from animals and living organisms can help improve land health, water infiltration, and the land's ability to sequester carbon through grazing and animal impact by many different species—thus providing multiple benefits with less negative consequences.

Tools are neither good nor bad and should be managed within the context of the whole under management. Consider your holistic goal and the degree of brittleness of the environment you manage, along with other factors before you decide whether or not a particular tool is suitable.

Practice Five—Test your decisions

The seven Holistic Management testing questions help us sift through the many factors and complex variables to get to the heart of the matter and help improve decision-making. Ultimately, we are looking at whether the action or decision meets the triple bottom line you have articulated in your holistic goal. These seven tests supplement other considerations when making a decision (research, intuition, cash flow, etc.). The seven tests are:

1. Root Cause—Does this action address the root cause of the problem?
2. Weak Link
   - Social—Are there any social concerns regarding this action?
   - Biological—Does this action address the weakest point in the life cycle of this organism?
   - Financial—Does this action address the weakest link in the chain of production? In my enterprise, what single thing will have the greatest positive impact on my chain of production?
3. Comparing Options—Which action gets the "biggest bang for the buck" toward your holistic goal? Where is your highest return?
4. Gross Profit Analysis—Which enterprises contribute most to cover the fixed costs (overhead) of the business?
5. Input Analysis—Is the energy or money to be used in this action derived from the most appropriate source in terms of your holistic goal? Will the way the energy or money is to be used lead toward your holistic goal?
6. Vision Analysis—Does this action lead toward or away from the Vision articulated in your holistic goal?
7. Gut Check—Considering all the testing questions and your holistic goal, how do you feel about this action or decision now?



Practice Six—Monitor your results

Before you begin to implement a decision, consider any unintended consequences that could arise from your actions. Determine the earliest warning signs that might say you're going off track. Monitor those indicators carefully; take action if things start to go wrong or circumstances change. This is a proactive feedback loop. ◆

If you would like to learn more about Holistic Management, we encourage you to visit www.holisticmanagement.org where you can get a free Introduction to Holistic Management Manual by clicking on the free downloads button.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Meet Your NODPA State Representatives


Siobhan Griffin 'out standing' in her field of dairy cows (2011)

NODPA started in February 2001 at a summit meeting of organic dairy producers in the Northeast after one processor arbitrarily lowered their farm gate price and farmers' future pay price was threatened. These producers came together to discuss critical issues within the organic dairy industry including: maintaining a sustainable milk price; the National Organic Program; alternative milk markets; and building effective communication lines between fellow producers in the Northeast and beyond. NODPA is a grass roots organization of organic dairy producers with minimal bureaucracy and a transparent and open decision-making process open to all those interested in the future of organic dairy. NODPA has remained true to its original goal of advocating on behalf of producers, regardless of whom they sold their milk to, for a sustainable pay price plus to protect the integrity of the USDA Organic regulations. NODPA is a membership organization structured as a 501C5 trade group and is governed by organic dairy producers who meet regularly by conference call and annually in-person as either Board members or State Representatives. NODPA has a very active and committed Board and team of State Representatives that work together with NODPA staff to fulfill the mission of the organization.

In the January 2013 issue of the NODPA News we profiled the current Board members. Below are the State Representatives, all of whom donate their time to fulfill NODPA's mission. Any organic dairy farmer who wishes to become a state representative or just be involved in conference calls and NODPA discussions should call NODPA president, Liz Baldwin – 315-324-6926.

Siobhan Griffin
NODPA Representative, New York

Siobhan owns and operates Rain Dance Organic Farm in Schnevus, NY and has been involved with NODPA since 2002 and she was the host farm for our 2011 NODPA Field Days. Her operation has been certified organic since 1997, and she milks 80 Holstein cows but is making changes to shift her herd to seasonal production. Her milk is sold to Organic Valley, and Siobhan produces a grass-fed semi-hard cheese (Sun Cheese) with a small percentage of her milk during the grazing season (raindanceorganicfarm.org)

Roman and Dwight Stoltzfoos
NODPA Representative, Pennsylvania

Roman, his wife Lucy, and their children, and now grandchildren operate SpringWood Organic Farm, in Kinzers, PA (Lancaster County). Their organic dairy operation is the largest supplier for SE PA Natural By Nature milk. They have a processing plant on the farm where some of the milk and eggs are made into gelato and yogurt; raise organic turkeys; and GMO-Free laying hens follow the grazing dairy herd in free-range style with moveable solar powered coops. Roman has been involved with NODPA since 2001; his farm hosted the first annual NODPA Field Days in 2001, and we returned to his farm in 2009 (www.springwoodfarm.com) for the 9th Annual NODPA Field Days.

Rodney Martin
NODPA Representative, Virginia

Rodney operated Bridge View Dairy in Oxford, PA for 13 years, farming 250 acres and milking 225 crossbred cows (Holstien, Normande, Jersey, Red Dane, Swedish Red) in an intensively grazed, grain-free system. He shipped his milk to Horizon and sold some milk and aged Cheese (among other things) from his farm store. Rodney moved to VA in 2009 onto a small grass farm where he has pastured hens and custom grazes dairy heifers. He currently supports the large dairy community in Virginia and West Virginia as a Representative for Lancaster Ag Products.

Arden Landis
NODPA Representative, Pennsylvania

Arden farms in Kirkwood, Pennsylvania and has been involved with NODPA since 2002. He has been certified organic since 1999 and milked 85 cows (retiring from milking cows in 2010). The breeds on his farm were Holstein, Jersey, Brown Swiss/Holstein crosses and numerous other crosses. Arden shipped his milk to Horizon Organic. Today Arden rears heifers, consults, and is an organic inspector.

John Stoltzfus
NODPA Representative, New York

John farms in Whitesville, New York and has been involved with NODPA since 2002. Their Be-A-Blessing Farm milks about 80 Holsteins and Holstein crossed with Normande. A few years ago,

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SAVE THE DATE!

The 13th Annual NODPA Field Days, September 26 & 27, 2013

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in Mansfield, PA on Thursday and Friday, September 26th and 27th.

This year, NODPA is partnering with Holistic Management International (HMI) to create an agenda that provides the tools for organic dairy farm families to enhance the health, productivity and profitability of their land and family while effectively and significantly increasing annual profits. NODPA Field Days kicks off on Thursday, September 26th with a full morning tour and educational program at Kress and Tammy Simpson's KTS Farm, Mansfield, PA. Along with the Simpsons, HMI personnel will lead a variety of activities on topics ranging from forage assessment, grazing considerations and land/infrastructure planning, with the farm providing the living examples. In addition, since the Simpson's are transitioning their farm to new ownership, we will have the chance to see how that process plays into all of their farm planning and decision making.

Even if you are just getting started in farming, the afternoon's sessions on preparing for your farm's future and succession planning will be informative and useful. You'll learn about the importance of creating a clear vision, developing short and long term goals, and decision making in solidifying the future of your farm.

Following Thursday's education session, we will have our annual Social Hour, Trade Show and banquet, with NODPA's Annual Meeting preceding the keynote address. Back by popular demand, we will feature an Organic Pig Roast for Thursday's banquet. Following dinner, our Keynote Speaker, a pioneer of organic dairy and past NOSB member, Kevin Engelbert, will share his thoughts and experiences on the Future of Organic Dairy with plenty of time to discuss different ideas on the direction of organic dairy.

Friday starts early with continental breakfast and a Producer-Only meeting facilitated by past NODPA President and longtime advocate for organic farmers, Henry Perkins. The morning sessions will be on New Trends in Multispecies Cover Cropping; a 'Live Odairy' Q & A session with Veterinarians Dr. Susan Beal and Dr. AJ Luft (invited) and policy update and news from Washington DC.

Following lunch and the time-honored door prize drawings, the afternoon will be devoted to the on-farm experimental work of growing Sprouted Grains as Fodder. Roman Stoltzfoos, Andrew Dykstra and John Stoltzfus will share their experiences.

You will be able to visit the diverse trade show throughout the meeting, and there will be ample opportunities to catch up with old friends, meet new ones and share common experiences.

More information on the agenda will follow in the July NODPA News and online at http://www.nodpa.com

Look for Sponsorship and Trade Show information in your email boxes in the next few weeks. For more information, or if you have questions about sponsorship or exhibiting, contact NODPA Field Days Coordinator Nora Owens anytime at: noraowens@comcast.net or 413-772-0444. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NODPA Representataives

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John and Tammy were introduced to sprouted grains (Barley Fodder) as a way to provide high quality nutrition to their cows in place of purchased concentrates. They are excited about this new feeding system and share their knowledge by speaking at conferences, on-farm workshops and have self-published a booklet on what they have learned about the system, Their milk is sold to Organic Valley.

L-R Arden Landis, Steve Morrison, and Rob Moore at the 2012 NODPA Field Days

Bill Stine
NODPA Representative, New York

Bill farms 450 acres in Redwood, NY. He has a 32-cow dairy farm, milking Holstein cows. His farm has been certified organic since 2005 and he has been involved with NODPA since 2007. Bill ships his milk to Horizon Organic.

Cindy-Lou Amey
NODPA Representative, New Hampshire

Cindy-Lou farms with her husband, John, in Pittsburg, NH. They have been certified organic since 2006 and ship their milk to Organic Valley. They milk about 50 Holstein, Holstein/Jersey and Holstein/Shorthorn crosses, and have a small side business selling timber, beef and lamb. Cindy has an off-farm job as a teacher, but manages to help a lot with afternoon chores and organizes

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NODPA Representatives

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lots of activities for school farm tours in the spring. They have been NODPA members since 2005.

Bonnie and Tom Boutin
NODPA Representative, Vermont

Bonnie and Tom both come from farming backgrounds; they were raised on dairy farms and knew that this is the life that they wanted for themselves and their children. They milk around 60-75 Holstein, Jerseys and some crosses and farm over 275 acres of owned and rented land. They have been certified organic since 2007, and hope to develop an organic beef market to complement their dairy enterprise. They came to NODPA's 2012 Field Days, and agreed to take a leadership role as a VT Representative for NODPA. They ship their milk to Organic Valley.

Rob Moore
NODPA Representative, New York

Rob farms in Nichols, NY with his wife Pam. Their 8th generation "no grain" seasonal dairy has been certified organic since 1996, and was co-host of the 2005 NODPA Field Days. Their "involvement" with NODPA dates back to participation in the 2001 Organic Dairy Summit meeting in Vermont, the gathering from which NODPA came to be. Rob and Pam have attended most of the annual NODPA Field Days events, including the first at Roman Stoltzfoos' farm, where Rob spoke about no-grain dairying. They currently ship milk from about 50 mostly NZ Friesen/Jersey/Normande cross cows to Organic Valley.

