NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Some of the Stonewall Farm staff. Details inside on page 26.

Stonewall Farm: Scale Appropriate Farming for Sustainability

By Lisa McCrory, NODPA News Editor

Stonewall Farm is a nonprofit working farm and educational center whose mission is to connect people to the land and the role of local agriculture in their lives. They operate a 30-cow certified organic dairy, which has been in operation for over 125 consecutive years (under various owners) and is the oldest and only working dairy farm in Keene, NH. Set in a scenic valley, it consists of 70 acres of pasture, 15 acres of crops/gardens, and 30+ acres of wetlands, woods and hiking trails. Other parts of the farm include chickens, goats, rabbits, ducks, llamas, draft horses, a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) garden, special events throughout the year, and an Education Center (open 7 days a week) which draws 20,000 visitors per year.

The job of their non-profit organization, as

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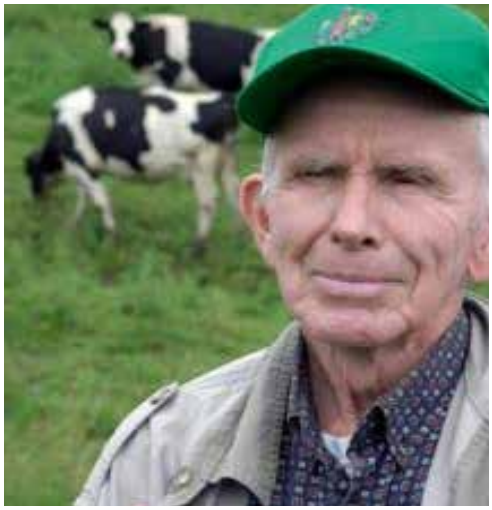
In Memory of John Kinsman

By Bruce Drinkman, Organic Dairy Farmer & MODPA Treasurer



In January the organic community and family farm community lost one of its shining lights. John Kinsman passed away peacefully at his farm. John farmed organically most of his life. After an incident with chemicals early in his life, which hospitalized him, he decided to move forward without them. The introduction of BST lit a fire in John that was never put out. John's view on this created tensions in certain circles. John viewed BST as a total loss. It was a loss for the farmer, a loss for the cow, and a loss for the consumer. The loss of farmers that resulted from this along with poor pricing

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From the NODPA President

Lots of chatter seems to be passing through my computer recently on farm safety issues. Some groups looking out for the rights of farmworkers would like to see farms fall under federal OSHA regulations, adding another level of inspection to dairy farms. I have to admit that my immediate thought was -- that's JUST what organic dairy farmers need -- more paperwork and another inspector! While I believe that involving a government agency to make farms a safer place to work would be a catastrophic boondoggle, reading a few statements from farmworkers about their conditions made me look around my own farm.

We work in a dangerous business. Accidents and fatalities occur on farms every year. How many of those are preventable? Perhaps winter is a good time to stand back and identify some of the potentially hazardous areas in our own operations.

Sometimes it is the "nearly getting killed" incident that makes us put safety up higher on our priority list. On our farm, Brian has always maintained equipment with the appropriate shields in place, replacing PTO shields when they disintegrated, adding extra shielding on some things when our son was small. He's highly aware of the importance of shields after having his own accident years ago with a PTO shaft.

I can't imagine asking a farmworker to do something that I would not do myself. But maybe that is the difference between the small, family operated farms and the larger farms run solely with hired labor. On the farm where the manager never milks the cows, maybe he has no real interest in getting rid of the one cow that kicks the milker every day. Maybe that same manager never drives the tractor, so isn't worried that it has no brakes. If he doesn't bring in the herd from pasture, does he worry about the temperament of the bulls? I really think that many farmers have been farming for so long they believe that the jobs are intuitive - everyone just knows how to move cattle, how to drive a skid steer, how to clean out the combine... And, of course, there is a language/communication barrier on farms that hire workers that do not have English as a first language. So we need to be committed to taking the time to make sure our hired worker, our child, or our spouse has an understanding of the job; understands the machinery; and understands what to do when something goes wrong.

From the big things like replacing shielding and ROP structures on machinery to the small things like replacing the light bulbs and fire extinguishers, we owe it to ourselves and our families to make our farms as safe as we can.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA Desk March, 2014

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

SAVE THE DATE: The 14th Annual NODPA Field Days will be on Thursday and Friday September 25 & 26, 2014 at Stonewall Farm, in Keene, New Hampshire.

Although it seems like it was only yesterday, NODPA had its last Field Days in New Hampshire in 2006 at University of New Hampshire's Organic Dairy Farm. Stonewall Farm is centrally located in Southwest New Hampshire, not far from Brattleboro, VT and Keene, NH. The farm is an educational farm that has an organic dairy, micro-milk processing facility, on-site hydroponic barley fodder operation, cheese and yogurt making capacity, farm store, CSA, and educational programing, and they are experimenting with growing canola for biodiesel as well as creating a small grains cooperative where they share combine harvesting equipment. They are also our featured farm this month. As we move forward with the planning for the Field Days, as usual, we welcome input from organic dairy producers and their supporters, especially around topics you'd like to learn more about.

The Farm Bill has passed and folks in DC are moving on to the implementation phase. It has been universally praised (and credit for it claimed by many) as a great step forward in recognizing organic and the buy-local, value-added movement that has grown in the last twenty-five years. That's how long it takes Washington, DC to 'catch-up.' There was nothing for organic dairy, in particular, in the Farm Bill, although NODPA will continue to ask how the new dairy margin insurance can be applied to organic dairy rather than the margin being defined only by non-organic data. Many organic dairies would benefit from margin insurance right now. As non-organic dairy looks forward to cheaper feed and record higher farm gate pay prices, they will definitely out perform organic ones in 2014. The National Organic Coalition (NOC) succeeded in ensuring that the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) had another $5 million to update and modernize its services and data compilation. The NOP repeatedly informs us that they are overstretched and have difficulties moving their priorities through the USDA and regulatory process. Hopefully, this $5 million will help speed that process, especially with the Origin of Livestock Proposed Rule which is working its way through the various processes of approval at USDA and at other agencies, then on to the Executive Office of Management and Budget (OMB). For a long time (6-7 years), this rule making has been a priority for the NOP. Perhaps we might see the Proposed Rule published in the Federal Register by the fall of 2014.

The Farm Bill also includes the Organic Trade Association (OTA) check-off rule. Part of the new law is to allow all organic operations to opt out of paying into check-offs. The implementation stage of this provision will, hopefully, be enacted quickly and dairy processors will be able to reclaim their 20 cents per hundred weight check-off payment, and producers their 5 cents, before an organic check is set-up. Under the bill proposed by OTA and passed by Congress, as soon as there is an Organic Check-off in place, producers and processors will not be able to opt out of paying into the check-off.

The OTA has been congratulating itself on their success in changing the law to enable an organic check off. At the recent Expo West trade show, OTA claimed that its check-off initiative is really rolling now. "We changed the game, and we got it done," OTA's CEO and Executive Director Laura Batcha is quoted as declaring at a workshop, "The program should be up and ready to go in 18 to 24 months." OTA Board Chair, Melody Meyer of UNFI also expressed delight that the check-off scheme is moving forward: "Hopefully gone will be the days when we have to do fundraisers for separate areas of industry and meet in hotel rooms and at dinners to raise funds."

The majority of producers have expressed their opinion that they do not want an Organic Check-off. NODPA is committed to working with its partners to ensure that the producer voice is heard at USDA as it is obvious that OTA remains deaf to what farmers and their families want and need. Please remember that:

You can still be UNITED FOR ORGANIC without supporting a Check-Off program

"Until genetically engineered crops (also described as GMOs) were introduced as a production method for U.S. farmers, "coexistence" between different sectors of agriculture was a fairly simple prospect. Today, the ability of organic, non-GMO or identity-preserved production to coexist with GMO production is in question."

This is the headline from the report produced by Food & Water Watch and the Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM) on their survey of organic grain producers on preventative measures that they use to avoid GMO contamination, and the financial losses associated with contamination. Survey findings show that nearly half of respondents were skeptical that GMO and non-GMO crop production could coexist enough to protect organic and non-GMO farmers from contamination. The whole report is available at: http://www.nationalorganiccoalition.org/news-items/survey-results-released-showing-gmo-contamination-concerns.

As pressure on organic commodity farming increases, with more and cheaper imports, lower domestic on-farm prices, and greater pressure from contamination from GMO's, producers are also losing their access to influence the future integrity of the organic program. The USDA is taking over control of what was a relatively independent and accessible National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) and also giving itself more control over the process of allowing the use of synthetics in organic. The USDA is increasingly applying the regulations enacted by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) that requires them to control the Board's agenda, work plan and governance. Too much control of this Board by the USDA will undermine consumers' confidence and, in the face of many unregulated 'natural' products, perhaps lead consumers to decide that the organic seal has lost its unique qualities. History shows that the industry and trade groups have more influence at USDA than producer or grassroots groups. This move by USDA will further restrict and undermine producer influence on the future of organics.

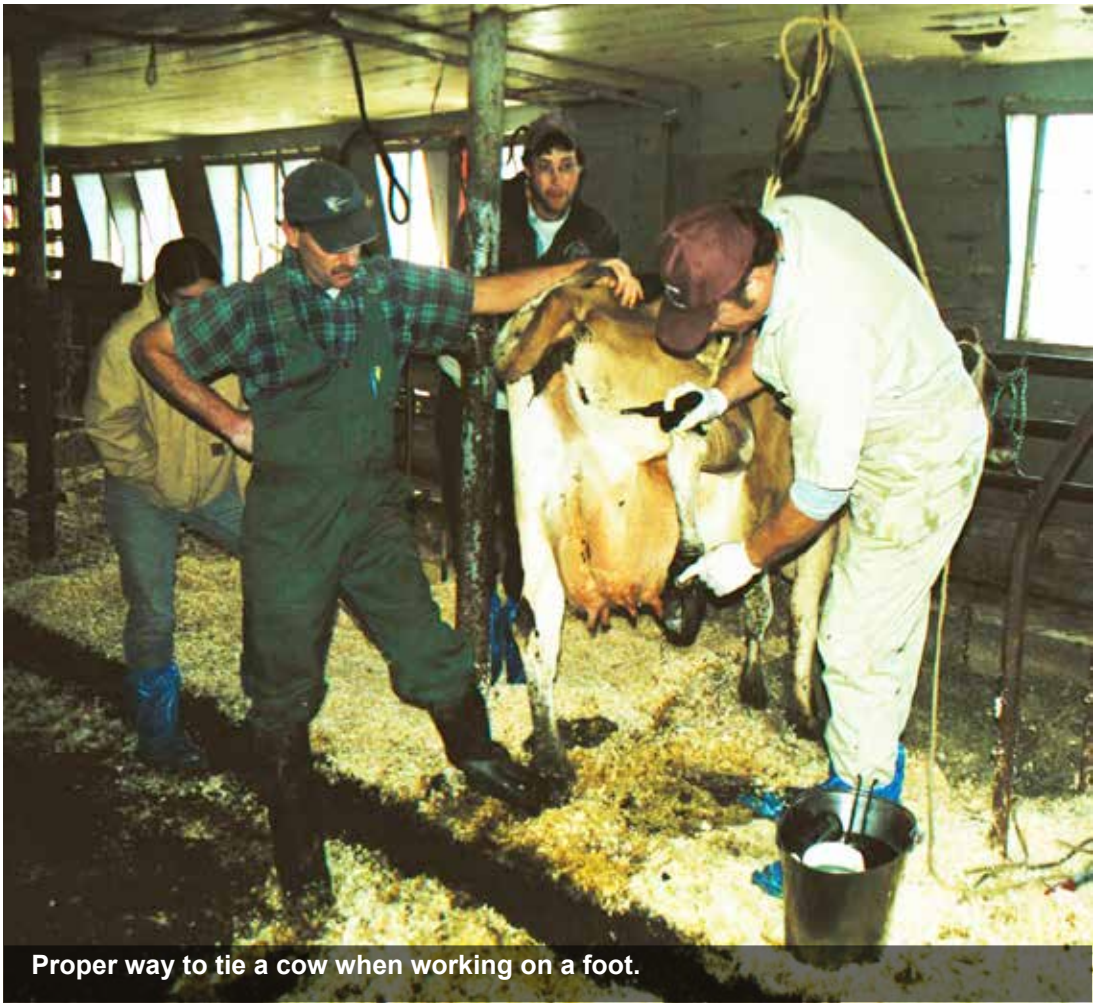
Hopefully by the time you read this, Spring will have come to the Northeast; extreme weather will have disappeared from the Midwest; and there will be a steady warm rain in the West. Even though our preferred sport is to complain, we farmers are the most optimistic folks and get up every morning to start a new day to feed our community. ◆

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Preventing & Treating Lameness in Cows

By Dr. Hubert Karreman

Lameness in cows is to be prevented as much as possible and especially in those that walk to pasture and graze for part of their diet, as certified-organic dairy cows are required to do. This article will look at nutritional and environmental factors affecting hoof health and the practical treatment of hoof problems.



