

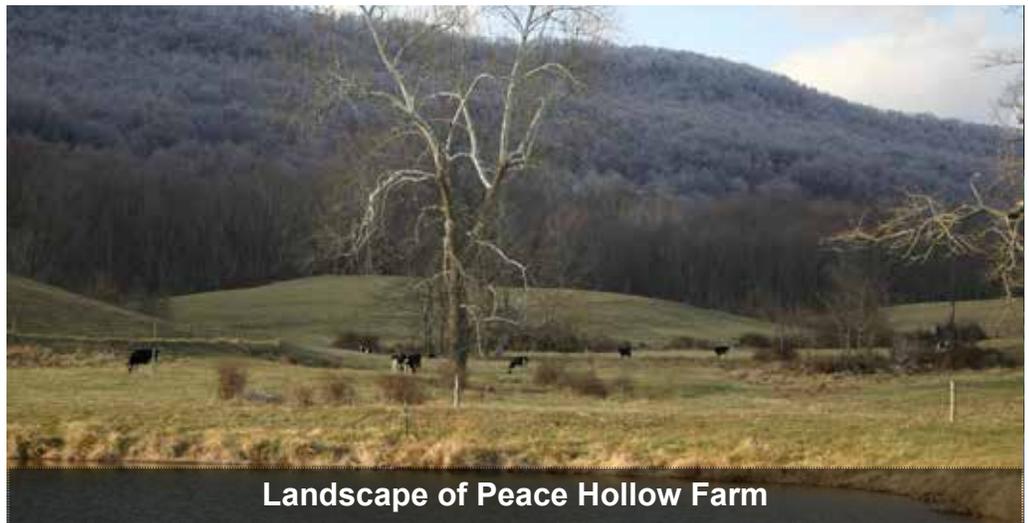
NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Landscape of Peace Hollow Farm

Faith in Grass: Peace Hollow Farm, Knoxville, Maryland

by Sonja Heyck-Merlin

Meet Myron and Janet Martin of Peace Hollow Farm- a Knoxville, Maryland all-grass dairy. Here is a recurring conversation Myron has with conventional dairy producers or those considering a transition to organic: “How much are you milking per cow, Myron?” “Oh, 10,000 pounds a year.

Some years it’s closer to 9,000 pounds but some years it’s 10,500 pounds,” Myron responds. “You only get that much?” the other farmer responds, with his eyes bugging out. “Yes,” Myron says, “but by focusing on grass we have minimized our expenses.”

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Organic Production

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Federal Mandated Organic Checkoff

Stop the Organic Checkoff Program (a Tax)!

Submit Comments on the Proposed Rule before April 19th

Analysis and talking points follow

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

They always say that the answers are in the details. In the case of OTA’s proposed organic checkoff, all you need to do is look past the propaganda and look at the actual wording to see

how impractical it is; how invasive it is; how unnecessary it is; how producers will have to pay a poll tax to qualify to vote on establishing an organic checkoff and then have no effective say in how money is spent. Those that designed the method of assessment obviously had no idea about the economics of small to mid-size organic family farms. Family wages/draw will be assessed because it is not an allowable deduction from gross organic sales. Taxing producers wages is not right.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Message from the NODPA President

It seems, at least for right now, the country is awash with milk – both organic and conventional. We hear the same story across the country from organic producers and processors; the demand for wholesale milk has gone flat while production has increased. So farmers are being asked for voluntary reductions in milk production or restricted by a quota. Our processor has asked for a 5% reduction; for our farm that works out to about 250 pounds per day. We are culling a few cows, adjusting the grain ration, and will delay breeding some heifers. The most difficult part will be holding to this level through the spring flush. We will all just do the best we can.

Unless you have been living inside a barrel for the last couple of years, you have no doubt heard about the Organic Checkoff, a program put forward by the Organic Trade Association. The checkoff will apply to organic dairy producers as you will have to choose between the organic checkoff or the conventional one IF an organic

checkoff is set up. The NODPA Board and Representatives have taken a clear stance against the checkoff, and it is your turn now. The USDA is seeking comments from producers, and the April 19th deadline is fast approaching. So please consider giving your opinion a voice – even just a sentence or two! Decision makers won't know how you feel about this unless you tell them. Here's a link to comment: www.regulations.gov/comment?D=AMS-SC-16-0112-1360 and/or mail to Promotion & Economics Div., Specialty Crops Program, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave. SW., Rm 1406-S, Stop 0244, Washington, D.C. 20250-0244; Fax comments: (202) 205-2800

Suggestions on what to put in your comments:

1. I will vote against any organic checkoff.
2. I can't support another Tax on farmers.
3. I want a promotional program that says "Organic is the Gold Standard." An organic checkoff will not allow that.
4. The checkoff system has been investigated many times and found that is fundamentally broken for farmers – this is not the program to benefit organic farmers

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the NODPA Desk: March 2017

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

This issue of the NODPA News has many articles and comments on the proposed organic checkoff. Some might call this overkill but one reason we still publish a printed copy of the NODPA News is that there are many organic dairy producers who do not have internet access. These producers have only received the biased propaganda in favor of an organic checkoff sent out from the Organic Trade Association. There is a fairly limited time to comment on the Proposed Rule. NODPA and others asked for a full 90 days extension to the comment period but we only received an extra 30 days. We are left with a very short time to educate producers about the reality of an organic checkoff and the vast impact it will have on all organic producers. We need to have everyone send in comments that will make the USDA stop and think about what is happening. The USDA has recognized that there is a sizable opposition to the checkoff because we have been sending them regular updates from our online petition, which now stands at 1,881 voting against the organic checkoff. Please send in your comments to the USDA so we can kill this intrusive and unnecessary tax on producers. A federally mandated, USDA administered Research and Promotion Program is not the right structure for raising research money to boost organic production. Remind the USDA-AMS that OTA does not represent producers and many small organically certified businesses.

Secretary of Agriculture-designate Sonny Perdue hasn't been confirmed as I write this and nobody expects that to happen until well into April. While Perdue is not related to the Maryland-based family behind chicken giant Perdue, he is no stranger to agribusiness. Before entering politics, he ran a small fertilizer business and soon after exiting office as Governor of Georgia in 2011, Perdue launched Perdue Partners, which Bloomberg Business describes as a "global trading company." He is an adamant climate change denier and, as governor of Georgia, he oversaw a dramatic expansion of factory farming, particularly in the poultry sector. His tenure saw overall farm sales go from \$4.9 billion in 2002 to \$9.3 billion in 2012, while the number of farms in Georgia actually declined by 17 percent (compared with a 1 percent national decline). While in office, he blocked efforts to regulate factory farms, while at the same time overseeing a \$155 million expansion of Perdue Farms (no relation) in the state and blocking the Environmental Protection Agency's efforts under President George W. Bush to enforce the Clean Air Act. Under Perdue's tenure as governor, major cutbacks were made in offices such as the Consumer Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Agriculture, which saw its budget slashed by more than a quarter. Adam Diamond reported in an opinion piece on McClatchy News that, "Saving money is not to be criticized, unless, of course, it comes at the expense of public

safety." In a response to a salmonella outbreak at the Peanut Corporation of America's Georgia plant, which killed nine people and sickened more than 700, officials stated that resource constraints limited both the frequency and scope of food safety inspections in the state. We have no idea yet of how he feels about the National Organic Program (NOP) which is unique in that it is a relatively small portion of the USDA budget and is voluntary regulation. With over 200 political appointments to be made to the USDA it will not be until the end of 2017 that we will have a clear picture about how organic programs will be supported and where the political preferences will end up. It is very likely that many proposed regulations will await the approval of new appointees' especially controversial ones like the implementation of the Organic Animal Welfare regulation whose implementation date has been set back until May 20th 2017. The Origin of Livestock regulation which has never been controversial is still languishing in the bowels of USDA.

What is of concern to all organic dairy and many transitional producers is the dismal state of the organic milk market. Despite rising retail sales, admittedly only averaging 5.7% over all fat levels, we are in a national oversupply situation. Utilization of all types of organic milk in the Federal Milk Marketing Order 1 (New England) continues to grow as the number of buyers shrink, and as smaller independent organic milk purchasers have more difficulty balancing supply and having enough processing allocation to handle the increased supply. With the surplus comes a drop in pay price and restrictions on volume, either voluntarily or, as is the case with CROPP, imposition of a \$20 deduction per cwt for milk over the active quota. Producers' response will be to cut back on expansion plans, decrease cow numbers, rear fewer replacements, feed less grain and/or lengthen the calving dates. At the same time that producers are being asked to cut back production, the largest, vertically integrated organic dairy (Aurora Dairy) is actively expanding production and processing ability. Manufacturers that require organic dairy ingredient are looking to source their own supply, and we have the brand leader of organic milk (WhiteWave/Horizon) being acquired by the brand leader of organic yogurt (Danone/Stonyfield). The number of buyers of organic milk is shrinking rapidly and any leverage to affect their pay price that producers may have had in the past has disappeared. A producer can't move to another buyer if there are no active buyers in the region.

George Siemon, CROPP Cooperative, posted on the ODairy listserv that, "The good news is we are bringing on more families. How to maintain the sustainable pay price is a subject for intelligent dialogue as it is not a birth right." A sustainable pay price is needed to keep all those committed farm families in business and although not a 'birth right,' producers should have a 'living wage' just as other working folks have a minimum wage or are fairly compensated for their labor and capital investment. If that doesn't happen we will have the same situation that exists in the conventional market, relying on larger operations that have the economies of scale and financial resources to sustain themselves with all the peaks and troughs of the market. ♦

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic Dairy Farm Profitability in 2015

By Bob Parsons, Professor

Extension Ag Economist, University of Vermont Extension/Department of Community Development and Applied Economics, Burlington, VT

An analysis of the returns to organic dairy farms (N=36) in Vermont shows that the average Return on Assets (ROA) remained about the same, at 1.71% as compared to 1.81% in 2014. Average milk price received by farmers increased from \$35.09 in 2014 to \$38.59 in 2015.

In using statistics, the group can be affected by an outlier, and this is the case this year. If one farm was dropped from the data set of 36 farms, the ROA would average 2.47%, well above last year and more reflective of the increase in milk price. Similar size conventional dairy farms (67 cows per farm) averaged -1.13% in 2015 with an average milk price of \$18.12 per cwt.

The farms participating in the study for 2015 have all been certified organic for at least 2 years, with some certified for more than 15 years. All but one farm were from Vermont, with the biggest farm at 135 cows and smallest at 27 cows. Three of the farms had more than 100 head and two farms had less than 30 cows. This is a reflection of the 203 organic dairy farms in Vermont.

The farms averaged 61.1 cows per farm, with milk production per cow at 13,289 lbs., well below the 19,957 for conventional dairy farms. For 2015, 14 of the 36 farms did not achieve the \$38,000 charge for the operator labor and management on an accrual basis. Of these farms, eight had off-farm income that offset family living costs not covered by the farm.

The average farm earned \$311,898 in milk sales and \$17,523 in cow and calf sales, reflecting higher beef prices and \$4000 in surplus dairy animals sold in 2015. On the expense side, the largest expense was feed, with grain purchases at \$89,440 and forages at \$11,718. The next highest expenses were repairs and supplies at \$41,513 and labor at \$34,424. Depreciation averaged \$36,195 per farm.

As compared to similar size conventional farms, feed cost was \$1657 per cow vs. \$1307. Additionally, repairs and supplies were \$680 per cow vs \$624, labor was \$564 vs \$370, and fuel cost was \$137 per cow vs \$178 for conventional dairy farms. When looking at total expenses, organic dairy farms averaged \$4775 vs \$4520 per cow for the conventional dairy farms. On the revenue side, organic dairy farms averaged \$5686 per cow vs \$4871 for conventional dairy farms. So with less milk per cow and more than twice the milk price, organic dairy farms averaged more than \$800 additional revenue per cow in 2015.

As compared to 2014, the biggest difference for organic dairy

farmers was the milk price with an increase of \$3.50. Additionally, the farms averaged 3.4 more cows and 550 lbs. more milk sold per cow. Total revenue per cow was up nearly \$800 per cow while expenses were up just over \$600 per cow, leaving the average farm with an additional \$200 per cow.

There continues to be a variation between organic dairy farms. When the 36 farms in the study were divided into 3 groups, we found a distinct profitable group (6.3% ROA), one that is getting by (2.4% ROA), and another for which some farms' future is highly questionable (-3.6% ROA).

The primary characteristics of the most profitable group are not a surprise to knowledgeable dairy farmers. This group has 16-19 more cows than the less profitable groups and produced 2800 lbs. more milk per cow. There is considerable advantage in getting more milk per cow and milking more cows, as the higher profit group averaged nearly \$1000 of additional revenue per cow (\$6218) than the other two groups. This provided the high profit group more than \$151,000 additional revenue per farm over the mid-profit group and \$191,000 over the low profit group. To make more profit, it helps to have more revenue to start with.

On the expense side, the high profit group had more cash to spend and they did. The high profit group averaged \$4966 in expenses per cow vs \$4673 for the low profit group. Interestingly, the mid-profit group had the lowest expense per cow at \$4384 per cow. The mid-profit group appears to fit the definition of "tight with a buck" in limiting their cash expenses.

The highest expense for each group was purchased grain. The higher profit group spent \$1692 per cow, followed by the low profit group at \$1445 and mid-profit group at \$1220. Another revealing characteristic was expenditures on forage. The low profit group spent \$314 vs \$201 for the mid-group, and only \$90 for the high profit group. This aspect has one wondering about the forage quality and quantity of the low profit group farms and their inability to get higher production from their cows, considering the amount spend on grain. Organic grain is 2.5 to 3 times the cost of conventional grain but there are farmers who believe that given the higher milk price, feeding organic grain is worth the price. Of the 36 farms in the study, 11 produce more than 16,000 lbs. of milk per cow and 1 farm produced 19,636 lbs. per cow.

Other high expense categories include repairs and supplies and labor. Repairs and supplies totaled \$631 per cow for the low profit group, \$611 for the mid-group, and \$714 for the high profit group. These expenses reflect the situation that if you have more money, more is spent on repairs and supplies but the difference is only \$86 per cow.

