# NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Andy Bures and Brian Klinge inspecting a grazing paddock

# Andrew P. Bures Farm, Deerbrook, WI

## An Interview with Wisconsin farmer Andy Bures: A Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Master's Perspective

*by Sonja Heyck-Merlin*

**Please explain a bit of your personal history and farming background:**

The farm is located in Antigo, Wisconsin which is 150 miles north of Madison. My grandpa bought the farm after World War II. My father bought it from him in the early 1960's and then I bought it in 1999. The farming operations have remained pretty similar over the generations. We've always grazed our cattle.

I left the dairy out of high school and joined the Army, spending twenty years between active Army, Army Reserves, undergraduate, and graduate school. For ten of those years, I did social work and spent the first year out of graduate school as a 4-H agent.

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# 16th Annual NODPA Field Days

## September 29 & 30, Chambersburg, PA

Are you coming to the 16th Annual NODPA Field Days on September 29th and 30th at the Chambersburg Mennonite Church in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania? There's still time to register! The title, ***The Future of Organic Dairy Farming: Regenerate, Renew, Refresh*** is all about looking at our organic dairy farms and how we are caring for the soil, the infrastructure, and our families. There will be tours of Cliff and Maggie Hawbaker's farms, Hamilton Heights Farm and Emerald Valley Farm, and a bonus tour of the Trickling Springs Creamery plant tour on Thursday morning, before the start of Field Days workshops. The full schedule is on page 20.

Each year, the NODPA Field Days program has followed a familiar schedule but this year we are shaking things up a bit. We will open registration on Thursday morning at 8:30 am so that folks attending the optional tour of

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# From the NODPA President

Last month, farmers in my area received a message: Making the farm safe for our families and our workers should be our number one job. A tractor rollover accident can have tragic consequences, but this time, thankfully no lives were lost - just bumps and bruises. Neighbors came from everywhere to make sure the ambulance took the driver to the hospital to be checked over and to get the twisted bale wagon off the road. Lots of discussion on why the brakes failed, how many bales on the wagon, the steepness of the hill, and how to get the tractor up out of the deep ditch, where it had rolled twice before coming to rest upside down next to a beech tree. My neighbor and I stood there looking at his inverted tractor, and I said that it is good to know these canopy structures are strong enough to support the full weight of the tractor; I mean, really, who tests these things?

We were all grateful that our friend was not severely injured; after all, tractors and wagons can be fixed. But it did get me thinking about the issue of farm safety. We all believe it's a good idea until we get busy…..

So here's a reminder that many states (New York is one) have a program to help farmers retrofit ROP (rollover protection) structures onto tractors without one. And let's listen to the message,

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# From the NODPA Desk: September 2016

*By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

After a dry Summer, we head into the Fall and the NODPA Field Days.Well know Southern Pennsylvania grazer, Cliff Hawbaker, will be the Field Day's featured farm. This will be a great opportunity to see this low cost operation, how it works for this family, and take home ideas for what may work on your farm. No two operations are the same, which is why we move the Field Days to a new location every year to both experience the different farming practices and also allow the local community of producers to meet and discuss issues of the day.

One of the most important sessions is the producer meeting on the Friday morning. We like to have it as the first session of the morning to ensure that we can allow a free ranging conversation over a couple of hours, while respecting our non-producer attendees and trade show participants.

Free ranging but controlled by the master of facilitation, Henry Perkins, known throughout the land for his perspicacity and dry sense of humor. Over the years, the topics for discussion often remain the same. Pay price is always a priority as it's at the forefront of NODPA's mission and the minds of all producers, especially with increased pressure from imports, plant based beverages that call themselves milks, and the rapid consolidation of the primary buyers. The WhiteWave/Danone merger will have an effect on the market for milk and we have been asked by the Department of Justice to detail any concerns that producers may have. Unlike conventional milk, producers' choice of buyers will be limited by location and the strength of that buyer in their area because of trucking. We all realize that the two main buyers of milk have been setting the pay price for many years but the disproportionate increase in purchasing power of one of them, especially in the northeast, will definitely reduce the choices that producers have and their ability to negotiate a fair contract.

Other topics for the producer meeting will come under the heading of "frustration with USDA." As producers, we think it very strange that the USDA prioritized an animal welfare regulation that did and said nothing new over the Origin of Livestock regulation. The continuing abuse of the transition process, especially by larger start-up operations and the inconsistency of interpretation of the current regulations by certifiers, has left massive loopholes for operations to effectively, continuously transition dairy heifers to expand herds to meet the demand for organic milk. We are now in more of a surplus situation and a fair pay price is threatened.

Frustration with fair and equal interpretation of regulations is always a topic at Field Days and this year we have seen the situation with organic poultry affect all livestock and grain producers. The ability of the USDA NOP to maintain and enforce the regulations has been most questioned with organic poultry, with the proliferation of illegal "porches" allowed for the outdoor access of thousands of birds approved by some certifiers but not others. This has caused excessive demand for corn and soybeans, which attracted the East European imports that flooded the market and drove the price down for domestic growers. While the lower prices will benefit dairy and livestock producers, we know that for organic certification acres to grow and thrive, all organic producers, in all commodities, need a sustainable price and fair contracts/cooperative agreements.

There has been a wide ranging discussion of how to encourage domestic organic production without undermining the pay price of existing producers. Unfortunately, we live in a global market and USDA and OTA have been spreading recognition programs across the world faster than they can provide inspections with sufficient integrity. With the rise in soybean and corn prices, it made it economically acceptable for East European countries to transition and flood the US market with corn and soybeans at a lower price (they are more mechanized, have cheaper labor, less risk of contamination, strong dollar, lower overhead costs, etc.), driving the price down below an economic level for US producers to produce the crops and even think about transition. Similarly with dairy and beef, the increased demand has created opportunity for lower priced imports which is now taking away any market opportunity for US producers who could benefit from the high demand by forcing pay price up. In other words, we are in the same mode of operation as conventional ag for commodity crops but with contracts that favor the processor. Processors are effectively using the vulnerability and lack of leverage of organic producers to ensure contracts that allocate all the power to themselves.

To encourage transition, the USDA needs to increase organic research and price discovery; create easier access to capital for organic operations to modernize equipment and expand their ability to achieve economies of scale; and have risk management programs that use an organic pay price as the basis for assessing risk. Part of encouraging transition will be good budgeting based on the reality of pay price swings, which are now prevalent within organics. Encouraging transition without a viable pay price specific to that operation is not responsible. A national transitional program will inevitably increase the number of operations that transition because of economic difficulties with the current operation, which is never a good reason. In the past, and to some extent still now, there are producers who have a relationship with a future buyer during their transition that will guarantee an organic pay price after transition. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that price will not be undercut by large operations with economies of scale and access to capital in the US, or to imports.

And of course, USDA can encourage transition by not having an organic check-off! Looking forward to seeing all of you who can attend the Field Days. ◆

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Portable Parlors, Robots & Challenges Managing Dairy Animal Flow in Grazing Systems

*By Sarah Flack, Sarah Flack Consulting*

Managing a grazing system for dairy animals requires that they move from pasture to get milked, and then back to pasture multiple times each day. This requires more planning for lanes and fence locations than on a beef or sheep farm, where the herd is simply moved from one paddock to another and may not return to the barn during the entire grazing season. Dairy grazing systems also require that the farm have enough pasture land within reasonable walking distance of the milking facility. If the parlor can be portable, there is more flexibility on the location of the grazing land. But if the milking facility is in a fixed location, the grazing system design requires some careful planning in order for it to work well.

Some key points to keep cows moving efficiently and comfortably around are pretty obvious: Lanes on a dairy farm need to be wide enough to accommodate the whole lactating herd or flock, and need to be well surfaced to keep the animals from getting muddy or injuring hooves. Lanes and paddock gates need to be located so that it is efficient and non-stressful for livestock to exit the pasture through the gate, walk to get milked, and return to grazing. Some shade or drinking water sources along the lane can also help during hot summer weather.

*In the Italian and French Alps, dairy herds are grazed during the late summer in high alpine pastures. Many of these pastures are far from the main farmstead, so a portable parlor is parked near the grazing areas. Cow flow is managed with single-strand polywire fences and portable energizers to control where the herd grazes each day, and to bunch the herd close to the parlor during milking. The first of these photos is in France in a location where the milk is hauled down to the valley where it is made into cheese. The second photo is of a more remote location in Italy where some milk is made into cheese on site in a portable cheese room next to the portable parlor.*

One innovative solution to managing dairy cow flow between pasture and milking facility is the use of portable parlors. Unfortunately, it is usually not easy (or possible) to be allowed to use these portable systems in this country, but where allowed, they are a very helpful tool that allows dairy animals to be milked and grazed in pastures located a long way from the barn. As our farm land-bases become increasingly fragmented by development pressures, portable parlors could be an ideal way to allow dairy farmers to graze and milk flocks and herds in the US too.

Another technology that has a significant impact on how cows move back and forth to pasture is robotic milking systems. An increasing number of farms are adopting this technology, but it creates some unique challenges for farmers who want to continue to graze the dairy herd. It is possible to continue to graze a herd that is being milked by robots, but the farm must have the right land base, barn/robot location, and grazing system design in order to maintain pasture dry matter intake levels for the herd. Even with a perfectly designed grazing system, most farms with robotic milking systems have seen a drop in dry matter intake from pasture overall.

A robotic milking system can offer many labor-saving benefits, but each farm will need to assess whether it is a useful and financially feasible choice. For farms that want to continue to graze the milking herd, (or are required to do so by the organic standards), it is critical that the grazing system work well with the new robotic milking system.

The robot units are generally located in or right next to the freestall or the loose housing area for the dairy cows. During the non-grazing season, this allows cows to walk between feed bunks, stalls, or bedded pack areas, and the milking units. Cows can choose when to get milked, when to eat, and when to sleep and usually have a fairly short walking distance between each area. Farms that have converted to robotic milking systems find that the cows choose to get milked more often than twice a day, which improves milk production and quality. Cows in these systems are calm due to low stress levels.

Each cow has a collar with an ID on it, which the robot reads each time she enters the milking unit. Based on her stage of lactation and level of milk production, the robot gives her some grain and milks her while she eats. Or if the cow has been milked recently, the robot just opens the door and the cow walks out. In addition to getting grain while in the robot, a cow can eat other forages and grains in the freestall or feed bunks. Using the robot to feed the additional grain allows each cow's ration to be individually balanced to her needs. So although installing a robotic milking system is a big financial investment, there are many advantages for the cows and the farmer.

For those who want to graze the cows, however, these robotic systems often require farmers to significantly redesign their grazing systems. This is why some grass based or organic dairy farms find that a robot just isn't a good match for their unique pasture system and land base.

Cow flow between the pastures and the robots is the primary

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Portable Parlors

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problem on farms that both graze and use robotic milking systems. When milking takes place in a parlor or tie stall, cows are herded out to pasture as a whole group after each milking. Then later that day, the whole group is brought back in for the next milking. Once a farm has robots, however, cows must have continuous access to the robots. Each robot can milk only one cow at a time, and the robots are designed to have a steady flow of cows passing through. It is not feasible to just bring in a whole herd a couple of times a day for robotic milking. A new grazing system must be designed that allows continuous flow of cows to pasture, to the freestall for additional feed, and to the robot to be milked. For some farms, due to the layout of the pastures and location of the barns, a robotic milking system may not be compatible with grazing the dairy herd.

There are some common principles that all farms adding robots will need to consider in designing (or redesigning) their grazing system:

- In addition to the milking robot, robotic exit gates improve cow flow on most farms. This exit gate reads each cow's ID and then sends her either back to be milked or out to pasture or to the freestall, depending on how recently she was milked.
- Pastures need to be high quality, and within a reasonable walking distance of the barn so that cows will choose to walk to pasture and back regularly.
- Ideally, a well-designed, well-surfaced cow lane is centrally built to give cows access to the pastures without having to walk over rough ground or through mud. Poor lane surfaces increase the likelihood that cows will either choose not to go out to pasture, or choose to stay out on pasture when they are due to come in and be milked.
- The milking robots are not always able to thoroughly clean very muddy udders prior to milking. (This is another reason that lanes must be well designed to keep the cows clean as they walk back and forth to pasture.)
- Pasture quality must be excellent, and the cows need to know they are getting fresh pasture frequently. Some farms use a system so that they graze three pastures each day. This allows cows to be directed by the computerized exit gate to a new paddock every time they leave the robot/freestall area to go to pasture. These cows know that each time they walk to pasture they will be going into fresh new delicious forages.
- Unless there is a road underpass allowing continuous access to pasture and the robots, road crossings are problems for

most farms once they put in robots. Without an underpass, the only way to graze the other side of the road is to herd a group of cows across the road to the pasture and lock them in the pasture for a period of time, during which they won't be milked.

