

NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Organic Industry News

Organic Dairy Policy	1
From the NODPA President	2
From the NODPA Desk	3
Francis Thicke at NOSB	4
Dirt Capital Partners	6
Case Study: Triple 3 Livestock	7
NODPA Fund Drive	12
Feed & Pay Prices	16
Dairy Grazing Initiative in NY	18
Field Days Review	19
Letter to the Editor	32
Northeast Organic Milk Buyers	34

Organic Production

Featured Farm: Hidden Meadows Dairy, Cincinnatus, NY	1
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Net Update

Recent ODairy Discussions	26
Online Ad Opportunities	26
Subscribing To ODairy	26

Member Info

Classifieds	35
Calendar	36
Support NODPA Through Milk Check-Off	
NODPA News Subscription	37
From the MODPA Desk	39



Annie and Ryan Murray

FEATURED FARM: HIDDEN MEADOWS DAIRY, Cincinnatus, New York

By Sonja Heyck-Merlin

In this issue, we used a slightly different format for the featured farm. It is a well known business assessment practice called a SWOT analysis, and is a tool that all farmers can use to assess their business.

What is a SWOT analysis?

A SWOT analysis is a tool used for business or personal analysis. SWOT is an acronym which stands for:

Strengths: internal factors that give a competitive edge to a company

Weaknesses: internal factors that can be harmful

Opportunities: external favorable situations which can bring a competitive advantage

Threats: external unfavorable situations which can negatively affect the business

continued on page 28

Organic Dairy Policy: What Producers Can Do Now

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

With a new administration in Washington DC, and the need for consistent implementation of organic regulation to ensure a fair and level playing field, organic producers need to educate policy makers on the dire conditions of the organic dairy market. While the policy and regulation

issues within the organic dairy community are foremost in our minds, they are of limited interest to most Congressional senators and representatives. For most of these legislators, understanding the issues is delegated to legislative aides who have varying levels of continued both knowledge of organics and

continued on page 8

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Message from the NODPA President

Over the years, I have had the good fortune to know some very talented people who served on the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) representing organic farmers—Kevin Engelbert, Hue Karreman, Jean Richardson, Nick Maravell, and Francis Thicke. After their 5 year stint, each of them seemed to emerge from the experience with a heavy veil of exhaustion over their eyes and lines of worry on their faces. There had always been battles between those that held fast to the principles of organic agriculture pitted against those who saw an opportunity to make a great deal of money, and wanted the standards to be relaxed. Down to the smallest ingredients in a packaged organic product or a micronutrient source in a mineral mix for livestock, they researched each item to determine if it could be allowed in organic production and food. I have the greatest respect for these people who have

devoted huge blocks of their time and energy to serve over the years.

Francis Thicke is the most recent farmer to have finished his tenure on the NOSB. You can read his exit comments on page 4. He believes that organics is at a crossroads. Big business has overruled the interests of the very organic farmers and consumers that started the movement to organic agriculture. Political pressures continue to allow some large dairies with thousands of cows that are not on significant pasture, huge chicken barns with no real outdoor access, hydroponic operations, and fraudulent grain imports. Where do we go from here? Francis suggests that an add-on to NOP certification is the way to go. He suggests we support a label such as the proposed Regenerative Organic Certification (which focuses on soil health, animal welfare, and social fairness for farmers).

So is this where we are today? Are we no longer relevant in our own industry? Must we leap to another certification program?

continued on page 27

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the NODPA Desk: November 2017

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

The seventeenth NODPA Annual meeting and Field Days was well attended and ran smoothly under the detailed coordination and management of Nora Owens and Kathie Arnold. It was especially good to be one of the the first outside events to take place at the freshly converted school that is now the Truxton Community Center. It's always a challenge to choose a location for the Field Days as we choose to rotate through different communities and states to allow as much access as possible by producers. The choice this time was ideal, with Kathie always there to smooth the path and make it possible to support her community. Any volunteers for 2018?

The educational sessions and workshops are always popular and the speakers this year were no exception. Those who have never handled livestock find it difficult to believe that an experienced herdsman can walk into a barn and feel if the herd is in good health. Regulators also doubt that producers can step on to a farm and almost immediately assess whether there is an adequate grazing program. Jack Rodenburg's presentations took that producer's knowledge to a new level and applied it to barn design. After listening to Neil Kinsey, it is no wonder that he has such a great reputation. His presentation style and content were exceptional and very appropriate for those attending. Both of them, and Sarah Flack on Friday morning, honored the work that organic producers do on a daily basis and all gave excellent advice about how to improve their operations.

From my point of view, the producer-only meeting is always the highlight of the event as its one of the few times that I am able to hear directly from producers about their priorities and challenges. This year, it was especially important to hear how the dramatic drop in pay price is affecting farm families and what solutions they see. The 7:00 am meeting was a very well attended with producers from all states represented. It was more positive than one could have expected, with producers pushing solutions rather than bemoaning the dramatic loss of income imposed on them.

The meeting was moderated excellently by Henry Perkins, NODPA Past President from Maine. The first order of business was the election of Board officers. This process was interspersed with good natured bantering, usually at the expense of those that were not present. Liz Bawden, Board President, led the discussions and encouraged the younger (under 50 years old) NODPA members to volunteer their services. With much pledging of support and encouragement for the work ahead, there was unanimous approval for the following slate of officers: Liz Bawden, President; Kirk Arnold, Vice President; George Wright, Treasurer; and Dwight Stoltzfoos, Secretary.

With no shortage of problems, the list was curtailed at 8:00 am so discussion could move onto solutions. The eight major areas of concern were: 1.) lack of enforcement; 2.) oversupply; 3.) drop in pay price; 4.) nut juice competition; 5.) non- GMO pseudo-organic consumer confusion; 6.) imports; 7.) consolidation of processors and organic milk buy-

ers; 8.) threatened loss of integrity. While the analysis of these problems could have taken many hours, since each producer had a differing experience, the meeting was steered into discussion of solutions.

The most popular solution was to make consumers aware of what was in their organic milk and the benefits of CLAs and Omega 3. Many producers saw the future in a more grass-based organic label that would be able to show a distinct difference in the product, not just the process of organic production. A Grass-fed Milk committee was enthusiastically set up to work on the issue. Members of the committee, to be led by Cliff Hawbaker, are Gerry Snyder, Ryan Murray, Forrest Stricker, Dwight Stoltzfoos and Rob and Pam Moore. If this is something that you feel you want to be part of, please contact me and I will pass your name on to them.

With income dropping from wholesale organic milk sales, producers were examining whether they can look to alternative profit centers on the farm for example on-farm sales, encouraging more states to have raw milk regulations. Of course the challenge here is whether we are just creating more work without generating more income.

There was interest in working more directly to influence and educate the media and consumers about the qualities of organic milk and the reality of how producers and their families are treated. While NODPA does have an excellent website and an active Facebook page, there was interest in how to use available communication channels more effectively. A committee of Annie Murray, Liz Pickard, Sonja Heyck-Merlin and Nora Owens was set up and has had three conference calls already. In the future, we will have report-outs from these committees in future editions of the NODPA News.

Producers recognized that part of the organic dairy crises was because regulations were not being enforced in a fair and consistent way, with a great variation in interpretation of regulations by different certifiers. One of the tactics for solving this situation is to work with Congress and the USDA to address the problems through legislation (Farm Bill, Appropriations). While NODPA has been developing policy positions over many years, there was agreement that events during the next year would require many responses as potential changes in regulation and perhaps to OFPA were raised. A Political Response committee of Ed Maltby, Steve Morrison, Kathie Arnold, Cecilia Murray and Board officers was set up to develop policy positions and assist with fine tuning the language used to respond to issues as they were raised. There was also agreement that any member could be involved in policy discussions at any time.

There is much talk in the organic community about whether we need something more than organic certification to maintain the integrity of our products. Whether that is possible, practical or marketable will be played out in the next few years. With hydroponics effectively given a green light by the NOSB to continue to be organically certified nationally and internationally and a further delay in the implementation of the Animal Welfare regulation until May 2018, many producers are disillusioned by the NOP and the effectiveness of the organic program. Part of the solution is to educate your federal senators and representatives to the reality of organic production. Without that education there will be no change. On page 9, we have a summary of the situation in organic dairy plus possible solutions. Please use this to educate at all levels of state and federal government and regulators. It's only by helping ourselves that change will happen, nobody else will. ♦

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

The Fall NOSB Meeting: Francis Thicke's Closing Remarks

Francis Thicke's 5-year term on the NOSB Board ended at the close of the Fall NOSB meeting in Jacksonville, Florida. We wanted to share his closing remarks which he delivered at the end of the NOSB meeting on November 2, 2017.

Francis Thicke's Closing Remarks

There are two important things that I have learned during my five years on the NOSB. First, I learned that the NOSB review process for materials petitioned for inclusion on the National List is quite rigorous, with Technical Reviews of petitioned materials and careful scrutiny by both NOSB subcommittees and the full board.

The second thing I learned, over time, is that industry has an outsized and growing influence on USDA—and on the NOSB (including through NOSB appointments)—compared to the influence of organic farmers, who started this organic farming movement. Perhaps that is not surprising, given the growing value of organic sales. As organic is becoming a \$50 billion business, the industry not only wants a bigger piece of the pie, they seem to want the whole pie.

We now have “organic” chicken CAFOs with 200,000 birds crammed into a building with no real access to the outdoors, and a chicken industry working behind the scenes to make sure that the animal welfare standards—weak as they were—never see the light of day, just like their chickens. The image consumers have of organic chickens ranging outside has been relegated to pictures on egg cartons.

We have “organic” dairy CAFOs with 15,000 cows in a feedlot in a desert, with compelling evidence by an investigative reporter that the CAFO is not meeting the grazing rule—by a long shot. But when USDA does its obligatory “investigation,” instead of a surprise visit to the facility, USDA gives them a heads up by making an appointment, so the CAFO can move cows from feedlots to pasture on the day of inspection. This gives a green light to that dairy CAFO owner to move forward with its plans to establish a 30,000-cow facility in the Midwest.

We have large grain shipments coming into the US that are being sold as organic but that lack organic documentation. Some shipments have been proven to be fraudulent. The USDA has been slow to take action to stop this, and organic crop farmers in the US are suffering financially as a result. I spoke with



the reporter who broke the story on fraudulent “organic” grain imports. I asked him how he was able to document the fraud of grain shipments when USDA said it was very difficult to do so. He replied “it was easy.”

We have a rapidly growing percentage of the organic fruits and vegetables on grocery store shelves being produced hydroponically, without soil, and mostly in huge industrial-scale facilities. And we have a hydroponics industry that has deceptively renamed “hydroponic” production—even with 100% liquid feeding—as “container” production. With their clever deception they have been able to bamboozle even the majority of NOSB members into complicity with their goal of taking over the organic fruit and vegetable market with their hydroponic

products.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised to find that big business is taking over the USDA organic program because the influence of money is corroding all levels of our government. At this point, I can see only one way to bring the organic label back in line with the original vision of organic farmers and consumers. We need an add-on organic label for organic farmers who are willing to meet the expectations of discerning consumers who are demanding real organic food.

A year ago I wouldn't have supported the idea of an add-on organic label because I, like many others, had seen the USDA organic label as the gold standard, and had hoped that through our vision of the process of continuous improvement we could really make it into that gold standard. Now I can see that the influence of big business is not going to let that happen. The USDA is increasingly exerting control over the NOSB, and big business is tightening its grip on the USDA and Congress. Recently, industry representatives have publicly called on the US Senate to weaken the NOSB and give industry a stronger role in the National Organic Program. And sympathetic Senators promised to do just that.

I now support the establishment of an add-on organic label that will enable real organic farmers and discerning organic consum-

ers to support one another through a label that represents real organic food. I support the creation of a label, such as the proposed Regenerative Organic Certification, that will ensure organic integrity; for example, that animals have real access to the outdoors to be able to express their natural behaviors, and that food is grown in soil. My hopes are that this add-on certification can be seamlessly integrated with the NOP certification, so that a single farm organic system plan and inspection can serve to verify both NOP and the higher level organic certification, by certifiers that are accredited by both certification systems.

I also am pleased that organic farmers have recently organized themselves into the Organic Farmers Association (OFA), to better represent themselves in the arena of public policy. Too often in the past, the interests of big business have overruled the interests of organic farmers—and consumers—when organic policies are being established in Washington. I hope this will allow organic farmers to gain equal footing with industry on issues that affect the organic community.

In summary, organic is at a crossroads. Either we can continue to allow industry interests to bend and dilute the organic rules to their benefit, or organic farmers—working with organic consumers--can step up and take action to ensure organic integrity into the future. ♦

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Dirt Capital: Promoting Land Access and Security

Dirt Capital Partners invests in farmland in partnership with farmers throughout the Northeast United States, promoting sustainable farmers' land



access and security. They recognize that farming is risky. For farmers who are building the quality of their soil every year, insecure land tenure critically inhibits multi-year business planning. Many talented farmers with profitable operations do not qualify for a conventional loan and/or do not have enough capital saved to make a large down payment. The primary alternative is leased land, which is often short-term, insecure and requires permission from landowners to erect basic farm infrastructure. Dirt Capital fills these gaps by facilitating farmland transitions, crafting long-term leases that allow businesses to expand securely, and providing defined pathways to ownership.

DIRT CAPITAL'S COMMON LAND PARTNERSHIP SCENARIOS

Relocate an existing farm to a larger property, or to a farm with more secure land tenure

Expand a successful operation by acquiring nearby land

Transfer a farm to non-family or family successors

Conserve when land trusts look to partner with a like-minded organization, or keep already conserved land in active agricultural production

Transform a farm with infrastructure updates for the next generation's efficiency

Reorganize, or refinance a farm in the event of a change in the partnership or business

DIRT CAPITAL'S APPROACH

Upon receiving an application from a qualified farmer, we work closely with the applicant to review operating history and create multi-year business plans and budgets. We then discuss what lease terms best fits a farmer's personal goals and financial capabilities. We provide support, as needed, on the land search, due diligence, legal work and negotiating terms.