Labor provided the biggest difference between the profit groups. The

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2015 Vermont Organic Dairy Farms Averages (N=36)
Reported by Profitability Group
Per Cow



	Bottom Third N=12	Middle Third N=12	Top Third N=12	All Farms N=36
Average # of cows	53.7	56.8	72.7	61.1
Lbs shipped total	825,206	719,050	1,118,851	821,036
Lbs shipped/cow	12,353	12,326	15,189	13,289
Milk price	\$38.76	\$39.69	\$37.32	\$38.59
Receipts				
Milk sales (a)	4,710	4,848	5,662	5,107
Dairy cattle sales	91	46	98	71
Cull cow sales	187	154	203	174
Bob/veal calf sales	43	33	48	43
Crop sales	28	17	40	24
Government payments	23	9	28	19
Patronage dividends	52	33	46	41
Custom work	0	0	25	10
Syrup	5	28	14	14
Timber	6	0	5	3
Other	95	54	50	62
Total Cash Receipts (b)	\$5,240	\$5,222	\$6,218	\$5,568
Accrual Revenue Adjustments				
Livestock inventory	(142)	41	93	21
Breeding livestock purchases	(54)	(10)	0	(16)
Accounts receivable (c)	6	30	46	25
Hay	26	63	123	85
Grain	3	1	5	4
Total Accrual Revenue (d)	(\$155)	\$120	\$267	\$118
Total Farm Revenue (e)	\$5,082	\$5,340	\$6,485	\$5,686
Expenses				
Auto and truck expenses	32	48	21	31
Bedding	106	122	162	132
Breeding	45	54	59	49
Chemicals/pesticides	4	0	0	1
Custom hire	129	124	104	127
DHIA	24	25	26	23
Fertilizers & lime	18	112	78	80
Feed - purchased grain & other	1,445	1,220	1,692	1,465
Feed - purchased forage	314	201	90	192
Fuel and Oil	155	121	138	137
Insurance	116	68	81	83
Interest	86	141	126	124
Labor	489	357	734	564
Milk Marketing	70	104	73	84
Real estate taxes (farm portion)	65	45	58	55
Rent	64	95	45	78
Repairs	362	307	434	386
Seed and plants	29	8	30	27
Supplies	269	304	280	294
Utilities	179	151	180	164
Vet	67	47	73	64
Miscellaneous	96	100	100	88
Total Cash Expenses (f)	\$4,165	\$3,752	\$4,584	\$4,242
Accrual Expense Adjustments				
Depreciation	544	649	515	593
Accounts payable	(28)	(38)	(102)	(53)
Pre-paid expenses	(1)	20	(19)	(2)
Supplies	(58)	(54)	(51)	(58)
Total Accrual Expenses (g)	\$509	\$633	\$402	\$532
Total Farm Expenses (h)	\$4,673	\$4,384	\$4,986	\$4,775
Cash Income from Milk (a-f)	\$546	\$1,096	\$1,098	\$865
Accrual Income from Milk (a+c-h)	\$43	\$493	\$742	\$358
Milk Income over Feed Costs	\$2,951	\$3,427	\$3,880	\$3,451
Net Cash Farm Income (b-f)	\$1,076	\$1,470	\$1,654	\$1,326
Net Farm Revenue (e-h)	\$409	\$963	\$1,519	\$912
Family Living (i)	\$863	\$750	\$562	\$622
Net Cash Farm Earnings (b-f-i)	\$213	\$720	\$1,092	\$703
Net Farm Earnings (e-h-i)	(\$454)	\$214	\$957	\$289
Off Farm income (j)	\$345	\$388	\$96	\$234
Net Family Cash Earnings (b-f-i+j)	\$557	\$1,109	\$1,187	\$938
Net Earnings (e-h-i+j)	(\$109)	\$602	\$1,053	\$524
Average Assets	\$19,154	\$14,581	\$17,393	\$16,058
Average Equity	\$15,729	\$11,240	\$13,875	\$12,442
Return on Assets	-3.58%	2.38%	6.32%	1.71%
Return on Equity	-6.20%	1.64%	7.73%	1.06%
Debt/Asset Ratio	24.34%	25.82%	22.63%	24.26%

Sincere thanks to cooperating farmers and NOFA-VT in producing this summary. Financial supporters include Stoneyfield, Yankee Farm Credit, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Organic Valley, and Green Mountain Feeds.

2015 Vermont Organic Dairy Farms Averages (N=36)
Reported by Profitability Group



	Bottom Third N=12	Middle Third N=12	Top Third N=12	All Farms N=36
Average # of cows	53.7	56.8	72.7	61.1
Lbs shipped total	825,206	719,050	1,118,851	821,036
Lbs shipped/cow	12,353	12,326	15,189	13,289
Milk price	\$38.76	\$39.69	\$37.32	\$38.59
Receipts				
Milk sales (a)	238,160	281,575	415,959	311,898
Dairy cattle sales	4,688	2,614	5,640	4,314
Cull cow sales	8,129	9,292	14,366	10,596
Bob/veal calf sales	2,330	1,854	3,656	2,613
Crop sales	1,231	765	2,484	1,493
Government payments	1,120	487	1,800	1,136
Patronage dividends	2,571	1,747	3,297	2,508
Custom work	0	0	1,889	630
Syrup	229	1,429	978	878
Timber	246	0	323	189
Other	4,309	3,300	3,738	3,782
Total Cash Receipts (b)	\$263,011	\$303,062	\$454,040	\$340,038
Accrual Revenue Adjustments				
Livestock inventory	(8,873)	3,463	7,200	1,263
Breeding livestock purchases	(2,167)	(842)	0	(1,003)
Accounts receivable (c)	(444)	1,541	3,507	1,535
Hay	1,917	5,113	8,505	5,178
Grain	216	230	280	242
Total Accrual Revenue (d)	(\$7,350)	\$9,594	\$19,492	\$7,215
Total Farm Revenue (c)	\$255,661	\$312,566	\$473,532	\$347,253
Expenses				
Auto and truck expenses	1,914	2,444	1,314	1,891
Bedding	5,196	7,116	11,882	8,065
Breeding	1,997	2,711	4,226	2,978
Chemicals/pesticides	183	0	0	61
Custom hire	6,498	8,607	8,093	7,733
DHIA	1,057	1,437	1,728	1,407
Fertilizers & lime	809	7,578	5,926	4,908
Feed - purchased grain & other	72,267	70,559	125,493	89,440
Feed - purchased forage	14,607	12,805	7,743	11,718
Fuel and Oil	7,388	7,254	10,499	8,380
Insurance	6,058	3,392	5,713	5,054
Interest	4,416	8,004	10,357	7,592
Labor	25,617	22,519	55,135	34,424
Milk Marketing	3,613	6,687	5,030	5,110
Real estate taxes (farm portion)	3,644	2,266	4,226	3,379
Rent	2,740	7,894	3,319	4,784
Repairs	19,375	18,027	33,534	23,586
Seed and plants	1,680	652	2,606	1,656
Supplies	14,407	18,722	20,653	17,827
Utilities	9,217	8,548	12,192	9,986
Vet	3,698	2,647	5,317	3,887
Miscellaneous	3,914	5,295	6,960	5,390
Total Cash Expenses (f)	\$210,294	\$225,194	\$341,765	\$259,084
Accrual Expense Adjustments				
Depreciation	29,465	40,004	39,115	36,195
Accounts payable	(1,048)	(1,132)	(7,532)	(3,237)
Pre-paid expenses	(8)	883	(1,371)	(99)
Supplies	(3609)	(5216)	(5287)	(5384)
Total Accrual Expenses (g)	\$27,802	\$39,540	\$30,144	\$32,495
Total Farm Expenses (h)	\$238,096	\$264,734	\$371,909	\$291,580
Cash Income from Milk (a-f)	\$27,866	\$56,381	\$74,195	\$52,814
Accrual Income from Milk (a+c-h)	(\$300)	\$18,383	\$47,558	\$21,854
Milk Income over Feed Costs	\$151,287	\$198,211	\$282,724	\$210,741
Net Cash Farm Income (b-f)	\$52,717	\$77,868	\$112,275	\$80,953
Net Farm Revenue (e-h)	\$17,565	\$47,832	\$101,623	\$55,673
Family Living (i)	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$38,000	\$38,000
Net Cash Farm Earnings (b-f-i)	\$14,717	\$39,868	\$74,275	\$42,953
Net Farm Earnings (e-h-i)	(\$20,435)	\$9,832	\$63,623	\$17,673
Off Farm income (j)	\$13,773	\$22,249	\$6,916	\$14,313
Net Family Cash Earnings (b-f-i+j)	\$28,490	\$62,117	\$81,191	\$57,266
Net Earnings (e-h-i+j)	(\$6,662)	\$32,082	\$70,539	\$31,986
Average Assets	\$975,497	\$758,274	\$1,208,127	\$980,633
Average Equity	\$798,367	\$560,627	\$620,450	\$759,815
Return on Assets	-3.58%	2.38%	6.32%	1.71%
Return on Equity	-6.20%	1.64%	7.73%	1.06%
Debt/Asset Ratio	24.34%	25.82%	22.63%	24.26%

Sincere thanks to cooperating farmers and NOFA-VT in producing this summary. Financial supporters include Stoneyfield, Yankee Farm Credit, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Organic Valley, and Green Mountain Feeds.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

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high profit group spend \$734 per cow for labor, more than twice that of the mid group and \$256 more than the low profit group. Even with more cows to spread the labor cost, the high profit group had more labor per cow. The mid-and low profit groups both had similar cow numbers but the mid-profit group makes best use of their labor. Close examination of the 2 groups does not reveal any major characteristic such as paying family members a higher wage than one would normally receive as a cause for the difference in labor costs.

Depreciation is a cost that is generally related to income because it provides options on reducing taxes and the simple fact that you cannot reinvest without having the cash to repay loans or pay for replacement equipment or building improvements and repairs. On a per cow basis, the mid-group has the highest depreciation, followed by the low profit and then the high profit group. On a per farm level, the mid and high profit group are nearly the same with \$40,004 and \$39,115, respectively. The low profit group comes in at only \$29,465.

The study charged \$38,000 for owner labor and management. None of the farms in the low profit group and 2 farms in the mid-profit group could not meet the \$38,000 charge on an accrual basis. This is where the reasons for showing a loss get a bit cloudy as 9 of these 14 farms had off-farm income to help make up for any shortage of farm income to cover family cost of living. In addition, 5 of the farms showed a loss due to rapid depreciation tax strategies. Only 3 of the farms failed to cover the \$38,000 family living charge on a cash basis. This is sometimes a dilemma in using accrual analysis but to fairly compare farms, one has to account for all expenses and all depreciation has to be charged sometime.

No-Grain/Grass Fed Milk Farms

The study for 2015 also includes 5 farms that did not feed any grain in 2015, for a market niche of grass fed milk. As a group, these 5 farms averaged \$43.16 per cwt while producing an average of 7703 lbs. milk per cow. The market for grass fed milk (no grain allowed) pays the farmer a bonus of \$4.00 above the organic price plus the farmer can get an additional \$1/cwt to purchase fertility to add to their soil. The thought process here is that since no grain nutrients are coming on the farm, the farmer needs to replenish their soil though compost, manure, or other organic supplements.

The grass fed farms averaged \$3719 per cow total revenue and incurred \$2879 of expenses per cow. Feed costs were only \$240 per cow for forages and minerals. While the farms did not have a grain bill to pay, they did experience a downturn in milk production. Two of the five farms did not earn \$38,000 for operator income but did better than they did the year before. But three of the farms did cover the \$38,000 operator charge and showed a positive ROA. One of the farms achieved a 4.5% ROA, while as a group they averaged 1.91% ROA.

2015 Vermont Organic Dairy Farms Producing Grass Fed Milk (No Grain)				
(n=5)	Per Farm	Per Cow	Per Cwt	
Average # of cows	57.2	57.2	57.2	
Lbs shipped total	443,095	443,095	443,095	
Lbs shipped/cow	7,703	7,703	7,703	
Milk price	\$43.16	\$43.16	\$43.16	
Receipts				
Milk sales (a)	188,546	3,298	43.16	
Dairy cattle sales	4,773	84	0.99	
Cull cow sales	5,806	109	1.48	
Bob/Veal calf sales	725	16	0.19	
Crop sales	148	3	0.04	
Government payments	1,212	21	0.29	
Patronage dividends	1,125	20	0.28	
Custom work	0	0	0.00	
Syrup	2,945	58	0.74	
Timber	0	0	0.00	
Other	4,104	59	0.85	
Total Cash Receipts (b)	\$209,385	\$3,669	\$48.01	
Accrual Revenue Adjustments				
Livestock inventory	(1,180)	(18)	(0.43)	
Breeding livestock purchases	0	0	0.00	
Accounts receivable (c)	(1,328)	(14)	(0.21)	
Hay	5,525	82	1.18	
Grain	0	0	0.00	
Total Accrual Revenue (d)	\$3,017	\$50	\$0.53	
Total Farm Revenue (e)	\$212,403	\$3,719	\$48.55	
Expenses				
Auto and truck expenses	1,350	23	0.34	
Bedding	4,365	57	0.70	
Breeding	445	8	0.10	
Chemicals/pesticides	0	0	0.00	
Custom hire	10,521	145	1.68	
DHA	369	4	0.05	
Fertilizers & lime	2,962	33	0.36	
Feed - purchased minerals & other	2,334	35	0.40	
Feed - purchased forage	8,735	295	2.58	
Fuel and Oil	8,660	148	2.07	
Insurance	4,502	88	1.32	
Interest	8,300	161	2.20	
Labor	24,257	430	5.73	
Milk Marketing	4,559	84	1.15	
Real estate taxes (farm portion)	3,387	62	0.89	
Rent	10,461	126	1.51	
Repairs	19,874	343	4.51	
Seed and plants	1,194	13	0.15	
Supplies	11,255	293	2.54	
Utilities	7,872	144	1.94	
Vet	1,506	28	0.38	
Miscellaneous	3,057	54	0.75	
Total Cash Expenses (f)	\$139,965	\$2,396	\$31.33	
Accrual Expense Adjustments				
Depreciation	29,980	504	6.71	
Accounts payable	(1,266)	(25)	(0.38)	
Pre-paid expenses	0	0	0.00	
Supplies	220	3	0.04	
Total Accrual Expenses (g)	\$28,934	\$483	\$6.37	
Total Farm Expenses (h)	\$168,899	\$2,879	\$37.70	
Cash Income from Milk (a-f)	\$48,581	\$902	\$11.83	
Accrual Income from Milk (a+g-h)	\$18,319	\$405	\$5.25	
Milk Income over Feed Costs	\$177,477	\$3,058	\$40.18	
Net Cash Farm Income (b-f)	\$69,420	\$1,273	\$16.68	
Net Farm Revenue (e-h)	\$43,504	\$840	\$10.85	
Family Living (i)	\$38,000	\$721	\$9.70	
Net Cash Farm Earnings (b-f-i)	\$31,420	\$552	\$6.99	
Net Farm Earnings (e-h-i)	\$5,504	\$119	\$1.15	
Off Farm Income (j)	\$28,466	\$383	\$5.44	
Net Family Cash Earnings (b-f-i+j)	\$59,887	\$934	\$12.42	
Net Earnings (e-h+i+j)	\$33,970	\$501	\$6.59	
Average Assets	\$795,905	\$14,915	\$211.98	
Average Equity	\$577,769	\$10,677	\$152.39	
Return on Assets	1.91%	1.91%	1.91%	
Return on Equity	1.33%	1.33%	1.33%	
Debt/Asset Ratio	25.88%	25.88%	25.88%	

Sincere thanks to cooperating farmers and NOFA-VT in producing this summary. Financial supporters include Stoneyfield, Yankee Farm Credit, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Organic Valley, and Green Mountain Feeds.

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Difficult respiratory cases in the bovine and their treatment with western herbal medicines

By Cynthia J. Lanckenau, DVM
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Herbal medicines provide such a multi-pronged approach to disease that in difficult to treat diseases, such as Bovine Respiratory diseases, herbal medicine shines as a therapeutic modality.



Bovine Respiratory disease initially presents as an acute viral invasion. Energetically, this can present as an invading 'Cold' pathogen that creates severe stagnation. If the animal has an underlying immune deficiency, a stressed animal from shipping, or a calf with minimal colostrum, this can rapidly develop into significant phlegm and more stagnation with then secondary heat (translated as an initial viral infection, leading to a bacterial infection). The lung tissue can develop areas of abscessed tissue, which have a very poor response to conventional drug therapy. If this heat is too severe, it can congeal the tissue, creating a syndrome classified as "Hepatization of the Lung", where the lung tissue becomes solid. Conventionally, this is recognized as a Mycoplasma infection and carries a very grave prognosis.