- Supplemental feed in the barn must be balanced carefully with the pasture. If the pasture is lush and high in protein and high-protein forages or grains are fed in the barn, the cows will be less likely to go out to pasture to graze. If the grain fed in the robots is changed to a higher energy content, cows will crave the higher-protein pasture and be more likely to make the walk out to it.
- Most farms find that they do need to sort and move cows at least once a day to make sure the cow flow is going well. The computer is able to tell the farmer which cows have gone out to pasture through the exit gate, which ones have not been milked recently, and a lot of additional useful management data. With this information, the farmer can go out to pasture and find the few cows that need to come in and be milked, or find the cows in the freestall that need to get kicked out to pasture.

Over time, farmers who are grazing and using robots find that the cow flow improves so that cows are accessing both high-quality pasture and the robots at the right intervals.

## A SUCCESSFUL GRAZING SYSTEM WITH ROBOTS:

Hall and Breen Farm in Addison County, Vermont, already had a well-designed grazing system for their organic herd of Holsteins when they installed milking robots in 2011. They were the first grazing farm in Vermont to put in a robot, so they had to figure out how to adjust their grazing system to work with the changes to cow flow that robots create.

The farm has two robots that milk a herd of over 100 cows. The soils are somewhat challenging heavy clay, and they have almost 160 acres of land available for the milking herd to graze. They take a first cut of hay from some of that land and add the additional land into the grazing rotation once it has regrown to the correct pre-grazing height. More land for grazing is available on the other side of the road from the barn, and other locations. However, it is too difficult to cross the road with the lactating herd now that they have the robots, so they now make stored forages from those fields.

Farmers Jen Breen and her dad, Louis Hall, have invested in many pasture improvements to make the cow flow work well and improve pasture quality. High-tensile perimeter fence and well-built animal walkways make moving cows easier. They have also invested in soil amendments and pasture seeds.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Rollover Protection for Farm Tractor Operators

**Tractor rollovers are the single deadliest type of injury incident on farms in the United States.**

*Reprinted with permission from Penn State Extension*

Tractor rollovers are the single deadliest type of injury incident on farms in the United States. The latest figures from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) suggest there are approximately 130 tractor rollover fatalities per year. NIOSH estimates that there are approximately 4.8 million tractors in use on U.S. farms; one-half of them are without rollover protection for the operator. This fact sheet will closely examine tractor rollover protection issues.

## What are ROPS?

Rollover Protection Structures (ROPS) are roll bars or roll cages designed for wheel- and track-type agricultural tractors. ROPS are designed to create a protective zone around the operator when a rollover occurs. When used with a seat belt, the ROPS will prevent the operator from being thrown from the protective zone and crushed from an overturning tractor or from equipment mounted or hooked to the tractor (see Figure 1).

Three types of ROPS frames are available: a two-post frame (with solid fold down versions), a four-post frame, and a ROPS with enclosed cab. They all serve the same function: protecting the operator in case of a tractor rollover.

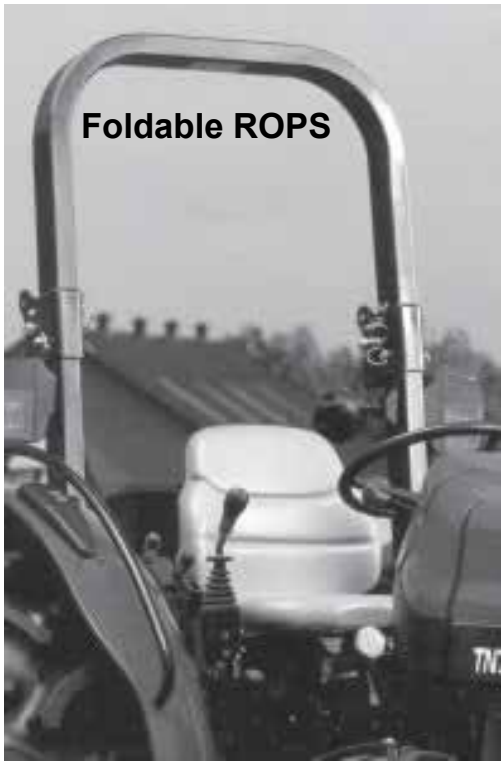
## Why Bother?

- The tractor is the leading cause of death on the farm.
- Tractors in the Northeast states have the highest rate of overturn deaths and the lowest percentage of tractors with ROPS.
- The use of ROPS and a seat belt is estimated to be 99% effective in preventing death or serious injury in the event of a tractor rollover.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) requires an approved ROPS for all agricultural tractors over 20 horsepower that were manufactured after October 25, 1976, and which are operated by a hired employee.
- A ROPS normally limits the degree of rollover thereby reducing damage to the tractor.
- A ROPS with enclosed cab also prevents tractor operators from being knocked out of their tractor seat from rough ground and low hanging tree limbs, provides protection from the sun and other weather hazards, and reduces risk for the unsafe practice of extra riders on tractors (see Figure 2).
- Experienced operators are involved in 80% of all Tractor rollovers.

## ROPS History

Between 1967 and 1985 U.S. farm tractor manufacturers provided ROPS as optional equipment on most tractor models. This meant that new tractor purchasers had to add the cost of a ROPS onto the base price of a tractor. Because most farmers are cost conscious, few added ROPS as an option. Even fewer pre-1967 tractors have ROPS, yet many of these tractors are still in use. Beginning in 1985, American tractor manufacturers began voluntarily adding ROPS on all farm tractors sold in the United States over 20 horsepower.

The percentage of tractors in use and manufactured before the voluntary ROPS agreement is high because farm tractors are often in use for 30 to 40 or more years. Many newer tractors originally sold with ROPS have been stripped of the protective roll bar or roll cage because some farmers claim the ROPS structure blocks their view during normal tractor operations. Another reason often given for removing a factory-installed ROPS is that the tractor won't fit into smaller spaces with a bulky roll bar. Foldable ROPS are now available to reduce this problem..




## ROPS Construction

ROPS are engineered to mount on specific tractor models and designed to operate with the tractor's mounting brackets and frame. This provides a structure that is flexible, yet rigid enough to withstand the

loads produced during a tractor overturn. Prototype ROPS must pass engineered, crush, static, and dynamic tests to assure adequate performance before they are produced for the public. These prototype ROPS must meet the standards set by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) J167 or OSHA 29 CFR 1928.51.

The dynamic test involves hitting the tractor ROPS in a prescribed manner with a 4,410 pound pendulum weight from behind and from both sides. In order for a ROPS to pass the dynamic test, the ROPS protective zone must remain intact and maintain the specified distances from the operator. The ROPS can be made of any material as long as the material meets temperature requirements and passes the tests set forth by the standards. Typical ROPS provided by manufacturers are made of steel that will not fracture in cold temperatures and are precision welded. The goal of the ROPS is to absorb the impact energy without excessive deformation to create a zone of protection for the operator.

## Overhead Protection

Some ROPS frames and enclosed cabs are equipped with overhead canopies to protect the operator from falling objects. Canopies that protect against falling objects – called FOPS (falling object protective structures) – must be properly designed and certified. Such canopies are recommended when using front-end loaders, working in the woods, or in other circumstances where falling objects may be a hazard. FOPS must be designed according to SAE and ASAE standards. To be sure that a canopy is a FOPS, check with the ROPS supplier or the equipment dealer.

## Factory Installed ROPS


Farm tractors (including some lawn and garden models) should have a factory installed ROPS with a seat belt.These ROPS are certified to meet maximum rollover impact and dynamic forces. Modification of the factory installed ROPS (cutting, grinding, drilling or welding) is unauthorized and unwise. Modification of the ROPS design can impair the ROPS ability to carry out its function (i.e. providing a protective zone to save a human life) in the event of a tractor overturn. Factory installed ROPS will have a certification label attached to the roll bar stating that the roll bar meets SAE/ASAE/OSHA standards. It is important to check for this label on imported tractors.

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### Types of ROPS

The following are the three types of ROPS frames are available for agricultural tractors:

**Two-post ROPS**

The two-post ROPS is the most common type of ROPS and available in either rigid or foldable models. The rigid ROPS has upright posts that are vertical or slightly tilted and mounted to the rear axle. The foldable ROPS was designed with hinges to allow the ROPS to fold to fit into low clearance areas.

**Four-post ROPS**

A four-post ROPS is mounted onto both axles and onto the frame in front of the operator.

**ROPS with an Enclosed Cab**


The ROPS with an enclosed cab is typically installed by the manufacturer and the structure acts as a ROPS.

### ROPS Maintenance and Misuse

It is necessary to inspect and service a ROPS and seat belt periodically to check for extreme rust, cracks, or other sign of wear. Any of these could cause a failure of the ROPS during a rollover. If there are signs of wear, the manufacturer or dealer should be consulted to determine the suitable course of action.

ROPS can also be abused or misused. Holes should never be drilled into the ROPS frame, nor should a piece of steel be welded onto the frame. If lighting or other light attachments are needed, they should be clamped onto the ROPS. A ROPS should not be used as a point of attachment for a chain, hook or cable. Pulling with the ROPS could damage it and result in a rear overturn. If a tractor with ROPS does overturn, the ROPS should be replaced because it is specifically designed to bend to absorb the energy generated by the tractor contacting the ground. ROPS are only designed and certified to withstand a single overturn.

**Important:** ROPS are only designed and certified to withstand a single overturn. Replace the ROPS if the tractor overturns.

### Retrofit ROPS

Many farm tractors manufactured since 1967 can be retrofitted with a ROPS. Tractor companies and aftermarket manufacturers have designed and developed ROPS for most tractor models. Manufacturers such as AGCO, Case-IH, Kubota, New Holland and Deere and Company offer low cost retrofit ROPS kits for tractors manufactured from the mid 1960's to 1985. ROPS for many older and smaller tractors can be purchased for $1000. Agricultural equipment dealers are approved to install a retrofit ROPS and seat belt. Installation charges are normally in addition to the cost of the ROPS.

A listing of ROPS retrofits for farm tractors manufactured since 1967 has been compiled by the National Farm Medicine Center, Marshfield, Wisconsin, in a publication called, "A Guide to Agricultural Tractor Rollover Protection". This guidebook is available on the web. (http://warehouse.ca.uky.edu/rops/ropshome.asp. Local equipment dealers should also have information on ROPS retrofitting for their brands of tractor.

ROPS for some older models of tractors may not be available even though one is listed by a ROPS manufacturer. This is because a ROPS manufacturer often will not produce a specific ROPS for an older tractor until an order has been placed. An order for just one ROPS may mean the cost will be prohibitive to the tractor owner.

For more information, visit the Rollover Protective Structure Retrofit Program website:
https://www.nycamhoutreach.com/ropsr4u/.

### Homemade ROPS

Because of the severe impact and dynamic forces present during a rollover, it is important that a ROPS be properly designed, manufactured, and installed. If the ROPS is too rigid or too flexible, injury could occur to the operator during a rollover. Homemade ROPS are not recommended because they may not be properly designed, built, or installed. Poor welds and undersized bolts could fail under the impact and stress of a tractor overturn. Farmers, local hardware stores and welding shops do not have the special steels, bolts or welding supplies required for an approved ROPS. Nor do they have the testing equipment that

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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

# Building Life in the Soil: Part 2

*By Neal Kinsey*

Correct fertilizer and soil amendment usage are the primary keys that unlock the door for biological activity to supply better soil and plant response. What type of changes may be needed to achieve such a goal? Depending on crops being grown and location, there may be several possibilities, but in general there is one good place to begin. That important beginning is to identify and correct the nutrient needs that will be reflected from observable differences across each field or farm. One big problem that continues to block progress in biological soil activity is the assumption that all the soil in a wide general area will benefit from the formulation and application of the same fertility program everywhere.

If all of the soil in a field were alike, it would all look the same, feel the same and grow the very same way. But that is seldom the case. If the soil has any major differences in texture, color, or plant population – even different weed or grass populations – chances are the fertility needs will be significantly different as well. If there is an observable difference and the area of land is large enough to fertilize separately, then it should be sampled separately and that land specifically evaluated, with fertility needs assessed, formulated and treated accordingly. This then provides the best environment for soil life to flourish.

The goal will generally be quite different for those wanting to build life in the soil than for those selling fertilizers and soil amendments. Find a consultant you can trust. If in doubt there are consultants who do not sell the fertilizers or other products they recommend. Serving strictly as consultants, they only sell advice on what is needed in terms of fertilizer materials and how to properly build up soils. Then each grower can buy what he needs from the fertilizer dealer he chooses.

