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NORTHEAST ORGANIC DAIRY PRODUCERS ALLIANCE

NODPA NEWS

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Organic Industry News

National Organic Program In Action: What's Happening

By Kathie Arnold

On October 21st, Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman marked the official implementation of the National Organic Standards. As certified organic producers, we are now operating under the hand of the USDA.

One component of the National Organic Program (NOP) that producers must adhere to is the National List of Approved and Prohibited Materials. At their recent October meeting, the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) made the following livestock materials recommendations:

Materials approved:

~Activated Charcoal—vegetable sources only
~Bismuth Subsalicylate
~Butorphanol—with double the FDA withholding
~Calcium Borogluconate
~Calcium Propionate—for treatment of milk fever only
~Epinephrine/
Adrenaline—prohibited except for emergency treatment of anaphalactic shock
~Flunixin (active ingredi-

ent in Banamine)

~Kaolin Pectate

~Magnesium Oxide

~Magnesium Hydroxide

~Propylene Glycol—for treatment of acute ketosis in ruminants only

~Potassium Sorbate—only for use in aloe vera products for livestock production

~Xylazine / Tolazoline—for emergency use only, with double FDA withholding

Materials clarified as allowed because they are natural

~Cell Wall Carbohydrates

~Yeast Derivatives

Materials Prohibited

~Heparin

The NOSB also approved a category of materials called excipients, which are minute extra ingredients often found in health care products. Without approval of these excipients, there are health care products that would be prohibited even though their active ingredient is approved.

Emily Brown Rosen, of the Organic Materials Review Institution (OMRI), reports the livestock committee revisited the recommendation that proposed permitting all substances approved for

use in organic food to also be permitted for livestock feed. The NOSB just approved a revision of this wording to permit use of approved processing substances for livestock healthcare and other purposes as well as in feed. The new wording is: *"The NOSB recommended that all materials allowed in processing also be allowed for use in organic livestock production subject to FDA or AAFCO."*

Livestock Committee Chair, George Siemon, reports that calf-hood medications have been put on a fast track for approval by the NOSB as currently there are very few of such materials on the National List.

As of this writing, the NOP has not yet actually added these newly approved materials or any other materials approved since November 2000 to the National List. Brown Rosen reports that the "NOP staff stated they intend to notify certifiers to consider use of these recommended materials as 'minor non-compliances' until rulemaking is complete and the USDA decides whether or not to accept the recommenda-

tions.”

VOF and NOFA-NY are indicating that they will be allowing the use of these NOSB materials prior to their formal addition to the National List based on the recognition that approving materials is one area where the NOSB has clear statutory authority. On the other hand, GOA is planning to wait until the materials have gone through the entire process, including being recommended by the Secretary of Agriculture by publication in the Federal Register.

Knowing what materials and products can be used is a difficulty for most organic dairy producers. With the limited National List, a great number of materials that were previously allowed by certifiers, no longer are acceptable. Some certifiers are trying to develop lists of acceptable materials but that is still in process and they are not going to be able to consider all the products that are out there in the marketplace.

So what is a producer to do? Here's what I do in deciding what products can and cannot be used on our farm for livestock. A few basic points to remember are:

- ⇒ Anything that is OMRI approved is useable.
- ⇒ Anything that is natural is allowed unless it is specifically prohibited on the List—the only such material at this time is strychnine.
- ⇒ Anything that is synthetic is prohibited unless it is on the National List.
- ⇒ Any products with artificial colors, flavors, or preservatives are not allowed.

I take each product label and see what's listed. I make sure that each ingredient is either a natural material, or if it is synthetic, I look for it on the National List. In multiple ingredient products, first, I look for the easy red flags such as artificial colors. If I see such on the product label, then I know that product is automatically prohibited. If there are no easy red flags, then I just start down through the

list of ingredients and see if all synthetic ones are on the List. If an ingredient is not on the List, then that product is not allowable.

Problems arise when I don't know whether a substance is natural or synthetic. To be sure of compliance, I either do some research on the net or through other resources, or check with our certifier to ask for their guidance.

Another major problem is when a percentage of ingredients is listed as inert. I then make calls to manufacturers to find out what the inert ingredient is and have them send me verification documentation. In most cases, it has turned out that the inert ingredient is water, but it is not safe to assume so without checking and getting the documentation.

A third problem area is carriers, for a producer must ensure that carriers are not products such as corn or other plant material that could be Genetically Modified Organism (GMO). For example, we feed supplemental Vitamin E which is mixed with a carrier. The first brand we were using had rice hulls as a carrier. I requested and received documentation from the company that the hulls were indeed from GMO free rice. Later, however, I found someone who could custom mix the Vitamin E for us using kelp as the carrier. I feel safer about that because I don't have to be concerned that the manufacturer might change the carrier unbeknownst to me. All the microbial products that we use (haylage inoculants, probiotics, etc.) must also be documented by the manufacturer that neither the organisms nor the substrate they are grown on is from a GMO source.

The bottom line is, you need to work with your certifier to ensure that the products you are using are acceptable.

Another issue on the table at the October NOSB meeting was dairy replacements. In the words of Emily Brown Rosen “The Livestock committee sought to make the requirements consistent between animals born on-

farm and purchased non-organic animals. The existing regulation permits stock to be managed organically for a minimum of 12 months before milk production, and requires organic management from last third of gestation for animals converted to organic production under the one-time new dairy herd clause. This results in an apparent contradiction, and NOP indicated that a rule change would probably be required to resolve it. The Board recommended (10-2-2) that the NOP consider the following language:

‘On existing organic dairy farms all replacement or expansion dairy animals shall be under continuous organic management from the last third of gestation.’

Richard Mathews, NOP Manager, noted that this clarification might require a rule change, and he would discuss this as well as an Organic Trade Association (OTA) recommended position with counsel to see if either could be accomplished without rule making. The OTA position called for organic management from birth, with an exception granted to all production stock that allows use of any medication, until 12 months before production of milk or fiber.”

This leaves the issue in a rather confusing state regarding dairy replacements. At this time, VOF, NOFA-NY, and PCO are reporting that they are requiring replacements to be organic from the last third of gestation. GOA, however, is permitting replacement heifers to be from any source until the NOP has made a final ruling; but they must be fed organic feed and raised under organic management practices from the time they are brought onto the operation for at least 12 months before milk or milk products can be considered organic.

Hopefully this contradiction will be resolved soon so we will all be playing on a level field.

Kathie Arnold is an organic dairy producer in Truxton, NY. She is co-editor of NODPA News.

Producer & Organic Integrity

By Kathie Arnold

What should you as an organic producer do if you hear of or know that another certified producer is intentionally violating the Standards? In deciding what to do, it is important to remember that that farm is not just risking de-certification of their farm but they are putting all of the organic farming community and the organic marketplace as a whole at risk of losing the faith of our customers.

When a farm chooses to become certified organic, they agree to follow the Standards now set by the National Organic Program. Consumers are purchasing organic products with the confidence that the products were produced under those Standards. It is the role of certification agencies to verify that that is indeed what is happening but they can't be looking over everyone's shoulder all the time. Therefore, we, as organic producers, must assist certifiers in maintaining the integrity of the system.

If we are faced with the situation above, what is the proper response? Certifiers in the Northeast were asked this question. Following are answers from:

- John Cleary, Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF)
- Lisa Engelbert, NOFA-NY Certified Organic LLC
- Leslie Zuck, Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO)
- Betty Kananen, Global Organic Alliance (GOA)
- Caroline Hetzel, Farm Verified Organic (ICS/FVO)

What should producers do if they hear of or know of other certified organic producers who are not

following Standards?

VOF: *Violations of the Standards should be reported to the certifier of the producer in question. VOF will respond to any allegation submitted in writing. We will also respond to allegations that are not submitted in writing if we hear them from at least two sources.*

NOFA-NY: *I think the best thing they can do is alert the certifier.*

PCO: *Report it to the certifier. All accredited certifiers must have a complaints procedure, which you should ask for. PCO requires the complaint to be in writing, signed and submitted to the Executive Director. Anonymous complaints are not accepted. The ED decides how to proceed, which depends on the nature and seriousness of the complaint and the operation involved. Usually, I will do as much re-*

search as possible into the matter and send a notice to the client, giving them a chance to respond. In most cases, the client was not aware of the violation and immediately took steps to correct it. We have never had a complaint serious enough to warrant an unannounced inspection, but our procedures would allow that under appropriate circumstances. Once we have resolved the complaint, I notify the complaining party to let them know the outcome. Of course all of this has to be done while respecting confidentiality.

