

# NODPA News

## Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Aaron and Carly Bell and family

## Tide Mill Organic Farm, Edmunds, Maine

By Sonja Heyck-Merlin, NODPA  
Contributing Writer

Although his father and uncle sold the dairy herd in the 1970's, eighth generation farmer Aaron Bell of Tide Mill Organics, knew that he wanted to be a dairyman. It was the stories from family members and the community that inspired Aaron to revive the dairy in the early 2000's when HP

Hood was aggressively seeking raw milk for its entrance into the organic milk sector, having purchased the right to bottle fluid milk under the Stonyfield Farm name. Compelled by his grandfather's tales of trailering cows to the local state fair, pumping dark green pasture poo on to the city streets and sagas of tipped over silage trucks driven by inexperienced farmhands, Aaron was driven to create

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## In Memory of Jerry Brunetti

Gerald "Jerry" Brunetti, 63, of Lower Mt. Bethel Twp., passed away peacefully on December 20, 2014, at St. Luke's Hospice House, Bethlehem. Jerry was born December 28, 1950 in Easton, PA. Jerry was a highly demanded lecturer and speaker, both nationally and internationally, on topics that included



soil fertility, animal nutrition and livestock health. He passionately proclaimed to his audience the strong link between healthy soil, truly nutritious food, profitable farming and healthy communities. Jerry studied Animal Science at North Carolina State University and then moved to western Virginia to run a cow/calf operation. He served as Regional Dairy Director of the National Farmers Organization in the Northeast for five years. In 1979 he founded Agri-Dynamics, a business devoted to providing products and services for farmers practicing ecological and sustainable stewardship towards the earth. In 1991,

*continued on page 3*

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### From the NODPA President

Sometimes it is difficult to process the events that can change our world. A death of a loved one can leave us feeling surprised that the world still seems to go on regardless of the hole we feel in our lives. Jerry Brunetti's passing last month will leave a big hole. I can feel joyous for Jerry, since he has returned "home". But I am saddened that I can no longer reach out and touch his knowledge and enthusiasm.

I think it is a safe bet that there are very few organic dairy farmers who have not been touched by Jerry's insight and understanding of organic systems. Many of us bought some of the products he developed. We furiously took notes while listening to him speak at farm meetings and conferences. We read his published articles and listened in on his conference calls. He mentored us, and helped us grow.

So we raise a glass to salute Jerry's lifelong work and his contributions to the organic community. At the same time, our hearts go out to his family and close friends who must continue without him.

While I am grateful for having known Jerry, I think of the other men-

tors we are so fortunate to have still with us. Like Jerry, they give of their time and experience, their knowledge and deep understanding. Thanks, Jerry. And thanks to all who take the time to help us become better stewards of the land.

**Liz Bawden, NODPA President**

**Hammond, NY | Phone: 315-324-6926**

### NODPA MISSION STATEMENT

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

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## In Memory: Jerry Brunetti

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Jerry co-founded Earthworks Natural Organic Products, which provides services and ecologically safe products to the golf course and landscaping industries. Jerry was active in community based organizations devoted to rebuilding local food systems and local democracy. He founded and served on the Lower Mt. Bethel Township Environmental Advisory Council, was a board member of Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) and was an honorary board member of the Weston A. Price Foundation. In 2008, Jerry received the Leadership Award from PASA and the Eco-Agriculture Achievement Award from Acres USA. Jerry's articles and DVD's on farming, land stewardship and the environment were widely published by the agricultural community. He also authored *The Farm as Ecosystem*, which was published in 2013. Per Jerry's request, family and friends will hold an event in Spring 2015 celebrating Jerry's life, accomplishments, and contributions to biological farming.

Jerry had been diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 1999 and defied the odds by staving off the disease for the better part of 15 years using alternative cancer treatments. Jerry built his 40 year career around ecological approaches to non-chemical based agriculture, providing consulting services and eco-friendly products to the organic and sustainable farming communities.

He was a champion of the "healthy soil, healthy food, health people" mantra.

Jerry had been battling Lyme Disease for several years and he speculated that it may have hastened the return of his cancer.

Testing revealed an aggressive form of B-Cell Lymphoma that had metastasized into his bone.

Alternative treatments were no match for the aggressive nature of this advanced stage cancer and the pain soon became excruciating. Jerry underwent emergency chemotherapy. Unfortunately, his cancer proved to be chemo resistant and his immune system became compromised.

Jerry is survived by his partner, Regina Marinelli, his friend and former wife Sherrie Arant Brunetti, his beloved children, Donald "Chip" Black, of Lake Forest, California, Yuri Brunetti and his wife, Jennifer, of Easton, and Corey Brunetti and his partner, Monica Wolinski, of Easton. Jerry is also survived by four loving grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. The family has requested that memorial gifts be directed to the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA).

*Thanks to Dr. Cindy Daley, CA State University, Chico, Yuri Brunetti, and Brian Snyder, PASA, for this obituary. ♦*



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Picture: John King / Hidden Camp Farm, Canajoharie, NY



## VERMONT ECONOMIC DAIRY STUDY

# Profitability Declines slightly in 2013

*By Bob Parsons, Ph.D, UVM Extension*

A study on the economics of organic dairy involved 34 Vermont dairy farms for the 2013 tax year found that Return on Assets (ROA) dropped from 1.82% to 1.60%. The study was conducted with the cooperation of the University of Vermont Extension, NOFA-Vermont, Vermont organic dairy farmers, and the generous financial support from Stonyfield Farms, Morrison Custom Feeds, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Green Mountain Feeds, and Yankee Farm Credit.

Data was collected from farm visits and compiled to compare balance sheets and accrual income for the 2013 tax year. The farms ranged in size from 24 to 102 cows. All farms have been certified organic for at least 5 years. Only one of the farms raised some grain, and 4 of the farms did not feed any grain for at least part of the year.

For 2013, the farms in the study averaged 55.0 (59.7 in 2012) cows producing 13,144 lbs. (12,531 in 2012) of milk per cow and sold 739,986 lbs. (744,537 in 2012) of milk per farm. Average milk price for the year was \$33.69/cwt, up \$0.30 from 2012. The farms averaged a net revenue of \$44,760 before any payment for unpaid owner labor and management and principal payments were made. A charge of \$37,000 for family living costs was used to represent payment to the owner, leaving a Return on Assets of 1.60% vs. 1.82%. On average, the farms are getting along, however, there is reason for concern as 11 of the 34 farms in the study failed to provide enough income for a positive ROA (Return on Assets) and to meet family living needs. The sustainability of these farms is highly questionable.

The largest expenses were purchased feed (36.2%), repairs and supplies (13.6%), labor (10.1%), and depreciation (9.5%). Of the purchased feed, 94% was for grain supplement. Compared to 2012, farm level organic production expenses increased about \$4600 while revenue increased only about \$2000. This isn't a desired trend.

To get a better analysis of the data, the herds were examined by profit groups, which shows a sizable difference between the farms. Each group was 11-12 farms, and ranked by overall farm profitability. The three groups showed returns of 5.17%, 2.25%, and -2.67%, respectively. The most profitable farms averaged more cows per farm (62.25), more milk per cow (14,968 lbs.), and a slightly higher milk price (\$33.96/cwt) than the other 2 groups. The low profit group averaged only 51.4 cows producing 12,653 lbs. of milk per cow at a farm price of \$33.89 per cwt. In comparison to the high profit group, the low profit group is producing 2315 lbs. less milk per cow, and milking 11 fewer cows. The middle profit group has 3 more cows than the lower profit

group but produced less milk per cow (11,924 lbs.) and had the lowest expenses on a per farm and per cow basis, \$3580 vs. \$4326 (most profitable) and \$4423 (low profit). Total revenue per cow ranged from \$4,527 for the middle profit group to \$5,664 for the high profit group.

The high profit group had the highest expenses on per farm and per cow basis. It's common behavior among businesses to spend more when you have more. Thus earning a higher income allows the high profit group to have more money available for repairs and reinvestment that the low profit group is likely putting off. However, the difference between the highest profit and low profit groups in expense per cow is only \$97 higher for the low profit group. Interest is not a major expense category as the highest debt/asset ratio was 24.03% for the low profit group.

The formula for profitability appears to be linked to revenue generated as the expenses per cow are nearly identical. The higher revenue results in a net farm revenue of \$1,339 for the high profit group vs \$946 for the middle profit group and \$232 for the low profit group to pay for owner labor, principal payments, and reinvestment in the farm. Incidentally, the high profit group is not spending more on feed to get more milk. The high profit group spent \$1541 per cow on feed vs \$1744 for the low profit group. As would be expected, off farm income is of greater importance to the low profit group, at \$390 per cow, while the high profit group only has \$229 of off farm income per cow.

There is another way to keep expenses under control and that is to keep expenses under control, or as described in Farm Credit's Dairy Farm Summary, being "tight with a buck." The middle profit group had the lowest milk per cow, milk price, revenue per cow but also had the lowest expense per farm and per cow basis. The middle group had expenses per cow that were \$750 or more lower than the other two groups. The middle group had the lowest expenses per cow for feed, fuel, bedding, labor, repairs, supplies, and utilities. It appears this group fits the reputation of the Vermont Yankee Farmer of being tight with their money. This strategy may not fit everyone but works for some farmers.

Purchased feed is usually the largest expense on dairy farms. Two farms in the study have not fed grain for at least 5 years and have maintained profitability. One of the farms does purchase minerals. These 2 farms milked 48 and 53 cows, producing 7078 and 8271 lbs. of milk per cow in 2013. However, by eliminating purchased grain, they finished the year with net farm revenue of \$47,260 and \$67,126, respectively, to pay for owner family living

*continued on page 6*

## Master Results By Cow

### 2013 Vermont Organic

Reported by Profitability Group - Per Cow

### Dairy Farms Averages (N=34)

Per Cow	Bottom Third N=11	Middle Third N=12	Top Third N=11	All N=34
Average # of cows	51.4	54.6	62.2	56.0
Lbs shipped total	641,547	637,513	950,212	739,986
Lbs shipped/cow	12,653	11,924	14,968	13,144
Milk price	\$33.89	\$33.28	\$33.96	\$33.69
<b>Receipts</b>				
Milk sales (a)	4,279	3,995	5,047	4,437
Dairy cattle sales	79	102	87	93
Cull cow sales	129	148	169	155
Bob/Veal calf sales	22	16	21	21
Crop sales	4	78	10	33
Government payments	74	73	31	57
Patronage dividends	50	39	45	44
Custom work	0	0	12	5
Syrup	10	0	75	26
Timber	10	0	7	4
Other	62	37	57	47
<b>Total Cash Receipts (b)</b>	<b>\$4,717</b>	<b>\$4,488</b>	<b>\$5,562</b>	<b>\$4,921</b>
<b>Accrual Revenue Adjustments</b>				
Livestock inventory	(77)	9	33	(24)
Breeding livestock purchases	(1)	(53)	(15)	(19)
Accounts receivable (c)	(16)	5	44	12
Hay	41	87	44	63
Grain	(10)	(9)	(3)	(7)
<b>Total Accrual Revenue (d)</b>	<b>(\$62)</b>	<b>\$38</b>	<b>\$103</b>	<b>\$25</b>
<b>Total Farm Revenue (e)</b>	<b>\$4,655</b>	<b>\$4,527</b>	<b>\$5,664</b>	<b>\$4,946</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Auto and truck expenses	49	39	36	37
Bedding	73	108	127	105
Breeding	49	49	50	47
Chemicals/pesticides	2	0	2	1
Custom hire:	91	142	144	135
DHIA	27	23	23	24
Fertilizers & lime	17	9	46	27
Feed - purchased grain & other	1,535	1,195	1,518	1,405
Feed - purchased forage	209	71	23	95
Fuel and Oil	198	153	164	175
Insurance	101	93	79	87
Interest	164	143	119	140
Labor	433	342	430	419
Milk Marketing	80	81	68	74
Real estate taxes (farm portion)	50	39	81	59
Rent	49	58	50	61
Repairs	336	224	299	299
Seed and plants	7	27	20	17
Supplies	302	229	259	266
Utilities	168	151	168	159
Vet	48	50	58	52
Miscellaneous	96	79	83	84
<b>Total Cash Expenses (f)</b>	<b>\$4,085</b>	<b>\$3,308</b>	<b>\$3,848</b>	<b>\$3,768</b>
<b>Accrual Expense Adjustments</b>				
Depreciation	394	290	449	395
Accounts payable	(53)	(9)	7	(19)
Pre-paid expenses	0	(9)	14	0
Supplies	(\$3)	\$0	\$7	\$2
<b>Total Accrual Expenses (g)</b>	<b>\$338</b>	<b>\$272</b>	<b>\$478</b>	<b>\$379</b>
<b>Total Farm Expenses (h)</b>	<b>\$4,423</b>	<b>\$3,580</b>	<b>\$4,326</b>	<b>\$4,147</b>
<b>Cash Income from Milk (a-f)</b>	<b>\$194</b>	<b>\$687</b>	<b>\$1,199</b>	<b>\$668</b>
<b>Accrual Income from milk (a+c-h)</b>	<b>(\$160)</b>	<b>\$419</b>	<b>\$766</b>	<b>\$302</b>
<b>Milk Income over Feed Costs</b>	<b>\$2,535</b>	<b>\$2,729</b>	<b>\$3,506</b>	<b>\$2,932</b>
<b>Net Cash Farm Income (b-f)</b>	<b>\$633</b>	<b>\$1,180</b>	<b>\$1,714</b>	<b>\$1,152</b>
<b>Net Farm Revenue (e-h)</b>	<b>\$232</b>	<b>\$946</b>	<b>\$1,339</b>	<b>\$799</b>
<b>Family Living (i)</b>	<b>\$771</b>	<b>\$773</b>	<b>\$637</b>	<b>\$660</b>
<b>Net Cash Farm Earnings (b-f-i)</b>	<b>(\$138)</b>	<b>\$408</b>	<b>\$1,076</b>	<b>\$492</b>
<b>Net Farm Earnings (e-h-i)</b>	<b>(\$538)</b>	<b>\$174</b>	<b>\$701</b>	<b>\$138</b>
<b>Off Farm income (j)</b>	<b>\$390</b>	<b>\$249</b>	<b>\$229</b>	<b>\$274</b>
<b>Net Family Cash Earnings (b-f-i+j)</b>	<b>\$252</b>	<b>\$656</b>	<b>\$1,305</b>	<b>\$766</b>
<b>Net Earnings (e-h-i+j)</b>	<b>(\$148)</b>	<b>\$422</b>	<b>\$930</b>	<b>\$412</b>
<b>Average Assets</b>	<b>\$17,034</b>	<b>\$15,673</b>	<b>\$17,760</b>	<b>\$16,098</b>
<b>Average Equity</b>	<b>\$13,716</b>	<b>\$12,282</b>	<b>\$14,794</b>	<b>\$12,743</b>
<b>Return on Assets</b>	<b>-2.67%</b>	<b>2.25%</b>	<b>5.17%</b>	<b>1.60%</b>
<b>Return on Equity</b>	<b>-6.87%</b>	<b>1.86%</b>	<b>5.45%</b>	<b>0.19%</b>
<b>Debt/Asset Ratio</b>	<b>24.03%</b>	<b>23.90%</b>	<b>19.55%</b>	<b>22.54%</b>

Sincere thanks to cooperating farmers, NOFA-VT, and supporting sponsors in producing this summary.

