

NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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The Access to Pasture Rule Has Left The USDA Building, But When Will It Return?

**Perhaps within 60 days (September 30th), and definitely
within 90 days (October 30th)**

By Ed Maltby

On July 31st the proposed access to pasture rule was received by the Executive Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for their review on behalf of the White House, which is the usual process followed prior to these rules being made into law. The rule is NOT judged to be economically significant so may not require an 'economic impact analysis,' probably due to its not having a \$100 million annual impact. As it is still considered 'Other-significant,' it will require a 'regulatory flexibility analysis,' probably due to the large number of small businesses affected.

NODPA is working directly with the National

Organic Coalition and Horizon Organic to actively advocate with the administration that the OMB only take 60 days to send the proposed rule back to the USDA National Organic Program (NOP). From there, the document would be put on the Federal Register with a 60-day comment period. It may come out as an interim final rule with a request for comments, which would be implemented immediately, but content could be changed after the comment period, OR it could be a proposed final rule that would be implemented after the comment period. Either way there will be more clarity on interpreting 'access to pasture.'

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Producers Take a Pay Cut as the Companies Fight for Retail Market Share

By Ed Maltby

The beginning of 2008 brought some real changes in pay price after nearly two years without any increase. There was some hope that the companies may have started to listen to the needs of the producers. By May of this year the average Northeast base pay price was \$28.50 with a farmgate price of approximately \$31 when quality, volume and component premiums were added (thank god for a high price for protein!). While this was still \$4 below what NODPA and FOOD Farmers were asking for in November 2007, there was some hope that the companies were listening. All hope that the companies would adopt a responsible attitude to pay price has disappeared and nothing has happened to

address producers' request for an immediate increase because of the rapid increases in fuel, feed and other inputs. Other suppliers have been able to pass on increases in their cost of production, but, when contacted for this article, the companies said, 'they are now planning for 2009,' meaning no further increases in 2008. They have all adopted the same level of irresponsibility and blame circumstances outside of their control - 'we are all suffering,' 'it's the other guy that is cheating/under-pricing/stealing our markets,' 'it's those factory farms.' The leaders of the companies have 'independently' resolved to ignore the producers either by hiding behind their corporate structure or through

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA President

By Kathie Arnold, NODPA President

After a very wet July and early August, we are finally packing away some dry hay as I write this in late August, though still waiting on some fields that have standing water. Thank goodness we have some well drained land and do the majority of our haycrop as either haylage or baleage. It has certainly been a challenging year weather-wise across much of the Northeast. The big question is, how will this challenging crop year (the third year for some) translate for organic dairy farmers surviving the upcoming winter given all the other factors impinging on our businesses—stagnant pay price, high cost of organic grain, and other high input costs.

To help NODPA get a handle on how the situation looks for organic dairy farmers, **we have created a survey** that is included in this issue of NODPA News (page 21). We would greatly appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to fill it out and return it to us. Those results will help NODPA get a better sense of how difficult the current scenario is for farmers and get feedback on what we can do to better serve you.

If at all possible, I would urge you to attend the NODPA Field Days being held October 26-28th in Auburn, NY. We have organized the schedule to have more time for farmer only meetings (Oct. 27 PM and

Oct. 28th AM) where we can discuss heart to heart the issues that are facing us and ways we can move forward in a positive direction. If you can't make the NY meeting, try to come to the NODPA SE Field Days at Arden Landis's farm in southern PA on September 18, 2008, or best of all, attend both events. I feel the current situation is at a crisis point similar to when Horizon Organic forced their New England pay price down by a dollar back in 2001—a situation that birthed NODPA. Our circumstance now is not of an impending farmgate pay price cut, but rather an on-going profit/pay cut because none of the major buyers will increase their pay price to adequately reflect the reality of the rising input costs that we have all experienced.

NODPA realizes the very tight cash flow that farmers are in, so we are making the Field Days registration free to organic dairy farmers and those transitioning, plus subsidizing the cost of food. If you need financial assistance to be able to make the trip, NODPA does have some scholarship money to assist. Please call Ed at 413-772-0444 or email ednodpa@comcast.net to set that up. Your input is very important to us and we want to make sure as many farmers as possible can attend.

Please let us know how your farm is doing and lend your voice on what should be done to make organic dairy farming more viable. Send in the survey and attend the Field Days if you possibly can. Your input and help in setting NODPA's priorities and direction is crucial to our farmer organization. ♦

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA Desk

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Fall is here, and we are looking forward to the southeast Field Day at Arden Landis' farm and NODPA's 8th annual Field Days and Annual Meeting at the end of October in Auburn, New York. I hope as many of you as possible will attend one or both of the events as this is a decisive time for organic dairies and we are looking for guidance from producers about NODPA's future role. To that end, we also have a survey in this edition's center pages for producers to tear out and send in. All results will be kept anonymous so please fill it out. NODPA is the only organization of and for organic dairy producers no matter whom you ship your milk to, so we need your opinions and guidance as to how we can best fulfill the mission of NODPA in these difficult times.

What does NODPA do? I hope at least a few of you can answer that question! Some of what we do is very apparent. We publish the NODPA News six times a year and it currently goes out to 2,000 producers and subscribers by mail and is available at many events, through suppliers, and through supportive businesses. We have recently teamed up with the Midwest Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (MODPA) to cover events, feature farms and relevant production topics for mid-western organic dairies and we will be expanding on that in future issues. We now have a monthly email-newsletter which allows us to report on events, action items and news in a more timely way. We organize Field Days, speak at industry and other conferences, and administer FOOD Farmers (the Federation of Organic Dairy Farmers). NODPA supports and moderates the highly active Odairy list-serve, where topics range from politics to bovine diarrhea, and for the majority of time the information on the listserve is useful, educational and relevant, if highly opinionated. There is just as much activity happening behind the scenes when some topics are being debated on the listserve, which increases dialogue and understanding among all producers.

In the last two years, NODPA has increased its work in Washington DC by joining the National Organic Coalition (NOC), and, sharing representation by a lobbyist is pushing the interests of organic dairy producers and organics in general. This relationship with NOC has allowed NODPA to work with interested processors, principally Horizon Organic, in meetings with the USDA and others to emphasize the necessity of publishing the access to pasture and last third of

gestation proposed rules immediately. Our NOC membership allows us to promote the interests of organic dairy with environmental, consumer and sustainable agricultural organizations on a national level. Other work in DC includes speaking at NOSB meetings (where Kevin Englebert and Dr. Hubert Karreman do such great work) and working directly with the NOP staff to ensure they understand the needs of organic dairy producers.

Central to NODPA's mission is a sustainable pay price and we have devoted many hours to building relationships and holding meetings with processors to ensure that they understand what producers need and why. We have made sure that they understand the economic and emotional stress that producers are under and we regularly provide independent data that highlights the need for both higher pay price and a process for deciding on a pay price that recognizes the unique expenses that organic dairies have. I know that they have heard what we need and, as individuals, appreciate the stress of producers who are trying to make a living, but we have failed badly in getting the increases in pay price that all producers have needed since the beginning of this year.

NODPA has the responsibility of holding to reasonable positions that protect the integrity of the organic seal and the economic future of all organic dairy producers regardless of size, brand or the organizational structure of the processor. We have drawn a line in the sand over pay price, but the 'beach bully' (the processors) keeps erasing the line. George Siemon, CEO for Organic Valley, has been widely quoted as saying that compromise is "just the nature of business," and he is correct. Politics is also the art of compromise and making deals. The nature of compromise and deal-making depends on your starting position and whether you see compromise as a cumulative process or a one-time exception to a position. How long can we wait before we strengthen that line so the 'bully' stubs their toe and decides to respect the 'line' drawn by producers? We may have already waited too long! ♦

Board Members & Representatives			
PENNSYLVANIA Arden Landis, State Rep 667 Puseyville Rd. Kirkwood, PA 17536 C2graz@epix.net Phone: 717-529-6644 Fax: 717-529-3911	Jim Gardiner, Board Member 2549 State Hwy 26 Otselic, NY 13072 herbswork4u@citlink.net Phone: 315-653-7819	MASSACHUSETTS Morvan Allen, State Rep Maple Shade Farm Inc. 229 Hewins St Sheffield, MA 01257 Phone: 413-229-6018 MAINE Henry Perkins, Treasurer Box 156 Bog Rd. Albion, ME 04910 bullridge@uninet.net Phone: 207-437-9279	Tony Azevedo, WODPA President 22368 W. 2nd Ave Stevinson CA 95374 doubletaces@earthlink.net Phone: 209-634-0187 Fax: 209-632-1965
Dave Johnson, Vice President 1254 Black Creek Rd Liberty, PA 16930 provident@epix.net Phone: 570-324-2285	Siobhan Griffin, State Rep 2518 Co. Hwy 35 Schnevus, NY 12155 raindance@baka.com Phone: 607-286-9362	NODPA STAFF NODPA Executive Director Ed Maltby 30 Keets Rd Deerfield, MA 01342 ednodpa@comcast.net Phone: 413-772-0444 Fax: 866-554-9483	
Roman Stoltzfoos, State Rep Spring Wood Organic Farm 1143 Gap Rd Kinzers, PA, 17535 romans@epix.net Phone: 610-593-2415	John Stoltzfus, State Rep 1553 Hesselton Gully Rd. Whitesville, NY 14897 jts tribe@yahoo.com Phone: 607-356-3272	Steven Russell, Board Member RR2 Box 5660 Winslow, ME 04901 jwinrussel@adelphia.net Phone: 207-872-6533	Newsletter and Web Editor Lisa McCrory 341 Macintosh Hill Rd. Randolph, VT 05060 lmccrory@together.net Phone: 802-234-5524 Fax: 802-234-6462
Rodney Martin, State Rep Bridge View Dairy 5158 Forge Rd Oxford, PA 19363 bridgeviewdairy@juno.com Phone: 717-529-2720	Dana Sgrecci, State Rep 4994 Halpin Rd. Odessa, NY 14869 sgrecci9@aol.com Phone: 607-594-4169	Steve Morrison, State Rep 159 Atkinson Rd Charleston, ME 04422 smorrison@midmaine.com Phone: 207-285-7085 Fax: 207-285-0128	Newsletter Editors Liz Bawden 119 Factory Rd. Hammond, NY 13646 bawden@cit-tele.com Phone: 315-324-6926
NEW YORK Kathie Arnold, Board President Policy Committee Chair 3175 NYS Rt. 13 Truxton, NY 13158 randkarnold1@juno.com Phone: 607-842-6631 Fax: 607-842-6557	VERMONT Craig Russell, Board Member Brotherly Farm LLC 570 Lavender Road Brookfield, VT 05036 crussell@bishca.state.vt.us Phone: 802- 272-7726	Aaron Bell, State Rep Tide Mill Organic Farm 91 Tide Mill Road, Edmunds, Maine 04628 Phone: 207-733-2551 eatlocal@hughes.net www.tidemillorganicfarm.com	Darlene Coehoorn Viewpoint Acres Farm N5878 Hwy C Rosendale, WI 54874 viewpoint@dotnet.com Phone: 920-921-5541
Liz Bawden, Secretary 119 Factory Rd. Hammond, NY 13646 bawden@cit-tele.com Phone: 315-324-6926	Beverly Rutter, State Rep 1450 Middle Rd. Bridport, VT 05734 brutter@gmavt.net Phone: 802-758-2615	AT LARGE NODPA BOARD MEMBERS Ed Zimba, MODPA Board Member Zimba Dairy 7995 Mushroom Rd DeFord, MI 48729 zimbadairy@tband.net Phone: 989-872-2680	Webmaster/Newsletter Layout Chris Hill Media 368 West Duval Street Philadelphia, PA 19144 Phone: 215-843-5704 chris@chrishillmedia.com
	CONNECTICUT Rick Segalla, Board Member 96 Allyndale Rd. Canaan, CT 06018 mocow@earthlink.net Phone: 860-824-0241	Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer 3253 150th Ave Glenwood City, WI 54013 bdrinkman@hotmail.com Phone: 715-265-4631	



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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

New “Sustainable” Standards Raise Concerns

By Samuel Fromartz

“Sustainable” might be one of the most-used buzzwords in agriculture these days, but what does it actually mean? To answer that question -- and perhaps own the term itself -- a group has convened to set up standards that define sustainable food, fiber and fuel.

This effort, which began last year at the behest of a single certification company, has caused some trepidation in sustainable agriculture circles, since many groups use the term and don’t want it appropriated.

Like a sought-after goal or deep philosophy, sustainability has been less about the specific practices than the end point itself which broadly amounts to sustaining the planet for generations to come.

But if this term gets boxed in by standards, what goes in and what’s left out and who ultimately makes those calls? More importantly, how will a “sustainable” label, if it ever gets to that point, complement or compete with “organic”?

So far, no one has very good answers to those questions. But the effort right now is being attacked from sustainable agriculture groups with a long presence in the field and from more conventional interests concerned that the draft standards are too organic and ban genetically modified crops.

The Background

Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), a certification juggernaut based in Emeryville, California, began pushing for the adoption of a draft sustainable standard in 2007. SCS has a long history of creating standards and is currently using the term certified “sustainable choice” for furniture and carpet makers. In addition, it created the VeraFlora label at the behest of Latin American producers, to certify sustainable practices in the floral industry, including labor standards. Two decades ago it launched the NutriClean label to certify pesticide free claims, though Consumer Reports notes that the label does not mean free of pesticides -- only that it has residues below the level set by Nutriclean.

In this recent effort, the standards are being drawn up under the auspices of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), which governs industrial standards across the board. The Leonardo Academy in Madison, Wisconsin, which is ANSI accredited, is organizing the work.