George (Jeep) Madison
NODPA Representative, Vermont

Jeep and his wife JoAnn farm in Shoreham, Vermont. They milk 50-60 Holstein cows and manage over 400 owned and rented acres for pasture and hay. Their farm has been certified organic since 2007, and they have been involved with NODPA for many years. Jeep ships his milk to Horizon Organic.

Brian Wilson
NODPA Representative, Vermont

Brian operates Morningside Farm with his wife Patti and their children in Shoreham, Vermont, farming 600 acres and milking 60-70 Jerseys, Linebacks, and Milking Shorthorns. They have been certified organic since 2002 and have been involved with NODPA for many years. They ship their milk to Organic Valley.

Aaron Bell
NODPA Representative, Maine

Aaron's farm is located in Washington County, along the edge of Maine's easternmost coast. The members of the 8th generation produce organic foods: vegetables, fruit and berries, meat, eggs, and dairy on the 1600 acre farm. Aaron Bell and Carly DelSignore are the husband/wife team that own and operate Tide Mill Organic Farm, the arm of the farm that grows and markets certified organic foods, specializing in produce, meat and milk. Their children are Hailey 8, Paige 6, and Henry 3. Aaron is a founding member of Moo-Milk. (www.tidemillorganicfarm.com). ◆

Bonnie and Tom Boutin at the 2012 NODPA Field Days

Our next issue will introduce you to our 'at large' NODPA Representatives and NODPA Staff. The complete list of NODPA Board, Reps and Staff can be found on page 2 of every NODPA news publication.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

May 2013 Feed & Pay Price Update

Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Organic milk processors and buyers have implemented increases in pay price through seasonal Market Adjustment Premiums (MAP's) and in the Northeast, both Horizon and Organic Valley are paying the same pay price before quality premiums are added, $30-31/cwt when seasonal MAP's are averaged over the whole year, which is only $3 higher than 2008. With Dean Foods finally divesting itself of WhiteWave and the leaders of Dean Foods now controlling White Wave there are plans to further diversify the Horizon brand. The core business at Dean Foods is not as profitable as it has been as it competed against itself by becoming a major player in private-label milk production. Sales of private label in organic and non-organic production have increased as the economy worsened. The current market data shows that Horizon is still the leader for sale of retail fluid product but store brand is now in second place ahead of Organic Valley/Stoneyfield Farm brands. Organic Valley is increasingly competing against its own brand with private label milk supplied by Organic Valley and the Stonyfield brand of fluid milk, which again is Organic Valley milk. As store brand products increase, the organic premium is diminishing. Add in competition from non-GMO product, 'natural' labeling and non-dairy juice marketed as milk, and the dairy section of the supermarket remains highly cut throat and competitive.

MILC payments are now being made but projections for the summer are not encouraging.

Month	MILC Payment
September 2012	$0.5944
October	$0.0237
November	$0.0000
December	$0.0000
January 2013	$0.1180
February	$0.522
March	$0.7700
April	$0.3500
May	$0.0000
June	$00000
July	$0.0000
August	$0.0000
September	$0.0000

Forecast provided by NMPF and based on CME futures as of 2/22/13

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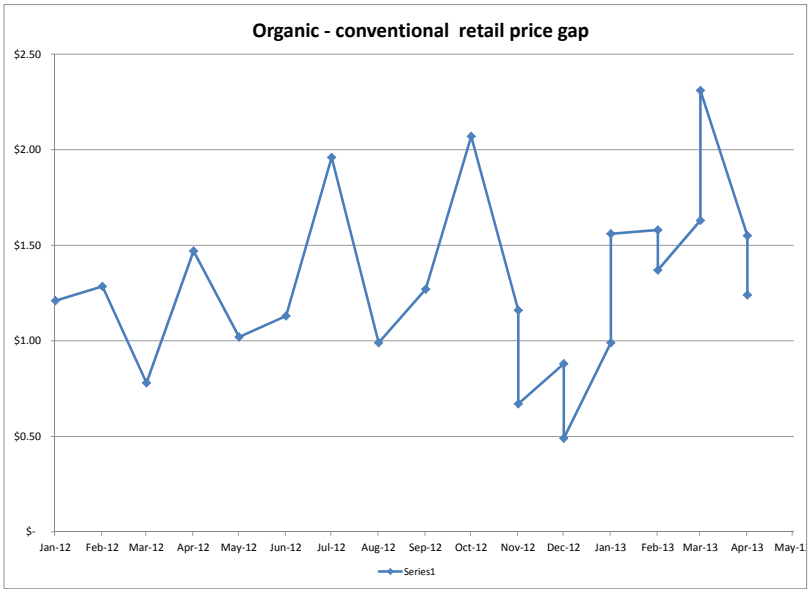

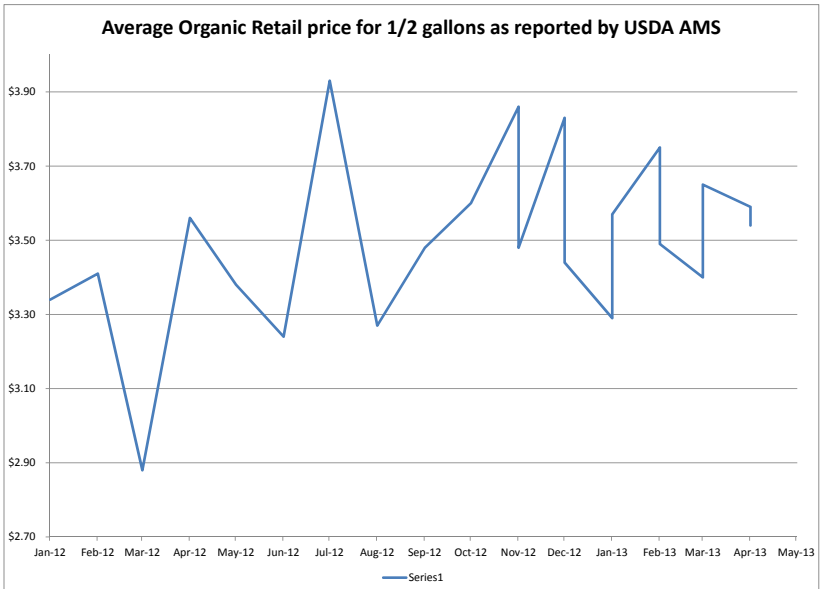

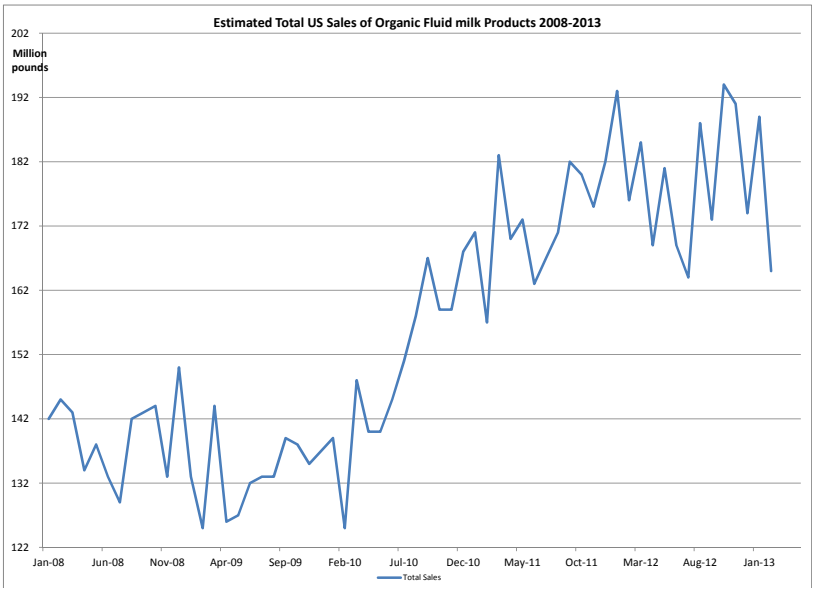

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Pasture Production Preparations

By Neal Kinsey

Several things can be done during summer to prepare for pasture improvements that can be made this fall to assure better pasture, hay and silage for 2014. When it comes to soil fertility management, the ultimate goal should be to correct and raise the overall soil fertility for improving and maintaining top quality and productivity.

Many farmers tend to forget that once they have been applied it takes three years to obtain the full response from lime and micro-nutrients on pastures. And the correct order to treat deficiencies is primary elements first, then secondary Ca & Mg, and then micros. Certain micronutrients may need to be applied for more than one year to reach the proper level and provide the maximum response.

Using a detailed soil analysis makes it possible to build a specific fertilizer program based on supplying the exact nutrients required. With such guidelines a plan can then be tailored for the correct recommendations to maximize or fine-tune the land's various capabilities based on the unique requirements for each soil.

How soil samples are taken is extremely important, as the recommendations you receive from the analysis will only be as good as the samples you send for testing. Following specific instructions provided by the company for testing your soil will assure that the samples you send are taken in the way that particular laboratory needs to perform the proper analysis. Requirements can vary from lab to lab and may not agree with how samples should be taken for the analysis we use.

Soil samples may be collected any time of the year, provided that the area is not suffering from prolonged drought, and provided that no nitrogen has been applied in the last 30 days and no sulfur has been used in the last six months. (If you must take samples under any of these conditions it should be duly noted as this will require the use of additional testing to assure the analysis is providing the correct nutrient content for that soil.) Late spring and early summer sampling avoids the rush periods, shows the soil's fertility at its best and gives time to plan a fertility program which can begin in time to help for the next growing season. However, if no samples have been taken within the last two years, the best time to sample is as soon as circumstances permit.

Prepare a map of the areas being tested. A good map helps make the sampling repeatable from year to year and can be very useful at the time of fertilization. Designate a number, or some other identification, even a name for each field.

Divide the field into areas that have the same soil color, slope, texture, drainage, etc. Use permanent lines such as roads, ditches and fences for boundary lines. Each area should have the same cropping history, fertilizer, lime and compost/manure treatments and the same cropping pattern. Assign each of the areas sampled a specific number or letter (or a combination of both) so you can correctly identify it.

It is recommended that sampled areas represent no more than 20 acres the first year the testing program is used, even if soils are uniform in texture and relief. Areas with taller or shorter plants, different weed or grass patterns, higher or lower yields, etc., should be avoided, or sampled separately if large enough to fertilize properly. You may wish to consider combining very small areas that have all the same characteristics, into one composite sample.

