

# NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Joe & Toni Borgerding in the nursery.

## FEATURED FARM: Borg-way FARM, Belgrade, Minnesota

By Sonja Heyck-Merlin

**I** started washing eggs when I was six and driving tractors at eight," said Joe Borgerding, a 61-year old Minnesotan organic farmer. He prepped cows for milking until he was old enough to reach the pipeline. By age 19, his father was ready to hand him the reins

to the 360-acre farm located near Belgrade, a small town in the central part of the state. As the 10th child of 12 with 8 older sisters, Joe embraced the challenge.

"My dad had an 8th grade education, but was one of the smartest people I know. Growing up the during the Great Depression taught

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## Organic Certification from the Inspector's Perspective: An Interview with Arden Landis

By Sonja Heyck-Merlin

**H**ow and why did you decide to be an inspector? What training do you have?

I decided to become an inspector because I was an organic farmer both in crops and

dairy for 15 years. After I left farming, I completed two training sessions, one for crops and one for livestock, with The International Organic Inspectors Association. Following that, I completed two apprentice-

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Message from the NODPA President

It seems to me that as organic farmers, we have always been “telling our story”. We explain our production methods, our relationships with our livestock, how we pasture cows in the grazing season, how we keep the young heifers healthy. Most of us will talk with anyone who asks. And lots of people DO ask us about what we do, and why we choose to do it --- our friends and neighbors, the County extension agents, the local schools, the newspaper reporters. But it still doesn't seem like it is enough. Fewer people drink milk these days, and there are lots of choices in the refrigerated cases at the supermarket. Consumers are bombarded by advertising, and it is sometimes deliberately designed to confuse them with meaningless claims (like “natural” meats or “gluten-free” jello).

During the Annual NODPA Field Days last September, some producers felt that we needed a more direct approach to tell our

story to consumers using social media. So it was exciting to witness the creation of the NODPA Community Connection Committee, made up of NODPA members Liz Pickard, Annie Murray, and Sonja Heyck-Merlin. They have launched NODPA's Listening Project where they will be capturing “Voices of Organic Dairy” on video and audio recordings. These will be shared with the public through both NODPA's and NOFA-NY's Facebook pages, newsletters, and other social media platforms. The first recordings were made on March 6 at NOFA-NY's Dairy and Field Crop Conference in Liverpool, NY. Farmers were recorded in brief 3-minute clips, giving consumers an insight into our lives as organic dairy farmers. If you have already participated, thank you! If you would like to participate, contact Liz Pickard at elizabethpickard@gmail.com, or at 607-279-0565. Read more about this project and see some of the participants at the Listening Booth at the NOFA-NY conference on page X.

On a more somber note, it was with a heavy heart that the organic farming community had to say goodbye to Bob Parsons last month after his battle with cancer. Bob was an extension

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## From the NODPA Desk: March 2018

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

As yet another snowstorm blows into the northeast we are left with a landscape of resignation by producers about pay-price and the economic reality for 2018. We had some criticisms that our last NODPA News was too depressing and projected producer views that the organic supply market has become as unfriendly to producers as the conventional one. Part of NODPA's mission is to provide a platform for producers to present their views and the print version of the NODPA News is one area that is accessible to all producers, whether they have internet or not. Farming can be a very lonely occupation and while the hours milking or doing fieldwork can be very rewarding, at times of economic stress, the perpetual workload can be overwhelming. Reading about others' experience can be reassuring; that the situation is not unique and is shared by many others. To that end, the NODPA Community Connection Committee spent some time at the NOFA New York Dairy conference on March 6, 2018, videotaping producers and consumers talking about organic production and their lifestyle. They are featured in this issue and, although some were cautious in talking about their milk buyer, NODPA members have captured some great conversations.

The many faces of the corporate world and its duplicity have always been interesting to observe. While Debra Eschmeyer, Vice President of Communications & Community Affairs at Danone North America was the keynote speaker for the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) fundraising event at the Expo West trade show in Anaheim, Danone subsidiary DanoneWave was busily cancelling contracts with organic dairy producers. Eschmeyer cited Danone's mission of bringing healthy food to as many people as possible and said that is why Danone also supports OFRF. A fairly negotiated contract with an economically reasonable pay price for producers is the basis of producing and sustaining a domestic supply of healthy, organic food. It's time for Danone to show that it can support extremely worthwhile non-profit research and pay producers a fair price under a contract that reflects the interests of both the buyer and the producer.

On March 12th, the USDA finally announced that it was withdrawing the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (OLPP) final rule published on January 19, 2017, effective on May 13th. The continuous delays to the implementation of the rule made its demise almost inevitable. The nine page explanation published on the Federal Register of why the USDA did not have the statutory authority to implement the rule provided a new interpretation of OFPA. This administration is clearly turning the historical process on its head. The USDA contended that the final rule would have hurt the NOP, not strengthened it, by ensuring a level playing field in the industry. The USDA also said it 'carefully considered public comments' in its decision. Over 63,000 of those comments—from a total of 72,000 submitted—opposed

withdrawal of the rule. In comparison, the USDA only received 50 comments in support. The USDA also used an argument tied not to a process but to an outcome. They contended that the imposition of the rule would increase the price of the eggs to some consumers. To quote from the Federal Register, "These consumers could be excluded from the organic market despite their preference to participate." If we had applied this argument to the Access to Pasture, the Origin of Livestock, and many other clarifying regulations that improved the standard but could possibly increase the cost to the consumer, they would not have passed.

If we applied the Administration's logic flowing through the Federal Register notice to amending or correcting the one time transition allowance, there would be no doubt that the decision would be to enable continuous transition of conventional livestock into organic to allow all those consumers who have a 'preference' to participate in the organic market to do so.

The Spring NOSB meeting is coming up at the end of April, to be held in Tucson, Arizona. The NOSB invites public comments that address topics on the meeting agenda. In addition to sunset materials, petitions, and imports, the following four topics are on the agenda: Inspector qualifications, native ecosystems, emergency use of parasiticides, and GMO contamination prevention for organic seed. Written comments and request for oral comments to be considered during the Spring Meeting must be received by 11:59 p.m. April 4, 2018. The recommendations on inspector training include, "The Subcommittee recommends the National Organic Program develop minimum qualifications and training, and continuing education guidelines to ensure a professional and competent inspector pool to meet the demands of ever-evolving and complex organic supply chains." The NOSB is requesting public comment from the community on the following questions:

- Are the criteria and qualifications laid out in the ACA Best Practices for Inspector Qualifications sufficient to establish a baseline for inspector competency? What changes do you suggest?
- What other resources are available to train new and seasoned inspectors?
- Should there be a licensing system for inspectors by scope and/or scale in recognition of their specific skills? How do you think such a system should work?
- While this document focuses on inspectors, what other roles should the CACS consider (e.g. initial and final reviewers as well as other certifier personnel)?
- What models from other industries that facilitate high quality personnel through training and oversight could the organic industry emulate.

If you have thoughts on how to improve the quality of inspection and record review by certifiers then now is your chance to express your views. Send in comment to the NOSB, or if you'd prefer, to us and we will forward them. ♦



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS



Bob Parsons (right) and his wife Grace Matiru in action.

Cheryl Dorschner photo

## In Memory of Bob Parsons

By Lisa McCrory

**T**he Organic Dairy Community lost a true gem with the passing of Bob Parsons on February 16th of this year. Bob worked at UVM as an Agricultural Economics Professor in the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics and Extension. A farmer at heart (having been raised on a dairy farm in Pennsylvania), Bob was devoted to his family, his work, and the many farmers that he served. When I heard the news of his passing, my first thought was, "But I just received an email from him a few days ago...". Bob was staying involved with the agricultural world right up to his last days. He never complained – or talked – about the cancer that ultimately took his life.

I first met Bob in 2000/2001 when I was working for NOFA VT and NODPA. I had just published an article titled 'An Economic Comparison of Organic and Conventional Dairy Production, and Estimations on the Cost of Transitioning to Organic Production' and Bob wanted to take the small study that we had done and turn it into a project that would prove to be incredibly valuable to the organic dairy world.

Under his leadership I happily joined his team of people, collecting organic dairy cost of production data from participating farms in Vermont (and sometimes Maine) from 2004 to present.

This information has played a very important role in providing leverage discussing pay price between producers with milk buyers. It also provided financial data for farmers interested in transitioning to organic dairy.

Another thing that Bob gave to the organic dairy world is historical documentation of organic dairy and case study stories of a handful of farming models that were emerging by 2009. Though the first organic dairy farms came to be in the 1980's, the surge in growth of organic dairy took off in the mid 1990's, and Bob made sure to capture the story behind organic dairy in the following articles/reports:

- Refusing to "push the cows": The rise of organic dairying in the Northeast and Midwest by Olivia R. Saucier and Robert L Parsons
- Organic Dairy: The Evolution of a New Industry by Riva Rondorf and Robert L Parsons
- A Comparative Analysis of Organic Dairy Farms in Maine and Vermont: Farm Financial Information from 2004 to 2006 by Bob Parsons and a team of others from UVM, UMaine, and NOFA-VT.
- Case Studies of 4 organic dairy farms, authored by Lisa McCrory

I am sure that what I listed here is just a fraction of Bob's accomplishments. I will hold onto those fond memories I have of visiting farms or talking with Bob on the phone about my kids, our farm, his family, and – of course – our annual project. ♦

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## A Tribute to Bob Parsons

*By Terence Bradshaw, PhD, Research Associate, University of Vermont*

**T**he agriculture, academic, and extension world lost a true friend with a sharp, grounded mind and a sense of humor only developed in farm fields, barns, and milk house driveways when Dr. Bob Parsons passed away Friday after a two-plus year battle with cancer. Bob's impact on Vermont agriculture looms large, as he has been key in studying dairy and other farm sector economics; in overseeing the UVM Risk Management Agency; in directing the Vermont Farm Succession Program; and in being a sought-out resource for detailing agricultural economics at all levels and relating them to stakeholders. Despite being quite sick (and sicker than he'd led on to those of us who work with him), recently he was commenting on Vermont Public Radio on the current state of milk prices and helping one of our undergrad students do his taxes. The man was dedicated right to the end.

I first met Bob when he was a co-Investigator on the organic apple feasibility project which would eventually yield me both of my graduate degrees and a substantial stash of early-career research papers and experience. He served on both of my graduate committees, and anyone who knew him will appreciate it when I say that in our sessions I learned more about his grandfather's tractors than I did about the topic at hand. But Bob didn't just rattle on (well, he did, kind of)- he brought the conversation back to the realities of farming in modern conditions, considering the macro-, micro-, and family-scale economic conditions that farmers face. He just got it, from a farmer's point of view, which is rare in the halls of academia.

Last Fall, Bob asked me to co-teach his Agricultural Policy and Ethics course for this current Spring 2018 semester. I knew this was a big step for him, as he hadn't taken a day off since his diagnosis, since treatment options are quite available what with UVM Medical Center being a short walk from our offices. We didn't say it explicitly, but I knew what was going on. "Bob, I can't just sit in front of the class and rattle on about dairy policy off the top of my head like you can," I told him. Bob said, and I clearly remember his words, "that doesn't matter Terry, I know you can figure it out. These students need to hear from us, and I know that you can carry this on." I am teaching that class this semester and think of Bob every day, and the task he handed me to present to these students the conditions farmers face to make a go of it in the modern local, national, and international economies. I can only hope that those students, when talking amongst themselves, refer to me in any of the same air as they did Bob when they would highlight his point of view as a needed balancing point to

the standard fare from a progressive northeastern Land Grant University.

Bob and I are among the few, real-live farm kids who teach in the UVM College of Agriculture and Life Science. My views have been shaped by both my upbringing on a small dairy farm and my many years in academic life, and tempered by a connection I have maintained with the farming community through the Vermont apple industry in particular. I often find myself bridging divides between old Vermont / new Vermont; organic / conventional; and applied / theoretical. People like Bob and I are few and far between in this strange world, and this world needs us.

I remember the first time I traveled with Bob to an academic symposium in Leavenworth, WA, a strange mountain town with a Bavarian fixation just upslope from Wenatchee, the self-proclaimed Apple Capital of the World. We were presenting some papers from that organic apple project, and I was lead or co-author on every one of them. This was among my first academic conferences, and certainly my first as author of multiple papers, including those from my Masters' research. Frankly, I didn't think that our economics paper was up-to-snuff, but I can still see Bob as he stepped up to the podium and started going through the slides. The graphs, despite having no statistical analyses, were quite clear- we were losing money in our simulations of organic orchard production, and Bob said to the crowd, "well, it doesn't take a damned Ph.D. to tell that this isn't working." I still use that line when appropriate, as it so often is the case.