Among the goals, the standards aim to:

- increase total terrestrial carbon sequestration on agricultural soils by a goal of 25% over the next 25 years;
- increase the overall energy efficiency of agricultural systems by up to 30% by 2025;
- reduce net greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural systems, including production, distribution and sales, by up to 30% by 2025;
- encourage and increase local bio-regional production and consumption of agricultural products;

Notably, the standards do not cover any aspect of livestock or dairy production, which might immediately raise issues for advocates of sustainable mixed farming systems. It’s also a notable omission given the methane emissions--a potent greenhouse gas--from farm animals.

What groups like the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture are concerned about is whether the standard is needed in the first place, since so many already exist. And how wide will the representation of farmers, ranchers and NGOs (non-profit organizations) be on the standards committee? Although agricultural companies are represented, so far there are no individual farmers.

“... these efforts lack balanced input from the sustainable agriculture community or safeguards for rigorous verification and enforcement and they often emphasize factors inappropriate to the very nature of sustainable agriculture,” an email from the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture said.

Although the draft standards ban GMOs at this point and refer to organic as “best practice” in certain instances, they are not entirely organic. Others wonder how long the non-GMO language will last, especially with groups like the American Soybean Association, and National Corn Growers Association represented on the standards committee.

“At this point it’s pretty loosely worded and some practices prohibited by organic are allowed in the draft,” pointed out Natalie Reitman-White, sustainability coordinator for Organically Grown Co., a Pacific Northwest organic produce distributor.

Take crop production, for example. The draft standards state: “The Producer is required to apply least toxic pest and disease management and control systems, integrating organic practices as these are proven to be practical, with organic conversion time-frames to be determined on a per crop, per region basis.”

This will clearly widen the tent to include those farmers practicing integrated pest management, but critics worry that such wording will end up watering down, supplanting or causing confusion about the difference between organic and sustainable methods.

Reitman-White thinks that sustainable should amount to an “organic and beyond” designation, which defines energy use, packaging and water resources, but doesn’t weaken the requirements of organic standards.

Some proponents think SCS is trying to bring some coherence to a vague term like sustainability, which if left undefined will become the fastest path to greenwashing.

“Companies are already using the term, marketing products with the label, but it has no meaning,” said Katherine DiMatteo, a consultant and former executive director of the Organic Trade Association. “So I think there was an opportunity to try and define what it meant.”

As to those left out of the process, she points out that many NGOs had an opportunity to become part of the process but chose not to join in. Reitman-White says that these groups didn’t want to legitimize a questionable process by signing up.

Some did, however, choose to become part of the process, including Environmental Working Group, Natural Resources Defense

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

What’s up with Corn and Forage?

We have had many positive predictions from the USDA about conventional feed yields which may also apply to organic crops (so long as we don’t have an early frost, natural disaster, etc.) but I’m writing this a few days before hurricane Gustav is projected to hit land which typifies how difficult it is to forecast crop yields too far in advance as crops can be ruined overnight and speculation can drive prices to unrealistic levels.

What we do know is that:

- There was no significant increase nationally in the number of acres planted to organic grain and forage crops in 2008.
- Reports from the Upper Midwest suggest that organic grain and feedstuff prices were steady to weaker on moderate demand and offerings, with new crop feed grade corn traded from \$10.00 to \$10.95 per bushel. On the Chicago market organic feed grade soybeans have dropped to around \$24 per bushel.
- The weather in the northeast ensured that there will be a great variation in the quality of forage as the weather was wetter and unpredictable, so a lot of second cut was harvested late, and
- There has been a lot more interest in growing small grains and forage crops for lengthening the grazing season as producers accept that high grain prices are here to stay.

The bottom line is probably that grain prices will not drop very much, which is good for the organic grain growers as they are, at last, receiving a reasonable price for their product. Depending on the demand for grain from the rapidly expanding organic poultry industry, price and availability of feed may stabilize this winter but availability of quality grains may be the biggest problem.


We regularly update the NODPA website with information on the price of corn plus classified ads for forage and corn: www.nodpa.com. ♦

Upper Midwest Prices: All prices FOB price per bushel* except where stated (trucking cost needs to be added)

	8/23/08	July 08	June 08	May 08	2nd Quarter 2008
Feed Grade Corn	10.86	10.92	10.82	10.49	10.44
Food Grade Soybeans	29.97	30.56		29.83	29.28
Feed Grade Soybeans	29.87	26.44	28.63	24.00	26.73
Feed Grade Oats	4.82	6.00			
Feed Grade Barley	7.20		8.71		8.11
Food Grade Wheat	18.59	17.44			
Feed Grade Wheat	16.27	15.86			15.36
Feed Grade Rye	10.85				12.15
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*Test weights have been averaging 57 lbs per bushel for corn, 32lb for oats.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

The Price of a Good Night's Sleep:

Why AGR-Lite insurance is in the Gardens of Eagan farm budget.

By Atina Diffley

This article was first printed in the January- February 2008 issue of the Organic Broadcaster, published by the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service

Often farmers joke about the “gamble” involved with their operations. Perhaps you’ve heard the one about the farmer who won the lottery and farmed until it was gone or the farmer who had a gambling addiction – his own farm. But, it’s not a comic story that farmers deal with an endless plethora of risks and perils that far too often snag farmers on the hook of financial instability.

The risk is often more complex than a single event such as a drought or other major event, either natural or manmade. It is often subtle and quiet, an everyday situation that grows in layers as the operation responds to external forces. No two people or farm situations carry exactly the same types or amount of risk. And no two people or farming operations possess the same capacity to tolerate nor the ability to manage and mitigate risk.

Many farmers and their families aren’t even aware of the magnitude of the risk they face. As farmers gain deeper understanding of their operations and as they mature and “get used” to risk, they often discover they have been carrying huge risk for many years and that risk has become a stress with prospects even more damaging than the risk itself.

A number of years ago in our annual winter farm planning meeting the concept of risk management planning came to the forefront of our attention. We printed out a spreadsheet and wrote all the risks we face on one side of the paper and in the next column wrote what farm systems we use or could develop to mitigate the risk.

While this was a very valuable planning tool, and we were able to drastically reduce the likelihood of disaster with good farm system planning, there were still major risk factors we knew our farm would always be vulnerable to. A cold wet spring delaying planting, the dreaded hail storm in late July, untimely frost; we wished we could buy adequate crop insurance. But no

Martin and I would have made a great AGR-Lite insurance commercial this past growing season in late-July when the dreaded, heart in the stomach, ping-ping of hail on metal woke us up in the middle of the night.

We both bolted upright in bed – saying, OH NO! HAIL! @%#&#* Then I said, “We bought the AGR-Lite”.

such product existed for organic vegetable producers.

Without reliable insurance we wrote frugal budgets knowing that it was very possible we could get caught with all our spring

start-up money out in the field and no crop income to repay it. The more established our farm became, the less willing we were to take the risk of losing what we’d built up. The stress of risk had, over time, become a risk of its own.

Introducing AGR-Lite Starting with the 2007 growing season, in Minnesota and Wisconsin, most farm-raised crops, animals and animal product are now eligible for Adjusted Gross Revenue-Lite (AGR-Lite), a whole-farm revenue protection plan of insurance. The plan provides protection insurance against loss of revenue

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- Uses a producer’s five-year historical farm average revenue reported on the IRS 1040 Schedule F tax form, other IRS farm tax forms and annual farm report as a base to provide a level of guaranteed revenue.
- Provides insurance coverage for multiple agricultural commodities in one insurance product; and
- Establishes revenue as a common denominator for the insurance of all agricultural commodities.

The government will pay a portion of the premium for the AGR-Lite policy that equals 48%, 55% or 59% depending on the level of coverage chosen. Sales closing date is March 15th. Cancellation date for all existing policies is January 31st.

When this information first crossed my desk I thought it looked too good to be true. After 34 years of farming we could suddenly have a guaranteed gross income! One disaster in 25 years would

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Cold Brook Farm, Poland, NY

Horizon Organic® joins with the Federation of Organic Dairy Farmers in support of regulatory changes to require that all dairy cows be raised organically from the last third of gestation.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

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pay our premiums for those 25 years. After a quick study of our farm's financial history I decided I was on the winning side of those odds. Then I added the economic stability and budget-planning tool that guaranteed gross revenue would provide the farm and the increasingly risky weather extremes that global climate change has brought and suddenly it didn't look too expensive, I was signing the policy paper.

For us having AGR-Lite insurance means that we can now write a very accurate farm budget including our own salary. The insurance premium goes into the budget right along with all the other farm expenses. We know how much money we can spend on labor, inputs and capitalization projects based on knowing that our farm income will at a minimum be the amount of coverage we purchased. This revolutionized our farm planning and management and drastically reduced our financial risks. Questions like, can we afford to purchase a desired piece of equipment, became easy to answer. We no longer need to tiptoe through the majority of the season until the books finally say we've successfully gotten through the danger zone, only to go back on tiptoe again a month later as the money flow reverses out for the next seasons start-up.

To be eligible for AGR-Lite coverage, a producer must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or resident;
- File a calendar year or fiscal year farm tax return;
- Produce agricultural commodities primarily in counties where AGR-Lite is available. (Includes income from contiguous counties);
- Have liability not exceeding \$1 million (less than \$2,051,282 in approved gross income);
- Have had the same tax entity for 7 years (filed 5 consecutive years of Schedule F tax forms, plus previous year and insurance year) unless a change in tax entity is reviewed and approved by the insurance provider;
- Have no more than 50 percent of total revenue from commodities purchased for resale; and
- Have no more than 83.35 percent of total revenue from potatoes.

For 2008 AGR-Lite is available in Alabama, Alaska, (selected counties), Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York (selected counties), North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania (except Philadelphia County),

Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

If AGR-Lite is not offered in your state and you would like it to be, contact your regional Risk Management Agency (RMA)/ Send them a letter telling them about your farm operation and why you would like to be able to purchase AGR-Lite in your state. (And organize other farmers in you state to do the same).

Martin and I would have made a great AGR-Lite insurance commercial this past growing season in late-July when the dreaded, heart in the stomach, ping-ping of hail on metal woke us up in the middle of the night. We know from first hand experience how many years it can take to recoup hailstorm losses. It took us twelve years to pay back the start-up loan from our first hailstorm disaster. (1976 hail paid off in 1988) Ironically, we finally paid it off with 1988 drought disaster relief.

We both bolted upright in bed – saying, OH NO! HAIL! @%#&#*

Then I said, “We bought the AGR-Lite”.

Martin said, “Hey, maybe we'll get completely hailed out and can spend August in Montana!”

I replied, “Oh yeah, let's hope!”

And we went right back to sleep.

The hail stopped. We spent August in the fields and pack sheds, not the mountains. Maybe next time. Despite a very challenging season, 2007 ended as our best season yet. In December, when it was time to write the 2007 premium check, I sat back for one moment and asked myself, “We didn't use this insurance in 2007, we made out just fine on our own. Do we need to buy it again for 08?”

The answer was a definite, “YES”.

For more information contact your regional Risk Management Agency Office.

Atina Diffley farms at the Gardens of Eagan, a fifth generation family farm, just south of the Twin Cities in MN. For news about exciting changes at GOE, see their webpage at www.gardensofeagan.com. ♦



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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NODPA Joins National Public Education Campaign about Food and Climate Change

By Meredith Niles, Cool Foods Campaign Coordinator, The Center for Food Safety

When Ed Maltby contacted me a few weeks ago to tell me that NODPA was signing onto the Cool Foods Campaign, I was thrilled to welcome him, and now you. The Cool Foods Campaign is a national public education initiative to inform people about the impact of their food choices on global warming and the environment, and give them the resources to reduce their “FoodPrint”. The Campaign has developed the Cool Foods Pledge as a way for organizations, businesses, farms, schools and individuals to commit to changing the way they eat. The Pledge advocates for eating foods that are organic, seasonal and local, and less processed and packaged. Crucial to this message is the importance for the public to reduce their consumption of conventional meat and dairy and instead purchase organic, local and grass-fed products. The Campaign will also be working with food distributors to encourage increased purchasing of “cool foods”. NODPA’s signature to the Campaign

To sign on to the Cool Foods Pledge and find out more about the Cool Foods Campaign or the Center for Food Safety, see their web sites at www.coolfoodscampaign.org and www.centerforfoodsafety.org.

demonstrates their continual commitment to the environment by providing high-quality organic dairy products to consumers who are continually demanding the best products for their own health and the earth.

Conventional dairy production can have a terrible impact on the environment. Confined dairy cattle fed diets of conventional pesticide-laden feed crops are producing significant and unnecessary amounts of methane and vast quantities of manure. On factory farms, where manure is usually pooled into pits, lagoons or holding tanks, it is often unutilized because of its sheer volume and will continue to produce polluting greenhouse gas emissions. Yet, as you all clearly know, dairy production does not have to be this way. Organic and pasture-based dairy production can reduce methane and other greenhouse gas emissions and reduce fossil fuel inputs. As oil prices continue to rise, organic and grass-fed production systems are

continued on next page

clearly becoming the key to a truly sustainable future of food.

In increasing numbers annually, we are seeing that the public wants to eat and drink foods that are organic for the benefit of their own health and the health of the environment. Organic sales have consistently climbed upwards of 20% annually for several years and milk is consistently one of the top organic products purchased. Farmers markets throughout the United States increased 18% between 2004 and 2006 as consumers sought to purchase their food more locally from farmers and farms they could trust. And most recently, it appears that Monsanto has chosen to sell its division involved in developing and selling Posilac- recombinant bovine growth hormone- as supermarkets, restaurants and the public widely rejected milk from cows injected with rBGH.

