

# NODPA News

## Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

March 2019

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#### From the NODPA News Editor:

I wanted to let all of our NODPA News readers know that the March NODPA News has been greatly delayed due to complications that stemmed from my recent hip replacement surgery. Recovery is now going very well but I want to extend my apologies for the delay and any inconvenience this may have caused anyone, and extend my thanks to all of you for your patience. ~ Nora Owens, NODPA News Editor



The Stoller family.

## FEATURED FARM: STOLLERS ORGANIC DAIRY, STERLING, OHIO

By Adam Diamond

Stollers Organic Dairy, run by Scott and Charlene Stoller and four of their grown children, is a 160-cow dairy in Sterling, Ohio, in the Northeast part of the state about 50 miles south of Cleveland. The Stollers own 490

acres of farmland and rent another 350, of which 67 are in organic transition. They have a mostly Holstein herd, with some red and white Holsteins, and a smidgen of Brown Swiss genetics. As the sons take over management of the farm, they are switching

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## Organic Valley and Maple Hill launch New Third-Party Certification for Grass-Fed Organic Livestock Program

By Nora Owens, NODPA News Editor and Adam Diamond based on information from an OV press release and interviews with Adam Warthesen, Government Relations Coordinator, Organic Valley and Tim Joseph, founder, Maple Hill Creamery

Maple Hill and CROPP Cooperative launched their new third-party certified grass-fed organic dairy standard on February 21, 2019. According to a CROPP Cooperative press release, “the

inaugural products including the Certified Grass-Fed Organic Livestock Program official seal [was announced] at Natural Products Expo West March 5-9 in Anaheim, CA.” The press release goes on to say that this new standard was created to establish a national

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Message from NODPA President

**T**An old folk song, the “Housewife’s Lament” calls it the “rubbish of spiders”. I have picked this day to do one of my least favorite tasks on the farm, sweeping down the winter’s accumulation of spider webs on the ceilings, between the rafters, and around the windows. I am hoping that a clearing of the barn will result in a clearing in my head. I can’t say that I have seen many spiders at work over the winter, but it is obvious that they have been here, spinning strands into webs. I stand at the open door wondering how long it will take me to bring some order to this mess, and can’t help think the same for the organic dairy industry.

With recent events here in New York, many farmers feel they should be grateful just to have a market for their milk, because there are farmers who do not. Many of us are left wondering if this is the new normal as base prices in contracts with the major brands have been ratcheted back to 2007 levels. So where do we go from here? Do we invest in our farms to build bigger barns to milk more cows? Buy machinery and rent additional land to grow more of our own feed? Invest into marketing our products directly to consumers? Should we look at the bottom line, getting smaller to eliminate outside labor, improve milk quality, or reduce inputs? Do we diversify? Do we get more focused?

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## From the NODPA Desk:

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

**A**pologies for the delay in the publication of this issue of the NODPA News. Unexpected complications following a hip replacement meant that Nora Owens took longer than expected to recover her strength, mobility and stamina. She is back with a serious mission to be fit to garden and already critical of her own progress.

There's no good news on the horizon for organic dairy but there are signs that it will not get worse. Danone is reported as looking for milk from farms on existing trucking routes in New York at an average pay price for the northeast. The rebranded Grass Milk program is working to increase brand awareness and Maple Hill's contract includes supply management paying more for milk at times of year when they are short and penalizing those farms that produce more milk in spring and early summer. Aurora Dairy opened its new plant in Columbia, Missouri where they can fill 500 bottles of milk in less than a minute and 30,000 in an hour, using automated machinery, plus this plant will be able to process alternative and plant-based beverage products in the future. No need to wonder where they will be getting the vast volumes of organic milk they will need to keep the facility up to production goals. Thrown into the melting pot of the organic dairy market is the rumor that Saputo is looking to purchase Dean which is sure to have some effect on CROPP's joint venture with Dean. The organic community has seen 3 critical changes in leadership which will have a direct effect on producers, the organic market and policy.

George Siemon turned in his resignation to the CROPP board on March 12, 2019, three weeks before the Cooperative's annual meeting and just before a Dairy Executive Committee (DEC) conference call which had been called for a livestock issue. The board has appointed Robert Kirchoff, who joined CROPP Cooperative in 2016 as chief business officer, as interim CEO. Kirchoff was formerly President at Agropur Natrel USA, and CEO at Schroeder Company. OV's chief mission officer, Melissa Hughes, comment to the *Sustainable Food News* on the resignation was, "30 years! Seems like enough?" when asked why Siemon was stepping down. George was one of the seven founders of Organic Valley in 1988. He is a leader in the organic movement serving on many Boards including the National Organic Standard Board and very active in setting the standards for the USDA NOP regulations. He tied CROPP's mission to the revitalization of rural communities through his efforts to create economic and environmental sustainability for small family farms. Thank you, George, for all your great work and best wishes in your retirement.

On March 30, 2019, the Cornucopia Institute's Board of Directors announced that Mark Kastel was leaving the organization after nearly 15 years of leading it. The Board praised Mark in their

press release: "His foresight, dedication, and guidance have been instrumental in building Cornucopia into the preeminent organic watchdog and champion for family scale organic farming." As one of The Cornucopia Institute's co-founders, Mark saw the need to help protect the integrity of the organic food movement before it became an issue. Helen Kees, Cornucopia Board President, praised Mark, "There is no doubt that his efforts helped family-scale farms survive and thrive where they may have otherwise ceased operations. While the board is excited about what lies ahead, we know that our future successes will stand upon the foundation of Mark's groundwork with Cornucopia." The board has appointed Devin Mathias to guide Cornucopia in an interim role and direct the search for candidates to present to the board. "I'm excited to serve such a wonderful organization as we look for a leader willing to further build Cornucopia into a strong, positive force in the good food movement," Mathias said. "Thankfully, there is a talented, dedicated team in place ready to help advocate for the interests of organic farms and their consumer advocates." Mark is a highly passionate and talented advocate for family-scale farms and was an uncompromising attack dog when it came to important issues that would undermine organic integrity or the sustainability of family farms. Never an easy person to work with, he could and can be relied upon to translate his passion into action and motivate a large number of supporters. We wish him great success in his next venture.

Earlier in March 2019 the MOSES Board of Directors ended John Mesko's tenure with MOSES. "The MOSES Board recognized the need for a leadership shift to move MOSES forward in line with its mission, vision, and values," said David Perkins, Board President. The Board has appointed Program Director Lauren Langworthy to be the Interim Executive Director. Langworthy has been with MOSES for four years. She has been deeply involved in all aspects of the organization's work, especially the annual MOSES Organic Farming Conference. "We're confident in her abilities to assume the leadership role," Perkins said.

Dave Chapman of the Real Organic Project (ROP) reported that during a meeting with Jennifer Tucker, the head of the NOP, she said organic hydroponics is a closed issue as far as USDA is concerned, and also that using herbicides in a hydroponic operation does not disqualify them from immediate certification. There is no transition time. Also, he was on a panel in Washington DC entitled "The Schism in Organic." Supporting the certification of the large hydro-producers were Laura Batcha from Organic Trade Association and Lee Frankel from the Coalition for Sustainable Organics. Opposing organic hydroponics was Dave Chapman (ROP) and Steve Etka from the National Organic Coalition. Dave argues that that there is no schism rather we are facing a hostile takeover. For more on the need to be actively involved got to: <https://mailchi.mp/realorganicproject/usda-organic-now-allows-herbicides> ♦



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Save the Date: 19th Annual NODPA Field Days September 26 & 27, 2019

*Canastota Volunteer Fire Department Hall • 127 East Center Street, Canastota, NY 13032*

**N**ODPA Field Days returns to the central New York region this year and our agenda is filling up with excellent educational workshops and two farm tours. Here's a sneak peak of what is to come.

The 19th NODPA Field Days will be centrally located in Canastota, NY, which is approximately midway between Syracuse and Utica, New York, just off I-90, the New York Thruway, and in very close proximity to the North/South Route I-81. This convenient location will allow farm families from New York, New England and Pennsylvania to attend without extensive travel. Certainly, the Field Days program will offer something for everyone, and as usual, at a very reasonable cost. NODPA strives to make these annual Field Days an event that everyone can afford to attend, with Organic Dairy farm families paying no registration, only the cost of food, so please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

### FARM TOURS

Program planning is in the early stages but so far, we have two well-known local organic dairy farms hosting tours. John Troyer of John Troyer Family Dairy Farm will host the Thursday morning tour of his farm which includes touring and hearing about his successful use of a bedded pack barn and learning about their family store. Nathan Weaver, of Grunen Aue Farm will host the Friday afternoon tour of his all grass-based farm.

### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

We are developing an educational program that will focus on topics that are particularly relevant to the organic dairy community, including grass-fed management practices, tried and



tested organic cow treatment methods that everyone can adopt, cost effective, small-scale milking parlors, and discussions on how the current organic milk pay price and some tenuous milk contracts are impacting all organic dairy farmers. And, there will be a producer-led panel facilitating an in-depth discussion of the big picture and future of the organic milk market and how all organic dairy producers will be impacted, and how they can plan for their family's future. We will be asking: what can be done to influence the future, especially for the next generation? We are fortunate to have a number of farmers and presenters from the central New York region that will be heading up a very strong speaker list, including Nathan Weaver, Liz Bawden, Kathie Arnold, Stephen Weaver and many more. The May NODPA News will have more educational program information, and please check the NODPA website ([www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com)) for regular program updates.

The 19th 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.

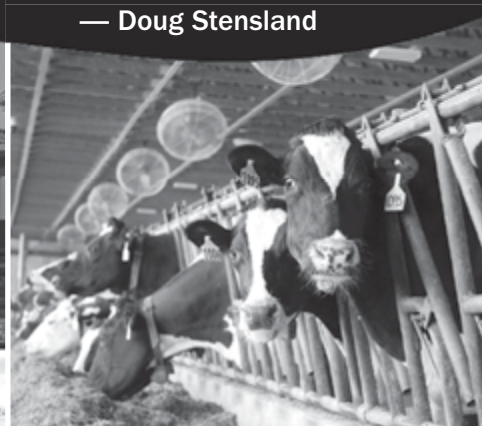
Meeting attendees will be able to visit the diverse trade show throughout the meeting, and will have many opportunities to meet new people and catch up with old friends. More information on the program will follow in the May NODPA News and online at [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com), so for now SAVE 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 19th 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.



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***“As we’re more proactive...  
we see the benefits.”***

— Doug Stensland



**STENSLAND FAMILY FARMS, LARCHWOOD, IOWA**

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“I really enjoy being part of this team,” says Cindy Krull-Begeman. “It’s in my blood. I love cows, and I love what Udder Comfort does for them. The robots give us conductivity lists every morning.

“Those cows get Udder Comfort. We also spray fresh udders 4 to 7 days when feeding in lockups, and we do prefresh heifers in the loafing pen,” says Cindy, noting her family’s Wisconsin dairies have also relied on the benefits of Udder Comfort for more than a decade.

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## Organic Production

# Keeping Kelp in Front of Cows on Grass

By Brittany Olson

*Reprinted with permission from Progressive Dairyman, March 18, 2019.*

In another installment of Penn State Extension's Dairy Grazing Management Guide webinar series, University of New Hampshire professor, extension educator and veterinarian Andre Brito discussed the growing popularity of supplementing kelp to cows in pasture-based systems, both organic and conventional.

Brito, who has been on the UNH faculty since 2009, conducts research at the UNH Burley-Demeritt Organic Dairy Research Farm.

### Why kelp?

Kelp is a species of brown seaweed that is rich in minerals, especially iodine. It also contains a plethora of other nutrients such as vitamins, polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA), polyphenols and bioactive peptides.

Kelp is also loaded with phlorotannin, a compound similar to terrestrial tannins found in legumes that affects carbohydrate and protein utilization in addition to inhibiting the growth of bacteria.

Kelp also helps pastured cattle meet their daily nutritional requirements that may not always be met by grass and legumes. While pasture forages are higher in crude protein content, kelp is far richer in calcium, magnesium, potassium and sulfur than straight pasture, on top of being a solid source of iodine.

"Kelp also has high concentrations of antioxidants such as beta-carotene and fucoxanthin, which may improve animal health as well," Brito said.

Brito cited data showing 59 percent of organic dairy farmers in New England fed kelp to their cattle, along with 49 percent of organic dairymen in Wisconsin and 83 percent of Minnesota organic dairymen.

According to a 2015 study, organic dairy farmers in the Northeast fed kelp for improvements in body condition score and overall animal appearance. Kelp was also shown to decrease somatic cell

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## Organic Production

count, reproductive issues and cases of pinkeye in addition to fly abatement during summer grazing.

