

NODPA NEWS

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Organic Industry News

Organic Dairy Processors & Farmers Meet to Protect Organic Integrity

By Ed Maltby

The Federation Of Organic Dairy Farmers (FOOD Farmers) hosted the first Organic Dairy summit in Boulder, CO, on the morning of Wednesday June 20th. The summit was attended by organic dairy producers representing three regional groups from across the United States — Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA), Midwest Organic Dairy Producers Association (MODPA), Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA), and major organic dairy processors and handlers including Organic Valley, Straus Family Creamery, Stonyfield Farm, Horizon Organic, Humboldt Creamery, HP Hood, Clover Stornetta, Dairy Farmers of America, Dairy Marketing Services, Aurora Organic Dairy, Radiance Dairy, and Wisconsin Organics.

The meeting happened immediately prior to the Organic Summit sponsored by OFRF and New Hope Media to economize on participants' travel expense and to give an opportunity for increased, cross-commodity dialogue following the meeting. The Organic Dairy Summit was a great opportunity to meet face to face and explore the many ideas that have made the organic dairy community so alive, vibrant and dynamic. The meeting, facilitated by Bill Capsalis of the Fresh Ideas Group, opened a constructive dialogue that has allowed producers and processors to increase their

work in cooperating to strengthen the organic dairy and pasture production standards. Everyone at the dairy summit agreed that the USDA National Organic Program's standards remain the most comprehensive organic dairy regulations in the world. What was no surprise was the level of agreement around the room that future profitability for everyone, at all levels of organic dairy, lies in working together to ensure the integrity of the organic label in the eyes of consumers. "I'm proud that the organic dairy community is committed to constructive dialogue, to taking steps to further strengthen the USDA National Organic Standards, and to assure that consumer expectations are met," said Kelly Shea, Vice President of Organic Stewardship for Horizon Organic.

Discussions during the four hour meeting, and subsequent networking after the meeting, covered topical questions that

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From The NODPA Desk

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

I'm writing this in mid July when my Anglo-Saxon and Irish blood are under severe stress from excessive weather conditions of heat and humidity, which brings us to the NODPA Field Days and Annual meeting which always seems to be held during a heat wave. This year we tried to change the time to the fall to take advantage of the cooler weather but arriving at a date that was convenient to farmers, not within peak autumn vacation season and a good venue that would be both cost effective and provide local and organic food brought us back to August.

Field Days will be held on August 17th and 18th (Friday and Saturday) at Freund's Farm Market in East Canaan, CT. We will have plenty of good food, good conversation and good company. If you run into difficulty with finding somewhere to stay, possibly a problem with the date and location, then give us a call and Nora and I will try to help out. One of the changes that we have made to the agenda for the Field Days is to have an open, facilitated discussion on the future direction for NODPA and its role in supporting organic farming in the northeast. This agenda change, following the annual dinner on Friday evening, was the result of listening to comments from many different folks and recognizing that as organic dairy grows it requires a proportionate growth in organic feed, seed, support services, research and technical advice.

Historically NODPA has provided support to organic dairy farmers and others with farm tours, Field Days, workshops, education and advocacy on the USDA NOP, moderating Odairy, a dynamic website and the regular publication of a quarterly newsletter. With the growth of organics there are now many more organizations providing workshops, presentations, farm tours, twilight meetings and websites with many links that organic dairy producers can access. What will NODPA's role be in the future when supply contracts with dairy producers devolve into focusing on production practices and business organizational structures that are then used as marketing tools for the end user? What will NODPA's role be in protecting the long term differentiation of organic milk that provides the basis for a higher farm gate price? These are just some of the questions that we should be anticipating and I'm look-

ing forward to hearing many points of view both at the Field Days and directly from those who can't attend.

The Organic Dairy Summit that took place in Boulder was a great opportunity for some key folks in the organic dairy community to meet each other and debate many of the issues and ideas that provide the backbone to the integrity of organic dairy. While there were certainly many "old" disagreements and personality conflicts hovering below the surface, there was a positive effort by all concerned to bury, or perhaps just ignore those and move forward for the sake of the future integrity and sustainability of the organic dairy industry. The meeting was well facilitated and the overwhelming majority of invitees participated very respectfully and positively, essential when passion and philosophy meet with economic sustainability and market share. While the devil is always in the detail, in the follow-up to these meetings everybody was able to recognize that chasms are not separating producers and processors, or among processors and other brands on pasture and herd replacement standards. There is a need for clear rulemaking so that basic organic standards do not become the prerogative of marketing departments as brands compete for market share.

It was also noted at the organic dairy meeting and the larger organic summit convening that it is time for the organic community to stop operating like a circular firing squad and work together to promote the advantages of organic rather than highlighting the problems. If we promote organic there is also the necessity to police our industry better ourselves, from certifier through processor and producer. If you are a producer, it should never be enough to "just satisfy the certifier" that best meets your situation or, if you are the certifier, to put the blame on the NOP, or if you are the processor/brand owner, blame the other processors, play follow-the-leader, or not do anything until negative media attention forces change.

Organic farming isn't for everyone. The organic community worked with Congress and the USDA to design standards to reward those that followed them and de-certify those that didn't, following a short allowance for remedying the deficiency. With the increasing number of imitators and different standards entering the market, organic certification needs to be held to a high standard. Those who do not meet these high standards should be de-certified, rather than allowed to live on in a limbo of possibly achieving the prescribed standards sometime in an undefined future. As we move forward, it's important to hold these ideas central to our work together as we focus on the details that must be the basis for a clear understanding of standards and for a level playing field for all. ♦

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Organic Dairy Policy and Production Trends

By Kathie Arnold

The second half of 2007 is proving to be a challenging time for organic dairy—from producers to processors to some input suppliers—and indicators are that many of those challenges will continue well into, if not through, 2008. I guess nobody said that organic dairy would be easy.

After the last few years with an inadequate supply of organic milk to meet demand, there is currently a considerable amount of excess organic milk in the marketplace. With the last of the 80/20 transition producers now on the truck, organic milk is going into the conventional market to deal with the large increase in supply that occurred this spring, with some of that excess going into rBST free milk cartons.

The record high price for conventional milk is both a plus and a minus. Organic milk that is being sold as conventional is receiving a much higher price than if this was last year when conventional milk was going for \$12/cwt. But the current high price is having down-sides. Some Midwest cheese plants that thrive on low cost milk to fill their warehouses are now on vacation—not interested in purchasing such high priced milk to make cheese—their business model being buy raw milk

low, sell cheese high, the latter of which they can now realize. Last year, cheese plants were going full tilt and were reluctant or unwilling to take in organic milk to make cheese. Now, when shut down, they offer no opportunity to put excess organic milk into cheese. And with a portion of the cheese production capacity shut down, fluid milk processors have more than enough milk, meaning that easily selling excess organic milk as conventional is not even a given.

Although consumer demand for organic dairy continues to increase, the rate of growth seems to have slowed somewhat from the 25% growth rate that has been the norm for the last few years. Carah McLaughlin, as Senior Brand Manager at Horizon Organic, wrote in February of 2006 that organic milk sales had doubled in less than the three previous years. She also noted that a couple steeper surges in growth occurred during that time period, with one being the summer of 2004 when the price of conventional milk rose considerably, which decreased the price spread between conventional and organic milk. A similar scenario is happening now. With farmgate conventional milk prices at \$20 plus, store prices are climbing. I've even seen predictions that store prices for conventional milk could rise as high as \$5 per gallon. Some marketers of organic milk have been running specials, thus the price differential in

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have dominated the organic dairy community over the past few years. Following the meeting, the Organic Dairy Summit attendees issued a joint press release urging the USDA National Organic Program to immediately publish the proposed rule detailing access to pasture. Summit meeting attendees acknowledged that this long delayed notice is needed to provide the necessary clarity and a level playing field that producers and processors need to ensure the economic sustainability of their businesses, and consumer confidence in the USDA organic seal.

California organic dairy producer and WODPA President Tony Azevedo summed up the view of producers that attended the meeting, "It was long overdue for producers and processors to sit down together and work on these issues of great importance to us all. I was pleased that we were able to meet and acknowledge just how much we were in agreement with each other on how to maintain the integrity of organic dairy and pasture standards."

The Organic Dairy Summit participants are continuing to work together to build on the positive steps taken at this initial meeting. This will expand the discussion to other areas of interest and importance to organic dairy via email and conference calls with a strong possibility for another meeting later in the year. FOOD Farmers, as the host of the meeting, is committed to working with all summit participants individually and

"FOOD Farmers...are actively working to increase communication between the different sectors of organic dairy."

as a group, to bring clarity, fairness and consistency to organic dairy and pasture production standards as promoted by individual processors and enforced by the National Organic Program.

FOOD Farmers met as a group in Boulder prior to and again following the Organic Dairy Summit and are actively working to increase communication between the different sectors of organic

dairy. FOOD Farmers represent the views of the three regional groups plus many independent groups and their position is outlined below:

A. Access to Pasture

The access to pasture rule, as a matter of policy, should be:

- 1) Organic dairy livestock over 6 months of age must graze on pasture during the months of the year when pasture can provide edible forage.
- 2) The grazed feed must provide significant intake for all milking age organic dairy cows. At a minimum, an average of 30% of the dry matter intake must come from grazed pasture during the region's growing season, which will be no less than 120 days per year.
- 3) Temporary exemption from pasture may be allowed because of:
 - a. Conditions under which the health, safety, or well-being of the animal could be jeopardized.
 - b. Short term inclement weather.
 - c. Temporary conditions which pose a risk to soil and water quality.
- 4) Instances of temporary confinement must be the minimum time necessary. In no case can temporary confinement be allowed as a continuous production system.

Dairy animals – replacement stock

Once a dairy herd has been converted to organic production, all dairy animals shall be under organic management from the last third of gestation. [Note: this wording is from the 2003 NOSB origin of livestock rule change recommendation.]

Proof of origin for all fluid milk and dairy products

The consumer has the right to know the locality from where the raw milk used in organic fluid and dairy products they purchase, originated, either directly on the packaging or with minimal research. ♦



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(Continued from Policy and Production Trends page 4)

some cases is moving toward the middle on both ends. The diminished price differential will hopefully become attractive enough to cause an extra surge in new organic milk consumers as it did in 2004.

Store brand milk continues to put pressure on brand name milk sales and some processors are responding by emphasizing the local / regional nature of their brand. Local foods continue to be a prime and growing interest of consumers and organic dairy needs to respond to that focus to retain and grow our consumer base by meeting their market desires.

The ever increasing number of conventional processors switching to rBST free milk no doubt has invaded some organic sales. That makes it all the more important for organic dairy to get the pasture and replacement animal standards issues resolved in a manner that engenders an even clearer differentiation between organic and conventional dairy. BST is what really got the organic dairy market off the ground and we must applaud its diminished use in conventional production but not let that deter us from the fact that there remain numerous and significant distinctions between conventional and organic production and products.

A surge in consumer demand would indeed be welcome now, much more so than the other factors that may work to tighten the equation on the supply side. Weather related problems are prevalent this year in the Northeast

with much of New York and Pennsylvania hurting for rain, resulting in greatly reduced hay yields and slow pasture regrowth. Rain in Vermont has been spotty so some areas are fine for soil moisture but in other areas, such as the well drained Connecticut River valley and west central VT, rain is much needed. Massachusetts had a late cold spring with plenty of rain followed by a dry spell that has recently broken. Maine had favorable weather for planting and harvesting of the first crop of forages but since then it's been dry with little regrowth and temperatures, for the most part, on the cool side.

Little growth in organic grain acreage this year to help meet the increased demand means ever higher prices for purchased organic feeds. Dealers in the Northeast are reporting increases in corn prices ranging from 12% to as much as 124% from last fall to now, with quotes as high as \$567 per ton for organic shell corn. Soybean prices have not shown as dramatic an increase but as much as a 30% increase is seen in some markets over the same time frame.

These factors have led to diminished milk production recently which has been showing up on more than one organic milk truck. If rain continues to be short and as producers are faced with higher feed costs, production may continue to decline. The more expensive the grain, the less it pays to feed if the organic milk pay price does not increase. Some producers are already working under lower pay prices as a result of the surplus taking the bot-

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tom out of the spot market. The high and rising input costs will put real stress on these producers.

Thoughts to go forward

Historically, feed prices decline somewhat around harvest time but don't expect that to last much past the end of the year. This means producers would be wise to be planning to secure their 2008 feed supply in some fashion before the end of 2007—by contracting, buying ahead, or at the very least, talking with your regular supplier to make sure they will be able to meet your needs.

Some feed mills have said that they cannot take on new customers, so any farms contemplating transition should ensure a feed supply before starting transition. That admonition extends to ensuring a milk market as well. There are currently some farms out there that have completed their transition but had not locked in a market and have now found themselves without an organic market. It is imperative for dairy producers to have a guaranteed market, with signed contracts in place, before starting transition. Not doing so is a huge business risk.

Dry conditions bring concerns about adequate feed supply, not only for grain but for forage as well. If this low rainfall pattern continues, many of us dairy producers will have to analyze our situation and decide if our harvests will be adequate to carry us through the winter. If it's looking like it will not, then we should soon be considering alternate plans which could include converting grain crops to forage harvest, sowing summer annuals and hoping for enough moisture for success, purchasing forage, and / or selling livestock.

Alan Nation postulated in the July issue of Stockman Grassfarmer that "More and more organic producers are learning that a production model that merely substitutes organic inputs for conventional ones is never profitable for long as all the profit is soon bid into the inputs". We must all continue to learn and expand our knowledge base, think outside the proverbial box for new and better ways to farm that use fewer resources, and endeavor to find and refine a production model that can sustain itself both environmentally and economically.

