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(3) Livestock, progeny and all succeeding generation from cloned livestock reproductive materials, or any other products derived from animals produced using animal cloning technology

The Livestock Committee and the NOSB will work in collaboration with the NOP on further rule making recommendations as issues are identified. ♦

A Farm Bill Year Calls For Farmer Activism

By Maureen Knapp

2007 is a Farm Bill year, and this is important because the Farm Bill sets the stage for the next 5 years. It seems that every other week, especially during Farm Bill years, there is a call to action for farmers to contact their representatives about one issue or another. It is much easier to act upon these "Action Alerts" when you know the person you are speaking to, especially if you have established a working relationship with them.

As farmers are now less than 2% of the population, and organic farmers even fewer in number than that, it not only behooves us to speak up for ourselves, it is absolutely essential. It's understandable that it may be uncomfortable to initiate a conversation with someone you don't know about a topic you may be lacking information on. It can be hard to step outside of one's comfort zone, but after you make the effort to stretch your boundaries, the discomfort eases or disappears, rather like sore muscles after a new activity. If you think of it as an educational experience and opportunity for personal growth, then the idea of doing such things becomes a little more palatable. At least it did for me.

At this particular time, opportunities for change abound because of the new blood in Congress. Many newly elected officials are being thrust into a debate they know little about and are grateful to hear from constituents the changes they'd like to see as well as how different aspects of the Farm Bill affect them. Once a relationship with an aide is established it is much easier to pick up the phone and call them for whatever reason, or email a question. Quite often they also turn to you for advice or an opinion because you are the expert. So, how do we go about this?

Often, different Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) will bring farmers and others to Washington DC to hold informational sessions for the purpose of educating on lobbying efforts. This is followed by actual congressional visits. These groups have done the research on the Farm Bill that farmers don't have time to do. Quite a bit of information is packed into these seminars and there is usually ample time for questions if you are still not clear about some things. The result is that when it is time to do the visits, you actually do know what you are talking about. Sustainable Ag Coalition www.msawg.org is one such organization. They have an outstanding website with all sorts reference and educational material. Another good one to investigate is



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www.upstateniagara.com

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the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture
www.sustainableagriculture.net

During the first week of March, Kathie Arnold, her daughter Carly, I, and many others attended the Sustainable Ag Coalition (SAC) summit “Roots to Reform” in Washington D.C. There was a wide variety of extremely interesting and informative workshops, so many that it was hard to choose which ones to attend. Some of the topics included:

- **Getting Your Message Across** – How to Write an Effective Op-Ed and Letter to the Editor,
- **Effective Media for Grassroots Organizations**
- **Effective Lobbying** – Basic Skills and Tips,
- **Appropriations 101**- Organizing Grassroots Advocacy for Long Term Policy Change

Notes from some of these sessions can be found at the SAC website listed above, under **Farm Bill Advocacy Toolkit**. This is a great resource - check it out!

The night before the Summit, there was a “Meet and Greet” reception on Capitol Hill that allowed time for attendees to meet with Members of Congress and their staff. This was valuable networking time. The day after the Summit, armed with our newly honed skills and information, we made our way around Capitol Hill (an education in itself!) and met with our representatives. During one of the visits to our local congressman’s office, we were joined by Tony Azevedo (WODPA, California) where we had a nice chat about the possibilities of his congressman working in concert with ours on Farm Bill issues. Tony’s congressman happens to be the Chairman of the new House Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture. Later on in the day we met with Samuel Fromartz, author of **Organic, Inc.** and *Chews Wise*, www.Chewswise.com, for lunch. Chews Wise- “Devouring the Food Chain one Bite at a Time” is an up-to-the-minute blog, about all things organic and some things not. Sam interviewed Kathie and Tony for Chews Wise, and we all had a great lunch at the Native American Museum cafeteria.

Regardless of where you obtain your information, here are some guidelines that are helpful for successful visits:

- Make appointments first
- Thank the legislator or aide for taking the time to meet with you
- Have your talking points organized in your mind to convey a succinct message

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It is called the Farm Bill, and as farmers we are in a unique position to be able to impact this important legislation and in fact, should consider it our duty.

