NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Left to right: Jack DeVos, Rye Matthews, and Hilary, JD, and Cheryl DeVos

From Wholesale Milk to Value-Added

In March, 2008, the NODPA Newsletter featured Kimball Brook Farm, one of Vermont's largest organic dairy farms, located in North Ferrisburg, Vermont (www.nodpa.com/kimballfarmvt.shtml). In this article, Cheryl and JD Devos shared their transition experience, animal housing, herd health, and pasture management practices. This article is a follow-up on Kimball Brook Farm as a lot has changed for this 200-cow dairy. Cheryl and JD decided to take the road of value-added production and retail sales, challenging themselves and pushing their marketing and creativity in ways that they never would have imagined. Their story is an inspiration.

At the time the Feature Farm article had been written in 2008, Cheryl and JD Devos had been shipping

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Economic Sustainability of Vermont Organic Dairy Farms: How strong is the Economic Leg?

By Bob Parsons, UVM Extension

A study on the economics of organic dairy involved 34 Vermont dairy farms for the 2012 tax year. The study was conducted with the cooperation of the University of Vermont, NOFA-Vermont, Organic Valley Cooperative and Vermont organic dairy farmers. Vermont has had more than 200 organic dairy farms since 2007, accounting for 23% of Vermont's dairy farms today. This is a rapid growth from just 2 certified organic dairy farms in 1993. Data was collected from farm visits and compiled to compare balance sheets and accrual income for the 2012 tax year. The farms ranged in size from 24 to 100 cows. All farms have been certified organic for at least 5 years. Only one of the farms raised some grain, and 2 of the farms did not any feed grain. As compared to earlier years, expenses were up about 5% but milk prices were up by about 10%, from $30.63 to $33.39 per cwt, following fairly consistent prices since 2007 that ranged from $29.35 to $30.90 per cwt.

The farm level results indicate the herds averaged 58.6 cows producing 12,834 lbs of milk

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the NODPA President

I suppose that we all pause around the beginning of a New Year to reflect on the passing of time. We look back on the past year, thankful for its blessings and (hopefully) wiser from its challenges. Looking forward, we hope that we have gained wisdom to make good decisions for ourselves, our families, our communities, and our farms.

The weather has already created serious challenges for many of us, but the brightly colored seed catalogues that arrive in the mailbox each day remind me that each day is steadily lengthening a bit as we inch our way toward spring. I think that farmers are the eternal optimists: no matter what the conditions were the previous year, we always think that next year will be better! Maybe it's not that the new year will be better; maybe it's more like a clean start. We get a "do-over". So, if your kitchen is like mine, it's the center of planning for the new growing season. Rough drawings for a new building, certification paperwork that isn't quite done, and a pile of seed catalogues rest alongside the coffee cups on the table. Neighbors have time to sit and chat for a while at this time of year. We toss around new ideas, and some old ideas for the coming year.

Wishing you all the best for a healthy and prosperous New Year!

Liz Bawden, NODPA President
Hammond, NY | Phone: 315-324-6926

NODPA MISSION STATEMENT

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

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA Desk January, 2014

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

For many folks this is conference time and an opportunity to meet friends and educators, learn from each other and presenters, and take a few days away from the farm. The winter conferences in the Northeast from the NOFA's and PASA are always well attended, with great programs for both full-time farm families and those that choose to farm as well as have off-farm jobs. For many years, we have seen the number of farm families that can make a reasonable living from just farming decrease while those that farm and have off-farm income increase, especially in New England. In this issue of NODPA News, there is a report of the 2012 economic study by Bob Parsons and Lisa McCrory that gives excellent, independent information on farm profitability over a seven year period, and illustrates the need for an increase in the base pay price to give an adequate family income and have some money to re-invest in farm improvements. Studies and reports from the western US have reached similar conclusions on the need for increases in base pay price. Processors might look to invest in their producer 'partners' and member owners by paying them better rather than investing in their infrastructure, employee benefits and in other companies.

Diversification is the key to survival in farming in the Northeast and we need to ensure that federal and state regulations are size-specific and not overly burdensome to allow folks the freedom to farm at a sustainable level. The FDA's Food Safety Modernization Act is looking for more comments, and the time to comment on co-existence with GMO's has been extended, so don't forget that your voice counts in the writing of regulation. The USDA National Organic Program has recently issued a Guidance document to insure that the audit trail from farm to table of bulk products like organic milk is fully documented and accountable. NODPA had offered detailed comments on the proposed guidance almost a year ago and the producer voice was heard; we have some reasonable interpretations so long as the processor owns the milk as soon as it leaves the farm bulk tank.

Maine Organic Milk Producers (MOMP) has appointed Henry Perkins, former NODPA President and Maine organic dairy farmer as their new President. Henry has a long history of being an advocate for organic dairy producers in Maine and across the country and will do an excellent job of representing the interest of organic producers. Henry is well known for his excellent facilitation skills, his even temperament and his skill in running meetings. For those in or near Maine, MOMP's annual meeting has a tentative date of April 11, 2014 at the Governors Restaurant, 356 Main Street, Waterville, ME 04901, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Dr. Susan Beal, a homeopathic veterinarian and Ag Advisor for PASA, will be the featured speaker. Other topics and issues related to the organic dairy industry will also be discussed. Henry encourages: "all Maine organic milk producers to attend and free lunch will be provided to them. Anyone else interested is welcome but lunch will cost $15.00 and we need to know who will attend so that there is enough food." Henry can be reached at bullridge@uninets.net or by calling (207) 437-9279 for more information or to reserve your spot.

Thanks to all of you that sent donations in response to NODPA's first annual fundraising campaign, which was successful in raising money to assist with all the work we do. Thank you also to those committed producers that divert their commercial dairy check-off payments to NODPA – that regular income is a relatively small part of our budget but a very welcome addition that we appreciate even more as we know that the pay price is not enough for the majority of producers. It was great to read the supportive comments that some folks sent with their donations. For the one donor that wanted to make sure we used all the money for programs rather than administration, NODPA does not have a line item in its budget for administrative expense, so everyone can be assured that all of the money goes directly to pay for activities, publications and advocacy. Our income from advertisers and sponsors has been affected by our opposition to the Organic Trade Association's (OTA) organic check-off program so we welcome as much support as possible from producers and companies.

The OTA management and Board saw some shuffling of chairs recently as Christine Bushway resigned from the leadership of OTA without any formal announcement, "to pursue other interests." Longtime OTA employee Laura Batcha was appointed by the Board as the new Executive Director and CEO. Batcha and David Gagnon, OTA's chief operating officer, have been interim co-executive directors since September when new board president Melody Meyer announced that Bushway had left the organization. Batcha, who started with the association six years ago as marketing and public relations director, is the fourth executive director in the 29-year history of the Washington D.C.-based organization. Laura has been a leader in OTA's drive to establish an organic check-off program and to expand foreign imports to provide raw materials for organic manufacturers.

The recent frigid weather undoubtedly tested everyone's equipment and patience. You know its cold when you have to put heat on the compressor that is used to cool the freezer and walk-in coolers. The extreme cold makes everything that much more difficult and every problem takes longer to solve. Please take the time to take care of yourselves and your workers who have no choice but to work outside to care for and feed the animals. Livestock need that much more feed and we use more energy just getting around, even those of us that think we are invincible!! Stay warm and take care of yourselves. ◆

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Poultry Litter on Pastures – Trash or Treasure?

By Dave Johnson, NODPA Vice President, Organic Producer

Graze just what grows or fertilize for more? It's a question that goes through the minds of graziers, especially when it seems like the pasture quality is marginal, drought patterns persist, and the land base is pretty tight. While Kiwi grass farmers regularly time applications of synthetic Nitrogen (N) to manage the feed wedge, I would venture to guess that most organic grass farmers in the states seldom apply fertilizer to pastures, maybe because a shot of organic N is not as easy to come by.

Some of us live in areas where poultry litter is available, albeit via a few hour truck ride, for the cost of material plus hauling. So how does it work, and what are the benefits and drawbacks of using this on pastures? That is the gist of a recent Odairy thread initiated by NRCS animal scientist and grazier, Karen Hoffman. She specifically asked for experiences with chicken litter regarding timing/time of year and amounts of applications; interval between application and grazing; effects on palatability and quality of the grass; cool season vs. warm season grasses; and any other practical advice. What follows reflects comments from my experience, from former dairyman and consultant Rodney Martin, and from the sage of organic farming in the finger lakes, Klaas Martens.

Living at the headwaters of a watershed (the Chesapeake) with major nutrient management problems downstream (too many CAFOs), and beginning with a very depleted run down farm, I found chicken litter readily available and found it to be a a real boon to quickly bringing our farm back to good productivity; trucking that manure 160 miles to our upland pastures where nutrients were needed. Most of the native fertility in our area was long gone, sitting in the harbors and bays of New York and Philadelphia from years of hay exported to feed horses.

Nutrient Values to Expect in Poultry Manure

First, what is in poultry litter as fertilizer, and how does it differ from synthetic fertilizers? Manure analysis can yield a wide range, so I have typically estimated 40-60# of Nitrogen (N), Phosphorous (P), and Potassium (K) per ton, plus 100-200# of Calcium (Ca) from layer litter (3-3-3-5). But as with any organic source, it is not all available immediately. Broiler or turkey litter will test differently, and any of it can vary based on the type of housing and how the manure is managed before and after it arrives at your farm.

Of course there is much more to NPK, and we can thank Klaas Martens for giving us the LONG and the short of it:

> *"We found that when manure is used as the primary nitrogen source, yields can be increased by using excessive amounts of poultry manure up to about 3 tons per acre, but weed pressure goes up and soils rapidly become overloaded with P and K. This may work well short term, but it is an expensive way to supply nitrogen and it leads to huge overloads of P and K as well as imbalances that can be hard to correct afterwards. Legumes should be part of the fertility program on all farms. It's very important to be aware of the differences between layer manure, broiler*

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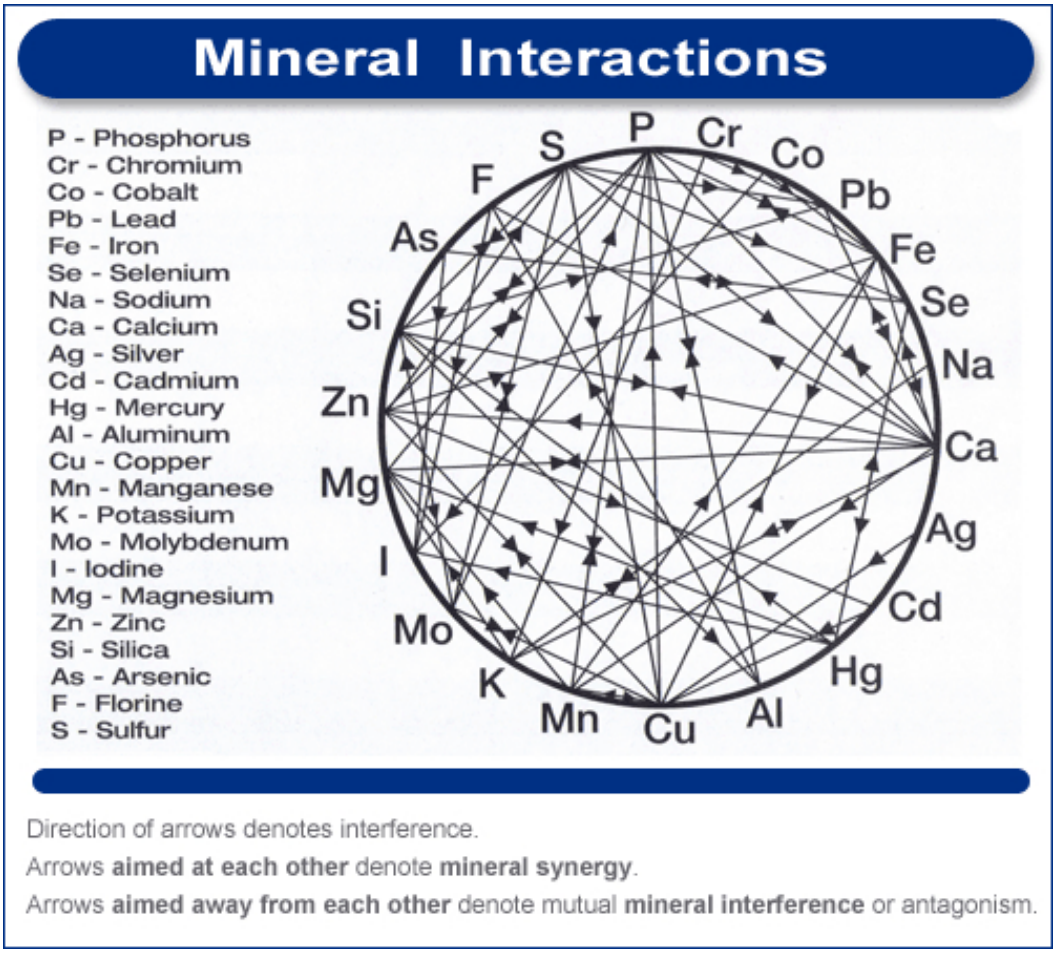

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Poultry Litter

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manure, and turkey manure and to monitor calcium levels especially when using them at high rates. Soil testing and rotating between the different kinds of poultry manure may be necessary to avoid driving calcium either up or down too far and lime applications definitely need to be adjusted to reflect the calcium from other sources and the basic difference that is needed in general recommendations between conventionally farmed soils and organic. Wood ash, gypsum, layer manure, leaf compost, and quarry dust are all organically approved fertilizers that contain significant amounts of Calcium in addition to their other components."

