

# NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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L to R- Dog Henry, Jason Schnauber, Monica Walldroff-Schnauber, Eliana Walldroff, Anne and Ed Walldroff, Oliver Van Pelt, Maria Walldroff-Van Pelt, and David Van Pelt

## FEATURED FARM: HOMESTEAD FIELDS, LaFargeville, NY

**H**omestead Fields has been in the Walldroff family for more than 100 years. Ed is the fifth generation to work the land located in LaFargeville, New York, about 100 miles north of Syracuse. LaFargeville is ten miles from the St. Lawrence River and the historic 1,000 Islands recreational area.

During the 1970's Ed's parents ran a 200-cow dairy, a 1,500-acre crop operation, and a farm equipment business with Ed, his five brothers, and a brother-in-law. Ed primarily managed the dairy.

After 20 years of doing business together,

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## Democracy Worked: USDA Terminates the Organic Checkoff Proposal, Citing "Lack of Support"

*By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

**O**n May 15th, the USDA announced that it was terminating the "rulemaking proceeding that proposed to establish a national research and promotion program for certified organic products under authority of the Commodity Promotion, Research and Information Act of 1996 (1996 Act)." The Organic Trade

Association proposal for an organic check off was denied by the USDA because there was "uncertain industry support for and outstanding substantive issues with the proposed program." In plain English, the USDA agreed with the 1,895 organic producers,

*continued on page 4*

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Message from the NODPA President

**T**he cold, wet spring has delayed spring field work here in northern New York. And although the cows can enjoy a few mouthfuls of grass in their spring "sacrifice" field, no cows are out to pasture yet. On this Mothers' Day weekend, we look anxiously across the fences as if we could hurry the grass along, the cows and the farmers.

Spring marks the natural beginning of a new season, a time when we can feel freed from the losses of the past year. It must be what makes farmers the most optimistic people of all, because deep down in every crusty, curmudgeon-farmer beats a heart that believes this year will be better. And perhaps by believing this, we can help make it so.

It is, however, tough to feel the spring exultation as we hear of some farms across the country losing their markets, and others

choosing to exit the industry due to their insufficient pay price. We feel the tension among our own neighbors who are behind in the feed bills; can't afford enough seed to plant the ground they have plowed; and wonder how they will get the work done without as many hired hands as last year.

We have been heading into uncharted waters as an industry. We are certainly moving toward a quota system. We will probably not use that word for it, but processors are trying to match supply with demand with more accuracy. In our contracts, we will have to agree to our farm's production level and stay there. Cows will probably be bought and sold among neighbors and in auction barns to adjust the milk production. Organic farm sales in our area are already offering an "organic market" to be included with the herd of cows, so the right to produce organic milk is transferred to the herd's new owner. That access to a market now has a quantitative value, represented in a higher price paid for the herd of cows. Sounds like a quota system to me. Not that that is a bad thing; it is certainly a better approach than the roller coaster approach of the conventional dairy market.

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## From the NODPA Desk: May 2018

*By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

**F**irst, an explanation of why this issue of NODPA News is late. Our longtime friend, supporter and Webmaster/Newsletter layout designer Chris Hill was diagnosed with a very treatable form of Lymphoma; treatable, yes, but not uncomplicated. He has been receiving treatment since March and has had setbacks which impacted his ability to return to work. We are pleased for him and his family that the illness is treatable and he will be able to resume his life moving forward. We are also very grateful, that in this time of treatment and convalescence, Chris agreed to layout this issue of the NODPA News. We appreciate his dedication to inform family farmers and all his work for organic agriculture. His patience and acceptance of working with us all, including those of us that have trouble meeting deadlines (me mostly) has made the NODPA News the professional publication that is respected and appreciated in the organic community. We wish you a speedy recovery Chris.

It is rare, increasingly so, that producers can claim a 'win'. The USDA announcement that they rejected the proposed regulation for an Organic Check-off program and had terminated the process was a WIN for us as producers and producer groups working together. Since 2011, organic farmer organizations and independent organic farmers worked together to stop the proposed organic checkoff. With very few resources to fight this regulation that would have affected every certified organic farmer and processor in the US, the No Organic Checkoff Coalition garnered a lot of opposition to the proposal by making sure farmers and their member organizations understood what was contained within the 150-page proposed Order.

NODPA and OFARM initially responded to the OTA initiative and used many different tactics to raise objections which were met with nasty personal vitriol and condescension by OTA's previous Executive Director. As we grew the voice of opposition, many producer groups and nonprofits joined into an ad-hoc coalition stretching across the country. Patty Lovera of Food and Water Watch and Liana Hoodes played essential roles in advising, supporting and believing in what we were told was impossible to do. Kate Mendenhall, now Director of the Organic Farmers Association, took our growing organiza-

tion and transformed it into an effective voice that was careful to pay attention to what producers were saying. Cornucopia, NOFA NY, Organic Consumers Association, Organic Seed and Trade Association, Land Stewardship Project and many individuals contributed time, money and access to grassroots and social media activities. This issue was so important to producers that we ran the risk of a very divisive fight if this was taken to a referendum. With very few financial resources, we took the USDA process and made it our own, responding to every twist and turn right down to a change in administration. Now, we continue the good work of ensuring that producers have a seat at the head of the table in the knowledge that we are many committed organic producers and we can shape our future.

Our NODPA Field Days are fast approaching. Our NODPA Board invited Mark Kastel of the Cornucopia Institute to be the keynote speaker. We felt that in these difficult times for organic dairy producers, Mark can bring a wealth of history and personal experience to our event. As always the presentations will be based on education and practical ways that organic dairy producers and their families can survive and thrive in this difficult organic dairy market. We hope to see as many as possible at the event so that we can share experience and support each other with networking or just plain gossip and exchange of family news.

We will be keeping an eye on the Farm Bill in the next many months as it wends its way through Congress. One of the advantages of having the organic certification housed in the USDA AMS NOP is that it brings the legitimacy and legal power of the Federal government to organic regulations, third party verification and enforcement. The disadvantage is that as part of the Federal government, organic integrity can be threatened by both the actions and inaction of politicians and appointed officials. NODPA is a member of the National Organic Coalition, the Organic Farmers Association and the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition so that we can be well informed and have access to Congress and the USDA. We will not keep you well informed on all the twists and turns of the political process but we will make sure that you know what the key points are and when your elected representatives need to hear your voices. Please respond when we ask you to – the folks you have elected to serve and protect your interest want to hear from you not me.

Good harvest weather to you all and a high five to John Bobbe of OFARM! ♦



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Democracy Worked!

# USDA Terminates the Organic Checkoff Proposal, Citing “Lack of Support”

*continued from page 1*

businesses and consumers that signed a petition against the organic checkoff, created by the No Organic Checkoff Coalition, representing 31 organizations and more than 6,000 organic farmers from the Western, Midwestern, and Eastern United States, and the comments that unequivocally said the checkoff would never work. For once, the process worked and a grassroots movement of producers made their voice heard over a barrage of promotion of the proposal financed by hundreds of thousands of industry dollars.

### When and where did this misplaced and inappropriate idea start?

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) first floated the idea of an organic checkoff with proposed language to Senator Leahy office in 2002. Leaders of the organic community worked with the Missouri Rural Crisis Center who had been, and are still, fighting conventional beef and pork checkoffs to highlight all the problems with the proposal. Senator Leahy's office failed to take it up.

In its next iteration in 2011, the OTA also tried and failed to attract the support of key senators who they were hoping would champion their plan. Once producer groups were alerted to the back door approaches they were quickly able to educate senate aides as to the opposition of producers.

At that time, the OTA invested \$50,000 on a feasibility study in Phase 1 of their plan for an Organic Check Off as part of a Federal Research and Promotion Program (FRPP). For their feasibility study, they used the leading lobbyists in Washington, the Podesta Group, which concentrated on congressional support rather than look at the support of the organic community. In fact, they refused to accept any comments from outside groups like NODPA or have an open process similar to the National Organic Action Plan which had been recently completed.

In January 2012, after approval from their Board, OTA launched Phase 2 of their plan. Phase

2 included plans to hold town hall meetings across the country to help educate the organic community about their proposal and to gain reaction from stakeholders within the community before reaching any final decisions on next steps. Before even hearing any feedback from the organic community, in March 2012, the OTA took the next step by using the Podesta Group to privately

lobby Senators in Congress to sponsor legislation that would provide a technical correction to past regulation and also allow for the formation of an organic check-off program. NODPA and other groups mobilized to inform key senators that OTA was not representing the wishes of organic farmers and that while producers supported producers being exempt from the conventional check-off they did not support an organic check-off.

In April 2012, an amendment proposing an organic check-off program was introduced to the Senate version of the 2012 Farm Bill. On April 26, 2012, the senate agriculture committee released their Farm Bill that required the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a feasibility study on an organic industry check-off program that would mandate industry fees to fund marketing, promotion and research projects aimed at boosting the value of the sector. This rapid movement from investigation to legislation was a surprise to most of the organic community, especially as the OTA-proposed program lacked any detail about who will be assessed and how the monies would be spent.

In the face of OTA's continued lobbying of the Congress to include their own legislative language, the Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM Inc.) and the Federation Of Organic Dairy Farmers (FOOD Farmers) submitted a letter to the leadership of the House on Monday, July 9 2012, that explained the position of organic farmers, producers, ranchers, growers and consumer groups.

The OTA Board's decision to appeal directly to Congress for language to be inserted into what eventually became the 2014 Farm Bill, to establish organic certification (a process based verification of production systems) as a commodity enabled them to apply to USDA for a multi-commodity organic checkoff. The OTA's lobbyist convinced a divided Congress to vote unanimously to support their proposals and badly misrepresented the views of the whole organic community. Retroactively, as an after-thought, OTA and its member-only GRO Organic Core Committee began preliminary discussions with the organic sector participants to determine the need for an organic promotion and research order. Based on NODPA and OFARM member participation and atten

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dance at the majority of OTA town halls and webinars, we were able to personally attest that there was significant farmer opposition to the OTA's and GRO Organic Committee's proposal, yet

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Organic Farmers Association applauds USDA for termination of Organic Checkoff: Press Release

May 15, 2018 (Kutztown, PA) – Organic Farmers Association (OFA), representing America's certified organic farmers, applauds the U.S. Department of Agriculture's action to terminate the rulemaking process to establish a mandatory national research and promotion program for organic (Organic Check-off). The proposed program was divisive among the organic community, and checkoff programs must have industry support to be instituted—this proposal did not.

The proposed Organic Research and Promotion Program (ORPP) would have required all certified organic operations to submit annual gross sales reports, and all entities whose organic gross sales exceed \$250,000 would have been mandated to pay 0.001% of their annual organic net sales. Dave Colson, President of Organic Farmers Association and certified organic farmer in southeast Maine commented, "Organic farmers already fulfill a heavy load of annual paperwork for their organic certification and additional federally-mandated paperwork would have been overly burdensome—especially for the 75% of certified organic farmers estimated to be exempt from the checkoff."

Organic Farmers Association agrees with the Organic Trade Association and other organic stakeholder groups that organic research and promotion are necessary and needed by the whole organic community. We hope that together we can unite organic stakeholders to identify creative solutions to support organic agricultural research and grow organic markets.

Organic Farmers Association represents certified organic farmers—the bedrock of the organic movement. Organic Farmers Association encourages the USDA to continue to listen to the nation's certified organic farming community to support the growth of America's organic markets fueled by domestic organic food



### Why We Oppose an Organic Checkoff

1. This will be just another Tax on farmers either directly or indirectly when processors pass the cost down.
2. Want to promote the benefits of Organic? You can't in a check-off. Even something as simple and accurate as "Organic is the Gold Standard," will not be allowed by USDA.
3. The Check-off system is fundamentally broken for farmers – the federally mandated check-off programs have restrictive guidelines, heavy bureaucracy, lack of accountability and cost of administration.
4. Check-off programs have a history of using check-off funds inappropriately, with poor representation of farmer priorities in granting of research dollars.
5. Commodity check-off programs that are successful see a decline of family farmers in business.
6. Promoting organic sales now will not increase organic acreage in the US but will increase lower priced organic imports.

Join the over 430 organic farmers and 300 organic farmer-supporters who have voiced their strong opposition to a mandatory organic checkoff. Voice your opposition at: <http://bit.ly/nocheckoff>

For more information please go to: [www.organiccheckoff.com](http://www.organiccheckoff.com) or email [info@noorganiccheckoff.com](mailto:info@noorganiccheckoff.com)

and commodities.