We also work closely with existing resources – University Extension programs, farm viability programs, land trusts, experienced farmer-mentors, etc. – to support our due diligence and ensure the farmer's business plans are realistic and achievable, and to provide ongoing support and assistance to the farmer.

FARMER-INVESTOR LEGAL AGREEMENTS

All leases between farmers and Dirt Capital are binding contractual arrangements that provide the farmer with land security, autonomy and an option to purchase. Each agreement is tailored to the specific farm operation and parcel of land. Additional investment for on-farm infrastructure is considered case-by-case.

While each is customized, the following summarizes a standard farmer-investor lease:

- Nine-year lease term
- Purchase option at year 5 or year 6 and again at lease expiry
- Opportunity to make payments towards purchase throughout the lease term

FARMER PARTNER CRITERIA

These are general guidelines. Farmers are encouraged to contact us even if they may not meet one of the guidelines, as every project is evaluated on its individual merits.

1. More than two years of sales history, or prior farm management experience and purchasing an established business
2. Over \$100,000 in annual gross revenue or projected gross revenue
3. Anticipated land purchase price between \$300,000 – 2,000,000
4. Utilizing organic practices or in transition to organic, certification not required
5. Properties over 40 acres in size
6. Located in New England, New York or New Jersey

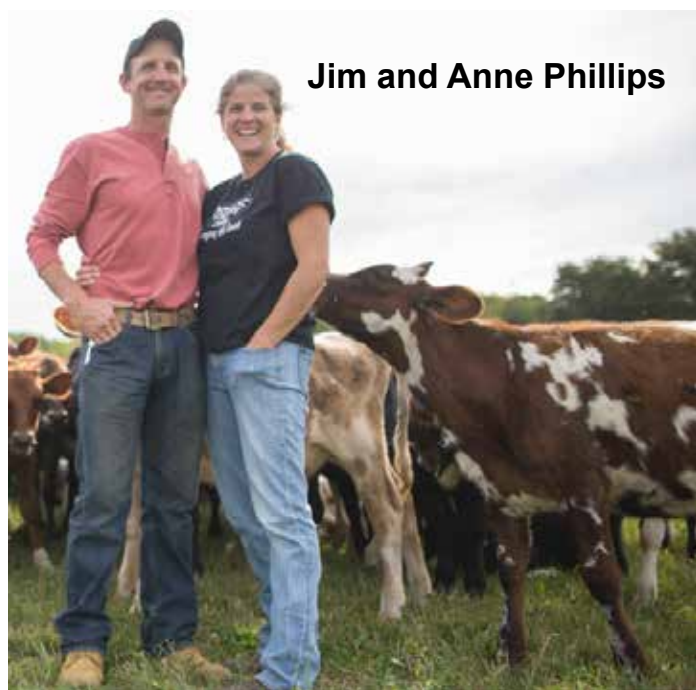
DIRT CAPITAL: WHO WE ARE

Jacob Israelow, Managing Director, founded Dirt Capital Partners in 2013 as a platform to channel private investment in

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

support of farmland access, conservation and long-term land security for sustainable farmers. The company's innovative approach has been featured at the New York Times Food for Tomorrow Conference, the US Sustainable Investment Forum, the Slow Money National Gathering, and various other gatherings of farmers, investors and food system advocates. Jacob has an MBA from Columbia Business School, an MA from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and a BA from Williams College. He lives in Chatham, NY with his wife and children on a former dairy farm.

Benneth Phelps, Director of Farmer Services, joined Dirt Capital Partners in 2016 as the Director of Farmer Services to further develop and refine the company's approach to investing in land in partnership with farmers, and the company's organizational culture and infrastructure. Previously, Benneth was Loan and Business Assistance Manager at The Carrot Project, where she spent five years evaluating loan applications and working with farm and food enterprises to plan for business growth. Prior to this she farmed vegetables and small fruit in the Connecticut River Valley of Western Massachusetts, working on organic farms with 4-80 acres in production. ♦



Jim and Anne Phillips

Case Study: Triple 3 Livestock, Marathon, NY

Project Highlights

- Dirt Capital purchases 303-acre "home farm" with organic, grass-fed dairy farm family – enabling land security and a path to ownership
- Project includes contribution by Dirt Capital to construct a new milking parlor, which will dramatically increase efficiency for the mid-sized dairy operation

Organic dairy farmers Jim and Anne Phillips were doing everything right. Graduates of Cornell University's Agricultural College, they had reached an impressive place in their farming careers – running an organic dairy farm in New York; practicing rotational grazing on nutrient-rich pasture for their 100% grass-fed herd of over 300 cows; producing premium certified organic milk and selling to the market at a good price.

Yet their only path to business growth and security – purchasing land of their own – seemed blocked at every turn. They were entering their fifth year of searching, and they felt no closer to land ownership than when they launched Triple 3 Livestock in 2007. No farm was within financial reach, particularly those with the 300-plus certified organic acres they needed for their operation. They even widened their search to other regions of the country.

"Lenders want 25 to 30 percent down," said Jim. "That's a big

continued on page 14

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic Dairy Policy: What Producers Can Do Now

continued from page 1

enthusiasm for bringing the issues to the attention of their 'boss'.

These senators, representatives, and their legislative aides receive many requests for support for different programs. They do respond to constituent requests, especially those requests that contain a clear statement of a situation, its implications for their constituents, and a way they can help.

Remember that old adage, 'The squeaky wheel gets the grease'? Now is the time for all producers, their families and supporters to directly contact their Congressional Senators and Representatives in person or by phone, fax or email to educate them on what is happening to organically certified dairy farm families. We need to tell them how they can help us: directly, when drafting the Farm Bill, and when they consider their annual appropriations.

In order to help educate all legislators, we have included, below, a letter that summarizes the situation in organic dairy and includes

talking points on what can be done on the Federal level. NODPA, NOFA NY and other organic organizations will be supplying these talking points directly to the Northeast congressional delegation.

Please use the letter at right when contacting your senators and representatives in Congress.

It is vitally important that all producers and their families take the time to educate and inform their Congressional representatives and senators who will be charged with crafting the upcoming Farm Bill and making decisions about how federal dollars will be spent. They need to understand the dire situation that the organic milk market is in, and they need to hear directly from you, the producers. This letter can be found online, at www.nodpa.com or you can copy it from this newsletter. Contact information for your senators and representatives can be found online at <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>, and emails and calls are effective tools for reaching them. If you do not access the internet, contact information can be found at all local government offices and the US Post Office, and mailing letters is always effective. Regardless of the way you make contact, the most important thing is to take action now.

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Please send this letter, or one like it, to your senators and representatives in Congress

Dear _____,

Organic dairy in the Northeast is in crisis. 2017 saw a massive drop in pay price for most producers, and an oversupply of organic milk that we anticipate will take until well into 2018 to adjust. Even though the Northeast is an organic milk deficit area, all producers have been hit by a \$2.00-8.00 per hundredweight (cwt.) drop in pay price (a \$10 drop for some by spring of 2018) and most have had a form of quota applied. Farm families have been hit twice: once with a 25% drop in pay price and then a restriction on how much milk they can produce. Despite the fact that retail sales of organic milk in the Northeast have increased, the national oversupply of milk has hit organic producers hard, many of whom have no safety net.

The reasons for this surplus can be summarized in three distinct areas - inadequate supply management by milk buyers; poor implementation of existing National Organic Program regulations and the failure of USDA National Organic Program to publish regulations to uphold a consistent and fair organic standard.

From 2012 to 2015, milk buyers encouraged organic dairy producers to increase production in order to correct a deficit in supply. Pay price went up and conventional dairy producers were encouraged to transition to organic production. In 2017, pay price has dropped below a break-even level and buyers have been breaking agreements with transitioning producers. Organic milk buyers will not need new producers until at least 2019.

The growth of organic milk retail sales had been increasing by approximately 7% per year from 2010-2015, and manufacturers were constantly competing for new supply during that period. In 2017, while organic whole milk sales were increasing annually at 15%, non-fat organic milk sales, which are 62% of total retail organic sales, decreased by 2%. While this trend is predictable, the increase in the certification of large scale organic dairies is not. The increase in the number of large scale, vertically-integrated organic dairies that have economies of scale has upset the balance of supply relative to demand. The lack of consistent enforcement of organic standards has allowed several processors to respond quickly to a shortage of organic milk and increased their ability to undercut other sellers in the private label/store brand market which is now in second place for retail sales of organic milk.

The solution to the large fluctuations in organic dairy pay price can be found in changes to regulation and to the practice of certification. While these measures will not solve the current oversupply problems, they will restore confidence in the organic dairy market for producers and their lenders while also presenting a positive future for those conventional farmers who are transitioning. If Congress expresses support, these changes can be achieved either by the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) through administrative action and regulation or by Congressional action in the upcoming Farm Bill or Appropriations processes.

We recommend the following actions:

Publication of the Final Rule for the Origin of Livestock

- The immediate prioritization of the publication of the Final Rule for the Origin of Livestock with a provision that ends the one-time transition of conventional dairy livestock and prohibits the continuous transition of breeder stock. This regulation is not controversial and the first Proposed Rule was published in 2008. The organic dairy industry has matured to the point that it can supply all the animals needed to meet the projected growth of the organic dairy market. Those operations transitioning from conventional to organic can now purchase certified organic animals at prices equivalent to conventional livestock rather than transition conventional herds. Those that want to keep their long established genetics would take advantage of the breeder stock allowance. This would put organic dairy on the same level as all other organic commodities, would stop the fraud and confusion existing within the organic dairy industry, would stop continual transition of non-organic dairy heifers, and would ensure that all US-based and international-based certifiers are using the same standards. While this change could be addressed legislatively in the Farm Bill, our strong preference would be for the Administration to promulgate the pending Origin of Livestock rule immediately, based on the broad-based support within the organic community.

Consistency of interpretation and implementation of standards

- The USDA needs to enforce a consistent interpretation and implementation of § 205.237 Livestock Feed and § 205.239 Livestock living conditions. There must be consistency in the inspection process and procedure for assessing compliance with the Access to Pasture Regulations. Because of the unique complexities associated with certifying larger dairy operations, many of the certification inconsistency problems have arisen with these larger operations. USDA's National Organic Program needs to devote greater

Continued on back

Continued from previous page

resources to the certification challenges of larger dairy operations, and require certification of organic dairy operations with over 1,000 cows to be conducted by approved certifiers that use inspectors and certification staff who have proven experience in certifying large organic dairies. The inspector/certification staff must have experience in livestock nutrition that encompasses bona fide knowledge of grazing, and include in the calculation matrix for pasture dry matter intake and pasture consumption as well as a series of validation exercises such as tying the ration back to the milk yield to verify compliance.

Certificate of proficiency for Inspectors and Certification staff

- The USDA National Organic Program needs to work with the organic community to establish a certificate of proficiency for organic certification inspectors and certification staff to fully implement the requirements of 7 C.F.R. § 205.501(a)(6). The economic success of organic dairy depends on strong enforcement by USDA and USDA-accredited organic certification organizations, domestically and internationally. It is the job of the certifiers to ensure that all organic operations meet the strict production, processing and handling standards established by USDA through an open and transparent public process. It is the job of USDA to use its accreditation and oversight functions to ensure that certifiers are enforcing the standards in an effective and uniform manner for all organic operations. Consumers and producers expect uniform enforcement of the standards. This is currently not happening in organic dairy. The NOP has recognized the need to educate inspectors and certification staff with the provisions in NOP 2027 and in their request to the NOSB for recommendations on improved practices. Certifiers are already using independent organizations to provide basic and further education for their inspectors and certification staff. The introduction of some type of USDA-approved certificate of proficiency which can include specific commodity qualifications is essential for the future integrity of the organic label.

Dairy Margin Protection Program

- Extend the Dairy Margin Protection Program to cover organic dairy operations by using the cost of organic dairy feed and inputs to calculate organic milk margin. This program is now under review during this upcoming Farm Bill process as Congress responds to criticism that small to mid-size dairy operations do not benefit from the program. With the current crises in organic dairy and with some organic dairies only receiving \$14 per cwt for their milk, this program could be an important factor as the pay price in organic dairy is starting to reflect the cyclical surplus/shortage of conventional dairy.

Data and Information Needs of Organic Dairy Farmers

- The USDA's Organic Production Market and Data Initiatives (ODI) requires USDA data collection agencies to collect segregated organic data vital to maintaining stable markets, creating risk management tools, tracking production trends, and increasing exports. We support the expansion of these efforts to include reporting of real-time data on organic dairy and the cooperation between USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and Economic Research (ERS) to provide producers with an accurate and independent assessment of the market. In particular, while the Federal Milk Marketing Orders (administered through AMS) provide real time information on supply and utilization of milk, it does not provide any segregated data for supply and utilization of organic milk. As a result, organic dairy producers have to sign individual contracts with milk buyers without the benefit of this real time market information.

Organic dairies are approximately 21% of Vermont dairy farms (172 organic dairies), 22% of Maine dairies (63 organic dairies) and 11% of New York dairy farms (486 organic dairies). Nationally, organic milk represents approximately 6% of the total milk volume and 6% of the total number of dairy operations with over 2,531 organic dairy farms. Organic dairy farms represent a significant part of the rural environment and economy. The challenge for the Northeast and the whole USA in the next few years will be to protect the integrity of USDA organic certification so that when the glut of organic milk finally subsides we will have a level playing field with which we can reestablish a thriving organic dairy market that pays a fair price to producers while guaranteeing the integrity of the product for consumers.

Sincerely,

(Please sign your name here)

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Fertility Needed for Growing Pastures & Hay: Part 2

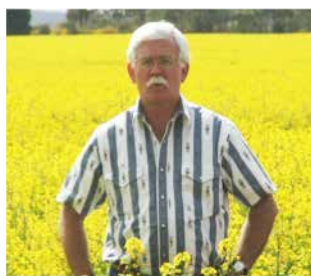
When overdone, any fertilizer can contribute to excesses right in the area where grass, legumes or other crops are trying to develop their roots to begin growing. Taking a six to eight-inch sample will generally show the soil as needing far more of some nutrients than a sample of the top four inches. The excesses caused by this consequent over-fertilization can become even more serious over years of supplementation.

