NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Member Info

The Stauderman Family: Karl, Tiffany, Klara and Lydia.

FEATURED FARM: STAUDERMAN FARM, GROTON, NY

Owned and operated by Karl and Tiffany Stauderman

Changing to Grow: Expanding the Family Dairy

By Tamara Scully, NODPA News Contributing Writer

Karl Stauderman's father, Philip, began the family business of farming on a small farm growing sweet corn and soybeans in New Jersey. After moving the family to Central New York, he continued to farm, switching from row crops to feeder pigs. That enterprise soon evolved into a heifer rearing outfit. In 1988, Philip began a dairy farm, operating out of a rented 38 cow

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Ask the Vet

Question: My veterinarian wants me to culture my cases of mastitis, what's the point if we are organic and can't treat?

Dayna Locitzer, DVM, answers the question submitted by one of our readers. Please see page 4 for more about Doctor Locitzer and her practice serving clients in the Northeast.

My short answer to this is that if you don't know what is causing your problem, you have no way to prevent it. My long answer is what follows.

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Message from NODPA Co-President

"A dollar saved is a dollar earned" as the saying goes. Unless it's not. I've been seeing much about cost cutting and feeding less grain with the high feed prices this past year. It makes me worried about being overly cost conscious and not margin conscious. (The sticker shock for a load of high protein feed can be real.)

I don't quite agree with the idea of spending less if what you're spending the money on has a quick and positive return. Soybeans, for instance, have been the most volatile of the organic feeds the past couple of years.

On our farm, we have strategized how to feed less or even possibly eliminate feeding soy in our dairy ration. We didn't chop any corn this year so that we don't have to make up for the low protein forage. We did our first cutting a week earlier than normal to try and make sure we hit our haylage protein and digestibility goals. We came in just under our 20% CP goal.

Even with these changes, I've found we still need a little added protein in the ration and the added milk in this case more than offsets the added cost. In our case, feeding about two pounds per cow of roasted soybeans has a positive return and a quick payback time and turning that one dollar into something more than one dollar. This is with the current prices for organic soy softening as of late. Had I spent this dollar on $1700-1800/ton soy, it would have been about a wash.

One projection I always like to look at is expected pounds of milk per pound of grain fed and then use this to figure out how many pounds of milk it needs to make to pay for itself. I then watch production after the ration change to make sure it pans out as expected. When adding or subtracting protein in the ration, we see a very fast milk response in our herd when compared to energy changes. Sometimes the expectation can be pretty far from the actual result.

In summation, even if prices are high for certain inputs, it's all about the margins and knowing your true costs and returns on those costs to know if that "dollar saved is a dollar earned" or if that dollar not spent actually just cost you $1.30 off your next milk check. One last thing to always be sure to think about in these calculations is finance charges. If you're paying interest on the dollar spent, that has to be accounted for.

Kirk Arnold, NODPA Co-President
Truxton, NY | Phone: 607-842-6631, Email: kickaha21@gmail.com

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the NODPA Desk:

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Beginning of a new year, hopefully not like the last one. Those producers that are reading this have, undoubtedly had a bad year. Whether it was disastrous or not could well depend on the length of time you have been in organic dairy, your debt service and the size of the operation. Some dairies will not be producing organic milk in 2023, either deciding to retire from the daily, unprofitable work or returning to conventional dairy where costs are lower and risk management better, or on the advice or lender and family, selling their cows and/or land. Natural attrition from age or family reasons is expected but the anticipated level of organic dairy farms leaving in 2022 and 2023 will be higher than usual across the country. Some estimate 25% and others, even higher.

Why is this possible with such a high retail price? Milk buyers have a variety of reasons all very relevant to their business model. For example:

- 'Our owners are multinationals that set a return on investment that we must meet.'
- 'The logistics of picking up milk from small farms no longer works.'
- 'We are held captive by the high charges that processors charge because of a shortage of processing.'
- 'We don't control retail prices, retailers do.'
- 'We are tied to bad contracts.'

Finally, I will add two more:

- In Aurora Organic Dairy's 2022 Sustainability Report as of March 2022 they had 21,200 milking cows at 9 locations with 2 dedicated processing plants. Their ESG scoring was well developed, very detailed and, of course, excellent.
- Buyers have an adequate milk supply from outside the region.

I hope everyone is signed up for the Dairy Margin Coverage since they project payments in 2023. The Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP) is dependent on loss of gross revenue not net income, which does not fit the situation for organic dairy. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is accepting applications for PARP from Jan. 23, 2023 to June 2, 2023 for the years 2020 and 2021. I do not expect that FSA will be able to find a relevant program for organic dairy quickly, so do not anticipate any emergency payments soon. A full safety net organic dairy program will have to come through legislation, probably the Farm Bill, which won't become law until the end of 2023 and be available sometime in 2024. ◆

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Ask the Vet *continued from page 1*

Question: My veterinarian wants me to culture my cases of mastitis, what's the point if we are organic and can't treat?

I just returned from a farm on this rainy December day, and I noted how wet it was outside and because of that, how wet it was inside the barn. When I see that, what immediately comes to mind is that these are prime conditions for mastitis. The warm, wet conditions of the inside of a barn on a rainy day are the perfect growth media for certain mastitis causing bacteria. These bacteria are categorized as environmental pathogens, and if you know you are dealing with these pathogens you will look at your wet barn with a more critical eye.

But let's rewind for a second. As organic dairy farmers, you are unable to treat intramammary infections (aka mastitis) with antibiotics and maintain that cow as organic. While this initially might sound like a handicap, it really isn't because most mastitis causing pathogens are not even treatable with intramammary antibiotics. About 30% of cultures are no-growth; 30% are gram-negative bacteria, which are not susceptible to antibiotics; and 30% are gram-positive, some of which are not susceptible to antibiotics. This culture information is helpful when you are using pathogen based antibiotic therapy, but it is also helpful when trying to troubleshoot mastitis on your farm.

As I stated above, 30% of samples will come back as no-growth. This means the immune system of the cow likely has already waged war against the bacteria and successfully eliminated the invaders. While this result can be frustrating, it also means that your cow's immune system is robust and doing its job.

Then there are 30% of samples that will be reported as gram-negative, these are typically E.coli and Klebsiella spp. bacteria. These bacteria do not respond to the intramammary antibiotics available to food producing animals and conveniently will often self cure. Both of these bacteria are considered environmental pathogens, but knowing which of these bacteria you have will give you clues as to what area of the farm to target as the cause.

E. coli is your run of the mill bacteria found in manure that can cause mild mastitis all the way to severe toxic coliform mastitis. Environments where manure is not managed well are at risk of causing E.coli mastitis. If you are seeing cultures come back as E.coli, you should consider cleaning bedding areas and alleyways more often, effectively removing debris from udders before machine attachment, and using an appropriate pre-dip. You might also want to consider vaccinating to prevent E.coli mastitis. These vaccines reduce the incidence and severity of disease and have cross protection against other gram negative mastitis causing pathogens, including Klebsiella spp.

If you receive a Klebsiella spp. positive sample, all the above precautions are also effective, but the source of this bacteria often comes from sawdust. In these situations you should evaluate the quality of your sawdust to make sure it is refreshed often and is clean and dry. You should also look into getting kiln-dried sawdust, which poses less risk for Klebsiella overgrowth.

The last 30% will culture as gram-positive. There are many different species of bacteria in this category, but to name a few: Streptococcus uberis, Lactococcus spp, Staphylococcus aureus, Streptococcus agalactiae, Streptococcus dysgalactiae, Enterococcus spp. and Non-Aureus Staphylococcus spp. To break this category down a little further you have environmental-gram positives and contagious gram-positives. The environmental gram-positives generally include Strep. uberis, Lactococcus spp, Strep. dysgalactiae, and Enterococcus, and to prevent these bugs from causing mastitis the same principles as E.coli prevention apply: making sure bedding areas and alleyways are as clean and dry as possible. In the case of a positive Strep. uberis, straw bedding can often be a culprit, so take extra caution if that is what you use. Unlike the gram-negatives, these gram-positive bacteria typically don't cause toxic mastitis, but they are also less likely to self cure. In these situations, I would recommend treating with your organic treatment of choice because not addressing it can cause long term high somatic cell count and animal welfare concerns.

As for the gram positive contagious pathogens, including Staph. aureus and Strep. agalactiae, these bugs are host-adapted and thrive in the environment inside the udder. It is very important that you know you are dealing with these bacteria because they spread from one cow to another and cause chronic infections. To prevent cows from contracting these pathogens and from spreading them, strategies related to milking time should be employed. Gloves should be worn; vacuum level should be appropriate; teat ends should be healthy; and a strong post dip should be used. Cows that are known to be positive for these pathogens should be milked last and be considered for culling. If you want to learn more about Staph. aureus, ask me and I can write a whole column on Staph. aureus control!

The last 10% are less common pathogens but are equally important to know about. These include Mycoplasma spp., Prototheca, and Pseudomonas spp. to name a few. Getting a positive of one of these less common pathogens is important

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Ask the Vet *continued from page 4*

Question: My veterinarian wants me to culture my cases of mastitis, what's the point if we are organic and can't treat?

because they also have unique implications for your herd health. I would suggest doing a bulk tank culture to see if they are present in your herd.

As you can see, it is important to know what pathogen is causing mastitis in your herd because it helps you target efforts to prevent future infections. It will also help you understand the trends on your farm. Do you constantly have an issue with E. coli? Maybe you should make sure the cows have manure free udders, which means cleaning walkways and beds more often. Maybe your overall cell count has been creeping up. Do you have a contagious pathogen making its way through your herd? Now the question is, what cows should you culture?

I think it is wise to culture all new clinical cases. This means cows that do not have a history of mastitis during this lactation and all of a sudden have a spike in somatic cell count and/or have abnormal milk. I also suggest culturing a cow with chronically high somatic cell count that doesn't necessarily have abnormal milk. This is a situation where you might find Staph. aureus. Some folks culture all fresh cows as a way to screen cows for Staph. aureus.

I hope this gives you a better understanding of when and why to culture your cows. Take a minute and look around your barn and milking area. Can you take a guess as to what mastitis pathogens might be present in your system? Ask your veterinarian (or me) if you are interested in learning more about this and adding culturing to your mastitis protocols. If you know your enemy, you will be better equipped to fight it. ◆

To submit a question to Ask the Vet, email Nora Owens, NODPA News Editor *noraowens@comcast.net*

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Dayna Locitzer, DVM

We are excited to announce that Ask the Vet will become a regular column beginning in this issue of the NODPA News. We welcome Dr. Dayna Locitzer, DVM, and thank her for generously giving her time to answer your questions. If you have a question, please see information for sending in that question at the end of the column.