Use a new soil-sample container, plastic bag or plastic container. A new Zip-loc bag works well. But put Scotch tape over the writing or attach masking tape to write on because all types of marking ink (including indelible ink) can rub off the bag during shipment. Never write the sample information on a piece of paper and pack it inside the bag with the soil. Do not use paper sacks from the grocery store, bread wrappers, or such items, as even when never used for something else they can cause contamination. Avoid using a plastic bucket that has been used for other purposes (even repeated washings of a bucket used to mix salt and minerals for feed can still result in contamination of the sample). Sample bags are available from our office upon request at no charge.

Label the sample bags with your name, the farm or field name (if any), field number and sample area. Make sure the labeling on the bag matches the number of the field and area on your map. Labeling the bags to match the areas before taking the sample helps.

A Soil Probe is recommended for easiest and surest sampling results. Using a soil probe or shovel, sample down to a depth of 6½ -7 inches. For no-till crops, orchards, vineyards, pastures, hay meadows, lawns, etc., where soils will not be worked or tilled up in some way, the depth should be 4 inches. Sampling to the proper depth is extremely important if the tests are to provide each area with correct recommendations.

Put the soil, using several probes from like areas to make up the sample, into the sample bag. Do not take off any soil from the top of the sample. Removal of obvious debris (roots, leaves, etc.) is fine but it is routinely removed at the lab before it can adversely affect the sample. If you do remove thatch or debris from the sample, be careful to avoid that any amount **of the actual soil is removed with it.**

Probe the soil every 50 to 100 paces, always taking a minimum of 5 probes per composite sample for smaller areas, and one probe for every 1 (one) to 2 (two) acres from larger areas. Only a small amount of soil is necessary for analysis. A cupful of soil is more than enough. If only a portion of the soil will be sent for analysis mix the sample very thoroughly first. Remember this will be a very detailed analysis, which will only be as accurate as the sample you send.

Pack the samples tightly. For larger packages consider UPS (United Parcel Service), Federal Express or another reputable shipper. Presently the US Postal Service has smaller pre-paid boxes which can be ordered from USPS.com, or the local Post Office. These can be packed full and sent for a set flat-rate charge. Always be sure to pack the samples tightly to avoid spillage or breaking open inside the package. Soils may be sent wet or dry (use a Zip-loc or plastic lined bag for wet samples).

Samples can be dried at home by spreading them on waxed paper and air-drying. DO NOT DRY SOIL SAMPLES IN AN OVEN. It is okay to leave samples to dry in the sun. Be sure to include a worksheet with specific information on each sample sent. We will gladly supply a worksheet which is designed to help get results back to you as quickly as possible.

NOTE: Our "Hands-On Agronomy" DVD has a section on taking soil samples properly, and provides a visual look at how to sample. Should you be interested please see our 'Publications' page on www.kinseyag.com for ordering information.

VERY IMPORTANT: Because our services emphasize accuracy and not 'a quick turn around' please contact us before sending samples for analysis to assure that we can meet any needed deadlines. We receive thousands of soil samples for analysis and recommendations and there are no "slow periods" of the year.

Kinsey Agricultural Services, Inc.
297 COUNTY HWY 357 – CHARLESTON, MISSOURI 63834
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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Managing Flies on Your Organic Dairy Farm

By Dr. Paul Dettloff and Dr. Sarah Slaby

Flies (musca domistica) have been around since man appeared, and are not going away anytime soon. We have learned to cope with them the best way we can.

What is it that they do to irritate a dairymen?

Well, number one, they spread disease. Pinkeye, a bacterial infection, is spread from eye to eye by flies. Staph and strep plus, other mastitis-causing bacteria, are spread from teat end to tea end. You see, there is always a little residual milk at the end of the teat after milking. Flies gravitate to this very shortly after milking. Post dipping is a tool used to decrease this. There are now residual essential oil teat dips on the market that repel the fly for about 12 hours.

BVD and BRSV are viruses in nasal fluids that can be transmitted easily by flies.

There are basically three types of flies:

1. Face flies that hang around the face, muzzle, nostrils and eyes. Face flies lay eggs in fresh manure.
2. Horn flies are on the neck and especially the back area. Horn flies lay eggs in any organic matter - manure, rotted feed, wet bedding and uncleaned gutters throughout the summer.
3. Stable flies are the pesky ones on the legs and bottom side of the animal. They reproduce same as the horn fly. The stable fly is very irritating as they suck blood daily, though only for a short time. The rest of the time they fly around.

It takes about two weeks once a fly lays eggs until you get a new batch.

CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Kelp fed to animals, over a long term, will build significant iodine levels in the tissue of an animal, and flies don't like iodine. Kelp-fed animals definitely have less pinkeye. A farm must use a multifaceted approach to attack flies. First, clean up the breeding area of manure and old organic matter.

Sticky tapes, the narrow reels you can uncoil, are really good.

Avoid the very wide ones, as birds can get stuck on them. Various jars and baited jars also work well. A very good one is the Flies-Be-Gone fly trap. That one is a dandy.

Predator wasps that are let out periodically during the summer work well also. There are numerous companies supplying parasitic wasps. The mechanical walk through fly traps that vacuum them off collect literally thousands of flies. North Carolina State University is a leader in research in this area along with other companies of late.

A very ingenious farmer in Wisconsin by the name of Jahnke took a 55 gallon plastic barrel and put 2" PVC elbows in it with the elbows facing down. The elbows are on the sides ½ of the way down. Put a lid on it with a plexiglass window in the lid. Place a piece of placenta, chicken butchering leftovers or whatever will rot, and you have a fly trap that will last years. Just clean it out and hose it down! If you have any questions on this, contact either author of this article or Lancaster Ag Products for barrel design. Editor's Note: You can go to NODPA's website (under Resources) for an article on Jahnke's Fly Trap: www.nodpa.com/production_healthy_jahnke_flytrap_02_03_11.shtml

Barn swallows are wonderful! Don't destroy their nests as they eat their weight daily in insects, flys and mosquitoes. Purple Mar

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

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tins are beautiful insect eaters. Many farms have the manufactured white gourds above the calf hutches. They look really attractive and give a farm a humane touch. Encourage bats by putting up bat houses as they live on insects and flys. Muscovy ducks are notorious fly catchers. They were very common in the Midwest in the 1950's.

The other tool for to keep down your fly population is the new essential oil fly sprays that have been developed recently. They have gotten better and better. Essential oils are safe for humans to touch and breathe. The era of toxic, long lasting fly-deadly sprays needs to come to a close as the side effects show up down life's highway.

As you can see, there are a lot of tools. Cherry pick this list for your farm with sanitation being first.

Dr Paul Dettloff has a large animal practice in Arcadia, Wisconsin, and has worked with CROPP Cooperative (Organic Valley) as a consulting veterinarian since 2002. He is the author of a popular book titled 'Alternative Treatments for Ruminants Animals' and has his own product line of Dr Paul's Health products for livestock. You can reach Dr. Paul Dettloff by email at: jmdettloff@hotmail.com or call: (608) 323-3047.

Dr. Sarah Slaby is located in Arcadia, Wisconsin, and specializes in Organic and Sustainable Agriculture. She has her own line of natural products for treating dairy cows and shares a holistic approach to her practice not only for her organic and biological clients, but for her conventional herds as well. You can reach Dr. Slaby by email, phone, or visiting her website: drsarahsessentials@gmail.com, (608) 323-3005, www.drsarahsessentials.com

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS: FEED & PAY PRICE

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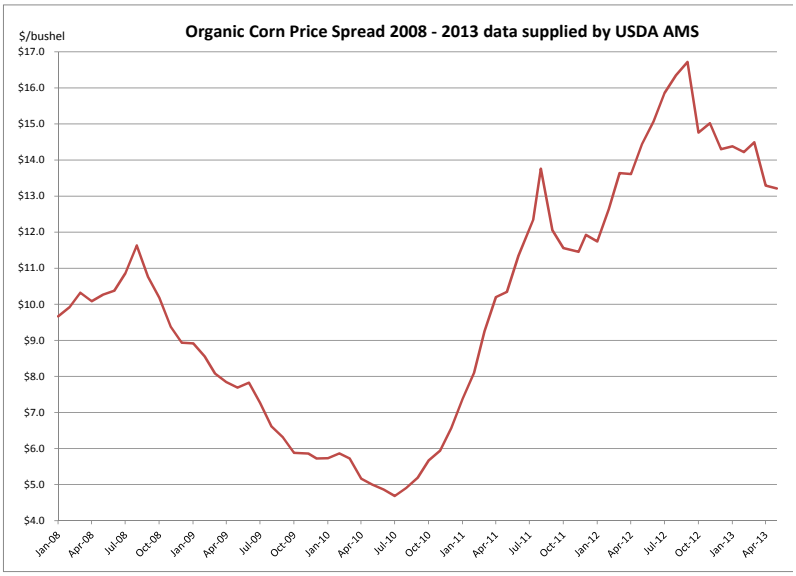
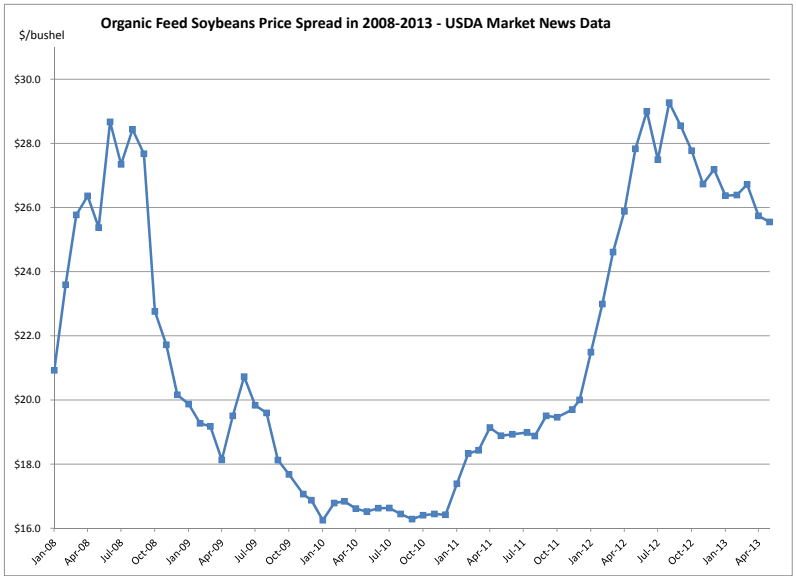
On April 26th 2013, Agricultural Marketing System (AMS) reported total organic fluid sales for January 2013 of 189 million pounds and for February 2013 down to 165 million pounds. Year to date sales of all organic fluid milk products is down 4% on the same period in 2012. Organic Whole Milk sales for January 2013, 51 million pounds, were up 6% compared with January 2012, and in February 2013 they were up again on February 2012, sales of 44 million pounds, up 1%. Sales of organic Whole Milk for the year to date (2013) were up 4.1% on the same period in 2012. Organic Fat-Reduced milk sales for January 2013 were 138 million pounds and for February 2013, 121 million pounds, with year to date sales down by 6.5% on the same period in 2012. The average retail price for organic half gallons remains stable at $3.54 for 2013 but has individual high price of branded product at $5.00 and a low price of store brand at $2.50. Market reports also indicate that more organic milk is going into manufacturing than usual at this time of year as producers adapt their production systems to a higher seasonal price, and organic nonfat dry milk continues to be shipped from the West to the Northeast. There are questions around whether future supplies of organic cheese manufactured in New Zealand and sold as store brand product in the US will be affected by the late production season, drought and the changing ownership structures of New Zealand cooperatives.