"Layer manure" he continues, " contains around 10% calcium which is a lot more than it looks like at first glance. Most limestone only contains between 20 and 25%. The Ca in limestone takes a lot longer to become active than the Ca in layer manure. In the first year, a ton of layer manure can offset almost a ton of lime in its effect on the soil. Broiler manure and turkey manure will actually leach out calcium if applied in excess of immediate crop uptake and soil tie up. Synthetic nitrogen leaches out much more calcium. Each pound of synthetic N over what it takes to bring the C/N ratio to 10 can leach out about 3 pounds of Ca. That's why standard lime recommendations don't work right for organic farms."

Application Rates and Soil Testing

At our farm in Liberty, PA, we have used poultry litter, preferably layer manure, usually "raw" (2-4 weeks old) or aged in a pile for a few months, on cool season pastures and hay ground. To avoid the noxious odor (and bad PR), and get the best bang for the buck, we have found it is best applied before or during a rain event, early spring (Ap 1) thru fall (Oct1) on vegetative swards. Consider an outdoor shower after spreading; your family will appreciate it. A typical rate would be 2 tons per acre per year, but we have used up to 4 tons per acre on a nitrogen hungry crop like thick ryegrass swards over the season in 1/2 to 2 tons per acre applications. This is on a farm that has historically had soil test levels of N, P, K, Ca on the lower end of low for crop requirements. On cropland at the Martens farm in the finger lakes of New York, Klass shared: "In a 5-year experiment done with Thomas Bjorkman at Cornell, we found that in soils with low to medium P and K levels, maximum corn yield response was reached at 3500# per acre of poultry litter. With higher rates, weed biomass continued to go up with no further gain in corn yield. I think 2 tons per acre is a good general rule of thumb maximum rate but that would lead to trouble if continued for very many years without regular monitoring with soil tests. This experiment was done with a good legume cover crop plowed down."

The wisdom of soil testing cannot be overemphasized when importing

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soil amendments. Admittedly, the use of litter has introduced a few weeds not previously seen on our farm and concurring with Klaas, a higher weed pressure on fields with heavier doses of litter.

Will the cows graze well after use? Palatability issues seem minimal if followed by a decent (1/4"+) rainfall and some time (7 days min), and if spread fine and even using a litter spreader or similar (like a side slinger). We tried using an old NH box spreader once and created a streak the cows would not touch the rest of the year. Klaas' experience, mostly on cropland, has been to use a litter spreader or lime spreader to apply poultry litter. He finds that they spread evenly and are pretty accurate in rate when set correctly. It is important that the operator has a good handle on spreader delivery rates, headland shutoff, and field speeds to achieve a controlled, accurate spread.

Expected Yield Response

So what kind of production can poultry litter provide on pastures, and does it pencil out? We have found 5-6 tons of dry matter per acre in most years to be a reasonable target. It is no secret that N fertilization increases both the protein and energy of grasses. This surprised us one year when we applied litter to an old neglected grass-only hayfield and found 3rd cutting Protein levels of 19% and RFQ over 170. But one of the best uses we discovered was season extension. Soil N is less active or available at cold temps, but N from fertilizer provides a quicker start in the spring, and late applications extend fall grazing by stockpiling, often adding 4-6 weeks of grazing. Another benefit we found litter can provide when applied after grazing or 1st cutting hay, is we can gain about twice the growth during summer dry spells for a given amount of precipitation. Does it pay? I have heard litter costing anywhere from $10 to $100 per ton delivered. Two tons/acre should provide another ton of forage. What is the cost of a ton of dry matter worth to your farm?

Timing of Application Depends upon the Crop

As with any use of manure, the timing and the overall fit into crop rotations needs to be considered to make the best use of the amendment without creating problems. Heavy applications year after year on the same crops (even a diverse, polyculture pasture) is a recipe for a trainwreck. On our farm, after years of permanent pasture and hay, we have seen a benefit with a diversified rotation including corn, legumes, oilseeds, covercrops, and various small grains. Litter applications are now limited more to preplant before a heavy feeder like corn.

The research Klaas Martens cited sheds more light on timing:

"The Cornell systems trials showed that timing of manure applications was important and dependent on which crop was grown. Winter grains responded well to fall applications while a lot of spring crops had no response at all to spring applied manure. The biggest negative effect of spring applications was increased weeds."

He goes on to mention; "My observation is that fertilizer for a heavy feeder like corn is best applied to the cover crop that

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Poultry Litter

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precedes it. Pasture is the exception. It seems to respond as Dave indicated in his post. It does the most good when applied just before a rain in early spring or fall. Rye grass gives the best response and at the highest rates. If winter grains are seeded for grazing, they should be fertilized at seeding or slightly before. Warm season grasses and summer annuals respond well to high rates (2+ tons/acre) just before planting. Summer seeded brassicas and small grains for fall grazing should be treated like summer annuals."

A crop like sudex can also benefit from the N in litter with an application after 1st cutting, again timed with rainfall. An early spring application on a limited acreage may provide earlier turnout, but if you have more pasture in spring than you can manage, you may not want to cover the whole farm.

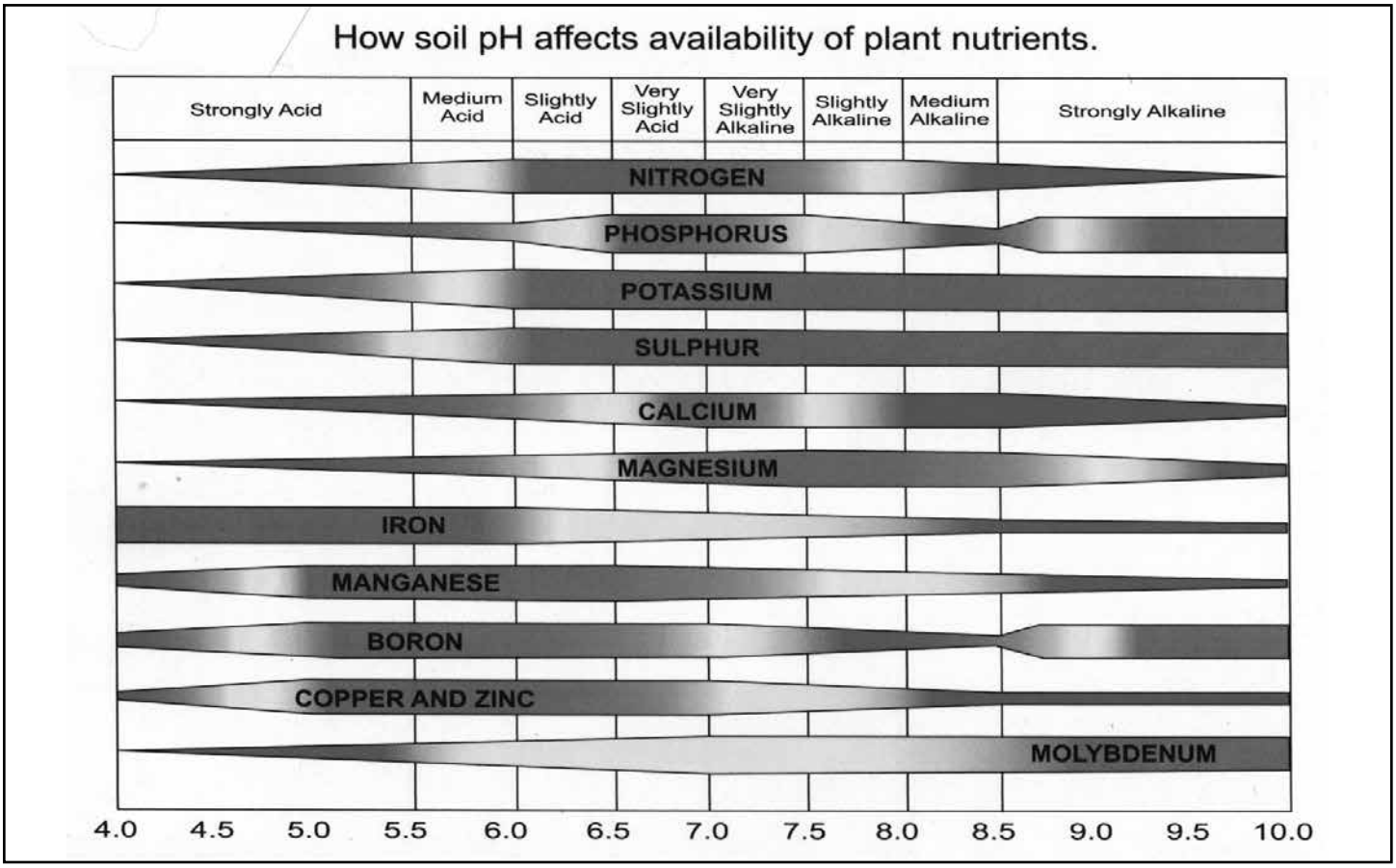
There is always a downside to most of our best intentions, and poultry litter is no exception. The upper limit pushes grass at the expense of clovers, but clovers do like it in moderation. Another negative repercussion if you spread and get no rain for 4 weeks, is that you and the neighbors get to live with the odor, not to mention all the lost volatized N you paid for.

Given our collective lack of insight, the current farm model is not a very long term sustainable plan: growing soybeans and corn in the Midwest with fossil fuel and chemicals, hauling it to the eastern seaboard to raise millions of birds and then hauling the poultry manure a few hundred miles more. As organic producers, we also need to consider the risk of importing undesirable substances like arsenic (mostly eliminated from poultry feed now), antibiotics, hostile bacteria, or GMOs to our farms, an area largely unknown that needs more serious research.

So how's that for a simple answer? ◆

Dave Johnson farms in Liberty, Pennsylvania and has been involved with NODPA since 2003. David's farm has been certified organic since 2001. He recently sold his dairy herd, but used to milk a seasonal herd of 50-90 cows and shipped his milk to Organic Valley. Current farm operations include a rotation of Corn, soybeans, oilseeds, small grains, cover corps, and forages and permanent pastures. Email: provident@epix.net, Phone: 570-324-2285.

See page nine for a chart on how soil pH affects availability of plant nutrients, and page 10 for a compilation of ODairy Listserv comments on pros and cons of poultry litter on pasture.



ORGANIC PRODUCTION

ODAIRY LISTSERV CONVERSATIONS ABOUT **POULTRY LITTER** ON PASTURE:

"Colloidal Soup: Favorite Soil Mineral Recipes"

Article starts on page 4

Klass went on to explain how Ca and K behave in soil; "Neal Kinsey does a good job explaining the chemical interaction of Potassium (K) with Calcium (Ca) in his book 'Hands on Agronomy'. K has an atomic mass of 39 and Ca has a mass of 40 but Ca combines with a charge of +2 while K is only +1 so the calcium attaches twice as tightly to the soil colloid. Putting large amounts of mined K fertilizers on soils with a pH over 6.8 results in little or no increase in soil test levels of K. It either leaches out or ends up in the crop. The K in manure, on the other hand can load over to the soil more effectively. This is partially because the N in manure can leach K even more easily than it does with Ca."

Along with his comments on Ca in litter, Klaas adds; "The Ca in gypsum reacts much faster than that in lime, and gypsum also has a lot of sulphur. Sulphate reacts more strongly than nitrate and can easily combine with Ca, Mg, or K. Jerry Brunetti often recommends using small but regular applications of gypsum on pasture and hay fields to provide readily available Ca for forages and to keep sulphur levels in feed higher for animal health. Sulphur is needed to make methionine and cystine, amino acids that cows need for immune function. In sulphur-deficient soils, adding gypsum can often lower somatic cell count."

As with any soil amendment, balance and moderation are critical issues that, if neglected, can lead to unforeseen troubles down the road. Again, Klaas adds; "I've found that excessively high Ca levels tie up copper and iron often leading to increased parasite pressure in cattle. Andre Viosin, the author of several important books on grazing , wrote a small book titled 'The Law of the Maximum' that says whenever a mineral is in excess, it can cause a shortage in one or more other minerals."

Excess use of poultry litter can push Phosphorous (P) levels up too high (some intensive operations already max out in this nutrient), and Rodney Martin's comments confirm potential problems; "I also used poultry litter and mushroom compost for quite a few years, and in my experience, excess P in the soil often leads to excess K in forages, which is detrimental to animal health." He continues and gives some great advise; "I would suggest a 2 ton/ Acre limit for poultry litter coupled with 1 ton of high calcium limestone. The calcium will help to offset the P in the soil and bring up the calcium in the plant to offset the K. This is a very simplistic suggestion. Soil and Forage tests on a regular basis and listening to your cows will ultimately give you a sense of direction on your particular farm." ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Stonewall Farm Wins Silver in 2013 National Dairy Quality Awards

(KEENE, N.H.)— Stonewall Farm, a non-profit educational farm and working dairy has won Silver in this year's National Dairy Quality Awards (NDQA), a program of the National Mastitis Council (NMC). The NMC wrote, "… a panel of milk quality judges rated (Stonewall Farm) as being among the best in the country." Stonewall Farm Director Joshua Cline says, "This is a testament to our farmers, Glenn Yardley and Wendy French, whose care for the dairy herd, attention to detail, commitment to organic practices and pride in their work has now been recognized on a national level."