A case about the use and specific indications of these herbs is that of Spirit, a three month old Holstein calf. Spirit had a history of 1½ months of antibiotic treatment, including Penicillin, Naxel, Baytril, and Darxin. On February 6, 2014, Spirit was in severe respiratory distress; she held her neck stretched, with a very rapid respiratory rate. No air flow was auscultable in Spirit's lungs. There was no compressibility in her chest. Her temperature was sub-normal at 97 degrees F. Her tongue was purple; pulse was fast and very thin but deep.

Her Western diagnosis was Hepatization of Lung tissue due to a presumed Mycoplasma infection concurrent with viral/bacterial pneumonia. She was in need of bronchodilation with blood moving herbs that could break down the stagnation in her lungs with an antiseptic, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory effect. With her subnormal temperature, she was in need of internal warming herbs.

Her Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine (TCVM) diagnosis was severe Cold Invasion with Blood Stagnation. She was started initially on two Chinese Formulas: Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang, a formula to move blood stagnation in the chest and Wei Ji Tang, a formula for pulmonary abscesses. She was also started on tinctures of Usnea and Thyme for added antiseptic, antimicrobial effects. The fol-

lowing day, she was still in distress with a rattling death sounding cough. Her formula was changed to include equal parts of Usnea, Bloodroot, and Thyme in a tincture given at the rate of 20 drops three times a day. Additionally, equal parts dried ground Eucalyptus leaves, Thyme, Mullein root, and White Horehound was given at one tablespoon three to four times a day.

On February 14, she no longer was in respiratory distress; she had good airflow in the dorsal fourth of her lung field but there was still no air flow in the ventral areas. She had a high degree of musical rales in the middle third. Schisandra was added into the formula for a perceived allergic component. By February 28, she had air flow in almost all of her lung quadrants but a significant wheeze when she was breathing, with a spastic cough. Her Chinese herbs had been stopped. In addition to her current western herbs, Andrographis and Echinacea was added for her wheeze and Khella seed and Lobelia for her cough.

By the end of March, except for a slight heaviness in the most anterior ventral aspect of her lungs, Spirit was normal. She was continued only on Echinacea and Andrographis. By the end of April, she was clinically normal and is currently a healthy replacement heifer.

One of the greatest significances of this case is that after 33 years of being a veterinarian, I have never seen a calf completely recover from such extreme lung pathology to become a normal healthy animal. Often, the only goal for the farmer is to keep them alive long enough past the antibiotic withholding times, to be shipped for veal. Spirit had made such a remarkable recovery that once we were past meat withholding times, her owner decided to see how far she could heal. She is a remarkable heifer.

Following are some of the important Western medicinal herbs that can strongly influence cases of bovine pneumonia and that were used to achieve Spirit's recovery.

Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) is an expectorant, anti-spasmodic, cardiotoxic, diuretic, febrifuge, sedative, antitarrhal, circulatory stimulant, and is a cholagogue, bitter hepatobiliary tonic. Specific indication for this herb is Hepatization of the lung. Bloodroot promotes expectoration, resolves viscous phlegm, and relieves coughing. It is indicated in subacute or chronic bronchitis with phlegmy cough, with or without mild cardiac disease, with poor peripheral circulation, and for asthma with bronchial catarrh. The use of Bloodroot in cases of severe Bovine respiratory disease with Hepatization of the lung can drastically improve these cases. The dose commonly used is only 5-6 drops of a tincture twice a day in an adult cow; 3 drops twice a day in a calf.

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NO ORGANIC CHECKOFF!

Organic farmers don't need MORE paperwork or USDA interference!

Oppose the Organic Checkoff

1. TAX on farmers!

A checkoff is an assessment on organic sales & small farmers are only exempt if they apply annually.

2. EXTRA PAPERWORK & REPORTING FOR ALL

EVERY YEAR all certified operations must submit annual sales data to USDA by end of December. THEN small farmers will have to file *another* request for exemption annually. TOO MUCH PAPERWORK!

3. USDA Checkoffs have a history of corruption

Now, the beef checkoff is being investigated for "misplacing" \$\$ in Oklahoma. What a waste!

4. USDA Checkoffs reduce family farms

Checkoffs have helped cause massive consolidation and a reduction in family farmers.

5. Decision makers will NOT represent 76% of farmers

6. We don't need MORE organic imports

7. No Choice - either an organic or a conventional checkoff

8. Cannot promote the benefits of organic

9. We Can Do It Better!



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would be bad for farmers.

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lected to sup-

port a bureaucracy that we don't need. We need to stop it now before it is too late."

– Liz Bawden, Dairy Farmer,
Hammond, NY

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- Mail comments: Promotion & Economics Div., Specialty Crops Program, AMS, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave.SW., Rm 1406-S, Stop 0244, Washington, D.C. 20250-0244;
- Fax comments: (202) 205-2800

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR TALKING POINTS: www.NOorganiccheckoff.com

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

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Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) is an antitussive, antispasmodic, antimicrobial, expectorant herb with antiallergic, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Traditional uses include bronchitis, contagious bronchitis, upper respiratory catarrh, respiratory inflammation, lower respiratory disease, asthma, and productive cough. Thyme can stimulate the thymus gland. Traditional Ethnoveterinarian use is for the treatment of parasites. In the chest, it has a bronchodilator/antiasthmatic effect in addition to secretolytic and stimulant expectorant action. It ranks as one of the finest remedies for the lungs. Research has shown it to have activity in killing mycobacterium. In cases where the animal still has respiratory pathogenic organisms but is exhausted from the chronic course of the disease, Thyme is strongly indicated. Spirit is a good example of this type of situation. Dose for a calf: ¼-½ tsp dried leaves: twice a day; cow: ½ tsp twice a day,

Usnea (*Usnea spp.*) is antibacterial, antibiotic, and antiseptic. It opens the chest, transforms phlegm, removes damp heat, invigorates blood, clears heat and toxins, and is indicated for tuberculosis. It is an immunity boost for common cold, pleurisy, pneumonia, and absorbs heavy metals and pollutants. Usnea, in my experience, works synergistically with Thyme. Dose: calf 4 grams twice a day, 2 ml three times a day of a tincture; double dosage for an adult cow.

Mullein root (*Verbascum thapsus*)--one of its other names is cow's lungwort. This is a relaxing expectorant and mild diuretic. It is valuable for all lung problems because it nourishes as well as strengthens. It enriches the lung's antioxidative ability, moistens dryness, relieves coughing and benefits the throat. It promotes expectoration and resolves viscous lung phlegm. It opens the chest, relieves wheezing, and can reduce allergy. Ethnoveterinarian use is reported for cattle against the 'cough of the lungs'. In deep respiratory cases, it helps remove the phlegm deep in the airways while reducing allergic reactions and allowing the deeper airways to open. In both COPD and pneumonia, this is a very much needed action. Dose: Calf dried root: 2 grams twice a day; cow: 4 grams twice a day.

Eucalyptus leaves (*Eucalyptus globulus*) is an antitussive, antitarrhal, antimicrobial, antispasmodic and a sedative with antibacterial, bronchodilator, expectorant, and immune stimulant effects. In Chinese terminology it 1) treats lung infections with/dryness and lung weaknesses; promotes expectoration, resolves viscous phlegm, relieves coughing, and soothes the bronchi. It disperses lung heaviness and clears retained pathogens; 2) treats heavy infections with pus, external wind heat, promotes sweating, dispels wind heat, reduces fever, promotes eruptions, opens the sinuses and relieves pain; 3) treats that achy flu feeling, stimulates immune system, clears toxins, benefits the skin, expels parasites, and repels insects; 4) acts as an adrenal tonic, supports the pancreas and lowers blood sugar; 5) can be used as a topical for tissue repair and insect repellent. The Indication for using Eucalyptus leaves are bronchitis, emphysema,

pneumonia, allergic asthma, wheezing, cough, fever, skin eruptions, and as a topical for burns, injuries, ulcers, and abscesses. Calf: 1 gram dried herb twice a day; cow: 2 grams twice a day.

White Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) Its Western actions include: expectorant, diuretic, diaphoretic, antispasmodic, bitter tonic, choleric. TCM Functions: 1) Clears lung phlegm/thick mucus and pus-expectorant and spasmolytic, 2) Relaxes the heart; 3) Promotes urination, resolves Toxicosis, 4) Tonifies and improves digestion. White Horehound helps symptom relief of the cough while strengthening digestion. Dose: calf 2 grams twice a day; cow: 4 grams twice a day.

Khella seeds (*Ammi visnaga*) is an ancient Egyptian medicinal plant. It is a strong antibacterial, anti-fungal, antispasmodic herb with smooth muscle relaxing action which acts as a non-stimulating bronchial dilator and vasodilator. It also relieves spasms around the heart muscles and improves circulation, Dose: Calf: tincture: 0.5-1 ml three times a day; cow: tincture: 2-3 ml three times a day.

Schisandra (*Schisandra chinensis*) is a hepatoprotective, adaptogenic, antitussive, nervine tonic, with antioxidant abilities. Many animals treated come with a long history of multi-drug usage; Schisandra is strongly indicated in these cases. Dose: Calf 2-8 grams per day; Cow: 15-30 grams per day

Andrographis (*Andrographis paniculata*) has an immunomodulating effect; both immune stimulant and immune suppressive. Its western actions include: anticancer, antimicrobial, an abortifacient/antifertility, anthelmintic, hepatoprotective/antihepatotoxin, digestive stimulant, antibacterial, antipyretic, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant effect. It is indicated in respiratory tract infections, liver disease, skin sores, snake bite, and Leptospirosis. The herb is traditionally given as a restorative and tonic in convalescence and used as a choleric to stimulate bile production and flow, which improves appetite and digestion/ fertility control. It is a non-specific immune stimulant, hepatoprotectant, with bone protective effect. Dose: Calves can be given up to 20-60 grams per day; Cow: 60-120 grams per day.

Lobelia inflata, L. Indian tobacco circulates the Lung Qi, opens the chest and relieves wheezing. It is a respiratory stimulant, and depending on dose, a stimulant or sedative expectorant, emetic, diaphoretic, anti-spasmodic, counterirritant, and analgesic. It has nervine qualities (anxiolytic and antidepressant), It is a sialogogue (small amounts are stimulating while large amounts are relaxing and emetic), anti-pyretic, and expectorant. It is also a uterine tonic, resuscitant, anticonvulsant; and laxative.

Veterinary usage: historically used to treat bronchial spasm of asthma in the dog, chronic bronchitis, and asthma, acute fever, with bronchitis, pneumonia, pleurisy, atonic bronchial function with accumulation of phlegm, abdominal pain, constipation, and delayed labor. Lobelia is very helpful in relaxing the spasms of bronchial smooth muscle in the lower airway. As a tincture, the dose is 4 ml twice a day for calves; horses and cows: 30 ml twice a day. **High doses are emetic and are to be avoided.**

References available from author upon request.

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Using True Compost – The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

By Neal Kinsey

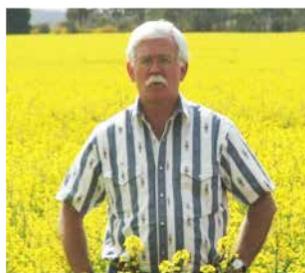
What is true compost? How do you measure that? Is all “compost” good compost? Are some so-called composts not really compost? If so, how do you know? How about certified organic compost? Is it safe? Is the very best organic compost always good for the land? Can you apply too much compost?

How about manure? When should animal manure be considered as only manure and when should it be considered compost? Does it make any difference? When manure stops smelling like manure, is it then to be considered as compost? Can you even tell such things? Not only is it possible to do so, but as organic farmers and stewards of the land, it is imperative knowledge that is vital to real success!

Like all needed plant and animal products that contribute positively to soil fertility and plant growth, using compost and manures correctly can be of tremendous benefit. The effectiveness and value of applying them to accurately supply the required nutrients for the best in crop production is still greatly misunderstood by so many as to its full effects on the soil. All of the benefits compost and manures provide to encourage the biological life in the soil provides an excellent example. Release of “locked-up” nutrients that are present in soils in unavailable forms by stimulation of biological life in the soil is often completely overlooked or far underestimated in terms of both good and bad effects upon fertility.

But before considering this further, let’s go back to the first question asked above. What is true compost? How can you tell when manure has become compost? Well-made compost should have a carbon to nitrogen ratio of between 20:1 and 10:1, with 12:1 down to 10:1 generally considered as most preferable. We analyze hundreds of manures and composts for clients and find that many of those materials that are being sold as an organic compost are actually not a compost at all. How can you tell? Because the C/N ratio is 7:1 or 8:1. That is not a true compost - that is still manure! If the use of straight manure is of no concern, then fine. But sell manure for what it is, manure, not falsely calling it compost.

Why should this be a concern to those applying the material as to whether it is a compost or manure? Because the effects on the soil are completely different. Once the proper C/N ratio has been achieved there is a different effect upon the soil that receives compost, than the one that instead receives a manure application. Compost has been built to achieve a balance between the carbon and nitrogen content. This means that when it is applied, true compost will not tend to tie up nitrogen that will be needed by



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the crop that will be grown there. Actually the use of a manure won’t either.

It is the so-called composted material with a carbon to nitrogen ratio higher than 20:1 that tends to cause a nitrogen tie-up in the soil. That is the result when too much organic matter is used without sufficient nitrogen to break it down. In such cases, there is too little nitrogen there to supply all that the microbes need and still supply enough to the plants. The microbes in the soil confiscate or metabolize the

nitrogen for their own use at the expense of then having enough nitrogen for the crop to grow properly. This causes nitrogen deficiency for the crop.

So then, why worry about the extra nitrogen contained in manures? What is the problem with the C/N ratio of manure which is below a 10:1? Microbes use nitrogen to build the energy they need to break down organic materials (carbon) as a food source. So long as the C/N is between 10-20:1 there is a sufficient amount of both so that both microbes and the crop can take up sufficient amounts. Within this range, the microbes break down organic matter to form humus in the soil. But when the C/N ratio is below 10:1, the nitrogen supply is so great that microbial populations proliferate and use up all the carbonaceous material present in that soil.

Now the microbes still have access to plenty of nitrogen as an energy source, but have run out of the most available food source – the undecomposed organic matter which serves as their food and which in the process of being broken down forms and builds the humus content of the soil. Once all the organic matter is decomposed, suddenly these organisms now face the problem of finding another food source or dying. With all the extra nitrogen still remaining as an energy source, they are now forced to turn to another source of food that is much harder to obtain, but with the extra N they can do so. It is the humus that has been built up in that soil. This is where the term “burning up the humus” comes from in agriculture. When materials such as raw manure with a C/N ration of less than 10:1 is applied to a soil, this is what can happen if there is not enough residues to decompose and use up the nitrogen being added to that soil. Here is an example of what over-applying raw manure to the soil can do to harm instead of help the land.

Whether using a true compost, or even raw manure, a detailed analysis of both the material to be used and the soil where it will be applied can show how effective these very different materials can be, because either or both may work well in certain situations

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Using True Compost – The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

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and yet that very same material can work very poorly or even cause harm in other places.

Moderate amounts of compost will likely benefit any poor soil. However, even moderate amounts can cause problems for good producing soils that have the maximum level of one or more nutrients, meaning adding more will possibly tie up other nutrients that are just as necessary, especially the trace elements. But using compost without testing the needs of the soil and the content of the compost to be used to build overall soil fertility can be greatly underestimated in terms of the benefits that compost will actually provide for each individual soil.

