

NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Cows on Nathan & Kristine Weaver's Grunen Aue Farm

Grunen Aue Farm, Canastota, NY

By Sonja Heyck-Merlin

Grunen Aue Farm of Canastota, New York, a seasonal all-grass, no-grain dairy, takes its name from a section of Psalm 23: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me besides the still waters." Grunen Aue, which translates to green pastures in the Amish tongue, is owned and operated by Nathan and Kristine

Weaver and family. The farm is located about 35 miles east of Syracuse and is comprised of 132 acres, with about one half of the acreage in pasture/hay ground. Adjoining the farm are another roughly 60 acres of rented ground. The land is reasonably flat with a few marginally steep corners and good dark loamy high calcium soils which make it very *continued on page 26*

An Interview with 2014 Acres U.S.A. Eco-Agriculture Achievement Award Winner Dr. Richard "Doc" Holliday

By Susan Beal, DVM

Waukon, Iowa veterinarian, Richard "Doc" Holliday, was presented with the Acres U.S.A. Eco-agriculture Achievement Award at the 2014 Acres U.S.A. Conference and Trade Show held in Columbus, Ohio in early December 2014. This award, presented yearly to an exceptional leader in the eco-agricultural community, honors "Doc" Holliday for his over fifty years of work in the alternative

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the NODPA President

Just in case you were wondering how this winter stacks up, the National Weather Service announced that this was the coldest February on record in northern New York. And snow? Well, we certainly had more than usual, but nothing compared to the six feet (or more) that some farmers are reporting in northern New England. I hope by the time you read this, winter has released its grip in your area.

Last month, people met in our Town Hall basement to paint quilt patterns on large squares of plywood. Maybe we were all desperate to do something that did not involve chopping frozen manure or moving snow. Barn quilts are the new thing this year; I suppose that it will give the tourists something to do in the summer and will draw attention to the remaining barns in the area. I easily chose a quilt block pattern that will hang on the north side of the barn -- the pattern is called "Storm At Sea". I thought it was the perfect metaphor for farming.

Just like a ship is tossed about on the ocean by forces beyond its control, it often feels like we are in the same situation, as farmers. We steer our own ships as deftly as we can through hardships imposed by weather

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extremes, market forces, rising costs and debt. It takes real skill, determined faith and a bit of luck to get past the storms. The winds also can carry us in positive directions, sometimes just as unexpectedly.

There is a lot of chatter among farmers in my area about the new milk markets looking for organic milk. It feels great to know we have options. And we know from experience that competition in the marketplace benefits everyone. I wish you the best in steering your farm through its challenges and towards its opportunities!

Liz Bawden, NODPA President

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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

From the NODPA Desk: March 2015

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

I'm going to write about something other than the weather, I'm sure that by the time you all read this we will be in Spring!

This last week I went to the annual meeting of the Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM), the MOSES conference and the reception held by the Cornucopia Institute, all of which were in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The OFARM members were excellent hosts and ensured that I was well housed, dined and wined while attending their daylong meeting which highlighted the work they have done over the year, and included an intercontinental presentation from seed and genetic saver Bela Bartha – Pro Specie Rara, Basel, Switzerland. They invited many organic leaders to their meeting to make presentations on their work and to share experiences helpful to all of the organic community. If you want to learn more about OFARM, visit their website is <http://www.ofarm.coop/>. It shows what they do and their mission statement, which is all about working together to ensure a sustainable income for all organic producers. I have attended several of their meetings over the last few years, and NODPA has a good working relationship on many issues critical to the future of organic producers because we share a common future rather than fearing competition with Midwest grain growers. We need a fair price for organic grain producers and for organic dairy producers so that both have a future that can sustain a domestic organic market and a healthy environment.

The MOSES conference attracted thousands of participants for their excellent programs and workshops and effectively took over the town of La Crosse. I took advantage of the many farmers and organizations at the conference to have discussions and attend meetings to forward the campaign to stop an organic check-off and to further the work of establishing a national organic producer voice. The strength of the opposition to the organic check-off enabled us to move forward in planning ways to coordinate activities to both educate producers about the adverse effects of a federal check-off, and ways to respond to any proposal that the Organic Trade Association (OTA) may/already has submitted to USDA. Unfortunately, we will not know the contents of any proposal until it is published on the Federal Register for comments.

The Cornucopia Institute hosted a very good reception with some great chili and good conversations on many issues including the organic check-off and coexistence.

The USDA is hosting a Stakeholder Workshop on Coexistence on March 12th and 13th for a select group of folks they have identified as stakeholders, with an agenda that is very slanted to benefit the

chemical companies, although they are responding to criticism about their choice of stakeholders by inviting producers a week before the event. This is one of the most important issues of the day for all, not just organic farmers, that do not want their crops contaminated by genetically engineered genes. It is common sense and established legal practice that if your land, livestock or crops are contaminated by another entity, then that entity bears responsibility for paying for any damage – if your neighbor's bull jumps the fence and impregnates your cows, the neighbor is responsible for any damage or financial hardship. GE crops are produced under license so the patent holder is responsible for any financial hardship, not your neighbor who is using it, since he/she is prevented from owning that seed by the patent holder. USDA has suggested that farmers having crop insurance may be a method to compensate for lost income from contamination, but it would be a difficult and probably expensive policy to underwrite and not appropriate for the situation. Chemical companies that hold the patent should be the ones that take out insurance to cover contamination caused by their product. It will be interesting to see what emerges from the workshop and whether any recommendations recognize the reality of the responsibility.

I was not surprised when I learned that over 60% of organic grains that are used in the US are imported and how the massive gains in organic sales are based on importation of raw materials. The reason for the importation is partly due to availability and partly on price. The availability is great for organic ground beef from organic cull cows available in the US, but it is easier and cheaper to import beef manufacture trim from Australia. If the organic pay price for grains were higher, there would be more grain producers transitioning to organic. Consumers are paying more for organic because they believe the products are better for them and that they benefit their environment. With imports driving the expansion of organics and either driving down pay prices or preventing prices from rising enough to sustain US organic producers, it is unlikely we will see a growth in organic production, especially as the early pioneers of organic processing sell out to large conglomerates who only have one bottom line – profits for their shareholders. Where is the commitment of processors to maintaining and growing organic production in the US, both from their own long term secure supply and food safety, but also the improvement of the environment for their customers and shareholders – the triple bottom line?

It's probably that I'm in my sixty third year that the attendees at the MOSES conference seemed so young. Their youth and commitment is very encouraging but it does give an added responsibility to those of us that have worked hard to establish organic production as a viable farming enterprise. We need policies, regulations and laws that will protect their future to farm under organic certification that provides for integrity of the product from field to table. It is not enough to compromise and admit that the problems that face us are a 'done deal'. We need to continue our fight to ensure a viable future for domestic organic producers and a way to build a structure to represent the farmers' voice to lawmakers and regulators to protect the long term interests of farmers. ♦

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Farmers Voice: Is It Time For An Organic Farmers Alliance Organization?

By Steve Gilman, Interstate NOFA Policy Coordinator



Steve Gilman

In the arcane world of farm and food policy where self-serving initiatives are put through by special interests in far-off seats of power – who speaks for organic farmers and how are those voices heard?

Although the idea of an organic farmers association

has been kicking around since organics' beginnings in the 1990's some recent issues have brought a new organizing effort to the forefront starting with a number of nationwide meetings, conference calls and a survey to explore the question.

Organic checkoff?

For starters, it's instructive to consider a controversial present day example where organic farmers were caught flat-footed without a genuine policy voice of their own.

In a chance meeting with my Congressman at the airport when I was heading to D.C. for Capitol Hill visits a few years ago, Representative Chris Gibson (R, NY) told me he had great news for organic farmers – the House Agriculture Committee, of which he is a member, had just included language for an all-commodity organic checkoff program in the developing 2013 Farm Bill. My jaw dropped but there wasn't time in the terminal to address this pronouncement until a meeting scheduled the next day at his office. Then the Congressman was surprised to learn that despite what was presented – a significant number of organic farmers actively oppose it. As the word went out into the hinterlands this "great news" proved to be a hugely divisive issue for organic farmer groups around the country.

Federal checkoff programs are administered for a fee by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) but funded and run by agricultural commodity industry groups for research and promotion to develop markets for their products. "Got Milk?" and "Pork, the Other White Meat" are examples of some intensive advertising campaigns funded by these multimillion dollar checkoff programs.

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National organic leaders gathered in Washington, DC in June, 2014, to consider a national organic farmer organization

For farmers not only does the checkoff funding come directly out of their pockets via a compulsory tax on their production – but also their relatively powerless position in the industry lineup gives them little representation on the boards that decide how that money is handled and spent. Not surprisingly farmer groups of all stripes have a history of working against checkoff programs after years of being on the receiving end of such levies while witnessing the lion's share of the benefits going to industry processors.

That's why the claims of deep farmer support for the newly proposed organic checkoff legislation in the Farm Bill were so extreme. But in the absence of a authentic farmer voice Congress was led to believe the assertions put forth by the Organic Trade Association (OTA) who enlisted the high-powered DC lobbying firm, the Podesta Group, to usher it through both the House and Senate Ag Committees right into the Farm Bill. It wasn't until

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic Farmers Alliance?

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the organic checkoff legislation was a done deal that concerted opposition emerged from the unorganized organic farmer groups scattered across the country. As OTA pushed for farmer buy-in after the legislation was accomplished many groups weighed in, including the Interstate NOFA Policy Committee who after discussions voted unanimously to oppose the checkoff.

Organic farmers are still in disarray. The Farm Bill finally passed in 2014 and OTA has been active on many fronts targeting support for a farmer vote to authorize USDA to take on the organic checkoff. One of their strategies has been to exempt small scale farmers from paying into the checkoff – but the tradeoff is that the marginalized grassroots bloc will also lose any say on how such a checkoff is constituted and administered – and how the funds get spent in the name of Organic. A vote by larger scale organic certificate holders and a decision by USDA to take on the organic checkoff is expected sometime in the first part of 2015.

OTA is not the only group to step into the vacuum claiming to be the voice of organic farmers. In the absence of a legitimate farmer organization – so-called watchdog and other organic advocacy groups have not been adverse to stepping into the void with claims that they are speaking for organic farmers on various issues. Such organic farmer issues are spurring discussions about the need to

build an effective national organic farmers organization.

Discussion time

A meeting in June 2014 was organized in Washington, DC to explore the possibilities of building an effective political voice for organic farmers and ranchers. Representatives of organic farming and supporting associations from the East, Midwest, Northwest, South, Upper Great Plains and mountain regions stood in for approximately one third of US organic farmers.

As the conversation continues the goal of these early discussions is not to immediately design a program but to reach out to as many organic groups as possible to gather input and work out some general parameters. An early agreement was that an organic farmers alliance should be a Big Tent organization representing certified organic farmers of all scales.

At this point the core group members are reaching out in an open-spirited effort across the country via networking connections and a survey in an attempt to bring in the vast majority of organic farmers and their organizations to the table for input – and if the project gains legitimate support to go forward to then work out the nuts and bolts of such an organization together.

To overcome domination by larger scale entities a balanced regional approach has been proposed where family farmers of the Northeast would have as much voting power as big growers in the Far West or Midwest. The Domestic Fair Trade Association regional model has been put forth – not only because of its exceptional peer-review process and commitment to continual



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improvement but also because its regional representation parameters have been shown to involve more people in the process.

NOFA deliberations

The NOFA Interstate Policy Committee is currently discussing this issue from many points of view. One criticism of this organizational effort is that a previous attempt in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s to found a national organic farmers group called the Organic Farmers Associations Caucus (OFAC) ultimately failed.

This organizing attempt took place during the intense negotiations that produced the Organic Food Production Act of 1990 in Congress, which formed the legal basis for creating the National Organic Program within USDA. But at that early time the organizers were also facing challenging logistics in addition to the legislation – there was no standardized organic certification program and very little linkage between the pioneering organic groups scattered across the country. Also, today’s modern communications technology was in its infancy.

All was not lost in the attempt, however, many good things came out of the process. Longtime organic activist Elizabeth Henderson, who was in the thick of the organizing effort, recalls it this way:

“While the Organic Farmers Associations Caucus (OFAC) was not successful in establishing a national alliance of organic farming groups, we were successful in changing the initial proposal for the National Organic Program so that it would not put certification in the hands of state departments of agriculture. We also were able to add the language on how to evaluate materials for

use in organic production. However, spending many, many hours on this legislation distracted us from our intentions of providing capacity building for the organic associations around the country. After 2 years, we threw in our remaining resources with the National Dialogue for Sustainable Agriculture, which eventually became the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture. The National Campaign organic committee coordinated the response to the first NOP that turned it around. It was not just grass roots groups each acting on their own.”