Only 53 dairy operations were recognized at the Platinum, Gold and Silver levels nationwide. Finalists, including Stonewall Farm, impressed NDQA judges and National Mastitis Council staff with "phenomenal milk quality numbers and consistent attention to detail in their pursuit to produce the best quality milk possible." Judges reviewed all contenders on the basis of many different criteria, including not only milk quality but also "milking routine, cow comfort, udder health monitoring programs, treatment and prevention programs, and adherence to drug use and record keeping regulations." This important award, along with the farm's 2013 Gold Award from the Organic Valley Cooperative, comes at a time when Stonewall Farm has begun promoting its new Milk Share Program. Community members can sign up for 6 months or a full year of pre-paid access to award-winning milk in pasteurized and raw batches.

For more information, please visit www.stonewallfarm.org/csaform. For those interested in learning to farm, this is another reason to attend the Stonewall Farm School, a year-long farm apprenticeship which features a small-scale dairy or garden management concentration.This year's NDQA results will be formally announced in the January 2014 issue of Hoard's Dairyman.

For more information on Stonewall Farm, the dairy, garden, farm store, or educational programs go to www.stonewallfarm.org, or call 603-357-7278.

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Controlling Flies This Summer

By Jessica Starcevich, Entomologist for Spalding Labs

As spring approaches, so does the coming fly season, which no dairyman looks forward to thanks to the mastitis, pink eye, and numerous other problems flies bring along. For organic dairy farms, this can be an especially challenging time of year. Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet for fly control, so developing an integrated pest management program is most effective for overall fly control. Every year, my associates and I visit over 100 dairies, both conventional and organic, to help them develop the best fly control program possible.

In this article, I'd like to share some of that wisdom so everyone can have a happier, more fly free summer. Because organic dairies have grazing cows, they get two different groups of flies. First, up near areas where manure and bedding accumulates, house flies and biting stable flies breed in abundance. Second, out in the pastures, the cattle will be bothered by face flies and horn flies. Because these flies breed in different environments, they require different approaches to control.

Soiled straw bedding can produce both House and Biting Stable flies. The reproduction is in the areas hooves don't reach.

An old winter hay feeding area can be very productive Biting Stable Fly breeding area.

House Flies and Stable Flies

House flies cause a lot of the fly specks you see on walls, fences, and light fixtures. Although house flies don't bite, they can spread bacteria which can spread disease among calves and contaminate milk. House flies breed in areas with manure and other rotting organic matter that stays damp, which includes calf bedding, areas around water and feed troughs, sick pens, holding pens, alleyways and crusted lagoons.

Stable flies look a lot like house flies, but they bite, mostly on the lower legs. Stable flies breed primarily in areas with decaying vegetation (that may or may not have manure), such as old winter hay, soiled straw bedding, and rotten silage. In fact, research at Texas A&M University has shown that over one million stable flies may develop from the residue of one round bale feeding site.

The most important method for controlling house flies and stable flies is SANITATION! Start by making sure to thoroughly clean up winter feeding and loafing areas in the early spring to kill off any overwintering flies.

A fly can go from egg to adult in just over a week, so cleaning weekly in the summer is important. Although calf bedding is one of the biggest breeders of house and stable flies, it's important not to overlook smaller areas as well. The edges of alleyways, corners that are hard to scrap, and tires around the bases of posts can all breed a surprising number of flies because they're often overlooked during regular cleaning.

Typically 5% of a dairy is producing 95% of its flies. Finding those hotspots is critical. The easiest way to find your fly breeding areas is to do a little scouting for maggots and fly pupae. Areas where you see fly pupae should be cleaned up first, because if they're not already producing adult flies they will be within 3 days. If you see only maggots in an area, but no pupae, then you have a few extra days to get it cleaned up. Try to spread the manure thin so that it dries quickly, or pile it in one large pile to kill developing flies with the heat from decomposition.

Also, consider what materials you are using as bedding. House and stable flies breed more successfully in materials like straw and stover as compared to sawdust and sand. So, during the summer months, if you have access to sawdust or sand, a simple change in bedding material may help reduce your fly production.

In areas that are hard to clean effectively, or cannot be managed on a weekly basis, spreading fly parasites once a week during warm weather months may help. The better the sanitation, the fewer fly parasites are needed. Fly parasites are easy to use; just sprinkle some near all of the hard to clean areas and they will seek out and kill the fly pupae.

Fly parasites are an all-natural alternative to sprays, because they are a naturally occurring parasite of fly pupae. In nature, the fly parasite species often occur in low numbers, so they aren't able to keep up with the faster breeding flies. By releasing fly parasites on a weekly basis, starting just before you have flies, you signifi

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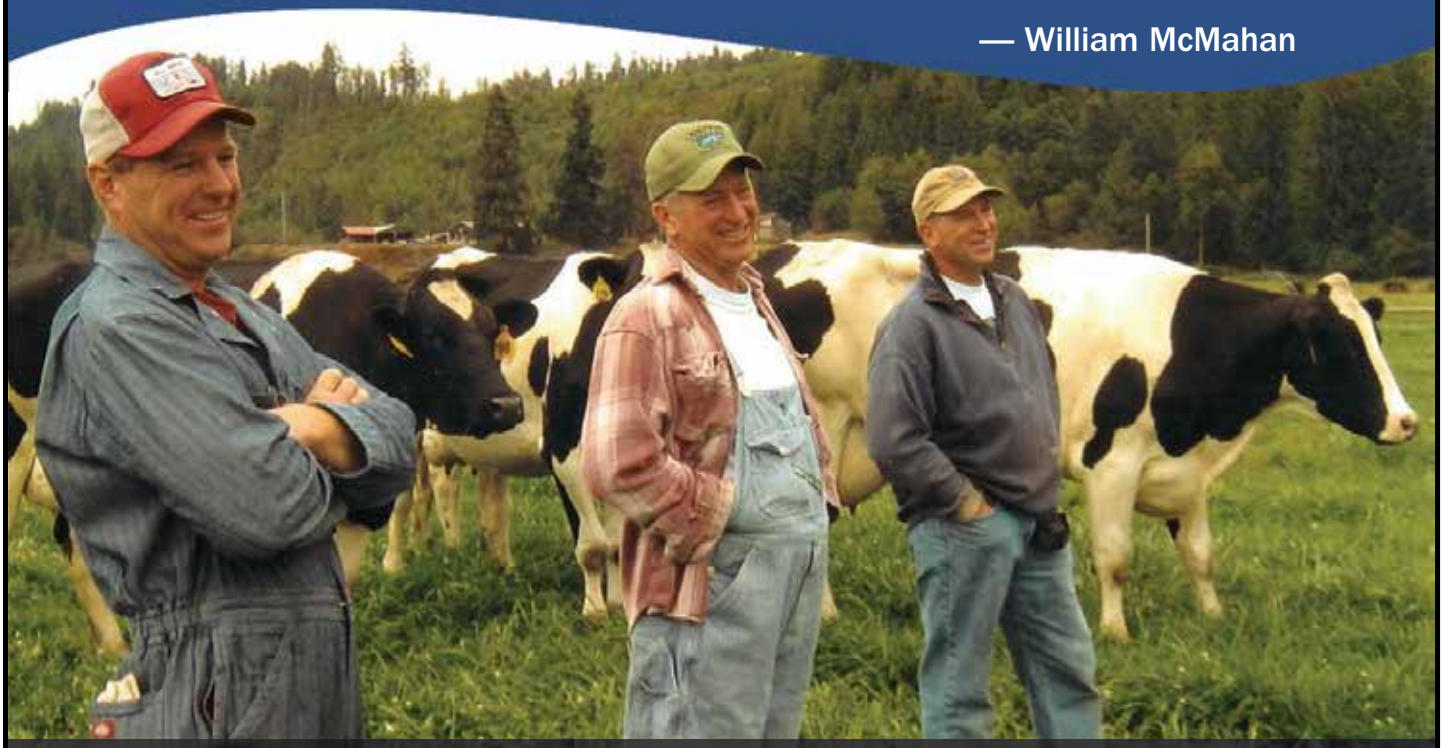
National Dairy Quality winner

"Udder Comfort is essential part of the good practices we use..."

— William McMahan



COWLITZ MEADOWS DAIRY, Inc. #1, Randle, Washington
THE MCMAHAN FAMILY: 50 cows (Certified Organic) — SCC average: 51,000
2011 Gold Level National Dairy Quality Award

"We've been using the Udder Comfort™ yellow spray for 2 years now. It works better on somatic cell counts (SCC). Our SCC has been under 100,000 for 3 years. But last year, we were able to get it down to 51,000. We're on DHIA, so we monitor cows, and when we see one with a high count, we use Udder Comfort and check the quarters regularly with the California Mastitis Test (CMT). It's always a blessing when they clear up," says William McMahan.

He and his brothers Ross and Jake and two nephews Wade and Joel, operate Cowlitz Meadows Dairy 1 & 2, Milking 50 cows at both locations.

Farm #1 near Randle, Washington was recognized as a 2011 Gold Level National Dairy Quality Award winner. Producing high quality milk is very important to the McMahan family, and it earns them high premiums through Organic Valley.

"With Udder Comfort, our cows have better udder condition and they milk out better. It helps to start their lactations with that extra stimulation, and they let their milk down better.

"I'm a big believer in essential oils. Udder Comfort is an essential part of the good practices we use to keep our cows more comfortable and producing high quality milk."

Controlling Flies

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cantly increase their numbers so that you see much better fly control.

Face Flies and Horn Flies

Face flies and Horn flies can be some of the hardest flies to control on an organic dairy. Face flies do not bite, but like house flies are capable of spreading bacteria, making them an excellent vector for pink eye.

Horn flies are only about 1/3 the size of other pest flies and like to cluster along the shoulders, backs, and bellies of pastured cattle. Horn flies feed on blood and can quickly reach high numbers on cattle. Their biting causes cows to bunch together rather than graze and can also cause teat damage.

Face flies and Horn flies breed exclusively in fresh undisturbed cow pats in pastures, so one way to reduce their population is to break up cow patties about once a week. This can be done by dragging pastures with something like a screen drag to help break up and spread out the cow patties so that they dry quickly. Encouraging dung beetle populations can also help since they will quickly tunnel through and break up cow patties.

Fly parasites can kill Horn flies, but not Face flies. Putting them in pastures is a lot of work though, so we now suggest only using fly parasites in the barn areas, and use the CowVac (a unique system developed by Spalding Labs) to control Horn Flies. Place the CowVac on the path to or from milking and it will vacuum off the Horn flies and collect them in a bag for disposal. Because adult Horn Flies remain on a cow, rather than leaving to rest elsewhere, the CowVac is a very effective and lower cost means of reducing their population.

Fly season is coming, and unfortunately there is no way to stop it; however, by implementing these suggestions, both you and your cows can enjoy fewer flies this summer. Being Organic is not a handicap when it comes to good fly control. With a good IPM program, organic dairies can have better control than conventional farms that depend on heavy pesticide use. ◆

Jessica Starcevich is an Entomologist for Spalding Labs (bxm5e.spalding-labs.com), a company offering products and information on fly control, including free phone consultations. Her phone and email is: 1-877-836-9746, jstarcevich@spalding-labs.com.

This innocent looking little pile of spilled feed under a grain bin, if it's gotten wet and spoiled, can host thousands of fly maggots. Check it and clean up regularly.

If you see fly pupae these could turn into a fly in hours. Clean this area up ASAP.

Fly maggots still have to go through the pupae stage so these won't be flies for at least 3 more days.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Growing Top Quality, High-Yielding Crops – Part 2

By Neal Kinsey

Plant roots, earthworms, soil microbes and all other life in the soil are all strongly affected by the environment that is created when good soil porosity is present. Good soil porosity, which helps determine the correct amount of minerals, water and air, is only present when the correct nutrients are provided in specifically determined amounts. Most soils lack proper structure, and without this key, such soils will never achieve their top potential in terms of yield and quality.

The physical structure of each soil is determined by the measured influence of the same four elements that most influence the pH of soils where good crops are generally being grown. These four elements are calcium, magnesium, potassium and sodium. When soils have the proper combination of these four elements they will be most closely aligned for the proper amount of water, air and minerals they should contain. For those soils that do not have the correct structure, the soil analysis can be used to determine what needed corrections should be required to achieve it and in what amounts. Use the chemistry of the soil to correct the physical structure which in turn builds the house for the biology.

Once the proper structure of a soil has been addressed, then to be most effective supplying needed fertility levels with fertilizer and soil amendments should be the next consideration. And again, for fertilization to be most effective in building high yields and quality, the importance of soil chemistry and its effects on physical structure must be correctly measured and properly considered. This is because the nutrient content of the soil actually determines how well all needed fertilizer that is applied can be taken up and utilized by the plants that are growing there. When the soil has too much of any element that excess will result in the crop not getting enough of another nutrient it needs for the best quality and/or yield.

The most efficient uptake and utilization of nutrients begins with the calcium content of the soil. As Dr. William Albrecht would say, "Calcium is like the doorman that opens the way for all other nutrients to enter into the plant." Without adequate calcium, it requires even larger amounts of all the other essential nutrients to produce the same yield.

