

NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Francis Thicke will be the Keynote Speaker At the NODPA Field Days.
See page 20 for details.

Francis and Susan Thicke Radiance Dairy, Fairfield, Iowa

Following Principles of Ecology from Land Management to Renewable Energy Systems

By Lisa McCrory, NODPA News & Web Editor

Located in the Southeast quadrant of Iowa, Francis and Susan own and operate Radiance Dairy, a grass-based organic farm that follows ecological principles in the management of farmland & livestock, the utilization of renewable energy systems for their home and farm, and the production and marketing of their value added dairy products. The Thicks have been farming organically since 1975, got certified in 1992, and moved

to a new farm in 1996 changing it from a crop farm (corn and soybeans) to a grass based enterprise. The Thicks restored the hilly fields to productive pasture, and planted the tillable land to perennial grasses and legumes.

Their hopes are to be self-sufficient some day; growing all the grains and forages that they need for their livestock on their 456 acre of

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Monitoring and Planning Your Forage Grazing System

By Troy Bishopp, presenting Thursday and Friday at the 2011 NODPA Field Days

See page 20 for the complete NODPA Field Days Agenda

In Francis Thicke's new book, *A New Vision for Iowa Food and Agriculture*, he described how we are moving away from an industrial age based on cheap energy and reductionist thinking to a holistic model driven by soil biology, animal power and knowledge intensive systems. "We need foresight, planning and design or be forced to change by default", he said. With this goal in mind, Francis and Susan Thicke have designed their

grass-based dairy operation to mimic nature's ecology and rebuild the soil's ecological capital.

This vision correlates nicely with a new NESARE funded Professional Development Project aptly named "Utilizing Holistic Planned Grazing as a Regenerative Engine for Sustainable Agriculture", administered by the Central New York RC&D Council Inc. This comprehensive grazing training program for

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS: 2011 Field Days

NODPA's 11th Annual Field Days in Cooperstown NY:
Organic Dairy: What does the Future Hold?

“This year’s program at the NODPA Field Days tackles the most pressing issues for organic dairy farmers no matter who you sell your milk to,” says NODPA President Rick Segalla.

The event starts in the morning on the 29th with a tour of Siobhan Griffin’s Raindance Farm, Schenevus, NY in the foothills of the Catskills where she milks 90 cows that graze on 200 acres. Participants will learn about incorporating cheese production into their dairy operation and the process of developing markets, creating products and on-farm cheese processing. Troy Bishopp will be at the farm to show producers how to ‘Read the Landscape.’ Troy is a regional grazing specialist from the Madison Co. NY, SWCD/Upper Susquehanna Coalition. Participants in the workshop will learn how to assess whether their pastures are moving forward or backward in productivity and profitability by

monitoring (assessing) percentage forage ground cover, biological activity, plant species diversity, earthworm and dung beetle populations, and much more.

Following lunch and registration at noon on Thursday, we will kick off the Field Days program with a panel discussion entitled, “Facts and Fiction: Demystifying Private Label Milk” at which Peter Miller, CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley, Northeast Regional Pool Manager, Kelly Shea, WhiteWave Foods, Vice President--Industry Relations & Organic Stewardship, and other invited industry professionals will discuss what we need to know about private label milk and whether it impacts pay price. Next, and new this year, we will experiment with a different format by holding an open producer and participant meeting on Thursday afternoon where we will explore the future of organic dairy and

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the NODPA Desk,
September 2011

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

NODPA’s virtual office was not quite under water these last few weeks but the weather has certainly delayed the publication of this issue of NODPA News, with Lisa McCrory’s farm surrounded by devastation from the heavy flooding that affected Vermont most dramatically, but affected all states on the east coast of the United States. Natural disasters do not discriminate between organic and non-organic land but those of us that choose to farm organically are more deeply affected by fields covered by silt, sink holes in the middle of fields, erosion of banks, hedges and field divisions designed to meet certification standards and to protect from pesticide drift, and years of building organic matter and fertility organically to have it covered by chemical waste from flooding rivers. Some of the losses will be covered by insurance, some by disaster relief, but the intangible wealth of soil fertility cannot be easily replaced. This winter will be tough for many organic dairies that may have lost feed (both harvested and season extenders) and infrastructure to the weather. With little cash reserves after the last few lean years many will be faced with the task of buying feed at exorbitant prices to replace what was lost during the storms, and with only a token seasonal increase in pay price by processors to cover winter costs, profitability, cash flow and return on equity will be threatened.

One of the bright spots for this fall is the upcoming NODPA Field Days on September 29 and 30, 2011 at Cooperstown Beaver Valley Camp and Campsites, Milford, New York. While many will see the organic pig roast and the excellent lunches, breakfast and dinner as the high spot of spending a couple of days with old and new friends, plus an hour or two supporting the hop and grape industry, there is an exciting and relevant agenda. As a membership organization, NODPA structures this meeting both to educate about the issues of the day and to provide time for both formal and informal discussion of the upcoming challenges and opportunities to not only the organic dairy industry but to all of organic and sustainable agriculture. Folks love to use the image of a three legged stool to show how we are all reliant on each other and are all affected by the actions of friends and foes alike. Organic dairy farmers have particular issues that will directly affect them, and NODPA is always an advocate for those issues surrounding a living wage, organic integrity and freedom to farm organically.

We value the conversations and in-person discussions that happen at NODPA Field Days. The time is very well spent in divining the more subtle positions that need to be taken on, for example, issues of policy that are always more grey than black and white. The face to face discussion can help work through

the challenge of when the practicalities of organic farming bang their head against the purism of organic integrity presented by some consumer organizations. Most importantly, looking at each other’s grey, receding hairlines, sharpens our concentration on the necessity of having a profitable industry that will sustain current participants and ATTRACT the next generation of small to mid-size operations.

The Thursday afternoon producer meeting at the Field Days, open to all attendees, will address the issues of supply management and how the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) Foundation for the Future plan will affect the organic industry. The NMPF plan that morphed into Ranking Member of the House Ag Committee Colin Peterson’s (D-MN) draft bill will almost certainly become the initial language for the dairy title of the 2012 (well perhaps 2013!) Farm Bill. There is agreement among all grassroots dairy groups that this plan is heavily biased toward the 30% of dairies that produce 70% of the milk rather than the 70% of producers that produce 30% of the milk. Sacrificing the well proven Milk Income Loss Contract safety net program to an insurance program will provide no relief to small to mid-size dairies, and the stabilization program within the proposed language will have a directly adverse affect on organic dairy. The different marketing and pricing structure of organic dairy makes the ideas proposed by NMPF, and their underlying belief that ‘Milk is Milk,’ harmful to organic dairy. As fluid non-organic milk sales slowly decline, organic sales are increasing. The conditions for determining the pay price for organic are very different from the Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) so the criteria used to trigger supply management controls for non-organic could well happen at a time of growth in organic dairy, an area of agriculture that is both innovative and good for the environment, both areas that NMPF claims to support. It is clear that the organic dairy industry should unite around a request to be exempt from the stabilization program; but should we also have to give up MILC payments to organic dairy producers which was so important to organic dairies in 2008-2010 (we are tax payers, too)? While organic milk that is balanced within the non-organic market would obviously have to pay any penalties in a supply management situation, if organic wants an exemption , shouldn’t it have a supply management program to balance its own supply? The Federal government already recognizes organic milk as different from non-organic milk (and certifies it as such) and the milk is marketed independently from the FMMO. Why should organic pay into the FMMO ‘pool’ if it provides no market protection to producers? Since the FMMO was designed to protect producers pay price, the money that is currently paid into the pool by processors (preventing them from paying a higher pay price) should be paid directly to organic producers by the FMMO to stabilize farm incomes.

Looking forward to diverse and passionate conversation, good food and calm weather at the NODPA Field Days. See you there!

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Monitoring and Planning Your Forage Grazing System

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conservation planning agency professionals, extension educators, grassland advocates and farmer mentors throughout Vermont, New York and Pennsylvania also seeks to teach practical intensive knowledge to folks who help farmers in their community. To learn more go to: <http://mysare.sare.org/mySARE/ProjectReport.aspx?do=viewProj&pn=ENE10-115>

This passion to learn more about the dynamics of farmstead decision-making, grass-based profit strategies, natural systems and grazing planning has led to a record amount (45) of participants who want to build local grazing programs and be a leader in “meeting farmers where they are” and in the relationship business. They are acquiring intensive knowledge in helping initiate farm family goal setting, grazing management and planning, grazing infrastructure design, effective communication skills, animal behavior, and reading the biology of the land.

The “reading of the land” sessions are now underway with many puzzled neighbors wondering why a bunch of grown-ups are throwing and chasing darts. Like forage and soil testing, biological monitoring of your pastures is a yearly tool to help you make



decisions towards what you want for your land. Generally you do this baseline measurement of biological activity and plant species composition during the growing season (June thru September) by monitoring fields you want to change.

You're probably thinking why should I do this? I had similar questions especially as a veteran grazier. It took a dynamic group of holistic management educators to show me how much practical

knowledge I was overlooking regarding my pasture. This activity forced me down on my hands and knees to really get intimate with the soil surface. We used a chart adapted from Holistic Management International that measured observations around the dart strike. We recorded soil surface and biological activity items such as: Amount of bare soil, how much and kind of litter, earthworm, insect and hoof signs, plant species, age and condition, soil capping and manure distribution.

I also took a picture of the sward and wrote down how it was managed and the date so I wouldn't forget the information on next year's throw. After 3 years of monitoring my specific grazing management with longer rest periods, I have increased my earthworm numbers to 96%, decreased bare soil (10% down to 4%) and added more plant and litter cover, broadened my plant species composition (grass 44%, legume 32%, forbs 24%) and have a manure pat within 3 feet of the dart, on 53% of the samples.

What does it all mean? Well it indicates I'm moving forward towards my goals of increasing diversity and biological life. My new goal is to expand this annual monitoring to include all my fields and see how this matches up with the soil and forage test readings. Basically, this gives me practical farmer knowledge to improve the viability of my grass-based operation and help with decision-making without needing a GPS unit, although it would be useful to add these dynamics into the computer tool.

To accomplish my own grassland management goals, help local grazing customers and teach agency professionals, I also needed to



plan and monitor grazing systems much better. With mentoring from some forward-thinking, very successful farmers and ranchers, the daily grazing chart has become another important tool in managing nature's ecology with ruminants. To say grazing planning is now a state of mind would be an understatement.

I enjoy the 12 month grazing planning and monitoring chart as much as a good game of chess. You have to think about the moves (paddock shifts), measure pasture dry matter, monitor recovery periods and rainfall while adjusting the animal's ration in hopes of winning Mother Nature's respect. This relatively simple piece of paper hanging in the barn with complimentary farm map is a great

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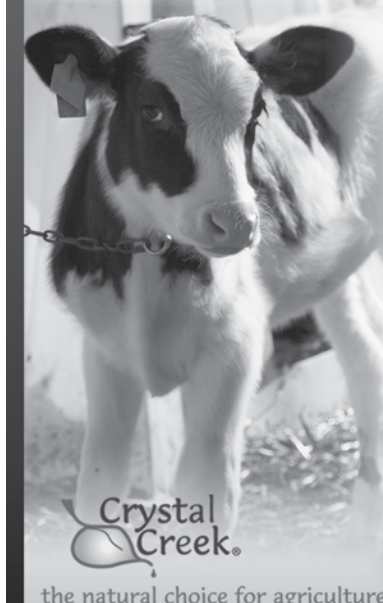
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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Monitoring and Planning Your Forage Grazing System

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visual that almost calls you over to think about making adjustments to the plan. Many are using this tool as a diary but I prefer to use it to plan out a month or twos' worth of grazing activity.

It does take practice and a little mentoring to get in the planning groove but I find it to be a profitable management strategy. It also compliments the organic pasture rule requirements by allowing the certifier to "at a glance" see how the pasture system and animals are functioning. Another caveat of the visual plan is it provides an educational opportunity to your customers in learning how you manage your ecological system and provide great nutrition straight off grass.

As Mr. Thicke said, "Agriculture is moving into a knowledge intensive era". The sharing of practical experience, new and old ideas with the appropriate research will help us work with nature and manifest the understanding of our soil's ecological capital. This is the new vision for success. See ya in Cooperstown.

For more info on accessing the grazing tools mentioned, go to <http://www.cnyrcd.org/planned-grazing-participants/>. To order grazing charts call Brian Reaser (607) 687-3553 or (570)716-4061 at the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District.



Troy Bishopp manages Bishopp Family Farm in Deansboro, NY; works for the Madison Co. SWCD/Upper Susquehanna Coalition as their regional grazing specialist; is a project leader for a NESARE funded professional development grazing training project through the CNY RC&D Council in Norwich and a Farmer Communications coach. He can be reached at (315) 824-9849 or troy-bishopp@verizon.net and maintains this website: www.thegrasswhisperer.com



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A CENTURY OF COOPERATION



ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic community advocates or circular firing squad – why we need them and who benefits?