Minutemen or Standing Army?

Another viewpoint in the NOFA discussion is that instead of putting energy toward constituting and maintaining yet another organization, organic farmers can be better mobilized if they are organized like the Minutemen during the Revolutionary War days – when they were called from their fields to respond to specific threats – and not enlisted into a standing army.

One response is that back in the day the Minutemen didn’t have the tremendous decentralized organizing and communications capability of the internet, email and conference calls that could make for a more effective organizational strike force. Further, nowadays there are numerous well-established organic groups that are already well linked and have worked together for years – so it’s an easier job to join forces. Just within the National Organic Coalition, for example, there are certified organic farmer constituents in the seven NOFAs, the Maine Organic Farmers

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Preparing for Spring: A Pre-Turnout Checklist

By Susan Beal, DVM

Sitting here, listening to the wind roaring through the hemlock grove behind my wee house, with the temperature solidly below zero and several feet of snow piled up, even in the protected timber, it seems odd to be writing about spring turnout. While we know that the land is still percolating under the snow cover, and we see the lengthening days, on days like today it can be difficult to envision the perennial miracle of the return of grass.

If you've not already put some thought into it, this is a great time of year to jot down a few notes and make a checklist to ensure you're ready for turnout. That time will come quickly – and will be sooner for some than for others. Here in Pennsylvania, the differences between the northwestern and southeastern corners of the state are incredible – with turnout varying between late March and mid- May. Some graziers (primarily beef herds) have been able to extend their grazing season into late January (even here in the west central region).

Some of my before-turnout checklist notes follow; they emphasize what is important to me, what are priorities in my management and overall goals. I will enjoy hearing what's on your checklist. Please feel free to write or email me – or better yet, post on Odairy list or send your notes to Nora Owens, NODPA News Editor, so she can collect them for a follow-up article. My list will not be your list and I know we're going to learn from one another.

Grazing Plan: Write it, update it

I'm not going to delude you – charting a grazing plan takes some thought and time. Folks who have made grazing plans in the past will find that each subsequent year's plan gets easier to do because you've got some records and notes about how the reality of the plan actually happened. It's easy to do with some coaching from in-person mentors or some help from references that take you step by step through the process.

Planning your grazing rotations and timing – and, importantly, basing that timing on ensuring the pastures are fully recovered before turning any stock back onto them – will really force you to consider many aspects of your farm and overall farm plan. It will help you calculate the amount of forage on the farm, it can help direct a plan to sow annuals and cover crops, and it will help you plan forward.

One of the misunderstandings about planned grazing is that the plan is in stone and must never change – and that any change negates the value of the plan. In fact, we plan to the best of our abilities, and then we amend the plan, as we need to while working in the structure and framework of the actual planning

Dr. Susan Beal



process. Plan in pencil – and write the actuals in ink. Year to year records will really help get a broader sense of the ongoing and evolving dynamic of the farm.

One of the pitfalls I often see when folks start making a grazing plan is using the same recovery period all season. In my experience recovery periods vary throughout the season. They may be as short as fourteen days in the early season to as long as sixty or more days in the late season.

It's important to remember that the recovery period begins when all stock is off the land. If you run chickens after cattle, for example, then the recovery period begins when the chickens leave, not when the cattle leave. And if you have large paddocks that are subdivided but not back-fenced between moves, the recovery period begins when the cattle cannot access the paddock.... not when they move from subdivision one to subdivision two. If the recovery period is twenty days, then the stock are going to need twenty-one places to be in that time.

Grazing planning references: *Savory Institute*, <http://www.savory-institute.com/>; *Holistic Management International and Holistic Management Workbook*, <http://holisticmanagement.org/>

Biological Monitoring

Biological monitoring is an inherent part of the pre-turnout checklist. Sure, you'll be measuring grass height and maturity but you should also be on the lookout for other things happening on the land. Is there evidence of relative overgrazing? What is the plant density and species diversity? Is that changing over time?

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“All fresh animals get it... works naturally, clears problems quickly.”

— Sean Mallett



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Sean and his step-dad John Reitsma own and operate Nature’s Harmony Organic Dairy, LLC, near Twin Falls, Idaho. The 1300-cow grass-based dairy has been in organic milk production since 2006, preceded by conventional dairying since 1984.

A top producer of high quality milk, the 1300-cow dairy’s SCC average stands below 180,000. Sean likes what natural methods do for the cows and the land. What he finds rewarding is “taking care of the animals and managing the herd with natural products that work.”



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RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Seeking Farmers for Farm Succession Project

By Kathy Ruhf, Senior Program Director and Southern New England Field Agent, Land For Good

Is planning for retirement and the future of your farm on your “to do” list? Would you be willing to share your ideas and concerns about your farm transition? If you are a senior operator, the junior generation, or a beginning organic dairy farmer with ideas and concerns about how organic dairies will be passed on please read on.

The farm succession conundrum. Of all the daily challenges that organic dairy farmers grapple with, farm succession is not usually on the list. It’s easier to put off planning for that unsettled future, and to avoid uncomfortable subjects like death and taxes. But we all know that the future of the farm is a concern for most farmers. A 2014 national gathering of senior organic farmers expressed an overriding concern with how they would be able to retire, and also pass their knowledge to the next generation. Organic farming groups such as NODPA share these concerns, as do younger farmers and the increasing number of devoted organic food consumers.

A new project led by Land For Good (LFG) will give the organic



Kathy Ruhf

farm transition “conundrum” focused attention and support. LFG is a New England nonprofit organization that specializes in farm access and transfer. Its organic farm succession project will investigate organic dairy farmers’ unique dilemmas and opportunities in transition planning. Supported by grants from Organic Valley’s

Farmers Advocating for Organics Fund and the Clif Bar Family Foundation, LFG will hold discussion groups and conduct interviews with organic dairy farmers across New England to develop better strategies to help farmers address farm succession.

Farmers’ voices are key! Please participate in this project. LFG seeks farmers at any stage of succession planning—from not having considered it yet to having a plan in place. The junior generation on the farm and young farmers looking to transition into organic dairying are also invited. All too often discussion and actions

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on farm succession get triggered far too late—by crisis or death. By that time options for a secure retirement and certain farm legacy have been drastically reduced. Too many farms are lost forever as a result. It's so much better to plan earlier for retirement and farm transfer. Midlife farmers are especially welcome in this project.

LFG will hold discussion groups in Vermont and mid-Maine in March and early April. These gatherings will explore farm transfer and access challenges in the organic dairy sector. As a participant, you will provide valuable insights leading to improved services to transitioning organic farmers. You will also learn from each other about attitudes and strategies to create a secure transition and meaningful legacy. LFG will also conduct individual phone or in-person interviews.

All participants will receive a stipend and mileage reimbursement. And, through LFG's Farm Legacy Program, project participants will be eligible to receive free or discounted farm succession planning services. The information and insights shared by farmers will lead to development of resources and assistance especially targeted to organic farmers. Your perspectives and experiences will help all generations of organic farmers keep their farms in farming. And you will have a chance to get further down the road to having a concrete plan for farm succession or transfer in place.

Interested? Call Land For Good at 603-357-1600 or email info@landforgood.org and a staff member will get back to you with details. You can learn more about Land For Good at www.landforgood.org.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic Farmers Association?

continued from page 7

and Gardeners Association, the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association, the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES), the Organically Grown Company, the Organic Seed Alliance, the Rural Advancement Fund International and the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance.

Since there's always multiple food industry machinations requiring continual vigilance and action, a light-on-its-feet alliance could make a real impact – and finally organic farmers would be empowered to speak with their own voice. There's still a long way to go and talks continue. At the recent MOSES conference there was another meeting of interested organic farmers and farm groups with another meeting planned for June in Washington DC.

Steve Gilman is Policy Coordinator, NOFA Interstate Council and welcomes comments and questions at stevegilman@verizon.net.

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Organic Industry News

Doc Holliday: ACRES Achievement Award Winner

continued from page 1

veterinary and holistic agricultural communities.

A 1959 graduate of the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine, Doc studied relationships between animal health and soil fertility under William Albrecht before entering into private mixed practice in northwest Missouri. It was during this time that Doc Holliday began to explore the concepts of feeding self-regulated individual minerals to animals.

Always one to push the envelope, and continually learning, in 1988 Doc became one of the first certified veterinary acupuncturists and served as the president of the International Veterinary Acupuncture Association from 1992-1994. Continuing to be active in his eighth decade, Doc works as the senior veterinary consultant for Advanced Biological Concepts, based in Osco, Illinois.

Doc Holliday was lured to the stage at an evening session at the 2014 AcresUSA meeting on the guise of recognizing him for the publication of his new book, *A Holistic Vet's Prescription for a Healthy Herd*, co-authored with the late Jim Helfter and published in December by Acres U.S.A. (and reviewed on page 13) Once he was on stage, the assembled group recognized Doc as an inspirational leader in the agricultural community who had dedicated his life to the betterment of man and beast and who generously and freely shares his knowledge and experience with others - supporting and encouraging better, healthier farming and animal husbandry practices.

I've known Doc since the 1980s. I've learned many things from him – and some of those things even have to do with veterinary medicine! He does stunning beadwork, beautiful leather work (both braiding and embossing), precise enlaid woodwork and has made numerous cedar strip canoes. I hold Doc not only as a friend, colleague and mentor, but also as a wise older brother, as well as a father of three daughters and proud grandfather of 14 grandchildren. It seems appropriate to have Doc share some insights and talk a little about his life in a more formal manner than he usually does. He's broken a lot of trail for those of us who have followed him – and I'll always appreciate that. Besides, it's not often you get to talk to someone who's studied soil with Albrecht!

Tell us about your past practice and career?

I graduated from the U of Missouri Vet School in 1959. I conducted a mixed animal, solo vet practice for 25 years when I went to work for the Impro Company in 1984. I guess my title would have been Technical Service Vet and I was involved almost exclusively with organic or alternative dairies. I initially worked for the Wisconsin distributor. After a couple of years I was moved to the

home office in Minneapolis and in 1991 we moved to Waukon to be employed by the Impro manufacturer. In January of 2008, I became employed by Helfter Enterprises as the Senior Veterinary Consultant ('senior' because I was old and the only one).

What got you excited about holistic practice and integrative methods of health care for animals?

My earliest exposure was through Louis Bromfield's books Pleasant Valley and Malabar Farm. I also studied soils under Dr. William Albrecht. In about 1960, I was exposed to "Organic Gardening and Farming" magazine. After a few years of exploring organic gardening and human health I finally made the quantum leap – "Hey, this would probably work for animal health too." I can't say that I never really practiced as a holistic vet but mostly practiced holistic stuff on my own animals. Used lots of vinegar and cafeteria style minerals. There wasn't much holistic stuff available back then and you had to be careful who you spoke to about holistic or you would be considered a little daft. My transition was gradual over many years.

Where did you receive your training in the various types of holistic medicines that you've practiced?

I attended training at the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society (IVAS) but mostly I learned from good holistic dairymen and from other experts in the field.

What animals have you worked with?

For the first 25 years I worked with any animal whose owners would pay me money; probably about 75% large animal, dairy, beef and horses. I really liked working with horses. With Impro it was mostly dairy. With Helfter – large animals.

What have been some of the high points in your career?

I enjoyed working with cattle and horses. It was a kick to be able to deliver live calves. Highest point has been the association with the holistic/alternative movement.

Are you finding growth in the number of organic dairy farms – and the number of people who are seeking holistic care for their herds, be they dairy or beef or other species?

I have no way to assess this. Remember, I am 81 years old and don't get around much anymore.

What are your favorite modes of treatment – and why?

I was intrigued by acupuncture even though I never had much chance to practice it. Of course, I worked a lot with colostrum whey products over the years and began using cafeteria-style minerals in the very early 1960's.