GOA: *First have some type of documented proof, make a written formal complaint to the GOA office.*

ICS/FVO: *Contact the certifying agent of the non-compliant producer. The certifying agent will take the complaint and deal with it under the USDA NOP Non-compliance procedure for certified operations 205.661.*

What would you as a certifier do if you were told that talk was circulating that Producer X was violating Standards, such as using antibiotics or buying conventional grain?

VOF: *If received in writing or from more than two sources, action would be taken immediately. This typically would involve a surprise inspection visit (that could include taking samples for testing if warranted). Previous inspection reports, records, and applications would also be reviewed. In the Office, the Review Committee would meet to determine the extent of the violation and the resulting actions.*

NOFA-NY: *We would follow the suggestions of our Review Committee. If they ask for testing to be*



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done, whether on milk, tissue samples or soil samples, it will be done, probably during an unannounced inspection.

PCO: Without a written complaint, we would not take immediate action.

However, if the information seems credible, we would put a note in the file for the inspector to look at that area thoroughly at the next inspection.

If we had a written complaint, we would take all of the evidence into consideration along with

other factors, such as: credibility of the complaint; previous complaints, if any; record of any other noncompliances; experience and knowledge of the

producer. Then we'd determine whether to proceed by notifying the producer or by performing an unannounced inspection. If it is determined that there is a noncompliance, our noncompliance procedure would go into effect and the USDA would be notified if the matter is not resolved.

GOA: Receive the complaint in writing, signed, with as much documentation as possible. GOA would require an inspection, by a designee.

ICS/FVO: We reserve the right to conduct surprise inspections and collect random soil and grain samples. The surprise inspection could be simply to review their audit trail. For example: If feed was purchased, is there an organic certificate from the source, an invoice for the amount, any other documentation that can ensure its organic integrity. If we compare harvest records to feed records and there is a discrepancy, is there an audit trail to justify the difference?

Is the name of the person making the complaint kept confidential?

VOF: Yes, the name of the person making the complaint is kept confidential.

NOFA-NY: I think the name of the person who comes forward with that information has to be kept confidential,

otherwise it would deter people from coming forward.

PCO: No, we do not necessarily hold the name of the complaining party confidential. At least it's not our policy to. But it would be within my discretion to do so if I determined that it was necessary to get someone to come forward about a serious problem. Frankly, nearly all of our complaints have been made by competitors.

So I think it's fair to let people know who's watching / complaining. No one has ever asked that I keep their identity secret, and I would need a good reason to do so. I certainly don't want to

scare people away from submitting legitimate complaints, but at the same time I want to discourage frivolous bickering among competitors.

GOA: Yes, as much as possible. There is always the possibility we could be forced to reveal the name, but we prefer not to.

Additional comments:

NOFA-NY: It is important for organic producers to keep their eyes and ears open. If someone is not following the Standards, they are technically contaminating other organic product. All organic producers stand to be hurt by such actions.

PCO: Although we are very concerned about preserving the integrity of organic products, our complaints procedure must also protect producers from harassment by unscrupulous competitors or disgruntled former employees. We don't want to act on rumors. But we also want to resolve the matter as quickly as possible on behalf of consumers and the rest of our clients (and others) who ARE following the rules. Problem: If a certifier doesn't respond to a complaint of this sort, the USDA/NOP should be notified. My understanding is that the NOP would probably put pressure on the certifier to respond rather than do anything

from their end since they really aren't set up for this type of enforcement and they have repeatedly told us that we, as certification agents, are charged with the first line of enforcement. A certifier that is not following up on serious complaints may put their USDA accreditation at risk.

NOTE: The USDA Final Rule states: 205.662(f)(2) *A certified operation or a person responsibly connected with an operation whose certification has been revoked will be ineligible to receive certification for a period of 5 years following the date of such revocation....(g) Violations of Act. In addition to suspension or revocation, any certified operation that (1) Knowingly sells or labels a product as organic, except in accordance with the Act, shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 per violation.*

Words From the Road An Organic Inspector's Thoughts

by Robert Perry

As an Organic Inspector, the issue of Organic Integrity is critical to my evaluation of a farm. I am entrusted with the job of assessing the integrity and verification of organic practices and the supporting documentation. I will address the dairy and crop issues from my perspective as an inspector as well as a certified producer of 14 years.

I think the first point of reference to certification is that of privilege. This is not an entitlement that anyone should pursue haphazardly. Not every farm will be certified for commodities of their choosing. Economic challenges should not be the only motivating factor. This certainly is a variable to consider, but should not be the sole purpose of "jumping through the hoops" for certification. Going through the motions, although a popular political attitude, does little for

If someone is not following the Standards, they are technically contaminating other organic product. All organic producers stand to be hurt by such actions.

adjusting to organic practices.

My main objective is to challenge the milk industry as a whole to embrace organic production as "REAL". Why are the handlers exempt from organic certification regulations? As producers, you are held accountable for your practices and maintaining records. Why are the hauler and "Cooperatives" not required to be certified? Each level of the marketing system should be certified.

If USDA sanctions and controls "Certified Organic" yet fails to require their own field and plant inspectors visiting farms and processing facilities to check for compliance, can they expect accredited certifiers to maintain product integrity after it leaves the farm? When a dairy has a high SCC or PI and a field representative contacts the farmer, why are they not also notifying his certifying agent? When that follow up visit is made, a simple check off sheet for organic dairies could be standard protocol. This would keep everyone on task with the purpose of creating the best possible product for the marketplace. If the plant or Co-op visit revealed reason to suspect a violation, the certifier should be notified for further action. Currently this communication is not planned or implemented on a consistent basis. If it was, this communication, coupled with regional production networking involving various agencies certifying dairies in the region, as well as the various marketing groups, could create the basis for securing Organic Integrity and Compliance for the industry as it grows and comes under increasing public scrutiny.

Robert Perry has been a certified organic producer of mixed vegetables and field crops since the late 80's at Fairbanks Farms in Homer, NY. This is Robert's 5th year of being an organic inspector.



Growing Demand for Organic Meat

The following is an interview with Teri Prior, a partner in Organic Lands LLC, an organic meat processor headquartered in Cooperstown, NY.

NODPA: What is Organic Lands LLC?

Teri: We are a processor of certified organic beef and pork products, targeting mainstream families concerned about their health and the environment. We focus on making economical and convenient foods that kids love such as pepperoni, hot dogs, and burgers.

Three of us are involved in the business. My husband, Shawn Prior, markets and sells Organic Lands products. Chuck Blood purchases stock and works with farmers and I develop products and manage production. Our headquarters are in Cooperstown, NY and our processing plant is in Bridgewater, NY, south of Utica on Rt. 8.

Our product line is distributed in Michigan, Ohio, Massachusetts, and New York. Since I bought Schaller's Packers, Inc. this year, we are also supplying beef and pork custom cuts to the public out of Schaller's storefront where consumers can get factory direct prices. Schaller's continues to serve local farmers and sell its Old World Butcher Shop products.

NODPA: Please tell us about the conception and birth of Organic Lands LLC.

Teri: Shawn and I were concerned about the mystery meats that our kids loved such as hot dogs and bologna. We have friends who were chefs of major restaurants and we decided to go into the business of supplying restaurants and stores with alternatives to mystery meats. We started developing products 2 ½ years ago and are now launching products in the marketplace. Our Beef Jerky Snack Stick was featured in USA Today October 30th as a new product to watch

and it has also been featured on NBC's Today Show.

NODPA: Could there be a market for most of the organic beef generated by organic dairy farms in New York and the Northeast?

Teri: Definitely. The biggest concern of our supermarket buyers is that we will not be able to supply them with enough product. We use every cut of the animal in our products and we are researching the possibility of making organic bone meal and organic dog food.

NODPA: What kind of premium over conventional beef are you able to pay?

Teri: 7-10% premium depending upon quality, transportation costs, etc. As a start up, we are looking for dairy farmers to help us launch the company by giving us pricing that is based upon recent conventional auction prices for comparable cattle but that still compensates them for the paperwork associated with an organic sale. Our hot-dogs, and pepperonis have to be priced competitively with all natural meats in order to get consumers to taste and switch to a new brand. This way, the farmer gets compensated for the paperwork and receives a bit of a premium for the animal and we can develop the market. For farmers interested in raising beef breeds, we'll work out something different since that is not an ancillary income as cull cow sales are to a milk operation. Because so much of a live animal is waste / loss, it still turns out to cost 40% more than conventional meat.