The key to our farming future is certainly in the hands of family farms and localized production systems focused on organic and beyond agriculture. Only through these methods will we be able to combat climate change, preserve biodiversity and provide healthy food that is best for the environment and human health. I thank each and every one of you for continuing to farm in this way, with an eye to tomorrow and our precious natural resources. I applaud NODPA for signing onto the Campaign and encourage all NODPA farms to demonstrate their commitment to organic production and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture by signing the Cool Foods Pledge. ♦

Meredith Niles is the Coordinator of the Cool Foods Campaign, a national initiative of the CornerStone Campaign and the Center for Food Safety, a non-profit public interest and environmental advocacy organization which challenges harmful food production technologies and promotes organic and other sustainable alternatives. Meredith writes extensively about agriculture, food, and climate change in a weekly guest column for Grist Environmental News and has contributed to National Public Radio, Environmental News Network and Political Affairs, among other outlets. Previously she worked for the U.S. State Department in International HIV/AIDS assistance and holds a B.A. from the Catholic University of America in politics with honors in environmental studies. She can be reached at Meredith@icta.org.

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SAVE THE DATE!

NODPA’s 1st Southeast
Regional Field Day
and Arden and Caroline Landis’
Retirement Celebration

Thursday, September 18, 2008, 9:30 am to 3 pm

“Dream big! I always wanted to dairy from the time I worked on a dairy farm as a teenage boy for 3 years,” says Arden Landis, “In 1988 when I quit trucking to go into dairy, our farm was a real family farm and a great place for teaching our children how to work and work together.”

Arden Landis and his wife Caroline will host NODPA’s first Southeast Regional Field Day at their Green Pastures Farm at 667 Puseyville Road, Kirkwood, PA 17536. The Landis’ have been farming their 115 grazeable acres since 1995 and currently have 100 milking cows that are milked through a 16 unit swing parlor that they installed in 2000. In 1995, they started the organic certification process and have been shipping organic milk to Horizon Organic since July, 1999.

Arden and Caroline will welcome all dairy producers to their farm with refreshments at 9:30 on Thursday morning, September 18th, and at 10:00 am Arden will lead a tour of the farm. At noon, there will be a locally produced organic meal: barbequed organic chicken, parsley & brown butter potatoes, baked beans, macaroni salad, apple crisp and gelato with fresh organic milk, coffee, tea, and juices.

After the meal, there will be an update from NODPA Executive Director Ed Maltby about the state of the organic dairy industry, and



the day will culminate with a round table discussion led by a panel of experienced organic dairy producers, including Roman Stoltzfoos, Rodney Martin, Dave Johnson, Forrest Stricker, and Rob Moore.

There will be no charge to dairy producers who pre-register by Monday, September 15th with a \$10 charge at the door for those dairy producers that do not pre-register. Non dairy producers will be charged \$15. Those wishing to attend can call NODPA’s toll-free number to pre-register: 1-888-308-9706 and if there are any questions, please call Ed Maltby, 413-772-0444, or email at ednodpa@comcast.com or go to www.nodpa.com

The following sponsors generously provided monetary support and product donations to allow us to provide this event at no cost to dairy producers: Horizon Organic, Organic Cow, Organic Valley, Lancaster Organic Farming Cooperative, Lancaster Grazers, and Dairymaster. ♦

ADVANCE NOTICE!

National Organic Action Plan Summit
February 25-26, 2009, LaCrosse, Wisconsin

Just prior to the country’s largest organic farming conference -- the Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) Organic Farming Conference

The National Organic Action Plan (NOAP) is a collaborative civil society initiative engaging organic community participants across the country. The NOAP project has been traveling the United States during the past 2 years seeking input from a broad range of the organic grassroots community – farmers/producers, consumers, trade, urban and rural groups, and industry – to articulate their vision for the future of organic food and farming in the next decades.

The National Organic Action Plan will establish a broad set of goals for organic agriculture over the next decade. It will also identify potential mechanisms for meeting those goals and benchmarks for evaluating progress. The scope and vision could include both governmental and non-governmental goals as to where organic should go and how to get there, from federal policy priorities for Organic, to acreage and sales goals for the future. These

goals would incorporate quantitative and qualitative measures to accurately track the substantial societal benefits provided by organic agriculture.

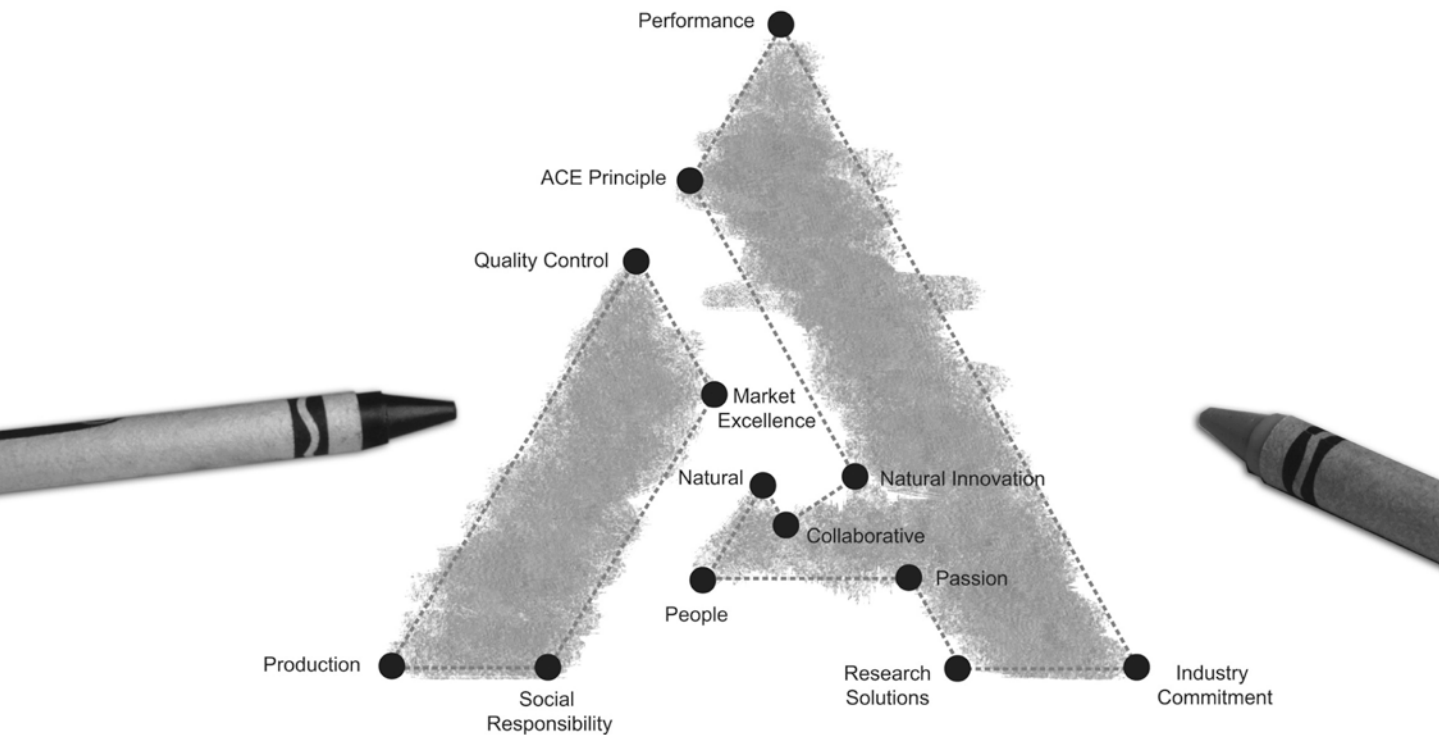
In February of 2009, a 2-day Summit will be held to review the results of the national input, and work from the draft plan currently being developed to build consensus for the Plan. This Plan can then be used by policy advocates, such as the National Organic Coalition in advancing federal policy objectives in Washington; state and local governments to work on other policy initiatives; and consumers, retailers and industry to advance innovative marketplace goals to ensure the integrity of organic in their local arena.

The active participation of a broad spectrum of organizational and individual leadership within the organic community is a core guiding principle of the NOAP process. As such, Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA (RAFI) and our NOAP partners are committed to finding resources for a diversity of voices to attend the Summit by establishing scholarship opportunities for those that want to attend but do not have sufficient resources.

For more information contact:

Liana Hoodes [p: 845-744-2304; Liana@hvc.rr.com] or Michael Sligh [msligh@rafiusa.org]

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Strategies for Extending the Grazing Season

By Dr. Heather Darby, UVM Extension Agronomist

Given the high price of grain, fuel, and forage it is logical to hope for a longer than normal grazing season. However, our traditional pastures generally become less productive both yield and quality wise in early fall. Thankfully, there are several strategies that can be employed to extend the grazing season in the Northeast. Stockpiling or growing fall forage crops can extend the season 60 to 90 days into the fall and even early winter.

Stockpiling Forage

Stockpiled forage is a practice that allows the forage to grow and accumulate for use at a later time. Essentially cool season forages are left to grow for the last 60-70 days of the growing season. This 70 day period can be achieved by terminating summer grazing or taking a last cut of hay in late July. The forage that grows during the autumn months is leafy and high in nutrition. All cool season grasses and legumes can be stockpiled however some species are considered more favorable than others. Tall fescue and birdsfoot trefoil are considered excellent candidates for stockpiled forage.

These two species are advantageous to the practice because they continue to grow in the fall and do not lose leaves as readily after a frost. If tall fescue is planted for grazing, make sure to purchase an endophyte free variety. Tall fescue has been shown to produce over a ton of dry matter per acre in the fall compared to half a ton from other cool season grasses. Yields can be increased by adding manure or nitrogen fertilizers after the last grazing or hay harvest. Since August and September are considered to be pasture shortage months it may not be realistic to set aside a portion of the summer pasture. Don't fret; there are other options to extending the grazing season.

Fall Annuals for Grazing

There are several forage species that are not as adversely impacted by the cool fall weather and short day length. The annual forages that grow best in the fall are small grains and forage brassica crops. Winter cereal crops such as wheat, barley, triticale, or rye can provide late season grazing opportunities. The grains should be planted in early to mid August at a seeding rate of 150 lbs/acre. Cereal grains are not heavy feeders but still require adequate levels of fertility. Manure will be able to cover the fertility needs of the small grains. Although not well documented, there maybe a yield and quality benefit to mixing the various cereal crops. Grazing should be available in October/November and again in the early spring. Moderate grazing pressure will allow for the crop to recover and produce more forage in the spring. Small grains pasture is high in protein and low in fiber during the fall

months. Crude protein levels range from 15 to 34% of dry matter.

Forage brassica is another highly productive fall annual for grazing. The standard brassica crops include turnips, rutabaga, kale, and rape. Turnip and rape is the shortest season brassica crops. Livestock can graze the stems, leaves and roots of turnips while just the stems and leaves of the rape. The crop will usually be ready to graze about 65-80 days after planting. Therefore a planting date in late July through early August would be preferable.

The crop grows best during periods of low temperature of 40 to 60 degrees F. Brassica crops grow best on fertile and slightly acid soils (5.3-6.8 pH). The crop does not grow well on poorly drained soils with high clay content. Turnip seed should be planted at 1.5 lbs per acre and larger rapeseed at 3-4 lbs per acre. The seed should be planted no more than on-half inch deep in row 6 to 8 inches apart.

Brassica crops are heavy feeders of nitrogen. Therefore an application of manure, legume plow down, or 100 lbs/acre of nitrogen will be required per acre. Phosphorus and potassium requirements are similar to small grains.

Strip grazing small areas of brassica provides the most efficient utilization of the crop. This keeps the forage from becoming trampled and wasted. Grazing rape down to 6 inches allows rapid re-growth and may be re-grazed in as few as four weeks. Turnips can also be grazed twice but requires more management. During the first grazing only the tops of the turnips should be grazed.

Make sure to leave 6 inches of stubble on the top of the turnip. During the second grazing, the cows can graze both the turnip tops and the roots. Typical dry matter yields obtained in numerous university and farm trials are 3-5 tons per acre of dry matter.

Brassica crops should be considered as "concentrates" rather than "forage" when planning the animal's nutritional needs. Above-ground parts of brassica crops normally contain 20 to 25 percent crude protein, 65 to 80 percent in vitro digestible dry matter, and low fiber content. The roots contain 10 to 14 percent crude protein and 80 to 85 percent in vitro digestible dry matter. Brassica crops can produce amounts of digestible energy per acre equivalent to corn yielding 115 bushel per acre. Since the crop contains a high concentration of protein and digestible nutrients, brassica crops should not constitute more than 75 percent of the animal's diet. The diet should be supplemented with hay or grass pastures.

It is always a good idea to introduce grazing animals to brassica pastures slowly. This will reduce chances of health disorders associated with these types of crops.

If you are looking to extend the grazing system, there are definitely options that can provide high yield and quality feed. If you can not decide what fall annual to plant...try mixing it up! Some folks like to combine the cereal grains with the brassica crops. A combination of winter wheat or oats (60 lbs/acre) seeded with turnips (5 lbs/acre) can provide a high quality combination of fiber, protein, and digestible energy! ♦

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NODPA's 8th Annual Field Days Event and Annual Producer Meeting

From 5 pm on Sunday October 26th to noon on Tuesday October 28th

Holiday Inn - Auburn, 75 North Street, Auburn, NY 13021 (Finger Lakes Region)

This year's event is sponsored by Horizon Organic, Organic Cow, Lakeview Organic Grain, NOFA New York Inc, NOFA New York Certified Organic, LLC, Organic Dairy Farmers Cooperative and Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative

This year's NODPA Field Days are at a different time of year as we have heard from many of you that the mid-August date conflicts with other commitments. We have also decided to move away from a farm based venue and schedule the meeting just prior to the Understanding Organics: Live-stock Management and Health Conference for veterinarians, extension educators and agri-service personnel to facilitate some networking between the different participants. We are also recognizing the extreme financial hardship that organic dairy producers are suffering this year and are offering free registration to organic dairy producers and are working with our sponsors to subsidize the cost of the food.