I guess I don't have a favorite form of treatment. Having to treat

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Research & Education

Book Review

A Holistic Vet's Prescription for a Healthy Herd

by Richard J Holliday, DVM and Jim Helfter

By Geneva Perkins, Contributing Writer

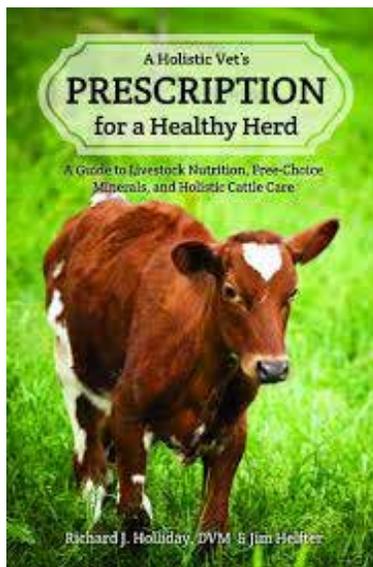
Our world today is bombarded with new drugs, new herbicides and pesticides, new soil amendments that promise to cure, kill and repair all the woes and miseries that afflict us and the livestock that we depend upon for our livelihood. Richard “Doc” Holliday and Jim Helfter draw from their years of combined experience in treating and studying animals to provide an introduction to holistic livestock care.

The key word here is holistic. By studying the change in feeding habits of the bison roaming hundreds of acres with a veritable smorgasbord of nutrients to the modern confined living conditions with limited or no choice of food, the authors show the effects of imbalanced nutrition on livestock health and productivity. The book builds the case that conventional care focuses on treatment of specific symptoms and prevention of specific illnesses, while holistic treatment can involve a variety of approaches, including nutrition and alternative therapy. While acknowledging that sometimes the use of antibiotics is necessary, their experience has shown that a healthy, well cared for animal is more likely to stay healthy even when exposed to disease.

The book is broken down into three sections: Holistic Animal Health and Nutrition, Trace Minerals and Free-Choice Mineral Programs, and Holistic Herd Management.

The book does not provide a specific “recipe”, but instead provides the base knowledge to build the foundation of a feed and health care program in which the animals themselves will demonstrate to the farmer what they need to become and stay a profit producing herd. When given the choice of quality, free-choice minerals that complement forage, each individual animal will select the specific minerals that are needed for that animal at that time.

Through real life examples, the authors show how each animal in a herd is affected by imbalances in nutrition and how each animal has different needs at different times. A variety of stresses to an animal affects each animal in different ways; what works for one animal may not be the solution to another animal's problem. Given a chance, with careful observation, the animal will show the herds person what is needed. This



book promotes the belief that every animal is unique; thus the need for holistic cattle care.

The mid-section of the book gets in to the nuts and bolts of a free choice system. As knowledge grows around the effects of diet, the designs of the experiments have changed to better demonstrate the benefits of the free choice system. While some research has not endorsed the free choice system, as with any data, the conclusions are only as good as the experiment designed. The reader is recommended to other resources if more in-depth information is desired.

The book offers suggestions on how to provide a free choice system and specifics on how to troubleshoot when health issues do arise. Examples of research efforts around free choice feeding are cited. Chapter 12 focuses on the specifics of free mineral consumption. This section is very detail oriented and is a good resource which can be referenced as the occasion requires. Each component of diet intake is considered, along with a description of symptoms of too much or too little. As with anything new, problems can arise; this chapter is a good guide to which you can refer time and again.

The book concludes with specific treatments for several of the most common afflictions encountered in the dairy industry: milk fever, mastitis, grass tetany, bloat, and fetal loss.

Doc Holliday explores unconventional methods of managing the health of the herd. Giving the example of Jim, whom he met early in his veterinary career, he shares how he learned from Jim, a man known for having a way with animals. Holliday believes we all can “have a way with animals” if we take the time to develop it. This involves more of a hands-on approach, observing and “listening” to what the animal is telling you. He explores the use of acupuncture as a method of diagnosis and treatment.

Finally, he emphasizes the importance of good record keeping as a tool for learning from your experience and developing good management practices.

I found the book to be informative and an overall easy read. The health of the animal doesn't begin at birth, but before birth. Herd health is not a quick fix, it must start from the ground up. ♦

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Doc Holliday

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an animal is somewhat of a failure of husbandry or vet advice. One of my instructors in Vet school advised us to be teachers to help owners do a better job of animal husbandry. I think that should still be a big part of our role. He also advised us to pick a town to practice in that had lots of saloons and brothels, as that was an indication that ‘money’ was available and moving. I don’t know if that still applies or not!

(Sue’s note: Hue Karreman’s advice when looking for a site for a potential practice is to look for lots of big blue silos. I kind of think Doc’s idea about assessing moving money might be more accurate!)

Are any of these more suited to dairy animals?

Why or why not?

Both colostrum and a good mineral are valid for all animals but especially good for dairy cattle.

Can you describe a couple of interesting cases on which you’ve worked and that still stick out in your mind?

I treated a 10-year-old Holstein “pet cow” that had been diagnosed with senile atrophy of the ovaries with acupuncture and she subsequently came into heat and was bred and produced a

healthy bull calf that they named Richard.

I had a lot of eye opening experiences watching animals experience the joys of cafeteria- style mineral supplementation.

What are some conditions in dairy cattle that you have treated successfully with alternative therapies?

Colostrum whey was successful in treating mastitis problems and reproductive problems. It was most successful when used as immune support to avoid problems rather than as treatment.

Can you tell us what led to the writing and publication of the book you co-authored with the late Jim Helfer?

It was a collection of articles I had written over the years on basic holistic animal health along with what little pertinent information we could assemble relative to self-selected minerals. A lot of it has been printed before in company booklets. We approached Fred Walters to see if could all be put together in a real book form. I think they did a good job. I was sad that Jim did not see the completion as I know it was a goal of his to see a book like that published.

If you could distill your many years of practice and life experience into a few short sentences, what have you found to be most significant in your relationships with humans and animals? Can you share a couple of pearls with us?

Looking back on my 55+ years of veterinary experience, I can say that I enjoyed most of it and would do it all over again but

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(would) try to do a better job. I believe I did a greater service for animals and people during the last half of my career when I was a teacher, than I did the first half when I was just putting out fires.

I am pleased with, but hopefully not prideful of, what I accomplished. Having said that, I know that in the grand scheme of things my vet career was only the mechanism to finance the truly important life work – that of building a family and a circle of friends.

Ruth and I have been married for 60 years. We have 14 grandchildren and 6.5 great-grandchildren. We also have many close friends that we cherish as if they were family. We are so thankful we could share this life experience with all of them.

What advice might you give the farmer that is most likely to serve him/her – and his/her stock - well in a variety of situations?

First of all, read my book.

Whether you are a livestock producers or a grain or produce farmer, always remember that you are producing foods for people or animals to eat and not just producing a commodity for profit.

Strive for fertile, highly mineralized, biologically active, high organic matter soils. Soils and crops free from herbicides, insecticides, antibiotics and GMO contamination. Go beyond organic.

Strive for a nutritious, high forage diet for ruminants. Use only feeds that are inherently “natural” to the species ... feeds that are appropriate to the species, age and intended production. Avoid urea, animal fats, cottonseed and excess protein.

Provide an environment or lifestyle as close as possible to one inherently natural to the species.

Provide free choice individual minerals, trace minerals, salt and kelp.

Provide immune support at critical stress periods. Focus on the pregnant female & the newborn.

Schedule regular, frequent checks of water quality, stray voltage, production equipment, and handling procedures. Avoid stress.

Avoid inbreeding and cull vigorously.

Believe in what you are doing. Trust your own powers of observation.

Be skeptical of bought-and-paid-for research.

Ponder on the wisdom of William Albrecht, Albert Howard and Charles Walters – and our other pioneers!

What advice might you give to a veterinarian (aspiring or experienced) who is interested in holistic practice?

First of all, read my book.

Develop a view of the natural order of things and learn to work with the animal’s innate constitution to encourage health.

Be respectful of the animals we are responsible for.

Pick a main treatment mode for which you have an affinity.

Learn this one well, and if and when the need arises - pick another mode.

continued on page 22

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Pay price, feed and retail price update for March 2014

Pay price moves up slowly as sales increase and shortages continue

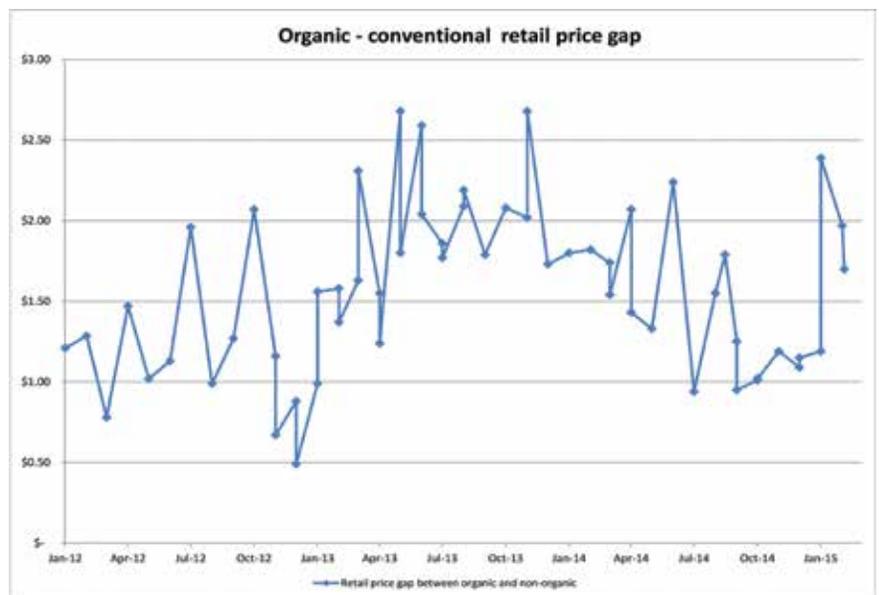
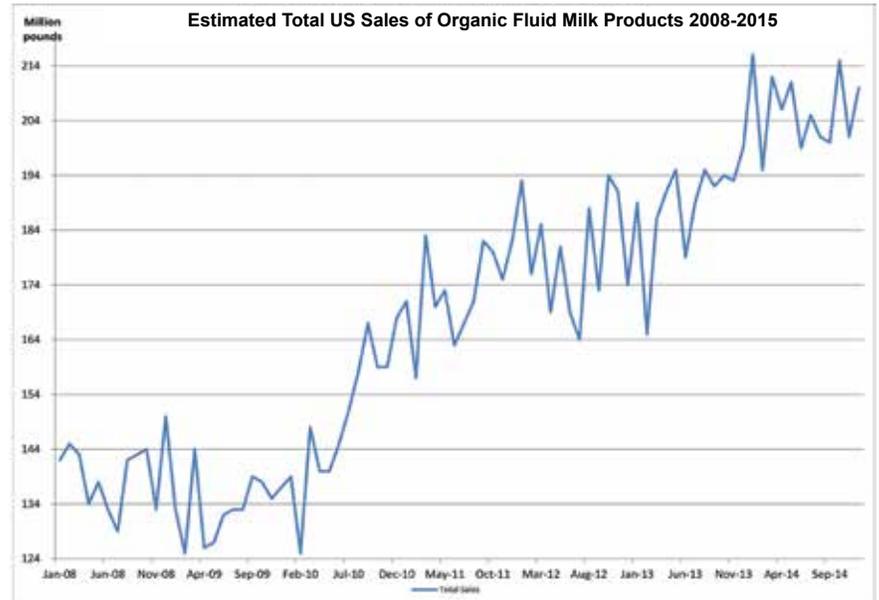
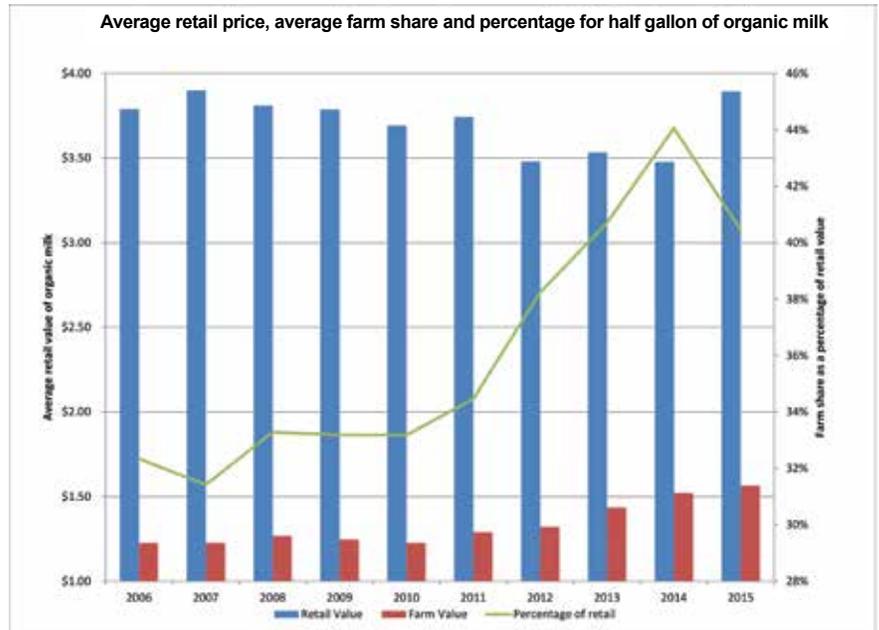
By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