We did publish that research, and Bob was right. It's important as an agricultural academic to stay grounded while staying current in the latest research in your field. As I consider my career and its place in Vermont agriculture, I look to mentors I've had like Bob Parsons who 'get it' for continued inspiration.

Thanks Bob, for all you've offered to me and the greater agricultural community in the years I've known you. You'll continue to be an inspiration to me, and I promise to carry on in your spirit as I not only work with farmers, but also as I teach the next generation of farmers and food systems practitioners from the viewpoint of someone who has shoveled more shit than most will see in a lifetime, and who respects the advances we have today that make that job more rare than when we were kids. ♦

*This article was reprinted with the permission of the author. Terence Bradshaw can be reached by email, [tbradsha@uvm.edu](mailto:tbradsha@uvm.edu), or by phone, (802) 922-2591.*

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Organic Certification from the Inspector's Perspective: An Interview with Arden Landis

*By Sonja Heyck-Merlin*

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ships with two different certifying agencies in which I job shadowed other inspectors and observed what they did during their inspections. I continue to participate in yearly trainings through either webinars or on-site training with specific certifiers.

### **How many certifiers do you work for? Is there a difference in how they each function?**

I work for four independent certifiers as an independently contracted inspector. They all follow NOP regulations. The format of the inspections is similar as far as attempting to fulfill the same goals, but the questions are all different. There is also different paperwork for each agency. Some are more narrative and others are more check-list oriented. Some tend to ask more questions and duplicate information; others get it done in a more efficient manner. The agencies I inspect for all working really hard to get it right. I feel like they are working hard to maintain the integrity of the National Organic Standards.

### **Do you find that the certifier that reviews your inspection report is knowledgeable and includes your comments and assessment in their reports?**

I feel that they are knowledgeable. In general, they look at my report and at that time they make their decision based on what I report. Typically, my comments are not incorporated. If I see something negative on the farm, I make a comment, and sometimes I will see those in a final report.

### **What are your thoughts on the certification process, especially from an inspector's point of view?**

One of the things I have observed is that agencies make their money by the farmers paying them to certify them. If farmers find one agency provides better services than another, that is where they go. Some agencies are very efficient at determining if specific products are allowed in organic production. Some have more tedious paper work.

If I see one real problem in the whole process, it is that the agencies make their money off the farmers they certify. They don't want to lose farmers. If a certifier is too tough, farmers find out and they will move from one agency to another. I don't know how you're going to get around this. It is just the reality of the situation.

### **From your experience, is their consistency in how dairy producers document the requirements under the Access to Pasture Regulations?**

The agencies all have different forms and formats but the goal is the same- to prove that a certain percentage of DMI comes from pasture. There is little consistency in how farmers document the pasture requirements. Some are really good at record keeping and some are really poor. Sometimes you have to use your imagination to figure out what they are doing.

### **What techniques do you use to verify the data they provide to ensure compliance?**

It depends on the time of the year I get to the farm. Sometimes I can visually assess what the pastures look like and determine that the farmer's records match the conditions of their pastures. If I am doing an inspection at the end of the grazing season, I look closely at their records. As a farmer, I have a good sense for typical yields from both pastures and hay fields. I know how much tonnage is available and I make sure the available dry matter intake is consistent with what the farmer says he is feeding his cows. Sometimes it can be difficult to wrap your head around if a farmer is actually meeting the standard. I take the information given to me by the farmer and combine it with my skilled observations. The better the records the easier it is to determine if there are any issues of concern.

### **How important do you feel it is to have the following to record and verify pasture consumption?**

- **Unannounced inspections?**  
Unannounced inspections will definitely help with verifying pasture consumption.
- **Inspections during the grazing season?**  
Inspections during the grazing season are important but it doesn't always happen.
- **A spreadsheet showing the grazing record which has automatic calculations to assist with calculating dry matter intake?**  
A farmer can put any numbers in there if their relying on spreadsheets.
- **A daily grazing record that shows where the different classes of livestock are grazing?**  
I think daily grazing records are really important and I ask



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS



**Arden Landis, left, at a recent NODPA Field Days**

for them. I like to see records. I want to see where the cows are being grazed and how often they are being moved.

- **A record of the pasture mix and a history of reseeding?**  
That's helpful and beneficial but it's not the most important thing. That information should also show up on the field records.
- **A unique record for each animal that you can use to spot check which animals are in which class and whether they reflect their record accurately for age, etc.?**

I think that would make things pretty complicated.

### **Do you have any more thoughts on how farmers are doing at proving the adequate amount of dry matter intake from pasture?**

The biggest thing I see as an inspector is that farmers do a pretty good job recording what they are feeding their milking cows. They are having a harder time with their records for dry cows, bred heifers, and young stock. I like to see records from all groups of animals. If I show up at a farm in July, I want to see grazing records from the start of the grazing season of the current year up to the day when I get there.

I also want to point out that grazing and grazing records have

nothing to do with scale or size. I have seen 25-30 cow dairies where the grazing records were terrible. I have also inspected larger farms that are clearly meeting the grazing standard. Grazing issues and recordkeeping is not size oriented. Just because it's a small dairy doesn't ensure that the farmer is doing a good job pasturing and keeping up with the necessary paperwork.

### **Any thoughts on how to improve the certification process of large dairies?**

I think the one thing you need are people that understand dairy and grazing and understand what it going on. I have real concern for these big dairies; I don't know how they're doing it. Their grazing plans would have to show that there is enough land to get a minimum of 30% DMI from pasture. Take for instance a herd of 5,000 Holsteins producing 65-70 pounds of milk per day. Their dry matter demand is roughly 50 pounds, so 15 pounds needs to come from pasture. Multiply that out by 5,000 cows and figure out how many tons they need and then look at typical yields per acre. After a bit, you might come to realize that something isn't working.

They should have a system in place both visually and on paper. It would also be pertinent that the inspector goes there and sees that there are cows out grazing.

### **Any suggestions for improving the certification process of organic dairies?**

Require a minimum time of grazing experience of at least one year. No buying of organic cattle and putting them on certified organic land and then becoming a certified organic dairy. There are too many organic dairy farmers that lack the experience for grazing cows and managing grass for grazing when they become certified organic.

Require farmers that want to be certified organic to become educated in understanding how to record DMI calculations and maintain adequate records of their grazing management. Pass a test on the requirements that need to be understood for DMI calculations and recordkeeping.

The inspectors that inspect organic dairies should have dairy and grazing experience and knowledge.

Continue to develop ways that restrict the movement of organic cattle out of organics and being replaced by non-organic cattle. Accurate livestock inventory lists and animal identification are needed to be maintained.

The NOP needs to start upholding the organic regulations. Their audits of the accredited certifying agencies need to be consistent and following the same organic standards that they expect the organic inspectors to follow when they are completing organic inspection. ♦

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS



# The Real Organic Project

BY DAVE CHAPMAN

A series of scandals and a lack of faith in the current iteration of the USDA, which oversees the organic program, have led a group of pioneering organic farmers to create their own label: the Real Organic Project. The Real Organic Project will include an additional label on top of the USDA's certified organic label that indicates a product was farmed according to the standards of the Real Organic Project. The group behind the Real Organic Project is made up of a large collection of farmers and academics from around the country. Organic farming has always been based on "feed the soil." Real organic farming relies on the microbial activity of the soil for the biological diversity. The Real Organic Project is gathering together to create a new organic label for agricultural products. Dave Chapman is a founder of the project and farms in Vermont.

## Dear Friend of Organic,

*I just wanted to let you know that the Real Organic Project is being born. I'd like to review the past and take a look at the future of certified organic farming. If you care about organic, please forward this letter to your friends.*

## The Past

It has not been a good year for the National Organic Program. Since the November NOSB (National Organic Standards Board) meeting in Jacksonville failed to prohibit hydroponic (HYDRO), the organic community has gone through a period of questioning and searching. We are wrestling with the basic question, "Can we trust the USDA to protect organic integrity?"

Following a series of devastating articles about the NOP (National Organic Program) in the Washington Post last year, all the news from the USDA has been bad. In September, the USDA



A certified "organic" Aurora dairy facility. Image courtesy of Cornucopia.





**This is a conventional CAFO. There are no pictures permitted of “organic” CAFOs, but they look the same.**

exonerated the enormous Aurora Dairy CAFO (Confinement Animal Feeding Operation) of any wrongdoing at their Colorado “farm.” This dairy operation was described in detail in one Washington Post article, along with compelling test results to prove the cattle weren’t on pasture. The government approval set the stage for Aurora to build several new CAFOs that will dwarf the current 15,000-cow operation.

**For the supporters of CAFO Organic:  
Mission Accomplished.**

Then the USDA abandoned the animal welfare reforms (called OLPP) which had finally been approved under Obama. This rejection by the USDA was the result of intense lobbying from such groups as the Coalition For Sustainable Organics (in their Senate testimony), American Farm Bureau, and the National Pork Producers Council. They were championed by the ranking members of the Senate Agriculture Committee, protecting enormous “organic” egg CAFOs in their home states. The USDA thus cleared the way for CAFOs to continue receiving “organic” certification.

**Once again, for CAFO meat, milk, and egg operations:  
Mission Accomplished.**

Then in January, the USDA announced that “Certification of hydroponic, aquaponic and aeroponic operations is allowed under the USDA organic regulations, and has been since the National Organic Program began.” This was an interesting rewriting of history, but who cares about the facts?

**For the soilless HYDRO growers:  
Mission Accomplished.**

Finally, the USDA recently told the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) that, going forward, they will be severely limited in the scope of their work. They will not address big questions about organic integrity. They will not set their own agenda. They will limit their focus to defining what substances will be permitted in organic certification.

These outcomes (allowing hydro, setting aside animal welfare, and reducing the role of the NOSB) are exactly what Theo Criasantes of the Coalition For Sustainable Organics called for when he testified before the Senate Ag Committee last year.

**Mission Accomplished.**

It would appear that the USDA is no longer even bothering to

*continued on page 10*



**Wholesum Harvest, which insists that it is not a hydroponic producer.**



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS



## The Real Organic Project

*continued from page 9*

woo the organic community with sweet talk. They are bluntly speaking their truth, which is that "Certified Organic" means whatever they want it to mean, and to hell with the organic community. And apparently, to hell with OFPA as well. Organic is all about marketing, isn't it?

For the many people who have spent years working hard to build the integrity of the NOP, this is a dismal moment. We have lost the helm, and the New Organic will not have much to do with the ideals of such pioneers as Albert Howard and Eve Balfour. It will have to do with money. Money will decide what is called "certified organic" and what isn't.

And so, if we still care about those ideals, we must move on. The

National Organic Program will continue to flourish. Many people will still turn to it to find safer food. Many good people will still work hard to make the NOP as honest and positive as possible. But the NOP will be controlled by politicians and lobbyists who have no belief in the mission of the organic farming movement.

Two amazing cartoons by Gary Larson show the evolution of the corporate takeover of the NOP. The first cartoon shows the beginning of seeing that it is easier to win if you look like the sheep.

So ten years ago, some CAFO farms started to "talk organic." They discovered that a lucrative market could be exploited while still embracing the conventional model of confinement feeding of livestock.

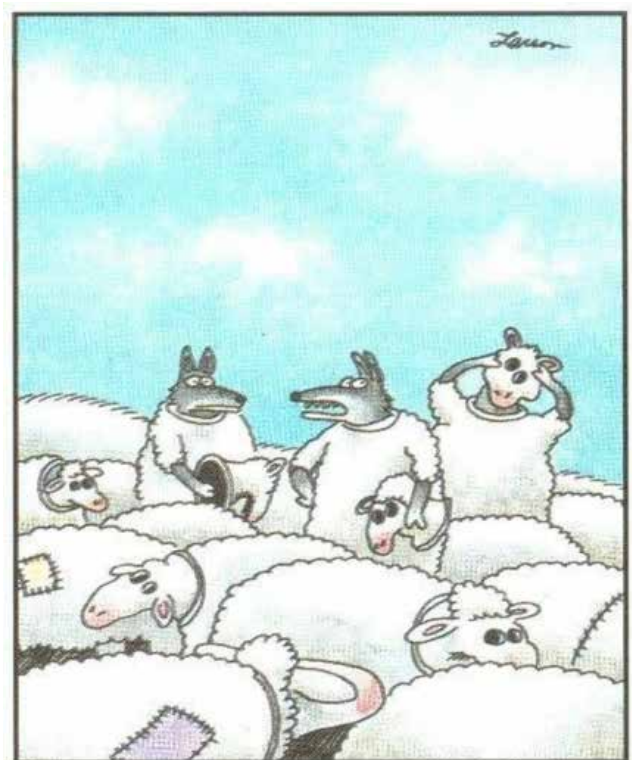
The second Larson cartoon shows where the National Organic Program is headed in another ten years.