For over 15 years we have done soil samples every year for one certified organic client on several hundred acres. They build their own composts and have each one analyzed each year before applications are made. The maximum amount is applied to each different area based on the soil tests and the nutrient content of each compost material. The desire is to use only their own compost to build up their soils. The soil tests indicated this would

not be possible based on the soil needs and the nutrient make-up of available compost materials. Tests were set up to measure whether that was true.

After ten years using only compost as the control and applying all the needed nutrients not supplied by the compost in the test area, there was little progress in building deficiencies where only compost was used. Not only were the levels increased in the test area where all nutrients shown to be needed but not sufficiently supplied by the compost had been added, but root systems were 50% greater there as compared to using just the compost. In addition, nutrient levels where only the maximum amount of compost was used without exceeding the amount that would tie up other nutrients were not increased below the first six inches, but when the same amount of needed compost plus the additional nutrients it did not supply were added, nutrient levels were significantly increased to a depth of three feet.

The point here is DO NOT GUESS. Measure what the soil needs. Measure what the compost or manure can supply. Then each year, at least on key fields, measure what the compost has actually done for that soil. We have many clients who send their compost and/or manures to be analyzed along with the soils where they want to apply it. From that information we can recommend where to use these materials to help build maximum fertility without causing the problems that overuse of either may cause.

Is the very best organic compost always good for the land? Can you

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apply too much compost? We will consider these questions and some of the others asked at the beginning here in the next issue.

And if this information makes sense, how about considering letting us help in receiving the most from the use of manure and compost on your land. Contact us for the information you need to send soils, manure and compost for analysis and recommendations. We have received samples from all 50 states and 75 other countries with pastureland and hay being some of the main crops raised on the land those samples represent. We look forward to the opportunity to help, even if that means beginning with a small acreage to make sure it would work profitably on your land first.

Neal Kinsey, from Charleston, Missouri, USA, owns and operates Kinsey Agricultural Services, Inc., a company which specializes in soil fertility management. The program is based on the system of providing soil nutrients to correctly treat the soil and the plants that grow there, using soil chemistry to correct the soil's physical structure to build the "house" which enables the biology to flourish. Our business includes working with most major food and fiber crops throughout the world. Consulting includes soils received for analysis and recommendations from every state in the United States and from over 75 countries, principally from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Great Britain, Germany, Austria and France. Detailed soil audits will determine specific fertilization programs based on each individual soil and its fertility requirements.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic Dairy Farm Profitability

continued from page 6

None of the grass fed milk farms were in the most profitable group, with three in the mid-profit group and 2 in the low profit group.

The organic sector in Vermont remains profitable and, with contract prices, looks to be profitable again in 2016. The entry of the grass fed milk market adds a new dimension to organic, representing low input for low output but, if priced as it is now, appears to be a route to profitability. It will be interesting to see how these farms do after another year of adjustment to no grain. Overall, the organic sector appears to have had a healthy year in 2015. We do know that milk prices dropped in 2016 and there are now some fears of overproduction with the creation of production quotas if needed in 2017. The organic sector is adjusting its milk price to reflect supply and demand. Demand goes down in the summer yet that is when milk production tends to go up due to more abundant pastures. We can expect milk pricing changes to continue and realize that the profitability of organic dairy ultimately will depend upon how many consumers are willing to pay more for organic milk.

Bob Parsons' contact information at the University of Vermont Extension is: 203 Morrill Hall, Burlington, VT 05405, 802-656-2109, bob.parsons@uvm.edu.



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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Farmer Quota begins March 1st

*By Theresa Washburn, Director of Member Affairs,
Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative*

During the December board meeting the CROPP Board of Directors enacted a straight-line quota (i.e. 100% of active base) effective with March 1 milk until demand/supply conditions improve. During this quota, all members will be paid the full organic premium on their monthly active base production volume only. Members producing more than 100% of their active base in a given month will be deducted \$20.00/cwt for the production over their active base. In early January, CROPP dairy farmers were sent letters explaining the quota as well as information on their active base.

A quota is one of our tools in milk supply management toolbox. The steps taken before implementing this quota included; building inventory, stopping procurement of new farmers, increasing promotions to retailers, putting active base increases on hold, and adjusting the active base formula. Quota is a strategy used to safeguard our cooperative.

Beth Wells, Director of Farm Milk Management offers this insight on quota:

“The coop traditionally sets quota when farm milk production exceeds organic marketplace demand and the option to build inventory is exhausted. It is a cost savings tool. It allows the coop to pay a reduced price for excess milk that cannot be marketed organically. Active Base is the coop’s commitment to pay organic premium for a level of production on each farm dependent on the quota percentage set. The remainder of the milk is paid for at a deducted price from the organic premium.

Exemptions and exceptions

In a large and growing cooperative like CROPP we have to consider the diversity in our farmers and farms. Grassmilk producers, small operations (below annual production of 270,000 pounds of milk) and certain foundational loads are exempt from quota.

How long will the quota last?

The quota is in place to safeguard the cooperative during times of supply surplus and economic downturns. It is a powerful tool but CROPP Board of Directors, who make the decision on quota, will only utilize this tool when needed. The situation driving the need for quota will be analyzed regularly and the quota will end when the supply situation recovers.

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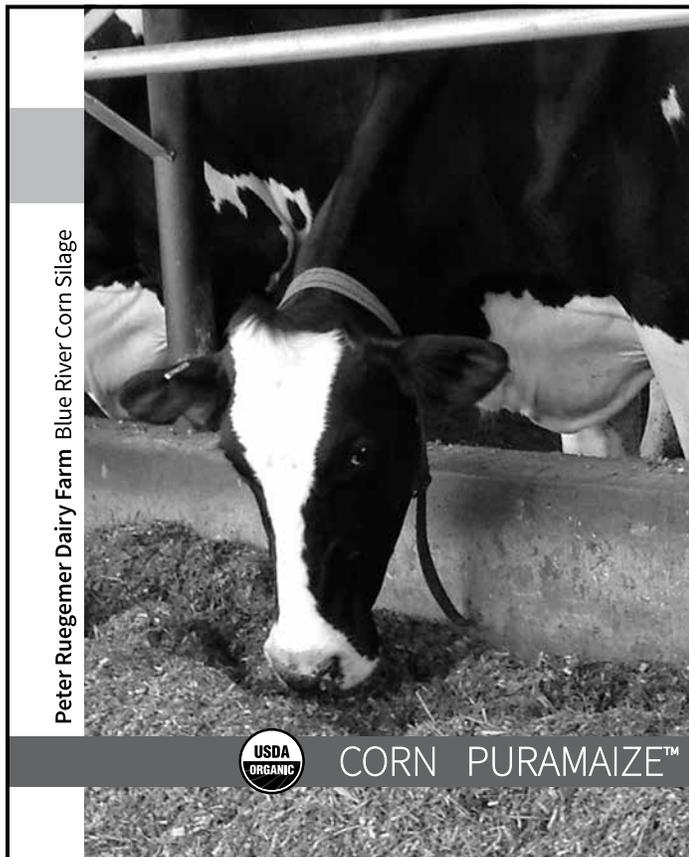
**2017 NODPA Field Days, September 28 & 29, 2017
at the Truxton Community Center, Truxton, NY**

The NODPA Board of Directors and State Representatives have selected centrally located Truxton, NY as the site for the 17th Annual NODPA Field Days. This central New York location will be ideal driving distance for farmers coming from New England, New York and Pennsylvania.

Planning for the educational program is just getting started but we are already planning the Farm Tour to Twin Oaks Dairy, the Truxton, NY-based dairy farm owned and operated by the Arnold family. Kirk Arnold, NODPA Board of Directors' Vice President, and Kathie Arnold, his mother and a founding member of NODPA, will lead the tour of their farm and newly constructed 3-row, 136 freestall barn with a double 12 rapid exit parallel Delaval parlor. This new construction features Dairy Master alley scrapers, drive-through feeding with

headlocks and slant bars, Lely Juno feed pusher robot, DCC waterbeds, automated curtains by Seneca Dairy Systems, a 40x40 bedpack for special needs cows, insulated cathedral ceiling, ventilation chimneys, and a 57 kW solar system. As with all of the NODPA Field Days farm tours, this one promises to be informative and full of innovative practices.

Opportunities to sponsor and support this event are available, along with trade show information, and we will be sending it out soon and posting it on our website shortly. Contact Nora Owens, at noraowens@comcast.net, or 413-772-0444, if you have questions, want to get involved or would like more information. So, get out your calendars and SAVE THE DATES for the 17th Annual NODPA Field Days, and look for full program information in the May NODPA News.



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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

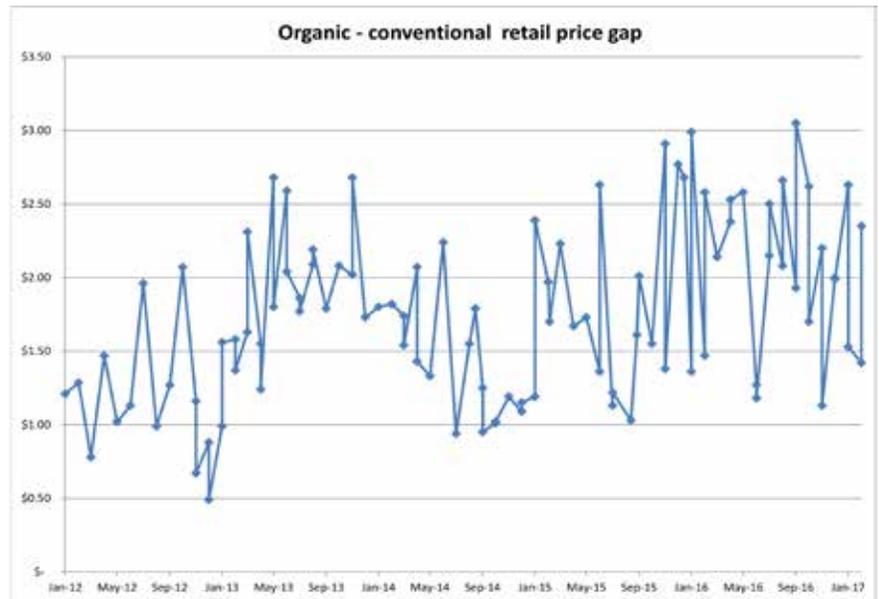
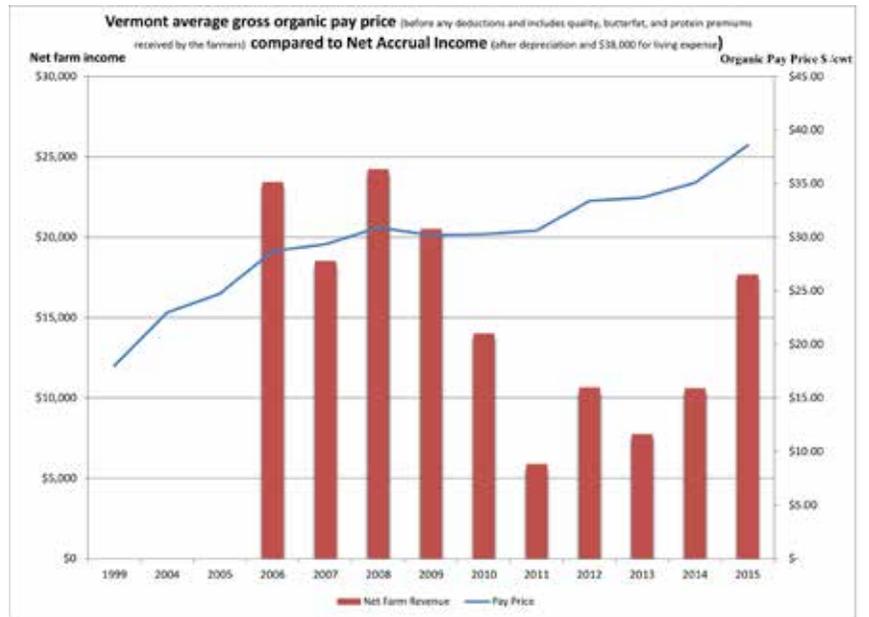
Organic Milk Pay, Retail and Feed Prices for January 2017

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Sales of organic fluid milk increased by 5.7 percent in 2016 over 2015 with a total of 2,576 million pounds in 2016 compared to 2,433 million pounds in 2015. Most interesting is that sales of whole milk in 2016 were up 16.5% on 2015 sales. This, together with the continuing increase in interest from manufacturers wanting to use organic dairy ingredients, should be positive for organic producers. Unfortunately, the rush by buyers to sign up new producers, the drop in feed prices and the lack of consistent implementation of the Origin of Livestock regulation (and the USDA's lack of a Final Rule) has caused an increase in production that has dwarfed the expected and easily predicted increase in consumption. The lack of a Final Rule on the Origin of Livestock has allowed large-scale dairies to rapidly expand their herds by cherry picking certifiers that allow continuous transition. This surplus has been caused by buyers encouraging higher production despite historical evidence that sales of organic fluid milk increase at an average of only 6-7% per year, as happened in 2016.

A surplus gives buyers more leverage on pay price, especially over those producers that sell directly to manufacturers and those who are members of smaller cooperatives and marketing groups. We saw this in 2009, and the same is happening again. A surplus should benefit exporters, especially of powder and product to Asia, but a strong dollar is inhibiting that growth as well as strong competition from Australasia and Great Britain. A surplus also needs increased manufacturing time at plants to save any organic premium by making organic milk powder and cheese. Manufacturers are at capacity with the increase in non-organic milk production of 1.8% from 2015 (2016 production was 212 billion pounds). Without any of these opportunities, any surplus organic milk will be dumped on the conventional market or just disposed of, especially since some Northeast conventional producers have been told to dump milk into lagoons because there is no capacity to handle it.