And while considering the importance of calcium in the soil, beware of a trap that catches some growers who are striving for top quality and yields which prevents them from reaching such goals. This trap is trying to achieve a specific ratio for calcium to magnesium in the soil. With the system being advocated and utilized here for top yields and quality, such a program will not work. In fact, there is no one ideal ratio of calcium to magnesium for soils when they are being measured as available nutrients for the crop. That is because the calcium to magnesium ratio will vary from 7:1 on heavy clay soils all the way down to 3:1 on very light sandy soils.

As the clay decreases in a soil and as the silt and/or sand increases the less magnesium by weight will be needed to provide what the plants need to grow best. It is the amount of negatively charged clay and humus particles in the soil that determine the amount of calcium and magnesium that are needed there. That amount is expressed as the percent of the total nutrient-holding capacity of each individual soil. In the case of calcium the required level would be 60-70% and for magnesium 10-20% of the soil's total exchange capacity. Soil tests need to show how many pounds of each nutrient is needed to supply the proper amount for that soil to grow the best crops possible. Apply the pounds of material to correct any deficiencies. At the same time the needed applications provide the first steps for achieving the correct percentage of each nutrient required to grow the best yield and quality on that land.

Farmers may sometimes grow a good crop without the addition of more fertilizer, but you cannot produce the land's true potential without the proper amount of fertility. Calcium and magnesium provides for the long range goals in terms of soil fertility needed to reach excellent yield and quality. Without the proper amount of both of these needed nutrients the soil's true potential will never be met.

Next consider that to produce the crop you need to grow this year, any nitrogen, phosphate, potassium or sulfur deficiency would generally take precedence over calcium and magnesium. This rule is especially true for crops other than legumes. Once these four nutrients are present in adequate amounts just be sure you use a soil test that can measure them properly in order not to continue to apply them at the expense of other needed materials.

For example, using an excessive amount of nitrogen will tie up copper. For the plant copper provides stalk strength and resilience. In terms of nutritional value, copper is required for protein utilization in livestock. So too much nitrogen contributes to stalk lodging and diminishes protein value in feeds.

Phosphorous in excess is antagonistic to sulfur availability, ties up zinc and when extremely excessive, copper. Sulfur is needed to development roots and plant protein. Zinc is needed for moisture absorption into the plant. So even though adequate to good P levels can positively influence root growth, too much can actually hinder proper root development because it reduces S availability. Due to zinc tie-up, excess P can be responsible for the failure to fully utilize soil moisture even when enough is there in the soil.

Too much potassium can also be a problem. Once above 7.5% saturation K ties up boron. Once above 10% soil saturation in combination with sodium, manganese uptake will be blocked. Boron is necessary for nitrogen utilization in the plant throughout the growing season. It also takes the starch out of the leaf to build fruit and grain size. Manganese is needed for seed germination, faster and taller growth, bloom and seed set, and stalk strength. Soil with excessive potassium can cause these problems.

Sulfur in excess is also a problem. When too much is present, it ties up nitrate nitrogen and inhibits phosphate availability. Too much sulfur can also reduce molybdenum availability. As long as it is utilized properly to feed the crops and reduce excesses of calcium, magnesium, potassium or sodium, sulfur is of extreme benefit, but once those needs are met adding more will begin to cause problems.

After assuring adequate N-P-K-S for the soil and crop and once the needed calcium and magnesium have been applied, then deficient micronutrients (covered next time) can become most limiting to quality and yield.

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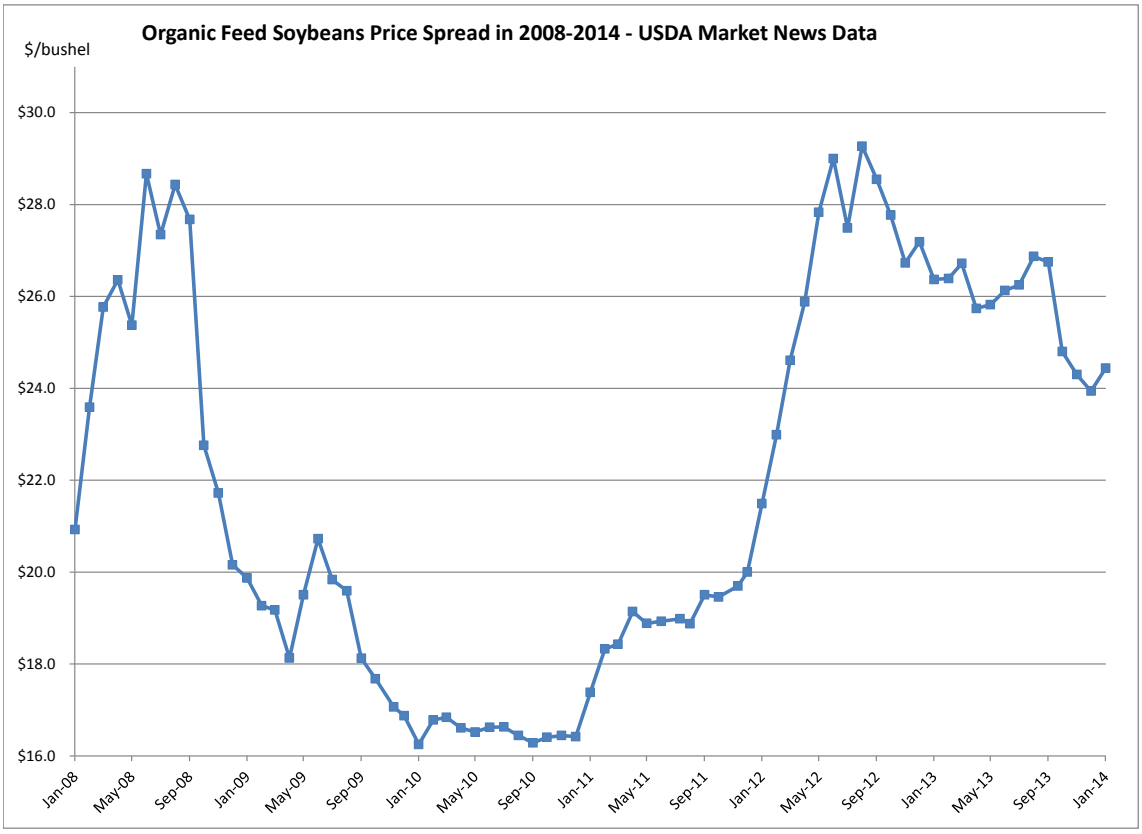
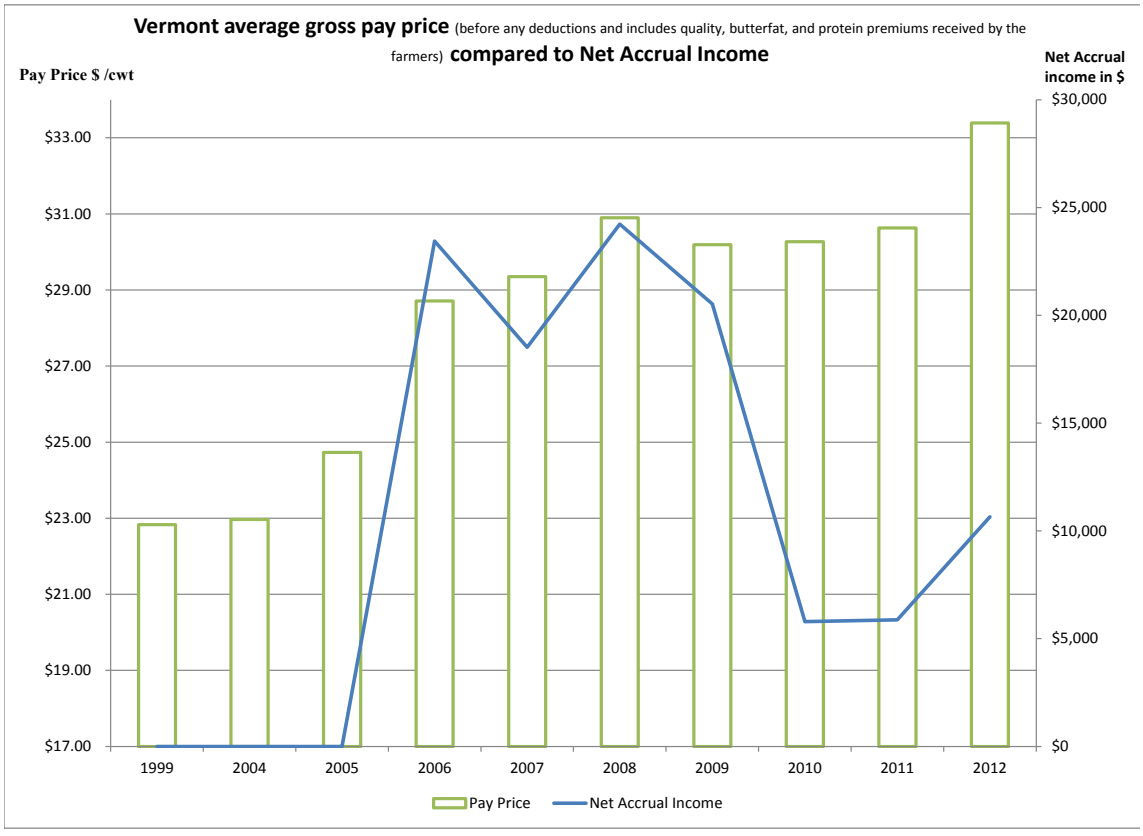
ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

January 2014 Feed, Pay and Retail Price Update

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director





Organic fluid milk sales are growing steadily with a year to date increase of 4.7% over last year, with some strong competition in the dairy case in the Northeast as Horizon Organic maintain the number one position in retail sales, with sales of store brand/private label in second place. While the average retail price remains fairly stable at an average of $3.45, the low end of the retail price is currently $2.79 per half gallon, which will be priced for in-store brand promotions and store brand loss leader promotions as organic milk is used to attract organic shoppers. The retail price at the high end is $4.99 per half gallon. All brands and store brands are offering specials depending on geographic location and willingness to use organic milk as a loss leader.

Contracted pay price for producers hasn't changed and with component and quality bonuses the farmgate price is reaching the mid $30 per hundred weight for many producers in the Northeast but profitability for all but the most established organic farms is still dropping. Processors are looking to diversify their operations and invest in non-dairy enterprises. WhiteWave have extended their MAP to January

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Environmentalists, Farmers Challenge USDA's Call for the Deregulation of Crops with Genetically Engineered Tolerance to the Highly Toxic Herbicide 2,4-D

Press Release from Beyond Pesticides

January 3, 2014, Washington DC. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today released for public input its Draft Environmental Impact Statements (DEIS), which calls for the deregulation of genetically engineered (GE) corn and soybeans engineered to be tolerant to the toxic herbicide 2,4-D. These new varieties of GE corn and soybean, created partly due to proliferate weed resistance resulting from the widespread use of glyphosate (Roundup) on other GE crops, is set to usher in dramatic increases in 2,4-D use with associated health and environmental hazards, according to environmental scientists. The GE crops are being produced by Dow AgroSciences under the brand name "Enlist."

According to Nichelle Harriott, senior scientist at the national environmental group Beyond Pesticides, "The engineered varieties will not only spawn new weed resistant strains, but contaminate the environment and increase the public health risks to cancer and Parkinson's disease, especially in farmworkers and farming communities exposed to 2,4-D."

The failure of GE-glyphosate (Roundup) tolerant crops to live up to their promises is a main contributing factor behind the development of stacked varieties of 2,4-D GE corn and soybean. So widespread is glyphosate resistance that EPA has granted emergency use exemptions for pesticides with unregistered uses in agriculture, like fluridone. One 2012 report shows that GE crops have been responsible for an increase of 404 million pounds of pesticide, or about 7%, in the U.S. over the first 16 years of commercial use of GE crops (1996-2011), which means that 2,4-D use is expected to increase dramatically in GE fields.

While USDA attempts to assure the public that 2,4-D is safe, the science has raised serious concerns about the safety of this herbicide, which was used as a key ingredient in "Agent Orange," used to defoliate forests and croplands in the Vietnam War. Scientists around the world have reported increased

> The failure of GE-glyphosate (Roundup) tolerant crops to live up to their promises is a main contributing factor behind the development of stacked varieties of 2,4-D GE corn and soybean.

cancer risks in association with its use, especially for non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL). It is also neurotoxic, genotoxic, and an endocrine disruptor. Studies have also reported that occupational exposure to 2,4-D is associated with an increased risk of Parkinson's disease.

The proposed deregulation of these GE crops is being met with criticism from farmers, environmentalists and other concerned groups. Similar to previous decisions to deregulate other varieties of GE soybeans, alfalfa, and sugar beets, safety advocates charge that USDA fails to take into account several scientifically-validated environmental concerns, such as the indiscriminate nature of GE gene flow among crops, a heavy reliance on faulty data, and a high degree of uncertainties in making safety determinations. Deregulation of 2, 4-D GE corn and soybeans also underplays the issue of 2,4-D drift that has long been a known problem to off-site locations, endangered species and non-target crops, as well as the threat of dioxin contamination. The agency once again overlooks the problem of herbicide-resistant weeds and insects, and the widespread corruption of conventional seed varieties by GE strains, along with documented severe health and economic injury to non-GE and organic farmers and markets.

Instead of chemical-intensive solutions, sustainable, integrated pest management strategies, including organic practices, to minimize and even avoid the production challenges that most GE organisms have been falsely-marketed as solving. These strategies can also help farmers get off the pesticide treadmill which constantly demands greater amounts of synthetic inputs.

