NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Member Info

Bo Lait Farm, Washington, Maine

FEATURED FARM: BO LAIT FARM, WASHINGTON, ME

Owned and operated by Conor and Alexis MacDonald

Jumping into Organic Dairy Farming

By Tamara Scully, NODPA News Contributing Writer

It's not every day that a young couple decides - without any lived experience in dairy farming - to become organic dairy farmers. But fact, as they say, is often stranger than fiction. Conor and Alexis MacDonald, of Bo Lait Farm in Washington, Maine, did just that back in 2015.

Before deciding to become organic dairy farmers, they decided to farm. Their vision was of farmstead, where hard work, nature, livestock, food, family and community would combine into an economically viable way of life. Looking for affordable property, they

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The Long Awaited Origin of Livestock Rule is Published

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

On Tuesday, March 29, 2022 the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) published the Final Rule for the Origin of Livestock which determines which animals can be considered organic and produce organic milk and milk products. The Final Rule brings clarity and one standard that all certifiers are required to enforce and milk buyers adhere to in their contracts with farmers. NODPA Policy Director and

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Message from NODPA Co-President

These first warm, sunny days seem to wake the earth itself as we shake off the memory of a tough winter and watch the last remnants of the snowbanks disappear. It is the season of new beginnings on the farm, of hope and promise for the new growing season. But the dark cloud of war and uncertainty in eastern Europe keep us worried over humanitarian issues as well as fuel, grain, and plastic prices.

For the good news, 90 farms that had been previously let go from Horizon and Maple Hill have been offered a market for their milk from Organic Valley (CROPP Cooperative). Kudos to the folks at OV who worked hard to find creative solutions for so many farms! Of those 90, any farmer joining the cooperative under the 100% grassmilk program enters with full co-op membership. The remaining farmers are being offered a reserve pool agreement for now.

More good news may be the NY/NE LLC, the partnership that is potentially adding another milk processing facility in the northeast. Additional processing choices will mean a more stable market for both farmers and consumers in the region.

We will hope that the beginning of the farming year brings peace to our shattered world and abundance and prosperity to those who work the land.

Liz Bawden, NODPA Co-President
Hammond, NY | Phone: 315-324-6926

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From the NODPA Desk:

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Spring is here and with it comes the promise of less stress for many producers. Finding viable and timely solutions to the wide scale loss of contracts is not easy but CROPP Cooperative took a large step forward with the offering of the Letter of Intent to those farms without a contract. We were surprised but delighted to read the news from CROPP. Travis Forgues from CROPP Cooperative has been very deliberate and as transparent as possible in moving with his team through the process of finding a home for as many producer families as possible. Travis was one of the founders of NODPA and his dedication to a solution and to organic dairy farm families has been apparent by his actions and crisscrossing New England and New York. Many thanks to Travis, the CROPP team of field representatives and CROPP producer owners that worked to make this happen.

Producer groups in the northeast will continue to bring pressure to bear on Danone to honor their commitment to pay their small transition allowance (though as I write this, nobody has yet received any money) and to invest in dairy infrastructure in the northeast (again, no money yet or any clear way they will pay it). We will use the tremendous support from consumers, advocacy organizations and farmers that have already shown their support with petitions to force Danone to fulfill its responsibilities to their farmers. The USDA Northeast Dairy Task Force had strong participation from all sides and yielded many good ideas. The USDA response to the Task Force has led to an investment of $80 million in its four Dairy Innovation Centers across the country, including $20 million for the one in Vermont. We will work with the Center to advocate for productive and innovative use of those funds. The Organic Farmer Association and the National Organic Coalition stand out as bringing a national perspective and practical leadership as did NOFA Vermont, NOFA New York, NOFA New Hampshire and MOFGA, working directly with farmers but also advocating for different solutions. Real Organic dedicated many hours to educate the community about the sometimes difficult-to-understand organic dairy world with their Milk and Honey Symposium, and by advocating for more transparency in sourcing product. Gary Hirschberg's Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership has continued its education and advocacy for more sales of organic milk.

Every Task Force on dairy and organic dairy has highlighted the lack of dairy infrastructure. This is one of the reasons that there is not more local milk packaged, and that organic milk is transported from Colorado to Maine for a retail store brand based on it being less expensive to do than processing northeast milk in the northeast for a northeast retailer. Not surprising, this came as a revelation to many consumers and media. We are working with NYNE Dairy to support the creation of more infrastructure for processing organic and conventional milk as is shown on the following pages. Part of NYNE Dairy's mission is to pay a fair Pay Price and have long term contracts to reinvigorate northeast organic dairies. As one experienced organic dairy farmer commented, "If this can truly come to fruition, it is amazing and transformative."

Then we have Pay Price. Making milk in the northeast is more expensive. Not getting a sufficient income from their conventional milk has been a problem which caused the exodus of smaller dairy farms. The New England Compact and the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) in the 1990's and early 2000 did some good but could not stand the onslaught of opposition from the rest of the country. For the conventional pay price we have plenty to blame in the Federal Milk Marketing Order, but conventional dairy also has some risk management tools. Organic dairy has none. Organic dairy is not a free market, and because there is not a regulatory level playing field or competition between buyers, the industry needs to step up and play a role before all small to mid-size organic dairy operations disappear.

In the next issue of NODPA News, we will feature NOFA Vermont's work on collecting data on organic dairy costs of production. It's no surprise that there is wide variance in costs but the average seems to settle around $37 per hundred pounds. Why does a northeast organic dairy farmer Pay Price average only $31 per hundred pounds? The few small buyers, such as Stonyfield/Lactalis who used to have a cost of production factor have now stopped using it because they can pay less in the current market. Pay Price is set by CROPP Cooperative and Danone based on the price they can pay in other regions of the country. How do we improve the Pay Price? There are many answers that range from an unfair market place because of poorly enforced organic regulations; too much consolidation; lack of competition; a static consumer market; and too much store brand milk which seems to be a race to the bottom in price. Supply controls are in place with individual buyers but there is no supply management industrywide. For those that have chosen the business plan of selling their milk into the store brand market, which includes such diverse companies as Natural Prairie Dairy in Texas, Aurora Dairy with their vertically integrated CAFO's in Colorado and Missouri, and CROPP Cooperative, they have had to accept the economies of scale either on the supply side or production in order to compete.

There is no drive to get rid of small to medium size organic dairies, per say. All milk buyers and brands promote how they source from them. BUT they do not support organic regulations that will level the playing field, and the Pay Price they insist on is not enough to make it profitable to continue dairying. Buyers now need to take responsibility and treat their organic dairy farmers with respect. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NY-NE Dairy Consortium LLC Announces Partnership with National Resources to Fund Phase 1 of i.Park 87 Dairy Processing Facility

New York, NY – March 23, 2022. NY-NE Dairy Consortium ("NY-NE"), a branded Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) company dedicated to supporting northeast organic dairy farmers, today announced a partnership with National Resources to secure financing for the first phase of a state-of-the-art dairy processing facility at National Resource's i.Park 87. Located in Kingston NY, the park was formally operated by IBM as a 2.5 million square foot mainframe computer manufacturing facility. www.youtube.com/watch?v=un9xrhC15lc. Terms of the Partnership, which includes an equity investment by National Resources in NY-NE, were not disclosed.

Strategically located 90 miles from New York City and 200 miles from Boston, upon completion of Phase 1 of the project, the facility will include:

- Dairy processing and manufacturing capabilities.
- Spray drying capabilities.
- 30,000 sq. feet of refrigerated storage
- 30,000 sq. feet of frozen storage.
- 100,000 sq. feet of deep freezer capacity.

The estimated cost for the first phase of the project is $110 million with an estimated completion date of December 2023.

Once completed, NY-NE will produce and market a proprietary brand of organic fluid milk sourced from family dairy farms that recently had their supply agreements terminated by Danone's Horizon Organic Dairy subsidiary and Maple Hill Farms. Other products to be produced at the plant will include conventional fluid and extended shelf life milk, bulk ice cream and ice cream novelties, dairy based nutritional beverages and spray-dried dairy ingredients. Once fully operational, it is anticipated that the facility will bring up to 300 permanent full-time jobs to Ulster county.

Farmers who contract with NY-NE can expect the following terms:

- Long-term, multi-year supply agreements.
- Fair and transparent pricing based on cost of production for the region using real-time cost data with adjustments for changes in the cost of inputs.
- Minimum price protection equal to a premium over the average farm gate price paid by other processors in the eastern New York/New England region.
- Legacy purchase commitments in the event the company is sold or ownership of the plant changes.
- Loyalty covenants to protect the farmer in the event NY-NE sells its proprietary brand of organic milk and gives priority to milk sourced in New York and New England.
- Participation in NY-NE's profit sharing program which will set aside 10% of NY-NE's annual profits across all organic dairy products determined yearly based upon the volume of milk each farm sells to the company.

Said Daniel Moran, Managing Director of NY-NE, "National Resources is the ideal partner for us in this project, not only because they are the industry leader in the redevelopment of legacy industrial sites, but because they share NY-NE's total commitment to providing a transparent and stable milk market for New York and New England organic dairy farmers. Without an alternative outlet for their milk and a price that allows the farmer to operate profitably, many of these organic farms will have no choice but to sell their herds, altering forever the cultural fabric of rural upstate New York and New England." Mr. Moran added "with National Resources as our partner, NY-NE is uniquely positioned to reset the organic dairy business model in a way that respects the needs and interests of the small family farmer without sacrificing the quality or profitability of our products."

Said Joe Cotter, President of National Resources, "i.Park 87 presents an incredible opportunity to locate a first-class facility for processing dairy products in the heart of the milk pail of New York state and New England. We see broad-based support from every level of government, and this is our top priority for the site as it will fill a genuine need for our community."

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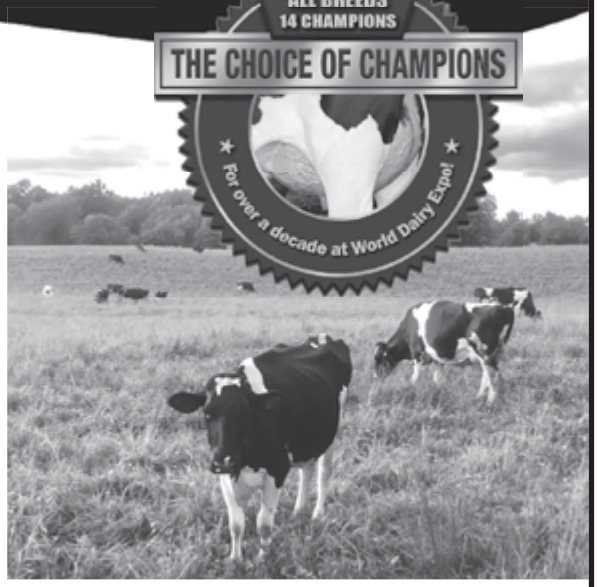
"... good news for the rest of her lactation!"

— Bryce Windecker



WINDEX FARM, FRANKFORT, NEW YORK
Dale, Deb, Bryce and Kayla Windecker
100 Registered Holstein cows
BAA 107.6, 7 EX, 47 VG, 28 GP
65 lbs/cow/day, SCC 110,000
Certified Organic grazing herd

Photos: Bryce, Deb and Dale Windecker with hay equipment. Bryce at 2019 Big E with his bred-and-owned show cow from a top cow family Windex Fremont Dandy EX94. She was nominated Jr. All-American 5-year-old.

"If you can get a cow rolling along when she freshens, it's good news for the rest of her lactation. That's why we use Udder Comfort™ on every fresh cow, especially heifers, 2x/day for 5 days after calving," says Bryce Windecker, cowman in charge of the breeding program at Windex Farm, Frankfort, N.Y. He transfers to Cornell last fall.

Bryce explains how his family has used Udder Comfort for 10 years, since before being certified organic in 2017: "This product is better than anything else. It's real prevention. We use the yellow sprayable Udder Comfort and we like to cover the udder on a fresh animal.

"This gets swelling out fast. That's better for their comfort level and udder quality as a whole, to keep SCC low."