Organic milk buyers have responded to the surplus in different ways. CROPP has been the most active. They have dropped their pay price, re-instituted the



ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

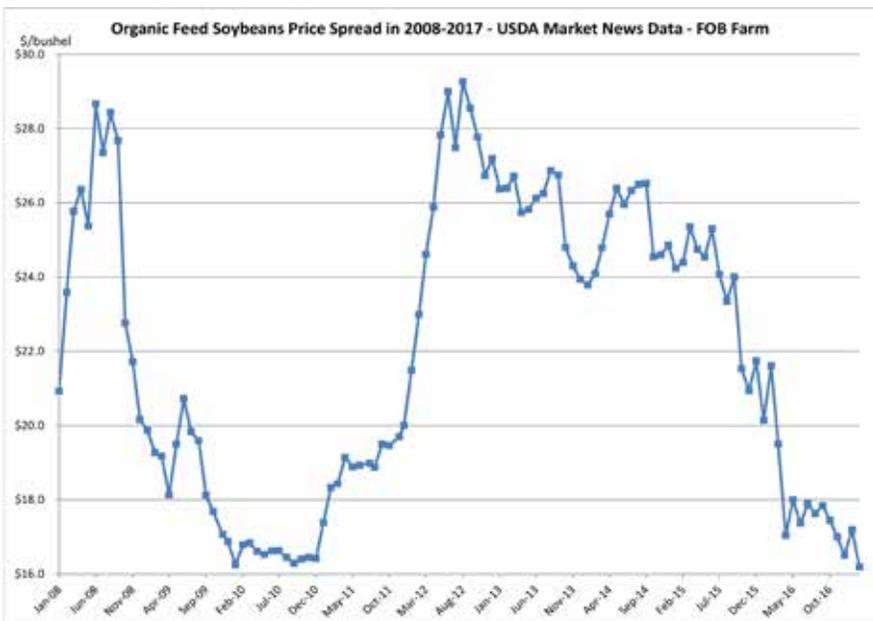
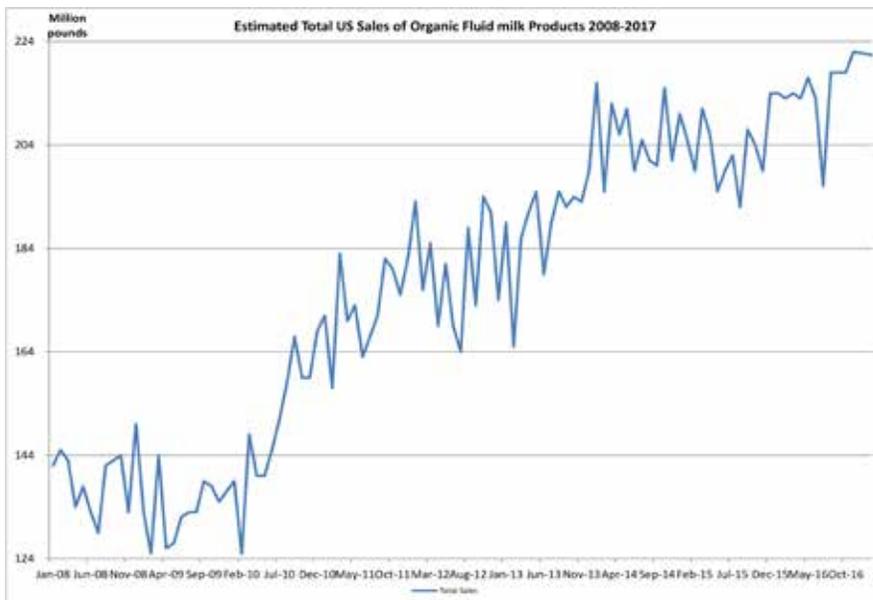
seasonal deduction and implemented a quota based on the active base, except for those producing less than 270,000 pounds (herds of 25 cows and under), grassmilk producers and ‘foundational loads’ (see CROPP’s press release on page 14). CROPP has also initiated a large \$20 per cwt deduction on over-quota milk, passing all the cost of surplus milk to the producer and leaving them with a pay price under the conventional Class IV price. WhiteWave (Horizon) has asked for a volume reduction of 3-4% and has dropped its pay price. Upstate has dropped \$1 on their MAP and dropped their incremental growth incentive but retained their volume payments. Tricking Springs struggled to find manufacturing and entered a supply relationship with CROPP.

Quick solutions to this oversupply are not available, especially with a low price for cull cows. The surplus may well be exaggerated by the Danone acquisition of WhiteWave which will create the US #1 refrigerated dairy company (Nielsen AOC last 52 weeks: including butter, cream/creamers, margarine and spreads, milk, whipped toppings and yogurt and excluding cheese). Danone is increasingly confident about the deal going forward under the new administration.

Aurora Dairy is pushing hard for the expansion of its plant and farming operations against local opposition in Columbia, Missouri. Aurora officials are saying they will be adding 30,000 cows worth of organic production in Missouri and the manufacturing plant they will be building will be much larger than their present facility in Platteville, Colorado. CROPP and other smaller cooperatives will have difficulty competing for store brand sales against this vertically integrated, well financed, low cost company.

The CROPP/Dean joint venture may well be able to slowly build a larger consumer base for its HTST milk but that will take years rather than months and is no way certain, especially as the store door delivery that Dean offers encompasses many non-traditional retail outlets for organic product, for example package stores. The answer has always been more attention to supply management which producers have been asking for the last ten years, rather than rapidly expanding gross sales. WhiteWave appears to have paid better attention to that than CROPP.

continued on page 18



ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Feed and Pay Price

continued from page 17

Feed corn is still trading at \$8 per bushel, about \$1 lower than February, 2016, and soybeans are priced at \$16 per bushel as compared with \$21.50 in February, 2016. The last time the soybean price was this low was January, 2010. Organic hay costs are within the same range as last year, with hay being offered at \$50 per round bale or \$150-200 a ton FOB with a good supply. Cheap foreign feed still dominates the market and undercuts domestic producers. John Bobbe, executive director of OFARM, has noted that the farmers tell him the current cost of producing a bushel of organic grain is about \$10 a bushel, while buyers have said it costs them about \$10.50 a bushel to import it into the US, drawing complaints from domestic organic farmers who fear their harvests are held to stricter standards than foreign-raised crops. For the first nine months of 2016, the top two countries for organic corn imports entering the United States were Turkey with 400,000 metric tons (73%) and Romania (11%). Meanwhile, the leading countries for organic soybeans entering the United States during January-September 2016 were Turkey (47%), India (19%), Argentina (12%), and Ukraine (9%). (Source: USDA Foreign Agricultural Service data January-October, 2016.) ♦

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Letter from the President

continued from page 2

5. My experience of checkoff programs is that they do not use their funds to represent farmer priorities when granting research dollars.
6. 'Got Milk' was successful in promoting milk sales but 80,028 dairy farms have been lost since 1992.
7. Increase in organic sales will increase lower priced imports not domestic organic production.

And finally, we've set the dates and location for the 17th Annual NODPA Field Days. We will be meeting in Truxton, NY on September 28th & 29th and the farm tour will be at the Arnold family's Twin Oaks Dairy. Program information will be available in the next NODPA News and online, but in the meantime, I hope you will save the dates!

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

Great News, But We Need Your Help Now!

The American College of Veterinary Botanical Medicine (ACVBM) has passed its first hurdle to becoming recognized as a specialty of the American Veterinary Medicine Association (AVMA) but we NEED YOUR HELP NOW. During the three month comment period, please let the AVMA know that our veterinarians need to be trained in botanical medicine in order to help all organic farmers and clients AND to help fight against antibiotic resistance. Please send your comments as soon as possible to David Banasiak by email, DBanasiak@avma.org, or by mail to 1931 N. Meacham Rd, Suite 100, Schaumburg, IL, 60173. Thanks!

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“We have been using Udder Comfort™ for 8 years and just love it in our maternity pen!” says 4th generation dairyman Alan Mesman, pictured above with wife Anita during the 2016 WODPA Conference. Alan and his son Ben and daughter Samantha operate Mesman Farms, a 110-cow robotic organic dairy near Mt. Vernon, Washington.

“As an original user, we did one of the first DHI comparisons 8 years ago, coating udders of high-count cows. We were surprised when our SCCs fell by 40,000. We then transitioned to using Udder Comfort routinely after calving to manage udder edema and milk quality.”

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Federally Mandated Checkoff: Comments due by April 19

continued from page 1

Below are some answers for some common points that the proponents of the program have offered and some questions about how unfair the program and process are. In a companion article, *The Facts: Organic Research, Promotion and Information Order Proposed Rule and Referendum Procedures*, we explain the proposed regulation in plain language.

1. Farmers and handlers with gross organic revenue below \$250,000 are free to choose whether to pay into the check-off program.

Untrue:

- Those dairy producers and handlers that choose not to pay into the organic checkoff will have to pay into their conventional checkoff. The exemption for organic producers and handlers from paying into the conventional checkoff program ends once an organic checkoff starts. For those producers that do not go through the annual paperwork of exempting themselves from the conventional checkoff and applying to and paying into the organic checkoff - they will continue to have automatic deductions from their pay check going into the conventional checkoff. If they don't pay attention to the paperwork they will be paying into both.
2. The Check-off Governing Board would consist of 50 percent producers, 50 percent handlers.

Technically true but misleading:

- There will be 8 producer Board members eligible to vote out of 16 Board members BUT a producer representative can be anything from an individual to an employee from a multi-national corporation – we have seen how USDA has applied this definition with the NOSB members. Producers will receive their basic expenses to travel to and stay at meetings – nothing else to compensate for their time away from their farm. It will be an expensive hobby that most producers could not afford.
 - 5 domestic mandatorily or voluntarily assessed handlers.
 - 2 'at large' mandatorily or voluntarily assessed product processors – not necessarily domestic with no definition on size.
 - 1 mandatorily or voluntarily assessed importer (importers do not need to be certified, are not classified as a handler and need no knowledge of organic production).
 - 1 public member at-large who is a non-voting member (no definition for who this might be).
3. Organic producers will select regional representatives through balloting.

True but misleading:

- Those representatives will be selected by a complicated

system of balloting and will only be recommendations to the Secretary. There is nothing in the language that says the Secretary (a political appointee) has to choose from these recommendations and there is no language that says these recommendations have to be made public.

4. Every certificate holder subject to an assessment will have a direct vote.

True but....:

- The burden of documentation to justify 'net organic income' for all certified operations will be immense, especially for grain and dairy farmers. This is a very complex issue. Inaccuracies, mistakes, and outright fraud are very likely without careful third-party verification. In the initial vote, there will be no independent data that shows what the organic sales income is for each certificate holder unless they ask for that data from certifiers. Will USDA contractors (certifiers) be required to verify the producer's claim? The certifier will be put in the position of challenging the accuracy of a farm's allowed organic expenses against the gross organic income. If the USDA has to verify the eligibility of every ballot, the cost to the future program will be incredible. The result of any referendum under these circumstances would inevitably face a legal challenge. Simpler would be one vote per certificate holder.
5. At least 50 to 75 percent of the funds would go specifically for research, or activities that work hand-in-hand with research such as technical assistance and widespread dissemination of research findings.

False

- The information in the Organic Checkoff Budget (on page 26, *Checkoff: The Facts*) is from USDA data and proposed regulation.
6. Twenty-five percent of the assessment from producers would go for local and regional research.

False

- From the proposed Rule: "Regional certified organic producer Board members shall establish priorities, including regional considerations, for investments in agricultural research." Establishing priorities by a subset of the Board for use of funds from a portion of the assessment that is not going to be separated out from other assessments is a long way from an allocation of fund by the full Board and it being approved by the Secretary.
7. A referendum is required every seven years to decide whether to continue the program.

True except....:

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

- The Secretary has, in the past, refused to acknowledge the vote to discontinue checkoff programs. If there is a vote to disband the organic checkoff, producers and handlers would have to return to paying into their conventional check off including the dairy processor checkoff.
8. Assessments would be made throughout the value chain: producers, handlers, processors, retailers.

False

- The only retailers that will pay will be those that are certified because they take organic ingredients and make something different with them and want to call the finished product certified organic, for example the retail deli or bakery. These are a very small minority of retailers, mostly consumer co-operatives. Wal-Mart, Whole Foods, and Trader Joe's will not be paying an assessment on all the organic products they sell. The 30-40% margin that retailers take on organic product will not be assessed. Distributors and marketers will not be paying into the checkoff. CEO salaries and stock options from companies that make and market organic products will not be assessed, but the owner draw from an organic family farm will not be an allowable deduction from gross organic sales and so will be included in the net organic sales that will be assessed.

- The proposed method of assessment uses criteria for determining net organic sales that do not reflect organic production methods, which are based on feeding the soil and building the nutrient value of the soil to increase yield and profitability. A ten year old, established organic operation would have few inputs, after ten years of building fertility, that meet the definition of Agricultural inputs. They would still have the costs of rent for land or mortgage payments, plus the costs of labor, which are higher on organic farms than on conventional operations. This operation's gross organic sales would be very similar to their net organic sales.
- This assessment proposal is inequitable across commodities. The inequity across commodities underlines the unfairness of a multi-commodity checkoff program and the inability of such a program to assess each participant equally. Some commodities have a high gross sales number (for example organic dairy producers), but typically low net profit, while other commodities, like high-value fruits and vegetables, typically have lower gross sales but higher net profit. They both would be classified as exempt or non-exempt under the unequal conditions of their individual commodity characteristics.

Whichever way you look at this proposed regulation, it makes no sense. Historically, single commodity checkoffs haven't worked and end up stifled by USDA bureaucracy. Historically, assessments have been channeled to consultants and companies to come up with slogans and promotions that encourage growth at the expense of small to mid-size farming operations. A multi-commodity checkoff is even more difficult and expensive to administer involving more USDA bureaucracy paid for by assessment prior to any budget decision on use of funds. The criteria for assessment that the Organic Trade Association has developed does not reflect the economics of organic farming and will be difficult to evaluate and make accountable. It will end up taxing the family income of small to mid-size organic family farms. The establishment of the organic checkoff will end the exemption that organic producers have from paying into conventional checkoff – this is stated in the 2014 Farm Bill and in the proposed regulation. ♦

TO STOP THE CHECKOFF, SUBMIT COMMENTS TO USDA TODAY THE DEADLINE IS APRIL 19th

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

The Facts: The Organic Research, Promotion and Information Order Proposed Rule and Referendum Procedures

Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

What are next steps?

1. Interested parties will send in comments on the Proposed Rule. The date by which comments need to be received is currently April 19, 2017.
2. USDA will analyze all the comments on the Proposed Rules and reach a decision about whether to continue with Organic Trade Association's (OTA) request for an Organic Research, Promotion and Information Order (organic checkoff).
3. If the USDA decides to continue, they will publish a Final Rule which will address the comments they have received and lay out the details of the organic checkoff, which would be implemented under the Commodity Promotion, Research and Information Act of 1996.
4. A separate Final Rule will lay out the details of the referendum that would be held at a date set by the USDA for those that will be assessed to determine whether they favor implementation of the program prior to it going into effect.
5. Timeline – since the Final Rule for both the program and the referendum will have to go through all of the vetting by internal agencies, plus through the OMB, at the earliest we are probably looking at 2019 for any implementation.

Who is assessed?

1. **Mandated Assessments:** Organically certified producers and handlers who have gross organic sales for the previous marketing year in excess of \$250,000, plus importers (not necessarily organically certified) who import greater than \$250,000 in transaction value of organic products for the previous marketing year.
 - a. § 1255.16 Gross organic sales means the total amount the person received for all organic products during the fiscal year without subtracting any cost or expenses.
 - b. § 1255.15 Fiscal year and marketing year. Fiscal year and marketing year means the 12-month period ending on December 31 or such other period as recommended by the Board and approved by the Secretary.
 - c. Transactional value for importers: "The price actually paid from the buyer to the seller for the merchandise." This is currently reported by importers on CBP Form 7501 as 'Entered Value'.

2. **Voluntary Assessments:** Those organically certified producers and handlers plus importers of certified product who are not mandatorily assessed but choose to participate in the program.
3. **Producers and handlers** who are in an existing Federal checkoff program have the choice between becoming part of the organic checkoff or continuing to pay assessments to the conventional checkoff program. If the organic checkoff is implemented there will be no exemptions from other checkoff programs for organic producers and handlers.

What will the mandatorily and voluntarily assessed entities pay?