"In the age of organic agriculture it is irresponsible to be introducing a failed technology reliant on 2,4-D with all its known hazards to human health and the environment," said Jay Feldman, executive director of Beyond Pesticides. ◆

For more info: Nichelle Harriott, Jay Feldman 202-543-5450 www.beyondpesticides.org

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Economic Sustainability of Vermont Organic Dairy Farms: How strong is the Economic Leg?

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and sold 753,340 lbs of milk per farm. Average milk price for the year was $33.39/cwt. The farms averaged a net revenue of $46,541 before any payment for unpaid owner labor and management and principal payments were made. A charge of $36,000 for family living costs was used to represent payment to the owner, leaving a Return on Assets of 1.84%. On average, the farms are getting along, however, there is reason for concern as 16 of the 34 farms in the study failed to provide enough income for a positive ROA (Return on Assets) and to meet family living needs. The largest expenses were purchased feed (36.1%), repairs and supplies (12.4%), labor (9.8%), and depreciation (8.9%). Of the purchased feed, 96% was for grain supplement. In contrast to fairly level milk prices, organic production expenses have increased about 4-5% per year.

Study: To Examine the Profitability of Organic Dairy Farms in Vermont

- **34 farms in 2012**
- **40 farms in 2011**
- **31 farms in 2010**
- **31 farms in 2009**
- **35 Farms for 2008**
- **28 Farms for 2007**
- **41 Farms for 2006 (VT and ME)**
- **44 farms for 2005 (VT & ME)**
- **30 farms in 2004 (VT & ME)**
- **7 farms in 1999**

To get a better analysis of the data, the herds were examined by profit groups, which shows a sizable difference between the farms. Each group was 11-12 farms, and ranked by overall farm profitability. The three groups showed returns of 5.82%, 1.94% and -2.25%. The most profitable farms averaged more cows per farm (67.5), more milk per cow (14,628 lbs), and a higher milk price ($34.41/cwt) than the other 2 groups. The low profit group averaged only 56.9 cows producing 11,297 lbs of milk per cow at a farm price of $32.39 per cwt. In comparison to the high profit group, the low profit group is producing 2300 lbs less milk per cow, milking 10 fewer cows, and receiving $2 less per cwt! The middle profit group has fewer cows but more milk per cow and lower expenses. Total revenue per cow ranged from $4,041 for the low profit group to $5,619 for the high profit group.

The high profit group also had the highest expenses on per farm and per cow basis. It's common behavior among businesses to spend more when you have more. Thus earning a higher income allows the high profit group to have more money available for optional expenditures. In particular, the high profit group spends more than $400 per cow for grain but pays for the grain with higher milk production. The difference between the highest profit and low profit groups in expense per cow is less than 10%, ranging from $3,831 to $4,214 per cow.

While having higher expenses than the other 2 groups, the highest profit group earned $1405 per cow while the middle group earned $964 and the low profit group earned $128 per cow to pay for owner labor, principal payments, and reinvestment in the farm. As would be expected, off farm income is of greater importance to the low profit group, at $335 per cow, while the high profit group only has $191of off farm income per cow.

There is another way to keep expenses under control and that is to eliminate the major areas of expense. Two farms have tried this by eliminating all grain and feeding just forage. One of these farms does spend about $60 per cow for minerals. These 2 farms milked 43 and 56 cows, producing 8707 and 9470 lbs of milk per cow. However, by eliminating purchased grain, they finished the year with $59,176 and 54,699 to pay for owner family living expense and to make payments, ending with a ROA of 5.01% and 4.62%, respectively. Is zero grain fed the way to go? Neither of these farms are in the top profit group, all of whom feed purchased grain. But they are not in the low profit group, who also all feed purchased grain. There is no answer here but it does present an interesting view on how some farmers adapt to make a profit that works for their farm.

When compared to similar sized conventional dairy farms over the past 9 years, the study has shown that organic has done better 4 times, conventional has done better 4 times, and 1 year was a tossup. For 2012, the organic dairy farms fared a bit better with 1.92% as compared to -0.02% ROA for conventional. But if we are looking for consistent returns over the past 9 years, organic would be the top choice due to the volatility of conventional milk prices. Organic dairy farms have averaged 1.81% ROA since 2004 while similar scale conventional dairy farms averaged only 0.86% ROA.

There are several characteristics of the conventional dairy farms. Herd size is generally 67-71 cows per farm and production has centered around 19,500 lbs of milk per cow. Generally, the conventional dairy farms pay more for repairs and supplies, but less for labor while feed expense per cow is strikingly similar to that spent by organic dairy farms. The challenge for conventional dairy farms are volatile milk prices, which have ranged from $13.30 in 2009 to $20.93 in 2011.

There is little doubt that organic has provided a saving lifeline to

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2012 Vermont Organic Dairy Farms Averages (N=34)

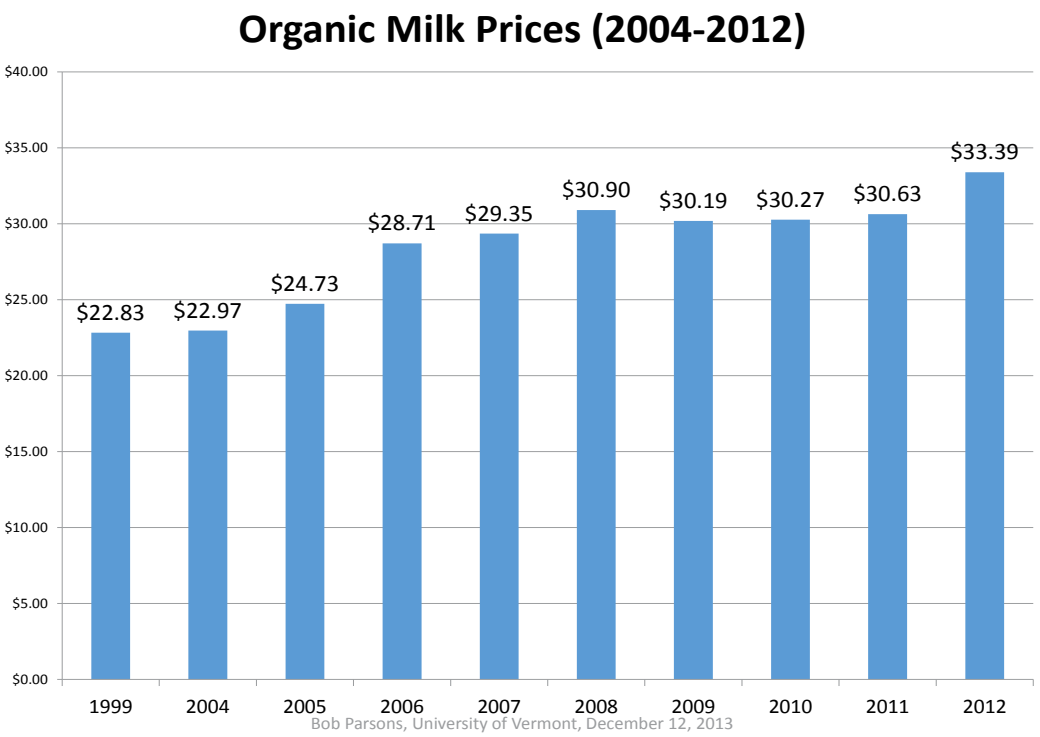
Reported by Profitability Group

The UNIVERSITY of VERMONT EXTENSION

	Bottom Third N=11	Middle Third N=12	Top Third N=11	All Farms N=34
Average # of cows	56.9	51.8	67.5	58.6
Lbs shipped total	640,061	637,535	992,953	753,340
Lbs shipped/cow	11,297	12,599	14,628	12,834
Milk price	$32.39	$33.47	$34.31	$33.39
Receipts				
Milk sales (a)	207,119	211,408	337,373	250,774
Dairy cattle sales	7,653	1,517	4,589	4,496
Cull cow sales	5,324	6,023	9,134	6,803
Bob/Veal calf sales	624	2,155	1,335	1,395
Crop sales	4,170	1,757	4,158	3,315
Government payments	4,160	3,914	4,610	4,219
Patronage divendends	1,469	3,233	4,746	3,152
Custom work	333	244	696	419
Syrup	676	1,498	816	1,011
Timber	1,820	0	1,217	982
Other	2,076	1,729	1,526	1,776
Total Cash Receipts (b)	$235,424	$233,477	$369,534	$278,126
Accrual Revenue Adjustments				
Livestock inventory	(295)	2,532	8,382	3,510
Breeding livestock purchases	(595)	(2,800)	(475)	(1,334)
Accounts receivable (c)	612	4,421	1,426	2,220
Hay	(838)	943	(2,249)	(666)
Grain	(6,088)	356	2,052	(1,180)
Total Accrual Revenue (d)	($7,204)	$5,452	$9,136	$2,549
Total Farm Revenue (e)	$228,220	$238,929	$378,670	$280,675
Expenses				
Auto and truck expenses	2,040	1,487	1,711	1,738
Bedding	4,907	5,780	11,053	7,204
Breeding	1,636	2,377	3,797	2,597
Chemicals/pesticides	84	0	0	28
Custom hire:	13,215	8,665	9,788	10,501
DHIA	976	1,280	1,878	1,376
Fertilizers & lime	973	262	3,484	1,535
Feed - purchased grain & other	68,979	61,188	111,029	79,834
Feed - purchased forage	3,888	2,674	7,443	4,610
Fuel and Oil	11,632	7,381	10,534	9,777
Insurance	4,410	4,727	5,735	4,950

Bob Parsons 802-656-2109 or bob.parsons@uvm.edu University of Vermont Extension Dec. 16, 2013

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS



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Vermont's small scale dairy farms. In discussing challenges with organic dairy farmers, more than 75% believe they would not be in business today if they had not had the option to go organic. These farms are supporting their local communities and there is evidence that they contribute more to the local economy than a similar sized conventional dairy farm. What does the future hold? This is a big question as nearly half of the farms cannot pay the owner a reasonable wage for unpaid labor and management. These farms are not economically sustainable. There is less likelihood that the next generation will be interested, willing, or able to take over a farm that cannot make breakeven returns. In the long term, these farms will most likely not survive, leaving a question as to where more organic milk will be sourced. It's also clear that without the $2.80 increase in average milk price this year, more farms would not have been able to meet family minimal family living expenses. So this brings up some big questions facing the future of Vermont organic dairy farms. Can farm milk prices continue to increase to help cover rising production costs? Will the market be able to charge more without losing customers? These are major questions for the sector for the long term viability of organic dairy and their importance to rural Vermont.

In conclusion, organic farms are getting by. Organic is not the road to riches for many, however it has been a key vehicle of survival for many of the smaller farms who likely would be out of business if they had not had the option to go organic. Higher milk prices are needed but can the market absorb a higher price without losing consumer demand? So while the coming years likely will not see an immediate loss of organic dairy farms, there should be concern for long run viability and sustainable and healthy supply of organic milk from Vermont farms. Without a higher price, organic dairy farms have only the same options they had available when on the conventional treadmill; add more cows and produce more milk per cow to meet rising expenses. ◆

This study, which provides a viewpoint on the profitability of organic dairy, faces the need for funding if it is to be continued. In the past few years, funding has been provided by Organic Valley and in earlier years by the USDA and University of Vermont Ag Experiment Station. To date, with the cooperation of Vermont's organic dairy farmers and NOFA-VT, this study has become the longest ongoing economic study of organic dairy in the US. There is some limited support available from UVM but additional funds are needed to pay for data collection and particularly to pay farmers participating in the study. If you are aware of groups or individuals who could support the study's costs, please contact Lisa McCrory of NODPA at 802-234-5524 or Lmccrory@hughes.net, or Bob Parsons at 802-656-2109 or bob.parsons@uvm.edu.

Bob Parsons is a Professor and Extension Ag Economist at the University of Vermont. He recently presented a webinar on the 2012 economic findings, which can be found here: (https://learn.extension.org/events/1359). You can reach Bob by phone or email: 802-656-2109, or bob.parsons@uvm.edu

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Online Resources, January 2014

Looking for some useful websites that can help you with your grazing strategies or provide insights on the economics of organic dairy production? Below are a few resources that NODPA would like to share with its readers.

Do you know of some on-line resources that you would like to share with the NODPA readership? Let us know! We would love to share your resource connections in a future issue of the NODPA News.

1. **Agricultural Insights** is a blog dedicated to promoting sustainable agriculture around the world. We are reminded daily about how agriculture has a negative impact on people, communities, animals and the planet as a whole. The mission of this website is to change that negative energy into positive; real world solutions that will benefit mankind and all the inhabitants of earth for generations to come. Producers note: this website has a lot of good information for graziers, including a series of podcast interviews with many recognizable leaders in grazing and holistic management circles including some recent posts by Temple Grandin, and Ann Adams of Holistic Management International. Others include Ian Mitchell-Innes, Gabe Brown, Greg Judy, and Fred Provenza. **Website address:** http://agriculturalinsights.com

Case Studies of Organic Dairies: From conventional management to organic certification, these case studies cover the farmers' stories starting with their days as conventional farmers, through their organic transition, and into a couple years as certified organic producers.