NODPA: What challenges have you had to face in procuring and marketing organic meat?

Teri: The biggest challenge has been in product formulation because organic spices and ingredients don't correlate to conventional ingredients so recipes weren't working. For example, organic mustard is much stronger flavored than conventional mustard. The procurement challenge has been finding a local supply. Other challenges are that supermarkets want

very expensive packaging. The machines cost upwards of \$50,000. We already purchased machinery, including a \$12,000 hot dog skinner.

NODPA: What changes have you made over time?

Teri: We started out with a product line that is lean / low fat. We found that customers wanted good tasting products that come from full fat. I now have five new product formulations on my desk that we are working on that are pork and beef product combinations.

NODPA: What future vision do you have for Organic Lands?

Teri: Now that we have our infrastructure in place to serve our markets, our vision is to produce for that market—to spend more time and money in advertising and marketing those products now that links to farmers and processing facilities are secured.

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teri@organiclands.com,
shawn@organiclands.com, and
chuck@organiclands.com.
website: **www.organiclands.com.**

**MOMP—The Alliance's
Maine Chapter**

By Mia & Steve Morrison

The past year has seen NODPA strengthening farmer to farmer interaction, successfully establishing a \$20 cwt base price in Maine and Vermont, building communication with processors, and promoting sustainable farm practices with public comment position letters sent to the NOSB and NOP.

As the next step, NODPA has also been able to act as a beneficial intermediary in discussions between new, interested producers and proces-

sors. The Maine Chapter of NODPA, the Maine Organic Milk Producers (MOMP), successfully pooled resources and knowledge to stimulate interest, educate, and guide potential producers during a time when processors were looking for milk. As a result the Maine organic milk pool increased by a third.

Organic producers sought out conventional farmers whose farms were close and easily adapted to organic production. Interested dairymen were brought together in groups to answer questions and concerns. Small farms were “hooked up” to create larger pools of milk in their areas. In addition, haulers were involved in creating new routes at minimum cost to accommodate new milk. Meetings with MOFGA, Maine’s certifier, were held to clarify certification requirements and assess each farm’s “organic feasibility”. Serious producers gathered in groups to review the certification application process and discuss Maine’s milk pool. Processors worked with the group as a whole unit, looking at the larger picture of Maine milk flow, instead of each farm as an entity unto itself. Contracts are individual and confidential. However, it is to the benefit of both processor and producer to understand statewide milk flow.

The number of Maine acres in certified organic production increased by 27%. The number of organic cows in Maine increased 30%. The organic community was strengthened in numbers (by 32%) but also in changing scopes from the individual farm level to the farther reaching view of statewide milk flow. By working together, not only is the milk pool strengthened, but NODPA’s mission to develop and promote community and broaden the scope to encompass regional milk flow is furthered..

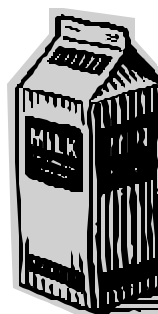
Mia and Steve Morrison are certified organic dairy producers in Charleston, ME. Mia is co-editor of NODPA News and Steve is the current NODPA President.

**New Milk Co-op in
Pennsylvania**

Lancaster Organic Farmers Cooperative, with approximately 24 farmer members, will be up and running on January 1st, 2003. The milk from this Coop is being sold to Natural by Nature. To learn more about the Cooperative, contact: Roman Stoltzfoos, 610-593-2415.

Organic Dairy Marketing

By Lisa McCrory



In September of this year the NODPA Web site launched its first Poll Page. The purpose of this Poll Page is to stay current on the average herd size, milk volume and pay price of organic milk and grain that exists in the Northeast as a whole and within each of the northeast states.

Organic dairy production information and current price reporting for milk is at the forefront of NODPA’s mission. As a service to fellow producers present and future, we are asking that everyone submit their information with the assurance that *all information will be confidential and will only be used to create averages.*

Below are the questions as presented on the web page followed by the poll results for September and October, 2002. When we have more responses, we will be able to display state by state averages.

Average lbs milk shipped annually = 911,600 pounds
Average base price for milk = \$19.95 per hundredweight
Average Herd Size: 57 cows
Organic Grain Price:

≤12% Protein = \$265/ton
 13-18% Protein = \$288/ton
 ≥19% = \$290/ton

A questionnaire was mailed to you recently asking these questions (and more!). We will be adding responses from these questionnaires to the Poll Page and averages will be reported as a regular feature of NODPA News.

Milk Premiums De-mystified

Premiums for organic milk vary depending upon which processor is buying your milk. The following is a summary of what you can expect when shipping your milk to CROPP/Organic Valley, Horizon Organic Dairy, and Natural By Nature. These values are current as of November, 2002.

CROPP/Organic Valley QUALITY

Somatic Cell Count: 350,000 is the hinge point. You gain or lose 24 cents

for every 100,000 somatic cells above or below this. For example, if your SCC is 150,000, you will get an extra 48 cents a hundredweight of milk produced. If your SCC is 450,000, you will have 24 cents/hundredweight taken off your base price.

PI: if your monthly average is below 15,000, you will get an extra 50 cents a hundredweight, if it is between 16,000 and 30,000, you will get an extra 25 cents. If your monthly average is 51,000-100,000, you will lose 25 cents and deductions continue to climb up to \$2.00 a hundredweight.

Standard Plate/Raw Count: 25,000 is the hinge point; you can gain or lose up to 5 cents a hundredweight.

SOLIDS

Butterfat: 3.5% is the hinge point and you earn or lose 17.7 cents per tenth percentage point over or under that.

Protein: 3.05% is the hinge point and you earn or lose 16.2 cents per tenth percentage point over or under that.

Other solids: 5.65% is the hinge point and you earn or lose 12.06 cents per tenth percentage point over or under that.

Horizon Organic Dairy

The following is the standard premium program offered:

QUALITY

One dollar per hundredweight if standard plate is less than 4,000, PI is less than 8,000 and Somatic Cell count is less than 150,000.

50 cents per hundredweight if the standard plate is less

than 8,000, PI is less than 16,000 and Somatic Cell count is less than 250,000.

25 cents per hundredweight if the standard plate is less than 16,000, PI is less than 32,000 and Somatic Cell Count is less than 300,000.

SOLIDS

Butterfat: 13 cents earned or lost for every tenth of a percentage point above or below 3.25%.

Natural By Nature QUALITY

50 cents per hundredweight if the standard plate count is 10,000 or less and Somatic Cell Count is 150,000.

40 cents per hundredweight if the standard plate count is 10,000 or less and the Somatic Cell Count is 200,000 or less.

30 cents per hundredweight if the standard plate count is less than 10,000 and the Somatic Cell Count is less than 300,000.

SOLIDS

Components are calculated in the following manner. The total amount of premium money (without quality) is divided by the components. This gives a per pound value for each pound of butterfat, protein and SNF. This calculation is based on a fairly constant ratio of 30% for butterfat, 65% for protein, and 5% for solids non-fat. As an example, for September a pound of butterfat was worth \$0.61865, a pound of protein was worth \$1.66372, and a pound of non fat solid was \$0.068. It is important to note that this is Natural by Nature's current pricing structure. With the formation of the Lancaster Organic Farmers Co-Op, this is going to be changed in some shape or form.

Lisa McCrory is the dairy tech specialist for NOFA-VT and serves as coordinator for NODPA. She lives in Randolph VT.

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Organic Production

Confused About Fat? Choose Grassfed!

by Jo Robinson

In my Grandma's day, there was no such thing as a bad fat. All fat was "good" simply because it tasted good.

My Grandma fried her eggs in bacon grease, added bacon grease to her cakes and pancakes, made her pie crusts from lard, and served butter with her homemade bread. My grandmother was able to thrive on all that saturated fat---but not my grandfather. He suffered from angina and died from heart failure at a relatively young age.

My grandfather wasn't alone.

Population studies from the first half of the 20th century showed that Americans in general had a much higher risk of cardiovascular disease than people from other countries, especially Japan, Italy and Greece. Was all that saturated fat to blame? The Japanese were eating very little fat of any kind, while the Mediterraneans were swimming in olive oil, an oil that is very low in saturated fat but high in monounsaturated oils.