One final thought—I haven't done the math (since the numbers needed are hard if not impossible to come by), but I would surmise that if McDonald's was to make the same announcement in the US that they just made in the UK, then the current surplus of organic milk would be gone. By the end of July, organic milk from British cows will be the dairy in all McDonald's coffee and tea served in that country. Organic milk is already a part of Happy Meals there. Let's hope McDonald's in this country follows their lead.

Kathie Arnold is an organic dairy producer in Truxton, NY and is the Policy Committee Chair for NODPA.

Organic Call To Action on Farm Bill

By Samuel Fromartz

Every so often, the broad coalition of organic food supporters – which include food companies, retailers, farmers, advocacy groups, and, of course, consumers – coalesce around one crucial issue.

This happened in 1997, when the first draft of organic regulations were released by the USDA and included such anti-organic practices as irradiation, genetically modified crops and sewage sludge fertilizer. The community sent an unprecedented number of comments to the USDA opposing the so-called "Big Three" and they were struck down in the final version of regulations.

In 2003, when a Georgia Congressman inserted a rider onto a bill in the dead of night and won passage for the right to use non-organic animal feed (sought by one of his chicken processors), the community rose up again. Led by opponents in Congress, the measure was rescinded in a subsequent bill.

Now, arguably, it's time for the organic community to rise up again, spreading the word through advocacy groups, in email, on blogs and most potently, at the check-out counters of natural food stores and co-ops.

What's the issue this time around?

The Farm Bill. Organic supporters have been pushing very hard in Congress to win a few crucial programs for organic farmers but the buzz is at a low level in Washington. Like many alternative programs in the farm bill – alternative, that is, to the usual feed trough of subsidies – organic doesn't rate very high. Organic farm research, for instance, gets less than 13 cents for every \$100 the USDA spends on research.

What are supporters of organic farming seeking?

- Basic research funds. Currently organic farming research and education gets about \$13 million from a patchwork of USDA programs. But only \$3 million of those funds is specifically dedicated for organic farming. Supporters want to increase those targeted funds to \$15 million annually in mandatory funding - this, out of a USDA research budget of about \$2 billion. Presumably, some of that money could go to fund organic dairy research programs, such as the new program at the University of New Hampshire.
- Certification cost share. Farmers can get up to \$500 annually to offset up to 75 percent of the costs of organic certification, but that money's only available until it runs out. This, by the way, is the only "subsidy" specifically targeted to organic farmers. Many states have run out of money and they won't get any more until the new farm bill is approved. Supporters are looking to increase the cost share to \$750 through \$25 million in

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funding over five years.

- **Crop insurance.** Organic farmers must pay a 5 percent premium to receive crop insurance but their crop losses are compensated at the same rate as conventional growers (even though the organic crop is worth more). They want the USDA to correct this unfair practice, which is not based on any actuarial data on losses or yields, but rather a figure the insurance industry pulls out of the sky. With a decent insurance program in place, more grain farmers could convert to organic production and fill the current shortage in organic grains and forages.
- **Transition Support.** Dairy farmers don't need to be told about the costs of the organic transition. During the one-year-long herd conversion process, costs go up dramatically but the farmer still gets the conventional price for milk. Granted, that's been high lately, but that wasn't always the case in the past, nor will it be in the future. For crop farmers facing a three-year transition, the costs are also steep. Part of these costs reflect the learning curve in farming organically, since so many USDA extension offices are ignorant of organic methods. The organic lobby is pushing for \$50 million per year to help farmers with the transition process, with the funds split between technical and financial assistance.
- **Data Collection.** Right now there is little reliable data

on organic products, on the amount and sources of organic food imports, on the prices farmers get for their crops – all of the usual information available to conventional farmers. That discourages investment, skews crop insurance decisions and undermines the market. So supporters want some dedicated funds for this type of research.

Although the House Agriculture Committee nodded in the direction of organic farming in the mark up of the farm bill, much of the funding under consideration would be discretionary, not mandatory. The programs will only get funded if money can be found, which is highly unlikely in this tight fiscal climate. The organic reception might be better in the Senate, but the bottom line is money will only arrive if it is taken from somewhere else. The biggest pools of money remain in farm subsidy programs but they are also the programs with the most political clout. In the House, for example, the Agriculture Committee voted to keep all subsidies intact, despite the clamor in many quarters for reform. All of this will be played out in the coming months, though the final bill won't emerge until the House and Senate go into conference to merge their two versions of the bill.

Why does organic farming need these funds?

Demand for organic food now exceeds supply, be-

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260-918-0246 genesis21jim@yahoo.com

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cause US farmers are not converting fast enough to fill the gap. The costs of transition, the lack of knowledge about organic methods, and uncertainty about the market all play a role in inhibiting conventional farmers from making the switch. With American farmers lagging, production is increasingly shifting overseas – meaning U.S. farmers will lose out on a lucrative market in the future. Consumers will see more organic products from Mexico, China, Chile, Brazil, India, Australia, Italy and Turkey, including fresh and frozen produce, soybeans, grass-fed meat, grains and beans, and animal feed. That's not a bad thing, in terms of agricultural practices and creating opportunities in those countries, but it won't do anything for farmers in the US.

To press the cause, the Environmental Working Group launched a worthwhile site to generate 30,000 signatures to lawmakers by July 15. But everyone needs to step up to the plate, raising the issue with lawmakers, since most don't even know about it. The message: Support organic farmers in the 2007 Farm Bill!

The point is to win baseline funding for organic agriculture, so that it can be increased in the next farm bill. If the baseline is near zero, it isn't going to move at all – not in the next bill, or the one after that and farmers will continue to sit on the sidelines.

When you wonder why so many organic products are

originating overseas, you will have your answer: the modest government incentives and research U.S. farmers needed to pursue organic farming weren't available. So many didn't bother to switch.

Helpful Web Sites

Organic Farming Research Foundation policy update: http://ofrf.org/policy/federal_legislation/federal_legislation.html

For in-depth news on the farm bill from a sustainable perspective, Blog From Rural America <http://www.cfra.org/blog>

For the perspective of an environmental and anti-subsidy advocate, the Environmental Working Group's Mulchblog: <http://www.mulchblog.com>

Samuel Fromartz is a longtime journalist and author of Organic Inc.: Natural Foods and How They Grew.

*Aside from writing about food, agriculture and environmental issues, Fromartz works diligently in an organic garden a mile from the nation's Capitol building, relying on farmers for tips and advice. He also blogs on organic and related issues at Chews Wise, www.chewswise.com and will be one of our **featured speakers** at the 7th Annual NODPA Field Days (see pages 18 & 19 for more information on the 2-day event). ♦*

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Perspectives on the Organic Grain Supply

Q & A Compiled by Kathie Arnold

Organic grain availability and pricing is a big concern for most organic dairy producers. With current conditions spiking that concern, I asked three questions of several organic grain dealers and received the following replies.

What is your take on the organic grain market, in terms of price and availability, for the near term and longer into 2008?

Lynn Clarkson of Clarkson Grain, Cerro Gordo, IL: The supply/demand balance has shifted significantly toward increased demand and static to declining domestic supply. The ethanol tsunami sweeping agriculture is making it increasingly difficult to add organic acres. In fact, some farmers are withdrawing transitional land and putting it back into conventional production. Some are even withdrawing organic land and placing it back into conventional production. As farm incomes increase in the conventional agriculture, the farmers' goal becomes "convenience". There is very little convenient about organic farming. So the question becomes whether the organic demand can support \$10/bu corn and \$16/bu feed soybeans. While those num-

bers themselves might not be accurate, the price prediction is higher than before.

Rick Dutil of Green Mountain Feeds, Bethel, VT: I was more fearful of the availability and price outlook a month ago than I am now. I believe there will be enough grain around this fall but that the prices will be over \$100 more per ton than last year's prices. I'm encouraged by the fact that I was recently offered new crop corn for less money than was being offered a few weeks ago, with new crop offered at \$385/ton compared to \$550/ton offering previously. I anticipate small grains to follow the price leadership of corn, which means higher prices and as a result I predict pricing of grain to the end producer to be \$100 to \$125 per ton more than a year ago.

Les Morrison of Morrison's Custom Feeds, Barnet, VT: I think that the market is going to go higher for November 2007 through March 2008, then we may see it come back some. There is a real shortage of organic grain. A lot of new companies have gotten into the organic grain market and that has added to the excitement to drive up prices. We, as processors, are bidding the price up, and grain farmers have no reason not to hold out for more money. Organic grain is short but we do have a crop growing and a lot of grain is coming in from over seas. Later in 2008 the supply should settle out and I think that prices should come back to where

(Continued on page 11)

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(Continued from Organic Grain Perspective, page 10)

we are today. I think that a lot of large brokers are taking advantage of this time of shortage to make some big money on grain they have bought forward.

Mary-Howell and Klaas Martens, Lakeview Organic Grain, Penn Yan, NY:

We don't have a complete picture of the highly volatile organic grain supply/demand/ price situation but we will give you our best guess at it. For starters, we honestly don't think that the increase in the number of organic dairy farms beginning transition last spring is the main cause of the shortage of feed or the high prices we have now. Rather the establishment and expansion of large organic poultry operations, most of which are in the South and West, seems to be a more major driving force.

We have been following organic grain prices since 1994 and have seen some general rules that organic prices seem to follow. Organic feed grains have tended to be about double the price of conventional much of the time. When they go far above or below two times conventional, often then there is a correction.

We also know from experience that organic grain prices don't just go up. In the late 1990's, food grade soybeans reached \$23/bu. At that point, suddenly grain imports began coming from China and South America, and more acres in the US were converted. Consequently, the food grade soybean price promptly dropped and has stabilized over the past few years around \$18/bu. Whether we see this now with corn will probably depend on how high the price rises, whether conventional corn price and demand remains strong, and the cost of transportation from outside the US.

When we set a target price for selling our grain, we look at organic prices in several areas that have surplus grain and add the cost of freight to New York to them. That tells us what it will cost to bring in grain from outside the area. If we are higher than that, farmers will begin buying feed from outside of New York. If we are lower, our grain will sell out quickly and then the price will rise to whatever it costs to bring it in. The cost of fuel has made freight much more expensive. Even with rail access, Lakeview has faced huge transportation cost increases this year. The transportation cost of bringing a rail car of barley from Saskatchewan this year was over \$7000 - and that was before we figure in the cost of the barley itself. It is important to recognize that the impact that rising transportation costs makes the price of Eastern grain far above the prices quoted in the Midwest. If corn sells for \$10/bu on a farm in Iowa, it is going to be nearly \$12/bu by the time it gets to New York.

When setting prices, we also look at what grain sells for in nearby organic grain deficit states and subtract

the hauling cost to see how much our grain would be worth if we sell it outside of this area. Right now, the Lakeview grain prices are substantially below 'market price' in surrounding areas, but that is intentional - we are trying to keep grain prices for our regular, loyal customers stable and as low as possible, and we are not taking on new customers or selling grain outside the area, regardless of the enormous profits we could be making if we choose to do that! Ridiculous as it may seem short-term, we strongly believe that financially healthy and loyal dairy customers and a reasonably stable local market will pay off in the long-term. At least, we're hoping that is the case.

What would your recommendation be to organic dairy producers as to how they should best proceed in this market?

Clarkson: Contract with a reliable supplier to cover your needs and contract early. Do what you can to increase feed flexibility and use feed materials other than just corn and soybeans.

Dutil: I believe the best way to proceed is to have ownership way out as I have done. Also, I have been encouraging people in our county to grow small grains such as winter wheat and barley. I have received good

(Continued on page 13)

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(Continued from *Organic Grain Perspectives*, page 11)

response both from dairy farmers for their own use and from those growing crops for sale.

Morrison: Some farmers that are small will not survive. These are the farmers that organic should help to survive, but organic has gone big on many farms, forcing out the little guy. The dairy farmer must pay attention to the little details, increase his management skills and put up the best forage he has ever done before. In the northeast we have a lot of new organic grain farmers and more if our organic grain will be purchased for the Vermont market near the borders of Vermont and we will not rely on the mid west states to supply as much organic grain.

Martens: For dairy farmers, a year like this requires agility and creativity. Grain will be expensive, and should be used sparingly and effectively with forage. In an ordinary year, we would advise dairy farmers to maximize the use of pasture/forage and minimize grain use, especially during the summer. We advise unconventional forage mixes, planting pastures with species for fall grazing, and putting up as much hay and baleage as possible now. However, in New York, our rainfall is very short and many pastures have gone dormant in June. This certainly limits our options.

There are some forage species, such as BMR sorghum-sudangrass and Japanese millet that do well in hot dry conditions, and may still be options. There are winter grains and brassicas that can be planted in late August to provide fall grazing. There is abandoned land that could be quickly added to our certifications now that could be harvested for hay.

Dairy farmers also need to keep in mind that feed mills too are feeling the pinch of this price rise, and they may be extra-cautious about extending credit or taking on new or possibly risky customers. On-going loyalty, and a history of reliably paying your bills may benefit you far more than you realize in a year like this. When a situation is this uncertain and volatile, everyone wants to limit their risk.

When buying expensive grain, make sure you are getting the very best quality grain and best-designed feed ration possible that will address the specific deficiencies in your situation. Be selective and shop around - not all organic grain is created equal! In a year like this, price may be misleading indicator of quality. Price may also not be a good indicator of organic integrity. Make sure you are buying from known and reliable sources and make sure you receive appropriate organic documentation before paying.

Please remember - we aren't the only ones noticing the high cost of organic grain!

Many dairy farmers may be thinking about buying large quantities of grains at harvest to assure a supply. While this often is a good idea, there are some very important considerations to address if you are going to have quality feed for your animals. First, ask to see grain samples before purchase, make sure you have a way to dry the grain and store it in weather-tight and aerated storage facilities, and then to manage stored grain carefully and diligently to maintain quality. For more information on managing stored grain, our article-
www.newfarm.org/columns/Martens/2004/0904/index.shtml may be of some assistance.