By Ed Maltby, Executive Director, NODPA

When you receive an action alert by email, a mailing with a request for response, or an email/text/facebook/twitter/US mail asking for money to "Protect the Integrity of Organics," "Save the Sky from Falling," "Push Back the Encroachment of Corporate America in Organics," what is your response? Perhaps they will all end up in the recycling bin with a muttered comment of, "haven't these ***** folks got better things to do?," or "they are only looking to get a salary twice my farming income," or "organics doesn't need this."

If you subscribe to the belief that your milk processor will protect your interests when it comes to assessing and determining changes in policy and regulation, you will probably discard all communications and participate only through your processor. Ultimately, this will reflect the interests of their business model in the short term and the interests and involvement of producers in decision-making in the long run. If you are an ardent supporter of one particular advocacy group, then you will wait for their assessment and follow their lead.

The truth of the matter is that we all need to be involved with policy and regulatory decisions, and organics/sustainable agriculture is very lucky to have such a broad range of advocacy groups for an industry that is such a small percentage of total agriculture production. Citizen pressure can and has been the driving force behind virtually every piece of progressive legislation or social program in recent memory. Public policy is nothing but decision-making by governments, and in the United States, government responds to mobilized and organized citizens.

Why should individuals get involved in the development of policy and regulation?

1. It's your money. You pay taxes in many different ways and you get to have a voice on how those taxes are spent.
2. The potential impact of policy is too important. Development of Policy is perhaps the best tool we have for increasing the scope and reach of our efforts to transform the food system.
3. It's an investment in your future. Corporations dedicate resources to research and development. Producers invest in genetics and quality livestock in the hope of increasing yield and profitability. Both of these groups do so because they know that a little money and effort now will reap potentially large rewards in the future.
4. If you don't, someone else will. Often that someone else has interests or goals that are contrary to yours and if you leave it to them, your ideas will never reach the table.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How can you make a difference in such a vast political sea of well-paid lobbyists and Political Action Committees (PAC) that have the ear of decision makers and legislators?

A: Work as a collective voice that can be heard and understood by decision makers.

Q: Does the variety and diversity of organic advocacy groups benefit or detract from the organic community's efforts to influence decision makers?

A: That is the \$60 million question and the answer will vary depending on the issue and the audience. As a community, we need to better understand when we need to put aside our differences in order to provide an effective position that will be heard by regulators and legislators. As individuals, we need to take an active role in organizations that represent our views to ensure that they do not lose sight of the big picture in the fight for turf and money.

Q: How does one choose between the many different tactics that different groups use?

A: Different situations require different tactics and we need to recognize that every approach has a role but not in every situation. Sometimes, the legal option needs to take the lead followed by the media blitz; sometimes the scientific detail and assessments can provide the clarity that emotional media coverage cannot.

One area of confusion is around the proliferation of different groups that are asking for money and purporting to represent your interest. Below, we have divided organizations into artificial groupings to assist people in understanding the role of the different organizations. In reality, all these groups have some role in policy; use the media; work on legal challenges; and work with producers groups. We have grouped a number of organizations to reflect their predominant areas of work and influence.

1. Policy lobbying and advocates centered in DC

Those groups that concentrate on having an effective role in Washington DC usually work together on critical issues that affect all aspects of organic and sustainable agriculture. Examples

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would be the threat to our environment and way of life from GMO’s and drafting of the Farm Bill. In some cases, as with the Farm Bill, this cooperative effort is based on a long history of working together and understanding different priorities. With others, like GMO’s, group consensus is achieved by the committed community organizing of key leaders who are able to cajole and persuade other strong personalities that everyone can benefit by working together.

Groups that have continuous representation in Washington DC include:

A) National Organic Coalition

The National Organic Coalition (NOC) is a national alliance of organizations working to provide a “Washington voice” for farmers, ranchers, environmentalists, consumers and progressive industry members involved in organic agriculture. The coalition operates under the central principle that protecting the stringency and integrity of the national organic standards is necessary:

- To maintain the organic label’s value to consumers;
- To realize the environmental benefits of the organic agricultural system;
- To provide and encourage diversity of participation and fair and equitable access to the organic marketplace; and
- To ensure the long-term economic viability of organic family farmers and businesses.

Further, the Coalition believes that organic agricultural policy must encourage continuous quality improvements, sound stewardship and humane practices. The Coalition is focused on federal organic agricultural policies that promote this mission, including:

- Implementation of and beneficial reforms to the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990
- Implementation of organic and other related provisions of the Farm Bill
- Promotion of policies that seek to reinvigorate public plant and animal breeding to benefit the expansion of organic agriculture.

B) Organic Trade Association

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the membership-based business association for the organic industry in North America. OTA’s mission is to promote and protect organic trade to benefit the environment, farmers, the public, and the economy. OTA envisions organic products becoming a significant part of everyday life, enhancing people’s lives and the environment.

OTA represents businesses across the organic supply chain and addresses all things organic, including food, fiber/textiles, per-

sonal care products, and new sectors as they develop. Over sixty percent of OTA trade members are small businesses.

C) Organic Farming and Research Foundation (OFRF)

OFRF’s mission is to foster the improvement and widespread adoption of organic farming systems.

They accomplish this by:

- Sponsoring organic farming research and education & outreach projects through their competitive grant-making program;
- Disseminating the results of OFRF-funded research and education projects to organic farmers and to growers interested in adopting organic production systems; and
- Educating the public and decision-makers about organic farming issues.

OFRF’s integrated strategy of grantmaking, policy, education and networking initiatives supports organic farmers’ immediate information needs while moving the public and policymakers toward greater investment in organic farming systems.

D) National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC)

NSAC is an alliance of grassroots organizations that advocates for federal policy reform to advance the sustainability of agriculture, food systems, natural resources, and rural communities. NSAC’s vision of agriculture is one where a safe, nutritious, ample, and affordable food supply is produced by a legion of family farmers who make a decent living pursuing their trade, while protecting the environment, and contributing to the strength and stability of their communities.

NSAC member groups advance common positions to support small and mid-size family farms, protect natural resources, promote healthy rural communities, and ensure access to healthy, nutritious foods by everyone. By bringing grassroots perspectives to the table normally dominated by big business, NSAC levels the playing field and gives voice to sustainable and organic farmers. To do this work, NSAC:

- Gathers input from sustainable and organic farmers and ranchers, and from a diverse group of grassroots farm, food, rural, and conservation organizations that work directly with farmers;
- Develops policy through participatory issue committees that involve NSAC member organizations and allies;
- Provides direct representation in Washington, D.C. on behalf of its membership to members of Congress and federal administrative offices, such as USDA and EPA; and
- Builds the power of the sustainable agriculture movement by strengthening the capacity of its member groups to promote citizen engagement in the policy process.

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RESEARCH & EDUCATION

SARE Comprehensive Grazing Course: Turning Teachers Into Learners

By Jenn Colby, Pasture Program Coordinator, UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Through a SARE-funded project, partners in multiple states have joined together to deliver a training course focused on comprehensive, holistic grazing planning. While past models of grazing based on calculated average numbers and daily observation have led in many cases to improvements in water and soil quality and financial success, this model includes a focus on planning around farm family goals and needs, as well as new techniques and field-based practices. Groups of trainees in three locations (NY, PA, VT) have embarked on a six-training series taking place over 18-20 months, with the requirement that each trainee work with 2-3 farmers in the field concurrent with the training experience. Trainees are working with all types of farms, including dairy cow, dairy goat, and diversified livestock farms.

The VT training group, which I coordinate through the UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture’s Pasture Program, includes trainees from VT, NY, MA, CT and NH. These trainees range from UVM Extension personnel to NRCS/NRCD staff, agricultural consultants, and farmers. The trainers have included project coordinator and NY farmer Troy Bishopp, NRCS conservation planner and Holistic Management educator, Phil Metzger, VT farmer Eric Noel and others. Training sessions have rotated throughout the state at several farms to vary driving locations, farm experiences and host farmer participation. As one host farmer described, “I thought yesterday’s get together was great! I especially liked the part about the dart and what we found and what we might want to do there. Lots to think about.”

We have delivered two formal trainings and added a farm-based discussion group to talk about overgrazing, planning grazing and performing biological monitoring. The group has grown from the initial trainees to additional service providers, legislators/policymakers, training location hosts (farmers) who would like to learn more about these methods. They are very engaged. After attending one of the training sessions, a representative from SARE had this comment to share with us: “Expertise may take years of experience to develop, but I think your project and its approach are well designed to bring new holistic planning practitioners - even some of your experienced planners are new to the holistic approach - to a proficient level where they can work effectively and confidently with farmers, and begin to build the experience that can lead them toward expertise.” As a site coordinator, and a participant, I am very excited to see that this process is turning teachers into learners. In my experience, when we are all learning together, we build



NESARE PDP Participants from PA and NY

a stronger network of support, curiosity and appreciation. Grazing is one of those things that takes a few minutes to learn, and a lifetime to master. With a grazing basics presentation and some books, many farmers new to grazing take the plunge. In the first season, they may watch the grass and animal impacts with an intense eye, but over the years as patterns develop they will likely relax. Many graziers would like to pretend that grazing is all about flexibility and trying new things, but we are all human and some degree of repetition brings with it comfort and stability. There’s nothing wrong with comfort and stability, as long as it doesn’t interfere with our goals...and that’s where this comprehensive grazing course, Troy’s willingness to embrace challenge, and our brave trainees come together to serve farmers and help them meet those goals.

First, we started by learning how to work with a farm family to help identify and articulate their farm family goals. On the surface, this seems so simple and obvious as to be ridiculous, but in practice it’s the very hardest thing to do. First of all, it takes time which is precious to both farmer and advisor. At a time when agencies and organizations have shrinking budgets, taking time to work with an individual farmer for long periods isn’t typically viewed as being the most efficient choice. For the farmer, there is a constant struggle for “working” time vs. “planning” time. “Planning” time isn’t perceived as being productive time, even though the act of planning can actually mean the farm is more productive, more financially secure and creates a higher quality of life for the farm family. These external (and internal) forces and perceptions make it hard to find or make the time to sit and talk together. Secondly, it’s hard to ask personal questions without some time together getting to know one another first. Questions like, “as you look around your farm, what things excite you?” or “why do you want to direct market?” or “what do you want your community to look like after you are gone?”. These questions seem simple on the surface, but they reach deeply into who we are as people; questions of core values, life, death and legacy. Essential to this goal-setting process is separating production amounts and articulating what a farmer does not want from what the farm family is actually working toward.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Natural Gas Exploration and its Impact on Organic Agriculture

By Lisa McCrory, NODPA News and Web Editor



Panelists James (Chip) Northrup (involved in the oil and gas industry for about 30 years, certified organic producer); Lisa Engelbert (NOFA-NY Certification & organic producer); and Paul Allen (PA organic dairy farmer) will share their views and experiences.

To provide the readers/Field Days attendees with some basic information on Natural Gas Exploration, otherwise known as Fracking or Shale Gas Development, we are providing you with a basic history of the practice along with potential issues for organic dairy producers. Thanks go to Chip Northrup for his help in pulling this information together.

The United States east coast has a geological formation called Marcellus Shale; a geological formation named for a rock outcropping near Marcellus, NY and covering some 54,000 square miles. This area spreads over eastern Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia, and Ohio. Within this formation, there will be “hot spots” of gas productivity, but most areas will not likely be productive. Only significant exploration can determine where the productive areas are. In order to release the natural gas, the rock trapping the hydro-

carbons needs to be porous and the Marcellus Shale is less porous than other types of sedimentary rock formations. Drilling a vertical well into a shale formation only draws the gas from the immediate proximity of the well, so though we have known of this natural gas deposit for years and years, getting to it has been a challenge – that is, until the introduction of a process known today as Hydraulic Fracturing or ‘Fracking’.

What is Hydraulic Fracturing?

Hydraulic fracturing is the process of fracturing rock to stimulate the flow of oil, gas or water from a reservoir. How does the Fracking Process work? Steel casings are placed into a well at depths of 1,000 – 4,000 feet to protect water supplies from being polluted. Cement is then placed in the space between the drilled hole and the end of the first steel casing. This process is continued until the desired depth has been reached. Using horizontal drilling technology, fracking fluids are pumped into the well at high enough pressure to make the shale rock fracture and for the trapped oil and gas to escape. Each drilling company has a different combination of materials in its fracking fluid, though over 99% of the fluid is water. To keep the cracks open so that gas or

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

In Memory of Richard Dutil

Article provided by the Dutil Family

The family of Richard Eugene Dutil sorrowfully and joyfully acknowledge his passing, knowing that he is in the arms of our Lord Jesus, on August 5, 2011. Richard was born on November 1, 1952, in Barre, Vt., the son of the late Placide and Blandine (Bedard) Dutil. He was 58 years young at his untimely death, due to an automobile accident. He had just finished having lunch with his wife of 36 years, when he was traveling over the mountain to his business in Bethel, VT.