Proper way to tie a cow when working on a foot.

Hoof growth and nutrients

The hoof grows downward from the hoof-hairline junction (coronary band) at about 0.2 inches per month (two inches per year overall). At the coronary band are cells, much like cells in our nail bed, which actively secrete substances the "bricks and mortar" of the hoof. These cells are highly sensitive to any changes in the nutrients and toxins circulating in the blood as they are at the "end of the line" - at the farthest point from the pumping station (the heart). A small handful of vitamins, minerals and amino acids have been identified as extremely important for the healthy growth of hooves. Biotin, sometimes called vitamin H, is the most important vitamin followed by vitamins A, D and E. Zinc is the most important mineral followed by copper, selenium and calcium. The most important amino acid is cysteine, which contains sulfur. All these work together in intra-cellular enzymatic reactions to secrete keratin, which builds up thicker and thicker to make what we see as the hoof itself. Problems with lameness will arise when any of these nutrients are lacking in the diet.

Rumen health and hooves

Equally as important is proper rumen health since rumen acidosis can cause the release of histamine and endotoxins which can go into circulation and alter blood flow to the hoof-hairline junction, changing nutrients delivered as well as depositing endotoxins to the hoof generating cells. You may sometimes see little line(s) wrapped around the hoof wall, parallel to the ground, on all four hooves. This is evidence of a major stress in the recent past, often due to sudden dietary changes, which has upset normal hoof growth. Anytime there are signs of irregularities of growth, there's a higher likelihood of infectious material in the environment, like that which causes hairy heel wart, setting in. Surprising to many graziers is that rumen acidosis can occur in cows grazing lush pasture early in the spring – but only if the other feed they are eating is baleage and grain. This is due to not enough structural/effective fiber ("scratch factor").

Pasture vs. confinement

Most university research on lameness is on cows continuously kept inside on concrete. Fortunately for certified-organic cows, they get to walk on real earth with its natural "give". I mention this because I've been called to emergencies in grazing herds

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

— Jeff Koester

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Lameness

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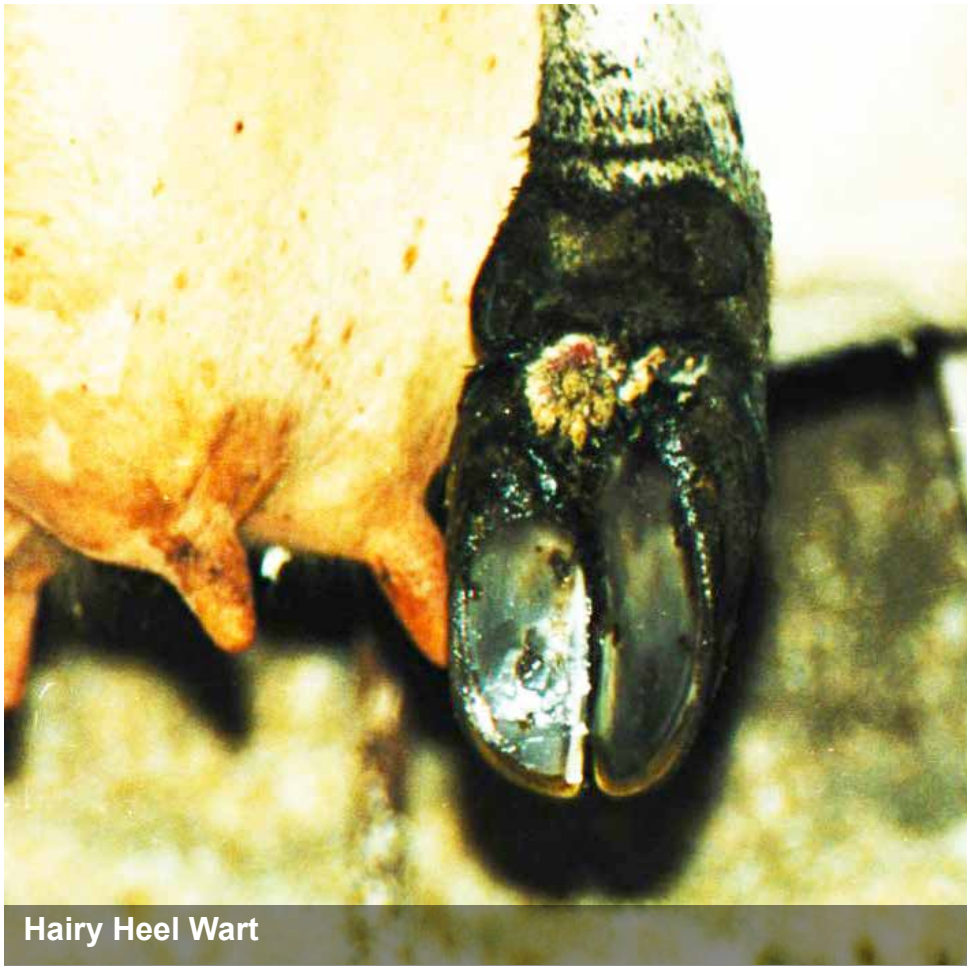
when a bunch of cows have somehow accidentally gotten into excessive amounts of grain in the barnyard yet ended up having no ill-effects on hooves (when treated the day it happens). Usually such a situation results in foundered animals with cows confined on concrete. I believe that the affected grazing cows, being able to walk on earth, were afforded natural cushioning as compared to if they had been stuck on concrete with zero "give".

However, walking on the land has its own potential problems in the form of pebbles, gravel and stones as well as mud. Dairy farmers who have invested in improved laneways are usually quick to tell others that they have never regretted doing so. Good laneways will have a "crowned" surface to ensure that water sheds away from the center of the walkway as well as a having pulverized, fine material free of stones to walk on – stone



Hairy Heel Wart

dust is often used. Use of a roll of thick rubber matting would be an alternative to actual re-construction on laneways. A cow lane needs only to be 3-4 feet wide, just wide enough for cows to walk in single file.

Not pushing cows too fast as they walk is critical – but especially on un-improved laneways. Let them go at their own rate so they aren't forced to step down on something that they would otherwise avoid. Stream crossings are also a potential problem with un-seen stones encountered on the bottom. Installing hog slats is a cheap way to create easy walking lanes since they make for a safe and level walking surface, whether submerged under water at a stream crossing or in areas known to easily become muddy.

Visual signs of lameness

While prevention via proper nutrient intake and good walking lanes are critical, problems still can pop up occasionally. Closely watching how cows walk can help with early detection of hoof problems. Normal cows walk with a level, straight back. Any arc to the spine, no matter how slight, is an indication that they are painful in some way – usually in a hoof or limb but also possibly internally in the abdomen. Any head bobbing upward as they walk is a definite sign of lameness. Cows should walk with their heads relaxed and relatively low. Obvious limping indicates the animal needs immediate attention.

Cows can "hide" a hoof problem for a while. This is because they can place their weight on the unaffected toe while keeping weight off the bad one, which will eventually show with extra growth where it is not worn down. This is how to spot a problem area when inspecting a hoof closely. However, if an abscess happens to develop at the very front point of any toe, they will go lame almost immediately.

Treatment of hoof abscess

Having an area to properly lift a hoof is an absolute necessity for any dairy operation - a stationary chute or a tie-stall so the cow and hoof can be immobilized. For ease of work, the hoof should be hoisted such that the hock is at about the level of the vulva and the hoof itself is about the level of your waist. At all times have ready sharpened hoof paring knives and a set of nippers. There's nothing worse than trying to pare and trim a hoof than with dull equipment – and the work needed to get done will be avoided, resulting in a terrible problem eventually.

Once hoisted, clean the hoof to see it completely. A normal hoof will have the entire bottom perimeter evenly touching the ground at the same time. The bottom of the hoof should slope slightly up and in toward the center of the toes. Any little bumps or bulging areas anywhere on the bottom surface are evidence of not being worn down normally. These areas should be pared away as that is where an abscess is likely to be. Also, any shiny black line leading to an area of bulging hoof growth should be pared away as this usually leads to an abscess area. Abscesses are usually caused by a stone piercing the weight bearing area of the hoof. Don't be afraid to open up an abscess – they must be opened up well. Some

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Lameness

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bleeding is OK. This will bring new circulation and nutrients to the area. Open up abscesses until the existing bottom surface blends once again smoothly to the more inner surface, so there is no "shelf" effect of two different levels of hoof surface. If you can run your finger tip underneath the bottom, there is still a "shelf".

I usually open up abscesses to about a nickel or quarter size area and even larger. I then cleanse with 3% hydrogen peroxide or iodine tincture and then apply a wrap. Usually if opened up properly, an abscess is a once and done treatment. One thing for sure: getting an abscess treated correctly the first time is very important as cows have a tendency to cover over that area quickly and any abscess area not opened up will go deeper yet.

Foot rot and Hairy heel wart

Foot rot is another problem usually caused by a piercing object – but into the skin area between the two toes. This can become infected quickly with lots of inflammation above the hoof-hairline junction. The cruddy area between the two toes needs to be cut away and allow new blood to come there. The area is then cleansed with 3% peroxide or tea tree oil. Then I make a thick paste of ½ cup sugar and 20cc Betadine (povidone iodine). I put that on a big wad of cotton and wrap with hoof wrap, having the toes slightly spread apart The wrap must be changed in 2-3 days. At the change, a dead "core" will be seen and can easily be pulled out. Then cleanse with peroxide and re-wrap with another round of the thick paste on cotton.

The sugar-Betadine mix has worked so well on foot rot in cows, goats and sheep that I actually now use it as my primary "salve" for any hoof problem. And it's cheap and easy to make yourself. I approach all hoof problems similarly: pare away as needed, make it bleed a little, cleanse with peroxide or tea tree oil, and wrap with sugar-Betadine. For instance, with hairy heel wart - much like poison ivy in that it is very much a surface problem – I very shallowly pare away the area (which afterwards is not painful), cleanse with peroxide, and apply a wrap with the sugar-Betadine mix. You can substitute a really thick raw honey for the sugar-Betadine if you like for any condition – the principle behind both is that they are anti-bacterial and healing.

Foot baths

Foot baths are certainly OK to use – but you don't need to actually use a sloppy liquid bath. In fact, copper sulfate baths dumped on your land will quickly load your soil with dangerously high levels of copper. Rather, use a box filled with dry hydrated lime

about 4 inches deep so that hooves will penetrate down into it and get a good covering of it. A minor draw back is that you can put the spent material only on any uncertified land.

Conclusion

While problems are generally minimal on organic farms, lameness and its effect on efficient grazing really must be prevented. By proper nutrition and environmental improvements, your cows should be able to move freely and easily as they graze contentedly. ◆

Dr. Karreman wrapping a hoof

Dr. Hubert Karreman is the Institute Veterinarian at the Rodale institute and Founder and Principal of Bovinity Health, providing natural products for the non-antibiotic treatment of infectious disease. Previously, he was in full-time dairy practice for 15 years with certified organic herds in the Lancaster, PA area. He is the first certified CowSignals (c) trainer in the United States and enjoys sharing insights into reading cows and understanding what they are telling us. Dr Karreman can be reached by email: penndutch@earthlink.net, website: www.hubertkarreman.com. See the ad for Bovinity Health on page 7 of this newsletter.

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

First Proof of Concept CowVac

The Story of the CowVac

By Tom Spalding, Spalding Labs

It might be one of the most improbable partnerships in modern dairying. A company in the beneficial insect business, teaming up with university entomologists, to introduce a revolutionary mechanical device to suck up Horn Flies. In fact, it is about as likely as a seed company starting to build tractors as the usual skill sets for bug guys don't normally align with machinery skills. But the CowVac, its inventors, designers and manufacturer all go beyond the norm and it makes an interesting tale.