There seems to be no changes in organic feed with price of $13/bushel for corn and $26 for soybeans - about the same as this time last year. Long term contracts show no sign of dropping and the higher price of feed is obviously here to stay and should be factored into any pay price negotiations. Feed manufacturers continue to buy on only a limited basis as most have longer term contracts based on overseas production. Price of hay remains at the same level as we move into Spring grazing very slowly in the Northeast. ◆





RESEARCH & EDUCATION

On-line Resources for the Organic Dairy Producer

As the world wide web (www) has become more dynamic and accessible, organizations and educational groups are taking advantage of this dynamic technology. It is getting easier than ever to go on-line, search, and find very useful information on organic dairy production and grazing management – both in video and written form. Though we appreciate the virtual world, we have heard from farmers that these resources do not replace the written word presented on paper. So don't worry; we are committed to providing the NODPA News in hard copy for as long as you continue to support our work. We also work hard to keep our website current, and archive all the resource articles that appear in our print newsletters.

Below are some highlights of webinars available through eOrganic Dairy and some information on a new grazing website that was launched earlier this year. We hope that you find this information helpful.

The following webinars are available on eOrganic's Website:
Website address: www.extension.org/pages/59461/organic-dairy-production-systems

1. Barley Fodder Feeding for Organic Dairies

Nov 30, 2012 ... In this webinar, John Stoltzfus and Cornell's Fay Benson will discuss the benefits and challenges of growing and feeding fodder to dairy animals. Other animals (from horses to chickens) also have benefited from the practice and their owners may be able to adopt the principles addressed in this webinar.

2. Stockpiling Forages to Extend the Grazing Season

Jul 29, 2011 ... About the Webinar: Extending the grazing season using stockpiling can cut those costs by 20% or more. Stockpiling forage is a practice that allows pastures to grow for use at a later time, typically to extend the grazing season into the early winter months. In this webinar, Laura Paine will describe how best to stockpile forages, including forage species that do well under this practice, when to start stockpiling, and other management considerations.

3. Your Organic Dairy Herd Health Toolbox

Jul 30, 2012 ... About the Webinar: What's in your herd health tool box? In this webinar, Dr. Hubert Karreman discusses organic dairy herd health considerations, approaches to organic dairy cattle treatment currently allowed by the National Organic Program, and how best to work with your local veterinarian.

4. The Economics of Organic Dairy Farming in New England

May 1, 2012 ... About the Webinar: What does the financial performance of organic dairy farming in New England look like, particularly in an economy where organic feed prices and fuel prices are high and where today's economic crisis is putting tremendous financial strain on all dairy farms, including organic dairies? University of Vermont agricultural economist Bob Parsons will address the economics of organic dairy farming in New England, based on 5 years of farm financial data.

New Grazing Resource Website:

On Pasture (www.onpasture.com) is a new website, whose goal is to have "an online publication that [will] give people access to the latest research and farmer/rancher experience, written in plain English and focused on turning ideas into farm and ranch ready practices."

Editors Rachel Gilker and Kathy Voth and their team of contributors plan to provide readers with information that has been substantiated by research through the scientific process, or by documented anecdotes that demonstrate the success of a practice over time. Articles will focus on helping producers determine how or if information gathered in one location can be extrapolated and adapted to your operation.

Some of the many contributors include:

- Ed Rayburn, Forage Extension Specialist at West Virginia University
- Jim Cropper, Executive Director of the Northeast Pasture Consortium
- Kathy Voth, On-Pasture Editor & Livestock For Landscapes
- Rachel Gilker, On-Pasture Editor, grazing specialist
- Greg Judy, Speaker and Author who runs a grazing operation in Missouri on 1400 acres of leased land
- Troy Bishopp, 'The Grass Whisperer', is a farmer, grazer, writer and grasslands advocate

Visit the website! Like them on their Facebook page. Let them know what you think. www.onpasture.com.

5. Supplementig the Organic Dairy Cow Diet: Results of Molasses and Flaxseed Feeding Trials Webinar

Apr 22, 2013 ... About the Webinar: As certified organic grain prices continue to increase, dairy farmers are interested in finding ways to maintain or improve milk production while reducing feed costs. In the quest to find lower-cost alternatives, there has been increased interest in supplementing pasture-based livestock diets with products like molasses and flaxseed. Molasses can be a source of energy and trace minerals. Flaxseed can also be a source of energy; in addition it is high in omega-3 fatty acids, a plus for animals and humans alike. In this webinar, Dr. Kathy Soder will present results of recent research she and her team have conducted on molasses and flaxseed feeding.

6. Using Small Grains as Forages on Your Organic Dairy

Apr 15, 2011 ... About the Webinar: Cereal grains can provide organic dairy farms with an early season crop to graze and/or harvest for forage as well as extend the grazing season into late fall and early winter. They provide flexibility as they can be grown for grazing, stored forage, grain, and/or straw. Learn how to integrate small grains--including wheat, barley, oats, triticale, spelt, and rye--into your organic dairy farm. Dr. Heather Darby, University of Vermont Extension, will share recent results of her on-farm research trials as well as practical ideas on how to get the most of home-grown feeds on your farm.

7. Fly Management in the Organic Dairy Pasture

Jul 7, 2011 ... In this webinar, Dr. Donald Rutz and Keith Waldron of the New York State IPM Program will address several fly pests that attack cattle while they are out on pasture, especially horn, face, and stable flies. Each has distinctive habits, life histories, and management options.

8. Maximizing Dry Matter Intake on Your Organic Dairy Pastures

Aug 3, 2012 ... In this webinar, recorded on September 16, 2010, USDA NRCS animal scientist Karen Hoffman describes how organic dairy farmers can maximize dry matter intake from the pasture. She describes the connection among milk production, a cow's rumen and pasture quality, including plant density, number of tillers/plant, pasture height, and species composition. She takes a look at protein and energy relationships in the pasture and ways to balance them to enhance dry matter intake and encourage high animal performance.

9. Setting Up a Grazing System on Your Organic Dairy Farm

Jun 4, 2012 ... In this webinar, we will address the basic principles of how to set up a grazing system which will improve pasture quality and animal performance. We'll include paddock size calculations, recovery periods, maps and record-keeping, and further resources. ◆

SAVE THE DATE

13th Annual NODPA Field Days

Organic Dairy: Innovative Strategies to Stay Profitable

September 26 & 27, 2013

Mansfield Hose Company Banquet Hall
381 South Main Street, Mansfield, PA

Keynote Speaker:
Kevin Engelbert

Pioneer of organic dairy and past NOSB member, will speak on the Future of Organic Dairy

Educational Program Topics

- Forage assessment, grazing considerations, land/infrastructure development and succession planning using Holistic Management strategies
- New Trends in Multi-species Cover Cropping, also known as Cover Crop Cocktails
- 'Live Odairy' Q & A session led by nationally known veterinarians
- Growing Sprouted Grains as Fodder: On-farm experimental work
- Organic Dairy Trends: Policy and Washington DC updates

HMI
Healthy Land, Sustainable Future

The 13th Annual NODPA Field Days Educational Program is being created in collaboration with Holistic Management International (HMI)

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

The Cost of Low Blood Calcium in Dairy Cows

By Dr. Ryan Leiterman, Director of Technical Services, Crystal Creek®

Dairy farmers know the signs of milk fever and how it can impact transition cow performance, but few are aware of the negative impacts of mildly low blood calcium levels. New research is shedding light on how fresh cow blood calcium levels affect fresh cow performance and production.

Normal Blood Calcium Levels: 9.5-8.5 mg/dL

Mildly Low Blood Calcium Levels: blood calcium levels that are lower than normal, but the cow looks healthy and otherwise normal. These cows have blood calcium ranges from 7.0 to 8.5 mg/dL.

Dangerously Low Blood Calcium Levels: blood calcium levels that are so low the cow has muscle tremors, is unsteady or cannot rise. This condition is commonly referred to as milk fever. Typical blood calcium concentrations are below 5.0 mg/dL.

Research done in 2011 at the University of Wisconsin's School of Veterinary Medicine shows that many recently fresh dairy cows that look normal and healthy may actually be suffering from mildly low blood calcium levels.

So what if some cows have mildly low blood calcium? They look healthy and normal.

A mild depression in blood calcium levels of fresh dairy cows has been linked to increased fresh cow diseases such as ketosis, metritis and displaced abomasum. ***Cows with blood calcium levels below 8.5 mg/dL after freshening are 3x more likely to have a displaced abomasum.*** Often times these cows look normal, but a blood test reveals mildly low calcium levels. There is an associated milk production loss ranging from 5 to 15 pounds of milk per day for the first three weeks of lactation with blood calcium levels below 8.5 mg/dL.

What costs my herd more money; down milk fevers or mildly low blood calcium levels?

As a disease, mildly low blood calcium levels cost dairy producers more money because it affects a greater percentage of the cows in the herd. On average only 2-4% of cows become down with milk fever, while roughly 30% of cows second lactation and greater suffer from mildly low blood calcium levels. On many dairies, around 65% of the herd are in their second lactation and older; which means roughly 1 out of every 5 lactating animals on that dairy experience mildly low blood calcium levels during the first three weeks of lactation. Each case of low blood calcium has an estimated cost of $125 from milk yield reduction and increased disease costs from ketosis and displaced abomasums. For every 100 cows, mildly low blood calcium levels cost the dairy $2,500 per year while clinical milk fevers cost the producer $600 for the same time period.

What are the preferred treatment options for mildly low blood calcium levels?

Oral calcium supplements are the treatment of choice. Cows can absorb an effective amount of calcium within 30 minutes after treatment. Depending on the type of oral calcium product used, the blood calcium levels will remain elevated for 4 to 12 hours. Although IV calcium is warranted in cattle with milk fever, it is not recommended for use in cows with mildly low blood calcium levels because it can elevate the blood calcium levels too rapidly.