“You can see it’s a prevalent feed in the organic sector,” Brito said. “I’m not too familiar with using kelp in conventional cows, but I would assume that there are some conventional farms in a pasture-based [system] feeding kelp.”

### According to Research

Studies conducted at the UNH Burley-Demeritt research farm investigated the effect of kelp meal supplementation on milk yield, digestibility, overall animal health and methane emissions during grazing season from June through October as well as winter months.

“Also, we had liked to improve our understanding of iodine metabolism in dairy cows fed kelp year-round,” Brito said.

The subjects of the study were 20 Jersey cows averaging 175 days in milk with daily production at 45 pounds per day with a mean bodyweight of 972 pounds. The study group received 4 ounces of kelp per day, compared to the control group that received no kelp at all, and received fresh pasture twice per day in addition to supplemental TMR twice per day.



Source: prairiehomestead.com

Samples of feed, blood, milk, fecal matter and urine were collected monthly throughout the study, while gases were taken using the GreenFeed system, which uses a head chamber with grain to entice the cows, read their RFID tags and measure their methane emissions through gases leaving the body during belching.

*continued on page 8*



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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

# Keeping Kelp in Front of Cows on Grass

*continued from page 7*

From a milk production standpoint, cows eating kelp gave slightly more milk than the control group in July and September, while the control group was more productive in August as pasture biomass began to decrease.

However, those differences were not statistically significant. No statistical significance was shown in any difference concerning pasture intake and dry matter intake either.

The study group had lower but not statistically different

linear somatic cell counts and higher blood serum cortisol levels than the control group throughout the experiment, as well. No statistically significant differences were shown in methane production, yield or intensity.

In short, kelp supplementation maintained or slightly improved fluid milk and milk solids production during the grazing season, and Brito said kelp's impact on blood cortisol, somatic cell count and methane emissions warrant further investigation.

"If we had a larger sample size, we may have seen a statistical difference, but we were only studying 20 cows," Brito said.

On the other hand, cows eating kelp had significantly higher levels of milk iodine concentration compared to the control group. They also showed lower levels of glucosinolates, or sulfur compounds,



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## Kelp farmer



Photo credit: Nancy Balcom, UConn Extension



## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

because the sulfur bonded to iodine and passed into the milk. Both compounds are essential to thyroid function, which regulates hormone processes for growth and development in tandem with metabolism and energy regulation.

"Kelp meal supplementation effectively increases the concentration of iodine in milk. Therefore, there are concerns and opportunities regarding the impact of iodine in human health," Brito said.

### Final thoughts on feeding kelp

While kelp meal supplementation may provide organic farmers with an additional opportunity to boost animal health, the lack of a statistical difference in milk production, somatic cell count and feed intake warrants further investigation.

Kelp isn't exactly cheap, either, at a cost of anywhere from \$50 to \$65 for a 50-pound bag, and when a herd of cows receives 4 ounces per head per day, one bag of kelp may not last very long.

However, the significant improvement in milk iodine levels may have positive implications for human health and again warrants further investigation.

"There is a critical need for developing a comprehensive evaluation of iodine concentration in retail organic milk," Brito said. ♦

*Brittany Olson is a dairy farmer and freelance writer from Chetek, Wisconsin. She and her husband, Sam, milk 40 registered Holsteins and Jerseys on their 116-year-old farm.*



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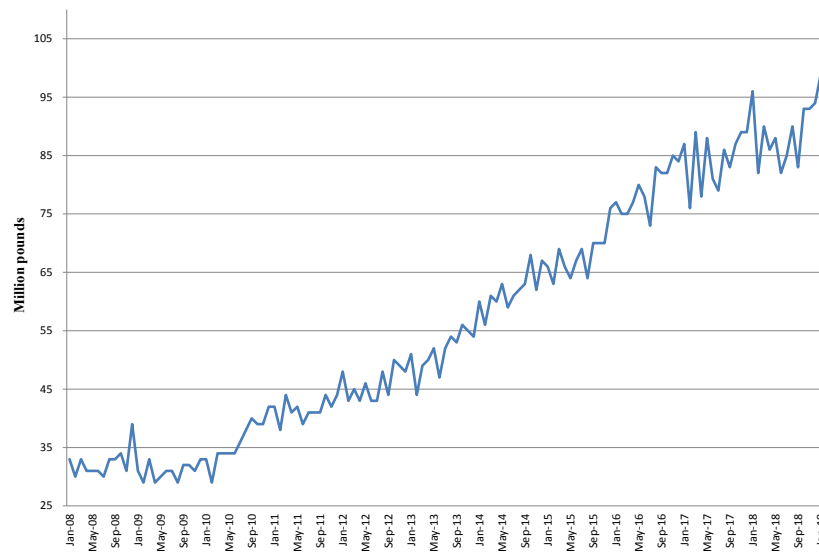
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By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

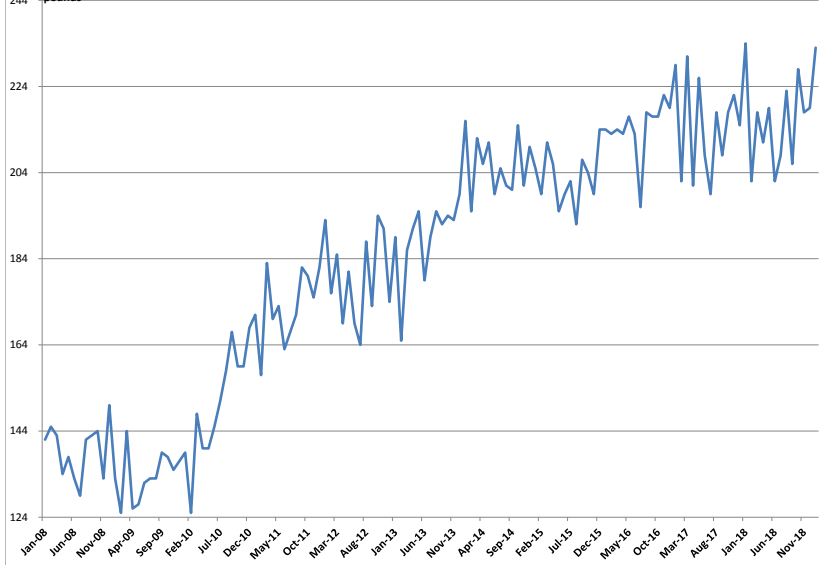
The Agricultural Market Service (AMS) reports total organic milk products sales for January 2019 were 233 million pounds, down 1.3 percent from January 2018. Total organic whole milk sales for January 2019 are 99 million pounds, up 5.6 percent compared with January last year. This mirrors the data from 2018 compared with 2017. In 2018, total sales of organic milk were 2,588 million pounds and sales of only whole milk were 1,062 million pounds. In 2017, retail sales of all types of organic milk were 2,577 million pounds and retail sales of whole milk was 1,012 million pounds. This represents an increase in whole milk retail sales of 5% in 2018 over 2017, which balanced out the decrease in sales of Non-Fat packaged milk to show level sales of the total of all retail organic milk. USDA AMS reports demand for organic whole milk powder has steadily improved, with significant sales increases reported in both domestic and foreign markets. Processing applications that target organic whole milk powder's utilization in fermented milk foods, yogurt, UHT milk, confectionary, bakery, ice cream and infant formulas are being assembled by many organic dairy manufacturers. Important factors that contribute to active demand are lower transportation costs and extended shelf life. As milk continues to be in surplus, manufacturers in the organic milk powder market are investing heavily in pioneering the development of innovative drying technologies that center on organic powder production. These statistics illustrate that organic dairy is not losing market share but may need to look at different models for the supply side that reward higher components and fat, plus tackle long term supply management.

CROPP Cooperative released its 2019 pay price in January 2019. CROPP is the only buyer that is transparent in its pay price structure and publishes the information on its website. Currently, there is no breakdown by region or a pay price for the Grass Fed standard. These pay prices are set by the CROPP Board of Directors and may change during the year as the market changes.

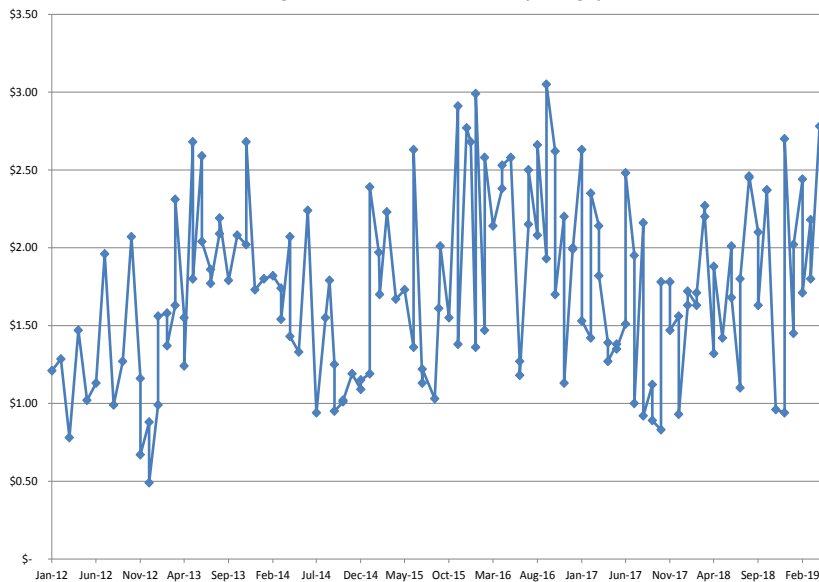
Organic Whole Milk Retail Sales 2008-2018



Estimated Total US Sales of Organic Fluid milk Products 2008-2019



Organic - conventional retail price gap

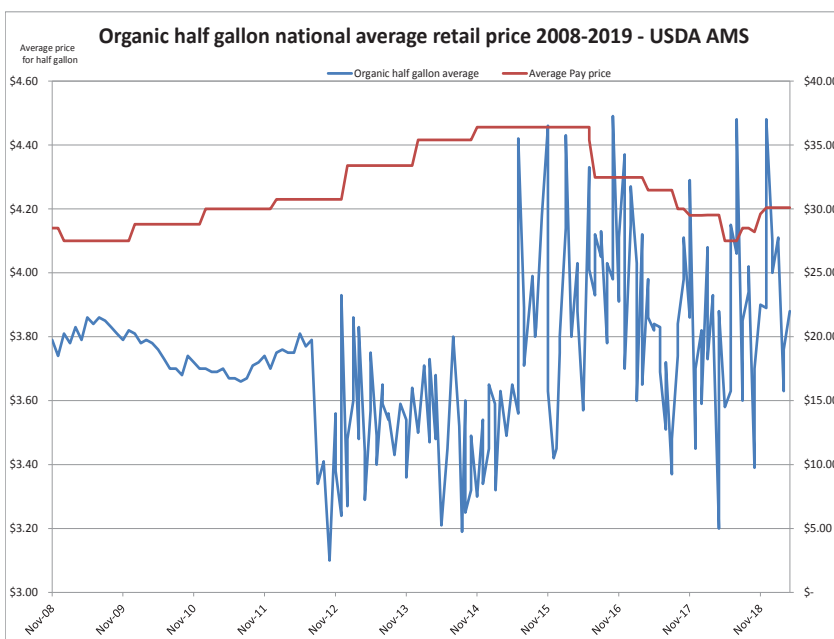
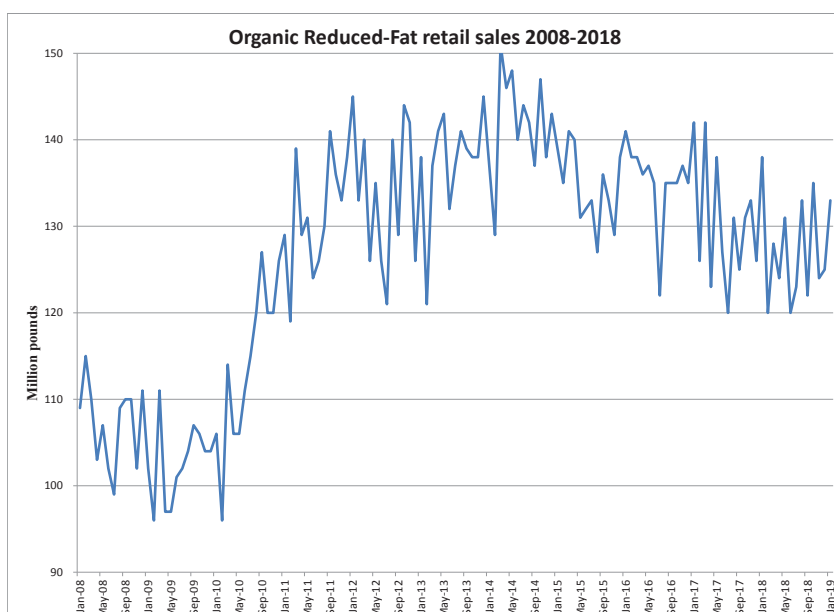


### CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley - 2019 farm gate pricing

Month/Year	\$/cwt
January 2019	\$32.42
February 2019	\$32.42
March 2019	\$29.24
April 2019	\$29.24
May 2019	\$27.13
June 2019	\$27.13
July 2019	\$27.13
August 2019	\$29.24
September 2019	\$29.24
October 2019	\$29.24
November 2019	\$29.24
December 2019	\$32.42
National Average Quality Premium	\$1.80
12-month Average Price*	\$31.30

There are unconfirmed reports that Danone NA is looking for more milk in the Northeast but we have no details on the volume they may be looking for or the location of the farms.