## Master Results by Farm Group

### 2013 Vermont Organic

Reported by Profitability Group

### Dairy Farms Averages (N=34)

	Bottom Third N=11	Middle N=12	Top Third N=11	All Farms N=34
Average # of cows	51.4	54.6	62.2	56.0
Lbs shipped total	641,547	637,513	950,212	739,986
Lbs shipped/cow	12,653	11,924	14,968	13,144
Milk price	\$33.89	\$33.28	\$33.96	\$33.69
<b>Receipts</b>				
Milk sales (a)	216,543	211,745	320,824	248,588
Dairy cattle sales	4,220	5,270	6,174	5,223
Cull cow sales	6,210	8,709	11,049	8,658
Bob/Veal calf sales	1,094	852	1,599	1,172
Crop sales	212	4,437	607	1,831
Government payments	3,985	3,628	1,855	3,170
Patronage dividends	2,598	2,020	2,885	2,487
Custom work	0	33	829	280
Syrup	613	0	3,853	1,445
Timber	348	0	402	243
Other	2,894	2,053	2,956	2,617
<b>Total Cash Receipts (b)</b>	<b>\$238,717</b>	<b>\$238,746</b>	<b>\$353,034</b>	<b>\$275,712</b>
<b>Accrual Revenue Adjustments</b>				
Livestock inventory	(3,674)	353	(816)	(1,368)
Breeding livestock purchases	(27)	(2,316)	(786)	(1,081)
Accounts receivable (c)	(459)	24	2,534	680
Hay	1,993	5,157	3,371	3,556
Grain	(493)	(547)	(194)	(416)
<b>Total Accrual Revenue (d)</b>	<b>(\$2,660)</b>	<b>\$2,671</b>	<b>\$4,108</b>	<b>\$1,411</b>
<b>Total Farm Revenue (e)</b>	<b>\$236,057</b>	<b>\$241,417</b>	<b>\$357,142</b>	<b>\$277,123</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Auto and truck expenses	2,491	1,858	1,974	2,100
Bedding	3,649	5,980	7,969	5,869
Breeding	2,456	2,378	3,018	2,610
Chemicals/pesticides	98	0	82	58
Custom hire:	4,564	9,062	8,972	7,578
DHIA	1,359	1,283	1,414	1,350
Fertilizers & lime	961	578	3,165	1,539
Feed - purchased grain & other	79,564	61,309	96,922	78,737
Feed - purchased forage	10,085	4,375	1,604	5,326
Fuel and Oil	10,505	8,663	10,315	9,793
Insurance	5,470	4,558	4,571	4,857
Interest	8,297	8,158	7,045	7,843
Labor	22,100	20,376	28,180	23,459
Milk Marketing	4,151	4,032	4,267	4,146
Real estate taxes (farm portion)	2,750	2,013	5,231	3,293
Rent	2,476	4,207	3,510	3,421
Repairs	17,879	12,145	20,677	16,761
Seed and plants	314	1,114	1,389	944
Supplies	15,464	13,057	16,429	14,927
Utilities	8,576	8,114	10,137	8,918
Vet	2,398	2,681	3,729	2,928
Miscellaneous	4,372	4,322	5,387	4,682
<b>Total Cash Expenses (f)</b>	<b>\$209,978</b>	<b>\$180,258</b>	<b>\$245,987</b>	<b>\$211,138</b>
<b>Accrual Expense Adjustments</b>				
Depreciation	19,982	15,935	31,113	22,155
Accounts payable	(3,771)	10	428	(1,078)
Pre-paid expenses	1	(598)	693	14
Supplies	(\$166)	\$51	\$527	\$135
<b>Total Accrual Expenses (g)</b>	<b>\$16,045</b>	<b>\$15,398</b>	<b>\$32,761</b>	<b>\$21,225</b>
<b>Total Farm Expenses (h)</b>	<b>\$226,023</b>	<b>\$195,657</b>	<b>\$278,748</b>	<b>\$232,363</b>
<b>Cash Income from Milk (a-f)</b>	<b>\$6,565</b>	<b>\$31,487</b>	<b>\$74,837</b>	<b>\$37,449</b>
<b>Accrual Income from milk (a+c-h)</b>	<b>(\$9,939)</b>	<b>\$16,113</b>	<b>\$44,610</b>	<b>\$16,904</b>
<b>Milk Income over Feed Costs</b>	<b>\$126,894</b>	<b>\$146,062</b>	<b>\$221,576</b>	<b>\$164,292</b>
<b>Net Cash Farm Income (b-f)</b>	<b>\$28,739</b>	<b>\$58,488</b>	<b>\$107,047</b>	<b>\$64,574</b>
<b>Net Farm Revenue (e-h)</b>	<b>\$10,034</b>	<b>\$45,760</b>	<b>\$78,394</b>	<b>\$44,760</b>
<b>Family Living (i)</b>	<b>\$37,000</b>	<b>\$37,000</b>	<b>\$37,000</b>	<b>\$37,000</b>
<b>Net Cash Farm Earnings (b-f-i)</b>	<b>(\$8,261)</b>	<b>\$21,488</b>	<b>\$70,047</b>	<b>\$27,574</b>
<b>Net Farm Earnings (e-h-i)</b>	<b>(\$26,966)</b>	<b>\$8,760</b>	<b>\$41,394</b>	<b>\$7,760</b>
<b>Off Farm income (j)</b>	<b>\$19,055</b>	<b>\$15,026</b>	<b>\$12,001</b>	<b>\$15,351</b>
<b>Net Family Cash Earnings (b-f-i+j)</b>	<b>\$10,795</b>	<b>\$36,514</b>	<b>\$82,048</b>	<b>\$42,925</b>
<b>Net Earnings (e-h-i+j)</b>	<b>(\$7,911)</b>	<b>\$23,786</b>	<b>\$53,396</b>	<b>\$23,111</b>
<b>Average Assets</b>	<b>\$868,742</b>	<b>\$782,586</b>	<b>\$1,065,387</b>	<b>\$901,954</b>
<b>Average Equity</b>	<b>\$689,944</b>	<b>\$580,461</b>	<b>\$883,755</b>	<b>\$714,006</b>
<b>Return on Assets</b>	<b>-2.67%</b>	<b>2.25%</b>	<b>5.17%</b>	<b>1.60%</b>
<b>Return on Equity</b>	<b>-6.87%</b>	<b>1.86%</b>	<b>5.45%</b>	<b>0.19%</b>
<b>Debt/Asset Ratio</b>	<b>24.03%</b>	<b>23.90%</b>	<b>19.55%</b>	<b>22.54%</b>

Sincere thanks to cooperating farmers, NOFA-VT, and supporting sponsors in producing this

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Vermont Economic Dairy Study

*continued from page 5*

expenses. These farms ended the year with a ROA of 2.9% and 6.5%, respectively, well above average for the group. Both of these farms are now supplying the grass fed milk market. There are several other farms in the study that have discontinued feeding grain for only part of the year so it's difficult to make an assessment for those farms.

There is little doubt that organic has provided a saving lifeline to Vermont's small scale dairy farms. In discussing challenges with organic dairy farmers, more than 75% believe they would not be in business today if they had not had the option to go organic.

What does the future hold? This is a big question as nearly 33% of the farms cannot pay the owner a reasonable wage for unpaid labor and management. These farms are not economically sustainable. There is less likelihood that the next generation will be interested, willing, or able to take over a farm that cannot make breakeven returns. In the long term, these farms will most likely not survive, leaving a question as to where more organic milk will be sourced.

It's also clear that organic either needs a higher milk price or lower feed expenses to become more profitable. For a number of farms in the study, organic grazing rules limit the ability to add more cows as they have limited pasture availability. There are reports of higher milk

prices in 2014 which will be highly appreciated. The addition of a premium for grass fed milk adds an additional option for some of the farms to increase revenue. As discussed above, not feeding grain can be done with profitable returns. Add a price premium and it looks much more appealing.

So this brings up some big questions facing the future of Vermont organic dairy farms. Can farm milk prices continue to increase to help cover rising production costs? Will the market be able to charge more without losing customers? Can farmers find ways to reduce production costs to increase overall profitability? These are major questions for the sector for the long term viability of organic dairy and their importance to rural Vermont.

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

*Bob Parsons, PhD. is an Extension Agricultural Economist Professor, UVM Extension/Department of Community Development and Applied Economics, and can be reached at 802-656-2109 or by email, bob.parsons@uvm.edu*

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Food for Tomorrow

By Mary-Howell & Klaas Martens,  
Lakeview Organic Grain, Penn Yan, NY

In November, we were privileged to participate in the NY Times "Food for Tomorrow" conference at the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Tarrytown, NY, along with a group of about 200 farmers, journalists, restaurateurs, nutritionists, policy-makers, politicians, university researchers, food activists, and consumers.

The topics were broad and the tone intense, ranging from food safety, the treatment of livestock, accessibility to farm-fresh products, the rise of diabetes and other food-related health issues, soil health and its role in both food nutritional quality and climate change, the next generation of farmers, and the problem of food waste.

Speakers included prominent food writers Mark Bittman, Michael Pollan, Marion Nestle, Raj Patel and Sam Sifton; Chobani and Panera CEO's; Dr. Kathleen Merrigan, the former deputy secretary of USDA; Sam Kass, the White House's Senior Policy Advisor on Nutrition Policy; and Chellie Pingree, organic farmer and US congress representative from Maine. US Farmers and Ranches sponsored one workshop with large-scale conventional livestock farmers who discussed their highly positive perspective on the style of agriculture they represent. Stone Barns executive chef, Dan Barber, eloquently presented his views on connections between food quality and agriculture as he described each highly creative and delicious dinner course in detail, with many of the ingredients coming from our farm.

It was indeed two days of intense and sometimes contentious ideas, with opinionated larger-than-life personalities. We left with many new ideas and understandings of the massive change that our food industry is currently experiencing - changes that give new opportunities to some farmers, and make others feel remarkably threatened.

Here are some highlights:

1. Many involved in conventional ag are beginning to admit that the system is struggling. Roundup and Bt resistant weeds and insects are rapidly proliferating, clearly demonstrating the fragility of GM-based agriculture. Manure/nutrient overloading is causing widespread water pollution. Research is showing clear links between conventional ag, declining soil health and climate change. Indeed, American-style conventional ag has been termed a 'brittle system', increasingly non-resilient and vulnerable to failure. Honest and experienced researchers, such as Dr. Molly Jahn of the University of Wisconsin, are calling for urgent change - perhaps not all the way to organic, but for the incorporation of dramatically more sustainable management, with diverse crop rotation, soil health management, significant reduction in pesticides, and greater decentralization of livestock production.



2. Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of food quality, and the agricultural system and values that their food dollars support. Because of social media, internet, and popular books, today's consumers know more about agriculture, they expect greater transparency, and they have informed opinions they are willing to express through food purchases. Often organic milk is the 'gateway drug', as parents will spend more on their children's diet. Then, as awareness of food quality grows, especially if their experience with organic milk is good, they buy a wider range of organic and local products, both at home and in restaurants. This trend is actively being reflected in chain restaurant success - Chipotle and Panera, offering high quality, nutritious food with emphasis on flavor and sustainability, are experiencing rapid expansion and profitability, while McDonalds and similar fast-food businesses are shrinking in market share. Chefs admit that while sourcing fresh food locally is often neither as convenient nor inexpensive, quality is usually higher, and most importantly, consumers expect it. This is creating a major opportunity for us organic farmers - milk demand is growing rapidly, vegetable farmers have more market opportunities, and grain farmers are taking advantage of the emerging flour, wholegrain, dry bean, malting, and distilling markets.
3. One issue rarely considered is that approximately 40% of the food produced in the world is never eaten, roughly 1.3 billion tons, is lost to waste and rot at all points along the supply chain - from farm, to warehouse, store, restaurant, and consumer. Most of local and world hunger issues could be solved if we develop better ways to reduce and intercept this waste, instead getting it to where it can be used.