1. Each certified organic producer or certified organic handler with gross organic sales greater than \$250,000 during the previous calendar year shall pay one-tenth of one percent (0.001) of net organic sales to the organic checkoff program. Sales of exports are currently excluded in any calculation of assessments. Nothing is mentioned about whether the value of exports is excluded from a calculation of gross organic sales.
 - a. § 1255.21 Net organic sales means total gross sales in organic products minus (a) the cost of certified organic ingredients, feed and agricultural inputs used in the production of certified products and (b) the cost of any non-organic agricultural ingredients used in the production of certified products.
 - b. § 1255.2 Agricultural inputs means all substances or materials used in the production or handling of organic agricultural products (e.g. fertilizer, lime, soil conditioners, agricultural chemicals, beneficial insects, other approved materials for pest control, seed, plants, vines, trees, feed purchased for livestock, etc.).
2. Importers who have a transactional value of organic imports greater than \$250,000 for the previous calendar year shall pay one-tenth of one percent (0.001) of net organic sales to the program. For example: those who have \$500,000 as Entered Value on their CBP Form 7501 for organic imports would be assessed \$500.

How much will the organic checkoff collect in the first year:

The USDA estimates that the assessments will total \$25.3 million in the first year based on USDA census information, reports from importers and their projection of net organic sales.

When will payments have to be paid? All payments must be received by the organic checkoff program no later than March 31st for the previous calendar year in which the product was 'produced, handled or imported.'

What paperwork will there be?

1. For those producers and handlers that self-determine that they are assessed:

- a. They will calculate their net organic sales for the previous year ending on December 31st multiply it by 0.001 and submit a check to the program by March 31st.
- b. Under the 1996 Act, organic producers and handlers “would submit a report that would include, but not be limited to, the entity’s name, address and telephone number” and the value of its net organic sales. They would need to maintain books and records needed to “carry out the provisions of the proposed program, including for verification of any required reports” and retain those records for at least two years beyond the applicable calendar year.
- c. If they are part of a commodity with an existing conventional checkoff they would have to apply annually for exemption from assessment by that program. Prior to the start of the calendar year, the entity would apply to the Secretary of Agriculture on a form supplied by the program, for an exemption to assessment by the conventional program to ensure that they would not have double deduction. They would also have to prove that they have paid into the organic checkoff for the previous year. These entities would need to request refunds if conventional checkoff deductions are taken at

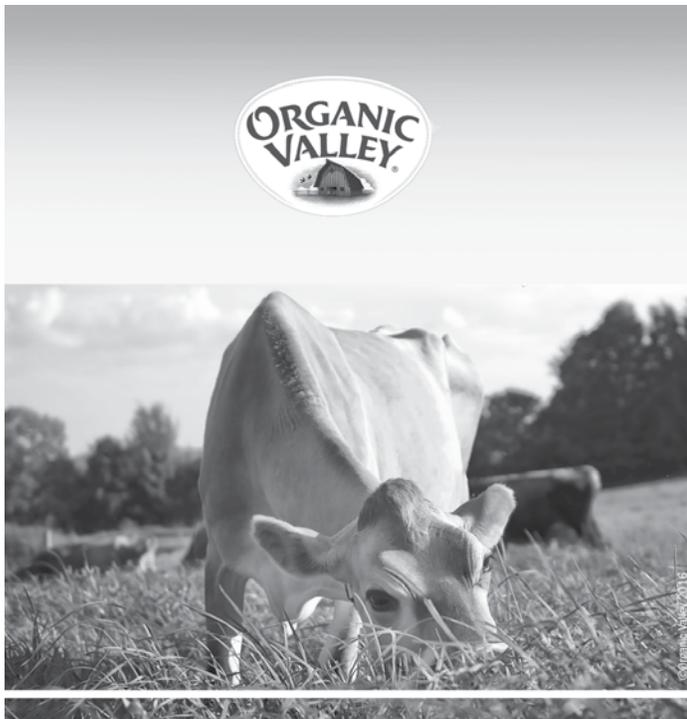
source, for example dairy on their milk check, beef and lamb at auctions.

d. If the entity is part of a State promotion program rather than a Federal program, the USDA will “encourage” those programs to recognize the Federal program. Entities can apply for an offset of 25 percent of the payment to the federal program to compensate for monies paid to a State or Regional program if the State and Regional programs agree.

2. For those producers and handlers that are not mandatorily assessed and choose not to be voluntarily assessed:

- a. They would apply annually, prior to January 1st, for exemption supplying proof that they had gross organic sales of under \$250,000 in the previous year.
- b. They would submit to the program past shipment/sales data that would validate their gross organic sales. They would need to maintain books and records needed to “carry out the provisions of the proposed program, including for verification of any required reports” and retain those records for at least two years beyond the applicable calendar year.
- c. The Organic Research and Promotion Board (Board)

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Checkoff: The Facts

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would then issue, "if deemed appropriate," a certificate of exemption for that calendar year.

d. Those producers and handlers that are part of a conventional checkoff program, and not paying into the organic checkoff, would have to pay into their conventional program. **The existing exemption that organic producers and handlers have, exempting them from the conventional programs would disappear.**

Enforcement

The organic program would be subject to the enforcements under the 1996 generic Act (SEC. 520. Enforcement). Essentially the Secretary could issue fines and penalties for nonpayment of checkoff assessments under Federal Law.

Use of checkoff funds

1. Reimbursement to the USDA for costs involved in running the program. There is no limit on what this might cost. This is paid out first.
2. Staff and administrative costs for the Board and program will be deducted next before evaluating what funds are

available for Programs, Plans or Projects. The program staff and administrative cost, plus whatever costs the Board has, can be no more than 15 percent of total assessment raised. Reimbursements to the USDA are not included in the 15 per cent.

3. Program, Plan and Project Funds:

a. All use of funds have to be approved by the Secretary of Agriculture. No program using checkoff funds can disparage or degrade the qualities of any other agricultural commodity or product (no "better than" or "more healthy than"). Wording of promotional programs must reflect the government's positions on policy. No funds can be used to advocate to or support the NOSB or any regulation.

b. The remaining funds will be allocated as follows:

- i. No less that 25 percent allocated to Research (as defined in § 1255.32) with a majority allocated to agricultural research.
- ii. 25 percent allocated to Information (as defined in § 1255.18) with a majority allocated to producer information.
- iii. 25 percent will be allocated to Promotion (as defined in § 1255.30).
- iv. 25 of the funds shall remain discretionary.



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Governing Board

1. 17 member Board including 1 non-voting member and a quorum of 9 members
 - a. 7 either mandatorily or voluntary assessed producers
 - b. 1 voluntarily assessed producer
 - c. 5 mandatorily or voluntarily assessed handlers
 - d. 2 mandatorily or voluntarily assessed product processors
 - e. 1 mandatorily or voluntarily assessed importer
 - f. 1 public member at-large who is a non-voting member
2. The Board members will be appointed by the Secretary
3. For the first Board the regulation says: 'Nominations for the initial Board will be handled' by the Department and OTA.' The terms for service of the initial Board shall be staggered for two, three and four years.
4. Board members will only be reimbursed for travel and other expenses but not for their time
5. Nominations to the Secretary for future producer seats will be based on geographic region and expressed wishes of producers voting in those regions.
6. Nomination to the Secretary for the other Board seats will be based on voting by that class of assessed entity and

the top 2-4 vote winners would be recommended to the Secretary

Voting to approve the Final Proposal to establish an Organic Checkoff

There are contradictions about how ballots are distributed and what is required to be eligible between the proposed rule for an organic checkoff (ORPIO) and the proposed rule for the referendum process.

1. Each assessed entity will have one vote. Organic importers can request one ballot per "business entity" that meets the definition of importer.
2. In ORPIO Rule: All currently certified domestic entities in the list maintained by the USDA NOP will be mailed a ballot. Importers of organic products with the existing 38 Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) codes from the previous year will also be mailed a ballot. Any entity requesting a ballot will have to provide an affidavit attesting to either (a) an importers participation in the organic industry or (b) a voluntarily assessed entity commitment to be assessed for 4 years.
3. In the proposed rule on the referendum: Assessed entities are defined above and may request and receive a ballot by

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Checkoff: The Facts *continued from page 25*

mail. No person that claims to be an assessed entity shall be refused a ballot.

- 4. Entities will be identified by its individual tax identification number.
- 5. All ballots will be cast by mail, in-person at Farm Services Agency or “by other means.”

Organic Checkoff Budgets		\$ million
USDA AMS Projection of total assessment raised	100%	\$ 25.3
USDA administration cost (OTA’s projection)		\$ 0.3
Board and program administration at 15% of total Budget		\$ 3.80
Available for Programs, Plans and Projects (PPP)	83% of Budget	\$ 21.21
Agricultural research		25% of PPP
Agricultural Research @ 60 percent of Research allocation		\$ 3.18
Other Research		\$ 2.12
Information for Producers		25% of PPP
Information for Producers @ 60 percent of Information budget		\$3.18
Industry and Consumer Information		\$2.12
Promotion for expanding organic markets	25% of PPP	\$5.30
Discretionary Funds	25% of PPP	\$5.30



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- 6. The program will be implemented if a majority of those voting agreed to it.

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Promotion & Economics Div., Specialty Crops Program, AMS, USDA, 1400Independence Ave.SW., Rm 1406-S, Stop

0244, Washington, D.C. 20250-0244;

Fax comments: (202) 205-2800

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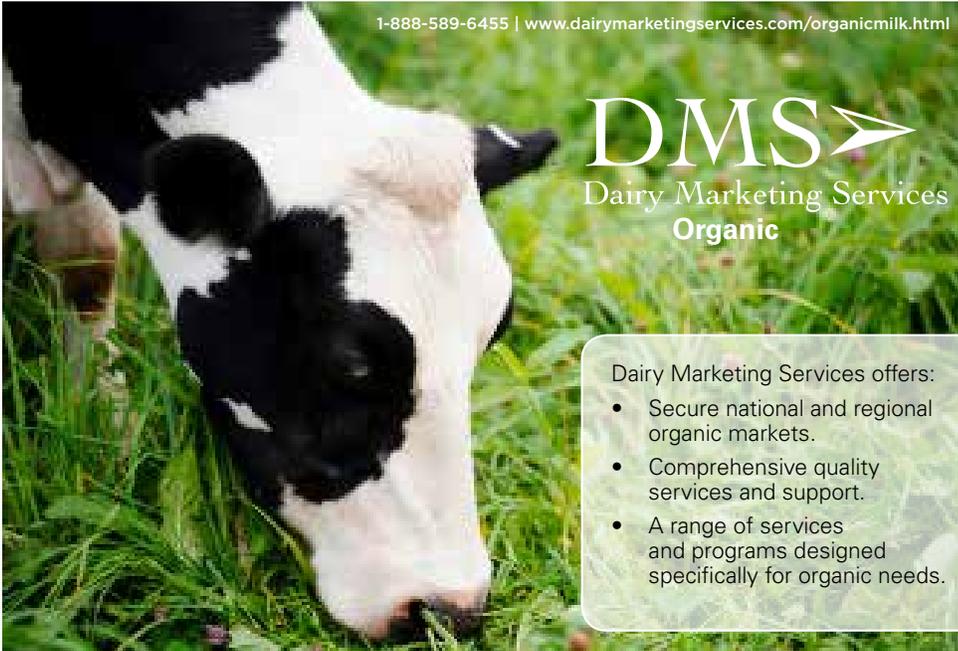
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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

Faith In Grass Peace Hollow Farm, Knoxville, Maryland

continued from page 1

Myron and Janet, both in their early 50's, farm in Pleasant Valley—a mile wide valley in Washington County, Maryland, bound by the Appalachian Trail to the east, the Potomac River to the south, and Elk Ridge to the west. According to the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map, the farm is located in Zone 7a. A scenic landscape of rolling hills, Myron said that “they had to make a flat place” when they built a new slatted floor freestall barn in 1996 (their parlor was also upgraded from a double-4 herringbone to a double-8).

The home farm is 118 acres, a V-shaped property with the buildings situated at the narrow end. This ground serves as pasture for their 80-head of milk cows. In 2007, the Martins purchased a neighboring 100-acre farm where they raise their heifers and all their bull calves. 50 acres of the heifer/steer farm is used for grazing and 50 for stored forage. They rent an additional 60 acres of hay ground.

Myron's family moved to the home farm in 1965 when Myron was three. Alongside his farming career, Myron's father served as a local Minister. Myron and Janet farmed in partnership with Myron's father through the 80's, began renting in 1988, and

started purchasing the property in 1993. Myron and Janet have seven grown children who have moved away from the farm. Over the years, Myron and Janet have provided a home to over 40 foster children.

“We were grazing some when we farmed with my Dad but began to get more intensive when I took over operations,” Myron explained about the progression of the grazing program. During this time period, 50 acres were in permanent pasture. Using a no-till drill and spray, the other 50 were double cropped with high-population corn (45,000 kernels per acre) and rye grass. “A winter annual and summer annual is basically the way I looked at it,” he said.

By 1996, he was grazing heavily on the rye grass but continued to feed grain and corn silage. In the early 2000's, organic processors began sourcing milk in their region, and Myron made the decision to transition. Following a three-year transition, the farm was certified organic in the fall of 2007. Myron and five other area farms began shipping to CROPP. In 2011, he started shipping to Tricking Springs. In early 2017, Tricking Springs entered into a supply relationship with CROPP. Before they began their transition, Myron said that they were using a lot of urea and he



South facing free stall built in 1996



Mixed breed heifers on pasture

was seeing a steady decline in the value of the crop and the health of the cows. He said, “When we transitioned, I knew we had to go in a different direction because I couldn’t put the urea on.” Having switched to cultivation, he continued to plant corn which “seemed to work,” but he had some reservations about the effects of constant tillage and cropping on his sandy loamed and hilly ground. In the back of his mind, he dreamed of switching to a more sod-based farming approach.

“I heard some people in Wisconsin were doing all-grass and I was wondering if it could be done here,” Myron explained. In his vicinity, there were very few people attempting an all-grass ration. Maryland Extension Educator Dale Johnson, who has had been tracking the Martin’s cost of production since 1996, observed that the farm was still purchasing a large amount of concentrates even though they had begun the transition to a high forage ration.

“All this was churning in my brain when the recession of 2009 hit,” Myron said. CROPP producers experienced a period of production quota and were asked to reduce milk output. “I thought this was my chance to go grain-free. I liked it so well; we actually made more money per cow in 2009 than I ever dreamed possible,” he said. His entire herd, including his calves and heifers, has been grain-free since 2009. Added Myron, “I am a man of faith; God worked it (transition to no-grain) out miraculously. My goal is to never till the ground again.”

The acreage on the home farm is primarily used for grazing. Spring turn-out dates range from mid-March to mid-April. The

herd is usually able to graze through December. “We have about 210 days of grazing,” Myron said, “but there is supplemental forage being used part of that time.”