###

### ABOUT ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION

The mission of Organic Farmers Association is to provide a strong and unified national voice for domestic certified organic producers. With the purpose to build and support a farmer-led national organic farmer movement and national policy platform by: developing and advocating policies that benefit organic farmers; strengthening and supporting the capacity of organic farmers and farm organizations; and supporting collaboration and leadership among state, regional and national organic farmer organizations. Learn more at [OrganicFarmersAssociation.org](http://OrganicFarmersAssociation.org).

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

**Democracy Worked!***continued from page 5*

this opposition was not accurately recorded in the meeting notes. One of those town hall meetings was held at a NODPA Annual meeting and Field Days in September, 2012, at which they found producers overwhelmingly, did not want an organic checkoff. The OTA minutes from this meeting were not published until public pressure was brought to bear on OTA's Board to publish them, along with minutes from other meetings where there was no support for the organic checkoff. There was a similar situation with the OFARM meeting with OTA representatives.

On May 5, 2015 the Organic Trade Association published their 50-page application to establish their Generic Research and Promotion Order for Organic. This proposal was written by a committee established by the trade organization with little input from producers on the final document. With their proposal, they also submitted a \$250,000 bond to pay for the expense of the proposed regulation.

Following the publication of the OTA's proposal and in response to pressure from producer groups, USDA AMS issued a news release inviting alternative proposals or partial proposals during the period between May 18th and July 20th, 2015. AMS' invitation did not include a request for comments on OTA's proposal or the merits of an organic research and promotion program but did allow for producer groups and their supporters to question the basis of the OTA proposal. AMS received 8 partial proposals: Food & Water Watch (FWW), Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES), National Farmers Union (NFU), Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA), Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA), Ohio Ecological Food & Farming Association (OEFFA), Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM), and the Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA).

On May 3, 2016, OTA submitted a revised proposal detailing changes made to their previous proposal for regulation. And, on June 7, 2016, the No Organic Checkoff Coalition, representing 750 signatories opposed to an organic checkoff, including 25 organic farmer organizations and businesses, responded to that recently revised OTA proposal. The final paragraph of their response sums up the views of those against the checkoff: "A mandatory federal organic checkoff is not the right fit for the organic community. We urge you to outrightly reject OTA's proposal and encourage the organic community to explore other options."

A proposed rule was published in the Federal Register on Jan. 18, 2017, with a 60-day comment period that ended March 20, 2017. On February 27, 2017, after numerous requests from producer groups the comment period was extended until April 19, 2017. In response to the rule, USDA received and reviewed more than

14,700 comments filed by producers and other stakeholders.

On May 11, 2018, just over a year after the close of the comment period, the USDA terminated the Organic Checkoff Proposal:

On May 11, 2018, just over a year after the close of the comment period, the USDA terminated the Organic Checkoff Proposal:

"USDA based the termination on lack of consensus within the industry in support for the proposed program and divergent views on how to resolve issues in implementing the proposed program. Some of the concerns USDA took into consideration were the impact of de minimis level exemptions and high-value commodities on the program, how organic promotion would affect other agricultural commodities, the voting methodology that would be used, the financial burden on small entities and the challenges of tracing imported organic products. Additional concerns were the method of assessment for imports, the assessment of non-food products and products "made with (specified ingredients)" and the paperwork burden on covered entities."

The following are lessons for the organic community that can be learned from this eight year debacle that divided the organic community and cost the OTA hundreds of thousands of dollars that could have been better used to promote organic:

- Producers working together at the grassroots level can make their opinions heard and defeat well financed campaigns based on false assumptions. An open process may take longer but will be more successful
- Consult producers first before DC lobbyists when you are going to spend producer money.
- The proposed program was divisive among the organic community, and checkoff programs must have industry support to be instituted—this proposal did not. If you are going to use a Federal program, make sure that the proposal fits the program, especially as organic is a multi-commodity sector.
- OTA failed to realize that producers had been fighting against checkoff programs for decades and would never trust the existing USDA structure. This bias was confirmed by several Inspector Generals' reports. The OTA's producer-blind process that attempted to railroad opinion to meet their preconceived proposal confirmed that producer bias.

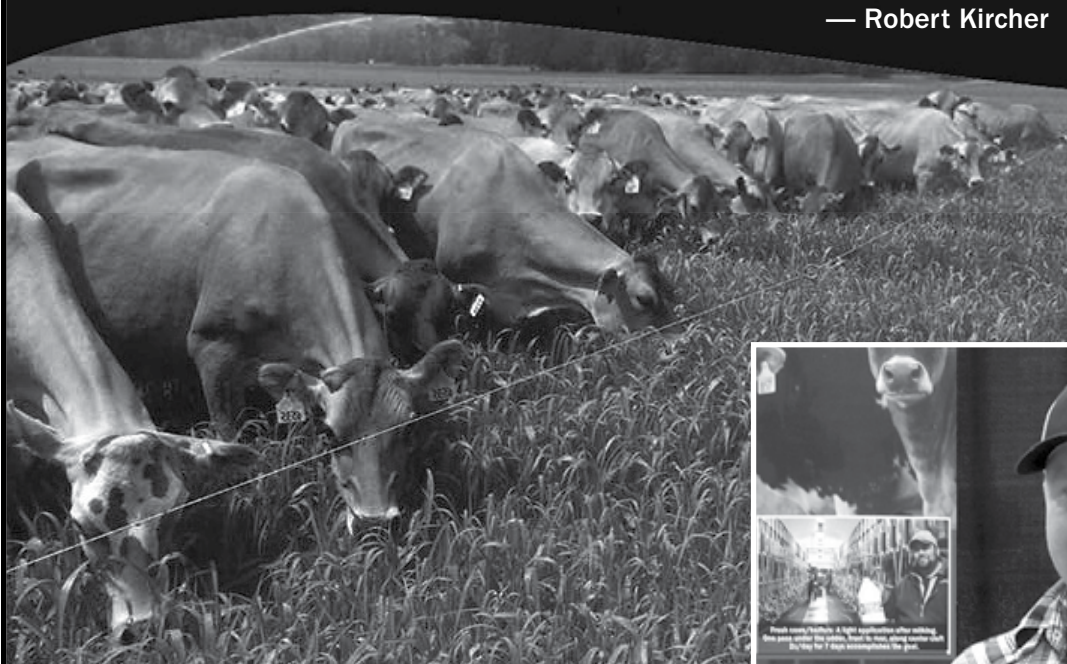
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- Members of the coalition (No Organic Checkoff) did make numerous alternative suggestions including a voluntary checkoff (pointing out several like the Pistachio Growers).



# ***“...an important piece in our management.”***

— Robert Kircher



**FOREST GLEN OAKS FARMS, DAYTON, OREGON**  
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Robert enjoys the challenge and fell in love with working around dairy cows at Forest Glen Oaks since he was 11. He earned his ag and dairy science degree from Oregon State before becoming a manager and then partner with Dan Bansen and his family at their second and third generation farm.

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

**What's Wrong with Organic Certification,  
and What Should Be Done About It?***By Adam Diamond*

In the March issue of NODPA News, Arden Landis briefly comments on a major structural flaw in the entire organic certification regime, the apparent conflict of interest between certifiers and businesses seeking organic certification. This article elaborates on the nature of this problem, its consequences, and possible solutions. Landis reflects on his experience working as an independent certifier for four certifying agencies. He feels that these agencies are working hard to conduct certifications in accordance with the National Organic Standards. However, “if I see one real problem in the whole process, it is that the agencies make their money off the farms they certify....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.”

The problem Landis is talking about here is not unique to organic certification; any 3rd party certification scheme is vulnerable to this dynamic of the certifiers’ independence being questioned because their economic survival is dependent on their providing positive reports to their clients. While a negative certification report is not necessarily fatal to the business relationship between a certifier and its client, it is only reasonable to expect businesses to seek out more lenient certifiers if they have the option of doing so and feel their current certifier is more exacting than others. The organic certification system may be more vulnerable to this conflict of interest, though, than industrial certification regimes because of the great variety between farms in what is grown or raised and what methods are used to grow crops or raise livestock. Farms have to adapt to local soil, weather, and topographical conditions, and likewise animal husbandry practices will vary in accordance with production goals, size of farm, and breeds. No two farms, even two organic farms are alike; this provides space for divergence perspectives on whether a particular farm is operating in accordance with organic standards.

The principle behind 3rd party certification is that the certifying body is providing highly qualified inspectors to assure the public and customers that certified entities are operating in accordance with a set of standards that have been set by a 3rd party, in the case of organic standards—the United States Department of Agriculture. Third party certification gives certified businesses a badge of approval that not only confirms adherence to a set of standards, but confers a certain status that translates into advantages in the market place. It may lead to less scrutiny from government regulators as the badge of certification indicates to regulators that the business in question is taking extra steps to operate its business in accordance with strict social, environmental, or quality standards. It generally translates into the ability



to tout one’s certification status to consumers as an indicator of quality, of environmental stewardship, or of social consciousness. On a broader social level, certification provides assurances to the public that firms abiding by a particular certification are operating in a way that provides public benefits or unique benefits to consumers. Reflecting the former, certified organic farms are not supposed to use dangerous pesticides, which should reduce potential health hazards resulting from runoff into streams and groundwater. Reflecting the latter, some consumers believe that their health will benefit from cows that graze and are not injected with antibiotics or hormones that increase milk production.

Regardless, the critical point here is that while individual firms certainly benefit financially from getting a positive certification report, the certification regime provides benefits to the public and/or consumers. The firms being certified know this, and thus are likely to place pressure on their certifiers to produce favorable reports that will make them look better in the eyes of the consuming public. While such pressure may not be overt, the controversies around certification of mega organic dairies speak to this exact dynamic of very large farms looking for certifiers that will produce favorable certification reports, earning them the prestige and marketplace advantage that organic certification confers, while not having to pasture as much as smaller organic dairies that are inspected by different certifying agencies, with

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# AGRI· DYNAMICS

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Staff Ruminant Nutritionist  
for Organic Valley

Can 100% Grass Diet Meet Nutritional  
Requirements of Lactating Dairy Cows?;  
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Milk Solids in Cows on Pasture

Sarah Flack

Author of The Art and Science  
of Grazing and Organic Dairy Production

Pastures from the Plants' Perspective;  
Graziers Tool Box-Using Livestock  
to Improve Pastures

Steve Gabriel

Ecologist, Forest Farmer and Educator

How to Improve Grazing practices  
with the use of Silvopasture

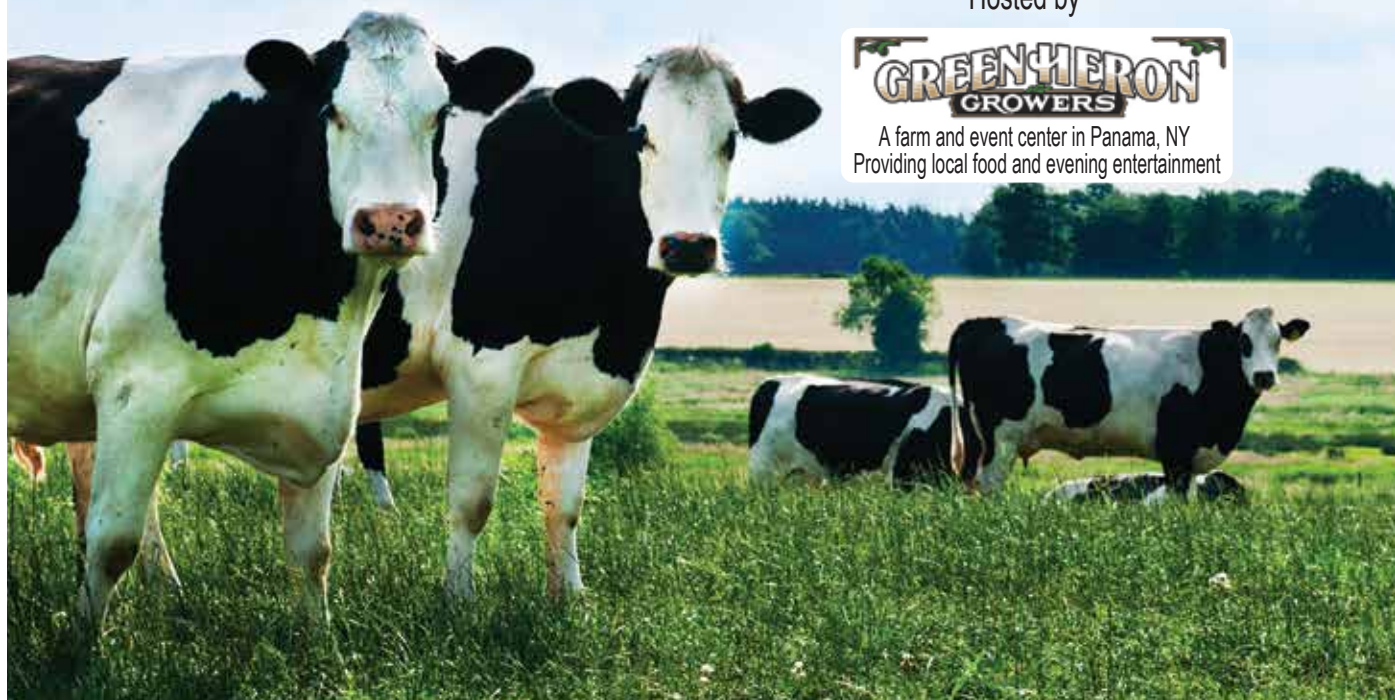
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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Organic Certification

*continued from page 8*

more stringent interpretations of the National Organic Standards. Even if certifiers have not been explicitly asked by these mega organic dairies to produce favorable certification reports, the ability of farms to “shop around” for lenient certifiers contributes to the current mess. Confined animal feeding operations are certified organic even though visual observation and laboratory tests of milk from such large farms points to little or no pasture in these cows’ dietary regimen during the grazing season, as required by the National Organic Standards. This reduces consumer confidence in the organic label and puts the economic squeeze on producers that strictly adhere to the pasture requirement.