We strongly believe that it is important for farmers to participate in discussions and meetings such as this. Food writers, consumers and restaurant operators should listen to our farmer perspective, but equally importantly, we must listen to theirs. If we are going to benefit from new opportunities and be valuable partners in the changing food industry, we must better understand the concerns, frustrations, needs, and logistics of our buyers, and of their customers. ♦

The Martens can be reached at Lakeview Organic Grain,  
315-531-1038 or [mh@lakevieworganicgrain.com](mailto:mh@lakevieworganicgrain.com)

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## National Organic Standards Board Update

*By Jean Richardson, Chair National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)*

Following the October Meeting in Kentucky the NOSB moved quickly back into its work agenda, increasing the number of subcommittee conference calls to accommodate the required 5 year Sunset Review of materials on the National List as well as petitioned materials. Each subcommittee has NOP staff support. All of our present agenda must be completed by February 24 so that it can be placed in the Federal Register for Public Comment in early March, to be ready for the April meeting in San Diego. Here's what each subcommittee of volunteers is working on:

**Livestock/Aquaculture:** The material which continues to occupy much of our time is methionine in poultry production. We asked a number of experts from diverse perspectives and scales of operation with diverse management techniques, and nutritionists to come and answer questions on our conference calls. We have also been in conversation with researchers who have



**Dr. Jean Richardson**

been working on alternatives to synthetic methionine. You can never know everything when researching a substance as there are so many confounding variables, but we have done a lot of research on this developing proposal which we hope to bring to

*continued on page 10*

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## Soil Tests, Fertility and Magnesium Value

*By Neal Kinsey*

There are foundational principles for understanding and utilizing the Albrecht/Kinsey system for correcting soil fertility and thus positively affecting the plants to be grown on a particular soil. The overall concept harkens back to the definition in agronomy textbooks concerning what is an ideal soil. The ideal soil is described as 25% air, 25% water, 45% mineral and 5% organic matter.

Most soils fall short of the ideal in some way. Clay soils are generally too tight, lacking adequate pore space and have too much water and not enough air for the ideal soil environment. Such soils tend to stay wet longer and become harder to work as they dry out. Sandy soils tend to have the opposite problem – too much air and not enough water – but will still pack down and become hard when worked too wet.

So then what if a farm is one that falls into one of the above categories? What if you don't have that ideal soil? What has to be done to achieve it? Unless the approach Dr. Albrecht devised is used I know of none who will propose it can even be done. And the simple answer he would give is to use soil chemistry, to build as closely as possible the correct physical structure (25% air, 25% water, 45% mineral and 5% humus) which in turn supplies the proper environment for the biology (roots, worms, microbes, etc.)

Achieving the correct percentages of calcium and magnesium in particular provides the basic requirements for this equation. For medium to heavy soils the numbers are 68% calcium and 12% magnesium, or as close as is feasible to achieve that (for example 66 – 70% calcium and 10-12% magnesium should provide extremely satisfactory results). In such soils emphasis is placed on pushing the percentage of calcium toward the 70% mark and supplying enough magnesium to keep it above 10%, but below 12% for best overall results.

When the correct amount of calcium is measured, soils that are most lacking, as reflected by lower and lower calcium percentages as analyzed in the lab, will be the hardest to work. As the calcium is correctly added to achieve the required percentage, the soil actually becomes more friable. Such soils are easier to work, have better water penetration and possess a better content of air due to the effects of better soil flocculation, as calcium causes the clay particles to clump into tighter aggregates. Thus we tell clients that when needed, calcium (as determined by achieving the correct percentage for that soil) increases soil porosity and helps to loosen tight soils.

On the other hand, on sandy soils the problem is too much porosity – too much air – allowing the soil to dry out more quickly and lose needed moisture for growing crops. Under such circumstances the soil needs to be treated in a manner that emphasizes attracting and holding more water. Magnesium is the answer, but not too much, and not too little. The proper amount for sandy soils involves providing enough to supply at least 200 lbs / acre up to 250 lbs / acre of magnesium and yet not to exceed 20% saturation for that particular soil.

But adequate magnesium for the crop on sand or clay still has great importance for fertilizer utilization by the plants being grown there. Magnesium is the center of plant chlorophyll and nitrogen then attaches around the magnesium center accordingly. Without adequate magnesium, nitrogen cannot function properly and the chlorophyll that keeps the plant green will be lacking. In addition, magnesium is needed for phosphate metabolism in plants. When there is not enough magnesium in a plant, the phosphate will not work properly. Two of the fertilizers that are most often purchased for farm application are limited in doing their job properly if the soil does not also supply adequate magnesium to the plants being grown there.

Magnesium is a unique nutrient in that if the soil has too little, the plants will not get enough, but for food and fiber crops if the soil has too much, the plants will still be deficient in magnesium. In either instance, the magnesium is missing and can be verified as deficient by plant or leaf testing. In such cases, the plants will not have enough magnesium and not only does this limit the correct use of nitrogen and phosphate, but it also results in magnesium being deficient as a nutrient in the plants growing there.

But what is enough magnesium to supply the needed nutritional value and for nitrogen and phosphorous to be properly utilized once applied for growing a crop? Using our testing program on any soil, if magnesium makes up less than 10% of the nutrient holding capacity of the soil, whatever food crop is growing there will be deficient in magnesium. On sandy soils it is possible to have well over 10% Mg and still have a magnesium deficiency in the crops. Sandy soils always need at least 200 pounds per acre of magnesium to grow the best crops, regardless of where that takes the percentage of magnesium. But on clay soils, where aeration is a big problem, the higher the magnesium above 12%, the harder it is to get magnesium into the plant in adequate amounts.

So then we have a double-edged sword in the case of magnesium. When there is too little in the soil, nutritional values come up short and the efficiency of nitrogen and phosphate are reduced. But once you have enough, more is not better, because too much magnesium in the soil means the plants grown for food and feed will not get enough.

Legumes are some of the most sensitive crops to soil magnesium levels. On soils with an exchange capacity of 9.0 or higher, less than 10% magnesium or more than 12%, will **cause the crop to suffer and will reduce yields accordingly.**

**If your soils may need attention, at least check with someone you trust to be sure that there is adequate magnesium in the soil for plant use and nutritional values. When thinking about this, we hope to be considered and would be pleased to help.**

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### NOSB Update

*continued from page 8*

a full board vote at the April meeting. We shall also be voting on acidified sodium chlorite and zinc sulfate, and may have enough research completed to consider a proposal for aluminum sulfate for poultry litter treatment.

We will be presenting the initial Sunset Review of 41 Livestock materials in order to seek public comment and discuss at the April meeting, with a vote on keeping or removing these materials from the National List at the October meeting in Stowe Vermont. I won't list them all here, but they include chlorhexidine, the parasiticides fenbendazole, moxidectin and ivermectin; iodine, copper sulphate, peracetic acid, lidocaine and methionine. For several of these we have requested updated Technical Reports. Your comments on any material up for Review is critical. If you find it hard to navigate the NOP Website and find the full list, or want to chat about sunset review of materials remember you can call me any time or e-mail me questions.

The Livestock subcommittee also has aquaculture on its Work

Agenda, but we are waiting on further discussion on these materials until the draft standards are published, which may not be until late spring 2015- things move slowly in Washington!

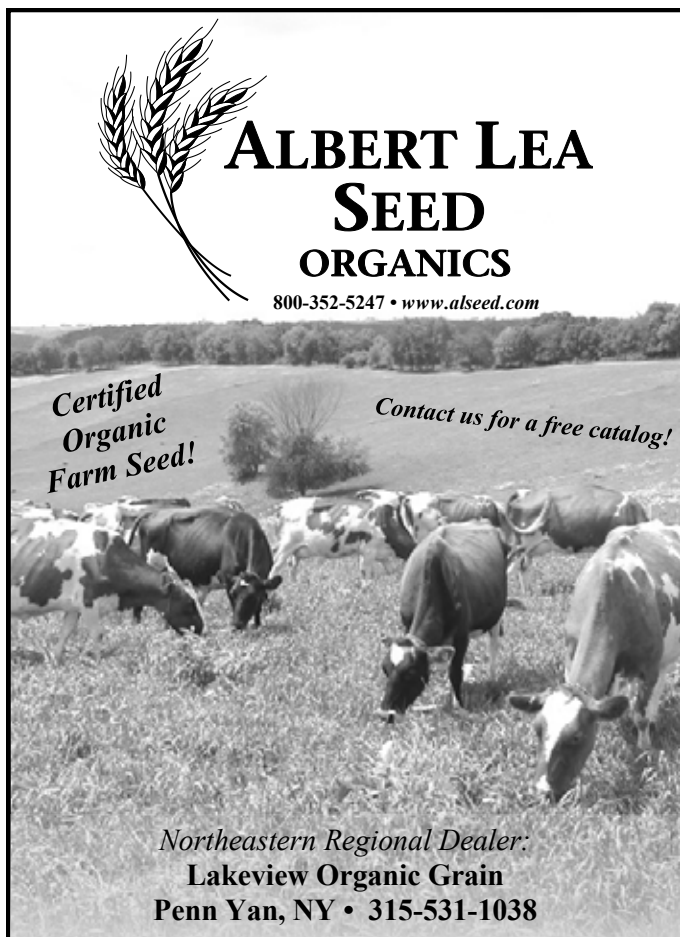
Animal Welfare standards should be out soon, and we are all hoping that these will be responsive to the concerns expressed by the NOSB and the public.

Crops: In the crops subcommittee we shall be presenting 4 proposals for new materials at the April meeting, and an update on Inerts, as well as a discussion document on Contamination in Farm Inputs. For Sunset Review there will be final votes on renewal or removal of ferris phosphate and hydrogen chloride, and initial review discussion of an additional 45 materials which will be voted on in October following public comment.

The Materials/GMO subcommittee continues its work on gmo (excluded methods) contamination and will lead a panel discussion on this issue at the April meeting.

The Policy subcommittee was reinstated by the NOP at our request and is working on updating policies and procedures.

Certification, Accreditation subcommittee is working on the Soil conservation document initially presented for public comment in April, and a proposal on peer review accreditation.



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The Handling subcommittee is working on 5 petitions which may be voted on in April, as well as 10 Sunset substances for vote in April, and an additional 106 materials (including groups of materials) to be presented for initial Review in April with final vote in October.

So if the NOSB is doing all this work, what is our Deputy Administrator, Miles McEvoy, doing with his time?

Miles is on all of our NOSB Executive calls and we typically talk by phone every week. He has been shepherding the animal welfare and origin of livestock proposed standards through the convoluted pathways in Washington, as well as working on a range of national and international issues in organic agriculture, including equivalency agreements, helping expand markets abroad, and efforts to keep mislabeled products out of the marketplace. To do this the USDA launched a new way to notify buyers when fraudulent organic certificates are identified. This includes surveillance audits of certifiers and operations certified in foreign countries. In 2014, NOP conducted foreign audits of certifiers in Mexico, Taiwan, South Korea, Australia, Turkey, France, England, Peru, Argentina, and Bolivia. He led the work to start up the \$11.5 million per year National Cost-Share Program.

Miles and his team have initiated over 200 investigative and enforcement actions, including 60 notices of warning, 26 cease and desist notices, and 48 referrals for investigation by certifiers and by State, Federal and foreign agencies. He has successfully referred two cases to Office of the Inspector General for criminal investigation; publicized 13 fraudulent organic certificates; and levied 9 civil penalties for \$81,500 via settlement agreements for knowing violations of the Organic Food Production Act.

Meanwhile, Miles and team NOP continue to provide information about organic agriculture to thousands of USDA employees so that USDA can better serve the organic community. This is an ongoing and much needed task.

I also happen to know that in his spare time Miles goes bird watching!

*Do not hesitate to contact me with your questions, comments or concerns any time. If I do not know the answer I will find the right person to help you.*

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- In New England, contact John Cleary at (612) 803-9087 or [john.cleary@organicvalley.coop](mailto:john.cleary@organicvalley.coop) or Steve Getz at 207-465-6927 or [steve.getz@organicvalley.coop](mailto:steve.getz@organicvalley.coop).
- In New York, contact David Hardy at (608) 479-1200 or [david.hardy@organicvalley.coop](mailto:david.hardy@organicvalley.coop).
- In the Southeast, contact Gerry Cohn at (919) 605-5619 or [gerry.cohn@organicvalley.coop](mailto:gerry.cohn@organicvalley.coop).
- Central to Western PA, contact Solomon Meyer at (814) 515-6827 or [solomon.meyer@organicvalley.coop](mailto:solomon.meyer@organicvalley.coop).
- In Southeast Pennsylvania and Maryland, contact Terry Ingram at (717) 413-3765 or [terry.ingram@organicvalley.coop](mailto:terry.ingram@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](mailto:farmerhotline@organicvalley.coop) and online at [www.farmers.coop](http://www.farmers.coop).