Dr. Dayna Locitzer has over 10 years of experience working with pasture-based dairies in the Northeast. Before starting veterinary school, Dr. Locitzer worked for 6 years on organic dairy farms in the Hudson Valley of New York including Hawthorne Valley Farm, Chaseholm Farm, and Churchtown Dairy. It was during that time that she developed a passion for herd health and decided to go to vet school at Cornell University. After graduating, Dr. Locitzer began working at Green Mountain Bovine Clinic in Chesterfield, NH where she treats cows, goats, sheep, alpaca, pigs and horses. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

The Organic Dairy Opportunity

By Jerry Snyder, organic dairy farmer, retired • Sunny Cove Farm, Alfred Station, NY

Occasionally, NODPA invite producers to submit articles relevant to organic dairy. The information and opinions are that of the writer, and don't necessarily reflect that of NODPA.

The Organic Milk Market brought new hope to small family farms in the past 20 years. Recently, the flooding of the organic market has led to contract terminations and a lagging pay price. In November 2021, NOFA-NY mailed 691 surveys to organic producers and found their biggest challenges were low milk prices, high hauling costs, and rising input costs. Other challenges were limited opportunities to sell milk and dairy products and market instability. When these farmers were asked about their vision for the future, 68% wanted a market and regulatory improvements to:

- Support small farms processors and local markets
- Regulate large farms and end government support from Big Agriculture
- Improving market fairness, competition, and access

I would like to thank NOFA-NY and the Organic Farmers Association for their efforts to pinpoint the issues. For full survey results visit www.nofany.org/policy-news/2021-NYS-dairy-producer-survey.

We can see that the overwhelming concerns of the farmers in the market regulations of the organic milk market were designed to offset the economies of scale advantage that large CAFO dairies have over small family farms. The built-in protection was the pasture rule. It is a challenge to raise large numbers of cows and milk them twice a day while meeting the pasture requirement. When this rule was not enforced, the price was ruined.

Therefore, the small family organic dairy needs a market that is local and focused on the quality of the milk. The desire of the consumer led to the creation of the organic milk market. The consumer did not want hormones, herbicides, and cows kept inside. The consumer wants your milk directly sold to them as 3 million people are regularly consuming raw milk.

Would it make sense to sell our milk locally and make yogurt, butter, and cheese with what we have left? I drove to a Pennsylvania farm that is bottling raw milk, making yogurt, butter, and cheese as well as two or three other dairies' milk.

Instead of losing money in the present market, let's create a local food system and invite the consumers to help us get it up and running. We have been selling raw milk since 1978. A tapper for your own bulk tank and a raw milk permit from Ag and Markets in New York State could allow you to sell some of your milk directly to Consumers. If you want to ship your milk, let's join together to bargain with the buyer. Many farmers are hesitant to speak about the hauling cost, but if we join together and agree that the cost of hauling should be paid by the company that purchases the milk and have a spokesperson meet and request to end all the hauling costs charged to the farmers, we can terminate that deduct from the milk check. Sounds too simple? Would you be willing to give it a try? We all pay the freight when we buy anything and I know trucking is expensive but the milk company can raise the retail price of milk to pay the milk haulers instead of taking it from the producer.

Phil Howard wrote about the concentration and power in the food system in *The Natural Farmer Winter 2022-2023 Edition*. He wrote that in the U.S., we have 2 million farmers producing food and almost 300 million people who eat that food. In between the farmer and the consumer are a much smaller number of firms that control how that food gets from farmers to eaters. These firms infiltrate government agencies with influential decision-makers, and we are experiencing this in organic dairy. Also, these firms manipulate the alternatives from which society is allowed to choose. There are two ways to overcome these situations. The first is to address the political system to open up the local markets, support farm processing, regulate large farms, and end government support for Big Ag. One idea would solve the uneven cost of production between small and large farms, perhaps with a possible Dairy Farm Structure Program as described below.

Dairy Farm Structure Program:

- o Use the federal milk orders to pay the extra $5/cwt on the first 1 million pounds produced each month. Reallocate the remaining amount equally. This program:
    1. Does not increase the cost to consumers
    2. Does not require taxpayer money
    3. Federal order system already in place to administer it

The second way to bypass large food companies is to sell directly to consumers.

In *Crisis and Opportunity*, John Ikerd explains that our industrial food system has brought abundant cheap food at the expense of our environment; including soil erosion, water pollution, etc. We have lost our rural economies as farms fail and the social fabric of our nation is unraveling. Ikerd sees the industrial model

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failing and being replaced by sustainable organic farming. We, as consumers, have experienced the empty meat counters in our grocery stores when Covid broke out and the large meat packers closed due to worker illness. Farmers euthanized hogs and dumped milk because our long supply chain was broken. The farmer had the food, but the consumers couldn't get it. A new local food system connects farmers and consumers and would eliminate all the expensive transportation and processing. Farmers could set their prices and diversify their farms to increase the sales and profits. Many farms are adding chickens and selling eggs. The options are abundant and unlimited.

In a poll taken in Lancaster Farming Newspaper:

1. How do you feel about raw milk? It is a healthy product and farmers should be allowed to sell it if they want to. It is under regulated and damages the reputation of the entire dairy industry. All milk should be pasteurized. Whole milk is more important to promote than raw milk.

Results:

1. 97.1%
2. 7%
3. .8%
4. 1.4%

Fluid milk consumption from 1975 to 2020 declined by over 40%. Why do we take this delicious organic raw milk and truck it to be ultra-pasteurized and lose money?

I have been meeting with Albany several times over the past 15 years with little results. I write this article in hopes that all will be encouraged about the current crisis we are all experiencing. It is here today to bring us all together to see the opportunity and seize it. I started milking cows with my dad in 1978, and bought the farm on a land contract when I got married. It was not long and financial pressure had me looking for work in the help wanted ads for another job. I love farming– the cows, the fieldwork, the time with my family, and the freedom to dream and see it come to pass. I was lying on the couch asking God what I should do and the only answer I got was to **milk cows!** I did not like that answer but continued farming. Soon the organic milk market came and those same cows giving me $10/cwt milk were bringing in $20/cwt. The best years of my life could have been lost if I had not changed the market.

I am retired now and my son is under the same financial pressure we all are experiencing. In my 45 years of milking cows, God has never failed to provide. The organic model of farming was new to New York State around 2000, and it changed the way we farmed but not the retail of our products. Now, this is the time to connect directly with consumers to change the marketing end. I am in need of help to form this Raw Milk Association to meet with Albany as well as big dairy companies. I called NODPA to ask if they could also be of some assistance through the process. I have many more calls to make and in asking them for help, **we are about to see a breakthrough!**

The U.S. has lost its food security and farmers with the above witnessed support of consumers (97.1%) can create a local, sustainable food system that will reflect the diversity of each farmer. What this new system will look like depends on the natural resources and gifts of each farmer. If you are interested in working with me to form a New York State Raw Milk Association, made up of producers and consumers to build a local food system with sustainable markets, feel free to contact me with the information below. ◆

Jerry Snyder, 1444 Randolph Road, Alfred Station, New York 14803, phone: 607-587-9282, email: rawmilkmove@gmail.com, www.sunnycovefarm.com

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Danone's Final Response to the Northeast Organic Community

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

At the end of December, in his final communication to the New England and New York organic community, Chris Adamo, Danone's Vice President for Public Affairs & Regenerative Agriculture Policy, spoke on behalf of Danone about their "multiple initiatives that make up our 2023 Northeast Region Investment Package." Adamo emphasized that "The package is designed to drive meaningful impact in the region and the organic farming community in both the immediate and longer term." He totaled the investment at approximately $18 million. He left many of us, and a few State Agriculture commissioners, confused about exactly who would get what, when, and how. The phrase 'smoke and mirrors' accurately describes the way they have attempted to make consumers believe that something is being done to assist Northeast organic dairy farm families when it is not.

The projects that Danone promised to implement were divided into three sections:

Partnership with Dairy Farming Co-ops and Processors

Danone plans to invest 'more' than $14 million in partnering with dairy farming co-ops and processors, to "establish new relationships with more than 50 dairy producers in Western New York." In December 2021, Danone maintained that they were going to take on 50 new organic dairy farm suppliers to replace those farms they had dumped as part of improving their trucking logistics. Is this investment geared to making these farms more efficient to improve the supply of milk to Danone, or perhaps to improve their co-op's infrastructure? How much is 'more than' the $14 million - $1 or $900,000? How can producers access this money or is it just for processors?

Market-Premium Price Payments

Danone commits to providing "direct financial support to farmers in the Northeast, along with additional pay price increases totaling approximately $3.6 million." Is this the transition payment that Danone already said it had paid to producers that they dumped or is it an increase in pay price for those farms that they took on when they dumped their existing producers?

Grants through the Organic Center

Danone committed to $500,000 in new grants, administered by The Organic Center, to "support projects connected to the future of organic dairy and Northeast farming and agriculture."

This from the website of the Organic Center, which is the non-profit arm of the Organic Trade Association, on 12/22/2022:

> **The Organic Center announces $500,000 in Funding to Advance Organic Dairy**
> The Organic Center announced $500,000 in new grant funding to support organic dairy farmers. The investment, from Horizon Organic, will be administered by The Organic Center to fund projects that meaningfully address the systemic challenges that organic dairies face by investing in the economic resilience of organic dairy, supporting activities that bring more organic dairy to more consumers, and empowering research on soil health to improve sustainability and farm profitability. The grants will be awarded through a combination of prizes to organic agriculture training professionals and organic research projects. The Organic Center will administer a request for grant applications in 2023. Recipients can include individual farms, groups representing farmers, non-profit organizations, academic institutions and universities, groups that provide agricultural technical assistance or groups that train and educate farmers on emerging agricultural topics.