One of the questions of greatest concern to farmers and growers in terms of building life in the soil is how do we improve the life of the soil in order to build more humus? How much of a chance is there that this will happen with a quick test designed to feed the plant? That kind of concept has been allowed to develop in agriculture based on a false set of premises! Those who promote these concepts want you to believe that all you need to do is just squeeze out as much yield as possible every year by feeding the plant because feeding the soil is too expensive. That is a bunch of hogwash and it is time the weaknesses in such a program be properly considered.

A program for soil building to increase soil life is based on completely different concepts than a quick soil test developed for rapid turn-around time. Clients should plan ahead to receive the proper advice in a timely manner. Under ideal circumstances, the turn-around time needed for soil recommendations to build soil life and humus can be done in a few days. But once growers begin to learn how well such a program works, more and more samples begin to arrive, and then that few days can turn into weeks because of the resulting backlog. The concentration is on accuracy, not speed, and the way to achieve that in each individual case is by evaluating every soil specifically element by element. This takes more time than a program designed to feed the crop based on the desired yield. It is a different approach designed to provide a different program for the planners and thinkers in agriculture, not those who feel they need only quick answers.

With this in mind, the main goal for building a program to most benefit life in the soil should be to convince farmers and growers that taking and using a soil analysis for determining the real fertility needs of each soil is actually possible and the most beneficial approach. At this time, farmers will only learn if that is best for them by doing it. Start small. Once this is realized as fact, testing can only then be of greatest benefit if the samples are properly collected, and then can be profitably utilized to find and apply only those materials shown to be needed in each case. And furthermore, when it is too expensive to supply all that is needed for each field at one time, then it is most important to understand how to allocate and apply the most necessary nutrients. Such a program should be able to express what to use in the proper order, using only the correct amounts of all needed materials. This allows the grower to stretch the allocated fertilizer budget which will then accomplish as much in terms of yield and/or quality as possible, while at the same time building the “house” for the best soil biology – the life in the soil!

To build a healthy soil, teeming with the life required to grow the best plants, feed the soil and let the soil feed the plant. This is the first step to be utilized in building up soil biology. Once this is achieved, the other steps recognized as needed to best benefit life in the soil can be most successfully applied.

For information on our fertility program designed for building biological activity in the soil, please see www.kinseyag.com, or contact us directly at:

**Kinsey Agricultural Services, Inc.**
**297 COUNTY HWY 357**
**CHARLESTON, MISSOURI 63834**
**PHONE: 573-683-3880 – FAX: 573-683-6227**
**E-MAIL: neal@kinseyag.com**

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

# Dealing with Drought Conditions in your Forage Production System

*Rod Porter, Agronomist, Regional Coordinator – King's AgriSeeds*

Low forage inventory as a result of drought conditions is good cause to implement defensive and offensive strategies in your production system. First, assess what your current forage inventories are and determine what your forage needs will be, then implement appropriate steps such as the following:

## Established hay stands

When dealing with drought stressed hay stands, keep the longevity of the stand a priority in your management. This will also help increase yields for later cuts this year.

- Avoid cutting too short - this exposes soil to increased evaporation and robs carbohydrates from grasses.
- Fertilize if needed - Potassium is a major nutrient used by legumes that also impacts winter hardiness. Consider fertilizing with sulfate of potash (for organic farms) this fall to build the strength of your alfalfa and clover.
- Avoid cutting 15 days or less before killing frost - Later fall cuts are likely to be made this year since forage supplies are tight. Alfalfa and clover need at least 15-20 days of growth to replenish carbohydrate root reserves. So try to cut well in advance of killing frost or soon after killing frost leaving a 4" stubble.

## Pastures

- Allow stressed pastures to fully recover before grazing.
- Clip high if necessary to manage weeds. Avoid grazing too short – always maintain at least 3-4" as this will result in faster regrowth and better overall yields.
- Plan now for frost seeding – read more about it at: http://www.kingsagriseeds.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/FrostSeeding_4-27-15.pdf

## Increasing forage supply quickly

Using some annual or fast establishing forages can help to increase forage supplies on a quick, short term basis. Below are things you can plant now to get more forage this fall or early next spring:

- Forage oats will produce a high quality forage crop that can be harvested in 50-60 days or grazed in less. Plant at least 100lbs./acre for best yields. When considering the calendar and weather in New York, planting should occur by September 1st for harvest or by September 10th for grazing. In higher elevations and more northern areas, plant 1 week to 10 days earlier, and in lower elevations and more southern locations, plant 1 week to 10 days later. Other seeds could be planted with oats such as ryegrass, turnip, crimson clover, vetch or radish. Double Play is a combination product for fall and spring harvest (oats, triticale & ryegrass)


- No-till plant fast establishing grasses in thin or weak hay fields or pastures. Fall is best time to establish new grasses in existing stands. Fastest establishing, highest yielding grasses are ryegrasses and festulolium but are not suited for dry hay. Any other grasses can establish great when planted in the fall but will be better suited for long term yields vs. fast, short term yields.
- Winter triticale is an excellent choice for planting this fall after early silage harvest and cutting early next spring. For best results, plant 100+lbs./acre before the end of September in NY, and in higher elevations and more northern areas (northern NY and New England), plant 1 week to 10 days earlier, and in lower elevations and more southern locations (Pennsylvania and South), plant 1 week to 10 days later. Yields can reach 4 ton of dry matter/acre of high sugar, highly digestible forage. There are various combination

*continued on page 14*

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# ROPS

*continued from page 10*

is needed to certify that a ROPS meets design standards. A home made ROPS also exposes the owner and builder of the ROPS to liability damages should a tractor overturn and the homemade ROPS fail.

## ROPS and Seat Belts

A seat belt is an integral part of the tractor rollover protective system as it keeps the operator within the protective zone created by the roll bar or roll cage. The seat belt assembly must also conform to engineering standards.

A ROPS alone will not provide full protection to the operator when there is a tractor overturn. A seat belt must be used in combination with the ROPS to provide the highest degree of safety. Without a seat belt, the operator will not be confined to the protective zone, and may be crushed by the tractor or even the ROPS itself.

Many farmers give the excuse that because they won't wear the seat belt, they won't bother to install a ROPS. While a ROPS alone won't completely protect the operator, it will provide considerable protection.Remember, while roll bars and seat belts together are the most effective system for operator protection from a tractor that is overturned, the ROPS portion of the system provides the bulk of the protection. Installation of a ROPS on all tractors is an important step toward agricultural injury prevention.

**Remember:** A ROPS will not prevent an overturn but it can prevent damage to the operator once the overturn occurs. The ROPS and properly worn seatbelt provides the most protection in an overturn incident.

*Dennis J. Murphy, Nationwide Insurance Professor, Agricultural & Biological Engineering Dennis R. Buckmaster, Professor, Purdue University*

## Contact Information

Dennis Murphy, Nationwide Insurance Professor and Extension Safety Specialist, djm13@psu.edu, 814-865-7157,

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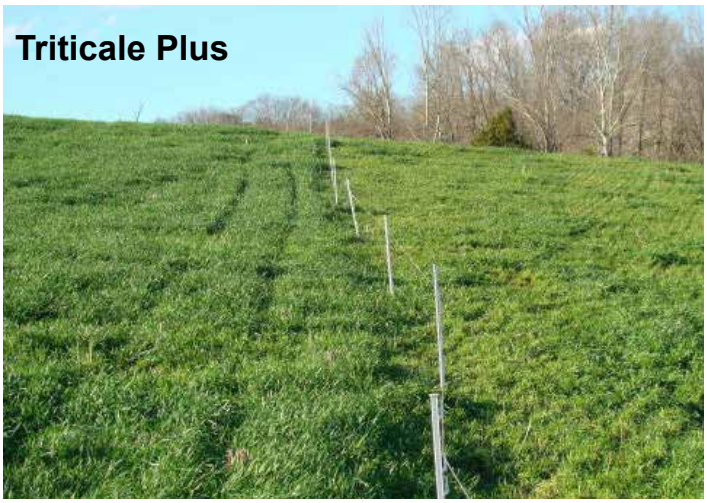
## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

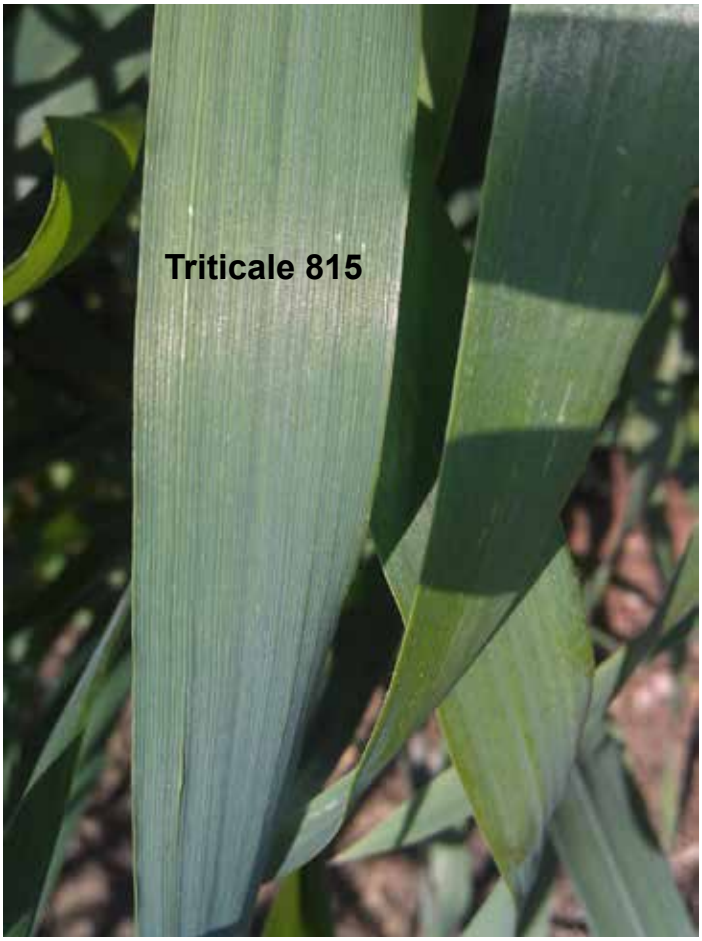
# Drought Conditions

*continued from page 13*

products that work very well also: Triticale Plus (triticale, ryegrass), Soil Builder Plus (triticale, crimson clover, hairy vetch, ryegrass, radish), Ray's Crazy Fall Mix (8 species mix for cover crop or forage).

*Much more forage information can be found at www.kingsagri-seeds.com*



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

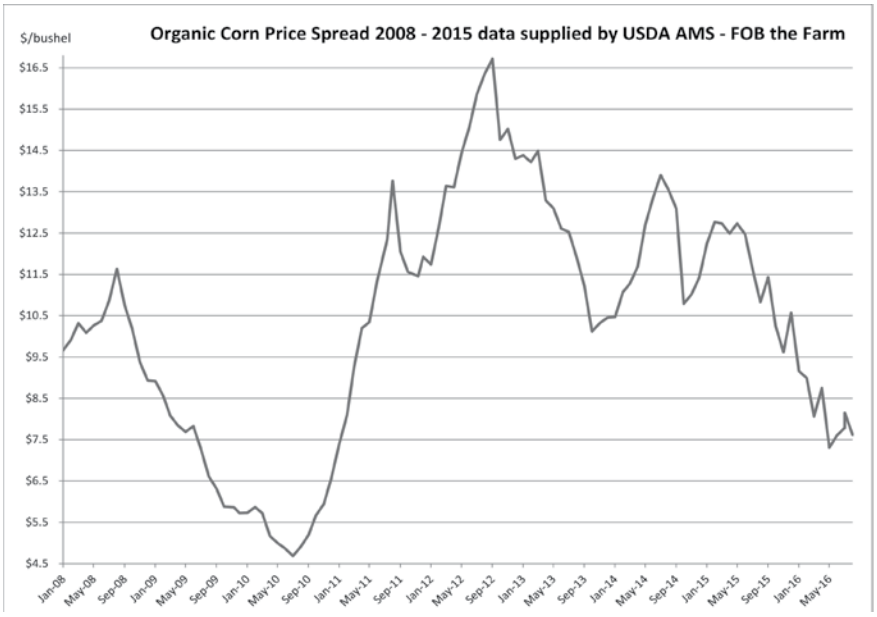
# Organic Milk Pay, Retail and Feed Prices for September 2016