In this edition of the NODPA News, we have an in-depth look at the newly re-launched Grass-Fed label and all the many challenges and opportunities that brings. Of as much interest is the new contract that Maple Hill is sending out to its producers that reflects the company's major problems with trucking and balancing. Maple Hill has accepted that the organic milk market in the Northeast will come under even more pressure as larger organic operations move to Missouri and other areas in the Midwest, leaving no regional market for balancing Grass-Fed milk that is not utilized in Grass Fed product. For this reason, in July 2019 they are moving to a quota system with the ability for annually updating the base volume and a stable year-round base pay-price of \$35.58, with an expected average quality and component price of \$2.58 per hundred pounds. The base production allocation for each farm resets every July based upon each farm's total prior year's production and farms may request an increased in base to reflect internal growth or growth via purchased animals. Maple Hill is also offering an incentive for those operations that can match their demand for supply with what they are calling an Over-or-Under Base Premium so that those producers that can go over their base in December will be rewarded with a higher base price and those that can go under their base in the Spring will also receive payment for milk not produced. Trucking charge will be increased to \$740 per month which will obviously affect smaller operations more, and there will be a \$.90 per hundred pounds



deduct from July 2019 to July 2020 for the cost of managing the 2019 spring flush. They will also not pick up any farm that does not have 1,000 lbs. every other day. While there will be challenges with this new system, especially with an annual update of the quota base which will eventually decrease the Over/Under Premium, this is a good faith attempt at supply management with financial rewards for the producer. **See chart at the bottom of page 12 for more detail.**

As many had predicted, CROPP cooperative had a second poor year in 2018, with a record loss of \$12.6 million before tax on gross sales that increased one percent. CFO David Poremba said in the company's annual report that the company, "continue to experience similar headwinds that have challenged us in recent years: continued increase in demand for butterfat-rich products,

*continued on page 12*



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

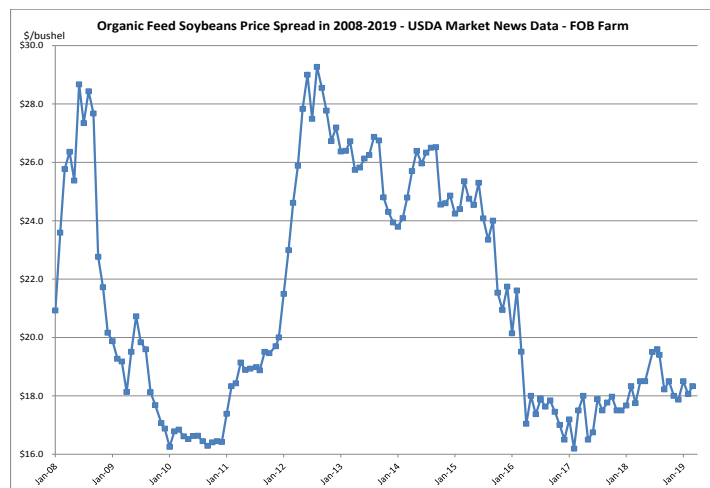
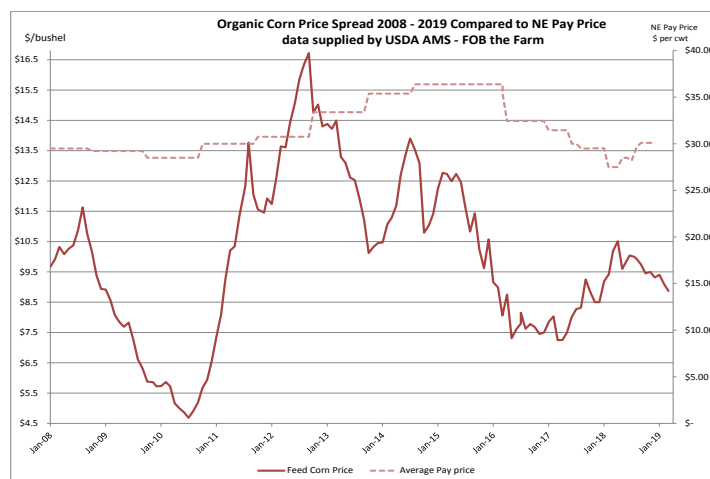
### Pay And Feed Prices

*continued from page 11*

which creates an unprofitable milk balance; pricing pressures from non-dairy alternatives; low conventional farm prices, which drives down retail prices; and transportation inflation.” In 2018, the company reduced gross inventories of non-fat powder by 23 percent or about \$37.5 million from 2017’s levels by selling both the current year’s powder and the inventory into the conventional market for a loss on their balance sheet. In 2017, CROPP reported a \$10.8 million net loss. CROPP is also facing more problems with its joint venture with Dean Foods which is also one of their distributors and packagers. Dean Foods is currently trying to sell the whole company or break it down into different parts that can be more easily marketed. Some of the major players in the industry, like DFA, are rumored to be interested in buying Dean Foods and any new owner might cause problems for CROPP. Difficult times are ahead for the company and its farmer owners.

The drive to stop the import of fraudulent organic grains that has been championed by OFARM appears to be making progress in the most important place, the market. USDA FAS reported organic import volume totals for 2018 of: Corn 8,677,613.60 bu.; Soybeans 12,001,843.19 bu.; Durum Wheat 809,616.68 bu. Compared to USDA FAS organic import data from 2017, corn imports are down 43 percent; soybean imports are down 25 percent; and durum wheat imports are down 42 percent.

Corn is trading steadily up from 2016-2017 lows with an average bushel price of \$9.50. Trade in other grains has been inactive, with little movement on price. USDA NASS National Crop Progress Report released April 8, 2019 reported only small



amounts of crop planted: Corn Planted, 2 percent; Sorghum Planted, 14 percent; Oats Planted, 27 percent, Emerged, 25 percent; Winter Wheat Headed, 3 percent; Spring Wheat Planted, 1 percent; Barley Planted, 2 percent. ♦

### July 2019 through June 2020 OVER/ UNDER Pricing, Maple Hill

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Base</b>	\$35.38	\$35.38	\$35.38	\$35.38	\$35.38	\$35.38	\$35.38	\$35.38	\$35.38	\$35.38	\$35.38	\$35.38
<b>Avg. Quality+ Comp</b>	\$2.62	\$2.62	\$2.62	\$2.62	\$2.62	\$2.62	\$2.62	\$2.62	\$2.62	\$2.62	\$2.62	\$2.62
<b>Base with Avg. Quality and Comp</b>	\$38.00	\$38.00	\$38.00	\$38.00	\$38.00	\$38.00	\$38.00	\$38.00	\$38.00	\$38.00	\$38.00	\$38.00
<b>Premium</b>	Over	Over	Over	Under	Under	Under	Under	Over	Over	Over	Over	Over
<b>Penalty</b>	None	None	None	Over	Over	Over	Over	None	None	None	None	None
<b>Over</b>	\$50.00	\$42.00	\$38.00	\$(20.00)	\$(8.00)	\$(8.00)	\$(20.00)	\$36.00	\$36.00	\$38.00	\$45.00	\$50.00
<b>Under</b>				\$5.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$10.00					

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Origin of Livestock Final Rule: Letter from the Organic Farmers Association

*On Friday, April 5, 2019, the following letter was sent to USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue, with 62 organizations signing on. Thanks to Organic Farmers Association and the many sign-ons for clearly expressing the will of the organic industry and community. If you do not see your organization or company on the list of sign-ons, please ask them why they are not supporting this common sense language. -Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

The Organic Farmers Association, along with the undersigned organizations, is concerned that the current Origin of Livestock standards are creating unfair and inconsistent interpretations of the standards and inconsistent implementation by certifiers across the country. We respectfully ask that USDA prioritizes implementation of an Origin of Livestock Final Rule in 2019.

The current rule is inhibiting the National Organic Program's ability to provide consistent and fair enforcement; leaving our nation's organic animal standards unfair and inconsistent. The effect of this is market instability which has resulted in an organic dairy crisis nationwide. Organic dairy farmers cannot wait for the USDA to reintroduce the Origin of Livestock rule in the format of a second proposed rule. We urge you to issue the Final Rule as soon as possible.

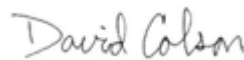
The USDA has sufficient comments to make a final rule now, and we urge you to move quickly and efficiently on behalf of family farmers across the United States that need clarification on the standards so that enforcement can be fair and consistent across the country. Since the 2015 rule was issued, the organic dairy industry has not changed significantly—it has only begun to crumble with the lack of regulation clarity as certifiers have

been interpreting the rule inconsistently; thus, allowing practices that were not allowed in the past. The lack of uniform interpretation of the existing standards has led to a lack of consumer confidence in the domestic organic dairy industry. We find this unacceptable and within your immediate power to rectify.

We ask that USDA fix these inequities by issuing the Origin of Livestock Final Rule within the 2019 year.

We would be happy to talk with you and your leadership within Agricultural Marketing Service more about origin of livestock and the pressing need for a final rule. We urge you to move swiftly as family organic dairy farmers are suffering because of the lack of uniform and strict enforcement. We know you share this priority for strong enforcement and integrity and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



David Colson  
President, Organic Farmers Association

### Supported by the following Organizations:

A Bee Organic  
Baystate Organic Certifiers  
California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)  
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association  
Center for Environmental Health  
Center for Food Safety

Community Alliance with Family Farmers  
The Cornucopia Institute  
Dr. Bronner's  
Dolan Family Biodynamic Farms  
Ecological Farming Association  
Ecology Center  
Equal Exchange  
FairShare CSA Coalition  
Farm Aid  
Friends of the Earth  
Food & Water Watch  
Food Democracy Now!  
Green America  
Hanover Co-op Food Stores

*continued on page 14*



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Origin of Livestock

*continued from page 13*

IFOAM North America

International Organic Inspectors Association

Iowa Organic Association

Kings River Produce

Lancaster Farm Fresh Co-op

The Land Connection

LSAdderson, Inc.

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)

Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance, Inc.

Midwest Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (MODPA)

Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES)

Montana Organic Association

MOSA Certified Organic

National Center for Appropriate Technology

National Family Farm Coalition

National Farmers Organization

Natural Food Certifiers Inc

Natural Grocers

National Organic Coalition

New England Farmers Union

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)

Northeast Organic Farming Association/Massachusetts Chapter (NOFA/Mass)

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY)

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Rhode Island (NOFA-RI)

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT)

Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association

Oregon Tilth

Organic Advocacy Organic Consumers Association

OFARM - Organic Farmers Agency for Relationship Marketing

Organic Pastures Dairy PCC Community Markets

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA)

Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO)

PrimusLabs

Provender Alliance

Real Organic Project

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

Thirteen Mile Farm

Valley Organic Growers Association

Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA)

Wild Farm Alliance

CC: Gregory Ibach, Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs

Jennifer Tucker, Director, National Organic Program

Honorable Collin Peterson, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture, U.S. House of Representatives

Honorable Stacey E. Plaskett, Chairwoman, Biotechnology, Horticulture, and Research Subcommittee of the House Committee on Agriculture, U.S. House of Representatives

Honorable Pat Roberts, Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, U.S. Senate



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Vermont Land Trust Announces New Award for Vermont Farmers

**Montpelier, VT** – The Vermont Land Trust is accepting applications for a new award to benefit Vermont farmers. The Eric Rozendaal Memorial Award has been established to honor Eric Rozendaal, a creative, innovative and enterprising farmer from Starksboro. After he passed away last summer, his family and friends raised funds to create an award in his memory, which is now managed by the Vermont Land Trust. One \$5,000 award will be given annually for the next 10 years to a Vermont farmer who demonstrates Eric's values of land stewardship, giving back, and entrepreneurial farming.