What happens when the organic market is mostly filled with CAFO and HYDRO production? Will eaters still trust the USDA Organic Seal?



## The Rallies

Last Fall we saw an unprecedented turnout from the organic community trying to reclaim the NOP. This culminated in the final Rally at Jacksonville and two days of



"Wait a minute! Isn't anyone here a real sheep?"

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

farmer testimony.

The sad outcome was that the farmers were ignored. It turned out that many members of the NOSB really didn't understand what organic meant. We failed to win even a simple majority in the NOSB vote to prohibit HYDRO. We faced an enormous and successful lobbying effort by the protectors of HYDRO such as OTA, CCOF, and the Coalition For Sustainable Organics. These seem to be the Champions of New Organic.

### What happens now?

real  
Organic  
project

real organic farming.

This will involve a number of efforts, starting with the creation of a new "Add-On" label to represent the organic farming that we have always cared about. It will use USDA certification as a base, but it will have a small number of critical additional requirements. These will differentiate it from the CAFOs, HYDROs, and import cheaters that are currently USDA certified.

This group grew out of several meetings of Vermont farmers who believed that the USDA label was no longer something that could represent us. Starting a new label is not a small task, but we can no longer find an alternative. That small group of Vermonters has grown quickly into a national group. This amazing group of organic advocates has gathered to build something new. Scroll below to see who we are.

**Standards Board** // We now have a 15-member Standards Board (listed below), based on the model of the NOSB, but with much greater representation from the organic community. The 15 volunteers have a wealth of experience in both farming and regulation. There are 9 farmer members, as well as representatives from NGOs, stores, consumers, scientists, and certifiers.



**Theo Crisantes testifying for the Coalition For Sustainable Organics to the Senate Ag Committee.**

This winter, a growing group of farmers and eaters have formed the Real Organic Project. The Real Organic Project will work to support

The group includes 5 former NOSB members, as well as leading farmers and advocates from across the country. They will meet in March to set the first standards. They will continue to meet once a year after that to review and update. This first year there will be a pilot project with a small number of farms to test the certifying process and work out the details.

**Advisory Board** // There is also a distinguished Advisory Board that currently has 18 members, including 4 former NOSB members and 3 current NOSB members. It also includes many

*continued on page 12*



**There is now a short video of the many Rallies. It's an inspiring short watch. You can view it here:**

<https://www.facebook.com/longwindfarm/videos/1637282016349560/>



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS



## The Real Organic Project

*continued from page 11*

well known organic pioneers such as Eliot Coleman and Fred Kirschenmann.

**Executive Board** // And finally, there is an Executive Board of 5 people that includes one current NOSB member.

These boards will work together to reconnect and unite our community. Our intent is transformational. We will create a label that we can trust again.

## Please Join Us

We can only succeed with your support. Go to [realorganicproject.org](http://realorganicproject.org) to become a member. Make a donation to help make this new label into a reality. We are only supported by our sweat and your generosity. We can reclaim the meaning of the organic label together.

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS



Annie Murray and Nora Owens interviewing Vaughn Sherman

## The NODPA Listening Project: Collecting the Voices of Organic Dairy

During the 17th Annual NODPA Field Days in Truxton, NY in September 2017, there was much discussion about the frustration and anxiety being experienced by organic dairy farm families as they attempted to cope with record low milk prices, an ineffective NOP, cheap 'organic' milk from mega-farms, and increased competition from plant based beverages sold like real milk. During the Producer-Only meeting, members agreed that consumers needed to know their farmers and to understand what was happening with the Organic Milk market. The best way to reach the most consumers with our messages would be by using very popular tools, such as these social media platforms: NODPA's Organic Dairy Farmers Facebook page, Twitter, YouTube, and the NODPA website, to name a few. A small committee was formed and almost weekly meetings were held since then. Liz Pickard, Twin Oaks Dairy, Truxton, NY, Annie Murray, Hidden Meadow

Dairy, Cincinnatus, NY, and Sonja Heyck-Merlin, Clovercrest Farm, Charleston, ME, make up the committee and receive support from NODPA News Editor and Events Coordinator, Nora Owens. The committee's main goals have been to raise consumers' awareness of organic dairy and its multiple benefits beyond healthy, delicious organic milk; to create and promote relationships between consumers and organic dairy farm families that will translate into greater customer loyalty and awareness of the issues facing organic dairy producers.

Originally called the Social Media Committee, the group decided that name might not have a lot of meaning for those who aren't deeply involved with social media. Instead, the committee chose The Community Connection Committee as its name in order to represent the goals it has set. There is much work to be done in

*continued on page 14*



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## The Listening Project: Collecting the Voices of Organic Dairy

*continued from page 13*

order for the committee's work to have a widespread impact but it's beginning to take shape.

The Community Connection Committee launched their first initiative, The NODPA Listening Project: Collecting the Voices of Organic Dairy on March 6th at the NOFA-NY Organic Dairy and Crop Conference in Liverpool, NY. Throughout the day, organic dairy farmers, their families, and those associated with organic dairy were invited to record their voices; to tell their stories. It was designed to be a short recording, with the tag line, 3 Questions in 3 Minutes. Happily, most interviews were under 3 minutes and everyone that participated left with a smile and a homemade chocolate chip cookie for their willingness to participate. Over twenty five participants took advantage of this opportunity and shared their thoughts and concerns about the state of organic dairy today, and why they remain committed to farming with organic and sustainable practices.

*Here are the three questions we asked most of our participants. For those who weren't farmers, we adjusted the wording to reflect their involvement and/or interaction with organic dairy producers.*

- 1. Where do you farm? Please introduce yourself and tell us about your farm and with whom you farm.*
- 2. What are the benefits of organic dairy to you, your family, and your community?*
- 3. What are the most important things that consumers need to know about organic dairy farming, today?*

"Since we are just beginning to organize all of these recordings, we will share some of the faces of the participants and a variety of quotes that we've taken from the interviews in this article. As we have time to organize this information, we will have more specific details and access to the interviews, but for now, it is still a learning process for all," said Nora Owens, support staff to the Listening Project.

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### A Sampling of Quotes from The NODPA Listening Project: 3 Questions in 3 Minutes

**F**or the most part, organic dairy farms are small farms that are really invested in their communities. Every dollar earned is re-invested in our communities, supporting the economies of rural communities across the state, and keeping them alive.

**W**hen an organic dairy farm is having difficulty-as we are with low pay price, the whole community suffers. The money is not being spent to support local businesses, those who supply us with products, provide parts for our equipment, and those that sell us groceries. It has a huge impact on our whole communities, not just us.

*continued on page 23*







## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

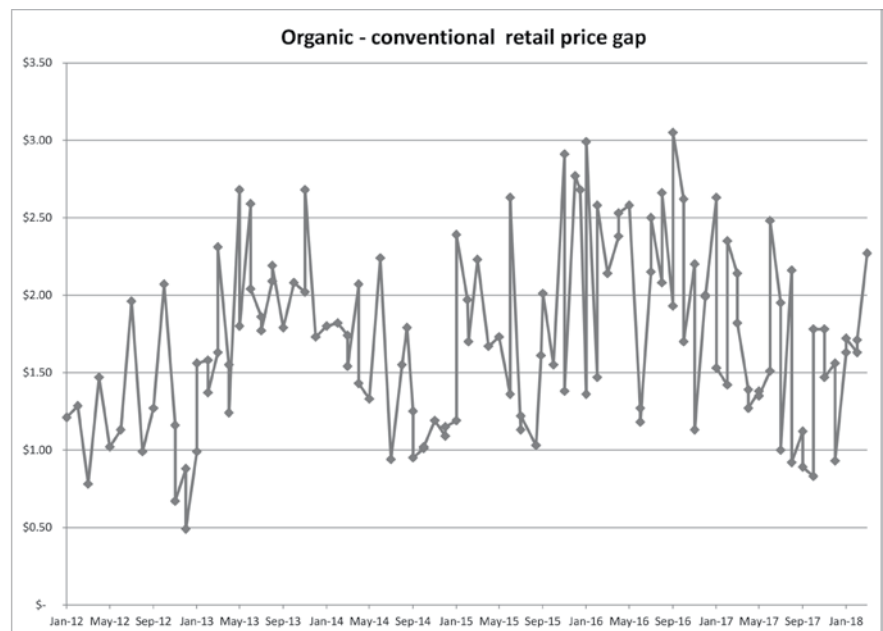
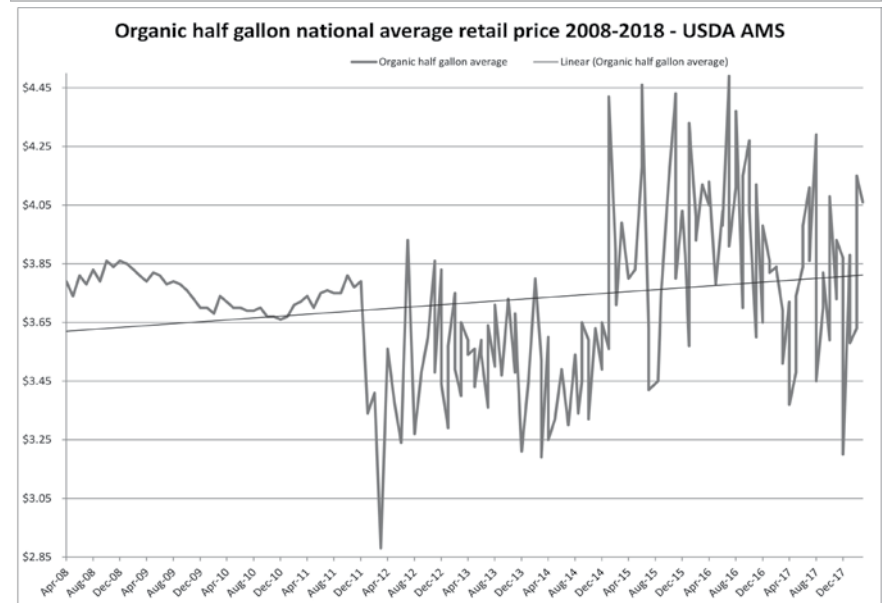
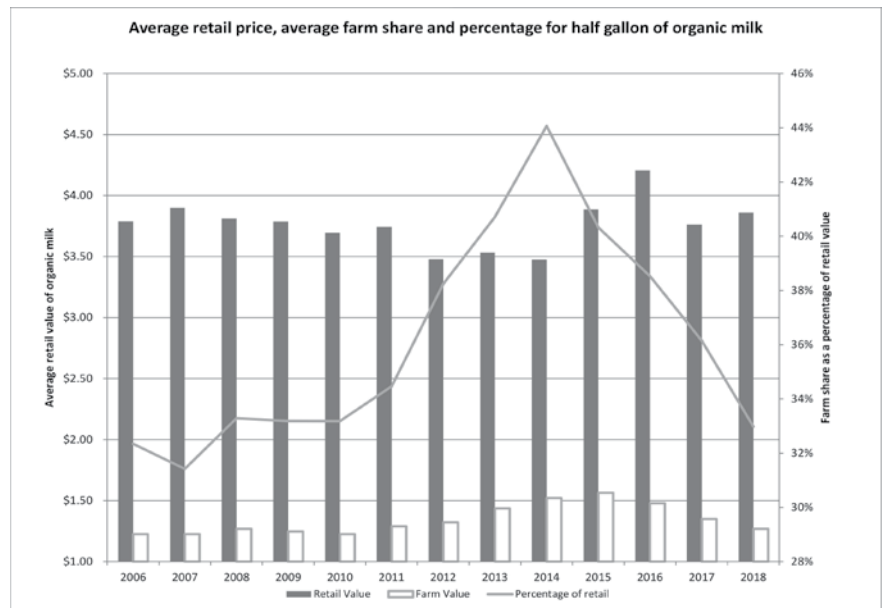
# Organic Milk Pay, Retail and Feed Prices: March 2018

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

**S**ales of organic dairy fluid products in 2017 were flat compared to 2016. The average increase in sales in previous years had settled around 4% growth. However, total organic whole milk fluid sales for December 2017, 89 million pounds, were up 5.6 percent compared with December 2016 and up 6.2% annually compared with 2016. Unfortunately, total organic fluid sales for December 2017 were lower than December 2016.