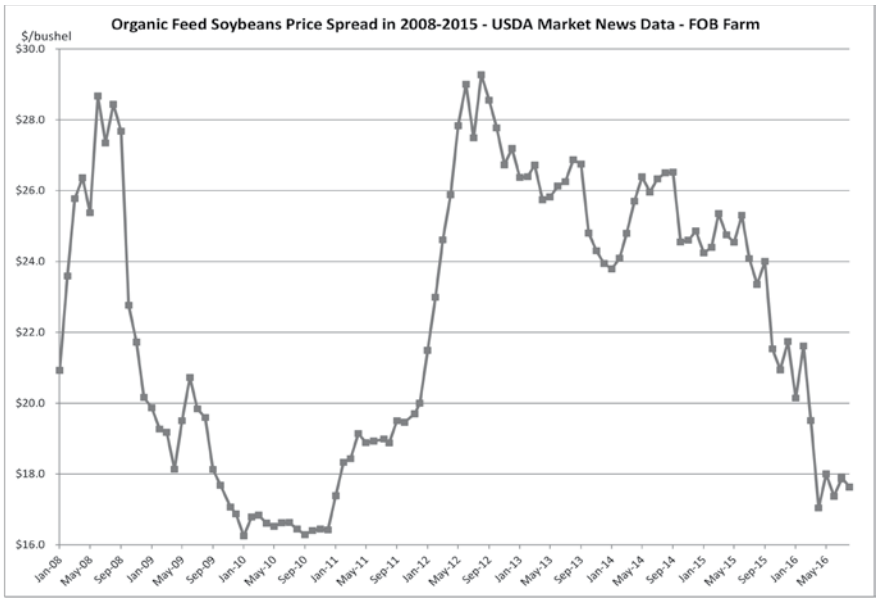
*By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

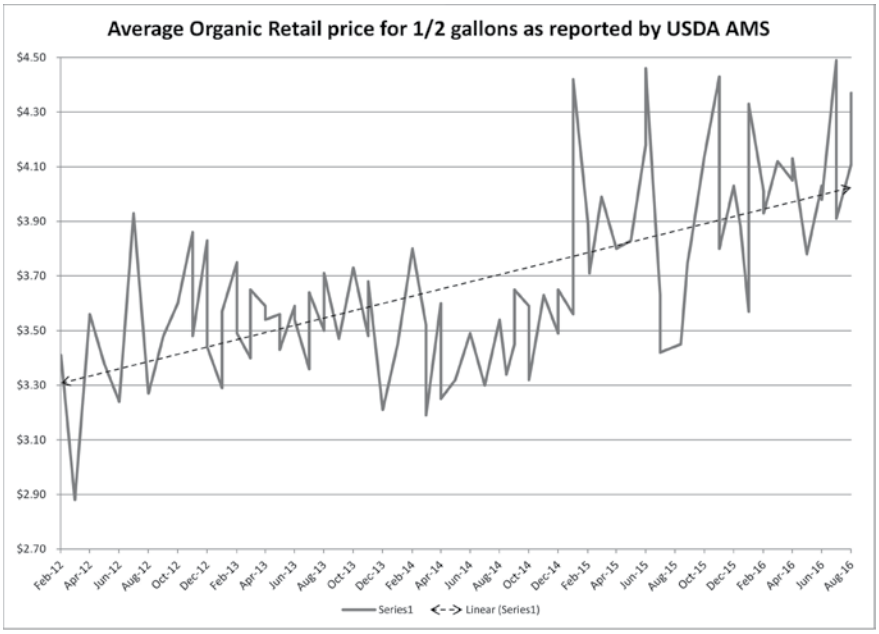
Following some months in 2015 when organic milk production seemed to have slowed, or even declined, 2016 has been a good year for growth in production. Recent efforts to increase numbers of organic dairy producers, by some processors, are now generating increased organic milk flows. NOFA-NY LLC is currently working with the largest group of transitioning farms since the rule change which mandated 100% organic feed for a full year to transition. They currently certify 312 dairy operations, 22 of which are grass-fed certified as well. Transition numbers are continually growing, with 55 farms in transition and an additional 13 farms looking to bring in organic animals to start shipping organic milk. Grass-fed is on the rise too, with nine farms pending certification through NOFA-NY. AMS reports total organic milk products' retail sales for June 2016 of 217 million pounds, were up 6.7% from June 2015, and up 5.6% from January through June, compared with the same months of 2015. Total organic whole milk products retail fluid sales for June 2016, 78 million pounds, were up 16.2% compared with June last year and up 16.3% January through June compared with the same months of 2015.

The New England Federal Milk Market Order 1 reported utilization of organic milk during July, 2016. Organic whole milk utilization totaled 12.3 million pounds, up from 11.9 million in July 2015. Organic reduced fat milk utilization for July this year, 18.5 million pounds, was down from 19.2 million in July last year. During July, there was withdrawal of Minnesota organic milk sold in New England to be replaced by organic milk from Indiana and Michigan sources.

Organic milk farm gate prices in the EU are trending higher than a year ago. Average organic milk farm prices in Germany for June 2016, 46.97 Euros/100kg ($23.62/per hundred pounds), are 0.09% higher than a year ago, but down 0.68%



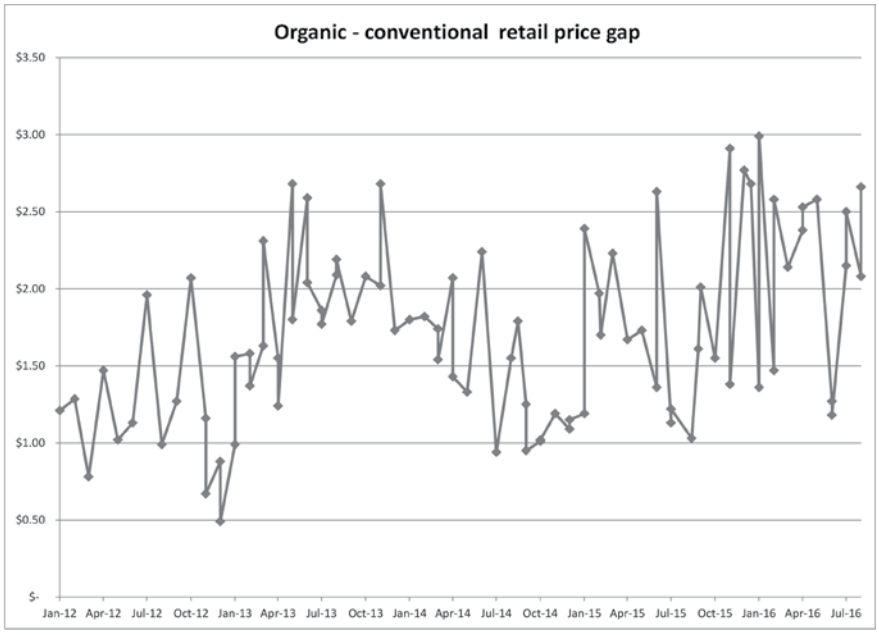



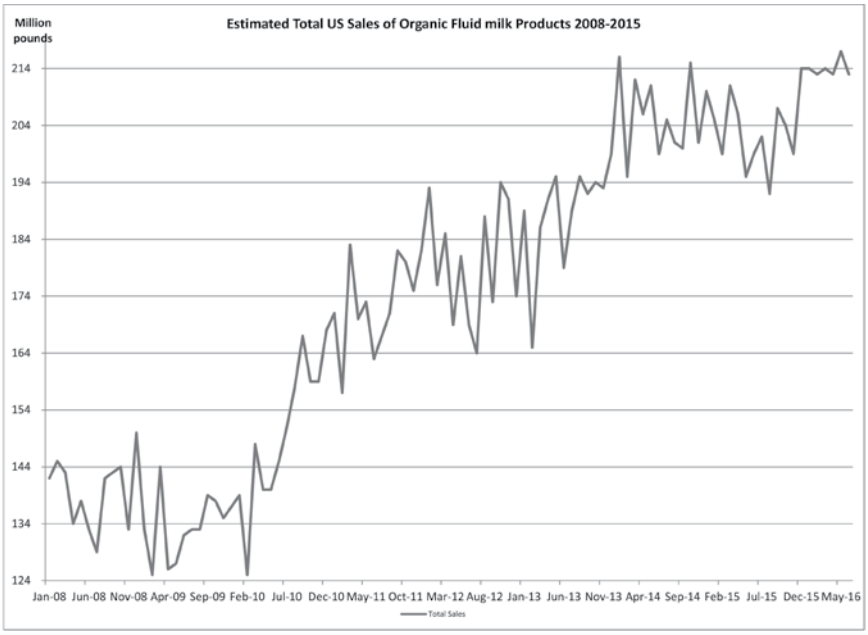
## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

from May, according to CLAL. In Bavaria, the June price, 47.58 Euros, is up 0.91% from a year earlier but down 0.25% from May.

One of the casualties of the proposed merger between WhiteWave and Danone is that WhiteWave is not able to take on any more transitional producers while the merger is completed. It is also reported that none of the major companies are taking on new producers as supply is long in most areas. Organic Valley told its members that they have been oversupplied in the Northwest for quite some time, with much of that surplus going into powder. Now they have invested in bricks and mortar to help solve their problem. In a break with their past practices, Organic Valley has purchased the Farmers' Cooperative Creamery facility in McMinnville, Oregon. The plant has primarily processed conventional products but has processed organic NDM and butter under contract. Organic Valley has been slow to purchase real estate preferring to contract with others for processing requirements and has no plans to purchase any plants in the northeast. Organic Valley farms in the Northwest have been allowed to continually expand and increase production (i.e., quota) for years. The west coast is still receiving "drought" payments as they have for several years that, which, when viewed in the context of the entire budget for the coop, are a significant portion of expenditures (even though it is a small number of farms).

The merger between WhiteWave and Danone is now being investigated by the US Department of Justice to assess what impact it will have on competition both in the retail market and for supply contracts. Danone, setting up its own small pool of milk, has created some competition for organic milk in New England that producers have been able to leverage for increased pay price and better contract conditions. With the two pools of milk under contract with WhiteWave and Danone merging under the proposed scenario, competition for milk will decrease as we revert back to choosing between the two major purchasers of organic milk. In many cases, depending on the producer's location to either the processing plant or the truck routes, producers will be left with only one choice for selling their milk, effectively a monopsony. If Danone decides to drop Organic Valley as its supplier of organic milk for its yoghurt and take back the franchise for the Stonyfield brand of retail milk, many New England producers will have little choice but to switch to Danone as a buyer of their milk, under individual contracts which have many restrictions on their rights.




Demand for organic feed corn is moderate to good and prices are steady with organic feed soybeans demand light to moderate. New crop forward contracts for feed corn are $8.00 to $9.25 through to April 2017 with Soybeans at $17-19.50 for the same period. Alfalfa ranges from $320 for Supreme to $160 per ton for fair at the farm. Hay is all located in the west and Southwest. ◆

*NODPA has three publications, available on NODPA's website Resources page, to help producers in making decisions on their contracts. They can be downloaded for free or we can send you copies if you do not have online access.*

# "We spray it on prefresh heifers for better letdown ... better milkout."

— Andrew Dykstra


**DYKSTRA FARMS**
**Andrew and Sandy Dykstra**
**BURLINGTON, WASHINGTON**
**260 cows grazed organically**
**50 lbs/cow/day with SCC 150,000**

"We've been using Udder Comfort™ for 4 years. We spray it on prefresh heifers to improve milk letdown when they calve. We run our heifers through the parlor before they calve, and spray the udders with the yellow spray," explains Andrew Dykstra, who serves as WODPA president.

He operates a 240-cow organic dairy near Burlington, Washington where cows milk mainly on pasture and grass hay, along with hydroponic barley fodder instead of grain.

"All of our fresh cows also receive Udder Comfort after they calve, especially if we see firmness in the udder.

"This product works better than anything else. Heifers come in more comfortable with less swelling, better milk letdown, and they milkout better when they get Udder Comfort.

"Udder Comfort is a piece of the puzzle, a tool we rely on with good results. Along with clean, dry bedding, good milking procedures and smart culling, it is part of our routine for producing high quality milk."

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For external application to the udder only after milking, as an essential component of udder management. Always wash and dry teats thoroughly before milking.

# 2016 NODPA Field Days: September 29 & 30, 2016

*The Future of Organic Dairy Farming: Regenerate, Renew, Refresh*

Chambersburg Mennonite Church
1800 Philadelphia Avenue, Chambersburg, PA 17201

*continued from page 1*

Trickling Springs Creamery plant will have plenty of time to register, get directions and learn about the tour policies. The small group tours start at 9:00 am and each new tour begins when the next ten participants arrive, so that tours will be leaving frequently, with the last 30-minute tour leaving at 10:00 am. This will give everyone plenty of time to tour and get back for the first workshop at 11:00 am. Also new this year, the Trade Show will open with the start of registration, giving attendees additional time to interact with our trade show participants.