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NY-NE Dairy Consortium LLC Announces Partnership with National Resources to Fund Phase 1 of i.Park 87 Dairy Processing Facility

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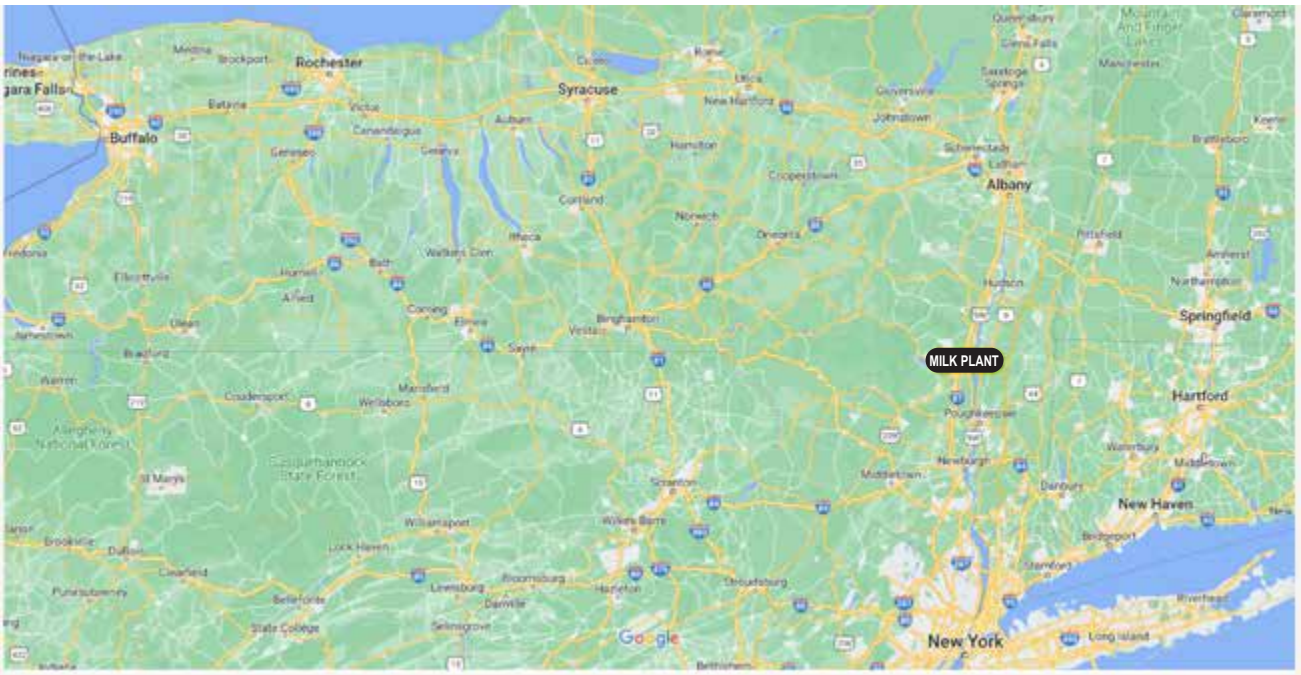
About NY-NE: NY-NE is dedicated to supporting the New York and New England organic dairy industry through a public/private partnership to redevelop a portion of the former IBM Kingston, NY manufacturing facility into a state-of-the-art dairy processing plant creating a guaranteed market for organic dairy farmers. Upon completion of the i.Park 87 Dairy Processing Plant, NY- NE will be a premier processor and distributor of organic fluid milk, ESL milk, cultured milk products, ice cream, dairy-based nutritional beverages, and powdered dairy ingredients. ◆

For more information, please contact: Butler Associates - 212-685 4600, Sabrina Petrafesa - 646-213-1366, SPetrafesa@ButlerPR.com

Background

In the early 1990's, IBM closed a 2.5 million square foot mainframe computer manufacturing facility in Kingston, NY. The closure of the plant, which had been one of the largest employers in Ulster County, cost the region 13,000 jobs. Rebranded as TechCity, the complex stood underutilized and substantially vacant for the next 30 years. In December 2021, the Ulster County Economic Development Alliance (UCEDA) acquired the TechCity parcel. UCEDA subsequently sold the property to National Resources, a real estate company that specializes in redeveloping complicated former industrial sites. National Resources has rebranded TechCity as the I-87 Park. Most recently, National Resources redeveloped the IBM manufacturing site located in Fishkill, New York (now known as the I-84 park), which is fully occupied.

The site borders I-87 and is approximately an hour and a half from New York City, or 60 minutes to Albany. It has excellent access to markets throughout the Northeast, in proximity to the NYS Thruway, Stewart Airport, and with its own rail link and helipad. It has easy vehicular access from 9W, 9G, and Route 209, the site lends itself to any type of business. Located 500 feet above the flood plain, the property is 'high, dry, and flat.'



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The Long Awaited Origin of Livestock Rule is Published

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past president Kathy Arnold, a New York farmer, commented, "Hallelujah! After having spent close to two decades working on having the loophole that allowed conventional dairy stock to be continuously transitioned as replacements on a subset of organic dairy operations--that for the most part have been large scale operations--this is a most welcome and absolutely positive change. I give my thanks to Jenny Tucker and all the National Organic Program staff who were involved in crafting this wording change and guiding it through the approval process. Best news for family scale organic dairy in a long time!"

The Final Rule is not perfect but it does carry significant changes that will stop continuous transition of conventional animals and the sale of transition animals as organically certified. The wording is clear and well enough defined to stand up to legal challenge. There now can be no complaint from certifiers or the NOP that they cannot enforce these basic standards. 'Origin of Livestock' loopholes have been a longstanding problem, creating significant economic harm for small to medium-sized organic dairies, and causing consumers to question the integrity of organic milk. The ambiguity in the existing regulations has been present since the NOP was established, and the rule has been interpreted in many different ways by farmers, milk buyers and certifiers. From the Final Rule: "This final rule will improve AMS's ability to effectively administer the National Organic Program (NOP) and improve AMS's oversight of the USDA-accredited certifying agents that inspect and certify organic dairy operations."

In describing the conditions that certifiers and farmers have to follow when animals are transitioning, the new regulation is prescriptive, mandating an Organic System Plan (OSP) which covers any use of third-year transition feed. It also includes the requirement that "individual identification of animals intended to complete transition" is required and tracked by the certifier which ensures that there are no substitutions. If there are substitutions then the clock on the transition of the whole operation starts again. The regulation is also clear that the operation is required to submit an application to start the process and that starts the twelve month clock, it is no

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longer arbitrary. So, an operation will still be in transition until the twelve months has been completed under the submitted OSP.

The regulation is clear about which animals are transitional, not just the dairy cows but any progeny born during that transitional year that consumes the third year transitional feed. This will again be a test for producers and certifiers to ensure that there is accurate and audited record keeping at a time of increased stress during the transitional process. Relatively easy on a small herd for which this exception was originally designed, but more complicated for both certifier and producer on a larger herd. Within these new regulations there is a recurring wording about good record keeping which can then be enforced and audited by the increasing numbers of NOP employees.

There is a new, and at first glance worrying, variance that has been added that will allow the movement of transitioned animals between organic herds. It is a loophole but the variance is not at the discretion of the certifier but has to go through the certifier to the Administrator. It also has a restriction on the size of the operation under the SBA definition of a small dairy business (13 CFR Part 121). Regulations currently establish that a dairy cattle operation is a small business if it takes in less than one million dollars in annual receipts. For an organic herd, assuming a herd average of 14,000 pounds annually per lactating cow at the low, but current, farmgate price of $31 per hundred, the number of cows would be approximately 220. This variance was introduced to minimize adverse economic impact on small entities, as directed by the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

This regulation, the Final Rule, does strike out one of my favorite phrases "an entire, distinct herd." The NOP has decided to us the words 'certified operation' to define who can use the one-time exemption, which it says brings more uniformity to all the regulations and is easier to track and enforce. Not producer or person as these titles has been the subject of many interpretations. In its explanation for the choice of entity it defers to the certifiers as the ones that will have to monitor and enforce who has already used the one-time exemption. It dismissed NODPA's and other's 'responsibly connected person'

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USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ORIGIN OF LIVESTOCK FINAL RULE

The Origin of Livestock (OOL) final rule revises the USDA organic regulations to clarify the one-time transition of dairy animals to organic production

WHAT DOES THE RULE DO?

- Describes how and when nonorganic dairy animals can be **transitioned into organic production**
- Harmonizes the market by ensuring all organic dairy producers use the **same transition practices**

HOW WILL THE RULE BENEFIT FARMERS?

- Ensures more consistent production and **certification practices**
- Promotes the ability to **compete more fairly** in the organic market

WHO IS AFFECTED?

- **Producers**
- **Certifiers**
- **Inspectors**
- **Consumers**

OOL IN PRACTICE

New or transitioning dairy operations may:

(a) Purchase or raise organic animals, **or**

(b) Transition nonorganic animals to organic production *ONCE*.

Once certification is complete:

(a) The operation may only add animals that have been organically managed from the last third of gestation.

(b) The operation cannot source transitioned animals from another operation.*

**Some small businesses may be granted limited exceptions by the AMS Administrator*

To learn more about the rule, please see AMS's website: www.ams.usda.gov/organic

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within the certified business argument for who can or can not use the exemption as being too difficult to enforce, although the term is used and enforced elsewhere in AMS. Using the 'certified operation' does allow the transition to be used many times by the same businesses or individuals if they start a new operation even if it is on the same property with the same owners or management. Our hope is the careful tracking of transitional animals, the better definition of transitional and the prohibition of organic dairies sourcing (a good overarching word to cover any form of transfer) transitional animals will give certifiers enough tools to stop as much abuse as possible.

There has always been concern that with those operations that bring breeder stock onto an organic operation, manage them organically for the last third of gestation so that the breeder stock can produce and nurse the organic offspring, and then return that breeder stock to nonorganic management until they are again bred. The NOSB and others have suggested that such a practice does not align with a regulatory provision that prohibits organic livestock removed from organic operations and subsequently managed on nonorganic operations to be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced (7 CFR 205.236(b)).3 To clarify these potentially conflicting regulations, the Final Rule addresses the use and management of breeder stock on organic operations. The Final Rule reiterates that nonorganic breeder stock may be brought from a nonorganic operation onto an organic operation at any time, but they must be brought onto the organic operation no later than the last third of gestation if their offspring are to be raised as organic livestock.

Given the time that everyone has been preparing for this regulation, and the number of times comments have been submitted, we had supported immediate implementation of the prohibition of organic dairies sourcing transitional animals and the ending of any existing organic dairies continuing to bring conventional animals on board. The Final Rule established a compliance date for this final rule of one year from the date of publication in the Federal Register or ten months after the effective date of this final rule which is sixty days from the publication date in the Federal Register. This means that a certified operation may still add or sell transitioned animals up to one year from the publication date in the National Register. Certified operations would have to stop any more transitions that would not be completed by one year from the publication date in the Federal Register, so immediately. Starting on the compliance date of one year from the effective date of the rule all certified operations (i.e., operations certified as of the compliance date) must fully comply with the provisions of this final rule, therefore no more sourcing of transitional animals or continuous transition.

I hope that this article has assisted with the understanding of what the new Final Rule is and how it will be interpreted by the certifiers and the NOP auditors. The organic community has done its work in attempting to create regulations that are clear, enforceable and fair. It is now over to the certifiers, NOP and the milk buyers to enforce these standards and take away the organic certification of those that don't follow the mandated requirement or the certifier status of those certifiers that do not enforce the regulation. To quote one well known organic dairy farmer when asked for a comment on the publication of the Final Rule, we can now have relief after "20 years of banging our heads against the wall." Thanks to all that have worked on this for 20 years, both from the community and at NOP, and the next generation of organic dairy farmers' thanks you, too.

Below is the text of the changes to regulation that has not yet been published in the Federal Register (as of 3.30.2022) and is not the official version of the Origin of Livestock final rule.

Change is definitions:
Organic management: Management of a production or handling operation in compliance with all applicable provisions under this part.
Third-year transitional crop: Crops and forage from land included in the organic system plan of a producer's operation that is not certified organic but is in the third year of organic management and is eligible for organic certification in one year or less.
Transitioned animal: A dairy animal converted to organic milk production in accordance with §205.236(a)(2) that has not been under continuous organic management from the last third of gestation; offspring born to a transitioned animal that, during its last third of gestation, consumes third-year transitional crops; and offspring born during the one-time transition exception that themselves consume third-year transitional crops.
§ 205.236 Origin of livestock.
(a) Livestock products that are to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic must be from livestock under continuous organic management from the last third of gestation or hatching: Except, That:
(a) (1) Poultry. Poultry or edible poultry products must be from poultry that has been under continuous organic management beginning no later than the second day of life;
(a) (2) Dairy animals. Subject to the requirements of this paragraph, an operation that is not certified for organic livestock and that has never transitioned dairy animals may transition nonorganic animals to organic production only once. After the one-time transition is complete, **the operation** may not

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transition additional animals or source transitioned animals from other operations; the operation must source only animals that have been under continuous organic management from the last third of gestation. Eligible operations converting to organic production by transitioning organic animals under this paragraph must meet the following requirements and conditions:

(i) Dairy animals must be under continuous organic management for a minimum of 12 months immediately prior to production of milk or milk products that are to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic. Only certified operations may represent or sell products as organic.