Transition to organic dairy case study: Franklin Family Farm (Guilford, Vermont). Lisa McCrory and Robert Parsons. 2013. [Online]. eXtension Foundation, eOrganic Community of Practice. **Available at:** http://www.extension.org/pages/67531/transition-to-organic-dairy-case-study:-franklin-family-farm-guilford-vermont

Transition to organic dairy case study: Fournier Farm (Swanton, Vermont). Lisa McCrory, Robert Parsons, B. Wallis, and S. Flack. 2013. [Online]. eXtension Foundation, eOrganic Community of Practice. **Available at:** http://www.extension.org/pages/67530/transition-to-organic-dairy-case-study:-fournier-farm-swanton-vermont

Transition to organic dairy case study: Hall and Breen Farm LLC (Orwell, Vermont). Lisa McCrory and Robert Parsons. 2013. [Online]. eXtension Foundation, eOrganic Community of Practice. **Available at:** http://www.extension.org/pages/67529/transition-to-organic-dairy-case-study:-hall-and-breen-farm-llc-orwell-vermont

2. **ATTRA Resources for Intensive Grazing**
The following ATTRA publications and resources include useful information related to intensive grazing management. These resources and many more can be found in the Livestock and Pasture section of ATTRA's website, www.attra.ncat.org. Call 800-346-9140 for printed copies. Prices vary. Many resources are free. SP* titles are also available in Spanish.

- A Brief Overview of Nutrient Cycling in Pastures IP221
- Assessing the Pasture Soil Resource IP128
- Converting Cropland to Perennial Grassland IP244
- Dung Beetle Benefits in the Pasture Ecosystem CT155
- Grazing Contracts for Livestock IP247
- Grazing Networks for Livestock Producers CT166
- Managed Grazing in Riparian Areas IP223
- Multispecies Grazing CT147
- Nutrient Cycling in Pastures IP136
- Paddock Design, Fencing, and Water Systems for Controlled Grazing IP152
- Pasture, Rangeland, and Grazing Management IP306
- Pastures: Going Organic IP297
- Pressure-Treated Wood: Organic and Natural Alternatives IP362
- Rotational Grazing IP086
- Ruminant Nutrition for Graziers IP318 SP*
- Tools for Managing Internal Parasites in Small Ruminants: Animal Selection IP400
- Tools for Managing Internal Parasites in Small Ruminants: Pasture Management IP401
- Pastures: Sustainable Management IP284
- Protecting Riparian Areas: Farmland Management

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Feed & Pay Price

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2014 because of the continued high cost of feed. They have decided to sell their large organic dairy in Idaho and move out of the production of raw milk. WhiteWave is now expanding into China through a joint-venture agreement with China Mengniu Dairy Co. The venture will purchase Yashili Zhengzhou, which is building a production facility. WhiteWave will own 49 percent of the venture, and Mengniu 51 percent. This follows WhiteWave's announcement that it has completed its $600 million purchase of Earthbound Farm, a California company that sells organic salads, dried fruits and frozen fruits and vegetables. Organic Valley, through its subsidiaries Organic Prairie and Lorentz Meats, is investing in a slaughterhouse and meat processing facility in southern Vermont and will distribute product throughout New England in partnership with Black River Produce.

Stonyfield Farm (manufacturers of organic yoghurt) have decided to move forward in establishing their own pool of milk. They have yet to name a pay price for the milk they will purchase or what farms they will contract with and at what volume, but intend to target farms that want to transition which will be difficult when non-organic dairy is more profitable than organic. Stonyfield will also be offering technical assistance to producers who wish to expand, although its difficult to imagine any profitable organic dairies thinking of expanding would need technical assistance – their major need will be money. The assumption is that this initiative by Stonyfield will be looking to cut their manufacturing costs by reducing trucking and pooling costs not by lowering the pay price to producers.

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service reports total organic milk products sales for October as 194 million pounds with organic Whole Milk sales seeing the biggest growth; an increase of 11.5% over October 2012. Year to date sales are up 4.7% over the same period of 2012. The weighted average advertised price of organic milk half gallons is $3.45 One year ago the weighted average advertised price was $3.29. The Northeast has the highest weighted average price, $3.76, while the South Central Region has the lowest weighted average price this period, $2.79. The organic-conventional half-gallon price spread is $1.80.

Trading in corn and soybeans has been affected by the weather and the challenges of transportation. While commodity prices are lower than 2013, down $2 per bushel to $24.4 for soybeans and $3 per bushel for organic corn, producers report that this only equates to an average reduction of $30-50 per ton of feed delivered to the farm. The supply of reasonable quality organic hay is light and difficult to find. ◆

NODPA Members Generously Support the 1st Annual NODPA Fundraising Campaign

NODPA's Board extends thanks to all that contributed during this fundraising campaign and to those that regularly support NODPA through their milk checks and to our business members.

If you haven't had a chance to make your annual donation, you can do so by filling out the forms on **page 37** of this newsletter or going online at **nodpa.com/donate.shtml** for a one-time donation or at **nodpa.com/membership_checkoff.shtml** for a monthly milk check contribution.

ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

Kimball Brook Farm & Green Mountain Creamery, Vermont

From Wholesale Milk to Value-Added

continued from page 1

organic milk for almost 3 years, and though they were very grateful for their market, they were starting to notice how the pay price for their milk was not keeping up with the rising costs of production. It is not in their nature to sit idly by and watch their margin continue to shrink, so they started to actively look into ways in which they could add value to their milk and earn a higher profit for their product.

Hilary and Jack Devos with the Kimball Brook Farm herd

Having recently completed a Farm Viability study on organic milk production, Cheryl and JD turned to marketing consultant, Rosalie Wilson, to help them research some of the many ways they could enter the world of value-added milk production. Bottling organic milk became the venue that they were interested in the most, and with a year of market research and pushing a pencil on infrastructure needs, they knew that they would not be able to finance a venture like this on their own; they would have to look for investors and grant opportunities.

Introducing Slow Money and Value-Added Grant Support

In 2010, the Slow Money Conference came to Vermont, and Cheryl decided to use this venue as a place to 'pitch' their idea of starting an organic dairy creamery in the Champlain Valley of Vermont. To do that, she needed to prepare a 2-minute talk in which she would sell her idea to an audience of possible investors and fellow entrepreneurs. Her efforts were rewarded! Cheryl got a commitment from a local investor who had been aware of their venture, but had not yet decided to support the effort. With the commitment of their first investor came support from others within that network. In the end they raised $500,000 from a total of 20 investors ranging in size from $5,000 to $250,000. With that upfront investment, they were successful in taking out a loan from the bank.

JD Devos

Over the next couple years, Cheryl and JD worked hard getting their creamery ready for production. It was not an easy road and they went over budget by 20-30%. But their vision was catching the eyes of many and in 2011, Kimball Brook Farm was awarded the Dairy Farm of the Year award by UVM Extension and the VT Dairy industry Association. Shortly after receiving this state-wide recognition, Cheryl and JD found out that the Value-Added Producer Grant proposal they had submitted had been awarded – to the tune of $300,000 – through the USDA's Rural Development Value-Added Producer Grant Program. This money could be used to provide

capital resources necessary for business growth and job creation.

Grand Opening

On May 17, 2012 Green Mountain Creamery had its grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony. Sharing retail space with another local business, Vermont Smoke and Cure, in the former Saputo Cheese plant in Hinesburg, Vermont, these two businesses hope to employ more than 40 workers in the near future.

Organic milk sales started at 400 gallons a week when they first opened their doors. Sales have been growing each month since then and today they are selling 2000 – 2500 gallons per week. "We have doubled sales since last year at the same time," says Cheryl with a smile. Today, 1.5 years into their new business, Green Mountain Creamery has just started to break even – which is quite impressive for a new business.

Not all the milk that they produce goes to their bottled milk products; about 50% of their milk (25,000 lbs per week) goes to their creamery and the remaining 50% goes to a national milk buyer. They feel very fortunate to have this continued relationship with a wholesale market so that they receive the organic price for their surplus milk.

Some of the companies, stores and local business purchasing their milk right now include: many local food coops and retailers throughout the New England and New ork, Champlain Chocolates, Red Kite Candy (caramels), Fletcher Allen Hospital, Price Chopper, Shaws, and a growing number of Vermont public schools. In order to service the elementary schools, their creamery will have to package 1% milk into 8-ounce containers. Cheryl and JD look forward to fulfilling that need soon, but that package size will take some additional capital investment on their part. The newest change that will be out by March 1st is switching to glass bottles.

Current staff/employee numbers

There are a total of 10 people working at their organic dairy farm (Kimball Brook Farm) and at the Green Mountain Creamery. In

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About Slow Money

(www.slowmoney.org)

Inspired by Woody Tach's book I*nquiries into the Nature of Slow Money: Investing As If Food, Farms and Fertility Mattered*, published in 2009, the Slow Money Alliance is bringing people together around a new conversation about money that is too fast, about finance that is disconnected from people and place, about how we can begin fixing our economy from the ground up ... starting with food.

With trillions of dollars a day accelerating around the globe, invested in securities that no one fully understands, it is time to affirm a new direction:

The Slow Money Principles

In order to enhance food security, food safety and food access; improve nutrition and health; promote cultural, ecological and economic diversity; and accelerate the transition from an economy based on extraction and consumption to an economy based on preservation and restoration, we do hereby affirm the following Slow Money Principles:

I. We must bring money back down to earth.

II. There is such a thing as money that is too fast, companies that are too big, finance that is too complex. Therefore, we must slow our money down -- not all of it, of course, but enough to matter.

III. The 20th Century was the era of Buy Low/Sell High and Wealth Now/Philanthropy Later—what one venture capitalist called "the largest legal accumulation of wealth in history." The 21st Century will be the era of nurture capital, built around principles of carrying capacity, care of the commons, sense of place and non-violence.

IV. We must learn to invest as if food, farms and fertility mattered. We must connect investors to the places where they live, creating vital relationships and new sources of capital for small food enterprises.

V. Let us celebrate the new generation of entrepreneurs, consumers and investors who are showing the way from Making A Killing to Making a Living.

VI. Paul Newman said, "I just happen to think that in life we need to be a little like the farmer who puts back into the soil what he takes out." Recognizing the wisdom of these words, let us begin rebuilding our economy from the ground up, asking:

- What would the world be like if we invested 50% of our assets within 50 miles of where we live?
- What if there were a new generation of companies that gave away 50% of their profits?
- What if there were 50% more organic matter in our soil 50 years from now?

FEATURED FARM

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their processing plant, they employ 4 people during their production days, and may be increasing those numbers once they start packaging their milk in glass bottles. Other staff positions include bookkeeping and sales and the rest are on the farm milking/feeding the cows and growing/harvesting the crops.

Balancing Milk and Staying Creative

Cheryl and JD read a lot of dairy processor magazines, which helps them stay on top of trends and gives them ideas for other ventures. It is a part of the business that Cheryl finds very satisfying. To stay motivated, learn from their peers and help others, they participate in a round table of other small scale agricultural business owners including Pete's Greens, The Royal Butcher, and Champlain Orchards. All the participants are people involved in a start-up and are trying to ramp up their business. Sharing and supporting each other gives all involved an opportunity to see how other new businesses have gained ground and handled stressful situations.

Products that they are marketing through their Kimball Brook Farm Organic Milk label include: whole milk, 2% milk, 1% milk, skim milk, cream-top whole milk, whole chocolate milk, 1% chocolate milk, heavy cream, and half & half. Once their milk products have gone to all their accounts, their creamery (Green Mountain Organic Creamery) has a small volume of skim milk remaining. The thought of raising pigs on the skim milk is enticing, but their business mentors discourage starting another enterprise so early in the game. What Cheryl and JD have decided to do is create some seasonal flavored

skim milk products such as Maple Milk in the winter; Strawberry milk in the summer, etc. By the beginning of February they will be bottling all four flavors of their new Ice Cappuccino line.

In October of last year, Cheryl and JD went to a regional 'Match-Maker' event in VT whose purpose was to match farmers producing value-added products with buyers. At these events, the farmer has 2 minutes to sell their product and can offer samples at the time of this interaction. Being that the Green Mountain Creamery was already

in many of the stores, Cheryl decided to pitch their products to the public schools. Cheryl met with the local High School food program coordinator and today Green Mountain Creamery is providing milk in 10 schools with more prospects in the wings.

Moving Forward and Making Room for the Next Generation

Now that their operation is breaking even, Cheryl is feeling less stress but says she needs another year under her belt before things will be feeling great. "Looking back over the past 4 years I am not sure that JD and I would have gone through the whole process", she reflects. "It's nice to be ignorant about what is going on. But we are really happy that we are at that point where we can put milk on the shelves." The time of envisioning the business and pitching the idea to others was exciting, but their first year was 'a year of hell.'

With the growth of their new venture, family members have been returning to the farm for full and part time employment. Their daughter, Hilary, works full time on the farm and Hilary's boyfriend, Rye Mathews, works part time at the creamery. Their son, Jack, an aspiring actor, is off to college in Europe, but may find a creative way to contribute to the enterprise, and an older son, Josh, is currently overseas in the military but has a goal of returning to the farm in two and a half years. There are other relatives who have expressed an interest in living nearby and being a part of this growing enterprise – something JD and Cheryl did not expect, but welcome with open arms. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Upcoming Winter Conferences for 2014: Part II

It seems there are more and more options each year for producers to travel and learn from fellow farmers, consultants, and researchers. It is gratifying to see not only the wealth of information, but the knowledge that at these events, you can be sure to find a vibrant Trade Show area, delicious food, and time during the days and evenings to network and spend quality time with friends old and new. Below you will find conference highlights at a handful of conferences taking place in Ohio, New York, Vermont, and Wisconsin. More events can be found in the Calendar section of the Newsletter on page 35.

