

# NODPA News

## Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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WWW.NODPA.COM



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Dutch Meadows Farm

### FEATURED FARM: DUTCH MEADOWS FARM, PARADISE, PA

By Adam Diamond,  
NODPA Contributing Writer

Raymond Stoltzfus has lived his whole life on Dutch Meadows Dairy in Paradise, PA, but only started taking over farm operations when he got married a year ago. Ray is the third generation in his family on this farm, started by Ray's grandfather in 1952.

Ray's dad—Alvin-- took over the farm in 1986 and farmed conventionally for a few years. He had always liked the idea of farming without chemicals, and had seen the negative effects of conventional farming on the cows and the land. At the time he took over the farm there were very few

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### NODPA Comments on the Proposed Rule on Origin of Livestock

*This 2015 Proposed Rule was re-opened for comment by the USDA National Organic Program and Congress has instructed the USDA to publish a Final Rule by June 2020. NODPA's 2015 comments on the Proposed Rule can be found at <https://nodpa.com/p/81/Origin-of-Livestock>*

**Re:** Origin of Livestock  
Proposed Rule;

Docket Number AMS-NOP-11-0009-1572

Dear Dr. Lewis,

The Northeast Organic Dairy Producers  
Alliance (NODPA) strongly supports

the Proposed Rule and the immediate implementation of a Final Rule, which will be made stronger by the incorporation of some of the comments from 2015 and this year.

**We continue to fully support all of our very specific comments that were submitted to AMS-NOP on July 27, 2015.**

*continued on page 18*

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Message from NODPA President

There is nothing sadder for my ice-fishing neighbors than having to fish from shore. The weather, they say, couldn't make up its mind this winter. Too few nights at zero degrees, too many days at 40 degrees. The weather could just not quite decide that it was winter...yet. And so, they huddled together on one thin band of ice next to the shore telling fish stories from past years of giant pike and ice that was too thick to cut with the power augers. Is it climate change, or just a blip in the oddities that mellow together to form the averages of the season? After all, we know that "weather" is not the same thing as "climate".

But we have seen substantial changes in what we have come to expect in the growing seasons of recent years, mostly in the ex-

tremes – when it is wet, it is seriously wet; when dry, seriously dry. That is the pattern that's likely to continue, and we have to be prepared for it. One huge thing we can do is to continue to raise the level of soil organic matter to help protect crops from those extremes while sequestering carbon at the same time.

However you choose to do it on your farm, incorporating more organic matter through limiting tillage, adding diversity, planting cover crops, good grazing practices, and other techniques will all help to mediate the year's challenges.

Wishing you all a healthy and prosperous New Year!

*Liz Bawden, NODPA President*

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

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

**From the NODPA Desk:**

*By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

**I**n 2010 we welcomed the Access to Pasture Rule with the promise of an Origin of Livestock Rule to immediately follow it. We had high expectations and hoped that both of the regulations would preserve the integrity of organic dairy and reestablish a level playing field for all organic dairies. Now, in 2020, pay price is as low as it was in 2010 and USDA is under instruction by Congress to have an Origin of Livestock Final Rule by June 2020. The Federal Government is not known for its speedy actions or equal enforcement, nor is organic dairy known for its fair distribution of profits to the benefit of producers.

The Access to Pasture Rule was a result of the organic dairy industry working together with the USDA to create a strong and enforceable regulation, which unfortunately has never been enforced consistently across the country. The deadline for the publication of the Origin of Livestock Final Rule is a result of a crash of the supply side for organic milk which brought many personal disasters to organic family farms. The harrowing examples of the effects of the oversupply did have the emotional pull to influence advocacy groups, politicians and even certifiers to push for regulation to provide consistent implementation of the transition of conventional dairy animals to organic, close loopholes on exemptions, and ensure one consistent standard that is easy to implement and honors the expectations of consumers. We print NODPA's comments on the Proposed Rule in full in this issue to highlight how the situation has worsened since the Proposed Rule was first published in 2015. The delays in publication of a Final Rule from 2008 onwards highlights the detrimental effect that poor enforcement of regulation, inconsistent certification standards, political bias of different administrations, and poor oversight by USDA NOP has on organic producers and their families that follow the spirit and letter of the regulation. The certifier's job is not to find the best interpretation of the regulation for their clients, whether they be small startup dairies or large conglomerates. The NOP regulations are littered with inconsistent implementation and enforcement; at the moment, the most remarkable one is that despite the common practices of intensive greenhouse growing using many herbicides, pesticides and liquid feed, the operator can just switch from conventional growing to organic without any waiting period or, it seems, any Standard Operating Procedures to ensure any cross contamination with excluded inputs. Organic dairy has learnt the lesson that enforcement must be consistent and effective to protect both the producer and the consumer.

All the signs are indicating that the recovery of the supply side of organic dairy market will be slow and painful. The number of organic herds and milking animal for sale has increased, clearly shown by more ads for organic cows for sale on the ODairy listserve and phone messages to the NODPA offices. Many producers are making tough decisions, including ending their production of organic milk. Even those that diversified and moved into bottling their own milk have decided that they need to move away from organic milk to other products. Milk buyers are not making life any easier. As we detail in the Pay Price article, those producers supplying organic milk to Danone North America for their Horizon brand have been informed of the outsourcing of procurement to a small regional organic brand. Danone has not replied to requests for more information and comment on their plans for the future but we understand that this model will be used widely and most of their field staff have been laid off or retired. CROPP cooperative is reportedly downsizing their operations in the west, and some of their field staff has left the company. At the time of writing, they haven't published their 2020 pay price but hopefully they will continue to set the example for other organic dairy buyers and publish their pay price that can be used as the basis or future planning. At this time, we need as much transparency as possible about the future demand for organic milk and what buyers will pay for it to allow organic dairy farm families to make informed decisions. At least the conventional market is looking better, which should make balancing organic supply less costly.

NODPA's annual fund drive continues to be successful and we most sincerely thank all our contributors. Remember it is never too late to respond to the fund drive and we get money drifting in year round as folks find they are able to send their dues in. We also recognize and thank all of our Field Day sponsors and NODPA News advertisers for their support in these tough times. We appreciate all donations and make very good use of them. In these times when there are more requests from organic organizations for support and less money to go around we understand that you are making difficult decisions on who to support.

Don't forget that NODPA Field Days will be on September 24th and 25th this year, so save those dates and discourage others from having their events on or near those days! As soon as a site has been selected, we will let you know. ♦



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Agriculture Spending Legislation Has Passed in United States Senate and House

### Analysis by the National Organic Coalition (NOC)

**O**n December 19, 2019, the Senate passed agriculture spending legislation as a part of a larger spending bill that includes some wins for organic, but falls short on several key asks. The House passed this same bill earlier on December 17. The President signed the legislation on Friday, December 20 to avert a government shutdown.

**Here are some of the wins for organic included in the bill:**

**Annual funding for USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) will increase by \$2 million** (up to \$16 million from the current funding level of \$14 million). NOC has been pushing for these increases to ensure that the NOP has the necessary resources and staff capacity to effectively enforce the organic regulations and prevent organic import fraud.

The legislation includes a **provision requiring that the USDA to issue a final rule on Origin of Livestock within 180 days of enactment** to ensure a level playing field for the transition of conventional animals into organic dairy herds.

Report language that accompanies the bill recognizes the need for **continued oversight of the organic dairy sector**. The report language states:

*The agreement recognizes the importance of consumer confidence in the integrity of the USDA Organic Seal. The agreement appreciates the work the USDA has done to increase training and certifier consistency with respect to dairy operations. The agreement urges USDA to continue to conduct this critical risk based oversight, particularly for large complex dairy operations.*

**Here are some areas where the bill falls short:**

**The bill funds the Organic Transitions Program at \$6 million annually**, which is level funding with FY 2019. NOC had requested an increase to \$8 million annually to address production challenges for farmers related to soil fertility and pest and disease management strategies.

The bill funds the **Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program at \$37 million annually**, which is level funding. NOC had requested annual funding of \$45 million for this critical program focused on on-farm research into sustainable agricultural farming systems, including organic systems.

**The bill does NOT include the provision in earlier House spending legislation to block the USDA from relocating the Economic Research Service and National Institute of Food and Agriculture.** NOC is opposed to the move because we believe it undermines the critical research conducted by these two federal agencies, including research on trends in the organic sector, and is resulting in the loss of highly experienced staff who have chosen not to move with the agencies.

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— Ryan Mensonides



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**“This is amazing work,”** says Ryan about the family dairy. He appreciates the community around him and says he also appreciates “good products like Udder Comfort.

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## Organic Industry News

## Vermont Law School Launches Free Lease Builder Tool For Farmers

By Molly McDonough

**A**re you a beginning farmer looking for land, or a landowner hoping to lease land? Creating a farm lease can be intimidating. That's why the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems at Vermont Law School developed a free online Farm Lease Builder to ease the process. It walks participants step-by-step through a series of questions, resulting in a draft lease ready to print for legal review. Learn more at [farmleasebuilder.org](http://farmleasebuilder.org).

In the United States, about 40% of land is considered farmland, and 40% of this land is leased. Agricultural lease agreements are essential to farming, especially for new farmers who may not have the financial resources to own farmland or to access legal services needed to create a lease. In addition to protecting legal rights, leases can provide long-term stability to foster land improvement for agricultural purposes, including sustainable farming practices.

The Center for Agriculture and Food Systems (CAFS) at Vermont Law School has launched a free Farm Lease Builder as part of their Farmland Access Legal Toolkit. The Farm Lease Builder creates a free customized lease draft for farmers based on their specific needs, significantly reducing the cost of legal services.

"Land access is currently one of the biggest hurdles for new farmers in the United States," says Laurie Beyranevand, CAFS Director. "The Farmland Access Legal Toolkit assists new as well as retiring farmers through a suite of resources that offers innovative models of ownership, leasing, and estate planning that have worked for other farmers in similar situations. We're excited to add the Farm Lease Builder to the Toolkit."

"This tool provides a comprehensive process for helping farmers and



### It's Easy to Build Your Own Lease!



#### Step 1

Answer the Farm Lease Builder questionnaire



#### Step 2

A draft lease document will be created based on your answers



#### Step 3

Discuss and finalize the draft with your lawyer and the other party



#### Step 4

Sign the lease and start farming!

## Organic Industry News

landowners think through how they'd like to handle issues that commonly arise in a farm lease situation," explains Amanda Heyman, CAFS project partner and consultant. "Having thought through these issues in advance and having come to a common understanding, the parties to the agreement are much more likely to have a successful business relationship. Also, it helps to have something in black and white to refer back to a few years into the lease, when it's hard to remember exactly what was agreed upon, and to help resolve disputes."

"The Farm Lease Builder makes time with an attorney more efficient and less expensive, since lawyers often charge by the hour," says Emily Spiegel, CAFS Assistant Professor. "Of course, this tool cannot replace personalized legal advice from an attorney, but it walks farmers through the decision-making process and creates a draft lease in a Word document that their lawyer can review and easily edit if needed." Free to use, the Farm Lease Builder is available online at [farmleasebuilder.org](http://farmleasebuilder.org).

### Benefits of the Farm Lease Builder

The Farm Lease Builder guides you through important common issues in farmland leases and helps you create a roadmap for your landlord/tenant relationship. Thinking things through ahead of time and getting them down on paper protects your time, money, and emotional investment in your farmland. The Farm Lease Builder creates a lease draft that is customized to your needs. The draft lease is created in an easy-to-edit Word document. And if you don't finish the draft lease in one sitting, you can save your work and easily come back to complete it.

### Getting Started

Essentially, there are four steps in this process. Access to a computer and the internet will be required because the questionnaire is only online. However,

partnering with someone to walk you through the process, if you don't regularly use a computer or the internet, is a great strategy.