This communication from Danone essentially closes the book on the campaign that producer groups in the Northeast led over the last 18 months to get some financial compensation from Danone when they arbitrarily dropped the contracts of their farmer suppliers based on an assessment of the trucking logistics. In this age of Environmental, Social, and corporate Governance (ESG) requirements that dairy companies must meet to market their products, these actions do little to repair the damage that should have been done to Danone's profile. Danone's actions did not threaten their classification as a B Corp company (B Corp Certification is a designation that a business is meeting high standards of verified performance, accountability, and transparency on factors from employee benefits and charitable giving to supply chain practices and input materials). Their shareholders tried to hold them to account but were generally disregarded. They suffered no loss of markets because of their actions. Danone's lack of transparency at every step, and their green washing, does not surprise anyone. Their actions have highlighted the problems faced by the Northeast organic dairy community that we continue to work on with support from consumers and other organic advocates. ◆

NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

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

It was a quiet time on ODairy. There was lots of news about winter conferences and meetings, some virtual, but many coming back as in-person meetings again. I hope you can spare some time to enjoy great exchanges of ideas this winter season!

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 producer asked the group how many days after breeding is a milk pregnancy test accurate. One vet replied that 45 days after breeding should give an accurate test. Blood testing can be done at 26 days.

Searching for a new program to keep the barn records up to date, a farmer asked the group for suggestions that would replace her older program that was no longer supported on the newer computers. One helpful vet responded, "the primary two are DC305, beloved by big herds for its flexibility … or PCDart, windows based and much more user friendly for small farms." There are others, some a bit pricey for small farms, others requiring more skill to set up.

Interest in crop insurance for pasture and forage crops continues to grow. To find out more about this "rainfall insurance", you can contact your local Farm Service Agency office. ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Pay and Feed Prices January/February 2023

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Product Name	Sales of Organic Fluid Milk		Change from	
	Sep-22	2022 Year to date	Sep-21	Year to date
	Million pounds		Percent	
Organic Whole Milk	113	1007	6.4%	2.7
Flavored Whole milk	1	14	-68.1%	0.1
Organic Reduced Fat Milk (2%)	79	715	-1.5%	-3.1
Organic Low Fat Milk (1%)	24	222	-6.2%	-8.2
Organic Fat Free Milk Skim	13	127	-4.1%	-6.9
Organic Flavored Fat-Reduced Milk	8	64	7.6%	-0.5
Other Fluid Organic Milk Products	0	1	4.0%	125.3
Total Fat Reduced Milk	124	1128	-2.3%	-4.4
Total Organic Milk Products	238	**2,149**	**1.1%**	**-1.2**

Product Name	Sales of Organic Fluid Milk		Change from	
	Oct-22	2022 Year to date	Oct-21	Year to date
	Million pounds		Percent	
Organic Whole Milk	116	1123	7.2	3.1%
Flavored Whole milk	1	14	-70.9	-8.00%
Organic Reduced Fat Milk (2%)	79	794	4.7	-2.4%
Organic Low Fat Milk (1%)	20	242	-18.5	-9.1%
Organic Fat Free Milk Skim	13	140	-11.2	-7.3%
Organic Flavored Fat-Reduced Milk	7	70	12.7	0.6%
Other Fluid Organic Milk Products	0	2	30.6	86.1%
Total Fat Reduced Milk	120	1248	-1.5	-4.1%
Total Organic Milk Products	**237**	**2385**	**2**	**-0.9**

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) reported that in September 2022, estimated fluid product sales of organic milk increased by 1.1% over September 2021, and an increase of 2% in October 2022 over October 2021, with a minus 0.9% for the year-to-date October 2022 over 2021. Organic whole milk sales, at 113 million pounds in September, and 116 million pounds in October, showed the greatest growth with a 3.1% growth year-to-date. Reduced fat milk sales were 124 million pounds in September, and 120 million pounds in October 2022, falling 4.1 percent from the previous year, year-to-date.

November 2022 estimated fluid product sales were reported on January 12, 2023, with sale of total organic milk products at 230 million pounds, down 4.9 percent from November 2021, and down 1.2 percent year to-date. Organic whole milk sales, 111 million pounds, were down 1.9 percent compared to a year earlier, but up 2.7 percent year-to-date. Reduced Fat Milk (2%) sales were 76 million pounds, down 6.3 percent from the previous year and down 2.8 percent year-to-date. Organic flavored whole milk sales, 1 million pounds, decreased 72.6 percent from the previous year and decreased 15.4 percent year-to-date. Flavored fat-reduced organic milk has been holding steady at between 7-8 million pounds on a monthly basis but up from 27 per cent on November 2021.

Federal Milk Market Order 1, in New England, reports utilization of types of organic milk by pool plants. During October 2022, organic whole milk utilization totaled 18.09 million pounds, up from 13.08 million pounds the previous year. The utilization of organic reduced fat milk, 16.73 million pounds, increased from 15.66 million pounds a year ago. During November 2022, organic whole milk utilization totaled 15.31 million pounds, up from 14.32 million pounds the

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Product Name	Sales of Organic Fluid Milk		Change from	
	Nov-22	2022 Year to date	Nov 2021	Year to date
	Million pounds		Percent	
Organic Whole Milk	111	1,234	-1.9	2.7%
Flavored Whole milk	1	15	-72.6	-15.4%
Organic Reduced Fat Milk (2%)	76	870	-6.3	-2.8%
Organic Low-Fat Milk (1%)	23	266	-11.7	-9.4%
Organic Fat Free Milk Skim	13	152	-11.2	-7.7%
Organic Flavored Fat-Reduced Milk	7	77	27.5	2.5%
Other Fluid Organic Milk Products	0	2	-14.3	47.5%
Total Fat Reduced Milk	119	1367	--6.6	-4.4%
Total Organic Milk Products	**230**	**2,616**	**-4.9**	**-1.2**

UTILIZATION OF ORGANIC FLUID MILK PRODUCTS AND CREAM BY POOL PLANTS (Million pounds)					
	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		-7%	31%
FEBRUARY	33.65	31.56		7%	18%
MARCH	31.56	31.87		-1%	14%
APRIL	33.23	28.97		15%	-1%
MAY	30.49	29.72		3%	5%
JUNE	31.53	28.41		11%	6%
JULY	29.44	25.50		15%	-4%
AUGUST	32.12	27.18		18%	10%
SEPTEMBER	35.00	30.26		16%	2%
OCTOBER	34.83	29.47		18%	14%
NOVEMBER	31.13	31.07		0.18%	27%
DECEMBER		31.36			11%
ANNUAL	352.12	356.68		-1%	11%

previous year. The utilization of organic reduced fat milk, 15.82 million pounds, decreased from 16.74 million pounds a year ago.

Mercaris supplies data on the average pay price for organic milk over the spot price. There was not a significant amount of trading on the Spot Market in October but some in November 2022. Processors and buyers report that organic milk is short in the Northeast.

AMS reports organic milk retail prices for selected U.S. cities. The data is collected by the Federal Milk Market Order administrators based on a survey conducted one day between the 1st and 10th of each month (excluding Fridays and weekends) in selected cities or metropolitan

U.S. Organic Dairy Prices (U.S. Dollars per CWT)		
Date	Spot Fluid Milk Price	Fluid Milk Pay Price
Mar-22	$ 33.21	$ 28.54
Apr-22	$ 32.72	$ 29.59
May-22	$ 33.88	$ 28.77
Jun-22	$ 35.88	$ 29.05
Jul-22	$ 35.88	$ 28.37
Aug-22	$ 37.05	$ 29.66
Sep-22	$ 37.05	$ 29.66
Oct-22	$ 36.08	$ 29.66
Nov-22	$ 36.08	$ 29.66
Data from Mercaris 12/18/2022		

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Pay and Feed Prices

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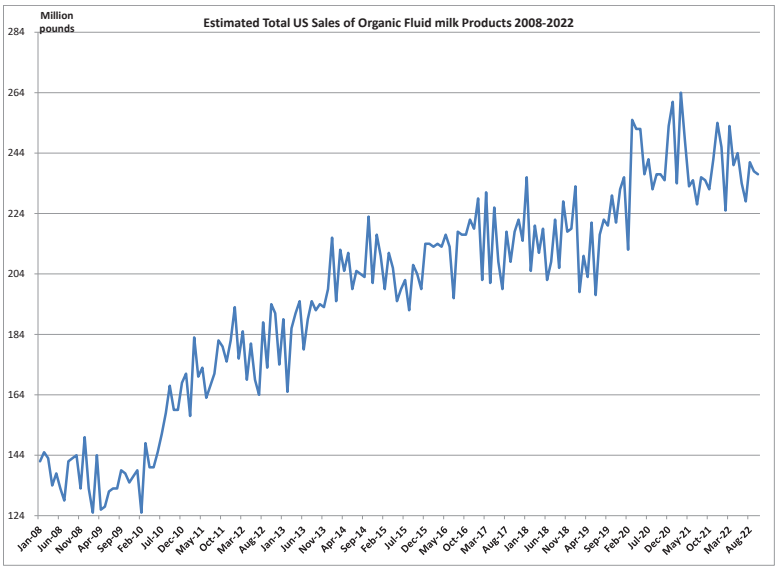
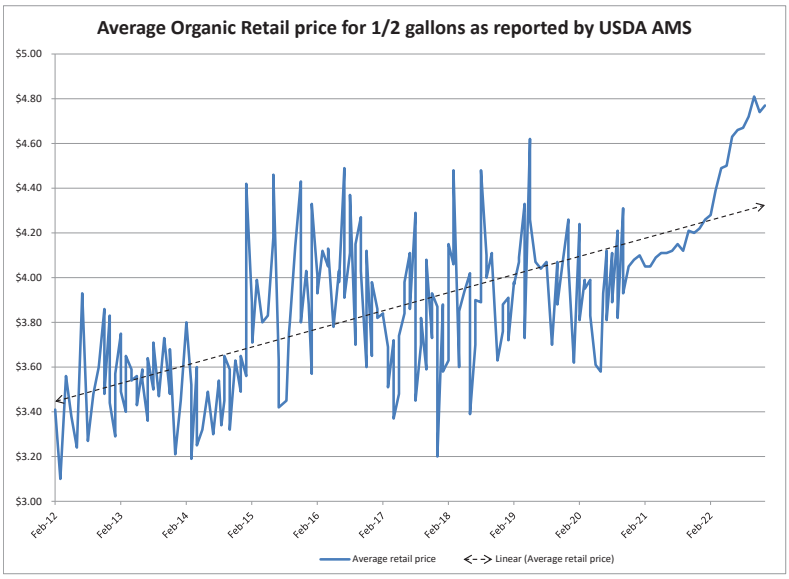
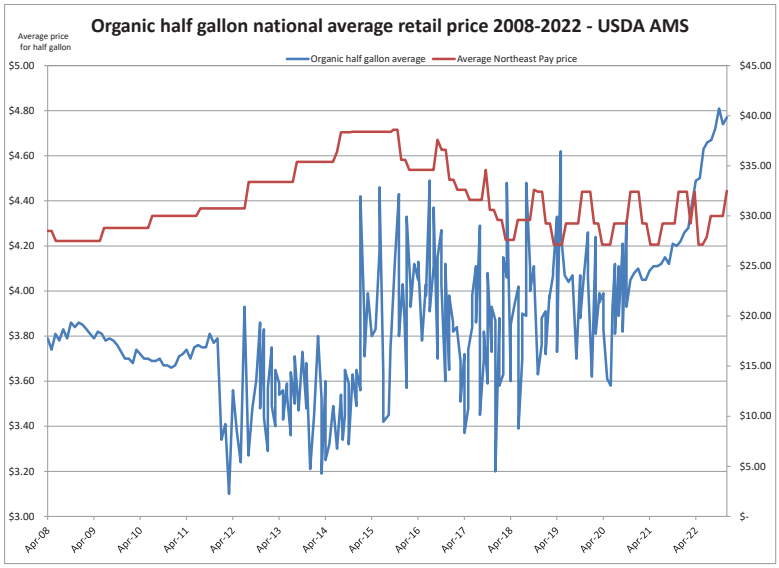
areas. One outlet of the largest and second largest food store chains are surveyed. The price represents the most common brand in ½ gallon nonreturnable containers. The November 2022 in-store retail surveys showed the average retail price decreased to $4.74, and increased slightly to $4.77 in December 2022, with a yearly average of $4.58 for 2022. This was an increase of 35 cents per half gallon over the average for 2021, and 54 cents over the average for 2020. The 35 cents converts to $8.14 per cwt. and the 54 cents converts to $12.56 per cwt. Producers received approximately $1.50 increase in pay price over that same period. Milwaukee, WI had the highest average retail price for 2022 at $5.63 per half gallon, while Seattle, WA had the lowest average annual retail price of $3.62 per half gallon.