The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) 35th Annual Conference, Affirming Our Roots, Breaking New Ground

February 15 - 16th, 2014, with pre-conference events taking place on Friday, February 14th.
Granville Middle and High Schools in Granville, Ohio.

Enjoy keynote sessions with former US Deputy Agriculture Secretary Kathleen Merrigan and organic farmer and activist Atina Diffley; two in-depth pre-conference events; a trade show; locally-sourced and organic homemade meals, and more.

As part of the 2014 conference, OEFFA will also host the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE) program's Farmers Forum. Farmers, ranchers, and others funded by NCR-SARE grants will present workshops about their research projects.

Many workshops will be geared specifically toward organic dairy and livestock producers:

- Dr. Gustavo Schuenemann, an Assistant Professor and dairy Extension specialist in the Ohio State University's Department of Veterinary Preventative Medicine will lead a workshop on dairy herd health.
- Organic dairy farmer Vernon Coblentz of Blue Sky Farm will share why he sprouts grains for feed and ideas for simple, affordable setups so you can make hay when the sun doesn't shine.
- During his SARE Farmers Forum workshop, veterinarian Bo Norby will provide attendees with information on non-antibiotic treatment options for bovine mastitis, and review new research on the topic.
- Learn how to select the most appropriate forage species and varieties based on your farm's soil type and soil fertility levels in this workshop by Retired State Grassland Conservationist and Ohio State Conservationist Hall of Fame member Bob Hendershot.
- In a second workshop, Bob Hendershot will discuss how including forage plant species and legumes into a crop rotation can result in healthier, more productive livestock, and improved weed and pest management control.
- Norm Conrad, program specialist with NCAT/ATTRA, will discuss how farmers can manage flies in their livestock operations.
- Bruce Rickard will share his methods for year-round cattle grazing on grass and explain the importance of a whole farm perspective on the role of cattle in managing grassland.
- Inspector Michelle Gregg will share tips for record keeping and organization that will help organic farmers prepare for

their annual inspection and audit.

- Inspector and certified organic farmer Mark Seeley will provide an overview of how organic records can be used as a basis for analyzing farm business performance and profitability.
- Jake Schmitz, of Organic Valley, Dave Shively, an organic grain grower, and Alan Sundermeier, OSU Extension Educator, will discuss organic corn variety test plot results and how to select the best corn varieties for your farm.
- Dave Campbell of Lily Lake Organic Farm in Illinois and Doug Doohan of OSU's Organic Food and Farm Education and Research (OFFER) Program will discuss strategies for organically managing weeds in field crops, including crop rotations, cover crops, and appropriate tillage.

For more information about the conference, or to register, go to www.oeffa.org/conference2014 or call: (614) 421-2022. Past conferences have sold out in advance, so early registration is encouraged to avoid disappointment.

NOFA-VT Winter Conference

February 15 – 17, 2014
The Davis Center, UVM in Burlington, VT.

This year's conference features over 75 workshops, roundtables, and events over three days, providing many opportunities for farmers to build their skills, and network with one another. There will be a track for advanced commercial livestock farmers on Saturday, February 15th, featuring:

- Better Soils are Better Business: Research from Vermont Dairy Farms with Brent Beidler, Guy Choiniere, Heather Darby, and Jack Lazor
- Cow & Calf Health Today for Tomorrow's Production with Dr. Amy Bartholomew
- Getting the Most from Your Harvested Forages with Seth Gardener, Dan Hudson, and Mike Thresher
- Grazing and Pasture Management: Improving Design and Troubleshooting Problems with Sarah Flack and Adam Wilson
- Milk Quality & Nutrition: From Glass to Farm with John Barlow and Jana Kraft

On Monday, February 17th, NOFA-VT will provide an all-day intensive with Jerry Brunetti, Jack Lazor and Heather Darby titled: Chicken Soup for the Soil: Building Nutrient-Dense Soil for Nutrient-Dense Crops - Soils, crops, and livestock are all interrelated and have the potential to add up to a thriving, healthy whole farm system. This workshop will start with strategies for building first class productive soils that produce nutrient-dense crops. Jerry Brunetti will tell us how to do it from the ground up. Jack Lazor and Heather Darby will describe their research and

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Winter Conferences

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practical approaches to producing superior quality crops here in Vermont.

Learn more about registration details, scholarships available, and the rest of the conference line up at: www.nofavt.org/conference or contact the NOFA-VT office to request a brochure at 802-434-4122.

The 2014 MOSES Organic Farming Conference

February, 27, 28 and March 1, 2014
La Crosse, Wisconsin

Please join us to celebrate the 25th anniversary of this remarkable gathering! The 2014 Conference offers organic dairy and field crop farmers a diverse selection of all day courses on Thursday, February 27, and several 90 minute workshops on Friday, February 28 and Saturday, March 1. Below you will find a sampling of these opportunities. Many more (10 Full Day Courses and 65 Workshops) are planned for every type of organic or transitioning farmer. For full details about the conference, and for registration options, please visit the MOSES website: http://mosesorganic.org/conference/

Organic University Full Day Courses

- Overcoming Weeds Organically, Jeff Moyer, Rodale Institute
- Good Start: Organic Dairy Calves and Replacements, Dr. Guy Jodarski and Jim Langmeier

Workshops

- Precision Cover Cropping, Joel Gruver, Western Illinois University
- Making Soybeans a Successful Part of Your Rotations, Charlie Johnson, Johnson Farms
- Weed Management for Organic Field Crops, Dave Campbell, Lily Lake Organic Farm
- Converting CRP Land to Organic Production, Bob Yanda, Midwestern BioAg of Iowa
- Organic Row Crops: Challenges and Rewards, Carmen Fernholz, A-Frame Farm
- Farm-Scale Permaculture: Know Your Biome, Mark Shepard, New Forest Farm, LLC
- Keyline Design and Water Management, Wayne Weiseman, Kinstone Academy
- Get the Most Out of Animal Manure, Edwin Blosser, Midwest Bio-Systems
- Cover Crop Considerations for Organic Field Crops, Dean Baas, Michigan State University
- Value-Added Small Grains: Einkorn, Emmer and Spelt, Steve

Zwinger, North Dakota State University

- Building Blocks of Quality Hay Production, Karl Dallefeld, Prairie Creek Seed
- Tinctures for Livestock, Dr. Paul Dettloff
- Analysis of Sprouted Barley Fodder in Dairy Rations, Dr. Silvia Abel-Caines and John Stoltzfus
- Flaxseed for Dairy Cows, Andre Brito, University of New Hampshire
- Robotic Milking: Lessons Learned, Peter Ruegemer, Ruegemer Organic Dairy
- Organic Dairy Forages across the Seasons, Heather Darby, University of Vermont
- Healthy Organic Dairy Calves and Heifers, Dr. Guy Jodarski

The 2014 Vermont Organic Dairy Producer Conference

Wednesday, March 5, 2014
Vermont Technical College in Randolph Center, Vermont

The conference is a collaborative effort with UVM Extension and NOFA-Vermont that providing Vermont organic dairy farmers with an annual gathering to learn timely research-based information on organic dairy production systems.

This year, the conference will focus on farm resiliency in the face of weather extremes.

- Dr. Fred Magdoff, UVM Department of Plant and Soil Science emeritus soil scientist, will provide a keynote presentation on practical ways to build farm resilience through soil health, forage crop diversification, and other agronomic practices.
- Dr. Silvia Abel-Caines, veterinarian and ruminant nutritionist with Organic Valley / CROPP Cooperative, will provide a keynote on balancing livestock nutrition on a pasture-based diet.
- Tom Kilcer, certified crop advisor with Advanced Ag Systems, will present on the hay-in-a-day technique and considerations for optimizing stored forage quality.

Due to their continued popularity, we will also offer our updates on recent organic dairy research and we will have farmer panel—this year. Both will address the value of high quality forages.

More information about the conference can be found at: www.uvm.edu/extension/organicdairy

NOFA-NY 3rd Annual Organic Dairy & Field Crop Conference

March 7th, 2014
The Holiday Inn in Auburn NY

We are pleased to announce our experienced organic keynote speaker Gary Zimmer, President of Midwester BioAg. Gary is recognized around the world for his commitment to improving farming through restoring soils. Through a lifetime in agricul

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NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Farmer, NODPA President

Robust discussions about retained placenta, milk fever, poultry litter on pasture, and more.

A farmer needed to treat a cow with a retained placenta. Suggestions included using a daily 60cc infusion of calendula tincture or calendula tincture mixed with a colostrum whey product, a daily infusion with dextrose and Uterine Care, and one farmer had success with infusing hydrogen peroxide. Additionally, it was recommended to give Caulophyllum tincture on day 1 and day 2 after calving, then switch to homeopathic Sabina and Pyrogen three times a day starting at day 4 post-calving. Another remedy is to insert Iodine pills starting at about day 4 at a dose of one gram (four pills) per day until the placenta is passed, and the cervix begins to close, usually by day 8. Uterine Bolus, a product from Van Beek Scientific was also recommended. Another farmer recommends Crystal Creek's Fresh Cow Bolus -- she inserts 2 into the uterus daily until the placenta drops or can easily be pulled out.

After treating her down cow for milkfever with an IV bottle of Calcium, a producer asked for suggestions in choosing an appropriate homeopathic remedy. She described the cow as an older Jersey, short and wide, and a personality that makes her "very much the Queen of the herd". It was suggested that she use Calc carb, since she is a big and blocky cow. (For more flighty and "dairy type" cows, the recommended remedy would be Calc phos.) Mag phos would be indicated if there are muscle tremors. It was pointed out that the homeopathics enable the cow to make better use of the mineral (calcium), but if her bloodstream is truly deficient in calcium, she will need more actual mineral added. After dosing with Calc carb, the cow seemed improved, so the farmer asked what to do next, and how frequently an animal can be dosed. Standard recommendations for the administration of homeopathic remedies were explained: Dose once an hour for 3 or 4 hours, and then re-assess. If there is improvement, no need to redose. If the symptoms have changed, it may indicate a different remedy.

A researcher asked for details on applying poultry litter on pastures. A farmer responded that they had used it on cool season pasture grasses and hay ground. He usually spread it raw (6 to 10 weeks old), although sometimes it was aged in a pile for a couple months. He felt it was best applied just before or during a rain, and must be spread fine using a litter spreader or slinger. He reported that he has spread as much as 4 T/Acre on rye grass over the season, split into 1/2 to 2T/Acre applications. He feels that

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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 banner ads 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 banner ads 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.

Discounted rates for commitments of 6 months or more.

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:

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:

www.nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml

Calendar

January 24-26, 2014
Northern Plains Sustainable Ag 35th Annual Winter Conference
Ramkota Best Western, Aberdeen, SD

Keynote speakers Melinda Memmelgarn – Thinking Beyond Our Plates, and Will Winter – The Art of Finishing Healthy Ruminants on Grass and Providing Consumers a Wholesome Product'. Pre-conference workshops begin on January 23rd. For more information: www.npsas.org, or call: 701-883-4304

January 24-26, 2014
NOFA NY 32nd Annual Winter Conference:
'Preserving the Past Seeding the Future'
Saratoga Hilton and City Center, Saratoga Springs, NY.

The conference offers a great lineup of workshops on a wide range of topics from dairy farming to urban gardening, from food policy to business planning, plus a special childrens conference, entertainment, and local food. Keynote speakers are Gary Paul Nabhan and 2014 Farmer of the Year Brian Bennett. For more info, contact Tanya: tanya@nofany.org. or call: (585) 271-1979

January 30, 2014 | 2nd Northeast Silvopastures For Your Farm
Century House, Latham, NY

This special one-day conference will build on the concepts and knowledge presented at the inaugural "Northeast Silvopasture Conference" in November, 2011. Foresters, farmers, land managers and conservationists will benefit by attending this conference. For more info: www.silvopasture.ning.com or contact Brett Chedzoy: bjc226@cornell.edu (ph: 607-742-3657).

January 30 - February 1, 2014
Organic Seed Growers Conference | Corvallis, Oregon

The biennial Organic Seed Growers Conference brings together hundreds of farmers, plant breeders, researchers, university extension, certifiers, food companies, seed production and distribution companies, and other organic stakeholders in two days of presentations, panel discussions, and networking events. There are also farm visits and short courses prior to the two-day conference. For more info: Phone:(360) 385-7192, Website: www.seedalliance.org/events/organic_seed_growers_conference

January 31 – February 1, 2014
6th Annual Winter Green-Up Grass-Fed Grazing Conference
Century House, Latham, NY

This year Doug Peterson, NRCS State Grazing Specialist in Missouri, Dr. Allen Williams, a consultant and rancher, and Jeff Moyer from Rodale Institute will make the trip to New York. Local custom graziers Brian Reaser and Drew Lewis from the Southern Tier will also be sharing their experiences. For more information visit www.ccealbany.com or contact Gale Kohler at 518-765-3500

February 1-2, 2014
12th Annual NOFA-NH Winter Conference:
"We Are All Farmers: Seeding a Common Soil"
Rundlett Middle School, Concord, NH

For more info: www.nofanh.org or contact: Jen Skibba, phone: (603) 224-5022, email: jen@nofanh.org.