So, in the 1960s, word came from on high that we should cut back on the butter, cream, eggs and red meat. But, interestingly, the experts did not advise us to switch to an ultra-low fat diet like the Japanese, nor to use monounsaturated oils like the Greeks or Italians. Instead, we were advised to replace saturated fat with polyunsaturated oils---primarily corn oil and safflower. Never mind the fact that no people in the history of this planet had ever eaten large amounts of this type of oil. It was deemed "the right thing to do." Why? First of all, the United States had far more corn

fields than olive groves, so it seemed reasonable to use the type of oil that we had in abundance. But just as important, according to the best medical data at the time, corn oil and safflower oil seemed to lower cholesterol levels better than monounsaturated oils.

Today, we know that's not true. In the 1960s, researchers did not differentiate between "good" HDL cholesterol and "bad" LDL cholesterol. Instead, they lumped both types together and focused on lowering the sum of the two. Polyunsaturated oils

seemed to do this better than monounsaturated oils.

We now know they achieved this feat by lowering both our bad and our good cholesterol, in effect throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Monounsaturated oils leave our

HDL intact.

In hindsight, it's not surprising, then, that our death rate from cardiovascular disease remained high in the 1970s and 80s even though we were eating far less butter, eggs, bacon grease, and red meat: We had been told to replace saturated fat with the wrong kind of oil.

During this same era, our national health statistics were highlighting another problem, this one even more ominous: an increasing number of people were dying from cancer. Why were cancer

deaths going up? Was it the fact that our environment was more polluted? That our food had more additives, herbicides and pesticides? That our lives were more stressful? That we were not eating enough fruits and vegetables? Yes. Yes. Yes. And yes.

But there was another reason we were losing the war against cancer: the supposedly "heart-healthy" corn oil and safflower oil that the doctors had

advised us to pour on our salads and spread on our bread contained high amounts of a type of fat called "omega-6 fatty acids." There is now strong evidence that omega-6s can make cancer cells grow faster and more invasive. For example, if you were to inject a colony of rats with human cancer cells and then put some of the rats on a corn oil diet, some on a butterfat diet, and some on a beef fat diet, the ones given the omega-6 rich corn oil would be afflicted with larger and more aggressive tumors.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to us, we were getting a second helping of omega-6s from our animal products. Starting in the 1950s, the meat industry had begun taking our animals off pasture and fattening them on grains high in omega-6s, adding to our intake of these potentially cancer-promoting fats.

In the early 1990s, we learned that our modern diet was harboring yet another unhealthy fat: trans-fatty acids. Trans-fatty acids are formed during the hydrogenation process that converts vegetable oil into margarine and shortening. Carefully designed studies were showing that these manmade fats are worse for our cardiovascular system than the animal fats they replaced. Like some saturated fats, they raise our

bad cholesterol.

But unlike the fats found in nature, they also lower our good cholesterol---delivering a double

whammy to our coronary arteries.

"Maybe butter is better after all," conceded the health experts.

Given all this conflicting advice about fat, consumers were ready to lob their tubs of margarine at their doctors. For decades they had been skimping on butter, even though margarine tasted little better than salty Vaseline. Now they were being told that margarine might increase their

Omega-3s may be the best of all the good fats because they are also linked with a lower risk of virtually all the so-called "diseases of civilization,"

Few people realize that all omega-3s originate in the green leaves of plants and algae.

risk of a heart attack!

Some people revolted by trying to abandon fat altogether. For breakfast, they made do with dry toast and fat-free cottage cheese. For lunch, they ate salad greens sprinkled with pepper and vinegar. Dinner was a skinless chicken breast poached in broth. Or better yet, a soy burger topped with lettuce. Desert? Well, after all that self-denial, what else but a big bowl of fat-free ice cream and a box of Snackwell cookies. Thank goodness calories no longer counted! Only fat made you fat!

Or, so the diet gurus had told us. Paradoxically, while we were doing our best to ferret out all the fat grams, we were getting fatter and fatter. We were also becoming more prone to diabetes. Replacing fat with sugar and refined carbohydrates was proving to be no more beneficial than replacing saturated fat with polyunsaturated oils.

At long last, in the mid-1990s, the first truly good news about fat began to emerge from the medical labs. The first fats to be given the green light were the monounsaturated oils, the ones that had helped protect the health of the Mediterraneans for so many generations. These oils are great for the heart, the scientists discovered, and they do not promote cancer. They are also a deterrent against diabetes. The news came fifty years too late, but it was welcome nonetheless. Please pass the olive oil!

Stearic acid, the most abundant fat in beef and chocolate, was also found to be beneficial. Unlike some other saturated fats, stearic acid does not raise your bad cholesterol and it may even give your good cholesterol a little boost. Hooray!

Then, at the tail end of the 20th century, two more "good" fats were added to the roster—omega-3 fatty acids and conjugated linoleic acid, or CLA, the fat found in the meat and dairy products of ruminants. Both of

these fats show signs of being potent weapons against cancer. However, the omega-3s may be the best of all the good fats because they are also linked with a lower risk of virtually all the so-called "diseases of civilization," including cardiovascular disease, depression, ADHD, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, obesity, asthma, and autoimmune diseases.

Grazing animals have more omega-3s because they get the omega-3s directly from the grass.

So, some of you may be wondering, what does this brief history of fat have to do with grass-farming? Few people realize that all omega-3s originate in the green leaves of plants and algae. Fish have large amounts of this good fat because they eat small fish that eat smaller fish that dine on omega-3 rich algae and phytoplankton. Grazing animals have more omega-3s because they get the omega-3s directly from the grass. In both cases, the omega-3s are ultimately passed on to humans, the top of the food chain.

Products from grassfed animals offer us more than omega-3s. They contain significant amounts of two "good" fats, monounsaturated oils and stearic acid, but no manmade trans-fatty acids. They are also the richest known natural source of CLA and contain extra amounts of vitamin E and betacarotene. Finally, grassfed meat is lower than feedlot meat in total fat and calories, making it ideally suited for our sedentary lifestyles.

I don't believe it's a matter of luck or chance that grassfed products have so many of the good fats but so few of the bad. In fact, I'll wager that the more that is discovered about fat in the coming years, the more grassfed meat will shine. The reason for my confidence is simple: our bodies are superbly adapted to this type of food. In the distant past, grassfed meat was the only meat around. Our

hunter-gatherer ancestors either brought home a grazing ruminant such as elk, deer, or bison, or a predator that preyed on those animals. Either way, the nutrients found in grass made their way into the animals' flesh, and ultimately, into our own.

Over the eons, our bodies began to "expect" the kinds and amounts of fat found in grassfed meat. Our hearts counted on the omega-3s to stabilize their rhythm and keep blood clots from forming. Our brain cells relied on omega-3 to build flexible, receptor-rich membranes. Our immune systems used the omega-3s and CLA to help fend off cancer. And because wild game is relatively lean, our bodies weren't burdened with unnecessary amounts of fat or calories.

When we switch from grainfed to grassfed meat, then, we are simply returning to our original diet, the diet that is most in harmony with our physiology. Every cell and system of our bodies function better when we eat products from animals raised on grass.

Jo Robinson is a New York Times bestselling writer. The Omega Diet, the book she coauthored with Dr. Artemis Simopoulos, explores the ideas in this article in more depth. Why Grassfed Is Best! focuses on the benefits of pastured animal products. To order her books or learn more about grassfed products, visit <http://www.eatwild.com>.



Some Thoughts on Holistic or Alternative Veterinary Medicine

By Richard J. Holliday, DVM

This is the first installment of a two part article by Dr. Holliday that NODPA News will be printing.

It is a difficult task to briefly describe "holistic" or "alternative" veterinary medicine. The dictionary defines "holistic" as being concerned with wholes or with complete systems rather than with parts or divisions, while "alternative" describes something existing or functioning outside the established cultural, social, or economic system. Both definitions are correct but do not adequately address the wide variations within the realm of holistic veterinary medicine as practiced today.

The range of alternative therapies is immense...acupuncture, herbs, homeopathy, refined colostrum products, microbial products (lactobacilli and yeasts), mega-vitamins, radionics, and many other natural products and procedures. The list goes on and on and I apologize if I've left out someone's favorite therapy. Most are useful and generally effective alternatives to the drugs, hormones and antibiotics commonly used in veterinary medicine today.

A HOLISTIC PRACTITIONER

I believe that the distinguishing characteristic of holistic practitioners is the way they approach problems...in short, the way they think.