The event will start on Sunday evening, October 26th at 5:00 pm with the trade show and time to socialize with NODPA Board members, NODPA state representatives and friends over snacks and cash bar in McMurphy's Authentic Irish Pub, at the Holiday Inn. The NODPA Board and State Reps will be meeting all day on Sunday to discuss plans for the future of NODPA and this time will be a great opportunity to have informal discussions about how you view the future of NODPA.

Conference registration and continental breakfast buffet will be from 7:30 -9:00 am on Monday, October 27th. At 9:00 am on Monday, NODPA's Board President, Kathie Arnold, will welcome everyone to the Field Days and introduce Board members and state representatives. Kathie's welcome will be followed by our first presentation: **Threat or Opportunity - Insights into the Organic Dairy Retail Market**, with a special emphasis on store brand milk. Clark Driftmier, President of the Fairhaven Strategy Group, who has over 25 years of management experience in the natural and organic products industry, will give his views on the future of the organic retail market and the need for a unified approach to solving the difficulties and problems in the organic dairy market. He has participated in the start-up of several natural and organic companies, including Pet Promise natural pet food and Aurora Organic Dairy. Clark has served as Senior Vice President of Marketing at Horizon Organic Holdings, Inc., Vice President of Marketing for Small Planet Foods, and marketing manager for Ralston Purina Company.

At 10:30 am, there will be a moderated discussion as a panel of organic dairy producers will be **Setting the National Scene for Producers** - a discussion on the future of organic dairy in the US. The panel will include the following producers:

- **Arden Nelson**, Vice President of WODPA, operates a certi-

fied organic dairy, cheesemaking and bottling facility with his wife, Dr. Meg Cattell, in Windsor, CO.

- **Darlene Coehoorn**, who is MODPA president, a member of the MOSES Board of Directors, and a dairy farmer from Rosendale, Wisconsin. With her husband, Dan, they have a 50-cow organic dairy, and raise about 500 acres of organic hay and diverse crops, including corn, soybeans, wheat, barley, rye and oats, and sweet corn and peas as canning crops.
- **Craig Russell** (NODPA Board member), who with his wife Angela own 15 acres and rent their dairy farm from Craig's father, which includes the barns plus 40 acres in Brookfield VT. Craig started organically certified production with their 60+ milking cows approximately two years ago.
- **Ed Zimba**, who with his wife Melanie have farmed over 2,000 acres organically near Deford, MI, since the early 1990's, and they milk over 300 cows.
- **Jerome Walker**, who is a third generation farmer from Franklinton, LA. Jerome and three other producers started by selling their organic milk directly to Publix supermarket and now receive a farmgate price of \$35.75, but their contract with Publix is threatened by other processors.

This discussion will be followed by a presentation from **Retail Milk Buyers** who will talk about buying organic milk and the factors that influence their decision- making.

A lunch of Heartland Pot Roast will be served at noon, at which time we will have door prize drawings. After lunch, there is a **farm tour of Mary-Howell and Klaas Martens' farm and Lakeview Organic Grain, LLC**. Klaas and Mary-Howell Martens, their three children, Peter, Elizabeth and Daniel, and several employees farm 1,400 acres of organic grains in the Finger Lakes area of western New York, approximately 60 miles southeast of Rochester, NY. They have farmed organically since 1993 and produce corn, soybeans, spelt, wheat, barley, oats, triticale, red kidney beans, edamame and other seed crops. They raise organic replacement heifers, pigs and chickens. The Martens also own and operate Lakeview Organic Grain LLC, an organic feed and seed business in Penn Yan, NY, primarily serving organic dairy farmers throughout New York and northern PA. Most of the farm's corn & small grains are sold to Lakeview Organic Grain LLC, while the soybeans, red kidney beans, and spelt are sold to other processors. The spelt is dehulled on the farm with some handled as kosher organic spelt. Klaas and Mary-Howell

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

continued from page 17

practice diverse, long-term crop rotations that actively incorporate soil building and cover crops to improve soil fertility and health. They enjoy experimenting with different crops, rotations and weed control machinery, and cooperate with faculty from Cornell University and others on several research projects, which they will discuss.

Following the farm tour, folks will gather at the Holiday Inn, to socialize and visit the Trade Show, and enjoy cheese & crackers, vegetable platters and beverages. All organic and transitioning dairy producers and their families are welcome, as well as all those interested in supporting certified organic dairies. Dinner is free for transitioning organic dairy farmers and their families.

At 6:30, there will be a roast turkey dinner with all of the trimmings which will be followed by the **NODPA annual meeting.** Kathie Arnold, NODPA President will open the meeting with the President's annual report and Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director, will give a report on NODPA's Year in Review. After reports from other regions and on the activities of FOOD Farmers, there will be a producer-only meeting, with the following suggested topics:

- 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?
- Pay Price
- Organic standards

On Tuesday, there will be a continental breakfast from 7:30 to 9:00 am with a continuation of the producer only meeting during this time. **At 9:00 am, there will be a round-table discussion(s)** facilitated by Ed Maltby and Sarah Flack which will allow producers to exchange ideas and concerns and to share alternatives to their current situation. Suggested topics include:

- Pay prices –strategies for a future approach that is based on defined criteria.
- Best cost cutting ideas: what one thing did you change this year that positively affected the bottom line?
- Will diversification be essential for future economic viability?
- When the milk check isn't enough to pay the bills anymore, what can we do to take advantage of other skills and resources?
- Health issues - feeding enough minerals on reduced grain diets, getting serious about Johnne's, other issues.

The Field Days will end at 11:30 am with a buffet lunch and the opportunity to visit with attendees at the Understanding Organics: Livestock Management and Health Conference that starts at the same venue that afternoon. ♦

Thanks to all our sponsors and supporters who make this event possible

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A message from the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance.

FIELD DAYS REGISTRATION

NODPA’s 8th Annual Field Days & Producer Meeting & Dinner, October 27 & 28

Please use the form below to register for NODPA’s 2008 Field Days & Producers Meeting. Tear out this page, place it in an envelop, and send it to the address listed below.

Cost		Qty.	Total
Field Days: Monday & Tuesday			
Free	Organic dairy & transitioning producers & families		
\$30	All who aren't organic dairy producers		
Meals			
\$5	Monday breakfast (7:30-10am)		
\$15	Monday lunch (under 11, \$7.50)		
\$25	Monday dinner (under 11, \$12.50)		
Free	Transitioning farm members, Monday evening dinner		
\$5	Tuesday breakfast (7:30-10am)		
\$15	Tuesday lunch (under 11, \$7.50)		
\$35	NODPA News annual subscription (6 issues)		
	Total amount enclosed:		

NODPA has a few scholarships available to assist producers with the cost of attending Field Days. Call 413-772-0444 for info.

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Dear Fellow Organic Dairy Farmers—To help NODPA know your current situation and needs and get feedback on how we can better serve you, please fill out and return this survey. Results will be kept anonymous. Thanks!

Kathie Arnold, NODPA President

1. What is the biggest challenge currently facing your organic dairy farm?

2. How is your winter supply of forage looking? (please check one)

3. How does your grain picture look? (check all that apply)

4. What does the financial picture of your farm look like? (check one and add a comment if you'd like)

5. How does your farm's financial picture compare to previous years? (can check more than one)

6. What are the top three priorities NODPA should focus on in the coming years?

continued on next page

Tear Here And Send To: NODPA c/o Ed Maltby, 30 Keets Road, Deerfield, MA 01342

Kathie Arnold, 3175 State Route 13, Truxton, NY 13158-3107

Organic Dairy Farmer Survey, continued from page 21

7. Suggestions for what NODPA should do to meet those priorities.

8. Feedback on NODPA’s performance over the last year.

9. Additional comments:

About Your Operation:

10. Are all your dairy herd replacements organically certified from the last third of gestation? _____

11. Do you currently meet the proposed access to pasture standard ((At a minimum, an average of 30% of the dry matter intake from pasture during your region’s growing season, which can be no less than 120 days per year)? _____

12. Do you have trouble measuring DM intake from pasture? _____

13. What year did you start shipping organic milk? _____

14. What state do you farm in? _____

15. How many organic cows do you milk? _____

To return this survey by mail:

Kathie Arnold, 3175 State Route 13, Truxton, NY 13158-3107.

To return by fax:

866-554-9483

To download and print a copy:

www.nodpa.com/survey.shtml

Any questions?

Call or email Kathie Arnold at 607/842-6631, email: randkarnold1@juno.com

THANKS!!

NET UPDATE

ODairy Discussions in August

By Liz Bawden

As most of us struggled to get in some feed between rains in June and July, there was a discussion about wrapping bales for baleage that had been made from rained-on forages. All who responded emphatically said that baleage should not be made from forage that has been rained on. Another cautioned about making it with too high a moisture content, as it can put the cows off feed. One person suggested testing for mycotoxins this year, since the conditions have been good for their formation.

There was a question about recommended testing before purchasing organic cows. It is mainstream thought to test for Johnes disease, Strep ag, Staph aureus, BVD, and Mycoplasma. Purchased animals, in a perfect world, should also be quarantined for 3 to 4 weeks.

A participant posted a link to a site discussing the connection between Johnes Disease in cattle and Crohn’s Disease in humans. That prompted a good dialogue on Johnes testing and eradication on dairy farms. Those that have participated in research projects noted that there are genetic factors at play -- some cow families will have a higher incidence of the disease than oth-

ers. As to the human connection with Crohn’s Disease, they reported that dairy farmers do NOT show a higher incidence of the disease than the general public. One farmer strongly encouraged organic farms in New York to enroll in the NYSC-HAP program (New York State Cattle Health Assurance Program). The program tests cattle and helps to define action plans for health issues. One of the vets on ODairy mentioned that an older textbook states that Johnes is more common when the soils or rations are deficient in Magnesium. Several farmers noted the connection between cows that were grazed or fed a diet high in dry hay and the lack of visible Johnes symptoms in the herd. But it was stressed that this was likely due to less inflammation due to a diet more in line with the nature of the cow, not the lack of the disease. There were estimates tossed around that about 75% of the US herds are infected to some degree. Testing is definitely suggested. The blood tests (ELISA tests) are quick, but carry a risk of a percentage of false positives. The fecal test is very reliable, but takes 3 to 4 months.

There was some discussion on feeding round bales outside vs. in the barn during the winter. The questions over which is better for the cows, and which is better for the farmer were discussed. Most seemed to feel that putting the round bales in feeders outside was the best method in all with the exception of severe weather, assuming that you have wind breaks and powdered teat dips to avoid frozen teats.. Several farmers told us they happily

continued on page 25



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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FORAGE & GRAINS

Molasses Makes Milk and Money

An Alternative to High-Priced Grain

by Karen Hoffman, USDA-NRCS, New York

It's no secret to anybody in the dairy industry that grain prices are currently high, both organic and conventional. The multiple reasons for it include everything from floods to ethanol to the laws of supply and demand.

The question everybody is asking is “what can we do?”.

For a few farms in New York, the answer is to feed an alternative source of energy at higher than typical rates – molasses, fed anywhere from 1 to 5 pounds per cow per day, depending on production.

One of these farms is that of Jim and Anne Phillips, in Cortland, NY. After working on both organic and conventional dairies in Ohio and Virginia, the young couple and their 3 children have moved to Central New York with a herd of crossbred cows that are milked on a seasonal basis.

They are currently renting a farm from Bob and Nancy Space, former dairy farmers who retired a few years ago. The land had been hayed for approximately 5 years without any applications of commercial fertilizers or pesticides, so was easily certified for organic production.

When Jim and Anne moved to the farm, there was some fencing already in place from when the Space's used a managed grazing system. Jim has built some additional fence to expand the acreage available for grazing, now totaling 130 acres. Their calves are raised on pasture by nurse cows, with one cow typically having 3 to 4 calves on her. While the grafting process can be time-consuming and frustrating, Jim and Anne feel the calves are healthier and grow better this way. The nurse cows are typically cows that have problem udders, poor milking dispositions, or high somatic cell counts.

The Phillips' also raise goats and sheep, and some of them graze either before or after the milking cows depending on growth of the pastures and other management factors. The kids enjoy the goats and sheep as 4-H project animals.

Molasses as the primary energy source

As stated before - and the real topic of this article – they feed

molasses to their cows as the primary source of energy. It is a certified organic liquid molasses that they purchase from Buffalo Molasses, and is stored in large poly tanks just outside the end of the barn. This spring, they were feeding 2 to 3 pounds of molasses with 1 pound of corn meal and minerals and kelp per cow, and he is milking 56 cows. He doesn't feed any source of protein, other than what the cows eat from the pasture.

Jim uses the leftover milkhouse chemical containers, cut in half, as feed troughs in the barn (cleaned well, of course). First he puts the corn meal in, and then pours the molasses on top to ensure the cows don't eat too fast. The cows simply lick the molasses until they reach the corn – and they lick the trough clean.

According to Jim, the molasses flows well during the grazing season and is relatively easy to feed out. Once colder weather sets in, or early in the spring when cows are calving out, he does have a bit of a challenge with the molasses flowing too slowly.

From a nutritional standpoint, the question is whether or not molasses can provide enough energy to meet the cows' needs. Most nutritionists will say that it can't, even when fed at a slightly higher rate, because the sugars are used in the rumen too rapidly. The energy content of molasses, as measured by the Net Energy system that is used, is almost equivalent to corn. However, the cows at the Phillips farm, as well as in a few others around the state, indicate otherwise.

This summer, Jim and Anne are helping to identify the reasons why it works better than expected by allowing Karen Hoffman, grazing nutritionist with USDA-NRCS, to collect baseline data on milk production, pasture quality, and body condition. Milk components and milk urea nitrogen (MUN) results from the milk plant are also being tracked. The information is then entered into the Cornell Net Carbohydrate and Protein System (CNCPS) model to compare what's actually happening on the farm to model predictions. The hope is to collect enough data to show that this is a viable option to reduce feed costs while maintaining milk production and cow health, and submit a grant to collect additional information next year on other farms as well as at Phillips'.

continued on next page

NET UPDATE

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fed bales outside in temperatures well below zero.