(ii) The operation must describe the transition as part of its organic system plan. The description must include the actual or expected start date of the minimum 12-month transition, individual identification of animals intended to complete transition, and any additional information or records deemed necessary by the certifying agent to determine compliance with the regulations. Transitioning animals are not considered organic until the operation is certified.

(iii) During the 12-month transition period, dairy animals and their offspring may consume third-year transitional crops from land included in the organic system plan of the operation transitioning the animals;

(iv)Offspring born during or after the 12-month transition period are transitioned animals if they consume third-year transitional crops during the transition or if the mother consumes third-year transitional crops during the offspring's last third of gestation;

(v) Consistent with the breeder stock provisions in §205.236(a)(3), offspring born from transitioning dairy animals are not considered to be transitioned animals if they are under continuous organic management and if only certified organic crops and forages are fed from their last third of gestation (rather, they are considered to have been managed organically from the last third of gestation);

(vi)All dairy animals must end the transition at the same time;

(vii) Dairy animals that complete the transition and that are part of a certified operation are transitioned animals and must not be used for organic livestock products.

(a) (3)Breeder stock. Livestock used as breeder stock may be brought from a nonorganic operation onto an organic operation at any time, Provided, That the following conditions are met:

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Update on Organic Contracts in New York and New England

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley has opened their cooperative to 90 farmers that have lost their contracts in the last year. This generous action that will enable these farmers to have a home for their milk has only happened once before, in 2009, when HP Hood dropped all their organic contracts, and once again, CROPP stepped in to pick up those contracts. With HP Hood, CROPP also took over the Stonyfield fluid brand to market their milk in a growing market. In 2022, the CROPP Board and member owners have taken on the risk of marketing the milk in a market with slow growth and at a time when its members were just ending restrictive quotas.

Against a background of mixed information from the media, Travis Forgues, Executive Vice President of Membership for CROPP, reports that they have given approximately 90 Letters of Intent's (LOI) to organic dairy farmers in the Northeast. Of those 90, any farmers joining the cooperative under the 100% grassmilk program enter with full membership. This is because demand for CROPP's grassmilk is outpacing supply in a very strong growth market in this category.

This action of offering so many farms LOI's is a transformation from the slow and steady approach that CROPP had previously adopted and is a remarkable action that none of the other existing brands or companies have shown the courage to do. For all these farmers, the fact that they have a possible home for their milk into the future gives them the stability that they crave and a buyer they understand.

For those not familiar with the supply side of the organic dairy market, this commitment goes along with many different challenges for the company. First, CROPP needs to be able to move the segregated organic milk from the farm to the processor, which is becoming ever more difficult and expensive. Second, finding the processing time in a market that has limited manufacturing space for organic segregated product without having to ship the milk long distances, adds to the problem. Third, there is also the increased time to service these new farms by the CROPP field representative, and being able to balance supply with increased volume to maximize the return to the coop.

The LOI is a short and very clear document that is the start in the process of full membership of the coop. It does not directly mention any Pay Price. Farms that do not qualify for the grassmilk program are being offered a reserve pool agreement. The LOI for those farms is an agreement that the farm's intention is to ship milk through CROPP, conditionally on them meeting all the terms and conditions of the cooperative's reserve supply group agreement, membership agreement, bylaws, policies, and on meeting CROPP's membership qualifications (Page 4-5, Policy 1.2). They have to sign the agreement within 30 days and they will start shipping milk to CROPP between June 2022 and February 2023. There are other conditions the farms have to reach about informing their certifier, giving notice to their existing buyer and ensuring their handler is a CROPP cooperative partner.

Travis Forgues confirmed that they will be paid full organic premium for the first 95% of their milk, with the remaining 5% having a deduction that is used in CROPP's supply management program. These farmers will not have to pay equity until they become full members, so the cost of this 5% deduction does not affect the farmers' net income significantly. The CROPP quality program is not a tiered, all or nothing approach, like Danone's, so the payment for this program should increase the return to producers that they were not receiving from Danone. CROPP's stated reason for the utilization rate is that there is a risk in taking on milk that doesn't come with any markets at all. It is a risk the member/owners are taking, and it makes sense that the company has a small buffer for utilization costs of this type of supply. Also, CROPP's national utilization of their supply in organic sales is very close to 95%, so the number closely links to what their supply demand balance is. CROPP hopes to move these producers out of the reserve pool agreements as fast as possible. Once signed up, any producer wanting to leave CROPP has to give 180 days' notice.

Maple Hill Creamery

Maple Hill reports that they made a decision to increase their price to retailers to cover increased costs of trucking which has put them in a position to extend the contracts of 22 of the farms that were going to be dropped in June 2022, until the end of the year. Despite the fact that Byrne Dairy has stopped processing yoghurt, Maple Hill has stabilized its other processing partners and has a positive attitude moving forward and sees a great future in the Grass Fed market.

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Danone/Horizon

Danone has been very quiet recently and have not kept their current and former farmer suppliers informed about their next steps. What is worrying producers is that lack of communication linked to the most recent media report that Danone, during an investor day presentation on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, told their investors that there are "no sacred cows" and that the dairy giant will "keep pruning" its portfolio as it aims to boost growth and distance itself from recent underperformance.

The France-based company said it would improve performance in "troubled offerings such as Horizon Organic" and traditional dairy; invest more in winning products such as yogurt brand Oikos; and create value by selling existing brands or buying new ones. Under its "Renew Danone" platform, the company aims to restore its "competitiveness" in core categories and geographies and expand its presence in segments, channels and geographies.

Producers report that those who have ended their contracts with Danone have not been paid the $2 per hundred transition payment as promised. Producers have been told the payments will be sent automatically once the producer stops shipping milk. Apparently, there may be the usual delay in settling out the protein and quality components and then a check will be mailed along with a letter confirming the mutual termination of the agreement. For some of these producers, it has been over 6 months. Even the most inefficient company that had been paying producers for their milk does not take this long. Apparently, Danone still has not got the message. Perhaps this will at last make the B Corp folks sit up and take notice. Apparently, Danone is certifying its businesses in Australia and New Zealand as B Corporations, thus joining the B Corp movement in Oceania.

A suggestion for Danone that would be a win-win for them: As some of these producers are now looking at new contracts moving forward and having to meet conditions which might involve improving their operations, it would be useful to the producers, and perhaps simpler for Danone, if they paid the transition payment now to all their farmers whose contracts they have cancelled. If Danone were to make all the transition payment now, it would make it easier than paying when individual farms leave, all with different end dates to their contracts, and could end confusion over which months of production they will be paying for. If all the farms were paid for the six months prior to September 2021 there would be consistency, equality and transparency.

When the Horizon brand is put up for sale, I would hope that any new owner has to honor the promises that were made to producers and the Northeast community on the transition payments and significant capital investment in the Northeast dairy infrastructure. When we spoke with Danone, they would not put any dollar amount on their investment. As a guide, they should match the $20 million that USDA has invested in the dairy industry in the region. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 22nd ANNUAL NODPA FIELD DAYS Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7823, 530 Exchange Street, Middlebury Vermont September 29 & 30, 2022

By Nora Owens, NODPA Field Days Coordinator

Photo: Boston Herald

It's been 10 years since the NODPA Field Days was held in Vermont, so we are happy to announce that the 22nd Annual NODPA Field Days will be held in Addison County, with the meeting site located in Middlebury, at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post. We are working with our educational planning committee to develop an amazing program, and there have been a number of the leaders in organic dairy, pasture management, and grazing experts that are eager to be involved in this year's agenda. Vermont is rich in these educators, researchers, and Extension personnel, including Heather Darby, Sarah Flack, Sara Zeigler, Jen Miller, and Cheryl Cesario, to name a few, and we will have more information in the next NODPA News about the education

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program and the speakers, panelists, and more.

We are excited to announce that one of our Farm Tours will be at Harrison's Homegrown Organic Dairy Farm, Addison, VT, with owners Melanie and Patrick Harrison serving as our hosts. The Harrison's farm was the November 2021 NODPA News' Featured Farm. To refresh your memory, visit this link: https://nodpa.com/n/6013/Harrisons-Homegrown-Dairy-Farm-Patrick--Melanie-Harrison-Addison-VT

Harrison's Homegrown Organic Dairy Farm

The Harrison's started farming in Lancaster, PA and moved to Vermont in 2008. They've grown their farm to 450 acres, with an additional 450 rented acres. Their milking herd consists of 190 Jerseys, along with 70 replacements. 300 of the farm's 700 tillable acres are dedicated to pasture, with another 400 acres of perennial grasses and legumes used for making hay, haylage and baleage. There will be a lot to learn from Melanie and Patrick as we visit their beautiful organic dairy farm. Plans for a second farm tour for Thursday morning are in the works, so please stay tuned.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Assessing PFAS Contamination on Dairy Farms in Maine

By Rick Kersbergen, Extension Professor, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Sustainable Dairy and Forage Systems
This article is reprinted with permission from the author

It is hard to escape the news about PFAS contaminated soils, crops, and milk in Maine. For dairy farmers, whose land was often utilized for the legal spreading of biosolids, the scrutiny, frequent accusations, and worry can be overwhelming. As we move closer to another cropping season, there are some steps you can do to minimize the impact of PFAS contaminated soils on your crops and the subsequent milk your cows produce.

The best place to start is to learn more about PFAS in Maine. To do that, a group of service providers and crop consultants put together this guide:

Guide to Investigating PFAS Risk on Your Farm

Maine CDC, Maine DEP, Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry, Cooperative Extension and MOFGA have been investigating forage crop uptake on two dairy farms in Maine to get a better understanding of the potential for contaminated soils to impact the levels of PFOS in milk (PFOS is the PFAS we find most prevalent in milk). While this research is preliminary, we have been able to use the information and data to alter the cropping practices on one farm to reduce the level of PFOS to acceptable levels so they can ship milk again.

What has been discovered?

Forage grasses and legumes tend to have a high potential to uptake PFAS from the soil and therefore from a crop management perspective grasses and legumes grown in contaminated soil have the highest risk as a potential contamination source for milk.

Corn silage has a lower potential to uptake PFAS and hence has a lower potential to contaminate milk

Corn grain has an even lower potential, so corn harvested as grain, snaplage or high moisture ear corn will have much lower levels of PFAS than corn silage

Although not quantified, the potential for soil contamination or dirt in your forages harvested from contaminated fields will increase the risk for contaminated milk.

We have found a lot of variation in uptake levels of PFAS into plants, and this is an area that needs further investigation.

What should you do as a concerned dairy farmer?

Evaluate the potential for contamination of soils on your farm and the acres you lease for forage crop production. Review the history of the fields and look for biosolid applications. Maine DEP is using historical records of licenses and volume of materials to prioritize what fields they will sample first this spring and focus on what they label "Tier 1" sites. The map on the EGAD Septage and Sludge Sites page may help you locate what fields and licenses were recorded.

For fields that have a history of biosolid applications, consider the following forage crop production and harvest changes for 2022.

Consider testing the suspect field soils for PFAS levels. If the suspect fields are near your well, consider getting that tested as well. The testing is expensive, and the sample collection process must be done carefully. There are several private consultants that have been testing this past summer. Additionally, as indicated before, Maine DEP will be testing priority sites. Additional funding for testing may become available through MDACF and several non-profit organizations.

If you find or suspect the potential of higher than background levels in the soil and it is currently producing a perennial forage (grass/legume), consider rotating that field into corn silage. If soils are highly contaminated, even corn silage could also result in contaminated milk, so knowing the levels in the field may help you decide to go to suggestion #3.

If you feel that you have the potential to do so, plant the field to corn, and harvest the crop as either snaplage, high moisture ear corn or even corn grain. Our research has shown that minor amounts of PFAS are taken into the grain portion of the plant. Snaplage can be easily harvested and stored in bunker silos, so the investment in moving to this harvest and storage method would only require the use of a snapper head on your chopper and good bunker silo management.

If the suspect field does remain in a perennial forage, make sure you reduce the potential for soil contamination by raising your mower and making sure that rakes, tedders, and pick-up heads are set high to eliminate soil contact.

If you are grazing the contaminated fields, do not allow the fields to become over-grazed, as that too will contribute to soil contaminated ingestion of feed and lead to high levels of PFOS in milk. The general recommendation would be to not use contaminated fields for grazing since the transfer from soil to feed to milk will be high.

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Some farms have discussed harvesting the contaminated feed and using it for feeding heifers or dry cows. This is not a solution to the problem and should be avoided. By monitoring fresh heifers at one of the dairy farms we have been working with, we have found that while the heifers were on clean feed for 8-10 months after being fed contaminated feed (both milk when they were calves and forage), their milk contained high levels of PFOS when they first freshened!

The research group will be continuing to investigate the transfer factors for forage crops this coming season so we can continue to make better forage crop harvest decisions to minimize risk.