A true holistic practitioner not only looks at the patient as an integrated unit but also views it in the context of the whole ecosystem in which it lives. In this regard, a sick animal is not only a patient to be treated but is also a symptom of a sick farm. Both patients need help. Any remedial ac-

tion must include what is necessary for the immediate relief of the patient as well as a critical assessment of the long-term effects of the chosen therapy on the patient and the environment. Part of the treatment must also be the removal or reduction of predisposing factors.

A holistic practitioner should also be well versed in several treatment modalities and be able to pick the most appropriate ones needed in any situation.

Finally, a true holistic practitioner should emphasize holistic animal health management (proactive) rather than any kind of treatment (reactive), whether it be holistic or conventional.

It should be noted that the terms holistic and alternative are not interchangeable. For example: an acupuncturist may be practicing alternative medicine, but if he only treats symptoms and does not search for the cause or other useful therapies he is probably not a holistic practitioner ... a fine distinction perhaps, but a significant one.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

To me, the greatest advantage to the holistic approach is that it works! In the hands of an experienced practitioner most holistic/alternative treatments have as good or a better success rate than conventional therapy. I think this is true because holistic practitioners attempt to find and treat the cause not just the symptoms.

There are many other advantages to holistic medicine ... less pollution, fewer side effects, and especially the fact that holistic medicine follows the old medical axiom, "at least do no harm." This advice seems to have

been lost or overlooked in the U.S. as evidenced by the recent report that pharmaceutical drugs are now either the 4th or 6th leading cause of death.

In the hands of an experienced practitioner most holistic/alternative treatments have as good or a better success rate than conventional therapy.

Unfortunately, several factors have slowed public acceptance. The sale and use of natural products do not generate the huge profits necessary to buy researchers, lobbyists, and politicians as does

the sale of antibiotics, pharmaceuticals, herbicides and insecticides. Thus we have little credibility in some circles because we do not have research to back up our empirical observations.

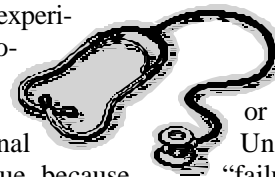
Because so few schools teach these advanced concepts, there are not enough qualified practitioners, although the number is growing. Those that do engage in holistic practice are often subjected to harassment by government agencies.

The biggest disadvantage is that most people tend to use it for the wrong reasons and at the wrong time! They will turn to alternative treatments only as a last resort when everything conventional medicine has to offer has failed. Usually by this time the patient is in advanced stages of the disease and also suffering from the side effect of all the prescribed drugs they have used. When the alternative approach also fails, and it usually does in this situation, the patient gives up on the entire concept and never realizes that the alternative treatment might have worked had they used the right product or technique at the right time. Unfortunately, this apparent "failure" provides more evidence for the pharmaceutical /medical complex to ridicule and condemn the entire concept of holistic medicine.

THE FOCUS OF HOLISTIC ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

The success of the holistic approach requires a change in perspec-

To me, the greatest advantage to the holistic approach is that it works!



tive and the development of a holistic outlook towards livestock management and disease control. It is not as simple as merely substituting a "natural" alternate therapy for a "toxic" drug. The principles behind the success of holistic therapy go much deeper than the characteristics or source of the medication.

Conventional Veterinary Medicine is primarily concerned with the *treatment* of sick animals. Even if successful, the loss of life and production added to the cost of treatment makes this approach by far the most expensive.

Veterinarians also emphasize disease *prevention*. Herd health checks and vaccination programs fall into this category. As essential as these

procedures are, the outlook is still towards preventing disease. Vaccinations may increase resistance against a specific organism but lowers the animal's general vitality to other challenges. Typical of this category are herds or flocks where the animals are not really sick or showing symptoms but are not really well and productive either.

A third concept, usually neglected by conventional veterinary practitioners, is that of *health enhancement through holistic management*. Everything possible is done to raise health and vitality to the highest level possible. All management practices are evaluated on the basis of their effects on the vitality of each animal in the herd. Strict attention is given to providing superlative nutrition. In so far as possible, all environmental stress factors are eliminated. Water is checked for nitrates or other toxins. Housing and ventilation are maintained at optimum levels. Any equipment with which the animals come in contact is properly maintained and adjusted. There are literally hundreds of other environmental factors that impact animal health and they all must

be considered. When animals are maintained at a high level of vitality their resistance is much higher. Health enhancement is much more profitable than either treatment or prevention.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or criticisms at rjhdvm@rconnect.com or rjhdvm@aol.com.

Dr. Richard Holliday has worked for IMPRO for the past 18 years as the Technical Services Veterinarian. Prior to that, he had a private mixed practice in northwest Missouri for 25

years. He became certified as a Veterinary Acupuncturist in 1988 and has been actively promoting organic agriculture and holistic veterinary medicine for over 30 years.

Dr. Holliday will be in ME, VT, and NY in January 2003 for healthcare workshops. See calendar for details.

Holistic practitioners attempt to find and treat the cause not just the symptoms.

"Dear Jim" Column: Get Your Alternative Health Care Questions Answered



A regular column, answering questions on health care concerns, will debut next issue.

Certified Natural Health Professional, Jim Gardiner, will use his 12 years of experience working with both people and animals to address your questions. Jim and his wife, Nancy, and their children have an organic dairy farm in Otselic, NY. You can submit your questions either to Jim or Lisa McCrory (contact info under NODPA State Rep listing). Jim will answer questions pertaining to just about anything. He'll address what may be going on in the system and will give you advice on how to combat the problem. **Deadline to submit questions to be answered in the next issue is January 15th, 2003.**

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Deadline for the next issue is January 15, 2003

Please send your ad and check (made payable to NOFA-VT) to: Lisa McCrory, NODPA Newsletter, 848 N.

Randolph Rd., Randolph, VT 05061 For more information, call 802-728-4416 or email lmccrory@together.net

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Feature Farm



Twin Oaks Dairy

August 16, 2002

NODPA's Second Annual Field Day

By Lisa McCrory

The Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance held its second annual field day event in Truxton, NY, hosted by Twin Oaks Dairy LLC, co-owned by Bob, Rick, and Kathie Arnold. The event, intended to be an educational, networking and organizational meeting, consisted of 40-50 producers, educators and product sales people from the northeast. The afternoon program was designed for the attendees to hear how the Arnolds manage their organic dairy operation and tour different parts of their operation with an emphasis on the calf rearing system.

History of Twin Oaks Dairy

Bob, Rick and Kathie Arnold created a partnership agreement in 1980. Prior to the partnership, part of the farm had been in the Arnold family since the 1930's. Management in the early 1980's was to graze the hillsides and harvest green chop that would be brought to their 70 cow herd. Over time they moved from green chop to haylage and began cultivating their corn land as a way of decreasing the amount of herbicides and pesticides needed.

In the mid 80's, they heard about a farm that didn't use antibiotics to treat mastitis and were inspired to try that as well. They quit dry treating their cows and quit using antibiotics to treat mastitis cases for several years. By 1990, they had a production average of 20,000 lbs per cow.

In 1991 and 1992, they made a small change to their grazing routine; the high production cows stayed in the barn and were fed a TMR (total mixed ration) while the rest of the herd was

out on pasture. What they found was that though production increased, their bottom line did not improve. The increased income they gained from added milk production was eaten by the increased feed costs. In 1993, they decided to intensify their grazing system, moving all the milking cows to a fresh paddock every 12 hours and adding their best land to the system. They had some challenges when they did this; their nutritionist had them top-dressing a 34% protein grain to the high cows. Realizing that this was not going to work, they contacted Sonny Golden whom they had seen advertise in Stockman Grassfarmer magazine as a nutritionist specializing in pasture based rations.

Within a couple years, their net farm profit had greatly improved; the whole herd was intensively grazing and their herd average only dropped 500 lbs from 22,000 in 1992 when high cows were kept in the barn to 21,500 when all were intensively grazed. In 1995, some near-by farm land became available and they decided to purchase the land and increase their herd size to 100 cows, since at this time there was not a market for organic milk. The organic milk market started to develop in New York in 1997. They started transitioning and were shipping organic milk in 1998.

