

(Continued from NODPA on the MOOve, page 17)

Ever wondered what happens to all the wonderful information that is exchanged on ODAIRY? With the new web site we will have a message board that will store the catalogued information and make it easily accessible to everyone through the website.

What makes this expansion possible is Lisa McCrory as the editor of NODPA News and Elisa Clancy as our webmaster. Lisa brings a wealth of knowledge and relationship to her work with NODPA and without her an expansion of the publication of the NODPA News would be impossible. Elisa has updated and maintained the web site from the beginning and she has provided skill and leadership with the layout of the newsletter which ensures it meets our publication schedule.

All this, of course, costs more money and we thank all of our advertisers and our many subscribers for their support. NODPA operates on a duct tape and baler twine budget so it can provide the maximum services for its farmer members so, like farmers, we have little money to invest in our infrastructure. **Help us accomplish more** and continue providing high quality services to organic dairy farmers by **donating to NODPA** through a cash donation or through our check-off program *see page 35*. ♦

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Thought For the Day: Eat More Pasture– Do Less Work

By Ed Maltby

Call it the “Grass Wars” or the “Access to pasture soap opera” there are still some leaders of the organic dairy industry that resist a NOP rule that requires lactating cows consume a quantifiable amount of pasture. They question that there can be a universally applied method of measurement that is size and location neutral. In order to answer that question, NODPA convened a committee to compile practical ideas on measuring dry matter intake that could be applied consistently across the country.

The report clearly shows that no matter what the size of the farm, the number of cows ... consumption of pasture can be measured effectively as part of the annual farm inspection by a certifier.

The committee was chaired by the newly appointed head of Organic Dairy Development & Research at the University of New Hampshire Organic Research Farm, Kevin Brussell and included Kathy Soder (USDA ARS), Kathie Arnold (NODPA Board member), Arden Nelson (WODPA Board member), Lisa McCrory (NOFA VT), Jim Gardiner (NODPA Board member) and Juan Velez (Aurora Organic Dairy).

The committee reached unanimous agreement on how to measure pasture consumption and published a short report and work sheet which is available on the NODPA website at www.nodpa.com/FOODpastureMeasurement.pdf. The report clearly shows that no matter what the size of the farm, the number of cows, the production practices (whether irrigated or not) or the geographic location, consumption of pasture can be measured effectively as part of the annual farm inspection by a certifier. The USDA NOP has thanked the committee for their work and valuable input and the report has also been welcomed by certifiers who agree that measurement and recording of consumption of feed is an integral part of their existing inspection protocols. Certifiers also mentioned that they had no difficulties in monitoring feed consumption under the 80/20 requirement for transitioning farms and the 30% dry matter worksheets are less complicated.

NODPA's position on access to pasture rule and dairy herd replacements:

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Clarification of the access to Pasture standards

1. Organic dairy livestock over 6 months of age must graze on pasture during the months of the year when pasture can provide edible forage.

2. The grazed feed must provide significant intake for all milking-age organic dairy cows. At a minimum, an average of 30% of the dry matter intake each year must come from grazed pasture during the region's growing season, which will be no less than 120 days per year.

3. Temporary exemption from pasture may be allowed because of: Conditions under which the health, safety, or well-being of the animal could be jeopardized, including to restore the health of an individual animal or to prevent the spread of disease from an infected animal to other animals. Short term inclement weather. Temporary conditions which pose a



Cows Grazing at Rick Segalla's farm, 2007 NODPA Field Days

risk to soil and water quality.

In no case will temporary confinement and exemption from this pasture standard be allowed as a continuous production system.

The measurement of the consumption of dry matter from grazed pasture will be calculated based on the daily dry matter intake from grazing averaged over the total time period grazed per year.

Organic Dairy Herd Replacements

Once an operation has been certified for organic dairy production, all dairy replacement animals, including all young stock whether subsequently born on or brought onto the operation, shall be under organic management from the last third of gestation prior to the animal's birth. ♦



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