Although the nitrogen, sulfur and boron will leach downward in the course of the growing season, a portion of the other nutrients will be held in that four-inch "sphere of influence" for much longer. This can affect how much fertilizer you may or may not need for the next crop. Spend your budget on things you need for growth, not on what "might" make a difference.

Eventually, due to biological activity - including the plant roots that penetrate deeper down and then die back and decay plus the activity of microbes, earthworms and other life forms - even those nutrients applied on top of the soil will be transported downward and increase the needed levels of fertility to a greater depth in that soil. Although it is a slow process, in work with farmers, ranchers and growers who have done this, we have measured significant changes in the soil to as much as three feet deep (as compared to the control areas that did not receive the nutrients).

This program was conducted where the proper fertilizers and liming materials were all applied on top of the soil based specifically on fertility needs. This was determined by sampling the top four inches and fertilizing accordingly for ten years. The results from multiple sites were increased levels of nutrients and increased rooting by as much as 30-50% to a depth of three to four feet.

Considering these results, why should the correct sampling depth be of prime concern for those growing pasture and hay? At times even the most needed fertilizer, if applied in excess, can make one or more other nutrients completely unavailable. This is the real meaning of balance in soil fertility! Excessive applications of any nutrient, no matter what type, will generally adversely affect the availability of one or more of the other



Neal Kinsey

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needed nutrients (particularly trace elements) that can cause the plants growing there to come up short.

Due to the use of compost and natural materials for fertilizers, deficiencies of micronutrients are too often dismissed as unnecessary for such soils. This can be verified as true on soils in Europe that have received moderate amounts of manures and compost and have been farmed for 500-1000 years.

However, most agricultural soils in North and South America have not had the benefit of hundreds of years of such manure and compost treatments and they show it. When the soil tests as lacking in one or more of the trace elements that are shown to be needed, once properly supplied they show up in a positive way concerning the health and vigor of the livestock.

For more on soil testing and other aspects of the soil fertility program we utilize please see our web site, www.kinseyag.com, or contact us directly for your specific needs. And for those who consider the points made above are of utmost importance, we hope you will consider working with us in order to provide the needs of your soil and the crops to be grown there for benefiting the livestock and people depending on them.

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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It's November: Time for the Annual NODPA Fund Drive

Has your NODPA Fund Drive letter arrived? When it does, we hope you will consider all the ways NODPA works for Organic Dairy farm families and those who support the industry, and send in your annual contribution. If you already support NODPA through the monthly Milk Check Assignment or during NODPA's Field Days, we say thanks!

Do you wonder how the events happening in Washington, whether in Congress or at the USDA, are impacting your organic dairy farm? NODPA is the only independent organic dairy farmer-controlled organization that represents your interests and can keep you informed of what is happening before it is too late to act. Are you wondering how to be informed of what the different processors are paying and what opportunities exist to sell your milk? Do you want to know and understand the current retail price for organic milk? Are you interested in learning new and successful animal health care methods, new production practices, and what other pro-

ducers are doing? The NODPA News print edition, NODPA E-newsletter, and the NODPA website are full of the best and most up-to-date information.

2017 saw a massive drop in pay price for most producers and an oversupply of organic milk that we anticipate will take until well into 2018 to adjust. Even though the Northeast is an organic milk deficit area, all producers have been hit by a \$2-8 drop in pay price (a \$10 drop for some by spring of 2018) and most a form of quota. Now, more than ever, NODPA needs to be able to speak clearly and loudly about the reasons for the glut of organic milk and the solutions that will mitigate the situation in the future. We are speaking out with solutions that increase accountability and close loopholes, like the one time transition allowance that Congress can change as part of the Farm Bill.

We take testimony to the NOSB and directly to the USDA, to show that organic producers need the same protections against exploitation that conventional producers do. An

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organic Margin Protection Program and possibly an organic version of the FMMO will be avenues to explore. The Department of Justice agreed with us that in many areas of the country there is a monopsony on the supply side, with only a couple of buyers of organic milk. We won the case to keep Stonyfield independent and created a great precedent to fight for producers' rights to a fair marketplace.

NODPA provides a wide range of resources and services, such as hosting and moderating the ODairy listserv, publishing the print newsletter (NODPA News) 6-times per year, the monthly e-newsletter, managing the resource-rich website, organizing and hosting the annual NODPA Field Days, and providing advocacy on behalf of all organic dairy farm families through membership in the National Organic Coalition. Although we keep costs to a minimum, there are still bills to pay and your generous support is needed.

"NODPA supporters are dedicated organic dairy farmers and industry professionals; hardworking, committed to the principles of organic farming and focused on operating their businesses in the most efficient and informed way possible," said organic dairy producer and NODPA Board President

Liz Bawden, "We work long hours and have come to expect reliable information delivered in the most convenient manner possible, and NODPA does just that! We know you depend on NODPA for the latest organic dairy news and education and that your support is a vote for the work we do."

"Many organic dairy farmers already support NODPA with their monthly Milk Check Assignment, and that continues to be a great way to support NODPA. And, we also offer Business Memberships," said Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director, "and applications for both are on page 37 of this newsletter, or on our website, www.nodpa.com." "If you didn't receive a letter in the mail or have misplaced it, you can complete and send in the contribution form on page 37. You can also donate online at www.nodpa.com/donate.shtml", said Nora Owens, NODPA Fundraising Campaign Coordinator. And, if you have questions or need assistance, please give her a call at 413-772-0444 or email her at noraowens@comcast.net. Your generous financial support will help NODPA continue to provide the valuable resources and services that you have come to depend on, so please take a moment and send in your pledge today. ♦

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Case Study: Triple 3 Livestock, Marathon, NY

continued from page 7

chunk of change when it comes to buying a farm. You'd have to sell part of your income makers - your cows - to make that down payment. But then you're strapped for cash flow."

Debt load had foiled their plans once before. More than two decades earlier, they owned a conventional farm in Ohio, pushed their cows to produce, and still lost the farm. "We were always behind trying to play catch up," said Anne. "There was no stability."

Still, they wanted to try again in New York. And this time, they were determined to do it right: minimal debt, maximum animal and soil health. Yet as their investment in their New York operation grew with each passing year, so too did their frustration. They were milking in a small barn with a tie stall set-up. Jim spent three to four hours milking the herd - a task he did twice each day. They also had to limit their herd to remain within the confines of the pasture immediately adja-

cent to their milking barn. Any investment in soil productivity, pasture health, and operational efficiencies were temporary on this leased farm.

"You have a lot fewer choices you can make about the facilities and the land base," said Jim.

Then finally, in 2012, they found the perfect farm: 303 acres of mostly pasture in the hamlet of Marathon, NY that could be certified organic right away; a farmhouse that would suit them and their 3 children; older dairy buildings that could be used for storage and winter housing of their animals; and it was only 15 miles from their leased farm. Inching ever closer to their dream, they would have to wait another two tense years before it became reality. Negotiations stalled, and then the sellers took it off the market.

Around that time the couple met Jacob Israelow, managing director of Dirt Capital, at the NOFA-NY conference in 2013. The timing was fortuitous, for both Jacob and the Phillips. Jacob spent the next year learning all about Triple 3 Livestock, evaluating how Jim and Anne manage their farm, run their business, and plan for growth. He was impressed.

Rotational grazing is "optimal farming for the health of the

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animals and the soil,” said Jacob. “Milk from grass-fed dairy cows is increasingly what consumers want. So it’s also a good business.”

Jim and Anne are longtime members of the Organic Valley Co-op, taking advantage of the co-op’s long-term stable pay price, and a recently introduced bonus for 100% grassfed milk. Through Organic Valley, “they are paid a price that is consistently higher and also less volatile than commodity milk,” said Jacob. “It’s a stable business model, so it’s a smart investment.”

After concluding Triple 3 Livestock was a sound investment, Jacob joined the Phillips in their search for land. After evaluating properties in other areas of New York, neighboring Vermont, and even in the Midwest, nothing was quite right, or as good as the Marathon farm.

So in 2014, Jim reached out to the seller of the Marathon farm and made an off-market offer. After many more months of haggling, the price came down to what Jacob and the Phillips considered reasonable. In February 2015, after the seller agreed to leave money in escrow to repair a broken septic and furnace, Dirt Capital closed on the farm in partnership with Jim and Anne.

At closing, Jim and Anne signed a 9-year lease with an option to purchase the farm from Dirt Capital after 5 years, and again at the end of the lease term. A fixed purchase option based on the original purchase price allows them to capture any additional value they create through improvements to the land and buildings. They’re already talking with their contact at Farm Credit East – from whom they borrow for working capital – to

prepare to exercise the purchase option at the first opportunity using Farm Credit financing.

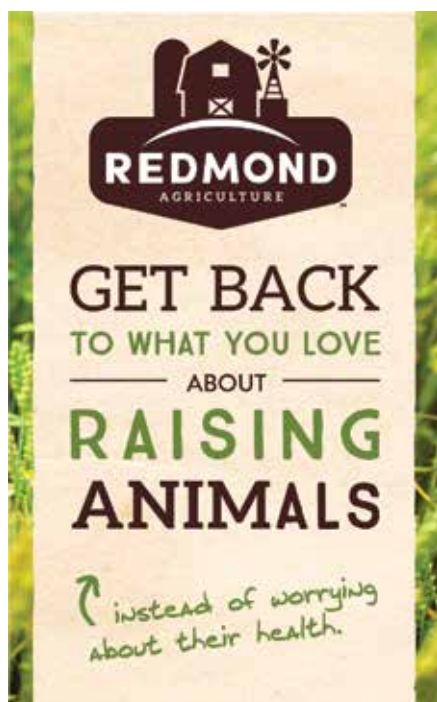
Lease payments in year one are reduced, allowing Jim and Anne to put their savings and cash flow into improving the property. Major items in the works include: updating the house; setting up pasture fencing and laneways for their cows; and most importantly, constructing a new milking parlor. The new parlor, which Dirt Capital helped to fund, will enable Jim to milk 40 cows at a time and up to 200 in under 2 hours. This is a huge efficiency benefit to their mid-sized operation.

Today Jim and Anne own and manage 300 cows that are 100% grass-fed, which includes their milking herd plus heifers, calves and young stock. They also raise sheep, goats and beef cows for meat, which they sell to their friends and neighbors.

“We are investing our money into the farm even though we don’t own it,” said Jim. “In turn it’s making it worth more, putting equity into it. So when we buy it from Dirt Capital it’s already appreciated.”

Added Anne: “We had the business plan, we had the numbers. Dirt Capital is looking for families to stay on the farm, and for organic production. We fit the bill.”

Dirt Capital invests in farmland in partnership with experienced, profitable, sustainable farmers throughout the Northeast United States: enabling land access and security for successful farmers while keeping farmland in productive and environmentally responsible use. ♦



ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic Milk Pay, Retail and Feed prices November 2017

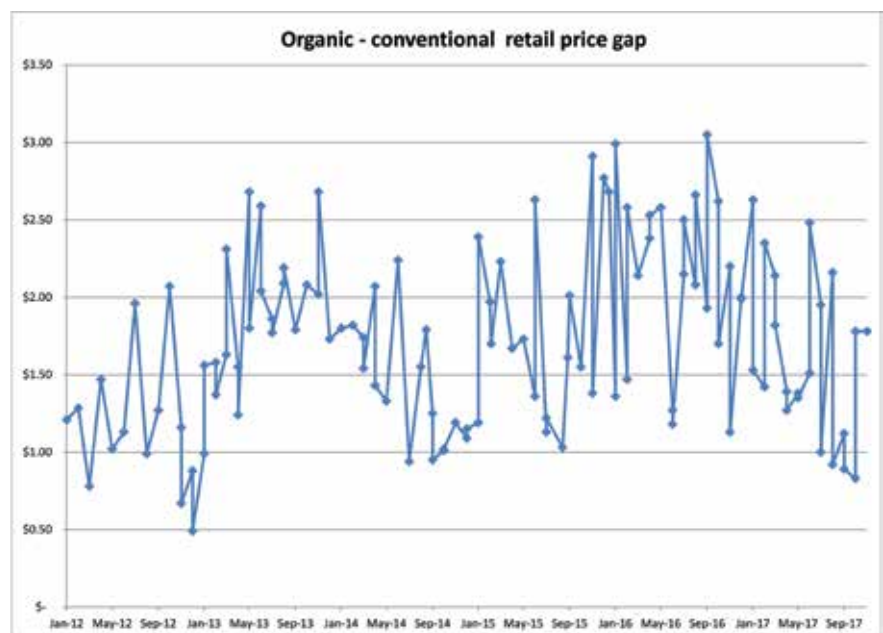
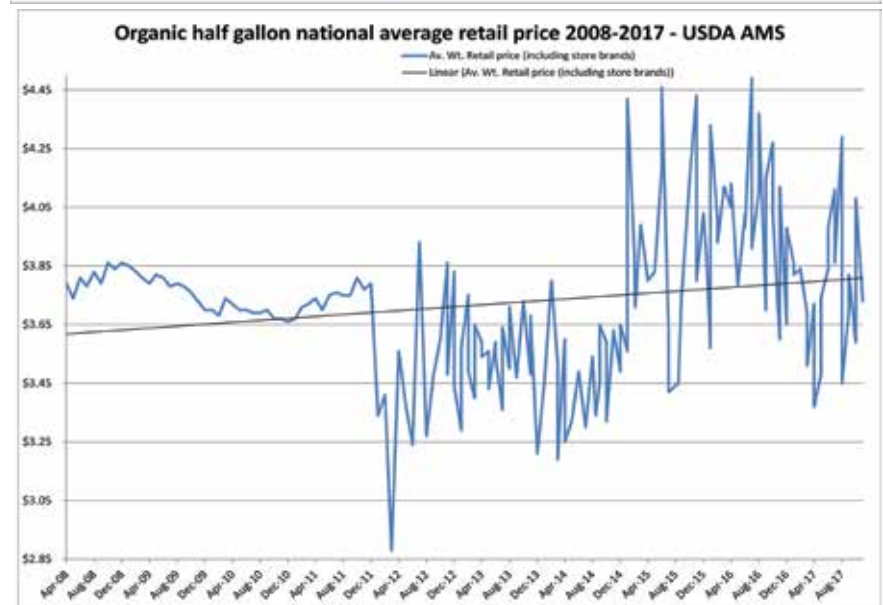
By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Estimated sales of total conventional fluid milk products decreased 8 percent from August 2016 whereas estimated sales of total organic fluid milk products decreased slightly by only 0.2 percent from a year earlier.