Management System Today

The Arnolds manage their farm based upon the following Tenets:

- ◆ Endeavor to work with nature
- ◆ Be good stewards of the land and other resources
- ◆ Provide a bovine friendly environment
- ◆ Farm as both a business and a lifestyle choice
- ◆ Strive to keep mechanical and management systems simple and natural systems complex
- ◆ Be always attentive to timeliness and details so that small things don't become big problems

With these tenets in mind, here is a brief description of how they attend to certain details on their farm; from pasture, to nutrition, housing, preventative health and overall care of the different groups of livestock (milkers, heifers, dry cows, and calves)

The cows are usually out on pasture (on their well-drained land) by mid April and graze typically until early November. The home farm is all in pasture and hay and more paddocks are added as needed throughout the grazing season. The heifers and dry cows receive 100% of their feed from pasture during the grazing season and are offered a free choice mineral mix called *Maxi-Graze* from Fertrell. It is designed for pasture and has added Selenium in the mix.

In the winter time, the pre-breeding, bred heifers, and dry cows have free access to free stall barns (converted from old stall barns) and are fed baleage outside or self-feeding haylage out of a bunk. Younger heifers are kept on bedded packs with those six months and older all having outdoor access. They are fed some form of haycrop—usually hay—and grain.

The calves born during the grazing season are raised outside on pasture from a couple days old—as soon as they can drink well from a mob feeder. They are kept in groups of four or five and are 'mob fed' whole milk until they are 8 weeks old. Mob feeding on this farm consists of nursing off a large elevated container with 10 nipples around the base (and no hoses). The calves are fed 2 gallons of milk a day by the time they are a week old. Grain is offered to them free choice starting at a three or so weeks old but they generally don't eat much until close to weaning time. Mobile shade units are provided in the paddocks. In winter, calves are kept on bedded packs, either in a pen where they are mob fed or in an area where they are individually confined.

Dairy cows are housed in a tie stall barn with tunnel ventilation and 64 comfort stalls with mattresses. Ad-

ditional animals are kept in a 34 stall free stall barn adjacent to the barnyard and these cows are switched into the tie stall barn for milking. During the real hot days of summer, the cows are in the barn by early afternoon and back on pasture after the pm milking.

Nutrition

The Arnolds don't believe in 'heifer hay'. They make a point of feeding high quality feed to all of their animals. They feed a total mixed ration to the lactating cows to compliment their pasture system, consisting of haylage, wheat midds, barley, and corn meal during pasture season and high moisture corn in the winter. Soy rarely needs to be added unless the haylage is especially low protein. Minerals, salt, vitamin E, and kelp are added to the TMR. They also make sure that their animals always have access to good clean water. Milk production / cow / day usually averages between 64 and 68 lbs for the year round herd.

In the pastures, they have found that the cows don't like Reed Canary grass, Tall Fescue, or Orchard grass. What they prefer to graze is Rye grass, clovers and Timothy, so any new pasture seedings are based on what they have found their cows will eat.

In determining paddock size, the milking cows are given 1.5 to 2 acres for 100 cows for a 12 hour grazing period. Their goal is to give the cows as much good feed as possible to maximize their intake and milk production. Depending on the paddock and the time of year, they may follow the cows with the dry cows and heifers, or clip or bale the extra feed left behind (to be used for feed or bedding, depending upon the quality).

The Arnolds use a mineral mix put together by their nutritionist, Sonny Golden and also use 'Maxi-Graze' mineral / salt mix sold by Fretrell (designed for pasture, high in Selenium).

Preventative Health Practices

Preventative health practices consist of: having herd health and reproduction checks once a month with their vet, a vaccination program, and boosting the herds immune system



through the use of kelp, probiotics, vitamin E, selenium, and high quality feed. They also rely on the expertise of a nutritionist who balances the grain and mineral ration based upon the harvested forages and pasture that is grown on the farm. The herd was tested for Johnnes and Leukosis in the 1980's and found to be Johnnes test negative and only had a couple Leukosis positive cows who were subsequently culled. Having a closed herd prevents a lot of potential problems. When one group of heifers was purchased, they were tested for Johnnes, & Leukosis before the new animals were brought into the existing herd.

Prior to being certified, the Arnolds had a somatic cell count of 400,000, but, through a number of management practices, have lowered the SCC to 200,000. Individual cow SCCs are run each month by DHI and

every six months all lactating cows are cultured for mastitis organisms. They also milk cows cultured positive for Staph Aureus last, cull the Staph Aureus cows a little quicker than other non-staph cows, and vaccinate all their heifers 6 months of age to freshening with a Staph Aureus vaccine.

Other than mastitis, the health of the herd has been excellent since beginning intensive grazing in 1993, when the Arnold's experienced a very noticeable drop in health problems. The udder health of the herd has been improving gradually over the last four years as a result of the Arnolds' constant attention to detail, care, and mastitis management practices. Four years ago, the cull rate on their farm was 35%. Today, it is only 28%. The biggest reasons for the decline are that fewer animals are being culled for mastitis and for non-breeding now that a bull is run with the cows for a cycle or two once or twice a year. As a result, their reduced cull rate has created a

surplus of organic dairy stock. They recently sold 8 cows for organic dairy and hope to build an extra income in dairy livestock sales.

Organic Beef

The Arnolds have been managing their livestock according to the beef standards for over 2 years now. Prior to that, the youngstock were fed non-organic grain for their first year of life, which was allowed by their New York certifier at that time. Their hope is to be able to sell their organic cull cows and other beef stock to a local organic meat buyer named Organic Lands. This company will pay a premium over the conventional beef price for cull cows and will pay even more for animals raised specifically for meat.

Calf Rearing

During the farm tour, a lot of time was spent looking at their calf rearing system. Some of the neat features they have at their farm are mob feeders which can feed up to 10 calves at a time, the 'cattle guard' entry way to the paddocks and their mobile shade structures.

Their paddock system for the calves 8 weeks and under consists of 4 permanent paddocks (about 1/3 acre in size). There were 2 groups of calves moving through the 4 paddocks, occupying a paddock for 2 or 3 weeks before moving to the next one. To feed the calves, the mob feeder is hung on a frame attached to a fence post. The fencing along this end of the paddock system consists of posts on 8 foot spacing with 16 foot long sections of cattle panel chained to the posts. This fencing is sturdy, yet is non-electrified so is safe for the calf feeder to pour milk over or to slip into the pen for calf / pasture care, and allows access anywhere along this end to bring calves in or bring the lawnmower in to clip the paddocks. The outside of the rest of the whole system for these calves (and the next paddock for weaned calves) is 6 strand high tensile fencing. The interior partitions are made of temporary metal posts with four strands of aluminum wire. The Arnold's found they needed to add one strand of electrified tape to increase the visibility of the fence for the calves. Each of these paddocks has a small water tank made from the end of a 30 gallon plastic barrel. Free choice feed is available to the calves from a 55 gallon plastic barrel with an oval hole cut out.

Each group of calves has a mobile shade / rain shelter. One structure is a 7 X 7 foot shelter with a base made of 2 inch pipe with green house like hoops attached, providing structure for a plastic canvas cover. This shelter is easily moved around the paddock to keep any one spot from getting worked up and to let the sanitizing

action of sunshine in. No bedding is used. Another structure is an 8 X 20 foot pen on wheels with a white canvas roof. Two of these mobile pens have been the Arnold's calf pasture rearing system for the past several years. The calves looked great and were very approachable.

Beyond the four paddocks for baby calves is a paddock for the weaned calves. To allow access to this paddock (through one of the baby calf paddocks) without having to stop and open gates, a five foot wide, 7 foot long, cattle guard gate was made so a four wheeler could be driven over it. This shallow "bridge" is designed to discourage the livestock from crossing; cows have very poor depth perception and do not like to walk over the slatted surface (2 X 4s spaced 4 inches apart on a convex frame). No calf has yet crossed it. The beauty of this design is that one can enter and exit the paddocks without having to manipulate a gate handle or get shocked, and it saves a lot of time when it comes to daily care.

The weaned calves are fed grain once a day in a portable feed trough made of 3 lengthwise halves of plastic 55 gallon barrels bolted together to form a train. This is pulled to a new spot each day in the paddock to disperse the impact from the animals around. This group also has one of the mobile pasture pens described above for shade and shelter. There are gates from each of the baby calf paddocks into the weaned calf paddock so when a group of calves is weaned, the gate is opened and they are easily moved to the next step of the system. Given the current drought conditions, the weaned calves are being offered hay now to supplement the pasture.

Spending the afternoon at the Arnolds' dairy farm was a wonderful way to visit and share management techniques. A special thanks to Kathie, Rick, Bob, and Kathie & Rick's daughter Carly for all the time and effort they contributed to making this meeting a success.