It's a little unusual on ODairy to have a series of posts discussing the best antibiotic to use in a situation, but that's what happened when a farmer had a couple of cases of calf pneumonia that had gone too long to be effected by the alternative therapies. Most of us have had to make a decision, with the advice of our vet, when an animal must have antibiotics to affect a recovery or eliminate suffering. It was recommended that for calf pneumonia Micotil is the most effective, although must be given with care as it can be fatal to humans. Nuflor is also used, although one vet said he finds it to be less effective.

A farmer shared her treatment for mastitis: homeopathic Apis (10 pellets per dose) twice a day for 2 weeks and a home-made udder salve made from lanolin cream and peppermint oil.

The wet soils led to discussions on the treatment for foot rot. One farmer says he has good success by spraying the hoof with tincture of iodine, then applying pine tar on a piece of gauze onto the affected area, and wrapping the entire hoof with hoof wrap. A vet suggested cleaning the hoof with peroxide, then applying a paste made from Betadine and sugar, and wrap the hoof. Repeat in 3 days.

A farmer shared his experience with growing winter triticale. He feels that like all winter grains, triticale does best in well-drained soils, but is a bit more forgiving than other grains. It can be grown for grain or forage, and can be planted with Austrian peas to boost the protein as a forage crop. It yields well and produces lots of straw. It does well in fertile soils, and he cautioned farmers from plowing up old hay fields in the fall to plant directly with triticale -- the fertility bound up in the old sods needs to be available to the emerging seedlings to encourage growth and tillering. ♦

Liz is a NODPA Board Member and farms with her husband Brian in Hammond, NY.



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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

Forgues Family Farm: Early Leaders in Organic

Travis Forgues and his father Henry transitioned to organic in 1997. Looking for markets for their milk in 1999, they pushed for a NE dairy producers summit that birthed NODPA.

By Lisa McCrory

There are some people out there, and we all know a few, who have a gift of getting things moving; someone who is able inspire people to take initiative or follow a cause. These people tend to be born with certain leadership qualities and, when there is something they believe in, they do not take ‘no’ for an answer. These personality traits, mixed with perfect timing or what some would call serendipity bring us a story about Travis Forgues, the transition of his family farm to organic, his influence in facilitating the growth of organic dairy in Vermont, and his role in the birth of NODPA.

It all started in the early 1990’s when Henry Forgues, tired of the high labor and low return from his confinement dairy system, decided to learn more about management intensive grazing. With the help of Bill Murphy and the UVM Pasture Management Outreach Program (which existed from 1992 – 1995), Henry turned his operation into a pasture-based farm. The change in his farming practices made immediate improvements on profitability and the quality of life for the Forgues. Travis, who was not planning on coming back to the farm after college, saw the positive changes and returned to the farm with his wife Amy where they are now partners in the farm operation.

Forgues Family Farm, started in 1978, is a grass-based operation located less than one mile from the Canadian border and right along Lake Champlain in Alburgh, Vermont. Their farm consists of 220 acres of which 200 are tillable. All the acres are set up to be grazed, and/or hayed allowing them flexibility in where they graze and what they harvest for stored feed from one year to the next. They milk 80 cows, which supports two households; Henry and Sally Forgues (generation 1) and Travis and Amy and their children Emma, Gabe and Molly (generation 2).

Transition to Organic:

The Forgues family transitioned to organic in 1997, which required that the land be managed organically for 3 years, plus a 90-day whole herd transition where the feed, housing and health practices needed to meet the organic standards. Aside from feeding conventional grain, they felt they were already managing their farm and their livestock organically. Their

grazing management system was well in place, and with the organic milk price, they would get a higher base price, , better quality premiums and a stable pay price.

At the time that Travis and Henry were interested in transitioning to organic, they did not have a market for their milk. The Organic Cow, the only milk buyer in the state, was not sourcing milk that far North. This is where ‘not taking no for an answer’ comes in. Travis called Peter Flint (Organic Cow) every day to the extent that Peter drove up to Travis’s farm to tell him personally that he was not going to pick up his milk. Peter explained that by telling him face to face Travis would finally understand and would stop calling him once and for all.

Travis ‘listened’ to Peter’s words and invited him to look around the farm – stretch his legs, if you will. By the end of the visit Peter agreed to start picking up milk in Northern Vermont.

Changes in the Industry and the birth of NODPA

The Organic Cow was sold in 1999 and with that came some unsettling times for Organic Cow producers in Maine, New York and Vermont. Horizon Organic, the new owner of the Organic Cow, was requesting that producers ‘voluntarily’ reduce their contracted pay price from \$21 to \$20, with the provision that if they did not willingly take \$20, their next contract would be at \$19. In response to that, Travis turned to Organic Valley, determined to make sure that producers had more than one processor to choose from. He made a deal with Organic Valley that he would find enough producers to fill a truck load of milk (40,000 lbs) and with that, Travis quickly took on a leadership role among Vermont organic dairy producers.

George Siemon (CEO of Organic Valley) was very interested in supporting a Northeast Summit meeting of producers and encouraged Travis to talk to producers in the surrounding states. With the help of the Vermont Organic Milk Producers Association (VOMPA) and NOFA-VT, the first regional summit of organic dairy producers took place on February 16, 2001 in Waterbury, Vermont. Twenty one farmers from the Northeast (Maine, New York, Vermont) were present, and it was at this meeting that NODPA was born. (Go to www.nodpa.com/history.shtml for the full story on NODPA’s start.)

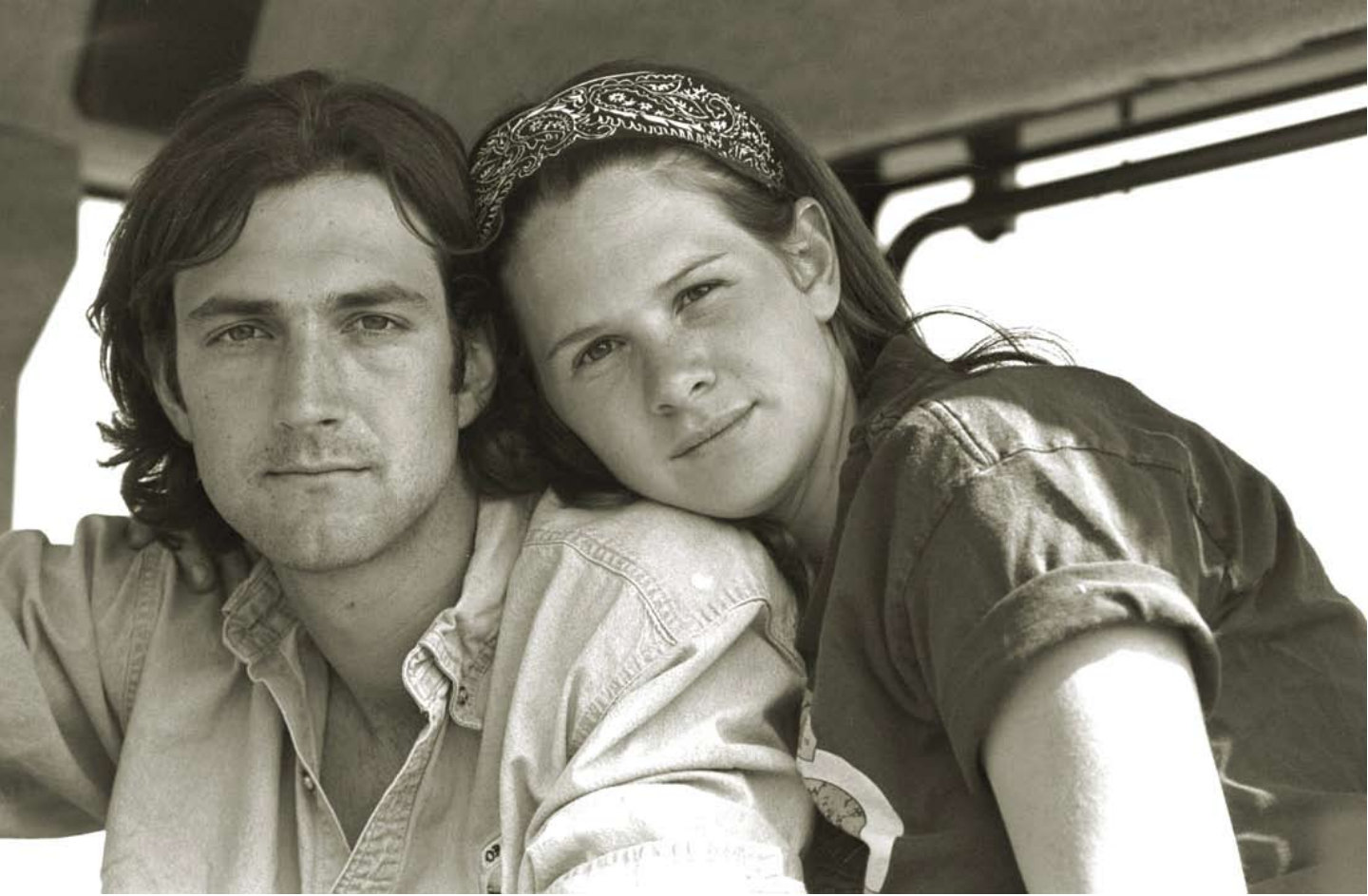


PHOTO COURTESY OF ORGANIC VALLEY. <http://www.organicvalley.coop/our-story/meet-the-farmers/new-england/travis-and-amy-forgues/>

nodpa.com/history.shtml for the full story on NODPA’s start.) So, now let’s talk about the Forgues Family Farm.

Production Practices at Forgues Family Farm

Cows are housed in a large quanset hut building that is a mix between a greenhouse barn and a freestall. There aren’t any stalls in the shelter, which faces South, and the barn is scraped clean every day. They have a closed herd and average 12,000 lbs per cow. The cows are cross breeds with a heavy influence of Dutch Belted genetics. They breed with a bull.

A summer feed ration on this farm consists of 5-6 # of a 10% protein grain and the rest is pasture. If they run short on pasture, they supplement with baleage. In the wintertime, the cows are fed 5-6 # of a 14% grain plus baleage. They may go to an all corn and barley grain ration this winter; it all depends upon how high grain prices go up this fall. After February they try to feed the baleage on the pasture, which saves the labor of handling and spreading manure and saves money on bedding which is very expensive and sometimes hard to find.

The cows are moved to new pasture twice a day and they often plant a BMR sorghum sudan or a brassica variety of forage for the summer slump, to extend the grazing season, and to put

up high quality forage for winter feeding. This season has been a bit of a challenge getting in good forage; they got their first cut in the end of May and then it rained most of June, July and early August. They managed to get 2nd and 3rd cut in between the rains, and Travis thinks that they will have enough feed this year.

Grazing and growing high quality forages is the focus on this farm and they have been fortunate to have a close relationship with Bill Murphy (Author of ‘Greener Pastures on Your Side of the Fence’) as a mentor and a friend. The Forgues were generous enough to let Bill design and implement a few on-farm research trials as well, which included organic parasite management for calves, organic fertilization and irrigation of pastures and looking at calf weight gain and its relationship to pounds of grain fed.

Livestock health issues are few and far between; Henry and Travis call the vet to the farm maybe once a year to help with emergencies. Preventative measures employed on the farm include: clean, low-stress environment, not pushing the cows for production, a high forage diet, a good grazing system and a vaccination program. ‘A healthy grazing herd makes becoming organic almost seam-less in my experience’, says Travis. They vaccinate the herd with Triangle 7 in the spring, vac-

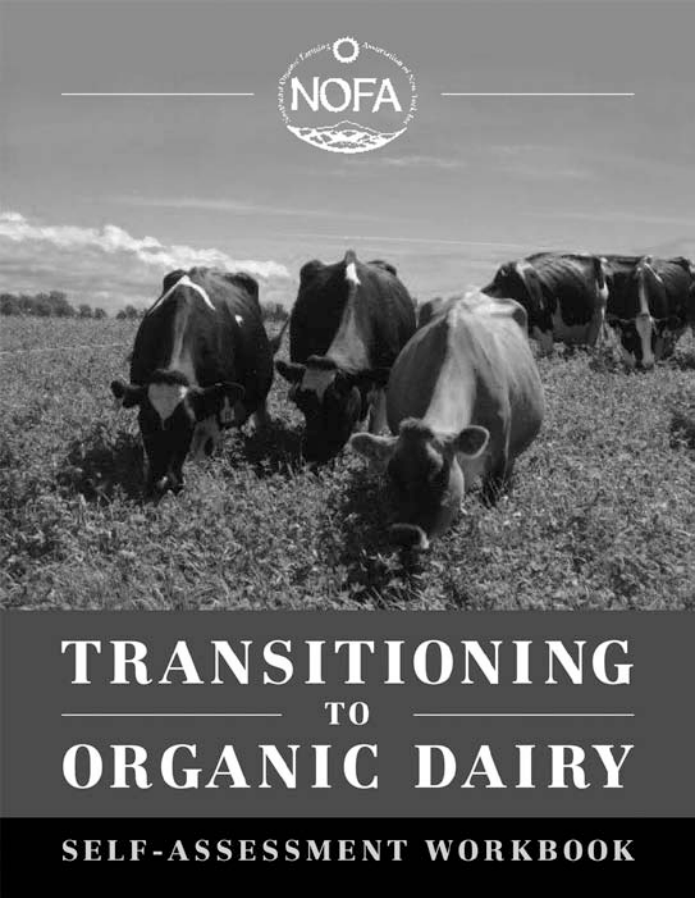
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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

New Guide for Organic Dairy Farmers Debuts in September

In September, NOFA-NY’s Organic Dairy Transitions Project will release the first of two books to help conventional dairy farmers transition to organic dairy production. This publication, *Transitioning to Organic Dairy: Self-Assessment Workbook*, uses a whole farm approach to the transition process and is based on the experiences of successful organic dairy farmers. The Northeast is an excellent region for pasture-based organic dairy farming; however, the transition period can pose risks to farmers such as the potential for increased cull rates, sharply increased feed costs, decreased milk production, and increased labor requirements. *Transitioning to Organic Dairy: Self-Assessment Workbook* is an interactive resource that gives farmers tools to identify the risks they may face on their own farm throughout the transition to organic production. It also helps farmers develop plans to mitigate those risks. This resource will be useful for conventional dairy farmers interested in learning more about organic production, farmers who have recently transitioned to organic dairy and agricultural professionals assisting farmers in the transition to organic management.