Any other thoughts or advice?

Clarkson: I suspect it will become increasingly difficult to meet domestic demand with domestic supply. While I suspect it will be increasingly difficult to find off-shore supplies, I expect off-shore supplies to take over an increasing share of US needs. If you project a need, start trying to get the needs covered. Do not rely on the spot market to cover your needs. It can't.

Martens: Both through Lakeview and by our own efforts, we have worked hard to increase the supply of locally grown organic grain throughout New York. We are reasonably certain that New York is nearly self-

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(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from Organic Grain Perspective, page 13)

sufficient in organic grain production - if it was assured that this grain would stay in New York to feed New York animals. However, outside brokers and feed mills have discovered that organic grains are grown in New York too, and we often see their persistent efforts to draw organic grain out of New York.

We have found that a reliable local supply of grain is important to our business because it protects us from supply disruptions due to weather and transportation. To us, it makes sense to pay a premium for local grain to reflect the value of having it nearby and more accessible, to encourage local production and to support the health of New York organic grain farmers.

Farmers and processors need to recognize that we are going through a period of strong price inflation right now. Regardless of what the 'official' consumer price index says, farmers are paying twice as much for fuel than we were few years ago, the cost of machinery is going up at double digit rates, fertilizer has gone up as much as fuel, and all of our other inputs have been rising sharply. While food processors would like to keep the prices they pay for the farm products as low as possible, that is just not realistic anymore.

There is talk of conventional milk price going over \$21/cwt this fall and Chicago Board of Trade conventional corn prices near \$140/ton recently. When you add freight to New York, this conventional corn is as high as organic corn was a year and a half ago! It's easy to see that organic prices do need to move up just to stay ahead of conventional. When a group of New York organic grain farmers calculated our costs of production 18 months ago at an NYCO meeting, all our inputs were much cheaper than they are today, so our costs of production and our target grain price simply can't be the same now either.

We honestly think that much of the current rise in organic grain price is more due to a perception of shortage than it is to reality. But, it is important to consider another factor. While it is easy to point the finger at organic grain farmers and accuse them of getting rich at the expense of organic dairy farmers, we should now ask the reverse question. If the market does go down and there is extra organic grain, will organic dairy farmers be willing to pay the grain farmers more than market price to help them out? If not, then should organic grain farmers be willing to sell to dairy farmers below market price now? It is extremely important to acknowledge that quite a few New York organic grain farmers have voluntarily sold their corn this spring at below what they might have gotten elsewhere to directly benefit the New York dairy farmers.

In summary, throughout the entire supply chain, eve-

ryone involved with organic grain is struggling to adjust to the present and predict the future, and none of us are coming up with very good information. As we write, the weather in many of the organic grain growing areas is not ideal - either too much or too little rain - and the crop is certainly not yet "made". However, we still have time and perhaps this will turn out to be a good year. Most people predict that organic grain will not be appreciably cheaper at harvest unless you find local farmers who either have no storage space or drying capability. Anyone who can store grain is likely to do so, in hopes of the price rising still further. Unfortunately that leaves us with fewer options.

The most important factor though was amply illustrated by a phone call we got from a grain farmer in Michigan yesterday. With some corn still left in his bin, he was asking \$15/bu, picked up at his farm. When we explained that our customers couldn't afford that, he said "well, for what they charge for those corn chips in the store, they could pay the farmers more!" It made him distinctly uncomfortable to learn that our customers were not the Big Guys, but instead were small to mid-size family dairy farmers, struggling to survive.

In a year like this one, when money is pitting one sec-

(Continued on page 15)



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(Continued from Organic Grain Perspective, page 14)

tor of the organic community sharply against another, it is even more important to recognize that we do need each other to be profitable, not at the expense of other farmers. Somehow we must reach agreement on a price that insures adequate and fair profit for both grain and dairy farmers, and find some way to restore the critical equilibrium so that everyone benefits.

About the respondents:

Clarkson Grain, Cerro Gordo, IL, has supplied organic grains for food and feed since 1992. They source organic grain by contracting production with known farmers over several states. They operate one of the largest organic fluidized bed roasters in the country, supplying organic dairies and chicken feeders with very consistent, roasted soybeans. They also process organic soybeans into soy meal and offer complete feeds. For information, contact Brad Taylor at 800 252-1638.

Morrison's Custom Feeds, Barnet, VT, began deal-

ing in organic grains in 1999 and delivers certified high quality organic feeds to the New England states. Their products are available in bulk or bags, as custom formulated in either pellets or mash, or as standard pelleted feeds. On site professional nutrition consultation is provided. Contact Les Morrison or Mike Thresher at 802-633-4387 for more information.

Green Mountain Feeds is a family-owned mill located in Bethel, VT and services farms in New England and New York. They have 2 separate mills, one is organic and the other is conventional. They provide exceptional delivery service, consistent grain quality, and their use of a cyclone to unload bulk grain minimizes separation. Contact Rick Dutil at 802-247-6700 or 802-234-6278.

Lakeview Organic Grain, Penn Yan, NY, serves the growing organic animal feed and crop seed needs in upstate New York and throughout the Northeast. It is owned by large-scale organic crop farmers, Klaas and

(Continued on page 16)

More Organic Milk Sought in Northeast

Farms should be sure to have a market secured before beginning the 12 month herd transition.

CROPP Cooperative / Organic Valley Family of

Farms, continues to grow its dairy producers base now and into the future in New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia and all of the New England States. Near term, we have ample milk supply and we are now directing producers interested transitioning to organic dairy production to begin their 12 month transition no sooner than the Fall of 2007. 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

HP Hood continues to look for high quality farms for our organic milk supply. We are eager to talk to farms that are ready to begin their herd transition in the fall of 2007. Our routes encompass a number of Northern Tier States (ME, NH, VT, NY, PA, OH, MI, WI, MN, IA) and we 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@hphood.com or at 1-866-383-1026.

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 processing 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 November 2007 issue, please email the desired text to Ed at ednodpa@comcast.net or call 413-772-0444 by October 1st 2007.

Massive Dairy Reapplies For Organic Certification, Then Changes Mind

By Sustainable Food News

A month after its organic certification was suspended, a massive dairy in Pixley, Calif., reapplied for use of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's organic seal, only to scuttle those plans this week.

The 10,000-cow Case Vander Eyk Jr. Dairy - over 3,500 were reportedly certified organic - had its certification suspended May 16 by certification group San Diego-based Quality Assurance International (QAI) for not meeting federal organic regulations.

The dairy reapplied for organic certification with CCOF (California Certified Organic Farmers) based in Santa Cruz, Calif., earlier this month.

But CCOF's Executive Director Peggy Miars told Sustainable Food News Thursday that Vander Eyk notified the group this week that it would not go through with the process of certifying its cows as organic after all.

Vander Eyk did not give a reason for abandoning its quest for re-certification, Miars said. In general, organic dairies must prove that its herd eats organic feed, has not been administered hormones and has access to pasture, among other requirements.

To win back its certification, Vander Eyk would have to submit new organic farming plans, fix previous non-compliance issues, pass inspections with a certifying agent and get final clearance from the USDA.

However, rather than withdrawing its application, the dairy amended it asking CCOF to certify its land

(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from Organic Grain Perspective page 15)

Mary-Howell Martens, and is operated by Mary-Howell and a terrific group of wonderful and dedicated people. Lakeview's guiding principle is service and community, with a strong emphasis on caring stewardship of people and land. This includes service to customers, suppliers, employees, community, and cooperating businesses. 315/531-1038

NOTE: A panel of Mary-Howell and Klaas Marten, Rick Kersbergen, Heather Derby and Rick Dutil will share their knowledge on the topic of "Organic grain - Where are we today, where do we need to be in 5 years and what will it take to get there?" on Saturday morning at NODPA Field Days ♦



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(Continued from *Massive Dairy Bows Out*, page 16)

instead. Miars said she did not know the number of acres Vander Eyk was looking to have certified.

Having been suspended by QAI, Vander Eyk is required by law to show CCOF documents detailing the reasons for the suspension, but Miars said she had not seen those documents.

"Obviously, CCOF holds all applicants to the same strict standards and would ensure that all previous non-compliance issues are resolved," Miars told SFN in a followup e-mail. "However, that seems to be a moot point based on my conversation with our contact at Vander Eyk," Miars continued. "He said that the Vander Eyk family is pulling out of the organic dairy business indefinitely."

Earlier this month, Vander Eyk told the Capital Press that the suspension was "very disruptive to our operation."

Vander Eyk did not return a call for comment. Repeated requests for comment from QAI have also not been returned.

Asked whether the USDA would certify a large dairy as organic in the future, USDA spokesperson Joan Shaffer told Sustainable Food News that the federal agency is "size neutral" when it comes to granting approval for use of the organic seal.

Horizon Organic, the nation's largest brand of organic milk, stopped buying milk from Vander Eyk in December because it wasn't satisfied with the quality of the organic milk, according to press reports. ♦

Horizon Organic Supports National Organic Standards Board

Horizon Organic announced its that it will be incorporating into their standards of care the NOSB recommendation that requires organic dairy cows to get an average of 30 percent of their daily diet from grazing on pasture for a minimum of 120 days a year. Horizon Organic also encouraged the organic dairy industry to set

goals that exceed that minimum.

Horizon Organic issued its updated "Standards of Care" which includes NOSB's recommendation. The "Standards of Care" govern the management practices used by its two company-owned dairy farms. The update also includes refinements based on collaborative efforts with key organic industry leaders, including The Organic Center and Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA).

"We asked some of the organic industry's most respected leaders to candidly review and comment on our 'Standards of Care.' It is extremely important to us that Horizon Organic's farm standards contain the kind of detail that is clearly understood by dairy farmers and the organic dairy industry, at large," said Kelly Shea, vice president of industry relations and organic stewardship for Horizon Organic. "The feedback was invaluable. As a result, we expanded the sections on grazing, pasture management, and environmental stewardship," said Shea, noting that the "Standards of Care" are the result of 15 years of collective experience in organic dairy farming from Horizon Organic's two farms and the hundreds of farm families who provide milk to the company.

Jule Taylor, vice president of dairy operations for Horizon Organic, said the "Standards of Care" will continue to change as holistic and sustainable dairy practices evolve with innovation.

"As a company that helped pioneer organic practices, we feel a responsibility to continue improving the way we do organic, and we believe that our updated 'Standards of Care' accurately capture our farm management beliefs and goals," said Taylor, who oversees the management of the company's farms. "We are always open to listening to organic experts to determine



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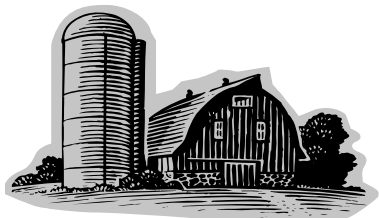


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UNH Research Activity Update

*By Kevin Brussell
UNH Organic Research Project Director*

Currently we are producing the different forages we will need for the second year of the USDA feeding trial to be conducted this winter. Agricultural Research Station (ARS) researchers from Maine are finishing soil sampling and gps mapping of all the organic production fields as well as the pastures. Along with NRCS they will be developing a nutrient management plan and will be tracking the nutrient flows within the organic farm. ARS researchers from Pennsylvania are finishing their vegetation analysis and mapping of the pastures and are working with PhD student Sue Marston to develop her skills in using the rising plate meter and sampling pastures for forage analysis. This is in preparation for dry matter intake and supplemental feeding on pasture research that we plan to initiate next year. As soon as field work gets caught up, we will be building some cattle lanes and wetland crossings in the main pasture and holding a field day to highlight this. At the end of August we will be using the Organic Dairy Research Farm for a "Conservation Planning Course" for the newer NRCS staff. Just about every week at least one tour of the farm is given to groups ranging from school children to researchers to New Hampshire State Legislators. ♦



(Continued from Horizon and NOSB page 17)

how we can continue to improve our farming practices.”

The "Standards of Care" were created to demonstrate what Horizon Organic is doing to protect the integrity of the USDA's organic seal and advance organic farming practices on its company-owned farms. According to Shea and Taylor, they also play an important role in educating the public about what organic farming means, how it's done and why it's good for consumers, communities and cows.

To review the Horizon Organic "Standards of Care" visit www.horizonorganic.com. ♦

Hood Announces Pasture Requirements

HP Hood recently announced the company's pasture requirements for organic milk produced for Hood.

"Hood is committed to having grass-based dairies with grazing requirements that exceed the current national standard," said Karen Cole, Director of Milk Procurement for Hood. "We have recently updated our guidelines and we are pleased and proud to be in the preliminary stages of bringing more structure to our program."

A variety of sources will be used to help Hood design and implement its new pasture requirements. For example, Hood's organic milk advisory panel, made up of farmers, advise on dairy business and economic issues.

Hood's updated guidelines are as follows:

Producers shall provide a written plan outlining compliance with HP Hood LLC, pasture requirements.

1. Dairy animals over the age of 18 months are required to have 120 days access to pasture during the growing season.
2. Thirty percent of the total ration's dry matter intake of dairy animals 18 months and older must be provided by grazing
3. Dairy animals six months and older are required to have access to pasture in accordance with the region's growing season
4. Amount of accessible pasture acreage per dairy animal
5. Average time dairy animals are grazed daily

Hood will conduct a survey of all of its farms over the next six months and will assess their ability to comply with these new requirements. Simultaneously, Hood will work to provide the structure to its guidelines that work in harmony with the land, farms, the environment, and our producers.