Eric Rozendaal was a pioneer of the farm-to-plate movement in Vermont, and one of the first to sell directly to restaurants, stores and hospitals. He was also an early advocate of greenhouse growing. A longtime vendor at the Burlington Farmers' Market, he developed new products: he grew artichokes, made farm-fresh donuts, and peeled and cubed butternut squash for customers' convenience. He also expanded to a food fair in New York City.

In addition to his creativity in diversifying farm products and markets, he worked to improve the soil on his farm, built enduring connections with his customers and farm laborers, and

was known for sharing his knowledge with others.

The Vermont Land Trust began working with Eric in 2001 when he purchased the conserved Rockville Market Farm in Starksboro and established his operations there. Over the years, he provided valuable advice to the land trust as it expanded efforts to help new and beginning farmers, especially through its Farmland Access Program.

"We are pleased to present these awards on behalf of Eric's family and friends, and to support farmers' efforts as responsible land stewards, conserving natural resources and enhancing community vitality," said Nick Richardson, president of the Vermont Land Trust.



*continued on page 29*

## WANTED Organic Inspectors

**Pro-Cert** is seeking contract inspectors for surveillance of its growing organic producer and processor clientele.

### The Opportunity:

Year-round work with remuneration proportional to scope, complexity of work and skill. Training provided; flexible work schedule.

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Must have a degree or diploma in agriculture or food science, the demonstrated ability to work on his/her own and a functional vehicle and driver's license. **Previous auditing, inspection and quality assurance experience is useful.**

### Application:

Please send covering letter and resumé to:

**Sean Manley, B.Sc.(Agr), A.Ag**  
sean.manley@pro-cert.org

www.pro-cert.org



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—Jenny Rocco ORGANIC INSPECTOR

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**Know**  
what you have done

SO THAT YOU KNOW  
**where you are going**

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Certification for Grass-Fed Organic Livestock

*continued from page 1*

organic grass-fed organic dairy standard that is beyond reproach, a standard that instills consumer confidence regarding what is behind the label, and builds on the existing NOP standards and enforcement infrastructure.

Both CROPP Cooperative and Maple Hill claim that the new standard will bring much-needed consistency and transparency to grass-fed organic dairy standards for farmers, processors, manufacturers, certification bodies, retailers and consumers. While both companies have had some success with marketing organic dairy products that are identified as coming from grass-fed cows, their self-certification process is not particularly transparent. It has contributed to consumer confusion, as they face dozens of private standards or labels, with varying degrees of transparency and traceability. Both CROPP Cooperative and Maple Hill have seen a decline in the growth of sales in the last year with Maple Hill cancelling some farmer contracts for their grass-fed program and estimates of utilization of grass-fed milk in grass-fed branded product at only 80%. The new certification is expected to boost consumer confidence in the grass-fed brands and increase sales. According to Rachel Prickett, director of certification for EarthClaims, which is managing the new program, and William J. Friedman, an organic industry lawyer and CEO of EarthClaims, Maple Hill Creamery and CROPP Cooperative “came together as a team of interested parties seeing the need for an additional certification on top of NOP organic standards due to consumer demand for such a claim, and demands from the dairy industry to improve animal welfare and meet consumer demands. Organic Valley and Maple Hill Creamery wanted to build off the USDA NOP standard as a baseline.”

This new label, officially “Certified Grass-Fed Organic Dairy,” is a privately developed, publicly available standard housed with Organic Plus Trust (OPT), a public benefit corporation that was created by EarthClaims, LLC, a global farm and food certifier. Its first program partners are the following brands: Organic Valley, Maple Hill and Natural By Nature. OPT’s sole purpose is to house the standard, and has delegated program manager duties for the standard to EarthClaims. Funding for the OPT’s work is expected to be primarily derived from small administrative fees and a licensing program for the use of its Licensed Trademarks. This new grass-fed organic dairy standard is open to all organic certifiers and certified organic farmers.

This new standard builds on expanding awareness and valuation of the health, animal welfare and conservation benefits of grass-fed dairy and meat production. There have been several previous efforts to establish verifiable standards for grass-fed livestock production in








the U.S. In 2007, the USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service released standards for a grass-fed claim on meat (organic and conventional) that many observers agreed was not perfect, but nonetheless represented a step in the right direction. However, in January, 2016, the USDA withdrew the grass-fed standard, citing a lack of authority to define the claim. Those using the USDA grass-fed standard were given 30 days to convert it to a private grass-fed standard. A number of organizations then produced their own grass-fed certification labels, including Food Alliance Certified Grass-Fed, Animal Welfare Approved (AWA) Certified Grass-Fed, and Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) (source: New Label Soon for Grass-Fed Milk and Yogurt, Dr. Joseph Mercola, 4-19-16, <https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2016/04/19/grass-fed-milk-yogurt-new-label.aspx>). (See Compare Grassfed Labels chart) The lack of federally-regulated grass-fed organic dairy standards allowed a variety of labels and different brands to appear on store shelves, confusing consumers and frustrating the farming community. Trickling Springs, founded in 2001, was an early proponent of a grass based dairy supply though not strictly organic. Their initial success was hindered by a lack of capital and poor management decisions, and in 2017 CROPP Cooperative acquired the Trickling Springs grass-fed milk route.

PCO and NOFA NY saw a demand from their clients and worked together to develop “an end-to-end farm through retail” protocol for verification of grass-fed claims that were based on organic certification. During 2016 and 2017, CROPP Cooperative, Maple Hill, PCO, NOFA NY and the American Grass-fed Association worked together to develop a national standard but the AGA dropped back from this collaborative because they didn’t want the label to be restricted to being based on organic certification. In January 2018, the American Grass-fed Association (AGA) published

*continued on page 18*

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## COMPARE GRASSFED LABELS

Label	"Grassfed"					
	(Not Certified)	Certified Grass-fed Organic Livestock Program™ by Organic Valley and Maple Hill	Pennsylvania Certified Organic 100% GrassFed	American Grassfed Association Certified Grassfed	Food Alliance Certified Grassfed	Certified Grassfed by A Greener World
Publicly Available Standards	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Requires 3rd Party Slaughter Audits, Including Welfare	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
All Farms in Production System Are Certified	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Supply Chain Traceability by Physical Inspection Required	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Independently Recognized Welfare Certification	No	No	?	No	No	Yes
Responsible Antibiotic Use: Allows Treatment While Prohibiting Routine Use	?	No	No	No	No	Yes
ISO/IEC Guide 17065 Accredited	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Independent Farms	?	?	?	?	?	Yes
Certified Organic	?	Yes	Yes	?	?	?
Globally Recognized	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Requires Country of Origin Labeling	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

This information is based on published standards and documents on organizational websites as of February 22, 2019



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Certification for Grass-Fed Organic Livestock

*continued from page 17*

updated Grass-fed Dairy Standards that require livestock production practices that include a forage-based diet derived from pasture, animal health and welfare, no antibiotics, no added hormones. By 2018, the initiative to form a national organic grass-fed add-on label had shrunk down to Maple Hill and CROPP Cooperative. The final details about who would own and accredit the program the program was finalized in the Fall of 2018. With the official launch, consumers will begin seeing the new seal on packaging in 2019, assuring the highest level of transparency by farmers and producers.

The new Certified Grass-Fed Organic Livestock Program builds on organic standards, meaning farms must first be certified organic to participate in the program. To then be certified under the new OPT standard, dairy cows must be fed a grass diet, with zero-grain, and given plenty of pasture for grazing. The two certifications can be bundled under one certification agency and inspection process. This new grass-fed organic dairy standard requires all animals to receive sixty percent (60%) of their dry matter intake from pasture over at least a 150-day grazing season (as opposed to 30 percent and 120 days per the National Organic Program's organic pasture rule standards). In a joint interview, Adam Warthesen, CROPP Cooperative, and Tim Joseph, Maple Hill, said, "We don't see this as a difficult reach because grass-fed operations are already at that level or higher, for the most part." They added, "one big difference is that we will be allowing additional sugar-based foodstuffs, such as molasses and sugar beets to enhance nutrition and maintain animal welfare."

The certification differs from other grass-fed certifications in that it requires full supply-chain verification to use the certification mark, creating a much higher level of transparency. Farms, processors and handlers must be certified to ensure grass-fed organic milk is segregated from all other milk, organic or conventional, from the farm to the consumer package. While EarthClaims currently serves as the program manager for the standard, this may change as 2019 is a pilot year to roll out the program and evaluate how it is working. OPT was created as a special purpose entity to house the standard and be responsible for its management; it has delegated provisional program management authority to EarthClaims for the 2019 pilot year.

*"Maple Hill and Organic Valley have always been devoted to producing 100% grass-fed organic dairy in a way that exemplifies what consumers believe the words 'grass-fed' really mean. This new certification and seal are a giant step forward in protecting the grass-fed claim and giving consumers a true standard to measure at the shelf, and for Maple Hill the*

*launch of the new program is a meaningful way for us to mark 10 years delivering 100% grass-fed organic dairy. It's all we've ever done and it's all we'll ever do."*

**--Tim Joseph, Founder of Maple Hill**

### What are the requirements for this new organic, grass-fed certification?

The certification applies to both producer and processor. There must be compliance from both parties so that the authenticity can be verified from the farm to the packaged product on the grocery store shelf.

- Producers must be organic and participate in an animal welfare verified program that includes on-site inspections and that is approved by the Program. The OPT Program's requirement for a third-party animal welfare program is met during 2019 by participation in the welfare assessments conducted under the Farmers Assuring Responsible Management or "FARM" Program. The FARM program uses on-farm Second-Party Evaluations and a system for Third-Party Verification of those evaluations.
- You cannot have both an organically certified dairy herd and an organically certified grass fed herd at the same location
- Cows must graze for the entire grazing season, which cannot be less than 150 days, and 60% of Dry Matter Intake (DMI) during the grazing season must come from grazing. This compares to the minimum of 120 days and 30% of DMI with the USDA NOP Pasture Rule.
- The priorities of this new label are on pasture, animal welfare requirements, and organic fundamentals.
- The one big difference is that additional sugar-based foodstuffs, such as molasses and sugar beets will be allowed in order to enhance nutrition and animal welfare, as needed.
- Processors will be certified and will have to demonstrate that they are in compliance by segregating all grass-fed milk, then processing it first, ahead of organic and conventional product.
- Labeling must appear on all grass-fed products that leave a facility.

2019 will be a transition year, with existing farms being reviewed as their certification becomes due. This will give the program the chance to educate everyone involved and to ensure that, by the end of year, everyone is in compliance. The certification process will begin immediately with a desk audit of all farms that are already

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

producing grass-fed milk under the standards of their buyers and brands. Presently, valid Grass-Fed organic certificates issued by NOFA NY, Pennsylvania Certified Organic (“PCO”) and Vermont Organic Farmers (“VOF”) that bear anniversary or expiration dates prior to December 31, 2019 will be accepted by OPT, provided the certified Operation designated has applied to a Certifier to receive Certification under the OPT Program no later than October 1, 2019. *See Chart at the bottom of page.*

### Does the new standard address the concerns over the abuses in the Origin of Livestock regulation?

The OPT standard does not address the aspect of continuous transition or purchase of transitioned dairy animals from other herds. It does distinctly differentiate between beef animals though, as does the USDA NOP regulation. While the standards do give preference to purchase of already grass-fed certified dairy animals when adding to the herd, it does allow variances if they are not commercially available. One of the stated reasons for the lack of availability is distance from the purchasing operation. This opens the door for the same abuse of the transition exemption that has played a large part in the oversupply of organic milk; a missed opportunity to safeguard this new standard from well-known and documented abuses within the NOP regulations.

According to the OPT Policy Manual:

X. Governance: Guidelines for Certification Services and Certificates of Compliance:

A. Eligibility for Certification:

1. Operations: This program is open to any livestock production or livestock product handling Operation, that is presently

certified under the NOP, or eligible to concurrently be certified under the NOP and the OPT program.

2. Dairy Livestock: Eligible dairy livestock are solely those animals present at the applicant Operation at the time of the initiation of the required 90-day transition period.

### Who is currently accredited to certify grass-fed operations and what are the certification fees associated with this new label?

- There are 10 certifiers ready to go: the certifiers currently accredited to offer certification services for Organic Plus Trust’s Grass-Fed Organic Livestock Program (as of April 12, 2019) are:
  - o MOSA Certified Organic
  - o OEFFA Certification
  - o Oregon Tilth Certified Organic
  - o Quality Certification Services
  - o Baystate Organic
  - o Vermont Organic Farmers LLC
  - o Nature’s International Certification Services
  - o Global Organic Alliance Inc.
  - o Pennsylvania Certified Organic
  - o Pro-Cert Organic Systems Ltd.