This data reflects the economic reality facing organic dairy producers across the country, with lower pay prices and producers losing their contracts. Reports from the Midwest are that smaller cooperatives and groups are losing their contracts to lower bids, especially for manufacturing milk as competition increases and inventory of organic cheese grows. At a recent producer meeting for DanoneWave, farmers in New York were told that contracts would have a \$25 base price, and new contracts are reportedly twenty five pages long. Producers are reminded that they have the right for their lawyers to read the contracts plus also any advisory non-profit group. This is a legal right that the buyers can not restrict. Whether it does any good to suggest any changes is another matter because at this time producers have no leverage in an over-supplied market and most will be grateful for a continuing contract. This type of situation is what the Department of Justice decided was a monopoly, and was the reason that Stonyfield was sold separately to retain some competition in the supply side of the market.

The reasons for the large oversupply include poor supply management and forward projection of demand by buyers, increase in sales of non-bovine juices (marketed as milks), shortage of available processing facilities, and the increase in large scale dairies supplying the private label buyers with large volumes at low prices because many use loopholes in the regulations, plus



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

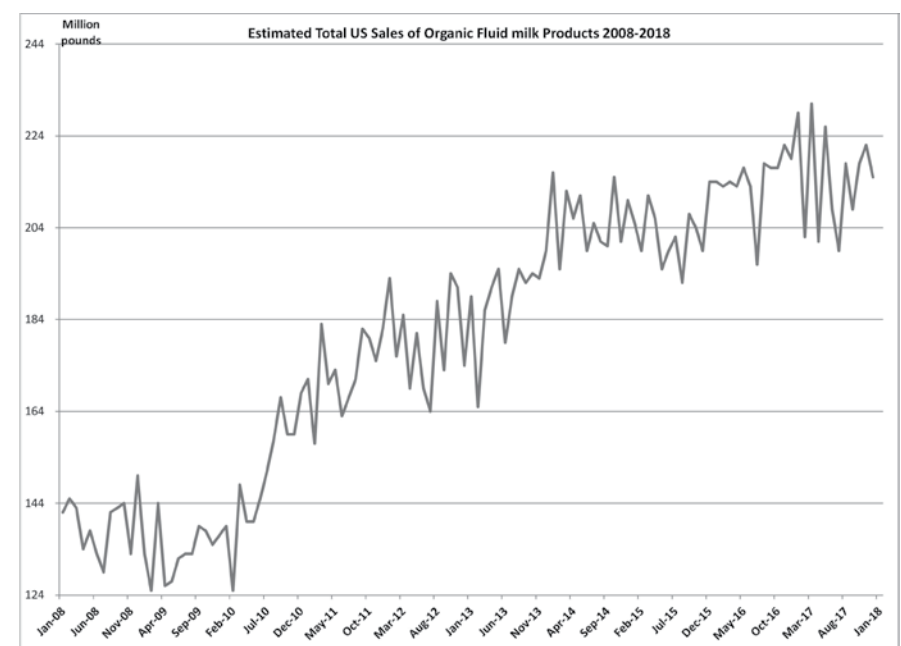
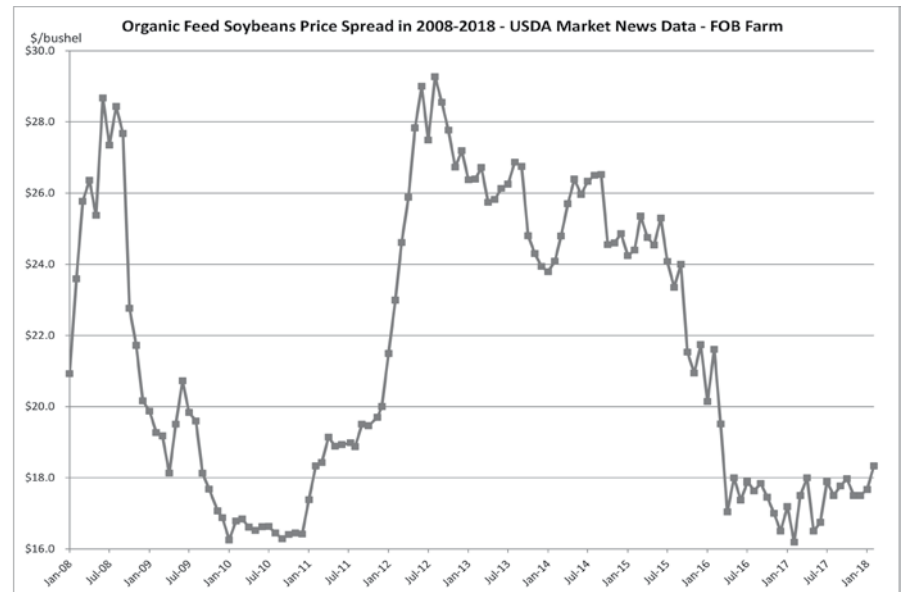
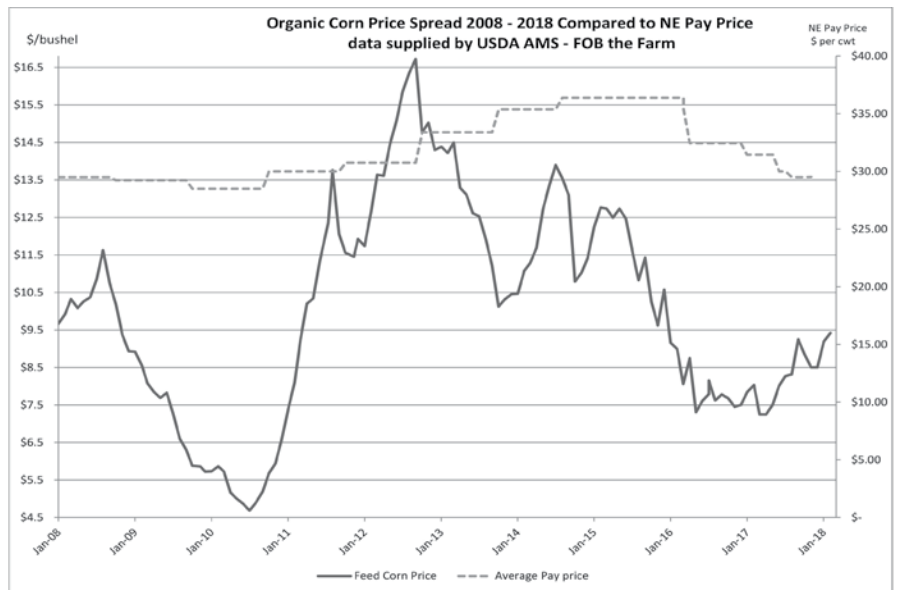
poor implementation of the standards by some certifiers. Organic Valley used the private label market to absorb higher volumes of milk as they grew the number of member owners, but without their own infrastructure for processing, they haven't been able to compete with the vertical integration of companies like Aurora Dairy. Organic Valley's joint venture with Dean Foods is reportedly "gaining momentum" but has not shown the increase in sales growth that was predicted and expected. On supermarket shelves, you still find the Organic Valley brand products at a retail price of over \$1 per half gallon more than store brand organic milk containing Organic Valley milk.

DanoneWave is switching its supply to larger dairies and is, reportedly, even buying packaged product from Aurora Dairy because of the significant cost savings. Their stated priorities are to expand their sales of non-bovine 'milk' and simplify the supply side of their organic milk supply. This has resulted in canceled contracts in Maine and New York based on what appears to be truck routes. The new owners of Stonyfield, Lactalis, have kept a low profile because of their involvement with contaminated baby formula in Europe, and all we know is that they are not expanding their own pool of milk in 2018.

We have some good news! There is now some scientific evidence on the benefits of grass milk that is accepted in the USA. In a recently release report from a collaborative research project including the University of Minnesota, Johns Hopkins University, Newcastle University in England, Southern Cross University in Lismore, NSW Australia, and the Aarhus University Hospital in Denmark, researchers have found that cows fed "100% organic grass and legume-based diet" produce milk with elevated levels of omega-3 and CLA, and thus provides a markedly healthier balance of fatty acids.

"Grassmilk provides, by far, the highest level of omega-3's—0.05 grams per 100 grams of milk (g/100 g), compared to 0.02 g/100 g in conventional milk - a 147% increase in omega-3's. Grassmilk also contains 52% less omega-6 than

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

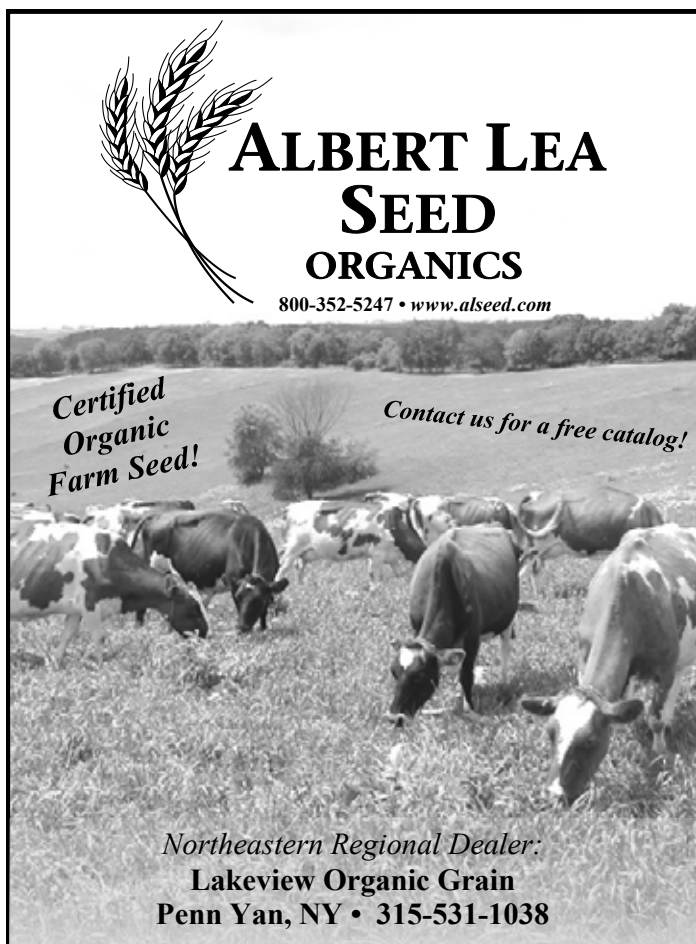
## Feed &amp; Pay Price

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conventional milk, and 36% less omega-6 than organic milk. In addition, the research team found that grassmilk has the highest average level of CLA—0.043 g/100 g of milk, compared to 0.019 g/100 g in conventional milk and 0.023 g/100 g in organic.” “With growing consumer demand for organic dairy products, producers may be able to expand their profitability and market share by converting to grass-based pasture and forage-feeding systems,” said co-author Dr. Bradley Heins, Associate Professor of Dairy Science at the University of Minnesota’s West Central Research and Outreach Center.

Given all these research results, supported by money from Organic Valley’s farmer owners, it is surprising that the pay price for grass fed milk has been cut by the various buyers to within a few dollars of regular organic milk. A year ago processors were telling producers in press releases that, “The growth [of Grassmilk] has barely kept up with consumer demand.” As always, we ask the question of whether producers will benefit economically from their attention to this method of production.