For generations Hood has been synonymous with innovation and quality. Founded and headquartered in Massachusetts, Hood is a national processor and manufacturer of dairy products from coast to coast and sells to all classes of trade. For more information about Hood and its organic milk program, please contact Karen Cole toll free at 1-866-383-1026. ♦

New York Organic Dairy Task Force A Forum for Cooperation

By Fay Benson

In January of 2006, New York's Farm Viability Institute funded The Organic Dairy Initiative (ODI). The grant was submitted through the Cornell Small Farm Program. The Organic Dairy Task Force was created to help guide and impact the efforts of the Initiative. As the project manager for this initiative I have continuously sought input from the people that make up the industry. As a dairy farmer for 20 years and a certified organic dairy farmer for 7 of those years, I watched as educational programs were spoon fed to dairy farmers attempting to alter their practices on how to achieve production and profit according to the latest research. Through my contacts as a farmer and from the Organic Task Force, we are attempting to create a different model of cooperation and education. The direction is given from the ground up, and the efforts are to benefit the families of the industry as a whole, rather than just production numbers and profit.

The Task Force is made up of 10-15 organic dairy and grain farmers, representatives from the four major processors of organic milk, NOFA-NY, NY Ag & Markets, Cornell Extension personnel, and invited guests. The Task Force meets twice a year, its agenda is put together by a leadership committee which is made up of 2 producers-Chuck Deichmann and Chuck Blood, 1 processor- Sharad Mathur from DMS, 1 grain producer-Mary Howell Martens, and Greg Swartz, interim executive director of NOFA-NY.

At our March meeting we invited Joe Bonivito from Chicago's Dairy Marketing Inc. (DMI). He was asked to talk on how DMI viewed organic milk promotion in their efforts. It was a productive meeting with Mark Stephenson, Dairy Marketing Specialist from Cornell, reviewing the need to collect marketing data, which he felt would illustrate the importance of organic dairy in bringing in new consumers to the fluid milk market. Mary Howell-Martens gave a sobering view of the organic grain market and the looming shortage. To address this barrier the Task Force broke into groups to brainstorm efforts to alleviate the situation. I was directed to compile a list of organic grain sources, and nutritionists that were familiar with working with organic herds. The processors agreed to send out the list with a warning letter that I wrote outlining the situation to their producers. I was also directed to help extend information on crops and methods to reduce the dependence on organic grain.

Besides the Task Force, the Initiative has been active with designing and putting on Organic Dairy Farm

Business Management workshops. These workshops are set up to help the farmer adapt to the similar but different management techniques required on organic dairies. One example is time management without access to quick tools such as antibiotics, herbicides, hormones, etc. to treat symptoms. The organic farmer has to direct more time to preventing these problems with activities such as cow comfort, cow nutrition, mowing weeds, etc. The workshops also focus on setting family goals and directing daily activities towards them. To see a copy of the workbook as well as other resources, go to: www.smallfarms.cornell.edu

One of the exciting opportunities that the organic market offers all of us is a chance to correct some mistakes that have been made in the evolution of conventional agriculture, such as the importance we place on marketing, education, animal welfare, and treatment of the environment. I look forward to receiving comments from all involved with the organic dairy market as we pave this new road.

P.S. I am looking for more sites in NY to put on the Organic Dairy Management workshops this winter. Please contact me if you are aware of a small group that would be interested. Usually 3-8 farms are best for the 2 day workshop. Fay Benson afb3@cornell.edu or 607-753-5213.

Fay Benson is the Project Manager for the NY Organic Dairy Initiative & the Cornell Cooperative Extension Small Farms Educator in Cortland County, NY. ♦

Hot Weather Grazing Tips

From the 7/07 GLCI Gazette

Here are some tips on making sure your water system and fences don't fail you in the heat of summer, from pasture infrastructure expert Rob DeClue of the Chenango County, NY SWCD.

Livestock watering:

With droughty conditions, moisture content of the pasture forage is likely to drop slightly. Even though the decline is usually small, the portion fresh forage contributes towards the total dietary requirements of animals is so great as to have a large net impact. Couple this with increasing water needs to help reduce heat stress from strong sun and high air temperatures, water intake climbs dramatically. If the flow into troughs is marginal under average conditions, try to make sure the troughs are not overturned and pushed out of the pasture. Some techniques include offering the water closer to where the animals are grazing. By shortening the distance they have to walk to quench their thirst, their behavior will change markedly. Instead of coming to the troughs in bigger groups, they will either make watering

(Continued on page 27)

NODPA's 7th Annual Field Days Event and Annual Producers Meeting

August 17 & 18, 2007

**Freund's Farm Market, 324 Norfolk Road
East Canaan, Connecticut**

This year's NODPA Field Days will take you through two states and many different years of experience in organic dairying. The event will be hosted by Rick Segalla and Morvan Allen who farm on either side of the Connecticut/Massachusetts border and will take place at the Freund family dairy farm market and greenhouse.

The event will start at 1:30pm on Friday, August 17th, with a Field Trip to Segalla Farm, led by Rick Segalla, Lisa McCrory, Sarah Flack and Kathy Soder (USDA ARS). Rick operates his family's 900-acre farm in Canaan CT, milking 115 cows and raising an equal number of young stock. The farm has been in the family since the early 1900's and today it is a corporation owned by Rick and his siblings. The farm consists of 300 acres wooded land, and the remaining tillable/open land is used for corn silage (65A), alfalfa (76A), grass hay (200A), and pasture (160A). Rick has raised soybeans in the past, but had some issues with flooding the last few years, which devastated the crop. This year, he would like to plant some flaxseed as a nurse crop hoping it will increase the omega-3 values of the forages grown. Along with the dairy cows, Rick has been raising some Hereford dairy crosses for a small, but growing organic beef market. Most of the dairy cows are Holsteins, though there are some Holstein/Jersey and

Holstein/Hereford crosses. Cows are housed in a freestall barn, bedded with sand, and milked in a double six herringbone parlor. At one time, he was milking 200 cows 3 times a day, but reduced his cow numbers to match the readily available pasture on the farm. Rick's basic philosophy to farming is to keep the operation simple and not push the cows for high production. Milk quality is excellent with somatic cell count running around 140,000. "You need healthy soils to produce healthy crops and pastures", says Rick. "Once you have that, you are sure to have healthy cows."

Following the farm tour, folks will gather at Freund's Farm, East Canaan, for socializing and visiting the Trade Show with cheese & crackers, vegetable platters and beverages. The organic beef barbeque will start at 5:30 with mashed potatoes plus gravy and fresh rolls, corn on the cob (fresh from the Freund's family farm) and organic butter; green salad with fresh local vegetables and dressings, plus baked beans with molasses and maple syrup and garlic bacon. There will be a vegetarian option. Dessert will be a choice of fruit pies and ice cream with plenty of iced tea, lemonade, coffee, tea, water and milk.

Steve Morrison, NODPA President, will welcome the Massachusetts Commissioner of Agricultural Resources (invited) and Connecticut Commissioner of Agriculture (invited) which will be followed by Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director, with "NODPA Year in Review." There will be reports from other regions plus a report on the activities of FOOD Farmers. An "Open Forum on "Future Activities and Priorities for NODPA" facilitated by Ed Maltby, Lisa McCrory and Sarah Flack will follow. This conversation will be open to

WHERE TO STAY DURING FIELD DAYS

HOTELS

Lodging in this area is expensive at this time of year and fills up very fast. Hotels listed are around \$100 and are within 1/2 hour of the event

Super 8 Motel: 492 E. Main Street, Torrington, CT 06790 Tel: 860-496-0811

Quality Inn & Suites: 395 Winsted Road, Torrington, CT 06790 Tel: 860-496-8808

Sharon Motor Lodge: 1 Calkinstown Road, Sharon, CT 06069. Tel: 860-364-0036

Yankee Pedlar Inn: 93 Main Street, Torrington, CT. Tel: 860-489-9226

CAMPSITES

Lone Oaks Campsites: 360 Norfolk Road, E. Canaan, CT 06024. Tel: 860-824-7051

White Pines Campsite: 19 Platt Hill Road, Winsted, CT 06098. Tel: 860-379-0124

Other options: Visit www.litchfieldhills.com

Morvan Allen and Rick Segalla have offered their land for informal (no services) camping: Tel: (Rick) 860-824-0241

everyone and some of the topics covered will be:

NODPA's scorecard—how well are we doing?

What is NODPA's future role?

What services should NODPA supply for organic dairy farmers in the future?

How can we support each sector of the organic infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of organics in the Northeast?"

Saturday's activities from 7am-9am will start with a breakfast of juices, coffee, tea, milk, yogurts and smoothies, homemade quiches, local sausages, and a variety of Freund's Farm famously delicious pastries. NODPA will hold its annual meeting restricted to organic dairy farmers from 7am-8:30 am which will map out the priorities for NODPA activities for the next year.

At 9am, Steve Morrison will welcome **Sam Fromantz** author of Organic, Inc. and well-known journalist with a blog at www.chewswise.com. Sam's presentation will give his perspective on the future of organics with his interactive presentation called "Organics, now and in the future – what should we plan for?"

After a short milk break, **Kathy Soder** USDA- Agricultural Research Service will talk about how you can **"Think Like a Cow"- Understanding Grazing Behavior**. Cows eat what cows eat – because cows are cows. Right? Well, not quite... Cows learn how, what, when, and where to eat in many different ways. They learn from other cows, they learn through trial and error. In addition, our management practices can affect pasture diet selection and grazing time. Understanding why animals eat what they eat, why they forage the way they forage and why they act the way they act helps us better manage our forage and livestock. Kathy will teach you how to 'think like a cow' and how to better feed and manage your grazing herds.

Feeding grain is a hot topic for all dairy farmers in the northeast and Kathy's talk will be followed by a panel of northeast experts to offer their perspectives on the organic grain market and how to plan for the future. The panel of **Mary-Howell and Klaas Marten, Rick Kersbergen, Heather Derby and Rick Dutil** will share their knowledge on the topic of **"Organic grain –Where are we today, where do we need to be in 5 years and what will it take to get there?"** Having spent the morning thinking of how to feed cows, there will be a lunch buffet for humans (you can either watch or take part in this controlled experiment!) of kielbasa with pepper and onions; sweet and spicy nodine sausage with pepper and onions; meatballs with fresh tomato/marinara sauce; creamy cheese vegetable lasagna; variety of giant cookies; milk, iced tea, lemonade, water.

The last activity of Field Days will be a tour of Maple Shade Farm, Sheffield, MA hosted by Morvan Allen and led by Sarah Flack, Lisa McCrory and Kathy Soder (USDA ARS). Morvan has a grass based dairy that finished its transition earlier this year. Morvan will explain how he financed the purchase and start-up of this farm deep in the Berkshires where land is expensive and in high demand. The tour will cover his extensive, intensively managed pasture, some of which is in the flood plain that experienced extensive flooding this year. There is an article of Morvan's farm in this issue.

This not to be missed event in yet another tumultuous year of organic dairy will leave you well fed with local and organic food and better ideas on how to feed your cows in the future. BUT please sign up early and book a hotel room quickly as this beautiful area has many visitors all year round. Go to www.nodpa.com for a full brochure or register using the form on page 39 of this issue of NODPA News. See you there! ♦

Thanks to all our sponsors and supporters who make the Field Days event possible

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Aurora Organic Dairy Opens New Organic Dairy Farm in Stratford, Texas

Boulder, CO, July 10, 2007 —Aurora Organic Dairy today announced that organic milk production has begun at its Coldwater West organic dairy farm near Stratford, Texas. This is the first organic dairy farm in Sherman County and Aurora Organic Dairy's second dairy location in Texas. Aurora Organic Dairy's Coldwater West farm has created nearly 50 new jobs in Sherman County.

On June 15, 2007, the Coldwater West facility received organic certification for its 2,500 livestock from independent certifier Quality Assurance International. The 640 acres of cropland and pasture at Coldwater West have been certified separately for several years. Aurora Organic Dairy also owns the adjacent facility, Coldwater East, where Aurora Organic Dairy currently grows certified organic crops on an additional 640 acres.

"U.S. families have shown an increasing appetite for organic dairy products, especially as the price gap between organic and conventional dairy products has narrowed recently," said Marc Peperzak, chairman and CEO of Aurora Organic Dairy. "We are delighted to add this facility to our network of organic dairy farms so that we can meet that demand, and make organic milk and butter more affordable and more available for American families."

The Stratford farm is modeled after Aurora Organic Dairy's High Plains Organic Dairy in Colorado, where the barns and facilities are located in the center of the farm, surrounded by hundreds of acres of organic pasture. ♦

The Organic Summit

By Kathie Arnold

A conference entitled "The Organic Summit: Renewing the Organic Conversation" was recently held in Boulder, Colorado. Because of its high cost and limited registration, it generated some controversy for being an exclusive event that limited participation by a large segment of the organic community. Conference producer, New Hope Media, did supply NODPA with one complimentary registration for a producer and I thus attended. While I saw a wide cross section of the organic community there, the primary population was industry/marketing/media folks with only a few farmers and grass roots organization representatives there. But still, I liked a lot of what I had a chance to hear and it was good to know that organic marketing and industry people were hearing the messages being put out there. I'd like to share some of the "conversation" that I heard there.

The leadoff keynote speaker was Fred Kirschenmann, who has long been a thought leader in organic and sustainable agriculture and a South Dakota organic farmer who continues to manage the family farm from afar. Fred laid out two challenges that face organics. He said that it is no longer adequate to rely on the organic label as a point of distinction and that we are not paying sufficient attention to what the market is telling us. He related that the Hartman Group reported that 62% of consumers now want food consistent with their values and that a growing edge of the market wants memory, romance, and trust, with health and nutrition close behind. Consumers want to feel good about the food they buy and they want to know where the food comes from and what the story behind it is. These consumers want active engagement. The second challenge Kirschenmann laid out is the climate challenge and the fact that following agro-ecological principles is going to be of paramount importance.

In the 'Marketing to New and Existing Organic Consumers' session, Rick Sterling, CEO and founding partner of the Sterling-Rice Group, reported that 35% of households use organic in some fashion and that 60% of those just started buying in the last year.