To obtain a copy of *Transitioning to Organic Dairy* on CD-ROM or as a bound book, contact the NOFA-NY office at 607-652-6632 or email membership@nofany.org. (Books will cost \$12; there will be a small fee for CD-ROMs.) Electronic copies will be available free of charge through the NOFA-NY website www.nofany.org. NOFA-NY is writing a companion book called *The Organic Dairy Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to the Transition and Beyond* (to be released in Spring 2009). This book provides transitioning and newly transitioned farmers with the



information needed to reduce the risks associated with transitioning to organic management. It covers all aspects of organic dairy including two major risk sources: the management of herd health and the development of organic feed diets that are both affordable and able to maintain high quality milk production. This tool will be a complete survey of proven strategies for all aspects of organic dairy management. For more information about the *Organic Dairy Handbook*, contact NOFA-NY at (607) 652-6632 or email bethany.organicdairy@nofany.org. ♦

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

“Sustainable” Standards

continued from page 4

Council, and American Farmland Trust, among others. Several organic and natural food companies are involved too, including Earthbound Farms, Organic Valley, Whole Foods Markets and Amy’s Kitchen. Despite the heat that the organic label gets today, from virtually all camps, what’s easily forgotten is that the label was created by a diverse set of interests who did not always see eye to eye. Consumer advocates, environmentalists, farmers, certifiers, retailers and food processors all came together to define what has now

become the organic label. The process took at least 30 years, and all the parties had a rough baseline of interests. But given the even wider diversity of interests represented by the sustainable standard, the process of creating organic rules might well look like a cake walk in comparison. As DiMatteo said, “It could be potentially bigger than organic, but then again, it could blow up.” More information is available at Leonardo Insitute’s website at: <http://www.leonardoacademy.org/Projects/SustainAgStdDevelopment.htm> Samuel Fromartz is the author of *Organic Inc.: Natural Foods and How They Grew* (Harcourt, 2006). His web-site is at www.fromartz.com and he blogs at www.chewswise.com.

This is a large advertisement for Stonyfield Farm. The background is a black and white photograph of several cows in a field, looking towards the camera. In the top right corner, the Stonyfield Farm logo is displayed, featuring a cow's head inside a circular frame with the words "Stonyfield Farm" in a script font and "ORGANIC" in a bold, sans-serif font below it. To the right of the cows, the text "Thank you, organic farmers, for all that you do." is written in a large, elegant serif font. In the bottom right corner, there is a collection of Stonyfield Farm organic dairy products, including a large tub of yogurt, a carton of Smoothie, a carton of lowfat strawberry yogurt, and several small containers of Yobaby Plus Fruit & Cereal. The text "From all the folks at Stonyfield Farm" is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font above the products.

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Funding Opportunities
Research and planning grants in
the Northeast and North Central US

Below is a listing of funding opportunities in the Northeast and North Central US. If you are aware of other opportunities that you would like to share, please contact Lisa McCrory, NODPA Newsletter Editor: lmccrory@together.net or 802-234-5524.

Organic Farming Research Foundation
Education & Outreach Grants

The Organic Farming Research Foundation will fund the development of educational opportunities and materials that are: pertinent to organic agricultural production or marketing; and aimed at organic producers and/or those considering making the transition to organic certification. OFRF will also accept proposals to fund activities that promote information sharing among organic agricultural researchers and organic farmers and ranchers. OFRF will not fund a project for more than \$15,000 per year except for fruit grants, for which the maximum grant size is \$20,000 per year. www.ofrf.org/grants/apply_education&outreach.html.

Proposals are due November 17, 2008.

Northeast SARE Grants

The Northeast region is made up of Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. For more information, go to www.uvm.edu/&7Enesare/grants.html or call 802-656-0471

Sustainable Community Grants

Northeast SARE and the Northeast Center for Rural Development offer grants to organizations such as community nonprofits, Cooperative Extension, local governments, educational institutions, planning boards, farming cooperatives, and incorporated citizens' groups. The purpose of the Sustainable Community Grants program is to reconnect rural revitalization and farming. Projects

can address diverse issues such as land use, nutrition, employment, markets, education, farm labor, public policy, and environmental quality. Proposals are due November 27, 2008.

Farmer Grants test new crops, practices and systems through on-site experiments and share the results with other farmers. Grants average about \$5,200, and are capped at \$10,000. Farmer Grant applications are due in December.

Partnership Grants are awarded for on-farm research and demonstration projects developed by agricultural professionals who work directly with farmers. Grants are capped at \$10,000. Partnership Grant applications are due in November.

Minnesota Dairy Business Planning Grant

The goal of the Minnesota Dairy Business Planning Grants is to encourage dairy business planning and modernization activities of Minnesota dairy farms. The program covers 50 percent of the cost of completing a business plan for a dairy operation. Producers who have applied for this grant are exploring the feasibility of expansion, environmental upgrades, stray voltage testing or transferring the operation to the next generation producer. Applications are funded on a first come first serve basis. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture can provide 50% of eligible project costs up to a maximum of \$5,000. For more info: www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/dbgrant.htm

North Central SARE Grants

North Central Region SARE administers four grant programs, each with specific priorities, audiences and timelines. The focus for all four NCR-SARE grant programs is on research and education. Funding considerations are made based on how well the applicant articulates the nature of the research and education components of their sustainable agriculture grant proposals. Scroll down to read more about each program and to find current calls. For more information, please go to: www.sare.org/ncrsare/cfp.htm or call Bill Wilcke, Regional Coordinator, (612) 625-8205.

Animal Welfare Grants

President of the Animal Welfare Institute Cathy Liss and Director of the Animal Welfare Approved program Andrew Gunther are pleased to announce a new initiative that will offer grants of up to \$10,000 for the sole purpose of improving animal welfare on farms. Current Animal Welfare Approved farmers and those who have applied

to join the program are eligible to apply for these grants.

Examples of eligible projects include conversion of buildings; fencing and paddock division; silviculture; improvement of water services; mobile housing; farm planning, farm health visits from recognized practitioners; alternative identification methods; alternative genetics; innovative chick transportation; alternatives to antibiotic use; and improvements in the slaughter process. Eligible costs include design fees, contractor costs, materials, slaughter equipment, new mobile housing, and incubators.

RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Cow-Share College and
Goat-Share University
Classes starting in September

The Farm-to-Consumer Foundation is offering a unique educational tele-seminar series - Cow-Share College and Goat-Share University - a series of three classes that cover setting up, maintaining and upgrading a cow- or goat-share operation.

The goal of these classes is to provide expert legal and operations guidance in a timely, convenient and inexpensive format.

Timely & Convenient: The series of three classes is **repeated monthly** and starts in September. **Classes are conducted via telephone conference call. A push button phone with long distance access is all that is needed to participate.** **Inexpensive:** Classes are reasonably priced with discounts for three or more classes.

All classes are held on Thursdays from 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. (EDT) and are limited to 25 participants to keep the interactions interesting, but

Applicants must submit an application and a budget by October 15, 2008, and propose a project that meets the purpose of this program. PDF forms for the Grant Guidelines and an Application Form are available online, go to: www.animalwelfareapproved.org or contact Julie Munk at (703) 836-4300. If you have any questions concerning eligibility or the procedure for applying, please contact Emily Lancaster at (919) 428-1641 or at Emily@AnimalWelfareApproved.org. ♦

give plenty of time for personal attention.

Classes:

Cow/Goat Shares 101 - Basic (Legal & Operations)

An introduction into cow/goat share contracts, set up, pricing and basic operations. **Dates:** September 11, October 2 and November 6

Cow/Goat Shares 102 - Intermediate (Operations)

Discussion of operations refinements for optimum quality and profitability as well as solutions to common problems. **Dates:** September 18, October 9 and November 13

Cow/Goat Shares 103 - Advanced (Legal & Operations)

A lively forum for getting your most important legal and operations questions answered. **Dates:** September 25, October 16 and November 20

Classes are \$35 each or \$30 each for three or more. Recordings of the classes will be available for sale following the class on the www.farmto-consumer.org shopping cart.

For Flier, go to: www.farmtoconsumerfoundation.org/cow-goat-shareFlier.pdf. Register online <https://www.ptfassociates.com/secure/ft-cldf/classregistration.asp> or call 703-208-FARM (3276) (Monday- Friday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. EDT) ♦

General Grant Program Timelines

Timeline projections are subject to change.

Farmer Rancher Grant Timeline		Research and Education Grant Timeline	
August - Call for Proposals		April - Call for Pre-Proposals	
December - Proposals Due		June - Pre-Proposals Due	
March - Authors Notified on Status of Proposal		Early Fall: Authors Notified of Pre-Proposal Status	
April - Funds Available to Recipients		Late Fall - Full Proposals Due	
		March - Funding Decisions Made by NCR-SARE	
		Spring - Authors Notified on Status of Proposal	
Professional Development Grant Timeline		Graduate Student Grant Timeline	
Mid-January - Call for Pre-Proposals		Fall - Call for Proposals	
Mid-March - Pre-Proposals Due		January - Proposals Due	
April - Authors Notified on Status of Pre-Proposal		March - Funding Decisions Made by NCR-SARE	
July - Full Proposals Due		Spring - Authors Notified on Status of Proposal	
November - Funding Decisions Made		Fall - Funds Available to Recipients	

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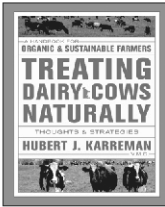
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INDUSTRY NEWS

More Organic Milk Sought in Northeast

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

Dairy Marketing Services (DMS) continues to market more than 50 percent of the organic milk produced in the Northeast. DMS was established to deliver efficiency in services and enhance returns from the market directly back to producers at a minimal cost. The DMS trained staff can assist you through organic certification process and help you explore your organic market options. At DMS we offer a wide range of services to producers such as health insurance and workers compensation through Agri-Services Agency, leases and loans from Agri-Max Financial, farm inputs and supplies through Eagle Dairy Direct, and herd management software from Dairy One. For more information, please contact Dave Eyster at 1-888-589-6455, ext. 5409 or david.eyster@dairymarketingservices.com

CROPP Cooperative~Organic Valley Family of Farms is the nation's largest farmer-owned organic cooperative and our continued growth offers new opportunities for dairy farmers throughout the Northeast and New England. We offer a stable, competitive organic milk pay price once certified and a complete year of Transitional Funding for new farmers during the herd's transitional year. We also offer farmers veterinary support, quality services, strong membership services, the Organic Trader Newsletter, inclusive communications and ownership of a cooperative with 20 years of organic farming and marketing experience. In addition, our Farm Resources Team can help source organic feed purchases for your operation. We also have expanded our cooperative membership to include our Grower Pool; Offering long term, stable pricing & marketing opportunities for organic forage/grain producers throughout the region. And, our Organic Cull Cow & dairy steer program is looking to grow into the region. Please contact our Regional Coordinators or Membership Services for further details.

In New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia contact Peter Miller, (612) 801-3506, peter.miller@organicvalley.coop. In New England contact John Cleary at (612) 803-9087, or email at john.cleary@organcivalley.coop. In the Great Lakes Region contact Jake Schmitz, (270) 779-1526 or jake.schmitz@organicvalley.coop. Membership Services- 1-888-809-9297 Monday through Friday 8-5 PM Central www.farmers.coop.

Interested in transitioning to organic dairy? At Horizon Organic, it all begins on the farm. As America's leading organic dairy brand, we owe our success to the growing community of family farmers who support

our mission, one organic acre at a time. We believe that farmers deserve to know where their milk is going – and consumers deserve to know where it originated. Over the years, we've maintained a dedicated milk supply and nurtured a direct relationship with each of the hundreds of farms in our network. And we're committed to keeping it that way.

Horizon Organic produces a full line of products from cheese to yogurt to fluid milk, and is the leading brand in the grocery store, as well as the number one source for bringing new organic milk consumers into the category.

Join Horizon Organic, the leading brand in one of the fastest growing categories within the number one segment of agriculture, and enjoy the experience, stability and competitive pricing that we have come to be known for.

Contacts: Cindy Masterman (New England) (888) 648-8377; Peter Slaunwhite (Northeast) (800) 381-0980; Steve Rinehart (Mideast) (866) 268-4665; Michelle Sandy (Mid Atlantic) (866) 412-1380; Mike Bandstra (Midwest) (877) 620-8259; Greg Dabney (West) (800) 588-9283 x4747

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.

Lancaster Organic Farmers Cooperative (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.

Upstate Niagara Cooperative, a dairy farmer owned, full service cooperative headquartered in Buffalo, NY is continuing to grow its supply of organic milk. The members of Upstate Niagara Coop own and operate 3 milk plants in Buffalo 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 at www.upstatefarms.com or contact me. Enjoy your day....Bill Young 800-724-6455 byoung@upstateniagara.com

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 September 2008 issue, please email the desired text to Ed at ednodpa@comcast.net or call 413-772-0444 by October 16th 2008.

FEATURED FARM

continued from page 27

ciate for rabies, and give all their heifer calves an oral ecoli vaccine shortly after birth.