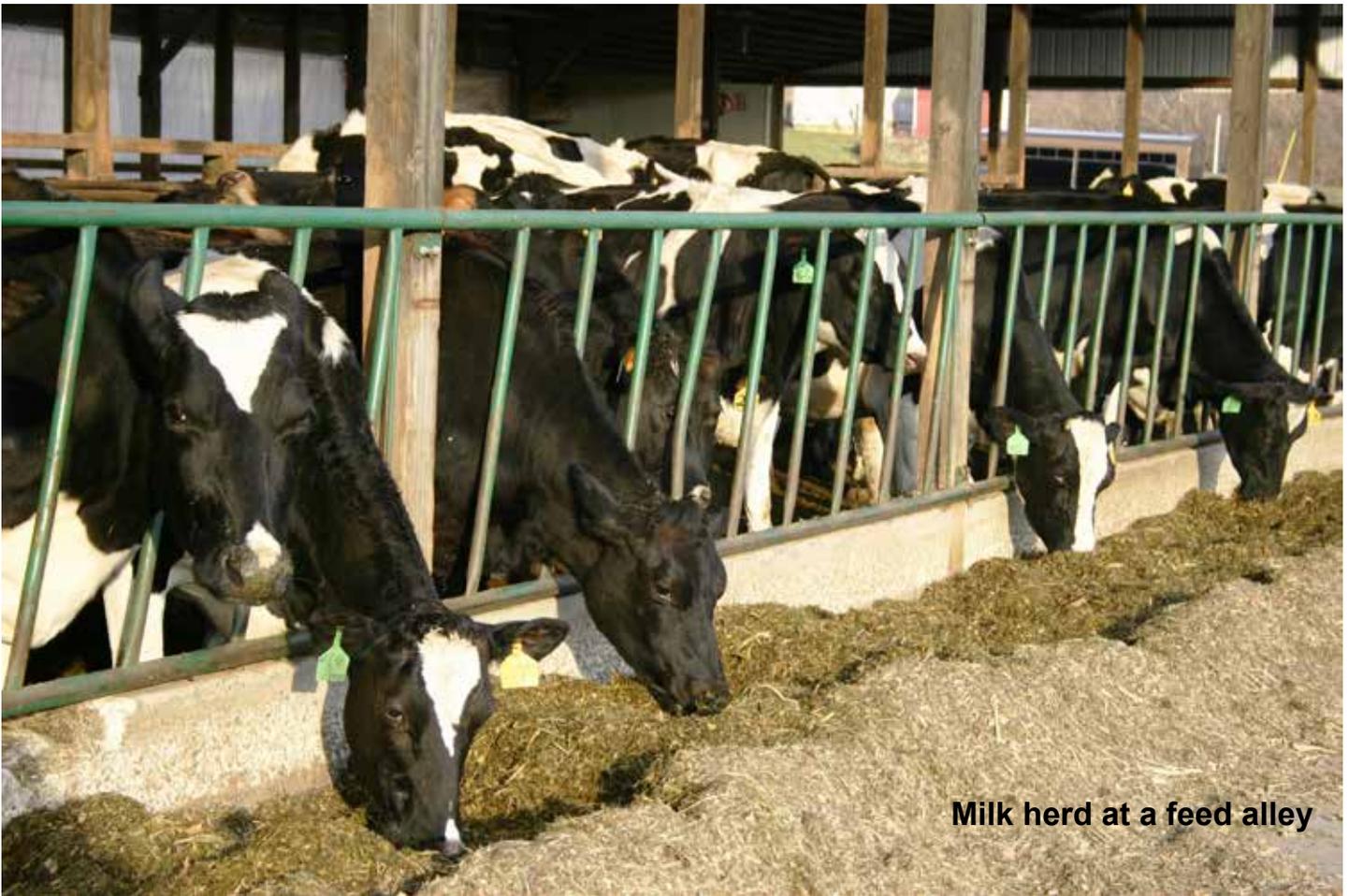
Since the property is V-shaped with the farmstead at the narrow end of the V, the grazing paddocks close to the barn are small and irregularly shaped. These paddocks are either reserved for calves or broken down into 2-acre paddocks for the milking herd. As you move farther from the farmstead the land opens up with 20 to 30-acre fields.

A high-tensile laneway is run through the center of each of these fields with permanent posts at 90-foot intervals. In many grazing systems, the herd is always going in and out of the same gate, but “we don’t have that,” Myron explained. “We just prop the laneway up with 10-foot poles and the cows have learned to walk under the wire into their paddock.”

In the spring when Myron is flash grazing the farm at a 21-day interval, the cows will get a 90’ section. When the heat hits by the end of July and the rotation has slowed to 30-days, the cows usually get a 180’ section.

Peace Hollow uses both pre-clipping, also referred to as pruning, and post-clipping to support its pastures. Myron (or his one full-time employee) pre-clip in the afternoon when sugar levels are highest. They try to pre-clip a PM paddock and the next day’s AM paddock at the same time. With wide-swathing, the pre-clippings dry quickly in the sun and continue to produce sugars,

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Milk herd at a feed alley

FEATURE FARM

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since the grass has no root structure to send the sugars back to. This makes it sweeter and more palatable for the cows.

“We clip high; just taking the top off,” Myron explained. “It encourages the cows to eat everything and it also stages the growth for the entire season.” By raising their Vermeer mower with a set of shoes, they are able to clip leaving a 4-inch stubble. Myron continued, “It establishes a grazing height. The next time the cows go through they maintain the same height.”

After the 3rd full rotation of his grasslands, Myron post-clips. Generally, the 118 acres of pasture are post-clipped three times per grazing season (twice in dry years). All of the clipping and mowing work is done with a Vermeer 1400- an 18’ wide tow-behind center pivot disc mower without conditioners. Myron acknowledged that his ground has very few rocks.

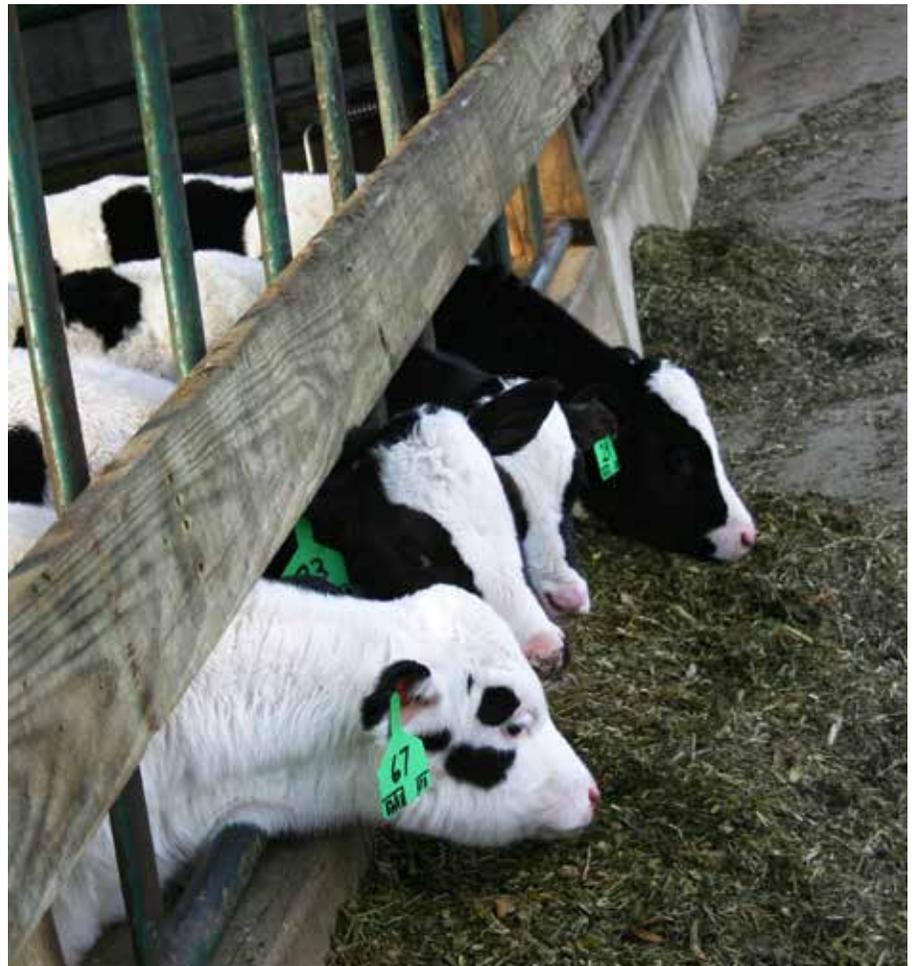
Although Maryland has a longer grazing season than its more northern counterparts, Myron still aims for putting up six months of stored feed. His goal is to raise a balanced forage of 60% grass and 40% legume that is 17% protein. Clover and grasses dominate his hay ground but there is also some alfalfa.

“We mow out in the morning for processing that day or in late afternoon for the next day,” he explained about the hay-in-a-day program. “We mow out flat in a complete swath with just a little bit of area for the wheels, cutting high so air can go through.” He uses wide swathing for both his 50% moisture haylage and dry hay.

After raking, the grass is picked up by a Pottinger wagon-mounted harvester. The machine has a pick-up head with processing knives built on to a self-unloading forage wagon. Then the crop is transported back to the farm and packed into trench silos. “It is really sweet smelling hay,” Myron noted, “and the cows really like this type of hay.”

Myron uses the same Pottinger system for harvesting his dry hay. Myron explained, “In the summer we make dry hay as we need it.” The excess dry hay (usually about 30-40 tons) is piled loose into a commodity shed. Both haylage and dry hay are scooped with an over-sized loader bucket, loaded into a retrofitted forage wagon mounted onto a trailer, and fed out in the south-facing feed alley of the freestall.

In response to high MUN’s during the grazing season, Myron has focused on feeding more dry hay. He said, “It is hard to get a cow that’s on lush pasture to eat hay,” but last year it was the only supplemental feed that was used until he began feeding haylage



in October. During the prime grazing season (April-June), the cows eat very little dry hay. When the heat picks up in July and the cows are spending the hottest part of the day in the freestall, Myron said that 20-25% of dry matter intake is coming from dry hay.

Myron prefers management techniques such as pruning and supplementing with dry hay over purchased inputs. He expressed a healthy skepticism towards products such as molasses and foliar products. He said, "I thought molasses was my ticket. I bought a tote and fed 6 gallons (per cow a day) and then went up to 8 before I began to back off. I didn't see that it helped me at all- it didn't move milk, it didn't move components."

He has also tried foliar feeding, but after some experimentation he decided to stop. Myron said, "You have to ask yourself is this my imagination that this is doing anything or does it just make me feel good because I am doing something?"

"I'd rather feed grass for energy," he explained. "To me, we do the best we can and take what we can get." If soil tests indicate a need, Myron does spread hi-cal lime every other year on all his ground at the rate of one ton per acre. This year he hopes to add some gypsum to his fertility program.

Originally a Holstein herd, Myron started cross-breeding with Jersey bulls. In 1996 when he began grazing more intensively, he switched to an all bull breeding program. Over the years, he has

Top left: Farm sign
Top right: Dinner Time at Peace Hollow Farm

brought in many off-farm bulls, but having experienced a severe bout of pinkeye last year, most likely brought in by a bull, Myron has decided to raise future breeding bulls from his own herd.

At the same time the farm was transitioning to all-grass, they were also developing a direct market for their culls and steers. The genetics of the herd were shifting to primarily Jersey and though he liked the Jerseys, "I also needed more of a cow when we were done," Myron added, "For this area, and the way I farm, we're more suited to a dual-purpose breed."

"I think I only sold one cow last year at the auction. Everything else went through the meat business." Large quantities of meat are sold for \$3.00/pound hanging weight with the customer paying the processor. The meat is 100% grass-fed but is not certified organic because they do not use a certified organic processor. Myron said that 70% of the beef business is wholesale. They sell to a number of CSAs in the region; the local CSA purchases a whole cow and then re-sells the meat to their members. Peace Hollow also maintains a farm stand where meat is sold by the

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NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

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

A producer asked the group for suggestions to control lice in his herd. Several farmers suggested feeding Agri-Dynamics' "Flies Be Gone." Other recommendations included Crystal Creek's No-Fly, Ectophyte, Sulphur powder, powdered tobacco, and PyGanic. It should be noted that there was some confusion over whether PyGanic is still allowed for use on livestock; different certifiers may have different interpretations. So check with your certifier. One person on the list quoted a NYS IPM Guide for Organic Dairies stating, "PyGanic is the most effective OMRI-approved pesticide available for use against lice in organic production." In all the external treatments, producers were reminded that there must be a second treatment, 10 to 14 days after the first, to kill the newly hatched lice.

On the subject of vaccinations, it was said that the very best vaccination program is "DRY bedding, fresh air, high forage diet, sunshine, and well-managed pastures (when available)." Some producers followed a yearly vaccination schedule with the standard combinations. Inforce 3 was recommended for pneumonia as it can be given when an animal is ill, and has a positive effect. One farmer's vet cautioned against the use of the Bovi-Shield Gold vaccines in bred animals; he prefers the Master-guard vaccines.

Using ultrasound at 28-35 days, cows at one farm are confirmed to be bred. If these cows come back into heat again, the farmer counts this as an "early embryonic death." With a rate of 29% EED, this farmer believed they had a problem. A vet on the list suggested that an "acceptable" level would be generally one cow per year on a 40-cow herd, or 2.5%. This farm's high rate of early embryonic death may be due to a Persistently Infected (PI) BVD animal. "No vaccine will ever overcome the presence of a PI animal." Other causes could be genetic mismatch, inbreeding (especially in Holsteins), and twinning. It was suggested that the farm test the cows individually to search for the PI BVD animals.

Looking ahead toward spring, a transitioning farmer asked if fly parasites were an effective tool. Several producers that had used them for up to a decade felt they were definitely an effective part of a fly control program.

A farmer had a cow with a uterine infection; their vet said it is the size of a 3 month pregnancy, and they would most likely have to ship the cow. A vet on the list suggested this remedy, which was the most successful in his experience: "Make a mixture of one part 7% Iodine with 11 parts 50% Dextrose. The cow with a 60-day size "pregnancy" infection would get infused with 60cc weekly for 3 weeks; a 90-day "pregnancy" infection would get 90cc weekly for 3 weeks. If larger than that, go with 1cc per day of "pregnancy", but twice weekly for 3 weeks. Works pretty darn well in most cases." A Chinese herb, Yunnan Baiyao was suggested if the infection was necrotic and foul-smelling. If the infection seemed yellow and pus-like, Andrographis and Dandelion root infusion were sug

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- 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.

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Classified Ads

ANIMALS

34 PCO Certified Organic Heifers, Dam raised on pasture, Jersey and Cross, Fall Calving. Call Terry Ingram, 540-270-8355. Location: Brandy Station, VA

Year old jersey heifers, jersey cross heifers. Certified organic. Well built calves from top artificial insemination bulls. \$550 each. Year and three quarters heifers, Jersey and Jersey cross ready to be bred, \$900 each. Barrett Russell, Barrett.russ09@gmail.com, phone: 207-314-7168
Location: Winslow, Maine

Jersey Heifers for Sale: Four Certified Organic Jersey Heifers, due to calve May - July. \$1,950 each. Bradley and Kathryn Kent, 518-521-0496 or butterfieldfarm@hotmail.com. Location: Burke, NY

Jersey Family Cow for Sale: We have a gentle Jersey family cow that we are offering for sale. She's currently dry and due within the next 2+ weeks. From organic herd. She has been favoring her right rear leg, and since it's a long walk back to the barn (especially with grazing season coming up) we are concerned she needs a change in environment. I think she would do a lot better in an environment where she is free to walk around with some exercise closer to the barn and not be tied up in a smaller tie stall like she is here. Any interest, please call (802-582-9026) or email me at ron@bedrockfarmvt.com. Location: St. Albans, Vermont

FORAGE

For Sale: 1st cutting certified organic large square bale hay for sale at \$65 each They are a timothy grass mix or a timothy rye-grass mix. Forage tests and our organic certificate are available. Hay samples are also available and free. The bales are approx 700lbs and the size is 3' x 3' x 7'. Also 1st cutting 4' x 5' round bales for \$35 each stored outside. Delivery is available and an additional charge or pick up at the farm. We can deliver anywhere in the US. Tony Marzolino, Marz Farm, 3624 Wilson Creek Rd, Berkshire, NY 13736, Farm: 607-657-8534. Cell: 315-378-5180 tmarzolino@yahoo.com

Location: Berkshire, NY

For Sale: 250 bales of 1st. cutting mixed hay \$50/bale, 100 bales of 2nd cutting mixed hay \$60/bale. Individually wrapped bales. Certified through PCO. Contact Jerry Wood, 607-293-8308. Location: Mt. Vision, N.Y.