Kevin Williams, brand strategist for Pure Design Co., went on to describe the 'echo boomers', the children of the baby boomers who are now 10-32 years old and 75 million strong (compared to 78 million baby boomers). He described these echo boomers as being very in-

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volved with organics and active purchasers. They are price and value driven, super-center shoppers and convenience oriented—seemingly a perfect fit for Walmart's organic endeavor. Williams theorizes that Walmart's failure with this group is because of what he called 'echo apathy', which he described as a many faceted insecurity on the part of the echo boomers. The income expectation of the current generation will not match that of their parents, thus financial insecurity, on top of environmental insecurity, institutional insecurity, and food insecurity. He said that the echo boomers don't have faith in the establishment and that Walmart represent the establishment, thus Walmart and organics was not a good fit for the echo boomers. Mr. Williams went on to say that connecting with consumers has to be through the head, heart, and gut—that something has to click to achieve meaning.

The final presenter in the marketing session was Allyson Savage, vice president and group manager at Ketchum Public Relations. She emphasized that consumers are seeking a connection with their brand, that authenticity and transparency are vital and that 70% of the global consumers say that honesty is important to them. Buying organic is 'activism lite' for many consumers whose overly busy lives keep them from engaging more in activism but feel that they are at least doing something positive by purchasing organic. They are relying on their chosen brand to bring products to them from a source and in a way that upholds and meets their values.

The closing keynote speaker was Walter Robb, Co-President and COO of Whole Food Market. Robb started out listing issues in the organic sector: supply issues, certification issues, the pasture rule taking too long, food safety, GMO drift, fraud, loss of genetic diversity, and fewer farmers. He related that organic sales have doubled in the last five years. He sees consumers moving to deeper values. Robb's vision for organic in the 21st century is that rather than focusing on what isn't in organic, that there be a return to the positive of what is in organic.

Mark Bradley, Associate Deputy Administrator for the National Organic Program (NOP), also presented at one of the sessions at The Organic Summit and he described the ten point outcome of a visioning session done by the staff at NOP:

1. The NOP becomes fully funded with adequate resources.
2. The organic community has confidence in the organic label.

3. The NOP seldom receives FOIA requests. (They plan to soon list all certified operations and compliance actions on their website and have a FOIA reading room.)
 4. Processes are fully transparent with quality manuals in place.
 5. Efficient and effective process for standards development.
 6. NOSB requests are handled in a time effective manner.
 7. NOP certifiers are competent. (NOP will do more on-site visits.)
 8. All accredited certifying associations are reviewed in a timely manner.
 9. Recognition agreements with other countries are reviewed regularly and overseen.
 10. NOP is boring place to work, all the fires are out, and everyone is happy with the way the NOP is working.
- May this list become a reality!! ♦

Classifieds

ANIMALS

25 to 60 Registered Jersey heifers for sale. 25 open, breeding age heifers and 35 bred heifers. Certified through OEFFA, located in northern VA. Call 540-687-5112 or email sadiezim@yahoo.com or fox-run-organic@hotmail.com.

10 Bred Heifers for sale. \$1500 each if sold as a group of 10. Contact Dave Minar at 952-212-9506 or email daveandflo@cedarsummit.com.

Organic Heifer Boarding for 10 to 15 head in New York. Certified pasture, hay, and grain. Tie-stall barn and bedded pack area. Contact Klaas (for daughter Elizabeth) Martens.

Jersey/Swiss Heifer Calves for sale. Two 5-month old heifers at \$500 each; two 2-month heifers at \$350 each. Contact Steven at 610-935-0314 or email cleess@yahoo.com.

Holstein Bred Heifers for sale, due September. 7 or 8 heifers, some with horns. Located on Ohio, contact David Osterloh at 419-305-7765.

HAY

Organic mixed grass hay for sale. Small square bales. \$150/ton or \$3 per bale. Southern tier of NY, trucking can be arranged. Tony Marzolino 607-657-8543 or 267-502-3703.

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Organic Production

Feature Farm

Maple Shade Farm Morven Allen Sheffield, MA

by Lisa McCrory

Morven Allen has been farming in Berkshire County, MA for over 20 years; starting with just a couple cows and a few calves and today he has a herd of just under 250 dairy cows. Morven grew up in England on an organic dairy farm and came to the US to pursue a career in farming as there was no way to get started farming in England due to limited farmland. He has been renting land all of those 20 years and 4 years ago, had the opportunity to purchase a 155-acre farm from the State Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program.

About the Home Farm

The 155-acre farm contains the house, dairy barn and permanent pasture for his milking herd and the remaining acreage that he uses (1045 acres) is rented under long-term lease agreements. One of the challenges for Morven is not having a block of contiguous land. He has to travel to 3 different pieces of rented land to grow his forages and two different pieces to raise his heifers. All of the rented land is no more than 12 miles away, but interestingly, some of the land is in NY, some is in CT and some of it is in MA. The total acres farmed is 1,200; 50 acres of land is in corn (first year growing corn) and the rest is harvested as haylage or dry hay.

The milking barn consists of a double-ten pit parlor and a free stall barn for the milk cows. The milking facility was rebuilt 4 years ago when the farm was purchased; doing much of the renovations themselves. Young calves stay on the main farm until weaning age and then they move to one of his rented farms in Alford, MA for their first winter and then to another farm in NY for the final period from breeding age to calving.



Being that pasture is limited, only the milkers stay on the home farm, which is used primarily for their intensive rotational grazing system.

Aside from himself, Morven has 2 full time employees working for him along with several part time employees helping out with cropping, relief milking and other livestock chores. His son Ian (9 years old) helps out a lot and proudly states that he is 'definitely going to be a farmer' when he grows up.

Organic Transition

Transitioning to organic was a 3-year process for the land and the livestock transitioned under the 80:20 rule during the final year of the land transition. Morven started shipping organic milk to Horizon Organic in December, 2006 and is certified by OCPP out of Canada.

Organic dairying has always been a way of life for this farmer, but the biggest challenge was farming organically on rented land that is renewed each year.

Once Morven owned his own farm and secured some long-term leases on other properties, he knew that taking the leap into organic dairy production was the next step. Having grown up on an organic farm in Britain, it was not hard familiarizing himself with the organic standards (there *are* some differences between EU and US standards) and he has always rotationally grazed his livestock.

Preventative Health Strategies

Morven's management has always been based upon preventative strategies and providing a low stress environment for all his animals. He does not push his cows for production and saw no change in his milk production when he transitioned to organic.

Getting cows outside as much as possible is Morven's primary strategy for preventing health problems. Other things he incorporates into his management are dry cow vaccinations used to build up antibodies in the colostrum to fight calf scours and respiratory illness. New-born calves are also vaccinated. He has a closed herd, so does not have to worry about problems arriving on

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(Continued from Feature Farm, page 24)

his farm via purchased livestock. His veterinarian, Dr. Wayne Hassinger, is very supportive of Morven's switch to organic dairy production and is interested in learning more. Most of Dr Hassinger's visits are for pregnancy checks and other management consultations and occasionally for an injury or a difficult calving.

To avoid pneumonia with his calves, Morven gets them out in paddocks as early as possible. Mastitis cases are rare and the SCC (Somatic Cell Count) decreases once his cows go out to pasture.

Some of his current challenges are with dry cow management and maintaining a low somatic cell count. He recently started using DHIA for monthly 'hot sheets' so that he can identify the chronic high count cows and ultimately cull them from the herd.

Breeds and Breeding

Cows are bred naturally, using a Jersey bull for the heifers and a Holstein bull for the rest of the cows. As a result, Morven's herd consists of Holstein/Jersey crosses. The majority of his animals freshen in the spring, taking advantage of the high quality pasture early in the season and making sure the cows are bred back before it gets too hot. He does not freshen any cows from December to February.

Pasture Management, Winter Management and Supplemental Feeding

Morven has been rotationally grazing his dairy herd ever since he can remember; cows are moved to new pasture after every milking and water is provided in every paddock.

The 155 acre home farm provides lots of pasture for his milkers, but Morven feels that his animals are a little over-stocked and hopes to reduce his cow numbers to better match the acreage available. The organic pay price should support this shift, but it is too soon in the game to make that move right now.

He has worked closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) receiving cost-share money for setting up a fencing and watering system, laneways, manure handling and storage system and has received additional funds for transitioning his land to organic production. Morven is impressed with the support that he has received from Kate Parsons (local NRCS District Conservationist) and hopes that more

farmers will be motivated to get involved in the various NRCS cost-share programs once they see what he has implemented on his farm.

To complement his pasture, Morven feeds a TMR of haylage, dry hay and 10 lbs of 11% protein grain. In the winter time, he changes his grain to an 18% protein grain and adds some baleage and corn silage to the TMR. He is a little concerned about the condition on his cows and is growing corn silage this year with the hopes that the corn silage will offer some extra energy

in the ration and have a positive effect on body condition.

Resources

There is a long list of individuals and organizations that have supported Morven through his transition: OCPP, his certifier, has been very supportive and knowledgeable; they have worked more as an ally than 'certification police'; Rick Dutil from



Green Mountain Feeds carried Morven through tough times when he owed GMF money and continues to provide support taking forage samples and balancing rations for his herd; and Rick Segalla, a long-time organic dairy farmer and neighbor has been there to answer questions and share his insight and experience.

Being a NODPA Representative has also been a great experience. Morven feels like he is part of a group that is really going somewhere; discussions are positive and forward-thinking.

What really captures Morven's attention is when discussions turn to supporting and mentoring the next generation of farmers. Morven started farming with just two cows and built his enterprise to the size and scale it is today – and he has very little debt. He never could have bought the farm he now owns if it wasn't for the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program. The eligibility process to be a candidate to purchase the farm was very competitive; Morven had to show 4 years worth of milk receipts, a business plan and provide a full business history. Ultimately, he was the one they chose. Morven is grateful for the opportunity that was given to him (though by the sounds of it, he earned it) and wants to make sure other farmers or prospective farmers have similar opportunities, keeping sustainable agricultural enterprises going and growing. ♦

Why Feed Supplemental Protein To A Cow On Pasture?

By Darrell L. Emmick Ph.D.

It never ceases to amaze me how we get caught up in “past practice” as a guide to what we do in the present, even when what we are doing in the present is not at all like what we did in the past. I have even made the statement “we should not throw away everything we have learned over the past 50-years of production agriculture just because we have gone back to grazing.” Unfortunately, it now appears to me that I was wrong. The pasture-based livestock production system, be it for meat, milk, or fiber is fundamentally enough different than a confinement-based production system that we need to re-think what we are doing, how we are doing it, and why. And the first thing we need to do is to stop thinking the animal is the “stupid”, and we are the, “oh so smart.” Herbivores have been eating grass for about 400-million years. Think they don’t know how?

Take, for example, the feeding of supplemental protein to dairy cows on pasture. Intuitively, it does not make any sense to supplement grazing cows with protein. Why would it? A well-managed pasture is at least

20% crude protein (most are much higher), and a lactating dairy cow only requires 16 to 18% protein in her diet. If a pasture is managed so as to not limit dry matter intake, i.e. grazed from a 6-8 inch starting height to not less than 2 inches of residual leaf area, and cows are moved to a fresh paddock after each milking (or whenever pasture becomes limiting), cows should be able to meet their protein requirements directly from pasture, and thus not require any supplemental protein. In fact, feeding supplemental protein may be why milk production in some herds is lower than it should be.

Protein is not limiting in well-managed pasture. However, energy is. Animals generally require 5 to 6 times more energy in their diets than protein. Thus, when supplemental protein is fed, depending on intake, total protein will exceed cow requirements, and rumen degradable protein will likely exceed what rumen microbes can efficiently utilize. Under these conditions, excessive protein is rapidly converted to ammonia, absorbed across the rumen wall, and transported to the liver where it is converted to urea and excreted. Unfortunately, this process takes energy that would otherwise be used by the cow to produce milk. Studies have shown the energy cost to excrete excess protein can result in milk production losses of 8 or more pounds/cow/

(Continued on page 27)



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Photo by Karl Pickett ©2007 Horizon Organic

(Continued from *Where's the Organic Grain?*, page 26)

day. In addition, ammonia is toxic, and toxic foods cause animals to stop eating. So, how much more milk do you want to lose by feeding excessive amounts of protein to your cows?

This information might be pretty hard for some folks to swallow, but not for our cows. Consider this. Behavioral studies from around the world have shown that when unsupplemented dairy cows, beef cattle, and sheep are provided with choice, they prefer 70% clover and 30% grass in their diets.

Clover is generally higher in protein than grass, is more digestible, cows can eat more of it, and they can eat it faster than they can eat grass. Thus, in the absence of protein supplements, cows can more easily meet their protein requirements by eating clover than by eating grass, and that is what they do. However, in my research with lactating dairy cows, when I fed a supplement containing either 11 or 21% protein, cows generally responded by eating more grass and less

clover, and specifically, the higher the protein content of the supplement fed in the barn, the less clover they ate when in the pasture. This is a complete reversal of what cows would prefer to eat in the absence of protein

supplementation. In effect, when we feed protein to a cow in the barn ration, we are altering the cow's natural foraging behavior and, in the process, replacing low-cost protein derived from clover with high-cost purchased protein.

The short of it is concentrate foods do more than simply substitute volumetrically for foods obtained from pasture. Specific nutrients are replaced through nutrient-nutrient, nutrient-toxin,

and toxin-toxin interactions. This is especially true when feeding protein. Too much protein fed to cows in the barn will reduce dry matter intake from pasture and cause you to have to feed more in the barn. For my money, it is not a fair trade to replace the low-cost protein derived from clover with high-cost purchased protein. A better strategy for feeding pastured dairy cows is to feed them all of the energy they can eat in the barn, let them harvest their own protein, and ask yourself the question "why was I feeding all that protein to my pastured cows anyway?"