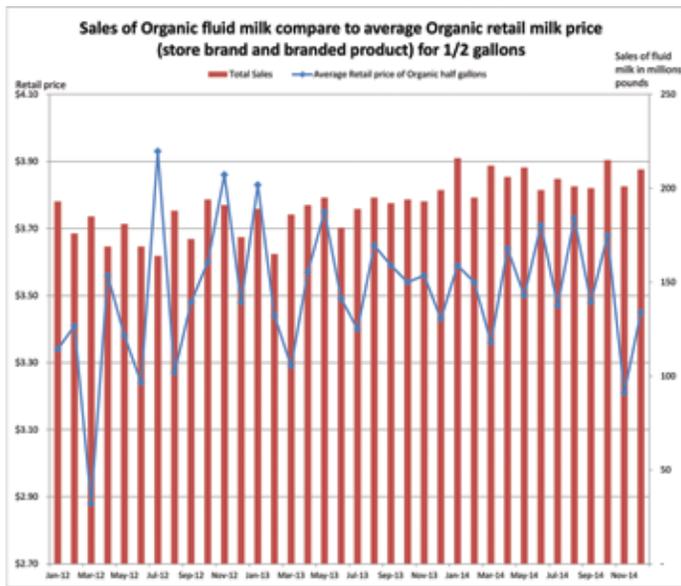
USDA AMS reports increases in retail sales of organic fluid milk in 2014 were up by 9.2% over sales in 2013, and total U.S. organic milk products' sales as a percentage of total conventional milk products' sales has trended up annually, from 1.92% in 2006 to 5.2% in 2014. As organic sales of retail fluid milk increase and conventional sales decrease interestingly it is whole organic milk that saw the highest increase in sales in 2014, with a 20.3% increase on 2013, and organic Fat Free (Skim) sales were down by 4.9% on 2013. This trend highlights the unique preference of buyers of organic milk who base their decisions on flavor, quality and the effect the product has on the environment, rather than just price.

Interest in the grass milk programs is continuing to increase, with more producers looking to satisfy the processor protocols to gain the higher pay price. For those that already have these production practices, this is a great opportunity. For those that are considering changing their practices to meet the processor requirements they should do some careful budgeting to ensure that the lower yields and the change in rations will work for their operations and the economic benefits are worth the change. They should also consider that these are currently processor requirements in a rapidly growing market and protocols could change to meet market demands.

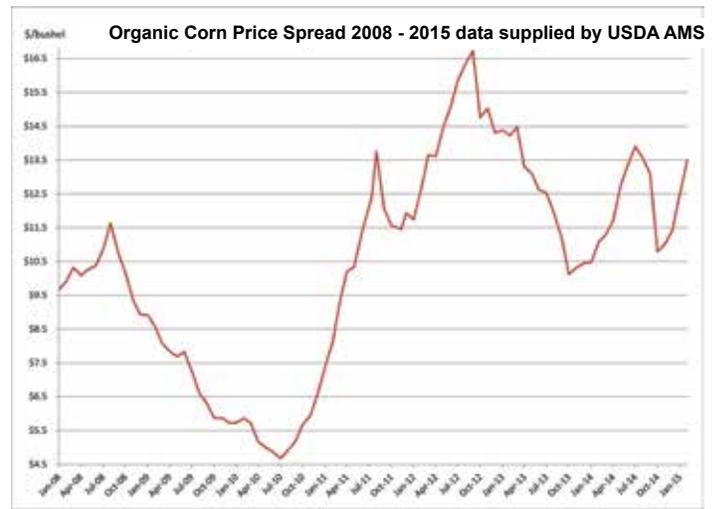
Empty supermarket shelves are evidence of the shortages across the country, and regional processors are offering incentives and increased pay price to encourage producers to switch away from the two major national brands. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of producers transitioning from conventional production to organic, although the projected lower conventional price

continued on next page





may act as an incentive if the new federal margin insurance does not work well enough for the small to mid-size operations. Organic processors are also looking to the efficiency of their trucking routes and their distance from the processing plants in their procurement decision making. One of the bigger questions that producers are asking is about the future of their Horizon/WhiteWave contracts as there are rumors that the company



will be moving away from direct procurement and contracts with producers, to another model, as the company expands into other areas. The increase in consumer demand has stimulated an increase in imports with both organic cheese and powder coming in from Australia, and being distributed by CROPP; organic beef coming in from Australia, Uruguay and Canada and being co-mingled and sold as store brand product and an increase in the importation of organic grains with over 60% of organic grain used in the US being imported.

continued on page 18

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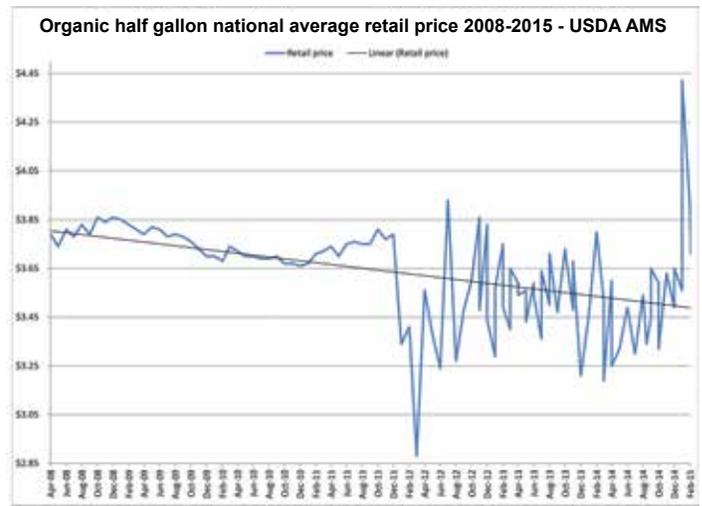
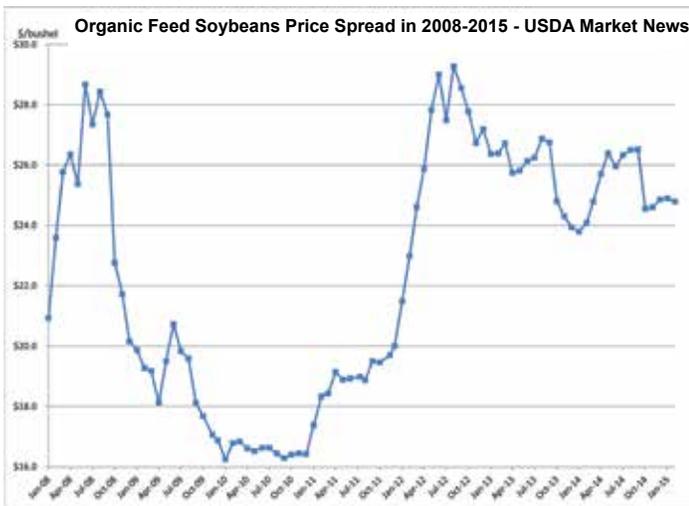
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As with everything this year the weather will affect how soon we will see pasture, especially in the northeast, and on the availability and quality of feed. The winter weather has had a measurable adverse effect on livestock and grain markets, plus slowed down and complicated transportation of product, which has been further complicated by labor disputes at the West coast ports. Some areas in the Midwest have seen more ice and blowing soil than piles of snow, although there is no change in the price of organic corn and soybeans, FOB farm. ♦

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NODPA Regional Round Up: March 2015



***Roman Stoltzfoos, Secretary,
Lancaster County Graziers
South East Pennsylvania Graziers
Conference, Ronks, PA***

The 22nd Annual South East PA Graziers Conference kicked off with a local Old Order Amish farmer, Elam Stoltzfus, giving many practical guidelines on how to, as he put it, “buy another farm without adding to your liabilities or property tax.” That is, with good grazing management you can increase your dry matter production and therefore animal performance to new levels. His 30 cow dairy is in its 6th year and has had many issues solved with the move toward mobbing cattle and improving the trample and preserving the solar plate for quicker turn around times on grazing. Good management equals the advantages of more acreage by making your current acreage much more productive. Elam walked us very gently through the process of understanding how to work with grass to maximize quality production, but reminded us also that the most important thing on a farm is family. Animal care and performance are also very important. Healthy food is the result that discerning consumers will seek when coming to your farm, and they will talk to others about it.

Cliff Hawbaker from Chambersburg, PA shared how he increases quality and production by what he calls, “a well-timed spring pruning” that is done just as grass is coming off of its peak. Cliff is convinced that the most efficient and profitable way to make soil work for you is to learn how to properly graze milking cattle. He milks once a day and ships the milk from his dairy to Tricking Springs Dairy nearby. Many practical pointers were shared about using what to most seems like radical ideas to make the farm more enjoyable and profitable.

Brendon and Katia Holmes from Misty Brook Farm in Maine gave us an overview of the grit it takes to be successful in making a living from a farm. Neither one ever had an opportunity to learn it from parents nor receive help from family to get started. The team spirit that was evident in the talk is, no doubt, their greatest asset. They are on what was Henry Perkins’ Bull Ridge Farm, Albion, ME, and enjoy having the opportunity to build

on what he has done for the past many years. They run a very diverse farm with a 30-cow dairy as the centerpiece enterprise. Direct-marketing raw milk and cream is a big share of their business. Cows are followed closely by hogs and vegetables and many other small enterprises that add up to a good living for themselves and about 5-6 full time workers. They know how to track the cost of each enterprise carefully so they know what the end cost to the consumer needs to be. They have a very loyal following of buyers for the high quality product that is delivered to stores in Maine. Average customer travel distance for those who come to the farm is about 45 miles.

Along with the above, we also enjoyed highlights from three other presenters. We toured Switzerland with Judy Mudrack who does groups tours through the Alps. She gave us a PowerPoint tour of dairy farming in the Swiss Alps and shared about the struggles of the small European Dairies. Elmer Stoltzfus, an Amish accountant, gave many good pointers about keeping records and tracking costs on farm and why it’s important to budget. Simeon Yoder, old order Amish farmer from Somerset County, PA, showed us how to take worthless strip-mined soils and build it into useful and attractive green pastures that provide milk for cheese.

This two day conference had a pre-registration fee of \$50 (\$60 for walk-in) for both days and included a very tasty home-cooked meal at noon, and proved to be a good investment for the 180 people who attended. This is held annually during the 3rd full week in February. To get on the mailing list, you can contact Roman Stoltzfoos at romans@epix.net. The meeting was held in the warehouse at the Lancaster Ag headquarters in Ronks, PA, making it easy for farmers to pick up supplies needed for their organic or grazing farm at home. Lancaster Ag is a huge supporter of the sustainable and agricultural community all across the east coast area. All the sessions were recorded and can be ordered from Cocalico Print Shoppe by calling 717-336-4179.



***Linda and George Wright
Hermon, New York***

We didn’t have much snow in December but the first two weeks of February have not been kind. We have seen a couple feet of

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Organic Industry News: Regional Roundup

Linda & George Wright

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snow and a lot of below zero temperatures. The cold is predicted to hold on for most of February.

Feed in this area remains tight but it looks like most farmers will make it through if spring gets here at a normal time or at least near normal. Sometimes freshening cows in the winter can be a challenge but so far this year seems to be going well. Cull cow and bull calf prices remain high with cows fetching 80 cents to as high as a dollar per pound. Bull calves are bringing \$2.50- \$4.00 dollars per pound.

One of the highlights for us this year is that there is close to half a dozen processors looking for milk and that can only mean higher prices for us farmers. I can hardly wait to see how much milk will be worth this year! I always find it interesting that the processors just can't afford any more money for the farmers until they are threatened with losing their producers. Then it seems the sky is the limit.

Jack Brigham, St. Albans, VT:

Hello from Northeast Vermont. Winter has gripped us with both hands. Below zero temps, deep snow. Our freestall barn is cold manure, frozen watertubs where they have little holes we keep open with an ax. Baleage is also frozen which makes feeding harder. We are looking forward to spring. Hope to start tapping trees in a week or so. Milk is \$39.84 for 5% butterfat, 3.58% protein, SCC 179,000. Grain is \$667 per ton for a 14%, baleage is selling around \$60 for a 4x5 second cut clover. Stay warm!