For drying off cows, they usually wait until a cow's milk production goes down to about 15 lbs, then switch to once a day milking and then stop milking them all together. This system tends to work well for the Forgues. If a cow comes down with mastitis they rub Udder Comfort or Dynamint on the affected quarter and use a quarter-milker to divert the milk. On occasion, the quarter will get dried off and it comes back the following lactation. They rarely have cases of milk fever, but make sure to have dextrose and calcium on hand just in case.

Calves are fed milk and free choice hay and are weaned at about 2 months of age. The biggest challenge that they have with caves is scours, which they treat successfully with electrolytes and Bright Start capsules from Crystal Creek. Since most of their calves are born in the spring and summer months, they are 6 months of age about the time that the pastures are done for the year. Most of the calves start grazing the following spring at 9 months – 1 year of age, which Travis likes, because he feels they are less susceptible to parasites and not as vulnerable to coyotes.

Resources and Future Outlook

Travis was an instrumental player in getting NODPA off the ground and from that 2001 meeting, he continued for a couple years as an Organic Valley DEC rep, and helped procure more milk in the state. As the producer pool grew, more DEC positions have been created and other farmers have stepped up to the plate to fill those spots. There are now two full time positions (John Cleary and Peter Miller) who do the milk procurement and outreach in the Northeast. Travis managed to step back a little and enjoy his young family and his farm for the past few years – until recently, that is. Earlier this year, Travis was voted onto the Organic Valley/CROPP Board – the first Board member from the Northeast. The Organic Valley Board of Directors consists of 7 elected farmers. This is a governance board rather than a management board, and their duty is to see the mission of the cooperative is carried out by the management team. The length of term is 3 years.

Like many producers, Travis feels that farmers are his biggest resource whether in person, by phone, or gleaning ideas from the Odairy Listserv. When asked what he thinks needs to be addressed in order for organic dairy producers to be better served, Travis says “The country's economy has to be the biggest challenge right now. How do we move forward and get a livable wage to deal with the perfect storm that has occurred across the country within the last year, while not killing the organic marketplace at the same time? It's a vital time to continue to work together to find a way to navigate through these rough waters, and cooperation is the key.” ♦

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COMMENTARY

Joint Letter from PASA, Rodale Institute & Pennsylvania Certified Organic Registers Concern Over Slate of Penn State Workshops Hostile to Organic and Sustainable Dairy

Statement of Grave Concern
August 19, 2008

To: Robert D. Steele, Dean, Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences
From: Timothy LaSalle, CEO, Rodale Institute
Leslie Zuck, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO)
Kim Seeley, President, Board of Directors, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA)

Pennsylvania Ag Progress Days is one of the state’s premiere annual events to showcase the best of Pennsylvania agriculture. The 2008 edition of this event comes after a year when food costs, food safety, food v. fuel use and even food sufficiency have been major news items.

It is therefore deeply disappointing and frankly shocking that members of the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences have announced a departmental slate of workshops that attack a number of approaches to farming that are benefiting hundreds of family farmers across the Commonwealth. Many of these feature human, environmental or animal advantages documented by research--some by research at Penn State.

A July 28 press release titled “See agricultural myths busted during Ag Progress Days,” promises “we will investigate and analyze some widely believed agricultural misconceptions and scientifically show why they are false.” Some of the myths promised to be “debunked” include:

- “High Milk Production Burns Out Cows”
- “Organic Therapies are Better than Conventional Antibiotic Treatments”
- “Grass Fed and Organic Beef is better for Consumers” and
- “rBST-Free Milk is Better for Consumers.”

The “myth-buster” topics listed in the release are simplistic and sweeping statements about organic animal-health therapies, grass-fed and organic beef, rBST-free milk and agriculture’s impact on the environment. This format reduces complex issues of animal, human and environmental well-being to a true-or-false treatment of selected facts. There is no indication that the workshops will be careful examinations of how Pennsylvania agriculture can become more ecologically sound or produce food that is more healthful through many different agricultural approaches.

Because of benefits to their health, well-being and profitability, hundreds of Pennsylvania farmers have chosen to farm organically. With the even greater numbers who have adopted grass-based dairy or beef production, these farm families have experienced greater profit potential and seen empirical evidence of changed conditions in their fields and herds.

It is profoundly troubling, then, that the Penn State planners of these workshops would so recklessly disparage the value of products being marketed by Pennsylvania farmers. In the case of certified organic farmers, these individuals have complied

with precise process rules listed in federal regulation sanctioned by the USDA. It is further troubling to have the animal science department at Penn State take a propaganda-like approach for a narrow special interest group.

Innovative farmers and farm organizations in Pennsylvania expect our Land-Grant university to be a leader in improving the sustainability of agriculture in a period when fossil-fuel based inputs are more expensive and scarce and it’s increasingly imperative to remove farm chemicals from our waterways. At the same time consumers are demanding more local food produced with less energy-intensive methods and toxic chemicals in more transparent processes.

Timothy J. LaSalle, Ph.D., is CEO of the Rodale Institute. He holds his doctorate in depth psychology at Pacifica Graduate Institute, a master’s degree in populations genetics from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and a Bachelor of Science degree from California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly). For 12 years he was a full professor at Cal Poly, where he taught dairy science classes and served as the president and CEO of California’s Agriculture Education Foundation. While at Cal Poly, LaSalle started and operated a conventional dairy near Templeton, California. He issued this statement on the release:

“As a dairy scientist, I find Penn State’s treatment of organic dairy management unobjective, unscientific, unprofessional and deleterious to many livestock farmers in Pennsylvania who are making extra efforts to farm well. Replicated research shows that there are nutritional benefits in organic milk that are beneficial to human health. This approach also dismisses the legitimate concerns of tens of thousands of Pennsylvania consumers who are benefiting from the document health benefits from organic foods, especially animal products.”

Leslie Zuck is a co-founder and Executive Director of Pennsylvania Certified Organic and a graduate of Penn State University (1980). She owns and operates Common Ground Organic Farm in Centre County and served on the advisory board for Penn State’s Organic Transition Project, which can be viewed on the bus tour at Ag Progress Days. She issued this statement on the release:

“Scientific, peer-reviewed studies published by reputable universities and research organizations show the health and environmental benefits of organic, pasture-based and rBGH-free food and farming systems. It is irresponsible for Penn State researchers to use the Ag Progress Days venue to “scientifically show why they are false” (quote from Brad Hilty, Penn State senior extension associate). It is exceedingly unprofessional for an institution of Penn State’s caliber to stoop to sensationalizing an important and controversial topic rather than approaching it directly with fair, accurate and well-balanced discourse. This event perpetuates the myth that there is only one way to farm - big, industrialized, highly capitalized, resource intensive - Penn State’s way.

“It is a mystery to me why Penn State is unwilling to support organic farming, which is the only sector of agriculture that continues

to grow in our state. While farms are going out of business due to lack of profits or lack of interest by future generations, organic production provides an opportunity for families to stay on the farm, produce healthy food, protect the environment and receive a stable income. While we appreciate Penn State College of Agricultural Science’s offering several courses in organic production for the first time this year, we are certainly mystified by this unwarranted attempt to steer consumers and farmers away from organic food and production methods.

“We suggest Penn State issue an apology to the thousands of organic and sustainable farmers of Pennsylvania who are working hard to produce high-quality, nutritious and healthy food for our Commonwealth.”

Kim Seeley is president of the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), co-owner of Milky Way Dairy Farm and co-founder of Northern Tier Sustainable Meats Co-op. Both farm enterprises supply Penn State’s sister school, The Pennsylvania College of Technology food service, with all of their fluid milk and a majority of their ground beef requirements. He issued this statement on the release:

“Unfortunately this is what I have come to expect, since graduating from Penn State 30 years ago. I realized then how research money was having a growing influence in the Land Grant university system. Regrettably for Pennsylvania dairy and beef farmers, the Department of Animal and Dairy Science has been infiltrated the most with an unparalleled lack of respect for the basics of animal husbandry and denial of the intricate differences in nutritional content of animal byproducts from those produced on pasture or by organic methods.

“Recently the Northern Tier Sustainable Meats Co-op funded research at Penn State (not via dairy/animal science) looking at fat-soluble vitamin levels in ground beef samples from cows fed on pasture and stored feeds. The results of this research tell the story clearly, production methods create very different end results. Each of the past 5 years, I have guest lectured at Penn State for a course entitled “Morality and Ethics in Agriculture,” and when I show butter and cheese samples from grass-based cows, compared to our winter samples, the students are wide eyed and openly admit they are only studying an industrial approach to dairy/animal science.”

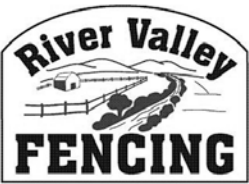
The Rodale Institute is a nonprofit 333-acre farm located in Berks County, Pa., and dedicated to promoting the environmental and health benefits of organic farming through rigorous research, education and outreach. Please see our innovative tools to help farmers succeed at our booth at Ag Progress Days.

Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) is a nonprofit organization that educates and certifies more than 500 organic producers and handlers. PCO is accredited to the National Organic Program by USDA. Visit their exhibit at Ag Progress Days to learn more.

The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) is a nonprofit organization working to improve economic and social prosperity of Pennsylvania food and agriculture. Local food systems are key to successful farms, healthy food and respect for the natural environment. PASA works with farmers and consumers to ensure a sustainable food system for all.

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Calendar

September 18, 2006 from 9:30 -3:00pm

First NODPA Southeast Regional Field Day and Retirement Celebration

Hosted by Caroline and Arden Landis at the Landis Dairy in Kirkwood, PA

- 9:30 - 10:00 Refreshments/Registration
- 10:00 Arden will host a tour of their seasonal organic dairy grazing farm
- Noon- Welcome by NODPA Board President Kathie Arnold and appreciation for Arden and Caroline's work

After lunch, there will be an overview of the organic dairy market, an update on NODPA's activities and plans for the future from NODPA Executive Director Ed Maltby. This will be followed by a farmer panel of Roman Stoltzfoos, Rodney Martin, Dave Johnson, Forrest Stricker and Rob Moore, moderated by Ed Maltby. There will be no charge to organic dairy producers.

September 19, 20 and 21, 2008 (Fri., Sat. & Sun.)

A Comprehensive Regional Festival and Conference on Sustainability and Energy Independence

The Kempton Community Center, Kempton, PA

A three-day festival about renewable energy, natural building construction, sustainable agriculture, land-use planning, forestry and healthy living practices in general. Featuring dynamic speakers, national exhibitors, workshops, hands-on demonstrations, vendors, live music and entertainment, children's activities, food and more. www.paenergyfest.com

September 20, 2008

Pasture Walk in Lehigh County, PA

Time: To Be Announced

Place: Barry and Barb Byler Dairy Farm, New Tripoli, PA

Part of Penn State's 2008 Grazing Walks in SE and South Central PA Series

Highlights:

- Calves started on grass very early,
- Second year of no grain for milking herd,
- Manages grazing based on no water in paddocks.

For more information or questions, call Dan Ludwig, NRCS, at 717-274-2597, Ext. 119

September 26 – 28, 2008

2nd Annual Northeast Animal Power Field Days

Tunbridge Fair Grounds, Tunbridge, VT

Time: General Admission: Friday noon – Sunday 5 PM

NEW: Intensive all-day workshop on Friday, 9 am – 4 pm, (\$40, must pre-register).

Featuring working animal and equipment demonstrations in field and forest settings, workshops, exhibits, networking sessions and moreMusic and educational films in the evening. Admission is \$35 for all 3 days or \$10 Friday, \$20 Saturday, \$15 Sunday. Children 12 and under free. Camping available on the fairgrounds. For more information or to register, go to: www.animalpowerfielddays.org, email: info@animalpowerfielddays.org, Phone: 802-234-5524. To Volunteer, contact Kristen Gage: Kristengage@comcast.net, Phone: 802-431-1029.

Sunday, October 5, 3 - 5 PM

Pasture Walk at Meadowsweet Farm, Swanville, Maine

Sponsored by the Maine Grass Farmers' Network

Sumner and Paula Roberts will show their lambs and beef cattle finishing on grass in the fall. Their flock of 50 sheep produces about 90 lambs in April and May, and the 20 Angus cross beef cows will calve in June. Cattle and sheep are sometimes pastured together, sometimes in leader/follower groups depending on each group's needs. Fencing, water systems, and forage will also be discussed. RSVP to meadowsweetfarm@gmail.com or 338-1265 and for directions.

Tuesday October 7th 10am-12pm

Season Extension-Fall Annuals and Perennial Stockpiling

Maple Wind Farm, Richmond, VT

Part of the 2008 NOFA- VT Organic Pasture & Livestock Management Workshop Series. www.nofavt.org

Bruce Hennessey and Beth Whiting will share their experience with both these season extending cropping system and discuss this year's planting of a Cereal Rye and Italian Ryegrass mix along with their experimenting with different grazing mixes, including festulolium, a ryegrass/fescue hybrid that remain high energy in colder weather. FREE for all organic and transitioning dairy & livestock farmers. \$10 NOFA-VT members, \$15 non-members. Drinks and snacks provided. BYO lunch. Contact NOFA-VT, 802-434-4122, email: info@nofavt.org

October 8 – 9, 2008

Mid-Atlantic Dairy Grazing Conference and Organic Field Day

Shenandoah Valley in VA.

We will visit two pasture-based organic dairy farms, have a dairy grazier panel discussion, and will offer several educational topics of interest to dairy graziers. We also plan to have a conference proceedings. Contact Steven P Washburn, Ph.D., Phone: 919-515-7726, email: Steve_Washburn@ncsu.edu.

October 21-22, 2008

3rd Annual WODPA Conference

Great Wolf Lodge, 20500 Old Highway 99, SW Grand Mound, WA

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802-234-5524 or email lmccrory@together.net

Please email your electronic ad (.eps, .tiff, .jpg, .gif) to chris@chrishillmedia.com or send your ad to: Lisa McCrory, Nodpa Newsletter, 341 Macintosh Hill Rd., Randolph, VT 05060

NOTE: Ads requiring typesetting, size changes or design work will be charged additional fees, according to the service (minimum charge \$30.00).