Blood calcium concentrations on 2,365 cows (55 Holstein herds in Canada and the United States) were monitored during the first three weeks of lactation. None of these cows were treated for milk fever and were classified as healthy and normal. Of this group of cows:

23% of the cows were below 8.5 mg/dL during the first week of lactation. Average milk production loss was 5.7 lbs per day for the first week.

8% of the cows were below 8.5 mg/dL during the second week or lactation. Average milk production loss was 10.6 lbs per day for the second week.

4% of the cows were below 8.5 mg/dL during the third week of lactation. Average milk production loss was 15.6 lbs for the third week.

(Chapinal et al., 2012) Note: "This study demonstrates that the longer a cow has low blood calcium levels, the more drastic its impact on milk production."

What groups of cows are at risk of low blood calcium levels upon freshening?

Two groups of cows are especially sensitive to low blood calcium levels.

1. Cows with high milk production in the previous lactation. Cows >105% relative value in Dairy Comp 305 or cows with milk production >105% of the herd average yield should be targeted for oral calcium supplementation post freshening.
2. Any cow that was lame at dry-off, close-up or freshening. It is well documented that lame cows do not eat as much dry matter as their sound herdmates. This dry matter reduction leads to a reduction in dietary calcium derived from feedstuffs and predisposes the cow to low blood calcium not only at freshening, but into the first three weeks of lactation as well.

How do I apply this new information on my dairy?

First, identify cows in your herd that are at high risk. They are any cow that was:

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A healthy dairy cow immune system can help fight the stresses of:

- Pathogens in the environment
- Changes in weather or cow comfort
- Milk production and reproduction
- Molds and mycotoxins in feed or pasture

Maintaining a healthy dairy cow immune system can help:

- Reduce somatic cell count (SCC)
- Reduce cases of mastitis and metritis
- Reduce cases of milk fever
- Reduce culls and death loss

To learn more about the immune system of a dairy cow and OMRI-Listed OmniGen-AF Green Formula nutritional supplement, call 1-800-6-PRINCE.

Green Formula OmniGen-AF® NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENT

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

Dykstra Farms, Burlington, WA

Finding Ways to Stay Profitable in Organic Dairy

continued from page 1

want to buy, we'll produce," says Andrew, "We are using the same equipment, same people, same labor." Seed crops bring a larger return these days, so they have been devoting more of their vegetable acreage into growing gold beet and red beet varieties. Another business venture that they have been working on over the past 1.5 years has been designing and selling Hydroponic Barley Fodder Systems. This added venture is bringing their youngest son, Charlie, back onto the farm, and is giving their dairy cows a highly nutritious and affordable feed for their organic dairy herd.

With the exception of the 3 years that he left the farm to work as a pipe welder in oil refineries, Andrew has been farming all his life. "Every farmer that is still in business [in his area] has gone off the farm and done something different," says Andrew. "They eventually come back to the farm; after they saw the other side of the fence."

Today, Andrew and his wife, Sandy, farm with their sons Chris and Charlie. They milk a closed herd of 260 Holsteins, with annual production of 15,000 lbs per cow. Milk quality and components average 191,000 SCC, 3.85% butterfat, 3.03% protein, and 5.61% other solids. Andrew and Chris run the farm with 6 additional employees, and Sandy is in charge of the bookkeeping. Charlie, who is going to school for green house management, is a partner in their Hydroponic Barley Fodder business (www.feedyourfarm.com).

Transitioning to Organic Production

Transitioning to organic production happened progressively over time. Andrew's father, Douwe, purchased the farm in 1972 and in 1981 he started making changes that steered the farm towards organic production. The first step was replacing commercial fertilizer with compost in 1989, followed by the decision to manage all the land organically. In 1992 they stopped using antibiotics on their cows, and in 2004, being one of the first organic farms in their county to transition to organic dairy, they started shipping organic milk to Organic Valley.

Housing, and Feed Systems

Cows and heifers are housed in free stalls and calves start out in polydomes and then move to group pens. They milk their cows in a double seven herringbone milking parlor.

During the growing season, the milk cows are moved to fresh pasture at least once a day; 50% of their ration is from pasture and the remainder is hay plus about 17 pounds of barley fodder. Heifers are moved to new pasture every few weeks and their ration is 100% pasture.

For winter feed, the cows are fed alfalfa hay and silage (either haylage or baylage), alfalfa pellets, and 9 pounds of barley fodder per cow (though this has now increased to 17 lbs of fodder per cow). During the winter of 2011, the cows were fed 15 pounds of grain per day; today they are not getting any grain. Older heifers receive baylage only, the small heifers get a little grain with their forages, and the calves get whole milk and hay, plus some Redmond Salt, free choice.

Matt Sampson and Andrew Dykstra; partners in Feed Your Farm Hydroponic Fodder Systems

Genetics

The Dykstras use bulls for breeding, and calve year round. They purchase their bulls from good producing Holstein herds and usually keep 4 bulls in with their milking herd at any one time. "Some bulls stay on for 4 days, others stay on for 4 years," says Andrew. If a bull acts up, he is gone; "they don't get a second

Cows finally out on pasture at Dykstra Farm.

chance." The cows are milked at 1 pm and 3 am, so the cows are moved back and forth from pasture using a quad (or ATV). Andrew preg-checks all their cows at dry off and they have a 95% conception rate.

Herd longevity is 4-5 lactations, and the Dyksrtas keep all their replacements. This past fall they culled all the cows that they thought would not make it through the winter for one reason or another. With the price of beef being so high, Andrew figured he could make $1,000 on each cow and bring in some nice young milkers to the milking string.

Livestock Health

Though the Dykstras have been organic for 9 years, they have been farming without antibiotics for 22 years. They like to make sure their animals have a balanced diet to negate complications, even if it costs a few more dollars up front. The veterinarian is used mostly for vaccinations and the occasional emergency, and they work with AgriKing for their ration balancing. They vaccinate at birth and at 6 -9 months, and there is very little that they have to do for health treatments.When they do treat an animal, they do not turn to a medicine cabinet full of options.: They have success treating sick cows and calves with Vitamin C, Dextrose, and saline.

They also use DHIA to monitor their cows' production, milk quality and stage of lactation. When it is time to dry a cow off, they will preg-check her, keep her in a holding pen with no hay or water for 6-7 hours, then they will offer water but no feed for the rest of the day. The cow is then moved to the dry cow pen and started on a dry cow ration that includes a dry cow mineral mix.

Calves live in the polydomes for at least six weeks, then moved to group pens where they still get milk and start on hay. Calf farming works very well for the Dykstras. Calves do not receive any grain until approximately 6 months of age when they move to rented farms.

Hydroponic Barley Fodder System

Economics prompted Andrew to look into feeds that could replace some or all of the concentrates that he was feeding his cows. "If corn prices dropped to $350/ton we would be at a break-even prices," says Andrew. In the 1970's grain (per ton) was 33% of the value of milk (per ton). In 2012, the cost of grain was 131% of what he was getting paid for his milk. This scenario is not sustainable.

In October, 2011 Andrew heard John Stoltzfus (NODPA Rep and organic dairy producer from Whitesville, New York) talking about his Barley Fodder system. Andrew was intrigued and went home and decided to set up a system in one of his greenhouses - but that was a disaster. "We could not keep the temperature steady; [it was] too warm in the sun and frozen at night, and we could not control the humidity," explains Andrew. They tried larger heaters, but the energy costs were too high.

Though it failed in the greenhouse, Andrew knew that he still wanted to find a way to make it work on his farm. With the help from his son Charlie and their friend Matt Sampson, who has over10 years of Hydroponic experience, they developed a hydroponic barley fodder system using plastic trays and racks. The fodder system is kept in an insulated room, and they try to keep temperatures between 65-75 degrees depending upon air exchanged and humidity. Andrew hopes to grow the same amount of fodder for his cows year round.

When they first got started, they were growing 250# of Barley

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FEATURED FARM

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fodder per day, but that quickly climbed to 1000 lbs, then 2000 lbs, and today they are producing the maximum amount that they can; 4000 pounds per day (or 17 lbs of fodder per cow). The ratio of barley seed to fodder produced is 1:7. As the volume of Barley fodder increased, the15 lbs of grain fed per cow gradually decreased to zero.

As a result of eliminating grain from the ration, production has gone down a little bit (Andrew had diminished the quality of his forages), but butterfat and protein has increased, and the economics of the farm has turned around dramatically. Instead of spending $40,000 per month on grain, they are now spending $14,500 per month on: barley seed ($4500), added labor ($5000) and water, utilities and equipment ($5000). That is a 64% reduction in concentrate costs, or a monthly savings of $25,500! "I would like to increase the fodder fed to 20 lbs per cow, but we would need to expand our Barley Fodder room if we did that," explains Andrew. "It will be a goal for 2013-2014 to go back to [growing] higher quality forages." The size of their current barley fodder room is 39 feet X 39 feet, and it produces up to 4000 pounds of fodder per day. The cost to build a fodder system of this size would be around $57,000.

Sandy and Andrew Dykstra

Feed Value and Production Standards for Fodder Systems

The goal for a good fodder system is to 'quick sprout' the Barley to 8 inches tall in 7 days with a good root mass. Sprouting converts the starches to sugar, increases vitamin content, and makes protein and nutrients available. They have tried sprouting other grains, and have found that Spring Barley is the preferred barley to grow. Fall barley is too slow, oats don't work, corn seed costs too much – though it would work, and with wheat, some of it is okay. Andrew and his Feed Your Farm fodder system partners are working with Washington State University in analyzing the barley fodder for nutrient value. The spring barley is the same variety of seed that the new malting company likes to use, which works for Andrew, as this means that there are growers growing the barley that they need.

So, when cows are eating barley fodder and they are not fed any concentrates in their ration, can milk from this farm be considered Grass-Fed Milk? Andrew thinks that this could be possible, but also feels there needs to be some standards in place and questions answered such as: Should the seed used for fodder systems be organic? (Andrew feels they should be); What would be the minimum % sprouting per batch to determine if the cow is consuming a forage versus a grain?; What would be the minimum germ?; What is the minimum amount of days a seed would be sprouting?, etc.

Organic Dairies Need to be Profitable

"Currently milk is at $580 per ton ($29 cwt) [in the West Coast] and corn is at $700-$750 per ton. This is why we stuck our neck out and started our Feed Your Farm barley fodder business," says Andrew. As the newly elected President for the Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA), Andrew feels that the number one issue that West Coast producers need to address is farm profitability. "2% milk at the retail store sells for $88 per cwt." Andrew feels that organic milk is becoming a commodity and this needs to be turned around. It is important to make sure that organic dairy is a thriving, and profitable vocation for producers today and into the future, and as WODPA President and a partner in his new fodder business, he hopes that he can help make positive changes for organic dairy farmers nationwide. ◆

Andrew will be a speaker at this year's NODPA Field Days, taking place September 26 & 27, 2013 in Mansfield, PA. To learn more about his Barley Fodder Feeding system, please go to www.feedyourfarm.com. You can reach Andrew at: phone: 360-661-4302, email: asdykstra@aol.com. To learn more about the Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance, go to www.wodpa.com.