### 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.

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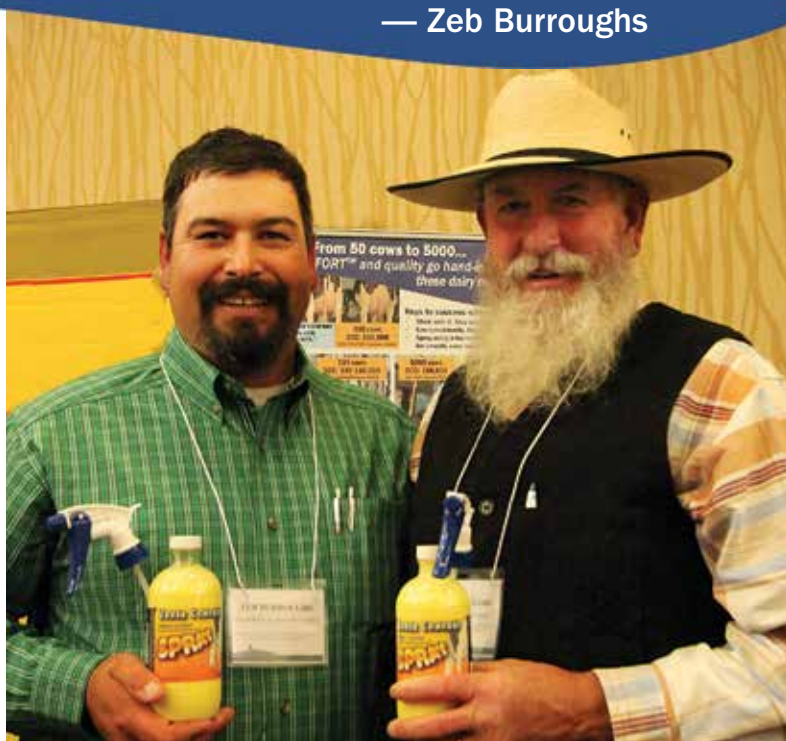
**To be listed, free, in future Organic Milk Sought columns, contact Nora Owens at 413-772--0444, [noraowens@comcast.net](mailto:noraowens@comcast.net).**

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*The entrepreneurial Burroughs families have been farming and dairying in California's Central Valley for over 100 years. Ward (right) and Rosie Burroughs are partners with each of their children in their own farms, and they all work together. In addition to Zeb (left) and Meredith Burroughs's California Cloverleaf Farms, other children have livestock, poultry, almond and olive operations, as well as additional dairy production.*

**“After 7 years of using Udder Comfort,™ we find the best use and results when our cattle freshen. It's great for fresh cows and any problem cow. It helps us keep our SCC under 200,000,” says Zeb Burroughs, 4th generation farming near Denair, California. He and his wife Meredith started the 550-cow organic dairy in 2005. They enjoy the challenge of managing the herd proactively for healthy, productive, and “happy cows.”**

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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

## Preventing &amp; Treating Pneumonia

By Hubert Karreman, VMD

**A**s I write this it's somewhere between 35-40 degrees, misty and lightly raining off and on - not exactly good weather farm animals to be outside. It's late December and the ground outside is muddy, snowy or frozen. Hopefully animals in the northern climates are inside a barn somewhere with good ventilation or, if outside, have a shed with a roof and dry bedding at night. Did I say good ventilation and dry bedding? Yes! Fresh air and dry bedding make for healthy animals. Dry bedding makes all the difference in the world if an animal is in questionable air or moisture conditions. Moist air and moist bedding challenge the immune system of animals. Rain and soggy bedding along with poor ventilation make for sick animals. No vaccination program will overcome stale air and damp bedding. The best vaccination program - without even giving a single injection - is dry bedding, fresh air, high forage diets, sunshine and good grazing management. The closer we can come to approximating these in the barn the healthier our animals will be during the winter.

Respiratory problems are unfortunately too common during various stages of life. Especially at risk are weanlings and yearlings which were born during the previous winter or early spring, robust when on milk for a solid 3-4 months but then sent out on

the same pasture lot in the summer that other calves have been on during previous years. Usually by early autumn those once great looking calves begin to look a bit rough coated, pot-bellied, and may have frank diarrhea. These symptoms are classic for internal parasitism. If then put inside when the weather starts to turn dreary and chilly, these animals often start to cough when introduced to barn air. If left in the same barn area for any length of time, the coughing can become worse. While the coughing and lung infection (pneumonia) can be treated, any treatment is at best a band-aid to the root cause of the problem: parasitism weakening the animal's immune system. Once the immune system is weakened, a relatively weak challenge of stale barn air (or any challenge for that matter) creates a suddenly serious problem in the animal.

Very young calves which are not yet immune competent, even though on a robust diet including whole milk, can also be at risk for pneumonia, especially if housed in the same general area as older cows. Also at risk would be grouped calves inside or outside, even when still on milk, if on damp bedding and if the air is raw and chilly. The worst weather conditions for pneumonia to strike are when it is freezing at night and above freezing during the day. For some reason the bugs can really start to wreak havoc with delicate young animals.

However, pre-weaned and weaned calves aren't the only animals at risk for pneumonia. Sometimes great looking first-calf heifers and are brought into the barn to join the milking string and come down with pneumonia. This is not totally surprising, as these



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animals have been outside at least a year or more and brought inside to breathe barn air, go through the birthing process which always suppresses their immune system, and also put onto a different ration. Their immune system is seriously challenged, just as parasitized calves or baby calves are and the barn air affects them almost the same exact way, with coughing and pneumonia developing if not addressed.

Early signs of pneumonia are wet rings around the eyes, a runny nose, a mild hacking cough when moving about and slightly increased breathing rate. Fever will be between 103 and 106 F. The higher temperatures of 105-106 usually are early on when the initiating respiratory virus is setting in, while the 103-104 range is when the more deadly bacterial stage is setting in. As it progresses, symptoms consist of more frequent coughing, sweaty hair coat, yellowish-white nasal discharge, and a shallow more rapid breathing, sometimes even "belly breathing" (abdominal muscles helping animal to breathe). Later the animal will often breathe with its mouth open at times as well as stretch out and straighten its neck out to make for the least resistance to get air in. At this point not even an antibiotic will work.

But what can we do early on - and what about prevention in the first place? Yes, preventing pneumonia is best but sometimes it creeps up bit by bit over time just as young stock slowly become parasitized over time. And sometimes surprising how quickly an animal can develop it, like with a just-fresh heifer. And other times it happens as the result of an innocent mistake of a well-intentioned farmer drenching a volume of liquid down the throat

but getting it instead into the lungs and causing aspiration pneumonia (nothing works well for that).

True prevention means feeding young stock really well during their first season out on pasture – supplementing them so that they stay ahead of the inevitable parasite challenges. And they certainly can stay ahead – if fed well. As far as the just-fresh heifer scenario, prevention would mean getting them accustomed to the barn situation little by little and not all of a sudden when they have just calved and their immune system is majorly suppressed.

If there has been a problem on the farm historically – despite dry bedding, fresh air and good feeds – using a vaccine may be useful. The best against pneumonia are the intranasal vaccines such as Inforce 3<sup>®</sup>, Nasalgen<sup>®</sup> or TSV-2<sup>®</sup>. These are effective within a couple days of administration and can even be given to animals that are already coughing to some degree. But never, ever give injectible vaccines to animals which show any signs of illness. Some research by Ron Schultz at the University of Wisconsin has shown that giving a modified-live vaccine to heifers that are between 6-8 months old may provide life-long protection. Where there is otherwise really good management but a constant simmering of respiratory or reproductive problems, talk to your veterinarian about the possibility of a BVD PI (persistently infected) animal. No vaccine can overcome the presence of a PI animal.

Treatment of pneumonia must be done early in the course of disease, whether it is on an organic farm or a conventional farm

*continued on page 31*



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Pay price, feed and retail price update for November 2014

*Pay price moves up slowly as sales increase and shortages continue*

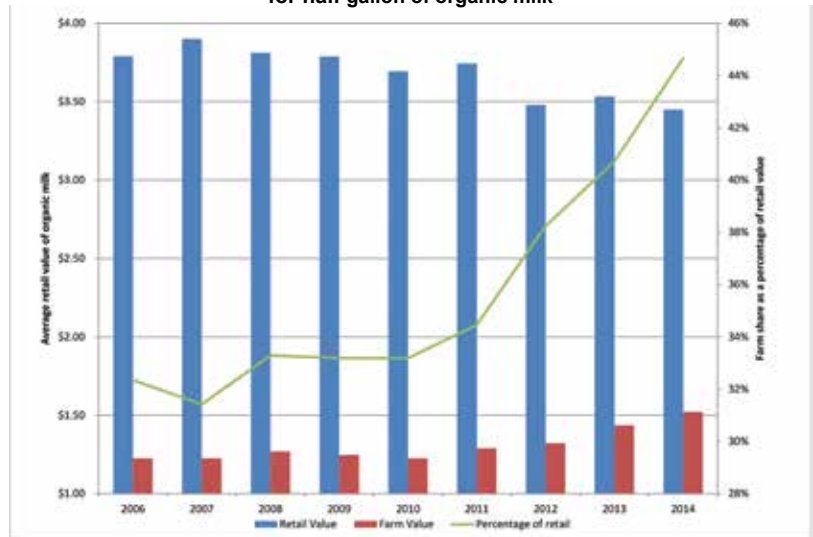
*By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

Hopefully, 2015 will be the year when processors start to recognize the realities of organic dairy production and the steady growth of demand in the retail market based on quality and production preference. USDA AMS reports that fluid milk sales for August 2014 were 204 million pounds, up 4.3% from August 2013, and up 10.7% year-to-date compared with last year. Interestingly, organic whole milk sales for August 2014 at 62 million pounds were up 14.1% compared with August last year and up 20.9% year to date compared with last year. Sales of the whole range of different organic reduced fat milk products (everything but whole milk products) for August were reported at 63 million pounds, were 16.2% above sales one year earlier and up 17.8% year to date compared with last year. This trend of whole milk sales increasing at a faster rate than reduced fat products is the opposite of previous years and of the non-organic market. This trend, together with the increased demand for grass milk, reflects that consumers are buying organic for quality, taste and production practices rather than purely on price.

In announcing an increase in pay price and change in regional pay price structure, CROPP CEO George Siemon announced, "In the development of this plan, we considered the following factors: an increase in costs on the farm from feed inputs and land rents; a slow-down in transitioning of farmland and farms to organic; customer input; competitive factors and a surge in market demand as the mass market embraces organic food." CROPP's comprehensive restructuring of its pay price is the result of years of work within the cooperative and reflects the producers' requests for a more simplified format that can be more easily understood by producers, their lenders and transitioning producers. While raising their base pay price, CROPP is still using the MAP to allow

*continued on next page*

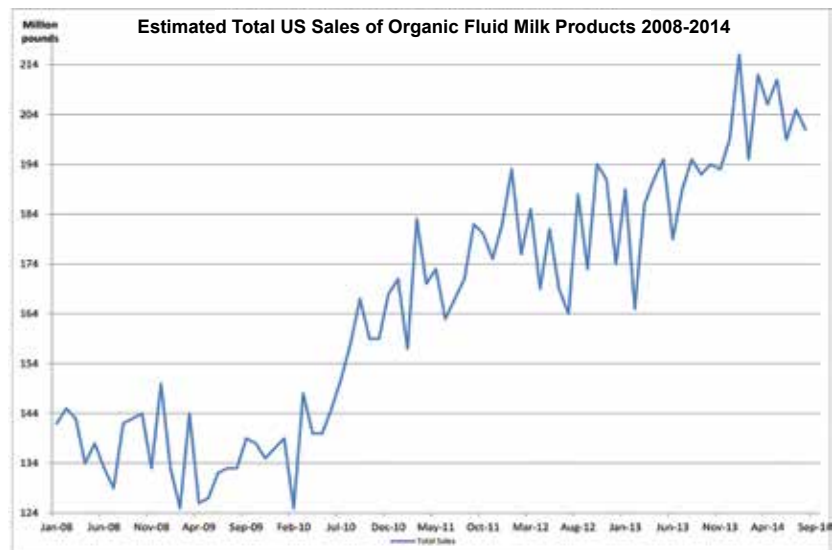
Average retail price, average farm share and percentage for half gallon of organic milk



Organic - conventional retail price gap



Estimated Total US Sales of Organic Fluid Milk Products 2008-2014



them flexibility in responding to changes in supply and demand. CROPP posts its pay prices on their website at <https://www.farmers.coop/producer-pools/dairy-pool/pay-price> where there is more detail. The chart below is a simple summary of what the 2015 pay price will be for New England CROPP producers:

### CROPP New England Pay Price

Pay Period	Base	MAP	Total per CWT
March to November	\$30.75	\$3.05	\$33.80
December, January, February	\$33.75	\$3.05	\$36.80
12 month average	\$31.50	\$3.05	\$34.55
Average Quality Premium	\$1.80		
12 month national average mailbox price*			\$36.80
*Before deduction for trucking and member investment			

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### CROPP producers under the Grassmilk New England program:

Pay Period	CWT Equivalent
Base (Mar-Nov)	\$37.80*
Winter Base (Dec-Feb)	\$40.80*
12 month Base (weighted average)	\$38.55
National Average Quality Premium	\$1.80
12 month Average Mailbox Price	\$40.38

WhiteWave/Horizon pay price varies by region and producer and, unfortunately, is not disclosed publically. Talking with producers in the northeast region (Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont) their pay price average is:

Pay Period	Base	MAP	Total per CWT
February to September	\$26.50	\$4.50	\$31.00
October, November, December, January	\$26.50	\$7.50	\$34.00
12 month average	\$26.50	\$5.50	\$32
Average Quality Premium	\$2.2		
12 month average mailbox price *			\$34.20
* No trucking charge and they pay volume premiums.			

