

# NODPA News

## Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

November 2019

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The Holmes Family, Misty Brook Farm

### FEATURED FARM:

#### MISTY BROOK FARM, ALBION, ME

#### Katia and Brendan Holmes' Family Farm

By Adam Diamond, NODPA Contributing Writer

**K**atia and Brendan Holmes took over long-time NODPA member Henry Perkin's farm in 2013 after farming on a patchwork quilt of rented land in Central Massachusetts for eight years before that. Henry Perkins sold the farm to the Maine Farmland Trust, which in turn sold the

property to Katia and Brendan with an easement restriction supported by state and federal farmland preservation funds. The property cannot be subdivided into smaller lots in perpetuity, although additional buildings can be built around the original

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### NODPA Field Days 2019

By Adam Diamond, NODPA Contributing Writer

**N**ODPA held its 19th Annual Field Days for NODPA members and supporters on September 26th and 27th in Canastota, NY. This year's theme was **Preparing for the Future of Organic Dairy: Strategies for Long-Term Sustainability**. Over the two days the 80+ attendees toured two nearby grass-fed organic dairy farms, learned about innovative methods for getting

the most out of pasture, diversification strategies, and discussed pressing policy issues facing the organic dairy industry. For this year's event, most of the presenters were farmers, sharing with their peers what has worked for them, from homeopathic animal care to increasing forage productivity, and the value of product and market diversification as a hedge against the commodification of organic dairy.

*continued on page 14*

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Message from NODPA Co-President

**A**s I don the mantle of co-president of NODPA and assume the first of my few duties, I think of what seems to be a recurring topic at the member meetings over the last few years: How do we get more young farmers involved in NODPA? My first thought, as a young farmer myself, is not that NODPA has a hard time attracting other young farmers, but that there are so few out there to attract in the first place (6% of US farmers are 35 and under). The few that are out there rarely have the time to get away for a field days or to participate on a board.

There seems to be a fair number of beginning farmer programs available that attempt to address some of the hurdles of entry into agriculture. FSA loans help with the capital cost associated with starting a farm, and USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher programs provide funding for education and training to bridge the knowledge gap. To me, all these programs are nice, but they don't really help with the core of the issue: a sustainable market.

The USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program website states, "The reasons for the renewed interest in beginning farmer and rancher programs are as follows: the rising average age of U.S. farmers; the 8% projected decrease in the number of farmers and ranchers between 2008 and 2018." So here we have a stated issue. Meanwhile, we have Secretary of Ag Sonny Perdue telling us that, "It's very difficult on economies of scale with the capital needs and all the environmental regulations and everything else today to survive milking 40, 50, 60 or even 100 cows, and

that's what we've seen." For Perdue, the old logic of "get big or get out" remains intact, despite mounting research demonstrating the economic and cultural significance of small farms.

But beginning farmers have to start small, and last I knew, FSA was not giving out loans for beginning farmers to start 1000+ cow "economy of scale" dairy farms. If there is no place in the market to get started farming, is it really any surprise that there are not many young farmers around? It seems that most young would-be farmers are just doing what common sense dictates and going to a field more fertile than that of agriculture. More and more young people carry student debt, which creates an additional barrier to accessing start-up capital and credit.

All in all, I don't know what NODPA can do to get more young farmers involved other than what it has already been working towards for the past 18 years - that is, trying to create a level playing field and a stable, sustainable market. To quote a famous movie, "If you build it, they will come." It seems that if there is a good place in the industry to get started and thrive in, then those young people who are passionate about farming sustainably would be more than willing to make a go at a career in agriculture.

*Kirk Arnold, NODPA Co-President  
Twin Oaks Dairy, Truxton, NY  
607-423-7113  
kickaha21@gmail.com*

The NODPA Fund Drive is currently underway. Please remember to send in your membership donation. You can sign up online at <https://nodpa.com/index.cfm?p=x.5>

**NODPA News**

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

**From the NODPA Desk:***By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

**T**his year's NODPA Field Days was very successful and well attended, and there is an excellent article in this issue which gives a great report that captures all the details. What is difficult to capture is the sense of community and respect for each and every participant no matter their personal beliefs and culture. While the organic milk market is very definitely a commodity increasingly controlled by international conglomerates, the organic dairy community is still one of respect and appreciation for each other. Although it was very clear that producers are still feeling the pain of the unprecedented large drop in pay price, many are now looking for the way forward and how to diversify into different profit centers. Each family's solution is slightly different but there was much sharing of lessons learned in how to survive with a pay price that is lower, in many cases, than the costs of production with no immediate expectation of an increase. As many producers diversify and move into areas of production and marketing where they have limited experience, the main caution is always to protect their core assets, family life and agricultural property. For example: if its raw milk, satisfy the regulations and get protection from losing the farm if you are sued; selling meat direct from the farm, make sure you have all the paperwork in place plus the highest standard of cleanliness; selling poultry, make sure you are making a profit and ensuring there is no cross contamination; direct marketing in farmers markets, CSA's and elsewhere, check your profit margins to make sure you are charging enough for the extra time and transport; and above all, remember that working harder does not always make more money and it definitely can adversely affect your family life.

Climate change has at last become a hot topic in the US Presidential elections and hopefully for a new administration. Organic farming, as very eloquently stated by Harriet Behar in her speech as departing Chair of the NOSB, is a clear way to address sequestering carbon. Organic certification should be seen as the gold standard for environmentally friendly farming methods but its integrity has been questioned because of poor enforcement of regulations. The integrity of the organic seal relies on strong enforcement of standards that are consistently applied to all operations. Certifiers are the front line of that certification and their important role is to apply the standards consistently with the support of the NOP. NOP is in the process of improving its accreditor role and holds certifiers accountable for their implementation of regulation. NGO's and advocacy groups' mission is to work in the system to change regulation or for NOP to issue Guidance documents. As we address regulatory and policy change that highlights the role that organic production plays in mitigating the human effect of climate change, we need to ensure that the conditions in the market place are fair and equal for all operations. Regenerative organic certification adds the all-

important social and economic justice issues. As there are fewer and fewer buyers of organic milk at the farm gate, producers have fewer opportunities and leverage to ensure a fair price for their products. The Department of Justice has already recognized the lack of competition between organic dairy buyers in New England, with the ruling that Stonyfield had to be sold before they would approve the merger of Danone and WhiteWave. Conventional dairy producers are also continuing the fight to maintain their leverage in determining pay price. A group of more than 115 Northeastern farmers have brought a suit against DFA after opting out of a prior lawsuit against the cooperative that resulted in a \$50-million settlement in 2016. The lawsuit alleges that DFA and its marketing arm, Dairy Marketing Services (DMS), violated the Sherman Antitrust Act by conspiring to monopsonize the fluid milk market. Specifically, farmers allege that DFA and other cooperatives upheld an agreement not to poach one another's farmer-members; shared information about how much they were paying farmers for raw milk in order to discourage competition, resulting in lower prices; and ensured that those low prices were maintained across the market by entering into supply agreements with top dairy processors, including Dean Foods, H.P Hood, Kraft, and others. While the issue of poaching each other's farmer suppliers is not so relevant in the organic market, the dominance of DMS on the supply-side of selling organic milk is. Supply agreements with processors that ensure the pay price offered by milk buyers are very similar if not identical show how little competition there is for purchasing organic milk. A sustainable farming operation is dependent on a fair pay price, consistent subsidies or subsidized insurance. If organic production systems are to benefit the US environment their needs to be regulatory and political action that addresses this issue rather than relying on cheap imports.

Hopefully many of you will receive this newsletter before the closing date for submitting comments to the NOP on the Proposed Origin of Livestock Rule. The deadline for submitting comment is midnight on Sunday, December 1st. We encourage you to submit individual comments, especially to show how you, as an organic dairy farm family have been negatively affected by the lack of clarity and enforcement around OOL since 2015. To comment you can use the regulatory.gov site at <https://www.regulations.gov/comment?D=AMS-NOP-11-0009-1572>. NODPA and many other organizations will be submitting comments, so any comments you make can be short and very personal, just a few minutes of your time. The integrity of organic dairy is at stake to ensure that consumers can be confident that the organic dairy products they are consuming have all the benefits of a high level of Animal Welfare, the cows producing the milk have been organic since before birth, and they are part of the solution to Global Warming rather than part of the problem.

Wishing you all the best for the holiday season and for a more prosperous 2020. ♦



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Learning to Love a Farmland Lease

By: *Kate Kellman, Digital Marketing Coordinator, Land For Good*  
and *Jae Silverman, MA Field Agent, Land For Good*

**W**ith fall arriving, and ever so quickly departing, it's the perfect time to gather the tools that will support you during your winter planning season. If you're thinking about leasing farmland (or already do lease) consider these many benefits - and tools - to help you craft a new lease agreement, improve your existing lease, or formalize the handshake agreement you've had for years.

Leasing farmland has many benefits, which makes it a common way to access land. Nearly half of all US farmers lease either some or all of the land that they farm. Leasing allows farmers to access farmland without the substantial commitment of capital required to purchase land.

### Lease Types

When it comes to leasing, there are different types to consider: short-term, rolling, long-term, ground leases, and even lease-to-own. A short-term lease, typically one to three years, can enable you to experiment with new practices, try a new location,



*Gaining ground for farmers*

test out your business model, and determine whether you are comfortable with your landlord. This flexibility, and reduced financial risk, are particularly useful when you're just getting started. It allows you to put your limited funds toward getting your farm business off the ground.

A challenge with a short-term lease is that it can be hard to make long-term business or family plans if the leased land is



Chase Hill Farm, Warwick, MA

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

a significant portion of your land base. With an annual lease, you don't know for sure if you'll be on that same land next year, so longer-term improvements to the land, such as drilling a well or putting up permanent structures, are usually not a wise investment. Focusing on temporary infrastructure, such as non-permanent livestock shelters or fencing that can be removed, is a way to try out a short-term lease while not risking assets that can't be retained by the tenant if the lease is not renewed.

If you're interested in feeling a bit more secure in your lease term, but like the flexibility of a short-term lease, you might consider a rolling lease, which automatically renews itself each year. For example, a rolling three-year lease renews at the end of each year for another three years. At the beginning of each year, the farmer tenant knows that he or she has at least three more years to continue farming the parcel. With a rolling lease, each year the parties have the option not to renew, at which point the lease will continue until the end of the previously renewed lease term and then terminate. This allows a "planning horizon" for both the farmer and landowner to prepare for the termination of a lease, without committing either party to a long-term arrangement.

Longer-term leases, five to 99 years, offer many of the same practical and emotional advantages of owning land without some of the associated costs and responsibilities such as taxes, fees, depreciation, and insurance. Long-term leases provide a much longer planning horizon, sometimes even as long as the foreseeable farming career of the tenant farmer. In this way, long-term leases give you more time to implement sustainable, long-term farming practices and see the benefits of investments in soil building and pasture health. A long-term lease is a significant commitment. Therefore, the lease should account for situations pertaining to early termination and the tenant's investments in the property if things don't work out.

A common complaint with leasing is that farmers don't have the opportunity to build equity in the land. Equity, wealth

that you have tied into an asset, is beneficial because it is a protected form of ownership. Equity allows you to borrow against that asset in order to finance something else, such as infrastructure improvements or land purchase. Although most leases don't allow you to build equity in the land, it is important

*continued on page 6*



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Learning to Love a Farmland Lease

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to remember that you may be building equity in other assets - in your dairy herd, in your farm equipment, or in other assets that are critical to growing your business. These forms of equity have a different value over time, compared to the rate of land appreciation. But, having capital to spend on growing your business early on may be what ensures the viability of your farm in the future. It may also be wise to have some capital to allocate to savings for retirement and other future needs.

Ground leases allow you to establish some degree of equity in a property's infrastructure. With an agricultural ground lease, a farmer leases the land ("ground") and purchases or builds and owns the buildings and sometimes, other improvements on the land. This interesting hybrid form of tenancy - "partial ownership interest" - is a potential option for farmers who wish to build equity in their enterprise. Because of the complexities involved, ground leases are less often considered by private individual

landowners and are more common when the landowner is an organization, such as a land-holding nonprofit or LLC.

### Lease-to-Own

If ownership is your goal, leasing can be a pathway to ownership. "Lease-to-own" refers to strategies to gain ownership of a particular property at a future point via specific legal transactions involving the property owner (landlord) and the buyer (tenant). Lease-to-own provisions can be advantageous for farmers who cannot arrange for a conventional mortgage but would like to own a particular property in the future. Additionally, lease-to-own provisions are also great for farmers who want to spend their capital on other assets first, like equipment, livestock, supplies, infrastructure (temporary or otherwise), to get their business up and running, and then have the flexibility to think about buying the land down the line if all goes well.