In a letter dated 12/22/2022, the CROPP Board sent a letter to Dairy Members informing them that there was a dairy pay price increase of 50 cents included in the 2023 budget, effective with January 2023 milk for both Grass Fed organic and organic. The pay price increase would be rolled equally into the butterfat and protein price at a rate of $0.0676/lb. on both components. The letter had a caution that "individual components may influence how this increase impacts your mailbox price." There was also a caution that 25 cents/cwt of the increase would be paid for with an increase in sales and 25 cents/cwt would come from savings within the business. The COOP board can, and does, change the pay price at any time it feels that the financial circumstances of the company require it.

Jeff Frank has been named chief executive officer of Organic Valley, effective Jan. 23. He will succeed Bob Kirchoff, who is retiring from the cooperative on Jan. 31. Mr. Frank will join Organic Valley following a 25-year career at Hormel Foods, where he held various senior roles in product and brand management. In 2009, he took on the role of vice president of marketing at MegaMex Foods and was later promoted to president and CEO of MegaMex Foods. He received bachelor's degrees in business administration and Spanish from the University of Minnesota-Duluth, a master's degree in business







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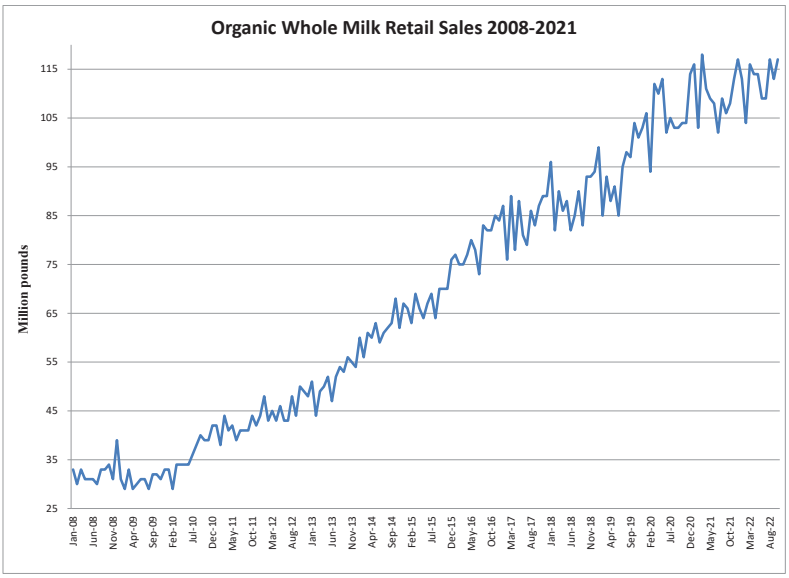

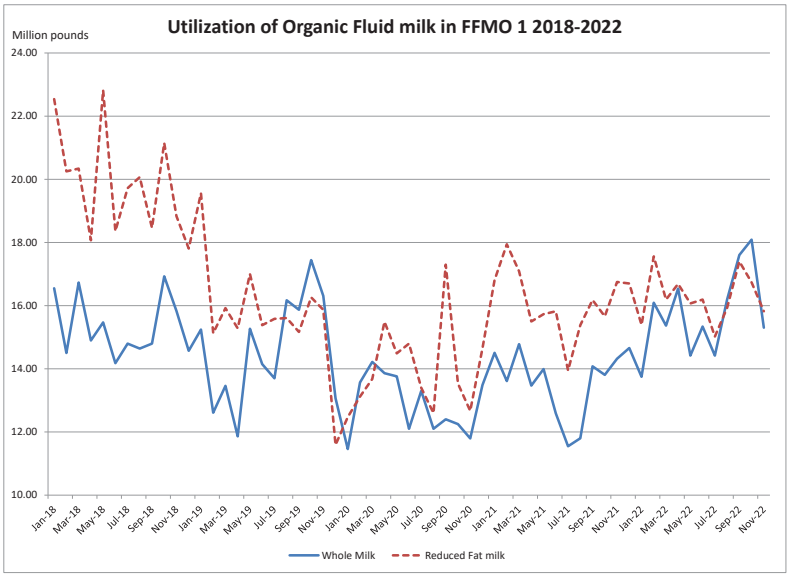

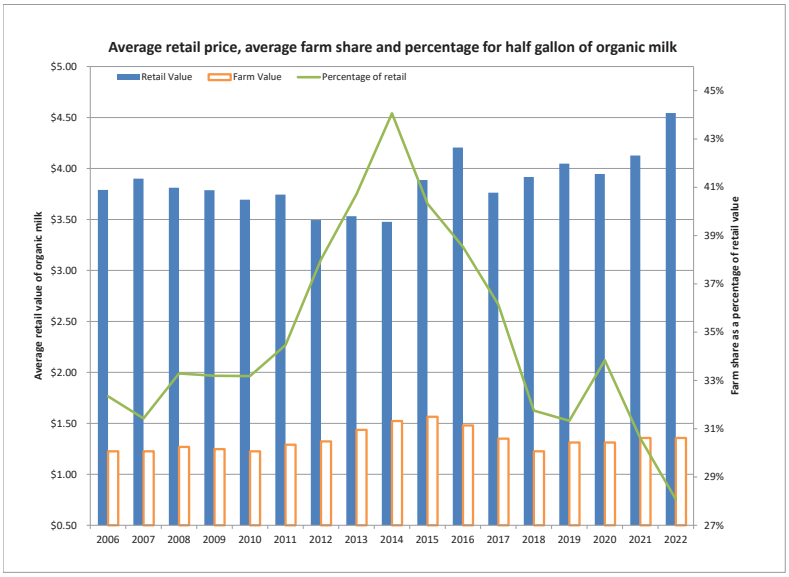

administration from the University of St. Thomas and an executive certificate from UCLA's Anderson School of Management. He also has completed the Executive Education program at Harvard Business School.

In a drive to get some dollars into organic dairy producers' pockets as they face record losses for 2022 and no improvements for 2023, NODPA and many others have been advocating with Congress and USDA for targeted emergency payments plus some long-term improvements in a safety-net program. In the Omnibus budget package at the end of 2022, there was report language that told USDA that Congress wanted a report on their progress in providing resources to supply financial assistance, increased data, and enforcement of regulations by January 23, 2023. Some extracts from the report language: "The agreement (Bill) is concerned with the dramatic rise in organic feedstock prices for livestock, especially organic dairy producers, as a result of severe drought conditions, international trade wars, supply chain backlogs, and unprecedented inflation. The Committees are working closely with the department to better understand this issue and find a solution. The agreement directs the department to report back to the Committees within 30 days of enactment of this Act on available funding sources to address this problem, including exercising authority under the Commodity Credit Corporation. The Secretary is directed to include 2022 losses in the Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program." And "The agreement recognizes the need for organic dairy producers to have detailed data about market conditions in order to make decisions about the value of their products. Within 60 days of enactment of this Act, AMS is directed to brief the Committees on the feasibility of collection and publication of organic fluid milk data from all Federal Milk Marketing Orders." And "The agreement directs AMS to continue strong enforcement of organic dairy production standards and to resolve significant variations in standards interpretation that exist among organic certifiers and organic dairy producers. AMS shall