Pam and Rob Moore, Nichols, New York

The price of organic milk is rising, and there's increased competition among buyers serving and moving into our region for milk. We can hear the drums beating for no-grain milk, but we don't yet have a market for ours. We have a little bit of optimism for the first time in a decade. We've been shipping no-grain organic milk for 18 years now and are eager to get paid a fair price for it.

The winter weather is making farming darn inconvenient. We had to use an excavator last week to dig up the groundhog so it could deliver its forecast of 6 more months of winter. We got our first big

snow at Thanksgiving and it hasn't let up. Looks like all the moisture we didn't get during the grazing season is coming now.

We attended a standing room only No-Grain Dairy Meeting in PA last month, where attendance was triple expectations. Markets for no-grain organic milk are expanding in the NY/PA area. Wisconsin grazer Cheyenne Christianson, who ships no-grain milk to Organic Valley, spoke about his farming practices and answered questions from the large audience of current and future no-grain dairy farmers.

We sent 4 black and white late lactation cows to the sale barn on Dec. 29th ranging from 1056 to 1264 pounds. They brought \$84.50, \$99.00, \$101.50 and \$105.50 per hundredweight, the bigger cows bringing the higher prices.



Henry Perkins, Albion, ME

This winter is beginning to wear on me, with all the snow we've been getting, about 50 inches in the last week and several more inches coming down right now. High temperatures are hovering around 0 degrees.

I've been thinking about the shortage of organic milk on the store shelves and what seems to be the obvious solution; raise the price paid to the farmer. Do you suppose that processors are following the old adage in the conventional milk industry: "that if you want to increase supply, cut the price?" This will force farmers either to feed more grain or add more cows to cover their costs. This doesn't seem to be working for the organic milk industry, however, for at least two reasons: organic grain is extremely expensive, and many farms don't have the land base to add more cows to satisfy the pasture requirements.

Lots of farms in my area have instead cut back on grain which, in turn, increases forage consumption and lowers milk production. This has created a real shortage of organic hay which is beginning to show up now. I no longer milk cows but I do sell organic hay, and I've been sold out for some time now. I'm not the only one.

When I first started shipping organic milk, the word was that there was a "glass ceiling" of \$20.00/cwt. or the consumer would stop buying the stuff; turned out not to be the case. If you ask me, organic milk should be \$45-47.00/cwt. I know many will disagree with me, just like back when we were asking \$25.00/cwt.

Now, what I see happening is that more farmers will begin to feed less grain, and as long as organizations like Cornucopia continue to expose facilities that operate more like feedlots instead of pasture-based dairies, there will continue to be a shortage of organic milk unless the price to the farmer is increased.



Steve Morrison, Charleston, Maine

Maine Organic Milling (MOM) closed its doors after four years of milling and delivering grain to organic livestock producers. It was a cooperatively owned start-up with significant operating support from Organic Valley as well as private and public investors.

Ideally situated on a rail siding, MOM's home was in a retired conventional feed mill previously owned by Blue Seal. It offered customers a unique opportunity: they could be an active participant in creating their own grain mix, and it was always clear what inventory was on hand and at what price it was being offered. It was distinctive in the marketplace in that customers could count on the quality of ingredients and have access to up-to-date information them.

Despite its offering of a high quality product, the mill suffered from its oversized facility; it had a capacity many times over its monthly throughput. There was also reluctance from Maine's organic dairy producers, the mill's largest volume customers, to feed much grain during a period of extremely tight margins. The mill failed just prior to the announcement of a pay price increase to organic milk producers. MOM was unable to remain viable at a time when its largest customers were forced to limit input costs to their dairy herds.

Northern Vermont Farmer

One farmer reported that he is feeding less grain because of rising costs. He feeds grain based on the following formula: 1-100 DIM- 1 pound of grain per 2 ½ pounds milk, 101-200 DIM- 1 pound of grain per 3# milk, 200 DIM-dry- 1# of grain per 4# milk. Milk and production weights come from monthly DHIA testing. His total herd size is 150 head with 52 cows currently in milk and his grain, purchased from Morrison's, is costing about \$7500/month. He milks Holstein and Jersey Holstein crosses; ships to OV through the St. Albans Co-op; and with winter premiums in place, is making \$37.50/cwt.

The farmer had to have his faithful dog of 15 years put down the

day before. He recounted a story of the dog saving his life when he had been knocked flat by a bull. In desperation, the farmer yelled at his dog to go for the bull, and not thinking twice, the dog grabbed the bull by the nose, allowing the farmer to get himself up. The farmer reflected, "That dog was a trooper; he was a loyal friend and will be well missed."



Leon Corse, Whitingham, Vermont

Mailbox milk price, including quality is currently \$ 37.53- 4.0 fat, 3.0 protein. Our custom pelleted 14% grain mix is going for \$706/ton.

We are buried in snow. We haven't seen this much in many years, seems like it was when I was a kid, 50 years ago! Now we have a week of bitter cold with a wicked wind, too. We had lots of ice in December so that makes plowing fun as it hasn't melted.

Cows are not milking like most years, partly breeding challenges, so days in milk are way out. Lower production is also due to the fact that we're trying to be less grain dependent.

We have plenty of feed which tests pretty good and lots of potential buyers for our surplus. Price for 2nd crop baleage (4 foot) is \$42, and 1st cut dry (5 foot) is \$65.

We are really looking forward to spring.



Darlene Coehoorn, Rosendale, Wisconsin

This winter in Wisconsin has been cold, windy without much snow. We are concerned that the winter grains may not make it with all of the extreme cold without snow cover. Competition for organic milk is still very strong with producers having a choice where they want to market their production. Prices have come up some as supply of organic milk is still short. Sadly, conventional prices are headed much lower as that milk supply seems to be out of balance.

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Organic Industry News



Doc Holliday

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Treating animals has to do with energy/spiritual relationships as well as chemical/physical relationships.

What do you see as the future of the organic dairy business? The larger world of farming?

I think organic dairy will grow, as the toxin-based conventional system will eventually im-

plode. Same for conventional agriculture based on rescue chemicals.

What do we have to watch out for?

I know we need to pull back from killing things as an answer to problems. I fear the biggest worldwide threat may be the unholy alliance between companies of Monsanto's ilk and "the best government money can buy". Individually, we need to guard against getting sucked into extremist views in agriculture and politics as well as religion. We need to become more self-reliant and above all - we need to pray a lot.

Dr. Susan Beal, DVM, Laughing Oak Farm, Punxsutawney, PA, can be reached by email at alchemy@penn.com.

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Dry-Off "The efficacy of the herbal products was similar to that of conventional (antibiotic) therapy, and the herbal products had no apparent adverse effects." Journal Dairy Science 2014 Jun; 97(6):3509-22.

Active Ingredient "Thyme oil at concentrations ≥ 2% completely inhibited bacterial growth in all replications. Only thyme essential oil had consistent antibacterial activity against the 3 mastitis-causing organisms tested in vitro." Journal Dairy Science 2014 Sep; 97(9):5587-91. (Phyto-Mast active ingredient is thyme oil at concentrations > 2%)

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By Neal Kinsey

Founded in 1973, the approach of Kinsey Agricultural Services has always been that of providing a consulting service specifically dealing with soil fertility and problems that are closely related. Initially begun as a one-man soil fertility consulting service for problem soils, Neal Kinsey was trained and certificated as an agronomist by Dr. William A. Albrecht, Professor Emeritus of Soils, University of Missouri/Columbia. Our company still utilizes this foundational work on soil testing and fertility. The principal goal is to help those who use the services we offer to economically achieve an ideal level of productivity and quality in terms of the soil and the crops grown on each soil. Soil fertility work includes soils growing just about any major food, fiber or feed crop, in the world.

Our work involves utilizing specific soil tests to determine nutrient needs, and recommending the appropriate types and amounts of fertilizers and soil amendments to fill those needs. This includes working with soils and crops of all types from all 50 states in the US. We also work with soils and formulate fertility needs for clients throughout Canada and Mexico. Other principal accounts include countries from Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, and South America, providing broad experience in working with soils and crops from some 75 countries worldwide.

It is not our purpose to recommend or convince clients as to which type of farming program they should use on their land. But we try to help interested parties to understand the consequences of any mineral excesses or deficiencies the soils may have, and the problems that correcting them will solve or at least begin to immediately help to reach the solution. Consequently, we work with both certified organic growers, including chemical-free, natural, permaculture, no-till and biodynamics, as well as commercial growers, including no-till, minimum-till, and a number of variations in such commercial programs.

We are not in business to sell the fertilizers or the materials we may recommend for soil nutrient corrections to our clients. Our specialty is that of recommending the exact products needed, based on our very specific type of detailed soil analysis, for attaining top quality and top yields. A number of clients tell us they initially

hired us because we were not selling the fertilizer or other products that the soil tests showed to be needed for building up their soil. Instead, we specify what is needed, and then each grower chooses where they will purchase the fertilizers and/or soil amendments they decide to use.

Our business is advice, including optional on-site farm consultations. We earn our livelihood from the consulting services we offer, which includes evaluating soils and crops and recommending the proper fertilization for each specific situation. In addition, as a part of our consulting service, we conduct training programs on soil fertility and fertilization for growers or for other consultants and companies who want to use this system to work with farmers and growers. Meetings we sponsor, and any we conduct for others if requested, will be listed on our web site, www.kinseyag.com. These programs are designed to help clients better understand the fertility requirements of the soils they are working to build. We also use them to teach why it is important to employ the specific materials recommended for achieving the most desirable results.

It is in keeping with this philosophy; the more people know and correctly understand about soil fertility management the better for everyone relying on the soil and its most productive bounty. Consequently, though we have to charge for our time and work, we strive to provide the most valuable information possible and as a part of each consultation we gladly share as much information as we can with those who want to learn from our consulting services. In other words, we have no secrets that we try to keep to ourselves to assure those using our services always have to come back for that same secret information again and again in order to succeed with that part of their fertility program.

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Organic Industry News: Regional Roundup

Darlene Coehoorn

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Encourage your conventional neighbors to take a look at organic production as an alternative to the periodic plunges in the conventional pay price and to help supply the growing need for organic products.

Chores have been really arduous as the cold takes its toll on equipment, animals and people. Needing a break, we decided to take a road trip to the National Farm Machinery show in Louisville. In an effort to make the ride more enjoyable, we took the scenic route (two lanes instead of four) which took us thru more farmland. We always enjoy the chance to see how others farm and what they are up to.

For the most part, this time of year, all you get to see is bare ground and the rare field of corn that didn't get harvested last fall. As we drove along we only saw three farms with livestock—a beef herd, some sheep, and one dairy. As we were driving along, we began to take notice of the lone sentinels along the way—the corn cribs of days gone by. We enjoyed the chance to take in the beauty and the diversity of designs in the different cribs. We questioned why they were built in the style that they were as we saw round cribs, rectangles and several variations of both. Some were made of brick and some were wood, some were sided at an

angle lending even more interest and beauty. I didn't count the different types and I am not sure if some of them were region-specific as we had a long drive.

We shared our thoughts on when they were last used and I questioned how much they held. We would have loved to have had the time and warmer temperatures which would have enabled us to seek out permission to take a closer look, and learn more about some of the unique designs. Some of the cribs were standing strong; many were the only structure left for miles as the old farmsteads were no more; bigger equipment, bigger farms. I guessed that the cribs were left as a potential storage when the farms were rented out or sold and now it is more work than it is worth to remove them. Others were leaning and showing signs of their age, still others were mere piles of rubble, left abandoned and having succumbed to many years of neglect.

I am glad to see many of these testaments to past farming surviving, at least for now. I enjoyed the distraction that they gave our trip, and I hope that each of you will also enjoy the old structures and equipment that were farming in the past. We are fast losing this part of history and we need to acknowledge the treasures we have while they are here. I usually look for different styles of barns, as so many of them are disappearing since the farms no longer have livestock and the barns become costly to repair without a good use for them. While at the farm show, we made sure to take the time to thank and encourage those who had the courage to resist GMO's in their products and seed. We always make a point of questioning about the availability of products that can be used for organics as a way to encourage their production.