There are some safety nets for dairy producers if your milk is considered adulterated by PFOS. The Dairy Indemnity Payment Program (DIPP) is a temporary option, especially if there is a way to depurate your herd. While stressful, we have successfully done that with one dairy herd in Maine this past year. While these contaminants are considered "forever chemicals", they are not forever in your cows, and they can again produce quality milk once they are on non-contaminated feed. Many state and non-profit organizations are organizing additional relief programs that will soon become available.

Feel free to reach out with questions as you plan for this coming season. Knowing your soil levels will help decide the best course of action. The current situation is stressful for everyone involved. Your farm may need to think about forage budgeting and feed requirements moving forward to make sure your herd size will fit the available forage you can safely harvest this coming season.

Knowing and evaluating all your options is the best path forward. ◆

Rick Kersbergen can be reached by email, richard.kersbergen@maine.edu, or by phone, 207.342.5971

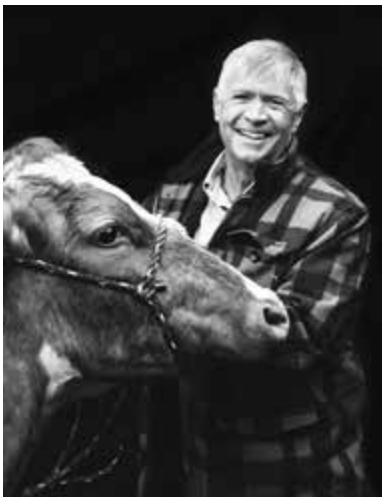
To our readers: Currently, there are a growing number of Maine farms learning that the soil and water on their property is contaminated with PFAS chemicals. While this article is specifically about Maine, the belief is that it is a growing issue that could face farmers across the country; therefore, we are sharing as much information with you as possible, and we will continue to follow-up as more information becomes available. University of Maine Cooperative Extension has published the **Guide to Investigating PFAS Risk on Your Farm** *which is available online at this link: https://extension.umaine.edu/agriculture/guide-to-investigating-pfas-risk-on-your-farm/ .*

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Rick Kershbergen, U of Maine Extension Professor and Advisor and Good Friend to NODPA Plans Retirement for June, 2022

Compiled by Nora Owens, NODPA News Editor

Rick Kershbergen, an Extension Professor with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension and a Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) with the Agronomy Society of America, has announced his full retirement commencing at the end of June. Rick has been a very good friend and advisor to NODPA and the organic dairy industry. He has worked closely with organic dairy farmers, and with educators and researchers throughout the Northeast.



Rick Kershbergen

Rick's focus for teaching and research has been on forage crops, including pasture, hay and summer annuals. Rick works closely with the Maine Grass Farmers Network, the Northeast Pasture Consortium, and serves as an instructor in the NRCS Pasture Ecology II class. Most recently, Rick has received several grants investigating reduced tillage and cover cropping strategies in corn silage systems, according to The Climate Adaptation Fellowship website.

Rick was instrumental in the organization and execution of all the NODPA Field Days held in Maine, and generously gave of his time in order to make them a success. For that, this NODPA Field Days Coordinator has been incredibly grateful. An email or a phone call was quickly answered, and Rick was always armed with equipment, projector screens, extension cords, you name it, in order to make things run smoothly. Since he seems to know everyone in the area and in organic dairy, he also has access to seemingly all of the presenters. A quick mention of Rick's name always brought acceptances to speaking invitations, which led to very solid educational programs. In honor of Rick's service to organic dairy and more, we've invited a number of his peers to contribute their memories and stories.

Heather Darby

Extension Professor: Agronomy and Soils Specialist, University of Vermont Extension:

Rick Kersbergen has been an outstanding colleague and friend! I met Rick nearly 20 years ago when I first started my job at UVM Extension. He was very welcoming and also encouraging. He has been a mentor and a colleague that I could always depend on. I have always noticed that Rick supports the next generation of extension and researchers, and is always looking for ways to involve them in research and outreach events. One of the first invitations I received to speak was from Rick. He invited me to ME to give a presentation at the Annual Maine Organic Dairy Producers Meeting. It was clear that Rick was just trying to give me a chance, trying to get me out in the world so I could start meeting farmers and other colleagues in our region. Rick has done that for so many, including many junior staff on my team at VT. Rick has always been generous with his time and expertise. He has always been willing to come to VT and share information with our organic farmers. We have called on him over and over again to be a speaker at our organic events or a collaborator on research projects. He always said yes, even as he was nearing retirement. Probably most importantly, Rick has been a close friend and ally to the organic dairy community. I am sure the organic farmers in ME would sing his praises. It was always clear to me that they relied on his support, expertise, and friendship. Although Rick is a "nutritionist" it certainly did not keep him from helping farms on all topics of need and concern. His goal and priority is just to help and make sure the farmers had what they needed to be most successful. Really I can't say enough about what his friendship has meant to me, all of my colleagues, and the farmers.

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John Jemison

Extension Professor of Soil and Water Quality, University of Maine:

Rick and I have done so much together over the years. He's like my older brother and as such we have a few fun stories for sure! Your task [collecting stories of Rick] is somewhat daunting. Rick is the consummate extension educator-excellent presenter, great researcher ... compassionate caring ... incredible guy.

I have one funny story about our riding in my pickup going to pull manure samples from a lagoon. So, we had a sample in a 5-gal bucket in the bed of the truck - covered with a towel. We were driving down the road and my dog decided she wanted the cover off the bucket. She stuck her head out the back truck window and got the fabric and started shaking it in the truck. Rick was not real impressed ... so I grabbed it and tried to throw it out the driver's side window back into the bed of the truck. The toss was poor and it almost hit the person driving behind us. Just an example of some of the fun we have had over time.

Henry Perkins

Retired Organic Dairy Farmer, past NODPA President, Albion, Maine:

I was asked to write a few things about Rick K. in light of the fact that he'll be retiring soon. I'm not sure why my name came up, (why I'm being picked on), but I'll say a few things that come to mind.

A number of years ago, we had an extension agent named Chad Arms in my area. Word got out that he was getting replaced and the new person had started the job. I was curious so I made my way to his office to see what he was like. He had an unusual last name (for this area) that was kind of hard for me to spell and pronounce. I walked in, introduced myself and spent a few minutes feeling him out, then left. He seemed a bit nervous or uncomfortable. (Maybe he just had to go to the bathroom).

Didn't really have much interacting with him until I decided to switch to shipping milk on the organic market. I was too busy running a farm and having a good time to go to any functions put on by the Extension Service, but I could see that, to get this market off the ground it was going to need some help.

Enter Richard Kersbergen. He, along with Russell Libby, had a lot to do with what the organic milk industry in Maine came to be.

If something had to be done, Rick was usually there to do what he could to help. There were a lot of good times, but I seem to remember the not-so-good times more than the others.

The Hinckley Farm had sold MOMP (Maine Organic Milk Producers) a combine that wasn't running so he asked if I'd help get it running and get it from there to Albion. Got it running and part way home but got pulled over by the cops and screamed at for a few minutes with a bullhorn for hogging up the road. He finally shut up and we continued home until it broke down. Rick had gone on in front of me and disappeared from sight so I ended up walking for a while.

Another time, I was combining grain in Sidney and at some point in the afternoon I was supposed to meet him, but put my hand where I shouldn't have and got hurt. I had someone call him,

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The Annual NODPA Fund Drive is Underway!

Your support is especially important this year, so please remember to send in your membership donations or visit the NODPA membership page on our website: https://nodpa.com/index.cfm?p=x.5

For more information, email Nora Owens, noraowens@comcast.net or call NODPA at 413-772-0444.

Tributes to Rick Kershbergen

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explain what happened and let him know I wasn't going to make it. He showed up at the emergency room and stayed until they loaded me into the helicopter to go to Boston. Now he knows what I'm like when I've had way too many drugs pumped into my system. Along with everything else that day I was diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome. It was nice of him to be there, I just wish he hadn't told so many people what went on.

There was a good memory of him being the featured speaker at a MOMP meeting, topic- Robotic Milkers. He had gone to Europe to gather information and spread what he learned to farmers in this area. The part of his presentation I remember the best is him sitting on top of a camel. (Maybe that was the high point of his career, camels are kind of tall).

I once locked myself in a room at the Maine Agricultural Trade Show; Rick was the one that rescued me.

I could go on but that's enough. A good person who did his best to help, and what sticks out the most is that He wasn't afraid to get his hands dirty.

We are lucky to have him.

Kathy Soder

Animal Scientist, USDA-ARS-Pasture Systems and Watershed Management, Research Unit:

Risk's knowledge of and passion for the grazing industry combined with his practical recommendations for farmers have made him an extremely effective extension educator. Rick has a great talent for taking the science and presenting it to audiences in a very down-to-earth way, interjecting his easy-going, humorous personality in each and every presentation. He will be greatly missed in the grazing industry. Best wishes in your next adventures, my friend.

Steve Washburn

Professor Emeritus and Extension Specialist, North Carolina State University:

I have known Rick Kersbergen casually for many years but got to know him much better when we were part of a team that helped teach the dairy Pastureland Ecology II course for NRCS workers in New Hampshire in 2015, and hosted by Rick at Wolfe's Neck Farm in Freeport, Maine in 2016. He also hosted again in 2018 but I was unable to participate.

Rick approached his work professionally but nearly always with a smile and a "let's do this together approach." Unlike specialists in larger dairy states who focused on one or maybe two disciplines, Rick necessarily covered a broad range of responsibilities which likely endeared him to dairy producers and other industry leaders. He also found time for family events and recreation. I have come to admire what I perceived to be a well-balanced life with his priorities in order.

Sid Bosworth, Retired, Extension Professor and Forage Specialist, University of Vermont:

I was fortunate to have worked with Rick on various projects and programs through the years. He is one of the nicest folks I've ever met or worked with. He has an easy going manner with a warm smile and good wit. But most importantly, he has a lot of experience and knowledge in dairy and forage crops, and he is a really good teacher and communicator. Although I had Rick over to Vermont for many workshops and meetings, I think my most enjoyable times with him were when we were out on farms or research sites. Whether in the field or in the barn, Rick was really good at looking over a situation and recognizing both good management as well as detecting any underlying issues and problems that could affect production and profitability. Rick has contributed so much to Northeastern agriculture. I know that farmers from across the region as well as agricultural professionals and extension colleagues are going to greatly miss him. ◆

FEATURED FARM

BO LAIT FARM, WASHINGTON, ME

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found a 72-acre former dairy farm, complete with the old tie-stall barn - vacant of cows since 1973 - that was affordable, beautiful, in a community of young farmers, and which appealed to them.

Organic Valley was expanding their dairy contracts at the time, and they were ultimately offered a contract months prior to their even owning a cow. "We had always planned to farm organically. It was the route we wanted to take for our land and our animals".

A former dairy farm, vacant of cows since 1973, was purchased and became the site of the new Bo Lait Farm

Their farmstead dreams solidified into the reality of a small, commercial organic dairy farming business as they wrote the business plan and secured the funding before they purchased the farm. They financed the dairy via CEI, and cemented their commitment to agriculture's future - while making the purchase more affordable - by working with Maine Farmland Trust to put an agricultural easement on the land.

While Conor's family had a milk cow, his grandfather was a dairyman in Nova Scotia, and his Canadian cousins have a dairy farm which he visited during his youth, he had no actual dairying experience.

"We milked for one week at a neighbor's farm and that was it!" Conor joked.

While it is true that their hands-on experience working with a milking herd was limited, they did know a bit more about dairying than that comment suggests.

"We have worked incredibly hard to get to where we are. We did not simply milk a few cows for a week. We researched, educated ourselves through books and podcasts, and reached out to other dairy farmers for information and support. It took a village to get us to where we are today," Alexis clarified.

Beginning the Dairy

Organic certification was the easy part. They are certified with Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA).

"In the Army, I was used to 'hurry up and wait'," Conor joked. Seriously, "MOFGA was easy to work with" on the certification, and the paperwork wasn't too cumbersome, particularly given that the land had not had anything done to it in at least a decade. It was ready for organic certification as-is. As they had no cows, they set out to purchase organic ones.

But at the time, there was sparse availability of organic dairy cows for sale. Their best option - and the one they've made work - was to purchase some "wild heifers" that had not been handled, having been raised exclusively on the dam, on pasture, from a small organic dairy farmer. Those eight Holstein and Jersey crosses were able to land a lot of kicks when the time came to milk them, Conor said.

They were able to add to their herd with purchases from other farms around the state; however the majority of their herd came from a retiring organic dairy farmer who had excellent Holstein cows, many of which descended from the now defunct Maine State Hospital Dairy that had been disbanded decades ago. Today, 85 percent of the Bo Lait herd can trace its lineage back to that historic hospital herd.