Unlike in past years, our first workshop will start before lunch, at 11:00 am. John Kempf, founder of Advanced Eco Agriculture and the evening's keynote speaker, kicks off the NODPA Field Days educational program with a presentation called Managing for Milk Production per Acre, about how to manage forages and crop nutrition to produce high fat and energy content forage, even in a single growing season. John will be with us throughout

*continued on page 21*

## OUR SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

### Lead Sponsors

**Trickling Springs Creamery ^ ***

**Lakeview Organic Grain ^**

**Maple Hill Creamery ***

**Organic Valley Family of Farms/ CROPP^ ***

*^ trade show participant*

** food/product donation*

### Sponsors

**Advancing Eco Agriculture ^**

**Agri-Dynamics ^**

**Blue River Hybrids ^**

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**NOFA-NY ^**

**Organic Dairy Farming Cooperative**

**PA Grazing Lands Coalition ^**

**Thorvin Kelp ^**

**Upstate Niagara**

### Supporters

**Acres USA * | Baystate Organic Certifiers ^**

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**PA Certified Organic ^ | PASA ^**

**Pure Life Organic Foods ^**

**Renaissance Nutrition | Rodale Institute ^**

**Sarah Flack Consulting ***

**Washington Homeopathic Products ***

# FIELD DAYS 2016

## Thursday, September 29, 2016

**8:30 – 11:00 am** NODPA Field Days Registration and Trade Show

**9:00-10:30** ***Trickling Springs Creamery Plant Tour*** OPTIONAL (Small group, 30 minute tours start at 9:00 am, with the last one leaving at 10:00 am) Please: no loose clothing or jewelry, open-toed shoes, no food or drink (full tour policy and directions will be given out at Field Days registration)

**11:00 – 12:30 pm** ***Managing for Milk Production per Acre***, John Kempf, Founder, Advancing Eco Agriculture. Learn how to grow high fat content, high energy forages. High yielding forages with a fat content of four percent or greater, and high digestibility are the foundation of grazing dairies financial performance. John will describe how to manage forages and crop nutrition to produce high fat content forages very quickly, even in a single growing season.

**12:30 – 1:30** Lunch and Trade Show

**1:30 – 2:30** ***Certified Grass Fed Label: A Progress Report*** Tim Joseph, Maple Hill Creamery, PCO and/or NOFA-NY Certifiers, invited, and

***Support for the Grass Fed Milk Market, a SARE Grant*** Fay Benson, NYCCE will describe the current project and how it impacts organic, grass-based dairy farmers.

**2:30 – 3:15** ***Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program: NY and PA:*** Fay Benson, NY-CCE, Franklin Egan, PASA, NY and PA DGA Education Coordinators, and Rob Moore, Master Grazier will provide updates on this program.

**3:15 – 4:45** ***Milking System Tune-Ups: Increasing Efficiency and Milk Quality*** Jessica Scillieri Smith, DVM, Director, Northern NY Lab, Quality Milk Production Services (QMPS), and Rick Watter, Ph.D., Director, Western NY Lab, QMPS.

**4:45 – 5:30** Social Hour and Trade Show

**5:30 – 7:00** Banquet Dinner and NODPA Annual Meeting

**7:00 – 8:30** Keynote Speaker John Kempf's Presentation: ***Decision Making Principles of Exceptional Farm Managers***, followed by Q&A session

**8:30** Meeting Ends

## Friday, September 29, 2016

**6:30 – 9:00 am** Continental Breakfast and Trade Show

**7:00 – 9:00** ***Producer-Only Meeting*** Facilitated by Henry Perkins, Maine Organic Milk Producers president and past NODPA president, with discussion on pay price, milk supply and much more.

**9:00 – 9:45** ***Updates on Animal Welfare Rule, Origin of Livestock, Organic Checkoff and Other Issues relevant to the Organic Community*** Updates and discussion on these and other regulations and areas concern to the organic community such as increase in imports of corn and dairy product, pay price, NOP's role in enforcing regulations. Panel: TBD

**9:45 – 10:15** ***Integrating Crops and Livestock to Enhance Organic Farm Stability, Safety and Resilience*** Dr. Kris Nichols, Chief Scientist, Rodale Institute, will describe this OREI research project being jointly conducted by The Rodale Institute and University of Iowa

**10:15 –11:00** ***Farm Tour Overview: Hamilton Heights Farm and Emerald Valley Farm*** Cliff Hawbaker will give an overview of his farms and farming philosophy with Q&A session

**11:00 – 2:00 pm** Depart for ***Hamilton Heights Farm Tour*** (just a few minutes away from the church/meeting site): Cliff and Maggie Hawbaker's farm and Lunch and Ice Cream Sundae Bar. (Door Prize Drawing will take place during lunch.)

**2:00 (approx.)** Meeting Ends after Farm tour and lunch

**2:00 -** ***Emerald Valley Farm: Optional tour*** of the second Hawbaker farm (a few minutes north of the main farm) where they are building their cheese plant

## FIELD DAYS 2016

**This year's Field Days features a tour of Cliff and Maggie Hawbaker's farms in South Central PA.**

*continued from page 19*

the day and will speak again after our annual banquet dinner.

Following lunch, we will have three workshops. First, we will hear from Tim Joseph, Maple Hill Creamery, Liz Amos, PCO, and Lauren Tonti, NOFA-NY, about the progress being made on the Certifed Grass Fed Label, along with news about a SARE grant program that is lending Support for the Grass Fed Milk Market. Next, Fay Benson, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Franklin Egan, PASA and Rob Moore, Master Grazier, will bring us up to speed on the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program in the Northeast. The final workshop of the day, Milking System Tune-Ups: Increasing Efficiency and Milk Quality will be full

*continued on page 22*

## REGISTRATION

### NODPA's 16th ANNUAL FIELD DAYS & PRODUCER MEETING & DINNER

| Cost | | Qty. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Registration: Thursday & Friday** | | |
| Free | Organic dairy & transitioning producers & families | | |
| $30 | All who aren't organic dairy producers | | |
| | **Meals** | | |
| $10 | Thursday lunch for Adults | | |
| $5 | Thursday lunch (under 11) | | |
| $25 | Thurs. dinner for Adults | | |
| $12.50 | Thurs. dinner (under 11) | | |
| Free | Transitioning farm member and farmers under 30, Thursday evening dinner | | |
| $5 | Friday breakfast (7:30-9 am) | | |
| Free | Friday lunch | | |
| $35 | NODPA News Subscription (6 issues) | | |
| | Donation to NODPA | | |
| | Total amount enclosed: | | |

Name:

Address:

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Email:

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NODPA c/o Ed Maltby, 30 Keets Rd.
Deerfield, MA 01342.
Email: ednodpa@comcast.net
Phone: 413-772-0444; Fax: 866-554-9483
**Pay by credit card.** Circle type:
Master Card • Visa

Cardholder Name: _____

Billing Address: _____

_____

Card #: _____

Expiration date: _____
Security Code: _____

**YOU CAN ALSO REGISTER ONLINE AT:**
**www.nodpa.com/fielddays_registration_2016.shtml**

## FIELD DAYS 2016

*continued from page 21*

of practical information to apply to your milking system. Dr. Jessica Scillieri Smith and Dr. Rob Qatter of the NY Quality Milk Production Services will be our presenters.

Some things don't change at the NODPA Field Days, and one of those things is the Social Hour preceding the banquet dinner and NODPA annual meeting. The social hour gives everyone time to relax, tour the trade show, grab a bite to eat, and visit with old and new friends. Field Days participants always tell us how important it is to have time to check in with their fellow organic dairy farm families and service providers, so we try to build in plenty of networking time. This year's banquet dinner, and all meals served, will reflect the rich local food tradition of the area. Maggie Hawbaker has created a menu that highlights all of the delicious food of the region and it promises to be a great treat for all. As always, though, if you have any dietary needs, restrictions or requests, please contact Nora Owens, 413-772-0444 or noraowens@comcast.net in advance so we can accommodate them.

Keynote speaker, John Kempf, who consults with farmers nationally and internationally, will give his presentation, Decision Making Principles of Exceptional Farm Managers, at which he will identify the common characteristics of farming operations which are extraordinarily successful and how to incorporate them into your own operation. He will close out the evening with a question and answer session.





Friday morning starts early for organic dairy farmers who have a 7:00 am producer-only meeting at which everyone has the opportunity to speak openly about all of the relevant issues to producers. We are fortunate to have Henry Perkins, Maine Organic Milk Producers president and past NODPA president, facilitating this session. Continental breakfast will be available from 6:30 to 9:00 am for producers and all other attendees.

A session full of updates and discussion on issues relevant to the organic community will open the morning program. We will be covering the Animal Welfare Rule, Origin of Livestock Rule, and Organic Checkoff, as well as looking at the impact of an increase in imports of corn and dairy products, pay price and NOP's role in enforcing regulations. Please bring all of your questions and opinions.

Dr. Kris Nichols, Rodale Institute's chief scientist will report on their research results on successfully integrating crops and livestock. In a session entitled, Integrating Crops and Livestock to Enhance Organic Farm Stability, Safety and Resilience. These results have the potential to be duplicated and to be very useful to organic dairy farmers.

Before heading to Cliff and Maggie Hawbaker's Hamilton Heights Farm for our farm tour and lunch, Cliff will give an overview and provide some insights into the farming practices

## FIELD DAYS 2016

and philosophies of their grass-based, once-a-day milking dairy. He will be able to answer questions during this session as well as ones that might arise during the tour.

We travel to the Hamilton Heights Farm where we will have a great tour and then a delicious lunch sponsored by Trickling Springs Creamery. In addition to lunch, they will host an Ice Cream Sundae bar featuring their delicious ice cream. The annual door prize drawing will take place during lunch, and we have some terrific donations from our sponsors and supporters. NODPA Field Days wind down following the tour and lunch but for those with the time and interest, they can travel up the road to tour the Hawbaker's second farm, Emerald Valley Farm at which they have built their new cheese plant.

**Socializing at the 15th Annual NODPA Field Days Social Hour**

NODPA is so fortunate to be able to offer free registration to all organic dairy producers, and a free banquet to all transitioning organic farm families, due to the generous support from our sponsors and supporters. We can't thank them enough for all the support they lend to the important work being done on behalf of organic dairy farm families in the northeast and throughout the US.

Many folks choose to register on site but this year we'd really appreciate it if you could let us know if you are planning to attend so that we can ensure that we have enough food for everyone. Even if you are going to register on-site, please call Nora Owens, NODPA Field Days Coordinator, 413-772-0444 or email noraowens@comcast.net and leave your name and the number who will be attending from your family and/or community. Also, please contact Nora Owens with any questions you may have or any special requests or accommodations you may have. ◆

# Classified Ads

## ANIMALS

### 100% GRASSFED MILKING SHORTHORNS

Certified organic, zero-grain heifers for sale. Bovey, female, b. 4/20/2014- sire is King Oscar (Milking Shorthorn). Hornet, female b. 8/7/2015- sire is King Oscar, too. Both ready to breed. Closed herd. $1200 each or $2000 for the pair. Located in Craftsbury, VT. We didn't make hay for these heifers! Jennifer Linck, email: nanyfer@ hotmail.com; phone: 802-586-2401

Location: Craftsbury, VT

### Certified organic springing Holstein heifers for sale

Name: Phil Alston. Email: berryalston@yahoo.com. Phone: 802-433-5837

Location: Williamstown VT

**Two Certified Organic, 100 % Grassfed Milking Shorthorn** Heifers. Both ready to breed. Closed herd. Ideally we'd sell them together, $1,800 each or $3,000 for both.

Name: Jennifer Linck. Email: nanyfer@hotmail.com

Location: Craftsbury, Vt

## EMPLOYMENT

### Northeast Organic Farming Association Of Vermont Farmer Services Coordinator

NOFA-VT was founded in 1971, and works to support organic farms, healthy food and strong communities. NOFA-VT is hiring a full-time Farmer Services Coordinator to coordinate NOFA-VT's Technical Assistance team, and provide technical services and educational programs to organic and transitioning producers in Vermont. The full job description is posted on NOFA-VT's web-site here: http://nofavt.org/about-us/join-our-team

Please submit a resume and letter of interest to NOFA-VT, PO Box 697, Richmond VT 05477 or e-mail info@nofavt.org. The job will be open until filled, with the position starting in October.

### California Cloverleaf Farms is searching for an Organic Dairy Farm Herdsman/ Assistant Manager.

Qualifications: Should have current dairy farm experience with rotational grazing and an emphasis on quality milk production. Strong operational management experience with basic computer skills and milking employee management experience. Field work experience preferred. Conversational Spanish. Owners willing to train a highly motivated person that shares their passion for organic dairying.