As anyone reading this article knows, the Horn Fly is very tough to control. It's resistant to most every chemical control. It only reproduces in cow pastures, which means there is always productive breeding material available as no one cleans up pasture pats. It's hugely impactful to dairies as only 200 Horn Flies per cow is the starting point of production losses and a cow can easily have a thousand Horn Flies on it. A loss of 15% in milk production has been reported during summer months and a 10% reduction in lifetime milk production has been reported from sub clinical mastitis in young stock caused by Horn Flies before the first lactation.

For the past 16 years, North Carolina State University entomologists, Dr. Wes Watson and Steve Denning, have been researching IPM practices for pest fly control for commercial livestock and poultry operations. Horn Flies have been a target for much of their work. They have seen it all, testing at least 100's of products and numerous techniques from pesticide use on all animals, to repellent on most and only a few animals with pesticide, to using electric traps, light traps, walk thru traps, feed thru products, ear tags, oilers, you name it. They recognized the need for the Organic Dairy industry and thought there must be another way.

The NCSU final prototype

As they say, necessity is the mother of invention and so in 2006 as, Steve was watching flies get scrapped off cows going thru a walk in trap, and then following the cow out the exit and getting

right back on, he had an AH HA moment of "let's see if we could vacuum up those little buggers". Steve being perhaps the most mechanically handy entomologist I've ever known, quickly built a test rig using a vacuum to suck up the flies as they came off when the cow went under a curtain. After several passes of the 170 cow herd, it yielded 40,000 Horn Flies and Steve knew he was onto something. That was the start of the CowVac.

Over the next 4 years Steve built ever more effective units that were more maintainable. The first ones pulled the flies through the blower fan and created quite a mess but didn't kill them all. Later ones had a filter in front of the blower, a capture room that opened to daylight when the fan was turned off, and the flies came to that area but could not get out. Then when they ran out of energy, in about 24 hours, they died and dropped to the floor, which soon had an opening going to a collection jar. Every year Steve made improvements and the Horn Fly capture counts went up. By design, the dairy herd was next to a beef herd that was the control without any Horn Fly treatment, so there were always plenty of Horn Flies on both dairy and beef herds. As you can see from the photo, these early units were made from home improvement store parts. Organic Valley heard about this unit and they sponsored a test, placing 6 units on North Carolina dairies in 2012. Steve started building those units in the fall.

Just after that Organic Valley deal I heard about this device so I called Wes, who we had known from before, and we made a trip to Raleigh, NC to see it. I knew from our efforts using Fly Predators to control Horn Flies that this little insect was a big deal. It took a lot of work as you had to put the Fly Predators in the pastures where the cows has just been and that only worked for those doing intensive grazing. Harrowing or running a screen drag over the pastures made a big difference too, but all those things took more time than most dairymen had. If this vac thing worked it would solve a horrible problem every grazier has.

At NC State we saw the working unit at the NCDA/NCSU Goldsboro dairy, and the first of the units being built for OV. It was a very clever design, but needed to be redesigned to be mass produced efficiently and optimized for even higher performance. This was early October and there weren't that many Horn Flies left but we saw the collection data which was impressive. You could control Horn Flies with just this device!

While at lunch I asked Steve how he counted all these Horn Flies. That lead to going to his pickup and when he opened the tool box it was full of 30 or more gallon zip lock bags of dead Horn Flies. Holy smokes! Part of that summer's catch of 2.5 million to be exact. Steve was very proud of those bags of flies and being an entomologist I half expected to see them mounted on his office wall like a hunter's trophy bucks (he hasn't…yet). We agreed to license the technology from NC State and so began the redesign for production and optimization.

This is the second unlikely alignment of the stars. I run a ben-

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Dr. Charles Benbrook to be honored by The Organic Center

Researcher to receive prestigious Award of Excellence from The Organic Center

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Feb 18, 2014)—The first recipient of The Organic Center's (The Center's) newly established Award of Excellence will be recognized in March at the organization's annual VIP Dinner held in conjunction with Natural Products Expo West in Anaheim, CA.

Dr. Charles Benbrook, who currently is a research professor at the Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources at Washington State University, has been selected to receive the award designed to honor an individual who has shown excellence in supporting the science behind the benefits of organic food and farming. At Washington State University, he serves as program leader of "Measure to Manage: Farm and Food Diagnostics for Sustainability and Health." Prior to that post, Dr. Benbrook served as The Center's original Chief Scientist, and currently is a member of its Science Advisory Board.

"Because of his extensive experience and background, Dr. Benbrook is well respected and knowledgeable about diverse agricultural system, and thus his research provides credible science highlighting the value and benefits of organic practices versus non-organic production," Todd Linsky, chair of The Center's Board of Trustees, said in announcing the award selection. He added, "We at The Center are delighted that he will be the first recipient of our new award."

Over the years, Dr. Benbrook's career has focused on developing science-based systems for evaluating the public health, environmental, and economic impacts of changes in agricultural systems, biotechnology, and policy. He has worked extensively on pesticide use and risk assessment, and the development of bio-intensive Integrated Pest Management. He also played an important role in the evolution of the 1996 "Food Quality Protection Act."

Most recently, he has authored two research articles in peer-reviewed publications that have garnered much attention and acclaim, advancing organic agriculture, and shedding light on the increased use of pesticides in the United States due to genetically engineered crops.

The first was published in December 2013 in PLOS One, one of the top three general science journals in the world. It showed that organic milk has a healthier nutritional profile than conventional milk. In the study, a research team led by Dr. Benbrook examined 220 organic and 164 conventional milk samples from dairies across the nation over an 18-month period. The team found that organic whole milk contained significantly higher concentrations of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids compared to milk from cows on conventionally managed dairy farms. In fact, milk from organic dairies contained 62 percent more omega-3 fatty acids and 18% more Conjugated Linoleic Acid (CLA), another fatty acid that promotes heart health. In addition, organic milk contained 25 percent lower levels of omega-6 fatty acids than conventional milk, a nutritional advantage since omega-6 fatty acids can be converted to pro-inflammatory compounds that increase the risk of heart disease.

"The recent research by Dr. Benbrook and his colleagues provides the strongest evidence to date that milk from cows raised on pasture grasses and legumes on certified organic farms provides more omega-3 fatty acids and improves the overall heart health profile of fatty acids in our diet. Importantly, these results make especially clear that women of childbearing age can directly benefit their babies during pregnancy and lactation by ensuring adequate intake of these essential fatty acids from organic milk," said Dr. Jeffrey Blumberg, Director of the Antioxidants Research Laboratory at Tufts University.

The second, published Sept. 28, 2012, in Environmental Sciences Europe, found that the use of herbicides in the production of three genetically modified herbicide-tolerant crops—cotton, soybeans and corn—has actually increased substantially in the U.S. In fact, Dr. Benbrook found, resistant weeds have become a major problem for many U.S. farmers reliant on genetically engineered crops, with the result that the volume of herbicide needed per acre each year has been going up steadily over the past decade. As resistant weeds emerge and spread in the Corn Belt, the annual increase in herbicide applications per acre will inevitably accelerate further.

Dr. Benbrook will receive the award at The Center's VIP Dinner to be held the evening of March 7 at the Anaheim Hilton. The program will also include the accomplishments of The Center during the past year, and its vision for the future.

The Organic Center's mission is to convene credible, evidence-based science on the health and environmental benefits of organic food and farming, and to communicate the findings to the public. As an independent non-profit 501(c)(3) research and education organization operating under the administrative auspices of the Organic Trade Association, The Center envisions improved health for the Earth and its inhabitants through the conversion of agriculture to organic methods. ◆

Contact Barbara Haumann, The Organic Trade Association, (802-275-3820)

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Would a "National Checkoff" Fit Organic?

By Elizabeth Burrichter, Organic Dairy Educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County

The New York Organic Dairy Task Force heard from two sides on this topic at its December 6th 2013 meeting at the Dairylea Offices in Syracuse, creating an educational opportunity for dairy producers, processors, certifiers, and related organizations. As an outcome of that meeting, the 23-member Task Force decided that more education on the topic should be directed towards those that would be affected by the program most—the producers.

What is a National Checkoff Program?

Do the sayings, "Got Milk?," "Beef: It's What's for Dinner," or "Pork. The Other White Meat" sound familiar? These promotions are all part of National Research and Promotion Programs, also known as commodity checkoff programs. These programs, overseen by the USDA, collect funds, called checkoff dollars or assessments, from producers, handlers or processors of a particular agricultural commodity. The goal of these programs is to maintain and expand existing markets, as well as to develop new markets. Some checkoff programs also fund agricultural production research.

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) has lobbied for such a program to promote the organic industry and distinguish it in the marketplace. The OTA believes that a major challenge for the organic sector is consumer confusion about what organic stands for, and this program would seek to help the consumer understand all that organic delivers through collective resources and coordination.

The purpose of the NY Organic Dairy Task Force meeting this winter was to discuss this potential organic checkoff program amongst producers and processors. Unfortunately, the organic community is split on their support of this idea for an organic checkoff program.

Hurdles to such a program:

- Currently, 100 percent organic operations are exempt from any checkoff assessments under the 2002 Amendment.
- Before an organic checkoff program could take place, organic products would have to become a single commodity. The Commodity Promotion, Research, and Information Act of 1996 does not allow for more than one commodity to be part of a checkoff program, but OTA's proposal is to change that Act so that organics could become a single commodity.
- Several checkoff programs include a research component as an output, but because of the breadth of products included in this organic program, the research component would be the weakest link in the proposal. If all organic products are a single commodity, then research dollars would need to be spread evenly across every different production system. The diversity within organic production, i.e. field crops, orchards, vineyards, greenhouse production, etc., would prohibit the possibility of conducting thorough production research across all organic fields, which would be extremely expensive. Since production research would not be the main output of this program, funds would be focused on promoting organic products.
- Creating a conflict of interest is prohibited within the checkoff programs. This means that all promotion must be generic, and that promotion cannot disparage another agricultural commodity. Funds cannot influence governmental action or policy or "pass through" the program in order to fund another organization. Any promotion that results from an organic checkoff program cannot promote organic food as better than conventional, but can explain exactly what "organic" entails as a production claim.

Richard Mathews represented the OTA at the meeting and delivered his same presentation that was given at the MOSES Organic Farming Conference in February 2013, titled National Research and Promotion Programs and the Role of USDA. He described the effort to launch an organic checkoff program.

Ed Maltby, Executive Director of the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance, consistently pointed out the potential problems associated with such a program: the current existence of other organizations that could do such work, the OTA's lack of involvement with those opposed to the program, and the OTA's survey that they put out for feedback from the public.

While the survey is accessible online for anyone who wants to give feedback, it does not allow one to oppose the program all together. The OTA may assume that anyone filling out the survey is supportive of the program because it only collects opinions on how the program should be carried out, not whether it should be carried out or not. At the Task Force Meeting one of the producers asked for a show of hands to see if any of the nine producers in attendance supported the checkoff initiative. There were no hands raised.

Despite some obvious resistance to this program, the final Farm Bill addressed some of the hurdles to an organic checkoff program, with identical language in both the House and Senate versions. This text would allow for a "technical fix" in the regulatory language so that all split operations (farms that produce both organic and conventional products) would be exempt from conventional checkoff assessments, and not just operations that are 100% organic. Those opposed to the checkoff

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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Correcting Soil Fertility

By Neal Kinsey

Far too many farmers assume that the soil they have can never be changed for the better. That is not true. Once the nutrient make-up of the soil is measured, considered and corrected, not just checking for pounds of phosphate, potassium and the pH, most pasture soils can be significantly changed for the better. More grass, better moisture utilization and higher nutritional values are all possible when the correct amount of each soil nutrient including calcium and magnesium needs are properly measured and maintained in forage and pasture soils.

Correcting the fertility of the soil positively affects the quality of the soil. When the fertility is right, water goes in and does not remain standing on the top. Yet there is ample capillary action so that the water can wick back up through the soil to the roots when the plants need it. Clients report that once the nutrients shown to be needed by the soil analysis are correctly supplied the grass then grew right on through the season instead of dying out from lack of sufficient moisture as compared to the areas where their normal program was being followed. In addition, when the soil takes in water properly, the grass can better withstand the tramping of the livestock with far less adverse effects. All soils can perform like this when they are provided with the correct amount of the fertility. If your soils are not reacting to such problems as they should, consider whether a new level of thinking might help.