There is little change in the price of organic feed corn and soybeans. There is a slight upward movement in the price of both commodities but nothing of significance. ♦



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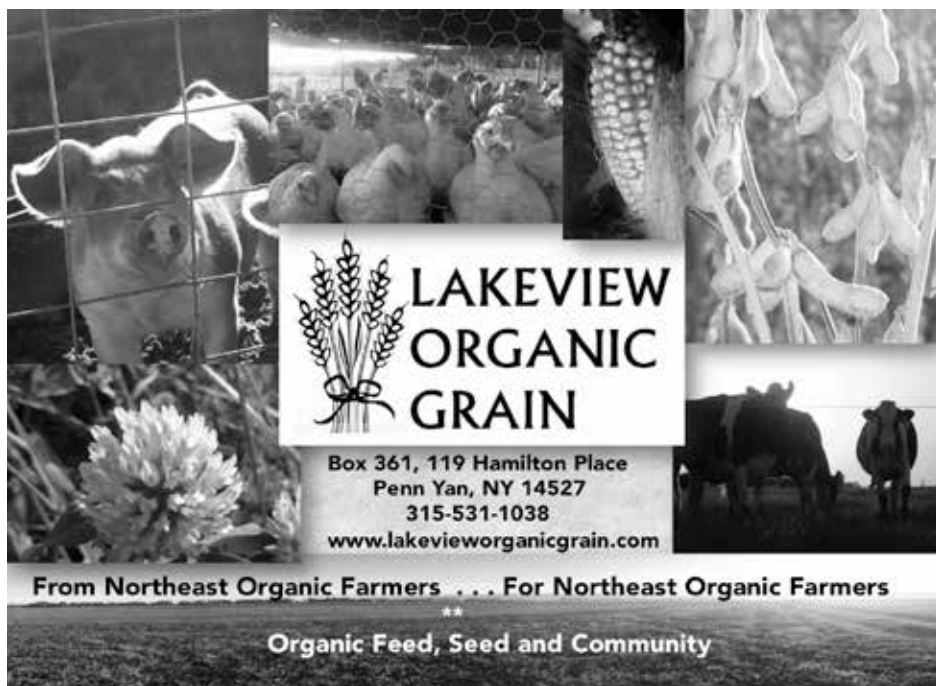
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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Anatomy of a Wet Year: Insights from New York Farmers

by Shannan Sweet<sup>1</sup>, David Wolfe<sup>1</sup>, and Rebecca Benner<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Integrative Plant Science, Horticulture Section, Cornell University

<sup>2</sup>The Nature Conservancy, New York State Office, Albany NY

## Key Findings

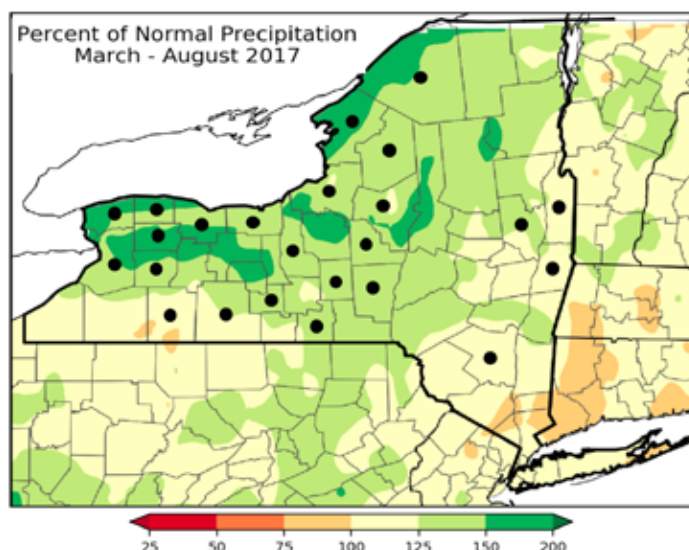
- The 2017 heavy rainfalls and flooding impacted farms across New York State
- Crops grown on clayey soils suffered an estimated 53% loss in crop yield and crops grown on gravelly, sandy or siltier soils suffered estimated crop yield losses of 25% or less
- In addition to yield losses, 95% of farmers said the quality of their crop was negatively impacted
- 30% of farmers said they would have increased their drainage infrastructure, including adding tiling and drainage ditches, if they had known how wet 2017 would be

## Background

A wet spring, followed by higher than average precipitation and heavy rainfall events (e.g. the heaviest 1% of all daily rainfall events) during the 2017 growing season (NRCC) led to saturated soils and flooding on many farms throughout New York State (NY). The frequency of heavy rainfall events have already increased by 71% in NY over the last half century (NCA 2014), and this trend is predicted to continue in the future (Wuebbles et al. 2014). Given this, and to get a sense of how farmers were affected by these conditions, as well as how they coped, we surveyed farmers across NY State throughout September of 2017. The survey was distributed online and in paper format with help from Cornell Cooperative Extension, The Farm Bureau, and New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets. A majority of the 45 farms in 24 counties were in areas of the state that experienced the heaviest rainfalls, and we had fewer responses from farms in the Adirondacks region and southeastern part of the state, where heavy rains and flooding were less prevalent (Fig. 1).

## Heavy rainfall and flooding impact

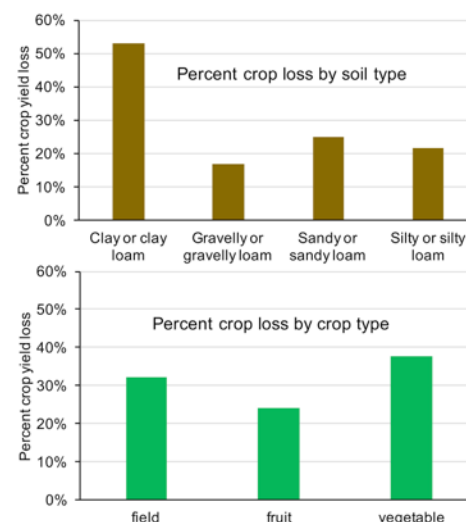
Of the farmers surveyed, those with heavier clay soils estimated crop yield losses of 53%. More gravelly soils led to lesser yield losses (17%), and for crops grown on siltier or sandier soils farmers estimated yield losses of 22 to 25%. Vegetable, field, and fruit crops suffered estimated yield losses of 38%, 32%, and 24%, respectively (Fig. 2). Importantly, 95% of farmers said the quality of their crop was negatively impacted by issues related to the heavy rainfalls in 2017 (see Fig. 3 for list of 'issues').



**Fig. 1. New York State percent of normal precipitation for March through August of 2017 (map provided by the NRCC). Black dots indicate counties where farmers responded to our survey.**

When asked what the economic impact of the heavy rainfalls was on their farm,

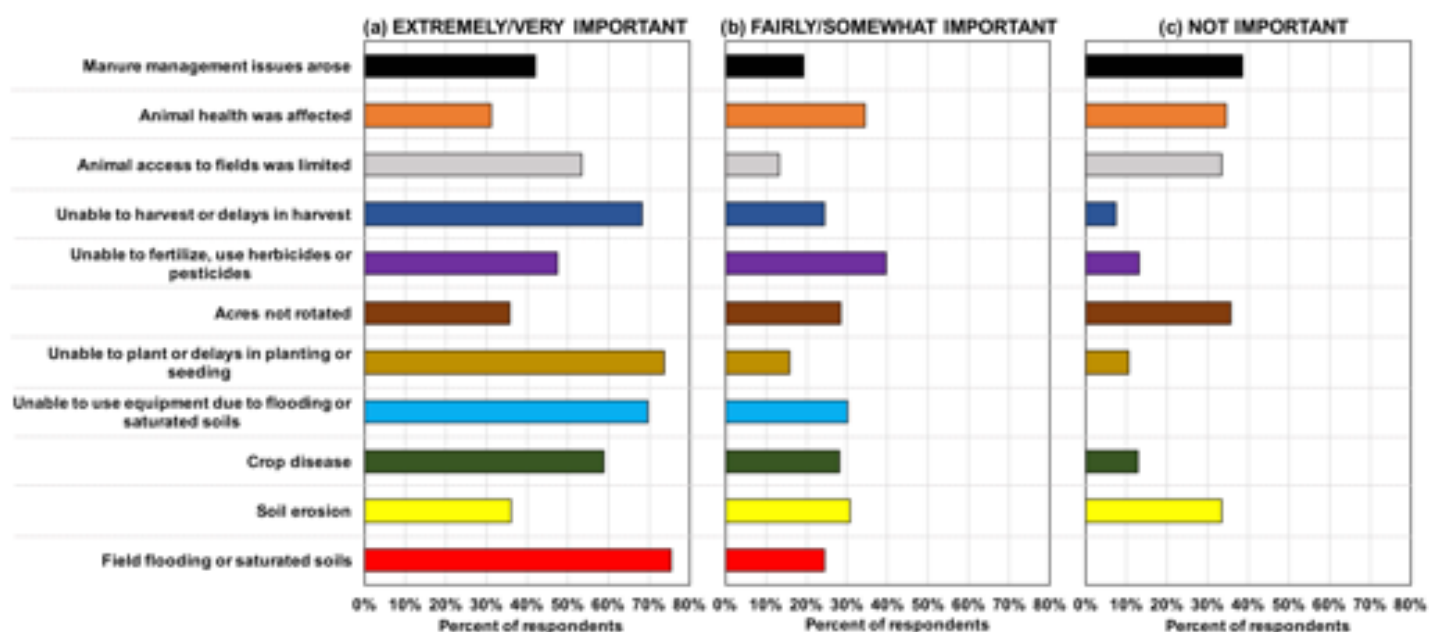
80% of farmers said it was either “moderate” or “severe”, 17% said it was “minor”, and 3% said the heavy rainfalls were merely a “nuisance” and had almost no economic impact. In rating the importance of various issues related to heavy rainfalls in 2017 in terms of economic impact on their



**Fig. 2. Percent crop yield loss by soil type (top) and crop type (bottom).**



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS



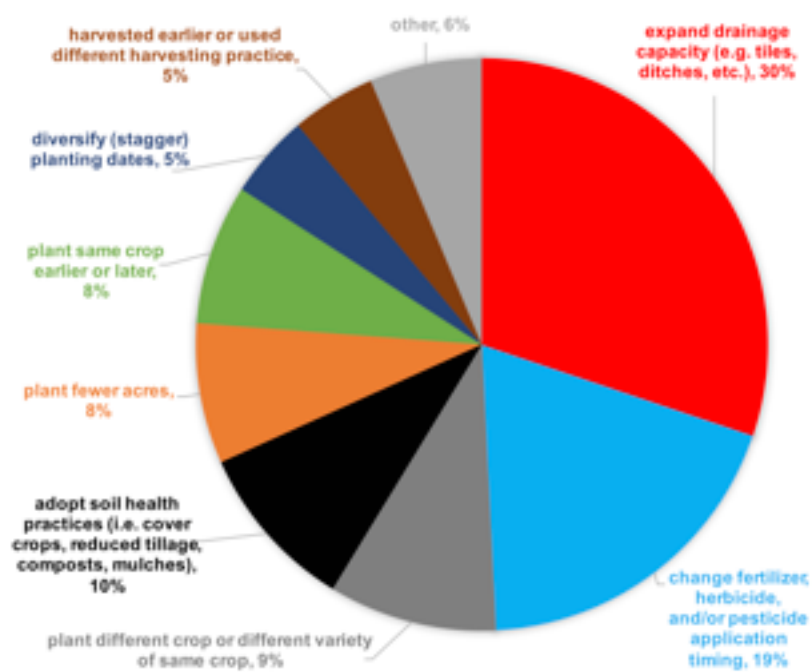
**Fig. 3. Response to the survey question “How important are these issues {listed on figure} related to heavy rainfalls in 2017 in terms of economic impact on your farm?”. Figure shows percent of farmers rating the issues as (a) extremely + very important, (b) fairly + somewhat important, and (c) not important.**

farm, over half of the farmers rated saturated soils and field flooding, delays in or inability to plant or harvest, inability to use equipment, lack of field access, and crop disease as “extremely or very” important (Fig. 3).

### Adaptive capacity

82% of farmers said they use drainage ditches or drainage tile to help deal with heavy rainfalls, yet over half of farmers said they did not have enough infrastructure and/or equipment to deal with heavy rainfalls. Further, 70% of farmers said the 2017 heavy rainfalls led to the recognition of weaknesses or limitations in the infrastructure on their farm, particularly in relation to manure management and drainage infrastructure. And when asked what they would have done differently if they had known how wet 2017 would be there was a variety of responses (Fig. 4). Nearly 1/3rd of farmers said they would have expanded their drainage capacity (e.g. more drainage tiles and ditches, etc.). Nineteen percent would have changed their fertilizer, herbicide, or pesticide application timing, and another 10% would have adopted better soil health practices, such as using cover crops, reducing tillage, and using composts or mulches.

We also gave farmers a list of soil health practices and asked them to tell us if, for the ones they use on their



**Fig. 4. Response to the survey question “What might you have done differently if you had known how wet this summer would be?”. The “other” responses included: plant more acres, plant in different location, and increase greenhouse infrastructure.**

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

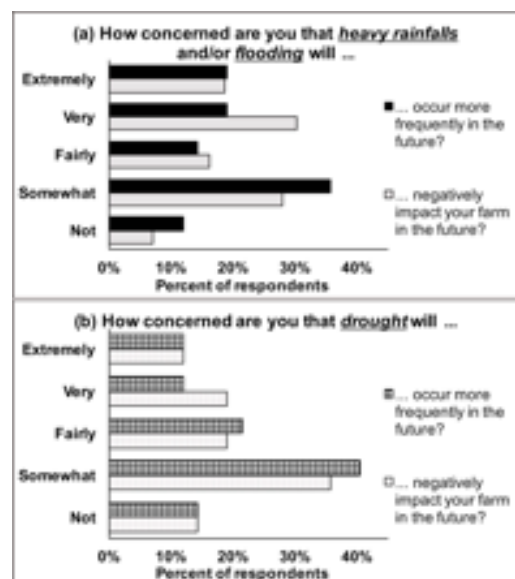
## Anatomy of a Wet Year

*continued from page 21*

farm, any of them lessened the impact of heavy rainfalls in 2017 (Fig. 5). Aside from “the use of mulches”, which 67% of farmers said did not help them, a vast majority said other soil health practices did help. Over 70% of farmers said that practices such as “use of winter cover crops”, “reduced tillage”, “use of composts or manure”, “leaving crop residues”, and/or “changing crop rotations” did lessen the impact of the very wet 2017 season. To learn more about soil health check out <https://blogs.cornell.edu/soilhealthinitiative/>.