There are three common elements that most farmers think of in a lease-to-own arrangement: Right of First Refusal, Purchase Option, and Rent Toward Downpayment.



Chase Hill Farm

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Having a Right of First Refusal prevents the owner from selling the property without giving the tenant the right to buy the property themselves at the price offered by a third party. Taking things a step further, a Purchase Option means that the landowner agrees to sell the property to the tenant at a future date, but is willing to wait a few years and lease it to the tenant in the meantime. The Option to Purchase would be built into the lease at the time of signing, but it does not obligate the tenant to go through with the purchase when the time comes. For example, on a 10 year lease, the option to purchase might start around year seven, giving the farmer some time to be on the land, to save up capital, and to build up their business and ability to qualify for financing, before ultimately deciding whether it is the property they want (or are able) to purchase.

Lastly, what many think of when they hear “lease-to-own” is the idea of attributing some amount of the rental payment towards a down-payment on the property. This can be a great way to build some amount of equity and begin “chipping away” at a farm purchase. Lease-to-own takes a certain type of landowner; one who is willing to receive some of their asking price in

installments ahead of the purchase and has patience for the added complications of the legal arrangement.

### Landowner Benefits

Interested in showing a landowner how they too can love a lease? Consider emphasizing these benefits for the landowner. There can be state-specific property tax advantages to putting land in agricultural use, which provide a substantial reduction in “carrying costs” associated with owning that land. Additionally, a conscientious farm tenant can share the burden of property maintenance and contribute desired improvements as agreed to and codified in a lease. Having your land farmed can also be aesthetically pleasing, can discourage vandalism, and can offer passive recreation possibilities. Finally, active farm management is often much better for the land itself than letting it sit idle or leaving it to weeds and scrub. Open farmland is an invaluable resource for our region, and once it goes back to brush, it’s hard and costly to get back again.

Kate Kellman, *Land for Good*, can be reached at 603-357-1600 or at [kate@landforgood.org](mailto:kate@landforgood.org) ♦



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

**NODPA Kicks off Annual Fund Drive**

**E**arlier this month, NODPA launched its 2019 Annual Fund Drive, with letters going out in the mail. Many of you contribute with a milk check assignment, and others have renewed their subscriptions during NODPA Field Days, and we thank you! Currently, we send the NODPA News to everyone who requests it, and represents all organic dairy producers, regardless of their financial support of NODPA, but during this fund drive, we ask everyone to make a donation to cover the cost of the newsletter, e-news, ODairy, the NODPA website, as well as to support NODPA's national work on behalf of all. NODPA's ability to provide services is dependent on this annual fund drive, plus advertising, sponsorship and business membership. But when there is a downturn in income for producers, suppliers are also affected which has an impact on how much they can advertise in the NODPA News or sponsor our events. During NODPA's annual fundraising campaign, we ask you to renew your support for the services you need and value. When you are able to make a donation beyond the cost of your 'subscription', it's hugely appreciated. Your support is a vote for the work we do, so if your letter is sitting in your pile of mail waiting to be opened, please do it now and return it with your donation/dues as soon as possible.

Still need a reason to support NODPA? Here are the ways NODPA is working for you: As we near the end of 2019 and the supply-side market starts to come into balance, we need to protect this slow recovery. We are more aware than ever that organic milk is a **commodity** and that pay price will be slow to recover from the 2018 crises of both a 25% drop in pay price and contracts that became increasingly biased in favor of the buyer. There is still a lot of work

that we must do to better protect producers in the future, and organic dairy producers continue to need NODPA's independent voice in the marketplace and in Washington.

While the road ahead for organic dairy farm families is complicated and potentially treacherous, it is critically important to have an independent organic dairy voice in the marketplace and one that is focused on regulations. NODPA's ability to speak loud and clear about both the pressing issues and the solutions that will mitigate this crisis remains vitally important. And, producers need all of the tools to help them navigate these times; tools that NODPA provides, such as all the latest organic news and opinion, and avenues for venting, sharing experiences, and problem solving, whether in person, on ODairy, in the NODPA News, or at [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com).

In 2020, NODPA will continue to advocate for closing regulatory loopholes to protect the integrity of the organic seal for consumers and producers. We will continue to work on implementing a Final Rule on the Origin of Livestock as we lead a partnership with other advocates to bring the maximum pressure to bear on USDA and organic trade groups. We will keep the pressure on the NOP to take certifiers to task in implementing the Access to Pasture regulation. Most of all, NODPA keeps the issues in front of the people that count in Washington and with consumers, and we will continue to work with other producers groups across the country to defend

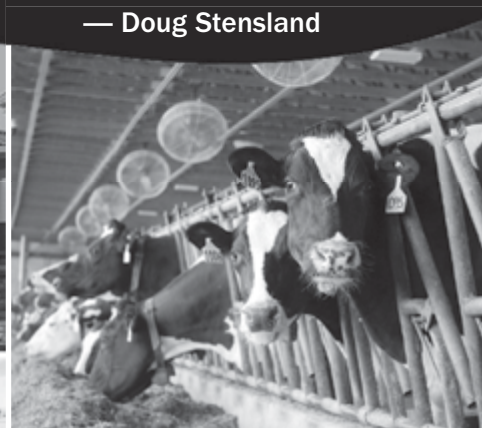
Pay online at: <https://nodpa.com/index.cfm?p=x.5> or visit [nodpa.com](http://nodpa.com) to download the printable forms. If you have questions, please call Nora Owens, 413-772-0444. ♦





# ***“We saw the benefits of being proactive with Udder Comfort.”***

— Doug Stensland



## **STENSLAND FAMILY FARMS, LARCHWOOD, IOWA**

Twins Jason (Paige) and Justin (Chelsea) and brother Kyle, sister Leah, parents Doug and Mona, grandparents Art and Rosie  
Herd manager Cindy Krull-Begeman (right)

180-cow robotic dairy and diversified creamery. Crossbred herd, 80 lbs. 4.0F 3.1P SCC below 180,000

“At first, we used Udder Comfort™ here and there and liked what we saw. Then we used it more regularly on our fresh cows, rarely having mastitis. We saw the benefits of being proactive with Udder Comfort,” says Doug Stensland, Stensland Family Farms, Larchwood, Iowa, where 9 family members and 10 employees operate the diverse 180-cow robotic dairy farm with a creamery also since 2016. They bottle milk and make ice cream, cheese curds, hard cheeses, and butter, with a store at the farm and two retail shops now in Sioux Falls. (<https://wp.me/pb1wH7-3B>)

“I enjoy being part of this team, I love cows and I love what Udder Comfort does for them,” says herdsman Cindy Krull-Begeman.

“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,” Cindy says, noting that her family’s Wisconsin dairies have also relied on the benefits for over 10 years.

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

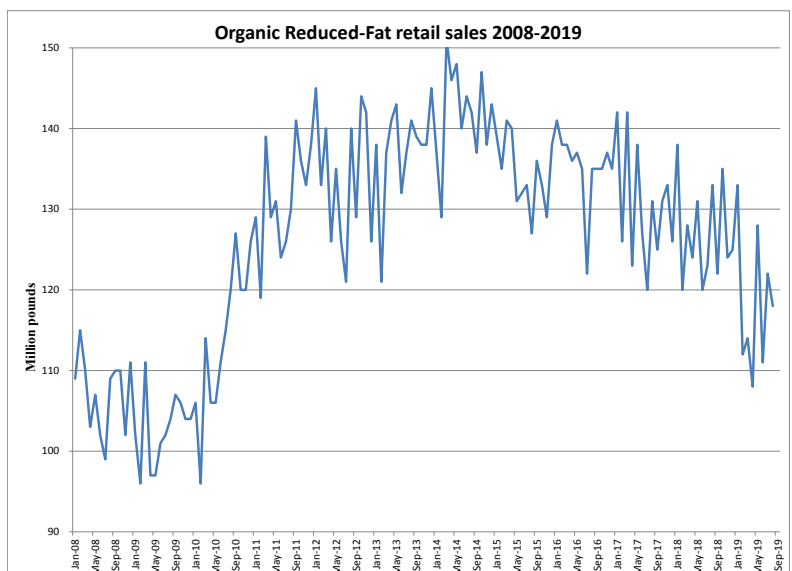
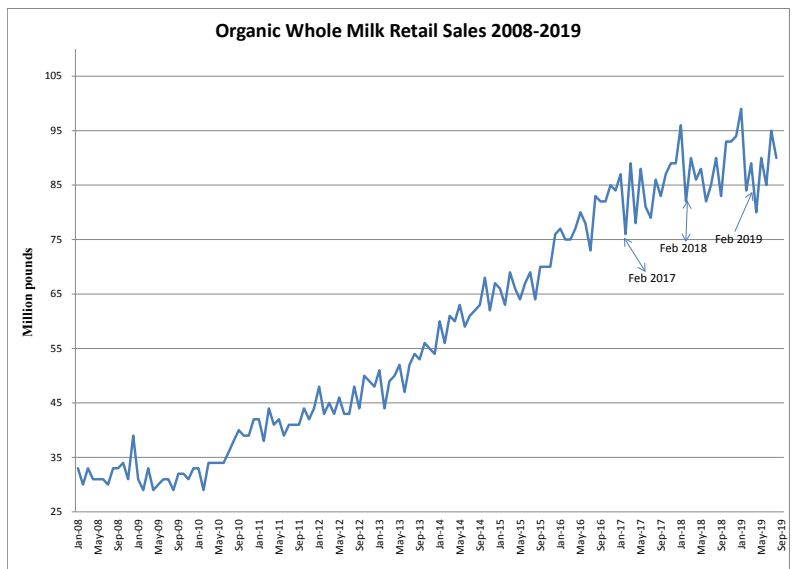
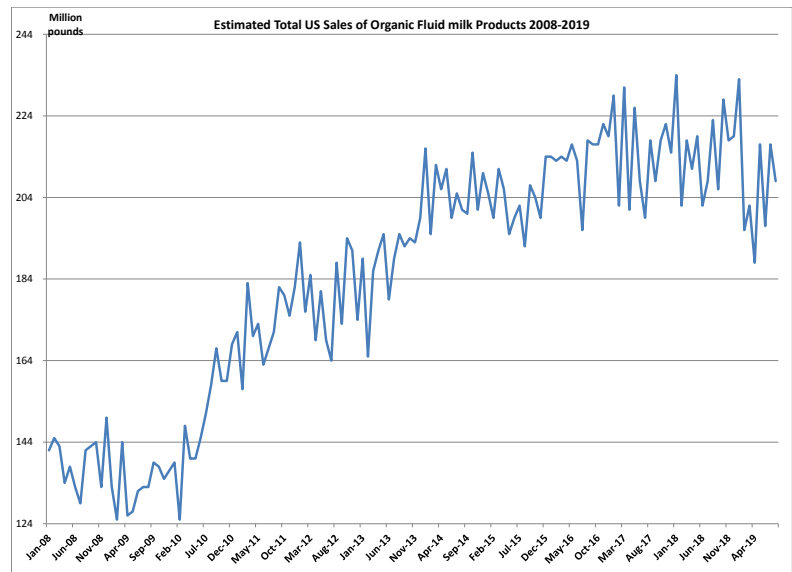
### Pay And Feed Prices November/December 2019

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

There's no good news on retail sales of organic milk in the latest data from USDA. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) reported estimated US sales of total fluid organic milk products decreased from a year earlier. August 2019 sales were 208 million pounds, down 6.6 percent from August 2018 and down 3.8 percent compared to January-August 2018. Organic whole milk retail sales for August 2019, 90 million pounds, were up 0.1 percent compared to a year earlier and up 2.1 percent compared with the year-to-date in 2018. Reduced fat milk (2%) sales were steady with the previous year, but declined 3.8 percent year-to-date.

Organic buyers are allowing some producers to expand their output and are looking for additional small quantities of milk in specific areas. While there is no increase on the horizon for organic pay price, the outlook for conventional dairy is more positive. The USDA's latest forecast shows Class III prices rising to near \$18 per cwt in the fourth quarter though some industry experts believe we could see \$19 per cwt. The all-milk price for the fourth quarter is expected to be near \$19.60. The all-milk price for the entire year is forecast at \$18.40, a big improvement over last year's \$16.26. The strength of the conventional market may allow organic buyers to lift some restrictions as they find it easier to balance any over-production.