If you already have what you want then continue with that program. But for those who are not up to the standards they are seeking, consider what Albert Einstein reportedly once said, "You cannot change the problems that you have now at the same level of thinking that created them." If the present system is not working, then consider trying a new type of program on a reasonable amount of land to see if that will make the difference.

Though too many farmers and their advisors fail to see the connection, fertility is the key to building and maintaining the life of the soil. Feed the soil and let the soil feed the plant is actually a way of saying once you feed the living organisms in a soil, then those organisms in turn will help provide what the plants growing there need to do their best. You do not build soil biology by "feeding the plant" and forgetting the needs of all the other life forms that need to be there for the best results. Clients have used this fertility program since the 1970's to build and increase soil life. But it only happens most efficiently when you use the proper fertility to build the house (proper environment) for the biology.

Fertility is the real key to increased nutrition for forages and grasses. But what type of fertility; fertility for nutrition, fertility for soil structure and water utilization and fertility for building life in the soil. When the soil is shorted of its proper fertility, all of these aspects of what excellent soil fertility can provide will be hurting. But where does a farmer or grower begin in order to better help the soil instead of hurting it?

Begin by correctly taking a soil test. Follow the instructions provided by the laboratory you choose to use. If you intend to send them to our company for analysis be sure to review the instructions we provide on taking soil samples. If samples will go to another lab, be sure to follow their instructions which may sometimes be similar, but often quite different. Once the samples have been correctly taken, fill out a copy of the soil sample worksheet for yourself and send a copy with the samples.

For more information on soil testing and other aspects of the soil fertility program we utilize please see our web site, www.kinseyag.com., or contact us directly for your specific needs.

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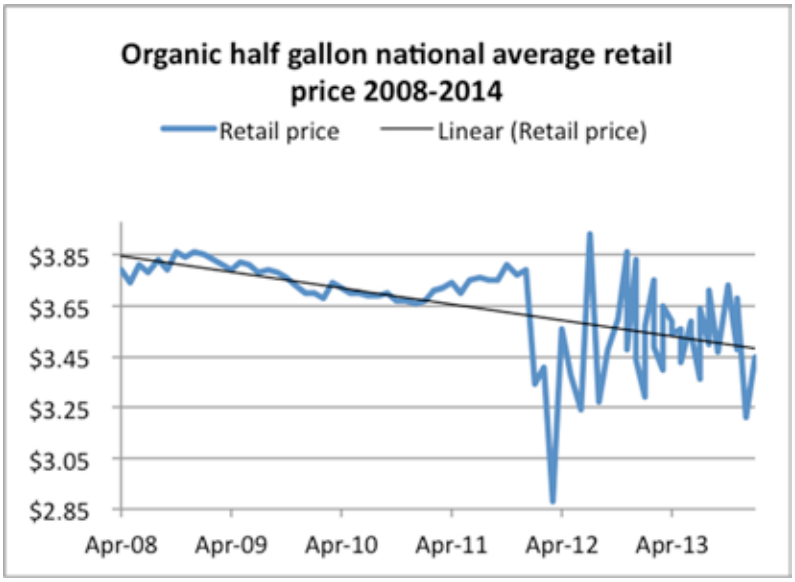
ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Share of the retail dollar: How important is it in determining pay price?

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director



Producers continually struggle to have an equitable system for determining milk pay price that is easily explained to consumers; a price that both reflects the consumer's willingness to pay extra for a high quality, environmentally-sound product, and that accurately reflects the costs of producing it. With non-organic milk there is an easy way to determine what share of the retail price goes back to farmers and many producers have suggested that there should be the same for organic milk. Many surveys suggest consumers believe that paying extra for organic milk means that producers are compensated for the higher cost of farming using environmentally sound practices without government subsidies, antibiotics, growth hormones and GMO's. The reality is that producers are not compensated enough. If we are to use the share of the retail dollar as an argument to increase the organic pay price, we need to use the same independent criteria generated by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) that non-organic dairy uses in order to have an effective comparative measurement.

The non-organic producer's farmgate pay price averages 50% of the retail price. This is determined through the data compiled by USDA AMS and the Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO). To determine the national average retail price for both organic and non-organic, the USDA AMS Dairy Market News surveys nearly100 retailers, comprising over 14,000 individual stores, with online weekly advertised features once every two weeks. With non-organic production there is constant monitoring of the farmgate pay price [1] so the calculation on the share of the retail dollar is very straightforward – take the average retail price and divide by the farmgate price, factor in an allowance for butterfat[2]. This is a very unsophisticated calculation for non-organic as it doesn't take into account all the other uses of milk and milk by-products and the fact that under 50% of milk is sold as fluid products. Other products, more highly processed and refined with true added value, such as cheeses, yogurts, creams and even more differentiated products, represent where milk really obtains value. Applying the non-organic process in determining the producer share of the retail dollar to organic is more difficult and less accurate. In organic dairy we do not have the depth of independent data for fluid milk, nothing on the value of butterfat and no independent data on farmgate price/blend price/NASS all-milk price that can be used to determine what producers receive. On the positive side it is estimated that 75% of organic milk is sold as fluid, so the fluid retail price is more relevant, and more organic milk is sold as whole milk than non-organic (approximately 25% is sold as whole milk) so factoring in the price of butterfat is slightly less important. NODPA and The National Organic Coalition have campaigned for many years for more investment in data gathering for organic dairy, and over the last six years that has improved but recent budget cuts have resulted in a contraction of this service.

Using a retail price as an indication of true value to the consumer or it's own value in the marketplace has a few challenges. Fluid milk, both organic and non-organic, is used as a loss leader to encourage consumers to shop at different stores, so the retail price does not necessarily reflect the standard margins that retailers use with other products or what the consumer is willing to pay. Organic dairy is also seen as an entry point for consumers who do not yet purchase organic products, so may be heavily discounted to attract new consumers and to compete with other specialty product stores, for example between Whole Foods and Trader Joe's. Horizon Organic is now using the reputation of its branded milk product to sell other non-dairy organically-certified products. Ironically, processors have found that positioning other non-dairy beverages and juices like soy and almond milk in the organic dairy refrigeration case increases sales for those products, especially when the retail price gap between organic and non-organic dairy products is small.

Comparing the share of the dollar that organic producers are left with to the non-organic share is complicated by a different pricing structure. There is a greater range of prices for organic than in non-organic. On the lower end, there is the retail price

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[1]The mailbox price is intended to identify the amount of money that actually shows up in the producer's check after deductions for milk promotion, service fees, dues, capital retains, etc. and is compiled by the USDA

[2]Using the butterfat component price, the value of butterfat can be estimated by taking the butterfat content times the butterfat component price.

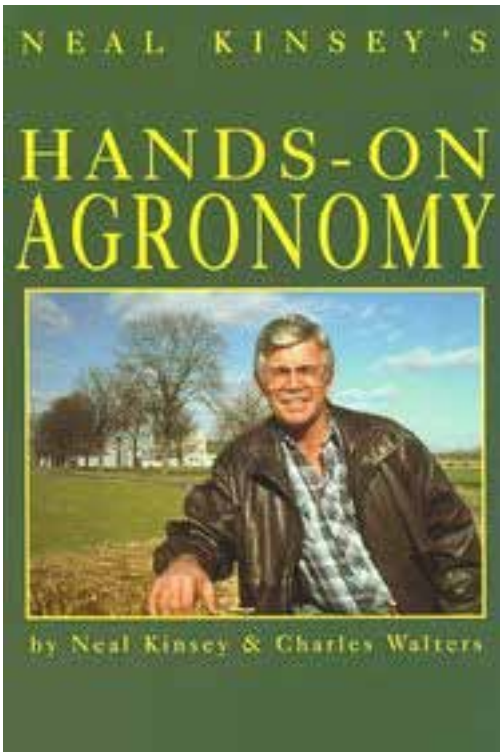
ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Magnesium for Dairy Pastures

By Neal Kinsey, Kinsey Ag Services

On most dairy farms, too little magnesium in the crops, even where farmers are just growing pasture and forages, is generally a far greater issue than most realize. Based on soil and plant testing performed throughout the U.S. and many other parts of the world, the problem of too little magnesium in the feed is present on a majority of all dairy farms. For most organic dairies testing for magnesium in the plants used for feed will confirm such a deficiency. But the solution to the problem is not always as simple as adding more magnesium to the soil. There is more than one reason for a magnesium deficiency in the crops and feeds grown on dairy farms and in too many cases just adding more magnesium to the soil does not solve the problem.

By use of a very detailed soil analysis we have tested dairy farms located in Eastern Europe, Ireland and New Zealand, where the majority suffer from too little magnesium in the feed due to a deficiency of magnesium in the soil. Though not as concentrated in terms of numbers, dairy soils in the U.S. and other areas of the world can also have the same problem, and this is especially true for sandy soils and some highly eroded clay soils. When magnesium levels are less than 10% of the soil's total nutrient holding capacity (percent saturation based on cation exchange capacity) all plants growing in such soils will be deficient in magnesium. In cases such as these, magnesium problems can be solved just by adding the proper magnesium fertilizer to those soils. But care should be taken as to what materials are needed and how much to apply when this problem exists on your farm. Magnesium deficiency can also be caused initially from the application of too much high calcium lime – especially on sandy soils. Know what your soils need first and then be sure to apply the correct requirement for each nutrient. If not, it may cause an even bigger price to pay from too much of a magnesium build-up in the soil. This is because soils that have too much magnesium can cause some of the same problems that are caused by the soils that have too little. Doing it right the first time can truly save even more added trouble, time and expense.



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When a soil has too little magnesium, the plants will not get enough. But the same is true if there is too much magnesium in the soil. When the saturation of magnesium is too high in any soil, the plants, including pasture grasses, hay meadows and silage fields will by analysis show to be deficient in magnesium. Adding more magnesium to such soils will only contribute more to the problem. And mark this well, a good soil pH does not assure that your soil has the correct amount of magnesium. When soils have a pH in the 5.5 to 7.0 range their principal make up is determined by four elements – calcium, magnesium, potassium and sodium. However, in this combination, too much of one or more of these elements means there will always be too little of one or more of the others. This can cause the pH to look good when in fact the soil is too high in magnesium and lacking one or more of the other three elements (calcium, potassium or sodium) in sufficient enough amounts to provide good nutrition for the livestock grazing there.

If a soil has too much of one element, it will not have enough of something else. A good soil test should tell farmers what is causing the pH to be where it is. Such tests will enable farmers and their consultant or fertilizer dealer to identify any excesses and deficiencies in each pasture, hay meadow or field of silage. To control any nutrient that is excessive in the soil, including too much magnesium, begin by making the required corrections to supply whatever materials are lacking in order to correct deficiencies of those nutrients that are shown as needed for that soil. This is where true soil balance begins. Without the ability to measure and understand such relationships, soil balance is just a term used as an excuse as to why something does not work as expected, but without any real idea of where the true solution to the problem lies, and likely with no idea or direction of even where to start.

Supply any deficient nutrients to control any excessive nutrients. This is the true beginning for building balanced soil nutrition. The soil is the plant's stomach.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Would A National Checkoff Fit Organic?

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at the NY Organic Dairy Task Force meeting were supportive of this measure.

While an organic checkoff program directed at consumer education is one way to help build the organic industry, it would be costly to attempt, and complicated to execute. Those involved in the organic dairy market know that the origins of organic milk in 1994 did not come from a clever media campaign, but from dairy consumers demanding an alternative to milk from cows treated with bST. Will the organic industry continue to grow through consumer demand, or does it need the help of the USDA's Research and Promotion Program?

How best to keep the trust of consumers is something in which every organic farmer should invest interest. Organic producers and processors should consider for themselves whether or not they are supportive of paying assessments to a checkoff program in order to educate their consumers by reading up on the topic and participating in the discussion with fellow stakeholders. To weigh in on the subject farmers can go to one of the websites listed below:

http://www.ota.com/ORPP.html

http://www.nodpa.com/checkoff_opposition.shtml ◆

The New York Organic Dairy Task Force has been funded by the New York Farm Viability Institute since 2005. The Task Force is comprised of organic dairy and crop farmers, certifiers, processors, and related support services. It meets twice a year to assess opportunities and barriers to the organic dairy industry in New York, allowing farmers to offer and develop informed opinions. For more information go to: http://cuaes.cornell.edu/organic/projects/dairy/dairy-initiative/.