We are excited about the MOSES Organic Farming Conference in La Crosse, WI next week. This is our winter opportunity to connect with many organic producers and to fill our minds to overflowing with great information and tips to try on our farm. We always greet old friends and meet new ones at this event. It is a wonderful opportunity to share insights on organic production and to catch up on the latest organic family news. May God Bless you with enough time and energy to fully enjoy life's treasures. ♦

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Pre-Turnout Checklist

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Is there evidence of excess water movement? Is there evidence of relative over-rest?

Biological monitoring may also involve taking soil samples and forage samples and plant sap samples. The timing of those samples will be influenced by the information you want to gain and how you want to employ that information. Your checklist should make some notes about what you want to do – and when – as well as what diagnostic labs you want to use. I encourage folks to do more than dry chemistry soil samples, to look at trace minerals as well as the macronutrients, and to consider sampling the deeper soil profiles at interval.

There is some very exciting work being done around measuring the soil's ability to hold and move carbon. It's evident from this work that the deeper soil profiles in biologically active soil hold a great deal of carbon – and appreciating that capacity may be missed if you only sample the top six inches of things. Peter Donovan and his growing team of citizen/farmer scientists are involved in a marvelous open-source project that is monitoring carbon dynamics over time. He's not advising any particular prescription for land use – but simply recording what happens over the longer term by taking sequential measurements of dynamic biological systems.

Reference: www.soilcarboncoalition.org, Peter Donovan, 541-263-1888, peter@wallowa.net, www.managingwholes.com

Plan for Seeding and Field Use

Once you've worked on your grazing plan and reviewed your biological monitoring plans, then plans for seeding and field use and crop varieties and such will become more evident. You'll know that you might need to bump up your use of summer annuals, or that a particular paddock might benefit from some additional biology, or that you want to integrate a different cover crop mixture into an specific area on the farm. If we don't write those things down, we forget – and the records are lost from year to year.

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This is also a great time of year to think about integrating some medicinal hedgerows in the farm scape – and also planting some medicinal plants such as calendula, comfrey, dandelion, plantain and brambles. Some of these can be part of the diversified pasture, some can go in alleys and hedgerows and others can be placed in flowerbeds, family gardens or up against a shed or building.

Fences and Fencing

The planning you've been doing thus far will also have you thinking about fences and fencing.

Do the plans you've made make sense with the current fences on the farm? Are there changes that could be made that could improve land use or stock movement, enhance regeneration, and solve erosion or water movement problem? What's the best timing for any changes that you might want to be making? Should they be a priority when you look at all the other things that need to be done on the land?

Minimally, you'll want to make sure that you've walked the perimeter and any permanent fences to check for breaches, snow and ice damages and damage from animals and man. Every year it seems that the two-leggeds do more damage to my fences than do the animals. You also want to make sure you've checked reels and wire and posts and other fencing supplies so that you're good to go when you actually get the cows out there. And you want to check and make sure there is sufficient power to those fences.

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

Grunen Aue Farm, Canastota, NY**“The farm lives and dies with our white clover”**

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conductive to productive grass and legume growth. It's rocky but cropping and pasture renovation are not a big part of the program. Their pastures are mostly native species. They have increased their herd size from 30 milkers to about 55 since 2006 and plan to level off at 60. Excluding calf milk and milk diverted for home use, their annual production per cow is about 9,000 pounds with an average SCC of 250,000, 5.0 butterfat, 3.4 protein and 5.65 other solids. Their milk goes to Organic Valley's grass-milk pool which was newly established in their region in October of 2014.

Grunen Aue Farm bought its last load of grain in April of 2013 and when they ran out a month later didn't call the grain company to deliver more. The transition to a no-grain dairy herd was a progression beginning almost two decades prior. Nathan and Kristine both grew up in farm families in north central Ohio. In 1997, they purchased Nathan's father's registered herd of Holsteins. Although the herd saw some pasture during Nathan's childhood, it was primarily an input-intensive operation. As Nathan became a better grazer, he began ratcheting down the tillage system required for grain and corn silage growing. It's been said that a change in your pasture program is probably your biggest return on your invested dollar. \$500 dollars invested in a pasture program can make a big difference for a beginning farmer, whereas that same \$500 invested in a forage program might put new teeth on the tedder. Nathan agrees and, “can't fathom why farmers, organic or not, aren't excited about pasturing.”

The Weavers, whose pastures are white clover and rye grass based, note that, “The farm lives and dies with our white clover. Naturally, clovers want to grow here; we just need to create a situation for them to express themselves.” In order to create the right conditions for the farm's life-giving clover, the Weavers graze hard and low in the first 60 days of the grazing season. After that, they pull back. Aggressive rotations at a minimum of twice a day are used. “It's pressure and then release.” When asked how he balances his high protein pasture for energy, Nathan replied: “We grow what we feed, the cows eat what we give them and we live with the consequences. Animals growing up on this system make adjustments for it. It's far less of a problem than animals



which were raised on grain.”

There is a 15-20 day resting period at the beginning of the grazing season shifting closer to a one month release as the season progresses. The herd may be moved up to four times a day during the thick of the summer as an incentive to keep the cows eating. Pastures are clipped at least once a season with a sickle-bar mower. From mid-May through mid-November, 95% of the milker's DMI comes from pasture

and 100% of the heifers and young stock. Young stock grazes about one week ahead of the cows which has mitigated parasite problems. Calving begins in April and baby heifers see grass by mid-May. Calves are fed milk outside on gang barrel feeders and are rotated separately on 6-8 acres until they are weaned in mid-July. The average age at weaning is three months.

Nathan's pastures see up to six grazings per year, removing roughly 1500 pounds of dry matter each time. Management intensive grazing increases organic matter because repeated harvesting of the tops of the plants causes repeated atrophy of the root systems of the plants and those dying roots are the organic material that builds soil organic matter. This pulsed harvesting is the fastest way to increase soil organic matter. Since Nathan can't justify the amount of energy that it takes to produce a finished compost product, the winter's worth of bedded pack is piled, semi-composted and is spread as time allows through the growing season, generally finishing up by November 1st. Despite his intensive pasture program, Grunen Aue is only able to put up about 50% of its stored feed. They also buy in bedding.



Weavers' new barn.

Mostly they put up baleage wrapped with an in-line wrapper. All the traction is provided by horses. His goal is to achieve an average of 8,000 pounds of dry matter from each of the 120 acres annually, which would be enough to support his herd for the year without buying any forage; his ultimate goal.

As Nathan began to shift his farm to a forage-only system, he simultaneously began cross breeding his Holsteins to Jersey, Milking Shorthorns and Dutch Belted to develop a smaller framed cow more suited to grazing. In the April 2008th edition of Graze magazine, Weaver wrote: “First we need a small cow-one that weighs less than 1,000 pounds. New Zealand research shows that compared to a larger animal, a cow weighing less than 1,000 pounds uses a smaller percentage of feed to maintain body functions, and a greater percentage for meat and milk production. Also, such a small cow is capable of consuming 4% of her body weight in grazed grass (dry matter basis) at 60 to 80 days post calving (she won’t maintain that through her lactation, though). A cow over 1,000 lbs. can graze only 3.6% of her weight.” Despite his intentions to develop a smaller framed cow by cross breeding, Nathan was disappointed in the outcome, “a duke mixture instead of peas in a pod,” and has been returning his herd to all Jersey genetics. The herd now is 60% Jersey, 20% Holstein with the remainder Dutch Belted and Milking short-horn.

By 2001, the Weavers had eliminated corn silage from their ration and transitioned to seasonal calving beginning on April 1st. They certified their Ohio farm in 2005. They moved to their current location in Canastota, New York in 2006, attracted by the affordability of farmland in the region, and began shipping organic milk (their certifier is Canadian based Pro-Cert Organic) from this farm in 2011. Organic Valley’s grass-milk premium came along in October, 2014. From the time they stopped feeding corn silage, it would be over a decade before the triad of productive pastures, cows, and skill set would meet the expanding market for 100% grass-fed milk. This convergence liberated the Weavers from any incentive to keep feeding grain. The cows had only been receiving four to five pounds of grain per head so eliminating the grain was not a dramatic change. Nathan does not encourage dramatic change, in fact he has: “little hope for graziers who try to make money with self-sufficiency from low fertility soils and cows and pastures that are not well adapted to the system. The goal is to achieve soils with



organic matter levels well above 5%, phosphorus levels that allow clovers to thrive, and well-balanced levels of cations and trace minerals.” (Graze- April 2008).

Nathan has more faith in the grass-milk market than the traditional organic one, and initially he was reluctant to even join the organic movement, predicting that it was a passing fad, one which consumers wouldn’t pay a premium for, and in which the standards were too lenient. He then acknowledged that he was mistaken about his predictions and “the organic movement is here to stay.” Grass-milk is a niche product within the traditional organic milk market; milk that Weaver feels can transcend

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FEATURED FARM

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consumers' confusion and doubt about the integrity of their organic milk. He commented that grass-milk has a "promising future, especially with its measurable health benefits such as CLA content and Omega 3 to 6 ratios." The extra premiums paid for grass-milk allow the farmer to develop a true perennial system which allows for the sequestration of carbon in the soil. For Nathan, this is an added benefit for the consumer who "would love to see carbon removed."

He would like to see national standards developed to define grass-milk which would be enforced by organic certifiers and not necessarily the USDA. One of Pennsylvania's major organic certifiers, PCO, does have a standard for grass-milk. Could this be adopted by other certifiers without involving the USDA?

The cows are bred using AI during the first 3 weeks of the breeding season and then run with a bull raised on the farm. For AI, Nathan chooses A2/A2 sires with high components and then looks to physical traits. Getting the appropriate genetics for an all-grass dairy is a challenge and Nathan sees this as, "the last frontier of the grass-based movement. We need to create our own domestic line of genetics in order to meet this challenge." He has one son with a keen eye for cows and imagines a scenario in which the farm becomes a seed stock producer for grass-based dairies. For now, they keep replacements based primarily on when they appear; the heifers born earliest in the season are the ones they keep. Nathan sees a need to perhaps be a bit more scientific about their selection of heifer calves rather than merely basing their decisions on timing. They retain about 15-20 heifers a year, sell the rest and do not receive an organic premium for the calves.

Growing up, Nathan remembers being on a first name basis with the local veterinarian but now his family rarely calls a vet except for the occasional difficult calving. "We try to create situations where animals live right and thrive and we will move an animal out if she doesn't do well within our system," he explained. Acute cases of mastitis are rare and they will dry off a quarter if necessary and he has only had to treat one cow for milk fever in the last two years. Conception rates vary from season to season but the majority of the cows breed back at the appropriate interval. Although he is not opposed to vaccinations, they do not strike him as a benefit. The only significant herd health issue is an as yet undiagnosed foot problem that causes lameness in 5 to 6 cows a year. It is neither foot rot nor hairy heel warts. Most cases clear up but each year one cow has an extended period of infection. He mulled, "it is really a thorn in our side at this point." Despite this issue, overall herd health is excellent.



White clover and mixed grasses.

The agricultural support between members of the Amish community is tremendous. This, in combination with local conferences, a hearty amount of reading (*Grass to Milk: A New Zealand Philosophy* by Campbell McMeekan is a favorite), and collaboration with fellow farmers- there are 10-12 other dairies within the family's fingertips- is a recipe which "can't be beat." It is a unique social framework in which to farm. It would behoove us all to culture such a thoughtful, holistic and community-oriented agricultural society. Nathan is happy with his current pay price from OV for his grass-milk and is concerned that the recent pay price increase, which in part will be shouldered by the consumer, may create push-back in the market place. "If we start looking for more money from the consumer we will be hurting ourselves. There is real opportunity at the price we're being offered. If you start having a great chasm between conventional and organic prices, I'm concerned consumers will turn away from the product."

Nathan and Kristine Weaver have eight children, 6 girls and two boys: Luann (22), Emily Mast (20), Elizabeth (19), Alex (17), Corrie (15), Lydia (13), Samuel (9), and Abigail (3). The family strives to maintain the same health and wellness for themselves that they see in their animals and land. The children are well-versed in all aspects of the farm; it is a true family affair. The children know how to "put their shoulders under the load and push" when it comes to the "rotational choring" schedule that the family maintains. They have worked hard to make the farm as efficient as possible and gauge that it takes about 3,000 hours of dairy work a year for the operation to run smoothly. In addition to producing milk, it is the Weavers' aim to be as self-sufficient as possible, raising their beef, pork, and poultry as well as maintaining a large vegetable garden. Off farm and non-local groceries are extremely limited. "The agricultural way of life is part of my spiritual make-up," said Nathan, "Our people see the farm as the ideal way of raising our families and building character in that it helps us serve God and our fellow man. We have great faith in how God created the world, and if we study it closely we can go a long way in structuring our farms by mimicking nature." ♦

Nathan Weaver can be reached at 4225 East Milestrip Rd., Canastota, NY 13032.