NODPA's 2nd Annual Field Day was made possible through the generous contributions from (listed in alphabetical order) :

- *Brookfield Ag Services*
- *Butterworks Farm*
- *CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley*
- *CrystalCreek*
- *Fertrell*
- *Horizon Organic Dairy*
- *Homestead Organics*
- *IMPRO Products*
- *Lakeview Organic Grain*
- *Meadowsweet Farm*
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- *Neptunes Harvest*
- *NOFA-NY*
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- *Organic Lands LLC*
- *Pennsylvania Certified Organic*
- *Ridge Rock Farms*
- *Stonyfield Farm*
- *Twin Oaks Dairy LLC*
- *USDA FSA of Cortland, NY*
- *Vermont Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets*
- *Washington Homeopathic Products*
- *Weston A Price Foundation*



Materials Use Reminder

Producers must remember that buyers may have higher standards than the National Standards in terms of use of some materials.

Be sure you know the requirements of your buyer as well as your certifier.

Net Update

NODPA Launches Website:

nodpa.com
organicmilk.org

by Elisa Clancy

The Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA) began creating a website in April 2002 with Lisa McCrory in charge of web content development and Elisa Clancy as Webmaster. The NODPA website first went live in June 2002 with two domain names: www.organicmilk.org and www.nodpa.com

A section about the Alliance contains member news and newsletters, mission statement, history, past survey results, and a list of NODPA representatives.

The Learn and Share section is designed to assist organic dairy farmers by providing important resources ranging from transitioning to organic dairying to attaining and reporting the "Farmer's Pay Price Poll". The Marketplace offers free classified ads to Northeast organic dairy producers.

The Calendar and News sections are part of the educational offerings. Learn about upcoming events in your area and read recent articles related to organic dairy farming. There are also special sections regarding "Cow Health" and "Grazing and Pasture Management".

For those who like to get involved and stay informed, we've added a Political Action section. We've created farmer-to-farmer email discussion lists: one list is open to all (ODAIRY) and the other list (NODPA) is devoted exclusively to transitioning and organic dairy farmers only--no processor or government subscribers are allowed on this privately operated list. The NODPA email discussion list is a perfect place for organic farmers to share ideas.

As I write this article in October, the web site was launched 30 days ago. We are averaging 17 unique hits per day. I'm sure as time goes by that will grow as it is discovered by more organic dairy farmers and web surfers. We hope it is helpful to you, and welcome your additions and comments. News items and calendar events are welcome and should be submitted to webmaster@organicmilk.org. Classifieds can be submitted right at the website or submit to Lisa McCrory. The site is updated weekly, so bookmark us and visit often.

Odairy:

A Computer-Based Tool for Organic Dairy Issues

By Bill Casey
bill5308@aol.com

In November of 2001, NODPA created an electronic communication tool for those interested in organic dairy production issues via the utilization of email. For those of you who have access to a computer but lack a connection to the Internet, you can still subscribe to free email by contacting the internet provider Juno.com @ (1 800 TRY-JUNO) for a copy of their software.

The Odairy electronic discussion group is owned and maintained by NODPA. The workings of this discussion group are housed within Yahoo's system server. Yahoo provides this hosting service free to anyone who might want to create or join a group. Yahoo is able to provide this service because they embed each email with some type of advertisement. If you want to search Yahoo for existing discussion groups, or consider creating your own (a group for your town is a

great way for people to advertise local meetings or garage sales), go to the website: <http://yahooogroups.com>.

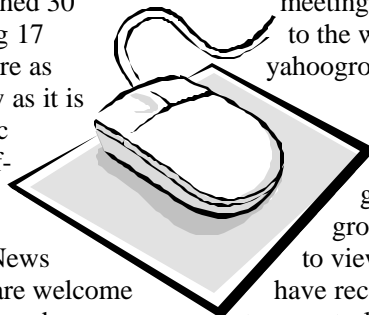
Odairy has been active with postings.

Go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Odairy/messages> to view past postings. We have recently updated the system controls so you are no longer required to be a member to view the past postings

Odairy currently has 150 members. It does not cost anything to join, post or read the archives of stored messages. All subscribers receive a copy of posted emails, normally within 5 minutes of an email being sent to the Odairy@yahooogroups.com address. All postings are not moderated, so take a few extra minutes and review your message for spelling and clarity, as you are now communicating with at least 149 other members and your email will be recorded as a permanent document in cyberspace. An archive file is maintained and is searchable by many search engines.

Since posted messages to Odairy are not moderated, we have been having some postings that are not organic dairy oriented. For each person who posts such off-topic messages, I have modified their account to require approval of all their future postings. We have not had any viruses attached to any of these postings, but we all should be using a virus prevention program. There are many good virus programs to purchase but I have found good success with the **free virus program AVG6.0** which can be downloaded at: <http://www.grisoft.com>

To become an Odairy subscriber, send an email to: Odairy-subscribe@yahooogroups.com. You do not have to enter anything in the



subject line or the body of the email. You will be asked by email to confirm your request. And that is all there is to joining. You may wish to respond to all the members of Odairy by hitting the "reply" button on your email, or reply to an individual by typing the sender's address instead. Attachments are allowed on Odairy, but due to the many viruses associated with attachments, it is highly recommended that you have a good form of virus protection.

One other feature of the Odairy site is the calendar. By going to the site: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Odairy/cal> you can view or list any local event that you want to share with others.

Bill Casey is an organic dairy producer in Apulia, NY.

2002 NE Organic Dairy Producers

Approximate number of certified farms

- ? **Maine: 50 (12% of total dairies in state)**
- ? **Vermont: 65 (4%)**
- ? **Connecticut: 4**
- ? **Massachusetts: 1**
- ? **New York: 120**
- ? **Pennsylvania: 75**
- ? **New Jersey: 1**

**HAVE YOU FILLED
OUT AND RETURNED
YOUR NODPA
QUESTIONNAIRE YET?**

Farmer Letters

This section of the newsletter is intended to provide organic producers a place to voice their concerns, opinions, and observations. It is not, however, meant to be exclusive. Letters from processor representatives and other interested parties are also welcome.

Your letter could be here.

Announcements

Northeast Region SARE initiates partnership grants
The Northeast Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program is initiating partnership grants for agricultural professionals who work directly with farmers in the region. **Application deadline is December 2, 2002.** Details: 802-656-0471 www.uvm.edu/~nesare

Northeast SARE Seeks Three Sustainable Farmer Educators
The Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program is seeking nominations for three new openings for its Sustainable Farmer Educator program. This program was launched in 2001 with the appointment of three producers who have since been traveling to conferences, meetings, work shops, and on-farm demonstrations while continuing their farming operations. These farmers have used the grant support from Northeast SARE to share their expertise in no-till, horticultural crops, community supported agriculture, and managed intensive grazing and seasonal milking on dairy farms. In expanding this program to include three more farmers, Northeast SARE seeks applications in the following areas: adding value and direct marketing; diversified agronomic crops such

as grains, beans, forages, and potatoes; and grazing management for dairy cows in the southern part of the region, specifically Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware.

The application deadline is **January 6, 2003**. Selections will be made in February. Details: 802-656-0471 www.uvm.edu/~nesare

Lancaster Organic Farmers Cooperative to start January 2003

A new milk cooperative in Pennsylvania will be starting in January 2003 with approximately 24 farmers ready to sign on. The milk from this cooperative will be sold to Natural by Nature. For more information, contact Roman Stoltzfoos, Vice President of the Lancaster Organic Farmers Cooperative at 610-593-2415



Resources

The Organic Decision: Transitioning to Organic Dairy Production Workbook

This workbook, developed by Cornell Cooperative Extension specialists in consultation with NODPA,

helps explore the possibilities of transitioning from conventional dairy farming to organic production. This workbook will help answer some preliminary questions:

- *How stable is the market for organic milk?*
- *How much will it cost?*
- *What are the yield reductions in forage production?*
- *What are some herd health/cull rate considerations?*
- *Includes a resource and contact list.*

Download a free copy as a pdf file from www.organic.cornell.edu. To receive a copy via mail, please call Faye Butts at 607-254-7412 or email to fsb1@cornell.edu. The cost is \$12 to cover printing and postage.

Organic Agriculture at Cornell

www.organic.cornell.edu

Launch of New Farm Online

The Rodale Institute has pre-launched its New Farm“ online magazine and training resource at **www.newfarm.org** to offer farmers leadership, expert advice, and first-rate training they need to regenerate their businesses.