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Magnesium for Pastures

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This balancing is not just for supplying the needs of the cows, but the needs of all those soil organisms that serve to feed the soil that feeds the cows. When a fertility program is employed that only considers the needs of the crop, and not the needs of the soil, that neglected soil, the crop and the cows will all pay a steep price.

There are those who will maintain that magnesium is not a real factor to be considered in regard to soil fertility for dairy cattle either in terms of yield or top quality feed production. Once the relationship of magnesium to nitrogen and phosphate utilization by plants is considered, it becomes clear that such thinking is not accurate. When plants lack magnesium, whether from soils that are too low or too high, then nitrogen utilization suffers because magnesium composes the center for chlorophyll formation and nitrogen attaches around that Mg center. In addition, plants need magnesium to metabolize phosphate. So when a soil is too high or too low in magnesium, nitrogen and phosphorous cannot provide the full benefits they normally could for the crop. In other words, without sufficient magnesium farmers do not receive full value from any nitrogen and phosphate fertilizers they have applied.

There are certain characteristics that can identify clay soils that are too high in magnesium even though the plants growing there are not getting enough. The magnesium content of such soils can even affect physical structure and related problems. When wet, clay soils are sticky and very slick. Then as these same soils dry out, they begin to show cracks in the dry soil as it begins to pull apart. Far too many farmers assume that when it comes to physical structure, the soil they have can never be changed for the better. However, once the nutrient make up of the soil is correctly achieved, and not just a good soil pH, even pasture soils with physical structure problems will show changes for the better.

Pugging, or soil that is easily tromped down by livestock while wet, is a good example. Note that some fields, or in some cases, even areas of the same field, tend to have the problem more than others. Check the areas that have the worst problem with pugging as compared to those that do best under the same conditions. Use any good soil test that shows the percentage of calcium, magnesium, potassium and sodium. Compare the numbers and see what they show. The closer each one of these specified elements are to the needed percentage the less pugging should be evident there.

For example, we find many dairy farms that have quite good levels of calcium, but are very low in magnesium which shows more trampling or pugging damage. Yet on the other hand,

many heavy clay soils have extreme levels of magnesium and insufficient calcium to allow proper drainage and they too suffer inordinately from pugging problems. The correct amount of each nutrient in the soil, in particular that of calcium and magnesium, actually form a stronger support system to better withstand the foot traffic of cattle or any other livestock grazing there. Such needs are not solved just by knowing the pH, but they can be by measuring the percent saturation of the elements that most affect how the soil holds up under wet conditions.

Sources of magnesium and their value can vary greatly. Where both calcium and magnesium are required, dolomite lime can be utilized, and even some manures and composts also contain relatively high amounts. But on soils where calcium is adequate to high, dolomite or anything with significant calcium content should be avoided. In such cases, Epsom salts or other forms of magnesium sulfate can be used, or if potassium and sulfur are needed, sulfate of potash/magnesia (marketed as K-Mag or Sul-Po-Mag in the US) can be used.

Soils should be properly analyzed to establish any true need for magnesium and to determine the correct material and the prescribed amount required. Whether it is lime or some other material that needs to be applied, all such products should be considered based on actual nutrient content and their use managed accordingly. If lime is being considered as a magnesium source, there are several factors to consider when determining the needs of different soils (principally supplying needed calcium and magnesium) and how much is enough. This includes the nutrient-holding capacity of the soil, the calcium and magnesium content of liming material to be used, how much is needed to supply what each soil lacks and the fineness of grind of whatever lime will be used to determine what amount it can ultimately supply. All of these factors should be considered for each different type of lime and each different soil where it might be applied.

Then the last and most important point – to provide the correct magnesium for the soil each farmer should be sure that the soil tests being utilized are capable of accurately determining true magnesium needs in order to secure the correct material to sufficiently provide for any needed corrections or changes. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Farmgate price as a percentage of the average retail price for organic ½ gallons									
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Retail Value	$ 3.79	$ 3.90	$ 3.81	$ 3.79	$ 3.69	$ 3.74	$ 3.48	$ 3.53	$ 3.63
Farm Value *	$ 1.23	$ 1.23	$ 1.27	$ 1.25	$ 1.23	$ 1.29	$ 1.32	$ 1.44	$ 1.52
Percentage of retail	32%	31%	33%	33%	33%	34%	38%	41%	42%
* Farm value is calculated using base price, MAP, seasonal bonuses and an estimate for components.									

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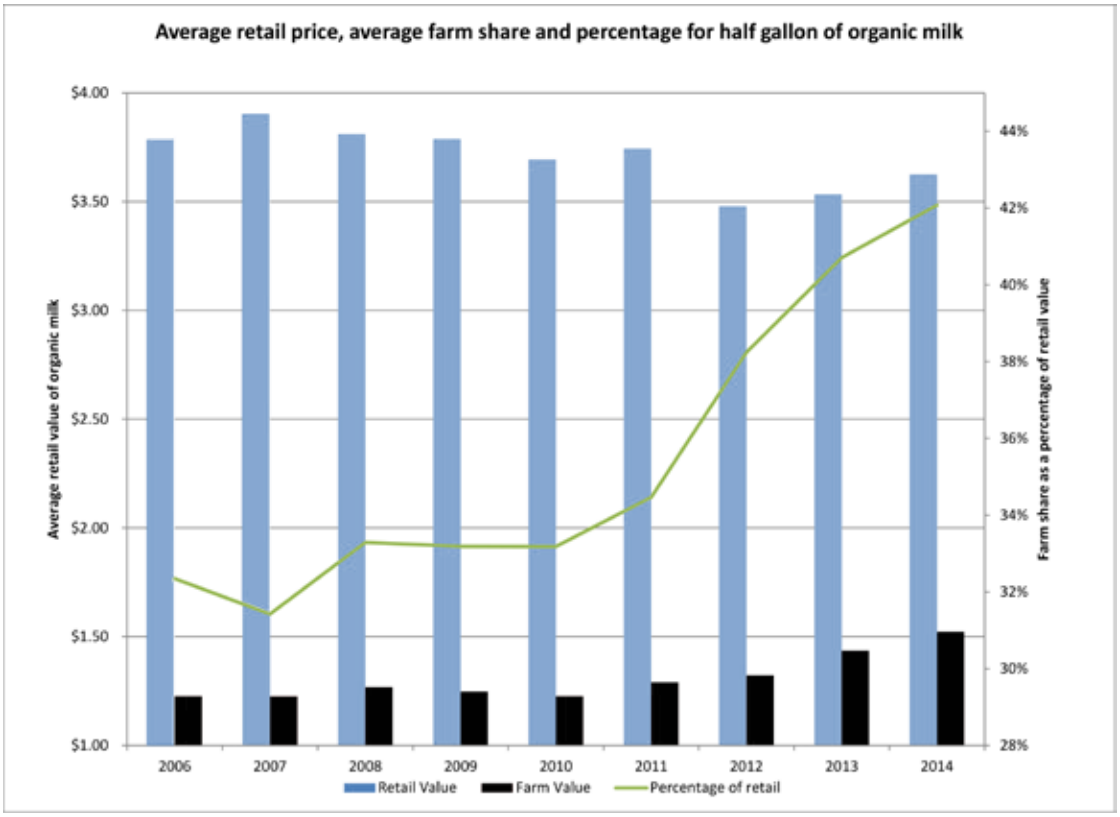
of store brand product which can be as low as $2.50 per ½ gallon (two ½ gallons for $5). There are also in-store promotions for set periods of time to encourage sales in competitive markets where ½ gallons have been as low as $2.40 per ½ gallon. For the majority of stores, the retail price of branded product will be between $3.50 to $4.99 per ½ gallon, with the higher prices found in the Northeast and the lowest in the Northwest. The higher price for branded organic ½ gallons is approximately $4.99 which would be found in areas with a lower volume of sales of organic, poor distribution, or no competition.



Determining the share of the retail dollar

Since 2006, NODPA has been compiling data on retail pricing, but it was not until 2008 that organic retail prices were included in the USDA AMS Dairy Report. As the chart (below) shows, the average organic retail price from 2008 to 2014 is $3.65 per ½ gallon, with a high of $3.93 in July, 2012 and a low of $2.88 in March, 2012. The chart shows the downward trend in the retail price of a ½ gallon of organic milk. Over the last few years, there has been no difference in retail pricing for the different fat-types of milk from Whole Milk to Fat Free.

In the absence of any independent data on pay price NODPA has taken the various packages paid by the leading brands and calculated a year round price averaging the seasonal payments and deductions. (For more detail on pay price from 2006 to 2013, please go to the NODPA Home page and click on "Pay price Summary Chart 2006-2013.") In 2006, the average year-round pay price per hundred pounds in the Northeast, including seasonal payments and MAP, but without components, was $26.50. In 2008, that price increased to $28, and in 2012, to $31. The chart and table below shows the share of the retail dollar graphically, with approximately $1.50 added for components on top of the calculated base, plus MAP prices to reflect more of an average farmgate price for the Northeast. With a lower pay price in the West, the percentage share of the retail dollar is less.

You will notice that as the retail price averages go down, the share of the retail dollar increases. The pay price does not change proportionately with the changes in retail price. Although the costs of organic inputs are at the highest level since organic records have been kept, the average retail price is dropping. If the pay price was tied to a percentage of the retail price, processors might lower the average retail price which would lower pay price to control their costs and by doing so maintain their margins.

Who sets the retail price?

The simple answer is that the retailer sets the retail price. Short of access to the confidential business information of stores, distributors, processors and marketers, the exact journey of money from that gallon of milk at the checkout to its ultimate recipients cannot

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Kathleen A. Merrigan to Serve as Executive Director of the Sustainability Institute

The former U.S. Department of Agriculture deputy secretary will lead new university-wide Sustainability Institute.

Press Release: February 06, 2014

The George Washington University has named Kathleen A. Merrigan, the former deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the university's first executive director of the Sustainability Institute.

As leader of the university's sustainability initiatives, Dr. Merrigan will be responsible for launching and nurturing a Sustainability Institute that advances GW's prominence as an academic leader in multidisciplinary sustainability education, research and outreach. She will also join the university's academic faculty.

"Kathleen Merrigan has exactly the combination of deep experience, professional stature and energetic commitment we need to launch this important effort," said President Steven Knapp. "Under her leadership, the Sustainability Institute will enable us to develop a full academic complement to the sustainability work we are actively pursuing across the university's operations."

Named one of Time Magazine's "Most Influential People in the World" in 2010, Dr. Merrigan brings to the university a diverse range of experience spanning nearly 30 years.

In 2009, she was nominated to serve as USDA deputy secretary by President Obama and unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate. During her four-year tenure at the USDA, she oversaw the daily operations of agency, leading the USDA's budget process, establishing the agency's priorities and monitoring progress, and driving its rulemaking process. Her accomplishments include creating and leading the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Initiative to support local food systems; serving as a key architect of First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" campaign; and representing the United States before the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

Before joining the USDA, Dr. Merrigan served for nearly a decade as a faculty member and director of the Agriculture, Food and Environment Program at Tufts University. She has also held positions as a senior analyst for the Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture and a staff member for the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, where she wrote the law establishing national standards for organic food.

Dr. Merrigan earned a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a Master of Public Affairs from the University of Texas at Austin, and a B.A. from Williams College.

"I'm thrilled to build upon the university's innovative sustainabil-

ity efforts. GW is ideally located, situated among federal and international agencies and in a city with its own ambitious sustainability plan," said Dr. Merrigan. "Given the limitless opportunity in our capital city coupled with the extraordinary expertise across GW faculty and staff, the university is well positioned to advance the field of sustainability in profound ways through research, teaching and practice. This is a perfect place to invest my years of sustainability leadership and networks to solidify GW as a global leader in sustainability."

At GW, Dr. Merrigan will oversee university-wide sustainability efforts with the goal of building premier programs focused on sustainable systems. She will work closely with GW's Office of Sustainability to integrate academics with GW's successful sustainability outreach and practice initiatives, including its Ecosystems Enhancement Strategy, Climate Action Planand GWater Plan.

"I am delighted that Dr. Merrigan will be joining the GW community as executive director of the Sustainability Institute," said Provost Steven Lerman. "Dr. Merrigan's career in the field spans academia, state and federal government, and the private sector. She is clearly the right person to lead our sustainability efforts to the next level."