Contact: Burroughs Family. Email: meridith@allwestnaturals.com. Phone: 209-678-7829

Location: Denair, Ca

### Apprentice wanted

Hawthorne Valley Farm is a 500 acre certified biodynamic and organic farm in Ghent, NY. We are looking to hire an advanced livestock apprentice to work with our 60 cow dairy herd, beef herd and pork operation - with a strong focus on the dairy. This is a yearlong, paid position with housing pro-

vided. Previous experience with livestock and specifically with dairy animals is strongly preferred. Tractor experience is also a plus. Position starts ASAP as of September 1st.

Please send a resume, cover letter and 2 professional references to: apprenticeships@hawthornevalleyfarm.org

Location: Ghent, NY

**Organic Valley is seeking a Regional Pool Manager in the Pennsylvania and Maryland regions** to support current dairy pool members and to procure new members. Practical dairy knowledge and good communication skills required. Organic production knowledge helpful.

Joelle Kaufman, Joelle.kaufman@organicvalley.coop, 608-625-3522

One Organic Way, La Farge, WI

**Looking for full time Dairy Farm employment.** With possible opportunity for ownership. ***I DO NO NOT HAVE MUCH EXPERIENCE*** 802 779 1021

Name: Nicholas R Armato. Email: nick.armato23@yahoo.com.Phone: 802-779-1021

Location: Stoneham, MA

**We are seeking a farm machinery operator/mechanic** who has a few years of experience operating and working on equipment, has enough years of farming experience to appreciate the benefits and limitations of a farming schedule, understands and accepts that farming is not always a 9-5, Monday-Friday job, is willing to meet the varying seasonal demands of farming and has farmed long enough to know that he enjoys a farming lifestyle.

As far as farming skills, we are looking for an individual who is very comfortable plowing, harrowing, running a Brillion seeder, mowing, raking, tedding, baling, wrapping and chopping hay, running a flail chopper and high dump wagon. Must be very much at home operating a full size, commercial front end loader and driving a tandem dump truck. CDL A would be great.

As far as mechanic skills, he doesn't need to be a full blown, factory trained, certified mechanic with intimate knowledge of every Cat, Cummins, Perkins, Deutz, Detroit and Mack, but he can certainly split an older tractor and change the clutch in his sleep. He can do rear tractor tires and truck tires by himself. He can swap injection pumps, trouble shoot injectors, troubleshoot and replace brakes and airlines, replace a head gasket, trouble shoot and replace alternators and

*continued on page 27*


**The exit gate sorts the cows as they leave the barn area, only allowing those that have been milked already to walk out to pasture.**

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Portable Parlors, Robotic Milking

*continued from page 7*

The transition from milking in a parlor to using robots to milk the cows had some rough spots as Jen and Louis figured out how to make the cow flow work. The robots were installed during the non-grazing season. During that first winter, the cow flow with the new system went very well. However, once the first grazing season started, a variety of problems arose with cow flow to and from pasture. Late-lactation cows sometimes chose to stay out on pasture, so milking frequency dropped and SCC (somatic cell count) went up. Jen and Louis had to go out to pasture to bring in cows more frequently while they worked on solving the cow-flow problems.

The changes they made included building new, improved lanes. This solved some problems with mud and rough lane surfaces, which had discouraged the cows from walking on them. The main access lanes also provide some shade as the cows choose to walk out to pasture or back to the barn on their own schedule. They also installed a computerized Grazeway exit gate, which doesn't allow cows to go out to pasture unless they have already been milked. They still need to go out to pasture to bring a few cows in, but the cow flow is now working well on the farm. ◆

*This article was adapted from portions of her recently-released book, The Art and Science of Grazing, which is available bookstores everywhere (just ask!), or directly from the publisher at www.chelseagreen.com.*

*Sarah Flack is a consultant specializing in grass based and organic livestock farming. She is the author of several books on organic dairy farming, and her most recent book, The Art and Science of Grazing, was published in the spring of 2016.*

**www.sarahflackconsulting.com**

## Register Now!

2016 NODPA Field Days:
September 29 & 30, 2016

Chambersburg Mennonite Church
1800 Philadelphia Avenue, Chambersburg, PA

**GO TO:**
**www.nodpa.com/fielddays_registration_2016.shtml**

# Classified Ads

*continued from page 25*

starters, disassemble and re-pack hydraulic cylinders, etc. Basic wrenching that any gear head kid learns growing up on a farm around equipment.

If you enjoy outdoor farming tractor work, wrenching & "custom" fabricating, driving trucks, operating earth moving equipment, working in the woods logging or sugaring; and doing all of these things in any combination, on any given day; then being here, you'll think you've died and gone to heaven. Excellent salary and benefits package.

Contact: Robbie Nuzzo. Email: shoebox2004069@yahoo.com. Phone: 802-644-5138

Location: Jeffersonville, Vermont

**Farm Couple Wanted for a 70-Cow Organic Farm in central Wisconsin**

Full time position with every other weekend off. Nice 2 story house provided-appliances included. Wage based on experience. Opportunity to work toward herd ownership. For additional information, call 715-200-1673. Location is central Wisconsin.

## EQUIPMENT

**Jack Frost freezer trailer** - 11 ft, 2-axle. 220 volt condensing unit w/ cold plate system, temp range to -20F. Single rear door and curb side door w/curtains. Approx. 332 cu ft storage space. Excellent condition, limited road miles. $15,000.

Name: Marc Cesario. Email: marc@meetingplacepastures.com.Phone: 802-989-2341

Location: Cornwall, Vermont (Addison Co)

## FORAGES, BEDDING & GRAINS

**Certified Organic Straw Square Bales.** 50-60 lbs each. Delivery available if order 250 or more. Willing to contract annually. $7

Name: Gross Organics. Email: alivableworld@gmail.com. Phone: 402-943-6750

Location: Blanchard, Iowa

## ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

# Andrew P. Bures Farm, Deerbrook, WI

*continued from page 1*

I married in 1988. When we moved back to the farm in 1999, we had three children – 3rd grade

and younger. Dad was ready to retire and I had completed my twenty years in the military. The return to the farm was an opportunity for a change in our family's life. I am also a deacon at a local Catholic Church.

### Can you give us a glimpse of your farming operation?

We own 150 acres on a dead end road with woods surrounding three sides of the farm. Another 90 acres are rented from neighbors. We milk around 45 Holsteins and have another 45 head of heifers. Some of our larger cows have been crossed with Jerseys. The hybrids seem a bit more hearty and aggressive on pasture. Heifers are bull bred but we use AI on the milking herd. We added a milking parlor to our hip roof stanchion barn in 2005 and still use the barn for winter housing. In 2013, we added an addition to the stanchion barn for more housing.

We freshen the majority of our cows in the late summer and fall to take advantage of Organic Valley's winter premium. Having a lot of dry cows in the spring and early summer means less time milking cows which allows us to focus on putting up quality forage. Our production goal is fifty pounds a day per cow.

### Can you share some more details about your heifer program?

Young stock six months and younger are kept in the barn. Heifers six months to calving age are rotationally grazed and out wintered during the non-grazing season. In the winter, I feed the heifers dry round bales which I spread out in a large grazing paddock in rows of four. I section off four bales at a time with a break wire fence. The bales are put in ring feeders. Once they eat those four bales, I move the rings and break wire fence and keep moving down the field.

### What does your forage program look like?

Our forage is stored in three 16'x60' silos. Two get filled with haylage and the other with corn silage. We supplement our forage with shelled corn and occasionally oats. Sometimes I have my own oats to combine, depending on how weedy they get. If the weed pressure is bad, I chop the oats and put them in the silo. A local feed mill comes and picks up the corn and oats and salt that I provide them with. They grind it up, add minerals, and bring it back to the grain tank on the farm.

We do all of our own field work with a full line of used machinery that I bought from my dad. It was here and I've always figured that

**Andy Bures, Master and Brian Klinge, Apprentice, with barn in background.**

it's better to use it than stick myself with monthly payments for new equipment. I've never been into custom work- why pay someone else to maintain their machinery?

Over time, I have redone all the fencing to better accommodate rotational grazing. Generally, I move the milk herd every 24 hours, although my current DGA Apprentice has been experimenting with moving the milking herd two or even three times a day. We've also been investing in raised reinforced lanes through NRCS cost-sharing.

### When and why did you decide to become a DGA Master?

I became a Master about two years ago. The practical answer as to why I became a Master is that my kids all grew up and left and I needed help. But there is more to it than that. The only way I can put it that makes any sense is that in my life I have always looked at the direction that the Spirit moves me. We all have a purpose in life and we find it if we pay attention to what goes on around us. Everybody has a purpose and my purpose is to pass on what I know and to leave the world in a better place. DGA is a vehicle for me to accomplish this. If I can help jumpstart even one dairy farm family, then I will feel like I have accomplished something.

Tell us about your current DGA Apprentice. What are his plans when he completes his Apprenticeship?

I have one Apprentice named Brian who is in his late 20's. He is my first Apprentice. I have already lined up two more Apprentices, both of whom are currently serving in the military.

Brian and his family have been here for 1½ years and will be leaving in March, 2017. They live on the farm in a rental house. They are lining up to buy a farm a few hours from here with the intent of

shipping wholesale grass milk. The retired farmer is the area DGA Education Coordinator who monitors and helps keep the area apprentices on track. This has been an added bonus for Brian. I think it is absolutely critical to have a transitional mentorship once an apprentice buys his/her farm. I know it was important for me to have dad down the road keeping an eye and helping out when I came back to the farm after being away for 20 years after high school.

## How do you find an Apprentice and what are your thoughts on vetting candidates?

I found my current and future Apprentices through the DGA website. As a Master, I have access to applicant's profiles which I try to peruse every so often. Many of the people applying are really interested in farming and may even have a farming background. From my perspective, some people are looking for more of an experience. I want to find somebody who seems like they have more than a 50% chance of actually pursuing a farming career. I think they're more likely to stick it out. What I am not interested in is finding someone that is just looking for an experience or has a Pollyanna view of farming. So many people seem to have a romantic and idealistic view of what farming is. Don't get me wrong- I love this, but it is anything but romantic. I am looking for someone solid who is looking to give an honest effort.

## What comes next after you've found someone who fits these criteria?

Basically, I invite them for an overnight at the farm. We have an informal interview over the course of their stay and do some chores together. I try my best to gauge whether or not we have similar values and goals, and if they are sincere. My aim is to be as upfront as I can about what I can offer and what my expectations are. The ultimate question I ask myself is: are our goals compatible with one another?

## How do you approach compensation? Do you offer any incentives such as heifers at the end of the Apprenticeship?

DGA has specific requirements for Apprentice compensation. Within these requirements, my current Apprentice and I agreed on a base salary of $20,000/year. On-farm housing is deducted from his salary. Housing includes sewer and water but he pays electricity, heat, and telephone.

Paying wages directly seems neater and easier to me than selling animals to an Apprentice. What if he doesn't end up farming and has a dozen animals that he needs to deal with? I would rather not have to worry about the unforeseen and personally don't care to keep track of that kind of stuff.

## Do you have any advice for how to structure the schedule of an Apprentice and do you have regular meetings?

We don't have formal meetings but it seems that there are natural

**Apprentice Brian with his wife Katie and their three children, George, Elizabeth, and Marjorie**

times that we are together during the day, primarily at milking time. My current Apprentice is a very self-evaluative person which has made it easy for me to provide feedback. I do think it is important to spend a lot of time with your Apprentice. Brian and I milk together nearly every evening, not because we both need to be there but because it is a time to connect with one another.

## What are your thoughts on an Apprentice who has little or no experience with operating equipment?

This is less of a barrier than I would have thought. I think the key thing that needs to be determined is if the person has mature judgement or not. When you interview, you should certainly ask questions about the applicant's driving record, if they have experience with 4-wheelers or off-road vehicles, etc. If you can pick up anything that indicates that the person is reckless it would be a red flag. It speaks of poor judgement and poor reaction.

When my current Apprentice arrived he had never driven a standard transmission, but he is careful and deliberate. Now it's our second summer together and he does just about all of the field work. He can mow, chop, disk, drag, and plow. Equipment experience adds up quickly when you're doing it every day.

## How do you keep your Apprentice motivated as they move through the two-year program?

I do not consider it my job to keep an Apprentice motivated. That is his job. Ultimately, you have to be self-motivated in order to become a successful farmer because if you don't do it yourself then it won't get done. The Apprentice is going to take out of the experience what they want to.

We recently had a meeting of Master Graziers and discussed how

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## FEATURED FARM

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to ensure people are successful once they have completed the DGA program. The reality of it is that colleges put people out into the world with a four-year degree, oftentimes with a significant debt load, and the colleges don't worry about whether or not their graduates are getting a job. You either use it or you don't. Masters can't take on more responsibility than the person going through the program.

