

## Forage Field Day at Stoltzfus Farm

By Lisa McCrory

John and Tammy Stoltzfus of Whitesville, NY opened their farm to a Forage Field Day event in late September and were pleasantly surprised to have 70 people in attendance. Why the interest? The Stoltzfus planted four different varieties of forage turnips with two different varieties of forage oats to determine the best planting rates and variety combinations for their farm. With the assistance and sponsorship of Lakeview Organic Grain, Bejo Seeds, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Allegany County Graziers and Organic Valley, they planted 18 acres of hayland to 25 plots of various seed/crop combinations.

This is not the first year that John and Tammy have tried using forage turnips; they have planted some turnips and oats on their farm for the past two years to extend their grazing season and to provide a high quality forage as part of their winter feeding plan. Planting the oats and forage turnips *together* was the new venture



*Forage Turnip September 27, 2007*

this year and tying this together with some sponsors allowed them the means to share the results to a broad audience of farmers and resource individuals.

### The Plots

An 18-acre field was split in half and two different varieties of forage oats were planted; 'Forage Oats' was on one half, and 'Keuka Forage Oats' was planted on the other half. Both variety were donated by Lakeview Organic Grain. The 'Forage Oats' was seeded down at three different seeding rates: 1 bushel/acre, 2 bushels/acre and 3 bushels/acre. The nine acres of Keuka Forage Oats was planted at a rate of 3 bushels/acre.

Four 1-acre plots of forage turnips was planted crossways in each 9-acre plot. The varieties planted were: 1) Paja, 2) Purple Top Turnip, 3) Fodder Kale, and 4) Napus .

The oats and turnips were planted on August 16<sup>th</sup> on an old sod field that had been plowed down. Oats were planted first and then the turnips were planted using a hand seeder at a rate of 1 lb per acre. Once all the crops were planted, they ran a cultimulcher over the seeding.

*(Continued on page 30)*

**NutriSmart™**  
Listed  
Organic Materials Review Institute  
**Eco-fertilizer**

NutriSmart is an effective way to optimize the efficiency of your crop fertility program while reducing your dependency on chemical fertilizer.

NutriSmart supports deeper, thicker rooting, improves the soil's physical and chemical characteristics, and increases the soil's water retention capabilities and C.E.C.s.

NutriSmart significantly decreases nutrient leaching ensuring optimum availability of applied nutrients and minimal run-off and pollution.

Most importantly, NutriSmart will convert nitrogen from the air, and unlock previously unavailable phosphate and potassium tied-up in the soil. The result is balanced NPK nutrition when the crop needs it (Smart-Release) for up to 5 months.

Jim Martindale, North American Ag-Gro Consulting  
260-918-0246 genesis21jim@yahoo.com

**CreamLine** 

a new voice for little dairies

CreamLine is a quarterly publication with emphasis on cheesemaking, farmstead processing, local marketing, ecofriendly milk production, unusual breeds of dairy animals, more.

Subscription: \$30/yr, \$55/2 years  
or send \$2 for print sample issue to:

CreamLine  
P.O. Box 186-ND  
Willis, VA 24380

E-mail: [infopp@smalldairy.com](mailto:infopp@smalldairy.com)  
(Paypal accepted at this address)

free sample issue available at  
[www.smalldairy.com](http://www.smalldairy.com)

Check out our new Marketplace classified section!

(Continued from Forage Field Day page 29)

Conditions were dry at the time of seeding, but the next day they got half an inch of rain and 3 weeks later they got another 4-5 inches of rain at which point the seeding really took off.

The fields were forage tested one week before the field days event in late September and they found that the forages were running about 30% crude protein and 75-80 Net Energy Lactation (NEL). John and Tammy plan to harvest their oats and turnips the end of October after the frost as forage turnips are much sweeter following a frost. "Forage turnips can handle 4 nights of 20-degree weather before they actually stop growing", says John. Normally John would set some of the crop aside to graze, but this year there is such a shortage on forage that they need to harvest all of the crop for winter feeding.

Additional forage testing will take place right before they harvest. They will store the feed as round bale silage and will take another forage sample after the bage has fermented for one month. They are curious to find out how much feed value is lost with fermentation.

They also plan to leave a small strip standing to see how long the stand stays green and to see how it stands up in snow. Next year John wants to plant 50 acres of oats and turnips in a location where he can graze 20 of those acres in Nov/Dec 2008 and harvest the rest.

John and Tammy know that next year they will plant 1/2 lb per acre of turnips with 3 bushels per acre of oats because the density of the turnips in this years crop (at 1 lb per acre) is a little too much. Turnips tend to be pretty stalky which could put some stress on the mower. Based upon what they have learned, John recommends seeding no later than the first week of August (their farm is at 2200 feet).

### Feed Quality and Estimated Yields

Forage turnips are mostly a broad leaf (see picture) and the height of the leaf grows nicely with the oats allowing for a healthy stand of both. The feed quality is excellent, allowing John and Tammy to reduce the grain



*John posing with his crops on October 26th, the day of harvest.*

in their winter feeding ration. Right now the cows get an average of 10# grain a day and with the oat/turnip bage will probably go down to 5-8 # grain (oats & cornmeal), 20# oat/turnip bage and the rest of the ration will be a poorer quality bage and some dry hay.

Estimated yield per acre is 11.8 tons of as-fed forage and probably 2.8 tons of dry matter. John feels that the volume of feed doubled between end of Sept and the time of harvest (end of October).

Stay tuned for the next issue to find out actual yield per acre, and feed value of the various forage plots at harvest and after fermentation. ♦



DMS and its member co-ops provide access to secure organic milk markets through relationships with major organic milk handlers. We offer a competitive premium package and can assist farms making the transition to organic.

#### PROGRAMS & SERVICES THAT IMPACT YOUR BOTTOM LINE:

- Organic Blend Price Stabilizer offered by Risk Management Services
- Loan programs offered by Agri-Max Financial Services
- Organic feed & supplies offered by Eagle Dairy Direct<sup>SM</sup>
- Health Insurance & Workers' Comp offered by Agri-Services Agency

**DMS**  
Dairy Marketing Services

1-888-589-6455