**Step 1:** The Lease Builder tool involves a series of questions answered via a website. The exercise takes 30-90 minutes in

*continued on page 8*



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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

## Vermont Law School Launches Free Lease Builder Tool For Farmers

*continued from page 7*

total, and it's best to come prepared with the following in order to answer the questions:

- Landlord and tenant information, including names and address
- Property information, including address, acreage to be leased, and legal description
- Any additional property to be leased in addition to land (houses, buildings)

- The length of the lease, including the start and end date
- The rent to be paid and at what frequency
- Information regarding how maintenance and repairs will be handled
- A list of activities the farmer will be allowed to engage in on the land (i.e. retail operations, on-farm events, CSAs, etc.) and any that are not permissible
- Any restrictions or requirements for how the land will be farmed, including conservation plans or easements, organic certification, chemical use, etc.
- Statement of who will be responsible for payment of utilities
- Any insurance requirements

**Step 2:** Based on the questionnaire answers, a draft lease will be created for you.

**Step 3:** Then you can discuss and finalize the draft lease with your lawyer and the other party.

**Step 4:** Sign the lease and start farming!

There is much more information online and you are encouraged to visit the website, <https://farmlandaccess.org/farm-lease-builder/> to learn more and to get started. If you have a questions, visit <https://farmlandaccess.org/contact/>. ♦



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## NET UPDATE

## Recent ODairy Discussions

By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Farmer, NODPA President

It was a quiet time on ODairy over the last few weeks. There were a few posts advertising equipment and animals for sale, and a few lamenting the loss of small farms and the consolidation of ever-larger farms. Questions arose last month about NPE's, those nasty chemicals that have been banned from the products in our milkhouses. Nonylphenol Ethoxylates (NPEs) are industrial grade surfactants, primarily used in iodine teat dip formulations, to help suspend the iodine in the dip. But they have issues, primarily biodegradation and aquatic toxicity. So they have been banned across the industry, both organic and conventional, through our milk coops and processors for several years.

Because it was such a quiet time, I have searched through my file of old posts too good to delete (in my humble opinion). So I offer one farmer's suggestions to us as an industry. Perhaps this may generate some discussion for the next issue! This farmer offered this list of recommendations to distance ourselves from large mega-farms:

- 1.) Organic dairy farmers should commit to establishing A2A2 genetics in five years.
- 2.) During conversion to A2A2, farmers should make every effort to develop naturally polled dairy cattle.
- 3.) Focus on thermization as the principal method of pasteurization. This method heats the milk to between 57°C to 68°C for 15 minutes, targets pathogenic bacteria while leaving the good bacteria, and does not alter the structure and taste of milk.
- 4.) Provide unhomogenized milk whenever and wherever possible. It is well known that homogenization essentially negates any healthy properties of pasteurized milk.
- 5.) HTST and UHT should be the exception rather than the typical method of pasteurization for yogurt and cultured milk products.
- 6.) Reduce the use of plastic throughout, from the farm to the table. Use less plastic wrapped bales, package milk in glass bottles.
- 7.) Immediately stop the arrogance of calling people who purchase food "consumers" and referring to farmers as "producers". We are all consumers. Stop brow-beating people who are vegan or vegetarian; we are all free to eat what we like and spend our money on things that we value. Blaming the lack of dairy product acceptance on vegetarians is an example of total cluelessness.
- 8.) Pasturing is not a panacea. Let's all do a better job.
- 9.) If organic dairy wants to turn things around, it is time to walk the walk that potential organic dairy clients expect. Organic food advocates are not stupid. Otherwise, organic dairy should accept their inevitable transition to a being just another commodity product. ♦

### Subscribing to ODairy:

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

To sign up for the ODairy listserv, go to:

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



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

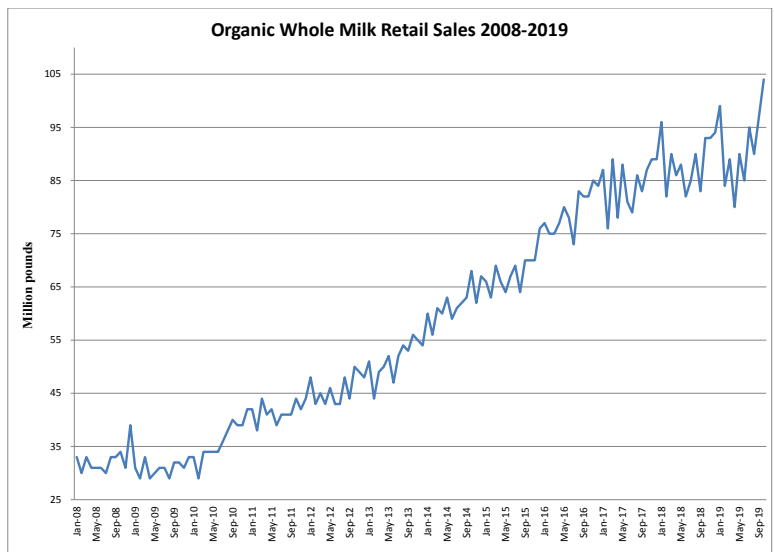
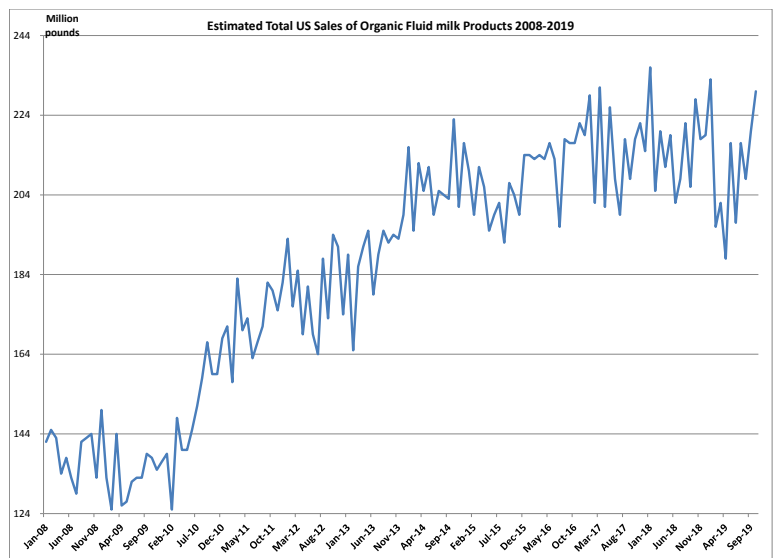
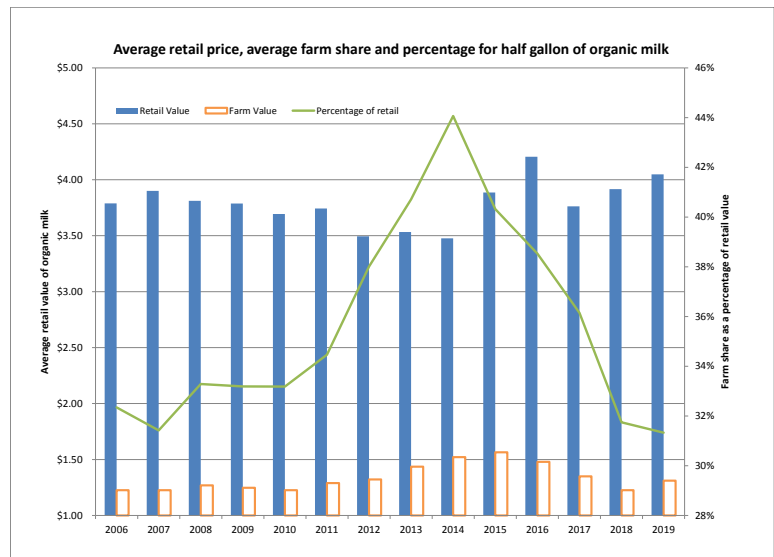
### Pay And Feed Prices January/February 2020

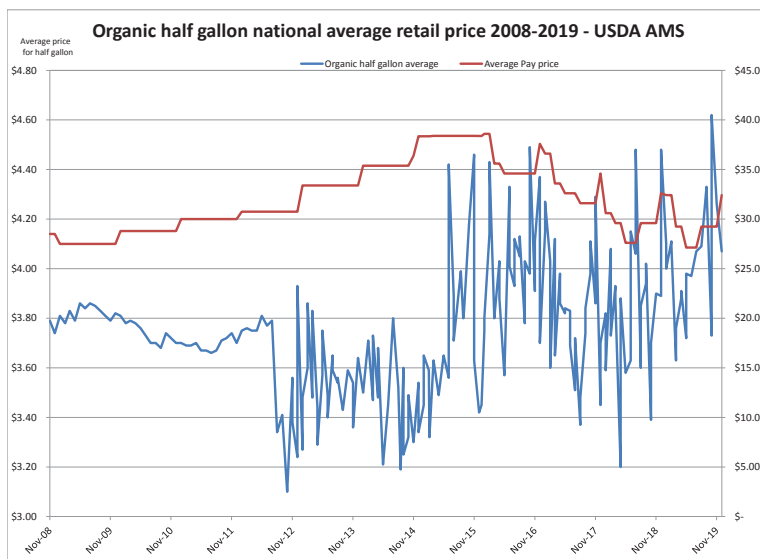
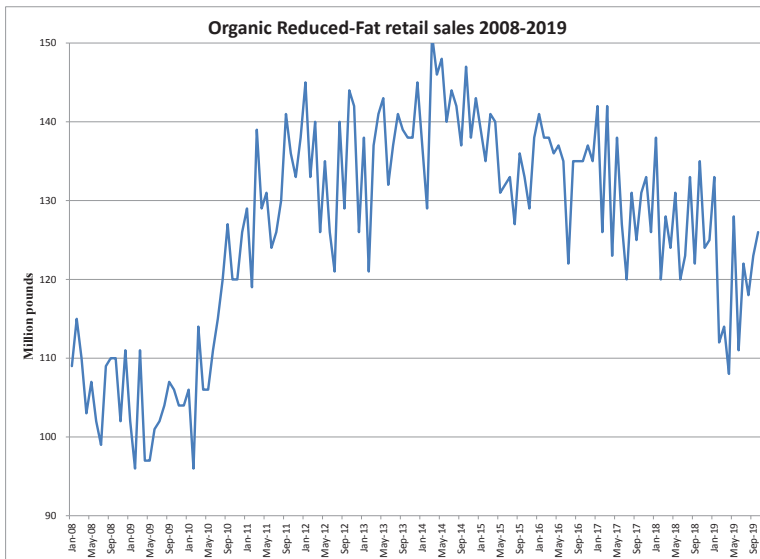
By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Good news, or at least not bad news, on retail sales of organic dairy product for October 2019. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) reported that estimated US retail sales of organic milk products for October 2019 were 230 million pounds, up 0.9 percent from October 2018, but down 2.2 percent compared to January-October 2018. Organic whole milk sales for October 2019, 104 million pounds, are up 11.2 percent compared to a year earlier and up 4.4 percent compared with year-to-date 2018. Reduced fat milk (2%) sales were 75 million pounds, up 1.1 percent from the previous year and up 0.7 percent year-to-date 2018.

In December 2019, Danone North America announced in a letter to its producers a change in the procurement relationship between the company and its 'Dairy Farmer Partners' as of January 2020. They failed to even acknowledge that they were working with organic farmers. In their letter to their 'partners' they acknowledge the retirement of their long time and well respected fieldman (Producer Relations Manager) Peter Slaunwhite and inform their producers that 'Danone North America/ Horizon has selected Kalona Farms (which is operating under Small Farm Program LLC) as a connection point.' In other words they outsourced their relationship with producers.

Who or what is Kalona Farms? The description in the Danone letter - Kalona Farms (which is operating under Small Farm Program LLC) - does not match up with the Iowa Secretary of State registration which has the Small Farm Program LLC as a separate code 489 Domestic Liability Corporation organized by Bill Evans, not part of Kalona Farms. Kalona Farms legal name is Milk Procurement of Iowa LLC organized by Bill Evans. From their website Kalona Farms is described as: Kalona SuperNatural™ began in 2005 when owner Bill Evans and his family moved to rural Kalona, Iowa. Over time, Bill's connection to the Amish and Mennonite farmers and the land, as well as his background in finance, led him to create Kalona Organics, which oversaw the distribution of the Farmers' All Natural Creamery and Cultural Revolution brands. In 2010 these brands consolidated to form the Kalona SuperNatural brand that you know and love. Today, the company, which operates out of





3 rural facilities in Kalona, Iowa, provides a market for small organic farmers.”

According to the Iowa Secretary of State the Small Farm Program LLC was registered on March 3, 2019 and is organized by Bill Evans. There is no information about any of the members of the LLC or officers. Kalona Farms is part of the family of companies under the Open Gates Group which is described in its LinkedIn page as “the Open Gates Business Development Corporation, known as Open Gates Group, Awesome Construction, Frytown Distribution, Hoards Bakery, consists of 8 companies located in the Kalona, Iowa area. Each company reflects the entrepreneurial culture created by founder, Bill Evans. Open Gates Group oversees and manages the family of companies and also provides them with accounting, human resources, training, and marketing support. Each business is operated by a managing partner(s) who manages the day-to-day duties and ensures the company’s success. As needs arise within our family of companies, Bill, and

his like-minded leadership team, evaluate the need and decide if a new company is needed to fill the void. The contact person for Horizon producers in the future if they have any question is Phil Forbes, Kalona Farms whose email is phil.forbes@opengatesgroup.com . Pick which company you are dealing with!