With a lot of talk about supply management, Agri-Mark has taken the plunge to better handle its own marketing and balancing of their supply. Agri-Mark, which represents more than 850 dairy farms throughout New England and New York, will charge members a five dollar per hundredweight penalty for overproducing, beginning in January. Officials say the policy is meant to slow down production in the region to more manageable levels. In a letter to farmers, Agri-Mark says increasing milk production is financially straining the co-op because regional demand has slowed. Members producing two million pounds or less annually are exempt from the rules. Nearly half of Agri-Mark's members milk 60 cows or fewer and this action is a clear attempt to protect its member owners. Hopefully, the benefit will be shown in the "13th milk check" and shared with coop members rather than



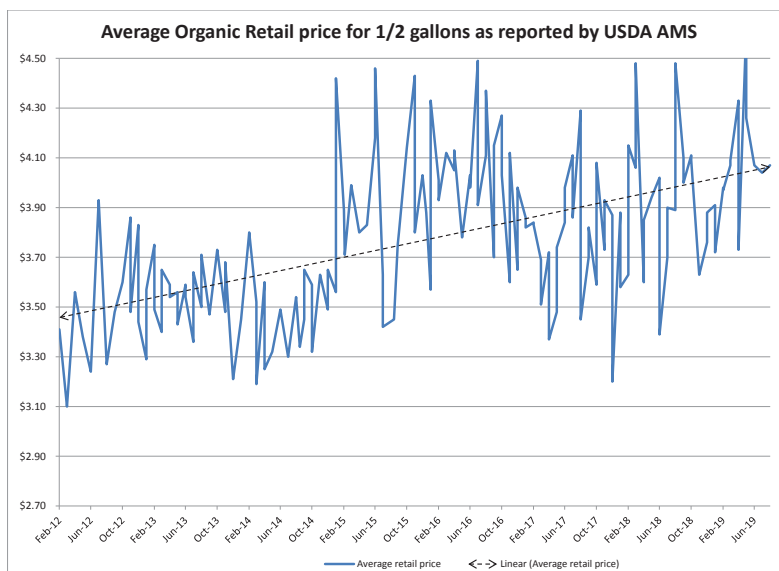
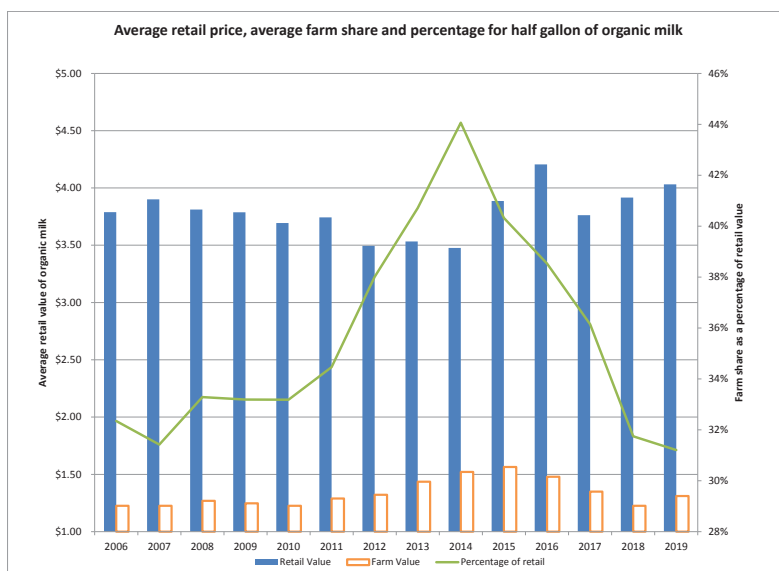
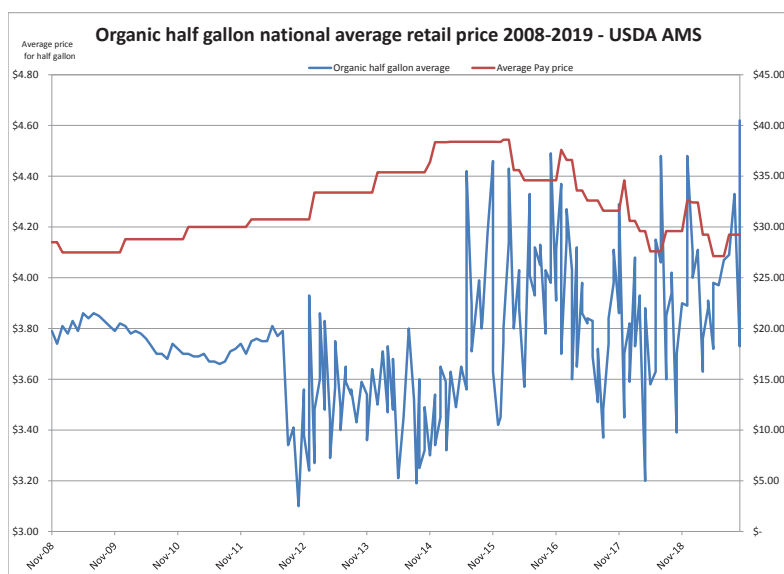


with management and infrastructure improvements; a lesson here for the organic sector.

Trickling Springs Creamery, in Chambersburg, PA ceased production of its products on Friday September 27, 2019. Trickling Springs opened in June 2001, with its founders hoping to capitalize on regional demand for high quality milk and dairy products. The founders established strict guidelines for the farms producing their milk- including requiring grass-fed, heritage breed cows and no use of synthetic hormones - and paid farms above-average prices to maintain these standards because of the regional focus. The pool of milk from their farmers was used to produce its milk, butter, cream, cheese, ice cream and other dairy products. The company was certified organic by 2002, and its products were sold throughout the Mid-Atlantic by restaurants, farm stores, food delivery services and some Wegmans supermarkets. They also had their own store and two markets in Washington DC. Since 2017, the creamery's 22 organic dairy farms have been a reserve pool of CROPP Cooperative, shipping their milk to Trickling Springs for processing but being paid by the co-op. CROPP Cooperative is continuing its relationship with the Trickling Springs farms but is sending the milk to other plants. When the marketing arrangement was started two years ago, the creamery had decided not to use direct-shipping from organic farmers anymore, and Organic Valley was hoping to help the processor stay in business without the cost of balancing organic milk. Those farms in the reserve pool are looking for their status to be upgraded to full membership with a pay price that reflects their status. Two farms that were still directly supplying the creamery with milk for its non-GMO line have been picked up by the Lanco-Pennland Cooperative.

In November 2018, Pennsylvania's Department of Banking and Securities proposed thousands of dollars in fines for the creamery and its owners. The agency alleged that the company had defaulted on promissory notes it had issued, and that the creamery had not given investors key details about its shaky financial health. From February 2015 to October 2017, the creamery sold 175 promissory notes totaling \$7.8 million, to at least 110 investors, according to the agency. The owners, Philip Riehl, Gerald Byers, Elvin Martin and Dale Martin, face 370 counts of violating the Pennsylvania Securities Act. If found in violation, they could be ordered to return investors' payments, be barred from selling securities in Pennsylvania, and be forced to pay the cost of the investigation

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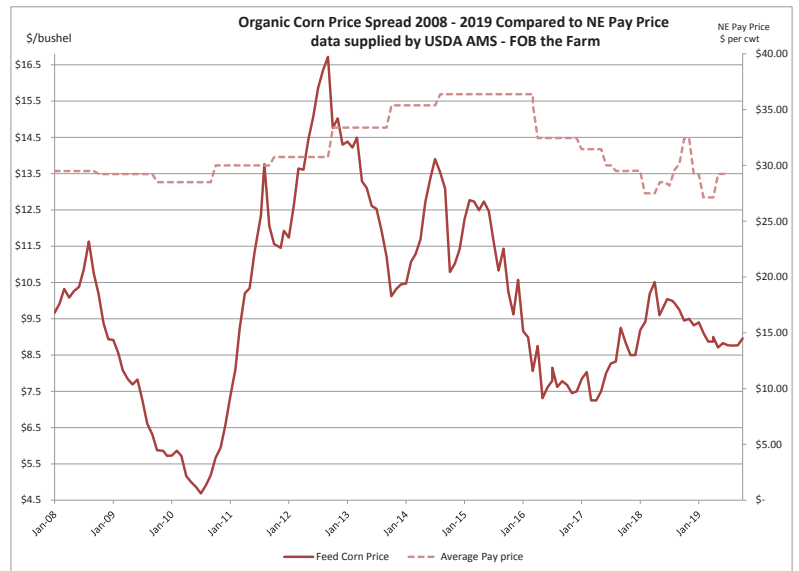
## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Pay And Feed Prices

*continued from page 11*

plus up to \$100,000 per violation. The agency held an administrative hearing on the case in July but has not yet reached a judgment, spokeswoman Dulcey Antonucci said.

The Government Accountability Office has released a report reviewing the impact of cooperative consolidation to dairy farmers. Not surprisingly the report finds dairy co-op consolidation can affect farmer's control and earnings, lead to competing interests, and create power imbalances. The report says from 1997 to 2017, the number of dairy farms decreased by more than half while the number of cows more than doubled. Since the mid-1960s, the number of dairy co-ops has declined by 90 percent. The top four dairy co-ops, which include Dairy Farmers of America, California Dairies, Land O'Lakes, and FarmFirst Dairy Co-op, marketed more than 40 percent of the milk produced in the U.S. in 2017, mostly unchanged since 2002. If we look at the impact of CROPP Cooperative and Dairy Marketing Services (owned by DFA) on the purchasing, handling and marketing



of organic milk it's not surprising that the only time there is significant improvement in pay price is when we have new entrants, like HP Hood, or new marketing edge as with Grass Fed, that diversified the utilization of a limited supply. There is no doubt that the limited number of buyers gives organic dairy producers no leverage in determining pay price.

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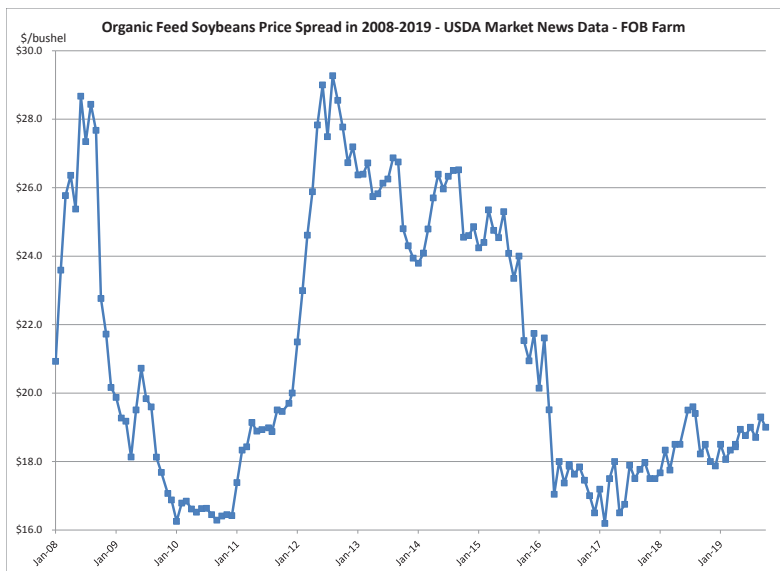
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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS



Wet spring weather conditions wreaked havoc on not only traditional corn and soybean acres, but their organic counterparts as well. Mercaris, a data and trading platform for organic and non-GMO markets, is tracking a significant drop in overall organic corn and soybean production. Compared to

2018, Mercaris forecasts a 12% decline in organic corn production and a 14% decline in organic soybean production related to spring weather challenges. "The production outlook for many key organic crops is expected to be down for 2019/20 following challenging growing conditions," said Ryan Koory, Mercaris director of economics, in a recent press release. "The industry appears set to see imports escalate over the coming year as organic grain purchases look to offset reduced domestic production." In September, Mercaris released their 2019 Organic & Non-GMO Acreage Report which estimated that farmers will harvest 3.1 million acres of U.S. land certified for organic field crop production, an increase of 7 percent over 2018.

When we do see an increase in imports, I'm hoping that the bi-partisan bill now wending its way through Congress, The Protecting America's Food & Agricultural Act of 2019, will become law in time to increase the monitoring of organic grain imports. The bill authorizes hiring 240 agricultural specialists per year until the shortage is filled, and 200 agricultural technicians per year for administrative and support functions. ♦

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## NODPA Field Days 2019

### NODPA Field Days 2019

*continued from page 1*

The Field Days started off with a drizzly tour of the Troyer Farm (July 2019 Featured Farm), right down the road from the conference site. John Troyer owns the farm, but his sons Leroy and Michael have primary responsibility for running this grass-fed, no grain organic dairy farm. The Troyers are milking between 60 and 70 cows on 170 acres of pasture, shipping to Maple Hill, which has its own brand of organic grass-fed milk. Michael handles the pasturing of the cows and Leroy is the farm mechanic, milks the cows, and runs the compost operation.