Dr. Merrigan's selection was the result of an extensive nationwide search. "We formed a top-notch search committee representing highly accomplished faculty from across the university," said Professor and Chair of the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Melissa Perry, who led the search committee. "Due to diligence and dedication to the sustainability initiative by the committee members, we successfully compiled a select list of stars in the field of sustainability. Kathleen emerged as an exceptional institutional builder, a policy visionary and a true leader."

Sustainability is one of GW's core strategic initiatives, and an essential part of achieving the university's goal of being the preeminent research university in the nation's capital. The university has substantial academic expertise in a wide range of fields related to sustainability, including climate and energy, environmental engineering, public health, food culture and systems, and environmental law and policy.

GW currently offers more than 250 courses on topics related to sustainability and 40 undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate programs in sustainability-related fields. In 2012, the university began offering an 18-credit minor in sustainability open to all undergraduate students.

In addition, Planet Forward, GW's innovative citizen journalist project dedicated to finding the best solutions to sustainability challenges around the globe, gives GW students and faculty the opportunity to tell their stories to the world. ◆

ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

Stonewall Farm, Keene, New Hampshire

Scale Appropriate Farming for Sustainability

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Executive Director Josh Cline so aptly puts it, is education; showing farmers what can be done on a smaller scale and opening their doors to schools, kids, and families so that they can build connections with the food that they eat.

Certified Organic

The dairy farm has been certified organic since 2007 using the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food as their certifier. Their motivations for getting certified was for the increased income they would receive for their fluid milk, the anticipated improvements in their dairy herd health, and the environmental advantages.

Since transitioning to organic, livestock health has definitely improved, and milk quality has been exceptional. The farm was recently awarded the 2013 Gold Award from Organic Valley and a Silver in the 2013 National Dairy Quality Awards, a program of the National Mastitis Council. "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," says Stonewall Farm Executive Director, Josh Cline.

Housing, Feeding, and Pasture System

The 30-cow dairy herd consists of 65% registered Holsteins, 30% registered Brown Swiss, and a couple Holstein/Normande crosses. Average yearly production is 18,000 pounds per cow with butterfat at 3.6%, Protein at 2.9%, and other solids at 5.7%. Cows range in age from 2 – 11 years of age with the average age being 6 years.

The farm has a 30-cow tie stall barn with manual ridge vents and thermostat controlled windows on both sides of the barn. The cows are milked with a pipeline milking system. Heifers are kept in a 3-sided open front barn with 3 sections for the different age groups and calves are started in calf hutches with an attached fenced run area where they are raised until weaning age.

Page 1 photo of Stonewall Staff taken last August, 2013:

L-R: Communication Manager, Matthew Young; Development Coordinator, Sandy Hamm; former Education Director Sarah Antel; Farm Manager, Glenn Yardley; Herdsperson, Wendy French; former Event Director Heather Gringeri; Wild Roots Nature School Director Liza Lowe; Assistant Director, Alan Bettler; and Executive Director, Josh Cline (not in photo are Garden Manager, Austin Mandryk; Farm School apprentice, Kady Harris and Event Director, Kelsey Fitzgerald.

During the growing season the cows are rotationally grazed, getting new sections of pasture after each milking. Yearlings and bred heifers are pastured in a couple large fields at two of their neighbors' properties during the summer months, and calves 6 months to a year are pastured at the farm.

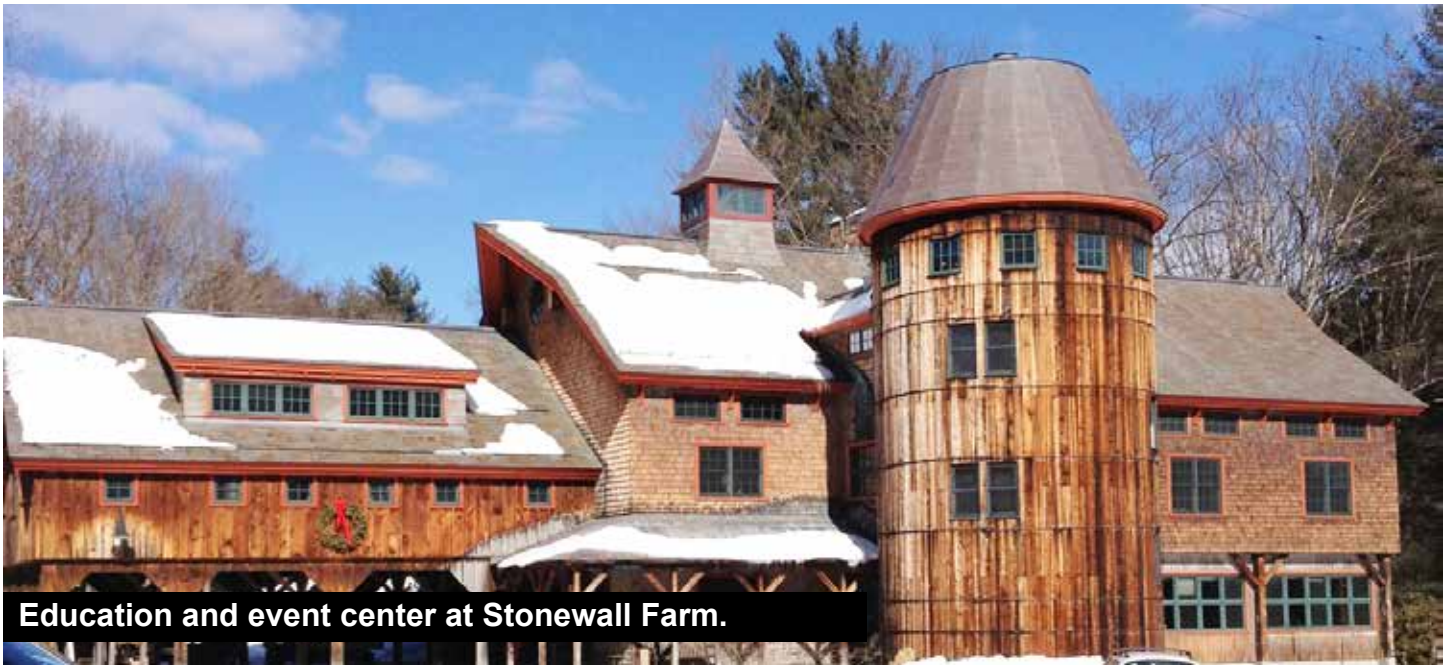
Grain is fed to the cows 3 times a day; morning milking at 3:30 am, before turnout at 8 am, and then at evening milking at 3:30 pm. The amount of grain fed depends upon the amount of milk that the cow is producing; 1 pound of grain for every 4 pounds of milk. Protein and energy in the grain, is determined based on the quality of the stored feed and pasture being fed. Farm Manager, Glenn Yardley, and Herdsperson, Wendy French work closely with Nutritionist, Mike Thresher, of Morrison's Custom Feeds to make sure that the cows are getting a balanced ration. In the winter, cows are fed hay and baleage to replace the pasture part of the ration, and heifers are fed grain and hay 2 times a day.

Calves are fed 2 gallons of whole milk per day and are started on a 16% heifer pellet (free choice) at 1 week of age. At one month they are offered free choice hay, grain and water, and are usually weaned from milk at 2 months of age.

Since most of their dairy acreage is used for pasture, Wendy and Glenn make sure that the forage on the stem is well cared for before and after grazing. Pastures are brush-hogged and chain-dragged right after the cows have grazed. This practice happens after the first 2 grazing rotations. Water is provided in each paddock using black plastic pipe and portable water tubs, and Redmond's trace mineral salt is offered to the cows, free choice. For soil amendments beyond the daily dropping that the cows leave behind, they spread potash on the pastures in 2013, and normally spread manure in the fall.

Livestock Health and Preventive Practices

Since their transition to organic dairy, Glenn and Wendy have noticed a huge improvement in their cows' health. The calves grow a lot better on


Education and event center at Stonewall Farm.

whole milk, the cows have fewer calving issues, and it is rare that they see cases of milk fever, retained placentas, and ketosis.

Prior to their organic transition, the farm had 3-4 retained placentas each year and half a dozen cases of milk fever. Today, Wendy can't remember the last time they have had either of these situations on the farm. For the occasional mastitis case, they give the cow garlic tincture 2 times a day for 5 days, Aspire (whey injection) 1 time a day for 3 days, and liniment rub. Traces of mastitis are usually gone within 36 hours.

Their veterinarian is very good to work with and comes to the farm once a month for pregnancy checks, vaccinations, dehorning calves, and anything else that may need attention. Their vaccination program includes Bovashield at 3 months of age, a booster 4 weeks later, just before breeding at 15 months, and once a year for the lactating cows.

Value-Added on the Farm

Being a working farm, an educational center, and a non-profit, the costs of operating the dairy farm is somewhat higher than what one might spend on the average 30-cow farm. As cost of production continues to climb faster than the pay price for organic milk, Stonewall Farms has found that their dairy farm is losing money. They bring in $160,000 from milk sales, but spend $120,000 on forage and grain, leaving only $40,000 to pay for two full time staff, insurance, and operating expenses.


Cows eating fodder.

With a retail store on the farm, there are a growing number of people coming to the farm to purchase their vegetables, meat, eggs and dairy products. True to their mission, Stonewall Farm's customers become more aware of where their food comes from and how it is produced; they can see how the land and livestock are managed, how the various crops are grown, and become more familiar with the common tools and day-to-day work that takes place on the farm. And when products are purchased on the farm, there tends to be a higher profit margin returning to the farm enterprise, validating their decision to focus more on value-added product development.

Value-added dairy products currently sold on the farm include: raw milk cheddar cheese, plain and vanilla flavored yogurt and beef from their cull cows. The cheese is made from their milk which is sent to the Grafton Cheese Company to be made and then retailed on the farm. Yogurt is made using a 40-gallon Vat Pasteurizer, from Micro Dairy Designs (www.microdairydesigns.com). They have also purchased a pump, chiller, and a bottling system from that same company, which is currently being used for their yogurt making, but which could easily be used for bottled milk if they choose to go that route.

Though New Hampshire law allows for the sale of raw milk from the farm, Stonewall Farm is not allowed to sell milk due to an agreement that they have with their current milk-buyer. This situation may change this year as Stonewall Farm is gauging the interest of having a year-round Milk CSA. They have estimated that if they sell 150 milk CSA shares (about 75 gallons a week), the income generated from that would match the current income that they receive by shipping their organic

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FEATURED FARM

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milk to a wholesale buyer. The rest of the milk not used for their milk CSA, would go to cheese or yogurt, or would be sold to a bulk milk buyer willing to work with them – which means that their surplus milk may be sold on the conventional market.

Innovation and On-Farm Demonstration

As an educational non-profit, Stonewall Farm likes to look at a number of creative cutting-edge practices so that they can share their successes, mistakes, and educate current and future farmers. They are also pulled in the direction of fiscal responsibility; they need to make sure that they are covering their expenses. They often count on grants to cover the extra labor involved in implementing and documenting the new practice(s) and to absorb some of the risk.

The farm may be small, but the board and staff feel it is important to share their knowledge and experience. Performing field trials in collaboration with others, and opening the farm to share their findings attracts farmers and builds opportunities for collaboration with universities, organic educators, federal agents and other resource professionals. It also means that decisions about large investments take some careful consideration from the farm's board of directors.

Last year the dairy farm took an interest in feeding sprouted grains.

They decided that before investing $50,000 into a system needed to feed their 45 cows, calves and heifers, they would purchase a micro fodder system (from Farm Tek) and feed it to just 3 of their cows. They fed them 5-10 lbs of fodder in place of 1/3 of their grain ration (about 5 lbs) and evaluated palatability, total feed intake, milk production, cost, and overall cow health. They are very happy with the response and feel confident that the fodder system could save them at least 30% in their total feed costs. Another piece to the puzzle that they want to address before jumping into sprouted grains is growing their own fodder feed.

During the 2013 growing season, Stonewall Farm planted a couple acres of spring Barley. They have been working with Dorn Cox of Green Start

(www.greenstartnh.org) who has a small combine harvester as well as the equipment, technology and know-how to help the farm adopt scale-appropriate systems on their farm for planting, harvesting, drying and storage of small grains. They were very pleased with the yield last year (1,500 lbs/qcre), but want to try winter barley this year to see if they can reduce the weed pressure. Stonewall Farm is aligning itself with organizations such as NOFA-NH, University of New Hampshire, National Center for Appropriate Technologies (NCAT), and NRCS in trialing different types of fodder grains and fine-tuning the system while also evaluating the sprouting quality, yield, and weed management. They will be opening up the farm to a workshop on growing small grains sometime this summer. All are welcome.