It seems to be a massive change for a small company to take over procurement and contract relationships with producers at this difficult time for all organic dairies. Who is Bill Evans? Who actually controls the Small Farm Program LLC? Who will be protecting producer’s propriety data and making decisions on whether they meet the requirements for quality and component payments? What is the conflict with the supply needs of Kalona? Horizon producers have seen many different companies and owners buying their product as CEO’s and others made millions of dollar for themselves as the brand was bought and sold over the last decade. From Dean Foods to WhiteWave and then selling to Danone, Greg Engles, in particular, netted a fortune while leaving devastation in his wake, part of the reason for the Dean bankruptcy.

It has been widely accepted that milk buyers have a monopoly on the supply side of the organic market and this type of activity from one of the only two national brands will trigger mistrust and concern from producers. Transparency needs to be a very clear objective of any procurement agreement. Danone North America which as a B Corp adheres to the ideal of “meeting the highest standards of overall social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability and aspire to use the power of business to solve social and environmental problems” (from their website). Now is the time for them to live by their proclaimed and marketed ideals and treat their organic dairy suppliers with respect even as they make their contracts more complicated and the achievement of quality payments more difficult.

News from CROPP Cooperative does not seem to be any better. The uncertainty around the future of their joint venture with Dean, plus reports from California that they want to remove many thousands of cows from their supply, does not provide confidence in any future increases in pay price. CROPP has their own problems with their manufacturing plant in Oregon, with ongoing illegal dumping of milk. While this problem originates from before CROPP purchased the plant, CROPP has been slow to solve what seems to be a failure of the quality control programs at the plant. The Oregon Statesman Journal reported that Organic Valley had recently upgraded systems designed to prevent accidental discharges at the McMinnville plant, and has reviewed proper procedures with production employees, quoting CROPP’s spokeswoman Elizabeth McMullen. The newspaper reported that

*continued on page 12*



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Pay And Feed Prices

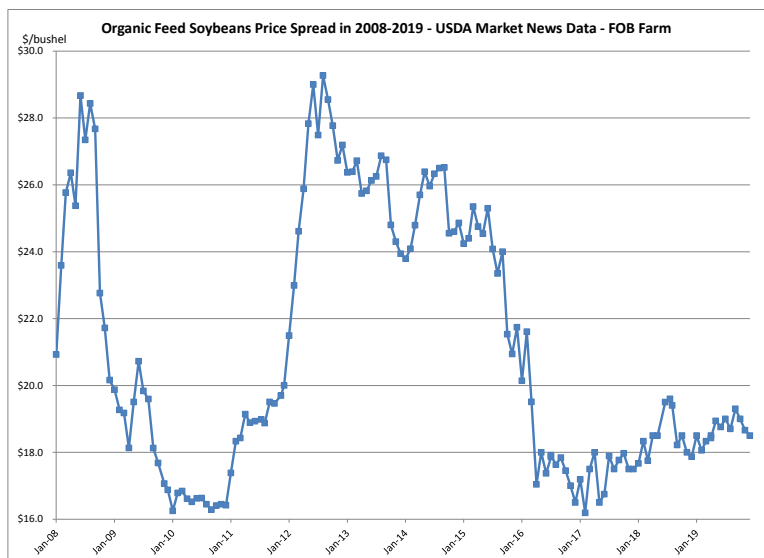
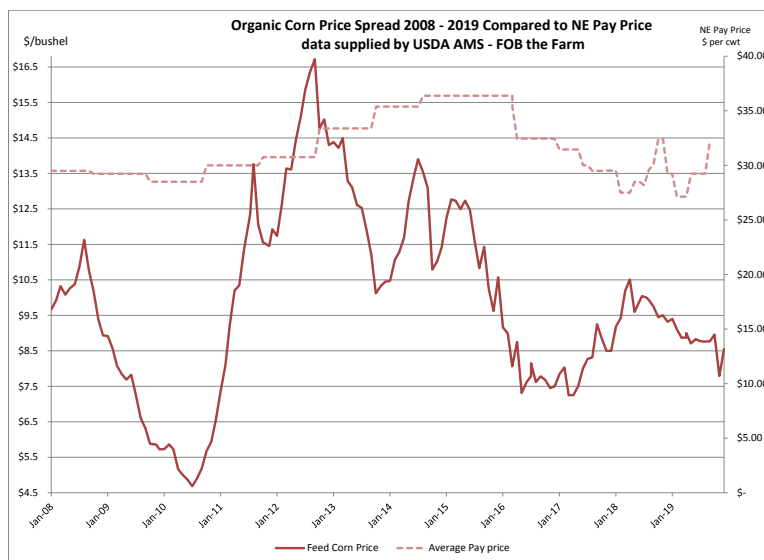
*continued from page 11*

McMullen said the company does not plan to appeal the fine. The CROPP organic meat brands, Organic Prairie and Mighty Organic, are reliant on imports from Australia which will undoubtedly be affected by the disastrous bush fires engulfing the country. Perhaps that might increase the demand and price for US organic beef and cull cows. At the time of writing, CROPP has not published its 2020 pay price schedule but with the growth of private label and store brands it does not seem positive for any increase in pay price.

We've been following the sad stories about Trickle Springs, and learned that dairy farmers weren't only faced with losing their milk market – many of them, as well as hundreds of others, had lent what amounted to millions of dollars to the company through one of its owners. They may never be repaid. Through the Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church, bishops have asked three deacons to set up a fund to receive contributions from interested persons, and to distribute the funds to church groups in proportion to the percentage of investments held by its members. Funds will not be distributed pro-rata to investors, but to local deacons who can identify the needy situations within their own group and disburse funds accordingly. A fund has been established called the Caring and Sharing Fund which can receive charitable contributions and issue a receipt to the donor for tax purposes. Distribution of funds will be made periodically as the deacon committee determines. Anyone wishing to contribute to this fund may make checks payable to: Caring and Sharing Fund, c/o Duane Martin, 779 Spruce Road, New Holland, PA, 17557.

The price for organic feed-grade corn and soybeans in the fourth quarter averaged the same as fourth-quarter 2018 values. Organic corn prices averaged \$8.53 per bushel in December 2019 and organic soybeans \$18.50 per bushel as reported by USDA AMS. As has been widely reported, the U.S. corn harvest has struggled this year, more than three weeks behind the five-year average. With the delayed harvest, crop yields and quality have become a primary concern and market trading activity has remained tepid over the fourth quarter.

In a December market update, the organic and non-G.M.O. trading platform and market information company Mercaris noted that imports of organic feed-grade corn slowed, and domestic prices declined in the September-November period, as they typically do in the first quarter of a new marketing year



(began Sept. 1 for corn and soybeans). But imports for the year were higher as buyers anticipated this year's reduced corn harvest. The market indicated strong imports and slack demand for organic feed-grade corn may keep prices subdued as the marketing year progresses.

The demand for organic feed-grade grain and soy protein is driven more by the organic poultry markets with the contraction of the organic dairy supply market. Mercaris reports that organic broiler meat production in November was down 3% from October but was up 6% from a year earlier, due in part to different timing of the Thanksgiving holiday this year. For the full year, Mercaris expects broiler slaughter down 2% from 2018. Organic, cage-free egg production, meanwhile, continued to grow. Egg layer numbers were at a record high at 16.2 million birds in November, up 7% from 2018. ♦

To Whom It May Concern:

12/21/19

In an effort to alleviate the hardships caused by the collapse of the Trickling Springs Creamery and Philip Riehl enterprise, the Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church bishops have asked three deacons to setup a fund to receive contributions from interested persons, and to distribute the funds to church groups in proportion to the percentage of investments held by its members. Funds will not be distributed pro-rata to investors, but to local deacons who can identify the needy situations within their own group and disburse funds accordingly.

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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

# Validation of the RumiWatchSystem to Monitor Feeding and Locomotive Behaviors in an Organic Grazing Dairy Herd

*By Glenda M. Pereira, Kirsten T. Sharpe and Bradley J. Heins*



**RumiWatch halters on cows**

**This article is a compilation of the following two articles:**

- Pasture-based dairy cattle have daily schedules too! By Glenda Pereira, Research Assistant, and Brad Heins, Associate Professor, Dairy Management, West Central Research and Outreach Center, University of Minnesota
- Validation of the RumiWatchSystem to monitor feeding and locomotive behaviors in an organic grazing dairy herd By Glenda M. Pereira, Kirsten T. Sharpe and Bradley J. Heins

**T**he excitement of releasing dairy animals to pasture every spring once the grass grows never gets old. At the West Central Outreach and Research Center in Morris, MN, all dairy animals other than calves born in the spring, are on pasture. As one of the few grazing and organic dairy research herds in the country, precision

dairy technologies have been used to study behaviors of pasture-based dairy cattle and of course to help manage estrus, transition and health associated behaviors. The technologies installed at the research herd, collect data continuously throughout the day, month and year. To retrieve the data so it can be used in real-time, solar powered routers may be utilized. Similarly, data can be collected twice a day once cows return to the milking parlor. The data can then be viewed on a computer system, on a website and some companies have applications for mobile devices.

Many precision technologies may accurately record feeding behavior; however, grazing behavior may be difficult to define because grazing may be considered both active and eating behavior because cows may graze while standing or while walking. Previous research has determined that most pasture-based dairy cattle graze for 8 to 10 hours per day and do so in



## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

bouts of 1.5 to 2 hours, and repeat that 4 to 5 times throughout the day. Once cattle go the pasture from the milking parlor, they tend to consume a large portion of their dry matter intake for the day. Typically, cattle will graze during the early morning and late afternoon, beginning at sunrise and ending around sunset. In the Midwest, fly pressure, humidity as well as the loss of moisture in certain forages (determining digestibility and palatability) can affect when cattle choose to graze. Even social hierarchy can determine when and how fast cattle tend to graze. Dominant cattle tend to graze on the best forages and for shorter amounts of times, having a larger bite rate, feeding faster than less dominant cattle.

Because many precision technologies do not monitor grazing behavior, grazing has not been researched as extensively. Recently in Ireland, a halter and pedometer system (RumiWatch, Itin and Hoch GmbH, Liestal, Switzerland) was validated for grazing behavior with 92% accuracy. The RumiWatch halter uses an oil-filled silicone tube with a built-in pressure sensor. The pressure difference caused by jaw movement generates a signal which is transmitted to a box on the side of the noseband and this data can be downloaded. Alternative grazing environments may provide opportunity for variation in monitoring behaviors.

### Validation of RumiWatch

The objective of the study was to validate a halter and pedometer for monitoring feeding and locomotive behaviors by direct visual observation in a grazing dairy herd in Minnesota, USA.

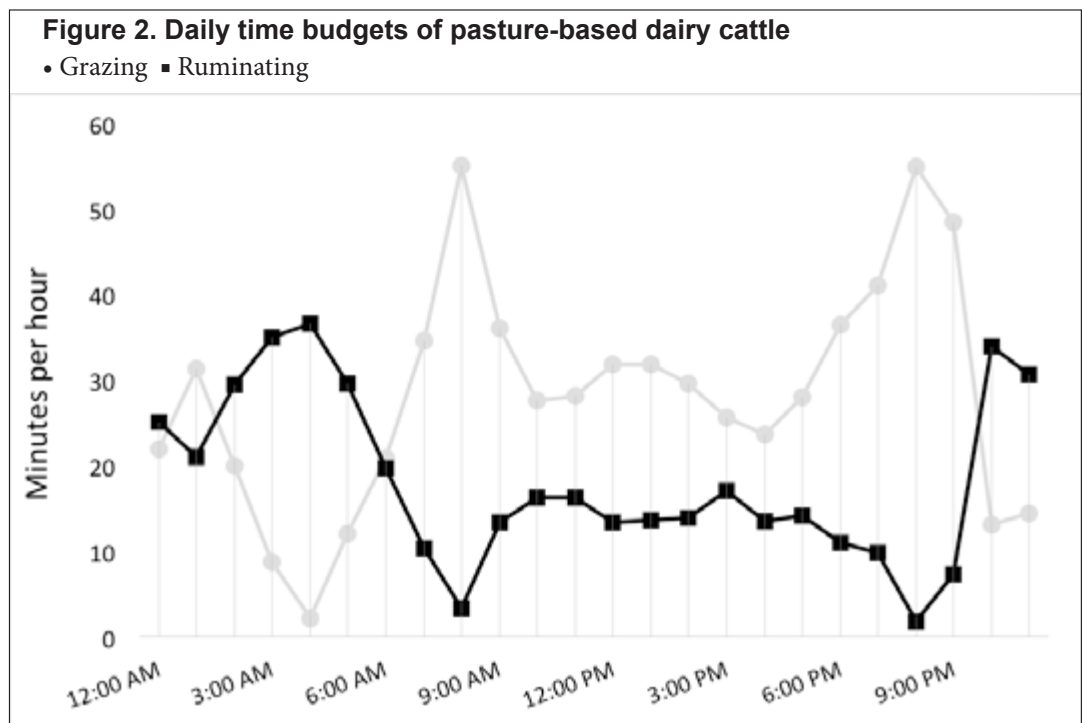
The study was conducted at the University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center organic dairy in Morris, Minnesota from May to June 2018. Lactating crossbred dairy cows ( $n = 12$ ) were offered pasture for 22 hours per day and milked twice per day. The pastures were comprised of grasses and legumes that included smooth brome grass, orchardgrass, meadow fescue, alfalfa, red clover, and kura clover. Cows were stocked at a rate of 3 cows per hectare and rotated to a new paddock

every 2 days, with 4,834 kg of DM/ha available at the initiation of grazing.