Richard was born and raised in the Barre, Vt., area. He attended St. Monica’s Elementary School and graduated from Marian High School in 1970. He furthered his education at the University of Vermont, was a member of Phi Delta Theta Fraternity, and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Engineering in 1974. Following graduation, he was employed by Beacon Feeds in Castleton, Vt., and moved to Brandon, Vt., in 1978. In 1982, he became salesperson and manager of Depot Farm Supply in Leicester Junction, Vt.; eventually becoming owner of the business in 2000. He and his wife, Jackie, purchased, lived on and ran Red Jam Farm for 11 years in the Arnold District area at the same time of his other employment. Work and love went hand in hand.

In 2002, he expanded into the organic feed business by purchasing a former feed plant in Bethel, Vt., now called Green Mountain Feeds, which is co-owned and operated by his son, Eric. Both feed plants will continue to serve their agricultural communities in Vt., N.H., N.Y., Maine and Conn.

Rick was a very active member in community service, and had been since his childhood. His love beyond his family and friends extended to the church as a lector, Eucharistic minister and steward of St. Mary’s in Brandon and St. Agnes in Leicester Junction. He was past president and member of the Feed Dealers Association, current president of Vermont Lions Charities and an active member of the Brandon/Forest Dale Lions Club for 33 years.



Rick Dutil & His Wife Jacqueline

While serving the Lions Club, he received a Melvin Jones Fellow Award in 1998 and Lion of the Year Award in 2010. It is his family’s wish that a memorial scholarship in Rick’s name be established that will benefit a student with a love of service, The Richard Dutil “WE SERVE” Scholarship of Vermont Lions Charities.

He married his soul mate, Jacqueline (Muncil), on October 17, 1975, at St. Monica’s Church in Barre, Vt. They shared 36 years with three wonderful children together. He is survived by his wife, Jacqueline, of Brandon; daughter Shelly, married to Jay Johnson, of South Burlington; their son, Eric, of Brandon; and their youngest daughter, Ashley, married to Matthew Kotylo, of Arlington, Texas, and their son, Carl Joseph Kotylo.

He is survived by his sister, Rosemay Roy and her husband, Marcel, of Barre, Vt.; brothers, Leo and his wife, Joyce, of Barre, Norman and his wife, Julie, of Barre, Ronald of Northfield, Vt.; and many nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family and friends.

He is predeceased by his parents, Placide and Blandine Dutil; his sister, Prescilla Cote; and his granddaughter, Addison Blandine Kotylo.

Contributions in Rick’s memory may be made to Vermont Lions Charities, c/o John Sprague Treasurer, PO Box 266, South Strafford, VT 05070; The Brandon/Forest Dale Lions Club, PO Box 364, Brandon, VT 05733; or the St. Mary’s and St. Agnes Renovation Fund, St. Mary’s Rectory, 38 Carver St., Brandon, VT 05733.



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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Forward Thinking North
Ferrisburgh Farm Named Vermont
Dairy Farm of the Year

JD and Cheryl DeVos, recipients of the 2011 Vermont Dairy Farm of the Year Award take a break from their work at Kimball Brook Farm in North Ferrisburgh.

Burlington--A North Ferrisburgh farm family that plans to take their certified organic dairy to the next level by bottling and selling their own milk has been named the Vermont Dairy Farm of the Year for 2011. The award is presented annually by University of Vermont Extension and the Vermont Dairy Industry Association, in cooperation with the New England Green Pastures Program. JD DeVos and his wife, Cheryl, received this prestigious award for their overall excellence in dairying including their high-quality milk production; outstanding herd, crop and pasture management; and sound conservation practices. The latter also earned them recognition as the 2010 Otter Creek Conservation Farmer of the Year. The DeVoses operate Kimball Brook Farm, which has been in JD's family since 1968. They purchased it from his parents, John and Sue DeVos, in 1997, transitioning from a conventional farm to organic six years ago. Today they are one of the largest organic dairy operations in the state. The farmers currently are in the process of establishing Green Mountain Organic Creamery in Hinesburg to bottle their organic milk to sell locally. Once viable, they plan to purchase milk from other Vermont organic dairy farms. They milk around 220



PHOTO: Peggy Manahan/UVM Extension

Holstein, Jersey and Jersey-Holstein cross cows with a rolling herd average of 18,000 pounds. They consistently produce top quality milk, which has earned them numerous milk quality awards from Horizon Organic, where they ship their milk. The dairy herd is housed in a free-stall barn with access to pasture seven months of the year. Dry cows and heifers six months of age and older are kept at a second farm, also located in North Ferrisburgh. The dairy farmers grow 100 acres of organic corn, averaging 15 tons of silage per acre, and 550 acres of organic hay, averaging 3.5 tons of haylage per acre for feed for their animals. The family, which includes sons Josh, Ryan and Jack and daughter Hilary, will be honored at Eastern States Exposition in W. Springfield, Mass., in September, and the Vermont Dairy Industry Association banquet at the Vermont Farm Show in Barre in January.

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RESEARCH & EDUCATION

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To find eOrganic Dairy resources, go to www.extension.org and click on Organic Agriculture Home on the left, just under the Home Page icon.

1. Video: Calculating Paddock
Size on Organic Dairy Pastures

eOrganic authors:

Sarah Flack, Sarah Flack Consulting
Amanda Gervais, University of Vermont Extension

Introduction

In this video, offered by the eOrganic Dairy Team, grazing and

organic certification expert Sarah Flack demonstrates how to calculate paddock size and stocking rates for pastures an organic dairy farm. Webpage address: www.extension.org/pages/60289/video:-calculating-paddock-size-on-organic-dairy-pastures

2. Webinar: Stockpiling Forages to Extend
the Grazing Season on Your Organic Dairy

eOrganic author:

Laura Paine, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Introduction

Winter feed is a livestock farmer's biggest expense. Extending the grazing season using stockpiling can cut those costs by 20% or more. Stockpiling forage is a practice that allows pastures to grow for use at a later time, typically to extend the grazing season into the early winter months. In this webinar, Laura Paine will describe how best to stockpile forages, including forage species that do well under this practice, when to start stockpiling, and other management considerations. Webpage address: www.extension.org/pages/59789/stockpiling-forages-to-extend-the-grazing-season-on-your-organic-dairy-webinar-by-eorganic

About the Presenter

Laura Paine is a Grazing and Organic Agriculture Specialist for the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. There she helps develop markets for organic and grass-fed products.

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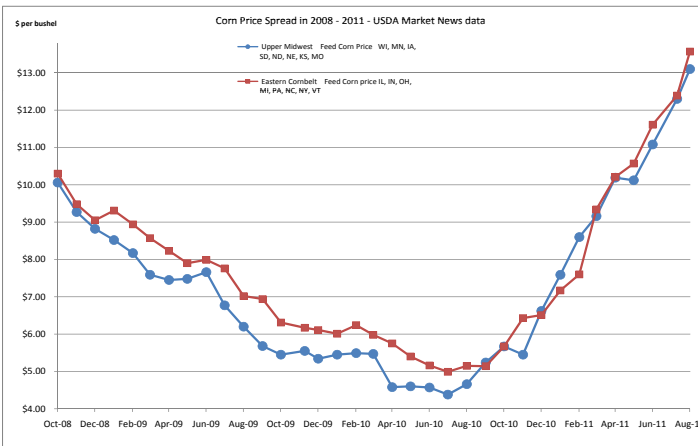
ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic dairy retail, pay and feed price update, September 2011

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

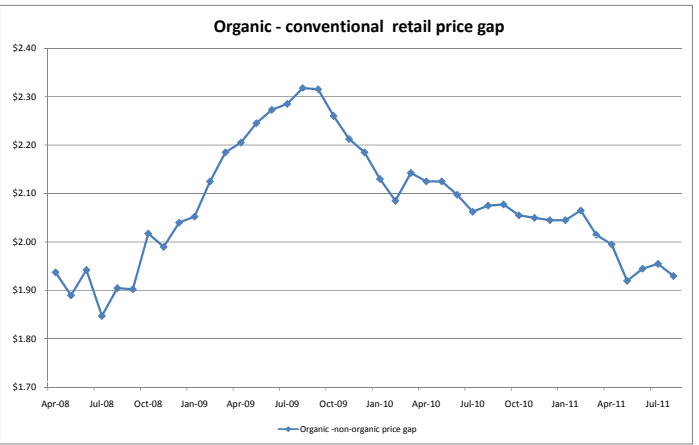
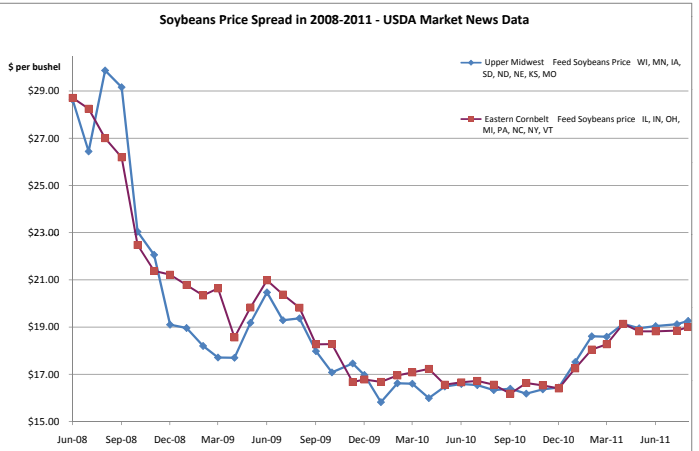
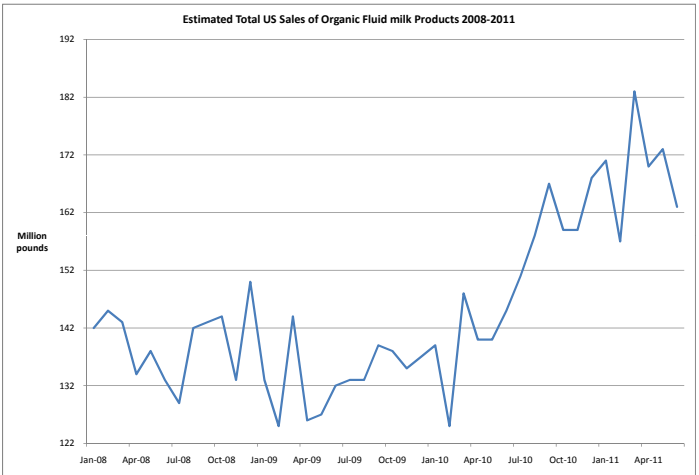
Highlights: July milk production up 0.8%, Most of NE/Upper mid-west down, Vermont up 1.4%, Class III prices surge to \$21.50, corn up to \$7.25, milk feed ratio at 1.91 (Bob Parsons Extension Ag Economist – Professor, Vermont). Bob Parsons is talking about non-organic milk with a projected farmgate price of \$22-24 per cwt and a declining retail consumption of fluid milk.

For organic we have an average farmgate price in the northeast (includes components) of \$28-30 per cwt, increasing sales of fluid milk on a year over year basis of 22% (highest June sales of fluid milk ever recorded), lower retail price gap between organic and non-organic (average of \$1.93/ half gallon), both branded and private label milk selling as low as \$2.50/half gallon with in-store specials and competition to sign producers, especially in New York state. But for organic production we have a milk:feed ratio of approximately 1.4 for organic milk compared to 2.3 for June 2010. Although the milk feed ratio is increasingly not an accurate reflection of profitability it is still one measurement that can be consistently applied and one that lenders use (lenders like to see a ratio averaging 3.0).



Corn prices are exceeding 2008 levels and supply is increasingly tight as the non-organic price competes directly with organic. In many cases availability is more critical than price and producers need to be looking for alternatives to feeding grain in the form of season extenders as the quality of pelleted feed will vary as mills look for alternatives to the higher priced corn. The increase in price of small grains has varied and the price for soybeans has remained relatively stable because many food grade soybeans have been sold on the feed

market due to lagging food grade demand. According to the recent crop production report, corn production is up four percent from 2010, soybeans are down eight percent from 2010, while wheat is down one percent from July's projections. Some organic grain farms are reportedly transitioning to non-GMO crops to increase yields and meet the overseas needs of consumers who now purchase more non-GMO than organic, due to the state of the global economy. This unpredictable situation may be aggravated by the recent de-certification of a large organic supplier in Canada and increased demand from large poultry operations. ♦



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- In New York, contact David Hardy at (608) 479-1200 or david.hardy@organicvalley.coop.
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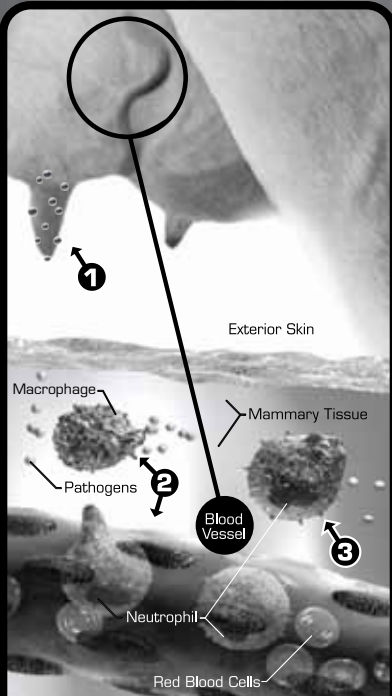


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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS: 2011 Field Days

Private label milk- a scourge or a necessity?