Organic watchdogs such as Organic Consumers Association and the Cornucopia Institute have rightly called out bad actors for abusing loopholes in the standards and the lax government oversight of certifiers. They have even sued retailers for selling “organic” milk that was not produced in accordance with organic standards. However, blaming abuses on lenient interpretation of the standards and lax oversight of certifiers misses the fundamental flaw in the entire 3rd party organic certification system. The very entities that are charged with enforcement of standards depend for their survival on the repeated patronage of businesses that they could harm financially or even put out of business with negative reports. This brings us to a discussion of alternatives to this kind of financial arrangement. I propose a series of changes in the relationships between certifiers and certified entities that would go a long way towards eliminating this contradiction.

In order to sever the financial relationship between certifying agencies and their clients all organic farmers, processors and retailers would be assessed a small share of their previous year’s revenue, which would go into a general pool for paying certifiers. A committee would be set up by the National Organic Program, with representatives from all certifying agencies in the United States as well as two NOP staffers, two organic watchdog repre-

sentatives, and six farmers from different regions of the country and of different sizes. This committee would create a uniform fee structure based on complexity and size of operations. Entities seeking to gain organic certification or renew their current certification would be assigned a certifier based on their location and the fee for the certification inspection would be paid to the certifying agency from the general certification pool. Breaking the financial ties between certifying agencies and certified entities, and stopping the shopping around process would reduce pressure to be lenient in order to maintain business, lead to less variation in interpretation of the standards, and ultimately increase consumer confidence in the organic label. Beyond severing financial ties, it is important to eliminate the prospect of certifiers competing with each other on price, as this could drive a race to the bottom. Furthermore, to eliminate the possibility of certifiers becoming more lenient after developing close relationships with their clients, certifier assignments for individual enterprises would be switched every two years, with the records from one certifying agency being transferred to the next one in line. Switching from the current arrangement to this alternative scenario is a challenge, to say the least, but this proposal is being put forth to stimulate discussion and debate on this crucial issue that severely impedes the overall potential of organic certification to reduce environmental harm from farming, increase animal welfare, and create a healthier, more sustainable food system.

*Adam Diamond is an environmental and food systems consultant based in Takoma Park, MD. He has a Ph.D. in geography and has done extensive research on the structure and development of the organic dairy industry in the Northeast United States, as well as the evolution of supply management in Federal agricultural policy. Previously he did applied research on local and regional food systems at the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Marketing Service and worked at the School of International Service at American University, where he taught courses on global agricultural development, environmental sustainability and global health and commodity chains. He can be reached at adamvdiamond@gmail.com.*

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Democracy Worked: USDA Terminates the Organic Checkoff Proposal, Citing “Lack of Support”

*continued from page 6*

Organic Valley's voluntary checkoff was repeatedly quoted as a good example of where farmers control how funds are spent and results have to be shown before you get more money.

- OTA continually tried to paint an obviously false picture of what checkoff funds can be used for. In their most recent press release they continue to use examples of what the money could be used for that are inaccurate. Painting a false picture of how a program works insults the intelligence of producers and does nothing to build future respect for the process of governing a checkoff program or anything similar.
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respect for the process of governing a checkoff program or anything similar.

From the beginning of this process, we attempted to work with the OTA to look at the need to increase the level of support for organic research and to promote the integrity of the label but they preferred the advice and counsel of Washington-based lobbyists and an opaque process to an open dialogue with committed organic farmers. Working with other producer groups, non-profits and independent businesses, the No Organic Checkoff Coalition staunchly defended the basic right of all farmers to make a decision as to how their hard earned money would be spent. For OTA to use the excuse that the USDA is now hostile to organic is ignoring the very real concerns of the whole organic community and that, despite plowing many hundreds of thousands of dollars into the promotion of their plan, they failed to convince certified organic farmers and handlers of their argument.

This is a very real win for true democracy and the power of farmers to work together collectively to promote their interests. This is not a question of producers not wanting to spend their own money on promoting and improving organic as suggested by some industry leaders. As individuals and producer groups, we will continue to support organic research both financially and with our sweat equity, and will promote the benefits and integrity of organic production every day. ♦

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS



### Crossbreeding for the Future Profitability of Dairying

By Brad Heins, Associate Professor, Dairy, Department of Animal Science and Glenda Pereira, a PhD student in Animal Science studying crossbreeding in dairy pasture production systems, University of Minnesota. She can be reached by email, [gmpereir@umn.edu](mailto:gmpereir@umn.edu)

*This research paper was originally published in the Organic Dairy Research News e-newsletter, May 2018, West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC) in Morris, MN.*

#### Introduction to Crossbreeding

The ideal milking cow should have a calf without any trouble, produce high fat and protein, have superior fertility, a functional udder, and good feet and legs while being resistant to health problems. If a cow has these traits, she should have a long productive life. Trouble free cows do exist and they are often unrecognized by producers because they are never in the sick pen. Currently, around 9.2 million dairy cattle are in the United States and 82% of that total is predominantly purebred Holsteins. In recent years inbreeding has been rapidly rising in the purebred Holstein population. The average inbreeding of U.S. Holstein females is increasing at 0.25% per year since 2013, and the current 2018 estimate within the Holstein breed is 7.5% (Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding, USA). Inbreeding depression has resulted in decreased survival and higher death loss of Holstein cows.

Crossbreeding has been applied in other species such as swine and poultry to introduce hybrid vigor. In these species, improvements have been made to decrease mortality, increase gain to feed efficiency and meat and carcass quality traits, improving overall profitability. To benefit

from crossbreeding, sires of higher genetic merit must be utilized to retain the best traits of the parent breeds. In dairy cattle, crossbreeding Holstein cattle to Jersey sires has been a popular method in the U.S. as this makes up a high percentage of the current population of crossbreds. However, it wasn't until the early 2000's that crossbreeding with Montbéliarde, Normande, and Viking Red sires became a trend.

#### Research with cooperating farmers

**Table 1: Profit per day**

Breed Group	US Dollars (\$) (Excludes potential health costs)
Purebred Holstein	\$4.17
Scandinavian Red x Holstein	\$4.32
Montbéliarde x Holstein	\$4.39
Normande x Holstein	\$3.89

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

The University of Minnesota worked with seven California dairies and compared purebred Holstein cows to Normande x Holstein, Montbéliarde x Holstein and Scandinavian Red x Holstein crossbred cows. All three groups of crossbred cows had lower 305-day fat plus protein production compared to purebred Holsteins across lactations, but this difference was small between purebred Holsteins and the Montbéliarde x Holstein cows (-53 lbs.) and Scandinavian Red x Holstein cows (-64 lbs.).

The crossbred groups were all consistently superior to the purebred Holsteins for fertility across the first five lactations, potentially due to the reduced calving difficulty and stillbirths observed for the crossbreds. Twenty-five percent of Holsteins did not calve a second time, whereas only 11% to 15% of crossbreds did not calve a second time. Montbéliarde x Holstein and Scandinavian Red x Holstein crossbred cows had 50% to 44%, respectively, more lifetime profit per cow and more profit per day than purebred Holsteins, Table 1. Because Normande x Holstein cows had 26% greater lifetime profit per cow, but had 6.7% less profit per day than purebred Holsteins, this crossbreeding rotation is not as recommended for high producing dairy herds like the ones utilized in this research study.

Starting in 2008, 8 dairy herds in Minnesota started crossbreeding with Montbéliarde and Viking Red sires. Purebred Holstein cows and heifers were bred to Montbéliarde (Montbéliarde x Holstein) and to Viking Red (Viking Red x Holstein), and calved for the first time from December 2010 to April 2014. In this study, purebred Holstein and crossbred cows were managed the same to properly be evaluated side by side on a herd management level. Unlike the results in the California study, 305-day fat plus protein production was 31 kg greater for the crossbreds (both groups combined) compared to the purebred Holsteins during first lactation. Fertility was superior for the crossbred groups compared to purebred Holsteins during first lactation. Crossbred cows were bred 2 days earlier on average than purebred Hol-

steins, and first service conception rate in addition to the conception rate across the first 5 inseminations increased 7%, during first lactation. Furthermore, the combined crossbred cows had 10 fewer days open compared with purebred Holsteins. Across the 8 herds, breed groups did not differ for survival to 60 days in milk; however, the superior fertility of the crossbred cows increased the number of crossbreds (71%) that calved a second time within 14 months compared with the Holstein cows (63%). For survival to second calving, the combined crossbred cows had 4% greater survival compared with the Holstein cows.



### Research conducted with the University of Minnesota dairy herds

Geneticists at the University of Minnesota have been crossbreeding with the Holstein, Montbéliarde and Viking Red sires at the University of Minnesota's two dairy research herds in the early 2000's. The first dairy herd is located in the middle of the city of St. Paul on the Agricultural campus (figure 1; star to the right) has 100 milking cows, consisting of purebred Holsteins and Pro-CROSS (a prescribed crossbreeding program that uses Holstein, Montbéliarde, and Viking Red breeding) crossbreds. Cows at this dairy are maintained in a tie-stall barn year round and have ac

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Crossbreeding

*continued from page 13*

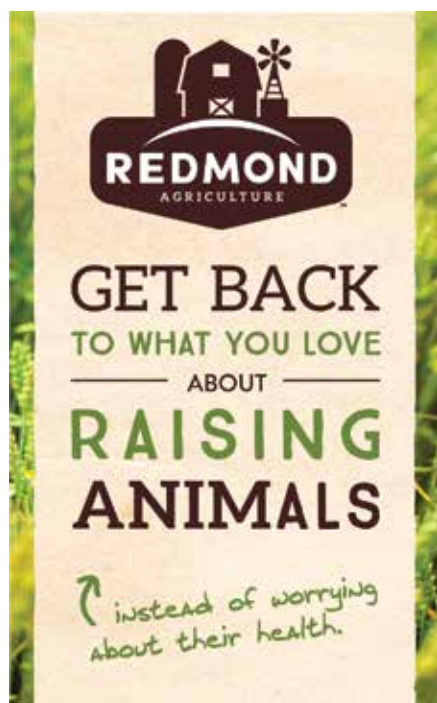
cess to a compost bedded pack barn. The second dairy is located at the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris, Minnesota (figure 1; star to the left). There are 150 organic cows and 150 low-input conventional cows, and both herds include purebred Holsteins, ProCROSS crossbreds (MVH) and a three-breed cross of Normande x Jersey x Viking Red (NJV). During the summer grazing season (May to October) organic cows are on pasture and supplemented daily with 2.72 kg of corn per cow, and low-input cows are fed a total mixed ration in an outdoor confinement dry-lot. During the winter season (November to April) all cows were fed a total mixed ration consisting of corn silage, alfalfa haylage, corn, soybean meal, and minerals in an outwintering lot and a compost barn. Because cattle in this herd consume pasture, Normande and Jersey breeds are utilized in this herd, but not in the St. Paul herd. Normande and Jersey cattle can consume forages and still produce adequate amounts of milk with high fat and protein.