The farm now consists of 160 acres, 110 of which are are in permanent pasture. Another 20 acres is in hay. Currently, there is some of the hay ground in annuals, as it is being rejuvenated. To do so, the land was turned over, planted to sorghum-Sudan grass mix, and then planted to straight Sudan grass the next fall. Once that is harvested, the land will be planted to a perennial pasture mix. They also lease another 120 acres of hay fields.

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FEATURED FARM

BO LAIT FARM, WASHINGTON, ME

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When they first began farming, only 50 acres were in pasture. The other 70 acres needed to be cleared. That required an excavator, a very old bulldozer and some forestry mulching. Forestry mulching was done after the land was clear cut and only stumps, sticks and rocks remained, to help keep the soil in place and add to the organic matter. Mulching done in early spring was frost seeded, and plots mulched in the summer were broadcast seeded and rolled. Pelletized lime spread with a cone spreader - best for neutralizing soil, versus agricultural lime or wood ash - because left over debris and sharp stumps can destroy tires on tow behind machinery.

The land wasn't very fertile, and regular liming has been a must. They've been able to increase the organic manner in the fields to some degree although the land continues to require improvement and fertility remains a challenge.

They also utilize their manure from the barns, which is mixed with the waste hay and some sawdust, then is combined with other ingredients including wood chips and food waste from outside sources, to create a unique compost mix. They have a 50 foot by 120 foot cement pad for storing and blending the ingredients, which are then spread into windrows and turned regularly until thoroughly composted.

Improving the fertility of their long-neglected land will be a "lifelong struggle," but is worth it, Conor said. "Spending money on your soil is the best money you can spend. It's more important than genetics, or anything else."

Compost made on the farm is sold to generate additional income

Eighty five percent of the Bo Lait herd can trace its lineage back to Holsteins decended from the Maine State Hospital Dairy

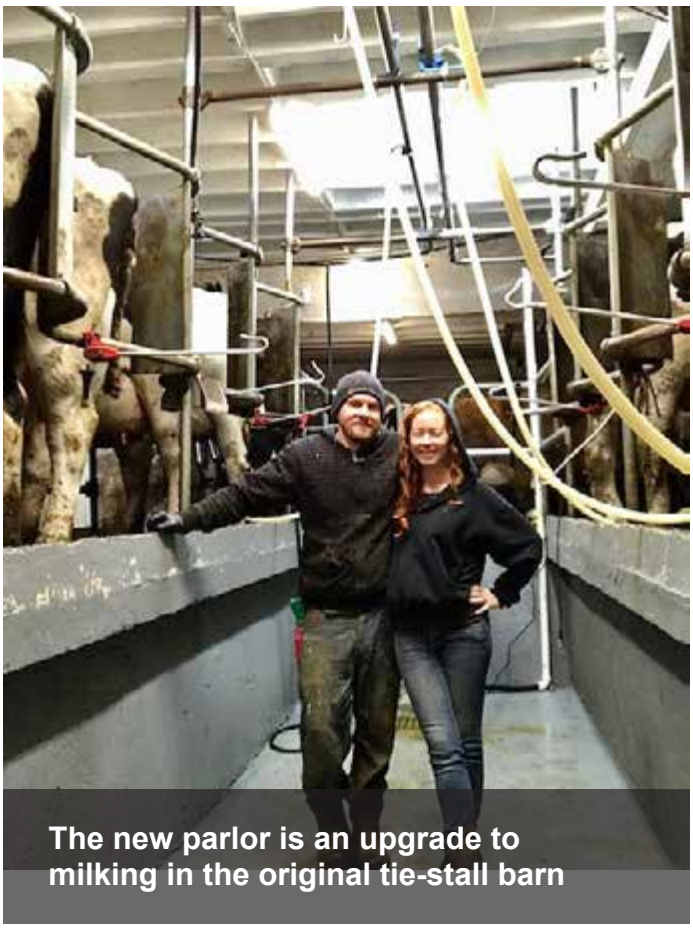
FEATURED FARM

Conor believes the diversity in the compost ingredients is key, and that the "compost is a pretty awesome fertilizer that we can make ourselves." They mix in food waste that is sourced from a local food service company. They generate a small income from the sale of the finished compost, too.

The farm itself is quintessential New England: house, garage, breezeway and old tie-stall barn are all connected together. The old milk room was in disrepair, so they converted the breezeway into a new milkroom. In December of 2020, they also retrofitted their tie-stall barn with A swing 5 herringbone complete with grain feeders. The parlor is a major upgrade from milking in the original tie-stall barn, both in efficiency and comfort. The first few weeks were tricky getting the cows to learn the new set-up, but now milking is significantly faster.

"Cows move pretty quickly through it, and they seem happy," Conor said.

That old 50 foot by 50 foot tie stall barn wasn't going to work for housing the entire herd for long. They've since built a 60 foot by 80 foot freestall barn, and a 30 by 40 pole heifer barn, which is a bedded pack. As the herd has grown, another freestall barn is in the works. The milking herd will move into the new facility.



The new parlor is an upgrade to milking in the original tie-stall barn

The existing freestall has 48 sand-bedded stalls. The barn is hoop barn construction. The new freestall barn will be similar in construction, but will have a feed alley inside, as the current one requires them to feed outside, in a heavy use area that just doesn't work well in the winter, for cows or humans. The manure handling system will be the same in both freestall barns: a three-sided manure pit with a scrape-out in back.

The sand for the stalls is sourced locally. All manure, waste hay and sawdust is stored in the manure pit until it's time to spread on the fields. Spreading occurs in spring and fall, as weather allows. There is the potential for a liquid pit to be added, as the current manure pit is open to the elements and can get too sloppy once the weather warms.

Animal Management

The farm labor is jointly shared between Conor and Alexis, who co-own and operate the dairy. Conor currently does the majority of the milking and field work, while Alexis maintains the farm's financials, herd health information, and all paperwork pertaining to the farm and organic certification. She also performs some daily calf chores, all while mothering two children under the age of four. They currently have a relief milker two nights each week.

"In the summer I am able to do some field work as we'll switch on and off who is with the children," Alexis said.

Calves are raised in the old tie-stall parlor, first in individual pens for the first month, moving to same-age group pens, with eight to ten calves per group, with group feeders, until weaning at about three months. Once weaned, the calves move to another group pen, with weaned heifers, until they reach breeding age, when they are moved in with dry cows.

Calves are fed milk from the bulk tank, and are started on grains - the same grain pellets the cows eat - at one week. Free choice dry hay is fed, with the feeders situated in between two pens. They grain feed the calves as early as possible, both to help build the rumen and to add gain. Their goal is for the calves to reach breeding weight by 15 months.

Calving is done year-round, with the majority of the calves being born in the fall and winter this year since they use a bull for breeding, but they'd like to venture back into using AI in the future. With limited hours in the day and only two people on the farm at any given time, it can be difficult to catch heats. Using a bull has ensured cows get bred in a timely manner.

Calf health issues have been minimal, and when scours do occur they are usually remedied with electrolytes, and a few ounces of yogurt in their bottles for a good dose of probiotics. They don't

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FEATURED FARM

BO LAIT FARM, WASHINGTON, ME

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vaccinate calves, but do routinely vaccinate adult cows once per year with a three-way respiratory vaccine.

"We do not vaccinate calves because we've had good outcomes without using vaccinations," Alexis said.

Bo Lait Farm cows out to pasture

During the grazing season, cattle are grouped accordingly- milk cows; dry cows bred heifers, and breeding age heifers; and yearlings. They have experimented with different types of grazing, mostly rotational. They have also grazed heifers on rough pasture that was cleared but hasn't reached its potential.

The milk cows are grazed according to holistic rotational grazing properties, which really just mean that they are switched from one paddock to another without first assessing whether or not that paddock is ready to be grazed. Sometimes that means moving cows to a completely different area of the farm vs. the paddock that is next in line. This helps with problems that can arise due to overgrazing and soil compaction. The milking herd is always given the best pasture, and is usually rotated every 24-48 hours. Other groups are grazed behind them, moving once a week or so, dependent on weather and how the pasture is holding up. Bale feeding on pasture occurs sometimes in the late summer, especially in drought conditions.

The milking herd consists of about 60 cows, with 40 - 50 milking at any given time. Add in dry cows, heifers, and calves and the overall herd size is about 110. While they'd like to grow the herd a bit larger, and have designed the new barn to accommodate that growth, they are on a quota and will have to consider that as well as the added labor before doing so.

They currently raise all of their own replacement heifers, and while they have experimented with breeding to Jerseys, for calving ease, their herd is mostly Holstein. They did breed one group of heifers with a beef bull and sold those offspring locally. Over the years they have sought out hardier Holstein genetics, and slowly removed some of the very leggy conventional type Holsteins, who seem to do better on TMR rather than pasture and baleage.

They also have some Ayshire, and Ayshire Holstein mixes, which is "a really good cross," Conor said. The goal right now is to keep the cows bred, keep to Holstein genetics, and eventually move to AI with the goal of selecting "New Zealand style Holstein genetics."

The grazing season runs from the second week in May through late October. The milking herd is rotated to fresh pasture twice a day, following each milking. The paddocks are each about two acres in size. Depending on the grass growth, they will divide these with a guide wire to split the paddocks.

Their dry matter intake from pasture is about 75 percent during the grazing season. They keep the forage ratio the same in the non-grazing season, utilizing a high-forage diet year-round. "We try to make as much of their diet up with pasture as possible," Conor said. They do feed purchased grains at milking, using a standard dairy pellet, feeding about 6-7 pounds per cow per day.

In order to increase protein in the winter, they also feed soybean pulp. They had previously used the pulp in the compost mix, and then realized that it might be better utilized - at least during the non-grazing season - as a part of the ration. It has 22% protein content, and isn't needed when the cows are on pasture, where protein is readily available.

The soy pulp "helps with the butterfat," Conor said, and they run 4.0 - 4.25 percent butterfat in the winter. During the summer, that drops to 3.5-3.7 percent. The herd's somatic cell count runs under 150,000 year-round.

FEATURED FARM

Mastitis isn't an ongoing issue. They did have staphylococcus aureus in the herd four years ago, and had to cull hard to eliminate it. When they do experience mastitis, a combination of mint cream and stripping the quarter is often all that is needed. They also dip milking units in peracetic acid after a mastitis cow was milked to ensure it doesn't spread.

Heel warts sometimes flare up in the winter when cows are on the pad, but are usually cured with a solution of betadine and sugar, wrapped and secured to the hoof.

They use a nutritionist through their grain company, who tests baleage samples and provides consultation for rations. Their veterinarian does regular pregnancy checks, and assists with any issue that Conor and Alexis feel they cannot figure out on their own. The cows also receive bi-annual hoof trimming to prevent lameness.

Farming's Future

With their own hard work, willingness to learn, and a community of farmers willing to help them succeed, the MacDonald's are realizing their farming dreams. Even as newcomers to Maine, and to dairy farming, they have felt welcomed into the existing agricultural community. "There are probably a half-dozen farmers I can call anytime," Conor said, adding that the farming community, as well as Maine Extension agents, has been very helpful.

Conor and Alexis have no qualms or regrets about reinventing themselves and building their lives on the foundation of organic dairy farming. They've found the life they were seeking, even if they didn't know it was commercial dairy farming that was going to be the basis of their new beginning.

"Running a farm is a lot like riding a roller coaster," Alexis says. "There are incredible highs, and stomach-dropping lows, and sometimes it's hard to see what's around the next bend. We are thankful to be a part of a Co-op that puts its farmers first, and there is a lot of uncertainty for some other Maine dairies who have lost or are losing their milk contracts with Horizon*. But, we believe that the future of organic dairy, especially locally sourced dairy, is bright. The pandemic shone a light on the complexity of sourcing our food from hundreds or thousands of miles away-a wake-up call whether we wanted it or not."

The fight for organic farming's integrity is waged by small farmers. Conor and Alexis MacDonald of Bo Lait Farm have joined the ranks, no matter the odds.

*Please see the Northeast Organic Dairy Contract Update article starting on page one. ◆

Bo Lait Farm is located in Washington, Maine. Alexis and Conor MacDonald can be reached by email at: alexis.gareau@gmail.com

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 22nd ANNUAL NODPA FIELD DAYS

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2021-2022 has been a tumultuous year for many in organic dairy, especially those that have had their contracts terminated with Horizon/Danone and Maple Hill. This year, we will ensure that the latest news and information will be available during NODPA Field Days, and we will bring everyone up-to-date about what's been happening behind the scenes for the past year.

Addison County is located in the Lake Champlain Valley and bordered by the Adirondacks (NYS) to the west and the Green Mountains to the east. Thriving downtowns of Middlebury, Bristol and Vergennes and picturesque villages such as Lincoln, Shoreham, or Starksboro remind you of simpler times. Middlebury is located on Route 7. Central Vermont is rich in agriculture, with many organic and conventional dairy farms.