Farmer Education at Stonewall Farm

When asked how to better serve the organic dairy industry, staff at Stonewall Farm said that they would like to see more colleges offering dairy courses including hands-on education; teaching organic versus conventional practices. Seeing the need for this type of information, it is probably no surprise that Stonewall Farm is in the process of putting together it's own 1-year school program called the 'Stonewall Farm School.'

Participating students will get a full calendar year of hands-on farm education - be it dairy or vegetable production. The tuition covers lodging and a small share of the farm products each week. Students will also be given an opportunity to blend that experience with a degree through Antioch New England University. Stonewall Farm Executive Director,

Dorn Cox with his small combine

Joshua Cline, is excited about the prospects of working with Antioch University to firmly establish an MBA in Farm Business Administration. ◆

The 14th Annual NODPA Field Days will be at Stonewall Farms this Fall! There is a lot going on and much to see at Stonewall Farm and we hope that everyone comes to the farm this fall (if not before) to see the results of the 2014 growing season and to participate in NODPA's 14th Annual NODPA Field Days taking place on Thursday and Friday, September 25-26, 2014. Don't miss it!

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

The Story of the CowVac

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eficial insect company, but I'm a mechanical engineer (ME) by schooling and in the 30 years prior had started a number of high tech companies that built things from professional sound equipment, hot tubs, race cars, video systems, computers to name a few. Accompanying me on that first trip to Raleigh was my nephew Zac, who was also a ME. His dad was actually the founder of Spalding Labs with my mom 38 years ago, and we both grew up working in our dad's machine shop. So I was looking forward to building a product that was very needed again.

With Zac as the chief engineer, we completely redesigned the CowVac to make it efficient to produce and much higher in performance. Using the latest in Computer Aided Design and Computational Fluid Dynamics (the same stuff you design jet airplanes with) we were able to model the air flow thru the system and over a simulated cow. We increased the flow rate by roughly double, while making the unit quieter. Some of the test runs are shown in these renderings. One of the big changes was making the airflow as non-turbulent as possible. This increased the flow and decreased the noise, but it required very smooth gradual curves in the ductwork.

Steve Denning with Horn Flies

However, we are a bug company and did not have a machine shop to make things. But on the first flight out to Raleigh with Zac, I had brought magazines to read and one was a metal fabrication publication. It had a story of an 80 year old Chicago company, Midland Metal Manufacturing, that had transitioned from old fashion dedicated tooling to complete numerical CAM


CowVac in operation

(computer aided manufacturing). They didn't use blue prints anymore, so we could just email them our SolidWorks files which is the CAD (computer aided design) program Zac used. Their normal business was making retail metal display racks for CVS, Target etc., but they had the latest of every automated robotic metal fabricating tool from welders, laser cutters, benders, punches and even their own powder coat paint line. They were perfect to build the CowVac. Yet, you can imagine their response to us on the first call, "you want us to manufacturer a what????".

Finding Midland was the third unlikely alignment of stars.

The first Spalding CowVac was ready for the 2012 International Ag Expo in Tulare, CA in February. From there it ended up replacing the NC State unit at Goldsboro, NC where we refined the airflow on real animals. While the simulated cow got us very close to optimized performance, we actually were blowing too much air on the sides and thus sending Horn Flies in many directions and not just into the vacuum. That is why the final

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Pay Price

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be known. The processor sets the price they sell to the retailer or distributor and that price is set differently for branded product and store brand. The processor will have to factor in their costs but also what the market will stand. If your competitor is pricing low to increase sales, do you follow them down or maintain your price? Do you give the retailer other incentives, for example in-store promotions, volume discounts, shelving fees, advertising credits, direct supportive marketing, reductions in other products that make up your "basket" of products presented to the retailer, or refuse the contract? Competition in the store brand products is particularly sharp, plus in-store promotions will skew the data especially where the major brands are competing heavily as the retailer's share is subsidized by the brand.

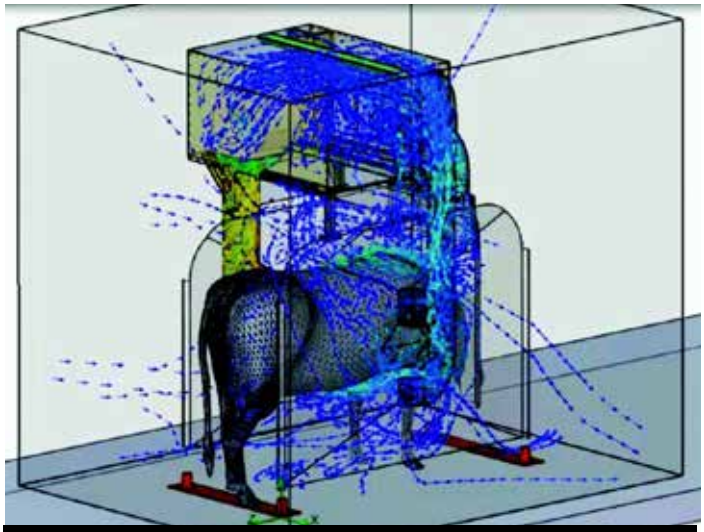
The retailer takes the price they pay and adds their margin. In the early days of organic milk, when organic dairy wasn't a commodity, the retailer would normally be looking for a 30% share of the retail dollar. With the increase in store brand product, the retailer buys at a lower price than branded product and may also choose to lower its share to stimulate sales, and also attracts organic consumers to other products where the margins will be higher (loss leader). This practice results in pricing of $2.50 per ½ gallon, with more consumers gravitating toward the cheaper store brand product, especially new consumers, but with an increase in volume that benefits the retailer.

Is the organic producer's share of the retail dollar irrelevant in any discussion of pay price?

Organic pay price changes have come from shortage of supply (increase of $4 from 2003 to 2006); increased competition when HP Hood entered the market; and most recently increases in the Market Adjusted Premiums (MAP) when high feed costs threatened supply. Coincidently, those increases happened at the same time as the producer share of the retail dollar increased and the average retail price decreased. Using the existing data, we would need a $3 increase on base price to bring the share of the retail dollar up to the same level as non-organic, assuming the retail price does not drop. History shows that an increase in pay price has no direct effect on the average retail price.

When looking at calculating pay price, an easier place to start is with costs of production and a pay price that gives an adequate Return On Investment (ROI) to re-invest in the farm (an essential part of organics), a modest family income (in the $60,000/year), and an ability to service all debt so producers have at least 60% equity against liabilities. Available data and reports from producers suggest that non-organic dairy will be more profitable than organic dairy for 2013 and 2014 based on accepted financial comparisons like ROI and net income. How we use the limited existing data to determine an equitable organic pay price and how this might be tied in with the new margin insurance program in the Farm Bill could be a way to address a pay price that is falling behind costs of production. But that is another article.. ◆

ORGANIC PRODUCTION



Computer Simulation of CowVac air

The Story of the CowVac

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production units have one duct per side, not the two you see in the early rendering.

The first production units were shipped to southern dairies starting in September 2012 as they were the only locations still with Horn Flies. Results were very promising, but most prospective customers wanted to see one running on a neighbor's farm before ordering. This was still a new and strange product. In 2013 CowVacs were shipped to many states in all regions. At the end of that year I finally knew for sure that the CowVac was going to make it, as almost every installation resulted in a sale to a neighboring dairy. This article is not a sales presentation so I'll stop here.

There is much more information on our website including videos or actual customer units in operation and results of the first University studies to be published with more coming in the next year or two. If you ever own a CowVac, you can thank NC State's Wes Watson and Steve Denning, Organic Valley, and the lucky alignment of stars in the last quarter of 2011. ◆

Tom Spalding is the Chief Fly Guy of Spalding Labs. This family owned business has provided Fly Predator beneficial insects for 38 years and the CowVac for Horn Fly control for the past 2 years. Prior to assuming control from his mom 10 years ago, Tom was a founder of a number of high tech businesses in music, video, computers, and internet. This diverse background is apparent when visiting their website at: 7dc4r.spalding-labs.com. Contact him at toms@spalding-labs.com or (877) 836-9746.

NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Farmer, NODPA President

Robust discussions about treating cows with a high SCC, Johnnes disease, and coccidiosis treatment.

A farmer asked the group for suggestions in treating cows with a high SCC, but they exhibited no swelling or other signs of mastitis. The cows were late lactation, and approaching dry off. The milk was cultured, and tested positive for environmental strep. The use of Phyto-Mast tubes at dry off was highly recommended by several producers. One protocol that was suggested combined the use of Phyto-Mast tubes with 50 ml injection of BiocelCBT, 50 ml of Vitamin C, and 10 ml of MuSe. Other suggestions included using a Lysigin vaccine twice a year, Immunoboost, free-choice kelp and humates during her dry period, Dr Sarah's ABC Relief, pre-milking 2 to 3 weeks before she is due to freshen, and giving her an extra-long dry period. Homeopathic Silica 30C is classically given at dry-off to "reduce scarring, soften quarters, and for chronic bad discharges (like mastitis)." One vet suggested that a multi-potency remedy, called a homeochord, was more effective than a single strength remedy. Homeochords blend the original mother tincture with several strengths of homeopathic potencies.

A calf was born with its hooves knuckled under. It was recommended that they be fixed with a small splint on the back side, and wrapped in place to stretch the tendons into the proper shape. Homeopathic Calf fluor can also be administered. Nutritional factors can play a role -- it was suggested this condition may occur in calves if there is a selenium or vitamin C deficiency. Or there may be a persistent BVD infection in the herd.

A producer asked for general information about Johnne's Disease. Several websites were given for background material on the disease. The vets that contributed all suggested that it is a management issue, specifically from imbalances in feeding. What we know is this: cows eating high-forage diets with minimal grain keep their pH in a healthier range, so that even if the cows are infected, they can keep symptoms at bay. It is especially important to give young calves access to hay/fiber, as they will satisfy their craving for fiber by eating bedding if hay is not available, thereby ingesting a host of germs, including Johnne's Disease. Infected herds can consider a Johnne's vaccine -- it's just a "band-aid" solution until management changes can turn things around.

Coccidiosis was diagnosed in an otherwise healthy Holstein heifer at 6 weeks of age. Suggestions from other producers for treatments included Neematox from Agri-Dynamics and Calf Start from Dr. Paul's Lab. Another producer recommended

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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

March 3 – April 24, 2014
Vermont Ag. Plastics Recycling Pilot Program Accepting Drop-Offs
Time: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Locations: Bennington, Highgate, Hyde Park, Middlebury, Montpelier

COST: Free. Casella Resource Solutions is offering free Agricultural Plastic Product Recycling to all Vermont producers, at the five locations listed above. Producers must follow these guidelines for items to be accepted.

CONTACT: Annie Macmillan anne.macmillan@state.vt.us, (802) 828-3479 with questions.

March 23 - April 4, 2014
Permaculture Design Certification
Warren, Vermont

Yestermorrow Design/Build School offers this 80-hour permaculture design certification course. Four instructors will train you to be a permaculture consultant who can apply the permaculture principles to a diversity of landscapes, scales and issues from rural to urban, and temperate to tropical environments.For more info: www.yestermorrow.org/workshops/catalog/sustainable-building-and-design

March 27 and April 3, 2014
Organic Farming: Principles and Practice
Augusta, Maine

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) presents a two-part course, Organic Farming: Principles and Practice, designed to provide farmers with a strong background in soils, weeds, and pest management, enabling them to make good management decisions. For more info: www.mofga.org/Default.aspx?tabid=296; phone: 207-568-4142;
email: mofga@mofga.org

April 4-5, 2014
New Farmer Summit
Primrose Valley Farm, Belleville, WI

24 practical workshops will cover both the financial and growing sides of your farm business! Daily large group strategy sessions on land access and innovative ways to access capital. Formal and informal networking, seed swap, local organic food, and fun! Contact; Lindsay Rebhan

neworganicstewards@gmail.com
phone: 612-568-8083, or Angie Sullivan, angie@mosesorganic.org, phone: 715-778-5775 www.mosesorganic.org/newfarmer-summit

April 8, 2014
Perennials in Your Food Production System
Minneapolis, Minn.