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Pay and Feed Prices

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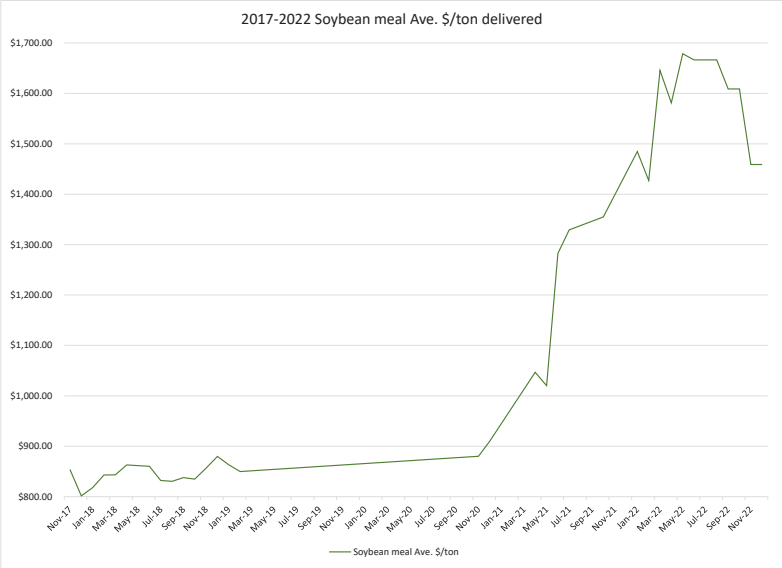
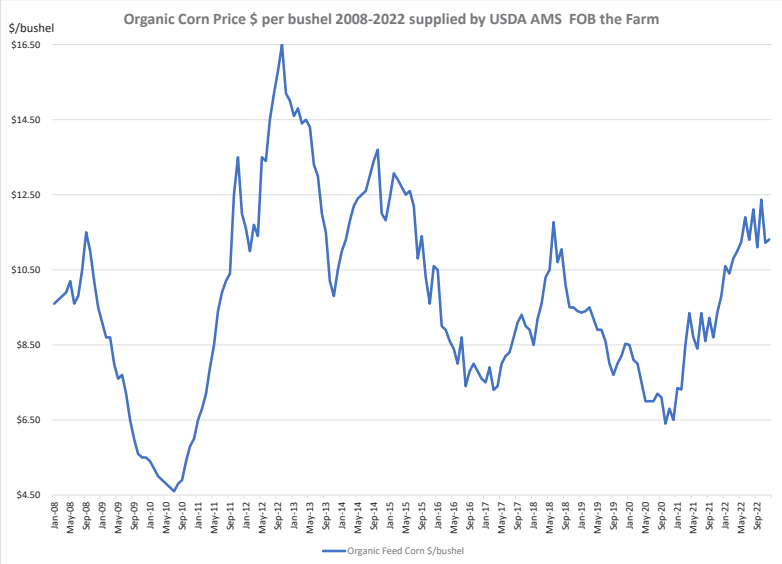
continue to conduct critical risk-based oversight, particularly for large, complex dairy operations."

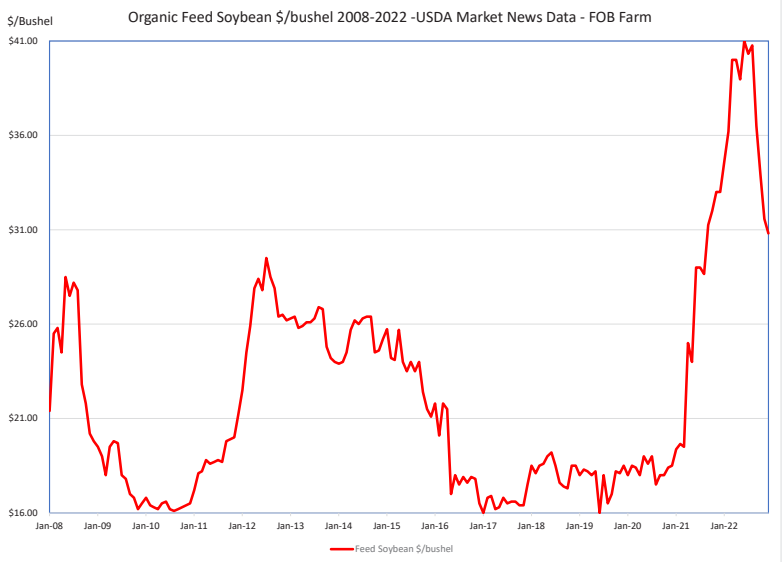
We have met with USDA to urge them to work as quickly as possible but on 1/11/2023, Zach Ducheneaux, administrator of the Farm Service Agency, told Agri-Pulse that USDA needs to finish allocating disaster assistance for 2020 and 2021 before it starts offering payments for 2022 losses. He told Agri-Pulse, "We will do our level best to get it out the door as efficiently and equitably as possible." The fiscal 2023 omnibus funding package included $3.7 billion to cover 2022 losses. He indicated that the department was likely to use the same Emergency Relief Program framework that USDA created for the 2020 and 2021 payments. "When we were contemplating ERP, we were thinking of a process that we could continue to put assistance through," he said. This process is based on emergency payments decided by any loss of gross income rather than losses on net income. While this may reflect the inability to produce products and challenges marketing them during weather related crises, it does not reflect the extraordinary increases in production costs that producers have seen in 2022 tied to the world economy, inflation, and supply chain problems due to COVID. For organic dairy, gross income has remained consistently low while production costs have spiraled out of control.

Mercaris reports that organic whole and cracked corn had stabilized in January 2023 at $11.31 per bushel. Imports bounced back in November 2022, reaching 21,700 MT, which was up 38% from October 2022. Organic whole corn imports reached 15,000 MT in October 2022, with 10,600 MT coming from Argentina and the rest from Canada.

Organic soybeans in January 2023 were priced at $30.81 per bushel and imports continued steady in November 2022, reaching 20,400 MT, a decrease of 1% y/y and 18% from October 2022. While organic soybean imports are slowing down a little, they remained relatively strong through the end the year despite prices beginning to drop. Over half of these imports came from Argentina (11,300 MT) with the second highest coming from Togo (4,000 MT). ◆







ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Trademark Registration Increases Cost of Misusing the USDA Organic Seal

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announced on 12/20/2022 that it has registered the USDA organic seal trademark with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

The USDA seal trademark is specifically described in the Organic Foods Protection Act (OFPA) and is currently protected by federal regulation. Registration of the organic seal grants additional intellectual property rights to further restrict the use of the trademark or a confusingly similar one, by uncertified farms and businesses. The trademark registration works in conjunction with OFPA and the organic regulations, providing another enforcement tool against misuse of the seal.

"While we have always had the authority to enforce against fraudulent use of the organic seal, registering the seal with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office significantly increases the cost of fraud and helps us better protect U.S. consumers and farmers" said USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny Lester Moffitt.

As the trademark owner, USDA can seek additional civil remedies such as injunctive relief and monetary damages under the Lanham Act. Operations trafficking in counterfeit organic goods or otherwise willfully misusing the USDA organic seal may be subject to fines and imprisonment under the Trademark Counterfeiting Act. This also means the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) can now detain, reject, or re-export imported products confirmed to be fraudulently using the USDA organic seal. Trademark authority and penalties for misusing the seal are in effect regardless of whether the ® is included.

Certified organic operations are authorized to use the organic seal to identify the composition of their products and receive a premium for those products. For consumers, the organic seal registration is just another way USDA is protecting the organic brand and strengthening organic enforcement.

Certified organic operations are not required to change their labels to include the registration mark ® of the seal, and certified organic products currently in the marketplace still meet the requirements of certification. Operations may choose either version of the seal and existing labels do not need to be revised or discarded.

If operations choose the updated version of the organic seal with the registration mark ®, it is available for download in multiple file formats on the AMS website (https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/organic/organic-seal). As always, certified operations are to seek approval from their certifier before making any product label changes.

The USDA National Organic Program works with accredited certifiers and law enforcement partners to continually strengthen farmer and consumer trust in products that display the USDA organic label. The Organic Integrity Database (https://organic.ams.usda.gov/Integrity/Default) (OID) remains a key tool for confirming that imported and domestic products are in fact certified organic. Anyone who suspects a violation of USDA organic regulations should submit a complaint using our online complaint portal (https://organic-compliance.ams.usda.gov/). ◆

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Fiscal Year 2022 Omnibus Appropriations Bill: Highlights

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

On December 23, 2022, Congress passed a massive spending bill, averting a government shutdown and funding federal government activities for the rest of fiscal year 2023. Embedded in the legislation are key provisions to advance organic agriculture. Unfortunately, organic producers did not have the influence that rice farmers have; the Bill includes $250 million in assistance for rice farmers. Arkansas Senator John Boozman championed the request by USA Rice to help offset the losses rice farmers have faced this year from flat prices and record high input costs. Flat prices and record high input costs – does that sound familiar?

This report is based on information from the National Organic Coalition, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Environmental Working Group and the Omnibus Appropriation Bill.

For Organic Dairy- Report language but no money

"The agreement is concerned with the dramatic rise in organic feedstock prices for livestock, especially organic dairy producers, as a result of severe drought conditions, international trade wars, supply chain backlogs, and unprecedented inflation. The Committees are working closely with the department to better understand this issue and find a solution. The agreement directs the department to report back to the Committees within 30 days of enactment of this Act on available funding sources to address this problem, including exercising authority under the Commodity Credit Corporation. The Secretary is directed to include 2022 losses in the Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program."

Organic data increases

"The agreement recognizes the need for organic dairy producers to have detailed data about market conditions in order to make decisions about the value of their products. Within 60 days of enactment of this Act, AMS is directed to brief the Committees on the feasibility of collection and publication of organic fluid milk data from all Federal Milk Marketing Orders."

Strong enforcement

"The agreement directs AMS to continue strong enforcement of organic dairy production standards and to resolve significant variations in standard interpretation that exist among organic certifiers and organic dairy producers. AMS shall continue to conduct critical risk-based oversight, particularly for large, complex dairy operations."

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USDA NOP funding

The bill boosts fiscal year 2023 funding for the National Organic Program (NOP) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) from $20 million to $22 million. There are now 85 people on the NOP team.

USDA Research

National Institute for Food and Agriculture

- Organic Transitions Program- $7.5 million
- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program - $50 million

"The agreement notes that the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) has identified key organic research priorities and encourages the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to consider these priorities when crafting the fiscal year 2023 Request for Applications for Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) and the Organic Transition Program. The agreement also encourages USDA to increase the number of organic research projects funded under AFRI and the Specialty Crop Research Initiative."

Seeds and Breeds

"The agreement encourages land-grant universities to take steps to foster the next generation of public plant and animal breeders by placing a higher priority on the development of publicly available, regionally adapted cultivars and breeds."

For Organic Data Collection and Analysis

"The agreement directs the Secretary to require mandatory reporting on an annual basis by accredited certifying agents on aggregate production areas certified by crop and location in order to accurately calculate organic acreage and yield estimates on a country-by-country basis. The agreement maintains funding for USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to coordinate with National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) for activities related to expanding organic price reporting and organic data collection."

"The agreement encourages USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) to continue and expand the efforts relating to organic data analysis."

"The agreement maintains funding … for NASS to coordinate with AMS for activities related to expanding organic price reporting and organic data collection."