As with the NOP program, certifiers are allowed to charge whatever they want for the extra certification. Producers will most likely pay an additional \$150-\$200 over their organic certification fees, depending on whether their organic certifier is accredited to the OPT program. If their

*continued on page 20*

### SUPPLEMENTAL GRAIN-FREE FEEDSTUFFS (OPT)

ENERGY SUPPLEMENT <sup>1</sup>	SUPPLEMENT DRY MATTER PERCENT	MAXIMUM ALLOWED PER DAY ON DRY MATTER BASIS (lbs.)	STARCH, %DM	ENERGY, M CAL/lb.
Sugar Cane Molasses	88%	4	0.5	0.88
Sugar Cane Dry Sugar	100%	4	0.5	0.98
Sugar beets, Whole	20%	5	2.5	0.79
Sugar Beets, Pulp	92%	5	0.5	0.73
Carrots, Pulp	92%	5	5.74	0.77
Citrus, Pulp	92%	5	1.5	0.84
PROTEIN SUPPLEMENT <sup>2</sup>	-	-	-	-
Alfalfa Pellets	92%	5	2	0.58
OTHER SUPPLEMENTS	-	-	-	-
Kelp	99%	No Limits/Free Choice	N/A	N/A

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Certification for Grass-Fed Organic Livestock

*continued from page 19*

certifier is not accredited with the OPT, there will have to be a separate inspection from a different certifier and the cost will reflect that.

### What happens if a farm fails to meet the new standard?

- All producers will have 2019 to meet the new standards. If producers and processors fail to meet these new standards during the 2020 inspection year, they will not be certified and will be dropped from the grass-fed program.

### Is the ownership of the label restricted to those brands that are starting the new certification program or will it be available to other brands to use?

- No, the label is not restricted to the companies that have started this program and is owned by OPT. Any brand can be certified and use the seal, as long as they are in compliance with all program standards. In the press release that launched the program it was stated that the program covers 320 producers,

15 processors, 15 certifiers, and 48 grass-fed products.

- There will be no centralized promotional or marketing plan for the new grass-fed label, although OPT/EarthClaims may provide an educational campaign. Otherwise, each brand that will offer products carrying the label will be able to develop their own marketing and promotional program to bring attention to it.

### Program Management and Oversight

EarthClaims will accredit and train certifiers and certification agencies to verify compliance by farms, handlers and processors with the standard. EarthClaims staff will review with a desk audit every single certifier's reports prior to the certifiers being able to issue a certificate of compliance. Certification agencies must submit proof of accreditation with the National Organic Program to EarthClaims.

OPT has convened a three-person Steering Committee to oversee the ongoing work on the OPT Program Materials. The Steering Committee is presently composed of a certifier stakeholder and two stakeholder handlers. The launching press release implies that the two stakeholders are CROPP Cooperative and Maple Hill. Currently, there are no farmers on the steering committee, but this could change in the future. The steering committee's job is to make sure the standards are implemented in a uniform manner by all accredited certifiers, which it does by revising the program manual as needed to clear up any ambiguities. The goal, as Prickett said, is to "minimize certifying agency drift." OPT wants to minimize certification agency discretion regarding interpretation of the standard.

The Steering Committee will convene three subcommittees:

- a) Production Standards
- b) Handling Standards
- c) Program Matters

Producers will mainly communicate through their certifiers, who will then bring producer-feedback to the steering committee. From OPT Policy manual: "OPT develops its standards by an open and inclusive process that involves diverse opinions. OPT conducts ongoing review of each module's standards by stakeholder subcommittees and receives input directly by a case-by-case petition process under which any materially affected person may petition for a change in existing OPT modules."

### Grass-Fed Certification Label: will it have an impact on producers?

The introduction of this seal comes at a time when American shoppers are becoming more aware of, and invested in, how their food is produced, including animal welfare and environmental impacts of food production. According to the program founders, grass-fed dairy aligns all of these interests, providing important health benefits, minimizing the environmental impact of the overall process and creating healthier livestock.

While the many benefits of grass-fed dairy are well known, some



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

producers are wondering how this will impact them: how will they justify the increased cost of certification? Will they have greater market access? Will their pay price reflect their investment? Maple Hill founder Tim Joseph said that he doesn't foresee that the new certification would impact pay price in the new future, noting that this isn't a 'magic bullet' for the grass-fed dairy industry; but noted that Maple Hill is currently paying between \$37.00 and \$40.00 for grass-fed milk, with seasonal adjustments. Nor does he see the label helping farmers who recently had their contracts canceled because their size/distance from other farms on milk routes did not justify keeping them on. Maple Hill has recently developed a new contract, which will start on July 2019, for its producers which includes the following: a quota system; penalties for over production, plus incentives for maximizing production when milk is short; an increase of trucking charge to a \$740 per month stop charge and a base price of \$35 with an expected average of \$38 including components. If anything, the new standard, by requiring additional segregation, could increase shipping and processing costs, which will increase cost pressures throughout the supply chain.

### Conclusion

On one level it is an extremely positive development that CROPP Cooperative, Maple Hill and Natural By Nature partnered to create a new grass-fed organic dairy label and standard that could help the entire organic dairy industry weather a milk glut and uncertainty over what the organic label means by providing a valuable add-on standard that is consistently interpreted in all regions of the country, and by all certifiers. The standard may serve to support smaller dairies that rely on a grazing-intensive cow feeding regime as they now will be able to differentiate themselves in the marketplace like never before. However, certain features of this new program might give one pause.

First and foremost, this is a private standard, and as such simply does not carry the weight that the USDA NOP standard has. OPT was formed for the explicit purpose of this standard and is reliant on EarthClaims for all its management and operation. While EarthClaims will provide oversight of certifiers, it will not audit certifiers nor conduct spot field checks to ensure full and accurate certification of farmers and handlers by the certifiers.

Second, the fact that the standard was essentially created by two organic dairy companies suggests the potential for a conflict of interest. A true third party standard would not be linked to the milk marketing firms that buy milk from certified suppliers; it would be completely independent. This lack of independence could lead to problems down the road as CROPP Cooperative and Maple Hill would be reluctant to drop certified producers from the program if that meant loss of sales to stores.

Third, the lack of direct farmer involvement in the development and modification of the standard is a concern. The existing OPT Steering Committee responsible for decision making has two handlers and

one certifier with a requirement that there is a two-thirds majority for any decision. This gives the handlers control of all decisions. Who is the standard really meant to serve? Are the standards going to help farmers who are facing a once in a generation cost-price squeeze to be able to climb out of the financial pit that is the current organic milk market and earn a fair return for their efforts?

Ideally, this grass-fed organic dairy standard would be housed within the National Organic Program, with farmers having the option of making this an add-on to the regular organic certification. Such a process would provide it more institutional support, reduce conflicts of interest, increase transparency, and ensure that certifiers are audited periodically, with NOP staff actually making field visits to verify that certifiers are correctly implementing the standard. While there is no opportunity that the current USDA administration will have the add-on integrated into the NOP, this program does nothing to remedy some basic problems and inequities within the implementation of the organic dairy regulations. It fails to provide explicit direction on the one-time transition allowance that has been used by bad actors to destroy the supply side of the organic dairy market and the opportunities of small to mid-size operations. Farmers and organic consumer advocates need to pay close attention to this new standard, and work to make it accountable and transparent. ♦



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## NET UPDATE

### Recent ODairy Discussions

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

It's an odd time of year to see an animal in the herd with symptoms of pink eye, but that is what one farmer faced last month. To make matters much worse, the afflicted cow was already blind in her other eye. A producer suggested that she could have poked her eye on a piece of coarse hay, and others suggested that it might be a form of cancer or another eye condition. Veterinary assistance was recommended to diagnose the problem, and to treat if possible. If diagnosed as pink eye, one vet suggested a sub-corneal injection of milk or Bovi-Sera, administered with appropriate anesthesia and restraint. Another producer suggested that her Vitamin A levels might be low, and another suggested checking her copper and iodine levels. Farmers recommended homeopathic remedies appropriate for the individual cow sprayed directly in the affected eye. It was also recommended to check Vitamin E and selenium levels, feed kelp and aloe pellets, keep the bedding clean and fresh, and reduce stress.

A farmer asked the group what was an allowed treatment for mild ketosis that would work with a single dose. The old standby, propylene glycol, has been added to the national list of products approved for organic use. A discussion followed where some farmers and a vet believed a glycerine-based product is better for the cow's system. Ketonic from Agri-Dynamics was recommended as it also has herbs to enhance liver function. Another farmer noted that propylene glycol has NOT been approved for organic use in Canada.

Farmers discussed their use of polled genetics to avoid the necessity of dehorning young calves. Some felt that they lost some milk production and saw reproduction problems in the polled offspring; others felt that the polled genetics have greatly improved over the last 10 years and there was no reason not to choose polled sires when using artificial breeding. There was a mixture of opinions on dehorning in general. One farmer never dehorned, and said he did not have any injuries; others shared their experiences with serious injuries in cattle resulting from conflicts with horned herd mates. One farmer shared this method of dehorning large horns: "clip the hair off where the horn meets the head and then put on one of the extra-large castrator bands as close to the bottom of the horn as possible. In 2-3 weeks, the horn falls off. Best technique we've found for when we do need to take off a full-grown horn. Soaking the band in hot water before putting it on the XL castrator bander is a help."

A veterinarian was consulting with a farmer about managing an outbreak of Step ag in his organic herd. He asked the group if anyone had experience using an autogenous vaccine (vaccine made from the individual's disease organism). Another vet responded that a homeopathic nosode from the herd's own milk could be easily made and then administered orally. He suggested stimulating the immune system with a sub-Q injection of Amplimune, wait 4 days and then give an extended botanical treatment like Phyto-Mast. Impro products, specific for Strep ag, were also recommended. Addison Labs in Missouri was suggested for autogenous vaccine. ♦

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To sign up for the ODairy listserv, go to:

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

## 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.

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\_\_\_\_\_ \$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: \_\_\_\_\_



## FEATURED FARM

**STOLLERS ORGANIC DAIRY, STERLING, OHIO***continued from page 1*

to AI from what had been an exclusive use of bulls for breeding, and have increased the use of technology to optimize breeding efficiency, cow health, milk quality and forage quality. Four years ago, they got rid of the stanchion barn and built a double 16 parabone milking parlor that allows for the testing of cows every time they enter the parlor—for being in heat, how much they eat, level of movement, and components in their milk. Just like cows, humans take some time to adjust. According to Scott, “when we switched to a parabone parlor the old cows and old farmer didn’t do as well. The new cows and new farmers did fine.” The older generation of Stollers has at times resisted some of the innovative practices advocated by the younger generation, but ultimately have come around.

The Stollers bought Scott’s grandfather’s farm in 1996, located across the road from the farm he grew up on, which is now farmed by his brother. They became certified organic in 2001, and started shipping to Organic Valley two years later. The story of how the Stoller farm went organic is quite poignant, and helps explain how they came to adopt their unique business structure. It is a story of questioning of farming paradigms, intense

personal trauma, and peer support. Out of this questioning and trauma has emerged an openness to innovation, and a strong commitment to intergenerational farm partnership and continuity.

A catalyzing event in this story is a dreadful farm accident. In 1997, Scott Stoller lost his right arm in a hay baler, and was very sick from the painkillers and other medicine he had to take during his long recovery. Scott relayed how he took stock with this near-death experience, “I thought about how I want to be remembered. After being so sick, I wondered what I did with the cows. Chemicals are not all good. The gal that I married didn’t grow up as a farmer; she would ask questions like ‘why give routine antibiotics to cows?’ that I didn’t have a good answer to. I thought—why do it then? She was a strong promoter of ‘do it the way God made it.’” Just as Charlene’s background influenced her perspective on farming practices, so did Scott’s experience of growing up on a conventional dairy farm. As he put it, “When you grow up and do it with your dad you feel it’s right, even if it’s not. My boys have no idea how to do it besides organic. If you grow up one way, it takes a while to relearn.”



**The Stoller Farm**



## FEATURED FARM

But relearn is what Scott did, with the accident and his wife's questioning compounded by a bad experience hiring a custom chemical sprayer around the same time. The person he hired used the wrong formulation and it led to stunted corn everywhere he sprayed; it was only nice where he missed. "It was just the ticket that turned me off," Scott said. After the botched custom spraying job, he had one more field to plant and his organic neighbor offered to plant and cultivate organic corn here. This field of organic corn did much better than the sprayed/stunted corn, and this year—1998—was the last year he intentionally used chemicals on his fields. At this point he started to farm organically, although it took a while to find an organic milk market as there were no organic shippers in the area. The Stoller farm started shipping in late 2003 with Organic Valley.