Darrell Emmick is the State Grazing Land Management Specialist with the USDA - NRCS in New York State. ♦



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(Continued from *Grazing Tips* page 19)

visits as individuals or smaller groups. The net effect is to put less demand on the watering system as a whole, improving its ability to keep up with the livestock's needs.

Fencing:

Energizers tend to have trouble with their "earth return system" which gathers electric pulses from the ground and brings them back to the ground terminal. Dry soil does not conduct electricity well. If other grounding systems at the farmstead become better relative to the fencing system's, the chance for stray voltage to develop in the facilities increases. Adding more ground rods to the earth return system and/or using a slurry of bentonite and salt around the full length of the ground rods can improve performance. Retest the adequacy of the system to ensure enhancements are effective enough.

On Fly Control

By Liz Bawden

There's nothing quite like the feeling of crunching on a few flies that flew in your open mouth as you try to express something important to a neighbor. Ahh, it's fly season yet again. The battle has begun.

This year on our farm, we have employed several hundred thousand fly parasites, and we are astonished with how well they are working. The new employees began arriving at our northern New York farm in early May, and a shipment of 40,000 arrives each week thereafter. The parasites arrive in a pupal stage of development in a plastic bag, and you wait until you see 15 or 20 of them have hatched before releasing them around fly breeding grounds. A handful is tossed around each water trough, under the stable cleaner elevator, into the group pens, near the eggdges of manure piles, in the pastures, anyplace where moisture and manure provide a breeding ground for flies.


The fly parasites are actually several species of wasps, about the size of a gnat. The wasps parasitize flies in the pupal stage; they live for 2 weeks to 1 month, and females lay 75 to 100 eggs during this time. They disperse themselves about 150 feet from where they emerged, so getting them close fly breeding areas

is good enough. The parasites only work on flies that breed in manure like the house, horn, and stable flies. Horse flies and deer flies are unaffected since these are semi-aquatic breeders.

Even with all the help from the fly parasites, we still hang the sticky tape in the barn. We have found over the years that the brand "Mr. Sticky" gets the most flies over any other similar product. And we keep a garden sprayer in the barn to use for those days before a rain when the flies come in on the cows from pasture, and are really biting. We have used a rotation of fly spray products over the years, usually we change products each season. We have used Crystal Creek's No-Fly, Pyganic, and Agri-Dynamics' Ecto-Phyte; all of them are good useful products. We just rotated them around in the hope that the flies wouldn't get used to one of them.

Good sanitation practices in the barn will keep your fly population down. Keep gutters cleaned out at least every 7 days (it takes 8 days for a stable fly to go through its cycle from egg to adult). Scrape down those damp corners. We switch our normal calf bedding from chopped hay to wood shavings during the summer, and scrape them out each day.

One of the more controversial fly control methods is having poultry in and around the barn. It works to control flies around the barn. The Muskovy Duck is renowned for its efforts in fly control, eating mostly the adult flies. Chickens tend to eat the larva (maggots) and pupa as they scratch in those corners where the flies breed. ♦



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Research and Education

USDA-ARS Facility to Conduct Grazing Behavior Research

A research project in grazing behavior and pasture intake by dairy cows was recently initiated at the USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS) that will provide new information for organic dairy producers. The project, headed by Kathy Soder and her postdoctoral research associate, Pablo Gregorini, will, among other things, evaluate the effects of supplementation strategy in relation to grazing behavior and pasture intake of dairy cows. One objective of this work is to evaluate and develop science-based recommendations to meet targeted pasture intake goals that are suitable for use by regulatory agencies, grazing advisors and consultants, and producers, such as the proposed 30 percent minimum daily dry matter intake that is currently being proposed by several organic dairy organizations.

Soder, a Research Animal Scientist with the USDA-ARS-Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Unit (PSWMRU), is currently conducting research to develop supplementation strategies for grazing dairy cows that complement or alter pasture diet selection based on farm goals, available forages, and nutritional quality of forage. Other research includes evaluation of physical and chemical attributes (such as forage height, forage yield, leaf length, height, and density, and nutrient composition) of forage species that affect grazing behavior, including bite rate (number of bites per minute), bite mass (weight per bite), time spent grazing, and diet selection within mixed species pastures.

As a Postdoctoral Research Animal Scientist with the USDA-ARS-PSWMRU, Gregorini is interested in non-traditional grazing experiments to develop new guidelines for practical foraging/feeding management. Current research activities include matching plant and animal processes to alter nutrient supply in grazing cattle, the effect of strategies of supplementation on pattern of functional foraging preference, the effect of animal internal state on foraging dynamics and short-term forage intake, and chemical and biomechanical features of forage as affected by time of day.

According to Soder, preliminary studies showed that type, amount, and timing of supplement can greatly influence forage intake from pasture. However, little is known about the mechanisms that drive these changes, nor is there enough information to recommend supple-

mentation strategies to best complement or alter pasture intake. This information is critical to understand the complex interactions that occur during the grazing process that drives diet selection. ♦

Winter Grain Research in Maine

*By Rick Kersbergen (UMCE),
Tim Griffin (USDA/ARS) and
Tom Molloy (MAFES)*

There has been a lot of interest in winter grain production, especially in light of the wild grain prices we are experiencing in both the conventional and organic grain markets. Last year, we started a SARE project "Expanding Grain Production in Maine and Vermont LNE06-240" with Heather Darby and Sid Bosworth from UVM and Tim Griffin from the USDA /ARS New England Plant Soil and Water Lab in Orono. The spring grains we planted in 2006 were a disappointment, both in terms of forage yields, (harvested in either the boot stage or soft dough stages) and grain yields (remember

(Continued on page 30)



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(Continued from Winter Grain page 29)
the weather last year?).

In the fall of 2006 we planted a number of winter grains and experimented with planting dates as well as trying to evaluate how best to provide fertility to these grains in an organic system. Concurrently, Henry Perkins from Bull Ridge Farm in Albion initiated a SARE Farmer/Grower trial investigating winter spelt for forage and grain production. Henry also is evaluating three different fall planting dates.

While all the data we have so far on winter grains is preliminary and relates to forage yield, we can draw some conclusions, especially about planting dates and the impact on forage yields the following spring. When you look at the tables and pictures, you can see that there was a significant decrease in forage yield and canopy closure in the spring by delaying the planting date of winter grains from the middle of September to the middle of October. This is even more significant if we consider how warm our fall was in Maine with warmer than normal temperatures through December. We will see if this ultimately translates into a reduced grain yield later this summer.

We have data on the boot stage harvest from some replicated trials at the University of Maine Rogers Farm, with spelt, wheat, rye and Triticale. Table 1 shows the two planting dates 9/20 and 10/17 and the impact of boot stage forage yield in pounds of dry matter per acre.

Table 1
Early Planting (Sept 20 2006), Rogers West

	Date Harvested	DM Yld lbs. Per acre
Rye	21-May	926
Oberhuaser Spelt	8-Jun	3377
Sungold Spelt	8-Jun	2583
Trical 336	29-May	3068
Trical 815	4-Jun	1419
Frederick Wheat	8-Jun	3186
Richland Wheat	8-Jun	2639

Late Planting (Oct 17 2006), Rogers West

	Date	DM Yld lbs.
Rye	29-May	303
Oberhuaser Spelt	15-Jun	2592
Sungold Spelt	11-Jun	2164
Trical 336	4-Jun	1083
Trical 815	15-Jun	723
Alzo Triticale	15-Jun	1988
Richland Wheat	11-Jun	2208

These plots indicate the difference we saw in the planting dates of Triticale 336 and Oberhauser Spelt earlier this spring.



Trical 336 planted 10/17/06



Trical 336 planted 9/20/06



Oberhauser spelt planted 10/17/06



Oberhauser spelt planted 9/20/06

At Henry's farm we measured the yield of winter spelt in replicated trials in the boot stage (5/31/07) planted at three different dates last fall (9/15, 9/30 and 10/15).

Bull Ridge Farm Winter Spelt

	15-Sep	30-Sep	15-Oct
Planting Date			
Yield DM lbs/acre	3400	2600	840
Stems/meter row	125	107	84

Another of our farmer researchers in Maine, Jeff Bragg from Rainbow Valley Farm in Sidney planted a number of winter grains for us on his farm on 9/16/06. His yield data for Trical 336 in the boot stage yielded 3.56 tons of dry matter per acre on May 31st! His yields of other small grains were similar to our data from the early planted Rogers Farm.

Rainbow Valley Farm Boot Stage 5/31/07

	Yield lbs/acre Dry matter
Trical 336	7120
Wheat (Frederick)	3260
Spelt	3400
Wheat (Richmond)	2800
Rye	3120

continue on p. 27



Winter spelt planted at Henry Perkins on 9/15/06 (left) and 10/15 (right). The unwilling participant in the picture is about 5'8" tall.

We have been very excited about the opportunities for organic dairy farmers to grow winter grains to reduce the cost of purchased supplements. We will continue to trial both spring and winter grains to try and fine tune organic management practices. Tim Griffin is researching nitrogen management practices for winter grains and alternative methods that organic farmers might be able to use to apply manure to winter grains in the spring to provide some needed nitrogen.

Many of these trials have also been replicated in Vermont under the watchful eyes of Heather Darby. ♦

A Farmer's Breeding Club in Vermont

*Dr. Heather Darby, UVM Extension and
Jack Lazor, Butterworks Farm*

In the spring of 2007, we received a USDA SARE grant to begin building farmer knowledge in the area of plant breeding. Currently there are few grain varieties being developed for organic farmers in the Northeast. Vermont is primarily a dairy state with a major focus on forage crops. Our cool climate and abundant rainfall offer us a unique growing opportunity along with many production challenges. Seed selections for forages and cereal grains are often very limited. Most available varieties are developed in regions with climates, soils, and management techniques that are very different than ours. In addition, those released are genetically homogenous and inbred for uniformity. This has often led to rapid breakdown of the genetic resistance to local diseases. These varieties are also the property of private seed companies and farmers are no longer freely able to save low cost seed as in the past. To address this situation farmers need to gain the technical skills needed to make their own crosses of small grain varieties and to learn how to make selections from their new populations under organic management. Plant breeding is a

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lost art here in New England. There are very few public plant breeders in New England. In fact, the last well known breeder at UVM was Cyrus G. Pringle. Although he is most famous for his extensive botanical collections, Dr. Pringle also made major contributions in wheat breeding during the mid to late 1800s. Interestingly Dr. Pringle was considered a revolutionary in wheat breeding during his time.

As a step towards this revitalization, the goal of this project is to create a Farmer's Breeder Club in Vermont. The organic grain growers of Vermont believe that when farmers again become breeders we will find new satisfaction in our work. We will be able to breed good varieties that fit our farms and to make use of genetically diverse populations that are often more disease resistant than pure lines are. Seed saving with our new varieties will reduce seed costs and bring new seed production enterprises to small farms in the Northeast. Participatory and on-farm breeding efforts have worked all around the world, from the dry Middle East to Africa to Mexico. The Farm Breeder Club of the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society in North Dakota is about to release a new wheat variety that seems well suited to organic farms, and there is every reason to expect success like that in the Northeast too. Since there is so little farmer breeding in New England, we will need to learn our skills from plant breeders around the United States. To start we have developed a wheat breeding project. There is considerable interest in selecting improved varieties to develop wheat of high baking and animal feed quality and suitable for our climate. We are interested in growing and selecting from modern cultivars and other heritage varieties such as Cyrus Pringle's 'Defiance' to develop our own wheat varieties. To acquire "hands-on" breeding skills we recently attended an intensive short course on wheat breeding methods under the supervision of Steve Jones – wheat and cereal breeder at Washington State University. Dr. Heather Darby, Jack Lazor, and Seth Johnson attended the training. Dr. Jones and his students taught us many new skills including how to choose good parent varieties, how to emasculate and pollinate the tiny flowers of small grain plants, and how to move those few seeds from a few potted plants to seed "increase fields" and then to farm

fields. We also met farmers in Washington that are working on their own breeding projects.

Upon returning from the "hands-on" training we are already practicing our new techniques on Vermont ground. In May of 2007, we seeded 19 varieties of spring wheat. The varieties we planted include 3 of Cyrus Pringle's wheat varieties, 5 from the North Dakota State Wheat Breeding Program, 10 from the Washington State Wheat Breeding Program, and 1 modern variety. Ten seeds per variety were planted. Each row represents one variety. The seeds were planted eight inches apart in the row and the rows were one foot apart. This planting scheme was developed to enable us



Heather Darby & Susan Monahan emasculating wheat.

to make our crosses easily. We have emasculated two plants per plot. Emasculating means to remove the male parts of the wheat flower. Once the plants are emasculated a paper bag is used to cover the female flowers. This keeps unwanted pollen away from our plants. These females will be crossed with males (non-emasculated plants) in the next few days. Currently, we are deciding what crosses we would like to make among our 19 varieties.

To determine our crosses we are evaluating the positive and negative characteristics of each wheat variety. This has helped us determine what varieties should be crossed with one another. To make the crosses we will cut the flowering head of the male plant and insert the head into the paper bag protecting the female flower. We will tap pollen from the male flower onto the female plant. If all goes well a seed will form into our first generation progeny. These progeny will be collected and grown out in the season of 2008 and evaluation, selection, and breeding will continue.

In the summer of 2008, we plan to host two field days at Butterworks Farm. The first workshop will teach farmers the wheat breeding skills learned from Washington. A second field day will be held near harvest to teach farmers strategies for selection. Keep your eyes open for more information to come about the Farmer's Breeding Club. If you are interested in learning more about this project contact Heather Darby at (802) 524-6501.