The NODPA Field Days will be held in the middle of Vermont's 'leaf peeping' season so please plan your lodging now! Most hotels and motels have liberal cancellation policies, so it's possible to make reservations without a lot of risk. Air B&B's and VRBO rentals are a good options, too. **So, if you are traveling to the area, please plan ahead so you won't be disappointed**.

The 22nd NODPA Field Days officially begins at noon on Thursday, September 29th, with lunch, and is followed by an afternoon of educational workshops, social hour, and an evening banquet with a keynote speaker. Friday morning starts early, with a producer-only meeting at 7:00 am, and a morning of workshops. Following lunch, we travel to Harrison's Homegrown Organic Dairy in Addison. For those arriving early on Thursday, we will have a pre-meeting farm tour, and that location will be announced soon.

More information about the program, speakers and tours will be available in the May NODPA News, and online at www.nodpa.com. Information on sponsorship and tradeshow opportunities will be sent out soon, too. If you have questions and/or you want to request more sponsorship information, please call Nora Owens, NODPA Field Days Coordinator, at 413-772-0444 or email her at noraowens@comcast.net.

Remember: Save the Date! We will see you in Vermont in September. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Pay And Feed Prices March/April 2022

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

In reports from USDA Agricultural Marketing Service in January 2022, 3.8 billion pounds of packaged fluid milk products, both conventional and organic, were shipped by milk handlers as compared with December 2021's total of 3.9 million pounds. The January 2022 total was 1.7 percent lower than a year earlier and the December 2021 total was 2.6 percent lower than December 2020. Estimated sales of total conventional fluid milk products decreased 1.5 percent from January 2021, and the December total was 2.5 per cent lower than December 2020. Estimated sales of total organic fluid milk products decreased 3.3 percent from a year earlier in January 2022 with a total 246 million pounds. Sales of organic retail milk of 242 million pounds in December 2021 were a decrease of 4.1 per cent over December 2020. This decrease in both years was for all products with no growth in any category.

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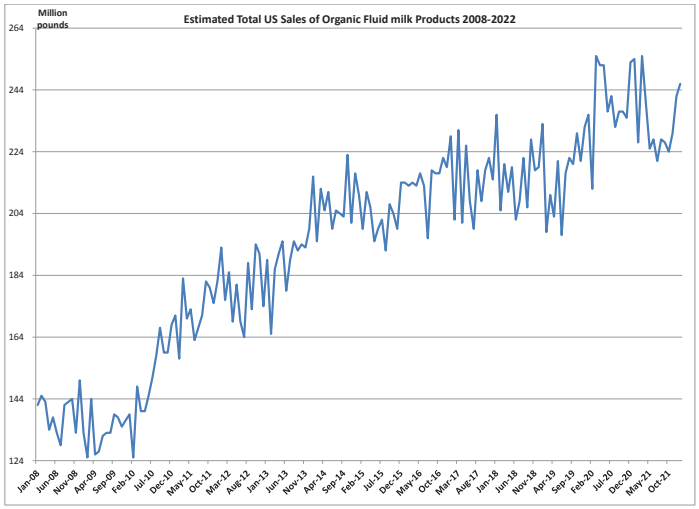
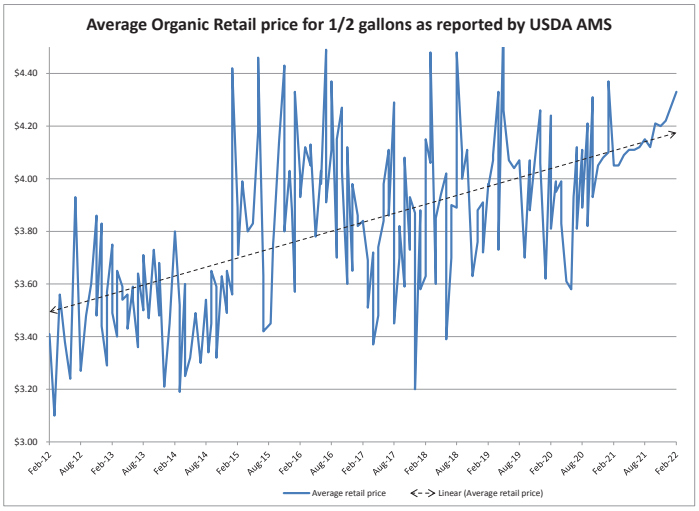
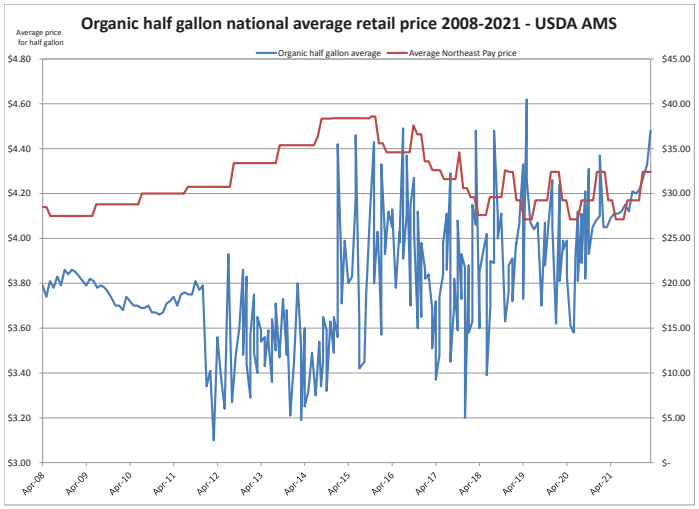
	Sales of Organic Fluid Milk		Change from	
Product Name	Dec-21	2021 Year to date	Dec-20	Year to date
	Million pounds		Percent	
Organic Whole Milk	111	1256	-3.2	-1
Flavored Whole milk	2	19	9.9	73
Organic Reduced Fat Milk (2%)	82	954	-3.2	-3.2
Organic Low Fat Milk (1%)	27	314	-3.7	-4.8
Organic Fat Free Milk Skim	14	174	-19.9	-12.3
Organic Flavored Fat-Reduced Milk	6	81	4.6	1
Other Fluid Organic Milk Products	0	2	57.1	23.2
Total Fat Reduced Milk	130	1526	-5	-4.5
Total Organic Milk Products	**242**	**2801**	**-4.1**	**-2.6**

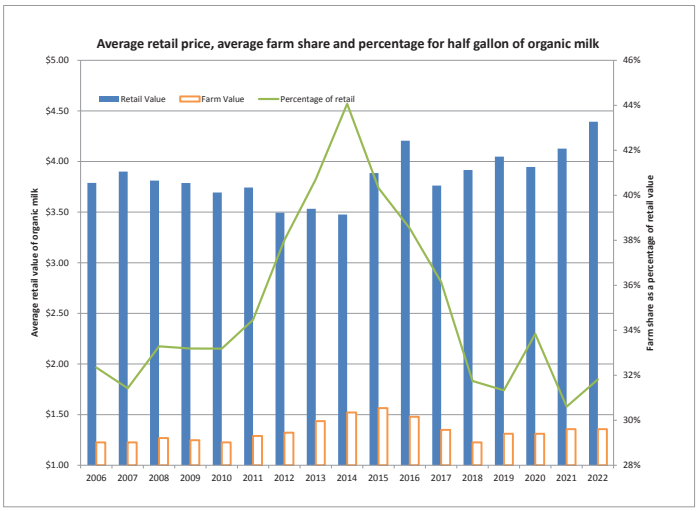
	Sales of Organic Fluid Milk		Change from	
Product Name	Jan-22	2022 Year to date	Jan-21	Year to date
	Million pounds		Percent	
Organic Whole Milk	113	113	0.4%	0.4%
Flavored Whole milk	2	2	56.6%	56.60%
Organic Reduced Fat Milk (2%)	84	84	-6.6%	-6.6%
Organic Low Fat Milk (1%)	27	27	-5.9%	-5.9%
Organic Fat Free Milk Skim	14	14	-7.4%	-7.4%
Organic Flavored Fat-Reduced Milk	6	6	-9.9%	-9.9%
Other Fluid Organic Milk Products	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total Fat Reduced Milk	132	132	-3.3%	-3.3%
Total Organic Milk Products	**246**	**246**	**-3.3**	**-3.3**

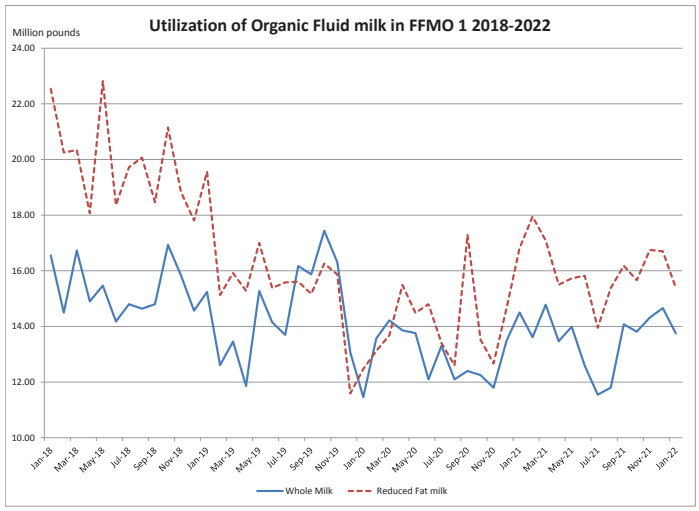
ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

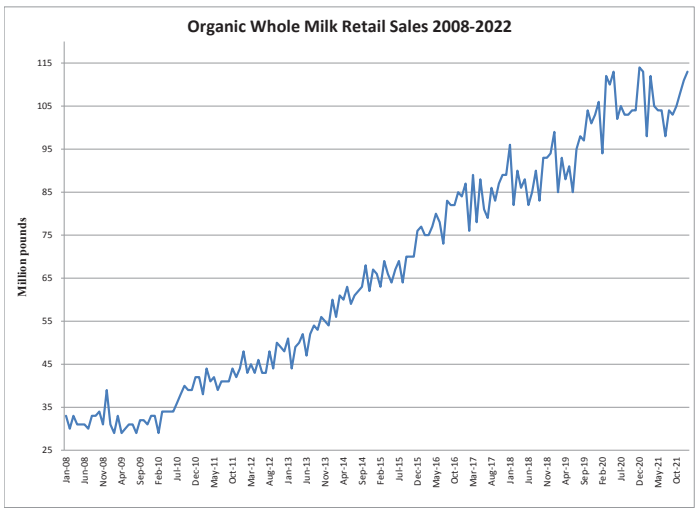












ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Pay And Feed Prices - March/April 2022

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UTILIZATION OF ORGANIC FLUID MILK PRODUCTS AND CREAM BY POOL PLANTS (Million pounds) - NORTHEAST

	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2022	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2021	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2020	Increase/Decrease of 2022 over 2021	Increase/Decrease of 2021 over 2020
JANUARY	29.14	31.32	23.93	-7%	31%
FEBRUARY		31.56	26.69		18%
MARCH		31.87	27.90		14%
APRIL		28.97	29.35		-1%
MAY		29.72	28.25		5%
JUNE		28.41	26.90		6%
JULY		25.50	26.70		-4%
AUGUST		27.18	24.70		10%
SEPTEMBER		30.26	29.70		2%
OCTOBER		29.47	25.78		14%
NOVEMBER		31.07	24.47		27%
DECEMBER		31.36	28.13		11%
ANNUAL		356.68	322.50		11%

In the northeast, the utilization of organic milk in January 2022 was 7 percent below January 2021. The utilization of organic milk in the northeast was skewed with the pandemic, and the total for January 2022 was approximately 6 million pounds higher than January 2020. As we have written before, its time that we have more detail and greater information on organic dairy sales.

The CROPP Cooperative Board of Directors passed an increase in Pay Price of $0.25/cwt per hundred pounds nationwide starting with March 2022 milk. This increase is split evenly between Butterfat and Protein in their component pricing. The Board has also decided to shrink the number of regions in the cooperative to three. That means they will have a West, Central, and East division. The Northeast pay schedule is going up half way to the New England price (12.5 cents approximately).