Overview by NODPA Staff

NODPA's 11th Annual Field Days in Cooperstown NY: Organic Dairy: What does the Future Hold?

“The growth of private label brands was probably simultaneous with the growth of Trader Joe’s and Whole Foods,” says David Wright, a senior associate at the Bellevue, Wash.-based Hartman Group, a research and consulting firm that has been tracking organic shopping trends for the past 15 years. “They really pushed the notions of specialized store brands into the spotlight.” “Private label was part of scaling our business,” says Eric Newman, Vice President of Sales

Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative. Early on, the company decided to embrace the private label market, rather than resist it, knowing if it didn’t do so, another supplier would. Now, about one fifth of the co-operative’s sales – or about \$100 million – comes from supplying products to private labels,…… (The Organic Challenge, Sustainable Industries)

“Additionally, in order to fulfill a broader consumer need, there is a need for Private Label (or “store”) brands of organic milk. The Private Label brands often appeal to consumers who are loyal to their local food retailer and buy products featuring their store’s

brand.” (Aurora Organic)

“While some laud private labels for making organics more accessible and increasing the overall appetite for natural foods, others criticize the grocery giants for profiting from the demand created by trailblazing organic brands. Either way, one thing is certain – if small organic producers are to flourish in this market, they have a fight ahead of them.” (Sara Stroud, The Organic Challenge, Sustainable Industries).

“Unfortunately, there is an inherent limitation in private-label organic products: organic consumers tend to want to know where their food is coming from and how it is produced, and private-label products are anonymous by their nature.” (Cornucopia Institute)

“The truth is, the industry has gotten bigger and is maturing in some ways,” says John Foraker, chief executive of Annie’s Homegrown. “The competitive landscape is getting tough for smaller brands. Private label is really bad news if you’re not the number one or number two brand.”

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how producers can ensure their voice is heard on regulatory, policy and marketplace issues.

After Thursday’s education program, attendees will have time to catch up with both new and old friends, and visit the Trade Show during the Social Hour. We will host an Organic Pig Roast for our banquet and afterward will hear from Francis Thicke, our Keynote Speaker. Francis is an organic dairy farmer and soil scientist who has been a leader in the organic community for many years and is very innovative in his farming and marketing practices. He is a leading advocate for sustainable and organic agriculture and recently ran unsuccessfully for the the position of Secretary of Agriculture for Iowa. Francis will challenge us to take more control of our future as organic dairy producers by sharing his own farming experience and vision for the future. Francis Thicke published his book, “A New Vision of Iowa Food and Agriculture” in June, 2010. NODPA’s Annual Meeting will follow the keynote presentation.

A producer-only meeting will be held early Friday morning, where producers can speak about their concerns, challenges and successes without fear of their views hindering their relationship with their processors. Beginning at 9 am, workshops will include “Natural Gas Exploration: What impact will it have on Organic Certification?” with Lisa Engelbert, NOFA-NY organic certifier, James Northrup, energy expert, and Paul Allen, PA organic dairy farmer addressing

the group. After a milk break there will be a panel discussion entitled “Advocacy Groups in the Organic Dairy Marketplace: Why they are important and necessary”. Panel members for this session include Liana Hoodes, National Organic Coalition’s director; organic dairy farmer, Cornucopia Board member and past NOSB member, Kevin Engelbert; OTA Board member, WhiteWave Foods Vice President-Industry Relations & Organic Stewardship Kelly Shea, organic farmer and past candidate for Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, Francis Thicke, and additional organic leaders. Afterward, we will have lunch, during which time the Trade Show will be open, and there will be the ever-popular door prize drawings for products generously donated by NODPA sponsors and trade show participants.

We have devoted the whole afternoon to a production based workshop entitled “Thinking-Man’s Grazing: Learning How to Plan your Grazing for Profit, Production and Success.” This workshop offers practical, hands-on learning experience on grazing plan strategies and will include examples of farms that have applied these strategies. Attendees will learn how to plan their grazing ahead of time to meet their personal production goals. Troy Bishopp, who will lead the presentation, is a grazing consultant, a Holistic Management Educator from the Madison Co. NY SWCD/Upper Susquehanna Coalition, and a project leader for a NESARE funded professional development grazing training project through the CNY RC&D Council in Norwich, NY. ♦



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Featured Speakers



Troy Bishopp:

Troy Bishopp, “The Grass Whisperer” comes to us from Deansboro, NY, and with his family, owns and operates Bishopp Family Farm, a 5th generation, 132 year old farmstead that is home to a Custom Grazing operation that finishes beef and backgrounds feeder cattle on 450 acres of owned and leased native pastures, and is home to an emerging Cow-calf operation. Their beef has been served at President Obama’s inaugural dinners, high-end restaurants, even in Japan. In addition, Troy works for the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Upper Susquehanna Coalition as their regional grazing specialist; is a project leader for a NESARE-funded professional development grazing training project through the Central New York Resource Conservation and Development Council in Norwich NY, writes a monthly column for Lancaster Farming and is President of the Mohawk Valley Toastmasters. To learn more, visit his website: www.thegrasswhisperer.com.



Francis Thicke:

Francis and his wife, Susan, own and operate an 80-cow, grass-based, organic dairy near Fairfield, Iowa. They have a processing plant on their farm where they process all the milk from their cows. They produce bottled milk, cheese and yogurt which they market through grocery stores and restaurants in their local community. All their milk products are sold within four miles of their farm. Francis and Susan’s farming operation is considered innovative in many respects, including how they integrate livestock onto the landscape in an ecologically sound way, their value-added dairy processing, the design and management of their grazing system, and their use of alternative energy systems.

In addition to farming, Francis is a soil scientist, author of *A New Vision for Iowa Food and Agriculture, Sustainable Agriculture for the 21st Century*, 2010; a leader in the national organic community; has served on numerous agricultural state and national boards and advisory groups, and was a 2010 candidate for Iowa Secretary of Agriculture.

2011 Field Days Schedule

Thursday, September 29, 2011

9:00 am to noon Farm Tour, Siobhan Griffin’s Raindance Farm, 2518 County Highway 35, Schenevus, NY, 12155. Field Days registration will take place after the farm tour.

This event is sponsored by NODPA, NOFA-NY and Organic Valley/ CROPP Cooperative.

9:00-9:30 Farm tour registration and breakfast refreshments

9:30-Noon Tour Raindance Organic Farm (www.raindanceorganicfarm.com) and view Siobhan Griffin’s organic cheese making operation where she produces Organic Sun Cheese, organic veal, pork, sausage, eggs and more that she sells locally and at farmers markets in and around NYC. Follow the tour with a pasture based ‘Reading the Landscape’ workshop presented by Troy Bishopp, grazing specialist, SWCD/Upper Susquehanna Coalition, where you will learn how to assess whether your pastures are moving forward or backward in productivity and profitability by monitoring (assessing) the percentage of forage ground cover, biological activity, plant species diversity, earthworm and dung beetle populations, and more.

12:30 -1:30 NODPA Field Days Registration and Lunch

Banquet Hall at Cooperstown Beaver Valley Cabins and Campsites, 138 Towers Rd., Milford, NY 13807

1:30 – 3:00 Facts and Fiction: Demystifying Private Label Milk

What we need to know about private label milk and whether it impacts pay price. Panel: Peter Miller, Organic Valley; Kelly Shea, Horizon Organic; and Upstate Niagara representatives (invited)

3:30 – 5:00 Producer Meeting: (Open to all Field Days Participants)

5:00 – 6:00 Social Hour and Trade Show: light refreshments and time to visit the tradeshow

6:00 – 7:00 Banquet Dinner: Organic Pig Roast

7:00 – 8:00 Keynote Speaker: Francis Thicke, organic dairy farmer, leader in the organic industry, author and former candidate for Iowa Secretary of Agriculture discusses the future challenges and opportunities facing Organic Dairy.

Directions

From the West (Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Utica): Take I-90 to Exit 30 (Herkimer); take State Route 28 South into Cooperstown; turn right at “T” intersection and continue to follow Rte 28S approximately 4 miles; go past McDonalds, Pizza Hut and traffic light; take next right onto Seminary Road; follow 1½ mile to “T” junction. Turn left on Towers Road; Beaver Valley is 1 mile on left.

From the East (Albany, New England): Follow I-90 West to New York State; stay on I-90 W through Albany to Exit 25A; follow I-88 toward Binghamton; take exit 17; follow State Rte 28 N for 12-13 miles. Go past the Cooperstown Dreams Park on the right; take next left onto Seminary Road; follow 1½ mile to “T” junction. Turn left on Towers Road; Beaver Valley is 1 mile on left.

From the South (Binghamton and eastern PA): Follow I-88 East into Oneonta; take Exit 17 and follow State Route 28 North 12-13 miles. Go past the Cooperstown Dreams Park on the right; take next left onto Seminary Road; follow 1½ mile to “T” junction. Turn left on Towers Road; Beaver Valley is 1 mile on left.

Friday, September 30, 2011

8:00 – 9:00 NODPA Annual Meeting:

- Welcome from Rick Segalla, NODPA President
- NODPA Year in Review, Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director
- Report from the regions and a FOOD Farmers Update

6:30 – 9:00 am Continental Breakfast and Trade Show, banquet hall.

7:00 – 8:30 Producer-Only Meeting (location to be announced)

7:30 – 8:30 YouTube video on Economic Impacts of Heavy Industrial Activities in the Town of Ulysses, PA, a one-hour video on Natural Gas Exploration with Carolyn Knapp and Carol French, two dairy farmers from Bradford County, PA who give a comprehensive, boots-on-the-ground tour of the positives and negatives of natural gas exploration, banquet hall.

9:00 – 10:30 Natural Gas Exploration: What impact will it have on Organic Certification? Panel Speakers: James Northrup, oil and gas industry expert, Lisa Engelbert, NOFA-NY Certifier, Paul Allen, PA organic dairy farmer.

10:30 – 10:45 Milk Break and Trade Show

10:45 – 12:15 Advocacy Groups in the Organic Dairy Marketplace: Why they are important and necessary. Facilitator: Liana Hoodes, National Organic Coalition. Panel: Francis Thicke, and Kevin Engelbert, dairy farmers; Kelly Shea, Horizon Organic.

12:30 – 2:00 Lunch, Trade Show and Door Prize Drawing

2:00 – 4:00 Thinking-man’s grazing: Learning how to plan your grazing for profit, production and success. This workshop offers practical, hands-on learning experience on grazing plan strategies and will include examples of farms that have applied these methods. Attendees will learn how to plan their grazing ahead of time to meet their personal production goals. Troy Bishopp, grazing specialist, SWCD/Upper Susquehanna Coalition.

4:00 pm Meeting ends

Accommodations:

Beaver Valley is offering special rates for NODPA Field Days participants. To make reservations, call 800-726-7314 or 607-293-7324. To view your options, visit:

- www.beavervalleycampground.com
- Campsites with water, electric and sewer are \$20.00 per night
 - 1 bedroom log cabin trailers with sleeping loft sleeps up to 4 adults, \$62.50 per night. Bedroom has 2 sets of bunk beds; one set has a double mattress with a twin bunk on top and the other has twin mattresses. The loft has two twin mattresses on a carpeted floor. The cabin has a kitchen, bathroom, dining area and front porch. It’s located within a few yards of the banquet hall. **Linens are not provided**, so you will **need to** bring your own.

There are also extensive lodging options to choose from in the area: motels, inn and suites hotels, bed & breakfasts and even historic inns. For a wide selection visit: www.thisiscooperstown.com, or use www.expedia.com or www.travelocity.com

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\$35	All who aren't organic dairy producers		
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Free	Transitioning farm member, Thursday evening dinner		
\$5	Friday breakfast (7:30-9 am)		
\$10	Friday lunch (under 11, half price)		
\$35	NODPA News Subscription (6 issues)		
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NODPA has grant funding available to assist producers with the cost of attending Field Days. Call 413-772-0444 for info.

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Horizon is the first and only national organic dairy brand to have a scholarship program designed to build the next generation of organic dairy leaders. To learn more, visit www.horizonorganic.com

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Private Label: Overview

continued from page 16

Industry professionals have many different views on the role of private label products within the organic and natural foods industry. Organic dairy producers have many questions on who profits from private label milk and its role in their industry. They question whether the highly competitive prices and short contracts give them long term market security or undermine their ability to capture a greater share of the retail dollar or benefit from the consumers' willingness to pay extra for organic products because of the environmental and health benefits of the organic production systems. With retail mark-up on organic

dairy branded fluid product ranging from 30-40%, the private label market has a competitive advantage in the dairy case and encourages brands to have in-store promotions to match store brand retail pricing, which bears none of the burden of marketing, policy work protecting the integrity of organic, or brand development.