Heather Darby is the UVM Extension Agronomic Specialist. ♦

Commentary

'Commentary' is an open forum for sharing thoughts, opinions, concerns, and whatever else inspires you. Please send your submissions, up to 1,000 words, to the Editor (see page 2 for contact information). The views expressed below are those of the author(s) and in no way represent the official views of NODPA or any of its representatives.

A View from the Summit

By Jim Riddle

In the Colorado Rockies, there are many summits. I had the fortunate opportunity to visit one on June 20-22, with the alluring and provocative name, "The Organic Summit." Organized by New Hope Natural Media and the Organic Farming Research Foundation, the Summit brought together some of the leaders of the expansive organic community for two and a half days of conversations, food, and fun.

Prior to traveling to Colorado, I took part in a virtual summit, called "The Organic Community Summit." The one-hour phone call brought together about 100 organic community leaders, some of whom also attended the event in the Rockies. The issues and concerns raised during both events were strikingly similar, which is both reassuring and troubling. (Reassuring in that the organic farming/public interest groups and business interests largely recognize many of the same challenges; and troubling in that solutions to some of the challenges were not readily apparent at either event.)

Common threads during both events included: the need to expand opportunities for small and medium-sized producers to adopt organic methods and receive sustainable prices; the need for more farmers, period; the necessity of maintaining high standards and effective certification/enforcement systems to maintain organic integrity; the need for adequate funding and support for the National Organic Program; the need for organic agriculture to receive equitable funding for research, data collection, conversion incentives, certification cost-share, and insurance coverage in the 2007 Farm Bill; the need for businesses to invest in domestic organic production; the need to address issues such as food miles, energy use, and climate change; and the need for less heated rhetoric and more cooperation.

The face-to-face Summit had a feature that deserves mention – the fact that the event was not held in conjunction with a trade show or organic conference allowed participants to focus on the issues and conversations at hand. We need more, not less, such opportunities to communicate in this growing sector, but events such as this need to be held at more affordable and accessible venues, to the maximum extent possible.

Unfortunately, certain members of the organic family were under-represented, despite Elaine Lipson's heroic efforts to reach out to representatives of the broad organic community. Some notable "empty chairs" included family farmers (never enough), farm workers, State governments, farm lenders, consumer groups, environmental groups, food coops, pesticide reformers, academics, and Federal agencies, beyond the

NOP and ERS. That said, many diverse viewpoints and interests were represented, and all were treated with respect.

Due to a morning flight, I'm sorry to say I missed Bob Scowcroft and Walter Robb continuing the conversation, again, anew, but I hope more of the challenges faced by the organic sector were discussed, than what I heard at either event, including:

GMO contamination of foundation seed stocks; the need to effectively prevent cloned animals, their progeny and products from entering the organic food system; how to respond to the *local food* frenzy by educating retailers and consumers on the ecological values represented by "organic"; impacts of the corn-for-ethanol craze on the organic sector, society, and the planet; how climate change and water shortages will effect organic agriculture and food production worldwide (and locally); models for sustainable economic relationships between organic producers, processors, distributors, retailers, and consumers; honeybee collapse; how to grow a garden; and mechanisms for robust debates on hot issues such as organic integrity, farm scale, animal confinement, approved ingredients, imports, and enforcement, that are constructive, productive, and strategic.

We are a passionate lot. We need to breathe deeply, whether we're in the Rockies or on the telephone, and choose our words wisely. We have worked hard to be at a point in our maturity where we can even consider ourselves at a "summit" (or two).

From the summit, ridge, island, or valley, we must cultivate, empower, and trust leaders within our community, and look ahead, choosing our paths with wisdom and vision so that others may follow into an organic, ecologically-sound future.

Summit 606 Postscript

While traveling home from the Summit, I received a call from a reporter, informing me that 38 non-organic ingredients had been approved by USDA to be added to the National List. He did not mention that the USDA had approved the substances in an *Interim Final Rule*, which allows for 60 days of public comment. Since returning home, I have become aware of heated rhetoric on this issue, with charges of "Sneak Attack", "Undermining the Organic Standard", etc. I would like to say a few words to put this issue into perspective.

Previous to the Harvey ruling, (which became final on June 9, 2007), certifiers had allowed processors to use non-organic ingredients in up to 5% of an "organic" product, (which must contain at least 95% organic ingredients), if the processor could demonstrate a good faith, but unsuccessful, effort to source the ingredient(s) from organic sources. Hundreds, if not thousands, of non-organic ingredients had been allowed.

If all 38 minor ingredients are added to the National List, it will bring to 43 the number of non-organic ingredients that can be used in "organic" products, if the manufacturer can demonstrate to the certifier that organic forms are not commercially available. This is a significant narrowing from the previous, pre-Harvey situation.

While I have serious concerns with a few of the petitioned items, including hops, fish oil, and "natural" casings, and am

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deeply troubled by the unprecedented 7-day comment period allowed on the *Proposed Final Rule*, I urge my colleagues to direct your concerns to the USDA. To exaggerate and/or misrepresent this issue in the press weakens confidence in organic foods, harms organic farmers, and undermines the growth of this ecologically-sound production system.

I have no problem with passion, and have been known to rock a few boats, when needed. As I said on the “community” call, however, we may not be our own worst enemy, but we certainly have that potential. We have a responsibility to use our passions wisely, and project messages that help build, rather than diminish, our diverse organic community. Enough said. ♦

Scaling the Organic Summitry

Back in April when the so-called “Organic Summit” was first announced, some community members took exception to the blatant exclusiveness of the event. Although ‘summit’ implies a high level meeting of the minds, and this event was subtitled, “renewing the organic conversation,” the gathering was restricted to 250 people able to pay the freight to Boulder, Colorado, along with expensive conference fees and pricey accommodations – all during the busy part of the June farming season. And even though the speakers’ list included a number of longtime grassroots “thought leaders”, major organic coalitions were not included. Rather, most of the participant registry read like a Who’s Who of representatives from the burgeoning organic business world.

Not that there’s anything wrong with business types rubbing shoulders over the organic finger food. It’s just this event was being produced in the name of the organic community – while promising exclusive business access at the top. The clash occurs when pay-to-play, business-as-usual meets the ideals of Organic’s socially responsible business model that is actually desired by consumers...

My posting to O’DAIRY on these issues quickly grew legs, as they say. As it resonated through the community, Mark at Cornucopia picked up the ball and organized a first-ever “community summit” via conference call. No one really had any idea what the response would be until the event itself when callers from all over the country swamped the access line and the phone company’s capacity was rapidly reached. But thanks to the able organization of the event, there was ample opportunity for everyone to have a say.

The keynoters sounded just the right tone. Jim Riddle said organics encompasses a wide range of farmers, activists, academics, business people and regulatory personnel and “in harmony we thrive.” Organic has strong roots and this is a time of great opportunity for the whole community -- as organic agriculture is best positioned to meet today’s huge challenges of climate change, energy use and sustainable food production. These issues were expounded upon by Fred Kirschenmann in the context of the longtime organic movement which grew out of the commitment to soil health principles espoused by the early pioneers. He also referred to the tension the organic community is experiencing with the com-



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(Continued from Commentary, page 34)

mercialization and mainstreaming of movement ideals and the need for the entire industry to move beyond this conflict if organic is to survive as a meaningful label in the marketplace.

As Jim Riddle later noted, there's plenty of summits in the Rockies. But – some are much more accessible than others. (Anyone can drive up Pike's Peak, for instance.) As reports from both summits underscored, a legitimate, inclusive organic conversation is more important than ever for the future of organics. Providing speaker's proceedings from the Boulder event could benefit all, but at this point all that's posted on organicsummit.com is some pictures of the confab. Alternatively, the robust response at the grassroots community's high scale event made it clear that the U.S. organic movement is alive and kicking. So too is a widespread deep concern for the integrity of organic as it grows and encounters business as usual in the marketplace.

Steve Gilman

Ruckytucks Farm, Stillwater, NY.

Response to Commentary in NODPA News

A recent Commentary in *NODPA News* raised questions about the role of private-label in organic dairy and also challenged the business practices and integrity of our company, Aurora Organic Dairy.

As a committed member of the organic dairy community, a supporter of NODPA and a member of FOOD Farmers, we believe ongoing dialogue is good for organic and good for consumers – provided it is fact-based and respectful and that all parties are afforded the opportunity to present their points of view. So we appreciate the opportunity to set the record straight for NODPA members and friends.

At Aurora Organic Dairy, our mission is making high-quality organic milk and butter more affordable and more available to American families. We don't believe organic goodness in the dairy case should be a high-priced luxury that only elites can afford. Organic milk and butter should be on every table, every day, because it's better for American families and for the planet.

This point of view is shared by our customers, the retailers for whom we process and package our products. These same retailers also carry name-brand organic dairy products, in some cases supplied by family-scale farmers, in order to offer consumers more variety and choice in organic dairy.

Retailers are seeking private-label, store-brand organic milk and butter at affordable price points because they know that's what their customer, the American consumer, wants. From an industry standpoint, we also believe having a variety of products and price points available in the dairy case is part of what's driving the explosive growth of organic dairy – growth from which the entire industry benefits.

Regarding our company's practices, the foundation for us is animal welfare. We are very proud of the excellent health of our herds and the outstanding job that our animal care specialists do to ensure that our cows are healthy, comfortable and productive. We employ a metrics-based system that quantifies and measures the most important aspects of animal health, rather than the subjective, unscientific approach taken

on too many organic dairy farms.

We invest heavily in the health and comfort of our animals. Our new state-of-the-art milking system includes sensors that check and record vital signs for each cow during milking. In our new dairies, cows stand or walk on rubber mats that reduce strain on joints and hooves. Our innovative greenfield dairy model, in place at our High Plains Organic Dairy outside Kersey, Colo., and at our new Coldwater West Organic Dairy in the Texas Panhandle, creates an integrated system that sustains the welfare of our animals, people and the land.

We open our animal welfare practices to inspection by an independent 3rd party auditor, Validus Services. NODPA members know that our voluntary participation in the Validus Animal Welfare Review program is not required as part of USDA organic certification, but it helps us ensure that we manage our herd to the highest levels of animal welfare standards.

Another result of the success of Aurora Organic Dairy has been the conversion to organic of thousands of acres of agricultural land. Since Aurora Organic was established in 2003, we have participated in the conversion of more than 50,000 acres of farmland from conventional to organic – either land we farm ourselves, or by providing technical and in some cases financial assistance to our network of farmer partners.

We believe converting farmland and dairies to organic is a good thing because it means fewer tons of synthetic fertilizer and pesticides sprayed on the land, fewer agricultural workers and their families exposed to the associated long-term health effects, better care for animals, reduced use of antibiotics and artificial growth hormones, and a more sustainable approach to stewardship of precious resources like soil and water. While we don't know if it's possible to convert at least 30 percent of U.S. agriculture to organic in the next few years, as envisioned by some in the organic community – we support this goal and we know it will only be reached if all of us, both smaller and larger, work together.

A network of more than 120 family-scale organic farmers in the inter-mountain West plays a critical role in helping Aurora Organic Dairy fulfill this mission. They provide organic pastureland and organic forage and feed crops for our cows, and important animal-care services for our farms.

We believe family-scale organic dairy farming is vitally important, because it helps to sustain agriculture and provides consumers with choices – a variety of organic product options and price points in the dairy case to suit every budget and preference. We want family-scale organic farmers to succeed, which is why we support organizations like NODPA and why we work so hard to share best practices and thought leadership through our support for organic agriculture research at respected institutions such as the University of New Hampshire and Colorado State University.

We are unwilling to apologize for our success in meeting the needs of our customers and the market, so we don't wish to make a point by point response to the NODPA article's attacks on our company. We do want to make one thing clear, however: Aurora Organic Dairy does not own any conventional dairy farms. Our CEO has owned – separately – several conventional dairies in the Southeast, but these have

(Continued on page 38)

Calendar

Pasture Walks with NOFA

July 25, *Williamstown, MA*

August 28, *Ipswich, MA*

September 12, *Lee, MA*

September 26, *Warwick, MA*

October 17, *Hoosick Falls, NY*

NOFA/Mass, USDA NRCS and U. Mass. Ext. have organized this series of pasture walks. Topics include pasture management, organic transition and herd health, forage species, soil fertility, fencing and water systems, and summer and winter grazing. All pasture walks are from 10:00 – 1:00. Please bring your own lunch. Contact NOFA/Mass Organic Dairy www.nofamass.org/programs/organicdairy/, or Kate Rositer at (413) 625-0118.

July 27 – 28, 2007

Whole Farm Health Pasture Walks with Dr. Ann Wells, Seneca County and Chenango County, NY. Dr. Wells is a well-known veterinarian from Arkansas who specializes in animal health practices that integrate soil and plant health as management strategies, and encourages grazing as a foundation principle. She has been highly involved in the development of many of the standards for the National Organic Program as well. **July 27** - David Hoover Farm (dairy), Benton Center (Yates County), and Ros Parks Farm, Seneca Falls (Seneca County). Contact Bill Henning at 315-536-5123 or email wrh6@cornell.edu for times and directions. **July 28** - Tradewinds Farm, Rodney and Janet Aldrich (dairy), Oxford (Chenango County), and Quarry Brook Farm, Adam and Steve Perrin (beef, sheep, pigs, and chickens), Sherburne (Chenango County). Contact Karen Hoffman Sullivan at 607-334-4632 x116 or email karen.sullivan@ny.usda.gov for times and directions.

August 1, 2007

Soil Quality Workshop: PASA & PA Women in Agriculture Field Day, Ron Gargas Farm, Lawrence Co., PA Tour of Ron Gargas organic farm in Volant from 10 am to 3 pm. This field day, co-sponsored by PA-WAGN and PASA, will focus on soil biology and fertility, beneficial soil microorganisms, the use of cover crops and crop rotation to improve soil fertility, and tillage. Registra-

tion is \$15 and includes lunch. Participants may register online at <http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Register9-6.html> or call 814-349-9856 x7.