USDA AMS reports total organic milk product sales for August 2017 were 218 million pounds, down from the previous August but up 0.8 percent, January-August compared with the same period of 2016. Total organic whole milk product sales for August 2017, 86 million pounds, were up 4.1 percent compared with August last year and up 7.3 percent, January-August compared with the same period of 2016.

In New England, Federal Milk Market Order 1 reports that during September 2017, organic whole milk utilization totaled 14.6 million pounds, up from 14.3 million pounds one year earlier. Organic reduced fat milk utilization for September this year, 18.6 million pounds, was down from 20.3 million pounds one year earlier. During September, there was milk added to the pool from organic plants in Ohio and Michigan.

Results of the 2016 NASS Certified Organic Survey were recently released. Comparing 2016 results with results from 2008 and 2014, the general trend is that organic dairy farms are producing more organic milk, and average dollar sales by farms have increased. Looking at each of the top 15 states, the number of organic dairy farms from 2014 to 2016 has increased except Minnesota, New Mexico and Iowa, each of which has declined. Comparing 2008 and 2016, there were declines in organic dairy farm numbers in 7 of the top 15 states: Wisconsin, Texas, Oregon, Vermont, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Iowa. However, in each of those states the average organic milk sales per farm increased from 2008 to 2016. Several states had no data on the number of cows, volume of milk or dollar sales includ-



ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

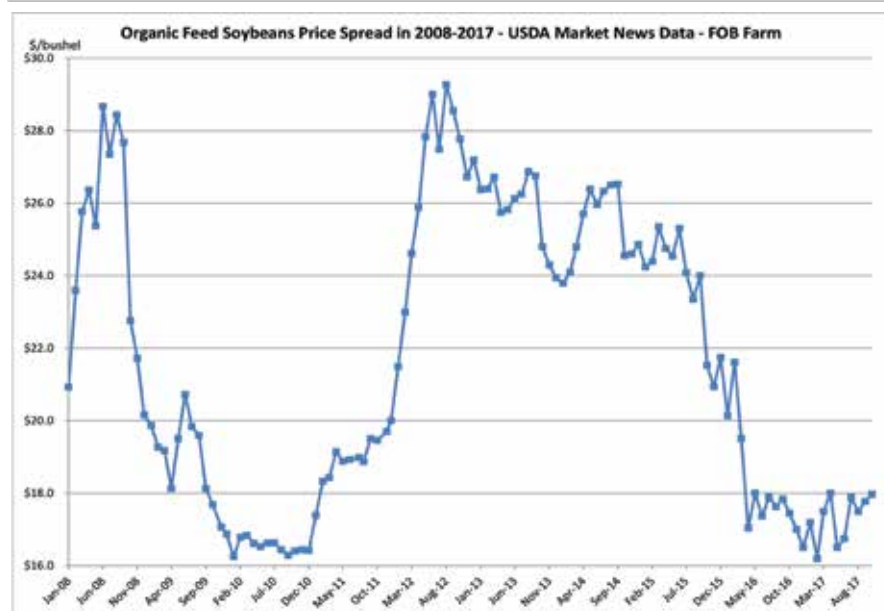
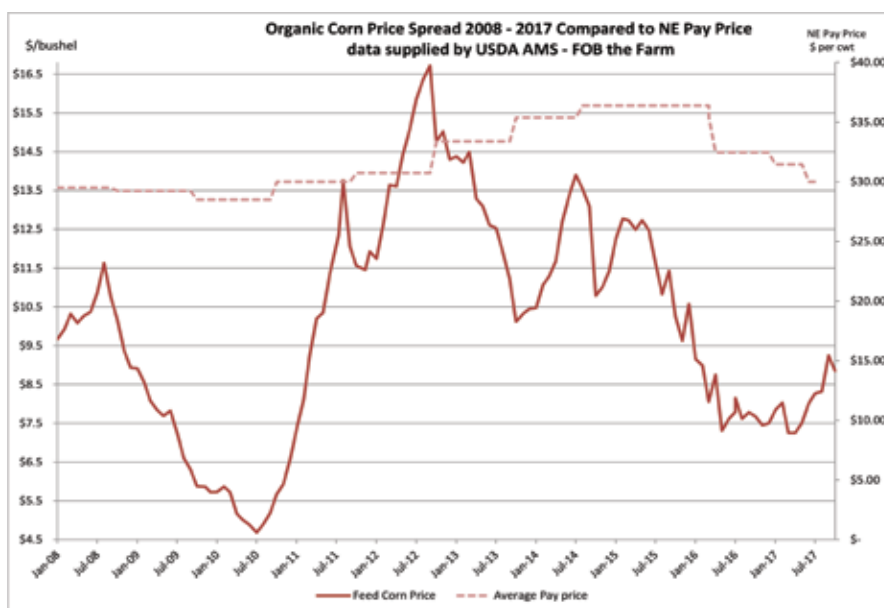
ing New Mexico and Colorado. New York has the largest number of organic dairy farms, 486, closely followed by Wisconsin with 455. Wisconsin had led the survey in farm numbers in 2008 and 2014. California has the highest organic milk sales (volumes and dollars) of any state with 106 farms averaging 473 milking cows per farm at an average pay price of \$34.90 per hundred pounds.

The table below is from the 2016 Organic census. The data is not conclusive as the survey was not completed by all farms and of those that did not all included financial data.

Since 2008, sales of organic milk at retail have increased by 54% and we have no independent data on organic milk not sold as Class I Fluid milk. In projecting to the future, we need more data on which to base the future of demand and pay price. The current AMS supplied data and the Organic Census is a start but there are many gaps in the data that could be easily supplied by other departments of USDA.

Stonyfield announced in September, at Expo East, that they will be launching some string cheese products. They will not be using their New Hampshire, Londonderry plant and there are no reports of where they will be manufacturing their product and what other types of cheese they will be adding to their brand. Stonyfield has been a

continued on page 38



	Number of organic dairy farms	Average number of cows per farm	Average pounds of milk per farm per year	Dollars per cow per year	\$ income per hundred pounds of milk produced
New York	486	54	695,090	\$ 1,270.24	\$ 36.01
Pennsylvania	303	52	655,472	\$ 1,221.53	\$ 35.04
Vermont	173	75	996,878	\$ 1,218.83	\$ 35.82
Maine	63	44	705,659	\$ 1,132.59	No data
New Hampshire	14	40	467,852	\$ 1,160.93	\$ 35.98
Massachusetts	7	58	712,218	\$ 674.85	No data
Connecticut	1	No data			
Maryland	15	103	1,032,546	\$ 1,661.81	\$ 35.44
USA	2,559	109	1,594,228	\$ 1,152.89	\$ 34.34

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Encouraging Knowledge Transfer to Ensure the Future of Our Industry:

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship in New York

By Abigail Teeter

“Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship is dedicated to providing a guided pathway to independent dairy farm ownership, developing grazing careers, and strengthening the economic and environmental well-being of rural communities and the dairy industry.” The mission statement of the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship is based on the desire for growth rather than decline of the dairy industry as a whole, and recognizes grazing dairy farms as an economic and sustainable way to not only maintain the industry but also allow new farmers to enter as current farmers retire. The mission is accomplished through the integrity of the program, linking current graziers with aspiring graziers to work together to transfer skills and knowledge, developing connections with not only the agricultural industry but also the consumers and provides opportunities for the next generation of grazing dairy farmers.

The Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship program began in Wisconsin, and has grown to approve Master Dairy Graziers in nine states, including New York. Young and beginning farmers have a hard time entering the industry, for many reasons, and the numerous barriers faced result in a lack of new farmers entering the industry. Regardless, the average farmer is 59 years old, and they are retiring and leaving the industry – with or without a successor. Dairy farmers in mid-career and looking to expand their business are also faced with a significant challenge – where can they find skilled, dedicated help? The Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship was created by farmers, for farmers, to help address these challenges. It is the first formal Apprenticeship for farming in the nation, and combines worked based training with related instruction in order to prepare skilled workers to enter and be successful in the industry.

Master Dairy Graziers have the option of hiring an Apprentice through a variety of channels. If a farm is interested in bringing a new person to the farm as an Apprentice, they have access to the Apprentice Candidate applications on the DGA website. Through the website, they are able to reach out and ask further questions and/or schedule times to interview. They can also reach out to a current employee they think may be interested in going through the program, or a son or daughter that may be interested in taking over the farm. It is important for everyone to be upfront about future goals, and it is necessary for the goals of the Master to overlap with the goals of the Apprentice.

Once in the program, the Apprenticeship consists of a total of 4,000 hours. 3,712 of those hours are spent as an employee of the farm, being mentored by their Master Dairy Grazier. 288 hours consist of off the job related instruction classes. Most classes are online, however there is also a discussion group/pasture walk requirement as well as

bi-monthly meetings (for a total of six meetings a year) with New York's Education Coordinator, Fay Benson.

Once the Apprenticeship has been completed, the Apprentice graduates and becomes a Journey Dairy Grazier. This status gives the individual the opportunity to apply for management jobs that are advertised with DGA and gives them recognition through Farm Service Agency in order to take out a loan to start a farm.

Recently, Education Coordinators (EC's) from all nine states gathered in Joplin, Missouri for an annual training. The four-day training consisted of a blend of presentations, group based discussions and farm tours, with the opportunity to meet Masters and Apprentices in Missouri. The EC's were able to discuss the troubles and success they have worked through, not only recruiting new Masters, but then orientating them into a teaching position. When a Master is ready for an Apprentice, they may reach out to an EC for tips on hiring the right Apprentice and then getting the apprenticeship started on the right foot. EC's were able to share experiences through that process also. The opportunity the group had to discuss similar challenges with each other, as well as with Master's and Apprentices, left the New York team feeling refreshed and engaged.

In New York, there are currently 16 approved Master's, ranging from Chautauqua County all the way to Rensselaer County, with a hub in Central New York and interest from some Northern farmers. There are five Apprentices paired with Masters, and some Apprentice Candidates are working with Masters throughout the state to gain experience before they begin an Apprenticeship.

Kim Shaklee and Janice Brown own and operate Birds All Farm in Birdsall, New York. They have hired their first Apprentice--Travis Belmore. Travis began with the farm in June 2017 part-time. Since, he has moved to the farm and is working diligently full-time to complete his apprenticeship. Kim and Janice have also hired Lauren La Mar, an Apprentice Candidate. Lauren has not been hired as an Apprentice, however she is looking to pursue an Apprenticeship on a different farm, and is gaining knowledge and on farm work experience while she seeks the right Master.

In March, the New York Program, along with Laura Paine, National Program Director, hosted a discussion group for New York State Masters and Pennsylvania Masters. The room was full and the afternoon discussion ranged from seeking qualified Apprentices to how to be a good Master. Our Small Dairy Support programming this winter can be taken advantage of by Masters, Apprentices and those interested in learning more about the industry. The New York Certified Organic Meetings will be held at Jordan Hall at the New York State Agriculture Experiment Station on the second Tuesday of January, February and March. Keep an eye out for localized discussion groups and other events put on by Cornell Cooperative Extension and the South Central New York Dairy and Field Crops Team. ♦

If you or someone you know may be interested in the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program, more information can be found at www.dga-national.org. Fay Benson, New York Education Coordinator, can be reached at afb3@cornell.edu or (607) 391-2669 and Abbie Teeter, who works with the program, can be reached at ajt248@cornell.edu or (607) 391-2670.



NODPA Field Days Farm Tour: Twin Oaks Dairy, Truxton, NY

2017 NODPA Field Days: Embracing Change in Organic Dairy

Truxton Community Center, 6337 Academy Street, Truxton, NY 13158

By Sonja Heyck-Merlin and Liz Pickard

The Northeast was hit by a serious heat wave leading up to the Field Days with temperatures well into the 90's. Fortunately, by the first day, the heat had receded, and the skies were gray. The two-day event included two farm tours, engaging speakers, and delicious farm-to-table fare. A big thanks to all of the sponsors, trade show participants, and the Arnold Family who helped organize the event.

Day 1:

Tour of Bill and Joanne Casey's Farm, Apulia Station, New York

The tour began in an equipment building where attendees listened to Bill outline the history and practices of the farm.

Bill explained that central New York experienced an unusually wet summer. Organic dairy farmer Brian Bawden commiserated, and said, "You know it has been a wet summer when you get stuck putting up first crop in September." The Casey's well-drained limestone soils allowed them to maintain a relatively normal haying schedule but Bill said his forage quality was lower, necessitating a change in grain feeding from 2 pounds per cow a day to 4 pounds.

There was a discussion about rust which was identified in pastures at the Casey Farm for the first time in 2017. There are two types of rust- crown rust and stem rust, both caused by a fungal pathogen called Puccinia.

Bill also answered numerous questions about his 33.6 kW solar system. Participants were also able to see the Casey's pick-your-own blueberries and raspberries.

From there, we toured the Casey's tie-stall where they milk their herd of 60 Holsteins, and their attached free-stall where the animals are housed. Then we strolled along a paved access lane into their 75-acres of well-managed pasture.