The upcoming NODPA Field Days features a panel discussion including Peter Miller (CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley, Northeast Regional Pool Manager), and Kelly Shea (Vice President--Industry Relations & Organic Stewardship, WhiteWave Foods) plus representatives from Aurora Dairy (invited) and Upstate Niagara (invited) that will examine the practical realities of private label milk and why the two companies have different approaches to the role it plays in their business model. ♦

Below, Organic Valley's Eric Newman gives CROPP/Organic Valley's perspective.

Private Label's Role

By Eric Newman, Vice President of Sales
Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative

Private Label is a growing business not without its controversies, challenges and benefits. As a partnership strategy, it has evolved greatly since its first appearance as "retailer controlled" brands. With Organic in particular, private label allows companies to partner with strategic retail customers, reach additional markets in times of over supply and make organics more accessible.

In our case at CROPP Cooperative, equally as important, it also allows us to better support our more than 1,600 farmer owners across the country with additional markets to help balance our supply and provide stability for them, their families and communities, in each of their regions. CROPP Cooperative in its second year began selling private labels including the now defunct "North Farm" brand and "Tree of Life" cheeses.

Today, private label milk sales represent 75 percent of the conventional fluid milk market. Only in the past 15 years have national fluid milk companies such as CROPP Cooperative with the Organic Valley brand established themselves in that channel with any significant market share. Borden Dairy Company failed at its attempt. However, Land O'Lakes, Horizon, Organic Valley and Lactaid have all been successful in this arena. National fluid milk brand development accelerated when Organic Valley launched ultra pasteurized organic milk in 1998. During the early days of organic milk marketing, there were short code dates and lots of spoilage. Ultra pasteurized milk delivered high-quality product to consumers with the best codes in the market place, bringing organic milk to the National table.

While the brands grew and competed for market share, which is the most expensive part of selling branded products, retailers began to focus on their own private label dairy offerings. They began to recognize there was a future for processing organic milk in their plants and sold under their own brands. Retailers with captive dairies include Kroger, Safeway, H-E-B, Publix, ShopRite, Harris Teeter, Lowes, Raley's, Save Mart and others. Most of these retailers are bottling organic milk today.

So back at Organic Valley, private label sales also allow us more room

to balance our milk supply and secure a stable market for our farmer owners—the farm families who produce our milk in each region. In 2010, private label sales totaled \$100 million or about one-fifth of our total sales. Additionally, our ingredient and bulk sales help round out a balanced approach to utilize and inventory our fluid milk.

Our approach to private label milk sales calls to mind the story of the three-legged stool. Branded sales, bulk tanker and private label/ingredient sales are the foundation of our marketing and sales strategy. Net profit targets are the same for our private label and branded products. Our private label business has consistently achieved the same or higher net income than the same Organic Valley branded products. Private label costs less to market because retailers handle marketing for their private label products. For branded sales, sales and marketing expenses can run from 10 to 17 percent of the wholesale price, depending on the product category and strategy.

Specifically, our private label strategy has enabled us to achieve the following goals over the past 15 years, to great success:

- Create a relationship and regular communication with our retail customers who purchase branded and private label products.
- Develop scale and support much-needed production minimum volumes at our many HTST milk plants that cannot process our brand efficiently without the private label volumes.
- Support our continued sales growth during the recent recession when consumers moved from purchasing branded products to private label to save money. We were glad our volume was steady and, while the OV brand declined, the private label grew, which insured a market for our farmers. As the recession has eased, branded milk business is growing again.

Our private label business has achieved and exceeded our net profit goals every single year for the past 15 years.

Private label should be looked at as an opportunity and a way to develop more business, security and profit for our farmers. Selling branded products is part of an excellent strategy for the cooperative, but it's expensive, especially when competing with public companies that seem to have endless financial resources at their disposal. Diversity is a key strategy for CROPP and private label plays an important role. ♦

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

Radiance Dairy, Fairfield, Iowa

Following Principles of Ecology from Land Management

continued from page 1
heaven, and producing as much of their own energy as they can using solar, wind, geothermal, and gravity systems. Their farm is a little too far south to grow small grains as successfully as Northern Iowa, but Francis is going to add that enterprise to his dairy operation; growing more and more of his own small grains every year.

Staffing on Radiance Dairy

The total number of employees on the farm is 3 full time and 3 part time. Francis and Susan are full time employees; Francis is involved with the daily chores and overall maintenance and management, and Susan handles all the paperwork on orders, deliveries, and helps with milking and cheese making. They have one full-time employee who lives in a separate house on the farm and works on the cow/crops end of things. The three part-time employees work mostly in the processing plant and one employee helps out some with milking.

Herd Production, Growth, and Marketing

Over the years the Thickets have grown their herd to meet the growing local demand for their products. They tend to expand 5-10% per year and are currently milking about 80 cows. With a land base of 456 acres (220 of which were added last year), they can afford to expand a little more if the market for their value added products continue to grow. Estimated production per cow is at about 10,000 lbs per year. All of their milk is processed on the farm and sold locally with an estimated production of about 2000 gallons of milk per week.

Radiance Dairy fills a niche market within their community; their products are sold in two grocery stores and about a dozen restaurants, all within a 5-mile radius of the farm! Their milk is sold as bottled milk (whole, 2%, and skim), cream, yogurt (whole and skim), cheese (Jack, Panir, and Ricotta), and a soft

serve liquid mix that some local restaurants use in the soft serve ice cream machines. They are committed to selling locally, even though they are often approached about selling their products in other cities. Radiance Dairy products are priced reasonably, making sure that the Thickets can cover their production costs and have some left over to live on. Their retail prices are comparable to other organic dairy products in the store.

Grazing System



Radiance Dairy has been managing a pasture based perennial crop cover for 15 years; “soil erosion has been virtually eliminated, and soil productivity continues to improve”, says Francis, “We are rebuilding the farm’s ecological capital that had previously been lost through intensive row cropping” (A New Vision for Iowa Food and

Agriculture, section 15). The 456-acre farm now has 120 acres designated to a grazing system consisting of sixty 2-acre paddocks. Another 130 acres, taken first for hay, is used later in the season when additional pasture is needed. There are three groups of animals managed on pasture; the milk cows, the dry cows & bred heifers, and heifers under 1 year of age. The grazing season starts the first week of April and continues well into October at which point they start to offer stockpiled forage, which allows their animals to continue harvesting their own feed in November and even into December, depending upon snow cover.

During the grazing season the milk cows are given new pasture every 12 hours (1-acre paddocks for about 80 cows), and fed some dry hay and 5-6 lbs of grain, consisting of barley, wheat, oats and extrudent soybeans. Most of the grains are purchased locally, but Francis is hoping to grow all of his own grains in the future. In the past, they had grown some corn, but at some point they found low levels of GMO contamination. As a result, Francis took corn out of the ration completely and switched to small grains. Adjacent to their parlor is a room with a roller mill where



the grains are cracked and fed at every milking.

Francis uses the ‘old fashioned’ method of paying attention to the manure and alters the grain and forage ration according what leaves the cow on the other end. To complement the forages and concentrates, cows are offered Redmonds Salt and kelp

along with a free choice mineral trough with 15-18 different minerals available in a cafeteria style (as recommended by Helfter Feeds). In the winter, the cows are fed dry hay and they increase volume and protein level in the grain mix is increased. As a back-up plan, they can also make baleage for their animals if they run into a wet spell during the haying season, but they find this to be more energy intensive than square baling. A winter feed ration consists of 10-12 lbs of grain and alfalfa/grass hay. Cows are outwintered on pasture and get some shelter in a bedded pack barn. Most of the manure stays out on pasture and the bedding pack manure gets composted and applied on the farm where the nutrients are needed the most.

Livestock Health

Francis has a basic plan for keeping cows healthy: don’t push them hard for production, feed them a high forage diet and feed them as much pasture forage as possible during the grazing season, and don’t vaccinate. The Thickets don’t have a veterinarian near them that understands organic production but will call on

Come to the 11th Annual NODPA Field Days and Annual Meeting in Milford, NY where Francis Thicke will be the Keynote Speaker (Thursday evening, September 29th). For a full agenda for the two-day event, please see page 20.

their local veterinarian for emergencies. They usually spend only \$100- \$200 per year on vet expenses.

For the rare case of mastitis, they like to strip the cow out frequently throughout the day, apply a peppermint liniment lotion on the udder, and offer Reiki treatments (Reiki is a Japanese

technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing; Francis is a Reiki practitioner). Most cases of mastitis are gone by the next milking as long as they are quick to respond. When a cow first calves, they give the cow Calcium, a probiotic bolus, Reiki, and make sure that they are eating well. Once in a while they will get a cow with a hoof injury or infection, at which point they will use Dr Karreman’s approach of applying Betadine and sugar followed by wrapping the hoof or, for more minor bruises, applying 10% topical iodine.

Calves are started in the barn and are given access to pasture even before weaning. They are fed 1 gallons a day, put on grain as soon as possible, and are weaned at 3 months of age. Over the years the Thickets have experimented with various ways of feeding their calves; from a group feeder to using a nurse cow to individual bottle feeding. There are occasions when putting groups of calves on nurse cows works for them, but since they do not have a seasonal operation they often do not have enough calves at one

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FEATURED FARM

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time to make that work. If a calf gets scours, they turn to electrolytes and other products by Crystal Creek, a company in Wisconsin that produces and markets livestock nutritional products.

Genetics and Breeding

The Thickest breed primarily with bulls, saving the bulls out of their best cows and using AI when they are interested in outside genetics. They have recently been focusing on polled genetics and are interested in finding a polled Jersey bull that is ‘double polled’ to quicken their evolution towards having a polled dairy herd.

To determine pregnancy and approximate due dates, Francis will bump his cows. He can generally tell when a cow is 60 days from calving this way.

Francis estimates that most of the cows that leave the farm are usually older cows that become ‘family cows’ to individuals all over the state. They usually keep all of their heifer calves, but when there is an overflow, they will sell some springing heifers.

Energy efficiency on the farm

With on-farm processing, the energy needs on Radiance Dairy are high; but they are gradually putting renewable systems in place, setting an example that Francis hopes others will follow. “We have an agriculture that is highly dependent on cheap

fossil fuels in a world of escalating fossil fuel prices”, says Francis in his recently published book ‘A New Vision For Iowa Food and Agriculture.’ “Without cheap oil, our current agriculture and food system will become imperiled and may fail us. Yet, we seem oblivious to how we are going to power agriculture in the future.”

Currently, Radiance Dairy has a solar powered watering system. Currently, Radiance Dairy has a solar powered watering system that pumps water from their pond to a storage tank above their pastures, supplying water to their 60 paddocks and saving them an estimated \$150/month in energy bills. They have also installed a solar hot water system that preheats the water for the water heater that supplies their barn and processing plant, reducing their propane use significantly. The next system they are looking into is a 30 Kilowatt wind turbine, which will offset the farm’s electricity usage. Staff from the Practical Farmers of Iowa recently performed an energy audit of the farm, so Francis and Susan are going to start monitoring the energy used and saved

from renewable energy systems on the farm.

Contributions, Resources, & Thoughts for the Future

Prior to establishing his current organic dairy farm, Francis earned a Ph.D. in soil fertility and has served as a National Program Leader for Soil Science for the USDA Extension Service in Washington, D.C.. Francis has also been active in numerous ways over the years on both a local and a national level. Some recent or ongoing activities include:

- Recently authored a book, titled ‘A New Vision for Iowa Food and Agriculture’, which can be downloaded for free from their website: www.radiancedairy.com
- Ran for Iowa Secretary of Agriculture in 2010 (though he did not win the election, he drew a lot of attention to agricultural on a state and national level)
- Past member of the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) board and current member of Cornucopia Institute’s Policy Advisory Panel.
- 2011 Keynote Speaker at the NODPA Field Days, September 29& 30, and at the Acres USA Conference and Trade Show, December 8-19 (see calendar for more information).

As farmers who are truly ‘walking the talk’, Francis and Susan offer tours of their operation to many groups throughout the year including elementary students, college students, and fellow dairy farmers. Since there are only two dairy farms in his county, most of the networking and information that the Thickest absorb is gleaned from attending grazing and organic conferences and reading publication such as Graze Magazine, Dairy Trade Magazines, ODairy list serve and the NODPA News.

When asked what he thought the organic dairy industry needs to address in order to better serve

organic livestock producers, Francis said, “I think we need a concerted research effort focused on organic livestock health. There are lots of practices and products used by organic livestock producers for which we have little or no verification of efficacy. I would like to see researchers team up with organic farmers to verify what works best. I also think that organic livestock producers need to continue sharing their new innovations with each other and with researchers, because most innovations in organic farming come from the farm level.” ♦

‘We have an agriculture that is highly dependent on cheap fossil fuels in a world of escalating fossil fuel prices. Without cheap oil, our current agriculture and food system will become imperiled and may fail us. Yet, we seem oblivious to how we are going to power agriculture in the future.’