PFAS

In 1946, DuPont introduced nonstick cookware coated with Teflon. Today the family of fluorinated chemicals that sprang from Teflon includes thousands of nonstick, stain-repellent and waterproof compounds called PFAS, short for per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances. PFAS are used in a staggering array of consumer products and commercial applications. Decades of heavy use have resulted in contamination of water, soil and the blood of people and animals in the farthest corners of the world. PFAS are incredibly persistent, never breaking down in the environment and remaining in our bodies for years.

President Biden has pledged to make the PFAS pollution crisis a top priority. He has said he would designate PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances under the federal Superfund law, which will accelerate the cleanup process at military bases and ensure that polluters pay their fair share of cleanup costs. He has also pledged to end the use of PFAS in many everyday consumer products and to quickly establish a national drinking water standard for PFAS in tap water.

- The Defense appropriations bill provides more than $142 million in additional funding for the Defense Department to clean up PFAS contamination at active military installations, for research and development funding for PFAS remediation and disposal, and to phase out PFAS-based firefighting foams.

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Fiscal Year 2022 Omnibus Appropriations Bill: Highlights

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- Overall, funding for the defense environmental restoration accounts, which pays for discretionary cleanup efforts at military sites, increased by $94 million to $1.5 billion, compared to last year. However, the dedicated line-item funding for PFAS within the Defense appropriations bill was slightly lower than the $172 million in last year's bill, which included $100 million in PFAS funding for the Air Force's environmental restoration account.
- The bill directs the secretary of defense to report to Congress on costs associated with investigating and cleaning up PFAS at military sites, including the estimated costs after FY 2021.

Military Construction and Veterans Affairs

- The bill provides $100 million for the Defense Department to increase the pace of cleanup of PFOA and PFOS ¬– the two most notorious PFAS compounds – at closed military installations, an increase of $40 million compared to last year's bill.

Interior and Environment

- The bill provides $49 million for the EPA's scientific, regulatory and cleanup work on PFAS, $10 million above President Trump's budget request.
- It also provides $2.7 million for the U.S. Geological Survey's efforts to monitor waterways for PFAS.

Health and Human Services

- The bill includes $1 million in grants to help health professionals better understand health impacts of PFAS exposure and best practices for treatment.

Department of Agriculture and the FDA

- The bill contains a provision directing the FDA to review the safety of PFAS chemicals in food packaging.
- It also contains a provision requiring the USDA to help dairy producers affected by PFAS contamination.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the Bill:

"There is appropriated to the Department of Agriculture, for an additional amount for "Agricultural Programs—Processing, Research, and Marketing—Office of the Secretary", $5,000,000, which shall remain available until expended, for necessary expenses, under such terms and conditions determined by the Secretary, related to testing soil, water, or agricultural products for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at the request of an agricultural producer, assisting agricultural producers affected by PFAS contamination with costs related to mitigate the impacts to their operation that have resulted from such contamination and indemnifying agricultural producers for the value of unmarketable crops, livestock, and other agricultural products related to PFAS contamination: Provided, That the Secretary shall prioritize such assistance to agricultural producers in states and territories that have established a tolerance threshold for PFAS in a food or agricultural product: Provided further, That, not later than 90 days after the end of fiscal year 2023, the Secretary shall submit a report to the Congress specifying the type, amount, and method of such assistance by state and territory and the status of the amounts obligated and plans for further expenditure, and include improvements that can be made to U.S. Department of Agriculture programs, either administratively or legislatively, to increase support for agricultural producers impacted by PFAS contamination and to enhance scientific knowledge on PFAS uptake in crops and livestock and PFAS mitigation and remediation methods and disseminate such knowledge to agricultural producers. ◆

Photo: Shutterstock

FEATURED FARM

Philip, in 2014, holding his granddaughter, Lydia who was three months old.

Stauderman cows in the barn

STAUDERMAN FARM, GROTON, NY

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tie stall barn. In 1994, a converted freestall barn with a flat stall milking parlor became home to the herd.

Philip opted to put the cows out to graze, which required less labor, and less feed to harvest. Since the cows were already consuming a good portion of their dry matter intake from grazing, and the organic market was strong and growing, it only made sense to convert to certified organic production. The family began the process of converting the dairy to certified organic - under older transition rules and shipped their first organic milk in 2002.

"The pasture rule wasn't out yet," when they transitioned, Karl said, but with 65 tillable acres, the dairy was going to need more pasture. They were planning to increase herd size to compensate for the decrease seen in milk production under organic management.

Karl had been working for his dad nights and weekends while attending Cornell, a mere 12 miles from home. He was back on the farm full-time in 2005. They had grown the herd from 45 to 90 cows by 2008.

Karl purchased a nearby farm which hadn't been worked in a while, and could be certified as organic immediately. The property had an existing tie stall barn for milking. He and his father began a "loosely based" business association.

"The new farm was all in grass, ready to go," with the needed infrastructure, including barns and perimeter fencing, Karl said.

Today, Philip does all of the cropping, and Karl does all of the livestock. Crops are grown on both of their farms, and cows are found on each farm, too, although the milking herd is all housed at Karl's farm. Combined, with owned and rented land, the entire operation including land for crops and the dairy herd is now based on 800 acres of tillable land in both Genoa and Groton, New York.

Originally, they were milking in both barns, which was "painful," so they consolidated the lactating cows onto the new farm, and opted to keep heifers at his father's original farm, about seven miles away, Karl said.

Karl's home farm in Groton has 326 total acres, with 85 in permanent pasture. There are 225 acres of tillable crop land. It features a 90 cow tie stall facility housing 88 cows. Another 65 cow tie stall barn located across the road houses dry cows during the winter. The tie stall housing for the milking herd was built in 1978, and was probably one of the last of the tie stalls built in the area. They bed the barns with straw.

FEATURED FARM

Calves are located at Karl's farm, housed in individual hutches before they are transferred to a straw bedded pack barn. At one year of age, they are moved to the heifer housing, which is in the free stall barn at his dad's farm, where they remain until just prior to freshening.

Karl purchased cows when they expanded to two farms in 2008, but the herd has been a closed one since then. Unfortunately, he suspects that Staphylococcus aureus was brought in with the purchase, and still appears on occasion today. He culls any cow with Staph immediately to try to eliminate this pathogen.

Breeding and Feeding

The 90 head herd, not including dry cows and springing heifers, is about one-third pure bred Jersey. They also have Holsteins. The Jerseys have less calving problems and leg issues, but they've found that the Jersey calves are challenging to raise. They began some crossbreeding a few years ago, and while Karl likes the first-generation crosses, he's not so enthusiastic about feet and leg problems he's seen in subsequent generations. They no longer crossbreed.

The lactating cows are bred AI only, and the heifers - housed at his father's facility - are all bred with bulls. When choosing sires for AI, calving ease is a top priority, to reduce hard calves and subsequent problems. The dry cows, housed on Karl's farm, are bred to Jersey bulls, but he doesn't keep any of the crossbred calves. Otherwise, he raises all the heifer calves for replacements, culling cows to make room.

"There's always a reason I want to get rid of somebody," he said, although he will re-evaluate raising all his heifer calves, as it "cost so much to raise a heifer."

Karl has been participating in a research study evaluating the cost of raising a certified organic dairy heifer, focusing on the economics. He also realizes that it might be in his best interest to breed some cows to beef genetics in the near future.

Feed Regime

The winter feeding season runs from mid-October through until mid-April. They feed a total mixed ration to the milking herd, along with minerals. Minerals are top dressed for other cow groups.

"We grow everything we feed," Karl said.

That includes corn silage, Sudangrass for baleage and silage, and clover baleage. His father is in charge of growing the crops, which can change a bit each year. Karl formulates the rations based on what his father has available. Philip does at times sell some of the harvested crops.

The lactating cows are fed a 50/50 mix of haylage and corn silage/ Sudan grass silage. They received 10-12 pounds of high moisture corn, and two to four pounds of soybeans. This year, he is feeding less soybeans, and therefore shipping a bit less milk, as the price of certified organic soybeans on the market is high enough to justify selling - and not feeding - them.

They would need two pounds of milk from one pound of soy to justify feeding it this year, and he doesn't think he'd get that. So they are selling some of the soybeans. "Are we losing money feeding it to a cow, or should we sell it?" is the question they are always trying to answer, Karl said.

The herd was fed a high-forage ration, even prior to organic certification. Today, the fed cow diet is about 80 percent forage, Karl said. They have seen a reduction in displaced abomasum as dietary grains were decreased.

Karl's farm originally had upright silos, but after ten years he made the switch to bunk silos to decrease labor needs, cutting the hours needed to feed the herd from five hours to two. Since

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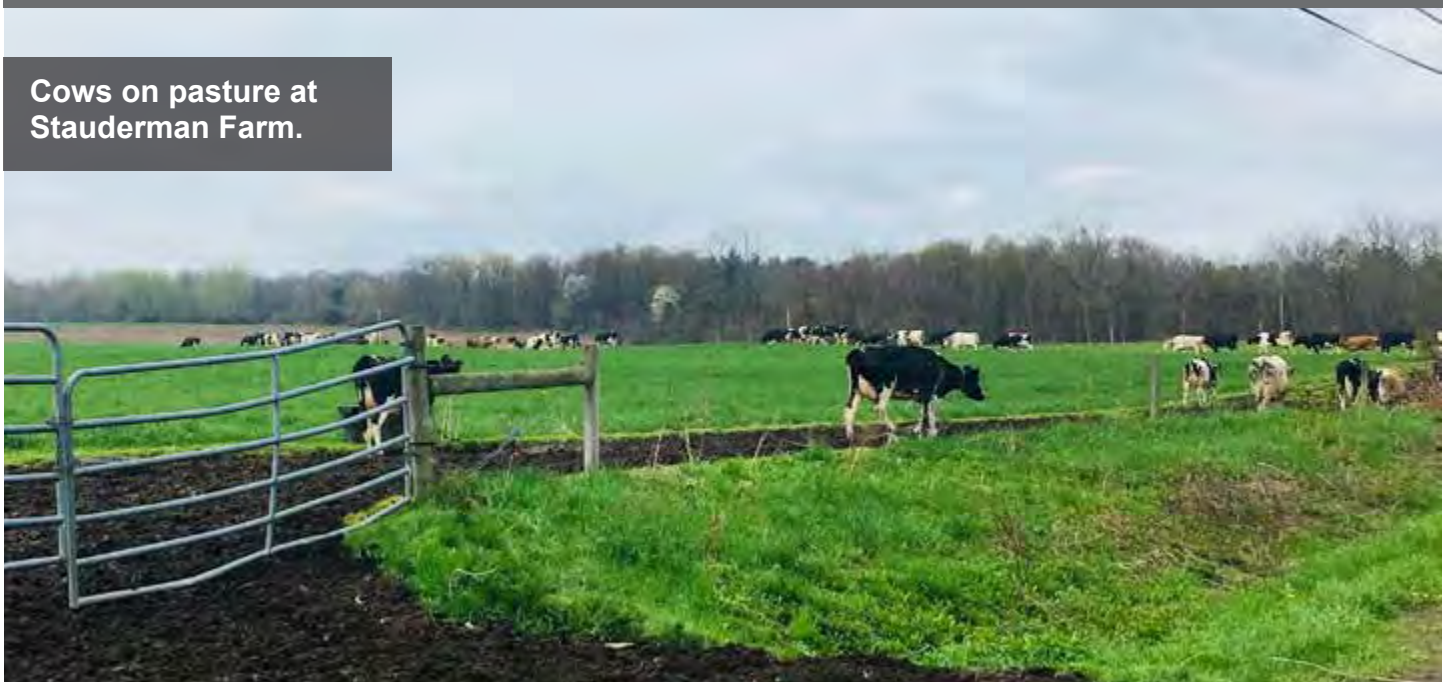
Lydia and Klara atop the bunk silos