The halter system can classify data as feeding behaviors, including ruminating, eating, drinking and other. In addition, the halter can classify jaw movements as grazing bites or rumination chews. The pedometer, a 3-axis accelerometer, monitors locomotive behaviors such as standing, lying and walking. Data from the halter and pedometer were collected in 10 Hz resolution, and the RumiWatch Converter V.0.7.3.36 transformed data into minute and hour summaries. Observational data were recorded by 3 trained observers on Samsung tablets, using the Pocket observer app (The Observer XT, Version 14.0, Noldus Information Technology, Leesburg, VA). Data from the visual observations were minutes and hour summaries.

On page 16 is a summary (Figure 2), of daily time budgets, minutes per hour of the day that pasture-based dairy cattle grazed and ruminated. The organic research herd milks twice a day at 6:30 am and 4:30 pm, therefore cattle are brought up to the milking parlor and back to the pasture twice a day. As suspected, cattle tend to graze following the milking times, grazing for almost the full hour at 8:00 am and 8:00 pm (see Figure 2). Cattle don't ruminate and graze at the same time, and therefore, the two are inverted. Interestingly enough,

*continued on page 16*



## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

# Validation of the RumiWatchSystem to Monitor Feeding and Locomotive Behaviors in an Organic Grazing Dairy Herd

*continued from page 15*

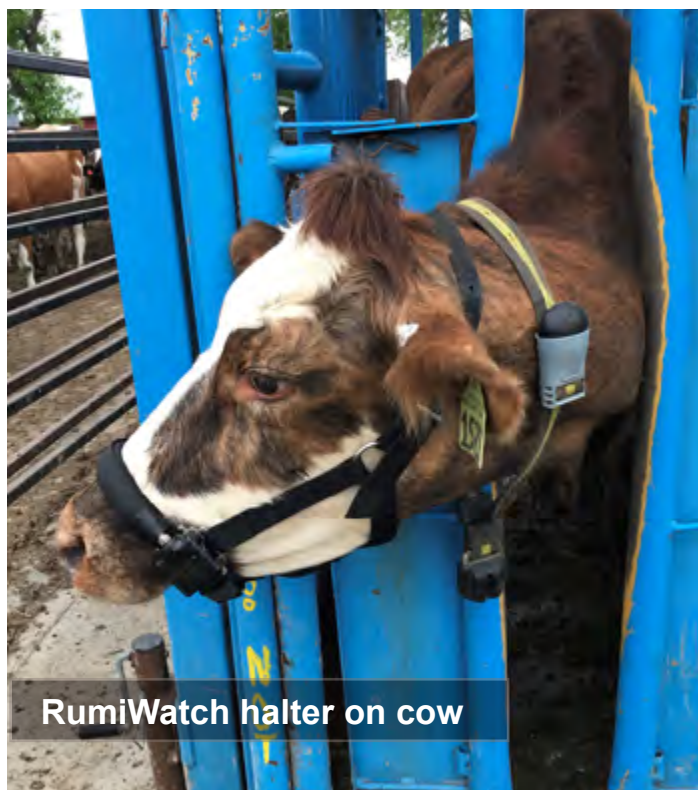
these cattle seem to graze throughout the entire day; however, summer temperatures may not have reached a consistently high temperature, and cattle may still feel comfortable grazing all day. During the nighttime, cattle tend to ruminate from 11:00 pm proceeding grazing and slowly decrease rumination time around 1:00 am where they spend time resting.

Because grazing is the main feeding behavior of pasture-based dairy cattle, temperature, forage mass and grazing ability, often influence their daily behaviors. The first experiment determined agreement between visual observation and the halter and pedometer. For this experiment, 144 hours of feeding and locomotive behaviors were evaluated. The second experiment evaluated correlation of grazing bites and rumination chews and 1,205 minutes were evaluated between visual observation and the halter system.

(See Figure 2.)

## Conclusions

The results suggest the RumiWatchSystem may accurately monitor rumination and eating, as well as standing and lying behaviors. Behaviors such as drinking and walking were seldom observed and may be difficult to accurately monitor in grazing dairy cattle. More information about grazing dairy cattle and the use of halters and other technologies will be available in the near future.



RumiWatch halter on cow

NODPA thanks Dr. Brad Heins and the researchers at the Department of DairyManagement, West Central Research and Outreach Center, University of Minnesota, for permission to re-print these two articles. Dr. Heins can be reached at 320-589-1711, Ext. 2118, or by email: [hein0106@umn.edu](mailto:hein0106@umn.edu). ♦

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Organic Farmers Association Hires New Policy Director: *Former Food and Water Watch Program Director Will Lead Organic Policy Advocacy Effort*

Organic Farmers Association (OFA), the nation's unified voice for certified organic farmers sponsored by the nonprofit Rodale Institute, has named Patty Lovera as its new Policy Director. Lovera brings an impressive background in grassroots organizing on farm and food issues and lobbying in Washington, D.C., as well as extensive knowledge of organic farming topics. Previously, she helped start and grow Food & Water Watch (FWW), serving as their Food and Water Program Director for 14 years. In this role, she represented FWW in the National Organic Coalition.

OFA was formed in 2016 as farmers from across the country came together to unite organic farmers for a better future together. The mission of the Organic Farmers Association is to provide a strong and unified national voice for domestic certified organic producers. With the purpose to build and support a farmer-led national organic farmer movement and national policy platform by developing and advocating policies that benefit organic farmers; strengthening and supporting the capacity of organic farmers and farm organizations; and supporting collaboration and leadership among state, regional and national organic farmer organizations.

As Policy Director, Lovera will work directly with Organic Farmers Association's elected Policy Committee, comprised

of twelve certified organic farmer members and six advisory organizational members from six U.S. geographic regions. She will facilitate the annual grassroots policy development process, where all U.S. certified organic farmers are invited to submit policy priorities and policy positions for the Policy Committee's review, and ultimately OFA farmer members' vote.

Lovera's addition to the Organic Farmers Association team comes as the organization is still gathering input from certified organic growers on their policy priorities for 2020. She will also guide the organization during their Advocacy Day in March, 2020. OFA's legislative priorities in 2019 included improving enforcement of the Origin of Livestock Rule and organic dairy standards, removing hydroponics from organic certification, and eliminating organic fraud.

Lovera will begin her work at Organic Farmers Association preparing certified organic farmers for the upcoming organic farmer advocacy day on March 10, 2020 in Washington, DC. Certified organic farmers from across the country will unite for training and advocacy in Washington to represent their fellow organic farmers and make sure our elected officials hear the policy priorities of organic farmers to continue to supply communities across the country with healthy food and fiber. ♦

## New Fair Competition Rules for Livestock and Poultry Industry Advanced *USDA takes small step forward in decade's long rules debate*

*Press Release, 1-10-20: National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition*

For years, American livestock and poultry producers have spoken out about the unfair and abusive practices of contract agriculture. Working alongside farmer advocates such as the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), RAFI-USA, and CCAR, these farmers have clearly demonstrated why rules governing the meatpacking industry needed strengthening. Today, the Trump Administration took a small step forward toward enhancing farmer protections by introducing a proposed change to language in the Packers

and Stockyards Act of 1921 that deals with undue preference.

The USDA's Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) introduced four criteria today aimed at making it easier to determine whether a meatpacker's actions were such that they could be construed as providing an "undue or unreasonable preference or advantage" to one producer over another. The rule does not, however, address several other important aspects of undue preference, such as harm to competition and retaliation or a farmer's right to speak out. ♦



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Origin of Livestock

*continued from page 1*

A strong Final Rule will specify that organic dairy animals must be raised organically from the last third of gestation or be raised organically for one year when an entire established conventional herd is transitioned to organic, which is allowed only once and has to be completed within one year. A certified entity is not eligible for the exemption if transition has been used previously by a Responsibly Connected person who has a 10% or more ownership share in that legal entity. Once a distinct herd is transitioned to organic, all animals must be raised organically from the last third of gestation. Existing organic operation's replacement dairy animals must all be organic from the last third of gestation unless the stock is from their own one time herd transition. Cycling dairy animals in and out of organic dairy production must be prohibited. **We urge you to quickly review the submitted comments from both 2015 and this year and move towards immediate implementation of a Final Rule.**

NODPA is the largest organic dairy producer organization in the country with a membership of eight hundred and thirty six

organic dairy producers in the Eastern USA. NODPA's mission is to "enable organic dairy family farmers, situated across an extensive area, to have informed discussion about matters critical to the well-being of the organic dairy industry as a whole." NODPA is not aligned with any one processor or cooperative and therefore is able to represent the views and needs of many different farmers.

Rulemaking is critical to bringing clear, consistent understanding and enforcement, maintaining a level playing field to all organic dairy producers, and upholding strong organic integrity for all organic farmers and consumers. Since its formation in 2002, NODPA has been submitting comments directly to the USDA on its proposed regulations. One of the first topics that NODPA commented on in 2003 was about the Origin of Livestock. In 2015, NODPA submitted extensive comments on this Proposed Rule, and we stand by those comments despite massive change in both the supply and demand for organic dairy products. The change in the organic dairy market in the last four years brings a different baseline to the economic and social cost to the organic dairy industry of the need for this Rule, which is explored below. Our comments will look at the following areas:

- Economic inequity for those operations that transition to organic and for existing operations whose certifiers interpret OOL in different ways
- Changing demand for organic dairy products
- How pay price is determined for organic dairies
- Inequity in responding to supply side demand and undermining the pay price for all organic dairies
- Undermining the integrity of the organic market
- Undermining the market for organic dairy replacements

### Economic Inequity for Operations that are Transitioning to Organic

In July 2013, the USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG) published an audit report on organic milk operations stating that certifying agents were interpreting the origin of livestock requirements differently.<sup>1</sup> For some conventional dairy operations that are transitioning to organic production, their certifier is currently restricting the transition to one, already-established, distinct conventional herd with a clearly defined one year start and finish time for the transition. After that, they have to rear or purchase animals which are organic from the last third of gestation, which involves increased cost of feeding animals, both with the use of land which could graze milking animals and the purchase or raising of higher priced organic



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

feed. Other certifiers are allowing operations to form a new herd from purchased, conventional animals and take one year to transition that initial number of animals. Then, they can add conventional animals transitioned for just one year to suit the supply side demands of the market, or transition more non-organic animals at a different time, or rear organically born calves on conventional feed and then transition them into the original transitioned herd, as well as other combinations of conditions now being accepted by certifiers. Some certifiers are allowing existing operations to continuously bring transitioned replacement animals into their herd.

All these many different ways of transitioning, other than the first one described, are less expensive in feed, health care, and land use costs, allowing staggered capital investment to reduce the cost of debt service and reduced operational costs and give the operations greater flexibility to respond more quickly to supply demand. Organic dairy farms that are raising all of their youngstock organically are at severe economic disadvantage because it is much more expensive to feed calves organic milk than conventional milk replacer or conventional milk (organic milk pay price is usually double that of the conventional pay price). It is more costly to feed the youngstock certified organic feeds during the first year of life rather than conventionally grown feeds, and they cannot respond as quickly to an increase in supply demand. Being able to raise the conventional youngstock with the whole arsenal of antibiotics, drugs, parasiticides, ionophores and other growth promoters, etc., allowed in conventional production, creates a very uneven economic playing field. At an operation level, the higher cost to raise animals organically puts operations that are abiding by the last third of gestation regulation at a significant economic disadvantage compared to those operations making use of the continuous transition loophole. The cost of raising replacement animals is highly sensitive to changes in feed costs, as well as geographic and operation-level variations in costs of production.<sup>2</sup>

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## Changing Demand for Organic Dairy Products

Organic milk has been the gateway point for customers moving towards organic purchases, and its growth was at 8-10% until 2012, with the exception of the downturn in the U.S. economy which started in late 2007 when organic milk sales actually declined 4% between 2008 and 2009. Sales rebounded quickly with supply exceeding demand, and from there it has varied year by year but declining to zero growth in retail organic sales by 2017.