-- Francis Thicke

“... glad we tried it because we are totally happy with it.”

— Leon Corse



CORSE FARM DAIRY, LLC, Whitingham, VT
LEON AND LINDA CORSE & daughter ABBIE
60 cows - Certified Organic - RHA: 16,600 lbs. - SCC: 75,000

“The main benefit of Udder Comfort™ is the milk quality,” says fifth generation dairy farmer Leon Corse. He and his wife Linda and their daughter Abbie milk 50 to 60 cows at Corse Farm Dairy in southern Vermont, which was certified organic in 2008. “Since we’ve been organic, we get pretty terrific quality premiums, and that made SCC an even greater focus than it was before.

“Historically, our SCC was up in the 150 to 200,000 range. Our numbers for the last 12 months show averages of 95,000 and as low as 75,000 in the first few months of 2010. It’s been a gradual decline since we’ve been using Udder Comfort consistently.

“We use Udder Comfort on any cow with a known high SCC, unusual swelling or any flakes. We apply it after both milkings for a few days. We monitor bulk tanks and cell counts from the milk company, and we test suspicious quarters and also all fresh cows for SCC levels. If high, we put Udder Comfort on for 2 to 4 days to take care of it.

“I was asked to give a quality milk presentation at the NOFA Vermont Winter Conference in 2010. Part of my preparation was to figure out our quality results for 2009. The interesting number I came up with was: On 956,000 total pounds shipped, we received \$26,187 in quality premiums for all 4 measures—SCC is a very significant portion of that.

“Initially, I was somewhat skeptical about what to expect from using Udder Comfort, but I’m glad I was willing to give it a try because we are totally happy with it.

“The best way to see what it does, is to pick out a couple cows that have got a cell count problem and try Udder Comfort on them, and see what you get for results.”

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Organic Industry News

Hurricane Irene – After the Storm: How can you help

By Lisa McCrory

By the time you read this article, Hurricane Irene’s destruction will be a few weeks old. Most farmers will have made contact with FEMA and other organizations and are probably still assessing their damages. We know that funds are scarce and if a farmer gets some state or federal assistance or insurance payment it won’t come close to recovering their losses. Homes, businesses and farms were affected in CT, MA, VT, NH, NY, RI and NJ with the bulk of the storm having its greatest impact in VT.

In a recent Odairy post, someone, after reading a NY Times article about a VT farm that was devastated, asked how they can help their fellow farmers. NODPA staff looked for resources in VT and the neighboring states specific to farm relief and found very little outside of Vermont. If you know of other organizations that NODPA should be promoting, please contact Lisa McCrory by email or phone at Lmccrory@hughes.net or 802-234-5524.

Below is a list of organizations in VT and NY that are raising funds to offer assistance directly to farmers.

- 1. **NOFA Vermont’s Farmer Emergency Fund** was established in 1997 to assist organic farmers adversely affected by natural and unnatural disasters like the recent flooding and damage from Irene. We anticipate many requests for funds after this disaster, so all donations are welcome. Grants and



Bethel, Vermont

zero-percent-interest loans are awarded to farmers in need as funds are available.

To donate, please contact Kirsten Bower at the NOFA office; Kirsten@nofavt.org or 802-434-4122 ext 16 or send your donations to: NOFA-VT’s Farmer Emergency Fund, PO Box 697, Richmond, VT 05477. To learn more about their program, go to www.nofavt.org.

- 2. **New York FarmNet** is a comprehensive program that provides farm families with a network of information, contacts and services to aid them in times of crisis. FarmNet staff offer financial and personal counseling to New York farmers during times of adversity, all at no cost to the farmer. To contribute to FarmNet, please send monetary donations to NY Farm Net, 415 Warren Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853-7801. To learn more about

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Fracking

continued from page 10

oil can escape, a proppant is used, which is usually small grains of material such as sand. After all this is done, oil and gas is able to flow freely from the well.

Potential problems that organic producers may face from shale gas development:

- 1. **Groundwater pollution**
Natural Gas Exploration can lead to the pollution of streams and stock ponds with methane, road run-off from heavy trucking, drilling fluids, frack water, and flowback. Any of one of these can sicken livestock, pollute the soil with toxins and cause loss of organic certification. What if water becomes unfit to drink? Most upstate municipalities draw their water from underground aquifers, lakes and streams. Most rural properties depend on private water wells for their personal and agricultural needs. Experts suggest that over time most of the toxic underground water will find its way to the surface through fissures,

- rusted pipes, cracked cement, and conduits of missing and unplugged water and gas wells.
- 2. **Physical and chemical impacts on farmland**
Physical impacts include compaction, erosion and fragmentation of agricultural land (fields are too small to farm). Chemical impacts include contamination, radiation and heavy metals.
- 3. **Trucking**
The intensity of truck traffic in a shale gas area can complicate deliveries of supplies and products to market. It can raise the cost of transportation, and pollute streams.
- 4. **Fracking flow back waste** can be spread on roads as “de-icer” which, over time, can leach into fields at toxic levels.

These topics and more, will be discussed at the NODPA Field Days, (Friday, September 30 from 9:00 am – 10:30 am) including what you can do to mitigate the downsides. In the interim, there are a number of Power Point presentations online that address the potential negative impacts of horizontal hydrofracking:

- **“Fracking in the Foodshed”:**
<http://my.brainshark.com/Fracking-in-the-Foodshed-5064306>
- **Presentations by Chip Northrup:**
<http://my.brainshark.com/Search.aspx?slice=1&searchtext=chiptex&sortby=views&msg=1>



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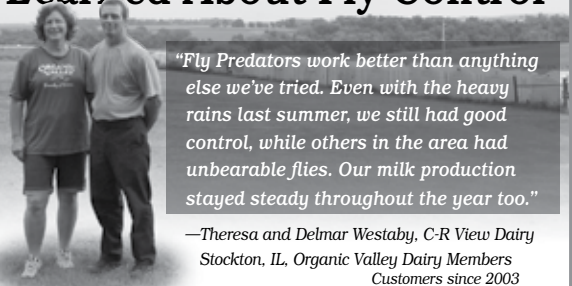
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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Organic community advocates

continued from page 8

2. Citizen watchdog groups who concentrate on consumer education and activism

This is a very broad and varied group of organizations that play the very important role of publicizing issues through the traditional and ever-evolving social media. These organizations have a direct mission to influence large numbers of food consumers who want to play an active role in determining the future quality and content of their food. They are the groups that enable individuals and organizations to generate the millions of comments now needed to influence regulatory agencies and to get the attention of the White House. They attract and grab headlines to push their message and directly confront their highly financed opponents with guerilla tactics and media sensationalism to protect many critical issues that surround organics.

The three more prominent organizations are:

A) Food and Water Watch (FWW)

Food & Water Watch works to ensure the food, water, and fish we consume is safe, accessible and sustainably produced. So we can all enjoy and trust in what we eat and drink, they help people take charge of where their food comes from, keep clean, affordable, public tap water flowing freely to homes, protect the environmental quality of oceans, force government to do its job protecting citizens, and educate people about the importance of keeping the global commons — our shared resources — under public control. FWW envisions a world where all people have access to enough affordable, healthy, and wholesome food and clean water to meet their basic needs — a world in which governments are accountable to their citizens and manage essential resources sustainably.

B) Organic Consumers Association (OCA)

OCA is an online and grassroots non-profit 501(c)3 public interest organization campaigning for health, justice, and sustainability. The OCA deals with crucial issues of food safety, industrial agriculture, genetic engineering, children’s health, corporate accountability, Fair Trade, environmental sustainability and other key topics. They promote themselves as being the only organization in the US focused on promoting the views and interests of the nation’s estimated 76 million organic and socially responsible consumers.

The OCA represents over one million members, subscribers and volunteers, including several thousand businesses in the natural foods and organic marketplace. Their US and international policy board is broadly representative of the organic, family farm, envi-

ronmental, and public interest community.

C) Cornucopia Institute

The Cornucopia Institute is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) public interest group that engages in educational activities supporting the ecological principles and economic wisdom underlying sustainable and organic agriculture. Through research and investigations on agricultural issues, The Cornucopia Institute provides needed information to consumers, family farmers, and the media.

3. Organizations that concentrate on particular issues and legal challenges

In a litigious society that relies on legal challenges to balance biased regulations, organic and sustainable agriculture interests are very well represented by a few groups who are badly underfunded.

A) Center for Food Safety (CFS)

The most active and consistent defender of the legal interests of organic producers and consumers is the Center for Food Safety, who uses the law to defend the correct and consistent implementation of laws; defend the appropriate process of consultation with stakeholders and investigation of the that is required prior to introducing or changing regulations (for example the required scientific investigation and verification of how GMO’s affect the environment); and in some cases, slow down the process to allow for adequate representation of a broad diversity of views, including organic. CFS is a non-profit public interest and environmental advocacy membership organization established in 1997 by its sister organization, International Center for Technology Assessment, for the purpose of challenging harmful food production technologies and promoting sustainable alternatives. CFS combines multiple tools and strategies in pursuing its goals, including litigation and legal petitions for rulemaking, legal support for various sustainable agriculture and food safety constituencies, as well as public education, grassroots organizing and media outreach.

B) Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS)

Organic regulation is based on scientific analysis of production practices and inputs. UCS is a nonprofit partnership of scientists and citizens combining rigorous scientific analysis, innovative policy development, and effective citizen advocacy to achieve practical environmental solutions.

Established in 1969, UCS seeks to ensure that all people have clean air, energy, and transportation, as well as food that is produced in a safe and sustainable manner. UCS strives for a future that is free from the threats of global warming and nuclear war,

and a planet that supports a rich diversity of life. Sound science guides our efforts to secure changes in government policy, corporate practices, and consumer choices that will protect and improve the health of our environment globally, nationally, and in communities throughout the United States. In short, UCS seeks a great change in humanity’s stewardship of the earth. Organizations like Union of Concerned Scientists provide the necessary data and perspective that can be used by the National Organic Standards Board and the USDA NOP.

C) Beyond Pesticides

Beyond Pesticides (formerly National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides) works with allies in protecting public health and the environment to lead the transition to a world free of toxic pesticides. Beyond Pesticides has historically taken a two-pronged approach to the pesticide problem by identifying the risks of conventional pest management practices and promoting non-chemical and least-hazardous management alternatives. The organization’s primary goal is to effect change through local action, assisting individuals and community-based organizations to stimulate discussion on the hazards of toxic pesticides, while providing information on safer alternatives. Beyond Pesticides has sought to bring to a policy forum in Washington, DC, state capitals, and local governing bodies the pesticide problem and solutions we have become aware of on a day-to-day basis. Beyond Pesticides provides useful information on pesticides and alternatives to their use, topics also covered in Beyond Pesticides’ quarterly news magazine, Pesticides and You; Daily News blog; and, the bi-monthly bulletin, School Pesticide Monitor. Beyond Pesticides believes that people must have a voice in decisions that affect them directly. They believe decisions should not be made for us by chemical companies or by decision makers who either do not have all of the facts or refuse to consider them. Organizations like Beyond Pesticides provide the necessary data and perspective that can be used by the National Organic Standards Board and the USDA NOP.

4. Producer Organizations

These organizations will be the most familiar to producers: Farm Bureau and National Farmers Union are the two with national coverage and representation in Washington, DC. Farm Bureau, as a national organization, is very much influenced by conventional agriculture but its many different state chapters can identify and promote more local issues of concern that are common to all production practices. The state chapter can be a very active proponent for organic and sustainable agriculture issues, as evidenced by the Massachusetts Farm Bureau’s support for raw milk legislation and New England Farmers Union having a complete section in their policy handbook on organics and consumer cooperatives.

The Northeast Organic Farming Associations have a history of representing producers, gardeners and consumers on regional and state policy and issues, and have partnered with national coalitions to have an input in Washington DC. They have a great ability to mobilize consumers to defend the rights of organic producers.

When we look at the number of membership organizations that represent and are controlled by organic producers there are depressingly few. Organic dairy is the strongest with NODPA, WODPA and MODPA and their umbrella organization Federation of Organic Dairy Farmers (FOOD Farmers). NODPA and the other ODPAs have developed strong relationships with consumer organization through its membership in NOC and with conventional agriculture through its membership with NEFU. NODPA is able to present its membership with a distillation of the different positions and how they relate to organic dairy, and, with FOOD Farmers, provide a united producer voice on national issues when appropriate, as with the Access to Pasture and the Origin of Livestock rules. FOOD Farmers has also been able to provide a contact point for media and routinely disseminates information on organic dairy to a wide audience.

The recent controversy over using antibiotics in fruit trees has caused some ad-hoc groups to be established. Organic Farming Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM) and Organically Grown Company (OGC) can and do represent producer interests but are primarily marketing organizations and have little capacity in the policy arena.