EMPLOYMENT

Manager of Farm Operations, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH

The University of New Hampshire is seeking a Manager of Farm Operations. Under the general direction of the Dean for the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture (COLSA)/Director of the NH Agricultural Experiment Station (NHAES), the Manager of Farm Operations is responsible for coordinating efforts of all the NHAES/COLSA research and teaching farms, the Farm Services unit and their service providers in order to provide high quality and efficient research and teaching resources for NHAES/COLSA, UNH and stakeholders across the state and region. For a full description and to apply, visit <http://jobs.usnh.edu/postings/25418>. UNH is an AA/EEO Employer. UNH is committed to excellence through the diversity of its faculty and staff and encourages women and minorities to apply.

Organic Grass-fed Dairy Manager, Grey Barn, Chilmark, MA

The Farm Manager will supervise, coordinate and run the day-to-day operations of the farm. This includes all aspects of grazing, health and breeding for the dairy herd. This also includes all aspects of parlor and milk room management. Additionally, the Farm Manager will be responsible for overseeing poultry and swine operations as well as coordinating personnel issues and employee scheduling with the Proprietor. The Farm Manager must be

ODAIRY UPDATES

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gested along with an oral dose of the herbs - one Tbsp. twice a day. Other suggestions were 60cc of hydrogen peroxide once or twice daily and a product called Utrecept (available through IBA).

A producer asked the group about their experiences of regularly feeding apple cider vinegar. Several farmers replied that they regularly fed organic apple cider vinegar (ACV) in the feed or mixed in the water and felt that the cows liked the taste of the vinegar in the feed, so ate the grain ration better. One producer sent a link to a 2011 NODPA News article written by Jerry Brunetti where he discusses why feeding ACV can be so beneficial – it “is the precursor to bovine growth hormone, which in turn drives butterfat and milk production”; it acts as a tonic, buffering an acidic rumen; “it is also a wonderful source of electrolytes and since it is a VFA (volatile fatty acid), it can really fortify the ration with energy.” Other producers chimed in that they use ACV as a drench to treat calf scours, apply it externally for udder rot and ringworm, and feed 2 oz. twice a day for 2 weeks before freshening to prevent milk fever.

What to do about wet spots in the pasture? One producer asked for suggestions about reclaiming some “wetland” areas. One farmer said that he feeds round bales in the winter when the ground is frozen to add organic matter to the area. Another suggested seeding pasture species into a wet area that are adapted to those conditions: Reed Canary grass, Meadow Fescue, and Festilolium. And other producers suggested that diversity is key to organic farming, and true wetland areas should be left alone, maybe just grazed in very dry periods in the summer. ♦

.....

a self-motivated, methodical and meticulous individual who is willing to work hard, is flexible and has loads of enthusiasm! Contact: Michael Barnes, michael@thegreybarmandfarm.com

Position- Dairy Herd Manager/Couple (MUST HAVE CURRENT DAIRY EXPERIENCE TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THIS POSITION)

Farm at Cold Brook is in search of a herd manager, prefer a working couple that will join a progressive milking team and farm managers. Full time position with scheduled time off. Advancement possible with schooling and continuing education available for the right people. New facilities fall of 2016, expansion to 300 cows planned through 2019. A cooperative work environment. Housing provided, pay dependent on experience.

We are seeking herd managers with strong work ethic, good character, and good morals. Position will be responsible for feeding and milking on a rotational schedule and will be responsible for fresh/maternity cows and overseeing parlor and calf feedings to ensure all procedures are being followed. We are also looking for someone with strong herd health experience and be able to spot and prevent sick cows. Positions are also responsible for record keeping and inventory of vet and parlor supplies. Herd manager will work with nutritionist, veterinarian, cooperate with other managers to maintain excellent herd health and facilities. Contact: Tim Wightman General Manager, call 765-277-3352 or email at clearvu@cheqnet.net

Location: Cold Brook, NY

Calendar

March 13, 2017

2017 Maine Grain Conference

Little School and Agriculture Museum, Littleton, ME
(just north of Houlton)

This year's conference will focus on alternative crops and precision, guided cultivation systems. Guest speakers will include among others: Willie Hughes of Janesville, Wisconsin. Willie will talk about his family's split conventional/organic, 5000-acre operation. Hughes Farms grow grains (wheat, rye, soybean, corn) and processing vegetables (sweet corn, peas, and snap beans). Jeremiah Evans of Merced, Manitoba. Jeremiah has used Robocrop, a video-guided hoe to cultivate between crop rows. He grows 450 acres of organic spelt, winter wheat, red spring wheat, field peas, and condiment mustard, as well as red clover and biannual sweet clover for plow-down. Peter Scott, Crop Development Specialist, New Brunswick Department of Agriculture. Peter will give an overview of results from his cereal and oilseed research program.

For more information: <https://extension.umaine.edu/agriculture/blog/2017/02/01/farm-scoop-february-2017/>

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

2017 Ad rates and sizes listed below.

**Deadline for advertising in the
May, 2017 issue is April 15, 2017.**

Full Page Ad (7.5" W x 10.25" H) = \$630

1/2 Page Ad (7.5" W x 4.5" H) = \$320

1/4 Page Ad (3.5" W x 4.75" H) = \$176

1/8 Page Ad/Business Card:

(3.5" W x 2.25" H) = \$95

Commit to a full year of print advertising and get 10 percent discount: Full: \$567, Half: \$288, Quarter: \$159, Eighth: \$85.

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

For advertising information call Nora Owens:
413-772-0444 or email noraowens@comcast.net.

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

Webinars

Strip Tillage Tools and Practices

Thursday March 16, 3-5pm EST

Adapting strip tillage for organic production requires careful crop planning. Learn the tools and equipment and what research is showing about integrating cover crops, managing residue, attracting beneficial insects, and controlling diseases and weeds. Anu Rangarajan and Meg McGrath - Cornell University, Dan Brainard and Zsofia Szendrei - Michigan State University. Registration questions? Contact Vicki Morrone, Organic Farming Specialist, at sorrone@msu.edu. Questions about the Cornell Reduced Tillage Project? Contact Ryan Maher, Cornell Small Farms Program, at rmm325@cornell.edu.

Cultivation for Reduced Tillage Systems

Thursday March 23, 3-5pm EST

Cultivation of the in-row zone is challenging, especially in reduced tillage systems. Learn about innovative in-row cultivation techniques for managing weeds in reduced tillage crops. Dan Brainard and Sam Hitchcock - Michigan State University, Eric Gallandt and Bryan Brown - University of Maine

Registration questions? Contact Vicki Morrone, Organic Farming Specialist, at sorrone@msu.edu.

Questions about the Cornell Reduced Tillage Project? Contact Ryan Maher, Cornell Small Farms Program, at rmm325@cornell.edu.

Thursday, March 16, 2017 - 9:00am To 1:00pm

Farm Business and Budget Clinics

(THERE ARE MULTIPLE DATES FOR THESE CLINICS)

UVM Extension farm business educators (Mark Cannella, Mike Dolce, Kim Kayhart, Tony Kitsos and Betsy Miller) are available to work one-on-one with farmers on their finances. Bring your financial statements, recent records and questions for this 1 ½ hour scheduled private meeting. Use the time to prepare the statements that will help manage the business. The session can also be used to review a written business plan or feasibility plan.

Register online at www.regonline.com/march17clinics. Contact Christi Sherlock at christi.sherlock@uvm.edu or 1-866-860-1382, for registration questions or assistance. Location: UVM Extension Office, 29 Sunset Dr., Suite 2, Morrisville, VT 05661. Registration fee is \$25.00.

WEBSITE: <http://www.regonline.com/march17clinics>. THERE ARE MULTIPLE DATES FOR THESE CLINICS. PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL CHRISTI SHERLOCK FOR ALL DATES.

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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 _____ \$300 to \$500 to become a Friend
_____ \$50 to become an Associate member (open to all) _____ \$500 to \$1,000 to become a Patron
_____ \$100 to become a supporter of NODPA _____ \$1,000+ to become a Benefactor
_____ \$150 to become a Business Member

Name: _____ Farm Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Date: _____ Are you a certified organic dairy producer? YES NO
Number of milking cows _____ Milk buyer _____

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

Please mail this form with a check to: Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342, or by fax: 866-554-9483 or by email to ednodpa@comcast.net. 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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March 18, 2017, 8:30am – 3:30 pm

Maine Grass Farmers Network Conference

Alfond Campus, Kennebec Valley Community College, US Route 201, Hinckley, ME

Keynote speaker: Fred Provenza, noted animal scientist and grazing behavior specialist, from Utah State University; Dr. Hue Karreman, author and veterinarian with his partner Suzanne Nelson. Concurrent sessions with speakers including Dr. Tatina Stanton from Cornell, discussing parasite control in sheep and goats, and UMaine's new Extension Livestock Specialist, Dr. Colt Knight. Registration and conference details are available on-line at <https://extension.umaine.edu/livestock/mgfn/conference/>. For more information, contact Rick Kersbergen, richard.kersbergen@maine.edu, 207-342-5971 or MOFGA's Diane Schivera, dianes@mofga.org.

Wednesday, March 22, 2017, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

2017 Soil Health Forum

Greenwich Elk's Lodge (Rte 40, Greenwich)

130 Bulson Rd, Greenwich, NY 12834

Farmers, bring your questions for a discussion with other farmers and

ag professionals; an open forum with no set agenda. We'll take it where it leads us. Topics: Why & how to make cover crops work.; How to use additives for enhanced fertilizer efficiency. The difference between "pop up" & "starter" fertilizer. Record keeping: Why? How to make it easy? Is double cropping for me? Minimum tillage – what does it mean? Equipment: What is new? Is it worth it? How to make old stuff better? Sulfur – zinc-boron: do we need them? Lunch Provided. Please RSVP to kwcornerpeace@myfairpoint.net or art@whitmansfeed.com; or to Art 802-733-1186, Doug 802-733-1193, or A & K Agriservices 802-442-4338.

March 25, 2017

The Art of Aged Sharp Cheese: Making Cheeses of The British Isles Gill, MA

Learn the art and craft of making aged sharp cheeses using mesophilic cultures with veteran farmer and cheese artisan Clifford Hatch. Using grass-fed, pastured milk from his family farm, Cliff will take you on hands-on journey through all the stages of making favorites like Cheddar and lesser-known hard cheeses like Caerphilly, Dunlop, or Wensleydale. This class, suitable for the beginner and advanced cheese-maker, will give you a new appreciation for the ancient art of making complex, nutrient-dense, and obnoxiously delicious cheese. The farm will provide a simple lunch of bread and cheese. You are welcome to bring something to share (or a bag lunch for yourself if you prefer). Wear clean, non-fuzzy clothing and practical footwear

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the MODPA Treasurer

Greetings to all. I hope this finds everyone in good health and spirit. Spring is trying very hard to make certain it stays. We have had a good winter in my area but spring is always a welcome sight. By the time most of you read this, you should be well on your way into the planting season. If farming was as easy as most think it is we would have it made. One of the things I have been focusing on this year is trying to be more involved with the issues that are affecting my neighborhood and way of life. I encourage all of you to make some time to get involved. It is the only way that we, as farmers, can be certain that we get our message out to the public. The past election was proof of the disconnect between rural and urban in this country. We as farmers have to do our part to be available and tell our story to the urban people. They do truly love it when they are talking to a real farmer. Make their day, share your story. We can't go on with others filling in the blanks for us. We have too much to lose.

From what I have heard, the conference season has been well attended. This chance to get out is always welcomed. I have managed to catch up with old friends and make new ones. We have much more in common than many of us think. Many of these people may be in our backyard and we don't even know it. I have met many folks over the years that were living in my neck of the woods and I never knew they were there.

There continues to be a rather large amount of discussion about a checkoff program. I recently received some bathroom material from the OTA. It's hard to like the checkoff when the folks pushing for it are some of the major processors in this country. If they can't budget for research and promotion on their own it may be time for them to use a new business model; that is what is expected of us as farmers so the same should apply to them. After all, a lot of corporate America seems to be able to make a go of it without a checkoff. When is the last time GM taxed their workers in order to pay for their promotion?

Another troubling aspect has reared its head in the form of quotas for supply management. This will make it a tough year for many. Not the end of the world, hopefully for anybody, but there will definitely be a need to keep the pencil sharp and to stay on top of things. Let your processor know how you feel about this. They need to hear from the producers. The farmers should not have to bear all of the brunt in this. We, the farmers, need to be very proactive on this. Demand continues to grow according to the figures available. It is up to our processors to make best use of our product and work with us for a sustainable path forward for all, not just a few.

May your spring rains be timely and your efforts be well rewarded in the upcoming growing season.

Peace and Blessings,

Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer
Glenwood City, WI, 715-781-485

Become a Member of MODPA!

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Certified Organic Dairy? Yes No # of cows: _____

Transitioning: _____

I wish to support MODPA (check whatever applies):

___ By becoming a state rep or director.

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

___ By providing a donation to support the work of

MODPA. \$_____ enclosed.

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

About MODPA

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

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

MODPA Board

Wisconsin

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Phone and Fax: 419-895-1182

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

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

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Calendar

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that can get wet. Consider wearing layers, as the cheese room can get quite hot. For more information, contact Dan Bensonoff, 860-716-5122, dan@nofamass.org; www.nofamass.org.

**NOFA Summer Conference SAVE THE DATE
August 11 - 13, 2017, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA**

NOFA Summer Conference: The community learning hub of the NOFA universe. We learn, we play, and we enjoy a weekend of skill building, inspiration and entertainment. It is our opportunity to get together and inspire one another during a family friendly weekend with people living the same lifestyle, holding the same vision and working respectively in many ways toward the same goals. Keynoters: Michael Phillips and Don Huber.

**September 27 to 29, 2017 SAVE THE DATE
The 2017 Grassfed Exchange, The Desmond Hotel, Albany, NY**

The 2017 Grassfed Exchange promises to be an experience you won't

want to miss. This year's event will feature a lineup of renowned keynote speakers, live cooking demonstrations, interactive farm tours, two full days of seminars with exhibitors, and outdoor livestock display pens. We invite you to come network and learn from some of the industries most innovative producers, thought leaders, top chefs, and bloggers that have their finger on the pulse of what is driving the fastest growing segment in the beef industry. Now more than ever, as grassfed and regenerative agriculture continues to rapidly evolve, it will be crucial to stay in-tune to the latest changes and advancements that will continue to shape the future of our industry. Keynote speakers include Tre` Cates, COO of the Savory Institute, Robb Wolf, author of "The Paleo Solution", Diana Rodgers, author of the "Sustainable Dish", and more. Early bird registration is now open! Registration and more information now available at <http://grassfedexchange.com>

**September 28-29, 2017-SAVE THE DATE
NODPA Field Days, Truxton Community Center, Truxton, NY**

Program information will be available soon online and in the May NODPA News. The Farm Tour will be at Kirk and Kathy Arnold's Twin Oak Dairy, Truxton, NY. For Sponsorship and Trade Show information, contact Nora Owens, noraowens@comcast.net or 413-772-0444.