It is important to note, however, that while the accident, his wife's questioning, and the bad spraying were the immediate catalysts for the Stollers going organic, in some ways he was already primed and open to the possibility of organic production by earlier childhood experiences, the latter of which speaks to the importance of having easy access to organic extension and educational programming. When Scott was young, his dad would not let him play in the insecticide dust, and Scott wondered at

*continued on page 26*



Tree stump carved into a milking can



Warren and Nelson in the parlour

## FEATURED FARM



**Nelson Stoller and his son**

## STOLLERS ORGANIC DAIRY, STERLING, OHIO

*continued from page 25*

the time, “why are we doing this if I couldn’t play near it.” Later, in high school, Scott had an agriculture instructor who brought in an organic farmer who emphasized all the positive aspects of organic farming, and how working with the soil and rotating crops would lead to improved soil health and good crops. This farmer showed how organic was a viable option, and he was not bashing conventional farming, “he was pro-organic.”

In the wake of the accident, and Scott’s epiphany about chemical farming, he also decided he needed to plan for the future—for his family, for his farm, and this meant changing the business structure of the farm. He set up an LLC for the farm business while the farmland went into a Trust, so that if something happens to Scott and Charlene their children can rent it from the Trust. Currently, Scott and Charlene control the Trust and receive annual rental payments from the farm business for its use of the land for raising cows and producing milk. To set up his children as future part owners of the LLC, they are paid for chores starting at the age of 6 or 7. As they get older and gain more responsibility, they make more money. The Stoller’s adult children are now so adept at farm tasks and management that, “they could handle the farm without me,” Scott said. This process of giving young children responsibility for chores, with a gradual escalation in responsibility and pay follows the experience Scott had as a child. He follows his father’s maxim “Let ‘em do before their able. They’ll do it when they’re able.”

When each child reaches 18, they have the opportunity to buy a 5% share of the LLC—the farm business, separate from the land. Once they achieve ownership stake, they are paid a 12% annual dividend on the value of their ownership stake in the LLC.

They are also paid a wage, and this wage varies among Scott and his sons, with his 18-year-old son actually getting a higher wage than Scott, while Scott and Charlene earn a substantial amount of income from land rent paid by Stollers Organic Dairy, LLC. While not an absolute requirement, the adult sons who are partners in the LLC farm business are expected to use the dividend payments for future house or land purchases, not consumer items. Whenever a son has an opportunity to buy into the farm business, he takes advantage of this opportunity, using, in part, funds accumulated through saving the dividends paid on his ownership stake in the LLC. No one in the younger generation has ever had to borrow money to pay for their share of the farm business LLC, which removes a major financial barrier to farm viability and intergenerational farm continuity.

The particulars of this business structure have changed over the years, as several of his sons have become adults and helped adapt the structure to best suit the farm’s needs. At first, the original intent was for the farm to have free rent and Scott to earn money through a wage, this has now been reversed to ensure he will still have an income stream if he cannot work. On occasion, Scott has used the money from the sale of shares in the farm LLC to buy additional land, which in turn is rented back to the Stollers Organic Dairy LLC.

All of the owners of the LLC weigh in on whether it makes sense for one of them to take outside work for extra income. All non-emergency equipment purchases must be approved at the annual business meeting. Regarding outside work, several sons have specialized skills that are quite marketable outside the farm and could induce them to abandon their farm chores in order to earn



## FEATURED FARM

extra personal income. However, the owners of the LLC decide collectively whether it makes sense for one son to do a welding project or another to do electrical work. "If it's profitable we all support it," Scott said. The income from this extra work goes straight to the LLC on the thinking that, "someone is doing that fella's chores while he's doing the outside work." This policy "keeps people from wanting to do side jobs and not doing chores....It helps make everyone managers and not be so selfish." Charlene added that their accountant advised them to not do side jobs that would fill up one partner's personal bank account.

At the annual meetings, each partner comes up with their wish list of items they believe should be funded in the upcoming year. At the meeting, they hash it out with each other and figure out what the farm can afford; what it needs; and plan accordingly, with 1- and 5-year plans for equipment, and 1- and 5-year plans for buildings. Of course, if there is an emergency and a critical piece of equipment breaks, exceptions will be made to the plans, but in general this planning process serves to eliminate impulse equipment purchases. The wives help keep the LLC's spending in check as well, particularly since the wives handle the finances, and serve as a check on their husbands who may get excited about a piece of equipment they see for sale; the wives will say, "It's not in the budget."

*continued on page 28*



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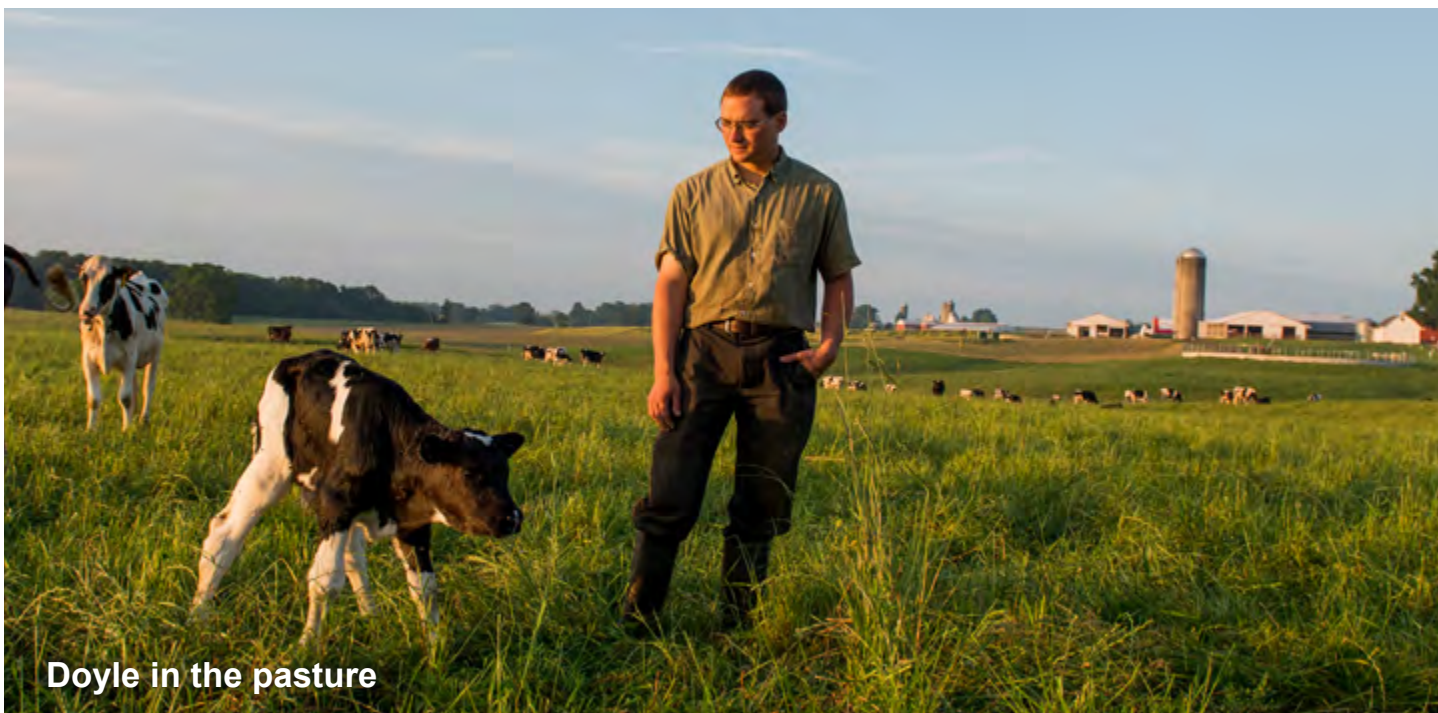
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## FEATURED FARM

**STOLLERS ORGANIC DAIRY, STERLING, OHIO***continued from page 27***Doyle in the pasture**


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Charlene and the wives of the three married sons who are partners in the LLC handle the farm's books and do a lot of chores, including most evening milking, but they do not earn a wage. Each husband/wife team is treated as a unit for the purposes of the LLC. Officially, only the husbands vote, one vote per owner, but essentially each husband-wife team shares one vote; they need to agree on decisions taken at the annual business meeting of the LLC. Most decisions made at the business meeting are unanimous, as otherwise it would be hard to operate smoothly as a tight knit, family-run business. Scott explained, "If there's contention...reasonable people equally informed will come up with a similar decision. If decision differs, we need to talk about what you know that I don't. Otherwise it's unreasonable." Scott feels that the process is working well and all the owners get a lot of work done, including sometimes agreeing to cover someone's chores when they go to a disaster zone far away to do volunteer work. The partners also cover for each other for absences due to meetings (Scott is on the Board of Directors of Organic Valley), vacations and other personal reasons. As Charlene explained, "the boys cover for each other and there is little to no contention about this...no charts of schedules govern this process.... Being a slave to the farm is no good."

Looking toward the next generation, the LLC has a plan for Scott and Charlene's grandchildren to become owners at a future date. Scott and Charlene's children will each have the opportunity to buy up to a 15% share in the LLC, until all kids have had a



## FEATURED FARM

chance to buy a stake. After that threshold has been reached, they can choose to increase their stake in the LLC as the opportunity arises. However, at the same time the kids (now adults) will potentially have to sell some of their shares in the future to a grandchild who wants to join the family business, with the proviso that any family investor has to also work on the farm. The Stollers do not want owners as simply investors. As Scott put it, “there are other ways to make a living...it’s a lifestyle not just a job.... We don’t want outside voting for the sake of one’s own pocketbook instead of what’s good for the farm.” Just as Scott, in his capacity as a board member of Organic Valley, has to leave his personal circumstances aside and do what’s best for the entire cooperative’s membership, so too do farm owners need to do, “what’s best for the farm as a whole.”

## KIDS BUYING IN BASICALLY DEBT-FREE

This innovative business structure is designed to maximize teamwork among the family owners; promote sound business management; ensure successful transition for the farm and its farm owners, whether or not they decide to keep farming on the Stoller homestead; and lifetime security for Scott and Charlene. The latter is especially important given that Scott (age 49) lost his right arm in a farming accident almost twenty years ago, and wants to have a stable source of income if he is no longer able to work, while at the same time making it feasible for his children to take over the farm without burdening them with a heavy debt load. Scott explained that he talked to others about their farm business structures, saw what worked and what didn’t, and then drew up the plan with the help of a lawyer based on his view of what the future holds. In his retelling, smoothing intergenerational transfer was a key motivation. “I...asked myself, am I going to live forever? No. Am I going to take it with me? No. Do I want someone to farm and have a similar lifestyle? Yes.” The whole schema minimizes the need for operating debt and facilitates kids buying into the farm little by little with cash. Sometimes the LLC has short-term debt, for example construction projects. Sometimes the owners will even loan personal savings to the LLC to fund a purchase, but this is not long-term debt.

Fiscal prudence minimizes risk exposure and makes it easier for the younger generation to assume ownership of the farm, or strike out on their own and buy another farm. Farm business structures such as the one created by Stollers Organic Dairy could play a key role in keeping farms in the family, keeping families on farms, and stabilizing agrarian communities.

Scott and Charlene Stoller, Stollers Organic Dairy, Sterling, Ohio, can be reached at 330-988-2990 or by email:

[stollersorganicdairy@gmail.com](mailto:stollersorganicdairy@gmail.com) ♦

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Vermont Land Trust Announces New Award for Vermont Farmers

*continued from page 15*

The awardee must be a resident of Vermont and be actively managing a commercial farm operation in Vermont. Applications will be accepted between January 1 and June 30 for each year’s award. A selection committee consisting of leaders in the Vermont agricultural community will review and score all eligible applications and select a final awardee. Each year’s award will be announced at the Vermont Land Trust’s annual celebration. Details regarding the award and application can be found at [www.vlt.org/eric](http://www.vlt.org/eric), or call Michelle Connor, Vermont Land Trust, (802) 262-1214.

The **Vermont Land Trust** is a statewide, member-supported, nonprofit land conservation organization. Since 1977, the Vermont Land Trust has protected nearly 2,000 parcels of land covering more than 593,000 acres, or 10 percent of the state. This includes more than 900 working farms and farmland parcels, hundreds of thousands of acres of productive forestland, and numerous parcels of community lands. For more information or to become a member, visit [www.vlt.org](http://www.vlt.org).