Many, if not all organizations, speak to the role of producers and the need to recognize their involvement; many even have producers on their board. Producers, however, generally have little say in the development of policies for organizations whose priorities and actions might be influenced by funders’ interest, consumer concerns, staff capacity, media sound bites, and time. Many organizations call themselves “member organizations” but are not governed by the members of the organization. Producers need to be informed and inform others of their interest and issues. The development of new, or changes to existing, policy and regulations need to be detailed and compatible with existing laws. They require appropriate knowledge and expertise of the subject plus an understanding of what policy can be achieved in the economic, social or political climate. Individual producers need to be well-enough informed to provide the more global goal that they want achieved, for example access to pasture regulation that will be consistently interpreted and will allow for legal prosecution of those that don’t comply. Although keeping informed takes time, it will pay off in the long run. Even if you prefer to spend your time farming, don’t sweat the details of policy or regulation but be well enough informed to hold organizations accountable for the policy positions and tactics they use to achieve them. ♦

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Irene Relief

continued from page 28

New York FarmNet, visit their website at www.nyfarmnet.org.

3. Vermont Community Foundation:

www.vermontcf.org/give-now
Established by the Vermont Community Foundation to support Hurricane Irene recovery efforts, there are two specific funds you can contribute to:

- Vermont Farm Disaster Relief Fund- Provides grant support to farms of any size that have sustained losses in the wake of Hurricane Irene.
- Special and Urgent Needs Fund: Irene Recovery - Provides grants to nonprofit organizations in the hardest hit communities, and pools and deploys donations in the coming weeks and months as specific needs become clearer.

If you would like to donate by check, please make it pay-

able to: The Vermont Community Foundation and mail to: P.O. Box 30, Middlebury, VT 05753. Please write the name of the fund you would like to support in the memo



Train tressle: White River Junction, Vermont

section. For more information, please call: 802-388-3355.

4. Center for an Agricultural Economy’s Vermont Farm Fund Emergency Loan Program

In light of the devastation that Hurricane Irene has wreaked on farms statewide, the Center for an Agricultural Economy has launched a zero interest loan program for farms in need. Donations to this fund accepted.

Website:
<http://hardwickagriculture.org/programs.html>
E-mail: center@hardwickagriculture.org
Phone: (802) 472-5840
Mail: PO Box 451, 41 South Main Street, Hardwick, Vermont 05843

5. VT Irene Flood Relief fund:
Founded by Montpelier resident Todd Bailey, the fund is committed to distributing 100% of donations to Vermont businesses in need. To make your tax-deductible contribution, To make your tax-deductible contribution, please make your check payable to:

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Tom Seawald
Mantle Ranch

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Liming and pH

By Neal Kinsey

Our company is not in the fertilizer or lime business. We do not make any profits from the sale of the actual lime or fertilizers we recommend to our clients. We sell advice and those we have helped the most by that advice remain as our best clients. If the advice we give is bad, it would soon become evident and many of our clients who have been with us for years would have gone elsewhere.

There are very influential people in agricultural thinking that will strongly disagree with what is being written in this ad. Some seriously believe the program we are advocating is just another ruse to try and be different enough that farmers and growers will think they should send soil tests to us instead some other consultant. However, our business is not about seeing how many people we can get to send us soil samples. We want to educate our clients so that they know the value of doing what the detailed soil analysis we use shows should be done for building and maintaining the fertility of each soil. Our real goal is to become a reliable source of information in order to work with each client concerning his specific soil fertility needs.

To see how the program works best just “test the soil test and the soil tester.” Try the program on a reasonable portion of land so that if something unexpected happens, such as hail, or a windstorm, or fire, or flooding the extra money that was spent on the program still would not result in causing undue hardship. Then once it is known as to what works and what doesn’t, begin to make the proper changes as time and economics permit.

For comparison purposes choose an area to test and stick with it for three years. Split the field and on one side use whatever fertilization program that would normally be done. On the other part test our program by correctly taking soil samples and sending them to us for analysis and recommendations. This does not have to be a large trial, just big enough to provide a good conclusion in your own mind.

One of the biggest mistakes made on building up pasture fertility is to rely on the use of a pH test to tell whether the soil should be limed or not. Most conventional wisdom for pasture production places great emphasis on soil pH. Ask most who insist on using pH and they will tell you that such a soil test is only meant to provide a “general direction” for fertility. And pH does provide a “general direction.” Just about everyone acknowledges that a soil pH of 6 is better than 4.5. But just using pH to determine when and how much to lime can cost the dairyman relying on pasture a serious shortfall in terms of tonnages produced.

You won’t likely hear or read this from an agricultural university - more likely the exact opposite would be true. But we have learned from experience that what is given here is actually the case on many dairy farms. And as Will Rogers once pointed out, some people learn the facts by reading, some learn from seeing the experience of others, and some just have to touch the electric fence for themselves. This can be especially true for those who have been led to believe that on a pasture with a pH of 5.5 liming does not pay.

To prove to yourself what is true, just take one pasture that is not producing well and split it. Test both sides separately to be most accurate. Then treat according to what the pH would indicate as needed on one side and treat based on our program of actual nutrients shown to be required by liming on the other. From the soil analysis we use, providing the proper type of limestone, and the proper amount, has paid off on soils shown to need lime, even on soils with pH levels above 6.0. This is because the pH does not provide a complete picture of what type of nutrient base a soil actually contains.

When the soil pH is in the 5.5 to 7.0 range its principal make up is determined by four elements – calcium, magnesium, potassium and sodium. The problem is a combination of too much of one or more of these elements and too little of one or more of the others can cause the pH to look good when in fact the soil is lacking what it needs to provide good nutrition for the livestock grazing there. On some of the tests near the coast the sodium will have an undue influence on the soil pH. On other pasture soils farmers use only calcitic limestone to maintain the pH, not considering the expense of then providing an adequate supply of magnesium.

When a soil has too much of one element, it will not have enough of something else. A good soil test should tell farmers what is causing the pH to be where it is. Such tests should enable farmers and their consultant or fertilizer dealer to identify any excesses and deficiencies in each pasture, hay meadow or silage corn field. To control any nutrient that is excessive in the soil, begin by correcting any deficiencies of other nutrients that are shown to be needed there.

After calcium is considered, care should be taken, especially in lighter, sandier soils, to assure that sufficient magnesium is present. Studies have shown that magnesium in the soil actually helps to attract and hold more water there. Soils that are too low in magnesium will tend to dry out more quickly. But soils that are too high in magnesium will become too hard when dry and actually reduce its availability to the crop. It is not just the pounds of magnesium shown to be available in the soil that determines how the plants will take up and utilize it. This is where sampling and the use of the soil’s cation exchange capacity to measure both the actual and the needed saturation of magnesium will most accurately identify and determine how to correct the situation.

Far too many farmers assume that the soil they have can never be changed for the better. However, once the nutrient make-up of the soil is considered and not just the pH, most pasture soils can be changed for the better. More grass, better moisture utilization and higher nutritional values are all possible when the correct amount of calcium and magnesium are maintained in pasture soils.

For more information on soil testing and other aspects of the soil fertility program we utilize please see our web site, www.kinseyag.com, or contact us directly for your specific needs.

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Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance Producer Milk Check Assignment Form

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request that _____ (name of company that sends your milk check)
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_____ \$0.05 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA (the amount that has been deducted in the past for national milk marketing but can now be 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 per hundredweight (the \$.05 marketing check-off plus \$0.02)
as an assignment from my milk check starting the first day of _____, 201____. 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 Coordinator, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342
Producer signature: _____ Date: _____
Producer number/ member no: _____ E-mail: _____
Number of milking cows: _____ Tel #: _____
Certifying Agency: _____
Farm Address: (please print) _____
Producers—please send this to NODPA, Attn Ed Maltby, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342, so we can track who has signed up and forward this form to the milk handler. Thank you.

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NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions
By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Producer,
NODPA State Rep, NY

Last month, we were reminded to supplement our soils with boron when soil tests indicate a need. In a series of posts, farmers discussed boron applications on crop and pasture fields. One farmer felt the small yearly application (1/4 pound of actual boron) mixed with his starter fertilizer was a successful method of application, and he feels that the increase in boron helps small grains have larger heads and corn ears fill better. Most soils in the east and midwest have lower than optimal levels of boron. Another farmer reminded us that boron helps with the utilization of calcium. Some farmers raised the question of feeding it directly to livestock, since adequate levels are important for livestock health. But this is not an allowable feed additive for either the organic or conventional farmer. One farmer suggested that cattle probably assimilate the boron better in their feed instead of direct supplementation. As with all soil amendments, your certifier will require soil tests to determine that there is a need; and then, be careful that the sources are allowable.

There was some discussion on using Normande genetics to improve the size/carcass weight and cheese yields for farms where milk production is not the only goal. It was mentioned that the Normande crosses hold their weight better under no-grain management, and they tolerate being outwintered better. On the down side, some of the breeding bulls can throw large calves.

Treatments for pinkeye were discussed. One farmer has had good luck using Crystal Creek’s Wound Spray, sprayed on twice a day. One farmer recommended adding 3 oz. of 7% iodine to 500 gallon water trough as both a treatment and as a prevention. Several farmers stressed the importance of feeding minerals, strong immune systems, and good pasture management in preventing the problems. Feeding kelp was mentioned by one farmer. On the topic of flies in general, another farmer suggested that organic soybean oil applied with an automotive paint sprayer was an economical way to kill horn flies on contact in the barn.

There was a long thread of discussion when a farmer asked how people manage their breeding bulls. Not surprisingly, there were a variety of opinions. Several farmers use bulls only on the heifers, then AI with the milking herd. Many more run bulls with the milking herd. All stress the importance of handling bulls safely; never trust them and never turn your back; establish a routine; and have barriers and escape routes. One farmer only lets the bull out with the herd at nights, and he is confined during the day. Other producers felt that a bull raised on its mother will have a better temperament, and several producers felt that bulls raised in groups with dry cows or older bulls learn some “manners” from the larger animals. Every farm has to assess the risks and benefits. One producer stated, “A bull can and will kill you!” and another said, “You can’t get AI down to the window that a bull can. It’s as simple as that.”

The most recent posts expressed producers’ worry over the escalating costs of grain, and the predictions of a shortened supply. ♦

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To sign up for the Odairy listserv, go to:
http://www.nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml

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Calendar

Tuesday, September 20, 2011

Processing & Storing Small Grains Field Day
Butterworks Farm, Westfield, VT 11 am – 3 pm

Cost: \$15, includes lunch by the NOFA-VT pizza crew. Pre-registration required. This workshop, hosted by Jack and Anne Lazor at Butterworks Farm, will highlight post-harvest techniques for cleaning, storing, and processing small grains. Butterworks Farm has been growing organic grains and crops for both people and livestock since 1977. They have built up a medium sized closed herd of Jersey cows. The preservation and augmentation of soil fertility has been an integral part in their whole farming operation. For more information or to register, call the NW Crop and Soils Program, (802) 524-6501. Organized by UVM Extension.

September 22, 2011, Time: 1:30pm – 4:00pm
Transitioning an Organic Farm to Draft Power
Roxbury Farm: 2501 State Rte. 9h, Kinderhook, NY 12106
(Columbia Co., NY)

Join NOFA-NY, Jean-Paul Courtens, Jody Bolluyt, and Donn Hewes for a look at what it takes to transition a large successful CSA to horse power. How is it different from starting a horse powered farm? We will take a tour of Roxbury Farm where we will attempt to answer the question - What if we were doing it with horses? The tour will be followed by a discussion about what aspects of transition might be common to most farms, and what challenges might be unique to individual operations.

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Deadline for advertising in the
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(3.5" W x 2.25" H) = \$60

Classified Ads: Free to Northeast organic farmers. All others \$20 for the first 30 words; \$.20 per word over 30

For advertising information call Lisa McCrory:
802-234-5524 or email Lmccrory@hughes.net

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

Bring your questions and ideas and join us for this fun experiment. Please register for this event by visiting the NOFA-NY Shopping page or by calling Katie (Membership & Registration Coordinator) at (585) 271-1979 ext 512.