Please send a check with your ad (made payable to NODPA).

INDUSTRY NEWS

Access to Pasture Rule Update

continued from page 1

The wording of the NOP's abstract of the rule for the OMB dramatically understates the need for its quick passage and implementation. The NOP said, in the abstract to the proposed rule that "some members of the public have advocated for a more explicit regulatory standard on the relationship between livestock, particularly dairy animals, and grazing land." This does not accurately represent the four years of work that the organic dairy community has invested in studying the issue, reaching consensus and advocating to the NOP with a unified position that is both practical and retains the integrity of the organic label (see http://www.nodpa.com/in_NOP_comments_june6_2008.shtml).

We have no idea what is in the rule, although it's difficult to think that NOP and the USDA would not follow the written recommendations we have from all sectors of the industry. Of course, there are many rumors, one of which is that the proposed rule would reverse the producers', industry and consumers recommendation and change it from a minimum of 30% DM from pasture to make it a maximum of 70% dry matter from

INDUSTRY NEWS

Producers Take a Pay Cut

continued from page 1

deliberate manipulation of the idealism and trust of intimidated producers and their families.

How many of the employees of these companies have taken a pay cut; had to give up their health insurance; and are accepting government and community assistance to feed their families? Organic dairy producers' costs have risen dramatically and their gross profit has shrunk. That is a pay cut for producers! The Milk:Feed ratio* is a key indicator for the profitability of conventional milk and that has moved from 3.19 (break-even) in August 2007 to 1.89 (not economical) in August 2008. With the dramatic change in Milk:Feed ratio, organic producers are losing as much as 60 cents per gallon of milk and feed costs continue to increase.

Danone (owner of Stonyfield) and Unilever (owner of Ben & Jerry) are not suffering; they are getting more efficient and paying higher prices for milk in Europe. Why not here? I'm sure Dean Foods (owners of Horizon and Organic Cow), HP Hood LLC with National Dairy Holdings (licensees of the Stonyfield brand) and Organic Valley can do the same and increase producer pay-price. Perhaps it's time for all producers

non-pasture feed.

NODPA is working with all sides of the industry to prepare for the publication of the proposed rule on the Federal Register. We will provide the best possible information to all producers about the implications of the proposed rule, assistance with the measurement of DM of pasture and how we can best respond to the NOP with a united voice of all producers nationwide.

NODPA is continuing its advocacy work of pushing the rule forward as quickly as possible. NODPA remains continuously available to answer questions, especially around the economic significance of having a strong, quantifiable rule that can be implemented, ensuring the integrity of organic certification.

NODPA and FOOD Farmers continue to work with the National Organic Coalition, Horizon Organic, OTA and other organic processors and NGO supporters to represent producer interests, the interest of consumers and organic integrity moving forward.

It should not take four years to ensure that there is a level playing field for all producers, whether large, vertically integrated companies or smaller family farms. Once we have the Pasture Rule in place, all producers can compete equally in providing a high quality product that meets consumers' expectations and ensures the premium necessary to keep ALL organic dairies economically sustainable. ♦

to stand together and have a milk boycott as they did in Europe where they appealed directly to the end consumer –supermarket buyers and consumers.

The current attitude of all the processors is to put the immediate burden of increasing costs onto the producer and leave the solution to the producer. Is the future in large dairies that have economies of scale and can afford to keep production at low pay-prices? Perhaps the future is company-owned dairies that are vertically integrated or dairies that are partners with companies? Will that leave family farms with fewer cows exposed to further exploitation by the brands and processing companies? What does that mean for producers' ability to negotiate for an adequate pay-price?

At the retail level there is a lot of marketing around organic milk to discriminate between the brands and most brands sell on the basis that producers are getting a fair deal. A fair deal means a systems approach to determining a farmgate price. It does NOT mean that companies can finance the expansion of their retail market on the backs of a low pay price for farm families. ♦

* Pounds of 16% Mixed Dairy Feed equal in value to 1 pound of Whole Milk (\$20/cwt). The price of commercial prepared dairy feed is based on current U.S. prices received for corn, soybeans, and alfalfa. The modeled feed uses 51% corn, 8% soybeans, and 41% percent alfalfa.

Classified Ads

Personnel

Second year farm/garden apprentice seeking work on a VT/NH dairy farm. I have hand-milking experience only and am eager to learn to use milking machines. I have skills in basic fencing, carpentry, and tractor skills. Enthusiastic to work hard and learn, especially to make hay. Please email: ash.kay.lee@gmail.com

My former employee is looking for work on a dairy farm. He has three years experience on dairies milking and cleaning barn with skidsteer. Hard working and honest. 607.286.9362.

Farm hand/milker need immediately. Must be able to run skidsteer and payloader. Pay depending on exp. Housing available. Contact Bridget. Email: briamar2@aol.com. Phone: 207.907.5073. Location: Charleston, Maine.

Livestock

For sale: 10 open or short bred Jersey heifers, organic grazing herd in Vermont, for more information on animals and price call Chester Abbot at (802)728-4282.

Certified Organic Registered Jersey and Registered Ayrshire cows for sale. Some due this fall. Excellent cows with great genetics. Herd SCC averages 150,000. About 15-20 cows available. Farmer needs to make room in the barn. Asking \$2,500 each if purchased as a group. Please contact Brian and Patty Wilson directly at 802-948-2675.Farm is in Shoreham, VT (Addison Co)

NODPA Check-Off Producer Milk Check Assignment Form

I, _____ (please print name on your milk check) request that _____ (name of company that sends your milk check) deduct the sum of : (choose one below)

___ \$0.02/cwt to support the work of NODPA

___ \$0.05/cwt to support the work of NODPA (the amount that has been deducted in the past for national milk marketing but has now been returned to you as an organic producer if you have applied for the exemption.) If you need assistance in applying for the exemption, check here _____

___ \$0.07/cwt (the \$.05 marketing check-off plus \$0.02) as an assignment from my milk check starting the first day of _____, 200___. The total sum will be paid monthly to NODPA. This agreement may be ended at any time by the producer by sending a written request to their milk buyer with a copy to NODPA. Milk handlers please send payments to:

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA), Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342.

Producer signature: _____ Date: _____

Producer #/member #: _____ # of milking cows: _____

Farm Address: _____

Herd of 60 Holstein/Jersey crosses for sale. 19 heifers; 6 fresh and 13 bred, due in October @ \$2000 each; 20 cows @ \$2000 each; 20 cows @ \$950 each; 1 Norweigen Red heifer, exposed @ \$1000. Averaging 53 lbs./cow. Low somatic cell count. May consider straight through price on whole herd. Call Todd @ 1-802-644-5990 or 1-802-644-2654

Organic Dairy Herd for Sale: 46 cows: Holsteins, Holstein/Jersey crosses, Brown Swiss crosses. Spring/Fall calving herd (50:50). 36 heifers: calves on milk to short bred heifers. Holland and New Zealand genetics. Very good grazing herd; low grain, high forage herd. Would like to sell cows as a group and heifers as a group. Contact: Tim Barrows, Vergennes, VT, 802-475-2273 email: pastureview@gmavt.net

Feed

Organic Hay: Certified organic dry hay for sale 1st cut, 2nd cut available. all stored under cover. Transportation services available. Southeastern NH. Phone: 603-742-4084.

First and Second Cutting Grass Hay in small square or large roud bales. Delivery available in approximately 8 ton loads. \$150 to \$225 per ton at our farm depending on type of hay. Contact Carl Crispell. Email: cac22@cornell.edu. Phone: 607-272-4065. Location: Ithaca, New York

Hay: Certified Organic. Second cutting. Round bales 700-800lbs each. Cut on time/good quality. Alfalfa/timothy mix. Contact Steve and Valerie Frerichs. Email: organichay@live.com. Location: Wilson, NY

High quality baleage for sale, Tom & Sally Brown, Groton, NY, 607/898-4401.

Equipment

Large capacity electric butterchurn. 40 liter (10 US gallons) total churning capacity 1300.00. Email for photos at vinceromano@epix.net. Contact Vince Romano. Email: vinceromano@epix.net. Phone: 570.709.2889. Location: Brodheadsville, PA.

Become a Subscribing NODPA Member!

By becoming a subscribing member you will receive NODPA News and help support the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance. NODPA depends on your 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 _____

Mail this form with a check payable to NODPA to: Ed Maltby, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342. Thank you.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

From the MODPA President

*By Darlene Coehoorn, MODPA President
Rosendale, Wisconsin*

It’s proving to be another interesting year in the Midwest; we have seen everything from major flooding to drought and everything in between. Some farms have gone from spring flooding and delayed planting to summer drought. Everyone seems to need a long warm fall to bring their crops to maturity. Small grains have yielded from good to very poor sometimes on the same farm, depending on the field conditions. We are seeing increased input costs with less than expected or no yields. All of this is happening with very little response from the larger processors on the pay price. There are existing organic farmers who are just giving up and selling the cows or reverting back to conventional production as well as transitioning farmers reversing or stalling transition. These factors really demonstrate the need to produce all of your own feed to

About MODPA

The Midwest Organic Dairy Producer Alliance (MODPA) represents organic dairy producers in WI, MN, ND, SD, IA, NE, KS, MO, IL, IN, OH, & MI with the mission “to promote communication and networking for the betterment of all Midwest organic dairy producers and enhance a sustainable farmgate price.” Objectives are:

1. To ensure a fair and sustainable farm gate price.
2. Keep family farms viable for future generations.
3. Promote ethical, ecological and humane farming practices.
4. Networking among producers of all organic commodities.
5. Promote public policy, research and education in support of organic agriculture.

MODPA Board

Wisconsin Darlene Coehoorn, President Viewpoint Acres Farm N5878 Hwy C Rosendale, WI 54974 viewpoint@dotnet.com Phone: 920-921-5541	bdrinkman@hotmail.com Phone: 715-265-4631
Jim Greenberg, Vice-President EP 3961 Drake Avenue Stratford, WI 54484 greenbfrms@tznnet.com Phone: 715-687-8147	John Kiefer, Director S10698 Troy Rd, Sauk City, WI 53583 taofarmer@direcway.com Phone: 608- 544-3702
John Kinsman, Secretary E2940 County Road K, La Valle, WI 53941 Phone: 608- 986-3815 Fax: 608-986-2502	Michigan Ed Zimba Zimba Dairy 7995 Mushroom Rd DeFord, MI 48729 zimbadaairy@tband.net Phone: 989-872-2680
Bruce Drinkman, Treasurer 3253 150th Ave Glenwood City, WI 54013	Ohio Ernest Martin, Director 1720 Crum Rd, Shiloh, OH 44878 Phone and Fax: 419-895-1182

better control costs. Feed that is less than top quality is still better than no organic feed.

This situation also increases the need for farmer involvement in marketing their production. Becoming informed and involved in the process is the best way to attempt to meet the on-farm needs. Becoming involved and communicating with other farmers adds strength to your voice; if we are all saying the same thing it is much harder to ignore. We cannot sit back and rely on someone else to do it or just wait for something to happen, we need to make it happen while there is still time. We cannot continue to let others be our voice, because if they give up we have no voice. The time is now or there is no future for farms our size.

I’m asking for all who read this to become involved in the process. Farmers need to join the ODPAS and other groups and speak to their processors so they know and understand the on-farm situation. We also need to be more involved in the process to ensure the pasture and last 1/3 rule go forward. Consumers need to speak with their dollars, becoming aware of the brand and product purchased, whatever the product, knowing that it meets all their expectations. Processors need to respect their producers’ needs along with the consumers’ expectations, and they need to step up and demand the long overdue pasture and last 1/3 regulations as this will ensure viability for all. ♦

Become a Member of MODPA!

Member dues are \$35 per year, for which you receive our newsletter and become part of our team working for the best interests of all organic dairies.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Certified Organic Dairy? Yes No # of cows: _____

Transitioning: _____

I wish to support MODPA (check whatever applies):

___ By becoming a state rep or director.

___ By supporting MODPA with a %/cwt check-off.

___ By providing a donation to support the work of MODPA. \$ _____ enclosed.

**Please send this form to: Darlene Coehoorn, MODPA Treasurer
N5868, Cty Hwy C, Rosendale, WI 54974**

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)

c/o Ed Maltby
300 Keets Road
Deerfield, MA 01342

Prsrt Std
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Permit 183
Turners Falls, MA

CALENDAR

continued from page 36

Panel Discussions Include:

- The Organics industry - current status and where it is going.
- Cost of production - labor, fuel, grain, hay, issues discussed.
- Is it milk or is it more? - what are the facts.

For more information contact Sharon Sinko, Phone: 541-396-2409 or email: sinko@dishmail.net

October 27 & 28, 2008

NODPA's 8th Annual Field Days Event and Annual Producer Meeting Holiday Inn, Auburn, NY

Reconnect with friends and find out what is going on in the organic dairy world. The annual producer meeting on Monday evening will be an opportunity for NODPA farmer members to review the previous year's work and set priorities for NODPA work in 2009-2014. Contact Ed Maltby, 413-772-0444 or email: emaltby@comcast.net

October 28-30, 2008

Understanding Organic and Grazing Herds: Livestock Management and Health Conference

Holiday Inn, Auburn, NY

A continuation of the 2007 Understanding Organics conferences and organized by NOFA-VT and QMPS, this 3-day conference is designed to educate extension personnel, veterinarians, NRCS agents and other professionals working with organic and transitioning livestock producers. For more information, contact Lisa McCrory, lmccrory@together.net, phone: 802-434-4122 or Linda Tikofsky, lg40@cornell.edu, phone: 607-255-8202.



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