Resources:

<http://onpasture.com/2014/10/20/dont-let-your-pasture-rust-fight-puccinia/>

<http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/pests-diseases-and-weeds/plant-diseases/pastures-diseases/rusts-in-ryegrass>

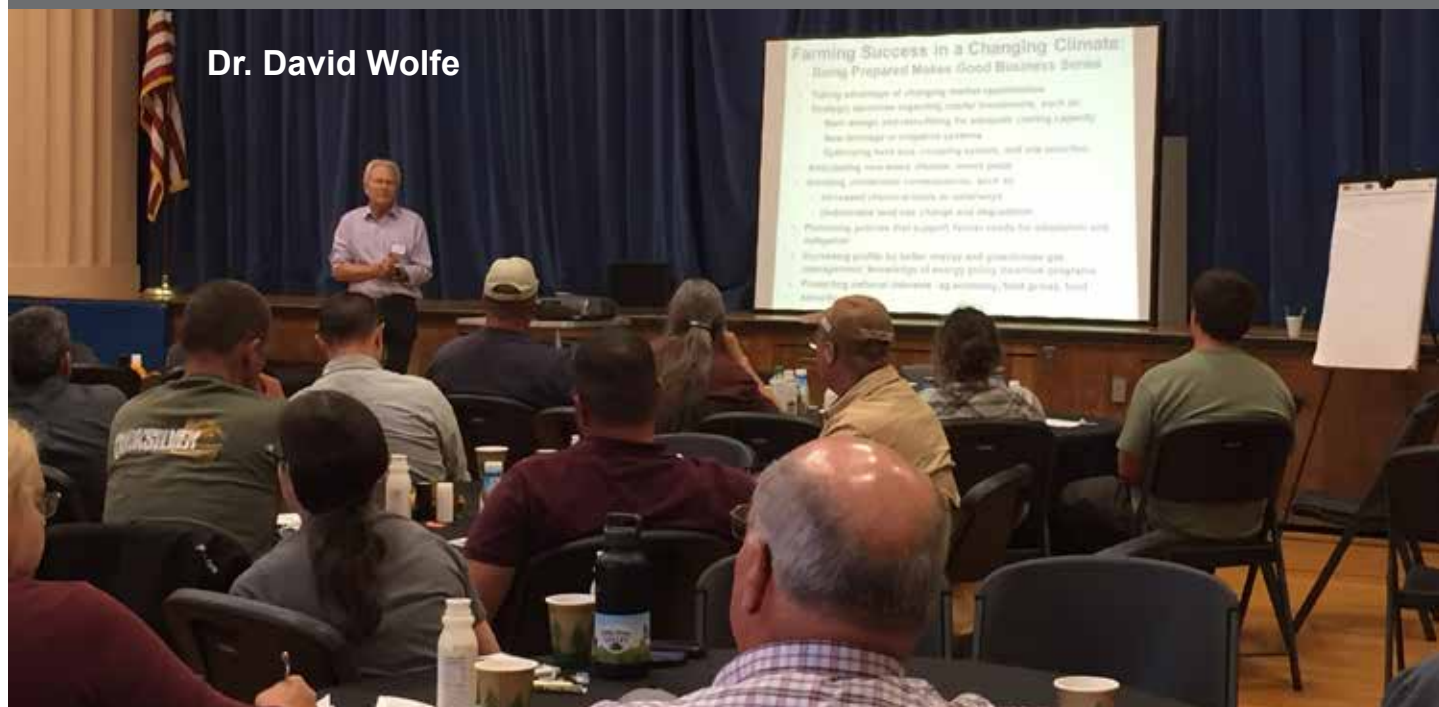
Back to the Truxton Community Center: Jacob Israelow, Founder of Dirt Capital Partners

During Thursday's lunch, Jacob Israelow introduced everyone to his organization, Dirt Capital Partners. The mission of Dirt Capital Partners is to invest in farmland in partnership with farmers throughout the Northeast, promoting sustainable farmers' land access and security. "Dirt Capital is a flexible, alternative source of funding," said Jacob. "We'll be a bridge as owner of a farm until the farmer is able to source traditional financing."

When asked how Dirt Capital is different from traditional lenders, Jacob said, "We are not a bank and not subject to bank metrics. We work with private investors who care about sustainable

continued on page 20

FIELD DAYS 2017



Dr. David Wolfe

Day 1

continued from page 19

agriculture. We're buying and owning the asset and then creating lease/rent agreements for a predetermined amount of time." To learn more about Dirt Capital Partners and read about one NY farm family's experience on page 6.

Resources:

<http://www.dirtpartners.com/>

<http://www.dirtpartners.com/for-farmers/>

Neal Kinsey:**Founder of Kinsey Agricultural Services**

Following lunch, internationally renowned soil expert Neal Kinsey presented on soil health and climate change. Neal Kinsey was trained by Dr. William Albrecht (1888-1974), former Chairman of the Soils Department at the University of Missouri. Albrecht taught that human health is inseparable from soil health and used the method of base-cation saturation ratios to make decisions about improving soil health.

Neal Kinsey carries on Albrecht's work through his business Kinsey Ag. Services, which offer both soil sampling and recommendations based upon those soil tests. Seeing Kinsey speak in person has a way of making a person wish they had been more attentive in Chemistry class. Fortunately, we have his book (*Hands-On Agronomy*) to aid our understanding of soil chemistry.

"Chemistry determines the physical structure of the soil which controls the biological," Kinsey said. "Calcium and magnesium values are the backbone of our soils. It's percentages, not ratios

that are the strength of this system." According to Kinsey, it is chemical principles such as these that will improve our soils and make them more resilient to climate change.

Kinsey made an interesting comment which tied back to the discussion of rust on the Casey Farm. "Rust problems are related to boron and copper deficiencies," he said.

He also explained that sulphur, spread at the rate of 50 pounds per acre, can be used in household yards for the control of ticks and chiggers. In an era where everyone knows at least one person who has been impacted by Lyme disease, this was a very interesting suggestion.

Resources:

<http://blog.nutri-tech.com.au/in-defense-of-albrecht/>

<http://web.missouri.edu/ikerdj/papers/Albrecht%20Lecture%20%20Healthy%20Soils%20Healthy%20People.htm>

www.kinseyag.com/

Hands-on Agronomy - Neal Kinsey

Dr. David Wolfe: Cornell University

Dr. Wolfe presented a talk called Opportunities and Challenges for Dairy and Crop Production in the Age of Climate Change.

"As if farming weren't hard enough, we now have climate change to worry about," opened Dr. Wolfe.

The challenges he presented for the Northeast were:

- Increased frequency of high temperature stress is bad for crop and milk production
- Both too much and too little water for crops and less predictable

FIELD DAYS 2017

Casey Farm Tour



- Increased and changing pest, disease, and weed pressure
- Climate change is much more complicated than just warming

The opportunities he presented for the Northeast were:

- New heat stress challenges less severe than some competing regions
- Relative to other regions, we have water
- Longer frost-free period allows exploring higher yielding crop varieties, double-cropping, etc.
- The Northeast is near to markets- 20% of the US population

Wolfe said, “There is more drought risk, although climate models don’t

predict lower annual rainfall. With higher temperatures, there will be increased crop water needs but with the same amount of rainfall. The trend is also towards warmer, increased heavy rainfall events.”

In closing, Wolfe remarked, “Climate change is an inevitable challenge to society as we move forward. We’re going to have to deal with it one way or another.”

Resources:

<http://soilhealth.cals.cornell.edu>

<http://Adapt-N.com> – Cornell’s weather-based precision management tool

Fay Benson: Cornell Cooperative Extension Small Dairy Specialist

Fay Benson rolled into Truxton with a moveable lab equipped to provide demonstrations related to soil health. Funded by a grant from NRCS, the solar-powered trailer is an incredible teaching tool, providing an engaging and hands-on approach to soil science education.

A rain simulator illustrates how rainfall behaves on various soil types. In trays, several soil types were represented, ranging from a sample collected from a continuously tilled corn field to a sample from a management intensive grazing (MIG) system.

An inch of rain was applied by the simulator. Beneath each sample were two pans- one captured the run-off and one collected the water that percolated through the soil. The heavily tilled soil lost most of its water through runoff and percolation. The MIG sample retained most of the water that was applied to that sample.

continued on page 22



Faye Benson and his soil trailer.

FIELD DAYS 2017

continued from page 21

Resources:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKKsZz07Ohs>

<https://cals.cornell.edu/news/soil-health-trailer-extends-cornells-reach-0>

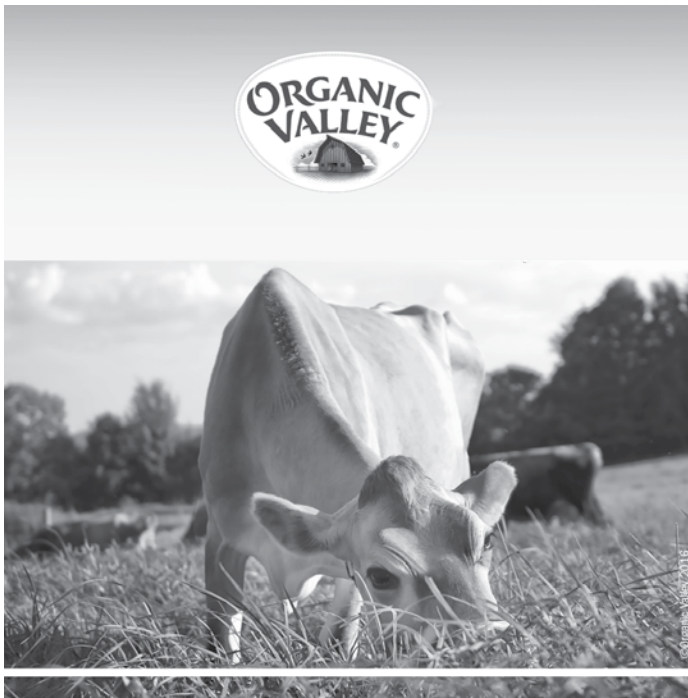
Jack Rodenburg: Founder of Dairy Logix and Certified CowSignals Trainer

Jack closed day one of the Field Days with an interactive discussion in which he encouraged participants “to put ourselves in the hooves of the cow and think how to manage our farms from the perspective of the cow.” Dairy Logix specializes in barn design and management support. Dutch-based CowSignals is a program which educates farmers, veterinarians, and advisors around the world about preventing illness and problems in dairy cattle.

“It is wrong to apply human standards to what we think cow comfort is,” Jack said. “What the cows want is quite different from what we want.” He uses the six freedoms of pasture as the gold standard for cow comfort: feed, water, air, light, rest, and space. “We want these six freedoms to be the mantra when we walk through the barn,” he said.



Jack Rodenburg



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Jack's slide show included pictures of cows in primarily free-stall barns. Working together in small groups, participants identified problem areas relating to cow comfort such as lack of access to feed and water, poorly designed stalls, and poor ventilation.

Jack encouraged participants to be aware and observant before making judgements. "Look and see everything," Jack said, "And then gradually focus in on the smaller; the individual cow. Think what the causes are of what I am seeing, and then finally act. What do I see? What are the reasons? How does it affect my management?"

Resources:

<https://www.cowsignals.com/>, <http://dairylogix.com/>

Day 2:

The second day of Field Days started with an early morning breakfast and the very well-attended Producer-Only meeting, which is summarized in the NODPA Desk column on page 3.

Sarah Flack: Sarah Flack Consulting

Sarah Flack kicked off the morning education program with her

continued on page 24

Sarah Flack and Jackie and Fidel Perkins



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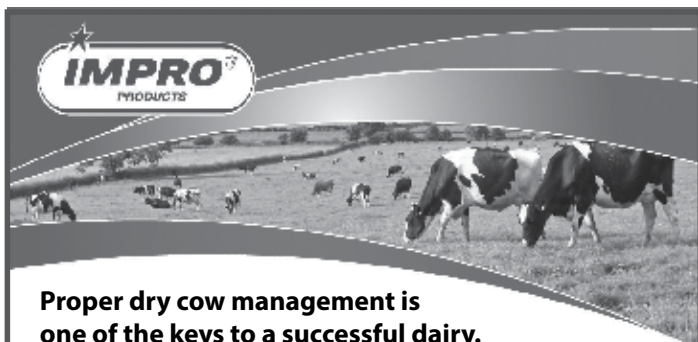


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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

continued from page 23

workshop on how to make well informed and financially sound major farm decisions. Concerning robotic milking on organic dairies, grazing consultant, Sarah Flack, discussed some of her findings in studying the data on farms that had transitioned to robots, or were considering it. She stressed that robotic milking is not necessarily right for all farms, and then discussed some of the important factors to consider in that decision-making process.

One important consideration is assessing how robots might affect a farm's grazing system, since cows need constant access to both robots and pasture. According to Sarah, few robotic farms are able to obtain high percentages of dry matter intake from pasture.

Another point Sarah made it that ideally a cow visits a robotic milker three times a day. The increase in milk production from having more than two milkings can be used to justify the cost of robots. In a pasture-based system which requires a lot of walking, the cow's production may be impacted by expending the extra energy. The cow may also decide that she isn't going to take that third trip back to the barn.

Another challenge is that it's impossible for an all-grass herd to use robotic milkers, since the system relies on the cows being enticed into the barn with grain, which is dispensed from the robot while the cow is being milked. Grist grain can clog the dispensing system, and so must be purchased in a more expensive pelletized form. This can lead to an increase in purchased grain expenses.