"We met our goal to improve for the Gold..."

— Jeff Koester

KOESTER FAMILY FARM
SCALES MOUND, ILLINOIS — 40 cows
Crossbred grazing dairy 55 lbs milk/cow/day
2012 Organic Valley Gold for SCC of 90,000

Jeff and Sheila Koester with sons Nathan, 16, Colton, 14 and daughter Madalyn, 5, at World Dairy Expo booth.

"We bought our first five-gallon jug of yellow Udder Comfort™ spray in 2010 and started using it on fresh cows right away. If we had some cows that showed swelling before freshening, we'd get them in to spray those udders a few times prefresh.

"Getting the swelling out, fast, is the key to good circulation for a healthier udder," says third generation dairyman Jeff Koester. He and Sheila and children have a 40-cow organic dairy near Scales Mound, Illinois.

"Our SCC averaged 120,000 in 2011. It was higher before. As we went from on-and-off to more routine use, Udder Comfort became a key to progressively bring down counts.

"For the past year, we'd spray udders after each of the first 8 post-fresh milkings. Our cows don't swell much, but we did this, routinely, no matter how much swelling we saw.

"We met our goal to improve for the Gold Quality Award as our SCC average for 2012 fell to 90,000, and we had fewer flare-ups last year.

"It's clear that using Udder Comfort at the start of lactation gets the udder flowing better. The spray is so convenient and cost effective. Just pick it up, spray, and done."

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Raw Milk As A Pasture Biostimulant

By Bridgett Jamison Hilshey, Graduate Student, Unversity of Vermont, and Sid Bosworth, Extension Associate Professor, University of Vermont

INTRODUCTION

The cost to renovate poor quality, low productive pastures can be very high for organic farmers. To manage this problem, some graziers are experimenting with highly active biological compounds known as positive plant growth regulators, metabolic enhancers, and biostimulants. These compounds, which are neither fertilizers nor pesticides, promote efficient plant nutrient uptake and enhance plant growth and development through a wide variety of mechanisms. They are typically applied in very small amounts to the soil or sprayed directly onto the plant. Humic acids and seaweed extracts are well known examples.

Raw cow milk has been suggested as an effective pasture biostimulant. Raw milk has been used as a crop amendment for centuries. It contains proteins and other compounds which are established fungicides and viricides. The amino acids present in

FIGURE 1 - MILK BEING SPRAYED ON PLOTS AT APPLECHEECK FAMILY FARM

milk proteins enhance plant tolerance to heat stress and nutrient uptake capabilities. Furthermore, many of the bacteria ubiquitous in raw milk are established beneficial, plant growth promoting, soil microbes.

Farmers and extension researchers in Nebraska, who applied raw milk to pasture at the rate of 20 gallons to the acre, in a study in 2004, reported increased forage dry matter yield, forage quality, soil porosity, and grass brix content. However, the study was

never repeated nor thoroughly replicated, yet the results have garnered widespread community interest and are greatly extolled in blogs, newsletters, and other internet resources.

The aim of our study was to test this observation of the affect of milk on pasture growth in Vermont by assessing the effect of diluted raw milk on pasture soil health, and forage production, quality, and composition. We hope this information will help farmers make well informed decisions before investing their time and/or money into implementing this novel practice.

METHODS AND RESULTS

FIELD EXPERIMENT

Field experiments were carried out in 2012 at two Vermont dairy farms- Applecheeck Farm, a diversified organic farm located in Hyde Park, Vermont and the Choiniere Family Farm, a family run organic dairy located in Highgate, Vermont.

Our trial was very simple. We compared an application of raw milk to no milk application, our control treatment. The treatments were replicated at each farm using a paired-comparison design with each pair of treatments (milk supplement verses a no milk control) replicated six times. Raw milk was sprayed on the pasture once, in June 2012, at the rate of 20 gallons/acre diluted 1:1 with tapwater within five days. Treatment application occurred within five days of the pasture being grazed, when the forage was still short, to help facilitate some of the solution reaching the soil. Plots were sampled twice during 2012, approximately 30 and 60 days post milk application immediately prior to grazing.

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Research & Education

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During each sampling event, 360 forage and soil samples were collected from randomly selected points at each farm. Pasture pregrazing and post-grazing mass was measured using cut samples and a rising plate meter. Soil samples were analyzed to measure organic matter, nutrient content and moisture content. Forage samples were tested for ADF, NDF, and crude protein in a typical wet chemistry analysis. In addition, forage botanical composition, brix content, and percent standing dead material was also measured in each study.

Table 1. Mean forage production, composition and quality within sites during each sampling event. P-value given by a paired t-test analyses displayed for each farm during each sampling event.

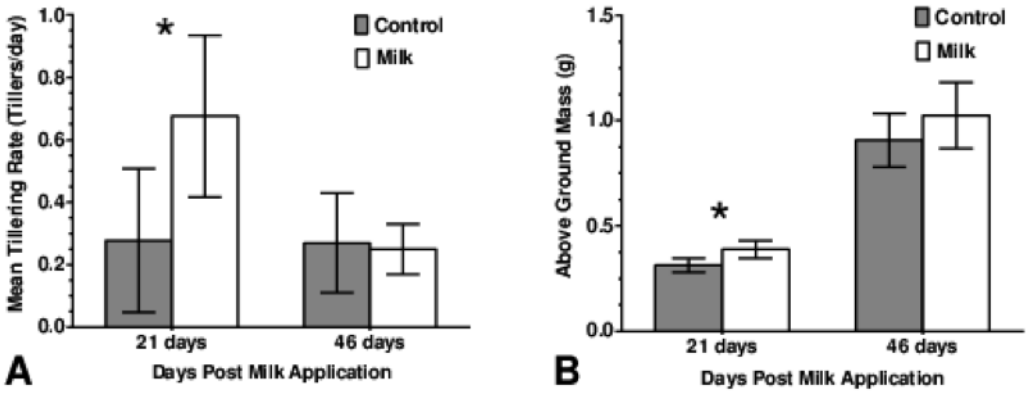
		FIRST SAMPLING EVENT			SECOND SAMPLING EVENT		
Variable	Unit	Control	Milk	P-Value	Control	Milk	P-Value
Site 1: Applecheek Family Farm							
Pature Pregrazing Mass	kg dm ha $^{-1}$	2511.6	2465.32	0.67	2023.1	1922.02	0.15
Forage Consumption	kg dm ha $^{-1}$				946.58	745.06	0.01
Acid Detergent Fiber	% of dm	37.88	38.37	0.56	34.90	35.53	0.20
Neutral Detergent Fiber	% of dm	58.73	58.88	0.90	53.27	54.18	0.59
Available Protein	% of dm	13.70	13.82	0.86	17.47	17.27	0.79
Simple Sugars	% of dm	6.15	5.75	0.33	5.60	5.88	0.17
Site 1: Choiniere Family Farm							
Pature Pregrazing Mass	kg dm ha $^{-1}$	2276.78	2417.19	0.12	2182.61	2176.45	0.96
Forage Consumption	kg dm ha $^{-1}$	892.27	897.56	0.98	905.8	1222.15	0.34
Acid Detergent Fiber	% of dm	36.57	36.00	0.47	35.75	35.47	0.78
Neutral Detergent Fiber	% of dm	55.98	57.70	0.28	57.27	56.47	0.63
Available Protein	% of dm	14.63	14.77	0.88	16.92	16.67	0.68
Simple Sugars	% of dm	6.55	5.18	0.07	5.10	4.90	0.39

Generally, we found little to no effect of the raw milk on pasture growth or productivity at either farm. There were no consistent differences in soil or forage quality measurements as well. Participating farms were not able to distinguish the areas that had been treated with milk from the controls. A selection of the forage results is displayed in the table below.

GREENHOUSE EXPERIMENTS

Two separate greenhouse experiments were also conducted. The first aimed to measure the effect of milk on forage growth parameters. Perennial ryegrass was grown from seed in 12 pots. After 21 days,

milk, diluted 50 fold with water, was applied to the surface of half of the pots at rate comparable to 20 gal/acre. The forage above and below ground mass, tiller elongation rate, tillering rate, and other characteristics of the forage above ground and below ground biomass was monitored for 43 days over two cuttings.



(A) Mean tillering rate (tiller per day) of perenial ryegrass between 0 to 20 days and 21 to 46 days after treatment application.

(B) Mean above ground mass (g) of ryegrass within pots 20 days and 46 days post milk application. Error bars represent one standard deviation from the mean. Grasses were cut to 6cm 20 days and allowed to regrown. During the second cut, grass was cut to ground surface. Error bars represent one standard deviation from the mean. Asterisks indicate significant differences from controls at P< 0.05.

Grasses treated with raw milk tillered significantly more rapidly than grasses which did not receive the treatment; this resulted in significantly greater above ground biomass in pots treated with milk. Other forage growth parameters including root density, shoot elongation, and forage Brix Content, were not affected by the application of raw milk.

In a second greenhouse experiment, the impact of raw milk on soil nitrogen dynamics and organic matter decomposition was investigated by destructively sampling soil microcosms. Fresh, sieved, pasture soils were packed into small pots. Mesh bags containing dry, ground grass were buried 1 cm beneath the soil surface. Diluted raw milk was applied to the surface of half of the pots at the rate of 20 gal/acre. After periods of 1, 7, 14, 21, and 28 days, pots were destructively sampled to determine litter decomposition rates and soil mineral nitrate and ammonium concentrations.

Ammonium-N concentrations spiked 1 day after milk application in pots treated with milk. However, ammonium concentra-

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Low Blood Calcium

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1. lame during the dry period or at freshening
2. a high production cow during the previous lactation
3. treated for milk fever at the beginning of this lactation
4. a cow with three or more lactations

Second, apply a treatment strategy that works on your farm. Cows identified to be at risk should be treated with oral calcium twice daily for the first two to three days in milk.

In conclusion, 20% of cows that look normal and healthy after freshening suffer from mildly low blood calcium concentrations. These mildly low blood calcium concentrations have been linked to production losses and increased disease incidences. By identifying cows at risk, oral calcium supplementation can be used when the cow is just fresh to combat the negative effects of low blood calcium levelss

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Chapinal et al. The association of serum metabolites in the transition period with milk production and early lactation reproductive performance. Journal Dairy Science. 95:1301-1309

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Dr. Ryan Leiterman is the Director of Technical Services for Crystal Creek®. He joined Crystal Creek® in 2012 after leaving a dairy based veterinary practice in southern Wisconsin. Dr. Leiterman holds degrees in both Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering and Veterinary Medicine and is responsible for product formulation and testing, on-farm trouble shooting and calf barn ventilation design.