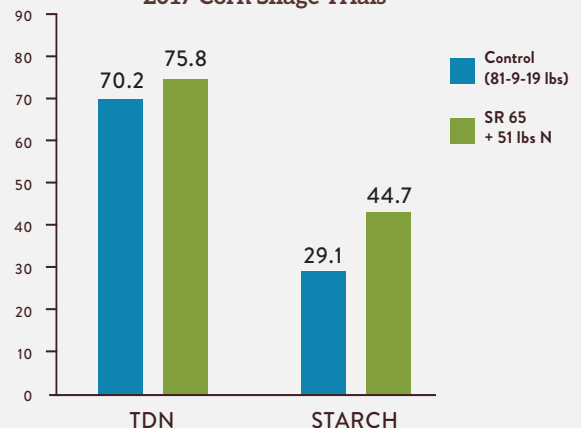
USDA AMS does publish retail sales data of organic milk which make up approximately 75% of organic milk that is consumed as fluid milk<sup>3</sup>. USDA AMS reported sales of retail fluid organic milk in 2008 at 1,676 million lbs.; in 2012 it was 2,157 million lbs.; in 2017 total retail sales was 2,577 million lbs. and in 2018 sales plateaued at 2,594 million lbs., as whole milk sales balanced the drop in fat-free milk. This shows a slowing growth of retail sales, from roughly 8%, annually, to less than 1%. In the last 4 years, whole milk sales have been growing at an average of 5% year over year and fat-free milk retail sales are not increasing, and even declining, as we see consumers' choices of many

*continued on page 20*



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Origin of Livestock

*continued from page 19*

different nut and cereal milks growing, and value added organic milk products sales dropping.

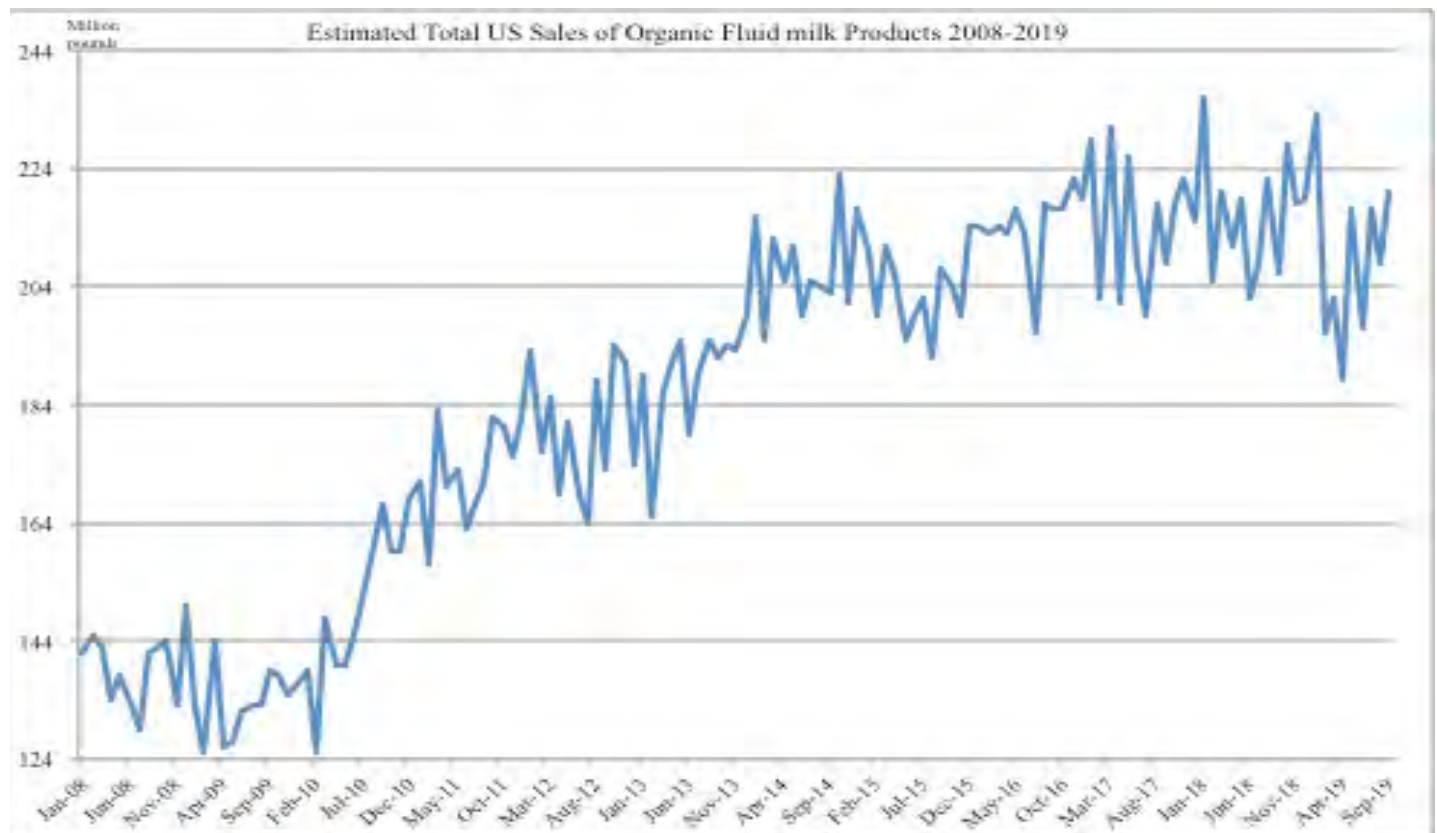
### Retail sales of organic fluid milk using USDA AMS data -2008-2018

Year	Fluid milk sales (million pounds)	% Change year to year	Whole Milk retail sales	Low Fat products retail sales
2008	1,676			
2009	1,602	-4.60%		
2010	1,799	11.00%		
2011	2,074	13.30%		
2012	2,157	3.80%		
2013	2,267	4.90%	617	1,650
2014	2,491	9.00%	742	1,702
2015	2,438	-2.20%	881	1,614
2016	2,573	5.20%	951	1,624
2017	2,577	0.20%	1,012	1,564
2018	2,594	0.70%	1,062	1,523

Together, Organic Valley (CROPP Cooperative) and Horizon Organic (Danone NA) control about 84% of the organic milk supply.<sup>4</sup> In March 2015, CROPP Cooperative raised its pay price to reflect an increase in costs of production and “a surge in market demand.”<sup>5</sup> In 2016, the twelve month average mailbox pay price was \$35.68 per hundred pounds (CROPP Cooperative); in May 2017 it had dropped to \$30.10, which included the ending of the \$2.00 market adjustment premium (MAP), the initiation of a quota, and the start of an inventory management deduction of \$1.00. In 2018, the twelve month average mailbox pay price was \$29.52. In less than two years, the deficit in supply was replaced by a significant surplus that resulted in a quota being imposed and a 25% reduction in pay price. While sales were at the monthly highest level because of an increase in organic whole milk sales, growth of sales in non-fat organic dairy products were dropping at a rate of 4% annually; the retail price was consistent while the average pay price to producers was plummeting.

### How organic pay price is determined:

- It is not determined by the costs of production as the differential between the conventional and the organic pay-price does not cover the increase in costs. Research from the University of Vermont shows that a typical break-even for organic milk production in the northeast in 2017 is \$36 per hundred pounds not the current pay price of \$29.





## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

- It is not determined by the Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) which was established in 1930's. The conventional pay price is determined by Federal regulation through the FMMO that regulates conventional pay price and protects farmers from being exploited by individual contracts. Conventional dairy also has subsidized margin insurance when pay price drops which can be claimed by organic operations but not by using organic costs of production.
- There is no extra cost of manufacturing that needs to be factored into an organic pay price. The cost of handling, processing and marketing organic milk is no more expensive than conventional now that the organic supply has reached a critical mass of approximately 5% of total dairy supply. There are economies of scale for vertically integrated organic dairies that process their own milk and market directly to store brand or private label contracts. There are also challenges to process organic milk when conventional supply is in surplus and there is no spare capacity on the manufacturing side for any surplus of organic milk.

Surplus organic milk is sold conventionally usually at the lowest FMMO price, which can be as much as \$20 per hundred pounds of milk lower than the organic pay price.

- Pay price is not affected by the retail price or the premium paid by consumers. Retail price is determined by the retailer, depending on their market--whether they use organic milk as a loss leader, whether they have their own store brand, or what margin they need for their dairy case which displays all types of non-bovine milk co-opting the term 'milk' (oat milk, soy milk). The USDA AMS reports that the average retail price for branded organic product from 2006 to 2018 is \$3.77 per half gallon with a high of \$4.21 in 2016 and a low of \$3.48 in 2014. The highest month for sales was January 2018 with 234 million lbs., with an average retail price of \$3.88 per half gallon. The organic pay price in 2006 averaged \$26 /cwt; in 2014 it averaged \$35.6/cwt and in January 2018 it was \$30.60/cwt.

*continued on page 22*

### Average retail price for a ½ gallon of organic milk compared to the cost of the milk at the farm to give the percentage share of the retail dollar that the farmer receives

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Average Retail Value of ½ gallon	\$ 3.79	\$ 3.90	\$ 3.81	\$ 3.79	\$ 3.69	\$ 3.74	\$ 3.49	\$ 3.53	\$ 3.48	\$ 3.89	\$ 4.21	\$ 3.76	\$ 3.92
Farm Value of ½ gallon	\$ 1.23	\$ 1.23	\$ 1.27	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.23	\$ 1.29	\$ 1.32	\$ 1.44	\$ 1.52	\$ 1.56	\$ 1.48	\$ 1.35	\$ 1.23
Pay price as a percentage of retail	32%	31%	33%	33%	33%	34%	38%	41%	44%	40%	39%	36%	32%



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Origin of Livestock

*continued from page 21*

The organic pay price is determined by the two national buyers, vertically integrated large dairies, and the conventional price for balancing organic milk when there is over supply. National buyers are CROPP Cooperative and Danone NA, and the major independent supplier is Aurora Dairy. The two major buyers, with their own dedicated pool of milk, dominate the supply-side, buying organic raw milk because monopsony<sup>6</sup> is prevalent in organic dairy. They each have regional pricing depending on geographic location. They also have quality incentives and penalties that are similar but not identical. In many cases a farmer's decision as to whom they sell their milk is determined by the pick-up route or processing plant that is nearest to their farm. Historical data shows that when there is a surplus of organic milk, the pay price drops across the board. It is only when supply is short or there is a new entrant into the supply market that pay price will increase, not when farm operational costs increase. Milk buyers have to bear the increased costs of balancing supply with demand and this affects the pay price in both the conventional and organic market because any surplus has to be sold at a lower price.

### Inequity in Responding to Supply-Side Demand and Undermining the Pay Price for all Organic Dairies

For those operations whose certifier does not allow continuous transition of conventional animals, it will take a minimum of three years to have a significant response to a shortage of supply by increasing cow numbers, unless they have sufficient capital available to purchase organically certified milking cows. For those entities whose certifiers allow continuous transition, they can respond within one year of seeing an increase in demand and pay price. USDA NASS organic census showed an increase in the number of organic dairy cows from 2014 to 2015 was 1,068. The increase in organic cows from 2015 to 2016 was 38,326. This ability to expand rapidly gives those continuous transitioning operations substantial economic advantage to increase profits quickly with a higher pay price. Operations whose certifiers allow continuous transition were able to increase their volume quickly and market their milk directly to store brand and private label contracts, which in 2018 became the number one sellers of retail organic dairy products.

To give an idea of the difference between dairies' sizes in Texas and Wisconsin, a NASS survey showed there were 76 times more organic dairies in Wisconsin than Texas, yet Texas produced 1.3 times more milk. Put another way, the average annual dairy's production in Texas was 80,000,000 pounds, while the average

dairy in Wisconsin annually produced 810,000 pounds. The inconsistencies in applying the Origin of Livestock regulations result in economic advantage for those whose certifiers allow for more than a one-time transition as they can respond more quickly to changes in the supply side market. With a supply deficit, they can increase the number of milking cows and heifers quickly while the pay price is high. When the price drops they can sell their less productive milkers to minimize losses in the knowledge that they can buy and transition more animals if the demand changes. ***Consistency in interpretation and enforcement of organic regulations that affect the supply side of the organic market are essential in creating a level playing field and maintaining the integrity of the organic seal.***

### Undermining the Integrity of the Organic Market

The majority of organic dairies rely on selling their organic milk on the wholesale market and their pay price is tied directly to the integrity of that market. 'No antibiotics' was the top concern of organic dairy consumers in the Natural Marketing Institute survey in 2005 and in all other surveys since then.