### Insights for extension educators, researchers and policy makers

Over half of the farmers reported experiencing issues on their farm related to heavy rainfalls or flooding every 1 to 4 years. The other 46% reported this occurrence rarely or only every 5 to 6 years. While climate projections for NY indicate that we are likely to expect more heavy rainfall events, as well as more short-term summer droughts in the future (NCA 2014, Wuebbles et al. 2014, Sweet et al. 2017), our survey results suggest that, though farmers were concerned about the impacts of these events in the future, they are not as convinced that these events will occur more frequently in the future. For instance, 49% of farmers said they were “extremely or very” concerned that heavy rainfalls and flooding will negatively impact their farms in the future. Yet, only 38% said they were similarly concerned that such events may occur more frequently in the future (Fig. 6). Also, given the drought in 2016 (Sweet et al. 2017), we asked farmers a similar



**Fig. 6. Level of concern by farmers of the frequency of occurrence and impact of (a) heavy rainfalls/flooding and (b) drought.**

unique challenges related to both increased heavy rainfall events as well as short-term summer droughts.

Resource managers and planners, engineers, researchers, extension agents, NGO's and other farm-support organizations need to prepare to help farmers adapt to and become more resilient to an uncertain future. Information collected from farmers about how they might adapt to future climatic events suggests there could be potentially dramatic consequences not only for farmer livelihoods and food production, but

also for NY natural resources. For example, certain adaptation practices could impact downstream water quality and availability.

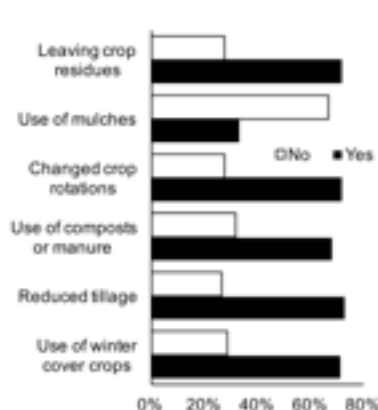
Based on our survey results, here are some ideas farmers had on how the above mentioned organizations might help farmers better prepare for and cope with heavy rainfalls events in the future:

- Low-cost loans or ‘in kind’ grants to help with costs of improving drainage (e.g. drainage ditches and tiles)
- Continued education on nutrient management planning
- Advice on how to increase soil organic matter for improved drainage capacity
- Information about cropping options and strategies to cope with heavy rainfalls
- Lower cost and better fungicides for wet years
- Increased town drainage (e.g. more funding for ditch digging and for clearing debris out of ditches)

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*This project was funded by Cornell University's Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future and The Nature Conservancy. For more information, contact Shannan Sweet: 126 Plant Science Bldg., Ithaca, NY 14853; 607 255 8641, [sks289@cornell.edu](mailto:sks289@cornell.edu)*



**Fig. 5. Response to the survey question “Did any soil health practices you have adopted on your farm lessen the impact of heavy rainfalls in 2017?”.**

## The Listening Project:

*continued from page 14*

**W**e have a diverse farming operation and currently are raising organic dairy heifers because there's no market for organic milk until the Spring of 2019.

**W**e have remained a somewhat self-regulated industry and I hope we don't become as commercialized and marginalized as the conventional dairy industry. If we can't continue as we are, then it is sad to see it all end at the hands of someone trying to make more money.

**T**he first day of college, I was told that it takes 2 years to pay off a cow, and the life expectancy of a cow was 1.6 lactations. If we confine cows and pour tons of corn into them, they aren't going to live good lives, and I sure wouldn't want to live like that.

**I**f you want to see cows and calves on pasture, organic milk is a good choice; if you want animals to live in a natural environment without chemicals, organic milk is a good choice; if you want land that hasn't had pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and chemical fertilizers put on it, organic milk is the right choice. And, remember that 'milks' like soy and nut beverages require a lot of human intervention and unnatural ingredients to produce them, but organic milk is the way nature intended it to be.

**W**e have a creek on our farm that flows into a river that is the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay. When I realized that anything I put on the soil on my farm will impact hundreds of thousands of people, adversely affecting those downstream, then I have a responsibility to farm in a way that protects the wellbeing of them.

*continued on page 24*



**Nathan Bawden,  
Bawden Farms,  
Hammond, NY**



**Paul and Maureen Knapp,  
Cobblestone Farm, Preble, NY**



**Audrey Lappin, Hayberg, NY**



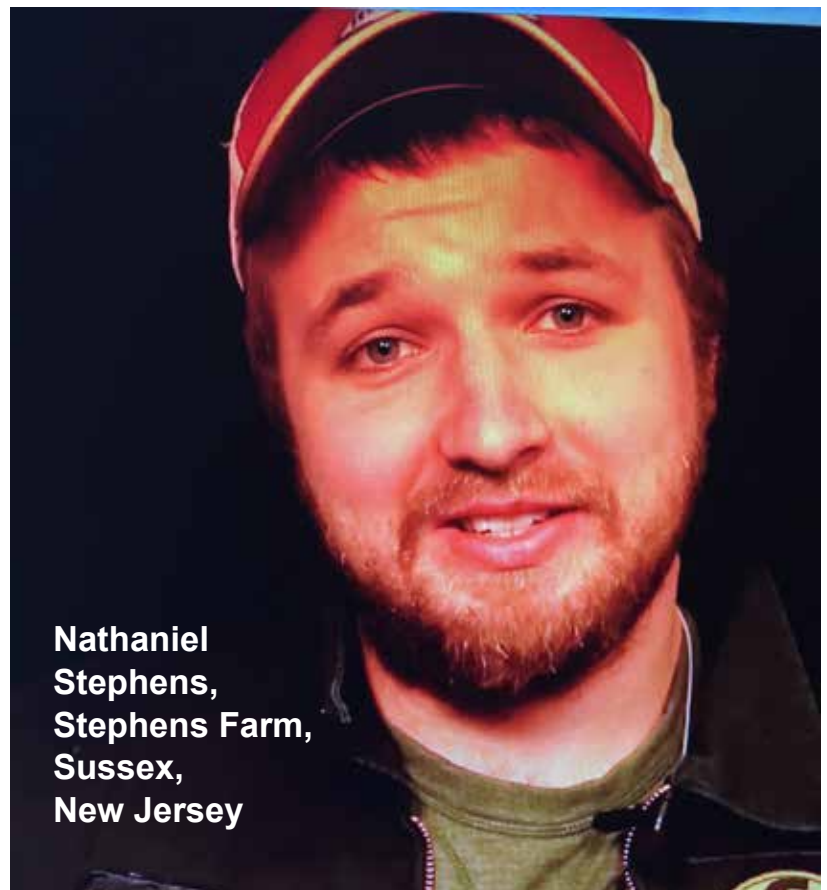
## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## The Listening Project

*continued from page 23*

**O**rganic dairy has provided a niche market for our farm; adding value and ensuring that the next generation can be there. The conventional market is a commodity market and a race to the bottom. Without organics, we wouldn't be alive. Organic makes us sustain able, and it's a perfect fit for our value system.

**W**e sell directly to the consumer and our base buys organic but they aren't really familiar with what makes organic "organic". My advice to consumers is continue to educate yourselves; know specific differences and why organic is



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Stephens,  
Stephens Farm,  
Sussex,  
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## NET UPDATE

### Recent ODairy Discussions

By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Farmer, NODPA President

A springing heifer was experiencing serious edema in her hind legs, making it hard for her to get up and move around. It was suggested that the farmer give her instant coffee as a diuretic. Make sure that it is regular caffeinated coffee, since it is the caffeine that she needs. Put it in 3 or 4 capsules and give twice a day. It was also suggested to get the heifer up and moving around as much as is possible. Aspirin given 3 to 4 times daily would help reduce the swelling and make her feel better. Flunixin was also suggested. Homeopathic Apis (10 pellets, three times a day), dried Dandelion leaf (2Tbsp twice a day), and acupuncture were recommended.

There was a long thread of discussion lamenting the national oversupply of organic milk, and the resulting loss of income and financial stress for organic dairy producers, some farmers feel that the price has fallen below their cost of production. And it was pointed out that the oversupply is in skim milk, as consumers are buying more butter and whole milk. One producer suggested that powdered organic milk is a great source of supplemental methionine for organic chicken producers. Some producers talked about increasing diversification, while other producers noted that already diversified farms with good customer bases have seen a decline in demand as organic foods become more available, and therefore more convenient, in supermarkets.

With consumers looking for more butterfat and protein, some farmers took a look at ways to re-position themselves to better supply that need: they talked of moving from the classic Holstein to breeds that have higher components, once a day milking to raise component percentage, breeding for A2A2, grassfed options, raw and un-homogenized direct sales.

A cow was exhibiting unusual symptoms – “when she walks, her front feet move normally, but she quickly shuffles her hind feet. It’s like she’s walking on pins and needles.” That night, the cow was down flat, throwing her head back. When she was propped up, she would eat grain and hay. The following morning, she was back on her side and seemed to be paralyzed from the neck down. The farmer had the cow euthanized and sent brain tissue for testing. Vets on the list seemed to agree that it sounded like meningeal worm – a parasite carried by deer, and transmitted to grazing ruminants when larva are present in accidentally ingested slugs and snails on pasture. Then the parasites make their way from the digestive tract to the brain.

Planning to go to once-a-day (OAD) milking, a farmer asked if others had difficulties with the change. He felt his herd was a good candidate for OAD milking as he feeds a low amount of grain and does not push

*continued on next page*

## Website & E-Newsletter Advertising

NODPA is pleased to provide additional advertising opportunities for our organic dairy supporters and resource individuals through our Website and our monthly E-Newsletter.

### Website Advertising

Three banner ads are located at the top of the home page and at least 10 other pages on NODPA's website. NODPA.com receives over 2500 visits each month navigating to an average of 3 pages per visit.

**Ad Design:** Display-ready ads should be 275 pixels wide by 100 pixels tall. Your ad can link to a page on your website.

**Cost:** Display-ready ads are \$150 per month.

### E-Newsletter Advertising

Two banner ads are located at the top of each E-Newsletter, going out monthly to over 2,000 individuals through our E-Newsletter, the NODPA-ODairy discussion forum, and NODPA's Facebook page.

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Go to the following web page for more information:

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## Subscribing to ODairy:

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

To sign up for the ODairy listserv, go to:

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



## NET UPDATE

*continued from previous page*

for production. As you might expect, some experiences were positive, others not. One farmer experienced a 30% drop in both feed consumption and milk production, and he felt that you should expect to see a rise in SCC. Another farmer had no problems milking OAD with Dexter and Kerry cows. Another farmer milks happily OAD without significant "leaking" by nursing calves on the cows; two other farmers switch from twice a day to OAD milking in a seasonal herd after all the cows are in mid-lactation. And yet on another farm, after a year on OAD, the farmer switched back to twice a day because "even with no grain, fresh cows got too engorged, and we just had too much trouble with high counts and mastitis". And another farmer went back to twice a day milking when he took on an apprentice, so needed more income, but could not expand the herd size; he had milked OAD for 2 years, feeding about 6 lbs of grain a day. There was a "little bit of SCC issues in the beginning but not bad. Biggest issue for me was loss of production. 30% is about right. By myself I loved OAD. It's a total game changer lifestyle wise, i.e., it allows one to have a life. Haha. I was also amazed at how exhausting physically and to some extent mentally going back twice a day was to me after being away from it for 2 years. I wonder now in writing this if the cows feel the same way?" ♦



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## FEATURED FARM

**Borg-way FARM, Belgrade, Minnesota**

*continued from page 1*

him frugality,” Joe said, and in-turn provided Joe with the principles that would guide his farming career.

The connotation of frugality can imply cheapness or stinginess. In Joe’s case, frugality involves constantly adapting to new technologies and ideas in order to improve efficiency and productivity.