The Troyers moved from a 7 acre farm in Ohio in 2009 to this conventional 200 acre farm. When they first started they were not sure what they were going to do with all this land; they started grazing beef cattle because of its low labor requirements (the boys were still in school) but in the back of their mind they had always considered organic dairy as something to pursue when the family had enough of a labor force to handle it. In the heyday of organic dairy the Troyers were getting \$45/cwt, but Michael believes that “organic dairy farmers need to learn to make milk for \$38/cwt, or get a job.”

To supplement pasture fertility the Troyers have composted their manure and bedding the last two years, using an inoculant to accelerate the composting process. After ten weeks the compost process is complete. Leroy is in charge of the composting operation, and estimates that he spreads 300 tons of compost a year on 100 acres of pasture.

Their pasture is seeded with orchard grass, brome, white and red clover, with cows brought back to the same pasture after 30-35 day intervals. To keep the cows comfortable and eating, water is



**Troyer Family Farm Tour**



**John Troyer describes his family farm operation to Thursday farm tour attendees**

available in the pasture for them; the grazing season usually goes into late November.

While the tour was cut short as it started raining heavily, folks gathered in the barn to catch up and swap the latest news in the organic dairy world before going back Theodore's Restaurant for a delicious lunch, followed by the afternoon program.

### Meeting the Needs of the Current and Future Grass Fed Milk Market: Nathan Weaver

Nathan Weaver, owner of Grunen Aue Farm in Canastota, NY, shared with NODPA members his insights on what farmers




## NODPA Field Days 2019





can do to succeed in the grass fed milk market, in terms of production practices, selling themselves to consumers and the public at large, and developing innovative aggregation and marketing strategies. He recognizes that small farmers face a lot of negative pressures, such as low milk prices and routes being dropped, but believes farmers have opportunities to seize a better, more prosperous future; this requires them to adjust their practices and their mindset. To make farming feasible for the next generation Nathan laid out two options: 1) cut production costs, or 2) add value and become a promoter of your dairy products. Nathan and his family have focused on the first option as they seek to optimize the productivity of their pasture and develop the herd genetics that are best suited for their all grass-fed farm.

Nathan discussed the broad context for grass-fed dairying, before delving into the specifics of his own farm operation and how to increase pasture health and productivity. When grazing was first promoted as an alternative feeding strategy for dairy farmers, the focus was on lowering costs, not ecological benefits. However, many farmers can attest to the fact that grazing is not less expensive, and in fact is usually more expensive because the lower production means labor and fixed costs per pound of milk are significantly higher. The overall message Nathan had



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## NODPA Field Days 2019

*continued from page 15*

for NODPA attendees is that organic graziers need to do the best job they can building up healthy, productive pasture AND differentiating grass-fed milk from the increasingly commodified organic milk that is facing severe downward price pressures. The current organic pasture standard, with its requirement that 30% of dry matter intake must come from pasture for at least 120 days means that organic dairies are in compliance even if only 10% of DMI annually comes from pasture. Nathan explained how these standards make it quite feasible for large scale industrial organic dairies to meet the pasture standard. A dairy that is 1 square mile in size, with 40 acres for buildings and laneways, and 600 acres for irrigated pasture producing 5 tons of DMI per acre would support 3,000 cows. Several audience members affirmed that they routinely moved their cows ½ a mile from milking parlor to pasture, as would be required in this situation. *(Editor's note: The organic standards require all livestock over 6 months of age to receive a minimum of 30% of their dry matter intake from pasture for the FULL grazing season, which can be no less than 120 days.)*

The only way for grass based dairies to compete in this environment is to develop a strong culture of pasturing, keep a close watch on costs, and develop high quality, good tasting milk that is marketed through local and regional marketing channels. Grass-fed organic milk has to strongly differentiate itself from the rest of the pack, and it has to be clear to consumers what values they are supporting by buying grass-fed organic milk. As Nathan put it—“It’s not just about selling a product—it’s about selling a concept. Need to market milk in terms of pastoralism instead of industrialism. It all starts with grass.... Organic world is not embracing pastoralism.... We need a product that can’t be duplicated on large scale. Grazing as a way to store carbon—that will be an easy sell. Carbon in the air is becoming a more important issue. Grazing keeps carbon in soil, where it’s beneficial.” Part of the challenge, as he laid out, is that highlighting the health and environmental benefits of grass farming needs to be accompanied by a renewed emphasis on more regional dairy networks.

Nathan explained that “nationwide coops won’t be able to do it... need to get knowledge to farmers about grazing, get knowledge to processors on how to manage grass-fed inventory, and also haulers, who need to figure out how to deal with seasonal fluctuations (with grass-based dairy products), retailers also.” The routes also need to be more efficient to minimize transportation costs, supporting his contention that “we can put product out there at a viable cost for most consumers.”

On the cost control front, Nathan spoke of a few principles that have guided his efforts to craft a productive and profitable organic, grass-fed dairy farm. “Our philosophy—put good grass



**Nathan Weaver's presentation**

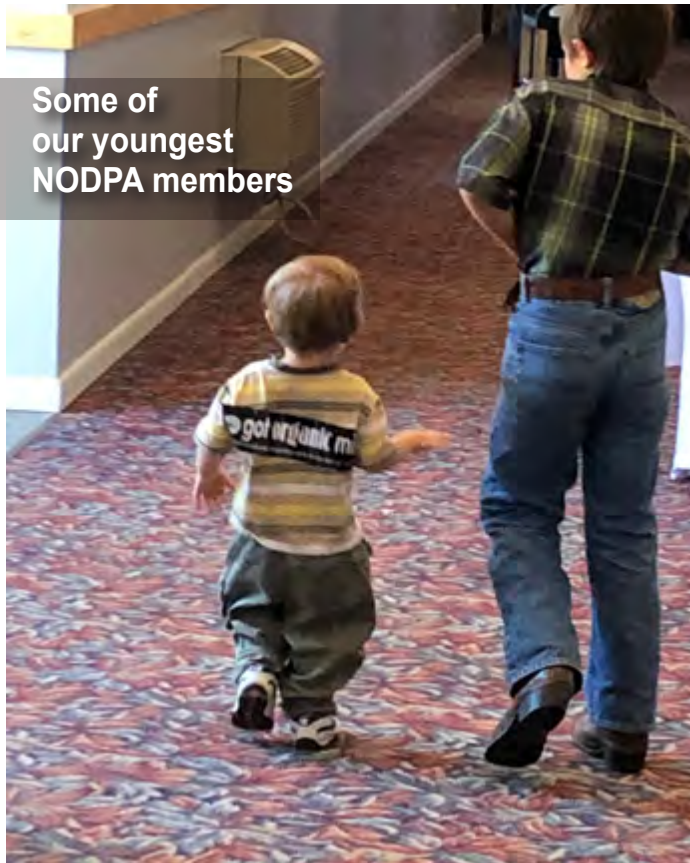
in front of the cow, and a good bull behind her.” Having the right mix of warm and cool season grasses and clover is critical for ensuring the cows have a good balance of energy and protein throughout the grazing season. And he spoke of the need to have cows that are wide and short, as this kind of cow does very well on grass. “Nature is what we should first be consulting when we build our farms.”

### Small Retrofitted Milking Parlors: Planning for the Future and Increasing Efficiency on Your Farm

In addition to running his own grass based organic dairy farm, Steven Weaver, Nathan's brother, has a thriving side business designing and installing low cost milking parlors for farmers that want to minimize labor costs through efficient milking, while also not spending a ton of money on infrastructure. Traditionally, many small farms have used tie stall barns with pipeline milking systems because they are assumed to be cheaper than putting in a separate parlor, but parlors are much more efficient than pipeline systems. Having a parlor means cows are not off pasture for two to three hours; they come into milk and go right back out again to pasture, where they need to be, not stuck in a barn while the whole herd is being milked.



## NODPA Field Days 2019



Some of  
our youngest  
NODPA members

Steven explained that with his innovative designs, parlors are actually quite affordable for the average small farm. For example, the installed cost of a swing 8 parlor with a polycarbonate splash guard and stainless steel kick guard, not including the cost of pouring concrete prior to installation, is only \$7,500

### Organic Policy Update: Ed Maltby

While market conditions are poor, there are several bright spots on the policy horizon as NODPA's policy advocacy via the National Organic Coalition, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition and the Organic Farmers Association has recently led to several significant wins. After almost two decades of pressure, the organic livestock industry may actually see the implementation of an Origin of Livestock Rule by the USDA next year. NOP almost put an Origin of Livestock rule in place in 2010 along with the pasture rule that was implemented at that time, and then in 2015 a proposed rule was published but was quashed by the USDA the last two years. In the interim, low milk prices have increased support for an Origin of Livestock rule. Presumably a strict Origin of Livestock rule that prevents continuous transition of conventional animals into organic production would level the playing field between industrial scale organic dairies that exploit this loophole and smaller ones

that used the one-time whole herd transition exemption and have since raised all animals organically from the last third of gestation.

While there is nothing in the Farm Bill passed in 2018 regarding an organic rule on origin of livestock, the various coalitions NODPA is part of got manager's language in the House and Senate Appropriations bills calling for the publication of a final rule on Origin of Livestock within 90 days of passage. Ed believes that the USDA will republish the 2015 proposed rule in the fall of 2019 with a 30 day comment period, hopefully leading to a final rule being published in 2020 that would close the continuous transition loophole.

Another significant policy victory is an increase in National Organic Program funding in Congressional Appropriations bills in both houses of Congress. Furthermore, the legislative language contains details on how the money is to be spent, such as the hiring of more staff to oversee enforcement. If passed, this will help ensure that NOP has the resources and mandate to ensure that the organic standards are being properly enforced.

NODPA is also working directly with certifiers to make the interpretation of existing organic standards more uniform. After years of controversy over issues such as pasturing of livestock and organic transition of livestock, many certifiers now realize that they have to change some of their practices as they see that their lenient interpretation of organic livestock standards has made it far too easy for large dairies to transition thousands of conventional animals into organic herds.

Just as inaction by the government has contributed to wide variation in interpretation of the pasture and livestock origin rules, so too has NOP's failure to delineate rules specific to hydroponic, except to say that hydroponic growers can be certified according to organic standards. Many soil based organic farmers are concerned that this opening to organic hydroponic production goes against the overall intent of organic standards and the National Organic Program. To address this concern, as well as the uneven enforcement of organic livestock rules, the Real Organic Project is working to develop an add-on label for soil based organic producers. The label will not require any additional paperwork, nor incur any additional cost; it will certify that producers are not using hydroponics and that they are actually pasturing their cows.

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## NODPA Field Days 2019



Thursday evening's farmer panel discussion

*continued from page 17*

### Panel Discussion: Adapting to the New Realities of Organic Dairy: Where Do We Go From Here?

While much of the news coming out of the organic dairy industry is negative, what with years of low prices, canceled contracts, and farm exits in some regions, thousands of organic dairy farmers are persisting, innovating and finding new ways to farm in the face of these challenging market conditions. During this panel discussion, five organic dairy farmers shared their lessons regarding how to adjust to what may be the new normal in the industry of flat demand and low milk prices. The audience heard a range of strategies, from diversification to more production of summer annuals to once daily milking, and securing rent reductions to address the cost-price squeeze that is making life difficult for all organic dairy farmers. There was also discussion of how to differentiate one's milk in the eyes of consumers, emphasizing milk quality.

Roman Stoltzfoos from Kinzer, PA has been farming more than 20 years, and now works with his son Dwight, running a highly diversified operation with dairy cows, turkeys, beef cattle and contracted out cheese production. They even have cabins on their farm they rent out to visitors, as well as a Tentrr ([www.Tentrr.com](http://www.Tentrr.com)) site where people can set up camping tents for a fee. Roman emphasized that the cows have been the largest portion of his operation throughout, but with the recent price dip he and Dwight have benefited greatly from the turkey and beef markets especially. They provide a good, consistent income, and their prices do not track milk prices.

Forrest Stricker, from Wernersville, PA, explained how he has cut down on labor requirements by going to once a day milking. Initially this was done because a hired person left, but he appreciates the more relaxed schedule; he has more

time to do other things on the farm, and the cows are easier to handle. He also has noticed health improvements in the cows; they have fewer flies, better body condition, their hair coats are slick, and they have fewer abscesses. The components of the milk have changed as well, with higher butterfat content, which translates into a higher pay price. Complementing these cost control measures, Forrest has ventured into direct marketing and diversification to create additional income streams for his farm. He is selling some raw milk for retail off the farm, and at a farmers market in King of Prussia, a suburb outside of Philadelphia. He also is selling some of his milk to a cheesemaker and raising some pigs. Regarding the latter, he outlined the simple and profitable proposition of turning milk with a base price of only \$27/cwt into pigs that have a and getting the equivalent of \$37/cwt from the finished pork that comes from the milk.