Once that integrity is undermined, consumers will be unwilling to pay more for organic milk and the only operations able to provide the organic milk are large scale operations that have access to capital, and economics of scale. Conventional youngstock being brought onto operations on a continuous basis, as is now practiced by many operations, belies the trust of organic dairy consumers who expect that organic milk is coming from animals that have not been treated with antibiotics or other prohibited substances nor fed genetically modified or other prohibited feeds. While rearing organic dairy replacement from the last third of gestation is more expensive than other methods, not doing so will undermine the integrity of the organic seal, directly expose small to mid-size organic dairy operations to a fluctuating pay price below their costs of production and fraudulently market milk as organic that clearly does not meet the expectations of the consumer.

### Undermine the Market for Organic Dairy Replacements

Currently, there is no established market for organic dairy replacements that are organic from the last third of gestation because of the inconsistent implementation of the Origin of Livestock. Although there are some private sales of both individual animals and herds, there is no national reporting of the value of organically certified dairy animals. Most organic dairy replacements are sold on the conventional market. The fact that the number of organic dairy cows was able to expand

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

by 38,326 in one year illustrates that the increase in organic dairy cows came from the continuous transition of conventional animals, since it takes 24-30 months to increase retention of heifer calves and grow organically certified animals from the last third of gestation. Anecdotally, organic dairy herds average a cull rate of between 20-24% and the USDA NASS data for 2016 shows a total number of organic cows of 267,523 who would produce 133,761 heifer calves every year/lactation (50% male to female). If operations need to retain replacements for their own operations at 25% of heifer calves, potentially there will be 100,000 replacements per year, more than enough to supply all those who want to start or expand their herds to meet existing demand of the marketplace. The inconsistent implementation of the Origin of Livestock brings uncertainty into the market for rearing and selling organic dairy replacements plus deprives established organic dairies of a secondary income stream that compensates for the investment of capital, sweat equity and building fertility in the land.

The Proposed Rule states its intent as, “A stated purpose of the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) of 1990 (OFPA) (7 U.S.C. 6501-6522) is to assure consumers that organically produced products meet a consistent and uniform standard (7 U.S.C. 6501). This action (*the Proposed Rule*) must facilitate a uniform standard, compliance, and enforcement of the USDA organic regulations (7 CFR part 205) and maintain consumer trust in the consistency of the Organic seal.” The responsibility of the USDA NOP in this Final Rule is to protect the integrity of the organic seal for consumers and certified operations. The Final Rule must have language that makes the regulation crystal clear and easy to enforce by certifiers and the courts, with no chance for alternate interpretations. The threat of a lawsuit cannot be used by an operation as blackmail to avoid immediate enforcement in the case of non-compliance; neither can the loss of a large certification fee or economic damage to operations built on the abuse of regulatory loopholes.

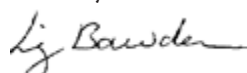
In the 2015 comments that NODPA submitted, we laid out suggested language that will close loopholes and ensure one consistent standard that is easy to implement and honors the expectations of consumers. Our comments above illustrate the impact of inconsistent implementation of regulations that have not stayed true to the intent of OFPA, as iterated in the preamble of the December 21, 2000 Federal Register National Organic Program Final Rule, nor heeded the recommendations of the National Organic Standards Board. The one time exemption for a conventional dairy herd to transition to organic, though no longer needed to grow the organic dairy herd, honors the desire to preserve genetics and established herd health for a family dairy wishing to adopt certified organic standards. NODPA's proposed language provides clarity and a single standard for the one time exemption, with specificity on what the transitioned animals and

their progeny can be used for. Transitioned dairy animals, like other species of organic livestock, will not be able to be sold for organic dairy production or slaughtered for organic consumption unless they are organic from the last third of gestation. Like all organic livestock, organic dairy animals cannot be cycled in and out of organic production and retain certification.

The Final Rule needs to be published quickly after consideration of all comments and then implemented immediately to maintain and restore the trust of consumers and organically certified organic dairy farm families. Indecision on the part of the USDA NOP will have a wide impact on organic certification from the bank loan officer's confidence in their farmer client to the consumer's choice in their purchases to the ability of small and mid-sized organic dairies to stay in business when kicking the ball from the downhill side of an un-level playing field.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact NODPA Executive Director Ed Maltby if you require any more information.

Sincerely



NODPA Board Chair and New York organic dairy farmer



NODPA Co-President and NY organic dairy farmer ♦

<sup>1</sup> The July 2013 Office of Inspector General (OIG) audit report on organic milk operations may be accessed at the following website: <http://www.usda.gov/oig/webdocs/01601-0002-32.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> National Organic Coalition comments 12/2/2019 on the Origin of Livestock proposed Rule (Docket Number AMS-NOP-11-0009-1572)

<sup>3</sup> Ye Su, Scott Brown, Michael Cook, Stability in Organic Milk Farm Prices: A Comparative Study, No. 150735, 2013 Annual Meeting, August 4-6, 2013, Washington, D.C., Agricultural and Applied Economics Association at 7 (June 3, 2013), <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/150735/2/Stability%20in%20Organic%20Milk%20Farm%20Prices%20A%20Comparative%20Stud%20AAEA%203180.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ye Su, Scott Brown, Michael Cook, Stability in Organic Milk Farm Prices: A Comparative Study, No. 150735, 2013 Annual Meeting, August 4-6, 2013, Washington, D.C., Agricultural and Applied Economics Association at 21 (June 3, 2013), <http://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/150735/2/Stability%20in%20Organic%20Milk%20Farm%20Prices%20A%20Comparative%20Stud%20AAEA%203180.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Letter from CROPP Cooperative November 2014

<sup>6</sup> On April 3, 2017, the Antitrust Division of the U.S. Department of Justice announced that it completed its review of Danone S.A.'s acquisition of The WhiteWave Foods Company Inc. ("WhiteWave"). In order to allow the \$12.5 billion acquisition to proceed, the Antitrust Division is requiring Danone to divest the Stonyfield Farms business to an independent buyer approved by the U.S. government. <https://www.huntonretailindustryblog.com/2017/04/articles/competition-antitrust/doj-completes-review-danone-whitewave-merger-requires-divestitures/>



## FEATURED FARM

## Dutch Meadows Dairy on-farm store products

**DUTCH MEADOWS FARM, PARADISE, PA**

*continued from page 1*

organic farmers in Lancaster County, PA. Ray explained that it “was considered a very strange way of farming.” His father decided—after experiencing allergies from pesticides—to transition to organic in 1996, and started shipping organic milk to Natural By Nature in 1999 under Pennsylvania Certified Organic’s certification. Dutch Meadows Dairy partners with other dairy farms and diverse operations to produce and market raw milk, yogurt and a range of meat and vegetable products through pick-up locations, an on-farm store, a network of wholesale customers in central and eastern Pennsylvania, and a burgeoning mail-order business.

**Cow Genetics: Dutch Belts and A2**

Ray’s father first tried raising cows organically with corn, but he quickly decided that it made more sense to rely on pasture as the primary feed source for his cows. However, switching to a grass-based dairy meant he had to move away from his Holstein herd and find a breed more suited to grazing. After attending a grazing conference in Pennsylvania in the mid-1990s he came away convinced that moving to an all Dutch Belt herd made sense. This breed does well on grass and produces a good amount of milk. Ray explained that in addition to Dutch Belts being good grass-based milking

cows, there is strong demand for Dutch Belt organic heifers, providing a boost to farm income. “We sell a lot of breeding stock. It has helped us a lot...there is good demand for Dutch Belt cows...instead of heifer calves being worthless, we have buyers waiting from them.” Right now, Ray and his wife, Fannie Mae, are milking 39 Dutch Belt cows, but are expecting to increase their herd size to 45 next year.

They mostly rely on bulls for reproduction, but have also found some good Dutch Belt A2 bulls in California and Illinois to use for AI. They are moving toward a full A2/A2 herd, as A2 milk is highly demanded by customers with allergies or autistic children who attest to it being easier to digest than non-A2 milk. The reason that A2 milk is easier to digest is that protein cells in A2 milk are consistently smaller than A1 milk proteins. Dutch Meadows Dairy tests all heifers, and sells any that do not test A2/A2.

This transition to A2 milk builds on the Stoltzfus’ 25 years of experience breeding Dutch Belt cows for optimum genetics. Ray explained that one difference with Dutch Belts is they do not produce quite as much butterfat as Jersey cows, with their current yearly butterfat herd average being 4%. The milk is not as creamy as Jersey milk, although Ray said, “some customers...say Jersey milk is too thick and heavy” and they

## FEATURED FARM



prefer the Dutch Belt milk. Also, the fat particles in Dutch Belt milk are smaller, making it naturally almost completely homogenized. This characteristic makes the milk easier to digest.

## Managing Cows: Housing, Feeding and Cow Health

The cows are milked in a tie stall barn, with the cows only coming inside for milking in the summer, even grazing at night. Using bucket milkers and a vacuum system, four cows can be milked at once. Ray said they are thinking of building a milking parlor in the next year or two to increase efficiency.

The Stoltzfus' practice mob grazing, with the cows concentrated on a small paddock for a short period of time. The cows are put on pasture when the grass is fairly tall because the Stoltzfus' have found that the grass has more energy and less protein when it is tall. The whole farm gets mowed twice a year, while other parts are mowed more often. All the pastures are clipped in June and August after the cows graze them. This is done for weed control, not for hay production, because with mob grazing significant clumps of vegetation are left over as the cows do not graze as evenly as they would if they were forced to stay on pastures longer. Given the option, cows favor certain kinds of plants over others and periodic clipping after the cows graze keeps weeds under control.

At other points, when cows cannot keep up with the pasture growth, the herd will skip one or more paddocks, and these paddocks will be mowed and the grass put in the barn as hay instead. The cows might be on paddock 10, and paddocks 11-13 will be mowed for hay and the cows will skip to paddock 14 because there is no way they will be able to keep up with

the pasture growth. In the summer, cows are moved to new grazing paddocks at least three times daily, twice daily in the spring and fall, and in the winter the cows are outside for exercise, and baleage is put in the pasture.

The cows' entire dry matter intake is from pasture, wrapped hay, or dry hay. In addition to forage, the cows always have free choice minerals, and in the winter molasses and apple cider vinegar are mixed in with the hay as a supplement. They have noticed that the apple cider vinegar helps lower high somatic cell counts and can remedy mastitis. Milking cows, heifers and weaned calves get pretty much the same ration. The calves are raised on feeders with four to a pen, and fed two gallons of milk daily for four months, and then transitioned to  $\frac{1}{2}$  a gallon of milk daily plus hay for two months before they are weaned completely. Ray said that after experimenting with different methods, including running calves with the cows, nurse cows, and keeping cows with momma, that feeders are the most efficient. "Whenever you run calves with cows you've got another group to take care of."

With the shift to organic production and even more, going from grain and corn silage to pasture has brought improvements in cow health and a dramatic decline in veterinarian bills. Dutch Meadows Dairy went grain-free about 5 years ago, at which time the few cows that did not milk well without grain were culled from the herd. Ray believes that it is better to start with a clean slate and have heifers raised from the start on grass, rather than switching them from grain to a grass only diet. The farm does have a regular vet who comes to the farm 3-4 times a year and does pregnancy checks and test for tuberculosis and brucellosis. Ray explained that "I want a good relationship with my vet so I'll get better service when there's an emergency."

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## FEATURED FARM

**DUTCH MEADOWS FARM, PARADISE, PA**

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## Marketing: Buying Clubs, Wholesale and Retail Outlets

What sets apart Dutch Meadows Dairy from the vast majority of organic dairy farms is its well-developed marketing operation, through which it sells all of its milk. It has spun off a separate business—Dutch Meadows, LLC—that processes and markets raw milk, yogurt and a wide range of meats, eggs and vegetables through a multi-layered distribution network, with most of the non-milk products coming from a network of supplier farms. Dutch Meadow's first foray into marketing was when it opened a farm store in 2004. Shortly after this, the farm got a raw milk permit in 2005 after several customers said they were interested in getting raw milk. Pennsylvania has relatively permissive laws regulating raw milk compared to many other states; raw milk can be sold in stores and through direct delivery.