“A lot of farms are patched together,” Joe said, “but since I took over my dad’s 50-cow herd in 1974, we have rebuilt or replaced every single farm building.” When not on pasture, the herd of 180 milk cows are housed in a free-stall and milked in a double-8 herring bone parlor, both built in 1994. “The barn yard is laid out in a nice circular design that allows us to move cattle between buildings,” said Joe. “The manure is concentrated on one side of the yard, and the shop, grains bins, and feed on the other.”

For some farmers, frugality may prevent them from growth,

“It’s hard to find better entertainment than work.”

***Joe Borgerding***

whether it be their land base, equipment, or infrastructure.

Joe, however, has not been inhibited by his frugality. Joe, and his wife Toni, of 39 years,

have increased their land base to 680 owned acres, and another 400 rented acres. Their land base and dairy are now large enough to support two sons who have returned to the farm full-time.

Joe and Toni raised six children on the farm- five sons and one daughter. Danny (30), and Tommy (28) have returned to the farm. Their son Ryan is an engineer in Texas, and their daughter Teri works at a hardware store but helps manage their crew of teenagers in the summer. Their youngest son, currently in college, also hopes to return. Their son Carl passed away at 11 in a tragic farm accident.



Winter machine shop



## 2017 farm picture



Joe is also heavily invested in equipment. “My strategy when I started was that every five years, I would trade for a piece 10 years newer,” he explained.

With profits from both organic milk and organic soybeans over the past five years Joe said, “We have been able to more than achieve that goal.” They have added DigiFarm RTK auto steering to their main planting and cultivating tractors, and purchased a newer combine equipped with a yield monitor.

“You can bleed on the leading edge or you can eat dust on the back edge.”

It’s not that Joe hasn’t ever experienced eating dust on the back edge. Joe farmed conventionally for nearly 20 years. Production was being affected by salt and chemical carry over. The heavy clay soils of the home farm were alkaline with a pH up to 8, had poor

“I can use a lot of modern tools to help make me frugal.”

*Joe Borgerding*

aeration, infiltration, and root penetration.

“Because of the tightness of the soil,” Joe said, “the problems got worse and worse. I don’t think I saw an earthworm for 15 years. None of our roots went into the ground very deep. I would see alfalfa roots where the tips had turned sideways.”

Joe continued, “Nobody had really ever taught us about soil structure; I didn’t fully understand the importance of soil biology.” A natural problem solver, Joe began to read about biological farming, particularly the studies of Dr. William Albrecht. “I also started working with Gary Zimmer of Midwestern BioAg,” Joe said.

By integrating cover cropping into his cropping systems and changing tillage, within five years Joe was able to see significant changes. “Now, when it rains, I can soak up three inches. Before we fixed our soil, the high ground would run off and the low ground would flood. No amount of drainage tiling would have fixed the problem.”

With two sons back on the farm and a nephew who has been

*continued on page 30*





Danny milking

## FEATURED FARM

*continued from page 29*

farming with Joe for 30 years, Joe described his current farm role as “general manager.” Stepping back from pasture and herd management has allowed him to focus on managing the business and cropland, and custom work. The cost of his equipment is partially offset by completing around 500 acres of custom work a year (planting, chopping, tilling and baling) for neighbors. Joe said his neighbors “appreciate not having to invest in the cost of the equipment that we maintain.”

In 2017, he planted 140 acres of soybeans, and 180 acres of corn (1/3 for silage, 1/3 for snaplage, and the remaining 1/3 for dry corn). He also harvested crops of wheat, barley, oats, and spelt. “Production has gotten pretty good,” Joe said. “We can grow up to 200 bushels of corn an acre, and 45-50 bushels of soybeans. We recently sold 4000 bushels of food-grade soybeans that will end up in Japan.” Currently, he is researching growing Black Turtle beans on contract. “I learned from my father that resiliency comes from diversity. My strategy is not to be dependent on one

commodity,” Joe said.

“We seed high population oats or barley for grain and straw and then incorporate manure in August,” Joe explained about a typical crop rotation. “That is followed by alfalfa or a cover crop blend. Older alfalfa (2-3 years) gets plowed, manured, and seeded to oats/radishes in late-August. That is followed by a year of corn, a year of soybeans, back to corn, and then back to small grains.”

Joe is currently experimenting with organic strip tillage and modifying cultivating equipment to allow cultivation within a strip tillage system. Joe said, “Strip tillage involves tilling 8-10” strips, every 30 inches, where we plant row crops, without disturbing the soil in-between.” According to Joe, the advantages of strip tillage are that it allows cover crops to shade the centers, it causes less soil disturbance, and reduces erosion from wind and rain.

He uses a Dawn strip tiller and with DigiFarm RTK, he is able to till 7-8 miles per hour with a 150 horse-power tractor.

“We modified a rotary hoe to work the strips,” Joe said. “And

we are revamping an old heavy-duty cultivator to handle the residue, and to catch up on the weeds later in the season. We understand this will be a challenge, so we are just doing trial strips each year until we can evaluate the results.”

“We don’t farm in a box. When the wind changes, we adjust our sails,” Joe said. “If you’re doing things like you did five years ago, maybe you aren’t looking. We really try to stay current. It sure beats eating dust.”

“The boys take care of the backaches and I take care of the headaches.”

Joe explained that serious stray voltage issues have historically affected the productivity of the milk cows, but that despite those issues “the dairy has made the farm work in terms of the manure, forage utilization, and rotation.”

Joe shipped his first load of organic milk to Organic Valley in 2004, and the higher milk prices have allowed the dairy to continue into the next generation. “We are focusing more on the dairy right now, and it is becoming more productive. Maybe the boys are better dairymen than I was,” Joe said. They have also

solved most of their stray voltage problems.

The herd was primarily Holstein, but seven years ago they began cross-breeding with Bavarian Fleckvieh semen. The use AI and a few years ago invested in a Semex ai-24 heat detection system. “The Fleckvieh breed is a dual-purpose breed with tremendous reproductive efficiency, something that seems to be lacking in the American Holstein,” Joe said. “They are better grazers, and in the winter, can take the cold.”

Average annual production per cow is 17,000 pounds with 4.3% butterfat and 3.2% protein. SCC averages 160 in the winter and 240 in the late summer. Current pay price is \$29.70/cwt.

60% of the herd calves in the fall in order to take advantage of what were until 2017, significant winter premiums. “Heat and humidity are our biggest enemies,” Joe said. “We’ve found that our cows are the most productive in the winter when we are able to manage their rations.” The current winter ration is 22# baleage, 25# corn silage, 14# haylage, 15# snaplage, 3# shell corn, 1# roasted soybeans, and 1# minerals. They produce all of their own forages and concentrates.

*continued on page 32*



**Weanlings**



## FEATURED FARM

*continued from page 31*

100 acres of pasture around the home farm are dedicated to the milk cow rotational grazing system. Upon his return to the farm, Tommy participated in the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship to learn the finer points of grazing. During prime grazing months, the cows are at 30-40% DMI from pasture.

Another 100 acres of pasture at three different satellite locations are grazed by heifers, dry cows, and a separate beef herd made up of steered bull calves from the milking herd. They finish about 50 steers a year, half of which are sold to Organic Prairie, and the rest direct marketed. Joe said, "Each location has buildings and pasture associated with it." The satellite farms also have housing for his sons and nephew. Joe said that the additional properties have allowed the farm to "decentralize their young stock, and utilize marginal ground."

Pastures are maintained as sod because the majority of their pastures utilize untiled, marginal land which tend to "muck up when they are wet," said Joe. "The sod developed over many years and withstands cow traffic better than fresh sod that gets smeared." At least one paddock per year, however, is re-seeded.

"Our brand is a little red barn, at the end of a nice green pasture, managed by a farm family."

"It doesn't look so good for the short term," Joe said about the current pay price. "I think the NOP dropped the ball by not standing up to those big dairies." He also expressed concern about the Aurora farm and processing plant being built in Missouri. In his opinion, the over supply is also due to the widening price difference between conventional and organic producers which he feels encouraged conventional producers to transition.

Setting the cause of the oversupply aside, Joe said, "We have to use our honest message to outsell the competition," which is quasi-organic milk and non-dairy milk. Joe continued, "We need to find a way to use science to show that our milk is better. Then, consumers will stick with it regardless of price. We have to sell the quality, lifestyle, and environmental benefits."

In an email, Joe elaborated, "Lower prices will also make it more important to use new tools and ideas to produce even more efficiently. Small changes in our practices can have big effects on margins because practices are free. We are still fortunate for the opportunity we have, but likely won't be bailed out by higher pay prices any time soon."

"The best thing we grow on our farm is our kids."


According to Joe, within the span of his farming career, the number of dairy farms in Minnesota has dropped from 25,000 to 3200. Many of the remaining dairies are large confinement operations. "Our communities," said Joe, "are changing. The school bus drives and drives to get a load of kids. Grocery stores and hardware stores have gone out of business. Our local community base is shrinking."


He continued, "I think one of the best things we grow on the farm is kids. My wife and I are so happy we had the opportunity to raise our children on the farm." Joe feels that children who grow up on small farms have an innate work ethic and sense of responsibility, and there is a huge social cost to our society when there are less farm children. Joe said, "How many hard-working farm kids do you produce on a 5,000-cow dairy?"

Joe and Toni have tried to buck this trend by employing local school children. Roughly 35 of their nieces and nephews have been employed at the farm, some for only a few weeks, others for longer periods of time. "We have an excellent labor supply," Joe said. "We even get the banker's and insurance agent's children out here on the farm. Parents are so happy to have their children get some farm experience."

"I encouraged my sons to come back. I told them it was the good life. We don't have the neighbors we used to. Large grain operations are taking over- there are two 30,000-acre operations nearby. It doesn't give you the same type of community as if you had young farm couples. At this point in my farming career, one of the most important things I can do is to promote efficient small farms."

*Joe Borgerding and his family can be reached at: 39736 275th St., Belgrade MN 56312, 320-254-8430-home, 320-248-9340-cell, jborg@wisper-wireless.com*





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*continued on page 34*

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# Classified Ads

*continued from page 33*

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Location: Keene, NH

*continued on page 39*

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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!

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

# Calendar

March 21 & 22, 2018, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Western PA Grazing Conference, Trinity Point Church of God, Clarion, PA

**COST:** \$85 for 2-days & evening session, \$45 for 1-day only (Continental Breakfast & Lunch included) registration deadline 3/14/18. Bonus evening session with Greg Judy on March 21: \$20.

The conference will focus on many aspects of improving low input grazing systems. Sessions will cover topics such as brood cow efficiency and nutrition, how soil health and profitability are related, extending the grazing season, marketing opportunities, health and economics of grass finished meat and developing and implementing grazing leases. Two keynote speakers Teddy Gentry and Greg Judy bring a wealth of knowledge gained through experience in tuning and evaluating the many pieces of a grazing system to maximize functionality and profitability. Gentry will share his insights into breeding cattle to fit environmental conditions along with how grazing management has benefitted his beef cattle operation. Gentry owns and operates the Bent Tree Cattle Co., located near Fort Payne, AL. Greg wrote a book, entitled "NO RISK RANCH-

ING, Custom Grazing On Leased Land", which gives a complete breakdown on the methods they used to build their operation of 1,600 acres from scratch. To Register or for more information visit <http://headwaterspa.org/> . Call 814-503-8653 or email [info@headwaterspa.org](mailto:info@headwaterspa.org)

March 22, 2018, 9:00 am to 5:30 pm

14th Annual Grain Growers Conference, The Essex Resort & Spa, Essex Way, Essex, VT

**COST:** \$50 per Northern Grain Growers Association member, \$50 for non-members

This daylong event will provide you with a diverse array of educational topics on grain production and research in North America. This year's conference will include four concurrent tracks throughout the day, including hands-on baking sessions. Our theme is "Diversifying Grains for a Changing Climate".

We are very excited to welcome Jessamyn Waldman Rodriguez from Hot Bread Kitchen as this year's keynote speaker! Other highlights will include: Grain Growing 101, Grain Research Updates, Making Feed Rations, Organic Hemp, Organic No-Till, Spelt Production and Processing, Product Development and Marketing, Mill Stone Dressing, Noodle making and much, much more! There is sure to be something for everyone!

Register today to join us at the Annual Grain Growers Conference!

Cost is \$75 per person and \$50 per NGGA member. Call 802-656-2990 with questions or visit [www.regonline.com/grainconference](http://www.regonline.com/grainconference) to register.