Resources:

<http://www.sarahflackconsulting.com/articles/>

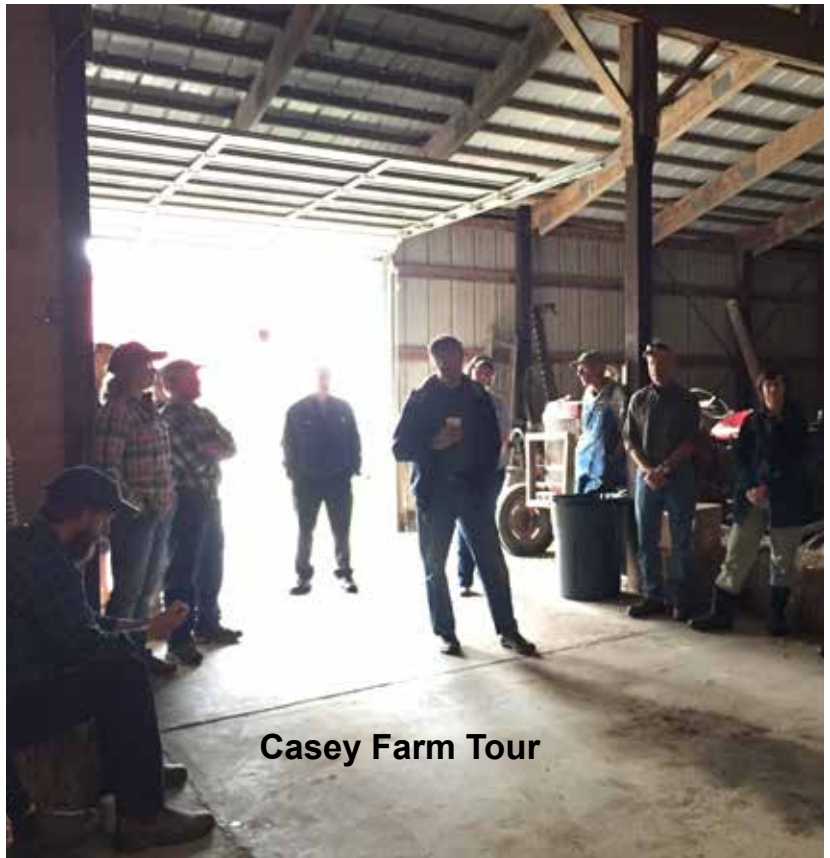
<http://measurelotsize.com/>

Jack Rodenburg: Founder of Dairy Logix and Certified CowSignals Trainer

In his second appearance at the NODPA Field Days, Jack led a discussion on barn design. His specialty is designing robotic barns, but many different styles of freestall barns were also included in his presentation. The four most significant elements of a well-designed barn include:

1. Cow comfort
2. Labor efficiency
3. Cost/value
4. Expandability

The group used their skills and information gleaned from the previous night's workshop to identify problems in barn design. The group also discussed manure management and bedded packs



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versus stalls. Jack showed the group some fascinating photos of barns that were not designed with expandability in mind.

Tour: Twin Oaks Dairy LLC

Before heading out from the Truxton Community Center, owners of Twin Oaks Dairy LLC, Kathie and Kirk Arnold, gave a brief summary of their decision-making process in designing their new barn. For more details, see Kathie's article in September's NODPA Newsletter link to the September NODPA News online.

Kathie also discussed her experiences as a Master Grazer in the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program. Fay Benson was on hand to answer questions about the program. For an update on the DGA program, see page 18.

Following lunch and lots more conversation, the group moved down the road to Twin Oaks Dairy for the final portion of the Field Days. Jack Rodenburg, consultant on the Arnold's new barn, was on hand to answer questions. The group had the chance to ask him questions about the cows' behavior in real time. Kirk and Kathie fielded questions about their Lely robotic feed pusher, barn ventilation, parlor efficiency, and more.

The 17th Annual NODPA Field Days was once again an educational, fun, and enriching time for organic dairy farmers to come together, share ideas, swap stories, address the current challenges of the organic dairy industry and develop concrete action plans for the future. ♦

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[www.journalofdairyscience.org/article/S0022-0302\(14\)00270-7/pdf](http://www.journalofdairyscience.org/article/S0022-0302(14)00270-7/pdf)

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NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Farmer, NODPA President

One farmer had a puzzling situation on his farm. A cow entered the milking parlor, refused to eat, and kept kicking the milker off. She lay down in the holding pen, and seemed to be kicking at her belly. She was not bloated. A vet commented that these were classic signs for colic or passing a kidney stone. If the cow is not passing any manure for an hour or two and if she dips her right hook bone, it could be an intestinal colic or torsion – best to get your vet involved at this point. But if the symptoms abated after 90 minutes or so, she passed a kidney stone. Other farmers recommended a magnet to treat for hardware; it was noted that a cow with hardware disease will show a fever, and one with colic will not. Another farmer offered the possibility that perhaps she had eaten too many green apples, and simply had a belly ache.

A producer was struggling to keep calves healthy in an outbreak of coccidiosis. Several farmers weighed in with their treatment recommendations: black walnut hulls can be powdered or tinctured and top-dressed over the calves' grain; Neematox (from AgriDynamics) can be added to the water; oregano, thyme, and garlic oils were also suggested; Calf Start (from Dr Paul's) is added to the milk as both a treatment and preventative. And several knowledgeable producers mentioned that the most important thing is to "get to the root of the problem to prevent the issue in the first place". One farmer related her experiences of copper-deficient calves having repeated bouts of coccidiosis; using soil tests, they determined that an over-application of calcium tied up copper, iron, potassium, and phosphorous. Once they corrected the soil imbalance, they have not seen any coccidia or other parasites. Another producer pointed to the anemia the afflicted calves often have: "Anemia commonly is considered an iron deficiency, but the biological pathway for blood production requires a number of key nutrients, notable among them in addition to iron are copper and B12. Cobalt is another, being required for B12 synthesis. I've had a little luck treating cases for which vets threw up their hands by tracing down these biological pathways to uncover underlying deficiencies (whether induced by a microbe or the environment)."

What began as a question to the group about why a farm's bull became lame became quite a long discussion on mineral supplementation. To begin, this farmer's bulls became lame usually about three years of age. It seemed as if the front and rear legs muscles just gave out; the bulls would be rested for weeks, or even months, but did not permanently heal. Some producers suggested a selenium deficiency. A vet noted that although selenium would be a good bet for a muscular lameness; but if it was in the hoof itself, then perhaps it was a deficiency of hoof building elements like zinc, biotin, etc. Or a boron deficiency if it was in the joints. Lameness is also often due to stones in the laneways. Then

continued on page 27

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www.nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Message from the NODPA President

continued from page 2

Perhaps it is likely that we will need another label for ourselves and our products.

But on this sunny day, I bring in the butternut squash from the garden, looking for a simple task to leave these larger problems behind for a while. And I laugh at myself because every year I tell my family that the squash did not do very well, and then when the leaves die down, there are so many that I will fill a wheelbarrow. I would like to think that this is a pretty good metaphor for life: things look bad, then the season is over, and it's surprising how things turn out.

That is certainly how this season has been in my corner of northern New York. Record rainfalls in the spring and summer played havoc with getting crops planted and forage harvested. Milk prices were slashed, and quotas (both voluntary and non-voluntary) kept us worried about producing too much, but enough to pay the bills. Dry weather in September allowed farmers to catch up where they could. Heavy rains in early November delayed the corn harvest in some areas. But when I remember the news

over the past season with its hurricanes, floods, and wildfires, I feel thankful for the season we had and the harvest we received, because for so many others, it was much worse.

From all of us at NODPA, we wish you and your families a joyful Holiday season!

Liz Bawden, NODPA President

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Recent ODairy Discussions

continued from page 26

again it could be truly genetic. And, a real possibility is a combination of the above.

Several producers were using a Free Choice Enterprise with kelp and salt system; one of those gives 5cc shots of MultiMin90 at dry-off with good results. Another producer reminded us to use selenium in a yeast form; the sodium selenite (rock form) is only 10% available, where the yeast form is 90%. More questions about minerals led to the following post about their connection to the immune system and SCC: "I just wanted to add that trace minerals (minerals in general) are needed for enzymes since every enzyme has a mineral in its center. Enzymes help biological reactions take place. Minerals are definitely needed for the immune system, which is a continuous cascade of reactions catalyzed by enzymes for the body to maintain or regain homeostasis (healthy equilibrium). It makes sense that correct mineral levels could help have a good SCC. But that's only part of the equation. Depending on the germs that confront the mammary tissue (traveling in via the teat opening), SCC cell count will reflect the battle the immune system is engaged in. Herds that are continuously battling Staph aureus or Strep ag will have higher SCC in their bulk tank in general." On this producer's grassfed dairy, they use Free Choice Enterprises 18-way mineral program with FCE's Cornerpost (a high energy mix with vitamins). Cows receive dry hay and pasture, and are milked once a day. They make sure that cows have good rumen fill, never shorting them on the basic "groceries".

And then the discussion turned to longevity after one producer asked why the average cow, across the country, has a productive lifespan of only 2 lactations. Many producers chimed in with their experiences of milking cows that were well into their teens. What has changed in the industry? Sexed semen and increased reproductive success (think hormonal breeding programs in conventional dairy) coupled with the practice of raising every heifer means there are just too many heifers "in the pipeline". Genomic testing has increased the rate of improvement, putting out superior heifers (based on genomic tests, not daughter testing) faster and faster. Another producer added, "The number one, and too often only, thing selected for in dairy genetics is milk production. What happens when you select for milk production but do not consciously select for longevity is that you implicitly select for cows with suppressed immune function.....High milking but short lived animals." Some producers suggested that this is a serious animal welfare issue on many farms.



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FEATURED FARM

HIDDEN MEADOWS DAIRY, Cincinnatus, New York

continued from page 1

Because strengths and weaknesses are internal, they can be directly managed by the business. Opportunities and threats are external and the business can only anticipate and react to them. The reasons for conducting a SWOT analysis vary, but in its most basic form it is a lens through which to analyze a business. This SWOT analysis provides an opportunity to both learn about Annie and Ryan's farm, and to study their internal and external positioning as they begin to make their transition to farm ownership.

The Farmers:

Annie and Ryan met at the 2015 NODPA Field Days and were recently married! Ryan (25) grew up on an 80-cow dairy, five miles outside of Truxton, New York. His parents went organic in 2007 in what was Ryan's first year of high school. Post-high school, Ryan attended two semesters of college, but decided he'd rather find a way to milk his own cows.

In 2013, Ryan rented an 80-stall stanchion barn from a family friend. "When I got started, I only had a few cows at my parent's farm," Ryan said. "I started out by buying about 40 conventional unbred heifers," which he began to transition to organic production in 2012. "The barn is small and antiquated but it works," Ryan said.

Annie (21) grew up in Silicon Valley; her dad employed at

Google and her mother at the University of Berkeley. She and her mother moved to New York when she was 16, and Annie joked that she had "almost never seen a cow before the move." "My mother met a dairy farmer down the road and encouraged me to visit the farm. I began milking with him one night a week," said Annie, explaining the roots of her farming career.

Through the end of high school, she worked on a 150-cow conventional dairy, and began to seriously consider agriculture as a career. "It seemed unrealistic," she said, "so I applied to nursing school." While in nursing school, she attended the NODPA Field Days and met Ryan. She will graduate from nursing school this spring, but her plan is to farm full-time with Ryan.

The couple recently closed a deal on a 248-acre hilltop farm in Cincinnatus, New York. Unable to obtain a traditional mortgage, they worked with a financing organization called Dirt Capital Partners, which holds title to the land. At either year six, or year nine, depending on when they find conventional financing, Annie and Ryan will buy the operation from Dirt Capital Partners. They currently live in the farm house on the new property and commute 14 miles to their rented facility. "The plan is to move the cows over during their seasonal dry period at the beginning of 2019," they said, and added, "they are looking forward to walking out the door of their home and being at work." They plan to



Hidden Meadows Dairy

continue leasing the land, but not any of the buildings, on the rental property.

Hidden Meadows is a seasonal dairy, freshening in April and May. The herd of 50 milk cows is 25% Jersey, 25% Holstein; the rest are crosses of the two breeds. By mid-October, they drop evening milking and milk once-a-day until dry-off. Their target production goal is 11,000 pounds per lactation. During the grazing season, the herd gets 75-80% of their DMI from pasture, supplemented with cornmeal. Other than the cornmeal, the cows eat baleage on both ends of the grazing season and during their dry period.

Strengths:

Youth and Optimism

Annie said that she and Ryan are fortunate to have time on their side. “We’re able to focus on our work, we have plenty of energy, and no children yet,” said Annie. She went on, “We have a diversity of experiences which is beneficial to our partnership. We are both willing to crunch numbers and look at the books, and we both love reading, listening, and learning about everything.”

Relationship with Dirt Capital Partners:

“We were outgrowing our rented facility and decided to begin looking for a farm,” Ryan said. Their parameters were that the farm be the right size, able to certify, and close to both their rented farm and Ryan’s parent’s farm. They found a farm sooner than they expected, but didn’t have the 20% down payment required to obtain a traditional mortgage.

A local farmer encouraged them to contact Dirt Capital. Dirt Capital invests in farmland in partnership with farmers throughout the Northeast United States, promoting land access and security for sustainable farmers.

They filled out a preliminary application. Dirt Capital responded positively, and set up a farm visit. “They wanted to see our existing operation,” Ryan said. “We also provided them with cash flow reports, a business plan, and three years of records. After that, we got the go-ahead to start negotiating on the price of the farm.”

Dirt Capital purchased the property. Annie and Ryan lease the farm from Dirt Capital at a cost of 5% of the purchase value per year. “We have the option to purchase at either year six or year nine,” Ryan explained about the terms of the arrangement. “There is a set price at each of those times with the value increasing from year six to year nine.” Because of this, they hope to source traditional lending by year six. Taxes and insurance are covered by Annie and Ryan during the lease period.

“Another advantage of this lease is that any improvements made to the property during the lease period are not included in the future purchase price,” the couple said. “Dirt Capital has given us

Cows going to pasture



the opportunity to have secure land tenure to build enough equity in cattle so we can eventually obtain a traditional mortgage.”

Seasonal Dairying

“One of the reasons I like being seasonal,” Ryan said, “is that I don’t feel compelled to own my own haying equipment.” The length of the pasture season in central New York, and a two to three-month dry period means there is less demand to put up large volumes of high quality feed. A contractor put up 800 bales of baleage in 2017.

Another reason he prefers being seasonal is that he likes doing a lot of one thing at a time. “All the calving gets done and over with at the same time. We only have to milk fresh heifers for two months. All the cows get dried off at once,” he said. “I like being able to keep the cows on the same schedule,” Annie added. “It doesn’t take much longer to feed 20 calves than 5. When we pregnancy-check we can do it all at once.” “There are economies of scale on a small-scale dairy such as this by doing everything all at once,” noted Ryan.