*continued on page 18*

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## PAY PRICE

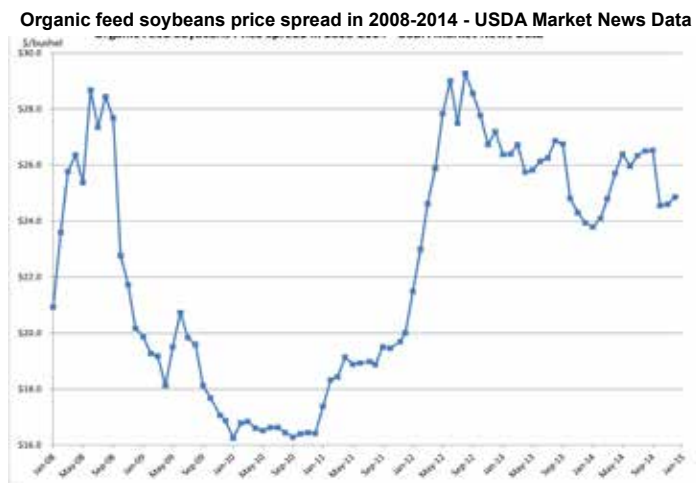
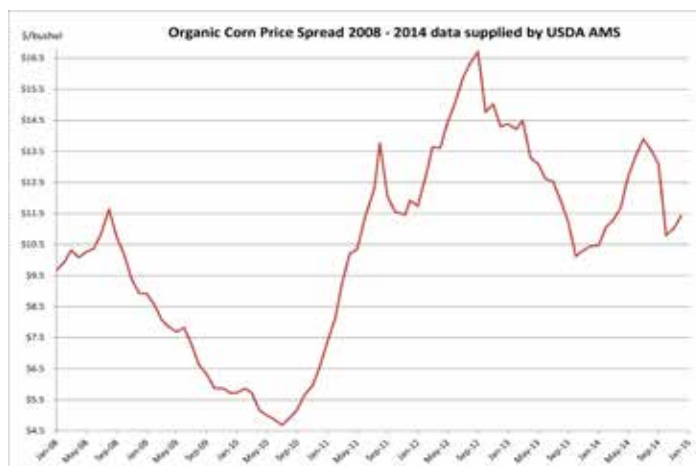
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Regional and individual buyers are reported as paying above these averages, with some exceeding the \$40 per CWT. Upstate Niagara Cooperative is among the more aggressive buyers in the northeast and their current pay price is:

Pay Period	Base	MAP	Total per CWT
April to September	\$28.00	\$5.00	\$33.00
October to March	\$28.00	\$7.00	\$35.00
12 month average	\$26.50	\$5.50	\$34.00
Average Quality Premium	\$2.2		
12 month average mailbox price *			\$36.20
* No trucking charge and there are comprehensive premiums that will factor differently for each farm.			

Overall producers can be aggressive with their price negotiations, especially with locations nearer to processing plants and if they fit the various **Grassmilk** programs.

Feed costs are steady with no changes in sight, with soybeans between \$24-26 per bushel and corn between \$10-12 per bushel. Beef prices for cull cows are still high with no indication of any change. ♦



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# Organic Dairy: Forecasts for 2015 and Beyond

*For this edition of the NODPA News, we asked a number of folks to share their forecast for Organic Dairy in 2015. We invited individuals from different backgrounds and occupations in order to have a variety of perspectives to share with you. We had no editorial control and have not edited their submissions.*

## Kevin Engelbert, NYS Organic Dairy Farmer:



I present my forecast for Organic Dairy in 2015 with one caveat: if the inevitable collapse of the U.S. economy occurs in 2015, my predictions cannot be held against me!

When writing about the future from an eco-

nomic standpoint, the normal factors for a business are supply and demand. While they certainly are part of the equation for Organic Dairy in 2015, there are many other facets unique to the organic dairy sector that must be included.

I believe the demand for organic dairy products will continue to grow as more consumers become educated about the differences between how conventional milk and organic milk are produced, and also the differences in the manufacturing of various dairy products. All indications are that the increase in demand will continue at 2014's rate or slightly higher.

With regard to the supply of organic milk, I do not think production will keep pace with the increase in demand, for a number of reasons, the biggest being that there are very few conventional dairy farms transitioning to organic.

Another reason I believe supply won't keep up with demand is because there are still organic dairies exiting the business, and while some organic dairies are expanding, their expansion isn't enough to make up for the loss in overall cow numbers.

That leads me to other unique facets of organic dairy production. The supply of organic grain continues to be a limiting factor, and I don't see how that can change fast enough to make a big difference in organic milk production. The thousands of organic crop acres that went back into conventional production during the last few years will need to transition for three years before they can produce organic crops again.

Another consideration that must be taken into account is the National Organic Program, and whether or not the NOP will finally start truly enforcing the National Rule. There are operations milking thousands of cows that continue to produce milk without any meaningful pasture for their animals. These same entities also continue to sell their new born calves and buy in conventional yearlings to maintain herd numbers.

Along the same lines, if the illegal poultry operations are either

forced to comply with the law or go back to conventional broiler and egg production, the price of organic grain will drop and less will be imported from countries lacking the certification oversight we have in the United States.

If these scofflaws are cracked down on like they should be, the future of organic dairy will brighten almost immediately. Consumers will begin to regain trust in the USDA organic label when only true organic dairy products are on store shelves.

An additional development in organic dairy involves the 100% grass-based label. Demand for grass-fed milk and beef has skyrocketed in the past year, and many dairies have stopped feeding grain, due to its high price, and have left their past marketing organization for the organic, grass-fed label.

So, all in all, I'm bullish on Organic Dairy for 2015, even with conventional grain and milk prices falling dramatically. Organic dairy has enough complicating factors to keep the demand for organic dairy products high, the competition for raw organic milk increasing, and for the main cost of production (purchased grain) to drop enough to help organic dairies regain profitability.

Kevin Engelbert, a New York organic dairyman, milking 140 cows that, along with his family, was one of the first certified organic dairy producers in the U.S. and served on the NOSB.

## John Bobbe, Executive Director, OFARM:

What do fracking sand, imports, GMO contamination, land rent



and chicken have to do with organic grain prices? Any organic dairy farmer knows that grain prices have made feeding organic grain hard at today's organic milk prices. Let me list a few factors that even organic grain farmers have very little control over.

In 2008, when organic grain prices crashed to around \$5 for corn at the farmgate, 35,000 to

50,000 acres left organic production permanently. Only recently have some organic grain operations begun to expand acreage and there is a small transition of producers into organic grain production.

*continued on page 20*

## Organic Dairy: Forecasts for 2015 and Beyond

*John Bobbe, continued from page 19*

We currently produce only half of the organic grains needed by our domestic market which includes organic dairy. About 50% of the organic corn used in the U.S. is imported according to Lynn Clarkson of Clarkson Grain in Illinois. And often times, organic corn imports are timed to keep prices at or below levels a short market would allow them to rise to. The end result is less incentive for producers to add more acres or transition.

Organic chicken continues to be at the forefront of consumer demand rising double digits for the past several years and into the foreseeable future. Organic eggs and chicken growers, many on a large scale seem to feel they can afford \$14 plus a bushel corn. This is also reflected in the demand for other grains such as small grains, feed wheat and soybeans for meal.

High conventional grain prices for corn and soybeans has resulted in a bidding war for crop land acreage. In many of the grain producing states in the Midwest, \$300 per acre on up to as high as one report of \$750 per acre have limited organic producers ability or willingness to pay these prices. An average yield of 150 bushels with \$300 per acre rent adds \$2 a bushel before the seed even leaves the bag.

Another factor organic grain producers are assaulted with every day is GMO contamination. Primarily in the food grade market, especially for the European Union, testing costs range from \$75 for a quick test to \$350 for a more accurate test. A survey done by OFARM and Food and Water Watch showed the average cost of a rejected load of grain to run upwards of \$5000 per 1000 bushels with the farmer eating most of the cost.

And what does fracking sand have to do with all this? Grain hoppers can and do haul fracking sand. Whereas the cost for a loaded mile of grain was \$2.50-\$3, fracking sand hauling pays \$4 a loaded mile or more. Often times, organic farmers can wait for weeks to get an available truck to haul the grain. And the railroads are so busy with oil tankers they could care less about a few cars of organic grain.

There is a saying, "Cheap grain means cheap milk, means cheap meat." While the recent increase in milk pay prices is a step in the right direction, the increases were less than half what is needed for organic dairy farms to be profitable.

On a positive note, OFARM, with funding from the Ceres Trust, just released a series of videos titled, "Eight Ways to Get Consumers to Buy Organic." Eight grain and livestock producers from Midwest states tell their story to consumers, especially food coop customers. The subjects include: getting the real thing when you buy organic, the next generation of organic farmers, importance of pollinators, women, local foods, organic as high tech, biodiversity and organic eggs. You can view them at [www.organictherealnatural.com](http://www.organictherealnatural.com). Each video comes with two pictures and a press release story to go with it. Help us get the word out

about the benefits of buying organic to your family, friends and neighbors. It is something we can do to keep organic growing.

*John Bobbe is the Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM, Inc) executive director. OFARM is a farmer cooperative with six member organic grain and livestock cooperatives with membership in 19 states. (Website: [www.ofarm.coop](http://www.ofarm.coop))*

### Andrew Dykstra, WODPA President:



**Andrew Dykstra, Right**

Greetings from the West coast! So here's a few of my predictions for 2015.

As President of WODPA I've been writing about changes that would be coming; took a lot longer than I had expected, but change is here. Hopefully WODPA's recommended changes to the "Origin of Livestock" will happen by late spring of 2015! I'd expect something with the

Organic Research and Promotion Programs to happen in early 2015, whether a person approves of it or not. Personally, I think if we keep the cost to our consumers under control that 2015 will continue to see excellent growth in the organic dairy case. I see all of the GMO labeling elections continuing; win or lose, I see the elections as "free" advertising for us. That being said, there will be a lot of competition for the ORGANIC dairy farmer's milk and beef in 2015!

*Andrew Dykstra and his family started operate their organic dairy farm in Northwest Washington 1989 and their farm includes vegetables, seed crops, and dairy.*

### Sharad Mathur, Chief Operating Officer, Dairy Marketing Services, Syracuse, NY:



Wouldn't It Be Nice – A 2015 Wish: Consumers continue to be more interested in how their food is produced. As a result, the demand for organic milk is on the rise and processors in the Northeast are considering the opportunities for providing more organic op-

tions to consumers – this is good for our farmer members. How can we increase our organic milk supply in order to capitalize on the growing demand? Higher pay price is always an incentive. However, it is hard for the organic companies / processors



## Organic Dairy: Forecasts for 2015 and Beyond

to keep increasing the price to consumers. As with any product, when prices rise too high, demand falls off.

The industry should continue to look at the costs and find efficiencies in our system. Today, every organic handler coordinates the pick-up and delivery of milk from their member farms on separate trucks. Sometimes it takes as long as 24 hours to fill a truck load of milk thus creating a huge cost. Wouldn't it be nice if we can minimize the hauling costs in order to bring more money back to the farms producing organic milk and thereby attracting more farms to produce organic milk?

Dairy Marketing Services (DMS) was created for that very reason. DMS works to reduce costs and increase efficiencies for our members by assembling, transporting and marketing milk for multiple handlers. The same model could work for organic handlers as well. Each organic handler would continue to manage their farms and the pay programs but the milk could be assembled and delivered by a neutral party on common trucks being dispatched on the handlers' behalf.

Consider looking into this concept and exploring these efficiencies in 2015. Happy New Year!

*Sharad Mathur can be reached at Dairy Marketing Services, 315-433-1115 ext 5523*

### Harriet Behar, MOSES Organic Specialist:



The need for more organic crop production and dairy production will continue into 2015. Even with commodity crop prices dropping, the high price of land rental has not gone down. More than 50% of the land in the Upper Midwest is cropped under rental agreements. This makes it difficult for

organic producers to compete with nonorganic producers for land, even land that has been fallow (such as CRP). Organic producers will need to be creative in finding land, perhaps seeking out landowners who have an environmental ethic, such as members of environmental groups who might be willing to take a lower rental price, based on the soil building crop rotation or grazing activities the organic producer can offer. Educating landowners that not every year will have a high value crop, and that organic producers can better steward the land when they have the protection of a long term lease, are important in having these landowners work well with organic farmers.

While nonorganic producers are beginning to embrace some fundamental organic principles such as soil health and use of cover crops, the gap between organic and nonorganic production

systems will continue to grow. Organic producers seek out diverse rotations and some practice livestock cross breeding for traits that support pasturing as well as longevity and vigor. Organic farmers will continue to diversify pasture mixes, cover crop mixes and small grain production. Unfortunately, less and less pasture, hay and small grains will be seen on nonorganic lands in 2015. This can have a negative effect on organic producers by lessening the availability of custom planting or harvesting services. We already know how hard it is to hire someone who knows how to cultivate!

The organic marketplace will continue to grow, in spite of periodic negative press the organic label receives from both outside and within our own community. The lack of domestic production to meet this demand will lead to an increased importation of organic feeds and organic livestock products. It is hard to say if this will result in downward pressure on prices for organic domestic producers. There is a place in the U.S. for many new organic producers of all types and sizes, this is good news!

The resiliency of the organic production system is just beginning to be recognized, and deserves a lot more praise and dollars than it currently receives! In 2015 and beyond, the greater society will slowly wake up to the fact that we can no longer even consider environmentally damaging agricultural systems, nor even environmentally benign ones as acceptable. We must move towards organic environmentally beneficial systems which include the corresponding economic rewards for those who steward the land and protect our ecosystems for future generations.

*Harriet Behar MOSES Organic Specialist (Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service) harriet@mosesorganic.org*

### Mike Davis, Member Services Manager, Upstate Niagara and Jodi Smith, Senior Dairy Market and Policy Analyst, Upstate Niagara:



Opportunities and Optimism Cultivate Market for Organic Dairy Products: The old adage that 'hindsight is 20/20' certainly reigns true when it comes to forecasting— "If only we could have seen that drought coming ... our forecasts would have been better." While hindsight is useful for understanding

what occurred, it can also shape expectations that are incorporated into any great forecast.

So let's start there... 2014 has turned out to be a great year for organic dairy farmers. At retail, demand for organic dairy products was incredibly strong. This increased demand has resulted

*continued on page 22*

## Organic Dairy: Forecasts for 2015 and Beyond

*continued from page 21*

in an extraordinarily tight supply of organic milk in the Northeast. Farmers throughout the region have only felt mild relief on input costs, so the resulting competition in the countryside has benefited farmers greatly.

With the organic dairy category at retail continuing to grow, the opportunities for organic dairy products are vast. There are likely to be new opportunities in product offerings—for example, consumers may be interested in purchasing all of their favorite dairy products made with organic milk. Additionally, and potentially more significantly, larger retailers are progressively interested in securing organic supplies to attract and maintain their customer base. The growth in specialty retailers is spurring this growth and interest.