March 22, 2018

Business Clinics for Farm Owners (Middlebury) (NUMEROUS DATES AND LOCATIONS)

UVM Extension, Middlebury, VT

UVM Extension Farm Business Specialists, Mark Cannella, Tony Kitsos and Betsy Miller are available to work one-on-one with farmers on their finances. Reserve a 1½ hour appointment to prepare documents that will help manage the business. Use the time to develop a balance sheet, update financial statements, review a business plan, consider changes

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## LOW-COST CERTIFICATION

Baystate Organic Certifiers certifies dairies in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic and Midwest



Non-profit, USDA-accredited. Our mission:  
Make certification affordable for operations of any scale.  
(401) 835-2210 [ehanson@baystateorganic.org](mailto:ehanson@baystateorganic.org)  
[www.baystateorganic.org](http://www.baystateorganic.org)



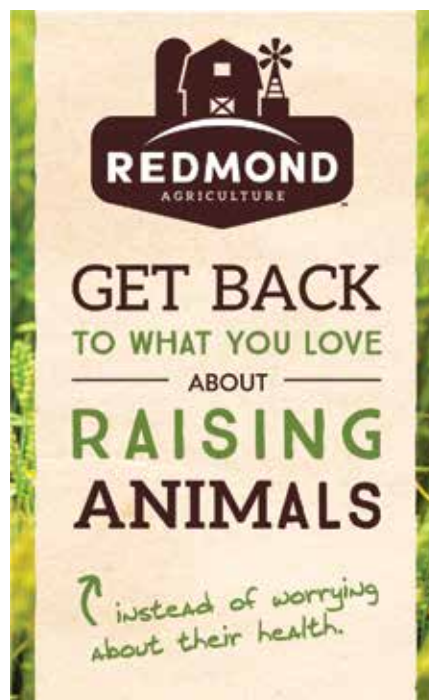
New AgriTech Inc  
607-379-3793  
[nate@newagritech.com](mailto:nate@newagritech.com)

## Somatic Cell Program

Liquid Feed Supplement  
(10 ml)

**Dramatic  
Reductions in  
SCC Production  
Responses**

OMRI Listed  
17-18c per day





# Calendar

*continued from page 35*

to the business and more. Bring your financial statements, recent records and questions! To see all locations and corresponding dates, click here to view the brochure. \* To ensure adequate preparation, reservations must be made by Thursday of the week before the appointment.\* Registration fee is \$25.00. You may register here, online, or contact Christi Sherlock for registration questions or assistance. 11:00 am to 4:00 pm (reserve a 1-1/2 hour one-on-one session). COST: \$25. CONTACT: Christi Sherlock at 802-476-2003 or 1-800-287-1552 or christi.sherlock@uvm.edu. Register online at [www.regonline.com/clinicswinter2018](http://www.regonline.com/clinicswinter2018)

## **March 25, 2018, 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm**

### **Butter, Yogurt and Cheese Making Class, Earthwise Farm & Forest, McIntosh Hill Rd., Randolph, VT**

Learn how to make delicious soft cheeses, yogurt and butter in your own kitchen! Get acquainted with using butter molds and adding herbs, or other flavors to your final product. With simple instruction and good quality raw milk, it is an easy and exciting activity providing nutritious, quality food for your family. COST: \$40 per person, \$75 for two people. CONTACT: Lisa McCrory at [Lmccrory560@gmail.com](mailto:Lmccrory560@gmail.com) for more information.

## **March 28, 2018, 9:30 am to 2:00 pm**

### **Dairy Farm Tour Workshop, Stonewall Farm, 242 Chesterfield Road, Keene, NH**

Join us for an interactive workshop to help you welcome the public to your farm. Whether a class of kindergarten students or executives from a major food company, this workshop will prepare you to tell your story, the journey from cow to consumer, and be a better advocate.

Co-facilitated by Jessica Ziehm, Executive Director of NYAAC and Laura Hardie, Communications Manager with the New England Dairy and Food Council

Cost: \$20 at the door (check or cash). All attendees will be entered to win a professional photo shoot on their farm - a \$500 value! After the workshop join us for a tour of Stonewall Farm and learn more about their mission. Space is limited, RSVP today! CONTACT: To RSVP please contact Emily Getty at [EGETTY@stonyfield.com](mailto:EGETTY@stonyfield.com) or 518-944-6709 or visit [https://www.evite.com/event/01B5LFWRPZ7RKMHP4EPH63PMAOKDFY/rsvp?utm\\_campaign=send\\_sharable\\_link&utm\\_medium=sharable\\_invite&utm\\_source=NA](https://www.evite.com/event/01B5LFWRPZ7RKMHP4EPH63PMAOKDFY/rsvp?utm_campaign=send_sharable_link&utm_medium=sharable_invite&utm_source=NA)

## **March 29, 2018 Are You Robbing Your Pastures to Feed Your**

### **Livestock Program?**

#### **Dryden Fire Hall, 26 North St, Dryden, NY**

On Thursday, March 29, Are Your Robbing Your Pastures to Feed Your Livestock will be the question for two noted grazing and grass-fed consultants at Dryden Fire Hall, 26 North Street, Dryden, NY. The 12-2:30 pm program begins with lunch followed by presentations by Altfred Krusenbaum, a Wisconsin-based grazing consultant helping grazing dairy and beef farmers, and Cleason Horst of Friendly Blends soil amendments in Canandaigua, NY.

Krusenbaum will discuss organically managing pastures on his 470-acre farm to generate profit. After operating a grazing dairy for several years, he now raises grass-fed, grass-finished beef; hay; and small grains. He worked for several years with the Natural Resources Conservation Services as a Certified Grazing Planner, and currently serves with the national Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program.

Horst will talk about the depletion of soil fertility in pastures and how farmers can identify this by understanding soil lab reports. He has experience with pastures from which there were only withdrawals and no deposits to the soil bank account long-term. Horst will describe how he reads a soil test to prioritize recommendations for re-investing nutrients into soil as the most important resource on the farm. For more information on the Cornell Organic Dairy Program, contact Fay Benson with the Cornell South Central NY Dairy Team at [afb3@cornell.edu](mailto:afb3@cornell.edu).

## **April 3-5, 2018**

### **The Our Farms, Our Future Conference, St. Louis, Missouri**

This national event, hosted by the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program and the National Center for Appropriate Technology ATTRA program, will bring together our diverse agricultural community including farmers and ranchers, agribusiness stakeholders, students, researchers, scientists, agency representatives and nonprofit leaders. Every decade SARE hosts a conference to look at the progress of sustainability in agriculture and to understand our trajectory for the future.

This is an incredible opportunity to join with many key stakeholders in the sustainable agriculture community. Participants will engage in important dialogue about the trajectory of sustainable agriculture for the next 30 years. Engaging panels, technical and issue-oriented breakout sessions, art and storytelling opportunities, long networking breaks, poster sessions, exhibitor booths and farm tours will all contribute to creating an unforgettable experience. To learn more, please refer to the schedule.

Please join us for a stimulating set of sessions on the future of sustainable agriculture in the United States.

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

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

deduct the sum of :

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

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

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

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

### Milk handlers please send payments to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Producers—please send this form AND YOUR EXEMPT FORM to NODPA, Attn Ed Maltby, Executive Director, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342, so we can track who has signed up and forward this form to the milk handler. **If you need assistance in applying for the exemption, check here \_\_\_\_\_.** Thank you.

## Subscribe to the NODPA News and support NODPA!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Are you a certified organic dairy producer? YES NO

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

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

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

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

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

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

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### From the MODPA Treasurer

**A**s I write this I am watching spring start to appear. The snow is melting and there are signs of the season to come. I am hoping that the change in the season can bring us a fresh start. Like most lifelong farmers I try to look at the glass as half full. This year is shaping up to be one of the hardest ever to do that. I have just been in Washington DC for a week. There seems to be very little support from them. It appears that we will have to go it alone. Dairy as a whole is such a small part of their world that they seem to want to just avoid any serious conversation. Rural America doesn't seem to have a place at the table. There appears to be no willingness to step up to the plate and do the right thing.

A good friend of mine recently told me that he cannot remember a time that looked as bleak as it appears right now. Like me, he was a survivor of the 80's. Many of us remember the wasteland from those days. What will be left after this round of change? I am scared for this country as a whole, but am really concerned about our farmers. How long will many of us deal with the stressful situation? If the stress is getting to you, please reach out to someone. Don't be afraid to ask for help. There are resources available. If you are ever in need, do not hesitate to me or any of the other board members. I will gladly do what I can to help. Sometimes we just need someone to listen to us.

With the lack of support from our politicians we must take our futures into our own hands. As many of you know this is something that I have proposed for years. We have the choice to make between to control or to be controlled. As farmers, we have the ability to turn this around, but our time to do this is running out. We know what needs to be done; so let's do it. It is our duty. We need to get this done now, not only for ourselves but for the future generations.

With the rush of spring planting right around the corner I wish for a safe and productive season for all. Feel free to share your thoughts and concerns with me or any of the other board members.

Blessings to all,

**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

#### Wisconsin

Darlene Coehoorn, President  
 Viewpoint Acres Farm  
 N5878 Hwy C, Rosendale, WI 54974  
 ddviewpoint@yahoo.com  
 Phone: 920-921-5541

Jim Greenberg, Vice-President  
 EP 3961 Drake Avenue  
 Stratford, WI 54484  
 greenbfirms@tznnet.com  
 Phone: 715-687-8147

Bruce Drinkman, Treasurer  
 3253 150th Avenue  
 Glenwood City, WI 54013  
 bdrinkman@hotmail.com  
 Phone: 715-265-4431

John Kiefer, Director  
 S10698 Troy Rd, Sauk City, WI 53583  
 taofarmer@direcway.com  
 Phone: 608-544-3702

Jim Small, Director  
 26548 Locust Ave.  
 Wilton, WI 54670  
 Tel: 608-435-6700

#### Iowa

Andy Schaefer, Director  
 25037 Lake Rd  
 Garnavillo, IA 52049  
 Tel: 563-964-2758

#### Michigan

Ed Zimba, Zimba Dairy  
 7995 Mushroom Rd  
 DeFord, MI 48729  
 zimbadaairy@tband.net  
 Phone: 989-872-2680

#### Ohio

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



# Classified Ads

continued from page 34

## FORAGES, BEDDING & GRAINS

**Late 1st cut org hay.** Small square or 5 ft round net wrapped stored inside. Call for price.

Name: Don Hatfield

Email: defleppmom@hotmail.com

Phone: 315 497 0157

Location: Moravia NY

**For sale: 40 or 50 large square bales** first cut baleage wrapped in tube. Baled early June. Mixed grass and clover. Also large amount of 4 by 5 dry round bales stored outside.

Late first cut. Make reasonable offer. Trucking available.

-Loyal Martin, Philadelphia, NY, loyalanasha@gmail.com, 315- 783-0223.

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### From the President's Desk

continued from page 2

economist with the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics at the University of Vermont. He was a frequent contributor to this newsletter over the years as he kept track, in the way an economist does, of the financial realities of organic dairy farmers in Vermont. He tracked farms that chose to participate in his study over several years, comparing organic farms to each other and with conventional dairies. He gave us some averages and comparisons that we could use as benchmarks in assessing our own farms. His roots as a dairy "farm kid" showed; he really understood how the small farms in his study operated, and farmers found him easy to talk with and understand. We were blessed to know him.

*Liz Bawden, NODPA President*

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



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[www.agri-dynamics.com](http://www.agri-dynamics.com)

## Advertise With Us!

**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](http://www.nodpa.com/directory.shtml) or contact Nora Owens.

**2018 Ad rates and sizes listed below.**

**Deadline for advertising in the  
May, 2018 issue is April 15, 2018.**

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

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

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

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

**NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
NORTHAMPTON, MA  
PERMIT NO. 4256**

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# Calendar

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Visit: [https://ofof.sare.org/?utm\\_source=email%20marketing%20Mailigen&utm\\_campaign=OFOF%20Release%20%233&utm\\_medium=email](https://ofof.sare.org/?utm_source=email%20marketing%20Mailigen&utm_campaign=OFOF%20Release%20%233&utm_medium=email)

**Advance Notice:**

**December 2 – 5, 2018**

**7th National Grazing Lands Conference: Taking the Gamble out of Grazing –Peppermill Resort and Casino, Reno, NV –**

This conference will provide you with a forum for discussion and exchange of grazing land information and technology, an opportunity to identify grazing land research and program needs, and a chance to see new products and services. Submit an Abstract: <https://www.cvent.com/c/abstracts/a9eda2a6-ffd7-4174-917d-0fae56614ed2>. Register: <http://www.cvent.com/events/7th-national-grazing-lands-conference/event-summary-564c8780432141b-0beb4d2ff69e08a46.aspx>