Another panelist—Anne Philips—also is diversifying on her farm in Marathon, NY, raising lambs alongside the cows, but taking care to minimize labor and land demands for this secondary livestock crop. Since she has very little time to spend on the farm, with a full-time job with Organic Valley, she doesn't finish her lambs, selling them at weaning for \$2.25-\$3.00/lb. This is much less work than finishing them, and it also means they don't compete with cows for grass. Likewise, the ewes mostly graze on marginal pasture, and will eat plants the cows do not, making the best use out of the land base.

Overall, a major theme of the panel was the importance of taking stock of one's land base, labor availability, and access to markets, and then adjusting one's production practices to increase efficiency, or venturing into new markets to add value to the bottom line. Executing a range of cost cutting and diversification strategies allows farmers to mitigate price pressures, add money to the bottom line, and reduce their risk exposure as they can feel confident that turkey, pig, raw milk, and wholesale pasteurized

## NODPA Field Days 2019

milk markets will rarely move in tandem. Furthermore, by plugging into more local or regional markets these farmers reduce their exposure to price volatility stemming from very distant market dynamics such as Texas organic dairy CAFOs flooding the New York organic milk market.

### Positioning Your Farm for the Future of the Organic Dairy Industry: Strategies for Diversifying Into a Mixed Organic Operation and How to Best Utilize Organic Acreage in Response to the Current Organic Dairy Market: Roman Stoltzfoos and Klaas Martens

Expanding on his remarks from the panel discussion the night before, Roman Stoltzfoos explained how he has adjusted his mix of crops and livestock so as to maintain pasture health, cow health, feed quality, and profitability. Roman has reduced the size of his chicken flock over the years; it simply is not very profitable going from four pens to one. If it wasn't for his son Dwight, who supervises the chicken operation, he would get rid of them completely.

Roman emphasized that “the important thing is the soil—honor, respect, and love the soil.” To increase grass productivity and quality he applies soil amendments in the spring, using compost from the farm along with gypsum, boron, and manganese sulfate. He cautioned people against using much chicken manure as it contains very high potash levels, even after composting it.

As far as cow health, to control for mastitis he tests each quarter and treats it if necessary. He uses a Lysigin vaccine twice a year, and uses iodine to kill bad quarters. Roman would like to reduce the cull rate and is experimenting with Fleckvieh genetics to get a more muscular cow, which he thinks will make for healthier cows in a grass-fed operation. He also has been breeding A2A2 cows as their milk is increasingly popular among consumers for its greater ease of digestion.

In addition to outlining practices designed to optimize soil fertility, cow health, and animal genetics, Roman gave an overview of how all the different pieces of the farm fit together financially to produce a rewarding enterprise for himself, his son and their respective families—“we farm and raise children, and now grandchildren.” Spring Wood Dairy's land is spread out over 15 miles, except for one 50 acre plot, with Dwight and Roman paying from zero to \$400 an acre for renting land. They recently spent \$50,000 on a wagon; this has revolutionized the business by increasing hauling capacity and not having to hire truckers, which is extremely difficult to do nowadays given the trucker shortage. He said the turkeys have basically saved the farm; they sell 7,000-8,000 birds a year for 1.65/lb wholesale. They net \$20,000 from the rental cottages, \$2,000 from cheese production,

\$10,000 net from beef, \$4,000 from eggs, and \$5,000-\$10,000 from premiums on milk sold to a gelato company that operates on the farm's premises and uses its equipment.

Klaas Martens from Lakeview Organic Grain in Penn Yan, NY, offered his reflections to NODPA Field Days attendees on what optimal cow genetics and pasture mixes are for organic dairies. He started by explaining the importance of selecting for cows that are actually slower in maturing, i.e. reaching peak production levels. For many years, dairy farmers have selected for a high first lactation; this fits into the conventional grain based, confinement paradigm. However, with organic production farmers are aiming for longevity and suitability for grass. Generally, older cows are a little bigger, and as they mature they can take in more forage and make better use of it compared to younger cows. Older cows can more easily produce a given amount of milk using primarily forages, hence the need to switch breeding strategies and select for longevity and slower maturation. Pasture is the cheapest kind of forage—the cows do the work, and potentially is the highest quality forage, so it makes sense to optimize one's herd so one can take best advantage of this fact.

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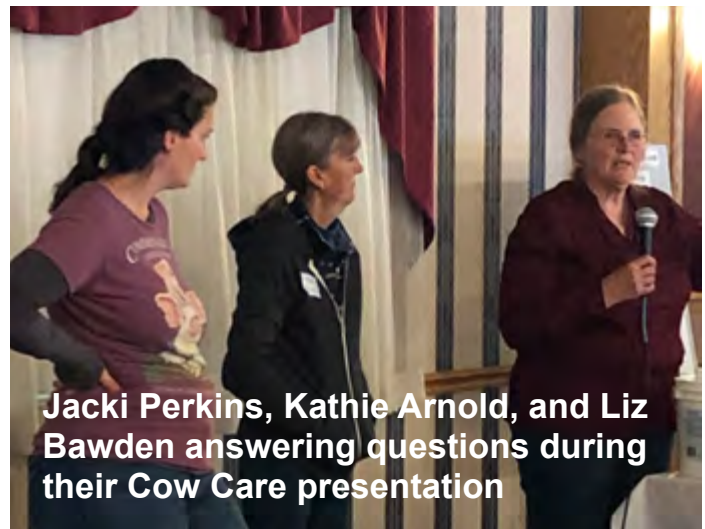
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### Cow Care: Creative effective treatments to increase your herd's health without breaking the bank

Jacki Perkins from MOFGA started the session off by giving an overview of essential items all organic dairy farmers should have on hand in case of emergencies. "When you don't have things set up is when things go wrong," Jacki explained. Diapers are good for soaking up blood. Arnica can be used to treat bleeds and bruises, and electrolytes are useful for dehydration. Farmers can use Pedialytes, for example, as what is good for humans is fine for cows as well. Other items she recommends to keep at ready include baking soda, betadine scrub, saline solution, halters, and towels. And one of the most comforting aspects of the homeopathic paradigm is that the wrong remedy will never make the cow sicker, or bring on new problems; homeopathic remedies are extremely safe.

Long-time New York farmer Kathie Arnold, based on her more than twenty years of using organic cow treatment methods, shared several simple methods for keeping cows healthy or



**Jacki Perkins, Kathie Arnold, and Liz Bawden answering questions during their Cow Care presentation**

for treating illnesses quickly once they manifest. After having a run of scours and then pneumonia in calves, Arnold started a regimen of adding Calf Shield (which includes probiotics) and Milkmate (mix of vitamins and selenium) to calf milk. Additionally, First Arrival is added to the milk for the first two weeks. Since starting this regimen, no calves have gone off feed nor have any calves gone from scours to pneumonia. If a calf has scours, she gives 1 tube of Last Stand, which is the same formula as First Arrival. Other scour treatment choices are Neonorm and Primary Care. When she dries off cows, she vaccinates with Scour Guard to provide e-coli scours antibodies in the colostrum. Arnold presented several treatments that are effective for birthing related issues, such as First Defense, which contains colostrum antibodies, given to calves within 18 hours after birth. Crystal Creek's Fresh Cow Bolus can be used to treat retained placentas, and Uterflush or dextrose can be used for treating metritis.

Liz Bawden has been farming organically in Hammond, NY for 19 years. She shared her experiences working with several herbal compounds and home remedies that work well either as preventative measures or curative treatments for cow ailments. In the case of pink eye, the primary approach should be prevention. This includes measures such as keeping water sources clean, keeping over-mature plants clipped, or giving cows a very dilute solution of iodine and water, or kelp with water every two weeks. If prevention doesn't keep pink eye at bay, though, some effective treatments include a mixture of 20% tea tree oil and 80% water, or a similar proportion of calendula to water. A mixture of raw milk and honey also works as a treatment for pink eye.

Before calling the veterinarian, farmers can use ingredients they already have on the farm to treat their animals. Adding eggs, yogurt or kefir to the calf's diet is good for treating scours, and a combination of sodium bicarb, salt, and sugar/honey is an excellent substitute for store bought electrolyte solutions. For

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## NODPA Field Days 2019

cows that have gone off feed because of a displaced abomasum or ketosis, a bolus of tobacco or coffee works wonders. And oregano oil rub can be used to treat mastitis. For commercial, organically approved remedies, Liz pointed out that many companies making such treatments are advertisers in NODPA News.

### Farm Tour: Grunen Aue Farm

After the last panel, Troy Bishopp, who works with the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, gave a brief overview of Grunen Aue Farm before the audience drove a few short miles to Nathan Weaver's farm in Canastota, where he has been farming with his family since 2006. According to Bishopp, "Nathan is a grass craftsman." He started farming in Madison County with worn out hay land. As he put it—"when a cow pie doesn't leave after a year you've got a problem." Nonetheless, the soil type on the farm was good for grazing. It just needed close attention, care, and rehabilitation to make into a healthy, productive grass based dairy farm. Bishopp explained that "capturing fertility is the key to getting worn out land back in shape....almost all pasture renovation has been done from within, stimulating seedbank in pasture with grazing. At 8% soil organic matter in pastures, Nathan doesn't believe in soil tests, he's more visual."



Weaver buggy

When we all came to the farm, we walked by the buildings and then out to a pasture where all the cows were close together in a 1 acre paddock, with 1 bull bellowing throughout our visit, protecting his harem. Nathan explained that while he has an all Jersey herd, he wants to pay more attention to developing cow genetics that will allow him to maximize the productivity of his grass-based dairy operation.

*continued on page 22*

### Weaver Family Farm tour in field





## NODPA Field Days 2019

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He has found that Jerseys are not well suited to the cold because they are too small. Larger animals can withstand colder temperatures because their area to mass ratio is smaller, so they retain more heat. However, having too large a cow is not good either in terms of optimal feed conversion/best use of pasture. Nathan has found that large cows can consume 3.6% of their bodyweight daily in dry matter intake, while small cows can consume 4% of their bodyweight daily in DMI. He also is looking for intramuscular marbling in his cows as they raise cows for beef as well, and tried Milking Shorthorns because they are a dual dairy/meat breed, Unfortunately, they did not work at all as Nathan found they were “lazy cows that didn’t want to milk for us.” Likewise, the Fleckvieh is too wide and beefy. Based on his experimentation with different breeds and assessment of what is needed for his system Nathan is looking to develop a Jersey-Ayrshire cross in the near future.

Nathan explained his guiding philosophy of pasture management and grazing as “pressure and release.” He wants to have a high stocking ratio for small paddocks, with cows grazing an individual pasture only 7 days out of the year, with pasture recovering in between, and the high stocking ratios building up soil fertility over time. He explained that “the grass follows the cows, not the other way around.” What this means is that after grazing a pasture down short, it grows back better than it would if it was not grazed. To help the cows consume more forage, he brings water to the cows in the field, and to expedite cow traffic and minimize mud, he makes sure to have adequate concrete laneways.

Compared to other graziers, Nathan grazes the grass short, and then clips it down to 4” - 5” after the cows go through it through July (mowing after August 1st would cut into fall forage production). However, he never harvests hay two years in a row in the same spot. He believes that grazing the grass this short is the only way to increase the amount of tonnage he can get off a given piece of pasture, and this is key to running an efficient grass-based dairy. Dry matter volume is never going to be as high if the grass is allowed to get too tall. To balance out energy and protein, as well as optimize for seasonality, Nathan has 25 species in the pasture, including orchard grass, fescue and white clover.



Weaver cows at pond



Weaver Family Farm Tour

To manage pasture quality, he sometimes adds chicken litter that has been composted and he has found that this added fertility is needed to take advantage of long days. The longest days of the year tend to have the lowest DMI/day and applying extra fertility before these long days helps increase DMI production. While the farm was in poor condition when he moved to New York, the land has always been blessed with well drained soils and this means that the cows rarely have to be kept out of the pasture because it's too wet and muddy. Nathan emphasized that a primary guideline for his grazing operation is “the closer you can stay to a natural system the easier it is to farm.” ♦



## NET UPDATE

## Recent ODairy Discussions

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

Most milk inspectors will tell you that the use of quarter milkers is not allowed on dairy farms. One contributor suggested that the reason may be due to conventional producers using them on treated quarters with the assumption that it solves the antibiotic residue issue. But other producers suggested that their construction has lots of hard to clean corners that require daily attention to keep them “squeaky clean”. One producer shared that they are an essential tool on his farm to manage SCC by keeping a high quarter out of the bulk tank. But all the farmers removed the quarter milkers before inspections.