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# Calendar

**May 1, 2019 at 1:00pm to 4:30pm**

**2ND ANNUAL SPRING TURN OUT GRAZIER MEETING**  
**St. Croix Farm 14 Ridge Rd, Valley Falls, NY 12185**  
**A Cornell Small Farms Program event.**

This meeting will cover topics like baleage production, pasture fly control, direct marketing both online and in person and many more. Other subjects for discussion include how our regional beef production fits into the NYS & National market landscapes. \$10 pre-register and \$15 at the door. For more information, email [cce-caahp@cornell.edu](mailto:cce-caahp@cornell.edu) or call (518) 765-3518.

**May 2, 2019, 10:00 am-3:00 pm**

**DESIGNING A ROTATIONAL GRAZING PLAN,**  
**A PASA WORKSHOP**  
**Hameau Farm, 6364 State Rte 655, Belleville, PA 17004**

During this field day at Hameau Farm, we'll discuss how to establish a rotational grazing plan for your farm. We'll begin the day with a pasture walk, led by Hameau Farm owner Gay Rodgers and apprentice Jessica Matthews, to examine the farm's forage, rotational grazing plan, and watering systems. In the afternoon, we'll work with Jeff Biddle of Bear Meadows Farm to review

aerial photos of his farm's typography, using it as a case study for developing a formal rotational grazing plan.

Also joining the conversation will be NRCS grazing specialists Suzette Truax—who helped establish Hameau's grazing plan nearly two decades ago—and Titus Martin, members of the PA Grazing Lands Coalition, and dairy grazing apprentices from Hameau and Bear Meadows. This event is free and lunch is included. Questions? Please contact this event's coordinator, Aaron de Long, by email at [aaron@pasafarming.org](mailto:aaron@pasafarming.org) or by phone at (814) 349-9856 x709.

**May 4, 2019, 8:00am-4:00pm**

**WOMEN'S FARM EQUIPMENT FIELD DAY (NH EVENT)**  
**UNH Thompson School, Cole Hall**  
**34 Sage Way, Durham, NH 03824**

This hands-on workshop is for women farmers looking to improve their skills in farm equipment safety and operation. Learn about tractor safety, general tractor maintenance and upkeep, driving and hitching onto equipment, basic trailer driving, crop insurance and chainsaw safety. COST: \$20. Space is limited so please register ahead of time online. For special accommodations or any questions regarding the program, please contact Elaina Enzien at [elaina.enzien@unh.edu](mailto:elaina.enzien@unh.edu) or (603) 679-5616 prior to the event start date. <https://extension.unh.edu/events/womens-farm-equipment-field-day>

## 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).**

May 5, 2019, all day

# **MANAGEMENT INTENSIVE GRAZING FOR THE DIVERSIFIED FARM MANAGEMENT**

**Earthwise Farm and Forest**

**341 Macintosh Hill Rd., Randolph, VT 05060**

Management Intensive Grazing, also known as 'Rational Grazing,' is a form of grazing management that can improve pasture forage yields, improve feed quality, increase plant species diversity, improve livestock performance, build organic matter & soil nutrient levels, and increase the biological life in your soil. By taking weather, biology, ecology, livestock management, and technology (ie electric fencing, water systems) into consideration you can make your grazing system a success on your farm. This class will provide instruction for setting up a successful grazing system on a diversified farm, using poultry, horses, cows, sheep, goats and/or pigs. Participants will be introduced to fencing & water system designs, and movable structures for hogs, poultry, and small ruminants, and will learn how to determine daily feed needs of various types of livestock. This class is also appropriate if you have only one type of livestock and want to manage your pastures well. COST: \$70 per person or \$130 for 2 people. For more information, contact Lisa McCrory, 802-234-5524, [lmccrory560@gmail.com](mailto:lmccrory560@gmail.com), and register at <https://www.earthwisefarmandforest.com/book-online/management-intensive-grazing-class>

MAY 10 2019, 1:00pm-3:00pm

# **FIELD DEMONSTRATION OF NO-TILL CORN INTO SOD GROUND**

**Birch Meadow Farm**

**Birch Meadow Road, Fairlee, VT 05045**

Come join UVM and UNH Extension and the Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance for a field demonstration of equipment used for farm viability, soil health, and water quality. Steven Stocking, farmer and Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance board member, will show us his converted no-till corn planter in action. We will be using the planter to drill into sod ground. He'll share considerations made to convert his planter to no-till and how to make equipment adjustments for successful planting. And we'll also talk about the no-till grain drill available for use by the Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance. COST: Free. Please register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/field-demonstration-of-no-till-corn-into-sod-ground-tickets-59970287745> or contact Laura Johnson at [laura.o.johnson@uvm.edu](mailto:laura.o.johnson@uvm.edu) if you have any questions. To request a disability-related accommodation to participate in this program, please contact Cheryl Herrick at (802) 656-5459 or [cheryl.herrick@uvm.edu](mailto:cheryl.herrick@uvm.edu) or Laura Johnson at (802) 751-8310.

May 21, 2019, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

# **BRINGING MARGINAL GROUND BACK INTO PRODUCTIVE GRAZING, A PASA WORKSHOP**

**Moyers Dairy Farm, 3148 James St., Towanda, PA 18848**

Join us for a pasture walk that focuses on bringing marginal ground into productive grazing rotations for cows. We'll take a look at one example of this practice with Master Grazier Brian Moyer. He'll explain how he no-till drills annual forage crops into cattle exercise lots to produce forage for grazing, while he mitigates the impact on heavy-use areas to revitalize soil. You'll also learn how Journeyman Dairy Grazier Joseph Moyer transformed edge habitats on the farm, such as woodland areas once overgrown with weeds, into productive grazing paddocks through regular grazing rotations and strategic mowing. In addition to Brian and Joseph Moyer, Austin Unruh, of Lancaster County, who operates Crow & Berry Land Management, with the goal of helping farmers add productive trees to their land, will discuss his work that focuses on productive streamside forest and adding the right trees to pastures. Questions? Please contact this event's coordinator, Aaron de Long, by email at [aaron@pasafarming.org](mailto:aaron@pasafarming.org) or by phone at (814) 349-9856 x709.

Additional information: This event qualifies for one SmartStart credits through AgChoice Farm Credit. SmartStart allows young and beginning farmers to earn credits toward a reduced interest rate on a new AgChoice loan by attending educational events.

## **SAVE THE DATE:**

**July 10, 2019, 12:00pm**

## **2019 MIDWEST FARM ENERGY CONFERENCE U OF MN WEST CENTRAL RESEARCH AND OUTREACH CENTER 46352 State Hwy 329, Morris, MN 56267**

Save the date for the 2019 Midwest Farm Energy Conference, which is scheduled for July 10-11, 2019. The conference will highlight energy efficient systems for Midwest dairies (on July 10), as well as energy conservation for swine production (on July 11). Conference will include: Energy optimized systems for dairy production, including solar shading for grazing cattle; energy conservation and generation in swine facilities, featuring our sow cooling and piglet heating systems; opportunity to network with energy experts and professionals; bringing solar PV to your farm: from idea to operation. Renewable Energy tours: dairy facilities that utilize renewable energy technologies and swine facilities with solar photovoltaic systems. Early bird pricing available until May 1. Full conference, single day, and student rates available; visit their website for more details: <https://wcroc.cfans.umn.edu/events-education/2019-midwest-farm-energy-conference> or call, 320-589-1711. Conference agenda will be made available soon.

**August 10-11, 2019**

## **NUTRITION MATTERS | SOIL HEALTH BUILDS HUMAN HEALTH, 2019 NOFA Summer Conference Hampshire College, Amherst, MA**

More information to come. Join our keynote speaker, Sandor Katz and the regional NOFA community for a festive summer weekend this August 10 -11, 2019 at Hampshire College in Amherst, MA.

# Classified Ads

## ANIMALS FOR SALE

**CERTIFIED ORGANIC DAIRY HERD FOR SALE:** 30 head milking at various stages of lactation. 6 heifers 3 heifer calves. Majority Jersey, a few Holsteins and a few crosses. Currently milked in a tie stall barn. Looking to sell as a group. \$35,700. Call Dan Finn, 607-435-7179 or email: [dmacfinn@gmail.com](mailto:dmacfinn@gmail.com)

**Location:** Catskills area, NY

**FOR SALE: 5 CERTIFIED ORGANIC HOLSTEIN HEIFERS DUE APRIL-JUNE.** 3 sired by Mogul and 2 by Yoder. Bred to Holstein. Well grown and in good shape. Can be registered. \$1650.00/each. Eric Nickol, 607-267-9338

**Location:** Maryland NY

**60 ORGANIC HOLSTEIN AND CROSSBREED MILKING COWS**

**FOR SALE:** Free stall and tie stall trained; milked in a flat parlor. \$1300 take one or all. Jason Nagel (716)782-3247

**Location:** Western NY

**FOR SALE: 42 ORGANIC MIXED DAIRY COWS**, currently shipping to Horizon; contract could be transferred pending Horizon approval. Half the cows are 1st and 2nd calf. \$44,000.00. Call James Elworthy, 802-989-9818, or email [elworthyj@gmail.com](mailto:elworthyj@gmail.com).

**Location:** Poultney, VT

**FOR SALE: CERTIFIED ORGANIC COWS.** Holstein, Dutch, Jersey Crosses Selling approximately 12 certified organic cows. 4 Holsteins (1 dry and due in May, 3 milking including one recently fresh), 2-3 Dutch Belts, and the rest are Jerseys (some are registered, most are 1st and 2nd lactation). Contact Ron Sweet, [ron@bedrockfarmvt.com](mailto:ron@bedrockfarmvt.com) or call 802-582-9026.

**Location:** Franklin County, VT.

**FOR SALE: CERTIFIED ORGANIC COWS.** I have 6 open heifers, 4 are breeding age. They are all showing strong heats. They are all Jerseys and Certified. A reasonable offer will not be refused... Call Lazaro, 802-755-6301

**Location:** Northern VT.

**FOR SALE: FOUR DUTCH BELTED DAIRY COWS.** All are currently in milk. Two are mother/daughter (7-year-old mother and 4-year-old daughter). From certified organic herd. Email [ron@bedrockfarmvt.com](mailto:ron@bedrockfarmvt.com) or call/text 802-582-9026 for more info.

## FEED, GRAIN, HAY FOR SALE

**2018 ORGANIC FORAGE FOR SALE:** 3rd cut haylage, 21% protein, \$50.00 per ton. 2nd cut haylage, 19% protein, \$45.00 per ton. 1st cut haylage, 18.9% protein, per ton. Call Paul and Kari Lussier, call 802-537-2435.

**Location:** Benson, VT

**FORAGE FOR SALE:** We milked fewer cows this winter and so will have leftover feed. Very good 2nd and 3rd cut, lots of clover, large 52x48 bales. Certified organic, \$65 each. We have around 75 to sell. We are in Western Mass, close to the NY and VT lines. Paul and Amy Klippenstein, Sidehill Farm, 58 Forget Rd, Hawley, MA 01339-9735 (413) 339-0033, [www.sidehillfarm.net](http://www.sidehillfarm.net)

**WANTED: HAY** I'm looking for a source of organic dry hay, I know it was a rough hay year last year but any leads would be appreciated. Ideally I am looking for quality first cut that can be fed in the dairy barn as we start heading out to pastures. I'll be looking for last years hay right off but then I'm hoping to buy hay right out of a field once its hay season. I'm looking for 20-30 round bales in late April and then 50-100 in late May/June. I LOVE forage samples if you've got them. I am located in the Mid-Hudson Valley and have a trucker I can hire. Sarah Lyons Chase, Farmer & Owner, Chaseholm Farm, call (518) 339-2071.

**Location:** Pine Plains, NY 12567

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**NEW ENGLAND CLIMATE & AGRICULTURE PROGRAM MANAGER, AMERICAN FARM LAND TRUST, NORTHAMPTON, MA**

AFT's Farmers Combat Climate Change initiative has been working to reduce the conversion of agricultural land to development and promote smart growth; increase the use of climate-smart conservation farming systems; and build support for policies that help farmers combat, mitigate and adapt to a changing climate.

AFT's work in New England builds on our national efforts. We are conducting research and comparative policy analysis around renewable energy generation and farmland; engaging agriculture, the general public, researchers, and policy makers around the role farms can plan in both preventing and mitigating against climate change; and we are working with a variety stakeholder groups to move forward agendas that are mutually beneficial to agriculture and the climate. But we can do more and wish to do so by increasing our capacity to further this work and build additional programming on the topic.