### What thoughts do you have on ensuring a successful Apprenticeship?

The best thing is to be honest, respectful, and do a lot of listening. Listening for things that aren't said is also important as is learning when to ignore one another. I learned a lot of this in social work, though some Masters might not have these skills in their toolbox.

Another critical element is to have a positive attitude about farming and life. I see a lot of negative attitudes about farm life and how difficult it is. In some ways, I understand these attitudes but it's really not that bad. You can see it half empty or half full and you have to see it half full. Apprentices need that. If that perspective is missing then you start questioning why the heck you are doing this. ◆

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Message from the NODPA President

*continued from page 2*

and make our farms safe places to live and work.

I hope to see many of you at the Annual Field Days in Chambersburg, PA later this month. You will find a complete lineup of the speakers and farm tours in this newsletter. We owe a great deal of gratitude to Cliff and Maggie Hawbaker for being the host farm, and to the Chambersburg Mennonite Church for providing the meeting site. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Postscript: After writing this, we contacted NY Center for Agriculture Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) regarding the NY ROPS Rebate Program online at www.nycamhoutreach.com/ropsr4u. This program will rebate the cost of retrofitting your tractor with a ROP structure at 70% up to a maximum out-of-pocket expense of $500. Rebates funds are good toward the purchase, shipping, and installation of the structure. The only minor glitch for cash-stressed farmers is that you have to pay for the structure first, then the program rebates you their portion. In our case, for an International 1466, they estimated the structure to cost $2,885 including shipping, and they would rebate us all but $500.

Because we feel that this is such an important issue, we have included an article from Penn State Cooperative Extension on page 8 on rollover protection for farm tractor operators.

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

## NODPA MISSION STATEMENT

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

## Organic Industry News

# Renewal & Efficient Energy Systems for Dairy Farms

**First published June 2, 2016**

*By Brad Heins, Assistant Professor of Organic Dairy Production, West Central ROC, University of Minnesota*

*Originally appeared in Hoard's Dairyman*

The typical mid-sized dairy farm uses a large amount of energy during milking activities. This is due to the frequency of milking and the energy intensive nature of harvesting milk, keeping it cool, and cleaning the equipment with hot water. Renewable energy systems generally become more economically efficient as the amount of energy used increases, making dairy farms a great place to incorporate renewable energy.

Dairy farms have not typically been set up with energy efficiency in mind and often use relatively expensive fuel sources like heating oil or propane to heat water. One of the difficulties encountered with renewable energy systems is the intermittent generation of wind and solar energy whereas the energy load on a dairy farm is very consistent since cows are typically milked twice or three times every day (very large dairies may milk continuously). An efficient way to store energy has long been sought to tie energy production and consumption together. A dairy farm's need for both electricity and heat provides an ideal situation to generate electrical energy on-site to meet current electrical load requirements, displace conventional thermal fuels with electrical energy, and evaluate thermal storage as a solution to the time shifting of wind and solar electrical generation.

Our team at the University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC) in Morris, MN has been monitoring water and energy usage since the fall of 2013 with our two dairy production systems. The dairy operation at the WCROC milks between 200 and 270 cows twice daily and is representative of a mid-size Minnesota dairy farm. The cows are split almost evenly between a conventional and certified organic grazing herds and all cows spend the winter outside in confinement lots near the milking parlor. The existing dairy equipment is typical for similarly sized dairy farms and included none of the commonly recommended energy efficiency enhancements such as a plate cooler, refrigeration heat recovery, or variable frequency drives (VFD) for pump motors when this project started in 2013. The goal of our project is to increase renewable electric energy generation on Minnesota dairy farms by establishing a "net-zero" energy milking parlor.

A data logger (Campbell Scientific CR3000) was installed in the utility room of the dairy milking parlor in August 2013 and has monitored 18 individual electric loads, 12 water flow rates, 13 water temperatures, and 2 air temperatures for the last 2.5 years. Average data values are recorded every 10 minutes. The milking parlor has gas and electric meters which measure the total consumption of natural gas and electricity within the parlor.

The data is used to evaluate energy and water usage of the various milking appliances throughout the day and total daily usage over a month or year. Not every load in the dairy barn is measured. Loads that are not measured are small, occur in unused parts of the barn, or are not directly related to the milking operation. These loads fall into the category of miscellaneous loads and are estimated by subtracting all the measured energy use from the total energy used measured by the utility electric meter.

Overall, the milking parlor currently consumes about 250 to 400 kWh in electricity and uses between 1,300 and 1,500 gallons of water per day (see figures). The milking parlor currently consumes about 110,000 kWh per year (440 kWh/cow/day) in electricity and 4,500 therms per year in natural gas. A majority of the electricity use in our dairy facility is for cooling milk (27%), followed by our ventilation system and fans (16%). Our dairy also uses about 600 gallons of hot water per day, with a majority of hot water used for cleaning and sanitizing the milking equipment after each milking, followed closely by cleaning the milking parlor facilities after each milking. The energy and water usage fluctuates throughout the year because our dairy calves 60% of our cows from March to May and 40% from September to December each year. Therefore, water and energy usage increases dramatically in April each year.

One energy efficiency upgrade was installed in the milking parlor in September 2013. The upgrade was a Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) for the vacuum pump. Before the upgrade, the vacuum pump used 55 to 65 kWh per day. After the installation, the vacuum pump used 12 kWh per day, resulting in a 75% decrease in energy usage. The data show a large drop in daily electricity usage by the pump providing a vivid example of the kind of energy savings that can be achieved with relatively simple equipment upgrades. This example also hints at the potential for

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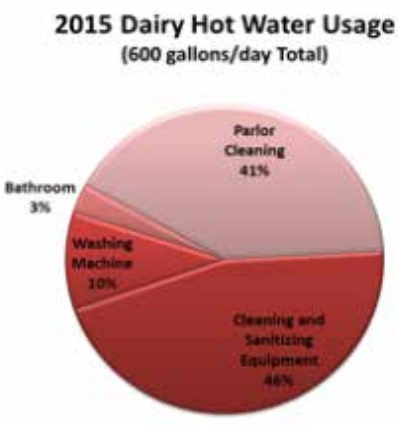


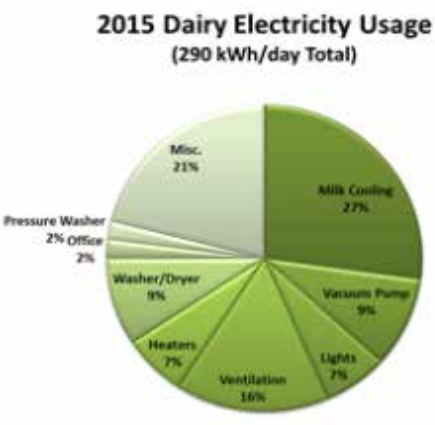

## NET UPDATE

# Recent ODairy Discussions

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

A farmer asked the group how they manage electric fences at the end of the grazing season – take them down? Or leave them up? One producer responded that they take down all the fences, as it makes the fiberglass posts last longer. Another producer leaves all the perimeter and laneway fencing up, and just drops the cross-fencing to the ground to spread manure, driving around the posts. Having a lot of milkweed in a field, a farmer asked if he should be concerned with toxicity if he makes baleage in that field. One vet responded that fresh milkweed sap is caustic and will irritate a cow's gums, but not if it is dried. She had never seen it as a problem in baleage or hay. Another farmer noted that his cows left the milkweed in the bottom of the feeder when he had it in his baleage. He added that milkweed grows in zinc deficient soils, so he added some zinc with clover seed to rejuvenate areas heavy in milkweed. Several farmers added that they leave some milkweed in the fields for the Monarch Butterflies, since it is their only food source.

A producer was surprised by a large bees nest on his grain bin, and was looking for some non-toxic solutions. Suggestions included mixing a borax and sugar syrup, and leaving it near the nest; a propane torch and a "serious" vacuum cleaner were also recommended.

A healthy, robust 4-month old calf became suddenly lethargic and went off feed. She exhibited a rapid pulse, no gut movement, and pale membranes. The attending vet decided to take a blood sample, and it was the color and viscosity of iodine teat dip. A few minutes later, the calf died. Results from the blood sample indicated that this appeared to be a form of anemia where all the red blood cells had ruptured, called Regenerative Hemolytic Anemia. Several vets weighed in on some possibilities: some blood parasites can be an underlying cause, along with vaccine toxins, some plant toxins, some wormers, and other toxicities (lead, selenium, copper, and zinc toxicity can manifest with symptoms of hemolytic anemia).

We were reminded that the treatment for a cow with Johnes' disease is dry, grassy hay. No pasture, no ensiled feed. Oats would be a good choice for grain, even with some molasses for added energy. They may be able to symptomatically clear up, although will still harbor the germs inside. "… feeding a cow as she is meant to be fed goes a long way in minimizing the symptoms of Johnes' disease." ◆



### 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

# 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 Anne Phillips at (607)-222-3265 or Anne.phillips@organicvalley.coop
- In the Southeast, contact Gerry Cohn at (919) 605-5619 or gerry.cohn@organicvalley.coop.
- Central to Western PA, contact Peter Miller, Division Pool Manager, peter.miller@organicvalley.coop; cell 612-801-3506.
- 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.

We offer:

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

Requirements:

- No grain, no corn silage
- Just pasture, dry hay and baleage
- Certified Organic

Please CALL US with questions! Phone: 518-758-7777

## Dairy Marketing Services Organic

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

## Stonyfield Farm, Inc.

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.

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

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## SARE Grant Project on Grass-fed Dairy to start this Fall

*Fay Benson will be presenting more about this project at the 16th Annual NODPA Field Days*

The USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (USDA SARE) program has funded a project to help support the emerging grass-fed milk market in the Northeast. The grant was awarded to Fay Benson with Cornell Small Dairy, Sarah Flack of Flack Consulting in Vermont, and Heather Darby with University of Vermont Extension. This three-part project will ask for collaboration of farmers that produce grass-fed milk. If you are a farmer that is producing grass-fed milk, look out for information on the project by mail or email, and if would be interested in participating please contact one of the project directors.

The Study will start an initial survey of as many dairies as possible to give a snapshot of current production practices on North East grass-fed dairy farms. If you receive a survey request we hope you will fill it out and return it to us. Also if you would like to participate in further phases of this project please indicate on the survey (or contact one of us).

The second part of the study will be done with a smaller group of grass-fed farmers that are willing to share monthly information from their dairy. This will require someone from the farm to fill out a monthly online (or paper) survey that will consist of information on herd health, reproduction, some information from your milk check, changes in herd inventory, and forage fed during the month. Participation will require the farms to commit to two years of data collection and allow for at least one on-farm visit to collect in-depth farm data. In return the farm will receive a monthly stipend, free forage sampling, and reports on changes on their farm over the study. This data will also be used to generate some benchmarks for grassmilk production. Sarah Flack will visit each of these farms at least once during the first winter of the project to take forage samples, learn more about each farm, and help farmers prepare their records to participate in the monthly data collection. Contact Sarah if you are interested in participating in this part of the study.

The third part of the study will be plant forage species trials to help identify high energy forage species that can be grown in the northeast. Energy is believed to be the weakest link in a high forage diet, so this portion of the study will help farmers determine the best suited and highest energy feed. If you are interested in providing feedback on this trial please contact Dr. Heather Darby.

The project team will compile the information from the surveys, on-farm visits, and the grass-fed monitor tool to develop a series of educational materials and tools that will help inform the production practices of current and aspiring grass-fed dairies. We look forward to sharing what is learned in this study to support the success of farms as they produce grass-fed milk for this growing market of consumers who are interested in the nutritional and environmental benefits of these products.

**Contact information:**

**Fay Benson**: 607.391.2669, afb3@cornell.edu
**Sarah Flack** 802-309-3714, sarahflackconsulting@gmail.com
**Heather Darby:** 802-524-6501, heather.darby@uvm.edu

## Renewable Energy

*continued from page 32*

large decreases in the energy needed to harvest milk if the whole system is re-engineered with energy efficiency in mind.

Furthermore, our dairy has 2 bulk tank compressors: one scroll compressor and one reciprocating compressor because of our organic and conventional dairy systems. The scroll compressor is the newest compressor and uses 15 kWh per day versus 40 kWh per day for the reciprocating compressor. Based on milk production for the 2 dairy herds, the scroll compressor costs $0.73 kWh/cwt versus $1.08 kWh/cwt., indicating the scroll compressor is more efficient than the reciprocating compressor. In terms of fossil energy use in our dairy production system, milk harvesting operations used more energy than herd feeding and maintenance. This suggests that fossil energy use per unit of milk could be greatly reduced by replacing older equipment with new more efficient technology or substituting renewable sources of energy into the milk harvesting process.