A farmer asked the group for suggestions on the best material for the surface of a cow lane. One farmer recommended asphalt millings from road surfacing projects. A six-inch layer (more in low or wet spots) was laid, then rolled. Prior to that, they had used a honeycomb stabilization product, covered with 1-inch clean stone, then covered with stone dust. Another producer removed the topsoil and put down a non-woven fabric. Lay 6 to 12 inches of “3 inch minus” or similar fill, then top with 2 inches of stone dust. And another suggested that a thinner layer of one inch to one and a half inch rock works well. With smaller stones, there is risk of the rocks getting caught between cows’ toes. Larger than that and it can be hard to spread the rock evenly. “I spread a thin layer of 1 or 1 ½ inch rock down the lane and try to work it down into the soil surface after a rain, when the soil is a bit soft, by driving a tractor over it. When it dries it gets very hard (on my silty, clay loam soils). It is a cheap way to surface a lane.”

A first calf heifer had udder rot between her udder and her leg, and the farmer asked for treatment recommendations.

Suggestions included using Mag-paste, corn starch mixed with a 10:1 ratio of yarrow to goldenseal, and apple cider vinegar.

A farmer asked for help in determining how long he should wait before feeding out frosted sorghum. He was concerned about the prussic acid (hydrogen cyanide) that develops when the plants are subjected to a frost. Another farmer posted this excerpt from the Hay and Forage Grower magazine:

“When the plants have been cut and are dry enough to bale, the cyanide gas will have volatilized and dissipated from the plant, so there is no feeding risk. When considering an ensiled forage or wet wrapped baleage, the cyanide concentration depletes significantly during the ensiling (fermentation) process. It is recommended not to feed the ensiled forage or baleage for at least four to six weeks after harvest.” ♦

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### National Organic Standards: Notes from the Fall Board Meeting

*Compiled by Ed Maltby from information supplied by Abby Youngblood and Christie Badger from the National Organic Coalition*

The Fall National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) meeting took place in Pittsburgh, PA in late October. The board heard public comments in person, and voted on seven proposals and over 50 sunset materials on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. There was also a report from the National Organic Program, and retiring Board Chair Harriet Behar took some time to assess the state of the NOSB. The board also elected new officers: Steve Ela (chair), Scott Rice (vice chair), and Jessie Buie (secretary). As of this writing, there had been no announcement of new Board members.

In her remarks, Harriet Behar highlighted that organic is at a crossroads with too many NOSB recommendations in limbo and gave some examples: native ecosystems, Origin of Livestock, pasture rule enforcement, NOP accreditation program, hydroponics, sodium nitrate, The Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices rule. She noted that fraud on many levels is directly affecting organic producers whose families rely on the integrity of the organic seal, notably organic dairy, organic grain and organic produce hit hard by 'organic' hydroponics. Behar credited the work of the NOSB as being thoughtful and comprehensive, giving examples of the unanimous votes to exclude gene editing and other methods. She spent some time talking about climate change and how hundreds of thousands of species are in danger of extinction. Harriett highlighted the role that organic agriculture plays in mitigating the effects, stressing that organic certification is a voluntary system that allows farmers, suppliers and processors to opt-in to a more rigorous and environmentally sensitive standard of farming and food production. Because of the federally regulated standards that require use of soil-building farming practices and prohibit the use of fossil-fuel-based chemical fertilizers and synthetic pesticides, certified organic production should be seen as the gold standard for climate-friendly agriculture. As always, she ended on a positive note by talking of the carbon that organic agriculture can sequester to slow climate change and start to heal the damage humans have caused. Organic agriculture can turn things around. Thank you, Harriet for your great leadership and hard work in your unfortunately all too short tenure at the NOSB.

Jennifer Tucker, Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program gave her presentation and summarized her 2020 priorities under the following headings:

- Rules: Strengthening Organic Enforcement, Origin of Livestock, National List
- Enforcement: Investigations and Surveillance
- Import Certificates

- International Arrangements
- Federal Partnerships
- Certifier and Other Partner Training
- Launch Noncompliance Library and Certifier Portal
- Building the Organization

Under enforcement, Tucker emphasized three points: investigations of complaints, market surveillance and coordination with federal enforcement agencies. She stressed that NOP is focused on imports, livestock, grain and oilseed handling, and has developed and strengthened the many tools that help in both domestic and import oversight. These tools include farm level yield analysis studies that have provided evidence for suspension, and she used the example of the suspended Turkey office of Control Union. NOP has hired an agricultural economist who is using public data to flag areas of risk in order to uncovering and proving fraud. Its priority is to detect fraud prior to leaving the country of origin and before it reaches the USA. Under Livestock Compliance, NOP is invigorating the tried and tested methods such as unannounced visits to high risk operations with a history of non-compliance. They have recently begun offering a course on dairy compliance, which takes 2-3 hours to complete. Of course, she highlighted the release of the Origin of Livestock rule and the reopening of the comment period as a priority for NOP in the next six months.

Tucker presented a whole slide in her PowerPoint on gene-editing with some forceful language:

- Many public comments for this NOSB meeting focused on gene editing in organic agriculture.
- The Excluded Methods definition in the USDA organic regulations does not allow for gene editing: it is prohibited.
- USDA encourages continued robust dialogue about the role of new technologies and innovations in organic agriculture.
- Changing the definition of Excluded Methods is not on the USDA regulatory agenda.

#### Livestock Subcommittee

The Livestock Subcommittee, chaired by Sue Baird, had a full agenda to report out from the NOSB. One of great interest to organic dairy is the use of excluded methods (GMO) vaccines in organic livestock production. This is a large, complex topic, and one on which NODPA has commented repeatedly, that vaccines are an essential tool for building herd immunity and necessary in some situations where approved remedies are not working. The

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

committee had lengthy discussions about how to bring uniformity to the implementation of the regulations but their motion listed below moved away from having a defined list of acceptable vaccines which they saw as the work of certifiers. There was also some skepticism on using the 'commercially available' criteria which has been universally abused with the requirement to use organic seed and was also one of the justifications for the varying implementation or the Origin of Livestock rules.

### **Motion to change the USDA organic regulations at § 205.105 (e):**

Excluded methods, except for vaccines: Provided, That, vaccines produced through excluded methods may be used when an equivalent vaccine not produced through excluded methods is not commercially available.

The motion was accepted Yes: 12 No: 0 Abstain: 1 Absent: 1 Recuse: 0

### **Sunset Reviews**

#### **National list references:**

§ 205.603 Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic livestock production

§ 205.603 (a) As disinfectants, sanitizer, and medical treatments as applicable.

§ 205.603 (b) As topical treatment, external parasiticide or local anesthetic as applicable

#### **Atropine 205.603(a)**

Remains on the National List for approved use

#### **Hydrogen peroxide 205.603(a)**

Remains on the National List for approved use

#### **Iodine 205.603(a) & 205.603(b)**

Remains on the National List for approved use for both categories - 205.603(a) & 205.603(b)

#### **Magnesium sulfate 205.603(a)**

Remains on the National List for approved use

#### **Peroxyacetic / Peracetic acid 205.603(a)**

Remains on the National List for approved use

#### **Xylazine 205.603(a)**

Remains on the National List for approved use

#### **National list references:**

205.603(a) (23) Parasiticides - prohibited in slaughter stock, allowed in emergency treatment for dairy and breeder stock when organic system plan-approved preventive management does not prevent infestation. In breeder stock, treatment cannot occur during the last third of gestation if the progeny will be sold as organic and must not be used during the lactation period for breeding stock. Allowed for fiber bearing animals when used a minimum of 36 days prior to harvesting of fleece or wool that is to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic.

(i) Fenbendazole (CAS #43210-67-9) - milk or milk products from a treated animal cannot be labeled as provided for in subpart D of this part for: 2 days following treatment of cattle; 36 days following treatment of goats, sheep, and other dairy species.

(ii) Moxidectin (CAS #113507-06-5) - milk or milk products from a treated animal cannot be labeled as provided for in subpart D of this part for: 2 days following treatment of cattle; 36 days following treatment of goats, sheep, and other dairy species.

**Fenbendazole** remains on the National List for approved use under §205.603(a)(23)(i)

**Moxidectin** remains on the National List for approved use under §205.603(a)(23)(ii)

#### **Methionine 205.603(d)**

The use of Methionine as a feed additive for poultry remains on the National List as defined in 205.603(d)

#### **Trace minerals 205.603(d)**

Widespread comments in support of continued listing and the motion to remove trace minerals from the National List failed.

#### **Vitamins 205.603(d)**

The vote on removing vitamins from the National List failed with the knowledge that there are no other non-GMO vitamins available and the NOP are mandated in three different sections to provide these vitamins.

The next NOSB meeting will take place April 29 – May 1, 2020, at the Westin Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia. Notable work agenda topics are expected to include Marine Materials in crop production, Paper Pots (petition for crop use), Sodium carbonate lignin (petition for crop use), low acetyl gellan gum (petition for handling), red jalapeño pepper (petition for handling), Fenbendazole (petition for livestock use), Biodegradable bio-based mulch film, and discussions on 2022 Sunset Reviews. ♦

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## FEATURED FARM

**MISTY BROOK FARM, ALBION, ME***continued from page 1*

farm house. The easements on the property lowered the purchase price for the Holmes considerably.

Katia and Brendan have 600 acres of land in Albion and Unity, ME, of which about 330 are pasture, hay, and crops with the rest wooded. About 60 are cropped in small grains and dry beans each year. They have a diversified organic livestock farm, with 30-35 milking Jersey cows, 40 Friesian ewes, 1,000 laying hens, 50 Tamworth pigs, and 70 lambs. Their farm business sells raw organic grass-fed cow's milk, raw cream, raw half & half, raw sheep's milk, beef, veal, lamb, pork, and eggs throughout the state of Maine, all marketed under the Misty Brook Farm label. Rather than compete with other farms, the Holmes do custom deliveries and distribute raw organic milk and yogurt for The Milkhouse, based in Monmouth, ME.

Misty Brook Farm may be the only farm in the country selling raw sheep's milk; Katia said she gets 1-2 calls a month from consumers looking for raw sheep's milk from all over the country; it is a highly specialized market that Katia and Brendan have been able to capitalize on. A good milking sheep only gives a quart of milk a day, and its lactation is only 6 months, making it much more expensive to produce than cow's milk. Katia has developed a good customer network of stores that buy the raw organic sheep's milk for \$5/quart wholesale. Katia enjoys mixing up her days, with a typical morning spent milking sheep and cows, moving to office work-- working on sales, marketing, and distribution tasks, and moving fence for the pastures in the afternoon. Brendan is responsible for managing crops, forage and the pastures, and also does the lion's share of human resource management; they have about 12 employees, including delivery drivers, a mechanic, a bottler, farm laborers, and a social media specialist.

Katia and Brendan have some help from Brendan's mother, who lives near the farm, and their two oldest children-- John--10 and Alistair--12, with William, age 3½, getting ready to make a contribution to the farm in a couple of years. The two oldest children are in a homeschooling group for three days a week, spending the other days working on the farm. Brendan and Katia met while working on Seven Stars Farm in Kimberton, PA, which is a biodynamic farm that produces yogurt. When they met, Katia was thinking about going to school to become a veterinarian, but Brendan told her that he had wanted to be a farmer since he was five years old, and if they were going to be an item it was farming or bust. Katia said she was happy to follow his lead, and has since taken it up with gusto. The both went to Emerson College in Sussex, England to learn biodynamic



farming techniques for three years, visiting several farmers in other European countries to see first-hand different ways people can employ biodynamic principles.

After their stint in England, they started farming on rented land in Massachusetts. They are not raw milk dogmatists, but they were organic from the start, with considerable incorporation of biodynamic principles into their farming practices. In Massachusetts there was no organic milk truck so they decided to sell raw milk, which in Massachusetts has to be sold directly to customers on the farm. After farming 200 acres owned by 14 different landlords spread across four towns in Massachusetts for eight years, they jumped at the chance to take over the Perkins farm, which not only meant less time spent traveling between farm plots, but also more inviting raw milk regulations. In Maine they could now sell their raw milk wholesale to stores.

**Multi-species Pasture Management**

Having different kinds animals serves as a bulwark against price drops, but perhaps more importantly there are symbiotic relationships between the animals on the farm that contribute to farm efficiency and soil health. The sheep and cows all graze together in the same paddocks. Katia indicated that this is done in part for labor saving; she doesn't want to move electric net fencing because it takes up too much time; instead she uses 1 strand polywire for the cows and sheep that is set knee high for the cows, which also keeps in the sheep. Sheep often move in a clump, and periodically will make "campsites" when it's hot and take a group nap all bunched on top of each other, flattening the grass and pooping on the grass, which helps build soil organic matter, leading to future regrowth. The Holmes follow Ian Mitchell Innis's grazing methodology, which calls for grazing one third and trampling two thirds. The milkers are moved at least twice a day and up to four times per day. Depending on the point in the growing season, the grass can be over three feet tall (late July). The

## FEATURED FARM

problem, of course with tall grass is that sheep will not go into it on their own, as it towers over their bodies. However, in this mixed species regimen the cows go in first and the sheep are able to follow their paths.