Dutch Meadows Dairy first started selling raw milk using a few drop sites in Philadelphia, and, about a year after the raw milk business started, Natural By Nature dropped the farm from its milk route because the loads were too small to make it worth it. By this point the farm was shipping only 25% of its milk to Natural By Nature; the rest was being sold through an extensive wholesale raw milk network. As Dutch Meadows built up its raw milk business it also started producing and marketing a range of other products, including chicken, dairy, beef, eggs, and vegetables. At first, the Stoltzfus' were doing all

of this diversified production on their own, albeit on a smaller scale than today, but after a while they realized it made more sense to have Dutch Meadows Dairy focus on dairy production, and coordinate with other farms to procure other products for its distribution and marketing network. Their dairy farms are certified organic and the raw milk and yogurt are certified, but some of the partner farms are not, although our standards are above and beyond organic. According to Ray, "the main reason our farms are not all certified is that some do not want to take on the expense or paperwork demands of certification, and we also like to keep the cheese and some of the other dairies without certification so that we can start new farms and be able to sell their product before they get their certification."

In spring 2007, Dutch Meadows had started sending raw milk to stores through Lancaster Farm Fresh (LFF), which is primarily a produce distribution company. The problem with using LFF was that it had fairly high minimum order requirements for individual stores, and it already had other suppliers for other items Dutch Meadows might want to sell to stores, so it was hard for Dutch Meadows to bring on new customers or diversify its product line using this market channel. At its peak, Dutch Meadows had 30-40 wholesale accounts, but this has been winnowed to 12-15 of the best accounts. The prices are better selling the milk to retail customers, and Ray said he finds "it's more rewarding dealing direct with customers, you get to see first-hand the benefits people are getting from your product. More labor is



## FEATURED FARM



involved, but it makes more sense- you can do more products with retail. Wholesale meant fewer opportunities to have a diversified product line.” Furthermore, farmers get paid more when the product is sold at retail.

Dutch Meadows LLC was started five years ago to take over the distribution and marketing from Lancaster Farm Fresh. It sells raw milk, yogurt, pork, beef, eggs, turkey, lamb, and vegetables to online customers throughout the United States, buying clubs, retail stores throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania, a farm store at Dutch Meadows Dairy, and three home delivery routes in Berks, Lancaster and Philadelphia Counties. Having one’s own distribution company means more flexibility when it comes to order sizes, shipping schedules, and product diversity. The retail business was expanded considerably three years ago with the help of a consultant--Kitchen Table, which designed the website, helps with marketing, and writes blogs on an ongoing basis. Dutch Meadows, LLC pays Kitchen Table an hourly fee now for marketing pieces such as recipes, blogs, or changes to the GrazeCart website that hosts the online store for Dutch Meadows. Bringing Kitchen Table onboard and shifting retail sales to GrazeCart has proven to be a highly rewarding decision. From 2016 to

2019 retail sales increased from 10 to 70% of total sales; the remainder is accounted for by wholesale orders from stores.

Currently, Dutch Meadows Dairy and one other nearby farm supply milk for Dutch Meadows LLC that is either bottled and sold as raw milk, pasteurized and made into yogurt, or turned into raw milk cheese by a local cheesemaker. An additional dairy farm will start supplying milk to Dutch Meadows LLC next year, and 15-20 additional farmers supply the meat, eggs, and vegetables for the various market channels. About two thirds of all sales through Dutch Meadows LLC are accounted for by beef and dairy products. Ray said that Dutch Meadows,

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## FEATURED FARM

## DUTCH MEADOWS FARM, PARADISE, PA

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LLC aims for a 40% margin on retail sales, with a lower margin on wholesale orders. Ray emphasized that he “has seen too many farms not keep track of margins, and then they lose out. You have to figure out costs and set your margin target to meet those costs.” For some products, order sizes, or market channels, the margins are lower and for some others they are higher.

In addition to targeting a certain margin, Ray explained the importance of having a pricing policy that encourages production of high quality meat and optimizes sales. Dutch Meadows, LLC picks up cattle live, takes the animals to a butcher, and sells the meat to stores. Farmers are paid hanging weight for their animals, which incentivizes farmers to have well-muscled and fattened animals, relative to bones so one won't lose a lot of the animal with butchering.

A guiding principle for Dutch Meadows, LLC in its diversified farm production and marketing business has been “to start small, get a good quality product, and grow from there.” Ray advises other farmers considering the direct marketing

route—“You have to be willing to make mistakes and do things that haven't been done....It's not easy, but it can be very rewarding, when you have customers talking about how it's helped with illnesses or their children's- allergies or immune disorders. That's what we're here for. Creating opportunities for farmers and making good food accessible for consumers.”

Ray and his wife have a lot of help with the non-farm tasks, from packing and bottling to delivery. Two of Ray's brothers and several neighboring (7-8) Amish young women help with packing and bottling operations. There is also one full-time and one part-time driver for the retail stores and buying clubs. The home farm only has cows and a few lambs; it makes more sense to coordinate with a network of farmers than to try and produce everything on one farm.

Dutch Meadows LLC, by bringing other farms into its distribution network, functions as a small farm/direct marketing incubator, helping existing farms broaden their crop base and/or their market channel mix by finding new customers for them. The tagline for Dutch Meadows is “rebuilding our communities and restoring a vibrant food system.” In part, Ray is able to actualize this mission when farmers come to Ray and ask “what can I do with my land?” Often, Ray is able to suggest that a farmer grow a particular crop for sale through Dutch Meadows LLC. These farmers may already be interested in growing a particular crop, but they don't have a market for it, and this is where Dutch Meadows can play a critical role in fostering agrarian entrepreneurialism. Farmers in the Dutch Meadows network avoid soy, chemicals, and raise livestock on grass. These guidelines send a clear message to customers who want to support this type of farming. Ray is not putting down farmers who don't follow these policies, “other farmers could do that, but we have to decide what we're going to do and market it to customers....We have to be strict across the board....Can't be all things to all people.” Dutch Meadows Dairy and Dutch Meadows LLC are blazing a trail for organic, grass-fed and chemical free farmers, linking up customers with producers, catalyzing new production, and offering a different model of vertically coordinated production and marketing that puts farmers in the drivers' seat.

*Raymond Stoltzfus, Dutch Meadows Farm, LLC, 694 Country Ln, Paradise, PA 17562 can be reached at 717-442-9208 or [info@dutchmeadowsfarm.com](mailto:info@dutchmeadowsfarm.com)* ♦

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

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

deduct the sum of :

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

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

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

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

### Milk handlers please send payments to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Subscribe to the NODPA News and support NODPA!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Are you a certified organic dairy producer? YES NO

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

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

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

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

Credit card: Master Card Visa

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

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



# Calendar

January 25, 2020 – 8:00 am to 4:15 pm

## WINTER GREEN-UP CONFERENCE

The Century House

997 New Loudon Road, Latham (Albany County)

Come join us at our 12th Winter Green-Up, the Capital District's original grazing conference! Hear talks from grazing experts, get to know other farmers and enjoy a buffet luncheon featuring local, grass-fed meats. This year's speakers include: Diana Rodgers, RD, LDN, author of Sacred Cow: The Case For Better Meat will discuss the intersection of optimal human nutrition and regenerative agriculture. Mike Baker, Cornell Beef Cattle Extension Specialist, and Christian Peters, Associate Professor at Tufts University, present Overcoming Supply Chain Barriers to Expanding Northeast Ruminant Meat Production. Lexie Hain, co-founder of Agrivoltaic Solutions LLC, will present Sheep + Solar = The New Power Couple. Abe Collins, grazer, consultant and co-founder of LandStream, Inc., will present Hiring Farmers to Grow Deep-Soil Watershed Infrastructure and Critical Ecosystem Services. Cost: \$80/person for adults, \$60/person for ages 12-18 if registered and paid in advance. \$100/person for adults, \$70/person for ages 12-18 walk-in/at the door. To help us

plan for refreshments and the luncheon buffet, please register and pay in advance. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/WGU2020>. For assistance with registration, email [cce-caahp@cornell.edu](mailto:cce-caahp@cornell.edu) or call 518-765-3518. Questions: Tom, 518-577-0958/tjg3@cornell.edu, Ashley, 518-272-4210/arp253@cornell.edu

February 5-8, 2020

## THE 2020 PASA SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

Lancaster Convention Center, Lancaster, PA

Each February since 1992, farmers, food system professionals, educators, advocates, homesteaders, and others who are passionate about building a better food system have gathered at our annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference for four days of intensive learning on 100+ food and farming topics. Whether you're in the beginning stages of your career, have decades of experience, or fall somewhere in between, you'll be able to pack your schedule with valuable and practical sessions that will support your work in the season and years ahead. For more information, visit the conference website: <https://pasafarming.org/conference/>

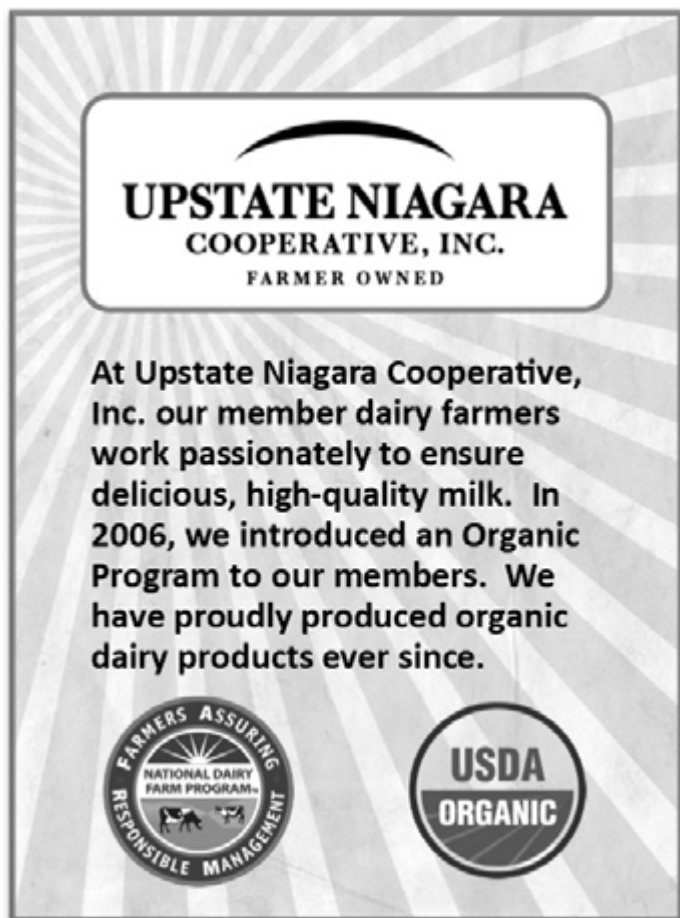
Tuesday, February 11th and Tuesday, March 10th – 10:00 am

## NY CERTIFIED ORGANIC MEETING

(NYCO) NEW LOCATION for its 2020 meeting series.

Martin Auction Barn, 1036 NY Route 318, Waterloo, NY, will host the meetings while the auditorium at Cornell AgriTech in Geneva is renovated.

Watch the website at <http://blogs.cornell.edu/organicdairyinitiative/> for details on the February and March NYCO meetings. Speakers currently scheduled for the February 11 and March 10 NYCO meetings include: Heath Deway, a reporter with the USDA Department of Ag Market News Service, Greeley, CO, will talk about the world organic grain situation; John Hanchar, farm business management specialist with the Cornell Cooperative Extension Northwest NY Ag Team, will review a four-year economic study on transitioning to organic crop production at the Aurora Research Farm; McGeary Grains President Shawn Kilpatrick, Lancaster, PA, will share from his 20-plus years of experience in the quality organic grains, feed ingredients, and custom fertilizer industry; Cornell University Soil and Crop Sciences Professor Matthew Ryan and graduate student Uriel Menalled of the Sustainable Cropping Systems Lab at Cornell will discuss using organic no-till practices; Lynn M. Sosnoskie, Cornell University Assistant Professor of weed ecology and management for specialty crop systems, School of Integrative Plant Science, will speak on the cultural and ecological aspects of bindweed; and John Winchell from Alltec will discuss mycotoxins in forages. For more information, contact NYCO Meeting Coordinator Fay Benson with the Cornell Cooperative Extension South Central New York Dairy and Field Crops Team at [afb3@cornell.edu](mailto:afb3@cornell.edu) or 607-745-3807.