To implement energy efficiency on dairy farms, dairy producers should begin an energy audit to gather farm energy data and identify energy efficient opportunities that could be made on their dairy farm. Energy monitoring will uncover electricity saving opportunities on dairy farms. Some of the energy efficiency options that may be installed on dairy farms include refrigeration heat recovery, variable frequency drives, plate coolers and more efficient lighting and fans. A majority of these upgrades would have immediate to 2 to 5 year paybacks.

Dairy farms should make all electrical loads as efficient as possible or practical. All thermal loads could be converted to electricity by the use of heat pumps to that allow for cooling of milk. In the future, we have plans to harvest energy from our manure lagoon and store electricity as heat by use of heat pumps. A dairy farm may also add renewable energy options to improve the energy efficiency on farms. These may include solar thermal collectors to pre-heat water, solar photovoltaic panels for generating electricity, small-scale wind turbines for electricity, and large, insulated tanks for thermal energy storage.

During the summer of 2016, we will install a 50 kW DC ground mount solar photovoltaic array, and 2-10 kW wind turbines to meet our dairies energy demands. A 2,200 thermal storage system employing an electric heat pump will also be installed to recover heat from the milk refrigeration system and solar thermal collectors. Our "Greening" of dairy energy project will investigate an efficient energy storage technology and system that could significantly improve the feasibility of renewable energy on dairy farms. More information and dairy energy project updates may be found at our website:

http://wcroc.cfans.umn.edu/research-programs/renewable-energy/energy-dairy ◆

# Calendar

**September 15, 2016**
**Organic Dairy: Infrastructure and Pasture Management**
Deberville Dairy, 73 Fairgrounds Rd., Washington, VT
12:30 - 2:30pm, $10 for farmers / $20 for all others

This workshop will look at Deberville Dairy's infrastructure including an Iowa low cost/high efficiency milking parlor, bedded pack barn, calf group housing and bird feeders. This workshop will also discuss their 100% grass feeding system including pasture management, use of mineral and apple cider vinegar, and their strategies for increasing butterfat.

More information and registration is available at http://nofavt.org/events/organic-dairy-infrastructure-and-pasture-management. Or contact Rachel at rachel@nofavt.org

**September 22, 2016**
**Continuing the Organic Tradition with the Second Generation**
The Hardy Farm, 718 Aney Hill Rd, Mohawk, NY
1 - 4pm, $15/person or $25 for two or more people/farm

Join NOFA-NY at the Hardy Farm to learn more about running a diverse dairy operation including hogs, poultry, beef and dairy. See

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## WEBINAR

**September 15, 2016 at 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. Pacific Time Organic Dairy Healthcare Webinar**

Join the CCOF Foundation on September 15 for a webinar on healthcare practices for organic dairy farms. Learn the basics of healthcare management for organic dairy herds, including both preventive health measures and methods allowed in organic production to treat sick animals. This webinar is ideal for those interested in transitioning to organic or current organic dairy producers looking to improve their healthcare practices. Dr. Guy Jodarski, supervising veterinarian for Organic Valley, will share his expertise gained from working as a veterinarian for nearly 30 years. Then, hear the practitioners' perspective on organic herd health from CCOF-certified dairy farmer Shane Radelfinger. Time will be reserved for questions from webinar participants.

More information/Registration: https://www.ccof.org/webinar-healthcare-practices-organic-dairy-farms

**QUICKBOOKS FOR FARMERS (BF 204)**
**Content opens on Friday, September 30, 2016 through Friday November 4, 2016.**

This course is an introduction to QuickBooks, designed to provide an overview of the QuickBooks Pro software application. It will cover the basic features, such as sales tax, inventory, invoicing, adjustments, and year-end procedures. Each student will gain hands-on experience reproducing the exercises presented by the instructor.

Students who demonstrate competence in each of the exercises will be able to proceed to the next unit of study. All units will build on the skills and knowledge of the previous unit. Students are recommended to take notes and participate at a steady pace to complete the course in the 6-week time frame.

Questions and brief discussions about using QuickBooks in real-world, business environments will be entertained and answered in a discussion area, drawn from the instructor's own experience as well as from input from other students.

This course is appropriate for people at all levels of farm experience who seek to get started using QuickBooks for their farm business record-keeping. Some understanding of elementary bookkeeping and accounting principles are helpful, and some previous exposure to QuickBooks will make the acquisition of skills much easier. If you are actively using QuickBooks and would like to improve your use of the software, this course may be too basic for you. Read through the syllabus below to make sure the topics covered will be useful.

The bulk of the course happens on your own time, with discussions, readings, and assignments in MOODLE, our virtual classroom. To add to the experience, webinars will be woven into the online interface of the course to allow you to meet on a weekly basis to learn from presenters and ask questions in real time. If you miss one, they are always recorded and posted for later viewing. This can be a self-paced course if you choose. One-on-one assistance (via webinar) will be available in addition to the weekly group webinar on Monday evenings during the course.

PLEASE NOTE: QuickBooks software is not included in this course and will need to be purchased separately if you want to use it long-term on your farm. You can participate in this course using the free 30-day trial of the online version of QuickBooks; your instructors will provide instructions to get started with this.

Instructors

Bonnie Collins, Resource Educator, Farm Business Management, Cornell Cooperative Extension – Oneida County, and Stephen Hadcock, Beginning Farmer and Market Development Educator, Team Coordinator, Capital Area Agricultural and Horticultural Program.

For more information: http://www.nebeginningfarmers.org/

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

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

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

deduct the sum of :

_____ $0.02 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA

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

_____ $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 handler/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 form AND YOUR EXEMPT FORM 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. **If you need assistance in applying for the exemption, check here _____. 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

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

_____ $100 to become a supporter of NODPA

_____ $150 to become a Business Member

_____ $300 to $500 to become a Friend

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

_____ $1,000+ to become a Benefactor

Name: _____ Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

Number of milking cows _____ Milk buyer _____

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

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

Credit card: Master Card Visa Card #: _____

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

# Calendar

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Aaron and Sarah Hardy's new beef facilities and learn how to manage your livestock organically. Aaron and Dave Hardy will share their story of building a family business that supports generational transfer. Hear how the Hardy family has worked to create a shared management system that focuses on building knowledge and profitability and learn more about NOFA-NY's Beginning Farmer Project and the On-Farm Skills Development Guide.

See more information at https://www.nofany.org/events-news/events/item/120-continuing-the-organic-tradition-with-the-second-generation, register at http://www.cvent.com/events/continuing-the-organic-tradition-with-the-second-generation/event-summary-c7c64333f0504afba449cab7ad9c927c.aspx or call 585-271-1979.

**September 23-25, 2016, 9am - 5pm each day**
**MOFGA's Common Ground Country Fair**
Unity, Maine

Free with MOFGA membership, or $10 in advance for adults, $8 for elders, kids 12 and under are free.

If you've ever been to the Fair, you know – and if you haven't been, anyone who has will tell you – it's an event like no other, that brings together so many people from so many walks of life, all in the spirit of celebrating the rural and agricultural traditions of Maine.

More information is at http://www.mofga.org/TheFair/tabid/135/Default.aspx

**September 29 & 30, 2016, 16th Annual NODPA Field Days**
**Chambersburg Mennonite Church, 1800 Philadelphia Avenue, Chambersburg, PA**

SAVE THE DATE for the 16th Annual NODPA Field Days. John Kempf, an internationally recognized lecturer on the topic of biological agriculture and plant immunity who founded Advancing Eco Agriculture (AEA) in 2008, will be the keynote speaker. Although John has spoken at many national and regional conferences and seminars, including at the United Nations, he remains a part of the Amish community in Northeast Ohio in which he was raised. The farm tour will be at Cliff and Maggie Hawbaker's farms, Hamilton Heights Dairy Farm and Emerald Valley Farm in South Central Pennsylvania's Franklin County. More information on the program will follow in the July NODPA News and online at www.nodpa.com. Trade show and sponsorship information will be in the mail this month. If you have questions, call Nora Owens, NODPA Field Days Coordinator at 413-772-0444 or email her: noraowens@comcast.net

**October 8, 2016**
**Grazing Dairy Cow Health & Genetics: Beyond the Basics**
Wholesome Dairy Farms, 181 Camp Rd, Douglassville, PA 19518
Registration Opens 9:00 am; program from 9:30-1pm, followed by lunch. Cost: $20 Members, $25 Non-members.

This field day will be a discussion regarding the challenges cows face at the different stages of their lives, including conversation around genetics, nutrition, and how the soil of the pasture directly influences the health of the animal and the end product of the system. Mark Lopez, VMD, owner of Wholesome Dairy Farms in Douglassville, PA, will lead the group from the pasture to the barn and, finally, to the on-site store that sells the farm's finished products. Susan Beal, DVM, CVH, will also be present to lend her expertise related to whole farm/whole system pasture-based ecology: managing health from the ground up. For more information, visit their website: https://www.pasafarming.org/events/pasa-events/pasa-education-event-grazing-dairy-cow-health-genetics-beyond-the-basics

**October 15, 2016, 9am-1pm**
**Productive Riparian Buffers**
Happy Hollow Farm, 2486 Orwig Rd, Stewartstown, PA 17363
Cost: $20 Members, $25 Non-members

This field day will be an in-depth look at a 5-year old riparian buffer that both follows Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) guidelines, as well as addresses different uses outside the CREP boundaries. Farm Service Agency employee Don English and wife, landscape architect Ann, have designed a buffer that uses a wide variety of native plants in the CREP area, such as elderberry, hollies, aronia, and viburnums, as well as a broader range of species outside the CREP area--including a number of heritage apples. Principles of buffer design, plant selection, working with government programs, and

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# From the MODPA Treasurer

As I write this, there is definitely change in the air. I am seeing the first signs of fall in my area. Some of the sumac is changing color. The box elder bugs are back and there has definitely been a change in the air. A blanket on the bed is welcome. A few weeks ago there was no need for it. Across the river in Minnesota, the State Fair opened yesterday. For me, that is an unofficial end of summer. As we head into fall there appears to be several unknowns in the picture. Will there be a checkoff, if so how will it be structured? Will the animal welfare rules be put in effect? Will they be fair? Will they be something we as farmers can live with and successfully manage our farms? How will the winter shape up for milk production? In my area the crop season has been good. We have had plenty of moisture. It has been hard to make dry hay but compared to other areas of the country I feel very fortunate. The overall milk supply in this country seems to be similar to the weather. It varies by location. There seems to be a fair amount of downward pressure by the processors on the price yet at the same time they are making money. We need to make sure that we as farmers are getting our share of the profits. We cannot forget that we are selling at a wholesale price to the processors.

I hope and pray that all of you who read this and your friends and neighbors have a safe and successful fall harvest.

Make sure you take the time to get the rest you need during this busy season. Safety first and take the time to stop and smell the clover along the way.

***Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer, Glenwood City, WI, 715-781-4856***



## Become a Member of MODPA!

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email:_____

Certified Organic Dairy? Yes No # of cows: _____

Transitioning: _____

I wish to support MODPA (check whatever applies):

___ By becoming a state rep or director.

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

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

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

## About MODPA

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

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

### MODPA Board

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

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**Northampton, MA**

# Calendar

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finding value in the buffer-- ecological, social, and economic-- will be discussed. The Englishes will also share the lessons they have learned over five years of buffer installation and management—what's worked for them and what, in hindsight, they' might have done differently.

Tracey Coulter, a representative of the DCNR, will be present to discuss agroforestry initiatives within DCNR related to riparian buffer projects. Also present will be representatives of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Stroud Water Research Center, organizations that work with farmers and landowners in the Chesapeake Bay and Delaware River watersheds in installing buffers by providing technical as well as access to financial assistance. This field day is a good event for any landowner or farmer who is considering planting a buffer on their land and is wondering what sort of productive potential there might be, what funding opportunities exist, and how, in general, to make the project work.

**October 15, 2016, 11am-3pm**
**Basics of Tractor Safety and Maintenance**
Everblossom Farm, 6363 Carlisle Pike, East Berlin, PA 17316
Cost: $20 Members, $25 Non-members

Everblossom Farm will host the Basics of Tractor Safety and Maintenance on Saturday, October 15 from 11:00am to 3:00pm. Darla Romberger, Agricultural Sciences Instructor and Penn State Certified Tractor Safety Instructor, will provide in-depth tractor safety training for beginner tractor users. Matt Steiman of the Dickinson College Farm, with over 15 years of vegetable farming experience, will instruct attendees on the basics of tractor maintenance. For more information, visit this website: https://www.pasafarming.org/events/pasa-events/pasa-education-event-tractor-safety ◆