Perennials play a critical role in delivering the ecosystem services you need to produce nutrient-rich foods. If you are interested in creating a perennial system or adding a perennial backbone to your annual system this class will provide the tools you need. We will discuss the role of perennials and ways to incorporate them into your system. You will learn about useful native and edible perennials, look at the latest research on plants and what that means for your designs, and use the Natural Capital plant database as a tool for plant selection and design. For more information:

www.pricoldclimate.org/course-catalog/item/187-perennials-in-your-food-production-system

April 11, 2014
Maine Organic Milk Producers Annual Meeting
Governors Restaurant, Waterville, ME

Maine Organic Milk Producers (MOMP) will hold it's annual meeting on Friday, April 11th featuring Dr. Susan Beal, a homeopathic veterinarian, as the Keynote speaker. Representatives from Stonyfield, Horizon, Organic Valley, and Moo Milk will be present to discuss the opportunities to transition to organic milk production. Other topics and issues related to the organic dairy industry will also be addressed. All Maine organic milk producers are encouraged to attend and free lunch will be provided. Non-producers are also welcome, but lunch will cost $15.00. Please pre-register so that there is enough food for lunch. For more information, please contact Henry Perkins, MOMP President, email: bullridge@uninets.net; or Rick Kersbergen, email: richard.kersbergen@maine.edu, Phone: 207-838-0257.

April 12, 2014
Organic Livestock Health Care Workshop
Unity, Maine

Susan Beal, veterinarian and consultant for PASA, will be the speaker. Susan has a clear understanding of organic livestock care and its relation to physiology, nutrition, herbs and homeopathy. She will give a good overview related to all species.

Registration will be available on the MOFGA Country Store.
For more information contact MOFGA: phone - 207-568-4142 , Email - mofga@mofga.org

April 14-17, 2014
Food Sovereignty Summit
Radisson Hotel, Green Bay, Wis.

The Oneida Nation, First Nations Development Institute,

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Organic Industry News

In Memory

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policy would be devastating. John knew the hardship caused to our cattle would be severe and declining consumer confidence would be the final nail in the coffin. When organic came to the forefront John was already there.

John was very much involved in social justice. He attended some of the civil rights events of the 60's and continued to work in this area most of his life. He believed that social justice should be obtained everywhere in the world and that production of food for a fair price was an important piece of that puzzle. John was a world traveler who took his message to places many of us only dream of. He was as comfortable with executives as he was with the peasants of the world. Food is the one connecting piece in all of it. John believed everybody deserves to have a good meal at a fair price. He also believed a farmer deserved a fair price for his product.

This outlook on life brought many activist groups into John's life. John was a good liaison between farmers and several groups concerned with hunger in the world. John was a founding member and President of Family Farm Defenders, Secretary of MODPA, and Secretary for many years of The National Family Farm Coalition. John also collaborated with groups like Farm Aid, Why Hunger, and RAFI just to name a few.

John always believed that the strength of farmers lies in letting our consumers know what we are doing and also what we need from them. We cannot count on the consumer to see through some of the press that is generated to support a certain issue. The consumer needs to hear directly from us. John also believed that we need to continue to support and improve on a local food system. If the consumer knows their farmer, they find it much easier to be supportive. He also saw the cost of moving food from coast to coast and around the world as being wrong for the farmer and the consumer. In this situation nobody wins.

Through all of this work, John also maintained a small organic dairy herd. With this he managed to raise 10 children. He firmly believed you did not have to get big or get out.

John will be missed by many but the benefits of his work will be enjoyed by all of us for years to come. We can all hope to carry his message and work forward. I know I intend to. ◆

Net Updates

ODairy Discussions

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Crystal Creek products; she suggested Primary Care for younger calves and Pivot for older calves.

A farmer usually treats calves suffering from internal parasites with Pivot, probiotics, kelp, and TLC. But this winter, two of the affected calves didn't bounce back, and she had to treat them with ivermectin. She asked the group about suggestions in follow-up care. It was suggested that a follow-up is generally not required after using the injectable form of ivermectin (the pour-on doesn't work as well for internal parasites). It was also noted that ivermectin (Ivomec) kills dung beetles in the soil; moxidectin (Cydectin) is less harmful, and fenbendazole (Safeguard) is not considered harmful to dung beetles. The vet responding to the question said he preferred fenbendazole as he feels it is very effective and may have some action against coccidia, but noted that it is ineffective against stomach worms in the winter when they are hibernating in the stomach walls. Editor's Note: Ivermectin is on the National List, allowed as an emergency wormer after other treatments have failed. Talk with your certifier before using another product as an emergency wormer to be sure they will allow them. ◆

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance Producer Milk Check Assignment Form

I, _____ (please print name on your milk check)

request that _____ (name of company that sends your milk check)

deduct the sum of :

_____ $0.02 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA

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

_____ $0.07 per hundredweight (the $.05 marketing check-off plus $0.02)

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

Milk handlers please send payments to:

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA), Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342

Producer signature: _____ Date: _____

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

Number of milking cows: _____ Tel #:_____

Certifying Agency: _____

Farm Address: (please print) _____

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

Subscribe to the NODPA News and support NODPA!

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

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

_____ $35 to cover an annual subscription to NODPA news

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

_____ $100 to become a supporter of NODPA

_____ $150 to become a Business Member

_____ $300 to $500 to become a Friend

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

_____ $1,000+ to become a Benefactor

Name: _____ Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

Number of milking cows _____ Milk buyer _____

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

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

Credit card: Master Card Visa Card #: _____

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

Organic Milk Sought

CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley

CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley is the nation's largest farmer-owned organic cooperative. With members throughout New England, the Northeast and Southeast, we offer a stable, competitive organic milk pay price to members. We are forecasting solid growth in these regions and welcome the opportunity to talk with producers about joining our Cooperative.

We offer veterinary support, quality services, organic food, the Organic Trader buy/sell newsletter and inclusive communications from a farmer-owned cooperative with over 25 years of organic farming and marketing experience. Our Feed Department sources organic feed purchases for our member operations. Please contact our Regional Managers or Farmer Relations for further details.

- In New England, contact John Cleary at (612) 803-9087 or john.cleary@organicvalley.coop or Steve Getz at (608) 632-3790 or steve.getz@organicvalley.coop.
- In New York, contact David Hardy at (608) 479-1200 or david.hardy@organicvalley.coop.
- In Central and Western Pennsylvania area, contact Peter Miller, at 612-801-3506 or peter.miller@organicvalley.coop.
- In Southeast PA/Maryland area, contact James Howe at (717) 205-7512 or james.howe@organicvalley.coop.
- In the Southeast, contact Gerry Cohn at (919) 605-5619 or gerry.cohn@organicvalley.coop.

Farmer Relations is available from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Monday through Friday at (888) 809-9297 or farmerhotline@organicvalley.coop and online at www.farmers.coop.

Natural by Nature

Looking for an organic milk market? Natural Dairy Products Corporation (NDP) was founded in 1995 as a family owned and operated organization producing organic dairy products under the Natural By Nature brand name. Natural By Nature organic dairy products are produced with great care and distributed nationwide.

We are actively seeking organic, grass-based dairy producers in the southeastern PA, northern MD and DE areas. NDP pays all hauling and lab costs, and we are currently offering a signing bonus, so this is the time to call! We'd be happy to answer your questions … please call 302-455-1261 x221 for more information.

Upstate Niagara

Upstate Niagara is a member owned dairy cooperative dedicated to high quality dairy products. We are currently seeking new organic member milk. Upstate Niagara offers a highly competitive organic pay program with additional premiums for milk quality and volume. For producers interested in transitioning to organic production, we also have programs to assist you in the transition process.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact Mike Davis at 1-800-724-MILK, ext 6441. www.upstateniagara.com

Maple Hill Creamery

Seeking 100% Grass Dairy Farmers! Maple Hill Creamery, located in Stuyvesant, NY is a small manufacturer of 100% grass-fed organic yogurt. We are growing rapidly and are looking for more 100% grass-fed farms in the NY state area to join us.

We offer:

- Six month winter premium
- Grass fed premium paid OVER organic milk price
- Grass fed dairy technical assistance / mineral program
- Organic transition payments possible

Requirements:

- No grain, no corn silage
- Just pasture, dry hay and baleage
- Certified Organic
- Please CALL US with questions! Phone: 518-759-7777

Dairy Marketing Services Organic:

More milk is needed by Northeast organic customers! Dairy Marketing Services can help you facilitate the transition from conventional to organic production. Count on DMS Organic specialists for organics, transition stabilizers, pasture requirements, pasture supplies and more. Call David Eyster at DMS: 1-888-589-6455, ext. 5409 for more information today.

To be listed, free, in future Organic Milk Sought columns, contact Lisa McCrory at 802-234-5524.

Classified Ads

Certified organic 4x4 round bales 1st and 2nd cutting Dairy One tested and results are available bales are wrapped delivery is available $40 a bale. Paul Hargett 315 246 2998. Contact: Paul Hargett

Email: hargetthay@gmail.com, Phone: 315 246 2998, Location: Locke NY

700 bushel high moisture corn (18.6% moisture) for sale. 49.5 lbs/bushel. $12.75/bu

Buyer can haul or transportation can be arranged. Lawrence County, PA.

Call Jonathan Byler at 724-946-2779 and leave a message.

NOFA-NY Certified organic Clover seed and Timothy seed - Cleaned and bagged, and bedding hay - 4 1/2 X 4 round bales. Mitchell Farms - Avoca, NY (Steuben Co) Contact Jeff @ 607-566-8477 or Mitchellorganics@Hotmail.com

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the MODPA President

This winter in the Midwest has been brutal with long periods of extremely cold temperatures, which are burning through the feed and fuel stocks with little to show for it. We have been teased occasionally with a slightly warmer temperature but then we get snow so there is no chance to catch up. We are either fixing the latest metal fatigue, thawing pipes or waterers, or dealing with the snow. The bright side of all of this is pretty-fresh clean snow is more appealing to look at and the moisture will be welcome for this year's crop. As the weather forces us to stay focused on just surviving one day at a time, we are burning through our reserves - "money in the bank or the feedstock pile" - and we are falling further and further behind. Some producers are going out to the barn to warm up as the cost and availability of Lp heating fuel has forced them to turn down the furnace as low as they dare go before freezing the plumbing. We just hold onto the realization that each new day brings us one day closer to spring and the new hope of the next crop.

Now is the time we need to work together to gain the necessary funds to keep our operations viable for the future. I have heard of young people turning the family farm back to retired parents because they have lost hope for the future as farmers. We cannot let this continue or we all will be looking to the mega dairies to provide our food and the scariest part is that they may not even be in the United States. We need to give our children hope for a bright future if we are to continue our dream of owning and operating a farm. I have been working with younger farmers and I find their energy to be somewhat contagious. I am always excited to be able to share with them and to offer the knowledge that comes with years of experience. I encourage you to be open to sharing what you know and also to be willing to fight to give the next generation a chance to live the farming dream. This means that we can no longer be satisfied to burn thru our equity in the hopes that next year will be better; we need to have a price that reflects the true cost of production and a profit. Here is where you need to become involved to help make sure that every processor and consumer knows how important it is that our operations are profitable.

It is with much sadness that I also report the loss of a true friend to every farmer and a tireless fighter in the battle for fairness for all farmers. John Kinsman left this earth on January 20th for his eternal home and some much deserved peaceful rest. He was a valued part of MODPA, serving as our secretary. The John I knew was a true believer in people and in treating everyone with the respect that they deserved. He never wanted to profit off the back of another producer as he felt that each deserved a share in the profits and that there was or should be enough profit generated in the marketplace for all involved to have a part. John had a talent and love for people and he was great at making sure he made connections for folks. The void his passing will leave will be felt by many for a long time. Our thanks and sympathy and prayers go to his family.

Darlene Coehoorn, MODPA President

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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Intertribal Agriculture Council and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College are pleased to announce the Food Sovereignty Summit will be held April 14-17, 2014, in Green Bay, Wisconsin. This is a forum for sharing and collaboration to build healthy food systems within our communities. Contact Bill Vervoort at 920-496-7423 or wvervoor@oneidanation.org. www.firstnations.org/conferences/2014/food/summit.html

June 3, 2014
Webinar: Commonly Used Organic Inputs
4 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST)

Oregon Tilth and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service present this webinar about commonly used organic inputs. The information needed to participate can be found at ConservationWebinars.net a month prior to each date. This free webinar is available to the public. Click here for more information. http://tilth.org/events/commonly-used-organic-inputs

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). ◆