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Pre-Turnout Checklist

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This is a great time to check chargers; make sure you have spare fuses, ensure the battery in your fence control unit is up and running, and make sure that things are functional, safe and effective.

And, speaking of fencing and chargers, does anyone on the group need to have some training around hot wire and the manner in which it works? One of the real worries I hear from some dairy-men is the wonder if their cows will respect the fence. This is a great time of year to have some simple lessons in closed quarters where escapes are not going to cause huge problems. Please make sure that the stock has ample opportunity to move freely and escape a shock and that they are not so tightly jammed that they are forced to take an undeserved shock.

Watering Systems

This is also the time of year to think about your watering systems. What works, what did not? Is the layout done optimally? Is there a way to maximize the accessibility to adequate clean, fresh water on pasture without a lot of walking, waiting or jockeying for space? How can you maximize the use of available water without deteriorating other aspects of the environment? Do you need to make a note to send a water sample for testing? Depending on

your circumstances, water tests might include more than simple E. coli and coliform counts. It may be appropriate for you to test for heavy metals, contamination from shale gas development, glyphosate and other agrichemicals.

Foot Care

This is also a good time of the year to make sure the herd is where they need to be as far as foot care is concerned. Cattle use their feet differently when they are inside when compared to outside – whether on bedded packs, on concrete or on other surfaces, including sand. You’ll see different patterns of growth and wear as the seasons and housing and husbandry changes. It’s a whole lot easier for most folks to have the hoof trimmer come and work when the cattle are close to the barn than when they are out and about on pasture, even if they come to the barn to milk. Once they are out on pasture, we want to maximize their time eating and cudding.... and not have them confined to wait for their turn on the tilt table.

Health Care Chores

This is also a good time of year to tend to the myriad of other health care chores, each of which will vary markedly with the farm and their goals and practices. If you are vaccinating or doing any routine blood work, is this something that you could schedule now? Are there cows with extra teats that need to be nipped? Are there any leftover dehorning or castration chores that need

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Pre-Turnout Checklist

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to be done? While we don't want to combine cold stress, weaning stress, and the stress of the long cold winter with the stress of those manipulations and activities, often it's appropriate to get them done while the temperature is moderate and the flies are not yet active.

If you're not on a regular herd health program with your veterinarian, does it make sense to think about doing breeding checks at this time of year?

Minerals and Special Needs Supplements

This is also the time of year to look at your program (or lack of program!) around minerals and special needs supplements. Do the animals have adequate basic and special needs supplements for the transition time? Depending on the manner in which you feed mineral and other supplement, this might mean making sure the TMR has been adjusted correctly or making sure that you have the specific minerals in the free choice boxes that are often consumed during this time.

I always like to see these cattle have access to Magnesium as well as the other macro (and micro) minerals at this time of year. We also see that many animals will take some extra Sulphur on the

culmination of the changes at either end of the seasons.

We know well that stock will have different nutritional needs as they move to grass from stored feeds. This is the time to begin to schedule visits with the folks who provide your service in nutrition so they can work with you to formulate rations that are appropriate for the class of stock and the time of year.

Fresh growing lush and washy grass often sets things up for grass tetany (hypo magnesium tetany) as well as protein-energy imbalance. I like to make sure the stock has access to dry hay, certainly before turnout – but also on the pasture if that's possible. I've found that cows on pasture, trying to self correct (an amazing ability if we'd simply provide them the choices they need and then stay out of their ways), will typically choose a grass hay of so so (or even lousy!) quality.

While some nutritionists tend to preload cattle with magnesium, fearing the worst, my preference is to allow them to self-select to meet their individual needs. For those of you who know me, you know that's my preference for a wide range of micro and macronutrients. Even if you are working with a well-formulated TMR, my experience has been that you will often find individuals who will have shifting day-to-day needs that are not met by that formula.

You'll need to figure out how best for the stock to access these supplements, too. Do you have enough feeders and space for them to take that which they need without being pushed or rushed?

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Organic Milk Sought CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley

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

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

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

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

Natural by Nature

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

organic dairy products are produced with great care and distributed nationwide.

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

Maple Hill Creamery

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

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Stonyfield Farm, Inc is looking for producers to support their comprehensive line of organic yogurt and diversified portfolio of organic dairy products. We offer a stable price platform with competitive premiums for components, quality and volume. In addition, we offer a comprehensive technical assistance program designed with producers to help them achieve their unique business goals. We are actively seeking producers looking to grow their business today and for the future.

Please contact our Farmer Relationship Manager, Kyle Thygesen for further details at kthygesen@stonyfield.com or (802) 369-0267.

To be listed, free, in future Organic Milk Sought columns, contact Nora Owens at 413-772--0444, noraowens@comcast.net.

Classified Ads

ANIMALS

Looking for organic started bull calves or young grass fed feeders within a reasonable distance, will go farther for a group. Ronald Axtell, email: chinavalley74@yahoo.com, 607-242-4490. Location: Deposit, NY

Looking for 10-15 certified organic Jerseys, Andy Smith, mainmilkhouse@gmail.com, 207-877-1705. Location: Monmouth. ME

I am looking to buy a good Brown Swiss, Contact: Brooke, brookejesse@gmail.com, 307-246-3399

Jersey cows and heifers for sale. We are a small family farm located in Northeast Ohio. Our goal is to raise the healthiest family milk cows that we can. We currently have 7 Jersey cows that are fresh (in milk) and ready for delivery. Another 9 heifers are pregnant ... take your choice and get to know your Jersey before she has her calf and starts milking. Contact: David R., contact@cowseatgrass.com, 330-340-0307. Location: Sugarcreek, Ohio

Organically raised bulls for sale. We have a half dozen, including four babies—a (big) Jersey cross, Dutch Belted/Jersey cross, and a Holstein/Dutch cross. We also have a really beautiful 10

month old Galloway, a 10 month old Dutch Galloway (red with white belt), and a 7 month old Dutch Belted (black with white belt). We also have two crossed bulls that are only about a week old (but BIG!) and a Holstein bull about four months old. I will only sell these bulls to be raised as breeders, etc., but not for beef. And finally, we have a 2 year old *castrated* belted Galloway bull that is very sweet and gentle and especially want to find him a good home. Thanks, Ron Sweet, Bedrock Farm, ron@bedrock-farmvt.com. Location: St. Albans, VT

For sale: 25 organic jersey cows and one bull, certified spring herd, call 802-253-8222 or email Christine at kaiserfarmvt@gmail.com. Location: Vermont

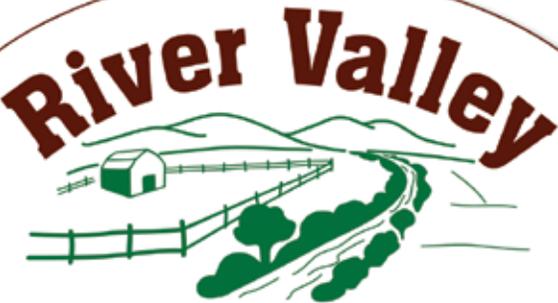
Wanted: five organic milking cows. Please call Gus or Kyra at 607-847-8998 if you can help us. Location: Southern Tier, NY

EMPLOYMENT

Greyrock Farm Dairy Manager

Greyrock Farm is a diversified farm in Cazenovia, NY. We raise beef, pork, and chicken and do our own slaughtering and butchering on farm. We have a raw milk dairy, a flock of laying hens, and we manage about 12 acres of vegetable fields. We make hay and work with draft horses. We market our produce through a year-round CSA and a bi-weekly market on the farm.

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The ideal candidate will have 2-3 years of experience managing a dairy. We are looking for someone with attention to detail, an eye for efficiency, and a love of cows. Experience with organic, grass-fed, and raw milk preferred. Salary will be between \$22,000 and \$28,000, based on experience. Please send a resume, cover letter, and professional references to Gillian at gdgoldbe@gmail.com.

FORAGES, BEDDING & GRAINS

For Sale: NOFA-NY Certified Organic BEDDING HAY - 4 1/2 X 4 round bales, stored outside. Also TIMOTHY SEED, cleaned and bagged on farm. Contact Jeff at Mitchell Farms, 607-566-8477 or Mitchellorganics@hotmail.com,

Location: Avoca, NY - Steuben County

1st, 2nd, 3rd cutting baleage individually wrapped. 4x4.5 round bales. Dry hay also available. Reasonable pricing. Trucking now available. Place your orders now! Contact Steve Magan, Century Grass Farms, 412.580.9692, centurygrassfarms@gmail.com

Corn silage: 2014 crop, blue river corn, processed with class 960 with shreddage attachment; packed good and covered in bunk silo. Lots of grain, tests available. \$75 a ton at the bunk; can

load. Derek Csendom, dcsendom@yahoo.com, 585-297-0652

Location: New York

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.

Wanted: certified organic round bales or haylage. Some of the usual suppliers of good quality certified organic hay are sold out so if anyone in/near Northern VT still has it for sale, please let me, Sarah Flack, sarahflackconsulting@gmail.com, 802-933-6965, or Ashley Green at NOFA VT (Ashley@nofavt.org) so we can pass that info onto farmers who are calling looking for forages.

Wanted: New Corn meal Supplier. I own a small local distillery on the NH seacoast named Smoky Quartz Distillery. I distill my spirits from New England grown organic corn meal and try to source everything as local as possible. My usual grain supplier, Maine Organic Milling, recently went out of business and I am in serious need of a new corn meal supplier. Can you recommend any bulk organic corn suppliers or mills in New England? Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Kevin Kurland, kevin.kurland@smokyquartzdistillery.com, 603-512-0455. Location: New Hampshire

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

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NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

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

A Jersey cross heifer calf was born small and relatively weak. The farmer gave 1cc of Selenium with her first colostrum. The next day she spiked a fever, showed runny eyes and was not too interested in eating. She was also licking the concrete wall. Suggestions from the group included giving homeopathic Aconite for sudden symptoms, 1cc of Immunoboost along with some aloe, 2 to 3 cc per day of garlic and/or Echinacea tinctures and Vitamins C and D to boost her immune system, the intranasal vaccine Inforce 3 for the viral pneumonia, and Bovi-sera or Multi -serum for increased antibody protection. It was also suggested to offer some loose Redmond salt since she appeared to be searching for minerals. Belladonna was suggested to bring the fever down.

Despite feeding kelp, a farmer had a problem with lice on some of his cows, especially on the young stock. It was suggested that feeding Agri-Dynamics Flies-B-Gone would help; the sulfur helps to get rid of lice and mange. A vet on the list suggested caution in feeding much sulfur – too much can cause serious damage; he suggested consulting a nutritionist to determine an appropriate level. For immediate treatment, a calendula ointment was suggested to smother the lice.

Another producer had a group of yearlings with severe ringworm. It was recommended that the farmer increase the protein in the diet and use oregano essential oil mixed with olive oil externally.

And since it is winter, we had some farms talking about winter dysentery. A novice farmer was concerned, but was reassured that it would eventually pass. Some suggestions included increasing the minerals, feeding probiotics (one producer fed the affected cows sauerkraut juice as a probiotic), cutting out silages and feeding only dry grass hay, aloe pellets, kelp, and garlic or garlic tincture.

A farmer had problem with birds making holes in his shrink-wrapped round bales, especially in the first cut bales. Some suggestions included a product called Bale Armour to cover the tops of the bales, tossing some long black lengths of hose on top of the bales to resemble snakes (you have to move them periodically), and using a dark colored plastic wrap. It was also noted that storing the bales at the home farm always means less damage from wildlife than leaving the bales in the field.

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.

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

Phone: 413-772-0444

Go to the following web page for more information:

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Subscribing to ODairy:

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

To sign up for the ODairy listserv, go to:

www.nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml

Calendar

March 10, 2015

Producing, Protecting, and Marketing of Organic Grain

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

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.

This third workshop, part of the three-workshop series entitled New Opportunities, Old Problems, Honoring the Soil, is presented by New York Certified Organic (NYCO), is a free meeting that begins 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.