### St. Paul Dairy Research Feed intake

At the St. Paul dairy herd, a tie-stall barn allows cows to be fed individually. Measuring the feed efficiency of dairy cattle is crucial but costly. Feed intake trials have been conducted consequently in the St. Paul dairy. An early study with crossbreds measured the daily dry matter intake during the first 150 days of 1st lactation for 40 purebred Holstein

cows, 33 Montbéliarde x Holstein and 24 Montbéliarde x (Jersey x Holstein) crossbreds. Dry matter intake was not significantly different for all breed groups; however, purebred Holstein cattle consumed 20.4 kg per day, Montbéliarde x Holstein crossbreds consumed 19.8 kg per day and Montbéliarde x (Jersey x Holstein) crossbreds consumed 19.7 kg per day. Both groups of Montbéliarde crossbreds had greater Body Condition Score (BCS) (3.30 vs. 2.74) and Body Weight (BW); (551 vs. 528 kg) than the purebred Holstein cows. Both groups of Montbéliarde crossbreds had 18 fewer days open than the purebred Holsteins, and this is presumed by the relationship between fertility and BCS especially during early lactation.

In a recent study, daily feed intake and refusals of purebred Holstein and ProCROSS cattle were recorded for the first 150 days of lactation. Production, BCS and body weights were also recorded. This study included 60 purebred Holsteins and 63 ProCROSS in 1st lactation, and 37 purebred Holsteins and 43 ProCROSS in 2nd and 3rd lactations. ProCROSS cattle had greater body weight and more body condition than purebred Holsteins in 1st lactation, but consumed on average 141 kg less feed in the first 150 days, while producing similar amounts of fat and protein. In 2nd lactation, ProCROSS cows consumed on average 232 kg less feed than purebred Holsteins while and had similar production in the 150 days of lactation. The income over feed cost for farmers would be 34 cents/cow/day for first lactation and 60 cents/cow/day for second plus lactations for ProCROSS compared



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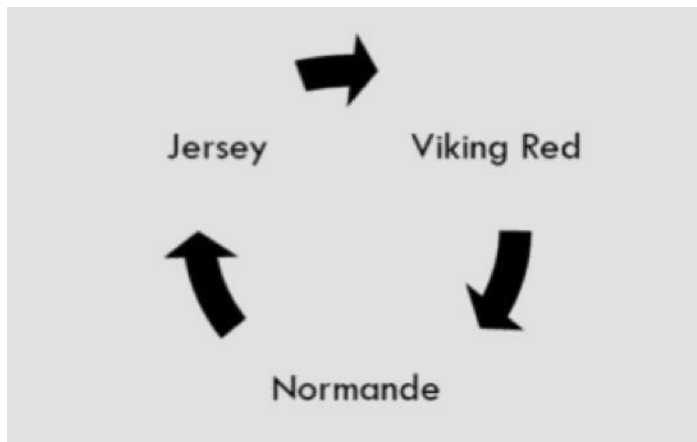
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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

to Holsteins. The ProCROSS cows consumed less feed but still maintained more body weight and body condition than purebred Holsteins.

### Morris dairy research



At the dairy in Morris, we have developed two crossbreeding designs and are comparing them to Holstein herd mates. In one 3-breed rotation, we are using the Holstein, Montbéliarde, and Viking Red breeds (ProCROSS, MVH). The other 3-breed rota-

tion, Figure 2, uses the Normande, Viking Red, and Jersey breeds (no Holstein in the rotation, NJV). The number of cows will only continue to grow as we continue these crossbreeding systems into the future. Therefore, some results are preliminary from the Morris herd.

The Jersey-sired and Viking Red-sired crossbred cows had lower 305-day fat plus protein production compared to their Holstein herd mates during first lactation. The Viking Red crossbreds were lower for fat plus protein than other crossbred sired cows because the Viking Red cows were from dams that were 50% Jersey, and therefore, the Jersey influence may have caused the lower production, which was observed in the Jersey-sired crossbreds. The Montbéliarde and Normande-sired crossbred cows were similar to their Holstein herd mates for fat plus protein production during first lactation. The Viking Red, Montbéliarde, and Normande-sired crossbred cows showed numerical advantage for fertility.

### Meat quality

Less research has been performed on the meat quality, amino acid profile and consumer preference of crossbred dairy steers

*continued on page 19*

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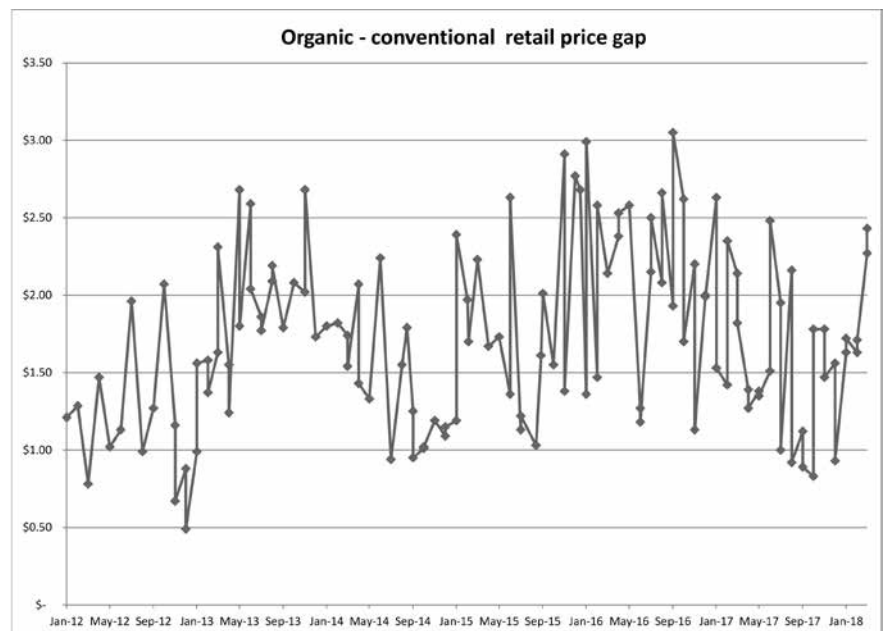
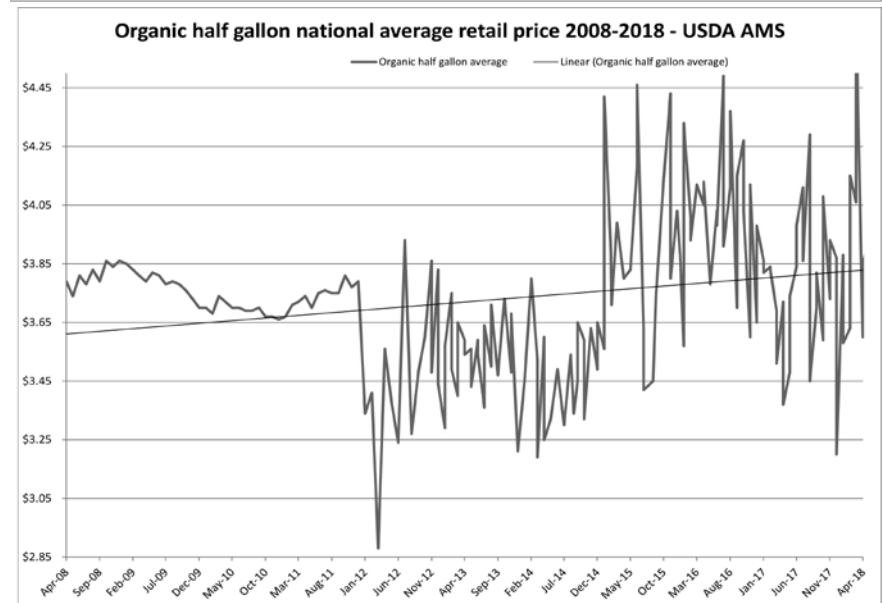
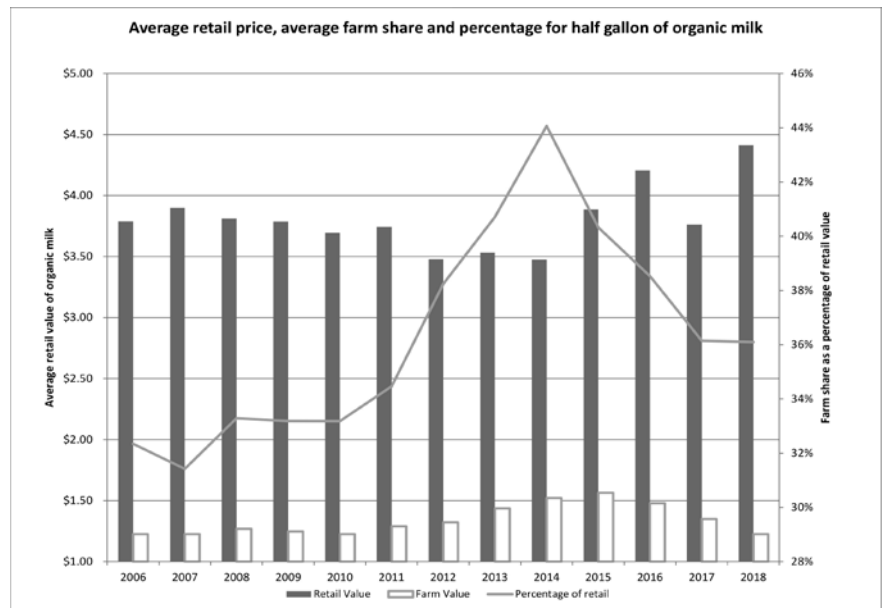
## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

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

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Total retail sales of organic milk for the first quarter of 2018, 654 million pounds, was one percent lower than sales in 2017, 662 million pounds, but sales of organic whole milk were up 6% on sales for the first quarter in 2017. Federal Milk Market Order 1 in New England again reported an increase in the utilization of types of organic milk by pooled plants. During March 2018, organic whole milk utilization totaled 16.7 million pounds, up from the 16.3 million pounds one year earlier. This continues the trend in consumer demand for retail organic dairy products and the average retail price for organic half gallons has been slowly increasing over the last ten years rather than declining with a surplus in supply. It is reported that store brand sales of organic milk are now number 1 in retail sales with the Horizon brand (owned by Danone North America) is now number two. This is not a healthy trend for producers' pay price as store brand is a very competitive market and has traditionally been able to purchase supply at low prices so they can use their store brand as a loss leader to encourage consumers to switch to organic products.

There has been much discussion over the last year with a surplus of conventional milk and an excess of skim organic milk about the shortage of available dairy processing. Reports are that the industry is looking at investing in their own plants rather than relying on conventional plants to co-pack organic. Aurora Dairy is now processing milk in gallons for Danone North America as Danone waits for renovation to their own plant in Salt Lake City. Aurora is also on track to build their other plant in Columbia, Missouri to be opened in December 2018 and is reported to be looking to co-pack for other brands as they grow their own supply. Danone North America have invested in the improvement of its own facilities in Salt Lake City, Dallas and Virginia to be able to control their processing and therefore balancing of product. CROPP