While the growth in this category has been incredible over the past several years, consumers of conventional dairy products have seen prices for their favorite products rise, often closing the gap between choosing organic and conventional dairy products. The close spread between pricing for the two products may have driven some additional sales of organic dairy products. The expectations of lower prices to dairy farmers for conventional milk in 2015 may translate into a larger spread between the two products. In the end, the purchase decision will be a direct result of their willingness to pay for the attributes of organics. Counter to this, though, is the notion that the economy in the United States is recovering somewhat and consumers may be willing to

absorb the additional cost of organic dairy products.

Looking ahead, Upstate Niagara continues to be a keen participant in the Northeast market for organic milk. The Cooperative will continue to review all organic opportunities at the commercial level and evaluate its ability to serve those markets and customers in an economical way. As such, it is the goal of Upstate Niagara to remain competitive on pay prices for organic dairy farmers. The Cooperative works diligently to maintain a healthy organic supply/demand balance to service its customers in the most efficient and cost-effective ways.

In short, many exciting things lie ahead in 2015!

*Mike Davis, Manager, Member Services and Jodi Smith, Senior Dairy Market and Policy Analyst, Upstate Niagara*

### Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer



The upcoming year seems to be one of few definite answers. There appears at this time to be a fair amount of upside for the organic market as a whole. The processors appear to be in need of more milk and more producers. They appear

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eager and willing to sign on new producers if they are already in an area that they are serving. The number of farms in transition is relatively low however so this will probably limit the number of new producers for the near future. The same appears to be true for the crop farmers. There will likely be additional interest in some making the change from conventional given the drop in price in the conventional market. The organic market will appeal to them in the sense that the organic price has been more stable over the last few years. The high commodity prices in conventional appear to be over for a while. This may be as good of a time as any to encourage your neighbor to look at making some changes.

The continued press in regards to the benefits of an organic and GMO free diet will only help. There appears to be much more public awareness than ever on these issues. This should give us a lot of opportunity to state our case and also promote ourselves. This is also going to be a good opportunity for the processors to gain market share. I hope they do this in a manner that can help all farmers gain from the additional possibilities. It seems sometimes they forget where their bread and butter come from. The spike in prices over the last couple of years in the conventional prices may have been a blessing in some ways as it appears to have narrowed some of the price gap at the grocery store. I believe this will also make organic appear more attractive to the consumer. The weather for the upcoming year will also likely be a wild card as there does

not appear to be anything that we can call normal any more. We appear to be in a favorable situation that should bring growth to our market and more opportunities for all of us.

*Bruce Drinkman organic dairy farmer and MODPA Treasurer, Glenwood City, WI, 715-265-4431.*

### **Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator, National Organic Program, USDA-AMS:**



The USDA National Organic Program's responsibility is to protect the USDA organic seal, from farm to market, around the world. We do that through three primary mechanisms – establishing clear standards that establish a level playing field for organic farms and businesses; making sure that organic certifying agents are properly and thoroughly verifying that

organic products comply with the USDA organic regulations; and

*continued on page 24*

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## Organic Dairy: Forecasts for 2015 and Beyond

*Miles McEvoy, continued from page 23*

taking appropriate enforcement actions when there are violations of the organic standards.

### **Our focus in 2015 includes:**

**USDA organic regulations:** The Agricultural Marketing Service plans to publish proposed rules on Origin of Livestock, Pet Food, Aquaculture and Animal Welfare in 2015. We look forward to your comments on these proposals. In addition, the NOP will continue to support the work of the National Organic Standards Board, and provide clarifications through guidance and instructions to organic producers, handlers and certifiers.

**Certifier Accreditation and International Activities:** In 2015, the NOP will conduct certifier audits throughout the U.S. and in more than a dozen countries to ensure certifier compliance with the USDA organic regulations. The NOP will conduct assessments of organic trade arrangements to make sure the arrangements are properly implemented. In addition we will continue to work with Latin American governments to support effective control systems and internal market development. The NOP recently provided the USDA organic regulations and NOP Handbook in Spanish to support Spanish-speaking members of the organic community.

**Compliance and Enforcement:** The NOP will continue to inves-

tigate and act on regulatory violation complaints, and manage appeals, as they are received by the program. Last year, the NOP issued over 200 enforcement actions, including 9 civil penalties for \$81,500 for knowing violations of the Organic Food Production Act. These compliance activities support consumer confidence in the USDA organic seal and protect certified operations operating in compliance with the standards.

**Sound and Sensible Certification Standards:** Many farmers and agricultural businesses have not taken advantage of organic market opportunities because of a lack of technical information, recordkeeping challenges involved in certification, and inconsistent certification processes. In 2013, the National Organic Program initiated a "Sound and Sensible" initiative to make organic certification more accessible, attainable, and affordable for small and beginning farmers. The NOP will continue to identify the near-term policy changes and clarifications that will streamline requirements; refocus certification and oversight on practices rather than paperwork; and support the Secretary's 2013 Organic Agriculture Guidance to eliminate duplicative requirements through cross-USDA collaboration.

**USDA Outreach:** The NOP supports the USDA-wide Organic Working Group (including the Organic Literacy Initiative), and facilitates implementation of Secretary Vilsack's Departmental

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*I look forward to another busy and productive year. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. If you have specific ideas on how we can improve our work or services please get in touch with me, Miles McEvoy, at miles.mcevoy@ams.usda.gov.*

**Andre Brito, Assistant Professor of Organic Dairy Management, University of New Hampshire, Durham:**



**The “Grass Fed” Milk Dilemma:**  
In my opinion the most discussed subject within the organic dairy industry in the Northeast in 2014 was “grass fed” milk. Even though the term still loose, “grass fed” milk is characterized by feeding cows only pasture and conserved forage (e.g., grass and legume hay,

baleage, silage, etc.) without grain supplementation year-round. It is worth noting that farmers shipping “grass fed” milk are allowed to use liquid molasses as an energy supplement by specific certifiers (e.g., Pennsylvania Certified Organic) and processors (e.g., Organic Valley). However, before making a decision to remove grain from organic dairy diets, farmers and proponents of “grass fed” milk should consider the following points:

**Forage quality:** I would say without any hesitation that forage quality is the bottleneck for implementing a successful no grain feeding regime. In general, forages are bulky and depress feed intake, which reduces milk production. Therefore, feeding high-quality forage is crucial to maximize feed intake and milk production. It is well known that rotational grazing is a management strategy that maximizes both pasture quality and digestibility, which can not only increase milk production but also milk fat and protein. Farmers should also consider adopting additional management strategies such as “hay in a day” and p.m.-cutting hay or baleage, which are known to improve forage quality (i.e., more sugars and starch) and digestibility. Use of alternative forage crops (e.g., BMR sorghum, sorghum Sudan, millet, etc.) as a management tool to extend the grazing season and enhance digestible forage intake should be considered by farmers who are transitioning to a no grain feeding regime.

**Herd records:** Even though organic dairy farmers are overwhelmed by certification paperwork, keeping accurate herd records are essential for successful dairy enterprises. One of the

major concerns of feeding high-forage diets is excessive protein intake in detriment of energy intake leading to high MUN. High MUN may result in poor reproductive performance particularly increasing calving interval (ideal = 12 months or one calf/year). Therefore, accurate breeding records will help farmers assess how the implementation of a no grain feeding regime is impacting herd reproductive performance. In addition, implementation and record keeping of body condition score, which should be done regularly, is an excellent strategy to help farmers further assess the effects of high-forage diets on cow reproduction and health. Farmers should consider paying for DHIA services as an effective way to follow herd health.

**Profitability:** The most outstanding justification that I heard from farmers who are currently adopting or considering to adopt a no grain feeding regime was skyrocketing grain costs and expensive grain bills. Indeed, dairy farms in which cows receive exclusively forage diets have lower production per cow than non-grazing dairies, but have the potential to be economically competitive because of lower operating and overhead costs. However, eliminating grain from dairy diets does not necessarily correlates with profitable dairy enterprises. For instance, a recent study from the University of Wisconsin (Dr. Victor Cabrera’s Laboratory) showed that Wisconsin organic dairies having predominantly Holsteins and relying on a greater variety of feed ingredients and greater amounts of grain had higher income over feed costs than farms using predominantly non-Holstein breeds and relying more heavily on grass-based diets.

**Environmental impact:** Organic agriculture is perceived by the general public as a more environmentally-friendly way to produce food for humans. Several scientific studies conducted with dairy and beef cattle showed that feeding exclusively forage diets increase methane emissions to the environment. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas that is contributing to global warming. High-forage diets often results in overfeeding protein to cows, thus contributing to excess nitrogen excretion to the environment. However, enhancing forage quality has the potential to minimize both methane emissions and nitrogen excretion to the environment. Thus, feeding high-quality forage should be the central goal in “grass fed” farms not only to mitigate losses in milk production but also to minimize the environmental impact of organic dairy systems.

Finally, I would state that the points discussed herein and many others (e.g., dairy breeds, direct marketing, omega 3 and CLA milk, etc.) should be carefully evaluated before making a decision to fully adopt a no grain feeding regime and the potential to capitalize on additional premiums for shipping “grass fed” milk. As a result, a careful plan of action should be designed and implemented over time when transitioning to a no grain feeding system.

*André F. Brito is an Assistant Professor of Organic Dairy Management, Dept. of Biological Sciences, University of New Hampshire, Durham. andre.brito@unh.edu; 603 862-1341 ♦*



**ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM****Tide Mill Organic Farm, Edmunds, Maine**  
**Nine Generations in the Making**

*continued from page 1*

his own dairy story.

Situated in the far edge of eastern Maine in Washington County, Tide Mill Organics is a stone's throw from the Canadian border and the ocean. The farm is recognized as a National Bicentennial Farm, a rare claim and especially so in this circumstance since not only is the land still in the Bell family but it is still commercially farmed. Originally a 10,000 acre piece, the land was granted to Scottish immigrant, Robert Bell, in 1765. Robert established a tidal powered grist mill in the 1800's and began clearing land. In 2000, when Aaron returned to the farm post-college with his wife Carly Delsignore, the farm was 1600 acres- 50 acres of fields, 20-30 acres of marginal but improvable land and the rest wooded. In some capacity, commercial dairying has been part of Tide Mill for the last five generations.

Beginning with organically certified mixed vegetables and then the addition of organic poultry, pigs and beef cows, and eventually four children, Aaron and Carly, pulled as strongly as the 20 foot Cobscok Bay tides they witness each day, set about creating their life on the farm. To Aaron, dairy "signified perseverance and prevailing over incredible challenges, the epitome of farming and community." With the impetus of a stable milk market, they began to build their herd which has grown to 50 milk cows of mixed breeds of the Holstein, Jersey, Brown Swiss and Lineback types. Aaron is particularly fond of his Holstein heifers bred by a Brown Swiss bull, commenting

on their pleasant nature. Perhaps nostalgia for past times motivated Aaron as his grandfather was a Brown Swiss man.

Although Aaron grew up with a beef herd and helped his family put up hay during the growing season, the shadow of the former dairy was a reminder of his family's past and fueled his ambition to have his own herd. Because of the existing infrastructure on the farm it was relatively easy to begin producing milk despite the vast barriers to entry that exist in the organic milk industry. Aaron milks in the single seven herringbone parlor built with an attached free stall barn by his grandfather, father and uncle in 1965. During the grazing season, he rotationally grazes his milk herd and offers a TMR during milking with about 6# of grain per cow. Paddocks are changed once a day. Heifers and small stock are raised off farm on leased land. A barn is also part of the lease so replacements are able to remain there through the winter. He feeds a bit more grain in the winter, 8-10 lbs. in the TMR. The herd has access to an outside paddock during the long dark Maine winter. There are few health problems—calf scours and weak calves are the primary challenge. His mother, Jane, whose presence is woven into all aspects of the farm, reaches to the Odairy listserv when cow health problems arise. The lack of large animals in this region diminishes the likelihood that a veterinarian will be able to solve such issues organically.

Putting up high quality forage and developing productive pastures is a challenge in the granitic shallow soils of the northeast. There are few large livestock enterprises in this region; importing



**Hampshire pigs at feeding time.**





**Cows sprinting along the ocean shore.**

fertility is neither economically or logistically feasible. Because of this, Tide Mill needs a larger land base than the home farm provides so they lease a combined 250 acres of pasture/hay ground. The fields are small and numerous. Aaron puts up mostly round bales of dry hay and baleage though he still does some square baling. Baleage is individually wrapped and left in the field. This offers the flexibility of hauling during the winter. By the early 1990's Washington County had lost its last dairy farm and once productive farm land is quickly being lost to alders and birch. People frequently ask Aaron if he can utilize their fields, of which there are many 15-20 acre pieces nearby, but the challenges of clearing land are too much for an already diversified farm.

Carly partly credits Aaron's university studies of philosophy for helping him persevere through the freezing cold, the sick calves, the demands of four children, wrestling with catching cows in heat in the free stall barn and the myriad of other challenges a dairyman faces in a day. He has the ability to "see the cyclical nature of challenges of things; it helps him handle the stress." Fortunately Aaron has this ability to handle adversity because in 2009 in the midst of the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression, HP Hood, Aaron and Carly's processor, decided to give Tide Mill and nine other farms in the far flung regions of Maine their six month notice. No other processor was willing to pick up the route and through the help of Maine's agricultural community, Maine's Own Organic Milk (MOO Milk), as chronicled in the beautiful movie, *Betting the Farm*, was created.

