

Butterworks Farm to Host a NODPA Field Trip

By Sarah Flack, NODPA Coordinator

Jack and Anne Lazor of Butterworks Farm will host a NODPA field trip on Friday August 20th, to be followed the next day by the NODPA Field days at Applecheek farm. Jack and Anne spoke at last years NODPA Field Day in Maine. Jack talked about his organic forage & grain cropping systems and Anne Lazor joined a panel discussing alternative animal health practices.

Butterworks Farm, in Westfield Vermont, is located on the top of a hill just south of the Canadian border. The home farm includes a well lit, ventilated tie stall where the Jerseys are milked, a dairy processing facility, a grain processing and storage barn with many grain bins, the farmhouse and a newly built solar barn with a deep straw bedded pack. All these buildings are surrounded by pastures, and for part of each year, many tidy windrows of compost. Jack and Anne Lazor also grow several hundred acres of grains in the lower elevation land in the valley below the farm.

Jack and Anne started as homesteaders on their land in the mid 1970s. They never went through an organic transition, as they were organic from the beginning. When they started, they had two cows, about five acres of pasture and about six acres in wheat, oats and barley. They started selling organic yogurt and other dairy products door to door and gradually grew the herd to six cows by 1980, and to just over forty today.

Butterworks Farm evolved from making products on the kitchen stove, to being the first legal "micro-dairy" in Vermont. A considerable investment of time and money was spent on a processing facility and barn improvements before they could be licensed. Now, with just over 40 milking Jerseys, they sell 5,000 quarts of yogurt a week, as well as cream and an occasional batch of cheddar and cottage cheese. Other products they produce and sell are certified organic dairy livestock, forages, grains and seed.

At Butterworks farm, great attention is paid to soil fertility and the production of high quality forages and grains. Over the years they have applied many types of minerals and rock powders and have developed a composting system producing high quality compost for their farm. Many of the grains grown on the farm

are used for livestock feed and some of the grains, including sunflowers for oil, are grown for human consumption.

Herd health is managed primarily by prevention through good nutrition, clean housing, and lots of observation. When needed, they use homeopathy and herbs. Anne has been participating in a homeopathy study group of organic farmers (which now meets at Applecheek farm where the August 21 NODPA Field Day will be held) for many years. They raise all their own replacements on the farm.

Over the years both Jack and Anne have hosted and been speakers at many workshops, and have provided many farmers and young people with advice. Their many years of being pioneers of organic dairy production have given them experience with soil fertility, composting, growing quality grains and forages, organic livestock health care, and many other subjects.