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

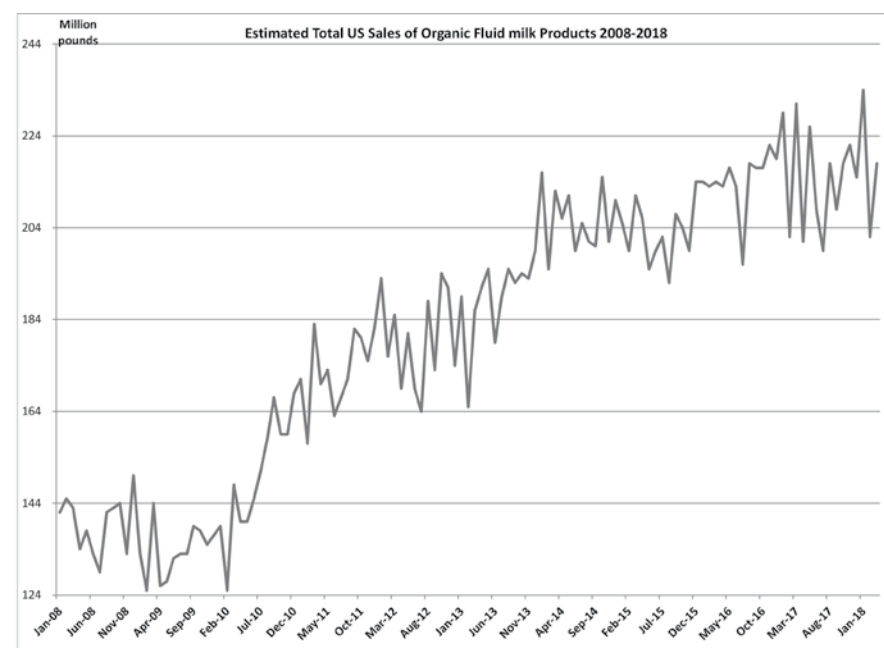
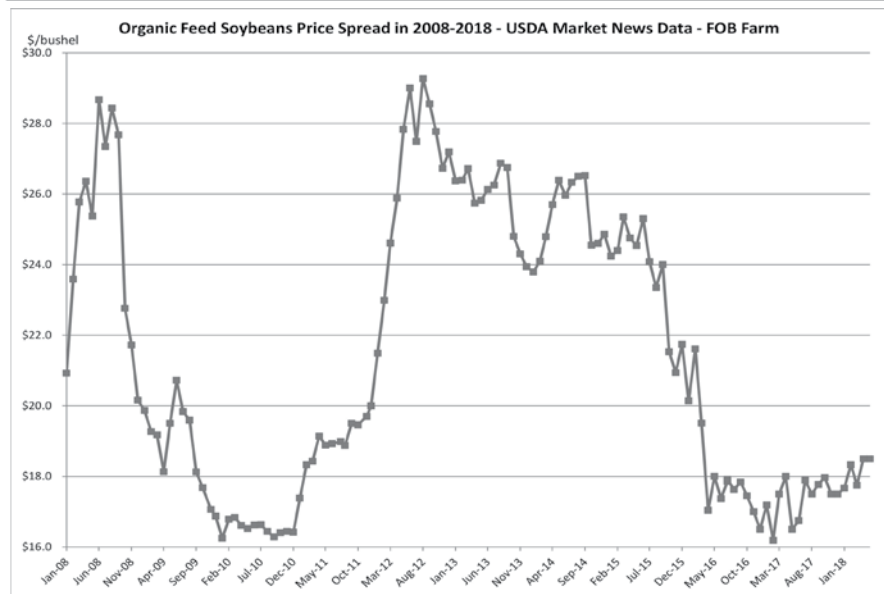
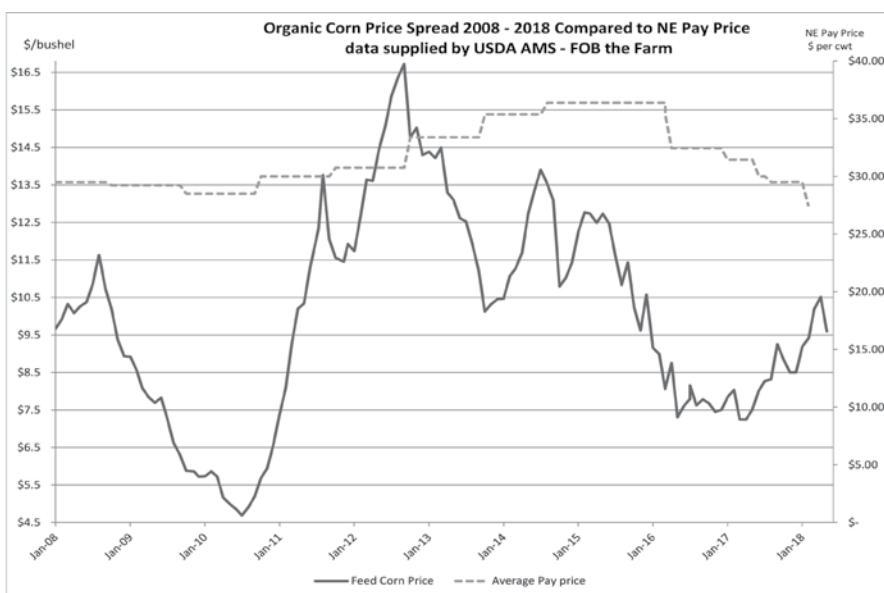
Cooperative has invested in manufacturing plants and warehousing, breaking with their original business model of not investing in plant and equipment.

The reported supply surplus in skim milk that has devastated producers' pay price and stopped any new transitions is reflected by tightness in the organic cream market which is making it harder to meet strong demand for organic butter. National food retailers carrying store and non-store brands of organic butter report increased customer demand for both despite increases in price. These retailers believe that one pound organic butter priced in or near the \$5.00 range is generally accepted by regular customers of organic butter. The shortage of organic cream is directly tied to the lack of processing for separated organic cream at conventional plants who co-pack organic retail products. In many cases, the volumes of organic cream do not justify investment in separate butter churns and silos as required under organic regulations. In other situations, the location of those plants do not have significant supply local to their facility or the plants that process the ultra-pasteurized retail product does not have sufficient volumes of cream to justify the expansion into organic products. Aurora investment in organic processing plants will give them a competitive advantage in the market for fluid products and cream, plus the ability to process organic skim milk.

The organic grain market is at last seeing the effect of the great work done by John Bobbe and OFARM in reporting shipments of fraudulent organic grain to the USDA. John has been able to tap into shipping industry reporting on the movement of grain into domestic ports and passes that information onto the USDA NOP. This has seen some ships being turned around while in transit and other shipments being decertified. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS),

Customs and Border Protection (CBP) are part of the ship-specific investigations. APHIS takes the lead at the border with CBP. Both

*continued on page 18*





## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Organic Pay &amp; Feed Prices

*continued from page 17*

have worked to investigate and block incoming grain shipments. NOP reports that of the organic operations in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkey, 96 (13%) have surrendered certification and 30 (4%) have been suspended or revoked by certifiers since 2016. PR Newswire reports that twenty-five thousand metric tons of purportedly organic corn grown in Russia, Moldova, and Kazakhstan currently sits on the M/V MOUNTPARK, a United Kingdom-flagged vessel lingering off the coast of California. U.S. Customs officials have blocked the shipment for offloading on the basis that it violates federal law.

According to official trade statistics from the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), in the first half of 2017, the US imported more than 11 million bushels of organic corn; in the second half of the year import volumes dropped significantly, only reaching 4 million bushels. (For comparison, in the last half of 2016, 8.4 million bushels were imported, over double 2017 H2 figures.)

John Bobbe reports that the bushel price and demand for domestic corn and soybeans are starting to increase to a point where they are reaching a break-even level for growers. Mercaris Data Service estimates that U.S. organic corn production for the 2017/18 marketing year reached 43.4 million bushels, up 51 percent over the prior marketing year. Hopefully, this trend will continue with both increased demand and a sustainable pay-price. ♦

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Crossbreeding

*continued from page 15*

especially on a grass based diet. Beef consumers are becoming more curious about how and where their food comes from, in addition to the fatty acid profile of the meat they consume. Therefore, in 2016 at the Morris dairy, purebred Holsteins, MVH crossbreds, and NJV crossbred dairy steers were finished on winter rye and winter wheat pastures. Following slaughter, the meat was evaluated for amino acid profiles and a consumer taste study was conducted to determine consumer acceptability. Fat from crossbred steers had 13% greater omega-3 fatty acids and an omega-6/3 ratio that was 14% lower in fat, when compared to purebred Holstein steers. In addition, steak from crossbreds had greater overall liking than purebred Holstein steers as determined by consumers.

### Precision technology

Rumination and activity monitors have gained interest of use by producers, however most research has been done with purebred Holstein cattle in confined systems. As mentioned, the number of crossbred dairy cows is increasing in the U.S. and a baseline of rumination time for crossbreds could be beneficial to producers. For this study, 114 purebred Holstein cows, 248 MVH crossbreds,

and 167 NVJ crossbreds from the Morris herd were evaluated for total average rumination time. HR-LD Tags (SCR Engineers Ltd., Netanya, Israel) were used to record rumination time in total minutes per day. Similar rumination time was reported for all breed groups evaluated: purebred Holsteins: 521 min/d, MVH: 513 min/d, NJV: 513 min/d.

### Future projects

The University of Minnesota will continue to pursue studies with crossbred cattle of the breed rotations mentioned throughout the article. Future projects to keep an eye out for include creating genomic predictions for crossbreds, determining the most profitable crossbred for grazing in the Midwest, and lactation curves of purebred Holsteins compared to crossbreds.

### Conclusions

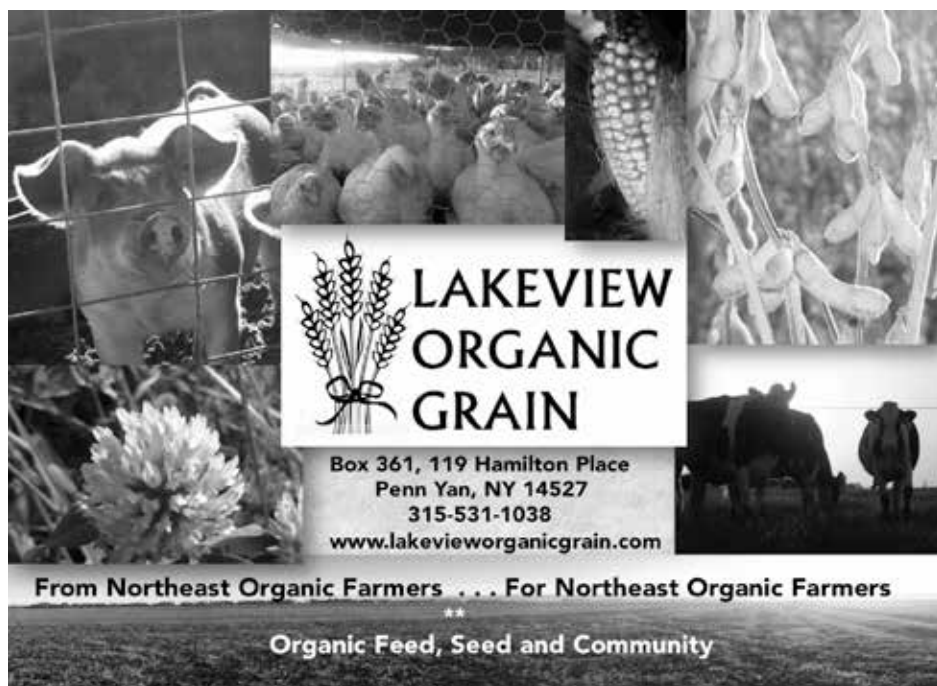
The University of Minnesota has been heavily involved with the research pertaining to crossbreeding in dairy cattle. Much of the research has explored alternative ways for producers to improve calving ease, fertility, health, and survival of cows. When compared to purebred Holsteins, crossbreds are superior for the traits described previously, but we must not forget that we need high quality purebreds to be able to crossbreed. Whatever breeds are used in dairy herds, the ideal dairy cow must have: 1) high fat and protein, 2) excellent fertility and the ability to produce

*continued on page 22*

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**ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS****Holterholm Farm, Adam and Ron Holter****SAVE THE DATE:****2018 NODPA Field Days: September 27 & 28, 2018**

**Yarrowsburg Mennonite Church  
2142 Rohrsersville Rd, Knoxville, MD 21758**

**T**he 18th Annual NODPA Field Days comes at a time when organic dairy farmers are struggling, so this year's educational program takes on these realities by offering practical, low-cost or no-cost solutions that can help our farms emerge intact from the current industry crisis while remaining true to the integrity of the organic seal. Some of the informational workshops we are developing will provide farmers with the tools to assess their operations in order to maximize net income; rethink management practices to increase efficiency; and even lay out all the options available to farm families as they consider their future within the current realities of the organic dairy industry. We also tackle the very important issues facing the organic dairy industry: preserving the integrity of the organic seal; understanding all of the Organic Plus Labels/

**Keynote Speaker Mark Kastel >**





## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Add-on Certification Programs that are emerging; and staying informed about the happenings at the USDA and this year's Farm Bill. Our keynote speaker, Mark Kastel will give a very timely presentation on the crisis in organic dairy (see a description, below).

For the first time in NODPA's history, the NODPA Field Days will be held in Maryland on September 27th and 28th in Knoxville, Maryland. We are fortunate to have 2 farm tours.

Peace Hollow Farm owned and operated by Myron and Janet Martin, Knoxville, MD will be our Thursday morning tour, and we will visit Holterholm Farms, Jefferson, MD, owned and operated by Ron and Adam Holter, on Friday afternoon.

**For those who might not be familiar with our keynote speaker Mark Kastel**, he is the co-founder of The Cornucopia Institute, a populist farm policy research group based in Wisconsin and director of its Organic Integrity Project. For the past nine years, he has acted as Co-director and Senior Farm Policy Analyst. Mark's professional experience includes political consulting and lobbying on behalf of family farm groups and business development work benefitting family-scale farmers. We are fortunate to have the following preview of his keynote presentation:

**The Crisis in the Organic Dairy Movement: History, Analysis, and What Farmers Can Do to Balance the Playing Field**

The organic food movement was founded upon the respect consumers had for farmers and ranchers willing to subscribe to a different, more ethical management model in terms of environmental stewardship and humane animal husbandry. The industry's original processing, marketing and retail entrepreneurs understood this covenant.