FEATURED FARM



Cows on pasture at Stauderman Farm.

STAUDERMAN FARM, GROTON, NY

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Karl does the livestock labor himself, he is always trying to gain efficiency.

Pasture and Grazing

The grazing season is most limited by the amount of rain received each year. The milking herd has 70 acres of dedicated pastures which are never used for hay, and which are plowed under in a four-year rotation, with a quarter of the pasture being renewed each year. Each approximately 1.1 acre paddock is planted to a King's AgriSeeds grazing mix upon renewal. First, the paddock is plowed, and corn is planted. Following harvest, the land is re-seeded to pasture.

The milking herd is turned out to pasture in mid-April, and by May they are getting about 90 percent of their dry matter intake from grazing. By the end of the grazing season in late October, the pasture DMI is about 33 percent. By July they only graze at night, avoiding heat stress, and the grazing rotation is doubled.

During the summer, pasture forages are primarily clover and rye grass. Steel posts and 12 gauge wire, which are not moved, are used to fence the paddocks. The cows rotate through the fixed paddocks.

"I just look at grass," Karl said of his grazing management strategy. He notes the height of the pasture, and its composition.

Because he plows and reseeds each pasture every four years, he isn't too concerned about long-term effects of overgrazing on the forage stands. By the end of the fourth year, he'll see some drop in milk as the pasture intake drops.

"I want them to go out and I want them to eat everything, and then we can make it up in the barn," if there is something lacking in the diet, he said.

Dry cows are on 100 percent pasture from April through September, then are fed in the 65 cow tie stall barn for the winter. There is not a watering system in these pastures, and they rely on creek water. The farm hosts a large healthy gorge that has never run dry, even during extreme drought conditions.

Calf Program

Because they are using bulls as well as AI, there are a lot of calves born in February and March. The plan is to utilize all AI in the future. For now, a lot of the calving happens in a three week period, but Karl is looking forward to year-round calving and spreading out that workload.

Calves are housed in individual hutches, a system that he feels works well and decreases health concerns. Calves are bottle fed for two weeks, then they are trained to buckets, and weaned at four months of age. During the first week of bottle feeding warm milk is used. Calves then are switched to cold milk before being fed sour milk. Karl leaves whole milk left out to sour for about 10-12 hours.

He is very satisfied with sour milk feeding, which allows him to store milk and use it when needed. He does have to balance milk supply with the number of calves drinking.

FEATURED FARM

Upon weaning, the calves move into a transition barn, which is a 30' X 40' straw bedded pack with feed pack. The pack is cleaned out once or twice per year, and is spread onto the fields every two years, depending on land availability for spreading. The bedded pack barn serves as a training ground for the free stall barn, where they are moved at one year of age.

Manure Handling

Karl's farm is a daily-spread farm, with manure from the tie stall cleaned with a gutter cleaner and hauled onto fields. There is no manure storage here, and although he'd like to have that, the barn is within 30 feet of a trout stream, complicating matters. Instead, he's hoping that within the next five years, he can increase on-farm efficiency, including custom hiring for manure spreading.

At his father's farm, the manure from the free stall heifer barn is stored in a 3/4 million gallon lagoon. It is spread every other year.

Because the cows at Karl's farm have to cross the road to get to some of the pastures, they also periodically use the scrapper to clean manure from the road. Ideally, they'd like to construct a tunnel crossing under the road to avoid the scrapping, prevent backing up traffic, and protect the cows from aggressive drivers, but the expense is prohibitive. They put up ropes and stop signs when the cows need to cross, which can be up to four times per day in the spring and summer, and try to avoid crossing during busy traffic hours.

Cow Productivity and Health

The goal is for the 90 head milking cows to produce 13,000 - 13,500 pounds of milk per year. Without soybeans, which is the case this year, Karl expects to produce 12,500 pounds of milk. The components typically are at 4.2 percent butterfat and 3.2 percent protein. Somatic cell count varies throughout the year, but on average is 150,000. Part of the reason the SCC isn't lower is that Karl does all the twice per day milking by himself. If he had help, he expects things wouldn't be so rushed, and the SCC would be lower.

The Staphylococcus aureus continues to be a herd health challenge, and all cows are tested at four to 10 days fresh. About one in 88 cows has recently tested positive. Part of the reason he is still raising every calf is that he doesn't really know how many fresh cows will tests positive and be culled.

The biggest herd health issue, however, is foot warts. The barn set-up doesn't allow for a foot bath, so he treats the herd each spring with copper sulfate. The only vaccine the herd receives regularly is for pink eye.

Hemlock gorge at Stauderman Farm.

Future Vision

The family has had to make sacrifices, sometimes feeling as if they were taking "a step backwards to go forward," such as taking on real estate debt instead of upgrading infrastructure at his dad's existing farm, in order to grow and remain profitable. All the buildings on the farm are old and need upgrades. Constantly

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FEATURED FARM

STAUDERMAN FARM, GROTON, NY

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repairing plumbing and structural items can really eat into Karl's already busy schedule.

But the biggest limiting factor is that Karl is doing all of the breeding, feeding, milking, manure spreading and other day-to-day hands on herd activities. Philip tends to all of the crops, along with a part-time laborer. Karl's wife, Tiffany, keeps the herd records and does some of the calf feeding along with payroll and the cow side of the organic plan, in addition to her full-time job at Cornell. Karl and Tiffany have two children.

Karl does participate in organic dairy discussion groups, but with limited time, he isn't able to do so as much as would be ideal.

Increasing on-farm efficiency is the main goal moving into the future. Automation - possibly including robotic milking - which will decrease the amount of time and labor Karl puts in each day is key.

"It's going to be me spending on labor-saving technology," Karl said. "Anything I can do to save myself five or 10 minutes."

Another venture they've added to diversify income stream, without adding too much time or labor to operate, is a farm stay rental. Karl's farm was originally two separate farms, divided by the road, with a farmhouse on each parcel. As they do not have hired labor, the "extra" aging farmhouse, after renovation, presented an opportunity for short-term vacation rentals.

"This coming summer will be our third year renting the unused farmhouse for seasonal short-term rentals," Tiffany said. "We've discovered short-term is more profitable and easier on the house than renting long-term. Heating both houses in winter is very challenging."

The couple did also try having a "glamping" (glamor/luxury camping) campsite for a short period, but it wasn't a good fit. The "glampers" proved to be too needy, requiring time and attention the busy family didn't have to spare.

Since purchasing the farm, the couple has found the neighbors to be friendly and supportive, for which they are grateful. Not only are they supportive of the dairy farming, but the neighbors also look out for one another, making the farm a part of a true community. ◆

Karl and Tiffany Stauderman can be reached at Stauderman Farm, 315-480-8665, 74 Talmadge Rd., Groton, NY 13073

Overlooking Stauderman Farm pasture.

Calendar

Friday, January 20-21, 2023, 9:00 am until 3:30 p.m.

NORTHEAST GRAZING AND LIVESTOCK CONFERENCE, ONLINE VIA WHOVA

FREE to VGFA Members with promotional code. Promo code provided with 2023 Membership. Registration required. Free access to family members and farm workers. (When registering in Eventbrite, please be sure the ticket quantity matches the number of people you are registering – we need a unique email for everyone who will be accessing the conference. Eventbrite will request a unique email for every ticket you purchase.) Tickets: $20 for General Access. Hosted by: The New England Grazing Network, Maine Grass Farmers Network, Granite State Grazers, the Livestock Institute, Vermont Grass Farmers Association, University of Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and Cornell Cooperative Extension Capital Area Ag & Hort. Program.

Conference Content: Farmer and Industry Panels, Live Q&A Sessions with Experts and Research Presentations. Keynote: Allen Williams - a 6th generation family farmer and founding partner of Grass Fed Insights, LLC, Understanding Ag, LLC and the Soil Health Academy.

For more information, follow these links:

- VGFA Membership Join/Renewal Link - https://www.vtgrassfarmers.org/vgfamember/p/vgfa-membership-farm-or-individual
- Conference Registration Link - https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2023-northeast-grazing-and-livestock-conference-tickets-474131810007
- Conference Agenda Link - https://www.vtgrassfarmers.org/agenda
- Conference Speaker Link - https://www.vtgrassfarmers.org/speakers

January 26-27, 2023

OHIO GRAZING CONFERENCE
Mt. Hope Event Center Mt. Hope, Ohio

For full information, follow this link: https://smallfarminstitute.files.wordpress.com/2022/11/wp-1669087031901.pdf

February 2-5, 2023, Thursday to Sunday

NOFA-NY VIRTUAL WINTER CONFERENCE – WHERE WE GROW

Online

Every year, NOFA-NY's Winter Conference attracts hundreds of farmers, processors, professionals, educators, advocates, researchers, homesteaders, and gardeners who are passionate about building a better food system. This conference marks 41 years of learning and building community together, so mark your calendars and register today! We can't wait to see you there. The conference will offer a wide range of educational workshop, special events, and networking opportunities, including workshops on grazing, sheep, and silvopasture. Workshops will run at 10:00 am, 12:00 p.m., 2:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. daily. And if you miss a session – no worries! Recordings will be available following each session and remain online for you to enjoy anytime for more than 40 days! For more information, visit: https://nofany.org/2023conference/

February 2nd - 4th, 2023

GRASSWORKS 31ST ANNUAL GRAZING CONFERENCE 2023: "FORAGING AHEAD"

Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells

Join the GrassWorks Grazing community at this year's annual conference. The GrassWorks Conference is a must for beginning and experienced graziers! Check out our full conference brochure and schedule: https://grassworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/GrassWorks-Conference-Brochure.pdf (Printable for mail-in registration)

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Score: What is it and why does it matter to me?