September 23-25, 2011
MOFGA Common Ground Fair, Unity, ME

For more information call 207-568-4142, email: mofga@mofga.org, or go to www.mofga.org

September 24, 2011
Organic Dairy Farm Tour
Pleasantview Farm, Circleville, OH

For more information, call 614-421-2022 or email addyg1000@gmail.com or visit the website: www.oeffa.org

September 27, 2011, 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Creating Nutritious Food & Feed, From the Soil Up
Earthwise Farm & Forest, 341 MacIntosh Hill Road, Bethel, VT
Lisa McCrory and Carl Russell own a certified organic draft animal-powered diversified farm, growing pasture, vegetables, livestock, and reclaiming some pasture from a pine plantation using animal impact and clearing. In 2010, Lisa enrolled in a course focused on applying soil amendments to create more biologically active, nutrient dense soil, and in turn produce higher quality crops and forages. She has documented the results from pasture and vegetable trial plots and maintained records of all expenses, in order to share that information with other farmers seeking to improve marginal lands on a budget. Supported by the VT Farm Women's Fund and USDA Risk Management. CONTACT: Jenn Colby, (802) 656-0858, jcolby@uvm.edu

September 29-30, 2011
11th Annual NODPA Field Days, Cooperstown, NY

This year's program theme is: 'Organic Dairy: What does the Future Hold?' Keynote speaker, Francis Thicke. For more information, go to http://www.nodpa.com/fielddays_2011_june7_announcement.shtml or Call Nora Owens, Field Days Coordinator, at 413-772-0444, email: noraowens@comcast.net

Starting in October, 2011 – March 2012
2011 – 2012 Bionutrient Rich Crop Production Courses
VT, NH, ME, MA, RI, NY

Course participants will learn to relate more knowingly and directly with their soils and plants, and learn to detect the growth stages, processes, and limitation of their plants and the interactions they are having with the soil and surrounding air. For more information, go to www.realfoodcampaign.org, or contact Douglas Williams at doug@realfoodcampaign.org or call 603-924-7008.

November 4, 2011
Organic Dairy & Field Crop Conference
Crown Plaza Hotel, Syracuse, NY

Join NOFA-NY for our first Organic Dairy and Field Crop Conference. Workshop topics include: grazing dairy cows, diversifying your dairy farm, soil and weed control in field crops, nutrient density in grain crops, food grade grains, seed cleaning and milk quality. For more information, contact Bethany Wallis, Phone: 585-271-1979 ext 513, Email: dairyconference@nofany.org.

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Research & Education

SARE Grazing Course

continued from page 7

The goal setting has been received very positively by both sides of the project. As one trainee described, "My farmer visits have also been very positive. I am so excited for this experience; it is a very nice change of pace and farmer dynamic to talk with them about the whole by including the social piece. " Farmers are also sharing feedback: "I found the whole afternoon wonderfully productive and informative. The opportunities to spend that much time talking specifics about our farm with someone who is in such close touch with the latest developments on grazing management is absolutely invaluable."

After our initial work in developing goals, the group has received training in planned grazing and reading the biological landscape to assess how an understanding of ecosystem processes can help address challenges on the farm and measure their improvement. The group has also engaged in in-depth discussions about high density and taller grazing methods, using animals as tools to change the farm environment, managing livestock nutrition in a changing grazing system, practical definitions of overgrazing, paddock sizing, managing for birds and wildlife, planning forage needs around

Vermont's Route 4 Before And After The Flood



family events and priorities, and much more. 2011 marks the first full grazing season that the trainees have been working with their farms and there has been a lot to learn, on all sides.

The importance of this project is so much more than simply applying grazing mechanics and walking away. Signs of successful assistance will be measured by greater forage yield enabling less purchased hay, by reduced bare ground, by increased biodiversity, by loans either secured or avoided (per the farmer's goals!), by the ability to attend a family event off the farm, by healthier animals, by reduced electricity bills, and most importantly, by meeting the farmer where they are and helping them move toward where they want to be. There is no right answer in this process, only questions and suggestions to help move in the right direction.

Jennifer Colby is the Pasture Program Coordinator at the UVM [Extension] Center for Sustainable Agriculture. She has a B.S. in Animal Science and is currently a Master's Candidate in the UVM Department of Community Development and Applied Economics. Her thesis focuses on how management decisions effect measurements of success on grass-based livestock farms. ♦

Teat Pain, Mastitis and the Professor:

Your milking system pinches the teat end causing pain, teat damage and reverse milking action driving mastitis infections. You can feel this pinching with your finger in a liner. A **university professor** recently **stated** about our statement: "I understand the physics and the physiology and in fact I teach the basics of machine action to vet students in NZ, I do invite students to put their finger in – usually only 1 or 2 at the front of the class do so. And you are correct - none last 30 seconds." in response to our suggestion of feeling the pain a cow endures. He further stated: "**Maybe it should be compulsory for all milkers to have 4 fingers "milked" for at least 7 minutes.**" Further consider that research by Dr. Derek Forbes has proven that this same liner pinch drives bacteria up the canal causing mastitis – basically a **reverse milking action**.

Boldly enter the 21st Century, see the difference and watch the videos at www.Facebook.com/CoPulsation

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Classified Ads

Feed for Sale

Organic Hay for Sale: 4X5 dry round bales, mixed first cut timothy, trefoil, clover and alfalfa. Located in Westport NY. Call Tom and Mary @ 413-323-4338 or 413-744-5366

NOFA certified dairy quality forage:

* 4x5 baleage harvested May 2011
* 4x5 dry hay harvested June 1-7, 2011
* Small square bales of second cutting harvested July 2011
* 150 bales of first cutting 4x5 dry hay harvested July 2011 from a field that we manage for nesting bird habitat. It is clean hay with reasonable color, given the harvest date.
Located in Western Massachusetts, contact Jeff Young, 413-458-3424

Certified Organic (NOFA-NY) Alfalfa Hay, Timothy Hay, Bedding Hay, Wheat Straw - all in small squares and/or Round 4 x 4 1/2. Also Clover Seed and Timothy Seedcleaned and bagged on farm. Contact Jeff @ 607-566-8477 or Mitchellorganics@hotmail.com (Avoca, NY)

Dairy Farms for Sale or Lease

Dairy Farm for Sale Canaan VT - 586-acres on CT River. Excellent ag soils. 600-head dairy complex in excellent condition with double six herringbone milking parlor. Renovated single-family farmhouse, two farm labor houses \$965,000. Restricted by conservation easement and option to purchase at ag value. For more information see vlt.org/johnson or contact Alex Wylie at (802) 352-4452 or alex@vlt.org.

Grass-based Organic Dairy Farm for Sale: Bridport, VT - Well-maintained, organic, family dairy farm, Surrounded by 245+/- acres of lush pasture and hay fields, with stunning, long-range mountain views in every direction. Suitable for the production of high quality organic milk, butter, yogurt &/or cheese, complete with grazing, milking, cheese-making/aging facilities and equipment. Located in a beautiful setting just 10 miles from Middlebury, and with easy access to Burlington. Bright and sunny, 4 bedroom cape has inviting kitchen with butcher block countertops and wood stove with brick surround. Built-in pantry and bookshelves, wide pine floors throughout. Contract for sale subject to 90-day right of first refusal held by VT Land Trust Please contact Amey Ryan at ipj Real Estate at 802-388-4242.
http://middvermontrealestate.com/realestate/detail-view/80//4070444

FARM FOR LEASE \$1/ Year 150 Acre farm with housing in the Lehigh Valley, Pa. Serves a secure market with grass fed beef, lamb, pasture pork and poultry. Best business plan with necessary experiences will be awarded this lease. Contact 6103606926

Position Announcement:

Research Associate

Research Associate--Enhancing Year Round Milk Production of Organic Dairy Farms Animal Scientist / Agronomist

Term : Postdoctoral Research Associate position (GS-11/12)

Location: Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Unit, University Park, Pennsylvania (located on The Pennsylvania State University campus)

Description of duties: The incumbent will coordinate and conduct collaborative interdisciplinary research between the Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Unit and university collaborators across the Northeast. Research will focus on developing practical strategies for organic dairy farmers in the Northeast to improve farm viability by evaluating advanced pasture production and supplementation strategies. Specific duties include collecting year round data from participating organic dairy farms in Pennsylvania, including on-farm feeding studies; assisting with forage field plot trials in Pennsylvania; summarizing and analyzing research data collected by incumbent and collaborators; and serving as project manager of the grant, including coordinating grant advisory board meetings, meeting grant milestones, and writing annual reports.

Qualification requirements: A Ph.D. is required in Animal Science, Agronomy or a related discipline. The incumbent should be able to independently initiate, organize and lead research projects; interact productively with farmers to collect on-farm pasture and animal management data; work in a multidisciplinary team environment; interpret research results; and prepare research articles for refereed publication. Excellent oral and written communication skills required. Experience or interest in agro-ecology, sustainable agriculture, or organic dairy production/dairy grazing systems preferred.

Citizenship restrictions: U.S. citizenship is required or citizenship from countries listed at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/jobs/visa/countries.htm>

Information on application procedures is available at: <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/divisions/hrd/hrdhomepage/vacancy/pd962.html>

Information on employee benefits is available at: <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.asp>

For questions specific to this position or to apply, contact:

Dr. Kathy Soder, Research Animal Scientist
USDA/ARS, Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Unit
Building 3702, Curtin Road, University Park, PA 16802-3702
ph: 814-865-3158, fax: 814-863-0935
Email: Kathy.Soder@ars.usda.gov
Location website: <http://ars.usda.gov/naa/pswmru>

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the MODPA President

Here in the Midwest we have seen conventional milk producer pay price at an even par with organic for July milk. Conventional corn has reached the \$7plus level and these factors along with competition for land and increased organic paper-work with its hassles have lead many to seriously consider if organics is right for them. With summer heat and no spring flush for most of the country coupled with short supply of available organic grain and milk, the time is now to petition for the dollars needed in the milk price to keep existing organic farmers going, to encourage transitioning farmers to take the final steps for certification, and to enable the dairy producer to pay the dollars needed by the organic grain producer to keep them producing grain organically.

If we are to ensure our place into the future, we must ensure that the benefits of organic production leave no room for doubt. We need to ensure that organic producers feel respected/valued/appreciated in

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:

- To ensure a fair and sustainable farm gate price.
- Keep family farms viable for future generations.
- Promote ethical, ecological and humane farming practices.
- Networking among producers of all organic commodities.
- 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 ddviewpoint@yahoo.com Phone: 920-921-5541	Sauk City, WI 53583 taofarmer@direcway.com Phone: 608- 544-3702
Jim Greenberg, Vice-President EP 3961 Drake Avenue Stratford, WI 54484 greenbfirms@tznnet.com Phone: 715-687-8147	Jim Small, Director 26548 Locust Ave. Wilton, WI 54670 Tel: 608-435-6700
John Kinsman, Secretary E2940 County Road K La Valle, WI 53941 Phone: 608- 986-3815 Fax: 608-986-2502	Iowa Andy Schaefers, Director 25037 Lake Rd Garnavillo, IA 52049 Tel: 563-964-2758
Bruce Drinkman, Treasurer 3253 150th Avenue Glenwood City, WI 54013 bdrinkman@hotmail.com Phone: 715-265-4631	Michigan Ed Zimba Zimba Dairy 7995 Mushroom Rd DeFord, MI 48729 zimbadairy@tband.net Phone: 989-872-2680
John Kiefer, Director S10698 Troy Rd	Ohio Ernest Martin, Director 1720 Crum Rd Shiloh, OH 44878 Phone and Fax: 419-895-1182

their position. We can do this thru production and business education/ marketplace rewards. As an ODPa we need to encourage collective bargaining to achieve the best possible pay price for our production. We also need pay price to reflect the true costs associated with our crop production.

As dairy producers, we need to be able to evaluate our production system well enough to know the price required to enhance that system. We also need to be proactive in implementing a system of supply control that will ensure that all organic producers have a level of protection if supply should become long. Whatever that system is, there needs to be room for new organic producers to enter the marketplace without causing damage to the organic premium. It is very important that we work together to benefit all organic producers.

I strongly encourage you to become involved in the process as the more input we have in the process the better the final product will be for us. I hope all of you are attending your field days and voicing your thoughts and opinions on where you see the future for your group, as all of us together is much stronger than any of us alone.

***Darlene Coehoorn, MODPA President
Rosendale, WI***

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: Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer,
3253 150th Ave, Glenwood City, WI 54013**

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)

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

Prsrt Std
US Postage Paid
Permit 8
S. Deerfield, MA

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

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November 11 – 12, 2011

It Takes a Region - 2011: A Conference to Build Our Northeast Food System

Desmond Hotel and Conference Center, Albany, New York

This year, NESAWG and partners will draw on the success of our 2009 & 2010 "It Takes a Region" conferences. Once again, we'll look at exciting efforts underway in our region. We'll hear and build from the work groups -- including distribution logistics, research, messaging, access & nutrition, and policy advocacy (how do we influence the 2012 Farm Bill?). Visit www.ittakesaregion.org or email Kathy Ruhf, NESAWG coordinator: kzruhf@verizon.net or 413-323-9878

November 17, 2011

A Team Approach to developing Successful Farm Transfer Plans 9am-4pm, Doyle Center, 464 Abbot Ave, Leominster, MA

Designed for professionals who assist, or would like to assist farmers with any aspect of farm transfer or succession plans, this workshop is hosted by Land for Good as part of its Land Access Project. For more information, contact Bob Bernstein, 603-357-1600

December 8-12, 2011

Acres U.S.A. Conference & Trade Show

Hyatt Regency, Columbus, Ohio

For more details, go to www.acresusa.com or call 800-355-5313



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