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Raw Milk On Pasture

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tion on other days as well as nitrate concentrations and litter decomposition rates was not affected by the milk treatment.

DISCUSSION

Raw milk stimulated grass tillering and slightly increased forage above ground biomass under greenhouse conditions. The positive benefits attributed to the milk were short-lived and did not appear after the initial cutting. These results are promising and offer some insight into the most likely mechanism of action. However, because yield increased only slightly and because the benefits were no sustained over the duration of the experiments, they by no justify the widespread use milk as a biostimulant. Furthermore, we found no effect of milk on pasture growth or yield within the first 60 days of application in the field.

There are several possible explanations. First, the dry conditions present during the summer of 2012 may have inhibited any stimulatory effect milk might otherwise have had. During the summer of 2012, the experimental sites received less than 1.5 inches of rain – roughly half of the average for that period of time. As a result, very little milk sprayed onto plant leaves may have been washed into the soil via a natural precipitation event. In addition, under the droughty summer conditions soil microbial activity and nutrient cycling would process slowly. The dry conditions may have inhibited the movement of the beneficial bacteria into the soil thereby negating the potential for milk to positively influence soil and forage parameters.

It may also be that there are too many environmental variables in the field for the slight benefits we found in the controlled environment of the greenhouse to be expressed and be biologically or economically significant.

This results of the greenhouse experiment allude to the possibly that minute applications of raw milk may positively influence forage growth. However, the merits of milk in the field setting have yet to be demonstrated. The results of these experiments indicate that the application of raw milk onto pasture is not an economical means of enhancing forage production or forage and soil quality. However, additional field studies under varied environmental conditions should be conducted to confirm these results. In addition, greater care should be taken to ensure that the milk comes in contact with the soil.

Despite the inclusive results, spraying milk on pasture is still a great way to dispose of waste milk. We recommend that those wishing to experiment with raw milk on their own farm should spray to solution immediately before a rainstorm and after the forage was grazed to maximize the amount of milk reaching the soil. Although you probably shouldn't expect a substantial change in forage production and quality, it may positively affect your pastures in ways not measured during this experiment.

Bridgett Jamison-Hilshey is a graduate student at the University of the Vermont Plant and Soil Science Department. *The research described above was funded by a Northeast SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) Partnership Grant.* *Contact Bridget by email: bridgettjamison@gamil.com* ◆

Calendar

May 29, 2013
Animal Handling Workshop for New & Beginning Farmers
Towanda, PA

Organized by the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), This Field Day will cover basic animal handling for new & beginning farmers, or for anyone who wants to improve their animal handling knowledge and skills. Through a series of demonstrations and discussions, we will emphasize humane practices and safety for both farmer and livestock in moving animals, loading and performing treatments. For more info, go to: http://animalhandlingmay29.eventbrite.com/#, or call PASA at: (814) 349-9856

June 5, 2013
Pasture Grazing For Profit
USDA Service Center, Ghent and Grazin' Angus Acres
Columbia County, NY

Mick Bessire, CCE of Columbia and Greene Counties will be discussing "Costs and Potential Returns of Grazing on Pasture", followed by Karen Hoffman, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service on "Nutritional Attributes of Well-Managed Pastures". Laura Sagar, Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District and Jim Unser, USDA Natural Resources Conservation District will then give an overview of programs and funding available through SWCD and USDA NRCS. After lunch, we will travel to Grazin' Angus Acres, to visit a "premier" grass-based livestock operation in Columbia County, featuring a purebred Angus cow-calf breeding herd, along with the production and marketing of grass-finished beef, pastured chicken and eggs, and meadow-raised pork. The Gibson and Stark families will host our group on a pasture-walk and tour of their farm. To register, please contact Eileen at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties, (518) 622-9820. If you plan to stay for lunch, the cost is $10/person. Please bring payment the day of the workshop.

June 3, 2013
Sustainable Management for Livestock Production Webinar
Online

Missouri Beginning Farmers Program presents this free one-and-a-half hour webinar with Ann Wells, DVM. To join the webinar log in at univmissouri.adobeconnect.com/debikelly at 7 pm. Link: http://agebb.missouri.edu/mac/agopp/calendar.htm

June 5-9, 2013
Planning for Whole Farm or Ranch Fertility
Wilsall, Montana

This is a five-day workshop for farmers and ranchers wishing to drought-proof their properties, improve grazing performance and create lasting fertility. This course will cover multiple proven technologies and strategies that maximize water harvesting, minimize inputs, improve grazing performance, increase forage yield and build soil, creating abundant and lasting fertility for your farm or ranch. Part I covers Grazing Success and Drought Resilience in the 21st Century (June 5-6); Part II is on Keyline® Design for Whole-Farm Fertility (June 7-9). Presenters are Owen Hablutzel, Roland Kroos, and Neil Bertrando. Link: http://www.montanawholefarmfertility.com/

June 5-9, 2013
Slow Living Summit and Strolling of the Heifers
Brattleboro, Vermont

The third annual Slow Living Summit, a conference that's all about sustainable living, resilient communities aims to foster cross-disciplinary conversations among thought leaders, entrepreneurs, educators, community leaders, artists, faith leaders, wellness practitioners, and engaged citizens. The Strolling of the Heifers Weekend features the Strolling of the Heifers parade on Saturday, followed by the Slow Living Expo, which highlights local food producers and craftspeople. On Sunday, the Tour de Heifer offers farm-to-farm cycling rides. Link: www.strollingoftheheifers.com, Office/Cell: 802-490-6366, julie.strollingoftheheifers@gmail.com

June 12 - 14, 2013
Holistic High-Intensity Grazing & Genetics Workshop with Ian Mitchell-Innes and Gearld Fry
Herondale Farm, Ancramdale (Columbia County), NY

Learn techniques to put you on the path to profit, including mob grazing, holistic financial management, and guiding principals for 100% grassfed genetics. Other topics include fencing, herding, and watering, as well as how genetics, selection, and management are the guiding principles used to build herds of cattle that can produce superior quality meat. Cost is $450 for 3 days, with refreshments and lunch included. Respond to info@herondalefarm.com or 518-329-3769 for more information or registration.

June 15, 2013
Fencing 101
Accokeek, Maryland

The Accokeek Foundation offers Fencing 101 as part of its Heritage Livestock educational programming. This class will focus on in-depth strategies and factors for fencing various types of livestock, and will include both a classroom lecture as well as a practical, hands-on portion. Link: www.accokeekfoundation.org/category/events/, phone 301.283.2113, email info@accokeek.org

June 21 – 24, 2013
Peak Performance Grazing: Planning and Management for Animals, Land, and Profit
Carbondale, Colorado

Sustainable Settings is offering a four-day class with Jim Gerrish and Owen Hablutzel. The course offers a fun-filled four days of learning together optimal and effective ways to plan for and achieve the full power of peak performance grazing on your land. This four-day workshop will include classroom as well as outdoor exercises and pasture walks. Link: www.sustainablesettings.org, phone: 970-963-6107, email: info@SustainableSettings.org

June 25 – 26, 2013
Iowa Grazing Conference
Creston, Iowa

Improving grazing management, cover crops, using annual forage crops for hay and pasture, using grazing to improve wildlife habitat and envi

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NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Producer, NODPA President

Robust discussions about treatment of ringworm, difficulty with letting milk down, and the decision to disallow use of antibiotic sprays in orchards

There was quite a bit of discussion about treatments for ringworm last month. One farmer says he prefers a preventative approach by feeding 2 to 4 ounces of kelp per head per day; he feels it improves the hair coat and immune system. Several farmers offered treatment advice; their suggestions included Dr. Paul's Wound Spray, homeopathic Bacillinum nosode in the water, and 2cc Thuja/Calendula tincture orally for one week. Others suggestions included scraping the gray crust off, then topically using 7% iodine, tea tree oil, apple cider vinegar, or Ecto-phyte. And most everyone noted that it will disappear when the animals are back out on pasture. The pen can be disinfected after to prevent future outbreaks.

A producer was considering feeding whey from his neighbor's small cheese operation to his cows and heifers, and asked if others had experience feeding whey. One farmer had used a concentrated whey in a TMR when he farmed conventionally; he felt the benefits were increased energy and protein with increased feed intake. Another farmer feeds the whey from their on-farm cheese plant to their heifers, and he says "they love it".

A fresh heifer was refusing to let her milk down. Some suggestions included massaging the udder with a warm towel, especially in the milk vein area. One farmer suggested treating the udder edema first, since the swelling will keep her from letting her milk down. She suggested homeopathic Apis (10 pellets given 3 or 4 times a day), 1/8 cup ground coffee, and an udder mint massage twice a day. She also reminded us that access to salt has an effect; too much salt before freshening or putting her onto salt too quickly after freshening will encourage edema. Gently rubbing the area below the vulva will stimulate the release of oxytocin, and help with her milk let down. One farmer shared his technique: stand on the right side of the cow, use your fingers to follow the milk vein from the udder to where it passes back into the body. You will feel a small hole there. Massage there with your fingers for 2 to 3 minutes, then put the milkers on. Continue to massage for another 2 to 3 minutes.

The topic that generated the most discussion this month was in response to the NOP's recent decision to disallow the use of antibiotic sprays in orchards. Tetracycline and streptomycin had been allowed as a treatment for fireblight in organic apple and pear production. Many of us were surprised that this provision existed,

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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

Phone: 802-234-5524

Go to the following web page for more information:

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

Subscribing to ODairy:

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

To sign up for the Odairy listserv, go to:

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

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); visit our web page (www.nodpa.com) or benefit from farmer representation with the NOP and processors that NODPA provides, please show your support by making a generous contribution to our efforts.

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

_____ $35 to cover an annual subscription to NODPA news

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

_____ $100 to become a supporter of NODPA

_____ $150 to become a Business Member

_____ $300 to $500 to become a Friend

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

_____ $1,000+ to become a Benefactor

Name: _____ Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

Number of milking cows _____ Milk buyer _____

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

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

Credit card: Master Card Visa Card #: _____

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

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meeting in Portland, OR, April 9 -11, 2013

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

The meeting of the National Organic Standards Board, which occurs twice a year, provided a public forum for the organic community to weigh in on issues concerning organic production and processing. The controversial and much discussed petition that tetracycline be put back on the National List and the existing expiration date of October 21, 2014 be removed attracted a great deal of public attention and comment at the meeting. In considering the petition the NOSB Crops Subcommittee recommended instead a new proposal for an extension of use of tetracycline to October 2016 with the condition that it may only be used if the grower has implemented an integrated system of practices and materials to control fire blight. Their recommendation also stated that orchard management systems must demonstrate an annual increase in the extent or number of alternative practices for managing fire blight.