The animals may only graze 30% of the vegetation and flatten the rest. The flattened grass provides a protective cover that keeps the soil moist when it's dry, and it feeds soil life. Letting the grass grow tall also means the roots are longer, which aerates the soil and maintains a good soil structure for soil organisms. There are also nutritional benefits to tall grass grazing. The protein energy balance of tall grass is preferable to short grass. Katia pointed out that in the spring when the cows first start grazing they are very excited and want to graze low, but this means they actually will get too much protein. The milk from cows consuming too much protein can give their calves scours.

Having a flerd (flock of sheep plus herd of cows) graze a paddock also helps optimize pasture health because cows and sheep like different kinds of plants. Having the two species graze together

leads to a more even consumption of the pasture, and likewise helps maintain a biodiverse pasture with an appropriate mixture of legumes and grasses. Pigs and chickens sometimes play a role in pasture management as well. Katia explained—“If we have a field that's doing poorly we will run chickens and pigs across the field to give it an extra shot of fertility. What works best for us is minimizing labor and improving pasture.”

While the cows and sheep get a 100% grass-fed diet, they have to feed grain to the chickens and pigs. Misty Brook Farm grows wheat, rye, and oats (and has grown corn in the past), and also grows 4 acres of dry beans for human consumption. The wheat and rye are used to mill flour for human consumption as well as cover crops. Oats are used for cover crops as well as feeding the breeding pigs. The pigs can be used as living seed planters, plowers, and harvesters. Sometimes they have run pigs through fields with stumps to work the soil in preparation for planting a crop, or use

*continued on page 28*



**Misty Brook Farm cows and sheep grazing.**



## FEATURED FARM

## MISTY BROOK FARM, ALBION, ME

*continued from page 27*

the pigs to work in seeds after they have grazed a patch of pasture. When this was done with corn, the pigs were then brought in to harvest it, saving a lot of time, equipment usage, and fuel.

## Livestock Genetics

Katia and Brendan used AI some when they started farming, but now use their own bull exclusively. Katia explained that she “likes to look at the bull—see, not just by numbers.” The Holmes have a lot of New Zealand Jerseys; they are fairly small and stout, which works well for their system, both because it’s a grass-based dairy and because she raises cows for beef. With the sheep, she commented that she has a fairly high cull rate as she tries to develop an ideal flock for her farm. When starting out she bought sheep from several different farms, but now is breeding for sheep that are more resistant to parasites, have good legs and udders. She mentioned that a couple of lambs that didn’t respect the fence got culled. Misty Brook Farm’s strong market for lamb and mutton allows for a high culling rate. Cows with staphylococcus aureus mastitis also get culled. And here

again, the farm’s beef market allows for a high culling rate.

## Outlook on Farming

Katia and Brendan fell into the raw market due to geographic circumstance, but realize it has made a major difference in their farm economics. Katia relayed how it’s a lot more work doing raw, bottled milk on the farm as she has to plan feeding and calving to balance their own tank, “but the upside is I set the price. Instead of being a price taker I am a price setter. That’s kept us in business over the ups and downs of the years. A few times when milk prices were high we looked at each other and said ‘why are we doing all this?’ But when it takes a downward turn it’s like ‘oh, that’s why.’ The Holmes don’t have one customer (buyer), instead selling to 50 wholesale accounts.

Katia ended our conversation with some reflections on what keeps her going, in this difficult business called farming, and some ideas for how farmers can best meet the challenges they face. “It’s tough right now. I don’t know how many more farmers we’re going to lose before something changes. I feel for a lot of those farmers out there that are maybe not making it. What’s kept us growing is our passion for farming, for the soil,



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## FEATURED FARM

for the livestock. But we've found that you've got to be constantly changing and recreating what you do. The weather is getting more changeable. The economic situation is constantly changing. It's kind of generally tough to be a small business, and farming's no different. I guess the biggest thing I would say as a piece of advice—constantly be reassessing what you're doing, in order to be flexible and be able to change and create a continuing farm business. The one thing that's guaranteed is change. Nothing ever stays the same."

Katia and Brendan Holmes can be reached at (207) 437-4719, or by visiting their website, [www.mistybrook.com](http://www.mistybrook.com). ♦



Misty Brook Farm

### Board Members & Representatives

#### PENNSYLVANIA

**Arden Landis, State Rep**  
1850 Bowmansville Rd.  
Mohnton, PA 19540-9427  
c2graze@dejazzd.com  
Phone: 717-484-0038

**Roman Stoltzfoos, State Rep**  
Spring Wood Organic Farm  
1143 Gap Rd, Kinzers, PA, 17535  
romans@epix.net  
Phone: 610-593-2415

**Dwight Stoltzfoos, Board Secretary**  
Spring Wood Organic Farm  
1143 Gap Road  
Kinzers, PA 17535  
info@springwooddairy.com

#### NEW YORK

**Kirk Arnold, NODPA Co-president**  
3175 State Route 13  
Truxton, NY 13158-3107  
kickaha21@gmail.com  
P: 607-842-6631

**Liz Bawden, Co-president, Newsletter Contributor, Associate Editor**  
119 Factory Rd., Hammond, NY 13646  
bawden@cit-tele.com  
Phone: 315-324-6926

**Ryan Murray, Board Member**  
6000 Chenango Solon Pond Rd.  
Truxton NY 13158  
rcmdairy@gmail.com

**Robert Moore, State Rep**  
Moore Farms, 2083 Moore Hill Rd.  
Nichols, NY 13812  
Phone: 607-699-7968  
cowpoke2@verizon.net

**Bill Stine, State Rep**  
45540 Stine Road  
Redwood, NY 13679-3160  
Phone: (315) 482-2017  
tstine2007@yahoo.com

**John Stoltzfoos, State Rep**  
1553 Hesselton Gully Rd.  
Whitesville, NY 14897  
jsttribe@yahoo.com  
Phone: 607-356-3272

**George Wright, Treasurer**  
821 Pyrites-Russell Rd., Hermon, NY 14897  
wrightdairy@yahoo.com  
Phone: 315-347-4604

#### VERMONT

**Brian Wilson, State Rep**  
Morningside Farm, 101 Hemenway Hill Rd, Shoreham, VT 05770  
Cell phone: 802-377-1786,  
bpwilson@shoreham.net

**Jeep Madison, State Rep**  
2806 Smith Street, Shoreham, VT 05770  
Cell: 802-349-6262  
jojoselixir@yahoo.com

**Bonnie and Tom Boutin, State Rep**  
1184 Cross Road, Newport Ctr, VT 05857  
Phone: 802-334-2081  
bonnieboutin@yahoo.com

#### CONNECTICUT

**Rick Segalla, Board Member**  
96 Allyndale Rd., Canaan, CT 06018  
mocow@earthlink.net  
Phone: 860-824-0241

#### MASSACHUSETTS

**Morvan Allen, Board Member**  
Maple Shade Farm Inc.  
229 Hewins St, Sheffield, MA 01257  
morvenallen@live.com  
Phone: 413-229-6018

#### NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Cindy-Lou Amey, State Rep**  
Indian Stream Farm  
81 Tabor Road, Pittsburg, NH 03592  
Phone: (603) 538-7734  
cindyloamey@gmail.com

#### MAINE

**Steven Russell, Board Member**  
RR2 Box 5660, Winslow, ME 04901  
jwinrussel@roadrunner.com  
Phone: 207-872-6533

**Steve Morrison, Board Member**  
**Policy Committee Chair**  
159 Atkinson Rd, Charleston, ME 04422  
smccrest@gmail.com  
Phone: 207-285-7085 Fax: 207-285-0128

**Aaron Bell, State Rep**  
Tide Mill Organic Farm  
91 Tide Mill Road, Edmunds, Maine 04628  
Phone: 207-733-2551  
eatlocal@tidemillorganicfarm.com  
www.tidemillorganicfarm.com

#### AT LARGE NODPA BOARD MEMBERS

**Ed Zimba, MODPA Board Member**  
Zimba Dairy, 7995 Mushroom Rd  
DeFord, MI 48729  
zimbadairy@tband.net  
Phone & Fax: 989-872-2680

**Darlene Coehoorn, MODPA President, Newsletter Contributor**  
Viewpoint Acres Farm  
N5878 Hwy C, Rosendale, WI 54874  
ddviewpoint@yahoo.com  
Phone: 920-921-5541

**Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer**  
N14264 490th Street  
Ridgeland, WI 54763  
bdrinkman@hotmail.com  
Phone: 715-265-4631

**Sean Mallett, WODPA President**  
seanmallett@msn.com

**Henry Perkins, Past President,**  
Box 156 Bog Rd., Albion, ME 04910  
Phone: 207-437-9279  
henryperkins51@gmail.com

**NODPA Policy Committee**  
**Chair Kathie Arnold**  
3175 NYS Rt. 13, Truxton, NY 13158  
kathiearnold@gmail.com  
Phone: 607-842-6631  
Fax: 607-842-6557

**Cecelia Murray, Policy Committee**  
Bundy Creek Farm LLC  
5229 Chenango Road  
Truxton, NY 13158-3118  
cecelmurr@aol.com

### NODPA STAFF

**Ed Maltby, Executive Director**  
30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342  
ednodpa@comcast.net  
Phone: 413-772-0444 Fax: 866-554-9483

**Nora Owens, Editor & Event Coordinator/Webmaster**  
30 Keets Rd., Deerfield, MA 01342  
noraowens@comcast.net  
Phone: 413-772-0444  
Fax: 866-554-9483

**Newsletter Layout**  
Angie Holcomb  
Hayward, WI 54843

**NODPA Contributing Writer**  
Adam Diamond  
12 Valley View Avenue  
Takoma Park, MD 20912  
adamvdiamond@gmail.com  
Phone: 301-537-8637

# Calendar

Thu, November 14, 2019, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

## MARKETING GRASS-FED MILK & MEAT

Concord United Methodist Church, 285 Concord Church Road, Beaver Falls, PA 15010

Cost: \$10

Join us at Concord United Methodist Church to learn about strategies and opportunities for marketing milk and meat produced from pasture-raised livestock. This workshop will include presentations and a panel discussion with speakers representing several local, grassroots marketing initiatives. We'll also walk the pastures at nearby Broadrun Farms—a sixth generation, 100-percent grass-fed, certified-organic dairy and beef farm. Broadrun farmers Kevin and Kelly Caldwell will lead the walk and discuss the farm's fall pasture management strategy. This event includes lunch.

This event qualifies for one SmartStart credit 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. If you have 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.

## LABOR ROAD SHOW III

– various dates and locations – 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

All New York farm employers are affected by new laws that take effect beginning January 1, 2020! New York Labor Road Show III is your opportunity to learn about the changes and position your business for compliance and success in a very different environment. Topics include: Compliance with Wage and Hour Laws, Overtime and Day-of-Rest Requirements, Understanding Unions and Labor Organizing, Managing the Collective Bargaining Process, The Increasing Importance of Farm Supervisors, Sexual Harassment Prevention: Updates to the NY Law, Compliance Priorities and Enforcement Plans for 2020, NYS Department of Labor, Industry Quality Assurance Program Updates, Insurance Update: Disability, Paid Family Leave, and Employment Practices Liability, What is Available? Cost - \$55 paid at the door. Register through a link at [agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu](http://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu) or call 315.433.0100, ext. 5595.

### Dates and Locations:

- November 18. Genesee Community College-Batavia Campus, One College Road, Batavia, NY 14020-9704. Room T119 Lecture Hall, Conable Technology Building.
- November 19. The Lodge at Hidden Valley Animal Adventure, 2887 Royce Rd, Varysburg, NY 14167.
- November 20. Ramada by Wyndham, 21000 NY State Rte. 3, Watertown, NY 13601
- November 21. Hilton Garden Inn Clifton Park, 30 Clifton Country Road, Clifton Park, NY, 12065
- November 22. Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES, 1879 West Genesee Street Rd, Auburn, NY 13021. Conference Room 1, 2, 3.