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

**At Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc. our member dairy farmers work passionately to ensure delicious, high-quality milk. In 2006, we introduced an Organic Program to our members. We have proudly produced organic dairy products ever since.**

FARMERS ASSURING RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT  
NATIONAL DAIRY FARM PROGRAM

USDA ORGANIC

February 15-17, 2020

**CELEBRATING OUR INTERDEPENDENCE**

**NOFA-VT 38th Annual Winter Conference**  
**University of Vermont, Burlington, VT**

The NOFA- VT Winter Conference provides a valuable opportunity for farmers, homesteaders, gardeners, land managers, educators, producers, and other food-system activists to participate in our vibrant organic community by sharing ideas, resources, and skills and celebrate all we are making happen together. At a time when divisiveness and fracture can feel like the status quo, NOFA-VT seeks to convene, to reunite, to connect, and to imagine how we might come together to build a food system for the future. For more information, visit the conference website:

<https://nofavt.org/conference>

February 27 -29, 2020

**MOSES ORGANIC FARMING CONFERENCE**  
**La Crosse Center, La Crosse, Wisconsin**

Join us for our 31st annual conference to be educated, inspired, and empowered to be the best organic and sustainable farmer you can. For more information, visit the conference website:

<https://mosesorganic.org/conference/>

August 7-9, 2020

**SAVE THE DATE AND GET THE SUPER EARLY BIRD \$99**  
**RATE UNTIL JANUARY 31ST**

**NOFA SUMMER CONFERENCE**  
**Hampshire College, Amherst, MA**

The keynote speaker will be Tim LaSalle, the Co-Founder of The Center for Regenerative Agriculture, Director of Outreach & Development and Adjunct Professor at the College of Agriculture at California State University, Chico, California. We are excited for Tim to bring his enthusiasm for carbon capture to the forefront of the annual NOFA Summer Conference. He will also discuss the regenerative farming methods that particularly tie in fungal components of soil composition to farmer profitability and ecosystem health. Register Now! Our \$99 registration is available until January 31st. For more information, visit the conference website <https://nofasummerconference.org/>

**WEBINARS:**

Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) offers free webinars on a variety of topics relevant to humane animal production. Join us for an upcoming session or peruse our archive to access all of our previously recorded presentations. For more information and to register, visit their website, <https://foodanimalconcernstrust.org/webinars>, or call 773-525-4952, or email them at: [INFO@FOOD-ANIMALCONCERNS.ORG](mailto:INFO@FOOD-ANIMALCONCERNS.ORG)

Tuesday, February 4, 2020

**PART 1: PASTURE MANAGEMENT WITH SARAH FLACK**  
**- SOIL AND PLANTS**

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (Eastern Time)

Join FACT and grazing expert Sarah Flack for part 1 of a 3 part series on pasture management strategies. This session will focus on the soil and plant perspective. Sarah Flack, author of The Art and Science of Grazing, & Organic Dairy Production, is a nationally known speaker & consultant on grazing and organic livestock.

Tuesday, February 18, 2020, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (Eastern Time)

**PART 2: PASTURE MANAGEMENT FROM THE**  
**LIVESTOCK PERSPECTIVE**

Join FACT and grazing expert Sarah Flack for part 2 of a 3 part series on pasture management strategies. This session will focus on the livestock perspective.

Tuesday, March 3, 2020, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (Eastern Time)

**PART 3: THE GRAZIER'S TOOLBOX - STRATEGIES FOR**  
**PASTURE IMPROVEMENT**

Join FACT and grazing expert Sarah Flack for part 3 of a 3 part series on strategies for pasture management. This session will discuss tools and strategies for pasture improvement.

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# THIS MARK MATTERS.

DFA Northeast is pleased to provide continued support to NODPA and organic farms.



**DFAMILK.COM** |

# Classified Ads

## ANIMALS

**COWS FOR SALE:** Organic Registered Holstein herd for sale. 52 cows total. -46 Milking -4 Dry Cows -2 Springing Heifers Over half the herd is fresh, 67# herd average and SCC is consistently under 100k. AI bred for 20 years. \$1800 each, prefer whole herd to be sold together. Scott and Traci Laing, [Tracilaing@aol.com](mailto:Tracilaing@aol.com), 315-261-2212.

**Location:** Potsdam, NY

**COWS FOR SALE:** Organic & Grass-fed certified, bred, dairy cows & heifers. Normande, Jersey, Holstein crosses, located in Central Ma. asking \$1200 each. Pamela Robinson, 413-477-6988 or [pbrfarm@comcast.net](mailto:pbrfarm@comcast.net)

**Location:** Hardwick, MA

**WANTED:** Looking to buy 2 grass fed organic dairy cows. Chris Simone, 315-530-8691, [Csimone302@yahoo.com](mailto:Csimone302@yahoo.com).

**Location:** Syracuse, NY

**WANTED:** Looking for some certified organic grass-fed Jersey cows. Contact [RichardRobertLarson@gmail.com](mailto:RichardRobertLarson@gmail.com), 802-884-5288

**Location:** Wells, VT

**WANTED:** We are looking for 20 certified organic cows. Must have good components, low scc, avg. production around 40 lbs or more, paperwork to go with it. Looking for good solid milkers. Contact Gus Tafel, [kcressotti@yahoo.com](mailto:kcressotti@yahoo.com), 607-376-4970.

**Location:** Hawley MA

**WANTED:** Looking for an A2A2, grass-fed, Jersey or American Milking Devon, for a family milk cow. Contact Diane Butler, [butlersd2@vermontel.net](mailto:butlersd2@vermontel.net), 802-325-2008

**Location:** Pawlet, VT

## FEED, GRAIN, HAY FOR SALE/WANT TO BUY

**WANTED:** Organic Hay or Balage. Looking for certified organic good quality dry hay or balage, dairy quality for grass-fed herd. Contact [RichardRobertLarson@gmail.com](mailto:RichardRobertLarson@gmail.com), 802-884-5288 Posted 12/20/19

**Location:** Wells, VT

**WANTED:** Organic Baleage wanted in Branchport, NY (just west of Penn Yan). Please call Luke Stauffer, 315-595-6679.

**Location:** Branchport, NY

## EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

**EQUIPMENT FOR SALE:** Gehl Mixer Wagon 7285, inside and covered x 10 years in good shape, (stopped growing corn) many rebuilt parts. Asking \$2950. Pamela Robinson, 413-477-6988, [pbrfarm@comcast.net](mailto:pbrfarm@comcast.net)

**Location:** Hardwick, MA

## REAL ESTATE

**FARM FOR SALE:** Maple Wind Farm of Huntington, Richmond, and Bolton, VT is selling its 137-acre property in Huntington, VT. The owners of Maple Wind Farm are consolidating their operations at their Richmond location and are seeking a buyer for their 137-acre farm property in Huntington, VT. The property has been a viable grass-based diversified livestock farm since



**LAKEVIEW ORGANIC GRAIN**

Box 361, 119 Hamilton Place  
Penn Yan, NY 14527  
315-531-1038  
[www.lakevieworganicgrain.com](http://www.lakevieworganicgrain.com)

From Northeast Organic Farmers . . . For Northeast Organic Farmers

Organic Feed, Seed and Community



1999, and was conserved with VLT in 2013. The farm consists of certified organic pastures that have extensive perimeter high-tensile fence and water systems, a ½-acre spring-fed pond, two large barns, a sugarhouse, a shop and equipment shed, a 3-bedroom home with attached but separate 2-bedroom apartment, and a 1-bedroom apartment over the shop. This farm is for sale directly from the current owners, Bruce Hennessey and Beth Whiting. Purchase Price: \$549,000. Since the property is conserved for agricultural use, any buyer must have a current viable farm operation or have an approved business plan for a viable farm operation. For information regarding the Conservation Easement, please read the information at this link: <https://landforgood.org/wp-content/uploads/Selling-an-OPAV-Farm.pdf>, and contact Vermont Land Trust stewardship manager Adam Piper at (802) 861-6405 with any questions about the requirements attached to conserved land. Please send an email outlining your farm experience and ideas about the property to Bruce Hennessey and Beth Whiting at [maplewind123@gmail.com](mailto:maplewind123@gmail.com).

**Location:** Huntington, VT

**FOR SALE: Farm and Processing Facility:** Dairy farmers with an onsite Grade A processing facility and a successful farmers market business looking to sell in order to pursue other interests. The farm is approximately 70 acres and is planted entirely in grass and managed with an intensive rotational grazing system. Milking parlor is

New Zealand style with the milk house and processing facility attached. Set up to process all of our milk that our 40 milk cows produce and get a premium price for our products by selling in the DC area. Licensed to bottle Grade A products, make cheese, butter, and have also made ice cream on site. Ideally we would like to find someone who would like to purchase the business assets and then lease the farm long term in order to continue a similar operation to what we've built. We are willing to remain long enough to train or consult new owners as necessary to aid in learning business details and methods of production. On farm housing could be part of agreement. We are willing to consider alternative ideas for business transition but ultimately would like to remove ourselves from it. The opportunity is there to step in our place in strong markets that we have a presence in with established customer base. In addition, the farm could be certified organic as the land is eligible. This could be a good way to become immersed in the dairy business and pursue a career in direct marketing and processing without the cost of purchasing a farm. Terms can be negotiated to include building equity in the form of livestock, additional equipment etc. If interested, please contact us via email: [mark.seibert@yahoo.com](mailto:mark.seibert@yahoo.com) or [clare.seibert@yahoo.com](mailto:clare.seibert@yahoo.com) or call 301-730-6539.

**Location:** Clear Spring, MD

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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



# 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.

### Website Advertising

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

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

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

### E-Newsletter Advertising

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Phone:** 413-772-0444

Go to the following web page for more information:

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

# Classified Ads

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## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**WANTED: Experienced Dairy Person Stonewall Farm**, Keene, NH, a non-profit working farm and education center, is seeking an experienced dairy person who can join our management team. Must be proficient in AI, grazing systems, herd health and nutrition as well as share a strong passion for teaching the public and love for cows and the dairy industry. This position is not for the faint of heart. It requires long hours, working a variety of shifts. Ideal candidate will have at least 5 years dairy experience with a proven track record of success and demonstrated work ethic. To apply, email resume and letter of interest. No phone calls or drop-in please. Julie Davenson, [jdavenson@stonewallfarm.org](mailto:jdavenson@stonewallfarm.org)

## 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 March 2020 issue is February 15, 2020.**

**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

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### From the MODPA Treasurer

Greetings from the Upper Midwest,

I hope that this finds all of you well. The winter show season will be in full swing by the time you receive this. I know that it can be hard to get away for these but I strongly encourage all of you to attend at least one show this winter. I have found the opportunities offered to connect with vendors and other farmers to be a good way to get charged up for spring which is right around the corner.

There are several new faces on the NOSB board. I personally am not sure what to make of some of these folks. It seems that the smaller family farms are being kept from their place at the table. We must continue to be aggressive in promoting ourselves and our neighbors. No matter what we are told, we are all in this together and in many ways dependent on each other. The NOP has stated that they are going to get an Origin of Livestock Rule done this year. We need to keep up the pressure to get a good rule in place. This pressure needs to come from the farmers and the consumers. Processors and distributors are focused on their bottom line, with little respect for the farmer. We need to maintain our work to get this done in a way that is equitable to the farmer.

2020 is going to be an interesting year. Hopefully, we don't lose any more options for marketing our milk. I would love to see more options but the greed of the powers-that-be makes it very difficult for them. Please continue to support MODPA and our sister organizations NODPA and WODPA in our work. We are one of very few organizations that truly represent organic dairy farmers and only organic dairy farmers. Wishing all a great, bountiful and safe spring. We will be able to smell the clover soon.

**Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer**  
**N14264 490th ST**  
**Ridgeland, WI 54763**  
**715-977-1314**

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

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

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

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

#### Iowa

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

#### Michigan

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

#### Ohio

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

### 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



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

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

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



**Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance**

# Calendar

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**Wednesday, March 18, 2020, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (Eastern Time)**

**LIVESTOCK COMPASS: A PROFIT MANAGEMENT TOOL  
FOR LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS**

Knowing your cost of production makes it possible to set prices with confidence and allows a farmer to assess various livestock enterprises, different marketing channels, and actively manage their farm business for profit...a vital component of sustainability. The challenge on many farms is record keeping and having a system to compile those costs so that a producer is making sure to include all costs, including overhead, marketing, labor (including the farmer-owner's labor) and production

costs. Join this webinar to learn about Livestock Compass, a comprehensive Excel spreadsheet tool to help livestock producers measure profitability and identify ways to improve financial outcomes. Jim Munsch is the original designer of the Livestock Compass tool and is also a grass-fed beef producer.

**Wednesday, March 25, 2020, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM (Eastern Time)**

**TREES FOR LIVESTOCK FOOD AND MEDICINE**

Several tree species including willow, poplar, and black locust have been extensively researched and found to offer exciting opportunities in silvopasture systems. Join us to learn about the medicinal and feed values these trees can offer ruminant livestock, and methods for managing them on your landscape. Our presenter is Steve Gabriel from Wellspring Forest Farm in NY. He is also an agroforestry extension specialist for the Cornell Small Farm Program.