The Bells believe that people's health is directly tied to the food that they consume. Physical health is dependent on high quality produce, meat and milk, and emotional health relies on community

relationships and bonds that in part are created through farms. MOO Milk's intent was to nourish both types of health; by selling non-ultra pasteurized organic milk to a regional market and helping communities by strengthening Maine's organic dairy sector. MOO Milk's mission was a perfect fit for Aaron and Carly whose commitment to supplying the people of Maine organic food is exemplary. In addition to the dairy, they raise and process 12,000 broilers and 500 turkeys a year, have a robust local market for whole raw milk, raise pork and direct market their own cull cows. They sell seedlings and variety of balsam products during the holiday season. They sell their goods through a CSA, at local stores and at a farm stand. Aaron's cousin, Rachel Bell and husband Nate, buy milk from Aaron for their business, Tide Mill Creamery. Another brood of three Bell kids, members of the ninth generation, live with Rachel and Nate.

*continued on page 28*



**Young turkeys at Tide Mill Organic**

## FEATURED FARM


*continued from page 27*


The scope of the nourishing, tangible products produced by the Bells is vast, but so are their intangible contributions to their local community. "I love to see people excited to learn where their food comes from," Aaron says, "We (society) got away from that for a couple generations. Everyone used to have farms. Then with the introduction of mass production, we didn't have to, and people moved away from it." Tide Mill offers guided farm tours throughout the growing season, and special visits may be arranged for home schooled families or school groups. The farm hosts apprentices and has a number of seasonal paid farming positions. It is rich with opportunity for anyone who wants to know the truth behind the food they're eating. Running between and through all these educational opportunities are Hailey, Paige, Henry and Ruth, the Bell's four children. "We incorporate our children into practically everything we do and value their participation, even though that participation takes more time, care and negotiations; as they get older they become more capable but it's harder to get them to perform," commented Aaron.

Community outreach and family values do not, however, generate the cash flow necessary for producing the scope and volume of food produced at Tide Mill. Despite the large grow-

ing demand for MOO Milk, the company folded in 2014, once again putting Tide Mill Farm in a tenuous position. Despite their various enterprises, the dairy plays a critical cash flow role in the farm. According to Carly, "It's kind of a dichotomy because the money is not enough to cover the costs of running a dairy operation, but it is regular and substantial. The dairy also supports the overhead that is used for the other farm enterprises. Scale is a tricky thing, mostly because of overhead. So our other operations are able to use the equipment that the scale of the dairy supports. This is a huge benefit to raising vegetables, pigs, beef and poultry. The dairy also offers us the opportunity to offer full time employment to individuals in our community. With these employees and help from the extended family, we have had the opportunity to leave the farm as a family."

The dairy has a symbiotic relationship with Tide Mill's other enterprises. The feeder pigs, quartered in portable A-frame huts, help to clear land which will eventually become pasture for dairy cows. "The pigs do a lot of foraging. They are always chomping in the dirt, eating shrubs and bushes." The pigs also enjoy eating silage and hay; feed that wouldn't be available without the dairy. The waste milk generated by the cows is another important feed source for the roughly 100 pigs grown at Tide Mill each year. These supplemental sources of pig food are especially important given the high cost of organic grain. The pastured poultry improve fertility as the birds are moved rotationally adding nutri-





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**Aaron with Paige, Ruth and Henry witnessing a birth**

ents to hay and pasture ground. The manure from the dairy, all solid, is vital to the productivity of the farm's vegetable ground, home pastures and hayfields. Located in an environmentally sensitive area, Tide Mill's manure requires a covered stacking pad. The dairy manure is mixed with chicken and pig bedding, mulch bales and poultry manure to create compost. "The dairy does re-

ally support the other enterprises because it allows them to be smaller scale and still have access to the overhead and afford it by sharing with the dairy- like the tractors we use to fill up the pig feeder from a bulk bag of grain. The supplies that we need are often on hand from the dairy, such as electric fencing supplies, manure storage, tools and equipment," says Carly. Despite the diversity of the farm a wholesale milk market is critical to Tide Mill. As MOO Milk faltered, Tide Mill, along with about 13 other farms were scrambling to find a new processor. The perishable nature of milk and the abrupt ending of

MOO Milk left the farmers little time to re-group as a unit. With organic milk in tight supply, some processors were willing to take the entire route but others were reluctant to incorporate the trucking for Tide Mill's eastern spur.

*continued on page 30*



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## FEATURED FARM

*continued from page 29*

Tide Mill was given three options by each of the three major processors in Maine: truck your own milk to a more centralized location and we'll pick it up, a 6-month contract offer, and a two year contract offer. Ultimately, the Bell's chose Horizon Organics 2-yr. commitment to purchase their milk. Their third processor in 10 years, Aaron is pleased to be working with Horizon and their Northeast representative. "Horizon went the extra mile. They were the only processor willing to offer us a 2-year market for our milk."

Even with their 2-yr. contract, Aaron is concerned about the organic dairy industry in Maine; "it seems fragile." The momentum, fervor and excitement surrounding the growth of organic dairy during the 1990's and early 2000's have given way to uncertainty and doubt. The cost of production is rising faster than the pay price. This prevents farmers from improving and growing their production capabilities. The growth of the organic dairy industry in eastern Maine and beyond is stagnant. Aaron, who among his other endeavors serves as a Maine state representative to NODPA, believes in NODPA's advocacy to establish a fair pay price to organic farmers. When asked what

needed to be done to increase the number of organic dairy farms in Maine the answer was simple: "we need a higher pay price." It is not enough to wax poetic about the sacrifice of farm families nor create bucolic images of the rewards of life on the farm. In order for farms such as Tide Mill to succeed and convince the next generation that dairy farming is a viable and worthwhile path, farmers need to be fairly compensated.

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*continued on page 33*



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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

### Pneumonia

*continued from page 15*

(where antibiotics are easily used). At the very first sign of coughing, if the weather is good, put the animal(s) outside. This can stop the problem right in its tracks. Next would be to quickly give one of the intranasal vaccines. They provide antibodies along the respiratory tract very quickly. Homeopathics such as antimonium tart, bryonia alba, belladonna or aconitum are also helpful and can be put into the water or dosed individually (better). These measures work best when the animal(s) are still eating well and only have a mild hacking cough when rustled up.

If not responding to the above, botanicals such as garlic, ginseng, goldenseal, echinacea and barberry with sulfur, berberines and immune stimulant compounds are indicated. Older veterinary books recommend giving 5ml/young calf, 10ml/yearling and 15-20ml/adult cow, dosed orally 2-3 times daily for about 4 days. When an animal is having respiratory difficulty, do NOT drench with volumes larger than 30ml (1 oz). It is way too easy to get liquids into the lungs. Indeed, it is saddening when I get a phone call and a farmer says they have been drenching a cow with 120-240ml (4-8 oz) of a liquid and now she is all of a sudden worse. There unfortunately is no good treatment for liquid in the lungs.

I've found over the years that the best effective treatment, short of antibiotics, is by providing injectible antibodies and immune stimulants. Bovi-sera® and Multi-serum® and similar products provide immediately usable antibodies which work for about 7-10 days with just one dose. For an adult cow, I give a whole bottle (250ml) intravenously. Follow dosages on the label for younger animals. I also use ImmunoBoost® (1ml/200 lbs) IV or under the skin, which stimulates the animal's own interferon production. I also use 250 ml vitamin C IV and 60-90 ml GetWell (garlic, goldenseal, ginseng, echinacea, barberry) in 500ml dextrose. This treatment is what I have come to rely upon for pneumonia, hot coliform mastitis, salmonella and when I can't specifically diagnose an illness.

Pneumonia. The word strikes fear into the hearts of most farmers. And it should, as it can and does cause a miserable death if not treated early and effectively. It is one of the very few conditions which I will still consider an antibiotic for treatment. Having your veterinarian listen to the lungs and knowing the extent of disease can help guide proper therapy. Obviously prevention is best. Keep animals outside as much as possible - including milk cows. That is where they would like to be on sunny days to breathe crisp, clear air - just like we should be. When it comes to respiratory health, what's good for us is good for the cows!

*Hubert Karreman is a veterinarian for the Rodale Institute in Kutztown, PA and owner of CowMaster, LLC (formerly Bovinity Health, LLC), and can be reached at 717-405-8137. ♦*

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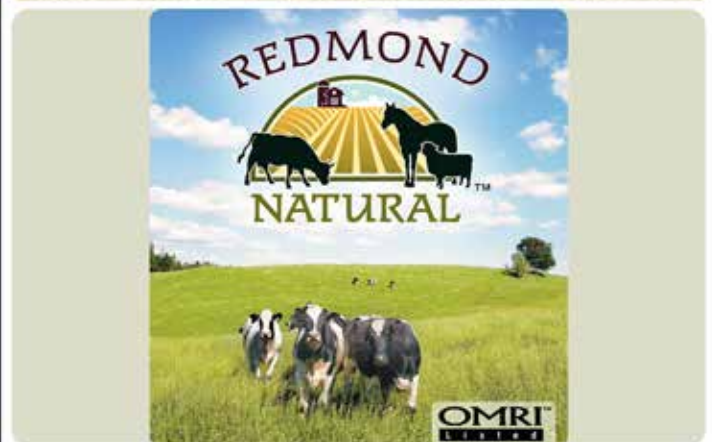
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**650 large square bales NOFA Certified Organic Hay.** First, second and third cutting. On pallets in our barns. Call Tim at 518-929-9018 or email: Tim.L@StewardshipFarms.com Location: Northern Columbia County NY, south of Albany.



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**60 4x4 bales of haylage individually wrapped.** 30 1st cutting (early June) & 30 3rd cutting (September): \$40/bale. 20 4x4 bales of 2nd cutting (dry hay): \$50/bale. Also available: 28 5x5 bales of 2013 Oatlage, line wrapped. \$30/bale as is or I will individually wrap them for another \$15/bale. These are all certified by NOFA-NY. These are FOB prices but I have a couple of neighbors who haul so I could contact them for you. Contact: Steve Kimball Phone: 716-267-9272; email: steve@kimvale.com. Location: Falconer, NY 14733

**I am looking for certified heifer hay and bedding.** Any help would be appreciated. Contact: Shaun Riordan, email: riordan.shaun@gmail.com, phone: 443-252-7970. Location: Shaftsbury, VT

## PRODUCTS

**We are looking for a supplier of organic unsalted butter,** about 120,000 lbs. annually. Contact: Lea Rubinstein, email: lea@glascg.com, phone: 401-515-4595.

## SERVICES

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Hauler Bob Meendering (l) and DFA Member Rick Bousquet (r)

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## FEATURED FARM

*continued from page 30*

the Bell's move through their days creating their own stories that doubtlessly will become their own legends. To Aaron there is a direct correlation between the diminishing strength of our rural communities and the lack of dairy farms. "Dairy farming involves big important life; you're caring for life 24/7 and it's always an emergency. Its life that births, breathes and bleeds. It's steaming placentas and the smells and sounds of the barn. It's getting your broke-down tractor going in the freezing cold because you need headlights to take care of a cow after you just broke your flashlight. There will always be a place for that mission." ♦



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## NET UPDATE

### Recent ODairy Discussions

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

A producer was concerned about a 5 month old heifer that could no longer stand. She appears bright-eyed, alert, and her appetite was good. She had been treated for a high fever 2 weeks prior, and had received electrolytes, antibiotics, Vitamin C, and MuSe at that time. A vet suggested that they put the calf back on milk to boost the nutrition, and wondered if the MuSe injection may have hit a nerve in the back of the animal's leg.

During a discussion about mastitis, several producers made the connection that in herds with very low somatic cell counts, e-coli mastitis is more likely to pop up. Probably due to the immune system being "on vacation", it can catch a farmer off guard. Look to the bedding material as the culprit, and look for leaking cows. One farmer's suggested treatment was 5cc Immunoboozt, topical Udder Comfort and frequent stripping. It is essential that treatment be prompt and early; one vet suggested that it needs to be within 12 hours of onset. If treatment is delayed, the prognosis becomes poorer. Flunixin was also suggested as an appropriate addition, since it has specific anti-endotoxin action. And vaccinating with J-5 does help to reduce symptoms and severity. One vet described his standard treatment for coliform mastitis as 250cc Bovi-Sera or Multi-Serum, 250 to 500cc Vitamin C,

60 to 90 cc Phyto-Biotic and 250cc sodium iodine -- all these are given IV. This is given as a one-time treatment with the farmer stripping frequently and using an udder salve.

*Liz farms with her husband and son in Hammond, NY. You can reach Liz by phone or email: 315-324-6926, bawden@cit-tele.com.*



**mosa@mosaorganic.org**  
**608-637-2526**

**When you're serious  
about organic.**

## 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 Nora Owens at:

**Email:** [noraowens@comcast.net](mailto:noraowens@comcast.net)

**Phone:** 413-772-0444

Go to the following web page for more information:

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

### Subscribing to ODairy:

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

To sign up for the ODairy listserv, go to:

[www.nodpa.com/list\\_serv.shtml](http://www.nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml)

# Calendar

## New Opportunities, Old Problems, Honoring the Soil

Jordan Hall Auditorium, NYS Agricultural Experiment Station,  
614 W. North Street, Geneva, NY

A three-workshop series presented by New York Certified Organic (NYCO), these free meetings begin at 10 am, and no registration is required. Please bring a dish to pass for a potluck lunch. For more details, contact Fay Benson, 607-753-5213, [afb@cornell.edu](mailto:afb@cornell.edu).

**January 13, 2015**

### Unlocking the Fertility of your Soil

Jean Bonhotal, Cornell Waste Management, will talk about soil vitality; Klaas Martens, Lakeview Organic Grain, focuses on the Soil Renaissance Initiative; and Carol MacNeil, Cornell Vegetable Team, on Cornell's Soil Health Assessment.