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**CCE Madison County, 100 Eaton Street, Morrisville, NY**

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## **ADVANCE NOTICE:**

**January 15th and 16th, 2020**

## **NORTHEAST PASTURE CONSORTIUM ANNUAL MEETING**

**Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, VT**

The NEPC Executive Committee is well underway putting together the program for 2020 annual meeting, which will be available in December. The sessions currently being planned are: The Do's and Don'ts of Silvopasture, Pastured Pigs – Feed and Grazing Management, The Fescues – Soft-leaved and Meadow, Minimizing Soil Compaction in Pastures, Getting the Most out of Winter Grazing by Forage Species Selection/ Management and Grazing Management, and the Producer Showcase – Pasture-based farmers from VT and NH. The Vermont Grazing Conference will follow the NEPC meeting on January 17th and 18th – stay tuned for details of both events!

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# **NODPA News**

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

## **Website & E-Newsletter Advertising**

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

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

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

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

### **E-Newsletter Advertising**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Phone: 413-772-0444**

Go to the following web page for more information:

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



# Calendar

*continued from page 31*

## WEBINARS

**November 13, 2019**

### UNDERSTANDING PASTURE FORAGE QUALITY

**Mat Haan (Penn State), presenter**

Designed for dairy producers, their employees and advisors, this series includes presentations on topics important to the management of the dairy farm. All webinars are from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM (EST) and will be recorded for viewing at a later date. Live webinars, <https://psu.zoom.us/j/966321203> can be viewed on the day of the program. To learn more about Penn State's Grazing Management Series visit <https://extension.psu.edu/dairy-grazing-management-guide>

**November 19, 2019, 11:00am - 12:00pm**

### ERGONOMIC SAFETY FOR FARM WOMEN

It is no secret - women are playing an increased role in production agriculture. They account for about one-third of

the management, ownership and work on farms, ranches and in crop production. A major challenge continues to be access to protective equipment that meets the ergonomic needs of women. This program is intended to help women in rural/agricultural communities identify ergonomic issues leading to musculoskeletal injuries in farm and ranch work and discover resources to aid in injury prevention. At the end of the presentation, participants will be able to:

- Identify work site hazards and potential musculoskeletal injuries.
- Identify wellness initiatives aimed at reducing risks related to musculoskeletal injuries.
- Locate three current evidenced based resources in the field of agricultural health and safety that address ergonomic safety.
- Utilize the individual AgHRA to look at current exposures and preventive methods for daily farm tasks.

Contact: Register and see more information at <https://learning.agrisafe.org/products/ergonomic-safety-for-farm-women-live-november-19> Cost: Free but registration is required.



**ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION**

Sponsored by RODALE INSTITUTE

## Upcoming Webinars

### Immigration Reforms Effects on Organic Farming

**Nov 7, 2019 2:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

**Host: David Runsten**

Immigrants have been critical to meeting the agricultural labor demand. In this webinar, David Runsten will be giving updates on immigration reforms, such as the H2A temporary agricultural program for guestworkers, and the way they affect organic farming. Tune in to learn more about the proposal OFA is supporting. Register Here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeLkqGZSr8O-NEeMWqOcxbsXDZ15ernOd86GKG2Zijn5xVBpA/viewform>

### The Organic Dairy Crisis

**Dec 13, 2019 2:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

**Host: Mark McAfee and Ed Maltby**

We have an Organic Dairy Crisis on our hands. Learn more about the failure in both Pasture Rule and the Origin of Live-stock and how these are impacting our organic dairy farms. See why we need to put pressure on the National Organic Program. Register Here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfmYiXSmoX-eOstFKPdzRGtH2y7SEv2n-NuPLoeHdnrDJ-kRg/viewform>

### The Debate on Hydroponics in Organic

**Jan 9, 2020 2:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

**Host: Dave Chapman**

Hydroponics, or a method of farming without soil, are changing farming as we know it. So, where do these water-based farms fit into organic farming? Generate an insight on the timeline of the organic hydroponics debate and see the impact on US growers. Register Here: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd\\_Oz-tfB8PI69EnSvzq3VX8pL2g9LiHHAOjtu\\_xdEmkWB0BtQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd_Oz-tfB8PI69EnSvzq3VX8pL2g9LiHHAOjtu_xdEmkWB0BtQ/viewform)

### How Corn and Soy Imports Impact US Production

**Feb 13, 2020 2:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

**Host: John Bobbe**

Fraudulent imports have been undercutting our U.S. organic farmers. U.S. organic farmers and consumers deserve better protection from our government. Join us for an overview of US organic corn and soy production and how imports affect these crops, along with insight on fraudulent imports over the last 5-years.

Register Here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSec14hkzPrPUZPA2DTpn5RWIqQNir89FvHVqRzzGMNAxMHgTA/viewform>

### Organic Farmers Association

611 Siegfriedale Road, Kutztown, PA 19530-9320 USA  
610-683-1475 • [OFA@RodaleInstitute.org](mailto:OFA@RodaleInstitute.org)

About the Organic Farmers Association: In 2016 farmers from across the country came together to launch the Organic Farmers Association (OFA) to unite organic farmers for a better future together. Rodale Institute supports this initiative as fiscal sponsor and partner with OFA's farmer leadership.

# Classified Ads

## ANIMALS

**COWS FOR SALE:** 2 Gorgeous Girls offered for your consideration: Fern of Brownstone, 4 yr. old registered A2/A2 grazing genetics Jersey cow in milk, calf due October 2019. Organically raised and fed. Excellent family milk cow; easy keeper. Black face. Cora, 3 yr. old registered A2/A2 grazing genetics cow bred to Covington Oliver calf due May 2020. Organically raised and fed. Phenomenal family milk cow. Gorgeous. TO SEE PHOTOS, VISIT THE ORGANIC DAIRY FARMERS FACEBOOK PAGE. Contact Jenn at [gentjenn@gmail.com](mailto:gentjenn@gmail.com) for more information.

**Location:** Mid. Michigan

**COWS FOR SALE:** 20 organic & 100% grass fed certified milking cows, Normande/Jersey/Holstien Cross. \$1350 first picks. Central MA- 413-477-6988.

**Location:** Hardwick, MA

**COWS FOR SALE:** Organic Dairy Cows! We have been dairy farming for over 15 years. We're currently milking 100 cows, but our setup can optimally handle 60 cows. Our herd has an average of #45 milk/day & SCC 222. We have mixed breeds of Holstein/Jersey/Norwegian Red. We'd like to sell 40 cows. Take one or all \$900-\$1500. Call/text Jim 920-988-6404.

**Location:** Watertown, WI

**WANTED:** Organic Holstein heifers for a dairy expansion. Open and bred less than 90 days. Large group needed. Farrell Farms. Ph 217 864 5450

Phil Farrell  
Farrell Farms  
217-855-9111  
6776 Farrell Road

**Location:** Lovington, IL 61937



**NOFA-NY  
Certified Organic, LLC**

Organic Certification Services for Crops, Livestock & Handlers

- Largest Certifier in New York State
- Local, Regional Knowledge
- Experienced, Dedicated Staff
- High Integrity, High Quality

840 Upper Front St. • Binghamton NY 13905  
607-724-9851 • [certifiedorganic@nofany.org](mailto:certifiedorganic@nofany.org)  
[www.nofany.org](http://www.nofany.org)

**Special Services:**

- 100% Grass Fed Certification Program
- Field & Dairy Herd Transition
- International Trade Documents
- Materials Review
- Expedited Certification
- Product Sourcing
- Free Informational Workshops





## FEED

**HAY/FEED FOR SALE:** NOFA-NY Certified Organic 2019 Products. 1st Cut BALEAGE (Timothy or Alfalfa/Grass) 4 X 4 Round bales. 1st Cut DRY HAY (Timothy) - never rained on - stored inside - 4 x 4 1/2 Round. 2nd Cut DRY HAY (Grass mix) 4 x 4 1/2 Round - stored outside. BEDDING HAY - 4 x 4 1/2 Round. Also BEEF Quality DRY HAY - 4 x 4 1/2 Round. Contact Jeff @ Mitchell Farm (Avoca, NY - Steuben County) 607-566-8477 or [Mitchellorganics@hotmail.com](mailto:Mitchellorganics@hotmail.com)

**Location:** Avoca, NY

**HAY FOR SALE:** Organic round bales (at the farm): 4 X 5 Net wrapped-1st crop \$45/bale, Plastic wrapped 1st crop \$55, Plastic wrap 2nd crop \$65. Will load. Hay for Sale. Organic round bales (at the farm): 4 X 5 Net wrapped-1st crop \$45/bale, Plastic wrapped 1st crop \$55, Plastic wrap 2nd crop \$65. Will load. Hay for Sale. Organic round bales (at the farm): 4 X 5 Net wrapped-1st crop \$45/bale, Plastic wrapped 1st crop \$55, Plastic wrap 2nd crop \$65. Will load. Posted 10/7/19

**Location:** Hardwick, MA

*continued on page 36*

## 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.

**2020 Ad rates and sizes listed below.**

**Deadline for advertising in the  
January 2020 issue is December 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 Producer Milk Check Assignment Form

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

deduct the sum of :

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

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

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

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

### Milk handlers please send payments to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Subscribe to the NODPA News and support NODPA!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Are you a certified organic dairy producer? YES NO

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

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

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

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

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

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



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### From the MODPA Treasurer

Greetings from the cool and wet Upper Midwest.

As I write this the true sign of what is to come weather wise has reared its ugly head. I saw my first snow yesterday morning and I am sure that it won't be the last one that I will see. What a trip this year has been in the weather department; from record breaking snow fall to record rainfall. I don't know that we ever had more than 3 days in a row without moisture all year. Most of the crops in the area reflect this. Dry hay is bringing a premium as conditions for making it were as difficult as I can remember. The corn and soybeans have done surprisingly well--certainly better than many expected in June. However most of the crop is still in the field. Making corn silage this year was a challenge to say the least. Much of it was late and with a lot of work to get it out of the field. Many were using an extra tractor to pull someone through the field just to get it done. The effects of this will be felt next year when we have to deal with the ruts that were made this year. The good news is that with the constant rain, we had pasture conditions remained good for the whole season. The grass really loved the weather.

In late October, the NOSB had its fall meeting in Pittsburgh. There was plenty of spirited talk and some action. The origin of livestock rule has been opened up for comments again and we are supposed to see a rule issued next year. Hopefully it will get done this time. We have been at this point before only to be disappointed on our government getting it done. I am not sure how optimistic to feel given what has happened in the past. Please make time to express your opinion on this important issue. We need to get this done right. We cannot afford to let someone else decide our future for us. If you have any questions on this feel free to contact me. With any luck at all, NOP will actually begin to enforce some of the rules instead of ignoring them as has happened in the past.

By the time you receive this we will be getting into the holiday season. I truly hope that one and all have a wonderful season. May your blessings be many as we end one year and look forward to the next one. As always, if you have any questions or comments feel free to contact me.

Till next time,

**Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer**

**N14264 490th Street**

**Ridgeland, WI 54763**

**715-977-1314**

**bdrinkman@hotmail.com**

### Become a Member of MODPA!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I wish to support MODPA (check whatever applies):

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

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

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

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

### About MODPA

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

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

### MODPA Board

#### Wisconsin

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

Jim Greenberg, Vice-President  
EP 3961 Drake Avenue  
Stratford, WI 54484  
greenbfrms@tzn.net  
Phone: 715-687-8147

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

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

Jim Small, Director  
26548 Locust Ave.

Wilton, WI 54670  
Tel: 608-435-6700

#### Iowa

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

#### Michigan

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

#### Ohio

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

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

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

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PERMIT NO. 935**



**Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance**

# Classified Ads

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## **MISCELLANIOUS**

**CHEESE WANTED: ORGANIC MOZZARELLA AND  
WHITE CHEDDAR CHEESE** Mickeys Brands, 120 North  
Street, York, PA is looking for Large Quantities of Organic  
Mozzarella and White Cheddar cheese for Organic Pizza  
being launched by end of month. We would like our supplier  
to be in the Northeast rather than in Midwest. For more  
information, contact Robert at [Rwh@mickeysbrands.com](mailto:Rwh@mickeysbrands.com), Jill  
at [jrb@mickeyswholesalepizza.com](mailto:jrb@mickeyswholesalepizza.com) or call 717-417-3088.  
**Location: York, PA**

## **EQUIPMENT**

**FOR SALE:** We are a certified organic dairy in western Mass, close to  
the VT and NY borders, and we are selling the following equipment:

- New Holland BR740 round baler
- Kuhn 10' disc mower
- A nearly new condition 60' Boom sprayer - used  
only for organic foliar sprays,
- Stolzhus feeder wagon - only one available now
- Upright 3pt hitch Wood splitter
- Steel loading dock/truck unloading ramp
- Stainless steel COP sink - I am willing to bargain  
on this - needs to go!

Contact Amy Klippenstein, Sidehill Farm, (413) 339-0033,  
[www.sidehillfarm.net](http://www.sidehillfarm.net)  
**Location: Hawley, MA**