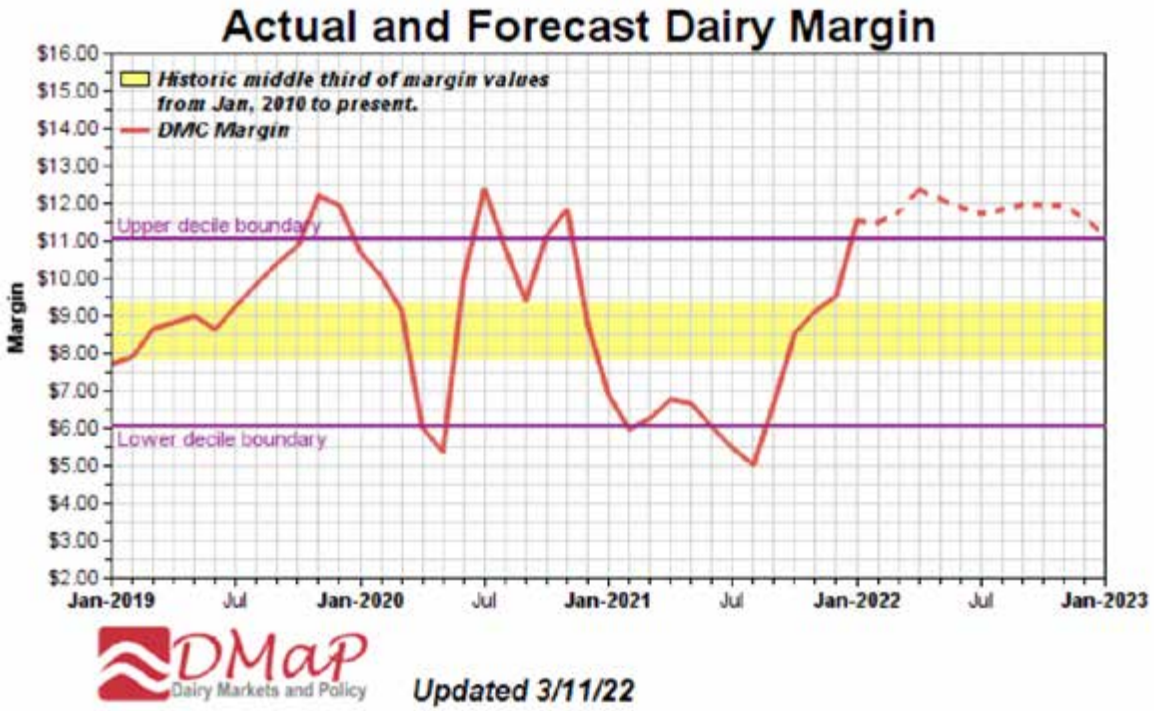
Maple Hill is extending the contracts for 22 of the farms they had planned to drop in June 2022. They are passing the increase in trucking and balancing on to their retail customers rather than passing it on to their farmers. They do not yet know what affect that will have on sales which will in turn affect their utilization of their milk as organic retail and their profitability.

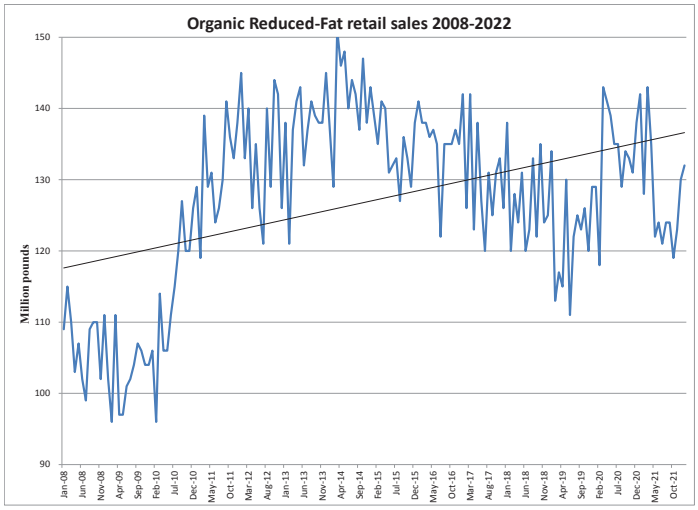
Trucking is obviously eating away at the processors' margins as is for any purchased feed for producers. The trucking cost is likely to improve slowly but the situation in the Balkans will make any improvement on the costs of corn and soybean very slow.

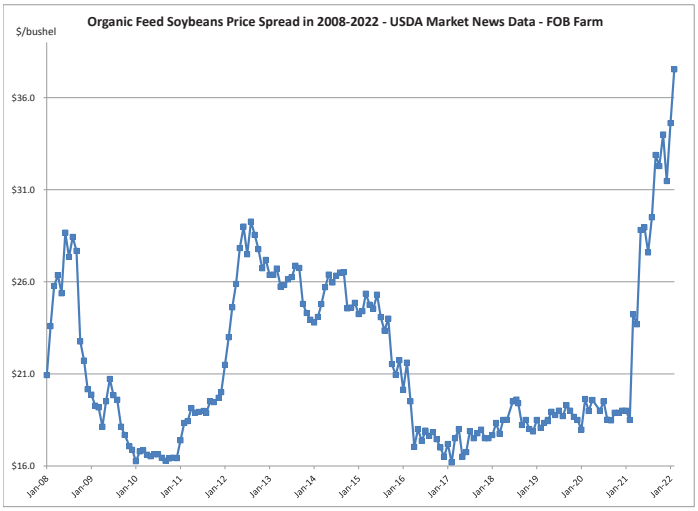
In Diane Bothfeld's (Director of Administrative Services, IV and Dairy Policy, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets) Dairy Summary, she reports that the USDA has changed its website and the two graphs show possible margins for 2022. At this time, the predicted margins for all of 2022 looks to be above the $9.50 trigger level for USDA's Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) risk management program. The sign-up period for 2022 ends on March 25, 2022. Be aware that conventional milk prices are high but so are feed prices, which may impact these predictions.

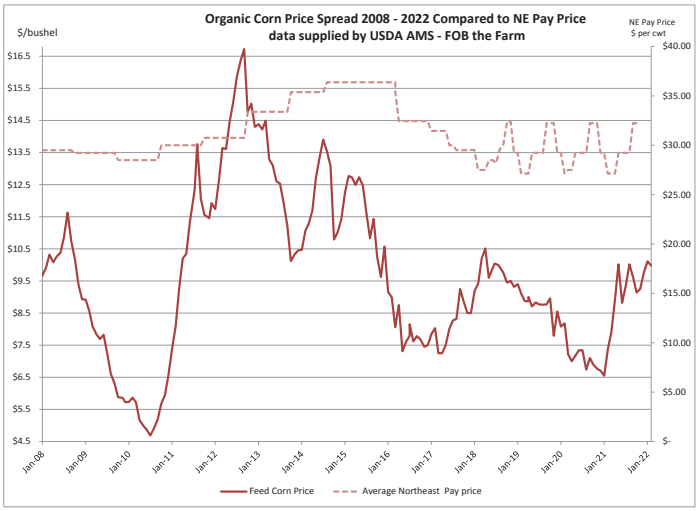
The graph on the top of page 29 is from March 4 and 11, 2022.◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS









ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Genetic Diversity of the Jersey Breed

A Partnership between University of Minnesota Researchers and a Minnesota Company aims to Make Farming More Sustainable

By Brad Heins, Associate Professor, Dairy Associate Professor, Dairy Management,

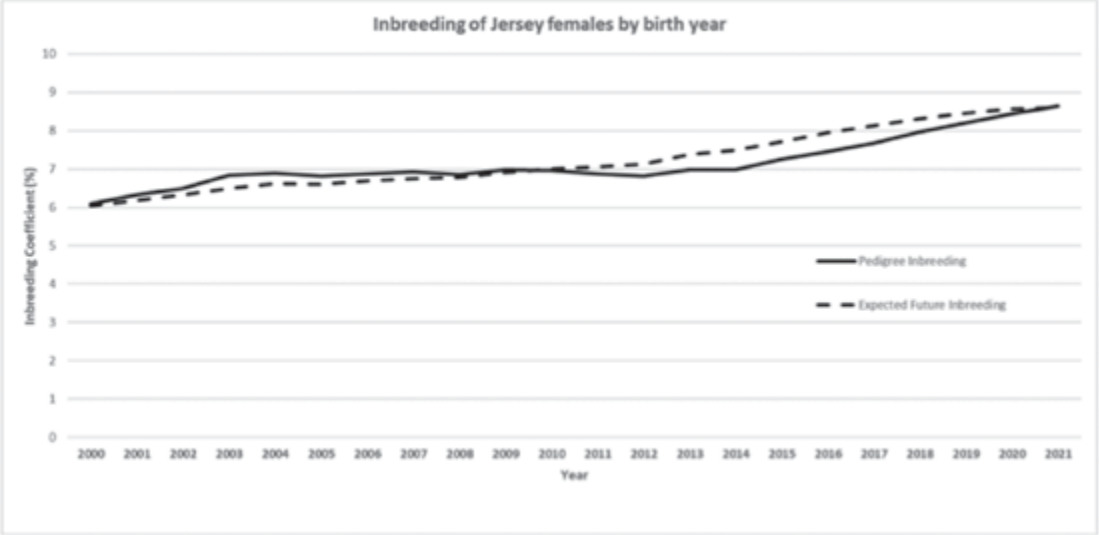
West Central ROC, University of Minnesota

This article first appeared in the March 2022 issue of News from the WROC, and is reprinted here with permission.

There has been a lot of chatter lately about inbreeding within the Holstein breed. An early estimate of average inbreeding for Holstein females born in 2021 is 9.1%, with an average yearly increase of 0.3 to 0.4 per year. The average inbreeding has surpassed the recommended inbreeding coefficient of 6.25% that minimizes the negative consequences for fertility, health, and mortality. Inbreeding occurs when closely related sires and dams are mated and there is an increase in the probability that the two genes at the same locus on the chromosome are identical by descent. An increase of homozygous genotypes and a decrease of heterozygous genotypes may lead to higher frequency of harmful recessive alleles and animals are subjected to inbreeding depression.

Jersey represented the second largest breed within the United States and still sees tremendous growth for commercial milk production. Recent research had indicated that all North American Jersey bulls can be traced back to 2 Jersey bulls, Secret Signal Observer (born 1953) and Advancer Sleeping Jester (born 1951). Two of Observers sons, Observer Chocolate Soldier and S.S. Quicksilver of Fallneva (both born in the 1960s) have a relationship of 14.4% and 12.8%, respectively. Quicksilver

ORGANIC PRODUCTION



is found in lineage of Highland Magic Duncan and Chocolate Soldier is found in Mason Boomer Sooner Berretta and his sire Soldierboy Boomer Sooner of CJF, to name a few great Jersey bulls.

Jester is found in Q Impuls (born 1989) and Meadow Lawn J Imperial and Vaucluse Sleeping Surville. Enough of the reminiscing about popular Jersey bulls of yesteryear. There is not much talk about inbreeding in the Jersey breed and what the solution may be to minimize the increase in inbreeding within Jerseys.

The table has the average pedigree inbreeding and expected future inbreeding for Jerseys females by birth year. From 2000 to 2003, the average yearly increase in inbreeding was +0.25%. Inbreeding plateaued from 2003 to 2014, and this could be due to a few factors. This could partly be due to the Gratitude cow that was found to have 20% red-carrier Holstein genes in her pedigree. Some of her sons (Gannon and Garden) were used heavily in the Jersey breed. This "leveling-off" of average inbreeding could also be due to the Danish Jersey influence of Lemvig and Impuls, although Lemvig is sired by Highland Duncan Lester who has a high relationship to the Jersey breed despite being born in 1985. However, from 2014 to 2021, there is an accelerated increase in average inbreeding. The average increase is +0.23 per year and estimates from 2021 have the average inbreeding level of Jersey females at 8.64%. This is well above the 6.25% threshold to minimize the effects of inbreeding depression that include loss of fertility and increased genetic defects. The average increase in inbreeding is currently slower than that of Holsteins (+0.4%); however, pedigree inbreeding level of females is very close to Holstein (9.1%). At the continued rate of increase, inbreeding level of Jerseys should be 10% within 5 years.

A new genetic defect has been discovered in the Jersey breed (neuropathy with splayed forelimbs (JNS)) which carries a frequency of 8.2%, and currently Chrome and Listowel-P are carriers of JNS and have probably increased its frequency with heavy use. When I was in graduate school, I personally had a Jersey calf born in July 2008 that displayed this condition; however, we thought that it might have been Limber Legs. I worked with the AJCA to get the calf gnomically tested, and recently I discovered that this calf was one of 16 calves that helped discover this new genetic defect.

Highland Magic Duncan still has enormous influence on the Jersey breed. His current relationship to Jerseys is 20.4%. Many of the top Jersey bulls that we all know have had great influence on the Jersey breed and highly related to Jersey cows and include the likes of Berretta, Lester, Action, Paramount, Valentino. Some might say that there has to be outcross genetics in the Jersey breed. Well, maybe, maybe not. The Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding publishes a list of high genetic merit Jersey bulls with low relationship to the breed. Of the top 20 bulls, 7 are Danish Jersey bulls and 13 are JX bulls. We can debate the merit of Danish Jersey and JX bulls another time. However, the Danish Jerseys are great commercial cows that are moderate-sized with high fat and protein and excellent fertility. I've seen them in their homeland, and they would fit well for commercial milk production in the US.