Organic Dairy Grazing Workshops

August 1, *Westfield, VT*

August 20, *Randolph Center, VT*

September 19, *Hyde Park, VT*

Workshops will cover all aspects of Rotational and Intensive Grazing -- livestock nutrition, paddock design, management strategies, animal health, soil quality and other topics of interest to livestock farmers. Workshops will be by organic dairy and non-dairy livestock farmers and facilitated by NOFA-VT's Dairy & Livestock Technical Assistance Program staff Team (Willie Gibson, Lisa McCrory, Sarah Flack, Dave Rogers). FREE for all organic and transitioning dairy & livestock farmers; others -- \$8 NOFA-VT members, \$12 non-members. Drinks and snacks provided. BYO lunch, contact NOFA-VT, 802-434-4122, info@nofavt.org or www.nofavt.org.

August 2, 2007

Diversified Livestock & Produce: Family Farming at Its Best

Heritage Farm, Bucks Co., PA 10-3pm.

Cost \$15 PASA members, \$25 non-members. www.pasafarming.org or call 814-349-9856 x7.

August 3-4, 2007

Principles of Holistic Livestock Production with Jerry Brunetti & Hue Karreman, Milky Way Farm, Bradford County, PA. Cost \$175 PASA members, \$250 all others. Register at www.pasafarming.org or call 814-349-9856 x7.

August 10 -12, 2007

Annual NOFA Summer Conference *Amherst, MA.* The 33rd Annual NOFA Summer Conference on the organic farmer-friendly campus of Hampshire College. Keynote speakers include Bill McKibben and Hazel Henderson. For more info, see: www.nofamass.org/conferences/s2007

August 17 and 18, 2007

NODPA's 7th Annual Field Days Event and Annual Producer Meeting

See page 18 – 19 and 35, this issue.

August 18, 2007

Value-Added Dairy Farm Tour

Norwich, NY. Dave and Sue Evans will

lead the tour of their farm and discuss the organic dairy products that are processed in their on-farm facility. Registration \$20, includes lunch. Contact: Kelly Miller 607-433-2545, www.cadefarms.org.

August 21, 2007

NOFA-NY Summer Field Days: Organic Fly Control Workshop & Pasture Walk, Bliss NY. Tour Ron Franklin's dairy farm for a pasture walk and lesson on animal foraging behavior from Darrel Emmick, NRCS. You'll also learn about organic fly management from the Cornell Fly Guys, Don Rutz and Keith Waldron. Focus is on identification of flies affecting dairy and beef animals, lifecycles and habits, and methods for both preventing fly populations and dealing with flies once they are established. Barn flies will be the featured topic of discussion. Hosted by Stonyridge Dairy farm, Bliss, NY Register by phone: 585-271-1979 or email: projects@nofany.org.

August 29, 2007

PASA Field Day, Pastured Pork Production

Borderline Farm, Bradford County, PA. 10-3pm. Cost \$15 PASA members, \$25 non-members. Register at www.pasafarming.org or call 814-349-9856 x7.

September 1-2, 2007

Haymaking with Horses and Mules Workshop

Northland Sheep Dairy in central NY. Equipment demonstrations, hands-on opportunities. How to graze your working horses & mules. Cost: \$150 includes farm dinner on Sat. Limited to 15 participants. Contact: Donn Hewes, 607-849-4442, tripletree@frontiernet.net

September 7, 2007

PA-WAGN/FFA Mixer, Gay Rogers' Hameau Farm in Belleville, PA. We'll meet at Gay's farm and travel from there to the Central PA Milk Marketing Cooperative, a goat milk processing plant, in Reedsville, for a tour. Afterward we'll meet back at Hameau Farm for an evening picnic. If you'd like to meet and be inspired by some young women students in agriculture, please join us. Registration is \$15. Participants may register online at wagn.cas.psu.edu/Register9-8.html.

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September 12, 2007

NOFA-NY Summer Field Days: Organic Fly Control Workshop & Pasture Walk, Schenevus, NY. Join us at Sio-bhan Griffin's dairy farm for a pasture walk and lesson on animal foraging behavior from Darrel Emmick, NRCS. You'll also learn about organic fly management from the Cornell Fly Guys, Don Rutz and Keith Waldron. Focus is on identification of flies affecting dairy and beef animals, lifecycles and habits, and methods for both preventing fly populations and dealing with flies once they are established. Pasture flies will be the featured topic of discussion. Hosted by Raindance Farm, Schenevus, NY. Register by phone: 585-271-1979 or email: projects@nofany.org.

September 11-14, 2007

Draft Horse 1 Workshop, Fair Winds Farm, Brattleboro, VT. Workshops will focus on building your skills & confidence in harnessing, hitching, driving & horse management including the basics of safety, handling, foot care, feeding and horse health. Technical driving skill development is achieved with lots of time in the driver's seat and one-on-one instruction. Contact: Fair Winds Farm, Fairwind@sover.net, 802-254-9067.

September 17, 2007, 2-4 pm

Fencing and New Pasture Layout (with Burgers!)
New Portland, ME. Hosted by: Gabe Clark & Amanda Waterhouse-Clark (cell 207-340-0098 or home 207- 629-4272)

Cold Spring Ranch. Gabe and Amanda operate a grass finished beef and contract dairy heifer grazing ranch in North New Portland.

September 21, 22 & 23, 2007

Common Ground Country Fair, Unity, ME Gates open at 9:00 am each day. *Downeast Magazine* calls Common Ground "Maine's most authentic country fair, uniting, as it does, old-time folkways with progressive ideas about living the good life on a fragile planet." www.mofga.org

September 26, 2007

Dairy Alternatives Field Day in York County. If you are considering alternatives to increase your farm profit, come to this field day to tour farms who have already made changes in their farm businesses, including adding pastured meats, eggs, and organic vegetables, getting a raw milk license, and adding on-farm milk bottling. Registration is \$15 and includes lunch. Participants may register online at <http://wagn.cas.psu.edu/Registration9-9.html>

September 27—29, 2007

Natural Products Expo East 2007, Baltimore Convention Center - Baltimore, Md. Natural Products Expos have led the natural and organic products industry for over 25 years. Ranked among the top 100 U.S. trade shows by Tradeshow Week for several years running.

(Continued on page 38)

Net Update



Discussions from the ODAIRY Group

The recent certification suspension of the Case Vander Eyk dairy in California was cause for celebration that certain certifiers and processors were enforcing the NOP standards at last! Discussions focused on concern for integrity in the marketplace, especially when Aurora Dairy posted an overview of their recent farm tour. As we reach out across our differences, can we maintain the organic standards which consumers expect?

Organic grain supplies remain tight, with a rising price. Some are very concerned about the organic grain imported from countries where the certification system is questionable, especially China. Many farmers are searching for ways to become less dependent on the grain mill, including strategies such as maximizing forage value, cross-breeding, growing small grains. There was a good exchange of ideas on direct cut vacuum silage, a practice that is more common in Europe.

Hydrolyzed fish and seaweed emulsion was discussed as a pasture/ hay fertilizer. Used as a foliar feed, sprayed on the early AM or evening, it was recommended to dilute 1 gallon in 5 gallons of water and spray twice or three times per season.

When feeding oats, they are better rolled or crimped.

Whole grain may be fed to calves.

Several producers offered suggestions to the farmer who had a skunk spray in the milkinghouse. Suggestions for neutralizing the odor included a mixture of hydrogen peroxide and baking soda, bleach, coke, ketchup, and pipeline cleaner.

OMILK

FARMERS ONLY—join the OMILK email discussion, send a letter of introduction to: wrightwaydairy@yahoo.com.

NODPA Web Site

www.nodpa.com is the NODPA website. The website is a resource for organic dairy farmers, organic milk producers and consumers interested in organic dairy farming and products. If you want to learn about the dairy side of the National Organic Program; find a certifier, or get some advice on transitioning; checkout the NODPA web site. If you missed an article in past NODPA News, all the back issues are there and downloadable, along with numerous articles on different aspects of organic dairy production. The site has current national news on organic dairies; an organic dairy business directory; a calendar of events; numerous links to processors and other groups, plus information on how to join NODPA and subscribe to ODAIRY. ♦

(Continued from Calendar page 37)

September 29—30, 2007

Northeast Animal-Power Field Days Trade Fair & Conference Fair-Grounds, Tunbridge, VT. The Field Days will be promoting conservation, stewardship, small farms, healthy forests and the roles they play in vital communities. The week-end activities will include presentations, panel discussions, vendor exhibits, working animal presentations, field demonstrations of animal-powered farming and logging equipment, plus an equipment auction. Workshop topics will include grazing management, composting, CSA/Market Gardening, and working with draft animals on the farm and in the woods. For information, or to reserve exhibit space, contact; Carl Russell or Lisa McCrory, Earthwise Farm & Forest, 341 MacIntosh Hill Rd., Randolph, VT 05060. Phone: 802-234-5524, Email: lmccrory@together.net.

For directions and lodging, go to: www.tunbridgefair.com.

October 4, 2007, 6-8 PM,

Late Season Grazing, Fort Kent, ME. Hosted by: The Guimonds: 207- 834-6267, Guimond Farm, Route 11, south of Fort Kent, ME. They have over 100 commercial brood cows that they rotationally graze. The primary topic will be late season grazing. Between land for hay, grain crops, and pasture they farm over 1000 acres.

October 13 -14, 2007

7th Annual Northeast Small Farm and Rural Living Exposition and Trade Show, Ulster County Fairgrounds in New Paltz, New York. The Expo has become a joint effort of the Cornell, Penn State, and Rutgers Cooperative Extension Sys-

tems in cooperation with agribusiness, agricultural agencies, producer and commodity groups and others. Contact: Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County office at (845) 677-8223 lch7@cornell.edu. www.smallfarmexpo.org

November 2-4, 2007

The 2007 Farmer to Farmer Conference the Bethel Inn Bethel, Maine. MOFGA's Farmer to Farmer Conference is known for its intimacy, its in-depth treatment of topics, and its amazing discussions. www.nofamass.org ♦

(Continued from Commentary page 35)

nothing to do with Aurora Organic Dairy and we know of no plans to convert any of them to organic.

Finally, although there's currently an ample supply of organic dairy products, we believe this is temporary and expect to see the supply-demand gap start to widen once again. There is enough room in this growing market for effective, efficient organic dairies and companies of all sizes, and all have a role to play in offering American families the variety and choices they demand.

Once again, we appreciate this opportunity to set the record straight and share our story with NODPA members. We have nothing but the highest regard for NODPA and look forward to continued collaboration that ensures a brighter future for everyone in the organic dairy community.

Clark Driftmier

Senior Vice President of Marketing

Aurora Organic Dairy , Boulder, Colorado

Become a Subscribing Member!

By becoming a subscribing member you will receive NODPA News and help support the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance. NODPA depends on your membership contributions and donations. If you enjoy this newsletter, visit our web page, and benefit from the education and farmer representation that NODPA has been providing, please show your support by making a generous contribution to our efforts.

Note that if you sign up for the NODPA Milk Check- Off, you will be automatically signed up as a NODPA News subscriber.

☐ \$35 to cover NODPA news ☐ \$300 to become a Friend ☐ \$500 to become a Sponsor member

☐ \$100 to become a supporter of NODPA ☐ \$1,000 to become a Patron ☐ \$2,000+ to become a Benefactor

Name: _____ Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Are you a certified organic dairy producer? Yes No

Number of milking cows: _____ Milk buyer: _____

Are you transitioning to organic? Yes No If Yes – proposed date of certification _____

**REGISTRATION: NODPA's 7th ANNUAL FIELD DAYS & PRODUCER MEETING DINNER,
FREUND'S FARM MARKET, AUGUST 17 AND 18, 2007.**

Cost	Friday, August 17th Field Trip and Annual Dinner	Qty.	Total
\$10	Field Trip, suggested donation		
\$25	Dinner, per person		
\$10	Dinner, under age 12		
Free	Transitioning Farm Member		
	Saturday, August 18th Workshops and Field Trip		
\$35	NODPA subscribing member per person		
\$70	Non-member per person		
\$50	NODPA subscribing member farm family		
\$85	Non-member farm family		
	Saturday—Lunch		
\$15	Lunch		
\$35	NODPA Subscribing Membership		
	Total Amount Enclosed		
Pre-register and save! Register after 8/10 add \$5 per meal.			

Name	
Address	
Phone	
Email	

Make checks payable to: **NODPA**

Mail: NODPA c/o Ed Maltby, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342

Phone: 413-772-0444 Fax: 866-554-9483 or email: ednodpa@comcast.net

Pay by credit card: circle card type: Master Card or Visa

Card #: _____ Expiration date: _____



**Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
(NODPA)**

c/o Ed Maltby
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Deerfield, MA 01342

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EMPLOYMENT

Farmer Education Program Coordinator, The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) is hiring a full-time employee to work out of our Richmond, VT office to coordinate our Farmer Education Program and develop a technical assistance program for commercial organic vegetable producers. Seeking an individual with program development expertise, strong administrative skills, and agricultural experience. Responsibilities include: program development and administration; marketing and outreach; and event coordination. Please send a letter of interest, writ-

ing sample, and resume to Enid Wonnacott at: info@nofavt.org - or- PO Box 697 Richmond, VT 05477.

EQUIPMENT

We are relocating to a new farm and the buyers of our place do not want the milking equipment or the silo unloader. Silo unloader is a 16 foot van dale. Rebuilt 2 years ago. Bulk tank is a Sunset tank. 415 gallon. pipeline is 1 1/2 inch. Double 6 milking parlor. Purchased used and never installed. Now we dont need it. Also many other dairy/milking items for sale. Surge milkers, claws, etc. Please call for more information and ask for John. 570-265-4160, Towanda, PA, ment2befarms@epix.net



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