**February 10, 2015**

### Quality Forage Comes From Planning, Not By Luck

Tom Kilcer, Advanced Ag Systems, will talk about the forage management required for All Forage Diets or High Forage Diets; Aaron Gabriel, Cornell Extension of Washington County, will review information on making dry hay, including certified organic hay preservatives; and a panel of organic dairy farmers will share their planning and management strategies to make high quality forage.

**March 10, 2015**

### Producing, Protecting, and Marketing of Organic Grain

Wegmans' Bakery Team describes their goal to use locally-produced organic grain in a new line of breads; Sam Sherman, Champlain Valley Mills, discusses marketing opportunities for organic grain; Dr. Heather Darby reviews results from her grain trials in VT; and Fay Benson presents on the new organic crop insurance program for organic grain production.

**January 16 & 17, 2015**

### VT Grazing and Livestock Conference

Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee, VT

Hosted by the Vermont Grass Farmers Association (VGFA) and the Vermont Beef Producers' Associations (VBPA), and coordinated by the UVM Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Don Hoglund will explain how to work with livestock for less stress to the animals, and more safety for everyone. Registration discounts are available for VGFA and VBPA members. More details about the conference as well as registration are available at [www.uvm.edu/pasture](http://www.uvm.edu/pasture). Contact conference coordinator Jenn Colby at [jcolby@uvm.edu](mailto:jcolby@uvm.edu), (802) 656-5459 with any questions.

**January, 2015**

Stockmanship Training Workshops with Don Hoglund will be held around VT and in NY this January. Workshops include morning presentations, lunch, and afternoon on-farm demonstrations. Space

is limited. Registration before January 10 is \$20 and \$25, after. For details and registration, please see <http://onpasture.com/dairy-stockmanship/>

**January 19, 2015**

### 100% Grass-fed Dairy Meeting and round-table Discussion with Cheyenne Christianson

Houston Run Community Center, 835 Houston Run Drive, Gap, PA

Begins at 9:30 am, and the \$20.00 registration includes a light lunch. For more information and to download the meeting brochure, go to this website: <http://www.springwoodfarm.com/talk-around-the-farm> or contact Roman Stoltzfoos, 717-278-1070 or [romans@springwoodfarm.com](mailto:romans@springwoodfarm.com).

### Plan to Grow More! King's AgriSeeds' 2015 Grow More Forage Events

January 19- Randolph Fire Hall, 70 Main St, Randolph, NY 14772

January 20- Hall Fire House, 4852 New York 14A, Hall, NY 14463

January 21- Joanna's Café, 145 Main Street, Somers, CT 06071

January 22 - Mo's Pub & Grill, 3357 State Route 11, Malone, NY 12953

January 23 - Winner's Circle, 3293 New York 5, Fonda, NY 12068

Join us for a day of learning about increasing forage production on every acre. Hear from King's staff as well as special guest speaker Cornell University's Dr. Larry Chase. Dr. Chase will offer great guidance on ways to increase dairy productivity. His overall program is to improve the efficiency and sustainability of New York dairy farms by conducting research and providing information to adjust dairy cattle rations. These adjustments are targeted to improve the efficiency of nutrient use within the animal and decrease nutrient excretion to the environment. Gather 9:30AM, Meeting Begins at 10:00AM and ends at 3:00PM. Please RSVP King's Office (717) 687-6224.

**January 23-25, 2015**

### NOFA-NY Annual Conference: Soil: The Root of the Movement Saratoga Hilton and City Center, Saratoga Springs, NY

Friday Keynote: Wes Jackson, President of The Land Institute, and Farmers of the Year Keynotes Klaas and Mary-Howell Martens, Lakeview Organic Grain.

For more info: [www.nofany.org/events/winter-conference](http://www.nofany.org/events/winter-conference), Phone: (585) 271-1979.

**January 24-25, 2015**

### 25th Annual Food & Agriculture Winter Conference Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, NJ

Keynote Speaker, March "Coach" Smallwood, Executive Director of Rodale Institute. For more information: [www.nofanj.org/winterconference.htm](http://www.nofanj.org/winterconference.htm), Phone: (908) 371-1111.

*continued on page 36*



## CALENDAR

*continued from page 35*

**January 31, 2015**

**NOFA-NH 13th Annual Winter Conference**

**Rundlett Middle School, 144 South St, Concord NH 03301**

The day's lineup is full of workshops on organic certification, keeping bees, balancing farming and family, wild edibles, nutrient dense foods, school gardens, 'greening your machines,' gleanings, launching your value-added product, and much more. Help us welcome Janisse Ray, writer, naturalist and activist, as our keynote presenter; peruse the always-robust and fun Green Market Fair and, of course, enjoy excellent organic and local meals. \$68 for NOFA/MOFGA members and \$85 for nonmembers. Children's program registration is \$35. Local, organic breakfast and lunch are included in your registration.

<https://nofanh.org/events/winter-conference/>

**February 3-7, 2015**

**Nature as Mentor, PASA's 24th Annual Farming the Future Conference, State College, PA**

Widely regarded as the best of its kind in the East, this event brings together an audience of over 2,000 farmers, processors, consumers, students, environmentalists and business and community leaders annually and features nationally known speakers, hundreds of workshops and much more. Visit <http://conference.pasafarming.org/> for more details.

**February 14 & 15, 2015**

**33rd Annual NOFA Vermont Winter Conference**

**University of Vermont, Burlington, VT**

For more information: [www.nofavt.org/annual-events/winter-conference](http://www.nofavt.org/annual-events/winter-conference), Phone: 802-434-4122.

**February 17 & 18, 2015**

**The 22nd Annual Southeast PA Grazing Conference: Maximizing Energy Harvest**

**Lancaster Ag Headquarters, 60 North Ronks Road, Ronks, PA 17572**

Cost: \$50.00 per person for those pre-registered, and \$60.00 for late registration and walk-ins; \$35.00 per additional person(s) from the same household (registration must be postmarked by February 9, 2015). Lunch included both days. Sorry - no refunds; no one day discounts.

For more information, and to download the meeting brochure, go to this website: <http://www.springwoodfarm.com/talk-around-the-farm> or contact: Roman Stoltzfoos (717) 278-1070 to obtain a registration form and with questions.

**February 25-26, 2015**

**Organic Agriculture Research Symposium**

**Radisson Hotel, La Crosse, WI**

The first Organic Agriculture Research Symposium (OARS), being

*continued on page 40*

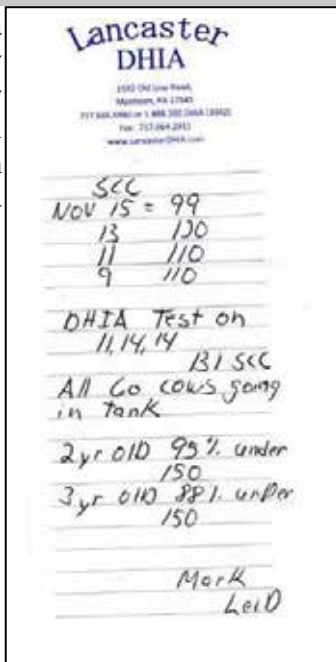
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**NODPA News is Published Bi-Monthly**  
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Join as a **Business Member** and receive an additional 5% off all advertising. To learn more about Business memberships and the Web Business Directory, go to [www.nodpa.com/directory.shtml](http://www.nodpa.com/directory.shtml) or contact Nora Owens.

**2015 Ad rates and sizes listed below.**

**Deadline for advertising in the March, 2015 issue is February 15, 2015.**

**Full Page Ad (7.5" W x 10.25" H) = \$600**

**1/2 Page Ad (7.5" W x 4.5" H) = \$305**

**1/4 Page Ad (3.5" W x 4.75" H) = \$168**

**1/8 Page Ad/Business Card:**  
(3.5" W x 2.25" H) = \$90

**Commit to a full year of print advertising and get last year's rates: Full: \$575, Half: \$290, Quarter: \$160, Eighth: \$85.**

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

For advertising information call Nora Owens:  
413-772-0444 or email [noraowens@comcast.net](mailto:noraowens@comcast.net)

Please send a check with your ad (made payable to NODPA).  
30 Keets Rd., Deerfield, MA 01342

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

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

deduct the sum of :

\_\_\_\_\_ \$0.02 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA

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

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

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

### Milk handlers please send payments to:

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

Producer signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Producer number/ member no: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of milking cows: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel #: \_\_\_\_\_

Certifying Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Address: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Subscribe to the NODPA News and support NODPA!

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_ \$40 to cover an annual subscription to NODPA news

\_\_\_\_\_ \$300 to \$500 to become a Friend

\_\_\_\_\_ \$50 to become an Associate member (open to all)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$500 to \$1,000 to become a Patron

\_\_\_\_\_ \$100 to become a supporter of NODPA

\_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000+ to become a Benefactor

\_\_\_\_\_ \$150 to become a Business Member

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a certified organic dairy producer? YES NO

Number of milking cows \_\_\_\_\_

Milk buyer \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Credit card: Master Card Visa Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_ 201\_\_ Security Code on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## FarmTek introduces Newly-Designed FodderPro System

FarmTek has introduced a redesigned commercial fodder system that provides easy assembly and yields “abundant growth.” FarmTek maintains that the FodderPro 3.0 Commercial Feed System has enhanced its nutrient film technique (NFT) trays in an effort to produce fresher and healthier fodder than ever before. The system comes available in three different daily output capacities, 375, 750 and 1,150 lbs., plus customized systems can be designed to fit your specific needs. Jon Kozlowski, FarmTek’s hydroponic fodder specialist states that, “We’ve started to see immediate positive results in better mold control and improved drainage.” The triple-galvanized structural steel frame of the commercial system supports seven rows of UV-stabilized, PVC growing channels. Each row provides the desired per-pound output based on the system, allowing the farmer to grow fresh fodder year-round in a controlled environment. The simple installation process allows the grower to get their system running in a short period of time.

*For more information on the FodderPro Commercial Feed Systems and accessories available at FarmTek, call 1.800.327.6835 to speak with a fodder specialist or visit [www.FodderSystems.com](http://www.FodderSystems.com).*



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## From the MODPA Treasurer

**A**s I write this we are at the start of a new year. For many of us having 2014 behind us will be welcome. After a long hard winter and a very wet spring in my area it seemed at times as if the year was never going to get going. In my area the pasture conditions were good all season. The best that they have been in many years. Some of the row crops paid the price for this as they don't deal as well with all of the moisture we had to deal with. Yields have been all over the board but most were at least acceptable for the year. There will be some effect on milk production going forward as getting good quality hay made was nearly impossible in June. If you are going to need to purchase feed I would advise doing it soon as the best feed will likely sell out fast. Hopefully 2015 will bring us a better cropping year.

Winter has its drawbacks but it also brings us opportunity as well. The time to reflect on what worked this past year can be very helpful looking forward. Winter also brings us to conference season. If you have the opportunity to take in a conference or two I strongly recommend doing so. We are blessed to have several very good ones here in the Midwest. I find the time spent at a conference to be very rewarding. The opportunity to exchange ideas and catch up with old friends is a great way to fight off the winter blues and give us a fresh look forward into the coming year. The MOSES website gives a good listing of what is going on or feel free to contact me if you have questions.

As always feel free to contact me or any of the MODPA representatives with your thoughts or questions. Hope to see you soon.

Wishing you all a great rest of the winter!

**Bruce Drinkman**

**MODPA Treasurer**

**3253 150th Avenue**

**Glenwood City, WI 54013**

**715-265-4431**

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[www.nodpa.com/nl\\_print\\_advertising.shtml](http://www.nodpa.com/nl_print_advertising.shtml)

## 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**

## 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." To ensure a fair and sustainable farm gate price.

1. Keep family farms viable for future generations.
2. Promote ethical, ecological and humane farming practices.
3. Networking among producers of all organic commodities.
4. Promote public policy, research and education in support of organic ag.

## MODPA Board

**Wisconsin**

Darlene Coehoorn, President  
Viewpoint Acres Farm  
N5878 Hwy C, Rosendale, WI 54974  
ddviewpoint@yahoo.com  
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Jim Small, Director  
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**Iowa**

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Garnaville, IA 52049  
Tel: 563-964-2758

**Michigan**

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zimbadairy@tband.net  
Phone: 989-872-2680

**Ohio**

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

**Northeast Organic Dairy Producers  
Alliance (NODPA)**

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

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**CALENDAR**

*continued from page 36*

held just prior to the start of the MOSES Organic Farming Conference, will focus on building a solid foundation for organic agriculture, in order to provide healthy food for the future in a sustainable and ecologically sound way. The event will highlight research on organic farming systems, seeds and crop varieties suitable for organic production, holistic livestock care and feeding, soil health, organic markets and more. Researchers from all over the world will present their work at this event. Keynote speaker Chuck Benbrook will speak on The Benefits of Organic Agriculture: Evidence Based Results. Visit <http://www.cias.wisc.edu/oars/> for full details and registration.

**February 26-28, 2015**

**MOSES Organic Farming Conference, LaCrosse Center, 300 Harborview Plaza, LaCrosse, WI**

The MOSES Conference is the largest event in the U.S. about organic

and sustainable farming. It's the one event of the season where you can expand your farming knowledge, discover new resources and tools, make connections and find support. Visit [www.mosesorganic.org/conference](http://www.mosesorganic.org/conference) for complete details.

**March 4, 2015**

**NOFA-NY Organic Dairy and Field Crop Conference**

**Holiday Inn Syracuse/Liverpool**

**441 Electronics Parkway, Liverpool, NY**

Enjoy a day of learning, networking, and information exchange, and featuring Keynote Speaker Neal Kinsey's talk on Know Your Soils: You Can't Manage What You Can't Measure. This year's program includes a half-day intensive workshop entitled "Homeopathic, Herbal and Holistic Solutions to Common Situations in the Dairy Herd". For more information, go to their website: [www.nofany.org/dairyconference](http://www.nofany.org/dairyconference).