Seasonality is also an advantage because they out-winter their milk cows. “I wouldn’t out-winter milking cows,” said Ryan. “This way I don’t have to spend all winter hauling feed in and manure out.”

continued on page 30

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

continued from page 29

Family Support:

During Ryan's first few years, he was able to use his parent's haying equipment to put up his stored feeds. When there are cows that fall out of the seasonal window, he was able to send them to his parent's farm (barring conventional cows that he transitioned in the one-time transition allowance). "Our parents have been very supportive of our choices," expressed both Ryan and Annie. "We trade labor and we can call on each other for reinforcements," said Ryan, describing the benefits of being close to family.

Weaknesses:

Youth

Youth is a strength, but can also be considered a weakness in this circumstance. "We're pretty green," Annie acknowledged, "and are going to make a lot of mistakes." A current problem facing the couple is that they are stretched between their rented farm and the new farm. "Having the two farms has been a strain on both our time and financial resources," Ryan said. "We are always wondering how much we should be putting into the rented farm since we are leaving in a year."

Soil Fertility

Since the previous owner of the new farm planned to raise elk, there is extensive fencing in place on the 50 acres of pasture. The existing infrastructure should allow for a quick start to rotational grazing once the herd is moved.

The bigger issue though, Ryan said, "Is that the land needs lots of work. Hay has been harvested from it for decades without much being added back." Annie and Ryan joked about keeping their wedding small in order to save money to buy lime and chicken manure for the new farm.

As they build soil fertility, they plan to continue feeding their usual seven pounds of cornmeal per cow per day while the cow is lactating (grain is eliminated during the dry period). "Although we are trying to breed more to a 100% grass-fed phenotype, we will be feeding grain for the foreseeable future," said Ryan. "Although we are interested in all-grass, grain is going to be our crutch as we work to improve the land on the new farm."

The Starter Herd

Ryan started his herd by buying in conventional unbred heifers which he began to transition in 2012. "This is something I would change if I did it all over again," Ryan said. "I would have spent more money on higher quality animals."

Calves drinking from mobile milk bar feeder out on pasture.



While many of the transitioned cows are still in the herd, Ryan also purchased 15 bred heifers from Dwight and Roman Stoltzfus. "Those 15 heifers have been one the best cattle purchase I have made," he said.

Despite the challenges that transitioning cows has presented, Annie and Ryan maintain a low somatic cell count; 2016's SCC averaged 71,000. Butterfat averages 4.68 and protein 3.6.

Opportunities:

Organic Milk

"The organic milk market is a great thing and it should continue to be a great thing," said the pair. "Even though it looks kind of bad right now, I imagine it will turn around." In fact, they see some opportunity in the recent price cuts: "If we can make it in this market, we are going to make it. We won't be tempted to take out loans that we don't absolutely need. We should be able to come out of this low-price cycle fairly lean and mean."

The grass-milk market is also an opportunity that interests Annie and Ryan. Ryan said, "The more markets there are, the better. I see the grass-milk market as a good opportunity if there continues to be a watering down of the organic standards. It provides farmers who like grazing a good chance to maintain a market premium."

Land Access

There is a huge turn-over in land tenure going on in central New York according to Ryan. Many farmers are nearing retirement age and there are few young farmers to fill their shoes. "It is depressing," they said, "but it provides us with a good opportunity. There

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

is plenty of grazing land available.” Since it is the couple’s intention to increase their herd size from its current 50 head to 100, it is critical they have rental resources available.

Threats:

Supply Management

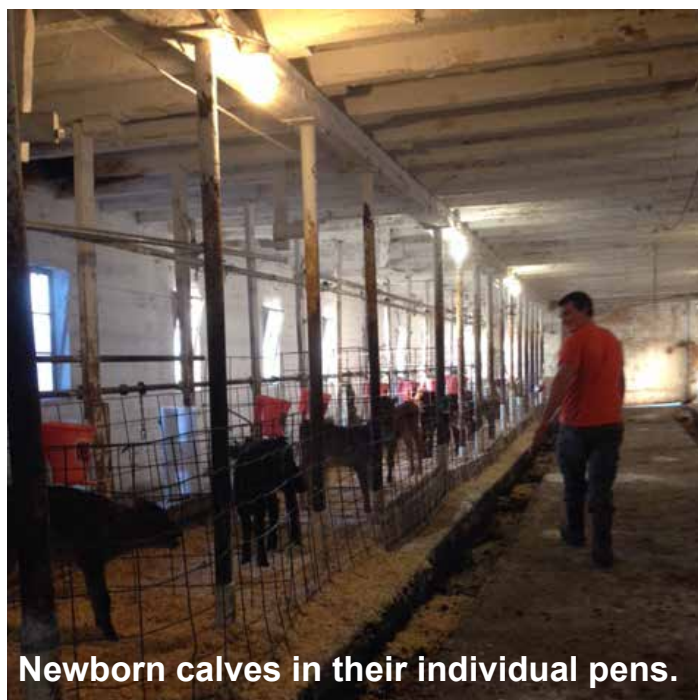
Ryan and Annie ship to Upstate Niagara and said they are very happy with the cooperative. They are currently receiving \$38.30/cwt. Ryan, however, said that if Upstate were to “apply some sort of supply control or quota that it would severely impact the farm.” Because they are depending on growth to cash-flow both a mortgage and farm improvements, Ryan said, “I would much rather see lower prices than a quota.”

Organic Standards

The couple also expressed concern about over-supply and price-depression due to farms that may not be following the organic standards.

In Conclusion

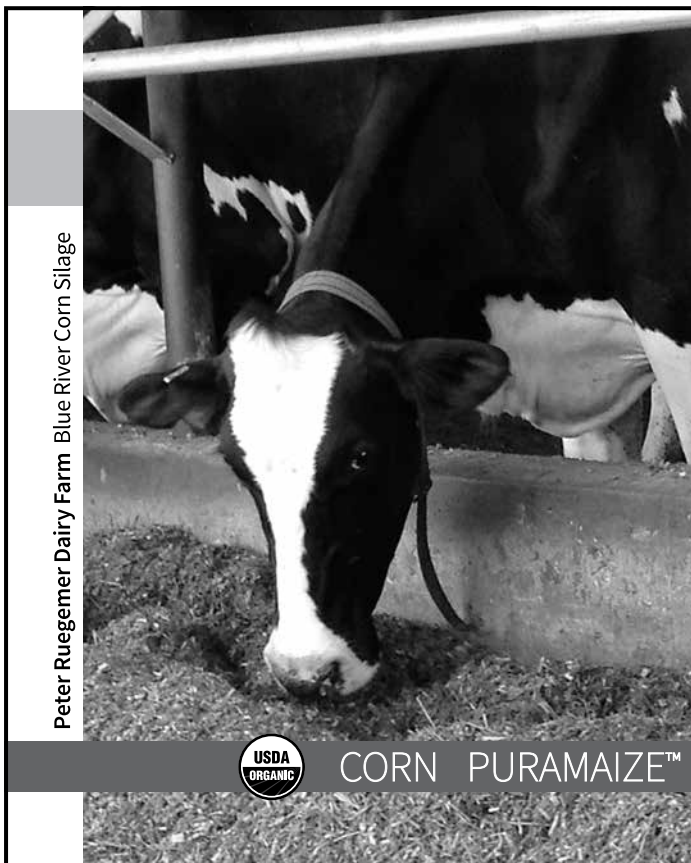
It seems fair to say that Annie and Ryan are exceptional. They are young and dedicated, and their choices in life are reflections of their passion and optimism for the future of the small family-scale farm. From this SWOT analysis, we see that there is much



Newborn calves in their individual pens.

that is in their control. They can grow their herd, expand their land base, build a parlor, improve their fertility, and it seems that from the internal perspective, they have the community, resources, and know-how to be successful.

Of greater concern to their future are the externalities that were discussed. Ryan and Annie are gambling on the integrity of the organic dairy standards to support the pay price required for their success. ♦



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear NODPA News Editor:

It is important that clarification be made about the information published recently, both on the Odairy listserv and in the September NODPA News, that stated aflatoxins, particularly gliotoxin, interfere with the Charm tests. This information is not accurate.

(Charm Sciences manufactures rapid diagnostic tests across many industries for antibiotics in milk, specifically tests for sulfonamide drugs.)

When the situation referenced in that article was unfolding, I contacted the technical services folks at Charm Sciences to discuss more fully the potential for cross-reaction to their sulfonamide assays, the Charm ROSA SULF test primarily used in milk processing plants and the Charm II SULFA test primarily used for confirmation testing in certified laboratories.

When the original email on the Odairy listserv was published, I questioned the Charm technical experts specifically about the potential cross-reactivity of mycotoxins in the sulfonamide assays and was told that they had no evidence of such cross-reactivity in these assays. Based on the claim that gliotoxin was the culprit that created the positive sulfonamide tests, the folks at Charm proactively ordered known gliotoxin and checked this specific

mycotoxin component with their assays to determine if there was cross-reactivity. There was not.

Bob Salter, the Vice President of Regulatory Affairs at Charm Sciences, responded to my request for comment to the NODPA article. In his words, "There is no data that indicate Charm Sulfa Tests are interfered by mycotoxins. I am not sure where the author got this information, but it is not in literature to my knowledge, and it is not information that came from Charm Sciences Inc."

He continued, "Following the incident earlier this summer, when our technical support staff were asked specifically about the potential of a specific mycotoxin, gliotoxin, containing a sulfur molecule, causing a sulfonamide test cross reactivity, we answered that we had no evidence to believe there would be any cross reactivity from sulfur compounds or from mycotoxins; but as a follow up to the question, we purchased gliotoxin from Sigma chemical and did a cross reactivity challenge. This challenge confirmed that there is no 1000 ppb gliotoxin cross reactivity to the Charm Sulfa test."

Mr. Salter offered that the only known interference to the Charm II Sulfa test is para-amino-benzoic acid (PABA), a co-vitamin made by bacteria in yeast. PABA is not a normal constituent in milk and it does not pass through cattle rumen. When bacterial

continued on page 35



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“... makes us better managers.”

— Jeff Greenberg



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“We have great success using it on questionable cows and those with elevated SCC or abnormal CMT, before any clinical signs of mastitis. We spray affected quarters after each milking for a few days until the cow has resolved her problem.



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

Northeast Organic Milk Buyers

CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley

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

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

- In New England, contact John Cleary at (612) 803-9087 or john.cleary@organicvalley.coop or Steve Getz at 207-465-6927 or steve.getz@organicvalley.coop.
- In New York, Contact East Regional Pool Manager Anne Phillips at (607)-222-3265 or Anne.phillips@organicvalley.coop
- In New York: West Regional Pool Manager Eric Beller at mobile: (315)-359-7382 or eric.beiler@organicvalley.coop
- In the Southeast, contact Gerry Cohn at (919) 605-5619 or gerry.cohn@organicvalley.coop.
- Central to Western PA, contact Georgia Klischer, Pennsylvania MID Regional Pool Manager at mobile: (570)-336-2354 or Georgia.klischer@organicvalley.coop
- In Southeast Pennsylvania and Maryland, contact Terry Ingram at (717) 413-3765 or terry.ingram@organicvalley.coop.
- Peter Miller, East Regional Division Pool Manager, (612) 801-3506 or peter.miller@organicvalley.coop

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

Upstate Niagara

Upstate Niagara is a member owned dairy cooperative dedicated to high quality dairy products. We are currently seeking

new organic member milk. Upstate Niagara offers a highly competitive organic pay program with additional premiums for milk quality and volume. For producers interested in transitioning to organic production, we also have programs to assist you in the transition process.

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

Natural by Nature

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

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

Dairy Marketing Services Organic

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

Stonyfield Farm, Inc.

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

Please contact our Farmer Relationship Manager, Kyle Thygesen for further details at kthygesen@stonyfield.com, 10 Burton Drive, Londonderry, NH 03053

802.369.0267 - Cell

603.437.4040 - Main Office

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

Classified Ads

ANIMALS

For sale: 2 year old Simmental-Holstein cross bull raised from certified organic herd. Pasture raised, friendly. \$1100.00. Contact Phillip Cutting, email: neros75@comcast.net, phone: 802-254-6982
Location: Guilford, Vermont

For sale: Organic dairy cows: Holsteins, Jerseys, and crosses; need to reduce herd size.

Your pick out of 120 head. Asking \$2000. Doug Murphy, email: dsm1@sbcglobal.net, phone: 216-401-1052

Location: Sherman, NY

Wanted to Buy: A farmer in Northern VT would like to buy about 30 certified organic Jersey's. They need to be lactating or close to calving (they don't need more young stock). Send Sarah Flack an email sarahflackconsulting@gmail.com or give her cell phone a call 802-309-3714 if you have some to sell.

EMPLOYMENT

100 cow organic grazing dairy in western NY has a good flexible opportunity for employment or to share a milker. Doug Murphy, email: dsm1@sbcglobal.net, phone: 216-401-1052

Location: Sherman, NY

FORAGES, BEDDING & GRAINS

Certified organic dairy-quality 4x4 round bales. All inline wrapped. 1st, 2nd and 3rd cutting available. Clover, timothy, mixed grasses. Dairy One tested results available upon request. Delivery can also be arranged. Paul Hargett, email: barnbabeboutique@gmail.com

Phone: 315 246 2998

Location: Locke, NY

3x4 Feed-Quality Wheat Straw. Delivered by truckload. Volume discounts available. Red River Forage. Caleb Siemens. Call/text 1-204-712-6509 or email: siemenscaleb@gmail.com

Location: Springfield, MA

Organic Hay for sale: first and second cutting square bales, \$4.50, you pick up. Large round bales also available, 45.00. Phillip Cutting, email: neros75@comcast.net, phone: 802-254-6982

Location: Guilford, Vermont

900 4x4 organic bales of mixed grass hay. Stored inside or inline wrapped. \$45-\$60 per bale. John Neiley, Bradford County, PA, , email: tneiley@ptd.net, phone: 570-746-1191 Location: Wyalusing, PA

Wanted: Transitional or certified organic alfalfa hay in big rectangle size bales. Must be straight alfalfa or predominantly alfalfa, please. Hue Karreman, 717-405-8137

REAL ESTATE

Dairy facility for lease on organic grass milk route 66 stall freestall/double-5 parlor. 55 Organic Grassfed cows for sale. Please call Irene Hurst, 315-237-8868 for more info or email: Hurst.im@gmail.com

Location: Locke, New York

GRAZING DAIRY FARM FOR SALE

A currently operating dairy farm for sale in Truxton, NY. 340 acres, 230 tillable-mostly in fenced pasture. Very nice valley ground; pastures likely eligible for immediate organic certification.