The program manager reports to the New England Director, who oversees AFT's work in the region and will work closely with national AFT staff including the National Climate Director. The program manager will implement AFT's climate strategy in New England and actively collaborate and coordinate with AFT staff to help ensure that AFT's programming is strategic, synergistic, efficiently-delivered, well-received, and impactful. Preferably the program manager will be based at AFT's Northampton Office but could possibly work remotely from elsewhere in the region, depending on the location. **For the full job description and how to apply, please visit** <https://www.farmland.org/careers/new-england-climate-agriculture-program-manager>

American Farmland Trust is the only national organization that takes a holistic approach to agriculture, focusing on the land



itself, the agricultural practices used on that land, and the farmers and ranchers who do the work. AFT launched the conservation agriculture movement and continues to raise public awareness through our No Farms, No Food message. Since our founding in 1980, AFT has helped permanently protect over 6.5 million acres of agricultural lands, advanced environmentally-sound farming practices on millions of additional acres, and supported thousands of farm families. Long a pioneering leader, AFT is now riding a new wave of growth, driven by agriculture's most pressing needs and opportunities. Conserving farmland by the acre and soil by the inch is a powerful strategy for sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing farmland and ranchland productivity in the face of a changing climate.

## 2 CERTIFICATION SPECIALISTS

### Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA)

The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association announces an immediate opening for two Certification Specialists. The successful applicants will join a team of bright and passionate individuals who are committed to upholding the integrity of the organic label and furthering the sustainable agriculture movement. Please consider applying if you have experience with food and agriculture, a strong work ethic, and value a collaborative approach. In this round of hiring, additional consideration will be given to applicants who have education and experience in food science and/or food processing and who wish to work with OEFFA's handling and processing clients.

These are full-time positions (40 hours/week) based in our Columbus, OH office. There may be some travel in Ohio. We expect these positions to begin no later than May 20th, 2019. It takes approximately one year to master this position, so please apply only if you are prepared to make a multi-year commitment. Full job description available at <http://www.oeffa.org/employment.php>

## REVIEW SUPPORT SPECIALIST

### Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA)

The Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association announces an immediate opening for a Review Support Specialist. The successful applicant will join a team of bright and passionate individuals who are committed to upholding the integrity of the organic label and furthering the sustainable agriculture movement. Please consider applying if you have experience with food and agriculture, a strong work ethic, and value a collaborative approach.

**POSITION SUMMARY:** Review Support Specialists support technical staff by undertaking administrative review tasks related to renewal applications for organic certification. This work involves processing, classifying, and organizing incoming applications and inspection reports and providing prompt customer service. They participate in administrative tasks such as application check-in, tracking, and routing correspondence.

This is a full-time position (40 hours/week) based in our Columbus, OH office. Telecommuting is not an option. We expect this position to begin no later than May 20th, 2019. Full job description is available at <http://www.oeffa.org/employment.php>

## CONSERVATION DISTRICTS AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS MANAGER

The State Natural Resources Conservation Council and the Vermont Association of Conservation Districts are seeking a qualified candidate for a full-time Agriculture Programs Manager position. This position will work on behalf of Conservation Districts and coordinate closely with the VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and other partners to help agricultural producers protect and enhance soil and water quality, strengthen farm viability, and comply with state regulations. This is a statewide position managing sub-agreements with Conservation Districts. Knowledge of and experience with grant management, agriculture and water quality issues, excellent verbal, interpersonal, computer, and written communication skills and Bachelor's degree are required. Salary is commensurate with experience. Training and benefits package included. Visit [www.vacd.org](http://www.vacd.org) for detailed job description. Send resume, cover letter, three references in a single pdf by 9:00am Monday April 15th to [kerry.obrien@vt.nacdnet.net](mailto:kerry.obrien@vt.nacdnet.net)

**FARM EMPLOYMENT:** Organic Grazing dairy farm has opening for one or two employees. Job involves all aspects of farm work, including cow care and milking, pasture rotations, fence repair, barn cleaning, some horse care, and bucket tractor work. In season, there is tractor work in manure spreading and hay making. The work is never boring, with a mix of regular chores and seasonal projects. You will be on your feet quite a bit, and must be able to lift 50+ pounds. Some level of animal and equipment experience preferred. Housing available. Rich Larson, [larsonrr@myfairpoint.net](mailto:larsonrr@myfairpoint.net), 802-645-0865.

**Location:** Wells, VT

*continued on page 35*

## SOMATIC CELL PROGRAM

Liquid feed supplement (10 ml/day)

- ✓ Dramatic reductions in SCC ✓ OMRI listed
- ✓ Production, fat and protein responses
- ✓ Supporting research ✓ 17-18¢ per day

## CINNATUBE™

The natural dry cow alternative — For organic production

**Dry cow tube for reduction of new mastitis infections**

**Dry cow issues** are among the most expensive problems to the dairy farmer, and there has been no product for the organic farmer to use.

A recent trial, conducted by North Carolina State University and published in the Journal of Dairy Science, concluded that "The efficacy of the **herbal products (Cinnatube)** was similar to that of conventional (antibiotic) therapy, and the herbal products had **no apparent adverse effects.**"

New Agritech, Inc. • [www.newagritech.com](http://www.newagritech.com) • 607-379-3793 • Locke, NY

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### From the MODPA Treasurer

Greetings to all from a cold and snow filled Upper Midwest,

Hopefully by the time you are reading this, winter will have let her relentless grip on all of us go. It has been a long time since I have seen cold and snow like this in my area. The winter seems to have added insult to injury for many this winter. I have seen or heard of many buildings in my area collapsing from the snow load. I am running out of room to store snow in my yard.

I recently attended the MOSES conference. It was the 30th anniversary for the conference. It doesn't seem possible that it has been going on for that long. It was well attended but was the casualty of blizzard conditions the final day. Many vendors were able to leave early. The last of the workshops were brief. On Friday, there was some great discussion on the future of dairy in this country. While nothing was formally decided, the sense of urgency to get something done was evident. Too many farmers are in a delicate situation right now. Some have already lost markets, others are afraid to even say anything for fear of being forced off the truck. What has happened to our right to voice our opinion? Nobody should be forced into silence when their livelihood is attached to it. It was widely agreed that the glut of milk coming from large dairies in the West needs to be dealt with. Lack of enforcement is killing all of us. We must speak out louder on this issue and we must do it jointly. We can no longer afford to let anyone else speak for us. Our processors do not seem to want to step up to the plate on behalf of their producers. It makes a person wonder what their motive is. If we do not speak up now we will be in the same shoes as our conventional counterparts a year from now. Can we afford to take that chance? I think not.

On a personal note I would like to thank all of you who have reached out to me in the last month. The loss of my son has been hard to deal with. I have truly been blessed with many great friends. We must not forget the value of our friends in these trying times. We all seem to be having our struggles right now. Remember that you are never alone. There is strength in the organic community. If any of you feel that you are alone, call me. I will make time to visit, even if it just to complain about the weather.

As we enter the spring planting season, please remember to be safe. Get your rest. Make time for your family. Believe me, you will not regret using your time to rest when needed or to be there for your family. Stress is a nasty thing. Take care of you!

May you all have a safe and productive spring and remember to stop and smell the fresh clover and flowers.

You won't regret it.

**Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer**

**3253 150th Avenue, Glenwood City, WI 54013**

**715-977-1314**

### Become a Member of MODPA!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Certified Organic Dairy? Yes No # of cows: \_\_\_\_\_

Transitioning: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to support MODPA (check whatever applies):

\_\_\_ By becoming a state rep or director.

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

\_\_\_ By providing a donation to support the work of  
MODPA. \$\_\_\_\_\_ enclosed.

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

### About MODPA

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

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

### MODPA Board

#### Wisconsin

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

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

Bruce Drinkman, Treasurer  
3253 150th Avenue  
Glenwood City, WI 54013  
bdrinkman@hotmail.com  
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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  
Garnavillo, IA 52049  
Tel: 563-964-2758

#### Michigan

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

#### Ohio

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

# Classified Ads

*continued from page 33*

## INSPECTION PROGRAM MANAGER, PENNSYLVANIA CERTIFIED ORGANIC (PCO)

Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) announces a job opening for an Inspections Program Manager. The Inspection Program Manager leads the Inspections Team and oversees PCO's Inspections Program, which includes performing supervisory duties for Inspections Team Staff, and related programs. The ideal candidate will have education and experience in organic regulations, inspection and regulatory compliance, financial planning, and team management. 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 1600 operations and employs approximately 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 serve our farming community. This is a full-time, exempt position. Salary Grade 3: \$54,300 - \$74,700, depending on experience. Benefits: health, dental, vision, disability and life insurance; Simple IRA, generous holiday, vacation and paid time off. To view a job description, visit: [www.paorganic.org/jobs](http://www.paorganic.org/jobs) This position will remain open until Friday April 26th, 2019. Please submit a resume and cover letter to PCO Job Openings, [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19EM\\_2lnsVHo0T3m-HXjHBhPq8UmB4IZ83gTHQW\\_1H40/viewform?edit\\_requested=true](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/19EM_2lnsVHo0T3m-HXjHBhPq8UmB4IZ83gTHQW_1H40/viewform?edit_requested=true) by 4.26.19.

## REAL ESTATE

### CERTIFIED ORGANIC GRAZING DAIRY FOR SALE - MILK CONTRACT WITH LOCAL CREAMERY INCLUDED

Sidehill Farm, Hawley, Massachusetts is a certified organic dairy currently milking 30 Jersey, Normandy and cross cows, with a capacity to milk up to 60 cows. The bulk of the milk goes to the Sidehill Farm brand of yogurt and sour cream that is produced on-farm, with a stable \$48/cwt pay price under a long-term contract. The remaining 10% of the milk is bottled raw and sold in the self-service farm shop, along with an increasing quantity of meat (6,000# beef and 2,500# pork in 2017) and other resale products from local farms. For complete information, see their listing, <http://www.sidehillfarm.net/listing>.

**VERMONT DAIRY CREAMERY BUSINESS FOR SALE:** Exciting opportunity for growth. Certified organic, Certified 100% grass-fed, Jersey cows all tested Sidehill Farm A2 protein. Significant raw milk sales support growing pasteurized product sales that include whole milk, yogurt, skyr, butter, ghee and gelato. Owners in mid-60s want to slow down, but available to advise and guide new owners. Purchase the 30-

cow A2A2 Jersey herd with replacements, farm equipment and lease the farm and creamery. Housing available. Stand on our shoulders and grow this business, or scale back to \$60K raw sales plus smaller product line.

Richard Larson, [Larsonrr@myfairpoint.net](mailto:Larsonrr@myfairpoint.net), 802-645-0865

**Location: Wells, VT**

## SERVICES

### WATER ANALYSIS

Are your animals drinking as much as expected or not producing as much milk as expected? Have you ever been somewhere that you didn't want to drink the water? Do you wonder if your water is safe for a gathering for family or visitors? Holmes Laboratory provides water analyses for farmers and non-farmers, including testing the quality of water your animals are consuming. We test for bacteria, nitrates, sulfates, smell, odors, stains, minerals, and more. After testing your water, we help to explain the results and make recommendations. We do not sell water treatment equipment or products.

**Holmes Laboratory, Inc.**

3559 US Route 62

Millersburg, Ohio 44654-8834

Phone: 330-893-2933 or 330-893-1326

Email: [gary@holmeslab.com](mailto:gary@holmeslab.com)

Website: [www.holmeslab.com](http://www.holmeslab.com)

## Advertise With Us!

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

Join as a **Business Member** and receive an additional 5% off all advertising. To learn more about Business memberships and the Web Business Directory, go to [www.nodpa.com/directory.shtml](http://www.nodpa.com/directory.shtml) or contact Nora Owens.

**2019 Ad rates and sizes listed below.**

**Deadline for advertising in the  
May 2019 issue is April 15, 2019.**

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

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

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

**1/8 Page Ad/Business Card:**

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

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

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

For advertising information call Nora Owens:

413-772-0444 or email [noraowens@comcast.net](mailto:noraowens@comcast.net)

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



## Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)

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

### ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

*continued from page 2*

The answers will be different for every family and every farm. But for our farm right now, there are too many cobwebs to see things clearly.

If I was to be granted one wish, it would be that farming was fun again. I meet too many depressed and worried farmers these days. But I was able to tap into that missing feeling last month at NOFA-NY's Dairy and Crop Conference. Gabe Brown, Ray Archuleta, and Francis Thicke were inspiring presenters, outlining their methods for regenerating soils and sequestering carbon. And they got a lot of us thinking that we have missed the opportunity to give our soils a jump start if only we changed our management.

So this year, I probably am not going to solve any big problems, but I think we will be planting some cover crops

under the corn, and some rye in the fall. Then we can roll it in the spring, plant something, and see how it all comes together. Farming is fun when we can share ideas and try out new strategies. And sometimes when those cobwebs keep you from seeing the big picture, we can work out things right under our feet.

In that spirit of sharing ideas, remember to mark your calendars for the Annual NODPA Field Days, to be held in Canastota, NY on September 26-27, 2019.

Wishing you all well with the spring work!

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