- If you are leaving any written materials behind, make sure that they are organized into a neat folder or packet. Make references to the material during the visit

- If you have a unique farm product, bring it along as a small gift.
 - These are busy people. If your appointment is for a half hour and you’ve said what you have to say in 15 minutes, then give them the gift of the 15 minutes. They’ll remember you for it.
 - Follow up with a thank you email.
 - Business cards are helpful
- Personal stories seem to have a longer lasting effect than simply listing changes that you’d like to see, i.e.

how this change affects your farm

Another easy way to meet your representatives and establish a relationship is to tag along on a local office visit with someone who already knows the ropes, or grab a friend and learn to do it together. Staff people, especially at the local level, look forward to learning

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things from an actual farmer. There is much to be learned from the staffers as well.

It's been said that the term Farm Bill is a mis-nomer. It should be called the Food Bill, as it affects everyone and would attract the attention of a whole lot more people if it were called such, but it isn't. It is called the Farm Bill, and as farmers we are in a unique position to be able to impact this important legislation and in fact, should consider it our duty.

Maureen and her husband Paul own and operate Cobblestone Valley Farm in Preble, NY, which includes an organic dairy, along with organic pick your own strawberries, various pasture raised meats, and compost. <http://cobblestonevalley.com> ♦



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More Organic Milk Sought in Northeast

The purpose of the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance is to enable organic dairy family farms, situated across an extensive area, to maintain the sustainability of organic dairy farming in the Northeast Region.

HP Hood is starting new organic milk routes in a number of Northern Tier States (ME, NH, VT, NY, PA, OH, MI, WI, MN, IA) and would like to hear from you. Our support of sustainable agriculture, a signing bonus and transition assistance have helped many already. Please call Karen Cole, HP Hood Milk Procurement, karen.cole@dairymarketingservices.com or at 1-866-383-1026.

CROPP Cooperative-Organic Valley Family of Farms, a national farmer owned organic marketing cooperative is looking for organic dairies, both established and transitional organic dairy producers, in New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia and all of the New England States. Competitive Organic Milk Pay Price once certified organic and complete year of Transitional Funding for new farmers during herd's transitional year.

In New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia contact Peter Miller, Northeast Region Dairy Pool Coordinator, at (888) 444-6455, x3407 to leave a voice message, or mobile at (612) 801-3506, peter.miller@organicvalley.coop.

In New England States contact John Cleary, New England Dairy Pool Coordinator, at (888)-444-6544 x3330 to leave voice mail, or mobile at (612)-803-9087, or email at john.cleary@organcivalley.coop

Upstate Niagara Cooperative is a dairy farmer owned, full service cooperative headquartered in Buffalo, NY who own and operate 4 milk plants in Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Rochester. Our members are interested in producing organic milk and proc-

essing organic dairy products. We currently process & package fresh, not ultra-pasteurized organic milk in our Rochester Milk Plant. If you are interested in learning more about Upstate Niagara Coop, please visit our website www.upstateniagara.com or give me a call or email me. Talk to you soon.....Bill Young at 800-724-6455 x 6225 or byoung@upstatefarms.com

LOFCO continues to look for milk in PA/MD, particularly southeast PA. The market is strong. Please contact Levi Miller at 717/661-8682 or Jerry McCleary at 717/577-8809.

Dairy Marketing Services (DMS) is looking for organic milk for its customers - H.P.Hood and Horizon Foods - at very competitive prices. We also have very attractive packages available for farms transitioning into organic dairy farming. Please contact Dave Eyster at 1-888-589-6455 extension 5409.

Horizon Organic continues to grow its producer partner network in the East and Midwest. Horizon Organic offers competitive pay, transitional funds during the 12 months transition of the herd and long-term contracts. Producers in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Michigan, Virginia and Kentucky contact Cindy Masterman 888-648-8377; New York, Maryland, Ohio and Pennsylvania contact Peter Slaunwhite 800-381-0980; Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana contact Mike Bandstra 877-620-8259.

United Ag Services in Seneca Falls, NY is looking for organic milk in NY and northern PA. Please call 800-326-4251.

Any buyers looking for organic milk who would like to be listed in this column for the August 2007 issue, please email the desired text to Ed at ednodpa@comcast.net or call 413-772-0444 by July 1st 2007.