February 2-4, 2014
Soil and Nutrition Conference with Graeme Sait and Joel Williams
Anthonys, Somerville, MA

This three day event is a must-see for growers and consultants seeking to expand their growing skills with cutting edge strategies. You will learn to create healthy, disease-free soils and resilient, problem-free crops. For more information: contact Ben Grosscup, NOFA/Mass Education Events Coordinator, at ben.grosscup@nofamass.org or 413-658-5374.

February 5-8, 2014
PASA's 23rd Annual Farming For The Future Conference
State College, PA

Join PASA for their annual conference featuring Dr. Daphne Miller, author of The Jungle Effect and Farmacology, and Miguel Altieri, professor of Agroecology at University of California at Berkeley. For more information: www.pasafarming.org or contact: (814) 349-9856.

February 14-16, 2014
2014 Healthy Farms Conference | Kearney, Nebraska

The Healthy Farms Conference features workshops ranging from cover crops, rotational grazing, backyard chickens, holistic management, fermentation and much more. For more info: http://www.nebsusag.org/conference.shtml or contact William at healthyfarms@gmail.com.

February 14 – 16, 2014
35th Annual OEFFA Conference—
Affirming Our Roots, Breaking New Ground | Granville, Ohio

OEFFA is Ohio's largest sustainable agriculture event, featuring keynote speakers Kathleen Merrigan and Atina Diffley; with approximately 100 workshops on sustainable farming, gardening, homesteading, cooking, and livestock production. Full-day Friday pre-conferences will also be offered. Go to www.oeffa.org/conference2014 or call: (614) 421-2022 for more info. See page 30 for more details.

February 15-17, 2014
NOFA-VT Winter Conference | University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

Over 75 workshops, roundtables and events over 3 days. A track of advanced commercial livestock workshops on Saturday, and an all-day intensive with Jerry Brunetti, Jack Lazor and Heather Darby on Sunday. For more information: www.nofavt.org/annual-events/winter-conference, or call: 802-434-4122. See page 31 for more details.

February 27 – March 1, 2014
25th Annual MOSES Organic Farming Conference

Started 25 years ago as a gathering of 90 people who wanted to learn more about farming organically, the MOSES Conference has grown to become the country's foremost educational and networking event for the organic community with annual attendance topping 3,000! The people involved in organic and sustainable farming tend to be passionate about food and farming, which makes for a truly inspiring event. Please join us in celebrating the 25th anniversary of this remarkable gathering!For more information: www.mosesorganic.org/conference.html, Email info@mosesorganic.org or call: 715-778-5775. See page 32 for more details.

March 5, 2014
Vermont Organic Dairy Producer Conference
Vermont Technical College, Randolph Ctr, VT

This year the conference will focus on farm resiliency in the face of Weather

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Organic Industry News

Winter Conferences

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ture, he has never stopped learning or teaching. Raised on a Wisconsin dairy farm, Gary studied dairy nutrition, earning a bachelor's degree from the Univ. of Wisconsin and a master's degree from the Univ. of Hawaii, and has combined his formal education with years of hands-on farming experience. He began asking questions about the soil and how it relates to healthy and productive plants, which lead him to read The Albrecht Papers. For the past 25 years, Gary has evaluated farming practices as a consultant, on his family's farm, and as president of Midwestern Bio-Ag, a biological farming consulting company located in Blue Mounds, WI. Gary's keynote talk will focus on how soil is the source of nutrients on a farm, and how healthy soils will produce healthy plants for healthy livestock and healthy humans. He will also share how, as organic dairy and field crop farmers, you can balance your soils to mitigate the risks of extreme weather patterns and maintain overall production during inclement conditions.

Here is a preview of some of the many workshops to look forward to at this conference:

Cover Crop Systems ~ Norm Conrad; **Distilling Grains** ~ TBD; **Small Grains** ~ Robert Perry; **Heifer Health** ~ Dr. Guy Jodarski; **Farm Bill Update** ~ TBD; **Hay in a Day** ~ Dave Johnson; **Herd Health** ~ Dr. Guy Jodarski; **Milk Quality** ~ TBD; **Transitioning to Organic Field Crops** ~ Robert Perry; **Mineralized Balanced Agriculture** ~ Gary Zimmer; **Processing Your Products** ~ TBD

Take time to visit our tradeshow, and remember that NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC staff will be available to answer questions on organic certification. Partake in a delicious organic meal prepared with food donated by local farmers and business members. Enjoy learning, networking and information exchange. We look forward to seeing you there!

For more program details visit our website at: https://www.nofany.org/dairyconference or contact NOFA-NY: 585-271-1979 x 513 email: bethany@nofany.org

Net Updates

ODairy Discussions

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it increases the protein in the grass, its overall yield, and extends the grazing season. He cautions that too much can push the P levels up too high. Another farmer agreed that the high P levels can be a problem, leading to high K levels in forages. He suggests that poultry litter be limited to 2T/Acre, and be applied with 1 ton of high calcium lime. The calcium will help to offset the P in the soil, and bring up the calcium in the plants to offset the K.

An outbreak of Clostridia perfringens in young calves was a catastrophe for a producer. Calves were "dropping like flies", and they resorted to conventional treatments to cure the remaining sick calves. The vet recommended vaccinating with Ultrabac 7 for just this year. The producer asked for advice from the group about a vaccination protocol. Another producer related her experience with blackleg, another Clostridial infection. She gives her calves an oral vaccine called Bovine Ecolizer (for Clostridia perfringens and e-coli scours) as soon as possible after birth. They also vaccinate and booster around weaning with Alpha 7 (for Clostridia chauveoi, septicum, novyi, sordellii, and perfringens Type C and D). They have had no new cases of blackleg since beginning this vaccination protocol. ◆

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: _____

Classified Ads

Livestock

Certified Organic Cows Wanted: Looking for high producing Jersey and Holstein organic cows (or crosses). Low (and verifiable) SCC counts a must (i.e.: under 350K). Must be CERTIFIED organic (with valid certificate). Prefer early to middle lactation. Also bred/springing heifers or dry cows soon to calve. We are also looking for some certified organic hay, delivered to our farm in Georgia, VT.

Email ron@bedrockfarmvt.com or call 802-782-8833.

Organic Heifers for sale: Two heifers to freshen in spring (March and May). One is a Holstein and the other is a Holstein/Jersey cross. Seven short bred heifers – exposed to the bull since November. Fourteen yearlings, born January – August. Please call for details. Call: Samuel at 814-749-0137. Location: Pennsylvania.

Certified Organic Holstein Dairy Herd for Sale: 38 first calf heifers, all preg-checked and bred back. Many calves as well; both heifers and bulls. High quality milk; average SCC is 75,000. Looking to sell as whole herd; priced reasonably. Located in New Sweden, Maine 04762. Contact Joshua Turnbull, Phone: 207-227-1353, Email: turnbullfarms@yahoo.com

Organic Dairy Herd for Sale: Mixed breed of Holstein, Brown Swiss and Jersey - 12 lactating cows, a handful dry that are due in January and February, 4 bred heifers due in March. Located in Kirwood (Lancaster Couty) PA. For more information, contact Samuel Z. Stoltzfus, 717-529-2898

Feed and Bedding

Approximately 1200 3x3x7.5' big square mixed grass hay. $150/ton. 1100 big square baleage with test results available. $3/bale. All certified organic. Location: Westport NY

Contact: Adam Perry | Email: adam_2235@yahoo.com

NOFA-NY Certified Organic Baleage for sale. 1st and 2nd cut legume grass mix. 4x4 bales wrapped with 6 layers of plastic. $45/bale 1st cut, $50/bale 2nd cut. Delivery available.

Contact: Rob Freeland | Location: Cherry Valley, NY
Email: rob@westwindfarm.com | Phone: 607-264-3635

Organic Hay for Sale: 4x5 dry round bales, first cutting, mixed grasses and red clover, you provide hauling, $40/bale; located in Westport NY. Contact: Tom Salva , Phone: 413-323-4338, email: TSALVA2@MASSMUTUAL.COM

For Sale: NOFA-NY Certified Organic BEDDING, BALEAGE, and CLOVER SEED. Clean Bedding Hay, and Straw Bales. (4 1/2 X 4 Rounds.) 1st Cut Clover Baleage. (Forage tested.) Clover SEED, ready for frost seeding, for sale as well. Mitchell Farms - Avoca, NY (Steuben Co.) Call Jeff @ 607-566-8477 or email Mitchellorganics@hotmail.com

First Cut Square Bales for sale: Hay did not get rained on. Brome, timothy, legume mix, would be good for dry cows, horses and heifers. Bales weigh approximately 35# each, certified by NOFA-NY. If interested call or email for price and other info: Bill Stine, phone:(315) 430-0465; Email: tstine2007@YAHOO.COM.

Organic Hay – Marz Farm, Binghamton/Ithaca area in NY

- 1st/2nd cutting small square bale hay - $3.50/$4.50 per bale or $175/$225 ton, approx 40lb bale;
- 1st/2nd cutting large square bales (3' x 3' x 7') - $75/$90 bale or $175/$225 ton, approx 750lb bale;
- 1st cutting dry round bales - 5 x 4 1000lbs @ $35; 1st cutting wrapped bales - 4 x 4 1200lbs @ $55

All square bale hay is stored indoors. Forage tests available. Quantity discounts available on all products. Free samples available. Shipping available throughout the country or pickup at the farm.

Contact Tony at 607-657-8534 farm, 315-378-5180 cell, or tmarzolino@yahoo.com

NODPA Members Generously Support the 1st Annual NODPA Fundraising Campaign

NODPA's Board extends thanks to all that contributed during this fundraising campaign and to those that regularly support NODPA through their milk checks and to our business members.

If you haven't had a chance to make your annual donation, you can do so by filling out the forms on **page 37** of this newsletter or going online at **nodpa.com/donate.shtml** for a one-time donation or at **nodpa.com/membership_checkoff.shtml** for a monthly milk check contribution.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the MODPA Treasurer

As I write this I am in the rush of the holiday season. By the time you get this it will be past. Hopefully everybody has had a good end to the year.

The past year has been challenging to say the least. At this time last year many of us were trying to find a way to feed the girls through the rest of the winter. Some of the less fortunate were forced to give up their organic certification and/or their herds. This has been hard on many folks. We cannot afford to let this happen.

Most farmers I know are some of the most giving people I know. I wouldn't trade any of you for the quick buck that seems to tempt the non-farming segment of society. That being said I often wonder if the processors realize how tight the margins are for many of us. I hear a lot about their earnings for the quarter, year etc. I see too many farmers struggling so that they can have those earnings.

There have been minimal increases in our pay price in the last couple of years. At the same time our expenses continue to increase. Are we not entitled to at least cover our increased costs of production? If they have been overpaying us it sure doesn't show.

I had an upper level manager give me his spiel on margin. I asked him what 7% of nothing was. I did not get an answer. I hear of some borrowing against their equity to stay in business. It should not have to be that way. I don't see our costs coming down anytime soon. I could point out some inefficiencies in the system, but who am I to question. I am just a farmer.

On a more positive note, we are closer to spring. The shortest day of the year has passed and we are on our way back to more sunshine. Always a good thing for the mind. It also means that we are well on our way into the organic conference season. Please try to find time to get out and take some of it in. It is always good for the mind and soul. We usually seem to catch up with old friends and usually make a few new ones. The events calendar has a listing of what is coming up in your area. Remember the old farmer's adage: 'Hope springs eternally every spring'. Warmer weather is on the way.

May the balance of your winter be fruitful and safe,

Bruce Drinkman
MODPA Treasurer

About MODPA

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

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

MODPA Board

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Shiloh, OH 44878
Phone and Fax: 419-895-1182

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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extremes. Keynote address by Dr. Fred Magdoff, UVM Department of Plant and Soil Science emeritus soil scientist. Other presenters include Dr. Silvia Abel-Caines, veterinarian for Organic Valley/CROPP, and Tom Kilcer, crop adviser for Advanced Ag Systems. For more information, please to to; www.uvm.edu/extension/organicdairy . **See page 33 for more details.**

March 7, 2014
NOFA-NY Organic Dairy and Field Crop Conference
Holiday Inn, Auburn, NY

The keynote speaker will be Gary Zimmer, farmer, author, agri-businessman and educator dedicated to biological agriculture. Recognized around the world for his commitment to improving farming through building healthy soils, Gary has spoken to farmers and agribusiness professionals all across the world. More Info: www.nofany.org/dairyconference , Phone: (585) 271-1979, Email:info@nofany.org. See page 33

March 13, 2014
10th Annual Grain Growers Conference: "Grow it Here"
Essex Resort and Spa, Essex Jct, VT

Grain grower Jack Lazor, co-owner of Butterworks Farm in Westfield, VT and co-founder of the Northern Grain Growers Association, will be the Keynote Speaker. Learn about small-scale malting, OVM research, organic corn growing, nutrient quality breeding, equipment sourcing, farm transition, and more. For more information: www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil, or call: 802-524-6501.

June 6-8, 2014
Midwest Women's Herbal Conference
Mukwonago, Wis.

With over 40 workshops, plant walks and Centered in the Wise Woman Tradition, the Midwest Women's Herbal Conference provides a gathering space to focus on earth-centered healing, nourishment, and the plants that grow around us. For more info: www.midwestwomensherbal.com, Email: herbwomen@gmail.com, Phone: 920-452-HERB (4372) . ◆