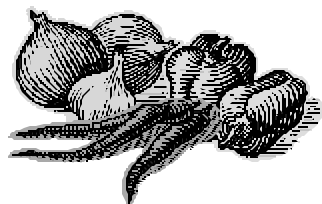
In addition to offering the same brand of practical advice on soil health and profitability that made New Farm magazine essential reading in the US and Canada for over 17 years, the site will also host discussion forums, daily polls, action alerts, weather reports, a weekly organic price index and farmer-to-farmer success stories.

Tails and Tassels

In depth articles on organic crop production and harvesting, dairy topics, classified ads, and more can be found in the monthly newsletter “Tails and Tassels”, which is a joint newsletter for members of both New York Certified Organic, Inc. and the Leatherstocking Organic Network. The two groups have been formed by New York farmers to meet the educational needs of non-chemical crop and dairy farmers. Contact Mary-Howell Martens, 315-536-9879 or kandmhfarm@sprintmail.com

Web-Based Map of Local Farms

Want fresh, locally grown food, but don't know where to find it? The Local Harvest community level map lists sustainable farmers, farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture projects (CSAs) all over the country.
<http://www.foodroutes.org/index.jsp>



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NEWSLETTER

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We welcome submissions and letters. Please send to: NOFA-VT, attn: Dairy Tech, P.O. Box 697, Bridge Street, Richmond VT 05477; info@nofavt.org. If you wish to speak with someone about concerns or questions, please contact one of the NODPA representatives listed.

Want to Help?

If you would be interested in working on future issues of NODPA News in any capacity, please contact Lisa, Mia, or Kathie (contact info in the NODPA reps list).

We would be especially happy to have more people involved who are interested in researching and writing articles.

Calendar

December 5, 2002

Larry Shearer of MA and Chuck Phippen will lead a seminar on seasonal dairying and related management 11am-1pm. Poplars Restaurant, *Fultonville, NY*. Contact Christopher Reed 518-672-7743 427-6537

December 11 & 12, 2002

Vermont Organic Dairy Workshops

Two full day workshops on the National Organic Dairy Production Standards will be held in December. The workshops are open to new, transitioning and certified dairy farmers as well as agency personnel/resource professionals. There is no charge for these workshops. Lunch will be provided. These workshops will be offered in a northern and central location:

December 11: *the Abbey in Sheldon 11am-3pm*

December 12: *the Berlin Extension office 11am-3pm.*

For more information and to receive a flyer about the event, contact the NOFA office at 802-434-4122 or info@nofavt.org.

December 12, 2002

Third Annual Northeast Local Food & Farm Initiatives Gathering: "Highly Successful Innovations for Increasing Farm Profitability, Campaign Capacity, and Community Vitality"

Gedney Farm, New Marlboro, MA
Contact Cathy Roth, 413-623-6053 or croth@umext.umass.edu

December 12-14, 2002

Eco-Farming 2002: Acres USA Annual Conference

Adams Mark Hotel, Indianapolis, IN
Info: 800-355-5313 or www.acresusa.com



New York Dairy Grazing Conferences

Special guests Larry Shearer from MA and Dave Surprenant from IL.

Jan 13: *Delhi*

Jan 14: *Cobleskill*

Jan 15: *Cortland*

Jan 16: *Fillmore*

Jan 17: *Carthage*

Jan 18: *Beekmantown*

Contact Dan Demaine

607-753-5213

dcd8@cornell.edu



January 11, 2003

Low Input Sustainable Farming Conference

David Kline, keynote speaker

Jordan Hall, Geneva, NY

Info: Bill Henning 315-536-5123

Foundations of Animal Health

Speaker: Richard J. Holliday, DVM

A discussion of the real foundations of animal health, questions & answers, and a panel discussion.

January 8, MOFGA Fair Site, Unity, ME, 10:00 am

January 10, Holiday Inn, Burlington, VT, 10:00 am

January 13, Ramada Inn, Ithaca, NY, 10:00 am

January 14, Yoder Family Restaurant, New Holland, PA, 9:30 am

January 15, Country Gardens Farm Supply, S of Mifflinburg, PA, 9:30

January 16, Family Cupboard Restaurant, Intercourse, PA 9:30, am

Sponsored by Impro Products, Inc.
Please call 800 626 5536 for more information

January 25, 2003

7th Annual Vermont Grazing Conference
Vermont Technical College Randolph Center, VT

802-656-3834

gharris@zoo.uvm.edu

February 7 & 8, 2003

PASA's 12th annual Farming for the Future Conference
State College, PA. "Local Food, Local Decisions—In Search of True Security." Keynote address, and over 45 workshops and 60 vendors. Ph. (814) 349-9856

February 10 & 11, 2003

Pennsylvania Grazing Conference: 'Farming with Grass'

Solanco Fairgrounds/ Hoffman Building, Quarryville, PA

For more information, contact: Ardin Landis, 717-529-6644

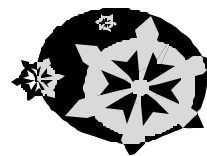
February 15, 2003

NOFA Winter Conference

Vermont Technical College, Randolph Center, VT

802-434-4122

info@nofavt.org



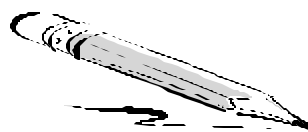
February 27, 28, & March 1, 2003

Health From the Ground UP III

Lititz, PA
Sponsored by the Homeopathic Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania
Speakers: Clyde Jensen, Christopher Lester, Michael Reece, and Sam Miller. For more info: Clark Veterinary Clinic, Inc, 717-838-9563

Send Calendar items to:

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Truxton, NY 13158
Ph.. 607-842-6631
Fax 607-842-6557



**Add some events
to your calendar!**



NODPA Membership Form

In order for NODPA to continue as a viable organization, it is necessary for NODPA to raise funds through grants and membership contributions. If you enjoy this newsletter, visit our web page, and / or benefit from the education and farmer representation that NODPA has been providing, please let us know by making a generous contribution to our efforts.

- _____ \$20 to cover NODPA News
- _____ \$50 to become a friend of NODPA
- _____ \$100 to become a sponsor
- _____ \$500 to become a Patron member
- _____ \$1,000 to become a Benefactor

Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____


Please copy or remove this page and mail to:

Lisa McCrory

848 North Randolph Rd

Randolph Center, VT 05061

Please make your check payable to: NOFA-VT
(The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont)



Thank you for your support!

NOFA-Vermont
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
(NODPA)
P.O. Box 697
Richmond, VT 05477

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Classified Ads

Send your Classifieds to:
Lisa McCrory, NOFA-VT
802-728-4416 (ph & fax)
848 N. Randolph Rd.
Randolph Ctr, VT 05061
lmccrory@together.net

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WWW.NEPTUNEHARVEST.COM

REAL ESTATE:

Organic farm for rent:
in West Enosburg, VT
All of the land will be in compliance with the USDA National Organic Standards by July 1, 2003.
Andrew & Sally Bobkowitz
Ph. 802-933-5322,
salan@bobkowicz.com,

FEEDS:

Certified Organic Hay For Sale - Large square bales weighing apprx. 750 to 800 pounds - mixed grass - July cut - \$100 per ton,
Bovina Center, NY
Joan Burns
Ph. 607-832-4292
Fax -607-832-4531
twbjsb@catskill.net

OPPORTUNITIES :

Help Wanted on organic grass based dairy farm,
100% grass based organic dairy farm in Northwest VT \$300/week (starting), milk, meat and garden space.
Contact Ted Yandow, 3133 Newton Rd, Swanton, VT 05488 Ph. 802-524-9454

LIVESTOCK:

30 Certified Organic high quality, grade, Holstein heifers bred 4-5 months and 20 heifers bred 3 months, located in Sterling, Ontario
Ph. 705-653-4854
Collin Matthewson
RR3, Sterling, Ontario
KOK 3E0

POSITION WANTED:

Herdsmen needing stable career position. Excellent references and 13 years of experience. Willing to move with a written contract. Experience in breeding, all areas of herd health and nutrition and management. I'm a steady employee in need of steady employment. I would be a great asset to your dairy operation.
BillyRay Meadows,
diny62000@yahoo.com,
315-938-5406,
You can also leave a message at 315-786-0350

Classified Ads:
FREE to Northeast organic farmers!