When this proposal was put in front of the full NOSB, the subcommittee proposal was defeated which meant that Tetracycline use on tree fruit will not be allowed after October 2014. As the regulation stands right now, use of tetracycline (oxytet is the name growers know) will be prohibited after October 21, 2014. The proposal needed 2/3 vote in favor by all NOSB members to pass and it failed to meet that requirement with six members voting no. The NOSB members voting no were: Jay Feldman, Jean Richardson, Colehour Bondera, Jennifer Taylor, Calvin Walker, and Francis Thicke. All others voted yes for the extension.

Throughout the meeting there were discussions to reach a compromise because of the serious effect that a ban may have on farmers who are using it now and may have no alternatives for fire blight. There were many articulate statements by all the Board members as they grappled with the tension between consumer expectations, scientific knowledge and the practicality of organic production. Board members tried to introduce a longer, more specific motion on emergency use during the three years following expiration which was, surprisingly, never publically discussed by the public or debated by the Board. The NOSB did pass (unanimously) the following:

The NOSB requests that the NOP investigate the ability of the Secretary to invoke its authority under the "Emergency Spray Programs" provision of the Organic Foods Production, 7 U.S.C. 6518(k)(6) and Act 7 C.F.R section 205.672, to allow the emergency use of oxytetracycline for fire blight during the period of October 21, 2014 to October 21, 2017.

Miles McEvoy head of National Organic Program (NOP) stated that the program would have a lot to consider about the proposal for emergency use and would have to consult with its attorneys. He noted that the NOP's provision about emergency provision had never been invoked before.

The other votes of the NOSB are summarized below:

Materials Subcommittee

Proposal: Examine and update petition and technical review process—turned into discussion document for fall workplan

Crops Subcommittee

Proposal: Polyoxin D Zinc Salt – petitioned to be added to the National List as a synthetic substance allowed for use inorganic crop production failed.

Proposal: Indole-3-butyric acid (IBA) 2012 - re-petitioned to be added to the National List as a synthetic substance allowed for the purpose of plant propagation via dipping failed.

Livestock Subcommittee

Proposal: Pet Food Amino Acids – Add Taurine (CAS 107-35-7) to the National List as a feed additive in pet food passed. All other petitioned amino acids for pet food failed. The report on excluded methods (GMO's) in vaccines was tabled for the fall meeting.

Policy Subcommittee

Proposal: The revised guide for new members and the updated policy on how the Board receives public communications which ensure more openness and transparency passed unanimously

Handling Subcommittee

Proposal: Sulfuric acid – petitioned as a synthetic processing aid in the production of seaweed extract-failed.

Proposal: Barley beta fiber – petitioned as a non-organic agricultural fiber source in organic products- failed.

Proposal: Sugar beet fiber – petitioned as a non-organic agricultural fiber source in organic products - failed.

Proposal: 1,3-Dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin (DBDMH) – petitioned as a synthetic antimicrobial treatment for beef carcasses - failed.

CAC Subcommittee

Proposal: Calculating Percentage of Organic Ingredients: Amendment to clarify that 'calculating 100% organic is not equivalent to labeling 100% organic' was passed unanimously.

GMO Ad Hoc Subcommittee

The use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is prohibited in the production and handling of organic products, including seeds. The discussion document presented by the committee requested comments on the establishment of a seed purity standard, presence of GMOs in seed, and the amount of testing currently conducted. This was added to the NOSB's workplan for the fall.

Classified Ads

Feed, Seed and Bedding:

Certified Organic Feed For Sale - Forward Contract Buyers Wanted:

- 400 acres Winter Barley - coming off in June
- 150 acres Pea/Barley combination - coming off 1st part of July
- 350 acres Sorghum Grain- coming off in October/ November

For more information, please contact Rick Boller, Boller Farms, Lebanon, Kansas. Phone: 785-389-2073.

Hay for sale: Forty, early to mid season baled 4x4 & 4x5 dry round bales of mixed grass hay for sale (2012 crop). Fifty dollars per bale, trucking available.Contact Scott Lewis, Antwerp, New York, (315) 659-9999, or cell (315) 681-7986.

Organic Livestock:

5-8 Organic Holstein milking cows for sale. Herd runs 60,000 SCC, 4% butter fat, 3.2% protein. Buyer can have pick of the herd for $2,250 each. Farm is located in Vermont's Champlain Valley. Please call: 802-349-8520.

Up to 25 or 30 lactating cows and a few springing heifers for sale from SpringWood Organic Farm in Lancaster County, PA. Crossbreeds and from a primarily spring freshening herd. Herd has been grain free since 9/2012. For more details or to discuss pricing contact Dwight at info@springwooddairy.com, call 717-278-1208, or check out www.springwoodfarm.com.

Selling Milking herd: 80 registered Jersey, Lineback and Milking shorthorns – certified organic. Prices start at $1700. Morningside Farms in Shoreham VT. Please contact Brian Wilson at 802-377-1786.

Organic Holstein (and some crosses) Heifers for Sale: 15 heifers ages weaned to some springing. Animals are used to tie stalls and free stalls. Have DHIA records on all of the animals. Call or email for more info: hazenfarm@vtlink.net or phone: 802-472-5750

10 organic Holstein heifers for sale: Ages 3 months - 2 years of age, DHIA records available, closed herd. Herd/ Farm has been certified organic for over 5 years.Call for more info: Jim Doyle, Chelsea, VT; 802-685-4408.

NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

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since antibiotic use in livestock operations is not allowed at any level. There was empathy expressed for fruit growers, who have few tools to manage the disease, and who face staggering losses if their orchards are seriously affected. There was solidarity expressed for the organic industry as a whole; it was felt that this decision helps to safeguard the integrity of organics. There were several insightful and thoughtful posts that outlined the variables involved in this decision. Parallels were drawn with organic dairy where producers had few products for animal health just 10 to 15 years ago; when farmers no longer could rely on synthetic/antibiotic drugs, then they learned to use other methods to prevent illness and to restore livestock to health.

One commentator called this allowance a "loophole" in the NOP regulations. An individual asked, "if they want to call out the national standards for having loopholes, why don't they start with the dairy replacement provision?" It was agreed that this was a good question. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The MODPA Treasurer

As I write this today I am still able to look out my window and see snow and the forecast calls for more this evening. This has been a tortuous spring for most of us in the Upper Midwest. At this writing we are already 2 weeks behind from normal in the spring routine and it looks like at least another week before we can begin any fieldwork. Hopefully by the time you receive this we will all be into the spring swing. One of the worst issues I see with the delay in spring is the need for feed. Many producers went into this winter with their feed supply on the tight side and this weather is doing nothing to help. The silver lining is that with the continued snow, we are getting valuable moisture for the coming season. We should get off to a good start this year albeit a late start.

There has not been much movement from the processors in regards to pricing in the near future; let's just hope that the cost of our inputs don't increase. While there has been a small softening in the fuel price in my area nobody expects it to last. A recent look at our spring supply needs shows that overall we have lost ground due to increases in the cost of seed, parts, etc. All the more reason for us to stand together in our local ODPA (organic dairy producer alliance) and demand a better price. I have heard a lot of rhetoric from the processors about how their costs have gone up, but there seems to be little concern for the farmer when his/her costs go increase. I think it is time for them to remember what is good for the goose is good for the gander.

I encourage all of you to get out and take in some of the workshop events that are scheduled over the coming summer months. Many of these educational organizations work with your local certifier as well as organizations like MOSES, NOFA, PASA etc. The NODPA website (www.nodpa.com) gives a great overview of events across the Northeast and Midwest. I always seem to pick up a good tidbit of useful knowledge when I attend events; plus it is a good way to see some old friends and often make new ones. Please mark your calendars to attend NODPA'S Field Days September 26 & 27 in Mansfield, PA.

As always, be safe; take time to get your rest no matter how rushed you may feel. Remember you are responsible for a lot of things in life; put yourself at the top of that list.

Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer
Glenwood City, WI
715-265-4431 Home | 715-781-4856 Cell

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.

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Become a Member of MODPA!

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email:_____

Certified Organic Dairy? Yes No # of cows: _____

Transitioning: _____

I wish to support MODPA (check whatever applies):

___ By becoming a state rep or director.

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

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

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

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)
c/o Ed Maltby
30 Keets Road
Deerfield, MA 01342

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CALENDAR

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ronmental impacts of grazing are just a few of the topics on the agenda. In addition to featured speaker Garry Lacefield, breakout sessions, and a producer panel, the event also has a pasture walk and barbeque. Link: www.iowabeefcenter.org/news/grazingsavedate2013.html, Phone: 515-294-BEEF (2333), email: beefcenter@iastate.edu

July 7-20, 2013
The 14th Annual International Agroecology Shortcourse
University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

What is agriculture's role in contributing to climate change? What are opportunities within agriculture to mitigate or adapt to a changing climate? When we talk about agriculture, do we mean smallholder farmers, industrial agriculture or both? These questions will be on the table during the 14th Annual International Agroecology Shortcourse, where the theme is the application of agroecological approaches to support resilience to climate change and promote robust, sustainable food systems. For more information, view the course website http://www.uvm.edu/~agroecol/shortcoursedescfinal_13.pdf

August 2-3, 2013: Pennsylvania Organic Farm Fest
Grange Fairgrounds, Center Hall, PA

FarmFest is a fun and free community –building event that fosters knowledge of organic agriculture and sustainable living through educational opportunities, local foods, lively entertainment, and interactive events. For more info, contact Farm Fest Coordinator, Erin McCracken at ecovents@gmail.com or 512-576-4831. Visit the FarmFest Website: www.farmfest.paorganic.org

September 26 & 27, 2013
13th Annual NODPA Field Days
Mansfield Hose Company Banquet Hall, Mansfield, PA

Theme: Providing organic dairy farmers the tools to enhance the health, productivity and profitability of their land and family while effectively and significantly increasing annual profits. On Thursday, in conjunction with Holistic Management International's Open Gate Program, NODPA will focus on whole farm planning using holistic management principles and will visit Kress and Tammy Simpson's KTS Farm, Mansfield PA, to view these practices in action. Friday will focus on the important and timely issues confronting all organic dairy farm families, along with educational workshops.

For more information, or if you have questions about sponsoring or exhibiting at the NODPA Field Days, contact NODPA Field Days Coordinator Nora Owens anytime at noraowens@comcast.net or 413-772-0444.