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

As part of a Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (DBIC) grant project, NODPA is working on a project to better understand what criteria, in addition to organic certification, organic dairy product buyers will be requiring of producers, to further distinguish them in the marketplace. This is being referred to as the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Score.

What is ESG?

At a basic level, ESG is a set of standards that determine whether a company falls under the umbrella of "sustainable investing."

- *Environmental criteria* could include energy use, waste management and treatment of animals.
- *Social criteria* deal with an operation's relationships with its employees, suppliers, customers and the communities where it operates. For example, does it work with suppliers that have the same values as the operation claims to have? Are working conditions safe and healthy for employees?
- *Governance* deals with a company's leadership and internal controls, among other factors. For example, does the operation have conflicts of interest or work with suppliers that have conflicts of interests.

Increasingly, consumers, retailers and processors are asking questions about ESG up and down their supply chains. If your buyer hasn't yet asked these questions they will in the future, whether it is in the form of a questionnaire or an inspection. Most of these preferences are well documented and are no surprise. The findings of NODPA's research are a result of direct interviews with buyers and the following are in no particular order:

1. Certified humane animal treatment is highly desirable.
2. Retailers expressed interest in having better relationship with suppliers and more consistent pricing and availability.
3. Local provenance is considered a positive product attribute with track and trace from origin to include tracking food miles.
4. Concern about the shrinking regional supply and wanting to support producer prices as a means to keep sufficient fluid and fat levels in the region.
5. Extended Shelf Life (ESL) products are strongly preferred and increasingly required because of the shortage and expense of delivery trucks.
6. Supply chain should/must contribute to positive ESG scores.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

ESG adds complexity in identifying and tracking meaningful and measurable metrics that fit the individual ESG plans of the buyer. For organic dairy businesses these will be heavily influenced by environmental metrics related to the food producer including CO2 measures, water use, waste management, production practices and food miles. There may be other requirements such as those in the table below that force producers to operate an ESG scoring system just to qualify for sale.

On the flip side, there are both near- and long-term ESG risks. Near-term risks could include whether you have the right safety practices in place or if you're exposed to a near-term risk of water scarcity. If you're in a drought-prone area, it's important to understand how you are managing that risk. Longer-term risks could include material impacts that climate change has on what you grow. How are you addressing that concern in your current operations?

We know and understand the environmental benefits of organic dairy production, but, similar to having organic and animal welfare certification, we need to share this information with consumers and provide facts with case studies. A recent study (Montgomery, David R., et al. "Soil Health and Nutrient Density: Preliminary Comparison of Regenerative and Conventional Farming." PeerJ, vol. 10, 2022, https://peerj.com/articles/12848/) found that organic and regenerative farms that combined no-till, cover crops and plant diversity had healthier soils and positively affected the nutritional content of food. We need to leverage our advantages as a pasture-based and organic system to manage lands responsibly and regeneratively increasing soil health and biodiversity. Grazing animals can help these systems thrive and capture more carbon. This shows the consumer how responsible organic dairy and livestock production can be, providing yet another reason to support organic dairy through their purchasing power. ◆

Some Examples of ESG Criteria:

Environmental	Social	Governance
• Recycling • Life-cycle thinking • Carbon footprint size • Using green energy • Clean water	• Health & safety • Community relations • Wages & benefits • Employee training • Recreation access	• Committee diversity • Tax policies • Corruption & bribery • Transparency • Investment policies

Classified Ads

ANIMALS

FOR SALE: looking to sell my **herd of 37 organic dairy cows** in the near future as I NEED knee surgery. Cows are housed in a free stall and milked in a tie stall barn. Herd consists of 31 Holsteins and 6 Holstein jersey crosses. Currently milking 30 cows with 7 dry and producing 3200 pounds/2 days. Herd eats mostly baleage and 1 or two pounds of grain a day. Cell count runs 100,000 to 200,000. Bulk culture show no Staph aureus or Strep ag over the last ten years from cultures from Organic Valley. Price: 37 cows for $60,000. Anyone interested please contact me by email: bill5308@aol.com to cut down on phone scamming.

Location: Apulia Station, NY

FOR SALE: Complete Herd Dispersal, 35 nice Organic dairy cows for sale 6 heifers and 8 yearlings. Milked in a parlor; rotationally grazed. Some AI bulls and some polled herd bulls. Owners are retiring from dairy farming. $1500-2500/each. Call 608-475-9100.

Location: Hillsboro WI

Advertise With Us!

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

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

2021 Ad rates and sizes listed below.

Deadline for advertising in the March 2023 issue is February 15, 2023.

Full Page Ad (7.5" W x 9.75" H) = $660
1/2 Page Ad (7.5" W x 4.75" H) = $340
1/4 Page Ad (3.625" W x 4.75" H) = $190
1/8 Page Ad/Business Card: (3.625" W x 2.25" H) = $100

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

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

For advertising information call Nora Owens: 413-772-0444 or email noraowens@comcast.net.

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

FEED, GRAIN, HAY FOR SALE/WANT TO BUY

FOR SALE: Organic haylage: 1st cut 15.5% $55.00 a ton; 1st cut 13.5% $45.00 a ton; 3rd cut 17.9% $65.00 a ton. Contact Kari Lussier, Klal72@yahoo.com, 802-537-2435.

Location: Benson, VT

FOR SALE: NOFA-NY Certified Organic BALEAGE. 2021 Crop. 1st Cut Orchard/Timothy, Alfalfa/grass, and Grass. 2nd Cut Grass. All 4x4 Round Bales. Also Organic BEDDING HAY. 4x4½ Rd Bales. Contact Jeff @ Mitchellorganics@hotmail.com or 607-566-8477

Location: Avoca, NY (Steuben County)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

Organic Staff Inspector

MOFGA Certification Services, LLC (MCS) is hiring a full time Organic Staff Inspector to join our team. MCS is a USDA-accredited organic certifier, certifying over 500 crop, livestock, and handling operations in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. The staff inspector will conduct onsite inspections year round throughout our service area (primarily in Maine), and provide high quality customer service along with skilled inspection auditing and verification to support positive organic certification experiences for organic producers certified by MCS. In addition, the staff inspector will be tasked with conducting unannounced inspections, pesticide residue sampling, and generating reports and other documents for MCS, as well as training, auditing, and evaluating inspectors in our inspector pool. The staff inspector will be expected to perform a significant percentage of MCS annual inspections (one-fifth of total inspections annually, or roughly 100).

This position requires travel within MCS' service territory, off-site visits to clients, as well as office-based work. This position is required to be Maine-based, but the inspector will be able to work from home. IOIA training (or equivalent) and prior organic inspection experience preferred.

Visit our Employment Opportunities page: https://www.mofga.org/our-community/about-mofga/employment-opportunities/ for the full job description, benefits, and employment details.

Please send your cover letter and resume to certification@mofga.org. Priority will be given to candidates who apply before February 1, 2023.

Calendar

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We'll be offering sessions covering: animal health, handling and selection, pasture and forage management, soil fertility in pastures, new technology: virtual fence and paddocktrac, custom grazing and pasture leases, "when weeds talk" and using brix measures, multi-species grazing and regenerative farm design, marketing and business management, nutrient density.

Featured Speakers include: Dan Kittredge, Bio-Nutrient Food Association, Alan J. Franzluebbers, Ph.D., USDA - Ag Research Service, Kent Solberg and Doug Voss, Sustainable Farming Association, Jay McCaman, Author "When Weeds Talk", Peter Allen, Mastodon Valley Farm, Inga Witscher, St. Isidore's Dairy Farmstead Cheese' and Will Winter, DVM -Practical Livestock Solutions

Entertainment! Farmers want to have fun too! Michael Perry! - Author, humorist, playwright, and radio show host from New Auburn, Wisconsin. Musing of the Herd (MOTH)! - Story-telling fun! Share your best farm stories with emcee Greg Galbraith. Music! - a GrassWorks Conference isn't complete without a jam session - stay "tuned".

Hotel Information: Chula Vista Resort, Booking ID: H69692, Booking Phone Number: 1-855-990-0204

Room Rate Cut Off Date: 1/20/2023

February 8-11, 2023 Wednesday-Saturday

CULTIVATE FARMS & FOOD SYSTEMS THAT NOURISH, HEAL & EMPOWER

PASA 2023 In-Person Conference, Lancaster, PA

90+ sessions on farming & food systems. An incredible lineup of 100+ speakers will spark new ideas and inspire action. Keynote: Jessica Hernandez, Indigenous environmental scientist • Author of Fresh Banana Leaves: Healing Indigenous Landscapes Through Indigenous Science.For more information, visit: https://web.cvent.com/event/84b0ee63-4241-4493-be09-390c82ba57b8/summary

February 18, 2023: Main Conference, and February 19, 2023: Intensive Workshops

BACK TO THE ROOTS, NOFA-VT'S 41ST ANNUAL WINTER CONFERENCE

UVM's Davis Center in Burlington, VT

With Some Live-Streamed Options

Each year, the NOFA-VT Winter Conference provides a valuable opportunity for farmers, homesteaders, gardeners, earth tenders, land managers, educators, students, policy-makers, and other food system activists to participate in our vibrant community event by sharing ideas, resources, and skills.

This winter's conference is designed to return to, nourish, and regrow our roots: our relationships! It's been a long while since we've gathered, and we're excited to do what matters most: connect with each other. Join us for a conference to connect, inspire, network, and deepen the roots that sustain the movement for a thriving agriCULTURE. For more information, visit their website: https://www.nofavt.org/events/annual-nofa-vt-events/winter-conference

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

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