So, how do we stop this increase in inbreeding and potential loss of genetic diversity in the Jersey breed? That question does not have an easy answer. However, we need to have a concerted effort on increasing genetic diversity in breeding programs, in sire selection on farms, and continue to make genetic diversity a top goal to improve the Jersey breed. ◆

Dr. Brad Heins can be reached at hein0106@umn.edu.

Calendar

Monday, April 11, 2022, 2:00pm - 3:00pm

INSECT-EATING BIRDS SUPPORTED BY NEST BOXES, BUILDINGS AND PERCHES

(FARMLAND FLYWAYS SERIES WEBINAR)

https://www.wildfarmalliance.org/bird_training_lesson_all_10 once you RSVP, a Zoom link will arrive in the confirmation email. Cost: Free

Presenters: Dr. Melanie Truan, UC Davis, Robyn Bailey, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, and Jo Ann Baumgartner, WFA

Upon successfully completing this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Determine which birds are present and how they could be supported by farms in different agricultural regions when using eBird
- Evaluate various nest boxes and perch plans and make recommendations
- Identify where to install and not install boxes and perches
- Monitor boxes

About Wild Farms Alliance's Farmland Flyways series:

This virtual course teaches agricultural professionals and farmers how to support beneficial birds and manage pest birds on farms, including specific practices to use during the shorter periods when they cause damage. The sessions cover the latest research, tools and resources, and are given by experts in avian pest control, entomology, ornithology and conservation.

This FREE 5-track course, made up of 10 online classes, is designed for agricultural professionals who work with farmers and farmers themselves. One or all of the hour-long classes can be viewed live, or watched later, to build your knowledge base on how farms can be designed with bird pest management services in mind. Each class will feature short presentations with plenty of time for discussion and interaction with peers.

April 13, 2022, 6:30pm - 8:00pm

INTRODUCTION TO PASTURE MANAGEMENT, CCE NIAGARA TRAINING CENTER, 4487 LAKE AVE, LOCKPORT, NY

Join Nancy Glazier from Cornell University's NWNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Team for an overview of pasture management. Topics include the basics of infrastructure, rotation, forage species and growth patterns, and fertility. There will be a follow-up pasture walk during the grazing season to learn more out in the field. This workshop is ideal for established and beginning farmers. Hosted by Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops. For more information, contact Nancy Glazier, 585-315-7746.The cost to attend the workshop is $10/person. Register online or contact Darlene Farnham at 716-433-8839 ext. 224 or email: djf18@cornell.edu.

Sunday, April 17, 2022, 12:00pm - 1:00pm

DAIRY HERD MANAGEMENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WEBINAR

Register at https://bit.ly/3GiSetg

Cost: Free

The DBIC Team (Tony Kitsos, Whitney Hull, Kelsie Meehan, and Zac Smith) will provide free on-farm technical assistance for Vermont farm business owners and managers. Hosting monthly meetings February through May 2022. Contact: Learn more about or register for this and other spring 2022 farmer webinars at https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Northwest-Crops-and-Soils-Program/2022%20Events/Organic%20Dairy%20Webinars/2022_Online_Dairy_Webinars_Flyer_Only_FINAL.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3a2GKB9OEOhH2H8DajnPGCSe4j-hPJtiHvuM4uVAkAoYkPpBvNJDkQNFU

APRIL 23, 2022, 10:00 AM - 3:30PM

FORAGE AND PASTURE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP FOR LIVESTOCK FARMERS

PIONEER CENTRAL SCHOOL, YORKSHIRE, NY

This workshop will cover setting up and managing pasture systems, and the importance of soil fertility for quality forage. It will include tractor and equipment selection, maintenance, safety and more.

Host: Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops, Nancy Glazier, 585-315-7746

April 29, 2022, 10:00am - 12:00pm

WOODCHIP PAD TOUR, CHANDLER POND FARM:

528 BURROUGHS RD, SOUTH WHEELOCK, VT

Cost: Free

Woodchip pads are a livestock holding area that uses screened woodchips as a surface material instead of concrete. This practice can help protect pastures during sensitive times of year, increase animal comfort, can be less expensive than the concrete alternative, and can help protect clean water.

Come see this innovative conservation practice in action at Chandler Pond Farm. Joshua Faulkner (UVM) and Matt Gardner (VT Agency of Ag Engineer) will be on hand to explain the practice and answer questions. Contact: RSVP with Emily

continued on page 36

NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Farmer, NODPA Co-President

Producers expressed concern about the future cost and availability of organic grains due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Most producers who feed grain to their livestock are already struggling with steep grain prices; and according to one organic grain mill owner, things are about to get worse. Another producer commented, "…maybe this war time grain shortage will push more farmers feeding grain to ruminants to consider the 100% grass-fed alternative paradigm. It is working really well for us and I'm more and more convinced it can work on a larger amount of dairy farmers all across the Midwest and Northeast."

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

A farm has been processing and selling their milk for years and ran afoul of the National Dairy Promotion Board. Other producer/processors joined in, sharing their experiences. Their recommendations for anyone marketing their own milk: an exemption for organic milk must be applied for every six months, and milk weights reported every month. One farmer suggests that you put reminders on your calendar or alerts on your phone as they are "…uncompromising and heavy handed and basically a pain…". To find out more and to get the organic exemption form, use this link: https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/research-promotion/dairy.

The NOP announced the 2022 amendments to the list of allowed substances in organic production. Substances on the list are regularly reviewed to determine if there may be better products to take their place, or if the products should no longer be used in organics. There was some confusion among producers when it was announced that kelp had been removed from the list but that was referring to non-organic kelp for use in food products. So for those of us feeding kelp to animals, nothing has changed because kelp for livestock feeding was required to be organic back in 2014. ◆

Classified Ads

ANIMALS

FOR SALE: 7 Certified Organic Jersey Bred Heifers from award winning low SCC/high component herd. A2/A2 certified. Due late May through late October. Priced to sell. Contact: Janine Putnam 802-457-1884, janinethistlehillfarm@gmail.com

Location: North Pomfret, VT

FOR SALE: 2 Registered Certified Organic Jersey Bred Heifers. Due in Early April. $1350/each. We have additional heifers available due throughout the year. Holyoke Farm, holyokefarm@gmail.com, 802-752-7169.

Location: Saint Albans, Vermont

FOR SALE: Seventy certified organic Jersey milk cows. Sixty certified organic heifers of all ages. $2000.00 or less depending on age and quality. Contact Steve Morrison at 207-944-3038, smccrest@gmail.com

Location: Charleston, Maine

FOR SALE: 10 certified Bred Heifers Due March 20 - July 18 at 22-24 months old. Four registered Jersey, 4 mostly Jersey, 2 Jersey Cross. No grain since May, could be transitioned to grassmilk. All are AI bred to Stoney, sired by high component Jersey AI bulls. Good body condition since they have been eating dairy hay and pasture after the milking herd was sold last spring. Friendly- most are halter trained. $1200 each (half the cost of raising them) Call Brian 802-623-6584 drbrianhowlett@gmail.com.

Location: Whiting Vermont

FEED, GRAIN, HAY FOR SALE / WANTED TO BUY

FOR SALE: Certified organic hay. Wrapped round bales of Clover, Timothy and mixed grasses. Delivery available or pick up at farm. Please call Matt at 802-558-3879, maplesugarfarm2015@yahoo.com

Location: Tinmouth, Vermont

FOR SALE: NOFA-NY Certified Organic BALEAGE (Mixed grass and Alfalfa) 1 & 2 cuts, 4 x 4 Round bales. DRY HAY (mixed grass) 1st cut - varying qualities, 4 x 4 1/2 Round bales. Also, BEDDING HAY. Contact Jeff @ Mitchell Farm 607-566-8477 or Mitchellorganics@Hotmail.com.

Location: Avoca, NY-Steuben County

FOR SALE:Certified NOFA-NY Organic Hay. 54-58" round bales, dry, stored inside. Also line wrapped bales. 1st, 2nd, 3rd cuttings. $45-$60/bale Bedding hay also available. Call Ed 315-778-3605 to learn about specific pricing, availability and delivery options.

Location: LaFargeville--Northern New York

FOR SALE: 300+ tons of second and third cut haylage, average quality.$40.00 ton at bunk. 100+ first and third cut balage $40.00 per bale. Contact Patrick and Melanie Harrison, 802-759-2605 or email: Ptpatrick@gmavt.net.

Location: Addison Vermont

EQUIPMENT

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE: Trans Iowa Swing 10 Milking Parlor. Swing Arms, Meters, Vacuum Pump, Wash Setup, Pre-Cooler, Crowd Gate. Complete Setup DeLaval equipment. 5 years old. $30,000 OBO. Holyoke Farm, holyokefarm@gmail.com, 802-752-7169.

Location: Saint Albans, Vermont

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE: Batch Bottle Washer, perfect for small creamery. Used to wash Wide Mouth Ball Jars and can be used for Stanpac bottles. 304 Stainless 3 hp motor with VFD drive and phase conversion. $20K. Contact Michael Busselberg, michael@purifyingpastures.com 435-770-9262.

Location: Knoxville, Maryland

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

The Long Awaited Origin of Livestock Rule is Published

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(i)Such breeder stock must be brought onto the operation no later than the last third of gestation if their offspring are to be raised as organic livestock; and

(ii)Such breeder stock must be managed organically throughout the last third of gestation and the lactation period during which time they may nurse their own offspring.

(b) The following are prohibited:

(1)Livestock that are removed from an organic operation and subsequently managed or handled on a nonorganic operation may not be sold, labeled, or represented as organic.

(2)Breeder stock, dairy animals, or transitioned animals that have not been under continuous organic management since the last third of gestation may not be sold, labeled, or represented as organic slaughter stock.

(c)The producer of an organic livestock operation must maintain records sufficient to preserve the identity of all organically managed animals, including whether they are transitioned animals, and edible and nonedible animal products produced on the operation.

(d)**A request for a variance** to allow sourcing of transitioned animals between certified operations must adhere to the following:

(1)A variance from the requirement to source dairy animals that have been under continuous organic management from the last third of gestation, as stated in§205.236(a)(2), may be granted by the Administrator to certified operations that are small businesses, as determined in 13 CFR Part 121, for any of the following reasons:

(i)The certified operation selling the transitioned animals is part of a bankruptcy proceeding or a forced sale; or

(ii)The certified operation has become insolvent, must liquidate its animals, and as a result has initiated a formal process to cease its operations; or

(iii)The certified operation wishes to conduct an intergenerational transfer of transitioned animals to an immediate family member.

(2)A certifying agent must request a variance on behalf of a certified operation, in writing, to the Administrator within ten days of receiving the request of variance from the operation. The variance request shall include documentation to demonstrate one or more of the circumstances listed in paragraph (d)(1) of this section.

(3)The Administrator will provide written notification to the certifying agent and to the operation(s) involved as to whether the variance is granted or rejected.

Section 205.237 is amended by revising paragraph (a) to read as follows:

§ 205.237 Livestock feed.

(a) The producer of an organic livestock operation must provide livestock with a total feed ration composed of agricultural products, including pasture and forage, that are organically produced and handled by operations certified under this part, except as provided in §§205.236(a)(2)(iii) and 205.236(a)(3), except, that, synthetic substances allowed under §205.603 and nonsynthetic substances not prohibited under §205.604 may be used as feed additives and feed supplements, Provided, That, all agricultural ingredients included in the ingredients list, for such additives and supplements, shall have been produced and handled organically.

Section 205.239 is amended by revising paragraph (a)(3) to read as follows:

§ 205.239 Livestock living conditions.

(a) ***

(3) Appropriate clean, dry bedding. When roughages are used as bedding, they shall have been organically produced in accordance with this part by an operation certified under this part, except as provided in §205.236(a)(2)(iii), and, if applicable, organically handled by operations certified under this part. ◆

Photo: Amber Kipp, Unsplash

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)
c/o Ed Maltby
30 Keets Road
Deerfield, MA 01342

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Calendar

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Finnegan, Caledonia Country Natural Resources Conservation District at 802-424-3149 or Emily.finnegan@vt.nacdnet.net. Also see the accompanying flyer https://caledoniadistrict.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Woodchip-pad-tour-flyer-3-22-22.pdf.

SAVE THE DATE!

The 2022 NOFA Summer Conference will be happening in person at Hampshire College in Amherst, MA August 5-7, 2022.

This year's conference theme is Decolonizing and Regrowing Food Systems – The Work of Our Time and we hope you'll join us to explore this and many other rich topics with your peers.

We feel confident that we'll be able to gather in person this August. We've appreciated the expansion of community and accessibility that meeting online has offered us, and will continue to offer some workshop material online. We will make preparations during our planning process to shift to a fully online conference if circumstances change. Registration opens May 2, 2022! For more information or to see updated news, visit https://nofasummerconference.org/