Now that the majority of brands in the organic marketplace are controlled by large multinational corporations organic farmers have become just as expendable as in the conventional marketplace.

Kastel's talk will be part history lesson, as he has been involved in the organic dairy movement since its scaling up commercially in the late 1980s. His economic analysis will include not only how we got to where we are but why.

In the second half of his talk he will shift gears, and enter into a

### Myron and Janet Martin's Peace Hollow Farm



dialogue with the cumulative knowledge of organic dairy producers present, in exploring optional action plans where consumers can influence policy at the cooperatives they own or partner with their proprietary milk buyers/marketing partners.

After 15 years of efforts by The Cornucopia Institute and NODPA to influence policy at the USDA, protecting as Congress had intended the interests of consumers and ethical industry participants, it is obvious that producers now need to directly influence purchasing decisions made by consumers and the retailers they patronize. The buyers of organic products are going to have the last say.

The 18th Annual NODPA Field Days program will be filled with information sessions, discussions and educational workshops that focus on the important and timely issues facing all organic dairy farm families. In addition, we will have a full trade show, our annual social hour and banquet featuring delicious local and organic food, and NODPA's Annual Meeting on Thursday evening. Our Producer-Only meeting takes place bright and early Friday morning, and will follow a continental breakfast.

Meeting attendees will be able to visit the diverse trade show throughout the meeting, and will have many opportunities to meet new people and catch up with old friends. More information on the program will follow in the July NODPA News and online at [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com), so for now SAVE THE DATE and begin planning to join us in September. Look for Sponsorship and Trade Show information and opportunities in your email and mailboxes in the next couple of weeks.

*For more information or if you have questions about sponsoring or exhibiting at the 18th Annual NODPA Field Days, contact NODPA Field Days coordinator Nora Owens any time at [noraowens@comcast.net](mailto:noraowens@comcast.net) or 413-772-0444.*

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Crossbreeding

*continued from page 19*

a calf regularly, 3) longevity (~5 to 7 years), 4) low somatic cell count, 5) smaller body size, and 6) efficient conversion of feed to milk. Of course, the use of a breed depends on each producer's management system.

## NJV Crossbred

*Bradley Heins, PhD., Associate Professor-Organic Dairy Production, University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC), State Highway 329, PO Box 471, Morris, MN 56267-0471, hein0106@umn.edu, 320-589-1711*

*Glenda Pereira, Animal Science graduate student, University of Minnesota WCROC, 46352 MN-329, Morris, MN 56267, 320-589-1711*



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# Classified Ads

## ANIMALS

### ANIMALS

**Full organic grassfed herd for sale.** Dutch belted crosses. Fresh 1-2 months. Milking 45-70 pounds.

Name: Joshua Grobelny

Email: Josh.grobelny@gmail.com

Phone: 3152249818

Location: Moravia, NY

**80 nice organic cows and bred heifers for sale.** Mixed breed and crossbred herd.

Nice grazing farm could be leased.

Name: Doug Murphy

Email: dsm1@sbcglobal.net

Phone: 7167613131

Location: sherman NY

**Looking to purchase 5-10 certified organic Jersey**

**cows** or springing heifers.

Name: Rich Larson

Email: larsonrr@myfairpoint.net

Phone: 802-645-0865

Location: Wells, VT

**Cows for Sale:** We are slowing down for a season and are scaling back our herd. We have 8 -12 milking cows for sale, plus one due in May, one in June and 3 due in July. They are primarily grade Holsteins with 2 Ayrshires, one grade and one registered. If you would like more information or to look at the cows, call Gary Tweedie at 315 287-1631, please leave a message if we are not available to answer the phone.

**Top Breeding Bulls Ready To BREED!** \*Vermont\* Last year I started raising a half dozen top quality breeding bulls from the best milkers in our herd. Now that grazing season is (finally) around the corner, I am looking to sell to a good home due to space limitations. Age ranges are 6-14 months old. Some are ready to breed NOW with the rest ready later this Spring. Breeds are Jersey/Dutch belted

*continued on page 24*



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# Classified Ads

*continued from page 23*

crosses, Holstein, pure Jersey (including one registered). Top AI Sires with EXCELLENT genetics. Also would make

*continued from page 23*

wonderful 4-H projects, but only willing to sell to a good home. All organically raised. Based in Georgia, VT. I am near McCracken's, so trucking is easy to arrange (and can be inexpensive especially to NY State and other areas in the Northeast). Call 802-582-9026 (NO TEXT) or email ron@bedrockfarmvt.com for details. Ron Sweet

**COWS WANTED:** A group of Amish farmers between Albany and Utica who are looking to purchase a herd of about 100 organic certified cows with an existing contract with DanoneWave. The farmer's name is Eli Miller and he can get a phone message at 518-853-3345, or contact me, Jenny Nelson, at jennyforfarmers@gmail.com

## EMPLOYMENT

Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) announces a

**job opening for an Executive Assistant.** This position will serve as the primary point of contact and support for constituencies on all matters pertaining to the Executive Director. The ideal candidate will have education and experience in customer and/or executive support. We are looking for a well-organized and self-motivated person to join our team-oriented environment in Spring Mills, Pennsylvania; telecommuting will be considered.

PCO is a growing non-profit organization that works with organic farmers and food producers in the Mid-Atlantic region. PCO provides organic certification services to more than 1000 operations and employs 30 staff and subcontracts with more than 30 field inspectors. Our staff is dedicated to our mission: to ensure the integrity of organic products and provide education, inspection, and certification services that meet the needs of our members. This is a full-time, non-exempt position. Salary Grade 2: \$47,500 - \$58,000, depending on experience. To view a job description visit: [www.paorganic.org/jobs](http://www.paorganic.org/jobs). Benefits: health, dental, vision, disability and life insurance; Simple IRA, generous holiday, vacation and paid time off. Position will remain open until filled. Please send resume and cover

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# Classified Ads

letter to [lia@paorganic.org](mailto:lia@paorganic.org)

**Experienced Haying Equipment and Machinery Operator wanted by Butterworks Farm.** April 1-December 20. Work 50-60 hours per week. Butterworks is looking for a team oriented individual able to operate and maintain tractors, loader, manure spreader, fertilizer spreader, mower, rake, round baler and square baler. Should have familiarity with ecological organic farming, carbon, soil building and conservation practices. Please call or email.

Name: Butterworks Farm. Email: [cmlazor@butterworksfarm.com](mailto:cmlazor@butterworksfarm.com). Phone: 802-624-9304

Location: Westfield, Vermont

**Career opportunity on a progressive organic dairy.** Herdsman/assistant manager responsibilities. Housing, parlor, good equipment, opportunity for equity all available.

Name: Doug Murphy. Email: [dsm1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dsm1@sbcglobal.net). Phone:

716-761-3131 Location: Sherman NY

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Name: Kori Stay. Email: [aislyn820@gmail.com](mailto:aislyn820@gmail.com). Phone: 315 323 2855. Location: Gouverneur, NY

## REAL ESTATE

**Farm Auctions:** Two Amish organic dairy farms complete, Rufus Yoder and Sam Hostetler, will be going up for auction on June 12, 2018. Apparently, the organic milk market stays with the property. <https://www.auctionzip.com/Listings/3083587.html>

**Farm for Sale, Wales, ME:** I'm posting this for our neighbor who is selling his roughly 100 acre organic farm. Any questions please contact their realtor: <http://brendafontaine.idxhome.com/homes/109331/423/1002-GARDINER-RD-WALES-ME-04280/1347074>



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

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## NET UPDATE

### Recent ODairy Discussions

By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Farmer, NODPA President

**A** producer asked the group for recommended application rates for layer litter and mushroom mulch on pasture. One consultant felt that it is difficult to know how much to apply without a test, but he suggested 10 T/Ac would be a good starting point. Another farmer has used a lighter rate of 1.5 to 2 T/Ac of poultry litter on his hay ground after the first cut, then again after the first frosts in the fall. Recently, they found a source of mushroom mulch, and applied 8-11 T/Ac on fields that “needed a boost” with good results.

Looking to build a bedded pack barn for winter housing, this producer asked the group for suggestions in its design. A producer with experience in barn design offered the following: “In central New York, we typically see pole barns go up for \$10-12 per sq ft. Concrete is usually \$5-7 per sq ft for flat work. Curbs add cost.” He went on to advise that although fabric building companies will quote an installed price of \$16-18/sq ft, this does not include the foundation costs; so expect to add on around \$5/sq ft. He noted that these costs will rise or fall depending on the building size and location, and the price of lumber has risen sharply in recent months. “Typically, a steel roof will last at least 30 years but a fabric cover will need to be replaced in 15 years. It might last longer but you need to keep it tight. The wind is your enemy.” As far as size per animal for a bedded pack, NRCS recommends 70 sq ft/hd, and he highly recommends a scrape alley. For barn design, “I would recommend a standard gable roof cantilevering out over an outside feed alley. When you start to exceed 50-60ft width, the trusses will start to get more expensive. Do not go any flatter than 4/12 pitch.”

A frustrated farmer was battling a high LPC count, and she listed off a laundry list of the gaskets, hoses, and valves she has replaced. She changed detergent and acid cleaners, replaced water heater thermostats and the pipeline air injector, and ran sanitizers through the vacuum line. She asked the farmers on the list what she may be missing as her count was still high. One farmer, who was experienced in troubleshooting quality issues, recommended replacing the milk pump seal and change to single-use paper towels. He suggested that the water may be contributing to the problem as it represents a sort of starter culture. So if possible, go to a gas water heater as it cooks the bottom of the tank unlike an electric water heater. Other producers suggested that a milkstone buildup was the most likely source of the bacterial residue. It was recommended that she use a longer and stronger acid rinse in hot water, and check for any milkstone deposits on the agitator and other easy to miss places in the tank. It was also suggested that she inspect the washer ball; it must be open and free of cracks or chips to function properly. The plastic ones need replacing if

*continued on page 27*

## Website & E-Newsletter Advertising

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

### Website Advertising

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

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

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

### E-Newsletter Advertising

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

**Ad Design:** Display-ready ads should be 300 pixels wide by 125 pixels tall. Your ad can link to a page on your website.

**Cost:** Display-ready ads are \$125 per month.

### Discounted rates for commitments of 6 months or more.

Interested in one or both of these opportunities? For more information, contact Nora Owens at:

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

**Phone:** 413-772-0444

Go to the following web page for more information:

**[www.nodpa.com/web\\_ads.shtml](http://www.nodpa.com/web_ads.shtml)**

### 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)



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## USDA Proposed Rule for GE Labeling Criticized as Misleading

(Beyond Pesticides,  
May 11, 2018)

Earlier this month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released its long-awaited proposal for disclosing the presence of genetically engineering (GE) in foods. Much to the disappointment of health, environmental, and consumer advocates, the draft rule appears as an attempt to mask or to promote GE products, rather than caution

consumers. Concerned individuals can send comments to USDA on the proposed rule through [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) until July 3, 2018.

### USDA's Proposed Labels for GE Foods

The USDA's proposal will move forward with wholly insufficient



### USDA's Proposed Labels for GE Foods

disclosure requirements that the Department's own study has indicated are discriminatory, according to analysts. Rather than use the phrase "genetically modified," or "genetically engineered," or include the acronyms "GE" or "GMO," the USDA is using

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### NET UPDATE

*continued from page 26*

they have cracks. Another producer had a number of problems with water quality interacting with the chemicals. A high level of manganese in his farm's water was reacting with chlorine, forming a scale which allowed a bio film to build up in the pipeline. He got help from De Laval to tailor cleaners to his water, ending up using stronger caustic cleaners and a peroxide sanitizer. And another farmer reminded us how vital it is to dump the wash cycle before the temperature drops too much.

Sometimes, calves need a little help to stay warm. One farmer asked what others use besides calf coats and heat lamps. One farmer successfully uses 5 to 15 gallon empty chemical containers filled with hot water with a few square bales to keep the calf close to the heat source. Another farmer suggested Premier's "Prima" heat lamp as it is supposed to be safer than traditional heat lamps. ♦

### ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Message from the President

*continued from page 2*

But if this new system does not put concern for the farmers near the top of the list of priorities, then it will have failed. For one of the underlying tenants of the organic farming movement has been to offer a fair price to farmers. This fair price was to allow farmers to pay their expenses, be compensated for their work, and to compensate their workers fairly.

Organic farmers take a lot of pride in producing quality milk for our consumers. We take pride in raising our animals with care and compassion. We feel blessed in the fall when the hay is baled in the barns, the corn is in the silo, and the grain is in the bins.