Double-7 parlor in 138 stall dairy barn, additional 30 stalls for dry cows, and bedded pack for pre-fresh cows. Heifer barn with 102 stalls. Young heifer barn with bedded pack for 70-80 young stock. 40 Calf hutches, 4-bay commodity shed, and bunk silos. Barns built within last 10 years. Large farmhouse on property as well.

We're listing this for a neighbor so please contact us, Ryan and Annie Murray, by email, hiddenmeadowsdairy@gmail.com and we can put you in contact with the owner.

Location: Truxton, NY

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

continued from page 32

levels in milk are in excess of 3 million cfu/mL a positive Charm II Sulfa test might result. But PABA does not interfere with the Charm ROSA SULF test. His information about the Odairy event was that the milk samples in question tested positive by both Charm sulfonamide tests.

The leaps and bounds in testing and assay technologies, both cow-side and in the laboratory, creates a two edged sword – with lots of opportunity and positive potential coupled with plenty of room for misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

Ferretting out the correlations and causations in these situations can be very interesting and typically includes thinking outside the box – but also requires that we know the characteristics and limitations of the technologies that we are employing.

In my conversations with Mr. Salter he recounted several situations in which they were involved in trouble-shooting some positive milk tests in very unusual circumstances. Those fascinating case histories will be part of some further writing about cow side testing, interpretation of some of these tests and troubleshooting (perhaps unexpected) results of such testing.

Sincerely,

Susan Beal, DVM

Calendar

November 19 & 20, 2017

Securing Tomorrow Today—Organic Leads the Way

17th Annual Iowa Organic Conference

Iowa State University, Iowa City, IA

The 17th Annual Iowa Organic Conference will be held on Nov. 19-20 on the University of Iowa campus in Iowa City, as a joint effort between Iowa State University and the UI Office of Sustainability. Producers and experts from across the country will share tips for transitioning into organic production and methods to enhance your organic operations. Rodale Institute Executive Director Jeff Moyer will be the Keynote Speaker. Learn more and register today! <https://sustainability.uiowa.edu/news/iowa-organic-conference-nov-19-20-highlights-robust-organic-growth/>

Dec 4, 2017, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Farmland Access Conference

Augusta Civic Center, Augusta, ME

Join co-hosts Land For Good & Maine Farmland Trust, fellow farmers and colleagues from around New England for a day of discussion and practical information on the challenges of farmland access, transfer and succession, and the ways we can address those challenges together. For more information about registration please contact Erica Buswell at ebuswell@maine-farmlandtrust.org or visit <https://www.maine-farmlandtrust.org/event/3rd-annual-farmland-access-conference/>

The second National Conference on Cover Crops and Soil Health will be held at the Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel at Keystone Crossing in Indianapolis, Indiana. This meeting will be a great opportunity to learn recent developments in how cover crops are being used by innovative farmers across the country and gain important insights on improving soil health from producers, conservation leaders, and scientists. For more information, visit www.swcs.org or contact Kim Johnson-Smith, the conference organizer with the Soil and Water Conservation Society, (515) 289-2331 x112 or kim.johnson-smith@swcs.org and view the program at: http://www.swcs.org/en/conferences/2017_national_conference_on_cover_crops/

Dec 13, 2017, 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Are You Managing Your Risks as a Farm Employer?

The Compliance & Safety Workshop

Whallonsberg Grange, 1610 NY-22, Essex, NY

This is the workshop that covers the nuts and bolts of risk management as an employer. This workshop will give you resources to

help you comply with labor laws and regulations as well as mandated and recommended worker safety training. Representatives from the NYS DOL Ag Labor Program and NYCAMH will be present. Participants will leave with an assessment of their farm's exposure to risk from having employees, and strategies for reducing that risk. Registration deadline is 11/26/17. Contact Abby at (518) 746-2553 for assistance with registration or aef225@cornell.edu. Or register at https://enych.cce.cornell.edu/event_preregistration.php?event=816

January 13, 2018

Cover. Diversify. Regenerate, the 31st Annual NOFA/Mass Winter Conference

Worcester State University, Worcester, MA

Join our keynote, Regenerative Pioneer Gabe Brown, and over 60 farming and gardening experts at this year's 31st Annual NOFA/Mass Winter Conference. This year's theme is Cover, Diversity, Regenerate. We will explore how soils can be improved and degraded soils can be restored by promoting the biological function of the soil ecosystem with living plant cover, mulches, and smart farm systems. <https://www.nofamass.org/events/wc>

January 19-21, 2018

Healthy People, Healthy Planet, NOFA-NY

36th Annual Winter Conference

Saratoga Hilton & City Center, Saratoga Springs, NY

This year's theme—Healthy People, Healthy Planet—recognizes the intersection of health and agriculture. We will celebrate the production of nutritious food in an organic system that maintains and encourages the well-being of the earth and all inhabitants. With 12 workshop tracks, there really is something for everyone, especially with this year's addition of the Wellness Fair. This one-day event will provide health screenings, massages, acupuncture, reiki and more! We are thrilled to offer our members and conference participants information to live a healthy life. To receive a \$10 discount, register by December 15, 2017. Pre-registration closes January 12, 2018. For more information, visit <https://nofa-ny-winterconference.squarespace.com/>

Thursday and Friday, January 25 & 26, 2018

2018 Northeast Pasture Consortium

The Century House, 997 New London Road, Latham, NY (Albany County)

The 2018 annual conference will be held in Latham, NY at the Century House Hotel and Conference Center on January 25 and 26 prior to the Winter Green-Up Grass-Fed Beef Conference being held on January 27 at the same location (see listing,

continued on page 40

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: _____

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

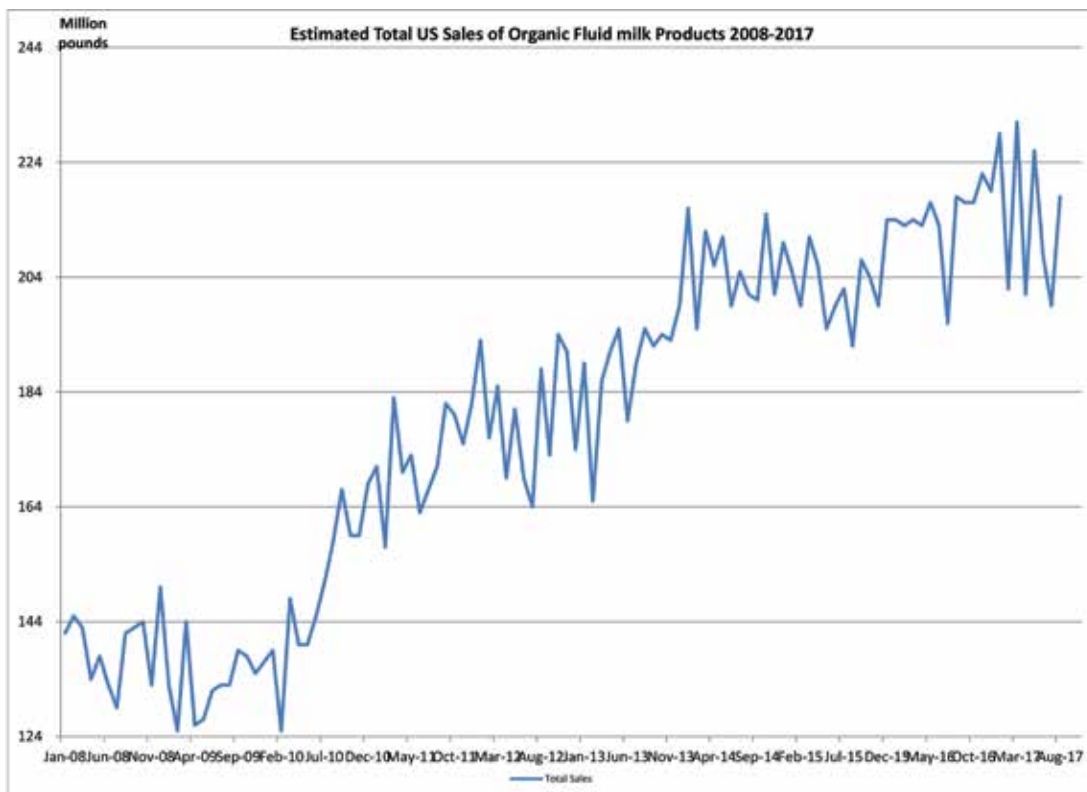
Pay & Feed Price

continued from page 17

major utilizer of New England organic milk and providing a third buyer for the region to mitigate the power of the two national brands to control pricing. The New England and New York Agriculture departments need to encourage the company to honor its mission and continue its investment in New England.

With organic milk being sold into the conventional manufacturing market, especially in the West, processing plants are reaching capacity. CROPP opened its new butter plant in McMinnville, Oregon on Aug. 12th after buying the old Farmers Cooperative Creamery last year. The plant is the co-op's first brick-and-mortar facility outside of Wisconsin, and after Wisconsin, Oregon produces the next largest volume of milk in the CROPP supply chain. The plant will produce butter and skim milk powder, but in the future could expand to making buttermilk powder and other products. The hope is that this extra processing capacity will tighten the market and allow CROPP to balance their supply more easily.

Organic feed grade corn demand is good although the price reported by USDA AMS is only slightly higher. Delays in harvest, high moisture tests for new crop corn and the restriction on imported supplies as a result of NOP's stricter controls had increased demand for organic corn until the new crop arrived. Organic feed grade soybean demand and activity is very light, trading 20 cents higher f.o.b. Organic soybean meal and oil trading is too limited to trend, but slightly firmer undertones are noted. ♦



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NODPA News is Published Bi-Monthly
January, March, May, July, September & November

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.

2018 Ad rates and sizes listed below.

Deadline for advertising in the
January, 2018 issue is December 15, 2017.

Full Page Ad (7.5" W x 10.25" H) = \$660

1/2 Page Ad (7.5" W x 4.5" H) = \$340

1/4 Page Ad (3.5" W x 4.75" H) = \$190

1/8 Page Ad/Business Card:

(3.5" W x 2.25" H) = \$100

Commit to a full year of print advertising and get 10 percent discount: Full: \$600, Half: \$306, Quarter: \$171, Eighth: \$90.

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

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the MODPA Treasurer

As I write this there is a definite feel of winter in the air. I have already been blessed with the white stuff twice. It hasn't lasted long but it still is a solid reminder of what time of the year it is. With the end of the year approaching it is a time for many of us to reflect on the ride we have had and in some cases may still be having. The crops in my area have been all over the place this year. Given the weather issues we have had, the crops certainly could have been much worse. It has been a wet year. Too wet in some ways, but I only need look 500 miles west to appreciate the moisture. At least things grow when you have a wet year. I have been through several droughts and having no feed is worse than rained on or late harvested feed. I do believe that overall production will suffer from the moisture we have had, but at least there is something to feed the girls. Having to buy feed, when you are also trying to grow it, gets to be expensive. But you already know that.

This has also been the year of another milk surplus. There is no definite end in sight at this time. More producers will be hurt by this again. The processors are to blame for some of this as they have been doing all they can to sign up new producers. This seems to be a double edged sword. It is wonderful to see more producers producing milk the right way. For those who have transitioned this year I am grateful. I firmly believe that organic production is the way of the future. We only have one earth and we had better do our best to take care of it. My goal has been to leave a better place for my grandkids and their kids. On the flipside, the surplus has hurt us on the pricing end. This is a delicate situation. We must do better as producers to not keep putting ourselves in this situation. Most processors have put some sort of supply management in place. Given the situation, in many ways they had no choice but to do this. This would be much better for us as producers if we would take control of our own destiny. We have let a small percentage of milk processors dictate the price that we are paid. We need to have clear input from our processors on what they need for production for a price that provides an equitable price for us. If it means that we milk a couple less cows to make sure we can have a profit than that is what we must do. After all, what is wrong with a little less work? Just think what you can do with that extra ten minutes every day. Get involved with MODPA or the ODPa of your area and do your part. It is your future that you will be working on. Let's all work hard to make it a better future.

As this is the end of the year I also wish all of the best to you in the coming year and hope that we all may find the time to enjoy the Holiday Season. As the song goes "It's The Most Wonderful Time of The Year." May your blessings be many through the season and into the coming year.

Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer
3253 150th Avenue, Glenwood City, WI 54013
715-781-4856

Become a Member of MODPA!

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Certified Organic Dairy? Yes No # of cows: _____

Transitioning: _____

I wish to support MODPA (check whatever applies):

___ By becoming a state rep or director.

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

___ By providing a donation to support the work of

MODPA. \$_____ enclosed.

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

About MODPA

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

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

MODPA Board

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

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

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Calendar

continued from page 36

below). We will have a session on flexible riparian area pasture management that our Pasture Systems & Watershed Management Research Unit of USDA-ARS in University Park, PA has been working on the past 3 or 4 years at our request, 2 sessions on soil health, producer showcase session, a poster paper session of interest to pasture farmers and support people, a session on ruminant fatty acid research that challenges past research that has dampened demand for whole milk and meat products, and sessions to prioritize research, education, and technical assistance

needs. For more information, visit their website at <http://grazing-guide.net/news/NEPC2018.html>

Saturday, January 27, 2018

**Tenth Annual Winter Green-Up 2018 Winter
Green-Up Conference**

**The Century House, 997 New London Road, Latham NY
(Albany County)**

This year, by popular request, Winter Green-Up continues as a one-day event. We've made sure that there are great speakers, vendors, and the traditional Winter Green-Up lunch – at a great price, \$75.00 per person. Register online at https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/WGU2018_201. Questions about the conference may be directed to Hank Bignell at hdb48@cornell.edu or to Tove Ford, 518-765-3518 or cce-caahp@cornell.edu