March 10 and 11, 2015

Dr. Hue Karreman Presents: A Series of Classes on Bovine Health

Rodale Institute, 611 Siegfriedale Road, Kutztown, PA 19530

Rodale Institute veterinarian, Dr. Hubert Karreman, will teach this two-day class on in-depth health care strategies for organic dairy cows. It will take place at the Rodale Institute, from 9am-5pm each day. There will be classroom sessions in the mornings and hands-on with the cows in the afternoons at the neighboring 65-cow certified organic dairy farm. For more information, visit the event registration site: <http://rodaleinstitute.org/event-registration/?ee=115> or call Rodale Institute, (610) 683-1400

Wednesday, March 11, 2015

5th Annual Vermont Organic Dairy Producers Conference

VT Technical College, Randolph, VT

Presented by UVM Extension's Northwest Crops & Soils Program and NOFA Vermont's Organic Dairy and Livestock Technical Assistance Program, this day-long conference will feature Dr. Roger Moon, a veterinary entomologist at the University of Minnesota, who will describe his research on fly management in the organic dairy herd; Dr. Guy Jodarski, staff veterinarian for Organic Valley, CROPP Cooperative, and keynote speaker, will share ideas and tools developed by organic dairy farmers to solve common livestock health, nutrition and management challenges; and Dr. Heather Darby will close the conference with a presentation on recent research evaluating on-farm precision feed management and connections between soil fertility, feed quality, and milk quality. For more information, email Deb Heleba at debra.heleba@uvm.edu or call Susan Brouillette at 802.524.6501, or visit their website:

<http://www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil/wp-content/uploads/2015organicdairyconferenceflyer.pdf>

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

The 11th Annual Grain Growers Conference: Grains in a Diversified Farming System

The Essex Resort and Spa, 70 Essex Way, Essex, VT 05452

9:30 am to 5:30 pm

This daylong event will provide you with a diverse array of educational topics on grain production and research in North America. This year's conference will include four concurrent sessions throughout the day, including hands-on baking sessions. There's sure to be something for everyone! If you have questions, phone (802) 524-6501 or e-mail: heather.darby@uvm.edu or eecummin@uvm.edu <http://www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil/wp-content/uploads/2015-Grains-Conf-Flyer.pdf>

March 18, 2015 and March 20, 2015

Cornell Cooperative Extension's Winter Dairy Management Workshops

March 18th, Carthage Elks Club, 511 Fulton Street, Carthage, NY

March 20, Mo's Pub and Grill, 3357 State Route 11, Malone, NY

These 10am to 3pm workshops will focus on how farmers can improve the production of milk components, such as butterfat and protein that generate premium income. The agenda at each location includes the experience of a local dairy operator who increased farm profitability by raising milk components by applying nutrition and dairy environment practices that encourage quality milk production. Presenters include Cornell PRO-Dairy Director and Animal Science Professor Tom Overton, dairy business management specialist Jason Karszes, and Dairy Profit Discussion Groups Leader Kathy Barrett. Workshops will include how milk components impact milk check income, how managing income over feed costs impacts farm profitability, and how feeding programs and dairy cow nutrition influence milk component production. The workshop fee is \$35 before March 8, \$50 at the door; lunch and materials included. To register for the Carthage workshop, go online to: https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/Winter_Dairy_Management_2015_222 or contact Ron Kuck at CCE Jefferson County, 315-788-8450, rak76@cornell.edu or Terri Taraska, CCE Lewis County, 315-376-5270, tt394@cornell.edu. To register for the Malone workshop, go online to: https://pub.cce.cornell.edu/event_registration/main/events.cfm or contact: Kim Morrill, CCE, St. Lawrence County, 315-379-9192, kmm434@cornell.edu.

Saturday March 28th, 2015

The First 2015 Northeast Contract Grazing Summit: Grow More Cash from your Grass

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CLASSIFIEDS

continued from page 33

GRAZING/HEIFER REARING

Wanted: certified organic farm to raise heifers, year round. I am working with a few farms that are looking for a certified organic farm to raise heifers for them year round. If anyone in northern VT is doing this and has some space in your barn for more this winter or next fall, please contact me, Sarah Flack, sarahflackconsulting@gmail.com, 802-933-6965. Location: Northern Vermont

Grandfather and granddaughter seeking cattle to custom graze. 20 acres of fenced ground available divided into 30 paddocks with piped water plus 11 acres of second cut hay meadows that we are able to fence with very hot, three strand polywire for grazing. There is an easy access catch pen, a head gate squeeze, and a tub on the premises. I have been grass farming for 35+ years. My granddaughter is anxious to learn everything she can about good grazing management. We'd really like to graze at 20,000 lbs. of cattle per day, starting June 1. If you are interested, please call Geoff Naylor at 802-644-6567. Location: Waterville VT

PRODUCTS

For Sale-OMRI Listed Cleaning line for organic production. The Cleaner Answer® product line consists of seven unique products, developed to clean, sanitize, disinfect and control odors. Designed for use on a wide range of surfaces and environments. Ideal for use on organic farms. To order, please visit: www.greeneranswer.com

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May, 2015 issue is April 15, 2015.

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

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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

Please send a check with your ad (made payable to NODPA).
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Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance Producer Milk Check Assignment Form

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 deduct the sum of :
 _____ \$0.02 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA
 _____ \$0.05 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA (the amount that has been deducted in the past for national milk marketing but can now be returned to you as an organic producer if you have applied for the exemption.) If you need assistance in applying for the exemption, check here _____
 _____ \$0.07 per hundredweight (the \$.05 marketing check-off plus \$0.02)
 as an assignment from my milk check starting the first day of _____, 201____. The total sum will be paid monthly to NODPA. This agreement may be ended at any time by the producer by sending a written request to their milk buyer with a copy to NODPA.

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

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

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

Subscribe to the NODPA News and support NODPA!

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

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

_____ \$40 to cover an annual subscription to NODPA news _____ \$300 to \$500 to become a Friend
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 _____ \$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. Please make your check payable to: NODPA

Credit card: Master Card Visa Card #: _____
 Name on Card: _____ Expiration Date: __ __ 201__ Security Code on Card: _____

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Pre-Turnout Checklist

continued from page 30

Restock/Replenish Supplies

This is also a great time of year to take a look at your medicine chest and make sure you've got what you need there. Restock medicines and remedies, certainly, but also think about the things that you might be called to treat as the seasons change and make sure you have things on hand.

This is a great time of year to make sure that tags and identification is correct, installed and that any missing identification is updated. If folks are keeping identification and breeding and calving and heat cycle records in their heads, now is a great time to make the resolution to change that; the simpler the system, the better – because you'll use it.

The vintage of the farmer might influence those choices, too. Those who are less grey than am I tend to love to keep records on the ever-present cell phone, while others of us might choose to use the calendar in the milk house or a big white board – or even put some of these records on a special place in the grazing planning chart.

Assessing Laneways and Paths

As the snow starts to melt and the ground becomes exposed again, careful observation may show you places where there are erosion sites, particularly on laneways and paths, which may not be evident in drier weather. On a farm where I used to do some work, the movement of water off a long sloping hill was only evident in the early snowmelt. At other times of the year, that area was dry and firm – in spite of there being water inches deep moving across the land in early spring. And yes, there were some significant pasture management changes that could have improved the infiltration on that piece of land!

This might be a good time of year to add simple dams and diversions on sloping roads and laneways. One effective technique might be to bury a piece of belting on edge so that there is a foot or so under the ground and a couple of inches above the ground.



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Some folks will attach that belting to timber before burying it, others not. Of course, the best cure for that runoff is to eliminate it in the first place – not redirect it- but there are situations in which the two solutions might work hand in hand.

And a Few More Things to Consider...

As the weather begins to open up and we start to be out and about more, this is a good time to take a look at the gates and handles that we've not used since last year. Are they sound? Do they need to be balanced? Tightened? Moved? Reinforced? Lubricated? Are the handles sound and insulated? Are they easy for everyone on the farm to open or are they only fair game for folks who can crush cans with one hand? And while we're working on gates, spring is a good time to make repairs to those gates and doors that have been beaten up over the winter, sprung by snow and ice, jammed or knocked askew.

Other things to keep in mind as we move toward turnout will include the consideration of the need for any restraint or handling equipment in areas other than where those items are typically housed. And restraint and handling equipment does not necessarily mean chutes and gates, but also includes things like stock canes, halters, stock markers, heat detection devices,.... and calf jacks!

The need for shade always generates a great deal of discussion among farmers and animal welfare folks. My short answer of "It depends" will have some folks accusing me of fence sitting. We do need to realize, though, that most cattle we see in pasture panting are not panting because they are hot but are panting because they have an imbalance between energy, protein and forage volume. If we present the forage to them in an appropriate manner such that they are not forced to over-eat the protein rich parts of the plants to meet their energy and forage volume needs, then these animals will stop panting. And you'll see the change within a few hours after you change the paddock size/timing of rotation so that they can make that selection.

Part of the planning process needs to consider things that may be unique to your farm, like pressure on young stock or specific species from predation, or your desire to have an open house, field day or customer appreciation day. If these things are priorities for your farm, now is the time to put them on the short list, so you can plan around and plan for them. Establishing a relationship with a mentor or support group, planning for self-care and working toward a quality of life that is important to you are also worthy items to place on your checklist.

And like all good lists, this list is only as good as the monitoring plan we have for it. Making a list and doing the tasks without assessing the value and usefulness of the task, but just doing the task because it's on a list somebody made, makes no sense at all. It's important that the items on your unique pre-turnout checklist meet the needs and priorities of your farm - and support the larger framework in which you make decisions and choices. ♦

Dr. Susan Beal, DVM, Laughing Oak Farm, Punxsutawney, PA, can be reached by email at alchemy@penn.com.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the MODPA Treasurer

As I write this I am looking out a window at one of the better days we have had this winter. The sun is actually shining. In my neck of the woods it has been a long, dreary, cold winter. This February has been consistently colder than normal. As I am writing this, the MOSES conference is a week away. Usually by this time of the year we are seeing some nicer weather. The conference seems to be our normal sendoff of the worst of winter. Not this year though, the forecast calls for continued cold. And yet, at the same time I feel blessed. This area has had it much better than some other areas of the country. We can still get out into the world unlike our friends in the Northeast dealing with snow or the folks in California dealing with continuing drought. As I mentioned we are into conference season. If you can possi-

bly make time to take one or more in, I feel they are a good way to refresh the spirit after a long winter. After all, hope springs eternal for a farmer, right?? At the very least, they are an opportunity to catch up with old friends and usually make some new ones. The more the merrier.

The organic check off continues to get publicity. I still feel it will be a bad deal for farmers. Many of us don't really need to be losing income for this. If we are going to give money away we should at least have the opportunity to say where it goes and what it used for. I do hope this will come to a binding vote from the producers if the push continues.

I wish and hope for a good spring for all of you. Please remember to put safety first. As my hero Red Green says, "I'll be pulling for you."

Bruce Drinkman
MODPA Treasurer
3253 150th Avenue
Glenwood City, WI 54013
715-265-4431

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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: _____

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Phone: _____

Email: _____

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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.

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Ag business professionals who will delve into the matrix of decisions for considering a contract grazing business arrangement. Speakers include: Meg Grzeskiewicz, Custom Grazer, Rhinestone Cattle Co., Colden, NY, Roy Brubaker, Blue Rooster Farm, East Waterford, PA, Richard Winter, Owner, Chaljeri Meats, Callicoon, NY, Troy Bishopp, Bishopp Family Farm, Deansboro, NY, Dwight Stoltzfoos, Springwood Organic Dairy Farm, Kinzers, PA, Mark Justh & Ryan Fibiger, Fleisher's Pasture-Raised Meats, Brooklyn, NY, Ken Jaffe, Slope Farms, LLC, Meredith, NY, Morgan Hartman, Black Queen Angus Farm, LLC, Berlin, NY, Brett Chedzoy, Angus Glen Farm and Schuyler County Cornell Cooperative Extension, Mike Baker Cornell Beef Cattle Extension

Specialist, Scott Jeffers, Sauquoit Valley Insurance, Attorney Jim Stokes, Cazenovia, NY, Brian Reaser, On the Rail Farm, LLC, Kirkville, NY, Fay Benson, Benterra Farm and Small Farm Educator, Cortland County CCE, and the Steven Weaver and John Hershberger Family Farms, Peterboro, NY.

A homemade lunch made by the Peterboro Amish Community Church will be available on-site for a donation to support the community's school.

Pre-registration admission is \$70 per person. Space is limited so sign up early.

For information and to register, please call Troy Bishopp at the Madison Co SWCD, (315) 824-9849 Ext. 110, email, Troy-Bishopp@verizon.net or send in your registration to Madison Co. Soil and Water Conservation District 6503 Wes Rd. Hamilton, N.Y. 13346