Wishing you all well with your spring work!

**Liz Bawden, NODPA President**

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

## FEATURED FARM

**HOMESTEAD FIELDS, LaFargeville, New York**

*continued from page 1*

the family decided to sell the dairy, move the equipment business to Watertown, and exit the cash-crop business. In 1985, Ed and his wife Anne decided to buy the dairy from the other family members. At this time, they also decided to sell their share of the family's equipment business.

Ed is 64. He joked that his three kids keep telling him, "Dad, you have to grow up." Joking aside, he is grateful that all three kids have settled on the farm. "From the window, I look out and see all of their houses. On any given day, I might see two of my grandchildren walking down the road."

His oldest daughter, Maria is an art teacher. Ben, second born, is an engineer. Monica, third born, is an ICU nurse and married Jason Schnauber. Formally a contractor, Jason farms full-time with his father-in-law and is becoming a partner in the dairy. Anne,

his wife, works off-farm as a hospital administrator. The farm also employs one full-time and one part-time employee.

They have 130 milk cows and about 80 head of young stock. When Anne and Ed bought the farm, they were milking Holsteins and trying to establish a rotational grazing system. "I got so frustrated with trying to pasture Holsteins," Ed said, and so he began cross-breeding with Jersey and Brown Swiss. Currently, Ed is leaning towards the Brown Swiss/Holstein crosses.

Ed has invested \$100,000 in the last two years rehabilitating the 1970's free stall; a three-row barn with a 14-foot wide feed alley. The barn is equipped with an in-ground manure system that holds a week's worth of manure and milk room discharge. Once a week it is pumped into the earthen lagoon. They milk in a swing-7 parlor with a high line.

"It's a good design with a simple layout," Ed said about the barn.

**2017 crop of peas, oats, and triticale**



## Jason with the new farm pup, Oslo



With trusses beginning to sag and plates and poles deteriorating, Ed decided to rehabilitate the barn rather than invest in a new one. “We determined it didn’t make sense to abandon this facility since the foot print we have is a good one.” The first year they tore down 100’ of the 220’ by 80’ barn. Last year, they completed the other 100’.

“We own 450 acres,” Ed said, “and rent another 150 acres.” Soil types are heavy clays and clay loams, and Ed said, “I would like to find at least a knob of ground somewhere that has a little sand, but good luck with that.”

“We have shallow soils, ranging from six inches of topsoil to five feet, over limestone bedrock,” Ed said. It is poorly drained and Ed

has had little luck with tiling. “Inevitably, whenever I try to tile, I get to a lateral line somewhere and lose six to eight inches of elevation. Then I have to go in with an excavator and it becomes a colossal mess. I have basically given up on tiling.”

His new strategy is subsoiling; he recently purchased a Blu-Jet Sub Tiller. “I think I can take care of the water by sub-soiling. The Blu-Jet is a beast, but it’s the right machine for this job,” he said. Ed intends to pull 20 acres of pasture out of production per year, sub-soil and then re-seed. He also plans on using the machine to increase drainage on their hay ground.

200 acres of their land base is reserved for pasture- roughly 110

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Rebuilding the 1970's free stall

## FEATURED FARM

*continued from page 29*

acres are rotationally grazed for the herd of 130 milk cows. Dry matter intake from pasture during the main grazing season is 40%. The other 90 acres of pasture is grazed by young stock on two permanent pastures. Calves and heifers are raised without grain until they begin their first lactation.

“As a kid and young adult my family cash cropped about 1000 acres every year,” Ed said. With his cropping knowledge, coupled with the goals of buying less grain and meeting the energy demands of the cows, three years ago Ed started planting 100 acres of high-moisture shell corn.

“The first year (2015) we had a drought in July but we ended up with a decent crop. The second year was the driest year in 45 years and the crop was a near failure. We ended up chopping it for silage when it was four feet tall. It yielded 6 tons per acre. The corn was intended to be my emergency feed supply in an extreme year, and it really saved me during the drought of 2016. Last year,

I set aside 100 acres and it was so wet that 40 never got planted.”

At 110 bushels per acre, the yields on the 60 acres that did get planted were solid, but Ed said, “I was combining ten days before Christmas and it took me back to all those years messing around in the snow, working in the middle of the night. After that, I decided that I was done with corn.”

In 2018, Ed plans on growing 100-acres of BMR Sorghum sudan. He said, “I need energy no matter how good the haylage is.” By displacing the high-moisture shell corn with BMR Sorghum sudan, Ed hopes to reduce the amount of purchased protein that is needed for a 50-pound milk average per day. He sees growth in the all-grass milk market and is positioning the farm for a potential transition in the future. He also feels that diversifying into the BMR Sorghum sudan will help round out the stored forage supply during a drought.

Similar to his corn rotation, the BMR Sorghum sudan will be planted into freshly plowed sod. The following year, it will be



re-seeded to a forage mix with a nurse crops of oats, peas, and triticale. When it comes time to see Ed said, "I just mix all the seed in one hopper and run it through the grain drill." He uses an International 5100 13' wide soybean planter with 21 runs. He has two Harvestores (one that is 25'x90' and the other 20'x60'). The oats, peas, and triticale nurse crop are chopped and stored in the smaller Harvestore.

Ed said they just used up the last of the oats, peas, and triticale mix. The current milk cow TMR is haylage, high moisture shell corn, and purchased soybean meal. Ed said, "Our round bales are running about 1200 pounds. To that we add 1200 pounds of haylage, 10 pounds of high moisture shell corn per cow, and 4 pounds of soybean meal per cow." The majority of the haylage is stored in the Harvestores but some is in the form of in-line wrapped baleage. In 2018, he hopes to store all the haylage in the Harvestores and will bale and wrap the BMR Sorghum sudan.

Ed said that he "ought to be able to hit the 14% protein mark with the BMR Sorghum sudan," and is hoping that the crop will displace the soybean meal that is in the current ration. This is

one reason why he sees it as more advantageous than growing corn silage. He said, "Corn silage will never test more than 9% protein. Corn silage is a high-energy low-protein crop." He also said one goal is to simplify the feeding process and corn silage would involve ag-bags, adding an additional layer of handling and processing.

The other advantage of the BMR Sorghum sudan is that it can be planted in the middle of June, after first crop has been harvested. He anticipates that he will harvest the BMR Sorghum sudan 30 days after it is planted with a second cutting in another 30 days. "Then, you're pretty much done and wrapped up with it by the first part of September," he said.

Another driver in changing his cropping strategy are the extreme weather changes that Ed has observed. "We're in what the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) considers a fringe weather area." In these fringe areas, NOAA models predict that these areas may have a stronger response to climate

*continued on page 32*



**Reconstructed free stall barn**

## FEATURED FARM

## Spring fever



*continued from page 31*

change. “This winter has been a bit more old-fashioned,” Ed said, “but the last 6-7 winters have been very mild compared to 30 years ago.” About heavier rainfalls, Ed said, “We used to measure rain in tenths of inches and now we measure it in inches.”

Building climate change resilience into the farm requires foresight as does a willingness to adapt to market changes. Homestead Fields was certified organic in 2007; the last year the 80/20 rule was allowed. A CROPP member for eight years, two years ago Ed changed his contract and went with Upstate Niagara Cooperative. Wegmans (a privately held American supermarket chain headquartered in Rochester, NY) was looking to start an organic yogurt line and approached Upstate Niagara to find an organic milk supply.

“Upstate Niagara basically decided overnight not to let that one slip away,” Ed explained. “They needed a milk supply quickly.” Upstate offered producers \$4/cwt above CROPP’s pay price, an offer that Ed found too good to refuse. “It was about money but it was also about looking down the road. Upstate is in the position to hang onto their unique piece of the pie due to their relationship with Wegmans.”

Although Upstate’s organic producers have been affected by recent pay price cuts (Ed has lost \$3/cwt), the cuts have not been

as severe as other processors. At 4.2 butterfat and 3.3 protein, the farm is averaging \$37.10/cwt. Ed pointed out that this includes a \$2/cwt seasonal incentive that will end beginning with May milk.

In addition to changing processors, Ed and his other son-in-law, David Van Pelt (Maria’s husband) are establishing a new branch to the farm named Homestead Heritage Cheese. A 25’ by 30’ addition was added to their current milk house and they purchased a 250-gallon C van’t Riet cheese vat build in the Netherlands. The cheesemaking equipment was bought with a \$12,000 loan from the Development Authority of North Country’s value-added agriculture loan fund and a \$48,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Business Enterprise program.

“For people who want to pursue niche marketing, I think there is a lot of opportunity in cheese making,” Ed said. For potential cheese makers, his advice was to not invest too heavily in an expensive state-of-the-art facility. “Go small and find your market niche and your dedicated customers. The best avenue is direct sales.”

Fresh cheese curds are the primary product at this point although they just completed an aging room and plan to begin a line of hard cheeses. David completed a course at the University of Vermont’s Institute of Artisan cheese. Currently, he is producing about 50 pounds of cheese curds per week, sold at local festivals

*continued on page 34*



## Northeast Organic Milk Buyers

### Upstate Niagara

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

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact Mike Davis at 1-800-724-MILK, ext 6441. [www.upstateniagara.com](http://www.upstateniagara.com)

### Natural by Nature

Looking for an organic milk market? Natural Dairy Products Corporation (NDP) was founded in 1995 as a family owned and operated organization producing organic dairy

products under the Natural By Nature brand name. Natural By Nature organic dairy products are produced with great care and distributed nationwide.

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

### Dairy Marketing Services Organic

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

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).

## Organic Milk Replacer

Convenient, Organic-Approved Nutrition



**Call Today.**

manufactured by  
**MILKSPECIALTIES**  
ANIMAL NUTRITION

Joe Gulick -National Acc. Manager  
**(412) 627-3623**  
[jGulick@milkspecialties.com](mailto:jGulick@milkspecialties.com)

**UPSTATE NIAGARA**  
COOPERATIVE, INC.  
FARMER OWNED

At Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc. our member dairy farmers work passionately to ensure delicious, high-quality dairy products. Our products have earned numerous awards and customer trust for years.



**1-800-724-MILK**  
**[www.upstateniagara.com](http://www.upstateniagara.com)**



## FEATURED FARM



**FF Cheese maker David Van Pelt in the Heritage Homestead Cheese creamery**

*continued from page 32*

and a few retail stores.

At this point, the creamery will remain a one-man show with David at the helm. They hope to begin producing about 200 pounds of a cheddar-style cheese and have teamed up with Zenda Farm (owned and operated by the Thousand Island Land Trust). Homestead Heritage Cheese will produce the cheese but it will be sold with the Zenda Farm label.

Zenda Farm and Homestead Heritage Cheese recently finished constructing an aging room. Ed said, "It's in the corner of an abandoned creamery that was built 50 years ago along the banks of the St. Lawrence River. Environmentally, it is a perfect spot to age cheese. Because it is so close to the river, there are geothermal characteristics that will carry through to the aging room. I am just finishing up the heating controls at Zenda and I figure that it will take very little supplemental heating or cooling to maintain the aging room at 50 degrees."

Despite his optimism for the new cheese making endeavor, Ed warned, "Be ready to compete with the Europeans. We're starting to see small European companies jump into the market,

### Subtiller 4



producing high quality mozzarellas, goudas, and cheddars. They are more old-school and very cost effective. They scare me as far as competing."

"The creamery hasn't made us any money yet," Ed said, "but we've been able to cover overhead costs." The milk check provides "the bread and butter," but he is confident in their product and the growth potential of the creamery.

Despite recent pay cuts and what Ed referred to as an "austerity" budget for the rest of the year, Ed is confident about the future of organic dairy. "Organic is going to continue to grow, even though we're in a little slump right now," Ed said.

"With lower prices in place, the goal is that we have to make 50-60 pound of milk per cow and do it with minimal grain. That is the whole game plan with the idea that in the future, if the grain free diets are going to be supported in the market place, I want to be in a position where it might be an option. If the organic price continues to erode, grain-free may be the new niche."

*Ed Walldroff can be reached at [homesteadfields@gmail.com](mailto:homesteadfields@gmail.com).*

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## GE Labeling Misleading

*continued from page 27*

the term “bioengineered.” The symbols proposed by USDA are a happy, smiling sun that would read either “bioengineered” or “may be bioengineered food.” Of course, such a symbol suggests to consumers that these foods are a positive, rather than concerning addition to a food product. However, USDA is also giving the option of simply including the words “bioengineered food,” “contains a bioengineered food ingredient,” or even leaving that language out and directing consumers to a QR code.

A lawsuit by the Center for Food Safety forced USDA to release a congressionally mandated study on the viability of using QR codes, small barcodes that must be scanned with a smartphone app and require broadband internet access. The research reinforced the common sense around the issue: low-income and rural residents, individuals unfamiliar with QR codes, and those without access to a smart phone or internet services will lack access to this information. The study concluded that “offline alternatives are necessary for consumers who lack access to a scanning device or broadband.”

Perhaps the most concerning aspect of USDA’s proposed rule is that it has left the decision whether to label “highly refined” GE products like cooking oil, snacks, candy, and soda up in the air. If USDA were to determine these foods did not require labeling, consumers would be no better off than before the weak and controversial bill was signed into law by President Obama in 2016.

Consumer, health, and environmental advocates’ primary concern with GE foods is not the health issues of eating GE foods themselves, but the multitude of up and downstream impacts created by GE agriculture. Despite promises of disease-resistance, drought-tolerance, and vitamin enhancement, GE crops have primarily been developed by multinational agrichemical corporations as a way to increase profits by vertically integrating their seed and chemical divisions. Farmers that grow GE crops are locked into a contract that requires they use one specific company’s seeds and pesticides. This is bad for farmers and our agricultural economy, and it further erodes the preservation and development of heirloom and regionally adapted seed varieties.

Herbicide-tolerant GE crops have been associated with massive increases in herbicide use and the rampant takeover of US farms by weeds which, through incessant herbicide spray, have themselves developed genes to resist herbicide mortality. As glyphosate, the most common herbicide developed for crop tolerance, has decreased in effectiveness, chemical companies began rolling out new GE crops using older herbicides like 2,4-D and dicamba that rival glyphosate’s toxicity. Chemical companies have also incorporated insecticides into the crop itself, with evidence that

resistance in target pests is trending synthetic insecticide use upwards.

Concern over farmers and our economy, farmworkers and their exposure, the impact of these pesticides on wildlife and the environment, and the likelihood for these overused pesticides to show up on GE foods make it clear that consumers should have a right to know whether their purchase contributes to the ongoing crisis GE crops create.

**Beyond Pesticides strongly encourages individuals to provide substantive comments to USDA through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), before the July 3rd deadline.** For more information on this toxic form of agriculture, see Beyond Pesticides Genetic Engineering program page, <https://www.beyondpesticides.org/programs/genetic-engineering/overview> and for a history of the GE labeling movement, see the Daily News archives.

All unattributed positions and opinions in this piece are those of Beyond Pesticides.

The USDA is accepting comments about its proposed National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard until July 3rd. If you’d like to comment, you can do so:

### Four main talking points you may want to include are:

1. The term “bioengineered” should not be used. It is both misleading and confusing to consumers. “GMO”, “GE” or “Genetic Engineering” should be used instead. These are terms consumers are familiar with and understand.
2. All forms of genetic engineering should be disclosed, including gene-editing, synthetic biology and RNAi.
3. All highly processed foods, such as genetically-engineered oils, syrups and sugars, should not be excluded from labeling.
4. Any symbol that represents “bioengineered” should be neutral and not contain a smiley face or a sun.

### If you’d like to comment, you can do so:

Interested persons are invited to submit written comments concerning this proposed rule. Comments should be submitted via the Federal eRulemaking portal at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

Comments may also be filed with the Docket Clerk, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Room 4543-South, Washington, DC 20250; Fax: (202) 690-0338.

All comments should reference the docket number and the date and page number of this issue of the Federal Register - ID: AMS-TM-17-0050-0234



# Calendar

**Friday, June 8th - 10:00 am to 3:00pm**

**Rotational Grazing Workshop**

**Butterfield Farm, 1002 Coveytown Rd, Burke, NY  
(Franklin County)**

Franklin County Soil and Water will be sponsoring a rotational grazing workshop with Grazing Specialist Troy Bishopp from Madison County. Troy will be speaking on what a grazing management plan is, forages you might find in your pasture, and help you and your farm become "grazing specialists". Participants will walk through an existing grazing operation to help visualize how to set up a grazing system based on forage types, conditions, and availability to livestock. This will be held rain or shine in the field, please dress appropriately. Lunch will be provided by the district; following lunch participants will learn how to implement a grazing system and Troy will explain his Grazing Chart which helps farmers during the grazing season. This interactive workshop is free and open to the public, pre-registration is required by June 1st to guarantee lunch. Pre-register today by calling (518) 651-2097 and ask for Allycia Leach or email aleach@fcswwd.org.

**August 10-12, 2018, 2018**

**NOFA Summer Conference: Honoring Our Roots,  
Tending Our Future**  
**Hampshire College, Amherst, MA**

During the weekend of August 10-12, 2018 we will gather again at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts for the 44th Annual NOFA Summer Conference. This immersive annual gathering is an opportunity to come together as the regional organic community from the seven NOFA states – NY, NJ, VT, MA, RI, NH, CT. The conference is a three day event packed with amazing education programming for adults and children, an array of fun spirited activities and the opportunity to be nourished by the collective wisdom and knowledge of decades of farming, gardening and activism that makes up the work of our NOFA chapters.

This year's conference program is woven with workshops and activities that will pay homage to the agricultural wisdom that has been instructive to us through the ages. We will celebrate the wisdom of the rich indigenous agricultural past that has provided the basis of the organic movement and the

*continued on page 39*

## PODCAST SERIES NOW AVAILABLE:

at [www.sare.org/OFOFpodcast](http://www.sare.org/OFOFpodcast)

**The New Our Farms, Our Future Podcast Series:** Voices in Sustainable Agriculture from Coast to Coast, a diverse community of farmers, ranchers, scientists and educators is working to shape a sustainable future for our food system. Listen to the new Our Farms, Our Future podcast series and join this community for intimate conversations about the state of agriculture, how we got here and where we're headed.

**Episode 1**, released in April, 2018, features Missouri farmers and neighbors Emily Wright and Dan Kuebler. They talk about what motivates them to be farmers and to build resilient farming systems, how local food systems can foster community, and the ways that beginning farmers can succeed.

"One of the things I love most about farming is the learning curve," Wright says. "It's a complex ecological system and you can never account for all the variables that are part of that system. So really the learning curve never drops off, and for me there's never a dull moment."

The Our Farms, Our Future podcast series will feature a new episode every two weeks for up to 25 weeks. It will bring together a wide variety of farmers, ranchers and others in the sustainable agriculture community to discuss such topics as federal policy, soil health, the role of business in sustainable food systems, water issues, climate challenges, women in agriculture, issues and opportunities for minorities and much more.

**Episode 2** will feature Greg Judy, a veteran pasture-based livestock farmer, and Adam Saunders, founder of the Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture in Columbia, Mo.

You can follow this series at [www.sare.org/OFOFpodcast](http://www.sare.org/OFOFpodcast) or by subscribing on iTunes or Stitcher.

## WEBINAR RECORDING: Hands-On Soil Health

<https://recordings.join.me/WiVNjWgDXU2VO3mqoTmvQA>

Healthy soils are a critical resource on any farm. Growing soil health requires a sound strategy and tools to measure progress. Through our Soil Health Benchmark Study, PASA member farmers are working to measure and improve their soil health over time, as individuals and as a community.

In this webinar, you'll learn how you can participate in PASA's 2018 Soil Health Benchmark Study. We explain what farm management activities study participants will be tracking and how to submit soil samples to the Cornell Comprehensive Assessment of Soil Health. We also discuss the information study participants will share about their soil management practices, including cover cropping, tillage, and amendment strategies.

Jenn Halpin from Dickinson College Farm shares how the farm is using results from the PASA Soil Health Benchmark Study to guide their plans for cover cropping, reducing tillage, and fertilizer and amendment purchases.

If you'd like to participate in the study, contact PASA Director of Education Franklin Egan at [franklin@pasafarming.org](mailto:franklin@pasafarming.org) or at (814) 349-9856 x21. This webinar was recorded on March 29th, 2018. Watch it here: <https://recordings.join.me/WiVNjWgDXU2VO3mqoTmvQA>

## 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

Spring has finally sprung in my area of the Upper Midwest. Better late than never. Will add to the anxiety of an already anxious year. By the time you receive this the planting will hopefully be done and the haying season should be underway. The anxiety in the farming community is at the highest level in years, maybe the highest ever. I have been watching barn after barn go dark in my area. Truly sad to see a situation like the one we are presently in. While most of these have been conventional farms, I have heard of a few organic producers exiting the business too. While there may not be an answer that is a cure for all there, are some things that we as individual producers can address. We have to do our part to stay informed of what is going on in the marketplace. We need to make sure that we are each doing our part to promote ourselves, our way of life and the way forward. Each one of us is obligated to put ourselves out there for the consumer. We cannot afford to sit back and count on our processors and the rest of them at the trough of profit to put words into our mouths or say that they represent us. Only you can represent yourself. Not your coop, or your corporate processor. Lack of We the Farmers using our voice has contributed to the mess we find ourselves in. I know that we are all busy, but are we so busy that we can't afford to watch our future be taken from us? And yes there is the money issue that whatever the processors and marketers want they can buy. That is true, but if we speak our mind to our consumers, and invest a little of our time that can be dealt with too. After all it is the consumer that puts the money in the pockets of those who continue to enforce a life of servitude on We the Farmers. Government regulations and guidelines will only work if those who are being regulated have their say. Our government has a pretty poor track record of getting things done right. Please take the time to talk with your friends, neighbors and consumers. If there ever was a time of urgency it is now. If you want help with materials and facts to present to them feel free to reach out to those of us who are involved with MODPA and NODPA. Or better yet get involved with our organizations. They are truly unique and outstanding in their own field.

Lastly I wish for a productive summer for all. More importantly I wish and pray for a safe summer for all. We only get one chance at life.

Stop and smell that clover,

**Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer**  
**3253 150th Avenue, Glenwood City, WI 54013**  
**715-781-4856; bdrinkman@hotmail.com**

### 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

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 greenbfirms@tznnet.com  
 Phone: 715-687-8147

Bruce Drinkman, Treasurer  
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 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  
 Garnaville, 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



# Calendar

*continued from page 36*

based practices we have used to be successful.

Our keynote speakers, Rowen White and Eric Holt-Giménez, are two very passionate, ambitious educators, both working diligently to share their knowledge and experience with small agricultural communities. We are looking forward this August and hope you are as well!

**September 21-23, 2018**

**MOFGA Common Ground Country Fair, Unity, Maine**

MOFGA's premier event celebrating rural living, the fair is three full days of educational talks and demonstrations, entertainment, delicious Maine-grown organic food and products from local artisans. For more information, visit [www.mofga.org](http://www.mofga.org). Want to volunteer? Contact [volunteers@mofga.org](mailto:volunteers@mofga.org)

**September 27 & 28, 2018**

**The 18th Annual NODPA Field Days**

**Yarrowsburg Mennonite Church, Knoxville, Maryland**

The NODPA Field Days will feature 2 farm tours, workshops and keynote speaker, Mark Kastel. Please see the article in this newsletter or visit [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com) for more information. For sponsorship and tradeshow opportunities, contact NODPA Field Days Coordinator, Nora Owens at 413-772-0444 or [noraowens@comcast.net](mailto:noraowens@comcast.net).

**December 2 to 5, 2018**

**7th National Grazing Lands Conference:**

**Taking the Gamble out of Grazing**

**Peppermill Resort and Casino, Reno, Nevada**

This conference will provide you with a forum for discussion

*continued on page 40*



## 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**  
**July, 2018 issue is June 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

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**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

*continued from page 39*

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. BE A FARMER-PRESENTER!! At this national grazing conference, the NGC endeavors to have livestock producers with very good grazing operations who are also good speakers giving the presentations at the conference. The NGC also tries to have good and equal representation from all parts of the country. This includes producer

speakers from the Eastern U.S. that are managing the pasture operations well. If you are interested in submitting an abstract, please contact Karen Hoffman, USDA-NRCS and NYGC coordinator for more information and to discuss your ideas for a presentation – [karen.hoffman2@ny.usda.gov](mailto:karen.hoffman2@ny.usda.gov) or 607-334-3231 ext. 116. A short abstract and bio is needed by May 15th to participate in the 7th National Grazing Conference on December 2 through 5, 2018 as a speaker. Details on how to do this can be found under the Grazing Conference information on the website <https://www.cvent.com/c/abstracts/a9eda2a6-ffd7-4174-917d-0fae56614ed2>. Register:

<http://www.cvent.com/events/7th-national-grazing-lands-conference/event-summary-564c8780432141b0beb4d2ff69e08a46.aspx>